

high rank proposed to her, she would not accept them. After several years, a man eventually came to propose with a present consisting of three carts loaded with pretty dyed silk cloths. She was happy at this and, becoming friendly with him, accepted his proposal and allowed him to enter the bedroom and consummate the marriage.

That night a voice was heard three times from the bedroom saying "It hurts!" Her parents heard, but ignored it and slept again, saying to each other, "She feels pain because she is not used to it."

The next morning because it grew late and she still did not get up, her mother knocked at the door of the bedroom, calling her daughter but getting no answer. Feeling uneasy, she opened the door and found her daughter completely eaten up except for her skull and one finger. Her parents were horrified and grieved at the sight. When they looked at the silk sent as a betrothal present, they discovered that it had turned into animal bones, and the three wagons into silver-berry wood. People from all quarters came to hear and see what had happened, and all were filled with wonder. Her skull was put into a beautiful imported box, and the box was placed in front of the Three Treasures, where a vegetarian feast<sup>5</sup> was served on the first seventh morning.

Thus we suspect that an omen preceded the calamity. The song noted above was the omen. Some say that it was the mysterious work of a deity,<sup>6</sup> and others say she fell prey to a fiend.<sup>7</sup> On reflection, however, we know that this was a penalty for her past deeds. This is also an extraordinary event.

## 34

### *On an Orphaned Girl Whose Devotion to the Bronze Kannon Brought Her an Immediate Reward in a Miraculous Event<sup>1</sup>*

In the neighborhood of Uetsuki-dera 殖槻寺<sup>2</sup> on the West Side of Nara there was an orphaned girl. She was unmarried, and her name

5. 齋食 *saijiki*; see I.24, n. 3.

6. 神怪 *shinge*.

7. 鬼啖 *kitan*.

1. Cf. *Konjaku monogatari-shū* (XVI, 8).

2. Or Kenpō-ji 建法寺, Kannon-ji 観音寺. It was located next to Uetsuki Hachiman Shrine 植槻八幡宮, in present Yamato-kōriyama-shi 大和郡山市. See Fukuyama, *Narachō jihin*, 221-229.

is unknown. Her parents in their lifetime were very rich, built many houses and storehouses, and made a bronze Bodhisattva Kanzeon 觀世音菩薩,<sup>3</sup> two and a half feet high. They built a detached hall to enshrine the image and perform rites before it.

In Emperor Shōmu's reign the parents passed away, the slaves<sup>4</sup> ran away, and the cattle died. Thereupon, having lost her wealth and suffering from poverty, the girl stayed in the house and cried sorrowfully day and night. When she heard that Bodhisattva Kannon fulfilled the wishes of devotees, she offered flowers, incense, and lamps, holding the rope tied to the image<sup>5</sup> and praying for a good share of fortune, saying, "Since I am the only child, I have been all alone since the death of my parents. I have lost my fortune, and I am poor, lacking any means of livelihood. Will you please bring me a fortune immediately? Please give me a quick response!" Thus she wailed and prayed day and night.

In the same village there was a wealthy widower. He saw the girl and proposed to her through a go-between. She replied, "I am so poor that I am naked and have no clothes. How can I veil my face and go to talk with him?" The go-between reported her words to the widower, who said, "I know very well that she is poor and has no clothes. I only want to know if she accepts me." Therefore, the go-between visited the girl again to tell her the message, but again she said "No." Then the man forced his way in to call on and visit with her. Presently she accepted him and lay with him.

The next day it rained from morning till night. The rain kept him from leaving her, and he stayed for three days. Being hungry, he said, "I am hungry. Will you give me something to eat?" The wife said, "I will prepare a meal soon." She kindled fire in the stove and set an empty pot on the fire, crouching with her chin in her hands. Wandering in her empty house, she sighed sorrowfully, and after she had cleaned her mouth and washed her hands, she entered the sacred hall. In tears, holding the rope tied to the image, she implored, "Will you please save me from shame? Please bring me a fortune immediately." After that, she went out of the hall and crouched with her chin in her hands in front of the empty stove as before.

About four o'clock on that day there was a knock at the door, and somebody called to her. She went out and found the wet nurse of a

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

4. 奴婢 *nuhi*; see Chap. I(1)a, n. 24.

5. See II.21, n. 8.

rich neighbor standing there. She had brought a big chest full of all kinds of food and drink, fragrant delicacies with nothing missing in metal bowls and on lacquered plates. She offered it to the wife, saying, "As we heard you have a guest, our master has prepared a present for you. Only please return the vessels when you have finished."

Greatly rejoicing, she was so overwhelmed with happiness that she took off her black robe to give to the messenger, saying, "I have nothing to offer you except my soiled clothes. Please accept this for your use." After the messenger put it on and left, she served the meal. At the sight the man wondered and looked at her face rather than at the feast.

After he had left the next day, ten rolls of silk and ten straw bags<sup>6</sup> of rice were sent from him with the following message: "Make your clothes out of the silk and wine out of the rice promptly." The girl visited the rich neighbors to thank them for their kindness, but the mistress said, "How funny you are! Or are you possessed by a spirit?<sup>7</sup> I do not know what you are talking about." The messenger, too, said, "I do not know either." Scolded by them, she went home and entered the hall to pay homage to the image as usual, and found her black robe draped on it. It was evident that this was a miracle of the Kannon. Therefore, she believed in the law of karmic causality and revered the image with increased faith. After that she gained a fortune as large as before and suffered from neither hunger nor sorrow. The couple enjoyed a long and happy life. This is a miraculous event.

## 35

### *On the Penalty of Immediate Death from a Bad Disease for Hitting a Monk<sup>1</sup>*

Prince Uji 宇遲王<sup>2</sup> was innately evil and had no faith in the Three Treasures. In the reign of Emperor Shōmu, this prince was traveling in Yamashiro 山背<sup>3</sup> on an errand, accompanied by eight attendants.

6. 俵, one *hyō* contains 2.5 bushels of rice.

7. 鬼 *mono*.

1. Cf. *Genkō shakusho* (XXIX, 3).

2. Dates unknown. See *Shoku Nihongi*, XII (Tenpyō 9:9:28, 12:28); XIII (10:12:4). 從五位下宇治王爲中務大輔.

3. Present Kyoto-fu; see I.12, n. 6.

On his way to the capital of Nara, in Tsuzuki district 綴喜郡,<sup>4</sup> he met Taikyō 諦鏡,<sup>5</sup> a monk of Shimotsuke-dera 下毛野寺,<sup>6</sup> who had been traveling from Nara to Yamashiro. Taikyō happened to come upon the prince so suddenly that he could not find any place to which to retire and stood by the road, hiding his face with a hat.<sup>7</sup> Seeing this, the prince stopped his horse to have him whipped. Although the monk and his disciple ran into the rice paddy to escape, the attendants caught them and broke open the chests<sup>8</sup> they were carrying. Whereupon, the monk cried, "Why is there no guardian of dharma?"<sup>9</sup>

The prince had hardly moved on when he was attacked by a serious disease. He groaned loudly and leaped several feet off the ground. Seeing the prince suffering the attendants asked Taikyō to cure him, but Taikyō would not listen to them. They entreated him three times in vain. The monk asked, "Does he have pain?" To which they replied, "Yes, he is in great pain." Taikyō then said, "Let the unworthy prince suffer a thousand times, ten thousand times!"

At this, relatives of the prince addressed the emperor, saying, "Dharma Master Taikyō has cursed Uji," and they wanted to catch and kill him. Learning of their intention, the emperor did not allow them to do so. In three days the prince died, his body as black as ink. Again his relatives went to the emperor, saying, "'An eye for an eye.' We would like to take revenge by killing Taikyō, since Uji is already dead." The emperor addressed them, saying, "I am a monk, and so is Taikyō. How can a monk kill a monk? Taikyō is not responsible for Uji's incurring a calamity." Since the emperor had shaved his head, had been ordained, and followed the path of Buddha, he sided with the monk and would not let him be killed.<sup>10</sup>

The insane Prince Uji was so evil natured that the guardian of dharma punished him. The guardian of dharma is always present. How can we ignore this?

4. Present Tsuzuki-gun, Kyoto-fu 京都府綴喜郡.

5. Unknown.

6. An unlocated temple in Nara; it may be a family temple of the Shimotsuke family. See Fukuyama, *Narachō jin*, 194-198. See also II.26, n. 3.

7. The *Sōni-ryō*, Article 19, states that monks and nuns must hide themselves when they meet a person of the Third Rank or higher on the road: they must stop their horse, salute, and pass on in case of meeting a person of the Fifth Rank or above or, if on foot, hide themselves. Monks were considered equal to persons of the Sixth Rank. Since Prince Uji had the Junior Fifth Rank, Lower Grade, Taikyō had to cover himself.

8. 藏; the place to store valuables, or, in this case, Buddhist scriptures.

9. 護法 *gohō*; see II.1, n. 11.

10. Emperor Shōmu received the Mahayana bodhisattva precepts from Ganjin at the newly constructed ordination platform of Tōdai-ji and abdicated in 749. His clerical name is Shōman 勝滿.