

II

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 *Hoke-kyō*⁷ at Noo-dera 濃於寺⁸ in Shikama district, Harima province 播磨國鎋磨郡, 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 Noo-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 kakun* 顏氏家訓¹² gives an analogous passage: "Once there was a man who belonged to the Liu family in Chiang-ling,¹³

1. Cf. *Sambō ekotoba* (II, 6), *Honchō kōsōden* (75).

2. Otherwise unknown.

3. *Shamon*; see Chap. I(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 [u]ango (雨) 安居, *gegyō* 夏行, etc), a translation of Skt. *varṣavāṣika*, 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 兵庫縣姫路市御着.

9. 行者 *gyōja*; in this passage refers to Jiō. It means "one who practices the path."

10. 咒 *ju*; see Chap. I(1)b, n. 47.

11. 大衆 *daishū*; the congregation consisting of the participants of the retreat.

12. Yen Chih-t'ui, *Yen-shih chia-hsün* (SPTK, No. 169). See Teng ssu-yü, trans., *Family Instructions for the Yen Clan*. Yen Chih-t'ui (531-591) presents a synthesis 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 *Kaden* (see Chap. I(1)c, nn. 67, 68) and other biographical and moralistic writings. That particular chapter is included in the *Kuang hung-ming chi* 廣弘明集, XI (Taishō, LI, 107b-108c).

13. Present Hupei 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.

I2

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.⁶ 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 萬侶 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 hung-ming chi*. See *Family Instructions*, 149. 江陵劉氏以賣鱒爲業後生一兒頭是鱒自頸以下爲人耳。

1. Cf. *Fusō ryakki* (IV, Kōtoku), *Konjaku monogatari-shū* (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 (*jūsshi* 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. I(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 山城, present Kyoto-fu.

7. 646.

8. See *Shoku Nihongi* (I (Monmu 4:3:10). There it gives Dōshō, not Dōtō, as the builder of the Uji Bridge, but other documents agree with the *Nihon ryōiki* 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.

Shortly after midnight they heard a male voice, and the man said to Maro, "Go away quickly, for here comes my brother who killed me!" In wonder, Maro asked him about this, and he answered, "Once my brother and I were traveling on business, and I acquired about fifty pounds¹¹ of silver in my trade. Out of envy and hate my brother killed me to take the silver. For many years my skull was trampled by passing men and beasts, till your master mercifully rescued me from that suffering, which is why I have given you a banquet this evening."

It was at this point that the man's mother and elder brother entered the room to worship all spirits.¹² Being surprised at the sight of Maro, they asked why he was there, and Maro told them what he had just heard. The mother thereby accused her elder son, saying, "Ah! You killed my dear son. It was not a robber, but you!" Then she thanked Maro and gave him a feast. On his return, Maro reported this to his master.

Even a spirit of the dead or a skeleton repays an act of kindness;¹³ how can a living man forget?

I 3

On a Woman Who Performed Work in an Extraordinary Way, Ate Sacred Herbs, and Flew up to Heaven Alive¹

In a village of Nuribe, Uda district, Yamato province 大倭國宇太郡漆部里,² there lived an extraordinary woman,³ who was married to Nuribe no miyatsuko Maro 漆部造麿.⁴ Innately pure and straightforward in upholding what was right, she gave birth to seven children, but she was too poor to feed them since she had no one to depend on. Since the children had no clothes, she wove vines into clothes for them. Every day she purified herself in a bath and clothed herself in rags. She would gather edible herbs in the fields, and devoted herself to staying at home and cleaning the house. When she cooked the herbs, she called her children, sat up straight, and ate the food, all the

1. 斤 gon; as 1 gon is 1.323 lbs., so 40 gon makes 53 lbs.

2. 諸靈 shoryō.

3. For the motif of "the grateful dead," see Chap. II(1)a, n. 10.

1. Cf. *Konjaku monogatari* (XX, 42).

2. Present Soni-mura or Mitsue-mura, Uda-gun, Nara-ken 奈良縣宇陀郡會爾村, 御杖村.

3. 風流 misao.

4. 妾 not the legal wife, but a concubine.

while smiling, talking cheerfully, and being grateful. This constant discipline in mind and body made her spirit resemble that of a guest from heaven.⁵

In the fifth year of the Hakuchi era⁶ of the emperor who resided at the Palace of Nagara no Toyosaki in Naniwa,⁷ heavenly beings⁸ communicated with her,⁹ and she ate special herbs¹⁰ gathered in the field in springtime and flew about in the heavens.

Indeed, we know that her extraordinary qualities and her diet of special herbs are well recognized, even though she has not studied Buddhist teachings. The *Shōjin nyomon-kyō* 精進女問經¹¹ gives this relevant passage: "You will be able to achieve five kinds of merit¹² by leading a lay life and sweeping the garden with an upright mind."¹³

I 4

On a Monk Who Got an Immediate Reward for Recollecting and Reciting the Shin-gyō and Showed an Extraordinary Sign¹

Saka Gigaku 釋義覺² was originally from Paekche.³ When it was destroyed⁴ in the reign of the empress who resided at the later Palace of Okamoto,⁵ he immigrated to this country and lived in Kudara-dera

5. 天上客 *tenjō no kyaku*, literally, a guest from heaven, that is, a *hsien* or Chinese Taoist saint. See I.28, n. 10.

6. Hakuchi era (650-654) during the reign of Emperor Kōtoku.

7. See I.9, n. 5.

8. 神仙 *shinsen*; Taoist saints.

9. 感應 *kan'nō*; see I.8, n. 9.

10. 仙草 *sensō*; diet for Taoist saints.

11. *Muku ubaimon-kyō* 無垢優婆夷問經 (*Taishō*, XIV, 950c).

12. 五功德 *go-kudoku*, five kinds of merit attained after rebirth in the pure land.

13. The quotation differs from the original, which reads: "Buddha taught a pure lay sister, saying, 'sweep the precinct of the pagoda, and you will be rewarded with five kinds of merit.'" The original text stresses the merit of sweeping the precinct of the pagoda, while Kyōkai's altered quotation shifted the emphasis to everyday household work by replacing the "precinct of the pagoda" with the "garden" and adding, "leading a lay life . . ." See Chap. II(2)b.

1. Cf. *Sanbō ekotoba* (II, 7), *Fusō ryakki* (IV, Saimei), *Konjaku monogatari* (XIV, 32), *Mizukagami* (II, Saimei), *Genkō shakusho* (IX), etc.

2. *Saka* is a shortened form of *Śākyamuni*; those who renounced the world are regarded as descendants of *Śākyamuni*, and given the surname *Saka*.

3. See Preface, n. 3, above.

4. See I.7, n. 6.

5. Empress Saimei (655-661), whose palace was called the later Palace of Asuka no Okamoto because it was built on the site of Emperor Jomei's Palace of Okamoto, presently Asuka-mura, Takechi-gun, Nara-ken. See *Nihon shoki*, XXIII (Jomei 2: 10: 12), XXVI (Saimei, 2: 9); Aston, "Nihongi," II, 165, 250.