

One day the son said to his father-in-law, "I would like to take you to Mutsu province." The latter agreed and got on board a ship for Mutsu. Plotting with the sailors, the son tied his father-in-law up and threw him into the sea. When he went home, he said to his wife, "As your father wanted to see you, I took him on the ship for the voyage. Before long we ran into a storm at sea, and the ship⁵ sank. Your father, being beyond any means of rescue, was drowned. He drifted on the sea before he sank under the water, while I barely saved myself." The wife, greatly dejected by this news, wailed and said, "How unhappy I am to lose my father! Did my idea of inviting him cause me to lose my treasure? It would be easier to find a jewel on the bottom of the sea than to see him and collect his bones. What a pity!"

Meanwhile, the monk sank into the water, reciting a Mahayana scripture with utmost devotion, and found that the water left a hollow space allowing him to crouch safely on the bottom. After two days and nights another ship bound for Mutsu province sailed by. The sailors noticed the tip of a rope drifting on the sea, and, seizing it, pulled up the monk on the other end. He looked as well as ever. The sailors, therefore, wondered greatly and asked him, "Who are you?" He answered, "I am so and so. I met robbers and was thrown into the sea with my limbs bound with a rope." Then they asked him again, "Venerable Master, by what magic could you survive without being drowned in the water?" He said, "I am always reciting a Mahayana scripture. No doubt its mysterious power has saved me." Thus he never revealed his son-in-law's name. He asked then, "Will you take me to a port in Mutsu?" Accordingly, they took him there.

As for the son-in-law in Mutsu province, he held a service for the drowned father, making an offering to the Three Treasures. The father, who had been wandering and begging there, happened to attend the service with a group of self-ordained monks⁶ and received an offering of food while his face was covered. When the son-in-law held out offerings for the monks, the drowned father put his hands out to receive them. The startled son-in-law shrank back in horror, his eyes shifting restlessly and his face flushing. He hid himself, stricken with terror. The smiling father-in-law showed no anger but only forbearance, never revealing the evil deed. Owing to the hollow space in the water, he did not drown; nor was he eaten by a poisonous fish, but remained safe in the sea. Indeed we know that this was

5. 驛船 *ekisen*; government boats for transportation. Cf. I.30, n. 6.

6. 自度 *jido*.

caused by the miraculous power of a Mahayana scripture and the protection of various Buddhas.

The note says: How good he was to be tolerant and not to accuse his son-in-law of his evil deed! Indeed he was the very model of fortitude. This is what the *Jōagon-gyō*⁷ means when it says: "To requite vengeance with vengeance is like trying to put out a fire with hay, but to requite vengeance with mercy is like putting out a fire with water."

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On Bodhisattva Myōken's Incarnation as a Deer to Detect a Thief

In Asuka district, Kawachi province 河内國安宿郡,¹ there was a mountain temple of Shidehara 信天原山寺.² It was a place to offer lamps to Bodhisattva Myōken 妙見菩薩,³ and every year lamps were offered from provinces around the capital.⁴

In the reign of Empress Abe, the devotees' association⁵ held the usual celebration of offering lamps⁶ to the Bodhisattva and made offerings of money and valuables to the monk in charge of the temple.⁷ At that time his disciple stole five *kan* of money from the offerings and hid it. Later the disciple went to the spot to retrieve the money and discovered nothing but a dead deer with an arrow in it. Therefore, he went to the village of Inoue-dera 井上寺⁸ near the city of Kawachi to get men to help him bring down the deer. When he led them to the spot, there was no deer but the five *kan* of money. In this way the thief was discovered.

Indeed, we know that the deer was not real but had been a temporary manifestation of the Bodhisattva. It is a miraculous event.

7. Kariya says that this passage is found not in the *Jōagon-gyō* but *Bonmō-kyō koshakki*, III (*Taishō*, XL, 712).

1. Present Minami-kawachi-gun, Ōsaka-fu 大阪府南河内郡.

2. Unidentified.

3. See Chap. II(3)b, n. 133.

4. 畿内 Kinai; see Chap. I(1)a, n. 3.

5. 知識 *chishiki*.

6. 燃燈 *nentō*.

7. 室主 *muronushi*.

8. Or Fukō-ji 普光寺, Torisaka-dera 鳥坂寺.