

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 bags⁶ 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?⁷ 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 Monk¹

Prince Uji 宇遲王² 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³ 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,⁴ he met Taikyō 諦鏡,⁵ a monk of Shimotsuke-dera 下毛野寺,⁶ 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.⁷ 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 chests⁸ they were carrying. Whereupon, the monk cried, "Why is there no guardian of dharma?"⁹

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.¹⁰

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 jūin*, 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. 臈; 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.