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*On an Evil Anonymous Novice Who Tore Down a Pillar
of the Pagoda and Gained a Penalty¹*

The novice² of Ishikawa was a self-ordained³ monk without a clerical name, and his secular name is unknown. The only fact known about his origin is that his wife came from Ishikawa district, Kawachi province 河内國石川郡,⁴ which is why he is called the novice Shami of Ishikawa. He had the appearance of a novice monk but the mind of a thief. Once he swindled people out of donations under the pretext of building a pagoda and spent the money for various foods. Or again, when he lived in the Tsukiyone-dera 春米寺⁵ in Shimashimo district, Settsu province 攝津國嶋下郡,⁶ he tore down a pillar of the pagoda to burn, and thus he failed to honor dharma. No one could be as wicked as he.

Eventually, he reached the village of Ajiki 味木里 in Shimashimo district,⁷ and came down with a fever. He cried aloud, "I am on

fire!" and jumped one or two feet off the ground. People gathered around to look and asked, "Why are you screaming like that?" He answered, "Because hell fire has come to devour me, and I am suffering. Why are you asking me such questions?" He breathed his last on that day.

What a pity it is! We should reflect on ourselves since we know that retribution⁸ is no idle fancy. This is what the *Nehan-gyō*⁹ means when it says: "If a man does good deeds, his name will be noticed among heavenly beings;¹⁰ while, if he does evil deeds, his name will be recorded in hell.¹¹ For retribution is a real fact."

1. Cf. *Konjaku monogatarihū* (XX, 38).

2. 沙彌 *shami*; see Chap. I(1)a, n. 10.

3. 自度 *jido*; see I.19, n. 3.

4. Present Minami-kawachi-gun, Ōsaka-fu.

5. Unidentified; its name suggests that there was a mill in the temple precincts. See Preface, n. 19, above.

6. Present Mishima-gun, Ōsaka-fu 大阪府三島郡.

7. Unidentified.

8. 罪報 *zaihō*.

9. *Daihatsu nehan-gyō*, XI (*Taishō*, XII, 524b). 若見有人修行善者名見天人修行惡者名見地獄定受報故。

10. 天人 *tenjin*, interpreted as heavenly beings or “heavens and this world.”

11. 地獄 *jigoku*. See Chap. I(2)a, n. 127.