

opened the chest, he found the color of the scripture brilliant and its characters distinct. People came from all quarters to see it and could not help wondering at it.

Indeed, we know that the same manifestations of power took place here as in the case of the scripture being copied properly by a highly disciplined nun of Hotung 河東練行尼, or as in the case of the daughter of Wang Yü 王與女 in the time of the Ch'en dynasty being saved from fire by reciting the scripture.⁹

The note says: How praiseworthy was this member of the Enomoto family for accumulating merits by his great devotion and by copying the Ekayana scripture!¹⁰ The guardian deity of dharma performed a miracle in the flames. This is an effective story for converting the minds of nonbelievers and an excellent guide for stopping offenses of the evil-minded.

II

On a Blind Woman Whose Sight Was Restored Owing to Her Devotion to the Wooden Image of Yakushi Buddha¹

There was a wooden image of Yakushi-nyorai 藥師如來² in Tadehara-dō 蓼原堂³ in the village of Tadehara, south of the pond of Koshida 越田池 in the capital of Nara.⁴ In the reign of Empress Abe, a blind woman lived in the village. She was a widow whose only daughter was seven years old. She was so poor that she could not get food, and almost starved to death. She said to herself, "My poverty comes not only from my deeds in this life but from those in my previous lives.⁵ I had better practice good with faith rather than die of hunger in vain."

Asking her daughter to lead her, she went to the hall and prayed to

8. See *Myōhōki*, I (*Taishō*, LI, 789).

9. Source unknown.

10. 一乘經, that is, *Hoke-kyō* which expounds the Ekayana teaching that all vehicles are reduced into one vehicle on the ultimate level. See I.Preface, n. 16; III.38, n. 42.

1. Cf. *Konjaku monogatari-shū* (XII, 19), *Genkō shakusho* (XXIX, 3).

2. *Bhaiṣajyaguruvaidīryaprabhatahāgata*; see Chap. II(3)b, n. 135.

3. Unidentified.

4. It may be located in the southern outskirts of the capital.

5. 宿業; see I.8, n. 4.

the image of Yakushi Buddha for restoration of her sight, saying, "I do not care for my life, only for my daughter's. Both of us are about to die. I entreat you to give me sight!" A patron of the temple who was present saw her and, in sympathy, opened the door of the hall to let her pay homage to the image and recite its name.⁶

Two days later the daughter saw something pink and as sticky as gum suddenly oozing from the breast of the image. She told her mother about it. The mother, who wanted to eat it, said to her child, "Will you take some and put it in my mouth?" It was delicious, and all at once her eyes were opened.

Indeed we learn that any vow will be fulfilled if made with utmost devotion. This is an extraordinary event.

I 2

On a Blind Man Whose Sight Was Restored Owing to His Chanting of the Name of Nichimanishu of the Thousand-armed Kannon¹

In a village east of Yakushi-ji 藥師寺² in the capital of Nara, there was a blind man whose eyes were open, but he could not see. He was devoted to Kannon and meditated on Nichimanishu 日摩尼手³ to restore his eyesight. During the day he used to sit at the eastern gate of Yakushi-ji, spread a handkerchief, and chant the name of Nichimanishu. Passersby and sympathizers put money, rice, and cereal on the handkerchief. At other times he sat in the marketplace doing the same thing. When he heard the temple bell at noon, he would go to the temple to beg food from the monks and in this way he lived for many years.

In the reign of Empress Abe, two strangers came to him, saying, "In sympathy for you we have come to cure your eyes." After they

6. 稱禮 *shōrai*.

1. Cf. *Konjaku monogatari-shū* (XVI, 23).

2. See Editor's Preface, n. 4.

3. The Thousand-armed Kannon has forty arms in addition to the regular two, and each of them has twenty-five spheres of existence; hence, the figure 1,000 is arrived at. Nichimanishu or Nishhōmanishu 日精摩尼手 is the eighth right arm of the forty, which holds the jewel of the sun, a symbol of Kannon's cosmic significance. It gives off light continuously. *Senju-sengen-kanzeon-bosatsu-daihishin-darani* says, "The blind man should recite [the following *mantra*] in the name of Nishhōmanishu . . ." (*Taishō*, XX, 111a).

had treated both his eyes, they said, "We will come back here without fail in two days. Don't forget to wait for us." Before long both his eyes grew bright and he recovered his eyesight. On the promised day he waited for them, but they never returned.

The note says: How good it was for a blind man to recover his eyesight in this present life and to travel far along the Great Way,⁴ having thrown away his cane, seeing clearly and acting firmly. Indeed, we know that it happened because of the power of Kannon and the great devotion of the blind man.

I 3

*On a Man Who Made a Vow to Copy the Hoke-kyō and
Who Was Saved From a Dark Pit Devoid of Sunlight
Owing to the Power of His Vow¹*

In Aita district, Mimasaka province 美作國英多郡,² there was a state-owned iron mine. In the reign of Empress Abe, a provincial magistrate drafted ten workmen and had them enter the iron mine to dig out ore. All of a sudden, the entrance to the mine caved in. Surprised and terrified, the workmen made a rush for the exit, and nine of them barely managed to escape. Before the last man got out, the entrance was blocked. The magistrate and people, high and low, grieved for him, for they thought he had been crushed to death in the landslide. Wailing in grief, his family painted an image of Kannon and copied the scriptures to give merits to the dead man, thus completing the seventh day service.³

The man, however, was sealed in the pit alone, saying to himself, "I have not yet fulfilled my vow which I made recently to copy the *Hoke-kyō*. If my life is saved, I will fulfill it without fail." In the dark pit he felt regret and sorrow greater than he had ever experienced.

Meanwhile he noticed that the door of the pit opened a little and

4. 太方 *taihō*; the path of Buddha.

1. Cf. *Myōhōki* (I, On a Servant in Yeh 鄭下人), *Sanbō ekotoba* (II, 17), *Hokke kenki* (III, 108), *Fusō ryakki* (VI, Genmyō), *Konjaku monogatarihū* (XIV, 9).

2. Or Agata district; present Aita-gun, Okayama-ken 岡山縣英多郡.

3. Or "seventh day services" which are usually continued for seven seven-day periods during which the dead person's future existence is decided. But from the following story we choose "seventh day service" as more probable than a longer period.

a ray of sunlight came in. A novice⁴ entered through the opening and brought him a bowl filled with delicacies, saying, "Your family made offerings of food and drink so that I might save you. I have come to you since you have been wailing in grief." So saying, he went out. Not long after he had gone, a hole opened above the man's head, and sunlight flooded the pit. The opening was about two feet square and fifty feet high.

At the same time, about thirty men who had come into the mountain to collect vines passed near the hole. The man at the bottom of the pit saw them pass and cried, "Take my hand." The workmen in the mountain heard what sounded like the hum of a mosquito. Out of curiosity they dropped a vine into the pit with a stone at the end of the vine. The man took hold of it and pulled. It was evident that there was someone at the bottom. They made a rope and a basket of vines, tied lengths of vine rope to the four corners of the basket, and lowered it into the pit with a pulley set up at the opening. When the man at the bottom got into the basket, they pulled him up and sent him home.

Nothing could surpass the joy of his family. The provincial magistrate asked him, "What good did you do?" The man told him the whole story. Greatly moved, the magistrate organized a devotees' association⁵ to cooperate in copying the *Hoke-kyō* and held a dedication ceremony.

This took place owing to the divine power of the *Hoke-kyō* and the favor of Kannon.⁶ There is no doubt about this.

I 4

*On Receiving an Immediate Penalty of Violent Death
Because of Hitting the Reciter of the Dharani
of the Thousand-armed Kannon¹*

In Kaga district, Echizen province 越前國加賀郡,² there was an of-

4. An incarnated Kannon.

5. 知識 *chishiki*.

6. This story is a rare case of Kannon and *Hoke-kyō* combined in one story.

1. Cf. *Sanbō ekotoba* (II, 8).

2. Present Kawakita-gun and Ishikawa-gun, Ishikawa-ken 石川縣河北郡, 石川郡. Since Kaga district became Kaga province in 823, this story offers one evidence for dating the compilation of the *Nihon ryōiki* before 823. See *Ruijū sandai-kyaku*, V (Kōnin 14:2:3).