

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

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

12. 諸靈 *shoryō*.

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

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

2. Present Soni-mura or Mitsue-mura, Uda-gun, Nara-ken 奈良縣宇陀郡曾爾村, 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 1.28, n. 10.

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

7. See 1.9, n. 5.

8. 神仙 *shinsen*; Taoist saints.

9. 感應 *kan'nō*; see 1.8, 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 monogatarihū* (XIV, 32), *Mizukagami* (II, Saimei), *Genkō shakusho* (IX), etc.

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

3. See Preface, n. 3, above.

4. See 1.7, 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.

百濟寺,⁶ in Naniwa. He was seven feet tall, studied Buddhist teachings extensively, and recited the *Shin hannya-gyō* 心般若經.⁷ Egi 慧義,⁸ a fellow monk in the same temple, happened to go out at midnight and found Gigaku's room brightly illuminated. Wondering why, Egi made a hole in the paper window, peeped secretly into the room, and saw Gigaku sitting and reciting the scripture, the light coming out of his mouth. Struck with awe and surprise, Egi confessed his offense⁹ the next morning, in the congregation of his fellowmen.

Once Dharma Master Gigaku said to his disciple, "One evening I had recited the *Shin-gyō* 心經 about one hundred times and had then opened my eyes when I found I could see right through the four walls of the room and into the middle of the garden. Then I had an extraordinary experience. I went out, walked about in the temple grounds, and came back to my room, but all the walls and doors had remained closed. When I recited the *Shin-gyō* outside, they opened and became passable as before. This is the wonder of the *Shin hannya-gyō*."¹⁰

The note says: How great is this child of Śākyamuni! He listens to and advocates Buddhist teachings, devotes himself to reciting the scripture, and attains a mind that penetrates everything. It manifests itself in extreme quietness without agitation, but, once in motion, it pierces walls and generates light of its own accord.

I 5

On a Wicked Man Who Persecuted a Begging Monk and Gained an Immediate Penalty¹

In the days of an old capital,² there was a foolish man who did not believe in the law of karmic causality. Once, when he saw a monk begging food, he grew angry and wanted to restrain the monk. The

6. Founded in 639 by Emperor Jomei (See *Nihon shoki*, XXIII, 11:7) on the bank of the Kudara River, presently Sumiyoshi-ku. Ōsaka-shi 大阪市住吉區. Kudara-dera and Hōkō-ji were considered great (state) temples (*ibid.*, XXIX, Tenmu 9:4). In the reign of Emperor Tenmu its status and function were taken over by Takechi-no-ōtera 高市大寺 or Ōtsukasa-no-ōtera 大官大寺 (see Chap. I(1)c).

7. Also called *Hannya shin-gyō* or *Shin-gyō*; see Chap. II(1)a, n. 17.

8. Otherwise unknown.

9. 悔過 *keka*; see Chap. II(1)a.

10. See Chap. II(3)b.

1. Cf. *Konjaku monogatari* (XX, 25). Similar stories are found in II.1, 11, 35; III.15, etc.

2. See I.1, n. 15.

monk ran into the water of a rice field, but the man chased him and caught him. When the monk could stand this no longer, he cast a spell³ on the man, who rolled on the ground and ran about⁴ hysterically. Then the monk disappeared from the scene.

The man had two sons. In order to break the spell binding their father, they went to the temple and asked a *dhyāna* master to come and see their father. When the master learned what had happened, he at first refused to make a visit. Again and again the two sons begged him earnestly to save their father, and at last the monk came. Hardly had he finished reciting the first passage of the Chapter on the Kannon 觀音品⁵ when the man was released from the spell.⁶ Thereafter his faith⁷ was awakened, and he turned wickedness into good.

I 6

On Gaining an Immediate Penalty for Skinning a Live Rabbit without Mercy¹

In Yamato province 大和國² there was a man whose name and native place are not identified. He was not benevolent³ and liked to kill living beings. He caught a rabbit and set it free in the fields after skinning it alive. Before long he contracted a fatal disease; his whole body was covered with scabs that broke out in extremely painful sores. He was never cured and died groaning loudly.

Ah! How soon wicked deeds incur a penalty in this life! We should be considerate⁴ and benevolent. Above all, we should show mercy.⁵

3. 咒縛 *jubaku*.

4. 東西 literally means "east and west," that is, in all directions.

5. *Kannon-hon*; Chap. XXV of the *Hoke-kyō*, often used as an independent scripture. See Chap. II(3)b; also, Katō, trans., *Myōhō-enge-kyō*, 405-415.

6. 解脫 *gedatsu*; a translation of Skt. *niokṣa*, meaning liberation, freedom from the bonds of illusion and suffering. In this passage, however, it means release from the spell.

7. 信心 *shinjin*; a pure heart, free from doubt, which believes in the Three Treasures and the law of karmic causation, the first requisite for following the Buddha's path.

1. Cf. *Konjaku monogatari* (XX, 28). A famous story on skinning a live rabbit is found in the *Kojiki* (I, On Ōkuninushi no kami); see Philippi, trans., *Kojiki*, I, 21, 93-95.

2. Present Nara-ken.

3. 仁 *jin*; the most important Confucian virtue which is the basis for the ideal image of man. See Arthur Waley, *The Analects of Confucius*, 27-29.

4. 恕 *shu* or *ju*; 夫子之道 恕而已矣. See *ibid.*, 105, n. 1.

5. 慈悲 *jiji*; a compound originally formed of two Skt. words, that is, *maitri* (friendship, love 慈) and *karuṇā* (sympathy, mercy 悲). For a general discussion, see Nakamura Hajime, *Jiji*.