

long afterward. My work is comparable to a rough pebble beside the K'un-lun Mountains.²⁹ Its source in the oral tradition is so indistinct that I am afraid of omitting much. Only the desire to do good has moved me to try, in spite of the fear that this might turn out to be a presumptuous work by an incompetent author. I hope that learned men in future generations will not laugh at my efforts, and I pray that those who happen upon this collection of miraculous stories will put aside evil, live in righteousness, and, without causing evil, practice good.³⁰

I

*On Catching Thunder*¹

Chisakobe no Sugaru 小子部栖輿² was a favorite of Emperor Yūryaku 雄略天皇 (called Ōhatsuse-wakatake no sumeramikoto 大泊瀬稚武天皇) who reigned for twenty-three years at the Palace of Asakura in Hatsuse 泊瀬朝倉宮.³

Once the emperor stayed at the Palace of Iware 磐余⁴, and it happened that Sugaru stepped into the Ōyasumidono 大安殿⁵ without

29. 崑崙山 a mountain range in Sinkiang province which is famous for jade.

30. 諸惡莫作諸善奉行, a popular maxim found in most Buddhist scriptures.

1. Another version of the same story is found in the *Nihon shoki*, XIV (Yūryaku 7:7:3); Aston, "Nihongi," I, 347. The emperor commanded Sugaru to go and seize the kami of Mt. Mimoro. Sugaru climbed the hill and caught a great snake. When he showed it to the emperor, thunder rolled, and its eyeballs flamed. The emperor was frightened and sent it back to Mt. Mimoro, renaming it Ikazuchi, thunder. For a discussion of snake (dragon)-thunder themes, see De Visser, *The Dragon in China and Japan*.

2. Chisakobe is a surname, and Sugaru a given name, the latter meaning "wasp." The *Nihon Shoki*, XIV (Yūryaku 6:3:7) gives a story on the origin of Chisakobe; Aston, "Nihongi." Once Emperor Yūryaku (traditionally, 456-479) told Sugaru to collect silkworms (Ja. *kaiko*) in order to encourage court ladies to work for the silk industry. Sugaru collected babies (*katoko*) instead of silkworms. The emperor was amused and gave him the title of Chisakobe, literally meaning "little children cooperation." Shida, on the basis of these stories, holds that Sugaru was in charge of preventive magic against thunder and was related to the Hata 秦 family which had immigrated from Silla early in the fifth century and probably taught the Japanese the process for making silk. See his "Chisakobe no sekaku ni tsuite," *Nihon rekishi*, No. 214 (March 1960), 66-79. Naoki says that Sugaru was a royal guard in his "Chisakobe no seishitsu ni tsuite," *Shokki Nihongi kenkyū*, VII (No. 9, September 1960), 225-228.

3. Located in the eastern part of present Sakurai-shi, Nara-ken 奈良縣櫻井市.

4. It may be a detached palace somewhere in present Shiki-gun, Nara-ken; neither the *Kojiki* nor *Nihon shoki* refers to this palace.

5. The main building in the imperial palace during the Asuka and Nara periods; identified by some scholars with the later Daigyokuden 大極殿.

knowing that the emperor lay with the empress there. The emperor, ashamed of his conduct, stopped making love, and it thundered in the heavens. The emperor then said to Sugaru, "Won't you invite the rolling thunder to come here?" "Certainly," answered Sugaru, whereat the emperor commanded him, "Go, invite it here."

Leaving the palace, Sugaru hurried away on horseback, wearing a red headband⁶ on his forehead and carrying a halberd with a red banner.⁷ He passed the heights of Yamada in the village of Abe⁸ and Toyura-dera 豊浦寺,⁹ finally arriving at the crossroads of Karu no morokoshi.¹⁰ He cried out: "The emperor has invited the rolling thunder of heaven to his palace." While galloping back to the palace, he asked himself why, even if it were a thunder kami, would it not accept the emperor's invitation.

As he returned, it happened that the lightning struck between Toyura-dera and Ioka 飯岡.¹¹ On seeing it, Sugaru sent for priests to place the thunder on the portable carriage,¹² and he escorted it to the imperial palace, saying to the emperor, "I have brought the thunder kami." The thunder gave off such a dazzling light that the emperor was terrified. He made many offerings¹³ and then had it sent back to the original site, which is called "Hill of Thunder" 雷岡.¹⁴ (It is situated to the north of the Palace of Owarida 小治田 in the old capital.)¹⁵

After a while Sugaru died. The emperor let the corpse stay, in its coffin for seven days and nights.¹⁶ Then, recalling Sugaru's loyalty, the emperor had a tomb built at the place which had been struck by lightning and had a pillar inscribed: "The tomb of Sugaru who caught the thunder." The thunder was not pleased. It struck the pillar and was caught between the splintered pieces. When emperor heard this,

6. 帷囊 a piece of red cloth tied around the head; also worn by a guard of the land of the dead (II.7). According to Shida, wearing it was a protective measure against thunder ("Chisakobe," 74).

7. 赤幡 棒 a sign of a royal messenger; see n. 6, above.

8. 阿部山田 a village to the south of Mt. Kagu 香具, the eastern part of the present Takechi-gun 高市郡, Nara-ken.

9. Also known as Mukuhara-dera 向原寺 or Kōken-ji 興健寺; a nunnery originally built by Soga no Iname 蘇我稻目 (d. 570) at his residence, which is located at present Asuka-mura, Takechi-gun, Nara-ken.

10. 諸越 *morokoshi* may be a place name which derived from the intercourse between China and Japan, hence meaning Chinese or trading center.

11. Unidentified local name.

12. 篋籠 *koshako*; a palanquin made of bamboo.

13. 幣帛 *mitogata*; see Chap. II(1)a, n. 18.

14. A low hill located in the present Asuka-mura on the bank of the Asuka River.

15. Since Kyōkai lived in the late Nara and early Heian periods, "the old capital" refers to the capitals before the Nara period, that is, during the Asuka and Fujiwara periods.

16. See Chap. II(3)a, n. 115.

he freed the thunder loose, narrowly rescuing it from death. The experience left the thunder in a confused state of mind which lasted for seven days and nights. The emperor's officer, in rebuilding the pillar, inscribed it with the following epitaph: "Here lies Sugaru who caught the thunder both in his lifetime and after his death."

This is the origin of the name, "Hill of Thunder," given in the time of the old capital.

2

On Taking a Fox as a Wife and Bringing Forth a Child¹

In the reign of Emperor Kinmei (that is, Amekuni-oshiraki-hironiwa no mikoto 天國押開廣庭命, the emperor who resided at the Palace of Kanazashi in Shikishima),² a man from Ono district of Mino province 三野國大野郡³ set out on horseback in search of a good wife. In a field he came across a pretty and responsive girl. He winked at her and asked, "Where are you going, Miss?" "I am looking for a good husband," she answered. So he asked, "Will you be my wife?" and, when she agreed, he took her to his house and married her.

Before long she became pregnant and gave birth to a boy. At the same time their dog also gave birth to a puppy, it being the fifteenth of the twelfth month. This puppy constantly barked at the mistress⁴ and seemed fierce and ready to bite. She became so frightened that she asked her husband⁵ to beat the dog to death. But he felt sorry for the dog and could not bear to kill it.

In the second or third month, when the annual quota of rice⁶ was hulled, she went to the place where the female servants were pounding rice in a mortar to give them some refreshments. The dog, seeing her, ran after her barking and almost bit her. Startled and terrified, she

1. The prototype of Japanese folktales concerning a fox; one tale of the Venerable Dōjō cycle; see Chap. II(2)b. Cf. M. W. de Visser, "The Fox and the Badger in Japanese Folklore," *TASJ*, XXXVI, Part Three (1908), 20-21. Cf. *Fusō ryakkei* (III, Kinmei), *Mizukagami* (I, Kinmei).

2. See Preface, n. 7, above.

3. The eastern part of present Ibi-gun, Gifu-ken 岐阜縣揖斐郡. The country was divided into provinces (*kuni* 國), and provinces were divided into districts (*ken* 郡). In the beginning of the eighth century, there were sixty-six provinces comprising 592 districts.

4. 家婆 (*teiji*), housewife.

5. 家長 (*teijin*), master of the family.

6. The rice harvested in the preceding autumn had to be delivered to the capital before the end of the eighth month.

suddenly changed into a wild fox and jumped up on top of the hedge. Having seen this, the man said, "Since a child was born between us, I cannot forget you. Please come always and sleep with me." She acted in accordance with her husband's words and came and slept with him. For this reason she was named "Kitsune" meaning "come and sleep."⁷ Slender and beautiful in her red skirt (it is called pink), she would rustle away from her husband, whereupon he sang of his love for his wife:

Love fills me completely

After a moment of reunion.

Alas! She is gone.⁸

The man named his child Kitsune, which became the child's surname—Kitsune no atae.⁹ The child, famous for his enormous strength, could run as fast as a bird flies. He is the ancestor of the Kitsune-no-atae family in Mino province.¹⁰

3

On a Boy of Great Physical Strength Whose Birth Was Given by the Thunder's Blessing¹

In the reign of Emperor Bitatsu 敏達 (that is, Nunakura-futotama-shiki no mikoto 淳名倉大玉敷命, who resided at the Palace of Osada in Iwano 磐余譯語田宮),² there was a farmer in the village of Katawa in Ayuchi district of Owari province 尾張國阿音知郡片穗里.³ While he was working to irrigate the rice fields, it began to rain. He took shelter under a tree and stood there holding a metal rod⁴ in his hands. When it thundered, he raised the rod in fear. At that moment the thunder struck in front of him in the form of a child, who made a

7. Folk etymology of *kitsune*, fox; *kitsu-ne* 來寝 means "Come and sleep," while *ki-sune* 來毎 means "come always."

8. In the form of a thirty-one syllable poem (5-7-5-7-7).

9. 狐直: although Kitsune no atae is not listed in the *Shinsen shōjiroku* 新撰姓氏錄, *atae* is a hereditary title conferred on the family of a local governor who was of the local genryū class.

10. For his descendant, see II.4.

1. One tale of the Venerable Dōjō cycle; see II.4, 27; quoted in the *Fusō ryakkei* (III, Bitatsu), *Mizukagami* (II, Bitatsu), etc.

2. Emperor Bitatsu's palace is located in the western part of present Sakurai-shi, Nara-ken.

3. Present Furuwatani-chō, Naka-ku, Nagoya-shi 名古屋市中區古渡町.

4. 金杖: metal rod or plow (the *Fusō ryakkei* gives "plow").