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*On a Loyal and Selfless Minister Who Gained Heaven's  
Sympathy and Was Rewarded by a Miraculous Event<sup>1</sup>*

The late Middle Councillor 中納言,<sup>2</sup> Lord Ōmiwa no Takechimaro 大神高市萬侶,<sup>3</sup> of the Junior Third Rank<sup>4</sup> awarded posthumously, was a loyal minister of Empress Jitō 持統.<sup>5</sup> According to a record<sup>6</sup> in the second month of the ninth year of the dragon, the seventh year of the Akamidori era,<sup>7</sup> an imperial order was given to the officials, telling them to prepare for the empress' visit to Ise 伊勢 on the third of the third month. The Middle Councillor, fearing that the proposed visit would interfere with agricultural work, presented a memorial to dissuade the empress. She did not yield to his remonstrance and demanded to have her own way. Thereupon he took off his official cap<sup>8</sup> and returned it to the empress, saying, "When farmers are most busy in the fields, you should not make a trip," reiterating his remonstrance.

Another time during a drought he had the ditch of his fields closed in order to irrigate the fields of other people.<sup>9</sup> When the water in his fields dried up, the dragon kami<sup>10</sup> sent down rain showing the empathy of all the heavens.<sup>11</sup> It rained only on his fields. Yao 堯 sent clouds and Shun 舜 poured down rain<sup>12</sup> to reward his extreme loyalty and great virtue.

The note says: How praiseworthy is this member of the Ōmiwa family who since infancy has favored studies and been both loyal and benevolent!<sup>13</sup> His mind never became unclear, and he conferred benefits on people, irrigating their fields at the expense of his own till he moved the heavens to send the seasonal rains. His fame will last forever.

1. Cf. *Nihon shoki* (XXX, Jitō 6:2:11), *Konjaku monogatari* (XX, 41).

2. *Chūnagon*, one of the high ranking officials under the prime minister.

3. Or 大三輪高市麻呂 (*Nihon shoki*).

4. When he died in 706, his rank was the Upper Junior Fourth Rank.

5. (686–697) Emperor Tenmu's consort.

6. A possible source of the *Nihon shoki*, but not clearly identified. According to the *Nihon shoki*, he resigned his position as the empress eventually proceeded to Ise on a two-week trip.

7. As the era of Akamidori (or Akemidori) ended in one year, its seventh year falls on the sixth year of the reign of Empress Jitō, 692.

8. The cap signifies his court rank, and removing it is a gesture of resignation.

9. 百姓 *ōmitakara*; as *ōmi* is an honorific prefix and *takara* is treasure, it means “emperor’s treasure.” Under the *ritsuryō* government all except slaves were given *kabane* 姓, and, therefore, one hundred *kabane* means people on all social levels and in all occupations.

10. 龍神; see De Visser, *The Dragon in China and Japan*.

11. 諸天感應.

12. 堯雲更霧 舜雨還霈. The above expression is a metaphor describing how the Chinese ideal sage emperors, Yao and Shun, bestowed benevolence on their subjects.

13. Both the *Nihon ryōiki* and *Nihon shoki* depict him as an ideal Confucian minister and Empress Jitō as a stubborn lady. However, contemporary historians assess her as a shrewd ruler and maintain that she made a trip to Ise, Iga, and Shima in order to appease the local gentry after she had begun to construct the capital of Fujiwara. See Kitayama Shigeo, “Jitō tennō,” *Nihon kodai seijishī no kenkyū*, 119–233; Naoki, *Jitō tennō*.