

When twelve of the men had been beheaded, he had a strange vision: the wooden image of Kannon he had worshipped so devotedly accused him, saying, "Oh, why do you stay in such a filthy place?" and transfixed his body with its leg from head to toe, making his body a girdle of its leg.

At the moment when the executioner was about to behead him, after ordering him to stretch out his neck, an imperial messenger hurried in, asking, "Is there a man named Ōma Yamatsugi among these?" "Yes, he is about to be beheaded," was the answer. Whereupon the messenger said, "Don't kill him. He is to be exiled to Shinano province."⁶

He was exiled, but, before long, was recalled and appointed an assistant governor⁷ of Tama district. On his neck could still be seen a scar from a cut inflicted by the sword at the moment he was to have been executed. It was Kannon that saved him from being beheaded. For you will be filled with great delight and saved from calamity with Kannon's help if your faith arises and your devotion deepens owing to the merit you have accumulated.

8

On a Miraculous Appearance of Bodhisattva Miroku in Response to the Vow

In the village of Oe, Sakata district, Ōmi province 近江國坂田郡遠江里,¹ there lived a wealthy man, whose name is unknown. Once he made a vow to copy the *Yuga-ron* 瑜伽論,² but many years passed, and the vow was not fulfilled. Finally the man fell on bad times and lost his means of livelihood. He left home, abandoning his family, and lived a life of discipline in pursuit of happiness. Remembering his unfulfilled vow, he was always thinking how he might achieve it.

In the reign of Empress Abe, in the ninth month in the autumn of the third year of the horse, the second year of the Tenpyō jingō era,³

6. Present Nagano-ken 長野縣.

7. 少領 *shōryō*; see I.30, n. 3.

1. Present Azai-chō, Higashi-azai-gun, Shiga-ken 滋賀縣東淺井郡淺井町.

2. *Yugashiji-ron* 瑜伽師地論 (*Taishō*, XXX, No. 1579). (Skt. *Yogācārahūmiśāstra*). Maitreya's discourse translated by Hsüan-tsang 玄奘 and a major text for the Hossō School.

3. 766, in the reign of Empress Shōtoku.

he went to a mountain temple and stayed for several days. In its precincts there was a bush. All of a sudden, an image of Bodhisattva Miroku 彌勒菩薩⁴ appeared⁵ on the bark of a branch of the bush. When the ascetic saw it, he walked around the bush and prayed fervently.

At the news people came to see the image. Some donated bags of rice, while others gave money and clothing. With these donations he was able to copy one hundred scrolls of the *Yuga-ron* and hold a dedication ceremony, although the image vanished some time before.

Indeed we know that Miroku high in Tosotsuten 兜率天⁶ came down in response to his vow so that he could attain deep faith and happiness here below in this land bound by suffering.⁷ How can one doubt it?

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In the reign of Empress Abe, Fujiwara no asomi Hirotsugu 藤原朝臣廣足² was suddenly taken ill, and, in order to cure the illness, he went to live at a mountain temple of Makihara, Uda district, Yamato province 大和國菟田郡真木原.³ He kept the eight precepts and quietly practiced calligraphy with a brush at the desk till the evening of the seventeenth of the second month in the second year of the Jingo keiun era.⁴ His young attendant, thinking he was asleep, shook him and tried to waken him, saying, "It is time to worship the Buddha since the sun has set." Still he remained motionless. The attendant shook

4. Maitreya; see Chap. II(3)b, n. 131. The Hossō School traditionally chose Maitreya as the focus of devotion.

5. 化生 *keshō*; one of the four kinds of birth. See I.21, n. 5.

6. A combination of a transliteration of Skt. *Tusita* and a translation of *deva*, 天; the fourth of the six heavens of the world of desire. Tradition says Maitreya resides and preaches in its inner palace waiting to descend to this world at the end of the age of degenerate dharma.

7. 願主下在 苦縛凡地在 contrast to the heavens.

1. Cf. *Jizō reigenki* (VI, 20). *Uji shūi monogatari* (VI, 1). On the theme "visit to the other world," this tale resembles I.30; II.5, 7, 16, 19; III.36, 37. See also Chap. II(1)b, c.

2. Unknown.

3. Kariya says that the remains of the temple are found near Kōsui Pass, north of present Haibara-chō, Uda-gun, Nara-ken 奈良縣宇陀郡榛原町.

4. 768.