

Fusenai-kyo (No Offering at Sutra-reading)

A poor monk-priest made it a rule to visit a certain parishioner monthly for reading sutras, and he received a fixed amount of offerings for his services. This day he visited the parishioner and read the sutras, expecting that due *ofuse* would be given for his services. But when he finished, there was no sign that the *ofuse* would be given to him. Decency forbade asking about it directly. By way of reminding the parishioner of the *ofuse*, the monk-priest gave a little lecture to the parishioner about the life after death, saying that to o—o—offer whatever was in his possession to a useful purpose might lead to eternal happiness. This did not work; no visible sign was detected. He left, but soon came back, with his patchwork surplice put inside the bosom of his garment and asked if his surplice might not be found somewhere in the house, describing it as having a hole big enough to make for coins to go through. This immediately reminded the parishioner of his duty, and he offered the priest the usual amount of money. The priest rejected it as he should to disguise his meanness. When the parishioner put his hand into the priest's bosom to place the offering in, however, the hidden surplice rolled out to the immense disgrace of the latter.

***Nonomiya*—The Shrine in the Field**

Late in autumn, a traveling priest visits an ancient shrine in Sagano after having visited all the noted sites and relics of the past. While worshipping at the shrine, he sees a beautiful young lady offering a twig of *sakaki* on the *torii*, the wooden gate to the shrine. When he asks her of the history of this shrine, she tells him that this day, the seventh day of the ninth month, is the anniversary of the day when Genji the Shining Prince visited the forlorn shrine and affirmed his love to Miyasudokoro, who, on her way to the east accompanying her own daughter, designated as the Virgin Priestess of the Ise Shrine, temporally lodged here at the shrine. In answer to the priest's inquiry, the young lady reveals that she herself is Miyasudokoro and vanishes.

While the priest is reading the sutras, with his thoughts on Genji and Miyasudokoro, her spirit appears and tells him of her blissful days with Genji, and of the utter humiliation at the annual Kamo Festival in which her pleasure carriage, among other carriages of nobles, was hauled out of the way and damaged by the carriers of the Princess Aoi's carriage. But then she talks of her failing body, and her renunciation of ever recurrent love, citing literary texts or using phrases and images of autumn that convey an air of melancholy and impermanence. Though having cleansed herself for serving the Ise Shrine, she cannot easily forget her glorious past and still wanders on the path of suffering and delusion. But at last she gets out of the Burning House (this world) with an aching heart.

The sound of Genji's carriage approaching, or the chirping of pine-cricket heights the feeling of Miyasudokoro to a magical effect.

(Takao Saijo)