

Rōtsu came to meet me at Tsuruga and accompanied me to Mino Province. Thus I arrived at Ōgaki, my journey eased by a horse. Sora came from Ise, Etsujin galloped in on horseback, and we all gathered at Jokō's house. Zensenji, Keikō, Keikō's sons, and other close friends called day and night, rejoicing and pampering me as though I had returned from the dead.

Despite my travel fatigue, I set out again by boat on the Sixth of the Ninth Month to witness the relocation of the Ise sanctuaries.<sup>6</sup>

Off to Futami,  
loath to part as clam from shell  
in waning autumn.

6. The two sanctuaries at the Grand Shrines of Ise, dedicated to the ancestral gods of the imperial family, are rebuilt every twenty years as a kind of repurification.

## UEDA AKINARI

1734–1809

In the more than two hundred years since they were first published, the supernatural stories of Ueda Akinari have intrigued generations of Japanese readers. The ghost story has a long history in Japan, but no writer has so successfully insinuated the supernatural into the everyday or better understood the irrational implications of erotic attachment. Akinari's coolly objective mix of realism and the fantastic asserts, long before Freud, that fantasy is part of reality and that our "real" lives embrace much that is "unreal."

*Tales of Moonlight and Rain*, published in 1776, is a collection of nine short stories that explore the discontinuity between routine life and the abrupt intrusion of the inexplicable. In one story, a money-loving *samurai* receives a visit from the spirit of wealth. In another, a grieving priest, unhinged by the death of his lover, consumes the corpse and thus develops a taste for decomposing flesh. In a work in a very different key, fish depicted by an eccentric artist spring to life, detach themselves from their paintings, and swim to freedom in a lake nearby. Two of the most popular stories recount the misadventures of husbands who abandon their wives. In one, the man finally returns; after a happy reunion he awakens to discover that he has spent the night with the ghost of his dead wife. In the other, the abandoned wife's vengeful spirit haunts her unfaithful husband:

Taken completely by surprise, he saw that it was the wife he had deserted. She looked pale. Her eyes were dull and ghastly. As she stretched out a bony, emaciated hand and pointed at him, he cried out and fainted in sheer terror. After a while he regained his senses. He opened his eyes and looked around. What had seemed like a house a moment ago was in fact the funeral hut of a graveyard.

The stories range, then, from whimsical to chilling, but each is articulated in a rhythmic poetic prose suffused with eerie beauty and abundant acknowledgment of the authority of Japan's literary past. A product of the merchant milieu, Ueda Akinari was a physician and scholar as well as a writer, and he would probably have been surprised to find that posterity remembers him for his ghost stories rather than his scholarship. His learning, however, permeates this fiction. Its presence is subtle and sometimes veiled in translation, but it is one of the components that raise his supernatural tales

As a student of the Japanese classics and the linguistic origins of his native culture, Akinari crafted an agreeable combination of vernacular and literary language. His scholarly command of *The Man'yōshū* (in Volume B), Japan's earliest poetry anthology, inspired both subject and style. The collection served as a sourcebook for stories and geographical settings and also for an archaic diction that seemed, by virtue of its distance, well suited to the spectral. Akinari exploited some of the technical devices of classical poetry and drew on the long-standing Japanese tradition of implanting poetry within a prose context. He was also steeped in *The Tale of the Heike* (in Volume B) and other military chronicles, to which he frequently alludes as part of the realistic fabric he weaves for his tales, made credible in part by recurring references to actual people, places, and events of the historic past. A voracious reader, Akinari appropriated some of his ideas from medieval Japanese folktales (which abound in the sort of miracles that appealed to his imagination) and others from Chinese literature, both classical and current. In fact, Akinari composed his tales during a craze in Japan for Chinese stories of the supernatural, and some of his own stories were elaborate adaptations reworked into the contemporary Japanese idiom.

Of all the various influences he received, however, the legacy of *nō* drama was one of the most important. Like the *nō* playwrights, in some stories Akinari takes a famous poem as the kernel for his narrative. In others he employs a formal device borrowed from the *nō*. Action is set in motion by a journey, and dramatic tension derives from an encounter between the traveler and a ghost. The ghost, of course, as in the *nō*, is the physical manifestation of some gnawing emotion, a restless spirit in the grip of an obsession—hatred, revenge, or jealousy, for example.

In *Bewitched*, Akinari goes further. He incorporates specific myth-making elements from the *nō* play *Dōjōji* (in Volume B). In the play, itself derived from folklore and eleventh-century miracle stories, rejection (or, in the Buddhist scheme of things, passion) transforms a lovesick girl into a serpent. Sexual heat takes a new and deadly form when the venomous snake destroys the man who jilted her: she coils her scaly flesh around his hiding place and roasts him alive. Manago, the heroine of *Bewitched*, is just as lethal. The original title, *A Serpent's Lust*, would have suggested to eighteenth-century readers, if only subliminally, the danger of dragon ladies, a threat already embedded in Japanese literature.

But Akinari reverses the usual narrative. If jealousy can transform a woman into a serpent, he says, then love can turn a serpent into a woman. Drawing on his reading across two cultures and deep into Japan's ancient mythology, he creates one of the great demon-goddesses of Japanese literature. His hypnotic, ethereally beautiful Manago is as weird, mesmerizing, and frightening as the wild serpent-girl in *Dōjōji*. And because *Bewitched* is not a stylized *nō* play but a fairly long short story, Akinari can fashion a vivid image of a woman hell-bent on love, a creature whose passion transcends the ordinary realities of this world.

Like an Alfred Hitchcock of the supernatural, he sets up the story in such a way that the reader has ominous feelings from the very beginning. From the outset we sense that the hero, the handsome, spoiled Toyo-o, a young man with no head for practical matters and no real discipline, is about to get himself caught in something far beyond his ability to control. From the first time he hears Manago's voice, "rich as the sound of rolling jewels," and lays eyes on her "bewitchingly voluptuous" beauty, we know that this is not going to be any ordinary encounter. In due course, both reader and hero discover that Toyo-o is locked in a fatal attraction with a possessive and fiendish apparition.

What is most impressive in *Bewitched* is the way that Akinari controls our descent into the uncanny. Every time Toyo-o's known world is about to rupture, the phantom-woman offers him a plausible excuse for her strange maneuvers, and indeed it is this very plausibility that makes her so frightening. Even after he should know better, Toyo-o hovers on the verge of believing, holding the reader with him. Suspended in uncertainty, we begin to question whether or not the real and the unreal are irre-

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versible opposites, and this is the fantastic's golden opportunity. The tension between logic and fable stretches like a tightrope. As Akinari leads us gingerly across, even modern readers may wonder if rationality's eradication of ghouls and angels is not just another of our own contemporary illusions.

Akinari strives to make the supernatural world credible by finding rational explanations for the fantastic. One could say that in the process *Bewitched* becomes a text that continually denies itself. But one could also say that for Akinari and his readers no denial was necessary. In the spiritual and psychological cosmology of eighteenth-century Japan, the extraordinary was in a certain sense the ordinary. The spirit world had impinged on Japanese life from the country's earliest days, when Shinto, the indigenous religion, taught a kind of nature worship based on the assumption that the boundaries between animate and inanimate, or the living and the dead, are exceedingly permeable. A tree, or river, or mountain, a single rock even, could be the manifestation of a god. The dead could also be gods, and the spirits of ancestors loomed over the living as more than shadowy presences. By the time of *The Tale of Genji* (eleventh century; in Volume B), the supernatural was construed as a normal part of daily life. Directional taboos, for example, often governed one's activities, so that a person could not proceed down a path where diviners sensed a naughty spirit prowling.

Even Buddhism, a much more sophisticated religion than Shinto, helped buttress the Japanese belief in the supernatural. The doctrine of transmigration, for example, taught that the dead are reborn after a brief, uncertain existence in an in-between world. Those who had failed to reconcile their passions could come back to life as ghosts. The most frightening were the "hungry ghosts," whose greed and moral depravity had turned them into the grotesque physical embodiment of their former appetites: skeletal fiends lurking in cesspools, trying futilely to fill their empty though enormous stomachs, bloated not with food but with hunger. When organized religion held that ghosts commingle with human beings, it is not surprising that a whole panoply of spirit-creatures—devils, mountain goblins, magic monkeys, lusty serpents, foxes who transform themselves into temptresses—should be given credence in pre-modern Japan, or that Akinari, a student of traditional Japanese culture, should take the supernatural for his theme.

One should read a story like *Bewitched* with an understanding that its "unreal" aspects may have seemed a good deal more "real" to its original audience and with an awareness that the presence of ghosts in such fiction is not to be identified with the play of the unconscious. We need to imagine, or reimagine, a mental life that addresses at the conscious level things that we would call the irrational, which modern psychology relegates to the unconscious. Akinari helps us in our reimagining. His ability to paint such a bold picture of desire incarnate and to give his tales the most stunning and delicate atmospherics, thick with fog and mist and midnight apparitions, places him among the forefront of the world's great gothic writers.

For the other stories in Akinari's collection see Kengi Hamada, trans., *Tales of Moonlight and Rain* (1972), and Leon M. Zolbrod, trans., *Ugetsu Monogatari: Tales of Moonlight and Rain* (1974), which contains an extensive introduction. A second collection of Akinari's fiction published posthumously, which contains several more supernatural stories, has been translated by Barry Jackman, *Tales of the Spring Rain* (1975). For biographical and critical studies see Blake Morgan Young, *Ueda Akinari* (1982), and the chapter on Akinari in Donald Keene, *World Within Walls* (1976). An interesting art historical introduction to the supernatural in Japan is found in Stephen Addiss, *Japanese Ghosts and Demons* (1985).

## PRONOUNCING GLOSSARY

The following list uses common English syllables to provide rough equivalents of selected words whose pronunciation may be unfamiliar to the general reader.

Abe no Yumimaro: <i>ah-bay noh yoo-mee-mah-roh</i>	Maroya: <i>mah-roh-yah</i>
Bunya no Hiroyuki: <i>boon-yah noh hee-roh-yoo-kee</i>	Miwagasaki: <i>mee-wah-gah-sah-kee</i>
Dōjōji: <i>doh-joh-jee</i>	Naniwa: <i>nah-nee-wah</i>
Gongen: <i>gohn-gen</i>	Suguri: <i>soo-goo-ree</i>
Hokai Oshō: <i>hoh-kai oh-shoh</i>	Tanabe: <i>tah-nah-bay</i>
Kanetada: <i>kah-ne-tah-dah</i>	Toyo-o: <i>tōh-yoh-oh</i>
Kii: <i>kee-ee</i>	Tsubaichi: <i>tsoo-bah-ee-chee</i>
Komatsubara: <i>koh-mah-tsoo-bah-rah</i>	Ueda Akinari: <i>oo-e-dah ah-kee-nah-ree</i>
Manago: <i>mah-nah-goh</i>	Ugetsu: <i>oo-ge-tsoo</i>
Man'yōshū: <i>mahn-yoh-shoo</i>	Yunomine: <i>yoo-noh-mee-ne</i>
	yū-ō: <i>yoo-oh</i>

Bewitched<sup>1</sup>

## 1

Some time in the remote past, in the coastal village of Miwagasaki, in the province of Kii, there lived a man called Ōya no Takesuke, who was blessed by the sea. He had a good many fishermen working for him, and he caught a great deal of fish every day, both big and small. He was very prosperous indeed.

Ōya no Takesuke had two sons and a daughter. Taro, the elder son, was honest and rugged, devoted to his work, and he carried on the family business. The daughter was married to a man in neighboring Yamato province. Toyo-o, the third child, was a handsome youth with a predilection for learning and cultural pursuits typical of life in Kyoto, the nation's capital. He had no desire or inclination to devote his time and efforts to the family occupation.

Because of this, Toyo-o was something of a problem to his father. Pondering his wayward son's future welfare, Ōya no Takesuke thought of dividing the family wealth and settling upon Toyo-o his portion so that he could live serenely the kind of life that suited him. But then Toyo-o was the sort who, once he came into possession of money, would soon be deceived and robbed of all he owned. If, on the other hand, he were given away for adoption to another family, there might be endless complaints from that family that he was shiftless and irresponsible; that too would be inadvisable.

In the end, Toyo-o's father decided to let him become a scholar or a priest, or whatever his own whims dictated, and thus to allow him to be a burden on his older brother for the rest of his life. Therefore he did not object when Toyo-o went daily to study with his tutor, Abe no Yumimaro, the chief priest of the Kumano Shrine.

1. Translated by Kengi Hamada.

On this particular day, toward the end of September, the sky was clear and the sea calm. Suddenly, clouds began to gather over the sea from the southeast and light rain soon began to fall. Toyo-o borrowed an umbrella from his tutor on his way home. As he reached the spot where he could see the depository of sacred treasures of the Asuka Shrine, the rain became a real downpour. He therefore sought shelter at a nearby fisherman's hut.

An old man emerged to greet him: "Welcome, young master, to this shabby house. Pardon me," he said, dusting off a cushion, "let me offer this for you to sit on."

"Oh, don't bother, please," said Toyo-o. "I just came in from the rain to stay awhile," and he sat down on the raised *tatami*.<sup>2</sup>

At that moment a voice called from outside, rich as the sound of rolling jewels, "May we take shelter in this house for a short while?"

No sooner said than, to Toyo-o's utter amazement, in stepped a beautiful woman less than twenty years of age. Her features, the way she wore her hair, her colorful robe, the perfume she exuded—all this, Toyo-o noted, made her bewitchingly voluptuous. With her was a pretty little maid of fourteen or fifteen carrying a bundle. Both were soaking wet.

## 2

Toyo-o felt sorry for the woman. And she seemed surprised to see him. Her face lighted up, blushing modestly. There was refinement in her look, and Toyo-o felt instantly attracted to her.

At the same time, it occurred to him that he had never heard of such a beautiful, refined-looking woman living in this neighborhood. She must be a woman from Kyoto, he surmised, who had come on a pilgrimage to the three famous Kumano shrines<sup>3</sup> and had perhaps been strolling on the beach to view the charming scenery when it began to rain. Even so, he felt it was rather unseemly that she was not accompanied by a male escort.

"Come sit here," he invited, making room for her. "The weather will soon clear up, I'm sure."

"Just for a while then, thank you," the woman said.

The house was small and there was barely enough room for her to sit beside him. At such close range, she seemed to Toyo-o more beautiful than ever, almost otherworldly, and his heart leaped with excitement.

"You seem to be a lady of high station in life," he said. "Did you come here on a pilgrimage to the three Kumano shrines? Or to visit the Yunomine Hotspring?<sup>4</sup> But why have you been strolling at such a bare, unattractive beach as this? An ancient poet once commented:

Oh, how bothersome indeed  
The rain, falling suddenly  
At Sano in Miwagasaki,  
Where there's no shelter for me.

"He probably got caught by just the kind of miserable weather we are having today. This is only a shabby hut, but the owner is a man employed by my father. So please be at ease and rest here. Where, by the way, are you lodging

2. Woven straw mats. These mats are still used in Japan as floor coverings. 3. Among the most popular Shinto shrines, located south of Kyoto and Nara in a mountainous region overlooking the sea. The native deities worshiped there were viewed as manifestations of Buddhist divinities who could prolong life and help the faithful attain rebirth in paradise. 4. Where pilgrims to Kumano often rested.

in the village? I should accompany you there—but perhaps that would be too personal and impolite. Why don't you take this umbrella with you?"

"Thank you for your hospitality," the woman replied. "I shall dry my clothes with the warmth of your kindness and then leave. I am not a visitor from Kyoto. I have lived near this village at Shingū for a long time. Today started out to be a clear day, so I went to offer prayers at the Nachi Shrine. But the downpour forced me to seek shelter here without knowing that you had done the same thing. My lodging is not far from here."

Rising, she continued, "The sky is already clearing, so I shall take my leave while there is still a light rain falling."

Toyo-o delayed her, saying, "The rain has not really stopped yet. Please use this umbrella. You may return it to me whenever it is convenient for you. Better still, where do you live? I can send someone for the umbrella later."

"Ask for Agata no Manago's house in Shingū. It will soon be sundown so I shall have to go now. I will take the umbrella you so graciously offered."

And so Toyo-o saw her off as she spread the umbrella and left, watching until she vanished from his sight. He himself borrowed a straw umbrella from the old man of the hut and went home.

## 3

That night Toyo-o could not sleep, disturbed by the image of the woman which flittered ceaselessly before his mind's eye. Toward morning, however, fitfully hovering on the edge of sleep, he dreamed that he went calling at Manago's house.

It was a huge structure, as was the front gate. The shutters and the bamboo blinds indicated that Manago lived in elegant style.

Manago herself came to greet him at the door, saying, "I cannot forget your kindness, and I love you. Please come in."

Showing him into an inner chamber, she laid out a feast before him, wine and all kinds of fruit. Made cheerfully drunk by the excesses of her hospitality, he yielded to her caresses and lay down beside her, talking intimately.

Came the dawn, however, and the end of his dream.

Toyo-o thought, if only what had happened were real and not just a dream, how happy he would be! He felt so restless that he even forgot to eat his breakfast, and he literally leaped out of the house, so eager was he to see her. But when he asked around for the house of Agata no Manago, no one seemed to know about it. He kept on searching until late in the afternoon, when he saw Manago's maid coming toward him from the east. Quickly he went to speak to her. "Say," he called, "where is the house of your mistress? I came to get the umbrella."

The maid smiled pleasantly. "I am glad you came. This way, please," and she led the way. Soon she pointed and said, "This is it."

Toyo-o saw that the front gate and the house were huge indeed. The shutters and bamboo blinds were just as impressive as he had imagined in his dream. Strange, he thought, as he walked through the gate. The maid preceded him into the house, announcing, "The man who loaned you the umbrella yesterday was coming this way, so I invited him in."

"Where is he? Bring him here quickly." There was no doubt about it. It was Manago herself who came out to greet Toyo-o.



"I happened to be returning from my studies at the house of my tutor, the Shinto priest Abe no Yumimaro, so I dropped in to get the umbrella. I shall look around your house today and perhaps come again another day."

Manago pressed him to stay. "Maroya," she called to her maid, "don't let Toyo-o leave the house."

Maroya blocked his way. "You forced us to accept your umbrella. It is only right that we force you to stay here now." She pushed him into a room with wooden flooring and a southern exposure, and spread a tatami mat for him to sit on.

It was a splendidly decorated room. The panels on the wall, the shelves, the screens—all seemed to be of valuable classical vintage. This, thought Toyo-o, must be the home, not of an ordinary person, but of someone wealthy and of high station in life.

4

Manago entered. "For certain reasons," she said, "this house no longer has a master. I cannot therefore offer you anything in the way of lavish entertainment. I have brought you some poor wine." So saying, she placed before him a small table and dishes piled high with seafood delicacies, and wine jars. Maroya, the maid, offered to pour the wine.

But Toyo-o was racked with doubts and suspicion. Can I still be dreaming, and will it soon come to an end? All this, however, seemed to be real enough. Still, it was all so mysterious that he could not fathom it.

Guest and hostess drank together immoderately, feeling a pleasant sensation. Manago lifted her wine cup and spoke coquettishly, with an expression reminiscent of a blooming cherry reflected in the water below while a spring zephyr brushed its face. In a bewitching voice like that of a nightingale flitting from branch to branch, she said, "Perhaps I should not tell you this, for it makes me feel ashamed. But if I should die without confessing, people might say something preposterous—that I had been put to death by some angry, vengeful god. So listen to what I have to say without doubting it—trust me that I am not blurting it out on the spur of the moment.

"I was born in Kyoto but my parents died soon afterward and I was brought up by my nurse. Due to family ties, a minor official named Agata in the governor's office of this district brought me here as his wife. My husband died of illness before his term of office expired, and I was left alone and uncared for. My former nurse in Kyoto had meanwhile become a nun and departed on a devotional journey without a fixed destination. And so, Kyoto, my birthplace, has become a strange, distant land to me. I have nowhere else to go.

"Yesterday, while seeking shelter from the rain, I enjoyed the blessings of your hospitality and friendship. I felt certain that you were a sincere man, and that I should devote the rest of my life to you. If you do not dislike me and are willing to accept my love, please drink the wine in this cup to seal our eternal pledge as husband and wife."

Toyo-o hesitated. He himself had felt in his heart the same intention—to marry her, for he was in love with her. And so her proposal caused his heart to leap with joy, like a bird taking flight from its roost. Still, dependent on his father and older brother for his livelihood, he realized he was in no position to make a hasty promise on his own initiative alone—without consulting

them and obtaining their consent. Glad though he was, therefore, he told her he could not give her an immediate reply.

Manago, angry and looking miserable, said, "I am afraid I have spoken rather rashly, like a woman crying out from the depths of her heart, and I regret I cannot take back what I said. A woman in my miserable situation should perhaps drown herself in the sea. But if I did, it would weigh heavily on your heart and that, too, would be a serious crime. What I have said is the truth, but please dismiss it as the foolish talk of a drunken woman and forget about it."

Toyo-o relented: "From the beginning I realized you were a cultured woman of Kyoto and I feel now that I have not been mistaken. Brought up as I have been in this rugged region where whales offshore spout seawater, I could not even have dreamed of such a fine proposal, bringing me so much happiness. I cannot, however, accept it immediately because I am still dependent on my parents. I have no property of my own except the hair on my head and the nails on my fingers. I have no power to earn my own living. How could I support you? I feel wretched in my present situation. But, if you are willing to accept these conditions, I shall willingly be of service to you. Confucius said, 'Even a mountain of love crumbles.' And as for myself, how can I help but overlook my obligations of filial piety and sacrifice myself for your sake?"

Manago responded gaily: "Now that you have given me such happy assurances, come and see me from time to time in this poor abode. Here is a sword which was a precious possession of my late husband. Wear it constantly," and she presented it to Toyo-o.

Toyo-o on examining it saw that it was a magnificent long sword with gold and silver trimmings on the scabbard. The blade was a sharp and fearsome thing. He realized it would be inauspicious to reject an engagement gift, so he inserted the sword in his hip sash.

He was repeatedly asked to spend the night there, but he rejected the offer, saying, "I would be chided by my father and older brother if I spent the night here without their permission. I promise you I will invent some kind of excuse to put them at their ease and come tomorrow night."

Thereupon he left without further ado. But at home, the next day dawned before he could sleep soundly.

## 5

His older brother Taro got up early to supervise the day's work for the fishermen in the family's employ. He peeped into Toyo-o's room through a crack in the door, and in the feeble light of the still-sputtering oil lamp he saw the glittering sword lying beside Toyo-o's pillow.

Strange, Taro thought. Where in the world could he have gotten such a sword?<sup>5</sup> He slid the door open noisily, awakening Toyo-o. Surprised to see Taro in the room, Toyo-o stammered, "Did you call me, Brother?"

"What is that thing glittering beside your pillow?" Taro demanded. "Such a thing is hardly appropriate in a fisherman's house. If Father hears about it, he will surely give you a sound scolding."

5. The possession of swords was a privilege of the *samurai* class.



"But I didn't buy it. Someone gave it to me yesterday, so I brought it here."

"There is no one in this village who has such a precious thing to give away. I have always felt it was a waste of money for you to buy books written in Chinese characters,<sup>6</sup> but still I have not interfered because Father has been lenient about it . . ." He added derisively, "Are you going to wear that sword to march and show off in the festival parade here? There is a limit to making a fool of yourself."

Their father heard the loud quarrelsome voice. "What is that good-for-nothing son up to now? Bring him in here."

Taro shouted back, "I don't know where he bought this thing. It is a glittering sword such as a general wears on his hip. To buy such a thing is unseemly, I think. Talk to him about it. I must go now to oversee the fishermen's work; otherwise they would idle their time away."

After Taro left, his mother summoned Toyo-o. "Why have you bought such a thing?" she demanded. "Everything in this house—food, money, goods—belongs to Taro. There is nothing you can claim as your own. We have usually let you do as you pleased. But if you were to incur Taro's displeasure, I am afraid you would have no place in the whole world to go and live. Why can't you, with all your learning, understand this simple truth?"

"I truly did not buy the sword," Toyo-o insisted. "It was given to me for a good reason. Yet Brother has scolded me so roughly just on seeing it."

His father roared, "What have you done to deserve such a precious prize? I cannot imagine! Tell us frankly, without holding back any detail."

"I am ashamed to tell you about it. Let me tell it through another person."

"To whom do you intend to reveal something you are ashamed of telling your own parents or your older brother?"

Taro's wife, who had been listening patiently, could no longer endure the violence of the family quarrel, so she interceded. "Let me hear it from him in his room," she said, pushing Toyo-o there, "though this may be presumptuous on my part."

So Toyo-o told the story to his brother's wife: "Before being found out and scolded by my brother, I had planned to discuss this matter quietly with you. I had not expected things to turn out in this explosive way. The truth is that there is a young widow called Agata no Manago living a lonely life near here, and she asked me to help her, giving me this sword at the same time. As you know, I am inexperienced in the ways of the world and have no means of making an independent living. If, because of this incident, I am driven out of this house, it cannot be helped. I do regret what I have done. But please, Sister, take pity upon me and intercede for me."

His sister-in-law laughed out loud. "I have always felt sorry that a fine young man like you should remain single so long. I think you have done the normal thing. Yes, I will do whatever I can for you."

6

That night she explained the situation to her husband, Taro. "I think it's about time Toyo-o became involved with a woman, don't you? Will you speak to Father about it, so he will approve?"

6. Only the well educated could read Chinese. The brother perhaps makes fun of Toyo-o, because the term *Chinese characters* was also slang for "secret code," suggesting the uselessness of such knowledge.

Taro knit his brows. "This is strange," he said. "I have never heard of a minor official called Agata who served as assistant to the governor of this district. Since our family serves as village headman, we should have been informed if and when any such official died. Anyway, let me see the sword."

When the sword was brought in, Taro examined it thoroughly and seemed to be troubled.

"This is no trifling matter," he said. "Recently ministers of state from the capital arrived at the Kumano Gongen Shrine for special prayers invoking the blessings of the gods and presented numerous precious gifts to the shrine. Then all the valuable gifts were stolen from the shrine depository. The chief priest reported the robbery to the governor's office. And in order to apprehend the robber, the vice governor, Bunya no Hiroyuki, is now conferring with the priest at the priest's house. I have a feeling this sword was not something worn by a minor official here. I shall show it to Father and see what he has to say."

When his father saw the sword and was told about the recent robbery of the precious gifts from the shrine, he turned pale.

"What a terrible thing to happen to us! That good-for-nothing son is the sort who can't even pluck a single hair from another person's head. How such an evil thought as committing this irreverent crime should have entered his head, I cannot understand. If news of this affair leaks out, our family is sure to come to ruin because it is a serious crime, a violation of the code governing shrines. We cannot afford to spare or protect a single member of the family from his misdeed. We must consider our obligations to our ancestors and to our descendants. Tomorrow let us make a clean confession to the authorities."

## 7

"Yes, indeed," said the surprised chief priest on examining the sword, "this is one of the precious gifts presented to this shrine by the state ministers."

The vice governor, Bunya no Hiroyuki, on receiving the report on the case, said, "Now let us go into the robbery of all the other precious gifts." He gave orders that Toyo-o be arrested immediately for questioning.

A group of some ten samurai, with Taro leading the way, thus went to the Ōya house. Toyo-o, ignorant of what had happened in the meantime, was reading a book in his room. The samurai stamped in unceremoniously, knocked him down, and bound him like a prisoner without even explaining the crime for which he was being arrested. His parents and his brother and his wife wept, saying it was all so sad.

"You have been summoned to the government office," the samurai said. "Now walk quickly."

Bound like a common criminal and surrounded by his captors, Toyo-o was taken to the government office.

Bunya, the vice governor, glared at the prisoner. "You must understand," he roared, "that to steal the offering to the gods of the shrine is a serious, unprecedented crime. Where have you hidden the other precious things you have stolen? Confess the truth without hedging."

At last Toyo-o began to understand that he had been accused of the theft of the sword. With tears flowing, he said, "I swear before the gods that I did

not steal anything." He explained how he had been given the sword as a gift by the woman called Manago, who claimed to be the widow of a certain minor official named Agata who had worn the sword while he was still living.

"To prove my innocence," Toyo-o urged, "why don't you arrest that woman at once?"

Bunya, the vice governor, became even more furious. "There has been no one in my employ here by the name of Agata. If you keep on evading the truth, I am warning you that the crime for which you have been arrested will become progressively more serious."

"Why should I keep on lying to you after being arrested for a crime I did not commit?" Toyo-o insisted. "Please, for the sake of the truth, bring the woman here for questioning."

Bunya thereupon said to the samurai, "Where is the house of this Agata no Manago? Go and arrest her."

The samurai, acknowledging the command, pushed Toyo-o ahead of them to lead them to Manago's house.

## 8

But what had appeared to Toyo-o as imposing pillars on the front gate of Manago's house were sagging with rot; the roof tiles were mostly broken, fallen to the ground. The yard was overgrown with weeds. There were no signs of anyone living in the house. Toyo-o was amazed, to say the least.

The ten samurai searched the neighborhood and rounded up several men, including an aged woodcutter and a rice thrasher. These men squatted in fear before the samurai, one of whom demanded, "Tell me, what manner of people lived here? Is it true that a man called Agata lived in this house?"

An old blacksmith edged forward on his knees and said, "I have not heard of any person by that name. About three years ago a certain man called Suguri lived prosperously in this house. But after his ship loaded with goods bound for Tsukushi was lost at sea, those remaining in the house left for places unknown. It has been unoccupied since then. But I heard from this old dyer that yesterday that young man," he pointed at Toyo-o, "entered the house and left it after a while, which he thought very mysterious indeed."

"Very well," said the samurai. "We shall go into the house and examine it thoroughly to report to the governor." The rest of the samurai, along with Toyo-o, followed the leader through the front gate and into the house itself.

The inside of the building was in a greater state of ruin and desolation than the outside. As they approached the inner courtyard they found what must once have been a lavishly built garden. The pond had dried up, the flowering plants were dead. Wild bushes and weeds flourished everywhere. A lone pine tree, broken by strong winds, looked ghastly.

Opening the latticed door leading to the main hall, they felt a raw-smelling spectral gust of wind and fell back in fearful excitement. Toyo-o, struck with amazement at the change, could not utter a word.

One of the samurai, a big, burly, daring man called Kose no Kumagashi, shouted, "Follow me in!" and stamped his way roughly into the wooden-floored room. A carpet of dust about an inch thick covered the floor, with

rat droppings strewn everywhere. And in this filthy room, beside a screen, sat a woman, pretty as a flower.

"In the name of the governor, I arrest you," shouted Kumagashi. "Come with me."

But the woman made no answer. As Kumagashi approached to seize her, there was a sudden clap of thunder, so loud that it seemed as though the earth itself had been split apart. Stunned by the impact, everyone fell to the floor before they could flee the room. When the rumbling ceased they looked around. The woman had disappeared. Nor was there any indication where she might have gone.

But scattered on the floor they saw a great many glittering articles—rolls of imported Korean cotton, Chinese figured silk, colorful linen, *katori*<sup>7</sup> cloth, metal hoes, as well as valuable weapons such as spears, shields, and quivers, the offerings that had been made to the shrine by the ministers of state and were stolen from the shrine depository.

The samurai gathered up the goods and reported back to the vice governor, giving him a detailed description of what had happened at the mysterious, dilapidated house. Both the vice governor and the chief priest of the Kumano Gongen Shrine were convinced that the robbery must have been the work of a spectral monster. The charge against Toyo-o was therefore reduced, but the fact that he had been in possession of the stolen sword could not be officially overlooked. He was thrown into jail and chained to the wall. However, the Ōya family bribed the officials with costly gifts, and Toyo-o was released after serving only a hundred days.

9

But Toyo-o felt that his family could never endure the unpleasant notoriety when his involvement in the affair became the subject of neighborhood gossip. He asked that he be allowed to go to his married sister's house in Nara and live there for a while. The family agreed, fearing that otherwise, after that dreadful experience, he might become seriously ill. And so they sent him off with a traveling companion to look after him.

Toyo-o's sister lived at a place called Tsubaichi in Nara province, married to a merchant called Tanabe no Kanetada. The couple greeted him warmly and, feeling sorry for him after his harrowing experience of the last few months, told him he could stay with them as long as he wanted.

That year passed without further incident. Soon it was February of the following year. The town of Tsubaichi, noted for its many temples and shrines, was near the Hasedera, a temple famous for the blessings of the Goddess of Mercy and known far and wide, even in China. Many were the worshipers from cities and distant villages who went on pilgrimages there each spring. The pilgrims usually lodged at Tsubaichi, and merchants competed for their trade.

Since the Tanabe store dealt in candles, lampwicks, and other lighting goods for religious ceremonies, it enjoyed a lucrative trade. So many customers crowded the shop that movement inside it was almost impossible.

7. A thin silk used for summer kimonos.

One day in the middle of this prosperous season a woman, seemingly from the city and dazzlingly beautiful, squeezed herself into the Tanabe store, accompanied by a maid, to purchase incense.

The maid, recognizing Toyo-o, shouted, "Here is our master!" Toyo-o, taken completely by surprise, saw it was Maroya, the maid, and her mistress Manago. "Oh, how dreadful," he cried, and ran into the interior of the shop to hide.

"What is the matter?" asked his sister and her husband, Kanetada. "That devil has come after me here. Keep away from her!"

The crowd in the shop began screaming: "Where is the devil?"

At this point Manago herself spoke up. "People, you need not fear me. And you, my husband, need not tremble so. I am sorry that I pushed you rashly into committing a crime. I searched for you after that in order to tell you the truth and put you at ease. Fortunately I have found out where you now live.

"I also ask the people of this house to listen carefully to me. If I were really a devil, would I be walking around carelessly in broad daylight, in dense crowds? The garments I am wearing have seams. When I walk against the sun my shadow shows clearly. Consider these things as logical proof and you will be convinced that I am not a devil. So be relieved of your doubts and suspicion."

Toyo-o at last regained his senses, emerged from his hiding place, and said, "I discovered that you are not a human being when I was arrested by the samurai and went back with them to your house. It was in an amazingly wretched state, completely different from the day before. And in that house inhabited only by devils I saw you again, and when the samurai tried to seize you there was a clap of thunder on that sunny day and you disappeared in a flash. I tell you I saw it all with my own eyes. And here you have the effrontery to come chasing after me again. Get out of here, you devil! At once!"

Manago clung to him with tears in her eyes. "I cannot blame you entirely for denouncing me. But please listen to what I have to say. I felt very sorry for you when I heard you were arrested and taken to the government office. So I discussed the matter with an old man in the neighborhood whom I had befriended and had him quickly reduce the house to its hideous state. The thunder that seemed to have rolled when I was about to be seized was a trick played by Maroya. I fled by ship toward Naniwa, but I wanted to find out what had happened to you after that and I prayed to the Goddess of Mercy of the Hasedera.<sup>8</sup> It was revealed to me during my prayer that I should come to the temple here, where the three cryptomeria trees<sup>9</sup> of sacred origin stand. I was thus able to trace you here to Tsubaichi, thanks to the infinite mercy of the goddess Kannon.

"Furthermore, how could a mere woman like me steal and carry away all those precious offerings from the Gongen Shrine depository? The robbery must have been the work of the spirit of my late husband. Please think all this over carefully, trusting the sincerity of my love for you."

8. Famous Buddhist temple south of Nara, established in the 8th century and dedicated to Kannon, goddess of mercy, who was revered for her vow to save all beings. 9. Japanese cedars.



Toyo-o, teetering in an ambivalent state of lingering doubt and pity, could find no words to alienate her further. His sister and her husband, however, were so moved by Manago's seemingly straightforward, singularly feminine pleadings that they had no doubt whatever that she had spoken the truth. And although Toyo-o claimed that Manago was a spectral monster, there could be no such thing in this world, they reasoned. They were impressed by her zeal—and her pitiful state—having come all the way here to search for him. Even though Toyo-o was not convinced, they themselves welcomed her into their household and provided her with a room.

In a day or so Manago, ingratiating herself to her host and hostess, pleaded with them tearfully to win back Toyo-o for her. Completely overcome by her tender pleas, they succeeded in urging Toyo-o to go through with formal wedding rites. Toyo-o, who, in any event, had first been attracted to Manago's physical beauty, daily became less and less intransigent and more attached to her than ever, and finally he pledged eternal love. Now nothing could separate them even for a day, for such was the intensity of their tender love for each other.

## 11

Then came the month of March, and Kanetada proposed that the whole family go on a picnic to the famed Yoshino.

"This province of Kii," he said, "naturally cannot compare with Kyoto in beauty and elegance, but we have our unrivaled scenic beauties, too. Yoshino<sup>1</sup> is especially beautiful in the spring. You will never tire of seeing Mount Mifune and the Natsumi River, no matter how often you visit there. At this time of year the cherries are in bloom, which makes it all the more beautiful." He urged Toyo-o and Manago, saying "Let us all go on a picnic together."

Manago smiled and said, "There is a saying, Yoshino is a good place which good people look upon as good," quoting the famous verse by Emperor Tenmu which paraphrases the literal implications of the word *yoshi* [good] in Yoshino. "It is the envy of the people of Kyoto, I hear. Yes, it must surely be glorious when the cherries are in bloom. But since childhood I have suffered from a congenital illness which makes me dizzy when I find myself in the midst of a huge throng, or when I have to walk a long distance on the highway. I am sorry to say I cannot accompany you on the picnic. But I shall expect a lot of souvenirs of your trip when you return."

"You need not worry about that," Kanetada replied. "We would never let you walk to the picnic grounds. We do not own a private palanquin<sup>2</sup> but we can always hire one for you. Besides, if you do not come along with us, Toyo-o will be worried and may refuse to go."

Toyo-o added his encouragement: "Since he has made this offer out of kindness, I don't see how we can refuse, even though you might collapse on the wayside."

Thus Manago reluctantly agreed to go along.

1. Famous for its cherry blossoms. 2. An enclosed seat, mounted on poles, that was designed to carry a single passenger.



Many people along the picnic route were dressed in colorful finery but none could compare with Manago's dazzling beauty.

The family first went calling at a certain temple on Mount Yoshino, where the chief priest was a friend of long standing. In welcoming them the priest said, "You are rather late this spring. The petals of the cherry blossoms are already scattering, and the warbling of the nightingale is waning. But I will escort you to some places where cherry trees are still in bloom."

But first he had a rather tidy supper prepared for them.

At dawn the area was thickly covered with mist. But as the mist cleared they could appreciate the view in all directions, for the temple was situated at a high elevation. Priests' quarters scattered here and there in the lower regions could be seen clearly. The warbling of mountain birds could be heard from hither and yon. Flowers and trees thrived in a riot of colors. The area was so beautiful as to dazzle one's eyes.

For those who were visiting this spot for the first time, the view at a waterfall below was said to be the best, so they were sent in that direction with a guide. As they descended the slope along a circuitous route, they came upon a site where an ancient imperial detached palace was said to have once stood. Nearby was the waterfall. The water below formed a foaming, bubbling whirlpool, in which some small fish were leaping, presenting a pleasing sight.

They sat down to eat their picnic lunch while enjoying the scenery. Presently a man was seen coming from downstream, stepping from boulder to boulder. His hair was as white as newly spun linen. But his legs seemed to be still vigorous with health and vitality. As he approached the waterfall, he stood looking at the picnicking group sitting on the bank. He seemed mystified.

Manago and Maroya deliberately turned their backs on him and pretended not to have seen him standing there. But the old man had already recognized them.

"You devils!" he grumbled. "Again you are bewitching and deceiving human beings. How can you dare assume that shape and form before my very eyes!"

Manago and Maroya stood up in a frenzy of confusion and plunged into the waterfall. The swirling waters suddenly shot up into the air and the two vanished from sight. At the same time a jet black cloud appeared over the spot like a splash of ink, and rain fell in a torrent, rattling noisily like thin bamboo slats.

The old man, seeing that the other picnickers in the group had been thrown into excited confusion, calmed them and led them down to a village. "You have been bewitched by that devil who attached itself to you," he told Toyo-o, fixing him with a steady gaze. "If I had not been there to save you, it might have taken your life. Beware of it in the future."

Toyo-o, kneeling on the ground with head bowed in profound thankfulness, revealed to the old man the entire history of his affair with Manago and pleaded earnestly for future protection from the devil.

"I thought so," the old man said. "That devil is really a huge old serpent—a lecherous monster. It mates with a bull and begets a freak calf; it mates with a stallion and begets a freak colt. It has bewitched you because it was fascinated by your good looks. Its evil attachment to its victims is so tenacious that you must be constantly on your guard. Otherwise you will lose your life."

All heard the venerable man with fear in their hearts and prayed to him, saying, "You must be the incarnation of a god."

He laughed. "I am not a god. My name is Tagima no Kibito, and I serve at the Yamato Shrine. I will escort you to your lodging now, so come along." They rose and followed him.

The next day the family returned to Tsubaichi, where the Yamato Shrine was situated. By way of expressing their gratitude to the old man, Tagima no Kibito, they presented him with three rolls of Mino silk and bundles of Tsukushi cotton. They pleaded with him to perform *misogi*<sup>3</sup> rites to ward off future visitations of the devil. He accepted the gifts on behalf of the shrine and distributed them among the priests there, without keeping any for his own use.

"That devil has put you under its spell because you are good looking," he told Toyo-o. "You have been bewitched by the beauty of the temporary abode of that serpent. You must develop a more manly, a more determined spirit, which you now lack, in order to repulse it. By so doing you will not need to rely on my powers to cast off the devil. You must never yield to temptations of passion and lust."

Toyo-o felt as though he had just emerged from a dream, and he thanked the old man profusely for his counsel. To Kanetada, his brother-in-law, he said, "It was due to my wrong thinking that I was subjected to the spell of that serpent for a whole year. I have been remiss in my duties to my parents and my older brother. I can no longer complacently place myself under your roof and favor. I thank you kindly for all you have done for me, and I hope to see you again sometime."

So saying, he left Tsubaichi for his parents' home in Miwagasaki.

## 14

His parents and his older brother, Taro, on hearing from him about his dreadful experience in Tsubaichi, realized at last that he was in no way to blame for the affair involving Manago and the stolen sword. Pitying him on the one hand, and dreading the evil tenacity of that devil on the other, they decided that they should not let him remain a bachelor any longer and discussed plans to get a wife for him.

At a place called Shiba there lived a petty official named Shōji. Shōji had an only daughter, who was then serving as a lady-in-waiting at the imperial palace in Kyoto. It was said that she would soon be resigning from her work there to return to her father's home in Shiba. Her father thus asked a go-between to call at the Ōya home in Miwagasaki with the proposal that Toyo-o become his son-in-law and live in Shiba. The proposal was immediately accepted as a desirable match.

Tomiko, for such was the girl's name, was sent for. She gladly returned

3. Purification.

from Kyoto to become Toyo-o's bride. As she was accustomed to the refined manners of court life, there was a glamorous quality in her appearance and behavior; she looked quite beautiful among provincial girls.

Toyo-o, on taking her as his wife, saw that she had pretty eyes and that she was alert, perspicacious, and assiduous about everything. He recalled how he had been bewitched by Manago and remembered one thing and another about their affair. Teasing Tomiko, he told her, "Since you have been accustomed for years to glamorous court life, surely you must find a provincial like me wanting in many respects. One day a general, the next day a minister of state must have made romantic love to you. I feel envious indeed."

Tomiko looked steadily up at him, saying, "In pampering a woman of no distinction like me and forgetting your own glamorous affair, you force me to be even more envious than you."

Though her appearance was different, her words were spoken precisely as Manago, the devil, would have spoken them. It was her voice!

Toyo-o's hair bristled with terror. He was amazed by the tenacity of that devil.

She laughed. "My dear husband, there is nothing strange about all this. Even if you have forgotten your pledge to me, made across the seas and over the mountains, we meet again because it has been predestined. If you continue to believe in the lies of other people and try to avoid me, vengeance is sure to overtake you. No matter how tall the mountains of Kii may be, it is easy for me to spatter your blood from the highest peak to the valley below. And I warn you, don't ever try to do away with yourself."

Toyo-o, shivering from head to toe, felt as though he were about to die. In fact, he was feeling more dead than alive when someone spoke from behind the screen: "Master, how cross you are tonight on this happy occasion!" It was Maroya, the devil's maid.

Again Toyo-o felt his stomach turn. He closed his eyes and dropped face down on the floor. Manago and her maid tried to mollify and threaten him by turns, but he remained deathlike in this prone position out of sheer terror throughout the night.

## 15

As the day dawned he leaped out of the bedroom and told his father-in-law about the terrible thing that had happened during the night. "Tell me how I can escape from the wrath of that devil," he said. Even while he spoke, he feared the devil might be listening behind him, so he lowered his voice.

Shōji and his wife turned pale. But Shōji said, "There is a priest here from the Kurama Temple in Kyoto, who comes to perform austerities<sup>4</sup> every year. Since yesterday he has been staying at the temple on the hill across from here. He is particularly effective in invoking divine help against such visitations as the plague, specters, and swarms of crop-destroying locusts. He is held in high esteem by the people of this community. Let us ask him to come and help us."

The priest was sent for in a flurry of excitement, and at length he arrived.

4. Renunciations of food and material comforts as forms of self-discipline and religious devotion.

When the frightful circumstances were explained to him, the priest said with a condescending air, "Don't worry. It is easy to catch such a devil." Thus placated, the people felt less uneasy.

He concocted a magic potion consisting of a plant called *yū-ō* and water, put the mixture in a pot, and proceeded to the bedroom which had now become the devil's den. As the people excitedly sought hiding places, the priest grinned, saying, "Old people and children, you need not hide yourselves out of fear. Stay where you are. I shall seize this serpent and show it to you."

No sooner had he opened the door of the bedroom than the serpent thrust out its head toward the priest. It filled the entire space as the door opened. Glittering whiter than the whitest snowdrift, its eyes like mirrors, its horns like branches of a huge tree, it opened its three-foot-wide mouth, spat out its crimson-colored tongue, and looked as though it would swallow the priest in a mouthful.

"Oh, how terrible!" cried the priest. He dropped the pot of magical potion then and there and fell to the floor. Unable to rise, he barely succeeded in crawling back. "Frightful! Frightful! This is indeed a profound curse of evil gods," he cried. "How can a stupid priest like me destroy the spell with incantations? Without my hands and feet I could never have come back alive." Then he fainted away.

When the people lifted him up, they found his body red, hot, and blackened, as though they were clutching burning wood, perhaps because of the poison spat out by the serpent. His eyes were blinking, as if he wanted to say something, but his voice failed him. The people dashed cold water on his head to revive him, but he finally died. And the people wept over him as though they themselves had been bewitched.

Thereupon Toyo-o seemed to have regained some control of himself. "If the devil is so tenacious as to be impervious to the incantations of such an exalted priest, then it will continue to pursue me as long as I live," he said. "It is not right that so many people should suffer on my account. I will not rely on the help of others any more. I am prepared to die. So please be at ease."

He then walked toward the bedroom. All the members of the household cried, "Are you mad?" and tried to stop him. But he pretended not to have heard them and, walking serenely to the devil's den, opened the door. There was no sign of disturbance. He found Tomiko seated silently opposite Maroya, the devil's maid.

Tomiko asked in the devil's voice, "What manner of grudge are you holding against me, asking others to put me out of the way? If you persist in trying to eliminate me, I shall be forced to be cruel not only to you but also to all the people of this community. Be happy over my undeviating love for you. And never, never transfer your affection to another woman."

She said this last in a coquettish fashion that was intolerable to Toyo-o.

He replied, "There is a saying that human beings have no intention of hurting the tiger. The tiger, on the other hand, is predisposed to hurt human beings. Just so, with an inhuman spirit you have bewitched me cruelly so many times. What is more, over a trifling matter you have threatened me with dire things. There is the worst kind of evil in you. To pursue me out of

love may be normally human, but to inflict cruelty on other people in this household is abominable. I beg of you to spare the life of this Tomiko. Then you may take me wherever you wish."

She nodded happily.

16

Toyo-o went out of the bedroom and told Tomiko's father, Shōji, "Since I am being pursued so relentlessly, it is wrong for me to remain in this house and thereby to bring trouble upon others. With your permission, I shall leave forever. That way Tomiko will be free from further molestation."

Shōji would not hear of it. "I have the blood of samurai in my veins," he said. "It would be shameful on my part to submit to such cowardice, and unfair to your family, the Ōyas. Let us plan a better scheme. . . . Oh yes, in Komatsubara, at the Dōjō Temple, there is a priest called Hokai Oshō who is exalted in the performance of incantations. He is an aged person and rarely goes out of his study, but I am sure he will not forsake us in this crisis."

No sooner had he said this than he leaped upon his horse and galloped away. The venerable priest's temple was situated some distance away, so it was late that night when he reached it. Hokai Oshō came out from the back room to greet Shōji. When the priest heard Shōji's story and appeal for help, he said, "It must be a wretched state of affairs indeed. I am an old man now, so I doubt if there would be any effectiveness in my prayers. But I cannot remain idle when your household is faced with such a calamity. Return to your house quickly. I will follow you directly."

He fetched a priest's surplice<sup>5</sup> stained with burned poppy incense and gave it to Shōji, saying, "Try to beguile the monster and coax it into submission, then cover its head with this sacred surplice, pressing down with all your might. If you don't press it hard enough, the monster might escape. Say your prayers as you do it."

Shōji leaped upon his horse again, and galloped homeward with joy in his heart.

He called Toyo-o aside and gave him the surplice, instructing him, as Hokai Oshō had explained, on how to subdue the devil. Toyo-o hid the surplice in the folds of his robe and entered the bedroom. He told the devil, "Shōji has agreed to let me go, so let us depart together."

Tomiko's body responded by rising, very happily, it seemed. Immediately Toyo-o took out the surplice and covered her head with it, pressing it down with all his might, and she fell to the floor.

"Oh, how painful," she cried out, in a muffled voice. "Why are you tormenting me like this? Please quit pressing me here . . . and here." But Toyo-o kept on pressing her down and covering her with all his strength.

Then Hokai Oshō arrived in a palanquin. Escorted into Shōji's house, he kept mumbling an incantation. He went into the bedroom and, shoving Toyo-o aside, lifted the surplice. A serpent lay coiled atop Tomiko's prone, unconscious body. There was no movement. The priest seized the dead snake and put it into an iron pot carried by the acolyte who had accompanied him. He

5. A loose outer robe, extending to the knees, worn by priests.

was still mumbling some incantations when another snake, only a foot long, came slithering up from behind the standing screen. This, too, the priest caught and put into the pot, which he covered tightly with the surplice.

And then he got on his palanquin and returned to his temple. He had a grave dug deep in the temple yard and buried the pot, together with its contents. In this way he sealed forever the chances of the serpent reemerging to bedevil and bewitch human beings. Even now, it is said, the serpent's grave mound may be seen in the temple yard.

The people at the Shōji household meanwhile prayerfully shed tears of gratitude. But Tomiko, as a consequence of her horrible experience, became seriously ill and died. Toyo-o, on the other hand, suffered no ill effects but lived a long and healthy life, it is recorded.