



PROJECT MUSE®

Japanese Demon Lore

Noriko Reider

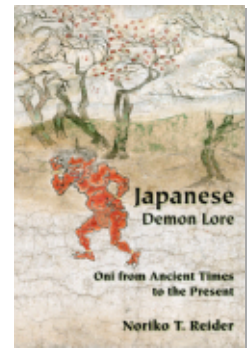
Published by Utah State University Press

Reider, Noriko.

Japanese Demon Lore: Oni from Ancient Times to the Present.

Utah State University Press, 2010.

Project MUSE.muse.jhu.edu/book/1077.



➔ For additional information about this book

<https://muse.jhu.edu/book/1077>

Access provided at 5 Apr 2020 16:59 GMT with no institutional affiliation



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

Appendix A

A Translation of Shibukawa's Version of Shuten Dōji

A LONG TIME AGO IN JAPAN, A DIVINE COUNTRY from the time heaven and earth were divided, and where Buddhism thrived, imperial rule from the time of the first emperor¹ to the Engi era (901–923)² was endowed with righteous authority, sincere honesty and compassion for the people in ways unsurpassed by the Chinese emperors, Yao and Shun.³

Then, strange events began to take place.⁴ Demons living in Mt. Ōe of Tanba province⁵ began to abduct numerous people at night from throughout the land. In the capital, many people, particularly comely maidens of seventeen or eighteen years of age, were kidnapped.

Of all the recorded tales of demonic abduction, the one that affected the retired emperor's middle councilor Ikeda Kunitaka was especially heart wrenching. Kunitaka enjoyed the retired emperor's favor, and had a home filled with treasures. He also had a daughter of divine beauty.⁶ It was said that anyone who encountered this girl's charms, either in person or through another's account, fell in love with her. The parents' love for the princess was most extraordinary. One evening, the graceful princess disappeared. Kunitaka's anguish, not to mention the grief of his wife, was indescribable.⁷

1 Emperor Jinmu. The first emperor of Japan who is, according to the ancient literatures, purported to have been enthroned in 660 BCE.

2 The sixtieth emperor, Daigo, reigned during the Engi era (901–923).

3 The reigns of the ancient Chinese emperors, Yao and Shun, were regarded by the Chinese as ideal.

4 The legend does not specify the time frame or historical context. However, the appearance of well-known characters in the story suggests the late tenth century or early eleventh century.

5 Present-day Kyoto.

6 *Sanjū-ni sō no katachi o uke*. These are the thirty-two attributes of Buddha that are used to compare beautiful women.

7 Kunitaka's reaction is not detailed, other than to confirm it was indescribable.

Nurses, maids, and all who happened to be in the dwelling were thrown into calamitous pandemonium.

Overcome with grief, Kunitaka summoned his servant Sakon and said, "I have heard recently that there is a reputable diviner named Muraoka no Masatoki⁸ in the capital. Bring him here." Sakon at once went to fetch Masatoki to bring him to Kunitaka's mansion. Piteable and without concern for his reputation, Kunitaka and his wife received Masatoki immediately.⁹ "Hear me Masatoki," Kunitaka spoke, "Parents with even five or ten children would not neglect any one of them [let alone me with only one child]. Last night, my only child was abducted and we know nothing of her whereabouts. She is thirteen years old this year and since she was born, my wife and I have doted on her. We even have nurse chaperones standing guard when she descends from her veranda to protect her from strong winds. If this is an act of a demon, why did the demon not take me, too?" Kunitaka pressed his face to his sleeve [to catch his tears]. Kunitaka piled up tens of thousands of coins in front of the fortune teller, pleading with him: "Seer of fortunes, please tell me where my daughter is and I'll reward you with great treasures. Please divine carefully." The masterly Masatoki took out a scroll. After consulting the text, the seer triumphantly clapped his hands together, certain he had ascertained the princess's whereabouts. "Your princess's disappearance is the work of demons living in Mt. Ōe of Tanba Province. Her life is safe. In proper measure, I will pray for her safety, so please rest assured. After careful examination, the divination indicates to me that this abduction occurred because you failed to keep a promise to Kannon when you sought her blessing for the birth of the child. If you appeal to Kannon now with the appropriate prayers, your daughter will return to the capital soon," and with that clairvoyant revelation, Masatoki took his leave from the Kunitaka mansion.

Kunitaka and his wife were overcome with woe after hearing Masatoki's prognostications. Still in tears, Kunitaka went to the imperial palace to report to the Throne. In the assembly of the emperor, with court nobles and ministers gathered, palace officials discussed Kunitaka's plight, but could offer no definitive consensus on a course of action. Among them, the chief imperial advisor reminded those gathered that, "during the reign of Emperor Saga

8 In some versions such as *Ōeyama ekotoba*, the diviner is Abe no Seimei (?– 1005?), a famed specialist of *onmyōdō* during the middle of the Heian period (794–1185).

9 According to the custom of the time, it was not considered suitable that a person of a higher social rank would give an immediate audience to a person of lower rank, in this case, the diviner.

(reign 809–823), a similar incident happened. The Great Priest Kōbō¹⁰ subdued the demon with his magical powers, expelling the demon from our land. If your majesty would summon Minamoto no Raikō to the palace and command him to subjugate the demon, the demon will surely be frightened of Raikō and his lieutenants, Sadamitsu,¹¹ Suetake,¹² Tsuna,¹³ Kintoki,¹⁴ and Hōshō.¹⁵ The emperor agreed, issuing an imperial proclamation charging Raikō with the task of defeating the evil demons. Raikō immediately came to the palace and was granted an audience. “Hear ye Raikō, demons dwell in Mt. Ōe of Tanba province. They are doing wrong. In my divine country it is inconceivable that demons would inhabit even the most remote region to cause distress, let alone in the vicinity of the capital. Crush them.”

The warrior Raikō was very moved to receive the imperial command but was also alarmed, reasoning, “Demons are transformers. If they learn that some punitive force is coming, they will turn into dust and leaves, and it will be hard for us ordinary humans to find them. Yet, how can I disobey an imperial order?” Hurrying home, Raikō called his men to his house. At their gathering, Raikō warned them all, “We won’t be a match for the mighty demons. Let us pray to the deities and Buddhas for their help. That will be the best.” And with that suggestion, Raikō and Hōshō proceeded to Yahata Shrine,¹⁶

-
- 10 Kūkai (774–835). The founder of the Shingon sect of Buddhism; he founded Kongōbu-ji on Mt. Kōya in present-day Wakayama prefecture.
- 11 Usui Sadamitsu (954–1021). A warrior of the mid-Heian period, and one of the *shitennō* (the four heavenly guardians/ lieutenants) of Minamoto no Raikō.
- 12 Urabe Suetake (?–1022). A warrior of the mid-Heian period and one of the *shitennō* of Minamoto no Raikō.
- 13 Watanabe Tsuna (953–1025). A warrior of the mid-Heian period and one of the *shitennō* of Minamoto no Raikō. As we have seen in the section on *Transformation Power* in chapter one, Watanabe no Tsuna encountered a beautiful woman of about twenty years of age at Modoribashi-bridge on Kyoto’s First Avenue. Her (or probably his) real identity turns out to be an oni. This oni appears as Ibaraki Dōji in the story of “Shuten Dōji.”
- 14 Sakata Kintoki (ca. 10th century). A warrior of the mid-Heian period and one of the *shitennō* of Minamoto no Raikō. As we saw in chapter four, as a child, his name was Kintarō, and his mother was a *yamauba*.
- 15 Fujiwara no Hōshō or Yasumasa (957–1036). A warrior who was good at both literary and martial arts. He became the governor of several provinces. His wife is Izumi Shikibu, a famous poet of the Heian period.
- 16 Iwashimizu Hachimangū. Located in present-day Kyoto, the god of battle and/or the deity for the Minamoto family was worshipped at this shrine by samurai warriors.

Tsuna and Kintoki went to Sumiyoshi Shrine,¹⁷ while Sadamitsu and Suetake prayed at the Kumano Shrine.¹⁸ All offered fervent prayers, and since Japan was a divine country where Buddhism thrived, each deity listened to their prayers. Nothing can be more joyous than the reception of their prayers, they thought, and they all went home content. Later Raikō and his lieutenants gathered to discuss plans for dealing with the Mt. Ōe demons, but the discussion ended without a solution.

Raikō took charge of the mission's tactical planning, recommending that the six warriors disguise themselves as mountain ascetics and pretend to be lost. He reasoned that if only they could locate the demon's base in Tanba province, defeating the demons would be easy, whatever military strategy they would employ. To that end, Raikō suggested, "Each of us must fabricate an ascetic's pannier in which to conceal our armor. What do you think?" With his men in agreement, the warriors set out to make their panniers. Concealed within Raikō's pannier was his vermilion armor called *randen gusari*, a helmet of the same vermilion thread named Lion King, and his splendid sword Chisui, which was two-foot-one in length. Hidden in Hōshō's pannier was his purple armor, a helmet of the same color, and his two-foot-long halberd, dubbed Cutting Rocks. Tsuna's pannier held his yellow-green armor with matching helmet and a sword called Cutting Demon.¹⁹ Likewise, Sadamitsu, Suetake, and Kintoki used their panniers to hide their battle armor that was identifiable by color, helmets, and swords. In each pannier, sake, flint, and oilpaper were put atop the battle vestments.²⁰ Accordingly, each of the men donned the attire of a mountain ascetic: each had a round cap [*tokin*], and dressed in humble linen clothes, each carried a conch shell, a stick, and a striking sword.²¹ While in concentrated prayer to the deities and Buddhas of Japan, the party left the capital for Tanba province. The warriors' resolve would terrify any dark force.²²

17 Sumiyoshi Myōjin. The god of navigation as well as the god of battle.

18 Kumano Gongen. One of the strongholds of mountain asceticism (*shugendō*).

19 The origins of the names of the battle equipment are not known. However, other literature such as *Taiheiki* (Chronicle of Grand Pacification) indicates that the name Cutting Demon was given to the sword for it had cut an oni's arm in times past.

20 Flint is used to spark a fire; oilpaper is used as a waterproof cover.

21 A sword with a blade primarily designed to cut as it strikes as opposed to a blade chiefly intended to pierce or puncture.

22 Tenmahajun. A force bent on undermining the Buddhist Way and its universal wisdom.

Raikō's party hurriedly pressed onward, soon arriving at the foot of Mt. Ōe, in Tanba province. There they encountered a woodcutter. "Excuse me, woodcutter," asked Raikō, "Where is the mountain Senjōdake in this province? And, please tell us in detail where the demons dwell." The woodcutter replied, "Pass this peak and the valleys, and peaks that lay beyond, then you will reach the demons' lair, where humans never approach." "I see," said Raikō and to his men enjoined, "Let's pass beyond this peak," and in so saying, Raikō and his followers proceeded to cross the valleys and climb the peaks. While on the trail, Raikō and his men came upon three old men in a brushwood hut concealed inside a cavern. Peering into the makeshift dwelling, Raikō asked the occupants, "What sort of strange beings could you be?" One of the old men replied back, "We are not strange creatures. One is from Kakenokōri of Tsu province,²³ another is from Otonashisato of Ki province,²⁴ and the other is from Yamashiro,²⁵ close to the capital. Our wives and children have been stolen by the demon named Shuten Dōji who lives over this mountain. We recently arrived ourselves, seeking revenge for our wives and children being taken away, but in looking at you closely, you don't appear to be ordinary priests. I understand that you are here by imperial command to subjugate Shuten Dōji. By all means, we three old men will show you the way. Put down your panniers, relax, and rest from your journey."

Raikō accepted the old men's welcome. "As you said, we are lost in the mountain and are quite fatigued. We shall then take a rest." Raikō and his party put down their satchels, unpacked the sake and presented it to the three men. One of the old men then advised Raikō, "You must enter the demons dwelling stealthily, by any way possible. The chief demon always drinks sake, and so he is called Shuten Dōji [Drunken Demon]. After he becomes intoxicated and lies down, he becomes oblivious to the goings-on around him. We have in our possession a special kind of sake known as *jinben kidoku* (a divine elixir, poisonous to demons).²⁶ If demons drink this sake, they lose their supernatural flying powers and become disoriented. But if you drink this sake, it is medicinal. That is why for generations it has been recognized as a divine elixir, poisonous to demons. Now this sake will

23 Present-day Osaka, near Sumiyoshi.

24 Present-day Wakayama prefecture, where Kumano Gongen is located. See note 18.

25 Southeast area of present-day Kyoto.

26 It is a play on words of *jinben kidoku*, which means "unfathomable change."

prove its wonders again.” Then, the old men produced a hobnailed helmet and handed it to Raikō, “Please put on this helmet when you decapitate the demon. It will protect you.” Assessing the situation, Raikō’s troop was convinced that the three old men were deities representing the three shrines they had visited before embarking on their mission. Overwhelmed, the six men shed tears of gratitude, their appreciation beyond words.

Emerging from the cave, the deities invited the warriors to follow them, “We shall show you the way.” The group proceeded to climb the treacherous mountain Senjōdake. The deities then guided Raikō and his men through a thirty-meter-long dark cave, which opened up into a free-flowing mountain brook. They then directed the warriors, “Follow this waterway upstream and you will encounter a lady of seventeen or eighteen years of age, she can tell you more. When you are ready to strike, we, the deities of Sumiyoshi, Yahata, and Kumano, will again help you.” With that promise to return, the elders vanished into thin air.

The six warriors fell to their knees humbled and honored by the deities’ presence. Then they pressed upstream as instructed. Just as the deities had foretold, the group came upon a maiden of seventeen or eighteen years of age. The young girl seemed to be crying while washing what appeared to be blood-stained garments. Approaching her, Raikō inquired, “May I ask who you are?”²⁷ The young lady replied, “I am from the capital. One night, the demon took me away and brought me here. I can see neither my dear parents nor my nurses. Please pity me for I am in such a miserable state,” she cried bitterly. Trying to hold back her tears, she sobbed, “Alas, how terrible! This place is called Demon’s Cavern, and no human can approach. How could you priests have come here? Please let me return to the capital any way possible.” And no sooner had she finished talking than the young maiden burst into tears again. Having heard the girl’s plea, Raikō asked, “Who are your parents in the capital?” “I am the only daughter of the middle councilor Hanazono,” she replied. “But I am not the only captive here. There are more than ten of us. Recently the princess of the middle councilor Ikeda Kunitaka was abducted and brought here. After taking good care of us, the demons wring the blood from our bodies, which they then consume as their sake. They consume our flesh as banquet condiments. It is so pitiable to look at the sight nearby of the blood-drained captives. This morning, the demons

27 Even though the deities suggested that there would be a maiden, the query is reasonable because a lone maiden high in Mt. Ōe would be highly unusual.

drank the blood of the princess of the middle councilor Horikawa. It's so sad that I now wash her blood-stained garments, indeed, it is pathetic," she lamented. The hardened warriors were so moved by the young maiden's distress, they broke into tears alongside her.

"We are here to exterminate the demons and return you all to the capital. Please, tell us about the demons' dwelling in detail." "Is this dream or reality?" she queried. "I shall tell you about the demons' place. You must follow this river upstream. There, you will see the iron gate, guarded by Shuten Dōji's doting demons. Use stealth to enter through the gate, by any means possible. Once you are inside, you will see an imposing azure palace with rows of roofs and bejeweled screens. The living quarters of the palace are adorned to represent the four seasons. They are built of iron, hence the name, the Iron Palace. At night, we are summoned to the demons' living quarters where we perform menial duties, including massaging their bodies. Shuten Dōji has four lieutenants who guard the entrance of the living quarters: Hoshikuma Dōji [Star-Bear Demon], Kuma Dōji [Bear Demon], Torakuma Dōji [Tiger-Bear Demon], and Kane Dōji [Iron Demon]. I have heard that the four demons are powerful beyond mortal comprehension. As for the appearance of Shuten Dōji, he has light-red skin and is tall with disheveled short hair. He has a human appearance during the day but at night he transforms into a ten-foot tall demon whose countenance is truly horrible. He always drinks sake. Once he becomes intoxicated, he forgets everything. So please enter the palace—by any means possible—and serve him sake. When he lies down intoxicated, strike him with a vengeance. The devil's luck will have run out for Shuten Dōji. And he will finally be conquered. Please plan carefully, priests."

The warriors pressed on upstream, toward the Iron Palace. Seeing Raikō and his men approaching, the demons at the gate wondered amongst themselves, "Who are these men? This is indeed rare!" Not having eaten humans for a while the demons at the gate had come to miss the taste. "Like 'moths to a flame' they've delivered themselves to their death. Let's tear them into morsels." Vying to be the first to reach Raikō and his men, the demons were about to sprint forward. Raikō and his men would surely have been eaten had there not been one among this overzealous band of flesh-hungry demons who warned, "Haste makes waste! We should not hasten forward for our own personal gratification. We should first check with our master and at his instruction we'll tear them apart." The rest of the demons agreed and proceeded to the inner palace to report to Shuten Dōji. Upon hearing

the report of the priests' arrival, Shuten Dōji declared, "That's strange. At any rate I shall meet with them. Bring them here!" Compliantly, the demons showed the disguised priests to a veranda within the palace complex where they would meet with the oni leader Shuten Dōji. Suddenly, an odour of rotting fish seemed to be carried in by the wind, and thunder and lightning began to strike. In the mayhem of these supernatural calamities, Shuten Dōji appeared. A towering human form with pale red skin and dishevelled short hair, clenching an iron staff, adorned in a checkered kimono with a crimson hakama, looked down on Raikō and his men.

Then, a voice challenged Raikō and his band: "The mountain I live on is no ordinary mountain—the boulders and rocks are towering and the gorges are deep with no passage. Neither birds of flight nor beasts that run on earth can approach this summit, for there is no passageway for them, let alone humans. Did you, despite being humans, fly here? Speak. I will listen."

Raikō responded, "This is normal in our training. Long ago, when an acetic named En no gyōja²⁸ pushed his way through impassable terrains, he encountered three demons that called themselves Goki, Zenki, and Akki. En no gyōja gave them food and incantations. Since then, every year En has continuously given these demons food and compassion. We priests follow in En no gyōja's wake, and we are from Mt. Haguro of Dewa province.²⁹ We confined ourselves to Mt. Ōmine³⁰ during the New Year [from New Year's Eve to the New Year's Day], and now, since spring has arrived, we set out from Mt. Ōmine late last night for sightseeing in Kyoto. But along Sen'non dō,³¹ we became lost and we arrived here in search of passage. It must be En's guidance that has led to our fortuitous meeting here and now. There is no other joy than this. It is said that to stay a night under the same tree and to drink from the same river is predestined from a previous life. Please give us lodging tonight. Because I carry sake, we humbly offer to share it with you. We, too, would like to enjoy sake and revel here this night."

28 En no gyōja was born in Mt. Katsuragi in present-day Nara prefecture. He was a devout Buddhist and a skilled magician. During the reign of Emperor Mommu (697–707) he was exiled to Izu, present-day Shizuoka prefecture, for the crime of misguiding the public with magic. He was later pardoned. He is considered to be the father of mountain asceticism.

29 Mt. Haguro of Dewa province, present-day Yamagata prefecture, is renowned as a center for mountain asceticism.

30 A main training field of mountain asceticism.

31 Present-day Kyoto, Hyōgo prefecture, Tottori prefecture, and Shimane prefecture all face the Japan Sea.

Hearing Raikō's explanations, Shuten Dōji judged the priests to be of no immediate threat, and so invited them to his inner sanctum to learn more of their journey and their intentions. Once there, the suspicious demon further tested Raikō's sincerity by offering him some of the demon's sake, "You brought sake, I heard. We, too, want to offer sake to you, priests." Shuten Dōji gestured the oni to bring forth the sake. The demons hurried off to obtain the maiden's blood to put into the sake container, placing it in front of Shuten Dōji, alongside his cup. Shuten Dōji then passed the chalice to Raikō and poured him some of the demon's blood sake. Raikō drank his entire portion with apparent zeal and upon seeing this, Shuten Dōji commanded: "Pass it on to the next person." The demon then poured sake for Tsuna. Tsuna received the cup and likewise, drank it all. Shuten Dōji asked his servants, "Are there not condiments?" In response, the demons immediately brought forth human arms and legs that appeared to have been recently severed. The dismembered body parts were carefully put in front of Shuten Dōji. "Prepare them for the priests," he ordered one of his subjects, but before the demon could comply, Raikō volunteered, "I shall do it." He then unsheathed his small sword, cutting the human flesh into five-inch pieces, once again, consuming them with apparent gusto. Looking on, Tsuna quickly followed suit, declaring, "I'm much obliged for your consideration, I will have some, too," and after similarly cutting the flesh into five-inch long pieces, he joined in the feast. Looking at them, Shuten Dōji asked, "What kind of mountains do you live among? It is strange to eat this kind of rare sake and condiments." Raikō replied, "Your suspicion is reasonable. According to our discipline, we do not reject anything if it is given in compassion—even if we do not desire it from our hearts. While I was relishing this sake and these condiments, something came to mind. To defeat or be defeated is but a dream. I am not, yet I am and there are no two tastes in eating. We all attain Buddhahood. Praise be to Buddha," and Raikō prayed. It is said that the world of demons is without deception. In veneration of Raikō's words, Shuten Dōji expressed his admiration for him, opening his heart and saying, "It's sad that we offered something disagreeable to you. It is not necessary for the rest of you to eat it."

In the spirit of this camaraderie, Raikō then took out his own sake, "I have brought this sake from the capital. Most humbly, I would like to offer it to you. I shall taste it first to make sure it is not poisonous." Raikō drank first, before giving the cup to Shuten Dōji who was all too eager to drink. The divine sake was indeed exceptional. It tasted like honeydew—simply

beyond description. Delighted, Shuten Dōji then announced, “I have two women who are very dear to me. I shall summon them to have them taste this sake.” With that, he called Kunitaka’s daughter and Hanazono’s daughter to his drawing room. “I shall pour sake for the ladies from the capital,” Raikō stood up.

Nearing a state of intoxicated bliss, Shuten Dōji confessed to Raikō, “I will tell you about my past: I was born in Echigo province,³² and brought up in a mountain temple. But since I bore a grudge against the priests, I stabbed many of them to death and in flight, arrived at Mt. Hiei, thinking that the mountain would become my home. But the Priest Dengyō, in league with the Buddhas, expelled me from there by reciting a holy “blessing on the mountain.”³³ Overpowered, I left Mt. Hiei for this Mt. Ōe. Later, an impostor named Priest Kōbō confined me with his magic, and it was beyond me. But now there is no such priest. Priest Kōbō is dead on Mt. Kōya. I returned to this mountain and have had no problems. I abduct ladies of my liking from the capital to use and enjoy as I wish. Look at this place. My azure palace with bejeweled screens has many rows of roofs and before me are trees and grasses in the tens of thousands, representing the four seasons. Within this palace is a living quarter made of iron called the Iron Palace. At night, I summon my maidens within and have them massage my arms and legs. How could any heavenly guardians surpass this? Yet, there is a man who concerns me—his name is Raikō, a great villain. His renown as a mighty warrior is well known in the capital and his power is without rival in all of Japan. Raikō’s vassals—Sadamitsu, Suetake, Kintoki, Tsuna, and Hōshō—are all accomplished masters in the arts of pen and sword. It is these six warriors who bother me. The reason for my concern is that on an errand to the capital this past spring, my man, Ibaraki Dōji, met and fought with Tsuna at the crossing of Horikawa and Seventh Avenue. Without compunction, Ibaraki Dōji wisely changed into a woman with the intent of gaining access to Tsuna. His plan was to abduct Tsuna and bring him here, but just as Ibaraki Dōji grabbed Tsuna’s topknot, Tsuna unsheathed his sword and cut off Ibaraki Dōji’s arm in one swift and seamless stroke. It was only later that Ibaraki Dōji successfully

32 Present-day Niigata prefecture.

33 In Book 20 of *Shin kokin wakashū*, the eighth imperial anthology (ca. 1205), Priest Dengyō’s poem is written as “*Anokutara sanmiyaku sannbodai no hotoketachi waga tatsu soma ni myōga arase tamae*” (The omniscient Buddhas, please bless this mountain, and the temple I am about to build).

retrieved his severed arm. But I no longer go to the capital myself because Raikō and his men are troublesome.”

Shuten Dōji glared at Raikō with a penetrating gaze. “Nevertheless, what strange people you are! When I look at your eyes well, you are Raikō and with you is Tsuna who severed Ibaraki Dōji’s arm. And the men that accompany you appear to be Sadamitsu, Suetake, Kintoki, and Hōshō. There is no mistake in my eyes. How hateful. Leave, priests! Demons, be alert, don’t get injured. We shall also leave here.” Shuten Dōji became enraged and the color of his face changed. Raikō quickly surveyed the situation and knew it would have been a grave affair if he failed to construct a viable explanation immediately. Distinguished in both the literary and martial arts, Raikō’s first instinct was to remain calm in the wake of Shuten Dōji’s challenge. Raikō erupted into fits of laughter. “What compliments you give me! We, mountain priests, resemble the most powerful warriors in Japan? I have never heard of Raikō or Suetake, let alone seen them. Listening to your story, I understand that they are atrocious. How awful, how wretched! It is disgusting that we even resemble such creatures. It is our custom that in our training we make our lodging in a mountain pass where sometimes we give our lives to tigers and wolves to save the lives of both sentient and non-sentient beings. Shakyamuni,³⁴ whose name was Shiufū in his previous life, set out to undertake an ascetic life. One day while making his way through a mountain pass, he heard the voice of an unidentified being call out in verse from somewhere deep in the valley, ‘All things are transient.’³⁵ Shiufū then descended into the valley only to discover a frightening-looking demon with eight heads and nine legs. Shiufū approached the demon and asked, ‘Please teach me the rest of the verse.’ The demon replied, ‘It would be easy to tell you but I am overwhelmed with hunger. I might be persuaded to recite it for you, if I could sate my hunger with human flesh.’ Hearing this, Shiufū stated, ‘That is extremely easy. If you can recite the rest of the verse, I shall be your food.’³⁶ The demon was delighted to hear Shiufū’s offer and proceeded to recite the rest of the verse: ‘Transition is the law of birth

34 Gotama Buddha (ca. 566–485 BCE), the founder of Buddhism. He was born to a noble family of the ruling class in Lumbini, present-day Nepal. He abandoned material life in pursuit of spiritual tranquility. When he was awakened to the truth about life, he became the Buddha, the enlightened one, and shared his teaching with others.

35 *shogyō mujō*.

36 These are stories of Buddha’s previous lives. They are recorded in such collections of prose narrative as *Sanpōe* (ca. 10th century) and *Hōbutsushū* (ca. 13th century).

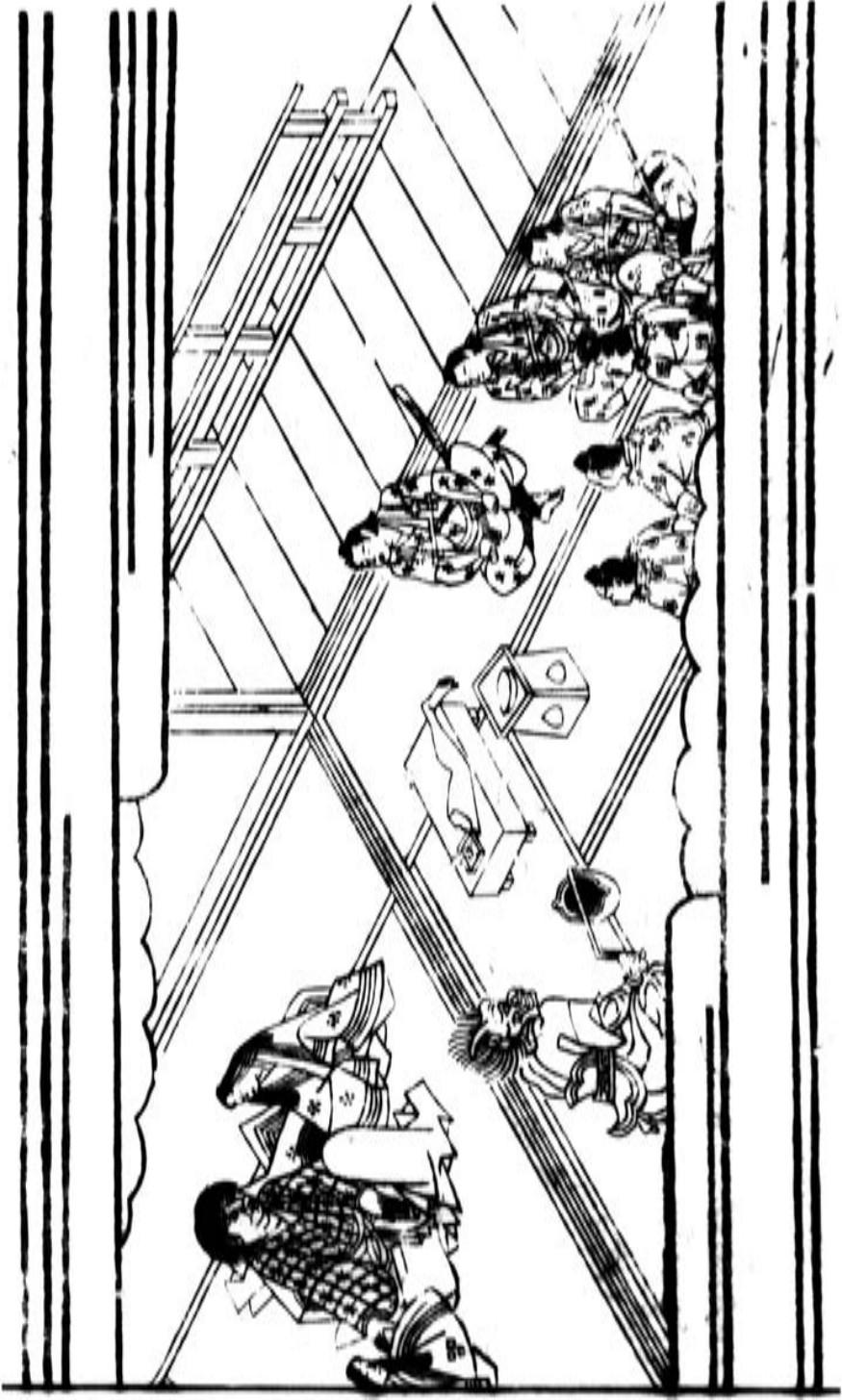


Figure 9. Shuten Dōji entertains Raikō and his vassals with human flesh. Courtesy of Tokyo daigaku kokubungaku kenkyūshitsu (The University of Tokyo).

and extinction, all things alive are destined to expire. Detach yourself from the transient world and you will attain the joy of Nirvana.³⁷ After receiving the verse, Shiufū thanked the demon. No sooner had Shiufū entered the demon's mouth than the demon transformed into Vairocana³⁸ and Shiufū became Shakyamuni.³⁹ On another occasion, Buddha saved the life of a pigeon by cutting off from his own thigh a piece of flesh.⁴⁰ The mountain priests here practice the same principles. So please make an incantation and take our lives. Our lives mean nothing to us."

Deceived by Raikō's story, Shuten Dōji's hospitable demeanor gradually restored. "Hearing your stories, I am very grateful. Surely those rogues won't dare come here, but as they are always in mind, it is true to my nature to be on guard, even when I'm intoxicated." He continued, "Please consider it simply my idle complaint under the influence of your sake. My face is red because I'm drunk. Don't think of me as a demon. To me, your appearance looks frightening at a glance, but once one gets used to it, a mountain priest looks quite cute." Singing, dancing, and drinking, he grew increasingly more at ease with Raikō and his men. As the sake was a divine elixir, its poison saturated Shuten Dōji's body, clouding his mind and further disheveling his appearance. Overcome in drunkenness, Shuten Dōji commanded his demonic minions, "Attention all demons present, drink a cup of this most rare sake before our guests and entertain them. Dance!" The demons complied with the wishes of their master, and as they were about to rise to dance, Raikō offered to fill their cups with the special sake, "First, let me pour some sake for you," and he disseminated the sake to all the demons around him. The sake infused the bodies of the demons quickly, rendering them all disoriented. Amidst this drunken delirium, the demon named Ishikuma Dōji rose to sing out, "From the capital what kind of people lost their way to become condiments of sake. How interesting," for a couple of times. With careful attention, Ishikuma Dōji's song is

37 *Zeshō meppō, shōmetsu metsui, jakumetsu iraku.* This verse appears in the *Nirvana sūtra* (*Nebankyō*).

38 A Buddha who sheds light all over the universe. In esoteric Buddhism, Vairocana is most revered.

39 See note 34 above.

40 When Shakyamuni was incarnated as King Sivi, Visvakarman, disguised as a pigeon, flew under King Sivi's armpit. Taishakuten (Sakra), trying to measure the wisdom of Shakyamuni, changed himself into a hawk and demanded the king give him the pigeon. In order to save the life of the pigeon, the king cut off his flesh from his thigh, measuring it out on a scale to weigh the same as the pigeon, and gave it to the hawk.



Figure 10. Shuten Dōji's severed head lunges at Raikō. Courtesy of Tokyo daigaku kokubungaku kenkyushitsu (The University of Tokyo).

understood to suggest that the demons should make condiments and sake out of the mountain priests.

Soon, Raikō stood to serve up more of the intoxicating sake to Shuten Dōji. Making certain Shuten Dōji received the cup, Tsuna rose to dance, singing: "After a passage of time, spring came to the demons' cavern. Wind invites the flowers to fall. How interesting," for a couple of times. This song was foreshadowing how the priests would cut down the demons like the strewn petals of a flower cut down by a storm. But the demons did not catch on to the song's hidden message. Rejoicing in drink and entertainment, the demons continued sinking deeper into their drunken stupors. Shuten Dōji then rose, commanding his demon servants, "Entertain these guest priests well! In my place, I will leave these two princesses. Priests, please rest here for a while. I will see you tomorrow," and with that, Shuten Dōji retired to his bedchamber. After seeing Shuten Dōji leave, the remaining demons lay down in disarray, overcome in drunken slumber.

Raikō beckoned the two princesses, asking them, "In the capital, whose daughters are you?" One of the two maidens responded, crying: "I am the only daughter of the middle councilor Ikeda Kunitaka. Recently I was abducted here and I can see neither my dear parents nor my nurses. Please pity me for I am in such a miserable state." "And you, Lady?" Raikō asked of the other princess. "I am the younger daughter of Yoshida, a state councilor. How hateful that I am still alive," and both princesses cried with such emotion that it appeared both might faint. "Indeed, your sadness is reasonable," Raikō said, "However, I shall conquer the demons tonight, accompany you on your return to the capital and reunite you with your dear parents. So, please, show us the way to Shuten Dōji's bedroom." Hearing this, "Is this a dream or reality?" the princesses inquired. "If this is true, we shall show you the way to the demon's bedroom." And the maidens led the way. Raikō was delighted and turned to his lieutenants ordering them, "Take up your arms" and the men moved into the shadows to don their arms. Then, Raikō advanced in his vermilion armor called *randen-gusari* with the hobnailed helmet given to him by the three deities and another helmet called Lion King of the same vermilion thread on top of the first helmet. He was carrying his splendid sword, Chisui, and recited in mind, "Hail, Great Bodhisattva Hachiman." The rest of his band wore their armor and carried their swords, and led by the ladies, all proceeded in stealth. Passing through large rooms and crossing a stone bridge, they peered inside a huge room where they saw more demons lying in drunken stupors. Not one challenged the warriors by

asking, "Who are you?" Walking over the bodies of the demons, the warriors came upon an iron room encased in a large room, the door, also iron, was bolted shut. It appeared very difficult for humans to gain entry. Peering through a crevice, the men could see lights held high in the four corners with iron bars and upside-down halberds against the wall. Inside, Shuten Dōji lay, looking quite different from the figure the warriors had seen earlier. He was now over twenty feet tall,⁴¹ his horns were now protruding through the spiked red bristles on his scalp, his beard had become wildly shaggy, and his eyebrows were overgrown. His limbs had become heavy and thick like those of a bear. He lay sprawled out, his arms and legs spread in all directions. [Unable to enter the demon's bedchamber, the warriors seemed hopeless.] At that moment, the three deities reappeared to help the warriors once more. "You have done well to have come this far. Now you can rest assured. We have chained the demon's limbs to pillars so that he will not move. Raikō, you cut off his head. The rest of you position yourselves to dismember him, it should not be difficult." Upon dispensing these instructions, the deities pushed open the iron door, then once again vanished into thin air. The warriors were moved to tears, knowing that the three deities had appeared to help them. As instructed, Raikō positioned himself at Shuten Dōji's side, smoothly unsheathing his Chisui in preparation for the final act. After praying three times, "Hail the Deities of the three shrines, please give me your helping hands," Raikō stood ready to slaughter Shuten Dōji with his Chisui, when the drunken demon opened his eyes widely, crying out, "How sad, you priests! You said you do not lie. There is nothing false in the words of demons." The bound Shuten Dōji tried in vain to escape from his chains. Then, as if tapping a colossal inner reservoir of strength, Shuten Dōji let out a final reverberating roar causing both heaven and earth to rumble in an unrelenting, thunderous quake.

With blows from the warriors' swords, Shuten Dōji's severed head hurled through the air. But the demon's life force took a few seconds to extinguish and the flying cranium lunged directly at Raikō in one final effort to kill him. Were it not for the hobnailed helmet provided him by the deities, Raikō would have surely perished.

After dismembering Shuten Dōji, the six warriors headed toward the main courtyard. Once outside, they encountered several of Shuten Dōji's demon guards. One demon in particular, Ibaraki Dōji, ferociously moved

41 Previously, Shuten Dōji was described as ten feet high.

to attack the six men crying out, "I will let you know my power, the enemies of my master!" Tsuna countered Ibaraki Dōji as he charged, "You should know my strength. You will have to pay for this!" For a while, the ensuing battle seemed to be yielding no victor because as they grappled, Ibaraki at times had the advantage while at other times, Tsuna was dominant. Tsuna's power was said to be equivalent to that of three hundred men combined, but Ibaraki Dōji's strength may have even been stronger, for as time passed, Ibaraki Dōji was able to wrestle Tsuna down to the ground. At that moment, Raikō intervened, [entering the fray] and decapitated Ibaraki Dōji. Ishikuma Dōji, Kane Dōji, and about ten more demons guarding the gate, then engaged the warriors yelling, "Now that Dōji is gone, we have no place to call home. We will go down fighting!" The six warriors responded, "How praiseworthy of these demons. We shall now show our skill." Summoning and employing every one of the possible techniques of military art they had long practiced, the warriors drove the demons to a position of no escape, before cutting them all down with their swords and mettle. After a brief respite from the killing, Raikō announced, "Now ladies, please come out quickly. You won't have to worry now." No sooner they heard his voice than the captive ladies ran from their confinement, one after another. The maidens cried, "Is this a dream or reality? Please help me, too." In so saying, the captives all folded their hands together in prayer. The sight of the maidens' grief would be indeed likened to that of the sinful criminals who were saved from Hell⁴² by the Bodhisattva Jizō⁴³ with his staff⁴⁴ and recitation of "onkaakamisensaisowaka."⁴⁵

Then, led by the ladies, the six warriors pressed deeper into the interior of the complex to find a magnificent palace with rows of roofs and jeweled screens—the quarters were adorned to represent the four seasons. It was beyond imagination, beyond description. Yet, turning their eyes to the other side, the scene—skeletons and bodies of the dead and dying including human flesh pickled with vinegar—was too miserable to witness. Amidst the carnage, a young lady of seventeen or eighteen years of age, half dead and missing an arm and half-a-leg below the thigh, shed tears of

42 Avīci hell, *Mugen jigoku*. The worst hell in which beings suffer incessantly.

43 Bodhisattva Ksitigarbha. A bodhisattva who vowed to deliver all people from this world of suffering. He enters hell to save the sinful criminals. His image is like that of a monk.

44 Shakujō. One of the eighteen possessions of a monk.

45 This is probably an incantation.

grief. Raikō asked the princesses, “Whose princess is she in the capital?” The ladies replied, “Yes, that is the daughter of the middle councilor, Horikawa,” and they ran to her. “How pitiful, princess. The priests eliminated all the demons and are going to take us back to the capital. But how can we return leaving you behind. How sad. Even in this horrible hell, we feel reluctant to go because of you,” the ladies stroked her hair soothingly. “If you have something on your mind, whatever it is, please tell us. When we return to the capital, we shall relay your message to your father and mother, princess.” Hearing this, Horikawa’s daughter sobbed bitterly, “How envious I am. My condition—short-lived, like a dew drop—is so miserable, yet I still linger in this world. I am so ashamed. When you return to the capital and my parents learn about me, it makes me sad to think that they will lament all the worse for me. Though a keepsake may distress my father and mother, please cut a lock of my hair and give it to them in my remembrance. And this robe, please tell my mother that I was wearing it up until the end. Wrap the hair in this robe and please give them to my mother. Make sure, would you please, to ask her to pray for me in the afterlife. The priests over there, please put a quick end to my life before you return.” Hearing her, Raikō said, “Indeed it is reasonable for you to ask. However, when I return to the capital, I shall report to your parents appropriately and will send people back for you. But in the meantime, I bid farewell to you.” Raikō and his troupe of warriors and liberated captives left the repugnant grotto. They hurried through the mountains and valleys and before long they arrived at the country village of Shimomura at the foot of Mt. Ōe.

Upon entering the village, Raikō commanded, “Now, villagers, send a swift horse to the capital to announce our return and send the ladies back to the capital. What do you think?” Raikō’s request was put into motion immediately. The governor of Tanba Province, also known as the Minister of Ōmiya, heard the auspicious news and quickly brought food and wine to Raikō and his men, while the freed captives were safely en route back to the capital, via horse and palanquin.

In the capital, the anticipation of Raikō’s arrival induced a commotion from the jubilant inhabitants. Among those waiting in the crowd were the middle councilor Ikeda and his wife, who came out in person to greet their daughter. Finding Raikō, Kunitaka beckoned, “Hey, here!” The princess caught glimpse of this brief exchange and cried out, “Mother!” Hearing the voice of her daughter, the mother ran to her and embraced her in tears. Kunitaka said, “We are so happy that we could again see our daughter, who

was separated from us,” and they hurried home. Raikō proceeded on to the palace for an audience with the emperor. The emperor was so impressed with the warrior’s report that he bestowed on Raikō and his men tremendous rewards. From that day forward, the land remained safe and the emperor’s reign remained peaceful. Raikō’s feat and reputation as an invaluable warrior impressed all, from the emperor down to the commoner.