

I-Moji (Province Beginning with 'I')

A bachelor lord visited Kiyomizuji Temple in order to pray for a good match. He was followed by his attendant, Tarokaja. Having received, after a long while, a divine revelation to wait at the west gate, they did as were told. Indeed, a lady appeared and acknowledged she would be his wife. When the lord bade Tarokaja to ask her where she lived, she answered by composing a *waka* poem: "If deeply attached, come and visit me in the province of Ise," and disappeared. Tarokaja repeated to his lord the poem she had read, but when he came to the province of Ise, his tongue failed him and he only managed to say 'I—' before forgetting the rest of the poem completely. So they built a temporary barrier station on the roadside and began to ask all the passers-by if they could reproduce the rest of the poem.

Teika

On October 10 in lunar calendar, a travelling monk from a northern province was strolling at dusk about Kamigyō-ku in Kyoto, when he was suddenly caught by the shower, and found shelter in a little bower. A local woman appeared and told him that it was the former tea house of Fujiwara no Teika called the "Pavillion of the Autumn Rain". Fujiwara no Teika (1162-1241) was a celebrated classical court poet, who often visited the tea house and composed *waka* poems in the season of autumn showers. Mentioning that a chance meeting would take place due to the karma of a previous life, she guided the monk to the grave of Shokushi-Naishin'no (Princess Shokushi, poet and Shinto high priestess at Kamo Shrine, ?-1201). The grave was overgrown with ivy and was unable to reveal its shape. She narrated of the fervent love of Teika for Naishin'no, and even after her death, his attachment was powerful enough to cling to her grave in the form of ivy. Hampered by their very deep attachment, the lovers were unable to enter Nirvana, hovering in an intermediate world for souls still tormented by love. So saying, she disappeared into the grave.

While the monk was chanting the Buddhist scripture, the ivy loosened and fell apart allowing the ghost of Naishin'no to emerge from the grave. The ghost told of Teika's secret visits to her when she was freed from services at the shrine, but that their meetings were discovered by the public so as to put an end to their attachment. Having been freed from agony by the monk's chanting, she thanked him and returned to the grave. The very next moment, however, the gravestone was once again covered by a clinging layer of ivy.

(Takao Saijo)