

Bai sōshi

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Overview

I.

This is a set of pictures on paper compiled into one scroll. There are other scrolls, similar to this one, but incomplete, suggesting that initially several copies were made and handed down. At the end of the scroll is written “compiled in the eighth day seventh month in the first year of Tienbao, the seventh year in the Chinese sexagenary cycle”. This must have been copied from the source of the scroll. However, the first year of Tienbao (742) during the reign of Xuan Zong of the Tang dynasty corresponds in Japan to the fourteenth year of Tenpyō, which is the nineteenth year in the Chinese sexagenary cycle, not the seventh. In ancient times, pictures of medicinal plants for horses were brought from the continent. The pictures were copied, Japanese names were added and they were turned into scrolls. This scroll was one of the secret pieces of writing owned by a horse veterinary. At the end of the scroll, we see “The healing methods in this scroll must not be easily transmitted to anyone. If your apprentice passes away, leaving this world where death comes to old and young alike, then the scroll should be returned to me. If I, Sai Amidabutsu, should die without leaving any apprentices, then these pages should be burnt and the ashes should be spread. Yours sincerely...” Thus it takes the form of a secret piece of writing. “Given to Shichirōhyōenojō Tadayasu on the twenty-sixth day, first month of the fourth year of Bun’ei”. This date seems to be correct, telling us that the scroll already existed by the fourth year of Bun’ei (1267). Scrolls like this one were secretly passed down from generation to generation in the families of horse veterinaries. The authors of the scroll are not known.

II.

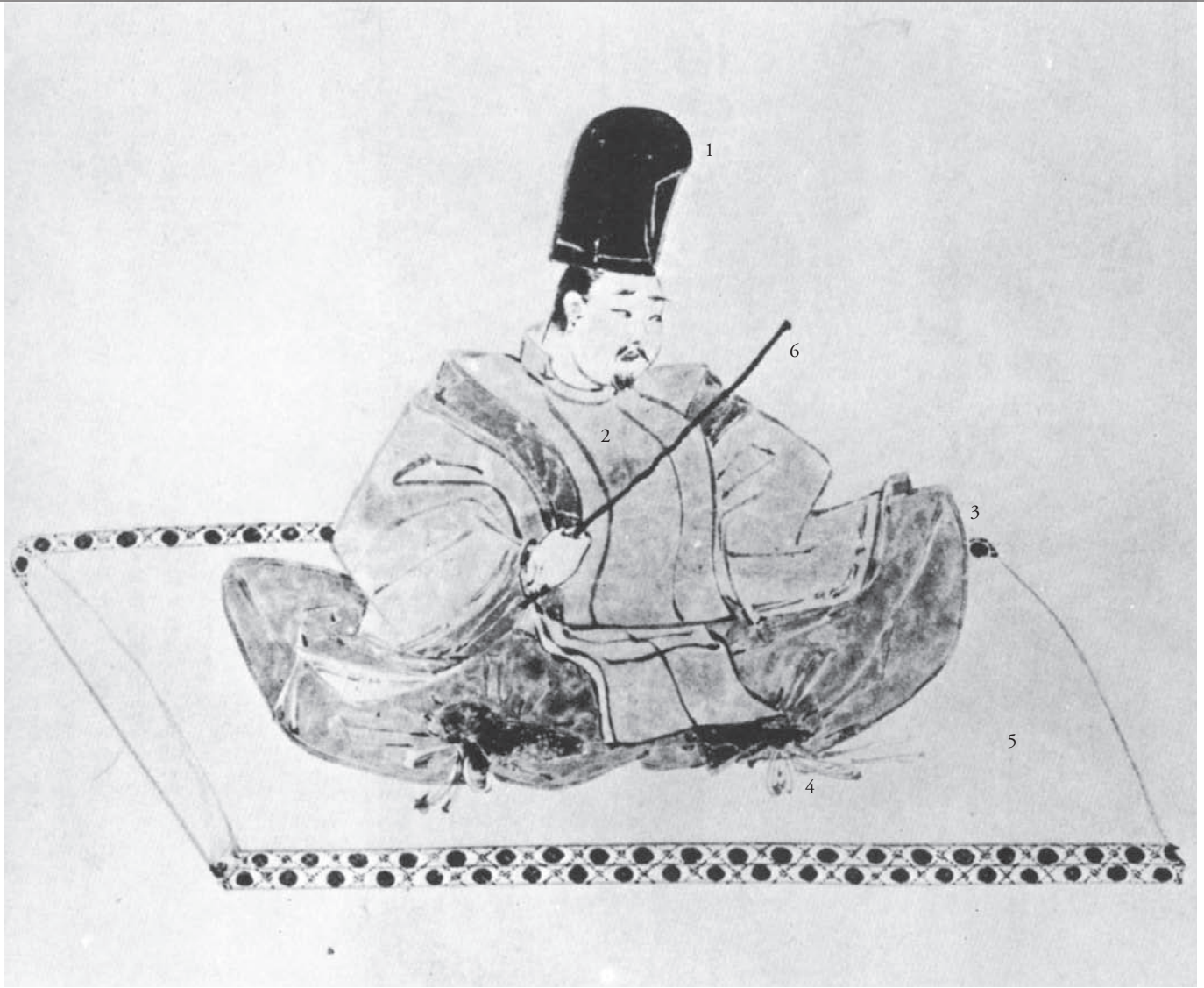
There are no explanatory text in the picture scroll. In the beginning, the images of the following ten characters are presented: Hakuraku, the god of horse veterinarians, Iō-hōraku, Raikō, Tōgun, Ten, Ōnamuchi, Ōryo, Bankai, Shinnō, Echigo no Tansuke. Only Ōnamuchi and Echigo no Tansuke are Japanese. These ten were regarded as manifestations of Buddhist deities, so the dates of their death (*kinichi*), the names of their corresponding Buddha and bodhisattvas (*honji*, original body), the True Words of each deity (*shingon*) and the names of their attendants are also written. The scroll also depicts horses tied down in the stable.

Further on, the scroll illustrates seventeen types of medicinal plants. Pictures of medicinal plants are not only rare, but also very valuable. As the samurai class was developing, the demand for horses increased and people became interested in horse-keeping. These kinds of pictures were of extreme importance to horse doctors. The pictures of plants are exact and one can easily identify the names of the plants even today. Shichirōhyōenojō Tadayasu was probably a horse doctor who cured horses using these medicinal plants.



376 Horses and Stable

Two horses are tethered to the stable in this picture, and neither of them are big. The reason the stable is tile roofed may be to show that it is a Chinese stable and not Japanese. The use of planks on the floor is probably what is called *ita-gai*. The custom of tethering a horse and supporting its body with another rope around it has been represented occasionally in pictures from the Kamakura to the Muromachi period.



377 Horse Doctor, *Tatami*

Two Japanese, Echigo no Tansuke and Ōnamuchi, are represented as horse doctors. It is unclear what contributions Echigo no Tansuke made to the field, but one may assume that he was revered as a horse doctor by his colleagues. He is wearing a *tate-eboshi*, *kariginu*, and *nubakama*, and in his hand he is holding a whip as he sits on a *tatami*. The *tatami* has *kōrai* pattern cloth edging and is closer to a raised mat. According to an official document in the third year of Tenchō (826), a horse doctor was assigned to each region. Needless to say, horse doctors were supposed to cure various ailments from which horses suffered, and it is believed that picture scrolls such as the *Bai sōshi* were necessary for such doctors.

- 1 *tate-eboshi*
- 2 *kariginu*
- 3 *nubakama*
- 4 fastening straps of *nubakama*
- 5 *tatami* (with *kōrai* pattern cloth edgings)
- 6 rod



- ① *miko*
- 2 wearing one's hair down
- 3 sash used by women
- 4 wide-sleeved kimono
- 5 hand drum
- 6 *hakama*
- 7 straw matting
- ⑧ female servant
- 9 wearing one's hair down (tucked under *uchigi*)
- 10 *uchigi*
- 11 accordion-fold book

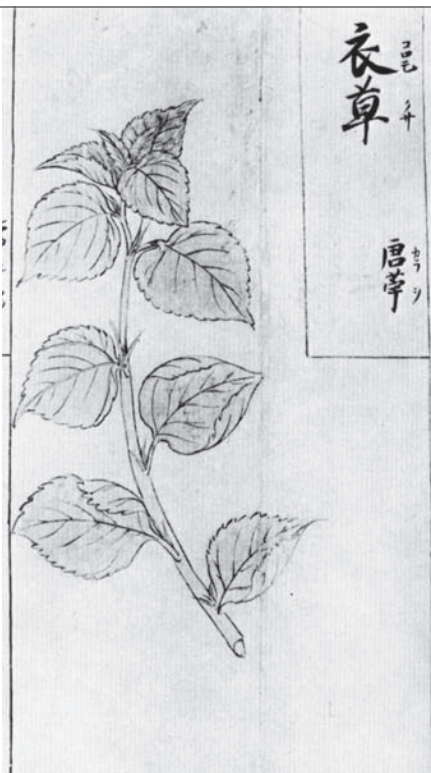
378 Shrine Maiden

This is a picture of the second horse doctor called Ōnamuchi. It is believed that Ōnamuchi refers to the god Ōkuninushino-mikoto, but it seems that in the artist's eye she has taken the form of a shrine maiden. She is clothed in a wide-sleeved kimono with a ribbon to tuck up her clothing, and she is holding a hand drum. One may imagine that, as a medium, she danced while playing this hand drum. The woman on the left is a female attendant offering an accordion-fold book. They are both wearing their hair down, and are on straw matting. Straw matting has been used for services relating to gods since ancient times, and in the *Bandainagon-ekotoba* also is depicted a man praying on straw matting.

379 - 395

In the original edition, there were no captions for sections 379 to 395, and the explanatory text contained only scientific information, with no social or cultural background as given in the other sections. Hence, here the pictures are included with their Japanese names, but the explanatory texts have been omitted.

379 *Yakushisou*380 *Hōyakusō*381 *Ōbako*382 *Mokusōten*383 *Atohasaki*

384 *Kusanoō*385 *Koromogusa*386 *Hotokenomae*387 *Iroi*388 *Chōshōsō*389 *Tanukinoshirinokoi*



390 *Metsusō*



391 *Kansōden*



392 *Akomekusa*



393 *Denchisō*



394 *Ten'esō*



395 *Hotokenoza*