

Asahina the Warrior and the King of Hell

(Asahina)

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Asahina

Emma, King of Hell

EMMA (Singing.

Emma, the king of hell,

The great king of hell, Emma

Now ascends into the mundane world

To beg for alms.

(Speaking.) The king of hell, Great King Emma is I. These days humans in the mundane world have become so very clever with the laws of their eight or nine different religions that they all troupe off to paradise, both those who do Zen meditations and those who adhere to the Pure Land sect, throwing hell into a desperate state of famine. As a result, I, the Great King Emma have made up my mind to go up to the Crossing of the Six Roads. Any and all sinners who come by, I will capture and eat on the spot.

(Singing.) From the home I love, From my beloved home in hell, I venture forth, From my beloved home in hell, I venture forth, Allowing my feet to lead me where'er they will, Allowing my feet to lead me where'er they will, I now arrived at the Crossing of the Six Roads

(Speaking.) Traveling with urgency, I now find myself at the Crossing of the Six Roads. I will rest here for a time, and if any sinners should come by, I will capture and eat them on the spot.

ASAHINA (Singing.)

Full of strength and power,

I, Asahina am speeding on my way

To the netherworld.

(Speaking.) I am the world-famous Asahina Saburo. Wafted about by the merciless wind of fortune, I am able to live no longer, and now I am pressing onward to the netherworld. I must continue on my way.

EMMA Mmmm. I smell a human, I smell a human. It appears that a sinner is coming this way, as his odor increases in intensity. So I see it is really a sinner. I will concentrate all my efforts to catch and eat him.

(They do battle and Asahina wins.)

ASAHINA You have been flitting about before my eyes for some time. Tell me who you are.

EMMA You say you do not know me?

ASAHINA I know you not.

EMMA Well then, know that I am Emma, the great King of Hell.

ASAHINA What's that? You say you are Emma, the great King of Hell?

EMMA That I truly am.

ASAHINA But what I heard in the mundane world is that Emma, the King of Hell, wears a jeweled crown, a stone sash hangs at his waist, and he is dressed in robes of gold and silver, all in all a most dazzling sight to behold. But your accouterments are nothing of the sort.

EMMA Your doubts are most well-founded. Indeed it is true that in the past I wore a jeweled crown, a stone sash hung at my waist, and I was dressed in robes of gold and silver, all in all a most

dazzling sight to behold. But these days humans in the mundane world have become so very clever with the laws of their eight or nine different religions that they all troupe off to paradise, both those who do Zen meditations and those who adhere to the Pure Land sect, throwing hell into a desperate state of famine. So, as you see me now, I have ended up coming out here to the Crossing of the Six Roads with the intention of capturing and eating any sinner who happens to come along this way. Thus I will capture and eat you, so prepare your heart for that.

ASAHINA You may torment me as much as you like.

(Emma uses all his tormenting skills to subdue Asahina, but all to no avail, and Asahina remains unmovable and unshakable.)

EMMA Hey, you rascal!

ASAHINA What is it?

EMMA I have tormented you with all my secret skill, but you do not so much as budge. Just who may you be?

ASAHINA I am the world-famous Asahina Saburo.

EMMA What's that? You say you are Asahina?

ASAHINA That I truly am.

EMMA I feel like I have been bitten by a bull. If only you had told me from the start that you are Asahina, I would not have wasted my time tormenting you.

ASAHINA Go ahead and torment me as much as you please.

EMMA But now that I know you are Asahina, it would be an embarrassment to hell to be unable to capture you, so I will lighten my accouterments and torment you once more, so prepare you're heart for that.

ASAHINA Go ahead and torment me as much as you please.

EMMA First I will remove my cumbersome outer garment. Hey, you sinner! Hell is not nearly as far away as Paradise, so hurry on with me to Hell.

(They do battle with each other for a time, until Asahina succeeds in pinning Emma down with his long fighting pole.)

EMMA Oh, I will torment you no longer, I will torment you no longer.

ASAHINA Come on and torment me a little more.

EMMA If you are truly Asahina, you should know well everything about the Battle of Wada. Recite it for me.

ASAHINA I do indeed know it well, so I will recite it for you. First bring me a stool.

EMMA With all my heart. Come, come, recite, recite!

(Emma seats himself on the stool, but Asahina shoves him off and sits on the stool.)

EMMA Well, I must say, he has powers that resist my tormenting skills.

ASAHINA Hey, just take a look at my seven weapons that I used to win that battle.

EMMA Oh, what a bloody stench they exude.

ASAHINA Now I will recite, so listen with attentive care. (He begins speaking in the narrative style.) In times long past the origin of the the Wada Army began when one named Egara Heita Tanenaga was captured at Usui Pass and hauled off to Kamakura, not only one, but two, and finally three times, suffering the indignity of being tied up with ropes. After disposing of him thus, my father Yoshimori wearing a helmet on his white-haired head, formed an army of 480 strong and slaughter the entire clan of Egara, leaving not a single person of either his army or his retainers, and in the early morning of the May 3rd, we pressed on as far as the great front southern gate, continuing to fight with all our might and main, bursting forth like a veritable storm with lightning that reechoed

through the clouds, and made the earth tremble like in a great earthquake. When his father sent a messenger to Asahina to relate the scene of battle, determined to make his mark in that battle, he leaped on his horse, and galloped off to the great gate. Determined to break through the gate, though it was secured with numerous gigantic bolts, he slashed them away, filling the air with what looked like a veritable mountain of flying swords. Then with the palm of his hand, he swept across the remaining bolts as though caressing them, which seemed to turn them into water that flowed to the ground as his hand passed over them. Then he threw open the gate and found himself facing one-hundred burly soldiers waiting inside. Thinking that it would be an embarrassment to leave the inside unbreached, he screwed up all of his prodigious strength, wrested out the supporting pillars from their very roots, causing what remained of the portal to collapse inward, causing those inside to fall flat to the ground spurting fountains of entrails that looked like raw fish in vinegar sauce.

EMMA Oh, how I would liked to have been there to gobble down their raw fish in vinegar sauce entrails.

ASAHINA You could have had your fill of those entrails if only you had been there are that time. But at that instant, one called Igarashi Komonji, declaring that he possessed the strength of 75 powerful warriors, galloped toward Asahina. But the instant that he reached Asahina's side, Asahina grabbed Komonji by the lobe of his ear and smashed his face into the forepart of his saddle and shoved him back and forth with indescribable violence. Come closer so that I can tell you the rest of the story.

EMMA I don't want to hear any more of it.

ASAHINA Then lead me to paradise.

EMMA You have straddled me without so much as a by-your-leave, so I what makes you think I will go wherever you wish.

ASAHINA So you say you will not lead me there?

EMMA Tell me what more you demand.

ASAHINA Will you really do as I say?

EMMA That I will indeed.

ASAHINA I, Asahina, make up my mind.

CHORUS Asahina makes up his mind, and since he cannot ride comfortably bearing all his weapons and armor, he forces Emma to bear them all and urges him on to lead him on the right path toward the Pure Land of Paradise.