

A Sinner with References and the King of Hell  
(Yao)

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Emma, King of Hell

Yao, a sinner

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 gobble up 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 arrive 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 gobble them up on the spot.

YAO I am a sinner on my way to the netherworld, and my name is Yao. First I will take this road, and hurry on my way.

EMMA I smell a human, I truly smell a human. The smell of human flesh has become strong. As I expected, here comes a tasty-looking sinner. I will torture him, then capture and gobble him up. I say, you sinner there. Hell is not far away, but Paradise is more distant. Come, hurry to the closer place.

*(Emma chases Yao back and forth and up and down the stage, until Yao pulls out a letter and holds it up toward Emma like a shield.)*

EMMA What might that thing be that you are flashing in front of my eyes?

YAO It is a letter.

EMMA A letter from who?

YAO It is a letter from the Jizo of Yao.

EMMA Well, I must say, what a vexing thing that is. Another letter from that Jizo puts me in a real fix. Well the, I cannot refuse to read it. First bring me a stool.

YAO As you say, Sir. Here is your stool.

EMMA Now let me see that letter. I cannot count the times I have been put into a fix by letters from that Jizo, though it must not be a matter of any great import. To begin with, I write to you from where I stand still pining for you at the village gate. (*He chukles.*) He starts with his longing for the past. There is no way that you would have of knowing, but in times long past this Jizo of Yao was quit a good looker. And he and I had something of a most intimate affair back then. So on the strength of that relationship, he writes me letters quite frequently. First, I will open it.

YAO And who might you, who speak thus, be?

EMMA Formally speaking, I am Emma, King of Hell.

YAO But what the Jizo of Yao related to me was 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. And, when there a sinner like you happens to come along, they invariably bear letters of reference from wise men of their acquaintance, throwing Hell into a state of famine for some time back. As a result of which, I have lost both my jeweled crown and sash of stone. So, as you see me now, I have ended up coming out

here to the Crossing of the Six Roads.

YAO I comprehend well your predicament.

EMMA Now I will read your letter. You come over here and read it with me.

YAO As you say, Sir.

EMMA & YAO (*Chanting together.*) From the southern Land of Kawachi, this parishioner of Jizo of Aso is named Matagoro. And though he is a human being, he is my brother-in-law.

EMMA Since you are Matagoro, you are his brother-in-law, and your wife is Jizo's younger sister

ASO As you say, that is indeed how it stands.

EMMA Since she is the younger sister of Jizo, your wife's looks are easy to imagine.

ASO Different from myself, she is quite attractive.

EMMA As my brother-in-law. . .

EMMA & YAO (*Chanting together.*) He believes in me and makes monthly pilgrimages, walking all

the way to worship me, bringing offerings in his hands. Since he is my faithful parishioner, I beg you, Emma, King of Hell, to allow him to proceed to the nine levels of Amitabha's Pure Land. And you should kick the boiling pot of Hell to smithereens, for he is a sinner with the purest of hearts, a sinner with a truly pure heart.

*(YAO shoves EMMA off of the stool, and takes his place sitting on it.)*

EMMA & ASO *(Chanting together.)* As this sinner is bereft of strength, you must take him by the hand, serving as his personal guide, to lead him all the way to the nine levels of Amitabha's Pure Land. Then bid him fare-you-well, expressing your heart-felt regret at leaving him behind, after which you can return to your demonic Hell.