

Reply to Matsuno



I HAVE received one thousand coins, one *sho* of oil, one robe, and ten writing brushes. I cannot adequately express my appreciation for the sincerity that you have always shown me, so I will leave it to the Lotus Sutra and to Shakyamuni Buddha.

As I have been saying for some time, in your situation as a lay believer, you should just single-mindedly chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo morning and evening, day and night, and observe what happens at the last moments of your life. At that time, hasten to the summit of perfect enlightenment, and look around you in all directions. The entire realm of phenomena will have changed into the Land of Tranquil Light, with the ground made of lapis lazuli, the eight paths¹ marked off by

golden ropes, the four kinds of flowers² raining down from the heavens, music resounding in the air, and Buddhas and bodhisattvas all being caressed by breezes of eternity, happiness, true self, and purity. We, too, will surely be among their number. The Lotus Sutra is indeed such a splendid sutra!

I am pressed for time, so I will not go into detail.

With my deep respect,
Nichiren

The ninth day of the ninth month
in the third year of Kenji (1277),
cyclical sign *hinoto-ushi*

Reply to Matsuno

Postscript: Would you kindly send me about ten *ryo* of magnolia tree seeds?³



Background

This letter was written at Minobu to Matsuno Rokuro Saemon, one of Nichiren Daishonin's followers, who lived in Matsuno of Suruga Province. In this letter, the Daishonin expresses his appreciation for Matsuno's offerings and

encourages him to chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo with earnest faith throughout his life. In this way, urges the Daishonin, Matsuno will be able to experience Buddhahood at the moment of his death.

Notes

1. The eight paths lead in eight directions, that is, toward the eight points of the compass.

2. Mandarava, great mandarava, manjushaka, and great manjushaka flowers. Fragrant red and white flowers that, according to ancient Indian tradition, bloom in heaven.

3. Magnolia is a deciduous tree native to China, which grows to a height of about ten meters. It has feather-shaped, compound leaves and produces small yellow flowers in summer. Its hard, round seeds were strung together to make prayer beads. "Ten *ryo*" would weigh about 1.6 kilograms.