

Unseen Virtue and Visible Reward



NOTHING is more fearsome in a human being than disloyalty. Since your elder brother and your younger brother have of their own accord become enemies of the Lotus Sutra, and cut themselves off from you, they are the disloyal ones, and you are not to blame. But failing to protect their wives will certainly be seen as disloyalty. If your fief is enlarged, provide for them out of your own stores, sparing no effort to support them. So long as you do this, your deceased parents will protect you without fail, and Nichiren's prayers will be answered at last. No matter how much your brothers' wives may be to blame, pretend not to notice. In view of this situation, it appears to me that, if you simply conduct yourself as I have advised, your lands will be increased still further and people's trust in you will be restored.

As I have often mentioned before, it is said that, where there is unseen virtue, there will be visible reward. Your fellow samurai all slandered you

to your lord, and he also has wondered if it was true, but because you have for some years now honestly maintained a strong desire for your lord's welfare in his next life, you received a blessing like this. This is just the beginning; be confident that the great reward also is sure to come.

Again, you must be on good terms with those who believe in this teaching, neither seeing, hearing, nor pointing out anything about them that may displease you. Calmly continue to offer prayers. What I mentioned above is not a matter of personal opinion. I have extracted and written down the main points of the three thousand volumes of non-Buddhist writings and the five thousand volumes of Buddhist scriptures.

With my deep respect,
Nichiren

The twenty-third day of the fourth month

Reply [to Shijo Kingo]



Background

This letter is thought to have been written to Shijo Kingo in the fourth month

of the first year of Koan (1278), while the Daishonin was living at Minobu. It

suggests that Kingo had begun to regain the trust and favor of his lord. Six months later, his lands were increased.

The original manuscript of this letter is thought to have been written on twelve sheets of paper, the first nine of which have been lost. Of the remaining three, the tenth page is preserved at one temple and the eleventh and twelfth at another. Only pages eleven and twelve were included in *The Complete Works of Nichiren Daishonin*, under the title *Unseen Virtue and Visible Reward*. Page ten was originally thought

to have been an independent fragment, called *On Disloyalty*, and was not included in *Complete Works*. More recent scholarship indicates, however, that page ten in fact contains the portion that immediately precedes *Unseen Virtue and Visible Reward*. All three pages have been translated here, with the addition running from the beginning of the text through the middle of the first paragraph: [Nothing is more fearsome . . . your deceased parents will protect you without fail, and].