

The Joy of Fulfilling the Sutra Teachings



I HAVE received the two thousand coins. I am delighted at the sincerity of faith you and Ōta¹ have shown. Iyo-bō² certainly has great abilities. This year I am having him stay here with me.

You must not grieve that the punishment I have incurred at the hands of the government has not been forgiven. I have no doubt that present-day Japan will encounter difficulties soon. Things will surely develop just as I have written in my memorial.³ Though it may be uncertain whether I, Nichiren, will live or die, there can be no doubt about the spread of the five characters of Myoho-enge-kyo.

The Great Teacher Dengyō strove to propagate his true intention, the perfect teaching of the Lotus school, in Japan. And although the teachings concerning perfect meditation and perfect wisdom were propagated during his lifetime, the platform for the ordination of the perfect precepts was established only after his death. Perhaps it was because this latter was a matter that required concrete form that he faced even greater difficulties.

In the more than 2,220 years since the Buddha's passing, neither the Buddha of the "Life Span" chapter nor the five characters that are its essence have been propagated. When I consider my

present rewards, I wonder whether they do not perhaps exceed even those of Dengyō and T'ien-t'ai, and surpass even those of Nāgārjuna and Vasubandhu. If I had no scriptural or doctrinal proof for this, how could there possibly be any greater arrogance?

The Great Teacher Chang-an praised T'ien-t'ai, saying, "Even the great scholars of India were not in a class with him, and the Chinese teachers—well, one need hardly mention them. This is no idle boast—the doctrine he taught was indeed of such excellence."⁴ Exactly the same may also be said of Nichiren. Even Nāgārjuna and Vasubandhu are not in a class with him. This is no idle boast—the doctrine he teaches is indeed of such excellence. That is why the Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai, referring to Nichiren, made such a statement as "In the last five-hundred-year period, the mystic way will spread and benefit humankind far into the future."⁵ The Great Teacher Dengyō said longingly of our present age, "The Latter Day is near at hand."⁶

It is indeed a matter of joy that my situation perfectly fits the sutra passage that reads, "Again and again we will be banished."⁷ How delightful! How gratifying!

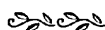
Since I write this as a reply to sev-

eral people, I will refrain from going into detail here.

With my deep respect,
Nichiren

The sixth day of the seventh month

Reply to Toki



Background

Nichiren Daishonin wrote this letter from Sado Island on the sixth day of the seventh month in 1273 to Toki Jōnin. After acknowledging an offering from Toki and Ōta Jōmyō, he praises them for their activities in faith. In response to Toki's concern that the Daishonin had still not been pardoned by the Kamakura government, the Daishonin assures him that there is no need for sorrow, and says that in fact the difficulties soon to be experienced by Japan will not only further prove the

veracity of his predictions in the memorial *On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land*, but also signify that the correct teaching will surely spread. He expresses his confidence in the importance of, and the great benefit associated with, his mission of propagating Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. He concludes by reassuring Toki of his great joy that the persecutions he is experiencing, particularly his banishment, perfectly match what is said in the Lotus Sutra about its votary.

Notes

1. Ōta Jōmyō (1222–1283). Also known as Ōta Kingo or the lay priest Ōta. He was converted to Nichiren Daishonin's teachings by Toki Jōnin. Together with Toki Jōnin and Soya Kyōshin, he was a leading figure among the believers of Shimōsa Province.

2. Iyo-bō is another name for Nitchō (1252–1317), who later was designated by

Nichiren Daishonin as one of the six senior priests. He was Toki Jōnin's adopted son.

3. "My memorial" refers to *On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land*.

4. *The Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sutra*.
5. *The Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sutra*.
6. *An Essay on the Protection of the Nation*.
7. Lotus Sutra, chap. 13.