

Reply to Ueno



I HAVE received ten strings of coins, two packets of river nori,¹ and twenty bundles of ginger. No words can express how moved I am that you remembered me with fondness, just when I was wondering whether the events in Kamakura would end up having been mere fleeting encounters.

I had been lamenting that if the late Ueno, your husband, were alive, I could at any moment tell him things, or listen to what he had to say, and now I wonder if he did not make himself young again and stay behind in the form of his precious, beloved son. Words fail me when I see that not only is there a perfect resemblance, but even his heart is the same. I was told that your husband had attained Buddhahood through the Lotus Sutra, so I went to pay my respects at his grave.

Again, no words suffice to describe sincerity like yours. I began my life here in the mountains this year during a drought and famine, and my dwelling looks as if it were made of leaves

laid out beneath the trees. Just try and imagine it!

Recently I offered up a portion of the benefit from a recitation of the sutra for the peaceful repose of your late husband. I was unable to restrain my tears, thinking how important it is that people have fine children. King Wonderful Adornment was led to the way of the Buddha by his two sons. That king was a man of erroneous views. The late Ueno was a man of good views, and bears no resemblance to him. Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, Nam-myoho-renge-kyo.

Nichiren

The twenty-sixth day of the seventh month

Written in reply

You had best avoid speaking indiscriminately about Buddhist doctrines to others. I say this for the sake of the young Ueno.



Background

Nichiren Daishonin wrote this letter on the twenty-sixth day of the seventh month in 1274 at Minobu. It is thought

that he wrote it to the lay nun Ueno in Ueno Village of Suruga Province. She was the widow of Nanjō Hyōe Shichi-

rō, who had passed away in 1265, and the mother of Nanjō Tokimitsu. Tokimitsu had brought offerings from his mother to the Daishonin at Minobu, and he thanks her for these, remarking on the resemblance the son bears to

his father, whom the Daishonin knew in Kamakura, and saying that this resemblance extends beyond the physical to the heart and faith that the son also possesses.

Note

1. One packet of river nori generally contains ten sheets of nori.