

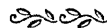
New Year's Greeting



MY New Year's greeting is somewhat late. Though my acquaintance with the deceased Nanjō was not of long duration, he became dear to me in the course of the various situations that brought us together. And so I held him in high esteem, but he passed away while he was yet in the prime of life. Grieved at having been parted from him, I made the trip all the way down from Kamakura and paid a visit to his grave. Since then, I had thought that I would stop by again on my next trip to Suruga, but this time, because I made my way here without anyone knowing it, I avoided informing even the lay priest of Nishiyama,¹ and it has been troubling me that I was powerless to do

more than simply pass by.

In order to fulfill my wish, I have sent my disciple with the intention that he visit you during the first month and recite the verse portion of the "Life Span" chapter in one scroll at the grave. I have lamented that I possessed not even a memento of your father, but it is a comfort to me that he has left you behind. Your late father rests beneath the trees and below the grasses, where not a soul passes by, nor can he listen to the Buddha's teachings. How lonesome he must be! Thinking on this, I cannot restrain my tears. When you go together with the practitioner of the Lotus Sutra to visit his grave, how happy he will be. How happy he will be!

**Background**

Written in the first month of 1275, this letter was sent from Minobu to Nanjō Tokimitsu. Nichiren Daishonin describes his friendship with Tokimitsu's father, Nanjō Hyōe Shichirō, and says that because he was unable to visit Shichirō's grave a second time himself, he is sending his disciple to visit the site with Nanjō Tokimitsu and recite

the verse portion of the "Life Span" chapter of the Lotus Sutra. It is thought that the Daishonin sent Nikkō to recite the sutra. The Daishonin praises Tokimitsu, telling him how happy his father will be to receive a visit from him and the practitioner of the Lotus Sutra.

Note

1. A follower of Nichiren Daishonin who lived in Nishiyama Village in Fuji District in Suruga Province. The Daishonin addressed six extant letters to him, including *Three Tripitaka Masters Pray for Rain*.

According to one view, Nishiyama was a relative of the steward of Nishiyama Village, but another view identifies him as the lay priest Yui, Nikkō's maternal grandfather, who lived in Kawai, Fuji District.