

## Letter to the Lay Nun, Wife of Toki



THE priest Iyo-bō<sup>1</sup> has become an excellent student of Buddhism. You should at all times listen to him regarding the Buddhist teachings.

You are far away, we cannot meet, and I wonder how you are getting along. Even now things are not easy for me, but I recall, when times were really bad, how you gave me support. I am truly grateful for all your kindness.

In any event, you must pray to the Lotus Sutra so that you may become as long-lived as the crane or the tortoise<sup>2</sup>

and that your happiness be like the full moon or the tide at its highest.

I am sending the priests Echigo-bō and Shimotsuke-bō<sup>3</sup> along with Iyo-bō. Please ask Toki to look out for them for the present.

Nichiren

The twenty-fifth day of the eleventh month

To the lay nun, wife of Toki



### Background

This letter, addressed to the wife of Toki Jōnin, who lived in Shimōsa Province, is dated the twenty-fifth day of the eleventh month, with no year indicated. Another letter, *Praying for the Prolonging of the Lay Nun's Life* (p. 1082), addressed to Toki Jōnin, bears the same date, and so the two letters are thought to have been sent together.

Both letters are thought to have been written at Minobu in 1279. The first paragraph of the present letter was added as a postscript in the space re-

maining after the body of the letter was written. Nichiren Daishonin encourages Toki's wife to seek and learn about Buddhism from Iyo-bō, or Nitchō, who was her son.

From a number of other letters the Daishonin sent to this couple, it is apparent that Toki's wife had been ill for some time. He expresses his concern for her and his gratitude for her constant support, and encourages her to pray to the Lotus Sutra to live a long and satisfying life.

## Notes

1. Another name for Nitchō, who would later be designated one of the six senior priests by the Daishonin. He was Toki Jōnin's adopted son and the lay nun's son by her first husband.

2. In China and Japan the crane and the tortoise have long been regarded as symbols of long life.

3. Nichiben and Nisshū. They were

priests at Ryūsen-ji, a temple of the Tendai school in Atsuhara, and they were converted to the Daishonin's teachings by Nikkō. Though the deputy chief priest Gyōchi ordered them to leave Ryūsen-ji, they secretly remained there and converted many local people, an effort that eventually led to the Atsuhara Persecution.