

The Hundredth-Day Observance



I HAVE received the two *koku* of polished rice and the horseload of taros that you sent to mark the hundredth-day observance for the late Gorō.

In the seventh volume of the Lotus Sutra it says, “Among all the rivers, streams, and other bodies of water, for

example, the ocean is foremost. And this Lotus Sutra is likewise.”¹

This sutra, the Lotus Sutra, is being compared to the ocean. The ocean is 84,000 yojanas deep and of a similar breadth. And if we ask what dwells in the great ocean, there is the asura king.



Background

This letter was written in the twelfth month of 1280 as a reply to offerings sent for the hundredth-day memorial service for Nanjō Shichirō Gorō, who had died on the fifth day of the ninth month of the same year. It is thought to have been addressed to Nanjō Tokimitsu and his mother. The late Shichirō Gorō was a younger brother of

Tokimitsu. The letter cites the simile between the ocean and the Lotus Sutra, one of the ten similes of the “Medicine King” (23rd) chapter of the Lotus Sutra that demonstrate the sutra’s superiority. Then the text ends suddenly because the latter part of the letter is missing.

Notes

1. Lotus Sutra, chap. 23.
2. Ibid., chap. 2.