

Reply to the Temple Superintendent



I HAVE written in detail in my letter to Shōmitsu-bō.¹ Please meet with him and read it to each other.

On any matter concerning the temples Futama and Kiyosumi,² you had better speak with Shōmitsu-bō. I say this because he is one who understands the ways of the world.

I never dreamed that you would think of such things as a gift for me. How much should it be? Words alone would be more than enough.

And I am much obliged to you for the early rice. It grieves me to think how much anxiety I have caused you over such a trifling matter, but I wanted you to know that I remember my debts of gratitude.

It is said that one who seeks for great renown has no concern for minor disgrace, and I cherish a great desire to spread the seven characters of Nammyoho-enge-kyo not only throughout Japan, but also to China and Koryō. Could it be a sign that my desire will be fulfilled? There have been frequent official letters from the great kingdom of the Mongols, and it appears that they are a cause of much trepidation to all the people in the nation. But I have long been aware that this would be the case, a fact that represents the foremost feat in all of Jambudvīpa.

Because I have long been detested, people refuse to wholeheartedly follow

what I have said, as if mine were the success of the stepson. In the end, however, when their situation becomes unbearable, I believe that even those who still cling to mistaken doctrines will surely regret what they have done. When I am entirely occupied with such an important matter as this, what need is there to speak out forcefully on minor affairs?

At present, however, I am praying in my heart for the land of my birth. I cherish it even more than the land of Japan. This is similar to, for instance, the emperor of Han³ placing great importance on the land of P'ei. The reason was that P'ei was his birthplace.

Since it is usual that sites associated with holy persons and persons of wisdom later become places of prominence, you should be aware that your temple will surely become central among the mountain temples of Japan.

I am the foremost votary of the Lotus Sutra in Jambudvīpa. This is a truth bestowed upon me by Heaven.

I can hardly express my thanks enough, not only for the one *to* and six *shō* of rice, the two *shō* of millet, and the sack of parched rice, but also for the sincerity that all of you have shown. I am very much obliged to you. From now on, you mustn't worry about me.

Be careful not to mention these

things to others.

Please be sure to give my regards to everyone.

Written immediately.

Reply to the temple superintendent



Background

Nichiren Daishonin wrote this reply at Minobu to the superintendent of Seichō-ji temple, which was also called Kiyosumi-dera or simply Kiyosumi, in Awa Province. One account identifies the superintendent as Jōken-bō, who was the Daishonin's senior at Seichō-ji when he studied there as a boy. It is unclear exactly when this letter was written, but it is believed to have been some time after the Daishonin entered Minobu, that is, after the fifth or sixth month of 1274. Another account suggests that this letter was written in 1277.

The Daishonin refers to a matter concerning Seichō-ji and Futama-ji

temples and urges the superintendent to talk it over with Shōmitsu-bō, who is thought to have been another resident priest at Seichō-ji. The nature of the matter concerning Seichō-ji and Futama-ji is also uncertain. Next the Daishonin conveys his great desire that the daimoku of Nam-myōho-renge-kyō be transmitted not only throughout Japan, but also to China and Korea, and expresses his confidence that he is the foremost votary of the Lotus Sutra in all of Jambudvīpa. He closes by thanking the superintendent for his offering and assuring him that he need not worry about him anymore.

Notes

1. Shōmitsu-bō is thought to have been a priest residing at Seichō-ji temple in the province of Awa. Another view is that he was a priest of the True Word school living near Seichō-ji. In any event, he is believed to have looked up to Nichiren Daishonin. He was the recipient of *Letter to Shōmitsu-bō* (I, p. 863) written at Minobu in 1277.

2. These were temples located in Awa Province. Kiyosumi is another name for Seichō-ji, which the Daishonin entered in 1233 to begin his study of Buddhism. Little is known about Futama.

3. The emperor of Han refers to Liu Pang (247–195 B.C.E.), the founder of the Former Han dynasty.