

Reply to the Lay Nun Kōnichi



AFTER you are gone you will leave a name behind. In your present existence you have cast off the bonds of the three obediences;¹ already you have freed yourself from the hindrance of the five obstacles.² The moon of your mind is without shadow and all stain has vanished from your body. You are a Buddha in your present body—how wonderful, how wonderful!

I ought to write more in detail, but I am writing this while writing a number of other things.

With my deep respect,
Nichiren

The nineteenth day of the ninth month

Reply to the lay nun Kōnichi



Background

This is the last part of a letter addressed to the lay nun Kōnichi of Awa Province. One view suggests that it was written in 1280. The preceding portion is missing. Kōnichi had lost her son, Yashirō, in 1274, and her husband

before that. Nichiren Daishonin states that she has cast off the “three obediences” and “five obstacles” because of her faith. The Daishonin assures Kōnichi that she is now a Buddha in her present existence.

Notes

1. The three obediences are the traditional obligations of women to obey their fathers while young, their husbands after marriage, and their sons in old age.

2. The five obstacles, described in vari-

ous Buddhist scriptures, refer to five types of beings that women were said to be unable to become. They are the gods Brahmā and Shakra, a devil king, a wheel-turning king, and a Buddha.