

Letter to the Lay Priest Domyo



I HAVE received your request for prayers for your father, and I will offer them before the Buddha. Concerning prayer, there are conspicuous prayer and conspicuous response, conspicuous prayer and inconspicuous response, inconspicuous prayer and inconspicuous response, and inconspicuous prayer and conspicuous response. But the only essential point is that, if you believe in this sutra, all your desires will be fulfilled in both the present and the future. The third volume of the Lotus Sutra states, “Although the devil and the devil’s people will be there, they will all protect the Law of the Buddha.”¹ And the seventh volume states, “[If a

person who has an illness is able to hear this sutra, then] his illness will be wiped out and he will know neither old age nor death.”² You must not doubt these golden words. I deeply appreciate the lay nun Myoichi’s³ visit to this mountain. I have given her a written scroll. You should open it and read it. Nam-myoho-rence-kyo.

Nichiren

The tenth day of the eighth month in the second year of Kenji (1276), cyclical sign *hinoe-ne*

To the lay priest Domyo



Background

Little is known about the lay priest Domyo, the recipient of this letter. He may have been a retainer of the lay nun Myoichi or of Indo Saburo Saemon Sukenobu, who was an elder brother of Nissho, one of the Daishonin’s six senior disciples. In any event, Domyo had evidently requested the lay nun Myoichi to carry a letter to the Daishonin asking him to pray for Domyo’s father, who was ill.

In this reply, the Daishonin clarifies

the relationship between prayer and its resulting benefit. “Conspicuous prayer” means prayer offered with a clear objective or purpose. “Inconspicuous prayer” means prayer offered without a pressing need, that is, simply chanting the daimoku continually. “Conspicuous response” indicates the immediately perceptible fulfillment of one’s prayers. “Inconspicuous response” indicates benefit that may not become manifest immediately, but is evident over the

course of time, such as the gradual purification of one's life.

The Daishonin stresses that the im-

portant thing is simply to maintain strong faith in the Gohonzon.

Notes

1. Lotus Sutra, chap. 6.
2. Ibid., chap. 23.
3. A follower of Nichiren Daishonin, who lived in Kamakura. She was related to

Nissho (1221–1323), one of the Daishonin's six senior priest-disciples, and was the recipient of the letter *Winter Always Turns to Spring*.