

The Sons Pure Storehouse and Pure Eye



I HAVE received one sack of unpolished rice, one basket of melons, some yams, and various other gifts.

Once there was a person who exerted himself in the service of a wealthy man named Pleasure Virtue. Day and night he, his wife, and their children were treated harshly and driven hard. Unable to bear the excessive ill-treatment, he hid himself and fled to another country. After serving for a time in the court of a great king in that country, he became an influential retainer and eventually the chief minister to the king. Later, employing the might of this country, he defeated the country where his former master resided. At that time, seeing this chief minister, the former master was greatly frightened and regretted his ill-treatment. Placing himself in the service of the chief minister, he brought him various treasures. And, with no thought for the defeat he had experienced, he now strove only to ensure that his life would be spared.¹

The case of the Lotus Sutra is the same. The Lotus Sutra is the master of Medicine Master Buddha in the east, as well as the master of all Buddhas in the south, west, north, and the worlds above and below. Shakyamuni Buddha and the other Buddhas revere the characters of the Lotus Sutra in the same way that people fear their sovereign and the stars venerate the moon.

We ordinary people, however, have long been under the reign of the devil king of the sixth heaven. We have been forced into confinement in the realms of hell, hungry spirits, and animals, and, without a moment of relief, day and night we are tortured by the wardens of hell. Even so, if we could somehow place ourselves under the protection of the Lotus Sutra, then Shakyamuni Buddha and the Buddhas of the ten directions would treat us as their children, and thus even the heavenly kings Brahma and Shakra would refrain from approaching us out of fear. How much more, then, would the devil king of the sixth heaven fear us! Even though the devil king had formerly been our master, he would now stand in reverential awe of us. And, terribly fearful that should he cause trouble for us, his situation would worsen when he presented himself to the Lotus Sutra and the Buddhas of the ten directions, he would make us offerings. For this reason, he spares no effort whatsoever to prevent all the living beings in the six paths from accepting the Lotus Sutra.

Therefore, how could this be? You have taken pity on Nichiren, who is hated by all people, sending various articles all the way to him in these mountains on more than just one or two occasions. This is no ordinary matter. Indeed, Shakyamuni Buddha

himself may have entered your body. Or perhaps your deceased son has become a Buddha and, in order to guide his father and mother, has entered your hearts.

The king Wonderful Adornment² was an evil king. However, because his two sons, Pure Storehouse and Pure Eye, guided him to the way, he and his wife were both able to place their trust in the Lotus Sutra and become Buddhas. Mysteriously enough, your own circumstances are much the same.

Kai-ko³ said: "He [the deceased son] was above the ordinary in both features and form. In addition, he was honest at heart and rich in wisdom. I felt it a terrible pity that someone such as he, outstanding in every respect, should die so young. Reconsidering the matter, however, I realized that it was because of this boy's death that his mother became a seeker of the way and his father began to practice, praying for his repose. How marvelous, I thought.

Moreover, the fact that they have put their trust in the Lotus Sutra, which all people detest, must mean that their deceased son has been at their side and encouraged them to do so." I also believe this to be the case.

Before, I had thought that your sincerity was just an ordinary matter, but now, for the first time, I have sensed the depth of your faith. If anything should happen to you, just as the moon emerges to shine in the dark night, so the five characters of Myoho-renge-kyo will appear as a moon for you. Be convinced that Shakyamuni Buddha, the Buddhas of the ten directions, and the son who preceded you in death will appear in this moon. I will explain in greater detail on another occasion.

With my deep respect,
Nichiren

The seventh day of the seventh
month



Background

This letter was written in the seventh month of the third year of Koan (1280), but it is not certain to whom it was addressed. One view holds that the recipient was Matsuno Rokuro Saemon-no-jo, who lived in Matsuno Village in Ihara District of Suruga Province, while another says that it was sent to Niike Saemon-no-jo. The Daishonin's priest-disciple Kai-ko Nichiji's description of the son's appearance and character suggests that he knew him personally, thus supporting the notion that the letter was meant for Matsuno Rokuro Saemon-no-jo, Nichiji's elder brother.

In this letter, the Daishonin uses the example of the wealthy man Pleasure

Virtue to illustrate how even the devil king of the sixth heaven fears and is subservient to a votary of the Lotus Sutra. He expresses joy that the recipient of the letter has persevered in his faith despite the opposition of the people of Japan to the Daishonin's teachings.

Next, the Daishonin mentions the story of the king Wonderful Adornment, who was introduced to the correct teaching by his sons, Pure Storehouse and Pure Eye. In conclusion, he assures the recipient and his wife that their son has indeed attained enlightenment and encourages them in their faith.

Notes

1. The source of this story is unknown.

2. A king who appears in the “King Wonderful Adornment” chapter of the Lotus Sutra. He lived in the age of the Buddha Cloud Thunder Sound Constellation King Flower Wisdom. Though originally a believer in Brahmanism, King Wonderful Adornment went at the urging of his wife Pure Virtue and his two sons Pure Storehouse and Pure Eye to see the Buddha, and made various offerings to him. The Buddha prophesied that the king would in the future attain enlightenment as a Buddha called Sal Tree King. King Wonderful

Adornment then abdicated the throne in favor of his brother and joined the Buddhist Order together with his wife, two sons, and followers. He devoted himself tirelessly to the practice of the Lotus Sutra. In the assembly on Eagle Peak, Shakyamuni Buddha identified the king with Bodhisattva Flower Virtue, and his sons Pure Storehouse and Pure Eye with the bodhisattvas Medicine King and Medicine Superior.

3. Kai-ko is another name for Nichiji (b. 1250), one of the Daishonin’s six senior disciples.