

The Meaning of Faith



WHAT is called faith is nothing unusual. Faith means putting one's trust in the Lotus Sutra, Shakyamuni, Many Treasures, the Buddhas and bodhisattvas of the ten directions, and the heavenly gods and benevolent deities, and chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo as a woman cherishes her husband, as a man lays down his life for his wife, as parents refuse to abandon their children, or as a child refuses to leave its mother.

Not only that, but one should ponder the sutra passages "Honestly dis-

carding expedient means"¹ and "Not accepting a single verse of the other sutras"² without the slightest thought of casting them away, as a woman refuses to part with her mirror, or as a man wears his sword.

Respectfully,
Nichiren

The eighteenth day of the fifth month

Reply to the lay nun Myoichi



Background

This letter was written at Minobu in the fifth month of the third year of Koan (1280). The lay nun Myoichi was a relative of Nissho, one of Nichiren Daishonin's six senior disciples, and lived in Kamakura. She was an earnest believer and fairly well educated, but

suffered from poor health. Her husband was also a believer, and their fief was confiscated because of their faith. After her husband died, the lay nun was left with two small children, but despite her many difficulties, she remained loyal to the Daishonin.

Notes

1. Lotus Sutra, chap. 2.
2. Ibid., chap. 3.