

NICHIU SHONIN'S LETTER OF PETITION

Nikko was the disciple of Nichiren, and I am Nichiu, the disciple of Nikko. I Nichiu respectfully appeal to you. I am privileged to receive the sovereign's favor. Please accept these words I submit for they are the words of the True Law to which all Buddhas have agreed. Moreover, the order of transmission of Buddhism was from India, to China, to Japan during the Former and Middle Day of the Law after the Buddha's passing, and before the rise of the Lotus Sutra. The teachings of those eras are evil and must be discarded. If you believe in the true Law of the Lotus Sutra during the Latter Day of the Law, then the world will be ordered and at peace. To have peace on earth you must have faith in the Lotus Sutra. The purpose of this letter is to petition you to take faith in the Lotus Sutra.

With my letter I am also submitting the following accompanying letters:

- One volume of the Rissho Ankoku-Ron written by Nichiren in 1260 - a letter concerned with the conversion of the government to True Buddhism.
- One letter of appeal by Nikko Shonin written in 1330
- One letter of appeal by Nichimoku Shonin written in 1333
- One letter of appeal by Nichido Shonin written in 1336
- One letter of appeal by Nichigyo Shonin written in 1342
- After respectfully putting forward the above mentioned letters, I will discuss the three time periods of the Former, Middle and Latter Days of the Law as a means to explain how Buddhism was introduced to Japan.

First, you must consider the importance of the difference between the role of the ordained priesthood and the role of the laity, since governing

the country and having a public policy that is beneficial to the people has its origins in Buddhism. To become a ruler of a country, one must have had a connection to the Buddha and made offerings to the Buddha in past existences. However, the reality of the world today is that countries are ruined, and people have become lost and unhappy because the prevailing spirit drives them to discard the Lotus Sutra, and insists upon the teaching of many, varied Buddhist scriptures. This is the wrong teaching, and it shows contempt for Bodhisattva Jogyo, whose heritage is to propagate the Lotus Sutra in the Latter Day of the Law.

The Buddha decided that the Lotus Sutra is the one and only true Law in the Latter Day. If priests and lay believers are sincerely seeking the true Law, they will grieve when they look at the situation today. After all, Shakyamuni taught for fifty years. Clearly some of his teachings can be employed and some cannot. The time for propagating a teaching is determined by the differences in people's capacity and their ability to understand and believe in Buddhism. In other words, once Hinayana teachings appear, the Outer Way will be destroyed and no longer have value. When Mahayana teachings begin, Hinayana is destroyed and loses its value. When true Mahayana teachings begin, provisional Mahayana is destroyed and loses its value. When the essential teaching of the Lotus Sutra appears, the theoretical teaching of the Lotus Sutra is destroyed. Who, other than Shakyamuni, can comment on this?

In order to introduce this religion to Japan sages kept and protected the Buddha's teachings during the Former, Middle and Latter Day of the Law. Not one of them was ever negligent. To explain, in India, in the age of the Former Day of the Law (the first 1000 years after the Buddha's demise), Mahakashyapa and Ananda initially spread Hinayana Buddhism. Then Nagarjuna and Vasubandhu spread provisional Mahayana, and Hinayana lost its value. Next, in China, during the Middle Day of the Law (the age of

the imitative Law) T'ien-t'ai appeared. He was the reincarnation of Bodhisattva Yakuo. T'ien-t'ai refuted and thoroughly destroyed the evil teachings of the three sects of Buddhism in the south, and the seven sects of Buddhism in the north, totaling ten schools in all, and established the theoretical teachings of the Lotus Sutra. Moreover, the same life of Bodhisattva Yakuo was later reborn as Dengyo in Japan. Dengyo destroyed the teachings of the six flourishing sects centered in and around Nara, and converted the people by introducing them to the Lotus Sutra, and teaching them that all people can become enlightened.

Now in the present, it is 380 years since the beginning of the Latter Day. Clearly, in this age, Nichiren Daishonin appeared in Japan as the reincarnation of Bodhisattva Jogyo and spread the essential teachings of the Lotus Sutra. The time has come for the destruction of the pre-Lotus Sutra teachings as well as the theoretical teachings of the Lotus Sutra; this is written in the Lotus Sutra. The age of the Latter Day is the age when the people's capacity is to understand and believe in the true Law; this is explained in all of the sutras. Yet, one shows contempt for the actual moon when he sees its reflection on the water; and although the sun has come out, one seeks the tiny light of a star. Is this appropriate?

People who believe in religions other than the Lotus Sutra are relying on sutras that are inferior to the Lotus Sutra. Sutras of previous eras, which are not suitable in the Latter Day, are being taught, and various provisional teachings are mixed together. Contempt is shown for the greater sutra, while respect is given to inferior teachings. Such confusion of right and wrong, and having contempt for the true Law are great offenses.

Because you choose to have faith in the wrong religion, you are breaking the Buddha's heart. The sage who knows the true Law and has tried to enlighten the people, will stop propagating true Buddhism. The Buddhist gods, who are suppose to protect believers of the Lotus Sutra,

will abandon the country, and instead demons will intrude. Close friends will attack and kill each other. War will break out. Calamities and disasters, such as invasion by another country, will arise. If you are merely thinking of the misfortune of yourself and those around you, this is wrong. Because you do not concern yourself with the enlightenment of all human beings, you will fall into the hell of incessant suffering and summon misery.

In order for me to confront the sects of pre-Lotus Sutra and theoretical teachings, I must receive the sovereign's approval. If you take faith in the object of worship, the invocation and the sanctuary of the true teachings of the Lotus Sutra, the true Law will spread throughout the entire country. Then there will be no more evil people and no more confusion. The country will be peaceful, the sovereign will be glorified, the world will be at peace, society will be calm, and the people will live tranquil lives.

I, Nichiu, inherited the true Law from Nichiren. Because I endeavor for society and for the sake of the Law, I ask the sovereign to hear me.

Please excuse my lack of decorum.

I respectfully submit this letter to you.

Nichiu

March 1432