



**SANBO-IN**

*Raido Hirota*

# OESHIMI



## 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 supposed 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

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## RISSHO ANKOKU RON<sup>1</sup>

*(On Securing the Peace of the Land Through the Propagation of True Buddhism)*

The Host exclaimed with delight: As the proverb says, the dove has changed into a hawk, the sparrow into a clam! How gratifying! You have transformed yourself through your association with me, and like the bramble growing in the hemp field, you have learned to stand up straight! If you will truly give consideration to the troubles I have been describing and put entire faith in these words of mine, then the winds will blow gently, the waves will be calm, and in no time at all we will enjoy bountiful harvests.

But a person's heart may change with the times, and the nature of a thing may alter with its surroundings. Just as the moon on the water will be tossed about by the waves, or the soldiers in the vanguard will be cowed by the swords of the enemy, so, although at this moment you may say you believe in my words, I fear that later you will forget them completely.

Now if we wish first of all to bring security to the nation and to pray for our present and future lives, then we must hasten to examine and consider the situation and take measures as soon as possible to remedy it.

Why do I say this? Because, of the seven types of disasters described in the passage from the Yakushi Sutra that I have cited earlier, five have already occurred. Only two have yet to appear, the "calamity of invasion from foreign lands" and the "calamity of revolt within one's own domain." And of the three calamities mentioned in the passage from the Daijuku Sutra, two have already made their appearance. Only one remains, the "disaster of warfare."

The different types of disaster and calamity enumerated in the Konkomyo Sutra have arisen one after the other. Only that described as "bandits and marauders from other regions invading and plundering the nation" has yet to materialize. This is the only trouble that has not yet come. And of the seven calamities listed in the Ninno sutra, six are now upon us in full force. Only one has not yet appeared, the calamity that occurs "when enemies rise up on all four sides and invade the nation."

Moreover, as the Ninno Sutra says, "When a nation becomes disordered, it is the spirits which first show signs of rampancy. Because these spirits become rampant, all the people of the nation become disordered."

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<sup>1</sup> *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, Vol. II; *Gosho Zenshu* p. 17.

Now if we examine the present situation carefully in the light of this passage, we will see that the various spirits have for some time been rampant, and many of the people have perished. If the first predicted misfortune in the sutra has already occurred, as is obvious, then how can we doubt that the later disasters will follow? If, in punishment for the evil doctrines that are upheld, the troubles that have yet to appear should fall upon us one after the other, then it will be too late to act, will it not?

Emperors and kings have their foundation in the state and bring peace and order to the age; ministers and commoners hold possession of their fields and gardens and supply the needs of the world. But if bandits come from other regions to invade the nation, or if revolt breaks out within the domain and people's lands are seized and plundered, how can there be anything but terror and confusion? If the nation is destroyed and families are wiped out, then where can one flee for safety? If you care anything about your personal security, you should first of all pray for order and tranquility throughout the four quarters of the land, should you not?

It seems to me that, when people are in this world, they all fear what their lot may be in the life to come. So is it that some of them put their faith in heretical teachings, or pay honor to those who slander the Law. It distresses me that they should be so confused about right and wrong, and at the same time I feel pity that, having embraced Buddhism, they should have chosen the wrong kind. With the power of faith that is in their hearts, why must they vainly give credence to heretical doctrines? If they do not shake off these delusions that they cling to but continue to harbor false ideas, then they will quickly leave the world of the living and fall into the hell of incessant suffering.

Thus the Daijuku Sutra says: "Though the ruler of a state may have for countless existences in the past practiced the giving of alms, observed the precepts and abided by the principles of wisdom, if he sees that my Law, the Dharma of the Buddha, is in danger of perishing and stands idly by without doing anything to protect it, then all the inestimable store of good causes that he has accumulated through the practices just mentioned will be entirely wiped out.... Before long, the ruler will fall gravely ill, and after his life has come to an end, he will be reborn in one of the major hells.... And the same fate will befall the ruler's consort, his heir, the high ministers of the state, the lords of cities, the village heads and generals, the magistrates of districts, and the government officials."

The Ninno Sutra states: "If a man destroys the teachings of the Buddha, he will have no filial sons, no harmony with his close relatives, and no aid from the

heavenly deities. Disease and evil spirits will come day after day to torment him, disasters will descend on him incessantly, and misfortunes will dog him wherever he goes. And when he dies, he will fall into one of the three realms of Hell, Hunger or Animality. Even if he should be reborn as a human being, he will be destined to become a slave in the army. Retribution will follow as an echo follows a sound or a shadow follows a form. A person writing at night may put out the lamp, but the words he has written will still remain. It is the same with the destiny we create for ourselves in the threefold world."

The second volume of the Lotus Sutra says: "One who refuses to take faith in this sutra and instead slanders it... After he dies, he will fall into the hell of incessant suffering." And in the Fukyo chapter in the seventh volume, it says: "For a thousand aeons they dwelt in the hell of incessant suffering and underwent great pain and torment."

In the Nirvana Sutra we read: "If a man separates himself from good friends, refuses to listen to the True Law and instead embraces evil teachings, then as a result he will sink down into the hell of incessant suffering, where he will experience indescribable torment."

When we examine this wide variety of sutras, we find that they all stress how grave a matter it is to slander the Law. How pitiful, that all men should go out of the gate of the True Law and enter so deep into the prison of these perverse dogmas! How stupid, that they should fall one after another into the snares of these evil doctrines, and remain for so long entangled in this net of slanderous teachings! They lose their way in these mists and miasmas, and sink down amid the raging flames of hell. How they must grieve! How they must suffer!

Therefore you must quickly reform the tenets that you hold in your heart and embrace the one true vehicle, the single good doctrine of the Lotus Sutra. If you do so, then the threefold world will all become the Buddha land, and how could a Buddha land ever decline? The regions in the ten directions will all become treasure realms, and how could a treasure realm ever suffer harm? If you live in a country that knows no decline or diminution, in a land that suffers no harm or disruption, then your body will find peace and security and your mind will be calm and untroubled. You must believe my words, heed what I say!

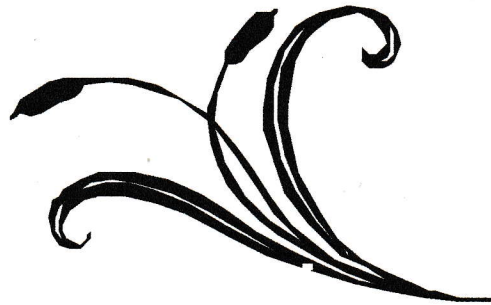
The guest said: Since it concerns both this life and the lives to come, who could fail to be cautious in a matter such as this? Who could fail to agree with you? Now when I examine the passages you have cited from the sutras we see exactly what the Buddha has said, I realize that slandering is a very grave



offense indeed, that violating the Law is in truth a terrible sin. I have put all my faith in one Buddha alone, Amida, and rejected all the other Buddhas. I have honored the three Pure Land sutras and set aside the other sutras. But this was not due to any distorted ideas of my own conception. I was simply obeying the words of the eminent men of the past. And the same is true of all the other persons in the ten directions who follow the Pure Land teachings.

But now I realize that to do so means to exhaust oneself in futile efforts in this life, and to fall into the hell of incessant suffering in the life to come. The texts you have cited are perfectly clear on this point and their arguments are detailed--they leave no room for doubt. With your kind instruction to guide me, I have been able bit by bit to dispel the ignorance from my mind.

Now I hope we may set about as quickly as possible taking measures to deal with these slanders against the Law and to bring peace to the world without delay, thus insuring that I may live in safety in this life and enjoy good fortune in the life to come. But it is not enough that I alone should accept and have faith in your words--we must see to it that others as well are warned of their errors!



## LETTER TO LAY PRIEST YADOYA<sup>1</sup>

[Nichiren Daishonin's Letter of Remonstrance]

I have not received any letters from you since we were in touch last, which strikes me as very strange indeed.

Formerly, in the first year of Shoka era [1257], the year with the cyclical sign *hinoto-mi*, on the twenty-third day of the eighth month, when the hour of the dog gives way to the hour of the boar [around 9:00 PM..], there was a great earthquake. I, Nichiren, consulting various sutras as to why this happened, concluded that, because people put their faith in the teachings of the Nembutsu school or the Zen or other schools, the various benevolent deities who protect this nation of Japan have become angry and have brought about this disaster. If steps are not taken to remedy the situation, this nation of ours will be overthrown by a foreign nation.

I wrote a petition expressing these views and, in the second year of the Shogen era [1260], cyclical sign *kanoe-saru*, on the sixteenth day of the seventh month, I sent it to you, requesting that it be forwarded to the late lay priest of Saimyo-ji.

Since then, nine years have passed. Now I hear reports that this year an official announcement from the great Mongol Empire has been sent to Japan. If the texts of the sutras are to be believed, this is an indication that our country will inevitably be attacked by the men of that nation.

I am convinced that, throughout the country of Japan, I, Nichiren, am the only person who can subdue these barbarians of the west, and I have written a treatise explaining my reasons. For the sake of the Buddhas, I ask that you forward my views to the regent [Hojo Tokimune] privately. I will explain the matter in detail at such time as I am granted an interview with you.

With my deep respect,  
Nichiren

The twenty-first-day of the eighth month in the fifth year of Bun'ei [1268]

To the lay priest Yadoya Saemon

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<sup>1</sup> From *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, Vol. II, p.312

## Nikko Shonin's Letter of Remonstrance

I Nikko, disciple of Nichiren, would like to appeal to you once more.

I urge you to cease putting the theoretical teachings ahead of the Lotus Sutra, to practice the essential teaching of the Lotus Sutra and to have correct belief in the true Law. If you do this, then the world will be peaceful and secure.

Along with this letter, I will submit additional letters:

- One scroll of the *Rissho Ankoku Ron* written in the 1<sup>st</sup> year of Bunno (1260)
- One letter of remonstrance by Daishonin written in the 5<sup>th</sup> year of Bun'ei (1268)
- One letter by Daishonin written in the 8<sup>th</sup> year of Bun'ei (1271)
- One principal gosho by Daishonin

So often have I told you all the details contained in these letters. Nevertheless I say once again, to discard heretical teachings and propagate the true Law in this world is the best way to govern the country. It is the way rulers of high virtue in past eras governed, and those times were the best in history.

In China, T'ien-t'ai refuted the doctrines of the ten major schools of Buddhism, all of which were heretical. He prevailed over these various heretical sects during the Sui Dynasty, and successfully brought peace to the entire country. In Japan, under Emperor Kammu, Dengyo refuted the six heretical sects and freed people from the anxiety of invasion by foreign countries.

To say Shakyamuni's words are ever-abiding is evil. Whether you are looking at the world from within Buddhism or from outside of Buddhism, throw away what is evil and keep what is good to govern the country well, are the words of Shakyamuni. Lately, however, when you see in this country disasters in the heavens and on earth, society declining and confusion growing worse every year, it is proof that the religion the Kamakura Shogunate believes in is not benefiting society or the people.

During the Middle Day of the Law Dengyo propagated the theoretical teachings of the Lotus Sutra, while at the beginning of the Latter Day of the Law Daishonin spread the essential teachings of the Lotus Sutra. This is the sequence of propagation of the Lotus Sutra established by Shakyamuni. Dengyo himself understood his role and his limitations. You must, as soon as possible, wake up and make a resolution in favor of the true Law of Buddhism.

In conclusion, because it is the age of the Latter Day of the Law, you must practice the essential teachings of the Lotus Sutra. Day after day there will be increasing disasters in the country, relatives and friends will kill each other and invasions from foreign countries will intensify. All of this is detailed in the Daishonin's *Rissho Ankoku Ron* and the goshō, and it has come true. That is why you have to stop practicing the theoretical teachings of the Lotus Sutra and take faith in and practice the true Law of the essential teachings of the Lotus Sutra. The world will then be peaceful and secure. For the sake of the country and the true Law I repeat this again.

3<sup>rd</sup> month of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of *Gentoku* (1330)