WITH regard to the official letter that has arrived from the western barbarians, the great Mongol Empire, I have respectfully submitted letters to the regent, the lord of Kamakura, and to other parties. All has happened just as I predicted in my treatise, On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land, written around the first year of the Bunno era [1260], without the slightest discrepancy.

What do you think of this? Right Venerable Ninsho, you had best give up your jeering attitude and make haste to put your faith in the priest Nichiren! If you do not, you will be guilty of “preaching the Law to white-robed laymen” while “despising and looking down on all humankind.”

“Rely on the Law and not upon persons” are the golden words given us by the Thus Come One Shakyamuni. But it would seem that the Sage Ryoken is one of the company described by the Lotus Sutra in the words “Or there will be forest-dwelling monks wearing clothing of patched rags and living in retirement.” The word ananya, or “forest,” means a place of peace and quiet. Why then do you make your own dwelling a place from which to issue slanderous reports regarding Nichiren? You are nothing more than a sham, a traitorous “sage” who pretends to the three types of learning, the precepts, meditation, and wisdom. A counterfeit sage, a person of overbearing arrogance, in your present existence you will surely be marked out as a traitor to the nation, and in your next existence will fall into the region of hell. But if you feel any remorse whatsoever for your past evil deeds, you will come and put your faith in Nichiren.

I have written letters to the regent, the lord of Kamakura, and to the head priest of Kencho-ji and of other temples informing them of my views on this matter. In effect, if my original intentions are to be realized, I think there is no better solution than for all of us to meet in public debate.

In terms of relative worth and superiority, the shallow doctrines set forth in the Tripitaka teachings are, when compared to the Lotus Sutra, which is the king of all the sutras, like streams and rivers in comparison to the great ocean, or like Mount Hua in comparison to Mount Sumeru.

Are you sure to know the secret Law that will overcome and subdue the Mongol nation? I, Nichiren, am the foremost votary of the Lotus Sutra in all of Japan, a great general who can defeat the forces of the Mongol nation, for, as the Lotus Sutra says, “A person who can accept and uphold this sutra is likewise foremost among all living beings.”
There is much more I would like to say, but it is impossible here to explain it in full, and I will therefore omit further discussion.

With my deep respect,
Nichiren

The eleventh day of the tenth month in the fifth year of Bun'ei [1268], cyclical sign tsuchinoe-tatsu
Respectfully presented to the Sage Ryōkan, the elder of Gokuraku-ji

Background

One of eleven letters of remonstrance, this was sent to Ryōkan of Gokuraku-ji temple. Ryōkan, also known as Ninshō, was a disciple of Eizon, a renowned priest who advocated strict observance of the precepts as well as adherence to the esoteric teachings of the True Word school. In 1261 Ryōkan thereafter had settled in Kamakura and had fostered a connection with the ruling Hōjō family. In 1267 he became chief priest of Gokuraku-ji, a temple that had been established by Hōjō Shigetoki, a high official of the Kamakura shogunate. Ryōkan played a behind-the-scenes role in persecuting the Daishonin and his followers.

Notes

1. “The lord of Kamakura” refers to Hōjō Tokimune (1251–1284), the eighth regent of the Kamakura government.
3. Ibid.
6. One of the five sacred mountains in China.
7. Lotus Sutra, chap. 23.