

Letter to My Disciples and Lay Supporters



WITH regard to the official letter that has arrived from the great Mongol Empire, I have written eleven letters and sent them to various persons. Undoubtedly this will result in Nichiren's disciples and lay supporters being condemned to exile or execution. You should not be surprised when this happens. I have used very strong language in my letters, but this is because it is necessary to "force others to listen, though it angers them."¹ That is the sort of response I am hoping for.

All of you should prepare yourselves mentally for what may come. Do not let concern for wife and children or other family members deter you. Do not fear those in authority. Now is the time to break free from the bonds of this realm of birth and death and to obtain the fruit of Buddhahood!

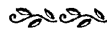
I have written eleven letters of

remonstrance and sent them to the regent, the lord of Kamakura;² to the lay priest Yadoya; to Hei no Saemon-no-jō; to Yagenta;³ and to the chief priests of Kenchō-ji, Jufuku-ji, Gokuraku-ji, Tahō-ji, Jōkōmyō-ji, Daibutsuden, and Chōraku-ji⁴ (eleven persons in all). There will undoubtedly be some response to them. You may come to my residence at your convenience and examine the contents of the letters in person.

With my deep respect,
Nichiren

The eleventh day of the tenth
month in the fifth year of Bun'ei
[1268], cyclical sign *tsuchinoe-tatsu*

To Nichiren's disciples and lay
supporters



Background

Nichiren Daishonin wrote this letter to his disciples and lay believers on the eleventh day of the tenth month in 1268. It was the same day he sent the eleven letters of remonstrance he mentions here to the leading government and religious figures in Kamakura.

Concerned about the consequences of these letters, he warns his followers to prepare for the worst kind of persecution, instructing them that now is their chance to attain Buddhahood by not begrudging their lives for the sake of the Law.

Notes

1. *The Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sutra.*
2. “The lord of Kamakura” refers to Hōjō Tokimune (1251–1284), the regent of the Kamakura shogunate.
3. See p. 321, Background.
4. Temples in Kamakura. See p. 316, n. 1.