

Reply to Gyōbin



REGARDING each of the questions you have raised, I believe that they would be difficult to settle in a private debate. For that reason, hadn't you better present them to the government authorities and then, abiding by the instructions they give, pursue this matter to determine what is right and what is wrong?

I earnestly desire that we receive their instructions this way.

With my deep respect,
Nichiren

The thirteenth day of the seventh month

Reply to the priest Gyōbin



Background

Written on the thirteenth day of the seventh month in 1271, this letter is a reply to a priest of the Pure Land school named Gyōbin. Gyōbin had written a letter on the eighth day of the seventh month, at the behest of Ryōkan of Gokuraku-ji temple and some leading priests of the Pure Land school, asking Nichiren Daishonin to meet him for a debate. In particular, Gyōbin challenged these four elements of the Daishonin's teachings: (1) none of the sutras preached before the Lotus

Sutra leads to enlightenment; (2) the Hinayana and Mahayana precepts mislead the people of the world and direct them into the evil paths of existence; (3) the Nembutsu is a practice leading to the hell of incessant suffering; and (4) the Zen school represents the teaching of the heavenly devil. The Daishonin answered Gyōbin by saying that any debate must take place not in private, but in public under government auspices.