Regarding the Birth of Kyō’ō

I have gratefully received the various items that you sent.

In the eighth volume of the Lotus Sutra, in the “King Wonderful Adorn ment” chapter, we are told how King Wonderful Adornment and his consort, Queen Pure Virtue, were guided to the correct teaching by their two sons, Pure Storehouse and Pure Eye. Now you have been blessed with this daughter, Lady Kyō’ō, who can act as a filial child, carrying on your line in this present existence, and in your next existence guiding you to the attainment of Buddhahood.

The world we live in today is a muddy age, a time of confusion. Moreover, everywhere we look we see chaos, so that all people in their present life meet with armed conflict and fall into the realm of the asuras, and in their next life will doubtless be reborn in the evil paths of existence. Nevertheless, it is taught that those people who put their faith in the Lotus Sutra will attain Buddhahood.

As you can see, it is predicted in the sutras that disasters of this sort are bound to happen in a country like ours. That is why I have spent day and night warning others of this crisis. But not only did they not heed my advice; without any good reason, they inflicted punishment on me. In past and present alike, however, it has ever been the case that when people are in danger of perishing, they refuse to listen to good advice. And so in the end, without heeding my words, the people of our present age will doubtless perish. It is solely because they have persecuted the emissary of the Lotus Sutra and Shakyamuni Buddha that Brahmā, Shakra, the deities of the sun and moon, and the four heavenly kings have brought this punishment on them.

But though this age may meet with destruction, I know that in Japan every person will in time come to chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. Though you may think that there is no more use in trying to persuade others, to those who would oppose the correct teaching you must speak with even greater fervor.

And while life remains in you, you will surely see the results of your efforts.

But no matter how others may chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, if they are persons who show enmity toward Nichiren, then without fail they will fall into the hell of incessant suffering. And then, after countless kalpas have passed, they will become Nichiren’s disciples and will succeed in attaining Buddhahood.

With my deep respect,
Nichiren

Reply to Shijō Kingo
Background

Nichiren Daishonin wrote this letter in 1272 on Sado Island to Shijō Kingo, his close disciple, who had reported the birth of his daughter Kyōō. He begins by citing the story of the two filial princes who led their father, King Wonderful Adornment, and their mother, Queen Pure Virtue, to the correct teaching. Then the Daishonin congratulates Shijō Kingo on the birth of Kyōō, saying that she will serve as a filial child in this life, and in the next she will lead him to attain Buddhahood.

The Daishonin then describes the conditions of society characteristic of what Buddhism defines as the muddy age of the Latter Day of the Law. He refers to the threats of invasion by the Mongol forces, which would become a reality two years later, and to internal strife, which had broken out earlier in 1272. Thus the Daishonin states that the people will become involved in battles and in the next life will fall into the evil paths of existence. He has warned them of such dangers, but because they have not heeded his advice, persecuting him instead, he says that they are destined to such suffering. But he concludes that even these people will eventually become his disciples and attain Buddhahood.

Note

1. A reference to occurrences such as the revolt that had taken place within the ruling Hōjō clan. In the second month of 1272, Hōjō Tokisuke revolted against his younger half brother, the regent Hōjō Tokimune, in an attempt to seize power. Internal strife is one of the seven disasters described in the Medicine Master Sutra.