

False Official Documents



I HAVE received five bundles of rice dumplings wrapped in leaves, ten bamboo shoots, and a bamboo container of sake.

As usual, the rain has been falling forever, and the summer days are long. And just when, since the mountains are deep and the paths overgrown with grasses, no one could push their way through, your single voice reached me along with the song of the cuckoo. How grateful I was!

Now with regard to the incident at Atsuhara,¹ perhaps you have realized the truth. What happened before was also a matter of lies.

The ruler, the lord of Sagami,² who went along with people's slander without asking for details and sent this priest into exile, regretted it and pardoned me. After that, how could he possibly punish us again without a clear offense?

Though at heart retainers of the ruler are enemies of the Lotus Sutra, they are concerned about slandering us to their lord. Thus when they actually used the situation in Atsuhara as a pretext to persecute us, their own earlier lies came to light instead.

I guessed that this matter was based on a falsified official document without even seeing it. Even when I was in exile on Sado Island they forged official

documents no less than three times.

Thus I can only feel pity for the ruler and for the country of Japan. Just as the insects protected by a tree's shade eat away at the tree and topple it, and the worms in a lion's body eat away at and kill it, those who make their ways in the world protected by the lord of Sagami, under cover of his authority, threaten everyone, causing them suffering and distress.

In addition, claiming that it is at the order of the ruler, they attempt to wipe out the teachings of the Lotus Sutra, causing the downfall of the nation and inviting the ruin of their lord. How foolish that, in the end, they destroy their own lives.

I am lowborn, but since the sutra is one that Brahmā, Shakra, the gods of the sun and moon, the four heavenly kings, the Sun Goddess, and Great Bodhisattva Hachiman protect, those who persecute believers in the Lotus Sutra are surely only swallowing their own swords, or grasping flames in their hands.

Therefore your ever-strengthening faith is admirable, admirable indeed!

Nichiren

The third day of the fifth month

Reply to the lay nun of Kubo

Background

This letter, dated the third day of the fifth month, was probably written in 1280 (or in 1278 according to another view). It was sent to the lay nun of Kubo, who lived in the Kubo area of Fuji District of Suruga Province. Thanking her for her offerings, Nichiren Daishonin explains that a falsified official document is surely behind the persecutions in the Atsuhara area of Fuji District, judging from the fact that during his own exile to Sado Island official documents were forged three times in order to force the Daishonin into seclusion and punish his local believers for giving him aid. He also points out that the regent, Hōjō Tokimune, who sent him into exile with-

out proper investigation, but later regretted this action and pardoned him, would therefore no longer punish the Daishonin's followers without asking for details. When under the regent's authority high officials attempt to destroy the Lotus Sutra and persecute its believers, the Daishonin says, they will not only bring about the downfall of the nation and their own lord, but also ruin themselves. The Daishonin declares that because the Lotus Sutra is protected by Brahmā, Shakra, the gods of the sun and moon, the four heavenly kings, and other guardian deities, those who persecute its believers will suffer retribution for their actions.

Notes

1. Threats and acts of violence against followers of Nichiren Daishonin in Atsuhara Village in Fuji District of Suruga Province.

2. Hōjō Tokimune (1251–1284), the eighth regent of the Kamakura government.