A ND some persons were banished or forced to write oaths renouncing their faith, measures that went beyond all reason, but around the end of the seventh month and the beginning of the eighth month [the man who oppressed them] was deprived of his land holdings and lost ten thousand or more bundles of his rice crop. He was turned out to wander in the fields and mountains. You blamed him, saying this came about because he spoke slanderously about me.

After you left, from around the fifteenth day of the seventh month we have been troubled by locusts, so that almost one-third of the province [of Sado] has been plunged into starvation. Most of the people do not even know how they will be able to survive.

You have been so kind in the past that I did not believe there was anything more that you could do, and yet you proceed to show even greater kindness—it really exceeds what is reasonable.

My greatest concern, however, is whether or not you are getting along well with your lord. If there is no trouble between the two of you, that will be the best news possible.

I have learned of the events concerning Koryō and the Mongols. Because our country ceased to heed the Thus Come One Shakyamuni and the Lotus Sutra, I had a feeling that even the greatest reward that the nation deserves would not last for three years. And now we continually experience armed strife, famine, and drought. But whatever may become of the country, I have no doubt that the Lotus Sutra will spread throughout the land.

You wrote me about your mother. I will recite the Lotus Sutra on her behalf. The messenger who is to take this letter is in a hurry to be on his way, so I will not write anything further.

Respectfully.

Background

The first part of this letter is lost, and neither the date nor the recipient is known. One view, based on the contents, suggests that it was written to Shijō Kingo in the ninth month of 1273. The existing portion begins with mention of someone who had oppressed believers of Nichiren Daisho-
nin's teaching and ended up incurring official punishment. The Daishonin mentions that the recipient found cause for that punishment in the person's having slandered the Daishonin.

He then refers to a locust infestation that has plagued the people of Sado; this accords with a similar mention in another letter dated the eleventh month and thought to have been written in 1273 (p. 467). Conveying his appreciation for the offerings in a time of famine, he expresses concern about the recipient's relations with his lord.

The Daishonin says, "Because our country ceased to heed the Thus Come One Shakyamuni and the Lotus Sutra, I had a feeling that even the greatest reward that the nation deserves would not last for three years." He continues, "And now we continually experience armed strife, famine, and drought." Envoy from the state of Koryo in Korea and the Mongol state arrived in Japan in 1272 and 1273 respectively with missives from the Mongol emperor. By "armed strife" the Daishonin refers to a rebellion in 1272. These occurrences testify to the fact that the Daishonin's predictions are coming true.

Whatever may happen, he says, the Lotus Sutra will spread throughout the country.

Note

1. This probably refers to an impending attack by the Mongol forces. In the fifth month of 1272, messengers of Koryo, acting on behalf of the Mongol Empire, conveyed demands to the Japanese government, and also in 1273 a Mongol delegation carried a letter to demand tribute from Japan. In both cases, however, the Japanese government made no response to the Mongol Empire.