

The Hell of Incessant Suffering in One's Present Existence



IT is stated that their heads will be cut off or they will be sent into exile.¹ This doctrine is expounded in the Nirvana Sutra and the Protection Sutra, sutras that are related to the transmission of the Lotus Sutra.

Therefore it is said [in those sutras] that the Buddha has ordered the great heavenly kings Brahmā and Shakra to attack this country [Japan]. It is because this country conducts itself as an archenemy of the Lotus Sutra that now in its present existence it is destined to undergo some of the great agony that one experiences in the hell of incessant suffering, is it not? Shakyamuni Buddha, the lord of teachings, wishes to make clear that he is an ally of Nichiren and tries to awaken this

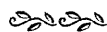
country to its error, does he not?

If that is so, then the Sun Goddess, Great Bodhisattva Hachiman, and the others can no longer continue to act as the allies of this country. Faced with the enemy of the priest Nichiren, they will move swiftly, boiling up like hot water in a tin container. Thus if these prayers are continued, the situation will only become worse, the situation will only become worse!

With my deep respect,
Nichiren

The thirteenth day of the second
month

Written in reply



Background

This is the final portion of a letter thought to have been written at Minobu in 1277. The preceding portion is missing, and the recipient is unknown. Nichiren Daishonin speaks of Shakyamuni Buddha directing the gods Brahmā and Shakra to attack Japan, as a consequence of the nation's enmity toward the Lotus Sutra, its votary (the

Daishonin), and his followers. The attack he refers to is the 1274 attempt by the Mongols to invade Japan or the subsequent threat of another invasion. The sufferings of hell in one's present existence mentioned in the title and text indicate the misery that would result from such an invasion. "If these prayers are continued" refers to prayers

by the priests of various Buddhist schools to subdue the Mongol forces. Relying on the wrong teachings for

such prayers will only exacerbate the problem, he warns.

Note

1. Probably a reference to passages in the “Encouraging Devotion” (13th) chapter of the Lotus Sutra, which read, “There will be many ignorant people who will curse and speak ill of us and will attack us with swords and staves,” and “again and again we

will be banished to a place far removed . . .” It is likely that the Daishonin quotes these in reference to the attempted execution at Tatsunokuchi and his exiles to Izu and Sado Island.