

2

On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land



ONCE there was a traveler who spoke these words in sorrow to his host:

In recent years, there have been unusual disturbances in the heavens, strange occurrences on earth, famine and pestilence, all affecting every corner of the empire and spreading throughout the land. Oxen and horses lie dead in the streets, and the bones of the stricken crowd the highways. Over half the population has already been carried off by death, and there is hardly a single person who does not grieve.

All the while some put their whole faith in the “sharp sword”¹ of the Buddha Amida and intone the name of this lord of the Western Land; others believe that hearing the name of the Buddha Medicine Master will “heal all ills”² and recite the sutra that describes this Thus Come One of the Eastern Region. Some, putting their trust in the passage in the Lotus Sutra that says, “His illness will be wiped out and he will know neither old age nor death,”³ pay homage to the wonderful words of that sutra; others, relying upon the sutra passage that reads, “The seven disasters will instantly vanish, and the seven blessings will instantly appear,”⁴ conduct ceremonies at which a hundred priests expound the sutra at a hundred preaching platforms.⁵ There

are those who follow the esoteric teachings of the True Word school and conduct rituals in which they fill five jars with water,⁶ and others who devote themselves entirely to seated meditation and try to perceive the emptiness of all phenomena as clearly as the moon.⁷ Some write out the names of the seven guardian spirits⁸ and paste them on a thousand gates, others paint pictures of the five mighty bodhisattvas⁹ and hang them over ten thousand thresholds, and still others pray to the heavenly gods and earthly deities in ceremonies conducted at the four corners of the capital and on the four boundaries of the nation. Taking pity on the plight of the common people, the rulers carry out government on the national and local levels in a benevolent manner.

But despite all these efforts, they merely exhaust themselves in vain. Famine and epidemics rage more fiercely than ever, beggars are everywhere in sight, and scenes of death fill our eyes. Corpses pile up in mounds like observation platforms, and dead bodies lie side by side like planks on a bridge.

If we look about, we find that the sun and moon continue to move in their accustomed orbits, and the five planets¹⁰ follow the proper course. The three treasures of Buddhism continue to exist, and the period of a hun-

dred reigns has not yet expired.¹¹ Then why is it that the world has already fallen into decline and that the laws of the state have come to an end? What is wrong? What error has been committed?

The host then spoke: I have been brooding alone upon this matter, indignant in my heart, but now that you have come, we can lament together. Let us discuss the question at length.

When a man leaves family life and enters the Buddhist way, it is because he hopes to attain Buddhahood through the teachings of the Buddha. But attempts now to move the gods fail to have any effect, and appeals to the power of the Buddhas produce no results. When I observe carefully the state of the world today, I see people who give way to doubt because of the lack of understanding [on the part of eminent priests]. They look up at the heavens and mouth their resentment, or gaze down at the earth and sink deep into despair.

I have pondered the matter carefully with what limited resources I possess, and have looked a little at the scriptures for an answer. The people of today all turn their backs upon what is right; to a person, they give their allegiance to evil. This is the reason that the benevolent deities have abandoned the nation and departed together, that sages leave and do not return. And in their stead devils and demons come, and disasters and calamities occur. I cannot keep silent on this matter. I cannot suppress my fears.

The guest said: These disasters that befall the empire, these calamities of the nation—I am not the only one pained by them; the whole populace is weighed down with sorrow. Now I have been privileged to enter the orchid room¹² and listen to these enlightening words of yours. You speak of the gods and sages taking leave, and of disasters and calamities arising in

sequence—upon what sutras do you base your views? Could you describe for me the passages of proof?

The host said: There are numerous passages that could be cited and a wide variety of proofs. For example, in the Golden Light Sutra we read: “[The four heavenly kings said to the Buddha], ‘Though this sutra exists in the nation, its ruler has never allowed it to be propagated. In his heart he turns away from it, and he takes no pleasure in hearing its teachings. He neither makes offerings to it, honors it, nor praises it. Nor is he willing to honor or make offerings to the four kinds of Buddhists who embrace the sutra. In the end, he makes it impossible for us and the other countless heavenly beings who are our followers to hear this profound and wonderful teaching. He deprives us of the sweet dew of its words and cuts us off from the flow of the correct teaching, so that our majesty and strength are drained away. Thus the number of beings who occupy the evil paths increases, and the number who dwell in the human and heavenly realms decreases. People fall into the river of the sufferings of birth and death and turn their backs on the road to nirvana.

“‘World-Honored One, we, the four heavenly kings, as well as our various followers and the yakshas and other beings, observing this state of affairs, have decided to abandon this nation, for we have no heart to protect it. And it is not we alone who cast aside this ruler. All the great benevolent deities who guard and watch over the countless different regions of the country will also invariably reject him. And once we and the others abandon and desert this nation, then many different types of disasters will occur in the country, and the ruler will fall from power. Not a single person in the entire population will possess a heart of goodness; there will be nothing

but binding and enslaving, killing and injuring, anger and contention. People will slander each other or fawn upon one another, and the laws will be twisted until even the innocent are made to suffer. Pestilence will become rampant, comets will appear again and again, two suns will come forth side by side, and eclipses will occur with unaccustomed frequency. Black arcs and white arcs will span the sky as harbingers of ill fortune, stars will fall, the earth will shake, and noises will issue from the wells. Torrential rains and violent winds will come out of season, famine will constantly occur, and grains and fruits will not ripen. Marauders from many other regions will invade and plunder the nation, the people will suffer all manner of pain and affliction, and no place will exist where one may live in safety.”

The Great Collection Sutra says: “When the teachings of the Buddha truly become obscured and lost, then people will all let their beards, hair, and fingernails grow long, and the laws of the world will be forgotten and ignored. At that time, loud noises will sound in the air, and the earth will shake; everything in the world will begin to move as though it were a waterwheel. City walls will split and tumble, and all houses and dwellings will collapse. Roots, branches, leaves, petals, and fruits will lose their medicinal properties. With the exception of the heavens of purity,¹³ all the regions of the world of desire will become deprived of the seven flavors¹⁴ and the three kinds of vitality,¹⁵ until not a trace of them remains any more. All the good discourses that lead people to emancipation will at this time disappear. The flowers and fruits that grow in the earth will become few and will lose their flavor and sweetness. The wells, springs, and ponds will all go dry, the land everywhere will turn brackish and will crack open and warp

into hillocks and gullies. All the mountains will be swept by fire, and the heavenly beings and dragons will no longer send down rain. The seedlings of the crops will all wither and die, all the living plants will perish, and even the weeds will cease to grow any more. Dust will rain down until all is darkness and the sun and moon no longer shed their light.

“All the four directions will be afflicted by drought, and evil omens will appear again and again. The ten evil acts will increase greatly, particularly greed, anger, and foolishness, and people will think no more of their fathers and mothers than does the roe deer.¹⁶ Living beings will decline in numbers, in longevity, physical strength, dignity, and enjoyment. They will become estranged from the delights of the human and heavenly realms, and all will fall into the paths of evil. The wicked rulers and monks who perform these ten evil acts will curse and destroy my correct teaching and make it difficult for those in the human and heavenly realms to stay there. At that time the benevolent deities and heavenly kings, who would ordinarily take pity on living beings, will abandon this impure and evil nation, and all will make their way to other regions.”

The Benevolent Kings Sutra states: “When a nation becomes disordered, it is the spirits that first show signs of rampancy. Because the spirits become rampant, all the people of the nation become disordered. Invaders come to plunder the country, and the common people face annihilation. The ruler, the high ministers, the crown prince, the other princes, and the hundred officials all quarrel with one another over right and wrong. Heaven and earth manifest prodigies and strange occurrences; the twenty-eight constellations, the stars, and the sun and moon appear at irregular times and in irregular positions; and numerous outlaws rise up.”

The same sutra also states: “Now when I use the five types of vision to clearly perceive the three existences, I see that in their past existences all the rulers served five hundred Buddhas, and that is the reason that they were able to become emperors and sovereigns. And that also is the reason that all the various sages and arhats are born in their nations and bring great benefits. But if a time should come when the good fortune of these rulers runs out, then all the sages will abandon them and depart. Once the sages have departed, then the seven disasters are certain to arise.”

The Medicine Master Sutra states: “If disasters and calamities should befall members of the ruling Kshatriya class and anointed kings,¹⁷ such disasters will be as follows: the calamity of disease and pestilence among the populace; the calamity of invasion from foreign lands; the calamity of revolt within one’s own domain; the calamity of irregularities and strange occurrences among the stars and constellations; the calamity of eclipses of the sun and moon; the calamity of unseasonable wind and rain; and the calamity of rain that fails to fall even when the season for it has come and gone.”

In the Benevolent Kings Sutra [the Buddha addresses King Prasenajit with these words]: “Great King, the region where my teachings now hold sway consists of one billion Sumeru worlds with one billion suns and moons. Each of these Sumeru worlds comprises four continents. In the southern continent of Jambudvīpa, there are sixteen great states, five hundred middle-sized states, and ten thousand small states. In these states, seven types of fearful disasters may occur. All the rulers of these states agree that these are indeed disasters. What, then, are these disasters?”

“When the sun and moon depart from their regular courses, when the seasons come in the wrong order,

when a red sun or a black sun appears, when two, three, four, or five suns appear at the same time, when the sun is eclipsed and loses its light, or when one, two, three, four, or five coronas appear around the sun, this is the first disaster.

“When the twenty-eight constellations do not move in their regular courses, when the Metal Star,¹⁸ the Broom Star, the Wheel Star, the Demon Star, the Fire Star, the Water Star, the Wind Star, the Ladle Star, the Southern Dipper, the Northern Dipper, the great stars of the Five Garrisons, and all the many stars that govern the ruler, the three high ministers, and the hundred officials—when each of these stars manifests some peculiar behavior, this is the second disaster.

“When huge fires consume the nation, and the people are all burned to death, or when there are outbreaks of demon fire, dragon fire, heavenly fire, mountain god fire, human fire, tree fire, or bandit fire¹⁹—when these prodigies appear, this is the third disaster.

“When huge floods drown the population; when the seasons come out of order and there is rain in winter, snow in summer, thunder and lightning in winter, and ice, frost, and hail in the sixth month;²⁰ when red, black, or green rain falls; when mountains of dirt and stones come raining down, or when it rains dust, sand, or gravel; when the rivers and streams run backward; when mountains are afloat and boulders are washed away—when freakish happenings of this kind occur, this is the fourth disaster.

“When huge winds blow the people to their death, and the lands, the mountains and rivers, and the trees and forests are all at one time wiped out; when great winds come out of season, or when black winds, red winds, green winds, heavenly winds, earthly winds, fire winds, and water

winds blow²¹—when prodigies of this kind occur, this is the fifth disaster.

“When heaven and earth and the whole country are stricken by terrible heat so that the air seems to be on fire, when the hundred plants wither and the five kinds of grain²² fail to ripen, when the earth is red and scorched and the inhabitants all perish—when prodigies of this kind occur, this is the sixth disaster.

“When enemies rise up on all four sides and invade the nation, when rebels appear in the capital and the outlying regions, when there are fire bandits, water bandits, wind bandits, and demon bandits,²³ and the population is subjected to devastation and disorder, and fighting and plundering break out everywhere—when prodigies of this type occur, this is the seventh disaster.”

The Great Collection Sutra says: “Though for countless existences in the past the ruler of a state may have practiced the giving of alms, observed the precepts, and cultivated wisdom, if he sees that my teaching is in danger of perishing and stands idly by without doing anything to protect it, then all the inestimable roots of goodness that he has planted through the practices just mentioned will be entirely wiped out, and his country will become the scene of three inauspicious occurrences. The first is high grain prices, the second is warfare, and the third is epidemics. All the benevolent deities will abandon the country, and although the ruler may issue commands, the people will not obey them. The country will constantly be invaded and vexed by neighboring nations. Violent fires will rage out of control, fierce winds and rains will abound, the waters will swell and overflow, and the inhabitants will be blown about by winds or swept away by floods. The paternal and maternal relatives of the ruler will join in plotting revolt. Before long, the

ruler will fall gravely ill, and after his life has come to an end, he will be reborn in the great hell. . . . And the same fate will befall the ruler’s consort, his heir, the high ministers of the state, the lords of cities, the village heads and generals, the magistrates of districts, and the other officials.”

The passages I have quoted from these four sutras are perfectly clear—what person in ten thousand could possibly doubt their meaning? And yet the blind and the deluded recklessly trust to distorted doctrines and fail to recognize the correct teaching. Therefore, throughout the empire these days people are inclined to turn away from the Buddhas and the sutras, and no longer endeavor to protect them. Because of this, the benevolent deities and sages abandon the nation and leave their accustomed places. As a result, demons and evil spirits²⁴ bring about disasters and cause calamities.

The guest thereupon flushed with anger and said: Emperor Ming of the Later Han dynasty, having comprehended the significance of his dream of a golden man, welcomed the teachings [of Buddhism] brought by white horses.²⁵ Prince Jogu, having put down the rebellion of Moriya [an opponent of Buddhism],²⁶ proceeded to construct temples and pagodas. Since that time, from the ruler on down to the common people, all have worshiped the Buddha images and devoted their attention to the scriptures. As a result, in the monasteries of Mount Hiei and the southern capital at Nara, at the temples of Onjo-ji and To-ji, throughout the land bounded by the four seas, in the five provinces of the capital area and along the seven marches, Buddha images and Buddhist scriptures have been ranged like stars in the sky, and halls of worship have spread like clouds. Those who belong to the lineage of Shariputra meditate on the moon atop Eagle Peak, while those

who adhere to the traditions of Hakle-nayashas transmit the teachings of Mount Kukkutapada.²⁷ How, then, can anyone say that the teachings of the Buddha's lifetime are despised, or that the three treasures of Buddhism have ceased to exist? If there is evidence to support such a contention, I would like to hear all the facts.

The host, anxious to clarify his words, replied: To be sure, Buddhist halls stand rooftop to rooftop, and sutra storehouses are ranged eave to eave. Priests are as numerous as bamboo plants and rushes, monks as common as rice and hemp seedlings. The temples and priests have been honored from centuries past, and every day respect is paid them anew. But the monks and priests today are fawning and devious, and they confuse the people and lead them astray. The ruler and his subjects lack understanding and fail to distinguish between what is correct and what is erroneous.

The Benevolent Kings Sutra, for example, says: "Evil monks, hoping to gain fame and profit, in many cases appear before the ruler, the crown prince, or the other princes, and take it upon themselves to preach doctrines that lead to the violation of the Buddhist Law and the destruction of the nation. The ruler, failing to perceive the truth of the situation, listens to and puts faith in such doctrines, and proceeds to create regulations that are perverse in nature and that do not accord with the rules of Buddhist discipline. In this way he brings about the destruction of Buddhism and of the nation."

The Nirvana Sutra states: "Bodhisattvas, have no fear of mad elephants. What you should fear are evil friends! . . . Even if you are killed by a mad elephant, you will not fall into the three evil paths. But if you are killed by an evil friend, you are certain to fall into them."

The Lotus Sutra says: "In that evil age there will be monks with perverse wisdom and hearts that are fawning and crooked who will suppose they have attained what they have not attained, being proud and boastful in heart. Or there will be forest-dwelling monks wearing clothing of patched rags and living in retirement, who will claim they are practicing the true way, despising and looking down on all humankind. Greedy for profit and support, they will preach the Law to white-robed laymen and will be respected and revered by the world as though they were arhats who possess the six transcendental powers. . . . Because in the midst of the great assembly they constantly try to defame us, they will address the rulers, high ministers, Brahmans, and householders, as well as the other monks, slandering and speaking evil of us, saying, 'These are men of perverted views who preach non-Buddhist doctrines!' . . . In a muddied kalpa, in an evil age there will be many things to fear. Evil demons will take possession of others and through them curse, revile, and heap shame on us. . . . The evil monks of that muddied age, failing to understand the Buddha's expedient means, how he preaches the Law in accordance with what is appropriate, will confront us with foul language and angry frowns; again and again we will be banished."²⁸

The Nirvana Sutra says: "After I have passed away and countless hundreds of years have gone by, the sages of the four stages²⁹ too will have all passed away. After the Former Day of the Law has ended and the Middle Day of the Law has begun, there will be monks who will give the appearance of abiding by the rules of monastic discipline. But they will scarcely ever read or recite the sutras, and instead will crave all kinds of food and drink to nourish their bodies. Though they wear the clothes of a monk, they will

go about searching for alms like so many huntsmen who, narrowing their eyes, stalk softly. They will be like a cat on the prowl for mice. And they will constantly reiterate these words, 'I have attained arhatship!' Outwardly they will seem to be wise and good, but within they will harbor greed and jealousy. [And when they are asked to preach the teachings, they will say nothing.] like Brahmans who have taken a vow of silence. They are not true monks—they merely have the appearance of monks. Consumed by their erroneous views, they slander the correct teaching."

When we look at the world in the light of these passages of scripture, we see that the situation is just as they describe it. If we do not admonish the evil priests, how can we hope to do good?

The guest, growing more indignant than ever, said: A wise monarch, by acting in accord with heaven and earth, perfects his rule; a sage, by distinguishing between right and wrong, brings order to the world. The monks and priests of the world today enjoy the confidence of the entire empire. If they were in fact evil monks, then the wise ruler would put no trust in them. If they were not true sages, then worthies and learned persons would not look up to them. But now, since worthies and sages do in fact honor and respect them, they must be nothing less than paragons of their kind. Why then do you pour out these wild accusations and dare to slander them? To whom are you referring when you speak of "evil monks"? I would like an explanation.

The host said: In the time of the Retired Emperor Gotoba there was a priest named Honen who wrote a work entitled *The Nembutsu Chosen above All*. He contradicted the sacred teachings of the Buddha's entire lifetime and brought confusion to people in every direction. *Nembutsu Chosen*

above All states: "Regarding the passage in which the Meditation Master Taoch'o distinguished between the Sacred Way teachings and the Pure Land teachings and urged people to abandon the former and immediately embrace the latter, first of all, there are two kinds of Sacred Way teachings, [the Mahayana and the Hinayana]. . . . Judging from this, we may assume that the esoteric Mahayana teachings and the true Mahayana teachings are both included in the Sacred Way. If that is so, then the eight present-day schools—the True Word, Zen, Tendai, Flower Garland, Three Treatises, Dharma Characteristics, Treatise on the Ten Stages Sutra, and Summary of the Mahayana—all are included in the Sacred Way that is to be abandoned.

"The Dharma Teacher T'an-luan in his *Commentary on 'The Treatise on Rebirth in the Pure Land'* states, 'I note that Bodhisattva Nagarjuna's *Commentary on the Ten Stages Sutra* says, "There are two ways by which a bodhisattva may reach the state of avaiavartika, or non-retrogression. One is the difficult-to-practice way, the other is the easy-to-practice way.'"

"The difficult-to-practice way is the same as the Sacred Way teachings, and the easy-to-practice way is the Pure Land teachings. Students of the Pure Land school should first of all understand this point. Though they may be people who have previously studied the Sacred Way teachings, if they wish to become followers of the Pure Land teachings, they must discard the Sacred Way and give their allegiance to the Pure Land teachings."

Honen also says: "Regarding the passage in which the Reverend Shantao distinguished between correct and sundry practices and urged people to abandon the sundry and embrace the correct: Concerning the first of the sundry practices, that of reading and reciting sutras, with the exception of

the recitation of the Meditation on the Buddha Infinite Life Sutra and the other sutras that preach rebirth in the Pure Land, the embracing, reading, and recitation of all other sutras, whether Mahayana or Hinayana, exoteric or esoteric, is to be regarded as a sundry practice. . . . Concerning the third of the sundry practices, that of worshipping, with the exception of worshipping the Buddha Amida, the worshipping or honoring of any other Buddha or bodhisattva, or deity of this world is to be regarded as a sundry practice. . . . In the light of his statement, I declare that one should abandon such sundry practices and concentrate upon the practice of the Pure Land teachings. What reason would we have to abandon the correct practices of the Pure Land teachings, which insure that out of a hundred persons all one hundred will be reborn in the Pure Land, and cling instead to the various sundry practices and procedures, which could not save even one person in a thousand? Followers of the way should ponder this carefully.”

Honen further states: “In *The Chen-yüan Era Catalog of the Buddhist Canon* we find it recorded that, from the 600 volumes of the Great Wisdom Sutra to the Eternity of the Law Sutra, the exoteric and esoteric sutras of Mahayana, or the great vehicle, total 637 works in 2,883 volumes. The phrase [from the Meditation Sutra] ‘reading and reciting the great vehicle’ should be applied to all these works. You should understand that, when the Buddha was preaching according to the capacity of his various listeners, he for a time taught the two methods of concentrated meditation and unconcentrated meditation.³⁰ But later, when he revealed his own enlightenment, he ceased to teach these two methods. The only teaching that, once revealed, shall never cease to be taught is the single doctrine of the Nembutsu.”

Honen also states: “Regarding the passage that says that the practitioner of the Nembutsu must possess three kinds of mind,³¹ it is found in the Meditation Sutra. In his commentary on that sutra [Shan-tao says]: ‘Someone may ask, “If there are those who differ in understanding and practice from the followers of the Nembutsu, persons of distorted and mistaken belief, [how should we confront them]?’” I will now make certain that their perverse and differing views will not cause trouble. These persons of evil views with different understanding and different practices are compared to a band of robbers who call back the traveler who has already gone one or two steps along his journey.’ In my opinion, when this commentary speaks of different understanding, different practices, varying doctrines, and varying beliefs, they are referring to the teachings of the Sacred Way.”

Finally, in a concluding passage, Honen says: “If one wishes to escape quickly from the sufferings of birth and death, one should confront these two superior teachings and then proceed to put aside the teachings of the Sacred Way and choose those of the Pure Land. And if one wishes to follow the teachings of the Pure Land, one should confront the correct and sundry practices and then proceed to abandon all of the sundry and devote one’s entire attention to the correct.”

When we examine these passages, we see that Honen quotes the erroneous explanations of T’an-luan, Tao-ch’o, and Shan-tao, and establishes the categories of the Sacred Way and the Pure Land teachings, and of the difficult-to-practice and the easy-to-practice ways. He then takes all the 637 works in 2,883 volumes that comprise the Mahayana teachings of the Buddha’s lifetime, including those of the Lotus Sutra and the True Word sutras, along with all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas and the deities of this world,

and assigns them all to the categories of the Sacred Way teachings, the difficult-to-practice way, and the sundry practices, and urges people to “discard, close, ignore, and abandon” them. With these four injunctions, he leads all people astray. On top of that, he groups together all the sage monks of the three countries [of India, China, and Japan] as well as the students of Buddhism of the ten directions, and calls them a “band of robbers,” causing the people to insult them.

In doing so, he turns his back on the passage in the three Pure Land sutras, the sutras of his own school, which contains Amida’s vow to save the people “excepting only those who commit the five cardinal sins and those who slander the correct teaching.”³² More fundamentally, he shows that he fails to understand the warning contained in the second volume of the Lotus Sutra, the heart and core of the entire body of teachings the Buddha expounded in the five periods of his preaching life, which reads, “If a person fails to have faith but instead slanders this sutra . . . When his life comes to an end he will enter the Avichi hell.”³³

Now we have come to this latter age, when people are no longer sages. Each enters his own dark road, and all alike forget the direct way. How pitiful that no one cures them of their blindness! How painful to see them taking up these false beliefs in vain! As a result, everyone from the ruler of the nation on down to the common people believes that there are no true sutras outside the three Pure Land sutras, and no Buddhas other than the Buddha Amida with his two attendants.³⁴

Once there were men like Dengyo, Gishin, Jikaku, and Chisho who journeyed ten thousand miles across the waves to China to acquire the sacred teachings, and there visited the mountains and rivers to pay reverence to Buddhist statues [and carry them back].

In some cases they built holy temples on the peaks of high mountains in which to preserve those scriptures and statues; in other cases they constructed sacred halls in the bottoms of deep valleys where such objects could be worshiped and honored. As a result, the Buddhas Shakyamuni and Medicine Master³⁵ shone side by side, casting their influence upon present and future ages, while the bodhisattvas Space Treasury and Earth Repository brought benefit to the living and the dead. The rulers of the nation contributed districts or villages so that the lamps might continue to burn bright before the images, while the stewards of the great estates gave their fields and gardens as an offering.

But because of this book by Honen, this *Nembutsu Chosen above All*, the lord of teachings, Shakyamuni, is forgotten, and all honor is paid to Amida, the Buddha of the Western Land. The transmission of the Law [from Shakyamuni Buddha] is ignored,³⁶ and Medicine Master, the Thus Come One of the Eastern Region, is neglected. Attention is paid only to the three Pure Land sutras in four volumes, and all the other wonderful scriptures that Shakyamuni expounded throughout the five periods of his preaching life are cast aside. If temples are not dedicated to Amida, then people no longer have any desire to support them or pay honor to the Buddhas enshrined there; if priests are not practitioners of the Nembutsu, then people quickly forget all about giving those priests alms. As a result, the halls of the Buddha have fallen into ruin, scarcely a wisp of smoke rising above their moss-covered roof tiles; and the priests’ quarters have become empty and dilapidated, the dew deep on the grasses in their courtyards. And in spite of such conditions, no one gives a thought to protecting the Law or to restoring the temples. Hence the sage priests who once presided over the

temples leave and do not return, and the benevolent deities who guarded the nation depart and no longer appear. This has all come about because of this *Nembutsu Chosen above All* by Honen. How pitiful to think that, in the space of a few decades, hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands of people have been deluded by these devilish teachings and in so many cases confused as to the true teachings of Buddhism. If people favor what is only incidental and forget what is primary, can the benevolent deities be anything but angry? If people cast aside what is perfect and take up what is biased, can the world escape the plots of demons? Rather than offering up ten thousand prayers for remedy, it would be better simply to outlaw this one evil.

This time the guest was truly enraged and said: In the ages since our original teacher, the Buddha Shakyamuni, preached the three Pure Land sutras, the Dharma Teacher T'an-luan had originally studied the four treatises,³⁷ but abandoned them and put all his faith in the Pure Land teachings. Similarly, the Meditation Master Tao-ch'ö ceased to spread the varied practices of the Nirvana Sutra and devoted all his attention to propagating the practice that leads one to the Western Pure Land. The Reverend Shan-tao discarded the sundry practices and established the single practice of the Nembutsu, and the Supervisor of Priests Eshin collected essential passages from various sutras to form his work, making the single practice of the Nembutsu the essence of his teaching. Such was the manner in which these men honored and respected the Buddha Amida, and uncountable numbers of people as a result were able to gain rebirth in the Pure Land.

Of particular note was the Sage Honen, who as a child entered the monastery on Mount Hiei. By the time he was seventeen, he had worked

his way through all sixty volumes of Tendai literature,³⁸ and had investigated all the eight schools and mastered their essentials. In addition, he had read through the entire body of sutras and treatises seven times, and exhausted all the works of exegesis and biography. His wisdom shone like the sun and moon, and his virtue exceeded that of the earlier teachers.

In spite of all this, he was in doubt as to the proper path to emancipation and could not make out the true meaning of nirvana. Therefore, he read and examined all the texts he could, pondered deeply and considered every possibility, and in the end put aside all the sutras and concentrated on the single practice of the Nembutsu. In addition, he received confirmation of his decision when Shan-tao miraculously appeared to him in a dream,³⁹ and he proceeded to spread his doctrines among friends and strangers in all four corners of the land. Thereafter, he was hailed as a re-incarnation of Bodhisattva Great Power, or was revered as Shan-tao reborn. In every quarter, people of eminent and lowly birth alike bowed their heads in respect, and men and women from all over Japan sought him.

Since that time, the springs and autumns have succeeded each other, and the years have piled upon years. And yet you insist upon putting aside the venerable teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha [contained in the Pure Land sutras] and willfully speak evil of the passage describing the oath of the Buddha Amida. Why do you try to blame the sacred age of Honen for the disasters of recent years, going out of your way to slander the former teachers of Pure Land doctrines and to heap abuse on the Sage Honen? You are, as the saying goes, deliberately blowing back the fur and hunting for flaws in the leather, deliberately piercing the skin in hopes of drawing blood. From ancient times to the present, the world has

never seen such a speaker of evil. You had better learn a little caution and restraint. When you pile up such grave offenses, how can you hope to escape punishment? I am afraid even to sit here in your company. I must take up my staff and be on my way!

The host, smiling, restrained his guest and said: Insects that live on smartweed forget how bitter it tastes; those who stay long in privies forget how foul the smell is. Here you listen to my good words and think them wicked, point to a slanderer of the Law and call him a sage, mistrust a correct teacher and take him for an evil priest. Your confusion is great indeed, and your offense anything but light. Listen to my explanation of how this confusion arose, and let us discuss the matter in detail.

Shakyamuni Buddha expounded the five periods of doctrines, established the order in which they were preached, and divided them into the provisional and the true teachings. But T'an-luan, Tao-ch'o, and Shan-tao embraced the provisional teachings and forgot about the true ones, went by what had been taught in the earlier period of the Buddha's life and discarded what was taught later. They were not the kind of men who delve into the deep places of Buddhist doctrine.

Honen in particular, though he followed the practices advocated by these earlier men, was ignorant as to their source. How do we know this? Because he lumped together all the 637 Mahayana scriptures in 2,883 volumes and along with them all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas and the deities of this world, and urged people to "discard, close, ignore, and abandon" them, with these four injunctions corrupting the hearts of all people. Thus he poured out perverted words of his own invention and took absolutely no cognizance of the explanations put forth in the Buddhist scriptures. His is the worst

kind of baseless talk, a clear case of defamation. There are no words to describe it, no way to censure it that is not too mild. And yet people all put faith in this baseless talk of his, and without exception pay honor to his *Nembutsu Chosen above All*. As a consequence, they revere the three sutras of the Pure Land and cast all the other sutras aside; they look up to one Buddha alone, Amida of the Land of Perfect Bliss, and forget about the other Buddhas. A man such as Honen is in truth the archenemy of the Buddhas and the scriptures, and the foe of sage priests and ordinary men and women alike. And now his distorted teachings have spread throughout the eight regions of the country, permeating the ten directions.

You became quite horrified when I blamed an earlier period⁴⁰ for the disasters that have occurred in recent years. Perhaps I should cite a few examples from the past to show you that you are mistaken in your feelings.

The second volume of *Great Concentration and Insight* quotes a passage from *Records of the Historian* that says, "In the closing years of the Chou dynasty, there were persons who let their hair hang down, went about naked to the waist, and did not observe the rites and regulations." *The Annotations on "Great Concentration and Insight,"* in the second volume, explains this passage by quoting from *Tso's Commentary on "Spring and Autumn Annals"* as follows: "When King P'ing of the Chou first moved his capital to the east, he saw men by the Yi River who let their hair hang down and performed sacrifices in the fields. Someone who had great understanding said, 'In less than a hundred years the dynasty will fall, for the rites are already neglected.'" From this it is evident that the portent appears first, and later the disaster itself comes about.

[The *Great Concentration and Insight*

passage goes on to say:] “Juan Chi⁴¹ was a man of extraordinary talent, but he let his hair grow like a mass of brambles and left his belt undone. Later, the sons of the aristocracy all imitated him, until those who behaved in a churlish and insulting manner were thought to be acting quite naturally, and those who were restrained and proper in their behavior were ridiculed as mere peasants. This was a sign that the Su-ma family [the rulers of the Western Chin dynasty] would meet with their downfall.”

Similarly, *The Record of a Pilgrimage to China in Search of the Law* by the Great Teacher Jikaku states that, in the first year of the Hui-ch’ang era (841), Emperor Wu-tsung of the T’ang dynasty commanded the priest Ching-shuang of Chang-ching-ssu temple to transmit the Nembutsu teachings of the Buddha Amida in the various temples. Ching-shuang spent three days in each temple, going about from one temple to another without ever ceasing.

In the second year of the same era, soldiers from the land of the Uighurs⁴² invaded the borders of the T’ang empire. In the third year of the same era, the regional commander in the area north of the Yellow River suddenly raised a revolt. Later, the kingdom of Tibet once more refused to obey orders from China, and the Uighurs repeatedly seized Chinese territory. On the whole, the conflicts and uprisings were like those that prevailed at the time when the Ch’in dynasty and the military leader Hsiang Yü were overthrown, and the towns and villages were devastated by fire and other disasters. What was even worse, Emperor Wu-tsung carried out a vast campaign to wipe out Buddhist teachings and destroyed a great many temples and pagodas. He was never able to put down the uprisings and died in agony shortly after. (This is the essence of Jikaku’s original passage.)

In view of these events, we should consider the fact that Honen belonged to the time of the Retired Emperor Gotoba, around the Kennin era (1201–1204). And what happened to the retired emperor is evident before our very eyes.⁴³ Thus T’ang China provided an earlier example of the fall of an emperor, and our own country offers similar proof. You should neither doubt this nor consider it strange. The only thing to do now is to abandon the evil ways and take up those that are good, to cut off this affliction at the source, to cut it off at the root.

The guest, looking somewhat mollified, said: Though I have not yet probed deeply into the matter, I believe I understand to some degree what you are saying. Nevertheless, throughout the area from Kyoto, the capital, to Kamakura, the headquarters of the shogun, there are numerous eminent Buddhist leaders and key figures in the clergy. And yet none of them has so far appealed to the shogun concerning this affair, or submitted a memorial to the throne. You, on the other hand, a person of humble position, think nothing of spewing out offensive accusations. Your assertion goes too far and your behavior is unreasonable.

The host said: Though I may be a person of little ability, I have reverently given myself to the study of the Mahayana. A blue fly, if it clings to the tail of a thoroughbred horse, can travel ten thousand miles, and the green ivy that twines around the tall pine can grow to a thousand feet. I was born as the son of the one Buddha, Shakyamuni, and I serve the king of scriptures, the Lotus Sutra. How could I observe the decline of the Buddhist Law and not be filled with emotions of pity and distress?

Moreover, the Nirvana Sutra states: “If even a good monk sees someone destroying the teaching and disregards him, failing to reproach him, to oust

him, or to punish him for his offense, then you should realize that that monk is betraying the Buddha's teaching. But if he ousts the destroyer of the Law, reproaches him, or punishes him, then he is my disciple and a true voice-hearer."

Although I may not be a "good monk," I certainly do not want to be accused of "betraying the Buddha's teaching." Therefore, in order to avoid such charges, I have cited a few general principles and given a rough explanation of the matter.

Earlier, in the Gennin era (1224–1225), petitions to the throne were submitted time and again by the two temples of Enryaku-ji and Kofuku-ji. And as a result, an imperial command and a letter of instruction from the shogunate were handed down, ordering that the woodblocks used in printing Honen's *Nembutsu Chosen above All* be confiscated and brought to the Great Lecture Hall of Enryaku-ji. There they were burned in order to repay the debt owed to the Buddhas of the three existences. In addition, orders were given that the menials at Kanjin-in Shrine should dig up and destroy Honen's grave. Then, Honen's disciples Ryukan, Shoko, Jokaku, Sassho, and others were condemned by the imperial court to exile in distant regions and were never pardoned.

In view of these facts, how can you say that no one has submitted a complaint to the authorities concerning these matters?

The guest, continuing to speak in a mild manner, replied: One could hardly say that Honen is the only one who disparages sutras and speaks ill of other priests [since you do the same thing yourself]. However, it is true that he takes the 637 Mahayana scriptures in 2,883 volumes, along with all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas and the deities of this world, and urges people to "discard, close, ignore, and abandon" them. There is no doubt that these four in-

junctions are his very words; the meaning of the passage is quite clear. But you keep harping on this one little "flaw in the jewel" and severely slandering him for it. I do not know whether he spoke out of delusion or out of enlightenment. Between you and Honen, I cannot tell which is wise and which is foolish, or determine whose assertions are right and whose are wrong.

However, you assert that all the recent disasters are to be traced to *Nembutsu Chosen above All*, speaking quite volubly on that point and elaborating on the meaning of your assertion. Now surely the peace of the world and the stability of the nation are sought by both ruler and subject and desired by all the inhabitants of the country. The nation achieves prosperity through the Buddhist Law, and the Law is proven worthy of reverence by the people who embrace it. If the nation is destroyed and the people are wiped out, then who will continue to pay reverence to the Buddhas? Who will continue to have faith in the Law? Therefore, one must first of all pray for the safety of the nation and then work to establish the Buddhist Law.⁴⁴ Now if you know of any means whereby disasters can be prevented and troubles brought to an end, I would like to hear about it.

The host said: There is no doubt that I am the foolish one—I would never dare claim to be wise. However, I would just like to quote some passages from the scriptures and offer some brief thoughts. Concerning the means for insuring order in the nation, there are numerous passages in both Buddhist and non-Buddhist texts, and it would be difficult to cite them all here. Since taking up the study of Buddhism, however, I have frequently given thought to this matter, and it seems to me that restraining those who slander the Law and respecting the followers of the correct way will assure

stability within the nation and peace in the world at large.

In the Nirvana Sutra, we read: "The Buddha said, 'With the exception of one type of person, you may offer alms to all kinds of persons, and everyone will praise you.'

"Chunda said, 'What do you mean when you speak of "one type of person"?"

"The Buddha replied, 'I mean the type described in this sutra as violators of the precepts.'

"Chunda spoke again, saying, 'I am afraid I still do not understand. May I ask you to explain further?'

"The Buddha addressed Chunda, saying, 'By violators of the precepts, I mean the icchantika. In the case of all other types of persons, you may offer alms, everyone will praise you, and you will achieve great rewards.'

"Chunda spoke once more, asking, 'What is the meaning of the term icchantika?'

"The Buddha said: 'Chunda, suppose there should be monks or nuns, lay men or women who speak careless and evil words and slander the correct teaching, and that they should go on committing these grave acts without ever showing any inclination to reform or any sign of repentance in their hearts. Persons of this kind I would say are following the path of the icchantika.

"'Again there may be those who commit the four grave offenses⁴⁵ or are guilty of the five cardinal sins, and who, though aware that they are guilty of serious faults, from the beginning have no trace of fear or contrition in their hearts or, if they do, give no outward sign of it. When it comes to the correct teaching, they show no inclination to protect, treasure, and establish it over the ages, but rather speak of it with malice and contempt, their words replete with error. People of this kind too I would say are following the path

of the icchantika. With the exception of this one group of people called icchantika, however, you may offer alms to all others, and everyone will praise you.'

Elsewhere in the same sutra, the Buddha spoke in these words: "When I recall the past, I remember that I was the king of a great state in this continent of Jambudvīpa. My name was Sen'yo, and I loved and venerated the great vehicle scriptures. My heart was pure and good and had no trace of evil, jealousy, or stinginess. Good men, at that time I cherished the great vehicle teachings in my heart. When I heard the Brahmins slandering these correct and equal sutras, I put them to death on the spot. Good men, as a result of that action, I never thereafter fell into hell."

In another passage it says, "In the past, when the Thus Come One was the ruler of a nation and practiced the way of the bodhisattva, he put to death a number of Brahmins."

Again it says: "There are three degrees of killings: the lower, middle, and upper degrees. The lower degree constitutes the killing of any humble being, from an ant to any of the various kinds of animals. But the killing of any being that a bodhisattva has chosen to be born as [to help other living beings] is excluded. As a result of a killing of the lower degree, one will fall into the realms of hell, hungry spirits, and animals, and will suffer all the pains appropriate to a killing of the lower degree. Why should this be? Because even animals and other humble beings possess the roots of goodness, insignificant though those roots may be. That is why a person who kills such a being must suffer full retribution for his offense.

"Killing any person from an ordinary mortal to an anagamin⁴⁶ constitutes what is termed the middle degree. As a consequence of such an act

of killing, one will fall into the realms of hell, hungry spirits, and animals, and will suffer all the pains appropriate to a killing of the middle degree. The upper degree of killing refers to the killing of a parent, an arhat, a pratyekabuddha, or a bodhisattva who has reached the stage of non-retrogression. For such a crime one will fall into the great Avichi hell. Good men, if someone were to kill an icchantika, that killing would not fall into any of the three categories just mentioned. Good men, the various Brahmans that I have said were put to death—all of them were in fact icchantikas.”

In the Benevolent Kings Sutra, we read: “The Buddha announced to King Prasenajit, ‘Thus I entrust the protection of my teachings to the ruler of the nation rather than to the monks and nuns. Why do I do so? Because they do not possess the kind of power and authority that the king has.’”

The Nirvana Sutra states: “Now I entrust the correct teaching, which is unexcelled, to the rulers, the ministers, the high officials, and the four kinds of Buddhists. If anyone should vilify the correct teaching, then the ministers and four kinds of Buddhists should reprimand him and bring him to order.”

It also states: “The Buddha replied: ‘[Bodhisattva] Kashyapa, it is because I was a defender of the correct teaching that I have been able to attain this diamond-like body. . . . Good man, defenders of the correct teaching need not observe the five precepts or practice the rules of proper behavior. Rather they should carry knives and swords, bows and arrows, halberds and lances.’”

Again the Buddha said: “Even though there may be those who observe the five precepts, they do not deserve to be called practitioners of the great vehicle. But even if one does not observe the five precepts, if one defends the correct teaching, then one

may be called a practitioner of the great vehicle. Defenders of the correct teaching ought to arm themselves with knives and swords, weapons and staves. Even though they carry swords and staves, I would call them men who observe the precepts.”

The Buddha likewise said: “Good man, in past ages in this very city of Kushinagara, a Buddha appeared whose name was the Thus Come One Joy Increasing. After this Buddha passed away, the correct teaching that he had taught remained in the world for countless millions of years. Finally, only forty more years were left before the Buddhist teaching was due to come to an end.

“At that time there was a monk named Realization of Virtue who observed the precepts. There were many monks at this time who violated the precepts, and when they heard this monk preaching, they all conceived evil designs in their hearts and, arming themselves with swords and staves, approached this teacher of the Law.

“At this time the ruler of the kingdom was named Possessor of Virtue. He received reports of what was happening, and, in order to defend the teaching, he went at once to the place where the monk was preaching the Law and fought with all his might against the evil monks who broke the precepts. As a result, the monk who had been preaching was able to escape grievous injury. But the king received so many wounds from the knives and swords, halberds and lances, that there was not a spot on his body the size of a mustard seed that remained unharmed.

“At this time the monk Realization of Virtue praised the king, saying: ‘Splendid, splendid! You, O king, are now a true defender of the correct teaching. In ages to come, this body of yours will surely become a boundless vessel of the Law!’

“At that time, the king had already heard the teaching, and he felt great joy in his heart. Thereupon his life came to an end, and he was reborn in the land of the Buddha Akshobhya, where he became the Buddha’s principal disciple. Moreover, all the military leaders, citizens, and associates of the king who had fought beside him or had rejoiced in his effort were filled with an unflagging determination to achieve enlightenment, and when they died, all of them were reborn in the land of the Buddha Akshobhya.

“Later, the monk Realization of Virtue also died, and he too was reborn in the land of the Buddha Akshobhya, where he became second among the Buddha’s voice-hearer disciples. Thus, if the correct teaching is about to come to an end, this is the way one ought to support and defend it.

“Kashyapa, the king who lived at that time was I myself, and the monk who preached was the Buddha Kashyapa.⁴⁷ Kashyapa, those who defend the correct teaching enjoy this kind of boundless reward. As a consequence, I have been able to obtain the distinguished characteristics that I possess today, to adorn myself with them, and to put on the Dharma body that can never be destroyed.”

Then the Buddha declared to Bodhisattva Kashyapa: “For this reason, laymen believers and others who wish to defend the Law should arm themselves with swords and staves and protect it in this manner.

“Good man, in the age of impurity and evil after I have passed away, the nation will fall into devastation and disorder, men will plunder and steal from one another, and the common people will be reduced to starvation. Because of hunger, many men at that time will declare their determination to leave their families and become monks. Men such as these may be called shavepates.⁴⁸ When this crowd of shavepates see any-

one who is attempting to protect the correct teaching, they will chase after him and drive him away, or even kill him or do him injury. That is why I now give permission for monks who observe the precepts to associate with and keep company with white-robed laymen who bear swords and staves. Even though they carry swords and staves, I would call them men who observe the precepts. But although they may carry swords and staves, they should never use them to take life.”

The Lotus Sutra says: “If a person fails to have faith but instead slanders this sutra, immediately he will destroy all the seeds for becoming a Buddha in this world. . . . When his life comes to an end he will enter the Avichi hell.”

The meaning of these passages from the sutras is perfectly clear. What need is there for me to add any further explanation? If we accept the words of the Lotus Sutra, then we must understand that slandering the Mahayana scriptures is more serious than committing the five cardinal sins countless times. Therefore, one who does so will be confined in the great citadel of the Avichi hell and cannot hope for release for an immeasurable length of time. According to the Nirvana Sutra, even though you may give alms to a person who has committed the five cardinal sins, you must never give alms to a person who has slandered the Law. One who kills so much as an ant will invariably fall into the three evil paths, but one who helps eradicate slander of the Law will ascend to the state from which there can be no retrogression. Thus the passage tells us that the monk Realization of Virtue was reborn as the Buddha Kashyapa, and that King Possessor of Virtue was reborn as the Buddha Shakyamuni.

The Lotus and the Nirvana sutras represent the very heart of the doctrines that Shakyamuni preached during the five periods of his teaching life.

Their warnings must be viewed with the utmost gravity. Who would fail to heed them? And yet those people who forget about the correct way and slander the Law put more trust than ever in Honen's *Nembutsu Chosen above All* and grow blinder than ever in their foolishness.

Thus some of them, remembering how their master looked in life, fashion wooden sculptures and paintings of him, while others, putting faith in his perverse teachings, carve woodblocks with which to print his ugly words. These writings they scatter about throughout the area bounded by the seas, carrying them beyond the cities and into the countryside until, wherever honor is paid, it is to the practices of this school, and wherever alms are given, it is to the priests of this school.

As a result, we see people cutting off the fingers of the images of Shakyamuni and refashioning them to form the gesture of Amida, or converting the temples formerly dedicated to Medicine Master, the Thus Come One of the Eastern Region, and replacing his statues with those of Amida, the Thus Come One of the Western Land. Or we find the ceremony of copying the Lotus Sutra, which had been carried out for over four hundred years on Mount Hiei, being suspended and the copying of the three Pure Land sutras substituted in its place, or the annual lectures⁴⁹ on the doctrines of the Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai being replaced by lectures on the teachings of Shan-tao. Indeed, the slanderous people and their associates are too numerous to count. Are they not destroyers of the Buddha? Are they not destroyers of the Law? Are they not destroyers of the Buddhist Order? And all their distorted teachings derive from *Nembutsu Chosen above All*.

Alas, how pitiful that people should turn their backs on the true words of prohibition spoken by the Thus Come

One [Shakyamuni]! How tragic that they should heed the gross and deluded words of this ignorant priest! If we hope to bring order and tranquillity to the world without further delay, we must put an end to these slanders of the Law that fill the country.

The guest said: If we are to put an end to these people who slander the Law and do away with those who violate the prohibitions of the Buddha, then are we to condemn them to death as described in the sutra passages you have just cited? If we do that, then we ourselves will be guilty of inflicting injury and death upon others, and will suffer the consequences, will we not?

In the Great Collection Sutra, the Buddha says: "If a person shaves his head and puts on clerical robes, then, whether that person observes the precepts or violates them, both heavenly and human beings should give him alms. In doing so, they are giving alms and support to me, for that person is my son. But if men beat that person, they are beating my son, and if they curse and insult him, they are reviling me."

If we stop to consider, we must realize that, regardless of whether one is good or bad, right or wrong, if he is a priest, then he deserves to have alms and nourishment extended to him. For how could one beat and insult the son and still not cause grief and sorrow to the father? The Brahmans of the Bamboo Staff school who killed the Venerable Maudgalyayana have for a long time been sunk in the depths of the hell of incessant suffering. Because Devadatta murdered the nun Utpalavarna, he has for a long time gasped in the flames of the Avichi hell. Examples from earlier ages make the matter perfectly clear, and later ages fear this offense most of all. You speak of punishing those who slander the Law, but to do so would violate the Buddha's

prohibitions. I can hardly believe that such a course would be right. How can you justify that?

The host said: You have clearly seen the sutra passages that I have cited, and yet you can ask a question like that! Are they beyond the power of your mind to comprehend? Or do you fail to understand the reasoning behind them? I certainly have no intention of censuring the sons of the Buddha. My only hatred is for the act of slandering the Law. According to the Buddhist teachings, prior to Shakyamuni slanderous monks would have incurred the death penalty. But since the time of Shakyamuni, the One Who Can Endure, the giving of alms to slanderous monks is forbidden in the sutra teachings. Now if all the four kinds of Buddhists within the four seas and the ten thousand lands would only cease giving alms to wicked priests and instead all come over to the side of the good, then how could any more troubles rise to plague us, or disasters come to confront us?

With this the guest moved off his mat in a gesture of respect, straightened the collar of his robe, and said: The Buddhist teachings vary greatly, and it is difficult to investigate each doctrine in full. I have had many doubts and perplexities, and have been unable to distinguish right from wrong.

Nevertheless, this work by the Sage Honen, *Nembutsu Chosen above All*, does in fact exist. And it lumps together all the various Buddhas, sutras, bodhisattvas, and deities, and says that one should "discard, close, ignore, and abandon" them. The meaning of the text is perfectly clear. And as a result of this, the sages have departed from the nation, the benevolent deities have left their dwelling places, hunger and thirst fill the world, and disease and pestilence spread widely.

Now, by citing passages from a wide variety of scriptures, you have clearly

demonstrated the rights and wrongs of the matter. Therefore, I have completely forsaken my earlier mistaken convictions, and my ears and eyes have been opened on point after point.

There can be no doubt that all people, from the ruler on down to the general populace, rejoice in and desire the stability of the nation and the peace of the world. If we can quickly put an end to the alms that are given to these *icchantikas* and insure that continuing support is instead given to the host of true priests and nuns, if we can still these "white waves"⁵⁰ that trouble the ocean of the Buddha and cut down these "green groves" that overgrow the mountain of the Law, then the world may become as peaceful as it was in the golden ages of Fu Hsi and Shen Nung, and the nation may flourish as it did under the sage rulers Yao and Shun.⁵¹ After that, there will be time to dip into the waters of the Law and to decide which are shallow doctrines and which are deep, and to pay honor to the pillars and beams that support the house of the Buddha.

The host exclaimed with delight: The dove has changed into a hawk, the sparrow into a clam.⁵² How gratifying! You have associated with a friend in the orchid room and have become as straight as mugwort growing among hemp.⁵³ If you will truly give consideration to the troubles I have been describing and put entire faith in these words of mine, then the winds will blow gently, the waves will be calm, and in no time at all we will enjoy bountiful harvests.

But a person's heart may change with the times, and the nature of a thing may alter with its surroundings. Just as the moon on the water will be tossed about by the waves, or the soldiers in the vanguard will be cowed by the swords of the enemy, so, although at this moment you may say you believe in my words, I fear that later

you will forget them completely.

Now if we wish first of all to bring security to the nation and to pray for our present and future lives, then we must hasten to examine and consider the situation and take measures as soon as possible to remedy it.

Why do I say this? Because, of the seven types of disasters described in the Medicine Master Sutra, five have already occurred. Only two have yet to appear, the calamity of invasion from foreign lands and the calamity of revolt within one's own domain. And of the three calamities mentioned in the Great Collection Sutra, two have already made their appearance. Only one remains, the disaster of warfare.

The different types of disaster and calamity enumerated in the Golden Light Sutra have arisen one after the other. Only that described as marauders from other regions invading and plundering the nation has yet to materialize. This is the only trouble that has not yet come. And of the seven disasters listed in the Benevolent Kings Sutra, six are now upon us in full force. Only one has not yet appeared, the calamity that occurs "when enemies rise up on all four sides and invade the nation."

Moreover, as the Benevolent Kings Sutra says: "When a nation becomes disordered, it is the spirits that first show signs of rampancy. Because the spirits become rampant, all the people of the nation become disordered."

Now if we examine the present situation carefully in the light of this passage, we will see that the various spirits have for some time been rampant, and many of the people have perished. If the first predicted misfortune in the sutra has already occurred, as is obvious, then how can we doubt that the later disasters will follow? If, in punishment for the evil doctrines that are upheld, the troubles that have yet to appear should fall upon us one after the

other, then it will be too late to act, will it not?

Emperors and kings have their foundation in the state and bring peace and order to the age; ministers and commanders hold possession of their fields and gardens and supply the needs of the world. But if marauders come from other regions to invade the nation, or if revolt breaks out within the domain and people's lands are seized and plundered, how can there be anything but terror and confusion? If the nation is destroyed and people's homes are wiped out, then where can one flee for safety? If you care anything about your personal security, you should first of all pray for order and tranquillity throughout the four quarters of the land, should you not?

It seems to me that when people are in this world they all fear what their lot may be in the life to come. So it is that they put their faith in distorted doctrines and pay honor to slanderous teachings. It distresses me that they should be so confused about right and wrong, and at the same time I feel pity that, having embraced Buddhism, they should have chosen the wrong kind. With the power of faith that is in their hearts, why must they recklessly give credence to distorted doctrines? If they do not shake off these delusions that they cling to but continue to harbor erroneous views, then they will quickly leave this world of the living and surely fall into the hell of incessant suffering.

Thus the Great Collection Sutra says: "Though for countless existences in the past the ruler of a state may have practiced the giving of alms, observed the precepts, and cultivated wisdom, if he sees that my teaching is in danger of perishing and stands idly by without doing anything to protect it, then all the inestimable roots of goodness that he has planted through the practices just mentioned will be entirely wiped

out . . . Before long, the ruler will fall gravely ill, and after his life has come to an end, he will be reborn in the great hell. . . . And the same fate will befall the ruler's consort, his heir, the high ministers of the state, the lords of cities, the village heads and generals, the magistrates of districts, and the other officials."

The Benevolent Kings Sutra states: "If persons destroy the teachings of the Buddha, they will have no filial sons, no harmony with their six kinds of relatives,⁵⁴ and no aid from the heavenly deities and dragons. Disease and evil demons will come day after day to torment them, disasters will descend on them incessantly, and misfortunes will dog them wherever they go. And when they die, they will fall into the realms of hell, hungry spirits, and animals. Even if they should be reborn as human beings, they will be destined to become soldiers or slaves. Retribution will follow as an echo follows a sound, or a shadow follows a form. Someone writing at night may put out the lamp, but the words he has written will still remain. It is the same with the effect of the deeds we perform in the threefold world."

The second volume of the Lotus Sutra says, "If a person fails to have faith but instead slanders this sutra . . . When his life comes to an end he will enter the Avichi hell." And in the "Never Disparaging" chapter in the seventh volume, it says, "For a thousand kalpas they underwent great suffering in the Avichi hell."

In the Nirvana Sutra, we read: "If a person separates himself from good friends, refuses to listen to the correct teaching, and instead embraces evil teachings, then as a result he will sink down into the Avichi hell, where the size of his body will become eighty-four thousand yojanas in total length and breadth."⁵⁵

When we examine this wide variety

of sutras, we find that they all stress how grave a matter it is to slander the correct teaching. How pitiful that people should all go out of the gate of the correct teaching and enter so deep into the prison of these distorted doctrines! How stupid that they should fall one after another into the snares of these evil doctrines and remain for so long entangled in this net of slanderous teachings! They lose their way in these mists and miasmas, and sink down amid the raging flames of hell. How could one not grieve? How could one not suffer?

Therefore, you must quickly reform the tenets that you hold in your heart and embrace the one true vehicle, the single good doctrine [of the Lotus Sutra]. If you do so, then the threefold world will become the Buddha land, and how could a Buddha land ever decline? The regions in the ten directions will all become treasure realms, and how could a treasure realm ever suffer harm? If you live in a country that knows no decline or diminution, in a land that suffers no harm or disruption, then your body will find peace and security, and your mind will be calm and untroubled. You must believe my words; heed what I say!

The guest said: Since it concerns both this life and the lives to come, who could fail to be cautious in a matter such as this? Who could fail to agree with you? Now when I examine the passages you have cited from the sutras and see exactly what the Buddha has said, I realize that slandering the Law is a very grave fault indeed, that violating the Law is in truth a terrible offense. I have put all my faith in one Buddha alone, Amida, and rejected all the other Buddhas. I have honored the three Pure Land sutras and set aside the other sutras. But this was not due to any distorted ideas of my own conception. I was simply obeying the words of the eminent men of the past. And the

same is true of all the other persons in the ten directions.

But now I realize that to do so means to exhaust oneself in futile efforts in this life and to fall into the Avichi hell in the life to come. The texts you have cited are perfectly clear on this point, and their arguments are detailed—they leave no room for doubt. From now on, with your kind instruction to guide me, I wish to continue dispelling the ignorance from my

mind. I hope we may set about as quickly as possible taking measures to deal with these slanders against the Law and to bring peace to the world without delay, thus insuring that we may live in safety in this life and enjoy good fortune in the life to come. But it is not enough that I alone should accept and have faith in your words—we must see to it that others as well are warned of their errors.



Background

On the twenty-eighth day of the fourth month, 1253, Nichiren Daishonin established the teaching of Nam-myoho-enge-kyo at Seicho-ji temple in his native province of Awa, and later he returned to Kamakura, the seat of the military government, to begin propagation. In examining the records, we find that in those days the era names were changed frequently. The year 1253 was in the Kencho era. Three years later, in 1256, the era name was changed to Kogen, and the next year, to Shoka. Then, two years later, in 1259, it was changed to Shogen, the following year to Bunno, and the year after that to Kocho. In the five years from 1256 to 1261, the era name changed five times. An era name was usually changed only on the accession of a new emperor, or when some natural disaster of severe proportions occurred; the frequency of these changes attests to the magnitude of the disasters that struck Japan during this period.

Soon after the Daishonin's arrival, Kamakura and the country as a whole faced a series of disasters and conflicts that served to emphasize his conviction that the Latter Day of the Law had indeed been entered upon. On the sixth day of the eighth month of 1256,

torrential rainstorms caused floods and landslides, destroying crops and devastating much of Kamakura. In the ninth month of the same year, an epidemic swept through the city, taking many lives. During the fifth, eighth, and eleventh months of 1257, violent earthquakes rocked the city, and the sixth and seventh months witnessed a disastrous drought. Most frightful of all was an earthquake of unprecedented scale that occurred on the twenty-third day of the eighth month. The year 1258 witnessed no lessening of natural calamities. The eighth month saw storms destroy crops throughout the nation, and floods in Kamakura drowned numerous people. In the tenth month of the same year, Kamakura was visited by heavy rains and severe floods. In the first month of 1258, fires consumed Jufuku-ji temple, and in 1259, epidemics and famine were rampant, and a violent rainstorm decimated crops.

Nichiren Daishonin sought answers to the cause of these disasters in the scriptural writings of Buddhism. In an effort to clarify it, he went to Jisso-ji temple at Iwamoto in Suruga Province, and he stayed there from 1258 through the middle of 1260. As a major temple of the Tendai school in eastern Japan,

Jisso-ji housed many important sutras in its scripture library. The Daishonin pored over them all.

As a result, Nichiren Daishonin found evidence for his theory in such sutras as the Benevolent Kings, Medicine Master, Great Collection, and Golden Light. He quotes passages from these sutras in the present text, *On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land*, chronologically the first of his five major works.

The work was originally written in classical Chinese and submitted to Hojo Tokiyori through the offices of high-ranking government official Yadoya Mitsunori on the sixteenth day of the seventh month in the first year of Bunno (1260). Tokiyori was then living in retirement, but was still the most influential member of the ruling Hojo clan. The work occasioned no immediate reaction, and no official response was made to the Daishonin. But the members of the government were incensed at the rational but unrelenting attack that the work made on the Pure Land teachings of Honen and his followers. Government officials who were Pure Land followers apparently encouraged an attack made on the Daishonin's dwelling at Matsubagayatsu in Kamakura on the twenty-seventh day of the eighth month. The Daishonin narrowly escaped and made his way to the province of Shimosa to stay at the home of a follower. He returned to Kamakura early in the following year, 1261. He remained continually under the threat of persecution and was summarily banished to Izu on the twelfth day of the fifth month of the same year.

The work consists of a dialogue between a host and a visitor. The host

represents Nichiren Daishonin, and the visitor, it is thought, represents Hojo Tokiyori. At the outset, the host lays the blame for the disasters that have befallen the country on the belief in an erroneous religion, the Pure Land teachings of Honen. Presented are numerous scriptural references to disasters that will befall a nation that follows false teachings. The Daishonin puts particular emphasis on a passage in the Medicine Master Sutra that describes seven types of disasters that will strike such a nation. Of these calamities, he points out, five have already occurred, and two, the "calamity of invasion from foreign lands" and the "calamity of revolt within one's own domain," have yet to occur. The Daishonin cautions that these will come about if the doctrines of the Lotus Sutra are not followed. Later, the prophecies of internal strife and foreign invasion were fulfilled when Hojo Tokisuke revolted against his younger half brother, Regent Hojo Tokimune, in 1272, and when the Mongols attacked Japan twice, in 1274 and 1281.

In terms of its view of the relationship between the people's religious beliefs and the realization of a peaceful society, *On Establishing the Correct Teaching* holds an important position in Nichiren Daishonin's writings. The Daishonin lived at a time of authoritarian government, and he probably felt that through an appeal to the most powerful members of the government he could help bring about a reformation of society. That his appeal was ignored only spurred his unremitting effort to propagate his teaching for the peace and happiness of society, a task he would pursue to the end of his life.

Notes

1. Reference is to a passage in Shantao's *Praising the Meditation to Behold the Buddha*, in which he says that calling on the

name of Amida Buddha serves as a sword to cut off earthly desires, karma, and suffering.

2. One of the twelve vows of the Buddha Medicine Master, which appear in the Medicine Master Sutra. As a bodhisattva he made these vows to cure all illnesses and lead all people to enlightenment.

3. Lotus Sutra, chap. 23. This is a reference to a practice of the Tendai school.

4. Benevolent Kings Sutra. This is another reference to the Tendai school, which held a ritual of prayer based on this passage.

5. According to the Benevolent Kings Sutra, a type of ceremony originally held by the god Shakra to defeat the evil king Born from the Crown of the Head.

6. Ritual in which priests of the True Word school placed five jars, colored white, blue, red, yellow, and black, on a platform and put into them, respectively, gold, silver, lapis lazuli, pearls, and crystal. In addition, they placed in these jars the five grains, five herbs, and five types of incense, and then filled them with water and set flowers in them. The ritual of filling the jars in this manner was believed to drive away disasters.

7. Reference is to the practice of the Zen school.

8. The names of the seven guardian spirits appear in the Mysterious Spells for Eliminating the Illnesses of the Five Components Sutra.

9. The five mighty bodhisattvas enumerated in the Benevolent Kings Sutra. According to this sutra, if a ruler embraces the correct teaching of Buddhism, these five powerful bodhisattvas will protect him and the people of his country.

10. Jupiter, Mars, Venus, Mercury, and Saturn.

11. This refers to an oracle said to have been received from Great Bodhisattva Hachiman in the reign of the fifty-first sovereign, Emperor Heizei (r. 806–809). In it Hachiman vowed to protect the nation until the reign of the hundredth sovereign. *On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land* was written in the reign of the ninetieth sovereign, Emperor Kameyama (r. 1259–1274).

12. The orchid room indicates the dwelling of a virtuous person.

13. The heavens of purity refer to the five highest heavens in the world of form, the second division of the threefold world, located above the world of desire.

14. Sweet, pungent, sour, bitter, salty,

astrigent, and faint flavors.

15. The power of earth that nourishes grains and fruits, the power of living beings that raise the people and vitalize human society, and the power of the Buddhist Law that brings about peace and happiness.

16. In the Great Collection Sutra, the roe deer is described as a small deer so timid that it flees immediately whenever danger approaches, without giving a thought to the welfare of its parents or others.

17. Anointed kings refer to the rulers of major kingdoms. In ancient India, when the ruler of a powerful kingdom ascended the throne, the rulers of smaller kingdoms and their ministers poured water on his head.

18. The Metal Star is Venus. The Broom Star, the Fire Star, and the Water Star refer to comets, Mars, and Mercury, respectively. Most of the other stars mentioned make up parts of the twenty-eight celestial houses.

19. Demon fire refers to fires of unknown origin attributed to the anger of demons. Dragon fire means fires ascribed to the wrath of dragons, who were thought to be able to change water into fire at will. Heavenly fire is said to be caused by the wrath of heaven, and mountain god fire—possibly a reference to volcanic eruptions—by the wrath of mountain gods. Human fire refers to fires caused by human error or negligence. Tree fire probably indicates forest fires, and bandit fire means fires set by invaders.

20. According to the Japanese lunar calendar, the sixth month corresponds to the last month of summer.

21. Black, red, and green winds refer to winds that stir up and convey clouds of sand, while heavenly and earthly winds correspond to tornados or cyclones. Fire winds indicate hot air in the dry season, and water winds refer to rainstorms.

22. Wheat, rice, beans, and two types of millet. Also a generic term for all grains, which is the meaning here.

23. Bandits who do evil amid the confusion of disasters caused by fire, water, and wind, respectively. Demon bandits are said to be abductors.

24. The original word for evil spirits is *gedo*, which literally means “outside of the way” and usually indicates heretics and non-Buddhists. Here the word means something or someone that brings about disas-

ters. Hence the expression “evil spirits.”

25. This refers to the tradition that Emperor Ming (28–75) dreamed of a golden man levitating above the garden. He awakened and asked his ministers about the dream. One of them said that he had once heard of the birth of a sage in the western region (India) during the reign of King Chao of the Chou dynasty, and that this sage had been called the Buddha. The emperor sent eighteen envoys to the western region in order to obtain the Buddha’s teachings. And at the request of these envoys, two Indian Buddhist monks came to China in C.E. 67 with Buddhist scriptures and images on the backs of white horses.

26. In 587, while still a youth, Jōgu, or Prince Shotoku, is said to have joined with Soga no Umako in attacking and killing Mononobe no Moriya, a powerful minister who opposed Buddhism and the Soga clan.

27. “Those who belong to the lineage of Shariputra” refers to those who attach greater importance to practicing meditation than to abiding by the teachings. “Those who adhere to the traditions of Haklenayashas” refers to those who hold doctrinal study to be more important than the practice of meditation. Haklenayashas was the twenty-third of Shakyamuni’s twenty-four successors. Kukkutapada is present-day Kurkihar, located about thirty kilometers northeast of Buddhagaya. Mahakashyapa is said to have transmitted the teachings to Ananda and to have died on this mountain.

28. Lotus Sutra, chap. 13. This is often called the “twenty-line verse of the ‘Encouraging Devotion’ chapter,” which enumerates the types of persecutions that will be met in propagating the Lotus Sutra in the fearful latter age. These persecutions were later summarized as the three powerful enemies by Miao-lo of China.

29. The sages of the four stages refer to the Buddhist teachers who embrace and propagate the correct teaching and benefit the people. Often this expression refers to the sages of Hinayana, who are classified into four ranks according to their level of understanding, but generally it indicates those successors of the Buddha who propagate his teachings and lead people to salvation.

30. “Concentrated meditation and unconcentrated meditation” refers to the sixteen types of meditation that are described

as practices leading people to rebirth in the Pure Land. In the first thirteen types of meditation, one concentrates one’s mind on the splendor of the Pure Land and the features of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas. These are regarded as “concentrated meditation.” The other three types of meditation can be carried out even if one’s mind is not focused. Therefore, they are called “unconcentrated meditation.”

31. The three kinds of mind refer to the three requisites for reaching the Pure Land: a sincere mind, a mind of deep faith, and a mind resolved to attain the Pure Land.

32. This refers to the eighteenth of the forty-eight vows, described in the Buddha Infinite Life Sutra, that Bodhisattva Dharmatraya, the name of Amida Buddha before his enlightenment, made to bring all people to the Pure Land, except those mentioned here.

33. Lotus Sutra, chap. 3.

34. The two attendants are the bodhisattvas Perceiver of the World’s Sounds and Great Power.

35. Shakyamuni and Medicine Master were Buddhas whose images were enshrined in the head temple of the Tendai school on Mount Hiei. The images of the bodhisattvas Space Treasury and Earth Repository were also enshrined on Mount Hiei. Space Treasury is a bodhisattva said to possess immeasurable wisdom and blessings. Earth Repository is a bodhisattva entrusted by Shakyamuni Buddha with the mission of saving people.

36. At the ceremony of the Lotus Sutra, Shakyamuni Buddha transferred his teachings to the bodhisattvas of the theoretical teaching led by Medicine King and entrusted them with the mission of propagating them in the Middle Day of the Law. It is said that Bodhisattva Medicine King was later born as the Great Teacher T’ien-t’ai in China and the Great Teacher Dengyo in Japan. On the basis of the parable of the skilled physician in the “Life Span” chapter of the Lotus Sutra, T’ien-t’ai and Dengyo used the Buddha Medicine Master, the lord of the Pure Emerald World in the eastern part of the universe, as an object of devotion for their school. In this sense, to neglect the Buddha Medicine Master and revere the Buddha Amida is to ignore Shakyamuni Buddha’s transmission.

37. The four treatises refer to Nagarjuna’s *Treatise on the Middle Way* and *Treatise*

on the *Twelve Gates*, and *The Treatise on the Great Perfection of Wisdom* also attributed to Nagarjuna, as well as *The One-Hundred-Verse Treatise* attributed to Aryadeva.

38. T'ien-t'ai's three major works: *Great Concentration and Insight*, *The Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sutra*, and *The Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sutra*, consisting of thirty volumes, and Miao-lo's three commentaries on them, which also consist of thirty volumes.

39. According to Honen's biography, in a dream he received permission from Shantao to spread the practice of calling on the name of Amida and was entrusted with the Pure Land teachings.

40. "An earlier period" refers to the period in which Honen propagated the Pure Land teaching.

41. Juan Chi (210-263) was one of the Seven Worthies of the Bamboo Grove, a group of scholars who, in the troubled political times at the end of the Wei dynasty, are said to have gathered in a bamboo grove to drink, play music, write poems, and discuss philosophy, particularly the Taoist philosophy of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu. Juan Chi is also known as a noted poet.

42. Uighurs: A Turkish people of Central Asia who prospered from the eighth through the mid-ninth century.

43. In 1221, the Retired Emperor Gotoba played a leading role in a struggle for power between the imperial court in Kyoto and the Hojo clan in Kamakura, an incident known as the Jokyu Disturbance. The imperial forces were defeated, and he and two other retired emperors were sent into exile.

44. This statement by the guest, who represents the highest political authority in the land, reflects his position as a ruler who puts matters of government first. In contrast, the Daishonin teaches that the refutation of misleading teachings and the propagation of the correct teaching are the surest way to establish the true security of the nation.

45. The four grave offenses are those particularly grave among the ten evil offenses: killing, stealing, committing adultery, and lying.

46. An anagamin, or "non-returned," is one who has reached the third of the four stages that voice-hearers can attain. The fourth and highest stage is that of arhat.

47. Kashyapa was one of the seven ancient Buddhas or Buddhas of the past. Of these seven, the Buddha Kashyapa was the sixth to appear, and Shakyamuni Buddha was the seventh.

48. Shavepate refers here to someone who has received tonsure and become a monk for self-serving reasons, such as to gain personal security or financial comfort, and is negligent in the practice and study of Buddhism.

49. Lectures held on the anniversary of T'ien-t'ai's death on the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month of each year.

50. A Chinese term referring to rebels and outlaws. Here "white waves" indicates Honen and other priests of the Pure Land school, as well as the followers of other misleading schools. The "ocean of the Buddha" signifies Shakyamuni's teachings. The phrases "green groves" and "mountain of the Law" likewise refer to Honen and his followers and Shakyamuni's teachings, respectively.

51. Fu Hsi, Shen Nung, Yao, and Shun are legendary sage rulers of ancient China.

52. Expressions taken from early Chinese literature that indicate dramatic change.

53. "A friend in the orchid room" indicates a person of virtue. The implication is that the company of a virtuous person works as a good influence, just as one is imbued with fragrance on entering a room filled with orchids. It is said that mugwort supported by hemp plants grows upright.

54. The six kinds of relatives refer to a father, a mother, an elder brother, a younger brother, a wife, and a son or daughter.

55. According to the Nirvana Sutra, the place called the Avichi hell, or the hell of incessant suffering, measures eighty-four thousand yojanas in total length and breadth. It is said that when a person falls into this hell he or she alone is sufficient to fill it up completely. The great size of the body symbolizes the magnitude of the pain one suffers in this hell.

The Postscript to “On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land”



I COMPILED the above work in the first year of the Bunno era (1260), with the cyclical sign *kanoe-saru*. That is, I began the work during the Shoka era (1257–1259) and completed it in the first year of Bunno.

In the first year of the Shoka era, cyclical sign *hinoto-mi*, on the twenty-third day of the eighth month, at the time when the hour of the dog gives way to the hour of the boar (around 9:00 P.M.), there was a severe earthquake. Observing this event, I conceived the work. Later, in the first year of Bunno, cyclical sign *kanoe-saru*, on the sixteenth day of the seventh month, I presented it to His Lordship, the lay priest of Saimyo-ji,¹ who is now deceased, by way of the lay priest Yadoya.² Still later, in the first year of the Bun’ei era (1264), cyclical sign *kinoe-ne*, on the fifth day of the seventh month, when a great comet appeared, I became even more certain of the origins of these disasters. Then, on the eighteenth day of the intercalary first

month of the fifth year of Bun’ei, cyclical sign *tsuchinoe-tatsu*, nine years after the first year of Bunno [when I submitted *On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land*], an official letter came from the great kingdom of the Mongols that lies to the west, threatening to attack our country. Again, in the sixth year of the same era (1269), a second letter arrived. Thus the prediction that I made in my memorial [*On Establishing the Correct Teaching*] has already proved to be true. In view of this, we may suppose that the predictions I made will continue to come true in the future as well.

This work of mine has now been substantiated by fact. But this is not solely due to Nichiren’s power. Rather it has come about as a response to the true words of the Lotus Sutra.

I copied this work on the eighth day of the twelfth month in the sixth year of Bun’ei (1269), cyclical sign *tsuchinoto-mi*.



Background

In 1269, Mongol emissaries again arrived at Dazaifu, the government outpost on the southern island of Kyushu, pressing for an answer to their earlier demands. Nichiren Daishonin is believed to have sent off another round of letters to high officials, which again failed to elicit a response. On the

eighth day of the twelfth month of 1269, the Daishonin copied *On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land* and appended this postscript. In the postscript, he warns that the prophecies set forth in that document nine years earlier are now coming true.

Notes

1. The lay priest of Saimyo-ji indicates Hojo Tokiyori (1227–1263), the fifth regent of the Kamakura shogunate. He became regent in 1246, but relinquished the regency to Hojo Nagatoki and took holy orders under Doryu, a naturalized Zen priest from China, in 1256. As a lay priest he lived

at Saimyo-ji temple, which he had built, but he continued as the de facto ruler. He was called the lay priest of Saimyo-ji.

2. Yadoya Mitsunori, also known as the lay priest Yadoya, was a ranking official close to Hojo Tokiyori.