

**EXCERPTS FROM NICHIREN'S RECTIFICATION FOR THE PEACE OF THE  
NATION (RISSHŌ ANKOKU RON)**

**Introduction**

Nichiren (1222-1282) was a reformer Buddhist monk in Kamakura era Japan who established his own sect (the Nichiren sect) based on devotion to the Lotus Sūtra and chanting the title of the sūtra Namu Myōhō Renge Kyō. Nichiren was often controversial and criticized by government authorities because of his prophecies that social problems and natural disasters were based on a failure to adhere to his form of Buddhist practice. He considered himself a reincarnation of the Bodhisattva Jōgyō. His last sermon, *Risshō ankoku ron* ("On Establishing the Correct Teaching and Pacifying the State"), ca. 1250, is one of his most important treatises.

**Selected Document Excerpts with Questions**

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(Risshō Ankoku Ron)**

The Sūtra of the Humane King (Ninnō kyō) states: "When a nation becomes disordered, it is the spirits which first show signs of rampancy. Because these 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 heir apparent, and the other princes and government officials all quarrel with each other over right and wrong. Heaven and earth manifest prodigies and strange occurrences; the twenty-eight constellations, the stars, the sun and the moon appear at irregular times and in irregular positions, and numerous outlaws rise up." ...

But because of this book written by Hōnen, this *Senchakushū*, the Lord Buddha Shākyamuni is forgotten and all honor is paid to Amida, the Buddha of the Western Land. The Lord Buddha's transmission of the Law is ignored and Yakushi, the Buddha of the Eastern Region, is neglected. All attention is paid to the three works in four volumes of the Pure Land scriptures, and all other wonderful teachings that Shākyamuni proclaimed throughout the five periods of his preaching life are cast aside. ... As a result, the halls of the Buddha fall into ruin, scarcely a wisp of smoke rises above their mossy tiles; and the monks' quarters stand empty and dilapidated, the dew deep on the grasses in their courtyards. And in spite of such conditions, no one gives thought to protecting the Law or to restoring the temples. ... If people favor perverse doctrines and forget what is correct, can the benevolent deities be anything but

**Primary Source Document with Questions (DBQs) on**

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angry? If people cast aside doctrines that are all-encompassing and take up those that are incomplete, 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 doctrine that is the source of all the trouble! ...

[Yampolsky, *Writings of Nichiren*, pp. 13-41]

**Questions:**

1. What is Nichiren's view of the Nation (Japan)?
2. What does Nichiren say is the impact of Hōnen's teaching on Japan?
3. What is Nichiren's alternative to the Ten Thousand Prayers?