

The Object of Devotion for Observing the Mind
Established in the Fifth Five-Hundred-Year Period
after the Thus Come One's Passing

Nichiren, the shramana of Japan



VOLUME five of *Great Concentration and Insight* states: "Life at each moment¹ is endowed with the Ten Worlds. At the same time, each of the Ten Worlds is endowed with all Ten Worlds, so that an entity of life actually possesses one hundred worlds. Each of these worlds in turn possesses thirty realms,² which means that in the one hundred worlds there are three thousand realms. The three thousand realms of existence are all possessed by life in a single moment. If there is no life, that is the end of the matter. But if there is the slightest bit of life, it contains all the three thousand realms. . . . This is what we mean when we speak of the 'region of the unfathomable.'"

Note: "[Three thousand] realms" might also read "[three thousand] factors," but the number is the same. The only difference lies in the method of expansion. Another copy of *Great Concentration and Insight* states, "Each world is endowed with the three realms of existence."³

Question: Is the principle of three thousand realms in a single moment of life explained in *The Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sutra*?

Answer: Miao-lo states that it is not.

Question: Then is it explained in

The Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sutra?

Answer: Miao-lo states that it is not.

Question: What are his exact words?

Answer: He says, "None of them reveal that a single moment of life contains the three thousand realms."⁴

Question: Is this principle mentioned in any of the first four volumes of *Great Concentration and Insight*?

Answer: No, it is not.

Question: What proof is there of this?

Answer: Miao-lo says, "When at last he revealed the method of meditation in *Great Concentration and Insight*, he at the same time employed the 'three thousand realms' as a way to understand."⁵

Question: Volume two of *Profound Meaning* states, "Each of the Ten Worlds contains the other nine, and in those one hundred worlds are one thousand factors." Volume one of *Words and Phrases* states, "Each sense field⁶ is endowed with the Ten Worlds, each of which again is endowed with all of the ten within itself. Since each of those hundred worlds is endowed with the ten factors, the total becomes one thousand." *The Profound Meaning of the "Perceiver of the World's Sounds" Chapter*⁷ comments, "The Ten Worlds are all

mutually inclusive, thus making one hundred worlds. One thousand factors are inherent in life. Even though these are not visible, life by its nature possesses all of them.”

Isn't the principle of three thousand realms in a single moment of life mentioned in the first four volumes of *Great Concentration and Insight*?

Answer: Miao-lo says it is not.

Question: What does he say exactly?

Answer: Volume five of *The Annotations on "Great Concentration and Insight"* reads: "In comparison with the chapter on correct meditation,⁸ the preceding chapters fall short of describing the practice in its entirety. But they do contain the twenty-five preparatory exercises that lead to understanding, and thus they provide the expedient means to the correct practice. The first six chapters, then, are all meant to bring about understanding." Also in the same volume: "When at last he revealed the method of meditation in *Great Concentration and Insight*, he at the same time employed the 'three thousand realms' as a way to understand. This principle is the ultimate revelation of his final and supreme teaching. That is why Chang-an states in his introduction [to *Great Concentration and Insight*], '*Great Concentration and Insight* reveals the teaching that T'ien-t'ai Chih-che himself practiced in the depths of his being.' He had good reason for saying this. I hope that those who read this work and seek to understand it will not allow their minds to be distracted by anything else."

T'ien-t'ai Chih-che propagated his teachings for thirty years. During the first twenty-nine years, expounding the doctrines contained in *Profound Meaning, Words and Phrases*, and other works, he explained the five periods and the eight teachings as well as the hundred worlds and thousand factors. He not only refuted the erroneous doctrines of the preceding more than five hun-

dred years, but also clarified matters that had not been fully explained by the Buddhist scholars of India. The Great Teacher Chang-an states: "Even the great scholars of India were not in a class with him, and the Chinese teachers—well, one need hardly mention them. This is no idle boast—the doctrine he taught was indeed of such excellence."⁹ How pitiful that T'ien-t'ai's successors allowed those thieves, the founders of the Flower Garland and True Word schools, to steal the priceless gem of three thousand realms in a single moment of life and then, ironically, became their followers! The Great Teacher Chang-an was fully aware this would happen when he remarked in sorrow, "If this teaching should be lost, it would be a tragedy for the future."¹⁰

Question: What is the difference between the principle of the hundred worlds and thousand factors and that of three thousand realms in a single moment of life?

Answer: The former concerns only sentient beings, but the latter applies to both sentient and insentient beings.

Question: If insentient beings are endowed with the ten factors, is it correct to assume that plants and trees have minds and can attain Buddhahood like sentient beings?

Answer: This is a matter that is difficult to believe and difficult to understand. T'ien-t'ai defined two points that are "difficult to believe and difficult to understand." One lies in the realm of doctrinal teachings and the other in the realm of meditative practice. With regard to the former, in the sutras preached before the Lotus Sutra we read that persons of the two vehicles and icchantikas, or persons of incorrigible disbelief, are forever barred from attaining Buddhahood, and that Shakyamuni Buddha, the lord of teachings, attained enlightenment for the first time in this world. Nevertheless,

we find that the theoretical and the essential teachings of the Lotus Sutra repudiate both these statements. One Buddha who says two things as opposite as fire and water—who could believe him? This is the point that is “difficult to believe and difficult to understand” in the realm of doctrinal teachings.

The point that is “difficult to believe and difficult to understand” in the realm of meditative practice concerns the principle of the hundred worlds and thousand factors and that of three thousand realms in a single moment of life, which explains that even insentient beings are endowed with the ten factors of life, and that they are endowed with both material and spiritual aspects.

Both the Buddhist and the non-Buddhist scriptures permit wooden or painted images to be used as objects of devotion, but T’ien-t’ai and his followers were the first to explain the principle behind this practice. If a piece of wood or paper lacked the cause and effect [of Buddhahood] in either the material or the spiritual aspect, it would be futile to rely on it as an object of devotion.

Question: What authority do you have for stating that a plant, a tree, or a land manifests cause and effect, or the ten factors?

Answer: Volume five of *Great Concentration and Insight* says, “The realm of the environment also has the ten factors. Thus an evil land has appearance, nature, entity, power, and so on.” Volume six of *The Annotations on “The Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sutra”* states: “Appearance exists only in what is material; nature exists only in what is spiritual. Entity, power, influence, and relation in principle combine both the material and the spiritual. Internal cause and latent effect are purely spiritual; manifest effect exists only in what is material.” *The Diamond Scalpel*¹¹

states: “A plant, a tree, a pebble, a speck of dust—each has the Buddha nature, and each is endowed with cause and effect and with the function to manifest and the wisdom to realize its Buddha nature.”

Question: You have told us about the sources of this doctrine. Now what is meant by the observation of the mind?

Answer: The observation of the mind means to observe one’s own mind and to find the Ten Worlds within it. This is what is called observing the mind. For example, though we can see the six sense organs of other people, we cannot see our own. Only when we look into a clear mirror do we see, for the first time, that we are endowed with all six sense organs. Similarly, various sutras make reference here and there to the six paths and the four noble worlds [that constitute the Ten Worlds], but only in the clear mirror of the Lotus Sutra and of the Great Teacher T’ien-t’ai’s *Great Concentration and Insight* can one see one’s own Ten Worlds, hundred worlds and thousand factors, and three thousand realms in a single moment of life.

Question: What part of the Lotus Sutra do you refer to, and what section of T’ien-t’ai’s commentaries?

Answer: The “Expedient Means” chapter in volume one of the Lotus Sutra states, “The Buddhas wish to open the door of Buddha wisdom to all living beings.” This refers to the world of Buddhahood inherent in the nine worlds. The “Life Span” chapter states: “Thus, since I attained Buddhahood, an extremely long period of time has passed. My life span is an immeasurable number of asamkhya kalpas, and during that time I have constantly abided here without ever entering extinction. Good men, originally I practiced the bodhisattva way, and the life span that I acquired then has yet to come to an end but will last

twice the number of years that have already passed.” Here the sutra refers to the nine worlds inherent in Buddhahood.

The sutra states, “Devadatta will be called the Thus Come One Heavenly King.”¹² This indicates that the world of hell also contains Buddhahood. In the sutra it says, “There were demon daughters, the first named Lamba . . . [The Buddha said to them], ‘If you can shield and guard those who accept and uphold the mere name of the Lotus Sutra, your merit will be immeasurable.’”¹³ Thus, the world of hungry spirits contains all the Ten Worlds. When the sutra speaks of “the dragon girl . . . attaining impartial and correct enlightenment,”¹⁴ it is indicating that the world of animals has the Ten Worlds. The sutra says that, by listening to one verse or one phrase of the sutra, the asura king Balin will attain supreme perfect enlightenment.¹⁵ Thus the world of asuras contains the Ten Worlds. The sutra says, “If there are persons who for the sake of the Buddha fashion and set up images . . . then all have attained the Buddha way,”¹⁶ meaning that the world of human beings contains the Ten Worlds. The sutra states that the great heavenly king Brahma and the other deities declared, “We too in the same way will surely be able to attain Buddhahood.”¹⁷ Thus the world of heavenly beings contains the Ten Worlds. The sutra says, “Shariputra . . . will be able to become a Buddha with the name Flower Glow Thus Come One.”¹⁸ Thus the world of voice-hearers contains the Ten Worlds. The sutra says, “Those who seek to become pratyekabuddhas, monks, and nuns . . . all press their palms and with reverent minds wish to hear the teaching of perfect endowment.”¹⁹ Thus the world of pratyekabuddhas, or cause-awakened ones, has the Ten Worlds. The sutra describes the bodhisattvas who emerged from the earth, numer-

ous as the dust particles of a thousand worlds, and who declared, “We ourselves wish to gain this great Law, true and pure.”²⁰ Thus the world of bodhisattvas contains the Ten Worlds. The sutra says, “Sometimes I speak of myself, sometimes of others.”²¹ Thus the world of Buddhahood contains the Ten Worlds.

Question: Although I can see both my own six sense organs and those of others, I cannot see the Ten Worlds in myself or others. How can I believe in them?

Answer: The “Teacher of the Law” chapter of the Lotus Sutra says, “[This Lotus Sutra is] the most difficult to believe and the most difficult to understand.” [In describing how difficult it will be to fulfill the teachings of the Lotus Sutra after the Buddha’s passing,] the “Treasure Tower” chapter speaks of the six difficult and nine easy acts. The Great Teacher T’ien-t’ai states, “Because the theoretical and the essential teachings [of the Lotus Sutra] contradict all the earlier sutras, they are extremely difficult to believe and difficult to understand.”²² The Great Teacher Chang-an comments, “The Buddha intended these as his ultimate teachings. How could they ever be easy to understand?”²³ The Great Teacher Dengyo says, “The Lotus Sutra is the most difficult to believe and to understand because in it the Buddha directly revealed what he had attained.”²⁴

Those who were born in the days of Shakyamuni Buddha and heard his teachings in person had formed deep karmic bonds with him in past existences. In addition, Shakyamuni Buddha, the lord of teachings, as well as Many Treasures Buddha, the Buddhas of the ten directions who are Shakyamuni’s emanations, the countless Bodhisattvas of the Earth, and the other bodhisattvas such as Manjushri and Maitreya, aided them and encouraged them to believe, but even then there

were those who failed to take faith. Five thousand people left the assembly, [arrogantly thinking that they had understood what they had not]. All human and heavenly beings [other than those already present in the assembly]²⁵ were moved to other worlds. How much more difficult it was to believe in the Lotus Sutra after the Buddha's passing—in the Former and Middle Days of the Law—and even more difficult it is now at the beginning of the Latter Day of the Law! If it were easy for you to believe in, it would not be the Buddha's correct teaching.

Question: The passages from the Lotus Sutra and the explanations by T'ien-t'ai, Chang-an, and others that you have cited are free from obscurities and doubtful points. But you seem to be saying that fire is water, or that black is white. Although they are the teachings of the Buddha, I find it difficult to accept them. Now I look repeatedly at people's faces, but I see only the human world. I do not see the other worlds. And the same is true when I look at my own face. How am I to believe in the Ten Worlds?

Answer: When we look from time to time at a person's face, we find him or her sometimes joyful, sometimes enraged, and sometimes calm. At times greed appears in the person's face, at times foolishness, and at times perversity. Rage is the world of hell, greed is that of hungry spirits, foolishness is that of animals, perversity is that of asuras, joy is that of heaven, and calmness is that of human beings. These worlds, the six paths, are all present in the physical appearance of the person's face. The remaining four noble worlds are hidden and dormant and do not appear in the face, but if we search carefully, we can tell that they are there.

Question: Although I am not entirely certain about the six paths, it would appear from what you have said that

we possess them. But what about the four noble worlds that cannot be seen at all?

Answer: Earlier you doubted that the six lower worlds exist within the human world, but when I illustrated the point through an analogy, you understood. Perhaps it will be the same with the four noble worlds. I will try to employ reasoning to explain a bit about the matter. The fact that all things in this world are transient is perfectly clear to us. Is this not because the worlds of the two vehicles are present in the human world? Even a heartless villain loves his wife and children. He too has a portion of the bodhisattva world within him. Buddhahood is the most difficult to demonstrate. But since you possess the other nine worlds, you should believe that you have Buddhahood as well. Do not permit yourself to have doubts. Expounding on the human world, the Lotus Sutra says, "The Buddha wish to open the door of Buddha wisdom to all living beings." The Nirvana Sutra states, "Those who study the teachings of the great vehicle, though they have the eyes of ordinary beings, are said to have the eyes of the Buddha." That ordinary people born in the latter age can believe in the Lotus Sutra is due to the fact that the world of Buddhahood is present in the human world.

Question: The Buddha clearly explained that each of the Ten Worlds has the same Ten Worlds within itself. Nonetheless, I find it difficult to believe that our base hearts could be endowed with the world of Buddhahood. If I cannot believe it, I will become an icchantika. With your great compassion, please help me believe, and save me from the torture of the Avichi hell.

Answer: You have already seen and heard the sutra passage concerning "the one great reason" [why the Buddhas appear in the world]. If you still do not believe, then how can anyone—

from Shakyamuni Buddha on down to the four ranks of bodhisattvas or we ordinary people of the latter age who are at the stage of being a Buddha in theory²⁶—save you from disbelief? Nevertheless, I will try to explain. After all, some could not attain enlightenment through the direct teaching of the Buddha, but were able to do so later through the preaching of Ananda and other disciples.

People can attain enlightenment in two ways: by meeting the Buddha and hearing the Lotus Sutra, or by believing in the sutra even though they do not meet the Buddha. Even before the advent of the Buddha, some Brahmans in India realized the correct view of life through the four Vedas. In China before the arrival of Buddhism, some realized the correct view through Taoism and Confucianism. Many bodhisattvas and ordinary people, endowed with keen faculties, perceived [even before they heard the Lotus Sutra] that Shakyamuni had planted the seeds of Buddhahood within them in the days of the Buddha Great Universal Wisdom Excellence or in the far more distant past [when he attained his original enlightenment]. They understood this by hearing the Mahayana sutras of the Flower Garland, Correct and Equal, and Wisdom periods. They were like the pratyekabuddhas [who could perceive the impermanence of life] at the sight of scattering blossoms or falling leaves. These, then, are the type of people who gained the way through teachings other than the Lotus Sutra.

But many who neither received the seeds of Buddhahood nor formed ties with the Buddha in past existences cling to Hinayana or provisional Mahayana teachings, and even if they are fortunate enough to encounter the Lotus Sutra, they cannot advance beyond their Hinayana or provisional Mahayana views. They are convinced that their own views are correct, and as a

result they place the Lotus Sutra on the same level as the Hinayana sutras or [the provisional Mahayana sutras such as] the Flower Garland and the Mahavairochana. Some even regard the Lotus Sutra as subordinate to these. The Buddhist teachers who preach such views of the Lotus Sutra are inferior to the worthies and sages of Confucianism and Brahmanism. But let us set this matter aside for the moment.

The mutual possession of the Ten Worlds is as difficult to believe as fire existing in a stone or flowers within a tree. Yet under the right conditions such phenomena actually occur and are believable. To believe that Buddhahood exists within the human world is the most difficult thing of all—as difficult as believing that fire exists in water or water in fire. Nevertheless, the dragon is said to produce fire from water and water from fire, and although people do not understand why, they believe it when they see it occur. Since you now believe that the human world contains the other eight worlds, why are you still unable to include the world of Buddhahood? The Chinese sage kings Yao and Shun were impartial toward all people. They manifested one aspect of Buddhahood within the human world. Bodhisattva Never Disparaging saw the Buddha in everyone he met, and Prince Siddhartha was a human who became a Buddha. These examples should help you believe.

Note: The teaching that follows must be kept in the strictest secrecy.

Question: Shakyamuni, the lord of teachings, is the Buddha who has completely destroyed the three categories of illusion. He is the sovereign of all rulers, bodhisattvas, persons of the two vehicles, human and heavenly beings, and others in the ten directions. Whenever the Buddha moves, Brahma attends him on the left and Shakra on the right. The four kinds of Buddhists and the eight kinds of nonhuman beings follow

behind, while the vajra-bearing gods²⁷ march in the vanguard. With his eighty thousand teachings he leads all living beings to emancipation. How could a Buddha such as this dwell in the hearts of us ordinary people?

Both the teachings before the Lotus Sutra and the theoretical teaching of the Lotus Sutra itself tell us that Shakyamuni Buddha attained enlightenment for the first time in this world. Searching for the cause of his enlightenment, we find that he practiced bodhisattva austerities in past existences as Prince Earnest Donor, Bodhisattva Learned Youth, King Shibi, and Prince Sattva. The Buddha practiced his austerities for three asamkhya kalpas or a hundred major kalpas, or for kalpas equal in number to countless dust particles, or for countless asamkhya kalpas, or from the time he first set his mind on enlightenment, or for as long as major world system dust particle kalpas. He served as many as seventy-five, seventy-six, or seventy-seven thousand Buddhas,²⁸ passed through innumerable kalpas and, having completed his practice, became, in this life, Shakyamuni Buddha, the lord of teachings. Are you saying that within each of us exists the world of the bodhisattva, which is endowed with all the blessings the Buddha attained as a result of his practice?

Looking into the results of his practice, we see that Shakyamuni Buddha, the lord of teachings, first attained enlightenment in this life. For more than forty years the Buddha revealed himself in four different ways in the four kinds of teachings,²⁹ thus, by expounding the pre-Lotus Sutra teachings, the theoretical teaching, and the Nirvana Sutra, he was able to benefit all living beings.

When he preached the Lotus Treasury World³⁰ [in the Flower Garland Sutra], Shakyamuni appeared as Vairochana Buddha seated on the lotus pedestal with other Buddhas surrounding

him in the ten directions. When he preached the Agama sutras, he appeared as a Buddha who had eliminated illusions and attained the way by practicing thirty-four kinds of spiritual purification. When he preached the Correct and Equal sutras, he was accompanied by a great multitude of Buddhas. One thousand Buddhas joined him when he preached the Wisdom sutras. In the Mahavairochana and Diamond Crown sutras, he made a dignified appearance as the twelve hundred and more honored ones.³¹ In the "Treasure Tower" chapter of the theoretical teaching of the Lotus Sutra, the Buddha manifested himself in four different ways, corresponding to the four kinds of lands. When the Buddha preached the Nirvana Sutra, those assembled saw him variously as a Buddha sixteen feet tall, as having a small or large body, as Vairochana Buddha, or as a Buddha with a body as vast as space. Thus he manifested four kinds of bodies.³² When the Buddha passed into extinction at the age of eighty, he left his relics³³ to benefit people in the Former, Middle, and Latter Days of the Law.

Now, the essential teaching of the Lotus Sutra says that Shakyamuni Buddha, the lord of teachings, attained Buddhahood numberless major world system dust particle kalpas ago, and that the cause that made this possible was the practice he had carried out at that time. Since then he has manifested emanation bodies throughout the worlds of the ten directions and preached all the sacred teachings of his lifetime to teach and convert people as numerous as the dust particles of the land. When we compare the number of disciples in the essential teaching with that of disciples in the theoretical teaching, the former is like the ocean, and the latter, like a drop of water, or the one, like a great mountain, and the other, like a speck of dust. What is more, a bodhisattva of the essential teaching is far

superior to any bodhisattva of the theoretical teaching, including Manjushri, Perceiver of the World's Sounds, or any of the others who gathered from the worlds in the ten directions. The difference between them is even greater than that between Shakra and a monkey. Are you saying that besides these bodhisattvas, the persons of the two vehicles who obtained their enlightenment by destroying their illusions, Brahma, Shakra, the gods of the sun and moon, the four heavenly kings, the four wheel-turning kings, and the immense flames of the great citadel of the hell of incessant suffering—all beings and all things in the ten directions are inherent in the Ten Worlds and in the three thousand realms of our own lives? Even if you say that this is what the Buddha taught, I still cannot believe it.

When we consider the matter in this light, we see that the sutras that came before the Lotus Sutra are genuine in both substance and wording. The Flower Garland Sutra describes enlightenment [at the stage of security] as "ultimately perfect and free from all falsehood and defilement, like the empty sky." The Benevolent Kings Sutra reads, "[If one obtains the great wisdom of nirvana], one can penetrate the ultimate source of delusion and realize one's essential nature until nothing but wonderful wisdom remains." In the Diamond Wisdom Sutra it says, "[When one reaches enlightenment], nothing but pure goodness will remain." Bodhisattva Ashvaghosha states in *The Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana*, "Only pure blessings exist within the matrix of the Thus Come One." Bodhisattva Vasubandhu remarks in his *Treatise on the Consciousness-Only Doctrine*, "When adamant meditation is achieved, other remaining defilements and a lesser form of non-defilement will draw forth the ultimate consciousness of perfect clarity and total purity.

Then, being no longer necessary, they will be abandoned forever."

A careful comparison of the Lotus Sutra and the sutras taught before it shows that those sutras are innumerable, and that they have been taught over a long time. Therefore, although both are the Buddha's teachings, if these two contradict each other, you should accept the earlier sutras. Bodhisattva Ashvaghosha was the Buddha's eleventh successor, whose appearance had been foretold by the Buddha himself. Vasubandhu was the author of one thousand treatises and was numbered among the four ranks of bodhisattvas. How then can you believe the Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai, a lowly priest living far away from the birthplace of Buddhism who [interpreted the sutras but] did not write a single treatise? Still, I might be able to disregard the many and accept the few, if the Lotus Sutra said anything to prove this point. But where in the sutra can you find any passages that definitely verify the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds, the hundred worlds and thousand factors, and three thousand realms in a single moment of life?

In the Lotus Sutra we find the following passage: "He [the Buddha] has rooted out evil from among the phenomena."³⁴ Neither Bodhisattva Vasubandhu's *Treatise on the Lotus Sutra* nor Bodhisattva Saramati's *Treatise on the Treasure Vehicle of Buddhahood* makes any mention of the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds. Nor are there any writings by the great teachers of the northern and southern schools in China, or by the priests of the seven temples of Japan, that expound this principle. It is simply T'ien-t'ai's own biased view, and Dengyo made the mistake of transmitting it. That is what the Teacher of the Nation Ch'ing-liang³⁵ meant when he said, "This is an error of T'ien-t'ai's." The Dharma Teacher Hui-yüan said, "By defining Hinayana doctrines as the Tri-

pitaka teachings, T'ien-t'ai has confused Hinayana and Mahayana, [for both contain the Tripitaka, or three divisions of the canon]." Ryoko³⁶ criticized him, saying, "T'ien-t'ai is the only one who did not understand the true meaning of the Flower Garland Sutra." Tokuitsu reproached him, saying, "See here, Chih-i, whose disciple are you? With a tongue less than three inches long you slander the teachings that come from the Buddha's long broad tongue that can cover even his face!"³⁷ The Great Teacher Kobo commented, "The Buddhist teachers of China vied with one another to steal the ghee [of the dharmas or True Word] and claim that it is the possession of their own school."³⁸ Thus, the doctrine of three thousand realms in a single moment of life is not mentioned in either the provisional or the true teaching of Shakyamuni Buddha. It did not appear in the writings of any of the four ranks of Indian scholars, and no Chinese or Japanese teacher has ever espoused it. How then do you dare to believe it?

Answer: Your criticisms are extremely harsh. Nonetheless, the differences between the Lotus Sutra and the other sutras are clear from the text of the sutras themselves. In them we find statements that the Buddha did not reveal the truth in the first forty-two years of his teaching, and that he will reveal it in the Lotus Sutra. Many Treasures Buddha and the Buddhas of the ten directions presented themselves to attest to the truth of the Lotus Sutra, something they did not do for any other sutra. With the Lotus Sutra Shakyamuni enabled the people of the two vehicles to attain Buddhahood, whereas with the earlier sutras he did not. In the earlier sutras he stated that he attained enlightenment for the first time in this world, but in the Lotus Sutra he revealed that his enlightenment actually occurred in the remote past.³⁹

I will now address the problems

posed by the scholars you mentioned above. The Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai comments: "Vasubandhu and Nagarjuna clearly perceived the truth in their hearts, but they did not teach it. Instead, they employed the provisional Mahayana teachings, which were suited to the times. The Buddhist teachers who came later, however, were biased in their understanding, and the scholars obstinately clung to their own views, until in the end they began to battle with one another. Each defended one small corner of the teachings and thereby completely departed from the sacred way of the Buddha."⁴⁰ The Great Teacher Chang-an says of T'ien-t'ai, "Even the great scholars of India were not in a class with him, and the Chinese teachers—well, one need hardly mention them. This is no idle boast—the doctrine he taught was indeed of such excellence."

In their hearts Vasubandhu, Nagarjuna, Ashvaghosha, Saramati, and other Buddhist scholars knew [the doctrine of three thousand realms in a single moment of life], but they did not reveal it to others because the time for it to be expounded had not yet come. As for the Buddhist teachers in China who preceded T'ien-t'ai, some kept this treasure in their hearts, and others knew nothing about it. Among those who came after him, some accepted this doctrine only after first trying to disprove it, and others never accepted it at all.

Concerning the passage in the Lotus Sutra that you quoted, "He [the Buddha] has rooted out evil from among the phenomena," here the Buddha is referring to a teaching from one of the earlier sutras. But when you take a closer look at the sutra, it is clear that the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds is being explained. For, in the same sutra, this passage is found: "The Buddhas wish to open the door of Buddha wisdom to all living beings."

T'ien-t'ai comments on this passage as follows: "If people do not possess innate Buddha wisdom, how could the Buddha say he wanted to open it? One must understand that Buddha wisdom is inherent in all human beings."⁴¹ The Great Teacher Chang-an concludes, "How could people open the door to and realize their Buddha wisdom if it did not exist within them? How could a person show the poor woman her treasure repository if the treasure repository did not exist?"⁴²

It is, however, extremely difficult to convince you that Shakyamuni Buddha, the lord of teachings, exists within us [just as the other nine worlds do]. Therefore, he gives us this admonishment beforehand: "Among the sutras I have preached, now preach, and will preach, this Lotus Sutra is the most difficult to believe and the most difficult to understand."⁴³ The "six difficult and nine easy acts" he expounds in the next chapter explains how difficult it is. Hence the Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai states, "Because the theoretical and the essential teachings [of the Lotus Sutra] contradict all the earlier sutras, they are extremely difficult to believe and difficult to understand—no less difficult than facing an enemy who is armed with a spear."⁴⁴ The Great Teacher Chang-an comments, "The Buddha intended these as his ultimate teachings. How could they ever be easy to understand?" The Great Teacher Dengyo remarks, "The Lotus Sutra is the most difficult to believe and to understand because in it the Buddha directly revealed what he had attained."

In the more than eighteen hundred years after the Buddha's passing, only three persons throughout the three countries perceived this correct doctrine. They are Shakyamuni Buddha of India, the Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai Chih-che of China, and the Great Teacher Dengyo of Japan. These three men are all Buddhist sages.

Question: What about Nagarjuna and Vasubandhu?

Answer: Those sages knew, but did not expound it. They expounded part of the theoretical teaching, but did not expound either the essential teaching or the truth that the Buddha had observed in his mind. Perhaps the people in their age were capable of believing it, but the time was not ripe to expound it. Or perhaps neither the people's capacity nor the time was appropriate.

After the advent of T'ien-t'ai and Dengyo, many Buddhists learned of the doctrine of three thousand realms in a single moment of life through the wisdom of these two sages. They included Chia-hsiang of the Three Treatises school; more than one hundred priests of the three schools of the south and seven schools of the north in China; Fa-tsang and Ch'ing-liang of the Flower Garland school; the Tripitaka Master Hsüan-tsang and the Great Teacher Tz'u-en of the Dharma Characteristics school; the Tripitaka masters Shan-wu-wei, Chin-kang-chih, and Pu-k'ung of the True Word school; and Tao-hsüan of the Precepts school. At first they all opposed T'ien-t'ai, but later they totally accepted his teachings.

Now, to dispel the grave doubts you have about Buddhahood within the human world, I refer you to the Immeasurable Meanings Sutra, which states: "[Good men], such persons are like a prince newly born to the king of a country and his queen. When he is one day, two days, or seven days old; one month, two months, or seven months old; one year, two years, or seven years old, though he is not yet able to manage the affairs of state, already he is respected and looked up to by the ministers and the people. He is a companion to the sons of other great kings, and the king and queen love and dote on him and are forever talking with him. Why? Because he is still just a child.

“Good men, the person who upholds this sutra is like this. The Buddhas, who are the king, and the sutra, which is the queen, join together in harmony to give birth to this bodhisattva son. If the bodhisattva is able to hear this sutra, whether it is one line or one verse, one repetition, two repetitions, ten, a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand, or immeasurable, countless repetitions equal to the sands of a million ten thousand Ganges Rivers, though he cannot fully grasp the extent of its truth . . . already he is revered and looked up to by all the four kinds of Buddhists and the eight kinds of non-human beings, and he has the great bodhisattvas for his companions. . . . He is constantly guarded and kept in mind by the Buddhas, who pity and love him, favor and shelter him, because he is new in these studies.”

The Universal Worthy Sutra says: “This great vehicle sutra is the treasure storehouse of the Buddhas, the eye of the Buddhas of the ten directions and the three existences, the seed from which spring the Thus Come Ones of the three existences. . . . You should practice the great vehicle and never let the seed of Buddhahood die out.” It also declares: “This correct and equal sutra is the eye of the Buddhas. It is through this sutra that the Buddhas are able to acquire the five types of vision. A Buddha’s three types of bodies are born from this correct and equal sutra, which is the great seal of the Law that assures entry into the sea of nirvana. It is from this sea that a Buddha’s three types of pure bodies are born. These three types of bodies are fields of good fortune for human and heavenly beings.”

Now we should go on to survey the entire range of the Thus Come One Shakyamuni’s teachings, the exoteric and esoteric as well as Hinayana and Mahayana, and specifically the sutras on which each school, such as the

Flower Garland and the True Word, depends for its doctrine. For example, the Flower Garland Sutra describes Vairocana Buddha seated on the lotus pedestal extending in the ten directions; the Great Collection Sutra, a cloud of Buddhas who had gathered together; the Wisdom Sutra, the emergence of one thousand Buddhas teaching the nonduality of pure and impure; and the Mahavairocana and Diamond Crown sutras, the more than twelve hundred honored ones. These sutras all explain the past practices of Shakyamuni Buddha and the Buddhahood he consequently attained in this life, but they do not reveal the original cause for his enlightenment in the remote past.

It is true that the immediate attainment of Buddhahood is revealed in the pre-Lotus Sutra teachings, but they do not mention Shakyamuni Buddha teaching his disciples since major world system dust particle kalpas ago or numberless major world system dust particle kalpas ago. Therefore, no revelation is made of when the Buddha started teaching or when he finished.⁴⁵ The Flower Garland Sutra seems to belong to the higher two and the Mahavairocana Sutra to all of the four teachings—the Tripitaka, connecting, specific, and perfect teachings—but these sutras actually fall into the category of the Tripitaka and connecting teachings, the two lower of the four, because they do not expound the three inherent potentials of the Buddha nature.⁴⁶ Then how can we define these sutras as the seeds of enlightenment?

The translators of the newer versions of the sutras⁴⁷ learned about T’ien-t’ai’s doctrine of three thousand realms in a single moment of life when they came to China. When they translated Sanskrit sutras into Chinese, some put T’ien-t’ai’s principle into their translations, and others claimed that the originals they had brought from India already contained it. Some of the

scholars of the T'ien-t'ai school were simply pleased that other schools were expounding the same doctrine as theirs, while others praised the Buddhism of India and slighted that of China, or discarded their original doctrines and adopted new ones. These scholars yielded to their devilish nature and to foolishness. Ultimately, however, without the seed of Buddhahood, that is, the three thousand realms in a single moment of life, sentient beings cannot become Buddhas, and any statue or painting would be an object of devotion in name only.

Question: You have not yet fully answered my question about the Ten Worlds, Buddhahood in particular, being inherent in the human world.

Answer: The Immeasurable Meanings Sutra states, "Although they have not yet been able to practice the six paramitas, the six paramitas will of themselves appear before them." The Lotus Sutra says, "All wish to hear the teaching of perfect endowment." The Nirvana Sutra states, "*Sad*⁴⁸ indicates perfect endowment." Bodhisattva Nagarjuna comments, "*Sad* signifies six."⁴⁹ *The Profound Meaning of the Four Mahayana Treatises*⁵⁰ states, "*Sad* connotes six. In India the number six implies perfect endowment." In his commentary Chitsang writes, "*Sad* is translated as perfect endowment."⁵¹ The Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai remarks, "*Sad* is a Sanskrit word, which is translated as *myo*, or wonderful."⁵² If I add my own interpretation, it will be as if I had profaned these passages, but in essence they mean that Shakyamuni's practices and the virtues he consequently attained are all contained within the five characters of Myoho-enge-kyo. If we believe in these five characters, we will naturally be granted the same benefits as he was.

With full understanding of Shakyamuni's teachings, the four great voice-hearers said, "This cluster of unsurpassed jewels has come to us unsought."⁵³

They represent the world of the voice-hearer that is within ourselves. The Buddha stated, "At the start I took a vow, hoping to make all persons equal to me, without any distinction between us, and what I long ago hoped for has now been fulfilled. I have converted all living beings and caused them all to enter the Buddha way."⁵⁴ Shakyamuni Buddha, who has attained perfect enlightenment, is our own flesh and blood. His practices and the resulting virtues are our bones and marrow. The "Treasure Tower" chapter of the Lotus Sutra says, "He who is capable of guarding the Law of this sutra will thereby have offered alms to me and to Many Treasures. . . . One who guards this sutra will also have offered alms to the emanation Buddhas who have come here adorning and making brilliant all the various worlds." Shakyamuni, Many Treasures, and the Buddhas of the ten directions represent the world of Buddhahood within ourselves. By searching them out within us, we can receive the benefits of all these Buddhas. This is what is meant by the following passage: "If one listens to them [the preachers of the Law] for even a moment, one will immediately attain supreme perfect enlightenment."⁵⁵ The "Life Span" chapter reads, "It has been immeasurable, boundless hundreds, thousands, ten thousands, millions of nayutas, ten thousands, millions of nayutas of kalpas since I in fact attained Buddhahood." The Shakyamuni Buddha within our lives is the eternal Buddha since time without beginning, who obtained the three bodies more than numberless major world system dust particle kalpas ago. The "Life Span" chapter states, "Originally I practiced the bodhisattva way, and the life span that I acquired then has yet to come to an end but will last twice the number of years that have already passed." He was speaking of the world of the bodhisattva within ourselves. The bodhisattvas, as numerous as the dust particles of a thousand worlds,

who emerged from beneath the earth, are the followers of the Shakyamuni Buddha present in our lives. They follow the Buddha just as T'ai-kung Wang and Tan, the Duke of Chou,⁵⁶ served as ministers to King Wu of the Chou dynasty and later assisted his son and successor, the infant King Ch'eng; or just as the Chief Minister Takenouchi⁵⁷ supported Empress Jingu and later her grandson Crown Prince Nintoku as a highly valued minister. The bodhisattvas Superior Practices, Boundless Practices, Pure Practices, and Firmly Established Practices represent the world of the bodhisattva within ourselves. The Great Teacher Miao-lo says: "You should understand that one's life and its environment at a single moment encompass the three thousand realms. Therefore, when one attains the Buddha way, one puts oneself in accord with this fundamental principle, and one's body and mind at a single moment pervade the entire realm of phenomena."⁵⁸

First, at his place of enlightenment, Shakyamuni Buddha [preached the Flower Garland Sutra in which he] revealed the Lotus Treasury World. In the following fifty years, until he entered nirvana in the grove of sal trees, Shakyamuni preached about the lands of the various Buddhas, such as the Lotus Treasury World and the Land of Secret Solemnity [in the Secret Solemnity Sutra], revealed the three kinds of lands when he three times purified countless lands [in the theoretical teaching of the Lotus Sutra], and revealed the four kinds of lands according to the four different views⁵⁹ [in the Nirvana Sutra]. These lands—the Land of Transition, the Land of Actual Reward, and the Land of Tranquil Light; the Land of Peace and Sustenance, the Pure Emerald World, the Land of Secret Solemnity, and the lands of all the other Buddhas—are transient lands that change in the course of the kalpas of formation, [continuance, decline, and disintegration]. The

Buddhas of these lands had been magically conjured by Shakyamuni Buddha, and when the lord of teachings entered nirvana, all these Buddhas likewise entered extinction. In the same way, their lands also vanished.⁶⁰

The saha world Shakyamuni Buddha revealed in the "Life Span" chapter is the eternal pure land, impervious to the three calamities and to the cycle of the four kalpas. The Buddha neither has entered into extinction in the past nor will be born in the future. And the same is true of his disciples. This means that their lives are perfectly endowed with the three thousand worlds, that is, with the three realms of existence. The Buddha did not reveal this truth in the theoretical teaching, or the first fourteen chapters, of the Lotus Sutra because the time was not right and the people's capacity was not yet developed.

Shakyamuni Buddha did not transmit the five characters of Nam-myohorenge-kyo, the heart of the essential teaching of the Lotus Sutra, even to the bodhisattvas Manjushri and Medicine King, let alone to any lesser disciples. He summoned from beneath the earth the great bodhisattvas as numerous as the dust particles of a thousand worlds and, as he preached the eight chapters,⁶¹ transferred it solely to them.

The true object of devotion is described as follows:

The treasure tower sits in the air above the saha world that the Buddha of the essential teaching [identified as the pure and eternal land]; Myohorenge-kyo appears in the center of the tower with the Buddhas Shakyamuni and Many Treasures seated to the right and left, and, flanking them, the four bodhisattvas, followers of Shakyamuni, led by Superior Practices. Manjushri, Maitreya, and the other bodhisattvas, who are all followers of the four bodhisattvas, are seated below. All the other major and minor bodhisattvas,

whether they are disciples of the Buddha in his transient status or of the Buddhas of the other worlds, are like commoners kneeling on the ground in the presence of nobles and high-ranking court officials. The Buddhas who gathered from the other worlds in the ten directions all remain on the ground, showing that they are only temporary manifestations of the eternal Buddha and that their lands are transient, not eternal and unchanging.

During the entire fifty years of Shakyamuni's teaching, only in the last eight years did he preach the twenty-eight chapters of the Lotus Sutra. Again, of all these chapters, only in the eight chapters did he reveal and transfer the object of devotion to the Bodhisattvas of the Earth.⁶² During the two millennia of the Former and Middle Days of the Law, statues were made showing Mahakashyapa and Ananda flanking the Shakyamuni Buddha of Hinayana, and Manjushri and Universal Worthy flanking the Shakyamuni Buddha of the provisional Mahayana, the Nirvana Sutra, and the theoretical teaching of the Lotus Sutra.

Even though statues and paintings were made of these Shakyamuni Buddhas during the two millennia, no image or statue was made of the Buddha of the "Life Span" chapter.⁶³ Only in the Latter Day of the Law will the representation of that Buddha appear.

Question: During the two thousand years of the Former and Middle Days of the Law, the four ranks of bodhisattvas and the teachers constructed images of and built temples and pagodas for Buddhas of other worlds or for the Shakyamuni Buddha of Hinayana, of provisional Mahayana, of the pre-Lotus Sutra teachings, or of the theoretical teaching of the sutra. No one in India, China, or Japan, however, neither rulers nor subjects, revered the object of devotion of the "Life Span" chapter of the essential teaching and the four great

bodhisattvas. Though I think I generally understand what you are saying, I have never heard such a thing before, and therefore it startles my ears and perplexes my mind. Will you explain it to me again in greater detail?

Answer: All the teachings that Shakyamuni Buddha expounded during his lifetime—all the eight volumes and twenty-eight chapters of the Lotus Sutra, the first four flavors of teachings that preceded the sutra, and the Nirvana Sutra that came after the Lotus—make an unbroken series of teachings like one perfect sutra. [These teachings can be divided into three parts—preparation, revelation, and transmission].⁶⁴ Preparation indicates the part from the Flower Garland Sutra, his first preaching at the place of enlightenment, to the Wisdom sutras; revelation indicates the ten volumes of the Immeasurable Meanings Sutra, the Lotus Sutra, and the Universal Worthy Sutra; and transmission indicates the Nirvana Sutra. The ten volumes of the revelation section likewise can be divided into these three parts. The Immeasurable Meanings Sutra and the "Introduction" chapter of the Lotus Sutra are preparation. The fifteen and a half chapters from the "Expedient Means" chapter to the nineteen-line verse of the "Distinctions in Benefits" chapter are revelation. The remaining eleven and a half chapters and one volume, from the section in the "Distinctions in Benefits" chapter clarifying the four stages of faith for people in the Buddha's lifetime to the Universal Worthy Sutra, are transmission.

The ten volumes of the Immeasurable Meanings Sutra, the Lotus Sutra, and the Universal Worthy Sutra can also be divided into two parts: theoretical and essential.⁶⁵ Each part has the three divisions. In the theoretical teaching, preparation comprises the Immeasurable Meanings Sutra and the "Introduction" chapter of the Lotus

Sutra, revelation comprises eight chapters, from the “Expedient Means” through the “Prophecies” chapters, and transmission comprises five chapters, from the “Teacher of the Law” to the “Peaceful Practices.” The Buddha of the theoretical teaching declared that he first attained Buddhahood in this life. He revealed the hundred worlds and thousand factors inherent in life, but he did not expound their eternal nature. Since the theoretical teaching of the Lotus Sutra thus directly reveals a part of the Buddha’s own enlightenment, it excels all the other sutras that the Buddha had preached, now preached, or would preach, and is the correct teaching that is difficult to believe and difficult to understand.

The relationship between Shakyamuni Buddha and his disciples can be traced back to the time when, as the sixteenth son of the Buddha Great Universal Wisdom Excellence, he planted the seeds of Buddhahood in their lives. In Shakyamuni’s present lifetime a few of these disciples discovered the seeds when they heard the Flower Garland Sutra and the other teachings of the first four flavors. This was not, however, the Buddha’s true intention. Their discovery through these teachings was like poison having a positive effect. Ordinary people and the persons of the two vehicles came to the Lotus Sutra gradually through the first four flavors of teachings. They then revealed the seeds of Buddhahood from within themselves and were able to obtain the fruit of enlightenment.

Among the human and heavenly beings who listened to the eight chapters for the first time in Shakyamuni’s days, some took the seeds into their lives by hearing just a single phrase or verse. Some nurtured and harvested the seeds they had received. Others brought their seeds to fruition when they came to the Universal Worthy and Nirvana sutras. Still others appeared

in the Former, Middle, or Latter Day of the Law and, through the Hinayana and provisional Mahayana teachings, obtained the fruit of enlightenment of the Lotus Sutra. These last are like the disciples in Shakyamuni’s lifetime who discovered their seeds of Buddhahood through the first four flavors of teachings.

Preparation, revelation, and transmission also exist in the fourteen chapters of the essential teaching of the Lotus Sutra. The first half of the “Emerging from the Earth” chapter is preparation. The latter half of this chapter, the “Life Span” chapter, and the first half of the following “Distinctions in Benefits” chapter—one chapter and two halves—are revelation. The remainder is transmission.

The Buddha of the essential teaching denies that he first attained Buddhahood in this life. The difference between the theoretical and the essential teachings is as great as that between heaven and earth. The latter reveals the eternity of the Ten Worlds and, further, the realm of the environment. The theoretical teaching, the first four flavors of teachings, the Immeasurable Meanings Sutra, and the Nirvana Sutra were all preached according to the capacities of the people. All these teachings that fall into the three categories of preaching⁶⁶ are therefore easy to believe and easy to understand. In contrast, the essential teaching, which transcends the three categories, is difficult to believe and difficult to understand, for it directly reveals the Buddha’s own enlightenment. Nevertheless, even the difference between the doctrine of three thousand realms in a single moment of life of the theoretical teaching and that of the essential teaching pales into insignificance [before the ultimate teaching contained in the depths of the “Life Span” chapter].⁶⁷

The essential teaching⁶⁸ [contained in the depths of the “Life Span” chap-

ter] also has its preparation, revelation, and transmission. Shakyamuni Buddha preached the Lotus Sutra in the past as the sixteenth son of the Buddha Great Universal Wisdom Excellence. When he appeared in his present life [in India], he also preached teachings for some fifty years, from the Flower Garland Sutra to the fourteen chapters of the theoretical teaching [of the Lotus Sutra] and the Nirvana Sutra. All these sutras as well as the countless sutras of the Buddhas of the ten directions and the three existences are preparation for revealing [the heart of] the “Life Span” chapter.

All the teachings other than the “one chapter and two halves” are Hinayana in nature and erroneous. Not only do they fail to lead to enlightenment, but also they lack the truth. Those who believe in them are meager in virtue, heavy with defilement, ignorant, poor, solitary, and like birds and beasts [that do not know their own parents].

The first half of the Lotus Sutra and the sutras preceding it contain the perfect teaching, but even this is not the cause for Buddhahood. Much less so are teachings of a Hinayana nature, such as the Mahavairochana Sutra. It is out of the question to think that the scholars and teachers of the seven schools, including the Flower Garland and the True Word, preach the cause for attaining Buddhahood.

These inferior sutras seem to fall within the Tripitaka, connecting, and specific teachings, but actually they are no better than the lowest two. They may maintain that their doctrines are incomparably profound, but nowhere do they clarify when the Buddha planted the seeds of Buddhahood, or when he nurtured and reaped them. These doctrines are no different from Hinayana, which demands that one reduce one’s body to ashes and annihilate one’s consciousness, for they do not reveal when the Buddha started

teaching and when he finished. If a consort of a king were to conceive by a beast, her baby would be inferior to a chandala.

Setting aside these lesser teachings, the eight chapters of the revelation section [the second through the ninth chapters] of the theoretical teaching seem to have been expounded for the sake of the persons of the two vehicles rather than for the ordinary people and bodhisattvas in Shakyamuni’s lifetime. From a more profound viewpoint, they are intended for the ordinary people after the Buddha’s passing—in the Former, Middle, and Latter Days of the Law—and, in particular, for the ordinary people in the beginning of the Latter Day.

Question: On what authority do you say so?

Answer: The “Teacher of the Law” chapter of the Lotus Sutra states, “Since hatred and jealousy toward this sutra abound even when the Thus Come One is in the world, how much more will this be so after his passing?” The “Treasure Tower” chapter states, “They [the Buddhas] make certain that the Law will long endure. . . . [The Thus Come One Many Treasures, I myself], and these emanation Buddhas who have gathered here, surely know this is our aim.” Look at what the “Encouraging Devotion” and “Peaceful Practices” chapters state about the future. The theoretical teaching was preached for the people after Shakyamuni Buddha’s passing.

As regards the essential teaching, it was addressed exclusively to the people early in the Latter Day of the Law. On the surface, the Buddha seems to have preached this teaching for the enlightenment of the people of his day; he planted the seeds of Buddhahood in their lives in the remote past [numberless major world system dust particle kalpas ago] and nurtured the seeds through his preaching as the sixteenth

son of the Buddha Great Universal Wisdom Excellence [major world system dust particle kalpas ago] and through the first four flavors of teachings and the theoretical teaching in this life. Then with the essential teaching he brought his followers to the stage of near-perfect enlightenment and finally to that of perfect enlightenment.

In actuality, however, the essential teaching bears no resemblance whatsoever to the theoretical teaching. The preparation, revelation, and transmission of the essential teaching are intended entirely for the beginning of the Latter Day of the Law. The essential teaching of Shakyamuni's lifetime and that revealed at the beginning of the Latter Day are both pure and perfect [in that both lead directly to Buddhahood]. Shakyamuni's, however, is the Buddhism of the harvest, and this is the Buddhism of sowing. The core of his teaching is one chapter and two halves, and the core of mine is the five characters of the daimoku alone.

Question: On what authority do you say [that the essential teaching is meant for the generations of the Latter Day of the Law]?

Answer: The "Emerging from the Earth" chapter states: "At that time the bodhisattvas and mahasattvas who had gathered from the lands of the other directions, greater in number than the sands of eight Ganges Rivers, stood up in the midst of the great assembly, pressed their palms together, bowed in obeisance, and said to the Buddha: 'World-Honored One, if you will permit us in the age after the Buddha has entered extinction to diligently and earnestly protect, embrace, read, recite, copy, and offer alms to this sutra in the saha world, we will preach it widely throughout this land!' At that time the Buddha said to the bodhisattvas and mahasattvas: 'Leave off, good men! There is no need for you to protect and embrace this sutra.'" This state-

ment totally contradicts the Buddha's exhortations in the preceding five chapters from the "Teacher of the Law" [to the "Peaceful Practices"]. In the latter part of the "Treasure Tower" chapter is the passage: "In a loud voice he [Shakyamuni Buddha] addressed all the four kinds of believers, saying, 'Who is capable of broadly preaching the Lotus Sutra of the Wonderful Law in this saha world?'" Medicine King and the other great bodhisattvas, Brahma, Shakra, the gods of the sun and moon, and the four heavenly kings would have followed Shakyamuni's command before anything else even if no other Buddha had supported his exhortations, but Many Treasures Buddha and the Buddhas from throughout the ten directions came to this world to exhort them to propagate the sutra after Shakyamuni's passing. Thus, hearing the Buddha's solemn appeal, the bodhisattvas all pledged, saying, "We care nothing for our bodies or lives,"⁶⁹ for they desired solely to fulfill the Buddha's will.

[In the "Emerging from the Earth" chapter,] however, the Buddha suddenly reversed himself and forbade all the bodhisattvas, more numerous than the sands of eight Ganges Rivers, from propagating the sutra in this world. We therefore face what appears to be an insoluble contradiction, one that is beyond ordinary understanding.

The Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai Chih-che gave three reasons for Shakyamuni's stopping the bodhisattvas, and three more for his summoning the Bodhisattvas of the Earth. Essentially, the great bodhisattvas taught by the Buddha in his transient status and the great bodhisattvas who gathered from the other worlds were not qualified to inherit the "Life Span" chapter that reveals the eternal Buddha's inner truth. At the dawn of the Latter Day evil people who slander the correct teaching would fill the land, so Shakyamuni Buddha re-

jected the pledge of these bodhisattvas and instead summoned the multitude of great bodhisattvas from beneath the earth. He entrusted them with the five characters of Myoho-enge-kyo, the heart of the "Life Span" chapter, for the enlightenment of all beings in the land of Jambudvīpa. The bodhisattvas taught by the Buddha in his transient status were also unqualified because they had not been the disciples of Shakyamuni Buddha since the time he had first set his mind on and attained enlightenment in the remote past. The Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai states, "[The Buddha said of the Bodhisattvas of the Earth,] 'These are my disciples, destined to propagate my Law.'"⁷⁰ Miao-lo says, "The children propagate the Law of the father, and this benefits the world."⁷¹ *The Supplement to "The Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sutra"*⁷² states, "The Law embodied therein [in the Lotus Sutra] is the Law that was realized countless kalpas in the past, and therefore it was entrusted to persons who had been the Buddha's disciples from countless kalpas in the past."

[In the "Emerging from the Earth" chapter] Bodhisattva Maitreya questioned Shakyamuni Buddha as follows: "We ourselves have faith in the Buddha, believing that he preaches in accordance with what is appropriate, that the words spoken by the Buddha are never false, and that the Buddha's knowledge is in all cases penetrating and comprehensive. Nevertheless, in the period after the Buddha has entered extinction, if bodhisattvas who have just begun to aspire to enlightenment should hear these words, they will perhaps not believe or accept them but will be led to commit the crime of rejecting the Law. Therefore, World-Honored One, we beg you to explain so we may put aside our doubts, and so that, in future ages when good men hear of this matter, they will not entertain doubts!"⁷³ Here Bodhisattva

Maitreya was imploring the Buddha to preach the "Life Span" chapter for those to come after his passing.

The "Life Span" chapter states: "Some are completely out of their minds, while others are not. . . . Those children who have not lost their senses can see that this is good medicine, outstanding in both color and fragrance, so they take it immediately and are completely cured of their sickness." The sutra explains that all bodhisattvas, persons of the two vehicles, and human and heavenly beings received the seeds of Buddhahood numberless major world system dust particle kalpas ago. The seeds were nurtured by the preaching of the sixteenth son of the Buddha Great Universal Wisdom Excellence as well as by Shakyamuni Buddha's four flavors of teachings and the theoretical teaching of the Lotus Sutra. Then they finally gained the way when they heard the essential teaching of the Lotus Sutra.

The "Life Span" chapter continues: "Those who are out of their minds are equally delighted to see their father return and beg him to cure their sickness, but when they are given the medicine, they refuse to take it. Why? Because the poison has penetrated deeply and their minds no longer function as before. So although the medicine is of excellent color and fragrance, they do not perceive it as good. The father thinks to himself, 'I must now resort to some expedient means to induce them to take the medicine.' So he says to them: 'I will leave this good medicine here. You should take it and not worry that it will not cure you.' Having given these instructions, he then goes off to another land, where he sends a messenger home to announce . . ." According to the "Distinctions in Benefits" chapter, [the good medicine of the "Life Span" chapter is left for those] "in the evil age of the Latter Day of the Law."

Question: Who is the messenger mentioned in the passage, "he sends a messenger home to announce"?

Answer: It means the four ranks of sages. They fall into four categories. [First,] most of the four ranks of sages of Hinayana appeared in the first five hundred years of the Former Day of the Law, and [second,] most of those of [provisional] Mahayana came in the second five hundred years. Third, those of the theoretical teaching appeared mainly in the next thousand years, the Middle Day of the Law, and the rest, in the beginning of the Latter Day. Fourth, the four ranks of sages of the essential teaching are the bodhisattvas emerging from the earth, numerous as the dust particles of a thousand worlds, who are certain to appear in the beginning of the Latter Day. When the sutra says, "he sends a messenger home to announce," it refers to the Bodhisattvas of the Earth. "This good medicine" is the heart of the "Life Span" chapter, or Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, which is endowed with name, entity, quality, function, and teaching.⁷⁴ Since the Buddha would not entrust this good medicine even to the bodhisattvas of the theoretical teaching, how much less could he have done so to the bodhisattvas of other worlds?

The "Supernatural Powers" chapter states: "At that time the bodhisattvas and mahasattvas who had emerged from the earth, numerous as the dust particles of a thousand worlds, all in the presence of the Buddha single-mindedly pressed their palms together, gazed up in reverence at the face of the Honored One, and said to the Buddha: 'World-Honored One, after the Buddha has entered extinction, in the lands where the emanations of the World-Honored One are present, and in the place where the Buddha has passed into extinction, we will preach this sutra far and wide.'" T'ien-t'ai says, "The great assembly witnessed the

Bodhisattvas of the Earth alone making this pledge."⁷⁵ Tao-hsien remarks: "As far as transmission goes, this sutra was entrusted solely to the bodhisattvas who had welled up out of the earth. The reason for this is that the Law embodied therein is the Law that was realized countless kalpas in the past, and therefore it was entrusted to persons who had been the Buddha's disciples from countless kalpas in the past."⁷⁶

Bodhisattva Manjushri is a disciple of the Buddha Immovable, who dwells in the Golden-colored World to the east. Bodhisattva Perceiver of the World's Sounds is a disciple of the Buddha Infinite Life in the west. Bodhisattva Medicine King is a disciple of the Buddha Sun Moon Pure Bright Virtue.⁷⁷ Bodhisattva Universal Worthy is a disciple of the Buddha Jeweled Dignity. They came to this saha world to help Shakyamuni Buddha teach the people of his day. They were bodhisattvas of the provisional and theoretical teachings, and were not entrusted with the supreme Law, so they could not possibly appear and propagate it in the Latter Day.

[In the "Supernatural Powers" chapter] the sutra states: "At that time the World-Honored One . . . before all these he displayed his great supernatural powers. He extended his long broad tongue upward till it reached the Brahma heaven . . . The other Buddhas, seated on lion seats underneath the numerous jeweled trees, did likewise, extending their long broad tongues." In no other sutra, whether Hinayana or Mahayana, exoteric or esoteric, is there a passage that describes Shakyamuni Buddha and all the other Buddhas, seated together, extending their tongues to the Brahma heaven.

The Amida Sutra states that Buddhas covered a major world system with their broad long tongues, but lacks the truth that such a gesture would sub-

stantiate. The Wisdom Sutra tells how the Buddha's tongue covered a major world system and radiated infinite light when he expounded the *prajna* (wisdom). Yet this certainly cannot be a proof [comparable to that of the "Supernatural Powers" chapter]. Because these two sutras include provisional teachings, they obscure the Buddha's enlightenment in the remote past.

After the Buddha displayed his ten supernatural powers, he entrusted the five characters of the Mystic Law to the Bodhisattvas of the Earth. As the sutra states: "At that time the Buddha spoke to Superior Practices and the others in the great assembly of bodhisattvas, saying: 'The supernatural powers of the Buddhas, as you have seen, are immeasurable, boundless, inconceivable. If in the process of entrusting this sutra to others I were to employ these supernatural powers for immeasurable, boundless hundreds, thousands, ten thousands, millions of *asamkhyā* kalpas to describe the benefits of the sutra, I could never finish doing so. To put it briefly, all the doctrines possessed by the Thus Come One, all the freely exercised supernatural powers of the Thus Come One, the storehouse of all the secret essentials of the Thus Come One, all the most profound matters of the Thus Come One—all these are proclaimed, revealed, and clearly expounded in this sutra.'" ⁷⁸ T'ien-t'ai says, "The passage that follows the words 'At that time the Buddha spoke to Superior Practices' constitutes the third stage of the chapter, the transfer of the essence of the Lotus Sutra."⁷⁹ Dengyo states: "The 'Supernatural Powers' chapter says, 'To put it briefly, all the doctrines possessed by the Thus Come One . . . are proclaimed, revealed, and clearly expounded in this sutra.' From this it is clear that all the doctrines, all the freely exercised supernatural powers, the storehouse of all the secret essentials, and all the most profound matters possessed

by the Buddha as the fruit of his enlightenment—all these are proclaimed, revealed, and clearly expounded in the Lotus Sutra."⁸⁰ Demonstrating ten supernatural powers, the Buddha transferred the five characters of Myōhōrenge-kyō to the four great bodhisattvas: Superior Practices, Firmly Established Practices, Pure Practices, and Boundless Practices.

[Miao-lo states that] the first five of the ten supernatural powers are meant for those living in Shakyamuni's lifetime, and the last five for the generations after his passing.⁸¹ But in a deeper sense all are intended for future generations. The Buddha confirmed this later in the same chapter, "Because after the Buddha has passed into extinction there will be those who can uphold this sutra, the Buddhas are all delighted and manifest immeasurable supernatural powers."

The following "Entrustment" chapter states: "At that time Shakyamuni Buddha rose from his Dharma seat and, manifesting his great supernatural powers, with his right hand patted the heads of the immeasurable bodhisattvas and mahasattvas and spoke these words: 'Now I entrust it [the Lotus Sutra] to you.'" The Buddha first transferred the Lotus Sutra to the Bodhisattvas of the Earth, and then to the bodhisattvas taught by the Buddha in his transient status, the bodhisattvas of other worlds, Brahma, Shakra, the four heavenly kings, and others. Then "Shakyamuni Buddha caused the Buddhas who were emanations of his body and had come from the ten directions to return each one to his original land, saying, 'The tower of Many Treasures Buddha may also return to its former position.'" ⁸² After the Bodhisattvas of the Earth had departed, from the "Medicine King" chapter through the Nirvana Sutra, the Buddha transferred the sutra again to the people taught by him in his transient status and to the bodhisattvas

from other worlds. This was gleaning in order to entrust.⁸³

Question: Did the Bodhisattvas of the Earth then appear in Jambudvīpa during the two millennia of the Former and Middle Days of the Law to spread the Lotus Sutra?

Answer: No, they did not.

Question: Your answer comes as a surprise. If the Lotus Sutra, especially the essential teaching, is intended primarily for those people living after the Buddha's passing, and the Buddha entrusted the sutra to the Bodhisattvas of the Earth, why did they not appear during the Former and Middle Days of the Law to spread the sutra?

Answer: I will not say.

Question: I am asking you again, what was the reason?

Answer: I will not disclose it.

Question: Once more, what was the reason?

Answer: If I disclose it, all will refuse to believe and, what is worse, will slander the sutra, as in the Latter Day of the Law of Awesome Sound King Buddha. Even my own disciples would slander the sutra if I tried to explain, so I can only keep silent.

Question: Nonetheless, I urge you to answer. Unless you do, you will be guilty of the fault of greed and stinginess.

Answer: Then since I have no choice, I will try to give you a brief explanation. The "Teacher of the Law" chapter states, "[Since hatred and jealousy toward this sutra abound even when the Thus Come One is in the world], how much more will this be so after his passing?" The "Life Span" chapter states, "I will leave this good medicine here." The "Distinctions in Benefits" chapter speaks of "the evil age of the Latter Day of the Law." The "Medicine King" chapter says, "In the last five-hundred-year period you must spread it [the Lotus Sutra] abroad widely throughout Jambudvīpa." A pas-

sage in the Nirvana Sutra reads, "Suppose that a couple has seven children, one of whom falls ill. Though the parents love all their children equally, they worry most about the sick child."

With the clear mirror of these passages one can guess the Buddha's intent. They show that the Buddha did not appear for the sake of those present during the eight years when he revealed the Lotus Sutra at Eagle Peak, but for those who would come after him in the Former, Middle, and Latter Days of the Law. His advent was specifically for people like us, those living in the beginning of the Latter Day, not for those who lived in the two thousand years of the Former and Middle Days. "The sick child" mentioned in the Nirvana Sutra represents those who slander the Lotus Sutra after the Buddha's passing. The Buddha will now "leave this good medicine here" especially for those who, the sutra says, though the medicine is of excellent color and fragrance, do not perceive it as good.

The Bodhisattvas of the Earth did not appear in the Former or Middle Day of the Law for good reason.

Hinayana and provisional Mahayana were spread in the first millennium, the Former Day of the Law, because the time was not ripe [for the Lotus Sutra] and the people were not ready to embrace it. The four ranks of bodhisattvas in the Former Day led those who had received the seeds of Buddhahood by hearing the Lotus Sutra during Shakyamuni's lifetime to harvest the fruit of Buddhahood through Hinayana and provisional Mahayana teachings. [If the Bodhisattvas of the Earth had spread the Lotus Sutra at that time instead of later,] the people would have reviled it and thereby destroyed all the merit they had accumulated by maturing their seeds. Therefore, the bodhisattvas did not appear then. People of the Former Day are like those in the Buddha's life-

time who gradually matured and attained enlightenment through the first four flavors of teachings.

In the middle and latter part of the Middle Day of the Law, Bodhisattva Perceiver of the World's Sounds was reborn as Nan-yüeh, and Bodhisattva Medicine King as T'ien-t'ai. Preaching the text of the theoretical teaching and employing the meaning of the essential teaching to supplement it, they fully revealed the doctrine of the hundred worlds and thousand factors and of three thousand realms in a single moment of life. They expounded it in principle, but they did not establish the actual practice of the five characters of Nam-myoho-enge-kyo or establish the object of devotion of the essential teaching. The time was not right for propagation, although even then some people had the proper capacity.

Now, in the beginning of the Latter Day of the Law, Hinayana adherents attack the doctrines of Mahayana, and provisional Mahayana believers denounce the true Mahayana teaching. East is mistaken for west, and heaven and earth are turned upside down. The four ranks of bodhisattvas of the theoretical teaching are gone, and all the heavenly gods have deserted the country and no longer lend it protection. At this time the Bodhisattvas of the Earth appear in the world for the first time solely to bring the medicine of the five characters of Myoho-enge-kyo to the ignorant people of the Latter Day. This is what is meant by the words, "Even if one reviles the correct teaching and falls into the evil paths, one can create causes for the eventual attainment of benefit."⁸⁴

You who are my disciples, take this to heart! The countless Bodhisattvas of the Earth were the disciples of Shakyamuni Buddha, the lord of teachings, from the time he first set his mind on and attained enlightenment in the remote past. But they did not come to his

place of enlightenment in India, nor did they come to the grove of sal trees when he entered nirvana. They were unfaithful to him. They also failed to appear when the Buddha preached the first fourteen chapters, or the theoretical teaching, of the Lotus Sutra, and they left the assembly when he preached the last six chapters of the essential teaching. They only attended the Buddha during the first eight chapters of the essential teaching. Since these noble bodhisattvas received [the five characters of Myoho-enge-kyo] and made a solemn oath to Shakyamuni Buddha, Many Treasures Buddha, and the Buddhas of the ten directions, is it possible that they will not appear now at the beginning of the Latter Day of the Law? Know this: in the time for the practice of shakubuku the four bodhisattvas appear as worthy rulers who rebuke and convert ignorant rulers, and in the time for the practice of shoju they appear as priests to embrace and spread the correct teaching.

Question: Does the Buddha predict their coming in the Latter Day of the Law?

Answer: The Buddha states, "In the last five-hundred-year period the Lotus Sutra will spread abroad widely throughout Jambudvīpa."⁸⁵ The Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai predicts, "In the last five-hundred-year period, the mystic way will spread and benefit humankind far into the future."⁸⁶ Miao-lo predicts, "The beginning of the Latter Day of the Law will not be without inconspicuous benefit."⁸⁷ The Great Teacher Dengyo says, "The Former and Middle Days are almost over, and the Latter Day is near at hand."⁸⁸ The latter part of this quotation means that his was not the right time for propagation. The Great Teacher Dengyo, who was living in Japan, foresaw the beginning of the Latter Day of the Law, saying: "Speaking of the age, [the propagation of the true teaching will begin] in the age

when the Middle Day of the Law ends and the Latter Day opens. Regarding the land, it will begin in a land to the east of T'ang and to the west of Katsu.⁸⁹ As for the people, it will spread among people stained by the five impurities who live in a time of conflict. The sutra says, 'Since hatred and jealousy toward this sutra abound even when the Thus Come One is in the world, how much more will this be so after his passing?' There is good reason for this statement."⁹⁰

"A time of conflict" in this commentary refers to the two disasters of internal strife and invasion from the western sea that are occurring at present. At this time the countless Bodhisattvas of the Earth will appear and establish in this country the object of devotion, foremost in Jambudvīpa, that depicts Shakyamuni Buddha of the essential teaching attending [the eternal Buddha]. This object of devotion has never appeared in India or China. Its time had not come when Prince Jōgu in Japan constructed Shitenno-ji temple, so he could only make a statue of Amida, a Buddha of another world, the object of devotion. When Emperor Shōmu erected Todai-ji temple, he enshrined a statue of the Buddha of the Flower Garland Sutra [Vairocana Buddha] as the object of devotion, but could not manifest the true meaning of the Lotus Sutra. The Great Teacher Dengyō almost revealed the truth of the sutra. The time had not yet come, however, and so he built a statue of the Buddha of the Eastern Region,⁹¹ but did not represent the four bodhisattvas of the essential teaching in any form. Ultimately, this was because the revelation of the true object of devotion had been entrusted only to the Bodhisattvas of the Earth. They have been waiting for the right time to emerge from beneath the earth and carry out the Buddha's decree. They did not appear

in the Former or Middle Day. But if they do not appear in the Latter Day of the Law, their vows would be outright lies, and the prophecies of Shakyamuni, Many Treasures, and the Buddhas of the ten directions would be no more than froth on the waters.

We have recently experienced great earthquakes, huge comets, and other calamities such as never occurred in the Former or Middle Day. These signs could not be caused by garuda birds, asura demons, or dragon deities. They must foretell the appearance of the four great bodhisattvas. T'ien-t'ai states, "By observing the fury of the rain, we can tell the greatness of the dragon that caused it, and by observing the flourishing of the lotus flowers, we can tell the depth of the pond they grow in."⁹² Miao-lo says, "Wise men can perceive the cause of things, as snakes know the way of snakes."⁹³ When the skies are clear, the ground is illuminated. Similarly, when one knows the Lotus Sutra, one understands the meaning of all worldly affairs.

Showing profound compassion for those unable to comprehend the gem of the doctrine of three thousand realms in a single moment of life, the Buddha wrapped it within the five characters [of Myōhō-*renge-kyō*], with which he then adorned the necks of the ignorant people of the latter age. The four great bodhisattvas will protect anyone who embraces the five characters as faithfully as T'ai-kung Wang and the Duke of Chou supported King Wen, and as devotedly as the Four White-Haired Elders⁹⁴ served Emperor Hui.

Written by Nichiren.

The twenty-fifth day of the fourth month in the tenth year of Bun'ei (1273), with the cyclical sign *mizunoto-tori*

COVER LETTER

I have received an unlined robe,⁹⁵ three sumi inksticks, and five writing brushes.

I have written down some of my thoughts concerning the doctrine of observing the mind. I am sending the treatise to Ota, Kyoshin-bo,⁹⁶ and the others. It explains an important matter that concerns me, Nichiren, and must be kept secret. Only those of single-minded faith should be allowed to read it.

The treatise contains many difficult points and few answers. What it reveals, however, has never been heard of before and is bound to startle those who read or hear of it. If you do show it to others, never allow three or four persons to read it together at one time.

In the more than 2,220 years since the Buddha's passing, the heart of this treatise has never been revealed before.

Despite the official persecution facing me, I expound it now in the fifth five-hundred-year period, when the time is ripe for its propagation. I hope those who read it will remain firm in their faith so that both teacher and disciples can together reach the pure land of Eagle Peak and behold with reverence the faces of Shakyamuni Buddha, Many Treasures Buddha, and the Buddhas of the ten directions.

With my deep respect,
Nichiren

The twenty-sixth day of the fourth month in the tenth year of Bun'ei (1273), with the cyclical sign
mizunoto-tori

Reply to Toki



Background

Nichiren Daishonin completed this work, one of his most important, in the fourth month of 1273, during his exile at Ichinosawa on the island of Sado. It was addressed specifically to Toki Jonin, a leading disciple who lived in Shimosa Province, and its cover letter instructed that because it revealed the Daishonin's ultimate teaching it should be shown only to those with strong faith.

In another of his major works, *The Opening of the Eyes*, written on Sado Island a year earlier, the Daishonin explains the object of devotion in terms of the Person. He declares that he is endowed with the three virtues of sovereign, teacher, and parent, implying that he is the Buddha of the Latter Day of the Law who leads all people to Buddhahood. In the present work, the

Daishonin explains the object of devotion in terms of the Law and declares that the Gohonzon that embodies the Law of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is the object of devotion in the Latter Day. Faith and practice based on the Gohonzon enable everyone to perceive the Buddha nature in his or her own life and attain Buddhahood.

Four important elements are contained in the full title of this work, *The Object of Devotion for Observing the Mind Established in the Fifth Five-Hundred-Year Period after the Thus Come One's Passing*. They are the time, the Buddha's teaching, the people's capacity, and the Law. Concerning the time, a Buddha appears in accordance with the deep desire of the people to see him. The time for his advent is defined as the "fifth five-hundred-year period after the Thus

Come One's [Shakyamuni's] passing." Concerning the Buddha's teaching, this is indicated by the word "established." In establishing the Gohonzon, Nichiren Daishonin, considering the people's capacity, depicted the essence of the Lotus Sutra, or the Law he perceived. The people's capacity means that "for observing [the true nature of] the mind." The Law is indicated by the phrase "the object of devotion."

Nichiren Daishonin embodied in the object of devotion the state of life he enjoyed as the eternal Buddha so that people could attain the same condition of enlightenment. A description of the Gohonzon in the text includes a depiction of the ceremony of the transmission of the Law: "Myoho-rence-kyo appears in the center of the tower with the Buddhas Shakyamuni and Many Treasures seated to the right and left, and, flanking them, the four bodhisattvas, followers of Shakyamuni, led by Superior Practices" (p. 366).

The text may be broadly divided into four sections. The first section explains the doctrine of three thousand realms in a single moment of life. The Daishonin elucidates this doctrine by referring to the works of the Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai of China, who based his exposition on the Lotus Sutra, and to the works of other Chinese scholars.

The second section discusses the meaning of "observing the mind." T'ien-t'ai established a complex practice of meditation as a means to perceive the true nature of one's own life. This was to observe one's mind, or to perceive all the three thousand realms in a single moment of one's own life.

Here the Daishonin proclaims that the practice of observing one's mind in the Latter Day of the Law is none other than to chant Nam-myoho-rence-kyo with firm faith in the true object of devotion, saying: "Shakyamuni's practices and the virtues he

consequently attained are all contained within the five characters of Myoho-rence-kyo. If we believe in these five characters, we will naturally be granted the same benefits as he was" (p. 365). This is the principle that embracing the true object of devotion is in itself enlightenment.

The third section describes the Gohonzon, the object of devotion, by classifying the entire body of the Buddhist teachings into three categories: preparation, revelation, and transmission. In terms of the Daishonin's teachings, preparation includes all the teachings of all Buddhas throughout time and space; revelation is Nam-myoho-rence-kyo, the Law implied in the depths of the "Life Span" chapter; and transmission, the teachings of all Buddhas seen in the light of Nam-myoho-rence-kyo.

The Daishonin asserts that Shakyamuni's is the Buddhism of the harvest, meaning that he expounded his enlightenment as an effect only, without revealing the cause. The Daishonin's teaching, however, is called the Buddhism of sowing, for it teaches the cause for attaining enlightenment directly, thus guiding people compassionately in their quest for the ultimate state of life.

In this section, Nichiren Daishonin identifies the object of devotion implied in the "Life Span" chapter as the entity of the Law for propagation in the Latter Day. He states that the Bodhisattvas of the Earth will surely appear in the world to establish this supreme object of devotion.

The fourth section brings the treatise to a close by declaring that the eternal Buddha who appears in the Latter Day of the Law will establish the Gohonzon of Nam-myoho-rence-kyo out of profound compassion for the people of that age, who are ignorant of the principle of three thousand realms in a single moment of life.

Notes

1. In *Great Concentration and Insight*, the Chinese word for “one mind” or “one thought” is used here, but in Nichiren Dai-shonin’s teaching it is interpreted as indicating the entire psychosomatic entity; hence the word is translated as “life” rather than “mind.”

2. Each of the Ten Worlds is endowed with ten factors, each of which in turn is endowed with the three realms of existence. The thirty realms refer to the ten factors multiplied by the three realms.

3. The Japanese text contains two parenthetical notes, one directly following the beginning clause, “Volume five of *Great Concentration and Insight* states,” and the other following the quotation. They are translated together here. T’ien-t’ai’s *Great Concentration and Insight* elucidates two ways to arrive at the “three thousand” of the “three thousand realms in a single moment of life”: (1) The hundred worlds are multiplied by the three realms of existence and then by the ten factors to arrive at the “three thousand factors.” (2) The hundred worlds are multiplied by the ten factors and then by the three realms of existence to arrive at the “three thousand realms of existence.” Although the method differs, the principle is the same.

4. *The Annotations on “Great Concentration and Insight.”*

5. *Ibid.*

6. “Each sense field” refers to each of the six sense organs (the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind) and the objects that stimulate them.

7. T’ien-t’ai’s annotations on the “Perceiver of the World’s Sounds” chapter of the Lotus Sutra, recorded by his disciple Chang-an.

8. The seventh chapter, which is regarded as the core of *Great Concentration and Insight* because it explains the practice of meditation.

9. *The Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sutra*, T’ien-t’ai’s major work, recorded by Chang-an.

10. Introduction to *Profound Meaning*.

11. A work by Miao-lo that maintains that even insentient beings are endowed with the potential for Buddhahood.

12. Lotus Sutra, chap. 12.

13. *Ibid.*, chap. 26.

14. *Ibid.*, chap. 12.

15. A rephrasing of a passage in chapter 10 of the Lotus Sutra.

16. Lotus Sutra, chap. 2.

17. *Ibid.*, chap. 3.

18. *Ibid.*

19. *Ibid.*, chap. 2.

20. *Ibid.*, chap. 21.

21. *Ibid.*, chap. 16.

22. *The Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sutra*.

23. *The Annotations on “The Treatise on the Observation of the Mind.”*

24. *The Outstanding Principles of the Lotus Sutra*.

25. According to the “Expedient Means” chapter of the Lotus Sutra, the five thousand arrogant people, who are mentioned in the preceding sentence, left the assembly as Shakyamuni began to preach about “the replacement of the three vehicles with the one vehicle,” because they supposed they had attained what they had not attained. In the “Treasure Tower” chapter, Shakyamuni transforms the lands three times to accommodate the Buddhas who assemble from the ten directions. He purifies the saha world by removing all heavenly and human beings to other worlds, leaving only the assembled multitude.

26. This stage refers to the first of the six stages of practice, when one has not yet heard the correct teaching and is ignorant of Buddhism. See also six stages of practice in Glossary.

27. Deities who wield weapons to protect Buddhism. Vajra (Skt) means diamond-pounder, a symbol for firmness or hardness.

28. In Hinayana Buddhism a bodhisattva is supposed to serve seventy-five thousand Buddhas for one asamkhyā kalpas, seventy-six thousand Buddhas for another asamkhyā kalpas, and seventy-seven thousand Buddhas for a third asamkhyā kalpas.

29. The text has been augmented slightly here for clarity. The “four different ways” refers to the four different aspects Shakyamuni assumed when he preached the four kinds of teachings—the Tripitaka, connecting, specific, and perfect teachings.

30. The land of Vairochana Buddha, who appears in the Flower Garland Sutra, the first sutra Shakyamuni taught after attaining enlightenment.

31. Venerable Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and others inscribed on the two mandalas on the Diamond and Womb realms.

32. "A Buddha sixteen feet tall" indicates the inferior manifested body of the Buddha, and "a small or large body," the superior manifested body. Vairochana Buddha refers to a Buddha of the reward body, and "a body as vast as space," to a Buddha of the Dharma body.

33. Here the Buddha's teachings.

34. Lotus Sutra, chap. 2.

35. The Teacher of the Nation Ch'ing-liang was the honorary title given to Ch'eng-kuan (738-839), the fourth patriarch of the Chinese Flower Garland school. Hui-yüan (n.d.), who appears in the next sentence, was an eighth-century T'ang dynasty priest who studied the Flower Garland doctrines under Fa-tsang (643-712), the third patriarch and doctrinal systematizer of the Flower Garland school.

36. No documents about Ryoko are extant, but he is thought to have been a Japanese Flower Garland priest. Tokuitsu, who appears in the next sentence, was a Dharma Characteristics priest who disputed frequently with the Great Teacher Dengyo on doctrinal matters. Chih-i is another name for T'ien-t'ai.

37. *An Essay on the Protection of the Nation*. The "long broad tongue" is one of the thirty-two features of a Buddha; it is symbolic of the Buddha's honesty.

38. The essence of this statement is found in *A Comparison of Exoteric and Esoteric Buddhism*.

39. This paragraph has been expanded in translation for the sake of clarity.

40. *Great Concentration and Insight*.

41. *Profound Meaning*.

42. *On "The Treatise on the Observation of the Mind."*

43. Lotus Sutra, chap. 10.

44. *Words and Phrases*.

45. The language of the text both here and in the preceding paragraph is highly condensed and technical; it has been expanded in translation for clarity.

46. Innate Buddhahood, the wisdom to perceive it, and the deeds that cause the Buddha nature to develop.

47. The reference here is to the translations of Indian scriptures by Hsüan-tsang (602-664) and by later translators such as Shan-wu-wei.

48. *Sad* corresponds to *sad* of *Saddhar-*

ma-pundarika-sutra, the Sanskrit name of the Lotus Sutra.

49. *The Treatise on the Great Perfection of Wisdom*. It is said that the number six was the base of the ancient numerical system in India.

50. A work by Chün-cheng, a T'ang-dynasty scholar of the Three Treatises school.

51. The quotation has not been identified.

52. *Profound Meaning*.

53. Lotus Sutra, chap. 4.

54. *Ibid.*, chap. 2.

55. *Ibid.*, chap. 10.

56. When King Wu of the Chou dynasty did battle with King Chou of the Yin dynasty, T'ai-kung Wang, as supreme commander, defeated the armies of Yin. Tan, the Duke of Chou, was the younger brother of King Wu. King Wu's son, Ch'eng, was still a child when his father Wu passed away, so his uncle, Tan, acted as a regent and administered the affairs of state on his behalf.

57. A legendary general and statesman who appears in the ancient chronicles of Japan. Takenouchi is said to have served five emperors.

58. *On "Great Concentration and Insight."*

59. According to the Sutra on Resolving Doubts about the Middle Day of the Law, those present in the grove of sal trees at the time of the Buddha's entry into nirvana perceived the scene in four different ways in accordance with their capacity and state of life: (1) as a grove composed of earth, trees, plants, and stone walls; (2) as a place adorned with the seven kinds of treasures, including gold and silver; (3) as a place where all Buddhas carry out their practices; and (4) as the inconceivable realm that all Buddhas attain. These four views are interpreted as corresponding to the four kinds of lands (*see* Glossary).

60. The wording of the Japanese text has been expanded here for clarity.

61. "Eight chapters" here refers to the chapters from "Emerging from the Earth" through "Entrustment," which describe the Ceremony in the Air (*see* Glossary).

62. The wording of the Japanese text has been expanded here for clarity.

63. Here the Buddha of the "Life Span" chapter indicates Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, or the Law implicit in the depths of the "Life Span" chapter.

64. Preparation indicates a teaching that prepares the way for the revelation of the truth, and that readies people to accept the truth. Revelation is the truth that the Buddha imparts. Transmission indicates the admonishment following revelation, which urges that the truth be transmitted to posterity.

65. The “theoretical teaching” generally means the first half, and the “essential teaching,” the second half, of the twenty-eight chapters of the Lotus Sutra. Here the Daishonin includes the Immeasurable Meanings Sutra and the Universal Worthy Sutra with the Lotus Sutra to form what is known as the threefold Lotus Sutra. As described here, the “theoretical teaching” indicates the Immeasurable Meanings Sutra and the first fourteen chapters of the Lotus Sutra, and the “essential teaching,” the last fourteen chapters and the Universal Worthy Sutra.

66. “Three categories of preaching” refers to “the sutras I [Shakyamuni] have preached, now preach, and will preach,” mentioned in the “Teacher of the Law” chapter of the Lotus Sutra. *The Annotations on “The Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sutra”* says that the Lotus Sutra stands above “the sutras I have preached” (the provisional sutras), “[the sutra] I now preach” (the Immeasurable Meanings Sutra), and “[the sutras] I will preach” (the Universal Worthy and the Nirvana sutras).

67. The wording has been reordered somewhat in translation.

68. The Daishonin uses the term “essential teaching” here to indicate not the latter half of the Lotus Sutra but the ultimate teaching contained within the “Life Span” chapter, that is, Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. Hereafter this term is used in two different ways. Similarly, the “‘Life Span’ chapter” and the “one chapter and two halves” are either meant literally or refer to Nam-myoho-renge-kyo that they contain.

69. Lotus Sutra, chap. 13.

70. *Words and Phrases.*

71. *On “The Words and Phrases.”*

72. A commentary on T’ien-t’ai’s *Words and Phrases* and Miao-lo’s *On “The Words and Phrases”* by Tao-hsien, a priest of the T’ien-t’ai school in China during the T’ang dynasty.

73. Lotus Sutra, chap. 15. In the quotation, the expression “these words” refers to Shakyamuni’s declaration that the Bodhi-

sattvas of the Earth are his original disciples.

74. These are the five major principles (see Glossary) formulated by T’ien-t’ai in his *Profound Meaning* to explain the title of the Lotus Sutra.

75. *Words and Phrases.*

76. *The Supplement to “The Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sutra.”* See n. 72.

77. The Buddha Sun Moon Pure Bright Virtue is described in the “Medicine King” chapter of the Lotus Sutra. When Bodhisattva Medicine King practiced austerities in a previous existence, he expounded the Lotus Sutra. The Buddha Jeweled Dignity, who appears in the next sentence, is described in the “Universal Worthy” chapter of the Lotus Sutra. According to the sutra, Bodhisattva Universal Worthy came to the ceremony of the Lotus Sutra from the Buddha Jeweled Dignity’s land in the east.

78. Lotus Sutra, chap. 21.

79. *Words and Phrases.*

80. *Outstanding Principles.*

81. *On “The Words and Phrases.”*

82. The quotations from the “Entrustment” chapter describe the conclusion of the Ceremony in the Air, which begins in the “Treasure Tower” chapter.

83. “Gleaning” here means gathering those left behind for the purpose of entrusting the teachings to them. This transfer takes place in the six chapters from the “Medicine King” to the “Encouragements” chapters and in the Universal Worthy and the Nirvana sutras.

84. *On “The Words and Phrases.”*

85. Here the reading of this sentence from the “Medicine King” chapter of the Lotus Sutra is changed. The sutra passage is generally rendered as follows: “After I have passed into extinction, in the last five-hundred-year period you must spread it abroad widely throughout Jambudvīpa.” Such a change is possible in rendering the classical Chinese into Japanese.

86. *Words and Phrases.*

87. *On “The Words and Phrases.”*

88. *Essay on the Protection of the Nation.*

89. T’ang refers to China, and Katsu to a Tungusic nation that ruled over northeastern China and northern Korea in the sixth and seventh centuries. “A land to the east of T’ang and to the west of Katsu” indicates Japan according to old maps.

90. *Outstanding Principles.*

91. The Buddha of the Eastern Region refers to the Buddha Medicine Master.

92. *Words and Phrases.*

93. On "*The Words and Phrases.*"

94. Emperor Kao-tsu (247-195 B.C.E.), founder of the Han dynasty, tried to disown his son, the future Emperor Hui. Hui's mother persuaded four eminent elders, who lived on Mount Shang, to become his advisers. They were known as Master Tung-yüan, the Scholar Lu-li, Ch'i Li-chi, and Master Hsia-huang. On seeing these

four elders, the emperor was so impressed by their dignity that he accepted Hui as his successor.

95. An unlined robe for summer use, made of hemp cloth or crinkled silk.

96. Ota is Ota Jomyo, an official employed in the Kamakura shogunate's Office of Legal Affairs. Kyoshin-bo is also known as the lay priest Soya. Together with Toki Jonin, they were leading followers of the Daishonin in Shimosa Province.