

The Entity of the Mystic Law

Composed by Nichiren



QUESTION: What is the entity of Myoho-*renge-kyo*?

Answer: All beings and their environments in any of the Ten Worlds are themselves entities of Myoho-*renge-kyo*.

Question: If so, then is it possible to say that all living beings, such as ourselves, are entities of the Mystic Law in its entirety?

Answer: Of course. The sutra says, "This reality [the true aspect of all phenomena] consists of the appearance, nature . . . and their consistency from beginning to end."¹

The Great Teacher Miao-lo comments on this as follows: "The true aspect invariably manifests in all phenomena, and all phenomena invariably manifest in the ten factors. The ten factors invariably manifest in the Ten Worlds, and the Ten Worlds invariably manifest in life and its environment."²

T'ien-t'ai commented, "All phenomena consisting of the ten factors, Ten Worlds, and three thousand realms are entities of the Lotus Sutra."³

The Great Teacher Nan-yüeh says, "Question: What does Myoho-*renge-kyo* represent? Answer: *Myo* indicates that all living beings are *myo*, or mystic. *Ho* indicates that all living beings are *ho*, or the Law."⁴ T'ien-t'ai also says, "The Law of all living beings is mystic."⁵

Question: If the entity of all living beings is the Mystic Law in its entirety, then are all the actions and their results that are associated with the nine worlds, from the world of hell up to that of bodhisattvas, in effect entities of the Mystic Law?

Answer: The mystic principle that is the essential nature of phenomena possesses two aspects, the defiled aspect and the pure aspect. If the defiled aspect is operative, this is called delusion. If the pure aspect is operative, this is called enlightenment. Enlightenment constitutes the realm of Buddhahood. Delusion constitutes the realms of ordinary mortals.

These two aspects, the deluded and the enlightened, are indeed two different phenomena, and yet both are workings of the one principle, that is, the essential nature of phenomena, or the true aspect of reality. It is like a piece of crystal. If the crystal is placed in the sun's rays, it will attract them and produce fire. But if it is placed in the moon's rays, it will produce water. The crystal is a single entity, but the effects it produces differ according to the circumstances.

The mystic principle of the true aspect of reality is like this. The mystic principle of the true aspect of reality is one, but if it encounters evil influences, it will manifest delusion, while

if it encounters good influences, it will manifest enlightenment. Enlightenment means enlightenment to the essential nature of phenomena, and delusion, ignorance of it.

It is like the case of a person who in a dream sees himself performing various good and evil actions. After he wakes up and considers the matter, he realizes that it was all a dream produced by his own mind. This mind of his corresponds to the single principle of the essential nature of phenomena, the true aspect of reality, while the good and evil that appeared in the dream correspond to enlightenment and delusion. When one becomes aware of this, it is clear that one should discard the ignorance associated with evil and delusion, and take as one's basis the awakening that is characterized by goodness and enlightenment.

The Complete and Final Teaching on Perfect Enlightenment Sutra declares, "The beginningless illusions and ignorance that beset all living beings are all produced by the perfectly enlightened mind of the Thus Come Ones."

The Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai in his *Great Concentration and Insight* states, "Ignorance or illusions are in themselves enlightenment to the essential nature of phenomena. But due to the influence of delusions, enlightenment changes into ignorance." The Great Teacher Miao-lo comments on this as follows: "Enlightenment has no separate entity but completely depends upon ignorance; and ignorance has no separate entity but completely depends upon enlightenment."⁶

Ignorance is a state of delusion that must be cut off, whereas enlightenment is the state that one must manifest. How then can we say that they are a single entity? To resolve doubts on this point, one should have a clear grasp of the passages that have been quoted here. The example of the

dream given in the ninety-fifth volume of *The Treatise on the Great Perfection of Wisdom* and the T'ien-t'ai school's example⁷ of the piece of crystal cited above are very interesting illustrations.

Further proof of the truth that ignorance and enlightenment are one in essence is found in the passage in the Lotus Sutra that reads, "These phenomena are part of an abiding Law, [and] the characteristics of the world are constantly abiding."⁸ *Great Perfection of Wisdom* says, "Enlightenment and ignorance are not different things, not separate things. To understand this is what is called the Middle Way."

There are many passages of proof asserting that the mystic principle of the true aspect of reality possesses two aspects, the defiled and the pure. But none can surpass the one in the Flower Garland Sutra that says, "The mind, the Buddha, and all living beings—these three things are without distinction," or the passage in the Lotus Sutra that describes the true aspect of all phenomena.

The Great Teacher Nan-yüeh says, "The entity of the mind is endowed with two aspects, the defiled and the pure. However, it does not have two different forms but is single in nature and without distinction."⁹ And the example of the mirror¹⁰ that he gives truly presents a thorough explanation of the subject. For a more detailed understanding, one may also refer to his interpretations in *The Mahayana Method of Concentration and Insight*.

Another good explanation is given in the sixth volume of Miao-lo's *Annotations on "The Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sutra,"* in the passage that reads: "While the three thousand realms remain latent [in ordinary beings], they are all designated by the term 'ignorance.' But when the three thousand realms all manifest themselves as the result [of Buddhahood], then they are all designated by the term 'eternal

happiness.' However, because the three thousand realms themselves remain unchanged, ignorance is essentially one with enlightenment. Since the three thousand realms all remain constant, they possess both entity and function." This commentary makes the matter perfectly clear.

Question: If all living beings are entities of Myoho-enge-kyo, then are ordinary people like ourselves who are ignorant and deluded, unenlightened and dull-witted, also entities of the Mystic Law?

Answer: Though there are a great many people in the world today, they all fall into two categories—those who believe in the provisional teachings and those who believe in the true teaching. Those who believe in the provisional and expedient teachings, such as the Nembutsu, cannot be called entities of Myoho-enge-kyo. But those who believe in the Lotus Sutra, which is the true teaching, are entities of Myoho-enge-kyo, mystic entities of the true aspect of reality. The Nirvana Sutra says, "Among all living beings, those who believe in the Mahayana are called the Mahayana people."

The Great Teacher Nan-yüeh in his *Four Peaceful Practices* writes, "The Great Diligence Sutra says, 'Ordinary beings and the Thus Come One share a single Dharma body. Being pure and mystic beyond comparison, it is called Myoho-enge-kyo.'" He also says: "Those who practice the Lotus Sutra are pursuing through this single act of devotion the mind that is endowed with all manner of fortunate results. These are present simultaneously and are not acquired gradually over a long period of time. This is like the blossom of the lotus that, when it opens, already possesses a large number of seeds. Hence such persons are called the people of the one vehicle." He also says: "The people of the two vehicles, particularly the voice-hearers, and the bo-

dhisattvas of inferior capacity choose to follow the way of expedient means, practicing methods that assure gradual progress over a long period of time. But the bodhisattvas of superior capacity honestly discard expedient means and do not carry out the practice of gradual progress. If they are able to complete the meditation based on the Lotus Sutra, then they will thereby possess all manner of fortunate results. Persons such as these are called the people of the one vehicle."

The phrase "practice of gradual progress" that appears in this commentary by Nan-yüeh has been interpreted by the scholars of our time to refer to the specific teaching. In fact, however, it refers to the way of expedient means, as opposed to the way of the Lotus Sutra, which is endowed simultaneously with causes and results. Hence the term "practice of gradual progress" includes the perfect teaching preached before the Lotus Sutra,¹¹ the various Mahayana sutras preached before the Lotus Sutra, and the Mahayana and Hinayana sutras that belong to the sudden and gradual teachings.

As proof, we may cite the following passage in the Immeasurable Meanings Sutra: "Then I preached the twelve divisions of the correct and equal sutras,¹² the teaching of great wisdom, and the Flower Garland teaching of the ocean-imprint meditation, describing the many kalpas of practice for bodhisattvas."

But the bodhisattvas of superior capacity honestly discard expedient means and do not carry out the practice of gradual progress. They practice the Lotus Sutra, and when they attain its truth, they simultaneously acquire all manner of fortunate results. Persons such as these are called the people of the one vehicle.

When we consider the meaning of these various passages, we understand that none of the ordinary people and

sages of the three vehicles, the five vehicles,¹³ the seven expedient means, the nine worlds, or the four flavors and three teachings can be called Mahayana followers who are entities of Myohorenge-kyo. Though there are Buddhas in these teachings, they are Buddhas of the provisional teachings and cannot be called Buddhas in the true sense. This is because the Buddhas of the provisional teachings in their three bodies¹⁴ have not yet freed themselves from impermanence. How then could beings in realms other than Buddhahood be [called entities of Myohorenge-kyo]? That is why it is said that a person of humble station born in the Latter Day of the Law is more worthy of respect than the kings and high ministers who lived during the two thousand years of the Former and Middle Days.

Nan-yüeh says in his commentary, "All living beings have within themselves the storehouse of the Dharma body, and therefore they are in no way different from the Buddha."¹⁵ That is why the Lotus Sutra says, "The pure and ordinary eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind that one received at birth from one's father and mother are also like this."¹⁶

Nan-yüeh also writes, "Question: In what sutra does the Buddha explain the eyes and the other sense organs and designate them by the name Thus Come One? Answer: The Great Diligence Sutra says, 'Ordinary beings and the Thus Come One share a single Dharma body. Being pure and mystic beyond comparison, it is called Myohorenge-kyo.'¹⁷ This comes from a sutra other than the Lotus, but since the Lotus later clarified the same point, it is all right to quote it here.

If we take up the word "share" that is used in this passage of the Great Diligence Sutra and apply it in our argument, we may say that those who share in and believe in the Lotus Sutra are entities of that mystic sutra. But those

who do not share in it, such as the Nembutsu believers, are not entities of the mystic sutra because they have already turned their backs on their Buddha nature, that is, the Thus Come One of the Dharma body.

In essence, the entity of Myohorenge-kyo is the physical body that the disciples and followers of Nichiren who believe in the Lotus Sutra received from their fathers and mothers at birth. Such persons, who honestly discard expedient means, put faith in the Lotus Sutra alone, and chant Nam-myohorenge-kyo, will transform the three paths of earthly desires, karma, and suffering into the three virtues of the Dharma body, wisdom, and emancipation. The threefold contemplation and the three truths will immediately become manifest in their minds,¹⁸ and the place where they live will become the Land of Eternally Tranquil Light. The Buddha who is the entity of Myohorenge-kyo, of the "Life Span" chapter of the essential teaching, who is both inhabiting subject and inhabited realm, life and environment, body and mind, entity and function, the Buddha eternally endowed with the three bodies—he is to be found in the disciples and lay believers of Nichiren. Such persons embody the true entity of Myohorenge-kyo; this is all due to the meritorious workings that the spontaneous transcendental powers inherent in it display. Could anyone venture to doubt it? Indeed it cannot be doubted!

Question: The Great Teacher T'ient'ai has explained that the term Myohorenge is used in two different senses, one meaning the entity of Myohorenge and the other being figurative in meaning. What are these two kinds of *rengé*, or lotus?

Answer: The figurative *rengé*, or lotus, is explained in detail in the three metaphors of the lotus blossom unfolding the seed, the lotus blossom opening to reveal the seed inside, and the lotus

blossom falling and the seed ripening, so one should refer to them. The lotus that is the entity of Myoho-enge is explained in the seventh volume of *The Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sutra* as follows: “*Renge*, or lotus, is not a symbol; it is the actual name of the entity. For example, at the beginning of the kalpa of continuance, the various things in the world had no names. The sage observed the principles that govern them and on that basis made up names for them.” He also writes: “Now the name *renge* is not intended as a symbol for anything. It is the teaching expounded in the Lotus Sutra. The teaching expounded in the Lotus Sutra is pure and undefiled and explains the subtleties of cause and effect. Therefore, it is called *renge*, or lotus. This name designates the true entity that the meditation based on the Lotus Sutra reveals, and is not a metaphor or figurative term.”

The Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai also writes: “Question: Does the term *renge* in fact mean the *renge*, or lotus, that is the essence of the meditation based on the Lotus Sutra? Or does it in fact mean the ordinary lotus that is a species of plant?”

“Answer: It in fact refers to the lotus that is the essence of the Lotus Sutra. But because the essence of the Lotus Sutra is difficult to understand, the metaphor of the lotus plant is introduced. People of sharp faculties will hear the name and immediately grasp the principle. They have no need to rely upon a metaphor but can understand the Lotus Sutra directly. But people of intermediate or inferior perception will not understand immediately. Only through the medium of a metaphor will they be able to understand. Thus the easily understood metaphor of an actual lotus plant is used to make clear the difficult-to-understand lotus that is the essence of the Lotus Sutra.

“Thus, in the Lotus Sutra the Buddha employed three cycles of preaching in accordance with the respective understanding of those of superior, intermediate, or inferior capacity. For people of superior capacity, the *renge*, or lotus, that is the name of the Law was taught. But, for people of intermediate or inferior capacity, the lotus was used as a metaphor or symbol. As long as one understands that the word is being used both as a name for the Law itself and as a metaphor, depending upon which of the three groups of people is being addressed, then there should be no reason to argue over it.”

This passage of commentary means that the supreme principle [that is the Mystic Law] was originally without a name. When the sage was observing the principle and assigning names to all things, he perceived that there is this wonderful single Law [*myoho*] that simultaneously possesses both cause and effect [*renge*], and he named it Myoho-enge. This single Law that is Myoho-enge encompasses within it all the phenomena comprising the Ten Worlds and the three thousand realms, and is lacking in none of them. Anyone who practices this Law will obtain both the cause and the effect of Buddhahood simultaneously.

The sage practiced with this Law as his teacher and attained enlightenment, and therefore he simultaneously obtained both the mystic cause and the mystic effect of Buddhahood, becoming the Thus Come One of perfect enlightenment and fully realized virtues.

Thus the Great Teacher Dengyo writes: “A single mind, the entity of Myoho-enge, simultaneously brings to maturity both the blossom of cause and the calyx of effect. The three cycles of preaching that the Buddha employed each contain both the lotus that is the entity and the lotus that is a metaphor. The Lotus Sutra as a whole consists of both entity and metaphor. In particular

we may note the seven parables, the three equalities, and the ten peerlessnesses, which each contain the lotus of the entity. And the teaching that fully sets forth this principle is called Myoho-*renge*-kyo [the Lotus Sutra of the Wonderful Law].¹⁹

The Great Teacher Miao-lo says: "When interpreting the seven parables, one should understand the *renge*, or lotus, in each of them in terms of the doctrine of the provisional and true teachings. Why? Because these lotuses are no more than metaphors for the fact that the provisional teachings were set forth for the sake of the true teaching, and that the provisional teachings are opened in order to reveal the true teaching. All the seven parables are to be understood in this way."²⁰

In the beginning of the kalpa of continuance, a plant existed. The sage observed its principle and gave it the name *renge*, or lotus. The lotus plant resembles the principle of Myoho-*renge* in that it simultaneously contains both cause [blossom] and effect [seed]. Hence the plant came to bear the same name as the principle. The lotus that grows in water is the lotus that is a plant, such as the pink variety or the white variety. When we speak of the figurative lotus, or the lotus that is a metaphor, it is this lotus plant we mean. This lotus plant is used to help clarify the difficult concept of Myoho-*renge*. That is what the Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai means when he says that, through the use of this metaphor, the difficult-to-understand Mystic Law is rendered more comprehensible.

Question: Since the beginning of the kalpa of continuance, has anyone become enlightened to the lotus that is the entity of the Mystic Law?

Answer: Shakyamuni Buddha²¹ became enlightened to this lotus that is the entity of the Mystic Law numberless major world system dust particle kalpas in the past, and in age after age

and lifetime after lifetime, declared that he had attained the way and revealed the fundamental principle he had realized with his enlightened wisdom.

In our present world as well, he appeared in the kingdom of Magadha in central India, intending to reveal this lotus of the Mystic Law. But the people lacked the proper capacity, and the time was not right. Therefore, he drew distinctions regarding this lotus of the single Law and expounded it as three kinds of flowers, delivering to the people the provisional teachings of the three vehicles. For over forty years he guided and led them with these temporary teachings according to their capacities. During this period, because the capacities of the people he addressed were so varied, he bestowed upon them the various flowers and plants of the provisional teachings, but he never spoke of Myoho-*renge*. That is why, in the Immeasurable Meanings Sutra, the Buddha said: "In the past I sat upright in the place of meditation [for six years] under the bodhi tree [and was able to gain supreme perfect enlightenment . . . But] in these more than forty years, I have not yet revealed the truth."

But when he preached the Lotus Sutra, he cast aside the various plants and flowers of the Hinayana doctrines and the provisional teachings, which correspond to the expedient means of the four flavors and three teachings, and explained the unique doctrine of Myoho-*renge*. When he opened the three figurative lotuses to reveal the single lotus of Myoho-*renge*, the people of the provisional teachings with their four flavors and three teachings were able to gain the lotus of the first of the ten stages of security. Not until he revealed the lotus of "opening the near and revealing the distant" were they able to obtain the lotus of the highest result, advancing to the second stage of security, the third stage of security, the tenth stage, the stage of

near-perfect enlightenment, and finally, the highest stage of perfect enlightenment.

Question: Exactly which passages in which chapters of the Lotus Sutra expound the lotus that is the entity of the Mystic Law, and which ones expound the lotus that is a metaphor?

Answer: If we speak in terms of the three groups of voice-hearers, then we would say that the whole of the “Expedient Means” chapter expounds the lotus that is the entity, while the “Simile and Parable” and “Parable of the Phantom City” chapters expound the lotus that is a metaphor. However, it cannot be said that explanations of the lotus as a metaphor are entirely lacking in the “Expedient Means” chapter, nor can it be said that the other chapters are without explanation of the lotus as the entity.

Question: If so, then what passage contains a full elucidation of the entity?

Answer: The passage in the “Expedient Means” chapter that deals with the true aspect of all phenomena.

Question: How do we know that this passage deals with the lotus that is the entity?

Answer: Because T’ien-t’ai and Miao-lo quote this passage when they explain the essence of the Lotus Sutra. And the Great Teacher Dengyo in his commentary also writes, “Question: What is the essence of the Lotus Sutra? Answer: Its essence is the true aspect of all phenomena.”²² This passage of commentary clarifies the matter. (Scholars of the time kept this commentary secret and did not reveal the name of the entity, but the passage is clearly referring to Myoho-enge.)

Furthermore, actual evidence of the entity is to be found in the examples of the three kinds of Buddhas²³ described in the “Treasure Tower” chapter, the bodhisattvas who appeared from the earth, and the dragon king’s daughter who attained Buddhahood in her

present form. The Bodhisattvas of the Earth offer actual evidence because, as a passage of the Lotus Sutra says, “[They are unsoiled by worldly things] like the lotus flower in the water.”²⁴ Thus we learn of the true entity of these bodhisattvas. And the dragon king’s daughter offers actual evidence because she made her appearance at the gathering at Eagle Peak, “seated on a thousand-petaled lotus blossom big as a carriage wheel.”²⁵

Moreover, the thirty-four manifestations of Bodhisattva Wonderful Sound and the thirty-three manifestations of Bodhisattva Perceiver of the World’s Sounds constitute further evidence. For, as the commentary says, “If he had not gained the mysterious power of perfect freedom of action through the meditation based on the Lotus Sutra, then how could he manifest these thirty-three different forms?”²⁶

In addition, there is the sutra passage that states, “. . . the characteristics of the world are constantly abiding.” All these passages are documentary proofs cited by the scholars of our time. Personally, however, I prefer to cite the passage in the “Expedient Means” chapter on the true aspect of all phenomena and the passage in the “Supernatural Powers” chapter that refers to “all the doctrines possessed by the Thus Come One.”²⁷ This last passage is also cited by the Great Teacher T’ien-t’ai in his commentary explaining the five major principles of the Lotus Sutra. Therefore, I feel that this passage in particular can be cited as certain proof of the entity of the Mystic Law.

Question: The documentary proofs and actual proofs that you have cited above are particularly compelling. But why do you place such emphasis upon this one passage from the “Supernatural Powers” chapter?

Answer: This passage is profoundly significant, and that is why it is particularly pertinent.

Question: What is that profound significance?

Answer: In this passage, Shakyamuni Buddha explains that he is entrusting the five characters of Myoho-rence-kyo, which is the essence of the Lotus Sutra, to the Bodhisattvas of the Earth, his original disciples. The Thus Come One Shakyamuni, who attained enlightenment countless kalpas in the past, says elsewhere, "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."²⁸ Thus, he has already fulfilled his earlier vow. Then, intending to charge his disciples with the task of accomplishing widespread propagation in the last five-hundred-year period after his passing, he called forth the Bodhisattvas of the Earth and entrusted them with the heart of the sutra, the lotus of the entity of the essential teaching. This passage represents the ultimate purpose for which Shakyamuni Buddha appeared in the world, the secret Law that he attained in the place of meditation. It is this passage that gives proof of the lotus of the entity that, for those of us who live in the Latter Day of the Law, assures the attainment of Buddhahood in both the present and future.

Accordingly, at the present time in the Latter Day of the Law, other than the envoy of the Thus Come One, there can be no one who understands and produces this passage as proof of the lotus of the entity. Truly it is a passage of secret meaning. Truly it is a matter of great concern. Truly it is to be honored and admired. Nam-myoho-rence-kyo, Nam-myoho-rence-kyo!

(This is what is meant by the statement²⁹ in the Lotus Sutra that the bodhisattvas of the perfect teaching preached before the sutra have assembled in a multitude of eighty thousand, wishing to hear the teaching of perfect endowment.)

Question: Concerning the doctrines of our school, when persons of other schools come and want to know what passages give proof of the lotus of the entity, what passages from the Lotus Sutra should be cited?

Answer: You should point to the title Myoho-rence-kyo that appears at the very beginning of each of the twenty-eight chapters of the Lotus Sutra.

Question: But how do we know that the title Myoho-rence-kyo appearing in each chapter is the lotus of the entity of the Mystic Law? I ask this because, when the Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai explained the title of the Lotus Sutra, he interpreted the lotus as a metaphor, so that we would have to say that this is the lotus that is a metaphor, would we not?

Answer: The *rence*, or lotus, in the title of the sutra is explained as both entity and metaphor. In the interpretation you have just referred to, T'ien-t'ai is explaining the lotus as a metaphor. This is what he does in the first volume of *Profound Meaning* where he discusses the six metaphors of the theoretical and essential teachings. But in the seventh volume of the same work, he interprets the lotus as the entity of the Mystic Law. Thus T'ien-t'ai's doctrine is flawless in that it reveals both interpretations, explaining the lotus in the title of the sutra as both entity and metaphor.

Question: How do we know that these two interpretations can be used and that the title can be taken as both entity and metaphor? When the Great Teacher Nan-yüeh explained the five characters Myoho-rence-kyo, he said, "*Myo* indicates that all living beings are *myo*, or mystic. *Ho* indicates that all living beings are *ho*, or the Law. *Renge*, or lotus, is a metaphor that is employed here." It would seem, then, would it not, that both Nan-yüeh and T'ien-t'ai interpreted the lotus as a metaphor?

Answer: Nan-yüeh's interpretation is like that of T'ien-t'ai. While it is not entirely clear from the sutras that there can be two interpretations, that is, taking the lotus as both entity and metaphor, Nan-yüeh and T'ien-t'ai discerned these two meanings through the treatises of Vasubandhu and Nagarjuna.

That is to say, in *The Treatise on the Lotus Sutra* we read: "The words Myoho-enge have two meanings. First, they signify the lotus that appears on the surface of the water. . . . The way in which the lotus emerges from the muddy water is used as a metaphor to explain that, when the Thus Come One joins the multitude of listeners, seats himself on a lotus in the same manner as the various bodhisattvas, and expounds on the unsurpassed wisdom of the Thus Come One and on the enlightened state of purity, the various voice-hearers, hearing this, are able to obtain the secret storehouse of the Thus Come One. Second, the words Myoho-enge signify the lotus opening up. [This is a metaphor explaining that] ordinary beings, though exposed to the Mahayana teachings, are timid and fearful in mind and incapable of taking faith in them. Therefore, the Thus Come One 'opens' or reveals his Dharma body in its purity and wonder, awakening in them the mind of faith."

In this passage, the word "various" in the phrase "the various bodhisattvas" refers to the fact that the bodhisattvas of both the Mahayana and Hinayana teachings, upon arriving on the scene when the Lotus Sutra is preached, are able, for the first time, to understand the lotus of the Buddha. This is clear from the above passage in *Treatise on the Lotus Sutra*. Therefore, we know that the statement³⁰ that the bodhisattvas had already gained entrance [to enlightenment] through the various sutras was no more than an expedient.

T'ien-t'ai explains this passage of *Treatise on the Lotus Sutra* as follows: "If we are to explain the meaning of the treatise, we would say that, when the Thus Come One causes ordinary beings to see the Dharma body in its purity and wonder, he is showing them the lotus that opens through a mystic cause. And when the Thus Come One enters the multitude of listeners and seats himself on a lotus, he is indicating that the land produced as a mystic reward is itself the lotus."³¹

Again, when T'ien-t'ai wishes to give a detailed explanation of the dual interpretation of the lotus as both entity and metaphor, he quotes the passage in the Great Collection Sutra that reads, "I now bow in reverence before the lotus of the Buddha," and the passage in *Treatise on the Lotus Sutra* that has just been quoted, to support his argument. As he explains: "According to the Great Collection Sutra, the lotus is both the cause and the effect of religious practice. When the bodhisattvas seat themselves on the lotus, this is the lotus of the cause. But the lotus of the Buddha that one bows before in reverence is the lotus of the effect. Or, according to *Treatise on the Lotus Sutra*, the land surrounding one is the lotus. That is, the bodhisattvas, by practicing the Law of the lotus, are as a result able to obtain the land of the lotus. Thus we should understand that the objective realm and the subjective being who depends upon it, the cause [that is the bodhisattva] and the effect [that is the Buddha], are all the Law of the *rengé*, or lotus. Therefore, what need is there to employ metaphors? But because dull-witted people cannot understand the lotus of the essential nature of phenomena, an ordinary lotus is introduced as a metaphor to assist them. What harm is there in that?"³²

And elsewhere he says, "If we do not use a lotus, then what are we to

employ as a metaphor for all the various teachings that have been described above? It is because the Law and the metaphor are expounded side by side that we refer to them by the phrase Myoho-enge.”³³

Next, we come to *Great Perfection of Wisdom* by Bodhisattva Nagarjuna, which states, “The lotus represents both the Law itself and a metaphor for it.” The Great Teacher Dengyo, explaining the above passages from the treatises of Vasubandhu and Nagarjuna, writes as follows: “The passage in *Treatise on the Lotus Sutra* says that the lotus of what is called Myoho-enge-kyo has two meanings. It does not say that an ordinary lotus has two meanings. On the whole, what is admirable here is the fact that the Law and the metaphor that is used for it resemble each other. If they did not resemble each other, then how could the metaphor help people understand the meaning? That is why *Great Perfection of Wisdom* says that the lotus is both the Law itself and a metaphor for it. A single mind, the entity of Myoho-enge, simultaneously brings to maturity both the blossom of cause and the calyx of effect. This concept is difficult to understand, but through the use of a metaphor, it can be made easy to understand. The teaching that fully sets forth this principle is called Myoho-enge-kyo.”³⁴

These passages from the treatises and their explanations quoted here will make the matter clear, and one should therefore examine them carefully. Nothing is hidden or held back, and hence the dual explanations of the lotus as both entity and metaphor are fully expounded.

In the final analysis, the meaning of the Lotus Sutra is that the metaphor is none other than the entity of the Law and that the entity of the Law is none other than the metaphor. That is why the Great Teacher Dengyo in his commentary says: “The Lotus Sutra con-

tains a great many metaphors and parables. However, when it comes to the major parables, we find that there are seven of them. These seven parables are none other than the entity of the Law, and the entity of the Law is none other than these metaphors and parables. Therefore, there is no entity of the Law outside of the metaphors and parables, and there are no metaphors and parables outside of the entity of the Law. In other words, the entity of the Law refers to the entity of the truth of the essential nature of phenomena, while the metaphors and parables represent the entity of the Mystic Law as manifested in actual phenomena. The manifestations are none other than the entity of the truth, and the entity of the truth is none other than the manifestations. Therefore, it can be said that the Law and its metaphors constitute a single entity. This is why the passages from the treatises and the annotations by the Tendai school all explain the lotus as both the Law itself and a metaphor for it.”³⁵

This passage is perfectly clear in meaning, and therefore I need say nothing further.

Question: During the Thus Come One’s lifetime, who was able to realize the lotus of the entity of the Law?

Answer: During the period of the four flavors and three teachings that preceded the Lotus Sutra, there were persons of the three vehicles, the five vehicles, the seven expedient means, and the nine worlds, and the bodhisattvas of the provisional perfect teaching, as well as the Buddha of this teaching. But with the exception of the Buddha of the “Life Span” chapter of the essential teaching, neither any of these persons nor the Buddha of the theoretical teaching had so much as heard the name of the lotus of the entity expounded in the essential teaching, much less realized it.

During the first forty and more years

of his teaching life, the Buddha did not make clear the doctrine of the lotus of unsurpassed enlightenment that reveals the replacement of the three vehicles with the one vehicle. That is why the Immeasurable Meanings Sutra says, "They will in the end fail to gain unsurpassed enlightenment," by which it means that the lotus of the replacement of the three vehicles with the one vehicle, which the Buddha revealed in the theoretical teaching, was never expounded in the period before the preaching of the Lotus Sutra. Much less, then, did he reveal the lotus of the entity, that of "opening the near and revealing the distant," of "the true identity that is difficult to conceive," of "the fusion of reality and wisdom," and of "originally inherent and not created." How could Maitreya and the others, who were taught and converted by the Buddha in his transient status, have had any understanding of such things?

Question: How do we know that the bodhisattvas of the perfect teaching expounded before the Lotus Sutra, or the bodhisattvas of the perfect teaching set forth in the theoretical teaching of the Lotus Sutra, were not enlightened to the lotus of the entity of the essential teaching?

Answer: The bodhisattvas of the perfect teaching expounded before the Lotus Sutra did not understand the lotus of the theoretical teaching of the Lotus Sutra, and the bodhisattvas of the perfect teaching set forth in the theoretical teaching did not understand the lotus of the essential teaching.

T'ien-t'ai says, "Even successors of the Buddha of the provisional teachings do not know people who have received instruction from the Buddha of the theoretical teaching, and people taught by that Buddha do not know people who have received instruction from the Buddha of the essential teaching."³⁶ The Great Teacher Dengyo explains, "This is a direct way, but it is not

the great direct way."³⁷ He also says, "Because they have not yet understood the great direct way to enlightenment."³⁸ The point being made in these passages is clear.

The bodhisattvas of the teachings preached before the Lotus Sutra or of the theoretical teaching have, in a certain sense, eradicated delusion and gained understanding of truth. Nevertheless, in the light of the essential teaching, they have gained only a temporary cutting off of delusion, not the kind that extends beyond a certain dimension. Therefore, it is said that they have in fact not yet cut off delusion.

Thus, although it is said that the bodhisattvas had already gained entrance [to enlightenment] through the various sutras, the term "gained entrance" is simply applied here in a temporary manner as a means of disparaging the achievement of the people of the two vehicles. Therefore, even the great bodhisattvas of the pre-Lotus Sutra teachings and the theoretical teaching arrive at the realization of the lotus of the Buddha only when they are exposed to the essential teaching, and achieve a true cutting off of delusion only when they hear the teachings of the "Life Span" chapter.

The Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai, commenting on the passage in the "Emerging from the Earth" chapter in which a period of time measuring fifty small kalpas is, through the Thus Come One's supernatural power, made to seem to the members of the assembly as though it were no more than half a day, says: "To the awakened ones, what seemed like a short period of time was understood to be a long one lasting fifty small kalpas; but to those who were still deluded, the long period seemed to be as short as half a day."³⁹

Miao-lo in turn explains this comment by saying: "The bodhisattvas have already freed themselves from ignorance, and so they are referred to here

as the 'awakened ones.' The ordinary beings of the assembly, however, have not yet advanced beyond the rank of worthy persons,⁴⁰ and thus they are referred to as the 'deluded ones.'"⁴¹

The meaning of these passages is quite clear. It indicates that the bodhisattvas of the pre-Lotus Sutra teachings and of the theoretical teaching were in fact still deluded, and only the Bodhisattvas of the Earth were worthy of being called awakened ones.

Nevertheless, at the present time there are certain persons of the Tendai school who, when they discuss the essential teaching and the theoretical teaching, declare that there is no difference between the two, and in interpreting the passages under discussion, they assert that the people taught and converted by the Buddha in his transient status are to be included in the category of "awakened ones." This is a gross error of interpretation. Since the meaning of the sutra passage and the annotations regarding it is perfectly clear, I do not see how anyone could put forward such an unreasonable assertion.

If we examine the passage in the "Emerging from the Earth" chapter, we see that it states that the Bodhisattvas of the Earth praised the Thus Come One for a period of fifty small kalpas, but to the members of the assembly on Eagle Peak who had been taught by the Buddha in his transient status, this seemed like no more than half a day.

T'ien-t'ai in his explanation introduces the terms "awakened ones" and "deluded ones." He explains that, because the assembly members who had been taught by the Buddha in his transient status were deluded ones, they accordingly believed that the interval of time was no more than half a day, though this was a mistaken interpretation of the facts. The Bodhisattvas of the Earth, on the other hand, were

the awakened ones, and they therefore viewed the interval of time as being fifty small kalpas in duration, which was the correct interpretation of the facts.

Miao-lo proceeds to comment on this by saying that the bodhisattvas who had freed themselves from ignorance were the awakened ones, and those who had not yet freed themselves from ignorance were the deluded ones. It is perfectly clear that this is what the above quotations mean. There are some scholars who say that some among the bodhisattvas taught by the Buddha in his transient status had attained the first stage of security or advanced beyond it in the course of bodhisattva practice and hence had already freed themselves from ignorance. They say so because they were taught that the various sutras that preceded the Lotus Sutra offer a means of attaining Buddhahood, when in fact they do not offer any such means.

Those who have received either the teachings prior to the Lotus Sutra or the theoretical teaching may in a certain sense attain the stage of perfect enlightenment, but when seen in terms of the true Buddha of the "Life Span" chapter of the essential teaching, such people are still in the company of the deluded or in the rank of worthy persons. The three bodies of the Buddha as they appear in the provisional teachings have not yet escaped from the realm of impermanence, and they are therefore in effect phantom Buddhas such as one would see in a dream.

As long as those who have received the teachings prior to the Lotus Sutra or the theoretical teaching have not yet received instruction in the essential teaching, they are to be described as people who have not yet extirpated illusion. But once they have received such a teaching, they qualify for the first stage of security.

Miao-lo comments as follows:

“When the Buddha proceeds beyond his transient status and reveals his true identity, all the listeners enter the first stage of security.”⁴² This may be contrasted to what has been said above about such people being in the rank of worthy persons. People who have received the teachings prior to the Lotus Sutra or the theoretical teaching are in the category of the deluded. They are Buddhas and bodhisattvas who have not yet freed themselves from ignorance. How true! How true!

Therefore, we understand that, once the “Life Span” chapter of the essential teaching had been revealed, all those in the assembly on Eagle Peak became enlightened to the lotus of the entity. Those of the two vehicles, the icchantikas, or persons of incorrigible disbelief, and the determinate groups,⁴³ as well as women and evil men, all gained an awakening to the lotus of the eternal Buddha.

The Great Teacher Dengyo, explaining the lotus of the “one great reason” [why the Buddhas appear in the world], writes: “The ‘one great matter,’ the heart and core of the Lotus Sutra, is the revelation of the lotus. The word ‘one’ signifies that it is the one reality. The word ‘great’ signifies that it is broad and all-encompassing in nature. And the word ‘matter’ refers to the working of the essential nature of phenomena. This one great reason or ‘ultimate matter’ is the truth or the teaching, the wisdom, and the practice of the perfect teaching, or the Dharma body, the wisdom, and the emancipation of the perfect teaching. Through this, the persons of the one vehicle, those of the three vehicles, those of the determinate groups, those of the indeterminate group, those who believe in Buddhist teachings, those who believe in non-Buddhist teachings, those who have no desire to become Buddhas, and those who are unable to believe in the correct teachings—all of these be-

ings, every one of them, are brought to the realm of the wisdom penetrating all phenomena. Thus, this ‘one great reason’ opens the door of Buddha wisdom to all beings, shows it, causes them to awaken to it, and induces them to enter into it, and all of them attain Buddhahood.”⁴⁴

Thus we may say that the so-called evil people such as women, icchantikas, those of the determinate groups, and persons of the two vehicles, all at Eagle Peak, were able to gain an awakening to the lotus of the entity of the Mystic Law.

Question: In our present age, the period of the Latter Day of the Law, who has obtained the lotus of the entity?

Answer: Observing the situation in the world today, we would have to say that, although there are many people who are destined to fall into the great Avichi hell, there is no one who has obtained the lotus of the Buddha. The reason is that people put their faith in the expedient means of the provisional teachings that cannot lead to enlightenment, and slander the lotus of the truth, the entity of the Lotus Sutra.

The Buddha states, “If a person fails to have faith but instead slanders this sutra, immediately he will destroy all the seeds for becoming a Buddha in this world. . . . When his life comes to an end he will enter the Avichi hell.”⁴⁵

T’ien-t’ai comments on this as follows: “This [Lotus] sutra opens the seeds of Buddhahood inherent in the beings of each of the six paths. But if one slanders the sutra, then the seeds will be destroyed.”⁴⁶

I, Nichiren, would like to say this. The Lotus Sutra is linked to the seeds of Buddhahood inherent in the beings of each of the Ten Worlds. But if one slanders this sutra, then it means that one is destroying the seeds of Buddhahood in the beings of each of the Ten Worlds. Such a person is certainly

bound to fall into the hell of incessant suffering. When might he manage to get out of hell again?

But those who follow the teachings of Nichiren honestly discard the mistaken doctrines of the provisional teachings and the incorrect theories of the mistaken teachers, and, with all sincerity, put their faith in the correct teaching and the correct doctrines of the correct teacher. Accordingly they are able to gain the lotus of the entity and to manifest the mystic principle of the entity of the Land of Eternally Tranquil Light. This is because they put their faith in the golden words of the Buddha indicated in the "Life Span" chapter of the essential teaching and chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo.

Question: The great teachers such as Nan-yüeh, T'ien-t'ai, and Dengyo employed the Lotus Sutra to spread widely the perfect teaching of the one vehicle, but they did not recite Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. Why is that? Does this mean that they did not know about the lotus of the entity, or that they failed to understand it?

Answer: It is said that the Great Teacher Nan-yüeh was an incarnation of Bodhisattva Perceiver of the World's Sounds, and that the Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai was an incarnation of Bodhisattva Medicine King.⁴⁷ If so, then they were present on Eagle Peak when the Buddha preached the "Life Span" chapter of the essential teaching, and at that time they became enlightened to the lotus of the entity. But when they appeared in the world [as Nan-yüeh and T'ien-t'ai, respectively], they knew it was not the right time to spread the Mystic Law. Therefore, for the words "Mystic Law" they substituted the term "concentration and insight" and instead engaged in the meditation on

the three thousand realms in a single moment of life and in the practice of the threefold contemplation in a single mind. But even these great teachers recited Nam-myoho-renge-kyo as their private practice, and in their hearts they understood these words to be the truth.

Thus the Great Teacher Nan-yüeh in his *Method of Repentance through the Lotus Sutra*⁴⁸ employs the words Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. The Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai employs the words Nam-byodo-daie-ichijo-myoho-renge-kyo,⁴⁹ Keishu-myoho-renge-kyo,⁵⁰ and Kimyo-myoho-renge-kyo.⁵¹ And the document⁵² concerning the vow taken by the Great Teacher Dengyo on his deathbed carries the words Nam-myoho-renge-kyo.

Question: The evidence you have presented is perfectly clear. But if these men understood the truth, as the evidence indicates that they did, then why did they not spread a knowledge of it abroad?

Answer: There are two reasons. First of all, the proper time to do so had not yet arrived. Second, these men were not the persons entrusted with the task of doing so.

It is the five characters of Myoho-renge-kyo that are the great pure Law that will be spread widely in the Latter Day of the Law. And it is the great bodhisattvas who sprang up from the earth in numbers equal to the dust particles of a thousand worlds to whom this was entrusted. It was for this reason that those such as Nan-yüeh, T'ien-t'ai, and Dengyo, though in their hearts they clearly perceived the truth, left it to the leader and teacher of the Latter Day to spread it widely, while they themselves refrained from doing so.



COVER LETTER

Question: The lotus of the entity of the Mystic Law is difficult to understand, and therefore metaphor is used to make its meaning clear. But is there any example in the sutras to support such a practice?

Answer: The sutra says, “[They are] unsoiled by worldly things like the lotus flower in the water. Emerging from the earth . . .” Here we see that the Bodhisattvas of the Earth are the lotus of the entity of the Mystic Law, and that the lotus is being used here as a simile. But I will write to you about this again at some future time.

This teaching represents the ultimate

principle of the entire Lotus Sutra. It is the ultimate purpose of the Thus Come One Shakyamuni’s advent, as well as the heart and core of the Lotus Sutra, which was entrusted to the great bodhisattvas who sprang up out of the earth so that they might spread it widely in the Latter Day of the Law. Only when the ruler of our nation has shown himself to have faith may this doctrine be revealed. But until then it should remain a secret teaching. I, Nichiren, have just completed transmitting it to you, Sairen-bo.

Nichiren



Background

From the cover letter, it is clear that this treatise was addressed to Sairen-bo, one of Nichiren Daishonin’s followers. However, it does not bear the date or the name of the place where it was written. One view is that it was authored in the tenth year of Bun’ei (1273), at Ichinosawa on Sado Island, when the Daishonin was in exile.

Sairen-bo was a learned scholar of the Tendai school and had been living in exile on Sado for some unknown reason. *Reply to Sairen-bo* reveals that he converted to the Daishonin’s teachings in the second month of 1272.

The Entity of the Mystic Law explains the great benefit of having faith in the Gohonzon. When examined in terms of the concept of teaching, practice, and proof, this treatise corresponds to proof, while *The Opening of the Eyes* and *The Object of Devotion for Observing the Mind* are related to teaching and practice, respectively. “Teaching” means the Buddha’s teaching, and “practice” means the practice that accords exactly

with the teaching. “Proof” means the merit resulting from the practice of the teaching.

Opening of the Eyes establishes a five-fold comparison, a system of comparative classification of all of Shakyamuni Buddha’s teachings, and demonstrates the superiority of the Lotus Sutra over all the other sutras. Ultimately it clarifies the supremacy of Nam-myoho-rence-kyo among all the Buddhist teachings, and accordingly it corresponds to “teaching.” *Object of Devotion for Observing the Mind* states that embracing faith in the Gohonzon is in itself enlightenment. Upholding the Mystic Law amounts to completing all the practices in which the Buddhas engaged and acquiring all the benefits and virtues that they obtained through these practices. Therefore, it corresponds to “practice.” *Entity of the Mystic Law* corresponds to “proof,” because it reveals that by believing in the Mystic Law one can manifest oneself as the entity of Myoho-rence-kyo.

In this treatise, Nichiren Daishonin uses the question-and-answer format to make his teaching more accessible to his contemporary and later followers. Its contents are divided into six parts. The first part teaches that the beings of the Ten Worlds and their environments, that is, all things and phenomena in the universe, are entities of Myoho-enge-kyo. Concerning this view, a question is posed: "If the entity of all living beings is the Mystic Law in its entirety, then are all the actions and their results that are associated with the nine worlds, from the world of hell up to that of bodhisattvas, in effect entities of the Mystic Law?" In reply to this question, the Daishonin states that, just as Buddhahood is the functioning of the Mystic Law, so likewise are the nine worlds of illusion and suffering. This is explained from the viewpoint of the defiled aspect and the pure aspect, both of which constitute the functioning of a single Law, that is, the Mystic Law.

The second part reveals from a more profound standpoint that actually only those who believe in the Mystic Law are entities of the Mystic Law. The Daishonin states, "The Buddha who is the entity of Myoho-enge-kyo, of the 'Life Span' chapter of the essential teaching, . . . is to be found in the disciples and lay believers of Nichiren." In the third part, citing T'ien-t'ai's *Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sutra*, the Daishonin discusses the lotus of the entity and also uses the lotus figuratively. The lotus flower was used as a metaphor to explain the lotus of the entity, since the entity of the Law itself is difficult to understand. He clarifies the lotus of the entity that inherently exists and is not created, and identifies it as the supreme single Law that simultaneously possesses both cause and effect. He also says that a sage perceived the reality of this Law and named it Myoho-enge. This is what

the lotus of the entity means. The lotus blooms and produces seeds at the same time and so represents the simultaneity of cause and effect, which is the expression of the Mystic Law.

In the following three parts, the treatise describes those who have become enlightened to the lotus of the entity. The fourth part reveals that Shakyamuni Buddha became enlightened to the lotus of the entity numberless major world system dust particle kalpas in the past. Shakyamuni Buddha himself declared in the "Life Span" chapter of the Lotus Sutra, "It has been immeasurable, boundless hundreds, thousands, ten thousands, millions of nayutas of kalpas since I in fact attained Buddhahood."

Next, this treatise asserts that the passage in the "Expedient Means" chapter on the true aspect of all phenomena and the passage in the "Supernatural Powers" chapter on the transmission of the essence of the Lotus Sutra both contain perfect elucidations of the lotus of the entity. Then the treatise explains that the title "Myoho-enge-kyo" itself, appearing at the beginning of each of the twenty-eight chapters of the Lotus Sutra, represents the lotus of the entity. In response to the question regarding who was able to obtain the lotus of the entity during Shakyamuni Buddha's lifetime, the fifth part singles out those who received instruction from the Buddha of the "Life Span" chapter of the essential teaching.

The sixth and last part clarifies who is able to obtain the lotus of the entity in the present Latter Day of the Law. This part also makes clear what Law it is that enables the people of the Latter Day to realize the lotus of the entity and to attain Buddhahood. Clarification of this point is found in the passage that states: "But those who follow the teachings of Nichiren . . . are able to gain the lotus of the entity and to manifest the mystic principle of the

entity of the Land of Eternally Tranquil Light. This is because they put their faith in the golden words of the Buddha indicated in the 'Life Span' chapter of the essential teaching and chant Nam-myoho-rence-kyo." "The Buddha indicated in the 'Life Span' chapter" means the advocate of the teaching implicit in the depths of the "Life Span" chapter.

Subsequently this treatise explains why the Mystic Law was not propagated in the Former and Middle Days. It identifies Nam-myoho-rence-kyo as the great pure Law that is to spread in the Latter Day. Nan-yüeh and T'ien-t'ai of China and Dengyo of Japan em-

ployed the recitation of Nam-myoho-rence-kyo as their private practice, but they did not spread this practice to other people. The treatise sets forth two reasons for this fact: "First of all, the proper time to do so had not yet arrived. Second, these men were not the persons entrusted with the task of doing so."

Then, in conclusion, the Daishonin writes, "It was for this reason that those such as Nan-yüeh, T'ien-t'ai, and Dengyo, though in their hearts they clearly perceived the truth, left it to the leader and teacher of the Latter Day to spread it widely, while they themselves refrained from doing so."

Notes

1. Lotus Sutra, chap. 2.
2. *The Diamond Scalpel*.
3. Source unknown.
4. *On the Peaceful Practices of the Lotus Sutra*.
5. *The Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sutra*.
6. *The Annotations on "The Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sutra."*
7. This example appears in T'ien-t'ai's *Great Concentration and Insight*. Hence the expression "T'ien-t'ai school" is used to mean the Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai, the founder of the Chinese T'ien-t'ai school.
8. Lotus Sutra, chap. 2.
9. *The Mahayana Method of Concentration and Insight*.
10. The example of the mirror is expounded in *Mahayana Method of Concentration and Insight*. Through the example of the inseparable relationship between an object and its image reflected in the mirror, Nan-yüeh reveals that a living being and a Buddha are "two but not two" in essence; in other words, common mortals of the nine worlds are inherently endowed with Buddhahood.
11. A reference to the teaching that expounds the concept of attaining Buddhahood in one's present form. But this teaches it in name only with no actual examples of its having occurred, or postulates various distinctions and exceptions.
12. The "twelve divisions of the correct

and equal sutras" refers to all the Mahayana teachings. The "twelve divisions" is a classification of the sutras according to style and content.

13. The five vehicles refer to the three vehicles of voice-hearers, cause-awakened ones, and bodhisattvas plus the human and heavenly realms.

14. In sutras other than the Lotus Sutra, the three bodies were held to exist separately, such as Mahavairochana in the Dharma-body aspect and Amida in the reward-body aspect. However, on the basis of the doctrine of three thousand realms in a single moment of life, T'ien-t'ai maintained that the three bodies are not separate entities but three integral aspects of one Buddha.

15. *On the Peaceful Practices*.

16. A summary of a passage in the "Benefits of the Teacher of the Law" chapter of the Lotus Sutra.

17. *On the Peaceful Practices*.

18. The "threefold contemplation" and the "three truths" here mean subjective wisdom and objective reality, respectively, and the expression that these "will immediately become manifest in their minds" represents the fusion of wisdom and reality. See Glossary for threefold contemplation and three truths.

19. Source unknown.

20. *On "The Profound Meaning."*

21. Shakyamuni Buddha attained en-

lightenment numberless major world system dust particle kalpas in the past and realized that his life is the entity of the Mystic Law.

22. A summary of a section from *An Essay on the Protection of the Nation*.

23. The three kinds of Buddhas refer to Shakyamuni, Many Treasures, and the Buddhas of the ten directions who are emanations of Shakyamuni Buddha.

24. Lotus Sutra, chap. 15.

25. Ibid., chap. 12. In this chapter, it states, "Manjushri was seated on a thousand-petaled lotus blossom," and in the latter part of this chapter it says that the dragon king's daughter perfected the bodhisattva practice and appeared in a world to the south called Spotless World, where she seated herself on a jeweled lotus flower, acquired the thirty-two features and eighty characteristics of a Buddha, and thence proceeded to preach the Lotus Sutra to all living beings.

26. *The Annotations on "Great Concentration and Insight."*

27. Shakyamuni declares to the Bodhisattvas of the Earth, "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." After this statement, he transfers the essence of the Lotus Sutra to Bodhisattva Superior Practices and the other Bodhisattvas of the Earth.

28. Lotus Sutra, chap. 2.

29. This refers to the "Expedient Means" chapter of the Lotus Sutra. "The teaching of perfect endowment" indicates the heart of the sutra, the lotus of the entity of the essential teaching.

30. This is found in *On "The Profound Meaning."*

31. *Profound Meaning.*

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid.

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

35. Source unknown.

36. Possibly a rephrasing of a passage in *The Annotations on "The Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sutra."*

37. *A Commentary on the Immeasurable Meanings Sutra.*

38. Ibid.

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

40. The rank of worthy persons, according to the T'ien-t'ai school, corresponds to the ten stages of faith, the first ten of the fifty-two stages of bodhisattva practice.

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

42. *On "The Profound Meaning."*

43. The determinate groups refer to the first three of the five natures, a doctrine set forth by the Dharma Characteristics school dividing human beings into five groups according to their inborn religious capacity. They are those predestined to be voice-hearers, those predestined to be cause-awakened ones, and those predestined to be bodhisattvas. These three are called the determinate groups, because the state they will achieve is predetermined.

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

45. Lotus Sutra, chap. 3.

46. This appears in *On "The Words and Phrases."*

47. According to the T'ien-t'ai school's tradition, Nan-yüeh and his disciple T'ien-t'ai were said to have been incarnations of Bodhisattva Perceiver of the World's Sounds and Bodhisattva Medicine King, respectively, because they attained a great awakening through the "Perceiver of the World's Sounds" chapter and the "Medicine King" chapter of the Lotus Sutra.

48. This work, in which the words Nam-myoho-enge-kyo appear, was actually authored by T'ien-t'ai.

49. These words mean single-minded devotion to the one vehicle, that is, Myoho-enge-kyo of the great impartially-perceiving wisdom.

50. These words mean "I bow my head before Myoho-enge-kyo."

51. These words mean "I dedicate my life to Myoho-enge-kyo."

52. Reference is to *The Record of Transmission at Hsiu-ch'an-ssu Temple.*