

Letter to Shomitsu-bo



WITH regard to the Mahavairochana Sutra, Shan-wu-wei, Pu-k'ung, and Chin-kang-chih declared that the principle of the Mahavairochana Sutra is the same as the principle of the Lotus Sutra, but in the matter of mudras and mantras, the Lotus Sutra is inferior.¹ On the other hand, the priests Liang-hsü, Kuang-hsiu, and Wei-chüan² declared that the Mahavairochana Sutra cannot compare to the Flower Garland, Lotus, or Nirvana Sutra, but is merely one of the sutras of the Correct and Equal period.³

The Great Teacher Kobo of Japan states, "The Lotus Sutra is inferior even to the Flower Garland Sutra, and so of course it cannot compare with the Mahavairochana Sutra."⁴ He also says: "The Lotus Sutra was preached by Shakyamuni, while the Mahavairochana Sutra was preached by the Thus Come One Mahavairochana. These sutras were thus taught by two different Buddhas. In addition, the Thus Come One Shakyamuni is a mere messenger of the Thus Come One Mahavairochana. He preached the exoteric doctrines, which represent no more than the first step toward the esoteric doctrines."⁵ And again he states: "The Buddha of the 'Life Span' chapter, which is the heart of the Lotus Sutra, is a Buddha in terms of the exoteric teachings; but from the point of view of the esoteric

teachings, he is no more than a common mortal who is bound by and entangled in illusions and desire."⁶

I, Nichiren, after pondering the matter, have this to say: The Mahavairochana Sutra is one of the newer translations⁷ and was transmitted to China by the Tripitaka Master Shan-wu-wei of India in the reign of Emperor Hsüan-tsung of the T'ang, in the fourth year of the K'ai-yüan era (716). The Lotus Sutra is one of the older translations, transmitted to China by the Tripitaka Master Kumarajiva in the time of the Later Ch'in (384-417). The two are separated by an interval of more than three hundred years.

More than a hundred years after the Lotus Sutra was brought to China, the Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai Chih-che established in the realm of doctrinal studies the classification of the five periods and the four teachings. He refuted the doctrinal interpretations put forward by the scholars of the preceding five hundred years or more and, through his practice of meditation, awakened to the truth of three thousand realms in a single moment of life, realizing for the first time the principle of the Lotus Sutra. The Three Treatises school that had preceded the Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai and the Dharma Characteristics school that appeared after his time both taught the doctrine of the eight

worlds⁸ but made no mention of the Ten Worlds. So these schools could not possibly have established the doctrine of three thousand realms in a single moment of life.

The Flower Garland school had its beginnings among the various teachers of northern and southern China before T'ien-t'ai's advent. These teachers declared that the Flower Garland Sutra was superior to the Lotus Sutra, but at that time they did not refer to themselves as the Flower Garland school. It was the Dharma teachers Fa-tsang and Ch'eng-kuan, men of the reign of Empress Wu, the consort of Emperor Kao-tsung of the T'ang, who first began using the term Flower Garland school.

This school, in its doctrinal interpretations, posits the five teachings and, in its meditational practices, sets forth the principles of the ten mysteries and the six forms. All these teachings appear to be extremely impressive, and one might think that by means of them Ch'eng-kuan would have been able to refute the teachings of T'ien-t'ai. But in fact what Ch'eng-kuan did was to borrow T'ien-t'ai's doctrine of three thousand realms in a single moment of life and define it as the true intent of the passage in the Flower Garland Sutra that reads, "The mind is like a skilled painter." We might say, then, that the Flower Garland school was actually defeated by T'ien-t'ai; or perhaps we should say that it was guilty of stealing the doctrine of three thousand realms in a single moment of life. Ch'eng-kuan was, to be sure, a strict observer of the precepts. He did not violate a single precept of either the Mahayana or Hinayana codes in any way. And yet he stole the doctrine of three thousand realms in a single moment of life, a fact that ought to be spoken of widely.

Whether or not the term "True Word school" was used in India is a matter of serious doubt. It may simply

be that, because there is a group of sutras known as the True Word sutras, Shan-wu-wei and others affixed the term school to the teachings based on these sutras when they introduced them to China. One should be well aware of this point.

In particular one should note that, when Shan-wu-wei came to judge the relative merits of the Lotus Sutra and the Mahavairochana Sutra, he set forth the interpretation that the two are equal in principle but that the latter is superior in terms of practice. By this he meant that, although the principle of three thousand realms in a single moment of life is the same in both the Lotus and the Mahavairochana sutras, the Lotus Sutra contains no mention of mudras and mantras, and is therefore inferior to the Mahavairochana Sutra in terms of the practices to be carried out. So long as it lacks actual descriptions of formulas for practice, one cannot say that it represents the esoteric teachings in both theory and practice.⁹

Nowadays the people of Japan, and many scholars of the different schools, subscribe to this opinion of Shan-wu-wei, including even the scholars of the Tendai school, who should be the last to do so. In this regard they are just like the adherents of the other schools who, although jealous of the Nembutsu believers, have all begun themselves to call out the name of Amida and have completely abandoned the particular object of devotion revered in their own schools. So the Tendai priests have all sunk to the level of True Word believers.

I am very suspicious of the logic underlying Shan-wu-wei's argument. This Tripitaka Master Shan-wu-wei declares that the Lotus Sutra and the Mahavairochana Sutra are equal in principle, but that the latter is superior in terms of practice. He is taking the doctrine of three thousand realms in a single moment of life first enunciated

by the Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai, reading it into the Mahavairochana Sutra, and on that basis arbitrarily declaring that the two sutras are alike. But should we accept such an assertion?

For example, long ago, Hitomaro¹⁰ composed a poem that reads:

How I think of it—
dim, dim in the morning mist
of Akashi Bay,
that boat moving out of sight
beyond the islands.

Ki no Shukubo, Minamoto no Shitagō,¹¹ and others have praised this poem, declaring it to be "the father and mother of poetry." Now suppose someone should announce that he had composed a poem and, without changing a single syllable, should proceed to recite this poem by Hitomaro and then boast that his talent was in no way inferior to that of Hitomaro. Would anyone be likely to agree with his claim? Uneducated people such as mountain folk and fishermen might just possibly do so.

This principle of three thousand realms in a single moment of life that was first put forward by the Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai is the father and mother of the Buddhas. Yet, more than a hundred years later, the Tripitaka Master Shan-wu-wei stole this doctrine and proceeded to declare in his writings that the Mahavairochana Sutra and the Lotus Sutra were equal in principle, and that the principle they had in common was this one of three thousand realms in a single moment of life. Should any person of understanding give credence to such a claim?

He further asserts that the Mahavairochana Sutra is superior in terms of practice because the Lotus Sutra contains no mention of mudras and mantras. Now is he speaking of the relative worth of the Sanskrit versions of the Mahavairochana and Lotus sutras? Or is he speaking of the relative worth of the

Chinese versions of these two sutras?

The Tripitaka Master Pu-k'ung's translation of *The Rules of Rituals Based on the Lotus Sutra* indicates that the Lotus Sutra does in fact contain mudras and mantras. Similarly, the translation of the Benevolent Kings Sutra by Kumarajiva contains no mudras or mantras, but a later translation of the same sutra by Pu-k'ung does contain mudras and mantras.

These various sutras as they existed in India no doubt had a countless number of such practices associated with them. But because India and China are far apart and it was difficult to transport everything, the sutras were abridged when they were brought to China.

Although the Lotus Sutra does not mention mudras and mantras, it has the merit of declaring that persons of the two vehicles can attain Buddhahood and even records the kalpas when this will happen, the lands where it will take place, and the names that they will bear when they become Buddhas. It also declares that Shakyamuni attained enlightenment in the distant past. The Mahavairochana Sutra may describe mudras and mantras, but it says nothing about the attainment of Buddhahood by those of the two vehicles, or the Buddha's original enlightenment in the far distant past.

If we compare this doctrine of the attainment of Buddhahood by persons of the two vehicles with the matter of mudras and mantras, we will see that they are as far apart in importance as heaven and earth. In all the various sutras that the Buddha preached in the more than forty years before the Lotus Sutra, persons of the two vehicles are described as rotten seeds that will never sprout. They are condemned not merely in a word or two but in innumerable passages in sutra after sutra. In the Lotus Sutra, however, all these passages are refuted; it is proclaimed that

persons of the two vehicles can in fact attain Buddhahood.

As for mudras and mantras, where in any sutra has one ever encountered a passage condemning them? And since they have never been condemned, the Mahavairochana Sutra, as with many other sutras, does not avoid mentioning mudras and mantras, and therefore teaches them.

A mudra is a gesture made with the hand. But if the hand does not become Buddha, how can mudras made with the hand lead one to Buddhahood? A mantra is a motion made with the mouth. But if the mouth does not become Buddha, how can mantras made with the mouth lead one to Buddhahood? If the persons of the two vehicles do not encounter the Lotus Sutra, then even though they may perform the mudras and mantras of the twelve hundred and more honored ones¹² for innumerable kalpas, they will never attain Buddhahood in body, mouth, or mind.

One who would declare as superior a text that contains no mention of the fact that persons of the two vehicles can attain Buddhahood, though this is a highly superior teaching, but that instead describes mudras and mantras, though these are matters of inferior significance, must be a thief in terms of principle and a non-Buddhist who regards inferior things as superior in terms of practice. Because he committed this error, Shan-wu-wei was censured by Yama, the lord of hell. Later he repented of it, revered the Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai, and put his faith in the Lotus Sutra; so he escaped the path of evil.¹³

The Buddha's original enlightenment in the far distant past is not even hinted at in the Mahavairochana Sutra. And yet this original enlightenment is the source of all Buddhas. Thus if we take the vast ocean as a symbol of the Buddha's original enlightenment in the distant past, then the fish and birds that

inhabit it are comparable to the twelve hundred and more honored ones of the True Word teachings. Without the revelation of the Buddha's enlightenment countless ages ago, the twelve hundred and more honored ones would become like so many bits of floating weed that lack any root, or like the nighttime dew that lasts only until the sun rises.

People of the Tendai school fail to understand this matter and thus allow themselves to be deceived by the True Word teachers, and the True Word teachers themselves, unaware that their own school is in error, go on vainly accumulating distorted ideas that can only lead to the evil paths.

The Reverend Kukai not only failed to understand this principle, but in addition, borrowed a false interpretation of the Flower Garland school that had already been refuted in the past, and adopted the erroneous view that the Lotus Sutra is inferior even to the Flower Garland Sutra. This is like talking about the length of turtles' fur or the existence of rabbits' horns. Since there is no fur on a turtle's shell, how can one argue over its length; since there are no horns on a rabbit's head, how can one debate their existence?

Even someone [like Shan-wu-wei] who declared that the Lotus Sutra and the Mahavairochana Sutra are the same in principle could not escape the censure of Yama. How then can someone who says that the Flower Garland Sutra is inferior to the Mahavairochana Sutra, and that the Lotus Sutra is in turn inferior to the Flower Garland Sutra, escape the charge of slandering the correct teaching? Though the individuals involved may differ, the slander is the same. From this we can discern the reason why Kukai's principal disciple, the Administrator of Priests Kakimoto no Ki, turned into a blue demon.¹⁴ Unless Kukai has repented of his mistaken opinions and rectified them, he no doubt still remains in the evil

paths. What then will be the fate of his followers?

Question: Why do you alone spew forth such evil words about other people?

Answer: I, Nichiren, am not condemning others. I am only pointing out the questionable places in their doctrines. If they want to get angry at me, then let them!

Long ago, the non-Buddhist doctrines spread throughout the five regions of India and prevailed there for eight hundred or a thousand years, so that everyone, from the wheel-turning kings on down to the common people, bowed their heads in reverence. And yet all its ninety-five schools were from first to last refuted by the Buddha. [In China,] the fallacious doctrines of the priests of the Summary of the Mahayana school flourished for more than a hundred years, but were later defeated;¹⁵ and the mistaken opinions of the Buddhist leaders of the north and the south, after being accepted for more than three hundred years, were likewise refuted. In Japan, the doctrines of the six schools of Nara were overturned after thriving for more than two hundred and sixty years. In fact, the Great Teacher Dengyo refutes them in some of his writings.¹⁶

In Japan, there are five schools that belong to Mahayana Buddhism, namely, the Dharma Characteristics, Three Treatises, Flower Garland, True Word, and Tendai schools. There are three Hinayana schools, the Dharma Analysis Treasury, Establishment of Truth, and Precepts schools. Next, though the True Word, Flower Garland, Three Treatises, and Dharma Characteristics schools derive from Mahayana Buddhism, if one examines them closely, one will find that in fact they all belong to the Hinayana.

A school may be defined as something that encompasses all of the three types of learning, namely, precepts,

meditation, and wisdom. Leaving aside meditation and wisdom, we should note that, by means of the precepts they uphold, the various schools can be clearly divided into those of Mahayana and of Hinayana. Neither the To-ji branch of the True Word school nor the Dharma Characteristics, Three Treatises, or Flower Garland school has its own ordination platform for administering the precepts, and therefore they must use the platform at Todai-ji temple.¹⁷ This means that they are binding themselves to the precepts put forth by the Precepts school, a Hinayana school, which are no better than donkey's milk or stinking excrement. In terms of the precepts that they observe, therefore, all these schools are to be classified as Hinayana.

The Great Teacher Dengyo received instruction in the teachings of the two schools of T'ien-t'ai and True Word in China and brought them back to Enryaku-ji on Mount Hiei. But in urging the establishment of an ordination platform for administering the precepts, Dengyo referred to the perfect meditation, perfect wisdom, and perfect precepts of the perfect and immediate enlightenment of the T'ien-t'ai, or Tendai, school. So it appears that he did not think it proper to use the term "True Word school" alongside the name "Tendai school." In the memorial that he submitted to the imperial court, he refers to the concentration and insight and the Vairochana discipline practices of the Tendai Lotus school.¹⁸ And the oath concerning the precepts that Dengyo handed down to his disciple Jikaku in fact speaks of "the concentration and insight and the Vairochana discipline practices of the Tendai Lotus school," with the term "True Word school" clearly omitted.

The Tendai Lotus school is known as the Buddha-founded school, having been established by Shakyamuni Buddha himself. The True Word school

was the invention of ordinary persons, and its scholars and teachers of later times were the ones who began to use the term school to describe themselves. However, they ascribed the founding of their school to the Thus Come One Mahavairochana and Bodhisattva Maitreya. Nevertheless, only the single school devoted to the Lotus Sutra conforms to the true intent of Shakyamuni Buddha.

The Hinayana teachings are divided into two schools, eighteen schools, or even twenty schools,¹⁹ but in essence they all expound a single principle, namely, the impermanence of all phenomena.

The Dharma Characteristics school teaches that all phenomena arise from the mind alone and have actual existence. There are countless different schools belonging to the Mahayana teachings, but insofar as they subscribe to this view—that the mind alone produces all phenomena, and that phenomena have actual existence—then they may be regarded as constituting a single school. The Three Treatises school teaches that all phenomena arise from the mind alone and are without real existence. Again, there are countless different Mahayana schools, but insofar as they subscribe to this view—that the mind alone produces all phenomena, and that phenomena have no real existence—then they may be regarded as constituting a single school. So all these schools stress one or the other of two partial truths of the Mahayana: that phenomena have actual existence, and that they are non-substantial in nature.²⁰

As for the Flower Garland and True Word schools, if we were to speak generously of them, we could say that they

represent the doctrine of the Middle Way that is independent of non-substantiality and temporary existence,²¹ while if we were to speak strictly of them, we would have to say that they are on a level with the two above-mentioned Mahayana views of phenomena. In terms of their content, the Mahavairochana Sutra cannot compare even with the Flower Garland or Wisdom sutras. But because so many distinguished persons still put their faith in the Mahavairochana Sutra, the situation is rather like that of a king who bestows his love on a woman of humble station. The Mahavairochana Sutra is like a woman of humble station because its principles do not go beyond the doctrine of the Middle Way that is independent of non-substantiality and temporary existence. And the scholars and teachers who have upheld the Mahavairochana Sutra are comparable to a king because they command respect and influence among the people.

Since we are now living in the latter age when people are shallow in wisdom and puffed up with pride, it is unlikely that anyone will heed the points I have made in the discussion above. But when a sage or worthy appears, then the full truth of the matter will no doubt become clear. Because I care about you, I have written this letter as a guide. I hope you will study it when you have time.

The points I have touched on here are very important matters of doctrine. When paying respect to Bodhisattva Space Treasury,²² you should make a regular practice of reading this aloud.

Sent to Shomitsu-bo.

Nichiren



Background

This letter was written at Minobu in the third year of Kenji (1277) and addressed to Shomitsu-bo, thought to be one of Nichiren Daishonin's disciples living at Seicho-ji temple in the province of Awa. Another opinion regards Shomitsu-bo as a True Word priest living near Seicho-ji, who looked up to the Daishonin. Detailed information about Shomitsu-bo is lacking, but it appears that he was a priest of Seicho-ji temple who had become the Daishonin's follower and occasionally sought his instruction. The chief priest of Seicho-ji at that time is thought to have been Joken-bo (some sources say Gijobo), a priest senior to the Daishonin, who had later taken faith in his teachings. In another letter written to this chief priest, the Daishonin urges him to consult with Shomitsu-bo about any difficulties confronting the temple and describes Shomitsu-bo as knowledgeable in worldly affairs.

In this letter, the Daishonin emphasizes the supremacy of the Lotus Sutra, an important point for Shomitsu-bo, who was living at a temple where the original Tendai reverence for the Lotus Sutra had been distorted by True Word influence. The Daishonin first cites the erroneous views of the True Word priests of India, China, and Japan with respect to the Lotus Sutra. In particular, he attacks Shan-wu-wei's assertion that the Mahavairochana Sutra and the Lotus Sutra are equal in terms of principle, but that the Mahavairochana Sutra is superior in terms of practice. "Equal in principle" here refers to the principle of three thousand realms in a single moment of life. But the Daishonin points out that this principle does not in any way derive from the

Mahavairochana Sutra; it was established by the Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai on the basis of the Lotus Sutra. Shan-wu-wei ordered this doctrine written into the True Word teachings. As for the Mahavairochana Sutra being "superior in terms of practice": by this Shan-wu-wei meant that the Mahavairochana Sutra mentions mudras and mantras, while the Lotus Sutra does not. The Daishonin asserts, however, that mudras and mantras are mere insignificant details when compared to the Lotus Sutra's two unprecedented revelations that even persons of the two vehicles can attain Buddhahood, and that Shakyamuni Buddha originally attained enlightenment in the far distant past.

In the latter part of the letter, the Daishonin explains that the Flower Garland and True Word schools, while nominally Mahayana, in fact should be considered Hinayana because they bind themselves to the Hinayana precepts. He points out that even the Great Teacher Dengyo, who introduced the True Word teachings to Japan, did not regard them as being in any way equal to the T'ien-t'ai teachings, which are based on the Lotus Sutra. As for how far they clarify the three truths of non-substantiality, temporary existence, and the Middle Way, the Flower Garland and True Word schools do not rise above the level of the specific teaching (a higher level of Mahayana addressed specifically to bodhisattvas). However, says the Daishonin, because so many distinguished scholars and teachers embrace the Mahavairochana Sutra, the True Word teachings have spread throughout Japan.

Notes

1. This opinion is stated in Shan-wu-wei's *Annotations on the Mahavairochana Sutra* and other commentaries on the esoteric sutras.

2. Liang-hsü (n.d.), Kuang-hsiu (771-843), and Wei-chüan (n.d.) were priests of the T'ien-t'ai school in China. Liang-hsü taught the T'ien-t'ai doctrines to Chisho (later the fifth chief priest of Enryaku-ji, the head temple of the Japanese Tendai school), when the latter visited K'ai-yüan-ssu temple in 851. Kuang-hsiu and his disciple Wei-chüan are said to have answered questions posed by Encho (the second chief priest of Enryaku-ji) concerning the T'ien-t'ai school's doctrines.

3. Source unknown.

4. Kobo makes this assessment in his *Treatise on the Ten Stages of the Mind*, though this is not an exact quotation.

5. This is a summation of views set forth in Kobo's *Comparison of Exoteric and Esoteric Buddhism*, which differentiates between the two Buddhas, and his *Precious Key to the Secret Treasury*, which identifies the exoteric teachings as an introduction to the True Word teachings.

6. This opinion is stated in *Precious Key to the Secret Treasury*.

7. The newer translations refer to the sutras translated into Chinese by Hsüan-tsang (602-664) and others who came after him. In contrast, the translations produced before Hsüan-tsang—by, for example, Kumarajiva (344-413) and Paramartha (499-569)—are called "older translations." The older translations are freer, while the newer translations tend to be more literal.

8. The eight worlds refer to all of the Ten Worlds except those of the two vehicles, voice-hearers and cause-awakened ones. The Daishonin says that the Three Treatises and Dharma Characteristics schools uphold "the doctrine of the eight worlds" because they do not teach the attainment of Buddhahood by voice-hearers and cause-awakened ones.

9. Tendai esotericism views the three vehicles as exoteric teachings and the one vehicle as the esoteric teaching. It therefore defines the Lotus and Flower Garland sutras as esoteric sutras, but because they do not mention mudras and mantras, which constitute the concrete form of esoteric

practice, they are called esoteric teachings in theory, while the Mahavairochana and Diamond Crown sutras are called esoteric teachings in both theory and practice.

10. Kakinomoto no Hitomaro (fl. c. 685-705), a major poet of *The Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves*, the earliest anthology of Japanese verse ranging from the earliest days of Japanese history to the year 760. The poem quoted here appears in the first of the imperially sponsored anthologies, *A Collection of Ancient and Modern Poetry*, where it is said that some people attribute it to Hitomaro.

11. Ki no Shukubo (d. 919) and Minamoto no Shitago (911-983) were court nobles and poets of the Heian period. Shitago was chosen to assist in compiling the second imperial anthology, *The Later Selection of Japanese Poetry*, and also devoted himself to the study of *Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves*.

12. The twelve hundred and more honored ones are Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and others inscribed on the two mandalas of the Diamond and Womb realms.

13. The story of Shan-wu-wei's escape from hell appears in *The Tripitaka Master Shan-wu-wei* (pp. 173-75).

14. Kakinomoto no Ki is Shinzei (800-860), a priest of the True Word school. In 856, he was appointed administrator of priests, the first True Word priest to receive this title. According to *The Rise and Fall of the Genji and the Heike*, when he conducted prayers for the recovery of the fifty-fifth emperor, Montoku, he fell in love with the emperor's consort and transformed himself into a blue demon after his death in order to approach her.

15. The Summary of the Mahayana school was one of the thirteen major schools of Buddhism in China. It is based on Asanga's *Summary of the Mahayana*, which expounds the Consciousness-Only doctrine. *Summary of the Mahayana* was translated into Chinese by Paramartha and propagated by his followers, and this school was formed as a result. In the early T'ang dynasty, however, Hsüan-tsang made a new translation of *Summary of the Mahayana*, and his disciple Tz'u-en founded the Dharma Characteristics school, which also expounded the Consciousness-Only doctrine. As a

result, the Summary of the Mahayana school gradually declined.

16. Dengyo refuted the doctrines of the six schools of Nara in several writings including *A Clarification of the Schools Based on T'ien-f'ai's Doctrine* and *The Outstanding Principles of the Lotus Sutra*.

17. Todai-ji is the head temple of the Flower Garland school. Ganjin established a Hinayana ordination platform at Todai-ji in 754.

18. In *The Regulations for Students of the Mountain School*, Dengyo specifies the regulations for those students who were annually appointed by the court to study the Tendai teachings on Mount Hiei, and sets forth the Mahayana precepts into which they were to be initiated when they were ordained. He says that, after their ordination, the students shall remain on Mount Hiei for twelve years and carry out two types of practice, the "concentration and insight" and the "Vairochana discipline."

19. The first schism in the Buddhist Order took place about one hundred years after Shakyamuni's death because of a dispute over five new interpretations of doctrine advanced by a monk called Mahadeva. As a result, the community split into the conservative Theravada school and the more liberal Mahasamghika school. These two schools later split into ten and eight schools, respectively. The twenty schools refer to the

Theravada and Mahasamghika schools and their eighteen derivative branches.

20. That is, among the three truths, they emphasize either the truth of temporary existence or the truth of non-substantiality. The former position is represented by the Dharma Characteristics school, which maintains that all phenomena arise solely from the alaya-consciousness but possess a temporary reality. The latter position is represented by the Three Treatises school, which stresses that because all things arise through dependent origination their existence is in itself non-substantial. These teachings both correspond to the connecting teaching, or introductory Mahayana, which does not yet reveal the truth of the Middle Way.

21. This indicates the doctrine of the specific teaching, a higher level of Mahayana addressed specifically to bodhisattvas. The teachings of this category reveal the three truths of the Middle Way, non-substantiality, and temporary existence, but show them as separate from and independent of one another.

22. Bodhisattva Space Treasury was the original object of devotion at Seicho-ji temple—where Nichiren Daishonin studied Buddhism in his boyhood—from the time of the priest Fushigi, who in 771 carved an image of the bodhisattva and enshrined it there.