

The Bodies and Minds of Ordinary Beings



THE sutras preached before the Lotus Sutra deal with the bodies and minds of ordinary beings. The Buddha preached them in terms that would be accessible to the minds of ordinary people, and therefore, though they represent the preachings of the Buddha, they do not go beyond the scope of the minds of ordinary people. Hence they are called the sutras that were preached in accordance with the minds of others.

To illustrate, suppose that there are parents who do not care for sake themselves, but who have a beloved son who is extremely fond of it. Feeling tenderly toward their son and desiring to win his affection, they urge him to have some sake and in so doing pretend that they themselves like it, too. The foolish son thereupon concludes that his father and mother in fact like sake.

The Trapusha Sutra¹ deals with the realms of human and heavenly beings. The Agama sutras deal with persons of the two vehicles. The Flower Garland Sutra deals with bodhisattvas. The Correct and Equal and the Wisdom sutras in some respects resemble the Agama and Trapusha sutras, and in others, the Flower Garland Sutra.

When ordinary people in this latter age read these various sutras, they suppose that these sutras accord with the mind of the Buddha. But if we ponder the matter closely, we will see that

in fact what they are reading is only a reflection of their own minds. And since their own minds are naturally uncultivated, there is little merit to be gained thereby.

The Lotus Sutra, on the other hand, is known as a sutra that was preached in accordance with the Buddha's own mind. Because the Buddha's mind is an excellent mind, persons who read this sutra, even though they may not understand its meaning, will gain inestimable benefit.

Mugwort that grows in the midst of hemp, or a snake inside a tube [will as a matter of course become straight], and those who associate with people of good character will consequently become upright in heart, deed, and word. The Lotus Sutra exerts a similar influence. The Buddha will look upon one who simply puts faith in this sutra as a good person.

Concerning the Lotus Sutra, however, the form of its teaching will vary depending upon the people's capacity, the time, the country, and the individuals who propagate it. Yet it seems that even bodhisattvas who have reached the stage of near-perfect enlightenment do not understand these relationships. How much less can ordinary people in the latter age ever fathom them!

In general, there are three kinds of messengers. The first kind is extremely

clever. The second is not particularly clever but is not foolish, either. The third is extremely foolish but nevertheless reliable.

Of these three types, the first will commit no error [in transmitting the message]. The second, being somewhat clever but not quite as clever as the first type, will add his own words to his lord's message. Thus he is the worst possible type of messenger. The third type, being extremely foolish, will not presume to insert his own words and, being honest, will relay his lord's message without deviating from it. Thus he is a better messenger than the second type, and occasionally may be even better than the first.

The first type of messenger may be likened to the four ranks of sages in India. The second type corresponds to the teachers in China. And the third type may be likened to the ignorant but honest persons among the ordinary people of this latter age.

I will set aside here the period when the Buddha lived in this world. The period of a thousand years that followed from the day after his passing is known as the Former Day of the Law. This thousand-year period of the Former Day is divided into two. During the first five hundred years, the teachings of the Hinayana sutras spread. The persons who propagated them were Mahakashyapa, Ananda, and others. In the second five hundred years, Ashvaghosha, Nagarjuna, Asanga, Vasubandhu, and others spread the teachings of the provisional Mahayana sutras. Some among these scholars wrote about parts of the Lotus Sutra, and others made no mention of it whatsoever. Of the scholars who appeared after this thousand-year period of the Former Day, their views in a few cases resembled the Buddha's own teaching, but for the most part they fell into error. Of those who [appeared in the Former Day and] were not in error, but whose treatises

were incomplete, we may name Mahakashyapa, Ananda, Ashvaghosha, Nagarjuna, Asanga, and Vasubandhu.

In the thousand-year period of the Middle Day of the Law, Buddhism was introduced to China. But at first, because of controversy with the Confucians, there was apparently no time to delve into the internal divisions of Buddhism, such as the distinction between Mahayana and Hinayana, and between provisional and true teachings.

As the Buddhist teachings spread more widely and one doctrine after another was introduced from India, some persons who had earlier seemed discerning now appeared, in the light of more recently introduced sutras and treatises, to have been foolish. There were also some who had earlier been thought foolish, but who were now seen to have been wise. In the end, ten different schools² developed, and a thousand or ten thousand different interpretations were propounded. Ignorant people did not know which to adhere to, while the attachment to their own views of those thought to be wise was extreme.

In the end, however, there was one opinion that all agreed upon. It was, in short, that of all the teachings set forth in the course of the Buddha's lifetime the Flower Garland Sutra ranked first, the Nirvana Sutra, second, and the Lotus Sutra, third. No one from the ruler on down to the common people disputed this interpretation, because it was shared by the Dharma Teacher Fa-yün, the Dharma Teacher Chih-tsang, and the other leaders of the ten schools, who were all looked up to as great sages.

Then, in the time of the Ch'en and Sui dynasties during the Middle Day of the Law, there appeared a young priest named Chih-i, who was later to be known as the Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai Chih-che. Although he taught many doctrines, his teachings ultimately

centered upon this single issue of the relative superiority of the Lotus, Nirvana, and Flower Garland sutras.

The Dharma Teacher Chih-i declared that the teachers of Buddhism had these three works ranked upside down. The ruler of the Ch'en dynasty, in order to determine the truth of the matter, thereupon summoned a group of more than a hundred men, including the Administrator of Priests Huiheng, the Supervisor of Priests Hui-k'uang, the Dharma Teacher Hui-jung, and the Dharma Teacher Fa-sui,³ all among the most eminent leaders of the ten schools of the north and south, and had them confront Chih-i in debate.

The Dharma Teacher Chih-i said: "The Lotus Sutra itself says, 'among the sutras, it holds the highest place.'⁴ It also says, 'Among the sutras I [Shakya-muni] have preached, now preach, and will preach, this Lotus Sutra is the most difficult to believe and the most difficult to understand.'⁵ The Immeasurable Meanings Sutra makes clear that the sutras the Buddha already 'has preached' here refer to 'the teaching of great wisdom and the Flower Garland teaching of the ocean-imprint meditation' and so forth. And with regard to the sutras he 'will preach,' the Nirvana Sutra says, '...from the prajna-paramita (the teachings of the perfection of wisdom) he brought forth the Nirvana Sutra.' These scriptural passages show that the Lotus Sutra is superior to the Flower Garland and Nirvana sutras; they make it abundantly clear, clear as could possibly be. You should understand accordingly."

Rebuked in this manner, some of his opponents simply shut their mouths, others spewed out abuse, while still others turned pale. The Ch'en ruler then rose from his seat and bowed three times, and all the hundred officials pressed their palms together in reverence. Powerless to prevail, the leaders of the other schools conceded defeat.

Thus it was established that the Lotus Sutra holds the highest place among the teachings of the Buddha's lifetime.

Then, during the latter five hundred years of the Middle Day of the Law, new translations⁶ of the sutras and treatises appeared one after another. In the third year of the Chen-kuan era (629) in the reign of Emperor T'ai-tsung, a priest named Hsüan-tsang journeyed to India. He spent seventeen years mastering the various Buddhist doctrines of the five regions of India and returned to China in the nineteenth year of the same era (645), introducing the Profound Secrets Sutra, *The Treatise on the Stages of Yoga Practice*, *The Treatise on the Consciousness-Only Doctrine*, and the other teachings of the Dharma Characteristics school.

Hsüan-tsang declared, "Although there are many different schools in India, this school is the foremost." Emperor T'ai-tsung was one of the wealthiest rulers China has known, and he took Hsüan-tsang to be his teacher.

In essence, what this school teaches is that for some persons the three vehicles are a mere expedient and the one vehicle represents the truth, while for others the one vehicle is an expedient and the three vehicles represent the truth. It also teaches that the five natures are completely separate, and that those sentient beings whose nature predestines them [to the two vehicles] or who lack the nature of enlightenment can never attain Buddhahood.

Such doctrines were as incompatible with those of the T'ien-t'ai school as are fire and water. But by this time both the Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai and the Great Teacher Chang-an had passed on, and their successors were not the men they ought to have been. Hence it appeared that the T'ien-t'ai school had already gone down in defeat.

Later, during the reign of Empress Wu, the Flower Garland school appeared in China. The translation of the

Flower Garland Sutra in sixty volumes, which the Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai had criticized, was set aside, and thereafter the school was established on the basis of a new translation of the Flower Garland Sutra in eighty volumes, introduced by the Tripitaka Master Jih-chao.⁷ In general, this school teaches that the Flower Garland Sutra represents the "root teaching" of the Buddha while the Lotus Sutra represents the "branch teachings." Empress Wu was a Buddhist nun, and she had a certain degree of understanding of both the Buddhist and non-Buddhist scriptures. In her arrogance she looked down upon the T'ien-t'ai school. Between the Dharma Characteristics and Flower Garland schools, the Lotus Sutra thus became doubly obscured.

Later, in the reign of Emperor Hsüan-tsung, the three Tripitaka masters Shan-wu-wei, Chin-kang-chih, and Pu-k'ung traveled to China from India, bringing with them the Mahavairochana, Diamond Crown, and Susiddhikara sutras. In both their character and doctrine, these three men were quite beyond comparison with the earlier teachers of Buddhism in China. And, in addition, because they introduced mudras and mantras, which had been previously unknown, it was thought that Buddhism had not really existed in China before their arrival. These men declared that the T'ien-t'ai school was superior to the Flower Garland, Dharma Characteristics, and Three Treatises teachings, but that it could not measure up to the doctrines of the True Word sutras.

Still later, the Great Teacher Miao-lo produced refutations of the Dharma Characteristics, Flower Garland, and True Word schools, schools that the Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai had of course not criticized. But he did not carry out his refutations in a public debate, as the Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai had done. Thus the Lotus Sutra became like a piece of fine brocade worn in the dark

of night, while the mudras and mantras, which are not to be found in the Lotus Sutra, were clearly visible before people's eyes. Therefore, everyone believed the True Word school to be superior.

During the Middle Day of the Law, Buddhism was introduced to Japan in the sixth year of the reign of Emperor Kimmei (545).⁸ During the more than two hundred years from the reign of Emperor Kimmei to the reign of Emperor Kammu, the six schools—the Three Treatises, Establishment of Truth, Dharma Characteristics, Dharma Analysis Treasury, Flower Garland, and Precepts—were propagated. The teachings of the True Word school were introduced during the reign of the forty-fourth sovereign, Empress Gen-sho, and those of the T'ien-t'ai school, during the reign of the forty-fifth sovereign, Emperor Shomu.⁹ But neither of these teachings was propagated at the time.

During the reign of Emperor Kammu, there lived the priest Saicho, who was later known as the Great Teacher Dengyo. Before journeying to T'ang China, he mastered the teachings of the six schools, and in addition, he spent fifteen years in seclusion on the mountain¹⁰ examining the doctrines of the T'ien-t'ai and True Word schools. Therefore, even before going to China he was able to criticize the earlier six schools from the viewpoint of the T'ien-t'ai teachings, and his criticisms persuaded all the leaders of the seven major temples of Nara to acknowledge themselves as his disciples. Thus the doctrines of the six schools were refuted.

Later, in the twenty-third year of the Enryaku era (804), he journeyed to China, returning to Japan in the twenty-fourth year of the same era. At that time he propagated the T'ien-t'ai and True Word teachings in Japan. But as far as their relative superiority was

concerned, though he discerned it in his heart, it appears that he did not expound it to others.

During this same period lived Kukai, later known as the Great Teacher Kobo. He, too, went to China in the twenty-third year of the Enryaku era and returned to Japan in the third year of the Daido era (808). He studied only the teachings of True Word and propagated them in Japan. In his opinion, the Lotus Sutra could not measure up even to the Flower Garland Sutra, much less to the True Word teachings.

The Great Teacher Dengyo had a disciple named Ennin, who was later known as the Great Teacher Jikaku. He went to China in the fifth year of the Jowa era (838) and returned to Japan in the fourteenth year of the same era. During those ten years he studied both the True Word and T'ien-t'ai doctrines. While in Japan, he had thoroughly studied the Tendai and True Word doctrines under the Great Teacher Dengyo, Gishin, and Encho, and in addition, during his ten years in China he studied True Word under eight distinguished teachers¹¹ and received instruction in the T'ien-t'ai teachings from Tsung-ju'i, Chih-yüan,¹² and others. After returning to Japan, he announced that the T'ien-t'ai and True Word schools alike represented the flavor of ghee, and that the sutras of both schools were profound and subtle. An imperial edict was issued supporting these opinions.

After him there appeared Enchin, later known as the Great Teacher Chisho. Before journeying to China, he was a disciple of the Reverend Gishin. While in Japan, he studied the Tendai and True Word teachings under Gishin, Encho, Ennin, and others. In addition, he went to China in the third year of the Ninju era (853), returning in the first year of the Jogan era (859). During his seven years in China, he made a thorough study of the two

teachings of the T'ien-t'ai and True Word schools under such men as Fa-ch'üan and Liang-hsü.¹³

He declared that the relative merits of the two schools of Tendai and True Word were as clear as though reflected in a mirror, but that this point would surely be disputed in later times, and so he would settle the matter. He therefore stated his opinion that the two schools of Tendai and True Word were comparable to the two eyes of a person or the two wings of a bird. Those who held interpretations at variance with this were going against the founder, the Great Teacher Dengyo, and should not remain on the mountain. An imperial edict was again promulgated in support of this position, and Enchin spread his interpretation throughout the country.

Thus it would appear that, though there have been many wise persons in both China and Japan, there have been none who could refute this interpretation. If it is valid, then those who practice in accordance with it are certain to attain Buddhahood, and those rulers who pay respect to it are bound to enjoy peace and safety in their realm.

I had thought that, should I venture to share my own opinion with others, they would not only refuse to heed it but in fact would try to do me harm, and that my disciples and lay supporters who heard my views would also be placed in peril. And in fact everything has turned out just as I anticipated.

Nevertheless, I believe that the interpretations put forth by the persons I have mentioned simply do not accord with the Buddha's true intention. Judging from the eight volumes and twenty-eight chapters of the Lotus Sutra, if there should be any other sutra that surpasses it, then the Lotus Sutra would represent no more than a gathering of the Buddhas of the ten directions who came together to pile up great lies. But in fact when we examine the Flower Garland, Nirvana, Wisdom,

Mahavairochana, and Profound Secrets sutras, we do not find any passage that controverts the Lotus Sutra's clear statement that "among the sutras, it holds the highest place."

Thus, although Shan-wu-wei, Hsüan-tsang, Kobo, Jikaku, Chisho, and the others put forth a variety of clever arguments, they could produce no passage of scripture proving the Lotus Sutra to be inferior to the Mahavairochana Sutra. Their whole argument rests solely on the question of whether the sutra includes mudras and mantras. Rather than writing hundreds of volumes of argument, traveling back and forth between China and Japan with their unending schemes, and arranging for the promulgation of imperial edicts in order to intimidate people, they would have been better off producing some clear passage of proof in the sutras themselves. Who then could have doubted their assertions?

Dewdrops accumulate to form a stream, and streams accumulate to form the great ocean. Particles of dust accumulate to form a mountain, and mountains accumulate to form Mount Sumeru. And in the same way, trifling matters accumulate to become grave ones. How much more so in the case of this matter, which is the gravest of all! When these men wrote their commentaries, they should have exerted themselves in examining both the principles and documentary evidence of the two teachings, and when the court issued imperial edicts, it, too, should have delivered its admonitions after thoroughly investigating both sides and citing some clear passage of proof.

Not even the Buddha himself could repudiate his statement that, among all the sutras he has preached, now preaches, and will preach, [the Lotus Sutra stands supreme]. How much less, then, can scholars, teachers, and rulers of states use their authority to do so! This statement [of the Buddha] has

been heard by Brahma, Shakra, the gods of the sun and moon, and the four heavenly kings, and duly recorded in their respective palaces.

So long as the people truly did not know of this statement, it seems that the false interpretations of the teachers I mentioned spread without anyone incurring retribution. But once a person of forceful character has come forward to make this sutra passage known in a bold and uncompromising fashion, then grave matters are certain to occur. Because people have looked down on this person and cursed him, struck him, sent him into exile, or attempted to take his life, Brahma, Shakra, the gods of the sun and moon, and the four heavenly kings have risen up in anger and become that votary's allies. Thus unexpected censures have come down from heaven, and the people are about to be wiped out and the nation destroyed.

Though the votary of the Lotus Sutra may be of humble background, the heavenly deities who protect him are fearsome indeed. If an asura tries to swallow the sun or moon, its head will split into seven pieces.¹⁴ If a dog barks at a lion, its bowels will rot. And as I view the situation today, the same sort of retribution is happening here in Japan.

On the other hand, those who give alms and support to the votary will receive the same benefit as though making offerings to the Lotus Sutra itself. As the Great Teacher Dengyo says in his commentary, "Those who praise him will receive blessings that will pile up as high as Mount Calm and Bright, while those who slander him will be committing a fault that will condemn them to the hell of incessant suffering."¹⁵

The person who offered a humble meal of millet to a pratyekabuddha became the Thus Come One Treasure Brightness.¹⁶ He who offered a mud

pie to the Buddha became the ruler of Jambudvīpa.¹⁷ Though one may perform meritorious deeds, if they are directed toward what is untrue, then those deeds may bring great evil, but they will never result in good. On the other hand, though one may be ignorant and make meager offerings, if one presents those offerings to a person who upholds the truth, one's merit will be great. How much more so in the case of people who in all sincerity

make offerings to the correct teaching!

In addition, we live today in a time of trouble, when there is little that ordinary people can do. And yet, busy as you are, in your sincerity you have sent me thick-stemmed bamboo shoots of the moso variety¹⁸ as offerings to the Lotus Sutra here in the mountains. Surely you are sowing good seeds in a field of fortune. My tears never cease to flow when I think of it.



Background

The opening and concluding portions of this letter have been lost, so its date and recipient are both unknown. From the contents of this existing portion, however, it would seem that Nichiren Daishonin wrote it at Minobu to one of his devoted believers.

In the beginning of this letter, the Daishonin declares that all the sutras expounded before the Lotus Sutra are to be classified as “according with the minds of others.” That is, they are provisional teachings accommodated to the people's understanding. The Lotus Sutra, on the other hand, is said to “accord with the Buddha's own mind.” It is the teaching in which the Buddha directly revealed his own enlightenment. The provisional teachings set forth only partial aspects of the truth, for they are expounded in accordance with the people's capacity, while the true teaching or Lotus Sutra reveals the truth in its entirety. The Daishonin asserts that those who take faith in the Lotus Sutra, even without understanding its meaning, will naturally gain immeasurable benefit.

He then briefly traces the history of the transmission of the Lotus Sutra in India, China, and Japan during the Former, Middle, and Latter Days of the

Law. In so doing, he uses the analogy of three kinds of messengers, who correspond respectively to the Buddhist teachers of the Former, Middle, and Latter Days of the Law.

The greater part of his discussion in this letter focuses on the Middle Day of the Law, when the message of the Lotus Sutra became overshadowed by other teachings. In China, the Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai made clear the supremacy of the Lotus Sutra when he met in debate with leaders of the ten schools of the north and south. After T'ien-t'ai's death, however, the central position of the Lotus Sutra was obscured by the introduction from India of the Dharma Characteristics, Flower Garland, and True Word schools. The Great Teacher Miao-lo to some extent revived T'ien-t'ai's teaching, but his efforts fell short of restoring the Lotus Sutra to its former uncontested place of honor.

In Japan, the supreme position of the Lotus Sutra was established by the Great Teacher Dengyo, the founder of the Japanese Tendai school. However, during the same period, Kobo established the esoteric True Word school, and Dengyo's successors eventually fell under its influence, placing the Lotus

Sutra on the same level as the esoteric teachings. Thus the teaching of the Lotus Sutra became obscured.

The Daishonin here criticizes the arguments of such teachers as Shan-wu-wei, Hsüan-tsang, Kobo, Jikaku, and Chisho, pointing out that they have no basis in the Buddhist sutras. In contrast, the "Teacher of the Law" chapter of the Lotus Sutra clearly states: "Among the sutras I [Shakyamuni Buddha] have preached, now preach, and will preach, this Lotus Sutra is the most

difficult to believe and the most difficult to understand," thus showing the Lotus Sutra to be the most profound teaching. When he sought to make the purport of this passage clear to all, the Daishonin says, he met with persecution; this, in turn, became the cause for various calamities. In contrast, he explains that those who support the votary of the Lotus Sutra will gain the same benefit as they would by serving the Lotus Sutra itself.

Notes

1. A sutra, now lost, in which Shakyamuni is said to have expounded the five precepts and the ten good precepts for the sake of Trapusha and Bhallika, two merchants who had offered him barley and honey soon after his enlightenment. *The Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sutra* cites a teacher of northern China who assigned this sutra to the category of teachings for human and heavenly beings.

2. Three schools of southern China and seven schools of northern China.

3. Hui-heng (515–589), Hui-k'uang (534–613), and Hui-jung (d. 586) were priests of the Northern and Southern Dynasties period. Hui-heng was appointed general administrator of priests in 586. His debate with the Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai is mentioned in *The Continued Biographies of Eminent Priests*. According to the work, Hui-k'uang was instrumental in propagating the teachings of *The Summary of the Mahayana* and *The Treatise on the Consciousness-Only Doctrine* translated by Paramartha. Hui-jung was a disciple of Fa-yün, who was revered as one of the three great teachers of the Liang dynasty. Fa-sui (n.d.) was a priest of Ting-lin-ssu temple, who lived during the Ch'en and the Sui dynasties. According to *The Biography of the Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai Chih-che of the Sui Dynasty*, when T'ien-t'ai lectured on the title of the Lotus Sutra at Wa-kuan-ssu temple in Chin-ling, the capital of the Ch'en, Fa-sui attended it in his capacity as the chief priest of Ting-lin-ssu and, deeply affected by T'ien-t'ai's doctrine, became his follower on the spot.

4. Lotus Sutra, chap. 14.

5. *Ibid.*, chap. 10.

6. Translations made by Hsüan-tsang (602–664) and those who came after him. They tend to be more literal than the "old translations," which preceded them.

7. Jih-chao (Skt Divakara, 613–687) was a monk from central India. He went to China in 676, where he produced the translations of eighteen texts. It is not certain in what sense the Daishonin says that Jih-chao "introduced" the eighty-volume Flower Garland Sutra. He may be referring to the fact that the Flower Garland patriarch Fa-tsang used the "Entering the Dharma Realm" chapter of the Flower Garland Sutra that Jih-chao had translated to supplement a deficiency in the old translation.

8. Today the date usually given for the official introduction of Buddhism to Japan is 538.

9. *A Brief History of Japan* quotes an unidentified source to the effect that the True Word master Shan-wu-wei visited Japan in the first year of the Yoro era (717) during Empress Gensho's reign. Though most probably not factual, it is a tradition that seems to have been accepted in the Daishonin's time. The priest Ganjin (Chin Chien-chen) brought T'ien-t'ai's three major works from China in 754 when he journeyed to Japan at Emperor Shomu's invitation to instruct priests and nuns in the Buddhist precepts.

10. The mountain refers here to Mount Hiei, located between Lake Biwa and the imperial capital at Kyoto. Later it became the site of Enryaku-ji, the head temple of the Japanese Tendai school.

11. Fa-ch'üan, Yüan-cheng, Tsung-jui,

Ch'üan-ya, I-chen, Pao-yüeh, K'an, and Wei-chin.

12. Tsung-jui (n.d.) was a priest of Hsi-ming-ssu temple in Ch'ang-an, different from the Tsung-jui listed in the preceding note. According to *The Genko Era Biographies of Eminent Priests*, Ennin studied Sanskrit with Tsung-jui when he went to T'ang China in 838. Chih-yüan (768-844) was a priest of the T'ien-t'ai school during the T'ang dynasty, who lived at Hua-yen-ssu temple on Mount Wu-t'ai.

13. Fa-ch'üan (n.d.) was a True Word priest of the T'ang dynasty. He is said to have instructed both Ennin and Enchin in the esoteric teachings when they journeyed to China. Liang-hsü (n.d.) was a priest of the T'ien-t'ai school during the T'ang dynasty.

14. According to *The Treatise on the Great Perfection of Wisdom*, when the asura king Rahula threatened to swallow the moon, the Buddha reproved him, saying that, if he did so, his head would split into seven pieces. A version of the same story in *The Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sutra* says that Rahula threatened to engulf both the sun and moon.

15. *A Clarification of the Schools Based on T'ien-t'ai's Doctrine*.

16. Probably this refers to Aniruddha, a cousin of Shakyamuni and one of his ten major disciples. He was predicted to become the Thus Come One Universal Brightness according to the Lotus Sutra, who is referred to in the text as Treasure Brightness.

17. This refers to the boy Virtue Victorious who offered a mud pie to Shakyamuni Buddha. According to *The Story of King Ashoka*, as a result of this offering, a hundred years after the Buddha's death the boy Virtue Victorious was reborn as King Ashoka.

18. The name moso (Chin meng-tsung) came from the filial son Meng-tsung who lived at Wu during the period of the Three Kingdoms (220-280). According to *Tales of Times Now Past*, bamboo shoots were a favorite food with his mother. One winter morning, she could not get any bamboo shoots, for the ground was frozen with the snow. When Meng-tsung lamented to heaven at this, bamboo shoots spontaneously sprouted in the garden.