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**Some disputed writings in the Nichiren corpus: Textual,
hermeneutical and historical problems**

Stone, Jacqueline Ilyse, Ph.D.

University of California, Los Angeles, 1990

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
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Some Disputed Writings in the Nichiren Corpus:
Textual, Hermeneutical and Historical Problems

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in East Asian Languages and Cultures

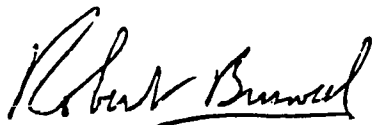
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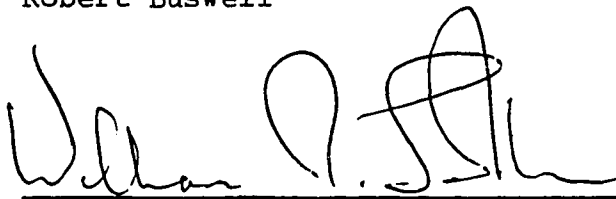
Jacqueline Ilyse Stone

1990

The dissertation of Jacqueline Ilyse Stone is approved.


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1990

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For S.,
In memory of our friendship

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While in Japan, I had the privilege of being a guest research fellow at the Sôgô Bukkyô Kenkyûjo (Institute for Comprehensive Studies of Buddhism) at Taishô University in Tokyo, which was then under the direction of the late Professor Shioiri Ryôdô. Professor Shioiri was a great inspiration to me, both for his remarkable scholarship and for his insistence

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Some Disputed Writings in the Nichiren Corpus:
Textual, Hermeneutical and Historical Problems

by

Jacqueline Ilyse Stone

Doctor of Philosophy in East Asian Languages and Cultures

University of California, Los Angeles, 1990

Professor William R. LaFleur, Chair

This dissertation addresses some controversial texts among those attributed to the Japanese Buddhist teacher Nichiren (1222-1282). These texts present Nichiren's doctrine of salvation through faith in the Lotus Sûtra in terms of original enlightenment thought (hongaku shisô), a discourse then current within the dominant Tendai sect. Once highly valued, they are now deemed possibly apocryphal by some leading Nichiren scholars in Japan who argue that, in breaking with Tendai to start a new school, Nichiren also rejected or substantially revised the Tendai hongaku doctrine.

The problems involved here are explored by considering representative writings in three genres: essays, personal letters and purported records of

Nichiren's oral teachings (translations are included). Reasons are cited for regarding these texts as problematic: Few survive in Nichiren's holograph, and several use terminology not attested in his authenticated writings. However, the evidence is seen to be inconclusive, and an argument is developed, based on historical data, that reference to original enlightenment thought alone may not constitute reliable grounds for questioning Nichiren's authorship. Arguments both for and against including these writings in a consideration of Nichiren's ideas are shown to have been influenced by various hermeneutical agendas, including sectarian interestedness in asserting Nichiren's independence from Tendai, scholarly assumptions about original enlightenment thought and Kamakura Buddhism, and conflicting doctrinal interpretations within Nichiren Buddhism.

In these texts, one cannot distinguish conclusively between Nichiren's thought and its interpretation by members of his early community who might have forged the documents. Thus they encourage a shift in emphasis from Nichiren as the founder of a sect to how the tradition emanating from him developed. They also show the early Nichiren community to have been embedded in a broader tradition of Lotus-related discourse, one not readily classifiable along denominational lines.

ABBREVIATIONS AND CONVENTIONS

The following abbreviations have been used:

<u>Chi</u>	<u>Fa-huan wen-chü chi</u>
<u>Chih-kuan</u>	<u>Moho chih-kuan</u>
<u>DDZ</u>	<u>Dengyô Daishi zenshû.</u> Hieizan Senshûin, ed.
<u>DNBZ</u>	<u>Dai Nihon Bukkyô zensho</u>
<u>ESZ</u>	<u>Eshin Sôzu zenshû.</u> Hieizan Senshûin, ed.
<u>Fuji</u>	<u>Fuji shûgaku yôshû .</u> Hori Nichikô, ed.
<u>Goibun kôgi</u>	<u>Nichiren Shônin goibun kôgi</u>
<u>Hsüan-i</u>	<u>Miao-fa lien-hua ching hsüan-i</u>
<u>Hung-chüeh</u>	<u>Chih-kuan fu-hsing-ch'uan hung-chüeh</u>
Hurvitz	Hurvitz, Leon, trans. <u>Scripture of the Lotus Blossom</u> <u>of the Fine Dharma</u>
<u>Ibun jiten</u>	<u>Nichiren Shônin ibun jiten.</u> Risshô Daigaku Nichiren Kyôgaku Kenkyûjo, ed.
<u>IBK</u>	<u>Indogaku Bukkyôgaku kenkyû</u>
<u>Keimô</u>	<u>Rokunai keimô</u>
<u>Lotus</u>	<u>Miao-fa lien-hua ching</u>
<u>Manji</u>	<u>Manji zoku zôkyô</u>
<u>Nichirenschû jiten</u>	<u>Nichirenschû jiten.</u> Nichirenschû Jiten Kankô Iinkai, ed.

<u>NSZ</u>	<u>Nichirenschû shûgaku zensho.</u> Risshô Daigaku Nichiren Kyôgaku Kenkyûjo, ed.
<u>Shih-ch'ien</u>	<u>Fa-hua hsüan-i shih-ch'ien</u>
<u>STN</u>	<u>Shôwa teihon Nichiren Shônin</u> <u>ibun.</u> Risshô Daigaku Nichiren Kyôgaku Kenkyûjo, ed.
<u>T</u>	<u>Taishô shinshû daizôkyô</u>
<u>TZ</u>	<u>Tendaishû zensho.</u> Tendaishûten Kankôkai, ed.
<u>Wen-chû</u>	<u>Miao-fa lien-hua ching wen-chû</u>
<u>Zenshû kôgi</u>	<u>Nichiren Shônin ibun zenshû</u> <u>kôgi</u>

Citations from the Taishô canon are listed in the following fashion: title (with Sanskrit title, where relevant, in parentheses) and chuan or fascicle number, T[aishô], Taishô sequence number, Taishô volume number, page number, column (a, b or c) and line number(s).
E.g., Wei-mo-chieh so-shuo ching (Vimalakîti-nirdeśa) 2, T 475.14:475a25-26. In the case of the Lotus Sûtra alone, I have given p'in or chapter numbers rather than chuan numbers, as the identification of individual chapters is often helpful in the context of the discussion. For writings by or attributed to Nichiren, I have used the four-volume, 1989 revised version of the Shôwa teihon Nichiren Shônin ibun [Shôwa-period standard edition of the works of Nichiren Shônin]. Individual writings are cited in the text of this essay by volume

and page number; sequence numbers are also provided in the Appendix of Works Cited.

In speaking collectively of the many traditions that have emanated from Nichiren, I have used the expression "Nichiren sect" or simply "Nichiren Buddhism." Specific denominations within this broader tradition are referred to by name, e.g., Nichirenschû, Nichiren Shôshû, Kempon Hokkeshû, etc.

Months and days for the pre-modern period are given according to the lunar calendar. When Japanese era names are used, Western equivalents are provided in parentheses, for example, the twenty-eighth day of the fourth month of Kenchô 5 (1253). To avoid discrepancy with traditional biographies, Nichiren's age at the time of various events is given according to the old East Asian system, at which one is considered to be a year old at birth. The expression "medieval period" is used to refer from roughly the beginning of the insei or Cloister Government period in the late eleventh century to the beginning of the Edo period (1600). The term "medieval Tendai" (chûko Tendai) technically indicates a somewhat longer historical span, extending to the late seventeenth-early eighteenth centuries.

The pronunciation of the names of persons, temples and texts, as well as the preferred titles for some of Nichiren's writings, varies to some extent from one

Nichiren denomination to another. In these matters I have followed the Nichiren Shōnin ibun jiten and the Nichirensū jiten. Chinese names have been romanized according to the Wade-Giles system; a modified Hepburn has been used for Japanese. Sanskrit words appearing in Webster's Third New International Unabridged Dictionary are not italicized, but diacritics have nevertheless been provided for the reader's convenience. Buddhist terms are given in the language of currency (usually Japanese).

Unless otherwise indicated, all references to the Lotus Sūtra refer to Miao-fa lien-hua ching, Kumārajīva's Chinese translation of the Saddharma-puṇḍarīka-sūtra, which Nichiren and his contemporaries regarded as authoritative. Nichiren and his followers used the title of this sutra, Myōhō-renge-kyō in Japanese pronunciation, to indicate both the sūtra itself and also as a designation for the ultimate reality; where this latter usage is clearly indicated, I have not italicized it.

Translations of works discussed in the dissertation appear in Part II of the dissertation. Where passages from these translations are quoted in the main body of the discussion, only the location of the passage is cited; explanations of material within the text are provided in footnotes in Translations section.

PREFACE

Great thinkers and religious leader may write down their own ideas, but their words are also recorded by their immediate disciples, whose recollections of the master's thoughts may in turn be recorded by their disciples. Long afterward, later followers of the school may then retrospectively attribute their own compositions to the great man, in order to invest them with authority. Thus a teacher's collected works may include not only his own writings, but redactions by several generations of disciples as well as later apocrypha, and where one layer of material ends and another begins may not always be easy or even possible to distinguish. In attempting to trace the life and thought of a particular figure, it is sound methodology to identify, where this can be done, those works that are authentic and accord them the greatest weight in one's interpretive work. However, works whose authenticity cannot be definitively determined also have their story to tell, sometimes one that merits close scholarly attention. Such is the case with a number of problematic writings attributed to the medieval Japanese Buddhist teacher Nichiren (1222-1282).

Nichiren wrote prolifically; his collected works

comprise more than five hundred writings. These represent a variety of forms, including essays of varying lengths, personal letters and recorded oral teachings and ranging from learned doctrinal expositions in literary Chinese to sermons for lay people in the vernacular language--all developing Nichiren's doctrine of salvation through exclusive devotion to the Lotus Sûtra and the direct accessibility of Buddhahood for anyone, man and woman, foolish or wise, who takes faith in the sūtra and chants its daimoku or title in the formula, Namu-myôhō-renge-kyô. Yet not all these writings are equally reliable as genuine works of Nichiren. At one end of the spectrum, well over a hundred documents that survive in his holograph or can be otherwise verified are indisputably authentic; while at the other end, we find a few that are almost certainly redactions by his close followers or pseudographic works attributed to him by disciples writing after his death. In between, however, lies a gray area of texts whose authorship remains uncertain, possibly written by Nichiren or possibly by his disciples. This essay will focus on a portion of this ambiguous material, specifically, a group of texts that illustrate Nichiren's idea of the immediacy of enlightenment via the Lotus by drawing on the vocabulary and symbol system of original enlightenment thought

(hongaku shisô).

Original enlightenment thought formed the topic of a major discourse in the medieval Japanese religious world. Traditionally associated with esoteric Tendai Buddhism and also having roots in Shingon, this doctrine holds that Buddhahood is not something "attained" at all but originally inherent in all beings, sentient and insentient alike. In the Tendai literature, depending upon the text, the original enlightenment discourse is associated with various religious acts, including faith, meditation, sūtra recitation and the chanting of mantras. The crucial point seems to be, not which practice one undertakes, but that one awakens to being Buddha inherently. In the corpus of works attributed to Nichiren, however, original enlightenment thought is welded to the exclusive practice of chanting the daimoku of the Lotus Sūtra: In that act, we are told, the practitioner is identified with the primordially enlightened Buddha whose body is the entire universe, and that person's dwelling place becomes the Buddha land. Of the works in the Nichiren corpus dealing extensively with this discourse--close to forty in all--some are very powerfully written, and a few have traditionally been revered as numbering among Nichiren's most important writings. Over the last several decades, however, this group of texts has been problematized by

some of the leading scholars of Nichiren doctrine in Japan, who maintain that Nichiren, in breaking away from the Tendai sect, also rejected or substantially revised its original enlightenment teaching. Thus many of these writings are now considered possibly apocryphal or at least not representative of Nichiren's primary thought.

Why are these texts important? Given how little is known about Nichiren in the West, and that so many authentic writings by him survive, why focus on problematic material? Those documents that are of indisputable authenticity of course provide the most trustworthy index to Nichiren's ideas, and most scholars of Nichiren in Japan today tend to rely on them chiefly or even exclusively. However, this dissertation is not about Nichiren per se, but about a cluster of writings attributed to him--writings that prove important and illuminating for a number of reasons.

First of all, one can cite their literary worth. Not every one of the texts in question could be called a masterwork, but several of them arguably hold a place among the most moving pieces in the Nichiren collection, eloquently repudiating as they do the perceived gulf between our flawed human condition and ultimate truth with their message of a Buddhahood originally inherent in even the most deluded being. Regardless of authorship, they deserve recognition as belonging to the

world's great religious literature.

Second, these texts prove historically significant, on multiple counts. To begin with, they tell us much about how Nichiren and his teaching of devotion to the Lotus have been--and in some quarters, still are--understood. Even if they should for the most part be apocryphal, their composition nevertheless precedes the major exegetical literature of the Nichiren sect produced during the late Muromachi (1336-1568) and Edo (1600-1868) periods; thus they would in effect constitute one of the first levels of Nichiren "commentary," reflecting how Nichiren's ideas were construed by the members of early community who were his first interpreters.

However, it is by no means certain that all or even most of these writings are apocryphal. While their ambiguous status unsuits them as primary sources for Nichiren's ideas, one still cannot dismiss the possibility that they may represent certain aspects of his thought. The Nichiren who emerges from these texts differs markedly from those stereotypes--Nichiren as national prophet, martyr, fanatic, and case study in abnormal psychology--that inhabit the pages of so much of our Western secondary literature on Japanese religion and history. While still adamant that only the Lotus Sûtra leads to liberation in the Final Dharma age--the

degenerate era in which many medieval Japanese Buddhists believed themselves to be living--this Nichiren is a teacher of sudden enlightenment, of mystical union with a cosmic Buddha, standing far more squarely in the mainstream of East Asian Mahayana thought than do our conventional images of this man as a somewhat bizarre and marginal figure. How far this Nichiren is grounded in historical reality, and how far he represents a construct of later disciples, cannot presently be determined; still, the documents in question may conceivably represent certain elements in Nichiren's thinking, elements that should be taken into consideration in any attempt at a comprehensive study of his thought.

These writings also constitute another fragment of information that may help in the ongoing attempt to piece together a clearer picture of those historically crucial developments in the Japanese Buddhist world that took place around and during the Kamakura period (1185-1333). The new Kamakura schools, including Nichiren's, have long been represented as a sudden break with the dominant Tendai/Shingon establishment, independent and radically different from what preceded them. Denominational scholarship, in particular, tends to paint the Kamakura founders as almost transhistorical figures, minimizing their embeddedness in an existing

tradition. Here in these texts, however, we find the practice associated with Nichiren and his followers--chanting the title of the Lotus Sûtra as an exclusive form--welded to the original enlightenment discourse central to the esoteric Tendai tradition that Nichiren is said to have rejected. While it would be premature to draw firm conclusions, this fusion would seem to support a view advanced in recent years by scholars in both Japan and the West, that the "radical disjuncture" model of Kamakura Buddhism needs reassessment, and that denominational categorization of the Japanese Buddhist tradition--e.g., into Tendai, Nichiren, etc.--may not always be the most useful approach in attempting to make sense of the new doctrines, practices and structures of religious organization that emerged during the medieval period.

Moreover, precisely because they overlap two traditions--Nichiren and Tendai--the texts in question illustrate the sort of interpretive problems peculiar to those gray areas that often slip through the cracks between academic categories. In addition to the reasons for their historical importance enumerated above, these writings provide a complex and fascinating case study of the interaction between scholarship and texts. We shall see, for example, how the ways in which these texts have been evaluated have been influenced by various

hermeneutical agendas, including sectarian interestedness in asserting Nichiren's intellectual independence from his Tendai matrix, modern scholarly presuppositions about the nature of original enlightenment thought and about Kamakura Buddhism, and conflicting doctrinal interpretations of rival Nichiren denominations. We shall also see how modern techniques of textual criticism, which aim at objectivity, can and occasionally have been manipulated to serve a distinctly partisan intent. The object of this study, in short, is to introduce representative examples from this intriguing body of texts, explore what they have to tell us about Lotus-related developments in medieval Japanese Buddhist thought and practice, and examine what can be learned from the politics of the scholarship concerning them, i.e., how the biases of modern interpretive communities have influenced the argument to include or exclude them from a consideration of what Nichiren had to say.

A word may also be in order here about what this essay does not attempt. While I have briefly outlined certain elements in Nichiren's ideas relevant to the discussion at hand, I have not undertaken a detailed exposition of original enlightenment-related elements in the structure of his thought as it emerges from his authenticated writings--a massive task far exceeding the

scope of what can be accomplished here. Nor have I attempted to present any definitive conclusions about whether or not these texts are genuine. While questioning the assumption that reference to the original enlightenment discourse in a particular text can alone be considered valid reason for doubting Nichiren's authorship, I remain uncertain about whether he wrote these texts. After having studied these texts for some years, I feel much less sanguine than when I started about the possibility of any clearcut answers to the enigma of these documents emerging in the foreseeable future. The historical and interpretive problems they raise, as well as their intrinsic interest as religious documents, prove in the end more compelling than the mere question of who wrote them.

Part I of the essay, chapters one through four, discusses the cluster of problems associated with these writings, introducing a number of texts. Chapter one traces the history of the controversy surrounding them and outlines the major problems involved--textual, historical and hermeneutical--through a summary of the significant voices in the debate. Chapters two through four analyze this problematic in the context of specific texts. Examples are taken from different genres found within the disputed material: chapter two deals with doctrinal essays; chapter three, with personal letters

addressed to followers of Nichiren; and chapter four, with purported records of Nichiren's oral teachings.

Complete translations of the texts discussed in these three chapters--or, in the case of the oral teachings, translations of substantial excerpts--comprise Part II of the dissertation. The major portion of this material--the long essay "Sôkanmon shô," the shorter essays "Ichinen sanzen hômon," "Jûnyoze no koto," and the excerpts from the oral teachings--have been translated by me here for the first time; to the best of my knowledge, they have never before been rendered into any Western language. The short essay "Isshô jôbutsu shô" and the six personal letters have been translated before in The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, vols. 1 and 2 (Tokyo: Nichiren Shôshû International Center, 1979 and 1981), as part of an ongoing project of translating Nichiren's work into English under the editorial supervision of Columbia University Adjunct Professor Burton Watson. My own participation in the work for those volumes, as one of the principal translators and editors, will account for any similarities between the English versions contained therein and the ones appearing here. The Major Writings was intended chiefly for Nichiren devotees as well as for an interested general readership. I have retranslated these seven pieces here in accordance with

the rather different standards of academic Buddhist translation and my own preferences for wording. In some cases I have altered the interpretation of specific passages in ways that I now feel more closely approximate the text. I have also worked from a different Japanese edition of Nichiren's collected writings.

PART I: DISCUSSION

CHAPTER ONE

Sects, Texts and Original Enlightenment:

Outline of a Problematic

In the world of contemporary Buddhist studies in Japan, it is often remarked, as one scholar notes, that "nowhere is [textual] authenticity argued more heatedly than in the doctrinal studies of the Nichiren sect."¹ This may be, first of all, because much room exists for argument: works attributed to Nichiren that have definitively been proven apocryphal are few indeed, while the disputed material is extensive. Second, a great deal is at stake. What, for example, did Nichiren teach concerning the object of worship? Did he intend the object of worship to be the person of the Buddha, or the Dharma immanent in one's own mind? Did he teach transcendence or affirm the world? Did he develop his thinking independently of the medieval Tendai esoteric tradition, or participate in the same universe of discourse? And, among the rival Nichiren denominations or rival scholars within denominations, whose interpretation of doctrine most closely reflects what Nichiren actually taught? Responses to all these questions and a host of others can be influenced to varying degrees by whether certain problematic texts are

included or excluded from a consideration of Nichiren's thought.

The above questions may not be those that most intrigue us who approach the Nichiren tradition from the outside, as a subject of academic study. Still, the problematic materials in the Nichiren collection prove both fascinating and important: as religious literature in their own right; for what they can tell us about how Nichiren and the religion he taught have been understood historically; and for what they suggest about one new movement within Kamakura Buddhism and its relation to older forms. In addition, the debate surrounding them stands as an illuminating and cautionary example of how the assumptions and agendas of modern scholarship can influence the interpretation of texts. This essay will focus on the most controversial group of disputed writings in the Nichiren canon: those closely related to the doctrine of original enlightenment.

As a prelude to the consideration of specific writings, this initial chapter will trace the history of the debate concerning these texts, outline the major problems involved in any attempt to determine whether they are genuine or pseudographic, or whether they do or do not represent Nichiren's thought, and point out some of the presuppositions, hermeneutical agendas, and areas of interestedness involved in the controversy. First,

however, it would be well to sketch in two major areas of background material necessary to the discussion by providing (1) a brief history of the Nichiren corpus and the attempts to identify apocryphal writings; and (2) an introduction to original enlightenment thought and how scholars interpret it today.

The Nichiren Collection

The body of texts attributed to Nichiren has traditionally been termed the gosho (sacred writings), sosho (writings of the founder), or ibun (bequeathed documents). No other religious teacher of the medieval period equalled him for the sheer volume of writings he produced. The standard edition of his collected works, the four-volume Shôwa teihon Nichiren Shônin ibun (Shôwa-period standard edition of the writings of Nichiren Shônin), contains a total of 529 complete writings attributed to him and 442 holographic fragments of additional writings, ranging in length from a few characters or kana syllables to full paragraphs of text.² These writings have come down to us in three forms: documents in Nichiren's autograph; transcriptions, either of individual writings or of collections of writings; and xylographs published during the Edo period. Of Nichiren's letters and essays, 113 complete autographs survive, and another 25 autographs,

lost in a fire at the Nichirenshū head temple on Mt. Minobu in 1875, are known to have existed. In addition, there are 56 transcriptions of individual works made by Nichiren's immediate or second-generation disciples. This voluminous collection includes doctrinal essays of varying lengths, summaries or extracts of other works, charts and graphs, recorded oral teachings, letters and petitions to government officials and religious leaders, and personal letters to disciples and lay followers. Nichiren is not mentioned in the historical records of his day, so these writings constitute the primary material for understanding his life and thought. They also provide a rich source of social, political and cultural information for the Kamakura period. Many of Nichiren's writings are valued for their high literary quality, and passages from them are cited in classical Japanese dictionaries as examples of contemporary usage.

Like many individuals later revered as religious founders, Nichiren did not systematize his own teachings; much of his writing was situational, produced in response to events confronting himself or his followers. His scathing criticism of other sects drew the ire of the authorities, and, being repeatedly exiled or forced to flee where he was staying, Nichiren led a peripatetic existence for much of his career, acquiring converts in each place he went. Thus many of his

writings, especially those in the form of letters, were scattered from the outset. According to tradition, Nichiren's six senior disciples collected his writings at Ikegami in Musashi Province on the first anniversary of his death, making an index to which they affixed their seals. These works they called the rokunai gosho (catalogued writings). A year later, they are said to have gathered those writings that had eluded their first compilation effort, terming these works the rokugeto gosho (uncatalogued writings).

The two major collections of Nichiren's writings to be published during the Edo period were in fact called the rokunai and the rokugeto, but the tradition of their compilation at the hands of the six senior disciples began to be questioned fairly early on and has finally been dismissed by modern textual scholarship.³

Painstaking work by Nichiren specialists Yamakawa Chiô (1879-1956), Asai Yôrin (1874-1941), Suzuki Ichijô (1890-1963) and Miyazaki Eishû (1913-) has traced in part how these writings were compiled over the course of centuries by individuals working at Nichiren centers located in Nakayama in Shimofusa Province, Minobu in Kai, and Fuji in Suruga, as well as in other scattered locations in other parts of the Kantô region, Kyoto, Sado Island, and even Kyushu. Though opinion varies slightly, the rokunai collection, consisting of 148

writings, is now thought to have been completed somewhere within 100 to 150 years after Nichiren's death, and the rokuge, containing 259 writings, over the more than 200 years following that.⁴

In the late Kamakura, Nambokuchô and Muromachi periods, the unsettled condition of society at large and interfactional conflicts within the Nichiren community inhibited free exchange among temples, and though indexes were gradually compiled and texts collected, probably only a few monks had ever actually seen a large number of the documents. Not until the first publication of the rokunai collection in its entirety in the Genna era (1615-1623), and of the rokuge in Kanbun 2 (1662), did a complete picture of the Nichiren corpus become more widely accessible.

Even before the modern period, scholars recognized that in the course of this long compilation process, works written by individuals other than Nichiren himself had, whether inadvertently or deliberately, been incorporated into the collection and transmitted as authentic works of Nichiren. Pseudographic writings seem to have become a problem early on. The "Nikkô yuikai okibumi" (Nikkô's last admonitions), said to record the final admonitions of Nichiren's disciple Byakuren Ajari Nikkô and traditionally dated Genkô 3 (1333), warns against associating with those who forge

gosho and condemns them as "parasites in the body of a lion."⁵ A version of the rokunai index made by Gyôgakuin Nitchô (1422-1500), eleventh chief abbot in the Minobu lineage, contains what purports to be a colophon appended by six senior disciples, stating their concern that, after Nichiren's death, there will appear "evil men without aspiration for the Way, who will forge writings as they please and call them the Shônin's gosho, deluding all living beings."⁶ Though this colophon is itself apocryphal, it suggests that the compilation of the rokunai may in part have been motivated by an awareness that pseudographic texts were beginning to circulate and a desire to prevent their acceptance as genuine writings.

Late Muromachi and Edo commentators, in their annotations on specific writings, occasionally express doubt about the provenance of a particular text and suggest that it may not in fact be Nichiren's work. A few were conclusively identified as apocryphal. For the most part, however, writings whose authenticity was not certain were either accepted or rejected as served the needs of various Nichiren communities at any given time.

In the early part of this century, however, following the introduction from the West of modern techniques of textual study, certain scholars affiliated with the Nichiren sect grew enthusiastic about the

possibility of purifying the Nichiren canon of apocryphal texts. Among the first to propose a methodology was Yamakawa Chiô (1879-1956). As a primary basis for distinguishing spurious from genuine writings, he suggested, the reliable documents in Nichiren's autograph should be assembled and their chronological order established; this would then serve as a "normative gosho" against which more questionable texts might be evaluated.⁷ Courage was needed to expose a body of time-honored sacred texts to the harsh light of modern critical methods, and Yamakawa seems to have met with some resistance: in a footnote to the above suggestion, which was published in 1934, he remarked that he had been urging this course for the preceding twenty years.⁸

However, the name that has become immortalized in connection with this methodology is that of Yamakawa's contemporary Asai Yôrin (1874-1941), professor at Risshô University, which is associated with Nichirenschû, and specialist in Nichirenschû doctrinal studies. Asai's success in generating enthusiasm for the idea of purifying the Nichiren canon may have owed in part to his skill in presenting it as a sacred task to be shouldered by forward-looking Nichirenschû scholars. His posthumously published Nichiren Shônin kyôgaku no kenkyû (A study of the doctrine of Nichiren Shônin), which has exerted an immense influence on subsequent Nichiren

textual studies, called for a marshalling of the latest resources of modern scientific scholarship to confront what he saw as a problem of recovering an original purity:

Owing to the number of people involved and the many years that have passed [in the process of compilation] until today, in not a few cases, forged writings have been incorporated [in the Nichiren collection] and transmitted as genuine. In order to show reverence to the Shōnin's pure and orthodox teachings, and to determine the basis of the early doctrine of this sect, these [apocryphal works] must by all means be weeded out and eliminated. This is a mission to be accomplished by modern scholars of our sect. In fulfilling it, we must [start] by determining which texts are authentic, without being governed by traditional opinion, and progress to scientific study of those texts. Our mission as scholars is indeed a grave one.⁹

Asai's passion, backed by his groundbreaking textual scholarship, inspired a generation of Nichirenschū scholars. Twenty years later his call for a purification of the canon continued to resound undiminished, for example, in the writing of Nichiren texts specialist Suzuki Ichijō, published in 1965:

Ibun must be writings that Nichiren Shōnin produced by his own hand. Nevertheless, forged writings by people who lived after him have been left behind as works of Nichiren Shōnin; that is, writings of doubtful authenticity have been incorporated even in the rokunai, rokuage and the collection of complete works. These must be investigated and removed, to protect the purity of the corpus.¹⁰

Yet despite their enthusiasm and the gains in

textual studies achieved by Asai and his successors, not much in the way of substantial progress has been made in conclusively identifying apocrypha. There is too little to go on in the way of real evidence, and attempts to determine authenticity by computer analysis have thus far proved inconclusive.¹¹ The criteria used at present are as follows: Is there a holograph? If not, is there a copy made by a contemporary of Nichiren? A "no" to both these questions removes a document from the category of the absolutely reliable but in itself remains inconclusive; though many holographs and transcriptions by contemporary disciples survive, the major portion of the corpus has come down to us only via much later transcriptions and xylographs. Next, at what point does the writing in question appear in the indexes? Mention in any of the earliest indexes preceding the formation of the rokunai and rokugeten tends to argue--though not conclusively--in favor of a particular work being genuine. Before the modern period, when the rokunai index was still thought to have been compiled by Nichiren's six senior disciples, listing in the rokunai was deemed proof of authenticity, but modern scholarship has shown this standard to be inadequate: the rokunai and the rokugeten alike contain problematic writings. Failure to appear in any index before the rokugeten could be taken as partial evidence in

absentia for a particular work being possibly apocryphal, but in itself a late listing proves inconclusive, considering that Nichiren's writings were scattered from the beginning and collected only over a long period of time. Many of the rokuge writings are no doubt genuine.

Another sort of criterion, one that Asai Yôrin widely employed, is whether or not a work contains terminology not found in any of Nichiren's authenticatable writings. Given the large number of surviving holographs, a "yes" here carries some weight, although again not decisively so. Beyond these criteria, the judgment that a particular document may be pseudographic inevitably passes into a vague area where pre-decisions about what is representative of Nichiren's primary thought are used to assess borderline materials.

With no more definitive criteria than these to work with, Asai's goal of a purified canon remains unrealized. The difficulty of making firm judgments about authenticity is in fact reflected in the organization of the Shôwa teihon standard edition of Nichiren's work. When the first three volumes of this collection were first published in 1952-1954, those writings whose authenticity had been questioned since premodern times were included in vol. 3, the zokuhen or "subsidiary texts" section, as works "whose authenticity

is problematic," while works "whose authenticity is not established, yet which traditionally have been highly valued from the standpoint of doctrine or of faith"¹² were included along with fully authenticated writings in vols. 1 and 2, the shôhen or "primary texts" section. In plainer language, the traditional judgment of premodern commentaries--rather than any new, conclusive determinations made by modern scholars of scientific text criticism--was employed as the guiding principle in the arrangement of the canon. Not all the writings in the shôhen have by any means been shown to be authentic, and--though the likelihood of pseudographia here is much higher--not all the works in the zokuhen have been definitely proven apocryphal. The division into shôhen and zokuhen can itself be seen as a compromise between the ideal of canonical purity and the difficulty of achieving it: the splitting off of certain problematic texts into the zokuhen section represents a recognition that questions of authenticity exist, while the fact that these texts nevertheless continue to be included in the collection represents the impossibility at present of resolving those questions conclusively.

Yet if Asai's vision of a purified canon has not materialized, his program for an interpretation of Nichiren's thought based solely on unimpeachable, "normative" texts has been carried on by his successors,

becoming greatly influential. Asai's intellectual heirs have for the most part, like himself, been specialists in Nichiren doctrinal or textual studies, affiliated with the Nichiren Kyôgaku Kenkyûjo (Research Center for Nichiren Doctrinal Studies) of Risshô University. While their assumptions and methodology are not necessarily shared by all scholars associated with Nichirenshû or even with Risshô University, let alone by all scholars of the other various Nichiren denominations, they have taken the lead in presenting Nichiren to the broader Japanese academic world, through their own published research and through the editing of important reference works including the Shôwa standard edition of Nichiren's writings, the Nichirenshû jiten (Dictionary of Nichirenshû) and Nichiren Shônin ibun jiten (Dictionary of the writings of Nichiren Shônin). Thus their textual and hermeneutical approaches have exerted a determinative impact on how Nichiren is understood by Japanese intellectuals today. With few exceptions, and some controversy over individual writings, they have continued to problematize, and occasionally add to, the list of works that Asai originally deemed suspicious. As a result, secondary studies of Nichiren have come to be based on an increasingly narrower range of documents that can be regarded as indisputably genuine.¹³

Nichiren scholar Miyazaki Eishû has provided an

exhaustive list of the categories of works in the Nichiren canon now regarded as apocryphal. They include: works produced under the influence of Tendai esotericism or of the Tendai oral transmission literature; works written to aid in preaching or explanation; works assimilating the cults of various deities to faith in the Lotus Sûtra or to Nichiren's teachings; works written as guidelines for debate with other sects; works associated with particular prayer rituals; works that purport to be autobiographical, putting together events of Nichiren's life culled from his own writings, or that attempt to provide him with an exalted lineage; works written to support a particular doctrinal position in the factional disputes that broke out among Nichiren's disciples after his death and retrospectively attributed to Nichiren to lend them authority; works purporting to be transfer documents from Nichiren to some designated individual; works emphasizing a special connection between Nichiren and a particular person or locality; and works mistakenly transmitted as Nichiren's, including amplifications of extracts from his own doctrinal writings and extracts from the work of earlier teachers.¹⁴ There are in addition numerous works that, in the absence of an extant holograph or other corroborating evidence, cannot be definitively proven genuine, but that contain no

otherwise suspicious points and have aroused no particular questions.

While the Nichiren corpus does indeed contain at least one or a few questionable texts from each of Miyazaki's categories, the overwhelming majority of those that have fallen under suspicion in recent years, the ones that Asai Yôrin questioned most vigorously, belong to the first group: works influenced by Tendai esotericism or Tendai oral transmission literature, specifically, those showing evidence of the original enlightenment discourse that characterized much of Tendai thought throughout the medieval period. In chapter six of his Nichiren Shônin kyôgaku no kenkyû, Asai problematizes no fewer than thirty-four writings in this category. As shall be described in greater detail later, Nichiren took his monastic vows in a Tendai temple, studied at the great Tendai center on Mt. Hiei, and counted a number of Tendai monks among his disciples, so it would hardly be surprising, one might think, if evidence of a major discourse then current in Tendai circles occasionally found its way into his writing. Yet at present, the mere presence in a Nichiren-attributed text of anything to do with original enlightenment thought has come to be regarded as sufficient reason to question that text's authenticity. To understand why this is this case, and what is at

stake in the exclusion of these texts from the sphere of Nichiren's "primary thought," we need to know something about the original enlightenment doctrine and modern scholarly assumptions concerning it, as well as the context in which these particular texts in the Nichiren collection were originally questioned and in which the debate concerning them has evolved. These issues are discussed in the following two sections.

Original Enlightenment and Its Modern Interpreters

"There is no such thing as the 'attainment' of Buddhahood. One does not 'attain' Buddhahood because one is Buddha inherently, if one would but realize it"--so runs the central argument of original enlightenment thought. Like many discourses, this one derives its impact from the contrast with what it is arguing against: in this case, traditional, linear models of the Buddhist path, beginning with the launching of the bodhisattva vows; followed by a program of gradual spiritual cultivation and progress through successive stages of achievement; and culminating in attainment of the goal. It is a grave error, say the Tendai original enlightenment texts, to thus seek enlightenment apart from oneself at this moment. The purpose of Buddhist practice is not to arrive at a truth external to oneself, but to awaken to one's own body and mind being

Buddha originally.

The late Tamura Yoshirô (1921-1989), who devoted a major portion of his scholarly career to study of the original enlightenment discourse, describes it as consisting in two philosophical moves.¹⁵ First, nonduality is pushed to its ultimate conclusion, negating any ontological difference whatsoever between the ordinary person and the Buddha, the mundane world and the Pure Land, self and other, etc. All conventional distinctions of the phenomenal world are thus collapsed in a breakthrough into an undifferentiated, nondual realm, wherein all existences and constructs, being Empty of independent self-nature, interpenetrate and are mutually identified. Second, based on this insight into absolute nonduality, one "returns," as it were, to the phenomenal world, affirming its relative distinctions, just as they are, as expressions of ultimate reality or original enlightenment. In other words, one negates two levels of distinctions to reveal two levels of nonduality: (1) the distinctions among phenomena (e.g., between body and mind, or between self and objective world) are negated to reveal their absolute nonduality; and (2) the distinction between this absolute nondual realm and the empirical world of differentiated phenomena (body/mind, self/other) is also negated, revealing the nonduality of

phenomena and the ultimate truth. This second move is often expressed in such characteristic terms as "the worldly passions are precisely enlightenment" (bonnô soku bodai) or "birth and death are precisely nirvâṇa" (shôji soku nehan). Professor Tamura's explanation as outlined above is a helpful one that has come to be regarded as standard, finding its way into reference sources such as the new Iwanami Buddhist dictionary published last year.¹⁶

The term "original enlightenment" (hongaku) first appears in the Ta-sheng ch'i-hsin lun (Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana), traditionally attributed to the Indian Buddhist Āśvaghoṣa but now generally considered to be an apocryphal work produced in China around the fifth or sixth century. The original enlightenment doctrine developed especially within the Hua-yen school. In the early stages of this development, the expression "original enlightenment" evidently referred simply to the potential for liberation inherent in all beings, but in medieval Japanese Tendai came to be identified with the ultimate ground of reality or True Suchness itself.¹⁷

As Hazama Jikô (1895-1946), one of the first and most important modern scholars of medieval Tendai Buddhism has demonstrated, the original enlightenment discourse dominated Japanese Tendai thought throughout

that period of its history known as medieval (chûko Tendai)--that is, from the middle of the insei or Cloister Government period (late eleventh century) until the Genroku and Hôei eras (late seventeenth through early eighteenth centuries) of the Edo period.¹⁸ Though its roots go back to classical times, from perhaps around the mid-twelfth century on, works devoted to elucidating it began to appear and continued to be produced over the next few hundred years. In the course of this process, expositions of original enlightenment thought developed their own characteristic language, symbols, and doctrinal formulations, all aimed at radically undercutting any notion of an essential disjuncture between ordinary people and the Buddha, or between the mundane world and the ultimate reality. Many of these texts purport to be records of teachings secretly passed down orally from master to disciple. This is the Tendai literature of orally transmitted doctrines, or kuden hômon. Schools formed in association with these transmissions, the two major ones being the Eshin and Danna schools, which retroactively claimed as their respective founders the two leading disciples of Ryôgen or Jie Daishi (912-985): Genshin (Eshin Sôzu) and Kakuun (Danna Sôzu). These schools in turn divided into many subordinate lineages.¹⁹

As lineages developed in importance, so did an

emphasis on secrecy. Many of the Tendai kuden texts warn in the most fearsome terms against careless disclosure of their contents. The "Juketsu entaragishû tôketsu," an early example of the genre, admonishes that it is never to be passed on to unqualified persons, "not even for a thousand in gold."²⁰ The "Sanjû shika no kotogaki" says, "Even if you must discard bodily life, do not confer this [inappropriately]....If there is none qualified to receive it, this transmission should be buried beneath a wall."²¹ Eventually, some schools began to assert that such transmissions should be passed on from the master only to a single chosen disciple (yuiju ichinin), or only to his own son (jisshi sôzoku).²²

To the modern reader, there is something paradoxical about this transmission in secret of doctrines concerning an enlightenment said by its very nature to be inherent in all. Attachment to lineage and the accompanying concern for secrecy appear to have stemmed from the influence of traditions of secret transmission in esoteric Buddhism, as well as from factional rivalries among the various groups of monks on Mt. Hiei, and was paralleled by similar phenomena of secret master-to-disciple transmissions in the arts.²³ The emphasis on secrecy in the Tendai kuden literature may also reflect an attempt to control the dissemination

of teachings seen as empowering and therefore dangerous as a potential threat to the authority of their proprietors. The radical nonduality of original enlightenment thought contains by implication a critique of hierarchies, and could easily be used to challenge authoritarian structures. There may also have been a fear that the doctrine could be misinterpreted to mean that, because one is enlightened inherently, no further practice is required, and thus be misused as a rationale for lax behavior.²⁴ It is also possible that the emphasis on secret transmission represented a ritualized reflection of a usual state of affairs: the immanence of the ultimate truth in oneself and the mundane world being so difficult to discern and believe in that it does, in effect, remain "secret."

In a very tantalizing sense, the medieval Tendai kuden literature is still "secret," in that there are so many things about it that have yet to be researched. Only a handful of the extant texts are available in print.²⁵ The rest exist as handwritten transcriptions stored in temple libraries, and although the staff of the Tendai Shûten Hensanjo (Tendai Research Foundation) is preparing many of them for inclusion in the now-in-process 100-volume Zoku Tendaishû zensho (Further collected works of the Tendai sect), the task promises to be a long and difficult one. Until these texts are

made available, collated and compared, a detailed picture of this literature remains inaccessible.²⁶ And even if this vast enterprise should be carried out, we would still be far from having all the documents that once existed, for great numbers of texts were irrevocably lost when the warlord Oda Nobunga razed the great Tendai center on Mt. Hiei in Genki 2 (1571). Thus any general statements about the medieval Tendai literature, especially at present, are unavoidably based on fragmentary information.

Another problem concerns the dating of individual texts. Until about the fourteenth century, virtually none of these writings was signed by its actual author but was instead attributed retrospectively to some great Tendai master of the past, such as Saichô, Enchin, Ennin, Genshin, etc. Tentative datings of specific texts or of stages within the development of original enlightenment thought have been proposed,²⁷ but opinions vary widely, and without firm dates for more than a few documents, it is nearly impossible to arrange the body of kuden literature in definite chronological order and determine precisely when specific doctrines developed.

Besides these textual problems, other questions arise. To what was this discourse responding, and what kept it viable for so many centuries? How did the oral transmission literature function within the monastic

community? A number of theories have been proposed, none wholly satisfying, but nevertheless provocative and an inducement to further study. A few of these theories are outlined below.

(1) The social corrective theory. One suggestion, proposed by Ogata Dôken,²⁸ is that original enlightenment thought represents a return to the classless and egalitarian spirit of the early Buddhist sangha that occurred in inevitable reaction against the excessively hierarchical structure of, first, the court nobility, and then later, the feudal era of Japanese society. Ogata here offers original enlightenment thought as a counter-example to criticism leveled by Ienaga Saburô and others to the effect that Buddhism on the whole allied itself with conservative forces and acted as a brake on social progress (the doctrine of karma, for example, worked to enforce the status quo by maintaining that one's social position in the present life is the deserved result of past deeds.)

Ogata is right in pointing out that original enlightenment thought can lend itself beautifully to egalitarian interpretations, but how far these implications were actually developed in the medieval period remains questionable. The tradition of secret transmission, for one thing, weighs against this suggestion. It would seem that any potential

implications for social egalitarianism in the original enlightenment doctrine were effectively held in check by the esoteric framework in which it was transmitted. Ogata draws many of his examples of the democratic application of original enlightenment thought from Sonshun's "Hokekyô jurin shûyô shô." However, Sonshun (1451-1514) lived rather late in the history of this discourse, at a time when it had already begun to be popularly disseminated. Moreover, the "Hokke jurin shûyô shô" is a collection of popular sermons, including many setsuwa, and in that sense is not representative of the original enlightenment literature, much of which--including other works by Sonshun--was clearly written for an educated monastic readership.

(2) The national character theory. Another suggestion, proposed by Nakamura Hajime (1912-)²⁹ and developed by Tamura Yoshirô,³⁰ is that original enlightenment thought represents an expression, in Buddhistic terms, of an indigenous, pre-Buddhist Japanese mindset or psychological orientation, characterized by an affirmation of nature and accomodation to phenomenal realities. In recent years, this theory has gained widespread credence in Japanese academic circles. Tamura argues in particular that the second philosophical move in the original enlightenment doctrine--the "return" to the empirical world, affirming

all its differentiated forms as expressions of ultimate reality--crosses the boundaries of traditional Buddhist thought and should instead be attributed to Japanese thinking patterns. Bracketing the problems this suggestion raises of cultural stereotypes, it is fair to say that something in original enlightenment thought evidently appealed to Japanese sensibilities, and that the development of this discourse in the medieval period amply reflects its Japanese social and cultural context, including attitudes toward the world of nature. Nevertheless, it remains questionable whether one can find anything uniquely Japanese in the original enlightenment doctrine itself. The return to the phenomenal world described in Tamura's second move was integral to Mahayana Buddhist thought long before its introduction to Japan, for example, in the second part of the famous formula, "Form is Emptiness, Emptiness is form," or in the second step of the dialectics of the T'ien-tai triple truth and the threefold contemplation in a single mind ("entering conventional existence from Emptiness"³¹).

(3) The deviant non-Buddhist doctrine theory. In marked contrast to the viewpoint represented by Nakamura and Tamura, Hakamaya Noriaki of Komazawa University has recently spoken out against "the illusion that original enlightenment thought is something unique to our

country."³² Neither, in Hakamaya's view, is original enlightenment thought legitimately Buddhist, a point he argues with near-polemical fervor in his controversial book Hongaku shisô hihan (A critique of original enlightenment thought). Hakamaya's concern is not sociological or historical description of what Japanese Buddhists have thought or done but the recovery of the normative meaning of the Buddha's teaching. His criticism is threefold: (1) "Original enlightenment," according to Hakamaya, represents an unchanging, all-encompassing universal ground within which one is born and dies, corresponding to the sort of *âtman* or self-existent (Hakamaya uses the word "topos") denied by the early Buddhist doctrines of dependent origination and non-self. In his view, it represents "nature" as found in the traditions of Lao-tzu, Chuang-tzu or other indigenous Chinese thought, resurfacing as a "topos" in a Buddhist context. (2) Representing as it does a self-existent *âtman*, original enlightenment thought uncritically affirms self and thus undercuts the Buddhist imperative of altruistic action, Hakamaya says. In this connection, unlike Ogata, Hakamaya sees original enlightenment thought as tending to support the authoritarianism of one's own tradition, as opposed to the critique of self and of authoritarianism implicit in the *anâtman* doctrine. (3) In its insistence on the

ineffability of ultimate reality that can only be experienced, original enlightenment thought denies faith and the use of words and of wisdom (prajñā), by which Buddhism traditionally holds that the truth of dependent co-production is to be discerned and investigated. One could take issue with many of Hakamaya's premises, but his thesis has proved most useful in helping to stimulate discussion and challenge stereotyped explanations of Japanese Buddhism.

As this brief sampling suggests, academic theories about original enlightenment thought share few points of agreement. Here, however, because of its relevance to this essay, we need to focus on a particular attitude toward original enlightenment thought, one that cuts across various theoretical positions. While not held universally, it is nevertheless widespread and has exerted considerable influence in the realm of Japanese academic Buddhist studies. This is the assumption that original enlightenment thought, in identifying all phenomena with the ultimate reality, represents an uncritical world affirmation that endorses everything, even human delusion, just as it is, in effect undercutting the very need for Buddhist practice. This notion has over the last few decades attained the status of accepted opinion and is starting to appear in dictionaries and standard reference works. Tamura

Yoshirô, who held this view concurrently with his "Japanese national character" theory, was among the most vocal of those who saw original enlightenment thought as ethically problematical:

We may say that Tendai original enlightenment thought breaks through the limitations of dualistic thinking to reveal a realm that is nondual and absolute....The problem, however, lies in the move from the nondual or absolute toward the affirmation of actuality. For example, from the formulation that the worldly passions are precisely enlightenment, [original enlightenment thought] goes to the extent of affirming worldly passions just as they are, and even further, comes to be offered as a tool for the fulfillment of worldly passions. While attaining to the highest level as a philosophical principle, it remains, on the contrary, pregnant with difficulties in respect to practice."³³

Or in blunter terms: "The illusional (sic) man is affirmed as he is, and any particular practice for enlightenment is unnecessary."³⁴

The disparaging of the original enlightenment doctrine as a corruption or deviation seems to have its roots partly in the attitude of modern Japanese Tendai scholars, who for the most part have tended to focus their studies on the more "orthodox" Chinese T'ien-t'ai tradition or on the pre-medieval period of Japanese Tendai, that is, from the time of Japanese Tendai founder Saichô (767-822) until around the time of Ryôgen and Genshin. Later texts, as described above, do not exist in any sort of order but rather confront the

researcher with a veritable Pandora's box of difficulties: in this sense, medieval Tendai may not be an attractive field for those who like answers better than questions. In addition, some Tendai specialists seem to have regarded the medieval kuden literature, with its emphasis on free and creative approaches to interpretation, as a falling away from the strict scholarly standards of the Tendai exegetical work that characterized the pre-medieval era.³⁵ Until recently, the medieval period was often referred to in scholarly literature as the "dark ages" (ankoku jidai) of Tendai Buddhism.

Perjorative evaluations of medieval Tendai thought in modern scholarship have gained further impetus from proponents of Kamakura Buddhism, who not infrequently characterize these newer movements as correctives that arose in reaction to Tendai's dangerous world-affirming tendencies, reasserting the primacy of practice.³⁶ This in turn dovetails with another familiar cliché --that, where the Tendai monks were corrupt, elitist and self-absorbed, the teachers of the new Kamakura sects reached out with true Buddhist compassion to the suffering masses.

The assumption that original enlightenment thought represents an uncritical affirmation of the world and of human delusion badly needs to be reassessed, and we will

return to this subject in greater detail later on in this chapter. For now, we may merely note that, as Tamura Yoshirô has observed, "With respect to Tendai original enlightenment thought, most modern scholars regard it as corrupt and decadent."³⁷ As we shall see later on, this attitude appears to have been one of the factors at work in the problematizing of those texts in the Nichiren corpus that draw on the original enlightenment discourse. To understand how this and other elements have conjoined to influence the evaluation of these texts, we must here consider the origin and subsequent development of the controversy surrounding them.

The Controversy: Its History and Contexts

Apparent connections between Nichiren and medieval Tendai original enlightenment thought have been noted since before the modern period. One of the first scholars to point them out was the monk Keikô of the Miidera, head temple of the Jimon branch of Tendai, who wrote in the latter part of the eighteenth century that "Nichiren's school" had "branched off" from certain oral transmissions then current within medieval Tendai Buddhism.³⁸ For more than a hundred years, Keikô was cited to support the contention that Nichiren's ideas were essentially derivative. Maeda Eun (1857-1930), for

example, expressing agreement with Keikô's position, wrote that the doctrines of the Nichiren Hokke sect

are in fact based on original enlightenment thought, and moreover, their talk about the three thousand realms in a single thought-moment as concrete actuality (ji no ichinen sanzen), on which they always pride themselves, is completely inherited from the original enlightenment doctrine of our teacher Saichô.³⁹

Shimaji Daitô (1875-1927), while acknowledging points unique to Nichiren in his approach to practice and application, nevertheless held the opinion that Nichiren had "transmitted the doctrinal studies of the Eshin school [of Tendai]" and that "the content of his doctrine hardly differs from that of medieval Tendai thought."⁴⁰ Uesugi Bunshû, who also cited Keikô, further wrote that Nichiren's doctrine represented "a derivation of the oral transmission literature of Mt. Hiei"⁴¹ and further suggested that "Nichiren's [idea of] attaining Buddhahood in chanting the daimoku may also have originated in" certain transmission rituals of the Tendai Danna school.⁴² With the exception of Shimaji Daitô, whose personal affiliation was with Jôdo Shinshû, these individuals were Tendai priests as well as scholars of Tendai Buddhism, and one detects in some of their comments a certain interestedness in emphasizing how much Nichiren had owed to their own school. One can imagine how galling such repeated assertions were to

scholars of the Nichiren sect, who prided themselves on their independent tradition.

Then--suddenly, as it seemed--Asai Yôrin discovered a means of rebuttal in the textual studies that he had been so instrumental in developing. Asai's counter-argument may be summarized as follows: Keikô, Maeda, Shimaji and Uesugi were in error, because they had assumed that the essence of Nichiren's doctrine was expressed by those works in the corpus reflecting the influence of medieval Tendai original enlightenment thought. In reality, however, these works were not written by Nichiren. They represent the forgeries of later disciples who, influenced by their study on Mt. Hiei or at Tendai centers in Eastern Japan, incorporated into their understanding of Nichiren's teaching a doctrine he himself had rejected. Even if some of these texts might conceivably be Nichiren's writings, they do not represent his primary thought, as expressed in normative writings such as his two most important treatises, the "Kaimoku shô" (Opening of the eyes) and the "Kanjin honzon shô" (On the object of worship). Nichiren, with his exclusive emphasis on the Lotus Sûtra, could never have borrowed anything from the medieval Tendai tradition, which had adulterated its Lotus doctrine with such diverse elements as Zen, Pure Land and esoteric teachings, thus confounding the true

with the provisional. Nichiren's doctrinal studies were indebted to no one except the orthodox T'ien-t'ai tradition represented by the Chinese T'ien-t'ai founder Chih-i (538-597), the sixth T'ien-t'ai patriarch and restorer Chan-jan (711-782), and the founder of Japanese Tendai, Saichô.⁴³ Asai further excoriated those scholars of his own sect who interpreted Nichiren's teaching in terms of original enlightenment thought:

If it is as such scholars say, then the Shônin's doctrinal studies, as I have said before, either lapped up the dregs of Tendai esotericism or sank to an imitation of medieval Tendai, and, in either case, possess neither originality nor purity. Can this indeed be the true pride of Nichiren doctrinal studies?⁴⁴

Despite his obvious agenda of defending Nichiren's uniqueness and purity, Asai was not without supporting evidence for his claims. After the early period of Nichiren's work (1242-1260), few of his fully authenticatable writings have original enlightenment thought as a central discourse. Most of the later writings in the Nichiren corpus dealing with original enlightenment thought do not survive in holograph. Moreover, many of them employ certain terms and expressions, associated with the original enlightenment doctrine, that do not appear in any of Nichiren's indisputably genuine writings. In their use of such terminology, Asai suggested, the writings he was now

questioning and works that had been regarded as forgeries since premodern times resembled one another, while both groups differed from Nichiren's authenticated writings. He further showed that the arguments of Keikô, Maeda and others in some cases rested on some very questionable documents.⁴⁵

Asai had tapped here into the modern exegetical principle of textual parsimony, the basing of interpretive work solely upon indisputable texts. The fact that so few of the Nichiren-attributed documents dealing with original enlightenment thought can be authenticated constitutes a powerful argument, suggesting that there may indeed be problems with some of the writings in question, and that Asai's proposal should be taken seriously. Nevertheless, even the sum total of the evidence will not justify his conclusion that original enlightenment thought had no place in Nichiren's thought, or that any reference to this discourse in a Nichiren-attributed text should in itself constitute sufficient grounds to call the authenticity of that text into question. These criticisms will be developed in the course of this essay; here we should simply note, first of all, that correspondence in the Nichiren collection between references to original enlightenment thought and those texts whose authenticity cannot be demonstrated is only a rough one: some

indisputably genuine Nichiren writings contain elements from this discourse, while many texts in the Nichiren corpus whose holographs have not survived, and which thus remain ultimately unverifiable, have nothing to do with original enlightenment thought at all. Second--a point to be addressed in some detail further on in this chapter--historical evidence suggests it to be unlikely that Nichiren developed his thinking outside the sphere of the original enlightenment discourse. Critics of Asai's argument, few as they have been, have for the most part focused on one of these two points: the risks of problematizing so many texts on the basis of inconclusive evidence, and the need to take greater account of history. Here, we will trace the progress of the controversy after its initiation by Asai, outlining the views first of his critics and then of the major scholars who have developed and refined his position, adding further observations where appropriate.

Asai's critics. In the first group, we find Suguro Shinjô (1925-), also of Risshô University, who questioned Asai's methodology of interpretation based solely on holographic documents. Suguro warned:

Because the reasons [for doubt] depend to a great extent upon negative evidence and subjective judgment or evaluation, if a firm principle is established that writings containing even slightly dubious points are not to be treated as genuine, then the scope of those elements that are deemed doubtful can

expand indefinitely until only works whose holographs survive or are known to have once existed are treated as authentic...However, because the reasons [involved] are of this [inconclusive] nature, no matter how one may pile them up, one cannot rule out the opposite possibility, in other words, that these are genuine writings. In terms of percentages, the odds are fifty-fifty.⁴⁶

He also added:

Even if the suspected writings are in actuality pseudographic, because in the majority of cases they would have been produced with the aim of giving a certain interpretation to Nichiren's thought, one could say that the ideas capable of eliciting such an interpretation were already latent in Nichiren's thinking. Thus if we eliminate apocryphal writings, we also eliminate these latent ideas, which does not seem appropriate.⁴⁷

Room may exist for questioning Suguro's contention that the ideas expressed in pseudographic writings must necessarily have been latent in Nichiren's thinking. Nevertheless, with his observation about the odds being fifty-fifty, Suguro put his finger on what may perhaps be termed the key difficulty of this entire problematic. Though an astonishing number of holographs do survive, still, the greater part of the Nichiren corpus exists only in the form of later copies. Thus, while the fact that most of Nichiren's writings dealing with original enlightenment thought do not survive in holograph could point to widespread production of pseudographia on the part of later disciples, as Asai suggested, it could also represent a pure "fifty-fifty" accident of history,

as Suguro reminds us. No way exists at present to determine conclusively which is the case.

Unfortunately, this state of affairs subtly lends itself to partisan readings.

Parsimony of interpretation--exegesis based solely on verifiable texts--in itself is sound methodology. Especially in a case like that of Nichiren, where more than a hundred holographs survive, what could be safer, more objective, or more scientific, one might ask, than to ground one's interpretations solely upon these unimpeachable documents? Ironically, however, in this case, this "scientific," "objective" approach coincides with a certain sectarian interestedness in stressing Nichiren's originality and minimizing his indebtedness to the earlier Tendai tradition. Since few works in the Nichiren collection dealing with original enlightenment thought survive in holograph, an exegesis based solely on holographs or otherwise authenticatable documents can serve as a polemical tool for asserting Nichiren's intellectual independence from medieval Tendai. Asai, as we have seen, stressed the importance of a scientific critical approach, but his use of it to defend the presumption of a "pure," original Nichiren doctrine, problematizing as possibly apocryphal those texts tainted by esoteric Tendai elements, makes one suspect that his application of this supposedly objective

methodology may have cloaked some non-objective assumptions.

That Asai's argument dovetailed too neatly with sectarian ideological agendas was noted in 1956 by Kawazoe Shôji. Where Asai was a specialist in shûgaku, or sectarian doctrinal studies, and was concerned with what should be regarded as normative in doctrinal matters, Kawazoe, a historian, brought a different viewpoint to bear on the issue. While praising Asai's groundbreaking work in textual studies, Kawazoe criticized his methodology for assuming that Nichiren had begun from the premise that he ultimately arrived at, i.e., a pure and exclusive emphasis on faith in the Lotus Sûtra. "One can detect hints here, in new guise, of an attempt to protect one's own doctrine," Kawazoe noted. It was "utterly inconceivable" to him that Nichiren, in the process of formulating his thought, had not incorporated something from medieval Tendai: Asai's position, in Kawazoe's view, was "ahistorical" in its denial of Nichiren's intellectual development.⁴⁸

Kawazoe's point is extremely relevant, not only to the specific issue of the relation between Nichiren and medieval Tendai thought, but also in the larger context of the encounter between traditional modes of doctrinal studies and modern scholarly methods. According to traditional Buddhist hermeneutics, the Buddha reserves

his most profound teaching until last, and sectarian scholarship in all Buddhist denominations has generally bent in the direction of honoring a revered teacher's later works as both the most authoritative and as representing the conclusion of all that he has written before. In the case of Nichiren scholarship, this tendency is seen in the long-standing hierarchical division of Nichiren's works into the two major categories of before and after his exile to Sado Island in 1271.⁴⁹ Such favoring of later teachings, however, negates the importance of the process by which a teacher developed his ideas, as well as the possibility that those ideas were not necessarily consistent throughout.

Kawazoe did not develop his critique of Asai's methods; his above-cited remarks were made almost parenthetically in a brief paper on another subject. By extension, however, we may say that his point can be used to question another aspect of Asai's methodology: his use of "normative" texts. For Asai, the definitive documents against which all others must be judged were the "Kaimoku shô" and the "Kanjin honzon shô," two major treatises written respectively in 1272 and 1273 during the Sado exile, both indisputably authentic.⁵⁰ He points out that Nichiren himself regarded them as vital expressions of his teaching,⁵¹ a judgment that counts considerably, given Nichiren's unique position as a

critic of his own work; and traditional Nichiren scholarship has always valued them as especially sacred. Certainly one cannot deny the doctrinal and historical importance of these two works. However, from the viewpoint of the process of Nichiren's intellectual development to which Kawazoe's criticism points, we need not assume that the ideas of a man whose extant writings span forty years are necessarily defined in their entirety by just these two treatises. A great virtue of "secularized" scholarship, one may say, lies in liberating us from the need to weight certain texts unduly.

Parenthetically, as will be illustrated later, we find that both texts can and have been used to support widely divergent views; and that differences in emphasis between these two texts and more questionable writings, which may not necessarily be substantial ones, have on occasion been reified into fundamental contradictions in order to problematize Nichiren-attributed material dealing conspicuously with original enlightenment thought.

Asai's conviction that there existed an originally "pure" Nichiren doctrine can itself be criticized as "ahistorical." Like any teaching, Nichiren's was syncretic, incorporating a number of earlier influences, some from schools that Nichiren harshly criticized.

Philosophically, his idea that Buddhahood is immediately accessible in the act of chanting the daimoku presupposes the basic Mahayana notion of Emptiness, that all things are without fixed self-nature, and the corollary ideas of nonduality and the interpenetration of the dharmas that developed to so great an extent in East Asian Buddhism. He also borrowed elements from Japanese esotericism, such as the doctrine of "becoming a Buddha in this very body" (sokushin jôbutsu). In the realm of praxis, his use of a mandala suggests esoteric Shingon influence; so does the daimoku, as a mantra imbued with the power for attaining mystical union with the Buddha. As an easy form of practice readily available to people of all classes, and as one held to be exclusively efficacious in the Final Dharma age, Nichiren's daimoku also has much in common with the Pure Land practice of reciting the Buddha Amida's name. It was part of Nichiren's genius, not that he established an originally pure doctrine, but that he synthesized a variety of traditions and assimilated them to the daimoku of the Lotus Sûtra, thus welding doctrines of great metaphysical subtlety to a simple and widely accessible form of practice.

Asai Yôrin's work, as Kawazoe acknowledged, created an important awareness of textual problems: No longer can any conscientious scholar of Nichiren retreat to the

naive position that everything in the Nichiren corpus must necessarily be Nichiren's work. He and his successors were courageous enough to turn the light of scientific inquiry on a sacred body of texts and insist that future sectarian scholarship must not be bound by traditional assumptions. Yet Asai in particular seems to have stopped short of questioning the most basic sectarian assumption of all: that there existed a pure Nichiren doctrine, intellectually independent of the medieval Tendai tradition from which Nichiren emerged.

Another, more recent critic of Asai's methodology is Hanano Mitsuaki, a specialist in Nichiren and medieval Tendai texts who, as a relatively young scholar, enumerated in a brief essay three limitations he perceived in Asai's methodology.⁵² First, he faulted Asai for excessive optimism in assuming that the entirety of Nichiren's thought could be determined from extant authenticated texts alone. Not all Nichiren's writings have survived, a fact attested to by several hundred holographic fragments. While acknowledging that primary weight should be given to undisputed documents, Hanano nevertheless cautioned against assuming that they yield a complete picture. In this he echoed Suguro's earlier argument, that focusing only on authenticatable documents could possibly obscure aspects of Nichiren's thought. Second, he questioned whether relying solely

on indisputable texts would invariably yield a conclusion so clear as to obviate the possibility of multiple interpretations. Third, he took issue with Asai's project of establishing a fixed, singular, and normative Nichiren doctrine, an end that would, in his opinion, rob Nichiren's thought of its dynamic and multifaceted quality and deny scholars room for individual conjecture.

Hanano's second point, that even indisputable texts do not yield a consistent viewpoint, bears particular relevance to this discussion. For example, one might think it a simple matter to ask: are Nichiren's ideas, as reflected in his authentic writings, consistent with original enlightenment thought, or not? However, this is far from easily determined. A lengthy exposition of Nichiren's thought would exceed both the scope and intent of this essay; nevertheless, a brief digression into doctrinal matters is called for here, in order to point out some of the problems involved.

Nichiren's conviction of the direct accessibility of Buddhahood in the act of chanting the daimoku or title of the Lotus Sûtra is grounded in T'ien-t'ai/Tendai notions of the interpenetration of the dharmas and the inherence of the Buddha nature or ultimate reality in all beings, sentient and insentient alike. To express this notion of interpenetration,

Nichiren employed the Tendai term ichinen sanzen, or the single thought-moment that is three thousand realms, a key concept that I outline in some detail in the Appendix. In the act of chanting the daimoku, Nichiren taught, as in more traditional forms of meditation, the subject/object barrier collapses, and the mind of the practitioner (single thought-moment) becomes one with the entire phenomenal world (three thousand realms). Chanting the title of the Lotus thus opens a point of access to nondual reality in which the ordinary person and the Dharma are identified, the eternal, timeless Buddha realm breaks through into the present moment, and the sahâ world of our empirical experience becomes the Buddha land. In speaking of this, Nichiren borrowed a phrase then current in both Tendai and Shingon Buddhism: the "attainment of Buddhahood in this very body" (sokushin jôbutsu).

From the time of his exile to Sado, Nichiren began to express his vision of the Buddha realm manifested in all phenomena in the form of a calligraphic mandala. Down the center of this mandala are inscribed the seven characters Namu-myôhô-renge-kyô; surrounding this inscription are the Buddhas who figure in the Lotus Sûtra, Śâkyamuni and Many Jewels, together with great bodhisattvas of both this and other worlds, voice-hearers, gods, humans, dragon kings, demons and hell-

dweller--representatives of all the ten realms constituting the hierarchy of sentient beings. Illuminated, as it were, by the central inscription of the daimoku, they manifest their inherent enlightenment without changing their original status. Nichiren termed this mandala the manifestation of the "single thought-moment being three thousand realms in concrete actuality" (ji no ichinen sanzen).

This aspect of Nichiren's thought, with its emphasis on the collapsing of dualities, the interpenetration of the dharmas and the ontological identity of the Dharma with all beings, structurally resembles original enlightenment thought very closely indeed. On the other hand, we also find passages in Nichiren's writings that describe the Buddha as an externalized, transcendent savior figure who extends his compassion to benighted beings, or which stress faith in the Lotus Sûtra with the eventual goal of rebirth in a pure land. This latter aspect of Nichiren's thinking hardly seems consistent with the original enlightenment doctrine at all.

This dual character of Nichiren's thought has fueled a debate of many centuries' duration over whether the object of worship advocated by Nichiren was to be understood as the Dharma (hō honzon), which is inherent in the believer (a position coinciding with original

enlightenment thought); or the person, (nin honzon), that is, the Buddha as an external object (a position harder to reconcile with original enlightenment thought). This controversy in turn underlies a related, equally venerable debate over whether devotees should revere Nichiren's mandala alone or whether the worship of Buddha images should also be permitted.

In the linguistic structure of the daimoku, the word namu (from the Sanskrit namas, an expression of devotion) takes as its object Myôhō-enge-kyô, the title of the Lotus Sûtra that was also employed in the Tendai tradition as a designation for ultimate reality: this structure would seem to argue for the Dharma as object of worship. The same may be said for the composition of Nichiren's mandala, on which the daimoku occupies the central position, flanked by the two Buddhas, Śākyamuni and Many Jewels, as its right- and left-hand attendants. Yet at the same time, Nichiren repeatedly mentions in his writings a small standing image of Śākyamuni Buddha that he seems to have kept by him for much of his life, and some of his letters praise the making of such images on the part of his disciples.

Elimination of problematic texts will not solve these apparent contradictions. Unimpeachable documents, including extant holographs, can be cited to support either side. Occasionally both views appear in the same

text. One can only conclude that Nichiren did not find these two aspects to be incompatible. His later followers, however, have been hotly disputing such issues since shortly after his death down to the present. Asai Yōrin, for instance, vigorously maintained that the Nichiren had intended the object of worship to be a personified Buddha, having objective existence, and not the Dharma immanent in the believer; his questioning of the texts related to original enlightenment thought in part represents an attempt to resolve what he saw as an irreconcilable contradiction between the two positions.⁵³ As a recent example of the opposing argument, Nichiren historian Tokoro Shigemoto (1911-1977) concluded that, while Nichiren may have provisionally approved worship of the Buddha as an expedient, his true intent, based on original enlightenment thought, was to establish as the object of worship the Dharma inherent in one's own body and mind.⁵⁴ Significantly, both scholars found passages to cite from the "Kaimoku shō" and "Kanjin honzon shō" in support of their respective views, which casts some doubt upon how far even these most unimpeachable texts can serve as a normative standard for determining Nichiren's ideas in this regard. Hanano Mitsuaki was correct in observing that even relying solely on authenticated material as an index to Nichiren's thought

will not necessarily yield a unified interpretation.

Where the controversy over the problematic Nichiren texts dealing with original enlightenment thought began, as described earlier, in the context of a long-standing rivalry between the Tendai and Nichiren sects, it has continued--at least in part--as a subject of contention between differing groups within the Nichiren tradition. Last in the category of major dissenters from Asai Yôrin's position we must mention Nichiren Shôshû, whose scholars have on the whole resisted Asai's project of identifying and weeding out apocryphal texts. This denomination of Nichiren Buddhism is best known in the West in connection with the Sôka Gakkai, the largest of the Nichiren-based new religions, whose members are nominally affiliated with it. Nichiren Shôshû doctrine acknowledges only Nichiren's mandala as the legitimate object of worship; the use of Buddha images is condemned. Nichiren himself, rather than Śâkyamuni, is revered as the Buddha most closely associated with the beings of the Final Dharma age; the oneness of the Buddha and the ordinary worldling often spoken of in the disputed texts is interpreted in a very specific sense, as pointing to the original Buddha who appeared in this world in the person of Nichiren. Thus, while Asai and his colleagues may be said to have had a certain sectarian-based interestedness, vis-à-vis Tendai, in

showing those writings closely related to original enlightenment thought to be spurious, their Nichiren Shôshu counterparts may be said to have a similar sort of interestedness in claiming them to be genuine.

One sees evidence of this in the Shôshû edition of the Nichiren collection, the Shôwa shintei Nichiren Daishônin gosho zenshû (Shôwa-period new standard edition of the complete works of Nichiren Daishônin),⁵⁵ published in 1966-71, whose organization reflects an implicit rejection of the entire project of attempting to purify the canon. The compilers of this edition clearly used the earlier Nichirenschû Shôwa standard edition as a reference and adopted its basic format, for example, by placing fragments and oral teaching in separate sections. The significant difference lies in the absence of a zokuhen; all the writings included, 538 in total, are categorized as shôhen--"primary texts"--and the prefatory remarks read: "This collection includes virtually all the writings that have since of old been treated as gosho, whether their authenticity has been confirmed or not." Most Nichiren Shôshû sectarian scholars continue to treat as genuine and authoritative the works questioned by Asai and his successors, though their dissent has in the main been one of silence rather than critical rejoinder.⁵⁶

Ample precedent, as well as hermeneutical

strategies, can of course be found for canonical inclusion of works whose authenticity is debatable; many of the most influential writings in the history of Buddhist thought probably belong to this category. However, simply abolishing the category of zokuhen in the complete edition and ignoring, once it has been raised, the critique of the texts in question does not amount to a critical response. It would be more persuasive from a scholarly point of view if Nichiren Shôshû, or its major affiliate, the Sôka Gakkai, were to acknowledge openly that questions exist concerning certain texts and that, without holographs or other independent corroborating evidence, authenticity can never be absolutely certain, following such an acknowledgement with a well-reasoned argument explaining why they have nevertheless opted to continue the use of these writings in interpretive work. This approach should certainly be feasible. Nichiren Shôshû and its associated lay organizations boast able scholars, but their efforts have thus far been oriented chiefly toward sectarian doctrinal studies and the communication of same to lay adherents, rather than toward academic research.⁵⁷ Should they choose in the future to engage the broader academic world, a more forthright discussion of this issue will be in order.

Asai's successors. We will turn now from Asai's

critics to some of the major figures who have inherited and developed his argument. One of the first was Asai's student Shigyô Kaishû (1907-68), also a specialist in Nichiren doctrinal history, who attempted to revise the entire chronology of the relationship between medieval Tendai thought and Kamakura Buddhism. Shigyô first of all proposed a much later dating scheme for the original enlightenment literature than those that had previously been suggested. Where medieval Tendai specialist Hazama Jikô had opined that Tendai original enlightenment thought had become influential during the insei period (late eleventh and twelfth centuries) and reached a peak during the Kamakura period, Shigyô suggested that it had first gained strong influence in the late Kamakura period (late thirteenth to early fourteenth centuries), reaching full maturity in the Nambokuchô and Muromachi eras.⁵⁸ Certain seminal Tendai original enlightenment and kuden texts that Hazama had placed in the late Heian or Kamakura period--such as the Shuzen-ji ketsu or the Kankô ruijû, Shigyô pushed up to middle or late Kamakura, that is, roughly around the same time that Nichiren was active or later.

The immense difficulties of precisely dating the medieval Tendai literature, touched on earlier, makes possible a great range of opinion. Pushing up the proposed dating of these texts a full century or more,

as Shigyô did, of course implies that Nichiren was unlikely even to have seen them, let alone have been influenced by them. Shigyô in fact went so far as to suggest--without, however, offering supporting evidence--that the new Kamakura schools had not, as Hazama and others maintained, branched off from a mature medieval Tendai original enlightenment tradition; rather, while Tendai had always maintained the original enlightenment doctrine inherently, the sense of rivalry engendered by the emergence of the new Kamakura schools was what stimulated its development as a full-blown discourse. This suggestion, however, rests on the assumption that the new Kamakura sects became forces to be reckoned with so quickly that scholars of the Tendai establishment almost immediately felt compelled to respond to and compete with them. Since the time when Shigyô put forth this suggestion in 1954, the notion that the new Kamakura movements thus mushroomed into being overnight, as it were, has been convincingly challenged by scholars in both Japan and the West.

A much more sophisticated development of Asai's fundamental position was assayed by Tamura Yoshirô (1921-1989). Tamura was not, like Asai, a specialist in Nichirenschû sectarian doctrine, but a more broadly grounded scholar of Japanese Buddhist, especially Lotus-related, thought; and his studies have reached a wider

audience in proportion to their greater scope. Tamura in the main retained Shigyô Kaishû's relatively late datings for a number of important Tendai kuden texts, thus suggesting that Nichiren was active before the original enlightenment discourse reached its height. However, rather than attempting as Shigyô had done to reverse the generally accepted relationship between medieval Tendai original enlightenment thought and the new Kamakura schools, Tamura acknowledged that Nichiren had at first been influenced by original enlightenment thought, but suggested that he eventually departed from and significantly modified it; that is, while retaining a conviction in the underlying identity of the ultimate reality and the phenomenal world in principle, Nichiren abandoned the absolute affirmation of the world found in nondual original enlightenment thought in favor of a doctrine that urged transformation of the contradictory, dualistic realities of society through practice and bodhisattva conduct. This thesis, advanced in Tamura's magnum opus Kamakura shin Bukkyô shisô no kenkyû (A study of the new Buddhist thought of the Kamakura period, 1965)⁵⁹ and several subsequent writings, has been extremely influential and is now widely accepted. At the same time, Tamura added to the list of texts from the Nichiren corpus whose authenticity Asai Yôrin had originally questioned, or explicitly challenged the

authenticity of works that Asai had merely termed problematic. Because of its great influence on the way Nichiren is understood and its relevance to the issue at hand, Tamura's theory is worth examining here in some detail.

Tamura divides Nichiren's life into the following three sequential phases:⁶⁰

(1) The period of affirming actuality, lasting from the time of Nichiren's first extant writing, the "Kaitai sokushin jôbutsu gi" (The meaning of the essence of the precepts and the attainment of Buddhahood in this very body),⁶¹ written in 1242 when he was twenty, up until about 1260, when he submitted his famous memorial, the "Risshô ankoku ron" (Treatise on bringing peace to the nation through the establishment of the correct teaching),⁶² to the Hôjô government when he was thirty-nine. During this period, says Tamura, Nichiren upheld the absolute nondual world view of Tendai original enlightenment thought, employing it in particular to criticize the dualistic, otherworldly doctrine of Hônen (1133-1212), who had taught salvation through rebirth in Amida's Pure Land after death. Tamura points out that the "Risshô ankoku ron" itself, which advocates exclusive devotion to the Lotus Sûtra as the sole means of banishing the epidemics, famine and other disasters then plaguing Japan, is based on the nondualistic

premise that the Buddha land is immanent in the present world.

(2) The period of confronting actuality, covering inclusively the period beginning and ending with Nichiren's two exiles, to Izu (1261-64) and to Sado (1271-74). According to Tamura, when the "Risshô ankoku ron" was rejected and hostile reactions to Nichiren's criticism of the Pure Land sect brought about his exile to the Izu peninsula, Nichiren descended, as it were, from the absolute monism of original enlightenment thought to grapple with the relative distinctions of history and the phenomenal realm, asserting, for example, that the time was the Final Dharma age, that Japan was an evil country, that its people were of inferior capacity, etc. In Tamura's view, where Nichiren had earlier stressed the immanence of the Buddha land in the present world, he now became convinced of the need to establish the Buddha land by reforming the present world through bodhisattva conduct as the gyôja or practioner of the Lotus Sûtra who disseminates its unique truth in the Final Dharma age, even in the face of persecution.

(3) The period of transcending actuality, corresponding to Nichiren's retirement to Mount Minobu in Kai (1274-82). During this period, Tamura suggests, having realized the futility of his attempts to convert

the nation, Nichiren entrusted the task of widely disseminating exclusive faith in the Lotus to future disciples and began to stress increasingly the impermanence of human affairs and the promise of rebirth in the Pure Land of Vulture Peak.

The key point for our discussion here lies in the shift in Nichiren's thinking that Tamura sees between first and second periods. In becoming concerned with relative, historical distinctions of good and evil, enlightenment and delusion, etc., and in realizing the need to transform the world through propagating the Lotus as a bodhisattva, "It is a matter of course," Tamura says, "that, in the latter part of Nichiren's career, he grew critical with respect to the Tendai doctrine of kaie [here, that all practices are the practice of the one vehicle] and of original enlightenment thought,"⁶³ and, "After age forty, Nichiren came to part with the Tendai original enlightenment doctrine's absolute monism and affirmation of actuality."⁶⁴ Thus Tamura concludes that:

For this reason, works from this [post-Izu] period that stress nondual original enlightenment thought must become subject to question regarding their authenticity. This is especially true of those writings in which highly developed original enlightenment thought is to be seen.⁶⁵

Tamura deserves immense credit for being among the first to work out a developmental view of Nichiren's

thought.⁶⁶ His recognition of the Izu exile as pivotal point in Nichiren's awakening consciousness of himself as the gyôja whose mission it is to uphold the Lotus Sûtra in the last age, enduring persecution for its sake, was especially valuable in transcending the older framework of doctrinal studies that had merely divided Nichiren's teachings into the two static categories of pre- and post-Sado. Tamura's model on the whole proves quite useful; nevertheless, while a detailed discussion of the stages in Nichiren's intellectual and religious development would go beyond our purpose here, we can mention one or two points in this model that raise questions relative to the discussion at hand.

The first concerns how far original enlightenment thought may be properly characterized as "affirming actuality." To "affirm" the phenomenal realm as the manifestation of ultimate reality, rejecting any ontological dualism or hierarchy between the two, is a metaphysical position; it does not inevitably follow that one therefore endorses the social, political or moral "actualities" of one's time. That Nichiren at around age forty came into sharp conflict with the secular authorities and assumed a critical stance toward the realities of Japan does not necessarily imply that he substantially rethought his original, nondual metaphysics. In other words, the shift in Nichiren's

thinking between the first and second periods in this regard may not have been as definitive as Tamura implies. Characterizing of Tendai original enlightenment thought as "world affirmation" as a way of dissociating it from Nichiren's mature thought has been attempted by others prior to Tamura; this issue will be discussed in greater detail further on.

Second is the problem of original enlightenment thought in Nichiren's later work. In saying that Nichiren "became critical with respect to" or "parted with" this discourse, Tamura can only mean that Nichiren accorded it a minimized attention and not that he became an overt critic; no criticism of this doctrine appears anywhere in Nichiren's writings. Tamura is absolutely right that the original enlightenment discourse recedes from the main rhetoric of Nichiren's later writings. This is especially true if one takes into consideration only those documents that can be authenticated; when we include problematic texts as well, this recession is much less pronounced. However, as Tamura also points out, original enlightenment thought does not disappear entirely even from the verifiable writings; elements of it remain, for example, in passages from Nichiren's major essays "Kaimoku shô" and "Kanjin honzon shô." While questioning the authenticity of a number of later works attributed to Nichiren because of their

conspicuous use of original enlightenment thought,
Tamura adds:

Nevertheless, because nondual original enlightenment thought represents the ultimate of Buddhist thought, and can even be called a special characteristic of Buddhism, we must recognize that, even in the latter part of his life, Nichiren was at bottom sustained by this [doctrine].⁶⁷

In this way, Tamura proposes--accurately, I believe--that, while retreating in later life from original enlightenment thought as a central discourse, Nichiren nevertheless retained it as an underpinning of his thought. The problem lies in Tamura's suggestion that Nichiren's later adaptation of original enlightenment thought is sufficiently distinctive to be used as a standard for questioning the authenticity of texts.

Tamura as a lifetime project attempted to shed light on both the continuity and breaks between the thought of the leading Kamakura Buddhist teachers (Hônen, Shinran, Dôgen and Nichiren) and their medieval Tendai matrix in terms of how they understood the relationship between the Buddha and the beings, or between ultimate reality and the phenomenal world.⁶⁸ Tendai original enlightenment thought Tamura characterized as "absolute nonduality," that so thoroughly identifies the ultimate and the phenomenal to effectively deny the need of practice for liberation.

In contrast, he termed Nichiren's mature thought "the relative based upon the absolute": while insisting on the ontological identity of the Buddha and deluded beings, Nichiren nevertheless acknowledged and sought to overcome through practice the phenomenally real distinction between delusion and enlightenment.

Toward the end of the last chapter of Kamakura shin Bukkyô shisô no kenkyû, Tamura applies this distinction to evaluating the authenticity of texts. He cites passages from twenty-five writings in the Nichiren corpus dating from the latter part of Nichiren's career that reflect the influence of original enlightenment thought. Of these writings, Tamura finds that twenty strongly "stress nondual original enlightenment thought" and concludes that their authenticity is therefore suspect.⁶⁹ Five, however, he finds, "when examined carefully, while they take nondual original enlightenment thought as their basis, they nevertheless in fact emerge from it."⁷⁰

Now it just so happens that the five writings which "emerge" from original enlightenment thought are indisputably Nichiren's work, either existing in holograph or otherwise verifiable, while the twenty that "stress" original enlightenment thought and are thus deemed suspect do not exist in holograph and cannot be otherwise verified. That every late unverifiable text

should fall into the problem category is almost too tidy to be credible, but we should nevertheless have to accept it if the distinction Tamura draws were sufficiently substantive. On comparing the two sets of quotations he presents, or even the entire works from which they are taken, one finds that the writings he questions do in several cases have a stronger nuance of nonduality than the authenticated ones, but it is precisely that, a nuance; even these questioned texts, like those that are genuine, premise the identity of the Buddha and the ordinary worldling upon faith and practice. It is sometimes difficult to see where one is substantially more "nondual" than the other. (A specific instance of works from the two categories will be considered in chapter three.) Altogether, one receives the impression that Tamura's categories, while by no means arbitrary, are nevertheless simpler and more rigid than the material they attempt to organize--a common problem with categories--and may not constitute a distinction sufficiently clearcut to be used as a basis for problematizing texts.

One should note, too, that a subtle valorization of Nichiren over medieval Tendai is at work here. As mentioned earlier, Tamura has characterized Tendai original enlightenment thought as "attaining to the highest level as a philosophical principle" but

"pregnant with difficulties in respect to practice." In proposing a process of intellectual development in which Nichiren first accepted, then rethought, and eventually transformed the original enlightenment doctrine, emerging from the absolute nonduality of Tendai thought to reassert the phenomenal distinction between delusion and enlightenment that must be resolved through Buddhist practice, Tamura is able to present Nichiren as having retained the lofty philosophical principle while nullifying its practical and ethical pitfalls.

The relationship between human beings and our immediate world, and that which is conceived of as ultimate reality, constitutes a profound religious problem. If one places too much emphasis on the difference or separation between the two realms (duality), then religious truth becomes remote, inaccessible and divorced from human affairs. On the other hand, if the identity of the two realms (nonduality) is stressed to an extreme degree, one can indeed wind up with uncritical world affirmation, denial of the necessity for practice, and the absolutizing of worldly concerns. A recognition of the dangers of falling into either extreme is implicit in the dialectics of the T'ien-t'ai triple truth: differentiated phenomena are neither only Empty (nonduality) nor only provisionally existent (duality);

to cognize both modes simultaneously is to perceive the Middle Way. Hence the use of such terminology as delusion and enlightenment being neither "two" nor "not two." The need to continually re-negotiate the balance is essential to both Buddhist traditions and individual Buddhist practitioners, and no doubt accounts for the many variations in emphasis on this theme that appear in both Tendai and Nichiren-attributed texts. Scholars working in the realm of Japanese Lotus-related thought will long be indebted to Tamura for drawing together a vast body of material from both medieval Tendai and the new Kamakura schools and proposing a scheme that would begin to illuminate both their continuities and differences. The contrasts Tamura draws among these various traditions in their interpretation of nonduality are heuristically useful; however, his model invites the overly simplistic understanding that medieval Tendai Buddhists collectively failed to recognize the problem inherent in the teaching of nonduality, while Nichiren--or any of the other Kamakura teachers--arrived at a definitive solution.

Tamura's methodology is far more polished than Asai's; he avoids the trap of asserting a historically questionable "pure" Nichiren doctrine, and he amply takes into account Nichiren's intellectual development, thus answering, in effect, the criticisms leveled

against Asai by Kawazoe. Tamura follows Asai, however, in drawing a major distinction between Nichiren's ideas and medieval Tendai nondual original enlightenment thought and in using this distinction to question those texts in the Nichiren corpus containing elements of this discourse whose authenticity cannot be absolutely proven. This assumption of a clearcut line of demarcation between Nichiren and Tendai thought with respect to the ideas of nonduality and original enlightenment--that is, one substantial enough to be used as a basis for problematizing texts--invites some questions, as shall be discussed shortly.

So stands the controversy at present. Those maintaining that the texts in question are problematic--either possibly apocryphal or in any event not representative of Nichiren's primary thought--hold the dominant voice. That their argument appears to serve certain ideological agendas warns us to view their conclusions critically--a caveat that applies equally to their opponents' position--but it does not necessarily mean those conclusions are wrong. Critics have been able to point out flaws in their methodology but not to authenticate the texts. Inconclusive as evidence though the fact may be, Asai and his successors in the controversy have on their side that so few of these questioned documents survive in holograph or can

otherwise verified as genuine.

The problem is that, in the wake of Asai's research, a subtle and complex issue has been reduced to an either/or proposition, so that the very presence in a text of anything at all to do with original enlightenment thought has come to be thought sufficient reason to raise questions about that text's authenticity. And where such texts cannot readily be challenged as possibly apocryphal, they are often placed in a questionable light as being outside the sphere of Nichiren's main ideas.⁷¹

All this, as we have just noted, assumes a distinction between medieval Tendai thought and that of Nichiren decisive enough to serve as legitimate standard for questioning textual authenticity. Two basic problems can be found with this assumption. First, the distinction that has been drawn between medieval Tendai and Nichiren's interpretation of nonduality, in their alleged respective emphases on affirming the phenomenal world as it is (Tendai) and reasserting the primacy of practice (Nichiren), proves to be a tenuous one, possibly too subtle to constitute a reliable criterion for problematizing texts. Second, the documented extent of Nichiren's exposure to the original enlightenment discourse and his connections with the Tendai community, coupled with the absence in his collected writings of

any explicit criticism of this doctrine, makes it seem somewhat questionable that reference to this discourse in works attributed to him should in itself be considered problematic. The following two sections of this chapter deal respectively with these objections.

World Affirmation Versus the Primacy of Practice

The earlier-mentioned preconception of original enlightenment thought as an uncritical endorsement of the world and a rationalization for laxity in religious practice has enjoyed support from several quarters. Evidently initiated by modern Tendai sectarian scholars and perpetuated by more broadly based historians of Buddhist thought, such as Tamura Yoshirô, it has also been espoused by specialists in Nichirenshû doctrinal studies. For example, Asai Yôrin suggested that original enlightenment thought stemmed in part from monastic corruption and falling off in scholarship, aggravated by the decline of imperial authority.⁷² Shigyô Kaishû too saw it as a doctrine that sought to "reject all effort by human agency and dwell peacefully in the given, natural realm, not acknowledging concepts of value distinction."⁷³ Asai Endô holds that medieval Tendai stressed only the Buddhahood inherent in ordinary people and "disregarded even [the stage of] hearing the Dharma and embracing it with faith," which he terms "a

confusion of theory and practice, a pernicious equality."⁷⁴ Tendai original enlightenment thought having been thus characterized, Nichiren is then presented as a teacher who championed a return to orthodox emphasis on the centrality of practice, rejecting a purely theoretical identification of the Buddha and the ordinary person set forth in medieval Tendai. Doctrinally oriented presentations of Nichiren often phrase this distinction in the dense shorthand of Buddhist technical terminology: e.g., where medieval Tendai emphasized the originally inherent Buddha nature (busshô), Nichiren stressed receiving the seed of Buddhahood (busshû) in the act of chanting the daimoku⁷⁵; or, in terms of the six identities, where medieval Tendai stressed the first, that of identity in principle (ri-soku), the stage of the ordinary worldling prior to practice, Nichiren stressed the second, that of verbal identity (myôji-soku), which represents the initial stage of practice.⁷⁶ Where Nichiren appears to have shared a concept in common with medieval Tendai thought, we may read that it is really not the same at all. For example, the emphasis on actuality (ji) in Nichiren's thought is described as "something practical and active that can be understood in the sense of concrete manifestation or accomplishment," while ji in Tendai original enlightenment thought means "affirming

the phenomena of reality just as they are."⁷⁷

This theory/practice distinction between medieval Tendai and Nichiren--or between Tendai and any of the Kamakura teachers--rests largely on the assumption that the original enlightenment doctrine amounted to an uncritical or even corrupt endorsement of things as they are and denied the need for practice. While a thorough reexamination of this assumption lies beyond what can be undertaken here, at least some of its more obvious flaws can be noted.

First of all, we should recall that, as Hazama Jikô has pointed out, that portion of Tendai history characterized by the original enlightenment discourse appears to have lasted from the insei or Cloister Government period of late Heian through the Genroku and Hôei eras of Edo--about five hundred years. The persistence of this discourse for so long a time suggests a remarkable vitality, inconsistent with a doctrine that is morally decadent. During those five centuries, there did occur undeniable instances of corruption in the Tendai kuden tradition, including the forging, buying and selling of transmissions,⁷⁸ and the abuse of the original enlightenment doctrine to rationalize self-indulgence and the pursuit of worldly desires.⁷⁹ However, corruption was evident in other sectors of the Buddhist world as well, and other

doctrines besides that of original enlightenment were used to rationalize misbehavior, including dualistic and "world-denying" ones, such as Hônen's Pure Land teaching.⁸⁰ That abuse occurred does not constitute evidence that the original enlightenment doctrine endorsed it.

The charge that this doctrine denied the need for practice is also questionable. First of all, this argument rests on a highly selective reading. A few passages in some texts could be construed to mean that practice is superfluous, or that evil behavior can be condoned.⁸¹ But many also set forth original enlightenment thought in connection with specific religious acts, including faith, meditative practices such as the threefold contemplation in a single mind, sûtra recitation or even chanting the name of Amida or the daimoku. Some writings urge one to "exert the mind night and day"⁸²; others warn against divulging to beginners such potentially dangerous teachings as good and evil being of the same essence.⁸³ Nakanishi Zuikô, one of the few scholars to explicitly challenge the alleged decadence of the medieval Tendai kuden tradition, quotes texts emphasizing that the secret doctrines should be transmitted only to those who have thoroughly prepared themselves through study and religious disciplines.⁸⁴ It is hard to reconcile such

admonitions with laxity and corruption, or with a denial of practice.

When we see these texts in conjunction with religious practice, the "affirmation of the phenomenal" that Tamura and others have viewed as an endorsement of worldliness and delusion appears in a different light. Such expressions as "the worldly passions are precisely enlightenment," "good and evil are a single suchness," etc. are not confined to the original enlightenment discourse. Such language has a long history in the Mahayana tradition in association with the dialectics of Emptiness, the critique of discriminative categories and the insights to be gained in meditation. "When a bodhisattva practices wrong paths, he thereby enters the Buddha Way," says the Vimalakīrti Sūtra. "Greed, anger and folly are the seeds [of the Tathāgata]."85 In the context of this larger tradition, it seems possible that such statements in the kuden texts were in no way intended as a moral cachet that "anything goes" in daily life, but rather represent attempts to express a perception of the world mediated by the radical critique of Emptiness, or to help practitioners break down the attachment to dualistic thinking that the Mahayana has always warned against as an impediment to insight. Care must be taken, in reading these texts, to distinguish between ontological and ethical statements: One can

"affirm" evil as ontologically inseparable from the ultimate reality and yet still consider oneself morally bound to resist evil conduct.

If on the whole the advocates of the Tendai original enlightenment doctrine were, as numerous texts suggest, not justifying deluded behavior at all but in fact deeply committed to practice, this undermines one of the differences frequently assumed to exist between medieval Tendai and the teachings of the Kamakura founders, Nichiren included. Parenthetically, in fact, we may note that several medieval Tendai documents exhibit many of the ideas commonly associated with the new Kamakura schools, such as an emphasis on simplified forms of practice, the possibility of salvation through faith, and the oneness of practice and attainment. In this, they add to mounting evidence suggesting that Kamakura Buddhism did not represent quite the radical break with tradition that it is often assumed to be, but in fact shared many points of continuity with older forms.

It must be acknowledged that, in reading through a number of medieval Tendai texts and a number of Nichiren's writings, one does receive the impression that, on the whole, the Tendai documents place more emphasis on innate Buddhahood, and Nichiren, on accessing it in the act of practice. Doctrinal

distinctions between Tendai and Nichiren concerning their respective emphases on inherent Buddha nature versus receiving the seed of Buddhahood, etc. have an undeniable basis in a general difference of nuance that emerges from the two bodies of writings. However, counter-examples also occur on both sides: passages in medieval Tendai documents that stress practice and passages in Nichiren's writings that emphasize inherent Buddhahood. Asai, Tamura and others are correct in pointing to a difference here, but it may amount to a difference of emphasis only. And if so, it may not constitute an adequate basis for questioning the authenticity of texts.

Nichiren and Medieval Tendai

Here we will consider our second objection: that Nichiren-- for all that he initiated a new religious movement--retained sufficiently close connections to the Tendai community, and to ideas circulating within it, that reference to a major Tendai discourse in writings attributed to him need not necessarily be cause for suspicion.

How thorough was the break between Nichiren and his Tendai matrix? Was it a break at all, or simply the beginning of a new movement within the larger Tendai community, one that evolved toward increasing

independence after Nichiren's death? Again, extensive exploration of this question is not possible here, but it will be well at this point to outline briefly some relevant aspects of this problem.

Nichiren tradition regards the occasion of Nichiren's first public sermon, on the twenty-eighth day of the fourth month of Kenchô 5 (1253), as the founding of the Nichiren sect, but Nichiren himself never referred to that event in this way. Later in life, he wrote enigmatically, "Nichiren is not the founder of any sect, nor am I a later follower [of some existing sect]."86 This ambiguity is mirrored in his own writings and in what we know of the structure and composition of his early community.

Like all the Kamakura founders, Nichiren was ordained as a Tendai monk and studied at the Tendai headquarters on Mt. Hiei; in many respects, his doctrine remained closer to Tendai's than did that of the other Kamakura teachers. He acknowledged the same sacred texts as Tendai, the Lotus Sûtra and the "sixty volumes of T'ien-t'ai literature"--Chih-i's three major works and Chan-jan's commentaries on them--and retained the Tendai classification of scriptures, the "five periods and eight teachings" (goji hakkyô), as well as the major Tendai doctrines.

On the other hand, however, Nichiren also looked

upon himself as the bearer of a unique teaching. Like Chih-i and Saichô before him, Nichiren saw the truth of the Lotus Sûtra as consisting in the "single thought-moment that is three thousand realms" (ichinen sanzen). But this doctrine as these earlier T'ien-t'ai/Tendai masters had taught it had been based on the manifestation section or first fourteen chapters of the Lotus Sûtra, that portion of the sûtra preached by Śākyamuni Buddha in his provisional guise as someone who had attained the Way for the first time in this lifetime; ichinen sanzen as he, Nichiren, taught it was based on the origin section or latter fourteen chapters of the Lotus Sûtra, that portion preached by Śākyamuni once he had revealed himself as the eternal Buddha, enlightened since inconceivable kalpas ago and constantly present in this world. Where the ichinen sanzen of Chih-i and Saichô was a formless principle (ri) to be observed within the mind in meditation, in his own teaching, ichinen sanzen found concrete expression in the actualities (ji) of the daimoku and the mandala. These constituted the only teaching valid in the Final Dharma age; Tendai, Nichiren asserted more than once, was as useless as "last year's calendar."⁸⁷ Thus with regard to the form of practice, its scriptural basis and its unique relevance to the Final Dharma age, Nichiren clearly saw himself as independent of

traditional Tendai.⁸⁸

Nevertheless, even while asserting his independence from the classical T'ien-t'ai/Tendai tradition in this regard, Nichiren also made statements that would seem to identify the Tendai sect as the orthodox stream of Buddhism, and himself, as the representative of orthodox Tendai. For example, in writings from the Sado and Minobu periods, we read, "Nichiren of Awa Province has reverently received the transmission from the three teachers [Sâkyamuni, Chih-i and Saichô] and assists the spread of the Hokke sect in the Final Dharma age"⁸⁹; "The Tendai-Hokke sect is called the Buddha-founded sect (butsur'yû shû), because it was established by the Buddha himself"⁹⁰; "Those [monks] in this country of Japan who are not disciples of the Great Teacher Dengyô [Saichô] are followers of heterodox paths and evil persons"⁹¹; "The ceremony for opening the eyes of painted or wooden Buddha images should be conducted only on the basis of the Lotus Sûtra and the Tendai sect,"⁹² and so forth. Nichirensû doctrine seeks to resolve this ambiguity by speaking of Nichiren having received both an "outer transmission" (ge sôjô), which is historical and intellectual, placing him within the historical flow from Sâkyamuni through Chih-i and Saichô, and an inner transmission (nai sôjô), religious and intuitive, directly from Sâkyamuni Buddha.⁹³

After Saichô (767-822), Japanese Tendai had fallen increasingly under the influence of Shingon, a trend Nichiren deplored because it had resulted in the dethroning of the Lotus Sûtra and the enshrining of the esoteric scriptures in its place. His heavy emphasis on the writings of the patriarchs Chih-i, Chan-jan and Saichô, rather than the work of later Japanese Tendai masters, has led some scholars (including Asai Yôrin) to characterize him in part as a Tendai reformer who sought to restore the sect's orthodox emphasis on the Lotus Sûtra. However, even though Nichiren harshly criticized later (i.e., medieval) Tendai for its esoteric accretions, this was the Buddhism that dominated his age, and one should not hastily conclude that he held nothing in common with it. Criticism of a tradition is, after all, not proof of autochthonous identity. Later in life, Nichiren also denounced Shingon, but its influence on his thought is unmistakeable, most notably clear in his use of a mandala.

Nichiren refers repeatedly to his community as "my followers" (waga ichimon), obviously considering them a distinct group, participating in the same faith as himself and willing to share his trials in upholding it.⁹⁴ Yet he and his early community were in no way isolated from the Tendai community of the day. In his opposition to the Pure Land sect, as Kawazoe Shôji has

pointed out, Nichiren identified with the Tendai establishment, and his criticisms of the Pure Land tradition were supported by a clear awareness that the spread of Hônen's teaching was undermining the Tendai economic base.⁹⁵ Takagi Yutaka has noted that, of sixty-six monk-disciples of Nichiren who can be identified by name, no fewer than twenty, including four of the six senior disciples, are known or can be presumed to have been Tendai monks originally.⁹⁶ While Nichiren was living in retirement on Mount Minobu (1274-82), many Tendai monks were converted in the Fuji area by his disciple Byakuren Ajari Nikkô, and in several cases they continued to reside at their original Tendai temples, maintaining their position and function within those temple organizations, though this arrangement was not always without friction.⁹⁷

After Nichiren's death, communities of devotees began to form around five of the six senior disciples (the sixth, Nichiji, traveled to Hokkaido and from there to mainland China to spread the teachings). As time passed, these groups moved increasingly in the direction of independent organizations, though again, separation from Tendai was not always complete. The Fuji lineage, originating with the above-mentioned Nikkô, was perhaps the most independent: documents attributed to Nikkô or his disciples excoriate the other five for calling

themselves "sramanas of Tendai," and Nichiren's teaching, a branch (yoryû) of Tendai Buddhism.⁹⁸ While the desire to escape persecution at the hands of the Kamakura authorities may have formed a partial motivation for such self-designation, it is also possible that these disciples genuinely regarded themselves as Tendai Buddhists. In either case, a number of Nichiren's disciples in the Kamakura area did maintain Tendai associations. The disciples of Ben Ajari Nisshô, another of the six senior disciples, continued to receive the precepts on Mt. Hiei. In 1351, Nisshô's successor Nichiyû even inscribed a copy of Nichiren's mandala and signed it "Nichiyû, sramana of Tendai."⁹⁹ Asai Yôrin has demonstrated that monks from Minobu and other Nichiren communities studied at Mt. Hiei and Tendai centers in the Kantô area and received transmissions of the Tendai kuden teachings.¹⁰⁰ Asai seems to assume that such contacts were initiated only after Nichiren's death, in the Nambokuchô and Muromachi periods, but they may simply have represented an escalation of interchange that in certain quarters had been going on all along.

Though much remains to be researched in this area, even this handful of data would seem to suggest that attempts to draw definitive boundaries, intellectual or institutional, between Tendai and the early Nichiren

tradition in all regards may amount to a retrospective imposition of a present, rigid sectarian consciousness onto a period when it had not yet solidified. In enumerating the continuities between the two, I do not intend to revive the specific arguments of Keikô, Maeda, Uesugi et al. to which Asai Yôrin was replying, which were reductive in minimizing the extent to which Nichiren had departed from the parent tradition. Nevertheless, the indication of links between Nichiren and medieval Tendai remains strong enough to render dubious the reliability of original enlightenment thought as a litmus text for identifying possibly apocryphal texts.

We know, moreover, that Nichiren was familiar with original enlightenment thought. He was educated from childhood in the Tendai esoteric tradition.

Transcriptions he made of seminal Tendai kuden works survive in his own hand.¹⁰¹ According to one tradition, his teacher on Mt. Hiei was Shunpan, an eminent scholar of the Eshin school of Tendai active in the original enlightenment discourse,¹⁰² and whether this was in fact the case or not, he would certainly have had ample opportunity to be exposed to the discourse while studying on Mt. Hiei.

Moreover, as Tamura Yoshirô has pointed out, up through the time of the "Risshô ankoku ron" (1260),

Nichiren used nondual original enlightenment thought to counter Hōnen's dualistic interpretation of the Pure Land teaching, asserting that the pure land is immanent in this present world. After about 1260 and the events following the submission of the "Risshō ankoku ron," original enlightenment thought becomes somewhat less apparent in his writings but continues to surface in later works, including a few of those considered major "normative" writings: the "Kaimoku shō," for example, identifies the sahā world as the Buddha's original land,¹⁰³ and the "Kanjin honzon shō" speaks of an eternal Buddha identified with the body of the practitioner.¹⁰⁴

Most tellingly of all, we find no criticism of the original enlightenment doctrine in the entire Nichiren corpus. Nichiren is famous, or some might say infamous, for his outspoken attacks on doctrines other than his own: Passage after passage in his collected works decries the evils of chanting the name of the Buddha Amida, the folly of relying on Shingon rituals to protect the country, and the errors of wordless Zen. Of a man so given to polemics, we would expect that at least a few words would have survived criticizing original enlightenment thought, if he had indeed rejected or rethought it. But none do. In fact--apart from Nichiren's criticism of contemporary Tendai for its

incorporation of the esoteric teachings--as Suguro Shinjô has pointed out, "There is extremely little in the ibun that can be seen as a criticism of medieval Tendai thought."¹⁰⁵

Even if clear lines of demarcation could be drawn between Nichiren's thought and that of medieval Tendai, which seems doubtful, reference to the original enlightenment discourse in Nichiren-attributed writings would still not necessarily be cause for suspicion. There are two reasons for this. First, although the stages in the development in this discourse have yet to be dated with anything approximating precision, we may assume that by Nichiren's time, the doctrine was already well known, at least in monastic circles. Although we tend to speak of the Tendai doctrine of original enlightenment, it is important to remember that this represented a very broad current of thought in the medieval Buddhist world, one that definitely transcended denominational boundaries. The term "original enlightenment" occurs in Shingon literature as well as that of Tendai, and the discourse itself is structurally almost identical to Shingon "Dharma-body thought" (hosshin ron): Where Shingon texts speak of the cosmic Buddha Mahāvairocana, whose body is the five elements that compose the universe, Tendai speaks of the "Tathâgata of original enlightenment," identified with

the eternal Sâkyamuni of the "Fathoming the Lifespan" chapter of the Lotus Sûtra, whose body is the entire dharma-realm. The influence of original enlightenment thought appears in Zen documents as well; Dôgen, for all that he is often presented as a critic of this discourse, draws on it in a number of his writings.¹⁰⁶ So pervasive a discourse may well have been viewed by medieval Buddhists as common property, rather than the exclusive possession of a particular sect. Thus in establishing his independence from esoteric Tendai, Nichiren might not have found it necessary to abandon original enlightenment thought as something inextricably identified with that tradition.

Second, there exists the phenomenon of what might be called "trendy" expressions. New discourses produce their own vocabularies, which, as the discourse gains currency, come to be used even by individuals who subscribe to that discourse only partially, or even nominally. It could be that Nichiren drew on the terminology and symbols of the original enlightenment discourse, assimilating them to his own teaching of gaining access to enlightenment in the moment of chanting the daimoku, without necessarily concurring with all aspects of original enlightenment thought.¹⁰⁷

Part of Nichiren's greatness, as noted earlier, lay in his gift for synthesis. While he criticized

virtually all the specific religious forms of his day in his insistence on exclusive devotion to the Lotus Sûtra, it can easily be seen that he in fact assimilated to the Lotus all the beneficial functions that the other teachings were said to possess, including the attainment of Buddhahood in this very body, the power to protect the nation and and subdue its enemies, the conferring of worldly benefits, the curing of illness, and rebirth after death in a Pure Land.¹⁰⁸ Rather than rejecting the original enlightenment discourse because it derived from the Tendai esoteric tradition that he condemned, it would arguably have been more in keeping with Nichiren's style to have assimilated it to the daimoku of the Lotus Sûtra--as it is in the texts we are about to examine.

We have here outlined the major problems and presuppositions involved in the attempt to establish, one way or another, the authenticity of the documents under discussion and whether or not the ideas they contain are expressive of Nichiren's thought. Let us see now how these issues are played out in the consideration of specific texts. For the material involved is by no means monolithic. Some of these writings present definite textual problems or show evidence of a hand other than Nichiren's; others display no particular problem whatsoever beyond a reference to original enlightenment thought. Some do not "sound" like

Nichiren at all; others are indistinguishable in this regard from his authenticated writings. The following three chapters deal with differing examples of this problematic material from three genres: doctrinal essays, personal letters, and records of oral teachings.

Notes to Chapter One:

1. Hanano Mitsuaki, "Junsui Nichiren gi kakuritsu no shomondai: Asai Yôrin shi no soshogaku ni taisuru gigi," Gyôun 2 (Dec. 1975), p. 32.

2. Risshô Daigaku Kyôgaku Kenkyûjo, eds., Shôwa teihon Nichiren Shônin ibun, 4 vols. (Minobu: Minobu-san Kuon-ji, 1952-59; revised 1989). The numbers of texts given are based on the 1989 revised version, which contains more writings than earlier editions.

3. See Yamakawa Chiô, Honge seiten kaidai teiyô (Tokyo: Shinjinsha, 1923), pp. 24-44; Asai Yôrin, Nichiren Shônin kyôgaku no kenkyû (Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1945), pp. 1-9; and Suzuki Ichijô, Nichiren Shônin ibun no bunkengakuteki kenkyû (Tokyo: Sankibô Busshorin, 1965), pp. 88-92, 100-101.

4. Yamakawa Chiô places the establishment of the rokunai index at around 100 years, and the rokuge, at around 300 years, after Nichiren's death. See Honge seiten kaidai teiyô, pp. 42, 44. Asai Yôrin places the compilation of the rokunai index by around 120-130 years, and the rokuge, in the period between 170 or 180 to 380, years after Nichiren's death. See Nichiren Shônin kyôgaku no kenkyû pp. 43, 49. Suzuki Ichijô places the completion of the rokunai at about 100 years after Nichiren's death, and the rokuge, some 250 years after that. See Nichiren Shônin ibun no bunkengakuteki kenkyû, pp. 101. Miyazaki Eishû suggests that the rokunai had generally taken shape by 140 to 150 years after Nichiren's death, in his "Nichiren Shônin ibun no bunkengakuteki kenkyû: rokunai gosho seiritsu ni kanshi" in Mochizuku Kankô, ed., Kindai Nihon no Hokke Bukkyô, Hokekyô kenkyû vol. 2 (Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1968), p. 373.

5. NSZ 2:131.

6. Gosho mokuroku, cited in Asai Yôrin, Nichiren Shônin kyôgaku no kenkyû, p. 3. Nitchô's text is missing the first line, so Asai quotes the full text from the Gosho mokuroku nikki no koto, a copy made by Nitchô's disciple, Engyô-in Nichii.

7. Nichiren Shônin ibun kenkyû (Tokyo: Bukkyô Nenkansha, 1934), pp. 17-18.

8. Ibid., p. 18, n. 3.

9. Nichiren Shōnin kyōgaku no kenkyū, pp. 73-74.

10. Nichiren Shōnin ibun no bunkengakuteki kenkyū, p. 8.

11. Efforts at computer testing have centered around a hotly disputed work known as the "Sandai hihō bonjō ji" or "Sandai hihō sho," whose authenticity has been debated for centuries. This text is relevant to the subject of this essay, as it makes use of original enlightenment thought, but its greatest point of controversy lies in its reference to a kaidan or ordination platform for the Final Dharma age to be erected by imperial edict, a place where "the people of the three countries [India, China and Japan], as well as all of Jambudvīpa, [may receive] the teaching of the precepts for repentance and the eradication of sins" (STN 2:1864). The kaidan constitutes one of "three great secret Dharmas" said by Nichiren to comprise the whole of his teaching, the other two being the object of worship and the daimoku. The "Sandai hihō shō," however, is the only work in the Nichiren collection to unambiguously define the kaidan as a "kaidan in actuality," that is, as a concrete structure having a physical location. In the years prior to World War II, this writing was interpreted in a manner sanctioning Japanese imperialism, but postwar scholars, anxious to disavow nationalistic interpretations of doctrine, have tended to interpret Nichiren's kaidan in symbolic or abstract terms as a "kaidan in principle," meaning wherever one may chant the daimoku, and to question the legitimacy of the "Sandai hihō shō" (see for example Tokoro Shigemoto, Nichiren no shisō to Kamakura Bukkyō [Tokyo: Fuzanbō, 1965], pp. 130-49). It was therefore among the first questioned writings in the Nichiren corpus to be subjected to computer analysis, in a project begun in 1977 headed by Assistant Professor Murakami Masakatsu of the Bureau of Statistics of the Ministry of Education. Murakami's initial results suggested that the "Sandai hiho shō" was genuine. The publication of his preliminary findings in 1981 provoked such a stir that he decided to apply stricter tests employing a broader data base (Mainichi Shimbun, August 15, 1988). Investigation is still in process.

12. STN, "Hanrei," p. 1. The standard for deciding which writings should be included in the zokuhen section is mentioned in Miyazaki Eishū, "Nichiren Shōnin ibun no bunkengakuteki kenkyū," p. 351.

13. This trend has been noted by Ishida Mizumaro of Tôkai University, who writes, "In inquiring into Nichiren's thought, we must take care in how we deal with the documents. This area is mediated by the troublesome problem of textual authenticity, and we are limited in that, until we can make sure of this, we cannot grasp a true picture of Nichiren. That is probably why, at present, discussions are developed centering around the most reliable of Nichiren's authentic writings, the 'Risshô ankoku ron,' 'Kaimoku shô,' 'Kanjin honzon shô,' 'Senji shô,' and 'Hôon shô' [i.e., the so-called five major writings]." From "Nihon Bukkyô ni okeru Hokke shisô" in Ôchô Enichi, ed., Hokke shisô (Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1969), p. 550n.

14. Miyazaki Eishu, "Nichiren Shônin ibun no bunkengakuteki kenkyû: rokunai gosho seritsu ni kanshi," pp. 348-51.

15. See for example "Nihon shisôshi ni okeru hongaku shisô," in Sagara Tôru, Bitô Masahide and Akiyama Ken, eds., Nihon shisô, vol. 1: Shizen (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1983), pp. 123-26. This is also explained in a number of articles by Professor Tamura on original enlightenment thought.

16. Nakamura Hajime et al., eds. Bukkyô jiten (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1989), pp. 745-46.

17. For an outline of the development of original enlightenment thought in China and Japan, see Tamura Yoshirô, "Tendai hongaku shisô gaisetsu" in Tada Kôryû et al., eds., Tendai hongaku ron, Nihon shisô taikai, vol. 9 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1973), pp. 483-540; or "Tendai hongaku shisô to Nichiren kyôgaku" in Kagayama Gyôô, ed., Chûsei Hokke Bukkyô no tenkai (Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1974), pp. 115-35.

18. Nihon Bukkyô no kaiten to sono kichô, vol. 2: Chûko Nihon Tendai no kenkyû (Tokyo: Sanseidô, 1948), pp. 5-10. This remains an indispensable work for the study of medieval Tendai.

19. Ibid., pp. 11-73.

20. DNBZ 28:54.

21. Tendai hongaku ron, Nihon shisô taikai, vol. 9: 184

22. Hazama Jikô, Nihon Bukkyô no kaiten to sono kichô, vol. 2, pp. 73-81.
23. Ibid., p. 25.
24. This was first suggested to me by Patricia R. Sachs.
25. These include two collections, Tendai hongaku ron, Nihon shisô taikai, vol. 9, and DDZ, vol. 5, as well as individual works included in TZ and DNBZ.
26. This was explained to me by Ôkubo Ryôjun.
27. See for example Tamura Yoshirô's distribution of the major known texts over six fifty-year periods between 1100-1400, in Kamakura shin Bukkyô shisô no kenkyû, pp. 403-51, or "Tendai hongaku shisô gaisetsu," pp. 521-41. Works reflecting original enlightenment thought continued to be produced after 1400, many of them commentaries on earlier kuden texts, but many of these were signed by their own authors and can be dated with considerably more accuracy.
28. "Kuden hômon no jissen rinri," Nihon bukkyô 2 (Oct. 1958) and "Sonshun ni tsuite: Ningen byôdô ron," IBK 9-1 (Jan. 1961).
29. The Ways of Thinking of Eastern Peoples (Tokyo: Printing Bureau, Japanese Government, 1960), p. 528; (revised version, Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1964), p. 351.
30. See for example "Interaction between Japanese Culture and Buddhism: The Thought of Original Enlightenment," Ôsaki gakuhô 138 (Feb. 1985), as well as other articles on original enlightenment thought by Professor Tamura.
31. Chih-kuan 3a, T 1911.46:24c7-11. See also Paul L. Swanson, The Foundations of T'ient'ai Philosophy: The Flowering of the Two Truths Theory in Chinese Buddhism (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1989), pp. 116-23.
32. Hongaku shisô hihan (Tokyo: Daizô Shuppansha, 1989), p. 8. Hakamaya summarizes his major arguments in his introduction, especially pp. 9-10. See also Paul Swanson's review in Japanese Journal of Religious Studies 17-1 (March 1990), pp. 89-91._
33. "Tendai hongaku shisô to Nichiren kyôgaku," pp. 135-36.

34. "Interaction between Japanese Culture and Buddhism: The Thought of Original Enlightenment," p. 4.
35. See for example Hazama Jikô, Nihon Bukkyô no kaiten to sono kichô, vol. 2, pp. 40-41.
36. An early suggestion of this appears in Shimaji Daitô, "Nihon Bukkyô hongaku shisô no gaisetsu," Bukkyô taikô (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 1931), p. 6.
37. "Tendai hongaku shisô gaisetsu," p. 541.
38. "Sange gakusoku," in Kinsei Bukkyô shûsetsu (Tokyo: Kôya Kokusho Kankôkai, 1918), p. 27.
39. "Tendaishû kôyô," Maeda Eun zenshû (Tokyo: Shunshûsha, 1931), vol. 2, p. 22. It is now generally agreed that Tendai original enlightenment thought developed considerably after Saichô's time.
40. Tendai kyôgaku shi (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 1929), p. 514; reprint edition (Tokyo: Ryûbunkan, 1986), p.469.
41. Nihon tendai shi (Nagoya: Hajinkaku Shobô, 1932; reprint edition, Tokyo: Kokusho Kankôkai, 1972), v. 1, p. 505.
42. Ibid., p. 712.
43. Nichiren Shônin kyôgaku no kenkyû. The specific response to Keikô, Maeda, Shimaji and Uesugi appears on pp. 194-95. The entire sixth chapter of this book, pp. 182-373, develops the thesis that Nichiren's thought differs essentially from that of original enlightenment.
44. Ibid., p. 285.
45. Keikô and Maeda in particular cite the Shuzen-ji ketsu (DDZ 5:69-138), an important text in the Tendai oral transmission genre retrospectively attributed to Saichô. This work has been of particular relevance to Nichiren studies, because it recommends chanting Namu-myôhô-renge-kyô, specifically at the moment of death. So closely has this practice been associated with Nichiren's name that, for a long time, it was assumed that he had initiated it. If the Shuzen-ji ketsu predated Nichiren, this assumption had to be called into question. The debate over this text has raged for centuries, one side insisting that it predated Nichiren and proved he had derived his daimoku thought from Saichô (Keikô and Maeda were still operating on the

assumption that the Shuzen-ji ketsu was in fact Saichô's work); the other side insisting that it was post-Nichiren and represented the influence of his thinking on Tendai Buddhism, or that it was a forgery by Nichiren's later disciples. The issue has been further complicated by the fact that two writings in the Nichiren corpus quote the Shuzen-ji ketsu, the "Tôtai renga shô" (STN 3:2129-2137) and the "Jûhachi enman shô" (3:2137-2144); if the Shuzen-ji ketsu is post-Nichiren, that would raise obvious questions about their authenticity. (Asai Yôrin argues against their being genuine in Nichiren Shônin kyôgaku no kenkyû, pp. 185-97). Controversy over the Shuzen-ji ketsu has continued into the present century, with estimates of its date of composition ranging from late eleventh through early twelfth centuries (Shimaji Daitô) to mid-thirteenth through early fourteenth centuries (Shigyô Kaishû and Tamura Yoshirô). Summaries of the modern scholarship on this issue appear in Takagi Yutaka, Heian jidai Hokke Bukkyô shi kenkyû, pp. 448-49, and Hanano Mitsuaki, "Nichiren kyôgaku to Shuzen-ji ketsu," Tôyô tetsugaku kenkyû 15-5 (1976):127-55. Since it has been pointed out by Shimaji Daitô, Ienaga Saburô and others, and exhaustively demonstrated by Takagi Yutaka, that the daimoku of the Lotus Sûtra was chanted before Nichiren's time (see chapter two, n. 29), the possibility of the Shuzen-ji ketsu preceding him has lost some of its startlingly revisionist implications. Nevertheless, the great range in datings proposed for this text gives some idea of the uncertainties involved in dating the Tendai kuden literature.

46. "Shûgaku kenkyûjô no nisan no mondaiten," in Motai Kyôkô Sensei Koki Kinen Ronbunshû Kankôkai, ed., Nichiren kyôgaku no shomondai (Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1974), p. 365-66.

47. Ibid., p. 366.

48. "Nichiren no shûkyô keisei ni okeru nembutsu haigeki no igi (2)," Bukkyôshigaku 5-1 (Jan. 1965), pp. 52-23.

49. This division of "pre-Sado" (sazen) and "post-Sado" (sago) rests in part on Nichiren's own admonition: "Of my teachings, regard those before my exile to the province of Sado as equivalent merely to the Buddha's [provisional] teachings preached before the Lotus Sûtra" (Misawa shô, "STN 2:1446-47). However, even Nichiren's preferences in this regard do not erase his earlier work, nor can one can escape the impression that

those preferences may have been reified by later Nichiren communities into more than he perhaps intended. The inadequacy of the pre- and post-Sado categories for modern scholarship was pointed out by Asai Yôrin (Nichiren Shônin kyôgaku no kenkyû, pp. 94-103), and recently, advocates of developmental approaches to Nichiren's thought have become more vocal, such as Komatsu Kuniaki: "To understand the Shônin's thought in terms of the two broad divisions of pre- and post-Sado may be common sense in terms of doctrinal studies, but it denies the continuity between the Shônin and the doctrinal thought that preceded him, especially that of Tendai, and, one may further say, amounts to judging the doctrinal study of his earlier period in terms of that of the later" ("Shugo kokka ron no ichi kôsetsu," Ôsaki gakuhô 125-26 [July 1971], pp. 97-98).

50. The "Kanjin honzon shô" survives in Nichiren's holograph. The holograph of the "Kaimoku shô" was destroyed during the 1875 fire on Mt. Minobu, but the fact that it existed is documented.

51. In the "Kaimoku shô," Nichiren says that it is "a bright mirror" in which the Buddhas have reflected the realities of Japan and a "keepsake" for his disciples (STN 1:590). The cover letter to the "Kanjin honzon shô" describes it as containing "a vital matter in terms of Nichiren's person" ("Kanjin honzon shô soejô," 1:721).

52. "Junsui Nichiren gi kakuritsu no shomondai: Asai Yôrin shi no soshogaku ni taisuru gigi," Gyôun 2 (Dec. 1975): 1-44. The following is based chiefly on pp. 24-27.

53. Nichiren Shônin kyôgaku no kenkyû, pp. 459-72.

54. "Butsu honzon ka hô honzon ka: Nichiren honzon ron no seitôsei," Nichiren kyôgaku no shisôshi kenkyû (Tokyo: Fuzanbô, 1976): 409-62.

55. Published by the Fuji Gakurin, Fujinomiya City, Shizuoka Prefecture.

56. Responses have, however, been forthcoming to questions raised about the authenticity of texts that have historically been transmitted within or especially valued by the Fuji school of Nichiren Buddhism, from which Nichiren Shôshû is descended. These rejoinders tend to be strongly polemical. See for example Matsumoto Saichirô, Fuji montô no enkaku to kyôgi (Tokyo: Taisei Shuppansha, 1968). A specific instance of such a response is discussed in chap. 4 of this essay.

57. While Nichiren Shôshû lags behind Nichirensû in academic endeavors, it has been more active in promoting the translation of Nichiren's writings. The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, an ongoing English-language translation project sponsored by the Nichiren Shôshû International Center in Tokyo, has now run to six volumes (1979-90).

Perhaps of its doctrine identifying Nichiren with the manifestation of the original Buddha in the Final Dharma age, Nichiren Shôshû tends to regard Nichiren's writings as more authoritative even than the Lotus Sûtra itself, which may have something to do with the evident reluctance to engage in critical discussion concerning them. Many members of Sôka Gakkai, Hokekô and other Nichiren Shôshû lay groups have an impressive knowledge of Nichiren's writings, which are not easy for most modern Japanese to read, but I have met very few who were aware of the issue under discussion here.

58. "Nichiren Shônin kyôgaku no shisôshiteki kenkyû no ichi kôatsu: toku ni chûko Tendai kyôgaku o haikai to shite," Ôsaki gakuho 101 (July 1954), pp. 46-49.

59. Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten. See especially chap. 5, sec. 5, "Nichiren to Tendai hongaku shisô," pp. 575-651.

60. Nichiren: Junkyô no nyoraishi (Tokyo: Nippon Hôshu Shuppan Kyôkai, 1975), pp. 23, 51-53, 59-62. See also the earlier Kamakura shin Bukkyô shisô no kenkyû, pp. 575-651, which lays the groundwork for this division.

61. STN 1:1-15.

62. STN 1:209-26.

63. Kamakura shin Bukkyô shisô no kenkyû, p. 611.

64. "Tendai hongaku shisô to Nichiren kyôgaku," in Kageyama Gyôô, ed., Chûsei Hokke Bukkyô no tenkai, Hokekyô kenkyû, vol. 5 (Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten), p. 142.

65. Kamakura shin Bukkyô shisô no kenkyû, p. 612.

66. The importance of Tamura's work in this regard has been noted by Paul Jaffe. See the latter's "On Nichiren's Appropriation of Truth," Ôsaki gakuho 141 (June 1986):1-10.

67. Ibid., p. 623.

68. In the model that Tamura develops, medieval Tendai thought, especially as expressed in the original enlightenment discourse, represents "absolute nonduality," the complete affirmation of the phenomenal world as being one with ultimate reality. Hônen is then shown as rejecting this position in favor of a dualistic view emphasizing the relative distinction between the Buddha and deluded beings, expressed in his teaching of world denial and salvation through reliance on the Other Power of the Buddha Amida's vow. The teachings of Shinran, Dôgen and Nichiren, in Tamura's opinion, represent differing attempts to synthesize these two positions. In Shinran's thought, in the moment that one fully recognizes one's benightedness and incapacity to effect one's own salvation, abandoning all attempts to rely on the power of self, one is enfolded and becomes identified with the Buddha Amida; this Tamura characterizes as "the absolute on the basis of the relative." In contrast, Dôgen and Nichiren begin from the standpoint that the Buddha and deluded beings are essentially one, on this basis asserting the relative distinction between the two that must be resolved in practice--a position Tamura terms "the relative on the basis of the absolute." This scheme is presented in detail in chapter five of Kamakura shin Bukkyô shisô no kenkyû, pp. 475-651, and summarized in Nichiren: Junkyô no nyoraishi, pp. 202-9.

69. Kamakura shin Bukkyô shisô no kenkyû, pp. 612-23.

70. Ibid., p. 625.

71. For example, Asai Endô writes, "Their authenticity may be considered as having not yet been determined...- .Or even if it is difficult to disclaim them all as forgeries, in the final analysis, we cannot avoid the criticism that these writings represent statements of Nichiren's subsidiary thought" (Jôko Nihon Tendai honmon shisô (Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1975), p. 17. Asai Endô is speaking here specifically of texts that refer to the doctrine of the uncreated triple-bodied Tathâgata (see chap. 2).

72. Nichiren Shônin kyôgaku no kenkyû, p. 221.

73. "Nichiren Shônin kyôgaku no shisôteki kenkyû no ichi kôsatsu: toku ni chûko Tendai kyôgaku o haikei to shite," p.45.

74. Jôko Nihon Tendai honmon shisô shi, p. 17.

75. See for example Watanabe Hôyô, "Nichiren Shônin no busshu ron" in Watanabe Hôyô, ed., Hokke Bukkyô no butsuda ron to shujô ron, Hokekyô kenkyû, vol. 10 (Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1985), pp. 402-3.
76. Suguro Shinjô, "Shûgaku kenkyûjô no nisan no mondaiten," p. 374.
77. Tamura Yoshirô, "Tendai hongaku shisô to Nichiren kyôgaku," p. 145.
78. Hazama Jikô, Nihon Bukkyô no kaiten to sono kichô, vol. 2, pp. 83-89.
79. Ibid., pp. 8-9. Hazama estimates that such corruption grew more pronounced from the Muromachi period on.
80. See Tamura Yoshirô, Kamakura shin Bukkyô shisô no kenkyû, pp. 208-9.
81. E.g. "After my [Saichô's] extinction, there is no need to copy sutras or make Buddha images. [Just] disseminate among all young men and women over the age of seven the doctrine that the mundane truth constantly abides" (Hokke monqu ryaku daikô shikenmon, DNBZ 18:51). Tamura also lists a few passages he considers susceptible to dangerous interpretations in "Tendai hongaku shisô gaisetsu," Tendai hongaku ron, pp. 541-42.
82. "Shinnyo kan," Tendai hongaku ron, p. 143.
83. "Kankô ruijû," Tendai hongaku ron, p. 196.
84. "Kuden hômon tenkai no igi," IBK 30-2 (March 1982), p. 627.
85. Wei-mo-chieh so-shuo ching (Vimalakîrti-nirdeśa) 2, T 475.14:549a1, a29-b1.
86. "Myômitsu Shônin goshôsoku," STN 2:1165.
87. "Kanjin honzon shô tokui shô" (STN 2:1120) and "Ueno-dono gohenji" (2:1634).
88. During the first part of his career, Nichiren evidently continued to regard himself as a Tendai monk, for example referring to himself as a "Tendai śramana" (STN 1:209, n. 2) or as a disciple of Saichô (kompon daishi monjin, 1:391). From the Sado exile on, however, he began to exhibit a greater independence, signing

himself "Nichiren, śramana of Japan" (1:702, 758) or "Nichiren, son of Śākyamuni [Śākyaputra]" (2:1003). It also becomes clear, for example, in the "Kanjin honzon shō," Nichiren's major work from the Sado period, that he saw himself as the bearer of a Dharma distinct from that of traditional Tendai, one uniquely suited to the Final Dharma age (1:719).

89. "Kembutsu mirai ki," dated 1273. STN 1:743.
90. "Shōmitsu-bō gosho," dated 1274. STN 1:825.
91. "Senji shō," dated 1275. STN 2:1016.
92. "Shijō Kingo Shakabutsu kuyō ji" (1276). STN 2:1182.
93. Nichirensū jiten, pp. 243-44.
94. Takagi Yutaka, Nichiren to sono montei (Tokyo: Kōbundō, 1965), pp. 96-98.
95. "Nichiren no shūkyō keisei ni okeru nembutsu haigeki no igi," Bukkyō shigaku 4, 3-4 (Aug. 1955):59-71 and 5-1 (Jan. 1956):45-57.
96. Nichiren to sono montei, pp. 52-53.
97. Ibid., pp. 53-54.
98. See especially the "Gonin shōha shō," NSZ 2:79-80.
99. Ibid., pp. 305-6.
100. Daiju Ajari Nisshin (1271-1334), Gyōgaku-in Nitchō (1423-1500), and his disciple Engyō-in Nichii (1444-1519), respectively the third, eleventh and twelfth abbots of Minobu, and Sanmi Ajari Nichijun (1294-1354), a noted scholar of the Fuji lineage, were among those who studied at Mt. Hiei (Nichii had been a Tendai monk originally). The late Kamakura and Muromachi periods also saw the rise of Tendai in the Kantō region (inaka Tendai), centering around such institutions as Konsan-ji, Kashiwabara, and the Senba Danrin in Irima in Musashino (now Kawagoe in Saitama Prefecture). A number of prominent Nichiren monks studied at these institutions and received transmissions of Tendai texts and doctrines. See Nichiren Shōnin kyōgaku no kenkyū, pp. 235-37, as well as the lineage charts on p. 239.

101. A copy of the first maki of the Juketsu entaragishû tôketsu made by Nichiren at Seichô-ji in Katei 4 (1238), when he was seventeen, was discovered in 1934 at the Kanazawa Bunko. In addition, Nichiren's transcription of sections of the Honri daikô shû is preserved at Honmon-ji in Ikegami, Tokyo. According to the editor of the manuscript, this is not a continuous transcription but represents a combining of transcriptions with different dates, one part being dated Bun'ei 1 (1264) and the other, Kenji 2 (1276). See Yamanaka Kihachi, ed., "Honri daikôshû tô yômon: Mikan shôhitsu yômonshû no go," Ôsaki gakuhô 119 (June 1965), p. 101. This raises interesting questions about the circumstances under which Nichiren copied it. Nichiren also cites a passage from this work, without identifying it, in his "Kanjin honzon shô." See Tada Kôryû et al., eds., Tendai hongaku ron, pp. 550-551.

102. Yamakawa Chiô upholds this tradition in "Eizan ni okeru Nichiren Shônin no shiyû no kenkyû," Nichiren Shônin no kenkyû, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Shinchôsha, 1924). However, Takagi Yutaka suggests that Nichiren's lowly origins probably worked to exclude him from the circles forming around the elite masters on Mt. Hiei. It is unlikely, according to Takagi, that the two shared a personal master-disciple relationship, though Nichiren may have heard Shunpan's lectures. See Nichiren: Sono kôdô to shisô (Tokyo: Hyôronsha, 1960), p. 30-32.

103. STN 1:576.

104. STN 1:711, 712.

105. "Shûgaku kenkyûjô no nisan no mondaiten," p. 374.

106. See for example Tamura Yoshirô, "Tendai hongaku shisô gaisetsu," Tendai hongaku ron, pp. 525, 531.

107. A possibility mentioned to me by Takagi Yutaka.

108. Suguro Shinjô notes this in "Nichiren Shônin no shisô keisei: toku ni Hokekyôkan to kokkakan ni kanshite," Nichiren shugi 2 (Sept. 1971), p. 57.

CHAPTER TWO

"Becoming a Buddha in One Lifetime":

Four Problematic Essays

We will begin our discussion of specific texts by examining four doctrinal essays attributed to Nichiren. Though not enough evidence exists to class these works as definitely pseudographic, three of them present sufficient difficulties, apart from their use of the original enlightenment discourse, to raise legitimate questions about Nichiren's authorship. One of these is clearly a composite text. These four essays will serve to illustrate the nature of those writings in the Nichiren canon that have fallen under suspicion because of their connections with original enlightenment thought and the grounds on which they have been problematized. They will also give some idea of the complexity of the issues involved in attempts to establish authenticity.

Along with the others of the questioned texts that form the subject of this essay, these four works rigorously deny any ontological gap between the ordinary person and the ultimate reality: anyone who believes in the Lotus Sûtra is thereby identified with the originally enlightened Buddha, and the place where he or she lives is the Buddha land. To express this idea of

the immediacy of Buddhahood via the Lotus Sûtra, all four texts employ the term isshô jôbutsu or "becoming a Buddha in one lifetime." To my knowledge, they are the only writings in the Nichiren canon that use this precise phrase, though this common terminology does not necessarily argue a connection among them. Three of the four discuss at length the value of chanting the daimoku or title of the Lotus Sûtra as a practice, or as the only practice, efficacious in realizing one's original enlightenment. In this sense, regardless of authorship, these texts prove important historically in understanding the development of thought concerning the daimoku, the practice central to Nichiren Buddhism.

For each text, I will first introduce some of its major points and then discuss the particular problems it presents. Full translations appear in Part II.

Of Dreams and Waking Reality: The "Sôkanmon shô"

Among those writings in the Nichiren collection that most eloquently assert the direct accessibility of Buddhahood to those who uphold the Lotus Sûtra, we find one with the imposing title "Sanze shôbutsu sôkanmon kyôshô hairyû" (The establishment of the hierarchy of teachings approved by all Buddhas of the three time periods), hereafter referred to by its abbreviated name "Sôkanmon shô."¹ Though the original manuscript of

this essay does not survive, the first notice of it occurs quite early, a copy of it being listed in the second earliest index of Nichiren's writings, compiled in Kôei 3 (1344), sixty-two years after his death in Kôan 5 (1282).² The "Sôkanmon shô" is traditionally said to have been written in Kôan 2 (1279), three years before Nichiren's death. However, as we shall see, it contains considerable internal evidence against so late a date. If it should in fact be Nichiren's writing--a question mark--it might rather belong to a very early stage in his career, perhaps even before he wrote the "Risshô ankoku ron." This possibility will be discussed in some detail further on.

The "Sôkanmon shô" represents an instance of a once highly valued work that has fallen from grace, as it were, in the wake of criticism by Asai Yôrin and his followers. With few exceptions, Nichiren Buddhists historically held this essay in high regard, as no fewer than twelve surviving commentaries on it from the Muromachi and Edo periods testify.³ One of the latest of these is a lengthy exposition by Udana-in Nichiki (1800-1853),⁴ an important forerunner of modern Nichiren doctrinal scholarship known for his contemplative-introspective interpretations of Nichiren's thought, who ranked the "Sôkanmon shô" among the most vital of Nichiren's writings. Masaharu Anesaki, whose work

predated the present concern with authenticity in Nichiren textual studies, considered the "Sôkanmon shô" one of the best examples of Nichiren's writings in a mystical strain.⁵ The high place traditionally accorded this work probably accounts for its inclusion in the shôhen or "primary texts" section of the standard addition of the canon, even after Asai's scholarship had relegated it to the limbo of questionable writings.

The "Sôkanmon shô" presents a series of potent images illustrating the uniqueness of the Lotus Sûtra as the only teaching affording direct access to the realm of original enlightenment. Here we will consider the predominant one: its analogy of dreams and waking consciousness.

The text begins by recapitulating several standard Tendai doctrinal categories, based on the tradition that Sâkyamuni Buddha taught for fifty years: For forty-two years, it is said, he expounded provisional teachings, and in the last eight years, he preached the true teaching, the Lotus Sûtra. The provisional teachings, being accommodated to people's understanding, do not represent the complete truth; they are the Buddha's "skilful means" or teachings for "instructing others" (keta). The Lotus Sûtra, on the other hand, represents the Buddha's "self-practice" (jigyô), the teaching he expounds without accomodation as the spontaneous and

direct expression of his own enlightenment. Almost immediately, however, the text departs from this rather dry, exegetical tone, bringing these abstract classifications within the realm of direct experience by assimilating them to two modes of consciousness familiar to everyone, dreaming and waking:

Living beings of the nine realms are in the midst of the sleep of ignorance at each thought-moment. Submerged in the dream of birth and death, they forget the waking reality of original enlightenment. Attached to rights and wrongs in a dream, they move from darkness into darkness. Therefore, the Tathâgata entered our dream of birth and death, placing himself on the same level as the perverted beings, and by means of the language used in dreams enticed the dreaming beings, leading them gradually by expounding matters concerning the distinctions between the good and evil that occur in dreams.⁶

The provisional sûtras are in this way shown to deal with ephemera. They speak in the "language of dreams" about things that happen in dreams, and thus lack real substance. The Lotus, however, differs essentially:

This sûtra expounds the original mind of waking reality. However, because the thoughts of the beings were habituated to the mind-ground of dreaming, the Buddha borrowed the language used in dreams to teach the waking reality of the original mind. Thus the words [of the Lotus Sûtra] are the language used in dreams, but its intent is to teach the original mind, which is waking reality. Such is the intent of the text of the Lotus Sûtra and its [T'ien-t'ai] commentaries. If one fails to understand this clearly, he will surely go astray concerning both the sûtra and the commentarial text.⁷

One notes that there exists no special "language of

waking reality"; words, as the "Sôkanmon shô" later indicates, belongs to the realm of discriminative conceptual categories (dreams) and thus cannot describe enlightenment directly. Nevertheless, a unique intent is claimed for the words of the Lotus Sûtra, in that they are aimed, not at guiding the beings from evil toward good within the context of a dream as do the provisional teachings, but rather, at enabling them to wake up.

The contrast between dreaming and waking consciousness, as a metaphor for the difference between delusion and enlightenment, has a long history in Buddhism, whose very name derives from the verb budh, "to awaken." The "Sôkanmon shô," however, uses the dreaming/waking analogy to illustrate a very particular concept of enlightenment--an enlightenment not to be cultivated or attained but inherent from the outset. The use of the term "original enlightenment" (hongaku) in the "Sôkanmon shô" reflects how this concept had evolved and come to be understood by medieval Japanese Buddhists. No longer does this term indicate a potential as opposed to its realization, as in its locus classicus, the Ta-sheng ch'i-hsin lun, where original enlightenment as an inherent capacity is said to be manifested as "initial enlightenment" (shikaku). Rather, it has become identified with ultimate reality

itself and is contrasted with delusion. Enlightenment pursued as a goal remote in time, involving the transformation, through gradual cultivation, of an ordinary person into a Buddha, is here rejected as illusory--"a fruit obtained in a dream." The ordinary person and the Buddha are essentially identical; only their mode of perception differs. The "Sôkanmon shô" illustrates this with a somewhat modified version of that archetype of dream analogies, the famous butterfly episode from the Chuang-tz'u:

Long ago there was a man named Chuang-ch'ou. In a dream, he became a butterfly and passed a hundred years. His sufferings were many and his pleasures few. [At last] he broke into a sweat and woke with a start, whereupon [he found that] he had not become a butterfly, a hundred years had not passed, and there had been neither sufferings nor pleasures; all were falsehoods, deluded thoughts....The Chuang-ch'ou who dreamed he had become a butterfly was not a different person from the Chuang-ch'ou who, on waking, realized that he had not. When we think of ourselves as ordinary worldlings in the realm of birth and death, that is a distorted view, a distorted thought, like [Chang-ch'ou] dreaming that he had become a butterfly. When we realize that we are the Tathâgata of original enlightenment, that is like Chuang-ch'ou returning to himself. It is becoming a Buddha in this very body.⁸

The "Sôkanmon shô" thus firmly disallows any ontological distinction between ordinary persons and the Buddha. However, this in no way amounts to an affirmation of delusion, or suggests that ordinary persons can be considered Buddhas prior to practice, as

the text is immediately careful to clarify. "One does not attain Buddhahood in the form of a butterfly," it continues. "Because the perception of oneself as a butterfly is a falsehood, therein one cannot speak of attaining Buddhahood; it would be out of the question." The difference between delusion and enlightenment, while ontologically nonexistent, is nonetheless empirically real, just as the experience of dreaming differs significantly from that of the waking state. Hence the necessity of Buddhist practice to transform one's perception and "wake up."

Nevertheless, the aim of practice as set forth in this essay departs altogether from traditional notions of a path with a beginning and ascent through sequential stages, culminating in final attainment. Since the "Sôkanmon shô" argues that enlightenment is not an external goal to be reached but is inherent originally, it vigorously denies the need to eradicate delusion and cultivate virtue through a program of graded stages. "Even the practitioner of inferior capacity can within a single lifetime enter the stage of wondrous enlightenment (myôgaku)," it claims. "Because the one and the many co-penetrate, all stages are completely included within one stage."⁹ It also emphasizes that, among the six identities, one attains Buddhahood directly from the stage of verbal identity (myôji-soku).

This represents the initial stage of practice in the Tendai system, at which one first hears the Dharma and thus learns that he is ultimately equal to the Buddha. The collapsing of all stages of practice into the initial stage, that of verbal identity, characterized the thought of a number of important Japanese Buddhists of the medieval period, including Nichiren.

Yet, just as there exist no sequential stages through which the practitioner must ascend toward Buddhahood, so--the text suggests--there exists no attainment in the sense of a final destination from which one cannot backslide. The realization of one's identity with the ultimate reality can evidently be gained, lost, and regained at any moment:

When one realizes that his own mind and the Buddha mind are one really one mind, then there is no evil karma that can obstruct him at the moment of death, and no false thinking that can detain him in the samsaric realm. Because he knows that all dharmas are precisely the Buddha-Dharma, he has no need of a good teacher to instruct him....Walking, standing, sitting or lying down, in all cases, his conduct is perfectly united and of one essence with the Buddha mind....[But] because one abandons such autonomous practice and dwells instead in the mind of one-sided thoughts arising from ignorance and false conceptualizing,...he moves from darkness into darkness, ever going against the Buddha-Dharma. How sad, how grievous! But if at this moment he were to come to himself, rectify his thinking and return to his enlightenment, he would know that there is no becoming a Buddha in this very body apart from himself.¹⁰

In its denial of enlightenment as a linear process, the "Sôkanmon shô" goes so far as to equate with delusion and suffering the entire notion of sequential stages of practice. In support of this position, it cites a statement by T'ien-t'ai founder Chih-i (538-597), as recorded in the Miao-fa lien-hua ching hsüan-i (Profound meaning of the Lotus Sûtra), to the effect that those who form a connection with the Lotus Sûtra can "put an end to the higher cycle of birth and death." By this statement, the Hsüan-i of course means that practitioners of the sûtra can free themselves even from the transmigration undergone by sages and enter final nirvâṇa. However, the "Sôkanmon shô" interprets his statement to mean freeing oneself, not from transmigration or rebirth at all, but from sequential models of the path:

...gradually they [the bodhisattvas of provisional teachings] advance and ascend, waiting throughout the passage of kalpas to attain the remote [goal] of Buddhahood. This is called "the higher cycle of birth and death." To abandon a lower stage is called "death." To ascend to a higher stage is called "birth." This sort of higher cycle of birth and death is the suffering that goes on in the pure lands.

Now because we ordinary worldlings practice the Lotus Sûtra here in this impure land,...we put an end to the rebirth undergone by bodhisattvas in the pure lands....We condense the higher circle of birth and death within a single lifetime and attain the Buddha Way.¹¹

This passage provides an example of a technique

often used in medieval Japanese Buddhist texts, that of quoting from sūtras or traditional commentaries to lend authority to their arguments, while at the same time construing the passages quoted in a way utterly unrelated to, or even at odds with, their original meaning so as to make them appear to endorse a new interpretation. Here, a phrase from the authoritative commentary of Chih-i ("put an end to the higher circle of birth and death"), which itself presupposes a scheme of gradual progress toward enlightenment over the course of successive lifetimes, is turned on its head, as it were, to support the position that such gradual progress is illusory, and that enlightenment is accessible in this very lifetime. Tension is thus deliberately generated between the original meaning of the commentarial passage and the new, hongaku interpretation being imposed upon it. This tension may in turn have been intended to trigger the conceptual breakthrough thought necessary for the practitioner to stop seeking enlightenment as a temporally remote goal and realize that inherently, one is Buddha already.

As can be seen in the above-quoted passage, the "Sôkanmon shô" accords primacy to "this impure land" where "we ordinary worldlings practice the Lotus Sûtra" over the pure lands where bodhisattvas exhaust themselves in pursuit of Buddhahood conceived as a

distant goal. This devaluing of the pure lands in favor of the present world is repeated in this essay's account of what transpires at death. At the last moment, it says, the practitioner of the Lotus Sûtra will:

...without obstruction achieve the highest grade of rebirth in the Land of Tranquil Light. Then in the space of a moment he will return to the dream of birth and death in the nine realms, filling the lands of the dharma-realms with his body and entering the bodies of all living beings with his mind. Urging and inducing from within, drawing and leading from without,...he will express the free and supernatural power of compassion, broadly benefiting living beings without obstruction.¹²

Rebirth in a pure land, the goal aspired to by many medieval Japanese Buddhists, is here shown to represent the merest interval on the way back to the "real" place of Buddhist practice--the samsaric realm. By implication, the "real" bodhisattva is not the sage aspiring to Buddhahood in the pure lands but the ordinary person who, in realizing the Lotus Sûtra's truth of nonduality, obtains unobstructed freedom in the phenomenal realm and thus can save all beings.

Though it deals with the subject of original enlightenment, the "Sôkanmon shô" cannot properly be classed as an "oral transmission" (kuden hômon) text, as it does not claim to record a specific teaching passed down from master to disciple. Nevertheless, it follows the convention of such texts in concluding with a stern

injunction to secrecy. In the case of the "Sôkanmon shô," where no question of protecting the interests of a particular lineage appears to be involved, the intent of this admonition may have been simply to guard against misunderstanding, and hence abuse, of the original enlightenment doctrine itself. As the text says, one who grasps this insight "has no need of a good teacher to instruct him"; this knowledge is liberating and thus also potentially dangerous. The original enlightenment message is one of almost dizzying freedom, of limits transcended and human possibilities extended almost beyond the conceivable. Yet perhaps the authors of such texts were well aware of how easily they could be misunderstood to mean that, because one is in essence Buddha to begin with, no further endeavor is required.

Tradition holds that Nichiren wrote the "Sôkanmon shô" in the tenth month of the second year of Kôan (1279), three years before his death, while in retirement on Mount Minobu in the province of Kai, to his follower Toki Jônin (1216-1299), a man of considerable erudition to whom Nichiren sent many letters and doctrinal essays. One problem with this account is that the "Sôkanmon shô" does not appear in Toki's own catalogue of the works he received from Nichiren. As mentioned earlier, however, a copy of it is listed in an early index compiled in Kôei 3 (1344),

and the compiler of this index, Jôgyô-in Nichiyû (1298-1374), belonged to Toki's lineage.¹³ This may serve to explain why Toki has traditionally been regarded as this essay's recipient.

Another, more troublesome difficulty, concerns the date. Valid reasons exist for doubting that Nichiren would have written this text as late as 1279. First are its unlikely sources of inspiration. The "Sôkanmon shô" draws on the "Jigyô ryakki" (An abbreviated comment on self-practice) attributed to the Tendai prelate Genshin (942-1017) and still more heavily on its commentary, the "Jigyô ryakki chû" attributed to Genshin's disciple Kakuchô (d. 1034). It also quotes in its entirety the "Chôdagaku-ketsu" (Repudiating the [doctrinal] studies of other [sects]) section from the Juketsu shû of the fifth abbot of Mt. Hiei, Chishô Daishi Enchin (814-891), referring to him in laudatory terms as "Sentoku Daishi" (Virtuous Predecessor and Great Teacher). From Nichiren's authenticated writings, however, it is clear that by as late as 1279, he no longer held these eminent Tendai masters of the past in much esteem. Genshin he chastized for his role in promoting Pure Land practices by authoring the "Ôjô yôshû" (Essentials of Rebirth), and Enchin he condemned for adulterating the Tendai Lotus tradition with Shingon esotericism. In questioning the authenticity of the "Sôkanmon shô," Asai

Yôrin noted, quite understandably, that he found it difficult to see how Nichiren could have praised Enchin by calling him "Sentoku Daishi."¹⁴ Miyazaki Eishû has also suggested that the obvious influence on the "Sôkanmon shô" of scholars whose position Nichiren had rejected provides grounds for questioning whether Nichiren in fact wrote it at all.¹⁵

Further problems also present themselves. The "Sôkanmon shô" is written in kanbun or literary Chinese, but by the period of his retirement to Mount Minobu in Kai (1274-82), Nichiren had ceased almost entirely to write in kanbun, preferring the kana-majiri style, a mixture of Chinese characters and the Japanese syllabary. This essay also mentions Śākyamuni Buddha's transfer of the Lotus Sûtra, described in the sûtra's twenty-first chapter, to a throng of bodhisattvas who have emerged from beneath the earth, but does not specifically name their leader, Bodhisattva Superior Conduct (Skt. Viśiṣṭacāritra. Jpn. Jôgyô). By the time of the Sado exile (1271-74), however, Nichiren had begun to closely identify his efforts with the mission of this bodhisattva--whose task is to spread the Lotus Sûtra in the evil, latter age after the Buddha's death--and almost always mentioned him by name when speaking of the bodhisattvas who emerged from the earth. And perhaps most puzzling of all, while the "Sôkanmon shô" speaks of

practicing the Lotus Sûtra, it contains no reference whatsoever to chanting the daimoku, which seems an odd omission indeed for a major essay by Nichiren written as late as 1279. In fact, this writing contains virtually nothing that can be regarded as distinctively characteristic of Nichiren as apart from the Eshin school of medieval Tendai thought, except perhaps its strong identification of the Lotus Sûtra with the Final Dharma age.¹⁶ Nor--subjective and imprecise as such an observation must remain--does it read for the most part like Nichiren's mature style. One notes, for example, some redundancy in certain passages and repeated use of the connective "therefore" when no logical connection is being indicated. Nichiren's writing is usually more polished.

One possible answer to these difficulties, of course, could be that Nichiren simply did not write the "Sôkanmon shô"--that we have here either an apocryphon produced by later disciples or, more probably, a Tendai work that somehow crept into the canon and has been erroneously transmitted as a Nichiren text. Balanced against this suggestion we find, as noted earlier, the listing of the "Sôkanmon shô" in a very early index of Nichiren's writings, dated Kôei 3 or 1344, sixty-two years after his death and almost a half-century before the earliest date suggested for the compilation of the

rokunai. While 1344 is certainly not early enough to rule out the possibility of forgery or mistaken authorship, it still suggests that one should not too quickly dismiss the possibility that the "Sôkanmon shô" could be genuine. In this regard, another suggestion may be worth considering: that Nichiren did in fact write this essay but at a much earlier point in his career, a suggestion that Shigyô Kaishû has referred to in passing.¹⁷ Before the Sado exile (1271-74), and especially before the submission of the "Risshô ankoku ron" (1260), Nichiren still regarded Enchin and Genshin as important Tendai forbears and did not yet consider himself fully independent of their tradition.

Nichiren's early essays include several written in kanbun, and up until his banishment to Sado Island, he had not yet begun to speak of himself as carrying out the task of Bodhisattva Superior Conduct. Moreover, while such correspondences are by no means adequate to establish authorship, the "Sôkanmon shô" does contain some elements more common to Nichiren's early writings than to his later works.

One such element is the authority accorded to Enchin in this essay. Were one to set up for discussion's sake the hypothesis that the "Sôkanmon shô" could be an early work, then the quotation of the entirety of the "Chôdagaku-ketsu" section from Enchin's

Juketsu shû might tend to argue in favor, rather than against, Nichiren as author. Though Nichiren was eventually to criticize Enchin for placing the Lotus Sûtra on the same level as the esoteric teachings, the Juketsu shû appears to have exerted considerable influence on his thinking.¹⁸ The "Chôdagaku" section evidently impressed him especially, for he quotes passages from it in no fewer than six writings besides the "Sôkanmon shô."¹⁹ Of these, the Chû hokekyô (Annotated Lotus Sûtra), Nichiren's personal copy of the sûtra in which he inscribed relevant passages from various commentaries, quotes the "Chôdagaku-ketsu" in its entirety.

The "Sôkanmon shô" also shares with some of Nichiren's early writings the use of a concept known as "five-element thought" (godai shisô). An extensive section of the "Sôkanmon shô" sets forth this discourse as a way of establishing the identity of the practitioner with the primordially enlightened Buddha whose body is the entire universe. This section begins with a long quotation from Chan-jan's commentary on Chih-i's Moho chih-kuan drawing on traditional Chinese thought that identifies the five organs of the human body with the five planets in heaven, the five sacred mountains on earth, the five movements of yin and yang, the five constant virtues in society, etc., thus demonstrating

the essential unity of the individual and the macrocosm. The "Sôkanmon shô" then subsumes these correspondences within the five characters of the daimoku, equating them with the whole of phenomenal reality:

The five elements are earth, water, fire, wind and space. These five major elements are also identified with the five skandhas, the five precepts, the five constant virtues, the five directions, the five kinds of wisdom and the five periods. They are but varying explanations of a single thing....In the present [Lotus] sûtra, these are opened up and explained as the five aspects of the Buddha nature and the seeds of the five wisdom Buddhas inherent in the minds of all living beings. These are in fact the five characters myô-hô-ren-ge-kyô. These five characters form the substance of the human body. Inherent and constantly abiding, they are the Tathâgata of original enlightenment.²⁰

Such correspondences of fives occur with some frequency in Japanese texts of the medieval period and derive from two main sources: (1) traditional Chinese thought, incorporated into Buddhism, which sees all things as arising through the interaction of the five elements of earth, wood, fire, metal and water; and (2) esoteric Buddhism, which identifies the five great elements that constitute all things--earth, water, fire, wind and space--with the Dharma body of Mâhavairocana. References to five-element thought appear only occasionally in Nichiren's later works, but as a young man, he seems to have been intrigued by this discourse. His earliest known work, the "Kaitai sokushin jôbutsu

gi"²¹ written in Ninji 3 (1242) when he was twenty-one, as well as two other works dated respectively Kangen 2 (1243) and Kangen 3 (1244),²² equate the five precepts with the five elements, five sense faculties, five organs, five directions, and so forth. As further evidence of his exposure to this discourse, in Kenchô 3 (1251), while studying in the region of the capital at Kyoto, Nichiren transcribed the "Gorin kuji myô himitsugi shaku"²³ of Kakuban (1095-1143), which attempts a fusion of Shingon and Pure Land thought. This text sets up a whole series of correspondences of fives, based on the five Sanskrit letters a vi ra hûm kham, which represent the five universal elements of earth, water, fire, wind and space and the enlightenment of Mahāvairocana. (The identification of these five Sanskrit characters with the five elements, frequently seen in Shingon esoteric texts, may have inspired a similar identification between the five elements and the five characters of the Lotus Sûtra's title that appears occasionally in writings of the Tendai/Lotus tradition.²⁴) A fragment of a chart in Nichiren's handwriting,²⁵ assigned in the standard edition to "around Kenchô 6," or 1254, when he would have been thirty-three, also identifies the five precepts with no less than sixteen different categories of fives. And a recently discovered chart²⁶ (which Asai could not have

known about), also in Nichiren's holograph and dealing with the five elements, has been dated as belonging to the period around the end of Kenji and the beginning of Kôan (1277-78), suggesting that Nichiren may still have retained an interest in this concept even during the latter part of his life.

Asai Yôrin, evidently disturbed by the esoteric origins of "five-element" thought, finds it sufficient reason to question the authenticity of, or at least to relegate to a subsidiary position, any work attributed to Nichiren in which it appears. As he writes:

The philosophy of the interpenetration and constant abiding of the five elements appearing in these works [i.e., the "Sôkanmon shô" and others] is identical to the esoteric thought of Eastern [Shingon] and Tendai esotericism....No matter how one may claim that he was influenced by the times, it is unthinkable that [Nichiren] Shônin would have so heavily adopted the thought of Eastern esotericism, which he himself criticized as a doctrine that would "destroy the nation," or of Tendai esotericism, which he denounced, after his enlightenment, for confusing the provisional with the true. If we assume that he did in fact adopt it, then wherein lie the grounds for his criticism of Eastern and Tendai esotericism?²⁷

Despite its esoteric roots, however, by the thirteenth century, five-element thought had become so much a part of the common intellectual ground that probably no one any longer considered it the unique possession of a particular sect. Eisai (1141-1215), for example, revered as the founder of Japanese Rinzai Zen,

employed five-element thought to argue the beneficial effects of drinking tea.²⁸ Nichiren's post-Sado criticism of the Shingon and Tendai esoteric traditions was aimed chiefly at their denigration, as he saw it, of the supreme position of the Lotus Sûtra, which their scriptural classifications ranked as equal, or even subservient, to the Mahāvairocana-sûtra. But nothing in any extant text attributed to him says anything at all critical of five-element thought or of the notion of the interpenetration of the individual and the macrocosm that it represents. It would be a mistake to assume that Nichiren's criticism of the esoteric traditions implies that he rejected all esoteric elements in formulating his thought. If he had, he would never, for example, have written the Sanskrit symbols for the esoteric deities Acala and Râgarâja on almost every mandala he inscribed, or, for that matter, have made use of a mandala at all. The "Sôkanmon shô" may not in fact be Nichiren's writing, but its use of five-element thought does not in itself constitute sufficiently convincing grounds on which to determine this.

We do not now, nor may we ever, have enough evidence to state conclusively whether Nichiren did or did not write this essay. It remains significant, however, for the role it has played historically in the interpretation of Nichiren's thought, and as an

expression--despite minor stylistic imperfections, one of great literary worth--of one way in which the Lotus Sûtra was understood by certain medieval Japanese Buddhists.

Three Thousand Realms in a Single Thought-Moment: The "Ichinen sanzen hômon" and the "Jûnyoze no koto"

Here we will consider two shorter works, traditionally dated Shôka 2, or 1258. Both contain a number of points that cast doubt upon Nichiren's authorship and have consequently been relegated to the zokuhen or "subsidiary texts" section of the Shôwa standard edition. Neither has the literary power of the "Sôkanmon shô," nor have they traditionally been valued as major works. They are of great interest, nonetheless, for what they can tell us about the historical development of thought concerning the chanting of the daimoku. Nichiren himself did not initiate this practice,²⁹ but he was the one who elevated it to the status of an exclusive practice, one uniquely suited to the Final Dharma age, and provided it with a theoretical foundation. From those of his writings known to be genuine, we can trace developments in his concept of the daimoku over the course of his lifetime. These two problematic essays discuss the daimoku in more detail than many of Nichiren's

authenticated writings and reflect how it was once interpreted, if not by Nichiren himself, then by some part of his community.

As background to the discussion, in 1258, Nichiren was thirty-seven and by his own account engaged in research for the "Risshô ankoku ron," which he would present to the authorities two years later. Among the writings he produced in this year we find one called the "Ichidai shôgyô taii" (The cardinal meaning of the sacred teachings of the Buddha's lifetime),³⁰ hereafter referred to as the "Taii." Since the "Taii" has survived in the form of a copy made by a contemporary disciple, Niidakyô Ajari Nichimoku (1260-1333), it is considered one of the most reliable documents from the early period of Nichiren's career. It concludes that Lotus Sûtra stands supreme among all teachings and identifies the ultimate principle of that sûtra as the perfect co-penetration of all dharmas, expressed in classical Tendai terminology as the "single thought-moment that is three thousand realms" (ichinen sanzen). Toward the end of this essay, Nichiren remarks, "Concerning the three thousand realms in a single thought-moment, I will write in detail separately."³¹

This "separately" presents a subject of great interest, for the collection of Nichiren's writings contains no fewer than four essays, all traditionally

dated like the "Taii" in Shôka 2, or 1258, that deal with the three thousand realms in a single thought-moment.³² All four are considered problematic, and it is a matter of question whether they were really written in 1258 or merely assigned to that year by later scholars because they appeared to represent the "separate" discussion of the "three thousand realms in a single thought-moment" referred to in the "Taii." Here we will consider the two regarded as the more problematic: the "Ichinen sanzen hômon" (The doctrine of three thousand realms in a single thought-moment) and the "Jûnyoze no koto" (On the ten suchnesses).

Both these texts interpret the Lotus Sûtra in the same manner as the "Sôkanmon shô," as teaching the ultimate identity of the Buddha and the ordinary beings. They also echo the dream analogy of the "Sôkanmon shô," using such expressions as "awakening from the dream of false conceptualization" and "returning to the waking reality of original enlightenment." But in contrast to the "Sôkanmon shô," which speaks only of the "practice of Myôhô-rence-kyô [i.e., the Lotus Sûtra]," these essays associate the awakening to original enlightenment with a specific religious act, that of chanting the daimoku. We will begin with the "Ichinen sanzen hômon."

This essay opens with the question: "What is it about the Lotus Sûtra that surpasses all others?" and

answers that only this sūtra contains the doctrines of the threefold contemplation in a single mind and the three thousand realms in a single thought-moment. In a passage that virtually duplicates the wording of Nichiren's above-mentioned essay "Taii," it describes where and when Chih-i first expounded the three thousand realms in a single thought-moment and cites a quotation from the sixth T'ien-t'ai patriarch Chan-jan interpreting this doctrine as the identification of one's own body and mind in the moment of enlightenment with the totality of all that is.³³

"Utter helplessness," wrote Leon Hurvitz some twenty years ago, "is the initial feeling of anyone who sets himself the task of describing in meaningful non-Buddhist language what Chih-i meant"³⁴ by the three thousand realms in a single thought-moment. Pioneering work by Western scholars of T'ien-t'ai Buddhism, including Hurvitz himself, has rendered the task marginally easier. No doubt the complexity of its technical language has played a considerable role in helping Tendai Buddhism to remain, in Stanley Weinstein's words, a "neglected tradition." To avoid too long a digression, the reader is referred to the Appendix for a detailed explanation; here, as in the preceding chapter, we shall make do with saying that the "single thought-moment that is three thousand realms"

represents the perfect interpenetration and identification, even in the briefest conceivable space of time, of one's own mind (the "single thought-moment") and the whole of reality (the "three thousand realms").

In the T'ien-t'ai tradition, insight into the interpenetration of all things was associated with complex meditative techniques set forth by Chih-i in his meditation manual, the Moho chih-kuan (Great calming and insight). While these techniques had tended to become increasingly simplified since Saichô's introduction of T'ien-t'ai Buddhism to Japan, they nevertheless remained accessible chiefly to those leading a monastic life. The interest of the "Ichinen sanzen hômon" lies in its indication of ways in which alternatives to traditional Tendai meditation, accessible to broader groups of people yet said to yield identical results, were beginning to develop.

One of these alternatives evidently involved an abbreviated form of sūtra recitation. The "Skilful Means" chapter of the Lotus Sūtra contains the following passage, upon which Chih-i developed his doctrine of the interpenetration of the dharmas:

Only a Buddha and a Buddha together can fathom the true aspect of the dharmas, that is to say, the suchness of their characteristics, the suchness of their nature, the suchness of their essence, the suchness of their power, the suchness of their activity, the suchness of their causes, the suchness of their

conditions, the suchness of their effects, the suchness of their recompenses and the suchness of their ultimate equality from beginning to end.³⁵

These are the "ten suchnesses" (jûnyoze), the true aspect of reality common to all beings from hell-dwellers to Buddhas, the basis upon which all categories of beings, the so-called "ten realms," can be said to interpenetrate. In the Hsüan-i, Chih-i further interpreted this passage in terms of the three truths of Emptiness, provisional existence and the Middle Way, pointing out that by appropriately transposing the punctuation of the Chinese text, this passage could be made to yield the meaning of the three truths.³⁶ These three truths form the underlying structure of T'ien-t'ai thought, and an important meditation of that school, the "threefold contemplation in a single mind" (isshin sangan), aimed at perceiving, in terms of one's own mind, that all things simultaneously manifest the three truths of Emptiness, provisional existence and the Middle Way. The "Ichinen sanzen hômon" advocates, as an alternative to practicing the threefold contemplation as a meditative discipline, that one simply recite three times the above-quoted passage from the Lotus Sûtra dealing with the ten suchnesses while contemplating its threefold meaning. By these three recitations, it claims, one can simultaneously realize the three truths

and acquire the Buddha's three bodies and three virtues. This is historically interesting, in light of the fact that this sūtra passage is still recited three times in each reading of the "Skilful Means" chapter as part of the daily observances of Nichiren Buddhists today.³⁷

Still greater interest, however, lies in this essay's claim that chanting the daimoku or title of the Lotus Sūtra is fully equivalent to the meditation on the three thousand realms in a single thought-moment:

The meditation on the three thousand realms in a single thought-moment and the meditation method of the threefold contemplation in a single mind are both contained within the five characters myō-hō-ren-ge-kyō, and the five characters myō-hō-ren-ge-kyō are contained within our mind....Thus, when we chant Myōhō-
renge-kyō, the Buddha of original enlightenment within our mind appears.³⁸

It also stipulates:

Persons of wisdom should practice contemplation together with reading and recitation [of the sūtra]. Ignorant persons, though they chant the daimoku alone, will be encompassed within this principle.³⁹

Here we find the daimoku being described literally as a "meditation container" and recommended as a practice particularly suited to "ignorant persons," one that will enable them to enjoy the same fruits as the threefold contemplation and the meditation on the three thousand realms in a single thought-moment. The "Sōzai ichinen shō," another of the four essays dated Shōka 2 or 1258 that deal with ichinen sanzen, reads in a

similar vein:

Question: If an ignorant person who cannot read even a single word chants Namu-myôhō-
renge-kyô, what merit is there in that?

Answer: Even in the case of an illiterate person who cannot recognize a single character, if he has faith and chants [the daimoku], then among the three karmas of the body, mouth and mind, he first forms the merit of actions of the mouth. And if he forms this merit, the Buddha's seed will be planted in his breast, and he will surely become a person who is liberated.⁴⁰

These references to chanting the daimoku as a practice especially suited to "ignorant persons" appear to be consistent with Nichiren's own thinking concerning the daimoku before his exile to Sado, as far as we can know from his authenticated writings. Several of his essays from this pre-Sado period suggest that there exist two equally valid modes of practice of the Lotus Sûtra: for those capable of performing it, the traditional Tendai meditation coupled with the daimoku, and for those unequal to meditative disciplines, the chanting of the daimoku alone. For example, the "Shô Hokke daimoku shô," written in Bun'ô 1 (1260), shortly before the submission of the "Risshô ankoku ron," reads:

One's constant practice should be chanting the daimoku, Namu-myôhō-
renge-kyô....Because ours is an age in which the ignorant are many, precedence is not given to the meditation on three thousand realms in a single thought-moment. But those with a will to do so should be all means practice and study, and meditate on this."⁴¹

Nichiren's "Jisshô shô," written to a monk-

disciple in Bun'ei 8 (1271), suggests that the distinction between "wise persons," capable of meditative practices in conjunction with the daimoku, and "ignorant persons" to whom the daimoku alone is suitable, is essentially one of clergy versus laity:

What should always be upon one's lips is Namu-myôhô-rengé-kyô. What should always reside within one's heart is the contemplation of the single thought-moment possessing three thousand realms. This is the practice and understanding of wise persons. As for the lay persons of Japan, one should just have them chant Namu-myôhô-rengé-kyô exclusively. The name is invariably accompanied by the virtue of the essence.⁴²

It may be that Nichiren's original emphasis on the daimoku stemmed partially from a concern for the religious needs of a growing number of lay people in Kamakura who were becoming his followers. This extremely simple form of practice no doubt served to make the Lotus Sûtra accessible to a much wider range of persons than those able to engage in meditation, and it is for this reason that Nichiren's teaching is customarily grouped with the "popular" Buddhist movements of the Kamakura period.⁴³

In Nichiren's writings from the time of the Sado exile and later, however, usage of the term "ignorant persons" expands to mean not only the laity but all people of the Final Dharma age in general. We see this, for example, in a famous passage from his major work

"Kanjin honzon shô" (1273):

For the sake of those ignorant of the three thousand realms in a single thought-moment, the Buddha, arousing great compassion, wrapped up this gem within the five characters and hung it around the necks of the children of the latter age.⁴⁴

Also from the Sado period on, references to meditation on the three thousand realms in a single thought-moment as an alternative mode of practice virtually disappear from Nichiren's writings, and the daimoku alone is stressed as the only authentic practice for the Final Dharma age.⁴⁵ Moreover, the "three thousand realms in a single thought-moment" itself comes to be presented, less frequently as a truth to be discerned or perceived, as in meditation, but rather as inherent in the moment of faith. In this sense, the view of the daimoku seen in the "Ichinen sanzen hômon" differs somewhat from Nichiren's eventual conclusion, resonating more closely with his earlier thought. It is a valuable document, nonetheless, for the insight it offers into the process by which the practice of chanting daimoku was emerging as an accompaniment or even an alternative to Lotus-centered meditative disciplines, much in the same way that nembutsu recitation had emerged alongside, and eventually superceded, the various visualization meditations associated with the Buddha Amida.

Now let us briefly consider the enlightenment of the Lotus Sûtra as described in this essay. Like the "Sôkanmon shô," the "Ichinen sanzen hômon" denies any ontological gap between the Buddha and ordinary beings; the distinction between them is reduced to whether or not one realizes that one is Buddha inherently:

This triple-bodied Tathâgata exists nowhere else; we ourselves are...the Buddha of original enlightenment who possesses the three bodies in one. One who knows this is called a Tathâgata, a sage, awakened. One who does not know it is called an ordinary worldling, an unenlightened being, deluded.⁴⁶

Just as Buddhahood in these texts is not premised on the acquiring of virtue or merit presently external to oneself, so it does not demand the extirpation of the passions and defilements. Rather, in the moment of awakening, the worldly passions of the ordinary person, just as they are, are revalorized as expressions of the ultimate reality:

We awaken from the dream of false conceptualization, and the orb of the moon of original enlightenment shines forth in all its purity. [In that moment,] the fleshly body born of father and mother, the body bound by worldly passions, is precisely the Tathâgata who is originally inherent and constantly abides. This is called attaining Buddhahood in this very body. It is also called the worldly passions being precisely enlightenment and birth and death being precisely nirvâṇa. At this time, when we illuminate the dharma-realm and observe it, everything is the single principle of the Buddha Way; the Buddha and the beings are one.⁴⁷

In the moment of enlightenment, the text continues,

"the worlds of the ten directions are all the Pure Land of Tranquil light. Which place can be called the pure land of Amida or of Yakushi?" Where the "Sôkanmon shô," as noted above, valorizes the sahâ world over the pure lands, the "Ichinen sanzen hômon" here denies any real distinction between the two. A similar use of nondual original enlightenment thought to repudiate the idea of a pure land postulated in contradistinction to the present, defiled world characterizes several of Nichiren's early writings.

To further undercut notions of any essential distinction between the Buddha and ordinary beings, the "Ichinen sanzen hômon" deliberately reverses the parent/child relationship conventionally said to exist between the two. Since enlightenment is a matter of our own awakening, the text says, "we are the father and mother of wondrous enlightenment, and the Buddha is the child we have begotten."⁴⁸ A Buddha who is our child is presumably much more difficult to externalize than a Buddha who is our parent; we cannot count on him to save us, but must rather assume the responsibility for manifesting him. This overturning of convention in identifying the beings as parent and the Buddha as their child is justified by a historical analogy:

There are many cases in which children surpass their parents. Chung-hua revered his foolish father and became known as a worthy man.

P'ei-king, even after becoming emperor, revered his father,...[but] the son...was the one looked up to as the ruler. Though the Buddha is the child, he is admirable and manifests awakening. Though ordinary worldlings are his parents, they are foolish and have not yet awakened.⁴⁹

Though it is of course impossible to know for certain, this last passage has the ring of something heard directly from Nichiren, who from time to time employed figures from Chinese history in this way to illustrate points of doctrine.⁵⁰

According to the "Ichinen sanzen hômon," the attainment of Buddhahood has two aspects, an inner realization achieved in this lifetime and outward signs manifested at death:

When we chant [the name of] the Tathâgata of original enlightenment who possesses the three bodies in one, [that Tathâgata] emerges. Attaining Buddhahood by realizing this inwardly in the present world is called becoming a Buddha in this very body. When one dies, one radiates light; this is called the attainment of Buddhahood as an outward function. This is what is meant by becoming a Buddha in the next life.⁵¹

This passage connects the "Ichinen sanzen hômon" to an on-going discussion, considerably predating Nichiren, about what exactly "becoming a Buddha in this very body" meant if one did not manifest the physical marks of Buddhahood. It also reflects a certain tension in the religious thought of the medieval period, which on one hand sought to make ultimate truth accessible in the

present moment, and yet, on the other, privileged the moment of death as a time when whether one had won salvation or was destined to fall back into the circle of transmigration might become known by manifest signs.

Several problems in the "Ichinen sanzen hômon" combine to raise questions about Nichiren's authorship. The first occurs in the passage dealing with sûtra recitation, which states, "In this sect, in accordance with T'ien-t'ai's interpretation, [the ten suchnesses] are recited three times...."⁵² Asai Yôrin, in his critique of this essay, rightly questions the expression "this sect" (tôshû), pointing out that Nichiren never referred to his own community as a sect.⁵³ Rather, he used such expressions as "Nichiren's disciples and lay supporters" (Nichiren ga deshi danna) or "my followers" (waga ichimon). It is possible of course that "this sect" could refer to the Tendai sect, for, as we have seen earlier, Nichiren continued to identify himself with Tendai until fairly late in his career. Nevertheless, the expression "this sect" is not characteristic of his usage.

A second possible problem concerns a criticism of Zen that appears in the "Ichinen sanzen hômon," attacking Zen claims to represent a "separate transmission outside the sûtras." This claim did indeed provide a frequent target for Nichiren's polemics

against Zen, but whether or not he had begun to formulate his criticisms as early as 1258 is a point of some disagreement. He would certainly have known about Zen developments, having arrived in Kamakura in 1253, the same year that the Chinese Zen master Lan-chi Tao-lung (1213-1278) became the first abbot of the newly-erected Kenchô-ji built by Hôjô Tokiyori. The Nichiren canon also includes other works from the 1250s criticizing Zen,⁵⁴ but at least one scholar, Tamura Yoshirô, has cast doubt on their authenticity, suggesting that Nichiren did not embark on a detailed critique of Zen until around the time of the Sado exile (1271).⁵⁵ Tamura's theory remains to be verified, but until it is either confirmed or disproven, a question mark must remain concerning so early a date as 1258 for any work attributed to Nichiren containing an elaborate attack on Zen.

A final question concerning the "Ichinen sanzen hômon" arises from the following passage:

In spring and autumn one prepares the fields, and, though some may ripen sooner and others later, within the year one can surely gather the harvest. Practitioners of the Lotus Sûtra may include those of superior, intermediate and lesser capacity, but they will all assuredly within this one lifetime attain Buddhahood.⁵⁶

This sort of classification of practitioners into different levels of capacity does not seem to have been

characteristic of Nichiren's thinking. The nearest thing to it we find is the distinction in his early writings, discussed above, drawn between those capable of practicing meditation together with the daimoku and those for whom the daimoku alone is best suited. Rather, we find a tendency to minimize differences of individual capacity and instead stress the power of the Lotus Sûtra to save all beings equally. There exists no reason, of course, why Nichiren should be expected to have consistently occupied himself with exactly the same themes and maintained exactly the same viewpoints throughout his career, but this division into superior, intermediate and lesser capacity seems somewhat atypical. The above passage is also interesting from a textual standpoint, as it associates the "Ichinen sanzen hômon" with another problematic text, the "Jûnyoze no koto," to be discussed below.

The "Ichinen sanzen hômon" was clearly written within the Nichiren community, by someone who had access to Nichiren's essay "Ichidai shôkyo taii," which, as noted earlier, the "Ichinen sanzen hômon" duplicates in part. But at present, not enough data is available to determine for certain whether this essay in fact represents Nichiren's own discussion of the "three thousand realms in a single thought-moment" that he had promised in the "Taii" to write about separately, or a

redaction by a disciple based on material he had heard from Nichiren, or a work written independently by a later follower, perhaps to provide a text that would correspond to the separate discussion to which the "Taii" refers.

We move on now to the "Jûnyoze no koto" (On the ten suchnesses), an essay whose authorship was questioned long before the modern period. Some of the earliest commentators suggested that it closely resembled some other writing of the Tendai sect, though they could not agree as to the title of the latter or its author.⁵⁷ Insofar as may be possible, the mystery was solved in this century by the investigative efforts of Shigyô Kaishû, who discovered that substantial parts of this writing virtually duplicate an essay in the original enlightenment genre, attributed to Genshin and titled "Hokke sokushin jôbutsu yôki" (Essentials of attaining Buddhahood in this very body through the Lotus Sûtra).⁵⁸ The "Jûnyoze no koto," Shigyô says, represents only a "liberal translation, an expanded commentary" on the "Hokke sokushin jôbutsu yôki."⁵⁹ Asai Yôrin, citing Shigyô's research, terms the "Jûnyoze no koto" a "mere restatement" of the "Yôki."⁶⁰ Miyazaki Eishû goes so far as to classify it under the heading of "mistaken transmissions," works written by others that have been handed down in error as Nichiren's writings.⁶¹

On comparing the two texts, one sees that the "Jûnyoze no koto" is indeed a composite text; major portions of the "Yôki" are embedded in the "Jûnyoze no koto." Nevertheless, a couple points of difference make the "Jûnyoze no koto" something more than a "mere restatement" of the other text. The first of these, as we shall see, is the particular practice that it emphasizes.

The "Jûnyoze no koto" opens with a long passage asserting the essential identity of the Buddha and the ordinary worldling by equating the characteristics, nature and essence (i.e., the first three of the ten suchnesses) of ordinary persons with the three bodies of the primordially enlightened Tathâgata. This passage, couched almost entirely in the formidable shorthand of Tendai technical terminology, virtually duplicates the opening passage of the "Hokke sokushin jôbutsu yôki."

However, when it comes to the question of what practice one should carry out to realize inherent enlightenment, the two essays diverge. The concluding section of the "Hokke sokushin jôbutsu yôki" says:

...for one who dwells in this contemplation [of the identity of oneself and the original Buddha] and holds this sûtra, reading and reciting it, Bodhisattva Samantabhadra, in accordance with his original vow, will appear in his actual body before that person and protect him....One who reads and recites the sûtra with this faith and this contemplation forms the merit of reciting it one time, ten

times, a hundred times, a thousand times.⁶²

In contrast, the "Jûnyoze no koto" reads:

When you believe in this [identity of oneself and the Buddha] and chant Namu-myôhō-rence-kyô even once, then that is awakening to [the meaning of] the Lotus Sûtra and reciting its entirety in accordance with its teachings. [Chanting Namu-myôhō-rence-kyô] ten times is equivalent to ten recitations of the entire sûtra; a hundred times, to a hundred recitations; and a thousand times, to a thousand recitations.⁶³

Here we can see how the author of the "Jûnyoze no koto"--whether Nichiren or a disciple--borrowed from the "Hokke sokushin jôbutsu yôki" attributed to Genshin, assimilating its explanation of the identity of the Buddha and ordinary worldlings to a new form of practice quite different from that recommended in the original text. This shift between the two texts in the form of practice, from recitation of the sûtra in expectation of seeing Bodhisattva Samantabhadra to chanting the daimoku, may suggest a shift in audience as well, from the traditional class of jikyôsha (those who hold and recite the Lotus Sûtra as their object of personal devotion) to an emerging group of people who embraced the simpler practice of the daimoku. To recite the Lotus Sûtra, one must be able to read Chinese and be in a position to acquire a copy of the text, while the daimoku would be available to a greater range of people. The majority of Nichiren's contemporary followers

probably were in fact literate,⁶⁴ but the extreme simplicity of the daimoku would eventually open it to a broad spectrum of social classes. The "Jûnyoze no koto" shows how the extremely sophisticated metaphysics of the Tendai intellectual tradition were being welded, within the Nichiren community, to a more widely accessible form of practice.

The claim made for this practice in the above passage, that one utterance of the daimoku contains the merit of reciting the entire sūtra, can be found throughout Nichiren's writings. For example, a letter dated Kôan 1 (1278) reads:

The heart of the entire sūtra is its title, Namu-myôhō-rence-kyô. If one chants this morning and evening, that indeed is truly reciting the entire Lotus Sūtra. Chanting the daimoku twice is reading the entire sūtra twice, chanting a hundred daimoku equals a hundred readings of the sūtra, and a thousand daimoku, a thousand readings.⁶⁵

Shigyô Kaishû, however, asserts that the philosophical basis of the daimoku presented in the "Jûnyoze no koto" "differs greatly" from that seen in Nichiren's major works such as the "Kaimoku shô" and "Kanjin honzon shô"; where the "Jûnyoze no koto" emphasizes original enlightenment as an inherent principle or essence (ritai hongaku) in the manner characteristic of medieval Tendai, these other works, Shigyô says, emphasize the realization of enlightenment

only in the concrete act of practice.⁶⁶ Shigyô does not explicitly address here the issue of authorship; his intent is to place the "Jûnyoze no koto" outside the scope of what can be considered normative for Nichiren's ideas.

On comparing the "Kanjin honzon shô" and the "Jûnyoze no koto," one notes the difference Shigyô refers to but feels compelled to ask if it is really all that substantial. It is true that Nichiren's distinctive doctrinal arguments for the validity of the daimoku, identifying it with the teaching of the eternal Buddha revealed in the "origin" section of the Lotus Sûtra and associating it specifically with the Final Dharma age and his own unique mission, do not appear in the "Jûnyoze no koto," but neither do they appear in any of Nichiren's writings before the Sado period. The "Jûnyoze no koto" perhaps places greater emphasis on inherent enlightenment, and the "Kanjin honzon shô," on attaining Buddhahood through faith and embracing the five characters of the daimoku. But the "Kanjin honzon shô" also discusses at great length the inherence of the Buddha nature in all beings, and both texts stress the importance of practice. It appears here, as elsewhere, that what may be only a slight difference in emphasis has been reified into a major philosophical divergence as a basis for problematizing a text that shows close

connections with medieval Tendai thought, and thus, for asserting Nichiren's independence from the earlier tradition.

As a second point of difference between the "Jûnyoze no koto" and the "Hokke sokushin jôbutsu yôki," we can point to a long passage that appears only in the "Jûnyoze no koto" and not at all in the other text. This passage carries the "Jûnyoze no koto" beyond the rather dry, doctrinal character of the "Yôki" and makes it a moving religious document. With a dramatic shift in tone, this section of the essay abandons technical terminology to discuss in relatively simple language an ever-present concern of actual practice, namely, that individual progress differs, and that frustration can become a major obstacle for those who feel they are not advancing. To quote this section in its entirety:

...in spring and summer one prepares and plants his fields, so that in autumn and winter he can gather the harvest into the granary and use it as he wishes. To wait from spring until autumn seems a long time, but since it will arrive within the year, one can manage to wait. Similarly, to enter this awakening and manifest the Buddha may seem to take a long time, but within this single lifetime you will manifest it, becoming in your own person a Buddha who possesses the three bodies in one.

Even among those who enter this path, there are those of superior, intermediate, and lesser faculties, yet they will all alike manifest [Buddhahood] within this single lifetime. Those of superior faculties perfect their awakening and manifest it on hearing [the Wonderful Dharma]. Those of intermediate

faculties can manifest it in a day, a month, a year. Those of lesser faculties do not advance and seem to be blocked, yet because enlightenment is certain within this lifetime, when such a person approaches the hour of death, then--just as one wakens from the various dreams that have appeared to him and returns to the waking state--the logic of the distorted thoughts and distorted views of birth and death and false conceptualization that he has beheld until this moment will vanish without a trace, and he will return to the waking reality of original enlightenment. Gazing around at the dharma-realm, [he will observe that] it is all the [land of the] Perfect Bliss of Tranquil Light, and that his own person, which he has habitually despised as base, is the Tathâgata of original enlightenment endowed with the three bodies in one. Of the rice that ripens in autumn, there are three strains: that which ripens early, that which ripens in mid-autumn, and that which ripens late, but it is all harvested within the year. In like manner, though people possess the distinctions of superior, intermediate and lesser faculties, they will all alike within this single lifetime comprehend that they and the Buddhas and Tathâgatas are of one essence and without duality.⁶⁷

These "distinctions of superior, intermediate and lesser faculties," illustrated with the analogy of the rice harvest, link this essay, the "Jûnyoze no koto," to the "Ichinen sanzen hômon" discussed above. An obvious connection exists between the two texts, but whether or not Nichiren wrote them, and whether or not they date from 1258, is something we cannot determine.

As we have seen, the three texts discussed thus far--the "Sôkanmon shô," "Ichinen sanzen hômon" and "Jûnyoze no koto"-- present sufficient reasons to at

least raise questions about Nichiren's authorship, quite independently of their use of original enlightenment thought. However, they have also, even chiefly, been problematized along with other texts in the Nichiren collection on the basis of images and terminology they share with medieval Tendai texts devoted to the original enlightenment discourse. First voiced by Asai Yôrin, these objections have been taken up by other scholars and have found their way into authoritative reference works such as the Nichiren Shônin ibun jiten (Dictionary of Nichiren Shônin's Writings). Here we will consider some representative examples of these objections, as they are important to understanding the sort of grounds on which the texts under discussion in this essay are being questioned. These examples also illustrate the difficulties inherent in the use of original enlightenment terminology as a litmus test for possibly apocryphal writings. All involve metaphors or specialized expressions for the ultimate identity of ordinary beings and the primordially enlightened Buddha. Part of this discussion will therefore unavoidably involve some rather technical aspects of doctrine.

(1) "Mind-lotus" imagery

Shingon esoteric texts sometimes represent the mind-nature (Skt. citta-dharmatâ) of ordinary persons as an eight-petalled lotus on which sit the nine venerable

ones--the cosmic Buddha Mahāvairocana and eight other Buddhas and bodhisattvas--thus indicating that the Buddha is originally inherent in the mind. This image of the "mind-lotus" was incorporated into Tendai esotericism at least as early as the ninth century and continued to occur in Tendai texts of the medieval period. It also appears in several works in the Nichiren collection. Of those just discussed, the "Sôkanmon shô" speaks of "the lotus-pedestal of the mind, which is the Wonderful Dharma"⁶⁸; the "Ichinen sanzen hômon" reads, "Myôhô-rengé-kyô is the eight-petalled white lotus blossom that is our mind-nature"⁶⁹; and the "Jûnyoze no koto" similarly says that the essence of Myôhô-rengé-kyô is "the eight-petalled lotus blossom that is the nature of our mind."⁷⁰ Asai Yôrin, citing the esoteric origins of this image and its later association with medieval Tendai original enlightenment thought, questions whether these or any of the other seven works in the Nichiren collection containing similar expressions can truly be considered representative of Nichiren's thought. Why, he asks repeatedly, would Nichiren, who rejected both Shingon and the Tendai of his day, have adopted a teaching with roots in both these traditions?⁷¹

However, as Suguro Shinjô has pointed out,⁷² of those texts in the Nichiren collection containing "mind-

lotus" imagery, one exists in Nichiren's holograph,⁷³ and in the case of two more, substantial portions of his holographs have survived, thus verifying their authenticity.⁷⁴ All three of these, it may be added, date from the Sado exile or later, when Nichiren had already begun to write critically of the esoteric teachings. This makes it difficult to propose that the notion of the "mind-lotus" lay completely outside the scope of his thought. Moreover, as Suguro suggests, though the image of the "eight-petalled lotus of the mind-nature" may come from esotericism, the idea it represents--the oneness of the Buddha and the ordinary being--remains perfectly consistent with Nichiren's thinking. It is possible that Nichiren simply borrowed the image because it was current, using it for his own purposes without necessarily endorsing the esoteric tradition from which it had emerged.

(2) The "three suchnesses" and "three bodies"

We have already touched on the "ten suchnesses," which the Lotus Sûtra sets forth as the "true aspect" common to all existents. Tendai thought interprets the first three of these suchnesses--characteristics, nature and essence--as indicating, respectively, the individual's body, mind and the totality of the two. Each of the three texts we have been discussing uses these three suchnesses to illustrate the identity of the

ordinary person and the Buddha by equating them, in the moment of practice, with the three bodies of the originally enlightened Tathâgata. The "Ichinen sanzen hômon" and "Jûnyoze no koto" further expand this equation, identifying the three suchnesses not only with the Buddha's three bodies, but also with his three virtues and with the three truths, as shown in the chart on the next page.

The notion of the Buddha's three bodies--the manifested body, or physical person of the Buddha who appears in this world; the recompense body, or the wisdom the Buddha has attained through practice, conceived of as a "body"; and the Dharma body, or Buddha as personification of ultimate truth--originally represented attempts to organize different concepts of the Buddha. Chih-i, however, interpreted these three bodies as the attributes of a single, original Buddha, the Sâkyamuni of the sixteenth chapter of the Lotus Sûtra, enlightened since countless dust-particle kalpas ago.⁷⁵ By identifying these three bodies respectively with the "characteristics, nature and essence" of ordinary beings, our three essays deny any ontological distinction between the ordinary worldling and the Buddha, or between the phenomenal world and the ultimate reality.

Asai Yôrin argues that this "three suchnesses" equals "three bodies" equation differs from Nichiren's

CORRESPONDENCES OF THREES

Ordinary worldling/delusion

three suchnesses:	characteristics	nature	essence

Buddha/enlightenment

three bodies:	manifested body (<u>nirmāṇakāya</u>)	recompense body (<u>sambhogakāya</u>)	Dharma body (<u>dharmakāya</u>)
three virtues:	emancipation (<u>vimukti</u>)	prajñā	Dharma body
three truths:	provisional existence	Emptiness	Middle Way

thought on two grounds: one textual, the other doctrinal.⁷⁶ First, it employs the interpretative device of "numerical correspondence," whereby two or more sets of categories are equated by virtue of the fact that they possess the same number of elements. This technique, Asai points out, appears frequently in medieval Tendai texts but only rarely in Nichiren's authenticated writings. Second, this equation, which directly identifies the person of the practitioner with an originally inherent Buddha essence, derives from medieval Tendai original enlightenment thought and should be distinguished, in Asai's view, from Nichiren's own concept of the Buddha.

In the first of his objections, Asai stands on fairly solid ground. The equation of the three suchnesses with the three Tathâgata bodies does not appear in any work attributed to Nichiren except the "Sôkanmon shô" and three of the questionable essays assigned to the year 1258--that is, not in any verifiable document. Moreover, it is true that the device of interpretation by numerical correspondence, while not altogether absent from Nichiren's authenticated writings, occurs there far less frequently than in those unverifiable works under discussion or in medieval Tendai texts. Asai's second objection, the identification seen in these texts of the practitioner

with an originally inherent Buddha, is far more problematic. Does this really mark a significant departure from Nichiren's thought? As we have already seen in the preceding chapter, scholars have heatedly debated this and related points, and found passages in Nichiren's authenticated writings that appear to support either side of the argument. In examining this complex question, we must proceed to one of the most involved and controversial of Asai's criticisms.

(3) The "uncreated triple-bodied Tathâgata"

Medieval Tendai texts speak of a primordial or originally enlightened Buddha, a Buddha without beginning, existing prior even to the distinction between enlightenment and non-enlightenment, who is immanent in all phenomena. This Buddha is not a person, whether historical or transcendent, but the ultimate principle itself. He is called musa no sanjin, the uncreated triple-bodied Buddha.⁷⁷ As Asai Yôrin points out, this concept represents the importation into the Tendai-Lotus tradition of Shingon's Mahāvairocana, the cosmic Buddha, whose body is the entire universe.⁷⁸ Tendai esotericism identifies the cosmic Buddha not as Mahāvairocana but as Śākyamuni--not, of course, the historical Śākyamuni who was born and died in India, but Śākyamuni as described in the sixteenth, "Fathoming the Lifespan of the Tathâgata," chapter of the Lotus Sûtra,

enlightened since inconceivable kalpas ago. According to a number of medieval Tendai texts, enlightenment is a matter of realizing one's identity with this Buddha, i.e., with the entire dharma-realm.

Several works in the Nichiren collection, including the three discussed above, also refer to the "uncreated triple-bodied Buddha." In Asai Yôrin's opinion, however, the concept indicated by this expression is utterly at odds with Nichiren's idea of the Buddha as expressed in his authoritative works, the "Kaimoku shô" and "Kanjin no honzon shô."⁷⁹ He therefore deems problematical any work attributed to Nichiren that contains this expression, an opinion that has been upheld and elaborated upon by Tamura Yoshirô⁸⁰ and, with minor qualifications, by Asai Endô.⁸¹

Asai Yôrin's rather complex argument runs as follows: The uncreated triple-bodied Buddha of Tendai texts, while nominally triple-bodied, represents little more than a Lotus-izing of the Dharma-body Buddha of Shingon doctrine; among the three bodies, the musa no sanjin concept definitely places emphasis upon the Dharma body. In Nichiren's thought, he claims, the recompense body is central. According to Asai, the Buddha whom Nichiren designated in his "Kanjin honzon shô" to be the object of worship "is not a Buddha immanent in the practitioner himself, nor is he a single

great all-encompassing Buddha who takes the dharma-realm as his essence and characteristics; he exists objectively and has definite form";⁸² he is "neither originally inherent, nor is he uncreated, he is a Buddha who literally 'attained enlightenment.'"⁸³

Nichiren himself held that the Buddha of the "Fathoming the Lifespan" chapter of the Lotus Sūtra possesses the three bodies. But, to judge from his surviving works, he did not explicitly discuss whether any of these three should be considered central,⁸⁴ and interpretations on this score by his later followers have varied greatly.⁸⁵ As we shall see, Asai is not without grounds for identifying Nichiren's concept of the Buddha with the primacy of the recompense body, but we should note that this identification also serves a particular hermeneutical program. First, it enables Asai to assert Nichiren's independence from his contemporary traditions, Shingon and Tendai esotericism, which maintained the primacy of the Dharma body. Second, it allows him to present Nichiren as espousing a return to the "pure" orthodox T'ien-t'ai of Chih-i himself, who had interpreted the Buddha of the "Fathoming the Lifespan" chapter in terms of the primacy of the recompense body.⁸⁶ Asai's emphasis on the recompense body, which represents the wisdom attained through practice, over the Dharma body, which is

originally inherent even prior to practice, also echoes the valorizing of Nichiren over Tendai discussed in the previous chapter, casting Nichiren in the role of a teacher who reasserted the necessity of practice in the face of a decadent tradition that neglected religious endeavor in the name of original enlightenment.

As mentioned earlier, Nichiren's view of the Buddha appears to have been remarkably complex and multifaceted. Let us look, for example, at the following brief passages from his major treatise "Kanjin honzon shô":

...the Lord Śākyamuni's practices undertaken as the cause [for attaining Buddhahood], and his virtues acquired as their effect, are completely contained within the five characters myôhō-ren-ge-kyô. When we receive and hold these five characters, he will spontaneously transfer to us the merit of his causes and effects.⁸⁷

The Lord Śākyamuni of wondrous enlightenment is our flesh and blood. Are not the merits of his causes and their effects our bones and marrow?⁸⁸

The Lord Śākyamuni who is our own mind possesses the three bodies that were revealed countless dust-particle kalpas ago; he is the ancient Buddha without beginning.⁸⁹

The difficulty inherent in attempting to define this Buddha in terms of traditional categories is at once apparent. That he transfers his merit to the practitioner seems to support Asai's contention that he "exists objectively." Moreover, he is described here as

a Buddha of "wondrous enlightenment" (myôgaku), which represents the last of the fifty-two stages of bodhisattva practice leading to Buddhahood, and as possessing the merits of "causes" (practice) and "effects" (attainment). In this sense, one could say that he must indeed represent the recompense body, the Buddha-wisdom attained through practice, different from the innate Dharma body existing prior to enlightenment. Yet at the same time, he is described as being inherent in the practitioner: he is "our mind," he is "our flesh and blood." He is also "without beginning." In this regard, he appears indistinguishable from the originally inherent Dharma-body Buddha of the esoteric teachings.

Parenthetically, we should note that Asai's insistence on a fundamental distinction between the "ancient Buddha without beginning" (mushi no kobutsu) of Nichiren's "Kanjin honzon shô" and the "uncreated triple-bodied Buddha" (musa no sanjin) of medieval Tendai must be understood against the backdrop of an old controversy, long predating Nichiren, over whether the enlightenment of the eternal Śākyamuni, described in the "Fathoming the Lifespan" chapter of the Lotus, did or did not have a beginning. If one holds that Śākyamuni attained Buddhahood at a given point in time, however long ago it might have been, such an interpretation endorses conventional, linear models of the path in

which one first cultivates practice and then eventually reaches enlightenment. But if one maintains that Śākyamuni has been the Buddha always, then one opens the way for the doctrine of original enlightenment. A number of medieval Tendai texts flatly dismiss the sūtra's statement that Śākyamuni "attained" Buddhahood countless kalpas ago as a mere expedient teaching; in reality, they say, this "attainment" points to the enlightenment originally inherent in all beings that is "uncreated" (musa), existing prior to practice.⁹⁰

As can be seen from the above quotations--and as Asai points out--Nichiren does not appear entirely to endorse this latter view. The Buddha of the "Kanjin honzon shō" clearly practiced for the sake of attainment; in this regard he cannot be termed musa. Yet at the same time, he is "without beginning"; in this, he is identical to the originally enlightened Tathâgata of the Tendai texts. How it is that he both traversed practice and attainment and yet is a "Buddha without beginning" we will not attempt to resolve here; Nichiren scholars have evidently found this point somewhat troublesome.⁹¹ It can be seen, however, even from this single writing, that Nichiren's concept of the Buddha included elements both identical to, and different from, that of medieval Tendai. It could be that he assimilated to the Lotus Sūtra, and in this way

attempted to synthesize, varying images of the Buddha held by his contemporaries, which, as expressions of different aspects of the one truth, he may not have seen as contradictory. In any event, his extant writings contain no explicit discussion about which of the three bodies holds primacy. The attempt on the part of later scholars to interpret his views in terms of the primacy of the recompense body, in contrast to the Dharma-body centered doctrines of Tendai esotericism, is not, as we have seen, without basis, but it functions to highlight the points of difference between Nichiren's view of the Buddha and that of medieval Tendai, greatly minimizing points of similarity. Here again, we have to ask, is the distinction between Nichiren's "ancient Buddha without beginning" and the Tendai "uncreated triple-bodied Buddha" truly substantive enough that the occurrence of the latter term in a Nichiren-attributed text should in itself be viewed as an indication of possible forgery? Or have different emphases been reified into separate doctrinal categories as a way of problematizing texts that suggest Nichiren to have been embedded in the earlier tradition?

There are by my rough count about fifteen writings in the Nichiren collection containing the term "uncreated triple-bodied Buddha." Several are indeed problematic, like the three discussed in this chapter,

or have been questioned as possibly apocryphal since the pre-modern period. A few, however, exhibit no particular textual problem beyond the lack of an extant holograph. The fact that no work in the collection containing this expression survives in Nichiren's handwriting lends some weight to Asai's argument, as Suguro Shinjô rightly notes.⁹² However, as Suguro also immediately reminds us, "Whether holographs have survived or not will in many cases have been influenced by chance, so there must be a limit to using this [i.e., the existence or non-existence of holographs] as a basis for determining authenticity."

Indeed, the methodology of questioning the authenticity of Nichiren-attributed texts on the basis of their use of medieval Tendai terminology is fraught with just such difficulties. One cannot deny that such terminology does occur more frequently in texts that have been considered apocryphal since pre-modern times, or in texts whose holographs do not survive, than in writings whose authenticity has been fully established; and for this reason, the questions Asai has raised about certain documents cannot be dismissed. However, the match is not quite perfect; the problem terminology occasionally turns up in unimpeachable documents. When one adds to this the random factors mentioned by Suguro that influence the survival of texts; Nichiren's

documented acquaintance with the medieval Tendai original enlightenment discourse and his use of it in his early writings; and the absence from his corpus of any later criticism of that discourse; the argument becomes a bit shakier. One must also point out how the problematizing of certain texts on doctrinal grounds, i.e., by positing doctrinal categories that sharply distinguish between Nichiren's thought and that of medieval Tendai, has glossed over some definite continuities between the two traditions.

Becoming a Buddha in One Lifetime: The "Isshō jōbutsu shō"

In concluding this chapter, we will introduce one final essay, the "Isshō jōbutsu shō" (Becoming a Buddha in one lifetime),⁹³ assigned in the Shōwa standard edition to the year Kenchō 7 (1255), when Nichiren was thirty-four and living in Kamakura. As in the case of the "Sōkanmon shō," its recipient is said to have been Toki Jōnin, but Toki's catalogue does not list it. In comparison to the three essays examined above, this short but very beautiful work has not generated much discussion. Apart from the issue of connections with original enlightenment thought, it presents no glaringly problematical points and has been included in the "primary texts" section of the canon. Asai Yōrin

evidently did not question Nichiren's authorship of the "Isshô jobutsu shô", noting only that because of its extremely early date, it reflects a Tendai perspective and cannot be viewed in the same light as Nichiren's post-Sado writings.⁹⁴ More recently, however, Tamura Yoshirô has cast doubt on its provenance, including it in a list of works from the Nichiren collection in which, even though they date from Nichiren's early period, "original enlightenment thought is excessively emphasized or overly developed," and are therefore, in his opinion, of questionable authenticity.⁹⁵ In contrast to his detailed analysis of later Nichiren-attributed works dealing with the original enlightenment discourse, Tamura does not define here what he means by "excessive emphasis" or "over-development."

In content, the "Isshô jobutsu shô" resembles the essays discussed earlier in identifying the mind of the practitioner with the Wonderful Dharma, the ultimate reality. It seems, however, to represent a slightly later stage in thought concerning the daimoku. It still speaks, in the language of meditative discipline, of "observing the mind" or "observing the subtle principle," and in this sense, as Asai noted, differs from Nichiren's later works, which stress chanting the daimoku with faith alone. Nevertheless, in this essay, chanting the daimoku is described almost as an exclusive

practice, one that has in effect replaced the
"observation of the mind" in meditation:

Now if you wish to put an end to beginningless birth and death and, this time round, attain unexcelled bodhi without fail, you must observe the subtle principle originally inherent in living beings. "The subtle principle originally inherent in living beings" is Myôhō-rence-kyô. Therefore, when one chants Myôhō-rence-kyô, that is observing the subtle principle originally inherent in living beings.⁹⁶

In chanting the daimoku of the Lotus Sûtra, this essay says, one will realize that none of the Buddhas of the three time periods exist apart from one's own mind, and so attain Buddhahood in this very body. However, this requires the proper mental attitude:

Even if you chant and uphold Myôhō-rence-kyô, if you think the Dharma exists apart from your own mind, that is not the subtle Dharma but some coarse dharma....When you chant the wonderful Dharma and recite the Lotus Sûtra, you should arouse deep faith that Myôhō-rence-kyô indicates your own [mind at each] thought-moment.

Never think of all the eighty thousand teachings or of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas ...as existing apart from your own thought-moment. [It is because people make this error] that, although they study Buddhism, they fail to observe the mind-nature and thus can never separate themselves from birth and death. If you seek the Way apart from the mind, even if you perform all manner of practices and good deeds, you will be like a poor man who, although he calculates his neighbor's wealth day and night, does not gain even half a sen thereby.⁹⁷

The text contains several such warnings against mentally externalizing the Dharma. Since liberation

lies in the awakening, or in the faith, that one's own mind and the ultimate reality are one, seeking the truth outside oneself, no matter how much one may revere it, will keep one bound to delusion.

While the Buddha and the ordinary person are ontologically identical, delusion and enlightenment nevertheless remain two vastly different modes of experience. Where the "Sôkanmon shô" illustrated this relationship with the analogy of the dreams and the waking reality experienced by a single individual, the "Isshô jobutsu shô" illustrates it with the analogy of a tarnished mirror and the same mirror when it is polished:

While deluded, one is called an ordinary worldling, and when awakened, one is called a Buddha. To illustrate, even a tarnished mirror, when polished, will appear like a jewel. The mind that right now is deluded by ignorance in this thought-moment is like a tarnished mirror. But if one polishes it, it will surely become the bright mirror that is the true suchness of the Dharma nature. Arouse deep faith and, night and day, morning and evening, polish [the mirror of the mind] without neglect. How should you polish it? Simply chanting Namu-myôhô-renge-kyô is what is meant by "polishing."⁹⁸

Just as there exists no ontological difference between a Buddha and an unenlightened person, so is there no difference between their lands. The difference between the mundane world and the Pure Land can be reduced to whether one's own mind is awakened or deluded:

When the minds of the beings are defiled, their land is also defiled, but when their minds are pure, the land is also pure. Thus we find that whether we speak of the Pure Land or whether we speak of the impure land, there are not two separate lands; [the distinction] depends solely on the good or evil of our minds.⁹⁹

Here the immanence of the Buddha Land in the present world is being used to subtly critique dualistic interpretations of the Pure Land teaching, such as that of Hōnen. This discourse, as noted earlier, runs through Nichiren's early writings up through and including the "Risshō ankoku ron."

This chapter has examined four representative examples of one type of writing, the doctrinal essay, within the group of works in the Nichiren collection related to the original enlightenment discourse, three of which present a number of textual problems and another that does not. We have seen how, regardless of authorship, such texts are important in understanding the development of Nichiren Buddhist thought. The complexity of authenticity questions and the bases on which these writings have been problematized should also by now be somewhat clearer. With this discussion as a background, we will move on to another genre.

Notes to Chapter Two:

1. STN 2: 1686-1705. This title draws inspiration from the "Skilful Means" chapter of the Lotus Sûtra, which declares that all Buddhas first set forth the provisional teachings to ready the minds of the beings and only then reveal the Lotus Sûtra, the ultimate teaching of their enlightenment. "In the manner that all Buddhas of the three time periods preach the Dharma"--Śâkyamuni Buddha is quoted as saying--"now, I, too, in the same way, preach a Dharma without distinctions" (T 262.9:10a22-23).
2. The "Honzon shôgyô roku" or "Nakayama Yûshi mokuroku," STN 3:2738.
3. Goyuimon kôgi 6:277.
4. "Sanze shobutsu sôkanmon shô rakuyô," Jûgôen zenshû 2:491-525.
5. Masaharu Anesaki, Nichiren, the Buddhist Prophet (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1916), p. 101.
6. STN 2:1688-89.
7. STN 2:1690.
8. STN 2:1695.
9. STN 2:1696.
10. STN 2:1699.
11. STN 2:1701.
12. STN 2:1704.
13. After Nichiren's death in 1282, Toki took religious vows, assuming the name Nichijô, and established a temple called Hokekyô-ji in Wakamiya in Shimofusa Province. His long-time associate and fellow devotee Ota Jômyô also established a temple in Nakayama in the same province, called Honmyô-ji. The lineages of both temples were transferred to Sotsu Ajari Nichikô, Jômyô's son and a direct disciple of Nichiren in his own right. On Nichikô's death in 1314, this joint lineage passed to Nichiyû. Nichiyû's index lists the sûtras, writings and mandalas by Nichiren, etc. that had been passed down by

both temples, as well as further writings of Nichiren that he himself had collected.

14. Nichiren Shōnin kyōgaku no kenkyū, p. 281.

15. Miyazaki Eishū. "Nichiren no ibun" in Tamura Yoshirō and Miyazaki Eishū, eds., Nichiren no shōgai to shisō, Kōza Nichiren, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Shunshūsha, 1975), p. 149.

16. See STN 2:1698-99. My tentative impression, to be tested by further research, is that Tendai original enlightenment texts are on the whole less concerned with the issue of mappō than was Nichiren or contemporary Pure Land teachers.

17. "Ongi kuden no kenkyū (2)," Risshō daigaku ronsō 2-7 (June 1943), p. 62. Shigyō himself says that, even taking into account the suggestion that the "Sōkanmon shō" may date from the pre-Sado period, he finds it difficult to accept this essay as Nichiren's writing.

18. For the importance of the influence of Enchin and his Juketsu shū on Nichiren's thought, see Komatsu Kuniaki, "Nichiren Shōnin no Chishō Daishi kan ni tsuite," IBK 13-1 (Jan. 1965) and "Nichiren Shōnin kyōgaku to Chishō kyōgaku no shisōteki renkan," Osaki gakuho 119 (June 1965); Asai Endō, Jōko Nihon Tendai honmon shisō shi, pp. 379-80; and, for a digest of the above in English, Jackie Stone, "How Nichiren Saw Chishō Daishi Enchin" in Chishō Daishi Kenkyū Henshū Iinkai, ed., Chishō Daishi kenkyū (Onjōji-machi: Tendai Jimonshū, 1989), pp. 55-65.

19. "Shingon kenmon," (STN 1:651); "Hōon shō" (2:1214); "Wa-Kan ōdaiki" (3:2349); "Shūku jūshō shō" (3:2370); "Shaka ichidai goji keizū" (3:2467) and the Chū Hokekyō (Yamanaka Kihachi, ed., Teihon Chū Hokekyō [Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1970], vol. 2, pp. 592-93). Another work attributed to Nichiren, the "Shingonshū shikenmon," also quotes the "Chōdagaku-ketsu" (3:2086), but it is thought to be the writing of later disciples. Some of these works date from the later period of Nichiren's career; however, if the "Sōkanmon shō" is Nichiren's work, its mention of Enchin in reverential terms as "Sentoku Daishi" could indicate an early date of composition.

20. STN 2:1697.

21. STN 1:1-15.

22. The "Kai hômon" (STN 3:1935-46) and the "Shikishin nihô shô" (3:1947-54). Both these texts are included in the zokuhen or "subsidiary texts" section of the standard edition. Where the "Kaitai sokushin jôbutsu gi" mentions only those correspondences of fives contained in Chih'i's Moho chih-kuan and Chan-jan's commentary on it, these two writings add several more pentads. Tamura Yoshirô deems them suspect for this reason ("Nichiren kyôgaku to hongaku shisô," pp. 139-40). Nevertheless, an extremely early copy survives of the "Shikishin nihô shô," made after Nichiren's death, by Nisshun (1230-1311), a contemporary disciple, which would tend to argue in favor of this particular essay being genuine. A late Edo-period commentary gives the traditional judgment on the "Kai hômon," stating that its authenticity has "not yet been determined" (Rokuge kômon 2:47), but gives no reason why this writing was questioned. It may be that Nichiren scholars both past and present have found these texts uncomfortable because their clear emphasis on the superiority of the esoteric teachings is at variance with Nichiren's later stance of exclusive devotion to the Lotus Sûtra. However, we know from the "Kaitai sokushin jôbutsu gi" and others of his writings that Nichiren as a very young man did for a time greatly admire the esoteric teachings, though he was to criticize them later on.

Though the style of all these three early writings is less sophisticated than that of the "Sôkanmon shô," and though they praise the esoteric teachings to a degree not seen in the "Sôkanmon shô" (or in any of Nichiren's writings after the mid- 1250s), they definitely resemble it in their use of five-element thought. The "Kaitai sokushin jôbutsu gi" (p. 3) cites, and "Shikishin nihô shô" (p. 1951) partially quotes, the same passage dealing with five-element thought from Chan-jan's commentary quoted in the "Sôkanmon shô." However, where these texts equate all things in the universe with the five precepts, the "Sôkanmon shô" identifies them with the five characters myô-hô-ren-ge-kyô.

23. T 2514.79:11. Nichiren's transcription is kept at the Nakayama Hokekyô-ji in Chiba Prefecture. His colophon is reproduced in STN 4:2875.

24. It is uncertain when the five characters of the daimoku first began to be associated with five-element thought. This association appears in a number of the problematized works in the Nichiren collection, as well as in the Shuzen-ji ketsu and the Hokke kan'yô ryakuchû shûku, both apocryphal works attributed to Saichô. The

latter text maintains that the five letters a vi ra hūm kham originate from the five characters of the daimoku, as do the five elements, five organs, five seasons, etc. (DDZ 5:293). The problems involved in dating the Shuzen-ji ketsu have already been touched on (see chap. 1, n. 45), though the argument placing it in the Insei period seems most convincing. The discussion of the daimoku in the Hokke kan'yô ryakuchû shûku is thought by some to reflect a post-Kamakura influence of Nichiren Buddhism on Tendai thought (see Ono Genmyô, Bussô kaisetsu daijiten [Tokyo: Daitô Shuppansha, 1935] vol. 10, p. 18d).

25. "Kai no koto," STN 3:2222.

26. "Gogyô no koto," STN 4:2918-21.

27. Nichiren Shônin kyôgaku no kenkyû, pp. 325-26.

28. Kissa yôjô ki, DNBZ 115:505-507.

29. For the daimoku before Nichiren, see Shimaji Daitô, "Shôdai shisô ni tsuite," Kyôri to shiron (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 1931); Takagi Yutaka, Heian jidai Hokke Bukkyôshi kenkyû (Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1973), pp. 447-65; and Asai Endô, "Hokke shôdai no genryû to tenkai," Ôsaki gakuho 142 (Dec. 1986):1-24. Takagi's account is the most extensive.

30. STN 1:57-75.

31. STN 1:73.

32. The "Ichinen sanzen riji" (STN 1:75-79), the "Sôzai ichinen shô" (1:80-86), the "Jûnyoze no koto" (3:2030-33) and the "Ichinen sanzen hômon" (3:2033-40). Though the "Ichinen sanzen riji" and the "Jûnyoze no koto" were included in the rokunai and the other two in the rokuze, they all appear to be related. In Asai Yôrin's opinion, Nichiren's statement in the "Taii" that he would discuss the "three thousand realms in a single-thought moment" probably refers to the "Ichinen sanzen hômon" (Nichiren Shônin kyôgaku no kenkyû, p. 277). Suzuki Ichijô suggests that it refers to the "Ichinen sanzen riji" (Nichiren Shônin ibun no bunkengakuteki kenkyû, p. 193). According to the Kôso nempu, a chronology of Nichiren's life and writings written in Tenmei 1 (1781), Nichiren wrote three essays in Shôka 2 on the three thousand realms in a single thought-moment (Hongu kôso nempu kai ehon, p. 360). A revised version of this chronology, the Kôsu nempu kai published in Kôka 4 (1847),

identifies these three essays as the "Jûnyoze no koto," "Ichinen sanzen hômon" and "Ichinen sanzen riji," but adds that they were assigned to the year Shôka 2 on the basis of the statement in the "Taii" (Ibid., p. 361). The "Ichinen sanzen riji" and the "Sôzai ichinen shô" are included in the shôhen section of the standard edition; the other two, in the zokuhen.

33. Compare the "Ichinen sanzen hômon," STN: 3:2033 (second line of the essay) to p. 2034 (line 2) with the "Ichidai shôgyô taii," STN 1:71 (line 7) to p. 72 (line 1).

34. Chih-i: An Introduction to the Life and Ideas of a Chinese Buddhist Monk, Melanges chinois et bouddhiques 12 (l'Institut Belge des Hautes Etudes Chinoises: Brussels, 1962), p. 316.

35. Lotus, p'in 2, T 262.9:5c11-13. This passage appears only in Kumârajîva's translation. It is therefore assumed that he worked from a Sanskrit text different from any of those now extant, or that this passage represents his own interpolation.

36. T 1716.33:693b12-25. Such an interpretation is possible because each of the ten suchnesses, in the Chinese text, is expressed in three characters. The word "suchness" is rendered as nyoze, literally, "like this" or "like such." Thus, if one punctuates the text to read, "These their characteristics are such" (ze sô nyo), that indicates the truth of Emptiness (or Suchness). If one reads it as "their such-like characteristics" (nyo ze sô), that emphasizes the truth of provisional existence. And if one reads it as "their characteristics are like this" (sô nyo ze), that emphasizes the Middle Way.

37. See instructions for sutra recitation in, for example, Narikawa Bunga, Nichiren shinto handobukku (Tokyo: Kyôei Shobô, 1980), p. 60, or in the "Nichiren Shôshû gongyo yôten," the liturgy for sutra recitation published by Taiseki-ji, head temple of Nichiren Shôshû.

38. STN 3:2036-37.

39. STN 3:2038.

40. STN 1:84-85.

41. STN 1:202.

42. STN 1:490.

43. It should be pointed out, however, that like Hônen, Shinran and other "popular" teachers, Nichiren's insistence on a universally feasible form of practice probably stemmed less from notions of democratic social equality than from the conviction that a valid teaching must by definition be accessible to all. The emphasis on a single, absolute form of practice applicable to everyone, not accomodated to individual capacity for understanding, seems to be connected in the case of both Nichiren and the Pure Land teachers to the notion of the degenerate age and its unique soteriological demands.

44. STN 1:720.

45. For example, the "Hôon sho," dated Kenji 2 (1275), which says that, in the Final Dharma age, both the wise and the ignorant should "discard all other practices and chant Namu-myoho-renge-kyo" (STN 2:1248), or the "Shishin gohon shô," dated Kenji 4 (1277), in the section which begins, "Why do you not encourage the meditation on the three thousand realms in a single thought-moment but urge only the chanting of the daimoku?" (2:1298ff).

46. STN 3:2034.

47. STN 3:2036.

48. STN 3:2035. The "Sôkanmon shô" similarly suggests that the image of the Buddha as compassionate father in the text of the Lotus Sûtra is merely a metaphor for the workings of the Buddha wisdom; in reality, the Buddha and the beings are equal (STN 2:1694).

49. STN 3:2035-36.

50. For example: "The bodhisattvas emerged from the earth are the retainers of the Lord Śâkyamuni who is our own mind. They follow him just as T'ai-kung, Tan the Duke of Chou, [and the others of the four counsellors] served as ministers to [King] Wu of the Chou...." ("Kanjîn honzon shô," STN 1:712); or "Chung-hua and Yu were the sons of commoners, but had a strong spirit of filial devotion. Therefore the two rulers Yao and Shun summoned them [respectively] and transferred the throne to them....In the same way that commoners became kings in their present body, ordinary worldlings can immediately become Buddhas. This is the essential meaning of the three thousand realms in a single

thought-moment" ("Nichimyô Shônin gosho," 1:645).

51. STN 3:2038.

52. STN 3:2034.

53. Nichiren Shônin kyôgaku no kenkyû, p. 278.

54. The "Renjô shô " (STN 1:17-21) and the "Shoshû mondô shô" (1:22-33), both dated Kenchô 7 (1255).

55. Kamakura shin Bukkyô shisô no kenkyû, pp.591, 598.

56. STN 3:2039.

57. See Shigyô Kaishû, "Jûnyoze no koto no kenkyû," Seishin 26 (1941), pp. 106-8, or Asai Yôrin, Nichiren Shônin kyôgaku no kenkyû, pp. 275-76.

58. ESZ 3:263-265. Whether or not the Yôki is in fact Genshin's work is another problem. Asai Yôrin suggests that the degree to which original enlightenment thought is developed in this essay argues a date of composition later than Genshin's time (Nichiren Shônin kyôgaku no kenkyû, p. 276). According to its colophon, a kana version of this work was submitted to one Lady Ichijô Nyoin, who had requested that Genshin write something summarizing for her the essentials of the doctrine of attaining Buddhahood in this very body by virtue of the Lotus Sûtra. However, only a kanbun version of this text survives. The "Jûnyoze no koto," however, is written in Japanese. It may have been based on a no longer extant kana version of the "Yôki," or represent a rendering into Japanese of the extant Chinese version, or the "Jûnyoze no koto" itself may originally have been written in literary Chinese. See Shigyô, "Jûnyoze no koto no kenkyû," pp. 111-12.

59. "Jûnyoze no koto no kenkyû," p. 111.

60. Nichiren Shônin kyôgaku no kenkyû, p. 276.

61. "Nichiren Shônin ibun no bunkengakuteki kenkyû: rokunai gosho seiritsu ni kanshi," p. 350.

62. ESZ 3:2-3.

63. STN 3:2033.

64. Of Nichiren's lay followers of whom we have detailed knowledge, a majority appear to have been middle-level samurai, landholders, and women in a position to have had servants. See Takagi Yutaka, Nichiren to sono montei, pp. 69-75.
65. "Myôhō-ama gozen gohenji," STN 2:1527.
66. "Junyozē no koto no kenkyū," pp. 105, 111.
67. STN 3:2032.
68. STN 2:1692.
69. STN 3:2038.
70. STN 3:2032.
71. Nichiren Shōnin kyōgaku no kenkyū, pp. 272-86.
72. "Shūgaku kenkyūjō no nisanten no mondai," p. 372.
73. The "Bōjikyō ji," which refers to the "wonderful lotus of the mind-nature" (STN 2:1151).
74. The "Nichimyo Shōnin gosho" (STN 1:644) and the "Nichinyo gozen gohenji" (2:1515).
75. Wen-chu 9b, T 1718.34:128a6ff.
76. Nichiren Shōnin kyōgaku no kenkyū, pp. 327, 330-31.
77. This term was evidently first used by Saichō in his Shugo kokkai shō (DDZ 2:567) but was not widely employed in Tendai texts until the medieval period. See also Part II, "The Teaching Approved by All Buddhas of the Three Time Periods," n. 19.
78. Nichiren Shōnin kyōgaku no kenkyū, pp. 226-32, 299-303.
79. *Ibid.*, pp. 287-99, 304-315.
80. "Tendai hongaku shisō to Nichiren kyōgaku," p. 143. Tamura also suggests that the term "uncreated triple-bodied Buddha" itself does not appear until around 1250 or later. Hanano Mitsuaki challenges this view in "Nihon chūko Tendai bunken no kōsatsu (1): musa sanjin shisō no seiritsu to Sanjūshika no kotogaki no senja ni tsuite," IBK 24-1 (Dec. 1975):337-342 and shows that the term was already in use during the insei period.

81. Jôko Nihon Tendai honmon shisô shi, pp. 117.
82. Nichiren Shônin kyôgaku no kenkyû, p. 105.
83. Ibid., p. 311.
84. Asai bases his argument for the centrality of the recompense body in Nichiren's thought on a passage from Nichiren's "Kaimoku shô" to the effect that the various Mahayana sutras other than the Lotus "expound that the Dharma body is without beginning or end but do not reveal the [beginningless] origin of the manifested body or the body of recompense" (STN 1:553). Asai takes this to mean that, of the three bodies, Nichiren rejected the primacy of the Dharma body and instead stressed the body of recompense (see Nichiren Shônin kyôgaku no kenkyû, p. 288). Another possible reading might be that Nichiren is simply arguing the superiority of the Lotus Sûtra in teaching the eternity of not just one but all three bodies. A similar passage appears in the "Hokke Shingon shôretsu ji": "The 'without beginning or end' of the Mahāvairocana-sûtra and the [other] various Mahayana sutras is the 'without beginning or end' pertaining to the Dharma body, not the 'without beginning or end' that pertains to the three bodies" (1:308).
85. See Asai Endô, "Nichiren Shônin no busshin kan no tokuchô," IBK 28-2 (March 1980), p. 72.
86. Wen-chü 9b, T 1718.34:129a20.
87. STN 1:711.
88. STN 1:711.
89. STN 1:712-13.
90. See the examples given in Tamura Yoshirô, Kamakura shin Bukkyô shisô no kenkyû, pp. 452-54. Tamura also quotes a critique of this position by Hôchi-bô Shôshin, a Tendai scholar active around the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, on p. 371.
91. See the explanations put forward by Asai Yôrin (Nichiren Shônin no kyôgaku kenkyû, pp. 288-89) and Tamura Yoshirô (Kamakura shin Bukkyô shisô no kenkyû, pp. 625-26).
92. "Shûgaku kenkyûjô no nisan no mondaiten," pp. 373.

93. STN 1:42-45. An earlier English translation appears in Nichiren Shōshū International Center, ed. and trans., The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, vol. 1., pp. 3-5, under the title "On Attaining Buddhahood." I have retranslated it in Part II.

94. Shōwa shinshū Nichiren Shōnin ibun zenshū bekkā (Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1934), p. 155.

95. Kamakura shin Bukkyō shisō no kenkyū, pp. 591-92.

96. STN 1:42.

97. STN 1:42-43.

98. STN 1:43-44.

99. STN 1:44.

CHAPTER THREE

The Enigma of Personal Letters

The suggestion that a particular group of writings may be pseudographic presupposes the existence of a writer, or writers, of pseudographic texts. However, we have not a clue to the identity of those individuals who could have produced the works in the Nichiren collection said to be apocryphal. As noted in chapter one, Asai Yôrin and others have suggested that Nichiren monks of the Nambokuchô and Muromachi periods, influenced by their studies at Mt. Hiei or at Tendai centers in the Kantô region, produced pseudographic texts incorporating the original enlightenment discourse and retrospectively attributed them to Nichiren. Beyond this general suggestion, however, no one has uncovered any evidence shedding light on the details of who might have been involved in the production of spurious texts or what the specific circumstances might have been. This lack of data by no means negates the possibility that the texts in question could be apocryphal. However, if we assume for the sake of discussion that they are in fact pseudographic, then some of them raise interesting questions about their purported authors.

Such questions do not assert themselves in

connection with the doctrinal essays discussed in the previous chapter; even if Nichiren did not write these documents, still they are not necessarily the products of consciously pseudographic effort. The "Sôkanmon shô," for example, could conceivably be a Tendai text mistakenly transmitted as Nichiren's, while the "Ichinen sanzen hômon" could perhaps be a redaction made by a disciple of material he had heard from Nichiren or from someone close to Nichiren, again mistaken in later years for Nichiren's own writing. In this chapter, however, we will consider texts that--if not genuine works of Nichiren--entailed deliberate, skilled and highly ingenious forgery: personal letters addressed to men and women known to have been Nichiren's followers. Let us briefly consider, for the sake of the discussion, what these letters--if apocryphal--suggest about the person or persons who wrote them.

Forging such a letter would require, first of all, that one step into the persona of Nichiren and produce various intimate details and expressions of feeling. If the letters we are about to consider are indeed pseudographic, this imitation of the Nichiren persona has been magnificently done. Unlike the essays discussed above, which, except for isolated passages, do not seem to bear any particular hallmarks of Nichiren's style, these letters "sound" like Nichiren; their tone,

conventions of expression, etc. appear indistinguishable from those of his authenticated correspondence. Their presumed writer, then, in addition to being a consummate artist, would have had to have access to a number of Nichiren's genuine letters in order to have so thoroughly familiarized himself with Nichiren's epistolary style. He would almost certainly have been a scholar-monk; others were not in a position to widely examine texts.

At the same time, he would have had to be able to see beyond a widespread clerical prejudice of the day and discern one of the truly innovative aspects of Nichiren's prose: his preference for Japanese, over literary Chinese, or kanbun, in communicating religious ideas. The majority of Nichiren's correspondence, like the letters we shall soon be examining, are written in Japanese--whether chiefly in the kana syllabary or, as in most cases, in Wa-Kan konkôbun, a mixed Japanese and Chinese style (some scholars prefer the term kana-majiri bun). This mixed style, essentially a Japanese grammatical structure incorporating Chinese characters, was an innovation of the Kamakura period, and Nichiren's use of it represents an aspect of his skill, evident to anyone who has read his personal letters, for accomodating his level of discourse to his reader's understanding. To learned monks or lay people, he would

employ complex Buddhist terminology, quote from the Buddhist and secular classics and occasionally write in literary Chinese; for the less educated, he used a more vernacular language, employing vivid imagery or didactic tales by way of illustration. One receives the impression that he took equal pains with both. Today, Nichiren's letters in Japanese are admired for their beauty and power of expression, but in his own time, literary Chinese was still the medium de rigueur for religious discourse; and after his death, as Asai Yôrin has pointed out, the lack of prestige associated with Japanese writing formed one reason for the production of apocryphal Nichiren texts in kanbun.¹

Evidence exists that after Nichiren's death, some of his disciples found his Japanese writings an embarrassment, while others saw them as requiring apologetics. The latter passionately defend Nichiren's choice of Japanese for his medium as more accessible to most people in Japan than literary Chinese, and thus indicative of his compassion as the manifestation of Bodhisattva Superior Conduct.² These apologetics occur especially in the literature of the Fuji school originating with Byakuren Ajari Nikkô (1246-1333), who in 1289 broke with Nichiren's other five senior disciples and left Mt. Minobu, eventually establishing an independent temple at the foot of Mt. Fuji in Suruga

Province. This represented the first schism within the Nichiren community. Writings by Nikkô's disciples criticize monks of the other Nichiren lineages who rewrote kana writings by Nichiren in kanbun form³ and even name individuals guilty of this deed.⁴ We also have the "Fuji isseki monto zonchi ji," attributed to Nikkô himself but possibly written by a later disciple, that enumerates his reasons for breaking with the other five senior disciples. Among them we read:

Those five persons all say with one accord: "[Nichiren] Shônin produced no sacred writings interpreting [the Buddhist teachings]. Or if we acknowledge that there are a few, they are written in kana to set forth in general terms for householders the causality of the Buddha-Dharma, or they are letters acknowledging the slight offerings of lay men and women, written to lead the ignorant. Yet Nikkô calls them the Shônin's 'sacred writings' (gosho); he lectures on them and reads them. This exposes our late teacher's shame." Therefore they have taken writings scattered in various places and torn them up to manufacture new paper, or in other cases burned them.⁵

Asai estimates that this controversy over the relative merits of Nichiren's writings in Japanese versus those in literary Chinese began about fifty to sixty years after his death.⁶ The specific incidents that prompted the accusations leveled in the above quotation, and why preferences for the medium of either kana or Chinese writing should have been divided along factional lines, remain unclear.⁷ Yet whatever the specifics of the case, we have evidence here that, in

the period following Nichiren's death, his writings in Japanese did not command the wide admiration that they do today. While the possibility of forged writings in Japanese cannot be ruled out, the much greater prestige accorded to kanbun may raise some question as to whether later disciples who produced pseudographic writings in Nichiren's name would have turned their talents to the forging of personal letters in the mixed Japanese style.

The body of this chapter will introduce six short personal letters attributed to Nichiren that draw on original enlightenment thought to convey the immediate accessibility of Buddhahood for those who embrace the Lotus Sûtra. Five of the six do not survive in Nichiren's holograph or appear in any index prior to the rokuge; the authenticity of these five has been questioned. All are written in the mixed Japanese/Chinese style. If genuine, they span about a fifteen-year period in Nichiren's career. They are presented here in chronological order as given in the Shôwa teihon edition, though in two cases considerable difference of opinion exists as to dating. With one exception, they are letters to lay people or to individuals who, though having taken religious vows, continued to lead a lay life. Following the format of the previous chapter, some of the main features of each text will be introduced, followed by discussion of the

grounds on which it has been problematized. Full translations appear in Part II.⁸

(1) The Buddha Who Emerged from the Sea: "Funamori Yasaburô moto gosho"

On the twelfth day of the fifth month of Kôchô 1 (1261)--probably in reaction to the "Risshô ankoku ron" and under pressure from Pure Land adherents outraged by Nichiren's repeated criticism of Hônen's teachings--the Kamakura bakufu had Nichiren banished to Itô on the Izu peninsula, where he remained for almost two years.⁹ Traditional Nichiren biographies dating from the Muromachi and Edo periods offer a dramatic description of the events of his first weeks in exile, which may be summed up as follows:

Bakufu functionaries left Nichiren at or near a place called Kawana on the eastern coast of Izu,¹⁰ where he was rescued by a fisherman named Yasaburô.

(According to several of the later, chiefly post-Edo, accounts, the functionaries had abandoned him on an offshore rock called the Manaita Iwa or "chopping-board rock," which lay below the high tide mark. In danger of soon drowning, Nichiren chanted the daimoku as the waves broke over him, and the sound of his voice drew Yasaburô to row over in his boat and investigate.) Despite harsh sanctions against aiding an exile, Yasaburô and his wife

took Nichiren into their care, secretly providing him with shelter and food for about one month. At this time the jitô or steward of Itô had fallen ill, and, learning of Nichiren's presence in the area, asked him to offer prayers for his recovery. Nichiren complied, and the jitô recovered. In gratitude, he presented Nichiren with a statue of Śâkyamuni Buddha that had emerged from the sea in a fisherman's net, which Nichiren is said to have kept by him throughout his life. Even today, various temples and other historical landmarks in the Itô area in Izu commemorate the supposed sites of these events.¹¹

These traditions evidently have their source in a single document, the "Funamori Yasaburô moto gosho" (Letter to Boatmaster Yasaburô), a letter said to have been written by Nichiren at Itô to Yasaburô in Kawana, expressing gratitude for his aid and reporting the jitô's recovery. This communication mentions an earlier letter from Nichiren to Yasaburô, which has not survived, and no other writing in the Nichiren collection mentions the events in question. Moreover, the "Funamori Yasaburô moto gosho" itself is a rokuge work and does not appear in any index of Nichiren's writings prior to the Honman-ji collection, which dates from the sixteenth century. Citing these reasons, the Ibun jiten suggests that some question remains as to

whether or not Yasaburô really existed.¹² We will return to this issue in a few pages. The authenticity of this letter represents an issue of considerable importance in the study of Nichiren biography and hagiography as well as in textual studies: If genuine, the "Funamori Yasaburô moto gosho" may in fact be Nichiren's earliest extant personal letter of substance.¹³ Our concern with it here, however, lies in its use of original enlightenment ideas to stress the immediacy of Buddhahood for those who embrace the Lotus Sûtra.

In this letter, after many earnest expressions of thanks for Yasaburô's support and an account of the events surrounding his prayers for the jîtô's recovery, Nichiren (as the putative, if not the actual, author; this usage will be employed throughout this chapter for convenience' sake) takes the Buddha image presented to him by the jîtô as a starting point for a brief Dharma exposition. This image being brought up from the sea with a catch of fish must have struck the inhabitants of the area as a miraculous event. Nichiren uses it to introduce a decidedly non-miraculous but, for Yasaburô, possibly equally astonishing interpretation of what the Buddha really is: He is us ourselves.

We living beings have dwelt in the sea of birth and death since time without beginning. But having become practitioners of the Lotus

Sûtra, we shall become the person of the Buddha whose form and mind are without beginning.... Then how are we any different from that Buddha [whose image emerged from the sea]? Śākyamuni, the master of teachings, enlightened since countless dust-particle kalpas ago,...is in fact ourselves, living beings. That is [what is meant by] the Lotus Sûtra's doctrine of the single thought-moment comprising three thousand realms; it is the action of "Always I dwell here, preaching the Dharma."¹⁴

Just as the image came out of the sea, so the practitioner of the Lotus Sûtra emerges from the great ocean of samsāra as the embodiment of the primordially enlightened Buddha.

Nichiren goes on to acknowledge that "even though we are ourselves the august Lotus Sûtra and Śākyamuni Buddha, ordinary worldlings do not know this." For Yasaburô, a man probably accustomed to conventional notions of the Buddha as a supernatural being, the thought that Śākyamuni dwells within oneself may have been difficult to grasp. Here, in order to convey this idea to someone without a learned monk's technical vocabulary for batting around notions of nonduality, Nichiren turns to a technique that he was to develop with particular effectiveness: the use of setsuwa and other miraculous tales.

The demon who appeared before the youth of the Snow Mountains was Indra in transformed guise. The dove that fled to King Śibi was the god Viśvakarman. King Universal Radiance who entered the citadel of King Kalmāsapâda was Śākyamuni, the master of teachings. The

fleshly eye cannot know these things, but the Buddha eye discerns them. In open space and in the great sea there are paths by which birds fly and fish swim, [though we cannot see them]. These things are found in the text of the sūtras....Aniruddha's gold became first a hare, then a corpse. Sand also became gold in the palm of Mahânâma's hand. An ordinary worldling is precisely the Buddha, and the Buddha is precisely an ordinary worldling. This is the meaning of the single thought-moment endowed with the three thousand realms, and of [the passage,] "[Since] I [Śākyamuni] in reality attained Buddhahood, [countless myriads of kalpas have passed]."15

In their original context, the setsuwa cited here represent a variety of types, including tales of the supernatural transformations of deities bent on testing a bodhisattva's resolve (Indra, Viśvakarman), or jâtaka tales of Śākyamuni's meritorious deeds in prior lifetimes (King Universal Radiance), or they illustrate how devotion to the Dharma brought great spiritual attainments to the practitioner (Aniruddha's gold, sand in Mahânâma's palm). All have in common, however, the feature of one individual or one object having a not-immediately-apparent dual identity, and are accordingly employed to communicate that ordinary people, although they themselves do not recognize it, are the Buddha inherently. These tales were probably fairly well known, and Yasaburô would not have needed footnotes. By using stories with which the fisherman was already familiar, Nichiren attempts to convey what was probably, for Yasaburô, a most novel idea.

The letter concludes with a strict injunction to secrecy: "Do not speak of it [i.e., this letter] to others but bear it in mind. If others learn even the slightest thing about it, it will go hard with you. Keep it in your heart and do not talk about it." Yasaburô's assistance to Nichiren may indeed have placed him real danger, as evidenced by the letter's opening passage, which acknowledges the need to keep their communication a private affair. Yet while Nichiren's warning may have been partly intended to shield Yasaburô from the risks of aiding an exiled criminal, since he himself was at that time under the jîtô's protection and thus no longer a despised outcast, this explanation seems insufficient. The admonition to maintain secrecy may in part have also been because--though without once mentioning the word--Nichiren had in this letter revealed the substance of something traditionally conveyed in secret: the doctrine of original enlightenment.

Now let us turn to the textual difficulties. Of the half dozen letters examined in this chapter, the "Funamori Yasaburô moto gosho" is the most problematic. As indicated above, considerable evidence in absentia combines to raise questions about it. Yasaburô is not mentioned in any other writings in the Nichiren collection, nor in Nichiren's earliest extant biography,

the "Goden dodai" of Nichidô (1283-1341).¹⁶ As one might expect respecting someone in so humble a social niche, we find no independent documentation confirming that he existed, and the numerous traditions that have sprung up concerning him have yet to be verified.¹⁷ Some evidence does exist, however, suggesting a connection between Nichiren and the jîtô.¹⁸

Although shared content by no means constitutes proof of authorship, the "Funamori Yasaburô moto gosho" has some noteworthy features in common with authenticated writings by Nichiren. The most obvious is its use of setsuwa, a characteristic of many of Nichiren's sermons.¹⁹ Moreover, the particular setsuwa chosen here appear to have numbered among Nichiren's favorites: by my rough count--and one limited to the shôhen or "primary texts"--mention of Aniruddha's gold appears in two other writings in the Nichiren collection, Mahânâma's transformation of sand into gold occurs in three other writings, King Universal Brightness in five, King Śibi in six, and the youth of the Snow Mountains in no fewer than sixteen.

The form in which this letter voices Nichiren's gratitude to Yasaburô and his wife also follows a pattern seen in others of his letters thanking lay followers for offerings of food or other necessities. The opening sentence reads, "I have received the rice

dumplings wrapped in bamboo grass, sake, dried rice, peppers, paper and other items that you troubled to send me by your messenger," enumerating by way of acknowledgement the articles that Yasaburô had sent as a donation. Nichiren then recounts in some detail the kindnesses shown him by Yasaburô and his wife and adds, "It would seem as though my father and mother had been reborn at a place called Kawana near Itô in Izu." Any merit gained by his prayers for the jîtô, he says, will be transferred to them. Most importantly, he takes the opportunity of the letter to convey a Buddhist teaching (here, the identity of believers in the Lotus Sûtra with the eternal Śākyamuni), and concludes, "Thus may not you two, husband and wife, be the master of teachings, the Great Enlightened World-Honored one, reborn to help Nichiren"? These elements--the listing of items received in donation, the recounting of specific acts for which Nichiren felt himself indebted, the expressed desire to share his own merit with the letter's recipient, the reference to his followers as his parents reborn or as transformations or reincarnations of the Buddha, various bodhisattvas or even the Lotus Sûtra come to aid him, and the use of a thank-you letter as an opportunity to convey a Buddhist teaching--all occur in other letters from Nichiren to his lay patrons.

The Ibun jiten points out that several of these

features, such as the itemized acknowledgement at the head of a letter of offerings received, occur in many of Nichiren's letters from the time of his self-imposed retirement on Mount Minobu (1274-82. The great majority of Nichiren's personal letters date from this period), and suggests that someone other than Nichiren may have written the "Funamori Yasaburô moto gosho" on the basis of the Minobu-period letters.²⁰ Thus this common pattern proves inconclusive: it could indicate either that Nichiren was in fact the author, or that someone else wrote the "Funamori Yasaburô moto gosho" based on an extensive acquaintance with Nichiren's later correspondence.

The authenticity of this letter seems not to have been questioned before the modern period.²¹ Interestingly, when doubts on this score were first articulated, they focused, not on the historical problems mentioned above, but on this letter's use of original enlightenment thought. Asai Yôrin, in his critique of the "uncreated triple-bodied Tathâgata" concept, lists the "Funamori Yasaburô moto gosho" as one of several writings attributed to Nichiren that equate the eternal Śâkyamuni with all living beings, a position that, in his opinion, deviates from both the text of the Lotus Sûtra and from Nichiren's thought.²² Tamura Yoshirô also questions the "Funamori Yasaburô moto

gosho" on the basis of its use of original enlightenment thought equating the ordinary worldling with the Buddha.²³ On the other hand, Miyazaki Eishû, who has made a detailed study of Nichiren Buddhist kitô (prayer) rituals, takes issue with Asai, regarding this letter as genuine and as important evidence of Nichiren's own early performance of kitô.²⁴

It one assumes that "Funamori Yasaburô moto gosho" was written, not by Nichiren, but by some later individual, then one has to ask what reason that person could have had for doing so. One possibility, of course, would have been to substantiate the Izu legends, though it is generally assumed that the legends were inspired by this letter, rather than the other way around.²⁵ Who would have had an interest in establishing these legends, and at the same time, a wide enough acquaintance with Nichiren's writings to produce this piece of writing? Did the "earlier letter" from Nichiren mentioned in the text really exist and serve this hypothetical pseudographist as a reference, or did he add it merely to give a touch of verisimilitude? And if the purpose of writing the "Funamori Yasaburô moto gosho" was to establish the Izu legends, why include a sermon on original enlightenment? In this case, the suggestion of forgery raises quite as many difficulties as it solves. Given the lateness of its first notice

and the lack of independent supporting evidence for the events it describes, the possibility of its being apocryphal certainly cannot be ruled out. On the other hand, it could also be genuine, which would in turn suggest that Nichiren, grateful for kindness that he felt had saved his life, sought in return to impart something that--at least at that point in his life--he considered very important: the teaching of original enlightenment.

Although not to the extent of the essays discussed in the previous chapter, in this letter, the problem of original enlightenment remains bound up to some degree with other problems, textual and historical, that could possibly cast doubt upon Nichiren's authorship. Let us turn now to some writings where lack of an extant holograph and reference to the original enlightenment discourse constitute the only grounds upon which their authenticity has been questioned.

(2) Hell is Itself the Buddha Land: "Ueno-dono goke-ama gohenji"

In 1259, while living in Kamakura, Nichiren gained among his new converts one Nanjô Hyôe Shichirô, a samurai and personal retainer of Hôjô Tokiyori. Shichirô also served as jitô of Ueno near Fuji in Suruga Province, so he was known as Lord Ueno. He died in

1265, but his widow, who took Buddhist vows after his death, remained staunchly devoted to Nichiren and raised their children as devotees of the Lotus Sûtra. In particular, her elder son and heir, Nanjô Tokimitsu, became a key figure in efforts to disseminate Nichiren's teachings in the Fuji area following the latter's retirement to Mount Minobu. Nichiren's collected works include more than forty letters to the Nanjô family.

The letter in question, the "Ueno-dono goke-ama gohenji," was written to the widowed nun, Ueno-ama, consoling her for the loss of her husband. Some disagreement surrounds its date. Most older chronologies assign it to the year Bun'ei 11 (1274), shortly after Nichiren had retired to Minobu and contact between him and the Nanjô family had been reestablished following the interruption of the Sado exile. Another opinion places it in Bun'ei 2 (1265), shortly after Nanjô Shichirô's death. The Ibun jiten points out, in support of the later date, that this letter refers to Hônen and Kûkai in the same breath as "evil teachers," consistent with the post-Sado period when Nichiren had enlarged the scope of his criticism to include Shingon along with the Pure Land and Zen schools.²⁶ On the other hand, Shigyô Kaishû suggests that certain expressions in the text, such as "Now I wonder if you have heard from Lord Ueno in the next world" or "You

need not grieve so much over his passing" would seem to be addressing a recent sorrow, rather than speaking almost a decade after the fact.²⁷ The Shôwa teihon adopts the earlier date.

In this letter, Nichiren first reassures Ueno-ama that her late husband, a practitioner of the Lotus Sûtra, undoubtedly attained Buddhahood. Yet he also makes clear that in speaking of Buddhahood, he has a very particular conception in mind:

Now whether in the case of the Pure Land, or whether in the case of hell, neither is found outside [us]. They exist solely within our hearts. One awakened to this is called a Buddha. One deluded to it is called an ordinary worldling. [What enables] this awakening is the Lotus Sûtra. And if this is so, then one who embraces the Lotus Sûtra awakens to hell being precisely [the Land of] Tranquil Light.²⁸

Here we have the ideas of the interpenetration of the dharma-realms and the immanence of the Buddha land in the present world, seen earlier in the doctrinal essays. While the nun of Ueno probably had more education than the fisherman Yasaburô, Nichiren would again have found himself in the position of trying to communicate the concepts of nonduality and the immediacy of Buddhahood to someone with only limited command of the extremely technical Buddhist vocabulary in which such ideas were conventionally expressed. First he lays the ground, as it were, by emphasizing that what he is

about to say is no ordinary teaching, and must be received with an earnest mind:

This doctrine is of extreme importance, but I will teach it to you, just as Bodhisattva Manjuśrī expounded for the dragon girl the secret teaching of becoming a Buddha in this very body. Once you have heard it, you must arouse your faith all the more. One who, on hearing the doctrines of the Lotus Sūtra, strives ever more in faith is called a true seeker of the Way.²⁹

By evoking the well-known story of the dragon girl who dramatically attains Buddhahood in a single moment before the assembly in the twelfth chapter of the Lotus Sūtra, Nichiren gives an indication of both the nature and significance of what he is about to reveal.

To convey to Lord Ueno's widow what the "attainment of Buddhahood in this very body" means in terms of her late husband, Nichiren employs, not setsuwa, as in the earlier letter to Yasaburō, but a single extended metaphor, another literary device in whose use he excelled. Here the immanence of both hell, with all its mythic topography, and Buddhahood are explained in terms of the concrete realities of death and its surrounding rituals--realities that, if this letter was written in 1265, Ueno-ama had just experienced:

The two characters ji-goku [hell] may be interpreted as digging a hole in the ground. When someone dies, isn't a hole always dug for him? This is [what is] called "hell." The [crematory] fires that consume the dead person are the flames of [the Hell] without Respite. His wife, children and retainers vying before

and behind [to be closest] as they accompany him [in the funeral procession] are the guards of hell, the abô râksasas. The grieving and weeping of his wife and children are the cries of the guards of hell. The staff, measuring two shaku and five sun, [that is placed in his hand] is the iron rod [wielded by jailors in hell]....[The dead man's] final setting out from his house is the mountain of death's departure....It is vain and useless to seek these matters anywhere else.

Those who embrace the Lotus Sûtra transform [all] this. [For them,] hell is the Land of Tranquil Light. Its flames are the wisdom-fire of the recompense-body Tathâgata, the dead person is the Dharma-body Tathâgata, and the fiery pit refers to the manifested-body Tathâgata, whose room is great compassion. Moreover, the staff is the staff of the Wonderful Dharma that is the true aspect [of the dharmas]; the river of the three crossings is the great sea of "birth and death being precisely nirvâpa," and the mountains of death's departure are the layered mountains of "the worldly passions being precisely enlightenment." You must understand things in this way. The expressions "becoming a Buddha in this very body" and "opening the Buddha's knowledge and insight" both refer to realizing or opening this [reality].³⁰

Such understanding also entails a revalorization of conventional Buddhist notions concerning birth and death:

The "Skilful Means" chapter [of the Lotus Sûtra] states: "The dharmas dwell in a Dharma position, and the worldly aspect constantly abides." It is the way of the world that the aspect [of birth and death] abides throughout the three time periods [of past, present and future]. Thus one need not lament or be surprised....The eight aspects [of a Buddha's life] as well do not transcend the two words "birth" and "death." To awaken in this way is what is known as a practitioner of the Lotus Sûtra becoming a Buddha in this very body.³¹

To free oneself from "birth and death"--the

suffering that results from attachment to, and self-definition in terms of, impermanent things--constitutes the original aim of Buddhist practice. However, the idea of enlightenment as expressed above does not entail emancipation in the classic sense of separation from the literal facts of being born and dying, but rather, liberation from the suffering these facts entail by awakening to them as the constant and inherent marks of ultimate reality.

One would expect, logically, that someone awakened to death as part of the "true aspect" of reality would have thereby transcended any need to grieve in its presence; grief would rather seem to be a proof that such awakening had not really taken place. But while having acknowledged that "there is nothing to lament or be surprised at," Nichiren in effect rejects this as a final conclusion and ends up by validating Ueno-ama's sorrow:

Your late husband was a practitioner of this sūtra, so there is no doubt that he attained Buddhahood in this very body. You need not grieve for him so much. Yet this grieving of yours is the way of ordinary worldlings. In fact, even saints lament. When Śākyamuni Buddha entered into nirvāṇa, his great disciples grieved amid their enlightenment, perhaps to display the behavior of ordinary people. By all means, offer memorial prayers to your heart's content.³²

The tension and apparent contradiction between enlightenment and the worldly passions resolves itself

in the awakening that Nichiren asserts is to be gained through the Lotus Sûtra. Based on a true cognition of nonduality, even the passion of grief, he suggests, can be affirmed.

The letter, too, concludes with a warning not to divulge its contents. "In this letter, I have written my hidden doctrine. Keep it secret. Keep it secret!" Here again we see the convention of secrecy surrounding the original enlightenment doctrine and embodied in the Tendai kuden texts carried over into a personal letter.

Asai Yôrin included this letter by name in a list of works from the Nichiren collection that he questioned because they equate the practitioner with the originally inherent triple-bodied Buddha,³³ but he seems not to have discussed it at any length. The first person seriously to problematize this work was Asai's student Shigyô Kaishû, in his graduating thesis, dated 1943,³⁴ an essay that has proved influential in the way the Nichiren-attributed texts related to original enlightenment thought have come to be viewed. In his thesis, Shigyô attempted to put into practice the sort of methodology first recommended by Yamakawa Chiô three decades earlier, that of evaluating questionable texts by comparing them against the "normative" standard of works that have been fully authenticated. Here we will briefly examine Shigyô's argument, which illustrates

some of the ways in which this outwardly sound methodology can be subject to distortion.

First, Shigyô calls into the question the concept of hell as depicted in the "Ueno-dono goke-ama gohenji." He characterizes this letter's identification of hell with the grave, the crematory fire and other funeral proceedings as "idealistic" (kannenron-teki), pertaining to the Lotus Sûtra's philosophical side, which deals with "principle" (ri), and suggests that a distinction be drawn between this sort of thinking and Nichiren's "fundamental idea" concerning hell, which is "concrete" (ji) and has a sense of actuality.

While I have not counted systematically, my sense is that the majority of Nichiren's authenticated writings that mention hell, including the particular examples that Shigyô gives, probably do speak of it as an actual realm into which evildoers are destined to fall after death. However, we also find reliable Nichiren texts that present a different view. The "Kanjin honzon shô," for example, extant in holograph and, as we have noted, universally agreed to number among Nichiren's most important doctrinal essays, contains a fully developed psychological explanation of the ten dharma-realms, including hell, as states originally inherent in the mind.³⁵ And one of Nichiren's personal letters from the Minobu period, also

surviving in his holograph, reads:

In inquiring into where hell and the Buddha are located, we find sūtras that say [hell] is beneath the ground and sūtras that say [the Buddha] is in the western quarter. But when we investigate in detail, we find that [both] exist within our five-foot body. I say so because, when someone in his heart despises his father and makes light of his mother, then hell is in that person's heart.³⁶

Thus we find both "actual" and "idealistic" notions of hell in Nichiren's verifiable writings. The former may possibly represent a more "fundamental idea" in his thinking than the latter, in that it occurs more frequently. However, since both are attested in his authenticated works, this is no reason to see the "Ueno-dono goke-ama gohenji" as problematic.

Second, Shigyô argues that this letter differs from other, authenticated Nichiren texts in its view of marital ties. He cites the following lines from its opening section:

In lifetime after lifetime and world after world, the men to whom you have pledged yourself [in marriage] must have been more numerous than the sands of the great sea, but he to whom you pledged yourself in this lifetime is your true husband. The reason is that, at your husband's urging, you became a practitioner of the Lotus Sūtra.³⁷

This passage implies, Shigyô says, that one changes marital partners from one lifetime to the next. Other, reliable texts, however, suggest that the bond between husband and wife remains unchanged over many existences,

such as the "Kyôdai shô" (Letter to the brothers), which says:

If a husband is happy, his wife will prosper.
If a husband is a thief, his wife will be a
thief, too. This is not merely a matter of
this lifetime. In lifetime after lifetime and
world after world, [husband and wife] are like
shadow and body, flowers and fruit, roots and
leaves.³⁸

What Shigyô fails to take into account here is the respective circumstances of the individuals being addressed. The recipients of the "Kyôdai shô," the two brothers Ikegami and their wives, were caught in a conflict between their devotion as Buddhists to the Lotus Sûtra and to Nichiren, and Confucian demands of loyalty to a father threatening to disown them unless they renounced their faith.³⁹ The above quoted-passage occurs in a section of the letter where Nichiren urges the women to stand by their husbands in upholding their commitment to the Lotus; this could suggest why, in the "Kyôdai shô," he describes the marital bond as something transcending birth and death. But, unlike these two women, whom were required to take a courageous moral stance beside husbands who were living, the nun of Ueno was grieving over a husband's death. The statement, "He to whom you pledged yourself in this life is your true husband. The reason is that, at your husband's urging, you became a practitioner of the Lotus Sûtra," emphasizes the unique nature of the tie she had shared

with him, and thus, while privileging her grief, may also have been intended to draw her attention from the depths of her anguish back to her faith in the Lotus. The different situations surrounding the composition of these two letters could amply account for this difference between them in their view of the martial bond, without any particular need to put the "Ueno-dono goke-ama gohenji" in question.

Shigyô asks:

Even if Nichiren had such an idea [of the immanence of hell as presented in this letter], isn't it somewhat problematical that he would present such a conceptual doctrine to a woman desolate over the loss of her husband? We should note that, as a letter he sent to a woman, this one has peculiarities.⁴⁰

The "Ueno goke-ama gohenji" is indeed unique among all Nichiren's letters of condolence, even those written later on to the same woman, the nun of Ueno, on the death of her younger son in 1280. Most of these letters make no attempt to preach the Dharma or, in some cases, even to console, but consist largely in expressions of shared grief. However, if the "Ueno-dono goke-ama gohenji" were in fact written in 1265, that would place it in a much earlier period, making it one of Nichiren's first extant letter of condolence, which could account for this difference. That it differs in tone and content from Nichiren's other letters written in similar circumstances does not, in itself, necessarily

constitute a difficulty.

While Shigyô placed the "Ueno-dono goke-ama gohenji" in a problematic light as differing from other, reliable writings of Nichiren, he did not go so far as to question its authorship outright. The explicit suggestion of forgery was raised later, by Tamura Yoshirô, who included this letter in a list of twenty-one writings from the Nichiren collection whose authenticity he said should be investigated.⁴¹ Tamura based his criticism on the presence in these writings of nondual original enlightenment thought; in his opinion, as outlined in chapter one, Nichiren retreated from this doctrine around the age of forty, at the time of the Izu exile. (We will return to this argument in connection with the next two letters.) Without an extant holograph or other independent corroborating evidence, the possibility of forgery can of course never be eliminated entirely. However, he must have been a remarkable pseudographist indeed, who--while others were rewriting Nichiren's Japanese works, or producing new ones, in literary Chinese to enhance their teacher's prestige--saw beyond the conventional valorizations of Chinese writing over Japanese, clergy over laity, and men over women, and, in an ingenious attempt to convincingly depict Nichiren as a teacher of original enlightenment thought, produced this letter in Japanese

to a provincial jitô's wife.

(3) Inheriting the Transmission of the Sole Great Matter: "Shôji ichidaiji kechimyaku shô"

No discussion of Nichiren texts questioned by virtue of their connection with the original enlightenment discourse would be complete without mention of at least one letter to Sairen-bô Nichijô. Sairen-bô, a Tendai monk banished to Sado Island for unknown reasons, evidently became Nichiren's disciple early in 1272, during the latter's own exile there. Numerous legends and varying accounts, coupled with a lack of reliable data, make it difficult to establish even the barest outlines this man's biography, yet there is sufficient evidence to confirm that he did indeed exist and was Nichiren's disciple.⁴² The Nichiren collection contains fourteen writings addressed to him, twelve in the "primary texts," and two in the "subsidiary texts," section of the Shôwa teihon edition.⁴³ Some are personal letters, while others are little more than doctrinal essays with Sairen-bô's name appended as addressee. Most contain extremely sophisticated expositions of Buddhist thought, written either in literary Chinese, or, for the most part, a very elegant Wa-Kan konkôbun. No one could ever have thought--as we have seen that some monks evidently did

of Nichiren's Japanese writings to less educated, lay followers--that they detracted from his prestige. Of these fourteen writings addressed to Sairen-bô, not one in Nichiren's holograph survives.⁴⁴

Their particular interest in connection with this study lies in the fact that virtually all these works addressed to Sairen-bô, whether letters and essays, focus on concepts related to medieval Tendai original enlightenment thought. Traditionally, this was said to be because Sairen-bô, having studied on Mount Hiei, had familiarized himself with this discourse and was eager to know how Nichiren understood various issues that it encompassed. However, since Asai Yôrin put forth his argument that Nichiren had developed his thought independently of medieval Tendai, and that works in the Nichiren collection showing evidence of medieval Tendai ideas were therefore likely to be apocryphal, virtual every writing addressed to Sairen-bô has fallen under suspicion. Here we will consider one that, if genuine, represents Nichiren's earliest extant letter to Sairen-bô, written on Sado in the second month of Bun'ei 9 (1272), just shortly after Sairen-bô had accepted his teaching.

This letter is known as the "Shôji ichidaiji kechimyaku shô" or "Transmission of the sole great matter of birth and death." To achieve liberation from

the sufferings of birth and death (shôji)--however such liberation might be conceived--is of course the "sole great matter" (ichidaiji) incumbent upon any Buddhist. Moreover, according to the Lotus Sûtra, all Buddhas make their advent for the "sole great matter" of awakening in all beings the Buddha's knowledge and insight.⁴⁵

Kechimyaku--literally a blood vessel--indicates the transmission from master to disciple, and also the content of such a transmission. Here it indicates transmission of the Dharma that makes possible emancipation from the sufferings of birth and death. The phrase shôji ichidaiji kechimyaku or similar expressions occur frequently in the medieval Tendai kuden literature, and this letter takes the form of Nichiren's reply to a request from Sairen-bô for his interpretation.

The response given in the text is that the transmission of the sole great matter of birth and death is encompassed in the five characters myô-hô-ren-ge-kyô. As in the "Ueno goke-ama gohenji" discussed above, birth and death are presented here, not as something literally to be escaped or transcended, but as inherent in the very fabric of reality. "Heaven and earth, yin and yang, the sun and moon, the five stars and [all states of existence] from hell to the fruits of Buddhahood--there is none that is not subject to birth and death,"⁴⁶

the text says. They are the innate workings of the Dharma, of Myôhō-rengē-kyō:

This being the case, when one chants Myôhō-rengē-kyō understanding that these three--the Lord Śākyamuni who attained Buddhahood in the remotest past, the Lotus Sūtra that enables all to attain the Buddha Way, and ourselves, living beings--are utterly without distinction, one receives the transmission of the sole great matter of birth and death.⁴⁷

As seen in its tradition of kuden hômon or oral transmission literature, medieval Tendai, under the influence of esotericism, emphasized the idea of Dharma transmission passed in a direct lineage from master to disciple. At times the notion of kechimyaku, with its image of the flow of blood, was taken so literally that monks endeavored to pass on their lineage only to their own sons (jisshi sôjô). Nichiren, however, appears to have departed from such concepts of the master-disciple relationship. As Takagi Yutaka has pointed out, unlike Dôgen, who regarded Ju-ching as his teacher, or Shinran, who similarly revered Hônen, Nichiren had no one person contemporary to himself whom he looked up to throughout life as "master."⁴⁸ Though he retained lifelong feelings of gratitude and affection for Dôzen-bô of the Kiyosumi-dera in Awa, under whom he had taken the tonsure at sixteen, he departed very early on from Dôzen-bô's Amidist mode of Buddhist practice and understanding. Nor does he seem to have held any

special allegiance to anyone at Mount Hiei or any of the other major Buddhist centers where he studied in the years from 1238 to 1253. Rather, as has been mentioned before, he saw himself as standing in a line that had begun with Śākyamuni Buddha and passed to Chih-i, Saichō and himself. Eventually, he came to believe that he had received a spiritual transmission directly from Śākyamuni. One of his later writings, for example, states:

Although Nichiren dwells in such a remote and forlorn retreat [Minobu], within the heart of his fleshly body he holds concealed the secret Dharma of the sole great matter (ichidaiji) transmitted by the Lord Śākyamuni, master of teachings, on Vulture Peak.⁴⁹

This present letter to Sairen-bō reflects a similar attitude, presenting the transmission of the Dharma--kechimyaku--not as something handed down from a master to a disciple, but as directly accessible to anyone at any moment via a personal relationship formed with the Buddha and the Dharma in the act of chanting the daimoku. A similar idea of receiving the transmission in the act of chanting the daimoku can also be found in an earlier-quoted passage from the "Kanjin honzon shō":

...the Lord Śākyamuni's practices undertaken as the cause [for attaining Buddhahood], and his virtues acquired as their effect, are completely contained within the five characters myōhō-ren-ge-kyō. When we receive and hold these five characters, he will spontaneously transfer to us the merit of his causes and effects.⁵⁰

The immediate accessibility of the Lotus Sûtra's enlightenment is suggested in this letter by the collapsing of various time frames. First, we see a breakthrough of primordial time into the present moment. Myôhō-rence-kyô is defined as "the transmission that has flowed without a moment's interruption since many long kalpas ago,"⁵¹ yet, as seen in the passage quoted above--"When one chants Myôhō-rence-kyô...one receives the transmission of the sole great matter of birth and death"--the person who chants the daimoku receives this transmission in that very act.

Second is an identification of the present moment with the moment of death, the time of the raigô when the Buddha is said to come from the Pure Land to welcome the devotee. The text reads: "For one who arouses faith and chants Namu-myôhō-rence-kyô with the awakening that now is the final moment, it is expounded, 'A thousand Buddhas shall extend their hands, causing him not to fear....'"⁵² The need to arouse a correct frame of mind at the moment of death greatly preoccupied many Buddhists at this time, who saw this as an essential prerequisite to rebirth in the Pure Land. The "Shôji ichidaiji kechimiyaku shô" suggests that if one holds this "correct mind" in the present moment, the thousand Buddhas whom the Lotus Sûtra promises will welcome the believer at death, will come and be with him now. ("How

joyful," the text continues, "that not one Buddha or two, nor one hundred or two hundred, but a thousand Buddhas shall come to greet us!"--a subtle thrust at conventional Pure Land depictions of the Buddha Amida coming to meet the faithful at the time of death.)

Third, we see in this text a breakthrough of primordial time into historical time in the person of Bodhisattva Superior Conduct, who is to make his advent in the Final Dharma age and make the five characters myô-hô-ren-ge-kyô--the transmission of the sole great matter concerning birth and death--accessible to all. If genuine, this letter reflects the initial stages of Nichiren's self-identification with the task of this bodhisattva: "Whether Bodhisattva Superior Conduct makes his advent or whether he does not, Nichiren has preceded him in roughly disseminating [this teaching]."53

The most detailed objections to the "Shôji ichidaiji kechimiyaku shô" have been advanced by Tamura Yoshirô, who cites it as an example of writings from the latter period of Nichiren's life that, in his opinion, must be considered suspect because of their strong emphasis on nondual original enlightenment thought. First, Tamura questions this letter's affirmation of birth and death as the intrinsic workings of the Dharma, especially as expressed in its quotation of a statement it attributes to Saichô: "The two

dharma of birth and death are the subtle workings of the one mind. The two ways of existence and non-existence are the true virtue of original enlightenment." This passage, Tamura points out, occurs in two medieval Tendai original enlightenment texts.⁵⁴ Since neither text was signed by its author but attributed to Saichō retrospectively, one has no way of knowing when they were written; thus the citation of this passage in the "Shōji ichidaiji kechimyaku shō" itself does not necessarily cast doubt on its authenticity.⁵⁵ Tamura's question, rather, is whether or not this letter's affirmation of the phenomena of birth and death as identical to ultimate reality is consistent with Nichiren's later thought.

Second, Tamura questions the reference in the "Shōji ichidaiji kechimyaku shō" to Bodhisattva Superior Conduct, with whose task Nichiren identified his own efforts. While acknowledging that this would seem to indicate a connection to Nichiren's thinking of the Sado period, Tamura suggests that its mention in this letter may on the contrary be problematical, because the "Kaimoku shō," a major essay completed the same month, does not refer to Bodhisattva Superior Conduct. This may be a valid point. On the other hand, the first indications of Nichiren's identification with the work of Superior Conduct had already appeared three months

before the date of the "Kaimoku shô," in the first letter he wrote from Sado,⁵⁶ so this objection cannot be termed conclusive.

The main difficulty, for Tamura, lies in the text's use of nondual original enlightenment thought. As explained in chapter one, Tamura maintains that after about age forty--that is, around 1261, the time of the Izu exile--Nichiren retreated from the Tendai position of absolute nonduality, stressing instead the need to resolve the relative, dualistic contradictions of the phenomenal world through bodhisattva practice. He therefore calls into question the authenticity of more than twenty writings in the Nichiren collection dating from this later period that strongly emphasize original enlightenment thought.⁵⁷

As noted in the first chapter, Tamura is quite right in pointing out that original enlightenment thought recedes from Nichiren's writings after the Izu exile (a trend that becomes less evident, however, if one also takes non-authenticated works into consideration). It should be noted that Tamura is not suggesting here the occurrence of a simple volte-face in which Nichiren abruptly became an overt critic of this discourse, but a more sophisticated intellectual development in which, while maintaining the absolute nonduality of the Buddha and ordinary beings in

principle as an underlying support for his thinking, Nichiren left behind the absolute affirmation of the phenomenal realm seen in Tendai original enlightenment thought, stressing instead the relative distinction between the Buddha and the beings to be resolved in practice. This argument largely rests, as we have seen, upon Tamura's characterization of original enlightenment thought as an unconditional "affirmation of actuality," from which he holds that Nichiren departed, and upon a distinction he has noted between verifiable and non-verifiable later Nichiren writings in the extent to which they stress nonduality.

Tamura's suggestion that Nichiren retreated from a nondualistic "affirmation of actuality" to focus instead on the relative distinctions of good and evil, delusion and enlightenment, etc. could be accurate. However, especially in the absence in the Nichiren corpus of anything resembling an explicit critique of nondual original enlightenment thought, one can also imagine other reasons why this discourse may have faded to some extent from Nichiren's later rhetoric without necessarily assuming a basic revision of his thinking concerning it. One such reason could be simply that other priorities intervened. Hounded by the authorities from the time he submitted the "Risshô ankoku ron" to Tokiyori in 1260 up until his recall from banishment to

Sado fourteen years later, Nichiren had to wrestle with his own doubts, and convince his followers, as to why a believer in the supreme sūtra should meet with such trials. He was also increasingly called upon, as he saw it, to risk his life in proclaiming the exclusive efficacy of the Lotus Sūtra in the Final Dharma age and denouncing other teachings, if the country and its inhabitants were to escape ruin and suffering. The original enlightenment doctrine was already established, at least in monastic circles, while declaring the sole truth of the Lotus was something Nichiren saw as his unique mission. It may be possible that, in mid-life, he did not so much retreat from original enlightenment thought as that he found other issues to be more pressing.

We have also briefly mentioned, in the first chapter, the possibility that, while drawing on the vocabulary and symbols of original enlightenment thought to express his own teaching of the immediacy of Buddhahood in chanting the daimoku, Nichiren may not have entirely endorsed the original enlightenment discourse itself. It could be that original enlightenment thought was only briefly, or perhaps never at all, the primary message he felt compelled to communicate. Even in the majority of his earlier writings that draw heavily on this doctrine, one has the

impression that it is almost always in service to his fundamental polemic--the supremacy of the Lotus, and, in his very earliest writings, of the esoteric Shingon teachings as well--and is usually employed as ammunition for his critique of Hônen's Pure Land teaching. In this case, too, one could imagine that, in mid-life, rather than altering his thinking concerning the original enlightenment discourse, Nichiren simply drew on it less frequently.

With no certainty about why Nichiren may have accorded this discourse less attention from the time of the Izu exile on, some question arises with regard to Tamura's suggestion that certain later, unverifiable writings, such as those addressed to the monk Sairen-bô, may possibly be apocryphal because they stress nondual original enlightenment thought more forcefully than those writings which can be verified. The overall validity of Tamura's distinction as a matter of emphasis or nuance has already been acknowledged. The problem is whether or not it constitutes a sufficient basis for questioning Nichiren's authorship.

As has been noted before, if we look only at authenticatable texts, it does indeed appear that nondual original enlightenment thought recedes considerably from Nichiren's later writings; if we also take into consideration those texts attributed to him

that have not survived in holograph, this recession becomes less marked. Whether or not one sees Nichiren as substantially retreating from this discourse must thus depend, to a great extent, on how one evaluates the unauthenticated material. Among these later, unverifiable documents dealing with original enlightenment thought we do find some that present definite problems, such as the "Sokanmon shô," discussed in the preceding chapter. But many others, including several of the writings addressed to Sairen-bô such as the "Shôji ichidaiji kechimyaku shô," exhibit no textual problems at all beyond the absence of a holograph and their marked use of the original enlightenment doctrine. The lack of a holograph, as noted before, does not necessarily indicate forgery but could be simply a matter of chance: the odds are fifty-fifty. At this point, the argument for excluding these texts from the scope of Nichiren's primary ideas becomes circular: nondual original enlightenment thought is predefined as something external to Nichiren's mature thought and then used as a criterion for casting doubt on the authenticity of those documents in which it appears.

However, it must be noted that the tendency toward circularity of argument is not limited to those who would exclude these writings from the body of texts considered normative. Here, let us briefly mention some

representatives of the opposing position. Kageyama Gyôô, a noted Nichirenshû scholar of the last generation, suggested historical reasons why the writings addressed to Sairen-bô might not have been catalogued before the rokuge and insisted that some of them "can be considered important writings ranking beside the ['Kanjin] honzon shô.'"58 (Kageyama makes this evaluation in a brief footnote to an article on a different subject and so does not develop his argument.) Hanano Mitsuaki, quoting Kageyama, also cites what he sees as close connections between these documents and the thought expressed in Nichiren's major treatise and says, "I would like to consider these [writings to Sairen-bô and other Nichiren-attributed texts stressing original enlightenment thought] as important works of Nichiren linked to the 'Kanjin honzon shô'--altogether authentic writings."59 However, the "Kanjin honzon shô," as we have seen, has elicited diverse interpretations. Where Kageyama and Hanano have seen it as inseparable from original enlightenment thought, Asai Yôrin and Shigyô Kaishû regarded it as differing substantially from that discourse, and Tamura Yoshirô, as retaining it in principle but emerging from it in practice. An independent analysis of original enlightenment thought in the structure of the "Kanjin honzon shô" would exceed what can be attempted here.

Yet, however one may interpret the "Kanjin honzon shô," in his readiness to view the Sairen-bô texts as "altogether authentic writings," Hanano in particular leaves himself open to the charge of glossing too easily over the possibility of forgery always present where no holograph or other corroborating evidence is available. It appears here that, where one side in the controversy has predefined nondual original enlightenment thought as outside the scope of Nichiren's later ideas and then used it to argue for exclusion from the normative category of those texts in which it appears, the other side has predefined it as intrinsic to Nichiren's thought and used it to argue for their inclusion: In either case, the argument remains circular.

While still on the subject of Tamura's critique of these documents, we may recall that, of works dating from the latter period of Nichiren's life related to the original enlightenment discourse, Tamura listed twenty works (all non-authenticatable) that "stress nondual original enlightenment thought," in which category he placed the "Shôji ichidaiji kechimyaku shô," and another five (all indisputably Nichiren's work) that, "while taking nondual enlightenment thought as their basis, nevertheless emerge from it." To better understand this distinction, as well as the difficulties with using it to sort out possibly apocryphal texts, let us turn now

to one of the writings from the second category that most clearly illustrates it.

(4) An Offering of Rice: The "Jiri kuyô gosho"

The "Jiri kuyô gosho" (Offerings in actuality and principle) is the only text discussed in this essay whose holograph survives. Nichiren wrote it from Mount Minobu expressing his gratitude to a follower who had sent him a sack of polished rice at a time of great need. The last page or pages of the manuscript are missing, so the precise date and the name of the recipient are not known. However, judging from the letter's reference to Nichiren's intense sufferings from hunger, it seems reasonable to assume that it dates from early in his retreat to Minobu, before an active community of disciples had established itself there around him. From its style and handwriting, it is presumed to have been written around Kenji 2 (1276),⁶⁰ the year assigned to it in the Shôwa teihon edition. Now in the possession of Fujii Taisei-ji, it slipped through the earlier collections and was not published until the modern period.

This letter illustrates Nichiren's remarkable skill at using some ordinary object donated to him by a follower, or something in a believer's immediate circumstances, as a frame of reference for preaching the

Dharma in a way particularly relevant to that person. Here he uses the sack of polished rice sent to him by an unnamed donor to explain how the Lotus Sûtra's teaching of nonduality opens the possibility of Buddhahood to ordinary people.

Those born in the human realm, Nichiren begins, have two treasures: clothing and food. These are valuable precisely in that they sustain life, which is the greatest treasure of all. Because nothing surpasses the value of life itself, the saints and sages of ancient times offered their lives to the Buddha and were thus able to attain Buddhahood. Nichiren cites graphic stories from the sûtras and from historical tradition of individuals said to have offered the flesh of their bodies or other bodily parts in exchange for hearing Buddhist teachings or as votive offerings to the Buddha-Dharma. This is the "offering in actuality" (ji-kuyô) of the letter's title.

However, Nichiren acknowledges, only saints and sages can do such things. If the offering of one's life is the cause that results in Buddhahood, then how can ordinary people hope to attain it?

Ordinary worldlings can become Buddhas if we bear in mind the single word "resolve" (kokorozashi). As for the meaning of "resolve": When we consider it carefully, it comes down to the doctrine of "observing the mind." And when we inquire into what is meant by the doctrine of "observing the mind," it

means that offering one's only robe to the Lotus Sûtra is in fact peeling off the skin of one's body, and that, in an age when prevails, offering the Buddha one's sole portion of food, without which one cannot sustain oneself another day, is offering one's life to the Buddha.⁶¹

This is "offering in principle" (ri-kuyô).

That offering one's last portion of food to the Buddha should constitute the moral equivalent of giving one's life seems easy enough to understand. The unusual feature of Nichiren's exposition lies in his equating such an act and the resolve underlying it with the "observation of the mind." The "observation of the mind," the central meditative discipline of T'ien-t'ai/Tendai Buddhism, aims at perceiving that one's own mind in a single moment encompasses the three thousand realms, i.e., that oneself and the whole of phenomenal reality are identified. Thus the "observation of the mind" pertains to meditation; why it should be associated, as in the above passage, with the act of offering, is a question that must inevitably occur to the reader at this point.

As an immediate answer, Nichiren refers to a passage from Chih-i's meditation manual, the Moho chih-kuan, in which the six pāramitās or perfections, including almsgiving or offering, are recommended as an auxiliary practice to help remove mental hindrances to "observing the mind." However, the Moho chih-kuan does

not equate the two as this text does. A second, more subtle answer can be found in Nichiren's subsequent clarification of the difference between the Lotus Sûtra and the pre-Lotus Sûtra teachings, which he reads as a difference in how they define the relationship between the phenomenal realm and the Buddhist truth. The pre-Lotus Sûtra teachings, he says, "explain secular dharmas in terms of the Buddha-Dharma," in effect maintaining a duality between the two, while the Lotus Sûtra reveals that "secular dharmas immediately comprise the whole of the Buddha-Dharma," thus denying any sort of separation between the ultimate reality and the mundane, phenomenal world:

The sūtras preached before the Lotus Sûtra hold in essence that all dharmas are produced from the mind. To illustrate, they say that the mind is like the great earth, while the grasses and trees [that grow from the earth] are like the dharmas. Not so with the Lotus Sûtra. [It teaches that] the mind is itself the great earth, and that the great earth is precisely the grasses and trees. The sūtras preached before teach that clarity of mind is like the moon and that purity of mind is like a flower. Not so with the Lotus Sûtra. It represents the doctrine that the moon is the mind, the flower is the mind. From this we must know that polished rice is not polished rice, but precisely life itself.⁶²

The interpenetration of the dharmas and the identification of ultimate and worldly truths can appear to be rather abstract concepts, but Nichiren draws them within the concrete scope of his reader's experience by

coming back full circle to the donation of rice that prompted the letter in the first place. In the "observation of the mind" one accesses that realm--grounded, in Nichiren's view, in the Lotus Sûtra alone--wherein all things interpenetrate and the mind cannot be separated from the world's visible forms, where principle (ri) and actuality (ji) are identified and rice donated is none other than the life of its donor. Thus, not only as a matter of moral equivalence but metaphysically as well, the act of dedication of which one is capable, based on one's earnest resolve, becomes the "offering of one's life" and thus the act productive of Buddhahood. Such a doctrine would have gone a long way, in principle at least, toward undercutting monastic/secular hierarchies and validating lay Buddhist practice.

We can begin here to understand what Tamura means by his distinction between writings that strongly "stress" nonduality and those that "emerge" from it. Where the "Shôji ichidaiji kechimiyaku shô" assumes the identity of the Buddha and the beings to begin with, urging the practitioner to chant the daimoku understanding that the Lord Śākyamuni, the Lotus Sûtra and all living beings "are utterly without distinction," the "Jiri kuyô gosho" presupposes a distinction between "common mortals" and the Buddha to whom they must

dedicate themselves in order to attain Buddhahood; in this respect, a difference in emphasis between the texts is clearly apparent.

On the other hand, however, even the "Shôji ichidaiji kechimyaku shô" maintains that the transmission of the "sole great matter" is received only in the act of the practice, and both texts premise the attainment of Buddhahood by ordinary persons on the nonduality of phenomenal and ultimate reality. The "Shôji ichidaiji kechimyaku shô" affirms this nonduality by identifying birth and death with the workings of Myôhō-rence-kyô; the "Jiri kuyô gosho," by interpreting the Lotus Sûtra as teaching that "secular dharmas immediately comprise the whole of the Buddha-Dharma." Thus, while Tamura's distinction is by no means arbitrary, points of commonality also present themselves. Especially in view of the great variation in concepts of the Buddha appearing in Nichiren's authenticated writings, this distinction in itself seems an insufficient basis for questioning his authorship of certain texts.

(5) The Emergence of the Jeweled Stûpa: "Abutsu-bô gosho"

This letter was written to one Abutsu-bô Nittoku, a follower of Nichiren who lived on Sado Island. Some

controversy surrounds the time and place of its writing, 1272 on Sado Island and 1276 on Mount Minobu being the two most commonly held opinions.⁶³ Suzuki Ichijô has suggested 1278.⁶⁴ As the name Abutsu--a contraction of "Amida-butsu"--indicates, this man had at first been a devout adherent of Pure Land Buddhism before converting to Nichiren's teaching. According to tradition, he was once a samurai called Endô Tamemori, and his wife, a lady-in-waiting, who accompanied the ex-Emperor Juntoku into exile on Sado following the defeat of the imperial forces by the Kamakura bakufu in the Jôkyû Disturbance of 1221. After Juntoku's death, it is said, the couple took Buddhist vows and devoted themselves to reciting the Nembutsu for Juntoku's repose. Recent scholarship, based on available historical materials, suggests that the couple were probably residents of Sado to begin with and that any connection with Juntoku is probably a matter of legend.⁶⁵

Nichiren's own writings tell us that the two became his followers early in his exile and served him devotedly at no small risk to themselves, for a time supplying him under cover of night with food and other necessities. In time, this elderly couple and their son, Moritsuna, became the nucleus of a small but growing community of believers on the island. After Nichiren was pardoned and retired to Mount Minobu in Kai, Abutsu-

bô, although nearing ninety, three times made the journey to visit him.

The present letter takes the form of an answer to an inquiry from Abutsu-bô about the meaning of the "jeweled stûpa" that appears in the Lotus Sûtra. This event, described in the eleventh or "Apparition of the Jeweled Stûpa" chapter,⁶⁶ forms one of the points of high drama in the sûtra. Michael Pye rightly notes that "the impression it makes cannot be adequately conveyed at second hand,"⁶⁷ yet the sheer length of the account requires that we make do here with a summary.

In the preceding chapters, Śâkyamuni Buddha has declared that the three vehicles of the voice-hearer, the condition-perceiver and the bodhisattva are not ends in themselves, as implied in his earlier teachings, but rather the "skilful means" by which he leads the beings to the one vehicle of Buddhahood, now revealed as the final destiny of all. At this point in the narrative, the ground splits open and a huge stûpa, of impossibly awesome dimensions and adorned with seven kinds of precious substances, emerges from beneath the earth and rises into open space, where it hangs suspended. From within the stûpa issues a voice declaring, "Well done, well done, O Śâkyamuni Buddha!..." praising the Buddha's exposition of the Lotus Sûtra.

To the bewildered assembly, Śâkyamuni explains that

inside the stûpa is the "whole body" of the Tathâgata Many Jewels (Prabhûtaratna), who has long since entered into final nirvâṇa. While still engaged in bodhisattva practice, this Buddha made a vow that, after his extinction, wherever anyone might preach the Lotus Sûtra, he would appear, in the jeweled stûpa, and bear witness to the sûtra's truth. When the members of the assembly ask to see this Buddha, Śâkyamuni says that he must first recall all the "partial-body" Buddhas who are now preaching the Dharma throughout the universe as emanations of himself. After he first purifies three groups of myriads of millions of world spheres to make room for these Buddhas, they begin to gather with their attendant retinues, taking their seats on lion thrones under jewel trees. When all have assembled, Śâkyamuni rises into space, opens the stûpa and seats himself beside the Buddha Many Jewels at the latter's invitation. By his supernatural powers, he also lifts the entire assembly into the air, to the same elevation as the two Buddhas. This begins the what is known as "the assembly in open space," which continues through the twenty-second chapter of the sûtra and provides the stage for some of its most central events.

Abutsu-bô's question--"What does all this mean?"--was by no means a new one. The powerful symbol of the "the apparition of the jeweled stûpa" had captured the

imagination of Asian Buddhists for centuries, inspiring a variety of interpretations and iconographic activity, in which Nichiren's mandala may be included. In his letter of reply, after duly citing the authoritative exegetical interpretations put forth by Chih-i in the Miao-fa lien-hua ching wen-chü (Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sûtra), Nichiren proceeds to identify this fantastic stûpa as something within the immediate experience of the practitioner:

In essence, [the stûpa's emergence] means that the three groups of voice-hearers, on hearing the Lotus Sûtra, beheld the jeweled stûpa of their own mind. Now the same is also true of Nichiren's disciples and lay followers. In the Final Dharma age, there is no jeweled stûpa apart from the figures of those men and women who embrace the Lotus Sûtra. And if this is the case, then those who chant Namu-myôhō-rence-kyô, whether noble or base, high or low, are themselves the jeweled stûpa and also are themselves the Tathāgata Many Jewels. There is no jeweled stûpa other than Myôhō-rence-kyô....

Now the single body of Abutsu Shōnin consists of the five elements of earth, water, fire, wind and space. These five elements are the five characters of the daimoku. This being the case, Abutsu-bō is himself the jeweled stûpa, and the jeweled stûpa is itself Abutsu-bō. Any other understanding would be profitless.⁶⁸

Here the jeweled stûpa itself is interpreted as the ultimate truth (= Myôhō-rence-kyô), and its emergence, as the cognition of one's identity with that truth. The five universal elements composing the body of the practitioner are equated with the five characters of the

daimoku of the Lotus Sûtra; in the act of chanting the daimoku, practitioner and truth become one. Thus all those who chant the daimoku, Nichiren says, are the jeweled stûpa.

In the vocabulary inherited from traditional T'ien-t'ai/Tendai studies, this is called a kanjin interpretation. Kanjin, literally, the "observation of the mind," usually indicates meditative practice in contrast to doctrinal study (kyôso). According to the Wen-chü, however, Chih-i also used this term as the last of the "four modes of interpretation," a four-part hermeneutical guideline for interpreting the "words and phrases" of the Lotus Sûtra. Having grasped from various angles the doctrinal or exegetical meaning of a particular phrase or image (i.e., the kyôso interpretation), one then internalizes it, contemplating its meaning with respect to one's own mind.⁶⁹ In this latter case, the "words and phrases" of the Lotus Sûtra are understood, not as referring to abstract or external events, but as an expression of one's own religious awakening. It would thus perhaps be valid to call them mystical interpretations. The Wen-chü prefaces such interpretations with the phrase "interpretation in light of the observation of the mind" (kaniin shaku). For example, in the interpreting the above-described episode of the jeweled stûpa, the Wen-chü says that the

emergence of the stûpa from beneath the ground indicates breaking through the mind-ground of ignorance to dwell in the Emptiness that is the supreme meaning⁷⁰; Śâkyamuni's three acts of purifying myriads of millions of world spheres mean that one purifies oneself of the three categories of delusion⁷¹; the two Buddhas seated side by side within the stûpa represent the fusion, in meditation, of truth as object with the subjective wisdom of the practitioner,⁷² and so on. Japanese medieval Tendai texts developed this style of interpretation to a high degree, as will be further discussed in the next chapter. In the "Abutsu-bô gosho," Nichiren (again, as putative, if not actual, author) employs the same technique in concrete and immediate fashion: The jeweled stûpa is the body of the practitioner, identified in the act of chanting with the ultimate reality and the universe itself. His observation that "any other understanding is profitless" indicates the central importance he placed on this realization.

As noted earlier, before becoming Nichiren's follower, Abutsu-bô had devoted himself to Pure Land practices. Living in the rural, isolated community of Sado Island, he may well have held a very literal faith in the Buddha Amida the lord of a Pure Land far away in the western quarter, who would come to welcome the

believer at the moment of death. In this letter, we find what seems to be a deliberate attempt on Nichiren's part to alter the elderly man's notions concerning the locus of the sacred. Here again, he takes a believer's offering as the starting point for preaching the Dharma. Abutsu-bô had sent, along with his letter of inquiry, a string of coins and polished rice to be offered "to the jeweled stûpa." Nichiren in effect demands that he reconceive what that act means:

You may think you made offerings to the jeweled stûpa of the Tathâgata Many Jewels, but that is not so; you offered them to yourself. One's own person is the Tathâgata of original enlightenment, possessing three bodies in one. Believing in this way, chant Namu-myôhō-rengē-kyō. Then that place [where you do so] is the very place where the jeweled stûpa dwells. This is the meaning of the sūtra's statement, "If there should be a place where one preaches the Lotus Sūtra, my jeweled stûpa [...] will rise and appear before him."⁷³

This passage shows an emphasis, already seen in some of the writings discussed earlier such as the "Isshō jōbutsu shō" and the "Shōji ichidaiji kechimiyaku shō," on the importance of the practitioner chanting the daimoku with faith in the identity of oneself and the ultimate reality. It further employs the image of the stûpa's rising and appearing to suggest that the Buddha land is "right there" for whoever chants the daimoku with such faith. Nichiren concludes his letter by saying, "Because [this teaching] is so extremely rare

and wondrous, I will inscribe the jeweled stûpa [i.e., the mandala] for you....This is the purpose of [the Buddha's] advent in this world."

The "Abutsu-bô gosho" has invited the all the by-now familiar criticisms. Asai Yôrin questions its use of five-element thought⁷⁴ and its identification of one's person and land (i.e., the entire dharma-realm) with an originally inherent Buddha,⁷⁵ a position which, as we have seen, is inconsistent with his reading of Nichiren's thought. Shigyô Kaishû takes exception to this letter's use of "the sort of original enlightenment doctrine that emphasizes inherent principle over specific actualities, terming it 'the purpose of [the Buddha's] advent.'"⁷⁶ Asai Endô groups this letter with other works from the Nichiren collection that he considers problematical because they employ the concept of the originally inherent triple-bodied Tathâgata.⁷⁷ Tamura Yoshirô as well, based on his premise that Nichiren departed from nondual original enlightenment thought after age forty, includes the "Abutsu-bô gosho" in a list of works whose authenticity, he says, requires further investigation.⁷⁸

Here again, we have the case of a writing questioned solely on the basis of the lack of a surviving holograph, or other independent verification, and its use of terminology related to the original

enlightenment discourse. Without verification, we cannot simply assume that it is genuine; on the other hand, as we have argued thus far, neither is the use of original enlightenment thought necessarily enough reason to suspect it may be apocryphal.

(6) Security and Peace in the Present World: The "Shijô Kingo-dono gohenji"

Among the most ardent of Nichiren's followers was the samurai Shijô Saburôzaemon-no-jô Yorimoto (1229-1296), also known as Shijô Kingo, who served Lord Ema Mitsutoki of the Nagoe branch of the Hôjô clan. He is thought to have embraced Nichiren's teaching around 1256, which would have made him one of Nichiren's first lay converts. Skilled in medicine as well as the military arts, he acted as Nichiren's personal physician. The Nichiren collection includes nearly thirty letters to Yorimoto and his wife, and this large volume of material, as well as Yorimoto's habit of consulting Nichiren in detail about his personal affairs, combine to yield an extraordinarily vivid picture of this man. He emerges from the texts as passionate, loyal, quick-tempered, impulsive and utterly fearless. Nichiren writes that when he was arrested on the ninth day of the twelfth month of Bun'ei 8 (1271) and was being led away through the streets of Kamakura,

possibly to be executed, Yorimoto came running to him and accompanied him, holding the bridle of his horse⁷⁹; tradition has it that Yorimoto was ready to commit seppuku himself if Nichiren were beheaded. While Nichiren was in exile on Sado, Yorimoto twice contrived to visit him there and also sent messengers to him with supplies, all the while acting as a rallying point for believers in Kamakura.

After Nichiren's retirement to Mount Minobu, Yorimoto's devotion to Nichiren became a source of conflict between him and his lord, Ema, a patron of one of Nichiren's old antagonists, Ryôkan-bô Ninshô of the Gokuraku-ji.⁸⁰ This conflict came to a head in 1277, when the samurai was presented with the choice of formally renouncing his faith in Nichiren or having his fief confiscated and being ousted from the clan. The present letter--if genuine--was written a year earlier, in 1276, but it would seem that the situation was already tense. In any event, Yorimoto was evidently in difficulties of some sort.

This letter is extremely short and may in fact represent only the concluding portion of a longer letter. It begins by discussing a phrase from the Lotus Sûtra describing the eternal Buddha land (identified in the sûtra with the sahâ world) "wherein the beings find pleasure and joy"--a phrase that appears in a famous

verse section from the "Fathoming the Lifespan of the Tathâgata" chapter. Nichiren first gives a word-by-word interpretation of this phrase:

For all living beings, there is no "pleasure and joy" apart from chanting Namu-myôhō-rengē-kyō. The sūtra states, "...wherein the beings find pleasure and joy." Doesn't this passage refer to joy of the Dharma received for oneself? Aren't you included among "the beings"? "Wherein" indicates Jambudvīpa. The country of Japan lies within Jambudvīpa. As for "pleasure and joy," doesn't this mean that our body and mind, our dependent and primary [recompense], are all the single thought-moment comprising three thousand realms and also the Buddha's self-enjoyment body?⁸¹

What the text does is to project Yorimoto and the world he knows into the text of the Lotus Sūtra. The word "wherein," which in the context of the sūtra indicates the Buddha land, is here shown to indicate the actual, human world (Jambudvīpa), including Japan, and Yorimoto is identified as one of the "beings" who inhabit that world. The "pleasure and joy" that the beings are said to experience in that Buddha land is defined as the realization of nonduality: all the categorical divisions that our discriminative consciousness habitually imposes on the world, such as body and mind, the self (primary recompense) and the outer world it inhabits (dependent recompense), are unified in being all simultaneously identical to the ultimate truth and to the Buddha's self-enjoyment body. The "pleasure and joy" of this understanding, the text

emphasizes, is accessible only in chanting the daimoku.

It goes on to say that such understanding will provide one, in the Lotus Sûtra's words, with "security and peace in the present world." As we know from other writings in the Nichiren collection, these words provoked repeated doubts on the part of Nichiren's followers, who wondered why their teacher, and they themselves, should be persecuted by the authorities when the Lotus Sûtra promises its devotees "security and peace in the present world."⁸² Nichiren here offers an explanation of "security and peace" that resolves the contradiction:

This [identity of oneself and the Buddha] is what it [the sūtra] means in speaking of "security and peace in this present world...." Even if worldly troubles should arise, you must pay them no heed. Not even worthies and sages can avoid these things. Just do your sake-drinking with your wife and chant Namu-myôhō-rengē-kyō. Take suffering as suffering, enjoy pleasures for what they are, and whether in suffering or joy, continue chanting Namu-myôhō-rengē-kyō. How can this not be the joy of the Dharma received for oneself? Muster the strong power of faith all the more.⁸³

"Security and peace" is thus interpreted to mean, not the absence of external troubles and dangers, but the knowledge of one's identity with ultimate truth. This "joy of the Dharma received for oneself" achieved in the chanting of the daimoku is shown here to provide one with a ground that transcends the world yet at the same time allows one to remain within it, involved but

not attached, participating in all its pleasures and sorrows but without being fettered by them. For the benefit of Yorimoto, a man very much immersed in "the world," Nichiren asserts here that the realization of nonduality, accessed through faith in the Lotus Sûtra and the chanting of its daimoku, opens enlightenment to the practitioner even in the midst of mundane affairs.

We should also note that the admonition to "do your sake-drinking with your wife" appears in other writings in the Nichiren collection addressed to Yorimoto from this early Minobu period (1274-76). Knowing the samurai's quick temper and the fact that he had enemies in his clan, Nichiren repeatedly advised him to avoid public drinking bouts as occasions of potential trouble.⁸⁴

Asai Yôrin singles out from this letter to Yorimoto the passage quoted above, from "Just do your sake-drinking with your wife and chant Namu-myôhô-renge-kyô" to "How can this be other than the joy of the Dharma received for oneself?"; the passage in the "Abutsu-bô gosho," discussed earlier, from "Abutsu-bô is precisely the jeweled stûpa and the jeweled stûpa is precisely Abutsu-bô" to "You may think you made offerings to the jeweled stûpa of the Tathâgata Many Jewels, but that is not so; you offered them to yourself"; and a few other passages of similar import from additional writings,

arguing that the ideas they express deviate from Nichiren's thought as expressed in his major, authenticated works, such as the "Kaimoku shô" and "Kanjin honzon shô":

The above represent the extremity of original enlightenment thought that takes all deeds to be the Buddha's work and holds that all actions are none other than the Buddha's action. Once one goes to this extent, then there are no defilements to be discarded and no enlightenment to be sought. The entity of the deluded ordinary worldling is itself Buddha....

...When contrasted with those primary writings that teach the awakening of faith and the establishment of practice and encourage the chanting of daimoku and the embracing [of the Lotus Sûtra], [these works] are seen to differ greatly. The former [i.e., reliable texts] stress faith, and the latter [problematized texts], contemplation. The former deal with actuality (ji), the latter with principle (ri). In contrast to the latter, which are based solely on original enlightenment, the former take the position of original enlightenment accessed through acquired enlightenment.⁸⁵

The texts we have considered do indeed assert, in effect, that "there are no defilements to be discarded and no enlightenment to be sought" and that "the entity of the deluded ordinary worldling is itself Buddha," stressing this point perhaps more forcefully than the texts Asai regards as normative. But as we have seen, they also make abundantly clear that the worldly passions being enlightenment and one's own person being Buddha are always premised upon faith in the Lotus Sûtra and the chanting of the daimoku. It seems very

difficult, in this light, to set them up in diametric opposition to "those primary writings which teach the awakening of faith and the establishment of practice," for the two groups of texts accord completely in asserting that faith and practice are necessary. Here again, one has to ask if the alleged "great difference" is not merely a difference of emphasis, reified into separate categories as a way of problematizing texts that would suggest Nichiren's thought to have been not "pure" but adulterated with medieval Tendai ideas. In summation, the six writings discussed in this chapter are representative of a number of personal letters from Nichiren to his followers that use images or terminology associated with the original enlightenment discourse to suggest the immediacy of Buddhahood for those who have faith in the Lotus Sûtra and chant its daimoku. With the exception of one, the "Jiri kuyô gosho," none of them survives in Nichiren's autograph, nor do they appear in any index before the rokuge. Thus it is impossible, at this point, to prove conclusively that they are authentic. On the other hand, neither does the absence of extant holographs or the late appearance of these texts in the indexes necessarily indicate that they are spurious. As mentioned before, accident has no doubt played a considerable part in determining which holographs have survived, while the fact that Nichiren's

letters were scattered from the outset in the possession of followers throughout Japan, coupled with social turmoil and the intense factional rivalries within the Nichiren sect that prevailed during the Muromachi period, worked to delay the compilation of his writings after his death. While it does seem odd that so few of the works in the Nichiren collection using original enlightenment thought should have survived in his holograph, this could be mere historical coincidence, and does not necessarily indicate that these texts are apocryphal, or that Nichiren himself parted company with this doctrine.

As discussed above, letters of this sort would have been more difficult to produce pseudographically than impersonal doctrinal essays, requiring that their authors not only have access to Nichiren's authentic correspondence in order to familiarize themselves with his style and the details of his followers' circumstances, but also that they don his persona and produce intimate expressions of feeling. In addition, these letters are written in Japanese, which lacked the prestige of literary Chinese for learned discourse, and are for the most part addressed to lay people--points that would seem to argue in favor of their authenticity, although not conclusively so. At the same time, the temptation to assume them genuine on this account should

probably be resisted as too facile. A recognized difficulty of the textual scholar, in the field of literature as well as in religion, is that personal letters tend to be regarded as authentic; hence the producer of pseudographia may find them a useful vehicle. I and II Timothy and Titus, among the deutero-Pauline letters, provide well-known examples. What can be pointed out in the case of the letters discussed in this chapter is how very few individuals would have had the opportunity to research, forge and introduce them into the canon, and what truly impressive ingenuity would have been involved.

In short, these letters may be apocryphal, and then again they may be genuine. Where both possibilities are not fully acknowledged, the controversy over Nichiren's use of original enlightenment thought becomes circular: one side making the prejudgment that nondual original enlightenment thought lies outside the scope of Nichiren's ideas and then using it to marginalize those texts in which it appears, glossing over the possibility that they could be authentic; the other side, making the prejudgement that this discourse was essential to Nichiren's thinking and on that basis arguing that the same texts must be genuine, glossing over the possibility of forgery. Future developments in computer-aided analysis or other

techniques of textual study may help resolve the problem of authenticity. At present, in any event, the enigma remains, and any account of Nichiren's thought that seeks to approach the ideal of objectivity must take this into account.

Notes to Chapter Three:

1. Nichiren Shōnin kyōgaku no kenkyū, pp. 120-21.
2. See for example the "Gonin shoha shō" (NSZ 2: 82), said to have been written by Sanmi Nichijun (1294-1356) in Karyaku 3 (1328) under the direction of Byakuren Ajari Nikkō but possibly a later production; and the "Nikkō Shōnin goden sōan" of Nichidō (1283-1341), included in the same volume, pp. 254-55.
3. See for example the "Hokke honmonshū kechimyaku sōjō no koto" ("Hon'in-myō shō"), said to represent a personal transmission from Nichiren to Nikkō but almost certainly a later work (NSZ 2:8), and also the "Gonin shoha shō" (NSZ 2:80-81).
4. The "Nikkō Shōnin goden sōan" names two of the six senior disciples, saying that "Nikō, Nitchō and others" rewrote kana writings in Chinese (NSZ 2:255).
5. NSZ 2:121-22. The "Nikkō Shōnin goden sōan" also mentions, on p. 255 in the same volume, the destruction of letters written by Nichiren in kana.
6. Nichiren Shōnin kyōgaku no kenkyū, p. 175.
7. Asai (ibid., p. 180) suggests that this matter may have been somehow connected with the itchi/shōretsu debate, an ongoing controversy that divided Nichiren's followers after his death, as to whether the two major exegetical divisions of the Lotus Sūtra, the trace teaching and the origin teaching, are of one essence, or whether the origin teaching is superior.
8. Earlier translations of the writings discussed in this chapter appear in Nichiren Shōshū International Center, ed. and trans., The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, vols. 1 and 2. Vol. 1 includes the "Shōji ichidaiji kechimyaku shō" (pp. 21-25), "Abutsu-bō gosho" (pp. 29-31), "Shijō Kingo-dono gohenji" (p. 161) and "Jiri kuyō gosho" (pp. 267-70). Vol. 2 contains the "Funamori Yasaburō moto gosho" (pp. 53-57) and the "Ueno goke-ama gozen gohenji" (pp. 239-44). I have retranslated these pieces in accordance with a more academic style of Buddhist translation.
9. For the background of the Izu exile, see for example Takagi Yutaka, Nichiren: sono shisō to kōdō (Tokyo: Hyōronsha, 1960), pp. 75-79, or Tamura Yoshirō,

Nichiren: Junkyô no nyoraishi, pp. 55-56.

10. For a summary of the difficulties involved in precisely identifying this spot, see Miyazaki Eishû, Nichiren to sono deshi (Tokyo: Mainichi Shimbunsha, 1971), p.76, as well as a more detailed discussion in Kamakura Iseki Kenkyûkai, ed., Kamakura to Nichiren Daishônin (Tokyo: Shin Jimbutsu Oraisha, 1976), pp. 118-25.

11. In present-day Kawana, the grounds of the temple Renkei-ji house graves said to be those of Yasaburô and his wife. Nearby, beneath the cliffs of the Kawana harbor, is a cave where the couple is said to have sheltered Nichiren. Offshore, a bronze statue of Nichiren has been erected on a flat rock, said to be the Manaita Iwa where bakufu functionaries abandoned him.

Alternatively identified as the site of Nichiren's landing on Izu is the present Cape Nichiren in Futo, about fifteen kilometers south from Kawana. Here, another offshore rock has been designated as the Manaita Iwa, and another temple, Renchaku-ji, has been erected. The Renchaku-ji grounds include several sites related to the Yasaburô legend, including a rock inscription of the daimoku, damaged by a typhoon in 1949, which Nichiren is said to have written in gratitude immediately upon landing; and the stump of a tree, killed by a forest fire 1934, on whose roots he is said to have hung his sea-drenched surplice to dry ("Renchaku-ji ryaku engi," leaflet prepared for temple visitors). In addition, Bukkô-ji and Butsugen-ji in the town of Itô are said to commemorate the emergence of the Buddha image from the sea.

12. Ibun jiten, p. 981.

13. The "Shiiji shirô-dono gohenji" (STN 1:227-28), dated simply "twenty-eighth day, fourth month," is assigned in the Shôwa teihon edition to Kôchô 1 (1261), which would place it about two months before the "Funamori Yasaburô moto gosho." However, reason exists for thinking Nichiren may have written it much later, after his retirement to Minobu (see Zenshû kôgi 5:146-47). A few of Nichiren's letters from before 1261 have survived, but they consist of only a few lines each and contain no expositions of doctrine.

14. STN 1:230-31.

15. STN 1:231.

16. NSZ 2:236-47. This biography mentions a less well-known legend: that the Amidist inhabitants of Izu, plotting to be rid of Nichiren, offered him poisonous mushrooms, which he ate without ill effect (p. 238).

17. Several Muromachi- and Edo-period biographies say that Yasaburô's original surname was Uehara or Uenohara; the Honge bettô Busso tôki says that he was a minor official of Kawana Harbor (see Nichirenschû jiten, p. 694). If he was some sort of local official, that would help explain how he would have been able to donate the sort offerings listed at the beginning of the "Funamori Yasaburô moto gosho," as well his apparent literacy.

The surname Uehara was once common in Kawana, evidently because the ancestors of many of the inhabitants originally came from a place called Uenohara in Kai Province (present-day Yamanashi Prefecture). A recent history of Uenohara-machi in Yamanashi says that Yasaburô was originally a samurai and vassal of Uehara Uenosuke, lord of Uehara Castle in Kai, and was exiled to Izu as the result of another's calumny; however, the source of this tradition is uncertain. Cited in Kamakura Iseki Kenkyûkai, ed., Kamakura to Nichiren Daishônin, pp. 126-27.

18. Kamakura Iseki Kenkyûkai, ed., Kamakura to Nichiren Daishônin, pp. 129-31, mentions the recent discovery, in Itô, of what appears to be a letter from Nichiren to one Itô Hachirôzaemon, thanking him for a donation of rice. See also Part II, "Letter to Boatmaster Yasaburô," n. 5.

19. For Nichiren's use of setsuwa, see Takagi Yutaka, Nichiren to sono montei, pp. 105-52, and Laurel Rasplika Rodd, Nichiren: Selected Writings (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1980), pp. 47-56.

20. Ibun jiten, p. 981. Suzuki Ichijô, Nichiren Shônin ibun no bunkengakuteki kenkyû, p. 358, also says that the enumeration at the head of a letter of offerings received does not appear in Nichiren's correspondence before the Minobu period, though this observation was not made in the context of this particular letter.

21. The Ibun jiten, p. 981, says that "doubts concerning this letter have been held from former times," but I have been unable to discover when or by whom. The earliest published criticism I have found appears in Asai Yôrin, ed., Shôwa shinshû Nichiren Shônin ibun zenshû bekkai, p. 168, which says only that "the origins of this work should be further investigated." Asai

enumerated more specific grounds for doubt in Nichiren Shōnin kyōgaku no kenkyū, which are cited later.

The late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries saw the rise, within the Nichiren community, of the fūju fuse ("neither accepting nor giving") movement, on the part of those maintaining that Nichiren monks should neither receive alms from those who do not believe in the Lotus Sūtra nor give offerings to them, e. g., participate in religious rituals for their sake. Proponents of this position, citing the "Funamori Yasaburō moto gosho," pointed out that Nichiren had agreed to offer prayers for the jīto only after the latter had displayed "a slight degree of faith," while both sides argued over whether, in initially receiving aid from Yasaburō and his wife, Nichiren had or had not in effect accepted alms from nonbelievers (see Miyazaki Eishū, Fūju fuse-ha no genryū to tenkai [Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1969], pp. 48-49, 61, 82-83 [n. 46]).

In the course of this debate, certain Nichiren-attributed writings that appeared to buttress the fūju fuse position were attacked by its opponents as spurious; the "Funamori Yasaburō moto gosho" may have been among them.

22. Nichiren Shōnin kyōgaku no kenkyū, p. 292.

23. Kamakura shin Bukkyō shisō no kenkyū, p. 642 (n. 168).

24. Miyazaki Eishū, Fūju fuse-ha no genryū to tenkai, pp. 49-51, and Nichirensshū no kitōhō (Kyoto: Heirakuji, 1980), pp. 43-45, 94 (n. 47).

25. To the best of my knowledge, the first extant document referring to the Yasaburō story is the Nichiren Daishōnin chūkasan by Enmyō-in Nitchō (1441-1510), while the Honman-ji index in which the "Funamori Yasaburō moto gosho" first appears was completed in Bunroku 4 (1595). However, the account of Nichiren's arrival in Izu, Yasaburō's devotion and the incident of the jito's illness as described in the Chūkasan seem to be an elaboration on the "Funamori Yasaburō moto gosho" (Nichiren Shōnin denkishū, pp. 25-26, 30).

26. Ibun jiten, p. 82.

27. "Ongi kuden no kenkyū (2)," Risshō Daigaku ronsō 2-7 (June 1943), pp. 58-59.

28. STN 1:329.

29. STN 1:330.

30. STN 1:330-31.
31. STN 1:331.
32. STN 1:331.
33. Nichiren Shônin kyôgaku no kenkyû, p. 331.
34. "Ongi kuden no kenkyû (2)," pp. 58-60.
35. STN 1:705-706.
36. "Omonsu-dono nyôbô gohenji," STN 2:1856.
37. STN 1:328.
38. STN 1:932-33.
39. For the details of this family conflict, see Takagi Yutaka, Nichiren to sono montei, p. 225-28.
40. "Ongi kuden no kenkyû (2)," p. 58.
41. "Tendai hongaku shisô to Nichiren kyôgaku," pp. 142-43.
42. For a discussion of the information available, see Kageyama Gyôô, "Sairen-bô ni tsuite," Ôsaki gakuhô 98 (July 1951):16-25.
43. The two included in the zokuhen or "subsidiary texts" section, the "Tôtai renga shô" (STN 3:2129-37) and the "Jûhachi enman shô" (3:2137-44), have been questioned from pre-modern times because they quote the Shuzen-ji ketsu. See chap. 1, n. 45.
44. However, early copies of two of these exist, the "Risshôkan jô" and its cover letter, made in Shôchû 2 (1325) by the third abbot of the Minobu lineage, Nisshin (1271-1334), and a third, the "Kitôkyô okurijô" is quoted in an extant writing dated Bunpô 2 (1318) by Nichizô, a direct disciple of Nichiren. See Ibun jiten, pp. 398-99.
45. Lotus, p'in 2, T 262.9:7a21-28.
46. STN 1:522.
47. STN 1:522.
48. Nichiren: sono kôdô to shisô, p. 32.

49. "Nanjo Hyôe Shichirô-dono gohenji," STN 2:1884.
50. STN 1:711.
51. STN 1:522.
52. STN 1:522.
53. STN 1:524.
54. The "Tendai Hokkeshû gozu hômon yôsan" (DDZ 5:59) and the "Gobu kechimyaku" (5:360).
55. As a matter of textual interest, this same passage occurs in another work in the Nichiren collection, a short letter called the "Daibyaku gosha shô" (STN 2:1412). However, since this work also fails to survive in holograph, it cannot be absolutely identified as authentic, and thus does not help date the Tendai texts.
56. "The secret Dharma, the sole great reason [for the advent of all Buddhas], that T'ien-t'ai and Dengyô roughly explained but whose propagation they left [for the future], will now be spread for the first time in this country. And is not Nichiren the very person who does so?...The sūtra states, "[Among the bodhisattvas who emerged from the earth,] there were four leaders. The first was named Superior Conduct, etc." ("Toki nyûdo-dono gohenji," STN 1:516-17).
57. Tamura lists eighteen such works, including several addressed to Sairen-bô, in Kamakura shin Bukkyô shisô no kenkyû, pp. 612-23, and another five beyond these in a list appearing in "Nichiren kyôgaku to hongaku shisô," pp. 142-43. (I have not included in this count the oral teachings attributed to Nichiren.) Of the works Tamura mentions, a few have been questioned since premodern times, but the majority have not. Eight are personal letters to Nichiren's followers, seven of these to lay people--including lay monks and nuns--and four of them to women.
58. "Nichiren Shônin no kai shisô ni tsuite," Ôsaki gakuhô 125-26 (July 1971), pp. 22-23 (n. 57).
59. "Junsui Nichiren gi kakuritsu no mondaiten," p. 12.
60. Ibun jiten, p. 574.
61. STN 2:1262.

62. STN 2:1263.

63. For a discussion of the problems involved in dating this text, see Asai Yōrin, Nichiren Shōnin kyōgaku no kenkyū, pp. 322-23, and Shigyō Kaishū, "Ongi kuden no kenkyū (2)," pp. 56-57.

64. Nichiren Shōnin ibun no bunkengakuteki kenkyū, pp. 357-58.

65. Kawano Chishō, "Abutsu-bō fusai no shiden ni tsuite no kōshō," Osaki gakuho 119 (June 1965): 81-91.

66. Lotus, T 262.9:32bff; Hurvitz, pp. 183-88.

67. Skilful Means (London: Gerald Duckworth and Co., 1978), p. 71.

68. STN 2:1144-45.

69. The four modes of interpretation are given in Wenchū 1a, T 1718.34:2a20-b10.

70. T 1718.34:113c14-15.

71. T 1718.34:114b3-4.

72. T 1718.34:113b28-29.

73. STN 2:1145.

74. Nichiren Shōnin kyōgaku no kenkyū, p. 319.

75. Ibid, pp. 105, 292-93.

76. "Ongi kuden no kenkyū (2)," p. 57.

77. Jōko Nihon Tendai honmon shisō shi, p. 117.

78. Kamakura shin Bukkyō shisō no kenkyū, pp. 618-19.

79. "Sushun Tennō gosho," STN 2:1394.

80. For details see Takagi Yutaka, Nichiren to sono montei, pp. 236-44.

81. STN 2:1181.

82. See for example the treatment of this question in the "Nyosetsu shugyō shō (STN 1:732-33), the "Hakii Saburō-dono gohenji" (1:745ff), or the "Shijō kingo-dono

gohenji" (1:894), another letter to Yorimoto dated the year before the one under discussion.

83. STN 2:1181.

84. "Shukun ninyû shihômon men yodôzai ji" (STN 1:834);
"Shijô Kingo Shakabutsu kuyô ji" (2:1188).

85. Nichiren Shônin kyôgaku no kenkyû, p. 478.

CHAPTER FOUR

"Opening" the Lotus:

Secret Oral Teachings of the Early Nichiren Community

In his later years, while living in retirement on Mount Minobu, Nichiren lectured for his disciples on the Lotus Sûtra, something he alludes to in his personal letters.¹ The Nichiren collection contains two documents that purport to be transcriptions of these lectures: the Onqi kuden (Oral transmission of the sacred meanings)² and the Onkô kikigaki (Lectures heard and recorded).³ Both texts interpret the Lotus Sûtra as uniquely revealing the truth of original enlightenment. These works have been treasured for centuries as direct records of Nichiren's oral teachings on the profound meaning of the Lotus Sûtra. They were also thought to hold the privileged position, so important in Buddhist hermeneutics, of being final teachings, and thus revelatory of Nichiren's ultimate intent. Traditionally they were revered as secret teachings, not to be shown to beginners, and almost too sacred to elucidate. Virtually nothing in the way of commentaries on either text was produced before this century.

The scholarship of recent decades, however, has cast doubt on the tradition that these oral transmission

texts represent direct records of Nichiren's lectures. Both present sufficient textual reasons--independently of their connection with medieval Tendai thought--for suspecting that they were probably, at least in part, composed after Nichiren's death. Nevertheless, as Miyazaki Eishû has observed, "Because their interpretations have, from the standpoint of doctrine and faith, persuaded and convinced people on many points, they have since long ago been widely read and employed as guides for faith and practice."⁴ Problematic though they may be, the Ongi kuden and the Onkô kikigaki are vital to a knowledge of how Nichiren has been, and by many, still is, understood. The Ongi kuden in particular remains the focus of considerable controversy, and no discussion of the Nichiren texts recently problematized by virtue of their connection to medieval Tendai thought would be complete without introducing these two works.

This chapter will first summarize the scholarship on each of these two texts and discuss some of the major problems involved in determining when they were produced and how closely they may or may not be related to Nichiren. It will then examine how they interpret the Lotus Sûtra and, focusing on the Ongi kuden, point out some of the literary devices by which this interpretation is conveyed. Lastly, it will briefly

address the question of what place these texts hold in a consideration of Nichiren's ideas and of his use of original enlightenment thought. Substantial excerpts in translation from both documents appear in Part II.

The Ongi kuden

The Ongi kuden is also called the Shû Chû Hokekyô ongi kuden (Oral transmission of the sacred meanings of the Annotated Lotus Sûtra) or the Nikkô ki (Nikkô's record). According to its colophon, it represents the record of lectures that Nichiren gave for his six senior disciples, and among them, Nikkô (Byakuren Ajari Nikkô, 1246-1333, later the founder of the Fuji lineage) recorded these lectures as the Ongi kuden, obtaining Nichiren's seal of endorsement on the first day of the first month in the first year of Kôan (1278). The text is divided into a "main transmission" (honden) and a "separate transmission" (betsuden). The main transmission consists of an introductory discussion of the meaning of Namu-myôhô-renge-kyô and of two hundred thirty-one "important matters" (daiji)--chiefly phrases, passages and symbols--selected from the twenty-eight chapters of the Lotus Sûtra and from its opening and concluding texts, the Wu-liang i ching (Sûtra of unfathomable meanings) and the Fo-shuo kuan p'u-hsien p'u-sa hsing-fa ching (Sûtra of the Buddha's exposition

on the method of practice for contemplating Bodhisattva Universally Worthy). The excerpts translated in Part II have all been taken from this main transmission. The separate transmission consists of two parts: a commentary on one passage from each of the twenty-eight chapters of the Lotus Sûtra, said to represent the essence of that chapter⁵; and another commentary, in twenty-nine sections, to the effect that the essence and heart of each of the twenty-eight chapters is Namu-myôhō-rence-kyô. The Ongi kuden does not survive in holograph. Tradition says that the text was passed down secretly; in any event, notices of this work do not appear until fairly late. The Ongi kuden is first quoted in a work called the Hokke keiun shô of Enryô-in Nitchô, completed in Bunki 3 (1503),⁶ and the earliest known transcription of the text itself--the Tenmon manuscript, copied by Nikkyô of the Happon lineage and said to be in the possession of the Myôkaku-ji in Osaka--was dated Tenmon 8 (1539).

The Ongi kuden has long been revered as containing Nichiren's inner awakening to the ultimate meaning of the Lotus Sûtra. Over the centuries, it has even attracted its own legends. A second colophon⁷ relates that when Nichiren was lecturing on the "Devadatta" chapter of the sûtra, a serpent came to listen to him and was looked upon as being a manifestation of the

dragon princess who appears in that chapter. The tale is also told how, when Nikkô was lecturing on the Ongi kuden at his seminary in Omosu near Fuji in the fall of Shôan 2 (1300), his disciple Nichizon became distracted by the falling leaves of a pear tree outside. Nikkô rebuked Nichizon for his inattentiveness and banished him from his community of disciples.⁸ Out of remorse and in order to win reacceptance, Nichizon converted and established a number of temples. Among the many temples actually founded by Nichizon was the Jôgyô-in in Kyoto, the predecessor of the Yôhō-ji that eventually published the Ongi kuden in woodblock.

Ichimyô-in Nichidô (1724-1789) and Udana-in Nichiki (1800-1859), major Nichiren scholars of the Edo period, assigned great importance to the Ongi kuden, and in the present century as well, many Nichiren scholars and devotees continued to value this text as the ultimate statement of Nichiren's intent. For example, according to Tanaka Chigaku:

The lectures recorded in the Ongi kuden reveal Nichiren's hidden teaching, which he conferred directly on his six senior disciples in particular, and, through them, declared to all living beings of the Final Dharma age....It is the sole interpretive guide to [Nichiren's] "Honzon shô," "Kaimoku shô," "Ankoku ron" and other essential writings.⁹

Or Shimizu Ryôzan:

Just like the Lord Sâkyamuni's [transfer of his teachings] in the "Supernatural Powers"

chapter [of the Lotus Sûtra], every word and dot of it [the Onqi kuden] is a wondrous phrase representing the transfer of Nichiren's teaching."¹⁰

Over the centuries, a few scholars occasionally questioned the absence of an original manuscript,¹¹ or warned that the Onqi kuden could prove potentially confusing to beginners not well versed in Nichiren's teaching and should therefore be used only as an adjunct to his major essays.¹² However, very few ever explicitly challenged the authenticity of the text itself.¹³ Then, with the initiation of Asai Yôrin's textual studies, attitudes abruptly changed.

The name most closely associated with the problematizing of the Onqi kuden is that of Shigyô Kaishû, a student of Asai's at Risshô University. In his graduating thesis, submitted in 1935, Shigyô first advanced the suggestion that this text did not represent a direct record of Nichiren's lectures at all, but was the work of later disciples. The following summarizes his conclusions in the thesis.¹⁴

Shigyô first addresses several problems with the information given in the Onqi kuden's two colophons. Both colophons make use of terminology that, Shigyô says, had probably not come into use during Nichiren's lifetime. They refer, for example, to the "six senior monks" (rokurôso), whom Nichiren did not officially

designate as such until a few days before his death in 1282; and the second colophon also speaks of Nichiren as "eminent founder" (kôso), a term which, according to Shigyô, cannot be attested in any fully authenticatable work by Nichiren's immediate disciples. Both colophons further indicate that the Ongi kuden represents a lecture based on the Chû Hokekyô (Annotated Lotus Sûtra), Nichiren's personal copy of the Lotus Sûtra in which he had inscribed relevant passages from commentaries such as those of the T'ien-t'ai masters Chih-i and Chan-jan and from other sources. However, a comparison of the Chû Hokekyô and the Ongi kuden suggests that these two texts are unrelated.¹⁵ In addition, the second colophon's reference to the serpent that appeared at Nichiren's lecture on the "Devadatta" chapter has all the earmarks of a later, legendary accretion. Finally, there is a problem with the date on which Nichiren is said to have affixed his seal. Shigyô points out that there was no "first day of the first month in the first year of Kôan"; the era name was changed from Kenji to Kôan on the twenty-ninth day of the second month. Moreover, if the Ongi kuden was indeed based on a series of lectures completed at the beginning of the Kôan era, then those lectures must have been conducted during the preceding, Kenji era (1275-77). However, during this period, the disciple Nikkô,

who is said to have written down the Ongi kuden, was leading an intense missionary effort in the Fuji area and in all likelihood would not, Shigyô suggests, have been present at Minobu long enough at one stretch to record successive lectures.

By the time Shigyô wrote his thesis, scholars were in general agreement that the colophons were most probably later additions, and Shigyô acknowledged that problems with the colophons should not necessarily call into question the provenance of the Ongi kuden itself. However, he found what he regarded as a major problem in the body of the text as well, one to which he devoted the major portion of his thesis. This was the Ongi kuden's striking emphasis on original enlightenment thought and its use of subjective, kanjin interpretations, more characteristic of medieval Tendai texts than of Nichiren's authenticated writings. Shigyô concluded that the Ongi kuden "does not display the fundamental originality of Nichiren's thought but rather appears to be no more than the chaff of medieval Tendai."¹⁶

Asai Yôrin's Nichiren Shônin kyôgaku no kenkyû, posthumously published in 1945, makes reference to the research on this text by Shigyô and other students, and also includes Asai's own doubts about the Ongi kuden. These similarly focus on its use of ideas and

conventions common to medieval Tendai texts, such as the identification of all beings with an originally inherent triple-bodied Tathâgata, five-element thought, and so forth.¹⁷ In fact, it is hard in fact to tell which of the two, Asai or Shigyô, questioned this text first. In either case, possibly due to delays occasioned by the war, knowledge of Shigyô's research for some years evidently remained confined to the community of Nichiren scholars working at Risshô University.

Then, in 1954, Shigyô published a revised version of his thesis in the recently inaugurated journal Indogaku Bukkyôgaku kenkyû (Journal of Indian and Buddhist studies),¹⁸ drawing considerable attention. This article included a new piece of evidence: In one place, the Ongi kuden quotes a work referred to as the K'o-chu, which Shigyô assumed to be the Fa-hua ching k'o-chu, a Yuan-dynasty commentary on the Lotus Sûtra by Hsü Hsing-shan dated Yüan-chen 1 [1295],¹⁹ thirteen years after Nichiren's death. He also reiterated his criticism of the Ongi kuden in his book Sôka Gakkai hihan (A critique of the Sôka Gakkai), published shortly thereafter.

Not too surprisingly, the first response came from Nichiren Shôshû. Research reports prepared in rebuttal to Shigyô by Ômura Jûken, Yagi Shimpô and Toyota Kôei of the Fuji Gakurin, the Nichiren Shôshû seminary, were

published in 1962 in the sect's monthly journal²⁰; and three years later, their findings were summarized for a broader audience by Daisaku Ikeda, then president of the Sôka Gakkai, the largest of Nichiren Shôshû's affiliated lay organizations, in the introduction to his lecture on the Ongi kuden.²¹ Nichiren Shôshû represents the largest of the modern descendents of the Fuji school, which began with the same Nikkô said to have recorded the Ongi kuden. Nichiren Shôshû regards Nikkô as Nichiren's sole legitimate Dharma heir, and the Ongi kuden has been and still is especially revered by this sect. Moreover, while Shigyô's Indogaku Bukkyôgaku kenkyû article itself contained nothing that could be construed as overt criticism of the Fuji doctrinal position, he had by this time already published a few pieces critical of the teachings of Nichiren Shôshû and its affiliate, the Sôka Gakkai,²² and the tone of the responses from both the Fuji Gakurin scholars and from Ikeda is stridently polemical.

Nittatsu's preface to the joint report first reiterates that the colophon represents a later addition, and that such difficulties as the use of the term "eminent founder," or the mistaken dating of the Kôan era as beginning in the first month, cannot therefore be used to cast doubt on the legitimacy of the Ongi kuden itself.²³ Balanced against these

difficulties, Omura points out evidence that Nikkô had referred to Nichiren's teachings as ongi ("sacred meanings").²⁴ Omura also addresses the issue of why no mention of the Ongi kuden occurs before Nitchô's Keiun shô (completed in 1503), attributing this to its status as a secret teaching. He quotes the late Edo-period monk Nichinin's statement that "the Ongi kuden was kept hidden by the various lineages and has thus remained outside the early indexes"²⁵; and also points out that the Nissei (1600-1683), the eighteenth chief priest of Fuji Taiseki-ji, had written:

There exists a lecture interpreting the Lotus Sûtra that [Nichiren] Shônin delivered at his disciples' request after retiring to the mountains....It is called Nikkô's Record. The manuscript is now at Omosu [site of the Honmon-ji, another Fuji-area temple in Nikkô's lineage].²⁶

This does not necessarily prove that the original manuscript of the Ongi kuden survived into the Edo period, as Omura suggests it does; it could simply mean that a manuscript purporting to be the original Ongi kuden, or that Nissei thought was the original, existed at Omosu. On the other hand, neither can this piece of data be dismissed out of hand.

The Fuji Gakurin scholars focus chiefly, however, on what they consider Shigyô's sole valid point of criticism, namely, the citation from the K'o-chu, which they argue is inconclusive. Both Omura and Yagi offer

two alternative suggestions: (1) the designation K'o-chu could refer, not to the K'o-chu written by Hsu Hsing-shan of the Yuan dynasty thirteen years after Nichiren's death, but to an earlier text, the Fa-hua-ching k'o-chu by Shou-lun of the Sung,²⁷ which Nichiren could conceivably have known; or (2) Hsu's Yuan-dynasty K'o-chu could have been introduced to Japan and the quotation from it added to the text of the Ongi kuden after Nichiren's death.²⁸

Despite its gratuitous polemics, the Fuji Gakurin report responds credibly to a portion of Shigyô's argument, emphasizing that problems with the colophons do not equal problems with the text, and countering his one piece of "hard evidence"--the citation from the K'o-chu--with plausible explanations. Unfortunately, however, from the standpoint of the theme of this essay, it does not seriously address Shigyô's criticism that the style and thought content of the Ongi kuden resemble that of medieval Tendai texts. The reaction seems to be one of sheer incredulity that anyone could even imagine this to be a basis for doubts. Omura, for example, dismisses it as

...an utterly groundless suspicion inappropriate to a scholar of Shigyô's calibre. For it is clear that Nikkô Shônin, to say nothing of the founder [Nichiren] Daishônin himself, had of course studied medieval Tendai. Thus even if their style of writing resembles [that of medieval Tendai],

there is nothing strange in that.²⁹

As can be seen here, in contrast to the school of thought represented by Shigyô that assumes a essential difference between Nichiren and medieval Tendai, Omura takes the continuity of these two traditions as a matter of course. One could wish that he had addressed this point more critically instead of merely attributing Shigyô's argument, as he does, to a lack of understanding. Nevertheless, his response does serve as a reminder that the assumption of a decisive break between Nichiren's thought and that of medieval Tendai remains to be conclusively proven.

Another response from the Nichiren Shôshû side was assayed a decade and a half later by Ohashi Jijô.³⁰ Citing the paucity of textual data, Ohashi opts to argue the authenticity of the Ongi kuden from the standpoint of "intellectual history," that is, of traditional doctrinal categories. He maintains that where medieval Tendai merely taught original enlightenment in principle (ri-hongaku), the original enlightenment doctrine as taught by Nichiren, being based on the five characters of the daimoku, is original enlightenment in actuality (ji-hongaku), thus providing a slightly new twist to the old stereotype that Tendai Buddhism was abstract and theoretical while the Kamakura teachers were concerned with actual practice. Ohashi further ties this presumed

distinction to a unique doctrine of Nichiren Shôshû that identifies Nichiren as the embodiment, in the Final Dharma age, of the original Buddha (Nichiren honbutsu ron). Thus, the originally enlightened Buddha spoken of in the Ongi kuden, according to Ohashi, far from representing an import from medieval Tendai thought, refers specifically to the person of Nichiren himself: that Asai and Shigyô could question the authenticity of this text stems from their failure (and that of Nichirensû as a whole) to recognize Nichiren's identity as the original Buddha--or in other words, to subscribe to Nichiren Shôshû doctrine. (Ohashi does not account for a similar emphasis on the original Buddha seen in numerous medieval Tendai texts.)

Earlier we pointed out how Asai Yôrin's attempt to exclude from the body of normative Nichiren texts those works dealing with the original enlightenment discourse in effect served the sectarian agenda of demonstrating Nichiren's intellectual independence from medieval Tendai. Here, on the Nichiren Shôshû side, an attempt to include one of the very same texts supports another sectarian agenda--a specifically doctrinal one--that of asserting Nichiren's identity with the original Buddha. Ohashi's argument in fact represents an inversion of the same kind of circular argument pointed out earlier: Where Asai and others defined the original enlightenment

doctrine as external to Nichiren's thought and then used it to question the authenticity of those texts in which it appears, Ohashi and other Nichiren Shôshû scholars have defined it (especially in its relation to the doctrine of Nichiren being the original Buddha) as essential to Nichiren's thought, and on this basis insisted that the same texts must be genuine. As stressed before, the fact of an argument serving a particular agenda does not in itself prove that argument to be wrong; however, Asai, Shigyô and their followers have in their favor here that they were the ones who did the pioneering textual work on the Nichiren corpus and demonstrated the existence of problematic points in some of the works in question.

Controversy over the authenticity of the Ongi kuden has by no means been limited to differences between Nichirensû and Nichiren Shoshû, as can be seen from yet another other response to Shigyô Kaishû. This was Miyake Shigenari's introductory essay to his published lecture on the Ongi kuden,³¹ published a few months after the Fuji Gakurin research reports. Though Miyake does not mention Shigyô Kaishû by name, it is nevertheless clear whose arguments he is addressing. Miyake shared Shigyô's denominational affiliation to Nichirensû--according to its preface, his lecture received the editorial supervision of the sect's chief

abbot--but his viewpoint was altogether different. Here, rather than demonimational, the disagreement may be characterized as a specific instance of broader tensions between the methodologies of modern, academic scholarship and traditional Buddhist studies, Shigyô representing the former and Miyake the latter. In this regard, Miyake outdoes even the Nichiren Shôshu scholars in his attempts to reassert the the authority of the Ongi kuden as a direct record of Nichiren's teachings. He suggests that the first colophon may be genuine, and that Nikkô could have written it and obtained Nichiren's endorsement sometime between Nichiren's official designation of his six senior disciples on the eighth day of the tenth month, Kôan 5 (1282) and his death less than a week later on the thirteenth day.³² The designation "first day of the first month in the first year of Kôan" he explains as a natural misremembering after the fact. Like Omura and Yagi, Miyake maintains that the K'o-chu quoted in the Ongi kuden is almost certainly the Sung-dynasty text by Shou-lun; thus in his opinion, this citation does not call the authenticity of the Ongi kuden into question.³³ But the most ingenious (albeit unverifiable) part of Miyake's argument lies in his explanation of the reference to the Chû Hokekyô in the colophons. There were, he suggests, in reality two texts known as Chû Hokekyô: One was Nichiren's personal

copy of the Lotus Sûtra in which he had inscribed relevant passages from various commentaries and other texts: a document, which, as mentioned above, appears to be unrelated to the Ongi kuden. The other Chû Hokekyô, however--according to Miyake--was a record of Nichiren's own verbal commentary on passages he himself had selected from the Lotus Sûtra, i.e., the Ongi kuden itself.³⁴ Miyake thus asserts that the actual text of the Ongi kuden existed during Nichiren's lifetime. He suggests that it was carried off when Anayama Baisetsu (d. 1582), a retainer of Takeda Katsuyori, attacked the Omosu Honmon-ji in the ninth year of the Tenshō era (1581), carrying off sacred treasures.³⁵

All the above-discussed responses to Shigyō Kaishū share an explicit agenda of re-establishing the Ongi kuden's legitimacy as a direct record of Nichiren's teachings, and none really succeeds in the attempt; without an original manuscript or other corroborating evidence, this will remain impossible. Some do succeed, however, to a certain extent, in putting Shigyō's thesis into question. In addition, while inconclusive in itself, this debate over the Ongi kuden has evidently produced the salutary effect of freeing the text for discussion. We have already mentioned that premodern Nichiren scholars did not venture to explicate it, and even in this century, prior to Shigyō's research, very

few lectures on the Ongi kuden appeared,³⁶ especially when compared with the veritable flood of commentary on the "Kanjin honzon shô" and others of Nichiren's major essays. It seems noteworthy, then, that within approximately a decade of Shigyô's article, no fewer than three book-length works on this text have been published. These are the two lectures by Ikeda and Miyake and a collection of waka by Tokishita Yonetarô expressing his understanding of the Ongi kuden and the Onkô kikiqaki in verse.³⁷ These books, along with the responses from the Fuji Gakurin and Ôhashi Jijô, reflect an old truth that academic scholarship and religious belief operate by different standards, and also show how vital this text remains to the understanding of Nichiren held by some of his interpreters today.

The Onkô kikiqaki

The second of the two documents under discussion here, the Onkô kikiqaki, is also known as the Nikô ki. It presents itself as a record of Nichiren's lectures on the Lotus Sûtra made by his disciple Nikô--that is, Sado Ajari Nikô (1253-1314), later the founder of the Minobu lineage and not to be confused with the Nikkô said to have recorded the Ongi kuden. According to an introductory note to the text, these lectures were given in succession from the nineteenth day of the third month of the first year of Kôan (1278) through the twenty-

eighth day of the fifth month of the third year of the same era (1280). If one takes both texts at their word, the lectures recorded in the Onkô kikigaki would thus have been conducted after those recorded in the Ongi kuden, whose colophon, as noted above, indicates that Nichiren endorsed the manuscript at the beginning of the first year of Kôan (1278). Nevertheless, as Shigyô Kaishû observes, the Onkô kikigaki is the less polished and sophisticated of the two documents.³⁸ It is much shorter than the Ongi kuden and is not divided according to the chapters of the Lotus Sûtra. It consists of introductory words of praise for the title of the sûtra, followed by comments on a total of ninety topics.³⁹ The first sixty-one of these, like the "important matters" in the Ongi kuden, consist of interpretations of phrases from the Lotus Sûtra, although the passages chosen are not the same, on the whole, as those discussed in the Ongi kuden. A feature of particular interest in this text lies in the last thirty-one topics, which comment, not on the sûtra itself, but on what appear to be Nichiren's own teachings, instructions and admonitions, and which convey a vivid sense of a fledgling religious community in the process of establishing its identity. As in the case of the Ongi kuden, the first notices of this text appear very late; the colophon to the earliest printed

edition (Genroku 16, or 1704) says that it follows a manuscript dated Meiô 9 (1500).

While the Onkô kikigaki has traditionally been considered a sister-work to the Ongi kuden, it never attained the stature of the longer text and has inspired relatively little scholarship. In an article published in 1974,⁴⁰ when Shigyô Kaishû's research had cast doubt on the authenticity of the Ongi kuden, Murozumi Ichimyo suggested that if the Onkô kikigaki could be taken as a genuine record of Nichiren's lectures, this lesser-known text could prove to be of unexpected value. His article proceeds on this assumption, speculating on the circumstances under which, and the audience to whom, Nichiren might have addressed such lectures.

The next year, however, Asai Endô published a brief article suggesting that the Onkô kikigaki could not be considered a direct record of Nichiren's lectures either, but was probably produced around 1500, the time of its earliest notice.⁴¹ Asai's major arguments may be summarized as follows: 1) The passages from the Lotus Sûtra discussed in the Onkô kikigaki differ in many cases from those Nichiren usually emphasized. Of fifty-nine passages from the sûtra interpreted in the Onkô kikigaki, twenty-one do not appear anywhere in Nichiren's extant writings. (Asai, playing his own devil's advocate, acknowledges that Nikô might have

focused on recording those parts of the lecture that impressed him as new and different from the parts of the sūtra to which Nichiren habitually referred); 2) The last thirty-one topics of the Onkō kikigaki contain many passages that seem to duplicate or explain passages from other writings by Nichiren. Asai thinks it unlikely that Nichiren would have delivered successive lectures on his own writings. 3) There exists a work by Nikō called the Kinkōshu, outlining the teachings of other sects and of the Lotus Sūtra, based on what he had heard and learned from Nichiren.⁴² However, the section of this work dealing with the Lotus Sūtra, the "Hokekyō no koto" in two maki, bears little resemblance to the Onkō kikigaki in terms of style or interpretation, and focuses chiefly on those passages from the Lotus Sūtra more commonly cited in Nichiren's writings. Finally, 4) the Onkō kikigaki reflects the strong influence of medieval Tendai thought and oral transmission literature. It draws in five places from the Shūzen-ji ketsu, an apocryphal work attributed to Saichō that is not cited in any of Nichiren's authenticated writings⁴³; it interprets at least one sūtra passage in a manner similar to the Mongu ryakudaikō shikenmon, a fifteenth-century Tendai commentary on the Lotus Sūtra text, and also refers to various oral transmissions. It uses interpretive techniques common to medieval Tendai

writings, such as numerical correspondence (to be discussed later), as well as terminology not found in Nichiren's fully authenticated works, such as "the principle of true suchness that is unchanging" (fuhen shinnyo no ri) and "the wisdom of true suchness that accords with conditions" (zuien shinnyo no chi).⁴⁴ Finally, Asai says, it emphasizes original enlightenment thought and its identification of the beings with the Buddha to a degree rarely seen in Nichiren's verifiable writings. He concludes:

It [the Onkô kikigaki] takes as its premise the absolute affirmation of reality that characterizes medieval Tendai original enlightenment thought, and further, the idea that the ordinary worldling is the original Buddha and Sâkyamuni, an ephemeral Buddha....[A]ctively stated, these are ideas outside the system of the Shônin's thought; passively stated, they are at least not his main ideas.⁴⁵

Perhaps because the Onkô kikigaki had never achieved the popularity of the Ongi kuden, Asai's research did not provoke the sort of outcry that accompanied Shigyô Kaishû's critique of the Ongi kuden. To my knowledge, no counter-opinions have been put forth.

The research of Shigyô Kaishû and Asai Endô, as outlined above, has called into question the long-standing tradition that the Ongi kuden and the Onkô kikigaki represent direct records of Nichiren's lectures

on the Lotus Sûtra. This, then, raises the questions of when and under what circumstances these texts were compiled. These questions prove exceedingly complex: Not all the evidence points in the same direction, and attempts to answer them raise still further, extremely interesting questions about the development of Nichiren thought after the founder, Nichiren's, death and the interaction of various Nichiren lineages with one another and with the Tendai community. The following summarizes some of the problems that require further exploration in pursuing the origin of these two writings:

1) The relationship between the two texts. As mentioned above, the Ongi kuden and the Onkô kikigaki do not, in most cases, comment on the same passages of the Lotus Sûtra. Thus, although earlier scholars have suggested that these documents represent two different individuals' record of the same series of lectures,⁴⁶ this is difficult to imagine, unless the two individuals fortuitously happened to transcribe different parts of the lecture series, or agreed between themselves that they would do so. However, even if the Ongi kuden and the Onkô kikigaki do not represent records of the same set of lectures, an undeniable connection nevertheless exists between the two texts. Both interpret in virtually identical fashion the underlying message of

the Lotus Sûtra and its relation to the daimoku taught by Nichiren. They employ a great deal of the same terminology, contain a few nearly identical statements, and also share certain stylistic devices. Among the most striking of these stylistic features is the repetition of statements such as "Now in the Final Dharma age, Nichiren and his followers who chant Namu-myôhō-rence-kyô are the ones who..." followed by the phrase of the sūtra being interpreted, thus indicating that the words of the sūtra are being manifested by the community of Nichiren's followers.⁴⁷ It thus appears highly probable that these two documents either had a common inspiration or that one inspired the other.

Asai Endô has suggested that the Ongi kuden and the Onkô kikiqaki may have been produced by opposing factions in the itchi-shôretsu debate, an ongoing controversy that fueled repeated schisms among Nichiren's followers after his death.⁴⁸ This argument centered around whether the two major exegetical divisions of the Lotus Sûtra--the trace teaching (shakumon) or first fourteen chapters, taught by the manifested Buddha, and the origin teaching (honmon) or latter fourteen chapters, taught by the original Buddha--are to be regarded as essentially equal and one in principle (itchi), or whether the origin teaching is superior and the trace teaching, inferior (shôretsu).

Asai argues that the Onqi kuden, which refers in several places to the distinction between trace and origin teachings, is consistent with the shôretsu position, which the Fuji lineage originating with Nikkô espoused; while the Onkô kikigaki, on the other hand, mentions this distinction only twice and thus seems more consistent with the itchi position held by the Minobu lineage deriving from Nikô.

Asai's suggestion is most interesting; however, one would want to compare these two texts against the extensive itchi-shôretsu literature before drawing firm conclusions. It should be pointed out in this connection that neither the Onqi kuden nor the Onkô kikigaki gives the slightest indication that it represents one side rather than another in an internal doctrinal controversy. The polemical target of both texts is identical to that of Nichiren, i.e., those persons and doctrinal systems that accord primacy to any teaching other than the Lotus Sûtra. Hônen and Kûkai are named specifically. Neither text alludes in any way to different factions or lineages within the Nichiren community or even refers to "this sect." The community is designated simply as "Nichiren and his disciples and lay supporters" or "Nichiren and his followers," which could, possibly, argue for a relatively early date of composition--no later, in any event, than the fourteenth

century.⁴⁹

In considering the relationship of these two texts, one is also tempted to wonder what significance may attach to the fact that they are attributed, respectively, to the two protagonists in the first schism to divide the Nichiren community. This schism, it will be recalled, occurred in 1289, seven years after Nichiren's death, when, due to irreconcilable differences between himself and Sado Ajari Nikô, Byakuren Ajari Nikkô left Minobu and established his own community near Fuji. The split was bitter and decisive, and the two resulting lineages have remained antagonistic toward one another to this day.

Now, if one takes the position that the Ongi kuden and the Onkô kikigaki are not records of Nichiren's own lectures but were composed after his death, then it would seem logical to assume that the Onkô kikigaki was produced within the Minobu lineage and retrospectively attributed to Nikô, from whom that lineage is descended; while the Ongi kuden would have been produced within the Fuji lineage and attributed to Nikkô, from whom the Fuji lineage derives. As noted above, however, clear indications exist that the two texts are related. If they had a common source, then that source would have to have predated the 1289 schism, placing it so close to Nichiren's death in 1282 that one would be forced to

reconsider seriously the possibility of a direct connection between these texts and Nichiren himself. Or, if one text inspired the other, that raises the question of how a presumed author--a monk from either the Minobu or the Fuji side--contrived to gain access to a treasured secret document of the lineage most hostile to his own.⁵⁰

Such are the mysteries surrounding the relationship between the Ongi kuden and the Onkô kikigaki. Questions of this sort involve the two texts in their entirety. Following are some of the problems raised by specific passages within the texts.

2) Relation to the problem of alms acceptance. In discussing the "great good medicine" of the Lotus Sûtra that cures sicknesses arising from the three poisons, a passage from the Ongi kuden reads:

The practitioner of the Lotus Sûtra who chants Namu-myôhô-renge-kyô does not accept offerings from those who slander the Dharma: This removes the sickness of greed."⁵¹

Similarly, the Onkô kikigaki, interpreting the sûtra passage "like a lotus in the water, untainted by worldly dharmas" states:

"[Untainted by] worldly dharmas" means that even if one should be granted fiefs or high rank from the ruler of the country or his ministers, one does not become corrupted by it. Not accepting offerings from those who slander the Dharma is called being "untainted by worldly dharmas."⁵²

These quotations hint at the dangers of compromise and corruption inherent in accepting the patronage of those outside the community, and especially from those in high positions. Both passages were in fact cited by proponents of the Nichiren fujū fuse ("not accepting, not giving") movement of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, in support of their position that a Nichiren monk should not accept alms from or participate in religious rituals for the sake of nonbelievers, no matter how high their position of secular authority.⁵³ Nichiren himself, when recalled from his exile to Sado in 1274, had declined to accept official patronage or to pray for the defeat of the Mongols while the bakufu continued to acknowledge other sects. But apart from this isolated instance, the issue of accepting support from outsiders or from those in positions of power did not arise for Nichiren's community during his lifetime. Not until the fourteenth century, and especially in Kyoto, when his followers began to found numerous temples and attract aristocratic patronage, did such problems begin to present themselves. These two passages taken by themselves would thus suggest a date somewhat after Nichiren's death, probably at least fourteenth century.

3) Relation to medieval Tendai texts. As already observed by Shigyô and Asai Endô, both the Ongi kuden

and Onkô kikigaki share similarities in structure, content and interpretive style with certain medieval Tendai commentaries on the Lotus Sûtra. The Ongi kuden in particular bears some resemblance to several Tendai commentaries that focus on Chih-i's Miao-fa lien-hua ching wen-chû ("Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sûtra").⁵⁴ One notes in this context that the Ongi kuden and Onkô kikigaki interpret a few passages from the sûtra in a manner identical to the Mongu ryakudaikô shikenmon [Personal observations on an abbreviated outline of the Words and Phrases], a commentary on the Wen-chû by Sonshun (1451-1514). For example, both the Ongi kuden and the Ryakudaikô shikenmon interpret the realm of Jewel Pure, the land of the Tathâgata Many Jewels, as indicating the womb,⁵⁵ and the four leaders of the bodhisattvas who emerge from the earth--Superior Conduct, Limitless Conduct, Pure Conduct and Steadfast Conduct--as representing the four universal elements of fire, wind, water, and earth.⁵⁶ Further, in discussing the Buddha's attainment of the Way in the remotest past, both texts interpret the "remotest past" (kuon) to mean not the literal past but the trans-temporal, originally inherent mind, and say that kuon is to be construed as "unadorned" (tsukurowazu) and "being as it is originally" (moto no mama).⁵⁷ Asai Endô also points out a similarity between the Onkô kikigaki and the

Ryakudaikô shikenmon in the Japanese readings they provide for the Chinese text of the sūtra's opening statement: "Thus have I heard."⁵⁸

Such similarities could argue for a relatively late date of compilation. As mentioned in chapter one, Asai Yôrin has demonstrated that the Minobu Nichiren lineage maintained extensive contacts with inaka Tendai institutions in the Kantô region during the Muromachi period. Thus monks of that lineage could have readily drawn on Tendai interpretive and stylistic influences in producing the Onkô kiki-gaki--though this does not explain how such influences crept into the more isolated Fuji school, assuming the Ongi kuden to be a product of Nikkô's lineage. On the other hand, the shared material does not necessarily indicate that the Ongi kuden and Onkô kiki-gaki were compiled as late as the Ryakudaikô shikenmon, as some of these interpretations could have been in circulation for long time. For example, in identifying the four bodhisattvas with the four universal elements, Sonshun says that this is "an interpretation of our country." His Ryakudaikô shikenmon tends to present the shared interpretations more elaborately than do the Ongi kuden and Onkô kiki-gaki, perhaps indicating that Sonshun's work is of a later vintage.

In itself, the use in Nichiren-attributed writings

of material also found in medieval Tendai texts does not necessarily point to a date of compilation after Nichiren's death, as even Nichiren's fully authenticated works refer occasionally to medieval Tendai traditions. To give an example, in discussing the dragon girl's attainment of Buddhahood described in the twelfth chapter of the Lotus Sûtra, the Ongi kuden says:

The eight-year-old dragon girl's attainment of Buddhahood [indicates that] the ancestral founder [of Japan] was an imperial ruler who upheld the [Lotus] Sûtra. The first of the human rulers was Emperor Jimmu. Emperor Jimmu was the son of Ugaya-fukiaezu-no-mikoto, who was fifth in the five reigns of earth deities. This Ugaya-fukiaezu-no-mikoto was the son of Toyotama-hime, and Toyotama-hime was the daughter of the dragon king Sagara, the elder sister of the eight-year-old dragon girl. Thus, the ancestral founder was a practitioner of the Lotus Sûtra.⁵⁹

As Shimizu Ryûzan has pointed out, this identification of Emperor Jimmu, the legendary founder of Japan, as the grand-nephew of the dragon girl appears in recorded oral transmissions of the Miidera branch of Tendai and represents part of a larger attempt at formal Lotus-Shinto synthesis being carried on within the Tendai community, and, especially after Nichiren's death, among Nichiren Buddhists as well.⁶⁰ A slightly different version of this tradition is also attested in one of Nichiren's own writings, indisputable because it survives in holograph, which says that Japan's last divine ruler, Ugaya-fukiaezu-no-mikoto, was the dragon

girl's son.⁶¹

Without knowing when specific traditions of this sort came into being, they will not help much in establishing the dates of texts, especially since many of them were transmitted orally for some time before being committed to writing. To answer, or at least shed light on, the questions raised by the common content of problematic Nichiren-attributed works, such as the Ongi kuden and Onkô kikigaki, and medieval Tendai texts would demand an extensive investigation of the intellectual and institutional history of both Tendai and Nichiren traditions: an important task that needs to be undertaken, but one beyond the scope of this essay. At this point, what this common content can be said to show is that the Nichiren community was not functioning in isolation but participating in a much larger world of Lotus discourse. This seems to have been true even while Nichiren was still alive.

5) Relation to Nichiren. While incorporating material from various medieval Tendai traditions, as seen above, both the Ongi kuden and especially the Onkô kikigaki also contain material that would appear to come directly from Nichiren. Asai Endô notes but does not account for the fact that the last thirty-one sections of the Onkô kikigaki contain a number of passages that closely resemble, and in some cases almost duplicate,

statements from letters and other writings Nichiren produced during his years of retirement on Mount Minobu.⁶² For example, the Onkô kiki-gaki reads:

"Nichiren's disciples must not be cowards." Our teacher said: This means that, in time of debate, one should not heed even Śākyamuni of the provisional teachings or of the trace teaching [of the Lotus Sūtra]. If one is a coward, he will start to think, "Am I really not to heed even Śākyamuni?" But if one should not heed even Śākyamuni, then how could one heed bodhisattvas from the stage of virtual enlightenment on down? Even less could one heed those who slander the Dharma! Sending forth the great voice of Namu-myôhō-renge-kyô, one should counter the various sūtras and sects. This is the meaning of the [sūtra] passage, "Skilful in answering difficult questions, their hearts were without fear."⁶³

The "Kyôgyôshô gosho," an essay Nichiren wrote in either 1275 or 1278 reads:

Nichiren's disciples must not be cowards. At the time when, between the other sūtras and the Lotus Sūtra, which is superior and which inferior, which shallow and profound, which leads to the attainment of Buddhahood and which does not, must be decided [in debate], then even the Lord Śākyamuni of the pre-Lotus Sūtra teachings and of the trace teaching is no one to take account of. Even less so is any lower bodhisattva at the stage of virtual enlightenment. Less still are the adherents of sects based upon the provisional teachings. The Lotus Sūtra occupies a position like that of the great god Brahma, so how could it be an error to regard those others as commoners or even as demons or domestic beasts? Bear this in mind when you engage in doctrinal debate.⁶⁴

The similarity between the two passages is immediately apparent.

To give another example, the Onkô kiki-gaki reads:

Among those who have faith in this sūtra, there are differences [like those] of fire and water. Practitioners like fire are many, while those like water are few. "Like fire" means that when they hear the teaching of this sūtra, [their faith] flares up like a flame. Although they believe, thinking [the teaching] most noble and superior, their faith is soon extinguished. At the time, theirs seems like remarkable faith, but the lamp of such belief easily goes out. As for the practitioners who are like water, water flows day and night without retreating, never ceasing even in the slightest. One who believes in the Lotus Sūtra in this way is called a practitioner like water.⁶⁵

A very similar passage occurs in one of Nichiren's personal letters thought to have been written in 1278:

At the present time, there are those who believe in the Lotus Sūtra. Some believe like fire, while others believe like water. When [the former] listen [to the teachings, their faith] blazes up, but when they withdraw apart, they are minded to abandon it. "Like water" means that one believes without ever retreating. Because you never retreat no matter what may happen, you surely have faith like water.⁶⁶

The final thirty-one sections of the Onkō kiki-gaki contain several similar instances.

Asai Endō is surely right in questioning that Nichiren would have lectured on his own writings. However, it seems possible that when Nichiren had these particular ideas in mind, he expressed them in lectures as well as writing them in letters, and that someone may have copied them down. These notes could then have later been incorporated in what eventually became the Onkō kiki-gaki.

To sum up thus far, the dates of the first notices of the Ongi kuden and the Onkô kikigaki (early sixteenth century) point to a late time of compilation. The references to alms refusal suggest a date after Nichiren's death, at least fourteenth century. On the other hand, the absence of explicit reference to any specific lineages or doctrinal disputes within the Nichiren sects argues a time no later than the fourteenth century. The duplication of content with Sonshun's Mongu ryakudaikô shikenmon could indicate a compilation date in the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century, or it may be inconclusive. The obvious relationship between the Ongi kuden and the Onkô kikigaki, coupled with the fact of the decisive schism, in 1289, between what became the Fuji and Minobu lineages, may point to a very early common source, possibly in Nichiren's lifetime, and the similarities especially between the last portion of the Onkô kikigaki and Nichiren's writings from the Minobu almost surely represents the incorporation of material from Nichiren himself. Given the lack of consistency in these indications, it seems altogether possible that the Ongi kuden and the Onkô kikigaki may be composites, put together over a period of time and drawing on a number of sources, including various Tendai oral traditions as well as teachings received from Nichiren.

Interpretive Approach to the Lotus

The Ongi kuden and the Onkô kikigaki both present what are termed kanjin interpretations of the Lotus Sûtra, that is, interpretations from the standpoint of "observing the mind." As discussed in the previous chapter, in this introspective approach to the sûtra text, each word and phrase of the sûtra is seen to be referring, not to external events, but to the mind of the practioner. Thus the "I" of the sûtra is no longer merely Śâkyamuni but is also identified with the person of the believer who chants Namu-myôhō-rengē-kyô.

The two texts also stress the absolute nonduality that characterizes original enlightenment thought. The Onkô kikigaki summarizes the conclusion of both works when it says, "In the final analysis, the intent of the Lotus Sûtra is that the defilements are precisely bodhi, and birth and death are precisely nirvâna; the beings and the Buddha are nondual, and delusion and enlightenment are a single essence."⁶⁷ For those who have faith in the Lotus Sûtra and chant Namu-myôhō-rengē-kyô, any distinction between one's own existence and the ultimate reality collapses: oneself is thereby identical to the originally enlightened Tathâgata, one's conduct is that Buddha's behavior, and one's dwelling place is the pure land. The notion that Buddhahood is not attained but inherent from the outset is presented

as the unique message of the Lotus Sûtra, while the idea that enlightenment is acquired for the first time after a period of practice is said to represent the position of the provisional teachings and to amount to delusion and bondage.

In accord with this doctrinal position, both texts carefully reinterpret all "journey" metaphors or other statements in the sūtra presenting the attainment of Buddhahood as a linear process in which one progresses from a deluded to an enlightened state over the passage of time. For example, in discussing the passage from the parable of the three carts and the burning house-- "Mounting this jeweled cart, they will directly arrive at the place of enlightenment"--the Onkô kikigaki states:

"Arrive" in the phrase "directly arrive" is not the arriving entailed in [going] from here to there. "Arrive" means that the dwelling place [of the believer in the Lotus] is precisely the [Land of] Tranquil Light."⁶⁸

A similar statement appears in the Ongi Kuden, interpreting the passage, "This person shall in no long time surely visit the place of enlightenment":

Embracing the Lotus Sûtra is called "surely visiting the place of enlightenment." This does not meaning leaving here and going there....Now, the dwelling of Nichiren and his followers who chant Namu-myôhō-rence-kyô, whether in the mountains, valleys or the wide plains, is in every case the Land of Tranquil Light.⁶⁹

To give another example: In the parable of the magically conjured city that appears in chapter seven of the sūtra, a party of travelers set out with a guide over a treacherous road to the place of treasure, a journey of five thousand yojanas. When their courage fails midway, the guide produces a magically conjured city where they can rest and regain their spirits before undertaking the remainder of the journey. In this parable, the teachings of the three vehicles (represented by the conjured city) are shown to be the Buddha's skilful means by which he provides his followers with a provisional "resting place" on the long journey to supreme enlightenment (represented by the place of treasure). In the Ongi kuden, however, the conjured city is reinterpreted as the phenomenal world; the place of treasure, as ultimate reality; and the five thousand yojanas that separate them, as the three categories of delusion. When delusion is removed, the separation between phenomenal and ultimate reality (or the beings and the Buddha) collapses, and "the conjured city is precisely the place of treasure."⁷⁰

Even the word "attain" in the phrase "attain Buddhahood," with its connotations of reaching something not yet possessed, is not allowed to stand unrevised. The character "to attain," says the Ongi kuden, should be read as "to open": one "opens" one's body and mind to

reveal them as the Wonderful Dharma. This idiosyncratic use of the word "open" occurs repeatedly in both texts and indicates the identification of the phenomenal with the ultimate said to take place in the act of chanting the sūtra's title.

From the standpoint of conventional Buddhist thought, some of the practical implications of this identification as outlined in these texts sound rather startling. One is the thorough denial that there is escape from birth and death. In the Lotus Sūtra's parable of the three carts and the burning house, the great white oxcart works as a metaphor for the Buddha vehicle that carries the beings out of the pains of samsāra, represented by the burning house. The Ongi kuden, however, suggests that this Buddha vehicle does not carry one out of birth-and-death at all:

The cart is the Lotus Sūtra. The ox [that draws it] is Namu-myôhō-rence-kyô.... We go round through birth and death, birth and death, over the great earth of oneself being the Dharma nature.⁷¹

To loath birth and death and seek to escape them is described as a delusion, allied to the false notion that enlightenment has a beginning (shikaku), but to understand that birth and death are inherent in things from the outset is a manifestation of original enlightenment (hongaku).⁷² In its view of birth and death as intrinsic to ultimate reality, the Ongi kuden

is perfectly consistent with the "Ueno-dono goke-ama gohenji" and the "Shôji ichidaiji kechimiyaku shô" discussed in chapter three.

Just as there is no getting off the cycle of birth and death, so--according to these oral teachings--is there no eradication of the defilements. Early in the narrative of the Lotus Sûtra, five thousand arrogant persons, "thinking that they have attained what they have not attained," rise and leave the assembly without waiting to hear the Buddha's preaching. According to the Ongi kuden: "These five thousand persons represent the five levels of defilement that we possess. When we now encounter the Lotus Sûtra, arrogance is opened [to reveal it] as being precisely the dharma-realm." As for the five thousand leaving the assembly, this is construed as "the leaving that is not leaving," because, in light of the enlightenment of the Lotus Sûtra, the five levels of defilement are originally inherent and constantly abide.⁷³ Desire is transformed, but not eradicated. Or again, we are told that the "Fathoming the Lifespan of the Tathâgata chapter," the core of the Lotus Sûtra, "does not make the subduing of delusion its ultimate aim. One should understand that this chapter takes as its ultimate principle the essence of the ordinary worldling as he is inherently."⁷⁴ This affirmation of the phenomenal--birth and death and human

defilement--as the manifestation of ultimate reality is expressed by both texts in Buddhist technical language as "birth and death are precisely nirvâṇa" (shôji soku nehan) and "the worldly passions are precisely enlightenment" (bonnô soku bodai). In either text, this is clearly not an indiscriminate endorsement of ordinary deluded experience but is premised upon the faith and practice of the Lotus Sûtra, by which the existence of the practitioner is "opened" and identified with the Wonderful Dharma.

As noted earlier, in their emphasis on original enlightenment and kanjin or introspective interpretations of the sûtra, the Ongi kuden and Onkô kikiqaki show great similarity to other medieval Tendai texts, such as Sonshun's Mongu ryakudaikô shikenmon. However, they also exhibit a second major characteristic unique to Nichiren thought and not found in Tendai literature: emphasis on chanting the title of the Lotus Sûtra as a single, exclusive practice.

Both texts adhere with absolute fidelity to Nichiren's emphasis on faith in the Lotus Sûtra as the only teaching efficacious in the Final Dharma age and the appropriateness in this age of shakubuku, the rebuking of attachments to provisional teachings; his certainty that the "three kinds of powerful enemies" described in the sûtra would arise in consequence; and

his conviction that one should give one's life, if need be, in declaring the sūtra's teaching. The metaphors for delusion used in the Lotus Sūtra, such as the "net of views" or the guest's drunkenness that prevents him from perceiving his host's gift of a precious jewel, are all reduced by the interpretations of these two texts to "slander of the Dharma," i.e. of the Lotus Sūtra. The Onqi kuden and the Onkô kikigaki perfectly accord with the view of evil seen in Nichiren's authenticated writings, which focuses on this one error alone. In this view, since Buddhahood is accessible only through the Lotus Sūtra, the one inadmissable error is to hold some lesser teaching prior to the Lotus; this constitutes the fundamental delusion for which no amount of good deeds can compensate and beside which all lesser errors scarcely merit notice.

The Onqi kuden and the Onkô kikigaki thus interweave as their warp and woof, so to speak, these two contrasting motifs: a theme of universality, identifying all phenomena with the primordially enlightened Tathāgata; and a theme of exclusivity, mandating that one repudiate provisional teachings and uphold the Lotus Sūtra alone. Thus the interpenetration of the dharmas, the mutual identification of all things that is itself the original Buddha, is shown to be accessible through the sole gateway of the daimoku.

Both texts also explicitly identify Nichiren as the teacher who revealed the sole teaching efficacious in the Final Dharma age, declaring for example that "these five characters are the purpose of Nichiren's advent" or referring to "Namu-myôhō-renge-kyô that was transferred to [Bodhisattva] Superior Conduct." The Nichiren community is similarly presented as the bearer of the mission to disseminate this teaching. In comparison some of the essays discussed in chapter two, which differ from Tendai texts only in their emphasis on the daimoku, the Onkô kikigaki and the Ongi kuden were produced by people acutely conscious of participating in the the community of "Nichiren's followers."

The Ogi kuden as a Literary Text

Most scholarship on these texts to date, as we have seen, has centered around the issue of authenticity, and no one thus far has commented upon them as literature. Read straight through, they tend to give a somewhat repetitious impression, as every passage or symbol taken from the sūtra is shown ultimately to refer to the daimoku or to Nichiren's disciples. However, as the Ongi kuden and the Onkô kikigaki represent either records of successive lectures, collections of separate oral transmissions or some combination of the two, they were probably never intended to be absorbed at a single

sitting. On considering them in their individual sections, the impression received is quite different. From this perspective, the Ongi kuden in particular shows itself to be superbly crafted in its use of various literary techniques to underscore its message of an enlightenment inseparable from the ebb and flow of the phenomenal world. This section will examine how Ongi kuden works as a literary text. Since the techniques that it uses are not limited to this particular document, such a discussion may help shed some light on other medieval Japanese Buddhist texts as well.

An analysis of one passage will give some idea of how the individual sections of the text are structured. As mentioned above, the main body of the Ongi kuden presents itself as a record of Nichiren's verbal teachings on several "important matters" from each chapter of the Lotus Sûtra. The first "important matter" of the "Introductory" chapter, for example, is the sûtra's opening statement: "Thus have I heard." The second "important matter"--which will serve as our illustration--is the name "Ājñāta Kaundinya." Ājñāta was one of the five ascetics to whom Śākyamuni preached his first sermon in the Deer Park in Vārānasī and the first of them to achieve arhatship. In the opening passages of the Lotus Sûtra, this is the first proper name

mentioned in the list of those gathered in the assembly to hear the Buddha preach, where he is mentioned as one of twelve thousand great arhats. His name appears a few more times later in the sūtra in a similar context. However, the Buddha does not address any teachings to him in particular, nor does he figure prominently in the events described in the sūtra. In short, in any straightforward exegetical reading, Ajñāta would decidedly not qualify as an "important matter" in the Lotus Sūtra. The Ongi kuden's subsequent interpretation is what turns him into one. This "zeroing in," as it were, on obscure details of the sūtra, treating them on the same level as more obviously pivotal topics and images, forms one of the characteristic features of this text. In deliberately obscuring conventional distinctions between major points and peripheral details, treating both as "important matters," the Ongi kuden in effect underscores a view of the Lotus shared by a number of medieval Buddhists including Nichiren: that every word of the sūtra contains profound meaning, and further, that the profound meaning of the entire sūtra is contained in every word.

Under the heading "Ajñāta Kaundinya," the Ongi kuden first quotes from an authoritative work of commentary:

The commentary reads: "Kaundinya is a surname. Here [in China] we translate it as 'a receptacle for fire.' [Ajñāta] belonged to the Brahman caste and his ancestors tended the sacrificial fire, so his clan was named accordingly. Fire has two functions: to illuminate and to burn. 'To illuminate' means that darkness does not arise (fushô). 'To burn' means that things are not produced (fushô). Therefore Ajñāta takes 'unborn' (fushô) as his surname."⁷⁵

The "commentary" cited here is Chih-i's Miao-fa lien-hua ching wen-chü. This quotation establishes the historical Kaundinya's ancestry and the etymology of his name. Its description of the physical properties of fire, by evoking some traditional Buddhist imagery, also works as a symbol of Kaundinya's spiritual status. Because "darkness" (illusion) no longer arises and "things" (e.g., attachments) are no longer produced, he is "unborn"--that is, an arhat, one who has eradicated defilements and freed himself from the cycle of rebirth.

In first citing a phrase from the sūtra ("Ajñāta Kaundinya") and then quoting the authoritative commentary of Chih-i, the Onqi kuden cloaks itself in the guise of traditional scholarly exegesis, suggesting that what follows will be simply a further explication of some ancient master's established explanation of the text. But what comes next, while posing as exegetical commentary, is not exegetical commentary at all but an entirely different sort of interpretation. The "fire" described below is not the fire of Chih-i's commentary,

and "Kaundinya" is not the Kaundinya of the Lotus Sûtra:

The Ongi kuden [of Nichiren] states: "Fire" indicates the wisdom-fire of the Dharma nature. As for its twofold significance, "illuminating" indicates the wisdom of true suchness that accords with conditions, while "burning" indicates the principle of true suchness that is unchanging....That which is endowed with these two virtues of fire, illuminating and burning, is Namu-myôhō-rengē-kyô.

Now when Nichiren and his followers chant Namu-myôhō-rengē-kyô, the darkness of birth and death is illuminated and dispelled, and the knowledge-fire of nirvâṇa burns brightly. When we realize that birth and death are precisely nirvâṇa, that is "illumination, [which] means that darkness does not arise." We burn the firewood of the worldly passions and behold the wisdom-fire of enlightenment before our eyes. When we realize that the worldly passions are precisely enlightenment, that is "burning, [which] means that things are not produced." Considering the matter in this light, Kaundinya is ourselves, the practitioners of the Lotus Sûtra, who manifest the worldly passions being precisely enlightenment and birth and death being precisely nirvâṇa.⁷⁶

The first thing that stands out here is the symbol transformation at work in the use of the image of fire. Fire in Buddhist texts has traditionally done service as an image, not of nirvâṇa, but of saṃsâra. Our mortal senses and their objects all burn "with the fire of passion, with the fire of hatred, with the fire of infatuation, with birth, old age, death, sorrow, lamentation, misery, grief and despair are they on fire."⁷⁷ The Lotus Sûtra itself says: "The three spheres, completely insecure/Are just like a house

afire,/Constantly marked by birth, old age,/sickness,
death and care--/Fires such as these,/raging without
cease."⁷⁸ And fire depending on firewood is an old
Buddhist metaphor, not for enlightenment, but for
dependent origination: When the firewood of delusion is
exhausted, the fire of suffering will go out. "To be
blown out" is, literally, what the word nirvâṇa means.
Here in the Ongi kuden, however, all this is turned
upside down, and nirvâṇa, not saṃsâra, is the fire
depending on the fuel of the defilements. And yet this
fire after all forms a most appropriate symbolic
expression for nirvâṇa as this text conceives it--an
enlightenment to the absolute that is in no way
separable from the phenomenal world. The interpretation
of Kaundinya's name in Chih-i's commentary suggests the
more conventional notion of a nirvâṇa distinct from the
conditioned realm, where illusions do not arise and
attachments are not produced. Yet in the discourse
represented by the Ongi kuden, without saṃsâra, there is
no nirvâṇa either. Just as a fire simultaneously burns
and gives light, so this nirvâṇa is at once transcendent
("truth that is unchanging") and yet unfolds in the
mundane world ("wisdom that accords with conditions").
Using for nirvâṇa the symbol traditionally associated
with saṃsâra radically undercuts notions of any ultimate
distinction between the two.

This example, like the major portion of the text, represents an interpretation from the standpoint of kanjin or "the observation of the mind." That is, the words of the sūtra-- "Ajñāta Kaṇḍinya"--are interpreted as referring, not to a historical person or figure in the sūtra, but to the truth to be realized within one's own mind in meditation (=chanting). As noted earlier, the notion of the kanjin interpretation was put forth by Chih-i in his Wen-chū as an aid to integrating doctrinal study with religious practice and thus perceiving the truth taught in the sūtra within one's mind. However, the Wen-chū does not employ the device of kanjin interpretation to produce readings fundamentally at odds with the sūtra text itself. In some of the medieval Japanese Tendai literature, and in the Ongi kuden, kanjin interpretations are used to "deconstruct" the text they purport to interpret and cause it to yield meanings unrelated to what it said originally. We have seen above for example how the image in the Wen-chū of the fire that burns and illuminates is co-opted, as it were, by the Ongi kuden to mean something quite different, in fact opposite, to what it does in its original context. For this reason, Japanese scholars frequently dismiss these kanjin interpretations in medieval Tendai literature as "arbitrary" and "unrelated to the text." While they do deviate from

straightforward exegetical readings, nevertheless, they are often executed very deliberately, and sometimes with consummate skill. What is happening here in the Ongi kuden, for example, works on two levels: under the guise of straightforward exegesis, (1) the sūtra and the Chih-i commentary--i.e., the authoritative texts--are being taken apart and reconstituted, as it were, to to yield an interpretation unrelated to, or even at odds with, what they actually say; and (2) at the same time, their traditional authority is being invoked to legitimize the new interpretation. The force of the kanjin interpretations in the Ongi kuden lies precisely in the tension between them and the conventional readings of the passages they interpret, in much the same way that the original enlightenment discourse itself depends for its impact on its opposition to more traditional, linear notions of attaining Buddhahood.

Before leaving this first example, we should also note the use of the word "now" in conjunction with the daimoku, in the passage that begins: "Now when Nichiren and his followers chant Namu-myôhō-renge-kyô....," which has already been mentioned as a distinctive characteristic of the text. This word "now" is frequently amplified in the Ongi kuden to read "now in the Final Dharma age" and is used to preface the kanjin interpretations. The age of mappô was widely understood

as presenting unique soteriological problems, to which Nichiren had proposed faith in the Lotus Sûtra and the chanting of its title as a solution. In the Ongi kuden, the word "now" almost always signals the point of cleavage with a conventional reading and the introduction of a new, kanjin interpretation as a meaning intended specifically for this Final Dharma age. At the same time, accessing this meaning in one's own experience (in this case, "burning the firewood of worldly passions to reveal the wisdom-fire of nirvâna") is shown to be dependent upon the practice said to have been revealed uniquely for this age: chanting the daimoku of the Lotus Sûtra.

In addition to kanjin interpretations and the transformation of symbols that they frequently entail, the Ongi kuden makes use of a number of other literary devices to put across its message. Some of these are discussed below.

1) Numerical correspondence. This interpretive device, originating in Chinese sources and widely employed in medieval Japanese Buddhist texts, collapses the distinction between two or more unrelated or even opposing categories and magically identifies them by virtue of the fact that they possess the same number of elements. We have already seen examples of this in the "five-element thought" and "correspondences of threes"

discussed in chapter two.

The Ongi kuden makes frequent use of this device. For example, in discussing the title of chapter eleven of the sūtra, "Beholding the Jeweled Stūpa," it states:

The jewels are the five skandhas, and the stūpa, their temporary union. A temporary union of the five skandhas is called the "jeweled stūpa." To see that the five skandhas in their temporary union are the five characters myô-hô-ren-ge-kyô is called "beholding." Now Nichiren and his followers who chant Namu-myôhō-rengē-kyō "behold the jeweled stūpa."⁷⁹

The five skandhas or aggregates--forms, perceptions, conceptions, volitions and consciousness--are the dharmas that, coming together, form the body and mind of all sentient beings. A "temporary union of the five skandhas" constitutes standard terminology in early Buddhist texts for the human psycho-somatic entity. Marked by lack of any permanent substance, our "self" to which we cling so determinedly is no more than five skandhas and a name: "All the workings of the five skandhas are suffering"--so states the first noble truth. According to the above passage, however, in chanting the sūtra's title, the five skandhas are identified with the five characters myô-hô-ren-ge-kyô. The fact that both the skandhas and the daimoku each have five elements is used here as the ground for equating the two, thus illustrating the identification in the act of practice of one's ephemeral self

(skandhas) with the ultimate reality (Myôhō-rence-kyô). This identification, the text suggests, so radically transforms one's experience of the world that the five skandhas, said to be marked by suffering, impermanence and egolessness, can be characterized as "jewels." The startling effect produced by this reversal of the commonplace, negative connotations of the skandhas--and similar reversals throughout the text--may have been intended to aid the practitioner by jolting the mind free from its accustomed categorizations and thus readying it for the insight that the phenomenal and the ultimate are one. The use of similar techniques in Zen literature is well known, but is by no means limited to the texts of that tradition.

Numerical correspondences, like kanjin interpretations, are sometimes referred to in modern Japanese scholarship as "arbitrary" or "meaningless," and certain passages do at first give this impression. For example, chapter twelve of the Lotus Sûtra describes how the eight-year-old daughter of the dragon king attains Buddhahood in the space of a moment before the eyes of the assembly. Discussing the significance of her age, the Ongi kuden says:

[The dragon girl's] eight years represent the eight rolls of the Lotus Sûtra. They are the defilements that are our eight sufferings. One should bear in mind that, in its entirety, the attainment of Buddhahood set forth in the

Lotus Sûtra is represented by the eight years [of the dragon girl]. The eight sufferings are precisely the eight rolls [of the sūtra text], and these eight sufferings being the eight rolls appeared as the eight-year-old dragon girl.⁸⁰

This passage does indeed appear at first reading to be an arbitrary stringing together of eights. However, closer examination shows it to be most carefully constructed. The eight sufferings, in basic Buddhist doctrine, arise from attachment to the phenomenal world and the failure to recognize and accept the truth of impermanence. However, as interpreted by the Ongi kuden, the message of the entire Lotus Sûtra--comprising eight rolls in Kumârajîva's translation and, fortuitously, said to have been preached by the Buddha over a period of eight years--is that enlightenment and liberation exist nowhere apart from the impermanent, phenomenal world. Hence the eight sufferings (=phenomenal reality) are precisely the ultimate truth (=eight rolls). This identity is manifested in the person of the eight-year-old dragon girl, who was traditionally interpreted as symbolizing the doctrine of "becoming a Buddha in this very body." This use of numerical correspondences acts to break down conventional categorizations and helps convey the Ongi kuden's theme of the nonduality of mundane and absolute reality.

2) Word play. The Ongi kuden employs several forms of word play to express its particular interpretation of the Lotus Sûtra. One such form involves the use of unconventional yomikudashi, or the "breaking down" of a Chinese text into Japanese syntactical form, in such a way that the grammatical structure of the Chinese sentence is deliberately altered to produce a new reading. Two famous examples of this technique are Dôgen's restructuring of the statement in the Mahâparinirvâna-sûtra, "All sentient beings have the Buddha nature," to read, "All sentient beings are the Buddha nature," playing on the double meaning of the character u or aru, to "to have" and "to be"⁸¹; and Shinran's reinterpreting of the text of Amida's eighteenth vow so as to reflect his emphasis on absolute Other-power.⁸² This kind of thing seems to have occurred quite frequently in medieval Japanese readings of Chinese Buddhist texts, and a few examples also appear in the Ongi kuden. The "separate transmission," for example, cites a passage from the fourteenth chapter of the Lotus Sûtra: "All the dharmas are empty, having nothing that exists. There is no constantly abiding, neither is there arising and perishing."⁸³ In this passage, "there is no constantly abiding" (mu u jôjû) must, to be faithful to the grammatical structure of the Chinese, be read in Japanese as jôjû aru koto nashi--

"there is no constantly abiding." Nevertheless, the indicators provided in the Onqi kuden text show that it is to be read mu mo u mo jôjû nari--"both non-existence and existence constantly abide." While by no means a grammatically defensible reading, this expresses much more closely than the original passage the Onqi kuden's interpretation of the Lotus Sûtra as a teaching that stresses, not impermanence and Emptiness, but that the continuous ebb and flow of the phenomenal world, now receding, now emerging, is itself the manifestation of ultimate reality. By the use of this sort of yomikudashi, one can subvert a Chinese text by taking it apart and reconstructing it to yield an interpretation quite different from its original meaning, and yet still claim that one is being faithful to the words of the original. Here again, the power of the new interpretation depends on the tension generated by its opposition to the conventional one. The Onqi kuden insures that this tension will be recognized by providing both the standard reading and the new, reinterpreted reading, using two sets of yomikudashi indicators, one on either side of the line of Chinese text.

Another form of word play used in the Onqi kuden involves reading elaborate significance into the placement of certain characters in the sûtra text. An

example concerns the famous verse section of the sixteenth chapter setting forth the teaching of the Buddha's eternal life (called the Ji ga verses because they start begin with the words ji ga toku butsurai or "Since I attained Buddhahood"). This verse section thus begins with the word "Since" (ji), in the phrase "Since I attained Buddhahood," and it ends with the word "body" (shin), in the phrase "quickly attain the Buddha's body." The character ji of course has the additional meaning of "one's own" or "self," and these two characters ji and shin placed together mean "oneself." According to the Ongi kuden, this "oneself" stands for the Buddha's self-enjoyment body, or ji [jiûyu] shin:

Thus this entire Ji ga verse section is the self-enjoyment body (jiûyushin). Because this is the self-enjoyment body of the Buddha who is the dharma-realm, having opened the entire dharma-realm [to reveal it] as himself (jiûshin), there is nothing [in the dharma-realm] that is not these Ji ga verses.⁸⁴

Here we find the equation of "text = Buddha = dharma-realm." The fact that this verse section is bracketed with the words "one's own" (ji) and "body" (shin) is used to equate it with the Buddha whose body is all dharmas. This reading enforces the view of the Ongi kuden that the eternal Buddha revealed in the sixteenth chapter is manifested as the entire phenomenal world.

A similar interpretation of character placement,

running to six typed manuscript pages in translation, concerns the significance of the opening and closing words of the entire sūtra: "Thus" and "departed." It concludes the translated excerpts from the Ongi kuden appearing in Part II.

3) Sexual and bodily imagery. At the beginning of the chapter in the Lotus Sūtra on "Bodhisattva Wondrous Sound," Śākyamuni emits vast rays of light from the knot of flesh on the crown of his head and from the tuft of white hair between his eyebrows, these being two of a Buddha's thirty-two distinguishing marks. Once again zeroing in on what would conventionally be considered a rather minor detail in the context of the events of this particular chapter, the Ongi kuden discusses the meaning of these two marks:

The "white tuft" indicates the carnal desire of the father, and the "knot of flesh," the carnal desire of the mother. The red and white fluids appear in this sūtra as these two marks....Now Nichiren and his followers who chant Namu-myōhō-renge-kyō are endowed with these marks. When we are first born, we are red in color; this corresponds to the knot of flesh. And the white bones that remain after our death correspond to the mark of the white tuft. Our red color at birth indicates the wisdom of true suchness that accords with conditions, while our white bones after death indicate the principle of true suchness that is unchanging. Keep this secret!⁸⁵

Each of the Buddha's distinguishing marks is said to be the visible manifestation of merits acquired over a hundred kalpas of austere practice. Here, the Ongi

kuden equates the two marks in question with the human sexual discharges--blood and semen, the "red and white fluids" of the above quotation--illustrating in the most graphic terms that "the worldly passions are precisely enlightenment." Sex, with its obvious connections to desire, attachment, birth, and continuing involvement in transmigration, has traditionally been considered a potential pitfall for serious practitioners. In terms of literal conduct, the Buddhist precepts restrict it for lay people and forbid it outright to monks and nuns; as metaphor, it had long served to symbolize the entire problem of desire and consequent bondage to the realm of suffering. Here again the Ongi kuden appropriates and transforms a conventional symbol to its own ends. In identifying the distinguishing marks of Buddhahood with some of the more explicitly physical aspects of human sexuality, the text reinforces its message of an enlightenment inseparable from the world of the ordinary person bound by desire and impermanence. The same holds true of the latter part of the above quotation, which identifies birth and death with the two aspects of suchness. This passage, evoking as it does the most graphic images of reproduction, birth, blood, death and decay, powerfully stresses that ultimate reality cannot be abstracted from the samsaric process in all its stark physicality.

Interestingly, this "important matter" numbers among several in the Ongi kuden that carries its own specific injunction to secrecy. This may indicate that this passage was originally a separate transmission, or perhaps special caution was deemed necessary in revealing its contents. It may have been thought appropriate that one first understand this body to be bondage, before being considered qualified to hear that this body is Buddha.

All the literary techniques discussed above in effect take the Lotus Sûtra apart and then reassemble it so that it expresses a message considerably different than it did before. No longer is the universal enlightenment it promises to be "attained" through long kalpas of practice, but rather to be "opened" immediately in the midst of ordinary experience. The combination of these various devices works, one could say, as a sort of literary analogue to precisely the kind of enlightenment that the Ongi kuden is talking about. Just as body and mind, birth and death, and the delusive passions--the entire phenomenal realm of human experience--are "opened" and revealed as the manifestations of the Wonderful Dharma, so in the Ongi kuden the text of the Lotus Sûtra is "opened" and shown to be a teaching of original enlightenment.

The kanjin interpretations and other devices of

this text were probably intended by its compilers as far more than literary techniques. Like much of the medieval Japanese original enlightenment literature, the Ongi kuden was almost certainly meant to be read in the context of meditative disciplines--in this case, chanting the daimoku. It may thus express what certain individuals had experienced in practice, and in turn, have been aimed at guiding the religious experience of others.

This chapter has outlined some of the difficulties involved in attempting to trace the compilation of the Ongi kuden and Onkô kikigaki. The lack of original manuscripts, late notices and other textual problems must inevitably mean, for the academic scholar, that they cannot be ranked equally with Nichiren's authenticated writings as indices to his thought. Yet if their "every word and dot" cannot, as tradition maintains, be regarded as a direct statement of Nichiren's teaching, neither can they be said to be completely unrelated to him. Here the question arises: Do the ideas set forth in these documents, as Shigyô and Asai suggest, really represent a departure from Nichiren's thought? Do they mark a compromise on the part of his later disciples with medieval Tendai notions that Nichiren had rejected? Or are they a development of elements already present in his own thinking?

This question is related to the broader issue of the connection between Nichiren and medieval Tendai in general and must therefore be addressed in conjunction with the texts introduced earlier in this essay and others like them. The similarities in both language and content between the Ongi kuden and the Onkô kikigaki and the works discussed in previous chapters will have been abundantly evident. If all the texts discussed earlier should be apocryphal, then these two oral transmission records as well would have to be considered outside the scope of Nichiren's ideas. Yet, as we have shown, the issue of authenticity remains ambiguous. If any significant portion of this body of Nichiren-attributed writings drawing on the original enlightenment discourse to explain the virtue of the daimoku should actually be his work, then we would have to say that this assimilating of original enlightenment thought to the daimoku formed an aspect of his thought, of which the Ongi kuden and Onkô kikigaki may represent a development.

Oral teachings such as the Ongi kuden and Onkô kikigaki represent a level of textuality at which it is simply not possible to distinguish clearly between Nichiren's ideas and those of his disciples. All we can say is that they reflect how an interpretive community of disciples understood Nichiren, and that this

community clearly saw him as a teacher of original enlightenment.

Notes to Chapter Four:

1. See for example the "Bôjikyô ji," STN 2:1151 (dated 1276), and the "Soya-dono gohenji," STN 2:1664 (1279).
2. STN 3:2597-2728.
3. STN 3:2541-96.
4. Miyazaki Eishû, "Nichiren no ibun" in Tamura Yoshirô and Miyazaki Eishû, eds., Nichiren no shôgai to shisô, Kôza Nichiren, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Shunshûsha, 1975), p. 109.
5. These are the same twenty-eight passages selected as representing the essence of each chapter of the Lotus Sutra in the "Hokke nijû-happon kan'yô" (Essentials of the twenty-eight chapters of the Lotus), a text attributed to Saichô (DDZ 3:731-36). According to its colophon, one who recites or understands these passages has in effect memorized all the Buddha's lifetime teachings. Saichô, it adds, secretly wore this text on his person in a brocade pouch; it was discovered after his death by his disciples Gishin and Enchô.
6. Risshô University Library. Ms. No. A03.6.
7. This colophon appears in the Kyôhō 6 (1721) printed version of the text, the Yôhōji edition, and is not included in the Shôwa teihon Nichiren Shônin ibun. See Ongi kuden, T 2699.84:340, n. 1.
8. According to Tomiya Nisshin, Nisshû nempyô (Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1935), p. 33, Nichizon was ousted from the temple by Nikkô for a display of inattention while the latter was lecturing on the "Ongi kuden shô." Nichizon's biography in the Soshiden of Kôzô-in Nisshin (1808-76) relates the same incident, giving the detail of the pear tree, but does not specify on what text Nikkô was lecturing at the time (Fuji 5:40). A letter written by Nikkô's disciple Nichimoku (cited in Nichirenschû jiten, p. 622) substantiates that Nikkô did indeed disown Nichizon at this time, but whether or not he was prompted to do so by Nichizon's absent-mindedness during a lecture is not mentioned. I have been unable to determine at what point the story of Nichizon being distracted from Nikkô's lecture by falling leaves became associated with the Ongi kuden. A more recent edition of the Nempyô (Kageyama Gyôô, ed., Shimpen Nichirenschû nempyô [Tokyo: Nichirenschû Shimbunsha, 1989], p. 47) says that Nichizon was

banished from the Omosu seminary in Shōan 1 (1299), rather than Shōan 2, and does not mention a reason.

9. "Hokekyō honbon betsuden kōgi," Dokku 4-2 (May 1931), p. 67.

10. "Ongi kuden kōgi," cited in Shigyō Kaishū, "Ongi kuden no kenkyū (1)," Risshō daigaku ronsō 1-2 (July 1942), p. 71. This very same statement also appears in the foreword to a Iida Eisai's Ongi kuden kechimiyaku shō (1939), pp. 1-2.

11. For example, Eishō-in Nichijū (1692-1776), in his Honjaku jikyō hen, cited in Ōmura Jūken, "Ongi kuden ronkō," Dai Nichiren (Feb. 1962), p. 55.

12. Eishō Nichijin (1806-69), "Honjaku risshō gi," NSZ 6:302-3; Shimizu Ryūzan, "Ongi kuden ni okeru taimitsu to Hokke shintō," Ōsaki gakuho 83 (Oct. 1933), p. 43.

13. Exceptions would include Chiken-in Nissen (1586-1648) of Minobu (see Bandai kikyō roku, maki 1, p. 66, cited in Ōmura Jūken, "Ongi kuden ronkō," p. 55) and Sōna-in Nippō (1600-1669) of Kyoto (Shō kindan hōse ron, cited in Miyazaki Eishū, Fuju fuse-ha no genryū to tenkai, p. 331. As opponents of the fuju fuse movement, these men had an interest in casting doubt on the authenticity of the Ongi kuden and the Onkō kikiqaki, both of which contain passages supporting the fuju fuse position. See n. 53 below.

14. Shigyō's thesis is partially reproduced in Risshō daigaku ronsō 1-2 (July 1942):68-87 and 2-7 (June 1943):33-64. My summary of his argument is based only on this available portion.

15. On this point see Yamanaka Kihachi, "Chū Hokekyō shikō," Ōsaki gakuho 110 (June 1959), pp. 50-55. Yamanaka notes that, of 133 passages of commentary cited in the "Ongi kuden," only 23 appear in the Chū Hokekyō.

16. "Ongi kuden no kenkyū (2)," p. 51.

17. See pp. 282-83, 291-92, 304, 320-21, 328-29, and 331.

18. "Nichiren kyōgaku jō ni okeru Ongi kuden no chii," IBK 3-1 (Sept. 1954):170-71.

19. Manji 48 and 49. The passage from the Ongi kuden occurs at STN 3:2647-48, beginning "[Chūan] four of the K'o-chu states...." The corresponding passage from

Hsü's K'o-chu (Manji 48:912b) appears in chüan four of the text but differs slightly from the quotation in the Ongi kuden.

20. Dai Nichiren, February 1962. This issue features a special section titled "Ongi kuden ni kansuru kenkyû" consisting of prefatory remarks by Abe Shin'yû, then Nichiren Shôshû chief of doctrinal studies (p. 50), and Nittatsu Hosoi, then the chief priest of the sect (pp. 51-53), as well as the following articles: Ômura Jûken, "Ongi kuden ronkô" (pp. 54-64), Yagi Shimpô, "Ongi kuden ni tsuite" (pp. 65-76), and Toyota Kôei, "Ongi kuden ronkô" (pp. 77-83).

21. Ikeda Daisaku, Ongi kuden kôgi (Tokyo: Seikyô Shimbunsha, 1965-67; reprint paperback edition, 1974) vol.1, pp. 42-45.

22. See for example Shigyô's "Fuji Taiseki-ji-ha kyôgaku no tokushitsu," IBK 5-2 (March 1957):592-95, and Sôka Gakkai hihan. In summarizing both Shigyô's argument and the responses to it, I have abridged where not relevant to the discussion at hand those criticisms focusing on longstanding differences between the doctrinal interpretations of Nichirenshû and Nichiren Shôshû. The controversy between these two denominations is an old one, unlikely to be resolved soon, and decidedly beyond the scope of this essay.

23. Dai Nichiren (Feb. 1962), p. 51.

24. "Ongi kuden ronkô," p. 62. Nikko's use of the term ongi in referring to Nichiren's teachings occurs in "Hara-dono gohenji," NSZ 2:174.

25. "Kompon Nichiren shûshi myômoku," cited in Ômura Juken, "Ongi kuden ronkô," p. 57.

26. "Fuji monkachû kenmon," Fuji 5:153, cited in Ômura juken, "Ongi kuden ronkô," p. 57.

27. No longer extant. A Ming-period revision of this work by Fa-chi appears in Manji 48:265.

28. Dai Nichiren, pp. 58-61, 67-74. Ômura also points out (p. 68) that one of the extant transcriptions of the Ongi kuden, the Genki-era manuscript, dated 1571 and in the possession of Taiseiki-ji, reads Pu-chu instead of K'o-chu, which he judges to be a transcription error. "Pu-chu" could possibly refer to the Fa-hua san-ta-pu pu-chu by Ts'ung-i of the Sung (Manji 43 and 44), a text

written early enough that Nichiren could conceivably have had access to it. The text of the Pu-chu, however, does not match the passage cited in the Ongi kuden.

29. Ibid., p. 62.

30. "Ongi kuden sôkô," in his Bukkyô shisô to Fuji kyôgaku (Tokyo: Nichiren Shôshû Bussho Kankôkai, 1978), pp. 1-11.

31. Ongi kuden no kenkyû (Tokyo: Sankibô Busshorin, 1962).

32. Ibid., p. 21.

33. Ibid., pp. 22-25.

34. Ibid., pp. 5-17. Miyake bases his argument on two documents, the "Goyuimotsu haibun no koto," Nikkô's record of the disposition of Nichiren's personal effects, and the "Shûso gosenge kiroku," Nikkô's description of the events surrounding Nichiren's death, his funeral, etc., both dated the tenth month of Kôan 5 (1282), the month of Nichiren's death. The "Goyuimotsu haibun no koto" refers to a Chû Hokekyô given as a memento to the disciple Ben Ajari Nisshô; in this record, the character for chû is written with the gomben or word radical (NSZ 2:107). However, the "Shûso gosenge kiroku" mentions a Chû Hokekyô that Nichiren had willed should be kept near his gravesite; in this record, the character chû is written with the sanzui or water radical (NSZ 2:105). Citing the discrepancy between these two documents in their reference to the disposition of the Chû Hokekyô and the characters with which they write its title, Miyake concludes that they are in fact referring to two different texts. The Chû Hokekyô of the "Shûso gosenge kiroku," the one to be kept by Nichiren's grave, is, Miyake says, in fact the Ongi kuden. According to Miyake, this opinion was also shared by Kawai Nisshin (1855-1943). He cites the latter's Nichiren Shônin Chû Hokekyô bekkân, p. 11. I have been unable to see a copy of this.

Shigyô Kaishû had already noted the discrepancy between these two records with respect to the disposition of the Chû Hokekyô but drew a very different conclusion. He points out that a third record from the month of Nichiren's death, the "Daishônin sôsô nikki" of Nichii, also says that the Chû Hokekyô was given as a memento to Nisshô (NSZ 1:55), confirming the account given in the "Goyuimotsu haibun no koto." Based on this and other details, Shigyô says that the "Shûso gosenge kiroku," though traditionally thought to be Nikkô's

holograph, may be a later product of the Fuji lineage. Its implication that Nichiren's will was violated in the distribution of his effects, Shigyô suggests, may reflect the Fuji school's later antagonism toward the other Nichiren lineages. See Shigyô Kaishû, "Nichiren Shônin no Chû Hokekyô ni tsuite," Nihon Bukkyô 2 (Oct. 1958), pp. 28-29.

35. Ongi kuden no kenkyû, p. 27.

36. I know only of Shimizu Ryôzan's "Ongi kuden kôgi" and Iida Eisai's posthumously published Ongi kuden kechimiyaku shô (1939), both cited above. Against the received opinion that this work was too profound to touch, Tanaka Chigaku argues the need to lecture on the Ongi kuden in "Hokekyô honbon betsuden kôgi" (1931), p. 67.

37. Nichiren Shônin Ongi kuden Onkô kiki-gaki haishô wakashû (Tokyo, 1963). Tokishita, professing himself to be "an individual believer completely outside the realm of doctrinal scholarship" (p. 4), also takes the position that the Ongi kuden and Onkô kiki-gaki are actual records of Nichiren's lectures.

38. "Nichiren kyôgaku ni okeru Ongi kuden no ichi," p.171.

39. Only ninety are given in the index (STN 3:2541-43). Technically, however, there are ninety-two, because the text contains two entries each for the phrases "roots, stems, branches and leaves" and "equally sends down the Dharma rain" from the "Medicinal Herbs" chapter. In both cases, the second entry constitutes an elaboration on the content of the first. If the Onkô kiki-gaki is indeed a record of successive lectures, these double entries could indicate that the topic was picked up again from a preceding lecture, or they could be later interpolations.

40. Murozumi Ichimiyô, "Onkô kiki-gaki o megutte" in Motai Kyôkô Sensei Koki Kinen Ronbunshû Kankôkai, ed., Nichiren kyôgaku no shomondai (Kyoto: Heirakuji, 1974):319-33.

41. "Onkô kiki-gaki kô," Seishin 48 (Oct. 1975):19-29.

42. Contained in NSZ 13 and 14, this is the largest work by any of Nichiren's immediate disciples.

43. Two works attributed to Nichiren do cite it, however, and their authenticity has long been debated on that account. See chapter one, n. 45.

44. However, an appendix to the above-mentioned Kinkôshû, the Kinkôshû furokû, contains a chapter called "Rigu" ("Possessing in principle"), whose earliest extant transcription is dated Karyaku 3 (1328), which discusses these two aspects of suchness (NSZ 14:594). In addition, the "Risshôkan jô" addressed to Sairen-bô, which survives in transcriptions dated Shôchû 2 (1325) and Gentoku 2 (1330), also mentions the two suchness aspects (STN 1:851). While neither of these texts can be grouped in the same class as Nichiren's authenticated writings, one being a disciple's later record and the other existing only in transcription, they do at least suggest the possibility that Nichiren may on occasion have made use of this concept.

45. "Onkô kiki-gaki kô," p. 29.

46. This seems to have been the opinion of both Shimizu Ryôzan and Tanaka Chigaku. See Shigyô Kaishû, "Ongi kuden no kenkyû," pp. 82-83.

47. According to Tokishita, this sort of construction occurs 116 times in the Ongi kuden and 13 times in the Onkô kiki-gaki. Nichiren Shônin Ongi kuden Onkô kiki-gaki haishô wakashû, p. 33.

48. "Onkô kiki-gaki kô," p. 29.

49. The difference between the Lotus Sutra and the teachings of other sects remained the chief focus of Nichiren doctrinal studies into the Nambokuchô period (1336-92). From the Muromachi (1392-1568) period on, however, differences between rival factions within the Nichiren sect came to be stressed, centering on the two issues of legitimacy of Dharma inheritance and the itchi/shôretsu controversy. See Risshô Daigaku Nichiren Kyôgaku Kenkyûjo, ed., Nichiren kyôdan zenshi, vol. 1 (Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1984), pp. 294-95. According to Shigyô Kaishû, factional consciousness was already starting to be reflected in doctrinal interpretations during the Nambokuchô period, especially with the loss of cohesion in the community following the death of those disciples who had known Nichiren personally. Nichirensû kyôgaku shi (Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten 1952), p. 3.

50. One other possibility, suggested by Inada Kaiso (1869-1956), is that the Ongi kuden was in fact produced by the Happon lineage founded by Nichiryû (1385-1464). Shigyô Kaishû mentions Inada's suggestion without elaboration in Kômon kyôgaku no kenkyû (Tokyo: Kaishûsha, 1974), pp. 63-64. Intercourse between the Fuji and Happon lineages during the Muromachi period is briefly discussed in Matsui Kôjun, "Happon-ha to Fuji-ha no kôryû (Muromachi ki)," Ôsaki gakuhô 131 (Sept. 1978):40-42.

51. STN 3:2666.

52. STN 3:2578.

53. The fujû fuse movement was formally initiated by Nichiô (1565-1630), abbot of the Myôkaku-ji in Kyoto. In 1595, Nichiô opposed to the Nichiren sect's participation in a series of interdemoninational ceremonies sponsored by Toyotomi Hideyoshi for the salvation of his deceased relatives and the consecration of a great Buddha image he had caused to be erected at the Hôkô-ji. A majority of Nichiren monks, however, were willing to compromise. In 1599, Nichiô and his opponents were summoned to debate the issue in the presence of Tokugawa Ieyasu. During the debate, Nichiô asserted that the authority of the Lotus Sutra transcended that of the state, and was exiled by Ieyasu to Tsushima. For the use of the above-cited passages in the fujû fuse controversy, see Miyazaki Eishû, Fujû fuse-ha no genryû to tenkai, pp. 176-77, 322-23, 331.

54. Three of the more readily available of these commentaries are discussed in Suguro Shinjô, "Hokekyô chûshaku no dôko" in Kageyama Gyôô, ed., Chûsei Hokke Bukkyô no tenkai (Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten), pp. 149-85, although not in conjunction with the "Ongi kuden."

55. STN 3:2646, 2719; DNBZ 18:111.

56. STN 3:2660; DNBZ 18:150.

57. STN 3:2671; DNBZ 18:159.

58. "Onkô kikiraki kô," p. 24. The passages in question appear at STN 3:2548 and DNBZ 18:22.

59. STN 3:2654.

60. "Ongi kuden ni okeru taimitsu to Hokke shintô," Ôsaki gakuhô 83 (Oct. 1933), pp. 5-42.

61. "Shinkokuô gosho," STN 1:878.

62. "Onkô kikigaki kô," p. 22-23. Asai gives fourteen instances where there appears to be some connection between the latter thirty-one sections of the Onkô kikigaki and others of Nichiren's writings, especially the "Kyôgyôshô gosho" (STN 2: 1479-89) and the "Kyôdai shô" (1:919-34). (One of these apparent connections involves a problematic text, the "Sôkanmon shô" discussed in chapter two.) The connection to the "Kyôgyôshô gosho," dated the twenty-first day of the third month, Kôan 1 (1278), would, Asai says, seem to lend some credence to the tradition that the lectures recorded in the Onkô kikigaki began on the nineteenth day of the third month, Kôan 1; however, as noted earlier, he questions whether Nichiren would have lectured on his own writings. Murozumi Ichimyo ("Onko kikigaki o megutte," p. 323) had also noted that starting date given for the Onkô kikigaki lectures was three days before the completion of the "Kyôgyôshô gosho."

In addition to the correspondences with the "Kyôgyôshô gosho" and other writings listed by Asai, Tokishita Yonetarô (Nichiren Shônin Ongi kuden Onkô kikigaki haishô wakashû, pp. 7-8) lists ten letters, written between the second day of the second month, Kôan 2 (1279) and the eighth day of the eighth month, Kôan 4 (1281), in which Nichiren cites specific figures for the population of Japan--something that does not occur in his earlier writings--and points out that that a similar citation appears in both the Onkô kikigaki (STN 3:2591) and the Ongi kuden (3:2618). While this does not really help to pin down the dates of these documents to the extent that Tokishita suggests it does, it represents an instance of something almost certainly received from Nichiren. These figures in Nichiren's writings are the only population count to appear in any extant Kamakura-period document and have been frequently cited by scholars researching the population of Japan. See Yoshimoto Zenkyô, "Nichiren Shônin goibunjô ni okeru wagakuni no jinkô (shijû kyûoku) ni tsuite," Gendai shûkyô kenkyû 15 (March 1981):76-82.

63. STN 3:2587-88.

64. STN 2:1487.

65. STN 3:2588-89.

66. "Ueno-dono gohenji," STN 2:1451.
67. STN 3:2548.
68. STN 3:2563.
69. STN 3:2699.
70. STN 3:2636.
71. STN 3:2626.
72. STN 3:2664.
73. STN 3:2619.
74. STN 3:2663.
75. Wen-chû 1a, T 1718.34:8a16-19.
76. STN 3:2608.
77. "The Fire Sermon," Mahâ-vagga (i.21-1); Henry Clark Warren, trans., Buddhism in Translations (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1896; reprint ed., New York: Atheneum, 1982), p. 352.
78. Hurvitz, p. 72.
79. STN 3:2645.
80. STN 3:2653.
81. See Hee-jin Kim, Dôgen Kigen: Mystical Realist (Tuscon: University of Arizona Press, 1975), pp. 160-66.
82. See Alfred Bloom, Shinran's Gospel of Pure Grace (Tuscon: University of Arizona Press, 1965), pp. 48-49.
83. STN 3:2710.
84. STN 3:2671.
85. STN 3:2691.

SUMMATION

The problem under discussion in this essay begins with the observation that, of those texts within the Nichiren collection showing a close relationship to original enlightenment thought, very few exist in Nichiren's holograph or can be otherwise verified as authentic. As noted before, this may indicate that a number of these documents are pseudographic, or it could be purely an accident of history, of no particular significance. No way exists at present to determine which is the case. A few of the documents in question exhibit textual problems apart from their reference to the original enlightenment discourse that raise questions about their authenticity. But even in the greater number of cases where no specific textual problems are to be found, in the absence of holographs or other corroborating evidence, Nichiren's authorship cannot proven definitively. Asai Yôrin and his successors stood on solid ground in insisting on this point: By every principle of modern textual studies, as indexes to Nichiren's thought, such documents cannot rank equally with those that are indisputably genuine. This remains the strongest argument for viewing these texts as problematic. Asai's critics have been able to

point out major flaws in his methodology, but not to authenticate the works he originally questioned.

Nevertheless, even though these works cannot be proven to be genuine works of Nichiren, one ventures out onto much shakier ground in claiming that reference to the symbols, terms or concepts of original enlightenment thought in itself constitutes grounds for suspecting forgery. First of all, this claim is rendered suspect by a too-neat coincidence with certain sectarian and doctrinal agendas. We have pointed out how Asai's attempt to eliminate these texts from the scope of Nichiren's primary thought enabled him to assert Nichiren's intellectual independence from the parent Tendai tradition, in reply to equally partisan claims from certain Tendai scholars that Nichiren had derived his thought entirely from their school. In the realm of doctrine as well, it supported Asai's contention that Nichiren, rejecting Tendai/Shingon emphasis on the Dharma body immanent in living beings, established the Buddha in his recompense-body aspect, rather than the Dharma, as the object of worship. The fact that Asai's ostensibly objective and scientific methodology served particular biases does not mean his conclusions are wrong, but simply warns us to evaluate them carefully. The same holds true for some of Asai's critics whose own agendas are clearly served by redefining as central the

same texts that Asai Yôrin marginalized.

A more serious failing in Asai's argument, pointed out by Kawazoe Shôji, was its slighting of historical context in postulating an original, "pure" Nichiren doctrine. Given that Nichiren was educated within the Tendai sect, was familiar with the original enlightenment discourse, and drew on it substantially in his early writings, it becomes difficult to maintain that he could not have incorporated it into his thought. Asai and Kawazoe, in their respective positions, symbolize the tension between the traditional sectarian scholar seeking to define what shall be doctrinally normative, and the historian of religions attempting to describe what actually happened.

The major flaws in Asai's methodology were avoided, as we have seen, by Tamura Yoshirô, who readily acknowledged the early influence on Nichiren of Tendai original enlightenment thought and amply took into account his intellectual development. Tamura followed Asai, however, in concluding that medieval Tendai thought represented an absolute affirmation of the phenomenal world against which Nichiren had reasserted the necessity of practice. As we have pointed out, certain questionable assumptions about medieval Tendai Buddhism and original enlightenment thought appear to be involved here. The distinction Tamura draws between

Tendai and Nichiren's thought in their respective treatment of nonduality is useful as a heuristic tool and finds support in an overall difference of emphasis or nuance emerging from a broad comparison of Tendai texts and Nichiren's writings, but it is probably neither consistent nor clearcut enough to serve as a reliable criterion for pinpointing possibly apocryphal texts. Tamura accurately observes that the original enlightenment discourse recedes from Nichiren's later work, though exactly how far it can be said to recede will depend upon whether the judgment is based only on fully authentic texts or whether other texts are also taken into consideration. As Tamura points out, Nichiren's later retreat from original enlightenment thought was not an outright rejection: its doctrine of the ontological identity of the Buddha and the beings remained an underpinning of his thought. Thus we get into difficulties in attempting to conclude from this lessened emphasis that a recrudescence of this discourse in later Nichiren-attributed works necessarily calls their authorship into question. The receding of original enlightenment thought from Nichiren's main rhetoric may not imply a fundamental reinterpretation of this issue on his part but could simply have been because new priorities intervened, demanding that he focus on other issues. In the absence of any explicit

critique of this discourse in Nichiren's writings, the argument tends to become circular: a pre-definition of Nichiren's mature thinking is set up that excludes nondual original enlightenment thought, which is then used to problematize those texts in which this discourse appears.

Here in summary is what we can say with some certainty about Nichiren's relationship to the original enlightenment discourse: (1) He was familiar with it, having trained on Mt. Hiei, transcribed seminal works in the original enlightenment genre, and drawn on it heavily in his writings up through 1260. In this early period, he focused especially on its concepts of the identity of the Buddha with all living beings and the immanence of the Buddha land in the present world, using these ideas chiefly to assert the primacy of the Lotus Sûtra and to dispute Hônen's doctrine of salvation through rebirth in Amida's Pure Land. (2) Reference to the doctrines, terminology and symbols of the original enlightenment discourse occasionally appear in Nichiren's authenticated later works, though not nearly to the extent seen in the problematic material discussed in this essay. (3) If we attempt to analyse the structure of Nichiren's thought as it emerges from his authenticated writings, important elements appear to take original enlightenment as their premise. These

elements include the doctrine of "attaining Buddhahood in this very body," the body and mind of the believer being identified with the Buddha in the act of chanting the daimoku, or the immanence of the Buddha land in the sahâ world. However, one also finds passages presenting the Buddha as an external savior figure or urging faith for the sake of rebirth in a pure land, which do not seem philosophically consistent with original enlightenment thought. (4) No explicit critique of the original enlightenment doctrine appears in any work in the Nichiren corpus. (5) As seen from documents such as the oral teachings, members of Nichiren's early community clearly saw him as a teacher of original enlightenment and interpreted his doctrine in this light. Their interpretation may represent the development of elements already present in Nichiren's thought, or it could be a result of their interaction with Tendai scholars (something known to have occurred), or reflect some combination of the two. From the above, we have enough information to assume that Nichiren's thought probably cannot be completely divorced from the original enlightenment discourse. It would appear that either (1) original enlightenment may have formed a significant element in his thinking, especially in his early years, or (2) without necessarily subscribing to this discourse in its

entirety, Nichiren nevertheless made use of its terminology and symbols to express his own teaching of the immediacy of Buddhahood in chanting the daimoku. In either case, we must question that reference to this discourse in itself constitutes reliable grounds for suspecting that a particular text may be apocryphal.

As has been noted repeatedly in this study, we cannot at present say with any certainty whether the majority of the texts under discussion were written by Nichiren himself or represent pseudographic productions on the part of later followers. This means that, in engaging them, we enter an area in which it is impossible to distinguish meaningfully between Nichiren's thought and that of his later disciples. In discussing Nichiren's relationship with original enlightenment thought, we are inevitably dealing with Nichiren plus the early community of his first interpreters who understood him in terms of this discourse. Similarly, we cannot readily distinguish, in these documents, between Nichiren and Tendai intellectual currents: the practice they recommend--chanting the daimoku of the Lotus Sûtra as an exclusive practice--is that advocated by Nichiren and his followers, while the thought in which they ground this practice is the original enlightenment discourse traditionally associated with Tendai.

None of the new Kamakura sects sprang into existence full-blown in the person of its founder, Nichiren Buddhism included. In demanding that we consider not only Nichiren alone but Nichiren plus his early community, these problematic writings encourage a shift in focus from exclusive emphasis on the person of the founder to investigating how the tradition emanating from him developed historically. These documents also clearly show Nichiren and/or his early community to have been embedded in a larger tradition of Lotus-related discourse, one that does not easily lend itself to categorizing under the rubrics of "Nichiren" and "Tendai." In this way, they add to evidence that traditional divisions of Buddhist studies along denominational lines do not always serve to illuminate, and on occasion obscure, trends or patterns that cut across such divisions. Much of the value of these texts--apart from their intrinsic interest as religious documents--lies in the challenge they issue to a number of long-established academic categories and ways of thinking about medieval Japanese Buddhism.

PART II: TRANSLATIONS

The Teaching Approved by All Buddhas
of the Three Time Periods¹

Written by Nichiren

Now the sacred teachings of the Buddha's lifetime were all expounded over a period of fifty years and constitute what is termed the body of sūtras. They may be divided into two categories: first, those [expounded in order] to instruct others (keta), and second, those of [the Buddha's] self-practice (jigyô). Those of the first category, the sūtras for instructing others, are the scriptural teachings that [the Buddha] expounded for a period of forty-two years before preaching the Lotus Sūtra. They are termed the provisional teachings and are also called skilful means. Among the four teachings,² they correspond to the first three--the Tripiṭaka teaching, the shared teaching, and the distinct teaching. Among the five periods, they correspond to the Flower Ornament, Āgama, Extended [Vaipulya] and Prajñā periods.³ They are the scriptural teachings of the four periods preceding the Lotus Sūtra. Moreover, among the ten realms,⁴ they correspond to the first nine dharma-realms. And in terms of dreams and waking reality, they concern the good and evil that

occur in dreams. Dreams are termed provisional, while the waking state is termed true. The reason is that dreams are temporary phenomena and have no substantial nature; therefore, they are termed provisional. Waking reality constantly abides and is the unchanging essence of the mind; therefore, it is termed true. The various sūtras of [the first] forty-two years set forth matters of good and evil occurring in the dream of birth and death; therefore, they are called provisional teachings. They are the scriptural teachings of preparatory, expedient means, by which the Buddha sought to entice and lead the dreaming beings, in order to startle and rouse them into the waking reality of the Lotus Sūtra. Therefore, they are called provisional teachings. Making clear the reading of the words ["true" and "provisional"] in this light, one should bear [this distinction] in mind. Therefore, "provisional" is to be read as "transient" (kari). The dream is the basic model of transient things. And "true" should be read as "genuine" (makoto). The model of genuine matters is waking reality. Because the dream of birth and death is provisional, without [self-]nature or substance, it is the model of transient things. Therefore, it is termed a false conception. The waking reality of original enlightenment is genuine; because it is the mind separated from birth and extinction, it is the model of

true reality. Therefore, it is called the true aspect. Making clear the two words "provisional" and "true" in this light, one should understand the distinction within the sacred teachings of the Buddha's lifetime between the provisional teachings expounded in order to instruct others and the true teaching that represents the Buddha's self-practice. Thus the first three teachings among the four teachings, the first four periods among the five periods, and the first nine dharma-realms among the ten dharma-realms, all alike explain matters of good and evil occurring in dreams. That is why they are called provisional teachings.

Concerning these doctrinal characteristics, the Wu-liang i ching [Sûtra of unfathomable meanings] states, "In these forty years and more, I have not yet revealed the truth."⁵ Those sûtras in which the Buddha had "not yet revealed the truth" are provisional teachings pertaining to the realm of dreams. Therefore, [Chan-jan's Fa-hua hsüan-i] shih-ch'ien [Commentary on the Profound Meaning of the Lotus] states:

Although the nature does not differ, depending upon illusion, there necessarily arises an illusory receptivity and an illusory seeking [of the beings toward the Buddha] and an illusory response and an illusory proceeding [of the Buddha toward the beings]. He who responds and they who are instructed are both neither true nor provisional.⁶

These [sûtras] are all teachings or expedient means

pertaining to a dream or an illusion. "Although the nature does not differ" means that, although the nature of the mind that beholds dreams and the nature of the mind while waking are but a single mind-nature and do not differ in the slightest, the false things occurring in dreams and the real things occurring in the waking state represent two classes of phenomena but a single dharma of the mind; accordingly, what we see and what we conceive is in fact our own mind. Therefore, [Chih-i's Moho] chih-kuan [The great calming and insight] states, "As for the four vows as set forth in the first three teachings, both their subject and object are obliterated."⁷ The four vows are the vow to save innumerable beings, the vow to extirpate unlimited defilements, the vow to master inexhaustible doctrines, and the vow to attain unexcelled bodhi. These are called the four vows. "Subject" indicates the Tathâgata, and "object" means the beings. This commentary is saying that in the first three of the four teachings, both the Buddha who makes these four vows and the beings who are their object are all merely rights and wrongs occurring in a dream. This being the case, the teachings of the various sūtras preached during the period of the forty-two years before the Lotus Sūtra are all provisional teachings and expedient means, of which the Buddha said, "I have not yet revealed the truth."⁸

Because they are expedient means leading to the Lotus Sûtra, they do not represent the true reality. The Buddha himself, after having expounded and brought together [these teachings] over the course of forty-two years, now wished to preach the Lotus Sûtra. First he taught the opening sûtra, the Wu-liang i ching, as its introductory division.⁹ Since [what he expounded] at that time represents the doctrinal classification conceived and put into words (kanmon shitamaeru) by the Buddha himself,¹⁰ one should not insert the words of others or give rise to doubts.

Therefore, [Chih-i's Miao-fa lien-hua ching] hsüan-i [Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sûtra] states, "The nine realms are regarded as provisional; the Buddha realm is regarded as true."¹¹ The nine dharma-realms, being provisional, correspond to the teachings preached during [the first] forty-two years, while the Buddha dharma-realm, being true, corresponds to the preaching of the [last] eight years, that is, to the Lotus Sûtra. Therefore the Lotus Sûtra is called the Buddha vehicle. Because birth and death in the nine realms is a principle pertaining to dreams, it is called a provisional teaching; because the constant abiding of the Buddha realm is the principle of waking reality, it is called the true teaching. Therefore, the teachings expounded over fifty years, the sacred teachings of the

Buddha's lifetime, the entire body of sūtras, consist of the provisional teachings for instructing others expounded during the [first] forty-two years, and the true teaching of [the Buddha's] self-practice expounded during the [last] eight years. Together they constitute the fifty years of teachings. If one holds them up to the mirror of the two words "provisional" and "true," [the distinction between them] will be reflected there spotlessly.

In the practice of the Tripiṭaka teaching, one expects to pass three asamkhyeya[-kalpas] and a hundred major kalpas¹² and at length become a Buddha. He therefore emits fire from his body, intending to "reduce his body to ashes and enter extinction,"¹³ so that he becomes ashes and vanishes. In the practice of the shared teaching, because one expects to become a Buddha after fulfilling seven asamkhyeya[-kalpas] and a hundred major kalpas,¹⁴ he will, as in the previous case, reduce his body to ashes and enter extinction so that he vanishes with no trace remaining. In the practice of the distinct teaching, after exhausting twenty-two major asamkhyas and a hundred, thousand, ten thousand kalpas,¹⁵ one may think that he has at last become a Buddha. But this is merely the attainment of Buddhahood of the provisional teachings, which belong to the dream of birth and death. When seen in light of the Lotus

Sûtra, which teaches the waking reality of original enlightenment, there is no real Buddhahood in the distinct teaching; it is a fruit obtained in a dream. Therefore it is said that in the path of doctrine set forth in the distinct teaching,¹⁶ there is no real Buddha. In the path of attainment of the distinct teaching, not until the first bhûmi¹⁷ does one rid himself of a portion of delusion and manifest to some extent the principle of the Middle Way. When one first perceives this [principle], he understands that in the distinct teaching, [the three truths] are separated and not unified, so he shifts and enters the perfect teaching. Once having become a person of the perfect teaching, he does not remain in the distinct teaching. Because the capacities [of bodhisattvas], being divided into superior, medium and inferior, are not the same, one may become a person of the perfect teaching from the first bhûmi, the third bhûmi, or the stage of virtual enlightenment. Therefore, in terms of the doctrine of the distinct teaching, there is no Buddha. Thus it is said that [in the distinct teaching,] there exists the teaching [of attaining Buddhahood] but no person [who in fact attains it].¹⁸ Accordingly, [Saichô's] Shugo kokkai shô [Essay on the protection of the nation] states, "The Buddha's body of recompense, being conditioned, is a provisional fruit obtained in a dream.

(This refers to Buddhahood attained through the practice of the first three teachings). The uncreated triple-bodied Buddha is the true Buddha prior to awakening.¹⁹

(This refers to Buddhahood attained through the observation of the mind in the perfect teaching).²⁰ It also states, "The three bodies of the Buddha of the provisional teachings are still subject to impermanence. (This refers to Buddhahood attained through the practice of the first three teachings.) The three bodies of the Buddha of the true teaching possess both essence and function. (This refers to Buddhahood attained through the observation of the mind in the perfect teaching)."²¹

One should understand this commentary thoroughly. In the case of the provisional teachings, though one may exert himself in difficult and painful practices and think that he has at last contrived to become a Buddha, this is but a transient Buddhahood obtained in a dream. When contrasted with the waking reality of original enlightenment, it is in fact not Buddhahood at all. Because there is no Buddha who has obtained the ultimate fruit [through these provisional teachings], we speak of the teaching existing but not the person. And can their Dharma teaching itself be real? One who gives precedence to these [provisional teachings] and practices them goes astray with respect to the [meaning of the] sacred teachings. Śâkyamuni taught and left

behind for us proof that one cannot become a Buddha through the first three teachings, thus enabling the beings of the last age to open their wisdom and understanding.

Living beings of the nine realms are in the midst of the sleep of ignorance at each thought-moment. Submerged in the dream of birth and death, they forget the waking reality of original enlightenment. Attached to rights and wrongs in a dream, they move from darkness into darkness.²² Therefore, the Tathâgata entered our dream of birth and death, placing himself on the same level as the perverted beings,²³ and by means of the language used in dreams enticed the dreaming beings, leading them gradually by expounding matters concerning the distinction between the good and evil that occur in dreams. But since the good and evil occurring in dreams are manifold, immeasurable and limitless in their variety, he first established the categories of superior, medium and lesser good. These are the teachings of the three vehicles and the nine divisions in the three levels of capacity.²⁴ When he had thus concluded setting forth [these categories], he further established the fundamental good of the highest level of the superior capacity,²⁵ the good [to be realized within] the nine divisions, that is, the three levels within each of the three capacities of superior, medium

and inferior. All these teachings concern the rights and wrongs of good and evil occurring within the dream of birth and death in the nine realms. Now [from the standpoint of the Lotus Sûtra,] they are all to be regarded as wrong views and heterodox teachings. (This represents the heart of the Sou-yao chi.²⁶)

In addition, moreover, because the good mind of the highest level of the superior capacity is the principle of the waking reality of original enlightenment, it is called the basis of good. When the Tathâgata explained and caused [the beings] to hear this, by means of the power of their enlightenment to the good and evil occurring in dreams, they were for the first time enabled to hear and know of the principle of the true aspect that is the waking reality of the original mind. At this time, the Buddha explained, saying, "These two, dreaming and waking, correspond to the two categories of false things and true things, but the Dharma of the mind is only one. When it encounters the condition of sleep, dreams occur. When sleep departs, that is the waking mind. The Dharma of the mind itself is only one." This [teaching] was a skilful expedient created and left as groundwork for the opening and integration [of the provisional teachings into the Lotus Sûtra]. (This refers to the principle of the Middle Way in the distinct teaching.) Because [the provisional teachings]

do not yet reveal that the ten realms are mutually inclusive, perfectly integrated and co-penetrating, there is no person who attains Buddhahood [through these teachings]. Therefore, from the Tripitaka teaching through the distinct teaching, the eight teachings²⁷ preached over forty-two years are all expedients concerning the good and evil occurring in dreams.

Nevertheless, they are preparatory, expedient means that the Buddha made use of for a while, to entice and lead the beings. Even these provisional teachings each possess their own measure of both skilful means and true reality, and lack neither provisional nor true dharmas. The four teachings each possess the four gates,²⁸ and [in this sense] are without distinction. Their language is the same language [as the true teaching]; their words and characters are without difference. But when, on this account, people become deluded by words and fail to discern the distinction between provisional and true, then this is termed the extinction of the Buddha-Dharma.

These teachings of skilful expedients exist only in this impure land and are not to be found in any of the pure lands. The Lotus Sûtra states, "In the Buddha lands of the ten directions, there is the Dharma of only one vehicle. There are not two, nor are there three, save only when the Buddhas teach skilful expedients."²⁹ Therefore one should know: To take up an expedient

teaching that is not to be found in any Buddha land throughout the ten directions, defining it as the practice for rebirth [in the pure land], and to reject the Dharma of the one vehicle that does exist in the pure lands of the ten directions, failing to take it up--can one reasonably expect to attain Buddhahood in this way? The Tathâgata Śâkyamuni, lord of the teachings of his lifetime, having expounded the body of sûtras, pondered and put this into words (kanmon), saying, "Because this is the manner of preaching affirmed alike, in a single language and with a single mind, by all Buddhas of the three time periods, I, too, in the same way, without deviating by a single word, follow the same order in expounding the teachings."

The "Skilful Means" chapter states, "In the manner that the Buddhas of the three time periods preach the Dharma, now I, too, in the same way preach a Dharma without distinctions."³⁰ The "Dharma without distinctions" means the Wonderful Dharma of the one vehicle. [Within this Dharma,] there is no discrimination of good or evil: grasses and plants, trees and forests, mountains and rivers, the great earth and a single particle of dust, are each alike completely endowed with the dharmas of the ten dharma-realms. Our mind, the single vehicle of Myôho-renge-kyô, pervades the pure lands in the ten directions and is lacking in

nothing. The merits and splendid adornments of the dependent and primary recompenses³¹ in the pure lands of the ten directions exist within our mind and are not separated from it even for a moment. This is the Tathâgata of original enlightenment possessing the three bodies in one. Apart from this there is no dharma. Only this single Dharma is found in the pure lands of the ten directions. There is no other dharma. Therefore it is called the Dharma without distinctions. Not to take up the practice of this Wonderful Dharma that is the one vehicle but to take up instead some teaching of expedient means that is not to be found in any pure land, regarding it as the practice for attaining Buddhahood, is a delusion among delusions.

After becoming a Buddha, [Śâkyamuni] returned to this impure land and, in order to enable the beings of the impure land to enter the Buddha dharma-realm, he gradually enticed and led them by expounding the teachings of expedient means. These are called the teachings for instructing others. Therefore, they are termed provisional teachings, and are also called skilful means. Such, in brief, is the general nature of the doctrines expounded in order to teach others.

As to the second category, the teachings of [the Buddha's] self-practice, this refers to the Lotus Sûtra, preached over a period of eight years. This sûtra

expounds the original mind of waking reality. However, because the beings were habituated in thought to the mind-ground of dreaming, the Buddha borrowed the language used in dreams to teach the waking reality of the original mind. Thus the words [of the sūtra] are the language used in dreams, but its intent is to teach the original mind, which is waking reality. Such is the intent of the text of the Lotus Sūtra and its commentaries. If one fails to understand this clearly, he will surely go astray concerning the text of both the sūtra and the commentarial text.

Nevertheless, because even these doctrines of dreams, the teachings for instructing others, are doctrines of the virtuous functions inherent in the original mind of waking reality, one takes these teachings of dreams and incorporates them into the mind of waking reality. Therefore, even the doctrines of dreams, the expedient means for instructing others that were expounded over a period of forty-two years, are contained within the waking mind of Myôhō-renge-kyô, and apart from this mind, there is no dharma. This is called the "opening and integration" [of the provisional teachings] into the Lotus Sūtra. To illustrate, it is just as the many streams [flow into and] are contained within the great ocean.

The dharma of the Buddha's mind is wondrous and the

dharma of the mind of living beings is wondrous.
 Because these two wondrous dharmas are contained within
 one's own mind, apart from the mind, there is no dharma.
 One's own mind, the nature of the mind, and the essence
 of the mind--these three are the triple-bodied Tathâgata
 of original enlightenment who is identified with one's
 own person. The sūtra explains this, saying: "The
 suchness of their characteristics (this refers to the
 manifested-body Tathâgata), the suchness of their nature
 (this refers to the recompense-body Tathâgata), and the
 suchness of their essence (this indicates the Dharma-
 body Tathâgata)."³² These are called the three
 suchnesses. The Tathâgata of original enlightenment
 represented by these three suchnesses takes the dharma-
 realms of the ten directions as his body, takes the
 dharma-realms of the ten directions as the nature of his
 mind, and takes the dharma-realms of the ten directions
 as his major and minor characteristics.³³ For this
 reason, one's own person is the physical entity of the
 Tathâgata of original enlightenment endowed with the
 three bodies. Because [these three Tathâgata bodies]
 completely pervade the dharma-realms and are the
 virtuous functions of a single Buddha, all dharmas are
 themselves the Buddha-Dharma. When the Buddha expounded
 this, the fourfold assembly, eight classes of lowly
 beings, beasts and persons of heterodox views who were

ranged in the assembly, without a single exception, all immediately dispelled and brought to an end their distorted views and distorted thinking arising from false conceptions and returned to the waking reality of original enlightenment, all attaining the Buddha Way.

The Buddha is like a person who is awake, while living beings are like persons who are dreaming. When they wake from the empty dream of birth and death and return to the waking reality of original enlightenment, that is called "attaining Buddhahood in this very body." It is also conveyed by the expressions: "impartial great wisdom,"³⁴ "the Dharma without distinctions,"³⁵ and "all shall attain the Buddha Way."³⁶ These are but a single doctrine. The Buddha lands of the ten directions may each be separated from one another, but the Dharma that pervades them is a single vehicle. Because there are no expedient means [in these lands], it is called "the Dharma without distinctions." The living beings of the ten realms are of different kinds, yet the principle of their true aspect is one; therefore, they are "without distinctions." The doctrines of the hundred realms and thousand suchnesses,³⁷ or of the three thousand realms, are different, yet because the ten realms are mutually inclusive, they are "without distinctions." Dreaming and waking, falseness and reality, are each different, but in that they are

dharma within the one mind, they are "without distinctions." Past, future and present are three, but because they are principles of the mind in a single thought-moment, they are "without distinctions."

As for the language of all the [other] sūtras, the language of dreams is like a fan or like trees, while the language that expresses the waking mind of the Lotus Sūtra is like the moon or the wind. The light of the moon that is the waking mind of original enlightenment dispels the darkness of ignorance, and the wind that is the prajñā-wisdom of the true aspect sweeps away the dust of false conceptions. Thus by means of the fan and the trees--the language of dreams--one is enabled to understand the moon and the wind that are the waking mind. In this way, the remnants of dreams are dispersed, causing one to return to his original waking mind. Therefore, the Chih-kuan states, "Because the moon is hidden behind the layered mountains, one lifts a fan to simulate it, and when the wind ceases in the vast sky, one moves the trees to illustrate it."³⁸ The Hung-chüeh comments:

The moon of the true, eternal nature is hidden behind the mountains of the defilements. The defilements are not merely one; hence the expression "layered." The wind that is the teaching of the perfect sound ceased to instruct and returned to quiescence. The principle of quiescence which is without obstruction is like the vast sky. The propagation of the teachings by means of the

four reliances is like the fan and the trees...for they make known the moon and the wind.³⁹

[Another commentary states:]

The clouds of the defilements within a dream are layered like mountains. Dust and troubles of eighty-four thousand kinds, they obscure the nature of the mind, the orb of the moon of original enlightenment. By means of the instruction set forth in the words and language of the sūtras and treatises, which are like the fan and the wind, the sacred teachings cause people to awaken to and know the principle of the original mind, which is like the moon and the wind. Therefore, their sentences and words are like the fan and trees.⁴⁰

The above commentary is a tentative one and does not represent the true meaning.⁴¹ That [teaching] which instructs us and causes us to know the moon that is the nature of the mind, the Wonderful Dharma that is like the moon, as well as the prajñā-wisdom of our mind, which is like the wind, is called Myôhō-renge-kyô. Therefore, the Shih-ch'ien states, "By inquiring into the immediate names of voices and forms, one arrives at the ultimate principle that is without characteristics."⁴² "The immediate names of voices and forms" indicates the verbal explanations of all sūtras and treatises, which are like the fan and the trees and belong to the realm of dreams. "The ultimate principle that is without characteristics" indicates the perfect bliss of [the Land of] Tranquil Light, the nature of our mind of waking reality which is like the moon or the

wind. This "perfect bliss" indicates the sentient beings, or primary recompense, of the dharma-realms of the ten directions, as well as the lands, or dependent recompense, of the dharma-realms of the ten directions, united in a single entity that possesses three bodies in one. The four kinds of lands⁴³ have no duality; they are a single Buddha, the Dharma-body. That which takes the ten realms as its body is the Dharma-body. That which takes the ten realms as its mind is the recompense body. And that which takes the ten realms as its form is the manifested body. Apart from the ten realms, there is no Buddha, and apart from the Buddha, there are no ten realms; thus dependent and primary recompense are nondual, and the beings and their lands are also nondual. The physical body of the one Buddha is called the Land of Tranquil Light; hence the expression, "ultimate principle that is without characteristics." Because it is free from the marks of birth, extinction and impermanence, it is called "without characteristics." This is "the depths of the Dharma nature, the ultimate ground of the profound source."⁴⁴ Therefore, it is called the "ultimate principle." This perfect bliss of [the Land of] Tranquil Light, the ultimate principle that is without characteristics, exists within the minds of all sentient beings, pure and without outflows. This is called the lotus-pedestal of the

mind, which is the Wonderful Dharma. Therefore it is said that apart from the mind, there is no separate dharma. This is called the penetration and understanding that "all dharmas are themselves the Buddha-Dharma."⁴⁵

The two principles of birth and death are principles of the dream of saṃsāra. They are false conceptions, perversions. When by means of the waking reality of original enlightenment we inquire into the nature of our mind, we will find no beginning that is to be born, and therefore, no end that is to die. Is this not already the dharma of the mind that is separated from birth and death? It cannot be burned in the fire at the kalpa's end,⁴⁶ nor will it rot in a flood.⁴⁷ It cannot be cut by swords, nor shot by bow and arrows. It can fit within a mustard seed, yet the mustard seed will not expand nor will the dharma of the mind contract.⁴⁸ It can fill all of space, yet space is not too broad, nor the dharma of the mind too narrow.⁴⁹

To turn one's back on good is termed evil; to turn one's back on evil is termed good. Therefore, apart from the mind, there is neither good nor evil. That which is separated from good and evil is called neutral. Good, evil, or neutral--apart from these, there is no mind, and apart from the mind, there are no dharmas. Therefore, good and evil, the pure land and the defiled

land, the common mortal and the sage, heaven and earth, large and small, east and west, south and north, the four subsidiary directions, zenith and nadir, are all where the path of language is cut off and the workings of the mind are extinguished.⁵⁰ Because it is in the mind that one discriminates and forms a conception of them, expressing it in language, apart from the mind, there is neither discrimination nor non-discrimination. Words are what cause mental conceptions to reverberate, expressing them through the voice.

Ordinary worldlings are deluded to their mind; they do not know it nor are they awakened to it. The Buddha is awakened to it, and the expression [of this awakening] is called his supernatural powers.

"Supernatural powers" means that his spirit (tamashii) permeates all dharmas without obstruction. These autonomous supernatural powers exist within the mind of all sentient beings. Thus the fact that foxes and badgers manifest their own sort of supernatural powers is, in all cases, because they are to that extent awakened to their spirit, or the mind. From this single dharma of the mind, there emerges the realm of the land.

The sacred teachings of the Buddha's lifetime are what expound [all] this. They are termed the respository of the eighty-four thousand dharmas, but they all without exception are doctrines originating

within the body of a single person. This being so, the repository of eighty-four thousand dharmas is the diary and record of oneself. Our mind is pregnant with the eighty thousand dharmas; there we possess and hold them. To conceive by means of the mind within us that the Buddha, the Dharma or the Pure Land lies outside us and to aspire to and seek it there, is called delusion.

In response to good or evil influences, this mind produces good or evil dharmas. The Flower Ornament Sûtra states:

The mind is like a skilled painter, creating various [temporary unions of the] five skandhas. Among all realms, there is no dharma that it does not create. Like the mind, so too is the Buddha, and like the Buddha, so too are living beings. The threefold world is but one mind, and apart from the mind, there are no separate dharmas. The mind, the Buddha and all living beings-- these three are without distinctions.⁵¹

The Wu-liang i ching states, "From the single Dharma that is without characteristics and is not a characteristic, innumerable meanings arise."⁵² "The single Dharma that is without characteristics and not a characteristic" is the mind of all living beings in a single thought-moment. Interpreting this, the Wen-chü [of Chih-i] states:

Because it is without the marks of birth, extinction or impermanence, it is called "without characteristics." Because it is separated from the marks of the two kinds of nirvâna, that of remainder and that of no remainder, achieved by people of the two

vehicles, it is called "not a characteristic."⁵³

The inconceivable [nature] of the mind is the conclusion and essence of the sūtras and treatises.

One who awakens to and knows this mind is called "Tathâgata." When one awakens to and knows it, the ten realms are his body, the ten realms are his mind, and the ten realms are his form. This is because the Tathâgata of original enlightenment is our body and mind. When one does not know this, that is called ignorance. The word "ignorance" (mumyô) is read as being "without illumination." It is not being clearly awakened to the nature of our mind. When one awakens to and knows it, that is called the Dharma nature. Thus ignorance and the Dharma nature are [but] different names for the one mind. Though the names or designations are two, the mind is only one mind. Accordingly, ignorance is not something to be cut off, for if one cuts off the ignorance of the dreaming mind, he will lose the mind of waking reality. In general, the intent of the perfect teaching is not to eradicate even so much as a single hair's breadth of delusion. Therefore, it is said that all dharmas are themselves the Buddha-Dharma.

The Lotus Sûtra states, "The suchness of their characteristics (this indicates the major and minor

characteristics of all living beings, or the manifestation-body Tathâgata of original enlightenment), the suchness of their nature (this indicates the nature of the mind of all living beings, or the recompense-body Tathâgata of original enlightenment), the suchness of their essence (this indicates the physical bodies of all living beings, or the Dharma-body Tathâgata of original enlightenment)...."54

From these three suchnesses arise the subsequent seven, and together they compose the ten suchnesses. These ten suchnesses are common to the ten dharma-realms. These ten dharma-realms emerge from the mind of a single person to become the eighty-four thousand doctrines. Taking this one person as a model, the equality of all living beings is also like this.

This represents the teaching of all Buddhas of the three time periods pondered and put into words (sôkanmon), the legitimate document that they have duly authorized with their seal. The authorization of the Buddhas is the seal of the true aspect.⁵⁵ "Seal" is another name for authorization. Because none of the other sûtras bear the seal of the true aspect, they are not legitimate documents. They have no real Buddha whatsoever. And because they have no real Buddha, they are the documents of dreams, and are not to be found in the pure lands.

The dharma-realms may be divided into ten, but the same ten suchnesses pervade them all. To illustrate, though the moon may be reflected in innumerable bodies of water, the moon in the sky is only one. The ten suchnesses of the nine dharma-realms are the ten suchnesses of dreams; therefore, they are like the moon's reflections in the water. The ten suchnesses of the Buddha dharma-realm are the ten suchnesses of the waking reality of original enlightenment, and are like the moon in the sky. Therefore, when the ten suchnesses of the one, Buddha realm appear, the ten suchnesses of the nine realms, like reflections of the moon on water, all appear simultaneously without a single exception, forming a single Buddha-entity endowed with both essence and function. Because the ten realms are mutually inclusive and all beings of the ten realms are accordingly equal, the moon of "beginning" in the sky and the moon of "end" reflected in the water are both inherent in the body of a single individual, with nothing lacking. Therefore, the ten suchnesses are ultimately equal from beginning to end, with no distinction among them.

"Beginning" indicates the ten suchnesses of the beings, while "end" indicates the ten suchnesses of the Buddhas. Because all Buddhas emerge from the mind of living beings in a single thought-moment, living beings

correspond to "beginning," and all Buddhas, to "end." Nevertheless, the sūtra states, "The threefold world is all my domain. The beings in it are all my children."⁵⁶ After the Buddha had gained enlightenment,⁵⁷ for the sake of instructing others he announced his ephemeral attainment of the Way, and in the midst of the dream of birth and death, he preached the waking reality of original enlightenment. Likening wisdom to the father and foolishness to the child, he preached in this way. For, though living beings possess the ten suchnesses of original enlightenment, their ignorance at each thought-moment clouds their mind like sleep. Entering the dream of birth and death, they forget the principle of original enlightenment, and in a hair's-breadth duration of time they behold the empty dream of the three time periods of past, present and future. Because the Buddha is like someone who is awake, he enters the dream of birth and death and rouses the beings. The wisdom by which he does so is in the dream like a father and mother, and in the dream, we are like children. For this reason, the Buddha says, "They are all my children." When we ponder and understand this principle, the Buddhas and ourselves are parent and child in terms of the beginning, and parent and child in terms of the end. The inherent nature of parent and child is the same from beginning to end.

Because, on this basis, one perceives that his own mind and the Buddha's mind do not differ, he awakens from the dream of birth and death and returns to the waking reality of original enlightenment. This is called "attaining Buddhahood in this very body."

"Attaining Buddhahood in this very body" means [the realization of] our inherent nature and of the untroubled and unobstructed destiny, karmic reward, and unseen protection enjoyable by living beings.

When one considers the matter in this way, the mind while dreaming may be likened to delusion, and the mind while waking may be likened to enlightenment. When on this basis one awakens to the sacred teachings of the Buddha's lifetime, [he will understand as follows:] When one has dreams, though they are false and empty and leave no trace, they trouble his mind, he breaks into a sweat and wakes with a start. Thereupon he finds that he himself, his house and his sleeping room are all in a single place, and are no different [from what they were]. Although we see with our eyes and conceive in our minds these two matters, the falsehood of dreams and the reality of waking, the place [where they occur] is but a single place; the person [who experiences them] is but a single person; and yet there are these two phenomena, falsehood and reality. By this, you should know that our mind, which beholds the dream of birth and

death in the nine realms, and the waking mind that is the constantly abiding Buddha realm, do not differ. The place where one beholds the dream of birth and death in the nine realms is the very place of the waking reality of the Buddha realm that constantly abides. It does not differ, nor does the dharma of the mind change; the places are not distinguished. Yet dreams are in all cases false affairs, while waking reality is in all cases true.

The Chih-kuan states:

Long ago, there was a man named Chuang-ch'ou. In a dream, he became a butterfly and passed a hundred years. His sufferings were many and his pleasures few. [At last] he broke into a sweat and woke with a start, whereupon he found that he had not become a butterfly, a hundred years had not passed, and there had been neither sufferings nor pleasures; all were falsehoods, deluded thoughts (The above represents a summary of the text).⁵⁸

The Hung-chüeh comments:

Ignorance is like the dream butterfly, and the three thousand realms are like the hundred years. A single thought-moment having no true substance is like [Chuang-ch'ou] not having really been a butterfly. And the three thousand realms likewise having no real existence may be likened to him not having accumulated the [hundred] years.⁵⁹

This [passage of] commentary substantiates the attainment of Buddhahood in this very body. The Chuang-ch'ou who dreamed he had become a butterfly was not a different person from the Chuang-ch'ou who, on waking, realized that he had not. When we think of ourselves as

ordinary beings in the realm of birth and death, that is a distorted view, a distorted thought, like [Chuang-ch'ou] dreaming that he had become a butterfly. But when we realize that we are the Tathâgata of original enlightenment, that is like Chuang-ch'ou returning to himself. It is the attainment of Buddhahood in this very body. This does not mean that one attains Buddhahood in the form of a butterfly. Because conceiving of oneself as a butterfly is a falsehood, therein one cannot speak of attaining Buddhahood; it would be out of the question. When we understand that ignorance is like the dream butterfly, our distorted ideas will also be like yesterday's dream, false conceptions without [self-]nature or substance. Who would believe in and embrace birth and death in an empty dream, and arouse doubts concerning the Buddha nature, the nirvâṇa that constantly abides?

The Chih-kuan states:

The folly and delusion of ignorance are originally the Dharma nature. Because of folly and delusion, the Dharma nature changes and produces ignorance, giving rise to various perverted views such as the confusion of "good" and "not good." It is like the arrival of cold freezing the water so that it changes and forms solid ice, or like the advent of sleep altering the mind so that it produces various dreams. Now truly one must understand that all these perversions are precisely the Dharma nature. They are neither identical to it, nor are they different. Though the rise and extinction of the perversions spin round like a firewheel, one should not believe in

the arising and extinction of the perversions but only believe, "This mind is simply the Dharma nature." "Arising" means the arising of the Dharma nature, and "extinction," the quiescence of the Dharma nature. When one understands this, [one will see that] what neither really arises nor perishes, he has arbitrarily conceived of as arising and perishing. This indicates only wrong conceptualizing; all is the Dharma nature. By means of the Dharma nature one is bound to the Dharma nature, and by means of the Dharma nature one bears the Dharma nature in mind. It is always this Dharma nature; there is no time when it is not the Dharma nature.⁶⁰

In this way, the principle that has not even the briefest moment when it is not the Dharma nature, is the Dharma nature. But because, like [Chang-ch'ou] dreaming he was a butterfly, one produces notions of actual existence with respect to ignorance, one goes astray concerning this.

Chüan nine of the Chih-kuan states:

To illustrate, when the dharma of sleep covers the mind, then in the midst of a single thought-moment we may see dreams of countless realms.⁶¹....In the quiet extinction that is true suchness, what successive stages could there be?⁶²...All living beings are precisely the great nirvāṇa. There is no further extinction. What successive ranks, high or low, great or small, could there be? The unborness of the unborn is beyond explanation [....], but because there exist causes and conditions, these can however be explained.⁶³ The first ten links in the [twelvefold] chain of dependent co-production become the cause for birth.⁶⁴ The expounding of all [such sequential] stages is merely like pictures drawn in empty air or trees planted as an expedient.⁶⁵

When one knows that both the dependent and primary

recompense of the ten dharma-realms are the Dharma-body Buddha possessing the virtues of the three bodies in a single entity, one reaches the penetration and understanding that all dharmas are precisely the Buddha-Dharma; this is called the stage of verbal identity [myôji-soku]. From the stage of verbal identity one attains Buddhahood in this very body. Thus, in the perfect and sudden teaching, there is no order of successive stages. Therefore, the Hsüan-i states:

Scholars of these later times in most cases remain attached to the [means of] extirpating and subduing [the defilements] taught as expedients in the sūtras and treatises, arguing and quarreling over them. It is just like the coolness that is the nature of water. If one does not drink it, how can he understand?⁶⁶

T'ien-t'ai's classification of the teachings states, "The framework of successive ranks derives from the Jen-wang [Benevolent King] and Ying-lo [Jeweled Necklace] sūtras.⁶⁷ The hierarchy [of ranks at which the defilements are gradually] extirpated and subdued comes from the Great [Perfection of Wisdom] Sūtra⁶⁸ and the [Ta-chih-tu lun] [Treatise on the Great (Perfection of Wisdom)]."⁶⁹ The Jen-wang, Ying-lo, and Great [Perfection of Wisdom] sūtras, as well as the Ta-chih-tu lun, are all sūtras and treatises belonging to the categories of the eight teachings preached before the Lotus Sūtra. Because, in the practice of the

provisional teachings, one advances through successive stages over the course of countless kalpas, [these works] set forth an order of stages.

Now the Lotus Sūtra is the perfect teaching transcending all eight categories,⁷⁰ the teaching of immediate and sudden attainment. On observing that these three--the mind, the Buddha and all living beings--are encompassed in a single thought-moment of one's mind and do not exist outside it, even the practitioner of inferior capacity can within a single lifetime enter the stage of wondrous enlightenment. Because the one and the many co-penetrate, all stages are completely included within one stage. Therefore, one can enter [the supreme stage of wondrous enlightenment] within one lifetime. This is true even for those whose capacity is inferior. How much more so for those of intermediate capacity! How much more so yet for those whose capacity is superior! Apart from the true aspect, there is no further, separate dharma. Within the true aspect there is no successive order, and therefore, no ranks or stages.

Since all the sacred teachings of the Buddha's lifetime are the dharmas of a single individual, one should thoroughly understand one's original essence. One who awakens to it is called a Buddha; one deluded to it is an ordinary being. This is the meaning of the

passage from the Flower Ornament Sūtra.

Chüan six of the Hung-chüeh states:

Our body imitates in detail heaven and earth. The roundness of our head resembles heaven, while the squareness of our feet resembles earth. The cavity within our body is just like open space. The warmth of our belly corresponds to spring and summer, while the hardness of our back corresponds to autumn and winter. The four parts of the body are like the four seasons. Our twelve major joints correspond to the twelve months. Our three hundred sixty minor joints are like the three hundred sixty days of the year. The inhaling and exhaling of breath through our nose is like wind in the mountains, marshes, streams and valleys. The inhaling and exhaling of breath through our mouth is like the wind in the open sky. Our eyes are like the sun and moon; their opening and closing is like day and night. The hair of our head resembles the stars and constellations. Our eyebrows are like the northern dipper. The flow of our blood resembles the rivers and streams. Our bones are like jewels and stones. Our skin and flesh resemble earth and soil. The hair of our body is like the forests. Our five organs⁷¹ are like the five planets⁷² in heaven, the five sacred mountains⁷³ on earth, the five agents⁷⁴ of yin and yang, the five constant virtues⁷⁵ in terms of society, the five spirits⁷⁶ that reside within, the five virtues⁷⁷ in terms of conduct, or the five punishments employed to quell offenses, that is, tattooing, cutting off the nose, cutting off the feet, castration, and decapitation. (These five punishments cause injury to people in various ways and entail three thousand varieties of punishment. They are [collectively] called the five punishments.) In the administration of a state, [the five organs] correspond to the five sacred ministers.⁷⁸ According to the Po-wu chih⁷⁹ cited in chuan eight of the work [Ch'an-men] mentioned below, these five ministers are Kou-mang, etc. Ascending to heaven, they are called the five kinds of clouds,⁸⁰ which change into the five kinds of dragons.⁸¹ The mind becomes the Scarlet Bird, the kidneys

become the Tortoise, the liver becomes the Green Dragon, the lungs become the White Tiger, and the spleen becomes the Hook.⁸² [The Ch'an-men] further states that the five tones,⁸³ the five sciences, and the six arts⁸⁴ in all cases arise from these [five organs]. One should furthermore discern [that these five correspond to] the method of governing the realm. The awakened mind is the great ruler within; it dwells within the hundredfold compound. When he goes forth, he is attended by five ministers. The lungs are the Minister of War, the liver is the Minister of Multitudes, and the spleen is the Minister of Works. The four limbs are the common people: on the left they carry out commands and on the right they keep the records, thus governing human destiny...And the navel is the Great Exalted Ruler. The Ch'an-men broadly explains these characteristics.⁸⁵

When one makes a detailed investigation of the human body, this is how it is. Thus to regard this indestructible vajra-body as an impermanent body subject to birth and extinction is a distorted idea, like Chuang-ch'ou's dream butterfly. That is the meaning of this commentary.

The five elements are earth, water, fire, wind and space. These five major elements are also identified with the five skandhas, the five precepts,⁸⁶ the five constant virtues, the five directions, the five kinds of wisdom⁸⁷ and the five periods. These are but varying explanations of a single thing set forth in the various scriptures, different designations of category names found in the inner scriptures and the outer writings.⁸⁸ In the present [Lotus] sūtra, they are

opened up and explained as the five aspects of the Buddha nature⁸⁹ and the seeds of the five wisdom Tathâgatas⁹⁰ inherent in the mind of all living beings. These are in fact the five characters myô-hô-ren-ge-kyô.

These five characters form the substance of the human body. They are inherent and eternally abiding. They are the Tathâgata of original enlightenment. This is what is meant by the ten suchnesses, which it is said that "only a Buddha together with a Buddha can fathom."⁹¹ Not even bodhisattvas who have reached the stage of non-retrogression or those who have obtained the ultimate fruit of the two vehicles can understand this doctrine even in the slightest. Yet ordinary people who embrace the perfect and sudden teaching can understand it from the time they first arouse the aspiration for enlightenment. Therefore they attain Buddhahood in their present form, becoming the indestructible vajra-body. From this you should clearly understand that, if the heavens are destroyed, one's own body will be destroyed, and that if the earth splits open, one's own body will split open. When earth, water, fire, wind and space cease and perish, one's own body also ceases and perishes. Yet even though the three time periods of past, present and future may change, these five great elements do not change, and though the three ages of the True Dharma, the Semblance

Dharma and the Final Dharma may differ, the five great elements remain uniform and do not prosper or decline, change or alter.

According to the commentary on the "Medicinal Herbs" chapter,⁹² the principle of the perfect teaching corresponds to the great earth, and the perfect and sudden teaching, to the rain in the sky. Moreover, the three teachings--the Tripitaka teaching, the shared teaching and the distinct teaching--correspond to the three kinds of grasses and two kinds of trees. The reason is that these grasses and trees are produced from the earth of the perfect principle and nourished by the rain from the sky of the perfect teaching. Yet although these grasses and trees that represent the five vehicles flourish, they never think that they flourish by virtue of heaven and earth. Therefore, all the followers of the three teachings--ordinary humans, gods, people of the two vehicles and bodhisattvas--are likened to grasses and trees and described as being ignorant of their obligations. For this reason, they receive the name of grasses and trees. Now through the Lotus Sûtra, the grasses and trees of the five vehicles for the first time know their mother, the perfect principle, and their father, the perfect teaching. Being produced from the single earth is like understanding one's debt to one's mother. And being nourished by the single rain is like

understanding the debt one owes to one's father. Such is the meaning of the "Medicinal Herbs" chapter.

When the Tathâgata Śâkyamuni was still a common mortal, countless dust-particle kalpas ago,⁹³ he realized that his body was composed of earth, water, fire, wind and space, and at once he attained enlightenment. After that, in order to instruct others, in world after world and time after time he made his advent and attained the Way; in lifetime after lifetime and place after place he displayed the eight aspects of a Buddha's life,⁹⁴ causing living beings to see and understand that he had been born in a king's palace and attained awakening beneath the tree, as though he had just become a Buddha for the first time. For more than forty years, he established the teachings of expedient means in order to lead the people. But after that, he discarded the various sūtra teachings of expedient means and frankly expounded the true Dharma of Myôhō-renge-kyô, the principle of the seeds of the five wisdom Tathâgatas. Within it he encompassed the various sūtras of expedient means expounded over more than forty years. He rolled them up into the one Buddha vehicle, which is called the Dharma that unifies all people in one. It is the Dharma revealing the enlightenment of a single person. He prepared a proper document with which others could not tamper, and on it set his authentic

seal. When this document, handed down from the Buddhas of the three time periods, was transmitted by Śâkyamuni, he stroked the heads of all the many bodhisattvas who filled and blocked off the skies above the three hundred myriads of millions of nayutas of lands.⁹⁵ Indicating the time, he [instructed them, saying that] for the sake of us, living beings of the present Final Dharma age, "Truly you should expound this matter, causing them to hear it. Truly you should take this transfer document of the Buddhas and duly confer it upon the living beings of the last age." Fully three times he earnestly uttered these same words, and the many bodhisattvas all without exception bent their bodies and lowered their heads, and each in the same words vowed fully three times that he would not be inferior [to the others in propagating this Dharma in the last age]. Thereupon the Buddha, feeling relieved at heart, returned to the capital city (miyako) of original enlightenment.

In the manner and method of the Dharma preaching of all Buddhas of the three time periods, this is the transfer document indicating in the same words the time of the last age. Thus, included in this document are passages substantiating its time of transmission, solely designating the last five-hundred-year period⁹⁶ as the time when one may attain Buddhahood by the Sûtra of the Lotus Blossom of the Wonderful Dharma.

The "Peaceful Conduct" chapter has left us the statement that, in the Final Dharma age, common mortals who have but recently aroused the aspiration for enlightenment can attain Buddhahood by practicing the Lotus Sûtra. With respect to the peaceful practice of the body, the peaceful practice of the mouth, and the peaceful practice of the mind--the three modes of action constituting self-practice--as well as with respect to the peaceful practice of vows undertaken to instruct others, the sûtra speaks identically of "a latter age, when the Dharma is about to perish."⁹⁷ This refers to the present time. [Thus in the "Peaceful Conduct" chapter, mention of the Final Dharma age] occurs in the above four places. It is mentioned in two places in the "Medicine King" chapter⁹⁸ and in three places in the "Exhortations [of the Bodhisattva Universally Worthy]" chapter.⁹⁹ All these passages point to our present age and have been transmitted and left [to us by the Buddha], and yet people reject these true passages and adhere instead to the words of ordinary men. Trusting to their foolish minds, they turn their backs on the transfer document handed down by the Buddhas of the three time periods, long going against the Buddha-Dharma. How contrary this must be to the true intent of all Buddhas of the three time periods! How vexed they must be, how they must grieve and lament! The Nirvâṇa

Sûtra states, "One should rely on the Dharma and not upon persons."¹⁰⁰ How painful, how sad! Though the scholars of this latter age study Buddhism, they in fact destroy it. Lamenting such a state of affairs, the Hung-chüeh states,

The fact that people hear of this perfect and sudden teaching and yet do not revere and value it is truly due to the distorted views of those who study the Great Vehicle in the present age. How much more in the Semblance and Final Dharma ages will people's spirit be faint and their faith weak! Though the teaching of sudden and perfect enlightenment fills the storehouses and overflows the sûtra boxes, none will ponder it for long, but reach the point where their eyes are obstructed. In vain they were born and in vain they die. What could be more painful!¹⁰¹

Chüan four of the same work states:

Moreover, the perfect and sudden teaching was originally expounded for the sake of ordinary worldlings. If it were not intended for the benefit of ordinary worldlings, then why did the Buddha, while himself dwelling on the ground of the Dharma nature, not preach this sudden and perfect teaching by means of the Dharma body for the sake of the many bodhisattvas? Why, for the sake of those many Dharma-body bodhisattvas,¹⁰² should he appear in this threefold world displaying an ordinary body?...It is precisely because the one mind exists in ordinary worldlings that they are able to practice and attain mastery.¹⁰³

The point here is that when one perceives the oneness of his own mind and the Buddha's body, he will at once become a Buddha. Therefore, the Hung-chüeh further states, "All the Buddhas, by perceiving that one's own mind does not differ from the Buddha mind,

were able to become Buddhas."¹⁰⁴ This is called "observing the mind" (kanjin). When one realizes that his own mind and the Buddha mind are really one mind, then there is no evil karma that can obstruct him at the moment of death, and no false thinking that can detain him in the samsaric realm. Because he knows that all dharmas are precisely the Buddha-Dharma, he has no need of a good teacher to instruct him. Thinking as he would think, speaking as he would speak, acting as he would act, behaving as he would behave, in any of the four modes of conduct--whether walking, standing, sitting or lying down--in all cases, his conduct is perfectly united and of one essence with the Buddha mind. Thus he becomes a person of autonomy, without fault or restriction. This is called "self-practice."

Because one abandons such conduct of autonomous self-practice and dwells instead in the mind of one-sided thoughts arising from ignorance and false conceptualizing that are utterly without substance, and thus turns his back on the teachings and instruction of all Buddhas of the three time periods, he moves from darkness into darkness, ever going against the Buddha-Dharma. How sad, how grievous! But if at this moment he were to come to himself, rectify his thinking and return to his enlightenment, he would know that there is no becoming a Buddha in this very body apart from

himself.

The mirror of our mind and the mirror of the Buddha's mind are in fact the same mirror. Nevertheless, we observe it from the reverse side and so fail to perceive the principle of our [true] nature. Therefore, our state is termed "ignorance." The Tathâgata looks into the face of the mirror and so has perceived the principle of his own nature. Thus enlightenment and ignorance are but a single essence. Though the mirror itself is the same, based on the [two] ways of facing it, there arises the distinction between enlightenment and darkness. Yet even though the mirror possesses a reverse side, that does not become an obstruction to its front. Solely depending upon one's way of facing it, there exists the dichotomy of success or failure. Mutually inclusive and co-penetrating, these are two meanings of a single Dharma. The doctrines for instructing others are like facing the reverse side of the mirror. The observation of the mind that is self-practice is like facing the front of the mirror. Whether it is the mirror at the time of instructing others or the mirror at the time of self-practice, the mirror that is the nature of our mind is only one and is without change. The mirror is analogous to "this very body." Facing the front of the mirror is analogous to "attaining Buddhahood," while facing it

from the reverse side is analogous to remaining an ordinary being. The mirror possessing a reverse side represents inherent evil not being extirpated.¹⁰⁵ When one faces the reverse side of the mirror, the virtue of its face is lacking; this illustrates the merit of the teachings for instructing others. It represents the Buddha nature of living beings not being manifested. Self-practice and instructing others are the power and function of success and failure [in attaining Buddhahood].

Chüan one of the Hsüan-i states:

Siddhârtha drew his grandfather's bow, bending it until it was round like the full moon; this corresponds to "power." His arrow penetrated seven iron drums, pierced one of the iron-wheel mountains, passed through the earth and reached the watery circle--this corresponds to "function." (This refers to the power and function of self-practice.) The power and function of the various teachings of expedient means are weak and feeble; they are like the bow and arrow of an ordinary person. The reason is that, while those who formed a connection before [i.e., to the pre-Lotus Sûtra teachings] received the two kinds of wisdom¹⁰⁶ of the teachings for instructing others, their illumination of principles was not complete, the faith they aroused was not profound, and the removal of their doubts was not exhaustive. (The above refers to the teachings for instructing others). Those who now form a connection [with the Lotus Sûtra] receive the two kinds of wisdom of self-practice, fully master the Buddha's realm, arouse the faith of the dharma-realms, advance [the practice of] the perfect and subtle Way, sever the fundamental illusions and put an end to the higher cycle of birth and death. Not only do the two kinds of bodhisattvas, those in their fleshly body¹⁰⁷ and those who in

their fleshly body have attained [the stage of] acquiescence [to the unbornness of the dharmas], both benefit, but so do Dharma-body bodhisattvas and Dharma-body bodhisattvas of the last stage.¹⁰⁸ Whose meritorious power of leading others is so vast and great, whose benefiting and nurturing is so broad and profound, is solely the power and function of this sūtra. (The above refers to self-practice.)¹⁰⁹

That the power and function of [the teaching of] self-practice should be clearly superior to those of [the teachings for] instructing others is a matter of course. One should examine this [passage] carefully. It provides a doctrinal standard clearly reflected in the mirror of the sacred teachings expounded in the course of the Buddha's lifetime.

To "fully master the Buddha's realm" [in the above quotation] indicates the doctrine of the ten suchnesses, which are fully present in each of the ten realms. Cause and effect of the ten realms and the ten suchnesses, as well as the two kinds of wisdom, true and provisional, and their two objects,¹¹⁰ are all present within ourselves, and there is not a single person who lacks them. When one penetrates and comprehends this, one awakens to the Buddha's words and masters them.

As for "arousing the faith of the dharma-realms": The Tathāgata of original enlightenment takes the ten dharma-realms as his essence, takes the ten dharma-realms as his mind, and takes the ten dharma-realms as

his form. [The phrase in question means] to believe that this Tathâgata dwells within ourselves.

As for "advancing [the practice of] the perfect and subtle Way," because self-practice and the instruction of others are mutually co-penetrating and perfectly united, they are like a pearl, its lustre and its worth--these three virtues are all inherent in a single gem. They are not separated from one another even for a moment. In the Buddha-Dharma, nothing is lacking. Therefore one shall become a Buddha in this lifetime, increasing one's thoughts of delight and rejoicing.

As for "severing fundamental illusions," when one awakens from the sleep that is the darkness of the thought-moment and returns to the waking reality of original enlightenment, saṃsâra and nirvâṇa will both be like yesterday's dream; not a trace of them shall remain.

As for "putting an end to the higher cycle of birth and death," this cycle refers to those who are born in the blissful domains where sages and ordinary worldlings dwell together, the blissful domains of the provisional lands and the blissful domains that are lands of true recompense. In those lands, as [bodhisattvas] practice the bodhisattva way in their aspiration to become Buddhas, cause moves and effect changes, and gradually

they advance and ascend, waiting throughout the passage of kalpas to attain the remote [goal] of Buddhahood. This is called "the higher cycle of birth and death." To abandon a lower stage is called "death." To advance to a higher stage is called "birth." This sort of higher cycle of birth and death is the suffering that goes on in the pure lands.

Now because we ordinary worldlings practice the Lotus Sûtra here in this impure land, and because the ten realms are mutually inherent and the dharma-realm is all a single suchness, we put an end to the rebirth undergone by bodhisattvas in the pure lands and advance the practice of the Buddha Way. We condense the higher cycle of birth and death within a single lifetime and attain the Buddha Way. Therefore, the two kinds of bodhisattvas, both those in the fleshly body and those who in the fleshly body have realized non-birth and non-extinction, advance in the Way and put an end to rebirth.

Dharma-body bodhisattvas have discarded their fleshly body and dwell in the lands of true recompense. Dharma-body bodhisattvas of the last stage are those who have reached the stage of virtual enlightenment. The trace teaching (shakumon) [of the Lotus Sûtra] benefits both bodhisattvas in the fleshly body and those who, in the fleshly body, have attained acquiescence to the

unbornness of the dharmas. The origin teaching (honmon) benefits Dharma-body bodhisattvas and bodhisattvas in their last body. But now the trace teaching is opened and integrated within the origin teaching to form a single Wonderful Dharma. Therefore, by the power of the practice that we, ordinary people, conduct here in the impure world, we benefit bodhisattvas of the ten bhûmis and at the stage of virtual enlightenment. Therefore, our "meritorious power of leading others is vast and great." (This explains the virtuous function of instructing others).

"Whose benefiting and nurturing are broad and profound" indicates the virtuous function of self-practice. In the practitioner of the perfect and sudden teaching, neither self-practice nor instruction of others is lacking. Both are inherent in the single thought-moment. Horizontally, they fill the dharma-realms of the ten directions; therefore, they are broad. Vertically, they exhaust the depths of the Dharma nature spanning the three time periods; therefore, they are profound. Such are the power and function of the self-practice of this sūtra.

The various sūtras expounded to instruct others are not endowed with self-practice; thus they are like a bird attempting to fly in the sky with but a single wing. Therefore, no one attains Buddhahood [through

these sūtras]. Now the Lotus Sūtra opens and integrates the two kinds of practice, self-practice and instructing others, and has nothing lacking; therefore, just as a bird with two wings can fly unhindered, there is no obstacle to the attainment of Buddhahood.

The chapter on [Bodhisattva] Medicine King establishes by means of ten analogies¹¹¹ the relative merits of the power and function of self-practice and of instructing others. The first simile states to this effect: "The various sūtras are like streams, while the Lotus Sūtra is like the great ocean,"¹¹² and so forth.

In reality, the many streams that are the sūtras for instructing others flow night and day without interruption into the vast ocean of the Lotus Sūtra, the teaching of self-practice. Yet even though these streams flow into it, the ocean neither increases nor decreases, displaying its inconceivable virtuous function. But the many streams that are the various other sūtras do not, even for a moment, encompass the vast ocean of the Lotus Sūtra. Such is the relative superiority of [the teachings of] self-practice and instructing others. From one example, you may judge all the rest. The above-mentioned analogies were all expounded by the Buddha, so one should not incorporate the words of others. When one grasps their meaning, then the sacred teachings of the Buddha's lifetime will all be as clear

as though reflected in a mirror, without the slightest obscurity. In reading this [sûtra] text and its commentaries, who could possibly have doubts?

[The Lotus Sûtra is] the document testified to by all Buddhas of the three time periods. Therefore, one must not venture to draw on the interpretations of others. It is the fundamental purpose for which all Buddhas of the three time periods make their advent in the world, and the direct path for all living beings to attain Buddhahood. The various schools established on the basis of the sûtras for instructing others expounded during the [first] forty-two years are the Kegon, Shingon, Daruma, Jôdo, Hossô, Sanron, Risshû, Kusha and Jôjitsu schools. Without exception, they all belong within the eight teachings expounded before the Lotus Sûtra. They are all expedient means. They are the expedients of "combining, excluding, contrasting and including"¹¹³ that entice and lead. Such is the order in which the Buddhas of the three time periods preach their various teachings. Confirming this order, they expound their doctrines. Were they to deviate from this order, it would not be the Buddha-Dharma. Śâkyamuni the Thus-Come One, lord of the teachings expounded in his lifetime, likewise confirmed the order of preaching of the Buddhas of the three time periods, not deviating from it by so much as a single character. "Now I, too,

in the same way," he said, as the sūtra states: "In the manner that the Buddhas of the three time periods preach the Dharma, now I, too, in the same way preach a Dharma without distinctions." Were one to violate this [order], he would long go against the true intention of all Buddhas of the three time periods. The founders of the other sects each established his own sect and fought with the Hokke [Lotus] sect, an error among errors, a delusion among delusions.

The Chôdagaku no ketsu [Decisions on repudiating the (doctrinal) studies of other (sects)] (of Sannô-in¹¹⁴), refutes them, saying:

As for the eighty thousand dharma repositories, if one categorizes their forms of practice, they would not go beyond the four teachings, as was demonstrated at the beginning [of this writing]. The Tripitaka, shared, distinct and perfect teachings correspond respectively to the vehicles of the voice-hearer, the condition-perceiver, the bodhisattva and the Buddha. How then could the teachings, and the principles revealed by the teachings, of Shingon, the Zen school, Kegon, Sanron, Consciousness-Only, Ritsu and the two treatises of Jôjitsu and Kusha, go beyond these four? If [your opponent in debate] says that they do, then is that not heterodox and perverse? If he says that they do not, then ask to what his sect aspires (that is, to the fruits of which of the four vehicles). In response to his answer, inquire into and verify the ultimate principle [of his sect]. Investigate and make your determination in light of the forms of practice based on the four teachings as put forth in our [Tendai] sect. If the fruits to which he aspires differ from those of our sect, then press him accordingly. In the case of Kegon, for example, in each of the five

teachings,¹¹⁵ there is cultivation of the cause and proceeding toward the effect. Thus practice at the beginning, the middle and the end are not the same. From a certain teaching, a certain effect is expected. But if this cause and effect are not those of the Tripitaka, shared, distinct or perfect teaching, then they are simply not the Buddha's teaching.

You should similarly establish matters with respect to [such classifications as] the three kinds of turning of the Dharma wheel¹¹⁶ or the three periods of teachings.¹¹⁷ Ask [your opponent] to what vehicle he aspires. If he says, "The Buddha vehicle," then point out that the meditative practice for attaining Buddhahood has yet to be found [in his sect]. If he says, "The bodhisattva vehicle," [then point out that] there is a difference between the Middle Way that is identified [with the other two truths of Emptiness and provisional existence, as taught in the perfect teaching] and the Middle Way that is separate [from these two, as taught in the distinct teaching]. Demand to know which his sect upholds. If he upholds [the Middle Way] that is separate, [respond by saying that] there is no effect [i.e., Buddhahood] that can be achieved [in the distinct teaching]. If he emphasizes [the Middle Way] that is identified [with Emptiness and provisional existence], then press him in the same manner [that you did when he said that his sect aspires to] the Buddha vehicle. Even if one should happen to recite the mantras, so long as he does not acquire the wondrous teaching of the threefold contemplation in a single mind, then he is the same as a practitioner of the distinct teaching and cannot attain enlightenment to the wondrous principle. Therefore, in accordance with the highest vehicle to which the other sects aspire, you should attack them from the basis of the principle (i.e., the principle of our sect).

The principle of hetu-vidyâ¹¹⁸ was expounded to counter heterodox teachings. In most cases it is found in the Hinayana or in the distinct teaching. With respect to the Lotus, Flower Ornament or Nirvâna sūtras, it is a doctrine to lead [the beings toward truth]. Thus it is set up temporarily, in

accordance with the beings' capacity. Ultimately, it is for the purpose of leading and advancing [them to the perfect teaching]. It encompasses people of heterodox views and of the lesser vehicle and causes them to arrive at the true principle. Therefore, when you debate, you should abide in the discerning resolve of [those who act as] the four reliances¹¹⁹ and not become attached to this [i.e., to logical argument itself]. Moreover, you should contrast other doctrines with our own and determine their rights and wrongs accordingly. Do not be attached [to your own views] and resent your opponent. (Since other doctrines are for the most part included in the three teachings, there are but few cases where they arrive at the purport of the perfect teaching).¹²⁰

Such is the evaluation made by Sentoku Daishi. The doctrines established by the various sects are as though reflected in a mirror, without the slightest obscurity. How can scholars of the latter age overlook this and judge the teachings arbitrarily?

One should carefully study the major categories which are the three teachings.¹²¹ These three are the sudden, the gradual and the perfect teachings, and correspond to the three truths that encompass the sacred teachings of the Buddha's lifetime. The two teachings, sudden and gradual, represent the preaching of the first forty-two years. The one, perfect teaching represents the preaching of the last eight years. Together, they were expounded over a period of fifty years. Apart from these, there is no dharma. How could one go astray with respect to this? In reference to ordinary beings, we

speak of the three truths, but when one attains the fruit of Buddhahood, they are called the three bodies. These are but different names for a single thing. That which expounds and clarifies this [principle] is termed the sacred teachings of the Buddha's lifetime. When we open and integrate these [sudden and gradual teachings] to form the single all-encompassing triple truth, we attain Buddhahood. This is called "opening and integration." It is also called self-practice.

Nevertheless, the sects established by others draw distinctions in this all-encompassing triple truth and divide it into eight.¹²² In establishing their own sects, they are each lacking the principle that is perfect and complete, and are thus without the principle of attaining Buddhahood. For this reason, in the other sects, there is no real Buddha. Therefore, when we repudiate them, it means that we repudiate their incompleteness.

When by means of the perfect teaching one contemplates all dharmas, [he will find that] they are perfectly interpenetrating and perfectly complete, like the moon on the fifteenth night. Lacking nothing, they are fully endowed and perfect. Therefore, he will not draw distinctions of good and evil, nor differentiate time and season, nor seek a quiet place, nor discriminate among people with respect to their

capacity. Because he knows that all dharmas are the Buddha-Dharma, he penetrates all the dharmas. Thus even if he should commit wrongdoing, he nevertheless perfects the Buddha Way.

Heaven, earth, water, fire and wind are the Tathâgatas of the five kinds of wisdom. They dwell within the body and mind of all living beings and do not depart from us, not even for a moment. Thus secular and religious matters are united in the mind, and apart from the mind, there is no separate dharma whatsoever. Therefore, when one hears this principle, there will be no obstacle to his attaining the fruit of Buddhahood immediately where he stands. This is the ultimate principle.

The all-encompassing three truths are like a jewel, its luster and its value. Because it possesses these three virtues, the wish-granting jewel is so named. Therefore it is likened to the triple truth. If the three virtues of a single jewel were to become separated, then it would serve no purpose. The sects based on the expedient teachings, which separate [the three truths], are also like this. The jewel itself is like the Dharma body, its lustre is like the body of recompense, and its value, like the manifested body. The establishment of various sects based on distinctions drawn among these all-encompassing three virtues is

repudiated as incomplete. The rolling of them together in one is called the all-encompassing triple truth. This all-encompassing triple truth is the Tathâgata of original enlightenment who possesses the three bodies in one.

Moreover, the Land of Tranquil Light may be likened to a mirror, and the three other kinds of lands--lands inhabited by both sages and common mortals, provisional lands, and lands of true recompense--to the images reflected in the mirror. The four kinds of lands are a single land, and the three bodies are a single Buddha. Now these three bodies and four kinds of lands unite to form the virtue of the Buddha's single essence; this is called the Buddha of [the Land of] Tranquil Light.

The Buddha of [the Land of] Tranquil Light is regarded as the Buddha of the perfect teaching, and the Buddha of the perfect teaching is regarded as the true Buddha of waking reality. The Buddhas of the other three kinds of lands are provisional Buddhas appearing in dreams.

Because this is the all-encompassing system of doctrinal classification conceived and set forth in the same words by all Buddhas of the three time periods, it does not incorporate the words of other people, nor has need of interpretation. If one deviates from it, then he is a person who commits the great offense of going

against all Buddhas of the three time periods. He is a devil, a follower of heterodox ways. Because such a person would long go against the Buddha-Dharma, you should keep this secret and not show it to others. If you do not keep it secret but expose it carelessly, then you will not only fail to realize the Buddha-Dharma but will gain no divine protection in this life or the next. And if there should appear someone who slanders [the Dharma on account of your carelessness], because he goes against all Buddhas of the three time periods, you two will fall together into the evil paths. Knowing this, I must admonish against it.

So one should keep this very carefully secret and hidden, and profoundly realize this principle [of the Lotus Sûtra]. Thus he will conform to the true intention of all Buddhas of the three time periods, gain the protection of the two saints, the two deities and the ten female râksasas,¹²³ and without obstruction achieve the highest rebirth in the Land of Tranquil Light. Then in the space of a moment he will return to the dream of birth and death in the nine realms, filling the lands of the dharma-realms in the ten directions with his body and entering the bodies of all sentient beings with his mind. Urging and inducing from within, drawing and leading from without, internal and external being in conformity, cause and circumstance united, he

will express the free and supernatural power of compassion, broadly benefiting living beings without obstruction.

All Buddhas of the three time periods, regarding this as the "cause and circumstance of one great matter,"¹²⁴ make their appearance in the world. "One" indicates the truth of the Middle Way, and also the Lotus Sûtra. "Great" indicates the truth of Emptiness and also the teachings of the Flower Ornament period. "Matter" indicates the truth of provisional existence and also the teachings of the Āgama, Vaipulya and Prajñā periods. The above form the all-encompassing triple truth of the Buddha's lifetime teachings. When one awakens to and knows this, he attains the fruit of Buddhahood; therefore, it is the fundamental purpose for the Buddhas' advent in the world and the direct path for becoming a Buddha. "Cause" means the all-encompassing triple truth which resides within the bodies of all living beings, abiding constantly and unchanging. These [three truths] are together termed "cause." "Circumstance" means that, although the three causes of the the Buddha nature¹²⁵ are present, unless one encounters the circumstance of a good friend, he will not awaken to them or know them, nor will they become manifest. But by encountering the circumstance of a good friend, they are certain to become manifest;

therefore, such an encounter is termed "circumstance." Now these five--"one," "great," "matter," "cause," and "circumstance"--being conjoined, and on encountering the rarely-to-be-met circumstance of a good friend, what hindrance could there be to manifesting the five aspects of the Buddha nature?

When the springtime arrives, by encountering the circumstance of wind and rain, even grasses and trees, which have no mind, all send forth sprouts, produce blossoms and flourish luxuriantly, displaying their best appearance to the world. When the autumn season arrives, by encountering the circumstance of moonlight, grasses and trees all produce fruit that ripens and nourishes all sentient beings, enabling them to sustain their lives so that ultimately, they may display the virtuous functions of Buddhahood. So it is even with mindless trees and grasses. How much more so with human beings! Although we are deluded common mortals, we possess mind and understanding to some small extent; we can distinguish good from evil and recognize the seasons. Moreover, prompted by karmic connections, we have been born in a land where Buddhism has spread. If we meet the circumstance of a good friend, we are capable of discerning causality and attaining Buddhahood. Why then, when we encounter such a good friend, should we remain inferior even to grasses and

trees and fail to manifest the three causes of the Buddha nature we possess?

This time, no matter what, you should awaken from the dream of birth and death and return to the waking reality of original enlightenment, severing the bonds of birth and death. From now on, do not ensconce in your heart the doctrines found in dreams. Let your one mind be united with the Buddhas of the three time periods and carry out the practice of Myôhō-enge-kyô, attaining enlightenment without obstruction.

The difference between the two kinds of teachings, that of the Buddha's self-practice and those for instructing others, is as clear as though reflected in a mirror without any obscurity. Such is the testimony of all Buddhas of the three time periods. Keep this secret! Keep this secret!

The tenth month in the second year of Kōan (1279),
cyclical sign tsuchinoto-u

Nichiren (his written seal)

Notes to "The Teaching Approved by All Buddhas of the
Three Time Periods":

1. STN 2:1686-1704. The Japanese title of this piece, "Sanze shobutsu sôkanmon kyôso hairyû" resists direct rendering into a manageable English phrase, and the English title given above represents a gloss, rather than a literal translation. The word kyôso, or "doctrinal characteristics," here refers to those doctrinal features used when organizing sutras into some overall scheme. Such schemes, called kyôso hanjaku or "comparative classifications of teachings," were devised by the various schools usually to emphasize the the superior or central position, among all the Buddha's teachings, of the particular text or texts on which they based their respective doctrines. Hairyû, literally "to abrogate and to establish," suggests that certain teachings will set aside in favor of others, and a hierarchy set up. In this case, the provisional teachings are being subsumed within the true teaching, i.e. the Lotus Sûtra. This central position of the Lotus is endorsed by all Buddhas (shobutsu) of the three time periods (sanze)--past, present and future. Kanmon generally meant a document prepared by officials or scholars in response to imperial decree, investigating historical precedents and offering an interpretation or judgment of present matters. This text however uses the word in a unique sense, to refer to a teaching that has been comprehensively (sô) pondered (kan) and put into writing (mon). Specifically, it indicates the Lotus Sûtra itself, which it presents as an "authentic document bearing the seal of the true aspect, the endorsement of all Buddhas of the three time periods." The expression sôkanmon evidently derives from Kakuchô's Jigyô ryakki chû, a commentary on the Jigyô ryakki (Abbreviated commentary on self-practice) attributed to Genshin, which states, "The Ryakki represents a comprehensive consideration, put into writing (sôkanmon) of the Moho chih-kuan" (Risshô University Library, Ms. No. A12.362, pp. 26-27). The author of the "Sôkanmon shô" seems to have been struck by this phrase and uses it repeatedly throughout the text.

2. The four teachings of conversion (kehô no shikyô), the T'ien-t'ai classification of the teachings according to content. They are: (1) the Tripiṭaka teaching (zôgyô), named for the three canonical divisions of sûtra, vinaya and abhidharma and exemplified by the four noble truths; (2) the shared teaching (tsûgyô), which

stresses the doctrine of Emptiness and is shared by the first teaching and the third and fourth teachings; (3) the distinct teaching (bekkyô), in which the truth of the Middle Way is cognized as distinct from the truths of Emptiness and provisional existence; and (4) the perfect teaching (engyô), encompassing all truth within itself. These are discussed in detail by the Korean monk Chegwan (d. 971) in his Ch'ônt'ae sa kyoûi, T 1931.46:776a5-780a21. See also Leon Hurvitz, Chih-i, pp. 248-71 and David Chappell, ed. T'ien-t'ai Buddhism: An Outline of the Fourfold Teachings (Tokyo: Daiichi Shobô, 1983), pp. 83-173.

3. Another aspect of the T'ien-t'ai doctrinal classification scheme, organizing the body of teachings according to a probable sequence of preaching. The five periods are: (1) the Flower Ornament period, the first three weeks following the Buddha's enlightenment, during which he is said to have preached the Flower Ornament Sûtra (Skt. Avatamsaka-sûtra, Chn. Hua-yen ching); (2) the Âgama period or the next twelve years, during which he is said to have preached the âgamas or the Hinayana teachings. Also called the period of the Deer Park; (3) the Extended (Skt. vaipulya) period, or next eight years, when the Buddha is said to have expounded various introductory Mahayana sutras; (4) the Prajñâ period, or next twenty-two years, during which the Buddha is said to have expounded the prajñâ-pâramitâ sûttras; and the Lotus-Nirvâna period, comprising the final eight years of his life, during which he is said to have preached the Lotus Sûtra, and the last day of his life, when he is said to have preached the Nirvâna Sûtra. See Ch'ônt'ae sa kyoûi, T 1931.46:774c20-776a5; Hurvitz, Chih-i, pp.230-44; and Chappell, T'ien-t'ai Buddhism, pp. 55-69.

4. The realms of living beings. In ascending order, they are (1) hell-dwellers, (2) hungry ghosts (Skt. pretas), (3) beasts, (4) asuras, (5) humans, (6) gods, (7) voice-hearers (srâvakas), (8) condition-perceivers (pratyekabuddhas), (9) bodhisattvas, and (10) Buddhas. In contrast to the realm of the Buddha, the first nine realms are collectively considered deluded states.

5. T 276.9:386b1-2. Probably an apocryphal scripture composed in China, this text is regarded as an introduction to the Lotus Sûtra.

6. T 1717.33:919c.23-25.

7. This actually appears in Chan-jan's commentary on Chih-i's Moho chih-kuan, the Chih-kuan fu-hsing-chu'an hung-chüeh 5-3, T 1912.46:292c20-21. The "Sôkanmon sho" alters the syntax of this passage slightly in quotation.

8. Wu-liang i ching, T 276.9:386b 1-2.

9. First of the three standard exegetical divisions of a sūtra: introduction (jobun), setting forth the circumstances under which the Buddha expounded a particular sūtra; main body (shôshûbun); and transmission (rutsûbun), urging that the sūtra be propagated after the Buddha's nirvâṇa. In terms of the so-called "threefold Lotus Sūtra," the Wu-liang i ching corresponds to the introductory section; the Miao-fa lien-hua ching itself to the main body; and its concluding sutra, the P'u-hsien ching, to transmission.

10. This refers to the earlier quoted passage from the Wu-liang i ching, "In these forty years and more, I have not yet revealed the truth," used in T'ien-t'ai exegesis as a basis for to distinguish between the provisional (pre-Lotus) and true (Lotus) teachings.

11. T 1716.33:696a11-12. The Taishô version says, "The nine realms are regarded as provisional; the one realm is regarded as true."

12. Chih-i gives three asamkhyeya-kalpas as the length of time needed for a bodhisattva of the Tripiṭaka teaching to complete his practice (Hsüan-i 4b, T 1716.33:729b-c). Chegwan says it requires such a bodhisattva three asamkhyeya-kalpas to complete the six pârâmitâs and a hundred kalpas to cultivate the major and minor characteristics of a Buddha (Ch'önt'ae sa kyoûi, T 1931.46:777b8-9; see also David Chappell, ed., T'ien-t'ai Buddhism, p. 104). Annen (841-?) says that Hinayana bodhisattvas must practice for three asamkhyas and a hundred kalpas (Fuzû ju bosatsukai kôshaku 1, T 2381.74:761b21-26).

13. This evidently intends to suggest that Tripiṭaka teaching leads only to the nirvâṇa of no remainder, in which both physical and mental desires are annihilated--the state ultimately achieved by the Hinayana disciples. Ch'önt'ae sa kyoûi, T 1931.46:777a13-14; Chappell, T'ien-t'ai Buddhism, p. 99: "When the body is burned and the awareness extinguished, it is called 'nirvâṇa without remainder.'"

14. These figures may derive from Annen's Fuzû kôshaku, which gives seven major asamkhyas and a hundred, ten thousand kalpas as the length of practice required for bodhisattvas of the shared teaching. T 2381.74:761b23.

15. Fuzû kôshaku 1, T 2381. 74:761b24-25. However, the Fuzû kôshaku gives the time involved as twenty-two, rather than twenty-two major, asamkhyeya-, kalpas.

16. In the T'ien-t'ai system, each of the four teachings are said to have the two aspects of doctrine (Jpn. kyôdô) and attainment (shôdô). In the Tripitaka and shared teachings, both doctrine and attainment are provisional, while in the perfect teaching, both doctrine and attainment are true. In the distinct teaching however, doctrine is provisional while attainment is true. This must be understood in connection with the distinct teaching's fifty-two-stage marga scheme, on which the above discussion in the text is based. The fifty-two stages of bodhisattva practice are the ten degrees of faith, ten abodes, ten degrees of practice, ten degrees of merit transference, ten bhûmis (stages), virtual enlightenment and wondrous or subtle enlightenment. The first forty stages correspond to "doctrine"; in these stages, the bodhisattva has yet to eradicate the primal ignorance. The ten bhûmis and above constitute "attainment"; having reached these latter stages of the path, the bodhisattva can eradicate a portion of the primal ignorance and perceive to some extent the principle of the Middle Way. However, the distinct teaching sets forth only the truth of the Middle Way, distinct from the truths of Emptiness and provisional existence. Realizing that this is incomplete, the bodhisattva will at this point make a direct transition to the perfect teaching, which sets forth the perfect interfusion of the three truths. Depending upon the bodhisattva's capacity, this transition may take place at the first of the ten bhûmis, the third, or the stage of virtual enlightenment.

17. The joyful stage (Skt. pramuditâ). The forty-first of the fifty-two stages of the marga scheme set forth in the distinct teaching. It corresponds to the first of the ten abodes in the marga scheme of the perfect teaching. Thus a bodhisattva, cognizing the Middle Way at this stage, makes a direct transit, becoming a practitioner of the perfect teaching.

18. Hsüan-i 5b, T 1716.33:742a22. In the Hsüan-i, this phrase is used to refer to the shared teaching.

19. The term "uncreated triple-bodied Buddha" (musa no sanjin) was probably initiated by Saichô, though it occurs only in this one place in his authenticated writings. Later on, it was widely adopted in medieval Tendai literature to stress that even prior to Buddhist practice, the ordinary person already inherently possesses the three Tathâgata bodies and is thus equal to the Buddha. Saichô himself did not use the expression in this sense, as has been pointed out in Tada Kôryû et al. eds., Tendai hongaku ron, p. 436, and Asai Endô, Jôko Nihon Tendai honmon shisôshi, p. 112-14. See also Hanano Mitsuaki, "Nihon chûko Tendai bunken no kôsatsu (1): musa sanjin shisô no seritsu to Sanjû shika no kotogaki no senja ni tsuite," IBK 24-1 (Dec. 1975), p. 342 (n.)

20. DDZ 2:567. In this and subsequent quotation, the material in parentheses has been interpolated by the author of the "Sôkanmon shô."

21. T 2362.74:222c22-23.

22. Cf. Lotus, p'in 6: "Throughout the long they night they increase the evil destinies/and reduce the numbers of the gods,/proceeding from darkness into darkness,/never hearing the Buddha's name" (T 262.9:21c24-25).

23. Cf. Lotus, p'in 16: "I am constantly abiding here,/but by means of my supernatural powers,/I cause the perverted beings/not to see me, though I am near" (T 262.9:43b18-19).

24. Some long-standing difference of opinion exists concerning the meaning of the "nine divisions of the three levels." I have found the following interpretations: (1) This represents a division of followers of each of the three vehicles (voice-hearers, condition-perceivers and bodhisattvas) into those of superior, medium and inferior capacity. (2) Practitioners of the three vehicles in the Tripitaka teaching constitute those of lesser capacity; practitioners of the three vehicles in the shared teaching, those of medium capacity; and bodhisattvas of the distinct teaching, those of superior capacity. (Both of these interpretations are mentioned in the Chôshi gosho kenmonshû of Gyôgaku-in Nitchô (1422-1500), NSZ 17:413). (3) The divisions of inferior, medium and superior capacity represent the successive cognition of the truths of Emptiness, provisional existence and the Middle Way as set forth in the distinct teaching (Goibun

kôgi 6:292).

25. The meaning of this phrase, and of "the good mind of the highest level of the superior capacity" mentioned subsequently, has also been the source of some controversy. Gyôgakuin Nitchô takes it to indicate the Buddha vehicle of the perfect teaching, i.e., the Lotus Sûtra itself (NSZ 17:413)--probably because the text says that the Buddha expounded the "fundamental good of the highest level" after setting up the three categories of superior, medium and lesser good. Edo-period commentator Nichigon also held the same opinion (Goshoshô 15:4-5). However, given that this phrase occurs in a section of the text dealing with the provisional teachings, it seems more likely that the "fundamental good of the highest level" refers to the earlier-indicated point in the practice of the distinct teaching at which the bodhisattva, cognizing the Middle Way, "shifts and enters" the perfect teaching. For a detailed discussion of both views, see Keimô 25:46-47.

26. The work referred to is Chan-jan's Mo-ho chih-kuan fu-hsing sou-yao chi, Manji 99:221-460. However, no passage dealing with nine divisions in the three levels of capacity appears in extant editions of this text.

27. The four teachings of conversion explained in n. 2 above plus the four methods of conversion (kegi no shikyô), the T'ien-t'ai classification of the body of teachings according to the method the Buddha is said to have used in expounding them. They are (1) the sudden teaching (tonkyô), which the Buddha preaches directly without preparatory teachings, as in the case of the Flower Ornament Sûtra; (2) the gradual teaching (zengyô), through which the Buddha gradually cultivates the beings' capacity, as he did with the âgamas and early Mahayana teachings; (3) the secret teaching (himitsukyô), through which the Buddha enables the beings to benefit differently from the same preaching according to their capacities without their being aware of this; and (4) the indeterminate teaching (fujôkyô), by which the beings knowingly receive different benefits from the same preaching. See Ch'ônt'ae sa kyoûi, T 1931.46:774c21-775b10-11; Chappell, T'ien-t'ai Buddhism, pp. 55-61. Here the expression "eight teachings" is used to indicate all those expounded prior to the Lotus.

28. The four gates are the doctrines of existence, Emptiness, both existence and Emptiness, and neither existence nor Emptiness. For their relationship to the

- four teachings, see Chih-kuan 6a, T 46.1911:73b25-75b.
29. T 262.9:8a17-18.
30. T 262.9:10a22-23.
31. That is, the lands and the beings who inhabit them, or both objective and subjective realms.
32. Lotus, p'in 2, T 262.9:5c11-12.
33. I.e., the thirty-two major and eighty minor marks that a Buddha's body is said to possess.
34. Lotus, p'in 11, T 262.9:32b28-29.
35. Lotus, p'in 2, T 262.9:10a23.
36. Lotus, p'in 1, T 262.9:4b10.
37. See "The Structure of the Single Thought-Moment Comprising Three Thousand Realms" in the Appendix.
38. T 1911.46:3b5-6.
39. T 1912.46:157b9-12.
40. Unidentified.
41. This commentary appears to draw an absolute distinction between the words of the sūtras and the truth they are intended to reveal, while the "Sôkanmon shô" argues that the words of the Lotus, while uttered in the language of dreams, simultaneously embody the truth of waking reality.
42. T 1717.33:819b9-10.
43. Lands where ordinary people and sages dwell together, as in this sahâ world; provisional lands, inhabited by persons of the two vehicles who have eradicated the delusions of views and of thoughts but not the remaining two of the three categories of delusion; lands of true recompense, inhabited by bodhisattvas who have to a certain extent realized the Middle Way; and the land of Eternally Tranquil Light, presided over by the Buddha in his self-enjoyment body. See Wei-mo ching lüeh-shu 1, T 1778.38:564a28ff.
44. Wen-chü 9a, T 1718.34:125a4.

45. A reference to Chih-kuan 1b: "When one penetrates the [meaning of the] words and letters and knows that all dharmas are precisely the Buddha-dharma, that is the bodhi of the stage of verbal identity" (T 1911.46:10b22-24).

46. According to Indian cosmology, in the last phase of the world cycle, the world is destroyed by fire, flood or winds. See A-p'i-t'a-mo chü-she lun (Abhidharma kośa-śāstra) 66, T 1558.29:66a28-b6.

47. Cf Lotus, p'in 23: "The blessings and merit obtained [by one who upholds the sutra] are unfathomable and boundless; fire cannot burn them, nor water sweep them away" (T 262.9:54c10-11).

48. Cf. Wei-mo-chieh ching (Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa), T 475.14:546b25-26.

49. This passage draws upon Kakuchō's Jigyō ryakki: "As for this our mind, fire will not burn it, nor will it rot [in water]. If one speaks of empty space, it can fill all of space, and space need not contract nor the mind-nature expand. If one speaks of mustard seeds, it can fit inside a mustard seed without stretching the mustard seed nor compressing the mind-nature" (Risshō University, Tokyo, Ms. No. A12.362, p. 8).

50. This phrase or variations thereof occur in several places in the Chinese canon. See for example the Ta-fang-kuang fo hua-yen ching (Buddhāvataṃsaka-nāma-mahā-vaipulya-sūtra) 5, T 278.9:424c4 (here the character "mind" is eliminated); Ta-chih-tu lun 2, T 1509.25:71c7-8 (here the two phrases are reversed); or Moho chih-kuan 5a, T 1911.46:54b27.

51. Ta-fang-kuang fo hua-yen ching 10, T 278.9:465c26-29.

52. This appears to be a rewording of the passage, "Innumerable meanings arise from a single Dharma. This single Dharma is without characteristics (musō) and is not a characteristic (fusō). Being thus not a characteristic and without characteristics, it is called the true aspect (jissō)."
Wu-liang i ching, T 276.9:383c24-26.

53. This too appears to be a paraphrase, rather than a direct quotation. See Wen-chü 2b: "'Without characteristics' means without the marks of birth and death. 'Not a characteristic' means that it is not the mark of nirvāṇa. And nirvāṇa is also absent. Therefore

[the sūtra] says, 'without characteristics and not a characteristic.' In speaking of the true aspect, it indicates the Middle Way" (T 1718.34:27c20-22).

54. Lotus, p'in 2, T 262.9:5c11-13.

55. This refers to the passage in Lotus Sutra, p'in 2, concerning "the true aspect of the dharmas," which is equated with the ten suchnesses (T 262.9:5c11-13). See also Hsüan-i 8a: "The Mahayana sutras have only one Dharma seal, which is the seal of the true aspect" (T 33:779c12-13).

56. Lotus, p'in 3, T 262.9:14c26-27.

57. This refers to the Buddha's attainment of enlightenment in the inconceivably remote past, as described in the "Fathoming the Lifespan" chapter of the Lotus Sūtra. "His ephemeral attainment of the Way," mentioned subsequently, indicates his enlightenment under the Bodhi tree near the town of Gaya. The Lotus describes this latter attainment as a skilful means used to instruct the beings.

58. Chih-kuan 5a, T 1911.46:55c16-19, reads, "Chuang-ch'ou in a dream became a butterfly, and fluttered about for a hundred years. Waking, he knew that he was not a butterfly, and also that he had not accumulated those years. Ignorance arises from the Dharma nature so that one mind becomes countless minds, like that confused sleep [of Chuang-ch'ou's]. But when one comprehends that ignorance is precisely the Dharma nature, then the countless minds become one mind, like his [Chuang-ch'ou] returning to himself." The version of this quotation given in the "Sōkanmon shō" follows almost word for word a passage from Kakuchō's "Jigyō ryakki" (Risshō University Library, Ms. No. A12.362.1, pp. 3-4). For the original Chuan-ch'ou story, see A Concordance to the Chuang Tzu, Harvard-Yenching Institute Sinological Index Series, Supplement No. 20 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1956), p.7.

59. T 1912.46:299c8-10.

60. T 1911.46:56b16-24.

61. T 1911.46:127b2-3.

62. T 1911.46:129a7.

63. This sentence is a direct quote from the Nirvâna Sûtra. See Ta-pan-nieh-p'an ching 21, T 374.12:490b22-25.

64. Another direct quote from the Nirvâna Sûtra. See Ta-pan-nieh-p'an ching 21, T 374.12:490c3-4. The meaning here is that sequence of ignorance and karma formations from the past life; along with consciousness, name and form, the six sense fields, contact, sensation, craving, grasping and becoming in the present life; together form the cause for birth, and henceforth for old age and death, in the future life.

65. T 1911.46.129a9-12. I do not understand the significance of the tree-planting analogy.

66. T 1716.33:735c5-6.

67. Jen-wang hu-kuo po-jo po-lo-mi ching, T 245.8:825-34 or Jen-wang po-jo po-lo-mi ching, T 246.8:834-45, and P'u-sa ying-lo pen-yeh ching, T 1485-24:1010-23.

68. Moho po-jo po-lo-mi ching, T 223.8:217-424.

69. This appears to be a paraphrase of Hsüan-i 4b, T 1716.33:731c14-16.

70. I.e., the eight teachings. See n. 27 above.

71. The spleen, lungs, heart, liver and kidneys.

72. Jupiter, Mars, Saturn, Venus and Mercury.

73. The eastern peak, or Mt. T'ai in Shantung; the southern peak, or Mt. Heng in Hunan; the western peak, or Mt. Hua in Shensi; the northern peak, or Mt. Heng in Hopei; and the central peak, or Mt. Sung in Honan.

74. The five primary elements of wood, fire, earth, metal and water.

75. The basic Confucian virtues of benevolence, righteousness, propriety, knowledge and good faith.

76. Keimô, maki 25, p. 76, gives these as mind; the human soul (hun) that ascends to heaven at death; spirit; the animal soul (p'e) that descends into the earth with the body; and will.

77. Kindness, goodness, respect, economy and giving precedence to others.

78. Divinization of five ministers said to have aided the legendary five emperors. As personifications of the five elements, they are said to administer the five directions. They are Hou-t'u, Kou-mang, Chu-yung, Ju-shou, and Hsuan-ming.

79. A work in ten chüan compiled by Chang-hua of the Tsin dynasty, dealing with an encyclopedic range of subjects including geography, rare birds and animals, foreign countries, customs, medicine, etc. See Zhong-guo Q'ing-nian Chu-ban-she, ed., Zhong-guo qu-dian wen-xue ming-zhu ti-jie (Beijing: Zhong-guo Q'ing-nian Chu-ban-she, 1980), pp. 202-3. The Ch'an-men, mentioned subsequently, is Chih-i's Shih-ch'an po-lo-mi tz'u-ti fa-men, T 1916.46:475-548. Its description of unity of the individual and the macrocosm appears at pp. 532b27-533a4, but the Po-wu chih is not mentioned by name.

80. Green, red, white, black and yellow clouds.

81. Green, red, white, black and yellow dragons.

82. All the correspondences in this sentence refer to constellations.

83. The five notes of the ancient Chinese musical scale. Together with their elemental correspondences, they are kung (earth), shang (metal), chüeh (wood), chih (fire), and yü (water).

84. Rites, music, archery, charioteering, writing and mathematics.

85. T 1912.46:342b6-24.

86. The five basic Buddhist precepts against taking life, theft, illicit sexual activity, lying and drinking intoxicants.

87. In esoteric Buddhism, the five kinds of wisdom possessed by Mahāvairocana. They are: (1) the essential nature of the dharma-realm wisdom (Skt., dharma-dhātu-svabhāva-jñāna, Jpn. hokkai taishō-chi), which knows the essential nature of all existents; (2) the great perfect mirror wisdom (ādarśa-jñāna, daienkyō-chi), which reflects all phenomenal things just as they are; (3) the non-discriminating wisdom (samatā-jñāna, byōdōshō-chi), which discerns the essential equality of all existents; (4) the wisdom of subtle observation (pratyavekṣaṇa-jñāna, myōkanzat-chi), which discerns the distinctive characteristics of all existents; and (5) the wisdom of

accomplishing what is to be done (kṛtya-anusthāna-jñāna, jōshosa-chi, which benefits all beings. See Kōbo Daishi Kūkai zenshū Henshū Iinkai, ed., Kōbo Daishi Kūkai zenshū 4:21.

88. I.e., in Buddhist scriptures and secular classics.

89. In T'ien-t'ai thought, (1) inherent Buddha nature (shōin busshō, (2) the wisdom to realize it (ryōin busshō), (3) the condition or practice to manifest such wisdom (en'in busshō), (4) the fruit obtained by the bodhisattva (kashō), and (5) the fruit of nirvāna realized by the bodhisattva wisdom (ka kashō). Here 1-3 correspond to "cause," and 4-5, to "effect." See Wen-chū 10a, T 1718.34:140c9-11.

90. The five wisdom Tathāgatas, symbolizing respectively the five kinds of wisdom mentioned above, are Mahāvairocana (Jpn. Dainichi), Akṣobhya (Ashuku), Ratnasambhava (Hōshō), Amitāyus (Muryōju or Amida), and Amoghasiddhi (Fukūjōju). These five are represented respectively by the "seeds" or Sanskrit syllables vaṃ, hūṃ, trāḥ, hrīḥ and aḥ.

91. Lotus, pi'n 2, T 262.9:4c10-11.

92. The two standard commentaries are the sections devoted to this chapter in Wen-chū 7a (T 1718.34:90-97) and Chi 7b (T 1719.34: 287-94). However, the subsequent interpretation does not appear in either text.

93. For brevity's sake, I have glossed in this fashion the technical term gohyaku jindengō, which, in traditional Lotus exegesis, represents the period of time indicated by the following passage from p'in 16, "Fathoming the Lifespan of the Tathāgata": "Suppose there were a person who takes five hundred (gohyaku) thousand myriads of millions of nayutas of asamkheyas of trichiliocosmic world systems and reduces them to dust particles. He proceeds eastward, and when he has passed five hundred thousand myriads of millions of nayutas of asamkhyas of worlds, he drops one dust particle. He continues eastward in this way, until he has exhausted all the dust particles....If all these worlds [that he has passed], both those where he dropped a dust particle and those where he did not, were completely reduced to dust, and each dust particle (jin) represented (den) one kalpa (gō), the time that has passed since I [Śākyamuni] attained Buddhahood would surpass even this" (T 262.9:42b13-25).

94. The eight major events in a Buddha's life: descending from the Tuṣita Heaven, being conceived in the womb, birth, renunciation of the world, defeating devils, attaining the Way, turning the wheel of Dharma, and entering nirvāṇa.

95. See Lotus, p'in 22, T 262.9:52c4-5.

96. The fifth of the five consecutive 500-periods following the Buddha's death, described in the Ta-feng-teng ta-chi ching, T 397.13:363b4-5. The fifth period, an age when "quarrels and disputes will arise among the adherents to my [Śakyamuni's] teachings, and the Pure Dharma will be obscured and lost," was identified by Nichiren and others with the beginning of the Final Dharma age.

97. This phrase occurs three times in p'in 14 ("Peaceful Conduct"): twice in the section on peaceful thoughts (T 262.9:38b2-3 and 38b15-16) and once in the section on peaceful vows (39a23). The section on peaceful words contains the phrase "after the extinction of the Tathāgata, in the Final Dharma age" (37c29), and the section on peaceful deeds repeats four times the phrase "in a latter, evil age" (37a11, 12, 13 and b18).

98. T 262.9:54b29 ("After the extinction of the Tathāgata, in the last five hundred years") and 54c21-22 ("After I pass into extinction, in the last five hundred years").

99. T 262.9:61a23 ("In the last five hundred years, in a defiled and evil age"), 61b9-10 ("In the latter age, in the last five hundred years, in a defiled and evil age") and 62a9 ("After the Tathāgata's extinction, in the last five hundred years").

100. Ta-pan-nieh-p'an ching, T 12:401. This is the first of the four reliances.

101. T 1912.46:174c22-25.

102. Bodhisattvas at the tenth bhūmi or above.

103. T 1912.46:273c15-19.

104. T 1912.46:187b26-27.

105. A reference to the T'ien-t'ai doctrine of inherent evil (shôaku), i.e., that, even though he does not manifest it in his conduct, the Buddha nevertheless retains inherently the evil of the ordinary person. See Chih-i's Kuan-yin hsüan-i 1, T 1726.34:882c8-883a11.

106. Provisional wisdom (gonchi), by which the Buddha leads the beings according to their capacity, and true wisdom (jitchi), which penetrates the ultimate reality. The two kinds of wisdom pertaining to both the teachings for instructing others and that of the Buddha's self-practice are mentioned in Hsüan-i 1a, T 1716.33:683a24-28.

107. The fleshly body is the body born of father and mother. The expression "bodhisattvas in their fleshly body" is used here in contrast to the more advanced Dharma-body bodhisttvas, mentioned subsequently, who take truth itself as their body. "Acquiescence to the unbornness of the dharmas" (anupattika-dharma-kṣānti) is recognition of the unproduced nature of all phenomena, that is, of the truth that is neither born nor dies.

108. I.e., bodhisattvas at the stage of virtual enlightenment (tôgaku), the fifty-first of the fifty-two stages of bodhisattva practice.

109. T 1716.33.683a28-b8.

110. I.e., the Buddha dharma-realm and the nine realms of unenlightened beings, respectively.

111. Lotus, p'in 23, T 262.9:54a19-b11. These analogies illustrate the superiority of the Lotus over all others.

112. T 262.9:54a19-21. "Just as among all brooks, streams, rivers, canals and all other bodies of water, the ocean is foremost, this Lotus Sûtra is also like this. Among the sutras expounded by the Tathâgata, it is the deepest and greatest."

113. In the T'ien-t'ai classification of teachings, this phrase describes the relationship between the first four of the five periods (i.e., the periods preceding the preaching of the Lotus) and the four teachings of conversion. The Flower Ornament period combines the distinct teaching with the perfect teaching; the Agama period consists of the Tripitaka teaching only and excludes the shared, distinct and perfect teachings; in the Vaipulya period all four teachings were taught in a manner corresponding to the people's capacity; and the

Prajñā period, while consisting of the perfect teaching, includes the shared and distinct teachings. Only the Lotus Sūtra does not participate in these relationships, being the ultimate true and perfect teaching. See Hsüan-i 1a, T 1716.33:682b8-10.

114. Chishō Daishi Enchin (814-891), fifth Tendai abbot.

115. A classification of the Buddha's lifetime teachings according to the Kegon (Chn. Hua-yen) school. They are: (1) the Hinayana teaching, which sets forth the four noble truths, twelve-linked chain of dependent co-production, etc; (2) the elementary Mahayana teaching, subdivided into teachings on the specific characteristics of the dharmas and teachings on the Emptiness of the dharmas; (3) the final Mahayana teaching, which teaches the universal potential for Buddhahood; (4) the sudden Mahayana teaching, which teaches immediate attainment without progression through successive stages; and (5) the perfect Mahayana teaching, ultimately identified with the Flower Ornament Sūtra. See Hua-yen i-ch'eng chiao-i fen-chi chang 1, T 1866.45:481b7ff.

116. A classification of the teachings proposed by Chitsang (549-623) of the San-lun (Jpn. Sanron) school: (1) the root teaching, expounded for bodhisattvas (i.e., the Flower Ornament Sūtra); (2) the branch teachings, setting forth the three vehicles, which include the āgamas, vaipulya sūtras, prajñā sūtras, etc; and (3) the teaching that draws together the branches and returns them to the root, or the teaching of the Buddha vehicle (i.e., the Lotus). See Fa-hua yu-i, T 1722.34:634c17-23.

117. The classification employed by the Hossō sect: (1) teachings of existence, such as the āgamas, which hold that the self is Empty but that the dharmas are real; (2) teachings of Emptiness, such as the prajñā sūtras, which reveal that the dharmas themselves are without self-existence; and (3) teachings of the Middle Way, such as the Flower Ornament, Lotus, and Chieh-shen-mi ching, which repudiate attachments to the views of both existence and Emptiness. This classification is based on Chieh-shen-mi ching 2, T 667.16:693:a 15-23..

118. Logic (literally, the "science of causes"). In India, one of five sciences, the other four being grammar (śabda-vidyā), manual and mechanical arts (śilpa-karma-sthāna-vidyā), medicine (cikitsā-vidyā) and knowledge of the Supreme Spirit (adhyātma-vidyā). Here the term hetu-vidyā (Jpn. inmyō) is being used

specifically to mean Buddhist logic.

119. Here, those who can be relied upon to uphold the True Dharma after the Buddha's extinction: (1) voice-hearers who have yet to attain the four stages of Hinayana enlightenment; (2) stream-winners and once-returners; (3) non-returners; and (4) arhats. See Ta-pan-nieh-p'an ching 6, T 375.12:637a21ff.

120. Juketsu shû 2, T 2367.74:309a25-b17.

121. See Juketsu shû 1, T 2367.74:282c3-4.

122. Probably a reference to the so-called "eight sects" of Buddhism in Japan before the Kamakura period: Kusha, Jôjitsu Ritsu, Hossô, Sanron, Kegon, Tendai and Shingon.

123. The two saints, bodhisattvas Medicine King and Brave Donor; the two deities, Vaiśravaṇa and Dhṛtarāṣṭra; and the ten daughters of the rākṣasa demons vow in p'in 26 of the Lotus to protect those who preach the Lotus Sûtra. See T 262.9:58b17-59b19; Hurvitz, pp. 320-24.

124. Lotus, p'in 2: "The Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, solely by virtue of the cause and circumstance of one great matter make their advent in the world" (T 262.9:7a21-22).

125. Inherent Buddha nature (shôin busshô), the wisdom to realize it (ryôin busshô), and the condition or practice to manifest this wisdom (en'in busshô). See also n. 89 above.

The Doctrine of Three Thousand Realms
in a Single Thought-Moment¹

What is it about the Lotus Sûtra that surpasses the other sûtras? This sûtra contains [the teachings of] the threefold contemplation in a single mind and the three thousand realms in a single thought-moment. Bodhisattva Medicine King appeared in the land of the Han, where he was called the Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai [Chih-i],² and awakened to this teaching. But [before revealing it,] he first expounded the Hsüan-i [Profound Meaning (of the Lotus Sûtra)] in ten chüan,³ the Wen-chü [Words and Phrases (of the Lotus Sûtra)] in ten chüan,⁴ the Chüeh-i san-mei [Samādhi of Awareness of the Mind],⁵ the Hsiao chih-kuan [Lesser Calming and Insight],⁶ the Vimalakīrti commentaries,⁷ the Ssu-nien-ch'u [Four Bases of Mindfulness],⁸ the Shih-ti ch'an-men [Teaching of Sequential Meditation],⁹ and others. Yet even though he set forth these many doctrines, he did not discuss the doctrine of the three thousand realms in a single thought-moment but spoke only of the doctrines of the hundred realms and thousand suchnesses.

Then, around the fourth month in the summer of his fifty-seventh year, at a place called the Yü-ch'uan-ssu temple in Ching-chou, he taught it to his disciple, the

Great Teacher Chang-an [Kuan-ting]. There is a text [containing this doctrine] called the Moho chih-kuan [Great Calming and Insight] in ten chüan.¹⁰ Even in its first four fascicles, [Chih-i] kept this doctrine secret and spoke only of the six identities¹¹ and the four kinds of samâdhi.¹² But in chüan five, he established the teachings of the ten objects of contemplation,¹³ the ten modes of contemplation,¹⁴ and the three thousand realms in a single thought-moment, saying, "Now one mind contains, etc."¹⁵ Two hundred years later, the Great Teacher Miao-lo [Chan-jan] stated in his interpretation, "Be it known: One's body and land are the three thousand realms of a single thought-moment. Therefore, when we attain the Way, in accordance with this fundamental principle, our body and mind pervade the dharma-realm."¹⁶

This doctrine of the three thousand realms in a single thought-moment, or the threefold contemplation in a single mind, derives from [the passage setting forth] the ten suchnesses in the first roll of the Lotus Sûtra.¹⁷ The heart of this passage is the hundred realms, the thousand suchnesses and the three thousand realms. In terms of the threefold contemplation in a single mind, the other sects read [this passage only] as "such-like" [characteristics, nature, and so forth].¹⁸ This is a distortion, lacking two [of three] meanings.

That is because they are unaware of the sacred meanings [set forth by] T'ien-t'ai [Chih-i] and Nan-yüeh [Hui-ssu].¹⁹ In this sect, in accordance with T'ien-t'ai's interpretation, [the ten suchnesses] are recited three times; thus the merit is superior. First, we read, "These their characteristics are such"; characteristics, nature, essence, power and the other ten are said to be "such." "Such" has the meaning of Emptiness. Therefore, the ten dharma-realms are all the truth of Emptiness. When we recite and contemplate this, then we are ourselves the recompense-body Tathâgata and the eighty-four thousand [dharma teachings]. This is also called prajñâ. Second, we read, "Their such-like characteristics." This refers to the characteristics manifested as the color and form of our body. These [characteristics] are in every case transient. Because [this viewpoint is applied to] characteristics, nature, essence, power and all the others of the ten [suchnesses], the ten dharma-realms are all said to be the truth of provisional existence and have the meaning of transitoriness. When we [thus] read [the passage] and contemplate this, then we ourselves are the manifested-body Tathâgata. This is also called emancipation. Third, we read, "Their characteristics are like this." This refers to the Middle Way and is the form of the Buddha's Dharma body. When [in this

way] we read and contemplate, we ourselves are the Dharma-body Tathâgata. This is also referred to as the Middle Way, the Dharma nature, nirvâna, and quiet extinction. These three correspond to the three bodies--Dharma, recompense and manifested; to the three truths--Emptiness, provisional existence and the Middle; and to the three virtues--the Dharma body, prajñâ and emancipation.

This triple-bodied Tathâgata exists nowhere else; we ourselves are precisely the entity of the ultimate of the three virtues, the Buddha of original enlightenment who possesses the three bodies in one. One who knows this is called a Tathâgata, a sage, awakened. One who does not know it is called an ordinary worldling, an unenlightened being, deluded.

The living beings of the ten realms are each endowed with the ten suchnesses, together making one hundred realms. The hundred realms each possess the ten suchnesses, making a thousand suchnesses. These thousand suchnesses are endowed with the realm of living beings, the realm of the land, and the realm of the five skandhas, making three thousand realms. The physical forms which appear as the hundred realms all have the significance of transience, and thus represent the single truth of provisional existence. The thousand suchnesses all have the significance of non-

substantiality and thus represent the single truth of Emptiness. The three thousand realms taken together have the significance of the Dharma body, and thus represent the one, Middle Way. Though the doctrines are many, ultimately there are only the three truths. These three truths are also called the triple-bodied Tathâgata and the ultimate of the three virtues. The first three suchnesses are the Tathâgata of original enlightenment. Because they are of one essence with the last seven suchnesses, without duality or separation, we speak of their "ultimate equality from beginning to end." "Beginning" indicates the Buddha nature, while "end" indicates the Buddha who has yet to emerge, and refers to the nine realms. "Ultimately equal" means that the Tathâgata at the ultimate stage of wondrous enlightenment and we ordinary worldlings at the stage of identity in principle are without distinction. This is called "ultimately equal." It is also called [the teaching of] the Lotus Sûtra of impartial great wisdom.

The first three suchnesses [of us, living beings] are the Tathâgata of original enlightenment. Since they are [equal to] the Buddha of wondrous enlightenment who awakens to and manifests this Tathâgata of original enlightenment, we are the father and mother of wondrous enlightenment, and the Buddha is the child we have begotten. Chüan one of the Chih-kuan states, "Calming

is the Buddha's mother, while insight is the Buddha's father."²⁰ To illustrate, suppose that there are ten people, each of whom has treasures piled up in his storehouse. Not knowing that they have treasure in their storehouses, they will die of hunger or cold. Again, suppose that among them there is one who is clever and realizes the truth of the matter, while the other nine remain in ignorance. However, they can be taught [by the wiser one] to eat, or they can be made [by him] to take food. Chüan one of the commentary explains that the two words "calming" and "insight" indicate the substance of what is heard.²¹ For one who does not hear [the Wonderful Dharma], in vain is he "ultimately equal"!

There are many cases in which children surpass their parents. Chung-hua²² revered his foolish father and became known as a worthy man. P'ei-kung,²³ even after becoming emperor, revered his father, but his father, who was thus respected [by his son], was not the one called the ruler. The son, who respected him, was the one looked up to as the ruler. Though the Buddha is the child, he is admirable and manifests awakening. Though ordinary worldlings are his parents, they are foolish and have not yet awakened. Those who do not understand the detailed significance [of this matter] use such offensive expressions as "treading on the head

of Vairocana."²⁴ A grave distortion!

As for the threefold contemplation in a single mind, there is the threefold contemplation that is sequential and the threefold contemplation that is non-sequential, but I will not speak of them in detail here. The clear grasp and attainment of this threefold contemplation is referred to in the Flower Ornament Sûtra with the words, "This threefold world is all the one mind."²⁵ T'ien-t'ai [Chih-i] speaks of all waters entering the sea. The Buddha, ourselves and all living beings are in principle and nature one and without separation; this is termed the impartial great wisdom. "Impartial" should be construed as "all-encompassing." This doctrine of the threefold contemplation in a single mind, or the three thousand realms in a single thought-moment, is not at all to be found in the various [other] sûtras. Unless one encounters the Lotus Sûtra, how can one attain Buddhahood? Though the other schools may go beyond the six realms²⁶ or the eight realms²⁷ to clarify the ten realms, they do not speak of their mutual possession. In the case of the Lotus Sûtra, when we in each moment perceive the purport of threefold contemplation in a single mind or the three thousand realms in a single thought-moment, oneself being the Tathâgata of original enlightenment is realized and manifested. The clouds of ignorance part, and the moon

of the Dharma nature shines brilliantly. We awaken from the dream of false conceptualization, and the orb of the moon of original enlightenment shines forth in all its purity. [In that moment,] the fleshly body born of father and mother, the body bound by worldly passions, is precisely the Tathâgata who is originally inherent and constantly abides. This is called attaining Buddhahood in this very body. It is also called the worldly passions being precisely enlightenment and birth and death being precisely nirvâṇa. At this time, when we illuminate the dharma-realm and observe it, everything is the single principle of the Buddha Way; the Buddha and the beings are one. Thus T'ien-t'ai states in his commentary, "Every color and fragrance is none other than the Middle Way."²⁸ At this time, the worlds of the ten directions are all the Pure Land of Tranquil Light. Which place can be called the pure land of Amida or of Yakushi? In this sense, the Lotus Sûtra states, "The dharmas dwell in a Dharma position, and the worldly aspect constantly abides."²⁹

As for the question whether, even without reading the sûtra, one can attain Buddhahood simply by contemplation of the mind-ground: The meditation on the three thousand realms in a single thought-moment and the meditation method of the threefold contemplation in a single mind are both contained within the five

characters myô-hô-ren-ge-kyô, and the five characters myô-hô-ren-ge-kyô are contained within our one mind. T'ien-t'ai states in his commentary, "Myôhō-rengē-kyō is the inner storehouse of the exceeding profundity of the original ground; [...] it is what all Tathāgatas of the three time periods have obtained."³⁰ Thus, when we chant Myôhō-rengē-kyō, the Buddha of original enlightenment within our mind appears. Our body and mind may be likened to a storehouse, and the character myô, to the seal [that opens it]. T'ien-t'ai states in his commentary, "It opens the secret innermost storehouse; this is termed myô [Wonderful]. It demonstrates the correct principles of true and provisional; therefore, it is termed hō [Dharma]. It indicates the original effect [obtained by the Buddha] in the distant past; for this, ren [lotus] is used as a metaphor. It encompasses [everything] in the perfect path of nonduality; this is illustrated by ge [blossom]. The voice does the Buddha's work; this is termed kyô [sūtra]."³¹ He also states, "The word myô praises the inconceivable Dharma. Moreover, myô indicates the ten realms, ten suchnesses and all provisional and true teachings."³² Ignorant people may think it hard to understand that chanting the sūtra's title and contemplation are the same. Nevertheless, [chūan] two of T'ien-t'ai's Chih[-kuan] refers to "reciting or

remaining silent."³³ "Reciting" indicates the sūtra. "Remaining silent" indicates contemplation. Moreover, [chuan] one of the Ssu-chiao i [The Meaning of the Four Teachings] states, "Not only is it not a waste of effort, it is the essential by which one can accord with the principle."³⁴

The person known as the Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai was Bodhisattva Medicine King. This great teacher made the interpretation concerning [the importance of both] recitation and contemplation. From the outset, in T'ien-t'ai's commentary, we find four kinds of interpretation: [interpretation with reference to] causes and circumstances, categories of teachings, the origin and trace [teachings of the Lotus Sūtra] and the observation of the mind.³⁵ Those who do not understand the importance of these four kinds [of interpretation] and consider but one, emphasize origin and trace [teachings] exclusively, or stress only the observation of the mind.³⁶ In the Lotus Sūtra, we find preaching by means of doctrinal exposition, parables, and elucidation of causal relationships.³⁷ In the doctrinal exposition section, [the sūtra] is defined as the original purpose for which all Buddhas appear in the world and the direct path of attaining Buddhahood for all living beings. And what the Buddha established as the causal relationship whereby not only he himself but all other beings can

"quickly reach the place of enlightenment"³⁸ is the daimoku. Thus [chüan] one of T'ien-t'ai's Hsüan-[i] states, "The beings' small acts of good are gathered up and returned to the one vehicle that is broad and great."³⁹ "Broad and great" means that the Buddha draws and leads [all to enlightenment through this sūtra] without exception. Even if Śākyamuni alone had declared it to be his original purpose, [all beings] from [the stage of] virtual enlightenment on down should reverently believe in this sūtra. How much more so, since it is the original purpose for which all the Buddhas appear in the world!

The Zen school reveres the observation of the mind as the Buddha's original purpose, but this is merely one aspect of the four kinds [of interpretation].⁴⁰ If the observation of the mind--as represented by the three thousand realms in a single thought-moment or the threefold contemplation in a single mind--alone constituted the essence of the Lotus Sūtra, then [the phrase] "the ten suchnesses" should have been positioned as the title of the Lotus Sūtra. But in fact, Myôhō-
renge-kyô has been placed there as the sūtra's title. I need not go into further detail. Moreover, when we consider that the Zen school of today asserts a "special transmission outside the teachings," in addition to citing passages from the Yuan-chüeh ching (Sūtra of

Perfect Enlightenment)⁴¹ and other sūtras, which they have supposedly discarded, they should not go so far as to adorn [their doctrines] with passages from the true sūtra. Persons of wisdom should practice contemplation together with reading and recitation [of the sūtra]. Ignorant persons, though they chant the daimoku alone, will be encompassed within this principle.

Myôhō-rence-kyô is the name of the eight-petaled white lotus blossom that is our mind-nature, or in general, the mind-nature of all living beings. It represents the words of the Buddha who taught this [identity of our mind-nature with ultimate truth]. Since time without beginning, being deluded to our own mind-nature, we have transmigrated in the realm of birth and death. But now, having encountered this sūtra, when we chant [the name of] the Tathâgata of original enlightenment who possesses the three bodies in one, [that Tathâgata] emerges. Attaining Buddhahood by realizing this inwardly in the present world is called attaining Buddhahood in this very body. When one dies, one radiates light; this is called the attainment of Buddhahood as an outer function. This is what is meant by becoming a Buddha in the next life. The words, "In abbreviation one cites the sūtra's title, but its profound [meaning] contains the entire sūtra,"⁴² means that one utterance [of the daimoku] contains the entire

sûtra. When we chant Myôhō-rengē-kyō, the Tathāgata who is our mind-nature emerges. Those who hear it can extinguish the sins of countless asamkhyeya-kalpas. When even for a single moment we rejoice in the sūtra, we attain Buddhahood in our present body. Even if one does not have faith [in the sūtra, hearing it] becomes a seed, matures, and invariably, by virtue of it, one will attain Buddhahood. The Great Teacher Miao-lo states, "Whether one takes it up or whether he discards it, by hearing it, one forms a karmic affinity. Whether one follows or opposes it, by virtue of this [relationship], one will achieve liberation."⁴³ Nichiren says, "Whether one takes it up or whether one discards it, whether one follows or whether one opposes," are words to be engraved in our hearts. This must be what the Lotus Sūtra means in saying, "If there are those who hear this Dharma, [there is not one who shall not attain Buddhahood]."⁴⁴ [The sūtra] has already spoken of "those who hear." If one could attain Buddhahood through contemplation alone, then why would it have said, "If there are those who hear this Dharma"? In T'ien-t'ai's interpretation, the ten suchnesses entail the ten realms.⁴⁵ These ten realms arise from a single moment of consciousness and the beings of the ten realms likewise emerge. These ten suchnesses refer to Myôhō-rengē-kyō. This sahā world is a land wherein one

attains the Way by virtue of the aural sense-faculty. As I quoted before, "You must know that our body and land...." The persons of all living beings are endowed with the hundred realms, ten suchnesses and three thousand realms. Because [the Lotus Sûtra] clarifies this meaning, all living beings who hear it are beings who have obtained merit. As for "all living beings," surely this includes trees and grasses, tiles and rocks (sentient and insentient). Concerning the case of grasses and trees, the Ching-kuang-pei [The Vajra Scalpel] states, "A blade of grass, a tree, a pebble, a mote of dust--each has the Buddha nature, and each is endowed with the cause and effect [of Buddhahood]."46 The beginning of the "Dharma Preacher" chapter reads, "Countless heavenly beings, dragon kings, yakṣas, gandharvas, asuras, garuḍas, kinnaras, mahoragas, beings human and nonhuman, monks and nuns [....] Of those who hear even a single verse or phrase of the Sûtra of the Lotus Blossom of the Wonderful Dharma and rejoice accordingly even for a single moment, upon them all I [Śākyamuni] confer a prophecy of anuttara-samyak-sambodhi."47 "Non-human" refers in general to the entire sentient realm apart from the human world, to all that has mind. How much more so [does the Buddha's prophecy apply to] those of the human world! Practitioners of the Lotus Sûtra, if they practice as it

teaches, shall surely attain Buddhahood within this one lifetime, not excepting a single person. To illustrate, in spring and autumn one prepares the fields, and, though some may ripen sooner and others later, within the year one can surely gather the harvest.

Practitioners of the Lotus Sûtra may include those of superior, intermediate and lesser capacity, but they will surely within this one lifetime attain enlightenment. [Chüan] one of the Hsüan[-i] states, "Whether they are of superior, medium or inferior capacity, [the Buddha] confers his prophecy upon all."⁴⁸ Those who think they can attain Buddhahood merely by observing the mind are lacking one aspect. How much more are [those who advocate] the seated meditation (zazen) of the "separate transmission outside the teachings"! The "Dharma Preacher" chapter reads:

Medicine King! There are many people, both householders and those who have left household life, who practice the bodhisattva Way. If they have not been able to see and hear, read and recite, copy and uphold or make offerings to this Lotus Sûtra, be it known that these people have not yet well practiced the bodhisattva Way. But if there are any who have been able to hear this scripture, they are the ones who can well carry out the bodhisattva Way.⁴⁹

If it were possible to attain Buddhahood only through observing the mind, then why would the sûtra speak of "seeing and hearing, reading and reciting"? This sûtra from first to last makes hearing its basis. This sûtra

does not discriminate against evil men, women, those of the two vehicles or icchantikas; therefore it says that "all will attain the Buddha Way" and also speaks of the "impartial great wisdom." When one hears that good and evil are nondual and that wrong and right are a single suchness, one can directly attain Buddhahood as an inner realization. This is called becoming a Buddha in one's present body. And because one will achieve it in one lifetime, it is called the wondrous enlightenment [achieved] in a single lifetime. Even those people who do not know [the sūtra's] meaning, because they chant [its title], will experience the joy that "only a Buddha and a Buddha"⁵⁰ can share. As the sūtra states, "I [Śākyamuni] will rejoice, and the other Buddhas will do likewise."⁵¹

Even if one has a medicine compounded of a hundred or a thousand [herbs], if he fails to put it in his mouth and take it, his illness will not be cured. Though one may have treasures in his storehouse, if he does not know how to open it, he will suffer thirst and hunger. And even though one may carry medicine in his purse, if he does not know that he should take it, he will die. The gem called the wish-granting jewel is described in the "Five Hundred Disciples" chapter [and possesses all treasure within itself].⁵² The virtue of this sūtra is just like this. [The following] goes

without saying if one reads it in addition to observing the mind. But even if one does not practice meditation, as mentioned before, when one reads [the passage dealing with the ten suchnesses] as "the so-called suchness of the dharmas, the suchness of this their characteristics," etc., because "suchness" has the meaning of Emptiness, the characteristics, nature, essence, power, [etc.] of our person, received through our prior deeds, and the eighty-eight delusions of view and the eighty-one delusions of thought⁵³ that it possesses, in their Emptiness, are the recompense-body Tathāgata. When one reads [the passage] as "that is, the dharmas' such-like appearance," etc., because this has the meaning of provisional existence, the characteristics, nature, essence, power, etc. of this our own person, received by virtue of our prior deeds, and the delusions like dust motes and sand grains that it possesses, are all at once the manifested-body Tathāgata. And when one reads [the passage] as "that is, the dharmas are like this," in accordance with the meaning of the Middle Way, the [delusions arising from] ignorance accompanying our characteristics, nature, etc., received by virtue of our deeds, recede, and the mind is opened to reveal one's present body as the Dharma-body Tathāgata. The three recitations of these ten suchnesses have the meaning of the three [Tathāgata]

bodies being one body and the one body being three.
Though divided into three, they are one; though
established as one, they are three.

Notes to "The Doctrine of Three Thousand Realms in a
Single Thought-Moment":

1. "Ichinen sanzen hômon," STN 3:2033-40.
2. This tradition evidently derives from the fact that Chih-i, after a period of intense effort in meditative practice, is said to have experienced a profound awakening on reading a passage from the "Bodhisattva Medicine King" chapter of the Lotus Sûtra. See Kuan-ting's biography, the Sui T'ien-t'ai Chih-che Ta-shih pieh-chuan, T 2050.50:191c26ff; the Hsü kao-seng chuan 17, T 2060.50:564b17-19; and Leon Hurvitz, Chih-i, p. 109.
3. The Miao-fa lien-hua ching hsüan-i, T 1716.33:681-814.
4. The Miao-fa-lien-hua-ching wen-chü, T 1718.34:1-149.
5. Chih-i's commentary on the Moho po-jo po-lo-mi ching, the Shih moho po-jo po-lo-mi ching chüeh-i san-mei, T 1922.46:621-27.
6. The Hsiu-hsi chih-kuan tso-ch'an fa-yao, often called the Hsiao chih-kuan, T 1915.46:462-475.
7. This may refer collectively to Chih-i's commentaries on the Vimalakîrti-nirdeśa, the Wei-mo ching lüeh-shu, T 1778.38:562-710; the Wei-mo ching hsüan-shu, T 1777.38:519-562; and the Wei-mo ching kuang-shu, Manji 27:429-77 (chüan 1-7) and 28:1-193 (chüan 8-28).
8. T 1918.46:555-580.
9. The Shih ch'an po-lo-mi tz'u-ti fa-men, T 1916.46:475-548.
10. T 1911.46:1-140. This is Chih-i's great meditation manual setting forth the T'ien-t'ai system of meditative practices.
11. The six stages of practice in the T'ien-t'ai school: (1) the stage prior to practice at which one possesses the Buddha-nature in principle but is not aware of it (ri-soku); (2) the stage of verbal identity, the initial stage of practice, at which one understands through the words of the teachings that all dharmas are the Buddha-Dharma and that one possesses the Buddha nature (myôji-soku); (3) the stage at which one perceives the truth in meditation and one's conduct accords with that

perception (kangyô-soku); (4) the stage at which one advances in practice and attains wisdom similar to the Buddha's (sôji-soku); (5) the stage at which one removes a portion of the primal ignorance and partially realizes the Buddha-nature (bunshin-soku); and (6) the final stage of full enlightenment (kukyô-soku). The term soku ("identity") appended to the name of each stage indicates that, whatever their level of spiritual development, the beings are ontologically identical to the Buddha. See Chih-kuan 1a, T 1911. 46:10b7-c24.

12. (1) The constantly sitting samâdhi, in which the practitioner sits in meditation for 90 days; (2) the constantly walking samâdhi, in which the practitioner circumambulates an image of Amitâbha while contemplating him and reciting his name, also conducted for a 90-day period; (3) the half-walking, half-sitting samâdhi, in which the two previous types of meditation are combined; and (4) the neither walking nor sitting samâdhi, in which one cultivates meditation by observing the mind wherever it happens to be directed and in the midst of any activity. Chi-kuan 2a, T 1911.46:11a21ff. See also Daniel B. Stevenson, "The Four Kinds of Samâdhi in Early T'ien-t'ai Buddhism" in Peter N. Gregory, ed., Traditions of Meditation in Chinese Buddhism, Kuroda Institute, Studies in East Asian Buddhism, vol. 4 (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986), pp. 45-97.

13. T 1911.46:49a27ff. The ten objects are: (1) the phenomenal world comprised of the five skandhas or aggregates, the eighteen dhâtus or elements and the twelve âyatanas or sense-fields; (2) the defilements, (3) sickness, (4) karmic effects, (5) the workings of demons, (6) meditations, (7) views, (8) arrogance, (9) the state of the two vehicles, and (10) the state of the bodhisattva. In this way, whatever mental state one may be experiencing can serve as an object of meditation.

14. T 1911.46:52b1ff. The ten modes are: (1) meditation on the inconceivable object; (2) awakening the bodhi mind; (3) skilful practice of calming and insight; (4) eliminating attachments; (5) discerning what leads to realization of the triple truth and what obstructs it; (6) examining and choosing appropriately from among the thirty-seven elements conducive to enlightenment (bodhi-paksa); (7) eliminating hindrances by performing the five meditations for stopping unwholesome thoughts and the six pârâmitâs; (8) being aware of one's own stage of spiritual development, in order to avoid arrogance; (9) maintaining calm and forbearance in all circumstances; and (10) removing attachment to inferior levels of

spiritual attainment. The basis of all ten is the meditation on the inconceivable object. Practitioners of the highest capacity need practice only this one contemplation, while those of lesser capacity benefit from undertaking others of the ten as well.

15. Chih-kuan 5a, T 1911.46:54a5. These words open the brief but famous passage setting forth the teaching of the three thousand realms in a single thought-moment.

16. Hung-chüeh 5-3, T 1912.46:295c23-24.

17. "Only a Buddha and a Buddha together can fathom the true aspect of the dharmas, that is to say, the suchness of their characteristics, the suchness of their nature, the suchness of their essence, the suchness of their power, the suchness of their activity, the suchness of their causes, the suchness of their conditions, the suchness of their effects, the suchness of their recompenses and the suchness of their ultimate equality from beginning to end" (T 262.9:5c11-13).

18. In light of the subsequent explanation, this means that, in terms of the three truths, they interpret the passage from the Lotus Sûtra only from the viewpoint of the truth of provisional existence, neglecting the viewpoints of the truths of Emptiness and the Middle Way.

19. Hui-ssu evidently read this passage as revealing the truth of Emptiness, while Chih-i advocated that it be read from the viewpoint of all three truths (Hsüan-i 2a, T 1716.33:693b12-25. See also the translation of this section of the Hsüan-i in Wm. Theodore de Bary et al., eds., Sources of Chinese Tradition, vol. 1, pp. 319-20, as well as the explanation of the three ways of reading the sûtra text in Leon Hurvitz, Chih-i, pp. 290-92). Briefly, in the Chinese text of the sûtra, each of the ten suchnesses is expressed in three characters. The word "suchness" is nyoze, meaning literally "like this" or "like such." Thus, if one punctuates the text to read, "These their characteristics are such" (ze sô nyo), that indicates the truth of Emptiness (or Suchness). If one reads it as "their such-like characteristics" (nyo ze sô), that emphasizes the truth of provisional existence. And if one reads it as "their characteristics are like this" (sô nyo ze), that emphasizes the Middle Way.

20. This quotation does not appear in extant versions of the Chih-kuan. Rokuge bikô 2:14-15, suggests passages in Chih-kuan commentaries upon which it may be based.

21. Hung-chüeh 1-1, T 1912.46:142b6-7.
22. Shun, one of the legendary five emperors, said to have been chosen as successor by the Emperor Yao on account of his ability and exemplary filial piety.
23. Liu-pang, the founder of the Han dynasty.
24. Pi-yen lu 1, T 2003.48:222b4-5.
25. This precise quotation does not occur in extant versions of the Hua-yen ching. However, other texts also cite it as a quotation from the Hua-yen ching. See Zenshû kôgi 2:429.
26. The six paths through which deluded beings transmigrate: the realms of hell-dwellers, hungry ghosts, beasts, asuras, humans and gods.
27. The above six realms plus the states of the voice-hearer and the condition-perceiver.
28. Chih-kuan 1a, T. 1911.46.1c24-25.
29. T 262.9:9b10.
30. Hsüan-i 1a, T 1716.33:681c9-11.
31. Hsüan-i 1a, T 1716.33:681c2-5.
32. This appear to be an abbreviation of T 1716.33:681c14-16.
33. See T 1911.46:11b1-2, 9-21. In the context of the Chih-kuan, this means that should one be overcome by illness or fatigue and be unable to sustain meditation, one may call on the names of various Buddhas as an aid to one's efforts.
34. T 1929.46:725b6-7.
35. This four-part hermeneutic appears in Wen-chü 1a, T 1718.34:2a20-b10.
36. That is, they place a one-sided emphasis either on doctrinal study and sûtra recitation, or on meditation.
37. The Buddha declares the one vehicle by these three means for the sake of his disciples of superior, intermediate and lesser capacity, respectively. "Doctrinal exposition" refers to the "true aspect of the

dharmas" and "ten suchnesses" set forth in p'in 2; the "parables" are expounded in p'in 3 through 5; and the "elucidation of causal relationships" refers to the Buddha's account in p'in 7 of his relationship formed with his disciples in the remote past when he first taught them the Lotus Sûtra as the sixteenth son of the Buddha Victorious through Great Penetrating Wisdom.

38. Lotus, p'in 3, T 262.9:15a14.

39. T 1716.33:681b14.

40. The implication here is that the Zen school stresses only meditation and undervalues the sutras and doctrinal study.

41. Ta-fang-kuang yuan-chüeh hsiu-to-lo liao-i ching, T 842.17:913-22.

42. Chi 8-4, T 1719.34:311a14.

43. Chi 10b, T 1719.34:359c28-29.

44. T 262.9:9b3.

45. See Hsüan-i 2a, T 1716.33:693c16-17.

46. T 1932.46:784b21.

47. Lotus, p'in 10, T 262.9:30c1-7.

48. T 1716.33:681b14-15.

49. T 262.9:31c3-6.

50. Lotus, p'in 2, T 262.9:5c10-11.

51. Lotus, p'in 11, T 262.9:34b15-16.

52. This refers to the parable of the jewel hidden in the robe. See T 262.9:29a6-b21; Hurvitz, pp. 164-67.

53. These comprise the first of three categories of delusion (sanwaku)--the delusions of thoughts and of views which trouble ordinary beings in the threefold world. The other two categories, mentioned subsequently, are the delusions numerous as dust motes and sand grains, which hinder a bodhisattva's knowledge of salvation methods, and the delusions arising from ignorance, which hinder knowledge of the ultimate reality. According to T'ien-t'ai thought, these three

categories of delusion can be eradicated by the contemplation of the truths of Emptiness, provisional existence and the Middle Way, respectively. See for example Chih-kuan 4a, T 1911.46:37c2-4.

The Ten Suchnesses¹

Our own person is the Tathâgata of original enlightenment who possesses the three bodies in one.

The present [Lotus] sūtra explains this in the passage:

[...] the suchness of their characteristics, the suchness of their nature, the suchness of their essence, the suchness of their power, the suchness of their activity, the suchness of their causes, the suchness of their conditions, the suchness of their effects, the suchness of their recompense, and the suchness of their ultimate equality from beginning to end.²

First, "the suchness of their characteristics" refers to the characteristics that appear in the color and form of our body. This is also referred to as the manifested-body Tathâgata, emancipation, and the truth of provisional existence. Next, "the suchness of their nature" refers to the nature of our mind. This is also called the recompense-body Tathâgata, prajñâ, and the truth of Emptiness. Third, "the suchness of their essence" refers to our physical entity. This is also called the Dharma-body Tathâgata, the Middle Way, the Dharma nature and quiet extinction. Thus these three suchnesses correspond to the three Tathâgata bodies. We think of these three suchnesses, which are the three Tathâgata bodies, as existing apart from us in other places, but they are in fact ourselves. One who has

understood thus can be called a person who has realized the Lotus Sûtra. With these three suchnesses as their beginning, the remaining seven suchnesses emerge, making ten suchnesses. These ten suchnesses in turn form the hundred realms, the thousand suchnesses and the three thousand realms. In this way, they expand into many doctrines and are called the repository of eighty thousand dharmas, yet they all originate with the single dharma of the three truths. Apart from the three truths, there are no doctrines. The reason is: The hundred realms correspond to the truth of provisional existence; the thousand suchnesses, to the truth of Emptiness; and the three thousand realms, to the truth of the Middle Way. Emptiness, provisional existence and the Middle Way are called the three truths.³ Though they expand into the many doctrines of the hundred realms, thousand suchnesses and three thousand realms, all these originate from a single doctrine, the three truths.

This being the case, the three truths of the first three suchnesses, and the three truths of the next seven suchnesses, are the same three truths. Thus "beginning" and "end" and the principle within ourselves are but a single thing. Because this is inconceivable, [the Buddha] expounded that beginning and end are ultimately equal. This is called "the suchness of their ultimate

equality from beginning to end."

The ten suchnesses--of which the first three suchnesses represent "beginning" and the latter seven suchnesses represent "end"--are the three truths within us. Since these three truths are the three Tathâgata bodies, then apart from our own body and mind there exists not even a hair's-breadth of a dharma, whether good or evil. This being the case, we ourselves are at once the Tathâgata of original enlightenment, possessing the three bodies in one.

One who thinks this [triple-bodied Tathâgata] exists somewhere else is called an unenlightened being, deluded, an ordinary person, while one who has understood it in terms of oneself is called a Tathâgata, awakened, a sage, a wise person. When we awaken to and clearly observe [the matter] in this way, then our own person will directly within this lifetime manifest the Tathâgata of original enlightenment. This is called attaining Buddhahood in this very body.

To illustrate, in spring and summer one prepares and plants his fields, so that in autumn and winter he can gather the harvest into the granary and use it as he wishes. To wait from spring until autumn seems a long time, but since it will arrive within the year, one can manage to wait. Similarly, to enter this awakening and manifest the Buddha may seem to take a long time, but

within this single lifetime you will manifest it, becoming in your own person a Buddha who possesses the three bodies in one.

Even among those who enter this path, there are those of superior, intermediate, and lesser faculties, yet they will all alike manifest [Buddhahood] within this single lifetime. Those of superior faculties perfect their awakening and manifest it on hearing [the Wonderful Dharma]. Those of intermediate faculties can manifest it in a day, a month, a year. Those of lesser faculties do not advance and seem to be blocked, yet because enlightenment is certain within this lifetime, when such a person approaches the hour of death, then--just as one wakens from the various dreams that have appeared to him and returns to the waking state--the logic of the distorted thoughts and distorted views of birth and death and false conceptualization that he has beheld until this moment will vanish without a trace, and he will return to the waking reality of original enlightenment. Gazing around at the dharma-realm, [he will observe that] it is all the [land of the] Perfect Bliss of Tranquil Light, and that his own person, which he has habitually despised as base, is the Tathāgata of original enlightenment endowed with the three bodies in one. Of the rice that ripens in autumn, there are three strains: that which ripens early, that which ripens in

mid-autumn, and that which ripens late, but it is all harvested within the year. In like manner, though people possess the distinctions of superior, intermediate and lesser faculties, they will all alike within this single lifetime comprehend that they and the Buddhas and Tathâgatas are of one substance and without duality.

As for the excellence of the essence of Myôhō-rengē-kyô: When we inquire into what sort of essence it is, [we find that] it is the eight-petalled white lotus blossom that is the nature of our mind. This being the case, our own essential nature is called Myôhō-rengē-kyô. Therefore, it is not the name of a sūtra but the essence of oneself. When we understand this, we at once become the Lotus Sūtra. Because the Lotus Sūtra represents the Buddha's words in which he summoned forth and manifested the essence of ourselves, we ourselves are at once the Tathâgata of original enlightenment possessing the three bodies in one. When we awaken to this, the false conceptualizing of distorted thoughts, to which we have accustomed ourselves since the beginningless past until the present, will all be dispersed like yesterday's dream, vanishing without a trace.

When you believe in this and chant Namu-myôhō-rengē-kyô even once, then that is awakening to [the

meaning of] the Lotus Sûtra and reciting its entirety in accordance with its teaching. [Chanting Namu-myôhō-
renge-kyô] ten times is equivalent to ten recitations of the entire sûtra; a hundred times, to a hundred recitations; and a thousand times, to a thousand recitations. One who believes in this way is called one who practices in accordance with [the sûtra's] teaching. Namu-myôhō-renge-kyô.

Notes to "The Ten Suchnesses":

1. "Jûnyoze no koto," STN 3:2030-33.
2. T 262.9:5c11-13.
3. The above section of the text is almost identical to the opening passage of the "Hokke sokushin jôbutsu yôki" attributed to Genshin. See ESZ 3:263.

Becoming a Buddha in One Lifetime¹

Now if you wish to put an end to beginningless birth and death and, this time round, attain unexcelled bodhi without fail, you must observe the wonderful principle² originally inherent in living beings. "The wonderful principle originally inherent in living beings" is Myôhō-rengē-kyô. Therefore, when one chants Myôhō-rengē-kyô, that is observing the wonderful principle originally inherent in living beings. Because [Myôhō-rengē-kyô] is the king of sūtras, true and correct in text and principle,³ its words and letters are themselves the true aspect,⁴ and the true aspect is itself the wonderful Dharma (myôhō). That is, that which expounds and reveals the meaning of the one mind being the dharma-realm is called the the "wonderful Dharma." Therefore this sūtra is called "the wisdom of the Buddhas."⁵ The one mind being the dharma-realm means that both land and person, body and mind, of [all beings of] the ten realms and of the three thousand realms, as well as insentient beings including grasses and trees, the sky and earth, not excepting even a particle of dust, are encompassed in the mind in a single thought-moment, and this mind in a single thought-moment permeates the dharma-realm; this is

called the "ten thousand dharmas." When one awakens to this principle, that is called the one mind being the dharma-realm. However, even if you chant and uphold Myôhō-rence-kyô, if you think the Dharma is apart from your own mind, that is not the Wonderful Dharma but some inferior dharma. If it is some inferior dharma, it is not the present sūtra, and if it is not the present sūtra, it is an expedient means, a provisional doctrine. And if it is a teaching of expedient means or provisional doctrines, then it is not the direct path of attaining Buddhahood, and if it is not the direct path of attaining Buddhahood, then one cannot become a Buddha, even if one should practice austerities over the course of many lifetimes and long kalpas. Becoming a Buddha in one lifetime would then be impossible. Therefore, when you chant the Wonderful Dharma and recite the Lotus [Sūtra], you should arouse deep faith that Myôhō-rence-kyô is referring to your own [mind at each] thought-moment.

One should never think of all the eighty thousand sacred teachings of the Buddha's lifetime, nor the Buddhas and bodhisattvas of the three time periods and ten directions, as existing apart from one's mind. It is because [people make this error] that, although they study Buddhism, they fail to observe the mind-nature and thus can never separate themselves from birth and death.

If you seek the Way apart from the mind, then even if you perform all manner of practices and good deeds, you will be like a poor man who, although he calculates his neighbor's wealth by day and night, does not gain so much as half a sen thereby.⁶ Thus we read in a T'ien-t'ai commentary that "if one fails to observe the mind, one's heavy sins will not be eradicated"⁷--a judgment that, if one fails to observe the mind, [one's Buddhist practice] will become an endless painful austerity. Thus people like this have been shamed as those who study the Buddha-Dharma [only] to become [followers of] heterodox ways. As the Chih-kuan states, "Although they study the Buddhist teachings, they in fact become identical to [those who hold] external views."⁸

This being the case, whether one chants the Buddha's name, reads from the sūtra rolls, scatters flowers or even lights incense, in every case, the merit and good roots [formed by such acts] is inherent in one's thought-moment. You should take faith in this. In this regard, the Ch'ing-ming-ching [Vimalakīrti sūtra] makes clear that if one seeks the liberation of the Buddhas in the mental functions of the beings, the beings are none other than bodhi, and birth and death are none other than nirvāṇa.⁹ We also read there that when the minds of the beings are defiled, the land is also defiled, but when their minds are pure, the land is

also pure.¹⁰ Thus we find there that whether we speak of the Pure Land or whether we speak of the impure land, these are not two separate lands; [the distinction] depends solely on the good or evil of our minds.

The same holds true whether we speak of the beings or of the Buddha. While deluded, one is called an ordinary worldling, and when awakened, one is called a Buddha. To illustrate, even a tarnished mirror, when polished, will appear like a jewel. The mind which right now is deluded by the ignorance of the thought-moment is a tarnished mirror. But if one polishes it, it will surely become the bright mirror that is the true suchness of the Dharma nature. Arouse faith deeply and day and night, morning and evening, polish [the mirror of the mind] without neglect. How should you polish it? Simply chanting Namu-myôhō-rence-kyô is what is called "polishing."

Now, what is the essential meaning of myô? Myô refers simply to the inconceivable [nature] of our mind in a single thought-moment; "inconceivable" means that thoughts cannot grasp it nor words express it. This being the case, on inquiring into the mind as it rises at each thought-moment, if we try to say that it exists, it has neither form nor substance [to verify such an assertion], but if we try to say that it does not exist, various thoughts arise [and thus repudiate this claim].

If we think that it exists, it does not, but if we think that it does not exist, that is likewise incorrect. The dual expressions, existence and non-existence, cannot express it, and the dual conceptions, existence and non-existence, cannot grasp it. Neither existence nor non-existence yet encompassing both, it is the subtle essence that is the single reality of the Middle Way, whose inconceivability is termed myô. This wonderful and subtle [myô] mind is also termed the Dharma [hō]. When expressing the inconceivability of this doctrine by relating an analogy in terms of concrete realities, it is called the lotus blossom [renge]. When one realizes that the one mind is wonderful, he will know by extension that other minds are also wonderful¹¹; this [realization] is called the wonderful sūtra [kyô].¹²

This being the case, [the Lotus] is the king of sūtras, expounding that the essence of our mind, which produces thoughts with regard to both good and evil, is the essence of the Wonderful Dharma. Thus it is called the direct path of attaining Buddhahood. If you have deep faith in this and chant Myôhō-renge-kyô, there can be no further doubt about your attaining Buddhahood in this single lifetime. Therefore, the sūtra states, "After my nirvāṇa, truly one should receive and keep this sūtra. This person, with respect to the Buddha Way, is assured; there can be no doubt."¹³ Never give

way to doubt but by all means [carry out] the faith that
will enable you to become a Buddha in [this] one
lifetime. Namu-myôhô-rengé-kyô, Namu-myôhô-rengé-kyô.

Notes to "Becoming a Buddha in One Lifetime":

1. "Isshô jôbutsu shô," STN 1:125-28.

2. Myôri. This could also be translated as "subtle principle," especially in contrast to the expression sohô, a coarse or inferior dharma, which occurs later. However, for the sake of consistency with the title of the Lotus, in which myôhô has been rendered as "Wonderful Dharma" throughout, the translation "wonderful principle" is used here.

3. This phrase occurs four times in the Wu-liang i ching, the introductory scripture in the threefold Lotus Sûtra, in the formula "[This sutra] is true and correct in text and principle, unsurpassed in worth, that which the Buddhas of the three time periods together guard and protect." See T 276.9:386a2, c14, 387a23, and 389a9.

4. This derives from Saichô's commentary on the first occurrence of the phrase "true and correct in text and principle" in the Wu-liang i ching, which reads: "'Text' means the words of the names and phrases setting forth the true aspect. 'Principle' means the principle of the true aspect explained in the text. It is the text setting forth the true aspect; therefore, it is called 'true.' It is the subtle principle of [the Buddha's] inner enlightenment; therefore, it is called 'correct'" (Chû Muryôgi-kyô 2, DDZ 3:616).

5. Lotus, p'in 2, T 262.9:5b25-26.

6. This has its original source in the Flower Ornament Sûtra, where it appears as the third of nine analogies for those who do not put into practice the teaching they receive: "Like a poor man who day and night counts another's wealth but himself has not half a coin--so too are those who hear many teachings [but do not practice]" (Ta-fang-kuang fo hua-yen ching 5, T 278.9a3-4). In the T'ien-t'ai literature, this analogy is cited in Hsüan-i 1b, T 1716.33:686a14-5; Wen-chû 1a, T 1718.34:2b8-9, where it is used as a metaphor for study without meditation; and also Chih-kuan 7b, T 1911.46:98a6.

7. Hung-chüeh 4-2, T 1912.46:258c21. This quotation as given here in the "Isshô jôbutsu shô" differs very slightly from the text of the Taishô edition.

8. Rokuge kômon 2:23 cites Chih-kuan 10 as the source for this quotation, but this exact passage does not appear there. Goibun kôgi 17:97-98 suggests that it represents a composite of phrases found at Chih-kuan 10a, T 1911.46:132c5, c9 and c18.

9. Goibun kôgi 17:101 suggests that this represents an amalgamation of two passages from the Wei-mo-chieh so-shuo ching: first, from p'in 5, "[Manjusri] asked, 'Where is Emptiness to be sought?' [Vimalakirti] replied: 'In the sixty-two [distorted] views.' 'Where are the sixty-two views to be sought?' 'In the liberation of the Buddhas.' 'Where is the liberation of the Buddhas to be sought?' 'In the mental functions of all living beings'" (T 475.14:544c3-7); and second, from p'in 8, "When a bodhisattva practices wrong paths, he thereby enters the Buddha Way....He manifests himself in nirvâna without severing birth and death" (549a1-2, a26).

10. This is probably based on the discourse in the Wei-mo-chieh so-shuo ching on the Buddha lands established by bodhisattvas in order to develop the beings, beginning from "Ratnakâra, the various living beings are the Buddha lands of bodhisattvas..." to "...in accordance with his purity of mind, so is the purity of his Buddha land" T 475.14:538a21-c5).

11. Here, one possible interpretation is that "one mind" indicates the mind at this moment, which the practitioner is observing in contemplation, and "other minds," the mind at subsequent moments.

12. The above passage explaining the five characters of the daimoku appears to be based on Hsüan-i 1a, T 1716.33:685c8-13.

13. Lotus, p'in 21, T 262.9:52c1-2.

Letter to Boatmaster Yasaburô¹

I have received the rice dumplings wrapped in bamboo grass, sake, dried rice, peppers, paper and other items that you troubled to send me by your messenger. The messenger also said you had instructed him to tell me that this matter should be kept secret, which I fully understand.

On the twelfth day of the last, fifth month, having been exiled, I reached that harbor, and when I got out from the boat at a place whose name I had not even heard of and was suffering, you kindly took me into your care. What karma led you to do so? Could it be that in the past you were a practitioner of the Lotus Sûtra, and now, in the Final Dharma age, have been born as the boatmaster Yasaburô² to take pity on me, Nichiren? Although a man might perhaps have done as you did, your wife, too, gave me food, brought me water to wash my feet and hands, and in other ways as well treated me with kindness. I do not know why, I can only say that it was wondrous.

In particular, what made you secretly take faith in the Lotus Sûtra and serve me for more than thirty days? The steward and the people [of the district] hated and resented me even more than [the people] in Kamakura.

Those who saw me glared furiously, while those who heard of me became hostile. Yet even though it was the fifth month when rice is scarce, you secretly fed me. It would seem as though my father and mother had been reborn at a place called Kawana near Itô in Izu.

[Chûan] four of the Lotus Sûtra states, "[I will send...] gentlemen and women of pure faith to make offerings to the Dharma teacher."³ This sûtra passage means that for one who practices the Lotus Sûtra, the heavenly gods and benevolent deities will assume the guise, now of men, now of women, changing their form to serve and assist him in various ways. There can be no doubt that Yasaburô-dono and his wife were born as a "gentleman and woman" and serve the Dharma teacher Nichiren.

Since I wrote in detail in my last letter,⁴ I will keep this one brief. Specifically, [however, I will mention that] when the steward of this area⁵ requested that I offer prayers concerning his illness, I pondered what I should do. However, since he had displayed even a slight degree of faith in me, I resolved to appeal to the Lotus Sûtra. At that time, I thought, how could the ten râksasa daughters fail to join forces [to aid me]? And I addressed the Lotus Sûtra, Śâkyamuni, Many Jewels, and the Buddhas of the ten directions, as well as Amaterasu, Hachiman and the greater and lesser deities.

I thought that they would certainly confer and manifest some sign. Surely they would never abandon Nichiren but would respond appropriately, just as [one extends a hand to touch] a sore or an itch. And at length his illness was cured. His gift to me of a Buddha image that had emerged from the sea with a catch of fish was due to his [gratitude at recovering from this] illness. Surely [that illness] was a rebuke from the ten râksasa daughters. The merit [resulting from Nichiren's prayers] will become the merit of you two, husband and wife.

We living beings have dwelt in the sea of birth and death since time without beginning. But having become practitioners of the Lotus Sûtra, we shall become the person of the Buddha whose form and mind are without beginning, [who is] the originally inherent principle of the [Buddha] nature, [the union of] the subtle object and the subtle wisdom, indestructible as the vajra.⁶ Then how are we any different from that Buddha [whose image emerged from the sea]? Śâkyamuni, the master of teachings, enlightened since countless dust-particle kalpas ago,⁷ the "only I alone [who can save and protect],"⁸ is in fact ourselves, living beings. This is [what is meant by] the Lotus Sûtra's doctrine of the single thought-moment comprising three thousand realms; it is the action of "Always I dwell here, preaching the

Dharma."⁹ Yet even though we are ourselves the august Lotus Sûtra and Śākyamuni, ordinary worldlings do not know this. The "Fathoming the Life Span" chapter states, "I cause the deluded beings, though they are near me, not to see."¹⁰ The difference between delusion and enlightenment is like the four views of the śāla grove.¹¹ The Buddha who is the three thousand realms in a single thought-moment represents the attainment of Buddhahood by the entire dharma-realm.

The demon who appeared before the youth of the Snow Mountains was Indra in transformed guise.¹² The dove that fled to King Śibi was the god Viśvakarman.¹³ King Universal Brightness who entered the citadel of King Kalmâsapâda was Śākyamuni, the master of teachings.¹⁴ The fleshly eye cannot know these things, but the Buddha eye discerns them. In open space and in the great seas there are paths by which birds fly and fish swim, [though we cannot see them].¹⁵ These things are found in the text of the sūtras. A wooden image is precisely a golden one, and a golden image, a wooden one. Aniruddha's gold became first a hare, then a corpse.¹⁶ Sand also became gold in the palm of Mahânâma's hand.¹⁷ These things are not conceivable. [Likewise,] an ordinary worldling is precisely the Buddha, and the Buddha is precisely an ordinary worldling. This is the meaning of the single thought-moment endowed with the

three thousand realms, and of [the passage,] "[Since] I in reality attained Buddhahood, [countless myriads of millions of nayutas of kalpas have passed]."18 Thus may not you two, husband and wife, be the master of teachings, the Great Enlightened World-Honored One, reborn to help Nichiren?

Though the road between Itô and Kawana is quite short, it is far to communicate one's heart. I am writing you this letter for later on. Do not speak of it to others but bear it in mind. If others learn even the slightest thing about it, it will go hard with you. Keep it in your heart and do not talk about it. With my deepest respect. Namu-myôhô-renge-kyô.

Nichiren

The twenty-seventh day of the sixth month in the first year of Kôchô (1261)

To Boatmaster Yasaburô

Notes to "Letter to Boatmaster Yasaburô":

1. "Funamori yasaburô moto gosho," STN 1:229-31.
2. It is not clear from the text whether "boatmaster" (funamori) represents Yasaburô's surname, the name of his occupation used as a surname, or simply a title Nichiren gave him.
3. "If after my nirvâṇa/Anyone can preach this sutra,/I will send him a magically conjured fourfold assembly--/bikṣus and bikṣuṇīs,/ as well as gentlemen and women of pure faith--/to make offerings to the Dharma teacher" (T 262.9:32a29).
4. Not extant.
5. Traditional Nichiren biographies variously identify this man as Itô Sukemitsu or Itô Tomotaka. There has also been some question as to whether or not he is the same person as one Itô Hachirôzaemon who became governor of Shinano Province, mentioned in another of Nichiren's writings ("Ben-dono goshôzoku," STN 2:1190). See Nichirenschû jiten, pp. 447-48.
6. I have expanded some technical terminology in translation to fit the grammatical context. Part of this sentence is taken from a passage in Chan-ṣan concerning "the inconceivable." See Hung-chüeh 5-2, T 1912.46:288a7-8.
7. See "The Teaching Approved by All Buddhas of the Three Time Periods," n. 93.
8. Lotus, p'in 3, T 262.9:14c26-28: "Now this threefold world/is all my domain./ The beings in it/ are all my children./ Yet this place/ has many cares and troubles,/ from which only I alone/ can save and protect them."
9. Lotus, p'in 16, T 262.9:43b16-17. "In order to ferry over the beings,/ I display nirvâṇa as a skilful means,/ yet I do not in reality enter extinction./ Always I dwell here, preaching the Dharma."
10. T 262.9:43b19.
11. It is said that that when Śākyamuni Buddha entered nirvâṇa in the śāla grove, those present perceived the scene differently according to their capacity and level

of spiritual attainment. See the Hsiang-fa chüeh-i ching, T 2870.85:1337a15-15.

12. Once when the Future Buddha was practicing austerities in the Snow Mountains, Indra decided to test his resolve. He appeared before him in the form of a demon and uttered half a verse from a Buddhist teaching. When the Future Buddha begged to hear the second half, the demon demanded his flesh in payment. The Future Buddha agreed, whereupon Indra resumed his true form and praised his aspiration for the Way. Ta-pan-nieh-p'an ching 14, T 374.12:449c5-51b5.

13. In a prior existence, the Future Buddha was a king called Śibi. To test him, the gods Indra and Viśvakarman transformed themselves respectively into a hawk and a dove. The hawk pursued the dove, which flew into Śibi's robes seeking protection. In exchange for the dove's life, Śibi gave the hawk an equivalent portion of his own flesh. The deities then resumed their true forms and praised his compassion. P'u-sa pen-sheng man-lun 1, T 160.3:333b10-334a13; Ta-chi-tu lun, T 1509.25:87c29-88c27 and 314c20-29.

14. King Kalmāsapāda, misled by heterodox teachers, had vowed to kill one hundred (or one thousand) kings. The last he captured was King Universal Radiance (or Sudasuma), the Future Buddha. This king asked grace to return to his country and offer alms he had promised to a certain monk, vowing to return in a week's time to be executed. When he returned in accordance with his promise, Kalmāsapāda was so impressed that he released the captive kings and converted to Buddhism. Hsien-yü ching (Damamūka-nidāna-sūtra) 11, T 202.4:425a18-27a5; Jen-wang pan-jo po-lo-mi ching, T 245.8:830a24-bb28.

15. See Ta-fang kuang-fo hua-yen ching 34, T 279.10:180c27; Yang-chüeh-mo-lo ching (Āṅgulimālīka) 2, T 120.2:525c2-3.

16. In a past life, Aniruddha was a poor man who made offerings to a certain pratyekabuddha. When he went in search of millet to offer as alms, a rabbit jumped on his back and turned into corpse. The poor man tried in vain to shake it off, but when he returned home, it fell off and turned into gold. When wicked men came to rob him of the gold, however, they saw only a corpse. This story appears in Wen-chü 1b, T 1718.34:15b29-c8, which cites it as a quotation from the Hsien-yü ching. However, I have not been able to locate it in the latter text.

17. Fa-hua san-ta-pu pu-chu 1, Manji 44:361-62.

18. Lotus, p'in 16, T 262.9:42b12.

A Reply to the Nun, the Widow of Lord Ueno¹

I have received your various offerings.

Now I wonder if, since Lord Ueno's death, you have received news of him from the afterworld. [If so,] I would like to hear it, but I do not think that this could be. If not in a dream, you could not possibly behold his form, and if not in a vision, how could he appear to you? Yet surely in the Pure Land of Vulture Peak, he must be listening to and watching day and night the affairs of the sahâ world. You, his wife and children, having [only] the fleshly eye, do not see or hear him, but you should believe that eventually you will be reunited.

In lifetime after lifetime and world after world, the men to whom you have pledged yourself [in marriage] must have been more numerous than the sands of the great sea, but he to whom you pledged yourself in this lifetime is your true husband. The reason is that, at you husband's urging, you became a practitioner of the Lotus Sûtra. Therefore, you should look up to him as a Buddha. While alive, he was a living Buddha, and now, he is a Buddha in death. In both life and death, he is a Buddha. This is the vital doctrine called "becoming a Buddha in this very body." [Chüan] four of the Lotus

Sûtra states, "If one can hold [this sùtra], he thereby holds the Buddha's body."²

Now whether in the case of the Pure Land or whether in the case of hell, neither is found outside [us]. They exist solely within our hearts. One awakened to this is called a Buddha. One deluded to it is called an ordinary worldling. [What enables] this awakening is the Lotus Sùtra. And if this is so, then one who embraces the Lotus Sùtra awakens to hell being precisely [the Land of] Tranquil Light. Even though one may practice the provisional teachings for incalculable hundreds of thousands of years, if he departs from the Lotus Sùtra, he will always be in hell. This is not [merely] something Nichiren has said. All Buddhas including Śâkyamuni, Many Jewels, and the emanation Buddhas throughout the ten directions³ have established it. Thus one who practices the provisional teachings is like someone being burned by fire going into the midst of the fire, or like someone sinking in water moving further toward the bottom of the depths. Those who do not embrace the Lotus Sùtra are like someone entering into the midst of fire or water. Those who rely on evil teachers who are slanderers of the Lotus Sùtra such as Hônen and Kôbô, and put their faith in the Amida and Mahāvairocana sùtras, are like someone in fire entering deeper into the flames or someone in water sinking

further toward the bottom. How can they escape from agony? There can be no doubt that they will fall into the [hell of] regeneration, [the hell of] black ropes or the fiery pit of [the hell] without respite,⁴ or sink to the bottom of the ice in [the hells of] the crimson lotus or the great crimson lotus.⁵ [Chúan] two of the Lotus Sûtra says, "These men, at life's end, shall enter the Avîci hell, [where they shall fulfill one kalpa. When the kalpa is ended, they shall be reborn there.] In this way, spinning around throughout kalpas unnumbered..."⁶

Your late husband will escape this suffering, for already he had become a patron of Nichiren, the practitioner of the Lotus Sûtra. The sûtra states, "Even if he should fall into a great fire, the fire would be unable to burn him.[...] If he should be swept away by a great flood, by invoking this name, he can at once reach a shallow place."⁷ It further says, "...which fire cannot burn nor water carry off."⁸ How reassuring, how reassuring!

In the final analysis, you may look for hell externally, [but] the iron staves of the guards of hell and the voices of the abô râksasas⁹ rebuking [evildoers] do not exist apart from us. This doctrine is of extreme importance, but I will teach it to you, just as Bodhisattva Manjuśrî expounded for the dragon girl the

secret teaching of becoming a Buddha in this very body.¹⁰ Once you have heard it, you must arouse your faith all the more. One who, on hearing the doctrines of the Lotus Sûtra, strives ever more in faith is called a true seeker of the Way. T'ien-t'ai [Chih-i] speaks of "the blue derived from the indigo plant."¹¹ This interpretation means that the more one dyes something [with indigo], the bluer it will become, more so even than were the leaves [of the indigo plant itself]. The Lotus Sûtra is like the blue [of the indigo plant], while the depth of our practice is like the ever-deepening blue.

The two characters ji-goku [hell] may be interpreted as digging a hole in the ground. When someone dies, isn't a hole always dug for him? This is [what is] called "hell." The [crematory] fires that consume the dead person are the flames of [the Hell] without respite. His wife, children and retainers vying before and behind [to be closest] as they accompany him [in the funeral procession] are the the guards of hell, the abô râksasas. The grieving and weeping of his wife and children are the voices of the guards of hell. The staff, measuring two shaku and five sun,¹² is the iron rod [wielded by jailors in hell]. The horses and oxen [carrying the deceased] are the horse-headed and ox-headed demons [of hell]. The hole [dug for the grave]

is the great citadel of [the hell] without respite. The eighty-four thousand cauldrons are the gates of the eighty-four thousand defilements. [The dead man's] final setting out from his house is the mountain of death's departure.¹³ His filial children lingering on the banks of the river [as he passes by]--this is the river of the three crossings.¹⁴ It is vain and useless to seek these matters anywhere else.

Those who embrace this Lotus Sûtra transform [all] this. [For them,] hell is the Land of Tranquil Light. Its flames are the wisdom fire of the recompense-body Tathâgata, the dead person is the Dharma-body Tathâgata, and the fiery pit refers to the manifested-body Tathâgata, whose room is great compassion.¹⁵ Moreover, the staff is the staff of the Wonderful Dharma that is the true aspect [of the dharmas]; the river of the three crossings is the great sea of "birth and death being precisely nirvâṇa"; and the mountains of death's departure are the layered mountains of "the worldly passions being precisely enlightenment."¹⁶ You must understand things in this way. The expressions "becoming a Buddha in this very body" and "opening the Buddha's knowledge and insight" both refer to realizing or opening this [reality]. Devadatta¹⁷ opened the Avîci Hell [to reveal it] as the perfect bliss of Tranquil Light, and the dragon girl's becoming a Buddha in her

present body was none other than this [awakening]. This is because the Lotus Sûtra saves both those who oppose and those who follow it. Such is the merit of the single character myô.

Bodhisattva Nâgârjuna states, "[The Lotus Sûtra] is like a great physician who can change poison into medicine."¹⁸ The Great Teacher Miao-lo [Chan-jan] states, "How can one seek [the Land of] Eternally Tranquil [Light] apart from [Bodh] Gaya? Outside [the Land of] Tranquil Light, there is no separate, sahâ world."¹⁹ He also says, "The true aspect is necessarily [manifest in] all dharmas, and all dharmas necessarily [possess] the ten suchnesses. The ten suchnesses necessarily [possess] the ten realms, and the ten realms necessarily [entail both] person and land."²⁰ The Lotus Sûtra states, "The true aspect of the dharmas...ultimately equal from beginning to end."²¹ The "Fathoming the Lifespan" chapter reads, "Since I in reality attained Buddhahood, incalculable and limitless [hundreds of thousands of myriads of millions of nayutas of kalpas have passed]."²² "I" in this sûtra passage indicates [all beings of] the ten realms. Since [all the beings of] the ten realms are Buddha inherently, they dwell in the pure land. The "Skilful Means" chapter states, "The dharmas dwell in a Dharma-position, and the worldly aspect constantly abides."²³ It is the

way of the world that the aspect [of birth and death] abides throughout the three time periods [of past, present and future]. Thus one need not lament or be surprised. The single word "aspect" encompasses the eight aspects of a Buddha's life,²⁴ and these eight aspects as well do not transcend the two words "birth" and "death." To awaken in this way is what is known as a practitioner of the Lotus Sûtra becoming a Buddha in this very body.

Your late husband was a practitioner of this sūtra, so there is no doubt that he attained Buddhahood in this very body. You need not grieve for him so much. Yet this grieving of yours is the way of ordinary people. In fact, even saints lament. When Śākyamuni Buddha entered into nirvāṇa, his great disciples grieved amid their enlightenment, perhaps to display the behavior of ordinary people.

By all means, offer memorial prayers to your heart's content. A virtuous man of antiquity²⁵ has left us the words: "Maintain the ground of the mind in the ninth consciousness,²⁶ but keep your practice in the six consciousnesses.²⁷" This is quite reasonable. In this letter, I have written my hidden doctrine. Keep it secret. Keep it secret! With my deep respect,

The eleventh of the seventh month

Nichiren (his written seal)

Reply to my lady the nun, widow of Lord Ueno

Notes to "Reply to the Nun, the Widow of Lord Ueno":

1. "Ueno-dono goke-ama gohenji," STN 1:328-32.
2. T 262.9:34-b12.
3. In p'in 11 of the Lotus Sûtra, "Apparition of the Jeweled Stûpa," the Buddha Many Jewels (Prabhûtaratna) appears from the Land of Treasure Purity in the east and testifies to the truth of all that Śâkyamuni has expounded in the sûtra (T 262.9:32b-c). In the same chapter, Śâkyamuni summons to the assembly all the Buddhas of the ten directions, who are revealed to be emanations of himself, and in p'in 21, "Supernatural Powers," these Buddhas too bear witness to the truth of the sûtra by extending their tongues to the Brahma Heaven (p. 51c18-22).
4. The first, second and eighth, respectively, of the eight hot hells said to lie beneath the continent of Jambudvîpa. In the hell of regeneration (Samjîva), the inhabitants are slashed and pounded with swords and iron staves, but their bodies immediately regenerate and undergo the same torment repeatedly. In the hell of black ropes (Kâlasûtra), wrongdoers are cut and sawed to the measurement of cables. The hell without respite (Avîci), the worst of the hells, is so called because its inhabitants suffer incessantly.
5. The seventh and eighth, respectively, of eight cold hells said to lie beneath the ground of Jambudvîpa to the side of the eight hot hells. The hells of the crimson lotus (Padma) and great crimson lotus (Mahâpadma) are so named because the intense cold of these hells causes one's back to break and the bloody flesh to emerge, resembling a crimson lotus flower.
6. Hurvitz, p. 77; T 262.9:15b28-c1.
7. T 262.9:56c9-11. This quotation comes from a passage enumerating the disasters from which one can be saved by invoking the name of Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara.
8. T 262.9:54c10-11. This refers to the indestructible merit obtained by accepting and holding the Lotus Sûtra.
9. Abô (Jpn.) are jailors in hell, said to have the heads and feet of oxen and the hands of human beings. Because they are said to be as fearful as râksasa demons, they are called in Japanese abôrasetsû.

10. In p'in 12 of the Lotus, the dragon king's daughter, who has learnt the Lotus Sûtra from Manjuśrī, appears before the assembly and in the space of a moment transforms herself into a male, perfects bodhisattva conduct and attains supreme enlightenment (T 262.9:35b15-c26; Hurvitz, pp. 199-201). Later commentators interpreted her enlightenment in terms of "attaining Buddhahood in this very body." See Chi 8-4, T 1719.34:314b22-c7 and Hokke shûku 2, DDZ 3:266-67.

11. Chih-kuan 1a, T 1911.46:1a12-13. Actually, this appears in Kuan-ting's preface.

12. This was placed in the hand of a dead person to help him or her on steep mountainous path of the afterworld.

13. A steep mountain that the dead must cross in the afterworld. See Fo-shuo Ti-ts'ang p'u-sa fa-hsin yin-yüan shih-wang ching, Manji 150:381.

14. A river that the dead are said to cross on the seventh day after their decease. One must cross it at one of three fords where the current is slow, medium or swift, depending upon the amount of evil karma one has accumulated. For a detailed account of this tradition, see Iwamoto Yutaka, Jigoku meguri no bungaku, Bukkyô setsuwa kenkyû, vol. 4 (Tokyo: Kaimei Shoin, 1979), pp. 312-20.

15. Lotus, p'in 10: "If there should be a good man or good woman who, after the nirvâṇa of the Tathâgata, wishes to preach this Lotus Sûtra for the sake of the fourfold assembly.....This good man or good woman must enter the room of the Tathâgata, don the robe of the Tathâgata and sit on the throne of the Tathagata....The room of the Tathâgata is the mind of great compassion for all living beings, the robe of the Tathâgata is gentle forbearance of insult, and the throne of the Tathâgata is the Emptiness of the dharmas" (T 262.9:31c21-27). Because the "room" represents compassion, it is associated here with the manifested body, i.e., the Buddha who appears in the world out of compassion for suffering beings.

16. The phrase "layered mountains" appears at Chih-kuan 1a, T 1911.46:3b5, and is interpreted as the "mountains of the defilements" in Hung-chüeh 1-1, T 1912.46:157b10.

17. The Buddha's cousin and renegade disciple who fomented a schism within the sangha and attempted to kill Śâkyamuni. Eventually he is said to have fallen

into hell alive for his evil deeds. P'in 12 of the Lotus predicts his future enlightenment as the Buddha Devarāja or Heavenly King (T 262.9:35a1-14; Hurvitz, p. 197).

18. Ta-chi-tu lun 100, T 1509.25:754b22. Nāgārjuna's authorship is doubtful.

19. Chi 9b, T 1719.34:333c3-4.

20. Chin-kang pei, T 1932.46:785c.12-13.

21. T 262.9:5c11-13.

22. T 262.9:42b12.

23. T 262.9:109b.

24. See "The Teaching Approved by All Buddhas of the Three Time Periods," n. 94.

25. Unidentified.

26. Amala-vijñāna. The undefiled consciousness, which is identified with true suchness or the ultimate reality.

27. The consciousnesses that arise from the contact of the six sense organs (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind) with their respective objects. Here, the realm of phenomenal existence or mundane affairs.

The Transmission of the Sole Great Matter
of Birth and Death¹

I have read your letter carefully. Now as for the transmission of the sole great matter of birth and death: this indicates Myôhō-rengē-kyô. These five characters myô-hô-ren-ge-kyô represent the transmission that has flowed without a moment's interruption since many long kalpas ago, which the two Buddhas Śākyamuni and Many Jewels, together in the jeweled stûpa, transferred to Bodhisattva Superior Conduct. Myô represents death, and hō, birth. These two dharmas of birth and death are the substance of the ten realms. They are also called the lotus that is the dharma-entity.² T'ien-t'ai [Chih-i] states, "Truly you should know that the causes and effects of dependent and primary [recompense] are all the lotus of the Dharma-entity."³ In this interpretation, "dependent and primary [recompense]" indicate birth and death. It clarifies that where there are birth and death, they are [the workings of] causes and effects and are also the Dharma of the lotus. The Great Teacher Dengyô [Saichô] states, "The two dharmas of birth and death are the subtle workings of the one mind. The two ways of existence and non-existence are the true virtue of

original enlightenment."⁴ Heaven and earth, yin and yang, the sun and moon, the five stars and [the ten dharma-realms] from hell to the fruits of Buddhahood--there is none that is not subject to birth and death. Such birth and death are the birth and death of Myôhô-rengé-kyô. T'ien-t'ai's Chih-kuan states, "'Arising' means the arising of the Dharma nature, and 'perishing,' the quiescence of the Dharma nature."⁵ The two Buddhas, Sâkyamuni and Many Jewels, also represent birth and death.

This being the case, when one chants Myôhô-rengé-kyô understanding that these three--the Lord Sâkyamuni who attained Buddhahood in the remotest past, the Lotus Sûtra that enables all to attain the Buddha way, and ourselves, living beings--are utterly without distinction, one receives the transmission of the sole great matter of birth and death. This matter is the important essential for Nichiren's disciples and lay followers, and is also what it means to hold the Lotus Sûtra.

In essence, for one who arouses faith and chants Namu-myôhô-rengé-kyô with the awakening that now is the final moment, it is expounded, "A thousand Buddhas shall extend their hands, causing him not to fear and not to fall into the evil paths."⁶ How joyful, that not one Buddha or two, nor one hundred or two hundred, but a

thousand Buddhas shall come to greet us, taking us by the hand! It is impossible to restrain one's tears of rejoicing. But for one who does not believe in the Lotus, it is expounded: "That person, at life's end, shall enter the Avici hell...."⁷ So surely the guardians of hell will come and seize him by the hand. How pitiful! No doubt the ten kings⁸ will pass judgment on him, and the deities who have accompanied him from birth⁹ will rebuke him. Now those of Nichiren's disciples and lay patrons who chant Namu-myôhō-rence-kyô should think of those thousand Buddhas extending their hands as melon [vines] or morning glories putting forth their tendrils.

Because of strong ties formed with the Lotus Sûtra in the past, one can accept and hold this sūtra in the present. There can then be no doubt that one shall attain the fruit of Buddhahood in the future. Through birth and death in the past, birth and death in the present, and birth and death in the future--not to separate oneself from the Lotus Sûtra throughout birth and death spanning the three time periods is to receive the transmission of the Lotus. But it is said that one who slanders the Dharma and does not believe "at once cuts off all worldly Buddha seeds."¹⁰ Because one cuts off the seeds for becoming a Buddha, one does not receive the transmission of the sole great matter of

birth and death.

From the general view, when Nichiren's disciples and lay supporters chant Namu-myôhō-renge-kyô, without thought of self or other, this or that, and like [different] fish within [the same body of] water,¹¹ have "different bodies but the same mind" [as Nichiren], they receive the transmission of the sole great matter of birth and death. Moreover, here [in enabling many people to receive this transmission] lies the meaning of Nichiren's propagation. And if this is the case, then surely the great vow [that the Lotus Sûtra] shall be "widely declared and spread"¹² can be fulfilled. But if among Nichiren's disciples there should be those who are of "different bodies and differing minds," they will be like inhabitants of a castle who destroy the castle from within.

In attempting to let all people in the country of Japan believe in the Lotus Sûtra and receive the transmission for becoming a Buddha, I have on the contrary been confronted with various trials and eventually was banished to this island. Nevertheless, you followed me and have met with difficulties. In my heart I pity you and feel pain. Gold cannot be burned even in a great fire, and even in a flood, it will not be swept away nor corrode. But iron can withstand neither fire nor water. A worthy man is like gold,

while an ignorant man is like iron. And are you not genuine gold? for you hold the gold of the Lotus Sûtra! The sûtra states, "Among all the various mountains, Mt. Sumeru is foremost. This Lotus Sûtra is also thus."¹³ It also states, "[The merit of one who embraces the sûtra is such that] fire cannot consume it, nor water sweep it away."¹⁴ It must be due to a karmic connection from the past that in this life you have become Nichiren's disciple. Śākyamuni and Many Jewels surely understand it. "In lifetime after lifetime in the various Buddha lands, they were always born together with their teachers"¹⁵ cannot possibly be an empty statement. In particular, your inquiry into the transmission of the sole great matter of birth and death is a thing unheard of in prior ages. How very admirable! I have explained in detail in this letter, so bear it well in mind. Simply practice Namu-myôhô-rence-kyô, [regarding it] as the transmission passed from Śākyamuni and Many Jewels to Bodhisattva Superior Conduct.

Fire has as its function to burn and to illuminate. Water has as its function to wash away filth and dirt. Wind has as its function to sweep away dust, and to breath life into people and animals, grasses and trees. The great earth has as its function to give birth to grasses and trees. Heaven has as its function to

nurture. The five characters myô-hô-ren-ge-kyô are also like this. They are the benefits conferred by the bodhisattvas emerged from the earth, who are the Buddha's original disciples. We see in the text of the sūtra that now, in the Final Dharma age, Bodhisattva Superior Conduct should make his advent to propagate this doctrine, but has he in fact appeared? Yet whether Bodhisattva Superior Conduct makes his advent or whether he does not, Nichiren has preceded him in roughly disseminating [this teaching].

No matter what, summon up the great power of faith and chant Namu-myôhō-rengē-kyō as the prayer and contemplation [that will ensure] your correct mind at the moment of death. Never seek the transmission of the sole great matter of birth and death apart from this. This is the meaning of "the worldly passions are precisely enlightenment, birth and death are precisely nirvāṇa." Without the transmission that is faith, even if one should embrace the Lotus Sūtra, it would be useless. I will explain again in further detail. With my deep respect.

Bun'ei 9 (cyclical sign mizunoe-saru), second month,
eleventh day

In reply to Sairen-bō Shōnin

the śramaṇa Nichiren

Notes to "The Transmission of the Sole Great Matter of Birth and Death":

1. "Shôji ichidaiji kechimyaku shô," STN 1:522-24.
2. This refers to the lotus that is the Dharma itself (tôtai rengo), as opposed to the lotus as metaphor (hiyu rengo), or the lotus plant that is used to illustrate the Dharma. See Hsuan-i 7b, T 1716.33:771c18-772a7.
3. Hsuan-i 7b, T 1716.33-772c17.
4. This passage appears in the "Tendai Hokkeshû gozu hômon yôsan" (DDZ 5:59) and the "Gobu kechimyaku" (DDZ 5:360), both apocryphal works attributed to Saichô.
5. T 1911.46:56b21.
6. Lotus, p'in 28, T 262.9:61c9-10.
7. Lotus, p'in 3, T 262.9:15b28-29.
8. In the Chinese religious tradition, a succession of kings who pass judgment on the dead in accordance with their deeds. They are said to be the provisional figures of Buddhas and bodhisattvas. See the Fo-shuo Ti-ts'ang P'u-sa fa-hsin yin-yuan shih-wang ching, Manji 150:381-84, as well as the Jûô santan shô attributed to Nichiren (STN 3:1966-92).
9. Two gods said to come into being simultaneously with one's birth and to reside on one's shoulders. They record all of one's deeds, good and evil, and report them after one's death to Yama, king of the afterworld. See for example Yao-shih liu-li-kuang ju-lai pen-yüan kung-te ching (Bhaisajya-guru-vaidûrya-prabhâsa-pûrva-pranidhâna-viśeṣa-viṣṭara), T 450.14:407b17-19.
10. Lotus, p'in 3, T 262.9:15b23.
11. In translating this passage, I have followed the interpretation given in Yamakawa Chiô, ed., Honge seiten daijirin (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankôkai, 1988), vol. 2, p. 2173.
12. Lotus, p'in 23: "After my entry into nirvâṇa, in the last five hundred years, widely declare and spread it throughout Jambudvîpa and do not allow it to be cut off" (T 262.9:54c21-22).

13. Lotus, p'in 23, T 262.9:54a22-23.
14. Lotus, p'in 23, T 262.9:54c10-11.
15. Lotus, p'in 7, T 262.9:26c20.

Offerings in Principle and Actuality¹

I have received the sack of polished rice, the sack of taro, and the basket of river plants that you troubled to send me by messenger. Human beings have two kinds of treasure. The first is clothing, the second is food. A sūtra states, "Sentient beings live in dependence upon food."² This passage means that those who have life sustain themselves in this world by means of clothing and food. Fish dwell in water and regard water as their treasure. Trees grow in the earth and take the earth as their treasure. Human beings live by means of food, and food is their treasure.

That which we call life is the foremost of all treasures. It is expounded that "throughout the trichiliocosm, there is nothing that equals the value of bodily life."³ This means that the treasures filling the billionfold world system could not replace life itself. Life is like a lamp, and food is like oil. When the oil is exhausted, the lamp will go out, and without food, life will cease.

In worshiping all gods and Buddhas, the word namu is placed [before their names] as the initial phrase. To explain the meaning of namu: Namu is a word from India, and in China and Japan it is translated as

"devoting one's life." "Devoting one's life" means to offer one's life to the Buddha. According to their lot, some people have wives and children, retainers, fiefs, gold and silver, while others have no treasures. But whether one has wealth or not, no treasure surpasses that called "life." Thus, those known as the sages and worthies of ancient times offered their lives to the Buddha and were able to become Buddhas themselves.

For example, the person known as the youth of the Snow Mountains entrusted his body to a demon in order to learn a verse consisting of eight characters.⁴ The person known as Bodhisattva Medicine King burnt his arm as an offering to the Lotus Sûtra.⁵ In our own country as well, a person known as the Crown Prince Shôtoku peeled off the skin of his arm on which to copy the Lotus Sûtra.⁶ The ruler known as Emperor Tenchi burned his third finger as an offering to Śâkyamuni Buddha.⁷ Because these are the deeds of worthies and sages, it is hard for us to equal them. When it comes to attaining Buddhahood, however, ordinary worldlings can become Buddhas if we bear in mind the single word "resolve" (kokorozashi). As for the meaning of "resolve": When we consider it carefully, it comes down to the doctrine of "observing the mind" (kanjin). And when we inquire into what is meant by the doctrine of observing the mind, it means that offering one's only robe to the

Lotus Sûtra is in fact peeling off the skin of one's body, and that, in an age when hunger prevails, offering the Buddha one's sole portion of food, without which one cannot sustain life for another day, is offering one's life to the Buddha. Such acts bring merit fully equal to that of [Bodhisattva] Medicine King burning his arm or the youth of the Snow Mountains offering his life to a demon. For sages, there is offering in actuality (ji-kuyô), and for ordinary worldlings, there is offering in principle (ri-kuyô). This is the doctrine of the pâramitâ of almsgiving in terms of the observation of the mind, as expounded in [chüan] seven of the Chih-kuan.⁸

The true path lies in the realities of the world. The Chin-kuang-ming ching [Sûtra of the golden light] states, "If one profoundly discerns secular dharmas, that is precisely the Buddha-Dharma."⁹ And the Nirvâna Sûtra states, "All secular and external scriptures and writings are in each case the Buddha's teaching. They are not heterodox teachings."¹⁰ When the Great Teacher Miao-lo [Chan-jan] cited the passage from chüan six of the Lotus Sûtra, "All worldly affairs of livelihood and property in no case differ from the true aspect,"¹¹ comparing it with the other [passages cited here] and elucidating its meaning, [he explained that,] although the first two sûtras have a profound intent, [in

comparison] they are still shallow and cannot approach the Lotus Sûtra.¹² Where they explain secular dharmas in terms of the Buddha-Dharma, this is not so of the Lotus Sûtra. It interprets secular dharmas as immediately comprising the whole of the Buddha-Dharma.

The sûtras preached before the Lotus Sûtra hold in essence that all dharmas are produced from the mind. To illustrate, they say that the mind is like the great earth, while the grasses and trees [that grow from the earth] are like the dharmas. Not so with the Lotus Sûtra. [It teaches that] the mind is itself the great earth, and the great earth is precisely the grasses and trees. The sûtras preached before teach that clarity of mind is like the moon and that purity of mind is like a flower. Not so with the Lotus Sûtra. It represents the doctrine that the moon is the mind, the flower is the mind. From this we should know that polished rice is not polished rice, but precisely life itself.¹³

Because I would not accept delicate fare,¹⁴ matters were beyond my power, and I have withdrawn to the mountain forest. Nevertheless, being an ordinary worldling, it is difficult for me to endure the cold and to withstand the heat. Food is scarce. I cannot endure like Piao-[]-mu,¹⁵ who walked ten thousand li on a single meal, nor am I a Ssu-tzu K'ung,¹⁶ who survived a hundred days on nine meals. My voice reading the sûtra

dies out, and my mind strays from meditation (kanjin).
Thus your happening to send me this offering is no
ordinary matter. Śākyamuni, the lord of teachings, must
have urged you to do so, or perhaps you were prompted by
your past karmic deeds. It is difficult to express
everything in a letter. With respect,

Notes to "Offerings in Principle and Actuality":

1. "Jiri kuyô gosho," STN 2:1261-64.
2. Unidentified. Here and in the next quotation, the sutra passage is first given in kanbun and then restated with a brief explanation in Japanese, which accounts for the redundancy of the text.
3. Unidentified. Gosho Kôgiroku Kankôkai, ed., Nichiren Daishonin gosho kôgi (Tokyo: Seikyô Shimbunsha, 1984), vol. 38, pp. 311-12, suggests that this may be a liberal paraphrase of the Lotus Sûtra, p'in 23: "If there is one who arouses the aspiration to attain anuttara-sanmyak-sambodhi, if he can burn a finger or a toe in offering to a Buddha-stûpa, he shall surpass one who offers a country or walled city, wife and children, or the mountains and forests, rivers and ponds, and rare and precious objects of the entire trichiliocosm" (T 262.9:54a12-160).
4. See "Letter to Boatmaster Yasaburô," n. 12.
5. Lotus, p'in 23, T 262.9:53c-54a; Hurvitz, p. 297.
6. Source of this tradition not yet located.
7. According to the Sûfuku-ji engi, cited in the Fusô ryakki 5, under the entry for the nineteenth day of the first month in the seventh year of the reign of Emperor Tenchi (626-671), when the temple Sûfuku-ji was to be built in the Shiga district of Ômi Province, excavation unearthed a piece of white stone measuring five sun in length. At night it glowed, and it was said to be the fourth finger of Emperor Tenchi's left hand that he had presented as an offering. (Cited in Gosho Kôgiroku Kankôkai, ed., Nichiren Daishonin gosho kôgi, vol. 38, p. 319).
8. T 1911.46:95c1-7.
9. This precise passage does not appear in any extant version of this sūtra. Both the Chin-kuang-ming ching (Suvarṇa-prabhāsottama-sūtrendra-rāja-sūtra) 2, T 663.16:344a9-10, and the Ho-pu chin-kuang-ming ching (Suvarṇa-prabhāsa-sūtra) 5, T 664.16:385a20-21, contain a passage of roughly similar meaning, which reads, "The affairs of the country, in both secular and religious realms, as well as secular discourses, in all cases depend upon this sūtra." However, Chih-kuan 6a, T

1911.46:77b1-2, quotes the Golden Light Sutra as saying, "The good discourses of all the realms in every case depend upon this sūtra. If one profoundly discerns secular dharmas, that is precisely the Buddha-Dharma," which is much closer to the version Nichiren cites here.

10. Here again, no such passage occurs in extant versions of the Nirvāna Sūtra. The Ta-pan-nieh-p'an ching 8 reads, "All the varieties of discourse, incantations, speech and writing are in every case the Buddha's preaching. They are not heterodox expositions" (T 374.12:412c29-413a1). However, Chih-kuan kuan 6a, T 1911.46:77a29-b1, gives the exact passage quoted here in the "Jiri kuyō gosho" as a citation from the Nirvāna Sūtra.

11. This passage actually occurs in Chih-i's Hsüan-i 1a, T 1716.33:683a6-7, as a comment on a passage from the "Merits of the Dharma Preacher" chapter of the Lotus Sūtra: "Whatever dharmas he preaches shall accord with that meaning and purport; in no case will they differ from or contradict the true aspect. Whether he discusses secular classics, maxims for governing the world, livelihood or other matters of that sort, all will coincide with the True Dharma" (T 262.9:50a22-24).

12. See Hung-chüeh 6-2, T 1912.46:341b26-c6.

13. This marks the end of Nichiren's holograph; the final page or pages are missing. Hori Nichikō, a scholar of Nichiren texts, made the judgment that a passage formerly appended to another of Nichiren's writings, the "Shishiō gosho," in fact belonged at the conclusion of this one. See STN 2:1263, n. 5.

14. I believe this refers to Nichiren's refusal, following his recall from exile to Sado in 1274, to accept bakufu patronage in exchange for his cooperation with other sects in offering prayers to thwart the Mongol invasion.

15. One character has been obliterated here in the original text, and the individual referred to has not been identified.

16. This may either refer to Ssu-tzu, the grandson of Confucius (K'ung-tzu), or it may be a contraction for both their names.

Letter to Abutsu-bô¹

I have read your letter carefully. Also I have duly received your offerings to the jeweled stûpa: one string of a thousand coins, polished rice, and the other items you sent. I have respectfully reported your intent to the object of worship (gohonzon) and to the Lotus Sûtra. Please be easy in mind.

First of all, in your letter, you ask, "What is represented by the jeweled stûpa of the Tathâgata Many Jewels that rose and appeared [out of the earth]?"² This teaching is extremely important. In explaining the jeweled stûpa, when the Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai [Chih-i] interpreted it in [chüan] eight of his Wen-chü, [he said that] the jeweled stûpa has a twofold significance: that of verifying what has come before [in the Lotus Sûtra] and that of introducing what is to come after.³ "Verifying what has come before" refers to the trace teaching. "Introducing what is to come after" refers to the origin teaching. Again, the stûpa when closed represents the trace teaching, and the stûpa when open, the origin teaching. These [two aspects of the stûpa] in turn indicate the two dharmas of [the truth as] object (kyô) and [the subjective] wisdom (chi) [to grasp it]. [These interpretations] get complicated so I will

stop here. In essence, [the stûpa's emergence] means that the three groups of voice-hearers,⁴ on hearing the Lotus Sûtra, beheld the jeweled stûpa of their own mind. Now, the same is also true of Nichiren's disciples and lay followers. In the Final Dharma age, there is no jeweled stûpa apart from the figures of those men and women who embrace the Lotus Sûtra. And if this is the case, then those who chant Namu-myôhô-rence-kyô, whether noble or base, high or low, are themselves the jeweled stûpa, and also are themselves the Tathâgata Many Jewels. There is no jeweled stûpa other than Myôhô-rence-kyô. The daimoku of the Lotus Sûtra is the jeweled stûpa, and the jeweled stûpa is also Namu-myôhô-rence-kyô.

Now the single body of Abutsu Shônin consists of the five elements of earth, water, fire, wind and space. These five elements are the five characters of the daimoku. This being the case, Abutsu-bô is himself the jeweled stûpa, and the jeweled stûpa is itself Abutsu-bô. Any other understanding would be profitless. This is the jeweled stûpa adorned with the seven kinds of gems: hearing [the Dharma], having faith, keeping the precepts, practicing meditation, striving assiduously, abandoning [attachments] and repenting of one's offenses.⁵ You may think you made offerings to the jeweled stûpa of the Tathâgata Many Jewels, but that is

not so; you offered them to yourself. One's own person is the Tathâgata of original enlightenment, possessing three bodies in one. Believing in this way, chant Namu-myôhō-rengē-kyō. Then that place [where you do so] is the very place where the jeweled stûpa dwells. This is the meaning of the sûtra's statement, "If there should be a place where one preaches the Lotus Sûtra, my jeweled stûpa [...] will rise and appear before him."⁶

Because [this teaching] is so very rare and wondrous, I am inscribing the jeweled stûpa for you.⁷ Do not bequeath it to anyone except your own son. Do not show it to others unless they are firm in faith. This is the purpose of [the Buddha's] advent in this world.

You, Abutsu-bô, should be called "teacher and leader" of the northern province [of Sado]. Could Bodhisattva Pure Conduct⁸ have been reborn in your form and visited me? It is wondrous, wondrous indeed. I, Nichiren, am unable to know [the reason for] your resolve, so I will leave that to the power of Bodhisattva Superior Conduct when he makes his advent. There can be no other reason, none at all. You and your wife should revere the jeweled stûpa privately. I will write again in detail. With my deep respect,

Nichiren

The thirteenth day of the third month, Kenji 2 (1276)⁹

To Abutsu Shōnin

Notes to "Letter to Abutsu-bô":

1. "Abutsu-bô gosho," STN 2:1144-46.

2. This event is described in Lotus, p'in 11, T 262.9:32b17ff. See also Hurvitz, pp. 182-88.

3. "Truly this stûpa rises and appears from the earth in order to verify what has come before and to invite [Śākyamuni Buddha to expound] what is to come after....The emergence of the stûpa is considered from two [aspects]. First, the sound of the voice [of the Tathāgatha Many Jewels] issuing forth [from the stûpa] serves to verify what has come before, and [Śākyamuni Buddha] opening the stûpa serves to introduce what is to come after" (Wen-chū 8b, T 1718.34:113a17-18, 26-27). Here, "what has come before" indicates Śākyamuni's teaching of the one vehicle that leads all beings to Buddhahood without discrimination, while "what is to come after" refers to the revelation of his original attainment of Buddhahood in the far distant past.

4. The śrāvakas of superior, intermediate and lesser capacity. In the Lotus Sūtra, those of superior capacity (actually only one individual, Śāriputra) grasp the principle of the one Buddha vehicle on hearing the Buddha speak of the "true aspect of the dharmas" in p'in 2; those of intermediate capacity, on hearing the parable of the "three carts and the burning house" in p'in 3; and those of lesser capacity, on hearing of the past karmic relationship existing between the Buddha and themselves, set forth in p'in 7.

5. The Lotus Sūtra identifies the seven jewels adorning the stûpa as gold, silver, vaidūrya, giant clam shell, coral, pearl and carnelian (T 262.9:32b22-23). Wen-chū 8b interprets these seven kinds of jewels as indicating the seven "limbs" of enlightenment (sapta bodhyaṅgāni) and the seven prizes (sapta dhanāni) (T 1718.34:113c9-10). Chi 8-4 in turn lists the seven treasures as hearing (śruta), faith (śraddhā), precepts (śīla), meditation (samādhi), assiduousness (virya), abandoning attachments (upeksa), and repentance (hri) (T 1719.34:311b13-15). This is the same list given in the above text; however, it differs somewhat from standard explanations of the seven prizes.

6. Lotus, p'in 11, T 262.9:32c12-13. The Taishō edition has "stûpa shrine" instead of "jeweled stûpa."

7. A reference to Nichiren's mandala.

8. Along with Bodhisattva Superior Conduct, mentioned subsequently, another of the four leaders of the bodhisattvas who emerged from the earth.

9. STN dates this letter Kenji 2 (1276). Another manuscript gives the year as Bun'ei 9 (1272). For a discussion of the dating of this letter, see Suzuki Ichijô, Nichiren Shônin ibun no bunkengakuteki kenkyû, pp. 357-59 and Asai Yôrin, Nichiren Shônin kyôgaku no kenkyû, pp. 322-23.

A Reply to Shijô Kingo-dono¹

For all living beings, there is no pleasure or joy apart from chanting Namu-myôhō-rence-kyô. The sūtra states, "...wherein the beings find pleasure and joy."² Doesn't this passage refer to the joy of the Dharma received for oneself? Aren't you included among "the beings"? "Wherein" refers to Jambudvîpa. The country of Japan lies within Jambudvîpa. As for "pleasure and joy," doesn't this mean that our body and mind, our dependent and primary [recompense], are all the single thought-moment comprising three thousand realms and also the Buddha's self-enjoyment body? There is no pleasure and joy apart from embracing the Lotus Sūtra. This is what it means in speaking of "security and peace in the present life, and later birth in a good place."³ Even if worldly troubles should arise, you must pay them no heed. Not even worthies and sages can avoid these things. Just do your sake-drinking with your wife and chant Namu-myôhō-rence-kyô. Take suffering as suffering, enjoy pleasures for what they are, and whether in suffering or joy, continue chanting Namu-myôhō-rence-kyô. How can this not be the joy of the Dharma received for oneself? Muster the strong power of faith all the more. With my deep respect,

Kenji 2 (1276), ne-hinoe, sixth month, twenty-seventh
day

In reply to Shijô Kingo-dono

Nichiren (his written seal)

Notes to "A Reply to Shijô Kingo-dono":

1. "Shijô kingo-dono gohenji," STN 2:1181-82.
2. This occurs in a passage describing the Buddha's land (Lotus, p'in 16, T 262.9:43c6-9):

When the beings perceive the kalpa ending
And being consumed by a great fire,
This, my land, remains secure and peaceful,
Constantly filled with gods and humans.
Its gardens and groves have many halls and
pavilions
Adorned with various gems
As well as jewel trees with abundant flowers and
fruit
Wherein the beings find pleasure and joy.

3. T 262.9:19b19.

Excerpts from The Oral Transmission of the Sacred
Meanings (Ongi kuden)

"Namu-myôhō-rengē-kyō" [STN 3:2605-6]

The Ongi kuden states: Namu derives from Sanskrit, and here [in Japan] it is called kimyô, to devote one's life. [The objects of this devotion] are the Person and the Dharma. [Devotion to] the Person means devoting one's life to Śākyamuni Buddha. [Devotion to] the Dharma means devoting oneself to the Lotus Sūtra. Moreover, "devotion" (ki) means to return to the principle of true suchness that is unchanging (fuhen shinnyo no ri), which is set forth in the trace teaching (shakumon), while "life" (myô) means to conform to the wisdom of true suchness that accords with conditions (zuien shinnyo no chi), which is revealed in the origin teaching (honmon).¹ The devotion of one's life is Namu-myôhō-rengē-kyō. The commentary states, "According with conditions and yet unchanging, quiescence and illumination in a single mind."² Moreover, "devotion" indicates our body, and "life," our mind. The nonduality of body and mind (shikishin funi) is called the single ultimate. A commentary reads, "It causes them to return to the single ultimate; therefore, it is called the Buddha vehicle."³

It [the Ongi kuden] further states: Namu of Namu-myôhō-rengē-kyô derives from Sanskrit, while Myôhō-rengē-kyô comes from the Chinese language. Both Sanskrit and Chinese together form Namu-myôhō-rengē-kyô. In Sanskrit, one says Saddharma-pundarîka-sûtra. Here, one says Myôhō-rengē-kyô. Sad corresponds to myô, dharma to hō, pundarîka to rengē, and sûtra to kyô. These nine characters⁴ are the Buddha-essence of the nine honored ones⁵; they represent the nine realms being precisely the Buddha realm (kyûkai soku bukkai). Myô represents the Dharma nature, and hō, ignorance. Ignorance and the Dharma nature being one essence is called the Wonderful Dharma. Rengē represents cause and effect, and also cause and effect being a single essence. Kyô indicates the words and speech, sounds and voices of all sentient beings. The commentary states, "The voice does the Buddha's work. This is termed kyô."⁶ Or, kyô can mean that which constantly abides throughout the three time periods. The dharma-realm is myôhō, the dharma-realm is rengē, the dharma realm is kyô. Rengē means the Buddha-essence of the nine honored ones on the eight-petaled lotus. You should ponder this carefully.

[From the seven important matters of the "Introductory" chapter]

Two: "Ajñāta Kaundinya"⁷ [STN 3:2607-8]

The commentary reads:

Kaundinya is a surname. Here [in China] we translate it as "a receptacle for fire."
[Ajñāta] belonged to the Brahman caste and his ancestors tended the sacrificial fire, so his clan was named accordingly. Fire has two functions: to illuminate and to burn. "To illuminate" means that darkness does not arise (fushô). "To burn" means that things are not produced (fushô). Therefore Ajñāta takes "unborn" (fushô) as his surname.⁸

The Ongi kuden states: "Fire" indicates the wisdom-fire of the Dharma nature. As for its twofold significance, "illuminating" indicates the wisdom of true suchness that accords with conditions, while "burning" indicates the principle of true suchness that is unchanging. The two words "illuminating" and "burning" [further] indicate the origin and trace teachings. That which is endowed with these two virtues of fire, illuminating and burning, is Namu-myôhō-rengē-kyô.

Now when Nichiren and his followers chant Namu-myôhō-rengē-kyô, the darkness of birth and death is illuminated and dispelled, and the knowledge-fire of nirvāṇa burns brightly. When we realize that birth and death are precisely nirvāṇa, that is "illumination, [which] means that darkness does not arise." We burn the firewood of the worldly passions and behold the wisdom-fire of enlightenment before our eyes. When we

realize that the worldly passions are precisely enlightenment, that is "burning, [which] means that things are not produced." Considering the matter in this light, Kaundinya is ourselves, the practitioners of the Lotus Sûtra, who manifest the worldly passions being precisely enlightenment and birth and death being precisely nirvâṇa.

Three: "King Ajâtaśatru"⁹ [STN 3:2608-9]

[Chüan] one of the Wen-chü states, "King Ajâtasatru was called 'enemy not yet born.'" It also states, "According to the Great [Nirvâṇa] Sûtra, Ajâtaśatru means 'enemy not yet born.'" It also states, "According to the Great Sûtra, ajâta means unborn, and śatru, enemy."¹⁰

The Ongi kuden states: All living beings in the country of Japan are King Ajâtaśatru. They have slain all Buddhas, who are their father, and killed the Lotus Sûtra, who is their mother. The Wu-liang i ching states, "The Buddhas are like the ruler of a country, and this sūtra is like his consort. They unite to beget a bodhisattva, who is their child."¹¹ Persons who slander the Dharma, though they may now be in their mother's womb, are nevertheless enemies of the Lotus Sûtra. Are they not "enemies not yet born"? In addition, Japan in the present age is filled with the

three kinds of powerful enemies.¹² Fix your mind on the phrase "śatru means enemy" and ponder it.¹³

Nichiren and his followers avoid this grave sin. If persons who slander the Dharma should take faith in the Lotus Sûtra and devote themselves to Śâkyamuni, how can their previous grave sin of having killed their father and mother fail to be eradicated? On the other hand, if a father and mother disbelieve in the Lotus Sûtra, perhaps they should be slain. For we read that the mother who is attachment to the provisional teachings and the father who is the failure to clarify [the relationship of] skillful means and truth are to be killed. Thus [chûan] two of the Wen-chû states:

Because contemplation and understanding destroy the mother who is greedy attachment and the father who is ignorance, they are called "disobedience." This is disobedience being precisely obedience. In committing this wrongdoing, one arrives at the Buddha Way.¹⁴

Now in the Final Dharma Age, "contemplation and understanding" means the contemplation and understanding that are the daimoku. As a child, to kill one's parents is disobedience. Nevertheless, to kill the father and mother who are disbelief in the Lotus Sûtra is obedience. This is the meaning of "disobedience is precisely obedience." Now Nichiren and his followers are King Ajâtashatru, because we take up the sword of Namu-myôhō-renge-kyô and slay our mother, who is

attachment, and our father, who is delusion, and attain the Buddha's body like the Lord Śākyamuni. When applied to the three kinds of powerful enemies explained in the "Forbearance" chapter, greedy attachment, the mother, corresponds to the first kind of enemy, who are lay persons, while ignorance, the father, corresponds to the second and third kinds of enemies, who are monks.

Five: "Reaching Down to the Avīci Hell"¹⁵ [STN 3:2610-11]

The Ongi Kuden states: This passage indicates that the beings of the ten realms will all attain [Buddhahood]. Devadatta's attainment of Buddhahood is clear from this passage. Devadatta's attainment of Buddhahood is expounded after the "Jeweled Stūpa" chapter, in the section of the text setting forth the two admonitions.¹⁶ But Devadatta had already attained Buddhahood when this [present] passage was expounded. The word "reaching" refers to the extent of [the ray of light emitted from] the tuft of white hair [between the Buddha's brows]. The light emitted from this tuft represents Namu-myōhō-renge-kyō. "Reaching up to the Akaniṣṭha Heaven" indicates the truth of Emptiness. "Reaching down to the Avīci Hell" represents the truth of provisional existence, and the ray of light itself represents the Middle Way. From this [it is clear that]

all beings of the ten realms attain Buddhahood simultaneously. [The prediction in the "Devadatta" chapter that Devadatta would become] the Tathâgata Heavenly King was [merely] to confer on him this honorific title.

Now in terms of the attainment of Buddhahood by both living beings and by their environments, the passage "reaching down to the Avîci Hell" in this chapter indicates the attainment of Buddhahood by the environment, while the prophecy that Devadatta will become the Tathâgata Heavenly King indicates the attainment of Buddhahood by living beings. Both living beings and their environments attain Buddhahood by means of the Wonderful Dharma.

Now when Nichiren and his followers offer prayers for the deceased, reciting the Lotus Sûtra and chanting Namu-myôhō-renge-kyô, the light of our daimoku reaches down to the hell of incessant suffering and causes them to attain Buddhahood in this very body. The words of the transfer of merit¹⁷ derive from this [principle]. Those who disbelieve in the Lotus Sûtra must fall into the hell of incessant suffering, but when with the light of the daimoku one offers prayers for them as a filial child and as a practitioner of the Lotus, then how could this principle not apply to them? Thus I, Nichiren, infer from this passage "reaching down to the Avîci

Hell" that the Buddha emitted the ray of light to cause Devadatta to attain Buddhahood.

Seven: "Heavenly drums resounded of their own accord"¹⁸
[STN 3:2611-12]

The commentary states: "'Heavenly drums resounded of their own accord' represents [the Buddha] preaching spontaneously without being asked."¹⁹

The Ongi Kuden states: This phrase [is part of the verse section] praising at length the omens [preceding the Buddha's preaching of the Lotus Sûtra,] which were the same in both this world and other worlds.

"Preaching spontaneously without being asked" means that the Tathâgata Śâkyamuni preached the Sûtra of the Lotus Blossom of the Wonderful Dharma spontaneously, without being requested to do so. Now it is Nichiren and his followers who "preach spontaneously without being asked." We declare: "Nembutsu leads to the hell of incessant suffering, Zen is the work of devils, Shingon will destroy the nation and Ritsu is traitorous."²⁰ This we preach spontaneously without being asked. Hence the three kinds of powerful enemies have arisen.

"Heavenly drums" indicates Namu-myôhô-renge-kyô.
"Of their own accord" means without obstruction.
"Resound" means the sound of the voice chanting. In another sense, all living beings freely giving utterance

to words and speech, sounds and voices, is "preaching spontaneously without being asked." The cries of the guardians of hell rebuking evildoers, the groans of those starving in the realm of hungry ghosts, and the thoughts of all sentient beings arising one after another from the three poisons of greed, anger and folly are all "spontaneous preaching." The essence of all these sounds and voices is Namu-myôhō-enge-kyô.

Both the origin and trace teachings and the five characters myô-hō-ren-ge-kyô are the "heavenly drums." "Heavenly" indicates the "heaven" that is the supreme meaning. "Preaching spontaneously" means the preaching of the self-enjoyment body. Chûan three of the Chi states:

"Preaching spontaneously" means that at the beginning of the "Skilful Means" [chapter], the Buddha arose from samādhi and addressed Sâriputra, praising [the wisdom of the Buddhas] both extensively and briefly.²¹ [By means of the auspicious signs manifested in] both this world and other worlds, he expressed [the profundity of the Dharma] that exhausts the power of words. Whether explained as the object [of meditation] or as the wisdom [that fathoms it, this Dharma] is precisely the basis of the entire sūtra and the core of the five periods. This is no trivial matter.²²

The "basis of the entire sūtra and the core of the the five periods" referred to in this commentary is Namu-myôhō-enge-kyô.

[From the nine important matters of the "Parable" chapter]

Eight: "There is only one gateway"²³ [STN 3:2626]

[Chüan] five of the Wen-chü states:

"There is only one gateway" serves to illustrate [the meaning of] the earlier passage, "By means of various teachings I declare the Buddha Way."²⁴ [...] This gateway, moreover, has two meanings. It is the gateway out from the house and [also] the gateway to the cart. The house represents birth and death, while the gateway is the essential path of exit. [From this view,] it represents the conclusion of the provisional teachings. The cart is the Dharma of the Great Vehicle. The gateway [viewed as opening into the Great Vehicle] represents the conclusion of the perfect teaching.²⁵

The Ongi kuden states: The "one gateway" is faith in the Lotus Sûtra. The cart is the Lotus Sûtra [itself]. The ox [that draws it] is Namu-myôhō-rengē-kyō. The house is the worldly passions. One goes round through birth and death, birth and death, over the great earth of oneself being the Dharma nature.

[From the six important matters of the "Faith and Understanding" chapter]

One: "Faith and Understanding"²⁶ [STN 3:2627]

[Chüan] six of the Chi states:

In the Cheng-fa-hua [ching],²⁷ this chapter is titled "Faith and Joy." While the meaning comes through, "joy" is not equal to "understanding." This present [chapter] expresses the acceptance and understanding [of the four great voice-hearers on hearing the

teaching of the one vehicle]. How could [the word] "joy" be most appropriate?²⁸

The Onqi kuden states: Among the titles of the twenty-eight chapters of the entire Lotus Sûtra, this one has the title "Faith and Understanding." The three thousand realms in a single thought-moment arise from the single word "faith." The attainment of the Way by all Buddhas of the three time periods also arises from the single word "faith." This word "faith" is a sharp sword that can sever the fundamental ignorance. As expressed in the statement, "Having no doubt is called belief,"²⁹ faith is a sharp sword to cut off and destroy doubts and delusions. "Understanding" is another word for wisdom. Faith is like the price [of a jewel], and understanding, like the jewel itself. The single word "faith" will purchase the wisdom of all Buddhas of the three time periods. "Wisdom" is *Namu-myôhôte-enge-kyô*. Faith is the cause for wisdom and represents the stage of verbal identity.³⁰ Apart from faith, there is no understanding, and apart from understanding, there is no faith. The single word "faith" is defined as the seed of wondrous enlightenment. Now because Nichiren and his followers believe and accept *Namu-myôhôte-enge-kyô*, they obtain a great precious jewel, as stated in the passage, "We have obtained for ourselves the supreme jewel cluster without seeking it."³¹ Faith is the seed of

wisdom, and disbelief is the cause for falling into hell. It also states: "Faith" corresponds to the principle of true suchness that is unchanging. The reason is: Faith means that one arrives at "knowing all dharmas to be the Buddha Dharma" and believes in this as the single principle of the true aspect.

"Understanding" corresponds to [the wisdom of] true suchness that accords with conditions. It indicates the wisdom of the self-enjoyment body. [Chüan] nine of the Wen-chü states, "Having no doubt is called belief; a clear grasp is called understanding."³² [Chüan] six of the Wen-chü states:

When the people of intermediate capacity heard the Buddha expound the parable [of the three carts and the burning house], their doubts and confusion were for the first time removed, and they entered into discernment of the Way of the Great Vehicle; therefore, this is called "faith." Because they advanced to cultivation of the Way of the Great Vehicle, that is called "understanding."³³

[Chüan] six of the Chi states:

Here the two words ["faith" and "understanding"] are treated separately with respect to the Great [Vehicle] and applied to "discerning the Way" and "cultivating the Way." Because doubts are removed, that is called "faith," and because one further advances, that is called "understanding." Faith applies to both discerning and cultivating, while understanding applies only to cultivation. Therefore, cultivation of the Way is called "understanding."³⁴

[From the seven important matters of the "Conjured City" chapter]

One: "The conjured city"³⁵ [STN 3:2636]

The Ongi kuden states: "Conjured" indicates the physical dharmas, and "city," the mental dharmas. Expounding the impermanence of these two kinds of dharmas, physical and mental, is the heart of the provisional teachings. The intent of the Lotus Sûtra is to expound impermanence as constantly abiding. [Hence] the conjured city is precisely the place of jewels. In the final analysis, Nichiren and his followers who chant Namu-myôhō-rence-kyō open body and mind [to reveal them] as the Wonderful Dharma; this is called the conjured city being precisely the place of jewels.

The ten realms are all the conjured city; the ten realms are each the place of jewels. The conjured city is the nine realms; the place of jewels is the Buddha realm. [According to the text of the sūtra,] from the conjured city to the place of jewels is a distance of five hundred yojanas. These five hundred yojanas represent the delusions arising from views and thoughts, the delusions innumerable as dust motes and sand grains, and the delusions arising from ignorance.³⁶ To open these five hundred yojanas that are the defilements, [revealing them] to be the five characters of the Wonderful Dharma, is called the conjured city being precisely the place of jewels.

In the phrase "the conjured city is precisely the

place of jewels," the word "precisely" indicates Namu-myôhō-rengē-kyō.

At each moment it is the conjured city; at each moment it is the place of jewels. The provisional teachings expound our physical and mental dharmas as impermanent. The Lotus Sūtra teaches that they constantly abide. When one dissolves feelings of attachment to [the view of] impermanence, that is the dissolution of the conjured city.

The conjured city is our skin and flesh; the place of jewels is our bones. The opening and realization of the dharmas of body and mind being the Wonderful Dharma is the reality of the conjured city being precisely the place of jewels. "Reality" means the simultaneity and co-penetration of the impermanent and the constantly abiding, according with conditions yet unchanging, quiescence and illumination in a single thought-moment. "Single thought-moment" here means a single thought-moment in which one believes without doubt in Namu-myôhō-rengē-kyō. [In the expression, "the conjured city is precisely the place of jewels,"] one should fix one's mind on the single word "precisely" (soku) and ponder it.

Six: "He straightway dissolved the conjured city"³⁷

[STN 3:2638]

The Ongi kuden states: The entity of one's person, which shall undergo dissolution, is the conjured city. Because one sees this dissolution as extinction, it remains the conjured city. But when one perceives it to be the extinction that is non-extinction, that is called the place of jewels. The "Fathoming the Lifespan" chapter expounds this with the words, "[I manifest nirvâṇa as a skilful means,] yet I do not in reality enter into extinction."³⁸ To eradicate the view of extinction is called "dissolving." One should ponder in this light the teaching that the three provisional [vehicles] are precisely the one true [vehicle]. In another sense, "He straightway dissolved the conjured city" means eradicating the temples and pagodas of those who slander the Dharma.³⁹

Now, Nichiren and his followers are the conjured city being precisely the place of jewels. The place wherein we dwell is the place of jewels, of which it is said, "Mountains, valleys and the wide plains are all the Land of Eternally Tranquil Light."

[From the twenty important matters of the "Jeweled Stûpa" chapter]

One: "The jeweled stûpa"⁴⁰ [STN 3:2645]

[Chüan] eight of the Wen-chü reads, "The former Buddha [Many Jewels] was already present, and the

present Buddha [Śākyamuni] sits by his side. And the same is true of future Buddhas as well."⁴¹

The Ongi kuden states: The "jewels" are the five skandhas, the "stûpa," their temporary union. A temporary union of the five skandhas is called the jeweled stûpa. To see that the five skandhas in their temporary union are the five characters myô-hô-ren-ge-kyô is called "beholding." Now Nichiren and his followers who chant Namu-myôhō-rengē-kyô "behold the jeweled stûpa."

Three: "Its four sides each sent forth [the fragrance of Tamālapatracandana]"⁴² [STN 3:2645-46]

[Chüan] eight of the Wen-chü reads, "'Its four sides sent forth fragrance' means that the marga-wind of the four noble truths [suffering, origin, cessation and the path] carries the fragrance of the [Buddha's] four virtues [self, eternity, purity and happiness]."⁴³

The Ongi kuden states: The four sides [of the jeweled stûpa] represent birth, old age, sickness and death. With these four aspects we adorn the stûpa of our person. When we chant Namu-myôhō-rengē-kyô in birth, old age, sickness and death, the fragrance of the four virtues emerges. Namu indicates the perfection (pāramitā) of happiness; myôhō, the perfection of self; rengē, the perfection of purity; and kyô, the perfection

of eternity.⁴⁴

Six: "There was a land named Jewel Pure. In it was a Buddha called Many Jewels."⁴⁵ [STN 3:2646-47]

The Ongi kuden states: The realm called "Jewel Pure" is our mother's womb. "In it was a Buddha" indicates the Buddha who is all dharmas manifesting the true aspect; that is why he is called the Buddha Many Jewels. [Again,] the womb indicates the defilements, but amid the mire and muck of the defilements is the Buddha who is true suchness. This refers to us, living beings. Now, when Nichiren and his followers chant Namu-myôhō-rengē-kyō, we are the Buddha who is the Lotus as Dharma-entity.⁴⁶

[From the eight important matters of the "Devadatta" chapter]

Six: "[There is the daughter of the dragon king Sâgara,] whose years are barely eight"⁴⁷ [STN 3:2652-53]

The Ongi kuden states: The eight years represent the eight rolls [of the Lotus Sûtra]. Devadatta represents the realm of hell. The dragon girl represents the Buddha realm. However, the ten realms are mutually contained, making a hundred realms, a thousand suchnesses and three thousand realms.

It also states: [The dragon girl's] eight years

represent the eight rolls of the Lotus Sûtra. They are the defilements that are our eight sufferings. One should bear in mind that, in its entirety, the attainment of Buddhahood set forth in the Lotus Sûtra is represented by the eight years [of the dragon girl]. The eight sufferings are precisely the eight rolls, and these eight sufferings being the eight rolls appeared as the eight-year-old dragon girl.

Another interpretation is that "eight years" should be read as "opening a jewel." The "jewel" indicates the one mind of the dragon girl, and "opening," the three thousand realms. Therefore, "eight years" is what is expressed by "opening the Buddha's knowledge and insight."⁴⁸ [The passage] from "She is wise and of keen faculties" to "she is able to attain bodhi" represents conversion to the Lotus Sûtra.⁴⁹ Within [this passage, the phrase] "the thoughts of her mind and the explanations of her mouth" represents verbal actions; "her will and thought are harmonious and refined" represents mental actions; and "[the most profound store of secrets preached by the Buddhas] she is able to accept and hold in its entirety, and she has deeply entered dhyâna concentration" represents bodily actions. The three kinds of actions being precisely the [Buddha's] three virtues, they are the Dharma nature that is the triple truth.

It also states: "The thoughts of her mind" represents the single thought-moment, and "the explanations of her mouth," the three thousand realms. "She can accept and hold in its entirety" refers to the dragon girl's accepting and holding the Lotus Sūtra. "Jewel" means the wish-granting jewel, the Wonderful Dharma, and "open" means opening body and mind [to reveal them as] the Wonderful Dharma.

[From the twenty-seven important matters of the "Fathoming the Lifespan" chapter]

Three: "Since I in actuality attained Buddhahood, it has been incalculable and limitless [hundreds of thousands of myriads of millions of nayutas of kalpas]"⁵⁰ [STN 3:2663-64]

The Ongi kuden states: "I in actuality" refers to the Lord Śākyamuni's actual attainment of the Way in the remotest past. Nevertheless, the intent of this chapter is that "I" indicates all living beings in the dharma-realm. Each of the ten realms is indicated by "I." "In actuality" indicates the Buddha endowed with the uncreated three bodies. This is the meaning of "actuality." "Attained" refers to both the one who attains and that which is attained. "To attain" means "to open." The dharma-realm is opened [to reveal it] as being the Buddha endowed with the uncreated three

bodies. "Buddhahood" means awakening to and perceiving this. [As for "since" (irai),] i indicates the past, and rai, the future. Within the word "since" (irai) lies the present. For the Buddha who is the opening [and revealing] of "I in actuality," both past and future are incalculable and limitless. This [passage further] indicates the hundred realms, thousand suchnesses and three thousand realms in a single thought-moment. As for the two words "hundreds" and "thousands" [in the passage under discussion], "hundreds" indicates the hundred realms and "thousands," the thousand suchnesses. These are precisely the single thought-moment being three thousand realms in actuality (ji no ichinen sanzen).

Now Nichiren and his followers who chant Namu-myôhō-rengē-kyō are the chief subjects of this "Fathoming the Lifespan" chapter. In general, bodhisattvas taught by the Buddha in his provisional aspect cannot uphold this chapter. For them, the trace teaching is primary and the origin teaching, secondary, while for us, the origin teaching is primary and the trace teaching, secondary. Even so, this chapter is not the essential teaching for the Final Dharma age. The reason is that this chapter confers the benefit of [reaping the harvest of] emancipation for those who lived in Śākyamuni's lifetime, while only the five

characters of the daimoku sow the seed [of Buddhahood] for those who would come in the future, that is, at the present time.⁵¹ This being the case, the Buddha's lifetime was the age for the benefits of [the harvest of] emancipation, while the last age is the time for sowing the seed. In the Final Dharma age, sowing the seed is the basis.

Four: "The Tathâgata in accordance with reality perceives the marks of the threefold world. There is no birth or death, [whether withdrawal or emergence, nor is there being in the world nor passage into extinction.]"⁵² [STN 3:2664]

The Ongi kuden states: "Tathâgata" means all beings of the threefold world. When one opens the eyes of the "Fathoming the Lifespan" chapter and observes these beings, one perceives in accordance with reality that the ten realms are originally inherent. The "marks of the threefold world" are birth, old age, sickness and death. When one sees these as birth and death that are originally inherent, then "there is no birth or death." And there being no birth or death, neither is there withdrawal or emergence. Yet this does not simply mean that there is no birth and death. To see birth and death and detest and [seek to] escape them is delusion; it is [the view that] enlightenment is acquired

(shikaku). But to perceive birth and death as originally inherent is awakening; it is [the perception of] original enlightenment (hongaku). Now when Nichiren and his followers chant Namu-myôhō-rengē-kyō, we open and awaken to originally inherent birth and death and originally inherent withdrawing and emerging.

It also states: [In the passage under discussion,] "no" and "is" and "birth" and "death" and "withdrawal" and "emergence" and "being in the world" and "passing into extinction" are all behavior that is originally inherent and constantly abides. "No" means that there exists nothing apart from the dharma-realms being all simultaneously the behavior of Myôhō-rengē-kyō. "Is" means that hell, [for example,] just as it is, is the entire essence of the Wonderful Dharma, which possesses the ten realms inherently. As for "birth," since this is the birth inherent in the Wonderful Dharma, it accords with conditions, and since "death" is the death revealed in the "Fathoming the Lifespan" chapter,⁵³ the dharma-realm is simultaneously all true suchness. Because of "withdrawal," there is "passing into extinction"; because of "emergence," there is "being in the world." This being the case, "no," "death," "withdrawal" and "extinction" correspond to Emptiness; "is," "birth," "emergence," and "being in the world" correspond to provisional existence; and "the Tathāgata

in accordance with reality" indicates the Middle Way. [Again,] "no," "death," "withdrawal" and "extinction" represent the uncreated recompense body; "is," "birth," "emergence," and "being in the world" represent the uncreated manifestation body; and "the Tathâgata in accordance with reality" indicates the uncreated Dharma body. These three bodies are inherent in one's own person. This is also the meaning of "One body being precisely three bodies is called secret, and three bodies being precisely one body is called hidden."⁵⁴ And this being the case, the uncreated triple-bodied Buddha, who is the Lotus as Dharma-entity, is the disciples and lay supporters of Nichiren, because they hold [this Buddha's] honorific title: Namu-myôhō-rence-kyô.⁵⁵

Five: "If the Buddha were to dwell long in the world, persons of meagre virtue would not plant wholesome roots, while the poor and lowly would crave and form attachments to [the objects of] the five desires, entering the net of notions and delusive views."⁵⁶ [STN 3:2665]

The Ongi kuden states: This passage from the sūtra teaches that if the Buddha were to dwell long in the world, persons of meagre virtue would not plant wholesome roots and would instead [become caught] in the

net of false views. The meaning here is that "[persons of] meagre virtue" indicates those who missed [the Buddha's preaching] during his lifetime and now, after his nirvâṇa, have been born in the country of Japan. That is, it means those who slander the Dharma--[the followers of] Nembutsu, Zen and Shingon. As for "not plant wholesome roots," "wholesome roots" refers to the daimoku, and "not plant" indicates those who do not yet uphold it. "Notions" indicates ideas of the sort that one should "discard, close, set aside and abandon" [the Lotus Sûtra],⁵⁷ or that relegate it to third place.⁵⁸ "Delusive" indicates the delusive words of the provisional teachings found in the sūtras, and "views" means wrong views. To regard the Lotus Sûtra, which is first and foremost, as third, is a wrong view. "In the net" refers to a family who slanders the Dharma and disbelieves [in the Lotus Sûtra]. Now Nichiren and his followers who chant Namu-myôhō-renge-kyô extricate themselves from sūtras that present delusive views and from the "nets" of families [who slander the Dharma].

Eight: "He [the good physician] pounded, sifted and blended [the herbs] and gave them to his children, ordering them to drink [the medicine]."⁵⁹ [STN 3:2666]

The Ongi kuden states: This passage clarifies the three truths of Emptiness, provisional existence and the

Middle Way, as well as the three studies of the precepts, meditation and wisdom. It refers to the "good medicine" that is colorful, fragrant, beautiful and tasty. "Pound" indicates the truth of Emptiness. "Sift" indicates the truth of provisional existence. "Blend" indicates the Middle Way. "Give" means to confer. "Children" are the practitioners of the Lotus Sûtra. "Take" means to accept and hold. Concerning this, the sûtra states, "This great good medicine is colorful, fragrant, beautiful and tasty--altogether perfect."⁶⁰ The two words "altogether perfect" mean that all the countless practices and good deeds, all the pârâmitâs [performed by the Buddha], are perfectly contained within the great good medicine of Namu-myôhō-rence-kyô. "Colorful, fragrant," etc. means that "of all that has color and fragrance, there is none that is not the Middle Way"⁶¹ and indicates the Buddhahood of grasses and trees. Thus, there is not a single dharma that is not perfectly contained within the five characters of the daimoku. For those who take [this medicine], it will "quickly remove their suffering and torment."⁶² This being the case, to take the great good medicine of the Wonderful Dharma is to remove the sickness and pain of the worldly passions arising from the three poisons of greed, anger and folly. The practitioner of the Lotus Sûtra who chants Namu-myôhō-rence-kyô does not

accept offerings from those who slander the Dharma:
This removes the sickness of greed. Though the practitioner of the Lotus Sûtra may be reviled and abused, he practices forbearance: This removes the sickness of anger. The practitioner knows that he shall attain Buddhahood in accordance with the passage, "This person, with respect to the Buddha Way, is assured; there can be no doubt"⁶³: This subdues the defilement of folly. Thus the great good medicine is the amṛta of Buddhahood for the Final Dharma age. Now Nichiren and his followers who chant Namu-myôhō-rence-kyô are the original possessors of the great good medicine.

Ten: "This excellent good medicine I now leave here. You should take and drink it, and not fear that you will not be cured."⁶⁴ [STN 3:2666-67]

The Ongi kuden states: "This excellent good medicine" can refer either to [the Buddha's] scriptural teachings or to his śarīra. In the Final Dharma age, it indicates Namu-myôhō-rence-kyô. "Excellent" means that what all Buddhas of the three time periods prefer is the five characters of the daimoku.⁶⁵ "Now leave" indicates the Final Dharma age. "Here" indicates, within all of Jambudvîpa, the country of Japan. "You" is all beings of the Final Dharma age. "Take" refers to the ritual in which one receives and holds the Lotus Sûtra.⁶⁶ "Drink"

is to chant [the daimoku]. From the time that one "drinks," one is the uncreated triple-bodied Buddha. This cures one of the sickness and pain [of the notion] that the Buddha first attained enlightenment in this lifetime.⁶⁷ Now, Nichiren and his followers who chant Namu-myôhō-rence-kyô are the ones to whom this passage refers.

Fourteen: "Then I along with the company of monks shall together appear on Sacred Vulture Peak."⁶⁸ [STN 3:2668]

The Ongi kuden states: This passage reveals that the assembly on Vulture Peak is solemnly present and has not yet dispersed. "Then" means the time of the Final Dharma age, when the Buddha responds to the beings' aspiration. "I" means Śākyamuni. "Along with" indicates bodhisattvas; [other] sage beings are here indicated by "the company of monks." "Together" means the ten realms. "Sacred Vulture Peak" means the land of Eternally Tranquil Light. "Then I along with the company of monks shall together appear on Sacred Vulture Peak." Keep this secret! This passage clearly reveals the actuality of the single thought-moment comprising three thousand realms, which is contained in the origin teaching. The object of worship [here, Nichiren's mandala] is the manifestation of this passage. Thus "together" indicates the principle of true suchness that

is unchanging, and "appear" indicates the wisdom of true suchness that accords with conditions. "Together" means the single thought-moment, and "appear," the three thousand realms.

It also states: "Then" indicates the sahâ world at the time of the Buddha's original enlightenment. The remainder of the passage describes the mandala, on which the ten realms are solemnly present. Therefore, "then" indicates the Final Dharma age, the fifth period.⁶⁹ "I" is Śākyamuni, "along with" indicates bodhisattvas, "the company of monks" means those of the two vehicles, "together" indicates those of the six paths, and "appear" means that all these are ranged together in the pure land of Vulture Peak. "Vulture Peak" means the object of worship as well as the dwelling place of Nichiren and his followers who chant Namu-myôhō-enge-kyô.

Twenty-three: "The remotest past" [STN 3:2671]

The Onqi kuden states: The meaning of this ["Fathoming the Lifespan"] chapter lies in the Buddha's actual attainment of enlightenment in the remotest past (kuon jitsujô). "Remotest past" has the meanings of "not setting in motion," "unadorned," and "being just as it is originally." Because this is the Buddha endowed with the uncreated three bodies, he does not attain

enlightenment for the first time; this is "not setting in motion." He is not endowed with the thirty-two marks or eighty characteristics; thus he is "unadorned." Because he is the originally inherent Buddha who constantly abides, this is "being just as it is originally." This is the meaning of "remotest past." "Remotest past" (kuon) indicates Namu-myôhō-enge-kyô. "Actual attainment" (jitsujô) means "truly opened," that is, opened [and revealed] as being uncreated.⁷⁰

Twenty-seven: "The uncreated triple-bodied Buddha--his bija, august form and samayas" [STN 3:2672]

The Ongi kuden states: The august form [of this Buddha] is the originally inherent forms and aspects of [all living beings of] the ten realms. His samayas⁷¹ are what [these beings of] the ten realms hold. His bija⁷² is the single character "faith," that is, Namu-myôhō-enge-kyô just as it is.⁷³ [Again,] his samaya is the palms placed together [as in chanting the daimoku]. Keep this secret!

[From the six important matters of the "Medicine King" chapter]

Three: "[This Lotus Sûtra too, in the same way, can enable living beings] to separate themselves from all suffering, from all sickness and pain, and can loose the

bonds of birth and death."⁷⁴ [STN 3:2689]

The Ongi kuden states: The heart of the Lotus Sûtra is that the worldly passions are precisely enlightenment and that birth and death are precisely nirvâṇa. The two words "separate" and "loose" go against this teaching. Nevertheless, the word "separate" may be read as "illuminate." When one observes them by opening the eyes of wisdom of the "Fathoming the Lifespan" [chapter] of the origin teaching, sickness, pains, sufferings and troubles are illuminated as being originally inherent; this is the wisdom of the Buddha who has received the recompense body for his own enjoyment. "Loose" means that our birth and death are not birth and death that have just now begun; they are birth and death that are originally inherent. [This realization] looses the fetters of the notion that enlightenment is acquired (shikaku). The two words "separate" and "loose" represent Namu-myôhô-rengé-kyô.

[From the three important matters of the "Wondrous Sound" chapter]

Two: The knot of flesh and the white tuft⁷⁵ [STN 3:2691]

The Ongi kuden states: These two marks result from filial conduct and obedience to one's teacher. To

uphold the Lotus Sûtra is the pinnacle of all filial behavior.

It also states: The "white tuft" indicates the carnal desire of the father, and the "knot of flesh," the carnal desire of the mother. The red and white fluids⁷⁶ appear in this sûtra as these two marks.

It also states: The knot of flesh represents the wisdom of true suchness that accords with conditions, and the white tuft, the principle of true suchness that is unchanging. Now Nichiren and his followers who chant Namu-myôhôte-enge-kyô are endowed with these marks. When we are first born, we are red in color; this corresponds to the knot of flesh. And the white bones that remain after our death correspond to the mark of the white tuft. Our red color at birth indicates the wisdom of true suchness that accords with conditions, while our white bones after death indicate the principle of true suchness that is unchanging. Keep this secret!

[From the six important matters of the "Samantabhadra" chapter]

Six: "This person in no long time shall surely arrive at the place of enlightenment." [STN 3:2700-01]⁷⁷

...Question: The Lotus Sûtra starts, at the beginning of the "Introductory" chapter, with the word "Thus," and ends, in the concluding, "Samatabhadra"

chapter, with the word "departed."⁷⁸ What teaching did [the sūtra's translator,] the Tripitaka Master Kumārajīva, have in mind to express?

Answer: The two essential teachings of this sūtra are the true aspect [of the dharmas] and the [Buddha's original enlightenment in] the remotest past. The initial word "thus" indicates the true aspect, and the concluding word "departed" represents the remotest past. The reason is that the true aspect corresponds to principle (ri) and [the Buddha's original enlightenment in] the remotest past, to actuality (ji). "Principle" has the meaning of Emptiness, and Emptiness has the meaning of "thus." In this way, "thus" corresponds to principle and to Emptiness. The commentary states, "'Thus' means 'not differing' and has precisely the meaning of Emptiness."⁷⁹ The remotest past corresponds to actuality. The reason is that the "Fathoming the Lifespan" chapter of the origin teaching has as its primary meaning the three thousand realms that are perfectly present in actuality. "Departed" corresponds to the past. "Depart" has the meaning of "opening." "Thus" has the meaning of "integrating." "Opening" represents the mind that discriminates. "Integrating" represents the mind that is without discrimination. When "opening" and "integration" are applied to the beings and the Buddha, then "integration" represents the

Buddha realm, and "opening," the realm of the beings. The word "thus" at the beginning of the "Introductory" chapter represents the nonduality of the Buddha and the beings. The trace teaching corresponds to the realm of nonduality, because it sets forth [the principle of] true suchness that is unchanging. "Thus" [Jpn. nyoze, "like this"] of "thus have I heard" is the suchness of "unchanging true suchness." Of the three truths of Emptiness, provisional existence and the Middle Way, "like" indicates Emptiness, "this" indicates the Middle Way, and "I have heard" corresponds to provisional existence. The trace teaching stresses [the truth of] Emptiness and therefore sets forth duality on the basis of nonduality. Thus, to express the aspect of duality, the beings who all hear [the Lotus Sûtra] equally are ranged in separate categories. "Departed," the last word of the origin teaching, corresponds to [the wisdom of] true suchness that accords with conditions, and to the realm of duality. Hence the use of the word "departed."⁸⁰ "Departed" of "They bowed and departed" corresponds to the "thus" (nyo) of true suchness (shinnyo) that accords with conditions. The origin teaching expounds nonduality on the basis of duality. "Two and yet not two, constantly identified and constantly differing, from past to present spontaneous and unchanging"⁸¹--one should ponder this [passage of]

commentary. This word "departed" is also related to the five thousand who rise and depart [from the assembly].⁸² The reason is that, according to a transmission that has been handed down, these five thousand persons represent the five levels of defilement.⁸³ These five levels of defilement bow to the Buddha who is one's own mind and depart.

The two words "thus" and "departed" [also] represent birth and death. Dengyô [Saichô] states: "'Departed' indicates the thus-coming that is without coming and the perfect departing that is without departing."⁸⁴ The word "thus" [also] has the meaning of "all dharmas are the mind," and the word "departed" has the meaning of "the mind is all dharmas." "All dharmas are the mind" corresponds to the unchanging suchness expounded in the trace teaching. "The mind is all dharmas" corresponds to the suchness that accords with conditions expounded in the origin teaching. Thus, the dharma-realm being contained within the one mind has the meaning of "thus," and [the mind] opening to become the dharma-realm has the meaning of "departed." This has the same meaning as the oral transmission concerning the triple truth and the threefold contemplation.⁸⁵

In another sense, "thus" indicates "true," and "departed" indicates "aspect." "True" indicates the mind-ruler,⁸⁶ and "aspect" the mental functions. Again,

"the dharmas" correspond to "departed," and the "true aspect," to "thus." The entirety of this sūtra from beginning to end is contained in the phrase, "the true aspect of the dharmas." The commentary states, "What is the essence of this sūtra? It is the true aspect of the dharmas."⁸⁷

Now proceeding a step further, in terms of Nichiren's practice, "thus" (nyo) indicates "practice that accords (nyo) with [the sūtra's] teaching" (nyosetsu shugyō). When [Śākyamuni] pronounced the essential transfer⁸⁸ of the five characters, [the events of this transfer] began with the "Jeweled Stūpa" chapter.⁸⁹ His voice penetrating beneath the earth, he ensured that there would be someone [to propagate the sūtra] in both near and distant times, declaring his entrustment [of the sūtra] both to his original disciples and to those whom he had taught in his provisional capacity. Thus [the "Jeweled Stūpa" chapter] serves as a hidden introduction to the origin teaching.⁹⁰ With the two Buddhas sitting side by side and the emanation Buddhas assembled, Śākyamuni expounded and revealed the excellent good medicine that is the Sūtra of the Lotus Blossom of the Wonderful Dharma. Manifesting ten kinds of supernatural powers, he summed it up in four phrases⁹¹ and entrusted it to Bodhisattva Superior Conduct. That which was transferred was the

title of the Wonderful Dharma. One should ponder the fact that the essential transfer occurred inside, and the general transfer, outside, the [jeweled] stûpa.⁹² In this way, [the substance of the transfer] was revealed in the "Emerging from the Earth" and "Fathoming the Lifespan" chapters and [the transfer itself] concluded in the "Supernatural Powers" and "Entrustment" chapters. As for these five characters myô, hô, etc.: In the Final Dharma age when the Pure Law becomes obscured and lost, Bodhisattva Superior conduct will make his advent in the world and, abridging four of the five practices,⁹³ attain Buddhahood by the single practice of accepting and holding [the sûtra]. This we see in the sûtra text. It is stated in the "Supernatural Powers" chapter in the words, "After my nirvâna, one should accept and holds this sûtra. Concerning this person's attainment of the Way, it is assured, and there can be no doubt."⁹⁴

This passage is perfectly clear and expresses the Buddha's transfer of merit. The mind-ground of one who accepts and holds this sûtra is "thus" (nyo) in that it "accords (nyo) with the [sûtra's] teaching." In the "thus" of this mind-ground, because one accepts and holds the five characters myô, hô, etc. and chants Namu-moho-rengé-kyô, one immediately departs from all ignorance and defilement and manifests the ultimate

fruit of wondrous enlightenment. Thus the word "departed" is used to conclude the sūtra, and is accordingly preceded by the words "accepting and holding the Buddha's words."⁹⁵ Even the demon king of the defilements and evil insight, when illuminated by the light of all dharmas being the true aspect, perceives that he pervades the dharma-realm in a single thought-moment. Then he in turn salutes the Buddha who is one's own mind; hence the phrase "They bowed and departed." One should ponder the interpretation that states, "The three thousand realms each interpenetrate and yet remain as they are."⁹⁶ Keep this secret! It is a transmission that has been passed down only from one person to another. Do not divulge it. It has been handed down that the ultimate meaning of this word "departed" is the departure of "not departing and yet departing."

Notes to The Oral Transmission of the Sacred Meanings:

1. This sentence involves a play on the double meaning of ki, "to devote oneself" and "to return." Also the character myô, life, is assigned the reading motozuku, "to conform to" or "to be grounded in."
2. Unidentified. Sôka Gakkai Kyôgakubu, ed., Nichiren Daishônin goshô jiten (Tokyo: Seikyô Shimbunsha, 1976), p. 624, suggests that this may represent a digest of points made in the "Sandaishôsho shichimen sôjô kuketsu." See DDZ 5:148, 153.
3. Probably a restatement of the San-lun hsuan-i: "The Lotus brings together the three vehicles and returns them equally to the single ultimate" T 1852:45.5b13).
4. The transliteration given here in the text, Sadaruma fundarikya sotaran, is actually written with ten characters. However, Iieda Eisai points out that there existed an alternative reading, Sadaruma fundari shutara, written with nine characters (Ongi kuden kechimyaku shô, p. 4).
5. Mahāvairocana and attendant Buddhas and bodhisattvas who sit on the eight-petalled lotus in the central court of the Matrix Realm mandala.
6. Hsuan-i 1a, T 1716.33:681c5.
7. Ajnâta Kaundinya is mentioned at the beginning of the "Introductory" chapter as one of the twelve thousand great arhats present at the assembly where the Lotus Sûtra was preached. See T 262.9:1c22.
8. Wen-chu 1a, T 1718.34:8a16-19.
9. King Ajâtasatru is also mentioned at the beginning of the "Introductory" chapter as being present in the assembly. T 262.9:2b5.
10. Wen-chu 2b, T 1718.34:25c21, 23-24. The first of the above citations differs very slightly from the Taishô text.
11. T 276.9:388a5-6.
12. Three kinds of enemies who will persecute practitioners of the Lotus in the evil age following the Buddha's extinction: (1) ignorant lay persons, who speak

ill of practitioners and attack them with swords and staves; (2) arrogant monks of perverted wisdom; and (3) monks who appear outwardly to be saintly and are revered as such, but who inwardly are attached to personal advantage and who denounce practitioners of the Lotus to the secular authorities. These were enumerated by Chan-jan in Chi 8-4, T 1719.34:315a5-7 on the basis of the verse section of the "Forbearance" chapter of the Lotus (T 262.9:36b22-c13; Hurvitz, pp. 205-206).

13. This may be a play on the character sa, which means "age" (as in "the present age") and is also used to transliterate śātru.

14. T 1718.34:26a6-7.

15. Before Śākyamuni Buddha begins to preach the Lotus Sūtra, while still seated in meditation, he displays an auspicious sign, emitting a beam of light from the tuft of white hair between his brows (one of the thirty-two marks of a Buddha), illuminating eighteen thousand worlds to the east. The light reaches "down to the Avīci hell" and "up to the Akanīṣṭha heaven" (T 262.9:2b16-18).

16. The two admonitions are the attainment of Buddhahood by evil persons (represented by the renegade disciple Devadatta) and the attainment of Buddhahood by women (represented by the dragon king's daughter), both indicated in the "Devadatta" (12th) chapter of the Lotus Sūtra, which immediately follows the "Jeweled Stūpa" chapter. These two principles are called admonitions because, in revealing the sūtra's great virtue, they in effect urge its propagation in the age following the Buddha's nirvāṇa.

17. Verses or ritual formulations expressing the intention of transferring one's merit, accumulated through virtuous deeds, to other beings.

18. T 262.9:4c2. This is one of the auspicious signs heralding the preaching of the Lotus Sūtra.

19. Wen-chü 3, T 1718.34:35a29-b1.

20. These are the famous "four maxims" (shika kakugen) summing up Nichiren's criticism of the other sects of his day. The precise expression "four maxims," however, as well as the summation of Nichiren's criticisms in this brief slogan-like form, may be the formulations of later disciples. See Nichirenshū jiten, pp. 143-45.

21. According to Miyake Shigenari (Ongi kuden no kenkyū, p. 80), the "extensive praise" indicates the opening section of the "Skilful Means" chapter from "The Buddhas' wisdom is profound and immeasurable" to "Enough, Śāriputra, I must say no more" (T 262.9:5b25-c9; see also Hurvitz, pp. 22), while the "brief praise" corresponds to the subsequent passage setting forth the "true aspect of the dharma" in terms of the "ten suchnesses" (p. 5c11-13; Hurvitz, pp. 22-23). Ikeda Daisaku's lecture gives the same explanation (Ongi kuden kōgi, vol. 1, p. 191). Iida Eisai however, says that the opening statement of this chapter corresponds to "brief praise" and the passage from "Enough, Śāriputra" through the ten suchnesses, to "extensive praise" (Ongi kuden kechimvaku shō, p. 23).

22. T 1719.34:208b19-22.

23. T 262.9:12b15, b25. This refers to the burning house.

24. Lotus, p'in 2, T 262.9:9b22.

25. T 1718.34:67a1-2, a8-10.

26. This is the title of p'in four.

27. The oldest of the three extant Chinese versions of the Lotus Sūtra, translated by Dharmarakṣa in 286. T 263.9:63-134.

28. T 1719.34:274c17-19. This passage appears in chüan 7a in the Taishō edition.

29. Wen-chü 10a, T 1718.34:137c1.

30. A virtually identical statement appears in Nichiren's "Shishin gohon shō," STN 2:1296.

31. Lotus, p'in 4, T 262.9:17c13.

32. T 1718.34:137c1. In the Taishō edition, this appears in chüan 10a.

33. T 1718.34:79c16-18.

34. T 1719.34:275b18-20. This appears in chüan 7a of the Taishō edition.

35. The parable of the conjured city appears in p'in seven, in the prose section, at T 262.9:25c26-26a24 (Hurvitz, pp. 148-49), and its restatement in the verse

section, at 26c29-27b8 (Hurvitz, pp. 153-55). A party of travelers are making a journey to the place of jewels, but the road is steep and treacherous, and they lose heart halfway. Their guide accordingly produces a magically conjured city where they can rest. When their spirits have revived, he dissolves the conjured city and informs them that their true goal is near at hand. In like manner, Sâkyamuni says, the Buddha preaches three vehicles as an expedient means to hearten those exhausted in their pursuit of the Way, but in reality there is only the one Buddha vehicle.

36. These are the three categories of delusion in T'ien-t'ai doctrine. See "The Doctrine of the Three Thousand Realms in a Single Thought-moment," n. 53.

37. T 262.9:26a11.

38. T 262.9:43b61-17.

39. This may refer to conversion through debate, or depriving rival temples of their economic base by converting their patrons.

40. The title of p'ien eleven is "Stûpasamḍarsana" (Apparition of the Stûpa). Kumârajîva renders this as "Hsien pao-t'a," which can be read as either "apparition of the jeweled stûpa" or "beholding the jeweled stûpa." Both the Wen-chû and the Onqi kuden take it in the latter sense.

41. T 1718.34:112c27.

42. T 262.9:32b21.

43. T 1718.34:113c20.

44. These four are given as the characteristics of nirvâṇa in Ta-pan-n'ien-p'ian ching 25, T 374.12:510b29ff.

45. T 262.9:32c9-10.

46. See "The Transmission of the Sole Great Matter of Birth and Death," n. 2.

47. T 262.9:35b16. In this chapter, the daughter of the dragon king, having put the Lotus Sûtra into practice, instantaneously attains Buddhahood in the presence of the assembly.

48. T 262.9:7a24.

49. These phrases mark the beginning and end of a passage in which Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī extols the dragon girl's spiritual attainments. See T 262.9:35b16-21; Hurvitz, pp. 199-200.

50. T 262.9:42b12-13.

51. Based on his reading of the Lotus Sūtra, Chih-i explained the process by which the Buddha leads the beings to enlightenment in terms of three stages: (1) sowing the seed of Buddhahood, or causing them to hear the Lotus Sūtra; (2) nurturing the seed to maturity by instructing the beings through various teachings; and (3) reaping the harvest of emancipation, or bringing the beings at last to full enlightenment (See Hsüan-i 1a, T 1716.33:684a10-14 and Wen-chü 1a, T 1718.34:2c1-9). According to Nichiren's interpretation, those who attained enlightenment on hearing Śākyamuni preach the Lotus Sūtra in India had already received the seed of Buddhahood from him by hearing him preach the sūtra in prior lifetimes; thus his preaching of the Lotus at that time conferred on those people the benefit of reaping the harvest of emancipation. People in the Final Dharma age, however, have never heard the Lotus Sūtra in the past and thus have never received the seed of enlightenment. For their sake, the Buddha left the teaching of the "three thousand realms in a single thought-moment" of the origin teaching of the Lotus Sūtra, that is to say, the five characters of the daimoku, which confer the benefits of sowing, nurturing and harvesting simultaneously. Cf. "Kanjin honzon shō": "The origin teaching of the Buddha's lifetime and that intended for the beginning of the Final Dharma age are both pure and perfect teachings, but the former corresponds to [the benefit of the harvest of] emancipation, and the latter, to [the benefit of] the seed" (STN 1:715). A detailed listing of the writings in which Nichiren discusses this concept appears in Asai Endō's entry on the "three benefits" (sanyaku) in Nichirenschū jiten, pp. 138-39.

52. T 262.9:42c13-14.

53. This chapter explains that the Buddha's apparent nirvāṇa is merely an expedient manifested in order to arouse in others the aspiration for enlightenment. "I manifest nirvāṇa as a skilful means,/but in truth I do not enter into extinction./I am always here, preaching the Dharma" (T 262.9:43b16-17).

54. Wen-chü 9b, T 1718.34:129c14-15.

55. An earlier portion of the text says that Namu-myôhō-
renge-kyô is the honorific title of the uncreated
triple-bodied Buddha (STN 3:2662).

56. T 262.9:42c25-27.

57. A reference to passages in Hônen's Senchaku hongan nembutsu shû to the effect that all teachings other than the Pure Land sūtras should be set aside as ineffective for the beings of the Final Dharma age. The expression "discard, close, set aside and abandon" is not a direct quote but a composite of statements occurring at T 2608.83:2a20, 17a10, 18c29 and 19a2.

58. A reference to Kūkai, who assigned the Tendai teachings based on Lotus Sūtra to stage eight in his "Ten Stages of the Mind," below the teachings of the Flower Ornament Sūtra and the Shingon esoteric teachings. The names of the ten stages are listed in Kūkai's Himitsu mandara jûjûshinron, T 2425.77:303c29-304a4, and the eighth stage is explained in the same text, p. 350b-353a.

59. T 262.9:43a16.

60. T 262.9:43a17.

61. Chih-kuan 1a, T 1911.46:1c24-25.

62. T 262.9:43:a18.

63. Lotus, p'in 21, T 262.9:52c2.

64. T 262.9:43a26-27.

65. A play on the character kô, which can mean both "good" or "excellent" and "to like or prefer."

66. Probably a reference to the ceremony in which one receives the precepts.

67. The expression used here, shijô shôkaku, is the technical term employed in traditional Lotus exegesis for the Buddha as presented in the trace teaching--i.e., the Śākyamuni who first attained Buddhahood in this lifetime--as opposed to the Śākyamuni of the origin teaching, who reveals himself to have actually been enlightened since the remotest past (kuon jitsujô). In the context of this particular document, the "sickness and pain [of the notion] that the Buddha first attained enlightenment in this lifetime" no doubt carries the

added connotation of being ignorant of one's own original enlightenment.

68. T 262.9:43b24.

69. See "The Teaching Approved by All Buddhas of the Three Time Periods," n. 96.

70. In this passage, the text interprets the Buddha's attainment of enlightenment in the remotest past, described in the "Fathoming the Lifespan" chapter, not as a past occurrence at some finite point in time, but as the revelation that Buddhahood is inherent originally. Hence the characters jitsujiô--"actual attainment"--are accompanied by furigana indicating that they are to be read makoto ni hiraketari, or "truly opened."

71. Here, in the iconography of esoteric Buddhism, the various implements such as vajras, weapons, etc. symbolizing the original vows of esoteric deities, and which they are depicted as holding. Also, the mudrâs symbolic of these deities.

72. In esoteric Buddhism, a Sanskrit letter symbolizing a particular Buddha or bodhisattva.

73. The Myôtoku-ji manuscript here adds the following: "In the word hija (Jpn. shuji), shu indicates the Wonderful Dharma, and ji, all Buddhas of the three time periods. Broadly speaking, it indicates all living beings of the ten realms. 'August form' indicates their originally inherent forms, just as they are." See STN 3:2672, n. 3.

74. T 262.9:54b18-19.

75. A fleshy protruberance on the crown of the head and a white tuft of hair between the brows are two of a Buddha's thirty-two distinguishing marks. At the beginning of this chapter, Sâkyamuni emits a beam of light from the knot of flesh on his head and the tuft of hair between his brows, illuminating the worlds in the eastern quarter. See T 262.9:55a17-18.

76. The mother's blood and the father's semen, thought to combine to form the fetus.

77. I have not translated the section of the Ongi kuden commenting on this particular passage. What follows here is a later section of the text that, while included under the heading of this sūtra passage, actually deals

with the first and last words of the entire sūtra.

78. The opening and concluding phrases of the sūtra are "Thus have I heard" and "they bowed and departed."

79. This appears to be a summary of Wen-chū 1a, T 1718.34:3b4-16.

80. I.e., separated or apart, and hence dual.

81. Not yet identified.

82. This refers to five thousand arrogant persons who, in the "Skilful Means" chapter, rise, bow to the Buddha and leave the assembly without waiting to hear his preaching. See T 262.9:7a7-11; Hurvitz, p. 29.

83. Deluded views in the threefold world, deluded attitudes in the world of desire, deluded attitudes in the world of form, deluded attitudes in the world of formlessness, and fundamental ignorance in the threefold world.

84. "Gobu kechimyaku," DDZ 5:360. This work is now considered apocryphal. The Ongi kuden appears to slightly alter the original text, which reads, "This is precisely the subtle coming that is without coming, the true birth that is without birth, the perfect departing that is without departing, the great death that is without dying."

85. Not yet identified.

86. Skt. citta-rāja, the fundamental cognitive function, as distinguished from specific mental functions, which are mentioned subsequently.

87. Not yet identified.

88. Śākyamuni Buddha's transfer of the Lotus to Bodhisattva Superior Conduct and the other bodhisattvas who emerged from the earth, described in p'in 21 (T 262.9:52a13-27; Hurvitz, pp. 287-88). The expression "essential transfer" is used in contrast to Śākyamuni's "general transfer" of the Lotus to all the bodhisattvas present in the assembly, including those from other worlds, described in p'in. 22 (p. 52c5-8; Hurvitz, p. 291). The transfers made "both to his original disciples and to those whom he had taught in his provisional capacity," in the next sentence above, refer respectively to these two acts of entrustment.

89. In p'in 11 ("Apparition of the Jeweled Stûpa"), Śākyamuni Buddha announces to the assembly that he wishes to entrust the Lotus Sûtra to those who will vow to protect and uphold it in the evil age after his nirvâṇa (T 262.9:34a3-b22; Hurvitz, pp. 190-94). In response, the bodhisattvas who are his original disciples emerge from beneath the earth in p'in 15 ("Emerging from the Earth"). To explain their presence and their relationship to himself, Śākyamuni must then reveal his original enlightenment in the far distant past, which he does in p'in 16 ("Fathoming the Lifespan of the Tathâgata"). In p'in 21 ("Supernatural Powers"), he entrusts the Lotus Sûtra to these bodhisattvas in particular, and in p'in 22 ("Entrustment"), to all the bodhisattvas in general.

90. The origin teaching begins with p'in 15, in which--in response to the Buddha's call for those willing to disseminate the sūtra after his nirvâṇa, first raised in the "Jeweled Stûpa" chapter--the bodhisattvas who are his original disciples emerge from beneath the earth.

91. A reference to Lotus, p'in 21, in which Śākyamuni is presented as saying that "all the dharmas possessed by the Tathâgata, all the Tathâgata's supernatural powers of self-mastery, all the Tathâgata's store of secret essentials, and all the Tathâgata's profound matters" are fully set forth in the Lotus Sûtra (T 262.9:52a17-19). The display of ten supernatural powers, manifested as auspicious omens presaging the entrustment, begins with the countless Buddhas who are Śākyamuni's emanations extending their tongues to the Brahma Heaven and radiating light from their pores. The complete description appears at T 9:51c14-52a13; Hurvitz, pp.286-87.

92. When he makes the essential transfer, Śākyamuni is still seated beside the Buddha Many Jewels inside the jeweled stûpa. At the beginning of the general transfer, however, the sūtra text says, "At that time Śākyamuni Buddha rose from his Dharma seat" (T 262.9:52c4), so presumably he has at this point left the stûpa.

93. The five modes of practicing the Lotus Sûtra after the nirvâṇa of the Tathâgata, set forth at T 262.9:30c10. They are to accept and hold, read, recite, explain, and transcribe the sūtra. For Nichiren, the merit of all five practices was included in the first, that of accepting and holding.

94. T 262.9:52c2.

95. "Accepting and holding the Buddha's words, they bowed and departed." T 262.9:62a29.

96. Not yet identified.

Excerpts from "Lectures Heard and Recorded"

(Onkô kikigaki)

[STN 3:2544]

I have here recorded the teacher's lectures given successively from the nineteenth day of the third month of the third year of Kôan [1280] through the twenty-eighth day of the fifth month of the third year of the same era.

Recorded by Nikô

The Lotus Sûtra is the essential Dharma that enables all living beings to attain the Buddha Way. This being the case, the Great Enlightened World-Honored One waited for the proper season to expound it, explaining that [he had not done so earlier] "because the time to preach it had not yet arrived."¹ To illustrate, this was like the cuckoo passing the spring [before singing] and the rooster waiting until dawn to crow. They do so because they await the proper time. Thus the Nirvâna Sûtra states, "Because he knows the time, he is called the Great Dharma Preacher."²

Now is the time to spread the seven characters na-mu-myô-hô-ren-ge-kyô of the Final Dharma age in order to

profit the beings and enable them to gain benefit. Therefore, to mix other practices with this daimoku would be an error. It is the time to hold with one's body the great mandala of this Wonderful Dharma, to contemplate it with one's mind and to chant [its daimoku] with one's mouth. Accordingly, at the head of twenty-eight chapters forming the entire sūtra we place the daimoku, forming the title "Namu-myoho-renge-kyo. 'Introductory.' Chapter One."

Myôhō-renge-kyō. "Introductory." Chapter One.

The transmission of Master Hsüan states, "The essence of all the sūtras is the five characters myô-hō-ren-ge-kyō."³ It also states, "One practice is all practices; all are encompassed in this samādhi. The 'samādhi' referred to here indicates the two kinds of practice of the Lotus Sūtra: those that have form and those that are formless. According to this principle, the practice of reading and reciting the sūtra is the threefold contemplation in a single mind encompassed in a Dharma-container."⁴ "All the sūtras" in this commentary refers, speaking close at hand, to those of the Flower Ornament, Āgama, Extended [vaipulya] and Prajñā periods,⁵ and speaking more distantly, to all the sūtras preached since the time of the Buddha [Victorious through] Great Penetrating [Knowledge].⁶ In terms of

the origin teaching, apart from the "Fathoming the Lifespan" chapter, everything else is to be reckoned as "all the sūtras." "Essence" is interpreted as being like the sun and moon in the sky, a great king on earth, and the spirit and eyes of a person. These [other sūtras] are the leaves and branches of Myôhō-rence-kyô. "One practice" means that all practices are encompassed by the single practice of the Wonderful Dharma. "Dharma-container" means that all dharmas are contained within the five characters of the daimoku. This being the case, all Buddhas of the three time periods and ten directions, Bodhisattva Superior Conduct and the others, the Great Heavenly King Brahma, Indra, the four deva kings, the ten râksasa daughters, Amaterasu Ômikami, Great Bodhisattva Hachiman, the deities of the twenty-one Sannô shrines,⁷ and in addition, all the gods of Japan, both lesser and greater, protect and guard the practitioner of this sūtra. This is clearly explained in the fifth roll of the Lotus Sūtra.⁸ It is like a shadow and a body, or a sound and its echo. The twenty-eight chapters of the Lotus Sūtra are like the shadow and the echo, while the five characters of the daimoku are like the body and the sound.

As for the sound of our chanting the daimoku, there is no place in the worlds of the ten directions where it fails to penetrate. Though our own voice represents

only a small sound, when we put it into the great sound of the daimoku and chant it, there is no place in the trichiliocosm where it cannot reach. To illustrate, though [one's own breath produces only] a small sound, when one blows into a conch shell, it resounds at a distance, and though the sound produced by one's hand is slight, when one strikes a drum, it echoes far. This represents the vital doctrine of the single thought-moment that is three thousand realms. Because this is such an auspicious sūtra, how could those who slander it not fall into the hell of incessant suffering? These [slanderers] are evil teachers such as Hōnen, Kōbō and others.

"The lotus blossom" [STN 3:2546]

The lotus blossom represents original cause and original effect. This original cause and original effect are the single thought-moment that is three thousand realms. They are the cause and effect that are originally inherent, not the sort of cause and effect that just now have their beginning. The doctrine of [the Buddha's original attainment of enlightenment] countless dust-particle kalpas ago⁹ reveals this matter. Original cause and original effect are the daimoku, which sows the seed [of Buddhahood]. "Effect" of original effect refers to the attainment of Buddhahood,

while "cause" refers to faith and acceptance. When one embraces this sūtra, that is original cause. This original cause is itself the attainment of Buddhahood, which is called original effect. Concerning the matter essential for Nichiren's disciples and lay supporters, we take original cause, rather than original effect, as our teaching. Without original cause there can be no original effect. "Original cause" indicates the cause for wisdom and represents the stage of verbal identity (myōji-soku). Original effect, being the effect, refers to the stage of ultimate identity (kukyō-soku). The stage of ultimate identity is another name for the original enlightenment that is the ninth consciousness.¹⁰ The capital city (miyako) that is the original enlightenment of the ninth consciousness is where the practitioner of the Lotus Sūtra dwells. The "Supernatural Powers" chapter reads, "Whether on the mountains, in the valleys or on the wide plains.....this is the very place of enlightenment."¹¹ How can the place where the practitioner of the Lotus Sūtra lives not be the place of enlightenment where all Buddhas are born into the world, where they obtain the Way, where they turn the wheel of Dharma and where they enter nirvāna?¹²

"Mt. Gr̥dhrakūta"¹³ [STN 3:2549-50]

Our teacher said¹⁴: Mt. Gr̥dhrakūta is Sacred Vulture Peak. "Sacred" indicates the mental dharmas of all Buddhas of the three time periods. Surely the Buddhas cause their mind to remain on this mountain. "Vulture" is a bird. To the south of this mountain is a forest called Śīta-vana where the dead are abandoned. The vultures seize and devour these corpses, and they dwell on this mountain. Thus it is called Sacred Vulture Peak.

The meaning here is that the heart of the present [Lotus] sūtra is to expound that delusion and awakening are a single essence. "Sacred" indicates the Lotus Sūtra. The "mental dharmas of all Buddhas of the three time periods" corresponds to "awakening." "Vulture" represents the realm of beasts and corresponds to "delusion." The "mountain" indicates the Middle Way that is precisely the Dharma nature and that opens the nonduality of delusion and awakening. "On Mount Gr̥dhrakūta" indicates the inner enlightenment to the nonduality of delusion and awakening, the three truths that are one truth, and the Middle Way, or Emptiness that is the supreme meaning. This being the case, on whatever mountain or plain it may be, the dwelling place of Nichiren's disciples and lay patrons who practice the Lotus Sūtra is Sacred Vulture Peak. How then can these

practitioners be other than Śākyamuni? The country of Japan is Mt. Gr̥dhrakūta, and Nichiren and his followers are the Tathāgata Śākyamuni. In general, the place where one practices the one vehicle of Namu-myōhō-rengēkyō, whatever sort of place it may be, is the capital city of Eternally Tranquil Light and also Sacred Vulture Peak.

This Mt. Gr̥dhrakūta is the mountain of the defilements.¹⁵ Buddhas and bodhisattvas represent the fruit of enlightenment. On the mountain of the defilements all Buddhas of the three time periods [of past, present and future] expound the Lotus Sūtra. The Buddhas depend on the ground of the Dharma nature; the beings depend on the ground of ignorance. In light of the "Fathoming the Lifespan" chapter, this mountain is interpreted as the originally inherent sacred mountain. The "inherent sacred mountain" is this sahā world, and within it, the country of Japan. This is the subtlety of the Buddha's original land (honkokudo-myō),¹⁶ which is precisely the sahā world, as taught in the Lotus Sūtra. It is the place wherein is established the great mandala never before known, expounded in the "Fathoming the Lifespan" chapter of the origin teaching. The Yu-ch'ieh lun states, "In the eastern quarter is a small country. Within it are found only those whose inborn capacity is related to the great vehicle."¹⁷ "Those

whose inborn capacity is related to the great vehicle" means [those who are related to] the Lotus Sûtra. This means they can attain Buddhahood with the seed of the Lotus Sûtra, that is to say, [by chanting] Namu-myôhō-renge-kyô. The "small country" indicates Japan.

"When I first sat in the place of enlightenment, gazing at the tree or walking about...."¹⁸ [STN 3:2555-56]

In this passage, the Lord Śākyamuni refers to the time when he had just attained the Way at the age of thirty. The "tree" in the phrase "gazing at the tree" indicates the twelvefold chain of dependent co-production. What he is saying here is that he contemplated the twelvefold chain of dependent co-production and walked about. The twelvefold chain of dependent co-production is another term for the dharma-realm. It is also another name for the Lotus Sûtra. The reason is that a tree produces branches, leaves, flowers and fruit. These correspond to the four aspects of birth, stability, change and destruction. The Great Enlightened World Honored-One contemplated [how the beings undergo] transmigration by the twelvefold chain of dependent co-production, and walked about.

Now it is just the same in the Final Dharma Age as well. Nichiren contemplated how all living beings undergo transmigration by their slander of the Lotus

Sûtra and walked about the country of Japan spreading Namu-myôhôte-rence-kyô. The practitioners of the Lotus Sûtra are all people who "sit in the place of enlightenment."

"Now I rejoice and am without fear."¹⁹ [STN 3:2556]

Our teacher said: In this passage of the sùtra, [Śâkyamuni] says that because he had finished expounding the provisional teachings and the time had arrived when he could preach the Lotus Sûtra, he rejoiced and had no fear. The reason was, during the period before he preached the Lotus Sûtra, he feared for all living beings. Thinking, "If I should be unable to preach the Lotus Sûtra, it will all have been in vain," he feared deeply--that is what this passage suggests. But now there was nothing to be afraid of, for the time had arrived, and, in preaching, he rejoiced to be without fear.

Now it is the same with Nichiren and his followers. Until the age of thirty-two, I, Nichiren, was afraid, [thinking,] "What if I am unable to disseminate this Namu-myôhôte-rence-kyô?" But now there is no fear about this. Since now, in the Final Dharma age, I have already spread the five characters myô-hôte-rence-kyô throughout Japan, I have no fear. And in the end, it is certain that they shall be widely declared and spread

throughout all of Jambudvīpa.

"Owning many fields and houses"²⁰ [STN 3:2559-60]

Our teacher said: "Fields and houses" refer to the great man's wealth. In the final analysis, "fields" indicate life, and "houses," the body. Chüan five of the Wen-chü interprets "fields and houses" as bodily life.²¹ Fields produce rice, and rice sustains life. A house shelters the body; it is a dwelling. There is no wealth, apart from making one's body and one's life secure and peaceful.

Interpreted in terms of doctrine, "fields" correspond to meditation and "houses" to wisdom. Meditation is like the earth of the fields. Wisdom is like all dharmas. All dharmas arise from the earth of the field that is our one mind. As indicated by the [passage of] commentary, "This is to be understood as the heart of the entire Lotus Sūtra,"²² the entirety of the Lotus Sūtra preached over eight years opens the one mind [to reveal it] as the three thousand realms. The meaning here is that because fields represent meditation, they correspond to the virtue of the Wonderful (myō), and because houses represent wisdom, they correspond to the virtue of the Dharma (hō). [Fields and houses] also represent the origin and trace teachings, and also calming and insight (shikan). With

the "fields and houses" that are the origin and trace teachings, the Lord Śākyamuni aids all living beings.

"Fields and houses" [also] indicate the body and mind of us, living beings. When we encounter the Lotus Sūtra and chant Namu-myōhō-renge-kyō, we experience that the worldly passions are precisely enlightenment and that birth and death are precisely nirvāṇa. Are we not then the wealthy man owning many fields and houses? "Owning many" indicates the mental functions with which the mind is endowed, and also the activity which the body possesses. And this being the case, the phrase "owning many fields and houses" indicates the doctrine of the one mind that is the three thousand realms. The reason is that the one mind corresponds to meditation, and the three thousand realms, to wisdom. As the commentary has already stated, "Fields and houses are separate metaphors. Fields nourish life and symbolize meditation conducing to wisdom. A house lodges the body and symbolizes the true object [of meditation] becoming a support for knowledge."²³ This commentary is perfectly clear. "Fields and houses" represents bodily life. Bodily life is precisely Namu-myōhō-renge-kyō. So, is one who embraces this daimoku not the great man owning many fields and houses? Now in the Final Dharma age, Nichiren and his followers are the subject of the phrase "owning many fields and houses." They are the

practitioners who practice in accord with [the sūtra's] teaching.

"Mounting this jeweled vehicle, they directly arrive at the place of enlightenment."²⁴ [STN 3:2563-64]

Our teacher said: This sūtra passage clarifies that the worldly passions of us living beings are precisely enlightenment and that our birth and death are precisely nirvāṇa. As for the reason, chüan five of the Wen-chü reads, "Because the cause does not change, one 'directly arrives.'"²⁵ This [passage of] commentary is saying in essence that the heart of the pre-Lotus Sūtra teachings is to abandon the worldly passions and loath birth and death, seeking enlightenment and nirvāṇa apart from them; but the intent of the Lotus Sūtra is that the worldly passions are precisely enlightenment and that birth and death are precisely nirvāṇa. "Directly" and "precisely" here have the same meaning. You should realize that the dwelling place of Nichiren and his followers who chant Namu-myōhō-rengē-kyō is precisely the Land of Tranquil Light. Thus, mounting this jeweled vehicle, in no time at all we directly arrive at the stage of the ultimate fruit of wondrous awakening (myōgaku). This is called "directly arriving at the place of enlightenment." The words "directly arrive" mean that one herein fulfills the forty-two stages.²⁶

This single word "directly" means that hell is precisely [the Land of] Tranquil Light, that [the realm of] hungry ghosts is precisely the Land of Tranquil Light. The dwelling of one who practices the Lotus Sûtra, whether in the mountains, the valleys or the wide plains, is [the place indicated by] "directly arriving at the place of enlightenment."

"The place of enlightenment" is the ultimate Land of Tranquil Light. Therefore, "mounting" (*jô*) of "mounting the jeweled vehicle" refers to the practitioners of the Lotus Sûtra.²⁷ In terms of this ["Parable"] chapter, it refers to the four great voice-hearers of intermediate capacity.²⁸ In general, it refers to all living beings. Now in the Final Dharma age, it indicates Nichiren and his followers. The "vehicle" (*jô*) in the phrase "jeweled vehicle" is the great white ox cart, which is Myôhō-enge-kyô. Thus "mounting" indicates those who ride, and "vehicle," that which is ridden. The jeweled vehicle is the lotus blossom. Śākyamuni, Many Jewels and all the other Buddhas mount this jeweled vehicle. This is expounded again in the "Devadatta" chapter, where it says, "If they are [born in] the presence of a Buddha, they will be born by transformation on a lotus blossom."²⁹ The two Buddhas Śākyamuni and Many Jewels are our own mind. To express the attainment of Buddhahood on encountering

the Lotus Sûtra that is one's own mind, the two Buddhas, Śākyamuni and Many Jewels, sit side by side, manifesting [the reality of] "mounting the jeweled vehicle, they directly arrive at the place of enlightenment."³⁰ This vehicle is a cart; the cart indicates the lotus blossom. The Wonderful Dharma (myôhō) that precedes the lotus blossom (renge) [in the sûtra's title] indicates our birth and death, and also the two Buddhas. "Arrive" in the phrase "directly arrive" is not the arriving entailed in [going] from here to there. "Arrive" means that the dwelling place [of the believer in the Lotus] is precisely [the Land of] Tranquil Light.

The jewels of this jeweled vehicle are the seven precious substances which adorn the great cart. The seven jewels are precisely the seven orifices in one's head, and these seven orifices are precisely the [seven characters] na-mu-myô-hô-ren-ge-kyô, the essential Dharma for the Final Dharma Age. For us, living beings, the five characters of the daimoku will become a boat at the river of the three crossings³¹; they will remove the cold in the crimson-lotus hell.³² In the hell of burning heat, they will become a cool breeze, and on the mountains of death, they will become lotus blossoms. When we are thirsty, they will become water, and when we are hungry, they will become food. When we are naked, they will become a robe. They will become a wife, a

child, retainers, a clan--benefitting all living beings by conferring their inexhaustible responsive workings. This is the meaning of "directly arriving at the place of enlightenment." Accordingly, the fact that one dwells nowhere else but in the Land of Tranquil Light is called "directly arriving at the place of enlightenment." You should fix your mind on the word "directly" and ponder it.

"[They will be] secure and peaceful in their present life and will later be born in a good place."³³ [STN 3:2566-67]

Our teacher said: Hearing the Sûtra of the Lotus Blossom of the Wonderful Dharma is called "security and peace in the present life" and also "later birth in a good place." [This passage] is immediately preceded by the words, "Having heard this Dharma." "Heard" indicates the ordinary worldling at the stage of verbal identity. In hearing the Wonderful Dharma, one hears that one attains Buddhahood in this very body. This is the meaning of the passage, "One who can hold [this sūtra] thereby holds the Buddha's body."³⁴ Because one hears, one holds, and therefore the three kinds of powerful enemies³⁵ arise; their coming fulfills this passage's prediction of "security and peace in this life." There can then be no doubt that one is a

practitioner of the Lotus Sûtra, [for] we read in the sûtra that a practitioner of the Lotus Sûtra will encounter such grave persecutions. And by encountering grave persecutions, one's attainment of Buddhahood--indicated by "later be born in a good place"--is assured. So how can one not feel secure and peaceful in the present? "Later birth in a good place" is clearly expounded in the "Devadatta" chapter.³⁶

In the final analysis, "security and peace in the present life" means that those who believe in the Lotus Sûtra shall escape the sufferings of the three evil paths³⁷ and the eight difficulties,³⁸ and all of them, whether good or evil, high or low, shall attain the fruit of Buddhahood equally with the Lord Śākyamuni, manifesting themselves as the Tathâgata of original enlightenment. Because the medicinal plants of Myôhō-renge-kyô are one's own essence, one is "secure and peaceful in the present life."³⁹ To open⁴⁰ [this reality] is "later birth in a good place." Myôhō-renge-kyô is the medicinal plant of the Wonderful Dharma. The meaning here is that "security and peace in the present life" indicates the physical dharmas, and "later birth in a good place," the mental dharmas. When one awakens to the body and mind of all [living beings of the] ten realms being the Wonderful Dharma, that is "security and peace in the present life." To propagate the Lotus

Sûtra is [also] called "security and peace in the present life and later birth in a good place."

"Roots, stalks, branches and leaves"⁴¹ [STN 3:2569]

Our teacher said: This passage is interpreted in the commentary as indicating faith, precepts, meditation and wisdom.⁴² The meaning of this interpretation is that grasses and trees grow by putting out roots, stalks, branches and leaves. It is the same with Buddhist practice. That is, we living beings having faith in the Lotus Sûtra is like putting down roots. Based on the essence of the precepts expressed in the words of the Lotus Sûtra, "He is called one who keeps the precepts,"⁴³ [acting] in accord with the passage, "Honestly discarding expedient devices, I will preach only the unexcelled Way,"⁴⁴ is what is meant by [keeping the] "precepts." Cultivating the Lotus samâdhi in accordance with the text of the Lotus Sûtra is what is meant by "meditation." Chanting the daimoku is "wisdom."

[Again,] that the dharma-realm in all its aspects passes through birth, stability, change and destruction corresponds to "faith." The inherent position of each [dharma] corresponds to "precepts." This [inherent position] never changing throughout the three time periods corresponds to "meditation." Each manifesting

its own virtue and significance corresponds to "wisdom." This is precisely the roots, stalks, branches and leaves possessed equally by the dharma-realm. This is precisely the behavior of the true aspect of suchness. The three studies of precepts, meditation and wisdom are Myôhō-rengē-kyō. To have faith in this is the root. The commentary states, "That which transmits the three studies simultaneously is called the Wonderful Dharma."⁴⁵

"Roots, stalks, branches and leaves" [STN 3:2569-70]

Our teacher said: This refers to our person. "Roots" are the mental dharmas. "Stalk" refers to [our body] from head to foot. "Branches" are our arms and legs. "Leaves" are the hairs [of our body]. These four [aspects of ourselves] are expounded [in the sūtra] as "roots, stalks, branches and leaves." Of all the three thousand aspects of the dharma-realm, there is none that does not possess these four. They are precisely the essence of faith, precepts, meditation and wisdom, and the essence of Namu-myôhō-rengē-kyō, the single principle that is the true aspect. Those who do not believe in the Lotus Sūtra possess roots, stalks, branches and leaves, but they do not grow. They are "parched beings."⁴⁶

"The Dharma rain that is sent down equally"⁴⁷ [STN
3:2570-71]

Our teacher said: "Equally" means evenly and pervasively. [The Tathâgata,] not begrudging the rain of the Wonderful Dharma, sends it down equally on good persons and evil persons, those of the two vehicles, icchantikas, those of correct views and those of wrong views. When we read this passage as "sends down the Dharma rain," it means that the Great Enlightened World-Honored One sends it down. But when we read it as "the Dharma rain falls," since this is from the outset the equal Dharma rain of the true aspect, it is rain that constantly abides and is originally inherent; therefore it does not just now start to fall. The true aspect of the dharmas is likened in [Chih-i's commentary on] the "Parable" chapter to the moon and wind.⁴⁸ The Great Teacher Miao-lo says, "What is hidden, and what revealed?"⁴⁹ The Dharma rain of the true aspect transcends the three time periods; there is no being hidden or revealed. As for the word tô ["equal" or "equally"]: When we read it as "equally," it refers to the impartial compassion of the Tathâgata Śâkyamuni. When we read it as "equal," it refers to the impartial great wisdom that is Myôhō-rengē-kyô. "Equally sends down the Dharma rain" indicates the one who propagates, while "the equal Dharma rain falls" refers to the Dharma

that is to be propagated. "Dharma" means the dharmas of the ten realms, and "rain" is the conduct represented by the words and speech, sounds and voices of the [beings of the] ten realms. As for "falls," all the spontaneously expressed sounds and voices of [everything from] hell's fiercely burning flames up to the conduct of the Buddha realm are expounded as "the Dharma rain falls equally." The Dharma essence of the equally falling Dharma rain is Namu-myôhō-renge-kyô.

Now in the Final Dharma age, the daimoku propagated by Nichiren and his followers is the Dharma essence of "the equally falling Dharma rain." This Dharma rain falls simultaneously on hell-dwellers, hungry ghosts, beasts, and all others. The Dharma rain transferred [to the bodhisattvas who emerged from the earth] for the sake of all living beings in Japan is the five characters of the daimoku. It is the object of worship and Namu-myôhō-renge-kyô that Nichiren has established. In the "Skilful Means" chapter, this is expressed as "ultimately equal from beginning to end,"⁵⁰ and in the "Parable" chapter, as "[he gives to each child] equally a great cart."⁵¹ This word "equal" is repeated [throughout the sūtra]. It also says, "[desiring to make all beings] equal to me, without difference."⁵² This word "equal" has the same meaning as "So it is, so it is!" in the "Jeweled Stupa" chapter.⁵³ In the final

analysis, "equal" means Namu-myôhō-rence-kyô. To "send down the Dharma rain" indicates the words of acceptance [in response to the question]: "From the time of your present body until you obtain the body of a Buddha, will you uphold [the Lotus Sûtra], or not?"⁵⁴

"The Dharma rain that falls equally"⁵⁵ [STN 3:2571]

Our teacher said: This time the Dharma rain--the true aspect that is the Wonderful Dharma--fills with the merit of the Wonderful Dharma the three thousand aspects of the ten realms, from hell at the bottom to the heaven where there is neither thought nor no thought⁵⁶ at the top, horizontally throughout the ten directions and vertically throughout the three time periods. This is called "equally." "Falls" means that the body and mind of all living beings "falls" as Myôhō-rence-kyô, constantly abiding throughout the three time periods.

In another sense, the rain of the Wonderful Dharma is the Dharma essence of the fundamental Dharma that is the ninth consciousness. Because a Buddha appeared and spoke forth this Wonderful Dharma, one says, "Sends down the Dharma rain." "Sending down" implies falling from high to low. Thus it indicates proceeding from effect to cause. [When this passage is interpreted] in terms of the Buddha, the Dharma rain is sent down from the tenth realm, that of Buddhahood or "effect," to the

nine realms. [When it is interpreted] in terms of the essence of the Dharma, those on whom the rain falls and he who sends it down are both the single principle of true suchness. In terms of the divisions of consciousness, it falls [from the ninth] to the [other] eight consciousnesses. This being the case, Nichiren and his followers sending down Namu-myôhô-rengé-kyô upon the heads of all beings in Japan is called "sending down the Dharma rain."

"Untainted by worldly dharmas, like the lotus blossom in the water, they emerge from out of the earth"⁵⁷ [STN 3:2578]

Our teacher said: "[Untainted by] worldly dharmas" means utterly uncorrupted by greedy desire, etc. To illustrate, though the lotus blossom grows in the water, it is not stained by the mud. This lotus blossom is a symbol for the bodhisattvas who emerged from out of the earth. "Earth" means the great earth that is the Dharma nature. The meaning here is that practitioners of the Lotus Sûtra are like the lotus not being stained by the muddy water. They simply make the spread of the sole great matter, Namu-myôhô-rengé-kyô, their basis.

"[Untainted by] worldly dharmas" means that even if one should be granted fiefs and official rank by the ruler of the nation and his great ministers, one does

not become corrupted by it. Not accepting offerings from those who slander the Dharma is [also] called "untainted by worldly dharmas." The lotus will not grow apart from the water. The water indicates Namu-myôhō-renge-kyô. The Buddha's original disciples⁵⁸ are like the lotus blossom. They are bodhisattvas who, since the remotest past, have upheld the original teaching. This is the meaning of the "lotus blossom in the water." Again, the water indicates our faith as practitioners. The lotus blossom is the Wonderful Dharma of original cause and original effect. In the water of faith, the lotus blossom of the Wonderful Dharma grows. "Earth" indicates the mind-ground of us ordinary beings. To "emerge from out of" means that at the time when [this teaching] is spread far and wide, all living beings throughout Jambudvîpa will become practitioners of the Lotus Sûtra.

"The pre-Lotus Sûtra teachings are like lands of rubble"
[STN 3:2586]

Our teacher said: [Chûan] three of the Lotus Sûtra reads, "It is as though they came from a land where hunger prevails and at once encountered a great king's feast."⁵⁹ Chûan six reads, "This my land is secure and at peace, constantly filled with gods and humans....My pure land is indestructible."⁶⁰ The intent of these

passages from both chapters is that the pre-Lotus Sûtra teachings are like a land where one must journey through rubble. To mistakenly think that such a place is one's own country or the capital city comes about because of delusion. Because the beings had all dwelt in such a country for forty-two years,⁶¹ they thought it was their original land. Our true country is the Lotus Sûtra. Thus the chapter on "Belief and Understanding" states, "By chance he returned to his own country."⁶² The place where one has received the seed of Buddhahood in the remotest past is variously called one's own country, the Pure Land, or the great king's feast. The mind-ground that receives the seed of Buddhahood is precisely the "country" of accepting, holding, believing and understanding.

"Nichiren's disciples must not be cowards" [STN 3:2587-88]

Our teacher said: This means that, in time of debate, one should not heed even Śākyamuni of the provisional teachings or of the trace teaching [of the Lotus Sûtra]. If one is a coward, he will start to think, "Am I really not to heed even Śākyamuni?" But if one should not heed even Śākyamuni, then how could one heed bodhisattvas from the stage of virtual enlightenment on down? Even less could one heed those

who slander the Dharma! Sending forth the great voice of Namu-myôhō-renge-kyô, one should counter the various sūtras and sects. This is the meaning of the [sūtra] passage, "Skilful in answering difficult questions, their hearts were without fear."⁶³

"Among practitioners of the Lotus Sūtra, there are those like water and those like fire." [STN 3:2588-89]

Among those who have faith in this sūtra, there are differences [like those] of fire and water. Practitioners like fire are many, while those like water are few. "Like fire" means that when they hear the teaching of this sūtra, [their faith] flares up like a flame. Although they believe, thinking [the teaching] most noble and superior, their faith is soon extinguished. At the time, theirs seems like remarkable faith, but the lamp of such belief easily goes out. As for the practitioners who are like water, water flows day and night without retreating, never ceasing even in the slightest. One who believes in the Lotus Sūtra in this way is called a practitioner like water.

"A woman, myô and Śākyamuni are one essence" [STN 3:2589]

Our teacher said: A woman gives birth to a child. The child she has borne will in turn bear another child.

In this way, through many repetitions, countless children will be born. Among them there will be good children, wicked children, children who are upright and handsome, and ugly children. There will be children of short stature and others who are tall, as well as male children and female children.

The meaning here is that, from the single character myô, all dharmas are produced, from hell, the realm of hungry ghosts, and all the way up to the Buddha realm. There are provisional teachings and true teachings; there is good and there is evil. [The character myô] gives birth to all the dharmas.

Again, from the body of the single Buddha Śākyamuni, all Buddhas and bodhisattvas are produced. Amida, Yakushi, Dainichi and the others are all like the ten thousand reflections on the ten thousand bodies of water of the single moon that is Śākyamuni. This being the case, there is no dissimilarity whatsoever between a woman, myô and Śākyamuni. The Great Teacher Miao-lo [Chan-jan] states, "Myô is precisely the three thousand realms, and the three thousand realms are precisely hō."⁶⁴ This is the meaning of the passage from the "Devadatta" chapter, "There was a single precious jewel, whose value was equal to the trichiliocosm."⁶⁵

"Arrive without differing thoughts at the Pure Land of Vulture Peak" [STN 3:2590]

Our teacher said: "Differing thoughts" indicates disbelief. When thoughts of disbelief arise in our mind, we should at once dwell in the mind of faith. The point is that one should not make the mind of disbelief one's teacher, but rather, take the mind of faith as one's teacher. With a pure mind and believing reverence, one should cultivate the practice of the Lotus Sûtra. Thus in the phrase "is able to uphold this sùtra" or "is able to preach this sùtra," the Buddha stressed the words: "is able to." Herein lies Vulture Peak. That is the meaning of the passage, "The four kinds of lands⁶⁶ exist in the single thought-moment; all are [the Land of] Eternally Tranquil Light."

"The transfer document for the last age" [STN 3:2594]

Our teacher said: "Last age" means the fifth five hundred years that begin the Final Dharma age. The "transfer document" is Namu-myôhō-renge-kyō, a document that is handed down as proof of inheritance. There are two meanings in this transfer. One is the designation of successorship; the other is the bestowal of wealth. The designation of successorship means that Śākyamuni named as his heirs the practitioners of the Lotus Sûtra. The passage of proof states, "[..desiring to make all

beings] equal to me, without difference."⁶⁷ As for the transfer of wealth, Śākyamuni also passed on to the practitioners of the Lotus Sūtra his wisdom and the virtues he had obtained by observing the precepts. The passage of proof states, "We have obtained for ourselves the supreme jewel cluster without seeking it."⁶⁸ Thus the five characters of the daimoku constitute a transfer document.

Notes to "Lectures Heard and Recorded":

1. Lotus, p'in 2, T 262.9:8a4.
2. Not yet located.
3. "Shuzen-ji sôden shichû," DDZ 5:75. The Onkô kikigaki actually says "the transmission of the profound purport" (genshiden), but Asai Endô ("Onkô kikigaki ko," p. 24) suggests that this is a transcription error for "the transmission of Master Hsuan" (Jpn. genshiden, written with different characters). The "Shuzen-ji sôden shichû" has "the transmission of Master Hsuan." Hsuan is Hsuan-lang, the fifth patriarch of the Chinese T'ien-t'ai school.
4. Ibid.
5. That is, the first four of the five periods into which the T'ien-t'ai classification system divides the Buddha's teachings. All the pre-Lotus Sûtra teachings.
6. Mahâbhijñânâbhîhû (Jpn. Daitôchishô), a Buddha said to have preached the Lotus Sûtra many dust-particle kalpas ago, referred to in p'in seven of the Lotus.
7. General term for the deities enshrined at the great Hie shrine in Ôtsû. They are regarded as protectors of Mt. Hiei and of the Lotus Sûtra.
8. Possibly a reference to the passage in p'in 14, "By day and night, for the Dharma's sake, all gods shall constantly protect him [one who preaches the Lotus]" (T 262-9:38c17-18).
9. See "The Teaching Approved by All Buddhas of the Three Time Periods," n. 93.
10. The fundamental pure consciousness (amala-vijñâna), free of karmic accretions, which is identified with inherent enlightenment.
11. T 262.9:52a24-26.
12. A reference to the same passage quoted above. "Be it known that this is the very place of enlightenment; that the Buddhas have here attained anuttara-samyak-sambodhi; that the Buddhas have here turned the wheel of Dharma; that the Buddhas have here attained parinirvâna" (T 262.9:52a26-27).

13. Mt, Grdhrakûta in the city of Rājagṛha in Magadha is where Sākyamuni is said to have preached the Lotus Sūtra. See T 262.9:1c19.

14. Ose ni iwaku, "according to his [Nichiren's] honorable words."

15. The phrase "mountains of the defilements" occurs in Hung-chüeh 1-2, T 1912.46:157b10.

16. One of ten interpretations of the word myô (subtle or wondrous), the first character of the sutra's title, with respect to the origin teaching. See Hsüan-i 7a, T 1716.33:765b8-13, 767a11-b14.

17. This passage does not appear in the Yu-ch'ieh lun (Yogâcârabhûmi). However, Annen, in the opening passage of his Fuzû ju bosatsukai kôshaku, gives this as a quotation from "Bodhisattva Maitreya" (T 2381.74:a6-7). A connection was probably drawn from this to the historical Maitreya, to whom the Yu-ch'ieh lun is sometimes attributed.

18. T 262.9:9c4.

19. T 262.9:10a18.

20. T 262.9:12b14. This refers to the property owned by the great man in the parable of the three carts and the burning house.

21. "Fields nourish life and symbolize meditation conducing to wisdom." T 1718.34:66c22-23.

22. Not yet identified.

23. T 1718.34:66c22-23.

24. T 262.9:15a13-14.

25. Not yet located.

26. According to the T'ien-t'ai system, bodhisattva practice consists of fifty-two stages. However, since the first ten stages are the stages of faith, the implication here may be that the entire path is completed in the moment of faith.

27. In the Chinese text of the sūtra, the words "mounting" and "vehicle" in the phrase "mounting the jeweled vehicle" are written with the same character.

The Onkô kikigaki now proceeds to explain the difference between the two.

28. The disciples Subhūti, Mahākātyāyana, Maudgalyāyana and Mahākāśyapa. They grasp the teaching of the one vehicle on hearing the Buddha relate the parable of the burning house, and express their understanding in the next chapter, "Belief and Understanding."

29. T 262.9:35a18.

30. I believe this passage may be a reference to Nichiren's mandala, which depicts the two Buddhas seated side by side in the midst of the assembly.

31. See "Reply to the Nun, the Widow of Lord Ueno," n.14.

32. See "Reply to the Nun, the Widow of Lord Ueno," n. 5.

33. T 262.9:19b19-20. A number of Nichiren's letters and essays, especially from the period of the Sado exile, address and seek to resolve the apparent discrepancy between this passage and the persecution he and his followers were experiencing.

34. T 262.9:34b12.

35. See "The Oral Transmission of the Sacred Meanings," n.xx.

36. "If there should be a good man or good woman who hears this "Devadatta" chapter of the Sūtra of the Lotus Blossom of the Wonderful Dharma, and with a pure mind believes and reveres it without giving rise to doubt, that person shall not fall into the realms of hell, hungry ghosts or beasts, but shall be reborn in the presence of the Buddhas of the ten directions, and wherever that person may be born, he or she shall constantly hear this sūtra" (T 262.9:35a14-18).

37. The realms of hell, hungry ghosts and beasts.

38. Eight places or conditions in which it is difficult to hear the Dharma or to carry out practice: (1-3) being in the hells, among hungry ghosts, or among beasts; (4-5) being in the Heaven of Long Life or in Uttarakuru, the paradise north of Mt. Sumeru, where absence of suffering would hinder one from seeking the Dharma; (6) being deaf, blind and mute; (7) being well versed in worldly matters and smooth-tongued; and (8) living before or after the time of a Buddha's advent in the

world. See Chang-o-han ching 1, T 1.1:55c5-21.

39. The passage under discussion occurs in the "Parable of Medicinal Plants" chapter.

40. One edition of the text has "hear" instead of "open." See STN 3:2576, n. 9.

41. T 262.9:19b2-3. This is a reference to the medicinal plants, the subject of the allegory that forms the theme of p'in 5.

42. Wen-chü 7a, T 1718.34:92c6-7.

43. P'in 11, T 262.9:34b17. This refers to one who can uphold the Lotus Sûtra after the Buddha's nirvâna.

44. Lotus, p'in 2, T 262.9:10a19.

45. Not yet located.

46. "I [the Tathâgata] appear in the world and, like a great cloud, infuse with moisture the parched beings, causing them to be freed from pain and to obtain the happiness of tranquility" (T 262.9:20a5-6).

47. "Sending down the Dharma rain equally" (T 262.9:20a20). The Onkô kikiqaki here provides two sets of yomikudashi indicators for "breaking down" this Chinese phrase into Japanese syntax. One indicates that it is to be read, "The Dharma rain that is sent down equally"; the other, that it is to be read, "The Dharma rain that falls equally." (When this phrase is removed from its original context, either reading is possible.) I have rendered it according to the first reading here, as the second reading will be discussed later in the text.

48. Wen-chü 5a, in explaining the meaning of the word "parable," speaks of "bending a tree to illustrate the wind and raising a fan to simulate the moon" (T 1718.34:63b15). The Onkô kikiqaki may also be evoking associations here with a similar passage that occurs in Chih-kuan 1a: "Because the moon is hidden behind the layered mountains, one lifts a fan to simulate it, and when the wind ceases in the vast sky, one moves the trees to illustrate it" (T 1911.46:3b5-6).

49. Chi 5b: "By moving the trees or raising a fan, one makes clear the meaning of the wind or the moon. Yet regarding the true aspect of the Dharma preaching, what is hidden, and what revealed? The strong wind is not

stilled, and in the sky the moon hangs constantly. It is only because the great capacity is not yet roused in those followers of intermediate or lesser [faculties] that one conceals the circumstances and keeps back [the truth], saying that the moon is hidden and the wind has ceased" (T 1719.34:253a17-20).

50. T 262.9:5c13. The last of the ten suchnesses.

51. T 262.9:12c18.

52. T 262.9:8b5.

53. T 262.9:32c1. These words occur in the passage of praise spoken by the Buddha Many Jewels from within the stûpa, affirming what Śâkyamuni has preached.

54. In the Nichiren sect, these words are spoken to this day by the one officiating in the ceremony of conferring the precepts. They also occur repeatedly in Nichiren's "Honmon kaitai shô" [The essence of the precepts of the origin teaching], STN 2:1726-28.

55. Here, indicators are given for this reading.

56. The fourth heaven in the world of formlessness, the highest division of the threefold world.

57. T 262.9:42a5-6.

58. The bodhisattvas who emerged from the earth, identified by Śâkyamuni as his disciples from the time that he first attained enlightenment, countless kalpas ago.

59. T 262.9:21a6.

60. T 262.9:43c7, c12.

61. According to the T'ien-t'ai classification of the teachings, Śâkyamuni taught the provisional teachings for forty-two years before preaching the Lotus Sûtra.

62. T 262.9:16b28.

63. Lotus, p'in 15, T 262.9:42a18. This refers to the bodhisattvas who emerged from the earth.

64. Shih-ch'ien 2, T 1717.33:829b14.

65. T 262.9:35c12-13. This refers to the jewel that the dragon girl presents to Sâkyamuni Buddha in p'in 12.

66. See "The Teaching Approved by All Buddhas of the Three Time Periods," n. 43.

67. T 262.9:8b5.

68. T 262.9:17c13.

The Structure of the Single Thought-moment
Comprising Three Thousand Realms (Ichinen Sanzen)

The "single thought-moment comprising three thousand realms" (Jpn. ichinen sanzen) represents the T'ien-t'ai doctrine of the interpenetration of all things. The "single thought-moment" designates the briefest possible moment in the thoughts of ordinary persons that arise from one moment to the next, while the "three thousand realms" indicates the whole of reality. To perceive that one's own mind comprises the three thousand realms--i.e., the identity of oneself and all that is--forms the goal of T'ien-t'ai meditation.

While the formulation of this exact expression appears to date from the sixth T'ien-t'ai patriarch Chan-jan (711-782), who gives a detailed explanation in his Chih-kuan fu-hsing-ch'uan hung-chüeh (T 1912.46: 295c20ff), the concept itself was articulated by T'ien-t'ai founder Chih-i (538-597). A passage from Chih-i's famous meditation manual, the Moho chih-kuan [Great Calming and Insight], provides the locus classicus:

Now one Mind comprises ten dharma-realms, but each dharma-realm also comprises ten dharma-realms, giving a hundred dharma-realms. One realm comprises thirty kinds of realms, hence a hundred dharma-realms comprise three

thousand kinds of realms. These three thousand are contained in a fleeting moment of thought. Where there is no Mind, that is the end of the matter; if Mind comes into being to the slightest degree whatsoever, it immediately contains the three thousand (T 1911.46:54a5-9; English translation quoted from Wm. Theodore de Bary et. al., eds., Sources of Chinese Tradition, vol 2. [New York: Columbia University Press, 1960], p. 328, slightly modified).

Although the mind at each thought-moment is said to "contain" the three thousand realms, Chih-i is careful to make clear that, in his system, the mind is not prior to dharmas:

One may say neither that the one Mind is prior and all dharmas posterior nor that all dharmas are prior and the one Mind posterior....If one derives all dharmas from the one Mind, this is a vertical relationship. If the mind all at once contains all dharmas, this is a horizontal relationship. Neither vertical nor horizontal will do. All one can say is that the mind is all dharmas, and all dharmas are the mind. Therefore the relationship is neither vertical nor horizontal, neither the same nor different. It is obscure, subtle and profound in the extreme. Knowledge cannot know it, nor words speak it. Herein lies the reason for its being called "the realm of the inconceivable." (T 1911.46:54a9-10, a13-18; Wm. Theodore de Bary et. al., eds., Sources of Chinese Tradition, vol. 2, p. 328)

Unlike those Mahayana models in which all dharmas are said to arise from the one pure mind, a distinctive characteristic of the T'ien-t'ai system is that pure and impure are said to constantly interpenetrate. The most depraved icchantika possesses the Buddha nature, while the Buddha still latently possesses the evil of

unenlightened beings.

To explain the structure of the single thought-moment being simultaneously three thousand realms, we note, first of all, that Chih-i says that the mind comprises "ten dharma-realms." These ten realms (jikkai) refer to the ten categories of living beings: hell-dwellers, hungry ghosts, asura demons, humans, gods, voice-hearers, condition-perceivers, bodhisattvas and Buddhas. While these ten are ranged hierarchically from the viewpoint of provisional existence, from the standpoint of Emptiness, they lack independent self-nature and therefore interpenetrate, thus making "a hundred dharma-realms." The mutual possession or co-penetration of the ten realms (jikkai gogu) collapses any ontological distinction between the Buddha and the beings, implying that the nine realms of unenlightened beings possess the Buddha nature inherently, while the Buddha possesses the nine realms of unenlightened beings.

Each of the ten realms further possesses the ten suchnesses (jūnyoze) which constitute the "true aspect of the dharmas" as set forth in the following passage of the Lotus Sūtra:

Only a Buddha and a Buddha together can fathom the true aspect of the dharmas, that is to say, the suchness of their characteristics, the suchness of their nature, the suchness of their essence, the suchness of their power,

the suchness of their activity, the suchness of their causes, the suchness of their conditions, the suchness of their effects, the suchness of their recompenses and the suchness of their ultimate equality from beginning to end. (T 262.9:5c11-13)

Chih-i explains these ten suchnesses as follows in his Miao-fa lien-hua ching hsüan-i:

"Characteristics" has its point of reference externally. What can be distinguished by being seen is called "characteristics." Nature has its point of reference internally. That which intrinsically belongs to oneself and does not change is called "nature." That which is the central quality of something is called "essence." The ability to influence is called "power." That which constructs is called "activity." Repetitive causes are called "causes" [i.e., karma]. "Auxilliary causes are called "conditions." Repetitive results are called "effects." Retributive effects are called "recompenses." The first, "characteristics," is called the "beginning"; the ninth, "recompense," is called the "end"; and the place to which they belong is "ultimately equal." (T 1716.33:694a11-15; English translation from Paul L. Swanson, Foundations of T'ien-t'ai Philosophy, p. 184, slightly modified)

Each of the ten realms contains the ten suchnesses.

Chih-i discusses in detail how the ten suchnesses are manifested in each of the ten dharma-realms in the Hsüan-i (T 1716.33:694a19-696a4; Swanson, pp.188-96).

The ten dharma-realms, interpenetrating to form a hundred realms that each simultaneously possesses the ten suchnesses, is called the thousand suchnesses.

Moreover, each of the ten dharma-realms may be understood in terms of the three realms (san seken): the

realm of the five skandas or aggregates, the realm of living beings, and the realm of the land. These are enumerated in the Ta-chi-tu lun (T 1509.25:546b29-c2) and elsewhere. The "realm of the five skandhas" represents an analysis of the sentient being into its psycho-somatic constituents: forms, perceptions, conceptions, volitions and consciousness. The "realm of living beings" views the living being as an independent existent that can be said to belong to one or another of the ten dharma-realms. The "realm of the land" is the objective realm in which the beings dwell. Because each of the ten dharma-realms, which embodies the ten suchnesses, can also be understood in terms of these three categories, as Chih-i says, "One realm comprises thirty kinds of realms." Thus, the ten-dharma realms, co-penetrating, yield a hundred realms; multiplied times the ten suchnesses they yield a thousand suchnesses; and multiplied times the three realms they equal three thousand realms.

The number three thousand is itself arbitrary; the point is that "all of reality is an integrated, interdependent unity," as Paul Swanson succinctly puts it (p. 12). The concept of the "three thousand realms in a single thought-moment" is not, however, merely an ontological analysis of the structure of reality. This "realm of the inconceivable" is to be perceived in

meditation by the practitioner, who in so doing realizes the identity of him/herself with the totality of all that is.

Nichiren had his own interpretation of the ichinen sanzen concept. As described in his "Kanjin honzon shô" and other writings, in his view, the three thousand realms in a single thought-moment of the mind of ordinary persons, to be perceived in meditation as Chih-i had taught, was ichinen sanzen in principle. For him, the single thought-moment containing three thousand realms was the thought-moment of the eternal Buddha revealed in the origin teaching of the Lotus Sûtra, embodied in the daimoku of the Lotus Sûtra and manifested in the mandala that he, Nichiren, had inscribed; this he termed ichinen sanzen in actuality. To chant the daimoku before the mandala was thus to realize the identity of oneself and the dharma-realm and, Nichiren claimed, constituted correct practice for the Final Dharma age.

GLOSSARY OF CHINESE LOGOGRAPHS

- Abe Shin'yū 阿部信雄
- abōrasesu 阿防羅刹
- Abutsu Shōnin 阿仏上人
- Abutsu-bō Nittoku 阿仏房 日得
- Amaterasu Ōmikami 天照大神
- Amida 阿弥陀
- Amida-butsu 阿弥陀仏
- Anayama Baisetsu 穴山梅雪
- ankoku jidai 暗黒時代
- Annen 安然
- Ashuku 阿閼
- Awa 安房
- bakufu 幕府
- Bandai kikyō roku 万代龜鏡錄
- bekkyō 別教
- betsuden 別伝
- bonnō soku bodai 煩惱即菩提
- Bukkō-ji 仏光寺
- Bun'ei 文永
- Bunki 分龜
- Bun'ō 文応
- Bunpō 文保
- Bunroku 文禄
- bunshin-soku 分真即

busshō 仏性
busshu 仏種
Butsugen-ji 仏顯寺
butsuryū-shū 仏立宗
byōdōshō-chi 平等性智
Chan-jan 湛然
Chang-an (Kuan-ting) 章安 (淮頂)
Chang-hua 張華
Chegwan 諦觀
chi 智
chih 微
Chih-i 智顗
Ching-chou 荊州
Ch'ing-ming-ching 淨名經
Chi-tsang 吉藏
Chou 周
chüan 卷
Chuang-chou 莊周
Chuang-tzu 莊子
chüeh 角
chūko Tendai 中古天台
Chung-hua 重華
Chu-yung 祝融
daienkyō-chi 大円鏡智
daiji 大事
daimoku 題目

Dainichi 大日
Daitsūchishō 大通智勝
Danna 壇那
Daruma 達磨
Dengyō (Saichō) 伝教 (最澄)
Dōgen 道元
Dōzen-bō 道善房
Edo 江戸
Eisai 栄西
Ema Mitsutoki 江馬光時
Enchin (Chishō Daishi) 円珍 (智証大師)
Enchō 円澄
Endō Tamemori 遠藤為盛
engyō 円教
en'in busshō 縁因仏性
Ennin 円仁
Eshin 恵心
Fa-chi 法濟
fuhē shinnyō no ri 不變真如の理
Fuji 富士
Fuji Gakurin 富士学林
fujōkyō 不定教
fuju fuse 不受不施
funamori 船守
fushō 不生
fusō 不相

Fusō ryakki 扶桑略記

Futo 富戸

ge sōjō 外相承

Genki 元龜

Genkō 元弘

Genna 元和

Genroku 元禄

genshiden 玄旨伝 / 玄師伝

Genshin (Eshin Sōzu) 源信 (惠心僧都)

Gentoku 元徳

Gishin 義真

godai shisō 五大思想

gohonzon 御本尊

gohyaku jindengō 五百塵点劫

goji hakkyō 五時八教

Gokuraku-ji 極楽寺

gonchi 権智

gosho 御書

Gosho mokuroku 御書目録

Gosho mokuroku nikki no koto 御書目録日記之事

gyōja 行者

Hachiman 八幡

Han 漢

happon 八品

Heng, Mt. 恒山

Heng, Mt. 衡山

Hie 日吉
Hiei, Mt. 比叡山
himitsukyō 秘密教
hiyu renga 譬喻蓮華
hō honzon 法本尊
Hōchi-bō Shōshin 宝地房証真
Hōei 宝永
Hōjō 北条
Hōjō Tokiyori 北条時頼
Hokekyō-ji 法華經寺
hokkai taishō-chi 法界体性智
Hokke 法華
Hōkō-ji 方広寺
Honan 湖南
honden 本伝
Hōnen 法然
hongaku 本覚
hongaku shisō 本覚思想
Honge bettō Busso tōki 本化別頭仏祖総記
honkokudo-myō 本国土妙
Honman-ji 本満寺
honmon 本門
Honmon-ji 本門寺
Honmyō-ji 本妙寺
Honri daikō shū 本理大綱集
Hopei 湖北

Hōshō 宝生
 Hosoi Nittatsu 細井日達
 hosshin ron 法身論
 Hossō 法相
 Hou-t'u 后土
 'Hsien pao t'a' 見宝塔
 Hsü Hsing-shan 徐行善
 Hsüan-lang 玄朗
 Hsüan-ming 玄冥
 Hua, Mt. 華山
 Hua-yen 華嚴
 hun 魂
 Hunan 江南
 ibun 遺文
 Ichijō Nyoin 一条女院
 ichinen sanzen 一念三千
 Ienaga Saburō 家永三郎
 Ikegami 池上
 Inada Kaiso 稻田海素
 inaka Tendai 田舎天台
Indogaku Bukkyōgaku kenkyū 印度学仏教学研究
 inmyō 因明
 insei 院政
 irai 以来
 Irima 入間
 isshin sanghan 一心三觀

isshō jōbutsu 一生成仏

itchi-shōretsu 一致勝劣

Itō 伊東

Itō Hachirōzaemon 伊東八郎佐衛門

Itō Sukemitsu 伊東祐光

Itō Tomotaka 伊東朝高

Izu 伊豆

Jen-wang ching 仁王經

ji 事

ji ga 自我

ji ga toku butsurai 自我得仏来

ji no ichinen sanzen 事の一念三千

ji-goku 地獄

jigyō 自行

jijūyushin 自受用身

jikkai gogu 十界互具

ji-kuyō 事供養

jikyō-sha 持經者

Jimmu 神武

Jimon 寺門

jishin 自身

jisshi sozoku 実子相統

jissō 実相

jitchi 実智

jitō 地頭

jō 乗

jobun 序分
Jōdo 浄土
Jōgyō 上行
Jōgyō-in 上行院
Jōgyō-in 浄行院
Jōjitsu 成実
Jōjū aru koto nashi 常住有る事無し
Jōkyū 承久
jōshosa-chi 成所作智
Ju-ching 如浄
Juntoku 順徳
jūnyoze 十如是
Ju-shou 蓂収
ka kashō 果果性
Kai 甲斐
kaidan 戒壇
Kakuban 覚鏝
Kakuchō 覚超
Kakuun (Danna Sōzu) 覚運 (壇那僧都)
Kamakura 鎌倉
Kambun 寛文
kana 仮名
kanbun 漢文
Kangen 寛元
kangyō-soku 観行即
kanjin 観心

kanjinshaku 観心釈
kannenronteki 観念論的
Kantō 関東
kari かり
Karyaku 嘉暦
Kashiwabara 柏原
kashō 果性
Katei 嘉禎
Kawagoe 川越
Kawai Nisshin 河合日辰
Kawana 川奈
kegi no shikyō 化儀の四教
Kegon 華嚴
kehō no shikyō 化法の四教
Keikō 敬光
Kenchō 建長
Kenchō-ji 建長寺
Kenji 建治
keta 化他
kimyō 帰命
kitō 祈祷
Kiyosumi-dera 清澄寺
kō 好
Kōan 弘安
Kōbō (Kukai) 弘法 (空海)
Kōchō 弘長

Kōei 康永

Kōka 弘化

kokorozashi 志ざし

Kompon Daishi monjin 根本大師門人

'Kompon Nichiren shūshi myōmoku' 根本日蓮宗旨名目

Konsan-ji 金鎖寺

kōsō 高僧

Kou-man 苟蒯 / 苟芒

Kuan-ting 灌頂

kuden 口伝

kuden hōmon 口伝法門

Kūkai 空海

kukyō-soku 究竟即

kung 宮

K'ung-tzu 孔子

kuon 久遠

kuon jitsujō 久遠実成

Kusha 俱舍

kyō 境

kyōdō 教道

Kyōhō 享保

kyōsō 教祖

kyōsō hanjaku 教相判釈

kyūkai soku bukkai 九界即仏界

Lan-chi Tao-lung 蘭溪道隆

Lao-tzu 老子

li 里

Liu-pang 劉邦

makoto まこと

Manaita Iwa 廻岩

mappō 末法

Meiō 明応

Miao-lo (Chan-jan) 妙樂 (湛然)

Miidera 三井寺

Minobu 身延

Minobu, Mt. 身延山

miyako 京

mizunoe-saru 壬申

Moritsuna 盛綱

moto no mama モトの儘

motozuku 命

mu mo u mo jōjū nari 無モ有モ常住ナリ

mu u jōjū 無有常住

munyō 無明

Murakami Masakatsu 村上征勝

Muromachi 室町

Muryōju 無量寿

musu no sanjin 無作の三身

Musashi 武蔵

Musashino 武蔵野

mushi no kobutsu 無始の古仏

musō 無相

myō 妙
 myōgaku 妙覺
 myōhō 妙法
 Myōhō-renge-kyō 妙法蓮華經
 myōji-soku 名字即
 Myōkaku-ji 妙覺寺
 myōkanzat-chi 妙觀察智
 Myōraku (Chan-jan) 妙樂 (湛然)
 myōri 妙理
 Myōtoku-ji 妙德寺
 Nagoe 名越
 nai sōjō 內相承
 Nakayama 中山
 Nambokuchō 南北朝
 namu 南無
 Namu-myōhō-renge-kyō 南無妙法蓮華經
 Nanjō Hyōe Shichirō 南條兵衛七郎
 Nanjō Tokimitsu 南條時光
 Nan-yüeh (Hui-ssu) 南岳 慧思
 ne-hinoe 子丙
 nembutsu 念仏
 Nichidō (Ben Ajari) 日道 (弁阿闍梨)
 Nichidō (Ichimyo-in) 日道 (一妙院)
 Nichigon 日健
 Nichikan (Eishō-in) 日鑑 (永昌院)
 Nichii 日位

Nichii (Engyō-in) 日意 (円教院)
Nichiji 日持
Nichijō 日常
Nichiju (Eishō-in) 日受 (永昌院)
Nichijun (Sanmi Ajari) 日順 (三位阿闍梨)
Nichiki (Udana-in) 日輝 (優陀那院)
Nichikō (Sotsu Ajari) 日高 (帥阿闍梨)
Nichimoku (Niidakyō Ajari) 日目 (新田卿阿闍梨)
Nichinin 日忍
Nichio 日與
Nichiren 日蓮
Nichiren ga deshi danna 日蓮が弟子壇那
Nichiren honbutsu ron 日蓮本仏論
Nichiren Shōnin Chū Hokekyō bekkā 日蓮聖人注法華經別卷
Nichiren Shōshū 日蓮正宗
Nichirensū 日蓮宗
Nichiryū 日隆
Nichiyū (Jōgyō-in) 日祐 (淨行院)
Nichizon 日尊
Nikkō (Byakuren Ajari) 日興 (白蓮阿闍梨)
Nikkō ki 日興記
Nikkyō 日經
Nikō (Sado Ajari) 日向 (佐渡阿闍梨)
nin honzon 人本尊
Ninji 仁治
Nippō (Sona-in) 日豐 (僧那院)

Nissei 日精

Nissen (Chiken-in) 日遲 (智見院)

Nisshin (Daiju Ajari) 日進 (大住阿闍梨)

Nisshin (Kozo-in) 日辰 (広蔵院)

Nisshō (Ben Ajari) 日昭 (弁阿闍梨)

Nisshun 日春

Nitchō (Enmyō-in) 日澄 (円明院)

Nitchō (Gyōgaku-in) 日朝 (行学院)

nyo 如

nyo ze sō 如是相

nyosetsu shugyō 如説修行

nyoze 如是

Oda Nobunaga 織田信長

Ōjō yōshū 往生要集

Omi 近江

Omosu 重須

Omosu Honmon-ji 重須本門寺

ōse ni iwaku 仰ニ云ク

Ōta Jōmyō 大田乗明

Ōtsū 大津

p'e 魄

P'ei-kung 沛公

Piao-[]-mu 表 [] 目

Po-wu chih 博物誌

raigō 来迎

Renchaku-ji 蓮着寺

Renkei-ji 蓮慶寺

ri 理

'Rigu' 理具

ri-kuyō 理供養

Rinzai Zen 臨濟禪

ri-soku 理即

Risshū 律宗

ritai hongaku 理体本覺

Ritsu 律

rokuge 錄外

rokuge gosho 錄外御書

rokunai 錄內

rokunai gosho 錄內御書

rokurōsō 六老僧

rutsūbun 流通分

Ryōgen (Jie Daishi) 良源 (慈慧大師)

ryōin busshō 了因仏性

Ryōkan-bō Ninshō 良觀房 忍性

Sado 佐渡

sago 佐後

Saichō 最澄

Sadaruma fundari shutara 薩達摩芬陀梨修多羅

Sadaruma fundarikya sotaran 薩達摩芬陀梨伽蘇多覽

Sairen-bō Nichijō 最蓮房 日淨

Saitama 埼玉

san seken 三世間

San-lun 三論
Sannō 山王
Sannō-in 山王院
Sanron 三論
sanwaku 三惑
san'yaku 三益
sazen 佐前
se 世
sen 錢
Senba Danrin 仙波壇林
Sentoku Daishi 先德大師
setsuwa 說話
shaku 尺
shakubuku 折伏
shakumon 迹門
Shang 商
Shantung 山東
Shensi 山西
Shiga 志賀
Shijō Kingo 四條金吾
Shijō Saemon-no-jō Yorimoto 四條左衛門尉賴基
shijō shōkaku 始成正覺
shika kakugen 四箇格言
shikaku 始覺
shikan 止觀
shikishin funi 色心不二

Shimofusa 下嵯

Shinano 信濃

Shingon 真言

shinnyo 真如

Shinran 親鸞

shōaku 性惡

Shōan 正安

Shōchū 正中

shōdō 証道

shōhen 正篇

shōin busshō 正因仏性

shōji ichidaiji kechimiyaku 生死一大事血脈

shōji soku nehan 生死即涅槃

Shōka 正嘉

Shōkindan hōse ron 笑禁断謗施論

shōshūbun 正宗分

Shōtoku 聖徳

Shou-lun 守倫

Shū Chū Hokekyō ongi kuden 就注法華經御義口伝

shūgaku 宗学

shuji 種子

Shun 舜

Shunpan 俊範

sō nyo ze 相如是

sohō 庵法

sōji-soku 相似即

Sōka Gakkai 創価学会

soku 即

Sonshun 尊舜

sosho 祖書

Ssu-tzu 思子

Ssu-tzu K'ung 思子孔

Sūfuku-ji 崇福寺

Sūfuku-ji engi 崇福寺縁起

sun 寸

Sung, Mt. 嵩山

Suruga 駿河

T'ai, Mt. 泰山

T'ai-kung 太公

Taiseki-ji 大石寺

Takeda Katsuyori 武田勝頼

tamashii 神

Tan, the Duke of Chou 旦公周

Tenchi 天智

Tendai 天台

Tendai Shōten Hensanjo 天台聖典編纂所

Tenmei 天明

Tenmon 天文

Tenshō 天正

T'ien-t'ai 天台

T'ien-t'ai (Chih-i) 天台 (智顗)

tō 等

tōgaku 等覺
Toki Jōnin 富木常忍
Tokugawa Ieyasu 徳川家康
tonkyō 頓教
tōshū 当宗
tōtai renga 当体蓮華
Toyotama-hime 豊玉姫
Toyotomi Hideyoshi 豊臣秀吉
Tsin 晋
tsuchinoto-u 己卯
tsūgyō 通教
tsukurowazu ツクロハズ
Ts'ung-i 從義
Uehara 上原
Uehara Uenosuke 上原上野介
Ueno 上野
Ueno-ama 上野尼
Uenohara 上野原
Ugaya-fukiaezu-no-mikoto 鵜萱葦不合尊
waga ichimon 我一門
waka 和歌
Wakamiya 若宮
Wu 武
Yakushi 薬師
Yao 堯
Ying-lo ching 瓔珞經

Yōhō-ji 要法寺

yomikudashi 読み下し

yoryū 余流

Yu 禹

yū 羽

Yüan-chen 元貞

Yu-ch'ieh lun 瑜伽論

Yü-ch'uan-ssu 玉泉寺

yuiju ichinin 唯授一人

zazen 坐禪

ze sō nyo 是相如

Zen 禪

zengyō 漸經

zōgyō 藏經

Zoku Tendaishū zensho 統天台宗全書

zokuhen 統編

zuien shinnyo no chi 隨緣真如の智

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