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“Upholding Faith in the Buddhadharma and Repaying the Nation” (1863)

Ogawa Taidō

Translated by Jacqueline I. Stone

TRANSLATOR’S INTRODUCTION

Ogawa Taidō 小川泰堂 (1814–1878) began his career as a scholar and physician in Edo (present-day Tokyo).¹ A chance encounter in 1838 with a work by the Buddhist teacher Nichiren 日蓮 (1222–1282) led him to embrace the Lotus sect (Hokkeshū 法華宗, now called Nichirenshū 日蓮宗) and commit himself to studying its doctrines. Ogawa found himself frustrated by the many transcription errors, missing characters, and other textual problems that he found in published versions of Nichiren’s writings, and he vowed to produce a complete and accurate edition. The task would consume the next four decades. Ogawa traveled to temples throughout the country to compare variant transcriptions of individual writings and, where possible, consult originals. The resulting compilation, the monumental *Kōso ibunroku* 高祖遺文録 (Record of the founder’s writings), represents the first text-critical edition of Nichiren’s corpus and laid the groundwork for its modern scholarly study. Eager to reach ordinary people as well as scholars, Ogawa also authored the immensely popular vernacular biography *Nichiren Daishi shinjitsu den* 日蓮大士真実伝 (True account of the Great Bodhisattva Nichiren), which helped shape modern representations of Nichiren as a patriot and protector of Japan.

Nichiren, who had trained in the Tendai sect, taught a doctrine of exclusive devotion to the *Lotus Sūtra*, revered for its promise of universal

Buddhahood. Tendai teachers regarded it as the Buddha's highest and final teaching; all other sutras were provisional and incomplete. Unlike Tendai, however, which sought to encompass multiple forms of practice as expedients for persons of different capacities, Nichiren's stance was exclusivistic. Now in the degenerate, Final Dharma Age (*mappō* 末法), he asserted, only the *Lotus Sūtra* could lead all men and women to liberation; other, provisional teachings had lost their efficacy and should be set aside. He himself taught a broadly accessible form of *Lotus* practice: chanting the *daimoku* 題目 or title of the sutra in the formula *Namu Myōhō-renge-kyō* 南無妙法蓮華經 (devotion to the sutra of the lotus blossom of the Wonderful Dharma). Nichiren saw the disasters confronting Japan in his day—including famines, epidemics, and the Mongol threat—as karmic retribution for widespread rejection of the *Lotus Sūtra* in favor of “inferior,” provisional teachings such as Pure Land and Zen. By spreading faith in the *Lotus Sūtra*, he taught, this world would become an ideal Buddha land. Believing that the country faced a crisis, Nichiren, in traditional Buddhist terms, rejected *shōju* 撰受, an inoffensive method of proselytizing by leading others gradually without initially correcting their misconceptions, and instead embraced *shakubuku* 折伏, an aggressively polemical approach that directly rebukes attachment to false views.²

Ogawa wrote “Upholding Faith in the Buddhadharma and Repaying the Nation” (*Shinbutsu hōkoku ron* 信仏報國論), excerpts from which are translated here, in 1863, five years before the Meiji Restoration, as an open letter of admonition to the Hokkeshū. Under the restraints of Tokugawa *bakufu* religious policy, Nichiren's style of confrontational *shakubuku* had not been possible. By this point, however, the Tokugawa *bakufu* was clearly unable to cope with pervasive social unrest generated by domestic political tensions, economic instability, and the demands of foreign powers. Leaders of the Hokkeshū debated how Nichiren's message should be taught in a changing world. In this essay, Ogawa argues, as had Nichiren, that the *shakubuku* approach suits Japan at the present time, but he interprets “*shakubuku*” in a novel way: not as proselytizing others, but as rigorously purifying and solidifying one's own *Lotus Sūtra* practice. Otherwise, he argues, the Hokkeshū will be unable to overcome its present laxity and meet the challenges of the coming era. A sense of impending crisis infuses the work. Interpreting recent calamities as omens in a manner reminiscent of Nichiren's own writings, Ogawa draws on cosmological notions from Buddhist and other, Chinese sources to

predict that either an awakened priest or a sage ruler will soon appear to rectify the world. If a holy priest appears, he will excoriate the Hokkeshū for its inertia; if a sage ruler appears, he will laicize superfluous priests. Ogawa personally delivered copies of *Shinbutsu hōkoku ron* to head temples and leading clerics of the various Nichiren denominations. No response is recorded. Ogawa’s tract could be seen simply as one of many efforts within Buddhist communities to argue the utility of Buddhism for an emerging modern Japan and to preempt discourses of Buddhist corruption for their own programs of internal reform. But Ogawa proved prescient in foreseeing the early Meiji-period attacks on Buddhism (*haibutsu kishaku* 廃仏毀釈), and his efforts ultimately helped to revive an impetus toward *shakubuku* within the Nichiren sect. As a devotee active outside the Hokkeshū seminaries, Ogawa also exemplified a new breed of lay Buddhist scholars whose voices would become increasingly influential in Japan’s modern period.

TRANSLATION

Now the country has enjoyed peace for more than two hundred years, bathed in the blessings of sagely rule. And yet we forget the debt we owe for that peace. Carried away by pride, overcome by indolence, we lament when matters do not go as we desire, resenting the heavens and maligning the world. The crazed and foolish fill the country. Though food and clothing are sufficient, miseries are many; amid an abundance of pleasures, griefs arise. Troubles began around the inauspicious year of Tenpō 7 (1836) [. . .]. In Kaei 6 (1853), a great earthquake occurred in Sagami, and in the first year of the Ansei era (1854), American warships entered Edo Bay. That year, major earthquakes occurred in several provinces, and in Ansei 2 (1855), a particularly severe one devastated Edo.³ In Ansei 3 (1856), violent rainstorms struck the Kantō region. In Ansei 5 (1858), a comet appeared, and many people perished in epidemics. In Ansei 6 (1859), there was flooding in the Kantō area. Foreigners from five countries set up trading posts in Yokohama; they prowled about at will in Musashi and Sagami. Since then the price of rice and other commodities has doubled or tripled yearly. The disasters of these past twenty-four years are too many to record. Everyone can see with their own eyes how the world’s troubles have now reached an extreme. In addition, exaggerated rumors have leaked out, reaching even the common people, that plans are afoot to unify the country and expel

foreigners. The commoners, once peaceful and compliant, believe we stand on the verge of a crisis; distressing though it is to say, they criticize the government and abuse officials. In the end they will revile even the ruler and despise their own country [. . .].

It is said that the country's safety depends on the flourishing of the Buddhadharmā (*buppō* 仏法). The great dharma of the Buddhist teaching from the outset encompasses all ten realms of existence throughout past, present, and future; it is a teaching (*kyōhō* 教法) that sets forth the karmic recompense for good and evil deeds without the slightest error. What can we say, then, when we consider the current state of Japan in its light? How can the country achieve peace, and how can we make its people enjoy security? If the Buddhist Way were correctly established and the country were still in disorder, then what use would the Buddhadharmā be? I will set aside the other sects. I have understood that, among buddhas, Śākyamuni is the most venerable, and among teachings, the *Lotus Sūtra* is supreme. But what is the essential principle of the Lotus sect?

In the summer of Kenchō 5 (1253), the great dharma general Nichiren first raised the banner of the five characters [*Myō hō ren ge kyō* 妙法蓮華經] on the peak behind Kiyosumi temple in Awa Province.⁴ From that time on, he asserted that the country's prosperity or decline, its very survival or destruction, depends on distinguishing truth from error in the reception of the Buddhist teachings. Sounding his golden drum, he rebuked the other sects for their attachment to provisional doctrines (*gonmon* 権門). Although in principle error should not prevail over truth, it was an age when evil flourished and good was slight, so he often suffered at the hands of the misguided followers of sects based on provisional teachings. On two occasions he was nearly put to death by the sword, and twice he was exiled. Just when it seemed that his teaching had no hope of prospering and that Śākyamuni Buddha's mandate delivered [at the Lotus assembly] on Eagle Peak and the predictions made by all the other assembled buddhas [that the *Lotus Sūtra* would one day spread] would amount to no more than foam on the waters, a great earthquake struck Kamakura on the first day of the eighth month of Shōka 1 (1257), followed by another on the twenty-third. [. . .] From the Shōgen era (1259–1260), serious famine and epidemics spread throughout the realm, and in Bun'ei 1 (1264), a huge comet crossed the sky. Along with battles within the [ruling] Hōjō house and attacks by Mongol barbarians, the troubles facing the country were too many to count. They occurred solely because the deities of heaven and earth

were furious that the true dharma had not been established and visited disaster upon the country to punish it. All this is clearly explained in the *Rissshō ankoku ron* 立正安国論 (Establishing the true dharma and bringing peace to the realm).⁵

More than five hundred years have passed since then, and yet the disasters facing the country in the founder’s time and the misfortunes of recent eras do not seem all that different. If the nationwide crises of the past stemmed from neglect of the true dharma, then the disasters of the present must arise for the same reason. [. . .]

The practice for protecting the nation has two forms. To practice the true and provisional together is called *shōju*. To discard the provisional and cultivate only the true is called *shakubuku*. In general, the 2,000 years of the True and Semblance Dharma ages following the Buddha’s nirvāṇa were the time for *shōju*, while the 10,000 years of the Final Dharma Age are defined as the time for *shakubuku*.⁶ This is a chief principle of our sect. The Shōka through Bun’ei eras (1257–1275), when our teacher Nichiren was propagating the dharma, correspond to the beginning of the 10,000 years of the Final Dharma Age and the middle of the fifth 500-year period.⁷ Because this was the beginning of the time when the single truth of the *Lotus Sūtra* was to be spread worldwide, he established *shakubuku* alone as his practice. The last of the five 500-year periods mentioned in the Buddhist teachings came to an end in Tenbun 2 (1533). From that time until the present year of Bunkū 3 (1863), some 320 years [*sic*] have passed. Uneducated followers put forth varying opinions: Some say that because Nichiren’s time was the founding period, it was natural that he embraced *shakubuku*, but since now the great dharma has already spread throughout the country, *shōju* should be practiced. Others say that because ours is an age when many provisional teachings still flourish, *shōju* and *shakubuku* should be practiced concurrently, both being essential, like the two wheels of a cart. Still others say that one should practice *shakubuku* inwardly but outwardly engage in *shōju*, or that one should accord with the capacity of individuals, practicing *shōju* some seventy percent of the time and *shakubuku* the remaining thirty. Thus they differ only superficially and fail to reach a proper conclusion. [. . .]

Our founder wrote: “In terms of practice, there are both *shōju* and *shakubuku*. It is wrong to practice *shakubuku* when *shōju* is appropriate. It is likewise mistaken to practice *shōju* at a time suited to *shakubuku*. Is our present age a time for *shōju* or for *shakubuku*? One should

determine this first of all. [. . .]⁸ Those who, ignorant of this principle, err in choosing between the *shōju* and *shakubuku* paths cannot expect to attain the Way [. . .].”⁹

If one wishes to know which method to adopt, one should understand the doctrine of sowing, cultivating, and harvesting (*shu juku datsu* 種熟脱). Beings who lived during the two thousand years of the True and Semblance Dharma ages had already received the seed of the Wonderful Dharma during the Buddha’s lifetime.¹⁰ Thus their case is like nurturing sprouts of barley or millet that have been planted in a field. One protects those seeds, adding fertilizer and shielding them from the wind, and waits until they bear grain. Since these individuals can be led to Buddhahood without discriminating between provisional and true teachings, for their sake one employs *nenbutsu* 念仏, Zen, or whatever means will foster the Buddha-seed until it has matured. Their capacity belongs to the categories of cultivating and harvesting; the method employed with them is *shōju*; and the time for its practice is the True and Semblance Dharma ages. But now we are in the third period, at the beginning of the Final Dharma Age, when the seed of Buddhahood, the cause of wondrous awakening, must be planted in the minds of those beings who have never before received it. One must therefore take care not to mix the [seeds of the] provisional teachings of other sects, which are like useless weeds, with the rice that is the seed of the Wonderful Dharma. The *Lotus Sūtra* states, “Throughout the Buddha lands of the ten directions, there is the dharma of only one vehicle,” and, “There are not two, nor are there three.”¹¹ Upholding this one great vehicle alone must be established as the practice for the ten thousand years of the Final Dharma Age. The capacity of persons to whom it is suited corresponds to the category called sowing (*geshu* 下種); its method is *shakubuku*; and its time is the Final Dharma Age. The two approaches are as far apart as heaven and earth and should be clearly differentiated, like front and back, or water and fire.

This being so, when one looks upward toward signs in the heavens or casts one’s eyes down to omens upon the earth and reflects on the disorder within our country and the threat of enemies from abroad, then one might think that the time has come when, just like our founder Nichiren, we should directly admonish the ruler, raising high the banner of subjugating the provisional teachings and engaging in a great dharma battle, ready to give our lives for the spread of the true teaching. But this would be mistaken. The reason is that, even though this great dharma

has not yet spread to all other countries, there is no place in the [more than] sixty provinces of Japan, however remote, where the profound title of the *Lotus Sūtra* has not reached, no corner to which it has not spread. Whether they have taken faith in it or not, all persons without exception have formed an auspicious connection with it. This is something unprecedented. Hasn't it come about precisely because this is a wondrous land with a connection to the Mahāyāna, the [Buddha's] “original land” (*hongoku* 本国) where Bodhisattva Superior Conduct (Jōgyō bosatsu 上行菩薩)¹² manifested his traces? [. . .]

Or one might think that in this age one should discard *shakubuku* and practice *shōju*, but that is not correct either. Now is precisely the time for *shakubuku*. [Nichiren's] *Opening of the Eyes* says that [even in *mappō*], *shōju* is to be used in countries that are evil [merely out of ignorance of the dharma], while *shakubuku* should be used in countries where the dharma is actively maligned, and that one should determine which category now applies.¹³ At present, the followers of sects based on provisional teachings outnumber us ten to one, and they have vigorously spread the sutras on which they rely. Therefore, there is not a hairbreadth's room for compromise in establishing *shakubuku* as the appropriate method.

Nonetheless, there is a difference between the founder Nichiren's age and our own in terms of how *shakubuku* should be practiced. I refer to the distinction between self-cultivation (*jigyō* 自行) and teaching others (*keta* 化他). To insist absolutely on the single truth, broadly admonishing the world against the confusion of true and provisional as our founder Nichiren did, is *shakubuku* for the purpose of teaching others. To embrace only the *Lotus Sūtra* oneself, not mixing it with the practices of other, provisional teachings, but upholding it firmly just as it prescribes, is the *shakubuku* of self-cultivation. Thus within the single practice of *shakubuku* there are these two approaches, and one should choose between them according to the time and the people's capacity. [. . .]

The thousands and tens of thousands of our sects' priests and lay supporters should together devote themselves to the *shakubuku* of self-cultivation as the practice meeting the needs of our time and country. Now is precisely the time to protect and foster the great dharma, not for a moment leaving cause for regret. One should be diligent in chanting the *daimoku* and reciting the *Lotus Sūtra* and also cultivate good deeds and Buddhist works. If one still has energy to spare, one should read books, listen to the Way, teach it in the world and guide others, single-mindedly promoting the Buddhist Way so that no harm will come to the ruler's

law (*ōbō* 王法). If our many tens of thousands of priests and lay believers unite the power of their pure and firm faith to protect the realm, then the power of the sutra and the power of the Buddha will surely respond. The calamities in the heavens and on earth will naturally be rectified; the sun and moon will shine bright and clear, and the wind and rain will not deviate from their proper season. The people's hearts will become tractable, and thus they will gradually abandon evil ways. Without coercion, they will yield; without being taught, they will transform. Peace will prevail throughout the four seas, as in the days of [the ideal Chinese sage kings] Yao and Shun. Though this approach differs outwardly from that of our founder Nichiren when in the past he admonished high and low with his *Risshō ankoku ron*, there is not the slightest disparity in terms of its benefit as the practice of the Buddha's original disciples (*honge* 本化) that befits the time.

How lamentable that as the world declines, priests exert themselves in study [solely] to become abbots of leading temples. Those of the upper ranks seek as the honor of a lifetime to shine resplendently at court or in the shogun's palace, while those of the middle and lower ranks indulge in women and liquor; they chant the *daimoku* and recite the sutra only to make a living, ignoring the purpose of renunciation. Their adorning of halls and stūpas and performances of rituals and ceremonies are in the end no more than baiting hooks to pull in donations. As for their sermons and displays of rare temple images (*kaichō* 開帳): when generously construed, one could say that such activities serve to instruct others and enable them to form good karmic connections, but when viewed more strictly, they are no different from drumming up patronage for wrestling matches or theatrical performances.¹⁴ And all this is to say nothing of the laity, who, ignorant of the original meaning of the Buddhist Way, pray solely to prosper in the present world. They do not know what the Buddhadharma is; they do not understand what the *Lotus Sūtra* teaches. Even if such priests and laypersons were to fill the country, one could not equate that with the spread of the *Lotus Sūtra*. It would be like millet and barley withering in the autumn fields without reaching fruition. Though the leaves might rustle loudly, there would be nothing to harvest; it would be impossible for the Buddhadharma to benefit the country [. . .].

Now we have reached the turn of another five-hundred-year period, when the ruler's law and the Buddhadharma must undergo great change. Surely it is time for either a wise leader or a holy priest to make an

appearance and rectify the worldly and Buddhist realms. While the priests and laity of the Lotus sect cling in vain to the outmoded ways of the last five hundred years, lacking the humility to reflect and heedlessly passing the months and years, a great transformation will occur. If a sage priest appears within the dharma, then, just as the ninety-five heterodox teachers were toppled by Śākyamuni Buddha; the three southern and seven northern schools were rebuked by [the Chinese Tiantai founder] Zhiyi 智顛 (538–597); the six sects and seven great temples [of Nara] were attacked by [the Japanese Tendai founder] Saichō 最澄 (766/767–822); and the eight sects were refuted by our founder Nichiren, the priests and laity of our present Lotus sect will be reduced to dust. Or if a wise ruler appears within the worldly realm, he will act [. . .] like Emperor Wuzong of the Tang, who in the eighth month of the fifth year of Huichang (845) seized and demolished more than 4,600 major temples and 40,000 smaller ones, returning 260,500 priests and nuns to lay life. [. . .] From the standpoint of the clerics, such actions were an evil that destroyed the Buddhadharmā, but from the ruler’s standpoint, one could say they were sound policy that brought order to the world and security to the people. From the outset, is it not better for the prosperity of both Buddhism and the worldly law that one uproot weeds that resemble seedlings, and remove traitors who resemble priests? [. . .]

Suppose there were even one person in a hundred million able to understand [the Buddha and Nichiren’s admonitions] and grasp the essence of the great dharma, practice self-discipline, pursue his profession without becoming defiled by either the three poisons [of greed, anger, and ignorance] or slander of the dharma, and carry out *shakubuku* as self-cultivation without slackening. While the minute power of that single person’s faith might be inadequate to protect the realm, such a Buddhist practitioner knows his indebtedness and repays the nation, thus standing in the true lineage of the *Lotus Sūtra*.

Have you heard the popular tale about the country of the one-eyed?¹⁵ In the southern sea, there is a solitary island whose inhabitants have but one eye each. [. . .] A certain man thought that if only he could capture one of those people and exhibit him at a fair, he could make his fortune. Setting sail, he at length arrived at the island, intent on somehow abducting one of the inhabitants. But before he could do so, he was spotted by the island’s residents, who, struck by the rarity of a two-eyed man, immediately seized him, dragged him to the marketplace, and displayed him at a fair for their entertainment. People of the Lotus sect

today are like that man. They obsess about converting the people of other sects but do not discard the provisional and uphold the true in their own practice. Merely chanting the *daimoku* mindlessly, they have not the slightest resolve. When beguiled by others, they are easily drawn into slander of the true dharma. [. . .] Rather than trying to steal another's single eye, one should take care not to lose the two one has!

When King Wu of the Zhou dynasty (r. ca. 1046–1043 BCE) passed away, his son, King Cheng, was not yet of age, so Wu's younger brother, Duke Dan of the Zhou, acted as regent. He said, "I do not strive to make King Cheng into King Wu. I strive only to make King Cheng into King Cheng."¹⁶ These words of the sage duke are truly admirable and apply to the Lotus sect today. Rather than trying to make other sects into our own, we should make the Lotus sect worthy of its name [. . .].

Notes

This translation is based on excerpts from *Ogawa Taidō zenshū* 小川泰堂全集, *Rongi hen* 論義篇 (Tokyo: Tendensha, 1991), 131–140.

1. For more on Ogawa Taidō, see Ogawa Yukio 小川雪夫, *Ogawa Taidō den* 小川泰堂伝 (Tokyo: Kinseisha, 1967); Ishikawa Kōmei 石川康明, "Ogawa Taidō: Nichiren Daishizō no shōdōsha" 小川泰堂：日蓮大士像の唱導者, in *Kindai Nichiren kyōdan no shisōka* 近代日蓮教団の思想家, ed. Nakano Kyōtoku 中濃教篤 (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1977), 71–114; and Jacqueline Stone ジャクリーヌ・ストーン, "Ishin zengo no Nichirensū ni miru kokka to Hokekyō: Ogawa Taidō o chūshin ni" 維新前後の日蓮宗に見る国家と法華経：小川泰堂を中心に, trans. Kirihara Kenshin 桐原健真, in *Kami to hotoke no bakumatsu ishin: Kōsaku suru shūkyō sekai* カミとホトケの幕末維新：交錯する宗教世界, ed. Iwata Mami 岩田真美 and Kirihara Kenshin (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 2018), 197–223.

2. For the role of *shakubuku* in the Lotus sect throughout its history, see Jacqueline Stone, "Rebuking the Enemies of the Lotus: Nichirenist Exclusivism in Historical Perspective," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 21, no. 2–3 (1994): 231–259.

3. As a physician, Ogawa personally treated victims of the 1853 and 1855 earthquakes.

4. A reference to Nichiren's first chanting of the *daimoku*. The temple name Kiyosumidera 清澄寺 is also pronounced Seichōji.

5. Nichiren submitted this admonitory treatise to the shogunate in 1260. It represents his first public remonstrance with the authorities to cease

support for priests espousing provisional doctrines and to embrace the *Lotus Sūtra* alone, in order to restore tranquility to the realm. He was prompted to write it by the sufferings he witnessed following the Shōka earthquake.

6. The True, Semblance, and Final Dharma ages represent three successive stages in the decline of human receptivity to the Buddha’s teachings after his final nirvāṇa. Ogawa follows Nichiren in identifying the True and Semblance Dharma ages as a time for *shōju*, and the Final Dharma Age, for *shakubuku*.

7. The last of five 500-year periods following the Buddha’s nirvāṇa and a time of dissension among his followers, as predicted in the *Yuezang fen* 月藏分 section of the *Daji jing* 大集經 (T 397, 13:363a29–b5). It corresponds to the beginning of *mappō*, which in Japan was said to have commenced in 1052. Nichiren believed that he was living in the last of the five 500-year periods. Ogawa calculates that period as ending in 1533, which would be 330 years before 1863, when he wrote *Upholding Faith in the Buddhadharmā and Repaying the Nation*. The mention below of “320 years” appears to be an error in the printed text.

8. Abridgement of Nichiren quote by Ogawa.

9. *Shōgu mondō shō* 聖愚問答鈔, *Shōwa teihon Nichiren Shōnin ibun* 昭和定本日蓮聖人遺文 (hereafter *Teihon*), ed. Risshō Daigaku Nichiren Kyōgaku Kenkyūjo 立正大学日蓮教学研究所 (Minobu-chō, Yamanashi Prefecture: Minobusan Kuonji, 1952–1959; rev. ed. 1988), vol. 1, 381, 382.

10. The Chinese Tiantai patriarch Zhiyi (538–597) likened the Buddha’s teaching process to sowing the seed of awakening, cultivating it through subsequent teachings, and finally reaping the harvest of liberation. Ogawa follows Nichiren’s interpretation, which sees the *Lotus Sūtra* as planting the initial seed of Buddhahood.

11. T 262, 9:8a17–18.

12. Bodhisattva Superior Conduct is the leader of the Buddha’s “original disciples” referred to below, those bodhisattvas entrusted by Śākyamuni with propagating the *Lotus Sūtra* in an evil age after his nirvāṇa. Nichiren tradition identifies him with this bodhisattva.

13. *Kaimoku shō* 開目抄, *Teihon* 1: 606.

14. *Kaichō* were also singled out as a harmful practice incompatible with modernity by the Jōdo Shinshū priest Shimaji Mokurai 島地黙雷 in 1872. See Hans Martin Krämer, *Shimaji Mokurai and the Reconception of Religion and the Secular* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2015), 106.

15. “Ichigankoku” 一眼国, a well-known title in the repertoire of *rakugo* 落語, a traditional form of Japanese storytelling performance.

16. Source unidentified. The Duke of Zhou is celebrated as a Chinese cultural hero and exemplary ruler who helped solidify the kingdom of Zhou established by his elder brother King Wu. Some early Chinese accounts say that, after Wu's death, the Duke ascended the throne in place of Wu's underage son, in order to forestall rebellions and consolidate the realm. Other versions represent him as a loyal regent who fostered the young prince without taking the throne himself. Inoue Gengo 井上源吾 suggests that the divergence stems from the differing historical circumstances and political ideals of early commentators in the fourth and third centuries BCE ("Shūkō sessai setsuwa no seiritsu" 周公攝政説話の成立, *Jinbun kagaku kenkyū hōkoku* 人文科学研究報告 7 [1957]: 8–25). In Japan, images of the Duke as a sage minister were well established. Ogawa's point is to show him as encouraging the young prince's own latent strengths rather than attempting to force him into his father's mold.