CHAPTER 6

Refusing the Ruler's Offerings: Accommodation and Martyrdom in Early Modern Nichiren Buddhism

Jacqueline I. Stone

Throughout its history, Buddhists have at times faced opposition, even outright persecution, from rulers inimical to their tradition. The topic of Buddhist statecraft raises its obverse: How have Buddhists dealt with hostile regimes? Unlike the ethics of Buddhist rule, political defiance has seldom been thematized as an issue in canonical texts. Nonetheless, Buddhists have drawn on their shared repertoire of scriptures, doctrines, values, and practices to formulate modes of ethical resistance to the state.[1] This chapter investigates one such instance that arose within the Nichiren sect (Nichirenshū 日蓮宗; also known as the Lotus sect or Hokkkeshū 法華宗) in early modern Japan.

Over the latter part of the sixteenth century, the military ventures of three successive warlords brought Japan under unified rule, ushering in the country's early modern period (1603–1868). In their campaigns of conquest, the "three unifiers"—Oda Nobunaga 織田信長 (1534–1582), Toyotomi Hideyoshi 豊臣秀吉 (1536–1598), and Tokugawa Ieyasu 徳川家康 (1543–1616)—strove to break the independent power of Japan's Buddhist institutions. Thus ended the medieval Japanese institution of the "mutual dependence of the king's law and the Buddhist law" (*ōbō buppō sōi* 王法仏法相依).[2] The architects of Ieyasu's shogunate, or Bakufu, would subsume Buddhist temples under the new Tokugawa order and ideology of rule, which they legitimized in absolute terms as "the way of heaven" (*tendō* 天道).[3] Tokugawa religious policy particularly threatened the Nichiren sect, whose teachings explicitly mandate loyalty to the *Lotus Sūtra* (*T* no. 262: *Miaofa lianhua jing* 妙法蓮華經) over the demands of rulers. Eventually the sect split over the choice between pragmatic accommo-

1 On religion as a repertoire, see Robert Ford Campany, "On the Very Idea of Religions (In the Modern West and in Early Medieval China)," *History of Religions* 42, no. 4 (2003): 287–319.

2 Kuroda Toshio, "The Imperial Law and the Buddhist Law," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 23, nos. 3–4 (1996): 271–285.

3 Herman Ooms, *Tokugawa Ideology: Early Constructs, 1570–1680* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press), 1985. See, for example, 66–67.

dation in the interests of institutional survival versus principled resistance and martyrdom; the oppositional faction, known by the epithet "neither receiving nor giving" (*fuju fuse* 不受不施), was persecuted in the mid-1660s, becoming the second religion, after Christianity, to be proscribed by the Tokugawa Bakufu and driven underground. The main part of this chapter focuses on a key issue in the controversy: should one accept donations from a ruler who does not embrace the *Lotus Sūtra*? Its concluding section links the *fuju fuse* movement to broader, transregional patterns of Buddhist resistance.

1 Origins of the Controversy

1.1 *Nichiren,* Shakubuku*, and Admonishing the State*

Fuju fuse means that followers of the sect should not accept donations from those who do not embrace the *Lotus Sūtra*, nor make offerings to them. Its clerics should not join in ritual performances with their counterparts from other sects or accept offerings from non-believers; lay followers should not visit other sects' temples or shrines, solicit their ritual services, or make donations to their priests. This principle stemmed from the teachings of the sect's founder Nichiren 日蓮 (1222–1282), who preached exclusive devotion to the *Lotus Sūtra*, expressed in the chanting of its *daimoku* 題目, or title, Namu Myōhō-renge-kyō 南無妙法蓮華経. Nichiren had emerged from the Tendai sect 天台宗, which revered the *Lotus* as supreme among the Buddha's teachings; all others were deemed provisional and incomplete. Like many of his contemporaries, Nichiren believed the world had entered an evil era known as the Final Dharma age (*mappō* 末法), when the Buddha's message becomes obscured and liberation is difficult to achieve. Now in the Final Dharma age, he asserted, provisional teachings had lost their efficacy; only the *Lotus Sūtra* was powerful enough to lead all persons to buddhahood. Indeed, the spread of faith in the *Lotus* would reverse the dark current of the age and transform the present world into an ideal buddha land. Yet all around him he observed that devotion to the *Lotus* was being eroded by the spread of "inferior" provisional teachings such as Pure Land, Zen, and esoteric practices that, in his eyes, had lost their efficacy in the *mappō* era. Nichiren equated rejection of the *Lotus* with the grave sin of "slandering the dharma" (*hōbō* 謗法), and upon this error he blamed the disasters confronting Japan in his day: famines, earthquakes, epidemics, and the Mongol threat. In his proselytizing, Nichiren therefore rejected *shōju* 摂受, a mild approach of leading others gradually without challenging their views, in favor of *shakubuku* 折伏, a strict method of directly rebuking attachment to provisional teachings.

Nichiren saw this aggressive proselytizing as a compassionate act. Even if others refused to listen, hearing the message of the *Lotus* would implant in their hearts the seed of buddhahood that would assure their eventual liberation. At the same time, he held, *shakubuku* freed its practitioner from the sin of complicity (*yodōzai* 与同罪) in dharma slander. Even the most committed practitioners lived within a web of social and economic interdependence and could thus easily become implicated, albeit indirectly, in others' slander of the *Lotus*. Nichiren therefore urged his followers to speak out and admonish parents and other relatives who were not devotees. The same held true on a larger scale: "If you would escape the offense of dwelling in a country of dharma slanderers, then you should admonish the ruler, even though you may be exiled or killed."[4] Such an act, he taught, would accord with the spirit of the *Lotus Sūtra*, which says, "We do not cherish bodily life. We value only the supreme way."[5] Nichiren himself on three occasions warned Bakufu officials that the disasters ravaging the country stemmed from rejection of the *Lotus Sūtra* and urged them to withdraw support from priests advocating other teachings. Here we can see the remote roots of the later medieval *fuju fuse* prohibition on making donations to nonbelievers in the *Lotus* and its connection to *shakubuku*. Nichiren's later disciples, following his example, established a tradition of "admonishing the state" (*kokka kangyō* 国家諫暁), an act of *shakubuku* directed specifically toward the ruler—the emperor, the shogun, or his representatives—urging him for the country's sake to abandon support for priests espousing provisional teachings and to promote faith in the *Lotus Sūtra* alone.[6] "Now with all speed you must quickly reform your faith and at once devote it to the single good of the true vehicle," Nichiren urged. "Then the threefold world will all become a buddha land, and how could a buddha land ever decline?"[7]

Nichiren's criticisms of other Buddhist forms drew hostility from government officials and prominent clerics. He was repeatedly attacked and twice exiled; his followers were sometimes arrested, banished, or even killed. The *Lotus Sūtra* predicts that its devotees in a latter, evil age will be maligned and persecuted by persons in power. Thus, in Nichiren's eyes, the opposition he encountered fulfilled the *Sūtra*'s prophecy and confirmed the rightness of

4 "Akimoto gosho" 秋元御書, *Shōwa teihon Nichiren Shōnin ibun* 昭和定本日蓮聖人遺文 (hereafter, *Teihon*), 4 vols., 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; revised 1988), 2: 1738.

5 *Miaofa lianhua jing* 4, *T* no. 262: 9.36c18.

6 Jacqueline I. Stone, "'Admonishing the State' in the Nichiren Buddhist Tradition: The History and Significance of *Kokka kangyō*," *Nichiren gaku* 日蓮学 4 (2020): 1–54.

7 *Risshō ankoku ron* 立正安国論, *Teihon* 1: 226.

his course. The legitimation conferred by meeting persecution at the ruler's hands—thus confirming the *Lotus Sūtra*'s prediction and reenacting Nichiren's example—would inspire and sustain early modern *fuju fuse* proponents.

1.2 Fuju fuse *in the Medieval Nichiren Sect*

While Nichiren had clearly opposed making donations to nonbelievers, because his community was small and little known, the question of accepting offerings from outsiders did not become pressing during his lifetime.[8] It arose, however, as his later following expanded, especially in the region of Kyoto, the imperial capital. Concessions had to be made to aristocratic patrons and powerful warriors if the sect were to prosper, and early prohibitions on accepting donations from nonbelievers often made exceptions for the court, the shogun, and other high officials whose protection and support were necessary in order to spread Nichiren's teaching. Some Nichiren clerics even argued that accepting donations from such persons could be an expedient means of leading them toward faith in *Lotus Sūtra*.

The *fuju fuse* principle began to be explicitly articulated from the early fifteenth century, as part of a growing recommitment to *shakubuku*. A landmark statement appears in the 1413 regulations of the Nichiren temple Myōkakuji 妙覚寺 in Kyoto, which forbade visiting shrines and temples of other sects or making offerings to their priests, except when unavoidable in the course of official affairs or as social convention; they also prohibited accepting alms from dharma slanderers (nonbelievers), even as an enticement to faith.[9] Similar prohibitions appear in the 1466 Kanshō-era Accord (*Kanshō no meiyaku* 寛正の盟約), in which several Kyoto-based Nichiren lineages, in response to threats posed by the older religious establishment, pledged themselves to a strict *Lotus*-only stance.[10] Soon after, the sect began to seek and obtain formal exemptions from the successive Ashikaga shoguns, the de facto rulers,

8 Tradition holds that, at one point, Nichiren was offered official support if he would join with the priests of other sects in performing prayer rites to defeat the Mongols, but he refused, convinced that only faith in the *Lotus Sūtra* could solve the crisis facing Japan. On the background of *fuju fuse* ideas in Nichiren's thought, see Miyazaki Eishū 宮崎英修, *Fuju fuse-ha no genryū to tenkai* 不受不施派の源流と展開 (hereafter, *Genryū to tenkai*) (Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1969; reprint 1981), 13–84, and Jeffrey Robert Hunter, "The *Fuju Fuse* Controversy in Nichiren Buddhism: The Debate between Busshōin Nichiō and Jakushōin Nichiken" (hereafter, "*Fuju fuse* Controversy") (PhD diss., Wisconsin-Madison, 1989), 19–86.

9 Articles 1–3, Miyazaki, *Genryū to tenkai*, 125; Hunter, "*Fuju fuse* Controversy," 99.

10 Articles 2–5, Miyazaki, *Genryū to tenkai*, 157–158; Hunter, "*Fuju fuse* Controversy," 115–116.

from participating with priests of other sects in Bakufu-sponsored rituals.[11] This growing exclusivism served to unify Nichiren devotees—largely samurai, merchants, and townspeople—and to protect their interests against those of the older, land-based authority of aristocrats and the religious institutions that supported them. It was also stimulated by a turn toward Nichiren's writings as the chief source of religious authority, rather than the more inclusive, Tendai approach to *Lotus Sūtra* interpretation widespread among medieval Nichiren Buddhist scholastics. Significantly, those Nichiren lineages most committed to this hardline approach were the ones most active in spreading Nichiren's teachings in the provinces, laying the foundation for broad *fuju fuse* support.[12]

Nichiren clerics' refusal to participate in Bakufu-sponsored ceremonies was countenanced because political power was fragmented and the Ashikaga shoguns were weak. That changed, however, with the rise in the mid-sixteenth century of Nobunaga, who refused to tolerate the independence of Buddhist institutions. He had razed Enryakuji 延暦寺, the great Tendai center on Mt. Hiei, and destroyed Ishiyama Honganji 石山本願寺, headquarters of the influential Jōdo Shin or True Pure Land sect 浄土真宗. He also struck a blow at the Nichiren sect in a rigged debate, held in 1579 at his headquarters at Azuchi castle, with their Jōdoshū 浄土宗 or Pure Land sect counterparts, whose victory had been decided in advance. After declaring the Pure Land representatives victorious and executing the alleged instigators of the debate on the Nichiren side, Nobunaga had forced the Nichiren sect's leaders to submit a written apology, threatening that he would otherwise kill some two or three hundred Lotus devotees whom he had arrested and also destroy all Nichiren temples and believers in both Kyoto and his own domains.[13] Observing firsthand Nobunaga's unprecedented consolidation of power, influential Nichiren clerics in Kyoto saw a need to abandon strict *shakubuku*, rebuking attachment to teachings other than the *Lotus Sūtra*, in favor of a more accommodating, *shōju* approach.

11 Miyazaki, *Genryū to tenkai*, 159–160, 177–180. The first known exemption, dated 1492, refers to earlier precedent, so the practice would have begun before that.

12 On these developments see Fujii Manabu 藤井学, "Hokke senju no seiritsu ni tsuite" 法華専修の成立について, 1959; reprinted in his *Hokkeshū to machishū* 法華衆と町衆 (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 2003), 143–171.

13 On the Azuchi debate, see *Zenshi*, 470–493; Neil McMullin, *Buddhism and the State in Sixteenth-Century Japan* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 204–209.

1.3 *The Incident of the Great Buddha Rites*

These concerns came to the fore under Hideyoshi, who as retired regent (*taikō* 太閤) and actual power-holder was continuing Nobunaga's project of conquest. In 1595, Hideyoshi demanded that each of the ten Buddhist sects provide one hundred priests to participate in a series of monthly memorial services for his deceased relatives, to be held before a great buddha image he had erected at Higashiyama, east of Kyoto. Erecting massive buddha images and sponsoring "thousand-priest offering rites" (*sensō kuyō* 千僧供養) were markers of imperial legitimation, and participation in the rites by clerics of all sects would solidify, and showcase, Hideyoshi's authority over Buddhist institutions.[14] For the Nichiren priests, taking part would clearly violate *fuju fuse* principles: they would be participating together with priests of other sects and accepting alms, in the form of an offertory meal, from Hideyoshi, a nonbeliever in the *Lotus Sūtra* and thus, a slanderer of the dharma. However, they were poorly placed to refuse, as Hideyoshi had warned them that, even if participation contravened Nichiren's teaching, this time, no exception would be granted. Fearing that Hideyoshi would destroy their temples if they refused, the majority of the Nichiren abbots in Kyoto reluctantly decided to participate just once, as a sign of respect, and then reassert their sect's *fuju fuse* position.

The most vocal opponent was Busshōin Nichiō 仏性院日奥 (1565–1630), abbot of Myōkakuji. Nichiō's teacher Jitsujōin Nichiden 実成院日典 (1528–1592) had studied in the east and instilled in Nichiō the strict *shakubuku* ethos upheld among Nichiren lineages there. Participating in the rites even once, Nichiō protested, would irrevocably compromise the sect's principle, and they would then find it impossible to refuse on subsequent occasions. Rather, they should remonstrate with Hideyoshi, following Nichiren's example. Nichiō argued:

> Refusing to accept offerings from those who slander the dharma is the first principle of our sect and its most important rule. Therefore, the saints of former times all defied the commands of the ruler in order to observe it, even at the cost of their lives … If our temples are destroyed because we uphold [our] dharma-principle, that is [still in accord with] the original intent and meaning of this sect. What could there be to regret?[15]

14 "Thousand-priest offering rites" were initiated by the retired emperor Shirakawa 白河上皇 (1053–1129) as a ritual of state protection. See Heather Blair, "Rites and Rule: Kiyomori at Itsukushima and Fukuhara," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 73, no. 1 (2013), 27–28. I thank Haruko Wakabayashi for this reference.

15 *Shūgi seihō ron* 宗義制法論, ed. Kashiwahara Yūsen 柏原祐泉 and Fujii Manabu 藤井

In other words, Nichiō urged an act of "admonishing the state." By his time, however, that practice seems to have lapsed for well over a century,[16] and his colleagues were not eager to challenge Hideyoshi. Isolated by his refusal to compromise, Nichiō immediately left Kyoto and settled at Koizumi in Tanba province, writing and travelling to preach the *fuju fuse* doctrine. As he had anticipated, the Nichiren clerics proved unable to participate only once but took part for the entire twenty years that the rites were continued. Nichiō could thus point to an ongoing egregious violation of the sect's rules, sharply contrasting with his own principled stance, and he began to win significant lay support. Fearing his influence, the leaders of the Kyoto-based conciliatory faction within the sect lodged a formal complaint with Ieyasu, who at the time was "inner minister" (*naidaijin* 内大臣) under Hideyoshi. Ieyasu saw their suit as an opportunity to suppress a potential source of conflict and summoned Nichiō to Osaka castle, to confront his opponents within the sect in debate. Like the Azuchi debate staged by Nobunaga some twenty years earlier, the outcome had been decided in advance. Ieyasu declared Nichiō a danger to the realm and banished him to Tsushima, an island off the coast of Kyushu, in 1600.[17] Nichiō's writings during his dozen years in exile, often drawing on Nichiren's own words, reflect how deeply he had internalized Nichiren's sense of mission, even honor, in meeting persecution from the ruler for the *Lotus Sūtra*'s sake.[18]

The Nichiren clergy had begun to polarize into two factions: fierce advocates of *shakubuku*, concentrated in eastern Japan, who upheld an uncompromising *fuju fuse* stance, and accommodationists, based chiefly in Kyoto, who, being closer to the center of power, recognized that concessions would have to be made to the emerging new order if the sect were to survive. Where the scholar-priests of the hardline contingent emphasized fidelity to Nichiren's writings and his uncompromising *Lotus* exclusivism, their conciliatory opponents leaned toward *shōju* and inclusive Tendai-style readings of the *Lotus Sūtra*.[19]

学, *Kinsei bukkyō no shisō* 近世仏教の思想 *Nihon shisō taikei* 日本思想大系 (hereafter, *NST*) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1973) 57: 309–310.

16 Nisshin cites, as an analogous prior case, a thousand-priest ceremony sponsored in 1440 by Lord Fukōin 普広院殿 (Ashikaga Yoshinori), when the Nichiren sect successfully petitioned to be excused from participating (*NST* 57: 265, headnote). This may refer to the thirty-third-year memorial service for Yoshinori's predecessor Yoshimitsu, the third Ashikaga shogun.

17 For the events leading up to Nichiō's exile, see Miyazaki, *Genryū to tenkai*, 203–253; Hunter, "*Fuju Fuse* Controversy," 131–192.

18 Miyazaki, *Genryū to tenkai*, 256–268.

19 For the background of this doctrinal controversy, see Takagi Yutaka 高木豊, "Kinsei shotō

2 The Conflict Escalates

After Hideyoshi's death, Ieyasu seized power and established his Bakufu in 1603, moving his capital to the eastern city of Edo (Tokyo). Perhaps due to the efforts of Nichiō's disciples who had campaigned for his release, Nichiō was pardoned in 1612 and returned to Kyoto. There, several abbots of the Nichiren temples who had taken part in Hideyoshi's Great Buddha rites formally apologized to Nichiō and joined him in reaffirming the sect's *fuju fuse* stance. The memorial rites had come to an end in 1615, when Ieyasu destroyed Hideyoshi's heirs, so participation was no longer an issue. In 1620, Nichiren clerics applied to the Bakufu for official recognition of their *fuju fuse* policy, which was granted in 1623 by Itakura Katsushige 板倉勝重 (1544–1624), who had served as Ieyasu's deputy and had also issued Nichiō's pardon.[20] However, tensions within the sect still smoldered.

2.1 *The Dispute between Nichiō and Nichiken*

The *fuju fuse* controversy next surfaced in an acrimonious written exchange between Nichiō and Jakushōin Nichiken 寂照院日乾 (1560–1635). Nichiken had originally sided with Nichiō in urging the sect to refuse Hideyoshi's demands but at the last moment was persuaded to change sides by his teacher Ichinyoin Nichijū 一如院日重 (1549–1623).[21] Unlike some of the Kyoto abbots, Nichiken had not apologized to Nichiō when the latter returned from exile but remained firm in opposing him. Nichiken was a respected scholar and leader among the Kyoto Nichiren Buddhist clerics. Twice, in 1602–1603 and again in 1609–1614, he was appointed chief abbot of the temple Kuonji 久遠寺 on Mt. Minobu 身延山 in the eastern province of Kai. Minobu, where Nichiren had spent his last years and which housed his grave, enjoyed special status among the various Nichiren lineages as a holy pilgrimage site, so appointment to its abbacy was a signal honor. Nichiken also had close ties to the new shogunate and enjoyed the patronage of Yojūin 養珠院, or Oman no kata お万の方 (1577–1653), a favored consort of Ieyasu.

Sometime after Nichiō's return from exile, Yojūin's brother, one Miura Tameharu 三浦為春 (1573–1652), a highly placed Bakufu official, became his follower. In 1615, Nichiō compiled for Tameharu a brief history of notable *fuju fuse* pro-

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ni okeru Kantō Nichiren kyōdan no dōkō" 近世初頭における関東日蓮教団の動向, 1962; reprinted in his *Chūsei Nichiren kyōdan shikō* 中世日蓮教団史改 (Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin, 2008), 478–479.

20 Miyazaki, *Genryū to tenkai*, 287–293; Hunter, "*Fuju Fuse* Controversy," 200–209.

21 Miyazaki, *Genryū to tenkai*, 222; Hunter, "*Fuju Fuse* Controversy," 148–150.

ponents in all six major Nichiren lineages. Here—as in all his writings—Nichiō represented refusal to accept the ruler's offerings as an absolute principle handed down unaltered since Nichiren's time. This understanding was shared by *fuju fuse* advocates generally, as the earlier history of making exceptions for donations from persons in power had by now been forgotten or overwritten.[22] The incendiary passage that triggered the exchange with Nichiken appeared in Nichiō's opening account, dealing with the Minobu lineage. All Minobu abbots, Nichiō asserted, had staunchly upheld the *fuju fuse* principle, but since its egregious violator Nichiken had acceded to that post, this most holy place, by rights equal to the site of the Buddha's preaching at Eagle Peak in India, had been reduced to a place of dharma slander.[23] Probably through Tameharu's connection with Yojūin, Nichiken learned of Nichiō's attack and felt compelled to respond. He authored a lengthy tract known as "Refuting Nichiō" (*Haōki* 破奥記).[24] To this, Nichiō responded with a still longer work of rebuttal, the *Treatise on the Regulations Based on the Teachings of our Sect* (*Shūgi seihō ron* 宗義制法論). Their exchange would set the terms of the subsequent *fuju fuse* debate. Here we will examine a central issue in their exchange: whether or not official land grants to temples constitute dharma offerings. Behind this seemingly legalistic dispute lay incommensurable views of the relationship between the buddha-dharma—specifically, the *Lotus Sūtra*—and worldly authority.

As others have noted, Nichiken's argument in "Refuting Nichiō" is inconsistent.[25] He first states that Nichiren clerics had participated in the rites before the great buddha to encourage Hideyoshi, who had shown signs of faith. Then he shifts to a defensive note, protesting that the sect had tried unsuccessfully to obtain an exemption and that in the end it had proved "difficult to refuse the ruler's stern command"—thus suggesting that compliance had been a mere expedient. The order was obeyed, Nichiken continues, "for the survival of the

22 Miyazaki Eishū, "Nichiren kyōdan ni okeru kyōgaku ronsō" 日蓮教団における教学論争, 1981; reprinted in *Nichiren Shōnin to Nichirenshū* 日蓮聖人と日蓮宗, ed. Nakao Takashi 中尾堯 and Watanabe Hōyō 渡辺宝陽 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1984), 275.

23 *Hokkeshū shomonryū kindan hōse jōjō* 法華宗諸門流禁断謗施条々, published in *Nichiren kyōgaku kenkyūjo kiyō* 日蓮教学研究所紀要 (hereafter *NKKK*) 15 (1988): 8–11 (8–9). Nichikan's *Haōki*, discussed below, appears in the same issue.

24 In writing it, Nichiken consulted his disciple Nichion 日遠 (1572–1642), and the work was presented as that of Nichion's disciple Nissen, introduced below. On the issue of authorship, see "Haōki," s.v., in Nichirenshū Jiten Kankō Iinkai 日蓮宗事典刊行委員会, ed., *Nichirenshū jiten* 日蓮宗事典 (Tokyo: Nichirenshū Shūmuin, 1981), 314c, and Hunter, "*Fuju Fuse* Controversy," 240. Hunter has translated the entire exchange: I am indebted to his study.

25 Noted in Hunter, "*Fuju Fuse* Controversy," 243.

teaching," and for that reason, those Nichiren priests who took part had "abandoned a minor regulation to establish the great way."[26] Finally, Nichiken settles into his main argument and asserts that no violation of principle had in fact occurred. Nichiō and his supporters, he argues, already receive dharma offerings from the ruler in the form of lands and tax exemptions granted to temples by the shogunate; temple appointments and honorific titles, such as the title "great bodhisattva" (*daibosatsu* 大菩薩) conferred by the court upon Nichiren in 1358, are also the ruler's offerings. Further, Nichiken notes, when travelling, priests of the Nichiren sect walk the roads of the country and drink from its wells; since the land and its products all belong to the ruler, these too are dharma offerings. Compared to these great offerings, Nichiken asserts, accepting the offertory meal provided by Hideyoshi after the memorial ceremonies pales to insignificance. Even if Nichiō should reject the ruler's more specific offerings, how could he possibly avoid accepting land and water?[27] This was not a new criticism for Nichiō. Prior to his exile, Ieyasu had reportedly rebuked him, saying that, if he were really determined to refuse the ruler's offerings, he should follow the example of the ancient Chinese moral exemplars Boyi 伯夷 and Shuqi 叔齊, who, in protesting the misrule of King Zhou 紂王 (1105–1046 BCE), last emperor of the Shang 商 dynasty (ca. 1600 BCE–ca. 1046 BCE), had refused to eat the products of his realm and starved to death.[28]

To bolster his argument, Nichiken makes curious use of proof texts. Chief among them is a passage from the *Brahmā*'s *Net Sūtra* (*Fanwang jing* 梵網經, *T* no. 1484), the locus classicus for the bodhisattva precepts, which states, "One who intentionally violates the holy rules of discipline is not qualified to receive any offerings from lay supporters. Nor is he entitled to walk the land of the king's realm, nor to drink the king's water."[29] He then cites from several commentaries on this passage, beginning with that of the Tiantai patriarch Zhiyi 智顗 (538–597), who clarifies: "The ruler of the realm provides land and water to the virtuous. Those who are without virtue have no claim to them."[30] Nichiken then quotes from another reading by Fazang 法蔵 (643–712), which explains that monks are exempt from taxes on the land and water they use because of the virtue of their precept observance. "If they neither pay taxes

26 *Haōki*, NKKK 15: 13, 23–24; Hunter, "*Fuju Fuse* Controversy," 332, 362.

27 *Haōki*, NKKK 15: 33–34; Hunter, "*Fuju Fuse* Controversy," 385–387.

28 *Ōsaka tairon ki* 大阪対論記, in Miyazaki, *Genryū to tenkai*, 240; Hunter, "*Fuju Fuse* Controversy," 175.

29 *Fanwang jing* 2, *T* no. 1484: 24.1009a, 13–15.

30 *Pusajie yishu* 菩薩戒義疏 2, *T* no. 1811: 40.579b, 7–8.

nor uphold the discipline, how could they claim any portion [of the land or water]? One who has no claim to a portion but takes it anyway is a bandit."[31] Nichiken follows with yet another comment by the Korean exegete Daehyeon (大賢, eighth cent.), which elaborates, "If monks, being exempt from national service, are not fields of merit, they deserve no gratitude from the ruler and thus have no right to the water of the realm; therefore they are called great bandits."[32]

In fact, these passages have no bearing on the *fuju fuse* issue. They do not support Nichiken's contention that land grants and tax exemptions from the ruler are his offerings to the dharma. Their thrust is rather to urge rigorous observance of the monastic rule. As persons not engaged in productive labor, monastics are qualified to receive tax exemptions and make use of the ruler's land and water only so long as they remain good merit fields for the people and the realm by virtue of their strict precept observance. This idea expresses the basic social contract between Buddhist institutions and the state recognized across East Asia. No one had ever previously criticized the *fuju fuse* stance as a precept violation; Nichiken appears to have been groping for some scriptural justification for having participated in Hideyoshi's rites. Nonetheless, his use of these passages accomplishes two things. First, because they mention land and water bestowed by the ruler side by side with references to donations from lay supporters, they seem to underscore Nichiken's claim that the roads and water provided by the ruler fall into the same category as devotees' offerings to the dharma. And second, because they condemn monks who illegitimately receive the produce of the land, they seem also to suggest that Nichiō and his supporters have somehow betrayed the ruler, violating the contract between state and saṅgha, and are therefore "great bandits." *Haōki*, in short, argues by suggestion and innuendo. Nevertheless, the passages identified by Nichiken would be invoked again and again in subsequent decades as the *fuju fuse* controversy unfolded.

Nichiō's response was scathing. Hideyoshi had shown no sign whatsoever of taking faith, so it was false to say that cooperating with him served to encourage his devotion. The only "difficulty" in refusing Hideyoshi's command, he retorted, was Nichiken's own cowardice. A true disciple of Nichiren would have refused to compromise and instead admonished the ruler to discard provisional teachings and embrace the *Lotus Sūtra* alone, being ready to risk his life for the dharma's sake as Nichiren had taught. Nichiō charged that, among those

31 *Fanwang jing pusa jieben shu* 梵網經菩薩戒本疏 6, *T* no. 1813: 40.653c, 10–12.

32 *Beommanggyeong gojeokgi* 梵網經古迹記 2b, *T* no. 1815: 40.717b, 9–10.

Nichiren priests outside Kyoto whom Nichiken had summoned to participate in the rites, many had abandoned their temples and fled to remote provinces, returned to lay life, hidden in mountains and forests, or even taken their own lives rather than compromise with dharma slander. Far from preserving the sect, accepting Hideyoshi's demand had shaken the confidence of lay devotees and made the Nichiren sect a laughingstock for abandoning its principle. If refusing alms from a ruler who did not embrace the *Lotus Sūtra* were a mere "minor regulation," then why had the patriarchs of the sect risk their lives to admonish the ruler and obtain exemptions from participating in rituals that he sponsored?[33]

2.2 *Worldly and Transcendent Perspectives*

The core of Nichiō's response lies in his rebuttal to the assertion that Nichiren priests already accept the ruler's offerings in the form of land grants and tax exemptions. First, he raises the issue of intent: Not all gifts made to temples are dharma offerings. The ruler may bestow gifts as a worldly reward, to sponsor Buddhist rites and ceremonies, or to acknowledge virtue. Official clerical ranks and titles are bestowed on priests in recognition of their service, not as dharma offerings; the same holds true of temple lands. "If they are given as worldly rewards, there is no need to decline them. But if they are offerings made for the performance of Buddhist rites, accepting them becomes slander of the dharma, and we must refuse them."[34]

The distinction between worldly rewards and dharma offerings was by no means new. It appears, for example, in *Lectures Heard and Recorded* (*Onkō kikigaki* 御講聞書), a record of oral teachings on the *Lotus* attributed to Nichiren but probably composed around 1500. One passage comments on the primordially awakened Śākyamuni Buddha's original disciples who, in the *Sūtra*, emerge in a vast throng from beneath the earth and receive the Buddha's mandate to propagate the *Lotus* in an evil age after his nirvāṇa. The *Sūtra* text praises them as "unstained by worldly dharmas, like lotus blossoms in the [muddy] water."[35] The commentary reads in part:

> As for "worldly dharmas": Even if one should be granted lands or official rank by the ruler or his great ministers, one does not become corrupted

33 This paragraph summarizes several of Nichiō's points in *Shūgi seihō ron*. See in particular *NST* 57:270, 289, 309–310, 320–321, 323; Hunter, "*Fuju Fuse* Controversy," 432–433, 479–480, 530–531, 552–554, 560–561.

34 *NST* 57:315–316; Hunter, "*Fuju fuse* Controversy," 543–544, slightly modified.

35 *Miaofa lianhua jing* 5, *T* no. 262: 9.42a, 5–6.

> thereby. "Unstained by worldly dharmas" means rejecting the offerings of dharma slanderers.[36]

Nichiken took this to mean that one may accept dharma offerings from nonbelievers if one does not become defiled by greedy attachment.[37] But the passage seems rather to support Nichiō's reading, that lands and titles are worldly matters, distinct from dharma offerings. Ample precedent supported this reading. The Kanshō-era accord, mentioned above, which had mandated refusal of offerings from nonbelievers, nonetheless made exceptions for donations stemming from "such worldly virtues as humanity, righteousness, love, and propriety."[38] Within the medieval Nichiren sect, temple lands bestowed by the ruler had generally been deemed worldly arrangements, not subject to the *fuju fuse* restriction.[39]

Nichiō explains the reason behind the *fuju fuse* prohibition as having two aspects: worldly and transcendent. From the worldly perspective (*sekai ichiō no gi* 世界一往の義), those who dwell in the ruler's realm receive their sustenance from the ruler's land, not unconditionally, but in exchange for their labor at their various professions. The carpenter, the wheelwright, the cart-maker, and so forth all eat by virtue of their labor. The same holds true for priests of the Nichiren sect, who, while living in the ruler's realm, are entitled to consume its fruits by the "diligent practice of our house" (*ie no gyō o tsutomete* 家の行を勤めて). That "practice," Nichiō explains, is to rebuke the ruler's dharma slander and undergo exile or other resulting punishments, just as Nichiren taught. In short, Nichiō reframes the social contract between state and saṅgha in a *Lotus*-only mode: Nichiren priests are qualified to consume the produce of the land by virtue of practicing *shakubuku* and admonishing the ruler to discard provisional teachings and embrace the *Lotus Sūtra*. Those priests of the sect who make no effort to rebuke the ruler's dharma slander are bandits and traitors. In quoting the *Brahmā's Net Sūtra* and its commentaries, Nichiō concludes, Nichiken merely undermines his own position.

But that is only the worldly perspective. From the ever-abiding, transcendent perspective (*shusse saiō no gi* 出世再往の義), Nichiō continues, the ruler does not own the country. All sovereigns hold their lands in fief from Śākyamuni Buddha, who declared in the *Lotus Sūtra* that "this threefold world is

36 *Onkō kikigaki*; a.k.a. *Nikō ki* 日向記, *Teihon* 3:2578.
37 *Haōki*, *NKKK* 15:21; Hunter, "*Fuju fuse* Controversy," 354.
38 Article 4. See n. 10 above.
39 Miyazaki, *Genryū to tenkai*, 172–177.

all my possession."[40] Here Nichiō drew on Nichiren himself, who had elaborated a cosmic hierarchy with the eternal Śākyamuni Buddha of the *Lotus* at its apex. Brahmā and Indra, the Indian world-ruling deities, hold their domains in tenure from Śākyamuni Buddha and protect his true disciples, the *Lotus* devotees. The four deva kings who guard the four quarters are gatekeepers to Brahmā and Indra, while the monarchs of the four continents are vassals to the four deva kings. "The ruler of Japan," Nichiren had written, "is not equal even to a vassal of the wheel-turning monarchs who govern the four continents. He is just an island chief."[41] Nichiren's idea of Śākyamuni as "lord of the threefold world" thus radically subordinated the ruler's authority to that of the *Lotus Sūtra*. Connecting this hierarchy to the issue at hand, Nichiō argues that Nichiren priests, being the direct disciples of Śākyamuni Buddha of the *Lotus Sūtra*, are perfectly entitled to receive the products of the land, as they come directly from that Buddha himself. Boyi and Shuqi, he adds, understood worldly loyalty, but because they lived before Buddhism had arrived in China, they had no way of knowing this transcendent principle and thus needlessly starved themselves to death.[42]

Whether from the worldly or transcendent perspective, the mandate of Nichiren's disciples remains the same: to practice *shakubuku*, the refuting of attachment to provisional teachings, and to admonish the ruler to take faith in the *Lotus Sūtra* alone. Only then are they qualified to consume the products of the land. The transcendent perspective differs in explicitly asserting the superior authority of the *Lotus Sūtra* and thus relativizing the ruler's position. In contrast, Nichiken's stance, which exempted the ruler's offerings from the prohibition against accepting donations from nonbelievers, tacitly endorsed—or at least did not contradict—Bakufu claims to absolute authority.

As a scripturally grounded justification for having taken part in Hideyoshi's rites, Nichiken's argument was weak and his use of proof texts flawed, as Nichiō unsparingly demonstrated. Nonetheless, although perhaps unwittingly, Nichiken made a crucial innovation that shifted the terms of the debate. While initially put forth to legitimate his own actions, his redefining of temple lands as the ruler's dharma offerings would become instrumental in the eventual *fuju fuse* suppression.

40 *Miaofa lianhua jing* 2, *T* no. 262: 9.14c, 26.

41 "Hōmon mōsarubekiyō no koto" 法門可被申様之事, *Teihon* 1:448.

42 *NST* 57:327–332; Hunter, "*Fuju fuse* Controversy," 568–581.

3 The Minobu-Ikegami Conflict

With the move of government to Edo, Buddhist lineages, including the several Kyoto-based branches of the Nichiren sect, began expanding into the eastern provinces. Disciples in Nichiken's lineage now occupied the chief abbacy of the temple Kuonji at Mt. Minobu, also in the east. These clerics enjoyed personal connections to prominent Bakufu figures—Yojūin's patronage has already been mentioned—and they began to strategize how they might use those connections to bring the entire sect under Minobu's leadership. However, the eastern provinces were a *fuju fuse* stronghold. The next phase of the *fuju fuse* controversy unfolded as a struggle between an accommodationist faction led by Minobu and a hardline *fuju fuse* contingent headed by the temple Ikegami Honmonji 池上本門寺, located close to Edo and the leading Nichiren Buddhist temple in the east. The contest between the two factions now assumed a dual character: on one hand, an internecine struggle for control of the sect, but at the same time, a clash of earnest but incommensurable opinions over how best to secure the sect's future under a regime intent on circumscribing religious activity.

3.1 *Nissen Petitions the Bakufu*

The next major round in the conflict was initiated by a petition to Bakufu officials submitted in 1629 by Chiken'in Nissen 智見院日暹 (1586–1648)—a second-generation disciple of Nichiken and at the time the chief abbot of Minobu—against Chōon'in Nichiju 長遠院日樹 (1574–1631), chief abbot of Ikegami Honmonji and an ardent admirer of Nichiō. Nissen of Minobu and Nichiju of Ikegami now represented the leadership, respectively, of the conciliatory and hardline factions within the sect. Compared to the lengthy internal exchange between Nichiō and Nichiken, Nissen's official complaint and Nichiju's rejoinder are brief documents, directed toward outsiders. Nonetheless, they show how arguments articulated by Nichiō and Nichiken some fifteen years earlier were being deployed in the evolving *fuju fuse* controversy.

Nissen launches his complaint with a selectively abridged account of the memorial rites sponsored by Hideyoshi, making no mention of the *fuju fuse* principle. Priests of the Nichiren sect attended, Nissen states, because the ruler had required it. At that time, Nichiō denounced their participation as slander of the dharma and a sin leading to rebirth in the hells. However, the sect's scholar-priests agreed that Nichiō did not understand the meaning of dharma slander and was merely spewing arbitrary abuse. As a result, the sect's abbots in Kyoto lodged a complaint against him, and Ieyasu had him exiled to Tsushima. Now, Nissen, continues,

> Nichuju of Ikegami, desiring to promote Nichiō's heresies [...] irresponsibly maligns our temple [Minobu], saying that because its former abbot Nichiken took part in the rites sponsored by Hideyoshi and received his offerings, our mountain has become a place of dharma slander, and those who visit here will surely fall into the Avīci hell. Thus he deters pilgrimage and curtails offerings. Determined to destroy Minobu with all possible speed, he commits such calumnies to writing and also travels around the provinces, widely preaching them from the lecturer's seat.[43]

Clearly the next generation of *fuju fuse* proponents had taken up Nichiō's accusation that the sacred ground of Minobu had become defiled by the dharma slander of Nichiken and his supporters and were promulgating it, with serious economic consequences.

Nissen next accuses Nichiju of hypocrisy, charging that, while condemning receipt of the ruler's donations as dharma slander, Nichiju nonetheless administers his own temple on the proceeds of lands bestowed by the ruler—the same charge that Nichiken had leveled against Nichiō. Nissen asserts: "The country's ruler, provincial governors, and local headmen donate paddies and fields to priests and bestow [income from] districts and villages on temples so that, by protecting the unsurpassed true dharma, those priests can pray for the pacification of the four directions; cultivate precepts, meditation, and wisdom; and become excellent merit fields."[44] The particular duty of Nichiren priests to rebuke attachment to provisional teachings goes unmentioned. Nissen cites the same passages Nichiken had quoted from the *Brahmā's Net Sūtra* and its commentaries about kings giving land and water to the virtuous and monks receiving tax exemptions in return for their strict precept observance. He also introduces another passage with similar purport from the *Heap of Jewels Sūtra* (Ch. *Baoliang jing* 寶梁經; Skt. *Ratnarāśi-sūtra*, *T* no. 310): "One who does not practice purity and yet says that he practices purity, who breaks the precepts while claiming to uphold them, is not qualified to receive even land sufficient to spit upon, let alone to come and go, or even to bend and stretch. Why? Because in the past, kings gave that land to monastics who uphold the precepts."[45] Here again, these quotations serve to reinforce by suggestion the claim that temple

43 *Shinchi tairon kiroku* 身池対論記録 1, Ōsaki Nichigyō 大崎日行, ed. *Genbun taiyaku bandai kikyōroku* 原文対訳万代亀鏡錄 (hereafter, *Bandai*), 2 vols. (Kyoto: Bandai Kikyōroku Kankōkai, 1931–1933), 2: 62 (*yakubun* 訳文), 108 (*honbun* 本文).

44 Ibid., 2:63 (*yakubun*), 108 (*honbun*).

45 The corresponding passage would be *Baoliang jing* 113, *T* no. 310: 11.640a, 7–11. Nichiken's phrasing differs slightly from the Taishō text and appears to incorporate some wording

lands bestowed by the ruler are dharma offerings; that Nichiju and his associates contradict themselves in accepting them; and that they have violated proper state-saṅgha relations by receiving offerings to which they are not entitled.

Nichiju's response to the complaint invokes in idealized form the *fuju fuse* history that Nissen had glossed over. The founder Nichiren himself, Nichiju says, had established the principle of not receiving donations from nonbelievers, and the entire sect had upheld it for more than three hundred years. It was Nichiken who had initiated a new doctrine permitting the acceptance of such offerings, in order to conceal his shame. As a result, Nichiren's jewel-like teachings have become buried in dust, and the sect devoted to them is no longer able to save living beings, but on the contrary, draws them into the sin of dharma slander and certain future suffering. Nissen also points out that the *fuju fuse* stance had been officially recognized, pointing to the exemption from participating in Bakufu-sponsored ceremonies granted by the former shogunal deputy Itakura a mere seven years before.

Nichiju then turns to the issue of accepting fields and paddies from the ruler. Nissen's charge of hypocrisy, he says, confuses the worldly realm with the realm of the buddha-dharma. Here he enlarges on the distinction drawn earlier by Nichiō. From a worldly perspective, Nichiju acknowledges, the ruler is a parent to all people. Thanks to his beneficence, priests can spread the teachings of their sect and sustain their temples. Priests of the Nichiren sect repay that beneficence by admonishing the country's dharma slander, conducting ceremonies based on the wonderful dharma of the *Lotus*, and praying for the welfare of the ruler and his ministers.

From a Buddhist standpoint, however, Śākyamuni Buddha is the teacher of all living beings. From this perspective, Nichiju argues, the question of devotion becomes crucial. Giving temple lands to priests in whose teaching one has personal faith is a Buddhist offering. Giving temple lands to priests in whose teaching one has no personal faith is an act of ordinary beneficence. The two are altogether different. Nichiren's writings offer no support whatsoever for Nissen's claims, Nichiju asserts. Although Nissen cites the *Heap of Jewels Sūtra*, he does not understand it and merely undermines his own position.[46]

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from a version of the same passage cited by Zhanran 湛然 (711–782) in his *Zhiguan fuxing zhuan hongjue* 止觀輔行傳弘決 1–5, *T* no. 1912: 46.177c, 18–24.

46 *Shinchi tairon kiroku* 2, *Bandai* 2:64–67 (*yakubun*), 109–110 (*honbun*).

Both Nissen and Nichiju, for polemical purposes, oversimplify the history of the *fuju fuse* dispute, each portraying the other as promoting a new and harmful doctrine. Whether or not the Bakufu officials reading their arguments could follow them, they may well have discerned that, while Nissen and other accommodationists offered no challenge to Bakufu authority, *fuju fuse* priests considered themselves obligated to admonish the ruler in the name of an authority greater than his own.

3.3 *A Foredoomed Contest*

Perhaps in response to Nissen's petition, Nissen and Nichiju, representing their temples at Minobu and Ikegami respectively, along with five prominent Nichiren clerics as supporters on each side, were summoned to debate in the presence of Bakufu officials and six clerical judges drawn primarily from the Tendai and Zen sects. The Minobu-Ikegami debate (Shinchi tairon 延池対論) began on 2/21/1630.[47] The Minobu side opened by charging that to reject the ruler's offerings was to oppose him; hence Nichiō's exile as an enemy of the realm. The Ikegami side countered that Ieyasu had pardoned Nichiō. In refusing to acknowledge the recent exemption from participating in Bakufu-sponsored ceremonies issued in 1623, Minobu supporters were the ones opposing the ruler. The Minobu representatives then put forth the peculiar argument that the 1623 exemption applied only to donations from ordinary people and not to the ruler himself. The Ikegami contingent retorted that it applied particularly to the ruler; it was precisely because "neither receiving nor giving" applied to offerings from the ruler that an official exemption had been sought in the first place. The major part of the debate, however, focused on whether temple lands bestowed by the ruler are dharma offerings. The Ikegami representatives upheld, and expanded upon, the earlier distinction drawn by Nichiō:

> Temple lands are donated as an expression of the ruler's benevolent government. Dharma offerings arise from faith and are given to sponsor Buddhist ceremonies and generate merit [...] How could the two be confused? Moreover, of the four debts [to parents, all sentient beings, rulers, and the three treasures], dharma offerings correspond to the fourth, the debt owed to the three treasures [the Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha]. If it were as you say, there would be no distinction between the third debt, [that

47 Two records survive, representing the two sides. The one representing the conciliatory faction purports to be an official Bakufu record but was produced by the Minobu side some thirty-six years later (See Miyazaki, *Genryū to tenkai*, 384). I cite here from the Ikegami version.

> owed to the ruler], and the fourth. And there would be no distinction between the ruler's law and the Buddhist law, or between worldly and Buddhist affairs.[48]

A war of scriptural quotations ensued. To support their assertion that gifts of temple lands are in fact the ruler's dharma offerings, the Minobu side mustered all the passages put forth earlier by Nichiken and Nissen: the *Brahma's Net Sūtra*, its commentaries, the *Heap of Jewels Sūtra*, and the *Lectures Heard and Recorded* attributed to Nichiren. In their rebuttal, the Ikegami side displayed superior textual skills, rebuking their opponents for parsing passages incorrectly and lifting them out of context. For example, they noted that Minobu's reading of the *Brahma's Net Sūtra* passage conflated two issues. "One who intentionally violates the holy rules of discipline is not qualified to receive any offerings from lay supporters" clearly refers to dharma offerings. But the subsequent statement—"Nor is he entitled to walk the land of the king's realm, nor to drink the king's water"—is a separate sentence and makes a different point, indicating a distinction between the offerings of devotees and the ruler's gift.[49]

A month into the debate, Nichiju decided that the victory of his own side must be evident, and he petitioned for a decision to that effect. But the contest was not judged on the basis of fidelity to scripture, and the Minobu side was pronounced victorious on 4/2/1630. Indeed, as in the Azuchi debate orchestrated by Nobunaga some fifty years earlier, and in the Ōsaka debate of 1600 that led to Nichiō's exile, the outcome had almost certainly been decided in advance. Throughout the medieval period, religious debate had been a formidable weapon in the Nichiren sect's arsenal of propagation, and its scholar-monks, especially of the hardline faction, excelled in its use. By the tactic of staging such debates but rigging the outcome, officials representing the new order turned the legitimizing power of this weapon against the troublesome *fuju fuse* contingent.

In the wake of the decision, Nichiju and his five associates were banished to remote areas throughout the archipelago, and Nichiō, who had died the month before, received a second, posthumous sentence of exile. Two major *fuju fuse* temples, Nichiō's Myōkakuji in Kyoto and Nichiju's Ikegami Honmonji near Edo, along with their hundreds of branch temples, were placed under Minobu governance. At one stroke, Minobu became the largest faction within the sect.[50] Nissen issued a statement to all branch temples now under his

48 *Shinchi tairon kiroku* 3, *Bandai* 2: 71–72 (*yakubun*), 113 (*honbun*).

49 Ibid., 2: 73 (*yakubun*), 113 (*honbun*).

50 In 1633, three years after the debate, in a Bakufu-mandated report, Minobu claimed 1,059

administration, in which he declared that, as the result of the debate, the false position asserted by Nichiju and his party, rejecting the ruler's offerings, had been silenced. "The doctrine of our mountain [i.e., the Minobu lineage] is that the ruler's offerings are always to be accepted, and this is not to be disputed," he declared.[51] As always, offerings from ordinary nonbelievers would be refused.

Early in the debate proceedings, Nichiju had submitted a list of errors he perceived in Minobu's position. The following is especially relevant here:

> If the ruler's donations are to be accepted, then those of ordinary nonbelievers should be accepted. Their wealth derives from the ruler's beneficence, so if you [Nissen] reject their offerings, you should reject those of the ruler as well. The reason we reject the offerings of ordinary nonbelievers is to save [ourselves] from the sin of complicity in dharma slander and to cause all to obtain the great fruit [of enlightenment] in this life and the next. [By accepting his alms and not reproving his dharma slander] you prevent the ruler—to whom you are deeply indebted—from reaping this great benefit. By making common people [alone] the object [of the *fuju fuse* restriction], you protect your own house but make light of the nation.[52]

Nichiju here reasserts Nichiren's teaching that reproving others' lack of faith in the *Lotus* is a compassionate act, enabling them to form a karmic tie to the *Sūtra* that will ensure their eventual buddhahood. By avoiding confrontation with the ruler, he says, Nissen protects his own interests but denies salvation to the ruler and, by extension, the country he governs. He also notes that exempting the ruler alone from the *fuju fuse* principle is logically inconsistent. From the outset, it was not a doctrinally grounded position but an expedient; perhaps that was why Nissen had simply decreed, without elaborating, that it was "not to be disputed." As *fuju fuse* hardliners such as Nichiju discerned, that expedient in effect collapsed the realms of the buddha-dharma, deemed absolute, and of worldly authority, seen as relative. Since the Tokugawa Bakufu itself represented its administrative order as absolute, its interests lay in supporting the Minobu side, which did not challenge its ideology of rule.

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branch temples, roughly half the number of temples reported by the entire sect. See Takagi, "Kinsei shotō," 489–492, and Fujii Manabu, "Edo Bakufu no shūkyō tōsei" 江戸幕府の宗教統制, *Iwanami kōza Nihon rekishi* 岩波講座日本歴史, vol. 11: *Kinsei* 近世 3 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1963), 144.

51 *Shinchi tairon kiroku* 10, *Bandai* 2: 99–100 (*yakubun*), 129–130 (*honbun*).

52 *Shinchi tairon kiroku* 5, *Bandai* 2:94 (yakubun), 125–126 (*honbun*).

4 *Fuju Fuse* Suppressed

While the verdict against Nichiju and Ikegami in the debate had in theory given the Minobu-led accommodationist faction the upper hand, over the next three decades, the conflict between the two parties only continued to escalate.[53] Priests of the branch temples turned over to Minobu refused to obey their new chief abbots and often decamped, along with their lay parishioners, to establish independent temples of their own. *Fuju fuse* scholar-priests instituted new seminaries (*danrin* 檀林), especially in the eastern provinces, pouring their efforts into educating young priests, who were then dispatched to preach the *fuju fuse* doctrine among the laity. For their part, the conciliatory faction—now contemptuously dubbed by their opponents *ju fuse* ("not giving but receiving")—sought to exploit their Bakufu connections by relentlessly petitioning the commissioners of temples and shrines (*jisha bugyō* 寺社奉行) against their *fuju fuse* adversaries. Invariably, they urged that lands granted to temples be defined as the ruler's dharma offerings, which would make it impossible for *fuju fuse* adherents to accept them.

The Minobu-Ikegami debate and Nichiju's exile, like that of Nichiō before him, had reflected the early Tokugawa Bakufu's piecemeal approach to religious issues, which dealt with perceived threats and troublemakers as they arose. But by the mid-seventeenth century, comprehensive administrative policies for regulating religion were being implemented. Edicts issued in 1665 forbade the preaching and advertising of religious services in public places, harshly curtailing the activities of those itinerant preachers, ascetic holy men (*hijiri* 聖), mediums (*miko* 巫女), and other independent practitioners who had peopled the medieval religious landscape. Regulations (*hatto* 法度) previously issued individually for certain temples and sects were now promulgated universally, exhorting priests to disciplined study and moral conduct and forbidding the preaching of heresies. The same period saw a tightening of mandatory identification of temples by sect and, within each sect, the establishment of clear head temple/branch temple hierarchies. The system of temple certification (*terauke* 寺請), by which temple abbots affirmed that their lay member families did not embrace the forbidden Kirishitan 切支丹 (Christian) faith, was gradually extended as a form of population oversight. All households were required

53 For developments during this period, see Miyazaki Eishū, *Kinsei Fuju fuse-ha no kenkyū* 禁制不受不施派の研究 (hereafter, *Kinsei*) (Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1959; reprint 1964), 3–80, and Takagi Yutaka, "Kanbun hōnan zengo: Fuju fuse shi kenkyū danshō" 寛文法難前後—不受不施史研究断章, 1957; reprinted in his *Chūsei Nichiren kyōdan shikō* (Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin, 2008), 408–438.

to join Buddhist temples and to receive temple certification; these certificates were then compiled by village and ward officials into population "registries of sectarian inspection" (*shūmon aratamechō* 宗門改帳). By 1664, temple certification was required annually, and officials were appointed in each domain to oversee registry compilation.[54]

4.1 *A Diabolical Strategy*

As part of this restructuring, in 1665, temple and shrine commissioners reviewed and reconfirmed the vermillion-seal lands (*shuinchi* 朱印地) granted by the Bakufu to temples and shrines. This seemingly routine bureaucratic operation proved an ideal opportunity to deal decisively with the *fuju fuse* issue, the last major obstacle to implementing Bakufu religious policy. Officials now stipulated that these lands were the ruler's dharma offerings and demanded written statements (*otegata* お手形) from each recipient temple, acknowledging their receipt in exception to the *fuju fuse* rule. This demand trapped *fuju fuse* priests in a horrifying quandary, similar to that faced by Christian believers required to tread on an image of Jesus or the Virgin Mary (*fumie* 踏み絵).[55] To refuse the land grants as offerings tainted by dharma slander was to be arrested and punished as an enemy of the ruler. To accept them was to publicly betray the *fuju fuse* principle, turning apostate in one's own and others' eyes. *Fuju fuse* priests could not even evade the choice by abandoning their temples to live as itinerant preachers, as such activities were now prohibited. Again, Bakufu officials had drawn on the practice of a religious group deemed troublesome for a weapon to be turned against them. Yet, although promulgated by government functionaries, the strategy of using *otegata* in this way was surely inspired by the Nichiren sect's accommodationist faction, which had persistently petitioned that land grants to temples be defined as dharma offerings.

The Bakufu then issued a yet harsher ordinance: certification by *fuju fuse* temples would no longer be recognized.[56] Without annual temple certification, individuals could not be entered into the registry of sectarian inspection, which was necessary to work, marry, travel, or change residence; unregistered persons had no legitimate social place. This new edict in effect banned *fuju*

54 See Fujii, "Edo Bakufu no shūkyō tōsei," 142–157, and Takagi, "Kanbun hōnan zengo," 421–423. On temple certification and sectarian registration, see Nam-lin Hur, *Death and Social Order in Tokugawa Japan: Buddhism, Anti-Christianity, and the* Danka *System* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2007), 14–16, 82–87, 95–100.

55 Fujii, "Edo bakufu no shūkyō tōsei," 165.

56 While most scholars accept 3/5/1669 as the date of this edict, 1665 has also been proposed. See Aiba Shin 相葉伸, *Fuju fuse-ha junkyō no rekishi* 不受不施派殉教の歴史 (Tokyo: Daizō Shuppan, 1976), 83.

fuse practice; for priests and laity alike, the alternatives were grim. Some *fuju fuse* priests, followed by their lay supporters, went over, at least outwardly, to their *ju fuse* opponents, probably reasoning that, even if forced into complicity with dharma slander, it would be better from a long-range view to preserve their temple institutions. Others went underground to live furtively as unregistered persons, subject at any time to arrest, followed by exile or execution, were they to be discovered. A surprising number of priests and laity chose this course, practicing their faith in secret communities until legalized in 1876, more than two hundred years later.[57] Other priests chose to defy the government and accept arrest, imprisonment, or exile as martyrs for the *fuju fuse* principle. They must have been sustained by Nichiren's example and his teaching that to meet persecution from worldly authorities for the *Lotus Sūtra*'s sake proves the righteousness of one's faith and guarantees one's future buddhahood. Still other individuals committed suicide in protest. One Anjūin Nichinen 安住院日念 (1656–1732), a priest in the underground *fuju fuse* community, later recalled the moment:

> In the sixth year of the Kanbun era (1666), the fire-horse year, when the true dharma was utterly destroyed, I was still a child, but I remember faintly. Several believers gathered. "Shall we commit suicide? Drown ourselves? Or flee, and simply die wherever we drop? Alas, how sad!" I watched them as they neglected their work to talk over possible courses. "We should not throw away our lives just yet; better to wait until there is no other choice," they concluded, and each sought out a [new] family temple. But among them were some persons of intense faith who hung themselves and died.[58]

4.2 *Defying the "Land and Water Offerings Edict"*

Throughout the archipelago, known *fuju fuse* hideouts were torched; arrests, executions, and deaths in prison are also recorded.[59] Among those who took

57 *Fuju fuse* adherents were better equipped to survive underground than were the Christians, as they were able to maintain priestly leadership and extensive communication networks among their communities. On the underground *fuju fuse*, see Miyazaki, *Kinsei*, 143–156, 212–256.

58 *Min'yu mōha ki* 愍諭盲跛記, *Bandai* 2, Appendix, 256.

59 On the history of *fuju fuse* martyrs, see Aiba, *Fuju fuse-ha junkyō no rekishi*, 89–139; Kageyama Gyōō, "Fuju fuse no hōnan narabi ni ryūsō seikatsu ni tsuite" 不受不施の法難並びに流僧生活について, in *Nichiren Fuju fuse-ha no kenkyū*, ed. Kageyama Gyōō, 142–198 (Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1956; revised 1972); and "Hōnan junkyōsha meibo" 法難殉教者名簿, *Shiryōshū*, 195–222.

their own lives rather than compromise with "slander of the dharma," the number of suicides by fasting stands out. Several occurred in Okayama, where the domain lord, Ikeda Mitsumasa 池田光政, an ardent neo-Confucian, authorized especially harsh anti-*fuju fuse* measures, destroying 313 *fuju fuse* temples out of 1,044 Buddhist temples in his domain and exiling 585 *fuju fuse* priests out of 1,957 Buddhist clerics.[60] In 1669, four nuns, together with Kenjūin Nissei 堅住院日勢, the priest of their temple, sequestered themselves in an ancient burial mound (*kofun* 古墳) in Fukuda in nearby Mimasaka province. There they fasted to death while chanting the *daimoku*.[61] The nun Myōjō 妙浄, also of Okayama, immured herself in a hole she had dug in the ground and fasted to death, and the priest Nichien 日円 similarly fasted to death inside a coffin he had made.[62] Suicides by fasting are also attested in Edo, Kyoto, and elsewhere. This method may have been chosen in response to the "land and water offerings edict" (*dosui kuyō rei* 土水供養令) issued in 1666.[63] In language clearly informed by the arguments of the *ju fuse*, accommodationist faction, this edict proclaimed that the earth one treads and the water one drinks are all the ruler's dharma offerings, and demanded written acknowledgment of their receipt. Like Nichirenist versions of the Chinese exemplars Boyi and Shuqi, those persons who fasted to death seem to have decided that, if the land and its produce were the offerings of a ruler steeped in slander of the dharma, they would rather starve than consume them.

The idea that the land and its products all belong to the ruler was ancient and appears in Japanese sources early on.[64] However, the more specific claim that the land and water are all the ruler's dharma offerings was, as we have seen, invented by Nichiren scholar-priests of the *ju fuse* faction to support their

60 Mizuno Kyōichirō 水野恭一郎, "Bizen-han ni okeru shinshoku uke seido ni tsuite" 備前藩における神職請制度について, 1956; reprinted in his *Buke jidai no seiji to bunka* 武家時代の政治と文化 (Ōsaka: Sōgensha, 1975), 257.

61 The women initially asked Nissei, as their religious guide, to watch over their terminal fast and their final moments. Nissei is said to have drowned himself in an act of self-immolation. Several details concerning the Fukuda martyrs remain unclear. For one theory, see Aiba, *Fuju fuse-ha junkyō no rekishi*, 105–113.

62 Ibid., 103.

63 Kageyama, "Fuju fuse no hōnan," 144. On the "land and water offerings edict," see Miyazaki, *Kinsei*, 125–128. This edict was initially directed against the Noro 野呂 and Tamatsukuri 玉造 seminaries in Shimōsa province, which did not have land grants. How broadly it was applied remains unclear. It is mentioned, for example, in *Shushō gokoku shō* 守正護国章, cited below, and in *Kanbun hōnanki* 寛文法難記, *Shiryōshū*, 8.

64 See, for example, the concluding episode of *Nihon ryōiki* 日本霊異記 3: 39, trans., Kyoko Nakamura, *Miraculous Stories from the Japanese Buddhist Tradition* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 286.

conciliatory position. At the same time, the idea of demanding receipts for such "offerings" reveals the pretensions of the Tokugawa regime to represent nothing less than the cosmic order itself. Let us look at one Nichiren priest's refusal.

Ankokuin Nichikō 安国院日講 (1626–1698) was a leading scholar-priest based at a seminary at Noro in Shimōsa province and active in the *fuju fuse* cause. Ordered to provide a receipt for land and water, Nichikō instead wrote a moving admonition. "You may say," he writes,

> that the water we drink and the earth we walk upon, the light of the sun, moon, and stars in the heavens that warms our bodies, and the five grains produced from the earth that sustain our vital spirit (*tamashii* 神) are all the ruler's offerings. But in Buddhism, these are considered the effects of collective karma [...] and in Confucianism, they are deemed the natural workings of *yin* and *yang* and the five elements.[65]

We speak of the land and water as belonging to the ruler, Nichikō continues, because he governs them. But the notion that they represent his dharma offerings is a new idea put forth by the Minobu faction, based on a misreading of passages from the *Brahmā's Net* and *Heap of Jewels* sūtras. These passages are rather intended to reprove precept-breaking monks and in fact support the very distinction between worldly beneficence and dharma offerings that the accommodationists seek to collapse.

"The ruler of Japan," Nichikō clarifies, "is not a devotee of the *Lotus Sūtra*. But because our sect has believers among the people of this country, he supports it as a matter of [worldly] beneficence. It is like the case of those emperors of Tang China who, while personally devoted to Confucianism, nonetheless funded Buddhist monasteries." Nichikō continues: "Before Buddhism arrived [in Japan], government comprised a single, [worldly] dimension. But after Buddhism was introduced, government acknowledged both worldly and Buddhist realms. How can the present government confuse the two?" He concludes:

> If you insist that all things are [the ruler's dharma] offerings, then what about my own person, which Buddhists term the result of past karma, and Confucians, the workings of the five elements? Is my own person, too, an offering from the ruler? If you insist that [all things] are the ruler's dharma offerings, then I refuse the specific offering of temple lands, but I accept

65 *Shushō gokoku shō* 守正護国章, *Bandai* 2: 218.

> the general offering of water to drink and roads to walk upon, and I will use them to spread the [*fuju fuse*] teaching throughout the country.[66]

Nichikō was charged with disobedience to the ruler and exiled to the remote province of Hyūga (Miyazaki prefecture) in eastern Kyushu. He would become a leader of the underground *fuju fuse* community. By his own account, when he and another condemned *fuju fuse* priest, Myōjōin Nichikan 妙静院日浣 (1616–1676), departed—bound by ropes and under official escort—for their respective places of banishment, more than a thousand weeping followers gathered along the road to see them off.[67]

4.3 *A Paradoxical Outcome*

In a set of regulations for his temple Myōkakuji written in 1623 after his return from exile, Nichiō had stated:

> Even if we meet with persecution and our temples are destroyed, we must not bring harm to our dharma-principle. Although our temples may be destroyed, they can readily be rebuilt through the power of our lay supporters. But an injury to the dharma-principle is difficult to heal, even over long ages.[68]

Evidently, the repercussions that Nichiō envisioned from opposing Hideyoshi did not go beyond a razing of temples that could be restored with lay support. Such a case had occurred in recent historical memory, when the sect's temples in Kyoto, torched in 1536 by the forces of Mt. Hiei, began to rebuild within a decade.[69] Nichiō, however, seems not to have recognized the emerging of a new form of power able to obliterate the sect's very existence. Even if every Nichiren Buddhist abbot in Kyoto had firmly sided with him from the outset, it is doubtful they could have prevailed in the end. And, had its institutions been wiped out, in what sense would the Nichiren sect have survived?

In contrast, the *ju fuse*, accommodationist leaders quickly perceived that the worldly order was shifting and that temples would have to submit to the subordinate role that the new regime demanded. They were understandably reluctant to resist and sacrifice their entire sectarian institution—with its many

66 Ibid., 219, 222.

67 *Ha chōso ron* 破鳥鼠論, *Bandai* 2: 245.

68 "Myōkakuji hattō jōjō" 妙覚寺法度条々, *FFS* 1: 329; Hunter, "*Fuju Fuse* Controversy," slightly modified, 222–223.

69 *Zenshi*: 368, 379–396.

hundreds of temples and seminaries, cumulative works of scholarship, and thousands of priests and their lay followers—built up over nearly four hundred years. Were that institution to continue, however, the traditional practices of *shakubuku* and admonishing the state, as well as confrontational debate with other sects, would no longer be tenable. From a distance their capitulation may appear inglorious; certainly, it had strong elements of self-interest and rewrote what many considered the very identity of Nichiren Buddhism. Nonetheless, the sect survived.

For their part, *fuju fuse* advocates, too, are easily dismissed from a modern perspective as narrow, rigid, and unattuned to the times. Yet they left behind a compelling example of defying worldly power out of commitment to a transcendent principle. They held fast to Nichiren's teaching that the true path of loyalty and compassion lies in refusing to compromise with "dharma slander," regardless of personal consequences. Though forced to live underground or face imprisonment, exile, or death, their resistance kept alive in the collective memory of the Nichiren tradition a normative ideal of readiness to give even one's life for the *Lotus Sūtra*.

The practice of *shakubuku* and the dream of realizing an ideal buddha land in this world based on the *Lotus Sūtra* powerfully resurfaced with the Meiji Restoration (1868) and the promulgation of a constitution guaranteeing religious freedom (1889). This resurgence sprang, neither from traditional Nichiren temple institutions, which had become domesticated under Tokugawa rule, nor from the sect's recently legalized Fuju Fuse branch, which, after more than two hundred years in hiding, had developed a closed identity. Modern Nichirenism was spearheaded chiefly by lay believers who had studied Nichiren's writings and absorbed his exhortation to spread the *Lotus Sūtra*. Still, one could say, it was the legacy of both sides in the *fuju fuse* controversy that made this reemergence possible: the one in preserving the sect's institutions, and the other by a sacrifice that kept memory of the *shakubuku* ethos alive. Paradoxically, it may have been the very conflict itself—pragmatic accommodation *and* principled defiance—that enabled the Nichiren tradition to endure.

5 *Fuju fuse* in a Larger Frame

While particular to the Nichiren sect and to early modern Japan, the *fuju fuse* movement also reflects broad patterns that have recurred, with local variation, across time and region among Buddhists facing persecution from oppressive regimes. It is difficult to trace direct historical connections between the

fuju fuse case and prior instances of Buddhist protest. Nonetheless, resources shared within the Buddhist repertoire—narratives, teachings, ideals, and norms of conduct—seem to have prompted roughly similar responses. This final section considers three modes of action adopted by *fuju fuse* proponents that can also be found, with regional variation, in both past and present instances of Buddhist resistance to the state.

One was to disrupt the reciprocal exchange, fundamental to institutional Buddhism, that traditionally binds monastics and laity. This exchange has both economic and soteriological dimensions: Lay people gain merit by offering food and material support to monastics, who in turn provide them with ritual services and religious instruction. Nonetheless, early canonical sources stipulate that monastics should refuse alms from lay persons who show disrespect or enmity toward the Buddha, Dharma, or Saṅgha.[70] Alms refusal—literally, "turning over the bowl" (Pāli: *pattanikujjana kamma*)—not only publicly shames would-be donors but also denies them the opportunity of generating merit for better rebirth. Its intent is thus to induce such persons to reflect on and reform their misconduct, so that their alms will again be accepted. A politicized version of this practice drew widespread attention in the late twentieth century, when Burmese monks refused to accept donations from the military as a form of protest.[71] No demonstrable historical connection exists between the Nichiren *fuju fuse* movement and the Southern Asian Buddhist practice of "turning over the bowl," although the parallel has been suggested.[72] Indeed, premodern instances of alms refusal directed against a ruler are hard to find anywhere; the *fuju fuse* advocates may represent a rare instance. Nonetheless, their stance of "not accepting" (*fuju*) donations from a ruler seen as inimical to the *Lotus Sūtra* reflects a logic with some similarities to that of the modern Burmese monastic protestors.

As for "not giving" (*fuse*): In principle, lay people have traditionally been free to withhold alms from monks whose laxity or corruption makes them unworthy merit fields. Such unworthiness is of course open to interpretation. In his famous 1260 admonitory treatise *Establishing the True Dharma and Bringing Peace to the Land* (*Risshō ankoku ron* 立正安国論), Nichiren drew on a passage from the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* (Ch. *Da banniepan jing* 大般涅槃經; Skt.

70 *Pattanikujjana Sutta*, in *Aṅguttara Nikāya* 8:87 and *Cullavagga* v:20.

71 Martin Kovan, "The Burmese Alms-Boycott: Theory and Practice of the *Pattanikujjana* in Buddhist Non-Violent Resistance," *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 19 (2012): 95–129.

72 Yoichi Aizawa, "Almsgiving and Alms Refusal in the Fuju-Fuse Sect of Nichiren Buddhism with a Consideration of These Practices in Early Indian Buddhism" (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1984).

Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra, *T* no. 374), in which the Buddha warns the householder Cunda against one type of person to whom alms will yield no merit and should never be given: namely, the *icchantika*s, those "who speak in a malicious manner, disparaging the true dharma ….never regretting such remarks or feeling shame."[73] *Icchantika*s are those without faith, persons unable to arouse the aspiration for enlightenment, and thus, without prospects for realizing buddhahood. Nichiren used the term *icchantika*s to designate those who refuse to take faith in the *Lotus Sūtra*, and the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*'s admonition against giving alms to *icchantika*s informed his appeal to government official to cease their patronage of clerics who promote teachings other than the *Lotus*. Nichiō and his successors mobilized a similar argument in urging the Nichiren Buddhist laity not to make pilgrimages to sites controlled by their accommodationist opponents. By their actions of "not receiving" and "not giving," *fuju fuse* leaders disrupted the traditional reciprocity of monastics and laity to resist both the opposing faction within their own sect and the new Bakufu regime. Their watchwords of "not receiving" and "not giving" both have scriptural warrant, and—although perhaps rare—are not unique in Buddhist history.

A second element of *fuju fuse* resistance attested in other Buddhist contexts is a clear imperative that, whatever the consequences, one must speak out in opposition to worldly authority when the future of the dharma is at stake. *Fuju fuse* advocates inherited this mandate from the founder Nichiren. And here—although *fuju fuse* documents seldom draw on them directly—we can find historical precedents, notably, in medieval China. Before the introduction of Buddhism, China had no monastic tradition and no autonomous religious institutions. As Buddhism spread and took root, tensions developed between the saṅgha, which sought institutional autonomy, and imperial dynasties that asserted absolute authority over their subjects. Monastic celibacy and rejection of family ties in pursuit of the individual, transcendent goal of liberation also drew criticism as a threat to social stability. Often such tensions found expression in disputes over the ceremonial issue of whether Buddhist monks should bow before the emperor and pay ritualized respect to parents—actions symbolic of the prime Confucian virtues of loyalty and filial piety.[74] Debates over the matter at court began in 340 under the reign of Emperor Cheng 成 (r.

73 *Da banniepan jing* 10, *T* no. 374: 12.425b, 3–6; trans. Mark L. Blum, *The Nirvana Sūtra* (Berkeley: Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai America, 2013), vol. 1, 320, very slightly modified. Nichiren's indebtedness to the *Nirvana Sūtra* is discussed below.

74 For an overview of these conflicts, see Mario Poceski, "Evolving Relationship between the Buddhist Monastic Order and the Imperial States of Medieval China," *Medieval Worlds* 6 (2017): 40–60.

325–342) of the Eastern Jin 晉 (266–420), when the regent Yu Bing 庾冰 (296–344) urged that monks should bow before the emperor; it resurfaced in 402, when the usurper Huan Xuan 桓玄 (369–404) renewed this demand and also attempted to laicize prominent monks in order to impress them into his service as officials. On the latter occasion, the monk Huiyuan 慧遠 (334–416) of Lushan 廬山 submitted a celebrated treatise arguing that monastics, in leaving the household life, had transcended society and were not to be bound by its conventions.[75]

Huiyuan's example inaugurated a tradition of monastic remonstration. When the controversy recurred under later dynasties, often in conjunction with Daoist attacks on Buddhism and state attempts to curtail or suppress the saṅgha, clerical leaders memorialized the emperor, mobilized support, and spoke out in Buddhism's defense. In 578, Emperor Wu 武 (r. 561–578) of the Northern Zhou 北周 (557–581), having conquered the Northern Qi 北齊 (550–577), planned to proscribe Buddhism in that region. At that time, another Huiyuan 慧遠 (523–592), of the Jingying monastery 淨影寺 in the capital at Chang'an 長安, admonished him, warning that, regardless of their rank, those who destroy the three treasures (Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha) will fall into the Avīci Hell. In consequence, it is said, the emperor relented.[76] In 606, when Emperor Yang 煬 (r. 604–618) of the Sui 隋 (581–618) dynasty ordered that Buddhist monks should bow before him as Daoists did, the eminent scholar-monk and saṅgha leader Mingshan 明瞻 (d. 628) united all monks in refusing to bow and argued against the emperor's requirement on five occasions, eventually winning his respect.[77] In 662, when Emperor Gaozong 高宗 (r. 649–683) of the Tang 唐 (618–907) decreed that both Buddhist and Daoist monks should bow to the emperor and to their own parents, the monk Weixiu 威秀 (c. 613–712) organized some two hundred monks in the capital to draft a memorial, and

75 *Shamen bujing wangzhe lun* 沙門不敬王者論, translated in Leon Hurvitz, "'Render unto Caesar' in Early Chinese Buddhism: Hui-yüan's Treatise on the Exemption of the Buddhist Clergy from the Requirements of Civil Etiquette," *Sino-Indian Studies* 5, parts 3–4 (1957): 80–114. See Erik Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest of China* (1959; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 106–108, 160–163, for the 340 controversy, and 214, 231–239 for that of 402. For translation and discussion of a later defense of the Buddhist position, see Thomas Jülch, "On Whether or Not Buddhist Monks Should Bow to the Emperor: Yancong's (557–610) 'Futian lun' (Treatise of the Fields of Blessedness)," *Monumenta Serica* 60 (2012): 1–43.

76 *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳 (hereafter *XGSZ*) 8, *T* no. 2060: 50.490a23–c25; see also Shan Shan Zhao, "Protection of the Dharma in Daoxuan's *Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks*," unpublished MA thesis (McMaster University, 2019; http://macsphere.mcmaster.ca/handle/11375/25029, last accessed 12/13/2021), 99. I thank Ms. Zhao for permission to cite her study.

77 *XGSZ* 24, *T* no. 2060: 50.632c12–633a3; Zhao, "Protection of the Dharma," 53–54.

the famed vinaya master Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667) similarly led monks at the imperial Ximing monastery 西明寺 in drafting petitions of protest to influential nobility and officials of the central government.[78]

Daoxuan's involvement is especially significant, because, as the author of the *Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks* (*T* no. 2060: *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳), he recorded the actions of these monastic protestors and transmitted them to posterity. To the typology of virtuous monks employed in Chinese monastic biography, *Xu gaoseng zhuan* adds the category of "Protecting the Dharma" (*hufa* 護法). In her study of this section of Daoxuan's biographical collection, Shan Shan Zhao notes the prominent place that Daoxuan accords to monks who actively resisted anti-Buddhist policies and attributes this emphasis to clerical concerns about possibilities of state interference. With two anti-Buddhist persecutions under the Northern Wei (386–534: 446–452) and Northern Zhou (557–581: 573–578) still fresh in historical memory, and repeated attacks on Buddhism by Daoists and by the court in the sixth and seventh centuries, Sui- and Tang-dynasty monks were keenly aware of the precarious nature of state-saṅgha relations. Daoxuan held up resistance to anti-Buddhist state policy, Zhao argues, as an important mode of "protecting the dharma" in an age seen as one of decline.[79]

While some such efforts proved successful in persuading rulers to postpone, mitigate, or even abandon their efforts to restrict the saṅgha, this was not universally the case, as we see Daoxuan's accounts of two monks who protested Tang Emperor Taizong's 太宗 (r. 626–649) 637 decree that the Daoist clergy should take precedence over Buddhist monastics in ranking and at ceremonies. Zhishi 智實 (601–638) of the Great Zongchi monastery 大總持寺 in the capital, together with one Fachang 法常 (567–645) and nine other eminent monks, submitted a memorial in protest. When the emperor sent a messenger to declare that those who disobeyed his edict would be punished, Zhishi alone spoke out and was severely beaten with a staff, later dying from his injuries.[80] Another prelate of the capital, Falin 法琳 (571–640), submitted several memorials to the throne protesting Daoist calls for the suppression of Buddhism; he too protested Emperor Taizong's directive. In 639, he was arrested and banished to

78 *Guang hongming ji* 廣弘明集 25, *T* no. 2103; see the documents at 52.284c4–25; 284c26–285a22; 285a23–286c9; and 290b22–c4, as well as Zhao, "Protection of the Dharma," 6.

79 Zhao, "Protection of the Dharma," 2–8.

80 *XGSZ* 24, *T* no. 2060: 50. 635b18–636a9. See also Stanley Weinstein, *Buddhism under the T'ang* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 16–17, and Zhao, "Protection of the Dharma," 59.

Yi prefecture but died from illness en route.[81] Daoxuan praises these individuals as persons willing to give their lives to protect the dharma, thus stressing the value of their remonstrations, even when they did not succeed.

Nichiren, as we have seen, similarly stressed the need to rebuke those in power when they are guilty of "slandering of the dharma." He, too, praised Chinese exemplars who risked their lives to remonstrate with the emperor, including Huiyuan of the Jingying monastery and also Dao'an 道安 (d.u.), mentioned below, who both appear in Daoxuan's collection.[82] The mention of Huiyuan may be particularly significant. In his biographical treatment, Daoxuan writes that Huiyuan must surely exemplify what "the Great Sūtra" (*dajing* 大經) means by a "dharma protector bodhisattva."[83] Zhao suggests that "the Great Sūtra" here likely refers to the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*, which stresses the theme of protecting the dharma in the evil age after the Buddha's passing.[84] If so, Daoxuan and Nichiren shared a source of inspiration in their valorizing of remonstration with worldly authority for the dharma's sake. The Tiantai/Tendai Buddhist exegetical tradition regards the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* as a restatement of the *Lotus Sūtra*, and Nichiren often drew on it in stressing the willingness to give even one's life, if need be, to protect the dharma, as seen, for example, in this passage from the *Sūtra*:

> It is like the case of a royal envoy, fluent in argument and skilled in expedients. When sent on a mission to another country, in the end he will not conceal his ruler's message, even if it should cost his life. Wise persons should do the same. In the midst of ordinary people and without

81 *XGSZ* 24, *T* no. 2060: 50. 636c13–638c12; Zhao, "Protection of the Dharma," 62–65.

82 "Sado gosho," *Teihon* 1:612. Nichiren also praises a later figure, the monk Fadao 法道 (1086–1147), who protested the anti-Buddhist measures of Emperor Huizong 徽宗 of the Northern Song 北宋 (960–1127) and in punishment was branded on the face and exiled south of the Yangzi River. (For Huizong's edicts targeting Buddhism, see J.J.M. de Groot, *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution in China* [Amsterdam: Johannes Mueller, 1903] 1: 79–80.) In extolling the virtues of risking one's life to admonish the state, Nichiren also cited non-Buddhist examples, chiefly conscientious ministers of China's remote antiquity who had admonished the misrule of their respective emperors and were executed in consequence: Bigan 比干, who rebuked the excesses of King Zhou 紂王 of the Shang dynasty, and Guan Longfeng 關龍逢, who admonished the corruption of the last ruler of the Xia (tr. 2070–1600 BCE) dynasty, Jie 桀 (tr. 1728–1675 BCE). Nichiren drew in addition on Chinese moral classics, such the Former Han-dynasty collection *Xinxu* 新序 (New arrangements), which states, "One who fails to admonish a ruler's tyranny is not a loyal minister. One who fails to speak out for fear of death is not a man of courage" (quoted in *Yorimoto chinjō* 頼基陳状, *Teihon* 2: 1356).

83 *XGSZ* 8, *T* no. 2060: 50. 490c25.

84 "Protection of the Dharma," 2.

> begrudging their lives, they must proclaim without fail the Tathāgata's secret treasury of the Mahāyāna *vaipulya* [sūtras], that all sentient beings have the buddha nature.[85]

For Nichiren, the "secret treasury of the Mahāyāna" was the *Lotus Sūtra*, and this passage resonated with the *Lotus Sūtra*'s reference to the "envoy of the Tathāgata," who willingly confronts all obstacles to declare its teachings in an evil latter age.[86] He often cited the Tiantai master Guanding's 灌頂 (561–632) comment on this passage: "One's body is insignificant, but the dharma is weighty. One should give one's life to propagate the dharma."[87] This ethos informed Nichiren's own assertive proselytizing and acts of "admonishing the state," as well as the actions of the early modern *fuju fuse* practitioners, beginning with Nichiō, who remonstrated with government officials and were exiled or imprisoned in consequence.

A third element of *fuju fuse* protest with resonances in the larger Buddhist world is "relinquishing the body" (*sheshin* 捨身). Although controversial even within Buddhist communities, the practice of self-immolation for soteriological reasons is well attested across Asia.[88] Practitioners have set their bodies aflame, fasted to death, drowned themselves, or leapt from cliffs for a range of stated motives: as an offering to the Buddha or his dharma, as a compassionate self-sacrifice for others' sake, or in order to reach the pure land of a buddha or bodhisattva. Often these acts have been legitimized if not inspired by scriptural accounts of past actions of the Buddha or other great bodhisattvas who in prior lifetimes sacrificed bodily parts or even life itself for the sake of living beings. In the modern era, self-immolation has been and is being carried out to protest political suppression, as in the cases of Vietnamese monks and lay persons who burned themselves in the 1960s to oppose the anti-Buddhist policies of the Diệm regime, or the many Tibetan Buddhists who in recent years have similarly immolated their bodies to protest ruthless destruction of Tibetan religion and

85 *Da banniepan jing* 大般涅槃經 (*Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*) 9, *T* no. 374: 12.419a15–19. Nichiren first quotes this passage in his *Kyōkijikoku shō* 教機時国鈔 (*Teihon* 1: 245).

86 For the reference to the "Tathāgata's envoy," see *Miaofa lianhua jing* 4, *T* no. 262: 9.30c27–28. Predictions of hostility to be encountered by bodhisattvas who propagate the *Lotus Sūtra* in an evil latter age appear in the verse section of the "Perseverance" chapter, 36b21–37a1.

87 *Da banniepan jing shu* 大般涅槃經疏 12, *T* no. 1767: 38. 114b10–11.

88 There exists a substantial body of scholarship on this issue. See James Benn, *Burning for the Buddha: Self-Immolation in Chinese Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), and the sources listed there. I follow Benn in using "self-immolation" for all forms of religiously motivated self-sacrifice, not only burning the body (8).

culture under Chinese occupation.[89] James Benn rightly notes that Buddhist scriptural accounts of the past lives of the Buddha and other bodhisattvas do not include examples of "relinquishing the body" to oppose government suppression of Buddhism.[90] Nor do premodern historical cases reflect the concern for Buddhist national identity that inform many modern self-immolations. Nonetheless, we can find premodern examples of self-immolation with strong overtones of political protest—again, notably, in the "Protecting the Dharma" section of Daoxuan's *Continued Biographies*, as well as later collections.

Daoxuan records several instances among monks who retreated to the Zhongnan mountains south of Chang'an during the anti-Buddhist persecution of the Northern Zhou. In 574, when Emperor Wu abolished both Buddhism and Daoism, the monk Jing'ai 靜藹 (534–578) admonished him to his face; when his efforts failed, he withdrew to Zhongnan, where he sheltered some thirty monks who had also fled the persecution. Four years later, grieving that he had been "unable to protect the dharma," Jing'ai disemboweled himself.[91] According to his biography, Jing'ai's last testament gave additional, more conventional reasons for his act, such as disgust for the body and a desire to quickly behold the Buddha. Nonetheless, by placing him in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan*'s section on "Protecting the Dharma," rather than "Abandoning the Body" (*yishen* 遺身), Daoxuan invests Jing'ai's self-immolation with a strong element of political protest. This element also occurs in the monk Daoji's 道積 (d. u.) response to Emperor Wu's edict, when he and seven companions fasted and prayed in repentance before an image of Maitreya; all died at the same time.[92] The monk Dao'an is similarly said to have refused Emperor Wu's invitation to serve him as a lay official and instead fasted to death to protest the persecution.[93]

89 See for example Edward Miller, "Religious Revival and the Politics of Nation Building: Reinterpreting the 1963 'Buddhist Crisis' in South Vietnam," *Modern Asian Studies* 49, no. 6 (2015): 1903–1962, and Katarina Plank, "Living Torches of Tibet: Religious and Political Implications of the Recent Self Immolations," *Journal of Religion and Violence* 1, no. 3 (2013): 343–362.

90 Benn, *Burning for the Buddha*, 81.

91 *XGSZ* 23, *T* no. 2060: 50. 626c27–627b21; Zhao, "Protection of the Dharma," 27–29. See also the discussion of Jiang'ai's death in Stephen F. Teiser, "'Having Once Died and Returned to Life': Representations of Hell in Medieval China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 48, no. 2 (1988), 437–439.

92 *XGSZ* 23, *T* no. 2060: 50.626c, 16–18; Zhao, "Protection of the Dharma," 29.

93 Zhao, "Protection of the Dharma," 29–32. Dao'an's terminal fast appears in the *Complete Chronicles of the Buddhas and the Patriarchs* (*Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀) 38, *T* no. 2035: 49. 358c10–12; Dao'an's biography in *XGSZ* 23 (*T* no. 2060: 50. 628a9–631b1) does not mention his manner of death.

Here again, we cannot trace a direct line of historical influence from medieval Chinese self-immolators to the early modern Japanese *fuju fuse* practitioners who took their own lives during the mid-1660s persecution. Nichiren himself did not endorse self-immolation, although he praised those who gave their lives in defending the dharma.[94] Nonetheless, self-immolation is well attested in other premodern Japanese Buddhist traditions, as is suicide committed for a range of ethical reasons. Those *fuju fuse* practitioners who took their lives would scarcely have lacked examples close at hand. Yet at the same time, their action would seem to represent appropriation from a broader Buddhist repertoire that also inspired Daoxuan's idea of self-immolation as a form of "protecting the dharma." While on one hand a selfless offering of one's life, "relinquishing the body" is simultaneously a transaction, in which the body of an ordinary person, bound by delusion, is exchanged for the superior body of an enlightened being.[95] Benn notes how some among Daoxuan's exemplars displayed confidence in "their ability to influence history in quite profound ways by bargaining with their bodies"[96] and cites the case of the monk Puji 普濟 (d. 581), who had taken refuge in the Zhongnan mountains from the Zhou emperor's persecution. Puji vowed that if Buddhism should flourish again, he would cast off his body as an offering. When Buddhism was restored under the Sui, in accordance with his vow, Puji assembled a crowd of witnesses on a western cliff and flung himself into the valley below.[97] The death of Puji, along with those of modern Vietnamese and Tibetan self-immolators, suggest themselves as politically inflected examples of self-immolation as a form of exchange in which practitioners offer their lives so that the dharma, suppressed under the existing regime, might one day again flourish.

What of the *fuju fuse* suicides? In their case, there was no realistic hope of mobilizing public opinion or changing government policy. Did they act in despair, seeing no other tenable course? Did they embrace the heroic ethos of the bodhisattvas of Buddhist scriptures, who gave their lives for the dharma's sake? While motives were likely varied and complex, the written record, frag-

94 Even though auto-cremation has its locus classicus in the *Lotus Sūtra*, in the story of Bodhisattva Medicine King (Skt. Bhaiṣajyarāja; Jp. Yakuō 薬王), Nichiren considered it a practice appropriate only to great saints of prior eras and not to ordinary practitioners of the Final Dharma age. See Jacqueline I. Stone, "Giving One's Life for the *Lotus Sūtra* in Nichiren's Thought," *Hokke bunka kenkyū* 33 (2007): 51–70.

95 Reiko Ohnuma, *Head, Eyes, Flesh, and Blood: Giving Away the Body in Indian Buddhist Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 217–223.

96 Benn, *Burning for the Buddha*, 81.

97 *XGSZ* 27, *T* no. 2060: 50.680c, 16–20; Benn, ibid., 80–81.

mentary though it is, suggests that these individuals may indeed have offered up their bodies in the spirit of the *Lotus Sūtra*'s words: "We do not cherish bodily life. We value only the supreme way."[98] A short account survives, written or dictated by Nissei, the *fuju fuse* priest, mentioned above, who secluded himself in an ancient tomb with four nuns to watch over them during their terminal fast as their religious guide and who also joined them in death. "We entered this tomb rejoicing," Nissei said, "as though it were Sacred Eagle Peak, [the buddha land of] Ever-Tranquil Light (*jakkō ryōzen* 寂光霊山). We hung several maṇḍalas and offered flowers, incense, and lamps that we had brought. Then we five as one placed our palms together, closed our eyes, and chanted Namu Myōhō-renge-kyō over and over, not sparing our voices. Nothing, I think, could be more sublime. Surely at this time the three treasures and all deities have descended here in response." In the future, Nissei added, sincere persons should visit this tomb as a holy site where *Lotus Sūtra* devotees had practiced in accordance with its teaching.[99]

The notion of Buddhism, not as a discrete, systematic entity, but as a fluid "repertoire" of ideas, practices, values, symbols, and models for action, has proved useful in accounting for internal inconsistencies, tensions, even contradictions within the tradition, without postulating problematic distinctions between a "core essence" and later accretions. The case of the early modern Nichiren *fuju fuse* proponents suggests that the idea of Buddhism as a repertoire also helps explain the recurrence of similar patterns of action across Buddhist cultures and time periods, even where evidence for direct historical connection is lacking. Although inflected by their particular strand of exclusive *Lotus Sūtra* devotion, the actions undertaken by early modern Japanese *fuju fuse* proponents—alms refusal, direct remonstration with the ruler or his functionaries, and self-immolation—are also found, *mutatis mutandis*, in other instances of Buddhist resistance to hostile regimes.

Sometimes these acts have succeeded in changing or at least meliorating government policy; often, as with the *fuju fuse* movement, they have not. Yet one element they seem to share, across time and region down to the present day, is an underlying conviction on the actors' part that, being grounded in the dharma, such actions are ultimately efficacious, even if not in an immediately visible register or timeframe. Where karmic causality is presumed to operate,

98 *Miaofa lianhua jing* 4, *T* no. 262: 9.36c18.

99 "Shashin no gyōja sutegaki" 捨身の行者捨書 3, *Shiryōshū*, 20–21. The tomb, one among the Sarayama tumuli cluster 佐良山古墳群 in Fukuda in Tsuyama city, Okayama prefecture, has indeed become a shrine honoring the five.

the cosmos must respond to human resolve. That premise distinguishes these modes of action from other, secular forms of principled civil disobedience and identifies them as "Buddhist" protest.

Abbreviations

Bandai	*Genbun taiyaku bandai kikyōroku* 原文対訳万代亀鏡錄. 2 vols. Edited by Ōsaki Nichigyō 大崎日行. Kyoto: Bandai Kikyōroku Kankōkai, 1931–1933.
FFS	*Fuju fuse shiryō* 不受不施史料. Ed. Nichiren Fuju Fuse-ha Kenkyūjo 日蓮不受不施派研究所. Vols. 1 and 5. Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1981, 1983.
NKKK	*Nichiren kyōgaku kenkyūjo kiyō* 日蓮教学研究所紀要. Published by Risshō Daigaku Nichiren Kyōgaku Kenkyūjo 立正大学日蓮教学研究所.
NST	*Nihon shisō taikei* 日本思想大系. 67 vols. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1970–1982.
Shiryōshū	*Fuju fuse-ha hōnan shiryōshū* 不受不施派法難史料集, ed. Nagamitsu Norikazu 長光徳和. Okayama: Okayama-ken Chihōshi Kenkyū Renkaku Kyōgikai, 1969.
T	*Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大蔵経. Ed. Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 and Watanabe Kaigyoku 渡辺海旭. 100 vols. Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai, 1924–1935.
Teihon	*Shōwa teihon Nichiren Shōnin ibun* 昭和定本日蓮聖人遺文. 4 vols. Edited by Risshō Daigaku Nichiren Kyōgaku Kenkyūjo 立正大学日蓮教学研究所. Minobu-chō, Yamanashi Prefecture: Minobusan Kuonji, 1952–1959; revised 1988.
XGSZ	*Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳, *T* no. 2060. Compiled by Daoxuan 道宣.
Zenshi	*Nichiren kyōdan zenshi* 日蓮教団全史, vol. 1. Edited by Risshō Daigaku Nichiren Kyōgaku Kenkyūjo 立正大学日蓮教学研究所. Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1984.

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Fujii Manabu 藤井学. "Hokke senju no seiritsu ni tsuite" 法華専修の成立について, 1959. Reprinted in his *Hokkeshū to machishū* 法華衆と町衆. Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 2003, 143–171.

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