

NICHIREN'S DOCTRINE OF THE AGE OF THE LAST LAW

ACCORDING TO THE SENJI SHŌ



By

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ABSTRACT

In this thesis, the bulk of which is the translation of a heretofore untranslated apocalyptic text of Nichiren (1222-1281), I have sought primarily to make available a translation of the Senji shō, produced in 1274. The fourth of Nichiren's major essays, the Senji shō, or Essay on the Selection of the Proper Time, represented the culmination of his thinking in regard to the Age of the Last Law. In this essay, Nichiren reviewed the history of the Age of the Last Law in Japan, specified the errors to which he believed the Pure Land and Shingon schools had succumbed, and set forth in vivid relief his own understanding of salvation in the Age of the Last Law.

Chapter One offers a brief history of Buddhism up to the time of Nichiren, a biography of Nichiren, establishing his place in the cultural milieu of Kamakura Japan, and a discussion of his interpretation of and teaching on the Age of the Last Law. Developed by Nichiren prior to the writing of the Senji shō, primarily in the Rissho Ankoku Ron (1260) and the Kaimoku shō (1273), the unique understanding of the meaning of historical events in Japan and the rationale he offered for the destruction of Pure Land teachings are expounded in sufficient detail to make his elaboration of the significant themes in the Senji shō more accessible to the reader.

Chapter One, then, helps to develop a context in which the Senji shō may be read. The reader is introduced to the stormy Kamakura period in Japan, given some notion of the complexity of Nichiren himself, and given insight into the tension at the centre of his teachings concerning the Age of the Last Law.

A proper understanding of the text, however, demands more than a close reading. Nichiren's doctrine evolved from earlier understandings of the Age of the Last Law within Indian and Chinese Buddhism and in sharp contradistinction to the schools which flourished in Kamakura Japan. In Chapter Two, therefore, Nichiren's doctrine of the Age of the Last Law is placed in historical perspective: the Age of the Last Law is traced through its development in India, its significance in China, and its interpretation in Japan prior to Nichiren. In this chapter, also, special doctrinal differences among the schools of Buddhism in Japan during Nichiren's own lifetime are elaborated.

Significant for an interpretation of the translation of the Senji shō is Nichiren's own interpretation of Buddhist history and of the uniqueness of his place in the history of the religion. Thus, Chapter Three contrasts the Nichiren of the Senji shō with the Nichiren of popular knowledge. In particular, this chapter clarifies the way in which the Senji shō adds to the understanding of Nichiren himself, of his school of Buddhism, and of the history of Japanese Buddhism.

Chapter Four consists of a foreword to the Senji shō and the translation itself. It is the translation and notes which I believe to be the major contribution of the thesis, for within this essay Nichiren can be seen to have brought to final formulation his long struggle to convince the rulers, the intellectuals, and the common people of Japan of the possibility of seeing religious significance in particular periods of historical transition.

Nichiren so enraged the powerful people of his day that they reviled, tortured, and banished him. Nevertheless, it can be seen in the full translation of the text of the Senji shō that he communicated his radical

understanding with such vigour that he became a powerful new force in Japanese Buddhism. He is here revealed as a forceful opponent and a skilled teacher, gifted with humour and a unique personal vision.

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INTRODUCTION

Nichiren (1222-1281) was a Japanese Buddhist monk who played a critical role in the evolution of Japanese Buddhism during the Kamakura period. During his lifetime, Nichiren trained a small group of disciples to spread his doctrine throughout Japan. There were less than one hundred of these disciples at the time of Nichiren's death, but he left a body of work consisting of five major essays and more than four hundred essays and letters. Today, the Nichiren sect is the third largest Buddhist sect in Japan, exceeded in number only by adherents of the Pure Land and Shingon schools.

Nichiren made much of an intimate connection between national and corporate life and spiritual destiny. He insisted that the Age of the Last Law, which in Buddhist chronology refers to that period roughly from 1052 A.D. to the present, was the ideal period in which to achieve salvation. It was this idea which set him apart from Pure Land and Shingon thinkers, and it is this idea which continues to differentiate Nichiren Buddhism from that of any other school.

Perhaps no text of the extant Nichiren writings is so important for an understanding of his apocalypticism as the Senji shō, a heretofore untranslated text written in 1274. I believe that an adequate translation of the text of the Senji shō will provide not only insights into an apocalyptic form of Buddhism peculiar to Japan but also an understanding of Nichiren's interpretation of the history of Buddhism in general and of the history of Buddhism in his native country.

A profoundly practical man, Nichiren was writing both for the intellectuals of his day and for the fishermen of his native Honshu. He was as concerned with practice as with doctrine, and in that he exerted a powerful appeal to the people who heard him. In the Senji shō he revealed his concept of salvation through a practice centered on the Lotus Sūtra and offered it as a means of salvation available to all men born into the corruption of the Age of the Last Law. In order to provide a context in which to understand this teaching, a brief history of Japanese Buddhism up to the time of Nichiren seems apposite as an introduction to the translation of the Senji shō.

Just as Nichiren's life unfolded against a backdrop of social and political upheaval, so did his doctrine evolve in a fiery series of attacks not only upon the weaknesses which he attributed to the political rulers of his time, but also upon the corrupt ideas which he maintained had permeated the teachings of the Pure Land and Shingon schools. Nichiren's essays took form and were completed during distinct epochs in his life, periods which he believed had meaningful counterparts in the political life of Japan itself. Since Nichiren's life and times were thus intimately intertwined in his own thinking, it seems necessary to provide a biography of the man in order to explain the manner in which he believed his own fate was interwoven with that of his country and its destiny, an understanding which he came to through his very personalistic reading of the Lotus Sūtra.

So far as Nichiren's understanding of the Age of the Last Law was developed in response to other Buddhist schools and their particular interpretations, a section on the Age of the Last Law as it developed prior to Nichiren's writing of the Senji shō is important. The Kamakura period

in Japan, a stormy time in that nation's history but a time crucial to the rise of Buddhism, provided the backdrop against which Nichiren could offer his particular interpretations of the Age of the Last Law. An examination of the period is, then, significant as a historical backdrop for the Senji shō and for its offer of interpretations for life in the Age of the Last Law.

The translation of the Senji shō is based upon two Japanese editions: Kato's Nichiren shonin goibun, the edition bearing the imprimatur of the Nichiren Buddhist sect, and Togoro Shigemoto and Takagi Yukata edition, contained in Nihon shiso taikai. Of the commentaries produced on the text of the Senji shō, some are directed primarily to devotional ends, others to purely scholarly ends. Produced over a six-hundred year span, thirteen of these commentaries have been identified. The earliest was produced by Shinen Nichidai in 1349, the latest provided by Kanda Gison in 1934.

In the belief that it might be helpful to others as it has been to me, I have provided as a separate Appendix a bibliography of Nichiren's essays and letters based upon the listing provided by Kato in Nichiren shonin goibun. I have translated the titles of these works and arranged them chronologically according to the Gregorian calendar.

One problem in studying Nichiren has been the paucity of adequate translations of his works and the resulting tendency toward reliance on secondary sources and early missionary writings to interpret his doctrine. Obvious exceptions to this tendency, however, are to be noted: Anesaki's Nichiren, the Buddhist Prophet, Murano's translation of the Kanjin Honzon shō, and Ehara's translation of the Kaimoku shō, all of which have been extremely helpful to me.

CHAPTER ONE

NICHIREN'S LIFE AND THE AGE OF THE LAST LAW

A. Japanese Buddhism Before Nichiren

Buddhism was officially introduced into Japan from the Korean Kingdom of Paekche in 522 A.D. It was Prince Shotoku, who ruled Japan from 593 to 622 A.D., who made the most important contributions to the establishment of Buddhism in Japan. He proclaimed Buddhism to be the State religion, founded several temples, and wrote the first constitution in Japan, in which he stated, in the second article:

Faithfully respect the "three treasures," Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. These three are the destination of all sentient creatures, the unmistakable truth for all nations, and the fellowship of all nations. This rule cannot be neglected by any people in any world. Really bad men are very few and they can be taught and guided, but how are they to be taught and guided apart from the three treasures?¹

Prince Shotoku used Buddhism to bring about national unity.

In 710 A.D. the court was moved to the new city of Nara, which remained the capital city of Japan until 784 A.D. In the new capital Buddhism flourished and sectarian doctrines representing both Hinayana and Mahayana teachings were institutionalized.²

In 753 A.D. Emperor Shomu (r. 724-749) founded a national temple in Nara called Todaiji. This temple was dedicated to the Buddha Mahāvairocana, a symbolic representation of the eternal law. Todaiji

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1. Young Buddhist Association of Japan (ed.), The Teachings of the Buddha, (Tokyo: Kenyusha Printing Co., 1965), p. 231.
 2. There were six schools in the Nara Period: Kegon, Hōso, Ritsu, Jōjitsu, Kusha, and Sanron. Although they are commonly referred to as schools, not all of them actually existed as independent entities.

was meant to be the symbol of religious unity in Japan: when Buddhism became the state religion, it incorporated elements of Shintō and Confucianism. While the ideals of the latter found a natural place in Japanese Buddhism, it was not long before Shintō priests became little more than servants to the increasingly powerful Buddhist monks.

The increasing wealth and influence of those monks gave them a powerful voice in the government, and resulted in their implication in corruption on a vast scale. Finally, the need for political and religious reform grew so great that Emperor Kammu (781-806) transferred the capital from Nara to Heian (present day Kyōto) in 794. With the change in the site of the capital there emerged two new leaders representing Buddhism during the Heian (794-1185) period. They were Saichō (767-823) and Kūkai (774-835).

Saichō, better known by his posthumous name Dengyō Daishi, went to China in 804 A.D., and upon his return to Japan founded the Tendai School of Buddhism at Mt. Hiei, near the capital city. Tendai, a Mahayana School, has as its basic scripture the Lotus Sūtra. Saichō was not only a master of the abstruse philosophy of Chinese T'ien-t'ai, but was also a student of the mystic rites and a dhyāna meditation master. Saichō desired to synthesize all of the schools of Buddhism known in his day. Most of the new sects of Buddhism that were to develop in the later Kamakura period can be traced back to Mt. Hiei and Tendai Buddhism.

Another important school which developed in the Heian Period was the esoteric Shingon School, which was founded in Japan by the monk Kūkai, better known by his posthumous name of Kōbō Daishi. He also travelled to China in 804, and after his return established the Shingon School on Mt. Koya. Kūkai was one of the most versatile of the Japanese

Buddhist leaders, a profound scholar, a traveller, a calligrapher, and a great politician.

The Shingon School centered on a belief in the Cosmic Buddha, Mahāvairocana. Shingon doctrines taught that all things were merely manifestations of the Cosmic Buddha. In order to realize this oneness of all things, Shingon taught that it was necessary to practice the three mysteries of speech, body, and mind. The most important of these was considered to be the practice of speech, which involved the recitation of mantras. The mystery of the body was based upon mudrās, and that of the mind included meditation on the mandalas.

During the Heian Period the Tendai and Shingon Schools almost completely overshadowed the older Nara Schools, but at the same time there were signs indicating that Tendai and Shingon would give way to a new force which was steadily moving across Japan. In the late Heian Period there were many monks who were dissatisfied with the highly scholastic, philosophical form of Buddhism which was developed in the Temples on Mt. Hiei and Mt. Kōya. As a result, they took Buddhism to the common people of Japan and from their efforts the so-called popular schools of Buddhism were derived and became a new force in Japan.

Thus, from about the eighth century Japan saw increasing numbers of evangelistic Buddhist monks who travelled across the nation preaching Buddhism, digging wells, building bridges, and doing various other kinds of public works. One of the monks who popularized Pure Land Buddhism was Kūya Shōnin (902-972), also known as the "marketplace sage." He popularized Amida Buddhism in the Heian period by singing praises to Amida in the streets. There were other such evangelists but it was not until the Kamakura Period (1185-1333) that such activities

crystalized into new and increasingly dominant forms of popular Buddhism in Japan.

Hōnen (1133-1212) was one of the greatest leaders of Pure Land Buddhism in Japan. His teaching was simple: he preached that all men are saved from this world of sin and evil in Jōdō (the Pure Land) by Amitābha/Amitāyus Buddha (the Buddha of Infinite Light and Life) through the nembutsu (repeating this Buddha's name). No elaborate ritual or abstruse philosophy was required, nothing but a simple, straightforward invocation of Amitābha Buddha.

In Hōnen's disciple, Shinran (1173-1262), Pure Land Buddhism reached its culmination. He taught that one need not repeat the nembutsu more than once. Salvation was assured with just one invocation of Amida's name, when done with absolute faith. All other recitations, he felt, were nothing more than expressions of thanksgiving to Amida Buddha.

Another school which developed during the Kamakura Period, which contrasted with Pure Land pietism, was Zen. Although it had been brought to Japan during the Nara Period it had not developed into an independent school until this time. Two main branches were founded, the Rinzai School by Eisai (1142-1215), and the Sōtō School by Dōgen (1200-1252).

The third school which developed during this period and taught the idea of universal salvation through faith was founded by the monk Nichiren. One of the most interesting and unique figures in Japanese history, he founded the only school which does not have a direct counterpart in China. One of the primary factors in shaping Nichiren Buddhism was Nichiren's own personality. In order to understand how and why his school developed, it is necessary to look at the particular political and social conditions under which Nichiren grew to maturity.

B. Nichiren's Life

Twenty years before Nichiren's birth, in 1199 A.D., Minamoto Yoritomo, the great Kamakura Shogun, died and was succeeded by Yoriie, his seventeen-year old son. A power struggle soon arose over who would rule the nation. Out of this struggle the Hōjō clan emerged as the victors.

While the Hōjō clan was strengthening its position in Kamakura, the former Emperor Gotoba, who was in Hiei, organized a plot to overthrow the Shogunate. In 1221 the Shogunate defeated the Emperor, and the court was made completely subservient to the bakufu in Kamakura.³

Nichiren was born one year after the defeat of the Emperor Gotoba. His place of birth was a small fishing village of Kominato in the Prefecture of Awa, on the Southeastern coast of Honshū, in the fourth year of Shokyū, 1222. In 1233, when he was eleven years old, his family sent him to Kiyozumi, a Tendai Temple near his home. There he studied with Dōzembō until at the age of sixteen he became a monk, taking the name Renchō.

In 1239, the young monk Rencho left Kiyozumi and travelled to Kamakura where he is said to have studied Pure Land Buddhism. After a brief stay in Kamakura he left for Mt. Hiei in 1242.⁴

In 1253, Rencho, who had by then taken the name Nichiren, left Mt. Hiei and returned to his old temple at Kiyozumi. On May 17, 1253

3. George Sansom, A History of Japan to 1334, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958), p. 373.

4. Nichiren's biographers point out that the details of his study during this period are not documented in any available sources. However, it is generally believed he spent the large part of this period staying at Mt. Hiei, only occasionally travelling to other temples. See: Tamura Yoshio and Miyasaki Eishu (eds.) Nichiren no Shogato Shiso, (Life and Thought of Nichiren), (Tokyo: Shinjusha, 1972), p. 26.

(April 28 on the lunar calendar) he proclaimed at Kiyozumi his doctrine of the supremacy of the Lotus Sūtra, for which the rallying cry was "Namu Myōhō Renge Kyō," or "Homage to the Lotus of the Wonderful Law." This event, referred to as the beginning of his teaching, was expressed as a direct attack upon Pure Land Buddhism and it invited strong reaction from Pure Land Buddhists. Consequently no temple would allow Nichiren to stay within its walls and his old teacher Dōzembō, whom he hoped would convert to this new teaching, would do no more than assist him in escaping from the monks and laypeople who attacked him.

After his escape he went to Kamakura, the seat of the government, and began his activities there as an itinerant preacher. He retired to a "grass hut" in Kamakura; there he prepared a number of works concerning the nature of natural calamities which had hit Japan.⁵ In 1260 he presented an essay called The Risshō Ankoku Ron or An Essay on the Establishment of the Righteousness and the Peace of the Country,⁶ to the government in Kamakura. In this essay Nichiren examined the cause of natural calamities and social unrest in Japan and concluded that a stable, peaceful nation could come about only after the correct Buddhist teaching was accepted by the nation.

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5. The period between 1257-1260 was plagued by natural calamities, famines, epidemics, and earthquakes in the region around Kamakura. See: Tamura Yoshio and Miyasaki Eishu, op. cit., p. 26.
 6. See: Katō Bunga, Nichiren shōnin goibum, (The remaining works of Nichiren Shōnin), (Tokyo: Heirakuji Publishing Co., 2nd edition, 1968), pp. 373-392. Hereafter referred to as works. There are two complete translations and one partial translation of the Risshō Ankoku Ron. Renondeau, G. (trans.) La Doctrine de Nichiren, (Paris: Musee Guimet, 1953); N. R. M. Ehara, Risshō Ankoku Ron, Young East, pp. 16-26; Rodd, L., Nichiren: Selected Writings, (Honolulu: The University of Hawaii Press [forthcoming 1980]). Nichiren also wrote the Shugokokka Ron (Essay on the Protection of the Country) and the Sainan Taijishō (Essay on the Elimination of the Calamities), in 1259. See works, pp. 220-272; pp. 299-309.

From this point of view he bitterly attacked the Pure Land teaching and recommended that these heretics be killed. In this essay he also issued a warning in reference to a future foreign invasion. The Pure Land Buddhist leaders in Kamakura were so outraged that his hermitage or "grass hut" was attacked and burned to the ground.⁷ Nichiren escaped but upon his return to Kamakura he was banished to Izu in 1261.

After two years he was set free, returned to Kamakura, and began preaching again. In 1264 he returned to his home in Awa to visit his sick mother. After leaving his mother's home he was attacked by Tōjō Kagenobu and other followers of the Pure Land School at Matsubara. One of Nichiren's followers was killed and two were seriously wounded; Nichiren was cut on the forehead.⁸

In 1268 a Mongolian envoy arrived in Japan demanding tribute from the government. Nichiren thought this indicated that the warning he had given in the Risshō Ankoku Ron predicting a foreign invasion was coming true. He sent eleven letters⁹ to high government officials and to the most important Buddhist Temples, reminding them of his earlier prediction and issuing a warning to them to accept the Lotus Sūtra as the true teaching. When these letters were ignored, Nichiren anticipated more government persecution. "I'm going to be exiled or killed. I'm already fifty years old and don't have many years left."¹⁰

7. Tamura, op. cit., p. 26.

8. This incident is described by Nichiren in a letter he sent to Nanjohyoe Shichiro, Works, p. 516.

9. The eleven letters he sent were addressed to the following: Shikken Hōjō Tokimune, Yadoya Saemon-no-jō, Nagasaki Yoritsuna, Hōjō Yagenta, Doryu, Ryokan, and the monks of the Jufukuji, Sokomyoji, Tahoji, and Chorakuji Temples. works, pp. 608-617.

10. Kingō dono gohenji (Letter to Mr. Kinjo), works, p. 635.

On October 17, 1271, Nichiren was arrested in Kamakura, charged with treason, found guilty and sentenced to death at the execution ground at Tatsu-no-kuchi. For some unknown reason Nichiren was not executed but sent to the Island of Sado, into exile for the second time.¹¹

It was at Sado where the mystical side of Nichiren came to full maturity. Because of all the hardships which he had endured, he began to re-interpret the Lotus Sūtra. He especially looked at Chapter Ten, "A Teacher of the Law" through Chapter Twenty-two, "The Final Commission" in which the bodhisattva was portrayed as an apostle or martyr.¹²

Nichiren began to see himself as the bodhisattva Visistacārita, the leader of the bodhisattvas, who was destined to preach the Lotus Sūtra, suffer persecutions and be exiled.¹³ As one destined to protect the truth, Nichiren saw himself as simply fulfilling the prophecy of the Buddha. This idea led Nichiren to produce a unique doctrine, which

11. Although the details of Nichiren's being exiled rather than executed cannot be verified, he gives a detailed account of the reason for it in, Shujū-on-furumai-gosho (Essay on Various Kinds of Behaviour). "I reached the place as I had thought it to be. Many soldiers stood around me. Saburo zaemon-no-jo wept, saying, "Now I must part with you." I said, "What a fool you are! Rejoice! This is my greatest pleasure. Why do you break your promise?" No sooner than I had said this, a ball of light as bright as the moon flew from Enoshima Island to the southeast, and all of the people became visible although the moon of the twelfth day already set. The executioner got dizzy and fell to the ground, and the soldiers ran away a hundred yards. Some of them got off their horses, and the others prostrated themselves on horseback. I said, "Why do you run away? You think I am a felon. Come!" But no one came. I said again, "Behead me quickly! When the day breaks, it will not be good to see me beheaded." But no one answered. After a while I was told to go to Echi in the Province of Sagami." Works, pp. 1394-1395; translated by, Eisen Hoshino and Senchu Murano, The Lotus Sūtra and Nichiren, (Aichi-ken, Jitsujoji Temple, 1968), pp. 29-30.

12. Tamura Yoshiro, "New Buddhism of Kamakura and Nichiren," Acta Asiatica, (Tokyo: Tōhōgakkai, 1971), p. 53.

13. T. vol. 9, no. 262, p. 40a. Taishō Shinshu dai Zokyo.

he set forth in the Kaimoku shō (Opening the Eyes)¹⁴ in 1272. In this essay Nichiren claimed to be the messenger of the Buddha who was predicted in the Lotus Sūtra to teach and spread the truth in the Age of the Last Law (mappō).

In 1273 Nichiren wrote the Kanjin Honzon shō (The True Object of Worship)¹⁵ in which he declared that the true object of worship would be Buddha Sākyamuni, who revealed his eternal nature for the first time in the Lotus Sūtra. A year later, he was released from his exile and allowed to return to Kamakura, but the government urged him to refrain from attacking the other schools of Buddhism. Once again Nichiren refused to compromise, and in May, 1274, he left Kamakura with a small band of his followers and settled at Mt. Minobu. He lived there for eight years and four months. During this period he wrote several essays, including the Senji shō (Essay on the Selection of the Proper Time) and the Hō-on shō (Essay on Gratitude) which was dedicated to his old teacher, Dōzembō. In 1282, Nichiren became ill and left Mt. Minobu to go to the hot springs near Edo (modern Tokyo). On the morning of October 13, 1282, Nichiren died at the home of Ikegami Munenaka, one of his disciples.

C. Nichiren's Teaching and the Age of the Last Law

Among the Kamakura Buddhist leaders Nichiren stands alone in his interpretation and understanding of the Age of the Last Law.¹⁶

14. Kaimoku shō - For an English translation of this text see: N. R. E. Ehara (trans.), The Awakening to the Truth, (Tokyo: International Buddhist Society, 1941).

15. Kanjin Honzon shō - For an English translation of this text see: Senchu Murano (trans.) Nyorai Metsugo Go Gohyakusai Shi Kanjin Honzon shō or The True Object of Worship, (Tokyo: The Young East Association, 1954).

16. I have translated the three ages of the Buddha's teaching as follows: 1. Shōbō (Skt. saddharma) Age of the Perfect Law; 2. Zōbō (Skt. saddharma pratirupaka), Age of the Counterfeit Law; and 3. mappō (Skt. saddharma vipralopa) Age of the Last Law.

The Age of the Last Law was in part the basis upon which he established his school. Hōnen and Shinran also based their schools upon the idea of the Age of the Last Law, but both held that it could not be overcome or conquered.¹⁷ By contrast, Nichiren thought that the Age of the Last Law could be overcome and conquered.¹⁸ Nichiren regarded the Age of the Last Law as the period best suited for the teaching of the Lotus Sūtra, and as the best possible period in which to attain salvation. His practice consisted in repeating the words "Namu Myōhō Renge Kyō" or "Homage to the Lotus of the Wonderful Law." This practice, for Nichiren, was the sole means to achieve salvation in the Age of the Last Law.

The purpose of Nichiren's teaching was to sow the seeds of Buddhahood in the minds of all beings.¹⁹ His primary concern in doing this was to awaken in all people their own innate Buddha nature, and thereby turn the world in the Age of the Last Law into the ideal world of the Buddha.

The late twelfth and thirteenth centuries in Japan were periods of almost constant natural disaster. From about 1225 until 1261 Japan was hit with a series of earthquakes, followed by floods and storms, shortages of food, and plagues. During this period not only were there

17. Alfred Bloom, "The Sense of Sin and Guilt and the Last Age in Chinese and Japanese Buddhism," Numen XIV, pp. 144-149.
18. Kanto Mochizuki, Nichiren Kyogaku no Kenkyu (日蓮教の研究) (Tokyo: Heirakuji Shoten, 1961), p. 60.
19. He states in the Kyōgyōshō Goshō (Essay on the Teaching, Practice, and Proof), (教行證御書), "This age is evil and corrupt and many people slander [the Lotus Sūtra]: I am making an effort to sow the seeds of Buddhahood [in their minds] by causing them [to chant] "Namu Myōhō Renge Kyō" which is the essence of the Lotus Sūtra." works, p. 1115.

natural calamities taking place, but the new government of the Kamakura bafuku which deprived the old regime in Kyoto of real political power ✓ began toward the end of the twelfth century to rule the nation.

Nichiren, conscious that he was living in the Age of the Last Law, came to the conclusion that the Lotus Sūtra should be the foundation for secular as well as religious life. Because he saw religion as the foundation of secular life, he felt the people of Japan had been deceived by the other schools of Buddhism as well as by a corrupt and illegal government. The other schools of Buddhism had abandoned the Buddha, and the government had destroyed the Emperor. Thus, in 1260 he wrote the Risshō Ankoku Ron and presented it to Hojo Tokiyori, the regent in Kamakura. In this essay Nichiren described the sad state of affairs in Japan.

Of late, ominous happenings have been witnessed in the heavens. On earth incessant are the ravages of famine and pestilence. Oxen and horses are dying in the streets, and the highways are strewn thick with skeletons. More than half the people of this country are on the verge of death. There is none who does not lament. Meanwhile, those who survive invoke the name of Amida Buddha, the Lord of the Western Paradise, or the compassion of the Healing Tathagata of the Eastern Paradise. . . Those who rely on the teaching of esoteric Shingon pour the water of the five vessels, and those who regard all misfortunes as void immerse themselves in trances. . . In spite of all the efforts of men, famine and pestilence stalk through the land with increasing ruthlessness. Beggars are plentiful. Countless are the dead. On dry ground corpses are stacked high as watch towers and across rivers they are even as bridges.²⁰

Nichiren opposed the other schools because he thought they were dividing Buddhism, and were destroying the teachings of the Buddha. He believed this would lead to the destruction of both Japan and of Buddhism. In the Risshō Ankoku Ron, Nichiren suggested that the way to stop the calamities and to attain the Pure Land on this earth was for the people

20. Risshō Ankoku Ron, translated by N. R. M. Ehara, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-17.

to "refrain from making donations to fallen priests and confine their gifts to the good."²¹ And the peace and security of the country would come about only when "the mind of man changes with time and the nature of things according to circumstances. If you wish for the security of the country and desire peace in the present and future, think deeply and stamp out erroneous doctrines."²² According to Nichiren, Japan had entered the Age of the Last Law because the gods had abandoned the nation which no longer had faith in the Lotus Sūtra.

Nichiren said that the people had forgotten the Lotus Sūtra or had slandered the Lotus Sūtra, so in order for the gods to return to the country and to protect it, the people must turn to the Lotus Sūtra with absolute trust and faith.

The people have forgotten Sākyamuni Buddha, and the Lotus Sūtra. Those who do not believe but slander the teachings of the Buddha expounded in this scripture will destroy the seeds of Buddhahood in all living beings in the world.²³

He warned the people that unless they renounced the incorrect teaching and accepted the correct teaching the entire nation of Japan would fall into hell.

It is pitiable that people should miss the gate of truth and enter into the prison house of false teachings. It is deplorable that people should be entangled in the coils of wrong doctrines, should be caught in the net of false teachings, should be lost in the thick fog of error and should be cast into the deep pit of suffering. Renounce your wrong views. Accept the true teaching. The Three Planes of existence are Buddha-lands. They are not subject to decay. The world in the Ten Directions of Space is the

21. N. R. M. Ehara, op. cit., p. 26.

22. N. R. M. Ehara, op. cit., p. 26.

23. N. R. M. Ehara, op. cit., p. 21.

house of indestructible treasure. If the world is indestructible and the lands free from decay, our bodies are bound to be safe and our minds peaceful in the light of truth.²⁴

The fact that the other sects were flourishing only supported Nichiren more in his conviction that the disasters which were taking place were due to the leaders and the people accepting and following the incorrect teaching.

His loyalty to the Lotus Sūtra was also grounded in his notion that it was not enough for the individual alone to practice the correct teachings, but that the state too must embrace the correct teaching. If the state did not do so, then the individual practitioner was thwarted in his effort.

In order to justify this position, Nichiren, in the Risshō Ankoku Ron, connected the actual historical events in Japan at the time with scriptural passages. The passages which Nichiren quotes all have to do with the Age of the Last Law, and imply that the government is responsible for the suffering of the people. For example, he quotes from the Chin-kuang-ming-tsui-sheng-wang-ching:

The Kings of the Four Quarters said to the Buddha, "If a king does not wish to read this scripture or to respect the person who keeps this scripture, men will decrease in number because we will cease to protect him and his kingdom. All the gods including us will leave his country. Then the king will be dethroned; all the people will be corrupt; pestilence will rage; the earth will quake; winds and rains will be untimely; famines will break forth; and the country will be invaded by a foreign army."²⁵

This passage is interpreted as a description of the situation of Japan in Nichiren's time. According to Nichiren not only the

24. N. R. M. Ehara, op. cit., p. 27.

25. E. Hoshino and S. Murano, op. cit., pp. 9-10.

government but also Hōnen was responsible for the calamities striking Japan, since, because of his popularity, "all over Japan the people have forgotten Śākyamuni Buddha and the Lotus Sūtra."²⁶ Nichiren justified his attack upon Hōnen and the Pure Land doctrine by turning to scriptural passages. He quoted the Jen-wang-ching:

Those who violate the teaching of the Buddha will not be able to have obedient sons or the peace of their families. They will be ill in health, have many misfortunes, and go to hell or the world of hungry spirits or of animals in their next lives. Even if they come to the world of man again, they will be killed in action.²⁷

He accused Hōnen of being the enemy of the Buddha, the scriptures, the bodhisattvas and the people: the one who was leading all of Japan to the hells and to total destruction.

Although Nichiren was convinced that Japan was destined to be destroyed unless it accepted the Lotus Sūtra and embraced the true teaching, he felt that it would in time embrace the Lotus Sūtra and would become the nation from which the Lotus Sūtra would spread to the entire world.

He regarded the Age of the Last Law not as the worst and darkest of the three periods but as the best of the three periods, since it was the time when the Lotus Sūtra would spread among the people of the world. Nichiren believed that whenever mankind returned to the faith and followed the Buddha's teaching according to the Lotus Sūtra, the Age of the Last Law would come to an end.

After his exile to Sado (1271-1274) Nichiren began to re-interpret his mission and to ponder the reasons for his subjection to continual

26. N. R. M. Ehara, op. cit., p. 18.

27. E. Hoshino and S. Murano, op. cit., p. 10.

hardships. During this period he produced two major essays, the Kaimoku shō and the Kanjin Honzon shō.

He found several reasons for his suffering: 1) wrong doing in a prior existence; 2) the guardian deities of Japan abandoning the nation; 3) the imperfect world in which corrupt religious leaders naturally persecute men such as Nichiren; and 4) suffering and hardships as the natural result for one who preaches the Lotus Sūtra in the Age of the Last Law.²⁸

The most important reason for Nichiren was the fourth. He interpreted his own sufferings as the necessary fulfilment for the sake of truth. Specifically, he linked his persecution for preaching the Lotus Sūtra with the predictions made by the Buddha, that the messengers of the truth would suffer for the sake of all sentient beings.

Finally, let the guardian deities withdraw their protection, let all perils come upon me, even so, will I dedicate my life to the authentic teaching. . . I will be firm in my great vow. Let me face all manner of threats and temptations. . . Temptations I shall meet unshaken, and shall never be lured by them. . . Any other perils shall be dust before the storm. I will be the Pillar of Japan; I will be the Eyes of Japan; I will be the Great Vessel of Japan. Inviolable shall remain these oaths.²⁹

At Sado, Nichiren began to make distinctions between the traditional Tendai manner of reading the Lotus Sūtra and his interpretation

28. In the Kaimoku shō he says, "That Nichiren suffers so much is not without remote causes." As is explained in the Chapter on the Bodhisattva Sadaparibhuta, all abuses and persecutions heaped upon the bodhisattva were the results of his previous karma. How much more, then, should this be the case with Nichiren, "a man born in the family of an outcast fisherman, so lowly and degraded and poor!" N. R. E. Ehara, op. cit., pp. 88-90.

29. N. R. E. Ehara, (trans). Kaimoku shō, ibid., p. 92.

of the scripture. The traditional Tendai teaching divided the scripture into two parts: the first fourteen chapters were called shakumon (realm of trace) and were thought to reveal the unity of the teaching (one vehicle doctrine), and the second fourteen chapters were called hōmon, the true teaching.

Nichiren divided the Lotus Sūtra into three sections, which overlapped the traditional Tendai two-part division of the text. According to Nichiren, in Chapters Ten to Twenty-two, the third section, the practice of the bodhisattva was stressed. Nichiren considered Chapter Sixteen, "Revelation of the (Eternal) Life of the Tathāgata" the most important chapter of the text, since the eternity of the Buddha was shown to be clarified and understood through the continual, eternal practice of the bodhisattva, and this eternal life of the Tathāgata could be perceived through the practice of the bodhisattva.³¹ In this third section the bodhisattva was seen often as a martyr who must suffer for the sake of the truth. For instance, in Chapter Thirteen, "Exhortation to Hold Firm," and Chapter Twenty, "The Bodhisattva Never-Despise," it is stated that bodhisattvas will suffer and die in order to propagate the Lotus Sūtra.³²

Nichiren argued that Chih-i and Saichō understood the Lotus Sūtra only theoretically and hence only as a provisional teaching, but that he, Nichiren, understood the scripture factually in that he was living the text through his suffering and hardships as predicted in the text itself. He said in the Kaimoku shō:

30. Yoshiro Tamura, "The New Buddhism of Kamakura and Nichiren," Acta Asiatica, vol. XX, 1971, p. 53.

31. Yoshiro Tamura, op. cit., p. 54.

32. Yoshiro Tamura, op. cit., p. 54.

If I Nichiren were not born in this country, Sākyamuni, who preached the twenty stanzas of the Chapter on "Effort" in the Saddharmapundarīka Sūtra, might have become a teacher of untruth. And innumerable bodhisattvas also would have been compromised and reduced to the plight of Devadatta. In this Chapter it is said that many ignorant men will abuse the true follower, he will be assaulted, stoned and so forth. Now, who else besides Nichiren is abused, beaten with sticks and swords, for the sake of the Saddharmapundarīka Sūtra? Without Nichiren this prophecy would not have been fulfilled. . . . Tendai and Dengyo did not read the Saddharmapundarīka Sūtra by the body, because his trials correspond to those described in the scripture.³³

With this very personal way of reading the scripture Nichiren was able to identify his life with that of the bodhisattvas described in the scripture. He was able to interpret the idea of the eternity of the Buddha as an actual living truth since the Tathāgata's bodhisattva course was happening in history, through Nichiren. After Sado, he professed to see his mission as independent of the state and the rulers of Japan, and said that his personal salvation and that of his disciples did not depend upon any social or political order at all. Rather, it depended only upon the vows and predictions of the Buddha, who established the bodhisattva course.

Nichiren rejected at this stage all sources of authority except for the scriptures. He thought that even if Japan did not realize it, he, Nichiren, as the living embodiment of the scripture, would continue to affect Japan's destiny. He said in the Kaimoku shō:

If I do not put down the wickedness of Zen and Nembutsu in Japan, I shall be like those (who do not act rightly according to the needs of the time). If one's love is not prompted by compassion he is an enemy.

I, Nichiren, am the most affectionate parent of the people in Japan. . . . if a man removes the evil in others, he is a parent.³⁴

33. N. R. E. Ehara, op. cit., pp. 34-35.

34. N. R. E. Ehara, (trans.) Kaimoku shō, op. cit., p. 101.

The Pure Land for Nichiren was not a world situated at some far place, but a spiritual realm which would be realized on this earth whenever the Lotus Sūtra was preached to the people of the Age of the Last Law. Whenever humanity returned to the faith and followed the Buddha's teaching as found in the Lotus Sūtra, then, Nichiren believed, would come the end of the Age of the Last Law.

Nichiren began his public teaching by calling for the restoration of Tendai Buddhism as the basis for national salvation in the Age of the Last Law. Three times he approached the government and twice he was rebuked and exiled. He saw his mission as staying in the world during the Age of the Last Law in order to transform the world into the true Buddha Land.

CHAPTER TWO

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE AGE OF THE LAST LAW

Nichiren's doctrine evolved from the earlier understanding of the Age of the Last Law in India and China, and in sharp contradistinction to the schools which flourished in the Japan of his day. It was during the Kamakura Period that Buddhism in Japan began to transcend its Chinese origins, and began to develop into a thoroughly Japanese form. In this chapter I shall present an historical overview of the Age of the Last Law doctrine from its origins in India, through the development of Mahayana Buddhism in China, and finally the development of this doctrine in Japan.¹

A. Indian Background

In early Buddhism there were several reasons given for the decline and extinction of Buddhism. The earliest and best known reason can be found in the Āṅguttara-Nikāya, where Mahāprajāpatī, the aunt of the Buddha, requested acceptance into the order. The Buddha refused her request three times until finally Ānanda came to her rescue and spoke to the Buddha on her behalf. The Buddha finally consented to her entering the order but told Ānanda:

If, Ananda, women had not obtained the going forth from home into homelessness in the dhamma and discipline

1. The background of the doctrine of the Age of the Last Law presented in this chapter comes primarily from David Chappell, Tao-ch'o: A Pioneer of Chinese Pure Land Buddhism, (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1976), pp. 151-212.

proclaimed by the truth finder, the Brahma-faring, Ananda would have lasted long, true dhamma would have endured for a thousand years. But since, Ananda, women have gone forth. . . In the dhamma and discipline proclaimed by the truth finder, now, Ananda, the Brahma-faring will not last long, true dhamma will endure only for five hundred years.²

In this passage the reason given for the decline of the teaching was the admittance of women into the order, and the time period for the teaching was 500 years, rather than the 1000 years the Buddha predicted before admitting women into the order.

Another reason given in the early texts has to do with the moral decay of the monks themselves. According to these texts, there were five different ways in which this moral decay would manifest itself: . (1) the monks would be unable to attain enlightenment; (2) the monks would give up the practice of the teaching; (3) they would stop teaching the novice monks, so that first the Abhidhamma would disappear, then the Sutta-pitaka, the Jātakas, and finally the Vinaya would all disappear; (4) the monks would take off the robe and put down the bowl; (5) finally the relics would be lost and the stūpas would disappear, destroying the last vestiges of the teachings of the Buddha.³

In the Samyutta-Nikāya the Buddha spoke to Kassapa, saying:

It happens, thus, Kassapa, when members decrease, and the true doctrine disappears, there are then more precepts, and few brethren are established as Arhats. There is no disappearing of the true doctrine, Kassapa, till a counterfeit doctrine does arise in the world; but when a counterfeit doctrine does arise, then there is a disappearing of the true doctrine. Just as there is no counterfeit gold arisen in the world, so it is

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2. Cullavagga, (xi), The Book of the Discipline (Vinaya-Pitaka), vol. 5, as Sacred Books of the Buddhist, vol. xx, translated by I. B. Horner (London: Luzac and Co., 1952), p. 356.
 3. J. Minoyeff, "Anagata-vamsa," Journal of the Pali Text Society (1886), pp. 33 ff.

with the true doctrine. . . . There are five lowering things that conduce to the obscuration and disappearance of the true doctrine. What are the five? They occur when brethren and sisters, laymen and laywomen live in irreverence and are unruly toward the norm, live in irreverence and are unruly toward the order, live in irreverence and are unruly toward the training, live in irreverence and are unruly toward concentrative study. But when they live in reverence and docility toward these five, then do these five things conduce to the maintenance, the clarity, the presence of the true doctrine.⁴

In the above passage the Buddha warned the monks that the end could approach if there was irreverence toward the Buddha, the teaching, and the order of monks.⁵ Other reasons are given in the Pali Canon for the disappearance of the Age of the Correct Teaching, such as the failure of the monks to cultivate the four stages of mindfulness⁶ and the carelessness of the monks in understanding the teaching or applying the principles of the teaching in their lives.⁷

There are few references in the Pali texts to the specific time when the teaching would disappear, although in the Questions of King Milinda there is a reference to a three-stage scheme for the disappearance of the teaching:

There are three modes of the disappearance, O King, of a system of doctrine. And what are the three? The decline of attainment to an intellectual grasp of it, the decline of conduct in accordance with it, and the decline of its outward form. When the attainment of it ceases, then even the man who conducts himself aright in it has no close understanding of it. By the decline of conduct, the promulgation of the rules of discipline ceases; only the outward form of the religion

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4. The Book of Kindred Sayings, vol. ii, tr. by F. L. Woodward (London: Luzac, 1922:1952), p. 152.
 5. There are other suttas which list various reasons for the possible disappearance of the teaching. Anguttara-nikāya, vol. 6, Gradual Sayings, IV, tr. by E. M. Hare (London: Luzac, 1935:1966), pp. 49-50. Gradual Sayings, iii, ibid., pp. 239-240; Gradual Sayings, iii, ibid., pp. 180-181.
 6. The Book of Kindred Sayings, iv (London: Luzac, 1935:1965), pp. 151-53.
 7. The Book of Gradual Sayings, vol. iii, op. cit. p. 132.

remains. When the outward form has ceased, the succession of the tradition is cut off. These are the three forms of the disappearance of a system of doctrine.⁸

Although a three-stage schema for the decline of the teachings transmitted was handed down, specific dates were not given. Throughout the Pali Canon, when there was any discussion of the decline of the teaching, it was usually associated with some form of internal chaos or decline, rather than some external cause for the disappearance of the teaching.

Mahayana Texts

It was not until the rise of Mahayana Buddhism⁹ that external social and political events were seen as a source of the decline of the teaching. The earliest Mahayana text which mentioned the decline of the teaching by name was the Mahāyāmābhisamaya Sūtra.¹⁰ There are, however, earlier Mahayana scriptures which dealt with the theme of the decline of the teaching even though the term mo-fa (Age of the Last Law) did not appear in the texts. One of these scriptures was the Lien-hua-mien-ching¹¹ translated by Narendrayasas, in 566 A.D. It describes the activities of King Mihiragula (502-542), an Ephtalic King who invaded

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8. The Questions of King Milinda, Part I, tr. T. W. Rhys-Davids, Sacred Books of the East, vol. xxxv (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1890), p. 190.
 9. Rhi Ki-young in "Critical Synthesis of the Different Arguments on the Disparition of the True Law," (Bulgyo Hakpo, Journal of the Buddhist Research Institute of Dong-Kook University, South Korea, no. 1, 1963) cites over forty different Mahayana Scriptures which either have a definite reference to or allude to the decline of the teaching. pp. 224-270.
 10. T. vol. 16, no. 673, p. 651c. The section of this work on Mahayana Texts is based upon David Chappell, op. cit., pp. 168-171.
 11. T. vol. 12, no. 386, pp. 1070-1077.

India and destroyed the Buddhist temples, stūpas, and libraries.¹² Yamada states that the Tai-chi-ching,¹³ which is the basis for mo-fa thought in China and Japan, came from the Rengemenkyō (Lien-hua-mien-ching), in which the hero tells of his idea of the conditions of the latter days of the law.¹⁴

There developed in Mahayana Buddhism four theories of the Decline of the Law, each one varying in the number of years of the existence of the Age of the Perfect Teaching and the Age of the Counterfeit Teaching but all agreeing upon the length of the Age of the Last Law, that is, 10,000 years.

The doctrine can be summarized as follows: The Age of the Perfect Law begins after the parinirvāṇa of the Buddha, during which period there exists the teaching, practice, and the attainments; this is followed by the Age of the Counterfeit Law when only the teaching and practice exist; and finally there is the Age of the Last Law when only the teaching itself exists, and finally it too will disappear.

The four theories are:

1. Age of the Perfect Law, 500 years - Age of the Counterfeit Law, 1000 years. This is based upon two texts, the Mo-ho-mo-veh-ching¹⁵ and the Ta-chi-ching.¹⁶

12. Ryujo Yamada says: "The Rengemen-kyō does not give the word 'the latter days of the law,' but describes what the word means." Japanese Association for Religious Studies (ed.) "A Study on the Formation of Mahayana Sutras," Religious Studies in Japan, (Tokyo: Maruzen Company, 1959), p. 317, note 1.

13. T. vol. 12, no. 397, p. 363b.

14. Yamada, op cit., p. 317, note 1.

15. T. vol. 12, no. 383, p. 1013c.

16. T. vol. 13, no. 397, p. 379c.

2. Age of the Perfect Law, 1000 years - Age of the Counterfeit Law, 500 years. This is based upon the Pei-hua-ching.¹⁷

3. Age of the Perfect Law, 500 years - Age of the Counterfeit Law, 500 years. Again, there are two texts which teach this doctrine: the Ta-ch'eng-san-chu-ch'an-hui-ching¹⁸ and the Hsien-ch'ieh-ching.¹⁹

4. Age of the Perfect Law, 1000 years - Age of the Counterfeit Law, 1000 years. There are problems with those texts which give this scheme of the three periods. Huai-kan attributed the theory to the Ta-pei-ching.²⁰ Chi-tsang said that it is found in the Ch'i-yüan-ching-she-lu but this cannot be confirmed.²¹ Lamotte cites five texts in which it is said the Age of the Perfect and Counterfeit Law will last for 1000 years.²²

The Lotus Sūtra translated by Kumārajīva in 406 A.D. is another important text which deals with the Age of the Last Law. This text, while not dividing the teaching into specific periods, does refer to the Age of the Last Law. For example:

Again, Manjusri! After the extinction of the Tathagata, in (the period of) the decline of the Law,

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17. T. vol. 3, no. 157, p. 211b.
 18. T. vol. 24, no. 1493, p. 1094a.
 19. T. vol. 14, no. 425, pp. 21a and 50c.
 20. T. vol. 47, no. 1957, p. 48c.
 21. T. vol. 42, no. 1824, p. 18b. For details see D. Chappell, op. cit., p. 172.
 22. T. vol. 49, no. 2026, p. 2a; T. vol. 49, no. 2027, p. 6a; T. vol. 24, no. 1451, p. 405a; T. vol. 2, no. 99, p. 177b; and T. vol. 50, no. 2042, p. 126b. Etienne Lamotte, Histoire du Bouddhisme Indien, (Louvain: Institut Orientaliste, 1967), p. 213.
 23. T. vol. 9, no. 262.

He who desires to preach this sūtra, should abide in the pleasant ministry (of speech).²⁴

In this text the Age of the Last Law is most often associated with the internal decay of the monks as well as the general decay of the people.

In the evil age to come living beings will decrease in good qualities, while they will increase in utter arrogance and in covetousness of gain and honours, develop their evil qualities, and be far removed from emancipation.²⁵

In the Chapter on "A Parable" the Buddha tells Sāriputra that he will become a Buddha in the future and explains, "The Righteous Law will abide in the world during thirty-two minor kalpas and (then) the Counterfeit Law will also abide in the world during thirty-two minor kalpas."²⁶

The uniqueness of this text in the final period of the Law is also explained: "He who, in the final age of fear, can preach it even for a moment, by all gods and men will be worshipped."²⁷

According to this text, it was the last of the teachings revealed by the Buddha and thus the most excellent of the teachings, and would not have been accepted by the people if it had been revealed earlier by the Buddha.²⁸

The idea of the decline of the teaching has its roots in early Buddhism and is more fully developed in Mahayana scriptures, but it

24. T. vol. 9, no. 262, 37c-38a. - Katō, p. . This is the only place in the text where the term mo-fa (Age of the Last Law) appears. However, altogether the Lotus Sūtra either refers directly to the Age of the Last Law or alludes to it in over fifteen different places in the text.

25. T. vol. 9, no. 262, p. 36a Bunnō Katō (trans.) The Lotus Flower of the Wonderful Law, (Tokyo: Rissho Kosei-kai, 1971), p. 262.

26. T. vol. 9, no. 262, p. 11c; Katō, p. 77.

27. T. vol. 9, no. 262, p. 61a; Katō, p. 433.

28. T. vol. 9, no. 262, p. 5b; Katō, p. 3.

was not until after Buddhism entered China that the decline of the teaching was assigned specific dates.

B. Chinese Background

Hui-ssu (517-577) in his essay the Li-shih-yüan-wen²⁹ used as his source the Shih-chia-mou-ni-fo-pei-men-san-wei-kuan-chung-sheng-p'in-pen-chi-ching,³⁰ a now extinct scripture, to date the decline of the teaching. He said:

The Buddha was conceived on the seventh day, the seventh month, in 1148 B.C. and was born on the eighth day, the fourth month, in 1147 B.C. He took up the homeless life when he was nineteen, in the year 1129 B.C. He attained enlightenment on the eighth day, the twelfth month, in the year 1118 B.C. and attained parinirvana on the fifteenth day, the second month of 1068 B.C. when he was eighty years old.

The Perfect Law (cheng-fa) will last 500 years from 1067 B.C. to 568 B.C. The Counterfeit Law (hsiang-fa) will last for 1000 years from 567 B.C. to 433 A.D. and the Age of the Last Law (mo-fa) will last for 10000 years from 434 A.D. to 10433 A.D.³¹

It is not clear whether Hui-ssu used this now extinct text to establish the dates of the decline of the law, or whether he used this text only to establish the dates of the Buddha's conception, birth, enlightenment, and death. What is clear is that he thought he was living in the Age of the Last Law. Indeed, this was the basis for his writing the Li-shih-yüan-wen.³²

During the persecution of Buddhism in the Northern Chou Dynasty under Emperor Wu (r. 561-577), Hsin-hsing (540-594) developed the San-chieh-chaio or Three Degree School based completely upon the idea of the Age of the Last Law.³³ He thought that he was living in

29. T. vol. 46, no. 1933. See David Chappell, op. cit., pp. 168-173.

30. T. vol. 46, no. 1933, p. 786b.

31. T. vol. 46, no. 1933, p. 786b/c.

32. D. Chappell, op. cit., pp. 184-187.

33. For details on the San-chieh-chaio sect see: Yabuki Keiki, Sangaikyō no Kenkyū, (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1927).

the Age of the Last Law, a view which was shared by two of his contemporaries, Tao-ch'o (562-645)³⁴ and Shan-tao (613-681).³⁵ For example, Tao-ch'o based his theory upon the Ta-chi-yüeh-tsang-ching,³⁶ which divided the time after the death of the Buddha into five periods of 500 years each. Using this scheme Tao-ch'o developed the scheme of 500 years for the Age of the Perfect Law, 1000 years for the Age of the Counterfeit Law, and 10000 years for the Age of the Last Law.³⁷ He concluded that he was living in the fourth of the 500 year periods, i.e. 1500 years after the death of the Buddha, during the period of the Age of the Last Law. He said, "The present age is the age of the decline of the teaching, the evil age of the five corruptions (wu-cho)."³⁸

There were other monks who followed the scheme used by Hui-ssu and Tao-ch'o for dating the decline of the teaching. For example, both Hui-yüan (523-592)³⁹ and Chi-tsang (529-623)⁴⁰ followed the 500, 1000, and 10000 year scheme, whereas monks such as Huai-kan⁴¹ and Fei-ch'ang-fang⁴² accepted the schema of 1000 years for the Age of the Perfect Law, 1000 years for the Age of the Counterfeit Law, and 10000 years for the Age of the Last Law.

The doctrine of the Age of the Last Law gradually became more important in Buddhism, from the rather vague references to it in the

34. D. Chappell, op. cit., p. 187.

35. Julian Pas, Shan-tao's Commentary on the Amitayur-Buddhānusmṛti-sūtra, (Ph.D. dissertation, McMaster University, 1973), p. 281.

36. T. vol. 13, no. 397, p. 363a.

37. T. vol. 16, no. 661, p. 651a.

38. T. vol. 47, no. 1957, p. 13c.

39. T. vol. 37, no. 1745, p. 116a.

40. T. vol. 34, no. 1721, p. 450a.

41. T. vol. 47, no. 1960, p. 48c.

42. T. vol. 49, no. 2034, p. 23a.

early Buddhist texts, to the growing importance in later Mahayana texts, and finally it becomes one of the important factors in the development of some Chinese Buddhist schools. In Japan, during the Kamakura Period (1192-1336), the doctrine of the Age of the Last Law would become one of the central doctrines in the development of Buddhism, especially in the so-called "popular" Buddhist schools of Pure Land and Nichiren.

C. Japanese Background

The Age of the Last Law (Japan. mappō) doctrine arrived in Japan during the Nara Period (710-793). The Sanron School (C. San-lun) advocated the view held by Hui-ssu and Chi-tsang, but the Hosso School, (c. Fa-hsiang) following the same division as Fei-ch'ang-fang, divided the Age of the Perfect and Counterfeit Laws into one thousand years each. The Age of the Last Law doctrine was interpreted in different ways by various schools in both the Heian and Kamakura periods, and consequently different doctrines evolved out of this concept. The various schools of Buddhism interpreted this doctrine in at least three different ways: 1) some schools approached it only as a minor theoretical problem; 2) some schools adopted it as one consideration in the teaching; and 3) some schools accepted the reality of the Age of the Last Law as one of the most important considerations in the development of their teachings.⁴³

During the Heian Period the two great Japanese Buddhist leaders, Saichō and Kūkai, who were the founders of the Tendai and Shingon Schools respectively, were both concerned with the Age of the Last Law doctrine.

43. Kanto Mochizuki, Nichiren Kyōgaku no Kenkyū, (Tokyo: Heirakuji Shoten, 1961), p. 60.

There are references to various theories of the Age of the Last Law doctrine in Kūkai and other Shingon Masters, but their emphasis was upon the universal validity of the Buddha's teaching, so the idea of the decline of the teaching was not important. For example, Kūkai, in his essay on The Precious Key to the Secret Treasury, was asked:

I suppose there will certainly be none in this degenerate age who can observe the precepts, practice- meditation, and gain wisdom?

He responded by saying: Why should it be so? . . . Although we live in a degenerate age, there is no reason to suppose that there are no worthy ones.⁴⁴

When Saichō desired to establish a vinaya centre at Mt. Hiei for the protection of the nation in preparation for the coming Age of the Last Law, he used as the scriptural basis the Fo-shuo-fa-mieh-chin-ching:

In the degenerate age of the five crimes (gogetsu) the ways of Mara will prosper. Mara will become a monk and destroy my path. He will wear the clothing of lay people and he will like the robes and clothes of five colours, he will eat meat, and kill living beings. He will be greedy in taste, have no compassion. . . .⁴⁵

Using this quotation, Saichō said, "Now that we know the time who would not go up to the mountain?"⁴⁶ In another essay he said, "The three calamities are near and we are deeply in the period of the five impurities."⁴⁷

While it is clear that both Kūkai and Saichō were well aware of the approaching Age of the Last Law, they were not seriously concerned that the arrival of the Age of the Last Law required a fundamental change in their Buddhist practices, and thus it was accepted as merely one

44. Yoshito S. Hakeda, Kūkai: Major Works, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), pp. 180-81.

45. T. vol. 12, no. 369, p. 1118c.

46. T. vol. 74, no. 2362.

47. T. vol. 74, no. 2361, p. 235a/b.

consideration in the development of the doctrines. Both, however, seem to have believed that it was possible to conquer and overcome the Age of the Last Law, enter upon the bodhisattva path and attain enlightenment in this life.

By the time of the Kamakura Period the great teachers of Buddhism in Japan such as Hōnen, Shinran, and Nichiren were all very much aware of the Age of the Last Law. They all seem to have followed the usual Chinese dating of the death of the Buddha, putting it in 949 B.C.⁴⁸ Therefore they were convinced that they entered the Age of the Last Law in 1050 A.D.

During this period there was continual social and political strife in the country and there were natural disasters and wars which altered both Japan and Buddhism. There were corrupt monks and political leaders. Taking these things into account, it is not surprising that the Kamakura monks saw the apocalyptic view of history as meaningful.

The Pure Land Masters understood and interpreted the Age of the Last Law as a description of an individual in spiritual crisis who is limited in his ability to achieve personal salvation. This can be seen clearly in Genshin's (942-1017) work Ōjōyōshū, or the Essentials of Salvation,⁴⁹ and was further developed by Honen and Shinran.

Hōnen viewed the Age of the Last Law with great pessimism and saw the Kamakura Period as a time when enlightenment would be impossible for ordinary people. Using the two terms developed by Tao-ch'o, "holy

48. Kenneth Ch'en, Buddhism in China, (Princeton: Princeton University, 1964), p. 298.

49. Ryusaku Tsunoda, etc. Sources of Japanese Tradition, vol. 1 (New York and London: Columbia University, 5th ed., 1969), pp. 192-197.

path (shōdō) and "Pure Land" (Jōdō), he classified the entire teachings of the Buddha, assigning the term shōdō to those schools which emphasized meditation and Jōdō to those which emphasized faith in Amida Buddha. Shōdō aimed at enlightenment in this life, while Jōdō suggested rebirth in the Pure Land of Amida. The former refers to enlightenment by "self-power" (jiriki), the latter by "other power" (tariki). According to Hōnen, since we were in the Age of the Last Law and had become corrupt, the only possible means for salvation was the exclusive path of the easy practice of the other power. In the Senjakushū he said:

. . . The sequence of the existence and extinction of the two teachings of the holy path and the Pure Land means that the various scriptures of the holy path will be extinct first. Therefore one speaks of the extinction of the way of scriptures. This scripture representing the Pure Land teaching will be especially preserved.⁵⁰

By Hōnen's use of the tariki doctrine as the primary means of salvation in the Age of the Last Law, there was a radical shift from the earlier idea of a monk who is well disciplined and practices meditation for the sake of himself and the nation, to a simple faith in the vows of Amida Buddha. Hōnen was not concerned for the national salvation but rather for the future personal salvation of all beings in another realm, the Pure Land of Amida Buddha.

Hōnen saw the Age of the Last Law from an extremely pessimistic view. He saw the perilous conditions of Japan, the corruption of the monks and the natural disasters in the nation as indications of the arrival of the Age of the Last Law. For Hōnen all attempts at self-enlightenment and any notion of protecting the nation were all useless or meaningless concepts in the Age of the Last Law. He shifted the

50. T. vol. 83, no. 2608, p. 17.

focus of Buddhism from the earlier Tendai conception of national salvation in this world to individual, personal salvation in a future transcendent world, and at the same time he redefined the method of salvation from "self-effort" to complete dependence upon the compassion of Amida.

Hōnen's disciple Shinran went further than Hōnen himself in his interpretation of the significance of birth in the Age of the Last Law, which he argued was external to human nature. With Hōnen, he felt that men were degenerate and evil because of their birth in that age, but he maintained as well that it was not possible to attain enlightenment through self-power in an age when it was impossible to follow the teachings of the Path of the Sages.

Thus the Age of the Last Law becomes important in a study of Shinran's teaching, but his formulation plays no significant role in providing us with a background for understanding Nichiren's conception of the age. While Nichiren repeatedly referred to his differences with Hōnen, he made no reference to Shinran's teaching in his own writing.

CHAPTER THREE

THE AGE OF THE LAST LAW AND BUDDHIST HISTORY IN THE SENJI SHŌ

The Senji shō contains Nichiren's own reconstruction of the history of Japanese Buddhism, which he perceives as closely intertwined with the fate of Japan itself. The essay stands as the culmination of Nichiren's understanding that the Age of the Last Law, referred to in the Ta-chi-ching as the time when "in my teaching there will be fighting, quarreling, abusive language, and the pure teaching will become extinct,"¹ had come to pass.

Nichiren accomplishes a number of purposes in the essay and these can be differentiated as follows. First, he establishes that the age has indeed come about. Second, he develops the theory that it is the correct time for teaching the Lotus Sūtra. Third, he provides the summation of his criticism of the Buddhism of his day, in particular of the increasingly powerful Pure Land School.

Finally, the Senji shō contains the exact essence of Nichiren's teaching concerning his own unique role in the purifying of Buddhism in Japan and therefore in the salvation of the nation itself. In the first half of this chapter, I will direct the reader to the manner in which Nichiren accomplished each of his purposes. In the concluding section of the chapter, I will discuss the uniqueness of Nichiren's teaching concerning the Age of the Last Law.

1. T. vol. 13, no. 397, p. 363b.

A. Outline of Buddhist History According to Nichiren

To support his conviction that his was the Age of the Last Law, Nichiren reviewed the history of Buddhism according to the Five Five Hundred Period schema found in the Ta-chi-ching (T. vol. 13, no. 379, p. 363a/b). According to the Senji shō these five periods are:

1. During the first 500 years after the death of the Buddha, salvation is firm and sure.
2. During the second 500 years, meditation is firm and sure.
3. During the third 500 years, reciting and reading of scriptures, and hearing of many teachings is firm and sure.
4. During the fourth 500 years, the building of stupas is firm and sure.
5. During the fifth 500 years, there will be fighting, quarreling, abusive language, and the pure teaching will disappear. (Ch. II, pp. 67-68).

This five stage interpretation of the development of the teaching of the Buddha is further reduced by Nichiren into a period of three stages.

1. The Age of the Perfect Law, consisting of the first and second 500 year periods (Ch. II, p. 68).
2. The Age of the Counterfeit Law, consisting of the third and fourth 500 year periods (Ch. II, p. 68).
3. The Age of the Last Law, which begins with the fifth of the 500 year periods (Ch. II, p. 70).

Nichiren, paraphrasing Chan-jan (Chih-kuan-fu-hsing-ch'uan-hung-chúeh, T. vol. 46, no. 1912, pp. 141b-149c) stated that immediately following the death of the Buddha, there was a period of 100 years "when only the teachings of the Hinayana spread" (Ch. III, p. 78).

This is followed by a period when Miccaka, Buddhanandi, Buddhamitra, Bhikṣu Pārsva and Puṇyayaśas both preached Hinayana scriptures and introduced the Mahayana scriptures. This comprises the teachings during the first 500 year period (Ch. III, p. 78).

During the second 500 year period Mahayana scriptures and doctrines began spreading in India by teachers such as Bodhisattva Asvagoṣa, Arhat Kapimāla, Bodhisattva Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva, Arhat Rāhulata, Saṅghānadi, Gayosāta, Kumārata, Jayata, Vasubandhu, Manrhita, Haklenayasas, and Simha Bhikṣu (Chapter III, p. 78). These two periods make up the Age of the Perfect Law, when "salvation is firm and sure" and "meditation is firm and sure."

In the third 500 year period, which is, according to Nichiren, "the first 500 years of the Age of the Counterfeit Law," (Chapter III, p. 78) the teachings of the Buddha were brought to China by Kāsyapa Mātāṅga and Dharmarakṣa, and ten schools of Buddhist thought developed during the five dynasties of the Wei, Chin, Sung, Ch'i, and Liang. After 400 years during the Ch'en and Sui Dynasties, the greatest event of the third period took place, the birth of Chih-i and the consequent development of T'ien-t'ai Buddhism (Ch. III, pp. 80-81).

During the fourth 500 year period, Tripitaka Hsuan-tsang went to India and upon his return established the Fa-hsiang and San-lun (Ch. III, p. 83). Fa-tsang advocated the superiority of the Hua-yen Sūtra, and Subhakarasiṃha, Vajrabodhi, and Amoghavajra arrived in China, translated the Mahāvairocana, Vajrasekhara, and Susiddhikāra Sūtras into Chinese and established the Shingon School in China (Chapter III, p. 85). According to Nichiren the above took place in the first 200 years of the fourth period of the five five hundred year periods of the Ta-chi-ching (Chapter III, p. 86).

Buddhism entered Japan during the last 400 years of this fourth period (Chapter III, p. 86). Prince Shotoku established the Lotus Sūtra, Vimalakīrti Sūtra, and the Srīmālādevī Sūtra as the principal teachings for the protection of the State. During the reign of Emperor Kotoku (645-654) the Korean monk Kanroku brought the San-lun and the Sh'eng-shih Schools to Japan and Doshō (629-700) brought the Fa-hsiang School. During the reign of Emperor Shomū (724-749) Shen-hsing brought the Hua-yen School and taught it to Shojō Ryoben (689-773), and Emperor Shomū built the Todaiji Temple. During this period Chien-chen (688-763) brought the Lu and T'ien-t'ai Schools to Japan but taught only the Lu (J. Ritsu) (Chapt. III, pp. 87-8). During the reign of Emperor Kammu (781-806) Saichō (767-822) went to China and returned to Japan with the Tendai teaching and established his school at Mt. Hiei (Chapt. III, p. 89). At the end of the fourth 500 year period the Six Nara Schools and the two Heian Schools were established in Japan. The third and fourth 500 year periods make up the Age of the Counterfeit Law, when, "the reading and hearing of scriptures was firm and sure" and the period when "the building of stūpas was firm and sure" (Chapter III, p. 91).

The fifth of the 500 year periods, a time when "in my teaching there will be fighting, quarreling, abusive language and the pure teaching becomes extinct," is the period during which Hōnen established the Pure Land School, the Zen School was established, and it is the period in which Nichiren lived. This is the beginning of the Age of the Last Law (Chapter III, p. 91).

The systemization of Buddhist history into this five stage theory provided a framework on which Nichiren could build as he reviewed

Buddhist scriptures in order to present evidence that the events of the Kamakura period in Japan had been forecast in the scriptures and could be identified from texts and signs as signaling the proper time for teaching the Lotus Sūtra. He would use this framework also for establishing that his own role as the upholder of that scripture had also been predicted throughout Buddhist history and that proof of that existed in the persecution which he suffered.

There was general agreement among all the great teachers of the day that the Age of the Last Law arrived at about 1050 A.D., which coincided with the Kamakura Period in Japan. Not surprisingly, in a time when political strife seemed to coincide with other calamitous conditions the people tended to accept an apocalyptic interpretation of these events.

Nichiren discussed the happenings of his day and correlated them with textual predictions that these events would occur during the Age of the Last Law. For example, about war he said:

I hear that the Mongols have already defeated 360 countries, and 260 provinces in China. The glorious capital has already been conquered. Both the rulers Hui-tsang and Ch'in-tsung were captured by the Northern Barbarians and finally died in the Tartar Kingdom. The grandson of Hui-tsung, Emperor Kao-tsung lost Chang-an and fled to the countryside in the temporary residence at Lin-an (Hang-chou) and has not seen the capital for several years. Over 600 provinces of Korea and countries such as Silla and Paekche were attacked by the Emperor of the Great Mongol Kingdom. In the same way, the Mongols now attacked Iki and Tsushima Islands and Kyushu of Japan. The Buddha's word concerning the "firm establishment of fighting and reviling" has not fallen to the ground. (Ch. II, 91-92)

Similarly, he quoted the Jen-wang-ching concerning the consequences of the rulers' failure to discriminate among good and evil monks.

In the Jen-wang-ching it is said: Evil bhikshus will seek fame and profit and themselves preach the causes and

conditions which destroy the teachings of the Buddha and the causes and conditions which destroy the country in front of the King, Crown Prince and Princes. That ruler failing to discriminate will listen to and believe these words. Again the scripture says: The sun and moon will deviate from this regular course, the time and seasons rebel; the red sun will appear, the black sun will appear, two, three, four, five suns will appear, or the sun will eclipse, and there will be no light, or a single sun ring, two rings, four or five sun rings will appear (Chapt. VI, p. 150).

Nichiren correlated such passages with various historical events which had already taken place, such as, the comet of Bun'ei (Chapt. III pg. 97), earthquakes (Chapt. VI, p. 150), fires (Chapter VI, p. 151) famines and epidemics (Chapt. VI, p. 151).

Where Nichiren differed sharply from the Pure Land monks of his day and where he departs from the entire history of Buddhist doctrine was in his radical interpretation of the meaning of his age. This shift depended in large part on his turning away from the historical determinism which said that salvation could not occur within this time period. Rather, in the Senji shō we find Nichiren's optimistic summation of the meaning of the correct time for the teaching of the Buddha.

For Nichiren, all the scriptures prior to the Lotus Sūtra were preached by the Buddha in order to prepare the world for this scripture. The time prior to the Lotus Sūtra was a period of fermentation, when certain conditions had first to evolve in order for the Lotus Sūtra to emerge as the pre-eminent teaching for the Age of the Last Law, the teaching which would allow every sentient being to attain salvation.

In the opening sentence of the Senji shō Nichiren established that there are appropriate teachings for specific periods of time. "If one is to study the teachings of the Buddha one must first learn about the problem of the time" (Chapt. I, p. 59).

He substantiated this assertion with quotations from the Lotus Sūtra (Chapter I, p. 59), from the Chinese Classics (Chapter I, p. 60), and from other Buddhist scriptures (Ch. I, pp. 60-61). He also drew analogies from the behaviour of beasts (Chapter I, p. 60). He concluded by asking the question, "Even beasts are like this. How can it be that in the cultivation of the teachings of the Buddha one should fail to investigate the proper time?" (Chapter I, p. 60).

Nichiren continued to establish the idea of the 'proper time' by quoting the Lotus Sūtra and explaining various doctrines which were taught at specific times, but explaining that the Buddha failed to teach, ". . . because the time to preach had not yet arrived (Chapter I, pg. 60). After being asked to explain why he placed the time over the capacity he said, "He did not preach because even though the capacity was there the time had not yet arrived" (Chapter I, pp. 61-62).

In these passages Nichiren was establishing that the Age of the Last Law is the appropriate time in which to preach the Lotus Sūtra. His reason was that, "There will be two times when the Lotus Sūtra spreads: the so-called last eight years of the Buddha's lifetime and in the first five hundred years of the Age of the Last Law" (Chapter II, page 75).

Nichiren pointed to the Buddha's example in order to bolster his argument that one should not be guided by capacity when choosing the appropriate scripture for a particular time. Although the Buddha's parents were obviously of the highest capacity, he did not preach the Lotus Sūtra to them. In Nichiren's view, he would surely have done so if the time were appropriate.

When the Buddha taught the Great Vaipula teaching he entered the Palace and preached the Kuan-fo-san-mei-ching

because the Great King Suddhodana, the affectionate father of the World Honoured One, wished him to do so. For the sake of the Compassionate Mother [the Buddha] secluded himself for ninety days in Trayastrimsāh and preached the Māyā Sūtra. To an affectionate father and compassionate mother what kind of secret law could one withhold? However, [the Buddha] did not preach the Lotus Sūtra. The point is, it was not due to [the consideration] of one's Capacity but because the time had not arrived that [the Buddha] did not preach the Lotus Sutra (Chapt I, pp. 65-66).

Nichiren also turned to internal evidence from the Lotus Sūtra, in order to establish that it is indeed the appropriate time for this scripture.

The Lotus Sūtra, Chapter Seven says, "In the last five five hundred years after my extinction proclaim and spread it in Jambudvīpa, lest it be lost." In the Sixth Fascicle of the Lotus Sūtra the Buddha speaks of, "Those who can hold on to this sūtra in the time of the evil age of the last law." Again, in the Fifth Fascicle the Buddha speaks of "the last age that is coming later when the teaching will be about to perish" (Ch. II, pp. 70-71).

He also quoted various masters who support this idea of the appropriate time.

T'ien-t'ai says, "In the last five hundred years beings will benefit in the wonderful path in the future." The Great Master Miao-lo says, "At the beginning of the Age of the Last Law we will not be without divine benefits." And Dengyō says, "The Perfect Age and the Counterfeit Age have almost passed away, the Age of the Last Law is very near" (Chapter II, p. 74).

Nichiren stated, but did not substantiate, that the three above-mentioned Masters lamented not being born in the Age of the Last Law, for they desired to be living in the Age of the Last Law in order to be present when the true teaching of the Lotus Sūtra would be taught to all beings (Chapter II, p. 75).

It was for their failure to accept the truth of the Lotus Sūtra that Nichiren found the most severe fault with the monks of his day. Once again, he accumulated what he considered correlations between scriptural predictions concerning the reviling and slandering of the

Lotus Sūtra and the consequences for the Japanese people for which he found evidence both in natural calamities and in social and political events.

Nichiren located both within the Ta-chi-ching and within a number of other scriptures what he considered predictions that the Buddhist monks would become evil, decadent, and corrupt. For example, he made reference to monks of whom it was said in the Lotus Sūtra that they, "will wear patched garments in seclusion, pretending that they will walk the true path and scorning other people, greedily attach to gain. They will preach the law to laymen and be revered by the world as arhats of the Six Transcendent Powers." He also quoted the Parinirvāṇa Sūtra, "One icchantika who looks like an arhat but practices evil deeds." And the Nirvāṇa Sūtra, "There is an icchantika who takes on the appearance of an arhat, stays in an empty discarded place, and reviles the vaipula scriptures. Ordinary people seeing him all think that he is a true arhat or a great bodhisattva" (Chapt. VI, p. 166).

Nichiren reserved a special ire for such thriving Buddhist Schools of his day as Zen, Shingon, and Pure Land, calling them among other things, "the three worms in the body of the lion of the Lotus Sūtra and the Great Master Dengyō" (Chapt. VI, p. 153). He quoted several passages from the Lotus Sūtra and other texts in order to demonstrate that the destruction of Buddhism would come from within the order of monks and not because of any external rebellion and wars. For example, from the Shou-hu-ching, he quoted:

As for all the teachings of Śākyamuni Tathagata, all the devas, heretics, evil people or spirits who possess the five supernatural powers, cannot destroy them even partially. But the evil monks who are monks in name only will ruin them completely. Even if one were to burn Mt. Sumeru for a long

time using grass and trees of the three thousand worlds as fuel, it would not decrease one bit. But the fires at the end of the world period, which begin from the inside of Mt. Sumeru will burn and will destroy in one instant Mt. Sumeru and not even leave ashes (Chapt. VI, p. 151).

Again, he quotes the Lien-hua-mien-ching:

The Buddha tells Ananda this is analogous to the death of a lion; all of the sentient beings which live in the sky, on earth, in water, or on the land will not eat its body. But the lion's body will issue forth insects which will eat the lion's flesh. Ananda, others will not destroy the teaching which I collected through accumulating practice and working hard for three great numberless kalpas (Chapt., VI, p. 151).

Nichiren's criticism of the monks of his day was based on their failure to accept the statement in the Fifth Fascicle of the Lotus Sūtra, "This Law Flower Sūtra is the mysterious teaching of the Buddha Tathāgata" which was "supreme among all the sūtras." It was in abandoning this scripture, and failing to recognize it as supreme, that Nichiren believed the monks had become revilers of the teaching.

Nichiren taught that it was this failure by the monks and their being taken up by the king which brought upon the nation and people of Japan natural calamities, civil wars, and foreign invasions. All of these, he thought, had been predicted in the scriptures. Once again, he provided correlations for his listeners between these predicted events and actual historical events with which they were familiar. For example, he cited predictions such as this from the Ta-chi-ching:

If again all the kshatriyas and kings make a false teaching and disrupt the disciples of the World Honoured One, slandering, cutting down with sticks, and swords, taking away necessary articles such as robes and bowls, if they make it difficult to give alms then we in heaven will let the enemies from outside spontaneously and suddenly rise up, and we will also cause uprisings of soldiers, famine, epidemics, winds and rains out of season, quarreling, accusing words, and slandering in the king's own realm or national territory. Furthermore, we will let this king lose his own country before long (Chapt. VI, pp. 157-158).

From the Suvarnaprabhāsa Sūtra he quoted this prediction,

The populations of the Thirty-three Heavens all give rise to heart of anger and strange stars fall, two suns come out at the same time, vengeful bandits from other countries come and people in the nation are subjected to loss and disturbances (Chapter VI, p. 149).

Nichiren taught that the calamities befalling Kamakura Japan were heavenly warnings (Chapt. VI, p. 145) and that if everyone from the ruler to the people did not turn to the proper teaching there would be wars and rebellions (Chapt. VI, p. 146) until finally the nation would be destroyed.

Once Nichiren had established abandonment of the Lotus Sūtra as fundamental to the downfall of Buddhism and the cause of the calamities Japan was experiencing, he could move to directly accusing his enemies.

He taught that it was his opponents of whom Sākyamuni Buddha spoke when he said, "As for those who with an evil mouth revile those who spread the Lotus Sūtra in the Age of the Last Law, their sins will be one hundred thousand billion times worse than that of those who persecute me for even one kalpa" (Chapt. III, p. 95).

This teaching set in place all the essential building blocks for Nichiren's vision of his own role in history. First, he had established that there would be evil monks, and that their coming had been predicted. Second, he had identified the nature of their evil, the abandonment of the Lotus Sūtra, and the reviling and slandering of that sūtra. Third, he had specified just those consequences which followed their evil actions, and had pinpointed the predicting of those consequences in scriptural passages.

By providing his listeners with a scriptural rationale for understanding the events with which they were already familiar Nichiren had prepared his listeners to accept his vision of his own role in the history of Buddhism and of Japan. Nichiren would teach that this role also had been predicted in the scripture, that the harsh treatment which he was receiving was forecast in those same scriptures, and that the nation could expect only further dire consequences should his position as the upholder of the Lotus Sūtra not be recognized.

B. The Uniqueness of Nichiren's Views on the Age of the Last Law

Nichiren established the importance of his own place in the history of Japanese Buddhism primarily through his radical interpretation of the Lotus Sūtra. He began by taking the statement from that scripture, "At that time there will appear one wise monk," as a direct reference to himself. He interpreted that wisdom as the upholding of the Lotus Sūtra, reminding his listeners that in the Eighth Fascicle of the Lotus Sūtra it says, "If when in the future you receive and keep, read and write the sūtra, what they wish will not be in vain, and in the present age they . . . will obtain their blessed reward" (Chapter VI, p. 164).

Nichiren relies, too, on the Hokke Shukū by Dengyō, in which he says, "Those who are capable of upholding the Lotus Sūtra are first among all sentient beings." As an ordinary man Nichiren said that he was not worth mentioning, but as the upholder of the Lotus Sūtra he called himself, variously, "the greatest man in Japan of the present age" (Chapt. VI, p. 159), "the first man in the entire universe" (Chapter VI, p. 146), and "undoubtedly the first practitioner of the Lotus Sūtra in Japan," saying, "Infer from this that neither in China nor in India, nor anywhere in the entire world, is one of the same stature" (Chapt. VI, p. 147).

Nichiren claimed that as the one who propagated the Lotus Sūtra he was the "parent of all the people in Japan" (Chapt. III, p. 94).

"If Nichiren were not the practitioner of the Lotus Sūtra," he asked, "who would be the upholder of the one vehicle?" (Chapt. III, p. 96).

As the practitioner of the Lotus Sūtra Nichiren made one central claim, "only and simply the spirit of the Tathāgata Sākyamuni entered into my body and replaced mine" (Chapt. VI, p. 156).

Nichiren found within the Lotus Sūtra what he said was evidence that he would bear his truth to an ungrateful people, for he said that his enemies hated him more than they hate the enemies of their parents and that he was persecuted more strongly than those who reviled or murdered. But Nichiren turned again to the Lotus Sūtra for predictions concerning the fate of the people for their attitude. On the basis of this reading, he said that his persecutors would fall into evil paths in this life, and into the avīci hell in the next. His persecution, which he could document and which his listeners understood, he maintained had been predicted by such statements in the Lotus Sūtra as, ". . . all the people of the time revile him, beat him with clubs and small stones, and punish him with exile and death" (Chapt. II, p. 72).

Nichiren knew that he was hated and despised by monks and kings as was predicted in the Lotus Sūtra in such lines as "even now there is much hatred and jealousy. How much more after my nirvana?" And in, "As for those who with an evil mouth revile those who spread the Lotus Sūtra in the Age of the Last Law, their sins will be one hundred thousand billion times worse than that of those who persecute me for even one kalpa" (Chapt. III, p. 95). Nevertheless Nichiren taught that one day the people would accept him although he claimed that "even

if the high monks of present day Japan try to recite 'Namu Nichiren,' they would only be able to say 'Namu.'" To which his comment was, "How pitiful! How pitiful!" (Chapt. VI, p. 154).

Of the importance of his own coming to believe in the Lotus Sūtra, Nichiren was simple and direct. He said that the beginning of believing in the Lotus Sūtra was like "one drop of one atom in the country of Japan. If two people, three people, ten people, a million people, recite the Lotus Sūtra, then it would become Mt. Sumeru of Subtle Enlightenment or a great ocean of Nirvāṇa. One should not look for any other way for becoming a Buddha" (Chapt. VI, p. 157).

Although Nichiren understood that his task of spreading the true doctrine to all the sentient beings in the world during that period which the Buddha referred to as the time "in which my teaching is about to disappear," he understood that age to be one filled with profound possibilities for those people desiring to cultivate the spiritual path. In fact he said that such people should rejoice, for:

Those who wish to attain Buddhahood in the future life should be born now during the Age of the Last Law as common people rather than be kings during the two thousand years of the Age of the Perfect Law or the Age of the Counterfeit Law. Why would one not believe this? One should desire to be a leper who chants "Homage to the Lotus Sūtra of the Wonderful Law" rather than be a Tendai head priest (Chapt. II, p. 76).

Nichiren thought the people of Japan were so corrupt and weak that if a real disaster should strike Japan, and the country was attacked by several tens of thousands of boats and soldiers from the Great Mongol Country, then everyone in the country,

from the one ruler at the top to the ten thousand people at the bottom. . . will throw away all Buddhist Temples and Shinto Shrines and all uniting their voices in reciting "Homage to the Lotus of the Wonderful Law" and holding their palms together, will shout, please help us monk Nichiren! (Chapt. VI, p. 154).

Nichiren can be seen in the Senji shō as a figure standing both within the history of his age, pitying his people and trying to persuade them of the truth of the Lotus Sūtra, and outside of history, protected by the Buddha for the single purpose of bringing the Lotus Sūtra, the teaching for the Age of the Last Law, to all beings.

Two major conceptions of the meaning of the Age of the Last Law spring from the Tendai Buddhism of Saichō, of whom Nichiren is a spiritual descendent, and the Pure Land School of Hōnen, that early contemporary of Nichiren's whose pessimistic formulation of the meaning of the Age of the Last Law became such an important point in Nichiren's attempt to reform Kamakura Buddhism.

Nichiren waged a vigorous struggle to win Japan to his views and in the process he suffered persecutions of every sort. At the end of his life, he was still preoccupied with the influential role which Hōnen was playing in Kamakura Japan. The result of his constant opposition of his own teachings to those of Hōnen seems to have had consequences which Nichiren himself may not have recognized. In the Senji shō, Nichiren is working out for the last time each point of departure from Hōnen's teaching. Contrasting the Senji shō with the Senjaku shū makes clear the line of Nichiren's thinking as it reaches back beyond Japan to his Tendai heritage, but also the symbolic and at times apparently actual fusion which occurred between Nichiren and Hōnen, especially in their recommendation of simple faith in a single practice as the appropriate teaching for the Age of the Last Law.

Saichō was the founder of Tendai Buddhism in Japan. After receiving high ordination in Nara in 785, he withdrew to a hermitage on Mt. Hiei to devote himself to strict religious practice. After

studying Tendai texts at Mt. Hiei, he travelled to China in 806 and spent nine months studying Tendai doctrine in Chekiang, where he received instruction in meditation, esoteric Buddhism, and orthodox Tendai doctrine, and to these Nichiren would later give the highest order of importance in the Senji shō. Of Saichō's establishing the Vinaya Centre on Mt. Hiei, ". . . and making everyone from the one person on top to the ten thousand people at the bottom look up to Enrakuji Temple as the teacher, (Chapt. IV, pg. 99) Nichiren said, "the Separate Precepts of the Perfect and Sudden Enlightenment of Enrakuji is not simply established for the first time in Japan but it is also the first establishment of the great precepts of the Vulture Peak, which had not been realized for over one thousand eight hundred years after the death of the Buddha in India, China, or the entire world and which now came into existence in Japan" (Chapt. III, p. 90).

While Chinese T'ien-t'ai was not particularly political, Saichō's Buddhism was closely connected to the State and his concern for corporate salvation can be found in the phrase "Great Country of Japan" (Dainipponkoku), which he is credited with originating.² He specifically urged his followers to "Chant the Lotus Sūtra for the protection of the State."³ This emphasis of Saichō's became an important element in Nichiren's Buddhism as well, and in the Senji shō he said, of the support of the king and ministers for those who found other scriptures superior to the Lotus Sūtra, that there would be "no doubt about their going to avici hell" (Chapt. VI, p. 168). He stated, "to establish this great teaching in Japan is a very important

2. Masaharu Anesaki, Nichiren the Buddhist Prophet, (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1916), p. 5.

3. Masaharu Anesaki, ibid., p. 5.

matter. Unless the teacher Sākyamuni of the Pure Land of Vulture Peak, Prabhūtaratna Buddha of the Precious World, the various Buddhas of the Ten Directions, Bodhisattvas emerging out of the ground of the ten thousand worlds, the Four Heavenly Kings, Brahma, Śakra, the Sun, and the Moon helped invisibly and in manifested forms, could there be peace even for one moment, or one day?" (Chapt. VI, p. 168).

In the selection of the Lotus Sūtra as the correct teaching for the Age of the Last Law Nichiren felt he was returning to the highest teachings of Tendai Buddhism and Saichō. In Saichō's view what was necessary was to establish the precepts through which the state could be saved, and both Saichō and Nichiren taught that self-enlightenment was possible in this lifetime. However, where Saichō would rely on training more religious disciples and on strict enforcement of the precepts, Nichiren emphasized the chanting of the title of the text as sufficient for salvation and said, "As for this virtue, chanting 'Homage to the Lotus of the Wonderful Law,' who in the world will match it and who in the world (four oceans) can stand at the great height?" (Chapt. III, p. 97).

Nichiren's departure from Saichō's teaching concerning the means of attaining salvation does not completely remove him from the Tendai tradition, and is more a matter of degree than of substance.

However, Hōnen's doctrines, namely his rejection of the historical Buddha, his rejection of the Lotus Sūtra, and his rejection of the idea that enlightenment could be achieved in the Age of the Last Law, were completely repugnant to Nichiren.

Like Saichō and Nichiren, Hōnen also found evidence for the arrival of the Age of the Last Law in the corruption and decadence of the time. But Hōnen was looking to the Pure Land scriptures for predictions that this age would come to pass, in particular to the Larger Sukhāvati Sūtra, and in the writings of such Chinese Pure Land Masters as Shan-tao and Tao-ch'iao.

Hōnen's "easy path" was exclusive and he taught that salvation was not possible in this lifetime and could come about only through faith in Amida Buddha. Hōnen placed no importance on corporate salvation and, unlike Nichiren, he saw no predestined role for himself. Hōnen's concern was for rebirth in the Pure Land of Amida Buddha, rather than for attaining enlightenment in this body, in this world.

Both Hōnen and Nichiren were popular teachers and both can be seen as historical determinists. But while for Hōnen birth in the Age of the Last Law ruled out the possibility of personal salvation, for Nichiren birth in the Age of the Last Law implied the best possible opportunity for achieving it.

Nichiren flatly rejected Hōnen's teaching that the recitation of the name of Amida Buddha would lead to rebirth in the Pure Land, as well as Hōnen's teaching that according to Pure Land scriptures everything will eventually come down to "nembutsu and nothing else." This rejection of the Lotus Sūtra so angered Nichiren that he said Hōnen had become an evil spirit entering the body of the ruler of Japan (Chapt. V, p. 124).

On the subject of the capacity, which Nichiren was at pains to show was not important in the Age of the Last Law, Hōnen said, "one

should know that the capacity and conditions of the Holy Path are shallow and those of the Pure Land are deep."⁴

Nichiren found this teaching heretical and placed his emphasis in the Senji shō not on the capacity but on the selection of the proper time to teach. He said that even to his father and mother the Buddha did not preach the Lotus Sūtra, not because of consideration of the capacity but because the time was not proper (Chapter I, pp. 65-66). Questioned as to how ordinary beings should know the time and capacity he answered, "Consider the time and capacity by means of the Buddha eye and illuminate the country using the Buddha sun" (Chapter II, p. 67).

For Nichiren the ultimate reference point for the Buddha's teaching is always the Lotus Sūtra, and for him Hōnen's rejection of the Lotus Sūtra was also a rejection of the historical Buddha. Hōnen used the Pure Land Scriptures as evidence that in the Age of the Last Law all other scriptures would disappear; thus, he was profoundly pessimistic about life in the Age of the Last Law. Nichiren's eschatology did not depreciate the sahā world, and he disliked the Jōdō School's emphasis on the achievement of salvation in the Pure Land to come.

Like Hōnen, Nichiren confronted a chaotic society and felt pity and compassion for his people. What most enraged and preoccupied Nichiren in Hōnen's teaching was his radically wrong emphasis on the appropriate scripture for the age. Ironically, however, Nichiren urged his followers towards a simple faith in the power of a single practice in much the same way Hōnen had done. Thus Nichiren achieved in the Senji shō a fusion of the most traditional of Saichō's teachings with those Pure Land practices which he thought would make his own doctrine accessible to all the people of Japan.

4. Tsuji Zennosuki, op. cit., p. 166.

CHAPTER IV

THE SENJI SHŌ

Foreword

The Senji-shō (The Treatise on the Selection of the Proper Time) is one of Nichiren's five major essays. There are four other major essays. The first is the Risshō Ankoku Ron (On the Establishment of Righteousness and the Security of the Country), written in 1260 when Nichiren was 39 years old. He presented this essay to Saimyoji Tokiyori, the regent of Kamakura. In this work Nichiren attacked the government and Pure Land Buddhism, predicted a foreign invasion, and gave as a reason for social and natural calamities, the rejection by the Nation of the Lotus Sūtra.

The Kaimoku-shō (The Awakening to the Truth) was written in 1272, when Nichiren was 50 years old and exiled at Sado. In this essay he claimed to be the messenger of the Buddha, who was predicted in the Lotus Sūtra to teach and preach this doctrine during the Age of the Last Law. The Kanjin Honzon shō (the full title is Nyorai Metsugo Go Gohyakusai Shi Kanjin Honzon Sho, The True Object of Worship Revealed for the First Time in the Fifth of Five Century Periods After the Great Decease of the Tathāgata), was also written while Nichiren was exiled at Sado in 1273. In this essay he said that the True Object of Worship should be Buddha Śākyamuni who, in the Lotus Sūtra, is revealed for the first time in his Eternal Nature. Nichiren's final essay, the Hō'on shō (Essay on Gratitude) was written at Minobu in 1276, after the death of

Dōzenbō, Nichiren's former teacher. This essay explained and stressed the importance of gratitude and appreciation which one should have for his teachers.

The Senji-shō was also written at Minobu after Nichiren's retirement there in 1274. The original manuscript of the Senji-shō is kept at the Tamazawa Myōhokkeji Temple at Mt. Minobu, where many of his other manuscripts are treasured.

In the Senji-shō Nichiren reviewed the history of the spread of Buddhism after the Parinirvana of the Buddha, and reaffirmed once again his often repeated conviction that the Age of the Last Law was the most significant period since the death of the Buddha for the propagation of the Lotus Sūtra. Since his age (Age of the Last Law) was the fifth of the five five hundred year periods, Nichiren thought a conflict would take place between the True Buddhism and what he called heretical Buddhism. He stated in the Senji-shō that the persecutions he suffered and the national calamities which the nation experienced were indications of the crisis when the decision between the truth and falsehood, between the one who was a messenger for the Buddha (himself) and his opponents must be decided. In other words Nichiren saw the crisis facing Japan as the period just prior to the establishment of the True Buddhism which would flourish during the Age of the Last Law.

Nichiren looked back in the Senji-shō at the persecutions he had to suffer over the years, and examined the prediction he made in order to demonstrate that he had been given the sacred mission, as the messenger of the Buddha, to establish Japan as the centre from which the true Buddhism would spread throughout the world.

The Senji-shō takes the form of a dialogue: thirty questions and answers are preceded by an opening statement and followed by a closing exhortation. Although there are no division or chapter headings in the original text, I have divided the essay into six chapters.

In the first chapter, "Time and the Teaching of the Buddha," the opening sentence: "If one is to study the teaching of the Buddha one must first learn about the problem of the time" contains the main idea of the entire essay. That is, which teaching should prevail during the Age of the Last Law. As a preliminary step in explaining this statement Nichiren highlights various doctrines, both Buddhist and non-Buddhist, and says that since even beasts understand the concept of time, how can it be that one who teaches Buddhism should not have a clear understanding of the concept of time. He then continues to explain the difference between the idea of the capacity to understand the teaching and the proper time to preach the Lotus Sūtra, which is the Age of the Last Law. He concluded this chapter by saying: "The point is, it was not due to the consideration of one's Capacity but because the time had not arrived that the Buddha did not preach the Lotus Sūtra." By this he meant that it was necessary to understand the "Five Five Hundred Year Periods of the Spread of the Teaching, which is Chapter II of the Senji-shō. In this Chapter, Nichiren established the spread of the teaching according to various sūtras and śāstra Masters, concluding that the Lotus Sūtra was to be spread in the final period.

In Chapters III and IV he discussed the spread of the Lotus Sūtra during the two periods of the Perfect and Counterfeit Law and

concluded that although the Lotus Sūtra was known and taught by such people as Chih-i, Miao-lo, and Dengyō Daishi they realized that the Age of the Last Law was the ideal time to spread the Lotus Sūtra.

Nichiren in these two chapters explained to his listeners how fortunate they were to be born in the Age of the Last Law and to be able to hear the Lotus Sūtra. He taught that the Buddha was simply preparing the ground for this teaching; the prior periods were periods of fermentation, periods in which conditions had to develop which would allow for the emergence of the Lotus Sūtra. In this chapter Nichiren is making the main point of the Senji-shō. He is differentiating the past and future and stating that it is better to be born in the Age of the Last Law as common people, able to practice Lotus Sūtra Buddhism, than to have been born kings or great monks in any prior time.

In Chapter V, "The Three Calamities Called the Nembutsu, Zen and Shingon Sects," Nichiren attempted to establish just how the other schools had misinterpreted the teaching of the Buddha and had caused the nation to suffer from various calamities because of their improper understanding of the teaching.

In Chapter VI, "The Spread of the Lotus Sūtra in the Age of The Last Law," Nichiren reviewed his own troubles and the difficulties of spreading the Lotus Sūtra during this age, and he predicted what would take place in the nation if it rejected the Lotus Sūtra. He concluded this chapter by encouraging his disciples to continue to spread the Lotus Sūtra regardless of what might happen to them and predicted Enlightenment for those who persevered in their efforts.

CHAPTER I

TIME AND THE TEACHING OF THE BUDDHA

If one is to study the teaching of the Buddha one must first learn about the problem of the time.¹ For example, Mahābhijñānābhibhū Buddha of the Past² appeared in the world and did not preach even one text for ten minor kalpas. In the Lotus Sūtra it is said, "At one sitting ten minor kalpas have passed."³ Again, it is said, "The Buddha knew that the time had not yet arrived; he received a request but silently sat."⁴ Śākyamuni Buddha did not preach the Lotus Sūtra for more than

¹Time (Ji) (時). In an essay entitled Kyokijikoku shō or An Essay on the Teaching, Capacity, Time, and the Country, found in Nichiren shonin ibun zenshu (Tokyo: Heirakuji Publishing Company, 1973), p. 424-429, which Nichiren wrote in 1262 while he was exiled at Izu, he explains what he means by time. He says that the teaching (kōyō) means the Lotus Sūtra which is the supreme teaching of the Buddha. The capacity (ki) is the ability of the individual believer to understand and comprehend the teaching, i.e., the Lotus Sūtra. The time (ji) in which the Lotus Sūtra is to be preached is the Age of the Last Law (mappō). While the Age of the Last Law is the proper time in which to preach the Lotus Sūtra, it must be taught with prudence and discrimination. The country (ko-ku) must be a country which is: 1) filled with heresy; 2) it must be during the proper time, i.e., the Age of the Last Law; and 3) the country must possess the Lotus Sūtra. Nichiren thought that Japan was the only country which fulfilled these three qualifications, thus it was Japan from which the proper text in the proper time would spread throughout the world.

²Mahābhijñānābhibhū-buddha. The Great Buddha of Supreme Penetration and Wisdom. Taisho Shinshu dai zokyo (hereafter abbreviated T.) vol. 9, no. 262, p. 22a; Bunno Kato, translator, Sutra of the Lotus Flower of the Wonderful Law (Tokyo: Kosei Publishing Company, 1971), p. 165.

³Katō, op.cit., p. 169, T. vol. 9, no. 262, p. 22c.

⁴Katō, op.cit., p. 139, T. vol. 9, no. 262, p. 26b.

forty years. The Lotus Sūtra refers to the Buddha's "knowing that the time had not yet come."⁵

Lao tzu waited for eighty years⁶ in his mother's womb. Bodhisattva Maitreya is confined to the inner court of the Tusita Heaven, where he is to wait for 5,670,000,000 years.⁷ The cuckoo does not come in the spring and the rooster waits until morning before it crows. Even beasts are like this. How can it be that in the cultivation of the teachings of the Buddha one should fail to investigate the proper time?

At the time of the preaching of the Hua-yen Scripture at Buddhagaya, the Buddhas of the Ten Directions appeared. All of the Great Bodhisattvas gathered and Brahmā, Sakra,⁸ and the Four Heavenly Kings⁹ all let their clothes flow. The nāgas and the others of the eight kind of heavenly protectors¹⁰ of the Buddha's teaching brought their palms

⁵Katō, op.cit., p. 50, T. vol. 9, no. 262, p. 8a.

⁶According to James Legge, The Religions of China (London: Holdder and Stoughton, 1800), p. 203, there are various legends concerning the time Lao-tzu spent in his mother's womb, ranging from seventy-two to eighty-one years.

⁷Maitreya. William E. Soothill, A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., 2nd edition, 1934), p. 456b.

⁸The Mahābrahmān King (Daibon Tenno) and Sakra (Taishaku), are gods adopted from Hindu mythology as protectors of Buddhism.

⁹Four Heavenly Kings. The Four Kings who live in the four quarters of heaven protecting the eastern, southern, western, and northern quarters of heaven.

¹⁰The Buddhas of the Ten Quarters. There are several different lists of these Buddhas. According to Togoro Shigemoto and Takagi Yutaka (eds) Nihon shiso Taikai: vol. 14, Nichiren (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1970), p. 194, this list is from that found in the Hua-yen-ching, (), T. vol. 10, no. 279. William Soothill lists the names as follows: Kāsyapa, Kanakamuni, Krakucchanda, Viśvabhu, Sikhin, Vipāśyi, Tiṣya (or Pusya), Padma, Tissa, and Dipaṅkara. See: W. Soothill, op.cit., p. 45a.

together. Those of greater Capacity among ordinary people strained their ears. The bodhisattvas who attained Great Enlightenment in human bodies (shojin tokunin), and Mukticandra,¹¹ requested the Buddha to teach. But the World Honoured One hid the name of the teaching of "Attainment of Buddhahood through two inferior vehicles" (nijosabutsu)¹² and "One thought contains three thousand worlds" (ichi-nen-san-zen).¹³ He did not preach because even though the Capacity (ki)¹⁴ was there the

¹¹Bodhisattva Mukicandra (Gedatsugatsu). He is mentioned in the Hua-yen-ching, T. vol. 10, no. 279, p. 2c.

¹²Nijosabutsu (二教). This doctrine comes from a prediction made by the Buddha in the Lotus Sūtra, Chapter II, "Tactfulness" in which the Buddha said that those people who belong to the Hinayana doctrine will attain enlightenment. Ref: Katō, op.cit., p. 37, T. vol. 9, no.262,p.6a.

¹³Ichin-nen-san-zen (一念三千). A fundamental doctrine in Tendai Buddhism which explains the relationship between the absolute world and the phenomenal world. L. Hurvitz explains that "the number three thousand is not crucial." Ref: L. Hurvitz, Chih-i (Bruxelles: l'Institut Belge des Hautes Etudes Chinoises, 1962), p. 283. The number 3000 expresses figuratively the totality of reality. Chih-i arrived at the number 3000 in the following manner: each one of the worlds (hell, preta world, beasts, demons, human, heavenly spirits, sravakas, pratyekabuddhas, bodhisattvas, and the Buddhas) includes the other nine which makes one hundred worlds. This is combined with the ten suchnesses which are found in Chapter II "Tactfulness" of the Lotus Sūtra (form, nature, substance, power, activity, cause, relation, effect, retribution, and the totality of all of the above factors), ref: Katō, op.cit., p. 52. This brings the total to one thousand worlds. The thousand worlds exist as the three levels of phenomenal existence: sentient beings, non-sentient beings, and the five skandhas. Thus there are three thousand worlds. These three thousand worlds exist in every thought moment of every individual. For details, see: L. Hurvitz, op.cit., p. 271-318.

¹⁴Capacity (ki) (機). Capacity means the inclination or ability of the one who hears the doctrine of the Buddha. Salvation is realized when one's personal ability or inclination to understand the teaching of the Buddha and that teaching comes together. The Buddha adapts his teaching to the various ages in order to lead all to enlightenment. Nichiren placed a great deal of emphasis upon historical conditions in which one lives; accordingly, the teachings of the Buddha and the propagation of doctrines are measured by particular ages, rather than by any real consideration of the particular individual.

time had not yet arrived. In the Lotus Sūtra it is said, "Because the time to preach had not yet arrived."¹⁵

On the occasion of the preaching of the Lotus Sūtra scripture at the Vulture Peak, the great king Ajātasatru,¹⁶ who was the most unfilial person in the world, sat with the others. The Buddha conferred the name Devarāja-tathāgata upon Devadatta,¹⁷ who slandered the teaching throughout his entire life. The Nāga girl of five hindrances became a Buddha without changing her body.¹⁸ The enlightenment of those with a fixed nature is like a roasted seed which brings forth flowers. When it was taught that "the Buddha has been the Buddha from the remote past" (kuonjitsu)¹⁹ people wondered whether an old man of one hundred can be the son of a young man of twenty-five. The Buddha taught that "One thought contains three thousand worlds" (ichi-nen-san-zen), that the nine

¹⁵ Katō, op.cit., p. 193, T. vol. 9, no. 262, p. 26b.

¹⁶ Ajātasatru. The son of King Bimbisara who according to legend (T.W.R. Davids, Buddhist India, p. 11-16) killed his father and assumed the throne at the instigation of Devadatta. Later he became a follower of the Buddha and supported the First Council. For a detailed discussion of Ajatasatru see: Graeme MacQueen, A Study of the Sranmyaphala Sūtra (Ph.D. Thesis, Harvard University, 1978), p. 30ff. *

¹⁷ Devadatta. The Buddha confers the title upon Devadatta in Chapter XII, "Devadatta;" Katō, op.cit., p. 251, T. vol.9, no.262, p.35a.

¹⁸ Nāga girl. There is an episode of an eight year old girl who attains Buddhahood in an instant. It is found in Chapter XII, "Devadatta" of the Lotus Sūtra. Katō, op.cit., p. 258-261, T. vol. 9, no.262, p. 35a-c. For details of this story see: Naresh Mantri, The Lotus Sūtra: A New Interpretation (Tokyo: Hokke Journal Co., 1977), p. 36-37.

¹⁹ Kuonjitsujo (久遠成). "The Buddha has been the Buddha from the remote past." The phrase occurs in the Lotus Sūtra (Katō, op.cit., p. 310, T. vol. 9, no. 262, p. 42c). The Buddha explains that he has always been the Buddha, so that, Sākyamuni Buddha who attained enlightenment at Bodhigaya was just a provisional manifestation of the Eternal Buddha.

realms are none other than the Buddha realm, and that the Buddha realm is none other than the nine realms. Consequently, one character of the Lotus Sūtra is like a rare, small jewel (nyoi hoja)²⁰ [which produces treasures according to one's wishes]. A phrase of the scripture becomes the seed of the Buddhas. When this scripture was preached the question of the maturity or immaturity of the Capacity was set aside. This is because the time to preach had arrived. In the scripture it is said, "Now it is precisely that time. Let us talk about the Great Vehicle."²¹

Question: If those who do not have the Capacity are given a great teaching, the foolish man among them would definitely slander the teaching and fall into the evil path. Is this not the fault of the one who preaches?

Answer: If a man makes a road and there are beings who get lost on the road is it the fault of the one who makes the road?²² If a good doctor gives a patient medicine and if the patient hates it and dies failing to take it, is the good doctor at fault?²³

Question: It is said in Chapter Two of the Lotus Sūtra, "Among undiscerning people do not preach this scripture."²⁴ Again in Chapter Four it is said, "Do not proclaim this scripture indiscriminately and confer it

²⁰Rare small jewel. (Skt. Cintāmani) a gem which is capable of responding to every wish, obtained from the dragon king of the sea. Ref: W. Soothill, op.cit., p. 211a.

²¹Katō, op.cit., p. 50, T. vol. 9, no. 262, p. 8a.

²²This alludes to an explanation of the Buddha's existence given in the Lotus Sūtra, Chapter XV, "Springing up out of the Earth," Katō, ibid., p. 303-305, T. vol. 9, no. 262, p. 45-46.

²³Katō, ibid., p. 107, T. vol. 9, no. 262, p. 16a.

²⁴Katō, ibid., p. 229-230, T. vol. 9, no. 262, p. 31b.

upon people."²⁵ Again it is said in Chapter Five, "This Lotus Sūtra is the mysterious treasure of the Buddhas Tathāgatas which is supreme above all scriptures, for long it has been guarded and not prematurely declared."²⁶ These passages in the scripture say that if there is not the Capacity, do not preach. What is your response?

Answer: In Chapter Twenty, "Bodhisattva Never-Despise," it is said, "He addresses them as follows: I revere you from the depths of my heart. Among the four groups, there were those who were irritated, angry, and impure in heart. They reviled and abused Bodhisattva Never Despise saying, "Where did this ignorant bhikṣu come from?"²⁷ Again it is said, in the same Chapter, "People beat him with clubs, sticks, potsherds, or stones."²⁸ Chapter XIII, "Exhortation to Hold Firm" says, "That many in their ignorance will curse and abuse us and beat us with swords and staves."²⁹ Do these passages about being abused, slandered, and beaten imply it is the fault of the teacher?

Question: These two teachings are like water and fire. How can they be understood?

Answer: T'ien-t'ai says, "Only when it is appropriate to the time."³⁰

Chang-an says, "One should make the appropriate choice. Do not be blind-

²⁵ Katō, ibid, p. 284, T. vol. 9, no. 262, p. 39a.

²⁶ Katō, ibid, p. 363, T. vol. 9, no. 262, p. 50c.

²⁷ Katō, ibid, p. 363, T. vol. 9, no. 262, p. 50c.

²⁸ Katō, ibid, p. 363, T. vol. 9, no. 262, p. 50c.

²⁹ Katō, ibid, p. 266, T. vol. 9, no. 262, p. 36b.

³⁰ Chih-i, Miao-fa-lien-hua-ching-wen-chu (妙法蓮華經文句), T. vol. 34, no. 1718, p. 8b.

ly earnest."³¹ The meaning of these comments is as follows: sometimes if people revile one should not preach; sometimes even though they revile one should preach in spite of it; sometimes even if some people with the Capacity would believe, but there are many people of all Capacities who would slander, one should not preach; sometimes even if the people of all Capacities revile one should preach in spite of it.

At the time when [the Buddha] first attained enlightenment, Great Bodhisattvas such as Fa-hui, Guṇaratnasa, Vajraketu, Vajragarbha, Mañjusrī, Samantabhadra, Maitreya, and Mukticandra, and ordinary beings of great nature (daikonjo), such as Brahma, Śakra, and the Four Heavenly Gods, were there in countless numbers.³² At Deer Park when the Buddha taught the Āgamas the five monks including Kulika, two hundred and fifty people such as Śāriputra and all eighty thousand gods were present.³³ When the Buddha taught the Great Vaipulya teaching³⁴ he entered the Palace and preached the Kuan-fo-san-mei-ching because the Great King Suddhodana,³⁵ the affectionate father of the World Honoured One, wished him to do so. For the sake of the Compassionate Mother the Buddha se-

³¹ Chang-an, Ta-pan-nieh-pa'n-ching-su (涅槃經疏), T. vol. 38, no. 1767, p. 84c.

³² The list of bodhisattvas who were present when the Buddha first preached the Hua-yen-ching (華嚴經). T. vol. 10, no. 279, p. 2a-b.

³³ Refers to the period when the āgamas were taught according to the Tendai classification of the doctrines.

³⁴ Refers to the period when the vaipula scriptures were taught according to the Tendai classification of the doctrines.

³⁵ Maya Sutra (摩訶). According to this text the Buddha, after attaining enlightenment, went to heaven in order to thank his mother, Maha Māyā, who died seven days after his birth. T. vol. 12, no. 383.

cluded himself for ninety days in Trāyastriṃsā³⁶ and preached the Māyā Sūtra.³⁷ To an affectionate father and compassionate mother what kind of secret law could one withhold? However, the Buddha did not preach the Lotus Sūtra. The point is, it was not due to [the consideration] of one's Capacity but because the time had not arrived that the Buddha did not preach the Lotus Sūtra.

³⁶ Kuan-fo-san-mei-ching (觀世音菩薩). The Sanskrit title of this text is unknown. It was translated into Chinese by Buddhahadra in 406 A.D. It consists of 12 chapters in 10 fascicles. Sākyamuni in this text expounds the method of meditation upon the various characteristics of a Buddha. T. vol. 15, no. 643.

³⁷ Trayastriṃsā. The heaven of the 33 devas. W. Soothill, op. cit., p. 188a.

CHAPTER II

THE FIVE FIVE HUNDRED YEAR PERIODS AND THE SPREAD OF THE LOTUS SŪTRA

Question: At which time should one preach the Hinayana and Provisional scriptures and at what time should one preach the Lotus Sūtra?

Answer: It is difficult for the Bodhisattvas of Ten Faiths or even the Mahasattva of the Realization of Equality (teng-chueh, i.e., next to the last state of attainment)¹ to gain knowledge of the time and the Capacity. How can it be, that we ordinary beings should know the time and the Capacity?

Question: Is there anything, at all, which one knows?

Answer: Consider the time and Capacity by means of the Buddha eye and illuminate the country using the Buddha sun.

Question: What do you mean by that?

Answer: In the Ta-chi-ching, the Great Wise World Honoured One established the future time in answer to Bodhisattva Candragarba,² Five hundred years after my extinction, salvation is firm and sure: in the next five hundred years meditation is firm and sure; in the next five hundred years reciting, reading of scriptures and frequent listening to

¹Teng-chüeh (等覺), the next to the last stage of enlightenment, W. Soothill, op.cit., p. 385a.

²Bodhisattva Chandragraba. Ta-chi-ching (大集經), T. vol. 13, no. 397, p. 363a.

teachings is firm and sure; in the next five hundred years the building of stūpas is firm and sure; in the next five hundred years there will be fighting, quarreling and accusing among the followers of my teaching and the pure teaching will disappear.³

People have different thoughts as to how one should apply these divisions of two thousand five hundred years. Meditation Master Tao-ch'o of China said, "In the four periods of five hundred years, during the two thousand years of the Age of the Perfect and Counterfeit Periods, the pure teaching of Hinayana and Mahayana will prosper. Entering into the Age of the Last Law those pure teachings will all disappear and only those people who train in the Pure Land teachings of Nembutsu will go beyond life and death."⁴

Hōnen of Japan examining the matter said, "As for the Lotus Sūtra, Avatamsaka Sūtra, Mahāvairocana Sūtra, and various small vehicle scriptures and the schools such as Tendai, Shingon, and the Ritsu that are prevalent in the present Japan, they are the pure teaching of the two thousand years of the Age of the Perfect and Counterfeit Periods referred to in the text of the Ta-chi-ching. After entering the Age of the Last Law these pure teachings will be completely destroyed. Even if there are people who practice these, not even one person could escape from living and dying. This is what is referred to as the 'Difficult

³Tao-ch'o, An-lo-chi (安樂集), T. vol. 47, no. 1958, p. 13c.

⁴Hōnen. Nichiren is offering a summary of Honen's essay, Senjaku-hongan-nembutsu-shū (善法集), which is that the nembutsu is the only possible way to attain salvation in the Age of the Last Law.

Path' in the Dasābhūmi-vibhāsā-sāstra,⁵ and quoted by the Dharma Master T'an-luan,⁶ the Dharma Master Tao-ch'o's statement, "There is not even one person who has attained,"⁷ and Shan-tao's reference to, "Not even one in one thousand."⁸ After the disappearing of these pure teachings there should appear only the Three Pure Land Scriptures⁹ and the single practice of the calling of the name of Amida Buddha as the Great Pure Teaching. Of the people practising this, even if they are evil or stupid, "ten in ten and one hundred in one hundred will attain rebirth in the Pure Land."¹⁰ "There is only one gate to the Pure Land which is the path that one should enter into."¹¹ These passages refer to the above Great Pure Teaching. Thus, according to this teaching, if the people who desire rebirth in the Pure Land cease to take refuge in the

⁵ Dasābhūmi-vibhāsā-sāstra (性惡要論). Chapter Nine, "I-hsing-p'in" or "Chapter on the Easy Practice" is the chapter of this work which deals with the nembutsu doctrine. T. vol. 26, no. 1521, p. 40a-45a.

⁶ T'an-luan. Wang-sheng-lun-chu (往生論註). T. vol. 40, no. 1819, p. 826a.

⁷ Tao-ch'o, ibid., p. 13c.

⁸ Shan-tao, Wang-sheng-li-tsan (往生論), T. vol. 47, no. 1890, p. 439c.

⁹ The Three Pure Land Scriptures. 1. Sukhavati-vyūha-sūtra; 2. The Smaller Sukhavati-vyūha-sūtra; and 3. Amida Sutra. See: F. Max Muller, ed. The Sacred Books of the East (Oxford: Oxford Press, 1889), vol. 49, for a complete translation of these texts.

¹⁰ Shan-tao, op.cit., p. 439b.

¹¹ Tao-ch'o, op.cit., p. 4b.

mountains and temples in Japan such as Mt. Hiei,¹² Toji,¹³ Onjoji,¹⁴ and the Seven Great Temples,¹⁵ and if they cease making donations of fields, villages and communities to those mountain temples and instead make donations to Pure Land Temples, then their rebirth in the Pure Land is certain. Honen having urged in this manner, all of us for more than fifty years have been followers of the Pure Land teaching. It was a long time ago that Nichiren attacked and refuted this evil teaching.

There is no doubt that the time of the disappearing of the Pure Law of the Ta-chi-ching is the fifth five hundred year period, which is the present time. However, after the disappearance of the pure teaching, the eight hundred rulers in the eight hundred countries, together with their ministers and people, will propagate and spread the Great Pure Teaching of "Homage to the Lotus Sūtra of the Wonderful Law,"¹⁶ which is the essence of the Lotus Sūtra, in the same manner in which the name of Amida Buddha is chanted by all the people in Japan today.

Question: What is the proof in the scripture?

Answer: The Seventh Fascicle of the Lotus Sūtra says, "In the last

¹²Mt. Hiei. This is the headquarters of the Japanese Tendai School.

¹³Toji. The head temple of the To-ji branch of the Japanese Shingon School.

¹⁴Onjoji. The head temple of the esoteric Tendai School in Japan.

¹⁵Seven Great Temples. 1. Todaiji; 2. Kofukuji; 3. Gangoji; 4. Daianji; 5. Yakushiji; 6. Seifaiji; and 7. Horyuji. Ref: T. Oda, Bukkyo Daijiten, p. 738b.

¹⁶Namu Myōhō Renge Kyō (南無妙法蓮華經). Homage to the Lotus Sūtra of the Wonderful Law.

five hundred years after my extinction proclaim and spread it in Jambudvīpa, lest it be lost."¹⁷ This text says, "Spread it widely"¹⁸ in reference to the time period following the disappearance of the pure teaching of the Ta-chi-ching. In the Sixth Fascicle of the Lotus Sūtra the Buddha speaks of, "Those who can hold on to this scripture in the time of the Evil Age of the Last Law."¹⁹ Again in the Fifth Fascicle the Buddha speaks of, "the Last Age that is coming later, when the teaching will be about to perish."²⁰ Again in the Fourth Fascicle the Buddha says, "And this scripture has aroused much enmity and envy while the Tathāgata is still here. How much more so after my extinction."²¹ Again in the Fifth Fascicle the Buddha says, "There are many who resent and it is difficult to believe."²² In the Seventh Fascicle, explaining the time of fighting and quarreling, which is the fifth of the five hundred year periods, the Buddha says, "Māra, māra people, gods, dragons, Yakṣas, dumbhardas, devas, etc...will be informed of it."²³ The Ta-chi-ching says, "Concerning my teaching, there will be quarreling, fighting and accusation."²⁴ In the Fifth Fascicle of the Lotus Sūtra

¹⁷Katō, op.cit., p. 391; T. vol. 9, no. 262, p. 54c.

¹⁸Ta-chi-ching, T. vol. 13, no. 397, p. 363c.

¹⁹Katō, op.cit., p. 331; T. vol. 9, no. 262, p. 46a.

²⁰Katō, ibid, p. 279; T. vol. 9, no. 262, p. 38b.

²¹Katō, ibid, p. 228; T. vol. 9, no. 262, p. 31b.

²²Katō, ibid, p. 284; T. vol. 9, no. 262, p. 39a.

²³Katō, ibid, p. 391; T. vol. 9, no. 262, p. 54c.

²⁴Ta-chi-ching, T. vol. 13, no. 397, p. 363b.

the Buddha speaks of, "Bhikṣus in that evil age,"²⁵ and of, "others in aranya,"²⁶ and also says, "Evil demons will enter the body."²⁷ The meaning of these verses is that in the fifth of the five hundred year periods the eminent monks in whose body the demons enter will fill the country.²⁸

At that time there will appear one wise person.²⁹ When the eminent monks in whom those demons have entered persuade the kings, ministers, and all the people of the time to revile him, beat him with clubs and small stones, and punish him with exile and death, Śākyamuni, Prabhūtaratna,³⁰ and all the Buddhas of the Ten Directions will speak to the great bodhisattvas coming out of the opening in the earth.³¹ These great bodhisattvas will command Brahmā, Śakra, the Sun, the Moon, the Four Heavenly Gods and there will be cosmic calamities at that time.

²⁵Katō, op.cit., p. 266; T. vol. 9, no. 262, p. 36b.

²⁶Katō, ibid, p. 266; T. vol. 9, no. 262, p. 36b.

²⁷Katō, ibid, p. 267; T. vol. 9, no. 262, p. 36c.

²⁸This refers to the monks of the Pure Land, Zen, Ritsu and Shingon Schools. Ref: Togoro Shigemoto and Takagi Yukata, op.cit., p. 198.

²⁹Nichiren is referring to himself here as the "wise person" who will appear in the world. The latter is predicted in the Lotus Sūtra Chapter II, "Tactfulness" (Kato, p. 262-268; T. vol. 9, no. 262, p. 35-37). Bodhisattvas who teach and spread the Lotus Sūtra in the world during the Age of the Last Law will be beaten, cursed, banished and murdered.

³⁰Prabhūtaratna Tathāgata. A Buddha in the Lotus Sūtra, Chapter XV. After Śākyamuni expounded the first Fourteen Chapters of the scripture, Prabhūtaratna appears before him and praises him to the assembly.

³¹This refers to the four bodhisattvas, Vivistakārita, Anaatakarita, Viśuddhākarita, and Supratishthitākarita who are to preach the Lotus Sūtra during the Age of the Latter Law. Katō, op.cit., p. 293; T. vol. 9, no. 262, p. 40a.

If the kings and others do not heed the warning, the gods will order neighboring countries to attack, and a great struggle unheard of in previous ages will arise in the world. At that time all sentient beings in the four realms on which the sun and moon shine, either because they treasure the country or because they treasure their own bodies, will pray to all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas; yet there will be no response. And so they will believe the teachings of that one small monk whom they had hated before, and numberless eminent monks, the eighty thousand great kings, and all the people will put their heads on the ground and holding their hands together recite, "Homage to the Lotus Sūtra of the Wonderful Law." This is like the following incident in the Divine Powers of the Tathāgata Chapter in the Lotus Sūtra when the Buddha manifested the Ten Divine Powers,³² and all of the sentient beings in the worlds in the Ten Directions without exception raised a great voice towards this sahā world and shouted together, "Homage to Sākyamuni Buddha," "Homage to the Lotus Sūtra of the Wonderful Law," "Homage to the Lotus Sutra of the Wonderful Law."

Question: The meaning of the scripture is clear. Are there words of predictions by T'ien-t'ai, Miao-lo, Dengyō, and others?

Answer: Your question is upside down! When someone quotes a treatise one might raise a question about the scripture. But if there is clear understanding in the scripture, you need not ask for a treatise. Now, if the sentence in the treatise contradicts the scripture, would one throw away the scripture and follow the treatise? What do you think?

³²Lotus Sūtra, Chapter XXI, Katō, op.cit., p. 372; T. vol. 9, no. 262, p. 52.

Question: What you say is very reasonable. However, for ordinary people the scripture is remote and the treatise is near. If the treatise which is near is clear, they will be able to increase faith a little more.

Answer: Because your question is conscientious I will quote a few treatises. The Great Master T'ien-t'ai says, "In the last five hundred years, beings will benefit in the wonderful path in the future."³³ The Great Master Miao-lo says, "At the beginning of the Age of the Last Law (mo-fa) we will not be without divine benefits."³⁴ And Dengyō says, "The Perfect Age and the Counterfeit Age have almost passed away, the Age of the Last Law is very near. Now is precisely the time of the Capacity for the One Vehicle Lotus Sūtra. How are we able to know this? In the Lotus Sūtra, Chapter XIV, "A Happy Life," it says, "The Last Law is the time of the destruction of the teaching."³⁵ Dengyō also says, "If we are to talk about the age, it is the end of the Age of the Counterfeit Law and the beginning of the Age of the Last Law. If we are looking for the place, it is East of T'ang and West of the Chieh tribe;³⁶ if we are looking for the people it is those who live with the five impurities at the time of struggle and conflict. In the Lotus

³³ Chih-i, Miao-fa-lien-hua-ching-wen-chu (妙法蓮華經論疏), T. vol. 34, no. 1718, p. 2c.

³⁴ Miao-lo, Miao-fa-lien-hua-wen-chu-chi (妙法蓮華經論疏), T. vol. 34, no. 1719, p. 157b.

³⁵ Dengyō, Shugokokai sho (中國國界章), t. vol. 74, no. 2362, p. 177b.

³⁶ Chieh tribe (Skt. Kalinga). Name of a country in South India. Ref: Japanese-English Buddhist Dictionary, op.cit., p. 64a.

Sūtra it says, "Even now there is much hatred and jealousy. How much more after my Nirvāṇa?" There are good reasons for these statements.³⁷

Now the birth of Sākyaṃuni took place in the decrease phase (gen) of the ninth period of the small kalpa during the existence kalpa (juko)³⁸ at the time when people's lifetime was one hundred years. The period between the time when human life lasts ten years and the time when it lasts one hundred years consists of fifty years when the Buddha lived on earth, two thousand years of the Age of the Perfect and Counterfeit Law after the extinction of the Buddha and ten thousand years of the Age of the Last Law. During all these periods there will be two times when the Lotus Sūtra spreads: the so-called last eight years of the Buddha's lifetime and the first five hundred years of the Age of the Last Law.

T'ien-t'ai, Miao-lo, and Dengyō missed the Age of the Last Law after the Buddha's death. They lamented the fact they were born in the interim, and wrote the above passages longing for the Age of the Last Law. This was like the case of the hermit Asita who, seeing the birth of Prince Siddhārtha, said sadly, "In this life I have already lived past ninety, so I shall not see the enlightenment of the prince. In my next life I will be reborn in the formless realm, so I shall not be able to be a disciple of the Buddha; nor shall I be born even in the Age of the Perfect Law, the Age of the Counterfeit Law, or the Age of

³⁷ Dengyō, Hōkke shūku (法華經疏), Dainihon Bukkyo Zensho, vol. 77, p. 151a.

³⁸ kalpa. A period of time lasting millions of years.

the Last Law."³⁹

Those people who desire to cultivate the spiritual path should rejoice upon seeing and hearing this. Those who wish to attain Buddhahood in a future life, should be born now during the Age of the Last Law as common people, rather than being born as great kings during the two thousand years of the Age of the Perfect and Counterfeit Law. Why would one not believe this? One should desire to be a leper who chants, "Homage to the Lotus Sutra of the Wonderful Law," rather than be a Tendai head priest. Emperor Wu of Liang⁴⁰ said in an oath, "I would sink in the bottomless hell becoming Devadatta rather than become Udraka Rāmaputra."⁴¹

³⁹ Asita. The hermit Asita was a Brahman hermit who lived, according to legend, at Kapilavastu, the birthplace of the Buddha Śākyamuni. He attained the stage of being able to see into the future. Nichiren is paraphrasing a long discussion which King Suddhana is having with the hermit Asita concerning the birth of his son. See: Kuo-ch'u-hsien-tsai-yin-kuo-ching (法華經疏), T. vol. 3, no. 189, p. 626c-627c.

⁴⁰ Emperor Wu of Liang (r. 502-549).

⁴¹ Uddaka Rāmaputta. One of the early teachers of Śākyamuni after he left home for the homeless life. W. Soothill, op.cit., p. 491a.

CHAPTER III

THE SPREAD OF THE LOTUS SŪTRA AFTER THE PARINIRVĀNA OF THE BUDDHA

Question: Is this teaching found in the writings of Discourse Master Nāgārjuna or Vasubandhu?

Answer: Although Nāgārjuna and Vasubandhu knew it in their minds they did not teach it in words.

Question: Why did they not teach it?

Answer: There are many reasons. One is that at that time there was not the Capacity; the second, the Time was not proper; the third, because they received the Trace Teaching¹ of the historical Buddha.

Question: I would like to hear this in greater detail.

Answer: The day after the parinirvāṇa of the Buddha, the twenty-sixth day of the second month, is the beginning of the Age of the Perfect Law. The Arhat Kāśyapa received the commission from the Buddha for twenty years; next, the Arhat Ānanda received the commission for twenty years; next, Saṅghadeva received the commission for twenty years; next Upagupta

¹Trace teaching. Kumārājīva's version of the Lotus Sūtra was traditionally divided into two parts of 14 chapters each. In the first 14 chapters the Buddha appears as a man who reached enlightenment and taught his disciples the way to that enlightenment. In the second 14 chapters the Buddha reveals himself as eternal. The doctrine of the first 14 chapters is called shakumon or "trace teaching." The second 14 chapters are called homonon or "original teaching" since in this half of the Lotus Sūtra the Buddha reveals his eternity. Ref: Kenneth Ch'en, op.cit., p. 303.

[received the commission] for twenty years; next Dhṛtaka [received the commission] for twenty years. During the above period of one hundred years, only the teaching of the Hinayana scriptures was spread. Not even the names of the Mahayana scriptures were there. How could the Lotus Sūtra be circulated and spread? Next, in the first five hundred year period the four or five figures such as Miccaka, Buddhanandī, Buddhamitra, Bhikṣu Pārsva, Puṇyayaśas preached only a small amount of the teachings of Mahayana scriptures. However they did not spread them widely and ended up with putting the Hinayana scriptures first. The above is the first five hundred years, of the time of the firmness of salvation, of the Ta-chi-ching.

After the first six hundred years of the Age of the Perfect Law and before one thousand years was the period during which appeared Bodhisattva Asvaghōṣa, Arhat Kapīmala, Bodhisattva Nāgārjuna, Bodhisattva Āryadeva, Arhat Rāhulata, Saṅghānadi, Gayosāta, Kumārata, Jayata, Vasubandhu, Manrhita, Haklenayasas, Simha Bhikṣu, altogether over ten people who first entered non-Buddhist schools, then mastered all the Hinayana scriptures, and finally refuted the Hinayana scriptures with Mahayana scriptures.² Although these great masters refuted the Hinayana scriptures using Mahayana scriptures they did not write clearly about the relative superiority and inferiority of the Mahayana scriptures and the Lotus Sūtra. Even where they appear to write a little about the superiority and inferiority they did not clarify the essential teachings

²This list of the monks who received the commission from the Buddha appears in the Chih-kuan-fu-hsing-chuan-hung-chüeh (龍華經疏), part 1, section 1, T. vol. 46, no. 1912, p. 141b-149c.

such as the "ten subtleties of the original and trace teaching,"³ "attainment of Buddhahood through two inferior vehicles," "Buddha has been the Buddha from the remote past," "subtlety of past, present, and future,"⁴ "one hundred realms, one thousand suchnesses,"⁵ or "one thought contains three thousand worlds." It is as if they are pointing to the moon with their finger. Or, as if they wrote only fragments in the text, but did not say anything concerning the "consistency of the Buddha's teaching from the beginning to the end," "the distance or nearness of the teachers and disciples," or "the presence and absence of the attainments." These belong to the period of the last five hundred years of the Age of the Perfect Law, referred to in the Ta-chi-ching as the

³Ten Subtleties of the Original and Trace Teaching. This doctrine refers to the division of the Lotus Sūtra taught in the T'ien-t'ai School. The trace teaching referring to the first 14 chapters; original teaching referring to the rest. The Ten Subtleties or suchnesses (ju-shih) is taken from the second chapter of the Lotus Sūtra, "Tactfulness" of Kumārajīva's translation. This list constitutes one of the main bases of the T'ien-t'ai metaphysics. For details, see: L. Hurvitz, op.cit., p. 206-209.

⁴Subtlety of the past, present, and future. This refers to a passage in the Lotus Sūtra where the Buddha explains this scripture is the most difficult to understand of all the scriptures. "Thereupon the Buddha again addressed the Medicine King Bodhisattva-Mahasattva (saying): "Infinite thousand myriads of kotis are the scriptures I preach, whether already preached, now being preached, or to be preached in the future; and among them all, this Law-Flower Sūtra is the most difficult to believe and the most difficult to understand." Katō, op.cit., p. 227; T. vol. 9, no. 262, p. 31b.

⁵One hundred realms, one thousand suchnesses. The ten realms (hells, ghosts, animals, asuras, men, devas, sravakas, pratyekabuddhas, bodhisattvas, and Buddhas) have ten divisions, making one hundred. Each of the one hundred realms have ten qualities, making 1000 in all. This is a fundamental doctrine in T'ien-t'ai Buddhism. Ref: Kenneth Ch'en, op.cit., pp. 311-12, note 1; W. Soothill, op.cit., p. 217b.

time of the firmness of meditation. After one thousand years of the Age of the Perfect Law, although the teachings of the Buddha filled Jambudvīpa (the entire world), they either destroyed Mahayana with Hinayana or covered the teaching of the "real" scriptures with the teaching of the "provisional" scriptures. The teaching was in confusion and so the number of people who attained the Way was very small, and innumerable people fell into evil ways through misunderstanding the Buddha's teaching.

After one thousand years of the Age of the Perfect Law, in the fifteenth year after entering the Age of the Counterfeit Law, the teachings of the Buddha spread eastward and entered China. During the first one hundred years in the first five hundred years of the Age of the Counterfeit Law the Masters of the Way in China debated inconclusively with the Buddhists. Even where the matters were conclusive, the devotion of those who believed in the teachings of the Buddha was not deep. Furthermore if one divides the teachings of the Buddha into the Mahayana and Hinayana, the Provisional, and the Real, and the Exoteric and Esoteric, these holy teachings will not always agree and doubts will arise, and there will be people who will go to non-Buddhist scriptures (i.e. Confucian and Taoist scriptures). Because of these fears Kāśyapa Mātāṅga and Dharmarakṣa⁶ did not distinguish between Hinayana and Mahayana and they stopped short of talking about the Provisional or the Real although they knew the distinctions themselves. After this, during the five dynasties

⁶Kāśyapa Mātāṅga and Dharmarakṣa. According to Chinese tradition they brought Buddhism to China in 64 AD. They are also credited with translating the Sūtra in Forty-Two Sections, T. vol. 17, no. 784. Ref: Kenneth Ch'en, op.cit., p. 34-35.

of Wei, Chin, Sung, Ch'i, and Liang,⁷ there were conflicts within the Buddhist teaching concerning the question of the Mahayana versus the Hinayana, the Provisional versus the Real, and the Exoteric versus the Esoteric. Since none of them sounded like the truth, there were many doubts in everyone's mind from the one person on top to the ten thousand people at the bottom. One talks of the so-called Three Schools in the South and the Seven Schools in the North: the teachings of the Buddha differentiated into ten streams in China. This refers to the ten theories of the so-called "three times," "four times," and "five times" in the South, and the "five times," "half and full letters," "four schools," "five schools," "six schools," "two schools of Mahayana," and "one sound teaching" in the North.⁸ Each school established its own teaching and fought with the other schools as fire and water. However, the basic principles are the same.

⁷Five Dynasties. The dates of these dynasties are as follows: Wei, 220-264; Chin, 265-420; Sung, 420-479; Ch'i, 479-502; and the Liang, 502-557. For details see: Eberhard, A History of China (Berkeley: University of California Press), p. 113-148; 159-162.

⁸The Three Schools in the South, Seven Schools in the North. The Three Schools in the South were founded upon a threefold division: 1. gradual teaching which leads to enlightenment by stages; 2. sudden teaching which was meant to lead the disciple to direct enlightenment; and 3. the indefinite teaching which included the above two depending upon the ability of the disciple to comprehend the truth. The Seven Schools in the North were: 1. ethical teachings with rebirth in heaven as the goal; 2. the incomplete and complete teaching; 3. the Abhidharma, Ch'eng-shih, Prajñā, Nirvāṇa, and Hua-yen teaching which were formulated by Fa-ts'ang; 4. Hinayana, Ch'eng-shih, Prajñā, Nirvāṇa, and Hua-yen teachings formulated by an unknown person; 5. Hinayana, Ch'eng-shih, Prajna, Nirvana, Lotus, and Hua-yen formulated by Kozu-risshi; 6. Mahayana which is based upon conditioned and unconditioned dharmas by an unknown monk; and 7. the teaching of one voice which was formulated by Ch'an monks. Ref: Japanese-English Buddhist Dictionary, op.cit., p. 210; Chih-i, Fa-hua-hsuan-i, T. vol. 33, no. 1716, p. 801a.

Among the holy teachings of one Buddha's lifetime, the Avatamsaka-Sūtra is the first, the Nirvāna Sūtra the second, and the Lotus Sūtra the third. When compared with the Āgamas, Prajñā-pāramitā-Sūtra, Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa Sūtra, the Ssu-i-ching, the Lotus Sūtra represents the true reality; it is the scripture containing the whole truth (liao-i-ching), and it is the correct view. However, when compared with the Nirvāna Sūtra, it is the impermanent teaching, a scripture representing truth incompletely (pu-liao-i-ching), and the scripture of the heterodox teaching.

From well over four hundred and going beyond the five hundredth year after the Han, during the two dynasties of the Ch'en and Sui, there appeared a small monk called Chih-i.⁹ He was later given the name Great Master, the Wise One of T'ien-t'ai. This Master exposed the incorrect teachings of the South and North, and said that among the holy teachings of the lifetime of the Buddha, the Lotus Sūtra is number one, the Nirvāna Sūtra is number two, and the Avatamsaka Sūtra is number three. These belong to the first five hundred years of the Age of the Counterfeit Law, the time when reciting and hearing was well established according to the Ta-chi-ching.

During the latter five hundred years of the Age of the Counterfeit Law, during the reign of T'ai-tsung (627-650) at the beginning of

⁹Chih-i (538-597). He is generally regarded as the founder of the T'ien-t'ai School of Buddhism in China because he systematized the teachings. Among his many works there are three important treatises on the Lotus Sūtra, namely, the Fa-hua-hsuan-i (T. vol. 33, no. 1716); Fa-hua-wen-chu (T. vol. 34, no. 1718); and the Mo-ho-chih-kuan (T. vol. 46, no. 1911). For details on his life and doctrines see: Leon Hurvitz, op.cit., p.

the T'ang, Tripitaka Hsüan-tsang (596-664)¹⁰ entered India. For nineteen years he visited temples and stūpas in one hundred and thirty kingdoms, met many teachers, and studied exhaustively the foundation of eighty thousand holy teachings and the twelve divisions of scriptures. Among them were two schools; namely the so-called Fa-hsiang¹¹ and San-lun.¹² Of these two schools the great vehicle of Fa-hsiang reaches back to Maitreya and Asanga in the distant beginning and was more recently transmitted by Śīlabhadra.¹³ After returning to China, Hsüan-tsang submitted it to Emperor T'ai-tsung. The essence of this school is as follows. The Buddhist teaching should adjust to the Capacity. For those with the Capacity of the One Vehicle, the Three Vehicle is upāya, and the One Vehicle is the truth. The Lotus Sūtra belongs here. For those with

¹⁰ Tripitaka Hsüan-tsang (596-664). A Chinese monk who in 629 went to India in order to collect Buddhist texts. He returned to China in 645 bringing with him many hundreds of texts. He wrote an extensive record of his travels called Ta t'ang-hsi-yu-chi (Buddhist Records of the Western World, T. vol. 51, no. 2076) translated by Samuel Beal, Chinese Accounts of India (Susil Gupta (new edition) 1957) 4 vols. Ref: Kenneth Ch'en, op.cit., p. 235-238.

¹¹ Fa-hsiang School. (J. Hōsso 法相). This school is based upon the "consciousness only" doctrine developed by Asanga and Vasubandhu. Hsuan-tsang brought this doctrine to China from India, and transmitted it to his disciple Tzu-en who is considered the founder of the school in China. Kenneth Ch'en, ibid., p. 320-325.

¹² San-lun School (J. Sanron 三論). It literally means "Three Treatises." This sect is based upon the Chung-lun (中論) (T. vol. 30, no. 1565) and the Shih-erh-men-lun (二門論) (T. vol. 30, no. 1568) both of which are attributed to Nagarjuna and the Pai-lun (百論) (T. vol. 30, no. 1569) which is attributed to Aryadeva. It was first brought to China by Kumārajīva in the 5th century, and was systematized by Chia-hsiang, who is considered the first patriarch of this school. Kenneth Ch'en, ibid., p. 84-88; 131-134.

¹³ Śīlabhadra. He was a disciple of Dharmapala at Nalanda Temple in Mahadha, and later became abbot of Nalanda. Hsüan-tsang visited him at Nalanda when Śīlabhadra was 106 years old. Kenneth Ch'en, ibid., p. 236.

the Capacity of the Three Vehicles, the Three Vehicles are truth and the One Vehicle is upāya. The Samdhinirmocana Sūtra and Srīmālā-devī-Simhanāda Sūtra belong here. This school insisted that Chihi and others did not understand this point. Yet, T'ai-tsung was a wise king. Not only did his name resound in the Empire at that time, but it was reported throughout the four oceans that he surpassed the Three Sage Kings¹⁴ and the Five Emperors.¹⁵ Not only did he hold China in his hand, he made over one thousand eight hundred kingdoms such as Kao-ch'ang and Kao-chuli obey him. He was known both inside and outside of China as the king who has attained the ultimate. Hsuan-tsang was the first monk whom this wise ruler T'ai-tsung followed. Even among the scholars of T'ien-t'ai, there was no one who would criticize Hsuan-tsang. Thus the real meaning of the Lotus Sūtra was already buried in China.

During the reign of Kao-tsung (628-683), Empress Tse-t'ien (623-705) who was the stepmother of the Crown Prince of the Emperor T'ai-tsung (684-705), there was a man called Dharma Master Fa-tsang,¹⁶ who seeing the T'ien-t'ai School was being attacked by the Fa-hsiang School, took out the Avatamsaka Sūtra which was attacked during the time of

¹⁴The Three Sage Kings. The Three Sage Kings were King Yu (2205-2197 B.C.) of the Hsia Dynasty; King T'ang (1766-1753 B.C.) the founder of the Shang Dynasty; and the Kings Wen (1324-1265 B.C.) and Wu (1198-1194 B.C.). Ref: J. MacGowan, op.cit., p. 18-21; 28-30; 35-37.

¹⁵Five Emperors. The five mythical rulers of China. Fu-hsi, Shen-nung, Huang-ti, Shao-hao, and Chuan-hsu. J. MacGowan, ibid., p.4-10.

¹⁶Fa-tsang (643-712). Founder of the Hua-yen School in China. He was a native of K'ang-chu, he studied the Hua-yen-ching under Chih-yen. When Siksanda brought the Sanskrit text to China in 695, Fa-tsang assisted in the translation. Kenneth Ch'en, op.cit., p. 236.

T'ien-t'ai. He argued that among the teachings of the lifetime of the Buddha, the Avatamsaka Sūtra was the first, the Lotus Sūtra was the second, the Nirvāna Sūtra was the third.

During the reign of the fourth Emperor following T'ai-tsung, namely Hsüan-tsung (712-756), in the fourth and eighth year of K'ai Yuan, Tripitaka Subhākarasimha,¹⁷ Tripitaka Vajrabodhi,¹⁸ and Tripitaka Amoghavajra¹⁹ brought the Mahāvairocana Sūtra, the Vajrasekhara Sūtra, and the Susiddhikāra Sūtra from India to China and established the Shingon School. The basic tenet of this School was that there are two kinds of teachings: the first is the exoteric teaching of Sākyamuni, such as the Avatamsaka Sūtra and the Lotus Sūtra, the second, the exoteric teaching of Vairocana, such as the Mahāvairocana Sūtra. According to this teaching the Lotus Sūtra is the highest of the

¹⁷ Tripitaka Subhākarasimha (637-735). He was a native of Central India and a great Master of Esoteric Buddhism. He went to China in 719 and remained there until his death in 735. Among the many texts which he translated are the Mahāvairocana Sūtra, and the Susiddhikāra Sūtra. Kenneth Ch'en, *op.cit.*, p. 334.

¹⁸ Tripitaka Vajrabodhi (663-723). He was a native of South India where he studied the Yogacara doctrine. Later he studied Esoteric Buddhism under Nagabodhi. He went to China in 720 and stayed at the Ta-tz'u-en-ssu Temple and at the Ta-chien-fu-ssu Temple in Chang-an where he taught Esoteric Buddhism. He translated many texts including the Vajrasekhara-sūtra. Ref: Kenneth Ch'en, *ibid.*, p. 334-335.

¹⁹ Amoghavajra (705-774). The Sixth Master in Shingon Buddhism. He was a monk who came to China at the age of 15 with Vajrabodhi. After Vajrabodhi's death, he returned to India and Ceylon in search of esoteric texts, returning to China in 746. In the same year Emperor Hsuan-tsung received upasaka vows from him. He is credited with translating and editing 120 volumes of Buddhist texts and commentaries. For details, see: Yoshito S. Hakeda, Kūkai (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), p. 30ff.

exoteric teachings. If one compared it with the esoteric teaching of Mahavairocana, its ultimate meaning is roughly the same, but there is no reference to the practical teaching of the mudrā and mantra.²⁰ Since the Correspondence of the Three Mysteries is missing,²¹ it is a scripture which does not exhaust the entire teachings of the Buddha.

The above three schools, Fa-hsiang, Hua-yen, and Shingon, similarly attacked the T'ien-t'ai Lotus School; yet, since there was no great man of wisdom of the stature of Chih-i in the Lotus School, although they knew privately that these were unfounded arguments, they did not debate in public as Chih-i did; therefore everyone, from the King and Ministers above to all the people below, had lost direction in the teaching of the Buddha, and the attainment of the Way by sentient beings was stopped. This happened in the first two hundred years of the last five hundred years of the Age of the Counterfeit Law.

Over four hundred years after entering the Age of the Counterfeit Law, the Tripiṭaka, the wooden image of the founder Sakyamuni, and monks and nuns came to Japan from the kingdom of Paekche.²² This was towards the end of the Liang Dynasty and the beginning of the Ch'in Dynasty in

²⁰Mudrā and mantra. Mudras are gestures made with the hands which represent the enlightenment of Buddha. Mantras are pictorial representations of cosmic nature. Both are used extensively in Shingon Buddhism.

²¹The Three Mysteries. This refers to the Shingon idea of the body, mouth, and mind of the Buddha. All bodies, all sounds, and all ideas or minds are nothing more than individualized parts of the Cosmic Buddha. Ref: W. Soothill, op.cit., p. 63a.

²²The date 552 AD is the date usually given as the time when Buddhism officially entered Japan from the Korean Kingdom of Paekche.

China. In Japan this was during the reign of Emperor Kimmel (539-571), the thirtieth human ruler after Emperor Jimmu. Prince Shotoku (573-621),²³ the Prince of the Emperor Yomei, the child of the Emperor Kimmel, was not only learned in Buddhism but also established the Lotus Sūtra, the Vimalakīrti Sūtra, and the Srīmālā-devī-Sūtra as the teaching for the Protection of the State. Following that reign of the Thirty-seventh generation of the human ruler, the Emperor Kotoku (645-654), Sōjō Kanroku²⁴ brought the San-lun and the Ch'eng-shih Schools from the Kingdom of Paekche. During the same reign the Dharma Master Dōshō (629-700)²⁵ brought the Fa-hsiang and Chu-she Schools from China.

Under the reign of the Emperor Genshō (715-724), the forty-fourth generation of the human rulers, the Mahāvairocana Sūtra was brought from India to Japan, but it was not spread widely and returned to China. The name of the monk who brought it was Subhākarasimha. Under the reign of the Divine Emperor Shomū (724-749) who was the forty-fifth generation of

²³Prince Shotoku (573-621). He is considered the father of Japanese Buddhism. The second son of Emperor Yomei (r.585-587). When Empress Suiko (592-621) ascended to the throne, Prince Shotoku became the Regent. The following year (593) he gave all of his support to Buddhism. In 604 he put forth his famous Seventeen Article Constitution and erected many temples, the best known being the Horyuji. In 607 he sent an ambassador for the first time to China. He died at the age of 49. Anesaki, op.cit., p. 55.

²⁴Sojo Kanroku. A Korean monk from the Kingdom of Paekche who came to Japan in 607 and established the Sanron School.

²⁵Dharma Master Dōshō (629-700⁶⁰²). He was a Japanese monk who was sent to China in 653. He studied the Fa-hsiang (J. Hosso) School under Hsuan-tsang for ten years after which he returned to Japan and established himself at Genkoji Temple. Takakusu, op.cit., p. 84-85.

human rulers, the Eminent monk Shen-hsiang²⁶ brought Hua-yen from Silla and conferred it to Shōjō Ryoben.²⁷ The latter submitted it to the Divine Emperor Shomū, and the ruler built the Great Buddha of Todaiji.²⁸ During the same reign, the monk Chien-chen (Ganjin)²⁹ of the great T'ang Dynasty brought the T'ien-t'ai (Tendai) and Lu (Ritsu) Schools to Japan. He spread the Ritsu and established the Hinayana Ordination Centre at Todaiji, but he died without even mentioning the name of the Lotus Sūtra.

After that, during the Fifth generation of human rulers, at the time of the 800th years of the Age of the Counterfeit Law, under the reign of the Emperor Kammu (781-806), there appeared a small monk called Saichō who later was called the Great Master Dengyō.³⁰ In the beginning

²⁶ Shen-hsiang (J. Shinjō ^{善祥}). A Korean monk from the Kingdom of Silla who came to Japan after having studied the Hua-yen (J. Kegon) School with Fa-ts'ang in China. He lectured on the Hua-yen-ching for the first time in Japan, in 740. He died at an unknown age in Japan. Matsunaga, op.cit., p. 97.

²⁷ Ryoben (689-772). A Japanese monk of the Kegon School. He persuaded Emperor Shomu in 740 to ask Shen-hsiang to lecture on the Hua-yen-ching. When 'Todaiji Temple was built he was named the first abbot, and given the honorary title of Sojo by Emperor Kammu. Matsunaga, ibid., p. 97-98.

²⁸ Great Buddha of Todaiji. The head temple of the Kegon School. The great image of Mahavairocana is enshrined there.

²⁹ Chien-chen (J. Ganjin 688-763). The first patriarch of the Ritsu or Vinaya School in Japan. He came to Japan from China in 753 at the request of two Japanese monks, Yoyei and Fusho, both of whom had studied Vinaya under him in China. After reaching Nara, Emperor Shomu and more than 400 court officials received the precepts from him in a new ordination centre (J. Kaidan) built especially for that purpose. Charles Eliot, Japanese Buddhism (New York: Paragon reprint, 1969). p. 231.

³⁰ Dengyō (Saichō 767-822). A descendent of Chinese immigrants to Japan. He was ordained at the age of 14, and received the higher ordination at the age of 19 in Nara. In 802 he went to China and studied the T'ien-t'ai (J. Tendai) School. After nine and a half months he returned to Japan and established the Tendai School at Mt. Hiei. For details on

Saichō studied the six schools of Sanron, Hosso, Kegon, Kusha, Jojitsu, and Ritsu, as well as the Zen School from Sojō Gyōhyō and others. The Kokushoji Temple which he established as his own was later called Mt. Hiei. Here he compared the original scriptures and treatises of the Six Schools³¹ with the commentaries of the human masters and found that these commentaries often differed from the scriptures and treatises on which they depended, and furthermore, there were many biased views. Thus he was concerned that those people who accept and believe them would fall into an inferior path. Moreover, as for the true meaning of the Lotus Sūtra, although each of the people of those schools praised themselves saying that they had attained it, its meaning was absent. If Saichō had mentioned this, there would have been a big uproar, yet, by remaining silent he would disobey the Buddha oath. Saichō worried about this, and finally, fearing the reprimand of the Buddha, he expressed his fear to the Emperor Kammu. The Emperor, surprised by this, called together the learned scholars of the six schools. Those scholars, although in the beginning their pride was as high as a mountain and their hearts as evil as a poison snake, in the end succumbed in front of the Emperor, and the six schools and seven temples all became Dengyō's disciples. This is like the incident in which the various masters of the South and North in China were made to submit by the Great Master T'ien-t'ai at Chen Palace

his life, see: B. Petzold, Dengyō Daishi: The Founder of the Japanese Tendai Sect (Tokyo: Young East).

³¹Six Schools. The Six Schools established in Japan during the Nara Period, namely, Sanron, Hosso, Kegon, Kusha, Jojitsu, and Ritsu.

and become his disciples. This only involved the Perfect Meditation and Perfect Wisdom (i.e., moral conduct was not included).³² Going further, Dengyō destroyed the Separate Precepts of Hinayana, which the Great Master Chih-i had not attacked. He gave the Separate Precepts of Mahayana of the Brahmajāla Sūtra to the eight great monks of the six schools. Moreover, he established the Separate Precepts of the Perfect, Sudden Enlightenment of the Lotus Sūtra at Mt. Hiei.³³ Thus the Separate Precepts of the Perfect and Sudden Enlightenment of Enrajuji is not simply established for the first time in Japan but is also the first establishment of the Great Precepts of the Vulture Peak, which had not been realized for over 1800 years after the death of the Buddha in India, China, or the entire world, and now came to exist in Japan. Thus if one discusses his merit the Great Master Dengyō is beyond Nāgārjuna and Vasubandhu. He is a sage superior to T'ien-t'ai and Miao-lo. Thus, who among the monks of Todaiji, Onjoji, the Seven Great Temples of Japan, the Eight Schools, Pure Land, Zen, or Ritsu, should disobey the Perfect Precepts of the Great Master Dengyō? Those monks of the Nine Kingdoms of China are like the disciples of T'ien-t'ai with regard to the Perfect Meditation and Perfect Wisdom. But since there was no Precept Centre of the Perfect Sudden Enlightenment in China there must have been people

³²Perfect Meditation and Perfect Wisdom. In both the Hua-yen and T'ien-t'ai Schools there is a doctrine called the Three Perfect Teachings which consist of the Perfect Meditation (enjo), Perfect Wisdom (enno), and the Perfect Precepts (enkai). Ref: T. Oda, op.cit., p. 1872c.

³³Nichiren is referring to the establishment of the ordination Platform at Mt. Hiei. Saicho desired to attain the right to ordain monks according to the Mahayana Brahmajāla Sūtra. This right was not given until shortly after he died.

there who did not become disciples with regard to the Precepts. In Japan those who are not disciples of the Great Master Dengyō, having less excuse, are heretics; they are evil people. However, as for the superiority and inferiority between Tendai and the Shingon School in China and Japan, the Great Master did know the victor and loser in his heart, but did not publicly debate as he had in the case of the six schools and the Tendai School. Perhaps for that reason, after the Great Master Dengyō, Temples such as Toji, the Seven Temples, Onjoji, and the whole of Japan, from the one person at the top to the tens of thousands of people below, all thought the Shingon School superior to the Tendai School. Therefore the Tendai Lotus School lasted only during the lifetime of the Great Master Dengyō. This time of Dengyo was the end of the Age of the Counterfeit Law and "the time of the firm establishment of building temples and stūpas"³⁴ according to the Ta-chi-ching. It was not yet the time of which the Buddha said, "in my teaching there will be many struggles and the true teaching will disappear."³⁵

It is the present time, over two hundred years after entering the Age of the Last Law, which the Buddha referred to in the Ta-chi-ching as the time when, "in my teaching there will be fighting, quarreling, abusive language, the true teaching becomes extinct."³⁶ If the word of the Buddha is true, this is the time when the struggles will necessarily take place in the world. I hear that the Mongols have already defeated 360

³⁴Ta-chi-ching, op.cit., p. 363b.

³⁵Ta-chi-ching, ibid, p. 363b.

³⁶Ta-chi-ching, ibid, p. 363b.

countries, and 260 provinces in China.³⁷ The glorious capital has already been conquered. Both the rulers Hui-tsang and Ch'in-tsung were captured by the Northern Barbarians and finally died in the Tartar Kingdom.³⁸ The grandson of Hui-tsung, Emperor Kao-tsung, lost Ch'ang-an and fled to the country side in the temporary residence at Lin-an (Hangchou) and has not seen the capital for several years.³⁹ Over 600 provinces of Korea and countries such as Silla and Paekche were attacked by the Emperor of the Great Mongol Kingdom.⁴⁰ In the same way, the Mongols now attacked Iki and Tsushima Islands and Kyushu of Japan.⁴¹ The Buddha's word concerning the "firm establishment of fighting and reviling"⁴² has not fallen to the ground. It is just as the great ocean which does not make a mistake concerning the timing of its tides. To consider the matter according to all these, should one also not doubt that following the time of the disappearance of the pure teaching of the

³⁷In 1126 the capital of the Northern Sung fell to the Mongolians; in 1276 the Emperor was forced to flee and the Mongols occupied the whole of China. Ref: Jacques Gernet, Daily Life in China on the Eve of the Mongol Invasion, p. 15-17.

³⁸They were captured by the Mongolians in 1126 and held in captivity in the Manchurian desert where they died. Gernet, op.cit., p. 208.

³⁹Kao-tsung was forced to flee to Hangchow in 1140. MacGowan, op.cit., p. 403.

⁴⁰In 1238 the Mongol army swept into Korea and in 1259 Kublai Khan established himself as Emperor of both China and Korea. Murdock, op.cit., p. 497.

⁴¹In November, 1274 the Mongolian armada attacked the Japanese Island of Iki. On November 18, 1274 they seized various places in Kyushu. Murdock, ibid., p. 507-508.

⁴²Ta-chi-ching, op.cit., p. 363b.

Ta-chi-ching, the great pure teaching of the Lotus Sūtra will spread widely in Japan and throughout the entire world? Certainly not.

That Ta-chi-ching is a provisional Mahayana Sutra within the Buddha's teaching. It does not reveal the path which takes us beyond life and death. It does not reveal truth for those who have not become followers of the Lotus Sūtra, but with respect to matters concerning the six paths, the four lives, and the three times, it is never different from the Lotus Sūtra by even a small bit.

Moreover the Buddha said in the Lotus Sūtra, "He must now proclaim the perfect truth."⁴³ He promised that Prabhūtaratna⁴⁴ Buddha is truthful. All of the Buddhas of the Ten Directions indicated truthfulness by extending their long, wide tongues to the God Brahma. Śākyamuni spoke with the tongue extended to Akanīṣṭha⁴⁵ Heaven and said that in the last five hundred years at the time of the extinction of the teachings of the Buddha he would have the Bodhisattva Viśiṣṭacāriṭra uphold the five words of myō, hō, ren, ge, and kyō⁴⁶ and make it the good medi-

⁴³ Katō, op.cit., p. 37; T. vol. 9, no. 262, p. 6a.

⁴⁴ Prabhūtaratna. The Buddha who appears out of his stūpa in order to hear Śākyamuni Buddha preach the Lotus Sūtra. Katō, op.cit., p. 291-306; T. vol. 9, no. 262, p. 39-42.

⁴⁵ Akanīṣṭha. The highest of the material heavens. W. Soothill, op.cit., 179a.

⁴⁶ Five Characters which make up the title of the Lotus Sūtra. Bodhisattva Viśiṣṭāriṭra. He is one of the four bodhisattvas who appear in Chapter XV, "Springing up out of the Earth," of the Lotus Sūtra, who is to spread this scripture among all people in the Age of the Last Law. Katō, op.cit., p. 293; T. vol. 9, no. 262, p. 40a.

cine for the people of white leprosy, i.e., the icchantikas⁴⁷ who revile the teaching, and he thus informed Brahmā, the Imperial Gods, the Sun, the Moon, the Four Heavenly Beings, and the Devās. How can this golden word be a falsehood? Even if the earth turns over, the highest mountains fall, summer does not follow spring, the sun returns to the east, and the moon falls to earth, this fact will be firmly true. If this is firmly true, then how can the rulers, the ministers, and the ten thousand people of Japan, who at the time of quarreling and strife rebuked, reviled, banished, and struck the messenger of the Buddha who tried to spread the teaching by saying, "Homage to the Lotus Sūtra of the Wonderful Law," and who caused various calamities for his disciples and relatives, be in peace? Those who are ignorant and stupid will say this is a curse. Those who propagate the Lotus Sūtra are the parents of all the people of Japan. The Great Master Chang-an said, "The one who renounces evil for the good of the person's sake is nothing other than his parent."⁴⁸ Therefore Nichiren is the parent of the present Emperor, the teacher of the Pure Land, Zen, and the Shingon Masters, and also their ruler. Yet everyone from the one person above to the ten thousand below persecutes him. How should the Sun and Moon shine on their heads? How could the Earth Deity carry their feet? When Devadatta hit the Buddha,⁴⁹ the earth shook and fire broke out. When Tan-mi-lo cut off the holy one's

⁴⁷ icchantikas. A being who is completely unreceptive to the teachings of the Buddha.

⁴⁸ Chang-an, Nieh-p'an-hsuan-i (涅槃經), T. vol. 38, no. 1767, p. 85b.

⁴⁹ Nāgārjuna, Ta-shih-tu-lun (法華論), T. vol. 25, no. 1509, p. 352b.

head, the right hand in which the King was holding the sword dropped off.⁵⁰ When Emperor Hui-tsung branded Fa-tao⁵¹ on the face and exiled him to Chiang-nan region in the South, Hui-tsung fell to the hands of the barbarians within half a year. The attack of the Mongols will also be like this. Even if they collect the soldiers from all of India and use cakravāda⁵² as a citadel, they will not be able to repel this invasion and all of the people of Japan will suffer the calamities of war. Whether or not Nichiren is the true practitioner of the Lotus Sūtra should be seen in this.

Śākyamuni, the founder of the teaching, said, "As for those who with an evil mouth revile those who spread the Lotus Sūtra in the Age of the Last Law, their sins will be one hundred thousand billion times worse than that of those who persecute me for even one kalpa."⁵³ Yet the present ruler and ten thousand people of Japan, following their own wills, hate Nichiren more than they hate the enemies of their parents and those from prior lives. They persecute Nichiren more strongly than they persecute those who have rebelled or murdered. It is surprising that the ground does not open up to let their mortal bodies fall into it, or that the heavenly thunder does not split their bodies in two.

⁵⁰T'an-mi-lo. This story appears in the Wu-teng-hui-yuan (五燈會元) according to Togoro Shigemoto and Takagi Yutaka, op.cit., p. 207.

⁵¹Fa-tao. Fu-tsu-t'ung-chi (法統記), T. vol. 49, no. 2035, p. 422b.

⁵²Cakravāda. The mythical Iron Mountain which exists in the middle of the world.

⁵³Katō, op.cit., p. 224; T. vol. 9, no. 262, p. 30c.

Does this mean Nichiren is not the practitioner of the Lotus Sūtra? If this is the case, it is to be greatly deplored. Nichiren is being persecuted by ten thousand people in the present life and there is no rest for a moment. And they will fall into the evil path in a later life. One can only say, how pitiful!

Again, if Nichiren were not the practitioner of the Lotus Sūtra, who would be the upholder of the One Vehicle? Could Hōnen, who said, "One should throw away the Lotus Sūtra?"⁵⁴, or Shan-tao who said, "Not one in a thousand,"⁵⁵ or Tao-ch'o who said, "There is not even one person who has been able to attain,"⁵⁶ be the practitioners of the Lotus Sūtra? The Great Master Kōbō said practicing the Lotus Sūtra is meaningless talk. In the sūtra text it is said, "to be able to uphold this sūtra well"⁵⁷ and "to be able to preach well."⁵⁸ "Well" means that the one who is called the practitioner of the Lotus Sūtra in the scripture is the one who says, "it is the highest among sūtras,"⁵⁹ and teaches that the

⁵⁴I have not been able to locate reference to this statement attributed to Honen by Nichiren. The closest reference which I have found to Nichiren's suggestion that Honen said: "throw away the Lotus Sūtra..." is a remark Honen made to a nun who had made a vow to recite the Lotus Sūtra 1000 times. After reciting the Lotus Sūtra for over 700 times she came to Honen and he said: "You have indeed done well in spite of your age, to read it over 700 times. As to the other 300 times, the best thing to do is to apply your whole mind to the one thing, and that is the practice of the Nembutsu." Quoted from Coates and Ishizuka, Honen the Buddhist Saint, vol. III, p. 378.

⁵⁵Shan-tao, op.cit., p. 439b.

⁵⁶Tao-ch'o, op.cit., p 4b.

⁵⁷Katō, op.cit., p. 328; T. vol. 9, no. 262, p. 45c.

⁵⁸Katō, ibid, p. 245; T. vol. 9, no. 262, p. 34b.

⁵⁹Katō, ibid, p. 280; T. vol. 9, no. 252, p. 39a.

Lotus Sūtra is superior to the Mahāvairocana Sūtra, Avatamsaka Sūtra, Nirvāna Sūtra, and the Prajñā Sūtra.

If it were just as the scripture text says then during the more than 700 years since the teaching of the Buddha was transmitted to Japan there has not been even one practitioner of the Lotus Sūtra, except for Dengyō and Nichiren. How can this be? It is according to reason that there has been no such thing as "may his head be split in seven,"⁶⁰ or, "The mouth will be closed."⁶¹ These are light punishments, only a matter of one or two people. Nichiren is the greatest practitioner of the Lotus Sūtra in the entire world. Those who say evil things to Nichiren and treat him as an enemy will meet the greatest calamities of the entire world. In the Bun'ei period (1264)⁶² there was the great comet that punished the entire heaven. Look at these. After the parinirvāna of the Buddha, people persecuted the practitioners of the teachings of the Buddha, yet the great calamities such as those of the present time have not taken place even once. This is because there has not been one man among men who recommended that all sentient beings should recite "Homage to the Lotus Sūtra of the Wonderful Law." As for this virtue of chanting "Homage to the Lotus Sūtra of the Wonderful Law," who in the world will match it and who in the world (four oceans) can stand at the great height?

⁶⁰Katō, ibid, p. 421; T. vol. 9, no. 262, p. 59b.

⁶¹Katō, ibid, p. 287; T. vol. 9, no. 262, p. 39b.

⁶²In July of 1264 a large comet appeared in Japan. Murdock, op.cit., p. 393.

CHAPTER IV

THE SPREAD OF THE TEACHING DURING THE AGE OF THE PERFECT AND THE COUNTERFEIT LAW

One said doubtfully: If one compared the Capacity during the time of the Age of the Perfect Law to that of the age when the Buddha lived, the Capacity of the Age of the Perfect Law would be inferior. But if one compared the Capacity of the Age of the Perfect Law to that of the Age of the Counterfeit Law or the Age of the Last Law it is superior. Why should it be that during the beginning of the Age of the Perfect Law one should not use the Lotus Sūtra? Asvaghosa, Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva, and Asaṅga all appeared within one thousand years of the Age of the Perfect Law. Bodhisttva Vasubandhu is the master of one thousand treatises. He wrote A Treatise on the Lotus Sūtra¹ and preserved the first meaning of all the scriptures. According to Tripitaka Master Paramārtha,² there are over fifty schools which are familiar with the Lotus Sūtra in India

¹Vasubandhu. Lotus Sūtra Treatise (Miao-fa-lien-hua-ching-lun-yu-po-t'i-she, T. 26, no. 1520) which was first translated by Ratnamati in 508. A second translation was made by Bodhiruci with T'an-lin sometime between 509-538 (T. 26, no. 1519). Ref: Kimura Mitsutake, "One Aspect of the Saddharmapundarika Sūtra" found in Studies on Japanese Buddhism, vol. 3 (Tokyo: International Buddhist Society, 1941), p. 74.

²Paramārtha (499-569). An Indian monk who came to China at the request of Emperor Wu of the Liang Dynasty. He is said to have translated over 64 texts. Among the more important are: Suvarṇaprabhāsa-Sūtra, in 552; the Madhyantavibhaga-Sāstra, in 558; and the Vajracchedika Sutra in 562. See Kenneth Ch'en, ibid, p. 134-135.

and Vasubandhu is one of them. All of these belong to the Age of the Perfect Law.

After entering the Age of the Counterfeit Law the Great Master Chih-i appeared in the middle of the Age of the Counterfeit Law in the land of China and exhausted the deepest meaning of the Lotus Sūtra by writing thirty volumes of the "Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sūtra," "The Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sūtra," and "Cessation and Contemplation." Toward the end of the Age of the Counterfeit Law, the Great Master Dengyō appeared in Japan. He not only spread the two teachings of Perfect Wisdom and Perfect Samādhi of the Great monk T'ien-t'ai but also established the Great Vinaya Centre of the Perfect Sudden Teaching on Mt. Hiei, turning the entire country of Japan equally into the Land of the Perfect Vinaya, and making everyone from the one person on top to the ten thousand people at the bottom look up to Enrakuji Temple as the teacher. How can all of this not refer to the spread of the Lotus Sūtra during the Age of the Counterfeit Law?³

Answer: The fact that the teaching of the Tathāgata always takes account of the Capacity is known by scholars of the world.⁴ However, the Buddha's teaching is not like that. If he taught the great teaching to

³The argument here is that how can Nichiren say that the Lotus Sūtra is meant only for the Period of the Age of the Latter Law when it is clear that it was taught and studied both in the Age of the Perfect Law and the Age of the Counterfeit Law.

⁴The point is, the "capacity" has nothing to do with the preaching of the highest truth. The "conditions" are the determining factor, his father and mother had great capacity but the "conditions" were improper so the Buddha did not preach the Lotus Sutra.

those people of superior Capacity and superior wisdom, then why did he not preach the Lotus Sūtra when he first attained the Great Enlightenment? He should have widely spread Mahayana scriptures in the first five hundred years of the Age of the Perfect Law. If the Buddha was to preach the great teaching to the people of favourable conditions, he would not have taught the Kuan-fo-san-mei-ching and Māyā Sūtra to King Suddhodana and Queen Māyā. If the Buddha were not to give the secret teaching to evil people and those who would revile the teaching with unfavourable conditions, then the Bhikṣu Bodhiguna⁵ would not have given the Nirvāna Sūtra to innumerable people who broke the vinaya rules. How would the Bodhisattva Sadāparibhūta⁶ spread the Lotus Sūtra to the four classes of beings who revile the teaching? Therefore, to say that the Buddha taught according to the Capacities is a great mistake!

Question: Did not Nāgārjuna and Vasabandhu teach the true meaning of the Lotus Sūtra?

Answer: No they did not.

Question: What teaching did they preach?

⁵Bhikkhu Bodhiguna. The story of Bhikkhu Bodhiguna is found in the Mahāparanirvanā Sūtra (T. 12, no. 374, p. 365). According to this story Bhikkhu Bodhiguna is a faithful follower of the Buddha who is attacked because of his faith. A good and pious king went to his rescue but was killed saving Bhikkhu Bodhiguna, as a reward he was reborn a Buddha. Ref: P. Del Campana (trs.) Nichiren, Sandai Hihō Shō Monumenta Nipponica, XXVI, p. 206.

⁶Bodhisattva Sadaparibhuta. This is the Bodhisattva Never-Despise who appears in Chapter XX "The Bodhisattva Never-Despise" of the Lotus Sūtra. He is abused by all people because of his great faith in the Lotus Sūtra. See: Katō, ibid., p. 361-396; T. 9, no. 262, p. 50b-51c.

Answer: They taught the scriptures of Provisional Mahayana, both Exoteric and Esoteric, such as the Avatamsaka, Prajñā, and Mahāvairocana Sūtras, and they did not teach the teachings of the Lotus Sūtra.

Question: How do we know this?

Answer: Bodhisattva Nāgārjuna wrote 300,000 verses.⁷ Since not all of them came to China or Japan, it is difficult to know the intention, yet through the Dasabhūmi-vibhāsa-sāstra,⁸ Mūla-Mādhyamika-sāstra,⁹ and the Mahāprajñāparamitāpadesa¹⁰ which were brought to China we know the Indian treatises by inference.

Question: Among the treatises left in India would there not be treatises which are superior to those which were transmitted to China?

Answer: One cannot speak about Bodhisattva Nāgārjuna merely according to subjective opinion. The Buddha wrote, "After my parinirvāna a man called Bodhisattva Nagarjuna will appear in South India."¹¹ What that man says will be seen in a treatise called Mūla-Mādhyamika-sāstra. As to the followers of Bodhisattva Nāgārjuna in India there are seventy

⁷ Three hundred thousand verses. See Lung-shu-p'u-sa-ch'uan, T. 50, no. 2047, p. 184c.

⁸ Dasabhūmi-vibhāsa-sāstra. (T. 26, no. 1521) A commentary on the first and second of the ten stages of the chapter on the ten stages in the Hua-yen-scripture. The ninth chapter "On the Easy Practice," is used as a basis in the Pure Land School.

⁹ Mūla-Mādhyamika-sāstra. A commentary on the Middle Way. This is one of the fundamental texts of the San-lun sect. T. 30, no. 1564.

¹⁰ Mahāprajñāparamitāpadesa-sāstra. A commentary on the Prajñāparamita Sūtra attributed to Nāgārjuna and translated into Chinese by Kumarajiva in 402-405. T. 25, no. 1509.

¹¹ Mahamāyā Sūtra. T. 12, no. 383, p. 1013c.

schools. All seventy are led by great philosophical teachers. Members of these seventy schools all use the kārikā as the foundation.¹² The essence of the kārikā in the four volumes twenty-seven chapters is found in the gāthā in four verses concerning "the dharmas which are produced by conditioning."¹³ These four lines of verse contain the four teachings and the three truths¹⁴ of the Avatamsaka and Prajñā Sūtras. They do not yet preach the Three Truths of the Lotus Sūtra.

Question: Are there people who think as you do?

Answer: T'ien-t'ai says, "Do not compare the kārikā with the Lotus Sūtra."¹⁵ He also says, "As for Vasabandhu and Nāgārjuna, internally the mirror wisdom was quiet but externally they adjusted to the age."¹⁶ Miao-lo says, "If one were to debate the overcoming of heresies and entering into the truth, nothing is as good as the Lotus Sūtra."¹⁷ Tsung-i says, "Nāgārjuna and Vasabandhu are inferior to T'ien-t'ai."¹⁸

¹² Chih-kuan-fu-ch'uan-hung-chueh, (上明論行位子決) T. 46, no. 1912, p. 149b.

¹³ Mūla-Mādhyamika-Sāstra, T. 30, no. 1564, p. 34c.

¹⁴ Four teachings and the Three truths. 1. Hinayana teaching; 2. Intermediate teaching; 3. Differentiated teaching; 4. Complete teaching. The three truths are: 1. the void; 2. the Empirical truth; and 3. the Middle doctrine. Ref: Togoro Shigemoto & Takagi Yukata (eds) op.cit., p. 210.

¹⁵ Chih-i, Miao-fa-lien-hua-ching-hsuan-i (摩訶止觀), T. 46, no. 1911, p. 55a.

¹⁶ Chih-i, Mo-ho-chih-kuan (摩訶止觀), T. 46, no. 1911, p. 55a.

¹⁷ Miao-lo, Fa-hua-hsuan-i-shih-ch'ien (法華疏), T. 33, no. 1717, p. 868b.

¹⁸ Tsung-i. A T'ien-t'ai monk of the Sung Dynasty. He was a member of the Shan-wai sect of T'ien-tai Buddhism which was founded by

Question: Towards the end of the T'ang Dynasty Amoghavajra transmitted a treatise of one volume; its name is Bodhicitta Śāstra. It is said to be produced by Bodhisattva Nāgārjuna. The Great Master Kōbō said, "This treatise is a treatise which is most essential among one thousand volumes of Nāgārjuna."¹⁹

Answer: This treatise is in seven sheets. There are many places where the text is not the word of Nāgārjuna's. Therefore, in a catalog it is sometimes said to be Nāgārjuna's and sometimes Amoghavajra's.²⁰ The matter is not yet resolved. Moreover, this treatise is not a treatise which summarizes the lifetime of the teaching of the Buddha, either. There is much in it which is incorrect. First of all the central sentence, "only in the Shingon teaching" is wrong. The reason is that it disregards the "Attaining Enlightenment in One's Own Body" in the Lotus Sūtra for which there is both textual and empirical evidence and posits the "Attainment of Enlightenment in One's Own Body" of Shingon scriptures for which neither evidence exists. The word "only" is the first mistake. To look at the matter objectively, it appears that what Tripitaka Amoghavajra produced privately is attributed to Nāgārjuna in

Wu-en (d. 986) and opposed to the Ssu-ming school of T'ien-t'ai founded by Chih-li. Ref: Togoro Shigemoto & Tagaki Yukata, op.cit., p. 210.

¹⁹ Kōbō Daishi. Benkenmitsu ni kyo ron (弁論二教論), T. 77, no. 2427, p. 376b.

²⁰ The Kai-yuan-shih-chiao-lu (開元釋教錄) (T. 55, no. 2154) states that the Bodhicitta-śāstra was translated by Amoghavajra. Enchin says there are two opinions, one considering it Nagarjuna's text, and the other considering it Amoghavajra's text. Ref: Togoro Shigemoto & Tagaki Yukata, op.cit., p. 210.

order to make the people of the time treat it more seriously. Moreover, Tripitaka Amoghavajra makes many mistakes. In the so-called Ritual Rules of the Contemplation of the Lotus Sūtra²¹ he writes of the Buddha in the Chapter of the "Revelation of the Eternal Life of the Tathāgata" as Amida Buddha. This is a glaring mistake. As for the fact that dhāraṇī is placed next to the Chapter on "The Divine Powers of the Tathāgata," and that the Chapter on the "Final Commission" is placed at the end of the scripture: these are not even worth mentioning. Then, he stole the Mahayana Vinaya of T'ien-t'ai, and getting the proclamation of Emperor T'ai-tsung established it in five temples of Godai Mountain. He also says that one should use T'ien-t'ai for the teaching aspects of Shingon. These are all delusions. One might use the treatises of others but one cannot believe scriptures and treatises translated by this man. All together, the people who have transmitted scriptures and treatises from India to China, including both old and new translations, are one hundred and eighty-six. With the exception of only one person, Tripitaka Kumārajīva, there are none who did not make mistakes. Among them, Tripitaka Amoghavajra not only makes mistakes, but his intention to misguide people is obvious.

Question: How do we know that people other than Tripitaka Kumārajīva are mistaken? You not only refute the seven schools including Zen, Nembutsu, and Shingon, but also you do not adopt any of the translations transmitted to China and Japan. Why is this?

²¹Amoghavajra, Ch'eng-chiu-miao-fa-lien-hua-ching-yu-yu-chia-kuan-chih-i-suei (王瑜如觀智儀軌), Ritual Rules of the Contemplation of the Lotus Sutra, T. 19, no. 1000, p. 594a-602a.

Answer: This is my most important secret. One should ask the details in the future. But I will only speak a little about it. Tripiṭaka Master Kumārajīva said, "When I see all the scriptures in China, they all are not the same as in Sanskrit. How can I make this manifest? I have only one great wish. I will be impure in body and have a wife. Only my tongue will be pure and not speak deludedly in regard to the teachings of the Buddha. When I die, make sure you cremate me. When you cremate me if my tongue also burns throw my scriptures away."²² He always said this while sitting in the high seat. From the one person on top to the ten thousand people on the bottom they all expressed their wish to die after Tripiṭaka Kumārajīva. After he finally died they cremated him and the impure body became ashes. Only the tongue gave birth in the fire to a blue lotus on top of itself. It threw off five colours of light and made the night like the day and during the day it

²² Kumārajīva, T. 50, no. 2059, p. 333a. He was born in Kucha, his father was a Brahman and his mother a princess. According to one story: "At the age of seven Kumārajīva followed his mother into the Buddhist order and together the two travelled to Kashmir to study Buddhist texts for three years under one of the most famous masters of the land, Bundhadatta." (Kenneth Ch'en, *op.cit.*, p. 81). In 379, Fu-chien invited Kumarjiva to China, but General Lu-kuang refused to allow him to travel to Ch'ang-an for 17 years. After finally reaching Ch'ang-an he began translating and teaching under the patronage of the ruling Yao family, and he was honoured with the title Kuo-shih, the National Preceptor. A partial list of his translations includes: Amidabha Sūtra, translated in 402; Perfection of Wisdom in 25000 Lines in 404; Treatise in 100 Verses, Treatise on the Middle Road, Treatise on the Twelve Gates, in 409; Treatise on the Perfection of Wisdom, in 405; and in 406-07 he completed the Lotus Sūtra, and the Vimalakīrti Sūtra. His translation of the Lotus Sūtra became the standard translation used by the T'ien-t'ai and Nichiren Schools. Ref: Kenneth Chen, *op.cit.*, p. 80-83.

stole the brightness from the sun. It was only thus the scriptures of all translators became less important and the scriptures translated by Kumārajīva, especially the Lotus Sūtra, spread easily in the Land of China.

Question: It may be thus as to the scriptures translated before Kumārajīva. How about the scriptures translated by Subhākarasimha and Amoghavajra, who came later?

Answer: Even with reference to those who came after, you should know that if the tongue of the translator burned there were mistakes. Thus, although the Hōsso School was popular in Japan, the way the Great Master Dengyō attacked the Hōsso School, was by saying, as for the Tripitaka Kumārajīva, his tongue did not burn, but as for Hsúan-tsang and T'zu-yen their tongues burned. The Emperor Kammu thought Dengyō's argument was true and changed to the Tendai School. If one looks at the third and ninth fascicle of the Nirvāna Sūtra, it says, "When my teaching is spread from India to other countries many mistakes will appear and the chance for sentient beings to attain the Way will be slight."²³ Therefore the Great Master Miao-lo says, "Progress and retrogression are in the people, how could it concern the holy intention?"²⁴ He writes

²³Miao-lo, Miao-fa-lien-hua-ching-wen-chu (文句), T. 34, no. 1719, p. 341a.

²⁴(). 因緣、約教、本迹、勸進. These are the four interpretations of the title of the Lotus Sūtra found in Chih-i's Miao-fa-lien-hua-ching-wen-chu (文句), T. 34, no. 1718. These interpretations are: 1. an interpretation designed to clarify the relationship between humans and the Buddha; 2. An interpretation based on the four doctrinal classifications of the pitakas, intermediate, distinct, and perfect teachings; 3. An interpretation based on the relationship between the original and manifested Buddhas; and 4. An inter-

further that however strongly people of today wish to attain the after-life in accordance with the teaching of scriptures, if they wish according to wrong scriptures, there will be no attainment of the Way. Thus, it is not the fault of the Buddha. Put aside the fact that in the method of learning the teaching of the Buddha there are distinctions between great and small, between provisional and real, exoteric and esoteric teachings. This point about the translation is the most important thing. Question: You say that the treatise masters of 1000 years' of the Age of the Perfect Law knew in their hearts that the true Way of the Lotus Sūtra was superior to the other esoteric and exoteric scriptures, but that they did not proclaim this externally, and spoke only about Mahayana as being superior. It does not appear to be the case, yet I understand the reasoning a little. In the middle of the 1000 years of the Age of the Counterfeit Law the Great Master T'ien-t'ai Chih-i appeared and wrote exhaustively about the five characters of Myō, Hō, Ren, Ge, Kyō in that ten volumes, i.e., 1000 sheets, of the "Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sūtra" (Hsuan-i), "Textual Commentary on the Lotus Sūtra" (wen-chu), and the "Great Concentration and Insight" (chih-kuan). He gave the four commentaries of Yin-yuan (Innen), Yüeh-chiao (Yakukyō), Pen-chi (Honjaku), and Kuan-hsin (Kanjin) to each letter and each phrase beginning from "Thus I have heard"²⁵ and ending with "making a bow and

pretation based upon the ability to conceive the reality of all things as reflected on the mind. Ref: Kiyota Minoru, "The Structure and Meaning of the Tendai Thought," p. 80.

²⁵Kato, op.cit., p. 1; T. 9, no. 262, p. 1c.

left"²⁶ and again he exhausted the 1000 sheets. In the "Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sūtra" and the "Textual Commentary on the Lotus Sūtra" in 20 volumes, the heart of the Tripitaka is compared to a great river and the Lotus Sūtra is compared to a great ocean; thus without exception, every drop of dew of the teaching of the Buddhas in the realm of the Ten Directions is included in the great ocean of the Lotus Sūtra of the subtle teaching. Moreover, not even one item of the various meanings of the great treatises of India is overlooked, and as for the teachings of the Ten Masters in the South and North of China, those that should be rejected are rejected, and those that should be adopted are adopted. In addition, there is the commentary in the form of the Great Concentration and Insight (Chih-kuan) in ten volumes in which the meditation gate of one lifetime of the Buddha is systematized in one thought and in which the main and secondary karmic rewards (i.e., all teachings) of ten realms are abbreviated in three thousand. The style of this book goes beyond the remote treatise teachers of a thousand years in India and is superior to the closer commentaries of the masters in five hundred years in China.

Therefore, the Great Master Chi-tsang of the San-lun School says in a letter in which he recommends to over one hundred leaders and seniors that they listen to the Great Master T'ien-t'ai's lectures on the scripture, "The sage that appears once in a thousand or the wise one who appears once in five hundred years is present now. The sage of Nan-yüeh (i.e., Hui-szu) and the wise one of T'ien-t'ai (i.e., Chih-i) are both

²⁶Katō, op.cit., p. 439; T. 9, no. 262, p. 52a.

superior. The three works of body, mouth, and intention upheld the Lotus Sūtra in the past, and now the two Holy Ones (who are later rebirths of Kuan-yin and Medicine King at the time of the preaching of the Lotus Sūtra) succeed and transmit it. How could it be limited to the sprinkling of ambrosia (nectar of immortality = Skt. amṛta) in China. The drum of the teaching makes the ground of India shake. They were enlightened at the time of their birth, and their preaching and lecturing on scriptures is unparalleled in the Wei-Chin periods. And (I) with over one hundred monks humbly make the request to the Great Master Chih-i."²⁷ Vinaya Master Tao-hsuan of Chung-nan Mountain says praising the Great Master T'ien-t'ai, "Like the midday sun which throws light clearly into a deep ravine T'ien-t'ai preaches the Lotus Sūtra. He preaches on the Mahayana as freely as the wind which moves in great voidness. Even though there are innumerable teachers of emptiness of the literature and they study his skillful lectures there will be none who is able to exhaust the truth. The meaning is comparable to the finger pointing to the moon in the sky, and the teaching reaches the Ultimate Truth."²⁸ Dharma Master Fa-tsang of the Hua-yen School says praising, "Those such as the Dhyana Master Hui-szu and the Wise One Chih-i compare with the mystery and truth of Heaven and Earth and are teaching sentient beings like bodhisattvas who ascended to the rank of the tenth stage. What they heard as the truth at Vulture Peak is re-

²⁷ Chi-tsang

²⁸ Tao-hsuan (596-667) Ta-t'ang-nci-tien-lu (). This text is not available to this author. 大唐内典錄

called at present in their commentaries.²⁹ In the story in which the Tripitaka Amoghavajra and Dharma Master Han-kuang, both the Master and disciple, leave Shingon School and subject themselves to T'ien-t'ai it is said, according to the Biography of Eminent Monks that when one was in India in the intimate presence of the Tripitaka Amoghavajra, there was a monk there who said in a question, "In the Great T'ang there are the writings of Chih-i and his followers. Those writings are most capable of distinguishing the correct and wrong views and clarifying the distinction between biased and perfect teaching. Could one translate them well and bring them to this land of India?"³⁰

This is the story which Han-kuang told to Miao-lo. The Great Master Miao-lo said, hearing this story, "The teaching was lost in India and one is looking for it in other countries in the four directions. And here there are few who know it, just as the people of Lu did not know about Confucius."³¹ If in India there were such a great treatise as the thirty volumes of T'ien-t'ai why would the monks of India wish for the commentaries of T'ien-t'ai in China? Would this not mean that during the Age of the Counterfeit Period the true meaning of the Lotus Sūtra became manifest and widely spread in the world?

Answer: As for the fact that (Chih-i) spread throughout China the Perfect Meditation and the Perfect Wisdom of the Lotus Sūtra which is the most superior among the teachings of the lifetime of Śākyamuni Buddha

²⁹Fa-tsang, T. 45, no. 1866.

³⁰Miao-lo, Fa-hua-wen-chu-chi (句義), T. 34, no. 1719, p. 359a.

³¹Miao-lo, op.cit., p. 359c.

but which the masters did not spread during the one thousand years of the Age of the Perfect Law and the first four hundred years of the Age of the Counterfeit Law, that is one thousand four hundred years after the death of the Buddha, and not only did he spread it in China but his name was heard in India. This seems to mean that the Lotus Sūtra had thus been "widely spread." But the Vinaya Platform of the Perfect Sudden Enlightenment had not yet been established. To take the Vinaya rules of the Hinayana and put it with the Perfect Wisdom and Meditation seems to be a little unreliable. It is like the eclipse of the sun or the waning of the moon. The time of the Great Master T'ient'ai falls into the time of the Firm Establishment of Reading, Reciting and Hearing, according to the Ta-chi-ching. This is not yet the time of the Spreading Widely of My Teaching.

Question: As for the Great Master Dengyō, he is a man of Japan. Being born in the reigning period of Kammū (767-822), he not only attacked and destroyed the wrong views that had prevailed for over two hundred years since the time of Kimmei (539-571), but also wrote on the writings of the Perfect Wisdom and Perfect Meditation of the Great Master T'ient'ai and also attacked and destroyed the Vinaya Platform in the three places of the Japanese Hinayana³² which was widely spread by the monk Chien-chen (Ganjin), and established the Mahayana Vinaya Centre of the

³²The three places where monks could be ordained in Japan during the lifetime of Saichō were: 1. Todaiji Temple in Nara; 2. Kwanjeonji Temple in Tsukusho; and 3. Yakushi Temple in Shimozukey. These three centers of ordination were established by the monk Genshin who came to Japan from China in 754. See: Takakusu, op.cit., p. 185.

Perfect Sudden Enlightenment at Mt. Hiei. This great event is the first extraordinary event in India, China, Japan and the whole world in one thousand eight hundred years since the death of the Buddha.

As for matters of mind Dengyō may have been either inferior or equal to Nāgārjuna, T'ien-t'ai and others. But as for the fact that he brought all the teachings of the Buddha together in one teaching, he is superior to Nāgārjuna and Vasabandhu and appears to be superior even to Hui-tsu and T'ien-t'ai. Generally spreading during the one thousand eight hundred years after the Mahāparinirvāṇa of the Tathāgata, these two (i.e., Chih-i and Dengyō) have been the very practitioners of the Lotus Sūtra.

Therefore the Myōhō Shukū says, "The scripture says, "if one took up Mt. Sumeru and hurled it to another region of numberless Buddha-lands, this would not be hard. But if, after the Buddha's extinction, one is able to preach this scripture in the middle of an evil world, this is indeed hard." He says, commenting on this scripture, "Śākyamuni's judgment is that the shallow is easy and the deep is difficult (i.e., the scriptures teaching superficial doctrines are easy to have faith in and those teaching deep doctrines are difficult to have faith in). It is the nature of a superior man to leave the shallow and go to the deep. The Great Master T'ien-t'ai had faith in Śākyamuni and taking the Lotus teaching spread it in China. The school of Mt. Hiei transmitted T'ien-t'ai and assisting the Lotus teaching spread it in Japan."³³

The essence of the commentary is that during the age starting

³³ Saicho, Myōhō Shukū (巻7) Dainihon Bukkyo zensho, vol. 77, p. 138b.

with the period in the good kalpa of the ninth decline, when the age of people is one hundred years, through fifty years when the Tathāgata was in the world and the over one thousand eight hundred years after the Parinirvāṇa, suppose someone takes the gold mountain of the height of 168,000 yojanas and 6,620,000 ri from the bottom of the sea and with the hand of the small human body of five feet, throws it just as one throws a stone of an inch or two in diameter one or two cho; even if there is one who can throw it outside of Cakravāḍa faster than a sparrow flies, the one who will preach the Lotus Sūtra as the Buddha taught will be rarer than that, in the Age of the Last Law. The Great Master T'ien-t'ai and the Great Master Dengyō are precisely those who taught it in a manner similar to the Buddha.³⁴

The Śāstra Masters of India have not reached the Lotus Sūtra. The Masters of China prior to T'ien-t'ai either went too far or not far enough. Tzu-yen, Fa-ts'ang, and Śubhākarasīṅha were people who made mistakes comparable to calling East West and Heaven Earth.

These are not examples of the Great Master Dengyō praising himself. On the 19th day, first month, twenty-first years of Enryaku (802), Emperor Kammu went to Mt. Takao and brought more than ten of the learned and virtuous monks of the six schools and seven great temples such as Zengi, Shoyu, Hoki, Chonin, Kengyoku, Anpuku, Gonso, Shuen, Jiko, Genyō,

³⁴Nichiren is saying that to teach the Lotus Sūtra during the Period of the Age of the Last Law is the most difficult task. The implication being that only three people have taught the text correctly, namely, Chih-i, Dengyō, and himself.

Saikō, Dōshō, Kosho, and Kanbin³⁵ together with the Dharma Master Saichō, and there was a debate; they were impressed at the first word of Saichō and before he reached the second or third word, all bent their heads and crossed their arms. Thus Saichō refuted the basic principles of these schools³⁶ such as the two Piṭakas, the Three Times, Three Turns of the Teaching Wheel of Sanron,³⁷ the Three Times and the Five Natures of Hossō,³⁸ the Four Teachings, Five Teachings, the Fundamental and the Derivative, the Six Marks, and the Ten Profound Principles of Kegon.³⁹

³⁵Ten learned and virtuous monks. Three were from the Sanron sect: 1. Zenji, Gonze, and Kanbin; there were two from the Kegon sect: Shoyu and Ankuku; there were four from the Hossō sect: Hoki, Kengyobu, Shuen, and Doshō; there were five monks whose sects are not known: Chonin, Jiko, Kenyo, Saikō and Kosho. Ref: Togoro Shigemoto & Takagi Yutaka, op.cit., p. 216.

³⁶Saichō attacked the teachings of the Hōsso, Sanron, and Kegon sects.

³⁷The teachings of the Sanron School which Saicho attacked were: 1. The three turns of the teaching at Deer Park, i.e., suffering, cause of suffering, overcoming of suffering. 2. The three times or the period when the Buddha preached the scripture according to the Sanron classification of the doctrine, a. scriptures preached by the Buddha immediately after he attained enlightenment; b. all the other Hinayaha and Mahayana texts; c. and the Lotus Sūtra. Ref: Togoro Shigemoto & Takagi Yutaka, op.cit., p. 216.

³⁸The teachings of the Hossō school which Saicho attacked were: 1. Five natures of all beings (sravaka for arhats, pratyekabuddhas, bodhisattva, indefinite nature, and icchantikas). 2. Three times: The teachings of the Middle Path, the realistic teaching, and the teaching of unreality. Ref: Matsunaga, op.cit., p. 76-94.

³⁹The Kegon teaching attacked by Saicho are: 1. Ten Profound Interdependent Relationships (a. interdependent co-arising of all phenomena, b. essential interdependence, c. mutual penetration of dissimilar things, d. mutual interdependence of all things, e. the manifestation and invisibility of things, f. individuality of all things, g. inter-reflection of all things, h. all things can lead to enlightenment, i. interrelationship of the past, present, and future, j. interchangeability of principle and attribute relationships). Ref:

This was like the beam of a great house breaking. The proud flag of the ten great monks fell down.

At that time the Emperor was greatly surprised. On the 29th day of the second month of the same year, he sent two officials, Wakeno Hiroyo and Otomono Kunimichi, as special envoys again to the Six Schools and Seven Temples. Then each said in a letter acknowledging defeat, "As we secretly examined the profound commentaries of T'ien-t'ai, we found that they summarize all of the teachings of the lifetime of Sākyamuni and make the meaning exhaustively clear and there is nothing that the commentaries do not penetrate. They alone go beyond various schools and especially reveal the one path (i.e., the One Vehicle of the Lotus Sūtra). They teach very deep subtle principles, which the students of the Seven Great Temples and Six Schools have not yet heard of and have not yet seen. The controversy of many years between Sanron and Hosso, melts down like ice, and all is already illuminated and clear as if the cloud and fog are opened up and one sees three lights (of the sun, the moon and the stars). The number of scriptures and treatises that have been lectured upon during more than two hundred years since the comprehensive teaching of Prince Shotoku is large.

Togoro Shigemoto & Takaki Yukata, op.cit., p. 216-217; Matsunaga, op.cit., p. 103-105. 2. Six characteristics of things: a. whole, b. parts, c. unity, d. diversity, e. entirety, and f. fractions. Ref: Soothill, op.cit., p. 13; Togoro Shigemoto & Takaki Yukata, op.cit., p. 216. 3. Teaching according to one's ability and at the proper time. 4. Five teachings: a. Hinayana, b. Provisional Mahayana, c. Complete Mahayana, d. Intuitive Mahayana, and e. Perfect Mahayana. 5. Four teachings, a. school of non-believers, b. sravakas and pratyekabuddhas, c. bodhisattvas who understand only partial truths, and d. fully enlightened bodhisattvas. Ref: Matsunaga, op.cit., p. 94-108.

They debated over the principles with each other, and yet doubts have not yet been resolved. This most subtle perfect school is not yet widely spread and elevated in importance. Could it be that sentient beings during this period have not yet been up to appreciating the Perfect Truth? As we bow down and think, the Holy Dynasty has long ago received the transmission of the Tathāgata and is deeply favored with the Capacities for the Pure and Perfect Teaching. Now for the first time the meaning and principle of truth of One Subtlety is raised and manifested, and the scholars of the Six Schools realize the ultimate truth for the first time. One may say that from now on, it will be possible to save all the sentient beings of this realm, carrying them on the ship of Subtle Perfections over to the other shore. Those such as Zengi were led into and encountered the fortunate age, and saw the extraordinary words. If it were not for a long period of preparation with good karmic conditions how could one be born in the Holy Age?"⁴⁰

Chi-tsang and others of China gathered together over one hundred people and established the Great Master T'ien-t'ai as a sage. Now over two hundred people of the Seven Temples of Japan call the Great Master Dengyō the Holy Man. More than two thousand years after the Nirvāna of the Buddha two holy men emerged in these two countries. Moreover Dengyō established the Great Vinaya Centre of the Perfect and Sudden Enlightenment at Mt. Hiei which the Great Master T'ien-t'ai did not spread widely. Does not this refer to the wide spreading and circulation of the Lotus Sūtra toward the end of the Age of the Counterfeit Period?

⁴⁰ Eizan Daishiten, (聖山正法) Dainihon Bukkyo zenshō, p. 55b.

Answer: The fact that the Great Teaching was widely circulated by Asvaghōṣa, Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva, Vasubandhu but not by Kāśyapa and Ānanda was mentioned in a prior questioning. Also the fact that the Great Teaching was widely circulated by the Great Master T'ien-t'ai but not circulated fully by Nāgārjuna and Vasabandhu was mentioned in a prior question.

It is clear that the Great Master Dengyō established the Great Vinaya of Perfect and Sudden Enlightenment, which the Great Master T'ien-t'ai did not establish. However, what is most difficult to understand is that, although the Buddha taught the Great Mysterious Correct Teaching⁴¹ exhaustively, Kāśyapa, Ānanda, Asvaghōṣa, Nāgārjuna, Asaṅga, Vasubandhu did not teach it, and even up to T'ien-t'ai and Dengyō has not yet widely spread it. But that this deep teaching is to be widely taught at the beginning of the Age of the Last Law, in the fifth of the five hundred year periods, that this is the case is what is most difficult to fathom.

Question: What is the secret teaching? Let us hear first its name and then its meaning. If this teaching is true, does this mean that Sākyamuni comes into the world twice? Does Bodhisattva Viśiṣṭacāritra appear from the ground twice? Quickly confer upon us your compassion.

Tripitaka Hsuan-tsang entered India after perfecting the six paramitas and spent nineteen years there. He learned that the One Vehicle Lotus Sūtra is a upāya teaching and that the Hinayana Āgamas are the true teaching. Tripitaka Amoghavajra returned to India and

⁴¹Great Mysterious Correct Teaching means the Lotus Sūtra.

wrote that the Buddha of the "Revelation of the Eternal Life of the Tathāgata" (Chapter Fourteen of the Lotus Sūtra) was the Amida Buddha. As for these mistakes, they are comparable to calling the East the West and the moon the sun. What can we do by tormenting the body, there is no point in defiling the mind. Fortunately we are born in the Age of the Last Law, and will surpass those who taught the teaching for three great asamkhyas⁴² without walking one step and attain uṣṇīsa⁴³ without offering our head to a tiger.

Answer: To speak about this teaching should be easy because it is in the text of a scripture. However, in this teaching there are three important things.⁴⁴ Although the Great Ocean is wide, it does not retain corpses. Although the Great Earth is thick, it does not hold those who do not practice filial piety. In the teachings of the Buddha there is help for those who have committed five evil deeds and for those who do not practice filial piety. However it does not forgive icchantikas who are revilers and those who proudly insist that they are first in upholding the vinaya rules. The "three calamities" refer to the Nembutsu School, Zen School, and the Shingon School.

⁴² asamkhyas. Three kalpas which are long countless periods of time. W. Soothill, op.cit., p. 71b.

⁴³ uṣṇīsa. The invisible mark on the head of the Buddha. Soothill, op.cit., p. 382a.

⁴⁴ Three important things. The three teachings of Pure Land, Zen, and Shingon. Ref: Togoro Shigemoto and Takaki Yutaka, op.cit., p. 218.

CHAPTER V

THE THREE CALAMITIES CALLED THE NEMBUTSU, ZEN, AND SHINGON SECTS

Firstly, the Nembutsu School fills the entire country of Japan, and is on the mouth of the four categories of people who constitute Buddhist society. Secondly, as for the Zen School the arrogant monks with three robes and one bowl fill the four oceans, and the people think they are the great teachers of the entire realm under heaven. Thirdly, the Shingon School is worse than these two other schools. They become the Kanzu,¹ or Omuro,² or Chori, or Kengyo³ of Mt. Hiei, Toji Temple, the Seven Temples, and Onjoji Temple. Although the Divine Mirror at Naishidokoro was burned to ashes,⁴ yet they rely on the Treasure Seal of Mahāvairocana as the mirror of the Buddha. Although the Treasure Sword⁵

¹Kanzu (管主). The head of a major monastery. Ref: Nihon Kokago Daijiten (Tokyo: Shogakukan, 1973), vol. 5, pp. 356a and 357c.

²Omuro (御室). Indicates the head monk of the Ninnaji Temple. It is another name for Doji Temple whose head was the retired Emperor Uda (r. 887-897).

³Chori and Kengyo (長手 檢校). Official title of the highest supervisors of the Temple. As for Kanshuji and Enryakuji its head is chori. At Mt. Koya and Yuya it is kengyo. Ref: Tojoro Shigemoto and Takaji Yutaka, op. cit., p. 218.

⁴In 1017, "A fire broke out in the Kyodo-tsuchimikado-dono, which was serving as the temporary Imperial Palace at this time, and the replica of the mirror was injured." Reishauer, Early Japanese History, part A (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1937), pp. 336-337.

⁵In 1185, the Sacred Sword, a symbol of the Imperial family was lost in the sea during the battle of Dan-no-ura. Ni-i-ama the widow of Taira leader Kiyomori, "seized the Sacred Sword and plunged it into the sea." Ref: Murdock, op. cit., p. 365.

entered the Western Ocean they intend to cut the national enemies with the Five Great Divine Kings.⁶ As for these examples of the incorrect firm faith, even if the kalpa stone became flattened, this firm faith will not decline. Even if the great earth turns over, the mind of suspicion is hard to come by. When the Great Master T'ien-t'ai attacked the Three Schools in the South and the Seven Schools in the North, this school had not yet reached China. When the Great Master Dengyō overcame the Six Schools, it was not included. It escaped many strong enemies and it is about to steal and destroy the Great Teaching. In addition, the disciples of the Great Master Dengyō, that is, the Great Master Jikaku, supported this School and stole and robbed the Tendai School of Mt. Hiei and made it all into the Shingon School. Who would oppose this person? Supported by such perversion, there was not even one person who criticized the wrong teaching of the Great Master Kōbō. The monk Annen tried to attack Kōbō a little, but would only attack him concerning Kegon, and ended up, paradoxically, only by subjugating the Lotus Sūtra to the Mahāvairocana Sūtra. This was like those who perform worldly meditation.

Question: What are the mistakes of these three schools?

Answer: As for the Pure Land School, there was a man at the time of the Ch'i Dynasty (479-501) who was called Dharma Master Tan-lúan.⁷ Originally he was a man of the San-lun School who, having seen the Daśabhūmivibhāṣā-

⁶ Five Divine Kings. The five protectors of the teachings of the Buddha. Ref: W. Soothill, op. cit., p. 116.

⁷ Tan-lúan (476-542) 曇鸞. A monk from the north of China. Originally he was a Taoist monk but converted to Buddhism after meeting Bodhiruci. Tan-luan devoted his life to spreading the Pure Land doctrine. Kenneth Ch'en, op. cit., pp. 343-345.

śāstra of Nāgārjuna, established the distinction of the Difficult and Easy Paths.⁸ There was a Dhyāna Master Tao-ch'o, a man of the period of T'ang, who originally taught the Nirvāna Sūtra. However, having seen in the Dharma Master Tan-luan's writings that he moved to the Pure Land, Tao-ch'o also left the Nirvāna Sūtra and moved to the Pure Land School, and established the two teachings of the Holy Path and the Pure Land. Again there was Shan-tao, who was a disciple of Tao-ch'o. He established the two paths of the Miscellaneous Path and the Correct Path.⁹

Two hundred years after Age of the Last Law began, in Japan, during the age of Gotobain (1184-1198), there was a man called Hōnen (1133-1212).¹⁰ He advised all the monks and lay people that what is essential to the teachings of the Buddha is the Time and Capacity. As for the Lotus Sūtra and the Mahāvairocana Sūtra, the eight schools or nine schools, such as the Tendai and Shingon Schools, and all the scriptures and schools whether the Hinayana or Mahayana, esoteric or exoteric,

⁸ Difficult and Easy Path. Tan-luan introduced this idea in the treatise on Vasubandhu. Alfred Bloom paraphrases Tan-luan's thought by saying, "He began with the observation that he was living in an age with five stains, practices become difficult when they are done in reliance on one's own effort, but they are easy when the devotees aspire for re-birth in the Pure Land and recognize the power of Amida Buddha." Alfred Bloom, Shinran's Gospel of Pure Grace, p. 8.

⁹ Miscellaneous Path and Correct Path. The miscellaneous path includes all practices other than calling upon Amida Buddha which is the correct path.

¹⁰ Hōnen. He was the most important thinker in the development of Pure Land Buddhism in Japan. His understanding of Pure Land Buddhism coupled with "the religion, social, and political conditions contributed to his establishing an independent Pure Land School." A. Bloom, op. cit., p. 20. His primary work was the Senjaku-hongan-nembutsu shū (T. vol. 83, no. 2608). For details, see: Coates and Ishizuka, Hōnen the Buddhist Saint, 5 vols. (Kyoto: The Society for the Publication of Sacred Books of the World, 1925.)

provisional or real, Mahayana or Hinayana which were taught during the lifetime of the Buddha, these are for those who are of a higher potential and higher wisdom, i.e., for those who have the Capacity that belongs to the 2000 years of the Age of the Perfect Law and the Age of the Counterfeit Law. After entering the Age of the Last Law, however hard one practiced (in regard to these), there would be no benefit. Furthermore, if these practices are mixed with the recitation of the name of Amida Buddha, the nembutsu will not lead to rebirth in the Pure Land. I, Hōnen am not saying this on my own authority. Bodhisattva Nāgārjuna and Dharma Master T'an-lüan called those "the difficult paths." Tao-ch'o disliked them and said, "Not even one person has attained."¹¹ Shan-tao said of them, "Not even one in a thousand."¹²

As for these, one may have questions because they belong to different schools. But would there be in the later age a wise man in Tendai or Shingon who would supercede the example of Eshin.¹³ Eshin wrote in the Ojōyōshū¹⁴ that "the exoteric and esoteric method is not the method through which it is possible for a man such as myself to transcend life

¹¹Tao-ch'o, An-lo-chi, T., vol. 47, no. 1958, p. 13c.

¹²Shan-tao, Wang-sheng-li-tsan, T., vol. 47, no. 1890, p. 439c.

¹³Eshin (942-1017) also known as Genshin. He was born at Taima, in the province of Yamato. According to the legend he left home without his parents' permission, at the age of 10 and went to Mt. Hiei. There he became a great monk. See: Coates and Ishizuka, op. cit., p. 194.

¹⁴Ojōyōshū (在王集). Collection of the Principles Essential for Birth into the Pure Land. It is a work on Amida Buddha which contains many descriptions of heaven and hell intended for popular consumption. See: Coates and Ishizuka, op. cit., p. 194.

and death."¹⁵ Again, take a look at the "Ten Causes of Yokan" (Ojōjuin) of Sanron.¹⁶ He urged, "thus if one casts aside the Lotus Sūtra and Shingon and practices only the nembutsu, ten out of ten, one hundred out of one hundred will be reborn in the Pure Land."

Consequently, Mt. Hiei, Toji Temple, Seven Temples, Onjoji Temple, and others first appeared to debate this, but since the words in the preface of the Ōjōyōshū seemed to fit the principle, the head monk Kenshin¹⁷ fell and bowed and became Honen's disciple. Moreover, even those people who did not become disciples of Hōnen repeated this Amida Nembutsu in a very different manner than that with which they called upon the other Buddha names and felt very affectionate. Thus it began to seem that everyone in Japan was a disciple of Hōnen's. During these past fifty years, everyone without exception became disciples of Hōnen. Since they became disciples of Hōnen, in the entire country of Japan each of them, without exception, became revilers of the teaching. For example, if 1000 children all together kill their parents, all 1000 are those who commit the five evil deeds.¹⁸ If one falls into the avīci hell, should not the others

¹⁵Ōjōyōshū, T., vol. 84, no. 2682.

¹⁶Yokan (1033-1111) (永観). Yokan was the abbot of a temple in Kyoto. He was originally a monk of the Sanron School in Nara, but later studied Pure Land doctrines and wrote a book called, The Ten Causes for Attaining Rebirth in the Pure Land (Ojōjuin) (). T., vol. 84, no. 2683. Ref: Matsunaga, op. cit., p. 59.

¹⁷Kenshin (1131-1192) (願真). He was a Tendai monk who practiced the Pure Land Nembutsu.

¹⁸The Five Evil Deeds are: (1) Patricide, (2) Matricide, (3) Killing and Arhat, (4) Shedding the blood of a Buddha, and (5) Destroying the harmony of the Sangha. Ref: W. Soothill, op. cit., p. 128.

also fall? Ultimately, Hōnen, in avenging this exile¹⁹ became an evil spirit and entered the bodies of the ruler of the Nation (i.e., Gotaba-in) and monks of the Mountain Temples who had found fault with him and his disciples. Some rebelled and others committed evil deeds, and all were conquered by the Shogunate in Kantō. Those few monks who were left at Mt. Hiei, Toji Temple, were made fun of by laymen and laywomen. They are laughed at as monkeys are laughed at by people and are despised as ainus are despised by children.

Hearing about this, the Zen School began deceiving the eye of the people by pretending to follow the monastic rules such as not taking a meal after noon. Because they appear to be noble, people do not think that they are wrong, however crazily they preach the mistaken teachings.

This School called Zen speaks of a "special transmission outside of the teaching," which Śākyamuni allegedly spoke in secret to the worthy Kāśyapa in addition to the generally known tripitaka. Thus they say that those who do not know Zen and study the scriptures are like a dog biting thunder, or a monkey trying to catch the shadow of the moon. Therefore, those in Japan who do not practice filial piety and are cast aside by their parents, those who because of rudeness are dismissed by the Master, young monks who are not inclined to study, prostitutes of the gay quarter --because Zen is the incorrect teaching it fits the true nature of these people. This is the reason they all pretend to keep the rules but in

¹⁹Hōnen's exile. Hōnen was exiled to Sankui, the north-eastern district of Shikoku in the early part of 1207, and was held there until the late fall of 1207 when he was allowed to leave his place of exile but not allowed to return to the capital city. Ref: Coates and Ishizuka, op. cit., pp. 616-635.

fact become outcasts who eat the peasants of the land. Thus the Heavenly Deity glares with his heavenly eye, and the Earth Deity shakes his body at them.

What is called the Shingon School is a great error which is incomparably worse than the above two evil things. I will talk about it in a broad outline. During the era of Emperor Hsuang-tsang (713-756) of the Great T'ang, Tripitaka Subhākārasīṃha, Tripitaka Vajramati, and Tripitaka Amoghavajra brought the Mahāvairocana Sūtra, and the Susiddhikāra Sūtra from India. The view contained in these three scriptures is clear: if one inquires into the highest principle it is that there is only one vehicle which either harmonizes the two with the one, or refutes the two in order to manifest the one (enihana); if one wished to discuss its concrete practice there is only mudrās (in) and mantras (shingon). These scriptures do not even reach the level of the one vehicle that is established in addition to the three vehicles (sanichisotai)²⁰ in the Avatamsaka and Prajñā Sūtras. They are not even equivalent to the Separate and Perfect Teaching prior to the Lotus Sūtra as discussed in the T'ien-t'ai School.²¹

It only places the two teachings of pitaka common teaching. However, Tripitaka Subhākārasīṃha thought that if one speaks out explicitly on the texts of these scriptures he will be despised by Hua-yen and Fa-hsiang and will be laughed at by the T'ien-t'ai School. Perhaps he also

²⁰ Sanichisotai (三-相^三). This means that the three vehicles are manifested in the one vehicle, i.e., the Lotus Sūtra.

²¹ This comes from the T'ien-t'ai classification of the doctrine which was Chih-i's systematization of the Buddhist scriptures. For details, see: Kenneth Ch'en, op. cit., p. 303ff.

thought that he brought these from India believing them to be important, so if he kept quiet it would conflict with the original intention. There was an evil person called Meditation Master I-hsing²² in the T'ien-t'ai School. He brought this man into his confidence and made him talk about Buddhist Schools in China. Ācarya I-hsing was completely deceived and not only talked freely about the outline of San-lun, Fa-hsiang, Hua-yen, but he also talked about the manner in which the teaching of T'ien-t'ai School is organized. Consequently, Subhākārasīmha thought that the T'ien-t'ai School was even superior to what he heard in India and that there was nothing to add to it. He said, "You are a wise one in the land of China. The T'ien-t'ai School is a school of spiritual subtlety. There is nothing that the Shingon School can add to the T'ien-t'ai School except the mudrā and mantra." And I-hsing thought that could well be the case. And Subhākārasīmha said to I-hsing, "Just as the Great Master T'ien-t'ai made a commentary on the Lotus Sūtra I would like to make a commentary on the Mahāvairocana Sūtra. Would you write it down?" I-hsing said, "It is quite easy, I shall do it, but how shall I write it?" The T'ien-t'ai School is hated by other schools. Even if other schools try to compete with it, there is one thing that they cannot do anything about. In the so-called introduction to the Lotus Sūtra, a scripture called Wu-liang-i-ching, the teachings of all the scriptures of the forty some years before the Lotus Sūtra is closed off. It also closes off all the

²²I-hsing (683-727). A Chinese monk. He studied Ch'an under P'u-chi, Vinaya with Wu-chen, and T'ien-t'ai with Hung-ching, the Esoteric teaching he studied with Vajrabodhi, and Hua-yen with Subhākārasīmha, all of which he is supposed to have mastered. See: Hakeda, op. cit., pp. 13, 81.

scriptures after the Lotus Sūtra with the "A Teacher of the Law" chapter (Chapter Ten) and "The Divine Power of the Tathāgata" chapter (Chapter One) of the Lotus Sūtra. The phrase "Just preached" attacked other scriptures which stand shoulder to shoulder to the Lotus Sūtra. Where among these three types of teachings shall we place the Mahāvairocana Sūtra?

He asked thus, and at that time Tripitaka Śubhākārasimha said, intending to deceive, "There is a chapter called 'Jūshin Chapter' in the Mahāvairocana Sūtra. It is like the Wu-liang-i-ching in removing all the scriptures of over forty years. The chapters following the 'Entering the Mandala' of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra appear in China as two scriptures, i.e., the Lotus Sūtra and the Mahāvairocana Sūtra, but in India they are one scripture. Buddha Śākyamuni named the Mahāvairocana Sūtra the Lotus Sūtra in the presence of Śāriputra and Maitrya, and dropped the mudrā and the mantra, and taught only the principle. This is what Kumārajīva transmitted. The Great Master T'ien-t'ai saw this version. Mahāvairocana Tathāgata (Dainichinyorai) called the Lotus Sūtra the Mahāvairocana Sūtra and taught it to Vajrasata. This is called the Mahāvairocana Sūtra. I saw this myself in India. Therefore, you should write in such a manner that you make the Mahāvairocana Sūtra and the Lotus Sūtra into one taste like water and milk. If you do that, then the Mahāvairocana Sūtra will refute all three teachings of the prior, present, and the future periods just as the Lotus Sūtra does. Now, as for the mudrā and the mantra, if they adorn the 'one thought in three thousand worlds' of the mind teaching then it will become the secret teaching of the Correspondence of the Three Mysteries (san-mi-hsiang-ying). In terms of the Correspondence of the Three Mysteries, the T'ien-t'ai School is confined to the Mystery of

Intention. The Shingon School is like a very superior general wearing armour, having a bow and arrow on his side and bearing a great sword at his hip. The T'ien-t'ai School being only the Mystery of Intention is like a superior general being naked." He said this and Ācarya I-hsing wrote accordingly. In three hundred and sixty kingdoms in the land of China, there is no one who knew about this matter, so at the beginning they debated its merits but such a one as Śubhākārasimha and others were weighty in their personality, while the people of the T'ien-t'ai School were light.²³ There was no one who had the wisdom comparable to the Great Master T'ien-t'ai. Therefore, day by day all became the Shingon School and the conflict stopped. Many years passed and the root of delusion of Shingon became deep and hidden.

The Great Master Dengyō of Japan went to China and when he transmitted the Tendai School, he also studied and transmitted the Shingon School. He conferred the Tendai School upon the Emperor of Japan and made the great monks of the Six Schools study the Shingon School. However, he had established the relative superiority and inferiority of the Six Schools and the Tendai School before he went to China. After he travelled to China, while the debate as to establishing the Vinaya Centre of Perfect Enlightenment was not settled, he may have thought that if there were too many enemies this one thing of the Vinaya Centre could not be achieved. Or he may have thought he would let the Shingon School be attacked by the practitioners during the Age of the Last Law. He did not

²³This means that the Tendai School teaches only the one thought in three thousand worlds doctrine.

debate the Shingon School in front of the Emperor, and he did not explain clearly to his disciples. However, there is a secret book of one chūan called Ebyoshu.²⁴ It is a book which describes the way in which the people of the Seven Schools fell before the Tendai School. In the preface to that book there is a brief account of the deception and delusion of the Shingon School.

The Great Master Kōbō entered China in the same period of the Enryaku (804) and met Hui-kuo of Ching-lung Temple and learned the Shingon teaching. After he returned from China he discussed the relative superiority and inferiority of the teachings of the lifetime of the Buddha and wrote: first, Shingon; second, Kegon; third, Lotus.²⁵ This Great Master is a man whom the worldly people especially respect. However, as for matters concerning the teachings of the Buddha, although it is impious to say this, there were often things surprisingly unclear in what he said. To consider this matter in general terms, he went to China and studied only the particular aspects of Shingon School, the mudrā and mantra. He did not inquire into the meaning of the doctrine in detail, and when he came back to Japan, he looked at the situation broadly and found the Tendai School had especially increased. Because it was difficult to spread the Shingon School which he treasured, he brought out the Kegon School which he had studied in Japan and spoke of its superiority to the Lotus

²⁴ Dengyo, Ebyō Tendai shū (依憑天台集), Dainihon Bukkyō Zen shū, vol. 77, pp. 245-254.

²⁵ This arrangement of the doctrines by Kukai appears in an essay written in 822 called the Jujushinron or the Doctrine of the Ten Stages, which was founded, according to Kukai "On a Chapter of the Ten Stages." Ref: Hakeda, op. cit., pp. 68-75.

Sūtra. Moreover, perhaps he thought that if he spoke as it is taught ordinarily in the Kegon School no one would believe him. So he added colours and said this is the true meaning of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra, the Aspirations to Enlightenment of the Bodhisattva Nāgārjuna, and Śubhākārasimha.²⁶ He thus added greatly to the deluded words, yet the people of the Tendai School did not criticize him sharply for that.

Question: It says in the Juju-Shin-Ron, Hizo-Hoyaku and the Nikyo-Ron of the Great Master Kōbō, "As for these vehicles, i.e., teachings other than the esoteric school, though they call themselves a Buddha vehicle, when compared to the later teachings of Shingon they turn out to be meaningless speculation."²⁷ In another place it is said, "They are in the sphere of ignorance and not in the realm of authentic enlightenment."²⁸ Again it is said, "The Lotus Sūtra is the fourth."²⁹ Again it is said, "Chinese Masters fought each other to steal the taste of the five excellent tastes (jukusomi), i.e., the highest truth of Shingon and all called it his own teaching."³⁰ What is the meaning of these commentaries?

Answer: I was surprised by this interpretation and opened the Tripitka and the Three Divisions of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra but found not even a letter or phrase which says that the Lotus Sūtra is a region of illusion,

²⁶ In the essay, The Precious Key to the Secret Treasury, Kūkai, "quotes extensively from the Aspiration to Enlightenment, attributed to Nagarjuna, which deals with Shingon method of meditation." Ref: Hakeda, op. cit., p. 157.

²⁷ Kūkai, Hizohoyaku (秘藏金鑰), T., vol. 77, no. 2426, p. 374c.

²⁸ Kūkai, op. cit., p. 371c.

²⁹ Kūkai, Benkenmitsunikyo ron, (弁顯密二教論), T., vol. 77, no. 2427, p. 379c.

³⁰ Kūkai, op. cit., p. 379a.

when compared to the Avatamsaka Sutra or the Mahāvairocana Sūtra, or a thief when compared to the Six Pāramitā Sūtra, or an area of ignorance when compared to the Shou-hu-ching. Although this is a very flimsy thing, since it was used for over 300 to 400 years in the past by some scholars in Japan, one would think it has some foundation. Briefly I will tell you about things which are very easy to understand in order to expose other things that are also not worthy of belief.

The Lotus Sūtra was first called the excellent taste (daigomi) in the Ch'en and Sui Dynasties. The Six Pāramitā Sūtra was transmitted by Tripitaka Prajñā in the middle of the T'ang Dynasty. If the excellent taste of the Six Pāramitā Sūtra was transmitted during the reign of the Ch'en and Sui Dynasties, the Great Master T'ien-t'ai may possibly have stolen the excellent taste (daigomi) of Shingon. (But this is not possible.) There is a parallel example. When Tokuichi³¹ of Japan abusively said, "The Great Master T'ien-t'ai said that the three time teachings of the Chieh-shen-mi-cheng was wrong, he was ruining his body of five feet with a tongue of three inches." And the Great Master Dengyō said, in correcting this, "The Chieh-shen-mi-ching was transmitted by Hsuan-tsang at the beginning of T'ang. As for T'ien-t'ai, he is a man of the Ch'en and Sui Dynasties; it was several years after the death of Chih-i before the Chieh-shen-mi-ching was transmitted. How could he have destroyed a scripture which was transmitted after he had died?" Then, Tokuichi was unable to answer and died as his tongue was split into eight pieces. The

³¹Tokuichi (749-842) (得一). A Hōsso monk who founded the Chuzen-ji Temple. He was a contemporary and rival of Saicho's. Ref: Japanese-English Buddhist Dictionary, op. cit., pp. 319-20.

words of Kōbō mentioned above are incomparably worse than those of Tokuchi. Fa-tsang of Hua-yen, Chia-hsiang of San-lun, Hsuan-tsang of Fa-hiang, T'ien-t'ai, up to the various masters of the North and South, the Tripitakas, and Masters after the Later Han were all put down and called thieves. Moreover, it was not just the arbitrary words of T'ien-t'ai to call the Lotus Sūtra the excellent taste (daigomi). The Buddha taught in the Nirvāna Sūtra that the Lotus Sūtra is the excellent taste (daigomi). Bodhisattva Vasabandhu wrote of the Lotus Sūtra and the Nirvāna Sūtra as the excellent taste (daigomi). Bodhisattva Nāgārjuna called the Lotus Sūtra "subtle medicine." So, if those who call the Lotus Sūtra the excellent taste (daigomi) are thieves, then are Śākyamuni, Prabhūtaratna, all the Buddhas of the Ten Directions, Nāgārjuna, Vasabandhu thieves? The disciples of Kōbō and the Shingon Masters of Toji Temple of Japan, even if they cannot distinguish the black and white of their own eyes, should know their own calamity through the mirrors of the words of others. Furthermore, as for the point that it is written that the Lotus Sūtra is idle speculation, give me the specific passage in the Mahāvairocana Sūtra and the Vjarasekhara Sūtra. Even if it is written in those scriptures that the Lotus Sūtra is idle speculation, there is the possibility that the translator may have made a mistake. There should be careful thought on this matter. Confucius thought nine times before speaking. The Duke of Chou held his hair three times in the course of bathing and took food out of his mouth three times in the course of a meal.³² Even among those people who study worldly things

³²The Master gave instructions to Pu-chin that even when he was washing his hair, if he was asked a question he would stop and think

are like this. How could it be that Kōbō spoke such deplorable things?

Since he is a descendent of such a biased view, it is said in the ritual text of Sharikō³³ by that Shogakubo,³⁴ who calls himself the hon-gan of the Denboin,³⁵ "As for that which is honoured and high, it is the Buddha of the non-dual Mahāyana Mahāvairocana. The three bodies of the Sākyamuni Buddha is like three donkeys and an ox which cannot pull a carriage. As for that which is profound and secret it is the teaching of the two part mandala. The four teachings of the manifest vehicle are not worthy of picking up its shoes." What is called here the four teachings of the manifest vehicle refer to the four schools of the Hōsso, Sanron, Kegon, and Hokke. The three bodies of the donkey and cow refers to the four Buddhas who are the teachers of the Lotus Sūtra, Avatamsaka Sūtra, Prajñā Sūtra, and the Chieh-shen-mi-ching. It is written here that these Buddhas and monks are not even good enough to be cattle herds-men or the men who pick up the shoes for Shogaku or Kōbō.

The Brahmin of Great Pride of India was greatly learned by birth.³⁶ He could call to mind the two teachings of the manifest and

before he continued. Ref: Shigemoto Togoro and Takaki Yutaka, op. cit., p. 225.

³³ Sharikō (舍利護). This is the service of worshipping the relics of the Buddha.

³⁴ Shogakubō (聖覚房). Very little is known about this monk except that he was the chief monk at the ceremony of chanting the Lotus Sūtra at Mt. Hiei. Ref: Coates and Ishizuku, op. cit., pp. 274, 284.

³⁵ Denboin (伝云院). Name of the temple on Mt. Hiei where the chanting of the Lotus Sūtra takes place.

³⁶ Śastra Master Bhadraruchi and the Brahman of Great Pride. In a story found in Hsi-yu-chi (Buddhist Records of the Western World) by

esoteric, and grabbed in his hands both the Buddhist and non-Buddhist literature. Therefore, the king and ministers lowered their heads and all the people looked up to him as the teacher. Out of excessive self-pride he thought that the four sages revered in the world are Śiva, Vasudeva, Buddha, and Nārāyana-deva, and that he would make them the four legs of his chair. So he made them into the legs of the chair and set on the chair and taught. It is like the Shingon Masters of the present time who gather together all of the Buddhas such as Śākyamuni and place them underfoot when they perform kanjō⁻³⁷ ceremony. This is just as the teachers of the Zen School who say, "This School is a great teaching that steps on the head of the Buddha." There was a little monk named Śāstra Master Bhadraruci. He proposed that he should correct the Brahmin of Great Pride, but the king, the ministers, and the 10,000 people did not adopt him. Finally the Brahmin of Great Pride let the disciples and patrons tell many lies and speak with evil mouths and hit Bhadraruci but he continued to speak of the Brahmin of Great Pride's faults without caring for his own life. So, the Emperor hated Bhadraruci and tried to defeat him through a debate, but the Brahmin of Great Pride was defeated. The Emperor, looking up to Heaven and throwing himself on the ground,

the monk Hsüan-tsang (T., vol. 51, no. 2076, p. 936a) Bhadraruci is a very noble monk who went to the country of Malava (Mo-la-po) where he met and challenged a very proud Brahman to debate before the King and the people. Bhadraruci defeated the monk in debate and the proud Brahman became ill, fell into a pit and went to hell. For details, see: Samuel Beal, trans. Chinese Accounts of India, vol. 4 (Calcutta: Susil Gupta [new edition], 1958), pp. 452-456.

³⁷Kanjō ceremony. The Shingon ceremony of sprinkling water on the head of a disciple giving him a higher position in the School. Ref: Japanese-English Buddhist Dictionary, op. cit., pp. 161-162.

cried in sorrow, holding the feet of Śāstra Master Bhadraruci. Following Bhadraruci's suggestion, they carried the Brahmin of Great Pride on a donkey exposing him throughout India. Then the evil mind of the Brahmin of Great Pride flared up even more and he fell in the avīci hell alive. Is the Shingon and Zen School of today any different from him?

Meditation Master San-chieh of China³⁸ has said that the Lotus Sūtra of Śākyamuni, who was the founder of the teaching, is the best teaching for the Age of the Perfect Law and the Age of the Counterfeit Law but for the purposes of the Later Age there is the universal scripture which he produced. Those who practice the Lotus Sūtra in this age will fall into avīci hell of the Ten Directions. This is because it does not fit the Capacity of the Age of the Last Law. He said this and performed the worship (and confessing) of the six times of the day³⁹ and the

³⁸San-chieh-chiao. The teaching advocated by Hsin-hsing (540-594) of the Sui Dynasty. San-chieh means three stages. Hsin-hsing divided the Buddha's teaching into three stages or periods. The first stage according to Hsin-hsing was the period of the one-vehicle teaching. The second stage was the three vehicle period when the doctrines of the śravaka, pratyebuddha, and bodhisattva doctrines were taught. According to Hsin-hsing during the first two periods it was possible to attain enlightenment, but during the third and final period (mo-fa) people should no longer rely upon any particular Buddha or scripture since enlightenment was not possible. Since salvation was no longer possible there were no sages, the old vinaya no longer made sense, and meditation was useless. Hsin-hsing's disciples devoted themselves to doing "good works" for the people, they did not live in monasteries but wandered over the country assisting everyone. Soon after the death of Hsin-hsing his sect was sur-
passed and all of his works were removed from the tripitaka. For details, see: Kenneth Ch'en, op. cit., p. 297.

³⁹Rokuji no raisan. The worship of Amida Buddha six times a day. Shan-tao advocated in his essay Wang-sheng-li-tsam () that Amida be worshipped six times daily in the following manner: (1) at sunset one should chant the twelve names of Amida; (2) in the early evening one should chant Shan-tao's hymns to Amida; (3) in the late night one should chant Nagarjuna's hymns to Amida; (4) before dawn one should chant

meditation at the four times of the day,⁴⁰ and became like the Buddha in his own body. Therefore, many people treasured him and there were more than 10,000 disciples. Nevertheless he was questioned by a young woman who had the Lotus Sūtra, and he lost his voice at that time. Later he became a great snake who ate lay supporters, disciples, young women, and virgins.⁴¹ The evil teaching "not even one in a thousand" of Shan-tao and Hōnen of the present time is like this. These three major teachings have been well established. So, although one should not show contempt for these teachings, if one speaks out there may even be people who would believe. There is one evil thing which is millions and millions of times more difficult to believe than this.

The Great Master Jikaku⁴² was the third disciple of the Great Master Dengyō. However, from the one person above to the 10,000 below they all thought he was a man superior to the Great Master Dengyō. This man fathomed the depths of the Shingon School and the Lotus Sūtra School and wrote that Shingon is superior to the Lotus Sūtra. Yet the three thousand people at Mt. Hiei and all the scholars in Japan were persuaded to follow his teaching. The disciples of Kōbō seeing the Great Master's

Vasubandhu's hymns to Amida, (5) in the early morning one should chant Yen-tsang's hymns to Amida, and (6) at midday one should chant Shan-tao's hymns to Amida. T., vol. 47, no. 1980, p. 438b.

⁴⁰Shihi no zazen. This means sitting in meditation four times a day, at dusk, at dawn, in the early morning, and in the late afternoon.

⁴¹T., vol. 51, no. 2068, p. 92b-c.

⁴²Jikaku Daishi (794-864). The posthumous name given to Ennin, a disciple of Saichō. In 838, he travelled to China, and there studied both Tendai and Shingon doctrines. Upon his return to Japan, he was made the third abbot of Mt. Hiei. Ref: E. O. Reischauer, Ennin's Diary: The Record of a Pilgrimage to China (New York: Ronald Press, 1955).

statement that the Lotus Sūtra was superior to the Avatamsaka Sūtra, thought it excessive even though it was in their favor but judging from the interpretation of the Great Master Jikaku, they took it as certain that the Shingon School is superior to the Lotus Sūtra School. If one insists that the Shingon School is superior to the Lotus Sūtra School in Japan, Mt. Hiei is precisely what should have become the strong opponent. Yet, since Jikaku had closed the mouths of three thousand people of Mt. Hiei the Shingon School could control the situation as they wished. Consequently, there is no one above Jikaku Daishi as the first ally of the Toji Temple. To illustrate the point, Nembutsu and Zen Schools may spread in other countries but if Enryakuji did not permit it, it could not have spread in Japan even after an infinite period of time. But Annen, the most virtuous man of Mt. Hiei, said in the Kyojijoran, establishing the merits of the nine schools, that Shingon was first, Zen second, Tendai third, and Kegon fourth. Because of this big mistake Zen is already filling and ruining the country. As for the cause and conditions of the country falling to ruin it goes back to Enshin's Ōjōyōshū and to the popularity of Hōnen's Nembutsu School. The Buddha's prediction that worms in the body of a lion will eat the lion has come true!

For a period of fifteen years Dengyō Daishi studied Tendai and Shingon doctrines in Japan without a teacher. He was intelligent by birth and attained enlightenment without a teacher. But in order to dispel the doubts of the worldly people, he went to China and tried to transmit the traditions of Tendai and Shingon. In his mind it appeared that the Tendai Lotus School was superior to the Shingon, so he erased the title "Shingon" and wrote the meditation (shikan) and the shingon of

the Tendai School title. Dengyō established at Mt. Hiei that two people may enter the order yearly for the study of a period of twelve years. He also established the Lotus Sūtra, the Golden Light Sūtra, and the Jen-wang-ching, at the meditation hall (shikanin) as the three scriptures for the protection of the state, and through an Imperial edict it was established that they should be worshipped in a manner similar to the most important treasures of Japan, i.e., the Sacred Jewel, the Sacred Sword, and the place where the Sacred Mirror is kept. This view remained unchanged during the time of the first head priest of Mt. Hiei, Gishin Oshō,⁴³ and the second head priest, the Great Master Enchō.⁴⁴

The third head priest the Great Master Jikaku went to T'ang China and studied the superiority and inferiority of the two paths of the esoteric and exoteric schools from eight great monks⁴⁵ for a period of ten years. He also learned from his people of the T'ien-t'ai School such as Kuang-hsiu (772-843) and Wei-chuan, but he thought in his heart that the Shingon School was superior to the Tendai School. He thought also that his master, the Great Master Dengyō, had not yet studied this in detail and that because he was not in China for a long time he only took a rough look at this teaching.

So he returned to Japan and established the Great Lecture Hall

⁴³Gishin Osho (780-833). In 804, he accompanied Saicho to China where he acted as his interpreter. In 824, he was appointed the abbot of Eynakuji.

⁴⁴Encho (771-837). He also was a disciple of Saicho and the second abbot of Enryakuji.

⁴⁵Eight Great Monks. These were the monks under whom Jikkaku studied in China; they include: Tsung-jui, Ch'uan-ya, Wu-t'ai-shan, Yuan-chent, I-chen, Fa-ch'uan, T'ing-hsiu, and Wei-chuan.

called Sojiin to the west of Mt. Hiei's eastern tower Shikan-in. The main Buddha in this lecture hall was Mahāvairocana of the Diamond Realm.⁴⁶ Working before Mahāvairocana and using the commentary of Śubhākārasīṃha of the Mahāvairocana Sūtra as a basis, he prepared seven volumes of commentary on the Vajrasekhara Sūtra and seven volumes on the Susiddhikāra Sūtra, fourteen volumes in all. In the essential part of the commentary it says, "There are two kinds of teaching. The first is the revealed teaching. This refers to the three vehicle teachings. The reason for this is that in these teachings, the worldly and superior meanings are not in perfect harmony in one body. The second is the esoteric teaching. This is the one vehicle teaching. The reason for this is that here the worldly and superior meanings are in perfect harmony and in one body. Furthermore there are two kinds of esoteric teachings. The first is the fundamental esoteric teaching of principle (li). It refers to the scriptures such as the Avatamsaka, Prajñā, Vimalakīrti, Lotus Sūtra, and the Nirvāna Sūtra. These teach only the non-duality of worldly and superior teachings, but do not teach the particulars (ti) of shingon (true mantra) and mitsuin (secret mudra) matters. The second is the teaching in which both the mysteries of the particular (ji) and principle (li) are present. It refers to the Mahāvairocana Sūtra, Vajrasekhara Sūtra, and the Susiddhikāra Sūtra. They preach both that worldly truth and the supreme truth are not two, because they explain the particulars (ji) of shingon and mitsuin.

⁴⁶ Kongo-kai. The diamond world. That aspect of the teaching of esoteric Buddhism which represents the wisdom of Mahāvairocana. It is called diamond because like the diamond it is so strong it is capable of crushing all illusion.

The point of the commentary is that he established the superiority and inferiority of the three scriptures of Shingon and the Lotus Sūtra on the basis of the following consideration: both Shingon and the Lotus Sūtra teach the same principle of the teaching of "one thought contains three thousand worlds"; however, the particulars of the teaching of the mitsuin and shingon are absent in the Lotus Sūtra. The Lotus Sūtra is the secret teaching of principle (li), the three scriptures of Shingon are the teachings in which both the mystery of principle (li) and particulars (ji) are present. Thus, there is a huge difference between the two. And, furthermore, this writing is not just his own private interpretation. He thought that this was the point of the commentary on the Mahāvairocana Sūtra by Tripiṭaka Subhakarasiṃha. Yet he perhaps thought this still does not make clear the superiority and inferiority of the two schools, or maybe he thought it would remove other people's doubts. In the biography of the Great Master Jikaku it is said, "The Great Master wrote commentaries on two scriptures; when he finished the work, thinking alone in his heart he asked, are these commentaries consistent with the teachings of the Buddha or not? If it is not consistent with the intentions of the Buddha I will not spread this teaching in the world. Therefore, he placed it before the Buddha for seven days and seven nights, ardently wishing for the proof of this truth and devotedly prayed. During the fifth ko (between 3 a.m. and 5 a.m.) on the fifth day he had a dream in which he saw the rings of the sun; he shot the ring with a bow and arrow, the arrow hit the sun, and the sun rolled around. After waking from the dream he realized that he had penetrated the meaning of the

Buddha deeply. So, he thought that he should transmit it in the later age."

The Great Master Jikaku made an exhaustive study of both Schools of Dengyō and Kōbō in Japan and China. He studied the most important secret teachings from eight great monks and the Tripitaka Pao-yüeh⁴⁷ of South India for ten years. After he finished writing the commentary on the two scriptures, he prayed repeatedly to the Buddha. Surprised by seeing the arrow wisdom striking the sun of the Middle Way, in his joy he made it public by having the Emperor Nimmyō issue an imperial statement. He made the head of Tendai into the head of the Shingon Temple. The Three Scriptures of Shingon became the scriptures for the protection of the state, and for four hundred years up to now, the number of scholars who study these are as many as rice hemp plants, and those who look up to them in thirst are as many as bamboos and reeds. Therefore, the temples established in Japan by Emperor Kammu and Dengyō all became Shingon Temples without exception. Both the aristocrats and warriors equally turned to the Shingon Masters and looked up to them as their teachers, appointing them as officials and giving them temples. As for the ceremonial opening of the eyes of the wooden images and paintings of the Buddha, all eight schools use the mudrā and mantra of Mahāvairocana's eyes.

Question: What should the man who says the Lotus Sūtra is superior to Shingon do with the interpretation? Should he adopt it or reject it?

Answer: The Buddha says determining the future, "Depend upon the

⁴⁷Pao-yüeh. A monk from the south of India who assisted Subhakarasiṃha in translating the Mahāvairocana Sūtra and wrote the introduction to various commentaries. See: Tanaka, Shiji, ed. Honge Seiten Daijirin, vol. 3 (Tokyo: Kojusho Kankokai, 1975), p. 2855.

teaching, not upon the people."⁴⁸ Bodhisattva Nāgārjuna says, "If one depends upon the scripture it is a correct argument; if one does not depend upon the scripture it is an incorrect argument."⁴⁹ T'ien-t'ai says, "Again, if it conforms to the scripture, quote and use it. If there is no corresponding sentence or corresponding meaning, then one should not believe and accept."⁵⁰ Dengyō says, "Depend upon what the Buddha taught, not upon the oral tradition."⁵¹ If one follows these scriptures, treatises, and commentaries, then one should not base oneself on dreams. One should only treasure the passages in the scriptures and treatises which explain clearly the superiority and inferiority of the Lotus Sūtra and the Mahāvairocana Sūtra.

As for the point that one cannot open the eye of the wooden images and paintings, this again is a stupid thing. Before Shingon was there no opening the eye of the wooden images and paintings? In India, China, and Japan there had been such things as walking, preaching, and speaking of wooden images and paintings that go beyond the time of the Shingon School. Ever since we performed the ritual to the Buddha with mudrās and mantrās, the merits which save sentient beings were mostly lost. This is commonly pointed out in discussions. On this matter, however, Nichiren need not draw clear evidence from other places. My evidence is drawn from the commentary of the Great Master Jikaku, and my belief comes from that.

⁴⁸T., vol. 12, no. 374, p. 401b.

⁴⁹T., vol. 26, no. 1521, p. 53c.

⁵⁰T., vol. 33, no. 1716, p. 800a.

⁵¹Hōkke shukū, op. cit., p. 144a.

Question: What do you believe?

Answer: The origin of this dream is that one had the fixed notion in the mind that the Shingon is superior to the Lotus Sūtra. If this dream is an auspicious dream, then as the Great Master Jikaku interpreted it, the Shingon must be superior. But should one call a dream of the shooting of the sun an auspicious dream? Let us hear if there is proof that dreaming of shooting of the sun is an auspicious dream in over 5000 and 7000 volumes of Buddhist scriptures and over 3000 volumes of non-Buddhist scriptures.

When King Ajātasatru⁵² dreamt the moon fell from heaven and let the minister interpret it, the minister said, "This is the parinirvāna of the Buddha." Subhadra, seeing the sun fall from heaven said, "This is the parinirvāna of the Buddha."⁵³ When the Asura fought with Śakra, he first shot at the sun and moon. The evil kings called Chieh of the Hsia Dynasty and Chou of the Shang Dynasty⁵⁴ always shot at the sun and destroyed themselves and ruined the country. The Lady Māyā dreamed of being pregnant with the sun and gave birth to Prince Siddhārtha.

⁵²Subhadra. According to the canon Subhadra was the last convert of the Buddha. See: Dialogues of the Buddha, vol. 2, trans. T. W. Rhys-Davids, p. 164ff. For a parallel version of the story see: The Mahayana Mahaparinirvanā Sūtra, vol. 3, trans. Kosho Yamamoto (Tokyo: The Karinbunko Press, 1973), p. 997.

⁵³King Chieh of Hsia Dynasty and King Chou of the Shang Dynasty are the last rulers of the Hsia and the Shand Dynasties. They represent all that is fierce and cruel in Chinese legends. For details, see: J. MacGowan, The Imperial History of China: Being a History of the Empire as compiled by the Chinese Historians (London: Curzon Press, 3rd ed., 1973), pp. 26-27; 38-41.

⁵⁴Suryavamsa. One of the five surnames of the Buddha meaning "Sun-seed."

Therefore the childhood name of the Buddha is called Sūryavaṃśa.⁵⁵ As for using the name of the country of Japan (Nihonkoku), this is because the Great God Amatarasu is the Sun God. Therefore the two part dream means that the commentary is the arrow that was shot at the Great God Amatasu, the Great Master Dengyō, Śākyamuni Buddha, and the Lotus Sūtra. Now Nichiren is a stupid man and therefore he does not know the scriptures and treatises but he does know that those who say because of this dream that Shingon is superior to the Lotus Sūtra will destroy the country and lose their family in this life, and will enter the avīci hell in the next life. Now there will be the "actual proof" (genshō) of this.

During the war between Japan and Mongolia all of the Shingon Masters prayed for victory. Because Japan won one might think that Shingon is superior. However, during the war of Shōkyū (1221)⁵⁶ some Shingon Masters prayed, but the Gon Taifu (Hojo Yoshitoki) against whom they prayed won, Gotobain, was exiled to the country of Ōki, and the Emperor, who was his son (Juntoku), was exiled to the Island of Sado because of this prayer. Ultimately it is just like the wild fox who in his howlings brings disaster to himself. It conforms completely to the phrase of the scripture which says, "It returns to the original person."

CHAPTER VI

THE SPREAD OF THE LOTUS SŪTRA IN THE AGE OF THE LAST LAW

Because of the sadness of losing the country and the deplorable-ness of losing oneself, I am sacrificing my personal destiny by making this matter manifest. If the king is the one who should maintain the age, he should find the situation unusual and raise questions. But he used words of distortion and persecuted Nichiren in many different ways. And the protectors of the Lotus Sūtra, Brahma, Śakra, Sun, Moon, Four Heavens, and the Earth Deity thought all the reviling of the teaching from old days strange, yet because there was no one who knew it, they forgave it as if it were an evil deed of one's only son. Sometimes they acted as if they did not know about it and sometimes warned by using minor punishments. At this present time it is beyond imagination that the king relies upon the revilers of the teaching, and takes revenge against those who admonish these revilers. This goes on for not only one or two days, one or two months, one year or two years, but for several years. It is even beyond the suffering of being hit by sticks undergone by Sadāparibhūta Bodhisattva and is worse than the murdering of Bhikṣu Bodhiguṇa.¹

Meanwhile the two kings Brahma and Śakra, the Sun, Moon, Four Heavenly Deities, Stars, and Earth Deities gradually became angry and admonished them repeatedly, yet the king and revilers committed further persecution. Thus the Heavenly Deities made the arrangements and gave an order

¹Katō, op. cit., T., vol. 9, no. 262, p. 58a.

to the sage of the neighboring country in order to admonish them, and let the great rākṣasa² into the country in order to deceive the people's minds and cause them to rebel within the realm. In accordance with the principle that, if the sign is great, whether auspicious or inauspicious there will be many calamities, there were great comets as never appeared and great earthquakes that have not taken place during the 2500 years after the Buddha's Parinirvāṇa. There were many sages in China and Japan who were superior in wisdom and extraordinary in their talents, yet there has never been one who was as much a supporter of the Lotus Sūtra and had as many enemies in the land as Nichiren. Above everything else from what is seen before our eyes one should know that Nichiren is the first man in the entire universe.

It has been over 700 years since the teaching of the Buddha came to Japan. Now there is the Tripiṭaka of 5000 to 7000 volumes. As for schools, there are eight or ten schools. The number of wise people is like that of rice plants and hemp plants, and Buddhism spreads like bamboo and reeds. Yet as for the Buddha there is none that is more widely spread than Amida Buddha, and as for titles of many Buddhas to be recited, none is more widely recited than the title of Amida. As for those who spread the title, Eshin produced the Ōjōyōshū and one-third of Japan became Nembutsu practitioners of Amida, Yokwan produced the "Ten Causes of Ojoko" and two thirds of Japan became Nembutsu people, Hōnen wrote the Senchaku and all in the country are Nembutsu people. Therefore those who recite the title of Amida today are not the disciples of one person. This

²raksasai. These are evil spirits or demons.

thing called Nembutsu is the title of Kuan-wu-liang-shou-ching, Wu-liang-i-ching, and the O-mi-t'o-ching.

Is it not the case that the widespread knowledge of the title of the Provisional Mahayana constitutes the beginning of the knowledge of the title of the Real Mahayana scriptures? Those who have good judgment should infer from this that if the Provisional scripture is widespread, then the Real Scriptures should be widespread. If the title of the Provisional Scripture is widespread, the title of the Real Scripture is also to be widespread. In over 700 years from the Emperor Kimmei to the present Emperor Go-uda one has not heard nor seen a wise man who has recommended to others that they should recite "Homage to the Lotus Sūtra of the Wonderful Law" which he himself recited. If the sun comes out, the stars disappear. If a wise king comes, a stupid king is destroyed. If the Real Scripture is widespread, the Provisional Scripture stops. If a wise man recites "Homage to the Lotus Sūtra of the Wonderful Law" then the ignorant person will follow just like the shadow and the body or the echo and the voice. Nichiren is undoubtedly the first practitioner of the Lotus Sūtra in Japan. Infer from this that neither in China nor in India, nor anywhere in the entire world, is there one of the same stature.

Question: What caused the great earthquake of Shoki and the Great comet of Bummei?

Answer: T'ien-t'ai says, "A wise man knows the cause of events. The snake naturally recognizes snakes."³

³T'ien-t'ai, Miao-fu-lien-hua-ching-wen-chu (文句), T., vol. 34, no. 1718, p.

Question: What does this mean?

Answer: Concerning the appearance from the great earth of Bodhisattva Viśiṣṭacāritra, Bodhisattva Maitreya, Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, Bodhisattva Bhaiṣajyarāja, who have terminated the ignorance of the forty-first state, they are called ignorant since they have not terminated the fundamental ignorance and did not know that Bodhisattva Viśiṣṭacāritra was called first in order to spread the "Homage to the Lotus Sūtra of the Wonderful Law" which is the essence of the Chapter in the Lotus Sūtra on the "Revelation of the Tathagata" in the Age of the Last Law.

Question: Are there people in Japan, China, and India who know this matter?

Answer: Even those great Bodhisattvas who have terminated the two delusions of sight and thought and have exhausted the ignorance of the forty-one stages do not know about this matter. How can one say that those who have not terminated even one bit of illusion should know this matter?

Question: If there were no wise men how could one specifically deal with this? To illustrate this with an analogy, if a man who does not know the cause of a disease treats a sick man, the sick man will necessarily die. If those who do not know the origin of these calamities perform the prayer, there is no doubt that the country will be destroyed. How deplorable! How deplorable!

Answer: The snake knows the time of the great rain within seven days, the crow knows the auspicious and inauspicious seasons during the year. This is because the snake is a follower of the great dragon and the crow has developed this habit over a long period of time. Nichiren is an ordinary

man and unable to know these matters. I will teach you this in a broad outline. During the time of King P'ing of the Chou Dynasty (770-719 B.C.)⁴ one who was bald and naked appeared and a man called Hsin-yu interpreted its meaning through divination and said the age will come to an end within 100 years. During the time of King Yu (781-771 B.C.)⁵ of the same Dynasty there was an erupting of the mountains and rivers and the great earth shook. A man called Pai-yang said in interpreting this event, "The great king will see the disaster within twelve years." As for the great earthquake and great comet of the present time they are calamities which the Heaven sent out in anger because the ruler of the Country hated Nichiren and sided with the Zen School, Nembutsu people, and Shingon Masters which preach the teaching of the destruction of the Country.

Question: With what shall we believe this?

Answer: In the Suvarnaprabhāsa Sūtra it is said, "Because one loved the evil man and punished the good man, constellations, wind, and rain do not follow the proper time."⁶ If it were like this scripture text, then there is no doubt that there are evil people in this Country and the Ruler and Ministers follow them, and there is also no doubt that there is a wise man in this Country, but the King hates him and persecutes him. The same scripture also says, "The populations of thirty-three heavens all give rise to a heart of anger and strange stars fall, two suns come out at the

⁴King P'ing of the Chou Dynasty.

⁵King Yu of the Chou Dynasty.

⁶Suvarnaprabhāsa Sūtra, T., vol. 16, no. 665, p. 443b.

same time, vengeful bandits from other countries come and people of the nation are subjected to loss and disturbances."⁷ Already in the Country there are heavenly disorder and earthly calamity. Japan is attacked by other countries. There is no doubt that the thirty three gods are angry. The Jen-wang-ching says, "Evil bhiksus will seek fame and profit, and themselves preach the causes and conditions which destroy the teachings of the Buddha and the causes and conditions which destroy the country in front of the King, Crown Prince and Princes. That ruler, failing to discriminate, will listen to and believe these words."⁸ Again the scripture says, "The sun and moon will deviate from their regular course, the time and season will rebel, the red sun will appear, the black sun will appear, two, three, four, five suns will appear, or the sun will be eclipsed, and there will be no light; or a single sun ring, two rings, four or five sun rings will appear."⁹

The meaning of the text is as follows. If evil monks fill the country, deceiving the king, crown prince, and the princes and teaching the causes and conditions that destroy the teachings of the Buddha and the country, then the king and others of this country will think, being deceived, that this teaching is the cause and condition of upholding the teachings of the Buddha and the cause and condition of upholding the Country. And if they practice these words, then there will be disorder with the sun and the moon; the great wind, the great rain, and the great

⁷ Suvarnaprabhāsa Sūtra, op. cit., p. 442c.

⁸ Jen-wang-ching (仁王經), T., vol. 8, no. 245, p. 833c.

⁹ Jen-wang-ching, op. cit., p. 832c.

fire will appear; and then a great rebellion by relatives, called internal bandits, will occur, destroying and losing all those whom they should side with. After this the king will be attacked by foreign countries and will either kill himself, be captured, or become a man who surrenders before the enemy. All this, simply because the evil monks destroy the teaching of the Buddha and destroy the country. In the Shou-hu-ching it says, "As for all the teachings of Śākyamuni Tathāgata, all the devas, heretics, evil people or spirits who possess the five supernatural powers cannot destroy them even partially. But the evil monks, who are monks in name and appearance only, will ruin them completely. Even if one were to burn Mt. Sumeru for a long time using grass and trees of the three thousand worlds as fuel, it would not decrease one bit. But the fires at the end of the world period, which began burning from the inside of Mt. Sumeru, will burn and will destroy in one instant Mt. Sumeru and not even leave ashes."¹⁰ The Lien-hua-mien-ching says, "The Buddha tells Ānanda, for example, when a lion dies, all of the sentient beings which live in the sky, on earth, in water, or on the land will not eat its body. But the lion's body will issue forth insects which will eat the lion's flesh. Ānanda, others will not destroy my teaching. Evil bhikṣus will destroy the teaching which I collected through accumulating practice and working hard for three great numberless kalpas."¹¹

As for the meaning of the scripture, the Buddha Kāśyapa¹² spoke

¹⁰ Shou-hu-ching (守覺經), T., vol. 19, no. 997, p. 573b.

¹¹ Lien-hua-mien-ching (蓮華面經), T., vol. 12, no. 386, p. 1072b.

¹² Buddha Kāśyapa. The third of the five Buddha's of the present

to the King Kṛtya¹³ concerning the matter of the disappearance of the teaching of Śākyamuni Tathāgata, and spoke about the kind of person who would destroy the teaching of Śākyamuni Tathāgata. Those evil men like the great King Mihirakula who burnt down the building of Five Heavens, killing the monks and nuns of sixteen countries, or the Emperor Wu-tsung of China¹⁴ who destroyed the temples and stūpas at over 4600 places in nine provinces and returned 2,600,500 monks and nuns to lay life, will not lose the teachings of Śākyamuni Buddha. Those monks who wear the three robes, carry one bowl around their neck, and think of 80000 Law Store Houses in their minds and recite twelve sections of the scriptures will lose the teaching. This is like the following: Mt. Sumeru is a mountain of gold; even if one fills up the four heavens and six realms of desire with grass and trees of three thousand great chiliocosm, and burn it for one year, two years, or a billion years, not even a small part would be lost, yet, when the kalpa fire occurs there will be a small fire of the size of a pea that begins at the root of Sumeru, and will burn not only Mt. Sumeru but also the three thousand great chiliocosm.

age, the sixth of the seven ancient Buddhas. Ref: E. Thomas, The History of Buddhist Thought, p. 167.

¹³King Kṛtya. King Kṛtya of Dashmir. His descendents were opposed to Buddhism. They were defeated by Kaniska who restored Buddhism, but eventually regained power and destroyed Buddhism in Kashmir. Ref: W. Soothill, op. cit., p. 339.

¹⁴Emperor Wu of China (842-845). The suppression began in 844 and continued into 845. In 844, Wu-tsung disallowed the worship of Buddha's tooth relic, closing of all small temples, defrocking of monks and nuns, demand for the accounting of all temple property, all monks under forty were ordered to return to the laity and those over fifty without certificates were ordered defrocked. By 845, there were 260,000 monks and nuns defrocked, 4600 temples destroyed, and 40,000 shrines destroyed or closed. Kenneth Ch'en, op. cit., pp. 226-231.

If it were as it is written in the record of the Buddha, would it not be the monks who study the Buddhist Scriptures in the ten schools or eight schools that burn up Mt. Sumeru of the Buddha's teaching? The anger in the heart of the Hinayana monks of Kusha, Jojitsu, and Ritsu who envy the Mahayana is the flame. The Great Masters of Shingon, San-chieh of Zen School, Shan-tao of the Pure Land School are the monks who are the worm which comes out of the flesh of the lion of the teaching. The Great Master Dengyo called the Japanese great learned monks of Sanron, Hōsso, and Kegon the six worms in his writings.¹⁵ Nichiren names the founders of Shingon, the Zen School, and Pure Land School the three worms. Jikaku, Annen and Eshin of the Tendai School are the three worms in the body of the lion of the Lotus Sūtra and the Great Master Dengyō.¹⁶ If one persecutes Nichiren, who corrects the source of these great revilers of the teaching, the Heavenly Deity will take away the light, the Earth God will become angry, and great calamities will occur. So, one should keep this in mind. Because I speak of the greatest matters of the world; the greatest omens are taking place here. How sad, how deplorable is the fact that all the people of Japan will fall into the avīci hell! How glad! How happy! For in the present time in the body of your humble servant

¹⁵ Saicho, Kenkairon, T., vol. 74, no. 2376, p. 615c.

¹⁶ In several of his essays, Nichiren attacked the founders of the Shingon, Zen, and Jōdō Schools. For example, in the Nyosetsu-shugyo-sho () Nichiren said, "I raise the army of the true teaching against the forces of provisional teachings, wear the armour of patience, take the sword of the Wonderful Law, bend the bow of the Revelation of the Truth, fix the arrow of honesty, ride in the white bullock-cart of equality, break the gate of provisional teachings and hurl criticism at the followers of the Nembutsu, Shingon, and Zen, Ritsu and other sects." Works, p. 733; translated by Hoshino, op. cit., p. 8.

the Buddha seed is planted in the mind-field. Wait and see. If the Great Mongol Country attacks Japan with several tens of thousands of boats of soldiers, everyone from the one ruler at the top to the 10000 people at the bottom will throw away all Buddhist Temples and Shinto Shrines and everyone will unite their voices in reciting "Homage to the Lotus Sūtra of the Wonderful Law" and holding their palms together will shout, "please help us, monk Nichiren!"

To give parallel examples, it is just like the King Mihirakula of India who held his palms together towards the King Bālāditya, or Moritoki Munimori of Japan who revered Kajiwara Kagetoki.¹⁷ The saying that those of great arrogance surrender to their enemies refers to this. The great arrogant destructive bhikṣus, who first took sticks and beat Bodhisattva Sadāparibhūta, later folded their palms and repented their fault. Devadatta drew blood from the body of the Buddha, but at the time of his death he recited "Namu."¹⁸ If he had said "Buddha" after that he would not have fallen into hell, but because his evil karma was deep, he said only "Namu" and did not say "Buddha." Even if the high monks of present day Japan try to recite "Namu Nichiren," they would only be able to say "Namu." How pitiful! How pitiful!

In non-Buddhist (i.e., Confucian) Scriptures it is said, those who know the events before they develop are called sages. In the Buddhist

¹⁷This refers to the events leading up to, and right after the battle of Ichi-no-tani (1184-1185) when the Taira clan lost to the Minamoto clan. Munimori of the Taira clan who, because of his cowardice supported the Minamoto clan and its leader Kajiwara. See: Murdock, op. cit., p. 358ff.

¹⁸This story is recorded in Chapter XX of the Lotus Sūtra. Kato, op. cit., p. 361; T., vol. 9, no. 262, p. 50.

Scriptures it is said those who know the three ages are called sages. I have fame for three things. First, on the 16th day of the 7th month of the 1st year of Bun'ei (1260), I presented the Rissho Ankoku Ron¹⁹ to Saimyoji (Hojo Tokiyori) and told the monk of Yadoya, "You should advocate that we get rid of the Zen School and the Nembutsu School. If you do not accept this, for this one reason, we will be attacked by a foreign country." Second, on the 20th day of the 9th month of the 8th year of Bun'ei (1272), at the time of the Monkey (4:00-6:00 P.M.), I said to Tairano Yoritsuna Saemon, "Nichiren is the chief pillar of Japan. If you lose me, then you let the pillar of Japan fall. Soon, in the calamity of the 'internal rebellion,' many on the same side, i.e., Japan, will kill each other, and in the calamity of a foreign invasion, not only will many die but many will be captured alive. If one does not burn the temples of all the Nembutsu and Zen monks at Kenchoji Temple, Jufukuji Temple, Gokurakuji Temple, Daibutsuji Temple, and Chorakuji Temple, and cut their heads off at the beach at Yuh, the country of Japan will inevitably be destroyed."²⁰

¹⁹In the Rissho Ankoku Ron (立正安国論) Nichiren maintains that all of the problems which Japan was experiencing at that time were due to the influence of the Nembutsu School. He advocated that the Nembutsu School should be suppressed and that the Lotus Sutra should be propagated as the means to save the nation.

²⁰This is the year Nichiren wrote the Kaimoku sho (開目抄) or the Awakening to the Truth. This essay was written while Nichiren was exiled on Sado Island. In it he makes his three vows or principles. He poses the hypothetical question: "The throne of Japan will I give you if you forsake the Lotus of the Excellent Law, and if you accept the Discourse of the Immeasurable Life and yearn for the life to come in the Paradise of the West or should the ruler say, unless you recite the invocation to Amitabha, I shall behead your parents, yet shall I remain unmoved unless my principles are proved wrong by the wise. All other troubles are like

Third, last year (1274) on the 8th day of the 4th month, I spoke to Saemon saying, "If one is born in the land ruled by a king one may have to have one's body subjugated, but one cannot have one's mind subjugated. There is no doubt the Nembutsu is the hell, Zen is the work of devamara, and Shingon School especially is the great calamity of this land. One should not let the Shingon Masters perform the prayer for overcoming the Great Mongols. If the Shingon Masters pray this great matter, this country will be destroyed even more quickly." When I said this, Yoritsuna asked, "When will this come?" Nichiren said, "In the scripture the time is not shown, but the mood of heaven is angry enough for it to be soon. I do not think we will pass this year before it happens."²¹

As for these three important things, it is not that Nichiren said it. Only and simply, the spirit of Tathāgata Śākyamuni entered into my body and replaced mine. Even though it is my body the joy was greater

dust before the storm. I will be the Pillar of Japan; I will be the Eye of Japan; I will be the Great Ship of Japan. Unbroken shall these oaths remain." Trans. by Ehara, op. cit., pp. 91-92.

²¹The above quotation comes from an essay Nichiren wrote to Nagasaki Yoritsuna: "I want to say something about the letter which came from Mongolia. The prophecy which I made in the Rissho-ankoku ron some years ago has come true. You are the leader of Japan. You know that Japan is now about to be destroyed. Be quick in expelling the enemies, in suppressing the slanders of the right teachings of the Buddha. The Lotus Sūtra reveals the one vehicle, the truth attained by the Buddha. It provides food for the gods. When you receive this sūtra by faith, the seven difficulties and the three calamities will be eliminated. I told you this before, and you exiled me. It is natural that the priests you are following, and the gods will protect you. I wrote to the chief priests of the temples of Kencho-ji, Jufukuji, Gokurakuji, Daibutsudenji, Chorakuji, Tahoji, and Jokomyoji; Yagenta-dono, and you. Discuss the matter with them and reply. I do not say this for myself. I say this for the sake of the gods, for the sake of the Emperor, for the sake of the Buddha, and for the sake of all the people of Japan." Trans. by Senchu Murano, The Lotus Sūtra and Nichiren (Tokyo: Young East, 1968), pp. 20-21.

than what it deserves. This is the important teaching of the Lotus Sūtra called "one thought in three thousand worlds." The scripture says, "All existence has such a form. . . ." ²² What does this mean? Because the "appearance (characteristics) of suchness," which is at the beginning of the list of Ten Suchnesses, is the most important matter, the Buddha appeared in the world. The sayings, "The wise men know the cause of events" and "The snake naturally recognizes a snake," refers to this. Many streams gather into a great ocean. Dust accumulates together into Mt. Sumeru. The beginning of Nichiren's believing in the Lotus Sūtra is like one drop of one atom in the country of Japan. If two people, three people, ten people, and millions and billions of people recite the Lotus Sūtra, then it would become Mt. Sumeru of Subtle Enlightenment (myogaku) ²³ or a great ocean of Nirvāṇa. One should not look for any other way for becoming a Buddha.

Question: At the time when you were admonished by the Government, on the 12th day of the 9th month of the 8th year of Bun'ei (1271), how did you know that if they harm you there would be wars both inside and outside of the country?

Answer: The Ta-chi-ching says, "If again all the Kṣatriyas and Kings make a false teaching and disrupt the disciples of the World Honoured One, slandering, cutting down with sticks and swords, taking away necessary articles such as robes and bowls, if they make it difficult to give alms, then we beings in heaven will let enemies from outside spontaneously and

²² Kato, op. cit., p. 33; T., vol. 9, no. 262, p. 5c.

²³ Myogaku. This is another name for Mt. Sumeru. Soothill, op. cit., p. 236b.

suddenly rise up, and we will also cause uprising of soldiers, famine, epidemics, winds and rains out of season, quarreling, accusing words, and slandering in the King's own realm or national territory. Furthermore, we will let this King lose his own country before long."²⁴

Now, although there are many sentences in scriptures, I found this scripture passage to be appropriate to myself and to be particularly valuable at the critical time, so I especially chose it. "We" in the scripture passage refers to all the deities and nāgas of the three realms such as the Brahma King, Sakra, and the Māra-deva of the Sixth Heaven, and the Sun, the Moon, and the four Heavenly Deities. These heavenly lords came in front of the Buddha and made a vow saying that "after the Parinirvāna of the Buddha, during the periods of the Age of the Correct Law, the Age of the Counterfeit Law, and the Age of the Last Law, Bhikṣus of the wicked law report to the king of those who practice the correct teaching, and if, because this is what is said by those who are close to the king, those whom the king himself reveres, he tries without reason and without distinguishing between right and wrong to shame that wise man of wisdom, then suddenly there will be a great military rebellion in that country and, later, the country will be attacked ~~an~~ another country. The king will die and that country will be destroyed." Nichiren, himself, has no fault which he committed in the present life. He has simply spoken in order to save his country hoping to repay the On²⁵ of the country of his

²⁴ Ta-chi-ching (大集經), op. cit., p. 355c.

²⁵ On (恩). This is an obligation which one has to his Emperor, country, parents, teachers, relatives and friends.

birth. Not only was it that it was not adopted, I was summoned and they took out the fifth fascicle²⁶ of the Lotus Sūtra which I was carrying with me, blamed and accused me, and finally pulled me around the roads in public disgrace. Therefore I called out to the gods, "If the Sun and Moon rule in heaven, yet do not take the place of Nichiren who is encountering a great calamity now, does this mean that Nichiren is not the practitioner of the Lotus Sūtra? If so, one must change the wrong opinion now. If Nichiren is the practitioner of the Lotus Sūtra, please show the signs to the country immediately. If it were not so, the present Sun and Moon are the great liars who deceived Śākyamuni, Prabhūtaratna, Buddhas of the Ten Directions. They are gods of great lies exceeding by millions of times even the deceptions of Devadatta and the lies of Kakalika." Thus I said loudly, and suddenly the calamity within one's world (jikai hangyakumon) has come, and the country has been badly disrupted. Therefore, I say that I myself am an ordinary man not worth mentioning, yet in the capacity of the one holding the scripture, I am the greatest man in Japan of the present age.

Question: As for the klesa of arrogance, there are lists such as those of seven arrogances, nine arrogances and eight arrogances. Your great arrogance is greater even by millions of times than the great arrogance that is elucidated in Buddhism. That Śāstra Master Ta-kuan did not bow to Bodhisattva Maitreya and the Brahman of Great Pride used the Four Holy

²⁶When Nichiren was arrested, he was beaten with the fifth fascicle of the Lotus Sutra. He described this incident in the Ueno-dono gohenji (), "I was beaten by Shoubo with the fifth scroll of the Lotus Sutra. In the fifth scroll it says that the prophecy of the Buddha has come true." Ref: Murano, op. cit., p. 9.

Ones as his seat. Mahādeva, while being an ordinary man, called himself arhat and Sāstra Master Amala said that he was the greatest monk in five heavens. These all fell into avīci hell. They are the sinners of hell. How can you call yourself the greatest man of wisdom in the entire universe? Would you not fall into hell? How frightful! How frightful!

Answer: Do you really know the seven arrogances, nine arrogances and eight arrogances? The World Honoured One of Great Enlightenment called himself the first of the three realms. All the heterodox followers said that he will be punished by the gods and that the great earth will split and he will fall into it. Yet the gods did not punish. Rather, they protected his left and right sides, and the earth did not split but became hard as a diamond. Over 300 people in the Seven Temples of Japan said, "Is the Dharma Master Saichō the reincarnation of Mahādeva or is he the rebirth of Tieh-fu." Yet, the Great Master Dengyō established Mt. Hiei and became the eye of all the sentient beings. In the end the seven great temples fell and became his disciples and the Country became his lay supporters. Thus to call what is really superior may appear to be ignorance, yet is in fact a great virtue. The Great Master Dengyō said, "The superiority of the Tendai Lotus Sūtra School over the other schools depends upon its scripture. It is not the case of arbitrarily praising oneself and condemning others."²⁷ In the Lotus Sūtra, Chapter Seven it says, "Of all the mountains, Mt. Sumeru is first. This Lotus Sūtra is also like this. Of all the scriptures it is superior."²⁸ What this scripture

²⁷ Saicho, Hokke shuku, op. cit., p. 142b.

²⁸ Katō, op. cit., p. 387; T., vol. 9, no. 262, p. 54b.

passage means is the following: Avatamsaka, Prajñā, Mahāvairocana, and so on which were preached earlier (isetsu), the Wu-liang-i-ching that is preached at the same time (konsetsu) and 5000 or 7000 volumes of texts such as the Nirvanā Sūtra which was preached after the Lotus Sūtra (tosetsu), the Tripitakas of India, Nāga Palace, Four Heavenly Kings, Trayas-
 rīmsā, Sun, Moon, all of the scriptures in the worlds in all Ten Direc-
 tions are like the Earth Mountain, the Black Mountain, the Small Iron
 Mountain, the Large Iron Mountain, and the Lotus Sūtra which has been
 transmitted to Japan is like Mt. Sumeru.

The Lotus Sūtra also says, "Those who are able to receive and keep this sūtra among all the living beings are supreme."²⁹ To consider the question in light of this passage of the scripture, the following may be said: compared with Bodhisattva Samantabhadra, Bodhisattva Muktican-
 dra, Bodhisattva Nāgārjuna, Bodhisattva Asvaghosa, Great Master Fa-tsang, National Master Ch-ing-liang,³⁰ Empress Tse-t'ien,³¹ Eminent Monk Shen-
 hsiang, National Master Ryoben, and Emperor Shomu, who hold the Avatam-
 saka Sūtra; Bodhisattva Shen-i-shang, the Honourable Subhūti, Great Master

²⁹ Kato, op. cit., p. 388; T., vol. 9, no. 262, p. 54c.

³⁰ Ch'ing-liang (738-839). He is also called Cheng-kuan, the fourth patriarch of the Hua-yen School in China. Kenneth Ch'en, op. cit., p. 315.

³¹ Queen Wu-hou (685-705). Empress Wu supported Buddhism since, "The Confucian system did not permit women to assume political control of the state. So she looked for justification of her rule outside and found the Ta-yun-ching (大雲經) or The Great Cloud Sutra, which contains a passage which describes a conversation the Buddha said that, as a result of her having heard a recital of the Mahāparinirvana Sūtra under a previous Buddha, she was now reborn as a female deity, but that, having heard his (the Buddha's) profound teaching, she would be reborn as a universal monarch ruling over a wide area." Kenneth Ch'en, op. cit., pp. 219-222.

Chi-tsang, Tripitaka Hsüan-tsang, Emperor T'ai-tsung, Emperor Kao-tsang, Kuan-lao, Doshō, Emperor Kotoku who uphold the Chieh-shen-ching and the Prajñā Sūtra and Mahasattva Vajrasattva, Bodhisattva Nāgārjuna, Bodhisattva Vasabhandhu, Emperor Yin-sheng, Tripitaka Śubhakarasiṃha, Tripitaka Vajrabodhi, Tripitaka Amoghavajra, Emperor Hsüan-tsung, Emperor Tai-tsuang, Hui-kuo, Great Master Kōbō, and the Great Master Jikaku who uphold the Mahāvairocana Sūtra of the Shingon School and Bodhisattva Kāśyapa, fifty-two groups of beings, Tripitaka Tan-wu-chan, Fa-yun of the Kuang-chai Temple, Ten Masters of the Three Schools of the South and the Seven Schools of the North who uphold the Nirvāṇa Sūtra, the ordinary man in the Evil Age of the Last Law, not upholding even one vinaya rule and being thought by others as if he were an icchantika, who, as the scripture passage says, believes stubbornly that the Lotus Sūtra is even better than the scriptures of the three periods (ikonto), and that there is no other way than the Lotus Sūtra for becoming the Buddha, is millions of times superior to those other great sages, even if he does not have a particle of understanding. This is what the scripture passage says. As for those people, some lead people into scriptures for the purpose of transferring them later into the Lotus Sūtra. Some do not enter in the Lotus Sūtra because of attachments to other scriptures. Some, not only stay with those other scriptures, but also because they are so deeply attached to those scriptures, say that the Lotus Sūtra is inferior to this scripture. Thus the practitioners of the Lotus Sūtra today should keep this in mind. "Suppose, just as, amongst all brooks, streams, rivers, canals and all other waters, the sea is supreme, so it is also with this Lotus Sūtra; among all the sūtras preached by the Tathāgatas it is the profoundest and

greatest as amongst all the stars the princely Moon is supreme, so it is also with the Lotus Sūtra.³² One should understand the situation according to these. The men of wisdom of present day, Japan are like the stars, Nichiren is like the full moon.

Question: Are there people who spoke like this in ancient days?

Answer: In the treatise of the Great Master Dengyō it is said, "One should know the sūtras that other schools base themselves upon are not the highest (or the first). Those who uphold those sūtras are also not the first. The sūtra which the Tendai Lotus School uphold is the first. Therefore, those who are capable of upholding the Lotus Sūtra are first among all sentient beings. This is based on the teaching of the Buddha and not arbitrary self praise."³³

When one says that the insect which is attached to a kirin flies 10,000 miles in one day and the inferior beings who follow the cakravartin³⁴ are able to circle under the Four Heavens in an instant, should this be criticized or questioned? As for the comment "How can it be arbitrary self praise" should be kept firmly in mind. If this is the case, those who uphold the Lotus Sūtra as the sūtra teaches are superior to the Brahma King and go beyond Śakra. If one is accompanied by asuras one would even bear Mt. Sumeru. If one sends a dragon for attack, he will drink up even the great ocean. The Great Master Dengyō says, "Those who praise will accumulate merit as high as Mt. Sumeru and those who

³² Kato, op. cit., p. 387; T., vol. 9, no. 262, p. 54a.

³³ Saichō, Hōkke-shuku, op. cit., p. 144a.

³⁴ Cakravartin. This is the universal monarch.

revile will fall in the avīci hell."³⁵ The Lotus Sūtra says, "Those who, seeing those who recite, write and uphold this sūtra, scorn and despise, hate and envy them, and bear them a tenacious grudge will enter into avīci hell at the end of their lifetime."³⁶ If the golden words of the Buddha Śākyamuni are correct, the proof of Prabhūtaratna Buddha is not wrong, and the manifestations of the tongues of various Buddhas of Ten Directions were fixed, should one doubt the fact that all sentient beings of the present country of Japan will fall into the avīci hell? The Eighth Fascicle of the Lotus Sūtra states, "If anyone in future ages receives and keeps, reads and recites this sūtra, what they wish will not be in vain, in the present age they will obtain their blessed reward."³⁷ It also says, "Anyone who takes offerings to and praises it will obtain visible rewards in the present world."³⁸ In these two sentences there are eight characters saying, "also in the present age will attain its reward" and eight characters saying, "in the present age will attain visible reward." If these two sayings of sixteen characters were in vain, and if there is no great reward for Nichiren in this life, then the golden words of the Tathāgata are the same as the empty words of Devadatta and the proof of Prabhūtaratna is no different from the deluded words of Kugyari. Then, all the sentient beings would not fall into avīci hell, and the Buddhas of the three ages would not exist. Therefore, my

³⁵Dengyō, Ehyoshū, op. cit., p. 248.

³⁶Katō, op. cit., p. 108; T., vol. 9, no. 262, p. 15b.

³⁷Katō, op. cit., p. 437; T., vol. 9, no. 262, p. 62b.

³⁸Katō, op. cit., p. 438; T., vol. 9, no. 262, p. 62a.

disciples, try to practice completely in your body and life as it is taught in the Lotus Sūtra, and try to test the truth and falsehood of the Lotus Sūtra teaching. "Homage to the Lotus Sutra of the Wonderful Law." Homage to the Lotus Sūtra of the Wonderful Law."

Question: Now, in the text of the Lotus Sūtra it is said, "I do not love my body and life but only the highest path."³⁹ The Nirvāna Sūtra says, "This is like the emissary of the king who is able to speak well and discuss well, who is skillful in means, and who is able to transmit the order of the king to another country. He would lose his body and life but would never hide the words and teachings taught by the king. The wise man is like this. Among ordinary people he would not care for his body and life, but would always preach the Mahayana Scriptures, the secret treasury of the Tathagata and the thesis that all sentient beings have the Buddha Nature."⁴⁰ What sort of things are these that one would go as far as to throw away one's body and life? I would like to hear in detail.

Answer: When I was young I thought that the words, "I do not love my body," referred to such things as the dangerous trips to China by Dengyō, Kōbō, Jikaku, and Chisho under the Imperial order, I thought that the six years which Hsuan-tsang risked his life travelling from China to India illustrates these words, and that it must also refer to the boy in the Himalayas who offered his life for the second half of the gāthā,⁴¹ or, to

³⁹ Katō, op. cit., pp. 267-268; T., vol. 9, no. 262, p. 36b.

⁴⁰ Ta-pan-nieh-pan-ching (大般涅槃經), T., vol. 12, no. 374, p. 419a.

⁴¹ Boy in the Himalayas. This refers to a story recorded in the

the Bodhisattva Medicine King who burned his arms for 72000 years.⁴² But if one were to follow the text of the sūtra, then it does not refer to these. The statement, "I do not love my body . . ." ⁴³ in the sūtra follows the list of three kinds of enemies who are said to revile, accuse, and beat him with swords and sticks. Again, the expression, "rather lose my body and life" in the Nirvāna Sūtra is immediately followed by the passage which says, "There is an icchantika who takes on the appearance of an arhat, stays in an empty discarded place, and reviles the vaipulya scriptures. Ordinary people seeing him all think that he is a true arhat or a great Bodhisattva."⁴⁴ The Lotus Sūtra passage says that the third enemy, "Will wear patched garments in seclusion, pretending that they walk the true path and scorning other people, will greedily attach to gain, and will preach the law to laymen and be revered by the world, as arhats of the Six Transcendent Powers."⁴⁵ The Parinirvāna Sūtra refers

Mahāparinirvāna Sūtra, fascicle 13, T., vol. 12, no. 375, pp. 691c-693b. In a former life, the Buddha was a monk who was searching for truth. Once when he was in the Himalayas Buddha tested him disguised as a rāk-sasa, reciting the first half of a gatha. The young monk offered his own body as food for the rāksasa in order to be taught the second half of the gatha. For a complete translation of this story see: Kosho Yamamoto, trans. The Mahāparinirvāna Sūtra (Tokyo: Karinbunko, 1973), pp. 351-356.

⁴²Bodhisattva Medicine King. This refers to an incident in the Lotus Sūtra, Chapter XXIII, "The Story of the Bodhisattva Medicine King." In order to pay homage to the Buddha the Bodhisattva Medicine King burned his arms for 72,000 years. Katō, op. cit., p. 385; T., vol. 9, no. 262, pp. 53c-54a.

⁴³Katō, op. cit., pp. 267-268; T., vol. 9, no. 262, p. 36c.

⁴⁴Ta-pan-nieh-pen-ching (大般涅槃經), T., vol. 12, no. 376, p. 892c.

⁴⁵Katō, op. cit., p. 266; T., vol. 9, no. 262, p. 36b.

to, "One icchantika who looks like an arhat but practices evil deeds."⁴⁶ According to these scriptural passages what is called, "the strong enemy of the correct law" is neither an evil king, evil minister, teacher of heretical views, māra king, or monk who has broken vinaya rules but rather a great reviler of the teaching who will be found among those great monks who uphold vinaya rules and possess wisdom. Therefore the Great Master Miao-lo wrote and said, "The third enemy is the most severe. This is because the later ones in the list are harder to detect."⁴⁷ The Fifth Fascicle of the Lotus Sūtra says, "The Lotus Sūtra is the mysterious treasury of the Buddha-tathāgatas, which is supreme above all sūtras."⁴⁸ In this quotation there are four characters which say, "The highest." Therefore, if it is as the passage says, should it not be that those who say that the Lotus Sūtra is at the peak of the Tripitaka are the practitioners of the Lotus Sūtra? Yet there are many who are respected in the nation and who say that there are many sūtras which are superior to the Lotus Sūtra. When confronted by the practitioners of the Lotus Sūtra they have the support of the king and ministers. As for the practitioner of the Lotus Sūtra, because he does not have influence, all in the country will look down upon him. When this happens, if he affirms strongly, as Bodhisattva Sadāparibhūta or as Śāstra Master Bhadraruci, then the threat will reach his life.

⁴⁶ Ta-pan-ni-yuan-ching (大般涅槃經), T., vol. 12, no. 376, p. 892c.

⁴⁷ Fa-hua-wen-chu-chi (法華文句), T., vol. 34, no. 1719, p. 315a.

⁴⁸ Katō, op. cit., p. 284; T., vol. 9, no. 262, p. 39a.

This appears to be the most important matter. This refers to the person of the present Nichiren. I, as little a personage as I am, say the Great Master Kōbō and the Great Master Jikaku, Tripitaka Subhakarasiṃha, Tripitaka Vajrabodhi, and Tripitaka Amoghavajra are strong enemies of the Lotus Sūtra, and if the text of the sūtra is correct, there will be no doubt about their going to avīci hell. Compared to this, to enter a big fire naked would be easy; to take Mt. Sumeru in one's hand and throw it would be easy; to carry a large stone on one's back and cross the great ocean would be easy. To establish this great teaching in Japan is a very important matter. Unless the teacher Śākya-muni of the Pure Land of Vulture Peak, Prabhūtaratna Buddha of the Precious World, the Buddhas of the Ten Directions, Bodhisattvas emerging out of the ground of the 10000 worlds, the Four Heavenly Kings, Brahma, Sakra, the Sun, and the Moon helped invisibly and in manifested forms, could there be peace even for one moment, or one day?

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

In the Kamakura period Buddhism in Japan transcended its Chinese origins and developed a uniquely Japanese expression. With the rise of sects which were independent of the state there was a shift from the old Nara and Heian concepts of corporate Buddhism to a more radical form of "popular" Buddhism.

Nichiren shared in the religious innovations of the Kamakura period. Along with Hōnen and Shinran he rejected his Tendai heritage when he rejected the notion of corporate national salvation. He joined the Pure Land masters in preaching personal salvation based upon faith. But while Hōnen employed the nembutsu as the exclusive path to salvation, Nichiren established the daimoku as the sole means to personal enlightenment. Both Hōnen and Nichiren rejected a religious hierarchy and elaborate rituals which represented the syncretistic Tendai tradition, and both taught that there was a personal religious faith apart from liturgy which was open to all people.

While both Hōnen and Nichiren focused their attention on the teachings related to the Age of the Last Law, Nichiren transcended his predecessor in emphasizing the idea of the eternal practice of the bodhisattva, leading him to a position affirming the self in the face of suffering--that is, the suffering was, in Nichiren's teaching, made positive. Nowhere is this more evident than in his Senji shō.

The Senji shō is significant in reflecting Nichiren's denunciation of the feudal rulers of Japan as corrupt, as illegitimate. In it he argues that since the death of the Sākya¹muni Buddha, his own time--even though overseen by illegitimate rulers--is the most propitious for the propagation of the true teaching, based upon the Lotus Sūtra, of the Buddha.

Hōnen, Nichiren's predecessor, had called for a renunciation of the world. For Nichiren, however, the Lotus Sūtra contained the promise that the real world can be transformed into the ideal world through faith in the scripture in any present. He thus can be seen to have replaced the Pure Land notion of radical transcendence with the concept of divine immanence, with himself as the messenger-bodhisattva whose destiny it is to teach the Lotus Sūtra during the Age of the Last Law. Early in his career, Nichiren had adopted as his model the Bodhisattva Sadāparibhūta; but as is evident from his Senji shō, he came to envisage himself as the Bodhisattva Viśiṣṭacarita of the Lotus Sūtra, the bodhisattva prophesied by the Buddha to spread the true teaching in the Age of the Last Law.

The Senji shō thus stands as the apogee in the writings of Nichiren and the development of his thought. In it he demonstrates his belief that though he and his successors were persecuted and will continue to be persecuted, such revilement is not to be construed as something innate in human nature but as the means to be rid of all past evil karma, individually as well as collectively. Therefore, through their suffering for the sake of the truth they envisage themselves as the vehicle through which the world is redeemed in the Age of the Last Law. In this, Nichiren can clearly be seen to have paved a new path for Buddhism in a particularly Japanese form.

APPENDIX

ESSAYS AND LETTERS WRITTEN BY NICHIREN*

Kaitai Sokushin Jobutsu - The Bodily Attainment of Buddhahood Through the Essence of Precepts - Written in the Third Year of Ninji, 1242.

Kaihō Mon - Gate to the Precepts - Written in the First Year of Kangen, 1243.

Shiki Shin Niho Shō - Essay on the Two Dharmas of Mind and Matter - Written in the Second Year of Kangen, 1245.

Shishi Kyō Ō Shō - Essay on King Suddhodana - Written in the Fourth Year of Kangen, 1246.

Gyōshun Ō Shō - Essay on Emperors Yao, Shun, and Yu - Written in the First Year of Hōji, 1247.

Shōgan Joju Shō - Essay on the Fulfillment of Various Desires - Written in the First Year of Kenchō, 1249.

Jōjin Ō Jō Shō - Essay on Women Attaining Buddhahood - Written in the Fifth Year of Kenchō, 1253.

Jū Ō Santan Shō - Essay on the Ten Kings of Purgatory - Written in the Sixth Year of Kenchō, 1254.

Hachidai Jigoku Shō - Essay on the Eight Great Hells - Written in the Sixth Year of Kenchō, 1254.

Rensei Shō - Essay on the Flourishing of the Lotus - Written in the Seventh Year of Kenchō, 1255.

Shōshū Mondō Shō - Questions and Answers on Various Sects - Written in Seventh Year of Kenchō, 1255.

Nembutsu Mūgen Jigoku Shō - Essay on the Evils of Nembutsu - Written in the Seventh Year of Kenchō, 1255.

Issō Jōbutsu Shō - Essay on Becoming a Buddha in One's Own Life - Written in the Seventh Year of Kenchō, 1255.

*Bunga Katō, Nichiren shōnin goibun (The Remaining Works of Nichiren)
Tokyo: Herrakuji Publishing Company, 2nd edition, 1968.

Shūshi Shin Goshō - Essay on the One who is Master of His Parents - Written in the Seventh Year of Kenchō, 1255.

Suijaku Hōmon - Dharmagate on the Appearance of Buddha - Written in the First Year of Kōgen, 1256.

Ekō Kudoku Shō - Essay on Pious Offerings - Written in the First Year of Kōgen, 1256.

San Hachi Gyō - On the Three and Eight Teachings - Written in the First Year of Shōka, 1257.

Sanshū Kyōsō - Three Modes of the Buddha's Teaching - Written in the First Year of Shōka, 1257.

Iza Shitsu Gōshō - Essay on Entering the Tathāgata's Room, to Wear the Tathagata's Robe, and to Sit on the Tathagata's Crown - Written in the First Year of Shōka, 1257.

Roku Bonshi Sei Gōshō - Essay on the Six Stages of Rebirth and the Four Kinds of Holy men - Written in the First Year of Shōka, 1257.

Ichidai Seikyō Tai-i - The Great Meaning of Sakyamuni's Sacred Teaching - Written in the Second Year of Shōka, 1258.

Junyōze Ji - Meaning of the Ten Thusnesses - Written in the Second Year of Shōka, 1258.

Ichinen Sanzen Hōmon - Dharmagates of One Thought Three Thousand Worlds - Written in the Second Year of Shōka, 1258.

Sōzai Ichinen Shō - Essay on All Possibilities in One Thought - Written in the Second Year of Shōka, 1258.

Shūgō Kōkka Ron - Protection of the Country - Written in the First Year of Shōgun, 1259.

Nembutsu Sha Tsuihō Senjō Ji - Essay Explaining the Circumstances of the Banishment of the Practitioners of the Nembutsu - Written in the First Year of Shōgun, 1259.

Jūhō Kaiji - The Ten Dharma Worlds - Written in the First Year of Shōgun, 1259.

Jizen Niho Bosatsu Fusaku Butsu Ji - In the Time Prior to the Lotus Sutra the Two Vehicle Bodhisattvas Cannot Attain Buddhahood - Written in the First Year of Shōgun, 1259.

Sainan Taijishō - Elimination of Calamities - Written in the First Year of Shōgun, 1259.

Juhō Kaimyō Innen Shō - Essay on Clarifying the Cause and Effect of the Ten Dharma Realms - Written in the First Year of Bun-o, 1260.

Shō Hōkke Daimoku Shō - Essay on Chanting the Title of the Lotus Sutra - Written in the First Year of Bun-o, 1260.

Risshō Ankoku Ron - Establishment of Righteousness and the Security of the Country - Written in the First Year of Bun-o, 1260.

Ichidai Goji Zu - Plan of the Five Periods - Written in the First Year of Bun-o, 1260.

Konkōsan Kai Gōbun - Essay on the Present Three Realms - Written in the First Year of Bun-o, 1260.

Go Gohyaku Sai Gōbun - Essay on the Five, Five Hundred Year Periods - Written in the First Year of Bun-o, 1260.

Nippon Shingon Shūji - Essay on the Japanese Shingon Sect - Written in the First Year of Bun-o, 1260.

Tsuigishiro Dono Goshō - Letter to Mr. Tsuigishiro - Written in the First Year of Kochō, 1261.

Funamori Yasaburō Mōtō - Letter to Lady Tsunamori Yasabu - Written in the First Year of Kochō, 1261.

Zenshun Yōgo Shō - Essay on the Protective Spirits - Written in the First Year of Kochō, 1261.

Onaji Hito Shio No Aji Goshō - Water in the Mountain Stream Ultimately Reaches the Ocean and Becomes Salty - Written in the First Year of Kochō, 1261.

Shi On Shō - Essay on the Four Obligations - Written in the Second Year of Kochō, 1262.

Kyōki Jikoku Shō - Essay on the Teaching, Capacity, Time and Country - Written in the Second Year of Kochō, 1262.

Gyōja Butsu Tenshugo Shō - Essay on the Devotee Whom the Buddha and Devas Protect - Written in the Second Year of Kochō, 1262.

Ken Hōbō Shō - Revealing the Slander of the Dharma - Written in the Second Year of Kochō, 1262.

Jōgyō Bosatsu Ketsu Yo Fuzoku Kuden - Summary on the Oral Transmission of Jōgyō Bosatsu - Written in the Second Year of Kochō, 1262.

Jimyō Hōkke Mondō Shō - Essay on Questions and Answers on the Lotus Sutra - Written in the Third Year of Kochō, 1263.

Mikoshi Buri Goshō - Letter to Mikoshi Buri - Written in the First Year of Bun'ei, 1264.

Gessui Gōshō - Essay on Women - Written in the First Year of Bun'ei, 1264.

Daimoku Amida Myōgo Shōretsu - Superiority and Inferiority of the Daimoku and Nembutsu - Written in the First Year of Bun'ei, 1264.

Hokke Shingon Shōretsu - Superiority and Inferiority of the Hokke and Shingon Sects - Written in the First Year of Bun'ei, 1264.

Daikoku Tenjin Kūyō Sōjō Ji - Daikoku Tenjin Assists a Poor Man - Written in the First Year of Bun'ei, 1264.

Tōsei Nembutsugya Mūgen Jigoku Ji - Present Nembutsu Practitioners Will Fall into Hell - Written in the First Year of Bun'ei, 1264.

Rokurotsunenaga Go Shosoku - Letter to Rokurotsunenaga - Written in the First Year of Bun'ei, 1264.

Nanjō-hyoe Schichiro Dono Goshō - Letter to Mr. Nanjōbyoeshichiro - Written in the First Year of Bun'ei, 1264.

Mokukai Nizō Kaigan No Kōtō - Enshrining the Wooden Image of Buddha Prior to the Counterfeit Age - Written in the First Year of Bun'ei, 1264.

Nyōnin Zobutsu Shō - Essay on Women Becoming Buddha - Written in the Second Year of Bun'ei, 1265.

Yakuobon Tōkishō - Essay on the Triumphant of Medicine King - Written in the Second Year of Bun'ei, 1265.

Seigu Mondō Shō - Essay on Questions and Answers on the Sage and Fool - Written in the Second Year of Bun'ei, 1265.

Hōkke Daimoku Shō - Essay on the Title of the Lotus Sutra - Written in the Third Year of Bun'ei, 1266.

Hoshina Gorotarō Dōnō Gohenji - Letter to Hoshina Gorotarō - Written in the Fourth Year of Bun'ei, 1267.

Ankoku Ron Gakan Urai - Reasoning on the Ankoku Ron - Written in the Fifth Year of Bun'ei, 1268.

Shuku Oku Nyudo Kyogoshō - Letter to the Monk Shukuoku - Written in the Fifth Year of Bun'ei, 1268.

Hōjotokimune Ni Ataeshi Shō - Letter to Hojotokimune - Written in the Fifth Year of Bun'ei, 1268.

Shukaya Mitsunari Ni Ataeshi Shō - Letter to Shukaya Mitsunari - Written in the Fifth Year of Bun'ei, 1268.

Heizaemon Yoritsuna Ni Ataeshi Shō - Letter to Heizaemon Yoritsuna - Written in the Fifth Year of Bun'ei, 1268.

Hōzyō Yagenta Ni Ataeshi Shō - Letter to Hozyo Yagenta - Written in the Fifth Year of Bun'ei, 1268.

Kenchoji Doryū Ni Ataeshi Shō - Letter to Kenchoji Doryu - Written in the Fifth Year of Bun'ei, 1268.

Gokurakuji Ryokan Ni Ataeshi Shō - Letter to Gokurakuji Ryokan - Written in the Fifth Year of Bun'ei, 1268.

Daibutsuden Battō Ni Ataeshi Shō - Letter to Daibutsuden Bettō - Written in the Fifth Year of Bun'ei, 1268.

Jufukuji Ni Ataeshi Shō - Letter to Jufukuji Temple - Written in the Fifth Year of Bun'ei, 1268.

Jōkōmyōji Ni Ataeshi Shō - Letter to Jōkōmyōji - Written in the Fifth Year of Bun'ei, 1268.

Tahōji Ni Ataeshi Shō - Letter to Tahoji Temple - Written in the Fifth Year of Bun'ei, 1268.

Chōrakuji Ni Ataeshi Shō - Letter to Chorakuji Temple - Written in the Fifth Year of Bun'ei, 1268.

Deshidanna No Naka Goshō - Letter to My Disciples and Patrons - Written in the Fifth Year of Bun'ei, 1268.

Monchū Tokui Shō - Essay on Questions and Comments on Pride - Written in the Fifth Year of Bun'ei, 1268.

Toki Dono Gōsho - Letter to Mr. Toki - Written in the Fifth Year of Bun'ei, 1268.

Ankoku Ron Okugaki - Postscript to the Risshō Ankoku Ron - Written in the Sixth Year of Bun'ei, 1269.

Hōmon Mosaru Beki Yō No Kōtō - Essay On What Should Be Taught in Buddhism - Written in the Sixth Year of Bun'ei, 1269.

Shikan Shaka Butsu Go To Yō Chukejō - Description of the Washing Ceremony of Sakyamuni Buddha - Written in the Sixth Year of Bun'ei, 1269.

Daizu Goshō - Letter of appreciation for Beans - Written in the Seventh Year of Bun'ei, 1270.

Kingo Dono Gohenji - Reply to Mr. Kingo - Written in the Seventh Year of Bun'ei, 1270.

Toki Dono Gohenji - Reply to Mr. Toki - Written in the Seventh Year of Bun'ei, 1270.

Zemui Sanzō Shō - Essay on Tripitaka Subhakarasingha - Written in the Seventh Year of Bun'ei, 1270.

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Shingon Tendai Shoretsu No Kōtō - Superiority and Inferiority of the Shingon and Tendai Sects - Written in the Seventh Year of Bun'ei, 1270.

Akimōtō Dono Gohenji - Reply to Mr. Akimoto - Written in the Eighth Year of Bun'ei, 1271.

Juryūbon Tokui Shō - Essay Praising the Eternal Life of the Tathagata - Written in the Eighth Year of Bun'ei, 1271.

Shijokingō Nyōbō No Goshō - Letter to Mrs. Shijokingo - Written in the Eighth Year of Bun'ei, 1271.

Sukimarō Goze Goshō - Congratulatory Letter to the Parents of Sukimarō Goze - Written in the Eighth Year of Bun'ei, 1271.

Jutsu Shō Shō - Essay on Ten Chapters - Written in the Eighth Year of Bun'ei, 1271.

Shijokingō Dono Gohenji - Reply to Mr. Shijokingo - Written in the Eighth Year of Bun'ei, 1271.

Yukitoshi Gohenji - Reply to Yukitoshi - Written in the Eighth Year of Bun'ei, 1271.

Yukitoshi Sojō Gokaitsu - Petition to Yukitoshi Sojo - Written in the Eighth Year of Bun'ei, 1271.

Hsusakujitsu Goshō - Letter to Hsusakujitsu - Written in the Eighth Year of Bun'ei, 1271.

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Gonin Tsuchirō Goshō - Letter to Gonin Tsuchiro - Written in the Eighth Year of Bun'ei, 1271.

Denju Keju Hōmon - Essay on Transforming the Profound Teaching into the Easy Teaching - Written in the Eighth Year of Bun'ei, 1271.

Tsuchirō Goshō - Letter from Prison - Written in the Eighth Year of Bun'ei, 1271.

Shikyonanji Jusankan Hiketsu - The Thirteen Critical Letters on the Esoteric Teaching - Written in the Eighth Year of Bun'ei, 1271.

Teradomari Goshō - Letter from Teradomari - Written in the Eighth Year of Bun'ei, 1271.

Sadō Gokanki Shō - Essay on the Unpleasantness Incurred at Sadō - Written in the Eighth Year of Bun'ei, 1271.

Toki Nyūdō Dono Gohenji - Reply to the Lay Priest Toki - Written in the Eighth Year of Bun'ei, 1271.

Shūku Jutsu Shō - Essay on the Ten Jinas - Written in the Eighth Year of Bun'ei, 1271.

Sōshō Mondō - Dialogue on an Early Victory - Written in the Eighth Year of Bun'ei, 1271.

Hokke Jōdō Mondō Shō - Questions and Answers on the Hōkke and Jōdō Sects - Written in the Ninth Year of Bun'ei, 1272.

Shoji Ichidaiji Kechinyaku Shō - Essay on the Heritage of the Sole Great Thing Concerning Life and Death - Written in the Ninth Year of Bun'ei, 1272.

Sōmoku Jobutsu Kuketsu - Oral Decisions on Trees and Grass Becoming Buddha - Written in the Ninth Year of Bun'ei, 1272.

Kaimoku Shō - Essay on Opening the Eyes - Written in the Ninth Year of Bun'ei, 1272.

Abutsu Ni Goshō - Letter to Abutsu - Written in the Ninth Year of Bun'ei, 1272.

Sado Goshō - Letter from Sado - Written in the Ninth Year of Bun'ei, 1272.

Toki Dono Gohenji - Reply to Mr. Toki - Written in the Ninth Year of Bun'ei, 1272.

Sairenbō Gohenji - Reply to Sairenbō - Written in the Ninth Year of Bun'ei, 1272.

Tokuju Sokunin Kudoku Hōmon Shō - Essay on the Merits of Ordinary People Receiving Buddhism - Written in the Ninth Year of Bun'ei, 1272.

Domyo Donamei Goshō - Letter on Same Birth, Same Name - Written in the Ninth Year of Bun'ei, 1272.

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Kitako Sojō - Letter to Kitake - Written in the Tenth Year of Bun'ei, 1273.

Hokke Shū Naishō Buppō Ketsumyaku - Essay on the Close Connection Between the Lotus Sect and the Buddha's Teaching - Written in the Tenth Year of Bun'ei, 1273.

Myōhō Mandara Kuyō Kōtō - Making Offerings to the Wonderful Law Mandala - Written in the Tenth Year of Bun'ei, 1273.

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Kanjin Honzon Shō Fukujō - Supplementary Letter on the Kanjin Honzon Shō - Written in the Tenth Year of Bun'ei, 1273.

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Nyōsetsu Shūgyō Shō - Essay on the True Ascetic Practices - Written in the Tenth Year of Bun'ei, 1273.

Kenbutsu Miraiki - Record of the Manifestation of the Buddha in the Last Age - Written in the Tenth Year of Bun'ei, 1273.

Toki Dono Gohenji - Reply to Mr. Toki - Written in the Tenth Year of Bun'ei, 1273.

Namiki Isaburo Dono Gohenji - Reply to Mr. Namiki Isaburo - Written in the Tenth Year of Bun'ei, 1273.

Kyō-ō Dono Gohenji - Reply to Mr. Kyō-ō - Written in the Tenth Year of Bun'ei, 1273.

Bendenni Gozen Goshō - Letter to the Nun Bendenni - Written in the Tenth Year of Bun'ei, 1273.

Total Goshō Sōjō - Letter on the Explication of the Meaning of Total - Written in the Tenth Year of Bun'ei, 1273.

Shōjō Daijō Funbetsu Shō - Essay on the Difference Between Hinayana and Mahayana - Written in the Tenth Year of Bun'ei, 1273.

Kashaku Bōhō Metsuzai Shō - Essay on the Explication of Sins - Written in the Tenth Year of Bun'ei, 1273.

Hōkke Joja Chinan Kōtō - Essay on the Worthy Deeds of the Practitioners of the Lotus Sutra - Written in the Eleventh Year of Bun'ei, 1274.

Jushoku Konjo Kudenka Denshō - The Oral Transmission Regarding the Ordaining of Monks - Written in the Eleventh Year of Bun'ei, 1274.

Yagento Dono Gohenji - Reply to Mr. Yagenta - Written in the Eleventh Year of Bun'ei, 1274.

Endō Saemon No Jō Goshō - Letter to Endō Saemon-no-jō - Written in the Eleventh Year of Bun'ei, 1274.

Hokke Shūyō Shō - On Seizing the Essence of the Lotus - Written in the Eleventh Year of Bun'ei, 1274.

Jizen Tokudō Umu Goshō - Letter on the Possibility of Attaining Salvation Prior to the Time of the Lotus Sutra - Written in the Eleventh Year of Bun'ei, 1274.

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Yagenta Nyūdō Dono Gohenji - Reply to the Lay Priest Yagenta - Written in the Eleventh Year of Bun'ei, 1274.

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Sōya Nyūdō Dono Goshō - Letter to the Lay Priest Soya - Written in the Eleventh Year of Bun'ei, 1274.

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Ōta Dono Kyō Goshō - Letter of Acknowledgment to Mr. Ota - Written in the Twelfth Year of Bun'ei, 1274.

Shojokingō Dono Nyōbō Gohenji - Reply to Mrs. Shijokingo - Written in the Twelfth Year of Bun'ei, 1274.

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Misawabō Gohenji - Reply to Misawabō - Written in the Twelfth Year of Bun'ei, 1274.

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Kon Nyūdō Dono Gohenji - Reply to the Lay Priest Kon - Written in the Twelfth Year of Bun'ei, 1274.

Kyōdai Shō - Essay on Brotherhood - Written in the Twelfth Year of Bun'ei, 1274.

Oshajō No Koto - Essay on Rajagrha - Written in the First Year of Kenji, 1275.

Horen Shō - Essay on the Law Lotus - Written in the First Year of Kenji, 1275.

Ueno Dono Gohenji - Reply to Mr. Ueno - Written in the First Year of Kenji, 1275.

Ichigaya Nyūdō Goshō - Letter to the Lay Priest Ichigaya - Written in the First Year of Kenji, 1275.

Sajiki Nyūbō Gohenji - Reply to Mrs. Sajiki - Written in the First Year of Kenji, 1275.

Myōitsu Amagozen Goshosoku - Letter to the Nun Myoitsu - Written in the First Year of Kenji, 1275.

Senji Shō - Essay on the Selection of Time - Written in the First Year of Kenji, 1275.

Kokufu Amagozen Goshō - Letter to the Nun Kokufu - Written in the First Year of Kenji, 1275.

Sansanzo Kiu Kōtō - On the Matter of Sansanzo's Praying for Rain - Written in the First Year of Kenji, 1275.

Jorenbō Goshō - Letter to Jorenbo - Written in the First Year of Kenji, 1275.

Daigaku Saburo Dono Goshō - Letter to Mr. Daigaku Saburo - Written in the First Year of Kenji, 1275.

Ōta Dono Nyūbō Gohenji - Reply to Lay Priest Ota - Written in the First Year of Kenji, 1275.

Takahashi Dono Gohenji - Reply to Mr. Takahashi - Written in the First Year of Kenji, 1275.

Uenō Dono Gohenji - Reply to Mr. Uenō - Written in the First Year of Kenji, 1275.

Takahashi Nyūdō Dono Gohenji - Reply to the Lay Priest Takahashi - Written in the First Year of Kenji, 1275.

Shiyokangō Dono Gohenji - Reply to Mr. Shiyokango - Written in the First Year of Kenji, 1275.

Konatō Gozen Gōshō Sōkū - Letter to His Excellency Konatō - Written in the First Year of Kenji, 1275.

Uenō Dōnō Goshō - Letter to Mr. Uenō - Written in the First Year of Kenji, 1275.

Minobu San Goshō - Letter from Minobu - Written in the First Year of Kenji, 1275.

Hyoeshi Dono Gohenji - Reply to Mr. Hyoeshi - Written in the First Year of Kenji, 1275.

Toki Dono Goshō - Letter to Mr. Toki - Written in the First Year of Kenji, 1275.

Myoshinni Gozen Gohenji - Reply to His Excellency Myoshinni - Written in the First Year of Kenji, 1275.

Hitoe Shō - Essay on an Unlined Kimonō - Written in the First Year of Kenji, 1275.

Abutsuni Gozen Gohenji - Reply to His Excellency Abutsuni - Written in the First Year of Kenji, 1275.

Onkoromo Hei Gōshō - Letter to Onkoromo Hei - Written in the First Year of Kenji, 1275.

Moko No Tuskai Goshō - Letter to Mongolia - Written in the First Year of Kenji, 1275.

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Hyōeshi Dono Gohenji - Reply to Mr. Hyoeshi - Written in the First Year of Kenji, 1275.

Kanjin Honzon Tokui Shō - Essay on Praising the True Object of Worship - Written in the First Year of Kenji, 1275.

Uenō Dono Haha Amagozen Gohengi - Reply to Her Excellency the Nun Uenō - Written in the First Year of Kenji, 1275.

Kyōjin Jō Gohenji - Reply to Kyōjin - Written in the First Year of Kenji, 1275.

Seijin Sanze Ō Shiru No Kōtō - Essay on the King of the Land - Written in the First Year of Kenji, 1275.

Zuisō Goshō - Essay on Good Omens - Written in the Second Year of Kenji, 1276.

Zemui Shō - Essay On Subhakarasiṃha - Written in the Second Year of Kenji. 1276.

Shinkoku Ō Goshō - Letter to Shinkoku Ō - Written in the First Year of Kenji, 1275.

Ueno Dōnō Goshōsoku - Letter to Uenō - Written in the Second Year of Kenji, 1276.

Kiyozumi Ji Taishu No Naka - Lecture to the Mamen at Kiyozumi Ji Temple - Written in the Second Year of Kenji, 1276.

Nanjō Dono Gohenji - Reply to Mr. Nanjō - Written in the Second Year of Kenji, 1276.

Matsuno Dono Goshosoku - Letter to Mr. Matsuno - Written in the Second Year of Kenji, 1276.

Nanjō Dono Gohenji - Reply to Mr. Nanjō - Written in the Second Year of Kenji, 1276.

Toki Amagozen - Letter to the Nun Toki - Written in the Second Year of Kenji, 1276.

Bōji Kyō No Kōtō - On the Matter of Not Preserving the Sūtra - Written in the Second Year of Kenji, 1276.

Shuju On Furumai Shō - Essay on Various Kinds of Behaviour - Written in the Second Year of Kenji, 1276.

Kojitsubō Goshō - Letter to Kojitsubo - Written in the Second Year of Kenji, 1276.

Myōmitsu Shonin Goshosoku - Letter to Myōmitsu Shonin - Written in the Second Year of Kenji, 1276.

Nanjō Dono Gohenji - Reply to Mr. Nanjō - Written in the Second Year of Kenji, 1276.

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Benden Goshō Soku - Letter to Benden - Written in the Second Year of Kenji, 1276.

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Hō'on Shō - Essay on Gratitude - Written in the Second Year of Kenji, 1276.

Hō'on Shō Sōbun - Further Comments on the Essay on Gratitude - Written in the Second Year of Kenji, 1276.

Nishiyama Dono Gohenji - Reply to Mr. Nishiyama - Written in the Second Year of Kenji, 1276.

Sōya Dono Gohenji - Reply to Mr. Sōya - Written in the Second Year of Kenji, 1276.

Dōmyōzenmon Goshō - Letter to Dōmyōzenmon - Written in the Second Year of Kenji, 1276.

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Matsuno Dono Gohenji - Reply to Matsuno - Written in the Second Year of Kenji, 1276.

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Honzon Kuyō Goshō - Making Offerings to the Honzon - Written in the Second Year of Kenji, 1276.

Oishōshi Nyūdō Goshō - Letter to the Lay Priest Oishōshi - Written in the Second Year of Kenji, 1276.

Matsuno Dono Shōsoku - Letter to Matsuno - Written in the Second Year of Kenji, 1276.

Hyōeshi Dono Nyōbō Goshō - Letter to Mrs. Hyōeshi - Written in the Third Year of Kenji, 1277.

Rokurojiro Dono Gohenji - Reply to Rokurojiro - Written in the Third Year of Kenji, 1277.

Shishin Gohon Shō - Essay on the Four Objects of Faith and The Fifth Chapter - Written in the Third Year of Kenji, 1277.

Shijokugo Dono Gohenji - Reply to Shijokingo - Written in the Third Year of Kenji, 1277.

Jōmyō Shonin Gokingō - Recent Events of Jōmyōshonin - Written in the Third Year of Kenji, 1277.

Ueno Dono Goshō - Letter to Ueno - Written in the Third Year of Kenji, 1277.

Kayama Goshoku - Letter to Kayama - Written in the Third Year of Kenji, 1277.

Abutsubō Gohenji - Reply to Abutsubō - Written in the Third Year of Kenji, 1277.

Nanjō Dono Gohenji - Reply to Nanjō - Written in the Third Year of Kenji, 1277.

Urabon Goshō - Letter to Urabon - Written in the Third Year of Kenji, 1277.

Yorimotojinjo - Petition of Yorimoto - Written in the Third Year of Kenji, 1277.

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Yasaburō Dono Gohenji - Reply to Yasaburō - Written in the Third Year of Kenji, 1277.

Nichinyō Gozen Gohenji - Reply to His Excellency Nichinyō - Written in the Third Year of Kenji, 1277.

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Matsuno Dono Gohenji - Reply to Matsuno - Written in the Third Year of Kenji, 1277.

Hyōeshi Dono Goshō - Letter to Hyōeshi - Written in the Third Year of Kenji, 1277.

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Hyoeshi Dono Nyōbō Gohenji - Reply to Mrs. Hyoeshi - Written in the Third Year of Kenji, 1277.

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Soya Nyūdō Dono Gohenji - Reply to the Lay Priest Soya - Written in the Third Year of Kenji, 1277.

Anshitsu Shufuku Shō - Essay on Retiring to a Hermits Cell - Written in the Third Year of Kenji, 1277.

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Jitsushoji Goshō - Letter to Jitsushoji Temple - Written in the Fourth Year of Kenji, 1278.

Shijokingo Dono Gohenji - Reply to Shijokingo - Written in the Fourth Year of Kenji, 1278.

Matsuno Dono Gohenji - Reply to Matsuno - Written in the Fourth Year of Kenji, 1278.

Sajiki Nyōbō Gohenji - Reply to Mrs. Sajiki - Written in the Fourth Year of Kenji, 1278.

Santaku Shō - Essay on Three Blessings - Written in the Fourth Year of Kenji, 1278.

Ueno Dono Gohenji - Reply to Ueno - Written in the Fourth Year of Kenji, 1278.

Shimon Butsujōgi - Meaning of the Srāvaka Vehicle - Written in the First Year of Kōan, 1278.

Shonin Gohenji - Reply to Shonin - Written in the First Year of Kōan, 1278.

Ueno Dono Gohenji - Reply to Ueno - Written in the First Year of Kōan, 1278.

Danetsubo Gohenji - Reply to Danetsubo - Written in the First Year of Kōan, 1278.

Ota Saemon Nojo Gohenji - Reply to Ota Saemon noji - Written in the First Year of Kōan, 1278.

Kaka Joju Goshō - Letter on the Flower and the Fruit - Written in the First Year of Kōan, 1278.

Matsuno Dono Gohenji - Reply to Matsuno - Written in the First Year of Kōan, 1278.

Kubō Amagozen Gohenji - Reply to the Nun Kubō - Written in the First Year of Kōan, 1278.

Nanjō Dono Hachiboku Shō - Letter on the Eight Trees to Nanjō - Written in the First Year of Kōan, 1278.

Nichijo Bon Hinkuyō - Reply to Nichijo - Written in the First Year of Kōan, 1278.

Hyōeshi Dono Gohenji - Reply to Hyōeshi - Written in the First Year of Kōan, 1278.

Nakatsukasa Saemon Nojo Dono Gohenji - Reply to Nakatsukasa Saemon-onjo - Written in the First Year of Kōan, 1278.

Kubō Amagozen Gohenji - Reply to the Nun Kubō - Written in the First Year of Kōan, 1278.

Rokunan Kueki - Six Difficult Things, Nine Easy Things - Written in the First Year of Kōan, 1278.

Shuju Mono Goshosoku - Letter on Various Things - Written in the First Year of Kōan, 1278.

Tokimitsu Gohenji - Reply to Tokimitsu - Written in the First Year of Kōan, 1278.

Myōhōni Gozen Gohenji - Reply to His Excellency Myōhōni - Written in the First Year of Kōan, 1278.

Sennichini Gozen Gohenji - Reply to His Excellency Sennichini - Written in the First Year of Kōan, 1278.

Shijokingo Dono Gohenji - Reply to Shijokingo - Written in the First Year of Kōan, 1278.

Kurōtaro Dono Gohenji - Reply to Kurōtaro - Written in the First Year of Kōan, 1278.

Yageta Nyūdō Dono Goshosoku - Letter to the Lay Priest Yageta -
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Myōshinni Gozen Gohenji - Reply to His Excellency Myōshinni -
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Myōhō Bikuni Gohenji - Reply to the Nun Myōhō - Written in the
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Honzon Mondō Shō - Essay on Questions and Answers on the Honzon -
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Oda Dono Nyōbō Gohenji - Reply to Mrs. Oda - Written in the First
Year of Kōan, 1278.

Juji Gosho - Letter on Ten Characters - Written in the First
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Shijokingo Dono Gohenji - Reply to Shijokingo - Written in the
First Year of Kōan, 1278.

Ueno Dono Gohenji - Reply to Ueno - Written in the First Year of
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Sennichini Gozen Gohenji - Reply to His Excellency Sennichini -
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Hyoeshi Dono Gohenji - Reply to Hyoeshi - Written in the First Year of Kōan, 1278.

Ueno Dono Gohenji - Reply to Ueno - Written in the Second Year of Kōan, 1279.

Jogyo O Nobu Besshi Shō - Letter on the Suffering of the People - Written in the Second Year of Kōan, 1279.

Kōshi Goshō - Essay on the Pious Child - Written in the Second Year of Kōan, 1279.

Nichigannyō Shaka Butsu Kuyōji - Essay on Nichigannyō's Memorial Service for Sakyamuni Buddha - Written in the Second Year of Kōan, 1279.

Matsuno Dono Goke Amagozen Gohenji - Reply to the Nun Widow Matsuno - Written in the Second Year of Kōan, 1279.

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Hokei Hō Omoshi No Kōtō - Essay on the Precious Light and Heavy Teaching - Written in the Second Year of Kōan, 1279.

Yōbosatsu Zōritsu Shō - Essay on the Establishment of the Four Bodhisattvas - Written in the Second Year of Kōan, 1279.

Matsu Dono Nyōbō Gohenji - Reply to Mrs. Matsuno - Written in the Second Year of Kōan, 1279.

Ueno Dono Gohenji - Reply to Ueno - Written in the Second Year of Kōan, 1279.

Sōya Dono Gohenji - Reply to Sōya - Written in the Second Year of Kōan, 1279.

Jakunichibō Goshō - Letter to Jakunichibō - Written in the Second Year of Kōan, 1279.

Shonin Gonanji - Hardships of Shonin - Written in the Second Year of Kōan, 1279.

Jimyōni Gozen Gohenji - Reply to His Excellency Jimyōni - Written in the Second Year of Kōan, 1279.

Honmon Kaitai Shō - Essay on the Embodiment of the Supreme Object of Worship - Written in the Second Year of Kōan, 1279.

Ryōnin Onchū Goshō - Letter to Ryōnin Onchū - Written in the Second Year of Kōan, 1279.

Shijokingo Dono Gohenji - Reply to Shijokingo - Written in the Second Year of Kōan, 1279.

Ueno Dono Gohenji - Reply to Ueno - Written in the Second Year of Kōan, 1279.

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Toki Dono Nyōbō Amagozen Gohenji - Reply to the Nun Toki - Written in the Second Year of Kōan, 1279.

Chūkō Nyūdō Shōsoku - Letter to the Lay Priest Chūkō - Written in the Second Year of Kōan, 1279.

Uemodayu Dono Gohenji - Reply to Uemodayu - Written in the Second Year of Kōan, 1279.

Kubō Amagozen Gohenji - Reply to the Nun Kubō - Written in the Second Year of Kōan, 1279.

Shutsuke Kudoku Goshō - Virtues of Becoming a Monk - Written in the Third Year of Kōan, 1280.

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Shōkyō Yō Hokke Kyō Naneki No Kōtō - Essay on Comparing the Difficult and Easy Sūtra with the Lotus Sūtra - Written in the Third Year of Kōan, 1280.

Kūbō Amagozen Gohenji - Reply to Mrs. Kūbō - Written in the Third Year of Kōan, 1280.

Sennichi Gohenji - Reply to Sennichi - Written in the Third Year of Kōan, 1280.

Ueno Dono Gohenji - Reply to Ueno - Written in the Third Year of Kōan, 1280.

Jōzō Jōgan Goshosoku - Letter to Lady Jōzō - Written in the Third Year of Kōan, 1280.

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Naibō Nyōbō Gohenji - Reply to Mrs. Naibō - Written in the Third Year of Kōan, 1280.

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Matsuno Dono Gohenji - Reply to Matsuno - Written in the Third Year of Kōan, 1280.

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Juhachi Enman Shō - Essay on the Eighteen Perfections of the Buddha. - Written in the Third Year of Kōan, 1280.

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