Translators' Note

The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, a two-volume work, is completed with the publication of the present volume. While consistency in style should ideally be maintained throughout, we found it necessary or advisable to make some changes in style and in the translation of quotations from the sutras and commentaries that appeared in volume 1. We would like, therefore, to explain the major differences in style between the two volumes.

First and foremost, in the second volume macrons have been added to mark long vowels in Japanese and Sanskrit words, though other diacritical marks are omitted as in the earlier volume. Macrons are not used, however, on a few words basic to Nichiren Daishonin's teachings, such as Myoho-renge-kyo, or on well-known place-names such as Tokyo.

Second, in the background section, the year of writings is simply indicated by Gregorian calendar dates without reference to the Japanese era names used by the Daishonin. The era names usually appear at the end of the main text, close to the background section. Thus, for example, a date such as “the third day of the second month in the ninth year of Bun'ei [1272]” is shown in the background section as “the third day of the second month in 1272.” The day and month indicate dates according to the lunar calendar.

Third, the translation of quotations from the sutras and commentaries were revised wherever such revision was considered necessary. For example, the statement by Miao-lo in volume 1 that reads, “The stronger one's faith, the greater the protection of the gods,” has been revised to read, “If one's mind is strong, the protection of the gods also is sure to be firm.” “Faith” and “mind” are both translations of the Japanese word kokoro. As explained in the Translators' Note in volume 1, the word kokoro, which is customarily translated as mind or heart, has no exact English equivalent. Thus the words “one's mind is strong” means to be “strong” in faith, will power, and caution.

Fourth, while this volume primarily comprises translations of works as they appear in Nichiren Daishonin gosho zenshū (The Complete Works of Nichiren Daishonin), several departures from the original text should be noted. A fragment of a letter that does not appear in the Gosho zenshū will be found in this volume under the title of On Meeting with the Late Lay Priest of Sainyō-ji (p. 1087). This fragment, which exists in the Daishonin's own hand, refers to his meeting with Hōjō Tokiyori, the retired regent and most powerful figure in the Kamakura
shogunate, to whom the Daishonin had submitted his treatise On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land.

A letter addressed to Nanjō Tokimitsu turned out to be a combination of two fragments unrelated to one another. Thus they have been separated and appear here entitled The Hundredth-Day Observance (p. 919) and Not a One Will Fail to Attain Buddhahood (p. 1081).

Also several letters in this volume contain lines that do not appear in the Gosho zenshū. The sources of these lines are extant fragments in the Daishonin’s own handwriting, which the Soka Gakkai study department determined fit in those letters. In the Continent of Jambudvīpa (p. 1061) has the inserted passage that reads, “though people speak of the divine eye, the wisdom eye, or the Dharma eye . . . the Buddha eye.” On Clothing and Food (p. 1066) has an additional passage that begins, “When one lights a torch for someone at night . . .” and carries through to the end. A Visit as Rare as the Udumbana Flower (p. 1075) contains the passage that begins, “And now at the beginning . . .” and ends, “Reply to the lay priest Naiki Sakon.” In One Drop of the Great Ocean (p. 946), the text that comes before “but one drop of the great ocean contains all the five flavors” is an attached fragment.

Fifth, the sequential numbers assigned to the various writings in this volume begin where the numbers in the first volume left off, that is, with number 173. Page numbers in the present volume, however, begin with the number 1. Quotations from any writing in this or the previous volume in the background sections or notes are cited as follows: (1, p. xxx) for volume 1, page xxx, and (p. xxx) for volume 2, page xxx.

We have avoided repeating what is explained in the Translators’ Note in volume 1. This includes explanations of a number of words used in the translations of the Daishonin’s teachings that differ from the generally understood sense, such as deity, god, demon, evil, sin, and punishment. Other matters explained in the note are the cyclical signs, a person’s age, the titles of documents, personal names, the usages of C.E. and B.C.E., dates based on the lunar calendar, and so forth. We recommend, therefore, that readers familiarize themselves with the Translators’ Note in volume 1.