

Dialogues for Quick Victory



DIALOGUES on the Pure Land School

If you are asked whether you believe that the recitation of the six characters [Namu Amida Butsu] is a good or an evil practice:

Reply by asking whether the questioner is using the terms “good and evil” in the ordinary sense or in a religious sense.

Ask if the questioner would agree that, depending upon whether the practice is good or evil, it could cause one to fall into hell.

Ask whether, if it can be shown that the practice is evil, the questioner would agree that it assuredly causes one to fall into hell.

If it has been accepted that the Nembutsu is a practice that leads to the hell of incessant suffering, then in what sense does the questioner ask if it is a good or an evil practice?

Ask whether the sutras upon which the questioner bases his beliefs belong to the category of provisional teachings or to that of the true teaching.

If the questioner asks whether, since you say that the Nembutsu leads to the hell of incessant suffering, the Lotus Sutra does not also lead to the hell of incessant suffering:

Answer by asking if the idea that the Lotus Sutra leads to the hell of

incessant suffering is a view simply put forth by the Pure Land school, or whether there is some sutra passage to support it.

Ask whether the questioner, in asserting that the Lotus Sutra also leads to the hell of incessant suffering, would agree that the Nembutsu leads to the hell of incessant suffering.

Ask whether the questioner, in asserting that the Lotus Sutra too leads to the hell of incessant suffering, would acknowledge the fact that the founder of the Pure Land school slandered the sutra.

Ask whether, when the questioner speaks of the Lotus Sutra, he is referring to the Lotus Sutra that surpasses all the other sutras, or to the Lotus Sutra by means of which Amida was able to attain Buddhahood.¹

If the questioner asks where in the twenty-eight chapters of the Lotus Sutra there is proof that the Nembutsu leads to the hell of incessant suffering:

Ask first whether, if such a passage of proof is found in the twenty-eight chapters of the sutra, the questioner will admit that this shows conclusively that those who practice the Nembutsu will fall into hell.

Point out that slandering of the Lotus Sutra is proof that one will fall into hell.

If the questioner asks where in the Lotus Sutra such a passage is to be found, first ask whether, if such a passage is pointed out, the questioner will put faith in it.

Then proceed to quote the passage that reads, “[If a person fails to have faith but instead slanders this sutra], . . . When his life comes to an end he will enter the Avīchi hell.”²

Point out that the title *Lotus Sutra of the Wonderful Law* is itself proof of the fact that the Nembutsu leads to the hell of incessant suffering.³

Point out that the Nembutsu does so because it goes against the original vow of Amida.⁴

Point out that it does so because it cuts off the life of Amida.

Point out that it does so because it casts aside Shakyamuni, the Buddha who is closely linked to [this saḥā world of ours].

That the Nembutsu leads to the hell of incessant suffering is a fact that has been established by the Buddhas of the three existences of past, present, and future.

If the questioner of the Pure Land school should ask about the Nembutsu described in *Great Concentration and Insight*:⁵

Reply by saying that it has already been shown that the type of Nembutsu advocated by Hōnen causes the practitioner to fall into hell. Why is the questioner asking about *Great Concentration and Insight*?

Take up the question of whether the Nembutsu described in *Great Concentration and Insight* is the same as Hōnen’s Nembutsu that aims for rebirth in the western Pure Land.

Take up the question of whether or not the Nembutsu of *Great Concentration and Insight* slanders the Lotus Sutra.

Ask the questioner just where in *Great Concentration and Insight* and in

what context the Nembutsu is described.

Ask whether the Pure Land school founds its teachings upon *Great Concentration and Insight*.

If the questioner claims that the Meditation Sutra was preached after the Lotus Sutra:

Ask if that is the reason why he slanders the Lotus Sutra.

Ask whether, if the Meditation Sutra was in fact preached before the Lotus Sutra, the questioner would admit that the Nembutsu leads to the hell of incessant suffering.

Ask if the questioner is asking this question while admitting that his slander of the Law leads to the hell of incessant suffering.

If the questioner claims that the Meditation Sutra and the Lotus Sutra were preached at the same time:

Ask if the fact that the two sutras were preached at the same time is the reason why he slanders the Lotus Sutra. Ask whether, in doing so, he is not also slandering the Meditation Sutra as well.

If the questioner claims that the former teacher Hōnen’s slander of the Law is only a temporary matter, because in his injunctions to abandon the Lotus Sutra he uses the words “for a time.”⁶

Ask whether this view that the slander is only intended “for a time” is one merely put forward by the Pure Land school or whether it is based on some sutra passage.

Ask whether, if the slander is intended not “for a time” but for all times, he would not agree that this means that the slanderer will fall into hell.

If the questioner claims that the words “I have not yet revealed the truth”⁷ refer not to the process of rebirth in the Pure Land but to the

attainment of Buddhahood:

Ask if this is the reason why the questioner slanders the Lotus Sutra.

Ask if those persons who assert that the sutras other than the Lotus do not enable one to gain the way are speaking nonsense.

If the questioner should ask what is your opinion regarding the Amida who appears in the theoretical teaching and essential teaching of the Lotus Sutra:⁸

Reply by asking if the Amida of the Lotus Sutra has taken a vow to slander the Lotus Sutra.

Ask if the questioner believes that the Amida of the Lotus Sutra is the same as or different from the Amida who appears in the three sutras⁹ honored by the Pure Land school. If the questioner says they are different, then does this not mean that the Nembutsu leads to the hell of incessant suffering?

If the questioner should quote the Lotus Sutra passage that reads, "If persons once exclaim, 'Hail to the Buddha!' then all have attained the Buddha way"¹⁰ and ask why you claim that recitation of the Buddha's name is of no benefit:

Ask whether this is the reason why the questioner slanders the Lotus Sutra.

Ask whether the questioner believes in the Lotus Sutra when he asks such a question or does not believe in the Lotus Sutra when he asks it.

If the questioner should quote the Lotus Sutra passages that read, "With regard to the Thus Come Ones, [think of them as kindly fathers]"¹¹ and "respectful and reverent to the Buddhas,"¹² and ask why, in view of such passages, you should cast aside Amida:

Ask whether this is the reason why the questioner slanders the Lotus Sutra. (Follow the same general approach as above.)

If the questioner should quote the Lotus Sutra passage that reads, "[If there are living beings who do not believe and accept it (the Lotus Sutra)], you should use some of the other profound doctrines of the Thus Come One to teach, benefit, and bring joy to them,"¹³ and asks why you slander the other sutras:

Ask whether this is the reason why the questioner slanders the Lotus Sutra.

Ask whether he asks the question while recognizing that he is guilty of slander.

Ask whether the question is based on some doctrine peculiar to the Pure Land school or whether there is some sutra passage to support it. (Follow the same general approach as above.)

If the questioner asks why, when the "Universal Gateway" chapter of the Lotus Sutra describes the benefits to be gained by reciting the name of Bodhisattva Perceiver of the World's Sounds, you reject the practice when it applies to any other Buddha or bodhisattva:

Reply by asking if this is the reason why the questioner slanders the Lotus Sutra.

Ask if this Perceiver of the World's Sounds slanders the Lotus Sutra.

Ask if the Pure Land school bases its practice of the Nembutsu on this chapter of the Lotus Sutra.

When the questioner quotes passages from the sutras or the commentaries in this manner, first ask in exactly what section of the text the quotation is to be found and in what context. In responding to any type of questioning, first bring up the matter of the questioner's slandering of the Law. That is the way to deal with proponents of this school.

Dialogues on the Zen School

If the questioner of the Zen school asks why you believe that Zen is the

work of the heavenly devil:

Answer that you believe so because it is not based on the Buddhist sutras.

Answer that you believe so because it slanders all the sacred teachings of the Buddha's preaching life.

If the questioner says that all the Buddhas of the three existences, when they attained the way, began by sitting in Zen meditation, and asks how you explain this:

Reply by asking whether, if this seated meditation can be shown to run counter to the Buddha's intention in appearing in the world, the questioner will admit that it is surely the work of the heavenly devil.

Ask whether the questioner is referring to the seated meditation of Hinayana or Mahayana.

Ask whether the questioner believes that, when the Buddha sat in upright position for six years,¹⁴ this means that the Lotus Sutra is of no benefit.

If the questioner says that, according to Zen doctrine, the pronouncements of the Buddha are of no benefit, and asks what you think of this:

Answer by asking if this is merely a teaching of the Zen school or if there is some sutra passage to support it.

Point out that this assertion in itself is proof that the Zen school is the invention of the heavenly devil.

If the questioner quotes the passage in the Lotus Sutra that reads, "This Law cannot be described, words fall silent before it"¹⁵ and asks you how you explain it:

Reply by asking if this passage proves that the Lotus Sutra is of no benefit.

Ask whether the questioner quotes this passage from the Lotus Sutra because the Zen school is relying on the Lotus Sutra.

Insist that, when this passage from

the sutra is quoted, it be interpreted in terms of the context, not taken out of context.

If the questioner should declare that the dragon king's daughter attained Buddhahood by sitting in meditation, quoting the passage in the Lotus Sutra that reads, "She has entered deep into meditation, thoroughly grasped the doctrines,"¹⁶ and maintains that this shows that the Lotus Sutra is of no benefit:

Reply by asking if this is merely a contention put forward by the Zen school, or whether there is some sutra passage to support it.

Ask whether, if it can be shown that the dragon king's daughter attained Buddhahood through the Lotus Sutra, the questioner will concede that the Zen school is the invention of the heavenly devil.

Point out that, with regard to the kind of teaching and converting that Manjushrī carried out when he was in the ocean, Manjushrī said that he "discussed the wonderful Law,"¹⁷ and ask how he explains this.

If the questioner quotes the passages from the Lotus Sutra that read, "He should constantly take pleasure in sitting in meditation,"¹⁸ "deeply entering meditation,"¹⁹ and "constantly prizing the practice of sitting in meditation,"²⁰ and asks what you think of these:

Reply by insisting that such passages must be interpreted in the light of the context as a whole.

Ask if passages such as these prove that the Lotus Sutra is of no benefit.

Ask whether the Zen school founds its teachings on these passages.

If the questioner quotes the Lotus Sutra passage that reads, "He alone will see brightly what is not visible to others,"²¹ and says this shows that the Zen school alone can see the true na-

ture of things, something that others cannot do:

Reply that the words must not be taken out of context and ask the questioner to examine the sutra passage as a whole.

If the questioner quotes the passage from the Sutra on Resolving Doubts about the Middle Day of the Law that states that the Buddha “never preached one phrase” of the Law, and says that this shows that all the doctrines of the Buddha’s preaching life represent a time when he had “not yet revealed the truth,” and that the real truth was taught only to one person, Mahākāshyapa, in a “special transmission outside the sutras”:

Reply by asking if the statement that the Buddha “never preached one phrase” is a pronouncement of the Buddha. If the questioner says that it is, then point out that, in relying upon such a pronouncement, the Zen school is contradicting its own assertion that it is a “separate transmission outside the sutras.”

Ask through what sutra Mahākāshyapa was able to attain Buddhahood.

Ask whether this sutra passage belongs to the sutras preached before the Lotus Sutra, at the same time, or after.

Ask whether the Lankāvātāra Sutra [upon which the Zen school bases its teachings] represents a pronouncement of the Buddha.

If the questioner points out that T’ien-t’ai’s three major works²² deal with the observation of the mind and asks why you look on Zen as the invention of the heavenly devil:

Reply by asking if the Zen school bases its teachings on these three major works.

Ask if the observation of the mind described in the three major works is the same as the Zen meditation advocated by the questioner.

Ask if the questioner looks on T’ien-t’ai as his teacher.

Ask if the observation of the mind described in the three major works teaches one to discard the sutras.

If the questioner points out that T’ien-t’ai describes a type of meditation, meditation in an unspecified posture for an unspecified period,²³ and asks what you think of this practice:

Reply by observing that the questioner on the one hand seems to be relying on the Lotus Sutra to support his arguments, but on the other hand declares that the Lotus Sutra is of no benefit.

State that for the Zen school to take either of these two positions represents the work of the heavenly devil. And ask if anyone who tries to deny this fact is not speaking nonsense.

If the questioner asks whether the Lotus school understands the meaning of the wonderful Law:

Reply by asking whether the questioner is asking this while acknowledging that the Zen school is the work of the heavenly devil.

Ask if the questioner is asking this question while putting faith in the Lotus Sutra.

Ask if the questioner, when asking this question, himself understands the wonderful Law.

Since the questioner has asked about the wonderful Law, point out that there are one hundred and twenty types of *myō*, or “wonderful,” in the Lotus Sutra,²⁴ and ask if he is referring to each of these kinds of “wonderful.”

Ask whether the Zen school founds its teachings on this wonderful Law.

Dialogues on the Tendai School

If the questioner from the Tendai school asks what proof you have that the Tendai school leads to the hell of incessant suffering:

Reply that it does so because it slanders the Lotus Sutra. Explain that you say this because its teachings contradict what is written in the sutra.

The questioner may ask about the assertion that all sutras other than the Lotus are of no benefit. On the superficial level this means that, in comparison to the Lotus Sutra, they represent only rough statements of the truth. But when one comes to consider the matter on a more profound level, one will see that all the various vehicles taught by the Buddha are opened up and merged into the one vehicle of Buddhahood. If he asks why you cling to the superficial interpretation and reject the more profound one:

Reply by asking, when the questioner speaks of “opening up and merging,” just what teachings are being opened up and merged.

Point out that in the Lotus Sutra there are ten principles of *myō*, or ten mystic principles, in the theoretical teaching and ten in the essential teaching, and that [since each mystic principle is interpreted from the perspectives of the comparative *myō* and the absolute *myō*] there are twenty instances of “opening up and merging” in the theoretical teaching and twenty in the essential teaching. Again, there are four instances of opening up and merging into one, namely, those relating to teaching, to practice, to the person, and to the principle.²⁵ Ask to which of these various examples of opening up and merging the questioner is referring.

Ask whether, when the questioner uses the term “opening up and merging,” he is referring to that which is capable of opening up and merging, or to that which is opened up and merged.

Ask whether the questioner believes that, after the act of opening up and merging has been performed, there

is then no more distinction between which sutras are good and which are bad.

Ask if the Tendai school puts its faith in the Lotus Sutra.

Ask whether, if the Tendai school considers that all the various schools of Buddhism become equal in worth with the Lotus Sutra after the process of opening up and merging, this does not make nonsense of the teachings of the Great Teacher T’ien-t’ai. Explain that you say this because the Great Teacher T’ien-t’ai refuted the doctrines of the three schools of the south and seven schools of the north in China, and the Great Teacher Dengyō refuted the doctrines of the six schools of Nara.

Ask if the Tendai school considers it all right to carry out evil practices, since T’ien-t’ai says that the evil inherent in one’s nature cannot be cut off.²⁶ If the questioner says that the Tendai school does not condone evil practices, then object that this talk of evil practices contradicts the Tendai’s own assertion that, after the act of opening up and merging has been performed, there are no more distinctions of good or evil.

Ask if the questioner considers that, after the process of opening up and merging has been carried out, it is nonsense to talk of the distinction between the provisional teachings and the true teaching. If there is no such distinction, then how does the questioner explain the fact that the “Medicine King” chapter of the Lotus Sutra sets forth ten similes to illustrate the superiority of the Lotus Sutra,²⁷ and the “Teacher of the Law” chapter states that the Lotus Sutra is foremost among all the sutras that the Buddha has preached, now preaches, or will preach.

Ask if it was because Jikaku had this process of opening up and merging in mind that he slandered the Lotus Sutra [by saying that in matters of practice

it is inferior to the Mahāvairochana Sutra].

Ask if the questioner considers himself to be a disciple of Jikaku. If he says he does, then clearly he must be guilty of slandering the Law.

If the questioner says that in the end, good and evil are inseparable, incorrect and correct are one, and asks why you insist upon making distinctions of good and evil when such distinctions go against the basic intent of the doctrine set forth in the Lotus Sutra:

Reply by asking whether T'ien-t'ai's appearance in the world was for the purpose of putting an end to evil, or for the purpose of encouraging evil.

Ask where, in the twenty-eight chapters of the Lotus Sutra, there is any passage that exhorts one to do evil deeds.

If the questioner brings up the principle of the absolute *myō*, or "wonderful" [expounded by T'ien-t'ai]:

Reply by requesting that the questioner first of all explain just what passage or passages in the writings of T'ien-t'ai he is referring to.

Ask just what teaching this principle is based upon.

Ask if it constitutes any reason for Jikaku to slander the Lotus Sutra.

If the questioner asserts that the comparative *myō*, or "wonderful," represents the superficial view of the truth, while the absolute *myō* represents the profound view:

Answer by asking if this is simply the interpretation of the questioner's own school, or whether there is some sutra passage to support it.

Ask where in the twenty-eight chapters of the Lotus Sutra there is any evidence to support the idea that the comparative *myō* represents a superficial view.

Ask whether the comparative *myō* is

revealed in the Lotus Sutra, or whether it is revealed in the other sutras. If it is revealed in the Lotus Sutra, then ask how the Lotus Sutra can be regarded as representing a superficial view.

If the questioner brings up the matter of T'ien-t'ai's classification of the sutras according to the eight teachings and five periods and asks if the judgment put forth in the five periods classification that the perfect teaching of the sutras prior to the Lotus is to be rejected is not a merely superficial view:

Reply by asking, when the questioner refers to the eight teachings, just which of T'ien-t'ai's four types of judgments²⁸ is to be applied to the evaluation of the sutras.

Ask whether the classification according to the five periods does not in the end represent T'ien-t'ai's final judgment on the matter.

Ask whether the classification of the five periods should be discarded.

Ask whether, if one applies the classification of the eight teachings and comes to the same conclusion, namely, that the perfect teaching of the sutras that precede the Lotus is to be rejected, this is a view that will condemn one to hell.

Ask where in the twenty-eight chapters of the Lotus Sutra there is any evidence to support the view that, when considered from the standpoint of the classification of the eight teachings, the perfect teaching of the Lotus Sutra and the perfect teaching of the sutras prior to the Lotus are of equal worth.

Ask whether the questioner is aware of the passage in volume one of *The Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sutra* in which T'ien-t'ai applies a threefold approach based on the principles of establishing, opening up, and discarding,²⁹ and concludes that, after the opening up and merging of the Lo-

tus Sutra, the other sutras are to be discarded.

Dialogues on the True Word Doctrine of Mount Hiei³⁰

If the questioner asserts that the Lotus Sutra is foremost only in terms of the exoteric teachings, and claims that this does not mean that it is foremost in relation to the True Word doctrine:

Reply by asking if this is simply an assertion of the True Word school or whether there is some sutra passage to support it.

Point out that it is because of assertions of this nature that the Great Teacher Jikaku condemned himself to the hell of incessant suffering.

Ask whether, if the Lotus Sutra is in fact foremost in relation to the True Word doctrine as well, the questioner would agree that the True Word doctrine brings ruin to the nation.

Ask on what sutras the True Word doctrine is based among the sutras that were preached prior to, at the same time, or after the Lotus Sutra.

If the questioner says that it is based on sutras that are outside these three categories, reply that such sutras must have been preached to individuals of a particular capacity or relationship [to the Buddha] and explain that they have only provisional validity and cannot be considered the secret or esoteric teachings of the Buddha.

If the questioner states that the Lotus Sutra and the True Word sutras are alike in principle, but that the latter are superior in matters of practice,³¹ and therefore, compared to the True Word sutras, the Lotus Sutra is a doctrine of mere childish theory:

Answer by stating that it is precisely because of views such as this that the True Word believers are destined to fall into the hell of incessant suffering.

State that, in expounding such

views, Jikaku was slandering not only the Lotus Sutra but the True Word sutras as well, because he asserted that the latter are the same in principle as the Lotus Sutra and then slandered the Lotus Sutra [by calling it “childish theory”].

If the questioner quotes from the text of *A Collection of Primary Teachings on the Fundamental Principle* by Dengyō and says that this shows that the exoteric and esoteric teachings are the same:

Answer by asserting that this text is not a genuine work of Dengyō.

Ask whether it is because of this text that Jikaku slanders the Lotus Sutra.

Dialogues on the True Word School of Tō-ji

If the questioner asks what proof you can offer that the True Word teachings were expounded by Shakyamuni Buddha [and not by Mahāvairocana Buddha, as the True Word school claims]:

Reply by asking whether, if they were in fact expounded by Shakyamuni Buddha, the questioner would admit that they bring ruin to the nation.³² If they were in fact expounded by Shakyamuni, then ask why, when the Great Teacher Kōbō discussed the five storehouses of the Buddhist scriptures described in the Six Pāramitās Sutra,³³ he assigned the Lotus Sutra to the fourth, or prajñā-pāramitā (perfection of wisdom), storehouse, but claimed that the fifth, the dhāranī storehouse, represents the True Word teachings.

If the questioner claims that the Buddha’s words “I have not yet revealed the truth” do not apply to the teachings of the True Word school because these were set forth separately and apart from the teachings expounded by Shakyamuni, and asks your opinion on this:

Reply by asking whether, if the True Word teachings were in fact expounded by Shakyamuni Buddha, the questioner would admit that they bring ruin to the nation.

Ask whether the questioner believes that the Six Pāramitās Sutra was expounded by Shakyamuni, or whether it was expounded by Mahāvairochana. If it was expounded by Shakyamuni, then the words “I have not yet revealed the truth” must apply to it.

The questioner may respond by saying that [as the Great Teacher Kōbō asserts] the teachings expounded by Shakyamuni are exoteric teachings and [in contrast to the esoteric teachings] are of no benefit.

If so, then continue the argument by inquiring whether he believes that the Six Pāramitās Sutra represents an exoteric teaching or an esoteric teaching.

If he states that the Six Pāramitās Sutra represents True Word teachings of a crude nature, while the three sutras honored by the True Word school represent the True Word in its pure exposition:³⁴

Reply by observing that it is not clear whether Kōbō himself believed that this supplementary proof found in the Six Pāramitās Sutra and the primary proof found in the three True Word sutras are to be accepted. But if this is indeed a principle put forth by Kōbō, then ask if the questioner does not agree that Kōbō deserves to fall into hell.

If the questioner asserts that the True Word teachings represent a doctrine leading to the immediate attainment of Buddhahood, while the exoteric teachings represent a doctrine that requires one to spend countless kalpas engaged in practice in order to gain Buddhahood:

Ask whether this is simply a view put forward by the True Word school,

or whether there is some sutra passage to support it.

If the questioner then quotes as proof the passage in *The Teaching on the Five Esoteric Ones* that reads, “If a person practices the exoteric teachings, after three great asamkhya kalpas have gone by, [one can attain enlightenment],” and asks your opinion on this:

Reply by asking if this sutra was expounded by Shakyamuni, or if it was expounded by Mahāvairochana. Point out that, if it was expounded by Shakyamuni, then the words “I have not yet revealed the truth” clearly must apply to it.

If the questioner asks what sutra the Lotus school relies upon for its descriptions of mudras and the extraordinary physical characteristics of the Buddha, asserting that, since these are not described in the exoteric teachings, the mudras have been stolen from the True Word, and asks your opinion on this:

Reply by asking if this is why the questioner slanders the Lotus Sutra.

Ask whether, if the questioner’s charge of theft is false, he would admit that the True Word teachings bring ruin to the nation.

Ask whether the questioner would agree that, ultimately, the object of devotion upon which the Lotus school founds itself [is not a Buddha] but is in fact the Lotus Sutra of the Wonderful Law itself.

Ask whether, since the True Word school claims that figures of Shakyamuni must be fashioned on the basis of [the eye-opening ritual of] the three True Word sutras, this is any reason for defaming Shakyamuni by calling him a “three-bodied donkey- or ox-Buddha.”³⁵ Berate the questioner by saying that, if this is so, then he is slandering his own True Word teachings by speaking in this manner.

Point out that the mudras and extraordinary physical characteristics of the Buddhas of the three existences of past, present, and future in fact originate from the Lotus Sutra of the Wonderful Law. If the questioner concedes this point, then insist that ultimately the True Word teachings must be viewed as a doctrine that leads to the ruin of the nation. And ask if he will admit that the True Word teachers are guilty of theft [for having stolen the Lotus school's doctrine of three thousand realms in a single moment of life].

Point out that at Eagle Peak the dragon king's daughter in her present existence manifested the mudras and physical characteristics of a Buddha and, moving to the southern region, announced that she had attained Buddhahood. Ask if she was able to do this through the power of the True Word teachings. If the questioner says yes, then immediately challenge him to produce a passage in the sutras to support his contention.

If the questioner asks what proof there is that the True Word teachings will ruin the nation:

Reply that they will do so because they slander the Lotus Sutra.

State that they will do so because they turn against Shakyamuni, who possesses the three virtues of sovereign, teacher, and parent.

State that the Lotus Sutra of the Wonderful Law brings people "peace and security in their present existence and good circumstances in future existences."³⁶ And because the True Word followers turn against it, they will bring ruin to the nation in their present existence and in their future existence will fall into the hell of incessant suffering.

Ask if the view that the Lotus Sutra ranks in third place³⁷ is based on some sutra passage or is simply the opinion of the True Word school. If it is the

latter, then assert that it must certainly lead to the ruin of the nation.

If the questioner explains that the Lotus Sutra ranks in third place in comparison to the esoteric teachings:

Reply by asking if there is some sutra passage to support this view, or if it is simply the opinion of the True Word school.

Ask if the questioner would not agree that in the end the Lotus Sutra is the foremost among the exoteric teachings. If he agrees, then point out that Kōbō was speaking errant nonsense when he asserted that, among the exoteric teachings, the Lotus Sutra ranks second in comparison to the Flower Garland Sutra, and third in comparison to the True Word teachings.

Ask whether, if the Lotus Sutra is in fact foremost in comparison to the True Word teachings, this is not proof that the latter lead to the ruin of the nation.

If the questioner asserts that the Lotus Sutra ranks in third place because it fails to describe mudras and mantras:

Reply by asking if there is some sutra passage to support this, or whether it is simply the opinion of the True Word school.

Ask whether, if it can be shown that the Lotus Sutra does in fact describe mudras and mantras, he would agree that the True Word teachings lead to the ruin of the nation.

If the questioner stresses that Mahāvairocana and Shakyamuni are two different Buddhas:

Reply by asking if this is why the questioner slanders the Lotus Sutra.

Ask whether, if it can be shown that the two are a single Buddha, the questioner would admit that the True Word teachings bring ruin to the nation.

Ask whether, if the two are separate

Buddhas, there is any sutra passage to indicate that Shakyamuni is inferior, or if this is simply the opinion of the True Word school.

If the questioner asserts that the exoteric teachings were expounded by the Buddha of the manifested body, while the esoteric teachings were expounded by the Buddha of the Dharma body,³⁸ and says that for this reason the Lotus Sutra is ranked in third place:

Ask if there is any sutra passage to prove that, because it was expounded by the Buddha of the manifested body, the Lotus Sutra is inferior, or if this is simply the opinion of the True Word school.

Ask whether, if it can be shown that the Lotus Sutra was preached by the Buddha of the Dharma body, the questioner would admit that the True Word teachings lead to the ruin of the nation.

Ask whether, if it can be shown that the True Word teachings were preached by the Buddha of the manifested body, the questioner would admit that these teachings lead to the ruin of the nation.

If the questioner points out that, when the five Buddhas and the five kinds of wisdom³⁹ they represent are shown in mandala form, Shakyamuni appears in the section of the mandala that corresponds to the north, while Mahāvairochana Buddha appears in the center, and asks your opinion on this:

Reply by asking whether, if Shakyamuni appeared in the center, the questioner would admit that the True Word teachings lead to the ruin of the nation.

Point out that there is nothing in the three True Word sutras to indicate that Shakyamuni should be shown in the section of the mandala that corresponds to the north. This is based on an asser-

tion put forward by Pu-k'ung, not on any pronouncement of the Buddha.

If the questioner asserts that the Lotus Sutra was preached in this impure land of ours, but that the True Word teachings were preached in the Dharma-realm Palace,⁴⁰ which is outside the threefold world:

Reply by asking whether, if the True Word teachings were preached within the threefold world, the questioner would admit that they undoubtedly bring ruin to the nation.

(*The Commentary on the Meaning of the Mahāvairochana Sutra* describes the Dharma-realm Palace as a place within the threefold world.)

The questioner may also assert that, although in the exoteric teachings Mahāvairochana and Shakyamuni are regarded as names referring to a single Buddha, in the esoteric teachings they are taken to refer to two different Buddhas. If he explains that, though the names are the same in the two teachings, they have quite different meanings, and asks your opinion on this:

Reply by saying that this is precisely why the True Word teachings lead to the ruin of the nation.

Insist that, when making claims such as this, one must be prepared to produce sutra passages immediately to support one's argument.

If the questioner asserts that the dragon king's daughter attained Buddhahood through the power of the True Word teachings, and gives as the reason for this assertion the fact that the Lotus Sutra lacks any explanation of the three mysteries of body, mouth, and mind:

Reply by asking if this is simply the opinion of the True Word school, or if there are sutra passages to support it.

If the questioner then cites the pas-

sage in the Lotus Sutra that says that the dragon king's daughter "has mastered the dhāranīs . . . and reached the level of no regression,"⁴¹ and claims that the word "dhāranī" here refers to the performance of the three mysteries:

Reply by asking if the view that the word "dhāranī" here refers to "true word," or mantra, is simply the opinion of the True Word school, or if there are sutra passages to support it.

Point out the perverse nature of Kōbō's view since, despite this reference to dhāranīs in the Lotus Sutra, he calls the sutra a work of childish theory and ranks it in third place.

Point out that he contradicts his own words by calling the Lotus Sutra "childish theory" because it lacks mudras and mantras when in fact it does have mudras.

If the questioner states that, according to the Protection Sutra,⁴² Shakyamuni studied the doctrine of the three mysteries under Mahāvairocana and thus was able to attain Buddhahood:

Reply by asking if this is the reason why the questioner slanders the Lotus Sutra.

Ask whether this sutra, the Protection Sutra, belongs to one of the three categories of sutras preached before, at the same time, or after the Lotus Sutra, or whether it is outside these categories.

Ask whether, if what is written in the Protection Sutra contradicts the truth, the questioner would agree that the True Word teachings without doubt lead to the ruin of the nation.

If the questioner quotes the passage

from the Lotus Sutra that reads, "All press their palms and with reverent minds wish to hear the teaching of perfect endowment,"⁴³ and asks why you reject mudras and mantras:

Reply by asking if this is why the questioner slanders the Lotus Sutra.

Ask whether this is simply the view of the True Word school, or whether there is some sutra passage to support it.

Ask whether the sutra passage just quoted in fact means that one should not reject the True Word teachings.

Ask whether this passage in fact means that one should embrace the True Word teachings.

Refute the questioner's claims by discussing the passage in terms of its context.

If the questioner asks whether there is any sutra passage to prove that the Great Teacher Kōbō has fallen into the hell of incessant suffering:

Reply that there is such a passage.

If the questioner demands to know where in the twenty-eight chapters of the Lotus Sutra any such passage is to be found:

Reply by asking whether, if such a passage exists, the questioner will agree that Kōbō has undoubtedly fallen into the hell of incessant suffering.

If he says yes, then ask whether he would agree that Kōbō slanders the Lotus Sutra.

If he says yes, then press your argument by producing the sutra passage that proves that slandering the Lotus Sutra leads to the hell of incessant suffering.⁴⁴



Background

Nichiren Daishonin produced this work in 1271. As the title *Dialogues for Quick Victory* suggests, it presents in concise language a guide for engaging in religious debate on the doctrines of major Buddhist schools. For each school, the Daishonin offers counterarguments to points of doctrine and contentions put forth by the other side.

Posing thirteen questions for the Pure Land school, eleven for the Zen school, six for the Tendai school, three for the True Word doctrine (i.e., the esoteric tradition) of Mount Hiei, and four for the True Word school of Tō-ji

temple, the Daishonin shows how to refute their errors and cause them to reflect.

In all cases, he focuses the debate on the issue of each school's slander of the Lotus Sutra. Strongly pressing the assertion that the teachings of each school do in fact slander the Lotus Sutra, he counters in a forceful yet logical manner any justification or rationalization of such slander put forward by the other side. In this way he exposes the faulty logic and contradictions inherent in the opponent's position.

Notes

1. Chapter seven of the Lotus Sutra says, "These disciples of the Buddha, these sixteen shrāmaneras, have now all attained supreme perfect enlightenment. In the lands in the ten directions they are at present preaching the Law. . . . Two are Buddhas in the western region, one named Amida, the other named Saving All from Worldly Suffering. . . . The sixteenth is I, Shakyamuni Buddha, who in this sahā land have attained supreme perfect enlightenment."

2. Lotus Sutra, chap. 3.

3. The lotus, or *rengé*, of the Lotus Sutra of the Wonderful Law means the simultaneous existence of the cause (nine worlds) and the effect (Buddhahood) in life. This Law of simultaneous causality is the wonderful Law, or *myōhō*. Therefore to go back on this Law is to go back on one's innate Buddhahood, that is, to direct oneself to its opposite, which is hell.

4. "Those who slander the correct teaching [of the Lotus Sutra]" go against the eighteenth of the forty-eight vows that Amida Buddha is said to have made while still engaged in bodhisattva practice. See eighteenth vow in Glossary.

5. A reference to one of the four methods of meditation that T'ien-t'ai described in his *Great Concentration and Insight*, that is, constant active meditation, in which, while reciting the name of Amida Buddha, one walks around a statue of the Buddha in a monastery for ninety days.

6. In *The Nembutsu Chosen above All*, Hōnen says, "If one wishes to escape quickly from the sufferings of birth and death, one should confront these two superior teachings and then proceed to put aside the teachings of the Sacred Way [for a time] and choose those of the Pure Land. And if one wishes to follow the teachings of the Pure Land, one should confront the correct and sundry practices and then proceed to abandon all of the sundry [for a time] and devote one's entire attention to the correct [practices directed toward Amida Buddha]."

7. Immeasurable Meanings Sutra.

8. For "Amida who appears in the theoretical teaching," see n. 1. "Amida who appears in the essential teaching" refers to a passage in chapter twenty-three that reads, "If in the last five-hundred-year period after the Thus Come One has entered extinction there is a woman who hears this sutra and carries out its practices as the sutra directs, when her life here on earth comes to an end she will immediately go to the world of Peace and Delight where the Buddha Amida dwells."

9. The Buddha Infinite Life Sutra, the Meditation on the Buddha Infinite Life Sutra, and the Amida Sutra.

10. Lotus Sutra, chap. 2.

11. *Ibid.*, chap. 14.

12. *Ibid.*, chap. 3.

13. *Ibid.*, chap. 22.

14. The Immeasurable Meanings Sutra says, "In the past I sat upright in the place of meditation for six years under the bodhi tree and was able to gain supreme perfect enlightenment."

15. Lotus Sutra, chap. 2.

16. Ibid., chap. 12.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid., chap. 14.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid., chap. 17.

21. Ibid., chap. 19.

22. *The Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sutra, The Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sutra, and Great Concentration and Insight.*

23. A reference to one of the four methods of meditation described in *Great Concentration and Insight*. In this type of meditation, one practices meditation of an unspecified length of time or in an unspecified form (walking, standing, sitting, or lying down).

24. A reference to the principles set forth by T'ien-t'ai in his *Profound Meaning* interpreting the word *myō*, meaning wonderful or mystic. According to this work, there are twenty mystic principles, ten in the theoretical teaching of the Lotus Sutra and ten in the essential teaching of the sutra. Because each includes the three mystic principles of living beings, Buddhas, and the mind, they make sixty mystic principles. Each of the sixty principles is grasped from the comparative standpoint and the absolute, or all-encompassing, standpoint, which makes one hundred and twenty mystic principles.

25. In chapter two, "Expedient Means," of the Lotus Sutra, the four factors of teaching, practice, person, and principle are opened up and merged in the one world of Buddhahood. The "teaching" refers to the passage "The Thus Come Ones have only a single Buddha vehicle which they employ in order to preach the Law to living beings. They do not have any other vehicle, a second one or a third one"; the "practice" to the passage "All the things they do are at all times done for this one purpose. They simply wish to show the Buddha wisdom to living beings and enlighten them to it"; the "person" to the passage "The Buddhas, the Thus Come Ones, simply teach and convert the bodhisattvas"; and the "principle" to the passage on enlightening living beings to the principle [of the wonderful Law] through the four actions of opening, show-

ing, awakening, and causing living beings to enter the Buddha wisdom.

26. This statement appears in *The Profound Meaning of the "Perceiver of the World's Sounds" Chapter.*

27. Ten similes are those of water, mountains, the heavenly bodies, the sun, a wheel-turning king, the god Shakra, the great heavenly king Brahmā, voice-hearers at the four stages of enlightenment and cause-awakened ones, bodhisattvas, and the Buddha. To take the simile of water, for example, just as the ocean is foremost among all bodies of water, so the Lotus Sutra is the most profound among all the sutras.

28. "Four types of judgments" refers to four teachings of doctrine that, coupled with the five periods, constitute the second, "correlated teachings," of the four guidelines that T'ien-t'ai established in *Words and Phrases*. On the level of the Tripitaka teaching, for example, not a single sutra is to be rejected, but on the level of the perfect teaching (of the Lotus Sutra), all the other sutras are to be rejected. See also four guidelines in Glossary.

29. "A threefold approach" refers to the three metaphors that T'ien-t'ai employed to interpret the meaning of *rengē*, or lotus, of Myōho-rengē-kyō. The lotus blossom enfolds the fruit, the lotus blossom opens to reveal the fruit inside, and the lotus blossom falls and the fruit ripens. Each of these can be interpreted in two ways. First, from the perspective of the theoretical teaching of the Lotus Sutra, the three metaphors respectively mean that one cannot see the fruit of the true teaching because it is covered by the blossom of the provisional teachings; that the blossom opens to reveal the fruit of the true teaching; and that the blossom of the three vehicles is replaced by the fruit of the one Buddha vehicle. Second, from the perspective of the essential teaching of the sutra, the three metaphors mean that the blossom of the theoretical teaching contains the fruit of the essential teaching; that the blossom of the theoretical teaching opens to reveal the fruit of the essential teaching; and that the blossom of the theoretical teaching is replaced by the fruit of the essential teaching. In the above two cases, "opens to reveal" indicates the principle of opening up and merging, and even after the act of opening up and merging, the three vehicles, or the provisional

teachings, are replaced by the theoretical teaching; and likewise after opening up and merging, the theoretical teaching is replaced by the essential teaching.

30. This refers to the tradition and lineage of True Word, or Esoteric, teachings as passed on within the Tendai school centered at Mount Hiei.

31. According to Tendai Esotericism, both the Mahāvairochana Sutra and the Lotus Sutra contain the doctrine of three thousand realms in a single moment of life, and therefore these two sutras are equal in terms of principle; however, because the Mahāvairochana Sutra contains descriptions of mudras (hand gestures) and mantras (mystic formulas), it is viewed as superior to the Lotus Sutra in terms of practice.

32. This is because the True Word believers worship Mahāvairochana Buddha instead of Shakyamuni Buddha who expounded the True Word teachings.

33. The five storehouses refer to the five categories into which the Buddhist teachings are divided: sutras (the Buddha's teachings); vinaya (monastic rules); abhidharma (treatises); prajñā-pāramitā (the teachings of the perfection of wisdom); and dhāranī (mystic formulas).

34. "The three sutras" refers to the three basic scriptures of the True Word school, the Mahāvairochana, Diamond Crown, and Susiddhikara sutras. "True Word teachings of a crude nature" above consists of other sutras the True Word school employs such as the Six Pāramitās Sutra. The school regarded the former as primary proof and the latter as supplementary proof of its doctrines.

35. Kakuban (1095–1143), the precursor of the New Doctrine branch of the True Word school, stated in his *Rules of Rites for Revering the Buddha's Relics*: "The figure worthy of true respect is the Buddha of the Nondual Mahayana [Mahāvairochana Buddha]. The three-bodied donkey- or ox-Buddha is not even fit to draw his carriage. The truly profound doctrines are the teachings of the twofold mandala [the Diamond Realm and Womb Realm mandalas]. The teachers of the four doctrines of the exoteric vehicles are not worthy even to tend the sandals of those who teach the mandala!" The three bodies of a Buddha

are the Dharma body, the reward body, and the manifested body.

36. Lotus Sutra, chap. 5.

37. In *The Treatise on the Ten Stages of the Mind*, Kōbō formulates ten stages in the development of religious consciousness that correspond respectively to ten different levels of teachings. He places the mind of a believer in the Lotus Sutra and that of a believer in the Flower Garland Sutra in the eighth and the ninth stages, respectively. He places the mind of a follower of the True Word teaching in the tenth or highest stage.

38. The True Word school refers to Mahāvairochana as the Buddha of the Dharma body and Shakyamuni as the Buddha of the manifested body, for this reason regarding the former as superior to the latter.

39. The five Buddhas depicted in the Diamond Realm and Womb Realm mandalas, the two types of mandalas of the True Word school. The five Buddhas in the Diamond Realm mandala are Mahāvairochana in the center, Akshobhya in the east, Jewel Born in the south, Amida in the west, and Infallible Realization in the north. The five Buddhas in the Womb Realm mandala are Mahāvairochana in the center, Jeweled Banner in the east, Florescence King in the south, Amida in the west, and Heavenly Drum Thunder in the north. In either case, the four Buddhas of the four directions represent the attributes of Mahāvairochana, whom the True Word school holds to be all-encompassing. For five kinds of wisdom, see Glossary.

40. The palace of Mahāvairochana Buddha, located in the Akanishtha heaven, the highest of the eighteen heavens of the world of form.

41. Lotus Sutra, chap. 12.

42. A reference to the Dhāranī for the Protection of the Sovereign of the Nation Sutra, which was introduced to Japan by Kōbō.

43. Lotus Sutra, chap. 2.

44. Chapter three, "Simile and Parable," of the Lotus Sutra says: "If a person fails to have faith but instead slanders this sutra, immediately he will destroy all the seeds for becoming a Buddha in this world... When his life comes to an end he will enter the Avīchi hell."