

Oral Exposition concerning  
the Transmission of the Essence of  
the Lotus Sutra to Bodhisattva  
Superior Practices



CHAPTER eleven of the Lotus Sutra of the Wonderful Law, the “Emergence of the Treasure Tower,” states, “At that time in the Buddha’s presence there was a tower adorned with the seven treasures.”

It further states: “Immediately Shakyamuni Buddha used his transcendental powers to lift all the members of the great assembly up into the air. And in a loud voice he addressed all the four kinds of believers, saying, ‘Who is capable of broadly preaching the Lotus Sutra of the Wonderful Law in this saḥā world? Now is the time to do so, for before long the Thus Come One will enter nirvana. The Buddha wishes to entrust this Lotus Sutra of the Wonderful Law to someone so that it may be preserved.’”

It also says, “The other sutras number as many as Ganges sands.”

It further says, “So I say to the great assembly: After I have passed into extinction, who can guard and uphold, read and recite this sutra? Now in the presence of the Buddha let him come forward and speak his vow!”

And it further states, “This sutra is hard to uphold; if one can uphold it even for a short while I will surely rejoice and so will the other Buddhas.

A person who can do this wins the admiration of the Buddhas.”

Chapter thirteen of the Lotus Sutra of the Wonderful Law, “Encouraging Devotion,” states: “At that time the bodhisattva and mahāsattva Medicine King, along with the bodhisattva and mahāsattva Great Joy of Preaching and twenty thousand bodhisattva followers who were accompanying them, all in the presence of the Buddha took this vow, saying: ‘We beg the World-Honored One to have no further worry. After the Buddha has entered extinction we will honor, embrace, read, recite, and preach this sutra. Living beings in the evil age to come will have fewer and fewer good roots. Many will be overbearingly arrogant and greedy for offerings and other forms of gain, increasing the roots that are not good and moving farther away than ever from emancipation. But although it will be difficult to teach and convert them, we will summon up the power of great patience and will read and recite this sutra, embrace, preach, and copy it, offering it many kinds of alms and never begrudging our bodies or lives.’”

“At that time in the assembly there were five hundred arhats who received

a prophecy of enlightenment. They said to the Buddha, 'World-Honored One, we too will make a vow. In lands other than this one we will broadly preach this sutra.'

"Also there were eight thousand persons, some still learning, others with nothing more to learn, who received a prophecy of enlightenment. They rose from their seats, pressed their palms together and, turning toward the Buddha, made this vow: 'World-Honored One, we too in other lands will broadly preach this sutra. Why? Because in this saḥā world the people are given to corruption and evil, beset by overbearing arrogance, shallow in blessings, irascible, muddled, fawning and devious, and their hearts are not sincere.'"

It also says: "At that time the World-Honored One looked at the eight hundred thousand million nayutas of bodhisattvas and mahāsattvas. These bodhisattvas had all reached the level of avivartika [non-regression]... At that time the bodhisattvas joined their voices together and spoke in verse form, saying: 'We beg you not to worry. After the Buddha has passed into extinction, in an age of fear and evil we will preach far and wide. There will be many ignorant people who will curse and speak ill of us and will attack us with swords and staves, but we will endure all these things. In that evil age there will be monks with perverse wisdom and hearts that are fawning and crooked who will suppose they have attained what they have not attained, being proud and boastful in heart. Or there will be forest-dwelling monks wearing clothing of patched rags and living in retirement, who will claim they are practicing the true way, despising and looking down on all humankind. Greedy for profit and support, they will preach the Law to white-robed laymen and will be respected and revered by the world as

though they were arhats who possess the six transcendental powers. These men with evil in their hearts, constantly thinking of worldly affairs, will borrow the name of forest-dwelling monks and take delight in proclaiming our faults... The evil monks of that muddied age, failing to understand the Buddha's expedient means, how he preaches the Law in accordance with what is appropriate, will confront us with foul language and angry frowns; again and again we will be banished.'"

Volume eight of *The Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sutra* says: "First, there is a section<sup>1</sup> that exposes people of mistaken views. This represents [the arrogance and presumption of] lay people. Next, there is a section<sup>2</sup> that exposes the arrogance and presumption of members of the Buddhist clergy. Third is a section<sup>3</sup> that exposes the arrogance and presumption of those who pretend to be sages. Of these three, the first can be endured. The second exceeds the first, and the third is the most formidable of all."<sup>4</sup>

The "Emerging from the Earth" chapter states: "At that time the bodhisattvas and mahāsattvas who had gathered from the lands of the other directions, greater in number than the sands of eight Ganges Rivers, stood up in the midst of the great assembly, pressed their palms together, bowed in obeisance, and said to the Buddha: 'World-Honored One, if you will permit us in the age after the Buddha has entered extinction to diligently and earnestly protect, embrace, read, recite, copy, and offer alms to this sutra in the saḥā world, we will preach it widely throughout this land!'

"At that time the Buddha said to the bodhisattvas and mahāsattvas: 'Leave off, good men! There is no need for you to protect and embrace this sutra. Why? Because in this saḥā world of mine there are bodhisattvas and mahāsattvas who are as numerous as the

sands of sixty thousand Ganges Rivers, and each of these bodhisattvas has a retinue equal to the sands of sixty thousand Ganges Rivers. After I have entered extinction these persons will be able to protect, embrace, read, recite, and widely preach this sutra.” (Volume five ends with this chapter.<sup>5</sup>)

In the “Entrustment” chapter we read: “At that time Shakyamuni Buddha rose from his Dharma seat and, manifesting his great supernatural powers, with his right hand patted the heads of the immeasurable bodhisattvas and mahāsattvas and spoke these words: ‘For immeasurable hundreds, thousands, ten thousands, millions of asamkhya kalpas I have practiced this hard-to-attain Law of supreme perfect enlightenment. Now I entrust it to you. You must single-mindedly propagate this Law abroad, causing its benefits to spread far and wide.’

“Three times he patted the bodhisattvas and mahāsattvas on the head and spoke these words: ‘For immeasurable hundreds, thousands, ten thousands, millions of asamkhya kalpas I have practiced this hard-to-attain Law of supreme perfect enlightenment. Now I entrust it to you. You must accept, uphold, read, recite, and broadly propagate this Law, causing all living beings everywhere to hear and understand it. Why? Because the Thus Come One has great pity and compassion. He is in no way stingy or begrudging, nor has he any fear. He is able to bestow on living beings the wisdom of the Buddha, the wisdom of the Thus Come One, the wisdom that comes of itself.’ The Thus Come One is a great giver of gifts to all living beings. You for your part should respond by studying this Law of the Thus Come One. You must not be stingy or begrudging!”

In volume nine of *Words and Phrases* (the section dealing with the “Emerging from the Earth” chapter), we read:

“There are in general three reasons why the Thus Come One rejected the offer of help from the bodhisattvas who had come from other lands. These bodhisattvas all had duties of their own to perform in their own lands. If they took up residence in this sahā world, they would be neglecting to provide benefits to their own lands.

“In addition, the bodhisattvas from other lands had ties with this world that were of a superficial nature. Thus, though they might wish to preach and propagate the Law here, they would surely not be able to do so with any great effectiveness.

“Again, if the Buddha had agreed to their offer, then he would have been unable to summon the other bodhisattvas from beneath the earth. And if these bodhisattvas had not come forth, the Buddha could not have put aside his transient identity and revealed his attainment of enlightenment in the far distant past. These constitute the three reasons why the Thus Come One rejected the offer of help.

“There are likewise three reasons why he summoned the bodhisattvas from beneath the earth. First, they were the Buddha’s own disciples and hence could spread his Law abroad.

“In addition, they had profound and widespread connections with the sahā world and hence could bestow benefit throughout the land, and could go to the lands of the emanations of the Buddha and bestow benefits there, and could go to lands in other directions and bestow benefits.

“And through them the Buddha could ‘open the near and reveal the distant.’ For these various reasons he rejected the offer of help from the other bodhisattvas and summoned the bodhisattvas from beneath the earth.”

Commenting on this, *The Annotations on “The Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sutra”* says: “Question: The Buddhas and bodhisattvas join together in

bringing to maturity those whose understanding is not yet mature. Why then do they distinguish between this world and other worlds? By dividing their bodies<sup>7</sup> and spreading their influence abroad they can bring blessing to all the lands in the ten directions. What is this talk of 'having duties of their own' or of 'neglecting to provide benefits to their own lands'?

"Answer: The Buddhas and bodhisattvas in fact make no distinction between this world and other worlds. But there are differences between living beings who have the innate capacity to receive the teaching of a particular Buddha or bodhisattva and those who have not, and this has always been the case throughout time. Therefore this second reason, the differences in capacity, is expressed in the first reason, the distinction between this world and other worlds, and the commentary speaks of those whose ties with this saḥā world are of a superficial nature. In the beginning one followed this Buddha or bodhisattva and formed a bond with him, and so it will be through this Buddha or bodhisattva that one will attain the way."

And the same text states: "The children propagate the Law of the father, and this benefits the world."

And in volume eight of *On "The Words and Phrases"* we read: "When the Lotus Sutra says, 'The World-Honored One addressed Bodhisattva Medicine King, and through him the eighty thousand great men,'<sup>8</sup> it means that the Buddha is making his announcement first of all to Medicine King, and through him is addressing the others. This is the beginning of the transmission section of the sutra. First, in the 'Teacher of the Law' chapter, the Bud-

dha addresses the eighty thousand great men. *The Treatise on the Great Perfection of Wisdom* calls the Lotus Sutra a secret teaching and says that it is entrusted to the bodhisattvas.

"And as we see in the latter part of the sutra, the bodhisattvas who emerge from the earth are summoned forth. The Buddha was waiting for them, his original disciples [to whom he then entrusted the sutra]. This is proof that the other bodhisattvas were not capable of undertaking this task."

Question: But why did the Buddha reject the offer of the bodhisattvas from other lands and instead summon up those who had been his disciples from the distant past?

Answer: This is not a matter upon which one can venture a private opinion. T'ien-t'ai was among the assembly on Eagle Peak<sup>9</sup> when the Lotus Sutra was preached and we must trust to his judgment in this matter. In his commentary, *Words and Phrases*, he states: "The narrative regarding the bodhisattvas who emerge from the earth is in three parts. In the first part, the bodhisattvas from other lands ask permission to propagate the sutra after the Buddha's passing. In the second part, the Thus Come One refuses to give them permission. And in the third part, he summons the other bodhisattvas from beneath the earth.

"When the bodhisattvas from other lands heard of the great blessings to be gained through the transmission of the sutra, they all conceived a desire to remain in this saḥā world, hoping to propagate the sutra here. Therefore they made their request. But because their reason for doing so was such, the Thus Come One refused their request."

Regarding the Transmission of the Essence of the Lotus Sutra

The transmission of the essence of the sutra with encouragement to devotion is in four parts [as revealed in the "Supernatural Powers" chapter of the Lotus Sutra]:

- First Part: transmission with praise  
 “At that time the Buddha spoke . . . I could never finish doing so.”<sup>10</sup>
- Second Part: transmission of the essence  
 “To put it briefly, . . . all these are proclaimed, revealed, and clearly expounded in this sutra.”<sup>11</sup>
- Third Part: transmission with exhortation  
 “For this reason, . . . you must . . . erect towers and offer alms.”<sup>12</sup>
- Fourth Part: transmission with reason for exhortation  
 “Why? . . . have the Buddhas entered nirvana.”<sup>13</sup>

Volume ten of *Words and Phrases* states: “The passage [in the ‘Supernatural Powers’ chapter] that begins ‘At that time the Buddha spoke to Superior Practices’ constitutes the third [of the three divisions<sup>14</sup> of the prose section of the chapter describing] the transfer of the essence of the Lotus Sutra.”

It also states: “The transmission of the essence of the Lotus Sutra is embodied in four phrases. The phrase that reads ‘all the doctrines possessed by the Thus Come One’ means that all the doctrines are the Buddhist Law [the wonderful Law]. This refers to the viewpoint of name as it applies to the Lotus Sutra. The phrase that reads ‘all the freely exercised supernatural powers of the Thus Come One’ refers to the fact that the Thus Come One’s powers are all-pervading and free of hindrance, being made up of eight types of freely exercised power.<sup>15</sup> This refers to the viewpoint of function. The phrase that reads ‘the storehouse of all the secret essentials of the Thus Come One’ refers to the fact that these doctrines prevail everywhere and represent the true aspect of all phenomena. This refers to the viewpoint of entity or essence. And the phrase that reads ‘all the most profound matters of

the Thus Come One’ refers to the fact that the causes and effects of the Thus Come One<sup>16</sup> are a matter of great profundity. This refers to the viewpoint of quality.

“The words ‘all these are proclaimed, revealed, and clearly expounded in this sutra’ mean that the entire Lotus Sutra is summed up in these four phrases. These four, which represent the essence of the sutra, are being transmitted to Superior Practices and the others.”

Commenting on this, *On “The Words and Phrases”* says, “The words ‘the transmission of the essence of the Lotus Sutra is embodied in four phrases’ mean that the essential teaching and the theoretical teaching each have their own quality and function, but the entity that underlies the two teachings is the same in both cases.”

*The Supplement to “The Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sutra”* says, “As far as transmission goes, this sutra was entrusted solely to the bodhisattvas who had welled up out of the earth. The reason for this is that the Law embodied therein is the Law that was realized countless kalpas in the past, and therefore it was entrusted to persons who had been the Buddha’s disciples from countless kalpas in the past.”

The narrative in the “Entrustment” chapter is in two sections:

- First, three stages of the transmission
  - stage one: the Thus Come One’s transmission
    - one: the transmission itself
    - two: explanation of the transmission
    - three: warnings regarding the transmission (“You should use some of the other profound doctrines . . .”)

- stage two: acceptance by the bodhisattvas
  - stage three: description of the dispersal after the conclusion of the ceremony
  - Second, the joy of the members of the assembly at that time<sup>17</sup>
- “When he spoke these words” on down to “were all filled with great joy.”

The five five-hundred-year periods described in the Great Collection Sutra are as follows:

- First five hundred years——the age of attaining liberation
- Second five hundred years——the age of meditation
- Third five hundred years——the age of reading, reciting, and listening
- Fourth five hundred years——the age of building temples and stupas
- Fifth five hundred years——the age of quarrels and disputes

The Former Day of the Law began on the sixteenth day of the second month, immediately after the Buddha had passed into extinction. At that time Mahākāshyapa had received the transmission of the Buddha's teachings. He was followed by the Venerable Ānanda, then by Shānavāsa, then by Upagupta, and then by Dhritaka. These five men each presided over the teachings for a period of twenty years, making a total of a hundred years.

During this period only the doctrines of the Hinayana sutras were propagated. Even the titles of the Mahayana sutras failed to receive mention, to say nothing of the Lotus Sutra.

These five were followed by five more men, Mikkaka, Buddhananda, Buddhamitra, Pārshva, and Punyayaśhas. During this five-hundred-year period, the doctrines of the Mahayana sutras began little by little to come to light, although no particular effort was made to propagate them. Attention was concentrated on the Hinayana sutras alone. The period described above corresponds to the first five-hundred-year period mentioned in the Great Collection Sutra, that known as the age of attaining liberation.

During the five hundred years that make up the latter part of the Former Day of the Law, there appeared more than ten men such as Ashvaghosha, Nāgārjuna, and Āryasimha. They started out as adherents of non-Buddhist

doctrines. Following that, they made a thorough study of the Hinayana sutras, and still later, they turned to the Mahayana sutras and used them to disprove and demolish the doctrines of the Hinayana sutras.

Nevertheless, they did not fully clarify the superiority of the Lotus Sutra in comparison to the provisional Mahayana teachings. Even though they wrote to some extent on this subject, they made no mention of such doctrines as the ten mystic principles of the theoretical teaching and the ten mystic principles of the essential teaching,<sup>18</sup> the fact that persons of the two vehicles can attain Buddhahood, the fact that the Buddha originally attained enlightenment countless kalpas in the past, the fact that the Lotus Sutra is the greatest of all the sutras preached in the past, present, or future, or the doctrines of the hundred worlds and thousand factors and of three thousand realms in a single moment of life.

These five hundred years correspond to the period known in the Great Collection Sutra as the age of meditation.

The world then entered upon the Middle Day of the Law. In India, the provisional teachings and the true teaching were all confused with one another and several hundred persons fell into hell as a result of doctrinal errors.

During the first hundred and more years of the Middle Day of the Law,

the Taoist teachers of China disputed with the proponents of the Buddhist doctrines introduced from India, and neither side could win a clear victory. Therefore people did not have a profound faith in the Buddhist doctrines, nor, of course, did they distinguish between the provisional teachings and the true teaching. The Buddhist monks Kāshyapa Mātanga and Chu Fa-lan, though quite aware of such distinctions themselves, did not discuss the differences between Mahayana and Hinayana or attempt to distinguish between provisional and true teachings.

During the five dynasties that followed in China, the Wei, Chin, Sung, Ch'i, and Liang, it reached the point where people disputed over the differences between Mahayana and Hinayana, provisional and true, and exoteric and esoteric teachings in the Buddhist doctrine, but no one could determine the truth of the matter.

Buddhism thus became split into ten different schools, three in the south and seven in the north,<sup>19</sup> each propagating the Buddhist teachings according to its own understanding. Generally speaking, however, among the various sutras, they rated the Flower Garland Sutra as first, the Nirvana Sutra as second, and the Lotus Sutra as third.

Some four hundred years after the beginning of the Middle Day of the Law, the Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai appeared in China and one by one utterly refuted the erroneous doctrines of the northern and southern schools.

This period corresponds to that described in the Great Collection Sutra as the age of reading, reciting, and listening.

During the latter five hundred years of the Middle Day of the Law, the Three Treatises, Dharma Characteristics, and True Word teachings were brought to China by various Tripitaka masters.

Some four hundred years or more

after the beginning of the Middle Day of the Law, the scriptures of Buddhism were brought to Japan from the Korean kingdom of Paekche, along with a wooden statue of Shakyamuni Buddha and priests and nuns. At this time the Liang dynasty in China was coming to an end, to be replaced by the Ch'en dynasty, while in Japan, Emperor Kimmei, the thirtieth sovereign since Emperor Jimmu, was on the throne.<sup>20</sup>

In the latter five hundred years of the Middle Day of the Law, the Three Treatises, Dharma Characteristics, and other schools, six schools in all, preached various different doctrines, but all of these were erroneous in nature.

Eight hundred years after the beginning of the Middle Day of the Law, the Great Teacher Dengyō appeared in Japan and attacked and refuted all these doctrines of the six schools. But after the time of Dengyō, Tō-ji, Onjō-ji, and other temples throughout Japan joined in declaring that the True Word school was superior to the Tendai school. This period corresponds to that described in the Great Collection Sutra as the age of building temples and stupas.

And now we have entered the Latter Day of the Law, 2,220 or more years since the Buddha's passing, and the time has come for a sage to appear. This is the period described in the Great Collection Sutra as the age when "quarrels and disputes will arise among the adherents to the Buddha's teachings, and the pure Law will become obscured and lost."

Shakyamuni Buddha appeared in the world in the kalpa of continuance, in the ninth period of decrease, when the life span of human beings was a hundred years in length. While the human life span is diminishing from a hundred years to ten years, [there are periods in which Buddhism will be spread, namely] during the fifty years of the Bud-

dha's preaching life, and after his passing, during the two thousand years of the Former and Middle Days of the Law and the ten thousand years of the Latter Day of the Law. During these periods, the Lotus Sutra will be spread on two occasions. The first was the last eight years of the Buddha's preaching life [when he preached the Lotus Sutra], and the second is the five hundred years at the beginning of the Latter Day of the Law.

In studying the teachings of Buddhism, one must by all means understand the time. In the past, when the Buddha Great Universal Wisdom Excellence appeared in the world, he remained for a period of ten small kalpas without ever expounding a single verse. As the sutra says, "having taken his seat, ten small kalpas pass."<sup>21</sup> And it also says, "The Buddha knew that the time had not yet come, and though they entreated, he sat in silence."<sup>22</sup>

And now Shakyamuni Buddha, the

lord of teachings, likewise passed the first forty and more years of his preaching life without expounding the Lotus Sutra. For, as the sutra states, "the time to preach so had not yet come."<sup>23</sup>

Lao Tzu remained in his mother's womb for eighty years,<sup>24</sup> and Bodhisattva Maitreya waits in the inner court of the Tushita heaven for 5,670 million years [till he will make his advent in the world]. How, then, can persons who practice the Buddhist teachings fail to understand matters pertaining to time?

Therefore, even if one does not understand that now, at the beginning of the Latter Day of the Law, is the time to propagate the teaching of the single truth that is pure and perfect,<sup>25</sup> one has only to trust in the sutra passage that says: "After I have passed into extinction, in the last five-hundred-year period you must spread it abroad widely throughout Jambudvīpa and never allow it to be cut off."<sup>26</sup> This makes the matter perfectly clear.



## Background

This work is thought to have been produced in 1275 while Nichiren Daishonin was residing at Minobu. However, the specific date, the recipient, and other details surrounding it are unknown.

Though the title suggests it is a record of the Daishonin's oral teachings, it was written by the Daishonin. Because the work consists mainly of passages from the Lotus Sutra and T'ien-t'ai's works, both of which were orally preached and later committed to writing, it was later entitled "Oral Exposition." The essence referred to in the title, which was entrusted to Superior Practices, the leader of the Bodhisattvas of the Earth, is the fundamental

Law to be spread after the Buddha's passing, in the Latter Day of the Law.

That entrustment is described in *The Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings*, the record of the Daishonin's lectures on the Lotus Sutra, as follows: "Generally speaking, regarding this entrustment of Myoho-enge-kyo to the bodhisattva [Superior Practices], the ceremony for entrustment begins in the 'Treasure Tower' [eleventh] chapter, the entity to be entrusted becomes apparent in the 'Life Span' [sixteenth] chapter, and the ceremony comes to an end in the 'Supernatural Powers' [twenty-first] and 'Entrustment' [twenty-second] chapters."

At the beginning of this work, the



Daishonin introduces passages from the Lotus Sutra and from the commentaries of T'ien-t'ai and Miao-lo that attest to the transmission of the Lotus Sutra's essence to Bodhisattva Superior Practices, illustrating events as they unfold in the sutra text. They are introduced in the following order: First, five passages from the "Treasure Tower" chapter, in which the Buddha calls upon his listeners to propagate the Lotus Sutra after his death; second, two passages from the "Encouraging Devotion" (13th) chapter, expressing the vow by the disciples and the assembled bodhisattvas to spread the sutra in response to the Buddha's call to do so, and a passage from Miao-lo's *Annotations on "The Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sutra."* Third, one passage from the "Emerging from the Earth" (15th) chapter, in which the Buddha declines the offer, made by the bodhisattvas he taught in his present life and the bodhisattvas gathered from other lands, to spread the sutra and instead calls forth his original disciples whom he had taught from the time of his original enlightenment and who will spread the Law after the Buddha's death. They are known as the Bodhisattvas of the Earth.

Fourth, one passage from the "Entrustment" chapter, which concludes the ceremony of entrustment, and in which Shakyamuni transfers the sutra to both his original disciples who have emerged from the earth and his other disciples who had already assembled. Fifth, to clarify the reason why Shakyamuni at first declined to entrust the sutra to his disciples he taught in his present life and the bodhisattvas from other lands, and instead chose to be-

queath it to the Bodhisattvas of the Earth, the Daishonin quotes passages from T'ien-t'ai's *Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sutra*, and Miao-lo's annotations on them.

Sixth, a chart is presented outlining the transmission of the essence of the Lotus Sutra to Superior Practices, and quotes are introduced from the commentaries of T'ien-t'ai and others to show that the essence that is transmitted is expressed in four phrases from the "Supernatural Powers" chapter, and that the person to whom this essence is transmitted is one who had been the Buddha's disciple from countless kalpas in the past. Seventh, the flow and significance of events depicted in the "Entrustment" chapter are explained using quotes from *Words and Phrases*.

Next, the Daishonin cites passages from the Great Collection Sutra that categorize the time after the passing of Shakyamuni Buddha into five five-hundred-year periods. He then classifies these five periods into the three periods of the Former, Middle, and Latter Days of the Law, describing the development of the Buddha's teachings after his death. He indicates that in the Latter Day of the Law, an age characterized by "quarrels and disputes," in which "the pure Law will be obscured and lost," a "sage" is certain to emerge. And citing a passage from the "Medicine King" (23rd) chapter of the Lotus Sutra, which describes the Buddha's prophecy of the spread of the sutra, he explains that, in the period of his lifetime and thereafter in the Latter Day of the Law, the teaching of the single truth that is pure and perfect, namely, Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, is to be widely spread.

## Notes

1. This section refers to the passage "There will be many ignorant people who will curse and speak ill of us and will attack

us with swords and staves, but we will endure all these things."

2. This section refers to the passage "In

that evil age there will be monks with perverse wisdom and hearts that are fawning and crooked who will suppose they have attained what they have not attained, being proud and boastful in heart."

3. This section refers to the passage "Or there will be forest-dwelling monks wearing clothing of patched rags and living in retirement, who will claim they are practicing the true way, despising and looking down on all humankind. Greedy for profit and support, they will preach the Law to white-robed laymen and will be respected and revered by the world as though they were arhats who possess the six transcendental powers. These men with evil in their hearts, constantly thinking of worldly affairs, will borrow the name of forest-dwelling monks and take delight in proclaiming our faults, saying things like this: 'These monks are greedy for profit and support and therefore they preach non-Buddhist doctrines and fabricate their own scriptures to delude the people of the world. Because they hope to gain fame and renown thereby they make distinctions when preaching this sutra.' Because in the midst of the great assembly they constantly try to defame us, they will address the rulers, high ministers, Brahmans, and householders, as well as the other monks, slandering and speaking evil of us, saying, 'These are men of perverted views who preach non-Buddhist doctrines!'"

4. This passage actually appears in *The Annotations on "The Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sutra,"* in which Miao-lo classified those who persecute practitioners of the Lotus Sutra into three types of enemies.

5. The Lotus Sutra consists of eight volumes and twenty-eight chapters, among which volume five contains four chapters from the "Devadatta" (12th) chapter through the "Emerging from the Earth" (15th) chapter.

6. In *The Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sutra*, "the wisdom of the Buddha, the wisdom of the Thus Come One, the wisdom that comes of itself" are interpreted to indicate respectively the wisdom to understand the universal aspect of phenomena, the wisdom to understand the various paths to enlightenment, and the wisdom to understand both the universal aspect and individual aspects of phenomena.

7. According to Mahayana belief, Buddhas and bodhisattvas can divide their bod-

ies and appear in innumerable worlds at one time in order to save the people there. In the case of Buddhas, these divided bodies are called emanation Buddhas.

8. Lotus Sutra, chap. 10.

9. T'ien-t'ai is said to have been the reincarnation of Bodhisattva Medicine King, who was present at the assembly on Eagle Peak, because T'ien-t'ai attained an awakening through the "Medicine King" chapter of the Lotus Sutra.

10. The full passage reads: "At that time the Buddha spoke to Superior Practices and the others in the great assembly of bodhisattvas, saying: 'The supernatural powers of the Buddhas, as you have seen, are immeasurable, boundless, inconceivable. If in the process of entrusting this sutra to others I were to employ these supernatural powers for immeasurable, boundless hundreds, thousands, ten thousands, millions of asamkhyā kalpas to describe the benefits of the sutra, I could never finish doing so.'"

11. The full passage reads: "To put it briefly, all the doctrines possessed by the Thus Come One, all the freely exercised supernatural powers of the Thus Come One, the storehouse of all the secret essentials of the Thus Come One, all the most profound matters of the Thus Come One—all these are proclaimed, revealed, and clearly expounded in this sutra."

12. The full passage reads: "For this reason, after the Thus Come One has entered extinction, you must single-mindedly accept, uphold, read, recite, explain, preach and transcribe it, and practice it as directed. In any of the various lands, wherever there are those who accept, uphold, read, recite, explain, preach, transcribe, or practice it as directed, or wherever the sutra rolls are preserved, whether in a garden, a forest, beneath a tree, in monks' quarters, in the lodgings of white-robed laymen, in palaces, or in mountain valleys or the wide wilderness, in all these places one should erect towers and offer alms."

13. The full passage reads: "Why? Because you should understand that such spots are places of religious practice. In such places have the Buddhas gained supreme perfect enlightenment, in such places have the Buddhas turned the wheel of the Law, in such places have the Buddhas entered nirvana."

14. Regarding the three divisions, in the first division the bodhisattvas are charged

with the Buddha's decree, in the second division the Buddha displays his supernatural powers, and in the third division the Buddha transmits the essence of the sutra to Superior Practices, the leader of the Bodhisattvas of the Earth.

15. The power described in the Nirvana Sutra, in which Shakyamuni divides the freely exercised power possessed by the "true self," one of the four virtues of a Buddha's life, into eight types. For example, a Buddha is able to freely perceive all phenomena.

16. "The causes and effects of the Thus Come One" means the Buddha's practices and the virtues he consequently attained.

17. This part refers to the last paragraph of the "Entrustment" chapter of the Lotus Sutra. "At that time" refers to the time "when he [the Buddha] spoke these words" indicated in the table.

18. According to T'ien-t'ai, the ten mystic principles are all implicit in the single word *myō*, or wonderful, of *Myōhō-enge-kyō*, and there are two categories: the ten mystic principles of the theoretical teaching and the ten mystic principles of the essential teaching of the Lotus Sutra. See also ten mystic principles in Glossary.

19. See Glossary under three schools of southern China and seven schools of

northern China.

20. According to *The Chronicles of Japan*, Buddhism was introduced to Japan during the reign of Emperor Kimmei, in the tenth month of the thirteenth year of his reign, a year with the cyclical sign *mizunoe-saru* (552), by King Syōngmyōng of the kingdom of Paekche.

21. Lotus Sutra, chap. 7.

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid., chap. 2.

24. According to *Records of the Historian* and other works, Lao Tzu, regarded as the founder of Taoism, was white-haired at birth and had the appearance of an old man.

25. "The teaching of the single truth that is pure and perfect" refers to the teaching of Nam-myōhō-enge-kyō. *The Object of Devotion for Observing the Mind* says, "The essential teaching of Shakyamuni's lifetime and that revealed at the beginning of the Latter Day are both pure and perfect [in that both lead directly to Buddhahood]. Shakyamuni's, however, is the Buddhism of the harvest, and this is the Buddhism of sowing. The core of his teaching is one chapter and two halves, and the core of mine is the five characters of the daimoku alone" (I, p. 370).

26. Lotus Sutra, chap. 23.