YOU have stated that it is imperative that recitation of the Amida Sutra be carried out at the appointed time each day. Even before you gave these instructions in the matter, as an official representative of my father, and on my own behalf as well, I have for the past four or five years without fail been carrying out recitation of the Amida Sutra at the appointed time.

But from the end of spring and beginning of summer last year, I ceased recitation of the Amida Sutra and have devoted all my attention to recitation of the verse section of the “Life Span” chapter of the Lotus Sutra, or have busied myself with a reading of the entire sutra.

I do this solely as a form of prayer for the sake of my present and future existences. But as to how I came to cease recitation of the Amida Sutra and the Nembutsu, I wish to relate the following.

These days the Sage Nichiren is known throughout the country of Japan. Some time ago, in the summer of the eleventh year of Bun’ei [1274], he took up residence in a retreat deep in the mountains near the peak of Mount Minobu, in the districts of Iino, Mimaki, and Hakiri of our province of Kai. Though qualified persons have asked to be allowed to journey there to receive his doctrinal teaching, they have not been granted permission. It is felt that, unless one has particularly close connections with him, one will not be suited to receive instruction.

Learning that a certain person was going for an interview with him, I decided to try to go along, not because I intended to take faith in the teachings, but because I simply wished to observe the situation. Slipping into the grounds at a deserted spot, I hid behind the retreat where he is residing and was able to listen in as he explained the doctrine to persons who had questions concerning it.

First he discoursed on the relative worth and profundity of the Lotus Sutra and other sutras such as the Mahāvairocana, Flower Garland, Wisdom, Profound Secrets, Lankāvatāra, and Amida sutras. He explained that the Lotus Sutra and the Amida Sutra do not differ by a mere one or two degrees of merit, but in fact are as far apart as heaven and earth or clouds and mud. In rank and worth, the Lotus Sutra is to the Amida Sutra as the deity Shakra is to a monkey, as a phoenix is to a magpie, as a great mountain is to a speck of dust, or as the light of the sun and moon is to that of a firefly.

He cited passages from the various sutras, comparing them with the Lotus Sutra in such a way that even a fool
could understand why the latter is superior, making the point absolutely clear and obvious. His teaching on this point indeed seemed to be already well understood by the persons present and not to be a matter for surprise.

He also emphasized that if one wishes to practice the Buddhist teachings, one should go about it by making clear the distinction between Mahayana and Hinayana, provisional and true, exoteric and esoteric teachings. One should also have a thorough understanding of the time in which we live and take into consideration the factor of people’s capacity.

[His lecture proceeded as follows]:

In Japan at the present time people all regard the Amida Sutra and the practice of calling on Amida’s name as fundamental and look on the Lotus Sutra with contempt. Those who are viewed by the world as persons of wisdom are convinced that they have a thorough grasp of these concepts of time and capacity. And yet they choose a lesser good and cast the greater good aside; they rely on provisional sutras and disregard the true sutra. Thus their lesser good becomes on the contrary a great evil, their medicine turns to poison, where they should act as close kin, they behave like mortal enemies. Such an approach is indeed difficult to remedy.

Again, though a person may seem to have a very sound grasp of the Buddhist teachings, if he does not understand how the factors of time, capacity, country, and the proper sequence of propagation relate to the teachings, then although he may labor in mind and body to put the teachings into practice, he will achieve no success. Thus, for example, though one may propagate the Mahayana doctrines in a country where only the Mahayana doctrines have prevailed. If one insists on propagating them in such a case, the country will be visited by disaster and its inhabitants will almost certainly fall into the evil paths of existence.

Again, when dealing with a beginner in Buddhist practice, one should never attempt to have such a person practice both the Hinayana and Mahayana doctrines simultaneously. In India it was the custom for persons in temples devoted solely to Hinayana teachings to avoid walking in the middle lane of the road, the so-called “king’s lane.” Similarly, monks in temples devoted solely to Mahayana teachings would avoid walking in the right or left lanes. In like manner, the two groups would refrain from drinking water from the same well or the same river. And of course they would never live together in the same room.

The Lotus Sutra, speaking of beginners in temples devoted solely to Mahayana teachings, describes them as “desiring only to accept and embrace the sutra of the great vehicle [Mahayana] and not accepting a single verse of the other sutras.” And it also says, “Again one should not associate with monks, nuns, laymen, or laywomen who seek to become voice-hearers, nor should one question or visit them.”

Thus, though one’s own father or mother may have been a monk or nun living in a temple devoted solely to Hinayana teachings, if one lived in a temple devoted solely to Mahayana, one would not pay obeisance to one’s father or mother or attempt to associate closely with either of them. And of course one would never have gone so far as to practice the Hinayana teachings that they followed. Temples in which both Mahayana and Hinayana practices were observed were suitable only for bodhisattvas who were far advanced in religious training.

The Buddhism that was first intro-
duced to this country of Japan was a mixture of Mahayana and Hinayana practices. In the reign of the forty-fifth human sovereign, Emperor Shōmu, a
man known as Reverend Chien-chen [called Ganjin in Japan] of Lung-hsing-ssu temple in Yang-chou in China
came to the Japanese court, bringing
with him the Lotus Sutra and the
 teachings of the T’ien-t’ai school. But,
perhaps because he felt that the capac-
ties of the people of that time were not
ready to receive the perfect teaching,
he kept these teachings locked away in
his heart and did not allow his mouth
to speak of them. Instead the Hinayana
precepts disseminated by the Discipline
Master Tao-hsüan of Feng-te-ssu tem-
ple of Mount Chung-nan in China
were introduced, and ordination plat-
forms for administering such precepts
were established at three places in
Japan. But this was done simply as an
expedient means to prepare for the
propagation of the doctrines of the
Lotus school. Once the Mahayana
 teachings were established, it was not
intended that these Hinayana precepts
should be carried on simultaneously
with them.

It is like the case of China, where the
Three Sages, among them Confucius, founder of the Confucian school, and Lao Tzu, were sent as messengers
of the Buddha to China to teach people
the writings pertaining to rites and
music so that these might serve as
a preparation for the sacred texts of
Buddhism. Thus in Great Concentration
and Insight a sutra is quoted that says,
“I [the Buddha] have dispatched the
Three Sages to educate the land of
China.” The Great Teacher Miao-lo
says, “First the teachings on rites and
music were set forth, and later the true
way was introduced.”

The Buddha set forth the Hinayana
precepts so that they could act for a
time as a kind of first step toward the
Mahayana teachings. But when the
time appropriate for them had passed,
he forbade them to be used any longer.
Thus in the Nirvana Sutra he says,
“Suppose there were a person who said
that the Thus Come One is transient
in nature. Could such a person escape
having his tongue fall out?”

Later, in the reign of the fiftieth
human sovereign, Emperor Kammu,
a sage known as the Great Teacher
Dengyō appeared. He first made a
thorough study of the six schools of
Buddhism in Japan, the Flower Gar-
land, Three Treatises, Dharma Charac-
teristics, Dharma Analysis Treasury,
Establishment of Truth, and Precepts
schools. Moreover, he investigated the
arcane doctrines of the Bodhidharma
school,7 and also made inquiry into the
 teachings of the T’ien-t’ai and True
Word schools, which at that time had
not yet been propagated in Japan. The
purpose of these exhaustive studies was
to determine the relative profundity
and worth of these various doctrines.

In the twenty-first year of the En-
ryaku era [802], on the nineteenth
day of the first month, Emperor Kammu
visited the temple at Mount Takao,
where he summoned Zengi, Gonsō,
and others, fourteen men who were
leaders of the seven major temples of
Nara, the southern capital, and had
 them meet with the Great Teacher
Dengyō to investigate and make clear
the relative worth of the teachings of
the six schools as they compared with
those of the Lotus school. Each of
these eminent scholars asserted that
the doctrines of his particular school
represented the highest point in the
Buddha’s lifetime of teachings, but the
Great Teacher Dengyō with a single
word demolished all their arguments.

The emperor once more issued an
order, commanding Wake no Hiroyo8
to act as his envoy and to reprimand
the fourteen men. They in turn, the
most outstanding scholars of the seven
major temples and six schools, unani-
mously expressed their apologies in a memorial to the throne. In their memorial, the fourteen men stated: "From now on, all the beings in this world who are endowed with life will be able to embark on the ship of the wonderful and perfect truth and quickly reach the opposite shore."

The Great Teacher Dengyō stated that he had forthwith cast aside the two hundred and fifty precepts. He also said, "The Former and Middle Days are almost over, and the Latter Day is near at hand." And he said, "In the school of the single vehicle, none of the provisional teachings should be regarded as valid." He said, "Do not place impure food in a jeweled vessel." He said, "The great arhat who lived during the Buddha’s lifetime has already been scolded and told what to do. How then should the little mosquitoes and gadflies who live in the age after the Buddha’s passing presume to do otherwise?"

I am not here propounding some private opinion of my own. In the Lotus Sutra the Buddha says, "Honestly discarding expedient means, I will preach only the unsurpassed way." And the Nirvana Sutra speaks of "people of mistaken views." These terms "mistaken views" and "expedient means" refer to the Flower Garland, Mahāvairochana, Wisdom, Amida, and the other various sutras expounded in the first forty and more years of the Buddha’s preaching life. The Great Teacher T’ien-t’ai says that the word "discarding" [in the Lotus Sutra passage quoted above] means "casting aside." And he also says that "‘to slander’ means to turn against."

The way honest beginners should practice the Lotus Sutra is to discard the above-mentioned sutras and schools of Buddhism and to devote themselves to the practice of the Lotus Sutra alone. Such persons are the true practitioners [of the sutra] who are honest. But if the beginners practice the various other sutras simultaneously with the Lotus Sutra, as bodhisattvas who are far advanced in religious practice do, then they are being dishonest. Even in secular life it is customary that a worthy man does not serve two lords, and a virtuous woman does not take to herself two husbands. Personal objection is useless.

The Thus Come One himself looked into the future and clearly stated who would propagate his teachings and what sutras would be propagated during the thousand years of the Former Day of the Law following his passing, the thousand years of the Middle Day of the Law, and the ten thousand years of the Latter Day of the Law. If anyone should appear in the world who goes against these dictates, whether a sage or a worthy ruler, his words should not be heeded.

The Buddha stated that in the first five hundred years of the Former Day of the Law, which would begin the day after his passing, only Hinayana sutras should be propagated. This would be done by Mahākāśyapa, Ānanda, and the other disciples down to Punyahāsas, eleven men in all. In the second five-hundred-year period of the Former Day of the Law, provisional Mahayana sutras such as the Flower Garland, Correct and Equal, Profound Secrets, Wisdom, Mahāvairochana, Meditation, and Amida sutras were to be propagated. This would be done by the four ranks of bodhisattvas, who were great scholars, such as Maitreya, Manjushrī, Ashvaghosha, Nāgārjuna, Asanga, and Vasubandhu.

These great scholars not only understood the profound meaning of the Lotus Sutra, but they knew that the time for the propagation of the Lotus Sutra had not yet come. And since they had not been commanded by the Buddha to propound these great doctrines, though they preserved them in
their minds, they did not allow their mouths to speak of them. At times perhaps they spoke certain words that hinted at them, but the true meaning of these doctrines remained hidden and unrevealed.

With the beginning of the thousand years of the Middle Day of the Law, Buddhism gradually spread from India to China and Japan. The Buddha, the World-Honored One, had expressly entrusted the first part of the Lotus Sutra, the fourteen chapters that make up the theoretical teaching, to the bodhisattvas of the theoretical teaching such as Bodhisattva Medicine King and to the bodhisattvas of worlds other than our present one. This was done as a kind of prelude to the appearance of the great bodhisattvas who emerge from the earth in the beginning of the Latter Day of the Law to teach all the living beings of this continent of Jambudvīpa to chant the five characters of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, which are the heart of the “Life Span” chapter of the essential teaching.

Those who were designated to propagate the theoretical teaching were persons such as Nan-yūeh, T’ien-t’ai, Miao-lo, and Dengyō.

Now the world has entered the age when the bodhisattva Superior Practices and the others of his group are destined to make their appearance. Even I with my untutored eyes can see the signs that this is about to occur.

If we examine the matter, we see that the sutras that the other schools rely on, such as the Flower Garland, Mahāvairocana, and Amida sutras, were intended to be propagated in the latter five hundred years of the thousand-year Former Day of the Law, or in the period of doctrinal controversy in the beginning of the Middle Day of the Law. Yet the Buddhist teachers, not only mistaking the relative profundity and worth of the various sutras but also forgetting the Buddha’s instructions regarding them, ignore the factors of time and capacity and unreasonably establish schools that recommend these sutras as the proper practice for the Middle and Latter Days of the Law. This is like planting seeds in an autumn field and hoping to reap grain in the dead of winter, like expecting to see a full moon when the moon is in its last quarter, or to see the sun shining at midnight.

Even more is this true of the Precepts school, which is purely Hinayana in nature. It represents a minor doctrine practiced in India in the first five hundred years of the thousand-year Former Day of the Law. It was introduced to Japan around the middle of the Middle Day of the Law, before the propagation of the Lotus Sutra teachings of the Tendai school, and was used for a time to develop the capacities of the people of the age. It is like the morning star that shines before sunrise, or the clouds that appear before a rainstorm. Of what use are the star or the clouds once the sun has risen or the rain fallen?

Now the time for such teachings has ended. Now that we have entered the Latter Day of the Law, to follow such practices is like applying a mild medicine to a severe ailment, or like loading a huge stone on a little boat. Persons who pursue such practices will exhaust themselves, spending much time and producing no results, bringing forth flowers but no fruit.

Therefore when the Great Teacher Dengyō appeared at the end of the Middle Day of the Law, he established an ordination platform on Mount Hiei for administering the precepts of perfect and immediate enlightenment, these precepts being one of the three disciplines, namely, precepts, meditation, and wisdom, of the theoretical teaching of the Lotus Sutra. At that time he forthwith discarded the two hundred and fifty precepts. According-
ly, fourteen priests of the seven major temples of Nara that had heretofore followed the ordination practices established by Ganjin, as well as three hundred or more other persons, expressed their agreement and became followers of the Mahayana precepts. Thereafter the entire nation abandoned the Hinayana precepts. All this is perfectly clear if one examines the documents pertaining to the administering of the precepts.

Despite all this, there are at present some priests of perverse wisdom, “observers of the precepts,” who take up the old Hinayana sutras that were cast aside long ago, and though they in fact do not observe a single precept, go about calling themselves priests of the two hundred and fifty precepts, misleading the members of the court and warrior families and declaring themselves to be the teachers of the nation.

What is more, these men in their self-conceit go so far as to insult the observers of the Mahayana precepts by calling them breakers of the precepts or men of no precepts. Such behavior is comparable to a dog barking at a lion or a monkey railing at the god Shakra.

At present these priests of the Precepts school appear to the people of the world to be keepers of the precepts and speakers of truth. But if one investigates the truth of the matter, one finds that they are in fact the most grossly untruthful men under heaven. I say this is because the texts they base themselves on, the works called *The Fourfold Rules of Discipline* and *The Ten Divisions of Monastic Rules*, belong wholly to the Hinayana division of the canon, not to the Mahayana, and even among the Hinayana writings they represent the very lowest of the works on Hinayana monastic discipline. When the Buddha was in the world, he preached them as a temporary doctrine after the twelve years of the period of the Āgama sutras and before moving on to the Correct and Equal period of the Mahayana sutras. After the passing of the Buddha, they were observed in temples devoted solely to the Hinayana teachings during the first five hundred years of the Former Day of the Law. Moreover, it was intended that they should be attacked and denounced by the temples devoted to the Mahayana teachings. Thus in Japan in the middle of the Middle Day of the Law, they were introduced by the Reverend Ganjin as a form of training in preparation for the Mahayana teachings.

When the Great Teacher Dengyō refuted the doctrines of the Precepts school and converted its adherents to the Tendai school, the Precepts school should have been abolished entirely. But in order that later ages would understand just what had happened, the Great Teacher Dengyō dispatched some of his own Mahayana disciples to help the school survive. Now the scholars of our present age, unaware of the particulars of the situation, believe that the six schools of Buddhism in Japan have gone on since the beginning without being refuted. What foolishness! What foolishness!

Again there are some followers of the Precepts teaching who realize that, in comparison to the talent and erudition displayed by the men of the Tendai school, their own school is a weak and juvenile affair. Bit by bit they shift their attention to the Brahmā Net Sutra, until they end by stealing the great Mahayana precepts of the Lotus Sutra and incorporating them among their own Hinayana precepts. Then they turn about and deride the practitioners of the precepts of perfect and immediate enlightenment for being breakers of the precepts or men of no precepts.

The rulers of the nation, deceived by the lofty and impressive outward appearance of the Precepts leaders of the time, snatch away the lands and
estates that had earlier been donated to the temples of the Tendai school and give them instead to the priests of the Precepts school, and the common people likewise withdraw their support and allegiance from the temples devoted to the Mahayana teaching and transfer them to the Precepts temples. Though they may not set the fires, they are burning down all the Mahayana temples in Japan, and though they may not be crows that pluck out the eyes of dead men, they are plucking out the eyes of all living beings. They are what the Buddha called “icchantikas who resemble arhats [but commit evil deeds].”

The Nirvana Sutra says: “After I have passed away and countless hundreds of years have gone by, the sages of the four stages19 too will have all passed away. After the Former Day of the Law has ended and the Middle Day of the Law has begun, there will be monks who will give the appearance of abiding by the rules of monastic discipline. But they will scarcely ever read or recite the sutras, and instead will crave all kinds of food and drink to nourish their bodies.... Though they wear the clothes of a monk, they will go about searching for alms like so many huntsmen who, narrowing their eyes, stalk softly. They will be like a cat on the prowl for mice. Outwardly they will seem to be wise and good, but within they will harbor greed and jealousy. [And when they are asked to preach the teachings, they will say nothing], like Brahmans who have taken a vow of silence. They are not true monks—they merely have the appearance of monks. Consumed by their erroneous views, they slander the correct teaching.”

In this sutra passage the World-Honored One describes what will happen in the future.

Shakyamuni Buddha acts not only as a wise father for us, but as an enlightened teacher and a sage sovereign. In his one person he embodies these three virtues [of parent, teacher, and sovereign], and with his Buddha eye he surveys the evil age of the future and describes for us how it will be.

In his passage of description he says, “After I have passed away and countless hundreds of years have gone by....” This refers to the period two thousand years or more after the Buddha’s passing. He says, “The sages of the four stages too will have all passed away.” This refers, does it not, to the twenty-four successors to the Buddha’s teaching? “After the Former Day of the Law has ended” indicates that he is speaking about the Middle and Latter Days of the Law.

“There will be monks who will give the appearance of abiding by the rules of monastic discipline.” Now, in this Latter Day of the Law, to whom can we point in this land of Japan as an example of a monk who gives the appearance of abiding by the precepts, so that the World-Honored One of Great Enlightenment will be proved to be no speaker of untruth? Surely the sutra passage is not referring to men or women lay believers or to nuns, for it speaks only of “monks.” There are countless monks or priests in this land of Japan. But among them those who appear to possess nothing more than the prescribed “three robes and one begging bowl” can be said to “give the appearance” of abiding by the precepts. Thus only priests who are observers of the precepts would seem to fit the description. And among all the observers of the precepts, the passage describes these men as “giving the appearance of abiding by the rules of monastic discipline,” so it must refer to someone of the Precepts school.

It says, “They will scarcely ever read or recite the sutras.” If this does not refer to the priest Ryōkan of Goku-raku-ji temple in Kamakura in the
province of Sagami, then who else can we point to to prove the validity of the passage?

The passage goes on to say that these persons “will go about searching for alms like so many huntsmen who, narrowing their eyes, stalk softly. They will be like a cat on the prowl for mice. Outwardly they will seem to be wise and good, but within they will harbor greed and jealousy.” If this is not Ryōkan, the priest Two Fires, then who are we to believe the Buddha is speaking about when he talks of a monk with three robes and one begging bowl who stalks like a hunter or a cat?

Alas, the laymen, laywomen, nuns, and patrons of Buddhism in our day are like so many mountain deer or household mice who are deceived and preyed upon by the priest Two Fires, who is like a huntsman or a cat. In our present age these people have been abandoned by the Sun Goddess and Great Bodhisattva Hachiman, the protectors of our nation, and will sink in defeat before the armies of other nations. They will be seized as mice are seized by a cat, and will die by arrows like deer before a huntsman. The laymen and warriors will be pierced with arrows and cut down with swords, and the laywomen will be taken prisoner and dragged off to foreign lands, their fate like that of Wang Chao-chün or Yang Kuei-fei. And in their next existence every one of these persons will fall into the great citadel of the hell of incessant suffering.

Because I can see what will happen, I do not hesitate for fear of the great evil that may be done to me by Ryōkan’s patrons, but speak out strongly against him. And he, the priest Two Fires, for that reason secretly works to spread slanderous reports about me here and there in an attempt to silence me.

Again it is stated in one of the sutras: “Those who give alms to you will fall into the three evil paths.” If even persons who made offerings to the arhats while the Buddha was in the world could not escape falling into the three evil paths, then how much worse will it be for those who make offerings to the deluded priests of the Hinayana Precepts teachings living in an age long after the Buddha’s passing! From this we know how serious is the offense of clinging to the Hinayana precepts. The precepts may be compared to donkey’s milk, which in the end turns to excrement. Their adherents may be compared to dogs that eat the excrement of persons of the Mahayana teaching. They are like apes or monkeys, broken tiles and shards.

If one fails to understand what is demanded by the time and the capacity of the people and instead observes the Hinayana precepts, this will act as an obstruction to the Mahayana teachings. And if one violates these Hinayana precepts, this too will invite evil consequences.

In addition, the followers of the Hinayana precepts at present appropriate the Mahayana precepts and combine them with their Hinayana precepts, which is like mixing cow’s milk with donkey’s milk, and in this way attempt to deceive the Mahayana followers. Persons who do this are great thieves, great slanderers of the Law. Considering the offense they are committing, even Devadatta does not measure up to them; even the Venerable Kokālika cannot compare to them, for they are the most evil persons in the whole continent of Jambudvīpa. So long as people follow their teachings, can there be any peace and safety for the nation?

I observe these things and understand them to my own satisfaction, which should be enough. But among those persons in Japan who are thought to be wise, there is not a single one
who understands this, and the country is thus in grave danger of destruction. Moreover, one must respect the admonitions of the Buddha and exercise a measure of compassion for others, and therefore for the sake of the country I risk my body and life by speaking out on the matter. But the rulers of the nation are so deceived by these men that not one of them heeds my warnings. I am like someone who throws cold water on molten iron, or who tweaks the leg of a sleeping lion.

Here is this priest called Two Fires. On his body he wears his three robes like a hide that he can never take off, and he has his one alms bowl that he guards as closely as he does his own two eyes. He meticulously observes the two hundred and fifty precepts and abides by the three thousand rules of conduct. The ignorant priests and nuns and lay persons of our time, from the rulers of the nation on down to the common people, all look upon him as though they thought he were the Ven- erable Earth Repository who had made his appearance from Mount Kharadiya, or the Venerable Mahākāshyapa who had come down from the holy mountain of Eagle Peak. I myself have read the “Encouraging Devotion” chapter in the fifth volume of the Lotus Sutra, which tells how, when the world enters the latter age, the three great ene-

emies of the Lotus Sutra24 will appear. And I have concluded that the third of these three enemies is none other than this man.

I thought that if a suitable opportunity presented itself, I would like to attack this enemy of the nation, curb that overbearing arrogance of his, and confront him with the full might and authority of the Buddhist teachings. But the priest Two Fires sits at all times on his lofty seat, sighs and says: “I do my best to see that the priests and nuns of this country of Japan all abide by the two hundred and fifty precepts and the five hundred precepts respectively, and that the men and women lay believers all observe the five precepts and the eight precepts. But Nichiren impedes the fulfillment of my wishes!”

Then I said to myself, I would like to decide this matter by means of actual proof. This man constantly tells people that he can cause rain to fall whenever he wills it. Let us see the proof of this. There are many examples in the past in which the power to make rain was used to determine the relative worth of doctrines, as when the Great Teacher Dengyō contended with Go-myō, and Shubin with Kōbō.25 And as it happens, the priest Two Fires has just now been requested by the authorities to conduct prayers for rain.

The prayers for rain conducted by the priest Two Fires were to begin on the eighteenth day of the sixth month in the eighth year of the Bun’ei era [1271] and last until the twenty-fourth day of the same month. At that time I sent a messenger to Gokuraku-ji tem- ple, making clear that he came from one who had caused the priest many sighs in recent years. “If within the space of seven days you can make it rain even once, then I will become your disciple and will undertake to uphold all the two hundred and fifty precepts,” I stated. “Moreover, I will acknowledge that my condemnation of the Nembutsu as a practice that leads to the hell of incessant suffering is based on an erroneous interpretation. And if I myself submit to you, my discip-

les will of course do likewise, as will almost all the people of Japan.”

During the course of the seven days, I three times sent messengers to convey these words to him. But what could have gone wrong? Not only did not a drop of rain fall, but all the eight kinds of winds, roaring winds, howling winds, whirling winds, violent winds, raged without cease throughout the twenty-four hours of the day and night.
Moreover, during another seven days [of their extended prayer period] these winds continued without stop, while not a drop of rain fell.

What does this mean? Izumi Shikibu was a licentious woman and the priest Nōin disregarded the precepts, yet both, by writing poems in the thirty-one syllable form that the priest Two Fires deplores, were able to make rain fall. And that great thieving bandit of India, by reciting the words “Hail to the Buddha,” managed to steal the gold head of the image of the heavenly god.

Yet this priest Two Fires and his disciples, several hundred persons abiding by the two hundred and fifty precepts and performing big and little ceremonies of the True Word and Lotus schools, proved less effective with their Buddhist prayers than did a licentious woman with her wanton poem or a great thief with his invocation of “Hail to the Buddha!” Is this not strange?

From this it should have been obvious what a great offense these men were guilty of. But on the contrary their slanderous words were accepted by the authorities and the truth of the matter never came to light. It seemed that the time had come for the country of Japan to perish.

When conducting prayers for rain, if rain actually falls, the nature and aspect of the rain will indicate whether the person conducting the prayers is worthy or unworthy. There are various types of rain, such as heavenly rain, dragon rain, asura rain, coarse rain, sweet rain, and thunder rain.

In the present instance of prayers for rain, of course, no rain whatsoever fell. Moreover, for a period of fourteen days there was even more severe drought than there had been previously, and great evil winds blew without cease throughout the twenty-four hours of the day and night.

If the priest Two Fires had been a man of true sincerity, he should immediately have renounced his erroneous views and hidden himself away in the mountain forests. But far from doing that, he brazenly showed his face before his disciples and patrons, and went even further by spreading slanderous words and urging the government to see that my head was cut off, so that a letter to that effect was sent to the authorities in the province where I was exiled. He is a very evil man who would have me done away with. And yet his patrons in their ignorance continue to support him, thus bringing about the ruin of the nation in this existence and insuring that in a future existence they will fall into the hell of incessant suffering. How pitiful!

The Origin of the World Sutra says, “Because the various living beings commit wanton acts and do things that defile their purity of conduct, Heaven refuses to send down rain.” And it also says, “Because people go against the Law and are guilty of greed and stinginess, jealousy, erroneous views, and perverseness, Heaven sends down no rain.”

Again, Divergent Concepts in the Sutras and Vinaya Texts states, “There are five factors that will prevent rain from falling.” (I will omit the first three here.) “The fourth is that the rainmaker is a person of lewd and disorderly conduct. The fifth is that the ruler of the nation fails to govern according to principle and the rainmaker is angry. Under these conditions no rain will fall.”

With these passages of scripture as our mirror, let us see what they show us about the true nature of the priest Two Fires. They reveal him very clearly for what he is. First, though by reputation he is an observer of the precepts, in fact he is wanton in conduct. Second, he is greedy and stingy. Third, he is jealous. Fourth, he holds erroneous views. Fifth, he is lewd and
disorderly. All the five factors apply to him. These passages of scripture do not apply to the priest Two Fires alone, but to other persons of both past and present as well. Thus, when the Great Teacher Kōbō prayed for rain, for a period of fourteen days not a drop of rain fell, a very strange outcome indeed. And yet so arrogant and overbearing was he, so deceitful in mind, that he attempted to steal the rain that the emperor had caused to fall through his prayers and to claim that he, Kōbō, had produced it!

Likewise, when the Tripitaka Masters Shan-wu-wei, Chin-kang-chih, and Pu-k'ung prayed for rain, though a small amount of rain did in fact fall, in all three cases it was accompanied by high winds that continued to blow over a long period, until at last an imperial envoy was sent to drive the men out of the country. How pitiful they were!

When the Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai and the Great Teacher Dengyō prayed for rain, in no time at all, or within a mere three days, the god Shakra sent down rain, and no winds whatsoever accompanied it, so excellent were the results they produced.

The Lotus Sutra says, “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.”

And it says, “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... Evil demons will take possession of others and through them curse, revile, and heap shame on us.”

And it says, “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.”

The Nirvana Sutra says, “There are icchantikas, or persons of incorrigible disbelief. They pretend to be arhats, living in deserted places and speaking slanderously of the correct and equal sutras of the great vehicle. When ordinary people see them, they all suppose that they are true arhats and speak of them as great bodhisattvas.”

When I use these passages from the Lotus and Nirvana sutras as a Buddhist mirror and examine the image of present-day Japan as it is reflected in them, then who are the priests who are revered by the rulers of the nation as though they were arhats endowed with the six transcendental powers, and who speak slanderous words about the votary of the Lotus Sutra and would have his head cut off? And who are the priests who are looked up to by the common people as though they were great bodhisattvas?

And who is the wise man who for the sake of the Lotus Sutra was again and again driven from one place to another and who was cut on the forehead, whose disciples were killed, who was twice sent into exile, and who in the end was nearly decapitated?

The eyeless and earless may be excused, but let all those persons who have eyes and ears examine and heed these sutra passages. What persons now can say, “I read these sutra passages, I believe in them!” and yet direct all their hatred at Nichiren alone? If they truly believe these sutra passages, then let them call forth the [three types of] powerful enemies described in them.
and show proof that they do indeed read these passages and believe them. Unless they do so, then to be angry at Nichiren, who reads and recites these passages as they are intended to be read, is to be angry at the passages themselves, is it not? And to do so is to look with contempt on the envoy of the Buddha!

If the priest Two Fires of our present age is not to be regarded as the third of the three powerful enemies of the Lotus Sutra, then Shakyamuni Buddha is a teller of great falsehoods, and Many Treasures and the Buddhas of the ten directions are guilty of bearing false witness. But if these sutra passages speak the truth, then without doubt the rulers of the nation who lend their support to the priest Two Fires will in their present existence be abandoned by the benevolent deities that guard and protect them and their country will become the possession of others, and in their future existence they will be born in the Avīchī hell. Because they pay honor to a very evil teaching, they conduct their affairs of government in a wholly unreasonable manner.

If I try to surmise what is in the minds of these rulers with their erroneous views, I believe they must be saying, "Nichiren is an implacable enemy of Amida Buddha and a deadly opponent of the Buddhist halls and pagodas built by our fathers and mothers. Even if we must depart from the ordinary ways of government to deal with him, we will not be going against the will of the Buddhas and the heavenly deities will surely forgive us." What foolishness, what foolishness!

I should perhaps go into further detail, but since this is a minor matter, I will say no more. Persons of understanding will be able to tell what I mean.

But there is a far greater error than the one I have been describing so far that has appeared in this country of ours, the gravest error of all in Japan and one that is as far apart from the one I have been describing as clouds are from mud. Because it has prevailed for so long, the country has been abandoned by Brahmā, Shakra, the gods of the sun and moon, the four heavenly kings, and the other heavenly gods, and the great benevolent deities who ordinarily guard and protect the nation have on the contrary now become its mortal enemies. Brahmā, Shakra, and the others who guard and protect the Lotus Sutra have addressed the sage ruler of a neighboring country, ordering him to chastise this country of Japan so that they may fulfill the vow they took in the presence of the Buddha.

Long ago, in the Former and Middle Days of the Law, the world entered a period of decline, a "muddied age." But because it had only just entered such an age, the nation had not yet become disordered. Sages and worthies appeared from time to time and there was no end to rulers and high ministers who possessed virtue and good fortune. Hence there was no deviation from proper procedure in the affairs of government, and the common people were honest and upright. In order to correct minor faults, persons such as the Three Sovereigns, the Five Emperors, the Three Kings, and the Three Sages appeared, composing codes and canons so as to insure that the world would be well ordered.

And for a time the world was indeed well ordered. But then gradually, as the ages passed, sages and worthies ceased to appear and persons of virtue and blessing became scarce. The three calamities frequently beset the nation in great force, and the seven disasters surpassed in scale anything that earlier ages had known. The non-Buddhist codes and writings could no longer deal with the situation and it became necessary to follow the teachings of the
Buddhist scriptures so as to insure order in the world. Because this was done, order was in fact insured for a time. But once more, as the world drew near to the latter age, there was a change. The evil committed by human beings became greater and more pronounced day by day, and month by month the ways of government fell into greater decline. The three calamities and seven disasters became more prevalent than ever before, and the precepts of the Hinayana teaching no longer manifested any power to cope with the situation.

At this time, in order to restore order to the age, the Hinayana precepts were set aside and the Mahayana teachings adopted, and when these in turn proved ineffective, a great ordination platform was set up on Mount Hiei for administering the Mahayana precepts of the perfect and immediate enlightenment of the Lotus Sutra, and in this way order was restored. In effect, the Great Teacher Dengyo in this way dismissed and put an end to the three ordination platforms where the Hinayana precepts had in the past been administered, and also dispensed with the Mahayana precepts administered by the Flower Garland, Three Treatises, and Dharma Characteristics schools.

This great teacher not only refuted the doctrines of the six earlier schools of Buddhism, but also made a thorough study of the teachings of the Zen school. In addition, he investigated the doctrines of the Lotus and True Word schools, which at that time had not yet been widely propagated in Japan. Examining them in the mirror of Buddhist doctrine as a whole to determine their relative worth, he found that the distinction between the exoteric and esoteric teachings became as clear as black and white.

But because this alone was not sufficient to dispel the doubts of the age, in the Enryaku era he embarked on a journey to T'ang China. The Chinese, however, though sagacious in other matters, had not as yet made clear the relative worth of the T'ien-t'ai and True Word schools and the texts on which they are based, the Lotus Sutra and the Mahavairochana Sutra respectively, or determined which was the more profound. Therefore, after the Great Teacher Dengyo returned to Japan, he expounded his ideas in accordance with his earlier conclusions. As proof that the T'ien-t'ai teachings are superior to those of True Word, he cited the passage in the tenth volume of the Great Teacher Miao-lo's Annotations on "The Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sutra" in which Han-kuang tells how his teacher, the Tripitaka Master Pu-k'ung, in his late years abandoned the True Word teachings and converted to those of the Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai. That citation is found in Dengyo's Clarification of the Schools Based on T'ien-t'ai's Doctrine.

In addition, he asserted that the True Word school did not deserve to be called a "school" at all. He gave as his reason the fact that he had discovered that the three True Word masters, Shan-wu-wei, Chin-kang-chih, and Pu-k'ung, had duped Āchārya I-hsing by stealing the doctrine of three thousand realms in a single moment of life, which was based on the personal enlightenment of the Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai, and asserting that it was to be found in the Mahavairochana Sutra, thus committing the gross error and deception of taking a treasure that belonged to someone else and claiming it as their own.

In similar fashion, he perceived that the Dharma Teacher Ch'eng-kuan had stolen the ten ways of observing the mind expounded by the Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai [in his Great Concentration and Insight], incorporating them into his own Flower Garland school and then turning around and claiming that the
T'ien-t'ai school represents the "branch teachings."

Thus the Great Teacher Dengyō, having denied True Word the right to call itself a school, taught that there were only seven schools of Buddhism [the six earlier schools and the Tendai school].

The priest known as the Great Teacher Kōbō, however, a man of great falsehoods who was given to praising himself and defaming others, after the demise of the Great Teacher Dengyō, without ever confronting his opponents in debate, succeeded in deceiving the members of the imperial court and was thus able to establish the True Word teachings as the eighth school.

Despite this fact, the men who carried on the teaching line of their original teacher, Dengyō, on Mount Hiei should have asserted that there were only seven schools. Among these were two men, however, who journeyed to China, the Great Teacher Jikaku, third disciple of the Great Teacher Dengyō, and the Great Teacher Chishō, a latter disciple of the Reverend Gishin, the first chief priest of Mount Hiei. At that time the question of the relative worth of the T'ien-t'ai, or Tendai, and True Word teachings was a prime subject of controversy and debate in Japan, and therefore whenever these men met with outstanding T'ien-t'ai or True Word leaders in China, they invariably questioned them as to the relative superiority and profundity of the two teachings.

But among the renowned masters of the time there were some who declared the True Word teachings to be superior, others who favored the T'ien-t'ai teachings, some who held the two teachings to be equal in value, and some who asserted they were alike in terms of principle but different in practice. None, however, could produce clear passages of scripture to support their contentions. Whichever teaching they favored, they were speaking out of mere conjecture.

The Great Teacher Jikaku returned to Japan without pursuing his studies thoroughly, and after his return wrote some fourteen volumes of commentary on the scriptures. These consisted of a seven-volume commentary on the Diamond Crown Sutra and a seven-volume commentary on the Susiddhikara Sutra. In essence these commentaries assert that the Lotus Sutra and the three True Word sutras, the Mahāvairochana [Diamond Crown, and Susiddhikara], are alike in terms of principle but differ in practice.30

In these commentaries, Jikaku based his writings on the fundamental ideas put forth in The Annotations on the Mahāvairochana Sutra and The Commentary on the Meaning of the Mahāvairochana Sutra. But he was not entirely certain of the correctness of his writings. Therefore, it is said, he placed his commentaries before the image of the Buddha and prayed that he might be informed whether or not they conformed to the Buddha’s will. He then dreamed that he shot an arrow that struck the sun. Awaking with a start, he took the dream to be an auspicious omen and declared that there was now no longer any doubt about the superiority of the True Word teachings. He requested that the emperor issue an edict to this effect.41

Jikaku was waiting for the edict to be circulated throughout Japan when he suddenly fell victim to the plague, and within the space of four months his earthly existence came to an end.

The Great Teacher Chishō saw himself as a disciple of Jikaku and acted on his behalf, following Jikaku’s deathbed instructions and requesting that an imperial edict be issued. The edict was to state that the True Word and Lotus Sutra teachings were of equal standing, comparable to the two wings of a bird or the two eyes of a human being, and
that Mount Hiei should give recognition to all eight schools of Buddhism.

Though the bodies of these two men, Jikaku and Chishō, rested among the clouds of Mount Hiei, their minds mingled in the dust of Tō-ji temple in the capital. They appeared to be carrying on the lineage of their original teacher, Dengyō, but in fact they were betraying the correct principles taught by that sage. From the passage in the Lotus Sutra that states, “Among the sutras, it [the Lotus Sutra] holds the highest place,” they deleted the word “highest” and relegated the sutra to a position inferior to that of the Mahāvairochana Sutra. They acted not only as deadly enemies of the Great Teacher Dengyō, but, astonishingly enough, as the foes of Shakyyamuni, Many Treasures, the emanation Buddhas of the ten directions, the Thus Come One Mahāvairochana, and all the other Buddhas.

This was the real meaning of the dream in which the Great Teacher Jikaku shot an arrow at the sun. This was the beginning of the great error in the Buddhist teachings. It was an omen foretelling that Japan would become a doomed nation, for the Lotus Sutra, which should have been the roof beam of the country, was thereby reduced to acting as a mere rafter or support to the Mahāvairochana Sutra.

In the political realm too it was an age when underlings usurped the position of their superiors and rulers were forced to obey the wishes of their ministers. At that time, however, there was a group of Buddhist leaders who vigorously disputed this relative superiority of the Tendai and True Word teachings, and the chief priests of Mount Hiei continued to support both the Lotus Sutra and the Mahāvairochana Sutra, so that the controversy remained without final settlement. This is perhaps why the nation did not experience any sudden downfall.

We may note the following passage in one of the non-Buddhist scriptures: “If in a large state there are seven ministers who remonstrate, in a middle-sized state five such ministers, or in a small state three such ministers, and if they remonstrate and reason with the ruler, then although there may be errors in the conduct of government, the state will not be destroyed. Likewise if there is a son in the family who remonstrates with the head of the family, then the family will not fall into unrighteous ways.”

The same is true in the world of Buddhism. Because at the time we are speaking of there were those who continued to debate over the relative worth and profundity of the Tendai and True Word teachings and the matter was not yet settled, although various minor troubles and disasters occurred, the nation was not abandoned by the blue heavens or rejected by the yellow earth, and what troubles occurred were confined within the borders of the nation.

But in the time of the Retired Emperor Goshirakawa, the seventy-seventh human sovereign, Myōun, the chief priest of Enryaku-ji temple on Mount Hiei, cast aside the Lotus Sutra and the other sutras that make up the three sutras for the protection of the nation, which the Great Teacher Dengyō had enshrined in Shikan-in hall, and instead paid honor to the Mahāvairochana Sutra and the other sutras that make up the three sutras of True Word, which the Great Teacher Jikaku had enshrined in Sōji-in hall. Thus Mount Hiei became a Tendai mountain in name only, and in fact was a True Word mountain, and the domain of the Lotus Sutra now became the property of the Mahāvairochana Sutra.

This was the presage to an era in which Tendai and True Word, the chief priest and the religious commu-
nity as a whole, confronted each other as enemies; and in the country at large, the presage of an era when the ruler and his ministers wrangled with each other and the ruler was obliged to obey the will of his ministers. It presaged a time when the entire nation would be plunged into disorder and would be destroyed by another country. Thus Myōun suffered death at the hands of Minamoto no Yoshinaka, and the Retired Emperor Goshirakawa was forced to obey the orders of Taira no Kiyomori. Neither the members of the imperial court nor the men of Mount Hiei, however, realized the reason for these happenings. And so the world continued in its unquiet way, with troubles and disasters becoming more and more frequent and prolonged. Then in the reign of the eighty-second human sovereign, the Retired Emperor Gotoba, two disasters occurred one after another, namely, the appearance of the Zen and Nembutsu schools.

The Chinese priest Shan-tao had earlier declared in his writings that in this latter age, the Lotus Sutra could not save even one person in a thousand, and Hōnen urged people to "discard, close, ignore, and abandon [the Lotus Sutra]." The Zen school likewise dismissed the Lotus Sutra, instead declaring itself to be a "separate transmission outside the sutras, independent of words or writing."

These three great evil doctrines, the teachings of the True Word, Nembutsu, and Zen schools, one after another poked their noses into our nation. And hence, this nation was abandoned by the heavenly deities Brahmā and Shakra, the gods of the sun and moon, and the four heavenly kings. These benevolent deities who in the past had guarded and protected it now on the contrary became its mortal enemies.

As a result, one after another of the reigning emperors or retired emperors were set upon and forced into submission by members of the warrior families that had earlier served them. They were exiled to barbarian islands where, never allowed to return, they left their sad remains to mingle with the island dust.

In effect, then, the domain that had formerly belonged to the sutra of the true teaching was now forcibly seized and made the preserve of the True Word teachings, which are based on the provisional sutras. Moreover, the common people of Japan had adopted the evil doctrines of the Zen and Nembutsu schools. This constituted a case of underlings usurping the position of their superiors such as had never been known in the past, the most flagrant such case in the entire world.

But the lord of Sagami was not a slanderer of the Law, and he had a thorough understanding of both civil and military affairs, and therefore Heaven sanctioned his authority and allowed him to act as the ruler of the nation. Thus for a time the world continued in a state of quiet.

But the True Word teachings, which earlier had caused the imperial court to lose its authority, gradually spread to the Kantō region, where, astonishingly enough, they were received with honor and veneration. As a result, the Kamakura shogunate began to patronize True Word, Zen, and Nembutsu priests, who were great slanderers of the Law and persons of incorrigible disbelief, building new temples for them and casting aside the older temples.

Because of this, the heavenly deities, their eyes blazing with anger, glared fiercely at this county of ours, and the gods of the earth trembled with indignation. Trailing comets covered the sky, and earthquakes rocked the entire region within the four seas.

Alarmed by these disasters and prodigies, I hastily searched through some five thousand or seven thousand vol-
umes of Buddhist scriptures and some three thousand volumes of non-Buddhist writings, only to discover that such strange occurrences in the heavens and on earth had rarely been known in the past. The scholars of the Confucian school had left no records of such happenings and hence could throw no light on their origin, while the Buddhist authorities were likewise perplexed and at a loss to understand them. I concluded therefore that these calamities sprang not from any dislocation in the ordinary conduct of government affairs or any mere worldly error, but without doubt from some dislocation in the Buddhist teachings.

First, with regard to the great earthquakes, in the first year of the Shōka era [1257] I began writing a work in one volume\(^2\) that I eventually presented to the lay priest of Saimyō-ji, who is now deceased. But there was no response and it apparently went unheeded.

Because I am not the sort of Buddhist leader who is heeded by the ruler of the nation, I suppose they thought they would not be punished regardless of what they did to me; in any event, a group of several thousand Nembutsu priests and lay believers, with the approval of certain other persons, I am told, attacked the little hut where I was living in the middle of the night, intending to kill me. Somehow I was able to escape that night without injury. But because the attack had been carried out with the tacit approval of certain persons, those who took part in it were never called to account for their actions, which constitutes a flagrant violation of proper government procedure.

When the authorities discovered to their surprise that I was still alive, they exiled me to the province of Izu. When people are too blinded by hatred, it seems they will not hesitate even to commit crimes that bring about their own downfall, or that violate the laws set forth in The Formulary of Adjudications. And according to the vow recorded in this legal code, the sanctity of such laws is protected by Brahmā, Shakra, the four heavenly kings, the Sun Goddess, and Great Bodhisattva Hachiman.\(^3\)

If the Buddhist doctrines that I preach are beyond the comprehension of such persons, they should summon the priests whom they rely upon from all over Japan and have them meet and debate with me. And if that fails to clarify the matter, then they should seek out the truth of the matter in China and India. And if even that proves unsatisfactory, they should assume that there are reasons for such a situation and let the matter rest for the time being. But it is surely wrong for such persons, because they fail to understand my teachings, to commit actions that will bring about their own downfall and that violate the sacred vow of Formulary of Adjudications.

It may seem like boasting to say so, but if I go by what is written in the sutra, then with regard to the people of Japan, from the Son of Heaven above on down to the myriad commoners, I, Nichiren, bear three special relationships. First, I am their father and mother; second, I am their teacher; and third, I am the envoy of their sovereign.

The Lotus Sutra says, “He is the envoy of the Thus Come One.”\(^4\) It also says, “He will be the eyes of the world.”\(^5\) And it says, “As the light of the sun and moon . . .”\(^6\) And the Great Teacher Chang-an says, “One who rids the offender of evil is acting as his parent.”\(^7\)

But the authorities heed the libelous words of those priests who are slanderers of the Law, persons of incorrigible disbelief, and the enemies of the nation. Failing to perceive the true meaning of such words, they proceed
without the slightest hesitation to depart from the vitally important correct methods of government. Are they intentionally calling down disasters upon themselves, or why do they commit such vain acts?

Once the situation had settled down, they were apparently ashamed of having inflicted punishment upon an innocent man, and therefore they soon recalled me from exile. And it was likewise not long before the lay priest of Saimyō-ji departed from this world.

But in the time of the succeeding ruler I was wounded, my disciples were killed, I was hounded from place to place, my dwelling was attacked, and not for a day or a mere hour was I able to find peace on this earth.

In this connection I recall that the Buddha has said, “It [the Lotus Sutra] will face much hostility in the world and be difficult to believe.” And the various bodhisattvas took a vow, saying, “We care nothing for our bodies or lives but are anxious only for the unsurpassed way.” If, as suggested by the passage that reads, “There is someone who...attacks him with swords and staves, tiles and stones,” or that that says, “Again and again we will be banished,” one is condemned to exile or set upon with swords, I realized that this is one’s way of reading the entire text of the Lotus Sutra. And like Bodhisattva Never Disparaging, the monk Realization of Virtue, Bodhisattva Nāgārjuna, Bodhisattva Āryadeva, or Buddhāmitra and the Venerable Āryasimha, I spoke out even more strongly in support of the Lotus Sutra.

At that time, when I observed the mortal enemies of the Lotus Sutra and considered what is written in the sutra, I knew that if I spoke out as forcefully against them as I would against the enemies of my father and mother or my teacher, the enemies of the court and enemies of mine from past existences, then the common people of Japan would surely grow angry, the rulers would heed slanderous words concerning me, and I would be condemned to exile or perhaps even have my head cut off. At that time, I thought, we will see whether Brahmā, Shakra, the gods of the sun and moon, and the four heavenly kings will fulfill the oath they took in the presence of the Buddha. They vowed that the enemies of the votary of the Lotus Sutra would not escape punishment for even a moment. I would test them with my own person.

Shakyamuni, Many Treasures, and the Buddhas of the ten directions who are emanations of Shakyamuni, have earnestly declared that they will share their lodging with the votary of the Lotus Sutra, will cover him with their robes, and will guard and protect him. I was determined to test whether these words were true or false so that I might increase my faith. Therefore I did not slacken my efforts. And just as I had expected, in the eighth year of Bun’ei [1271], on the twelfth day of the ninth month, though I was not guilty of the slightest fault, I was exiled to the province of Sado.

Ostensibly I was being banished to a distant region, but secretly it had been decided that I would have my head cut off. I had known all along that it would come to this, and therefore I said to my disciples: “What I have long desired will now come about, and the joy of it overwhelms me. It is difficult to be born in human form, and such form is easily destroyed. In existence after existence, for countless kalpas, I have lost my life for no significant reason, but I have never given it up for the sake of the Lotus Sutra. Now, when my head is cut off, I will be following in the tracks of the Venerable Āryasimha, and will perform a deed that outshines those of T’ien-t’ai and Dengyō. I will join the line of twenty-five successors of the Buddha, to become the twen-
ty-sixth. I will be carrying out practices surpassing those of Bodhisattva Never Disparaging, so that Shakyamuni, Many Treasures, and the Buddhas of the ten directions will be at a loss to know how to deal with me.”

Therefore I did not cease my warnings, but spoke out without restraint, describing the happenings of the past and what would occur in the future, reporting all this to Hei no Saemon. But I will not describe in detail the many things I told him.

Now those who have become the rulers of Japan can dispose of all matters as they see fit. In any matter they should invite representatives of the opinions on both sides before deciding which opinion is superior and settling the question. Yet in the case of Nichiren alone they do not summon him to a confrontation with the other Buddhist priests, but arbitrarily accuse him of major faults. This is an extremely serious affair. Even if Nichiren were guilty of such major faults, this would not be conducive to the peace and safety of the nation.

If we examine Formula of Adjudications, we see that it is made up of fifty-one articles and ends with a vow before the gods. The first and second articles deal with matters relating to the gods and Buddhas, and so on for fifty-one articles. Yet this person who holds in his hand the Lotus Sutra, which is essential to matters pertaining to the gods and Buddhas, is not summoned so that he may confront those who slander him, but is treated as though the accusations of the slanderers were true and is condemned to execution. The rulers may be responsible for government actions that are in violation of the vow recorded in Formula of Adjudications, but this is surely the most serious of such acts. Do they intend, simply because of their hatred for Nichiren, to destroy the nation and bring ruin on themselves?

Duke Ai of the state of Lu, it is recorded, spoke of a person who was renowned for his forgetfulness, and who was said to have forgotten to take along his wife when he moved to a new dwelling. But Confucius commented that there are those who do even worse, namely, who forget their own safety and well-being. Persons who become the rulers of a nation and then conduct the affairs of government in an unjust manner are examples of what Confucius meant.

Or are the rulers of the nation unacquainted with the details of these matters I am speaking of? Even if they are ignorant of them, they can hardly escape the grave charge of acting as mortal enemies of the Lotus Sutra.

In the presence of Many Treasures and the Buddhas of the ten directions, Shakyamuni Buddha, the lord of teachings, described in his own words the situation that would prevail in the latter age. The sutra records that at that time the bodhisattvas said, “Evil demons will take possession of others and through them curse, revile, and heap shame on us. . . . Again and again we will be banished.”

Again, the Sovereign Kings Sutra, which was expounded by Shakyamuni and the four Buddhas of the four directions, says, “Because evil people are respected and favored and good people are subjected to punishment, marauders will appear from other regions, and the people of the country will meet with death and disorder.”

Even though the rulers may look with scorn and contempt on Nichiren, they cannot invalidate the golden words of Shakyamuni Buddha, the lord of teachings, or the affirmations of those words by Many Treasures and the Buddhas of the ten directions. But, although they have from times past lent their support and allegiance to all these True Word teachers and men of the Zen and Nembutsu schools, evil
monks who slander the Law, because they were unaware that in doing so they were committing a grave error, the heavenly gods have pardoned them to some extent and the benevolent deities have not abandoned them altogether.

Nichiren, however, has now made his appearance in the world, he who fears no person whatsoever and who is prepared to cast aside body and life in order to point out the truth. If these men were truly worthy rulers of the nation, they would listen carefully to what he says. They do not listen or heed his advice, however, but, incredible as it may seem, go so far as to contemplate cutting off his head. This is a most astounding matter!

Thus we see that two evils have appeared side by side, the grave error of giving heed to men of great evil, and the grave crime of heaping shame on men of great goodness who uphold the correct teaching. It is as though one were to pay honor and respect to the asuras and shoot arrows at the god of the sun! This is why grave disorders occur now in this country such as have never been known in the past.

But such a situation is not without precedents in history. For example, King Chieh of the Hsia dynasty cut off the head of his minister Kuan Lung-feng, King Chou of the Yin dynasty tore open the breast of his minister Pi Kan, the Second Emperor of the Ch’in dynasty put to death his minister Li Ssu, King Udayana heaped insult on the Venerable Pindola, King Dam-mira cut off the head of the Venerable Áryasimha, Emperor Wu of the Northern Chou dynasty engaged in controversy with the Dharma Teacher Hui-yüan, Emperor Hsien-tsung of the T’ang dynasty condemned Po Chu-i to exile, and Emperor Hui-tsung of the Sung dynasty branded the face of the Tripitaka Master Fa-tao.

All these rulers not only failed to heed the admonitions of others, but on the contrary vented their wrath on the admonishers. In this life they lost both their kingdoms and their lives, and thereafter they fell into the evil paths. This was because they showed contempt for others, heeded the words of slanderers, and failed to abide by reason.

In the second month of the eleventh year of Bun’ei [1274] I was recalled from exile in the province of Sado. On the eighth day of the fourth month in the same year, I had an interview with Hei no Saemon. At that time I described to him in detail the utter unreasonableness of the actions that had been taken against me. I also told him that, to my great regret, this country of ours was by now fated to be destroyed by forces from another country, and that the situation was extremely grave.

Hei no Saemon asked when the armies of the great Mongol nation would launch their attack. I replied that the sutra passages did not indicate any specific year or month, but that, judging from the aspect that Heaven displayed, it appeared to be exceeding-ly angry with our country, and that I was convinced the attack would surely come within this year. And if it did, I said that no one would be capable of withstanding it. I added that this was a punishment from Heaven, and since he and the other officers had refused to heed my advice, there was nothing I could do about it. I cautioned that under no circumstances should the True Word priests be permitted to try to overcome the Mongols with their prayers, for if they did so, they would only make the situation worse than it was.

Having delivered this advice, I returned to my lodging. But, just as in the past, those in both the upper and lower levels of the government refused to heed my words. My intention all
along had been to attempt to repay the
debt of gratitude I owe my country by
offering such advice. If after delivering
three such admonitions my words were
still ignored, I had determined to with-
draw to retirement in the mountain
forests. Indeed, it is stated in one of
the ancient texts that if after three attempts
to warn the rulers one’s advice is still
unheeded, one should withdraw from
the scene.\textsuperscript{69} In compliance with that
text, I have retired to the mountains.

In addition, because the rulers of the
nation refuse to heed my advice, it has
seemed to me hopeless to try to ex-
pound my Buddhist doctrines to the
men who serve under them. Though
I should attempt to preach to them, I
doubt that I could aid the nation by
doing so or insure that they attain Bud-
dhahood.

I have also stated that the practice of
the Nembutsu will condemn one to
the hell of incessant suffering, and that
one should not recite the Amida Sutra.
But this is not some mere private opin-
ion of my own. This practice of reci-
ting the name of Amida Buddha has its
origin in the Amida Sutra and the oth-
er sutras that make up the three Pure
Land sutras, sutras that were preached
during the first forty and more years of
the fifty years during which the Thus
Come One Shakyaamuni preached the
Buddhist teachings.

One might suppose that whatever
golden words the Buddha spoke must
surely represent the truth. Yet in the
Immeasurable Meanings Sutra, which
serves as an introduction to the Lotus
Sutra, preached in the last eight years
of his life, the Buddha, in preparation
for preaching the Lotus, referred to the
various sutras he had preached in the
first forty and more years of his preach-
ing life and the number of years that
had passed while he was doing so, and
stated, “In these more than forty years,
I have not yet revealed the truth.” And
he further stated, “[As for those living
beings who are unable to hear this
sutra . . .] they will in the end fail to
gain unsurpassed enlightenment.”

Thus with this one pronouncement
he negated all the various earlier sutras
and the doctrines contained in them. It
was like a great flood of water wiping
out a small fire, or a great wind shak-
ing down the dew from the masses of
plants and trees.

Later, in the first volume of the
Lotus Sutra, in the revelation section
[that begins with the “Expedient
Means” chapter], the Buddha said,
“The World-Honored One has long
expounded his doctrines and now must
reveal the truth.”\textsuperscript{70} And he also said,
“Honestly discarding expedient means,
I will preach only the unsurpassed
way.”\textsuperscript{71} It was like a great round moon
appearing in the dark night, or the
completion of a great pagoda, after
which its scaffolding is done away with.

After making these statements, the
Buddha proclaimed his true meaning,
saying, “But now this threefold world
is all my domain, and the living beings
in it are all my children. Now this
place is beset by many pains and trials.
I am the only person who can rescue
and protect others, but though I teach
and instruct them, they do not believe
or accept my teachings.”\textsuperscript{72} And he con-
tinued, “If a person . . . on seeing those
who read, recite, copy, and uphold this
sutra, should despise, hate, envy, or
bear grudges against them, . . . When
such a person’s life comes to an end he
will enter the Avīchi hell.”\textsuperscript{73}

The teaching expounded in these
sutra passages is not of an ordinary
nature. Ordinarily the sutras proclaim
that persons who are guilty of the five
cardinal sins or the seven cardinal sins\textsuperscript{74}
will fall into the Avīchi hell. But this is
not so of the Lotus Sutra. All persons
living during the lifetime of the Bud-
dha or after his passing who cling
adamantly to the Amida Sutra or the
other sutras expounded during the first
forty and more years of the Buddha’s preaching life and refuse to accept the Lotus Sutra; persons who accept the Lotus Sutra but refuse to set aside their adherence to the earlier sutras and practice them along with the Lotus Sutra; persons who declare that the earlier sūtra or sutras that they adhere to are superior to the Lotus Sūtra; or persons who, though they practice the Lotus Sutra as the sutra itself directs, treat the votary of the Lotus Sutra with scorn and contempt—all such persons as these, when their present life comes to an end, will, the Buddha assures us, enter the Avīcī hell.

Although this doctrine was proclaimed by one Buddha alone, Shakyamuni, unless one is a follower of non-Buddhist teachings, one should have no doubts concerning it. In order to make clear that it is of greater weight than all the doctrines of the other sutras that the Buddha has preached, now preaches, or ever will preach, the Thus Come One Many Treasures of the land called Treasure Purity came in person all the way to this world of ours to testify to its importance. He gave his testimony to the truth that all those people who adamantly adhere to the earlier teachings of the Thus Come One Shakyaumuni, as set forth in the Mahāvairochana, Amida, and other sutras, or to the Nembutsu practice, and fail to accept the Lotus Sutra that was preached later, are without doubt destined to enter the Avīcī hell.

In addition, Amida Buddha and the other Buddhas of the ten directions one and all abandoned their respective lands and journeyed to Eagle Peak to take part in the Ceremony in the Air. There, seated under the jeweled trees, they stuck out their long broad tongues until they reached to the Brahma heaven. It was as though a countless, immeasurable number of rainbows were soaring into the sky.

The purport of all this was that the matters related in the sutras preached in the first forty and more years, such as the Meditation, Amida, and Compassionate White Lotus Flower sutras, including the story of how the monk Dharma Treasury made his forty-eight vows and the other bodhisattvas their respective vows, promising to guide ordinary people to the Pure Land with the nine-grade distinction were no more than temporary words of solace preached prior to the Lotus Sutra. There is in fact no such thing as being welcomed into the pure lands of the ten directions or of the western direction, as is asserted in those various sutras, and one should not look on such assertions as the truth.

The truth lies in what Shakyaumuni Buddha has preached now [in the Lotus Sutra]. One should have faith in the five characters of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, the crux of the “Life Span” chapter. It was to affirm this that Shakyaumuni, Many Treasures, and the Buddhas of the ten directions appeared here and stuck out their long broad tongues.

“We are Buddhas in the same way that Shakyaumuni is a Buddha” [said the Buddhas of the ten directions]. “Shakyaumuni Buddha is like the moon in the heavens, and we are the reflection of the moon in the water. The realm of Shakyaumuni Buddha is in fact this sahā world. So long as the moon in the heavens does not move, we ourselves will not take our leave. We will continue to reside in this sahā world and will guard and protect the votary of the Lotus Sutra, serving him the way ministers and subjects serve their sovereign ruler, and loving him the way parents love an only child.” This is what they wished to express when they stuck out their tongues.

At this time Perceiver of the World’s Sounds and Great Power, who were foremost disciples of the Buddha Amida, acted as his aides like a set of wings,
like the high ministers of the left and right, or like a pair of eyes. They accompanied Amida when he left his World of Perfect Bliss and journeyed all the way to this present world. But when Shakyamuni Buddha preached the Immeasurable Meanings Sutra, he made clear that the forty-eight vows described in the Amida and similar sutras belong to a time when he had “not yet revealed the truth.” And in the Lotus Sutra he cited Amida Buddha by name76 and stated that the doctrines associated with Amida’s name did not represent the truth.

Perceiver of the World’s Sounds and Great Power could not believe this, but Amida Buddha himself came forth to confirm it. They then realized that the lotus seats and the gesture of the pressed palms that these two bodhisattvas were to employ to welcome Nembutsu believers to the Pure Land with the nine-grade distinction, were all void of truth.

They then concluded that it was pointless for them to return to their original realm. Instead they joined the other eighty thousand or twenty thousand bodhisattvas [who had assembled at the ceremony of the Lotus Sutra], and vowed that “in their comings and goings in the sahā world,” as the “Perceiver of the World’s Sounds” chapter of the Lotus Sutra puts it, they would devote themselves assiduously to guarding and protecting the votary of the Lotus Sutra in this sahā world. They were assigned a place to dwell by Shakyamuni Buddha, a small location called Mount Potalaka in the southern part of the continent of Jambudvīpa, which is close to our country of Japan.

Amida Buddha, who had thus been deserted by his two ministers of the left and right, Perceiver of the World’s Sounds and Great Power, did not return to his realm in the western direction but remained in this world of ours, declaring that he would guard and protect the votary of the Lotus Sutra. In the Tushita heaven, the fourth heaven in the world of desire, in the domain of the bodhisattva Maitreya, there are forty-nine cloisters, and Amida was assigned to one of these. It is reported that he put up a plaque reading “Amida Cloister” and took up residence there.

In the Amida Sutra the Buddha [Shakyamuni], addressing Shāriputra, states that ordinary people can attain birth in the Pure Land. The Buddha keeps saying, “Shāriputra! Shāriputra!” and again, “Shāriputra!” repeating the name twenty and more times in the space of that short sutra in quite a clamorous fashion. Yet in the four sheets that make up the entire sutra, it is never once stated that Shāriputra and the other voice-hearer disciples will be permitted to be reborn in the Pure Land and to attain Buddhahood. It is only with the appearance of the Lotus Sutra that we learn of the Buddha’s prophecy that Shāriputra will become a Buddha named Flower Glow Thus Come One, that Mahākāshyapa will become a Buddha named Light Bright Thus Come One, and so forth.

Shāriputra was known as the wisest person in the entire continent of Jambudvīpa, yet in the three Pure Land sutras there is no suggestion that even he is capable of gaining rebirth in the Pure Land and attaining Buddhahood. What hope could sutras such as these offer, then, to men and women of this latter age, who are like so many cows and sheep, that they could ever escape from the sufferings of birth and death?

But Buddhist scholars of our latter age who fail to understand the situation, or those persons who are just beginning their practice of the Lotus Sutra, will read the Amida Sutra and recite the Nembutsu with great reverence, or will place them on the same level as the Lotus Sutra, or will recite the Amida Sutra after reciting the
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Lotus Sutra, regarding it as the heart of the teachings of the Lotus Sutra, or will trust in the blessings received from the Amida Sutra, hoping to apply these blessings to their rebirth in the Western Paradise. A person who acts in this fashion is comparable to a dragon who rides on a donkey, or a lion who places his trust in a fox. For the Amida Sutra may be compared to the light of the host of stars after the sun has appeared in the sky, or to little drops of dew in a time of drenching rain.

Therefore the Great Teacher Dengyō said, “On the morning when one receives the carriage drawn by a white ox, one no longer needs the other three kinds of carts; on the evening when one succeeds to the family fortune, what reason is there to go on clearing away excrement? Hence the Lotus Sutra says, ‘Honesty discarding expedient means, I will preach only the unsurpassed way.’” And he also said that when the sun rises, the stars fade from sight, and that when true skill appears, clumsiness becomes known.

Once the Lotus Sutra had made its appearance, all the other sutras preached in the past, at present, or in the future would be useless to say cast aside. Even if one were to practice them, they would serve merely as attendants and retainers to the Lotus Sutra.

And yet now the people of Japan firmly believe in Tao-ch’o’s assertion that “not a single person has ever attained Buddhahood” through the Lotus Sutra, in Shan-tao’s statement that “not even one person in a thousand” can be saved by it, in Eshin’s own introduction to his Essentials of Rebirth in the Pure Land or Yōkan’s Ten Conditions for Rebirth in the Pure Land, or in Hönen’s command to “discard, close, ignore, and abandon” the other sutras. Hence some of them discard the Lotus Sutra and devote themselves entirely to the Nembutsu, while others make the Nembutsu their basic practice but supplement it with observance of the Lotus Sutra. Some view the Nembutsu of the Buddha Amida and the Lotus Sutra as standing side by side, giving heed to both of them and practicing them simultaneously, while others regard the Nembutsu and the Lotus Sutra as merely two different names for a single truth and carry out their practice accordingly.

All persons such as these dwell in the mansion of Shakyamuni Buddha, the lord of teachings, and yet they ignore their teacher and sovereign. Instead they erect halls to Amida in the domain of the Thus Come One Shakyamuni, building them side by side in every province, in every village, in every household. There they practice and perform the Nembutsu ten thousand times, twenty thousand times, seventy thousand times, or devote their entire lifetime to it, and, strange as it may seem, completely forget the one who is their sovereign, teacher, and parent.

Moreover, they seize upon the two days that commemorate the birth and the passing of their father, Shakyamuni Buddha, the lord of teachings, and declare the second of them, the fifteenth day [of the second month], to be the death date of Amida Buddha, and the first, the eighth day [of the fourth month], to be the birth day of Medicine Master Buddha. To appropriate these two days that mark the birth and death of a single Buddha and assign them as the birth and death dates of two different Buddhas dwelling in the east and the west respectively—does this not show a gross lack of filial piety? Is not any person who would do this guilty of betraying his teacher and committing the seven cardinal sins? Each person who does so is guilty of a grave error, and yet each such person thinks that he is blameless. Each one is an unashamed, unabashed person of incorrigible disbelief.
The second volume of the Lotus Sutra describes the three great functions of Shakymuni Buddha, those of sovereign, parent, and teacher, which constitute the heart of the entire sutra. In that passage, the Buddha states: “Now this threefold world is all my domain, and the living beings in it are all my children. Now this place is beset by many pains and trials. I am the only person who can rescue and protect others.” And regarding those who act contrary to this sutra passage, the Buddha says, “But though I teach and instruct them, they do not believe or accept my teachings.... When such a person’s life comes to an end he will enter the Avichi hell.”

Shan-tao, whom the Nembutsu believers regard as one of the founders of their doctrine, is included among “the living beings in this threefold world,” and yet he directly contradicts the sutra passage in which Shakymuni declares that [as for the living beings in this threefold world] “I am the only person who can rescue and protect them,” and instead states that “not even one person in a thousand” will be saved by teachings such as those of the Lotus Sutra. That is why, in his present existence, he went mad, climbed a willow tree, and threw himself down on the hard ground. Even then he was unable to die, but for fourteen days, from the fourteenth day of the month to the twenty-seventh, he raved in his madness until death finally came to him.

Similarly, the founders of the True Word school, the Tripitaka Masters Shan-wu-wei, Chin-kang-chih, and Pu-k’ung, looked with contempt on Shakymuni Buddha, the Dharma king and lord of teachings, who was also a father to them, and instead paid honor to Mahāvairochana, a Buddha with whom they had no such connection. Therefore Shan-wu-wei was not only berated by Yama, the king of hell, but fell into the hell of incessant suffering. If you doubt this, just look with your own eyes at the painting in the Yama Hall. But the stories pertaining to Chin-kang-chih and Pu-k’ung are so numerous that I will not go into them here.

Again, the Meditation Master San-chieh, also known as Hsin-hsing, of the Zen school demoted the Lotus Sutra and the other sacred teachings delivered by the Buddha in his lifetime of preaching to an inferior rank, calling them “specifically designed teachings,” and elevated to the position of honor what he called the “universal sutra,” a sutra that he himself had composed. Because he did this, though he was for a time regarded as being among the four ranks of bodhisattvas, he was challenged by a lay woman believer who upheld the teachings of the Lotus Sutra. Unable to refute her, in his present existence he changed into a huge snake and devoured dozens of his own disciples.

If the people of Japan now, while upholding the Lotus Sutra and paying the respect and honor to Shakymuni Buddha that is his due, at the same time pay respect to the patriarchs of the True Word or Zen school or Nembutsu teachers, then they can hardly hope to escape the hell of incessant suffering. And how much more is this so if they look up in adoration to the proponents of these three schools as though they were the sun or the moon, and themselves perform the Nembutsu and other practices of these schools!

If people are truly thoughtful, they will realize that such things as the Nembutsu and the Amida Sutra are more to be abhorred than an enemy of their parents, their teacher, or their sovereign, or an enemy from a previous existence. One should no more think of accepting them than one would think of hoisting a rebels’ banner over the government troops, or of lighting
a fire at the time of the Cold Food festival.81

Thus in ancient times Bodhisattva Vasubandhu, a great scholar, swore that he would no longer lend his tongue to the expounding of Hinayana sutras, and the Great Teacher Chi-t’ang, a worthy man, would not even venture to recite the Lotus Sutra any longer. They did these things because they hoped to expiate the grave fault of slandering the correct teaching that they had earlier committed by using the Hinayana sutras to criticize and refute the Mahayana sutras, or using the Lotus Sutra to attack and defame the Great Teacher T’ien-t’ai.

Now the people of Japan, without a single exception, are like those who slandered Bodhisattva Never Disparaging, or like the slandering monks Shore of Suffering and Superior Intent; everyone in the country is destined to fall into the hell of incessant suffering. Hence it is that in the Nirvana Sutra the Buddha prophesied that in the Latter Day of the Law, those who slander the Lotus Sutra will be more numerous than the dust particles of the land.

If now the votary of the Lotus Sutra should appear in the world and all these people throughout the country should serve him, like the Great Teacher Chi-t’ang who ceased reading and reciting the Lotus Sutra and instead became a follower of the Great Teacher T’ien-t’ai, offering his own body as a living bridge to his teacher; or like those who had earlier abused Bodhisattva Never Disparaging but who later turned about and became his attendants and believers in his teachings; and if they served the votary of the Lotus Sutra for the space of one day or two, one month or two, one year or two, or even one lifetime or two, it would still be difficult for them to expiate the grave fault they had committed earlier by slandering the Lotus Sutra. But they show no sign of doing any such thing. On the contrary, the people of our time, all four categories of them, priests, nuns, laymen, and laywomen, give themselves up to arrogance.

These people say, “The Nembutsu believers cast aside the Lotus Sutra and simply recite the Nembutsu. Nichiren upholds the Lotus Sutra but does not approve of the Nembutsu. We, on the other hand, practice the Nembutsu and also put faith in the Lotus Sutra, observe the precepts and carry out all kinds of good actions!”

Such persons are like wild rabbits who try to hide their traces by running in a circle, or pheasants who try to hide by sticking their heads in a hole. They are no different from the people of the state of Lu who reviled Confucius [a native of Lu, without being aware of his greatness], or the monk Sunakshatra, who threatened the Buddha. It may be difficult at times to distinguish a deer from a horse, but it is hard for a hawk to change into a dove.82 How pitiful these people are! How pitiful!

At present, the events that I predicted in the past are now little by little coming true, and as a result these people are beginning to wonder in their hearts just what they should do. But for so many years now they have slandered and reviled me in so excessive a manner that it is difficult for them suddenly to turn about and put their faith in my teaching. Moreover, the threat of Mongol invasion becomes ever more pressing until, like Taira no Munemori or Minamoto no Yoshitomo, they are filled with despair.

How vital it is that people should think about what they are doing! Confucius thought nine times before he spoke one word, and Tan, the Duke of Chou, would interrupt his hair-washing three times or spit out his food three times in the course of one meal [in order not to keep visitors waiting].83
Such is the care and caution with which worthies such as these conduct their affairs. It is also customary in the world to harbor doubts about anything excessive. When persons are in the position of governing a nation, if someone offers them advice, they should investigate the matter thoroughly and with care. Yet in my case, they summarily assumed I must be at fault and sent me into exile. They must have deeply regretted this error.

When King Chieh of the Hsia dynasty was hard pressed by King T’ang [the founder of the Yin dynasty], or when the king of Wu was taken prisoner by the king of Yüeh, they regretted then that they had not heeded the words of warning that had been given them by worthies earlier. When King Ajātashatru’s body broke out in virulent sores and he faced attack from abroad, he swore he would no longer permit Devadatta into his sight or listen to Devadatta’s advice. And when Taira no Munemori, defeated in battle and taken prisoner by Minamoto no Yoshitsune, was being escorted to Kamakura to suffer the shame of execution, he bewailed his earlier actions in setting fire to Tōdai-ji temple and shooting arrows that struck the sacred carriage of Mountain King, the god of Mount Hiei.

And the people in the world today act in precisely the same fashion as these men did. Because they look with contempt on Nichiren and pay honor to the priests of the other teachings, they are automatically acting as the mortal enemies of the Lotus Sutra, yet they fail to understand this. Actions such as theirs, which go against the proper methods of government, are viewed with wrath and enmity by Brahmā, Shakra, the gods of the sun and moon, the four heavenly kings, and the dragon kings. Shakyamuni, Many Treasures, and the Buddhas of the ten directions, who are emanations of Shakyamuni, the bodhisattvas as numerous as the dust particles of a thousand worlds who emerged from the earth, the bodhisattvas of the theoretical teaching and those from other lands, the two sages, the two heavenly deities, the ten demon daughters, and the goddess Mother of Demon Children—all these beings who guard and protect the Lotus Sutra will take possession of the worthy rulers of other nations and in that guise will punish the sovereign of our nation and bring about the downfall of the country, yet they fail to realize this.

If Heaven is truly intent upon meting out punishment, then although one were to surround this country of Japan with the Iron Encircling Mountains, cover it over with Mount Sumeru, and gather together the four heavenly kings from all the worlds in the ten directions and station them everywhere along our shores, so long as one acts as the enemy of the Lotus Sutra and commits fearful outrages such as taking the fifth scroll of the Lotus Sutra and striking Nichiren on the head with it—Nichiren, the votary of the Lotus Sutra who is more precious than Shakyamuni Buddha, the lord of teachings—and unrolling and scattering all ten scrolls of the Lotus Sutra and trampling all over them, one can hardly hope to escape punishment either in this present life or in lives to come.

How can the Sun Goddess, Great Bodhisattva Hachiman, and the other deities who guard and protect Japan be expected to aid a country such as this? On the contrary, they will most likely make haste to inflict punishment upon it as quickly as possible so that they themselves will not be held guilty of a fault. Or are these guardian deities of Japan perhaps even at this moment being upbraided by the four heavenly kings for delaying their punishment? It is hard to know which is the case.

The Great Teacher Dengyō said:
“My opinion is this: It is stated in the Lotus Sutra that a bodhisattva is the treasure of the nation, and the Mahayana teachings tell us that the great vehicle of the Mahayana can benefit others. When the seven disasters attack the whole country, what but the Mahayana sutas can drive them away? And when great calamities occur in the future, who but the bodhisattva priests [of the Mahayana] can wipe them out?”

But now when I examine the daily records of how the courtier and warrior families are attempting to overcome the forces of the great Mongol Empire through prayers and incantations, I see that they are performing ceremonies to the five honored ones, to the seven Buddhas beginning with Medicine Master, to the Honored One Buddha Eye, or to the Honored One One-Character Gold-Wheel. But how can these manifestations of a petty doctrine be expected to dispel a major calamity? Rather [as the Lotus Sutra says], they will “rebound upon the originator,” and this country of ours will be summarily destroyed.

There are other persons who carry out the Lotus Sutra fire ceremony at Hie Shrine. But this ceremony is based upon the mistaken teachings of the Tripitaka Master Pu-k’ung and therefore cannot function as a true prayer.

Again, many of the eminent priests of the present time follow the True Word teachings of Tō-ji temple or the True Word teachings of the Tendai school. But the Tō-ji doctrines originated with the Great Teacher Kōbō, while those of the Tendai school originated with Jikaku and Chishō. And, as I stated earlier, these three men are all great slanderers of the Law. And many of the priests other than the disciples of these three are men who received Hinayana precepts at the ordination platform of Tōdai-ji temple.

Furthermore, the ordination platform on Mount Hiei for administering the precepts of perfect and immediate enlightenment has been diverted from its original meaning by Jikaku’s slandering of the Law. And even in its original form it represented the precepts of perfect and immediate enlightenment of the theoretical teaching only, so it could hardly be effective in this latter age. In any event, such prayers as I have described cannot be expected to have any effect.

At this moment, our nation is on the brink of destruction. It is too late now to regret what one has done. How pitiful, how pitiful indeed!

What I have written above is only one small part of the teachings I heard from the Sage Nichiren.

Though I am a person of lowly birth and poor mental powers, these teachings of the Sage Nichiren seemed to me entirely reasonable. However, the rulers of the nation fail to make use of them, and therefore I am in doubt as to how they are viewed in Kamakura. Unworthy as my thoughts on the subject may be, I keep asking myself why, when this is a matter of such grave concern to the nation, the authorities do not investigate the facts, but have twice sent this man into exile. I cannot believe that people have a right to decide if his doctrines are correct or not when they have not taken the trouble to conduct a thorough examination of them.

As for myself, it is for your sake and the sake of my parents that I desist from reciting the Amida Sutra. If you should tell me that I absolutely must recite it, I will at that time address you again on the matter. But when I am ordered to do something not because the matter has been thoroughly investigated, but because certain persons are making arbitrary conjectures, then although I might obey in body, in my heart I could never comply.
Though I fear I speak too boldly, may I urge you once more to consider the matter. This priest Nichiren we are speaking about—there is no one else like him! If events should take a certain course, I fear you may later have cause for regret. Just because the people of our present age do not heed his teachings, it would be foolish for you to do likewise. If in the future the persons in authority decide to heed him, then who among all the rest will fail to do so? But at that late date, what use will it be for you to join them? You will merely be putting your faith in persons rather than in the Law.

People these days believe that children should at all times obey their parents, and that the same should hold for subjects with regard to their sovereign, or students with regard to their teacher. But this is a mere erroneous conjecture put forward by persons who do not understand the non-Buddhist texts or have no knowledge of the Buddhist scriptures. Among the non-Buddhist writings, The Classic of Filial Piety describes cases in which a son should remonstrate with his father, or a subject with his sovereign. And in the Buddhist scriptures the Buddha makes clear that by renouncing one’s obligations [to parent and ruler] and entering the Buddhist life one can truly repay those obligations in full.95

Prince Siddhartha was the most filial son in all the continent of Jambudvīpa, yet only by disobeying the orders of his father, the king, was he able in the end to lead both his father and mother to enlightenment. And it was because Pi Kan reprimanded his father, King Chou of the Yin dynasty, though his breast was slashed open as a result, that later ages have honored him as a worthy man.

You may well look on me as a person of no importance, but if you fail to heed my advice, humble priest though I am, I fear you will regret it in both your present and future existences. It is for my parents’ sake that I have ceased my recitations of the Amida Sutra, so it is hardly likely that I could now comply with your wishes by resuming them.

With deep respect I offer these thoughts,

Priest Nichiei

The sixth month in the third year of Kenji [1277]

Reply to Shimoyama Hyōgo Gorō

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**Background**

One of Nichiren Daishonin’s ten major writings, *Letter to Shimoyama* is a petition to Shimoyama Hyōgo Gorō Mitsumoto, the steward of the district of Shimoyama near Mount Minobu in the province of Kai. The Daishonin wrote it on behalf of a priest named Inaba-bō Nichiei in the sixth month of 1277, while residing at Mount Minobu.

Inaba-bō Nichiei had been converted by Nikkō to the Daishonin’s teachings, and tried to convert Shimoyama Mitsumoto, who was Inaba-bō’s father (or, according to another account, his lord in the feudal system of the time). But Shimoyama, who was a believer in the Nembutsu, or Pure Land, teachings, furiously opposed the priest’s new-found faith. Hearing this, the Daishonin wrote a petition on behalf of Inaba-bō to persuade Shimoyama to discard the Pure Land teachings and take faith in the Lotus Sutra.
The petition explains the superiority of the Lotus Sutra to the Pure Land doctrines, and states that Inaba-bō's conversion to the Lotus Sutra constitutes a distinguished act of loyalty to Shimoyama. Later, Shimoyama in fact gave up the Nembutsu and became a follower of the Daishoinin's teachings.

In the beginning paragraphs, the voice is that of Inaba-bō addressing his angry father or lord, Shimoyama. Inaba-bō explains that he has ceased reciting the Amida Sutra and instead taken up recitation of the Lotus Sutra because of an encounter with the Sage Nichiren. He says he went to Mount Minobu to listen to a lecture by the sage without the intention of taking faith. He writes very briefly of what he felt about the lecture.

The letter then outlines the Daishoinin's lecture from a third-party viewpoint. The letter first introduces the five guides of propagation, the teaching, the time, the people's capacity, the country, and the proper sequence of propagation. Then it describes the history of the spread of Buddhism in Japan. This begins with the Chinese priest Chien-ch'ien (known in Japan as Ganjin), who brought the Hinayana precepts and T'ien-t'ai's teachings to Japan but propagated only the former, which he thought were appropriate to the time. Later Dengyō appeared and studied T'ien-t'ai's teachings and investigated thoroughly the doctrines of the six schools of Nara, demonstrating the superiority of the former over the latter. Dengyō also asserted that the Hinayana precepts should be abolished and replaced with the Mahayana precepts.

Next, the Daishoinin describes the spread of Buddhism during the Former, Middle, and Latter Days of the Law. The Buddhist leaders in the first two periods knew the great Law of the Lotus Sutra but did not expound it because the time had not yet come for its propagation. As the Daishoinin points out, the Latter Day is the time for the advent of Bodhisattva Superior Practices, who will spread the essence of the Lotus Sutra, which is Nam-myoho-ренge-kyо.

Then the Daishoinin refutes the views of Ryo Kan, who attempted to restore the Hinayana precepts and who urged the shogunate to put to death his rival, Nichiren Daishoinin. Basing his view on the Lotus Sutra, the Daishoinin regards Ryo Kan as the third of the three powerful enemies and himself as the votary of the sutra. He also describes the other persecutions he experienced.

He points out the errors of the shogunate and the Buddhist schools it supported, the Pure Land, True Word, and Zen schools. Moreover, he describes how Dengyo's teachings were distorted by his successors, Jikaku and Chisho, who incorporated True Word teachings into the Tendai school. In addition, he asserts that the Pure Land and Zen schools have turned the people away from the Lotus Sutra. As a result of these errors, the three calamities and seven disasters have occurred.

The Daishoinin explains that he submitted his work On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land to Hōjō Tokiyori, the retired regent and de facto leader of the shogunate, to identify the basic cause for these calamities. Not only was his advice unheeded, however, but he was subjected to various persecutions. Finally, without carrying out a full investigation, the shogunate exiled him to Sado Island. Because the internal strife he had predicted took place, he was pardoned from exile and summoned to an interview with Hei no Saemon, a powerful official of the shogunate. Hei no Saemon asked him when the Mongols would attack Japan, referring to another of the Daishoinin's prophecies. The Daishoinin replied that it would
occur within the year and warned Hei
no Saemon that mistaken Buddhist
teachings should not be relied on for
prayers to protect the nation. When his
admonitions went unheeded, he retired
to Mount Minobu. Thus at this time
the country appeared to be on the
verge of ruin.

At the end of the letter, the voice
returns to that of Inaba-bô Nichiei. He
says that the Sage Nichiren regretted
the turn events had taken, expressing
great pity for the people. He says he
himself has written down here only a
part of the lecture, and urges Shimoyama
to take faith in the sage’s teachings.
He expresses his conviction that, in
discarding the Nembutsu and embrac-
ing the Lotus Sutra, he had the happy-
ness of his parents in mind, and is
therefore exercising the highest form of
filial piety.

Notes

1. From this point until the middle of
p. 711, the narration represents the words of
Nichiren Daishonin himself.

2. This refers to the five guides for
propagating Buddhism: the teaching, the
people’s capacity, the time, the country, and
the sequence of propagation. The point of
the criterion of the sequence of propaga-
tion is that one should not propagate a
teaching inferior to those that have already
spread.

3. Lotus Sutra, chap. 3.


5. The three places are Tôdai-ji temple
in Nara, Yakushi-ji temple in Shimosuke
Province, and Kanzeon-ji temple in Chi-
kuzen Province.

6. The Annotations on “Great Concen-
tration and Insight.” “The true way” here
refers to Buddhism.

7. A reference to the Zen school, whose
founder was Bodhidharma.

8. A court noble. In 802, he and his
brother Matsuna sponsored a lecture by
Dengyô at Takao-dera temple in Kyoto.
Fourteen representatives of the six schools
of Nara attended the lecture.

9. The Biography of the Great Teacher of
Mount Hiei. Dengyô rejected the two hun-
dred and fifty precepts of Hinayana, while
embracing the bodhisattva precepts of Ma-
hayana.

10. An Essay on the Protection of the
Nation.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid. “Impure food” here refers to
the Hinayana teachings, and “jeweled ves-
sel” to the Mahayana teachings.

13. A paraphrase of a passage in Essay
on the Protection of the Nation. The “great
arhat” here refers to Pûrṇa, one of Shak-
yamuni’s ten major disciples. He was chas-
tised by Vimalakîrti, when he preached the
Hinayana teachings to the monks who had
sought out the Mahayana teachings.


15. This statement is based on a passage
in The Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sutra.

16. The Commentary on the Meaning of
Bodhisattva Precepts Sutra.

17. This statement is found in Records
of the Historian, chapter 82, as the words of
Wang Chu of Ch’i, a man of wisdom and
virtue, when he was pressed to serve the
king of Yen, who had destroyed his state.
He chose to commit suicide rather than
comply.

18. Parinirvâna Sutra, one of the Chi-
nese versions of the Nirvana Sutra, translat-
ed by Fa-Hsien.

19. The sages of the four stages refer to
the Buddhist teachers who embrace and
propagate the correct teaching and benefit
the people. Often this expression refers to
the sages of Hinayana, who are classified
into four ranks according to their level of
understanding, but generally it indicates
those successors of the Buddha who propa-
gate his teachings and lead people to salva-
tion.

20. In a play on words, the Daishonin
changes the name Ryôkan-bô (Priest
Ryôkan) to Ryôka-bô, which means Priest
Two Fires. In a passage in The Royal Palace,
he refers to the two major fires that erupt-
ed on the grounds of Ryôkan’s temple,
Gokuraku-ji, that inspired this nickname:
“A name reveals the essence of a thing. The
slanderous sage, Priest Two Fires, is the
teacher of people high and low throughout
Kamakura. One of the two fires was con-
centrated on his own grounds, reducing
Gokuraku-ji [Paradise Temple] to Jigoku-ji [Hell Temple]. The other fire leaped over to devour the ruler's palace...” (I, p. 488).

21. A court lady who served Emperor Yüan of the Former Han dynasty. In 33 B.C.E. she was forced for political reasons to marry the leader of the Hsiung-nu, a powerful central Asian tribe, by the Han emperor who feared their invasion.

22. Vimalakirti Sutra.

23. According to the Protection Sutra, one day King Krikì dreamed about ten monkeys. Nine of the monkeys harassed the people of the city, robbed them of their food and drink, and went on a destructive rampage. One of the ten, however, would not join the others, but remained sitting in a tree. He was therefore tormented and expelled from the community of monkeys. When King Krikì asked Kâshyapa Buddha about this dream, the Buddha said, “It represents the evil latter age after the passing of Shakyamuni Buddha. The ten monkeys represent his ten kinds of disciples, only one of whom is a true practitioner who renounces the world and endeavors to seek the way.”

24. See Glossary under three powerful enemies.

25. Gomyô was a priest of the Dharma Characteristics school. According to The Record of the Precepts of the One Mind, in 818, when people were enduring the hardships of a great drought, Dengyô, in response to Emperor Saga’s command, offered prayers employing the Lotus, Golden Light, and Benevolent Kings sutras. On the third day rain began to fall. Gomyô prayed for rain with his forty disciples using only the Benevolent Kings Sutra, and rain did not fall until the fifth day. Shubin was a priest of the True Word school. In 823 he was given Sai-ji (West Temple) by Emperor Saga, while Kôbô was given Tô-ji (East Temple). In the spring of 824, during a drought, Shubin competed with Kôbô in praying for rain. He brought about rainfall on the seventh day, while Kôbô could not make rain fall even after twenty-one days.

26. Izumi Shikibu (fl. c. 1000) was a court lady-in-waiting, and Nôin (b. 988), a poet-priest, whose works include poems that express prayers for rain.

27. The source of this statement is based on a passage in The Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sutra.

28. This refers to Homma Rokuro Sae-mon, deputy constable of Sado Island. The Daishonin was exiled to Sado in his custody.

29. A ten-volume sutra translated by Jñanagupta, a monk of Gandhāra in northwestern India, who went to Ch’ang-an in China around the mid-sixth century.

30. An explanation of Buddhist concepts written by Seng-min in 516, which consists of fifty volumes.

31. The first is that, among the four elements (earth, water, fire, and wind) that compose all things, fire works strongly to burn away clouds; the second is that a gale blows away clouds; and the third is that the great asura king takes the floating clouds and places them over the ocean.

32. The stories of the three Tripitaka masters’ prayers for rain are described in Three Tripitaka Masters Pray for Rain (I, p. 599).


34. Ibid.

35. Ibid.

36. Many Treasures Buddha confirmed the truth of the Lotus Sutra in chapter eleven of the sutra, and all the other Buddhas lent their tongues in testimony as stated in chapter twenty-one of the sutra.


38. Han-kuang said to Miao-lo, “When I was traveling in India together with the Tripitaka Master Pu-k’ung, a monk said to him, ‘In the land of China there are the teachings of T’ien-t’ai, which are most suitable in helping distinguish correct from incorrect doctrines and illuminating what is partial and what is perfect. Would it not be well to translate these writings and bring them here to this country?’” Then, Miao-lo exclaimed: “Does this not mean that Buddhism has been lost in India, the country of its origin, and must now be sought in the surrounding regions? But even in China there are few people who recognize the greatness of T’ien-t’ai’s teachings.”

39. “The ten ways of observing the mind” refers to the ten meditations set forth in Great Concentration and Insight as a way to observe the true nature of life. For ten meditations, see Glossary.

40. According to this interpretation, both the Mahâvairochana Sutra and the Lotus Sutra reveal 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 superior to the Lotus Sutra in terms of practice.

41. For further details regarding this story, see The Selection of the Time (I, p. 571).
42. Lotus Sutra, chap. 14.
43. Source unknown.
44. The three sutras refer to the Lotus Sutra, the Golden Light Sutra, and the Benevolent Kings Sutra.
45. Also called Ichiō Shikan-in. Another name for Kompon Chūdō, the main temple building on Mount Hiei.
46. A great lecture hall west of Shikainin in the Tōtō area on Mount Hiei. Jikaku founded Sōjī-in in this area in 851 as a center for esoteric practice.
47. Yoshimaka (1534–1184), a general and a cousin of Yoritomo, the head of the Minamoto clan. He beheaded Myōun when he attacked Mount Hiei during the struggle between the Minamoto and the Taira clans.
48. In the Shishigatani Conspiracy of 1177, the Retired Emperor Goshirakawa and others attempted to dispose of Taira no Kiyomori, who, as grand minister of state, held military control of the capital. The plot was discovered, however, and the conspirators were arrested. The Retired Emperor Goshirakawa was confined to the Toba detached palace.
49. Praising Rebirth in the Pure Land.
50. These four words are the Daishoinin's summarization of claims Hōnen set forth in his work The Nembutsu Chosen above All, though Hōnen did not use them in this particular form.
51. Hōjō Tokimune (1251–1284), the eighth regent of the Kamakura government.
52. "One volume" refers to On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land. For the lay priest of Sainyō-ji, Hōjō Tokiyori, see Glossary.
53. This refers to the vow appended by the shogunate officials to the end of the law code stating that any violation of the laws in the code will call down upon them punishment by these gods.
54. Lotus Sutra, chap. 10.
55. Ibid., chap. 11.
56. Ibid., chap. 21.
57. The Annotations on the Nirvana Sutra.
59. Ibid., chap. 13.
60. Ibid., chap. 16.
61. Ibid., chap. 13.
62. Here the Daishoinin counts Shakyamuni Buddha among the successors; hence the total of twenty-five. Usually Shakyamuni is excluded so that there are only twenty-four (see Glossary under twenty-four successors).
63. Duke Ai was the twenty-fifth ruler (r. 494–468 B.C.E.) of the state of Lu, China, during the time of Confucius, who was a native of Lu.
64. Lotus Sutra, chap. 13.
65. The four Buddhas are Akshobhya (east), Jewel Sign (south), Infinite Life (west), and Subtle and Wonderful Voice (north). They preach about the long life of Shakyamuni in the sutra. Hence the Daishoinin says Shakyamuni and these Buddhas expounded the sutra.
66. For Kuan Lung-feng, see Glossary. The story of Pi Kan is found in Records of the Historian. King Chou was so absorbed in his affection for his consort, Ta Chi, that he totally neglected affairs of state. When Pi Kan remonstrated with him, King Chou flew into a rage and killed him. The Second Emperor of Ch'in refers to Hu Hai (229–207 B.C.E.). A puppet ruler, he was controlled by the eunuch official Chao Kao. Instigated by Chao Kao's slanderous tongue, he had Li Ssu executed, and later Hu Hai himself perished at the hands of Chao Kao.
67. This story appears in The Fourfold Rules of Discipline. Udayana was the king of Kaushāmbī in Shakyamuni's time. Pindola was the son of a minister to Udayana, but renounced secular life to enter the Buddhist Order. King Udayana revered the Buddha's disciple Pindola and visited him every day. His jealous minister persuaded the king that Pindola was insufficiently respectful and urged him to kill the disciple if the latter did not rise to greet him. Knowing this with his supernatural powers, Pindola rose from his seat to save the king from the offense of killing a disciple of the Buddha, but as a result of his own ill intent, the king was soon captured by an enemy ruler and died within seven years.
68. Po Chü-i (772–846) was a Chinese poet-official noted for his Hsin Yüeh-fu, "New Ballads," a series of poems in yüeh-
fu, or ballad, form criticizing social and political ills of the time. Partly as a result of his criticisms against the government of Emperor Hsien-tsung, he was deprived of his government posts in 875 and exiled to Hsün-yang in Kiangsi on the south bank of the Yangtze River.

69. This statement is found in the Book of Rites, one of the Confucian canon.
70. Lotus Sutra, chap. 2.
71. Ibid.
72. Ibid., chap. 3.
73. Ibid. The Chinese text of the sutra can also be read as it is translated here. The translation has been slightly changed to fit the context.
74. The seven cardinal sins are killing a priest and killing an āchārya (a Buddhist teacher), plus the five cardinal sins (see Glossary).
75. Nine categories, classified according to their natures and qualities, of people who attain rebirth in the Pure Land of Amida Buddha. Ordinary believers are of superior, medium, or inferior capacity, corresponding respectively to followers of Mahayana, followers of Hinayana, and evil people who violate the precepts and commit crimes. Each of these three categories is further divided into those of superior, medium, or inferior quality and merit. According to which category they belong to, Amida Buddha comes down to this world in a different manner to lead them at the moment of death to the Pure Land.
76. The chapter seven of the Lotus Sutra says, “Two are Buddhas in the western region, one named Amitāyus [Amida], the other named Saving All from Worldly Suffering.”
77. A Clarification of the Precepts.
78. This statement is found in The Verse-Form Record of the Lineage of the Tendai Lotus School.
80. Refuting Ryōkan and the Others reads, “The Tripitaka Master Shan-wu-wei himself, in The Annotations on the Mahāvairochana Sutra, records the fact that at that time he was bound with seven cords of iron. Moreover, in Japan these events are depicted in the Yama Hall of Daigo-ji temple [in Yamashiro Province] and the Yama Hall of Kamakura in Sagami Province” (p. 1048). The facts are not known, but most probably pictures of King Yama berating Shan-wu-wei bound with iron cords were hanging on the walls of these temples.
81. In China the three-day Cold Food, or Han-shih, festival was observed around 105 days after the winter solstice. During the festival, people ate only cold or pre-cooked food, as heating by fire was not allowed.
82. This statement is based on a passage from the Book of Rites. The hawk changing into a dove indicates dramatic change.
83. These anecdotes are mentioned in Analects and Records of the Historian, respectively. Tan, the Duke of Chou, was a younger brother of Emperor Wu of the Chou dynasty. He implemented a number of reforms in state affairs and established a firm foundation for the dynasty. He was so eager to find able persons and anxious not to overlook anyone that he would receive visitors even while washing his hair or during the course of a meal. The Daishōnin cites this example to explain the importance of being conscientious.
84. King Chieh, the seventeenth ruler of the Hsia dynasty, perpetrated various atrocities. When Kuan Lung-feng, a loyal minister, admonished him, the king had him beheaded. Eventually, Chieh was overthrown by his enemy, King T'ang, and the Hsia dynasty came to an end. The king of Wu refers to Fu-ch'a, the twenty-fifth ruler of the state of Wu. His father was killed by Kou-chien, ruler of the state of Yüeh, and Fu-ch'a took revenge two years later by defeating Yüeh in battle. Kou-chien proposed a peaceful settlement with Fu-ch'a, but secretly planned to attack the state of Wu again. Wu Tzu-hsü, a loyal minister of Fu-ch'a, discovered the plot and urged the king to kill Kou-chien, but the king would not listen. Instead, in 485 B.C.E., he compelled Wu Tzu-hsü to commit suicide.
85. In 1177, the Taira clan attempted to control the shrine keepers and the Buddhist priests of Japan, as a result of which they aroused the enmity of the priests of Mount Hiei and of the seven major temples of Nara. It is said that the arrows shot by the Taira clan struck the carriage of Mountain King at Hie Shrine at the foot of Mount Hiei. In 1180, the Taira clan uncovered a plot against them in Nara and had Taira no Shigeihara burn Tōdai-ji and Köfuku-ji temples as punishment for their support of the conspirators.
86. The two sages are the bodhisattvas
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Medicine King and Brave Donor, and the two heavenly deities are Upholder of the Nation and Hearer of Many Teachings, two of the four heavenly kings. In chapter twenty-six of the Lotus Sutra, they vow to protect the sutra’s practitioners.

87. The outermost of eight concentric circular mountain ranges said to surround Mount Sumeru located at the center of the world, according to the ancient Indian worldview.

88. The scroll of the fifth volume of the Lotus Sutra contains four chapters, twelve through fifteen. Among them, chapter thirteen predicts that those who propagate the sutra after Shakyamuni Buddha’s death will be attacked with swords and staves. When the Daishonin was beaten with the fifth scroll (wound on a heavy wooden dowel or staff) of the Lotus Sutra just before the attempt to behead him known as the Tatsunokuchi Persecution, he regarded it as a fulfillment of this prediction.

89. The Regulations for Students of the Mountain School.

90. Also known as the five great wisdom kings, Immovable, Conqueror of the Threefold World, Kundalī, Great Awesome Virtue, and Diamond Yaksha.

91. The seven Buddhas refer to the seven manifestations of the Thus Come One Medicine Master, said to reside in realms to the east of our world. In Japan they are represented either by seven independent images or, more frequently, by six or seven figurines attached to the halo of Medicine Master sculptures.

92. One of the Buddhas described in the esoteric teachings. One-Character Gold-Wheel is a deification of the crown of a Buddha’s head and also of a mantra expressed in one character. This Buddha is compared to a gold-wheel-turning king because the latter is foremost among the four types of wheel-turning kings.

93. Lotus Sutra, chap. 25.

94. This ceremony of worship is based on Pu-k’ung’s translation of The Rules of Rituals Based on the Lotus Sutra, which practitioners of esoteric teachings adopted.

95. Salvation by Men of Pure Faith Sutra. Though this sutra is no longer extant, this passage from it is quoted in The Forest of Gems in the Garden of the Law. “The Buddhist life” in the sutra’s context means a monastic life, but here the Daishonin interprets it as a life based on faith in the Law.