The Unanimous Declaration by
the Buddhas of the Three Existences regarding
the Classification of the Teachings and
Which Are to Be Abandoned and Which Upheld

Written by Nichiren

The sacred teachings of the Buddha's lifetime are the doctrines he preached over a period of fifty years. These are known as the complete body of sutras.

These are divided into two categories, sutras intended for the instruction and conversion of others, and those pertaining to the Buddha's enlightenment. The sutras intended for the instruction and conversion of others constitute all the sutra teachings set forth in the forty-two years prior to the preaching of the Lotus Sutra. These are known as provisional teachings, and are also called expedient means.

In terms of the four teachings [of doctrine], they represent the first three teachings, the Tripiṭaka teaching, the connecting teaching, and the specific teaching. In terms of the five periods [of teachings], they represent the sutra teachings set forth in the four periods that preceded the Lotus Sutra, that is, the Flower Garland, Āgama, Correct and Equal, and Wisdom periods.

Again, in terms of the Ten Worlds, they represent the first nine worlds. With regard to the categories of dreams and waking, they correspond to the teachings on good and evil in the category of dreams.

Dreams may be called provisional, and the waking state may be called true. This is because dreams are temporary and lack any inherent entity and nature; hence they are termed “provisional.” But the waking state is permanent, the unchanging entity of the mind, and hence it is designated by the term “true.”

For this reason the sutra teachings set forth in the first forty-two years of the Buddha's preaching life deal with affairs of good and evil as these exist in the dream that is the realm of birth and death. Therefore they are called provisional teachings. They are intended to lead and guide living beings who exist in a realm of dreams and awaken them to the enlightenment of the Lotus Sutra. They are sutra teachings of preparation, an expedient means. Therefore they are called provisional teachings.

This is how we should read the words “provisional” and “true” and how we should understand them.

We should read the word “provisional” to mean temporary, because it
exemplifies the world of dreams. And we should read the word "true" to mean real, because it exemplifies the waking state.

The dreams that are the realm of birth and death are temporary and lack an inherent entity and nature, and thus exemplify that which is provisional. Hence they are called illusions. The waking state of original enlightenment is true or real, the mind that is removed from the realm of birth and extinction, and thus exemplifies truth. Hence it is called the true aspect.

By grasping the meaning of these two words "provisional" and "true," we may distinguish in the sacred teachings of the Buddha's lifetime which ones are provisional and deal with the instruction and conversion of others, and which are true and pertain to the Buddha's enlightenment. The first three of the four teachings, the first four of the five periods of teachings, and the first nine of the Ten Worlds all alike deal with affairs of good and evil as these exist in the realm of dreams. Hence they are called provisional teachings.

With regard to these doctrinal teachings, the Buddha in the Immeasurable Meanings Sutra stated that "in these more than forty years, I have not yet revealed the truth." These various sutras in which the truth is not yet revealed are provisional teachings pertaining to the realm of dreams.

Therefore The Annotations on "The Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sutra" states: "Though the nature of the mind does not vary, it is inevitably engaged with phantoms, and so it gives rise to phantom capacities, phantom receptiveness, phantom responses, and phantom salvation. Both the Buddha, who is capable of responding, and the living beings, who receive instruction and undergo conversion, are provisional in aspect and not true."

This passage is saying that these teachings are all expedient means relating to a realm of dreams and phantoms. The words "though the nature of the mind does not vary" mean that the nature of the mind when it is viewing dreams and the nature of the mind when it is wakened is one uniform mind nature and never varies. However, there are two types of events viewed by this single mind, the false events encountered in dreams and the true events of a time of waking. But though we realize this, we know that both are simply the workings of one's own mind.

Therefore Great Concentration and Insight states: "In the four universal vows set forth in the first three of the four teachings, [distinctions between] both the doer and the ones who receive the doing are wiped out."2

The four universal vows declare: "Living beings are numberless: I vow to save them. Earthly desires are countless: I vow to eradicate them. The teachings are endless: I vow to master them. Enlightenment is supreme: I vow to attain it."

The doer is the Thus Come One, and the ones who receive the doing are living beings. The passage of commentary is explaining that in these four universal vows set forth in the first three of the four teachings, the Buddha who carries out the act of saving, and the living beings who are saved, all belong to the dream realm of right and wrong.

Thus the various sutras preached in the forty-two years prior to the Lotus Sutra are provisional teachings in which the Buddha has "not yet revealed the truth," an expedient means. They are an expedient means designed to lead one to the Lotus Sutra and hence do not represent the truth itself.

The Buddha himself acknowledged this fact when he grouped the works preached in the first forty-two years together and then, in preparation for
the preaching of the Lotus Sutra, preached the Immeasurable Meanings Sutra to serve as an introduction for the Lotus Sutra, and in it made a declaration regarding the classification of the teachings [in terms of their relative worth]. This declaration no one can controvert, nor can any doubt be cast on it.

Therefore The Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sutra says, "The nine worlds represent the provisional, the world of Buddhahood represents the true."3

The nine worlds that are provisional are the teachings set forth in the first forty-two years. The world of Buddhahood that is true is that which was preached in the last eight years, namely, the Lotus Sutra. Therefore the Lotus Sutra is called the Buddha vehicle.

The births and deaths occurring in the nine worlds exemplify the principles underlying a realm of dreams, and hence they are called provisional teachings. The eternally abiding nature of the world of Buddhahood exemplifies the principles of the waking state, and hence it is called the true teaching.

Therefore we may say that the teachings set forth over a period of fifty years, the sacred teachings of the Buddha’s lifetime, or all the various scriptures, are made up of the provisional teachings preached in the first forty-two years, which are designed for the instruction and conversion of others, and the true teaching set forth in the last eight years, which pertains to the Buddha’s enlightenment. Together the two make up a period of fifty years. These two terms, provisional and true, thus provide a mirror in which one may perceive the real nature of the teachings without doubt or misunderstanding.

Therefore, if one practices the Tripitaka teaching, thinking that after three asamkhayas and a hundred major kalpas, one may in the end become a Buddha, then one must generate fire from one’s body, “reducing the body to ashes and entering extinction,” and thus destroy oneself. If one practices the connecting teaching, thinking to become a Buddha after seven asamkhayas and a hundred major kalpas, then likewise, as in the previous case, one must reduce the body to ashes and enter extinction, and thus destroy oneself, leaving no trace or form behind.

And if one practices the specific teaching, thinking to become a Buddha after twenty-two great asamkhayas and a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand kalpas, this is to become a Buddha of the provisional teachings in the dream realm of birth and death. Seen in the light of the waking state of the original enlightenment of the Lotus Sutra, the Buddhahood of the specific teaching is not true Buddhahood but a goal achieved in a realm of dreams. Thus the path outlined in the specific teaching can never lead to true Buddhahood.

In the path to enlightenment set forth in the specific teaching, when one reaches the first of the ten stages of development, one for the first time to a certain degree cuts off ignorance and begins to gain understanding to a certain degree into the principle of the Middle Way. But when one does so, one realizes that the specific teaching presents the three truths as separate entities not fused together. One thereupon shifts to the perfect teaching, becoming a believer in the perfect teaching, and thus no longer remains in the category of those who embrace the specific teaching.

Those who pursue the bodhisattva path may be divided into superior, middling, and inferior in terms of capacity. But anyone who is in the first of the ten stages of development, the second stage, the third stage, and so on up to the stage of near-perfect enlightenment, is a person of the perfect teaching. Therefore, in the system out-
lined in the specific teaching there is in fact no real attainment of Buddhahood. Hence it is called a system in which the teaching regarding the goal exists but no example of anyone who has reached it.

Therefore An Essay on the Protection of the Nation states: “The Buddha of the reward body, which exists depending on causes and conditions, represents a provisional result obtained in a dream, while the Buddha eternally endowed with the three bodies represents the true Buddha from the time before enlightenment.” (The former represents the Buddha gained through practice of the first three of the four teachings, and the latter, the Buddha perceived through observation of the mind described in the last of the four teachings, the perfect teaching.)

And the same text states: “The three bodies as they are expounded in the provisional teachings are not free from impermanence. But the three bodies as expounded in the true teaching are endowed with both entity and function.” (The former represents the Buddha gained through practice of the first three of the four teachings, and the latter, the Buddha perceived through observation of the mind described in the last teaching, the perfect teaching.)

One should make certain that one clearly understands the meaning of these passages of commentary.

The provisional teachings represent a difficult and arduous method of practice in which one only occasionally attains Buddhahood. And that is a provisional Buddhahood in a realm of dreams; viewed from the standpoint of the waking state of original enlightenment, it is not true Buddhahood. And if such a path cannot lead one to the Buddhahood that represents the highest goal or reward, then it is a system in which the teaching exists but no example of anyone who has fulfilled it.

How can such a teaching be called true? To adopt and attempt to carry out such a teaching is to mistake the true nature of the sacred teachings of the Buddha.

The Buddha in his preaching left proof that Buddhahood cannot be gained through the first three of the four teachings, thus opening the way to full understanding for living beings of this latter age.

Living beings in the nine worlds sleep in an ignorance that accompanies them each moment of their lives, drowned in dreams of the realm of birth and death, forgetful of the waking state of original enlightenment, clinging to dreamlike rights and wrongs, moving from darkness into darkness.

For this reason the Thus Come One enters this dream realm of birth and death in which we dwell, speaks in the same dream language as living beings with their topsy-turvy thinking, beckons to these living beings in their dreams, speaks to them of distinctions between good and evil as they exist in the realm of dreams, and in this way bit by bit leads and guides them. But because the affairs of good and evil in this dream realm are so manifold in nature, so endlessly and boundlessly varied, he first of all addresses himself to the good, establishing three categories of superior, middling, and inferior good. This is the doctrine of the three vehicles [of voice-hearer, cause-awakened one, and bodhisattva]. And, after explaining this, he points out that within each of these three categories there are three subcategories [those of superior, middling, and inferior capacities], so that, beginning with the highest category, that of superior capacity within the category of superior good, there are three times three categories, or nine categories in all.

But all these categories belong in the end to the rights and wrongs or good and evil as these exist in the dream
realm of birth and death in the nine worlds. And all these distinctions represent erroneous views, the way of the non-Buddhists. (This is the view set forth in Delving into the Essentials.)

But then he explains that the goodness of mind of the highest category, that of superior capacity within the category of superior good, represents the principle of the waking state of original enlightenment and hence may be called the root or basis of goodness. At this point, because the listeners are utilizing the power of distinguishing between good and evil as they exist in the realm of dreams, they can begin to understand the principle of the true aspect of the original mind in the realm of wakefulness.

At this time the Buddha points out that, although one speaks of two different phenomena, dreams and the waking state, false affairs and true affairs, the mind underlying these is a single entity in either case. When it encounters conditions leading to sleep, it becomes the mind of dreams, but when sleep has passed away, it is the mind of the waking state. In either case the mind is a single entity, he explains. But in order to lay the groundwork for opening and merging of the dream realm and waking state, he has earlier preached an expedient means. (This addresses the doctrine of the Middle Way as it is explained in the specific teaching.)

Thus, because the principle of the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds, or of all phenomena perfectly fused and integrated, had not yet been made clear, no one could in fact attain Buddhahood. Therefore we may say that, from the Triпитaka teaching up through the specific teaching, all the eight teachings set forth in the first forty-two years of the Buddha’s preaching life are in all cases expedient means and deal with the good and evil in a realm of dreams. The Buddha simply employed them for the time being in order to lead and guide living beings. They are expedient means used as a type of preparation.

However, within these various provisional teachings there are some that fall into the category of expedient means and some that fall into the category of truth. The two categories of provisional and true are not completely lacking in these teachings. Thus within each of the four teachings are to be found the four perceptions of reality, and they may seem to be the same in all four teachings. The words in which they are couched are the same and there may seem to be no difference in the meaning of the words. But if one is misled by this similarity of language into supposing that there is no real difference between provisional and true teachings, then the Buddha’s teachings will be destroyed.

The teachings that are expedient means exist only in this impure land and not in any of the pure lands. The Lotus Sutra states, “In the Buddha lands of the ten directions there is only the Law of the one vehicle, there are not two, there are not three, except when the Buddha preaches so as an expedient means.”

From this it is easy to determine whether there is any reason to suppose that one may attain Buddhahood by following the expedient means teachings, which do not exist in the Buddha lands of the ten directions, and practicing them in hopes of gaining rebirth in a pure land, while rejecting and despising the Law of the one vehicle, which exists in the pure lands of the ten directions.

The Thus Come One Shakyamuni, the lord who set forth a lifetime of teachings, preached the complete body of the scriptures and left us this declaration. The Buddhas of the three existences all unanimously use the same words and the same intention in the
fashion they employ in preaching the teachings. Therefore I too will preach the teachings in this manner, not differing in a single word. As the “Expeditious Means” chapter of the Lotus Sutra says, “Following the same fashion that the Buddhas of the three existences employ in preaching the teachings, I now will do likewise, preaching a Law that is without distinctions.”

The Law that is without distinctions is the wonderful Law of the one vehicle. It is the Law that makes no distinctions between good or evil, the Law that preaches that grass and trees, forests, mountains and rivers, the great earth or even one particle of dust all possess within themselves the full Ten Worlds. This one vehicle of the Lotus Sutra of the Wonderful Law present in one’s mind pervades all the pure lands of the ten directions without exception. The blessings that adorn the living beings and the environment in the pure lands of the ten directions are present within one’s own mind and never depart from it for an instant. This is the Thus Come One of original enlightenment, the three bodies that are a single unity, and outside of this there is no Law. This single Law exists within the pure lands of the ten directions, and no other Law exists. Hence it is called a Law without distinctions.

To fail to practice this wonderful Law of the one vehicle, but instead to seize on the expedient means teachings, which do not exist in any form in the pure lands, and hope thereby to attain Buddhahood is the most deluded of delusions.

After Shakyamuni had attained Buddhahood, he then returned to this impure land and, in order to enable the living beings of the impure land to enter the realm of Buddhahood, he gradually led and guided them by preaching the expedient means teachings. This is what is called the teachings intended for the instruction and conversion of others. Hence these are referred to as provisional teachings or as expedient means.

The nature of the doctrines that pertain to the instruction and conversion of others is in general as I have outlined it here.

Next we come to the teaching that pertains to the Buddha’s enlightenment, namely, the Lotus Sutra preached in the last eight years of the Buddha’s life.

This sutra deals with the original mind [of enlightenment] in the waking state. But because living beings are accustomed to thinking in the mental terms appropriate to a dream state, it borrows the language of the dream state in order to teach the waking state of the original mind. However, though the language is that employed in a dream state, the intention behind it is to give instruction in the waking state of the original mind. This is the aim of both the text of the Lotus Sutra itself and of the commentaries on it. If one does not clearly understand this, one will invariably misunderstand the wording of both the sutra and its commentaries.

One should note that the dream realm doctrines set forth in the teachings designed for the instruction and conversion of others are doctrines of the functions inherent in the waking state of the original mind. Because the dream realm teachings are subsumed within the waking state of the original mind, the doctrines preached in the first forty-two years of the Buddha’s preaching life, the expedient means intended for the instruction and conversion of others in a realm of dreams, are subsumed within the waking mind that is revealed in the Lotus Sutra of the Wonderful Law. Outside of this mind there is no other teaching. This is what is known as the opening up and merging effected by the Lotus Sutra. The situation is comparable to a multi-
tude of streams being gathered into the great ocean.

The wonder of the Buddha mind and the wonder of the mind of living beings—these two wonders are subsumed within the mind of the individual, and therefore we may say that outside of this mind there is no teaching.

One's own mind, the mind nature, and the mind entity—these three are the three bodies of the Thus Come One of original enlightenment within one's own body. This is what the Lotus Sutra means when it speaks of the three factors, "appearance" (the Thus Come One of the manifested body), "nature" (the Thus Come One of the reward body), and "entity" (the Thus Come One of the Dharma body).

The Thus Come One of original enlightenment marked by these three factors embodies in flesh the phenomenal realm of the ten directions, has for his mind nature the phenomenal realm of the ten directions, and takes on for his appearance and auspicious features the phenomenal realm of the ten directions. Thus one's own body becomes the body of the Thus Come One of original enlightenment endowed with the three bodies. It pervades and embraces the whole phenomenal world and manifests the functions of a single Buddha. Hence, as the Buddha explained in his preaching, all phenomena are manifestations of the Buddhist Law.

When he did so, all the beings who were seated in the assembly, the four kinds of believers, the eight kinds of nonhuman beings, the animals, the non-Buddhist believers, all without a single exception instantly cast off the distorted vision and distorted thoughts of delusion, returned to the waking state of original enlightenment, and thus attained the Buddha way.

The Buddha is like a person awake and living beings are like persons dreaming. Therefore when the latter wake from their empty dreams of birth and death and return to their waking state of original enlightenment, they are said to attain Buddhahood in their present form, to gain the great wisdom of equality, the Law that is without distinctions, and to understand that all are able to achieve the Buddha way, for there is only this one doctrine.

Though the Buddha lands of the ten directions are divided up into various regions, the Law pervades them all. The Law is that of one vehicle, there are no expedient means, and hence it is called the Law that is without distinctions. Though the beings of the Ten Worlds fall into various categories, they conform to the one basic principle of the true aspect of all beings and hence in the end are without distinctions. Though the doctrines of the hundred worlds and thousand factors and of the three thousand realms speak of distinctions, yet because the Ten Worlds are mutually inclusive, they are without distinctions. Though the terms "dreams" and "waking state," "false" and "true" seem to indicate differing categories, they all come together in the single mind and hence are without distinctions. Though we speak of the three existences of past, future, and present, all conform to the principle that underlies an instant of the mind and hence are without distinctions.

The words set forth in all the other sutras are words in a dream and are comparable to a round fan or a tree, while the words that reveal the waking mind in the Lotus Sutra are comparable to the moon or the wind. Thus the waking mind of original enlightenment is a round moon whose rays shine on and drive away the darkness of ignorance. And the wisdom that perceives the true aspect of all phenomena is a wind that blows away the dust of delusion. Thus, through the dream words that are like a fan or a tree, we come to
understand the waking mind that is like the moon and wind, and in this way we can dispel the last remnants of the dream realm and return to the waking state of the original mind.

Hence it is stated in Great Concentration and Insight: “When the moon is hidden behind the ranged mountains, we hold up a round fan as a symbol of it; when the wind dies down in the vast sky, we shake a tree to illustrate how it moves.”

The Annotations on “Great Concentration and Insight” comments: “The moon that represents the true and eternal nature is hidden behind the mountains of earthly desires. Earthly desires are not of one kind alone, and therefore the text speaks of them as ‘ranged mountains.’ The wind that is the sound of the perfect teaching in time ceases its instructing influence and returns to tranquillity.9 The principle of tranquillity is still and unobstructed like the vast sky. The teachings set forth by the four ranks of sages are like the fan and the tree... These enable us to understand the moon and the wind.”

Another commentary10 says: “The clouds that are the earthly desires of the dream realm heap up like mountains, and the eighty-four thousand dust-like cares or delusions hide the round moon that is the mind nature of original enlightenment. The words of the sutras and treatises, which are comparable to a fan or a tree, are used to teach one the principle of original enlightenment, which is comparable to the moon and the wind, and enable one to understand it. Such are the sacred teachings, and hence their words and phrases are comparable to a fan or a tree.”

The passage cited above represents one sort of interpretation and is not necessarily to be taken as the truth. What instructs us and enables us to understand the mind nature of the wonderful Law, which is comparable to the moon, and the intelligence and wisdom of the mind of the individual, which is comparable to the wind, may be called the Lotus Sutra of the Wonderful Law.

Hence On “The Profound Meaning” states, “One tries to understand terms in the category of sounds and forms in order to perceive the ultimate principle that is without marks.”

“Terms in the category of sounds and forms” refers to the dream-realm words of the various sutras and treatises such as the analogies of the fan and the tree. “The ultimate principle that is without marks” refers to the perfect delight of Tranquil Light, the waking mind nature present within the individual, which is comparable to the moon and the wind.

This “perfect delight” represents the harmonious unity of the sentient beings, who dwell in the phenomenal realm of the ten directions, and the lands, which support and surround them in the phenomenal realm of the ten directions. Thus the living beings and their environments are one, and the three bodies of the Buddha are a single body. The four kinds of lands are not differentiated but come together in the one Buddha of the Dharma body.

The self made up of the Ten Worlds is the Dharma body. The mind made up of the Ten Worlds is the reward body. The form made up of the Ten Worlds is the manifested body. Outside of the Ten Worlds there is no Buddha, outside of the Buddha there are no Ten Worlds. The living beings and their environments are not two things, and one’s self and the land one inhabits are not two things. Because the phenomenal realm of the ten directions is the body of a single Buddha, it is called the Land of Tranquil Light, and for this reason it represents the ultimate principle that is without marks.

It is separate from the marks of the
impermanence of birth and extinction, and therefore it is called "without marks." It is the utmost depth of the essential nature of phenomena and the ultimate of profound Buddhist principles and hence it is called the ultimate principle.

This ultimate principle that is without marks, or the perfect delight of Tranquil Light that embodies it, exists within the mind nature of all sentient beings, a pure realm free of outflows. It is termed the lotus dais of the mind of the wonderful Law. Therefore it is said that outside the mind there is no other principle. And so we may come to understand that all phenomena are manifestations of the Buddhist Law.

The two principles of birth and death are principles that pertain to the dream realm of birth and death, delusions, examples of topsy-turvy thinking. When we employ the waking state of original enlightenment to gain a correct understanding of the nature of our minds, we see that it has no birth that can be called a beginning, so it could never have a death that would be an ending. Is this not what it means to grasp the mind that is removed from birth and death?

This mind is not burned in the fires at the end of a kalpa, is not destroyed by the disaster of floods, cannot be severed with a sword or pierced with an arrow. One may put it inside a mustard seed and the mustard seed will not be stretched nor will the mind be cramped thereby. One may put it in the vast heavens and the heavens will not be too broad for it nor the mind too narrow to fill them.

The opposite of good we call bad, the opposite of bad we call good. Hence we know that outside of the mind there is no good and there is no bad. What is apart from this good and this bad is called the unlabeled. The good, the bad, and the unlabeled—outside of these there is no mind, and outside of the mind there are no concepts. Beyond all such distinctions expressed in words, beyond good and bad, pure and defiled, ordinary mortal and sage, heaven and earth, big and small, east and west, north and south, the four other directions between each of these and the directions of up and down, is that which transcends the reach of words, the place where the workings of the mind come to an end.

Words are what give expression to the distinctions that are thought of in the mind. Therefore, outside of the mind there are neither distinctions nor the absence of distinctions. Words echo the thoughts of the mind and find expression through the voice.

The ordinary mortal is confused about the nature of his own mind, and remains unenlightened. The Buddha is enlightened to that nature, and manifests it as what are called transcendental powers. Transcendental power means the power of the spirit to penetrate all phenomena without hindrance. Such freely exercised transcendental powers are present in the minds of all sentient beings. Hence even foxes and raccoon dogs can exercise the respective transcendental powers that they possess, because their respective shares of awakening arise from the spirit of the mind.

From this single element of mind spring all the various lands and environmental conditions. The sacred teachings of the Buddha's lifetime are devoted to explaining this principle. These are what is known as the storehouse of the eighty-four thousand teachings. All these are teachings encompassed within the single entity of an individual. Hence the storehouse of the eighty-four thousand teachings represents a day-to-day record of one's own existence. This storehouse of the eighty thousand teachings is embodied in and contained within one's own mind. To use the mind to suppose that
the Buddha or the Law or the pure
land exist somewhere other than in
one's own self and to seek them else-
where is a delusion.

When the mind encounters good or
bad causes, it creates and puts forth the
aspects of good and bad. As the Flower
Garland Sutra says: "The mind is like
a skilled painter, who creates various
forms made up of the five components.
Thus of all the phenomena throughout
the entire world, there is not a single
one that is not created by the mind.
The Buddha is the same in nature as
the mind, and living beings are the
same in nature as the Buddha. In the
threefold world there is only this single
mind. Outside of this mind there is no
other phenomenon that exists. The
mind, the Buddha, and all living be-
ings—these three are without distin-
ction."13 And the Immeasurable Mean-
ings Sutra says: "From the single Law
that is without marks, that is devoid of
marks, are born immeasurable mean-
ings."14 This single Law that is with-
out marks, that is devoid of marks, is the
mind that is present in each instant of
thought in all living beings.

The Words and Phrases of the Lotus
Sutra comments on this: "It does not
have the marks of impermanence char-
acterized by birth and extinction and
hence it is said to be 'without marks.' It
is removed from the marks of the nir-
vana of remainder and the nirvana of
no remainder expounded in the two
vehicle teaching, and hence it is said to
be 'devoid of marks.'"15

This mind that is beyond com-pre-
hension constitutes the core teaching
of the sutras and treatises. And one
who is awake to and understands this
mind is called a Thus Come One.

Once one has waked to and under-
stood this mind, then the Ten Worlds
become one's own self, one's own
mind, one's own form, for the Thus
Come One of original enlightenment
becomes one's own body and mind.

While one fails to understand this,
one is in a state of ignorance. Igno-
rance means to be without clear un-
derstanding. One has not yet become
clearly enlightened as to the nature of
one's own mind. When one wakes
to and understands this mind, this is
called awakening to the essential nature
of phenomena. Thus ignorance and
awakening are simply different names
for this single mind. Although there are
two different words or terms used,
there is only the one mind.

Therefore one must not cut off or
do away with ignorance. For if one
cuts off the dreaming mind that is
ignorance, then one will also lose the
waking mind, the mind of enlighten-
ment. The whole point of the perfect
teaching is to show that one must not
cut off the tiniest bit of delusion. For
all phenomena that exist are manifesta-
tions of the Buddhist Law.

The Lotus Sutra speaks of the "ap-
pearance" (the physical features of all
living beings; the Thus Come One
of the manifested body of original en-
lightenment); the "nature" (the mind
nature of all living beings; the Thus
Come One of the reward body of
original enlightenment); and the "en-
tity" (the entity of all living beings;
the Thus Come One of the Dharma
body of original enlightenment).

From these three factors evolve the
other seven factors that follow them,
and the two groups then combine to
make up the ten factors. These ten fac-
tors pervade the Ten Worlds. These
Ten Worlds are born from the mind
of the individual and constitute the
eighty-four thousand teachings.

Here a single individual has been
used as an example, but the same thing
applies equally to all living beings. This
unanimous declaration by the Buddhas
of the three existences, this passage [in
the Lotus Sutra], is a basic text, a judg-
ment of the Buddhas that bears their
stamp of unmistakable authentication.
This stamp of the Buddhas is the single seal of the true aspect. “Seal” is another term for “stamp.”

All the other sutras lack this seal of the true aspect, and hence they cannot function as a basic text. They lack any true Buddha, and because they lack a true Buddha, they are texts pertaining to a dream world. They are not to be found in the pure lands.

Though the Ten Worlds are ten in number, the ten factors are all one. For example, though the moons reflected in different bodies of water are countless in number, the moon up in the sky is only one. The ten factors as they pertain to the nine worlds are ten factors in a dream world—they are like the moons reflected in bodies of water. But the ten factors of the world of Buddhahood are the ten factors of the waking state of original enlightenment—they are like the moon up in the sky.

For this reason, when the ten factors that pertain to one realm, the world of Buddhahood, become manifest, then the ten factors pertaining to the nine worlds, factors that are like the moons in the water, will without exception all become manifest at the same moment. The whole will constitute the entity and its function, the essence and its activities, that come together within the single entity of Buddhahood.

Because the Ten Worlds are mutually inclusive, the living beings of the Ten Worlds equally possess all of the ten within their lives. Thus the real moon up in the sky and the moons reflected in the bodies of water are all part of the entity of the individual, without a single exception. Hence the ten factors are marked by consistency from beginning to end, with no distinction setting off one from another.

What is “original,” or at the beginning, are the ten factors of the ordinary living being. What is “latter,” or at the end, are the ten factors of the Buddhas. Since the Buddhas are made manifest through the mind of the living being at each moment, the living being is termed “original” and the Buddhas are termed “latter.”

In the Lotus Sutra, however, the Buddha says: “Now this threefold world is all my domain, and the living beings in it are all my children.”

After the Buddha had attained the way, in order to instruct and convert others he referred to this as his first attainment of the way, and, entering the dream realm of birth and death, from that standpoint described the waking state of original enlightenment. Hence he likened wisdom to a father, and ignorance to the children, explaining the matter in this fashion.

Although living beings are made up of the ten factors of original enlightenment, even a single instant of ignorance can cloud their minds, as though in a state of sleep. They have then entered the dream realm of birth and death and forgotten the principle or truth of original enlightenment. This tiny hair’s breadth of ignorance sets them to dreaming empty dreams of the three existences of past, present, and future.

The Buddha may be likened to a person in the waking state who enters the dream realms of birth and death in order to waken living beings. This wisdom of the Buddha is comparable to a parent to those in a realm of dreams, and we who are in the dream state are comparable to the children. That is the reason why the Buddha says that living beings “are all my children.”

Once we have fully understood this principle, then we will see that the Buddhas and we as individuals, from the standpoint of what is “original,” are like a father and his children, and from the standpoint of what is “latter” also, are like a father and his children. The inborn nature of the father and of the children, both in terms of which is “original” and which is “latter,” is
identical. Hence we come to realize that there is no difference between one's own mind and the mind of the Buddha, and accordingly wake from the dream realm of birth and death and return to the waking state of original enlightenment. This is known as attainment of Buddhahood in one's present form.

To attain Buddhahood in one's present form means at this moment to realize one's inborn, original nature, to know that it is one's unaffected and unobstructed destiny as a living being, one's reward, and the unseen protection of the Buddhas.

If we consider the matter, we see then that the mind when it is dreaming is comparable to the state of delusion, and when it is awake is comparable to enlightenment. Thus if we fully understand the sacred teachings of the Buddha's lifetime, we see that we have been viewing empty dreams, groundless and ephemeral, troubling our minds with them, pouring out sweat; but when we wake from them we find that our bodies, our homes, our resting places are just as they have always been. The empty world of dreams and the real world of the waking state appeared to our eyes and seemed in our thoughts to be two different matters, yet all along there was only one place and only one person involved. Thus we come to understand these two matters of false or empty, and true or real.

From this one should also understand that one's own mind that views the dream realm of birth and death in the nine worlds is no different from the waking mind of the world of Buddhahood, the world that is eternal and unchanging. The place in which one views the dream realm of birth and death in the nine worlds is no different from the place in which one experiences the waking state of the world of Buddhahood, eternal and unchanging. There is no difference in the mind itself, and no difference in the place where all this occurs. But the dreams are all false or empty, while what is experienced in the waking state is all true.

Great Concentration and Insight relates that long ago there was a man named Chuang Chou who dreamed that he became a butterfly and passed a hundred years in that state. His sufferings were many, his pleasures few, sweat poured from him, and then he awoke. When he did so, he saw that he was not a butterfly, that no hundred years had passed, that he had experienced neither suffering nor pleasure, and that it was all false and empty, all a mere illusion. (This is the gist of the passage.)

On "Great Concentration and Insight" comments: "Ignorance is comparable to the butterfly dream and the three thousand realms [of three thousand realms in a single moment of life] are comparable to the hundred years. Not a single moment of life is real, just as the butterfly does not really exist, and the three thousand realms also do not exist, just as there is no real passage of years in the dream."

These passages of commentary describe the attainment of Buddhahood in one's present form. While dreaming he is a butterfly, he does not cease to be the same Chuang Chou as before, and when waking to find he is not a butterfly, he is not a different Chuang Chou. While one believes that one is an ordinary person in the realm of birth and death, this is comparable to dreaming that one is a butterfly, a state of distorted views and distorted thoughts. And when one realizes that one is the Thus Come One of original enlightenment, this state is comparable to the original Chuang Chou, or the attainment of Buddhahood in one's present form.

This is not to say that one attains Buddhahood while in the form of a butterfly. The belief that one is a but-
terfly is empty or false. One could never speak of attaining Buddhahood in such a form—that would be out of the question.

Once we realize that ignorance is like dreaming that one is a butterfly, then our distorted thoughts are seen to be like yesterday’s dreams, things lacking in an intrinsic nature or entity, mere delusions. Who would ever put faith in the empty dream of the realm of birth and death and harbor doubts about the Buddha nature, or nirvana, that is eternal and unchanging?

*Great Concentration and Insight* states: “Ignorance or illusions are in themselves the essential nature of phenomena. But due to the influence of delusions, the essential nature of phenomena changes into ignorance, giving rise to all the topsy-turvy categories of good and not good. It is just as, when the cold weather comes, water congeals and changes into hard ice, or again as when one falls asleep and one’s mind undergoes a change and produces various sorts of dreams.

“Now these various topsy-turvy views are all part of the essential nature of phenomena, something to be understood as not identical with it and yet not different from it either. The arising and extinction of such topsy-turvy views is like [the illusion of] a ring of fire that one creates by whirling a torch in a circle.

“One does not really believe in the arising and extinction of such topsy-turvy views, but knows they are only a product of the mind; one believes only in the essential nature of phenomena. Arising is the arising of the essential nature of phenomena, and the extinction is the extinction of the essential nature of phenomena.

“When one realizes this, one sees that there is in fact no real arising and extinction, that one has only mistakenly believed there was such arising and extinction. What we refer to as delusions are all simply part of the essential nature of phenomena. The essential nature of phenomena acts upon the essential nature of phenomena, the essential nature of phenomena gives thought to the essential nature of phenomena. It is the essential nature of phenomena throughout—there is no time when it is not the essential nature of phenomena.”

As we see from this passage, there is never an instant when the essential nature of phenomena ceases to exist. To fail to understand this principle and instead give way to the belief that the manifestations of ignorance such as the dream of a butterfly are real in nature is to be led astray.

The ninth volume of *Great Concentration and Insight* states: “For example, it is comparable to the phenomenon of sleep that comes over the mind, so that in one instant of thought the mind dreams of countless different worldly affairs... With regard to tranquil extinction, the essential truth of things, can there be any question of an order of precedence?... All living beings are in a state of great nirvana. There is no question of any further extinction, so how could there be any question of precedence, of higher or lower, of greater or smaller? This state is the birthlessness of the birthless and hence cannot be explained in words. But because it involves causes and conditions, it can in a certain sense be explained. The first ten links in the twelve-linked chain of causation constitute a cause for the salvation of living beings. But explaining the various stages of this process is like painting a picture or planting a tree in the empty air, no more than an expedient means adopted in an attempt at explanation.”

The sentient beings and the environment of the Ten Worlds are the Buddha of the Dharma body, one who possesses the virtue of the three bodies in a single entity. Once one has under-
stood this, one will fully realize that all phenomena are the Buddhist Law. This is known as the stage of hearing the name and words of the truth. From the stage of hearing the name and words of the truth one proceeds directly to the attainment of Buddhahood in one’s present form. Thus in the teaching of the perfect and immediate enlightenment there are no successive stages of practice.

Hence Profound Meaning states: “Many scholars in this latter age seize on the various methods for cutting off delusion set forth in the sutras and treatises as an expedient means and argue over them. But as in the case with water, how can you tell whether it is cold or not unless you drink some?”

T’ien-t’ai states the opinion: “The order in which the different stages of religious practice proceed is set forth in the Benevolent Kings and Jeweled Necklace sutras, and the higher and lower degrees to which delusions can be cut off are described in the Larger Wisdom Sutra and The Treatise on the Great Perfection of Wisdom.”

The Benevolent Kings, Jeweled Necklace, and Larger Wisdom sutras and Great Perfection of Wisdom are all sutras and treatises that belong to the eight teachings that preceded the Lotus Sutra. The religious practices set forth in the provisional teachings require countless kalpas in order to be carried out stage by stage, and hence these texts describe these successive stages.

But the Lotus Sutra represents the perfect teaching that transcends the eight teachings, a type of immediate enlightenment to be quickly achieved. One perceives that the mind, the Buddha, and living beings—these three are all encompassed within a single instant of mind; outside of the mind, nothing else exists. Thus even practitioners of inferior capacity are able within a single lifetime to reach the stage of perfect enlightenment. The one and the many are mutually identical, and hence one stage of religious practice includes within it all stages of practice, and thus one may reach enlightenment within a single lifetime.

If even persons of inferior capacity are able to do so, how much more so, then, in the case of those of middling capacity, or those of superior capacity? Outside of the true aspect there is no other thing that exists, and the true aspect knows nothing of stages or degrees. Hence there is no such thing as a stage of religious practice.

Broadly speaking, the sacred teachings of the Buddha’s lifetime represent a Law or doctrine pertaining to the individual. One should thus strive to achieve a very clear understanding of one’s own original entity as an individual. To awake to that is to be a Buddha, to be confused about that is to be an ordinary living being. This is the message contained in the text of the Flower Garland Sutra.

The sixth volume of On “Great Concentration and Insight” states: “One understands that everything that is contained within this body of ours is modeled after heaven and earth. Thus we see that the roundness of the head is patterned after the heavens, the squareness of the feet imitates the form of the earth. The empty spaces within the body correspond to the empty sky. The warmth of the belly is patterned on spring and summer, the firmness of the back is patterned on autumn and winter.

“The four major parts of the body imitate the four seasons, the twelve large joints imitate the twelve months, the three hundred and sixty smaller joints imitate the three hundred and sixty days of the year. The breath going in and out of the nose imitates the wind passing over the mountain lakes and stream valleys, the breath going in and out of the mouth imitates the wind in the open sky. The eyes
correspond to the sun and moon, and their opening and closing correspond to day and night.

“The hairs of the head are like the stars and constellations, the eyebrows like the stars of the Big Dipper, the veins like the rivers and streams, the bones like the rocks, the skin and flesh like the earth, and the body hairs like the thickets and groves of trees.

“The five major organs correspond to the five planets in the sky, the five sacred mountains on the earth, the five agents in the yin-yang cosmology, the five constant virtues in human society, the five components that make up the mind, the five virtues in terms of conduct, and the five penalties in terms of the regulation of crime. The five penalties are tattooing, amputation of the nose, amputation of the feet, castration, and the death penalty. (These five penalties represent various kinds of injury inflicted on the individual as a form of punishment. They amount in all to three thousand types of punishment, but are summed up under the term five penalties.)

“In terms of governors of the realm of heaven and earth, the five major organs correspond to the five offices. The five offices are discussed later on in volume eight, where Notes on the Objects in Nature is quoted; they are Kou-mang and the other deities. These ascend to the sky and become the five kinds of clouds, or undergo transformation to become the five kinds of dragons. The heart corresponds to the red bird of the south, the kidneys to the black tortoise of the north, the liver to the green dragon of the east, the lungs to the white tiger of the west, and the spleen to the Hooked Stars.”

It also states: “The five musical notes, the five fields of study, the six arts all arise from the five major organs. And if we consider the correspondences as they apply to the domestic administration, we see that the mind of enlightenment within the individual is comparable to a great king who resides within a hundred encircling walls. When he comes forth, he is flanked and guarded by the five offices. The lungs correspond to the Minister of War, the liver to the Minister of the Interior, the spleen to the Minister of Works, the four limbs to the general populace, while to the left is the Supervisor of Fate and to the right the Supervisor of Records to control and supervise the life span of the individual. The navel corresponds to the Lord of the Great Unity, and so forth. All of these correspondences are clearly set forth in The Teaching of the Practice of Meditation.”

If we look carefully into the basic entity of the individual, we find it to be as just described. And to suppose that this diamond-hard, indestructible body is in fact a body belonging to the impermanent realm of birth and extinction is a form of distorted thinking comparable to Chuang Chou’s dreaming that he was a butterfly. This is what this passage of commentary is telling us.

The five agents are earth, water, fire, wind, and space. They are also referred to as the five elements, the five components, the five precepts, the five constant virtues, the five directions, the five kinds of wisdom, and the five periods of teachings. It is simply that one single thing is explained in different ways in the various different sutras, or that the Buddhist texts and the non-Buddhist texts give different names to the various categories.

If now we consult the Lotus Sutra, we find that it opens up and explains these five agents as the five aspects of Buddha nature and the seeds of the five wisdom Thus Come Ones that are to be found in the lives of all living beings. They are thus equivalent to the five characters Myoho-venge-kyo.
These five characters are what make up the entity of the individual, and hence that entity exists eternally in its original state, it is the Thus Come One of original enlightenment.

This is what is explained in terms of the ten factors of life, that which "can only be understood and shared between Buddhas."39

Bodhisattvas who have reached the stage in which there is no more regression or people who have attained the highest stage in the two vehicles know nothing whatsoever of this doctrine. But ordinary people who follow the teachings of perfect and immediate enlightenment understand this even when only beginners in religious practice, and therefore they are able to attain Buddhahood in their present form, to enjoy the entity that is diamond-hard and indestructible.

Hence it is perfectly clear that if heaven itself crumbles, then the body of the individual likewise will crumble; if the earth breaks asunder, the body of the individual too will break asunder; if the elements of earth, water, fire, wind, [and space] perish, the body of the individual too will perish. But though the three existences of past, present, and future may give way to one another, these five elements will never change or pass away. And though the three periods of time, the Former Day, the Middle Day, and the Latter Day of the Law, may differ one from another, these five elements are one in nature, not subject to rise or fall, to change of any kind.

The commentary40 on the "Parable of the Medicinal Herbs" chapter of the Lotus Sutra explains that the principle underlying the perfect teaching, or the perfect principle, is comparable to the great earth, while the teaching of perfect and immediate enlightenment, or the perfect teaching, is comparable to the rain that falls from the sky. The first three of the four teachings, the Tripitaka teaching, the connecting teaching, and the specific teaching, are comparable to the three types of plants and two types of trees described in the chapter. These plants and trees spring up from the great earth that is the perfect principle and are nourished by the rain from the sky that is the perfect teaching. But though these plants and trees, which represent the five vehicles, flourish, they do not realize that their flourishing is due to their dependence on heaven and earth. Hence the Buddha explains that the human and heavenly beings, persons of the two vehicles, and bodhisattvas who follow the three teachings mentioned above are comparable to such plants and trees because they are unaware of the debt of gratitude they owe. Thus they are given the designation "plants and trees."

But now with the preaching of the Lotus Sutra these "plants and trees," which represent the five vehicles, come to know and understand their mother, the perfect principle, and their father, the perfect teaching. They realize the debt they owe their mother, the one earth that they all sprang from, and the debt they owe their father, the one rain that watered them. This, then, is the meaning of the chapter on the "Parable of the Medicinal Herbs."

Numberless major world system dust particle kalpas in the past the Thus Come One Shakyamuni, who was then an ordinary mortal, came to realize that his body was made up of the elements of earth, water, fire, wind, and space, and having done so, he immediately attained enlightenment. After that, in order to instruct and convert others he appeared in the world again and again, in age after age going through the process of acquiring the way and in place after place manifesting the eight phases of a Buddha's existence. Later he was born in the palace of a king, gained enlightenment under the bodhi tree, and made it appear to
living beings that he had attained Buddhahood for the first time. In the forty and more years following, he set forth various expedient teachings in order to lead and guide living beings.

After that, he thrust aside the various sutra teachings that he had used as an expedient means and preached the correct and straightforward doctrine of the Lotus Sutra of the Wonderful Law, revealing the truth of the seeds of the five wisdom Thus Come Ones. He included within it the various sutras preached as an expedient means in the preceding forty-two years, rolling them all together and fashioning the one Buddha vehicle, calling it the Law that embraces all people in one, the Law that embodies the enlightenment of the individual. He created an honest and truthful document that others could not tamper with, and affixed to it his own seal of verification.

When Shakyamuni Buddha was preparing to transmit this document handed down from the Buddhas of the three existences, he patted the heads of the numerous bodhisattvas who had filled the air above three thousand three hundred ten thousand million nayutas of lands, and then, indicating the time he had in mind, he exhorted them to expound this Law specifically for the sake of us today, the living beings of this Latter Day of the Law, and to use the above document of the Buddha and bestow the Law without fail upon us. Three times he spoke, carefully repeating the same words over. And when he had done so, the numerous bodhisattvas all without exception bent their bodies, bowed their heads and, repeating the same words three times over, each promised without fail to honor the Buddha's instructions. With this the Buddha, his mind now at ease, returned to his royal city of original enlightenment.

Following the ceremony of preaching the Law of the Buddhas of the three existences and their manner of setting forth the Law, this transfer document indicates in the same words the period to which the Law should be transmitted, the Latter Day of the Law. That is, it is indicated that in the last five-hundred-year period this Lotus Sutra of the Wonderful Law should be the sole means for attaining Buddhahood. This is clearly indicated in this document that was handed down from the Buddhas of the three existences.

The "Peaceful Practices" chapter of the Lotus Sutra has described how, after the world has entered the Latter Day of the Law, ordinary people who have just set their minds on the attainment of the way can, by practicing the Lotus Sutra, gain Buddhahood. That is, by carrying out three types of activities for their own benefit, namely, peaceful practices of the body, peaceful practices of the mouth, and peaceful practices of the mind, and by carrying out practices intended for the conversion of others, peaceful practices based on the vow of compassion—doing so, as the chapter says, "in the latter age hereafter, when the Law is about to perish."

The reference here is to the present time. In the "Peaceful Practices" chapter just cited, there are four passages that refer to the latter age. In the "Medicine King" chapter, there are two such passages, and in the "Encouragements" chapter, the latter age is three times referred to.

All these passages refer to our present age and represent instructions handed down from the Buddha. But now if one fails to heed the correct instructions contained in these passages and instead follows the words of some ordinary person or gives way to one's own ignorant mind, turning one's back on the declaration handed down from the Buddhas of the three existences and spurning for all time the Law of the Buddhas, what regret, what distress of mind, what pity and grief one will
inflict upon the Buddhas of the three existences!

The Nirvana Sutra says, "Rely on the Law and not upon persons." How deplorable, how pitiful, that scholars of this latter age, believing that they are studying and applying the Law of the Buddha, should on the contrary bring about the destruction of that Law!

On "Great Concentration and Insight" expresses grief over this fact when it says: "The reason that people hear of this teaching of perfect and immediate enlightenment but fail to respect it is that in recent times there is much confusion and misunderstanding among those who practice the Mahayana doctrines. And the situation is even worse because in the Middle and Latter Days of the Law people have little feeling and little faith. Though the teaching of perfect and immediate enlightenment may overflow the storehouses and its scrolls more than fill the sutra boxes, people give it not a moment's consideration but rather turn away with closed eyes. How painful it is to think of them, being born in vain, dying in vain!"

And in volume four of the same work we read: "The teaching of perfect and immediate enlightenment was from the beginning directed at ordinary people. If it was not intended to bring benefit to ordinary people, then why, instead of electing to dwell in a land where the essential nature of phenomena is manifest and, with a body marked by that essential nature, expounding this teaching of perfect and immediate enlightenment to the various bodhisattvas there, did the Buddha, for the sake of bodhisattvas who have just begun to manifest the essential nature of phenomena, take on the body of an ordinary person and make his advent in this threefold world? ... He did so to show that the one mind of the Buddha nature is present within ordinary people and therefore can be cultivated by religious practice."

In effect, then, we may say that when one comes to see that one's own mind is one with the body of the Buddha, then one quickly attains the state of Buddhahood.

Hence On "Great Concentration and Insight" says, "Because all the various Buddhas have come to see that their own minds are no different from the Buddha mind, they have therefore been able to attain Buddhahood."

This is what is known as observation of the mind. When one truly awakens to the fact that one's own mind and the Buddha mind are in fact one mind, then no evil karma can obstruct one when one's life comes to a close, and there will be no more deluded thoughts to detain one in the realm of birth and death.

When one understands that all phenomena whatsoever are manifestations of the Buddhist Law, then one does not need any "good friends" to teach and instruct one. One thinks as one thinks, speaks as one speaks, acts as one acts, behaves as one behaves, and all one's four types of activity, walking, standing, sitting, lying down, all that one does, is one with and in harmonious accord with the mind of the Buddha. One becomes a person who can act freely, without error or obstacle. This is what is known as practice based on the Buddha's teaching that pertains to enlightenment.

If one should discard this freely exercised practice and instead allow one's mind to dwell in a state of distorted thinking marked by ignorance and delusion, thoughts without substance, turning one's back on the teaching and instruction handed down from the Buddhas of the three existences, then for all time one will merely move from darkness into darkness, always, alas, alas, at variance with the Law of the Buddha!

But now if one will only cast aside
such thinking, correct one's outlook, and return to a state of enlightenment, then one will realize that the attainment of Buddhahood in one's present form is to be found nowhere outside one's own body. The mirror that is one's own mind is none other than the same mirror that is the mirror of the Buddha's mind. But we are looking at the back side of the mirror, and therefore we cannot see the truth or principle that underlies our nature, and so we are said to be in a state of ignorance. The Thus Come One, however, looks at the front side of the mirror and can see and understand the principle underlying our nature. For this reason, enlightenment and ignorance may be said to constitute a single entity.

The mirror is a single mirror, but depending upon whether one is looking at the front or the back of it, the distinction between enlightenment and darkness arises. The fact that the mirror has a back side does not constitute any interference to the front side, but, depending upon which side of the mirror one is viewing, the distinction between enlightenment and darkness is produced. This is known as the identity or the fusing and penetrating of two aspects of a single phenomenon.

The doctrines intended for the instruction and conversion of others are comparable to the back side of the mirror, while the observation of the mind that marks the teaching that pertains to the Buddha's enlightenment is comparable to the front side of the mirror. But the mirror representative of the time when one is practicing the doctrines intended for the instruction and conversion of others and the mirror representative of the time when one is practicing the doctrines pertaining to the Buddha's enlightenment are one and the same mirror in either case, the mirror of the nature of one's own mind.

If we apply the mirror analogy to the process of attainment of Buddhahood in one's present form, then looking at the front of the mirror is comparable to attaining Buddhahood, while looking at the back of the mirror is comparable to being an ordinary living being.

The fact that the mirror has a back side illustrates the point that there is no cutting off or elimination of the element of evil that is inherent in the nature of the individual. And the fact that, when one faces the back side of the mirror, the power to reflect an image that is a virtue of the front side is inactive, illustrates the limited type of blessings obtained through the doctrines intended for the instruction and conversion of others. That is, at such a time the Buddha nature inherent in living beings is not in a manifest state.

The teachings pertaining to the Buddha's enlightenment and those intended for the instruction and conversion of others produce very different results because of the differences in power and function. The first volume of *Profound Meaning* states: "When Prince Siddhārtha stretched the bow of the king, his grandfather, to its full extent, this was an example of power or strength. And when the arrow he discharged pierced seven iron drums, went through one of the Iron Encircling Mountains, dug a hole in the earth, and reached as far as the circle of water, this was an example of function or activity." (This illustrates the power and function of the teachings pertaining to the Buddha's enlightenment.)

"The power and function of the various expedient teachings are paltry and weak in a way that is comparable to the bow and arrow of an ordinary person. This is because, though those who have in the past received from the Buddha the two types of wisdom associated with the teachings intended for the instruction and conversion of oth-
ers, their understanding of principle is not complete, the faith engendered in them is not deep in nature, and their doubts have not yet been fully dispelled.” (This applies to the teachings intended for the instruction and conversion of others.)

“But now when one forms a relationship with the Lotus Sutra, one receives the two types of wisdom associated with the teachings pertaining to the Buddha’s enlightenment, experiences to the full the realm of Buddhahood, calls up faith in the essential nature of phenomena, broadens the way of the perfect and wonderful teaching, cuts off all fundamental delusions, and frees oneself from transmigration marked by change and advance. Not only do those bodhisattvas who have been able to carry out religious practice in their present bodily form, and those who have done so and also attained the realization of the non-birth and non-extinction of all phenomena, benefit from this, but those who have just begun to manifest the essential nature of phenomena, and who have done so and advanced to the higher stages of religious practice, likewise benefit from it. This practice is highly effective in spreading the teachings abroad and brings benefits that are widespread and profound. Such is the power and function of this, the Lotus Sutra.” (This refers to the teaching pertaining to the Buddha’s enlightenment.)

One need hardly point out that the power and function pertaining to these two kinds of teachings, those intended for the instruction and conversion of others and those pertaining to the Buddha’s enlightenment, clearly differ greatly in their relative merits. One should pay very close attention to this passage, for it reflects as in a mirror the proper system of classification to be applied to all the sacred teachings of the Buddha’s lifetime.

To “experience to the full the realm of Buddhahood” refers to the doctrine of the ten factors. One comes to fully realize and understand that these ten factors and the Ten Worlds are mutually inclusive, that the causes and effects of the Ten Worlds and the ten factors, the two types of wisdom, provisional and true, and the two kinds of realms are all contained within one’s own life, within everyone’s life without exception, and hence one can fully comprehend the Buddha’s words.44

To “call up faith in the essential nature of phenomena” means to have faith that the Thus Come One of original enlightenment is present within one’s own life as the embodiment of the Ten Worlds, as the mind of the Ten Worlds, as the form of the Ten Worlds.45

To “broaden the way of the perfect and wonderful teaching” is to broaden and enlarge one’s thoughts of rejoicing over the fact that, since the two types of teachings, the teachings intended for the instruction and conversion of others and those pertaining to the Buddha’s enlightenment, are teachings that are inseparable, fusing with and interpenetrating one another, they are comparable to the three virtues inherent in a single jewel, namely, the jewel itself, its brilliance, and its precious nature; that these two practices are never for a moment separate from one another, and that there is nothing lacking in the teachings of the Buddha, so that one is thus assured of attaining Buddhahood in the course of a single lifetime.

To “cut off all fundamental delusions” means to open one’s eyes that have from instant to instant been in the sleep of ignorance, and to return to the awakening of original enlightenment, so that both the sufferings of birth and death and nirvana become like yesterday’s dreams, not a trace of them remaining.

To “free oneself from transmigration
marked by change and advance” has the following meaning. There are persons who gain rebirth in one or other of the three lands, the paradise of the Land of Sages and Ordinary Mortals, the paradise of the Land of Transition, and the paradise of the Land of Actual Reward. In these lands they practice the bodhisattva way, hoping to attain Buddhahood. They build up causes through their practice, they gain different results, and step by step they advance upward, hoping over the course of numerous kalpas to attain the far-off goal of Buddhahood. This is what is meant by “transmigration marked by change and advance.” In this realm, to abandon the form associated with a lower level is called “death,” and to move up to a higher level is called “birth.” This process of birth and death is in fact pain and suffering in the pure lands.

But now if we who are ordinary mortals in this land of defilement practice the Lotus Sutra, then, because of the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds and the equality of all in the phenomenal realm, we will be able to free ourselves from the necessity of transmigration marked by change and advance, through which bodhisattvas in the pure lands [advance toward the far-off goal of Buddhahood]. We will increase our practices of the Buddha way and will be able to compress the process of [kalpas of] transmigration marked by change and advance into a single lifetime, and thus attain Buddhahood. Therefore, when they form a relationship with the Lotus Sutra] bodhisattvas who carry out religious practice in their present bodily form, and those who do so and also attain the realization of the non-birth and non-extinction of all phenomena, may increase their practice of the way and free themselves from the sufferings of birth and death.

“Bodhisattvas who have just begun to manifest the essential nature of phenomena” refers to those who have cast off their bodily form and are dwelling in the Land of Actual Reward. Bodhisattvas “who have advanced to the higher stages of religious practice” refers to those who have reached the stage of near-perfect enlightenment.

The theoretical teaching of the Lotus Sutra can benefit bodhisattvas who have been able to carry out religious practice in their bodily form, and those who have done so and have also attained the realization of the non-birth and non-extinction of all phenomena. The essential teaching of the Lotus Sutra can benefit bodhisattvas who have just begun to manifest the essential nature of phenomena, and those who have done so and advanced to the higher stages of religious practice.

But now the theoretical teaching has been opened up and merged with the essential teaching to form the one wonderful Law. Therefore we ordinary mortals in this land of defilement can use the power of our religious practice to benefit bodhisattvas who have attained rebirth in the pure lands and advanced through the ten stages of development or have reached the stage of near-perfect enlightenment.

Therefore this practice is highly effective in spreading the teachings abroad. (This refers to the function of the teaching for the instruction and conversion of others.) And it brings benefits that are widespread and profound. (This refers to the function of the teaching pertaining to the Buddha’s enlightenment.)

The person who practices the teaching of perfect and immediate enlightenment embodies the teachings for the instruction and conversion of others and the teachings pertaining to the Buddha’s enlightenment in each moment of life, without lacking any of them. Thus on a horizontal plane the effects of the practice spread through-
out the phenomenal realm of the ten directions. Therefore the effects of this practice are described as "widespread." And on a vertical plane, these effects extend over the three existences of past, present, and future, reaching to the utmost depth of the essential nature of phenomena, and therefore they are described as "profound."

Such, then, are the power and function of the teachings pertaining to the Buddha's enlightenment set forth in this sutra, the Lotus. The sutras intended for the instruction and conversion of others do not include this teaching pertaining to the Buddha's enlightenment, and hence may be likened to a bird that cannot fly through the sky because it has only one wing. Thus no one has ever attained Buddhahood through these sutras.

But now the Louts Sutra has opened up and merged the two types of teachings, one for the instruction and conversion of others and the other pertaining to the Buddha's enlightenment, so that it is lacking in nothing. It is like a bird with two wings that flies without hindrance. That is to say, through this sutra Buddhahood can be attained without delay.

In the "Medicine King" chapter of the Lotus Sutra, ten similes are employed to indicate how superior is the power and function of the teachings pertaining to the Buddha's enlightenment in comparison to the teachings intended for the instruction and conversion of others. The first of these likens the other sutras to the various rivers and streams, and the Lotus Sutra to the great ocean. (This summarizes the meaning of the passage.) For in truth, although the various waters that are the sutras concerned with instruction and conversion of others flow unceasingly day and night into the great ocean that is the Lotus Sutra, the teaching pertaining to the Buddha's enlightenment, the ocean never grows in size or diminishes. In this it displays the wondrous nature of its function. But the various waters that are the other sutras cannot even for an instant encompass the great ocean of the Lotus Sutra. The relative superiority of the teachings pertaining to the Buddha's enlightenment as compared to the teachings for instruction and conversion of others is thus as indicated in this simile. This one simile may be taken as representative of the others in the series.

These similes just mentioned are all expounded by the Buddha himself and are not mixed in with comments from others. If we correctly understand their meaning, then we will have before us a clear and unclouded mirror reflecting the true nature of the sacred teachings of the Buddha's lifetime. Who can read these passages of the sutra and its commentary and still remain in doubt and confusion?

This is the unanimous declaration handed down from the Buddhas of the three existences. There is no reason for others to intrude themselves in an effort to interpret its meaning. It represents the original intention for which the Buddhas of the three existences made their appearance in the world, the direct road by which all living beings may attain Buddhahood.

The schools that have been established on the basis of the sutras preached in the first forty-two years of the Buddha's preaching life, sutras that are concerned with the instruction and conversion of others, are the Flower Garland, True Word, Bodhidharma, Pure Land, Dharma Characteristics, Three Treatises, Precepts, Dharma Analysis Treasury, and Establishment of Truth schools. All of these set forth doctrines that belong to the eight teachings propounded prior to the Lotus Sutra, and all are a form of expedient means. That is, they are expedient means employed to lead and guide others, and fall into the categories of
THE UNANIMOUS DECLARATION BY THE BUDDHAS

combining, excluding, corresponding, and including.

This is the order in which the Buddhas of the three existences put forth their teachings. One must take cognizance of this order when discussing the doctrinal teachings. Anything that goes contrary to this order is not the teaching of the Buddha.

The Thus Come One Shakyamuni, the lord of teachings, took full cognizance of this order observed by the Buddhas of the three existences in setting forth their teachings, and not a single word of his teaching went contrary to that order. And declaring that he did the same as those Buddhas, the Buddha says in the Lotus Sutra: "Following the same fashion that the Buddhas of the three existences employ in preaching the teachings, I now will do likewise, preaching a Law that is without distinctions." If one goes contrary to that fashion, then one is turning against the original intent of the Buddhas of the three existences. The founders and teachers who have set up their own various schools and challenge the teachings of the Lotus school are committing the most erroneous of errors, are suffering from the most deluded of delusions.

The "Resolution on Reprimanding Other Schools" (by Sanśñā-in'4) contains this passage of refutation: "In general we speak of the eighty thousand Buddhist teachings, but if we make an overall survey of them, we find that there are none that do not belong to one or another of the four teachings, as I have shown at the beginning of this work.

"These four teachings, the Tripitaka teaching, the connecting teaching, the specific teaching, and the perfect teaching, pertain to the vehicles of the voice-hearer, the cause-awakened one, the bodhisattva, and the Buddha respectively. But if we examine the doctrines expounded and the principles underlying them in the True Word, Zen, Flower Garland, Three Treatises, Consciousness-Only, Precepts, Establishment of Truth, and Dharma Analysis Treasury schools, how do these go beyond what is set forth in the four teachings?"

"If one claims that they do go beyond them, then they must be non-Buddhist doctrines or heretical teachings. And if they do not go beyond them, then one must inquire what goal they are intended to achieve. (That is, which of the four vehicles mentioned above does one hope to achieve.) And depending upon how that question is answered, one should then examine their fundamental principles to the fullest and admonish them for their errors. In doing so, one should employ the classification of the four teachings set forth by our own school and base one's conclusions on this. If the goals that these other schools aim to achieve differ from those set forth in our teachings, one should then take them to task for this.

"Now then, as regards the Flower Garland school, it sets forth its various practices, which act as causes, and the various results or goals that these are intended to achieve, within the framework of the five teachings. These practices fall into different categories such as initial, medial, and later, and are not uniform in nature, with one type of teaching intended to achieve one particular result. But if the causes and results in their scheme do not conform to those outlined in the Tripitaka, connecting, specific, and perfect teachings, then this is not a Buddhist teaching.

"When it comes to the thrice turned wheel of the Law [expounded in the Three Treatises school] or the teachings of the three periods [expounded in the Dharma Characteristics school], one should determine whether such doctrines are sound or not. One should ask what vehicle the
practice of such teachings is designed to achieve. If the reply is that they are designed to achieve the vehicle of Buddhahood, then one should point out that they do not include the meditative practice required to achieve Buddhahood.

"If the reply is that they are designed to achieve the vehicle of the bodhisattva, then one should point out that there are two interpretations of the Middle Way, that which sees the three truths that make up the Middle Way as separate entities, and that which sees them as an integral whole, and ask which view is held by the school of the person being questioned. If the answer is that they are regarded as separate, then point out that there is no way that the desired goal can be achieved by such means. If the answer is that they are regarded as an integral whole, then raise the same objection as one did where the goal to be achieved was that of Buddhahood.

"If there are those who mistakenly rely upon the recital of mantras, then point out that unless one has an understanding of the wonderful teaching of the threefold contemplation in a single mind, then one is no different from a follower of the specific teaching and can never gain enlightenment as to the wonderful principle underlying existence.

"In this way one should investigate to the fullest the goals aimed at by these other schools and criticize them on the basis of true principles. (That is, the principles taught by our own school.)

"The principles of logic" are addressed to non-Buddhist believers. Such principles are in most cases associated with the Hinayana or specific teaching doctrines. In comparison to the teachings set forth in the Lotus, Flower Garland, and Nirvana sutras, these are intended to serve as an introduction to those higher teachings.

They are designed as temporary measures to fit the particular capacities of the hearers and to lead and guide them. Their ultimate purpose is to enable non-Buddhists and followers of Hinayana teachings to come to an understanding of true principles.

"Therefore, when discoursing on Buddhist teachings, one should keep in mind the goals aimed at by the four ranks of sages and not become unduly concerned with the particular doctrines or principles of logic alone. Also, when assessing the doctrinal tenets of other schools, one should examine them in the light of the tenets of one's own school and judge their correctness accordingly. But this must not be done in a hard-headed or hostile manner. (On the whole, the other schools in most cases hold doctrines that pertain to the first three of the four teachings and seldom touch upon the principles of the perfect teaching.)"

This, then, is the judgment on these matters passed by the sage of former times, the Great Teacher [Chishō]. It provides a mirror by which one may unfailingly perceive and judge the principles set forth by the various schools. Why then do the scholars of this latter age fail to look into it, but instead rashly presume to judge the doctrinal teachings on their own?

It is essential that one give close study to the three teachings that run through all Buddhism. These three are the sudden teaching, the gradual teaching, and the perfect teaching. These are the unity of the three truths set forth in the sacred teachings of the Buddha's lifetime.

The first two teachings, sudden and gradual, were expounded by the Buddha in the first forty-two years of his preaching life; the perfect teaching was expounded in the last eight years. Together they represent the teachings of a period of fifty years. Outside of these, there are no other doctrines.
How then can you fail to understand them correctly?

When one is still at the stage of an ordinary living being, these three teachings are referred to as the three truths. When one has attained the goal of Buddhahood, they are called the three bodies. These are different names for the same thing. The process of expounding and bringing them to light is known as the sacred teachings of the Buddha’s lifetime. When one opens up and merges these so that one can perceive that the three truths constitute a single entity, this is to attain Buddhahood. This is called opening up and merging, and this is the teaching that pertains to the Buddha’s enlightenment.

In the doctrinal systems expounded in the other schools, these three truths that constitute a unity are treated as separate and expounded under eight headings. Each of these eight forms the basis for a particular school; thus they are all lacking in the principle of full and perfect unity and hence have no truth by which one may attain Buddhahood.

In these other schools, there is no possibility of truly attaining Buddhahood—therefore one dislikes them. But what one dislikes about them is the fact that their doctrines are insufficient.

When one turns to the perfect teaching, however, and sees that all phenomena are perfectly fused together, full and perfect like the moon on the fifteenth night of the month, free of all insufficiency, and when one understands them to the fullest, then there is no more judging them as good or bad, no more choosing on the basis of what is timely, no more need to seek out a quiet setting, no more question of which persons are eligible. When one understands that all phenomena whatsoever are manifestations of the Buddhist Law, then one has fully comprehended the nature of the things of the phenomenal realm. Then even if one follows a path that is not the way, one will still be fulfilling the Buddha way.

Heaven, earth, water, fire, and wind are the five wisdom Thus Come Ones. They reside within the body and mind of all living beings and are never separated from them even for an instant. Therefore worldly affairs and affairs relating to enlightenment blend together in harmony within the mind of the individual; outside of the mind, there is absolutely no other thing that exists. Therefore, when one hears this truth, one can at that point immediately attain the goal of Buddhahood without a moment’s delay, for it is a principle of the utmost profundity.

The three truths that form a unity may be compared to a jewel, its brilliance, and its precious nature. Because it has these three virtues, it is called a wish-granting jewel, and it can serve as a symbol for the unity of the three truths. But if these three virtues were taken apart and treated as separate entities, then the jewel would be of no use. It would then be comparable to the various schools that expound expedient teachings in which the three truths are regarded as separate from one another.

The jewel itself is comparable to the Dharma body, its brilliance to the reward body, and its precious nature to the manifested body. When these three virtues, which form a unity, are treated as separate entities and schools are established on that basis, one dislikes such schools because of their insufficiency. But when the three are combined to form a single whole, this is known as the unity of the three truths. This unity of the three truths is comparable to the Thus Come One of original enlightenment, whose three bodies are in fact a single body.

[In terms of the four kinds of lands], the Land of Tranquil Light is compara-
ble to a mirror, and the other three lands, the Land of Sages and Ordinary Mortals, the Land of Transition, and the Land of Actual Reward, are comparable to the images reflected in the mirror. But the four lands are one single land, just as the three bodies are one single Buddha.

Now, [with the Lotus Sutra] these three bodies and four kinds of lands blend together in harmony to form the virtue of a single Buddha, known as the Buddha of Tranquil Light. The Buddha of Tranquil Light functions as the Buddha of the perfect teaching, and the Buddha of the perfect teaching is the true Buddha of the state of wakefulness. The Buddhas of the other three lands are provisional Buddhas in a dream realm.

This is the declaration proclaimed in identical words by the Buddhas of the three existences regarding the overall classification of the teachings. No one can say a word against it, no one can try to interpret it to mean anything else. Anyone who goes against this declaration is guilty of the grave crime of turning against the Buddhas of the three existences. Such persons are the heavenly devil or non-Buddhists.

Because persons, if they do so, will be turning against the Buddhist Law for all time, this teaching must be kept secret and not revealed to others. If it is not kept secret but is recklessly made known, then people will fail to have a true understanding of the principles of the Buddhist Law and in their present and future existences will cease to receive divine protection. If persons appear who slander the Law, they will be turning their backs on the Buddhas of the three existences, and both those who reveal the secret teachings and those to whom they are revealed will fall into the evil paths of existence. Because I know that this is what will happen, I issue this warning.

Therefore one must take great care to guard these secret teachings and gain a true understanding of these principles. Doing so, one will be acting in accord with the original intention of the Buddhas of the three existences, and therefore will enjoy the protection of the two sages, the two heavenly deities, and the ten demon daughters, and without hindrance attain the highest level of rebirth, rebirth in the Land of Tranquil Light. Then in no time one will return to the dream realm of the nine worlds, the realm of birth and death, will cause one's body to pervade the lands of the entire phenomenal realm of the ten directions, and will cause one's mind to enter into the bodies of all sentient beings, encouraging them from within, leading and guiding them from without, inner and outer complimenting one another, causes and conditions functioning in harmony, and in this way will utilize the pity and compassion of one's freely exercised transcendental powers to bestow unhindered benefit upon living beings far and wide.

The Buddhas of the three existences make their appearance in the world because they bear in mind the "one great reason," or one great affair. The word "one" represents the truth of the Middle Way, the Lotus Sutra. The word "great" represents the truth of non-substantiality, the Flower Garland Sutra. The word "affair" represents the truth of temporary existence, the Agama, Correct and Equal, and Wisdom sutras. These three constitute the unity of the three truths as expounded in the teachings of the Buddha's lifetime.

When one wakens to and comes to understand this, then one can attain the goal of Buddhahood. Hence this constitutes the fulfillment of the original intention for which the Buddhas appear in the world, the direct road to the attainment of Buddhahood by living beings.

[The "reason" for which they appear
consists of “causes” and “conditions.”] The causes are the unity of the three truths that exists, eternal and unchanging, within the bodies of all living beings. Hence they are referred to collectively as “causes.” But although the three inherent causes, or potentials, of the Buddha nature are possessed by all beings, if such beings do not encounter the right conditions by meeting a “good friend” or teacher, then they will not become awakened, they will not understand, their Buddha nature will not manifest itself. If they encounter the necessary conditions by meeting a good friend, however, then their Buddha nature will invariably become manifest. Hence such meetings are referred to as “conditions.”

But now, if these five components, “one,” “great,” “affair,” “causes,” and “conditions,” come together harmoniously, and one fulfills the difficult-to-fulfill condition of encountering a good friend, then what could possibly hinder the manifestation of the five aspects of Buddha nature?

When spring comes and conditions of wind and rain prevail, then even the mindless plants and trees will all put forth buds, blossom in glory, and make their presence known to the world. And when autumn arrives with its conditions of autumn moonlight, then plants and trees will all ripen and bear fruit. Then they will nourish all sentient beings, sustain their lives, bring them to maturity, and in the end manifest both the virtue and the functions of Buddhahood. Can anyone doubt this? If even the mindless plants and trees can do so, how much truer should this be of human beings?

Though we are no more than ordinary mortals in a state of delusion, we have our own minds, our understanding; we can distinguish right from wrong and gauge what is timely. Because of karma accumulated in the past, we have been born in a land where the Buddhist Law is propagated. If we can meet with a good friend, we will gain an understanding of causes and effects and attain Buddhahood. If we meet with a good friend, is there any reason why we should be inferior even to the plants and trees, remaining dumb and unresponsive and failing to manifest the three inherent potentials of the Buddha nature that are within us?

This time, without fail, without fail, we must wake from this dream realm of birth and death, return to the waking state of original enlightenment, and sever the cords that bind us to birth and death. And from that time on, we will no longer entertain in our minds the Buddhist doctrines that pertain to that realm of dreams.

We will join in harmony with the single mind of the Buddhas of the three existences, carry out the practice of Myoho-renge-kyo, and, without any obstruction, attain enlightenment, for the distinction between the two teachings, those that pertain to the Buddha’s enlightenment and those that pertain to the instruction and conversion of others, is as clear as though reflected in a mirror. It is just as stated in the declaration of the Buddhas of the three existences. Keep this matter secret! Keep this matter secret!

Nichiren

The tenth month in the second year of the Kōan era [1279], cyclical sign tsuchinoto-ii
Background

This work is generally recognized as having been written at Minobu in the tenth month of 1279, but its recipient is unknown. It is also referred to by its abbreviated titles, The Unanimous Declaration by the Buddhas of the Three Existences or The Unanimous Declaration.

The title in effect summarizes the contents. It indicates, in essence, that all Buddhas throughout all time have deeply considered and declared the manner in which the teachings of Buddhism must be classified, affirming which teachings are to be rejected and which upheld as effective for the attainment of Buddhahood. Nichiren Daishonin applies a classification to the entire body of Shakyamuni Buddha's teachings that divides them into two categories, those teachings pertaining to the instruction and conversion of others, and those pertaining to the Buddha's own enlightenment. The Japanese terms for these two categories are jikō, literally self-practice, and keta, instructing and converting others. These terms are interpreted differently when applied to religious practice and when applied to the Buddha’s teachings. When applied to practice, jikō means practice for oneself—Buddhist practice for the purpose of achieving one’s own enlightenment, and keta means practice for others, altruistic practice aimed at helping others to gain enlightenment. But when applied to the Buddha’s teachings, jikō refers to the Buddha’s teachings that pertain to his own enlightenment, while keta refers to the teachings of the Buddha expounded in accord with the capacities of persons to lead them to the true teaching of enlightenment.

In the system of classification referred to in this work, the teachings pertaining to the instruction and conversion of others are identified as expedient means or the provisional teachings that Shakyamuni set forth prior to the Lotus Sutra. The teachings pertaining to the Buddha’s enlightenment refer to the true teaching, or the teachings of the Lotus Sutra. The declaration of the Buddhas of the three existences of past, present, and future is that the expedient teachings expounded for the instruction and conversion of others should be abandoned, and the Lotus Sutra, the teaching that directly reveals the Buddha's own enlightenment, should be upheld.

The Daishonin describes the “declaration” referred to in the title as a collection of passages related and sealed by the Buddhas of the three existences, a reference to the entire Lotus Sutra, and specific passages such as the one from the Immeasurable Meanings Sutra, which serves as an introduction to the Lotus, “In these more than forty years, I have not yet revealed the truth”; the passage from the “Expedient Means,” or second, chapter of the Lotus Sutra, “Following the same fashion that the Buddhas of the three existences employ in preaching the teachings, I now will do likewise, preaching a Law that is without distinctions”; also from the same chapter, “In the Buddha lands of the ten directions there is only the Law of the one vehicle, there are not two, there are not three,” and “The Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, appear in the world for one great reason alone.”

The words of the title “classification of the teachings and which are to be abandoned and which upheld” point to the conclusion that, among all the Buddha’s teachings, those taught as expedient means are to be abandoned, and those that reveal the truth are to be upheld. The Daishonin applies the classification of Buddhism approved by all the Buddhas to Shakyamuni Buddha’s lifetime teachings, and makes
clear that the Lotus Sutra is the true teaching, which opens up and merges all the other teachings. Then he refers to "a wonderful Law without distinctions" in the "Expedient Means" chapter, identifying it as the "one vehicle of Myoho-renge-kyo present in one's mind" that pervades the entire universe.

The Daishonin begins by making the distinction between the teachings expounded by Shakyamuni Buddha during the first forty and more years of his preaching life, and the teachings of the Lotus Sutra, which the Buddha expounded during his final eight years. He identifies the former as teachings pertaining to the conversion of others, expedient means, provisional in nature, teachings expounded in a dream realm for those in a dream state. In contrast to this, he defines the Lotus Sutra as a teaching pertaining to the Buddha's own enlightenment, the true teaching, a teaching expounded in and for those in the waking state.

Next, he briefly outlines the nature of those teachings pertaining to the conversion of others, and describes the significance of the teaching pertaining to the Buddha's enlightenment, the Lotus Sutra, explaining its wondrous function in opening up and merging all other teachings into the single principle of the wonderful Law. He explains the essence of the enlightenment attained by Shakyamuni Buddha in the unimaginably remote past, which is the wonderful Law or Mystic Law from time without beginning. He describes greatly different results produced by the teachings pertaining to the Buddha's enlightenment and those intended for the conversion of others, and the differences in power and function between them, prescribing the practice that enables ordinary people in the Latter Day of the Law to attain Buddhahood.

Next, he says, "When one opens up and merges these [the sacred teachings of the Buddha's lifetime] so that one can perceive that the three truths constitute a single entity, this is to attain Buddhahood. This is called opening up and merging, and this is the teaching that pertains to the Buddha's enlightenment." Finally, he refers to the "one great reason," or more literally, the "one great affair," for which all Buddhas appear in this world, and concludes, "We will join in harmony with the single mind of the Buddhas of the three existences, carry out the practices of Myoho-renge-kyo, and, without any obstruction, attain enlightenment, for the distinction between the two teachings, those that pertain to the Buddha's enlightenment and those that pertain to the instruction and conversion of others, is as clear as though reflected in a mirror. It is just as stated in the declaration of the Buddhas of the three existences. Keep this matter secret! Keep this matter secret!"

Notes

1. "The waking state of original enlightenment" means true enlightenment, the awakening to the truth that all living beings are originally enlightened and therefore Buddhas.

2. This passage is actually found in Miao-lo's Annotations on "Great Concentration and Insight."

3. This passage is actually found in Miao-lo's Annotations on "The Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sutra."

4. The full title of this work is Delving into the Essentials of "Great Concentration and Insight," Miao-lo's commentary on T'ien-t'ai's Great Concentration and Insight.

5. The four perceptions are also called the four gates, ways to enter the Buddhist truth. They are (1) the gate of being, (2) the gate of non-substantiality, (3) the gate of both being and non-substantiality, and
(4) the gate of neither being nor non-substanciality. T’ien-t’ai associates them respectively with each of the four teachings, the Tripitaka, connecting, specific, and perfect teachings.


7. “One’s own mind” indicates the manifested body; “mind nature,” the reward body; and “mind entity,” the Dharma body. These constitute the three bodies of the Thus Come One of original enlightenment.

8. The Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sutra says, “The Buddha’s great compassion is unceasing. And since his clever wisdom is boundless, he goes farther and sways the trees in order to instruct them [people of lesser capacities] concerning the wind, or holds a round fan to show them the moon.” Later in the text, the Daishonin cites a passage from Great Concentration and Insight: “When the moon is hidden behind the ranged mountains, we hold up a round fan as a symbol of it; when the wind dies down in the vast sky, we shake a tree to illustrate how it moves.”

9. “Tranquility” refers to extinction or nirvana. That is, the Buddha enters nirvana in death.

10. What is referred to by “another commentary” is unknown.

11. What can be labeled neither good nor bad. In other words, morally neutral.

12. In ancient Japan foxes and raccoon dogs were believed to deceive people. The Daishonin regards these animals as exercising supernatural powers, and refers to it as a kind of enlightenment. With such an example, he intends to illustrate that the Buddha nature exists in all sentient beings.

13. The words “In the threefold world there is only this single mind. Outside of this mind there is no other phenomenon that exists” are not found in the extant edition of the Flower Garland Sutra, but their meaning is reflected in some places in the sutra.


15. A summary of a passage from Words and Phrases. What transcends the two extremes of “births and deaths” and “nirvana,” or the end of the cycle of birth and death, is the Middle Way. The nirvana of remainder is the nirvana of the arhat who has eliminated all illusions and will no longer be reborn in the six paths, but who is still bound to the world of suffering in that he possesses a body. The nirvana of no remainder is the state that the arhat achieves at death, when both body and mind—the sources of suffering—are extinguished.

16. While the Ten Worlds represent the ten different states of life, the ten factors exist in each of the Ten Worlds. Hence it states, “Though the Ten Worlds are ten in number, the ten factors are all one.”

17. In this context, “beginning” indicates the ten factors that pertain to the world of Buddhahood, and “end,” the ten factors pertaining to the nine worlds.

18. Lotus Sutra, chap. 3.

19. Chuang Tzu, a Chinese philosopher in the fourth century B.C.E.

20. The phrase means that “the birthless,” which means nirvana, or the extinction of birth and death, is itself birthless, and therefore indescribable in words. It signifies that the essential truth of nirvana is eternal and unchanging, and is beyond description.

21. This refers to the six stages of practice. The attainment of Buddhahood in one’s present form is the last stage of ultimate enlightenment. In the teaching of perfect and immediate enlightenment, one proceeds from the stage of hearing the name and words of the truth to the final stage; therefore there are no successive stages in between.


23. The head, torso, arms, and legs.

24. The number of days in a lunar calendar year. Intercalary days are added periodically to adjust to the solar year.

25. The spleen, liver, heart, lungs, and kidneys.


27. The five sacred mountains in China. They are Mount T’ai (the eastern peak), Mount Heng (the southern peak), Mount Hua (the western peak), Mount Heng (the northern peak, Heng written with a different character), and Mount Sung (the central peak).

28. The five agents are the five natural elements of wood, fire, earth, metal, and water in ancient Chinese cosmology.

29. The five components of mind are the aspect of the soul that governs one’s mind, the aspect of the soul that governs
one’s body, the spirit, will, and aspiration. For five constant virtues, see Glossary.

30. Kindness, goodness, respect, economy, and giving precedence to others.

31. A work in ten volumes compiled by Chang Hua (232–300) of the Western Chin dynasty, dealing with such subjects as geography, rare birds and animals, and anecdotes.

32. Deifications of five ministers said to have aided the legendary five emperors. As personifications of the five agents of yin-yang cosmology, they are said to administer the five directions. They are Hou-t’u, Kou-mang, Chu-jung, Ju-shou, and Hsüan-ming.

33. Green, white, red, black, and yellow clouds.

34. Green, white, red, black, and yellow dragons.

35. The five fields of ancient Indian studies. They are (1) linguistics and grammar, (2) craftsmanship and astronomy, (3) medicine and pharmacy, (4) logics, and (5) philosophy.

36. Rites, music, archery, chariot riding, writing, and mathematics.

37. Here the Daishonin interprets the five agents as the five elements of the universe—earth, water, fire, wind, and space.

38. The three inherent potentials of the Buddha nature (which are regarded as causes) plus two results. These results are the enlightenment attained by the wisdom to perceive the Buddha nature and the nirvana attained by the practice to develop that wisdom.

39. Lotus Sutra, chap. 2.

40. This refers to the explanation given in Words and Phrases and The Annotations on “The Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sutra.”

41. Also called the watery circle. In the ancient Indian worldview, one of the three circles located under the earth that support the world. When a world is formed, a windy circle first takes shape, and upon this a watery circle develops. Next, on the watery circle a gold circle forms, and upon this forms the land itself with seas and mountains.

42. True wisdom and provisional wisdom. True wisdom means the wisdom to perceive the truth of all phenomena, and provisional wisdom, the wisdom to perceive the different aspects of phenomena.

43. According to Miao-lo’s On “The Profound Meaning,” in terms of the perfect teaching, “those bodhisattvas who have been able to carry out religious practice in their present bodily form’’ are those below the first stage of security, and “those who have done so and also attained the realization of the non-birth and non-extinction of all phenomena” are at and above the first stage of security. Also “those who have just begun to manifest the essential nature of phenomena” are the bodhisattvas who have reached the first stage of security and above and who practice in the Land of Actual Reward, and “those who have done so and advanced to the higher stages of religious practice” are those who have attained the stage of near-perfect enlightenment.

44. As for causes and effects among the Ten Worlds and the ten factors, for example, the world of hell can become the cause for attaining the effect of Buddhahood. Or the first three of the ten factors are the cause, and the other seven, effect. “True wisdom” is the wisdom to understand the true teaching of the Buddha and “provisional wisdom” is the wisdom to understand the expedient means teachings. From the viewpoint of the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds, “the true realm” (Buddhahood) and “the provisional realm” (nine worlds) exist in Buddhahood and “the true realm” (Buddhahood) and “the provisional realm” (nine worlds) exist in the nine worlds. All of these exist in everyone’s life without a single exception. When one realizes this, one understands the Buddha’s words or teachings.

45. “The embodiment of the Ten Worlds” indicates the Dharma body, “the mind of the Ten Worlds” indicates the reward body, and “the form of the Ten Worlds” indicates the manifested body.

46. The Bodhidharma school indicates Zen, which regards Bodhidharma as its founder.

47. Sannō-in is a temple structure on Mount Hiei where Chishō, the fifth chief priest of Mount Hiei, once lived. Here it indicates Chishō.

48. The Consciousness-Only school refers to the Dharma Characteristics school. It is so called because it upheld the Consciousness-Only doctrine.

49. Indian logic known as hetu-vidyā in Sanskrit. Hetu means reason or cause and vidyā, knowledge. This logic was founded by the Nyāya school and fully developed by Buddhist scholar Dignāga. Dōshō (629–
700), founder of the Dharma Characteristics school in Japan, introduced this logic to his country.

50. “Eight headings” probably refers to the eight schools of Buddhism in Japan: the Dharma Analysis Treasury, Establishment of Truth, Precepts, Dharma Characteristics, Three Treatises, Flower Garland, Tendai, and True Word. According to another account, “eight headings” refers to the eight teachings: the four teachings of doctrine (the Tripitaka teaching, the connecting teaching, the specific teaching, and the perfect teaching) and the four teachings of method (the sudden teaching, the gradual teaching, the secret teaching, and the indeterminate teaching).

51. Such a path represents the three paths of earthly desires, karma, and suffering. These paths are not the way to enlightenment.

52. These beings are those who vowed to protect the practitioners of the Lotus Sutra in the “Dhāranī” chapter of the Lotus Sutra. The two sages are the bodhisattvas Medicine King and Brave Donor, and the two heavenly deities are Vaishravana and Upholder of the Nation, two of the four heavenly kings.

53. Out of compassion, one will quickly return to the realm of birth and death to help others rather than enjoying the Land of Tranquil Light.

54. Both one’s body and the lands are composed of earth, water, fire, wind, and space. The expression here indicates the oneness of one’s self and the cosmos.

55. The words “encouraging them from within, leading and guiding them from without, inner and outer complimenting one another, causes and conditions functioning in harmony” describe how a Buddha benefits all living beings. “Encouraging them from within” means that the Buddha awakens the Buddha nature of living beings that is dormant and undeveloped. “Leading and guiding them from without” means that the Buddha leads them to Buddhahood by expounding various teachings. “Inner” and “causes” represent the mind of living beings and “outer” and “conditions,” the instruction by the Buddha. The entire expression describes the function of the world of Buddhahood pervading the universe as well as the Buddha nature inherent in all living beings.

56. See three inherent potentials of the Buddha nature in Glossary.