

# THE MIDDLE WAY

ADVOCATING THE TRUE TEACHINGS OF NICHIREN THE TRUE BUDDHA

AUTUMN/WINTER

2019/2020



## Oeshiki

October 13, 1282

Oeshiki is the most important ceremony in Nichiren Shoshu. On the 12<sup>th</sup> day of the 10<sup>th</sup> month in the 5<sup>th</sup> year of *Koan* (1282), Nichiren Daishonin's body, which was the same as our bodies, passed away at the age of 61. However, the Buddha nature – the life of *Namumyōhōrengekyō* itself – never dies; it is eternal. That is why we celebrate Oeshiki, to affirm the eternal life of the Buddha.

At the time the Daishonin passed away, the 12<sup>th</sup> day of the 10<sup>th</sup> month would have actually fallen at the end of November rather than in October. It was winter, yet cherry blossoms bloomed throughout Japan. Thus, for Oeshiki we make paper cherry blossoms and place them on either side of Gohonzon.

Oeshiki is a joyous holiday. It should be celebrated with much fanfare and festivity.

*The Middle Way*

Published by

Udumbara Foundation

Website: [udumbarafoundation.org](http://udumbarafoundation.org)

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# THE COUNTERFEIT WRITINGS

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International Meeting

April 29/30, 2019

## IN THIS ISSUE

Oeshiki	1
The Counterfeit Writings	2
Creating Space Between Us	13
On Accomplishing Buddhahood	15
In This Time and Place	21
The Kalpa of Decrease	23
Making Paper Cherry Blossoms	27



**QUESTION:** By what chronological reasoning were the writings of Nichiren Daishonin<sup>1</sup>, which we believers use, chosen, arranged and cataloged? Was it by the date they were written? Or was it by having similar subject matter.

**Reverend Raidō Hirota (RH):** Among all the writings attributed to Nichiren Daishonin, some are actually forgeries. They are not Nichiren Daishonin's original letters or writings.

After Nichiren Daishonin passed away, his followers split up and organized into different groups or sects. Each of these groups insisted that they were the correct group—the orthodox sect. Each of these groups arranged and edited Nichiren's writings to make them advantageous for their organization. Thus, some writings attributed to Nichiren were actually written by someone else. These writings are included among the writings of Nichiren Daishonin

You cannot put the authentic writings of Nichiren and the counterfeit writings attributed to Nichiren on the same level. They cannot be compared or discussed equally. If you do, you will find discrepancies and contradictions. At times the years or dates are missing, but not always. Some writings include doctrine that is true and doctrine that is not true. And sometimes it is difficult to say whether a writing is true or not. The writings are all mixed up. Therefore, it is quite

doubtful that the order and cataloging by SGI<sup>2</sup> and Taisekiji<sup>3</sup> is correct. I believe there

<sup>1</sup> Nichiren Daishonin - (1222-1282) the true Buddha who realized the Law of Namumyōhōrengekyō imbedded in the Lotus Sutra and established the Law as the means by which all living beings can become enlightened.

<sup>2</sup> SGI - Soka Gakkai International – a lay organization that wrongly incorporates some of the doctrine of Nichiren Shoshu Buddhism into its own philosophy and practice.

<sup>3</sup> Taisekiji - the head temple of Nichiren Shoshu and its organization.

needs to be a correct cataloging in chronological order of Nichiren Daishonin's authentic writings. This really needs to be done.

**Question:** Are these counterfeit gosho<sup>4</sup> included in *Gosho Zenshu*<sup>5</sup>?

**RH:** Yes

**Question:** Do you know of any gosho that is clearly fake?

**RH:** The *Ongi Kuden* (The Oral Teachings of Nichiren Daishonin) is clearly fake. The *Ongi Kuden* is included in the *Gosho Zenshu*. It was not written by Nichiren Daishonin, but some believe that Nichimoku Shonin<sup>6</sup> said Nikko Shonin<sup>7</sup> wrote what they heard Nichiren say. However, there is no record or proof of this anywhere. Neither Nikko or Nichimoku mention it in any of their writings, anywhere.

**Question:** *The Dictionary of Buddhist Terms and Concepts* quotes the *Ongi Kudgen* in its definition of the basic Law of Namumyōhōrengekyō. So we cannot trust the dictionary that was published by the Soka Gakkai.

**RH:** This is true. Both Taisekiji and Soka Gakkai say the *Ongi Kuden* is the most important writing. Despite their claim, the *Ongi Kuden* scholastically is actually the most doubtful teaching attributed to Nichiren Daishonin.

The *Ongi Kuden* has condensed the teachings. It's written in very short, strong and compelling sentences. This style of writing misses the depth and thereby the meaning of the teachings. This is not how Nichiren taught. It is certainly easier to convince people with short, intense sentences or a single word. But Nichiren Daishonin's style was to teach in long, drawn out sentences, based on each person's capacity. Nichiren thought through things deeply, and took a long time to consider and explain a point. The style of the *Ongi Kuden* with its short sentences that are more like itemized bullets, is totally opposite to the Daishonin's style.

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<sup>4</sup> Gosho – The writings of Nichiren Daishonin.

<sup>5</sup> *Gosho Zenshu*, compiled and published by the Soka Gakkai in 1952, collection of writings by or attributed to Nichiren Daishonin.

<sup>6</sup> Nichimoku Shonin - Niidakyo Ajari Nichimoku (1260-1333) – 3<sup>rd</sup> High Priest of Nichiren Shoshu Buddhism who inherited the teachings of Nichiren Daishonin from Nikko Shonin.

<sup>7</sup> Nikko Shonin - Byakuren Ajari Nikko Shonin (1246-1333) – 2<sup>nd</sup> High Priest of Nichiren Shoshu Buddhism who received the transfer of the teachings directly from Nichiren Daishonin.

The reason the *Ongi Kuden* is included in *Gosho Zenshu*, and the reason Taisekeji uses it and relies on it is because it is a very convenient, simple teaching tool. But in Japan, the people who actually chant Namumyōhōrengekyō<sup>8</sup> dismiss the *Ongi Kuden*. They don't consider it important.

Two other writings included in *Gosho Zenshu* which are forgeries are the Transfer Documents which, it is said, Nichiren handed to Nikko Shonin. The two transfer documents are the *Minobu Transfer Document* and the *Ikegami Transfer Document*. They are considered like last wills in which the teachings are passed on. However, neither Nikko nor Nichimoku ever mentioned anything about receiving such documents from Nichiren. These documents were never written by Nichiren. There was never a transfer document written by Nichiren Daishonin to Nikko Shonin or to Nichimoku Shonin.

The reason for the inclusion of these transfer documents in *Gosho Zenshu* is for Taisekiji to prove the orthodoxy or authenticity of their organization to their believers and to others. But in Buddhism, rather than documentation, the most important thing is correct faith.

For me, the most important thing is that when I teach you, I quote only the true, authentic gosho. If I feel that you are going in the wrong direction, I will quickly correct you based on the correct teaching in the true gosho.

The inauthentic goshos are indicated in the contents of *Gosho Zenshu*. These counterfeit goshos have been included to make it more advantageous for the organization. However, they didn't want believers to lose faith.

**Question:** I am stunned by the counterfeit gosho listed in *Gosho Zenshu*. Goshos that I have found insightful and inspirational I have now learned are counterfeit. It's as though all that we have relied on is false. I almost don't know what to believe. So, for instance, what is misleading in the *Shoho jisso sho (True Entity of Life)* or *Shoji Ichidaiji Kechimyaku sho (Heritage of the Ultimate Law of Life)*?

**RH:** Goshos such as "The True Entity of Life (*Shoho Jisso sho*)", "The Heritage of the Ultimate Law of Life" (*Shoji Ichidaiji kechimiyaku sho*)", "*Ongi Kuden*", etc. were all studied by many Buddhist scholars.

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<sup>8</sup> Namumyōhōrengekyō - the Mystic Law which enlightens all Buddhas; the Supreme Law of life and the universe; the Buddha-nature in all things.

The Great Teacher Dengyō<sup>9</sup> (also known as Saichō), the founder of the Tendai sect in Japan, earnestly taught the teachings of The Great Teacher Tien-t'ai<sup>10</sup> which he studied in China in 804. The basis of these teachings was the Lotus Sutra<sup>11</sup>. After returning to Japan, Dengyō established Enryakuji temple and formally established the Tendai school on Mt. Hiei. In 806, the emperor of Japan converted to the Tendai religion, and from there the teachings started to spread throughout the country.

After Dengyo past away, other teachings were incorporated into the Tendai sect which then mutated into Shingon<sup>12</sup> Buddhism, Jodō<sup>13</sup> Buddhism, Zen<sup>14</sup> Buddhism, etc. Therefore, the Tendai sect transformed into a religion of many thoughts, while deviating from its Lotus Sutra foundation. Thus, during the 400 years of the Heian period (794-1185), Tendai Buddhism had developed a philosophy that professed that any teaching leads to Buddhahood since the teaching of the Lotus Sutra professes that all life has Buddha nature. This way of thinking is called "*Chuko hongaku shiso*" or "thought upon thought".

After his ordination, Nichiren Daishonin traveled to Mt. Hiei to study Tendai teachings. Nichiren soon realized that you could never reach enlightenment by practicing, for example, Namumyōhōrengekyō in the morning, and Namuamidabutsu in the evening. The Daishonin argued that all life has Buddha's life, but if you do not have "faith" in the Lotus Sutra and "practice" and live as a believer of the Lotus Sutra, you cannot realize, become enlightened to, or aware of the life of Buddha inside you.

The three goshō mentioned above give you a feeling of comfort, but they are written under the strong influence of adding "thought upon thought" (*Chuko Hongaku shiso*), and are not based on the "belief" and "practice" of Nichiren Daishonin's teachings. These goshō are supposed to be very important goshō, but Nikko and Nichimoku never mentioned anything about them. If they were so important Nikko and Nichimoku would have taught these goshō. They would have handed them down to the next generation to study and learn. But they didn't write anything about these goshō. They left nothing behind regarding them, which is very strange.

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<sup>9</sup> The Great Teacher Dengyō - (767-822)—also known as Saichō—introduced and established in Japan the true teaching of the Lotus Sutra taught by T'ien-t'ai of China.

<sup>10</sup> Great Teacher Tien-t'ai - (also known as Chih-i in Japanese) (538-597) was the founder of the T'ien-t'ai school of Buddhism in China.

<sup>11</sup> Lotus Sutra - - the highest teaching that Shakyamuni Buddha taught in the last eight years of his life. It reveals that all life has Buddha nature, and that the life of Buddha and all life is eternal.

<sup>12</sup> Shingon - teachings based on the teachings of Dainichi Buddha.

<sup>13</sup> Jodō - a school of the Pure Land teaching that believes in Amida Buddha.

<sup>14</sup> Zen - a Buddhism that does not believe in doctrinal studies, but rather that it is a "special transmission" that occurs "outside the sutras" through meditation.

Those who wrote the counterfeit gosho mixed the teachings so well that you can't tell that they are fake. However, even though they are fake, I wouldn't recommend getting rid of them 100%. But, you can't really use them as gosho. I can explain to you what is not true within these writings, but you will have difficulty discerning it, and will therefore be misled.

Don't be confused. In fact, I am not confused or discouraged. Nichiren Daishonin teaches us that there is no reason why we cannot achieve Buddhahood if we have “faith” in and “practice” the true teachings of Namuyōhōrengekyō.

### **The reasons for the counterfeit writings:**

1. To make it easier for each separate Nichiren organization to claim sectarian advantage after the death of Nichiren Daishonin.
2. Seeking their own self-interest they were inclined to use false words, and thus justify their doctrine by insisting they are authentic writings of Nichiren Daishonin.

### **The criteria for judging a forgery:**

1. It is not Nichiren Daishonin's authentic handwriting.
2. Although it never existed during the time of Nikko Shonin and Nichimoku Shonin, it appears after they have passed away like a treasured sword of an evangelist.
3. The teaching of the self-proclaimed religion is mixed with the teachings of the true sect in such a way so that it appears to have useful value by not denying everything, making the deviation in doctrine difficult to detect.
4. Different expressions, styles, and doctrines than the proven authentic teachings.
5. The deportment or attitude expressed in the letters were not possible during the time and place of Nichiren Daishonin.
6. Inconsistencies in references to literature that did not exist during Nichiren Daishonin's era.



## A LIST OF COUNTERFEIT WRITINGS

**The follow gosho appear in both  
*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin and  
The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, Vol. I***

#	GOSHO TITLE	GOSHO ZENSHU  (PAGE)	MAJOR WRITINGS OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN (VOLUME)
1	Propagation by the Wise	1148	1
2	Heritage of the Ultimate Law of Life	1336	1
3	The True Entity of Life	1358	1
4	On Practicing the Buddha's Teachings	501	1
5	The Difficulty of Sustaining Faith	1136	1
6	On the Treasure Tower	1304	1
7	Happiness in this World	1143	1
8	Letter to Niike	1439	1
9	Hell and Buddhahood	1504	2
10	Earthly Desires are Enlightenment	1116	2
11	Letter to Gijo-bo	892	2
12	The Birth Tsukimaro	1110	3
13	Thus I Heard	1057	3
14	Establishing the Four Bodhisattvas as the Object of Worship	987	3
15	Teaching, Capacity, Time and Country	438	4
16	Reply to Hoshina Goro Taro	1206	4
17	Teaching, Practice and Proof	1276	4
18	Questions and Answers on Embracing the Lotus Sutra	461	5
19	Conversation Between a Sage and Unenlightened Man, Part One and Part Two	474 487	5
20	Aspiration for the Buddha Land	955	5
21	Reply to Soya Nyudo	1025	5

22	Rebuking Slander of the Law and Eradicating Sins	1125	6
23	Reply to Yasaburō	1449	6
24	How Those Initially Aspiring to the Way Can Attain Enlightenment Through the Lotus Sutra	544	6
25	Reply to Sairenbo	1340	7
26	On Prayer	1344	7
27	The Entity of the Mystic Law	510	7
28	The Doctrine of Attaining Buddhahood in One's Present Form	1255	7

**The following goshō appear in  
*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, Vol. II***

	TITLE	<i>GOSHO ZENSHU</i> PAGE
29	Letter to Renjō	<b>150</b>
30	Nembutsu and the Hell of Incessant Suffering	<b>97</b>
31	On the Ten Worlds	<b>417</b>
32	On the Relative Superiority of the Lotus Sutra	<b>120</b>
33	On the Attainment of Buddhahood by Women	<b>470</b>
34	Letter to Hojō Tokimune	<b>169</b>
35	Letter to Hei no Saemon Mitsunori	<b>171</b>
36	Letter to Hojō Yageta	<b>172</b>
37	Letter to Doryū of Kenchō-ji	<b>173</b>
38	Letter to Ryokan of Kenchō-ji	<b>174</b>
39	Letter to the Superintendent of Daibutsu-den	<b>174</b>
40	Letter to Jufuku-ji	<b>175</b>
41	Letter to Jokomyō-ji	<b>175</b>
42	Letter to Taho-ji	<b>176</b>
43	Letter to Choraku-ji	<b>176</b>



44	Letter to My Disciples and Lay Supporters	177
45	The Two Meanings Implied in the Nembutsu Leading to the Hell of Incessant Suffering	1368
46	On the Relative Superiority of the True Word and Tendai School	134
47	The Oral Tradition Regarding the Enlightenment of Plants	1338
48	Examining the True Word School	142
49	Regarding the Birth of Kyō-ō	1123
50	Letter Sent with the Prayer Sutra	1356
51	Establishing the Correct Method of Contemplation	527
52	Cover Letter for Work Entitled “Establishing the Correct Method of Contemplation”	534
53	Understanding the Meaning of “The Object of Devotion for Observing the Mind”	972
54	The Large Carriage Drawn by a White Ox	1543
55	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	558
56	The Attainment of Buddhahood in Principle and in Its Actual Aspect	1260
57	On Receiving of the Three Great Secret Laws <i>Sandai hihō Honjōji Sho</i>	1021
58	Regarding the Little Mongol State	1284
59	On the Ten Factors	410
60	The Doctrine of Three Thousand Realms in a Single Moment of Life	412
61	An Offering of Soybeans	1210
62	Minobu Transfer Document	1600
63	Ikegami Transfer Document	1600
64	On the True Word Teaching Ranking Seventh	128
65	Diagram of the Five Periods of the Buddha’s Lifetime	612

66	Diagram of the Five Periods of the Buddha's Lifetime Teachings	618
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**The following goshō are in Goshō Zenshu  
but do not appear in any volume of  
*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, or  
The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin***

	TITLE	GOSHO ZENSHU PAGE
67	Funamori Yasaburo's Book of Forgiveness	1145
68	An Abstract on the Buddha's Guardian	30
69	得受職人功德法門抄	1340
70	Reply to Lay Nun Matsuno	1390
71	Tōtaigishō okurijō	519
72	授職灌頂口伝抄	1125
73	Hayagachi Mondo	161
74	Addendum to Nichiren's Transfer Documents	1600
75	Shaka Ichidai go ji keizu	633
76	Hon'nimiyō shō Kukunin	870
77	Hyaku Roka Shō	854
78	Ubuyu sōshō koto	878
79	Onkōkiki gaki	804
80	Ongi Kuden	701



**The following Goshō appear in  
Volume 3 of Nichiren Shū's<sup>15</sup> Collection of Nichiren's writings:  
*Showa Teihon Nichiren Shonin Ibun*  
(Authentic Writings of Nichiren Shonin  
Standardized in the Showa Period)**

	TITLE	Vol. 3 of Nichiren Shū Collection Page
81	Juno Tan Sho	6
82	Zenshin Yōgo Goshō	15
83	Daikoku Tenjin Sōden Kan Bun	16
84	大黒送状	17
85	Seijin o keizu Goshō	18
86	Daikoku Tenjin Memorial Service	19
87	Zenshū tendai-shō retsu Goshō	20
88	法華大綱抄	21
89	Shingonshū watashi kenbun	25
90	Prayer Sutras	26
91	Jōbutsu hokke kanjin kuden mi zō shō	32
92	Musa sanjin kuden shō	33
93	Tō tai Renge Sho	39
94	十八円満抄	40
95	Higan Sho	42
96	Sen Hokekyō Fuzoku Goshō	43
97	Ueno Gorō Zaemon'noji ~yōdono Sho	45
98	Honji Sankei Sho	46
99	日郎御讓状	50
100	Banpō Ichi ni Goshō	51
101	Rinjū Isshin San-gan	52
103	末法一乗行者息災延命所願成就祈禱經文	53
104	Kon ro shiko goshō	54

<sup>15</sup> Nichiren Shū – the Nichiren sect that has its head temple in Kuon-ji at Minobu, which views Shakyamuni as the true Buddha

105	Hokke honmon shūyō	44
106	Minobuyama Gosho	432
107	Haiki dono Gosho	434

**The Following Gosho Appear in  
Fuji-shūgaku-yōshū,  
(Volume 1 of Fuji Sect Study Collection  
( a Text Book published by Taisekiji ))**

	GOSHO	<i>Fuji Sect Study Collection, Vol. 1 Page</i>
108	Jōgyō shoden Sandai hiho Guketsu	45
109	Honzon Shichika no Sōjō	31
110	Juryō-hon bun soko daiji	43

**The following gosho appear in a publication that is abbreviated as 圖.  
(unable to obtain translation of this by the time of publication of this newsletter)**

	GOSHO	圖 Page
111	今此三界合文	10
112	Nihon Shingon Shu	12



# CREATING SPACE BETWEEN US

REVEREND RAIDŌ HIROTA

Quakertown, Pennsylvania

July 26, 2019

**QUESTION:** How does one deal with someone at work that you otherwise would not have in your life because the person is mean, dishonest and beyond difficult?

**RH:** Even thieves have that thought. In this world, there is no one who wishes to live as a mean, dishonest or jealous person. For the person who asked this question, there is a mismatching of personalities between him or her and the person who is considered mean and dishonest. Yes, it is a case of mismatched personalities. This can happen, and does happen with any of us. Therefore, for our part, it is important for us to keep a distance in our minds from certain people with whom we have a relationship. For example, if your personality does not match with another, even if you think you are doing a good thing, the other person may think that what you are doing is bad. When personalities don't match, the outcome is not what one expects. So, it is important that you keep a mental distance and not step into, or get caught up in the other person's life. To keep a distance is often very hard to do while you are trying to maintain a cooperative relationship such as with family members – siblings, parents, etc. But at work, you have to learn what is the best distance you need to keep between the person who does not match with you so that you can have a working relationship.

Everybody wants to be a good person. But even though you want to be a good person, you may end up doing something that is not good, such as lying or trying to cover up a bad thing you did. Unfortunately, everyone, while having a mind to do good, also has the mind to do evil. It is as the Buddha said, "every single life has the Buddha's life" – the Buddha's mind. Even the person you really don't like has the Buddha-mind. The most important thing is that you should not lose your respectful mind towards the other person, because that person has the Buddha's life as all other life has. So, you shouldn't diminish your integrity, or descend to a lower world by thinking, "I wish this person didn't exist," because that is not coming from the Buddha's mind.

**Question:** Suppose the person is close to you – your daughter, son, wife or parent? How can you approach this situation if you must have a relationship with them?

**RH:** When I say, keep your distance, I don't mean it literally. For example, if this dynamic is between a parent and a child – if the child is rebelling against the parent and rejecting everything that is coming from the parent – even though the parent doesn't know why he is being rejected by their own child, the parent will tell the child what he thinks of the child. Your distance from your child will be different than the distance that your child has with you. You can tell your child, even though you are rejecting me, I am not rejecting you. You openly tell your child how you feel about him or her. You tell your child what distance or kind of space you will have between them even though you don't know how your child will react. In any relationship, there is a space that you have established between another person. And another person will also have established a space between you. Therefore, try to maintain the mental space you set between your family member, even though you don't know how they will react to you. Just try to keep your own space – your own distance.

I have been counseling a teenage girl for a year. She is now in her senior year of high school. For the past five years, she has not spoken to her father. Yet, when she talks to me she is a very happy, cheerful person. She talks to her mother, but not at all to her father. I asked her what was her reason for not talking to him. She said she wasn't sure why, but she didn't like how he smelled, or how he dressed. She just couldn't stand him. She doesn't want to eat with him; and she won't take a bath after he has used the bathroom. Right now, there is nothing she likes about him. This is the distance she keeps between her father. On the other hand, her father, despite the distance his daughter has established between him and her, has not changed his attitude at all towards her. Even though her attitude is disrespectful, he doesn't scold her, or act negatively in any way towards her. Over the past five years, his attitude has not changed. Today, he feels exactly the same as he did five years ago. That is his distance that he has with his daughter. This is an example of the distance/space relationships I have witnessed.

**Question:** So you tolerate the negative behavior? You don't return in kind?

**RH:** The father has never betrayed his family. He has never been mean to his daughter or any other family member. He has just worked hard to support his family. He gives his daughter an allowance from the money he earns, and gives her many other things. And the daughter, herself, says she can't understand why she dislikes her father. She doesn't feel she's at a stage where she dislikes all men. She really doesn't know what it is. The relationship just developed that way. Her behavior and attitude are very

immature. But the father, who has lived many more years than she, embraces his daughter who is immature; who doesn't know anything about the life ahead of her.

So likewise, if you encounter a mean person at work, the most important thing for you is to stay calm and observe the situation with the person. Regard the person as a very sad person, and embrace the person. It will not resolve anything if you act in kind to a person who is living such a sad life. It will only cause the person to become more twisted and rebel or retaliate against you. For you to attack the person, or act in kind is not valuable. What is valuable is that you embrace the person.



## ON ACCOMPLISHING BUDDHAHOOD

REVEREND RAIDŌ HIROTA

Quakertown, Pennsylvania / July 26, 2019

International Meeting / August 15, 2019

**QUESTION: How do you reach enlightenment in Buddhism? And, what happens when you reach enlightenment?**

**RH:** Prior to the preaching of the Lotus Sutra, all religions and religious teachers, including Shakyamuni, taught that to become Buddha you had to eliminate your greed, desires, wandering, and evil mind. They taught that to be able to go to heaven you had to be pure. These teachings are extremely different from what Nichiren Daishonin taught. In fact, if I may use a metaphor here, Nichiren Daishonin said that if you wash your body, it will not stay completely clean. Every day we create new dirt and new skin. In the same way, human beings will always have a wandering mind. And, if I may refer back to the skin metaphor, if you don't wash your skin every day, your dead skin will accumulate and become dirtier and dirtier. So, it is very important that you make an effort to wash yourself every day to stay clean. Likewise, as Nichiren Daishonin explained, even though your mind is impure, you can still become Buddha by believing and practicing Namumyōhōrengekyō. Having the way of life of a believer of Namumyōhōrengekyō you will be able to attain Buddhahood, which means reaching enlightenment. But like the dead, dirty skin which needs to be washed off every day,

you really need to continue to believe and practice every day to keep the mind of Buddha.

When you reach enlightenment, and become a Buddha that is not the end. It is not the completion of everything. Even if you become Buddha, you still must make an effort every day to keep working towards enlightenment, even though you have reached it, because it doesn't mean you are going to stay there. The Lotus Sutra is the only teaching that explains that reaching enlightenment means accomplishing. Every day you are accomplishing Buddhahood.

The Virgin Mary in Christianity looks perfectly sweet, kind and serene. If you look at all the statues and pictures and depictions of her, she looks like a perfect person. However, if you are raising a child it is impossible to be a perfectly calm and kind person all the time. When your child does something really bad, you have to scold or discipline the child. Or, occasionally when you are doing housework you might feel tired after cleaning, cooking and doing all the household chores. This can most likely apply to the Virgin Mary as well. Even though she is depicted as a very sweet person, in reality she probably also had moments of not being kind. It just goes against the grain of human nature. The reality of our life is not like that.

It is important to have a goal of being a kind person, and to make an effort to be so. But to think that once you have achieved that you will stay there is a different matter. You have to keep aspiring and making an effort towards your goal.

**Question:** Could you please explain *Ayuiotchiji* which appears in the Juryo (16<sup>th</sup>) chapter of the Lotus Sutra. In English, it means "never returning." [Also, translated in *The Threefold Lotus Sutra* as "irrevocable"; "not sliding back"; "going straight to Nirvana"<sup>16</sup>.]

**RH:** Before he taught the Lotus Sutra, Shakyamuni taught that once you rid yourself of a wandering mind and evil tendencies – this would be comparable to your dead skin mentioned above – and become completely clean or pure, you will reach enlightenment. This is *Ayuiotchiji*. Initially Nichiren Daishonin taught this way too. But soon he realized this would not lead to true enlightenment, because it would not lead to enlightenment for all living things. The Daishonin realized that all life can become Buddha, even a person with an evil mindset. As I have mentioned at other times, there are Ten Worlds inside our minds regularly circulating. The thinking that if you become a Buddha when you are alive, you will continue to be a Buddha after death is wrong. This thinking is wrong because it suggests that once you achieve Buddhahood your mind will not

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<sup>16</sup> Nirvana - enlightenment



change—not circulate through the Ten Worlds. That would negate the Ten Worlds – that is they would no longer exist. Thus, Nichiren Daishonin changed from Shakyamuni’s teaching to the True Teachings of Buddhism.

In “Reply to Soya Nyudo” Nichiren Daishonin wrote, “Be careful not to be swayed by various thoughts; with single-minded resolve, you should aspire to the pure land of Eagle Peak. ‘The Rokuharmitsu Sutra’ states that one should become the master of his mind rather than let his mind master him.”<sup>17</sup> Therefore, you must become your own teacher to be able to understand your life and your mind more objectively. But if your mind is your teacher, and you have a negative, corrupt or wrong way of thinking such as, thinking you are the most important person, the most correct person, the most righteous person, your doubtful mind will sway your way of life, and your way of life will be steered or directed by your mind. You can’t just be controlled by your doubtful mind, your desires, or your pride or self-confidence. That is not the way you should be living. You should set Namumyōhōrengekyō as the pilot to guide your life.

When you ask, what happens when you reach enlightenment, that is not something that can be defined or described. One cannot say you will be this way or that; or that you will have this experience of that. The most important thing is that you should be able to see the mind of Namumyōhōrengekyō more objectively in order to understand yourself. By putting Namumyōhōrengekyō in the center of your mind, you are able to reach enlightenment in Buddhism. That is the meaning of the passage from “Reply to Soya Nyudo.”

**Question: How do I recognize when one is receiving or has received Buddha wisdom, versus information coming from one’s own ego mind.**

**RH:** At the center of the human mind is pride. With pride at the center of our minds desires and emotions breed. As a result, we start putting ourselves at the center of everything. And because we believe that “I am right,” we try to force our way of thinking on others, or we start discriminating against others. This is how the average human mind works. The lives of human beings function based on this way of thinking and this way of life.

Usually human beings tend to be selfish – putting one’s self in the center and acting selfishly. This is normal human behavior. But the teachings of Nichiren Daishonin explain that all lives are equal. Even though you, as a human being, have pride, and cannot exist without pride, you must come to realize that all life is equal and every life has the life of Buddha within.

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<sup>17</sup> *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, Vol. Five, p.164

You are very important; but others are also important. You might think that you are number one, while others might also think that they are number one. Therefore, even though you might think that you are always right, you also have to be objective and view others in the same way you view yourself because, as all life is equal, others are equal to you.

Believers with faith in Nichiren Daishonin's teachings must make an effort to not have the feeling of discrimination or exclusion. You must make an effort not to have such feelings.

As to the question of how do we recognize when one is receiving Buddha wisdom versus information from one's own ego, I can say for me I recognize what I am feeling. For example, when there is someone I really dislike, maybe that person might feel the same way towards me. So, when I or anyone feels this way, we have to observe ourselves very objectively. If we do this, then we will start to realize that everybody has the life of Buddha inside, and therefore, everyone can become enlightened. It's not only me, or you – it's everyone. When I chant, I start to wake up and, in that moment, realize that me and everyone has Buddha nature and can become enlightened, my mind opens to this way of thinking. That moment when you wake up and realize this is a very important and precious moment. And I want everyone to experience it and cherish and nurture this special feeling.

When I was much younger and a new believer in this Buddhism, when my faith was not as strong as it is now, I wrote down all the things that I wished for while I was chanting Odaimoku. And while I chanted I thought about those things. But the more I learned about Nichiren Daishonin and his teachings, I stopped chanting for wishes and desires. I realized when you wish for something you are putting yourself in the center. The conscious thought of wishing is selfish because you are putting yourself in the center while you chant. Consequently, I started to let Namumyōhōrengekyō be my center. Of course, when you interact with another person, you may have a strategy, or at other times unexpected things arise, or you yourself take an unexpected action. There are many different dynamics at play when you interact with others. So it is important that to not only act upon your own wish, but that you put Namumyōhōrengekyō in the center. However, you shouldn't only depend on Namumyōhōrengekyō in the center, you should at the same time go with the flow of the circumstance at the moment. This is how I live my faith. I don't have any wishes while I'm chanting.

**Question:** If you don't chant for your wishes, what do you think about when you chant?

**RH:** What do I think about? I just let Namumyōhōrengekyō let things happen. That is slightly different than what I am thinking. Sometimes I will think something is right, but maybe it's wrong. And since I can't really judge if it is right or wrong, I have to let the Law of Namumyōhōrengekyō decide, or show me. However, sometimes I realize that even though I think I'm right, I make a mistake in my daily life. And I also realize that if I become too confident about myself, that is not right. So, I've decided to let Namumyōhōrengekyō let things happen. Before I make a judgement, before I decide something, I let Namumyōhōrengekyō decide or show me. I've changed myself by not having or making my own wishes, but I try to make an effort based on where I am and what I can do. This is how I have changed from wishing something to happen. But I must admit, up until the time I changed I was wishing for a certain person to practice this Buddhism and become enlightened. That hasn't happened. If he practices and becomes enlightened or not is not something I have the power to make happen. It's not something I can decide. I have to just let Namumyōhōrengekyō decide. If you think just because your pray things will happen, that is wrong. If your wish is not right, or you're wishing for the wrong thing, things won't happen. That is why I am letting Namumyōhōrengekyō decide. And as I am explaining this, I realize this is very difficult to explain.

Namumyōhōrengekyō actually understands your wishes even if you don't make a wish. From very small wishes to great ones. All kinds of wishes. Even without asking. For example, what we wish for could be wrong. And if we are wishing for the wrong thing, it is better not to make that wish happen. Even if we are thinking very strongly – praying very hard to make a wish happen, from the perspective of Namumyōhōrengekyō we are probably missing something more important. That is why I let Namumyōhōrengekyō let things happen on its own.

Because all you believers have had faith for a long time, I think it's time for you to graduate from the mindset of wishing for this or wishing for that. It's time for you to stop practicing that kind of faith.

**Question:** What is the True Entity of all phenomena? How do I use it in my practice?

**RH:** In Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism there is a term *shoho jisso*. *Shoho* = all laws - worldly, universal in every direction. *Jisso* = true, center. Thus, *shoho jisso* means the true Law, or the Law at the center of all laws. Namumyōhōrengekyō is the True Law: the Law at the center of all laws.

What is the true entity of all phenomena? Well, there are all kinds of laws and all kinds of occurrences, all kinds of marvels, incidents and events happening in the world. But no matter what is happening, or whatever exists, Namumyōhōrengekyō is at the center of it. Every kind of life has Namumyōhōrengekyō in the center. This is the meaning of *shoho jisso*. This is what is written in the Lotus Sutra.

The center of you and the center of everything else is the Buddha life of Namumyōhōrengekyō. You have to strive to see this Buddha life at the center of everything, including your own life. This is how you use it in your practice. You have to strive to understand it and see it in yourself and in all things.

**QUESTION:** Since the Gohonzon mandala is a representation of the Ceremony in the Air, the Three Thousand Realms, and all the forces of life, etc., and since it is within my 5-foot body, how do I connect to it consciously when I chant Diamoko? Is it a feeling of joy when I'm in the state of Buddhahood, or is it a conscious conviction in my mind that I am an entity of the Gohonzon?

**RH:** The teachings of Nichiren Daishonin include everything. The term *shoho jisso* encompasses everything, and pertains to everything. It is not limited to just ourselves. We may think our body – our height, weight, etc. – is something we own or something that has to do only with ourselves. But as I have mentioned before, there are all kinds of life and all lives are connected. It's not limited to what you own or what you have. Animals, plants, all things breathing in and out, including ourselves which breathe in and out, breathing the same air, drinking the same water – are connected to each other. This is how our lives are all connected. We just have to come to realize the connection of all lives, and that all lives are inside ourselves because life is all one entity.

*Muryo muhen* is a concept in Nichiren Daishonin's teachings meaning infinite and boundless. This means that our life does not only exist on this earth – in this plane. Its existence is infinite and boundless, and cannot be measured. In other words, our life is immeasurable. Our life exists from the past to the future. And all life is connected from the past to the future. This means there is no beginning and no ending. This is called *mushi mushu*. *Mushi mushu* is a very basic way of thinking out time and space in Buddhism. Time and space have no beginning and no end. This is one of the fundamental difference between Buddhism and other religions such as Christianity, Islam and Judaism. These other religions profess that in the beginning God created everything. By contrast, in the Buddhist way of thinking, with no beginning and no end, all life existed and was connected before a God created anything. Even if God proclaims the end of the world, from the Buddhist perspective even if this earth is destroyed, life will continue to exist throughout the universe.

From a scientific perspective, the universe was created with a Big Bang. But from the Buddhist perspective something existed before the Big Bang because a bang cannot come out of a void. There had to have been something that caused the bang. What banged in to what? Therefore, life is eternal. There is no beginning. A much bigger existence than a galaxy or one universe is exactly what *shoho jisso* means. Here, in this ultimate reality, is where life is connected to all lives. Because you are connected to all life is why you exist. This is the way of teaching and explaining Namumyōhōrengekyō

**Question:** When you say all life drinks the same water and breathes the same air, and all life being connected, are you describing the Jungian collective consciousness?

**RH:** The connectivity I speak of is not only a physical or mental connection, or even a spiritual connection. It includes everything: a physical, spiritual, cultural, psychological connection throughout endless time. It is not limited to time and place. Water, food, air, are merely examples. This connectivity includes everything. That is what connection or connectivity means in Buddhism This means that all lives are connected, and each life is all life. This is a basic Buddhist teaching.



## IN THIS TIME AND PLACE A BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE

September 2019

Chaos. That is the word that characterizes the state of the world today.

As citizens of this world, should we hate others because others look different from ourselves, hold different opinions, believe in different faiths, live in different countries, or come from different backgrounds and different circumstances? Aren't these differences the wonderful, natural tapestry of this diverse planet?

Namumyōhōrengekyō. That is the name of the Buddha nature in every living thing. There is not a different Buddha nature for me and another for you. Or a different one for able-bodied people and a different one for people of special needs. Not a different Buddha nature for Buddhists, Christians, Moslems, Jews, Hindu, etc. Nor a different one for Central Americans, North Americans, Africans, Asians, Europeans, etc. and a different one for me or you. There's not a different one for plants and animals,

water and air; nor a different Buddha nature for the sun, the stars, or the entire universe. There is only one Buddha nature—*Namumyōhōrengekyō*. What that means is we are all related.

Because everyone has Buddha nature, and therefore all have the same potential to become Buddha, when you kill someone, you are killing the Buddha. When you disparage someone, you are disparaging the Buddha. When you have contempt for someone, you are holding contempt for the Buddha.

*Namumyōhōrengekyō* is a Buddhist Law. It is the Mystic Law of Cause and Effect. In addition to having this Buddha nature, all life is equal and eternal. This is the teaching of Buddhism. It doesn't matter if you believe or not, it is just THE FACT of life. No one is above this Law; no one is exempt from this Law's workings. Our lives are determined by causes – thoughts, words and deeds – we make. This reservoir of causes is what is known as *karma*. On a daily basis, we continuously create good and bad *karma* for ourselves. The Buddha said, "If you want to understand the causes that existed in the past, look at the results as they are manifested in the present. And if you want to understand what results will be manifested in the future, look at the causes that exist in the present."<sup>18</sup> This means, it is possible that in the next life, any one of us could have the same experience as migrants fleeing desperate conditions, whether it's due to climate change, or violence, in Central America, the Middle East, Africa or elsewhere.

". . .If the minds of the people are impure," the Buddha wrote, "their land is also impure, but if their minds are pure, so is their land. There are not two lands, pure and impure in themselves. The difference lies solely in the good or evil of our minds."<sup>19</sup>

Buddhism views all life as basically good, because all life possesses Buddha nature. But also contained within all life are the worlds of Hell, Greed, Animality and Anger. As human beings, we have a choice between expressing our Buddha mind and heart, or expressing our lower natures. At present, the baser, destructive natures in humankind are increasing in dominance, causing us to lose our pure minds and pure land.

It should be mandatory for world leaders to spend time in the International Space Station. If they looked at planet earth from that vantage point they would not see any borders. Instead, wouldn't they be awed by all this life sharing this one planet in an uninhabited solar system suspended in infinite space? Thereby, wouldn't they come to realize that we, in this time and place, are all related, and must care for and take care of this planet and each other?

Nonetheless, it is up to each one of us to seriously consider our actions, our words, and our thoughts because they are permanently recorded as our *karma*. Our individual

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<sup>18</sup> *The Opening of the Eyes, Part 2, The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, Vol. Two, p. 197*

<sup>19</sup> *On Attaining Buddhahood, The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, Vol. One p.4,*

*karma* and our collective *karma* not only affect ourselves, our communities, our country and our people, but also determine the viability of our planet.



## GOSHO SELECTION

### THE KALPA OF DECREASE<sup>20</sup>

The kalpa of decrease<sup>21</sup> has its origin in the human mind. As the poisons of greed, anger and stupidity gradually intensify, the life span of human beings accordingly decreases and their stature diminishes.

In the lands of China and Japan, before the introduction of Buddhism, the outer classics<sup>22</sup> of the Three Rulers,<sup>23</sup> the Five Emperors<sup>24</sup> and the Three Sages<sup>25</sup> were used to order the minds of the people and govern the world. However, as the people's minds gradually diminished in good and grew accomplished in evil, the wisdom of the outer classics, being shallow, could no longer restrain the people's offenses, for their evil was deep. Because it became impossible to govern the world by means of the outer classics, the Buddhist sutras were gradually introduced, and when they were used in governing, the world was restored to tranquility. This was solely because the wisdom of Buddhism fully elucidates the nature of the people's minds.

What are called "outer writings" in the present day differ essentially from the original outer classics. When Buddhism was introduced, the outer classics and the

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<sup>20</sup> *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, Vol. Six, p. 139

<sup>21</sup> Kalpa of decrease: A period in which the human life span diminishes. While the world is in the stage of continuance, the life span of human beings is said to undergo a repeated cycle of change, increasing one year every hundred years until it reaches eighty thousand and then decreasing at the same rate.

<sup>22</sup> Outer classics: A general term for non-Buddhist scriptures, particularly those of Confucianism and Taoism. The term is used in contrast to "inner scriptures," which denotes the Buddhist writings.

<sup>23</sup> Three Rulers: Fu Hsi, Shen Nung and Huang Ti, legendary rulers of ancient China said to have realized model governments. The books recording their deeds, known as the Three Records, are said to date from their time.

<sup>24</sup> Five Emperors: Shao Hao, Chuan Hsu, Ti Kao, T'ang Yao and Yu Shun, said to have reigned after the Three Rulers. The books of the five emperors, known as the Five Canons, are said to date from their time.

<sup>25</sup> Three sages: Three wise men of ancient China. The Maka Shikan, vol. 6, lists them as Lao Tzu, Confucius, and Yen Hui, Confucius' foremost disciple.

Buddhist scriptures vied with one another. But because in time the outer classics were defeated and the ruler and the people ceased to employ them, adherents of the outer classics became followers of the inner scriptures, and their former confrontation came to an end. In the meantime, however, the adherents of the outer classics extracted the heart of the inner scriptures, thus increasing their wisdom and incorporated it into the outer classics. Foolish rulers suppose [that such wisdom derives from] the excellence of these outer writings.

Furthermore, as good wisdom gradually diminished and evil wisdom came to dominate people's minds, though men tried to govern society by means of the Buddhist scriptures, when they employed the wisdom of the Hinayana sutras, the world was not at peace. At such times, the Mahayana sutras were spread and used in governing, the world was somewhat restored to order. After this, because the wisdom of the Mahayana teachings in turn became inadequate, the wisdom of the sutra of the one vehicle<sup>26</sup> was brought forth and used to govern the world, and for a brief period, the world was at peace.

The present age is such that neither the outer classics, the Hinayana sutras, the Mahayana sutras, nor the one vehicle of the Lotus Sutra has any effect. The reason for this is that the intensity of the greed, anger and stupidity in people's minds rivals the Greatly Enlightened World-Honored One's superiority in great good. To illustrate, a dog, in the keenness of its sense of smell, is superior to a man; in picking up the scent of birds and beasts, its nose is not inferior to a great saint's supernatural power of smell.<sup>27</sup> The owl's keenness of hearing, the kite's sharpness of eye, the sparrow's lightness of tongue, and the dragon's magnificence of body--all of these surpass even the faculties of a wise man. In this way, the extremity of greed, anger and stupidity in people's minds in the impure world of the latter age is beyond the power of any sage or worthy man to control.

This is because, although the Buddha cured greed with the medicine of the meditation on the vileness of the body, healed anger with the meditation on compassion for all, and treated stupidity with the meditation on the twelve-linked chain of dependent origination,<sup>28</sup> to teach these doctrines now merely makes people worse and compounds their greed, anger and stupidity. To illustrate, fire is extinguished by water, and evil is defeated by good. However, if water is cast on fire that has emerged from

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<sup>26</sup> Sutra of the one vehicle: The Lotus Sutra.

<sup>27</sup> This refers to the supernatural abilities acquired by the bodhisattvas of Hinayana Buddhism.

<sup>28</sup> These are three of five meditations for quieting the mind and ridding it of error. The other two are a breath-counting meditation and a meditation on analysis of the elements.



water, it will on the contrary have an effect like that of oil, producing an even greater conflagration.

Now in this latter, evil age, great evil arises less from secular wrongdoing than with respect to the doctrines of the religious world. Because people today are unaware of this and endeavor to cultivate roots of merit, the world declines all the more. To give support to the priests of the Tendai, Shingon and other sects of today may outwardly appear to be an act of merit, but in reality it is a great evil surpassing even the five cardinal sins and the ten evil acts.<sup>29</sup>

For this reason, if there should be a wise man in the world with wisdom like that of the Greatly Enlightened World-Honored One, who, so as to restore the world to order, meets with a wise ruler like King Sen'yo;<sup>30</sup> and if together they put an end altogether to these acts of "goodness" and commit the great "evil" of censuring, banishing, cutting off alms to or even beheading those people of the eight sects<sup>31</sup> who are thought to be men of wisdom, then the world will surely be pacified to some extent.

This is explained in the first volume of the Lotus Sutra where it says: "The true aspect of all phenomena can only be understood and shared between Buddhas."<sup>32</sup> In the phrase "consistency from beginning to end," "beginning" indicates the root of evil and the root of good, while "end" indicates the out-come of evil and the outcome of good. One who is

thoroughly awakened to the nature of good and evil from their roots to their branches and leaves is called a Buddha. T'ien-t'ai states, "Life at each moment is endowed with the Ten Worlds."<sup>33</sup> Chang-an states: "The Buddha regarded his doctrine as the ultimate reason [for his advent]. How could it ever be easy to understand?"<sup>34</sup> Miao-lo adds that

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<sup>29</sup> Ten evil acts: Evils condemned in the Kushi Ron. They are killing, stealing, unlawful sexual intercourse, lying, flattery (or random and irresponsible speech), defaming, duplicity, greed, anger and stupidity, or the holding of mistaken views.

<sup>30</sup> Sen'yo: The name of Shakyamuni in a previous existence. According to the Nirvana Sutra, King Sen'yo was a ruler of a great kingdom who had faith in the Mahayana sutras. When five hundred Brahmans slandered the Mahayana teachings, he had them put to death. Because of this act, the sutra says, he was never thereafter in danger of falling into hell. In his "Rissho Ankoku Ron," Nichiren Daishonin suggests that this story should not be taken literally as an endorsement of the execution of slanderers; instead, he interprets it as a comment on the gravity of slander and the importance of protecting the True Law.

<sup>31</sup> The eight sects are the Kushi, Jijitsu, Ritsu, Hosso, Sanron and Kegon sects, which flourished in the Nara period (710-794), and the Tendai and Shingon sects, which rose to prominence in the Heian period (794-1185). The nine sects comprise these eight plus the Zen sect, which appeared in the early part of the Kamakura period (1185-1333). The ten sects are those nine plus the Jodo sect, which also spread during the Kamakura period.

<sup>32</sup> Lotus Sutra, chap.2. The phrase "consistency from beginning to end," mentioned subsequently, concludes the passage describing the "true aspect of all phenomena."

<sup>33</sup> *Maka Shikan*, vol. 5.

<sup>34</sup> *Kanjin Ron Jo*, vol. 4.

"this is the ultimate revelation of the final and supreme truth."<sup>35</sup> The Lotus Sutra states: "[And whatever he preaches according to his understanding] will never contradict the truth."<sup>36</sup> And T'ien-t'ai interprets this to mean that "no affairs of life or work are in any way different from the ultimate reality."<sup>37</sup> A person of wisdom is not one who practices Buddhism apart from worldly affairs but, rather, one who thoroughly understands the principles by which the world may be governed.

When the Yin dynasty became corrupt and the people were suffering, T'ai-kung Wang<sup>38</sup> appeared in the world and beheaded King Chou of the Yin, bringing an end to the people's anguish. When the second ruler [of the Ch'in dynasty]<sup>39</sup> caused the people to taste bitterness, Chang Liang appeared and restored order to the world, enabling them to know sweetness. Though these men lived before the introduction of Buddhism, they helped the people as emissaries of Lord Shakyamuni. And though the adherents of the outer classics were unaware of it, the wisdom of such men incorporated in its essence the wisdom of Buddhism.

In the world today, at the time of the great earthquake of the Shoka era<sup>40</sup> or at the time of the great comet of the Bun'ei era,<sup>41</sup> had there been a ruler of outstanding wisdom, he would surely have heeded me, Nichiren. Or, even if he did not do so then, when strife broke out within the ruling clan in the ninth year of Bun'ei (1272) or when the Mongols attacked in the eleventh year of the same era (1274), he ought to have welcomed me as King Wen of the Chou dynasty welcomed T'ai-kung Wang, or sought me out as King Kao-ting<sup>42</sup> of the Yin dynasty sought out Fu Yueh from seven ri<sup>43</sup> afar. Thus it is said that the sun and moon are not treasures to one who is blind, and that a

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<sup>35</sup> *Maka Shikan Bugyoden Guketsu*, vol. 5.

<sup>36</sup> Lotus Sutra, chap. 19.

<sup>37</sup> Hokke Gengi, vol. 1.

<sup>38</sup> T'ai-kung Wang: Teacher and advisor to Hsi Po, the Earl of the West (later known as King Wen of the Chou dynasty). His strategies are said to have enabled Hsi Po's son, King Wu, to overthrow the Yin dynasty and establish the Chou dynasty.

<sup>39</sup> Second ruler: Hu-hai (229-207 BC), the second emperor of the Ch'in dynasty. A puppet ruler, he was controlled by the eunuch official Chao Kao, who eventually forced him to commit suicide to further his own ambitions. Chang Liang (d.168 BC), mentioned subsequently, was a statesman and strategist who assisted Liu Pang in the overthrow of the Ch'in and the establishment of the Han dynasty.

<sup>40</sup> This refers to a major earthquake that leveled much of Kamakura in the eighth month, 1257.

<sup>41</sup> This refers to a large comet that appeared in the sky from the sixth through the eighth month of 1264 and was widely interpreted as an evil omen.

<sup>42</sup> Kao-ting: The twenty-second ruler of the Yin dynasty. According to the *Shih Chi* (Records of the Historian), Kao-ting sought to revive the declining Yin dynasty but could find no able advisers. At length he learned of Fu Yueh, who had been living in retirement, and appointed him his minister. With Fu Yueh's counsel, he was able to revive the dynasty.

<sup>43</sup> Ri: Unit of linear measurement. A ri was originally defined as 6 *cho* (0.65 km), but from the Heian period (794-1185) on, it was commonly understood as 36 *cho* (3.93 km).

worthy man will be hated by a foolish ruler. Rather than go on at length, I will stop here. The heart of the Lotus Sutra is just as I have explained. You should not think of it as otherwise. Great evil portends the arrival of great good. If all of Jambudvīpa should be thrown into chaos, there can be no doubt that [this sutra] will "spread widely throughout the continent of Jambudvīpa."<sup>44</sup>

I am sending Daishin Ajari<sup>45</sup> to pay a visit to the grave of the late Rokuro Nyuko.<sup>46</sup> In the past, I had thought that if there were people in the Kanto region<sup>47</sup> who had heard this teaching, I would go to their graves myself and recite the *Jigage*.<sup>48</sup> However, if I were to go there under the present circumstances, the entire province would hear of it within the day, and it would probably cause an uproar as far away as Kamakura. And, even though they may have steadfast faith, where-ever I go, the people will have to fear the eyes of others.

Because I have not yet been to visit, I had thought how greatly the late Rokuro Nyudo must be longing to see me, and that there must be something that I could do. Therefore, I have first of all sent a disciple to recite the *Jigage* before the grave. I ask for your understanding on this point.

With my deep respect.

1276

*Happy Oeshiki !*

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<sup>44</sup> The Daishonin alludes here to a passage from chap. 28 of the Lotus Sutra, which states, "After the Buddha's death, I [Bodhisattva Fugen] will spread this sutra widely throughout the entire continent of Jambudvīpa."

<sup>45</sup> Daishin Ajari (dates unknown): A priest-disciple of Nichiren Daishonin who was born in Shimosa Province and is thought to have been a relative of the Soya family.

<sup>46</sup> Rokuro Nyudo: Thought to be Takahashi Rokuro Hyoe Nyudo, a disciple of the Daishonin who was a leading figure among the lay believers in the Fuji area. He was converted to the Daishonin's Buddhism by Nikko Shonin, who was his wife's nephew.

<sup>47</sup> Kanto region: The eastern part of Japan.

<sup>48</sup> *Jigage*: The verse section that concludes the *Juryo* (16th) chapter of the Lotus Sutra. It restates the teaching of the eternity of the Buddha's life revealed in the preceding prose section of the same chapter. The verse (Jap. *ge*) section begins with the words *ji ga toku burrai* ("Since I attained Buddhahood").

# How to Make Simple Cherry Blossoms

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## SUPPLIES:

- Tissue paper
- Scissors
- Glue
- Branches or dowels

## INSTRUCTIONS:

1-Stack several pieces of tissue on top of each other and cut out a flower shape. It does not need to be perfect! Mine were about 2 1/2" across and had five petals, but it doesn't really matter that much. I wanted to do two colors, but you can just do one. And because I know a few of you are bound to notice. . . yes, my light pink paper has words on it. But it's all I had and I knew once it was all scrunched up they wouldn't show. Which they don't. Thank goodness.



2-For two-toned cherry blossoms, stack two flowers on top of each other with the petals not matched up.



3-Now just scrunch the flower petals up and twist the whole thing together at the bottom.



I thought it would be more realistic if there were variations in the blossoms, so I made some light pink, some dark pink, and some with the two colors together. To make smaller blossoms like the two on the left, just scrunch up one flower at a time.



4-Now it's time to glue them to your branches. I used branches that I pruned from our apple tree. If you don't have your own tree, check with your neighbors. You should be able to find some unwanted branches this time of year.

I think it looks best to apply the blossoms to the natural buds of the branch. Just add a tiny dab of hot glue, and press your blossom on.



Continue adding blossoms to all sides of your branches.



5-When you are all finished, just stick them in the container of your choice. I added some wheat at the bottom to hold them in place.

