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Chapter 5

Tanaka Chigaku on "The Age of Unification"

Jacqueline I. Stone

TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

The medieval Japanese Buddhist teacher Nichiren (1222–1282) taught that the spread of faith in the *Lotus Sūtra* would one day transform this world into an ideal buddha-land. Several contemporary Buddhist movements deriving from the *Lotus Sūtra* and Nichiren's teachings have drawn on his vision in developing programs of social engagement: Sōka Gakkai and Risshō Kōseikai, two of Japan's largest lay Buddhist movements, are NGO members of the United Nations and are active in peace education and relief and welfare work; Sōka Gakkai also engages in politics at national and local levels. Nipponzan Myōhōji, a small Nichiren Buddhist monastic order known for its stance of absolute nonviolence, is especially committed to the antinuclear movement. These activities represent modern versions of engaged bodhisattva practice and are shared by other Buddhists, but for members of these particular groups, such endeavors have specific roots in the *Lotus Sūtra* and in Nichiren's teaching that the pure land is to be manifested here in this world.

This chapter introduces Tanaka Chigaku (1861–1939),¹ arguably the first person to put forth a modern *Lotus Sūtra*-based vision of a this-worldly pure land. Tanaka presents scholars of modern Buddhism with a complex interpretive challenge. On one hand, he was a learned and committed devotee who strove tirelessly to establish an active lay Buddhism and reform his inherited Nichiren tradition to meet modern needs. Yet at the same time, his concept of the buddha-land foregrounded elements that many Buddhists today, Nichiren Buddhists included, would strongly repudiate: Tanaka denied the legitimacy of other religions; argued for a merger of the *Lotus Sūtra* and government; and invested his own country, Japan, with a sacred status, elevating it above

all other nations and ultimately supporting its imperialistic ventures. The question of how these troubling elements could coexist with universalistic Buddhist principles offers important insights into the historical and hermeneutical processes by which representations of religious ideals, including ideal buddha-lands, take shape.

Who Was Tanaka Chigaku?

Tanaka was born into a staunch Nichiren Buddhist family, just a few years before the Meiji Restoration (1868) that marked Japan's transition from rule by hereditary shoguns to a modern nation-state. As a young man training for the Nichiren Buddhist priesthood, Tanaka was frustrated with the liberal stance of his seminary instruction. Buddhism in the late nineteenth century was under pressure from modernizing forces. Confucian and Shinto ideologues active in the new Meiji regime (1868–1912) condemned it as a superstitious holdover from the past, a drain on public resources, and a harmful foreign influence that had suppressed the native Japanese spirit. Buddhist leaders of all sects rallied to the challenge, seeking to reformulate their traditions in ways suited to a modernizing Japan. Many saw Buddhism's best hope of survival in interdenominational cooperation. They included leaders of the Nichiren sect, or Nichirenshū, who downplayed Nichiren's exclusivistic claim that only the *Lotus Sūtra* leads to liberation in the present, Final Dharma age. Tanaka, however, saw this accommodation as a betrayal of Nichiren's teaching. Eventually he abandoned his priestly training to become a lay evangelist, initiating a movement he called Nichirenshugi (Nichirenism). Nichirenshugi was not the traditional Nichiren Buddhism centered on temples and priests but a lay movement engaged with practical social realities. In 1880, Tanaka founded the Rengekai (Lotus Blossom Society) to propagate Nichirenshugi ideals. It was reorganized in 1884 as the Risshō Ankokukai (after Nichiren's famous treatise *Risshō ankoku ron*, Establishing the true Dharma and bringing peace to the land), and again in 1914 as the Kokuchūkai, or Pillar of the Nation Society (after Nichiren's words, "I will be the pillar of Japan"), as it is still called today. Tanaka called for a return to *shakubuku*, an aggressive mode of proselytizing that Nichiren had employed in asserting the unique efficacy of the *Lotus Sūtra*. The clause guaranteeing religious freedom included in the Meiji Constitution (promulgated 1889) had removed earlier strictures on proselytizing imposed by the preceding Tokugawa regime (1603–1868). For Tanaka, this made his own historical moment the ideal time to realize Nichiren's vision of worldwide propagation.

The Kokuchūkai never had more than about seven thousand members.² Nonetheless, Tanaka's influence far exceeded the modest size of his organization. Scholarly treatments of Tanaka often indicate the range of his appeal by listing his more famous associates, both committed followers and others who came for varying lengths of time within his orbit and drew on his message in differing ways. These included the scholar Anesaki Masaharu (1873–1949), instrumental in establishing the academic study of religion in Japan; the poet and author of children's literature Miyazawa Kenji (1896–1933); the literary figure Takayama Chōgyū (1871–1902); the Buddhist socialist and youth leader Seno'o Girō (1890–1961); Tanaka's close disciple General Ishiwara Kanji (1889–1949), operations officer of the Kwandung Army, whose role in the so-called Mukden Incident of 1931 committed Japan to armed invasion of Manchuria; and Inoue Nisshō (1886–1967), would-be radical social reformer and founder of the terrorist organization Ketsumeidan (League of blood). Tanaka's influence, however, went beyond such well-known individuals and helped shape the very contours of modern Japanese lay Buddhism. Tanaka struggled against perceptions of Buddhism as being chiefly for the ritual care of the dead. He initiated Buddhist wedding ceremonies and also devised rites for other major life passages.³ Features of his organizational style influenced several subsequent lay Buddhist movements. Tanaka mobilized the resources of youth and women in his organization and made innovative use of print and visual media. But perhaps his most durable legacy was his conviction that, just as Nichiren had taught, this world could become the buddha-land, not as a distant ideal, but as a concrete, foreseeable reality. Viewed in retrospect, some aspects of his thinking, such as his militant nationalism, appear disturbingly flawed. But the ideal of lay bodhisattva practice and the goal of realizing the buddha-land that he espoused remain central to a number of contemporary Nichiren Buddhist movements, although now generally revised in accord with pacifist and universalist ideals.

Background in the *Lotus Sūtra* and Nichiren

Tanaka's vision drew on a long tradition of *Lotus Sūtra* commentary and the teachings of Nichiren. The *Lotus* is a Mahāyāna scripture especially valued in East Asia for its teaching that all shall become buddhas. It presents itself as the Buddha's final statement; all his other, previous teachings were merely his "skillful means" to lead persons of differing religious capacities to the one buddha vehicle. Not only the Buddha's

teachings but the great events of his life, including his awakening under the bodhi tree and his entry into final nirvana, were provisional teaching devices intended to guide the ignorant. In reality, Śākyamuni Buddha says, he has been awakened since the inconceivably distant past and ever since then has dwelt here in this world. Though deluded beings experience this world as a place of suffering, in reality it is the realm of the primordially awakened Buddha. East Asian exegetes developed this idea in terms of the non-duality of living beings and the land they inhabit (*eshō funi*): When one awakens to the buddhahood within oneself, one's surrounding world or environment becomes the pure land. Nichiren would greatly develop the implications of this idea.

Nichiren had originally trained in the Tendai (Tiantai) school, which accords the *Lotus Sūtra* a central place among the Buddha's teachings. Like many of his contemporaries, he believed himself to be living in the Final Dharma age (*mappō*), a period of decline said to have begun some two thousand years after the death of the historical Buddha, when human delusions are profound, misunderstandings of the Buddhist teachings proliferate, and awakening becomes increasingly difficult to achieve. In this age, Nichiren taught, only the *Lotus Sūtra* was profound and powerful enough to lead all beings to liberation; indeed, the Buddha had left it precisely for this evil era. Nichiren advocated a form of *Lotus* practice that, while grounded in sophisticated Mahāyāna teachings of non-duality, was at the same time accessible to all persons: chanting the *daimoku* or title of the sutra in the formula *Namu Myōhō-renge-kyō*.⁴ For him, the title of the *Lotus* encapsulated the whole of the primordial Buddha's enlightenment; in chanting it, one simultaneously called forth buddhahood within oneself and manifested the buddha-land in one's surroundings.

Nichiren's approach to the *Lotus Sūtra* was fiercely exclusivistic. Now in *mappō*, he taught, other, incomplete teachings had lost their efficacy. To abandon the *Lotus* in favor of "lesser," provisional paths such as Zen, Pure Land, or the Esoteric teachings was to cast aside the one teaching that still led to awakening in the Final Dharma age, a misguided act that could only bring misery in both this life and the next. The disasters then confronting Japan—droughts, famine, epidemics, earthquakes, and the threat of invasion by the Mongols—were for Nichiren karmic retribution for neglect of the *Lotus Sūtra* and blind adherence to incomplete, provisional teachings. Conversely, he said, by embracing faith in the *Lotus Sūtra*, Japan would become an ideal realm. "Now you must quickly reform the faith you hold in your heart and direct it to the single good of the true vehicle," he urged. "If you do, the threefold world will all be-

come a buddha-land, and how could a buddha-land ever decline?"⁵ That this world is ultimately the buddha-land had long been recognized by Buddhist teachers as a truth one might realize subjectively through faith and practice. Nichiren, however, taught that as faith in the *Lotus Sūtra* spread, objective realities would actually change: people would enjoy harmony with nature, just rule, and freedom from catastrophes.

Tanaka's Millennial Vision

For six centuries after Nichiren's death, the universal spread of the *Lotus Sūtra* remained for his followers a vague ideal, indefinitely deferred. But in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, some Nichiren Buddhist figures, of whom Tanaka was most influential, began to re-envision it in concrete terms. Tanaka first articulated such a vision in his 1901 "Restoration of Our Sect" (*Shūmon no ishin*). This manifesto laid out a blueprint for reforming Nichiren Buddhism, along with a detailed fifty-year plan for world conversion to be implemented once those reforms had become reality. It reflects Tanaka's bombastic style, interweaving his evangelical fervor with innovative proselytizing strategies. Tanaka envisioned proselytizing throughout the country: by the roads, in halls and auditoriums, even at hot spring resorts. Laywomen would be organized into a nursing corps and charitable hospitals established, winning public respect through acts of practical compassion. The sect would operate a shipping fleet and establish colonies of Nichiren devotees in Hokkaido, Taiwan (then under Japanese rule), and other overseas countries as bases for world propagation. Its growing financial capital would contribute to the nation's wealth and power, and eventually Nichiren Buddhism would become the state religion. Tanaka expanded his vision in *An Overview of Nichirenshugi Doctrinal Studies* (*Nichirenshugi kyōgaku taikan*), a grand systematization of Nichiren's teaching based on Nichirenshugi principles, originally published in 1904–1913. A section of this latter work is translated here.

Tanaka shared some ground with a number of Buddhist reformers, such as his insistence that Buddhism must be relevant to realities of modern life. Like many government and intellectual leaders, he sought to purge society of ignorance and "superstition" that would retard modernization. To his mind, that included eliminating even from his own sect traditional elements of local religious culture that were now deemed irrational and at odds with modernity. And, though Tanaka's nationalism was inflected through his own particular reading of Nichiren, it was

also part of an overriding concern with the nation, Japan, and its place in the world that structured the greater part of intellectual discourse and public endeavors at the time.

In other respects, however, Tanaka went against the current. His proposals for sectarian reform called on the various branches of Nichiren Buddhism to abandon their rivalries and unite, return to the rigorous practice of *shakubuku* that Nichiren had taught, and strive tirelessly to convert the world. This meant that he rejected the transsectarianism embraced by many Buddhist leaders of his time. Tanaka termed the future purified Nichiren Buddhism that he envisioned "Honge Myōshū," a name that resists concise translation. *Myō* ("subtle," "wonderful") is the first character of the *Lotus Sūtra's* title; *myōshū* means the sect based on the Wonderful Dharma of the *Lotus*. *Honge*, a Buddhist technical term, refers to those bodhisattvas who were taught by the primordial Śākyamuni Buddha at the time of his original awakening in the inconceivably remote past. In the sutra's narrative, they emerge from beneath the earth at the Buddha's summons and receive his mandate to propagate the *Lotus* widely in an evil age following his nirvana. Nichiren spoke of himself as a forerunner preparing the way for these bodhisattvas, and his subsequent tradition often identified him as a manifestation of their leader, Bodhisattva Superior Conduct (Jōgyō). The name "Honge Myōshū" thus suggests the *Lotus Sūtra's* promise of universal buddhahood while emphasizing Nichiren's mandate to spread faith in the *Lotus* in the Final Dharma age.

Tanaka also differed from other Buddhist reformers in his utter rejection of the religious-secular divide. In formulating policy toward Buddhism, Shinto, and other traditions, Meiji officials had appropriated a concept of religion shaped largely by Protestant Christianity, in which "religion" was understood to be a matter of private belief and confined to a personal, interior sphere. By this definition, the state could not legitimately intrude on individual faith commitments, but at the same time, religious bodies could not be allowed to influence the course of government. For Tanaka, however, Nichiren's teaching that the Wonderful Dharma of the *Lotus* encompasses all aspects of life and society was not simply a matter of individuals manifesting their faith in daily activities; Honge Myōshū, the reformed Nichiren sect, must actively guide, even subsume, the state. The unity of Buddhism and government, a major theme of the text translated here, set Tanaka and his followers radically apart from the secularizing spirit of the times.

The Sacred Center and Japan's Global Role

As seen in the text that follows, Tanaka called for the building of a sacred center. Nichiren had taught that practice for the *mappō* era comprises "Three Great Secret Dharmas": the *daimoku*, or invocation of the *Lotus Sūtra's* title; the object of worship (*gohonzon*), that is, the *maṇḍala* that Nichiren devised as a focus of practice for his followers, depicting in Chinese characters the *Lotus Sūtra* assembly or realm of the primordially awakened Buddha; and the ordination platform (*kaidan*). Nichiren established the first two himself but entrusted the realization of the ordination platform to his followers in the future. Superseding all other ordination platforms, it was to be the *honmon no kaidan*, the ordination platform based on the "origin teaching" (*honmon*), or latter fourteen chapters of the *Lotus Sūtra*, which reveal that the Buddha is always present in this world.

An "ordination platform" is a ritual space where the Buddhist precepts are conferred upon persons taking vows as monks or nuns. Nichiren, however, had taught that, now in *mappō*, the only valid precept is to embrace the *Lotus Sūtra*, and his intent regarding the future *kaidan* is not altogether clear. Nonetheless, the official ordination platforms in Japan in his time were state-sponsored, and Nichiren may well have seen the establishment of a *kaidan* as manifesting the traditional interdependent relationship of state and sangha in its ideal form, based on the *Lotus Sūtra*. Such a reading is suggested by "The Three Great Secret Dharmas" (*Sandai hihō shō*), cited here by Tanaka and the only writing in the corpus of works attributed to Nichiren to address the ordination platform in any detail.

After Nichiren's death, prospects for establishing such a *kaidan* seemed remote, and for centuries it remained an indefinite future goal. Many scholar-monks of the tradition interpreted the "ordination platform" in abstract terms (*ri kaidan*) to mean any place at all where a *Lotus* devotee might chant the *daimoku*. In the modern period, however, some Nichiren Buddhist leaders, most prominently Tanaka himself, began to re-envision the *kaidan* as a very real and not-too-distant possibility. For Tanaka, this was to be an actual edifice (*ji kaidan*) that would not only seal the unity of Buddhism and government, recast in modern terms, but also establish Japan as the world's spiritual center.

Japan's place in the world meant something quite different for Tanaka than it had for Nichiren. Nichiren had inherited from his Tendai forebears the idea that Japan had a particular karmic connection to the

Lotus Sūtra. For that very reason, he on one hand condemned Japan as a benighted country where people rejected the *Lotus*. But at the same time, he saw Japan as the place where the *daimoku* of the *Lotus Sūtra*, the true teaching for the Final Dharma age, was first destined to spread. From Japan, he said, it would rise, like the sun, and illuminate the world. Educated Buddhists in Nichiren's time were keenly conscious of living in a tiny archipelago on the easternmost periphery of the Buddhist world and in an age of decline. Nichiren's thinking about Japan as the birthplace of a new Buddhism uniquely suited to the *mappō* era was part of a larger move on the part of premodern Buddhist teachers across school and lineage boundaries to assert the legitimacy of Japanese Buddhism vis-à-vis that of India and China. Tanaka, however, read Nichiren's statements about Japan not in their historical context but in light of the country's geopolitical situation in the modern period, as Japan first struggled to establish itself as a developed nation able to hold its own against Western powers and then asserted itself as an imperial power in its own right.

Intellectuals of the day, drawing on Hegel and related thinkers, often conceived of nation-states not as human constructs but as ontologically real. Individual lives were held to derive meaning through their connection to the nation, and the universal truths of religion could have value for individuals only insofar as they could be grounded in the specifics of the country to which people actually belonged. The Christian leader Uchimura Kanzō (1861–1930) famously declared that he "loved two Js": Jesus, connecting him to the universal, and Japan, rooting him in the world. Tanaka, it has been observed, similarly cherished two Ns, Nichiren and Nippon (Japan), and sought to theoretize their relationship.⁶ In the decades after completing his *Overview*, Tanaka devoted himself to elaborating a new branch of doctrinal studies that he called *kokutaigaku*, an interpretation from a Nichirenshugi perspective of the *kokutai*, the "national polity" or "national essence," a key term in political discourse of Japan's modern imperial period (1890–1945). In the excerpt translated here, Tanaka uses the term chiefly in the sense of polity and traces the relationship of government to religion over the course of Japan's history. Later, he would increasingly identify Japan's *kokutai* with the *Lotus Sūtra* itself. The modern Japanese state was not only to be based on the *Lotus Sūtra*, it was the vehicle by which the *Lotus Sūtra* would spread to the world.

Postwar critics have often charged Tanaka and other Nichirenshugi advocates with catering to an imperialist state by subordinating the

dharmā to the nation. Were the matter so simple, Tanaka would not present us with an interpretive challenge but could readily be dismissed as an eccentric chauvinist. The reality, however, was more complex. Tanaka was a serious Buddhist who saw the dharmā—in particular Nichiren's teaching—as the only secure foundation on which an ideal nation could be established. He did not reinvent Nichiren Buddhism to serve the Japanese state so much as he enlisted the national ideology of his time to reassert to his contemporaries the truth claims of the Nichiren tradition. Yet his view of Japan as endowed with a sacred mission to unite the world through the *Lotus Sūtra* mapped smoothly onto Japan's armed expansion of empire in the mid-twentieth century and lent the imperial project a sacred legitimacy. Nichirenshugi adherents, and Nichiren Buddhists in general, were not necessarily any more committed to the imperial cause than the Buddhists of any other school; most religious organizations lent support to Japan's military ventures. But modern interpretations of Nichiren doctrine such as Tanaka's imbued public perceptions of the Nichiren tradition with a particularly nationalist coloration. During Japan's modern imperial period, this reading won sympathizers among intellectuals, officials, and military leaders, even outside Nichirenist circles. In the postwar era, however, Nichiren Buddhists seeking to frame their teaching in terms of contemporary liberal values have had to struggle against the fiercely nationalistic image of Nichiren forged by Tanaka and his sympathizers.

Tanaka Chigaku's case informs us that modernist visions of a this-worldly pure land do not emerge seamlessly from received Buddhist doctrine but are shaped by the needs of their creators and their historical circumstances. Doctrine is politically underdetermined, and how it will be appropriated for social agendas is often decided by external factors. Thus the *Lotus Sūtra*'s teaching that this world is not separate from the buddha-land has, within a historically short span of time, been invoked in ways that sacralized one nation above others, legitimizing its militant aims, and has also been enlisted in the service of universalist, postwar democratic visions of world peace.

The following excerpt from *Nichirenshugi kyōgaku taikan* is taken from a passage where Tanaka discusses the category of the "time," meaning the time when the *Lotus Sūtra* is destined to spread. Tanaka divides the Final Dharma age into three periods: (1) the age of establishment, when Nichiren appeared and declared his teaching; (2) the age of dissemination, when that teaching was spread and perpetuated through Nichiren Buddhist institutions; and (3) the coming age of unification, when,

mediated by the merger of dharma and government and spearheaded by Japan, the world will be unified by faith in the *Lotus Sūtra* and the buddhahood of the land will be realized. The third section, on "the age of unification," has been translated here.⁷

TRANSLATION

"The Age of Unification"

Tanaka Chigaku

The last of the three periods of the Final Dharma age (*mappō*) will be the age of unification. In his "True Aspect of the Dharmas," [our founder Nichiren] declares [that someday the people of Japan will all chant the *daimoku* of the *Lotus Sūtra*,] "as surely as an arrow aimed at the earth cannot miss the mark."⁸ In "On Practicing as the *Lotus Sūtra* Teaches," he cites "the golden words [of Zhiyi], 'The practice of the *Lotus Sūtra* is *shakubuku*, the refutation of provisional teachings,'" asserting the principle by which this unification will surely be achieved. From a mundane perspective, the unification of religious thought at the national and global levels might appear to be an impossible dream, but such an attitude merely reflects one's own short-sightedness. The *Lotus Sūtra* itself says, "In the buddha lands of the ten directions, there is the dharma of only one vehicle," and "The worlds of the ten directions interpenetrated, forming a single buddha-land."¹⁰ From the standpoint of the dharma, the age of unification is already a fact. From our standpoint, it is a precious edifice that we must build. And in terms of the non-duality of the dharma and ourselves, it is a reality that is approaching moment by moment.¹¹ When we advance a single step for the sake of the great dharma, then with that step, the ground of this age [of unification] unfolds before us; this is a certain thing. The buddhahood of the land (*kokudo jōbutsu*) to be realized in this age of unification is not like heaven or the pure land, which are never actually expected to appear before our eyes. We predict, envision, and aim for it as a future reality that we will definitely witness.

I will address this theme under three headings: the merger of Buddhism and government, the establishment of the ordination platform, and the unification of the world.

The Merger of Buddhism and Government

First, the merger of Buddhism and government means the merging of the ruler's dharma (*ōbō*) and the buddha-dharma (*buppō*). This is the foremost requirement for world unification. It entails two aspects: first, subsuming government within the buddha-dharma, and second, applying the buddha-dharma to government.

"The Three Great Secret Dharmas" states:

When the ruler's dharma becomes one with the buddha-dharma and the buddha-dharma is united with the ruler's dharma, and the ruler and his ministers all uphold the Three Great Secret Dharmas [of the origin teaching of the *Lotus Sūtra*], the bond that once existed in the past between the king Possessing Virtue (*Utoku*) and the monk Awakened Virtue (*Kakutoku*) will be restored in the future, in the polluted and evil Final Dharma age.¹² At that time, an imperial edict and official decree will be handed down, to seek out the most superior site, resembling the Pure Land of Sacred Eagle Peak [where the *Lotus Sūtra* was expounded], and erect the ordination platform there. You have only to await the time. This ordination platform will manifest in concrete form the dharma of the precepts [for the Final Dharma age] by which all people of the three countries [India, China, and Japan] and the entire world [*Jambudvīpa*] will perform repentance and eradicate their offenses.¹³ Here too [the world-governing deities] *Brahmā* and *Indra* and the other gods will descend [to lend their protection].¹⁴

Before the entire world can be unified, the people of Japan must all convert [to the Wonderful Dharma], and on that basis, the merger of Buddhism and government must be achieved. In so doing, first government must be subsumed within Buddhism, and then Buddhism must be applied to government. If Buddhism were first merged with government without "awaiting the [proper] time," that would subordinate the transcendent dharma to worldly matters and end up in catering to political authority. In the merger of government with Buddhism (*ōbutsu myōgō*) that is to be achieved by the original disciples of the constantly abiding primordial Buddha of the *Lotus Sūtra*, the ruler's dharma must first be made to abide securely in the spirit of the buddha-dharma. Then, when the two have merged, the true Eagle Peak, the actual realm of Tranquil Light (*jakkō*), will manifest in this land.¹⁵

To illustrate: The buddha-dharma corresponds to "abstract principle" (*ri*), so it is like the mind. The ruler's dharma corresponds to "concrete actualities" (*ji*), so it is like the body.¹⁶ From the standpoint of the buddha-dharma as principle, the truth that informs *Lotus*

Sūtra's words about "the worlds of the ten directions interpenetrating to form a single buddha land" inherently encompasses the source of the ruler's dharma, just as our mind is naturally endowed with the buddha nature and has abided since the beginningless past. When we act in accordance with that buddha-nature in our thoughts, words, and actions, we directly realize buddhahood in this very body (*sokushin jōbutsu*). In like manner, when government is fully awakened to the spirit of the buddha-dharma and merges with it, then the "body" that is the ruler's dharma comes to possess the "mind" of the buddha-dharma, while the "mind" that is the buddha-dharma obtains the "body" of the ruler's dharma, and the buddhahood of the land will be manifested. This subsuming of government within Buddhism requires that the emperor take faith in the True Dharma and that the entire country come to accord with the one vehicle. It is our responsibility as Nichiren Buddhist practitioners to generate an atmosphere in which this can happen.

To sum up: The subsuming of government within the buddha-dharma means that the actual nation-state will achieve the ideal of [becoming] "indestructible as a diamond" (*kongō fue*), while the application of the buddha-dharma to government means that the ideal buddha-land of Tranquil Light will be manifested in this actual land.

Nonetheless, it would be appalling if this country were to merge with Buddhism as represented by the Nichiren sect in its current state, with its worship of foxes and badgers and other debased practices.¹⁷ That is why the sect of the Wonderful Dharma brought by the Buddha's original disciples (Honge Myōshū) must steadily display its true worth from now on. It may actually be fortunate that a merger of government with Buddhism cannot take place at present. Were there a movement to make Nichirenshū as it is today our national religion, anyone with the slightest common sense and good conscience would have to oppose it for the sake of the nation and world civilization, to say nothing of the deleterious consequences such a move would have for Buddhism. To link to the project of world unification such barbarous practices as worshipping animals or shouting the *daimoku* in garbled form to the beat of hand drums¹⁸ would be an absurdity on a grand scale. "Awaiting the time" in that fashion would be worse than futile. Those who would qualify as true followers of the Buddha's original disciples must undergo a great awakening in order to "await the time" in the correct way.

Establishing the Ordination Platform

After the merger of Buddhism and government, the ordination platform must be erected. This will be the concrete manifestation of the precepts referred to in "The Three Great Secret Dharmas" quoted above. It means actually building the ordination platform where the people of all three countries and the entire world will perform repentance and eradicate their sins. The same writing says to "seek out the most superior site, resembling the Pure Land of Sacred Eagle Peak, and erect the ordination platform there." As these words indicate, this *kaidan* will be the sacred place that will gather the devotion of all people of the world. And if we turn to other [passages among our founder's teachings], we learn that it is to be established in our country.

For example, "The [Contemplation of the Mind and the] Object of Worship" says that [the Buddha's original disciples, the bodhisattvas who emerged from beneath the earth, will appear in the Final Dharma age and] "establish in this country the foremost object of worship in the world."¹⁹ *Nikō's Record* states: "The 'originally innate Eagle Peak' refers to this Sahā world, and in particular, to the country of Japan. The 'subtlety of the original land' [of the primordial Buddha] indicated in the *Lotus Sūtra* refers to this Sahā world [and specifically] to the place where the great *maṇḍala* implicit in the 'Fathoming the Lifespan' chapter of the origin teaching will be established."²⁰ Elsewhere [our teacher Nichiren] refers to "Japan and all the world" or speaks of himself as "the pillar of Japan."²¹ All such references secretly hint that Japan is the world center and the sacred ground where the ordination platform is to be established. In particular, Mount Fuji is called Great Sun Lotus King Mountain (*Dainichirengō-zan*) and is deemed the most celebrated peak within the three countries. According to tradition, our founder buried a copy of the *Lotus Sūtra* there.²² Thus it has already been established that the ordination platform should be erected here in Japan.

However, two great conditions must be fulfilled in order for that to take place. First, His Majesty the emperor, carrying on a single lineage unbroken through a myriad reigns, must convert to this great dharma [of the *Lotus*] and, as sponsor for the ordination platform, issue an edict that it be built. Second, a majority of the nation's people both high and low, of whatever class, must also convert to the great dharma. Now let us consider what is meant by these two conditions: the promulgation of an imperial edict and the conversion of the entire nation.

"The Three Great Secret Dharmas" says that "an imperial edict and official decree will be handed down." An "imperial edict" (*chokusen*) means the emperor's command establishing the ordination platform. "Official decree" (*migyōsho*) originally meant an order promulgated by the retired emperor, the regent, or the shogun; in the Kamakura period [1185–1333, when Nichiren lived], it meant an order of the Bakufu, that is, the shogunate or military government. In terms of the present era, we may consider "an official decree" to be a resolution of the National Diet. In order to obtain such a resolution from the Diet, we must first convert a majority of the people. That is, to create a trend of the times favorable to an "official decree," we must win the hearts of the entire populace to Nichirenism.

Our founder addressed himself to the Bakufu, rather than the imperial court, because in those days political power lay with the military government. Rather than placing priority on converting individual citizens, he directed his efforts toward the center of power and proclaimed his doctrine, admonishing the country's leaders [to support faith in the *Lotus Sūtra* alone] and urging that it be established as the national teaching. He did so because his was an age when politics and religion were united. Shallow-minded people dismiss his actions as collusion with political power, but that merely betrays their ignorance.

Government and religion ought to be one. Of course it would be undesirable either for government to be under the sway of an undeveloped religion or for religion to cater to government; both these cases are to be avoided. But to regard the unity of politics and religion as evil under any circumstances would be a grave misunderstanding. In the ancient past, the polity (*kokutai*) of our country of Japan was religious in nature; hence the expression "unity of rites and rule" (*saisei itchi*).²³ But with the passage of time, ideas about what constitutes the *kokutai* and what constitutes religion gradually separated. Confucian and Buddhist teachings entered the country [early on], and perhaps in that connection Prince Shōtoku (574–622), in addressing the three teachings, likened Shintō to the root, Confucianism to the flowers, and Buddhism to the fruit.²⁴ He said that although the three are different, they are all to be employed, thus expounding the unity of these three paths. He himself preached on the *Lotus*, *Queen Śrīmālā*, and *Humane Kings* sutras, designating these as the three scriptures for the protection of the nation and personally delivering lectures on them. In his seventeen-article constitution as well, he admonished that the three treasures [the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha] were to be revered. All these acts of his express the ideal of the

unity of government and religion. At a later point, the Great Teacher Dengyō [Saichō, 766/767–822, founder of the Japanese Tendai school] appeared and sought to unify religion and government by means of the *Lotus Sūtra*. Emperor Kanmu (r. 781–806) accepted his plan and strove to implement it. After the death of these two figures, however, a reversal of high and low occurred within the Buddhist teachings, so that they became spiritual poison for the nation.²⁵ From the period of Fujiwara rule through the struggle of the Minamoto and the Taira, the ascendancy of the Hōjō and then the Ashikaga military houses up until the time of total upheaval [in the late medieval period], Buddhism and the national polity coexisted in an orderly fashion; though minor conflicts broke out, there was no major revolt. But once a deviation occurred [within this coexistence], it acquired overwhelming momentum, and a succession of warlords battled to seize the nation's rule.²⁶ If one were to elaborate in detail on the relation of government and religion in terms of our national history, one would find clear evidence [to support my argument] and turn up many interesting matters, but I must defer such a discussion for another occasion.

In essence, the *kokutai* underwent its greatest disruption during the period of the Country at War. The first warlord to attempt to unify the country was Nobunaga (1534–1582). Nobunaga conceived of ruling the country by making use of religion, but he was unable to find anyone appropriate in the Buddhist world to serve as his tool. In the end, he mistook Christianity for a form of Buddhism and, placing his hopes in it, he struck a hard blow at the Nichiren and Jōdo Shin sects and also razed Mount Hiei and Mount Kōya, all of them powerful in the Buddhist world at the time.²⁷ In contrast, [his successor] Hideyoshi (1537–1598) discerned that Christianity would harm the nation and sought to eradicate it, replacing it with Buddhism [as a means to unify the realm] by such undertakings as the building of the Great Buddha [at Higashiyama in Kyoto]. But things did not go as he had hoped. Not only did Hideyoshi not positively establish a unity of government and religion, but in using religion to serve his ends, he failed to draw upon its better strands. Ieyasu (1542–1616), who followed him, wiped out the foreign religion and won the people's hearts. He protected all sects of Buddhism, beginning with the Pure Land sect, which was his family religion, and established a basis for making use of them [in governing the country].²⁸ But with respect to our sect, he attacked Nichiō and Nichikyō for upholding the principle of "neither receiving nor giving" (*fujū fuse*) and asserting that the *nenbutsu* leads to the Hell without Respite, and he forbade

proselytizing based on doctrinal principles.²⁹ Thus inevitably he employed strategies for governance using religions that made the people stupid. Before Ieyasu died, the administrator of monks Tenkai (1536–1643) asked him, "Do you wish to be born in Amida Buddha's Land of Bliss? Or do you intend to remain in this realm and protect the nation?" Ieyasu replied that he had no desire to go to the Pure Land. In the end he decided that he personally would convert to the Tendai sect and protect the nation as the deity Tōshō Daigongen, which is how his mausoleum came to be established at Nikkō.³⁰ Such was his personal faith. In his ideas of government, however, he applied Confucian teachings but merely exploited Buddhism. Thus no teaching came into direct conflict with the power of the state but all submitted to its authority, as is presently the case. Religions that preached the principles of loyalty, filial conduct, integrity, and moral recompense according with one's deeds were all protected. Only Christianity and the Nichiren sect conflicted with Ieyasu's will and were proscribed throughout the country: Christianity, because its religious authority derived from foreign countries, and the Nichiren sect, because it sought to rectify government by means of religious truth.³¹ However, Ieyasu never imagined the interpretation of the *kokutai* that would result from the combination of Confucian ideas about loyalty to the sovereign and the revival of Nativism (Kokugaku), such as that initiated by Tokugawa Mitsukuni (1628–1701).³² In time, foreign countries sought trade treaties, the external threat posed by their demands aroused the people's self-awakening, and in the end the great work of the Imperial Restoration was accomplished, returning sovereignty to the emperor as in antiquity. At the beginning of the Meiji era (1868–1912), it briefly appeared that Shinto would become something like a national religion. But, apart from grassroots *kami* practices and some elements added on in later ages, Shintō has no religious aspects, no doctrine, and no articles of faith. Since it is no more than a custom of ancestor worship and stops at clarifying the *kokutai*, it was divorced from the realm of religion, and its religious strands came to be treated like Buddhism or Christianity.³³ The Constitution recognized citizens' freedom of religion, and a total separation of government and religion was thus achieved. The modern *kokutai* therefore has no connection to any religion but has come to be held supreme simply on its own merits.

The natural confluence of circumstances that has brought about this current state of affairs is truly advantageous for implementing our founder's teaching. It would create chaos if some mistaken religion of

the present were to join forces with the imperial house and the state and become established as the national religion. But as long as the *kokutai* stands aloof from religion, natural selection, the struggle for survival of the fittest in the realm of religion, can proceed.³⁴ When at length the great religion has appeared whose influence will extend to all citizens as a whole, then at any time it can join together with the state and the imperial house. Hōge Myōshū, our Lotus school of the Buddha's original disciples, is the teaching that carries this innate destiny and duty.

Therefore, for the present, rather than engage in public debates or petition the government, we should actively arouse public opinion. From a spiritual standpoint, we should bring about a great awakening at the source of popular thought, and from a practical standpoint, we should plan to nurture the power of our sect in terms of the wealth and military force that are a nation's real strength. Since debates are ultimately resolved by the power of finance or aggression, we should develop our influence to the point where it can sway national opinion even by such means. I have explained this ideal in concrete detail in my "Restoration of Our [Nichiren] Sect." The money to fund the building of the ordination platform and other endeavors, such as volunteer fleets to be maintained by the sect, are part of this design.³⁵ If matters can be implemented as I envision, then, when faced with a great conflict, such as the impending war with Russia, we should be able to launch three squadrons in the Japan Sea, the China Sea, and the Sea of Okhotsk respectively and also deploy a division of our followers in Siberia. When the priesthood in the Final Dharma age forgets the two great practical forces of financial power and military might and does nothing but preach sermons, then it becomes powerless to accomplish anything. [The imperative to concern ourselves with such matters] is a secret intent of the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* and of [our founder's writings,] "The Object of Worship" and the "[*Risshō*] *ankoku ron*."³⁶ When our sect of the Wonderful Dharma borne by the original Buddha's disciples can implement this secret intent, our nation and society will come into their true life, and the conversion of the entire nation will come about of itself. Once it is clear that a majority of the country has converted, that will be the precise moment to petition the imperial household to make ours the state religion. At that time, the emperor will surely approve our petition and convene a special session of the Diet to deliver an edict mandating that article 27 [*sic*] of the Constitution, guaranteeing religious freedom, be revised, and a new system instituted with Hōge Myōshū as the state religion.³⁷ If a two-thirds majority approves, [then the two conditions

mentioned above,] the conversion of the entire nation and the promulgation of an imperial edict, will be realized, and the ordination platform can be established in actuality. The "time to be awaited" [referred to in "The Three Great Secret Dharmas"] is a time that we ourselves must create.

Under this newly established unity of government and religion, the *Lotus Sūtra*, that is, the wondrous principle that is the great truth of the one vehicle, shall manifest as the great power that is the nation. This tiny country of Japan, as the true Eagle Peak, the actual Land of Tranquil Light, will establish the ordination platform at Fuji as humanity's universal sacred place, becoming the holy nation where "all people of the entire world will perform repentance and eradicate their offenses." When one mentions the unity of government and religion, people today seem unable to conceive of it apart from the example of the Roman Catholic Church, but since "they who have not practiced cannot understand,"³⁸ theirs is an uninformed view. Originally speaking, Rome and Christianity had no special affinity or connection, and the Roman emperor in himself had no basis of moral authority. It would be a great mistake to compare that situation with our imperial house, which since its founding has upheld and transmitted the Way as its lifeblood. And, in terms of its teachings, Christianity contains no national elements pertaining to this world; thus it would also be wrong to compare it to the great ideal of a sacred country expressed in the ordination platform of the origin teaching. The Roman emperor, who had no basis in the Way, and Christianity, which had no foundational ideal of the nation, were brought together as an expedient. Thus in time, disputes broke out between the emperor and the pope, and all sorts of ecclesiastical abuses appeared. Now our country and Nichiren's Buddhism (*Honge Myōshū*) have an inherent affinity and bond: In the imperial house, there is the ideal of the imperishable Way, and in our sect, there is the doctrine that the land of the Wonderful Dharma will be manifested in actuality. With the sun as their common emblem, this country and this teaching will inevitably join together, sharing a destiny to save the people of the world.³⁹ The divine imperial ancestor [i.e., the sun goddess], manifesting the virtue that illuminates heaven and earth, declared, "My descendants shall rule over this land."⁴⁰ Our founder, as the savior for all people of the Final Dharma age, said, "I will be the pillar of Japan."⁴¹ He also made reference to "Japan and all the world," and "the whole world, but specifically Japan," hinting at the profound relationship [between our country and the dharma]. Thus his words "You have only to await the time" resound in our ears.

Unless such unity of government and religion is achieved, it is pointless to ask which emperor will issue the edict or will he bestow the purple robe; or to think that if only one establishes close contact with the imperial household, one has made some great accomplishment; or to go around bragging about the Murakumo nuns' imperial pedigree, and the like.⁴² Such actions represent an extremely narrow, low-level way of thinking that will only destroy the timing [of our undertaking] and the character of our sect. If the union of government and religion is not profoundly rooted throughout in the oneness of the *kokutai* and our fundamental teaching, it will be no more than a government strategy of exploiting religion or an incomplete joining of government and religion, or, as in the past, it will simply mirror the changing religious preferences of successive rulers. Compared to any of those, the complete separation of religion and government that we see today would be a far happier outcome both for our country and the world. But if we can realize the ordination platform in actuality by the proclamation of an imperial edict and the conversion of the entire nation, then the unification of the world will come about of itself.

The Unification of the World

In the face of its seeming impossibility, people have always cherished the idea of unifying the world. Great religious leaders such as Śākyamuni and Jesus sought to accomplish it spiritually. Powerful statesmen such as Alexander and Napoleon tried to achieve it by force or by the power of diplomacy. However, force or diplomacy cannot readily accomplish it. Even if world unification should be realized temporarily through such means, it would soon dissolve, as we can learn by examining the history of great empires of the past. That said, it would also be difficult to accomplish world unification solely by the power of religion. Today, the various European nations are all Christian, but Christianity has merely produced ties among individuals. We cannot find anything in it that would serve as a point of unification among nations in religious terms. Must we then establish some sort of institution above nations that would unite them? Not necessarily. Today, joint undertakings in such arenas as international law, peace conferences, mail delivery systems, and the like are seeking commonalities across national boundaries. But they do not represent a unification of spirit and body, nor do they embody a religious ideal that can become the real power of the nation, and thus they cannot carry out the project of unifying the world. That task is none

other than the establishment of the ordination platform of the origin teaching, the sacred mission of world unification, which will manifest the ideal world described in "On Practicing as the Lotus Sūtra Teaches":

In that time, when the ruler, the people, and the various Buddhist schools all convert to the one vehicle, and the people all chant *Namu Myōhō-renge-kyō* as one, the wind will not thrash the branches nor the rain fall hard enough to erode the soil. The world will be as it was in the ages [of the ancient sage kings] Fuxi and Shennong. In this life, inauspicious disasters will be banished, and people will obtain the art of longevity. You will behold a time when the principle becomes manifest that persons and dharmas neither age nor die.⁴³

For such unification to take place, some sort of standard or center is absolutely necessary. Force and diplomacy are responses geared to specific situations, so their results are bound to be temporary, and therefore they can never bring about true unification. Unification requires that which is constantly abiding and all-pervasive, bringing together all individuals and nations in the great ideal of the one vehicle, just like the string that holds together a necklace of pearls. What can serve as the center for that unification and generate the driving force to accomplish it is the great doctrine of the ordination platform of the origin teaching to be actualized in reality (*honmon ji no kaidan*). Where there is no ideal, there will be no unification. Hōge Myōshū will unite the world by the teaching of the one buddha vehicle. Then all the various nations of the world, just as they are, will return to the single great ideal of the Wonderful Dharma. And, as the place of the ordination platform where that dharma has been established and is protected and upheld, our imperial nation will be revered; and our emperor, heir to a lineage unbroken throughout a myriad reigns, will receive the reverence of all humanity and nations as the protector of the way of antiquity and the foremost model for the world's leaders. Individuals and nations will each obtain their proper place and all alike return to the Great Way, enjoying the numinous blessings of humanity's original ground. This is the wondrous benefit to be conferred by our Hōge Myōshū sect; it is the conversion of all under heaven and within the four seas to the Wonderful Dharma. It will entail the following five aspects: (1) unification of thought; (2) unification of religion; (3) unification of morality; (4) unification of society; and (5) unification of government.

In other words, in that age of world unification, thought, religion, morality, society, and government will all be unified in the *Sūtra of the Lotus*

Blossom of the Wonderful Dharma; all will steadily come to accord with the one vehicle. However, that does not mean that the ideas and cultural products of the world's nations will all become the same. Rather, these differing ideas and products, while each radiantly displaying its individual characteristics, will all have their point of unification in the Wonderful Dharma. Even when that dawn of world unification comes to pass, in the realm of thought [we will find varying attitudes]: there will be optimism; there will be pessimism; there will be prayers for the deceased. But in their essential points these varying outlooks will be unified. In any age, the vulgar masses and persons of education and refinement cannot possibly embrace the same views and spirit in all instances. In like manner, there will be people of varying religious temperaments, and they will not necessarily all come to embrace only the same elevated ideas. There will be those given to acts of religious charity, those who embrace lofty ideals of renunciation, and those who pray for peace and security in this world or for happiness in the future. But this diversity does not mean that the various religions and thought systems will be allowed to stand just as they are. We must seek out and establish their point of unification in the fundamental place to which they return. Reverence for the Wonderful Dharma is what unites all things at the center. Even more than the ethos of loyalty and filial piety that prevailed during the Tokugawa period, it will become a clear and profound way of thinking natural to ordinary citizens.

In this age of unification, morality, society, and government will be unified in the same manner as thought and religion, but there is no telling, specifically, what that unification will be like. When the time comes, assisted by the power of the Buddha's original disciples, the most perfect unification shall surely come about. Of course I have my own opinions on the matter, but to voice them now would just be foolish. I will leave it at simply asserting that this unification must take place.

Notes

- 1 Names are given according to East Asian convention, with the surname first.
- 2 Ōtani Eiichi, *Kindai Nihon no Nichirenshugi undo* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 2001), 205-206.
- 3 Richard M. Jaffe, "Tanaka Chigaku and the Buddhist Clerical Marriage: Toward a Positive Appraisal of Family Life," in *Neither Monk nor Layman*:

- Clerical Marriage in Modern Japanese Buddhism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 165–188; Ōtani, *Kindai Nihon no Nichirenshugi undo*, 40–41.
- 4 *Myōhō-rence-kyō* (*Miaofa lianhua jing*, *Sūtra of the Lotus Blossom of the Wonderful Dharma*) is the title in Japanese pronunciation of Kumārajīva's famed 406 Chinese translation of the *Lotus Sūtra*. *Namu* is from Sanskrit *namo-* or *namas*, indicating praise, reverence, devotion, and the taking of refuge.
 - 5 *Risshō ankoku ron*, in *Risshō Daigaku Nichiren Kyōgaku Kenkyūjo*, ed., *Shōwa teihon Nichiren Shōnin ibun* (hereafter *Teihon*) (Minobusan Kuonji: Minobuchō, Yamanashi Prefecture, 1952–1959, rev. ed. 1988), 1:226.
 - 6 Nishiyama Shigeru, "Kindai no Nichirenshugi: 'Kennō' shinkō no keifu," *Nihon no bukkyō* 4 (1995): 228–240 (228–229). On Uchimura, see Hiroshi Miura, *The Life and Thought of Kanzō Uchimura, 1861–1930* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1996).
 - 7 The following selection has been translated and adapted from Tanaka Chigaku, *Nichirenshugi kyōgaku taikan*, 6 vols. (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1975), 4:2267–2280. This work was originally published from 1904–1913 in 5 volumes as *Honge Myōshu shikimoku kōgiroku* and retitled *Nichirenshugi kyōgaku taikan* in 1915. Based on a year-long series of lectures by Tanaka, it was edited by his disciple Yamakawa Chiō (1879–1956).
 - 8 *Shohō jissō shō*, *Teihon* 1:727.
 - 9 *Nyosetsu shugyō shō*, *Teihon* 1:733. The Chinese master Zhiyi (538–597) is considered the founder of the Tiantai school, and Nichiren regarded him as an important forebear. The statement quoted here appears in Zhiyi's *Fahua xuanyi*, T. 1716.33:792b. The *shakubuku* method aims directly at confronting and breaking attachment to inferior teachings. It stands in contrast to *shōju*, a mild method of leading others gradually without challenging their present views. Both terms occur in the Buddhist sutras, and commentators before Nichiren had linked *shakubuku* with the *Lotus Sūtra*. Today, the term is most often associated with the Nichiren tradition. See also George J. Tanabe Jr., "Tanaka Chigaku: The *Lotus Sutra* and the Body Politic," in *The Lotus Sutra in Japanese Culture*, ed. George J. Tanabe Jr. and Willa Jane Tanabe, 191–208 Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1989.
 - 10 *Miaofa lianhua jing*, T. 262.9:8a; 52a. Tanaka slightly abridges the language of the second quote.
 - 11 Literally, Tanaka begins this sentence, "In terms of ourselves and the dharma forming a single suchness (*ichinyo*)." Here and elsewhere, I have simplified some technical Buddhist terminology.
 - 12 The *Mahāparinirvāṇa sūtra* tells how, in a prior age when the dharma was in decline, the monk Awakened Virtue alone correctly upheld the Buddha's teachings. When Awakened Virtue was attacked by corrupt monks, the king, Possessing Virtue, defended him at the cost of his own life (*Da ban-niepan jing*, T. 374.12:383c–384a). For Nichiren, this story represented the ideal relationship between sangha and state, or Buddhism and worldly authority, in which the ruler would protect the true dharma to the utmost. He cites it at length in his *Risshō ankoku ron*.
 - 13 "Offenses" here has traditionally been interpreted to mean rejecting or slighting the Wonderful Dharma of the *Lotus Sūtra*.
 - 14 *Sandai hihō honjōji* (often abbreviated as *Sandai hihō shō*), *Teihon* 2:1864–65. Nichiren's authorship of this work has been questioned. In the postwar period, the controversy has centered on its incompatibility with modern notions of the separation of religion and state, and some scholars within the Nichiren tradition have argued that Nichiren never envisioned a state-sponsored *kaidan*. While the question of authorship continues to be disputed, since all official ordination platforms in Nichiren's time were state-sponsored, it would have been reasonable for him to have envisioned such a structure as the seal of official acceptance of his teaching. See entries for "kaidan," "sandai hihō," and "*Sandai hihō shō*" in Nichirenshū Jiten Kankō Iinkai, ed., *Nichirenshū jiten* (Tōkyō: Nichirenshū Shūmuin, 1981), 43d–47a, 130c–133c, 133c–134b; and Jacqueline I. Stone, "By Imperial Edict and Shogunal Decree: Politics and the Issue of the Ordination Platform in Modern Lay Nichiren Buddhism," in *Buddhism in the Modern World: Adaptations of an Ancient Tradition*, ed. Steven Heine and Charles S. Prebish (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 196–197, and the sources cited there.
 - 15 "Eagle Peak" (Ḡḍhrakūṭa; Ryōjusen), a mountain near the city of Rājagṛha in the ancient Indian state of Magadha, is said to have been the site where the Buddha preached the *Lotus Sūtra*. It was later apotheosized as the ever-present pure land of the originally awakened Buddha. See Jacqueline I. Stone, "Realizing This World as the Buddha Land," in *Readings of the Lotus Sutra*, ed. Stephen F. Teiser and Jacqueline I. Stone (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 209–236.
 - 16 *Ri* or "principle" corresponds to ultimate truth, while *ji* or "actuality" refers to the concrete particulars of the phenomenal world. In the Mahāyāna, the two are non-dually related, inseparable and interpenetrating; in the insight that all phenomena (*ji*) instantiate ultimate reality (*ri*), awakening is achieved. This way of thinking underlies key concepts such as the interconnection of all beings and the universal possibility of buddhahood. For Tanaka, *ji*, the realm of actuality, is represented by the nation-state. By grounding the state in the buddha-dharma or *ri*, he argues, the actual world will manifest its innate buddhahood.
 - 17 Tanaka probably refers here to elements of local religious culture such as the exorcism of fox spirits, which were thought to cause illness and discord. Long-standing grassroots practices of this kind were carried out

- across sectarian boundaries and often drew criticism from modernizers as well as outright government suppression. See James E. Ketelaar, *Of Heretics and Martyrs in Meiji Japan: Buddhism and Its Persecution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 50–52.
- 18 Tanaka refers to a traditional Nichiren Buddhist practice of chanting the *daimoku* to the beat of a hand-held fan-shaped drum (*uchiwa daiko*) while marching in procession, for example, when on pilgrimage or at festivals. During the Tokugawa period, such processions were common among Nichiren Buddhist lay or lay-oriented religious associations (*kō* or *kōchū*) and often drew considerable attention in the streets. Meiji government regulations at one point restricted possession of hand drums to one per each such group (see entry for "Kō" in *Nichirenshū Jiten Kankō Iinkai, Nichirenshū jiten*, 493b).
- 19 *Kanjin honzon shō, Teihon* 1:720.
- 20 *Onkō kikigaki* (aka *Nikō ki*), *Teihon* 3:2550. This work purports to be a record of Nichiren's oral teachings on the *Lotus Sūtra*, given to his closest disciples and recorded by Minbu Ajari Nikō. Most scholars now date it to later in the medieval period. "Origin teaching" (*honmon*) refers to the latter fourteen chapters of the *Lotus Sūtra*, which present Śākyamuni as the primordially awakened Buddha, in contrast to the first fourteen chapters, or "trace teaching" (*shakumon*), which depict him as a manifested "trace" or finite person in historical time. "Subtlety of the [Buddha's] original land" (*honkokudo myō*), the teaching that the primordially awakened Buddha dwells in this world, is one of ten "subtleties" or profound doctrines that Zhiyi identified in the origin teaching. Nichiren considered chapter 16, "Fathoming the Lifespan of the Tathāgata," to be the heart of the origin teaching; it formed his scriptural basis for the calligraphic *maṇḍala*, depicting the *Lotus* assembly on Eagle Peak as the ever-present realm of the primordial Buddha, which he inscribed as an object of worship for his followers. It was this ideal awakened buddha realm that Tanaka sought to actualize in the real world.
- 21 *Hōon shō, Teihon* 2:1248 ("Japan and all the world should make Lord Śākyamuni of the origin teaching their object of worship"). Nichiren's famous vow—"I will be the pillar of Japan, I will be the eyes of Japan, I will be the great ship of Japan"—appears in *Kaimoku shō, Teihon* 1:601.
- 22 The burying of sutras was conducted in premodern Japan as a devotional act, often with the aim of preserving the teachings throughout the Final Dharma age. Nichiren's own writings make no mention of him burying a copy of the *Lotus Sūtra* on Mount Fuji; an eighteenth-century biography, however, records a legend that in 1269 Nichiren buried there a copy of the *Lotus* he had personally inscribed, in order to plant karmic roots for the future spread of the *Lotus Sūtra* (*Kōso nenpu*, in *Nichirenshū Zensho Shuppankai*, ed., *Nichiren Shōnin denkishū* [Kyoto: Honmanji, 1974], 394). For Tanaka, Fuji (which he writes here with the homophonous characters for "non-duality") corresponded to "the most superior site, resembling the Pure Land of Sacred Eagle Peak" referred to in "The Three Great Secret Dharmas." In 1909, he began building a new Kokuchūkai headquarters close to Mount Fuji, in Miho in Shizuoka Prefecture. The top floor of this structure contained a room prepared to house the future imperial edict that would mandate the *kaidan's* establishment (Ōtani, *Kindai Nihon no Nichirenshugi undō*, 152–154).
- 23 The slogan "unity of rites and rule" expressed the stance of those early Meiji Nativist ideologues who sought to restore the central position of the emperor as ritual mediator between the nation and the world of the gods, or *kami*, said to have obtained in Japan's ancient past. The "restoration" of this supposed unity formed the rationale for the Jōgikan (variously translated as Ministry of Rites or Council of Divinities), which was established in 1868 but dismantled in 1872. See Ketelaar, *Of Heretics and Martyrs*, 87–96, and Helen Hardacre, *Shinto: A History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 359–368.
- 24 As regent for Empress Suiko (r. 592–628), Prince Shōtoku was an early and influential patron of Buddhism and a celebrated Japanese cultural hero. Many of the accomplishments credited to him, including his commentaries on the three sutras mentioned below, were probably the work of Korean immigrant scholars. The famous "tree metaphor" for the unity of the three teachings actually dates to Japan's medieval period and was attributed to Shōtoku retrospectively.
- 25 Tanaka here alludes to Nichiren's claim that devotion to the *Lotus Sūtra*, established by Saichō as the Buddha's supreme teaching, was later undermined by the rise of "lesser," provisional teachings such as Esoteric Buddhism, Pure Land, and Zen that were unsuited to the Final Dharma age. The next sentence, however, does not immediately follow through with this idea but returns to Tanaka's summary of the relation between government and religion in Japanese history.
- 26 This passage summarizes Tanaka's understanding of the relation of Buddhism and the polity up through the Sengoku ("country at war") era, roughly the late fifteenth through sixteenth centuries. The Fujiwara family dominated the court as regents to the emperor from around the mid-tenth through late eleventh centuries. The Minamoto and the Taira, two powerful warrior houses, battled for supremacy in the Genpei War (1180–1185); a Minamoto victory brought about the establishment of the first Bakufu, or shogunate, which soon came to be ruled by the Hōjō family based in Kamakura. Power shifted in 1333 to the Ashikaga shoguns, who were based in Kyoto. The decline over time of Ashikaga power opened the way to

protracted struggle among various warlords in the Sengoku era. Eventually Japan was united by the successive efforts of the so-called "three great hegemon"—Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and Tokugawa Ieyasu—whom Tanaka names below. Tanaka follows conventional usage in referring to major historical figures by their given names.

- 27 Mount Hiei and Mount Kōya are the headquarters respectively of the Tendai and Shingon schools of Buddhism. Nobunaga made concerted efforts to break the temporal power of late medieval Buddhist institutions.
- 28 Tanaka alludes to the early modern system of temple certification (*terauke seido*), which enlisted temples in the roles of census keeping and population oversight. Buddhist temples issued annual certificates attesting that patron households (*danka*) were temple families in good standing and did not espouse Christianity or other proscribed sects.
- 29 *Fuju fuse* ("neither receiving nor giving") denotes a movement within the Nichiren sect active in the late sixteenth through mid-seventeenth centuries. The term expresses a hard-line interpretation of Nichiren Buddhist commitment to the *Lotus Sūtra* alone as the only teaching efficacious in the Final Dharma age and means that Nichiren priests should neither accept offerings from nor perform ritual services for persons who are not *Lotus Sūtra* devotees, however powerful or high-ranking. Throughout the medieval period, based on this principle, Nichiren priests had often won exemption from the obligation to participate in official rituals along with priests of other sects. Matters changed in 1595, when Hideyoshi, in an attempt to display his authority, required that ten priests from each Buddhist sect participate together in a series of memorial rites for his deceased relatives, to be held before the "Great Buddha" image that Tanaka refers to above, which Hideyoshi had commissioned. Fearing punitive measures if they refused, most Nichiren sectarian leaders counseled compromise. Those constituting the minority *fuju fuse* faction, however, urged refusal and were prepared to risk their lives if need be to uphold the sole truth of the *Lotus Sūtra*. Busshōin Nichiō, a *fuju fuse* leader, and Jōrakuin Nichikyō were arrested and exiled in 1600 and 1609 respectively. See Stone, "Rebuking the Enemies of the Lotus: Nichirenist Exclusivism in Historical Perspective," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 21, nos. 2-3 (1994): 231-259 (243-246). *Nenbutsu* refers here to chanting the name of the Buddha Amida in hopes of birth in his pure land. "*Nenbutsu* leads to the Hell without Respite" is sloganized shorthand for Nichiren's opposition to the Pure Land teachings, which he criticized for setting aside the *Lotus Sūtra*-based principle of realizing buddhahood in this world in favor of the provisional doctrine of post-mortem salvation in Amida's realm.
- 30 Tokugawa Ieyasu represents a paradigmatic instance of a warlord being posthumously apotheosized as a *gongen* ("avatar") or deity said to be a

- manifestation of a buddha or bodhisattva. Ieyasu's tomb at the Tōshōgū shrine in Nikkō, where he was enshrined as Tōshō Daigongen ("great avatar illuminating from the east"), became the center of a nationwide network of Tōshōgū shrines. Tenkai (1536-1643), architect of the Tōshōgū cult, was a leading Tendai monk and advisor to Ieyasu.
- 31 Both Christianity and the Nichiren sect explicitly taught allegiance to a truth transcending the ruler's authority. Within the Nichiren sect, however, only the purist *fuju fuse* group was suppressed; other, conciliatory factions quickly reached a rapprochement with the Tokugawa regime.
 - 32 Mitsukuni, lord of the Mitō domain, sponsored the compilation of a massive history of Japan (*Dai Nihonshi*) that stressed the centrality of the emperor. Emphasis on the emperor as the country's legitimate ruler, along with Nativist ideas about restoring the ways of ancient Japan, would become the ideological pillars of those who eventually overthrew the Tokugawa Bakufu and established the Meiji regime.
 - 33 Tanaka presumably refers here to a legal distinction drawn by the Meiji government between Shinto-derived new religious movements (sometimes called "sect Shinto"), dating chiefly from the nineteenth century, that were officially registered as independent religious bodies, and the Shinto of government-administered shrines. The distinction was part of a larger move to define religion as a private matter and exclude it from public policy making. Tanaka's characterization here lends support to recent scholarship suggesting that so-called "state Shinto" in Japan's modern imperial period should be understood not as a national religion but as a form of the secular, albeit one with strong religious symbolism. See Jason A. Josephson, *Invention of Religion in Japan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 132-163; and Jolyon B. Thomas, "Japan's Preoccupation with Religious Freedom" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2014), 76-92, 395-402.
 - 34 Evolutionary theory was appropriated in Japan for a range of intellectual, religious, and political agendas. See G. Clinton Godart, *Darwin, Dharma, and the Divine: Evolutionary Theory and Religion in Modern Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2017). For Tanaka's interpretation in particular, see Yulia Burenina, "Kindai Nihon ni okeru Nichiren bukkyō no shūkyō shisōteki saikaishaku: Tanaka Chigaku to Honda Nissō no 'Nichirensugui' o chūshin toshite" (PhD diss., Ōsaka University, 2013), 65-78.
 - 35 In the appendix to *Shūmon no ishin*, Tanaka offers detailed projections of the sect's capital, income, and expenditures over ten five-year periods, beginning from the implementation of his proposed sectarian reforms. He also outlines undertakings by which the sect would become a major social force, eventually dominating the national economy, infrastructure, and politics. He gives particular attention to the sect's building a fleet of ships that would promote trade, link settlements of devotees, and promote

proselytizing worldwide, and could also be armed and lent to the nation in times of emergency. The ordination platform was to be funded by life insurance policies held by Nichiren Buddhist adherents that would designate the future Honge Myōshū head temple, site of the *kaidan*, as beneficiary. See Tanaka, *Shūmon no ishin* (Tokyo: Shishiō Bunko, 1919), *furoku*, esp. 6–7.

- 36 This represents Tanaka's free interpretation. The *Mahāparinirvāṇa sūtra* permits arms to be borne in defense of the dharma; King Possessing Virtue's defense of the monk Awakened Virtue (see note 12 above) represents a case in point. Nichiren cites this episode in his *Risshō ankoku ron* but also makes clear his own stance that priests who distort the Buddhist teachings should be suppressed not by violence but by withdrawal of support. The issue of Buddhists raising arms or revenue to support their country's defense does not arise in either text. The reference to "The Object of Worship" is less clear still. Tanaka may have had in mind Nichiren's statement in that work that, in an age when *shakubuku* is necessary, the leaders of the bodhisattvas who are the Buddha's original disciples will appear as "wise kings who chastise foolish kings" (*Kanjin honzon shō*, *Teihon* 1:719). In context, the "wise king" probably referred to the Mongol ruler, since Nichiren saw the Mongol threat as Japan's deserved karmic retribution for rejecting the *Lotus Sūtra* in favor of provisional teachings. Tanaka, however, saw the "wise king" as that emperor of Japan who would one day subdue all nations and unite them in the one vehicle. See Nishiyama Shigeru, "Kindai no Nichirenshugi," 236–237.
- 37 The Meiji Constitutional guarantee of religious freedom actually appeared in article 28. In 1923, to begin implementing his goal of a government based on the *Lotus Sūtra*, Tanaka established a political party and ran candidates for local office. Though unsuccessful, this effort set a precedent for the postwar Sōka Gakkai's entry into electoral politics on a national scale (Ōtani, *Kindai Nihon no Nichirenshugi undo*, 297–299, 322–329).
- 38 Tanaka appropriates a quotation from the *Lotus Sūtra* (*Miaofa lianhua jing*, T. 262.9:10b). In context, the Buddha is saying that those who have not practiced and studied the dharma cannot understand how the buddhas employ a variety of skillful means in order to teach the one vehicle.
- 39 The names "Nichiren" and "Japan" (*Nihon* or *Nippon*; literally "sun origin") both begin with the character for "sun." Nichiren's name derives from the *Lotus Sūtra* passage, "just as the light of the sun and moon can banish all shadows and obscurity, this person [who upholds the *Lotus*], in going about the world, can remove the darkness of living beings" (T. 262.9.52b). A flag with the rising sun disk was adopted as the Japanese national flag for merchant ships and for the navy in 1870.
- 40 According to ancient myth, Jinmu, a descendant of the sun goddess, became the first emperor of Japan, an event said to have occurred in 660 BC.

This passage marks an early instance of what later became a concerted effort on Tanaka's part to integrate national mythology into his interpretation of Nichiren's doctrine.

- 41 See note 21.
- 42 The purple robe was a mark of recognition bestowed by the emperor on eminent prelates. Murakumo Zuiryūji was an elite convent of the Nichiren sect near Kyoto, whose successive abbesses belonged to the imperial or regental families. Tradition attributes its founding to Hideyoshi's sister.
- 43 *Nyosetsu shugyō shō*, *Teihon* 1:733. The *Mahāyāna* expounds the conditioned, impermanent nature of both persons and dharmas, the momentary physical and mental elements that compose both individual persons and their environments. Nichiren's point is that all things, sentient and insentient, will manifest the constantly abiding Wonderful Dharma.

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VI

Worlds beyond Sukhāvati

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**Pure Lands in Asian Texts
and Contexts**

An Anthology

**Edited by Georgios T. Halkias
and Richard K. Payne**



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