

Interpretations of passages in this second chapter

**Said to be given by Nichiren (日蓮) to his disciples
and recorded by Nikkō (日興)**

From The Oral Transmission of the Meaning

(Ongi Kuden, 御義口傳)

The Oral Transmission of the Meaning (J. Ongi Kuden, 御義口傳)

Introduction

The Oral Transmission of the Meaning (J. Ongi Kuden, 御義口傳), also known as The Orally Transmitted Commentaries on The Lotus Sūtra (J. Shū Jū Hokke Kyō Ongi Kuden, 就注法華經御義口傳) as well as The Record of Nikkō (J. Nikkō Ki (日興記), is said to be an account of oral lectures on The Lotus Sūtra given by Nichiren (日蓮, 1222-1282) to his six senior disciples in his later years (c. 1278) and recorded by Nikkō (日興, 1246–1333) founder of Taiseki Ji (大石寺), The Monastery in the Great Stone Meadow (Ōishigahara, 大石ヶ原).

The text is divided into three parts:

1. The first part provides an introduction to the meaning of ‘Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō’ and then offers interpretations of two hundred thirty-one passages from The Lotus Sūtra, the opening Sūtra on Infinite Meanings (S. Ananta Nirdeśa Sūtra, J. Muryōgi Kyō, 無量義經) and the closing Sūtra About Meditation on the Practice of the Bodhisattva (said to be) ‘Wholly Worthy’ (S. Samanta Bhadra Caryā Dhyāna Sūtra, J. Kan Fugen Bosatsu Gyōhō Kyō, 觀普賢菩薩行法經). Many of these interpretations begin with the citation of commentaries on these passages by Zhìyǐ and/or Zhànrán as a starting point for further explanation. A translation of its explanation of the meaning of ‘Devoting One’s Life to the Sūtra on the Lotus Blossom of Sublime Purpose’ (J. ‘Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō’, 南無妙法蓮華經) is covered in **Appendix J**. A translation of its interpretations of eight passages from this second chapter (including one on the meaning of the chapter’s title ‘On Skillfulness in Ways & Means’) are covered in **Appendixes K through R**.
2. The second part selects one short passage from each chapter of special importance and provides an insight into how it encapsulates the meaning of the entire chapter. For this chapter, the passage chosen comes from lines 111a-111b of verse. A translation of the explanation of how this passage reflects the meaning of the whole chapter is found in **Appendix S**.
3. The third and final part explains how the titles of each of the twenty-eight chapters is connected with the meaning of the sūtra’s title (J. daimoku, 題目). A translation of its explanation of how the title of this chapter is connected to the sūtra’s title is found in **Appendix T**.

It is said that Nichiren’s disciple Nikkō compiled and preserved these lectures by 1295. There has been controversy over the authenticity of this Oral Transmission of the Meaning (J. Ongi Kuden, 御義口傳) as a teaching from Nichiren himself because there was no written evidence of its existence prior to the early sixteenth century (more than two hundred years after Nichiren’s death), when it is first said to have appeared on lists of Nikkō’s works. Defenders point out however that, during this era, oral transmissions (kuden, 口傳) like this were meant to be confidential explanations of the deeper, esoteric meaning of scriptures and only intended for the initiated, those deemed to have sufficient faith to understand them.¹⁰⁷

This work is translated here because it is a definitive example of a current of ‘original enlightenment’ thought about The Lotus Sūtra found in Nichiren Schools.

The Oral Transmission of the Meaning (J. Ongi Kuden, 御義口傳)

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And why is it said that there is only one great work through which there are the causes and conditions for those blessed with enlightenment to appear in this world? The answer is that:

- * Those blessed with enlightenment appear in this world because they desire to make sentient beings open up the knowledge & vision of enlightenment and help them become pure.
- * They appear in this world because they desire to make sentient beings reveal the knowledge & vision of enlightenment.
- * They appear in this world because they desire to make sentient beings awaken the knowledge & vision of enlightenment.
- * They appear in this world because they desire to make sentient beings enter into the knowledge & vision of enlightenment."

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"There have been monks and nuns //39a
With hearts of arrogance, //39b
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And laywomen with a lack of faith. //39d
Those in the four-fold assembly like this //40a
Have numbered five thousand. //40b
Not seeing the errors of their ways, //40c
Beset with ethical flaws, conflicted in their moral commitment, //40d
And defending their own shortcomings, //41a
These narrow and shallow minded beings have now departed. //41b
They were the dregs and chaff of this assembly, //41c
Leaving due to the majesty of the Buddha's moral authority. //41d
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Were incapable of taking on such a great purpose. //42b
This assembly is now without any twigs or leaves, and //42c
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In rejecting it, they will fall into the path of evil. //155d
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“This purpose abides and is defined //111a
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Appendix T: On how the title of The Chapter on Skillfulness in Ways & Means (J. Hōbenpon, 方便品) is connected with the sūtra’s title (‘Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō’, 南無妙法蓮華經)

Appendix J

The Oral Transmission of the Meaning (J. Ongi Kuden, 御義口傳)

On Devotion to the Title of the Sūtra ('Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō', 南無妙法蓮華經)

Nāmaḥ is Sanskrit and refers to taking refuge in something greater, and devoting and turning one's very life over to it (śaraṇa gamana, 歸命). This can take the form of devotion to a person or a purpose:

- * In terms of a person (puruṣa, 人), it is devotion of one's life to the Blessed One Śākyamuni.
- * In terms of a purpose (dharma, 法), it is devotion of one's life to The Lotus Sūtra.
- * In terms of devotion (歸), there is the gateway of meditation to penetrating the manifestation of enlightenment (J. shakumon, 迹門), the unchanging dialectical principle that is the foundation for the transcendental nature of life's purpose (S. ananya tathatā, 不變眞如之理).
- * In terms of one's life (命), there is the gateway of meditation to penetrating the source of enlightenment (J. honmon, 本門), the knowledge of this transcendental nature that is ever adapting to the conditions at hand (S. yathā pratyaya jñāna, 隨緣眞如之智).

The essence of this devotion of one's life is expressed as 'Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō'. Saichō called the transcendental nature ever adapting to the conditions at hand 'the serene illumination of spiritual freedom in a single moment of thought' (eka kṣaṇa praśānta, 一念寂照). Further:

- * Devotion refers to the purpose found in the objective reality (or 'form') before us, while
- * One's life refers to the purpose found in our own (subjective) minds.

These two are ultimately inseparable. Volume one of Zhànrán's Commentary on the Profound Meaning of The Lotus Sūtra (C. Fǎhuá Xuányì Shìqiān, J. Hokke Gengi Shakusen, 法華玄義釋籤) says "Opening up an understanding of this ultimate unity is the vehicle of enlightenment."

In expressing devotion to the title of the sūtra (J. daimoku, 題目), 'Nam' is Sanskrit while 'Miàofǎ Liánhuá Jīng/Myōhō Renge Kyō' (妙法蓮華經) is Chinese/Japanese. This way, the Sanskrit, Chinese and Japanese are all seamlessly integrated together. In Sanskrit, the title of the scripture is 'Saddharma Puṇḍarīka Sūtra' while here (in Japan) it is 'Myōhō Renge Kyō'.

- * The one syllable 'Sat' (薩) means 'Sublime' (Myō, 妙)
- * The two syllables 'Dharma' (達 磨) mean 'Purpose' (Hō, 法)
- * The four syllables 'Puṇḍarīka' (芬 陀 梨 伽) mean 'Lotus Blossom' (Renge, 蓮華) &
- * The two syllables 'Sū-tra' (蘇-多覽 (二合)) mean 'Scripture' (Kyō, 經)

These nine Sanskrit syllables refer to the nine blessed beings¹⁰⁷ found in the existential sphere of enlightenment while the nine other spheres of life's purpose are the expressions of this sphere.

- * Sublime (Myō, 妙) refers to the true nature of life's purpose (S. dharmatā, 法性) while Life's purpose (Hō, 法) refers to the darkness of its ignorance (S. avidyā, 無明). With these two being perfectly integrated, there is the sublime nature of life's purpose (Myōhō, 妙法).
- * The lotus blossom (Renge, 蓮華) is a reference to dual nature of life's purpose as a cause and effect that also has this seamlessly integrated existential reality
- * The sūtra, or scripture (Kyō, 經), is said to consist of the sounds and the voices of all sentient beings. It is also said that the sūtra is 'the work of the Buddha's voice'. Some express this by saying it is the voice that is constant and everlasting (timeless) through the course of the past, the present and the future."

With there being the transcendental sphere of life (dharma dhātu, 法界), so there is a sublime purpose, a lotus blossom and a scripture. The lotus blossom is the existential reality of the Buddha's spiritual life (dharma kāya, 法身) that is endowed with eight petals and nine blessed beings (八葉九尊).¹⁰⁷ One should deliberate on this carefully.

Appendix K

The Oral Transmission of the Meaning (Ongi Kuden, 御義口傳)

#1 On the meaning of the chapter's title, 'On Skillfulness in Ways & Means' (Hōben, 方便)

Volume three of Zhìyǐ's Words & Passages of The Lotus Sūtra (C. Fahuá Wénjù, J. Hokke Mongu, 法華文句) *says*:

"And the way is secret while the means is sublime. *In the subliminal penetration of the way there is the true secret.* Inside the lining of the pauper's clothes, there was a priceless gem.^{9e} On the top of the king's crown there was also but a single gem.^{9f} These two gems were one and the same. A rich man pointed out the hired worker and adopted him as his son.^{9b} This too was no different. In all of these words there is a sublime secret. Like the verse in this second chapter of the sūtra says:

"Alone I understand the transcendental meaning of all of its mutually dependent aspects, // 18a

Along with the Buddhas of the ten directions. // 18b ...

"No more, no more! There is no use in explaining this further. // 34a

The purpose that I have realized is sublime and unfathomable. // 34b"

Therefore, we explain the ways as being secret and the means as being sublime. This is truly the idea of this chapter, and why it is called 'The Chapter on Skillfulness in Ways & Means' (Hōbenpon, 方便品)."

Volume three of Zhànrán's² Commentary on The Words & Passages of The Lotus Sūtra

(C. Fahuá Wénjù Jì, J. Hokke Mongu Ki, 法華文句記) *says*:

"The third explanation of skillfulness in ways & means is about it being a 'sublime secret.' It is sublime because the different doctrines (teachings about the true nature of life's purpose) all agree with one another. In aspiring to penetrate the true meaning (of the first four periods) of the Buddha's teachings, the three provisional doctrines are made to agree with one another through the perfect doctrine.¹² These three do not agree with one another when considered separately. And so they are (first) dealt with as not agreeing in order to then explain how they agree (through the perfect doctrine)."

On this The Oral Transmission of the Meaning says:

In this explanation, the single gem that is in the lining of the poor man's clothes was the same as the one on the top of the king's crown. The story of the hired worker who became the rich man's son was no different. These parables describe people without faith who have maligned the Buddha's true purpose while on the outside following the provisional teachings. This includes the two kinds of skillfulness in ways & means called 'applying the teachings (in accordance with the capacity of the audience)' and 'the penetrable gateways (of meditation on them)'. Because of this, they did not recognize that the jewels were really one and the same.

Now Nichiren and those like him chant 'Nam-Myōhō Renge Kyō' and embody the inner skillfulness in ways & means that is a sublime secret. Because of this, in reciting this chapter, first they invoke the title of the sūtra, saying 'The Sūtra on the Lotus Blossom of Sublime Purpose' ('Myōhō Renge Kyō', 妙法蓮華經) and then they invoke the title of this chapter, saying 'The Chapter on Skillfulness in Ways & Means' ('Hōbenpon', 方便品).

The third volume of Zhànrán's² commentary clarifies Zhiyǐ's original explanation, revealing that the true secret of the perfect doctrine is found in its resolving of all the differences found in the various teachings about the nature of life's purpose.

The expression 'perfect' (C. yuán, J. en, 圓) here is a special name for the teaching of The Lotus Sūtra because, in it, an ordinary person is in perfect accordance with the ultimate enlightenment of the Buddha and the transcendental meaning that is found in the mutually dependent aspects of all of life's purposes (J. shohō jissō, 諸法實相). In being perfect, the three thousand mutually dependent aspects of life's purpose are all possessed in a single moment of thought (J. ichinen sanzen, 一念三千). The word 'perfect' (C. yuán, J. en, 圓) is substituted in the sūtra by the term 'sublime' (C. miào, J. myō, 妙) because enlightenment to the transcendental meaning of the mutually dependent aspects found in all of life's purposes is inconceivably sublime. People who malign or ridicule this do not understand it. Because of this, it is said to be a secret. And the three thousand mutually dependent aspects found in the transcendental sphere of life's purpose are said to be a sublime secret, yet at the same time these three thousand are all enumerated; this in itself is nothing other than inconceivable.

- * *The place* where people who have committed great slander against the Buddha's true purpose go to accept and embrace The Lotus Sūtra is called 'The Chapter on Skillfulness in the Ways & Means of The Lotus Sūtra' (Myōhō Renge Kyō Hōbenpon, 妙法蓮華經方便品). Now, upon entering into the age in which there is the demise of the dispensation of the Buddha Śākyamuni's purpose (S. saddharma vipralopa, C. mò fǎ, J. mappō, 末法), this is the true work of Nichiren and those like him.
- * *The time* when those who have followed the earlier teachings about the nature of identity (ātma, 我) and purpose (dharma, 法) enter into its inner essence through The Lotus Sūtra is also called 'The Chapter on Skillfulness in the Ways & Means of The Lotus Sūtra'. This is the teaching about attaining enlightenment in this very life (J. sokushin jobutsu, 即身成佛) and there being a perfect consistency from beginning to end (J. honmats- kikyō tō, 本末究竟等).
- * With there being skillfulness in ways & means (Hōben, 方便), there is discovery of all of the phenomena of ignorance that are found in the ten-fold sphere of life's purpose.
- * With there being The Lotus Sūtra (Myōhō Renge Kyō, 妙法蓮華經) there is discovery of the transcendental nature of life's purpose, the crown atop this tenfold sphere. This is the same as saying:
 - "With there being affliction, so there is awakening to the nature of life's purpose." (S. yad kleśaṃ sā bodhi, J. bonnō soku bodai, 煩惱即菩提) &
 - "With there being life and death, so there is spiritual freedom." (S. yad saṃsāraṃ sā nirvāṇa, J. shōji soku nehan, 生死即涅槃).

Because it is 'perfect', all of the three thousand mutually dependent aspects found in the transcendental sphere of life's purpose are possessed in a single moment of thought. The word 'sublime' found in the sūtra signifies the same thing, the sublimely perfect phenomenal reality (of sentient existence) that is the work of the three thousand mutually dependent aspects in this single moment.

In being perfect, there is the transcendental meaning that is found in the mutually dependent aspects of all of life's purposes. Being perfect is also called 'being perfectly blended and perfectly fulfilled'.

- * Through *the gateway to penetrating the manifestation of enlightenment* (J. shakumon, 迹門) (in chapters one through fourteen of the sūtra), there is a perfect blending of all of life's purposes.
- * Through *the gateway to penetrating its source* (J. honmon, 本門) (in chapters fifteen through twenty-eight of the sūtra), there is their perfect fulfillment.

This is also expressed as the duality between meditation with introspection (vipaśyana, 觀) and stillness of mind (śamatha, 止) and the duality between matter (rupa, 色) & mind (citta, 心), objective & subjective reality. With these three thousand aspects being possessed in a single moment of thought and expressed through each single utterance, there is the secret treasury (of invocations) in the Eshin School (惠心流)¹⁰¹ of meditative practice.

Being 'perfect' is a reference to the single moment of thought while being 'sublime' is a reference to its three thousand mutually dependent aspects. This is also called 'the inconceivable work of the three thousand mutually dependent aspects being possessed in a single moment of thought'.

This sublime nature of life's purpose was not taught in the first three doctrines,¹² and so it was called a secret. Therefore, one should understand that, with there being 'Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō', there are the skillful ways & means of the single mind.

'Myōhō Renge Kyō' is the ninth level of pure consciousness (amala vijñāna, 阿摩羅識),⁴⁸ the seed dropped into the soil of the eight other levels of consciousness⁴⁸ and the ten-fold sphere of life's purpose. This must be deeply considered.

- * With there being **the ways**, there are the ten directions, which are the ten spheres of life's purpose.
- * With there being **the means**, there are said to be the inconceivable phenomena of their expression in sentient existence.

Appendix L

The Oral Transmission of the Meaning (Ongi Kuden, 御義口傳)

#2 On the passage “The knowledge of the Buddhas is very deep and infinitely broad.

The gateway into this knowledge ...” (J. sho butsu- chi-e jinjin muryō, go chi-e mon..., 諸佛智慧甚深無量其智慧門 ...)

Volume three of Zhiyi's Words & Passages of The Lotus Sūtra (C. Fahuá Wénjù, J. Hokke Mongu, 法華文句) says:

In praising the dual knowledge of all the Buddhas, first there is praise of the transcendental knowledge and then there is praise of the provisional knowledge.

a. Praise of the Transcendental Knowledge

With there being **the (dual) knowledge of all the Buddhas** (J. sho butsu- chi-e, 諸佛智慧), so there is the dialectical principle found in the transcendental nature of life's purpose.

* Because it goes beyond the three kinds of provisional knowledge⁴ that are applied in the influence of others, it is said to be **of all the Buddhas** (sho butsu, 諸佛).

* Because it reveals the ultimate purpose for one's own practice, it is called **the (dual) knowledge** (J. chi-e, 智慧).

The existential reality of this knowledge is also called the three-fold knowledge of the single mind (一心三智).³⁴

Very deep and infinitely broad (J. jinjin muryō, 甚深無量) is a term of praise.

* This explains that the knowledge of the Buddhas is as deep as the ultimate dialectical principle found in the transcendental nature of life's purpose. Because of this, it is said to be **very deep** (J. jinjin, 甚深).

* It is ultimately as broad as the whole of the transcendental sphere of life's purpose (S. dharma dhātu, 法界), and so it is said to be **infinitely broad** (J. muryō, 無量).

In being very deep and infinitely broad, its vertical depth and horizontal breadth are likened to the depth of a tree's roots and breadth of its spreading branches. A stream's size is based on the distance from its source. With the transcendental knowledge being praised like this, the provisional knowledge is as well.

b. Praise of the Provisional Knowledge

The gateway into this knowledge (J. go chi-e mon, 其智慧門): Because the preliminary ways & means are endowed with the power to move one's practice forward along the noble path, they are called 'gateways' (J. mon, 門). Through these gateways, one penetrates and reaches the dialectical principle of the middle way (S. madhyamā pratipad, 行中道) called 'transcendental knowledge'. The preliminary methodologies that prepare one for the noble path are that which is called the provisional knowledge.

Difficult to understand and difficult to penetrate (J. nange nannyū, 難解難入): This is a term of praise for it. Without a comprehensive plan one will not end up with anything of great (practical) usefulness.

* With the seven skillful ways & means²¹ (on the lesser vehicle) one is unable to fathom it.

* With the ten-fold abode of mindfulness^{23A} (on the bodhisattva's greater sense of purpose) there is the beginning of **understanding** (J. ge, 解).

* With the ten levels of grounding^{23D} there is its full **penetration** (J. nyū, 入).

In indicating it from beginning to end, it is possible to comprehend that which in the meantime is difficult to reveal in oneself or awaken in others. Therefore, it is specifically indicated that **students of life's purpose and those only spiritually awakened in their own lives are unable to comprehend it** (J. issai shomon hyakushibutsu sho funō chi,

一切聲聞辟支佛所不能知). Because their attachments (to their own practices and realizations) are particularly strong, their obstacles (of cognitive dissonance) are specifically corrected here.

The third volume of Zhànrán's² Commentary on The Words & Passages of The Lotus Sūtra

(C. Fahuá Wénjù Jì, J. Hokke Mongu Ki, 法華文句記) *says:*

On Transcendental Knowledge:

In being described as vertically lofty and horizontally broad, the nature of life's purpose is matched with an illustration. This way, Zhìyǐ explained that the transcendental knowledge is already everywhere in the ultimate domain of the vertical and the horizontal. Later, Zhìyǐ will explain that the principle of the provisional knowledge also corresponds with that which is ultimately deep and broad. To properly explain the provisional knowledge, Zhìyǐ first cited their different aspects and then explained them.

On Provisional Knowledge:

The gateway into this knowledge (J. go chi-e mon, 其智慧門) is a reference to the very first cause that leads to the ultimate fruit of transcendental knowledge.

- * When knowledge is viewed as a gateway, the gateway itself is the provisional knowledge.
- * When there is a gateway that leads to transcendental knowledge, the transcendental knowledge itself is viewed as being its effect.

With these being consistent, it is necessary that:

- * From the very beginning, the noble path involves the ten levels of grounding^{23D} found in its transcendental nature.
- * In the middle there is the sublime awakening (S. anuttara samyak sambodhi, 妙覺)¹⁰³
- * At the end there is the ultimate spiritual freedom (S. mahā parinirvāṇa, 大般涅槃).

Therefore, one knows that the intent of the words about there being a 'gateway' is reference to it being the *cause*.

On this, The Oral Transmission of the Meaning says:

The explanation above analyzes the idea from beginning to end. In being vertically deep and horizontally broad, the vertical depth signifies *the gateway to penetrating the source of enlightenment* and the horizontal breadth signifies *the gateway to penetrating its manifestation*. The roots of spiritual capacities are like those of grass and trees. The grass and trees themselves are like the manifestations of the Buddha's spiritual life while water is like the source of their growth.

- * The pouring down of the (compassionate) rain on the grass and trees is like the last fourteen chapters of the sūtra that are *a gateway to penetrating the source of enlightenment*.
- * The growth of the grass and trees is like the first fourteen chapters that are *the gateway to penetrating its manifestation* (the harvest of its fruits).
- * The planting of its roots (the sowing of its seeds) is also likened to the fourteen chapters *on the gateway to the source*.

The (dual) knowledge (J. chi-e, 智慧) refers to *the three-fold knowledge of the single mind*.³⁴

The gateway (J. mon, 門) refers to the place where one is able to enter into this knowledge. The existential reality of this three-fold knowledge is 'Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō' while the gateway is the working of the faithful mind.

And so in chapter three On the Parable of the Burning House, The Lotus Sūtra says:

"By means of faith they attain entry"

Entering into the gateway is the same idea. Now Nichiren and those like him chant 'Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō' and there is an expression of this knowledge.

The Chapter on *The Parable (of the Burning House)* says:
“There is (really) only one gateway (from the house).”

Within this gateway, there are (many gateways to realizing life’s true purpose):

- * The gateway of existence
- * The gateway of non-existence
- * The gateway of both existence & non-existence, and
- * The gateway beyond existence and non-existence.

- * The gateway of existence is life
- * The gateway of non-existence is death
- * The gateway of both existence & non-existence is life & death in a single moment.
- * The gateway beyond existence and non-existence transcends life & death.

- * Through the gateway of existence, there are the literal words of the sūtra’s title.
- * Through the gateway of emptiness, there are the myriad aspects of these five characters that are completely perfect without freezing them into any one particular meaning.
- * Through the gateway of there being both existence and non-existence, there is the completely perfect source and manifestation of the five characters of this title.
- * Through the gateway beyond existence and non-existence, there is the idea of the whole sūtra being included within them.

This inner realization of The Lotus Sūtra is not reached through the knowledge found on the two lesser vehicles.⁴ Volume three of Zhiyi’s Words & Passages of The Lotus Sūtra says:
“One cannot be delivered into it by means of the seven skillful kinds of ways & means²¹ on the lesser vehicle.”

Now Nichiren and those like him enter into this dual (provisional & transcendental) knowledge, and so there are lines 6c-7b of verse in this chapter that say:

“There are no sentient beings
Who can attain a full understanding of it
Other than those bodhisattvas
Endowed with the very strongest power of faith.”

This explains the work of those of us who are the practitioners of The Lotus Sūtra.

Appendix M

The Oral Transmission of the Meaning (Ongi Kuden, 御義口傳)

#3 On the passage :

And why is it said that there is only one great work through which there are the causes and conditions for those blessed with enlightenment to appear in this world?

The answer is that:

- * Those blessed with enlightenment appear in this world because they desire to make sentient beings open up the knowledge & vision of enlightenment and help them become pure (of affliction).
- * They appear in this world because they desire to make sentient beings reveal the knowledge & vision of enlightenment (through their own lives).
- * They appear in this world because they desire to make sentient beings awaken the knowledge & vision of enlightenment (though another life).
- * They appear in this world because they desire to make sentient beings enter into the knowledge & vision of enlightenment (beyond any distinctions of self & other, etc.).

云何名諸佛世尊唯以一大事因緣故出現於世？諸佛世尊，欲令眾生開佛知見，使得清淨故，出現於世；欲示眾生佛之知見故，出現於世；欲令眾生悟佛知見故，出現於世；欲令眾生入佛知見道故，出現於世。舍利弗！是為諸佛以一大事因緣故出現於世。

On this, Volume four of Zhiyi's Words and Passages of The Lotus Sūtra (C. Fahuá Wénjù, J. Hokke Mongu, 法華文句) says:

- a. **One** (S. eka, J. ichi, 一) is a reference to the transcendental meaning that is found in the mutually dependent aspects of life's purpose (S. tattvasya lakṣaṇa, J. jissō, 實相). There are not five, or three, or seven or nine. Because of this, it is said that there is one.
- b. Its nature is broad and wide-ranging, branching out into three, five, seven or nine (different aspects), etc. Because of this, it is said to be **great** (S. mahā, J. dai, 大).
- c. The manner, the means by which the Buddhas appear in this world is said to be the **work** (S. yena, J. ji, 事).
- d. Because sentient beings are able to be receptive to and make connections with the Buddha (through faith), there are said to be the **causes** (karaṇī, 因).
- e. Because the vehicle of enlightenment has the capacity to respond to the needs of sentient beings, there are said to be **the conditions** (S. kṛt, J. en, 緣).

This passage is about the Buddha's original intent for appearing in this world.

On this, The Oral Transmission of the Meaning says:

- a. **One** is a reference to The Lotus Sūtra (on the one, universal vehicle of the transcendental vow descending from the Buddha's spiritual life that includes all of life's purposes).
- b. **Great** refers to The Garland Sūtra (on the countless mutually dependent aspects found in all the different levels of purpose on this greater vehicle).
- c. **Work** here refers to all the resolves of meditation (samādhis, 三昧) in between these two. The sūtras before The Lotus Sūtra taught about the three truths as if they were the pieces of a shattered jewel that was no longer precious. And further:
 - a. **One** refers to the sublime (Myō, 妙)
 - b. **Great** refers to the purpose (Hō, 法)
 - c. **Work** refers to the lotus (Ren, 蓮) (the practice of faith)
 - d. **The causes** refer to its blossoming (Ge, 華) and
 - e. **The conditions** refer to the sūtra (Kyō, 經)

And further it can be said:

- a. Through our heads there is the sublime (Myō, 妙),
- b. Through our throats there is the purpose (Hō, 法),
- c. Through our hearts there is the lotus (Ren, 蓮),
- d. Through our guts there is the blossom (Ge, 華) and
- e. Through our legs there is the sūtra (Kyō, 經).

Our entire (c. five foot tall) body is therefore made up of the five characters in The Sūtra on the Lotus Blossom of Sublime Purpose (Myō Hō Ren Ge Kyō, 妙法蓮華經)

Śākyamuni, The One Who Has Descended Into This World (S. Tathāgata, J. Nyorai, 如來), had concealed the precious secret about this great work for forty years. Now, with the teaching of The Lotus Sūtra, this secret was revealed. It was for this great work that the Buddha appeared in this world. Through embracing these five characters of life's sublime purpose with singleness of mind, we open up of the knowledge and vision of the Buddha (J. kai buts- chi ken, 開佛知見) and there is the time we attain enlightenment in this very life (J. soku shin jōbutsu, 即身成佛).

Opening up here is a different name for the faithful mind.

- * Upon invoking this most sublime purpose of life (myōhō, 妙法) with a faithful mind, there is **opening up** the knowledge and vision of enlightenment.
- * Upon opening it up by chanting 'Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō' with a faithful mind, there is said to be **revealing** the knowledge and vision of enlightenment (through our own lives).
- * Upon revealing it through our own lives, there is abiding in the Pure Land at Vulture's Peak (S. Gṛdha Kūta, J. Ryōju San, 靈鷲山) and attaining enlightenment in this very life. This is said to be **awakening** this knowledge and vision (though another life).
- * Upon awakening the knowledge and vision of the Buddha though another life there is existential reality of directly reaching the seat of enlightenment (bodhi maṇḍa, 道場).^{14a} This is said to be **entering** into the knowledge and vision of the Buddha (beyond there being or not being any distinctions in its transcendental nature such as self & other, etc.).

And so there is the true intent behind opening up the knowledge and vision of the Buddha through a faithful mind.

In **entering** into the knowledge and vision of the Buddha:

- * The intent of the term 'entering' in the teachings on the gateway to penetrating the manifestation of enlightenment (J. shakumon, 迹門) is to reach the ultimate principle underlying the transcendental meaning found in the mutually dependent aspects of all of life's purposes (J. shōhō jissō, 諸法實相).
- * The intent of the term 'entering' in the teachings on the gateway to penetrating the source of enlightenment (J. honmon, 本門) is to reach the ultimate principle (found in the transcendental vow of the spiritual life) underlying the original enlightenment.

Now Nichiren and those like him chant 'Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō' and are said to enter into the treasure tower (where this original enlightenment is found).

Furthermore:

- * The term 'Buddha' in 'opening up the knowledge & vision of the Buddha' refers to the sphere of enlightenment that is endowed with the other nine spheres of life's purpose.
- * The dual term 'knowledge and vision' refers to the duality found in such terms as:

- * Life's purpose and its sublimity
- * Meditation with introspection and stillness of mind
- * Serenity and illumination
- * Life and death, and
- * The cause & effect of mind & body, mind & matter, subjective & objective reality, etc.

This knowledge & vision is about life's most sublime purpose. In being endowed with the nine other spheres of life's purpose, there is an opening up of the knowledge & vision of the Buddha's mind and doing the work of The Lotus Sūtra. And upon deliberating on this, there is a realization that sentient beings in the nine spheres of life's purpose are the work of the Buddha. In opening this knowledge & vision up, there is a revealing of the Buddha's spiritual life and an upholding of it through one's own life. There is no revealing of this sublime purpose without this upholding of the Buddha's knowledge & vision through one's own life. When there is such receptivity, sympathy and response maintained between teacher and disciple, there is an awakening as is expressed in line 65b of the verse of this chapter, when the Buddha said to his disciples 'you are just like me, without any difference.' It is awakening to the knowledge & vision of enlightenment through another life, an awakening that is endowed with a vision of the three-thousand-fold sphere of life's purpose but found in each and every one of our lives. This is the very existential reality of The Lotus Sūtra. In penetrating this realization within, there is said to be entering into this knowledge & vision of enlightenment. It is an inner realization that must be kept secret!

And it is said in that within the four parts of this knowledge & vision of the Buddha there are the eight signs of the Buddha's life.⁸²

1. With **opening it up**, there is the sign of its birth
8. With **entering into it**, there is the sign of its death
- 2-7. In between them, there are six signs of **revealing it** through one's own life and **awakening it** through another:
 - 2-3. In #2 descending from the heaven of grace (tuṣita devaloka, 兜率天)^{47d} and #3 being entrusted in a womb there is revealing the knowledge & vision of the Buddha through one's own life.
 - 4-7. In #4 leaving home, #5 defeating the devil, #6 attaining perfect enlightenment and #7 turning the wheel (teaching) of life's purpose, there is awakening the knowledge & vision of the Buddha through another life.

The intent of the doctrines on provisional knowledge was to teach sentient beings how to make (the affliction and existential suffering of) life & death very distant and remote. Because of this, they were not about these four components found in the knowledge & vision of enlightenment. Now, in this sūtra, the duality of life & death is seen to be the sublime function of a single mind. The two paths of (meditation on their) existence & non-existence are the transcendental virtues found in the original (timeless source of) spiritual awakening. In opening up this awakening, there are the four components of the Buddha's knowledge and vision. These four parts are the one great work of the Buddhas through the past, present and future. Deliberating on this work and carrying it out is the reason for their appearance in this world.

And yet, about this (opening of the Buddha's knowledge and vision of enlightenment in The Lotus Sūtra), Hōnen (法然) spoke of discarding, closing, ignoring and abandoning it.¹⁰² The Great Teacher Kōbō (弘法大師, also called Kūkai, 空海) regarded it as a third rate

purpose¹⁰² and disparaged it as being mere sophistry. By doing so, did he not cut off the tongues of the five Buddhas found in the lotus sphere¹⁰⁷ who are all on the same path? And (in equating the sūtras on esoteric ritual practices as equivalent to The Lotus Sūtra), were not the Great Teachers Jikaku (慈覺大師, also called Ennin, 圓仁) & Chishō (智證大師, also called Enchin),¹⁰² like those who gave a sword to their bad children so that they could cut off the heads of their parents?

And it is also said that:

- a. **One** is a reference to *the dialectical principle of the middle way* (madhyamā pratipad, 中道).
- b. **Great** refers to *the nature of emptiness* (śūnyatā, 空).
- c. **Work** refers to *the (mutually dependent) constructs found in the virtual nature of sentient existence* (prajñapti, 假).

What is the perfectly seamless blending of these three truths but 'Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō'? This title in five characters is the very heart of Nichiren, harboring the original purpose for his appearance in this world, and devotion to it is 'the work to be done'.

- * Among all the sentient beings in Japan, are not the disciples and lay supporters of Nichiren those of whom Zhìyǐ said "Because sentient beings are able to be receptive to and make connections with the Buddha (through faith), there are said to be *the causes* (karaṇī, 因)."
- * And, in propagating the ultimate principle of The Lotus Sūtra, is there not that of which he said "Because the vehicle of enlightenment has the capacity to respond to the needs of sentient beings, there are said to be *the conditions* (S. kṛt, J. en, 緣)."?
 - * Through *the causes* there is the sowing of the seeds.
 - * Through *the conditions* there are the karmic connections that reach deep into the past.
 - * The *work* is the actual work of Nichiren's life among all the phenomena of sentient existence in the three-thousand-fold sphere (that occur) in a single moment of thought.
 - * **One** is a reference to the single moment of thought (J. ichinen, 一念).
 - * **Great** is a reference to the three thousand mutually dependent aspects of life's purpose (J. sanzen, 三千).

These three thousand are the mutually dependent phenomena of causes and conditions.

- * **The work** is at the level of society (S. sattva loka, 衆生世間).
- * **The causes** refer to the five projections of life's purpose (S. pañca skandha loka, 五陰世間)⁴² at the level of the individual.
- * **The conditions** refer to the level of the nation and land (S. kṣetra loka, 國土世間). This is a reference to the jungle (S. Jambudvīpa, 南閻浮提)⁵⁸ where The Lotus Sūtra is propagated, the world we must all endure together (sahā loka, 娑婆世界) that is the foundational condition of the nation.

The (twenty-eighth chapter of this) sūtra (On the Inspiration of the Bodhisattva (said to be) 'Wholly Worthy' - Samantabhadra Utsāhana, 普賢菩薩勸發品) says:

"I will broadly propagate this sūtra in the jungle of this world (S. Jambudvīpa, 南閻浮提)⁵⁸ so that it will never disappear here."

Appendix N

#4 The Oral Transmission of the Meaning (Ongi Kuden, 御義口傳)

On the Five Kinds of Corruption (S. pañca kaṣāya, J. go joku, 五濁事)

On this, volume four of Zhiyi's Words and Passages of The Lotus Sūtra (C. Fahuá Wénjù, J. Hokke Mongu, 法華文句) *says*:

1. **The corruption of ages** (kalpa kaṣāya, 劫濁): A corrupted age does not have any distinctly defined size. Generally speaking, an age (kalpa, 劫) refers to a very long period of time while a moment (kṣana, 剎那) refers to a very short one.
2. **The corruption of societies** (sattva kaṣāya, 眾生濁): A society, an interacting group of sentient beings, is also without any distinct size. Upon clinging to pride and belief in attaining the fruits and rewards of a society's esteem, this ... is established.
3. **The corruption of emotional disturbances** (kleśa kaṣāya, 煩惱濁) refers to the existential reality of the five kinds of emotional disturbance that are dull; greed, hatred, delusions of selfish disinterest, pride and doubt.³
4. **The corruption of beliefs** (dṛṣṭi kaṣāya, 見濁) is a reference to the existential reality of the five kinds of mental disturbance that are sharp.³
 - a. Flawed beliefs about the reality of one's self-centered existence
 - b. Flawed beliefs attached to the extremes of duality
 - c. Flawed beliefs about the transcendental nature of life's purpose
 - d. Flawed beliefs exaggerating the importance of beliefs, confusing subjective views (opinions) with objective reality
 - e. Flawed beliefs exaggerating the importance of rituals and moral rules, superstitious beliefs confusing the means & ends of the noble path
5. **The corruption of lifespans** (āyu kaṣāya, 命濁) is a reference to the existential reality of continuous attachments to the bodies & minds (of individual lives).

On this, The Oral Transmission of the Meaning says:

Nichiren and those like him have overcome these five kinds of corruption.

1. In saying 'my land is a sanctuary of peace', the sixteenth chapter declares that it goes beyond **the corruption of ages**.
2. Through the natural, effortless spontaneity (J. musa, 無作) found in the transcendental meaning found in the mutually dependent aspects (J. jissō, 實相) of the Buddha's (three-fold) spiritual life (J. busshin, 佛身),⁶⁵ it goes beyond **the corruption of societies**.
3. With there being emotional disturbances, so there is spiritual awakening (J. bonnō soku bodai, 煩惱即菩提), and with there being life and death, so there is spiritual freedom (J. shōji soku nehan, 生死即涅槃). Through the sublime intent found in the Buddha's spiritual life, it goes beyond **the corruption of emotional disturbances**.
4. With this originally existing (timeless & eternal) spiritual life being without any beginning or end and enduring for an inconceivable number of ages (J. gohyaku jintengō, 五百塵點), it goes beyond **the corruption of lifespans**.
5. In properly discarding the ways and means and simply teaching of the supreme path of enlightenment, the votary of The Lotus Sūtra goes beyond **the corruption of beliefs**.

This is about the objective of 'Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō' being to overcome the arising of the five kinds of corruption, and its true intent now being revealed here among the five kinds of corruption found in the sentient beings of Japan.

Consequently, in volume four of The Words and Passages of The Lotus Sūtra (C. Fahuá Wénjù, J. Hokke Mongu, 法華文句), Zhìyǐ says the following about the characteristics (lakṣaṇa, 相) of corruption:

“The characteristics found in the corruption of ages occur when the four other kinds of corruption intensify and accumulate over a period of time:

- * As hatred intensifies, there is the arising of knives and other weapons.
- * As greed and lust intensify, there is the arising of hunger and starvation.
- * As the delusions found in the stupidity of selfish disinterest intensify, there is the arising of disease and pestilence.

As these three kinds of hardship arise, so emotional disturbances proliferate and are perpetuated, beliefs become inflamed, bodies and minds become coarsened and evil words are invoked.”

And chapter ten of this sūtra On the Teacher of Life’s Purpose (Dharma Bhāṇaka, 法師品) says:

“People have shown great hostility towards this sūtra during the lifetime of The One Who Descends Into This World, and they will show even more afterwards.”

Those who do not have faith in The Lotus Sūtra are heavily obstructed by these five kinds of corruption. On this, lines 154a-d of verse in this second chapter of the sūtra say:

“In evil worlds with the five kinds of corruption,
There is only pleasure in attachments to sensory desires.
It is because of this that sentient beings
Ultimately do not seek the path to enlightenment.”

The Lotus Sūtra is a different name for the path to enlightenment and Zhìyǐ said that its teaching is specifically about this path.

Appendix O

#5 The Oral Transmission of the Meaning (Ongi Kuden, 御義口傳)

On lines 39a-42d of verse that say:

"There have been monks and nuns //39a
With hearts of arrogance, //39b
Laymen full of conceit //39c
And laywomen with a lack of faith. //39d
Those in the four-fold assembly like this //40a
Have numbered five thousand. //40b
Not seeing the errors of their ways, //40c
Beset with ethical flaws, conflicted in their moral commitment, //40d
And defending their own shortcomings, //41a
These narrow and shallow minded beings have now departed. //41b
They were the dregs and chaff of this assembly, //41c
Leaving due to the majesty of the Buddha's moral authority. //41d
These people, with such scant blessings, //42a
Were incapable of taking on such a great purpose. //42b
This assembly is now without any twigs or leaves, and //42c
There are only those who are pure and true of heart. //42d

On this, volume four of Zhiyi's Words and Passages of The Lotus Sūtra (C. Fahuá Wénjù, J. Hokke Mongu, 法華文句) *says*:

- * Generally speaking, this refers to those among the four groups in the assembly (monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen) **with arrogance ... conceit and ... a lack of faith**.
- * Only the two groups that had left home (monks and nuns) had cultivated any spiritual awakening or attained any stillness of meditation. Mistakenly reasoning this was the genuine fruit of the noble path, they had developed arrogant and haughty opinions, considering themselves superior to those of this world.
- * There were also many conceited laymen and laywomen with shallow knowledge that bore prejudices and superstitious beliefs.
- * **Not seeing the errors of their ways:** There are three kinds of lapses (false beliefs, lack of merit & immorality) that upend the inner mind and raise blemishes in people's virtue so that they are unable to bear shame. If they are able see their own errors, they will bear shame and humility before their community (S. saṃgha, 僧).

On this, volume five of Zhànrán's² Commentary on The Words & Passages of The Lotus Sūtra (C. Fahuá Wénjù Jì, J. Hokke Mongu Ki, 法華文句記) *says*:

In concealing their flaws, there are the three errors of arrogance, conceit and lack of faith.

- * Concealing their flaws while extolling their virtues is **arrogance**.
- * Being unable to examine their own conduct is **conceit**.
- * Being without personal humility is having a **lack of faith**.

If people do not see their own errors, they will not get beyond these three. Although they may not yet have realized the fruit of enlightenment, they will at least have a sense of shame.

On this, The Oral Transmission of the Meaning says:

These passages from Zhiyi and Zhànrán² explain the motivations of the five thousand who left the assembly before the Buddha's elaboration of this teaching in the second chapter of the sūtra. You should deliberate on them carefully. The monks (bhikṣus, 比丘) and nuns

(bhikṣuṇīs, 比丘尼) were the two kinds of people who had left home. They were both said to be arrogant when they concealed their flaws while extolling their virtues. The laymen (upāsakas, 優婆塞) were conceited while the laywomen (upāsikās, 優婆夷) lacked humility.

These four kinds of people now flourish in Japan. Line 40b of verse in the sūtra says they **numbered five thousand**. In Japan there are now said to be five million such people (the original text says 4,994,828, perhaps there was a census!), but when the Buddha was in the world, it was said that five thousand arose from their seat and departed. Now, after the demise of the Buddha's true purpose (S. saddharma vipralopa, J. Mappō, 末法) in this world, all sentient beings in Japan arose from their seats and departed when Nichiren spoke.

Were not Dōryū (道隆),¹⁰² Ryōkan (良觀)¹⁰² and their nuns at Kamakura just like these arrogant monks and nuns in the sūtra? And, regardless of their social station, were not the Lord Hōjō Tokiyori¹⁰⁶ at The Monastery of the Highest Illumination (Saimyō Ji, 最明寺) and the laywomen there also just like them? None of them recognized their own transgressions, did they? Now there are people who malign Nichiren and those like him. Are not these people, as it says in line 40c of verse, **not seeing the errors of their ways**? They have all committed the serious transgression of maligning the Buddha's great purpose. Without any doubt, they are like the people who left their seats when The Lotus Sūtra was to be taught. Although they may have encountered Nichiren, they are like those in this chapter who 'arose from their seats, bowed to the Buddha and then departed', but only in the sense of disrespecting and looking down on him. They have not bowed and departed with any faithful understanding. They are like those of whom line 40d of verse in this chapter said (they were) **beset with ethical flaws, conflicted in their moral commitment**. On this, volume four of Zhiyi's Words and Passages of The Lotus Sūtra (C. Fahuá Wénjù, J. Hokke Mongu, 法華文句) says:

"Lapses in observing moral conduct are called ethical flaws while lapses preventing proper resolve and spiritual awakening are said to be (emotional) conflicts."

These five thousand arrogant people were endowed with the five habitual forces of attachment (pañca vāsanā, 五住)⁵⁵ to emotional disturbances we are all endowed with. Now, when encountering The Lotus Sūtra, there is opening up the mind to the fact that, with there being conceit, so there is also the sphere of life's purpose and, in bowing to the Buddha and departing, we are all just said to be running away from the Buddha's moral authority. But we are also endowed with the sphere of enlightenment, and 'Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō' is this moral authority. And so, in departing from it, we are also not really departing from its ultimate intent. Because of this, in the very last words of the sūtra, found in chapter twenty-eight On the Inspiration of the Bodhisattva 'Wholly Worthy' (Samantabhadra Utsāhana, 普賢菩薩勸發品), it is said:

"The entire assembly then ... bowed to the Buddha and departed."

And it has been said that the five thousand withdrew from their seats, but The Lotus Sūtra says that ultimately there was no withdrawing from their seats. This was because, upon hearing about the transcendental meaning of the mutually dependent aspects found in all of life's purposes, they had already opened up and awakened to the summary teaching about 'opening up the three & revealing the one'. It had already been revealed to the conceited and arrogant that, with there being pride, so there is the sphere of life's purpose, and that the potential capacity for pride is intrinsic to the primordial nature (anāditva, 本有) of sentient existence that is without any beginning. Saying that they **numbered five thousand** was a reference to all of those who are endowed with the five habitual forces of attachment

(pañca vāsanā, 五住)⁵⁴ to emotional disturbances (kleśas, 煩惱). If we were without these five, the very intent of The Lotus Sūtra would be lost and forgotten.

With these five kinds of attachment to emotional disturbances pre-existing in our existential nature and always abiding within us, we are said to be among the five thousand. In not just being attached to severing these afflictions but rather integrating them seamlessly with the very existential reality of life's most sublime purpose, these five kinds of attachments are, paraphrasing line 40c of verse in this chapter, 'not seeing the error of our own ways'.

Line 40d says they were **beset with ethical flaws, conflicted in their moral commitment**. This is not just a reference to the precepts of moral commitment found in the teachings of the lesser vehicle or the provisional teachings of the greater vehicle that are designed to correct certain errors of understanding or heal specific mental illnesses. It is instead said to be about maintaining a commitment to life's most sublime purpose (J. myōhō, 妙法) (despite our shortcomings). And so in being **beset with ethical flaws** and **conflicted in their moral commitment**, there is the very existential reality of people who chapter eleven On the Teacher of Life's Purpose (Dharma Bhāṇaka, 法師品) called 'those who maintain a moral commitment' (despite their flaws). Because flaws and afflictions are found in this very pre-existing, primordial nature (of sentient existence), the sūtra here speaks of all beings **defending their own shortcomings**. From the very beginning of time, in the sublime moral commitment to the one universal vehicle of spiritual awakening, the transcendental sphere of life's purpose (dharma dhātu, 法界) is found in each particle of dust and each moment of thought everywhere in the ten directions. Even with that being the case, as it is said in line 41b, **these narrow and shallow minded beings have now departed**.

The dregs and chaff: Within the purpose of each and every particle of dust (in the universe), there is the original pre-existing nature of enlightenment that is found in the three-fold spiritual life of the Buddha.⁶⁵ And so, although (in line 42a) the five thousand are said to be **these people with such scant blessings** (of virtue), they are also innately endowed with very essence of enlightenment. They were said to be **incapable of taking on such a great purpose**, but having heard about the transcendental meaning of the mutually dependent aspects found in all of life's purposes that summarizes the opening up of this existential reality, there was the inevitability of completely opening up and awakening to the knowledge and vision of enlightenment. The venerable Śāriputra then requested that the Buddha further distinguish this by elaborating on the teaching about 'opening up the three (and revealing the one)' for those with a duller capacity, as they were said to be **incapable of taking on such a great purpose** (even though they were already innately endowed with it).

In going back to the true meaning of The Lotus Sūtra, and seeing the existential reality of life's sublime purpose, one should not forget (that there is no distinction between) that which is taken on and those that take it on. The sublime nature of life's purpose is inconceivable. Upon awakening to it, one sees why it is said in line 42c of the verse that **this assembly is now without any twigs or leaves**. This inner realization is simply the one transcendental meaning that is found in the mutually dependent aspects of all of life's purposes. There is no other purpose distinguished outside of it because, this way, as line 42c says, **there are only those who are pure and true of heart**. In speaking of the pure of heart, there is the opening up of life's sublime purpose in terms of all the phenomena of sentient existence, in both mind and body.

Now Nichiren and those like him chant ‘Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō’, and it is said that there are only those who are pure and true of heart.

- * **Those** here is a reference to those who are enlightened to the transcendental meaning of the mutually dependent aspects found in all of life’s purposes (J. shohō jissō, 諸法實相), ‘those’ found in all ten spheres of life’s purpose.
- * **Pure and true of heart** (S. sārātva, 真實) refers to the sublime purpose of mind and body found in these ten spheres.
- * **Only** here is a reference to this being limited to the teaching found in this sūtra.

The five thousand who were arrogant were none other than those hearing The Lotus Sūtra. These five thousand proud people are all of us who are endowed with the four elemental principles of form (matter, or objective reality)⁵⁷ and the empty space in which they are contained. And with there being these four elemental principles and the empty space in which they are contained, so there is The Lotus Sūtra (Myōhō Renge Kyō, 妙法蓮華經).

- * These five thousand people exemplify all those in the primordial darkness of ignorance (mūla avidyā, 元品無明) that is fundamental to the very nature of sentient existence. Because of this, it is said that they **bowed to the Buddha and then withdrew**. This is about those who descend from the ninth down to the eighth and then to the sixth level of consciousness,⁴⁸ the gateways descending along the path of transmigration (into the sufferings of life & death).
- * **Leaving due to the majesty of the Buddha’s moral authority** is a reference to the gateway of transcending (these sufferings to attain the spiritual freedom of nirvāṇa). In fact, the majesty of this moral authority is ‘Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō’. Its existential nature is the source of all delusion and all spiritual awakening. This is should be considered very carefully.

Appendix P

#6 The Oral Transmission of the Meaning (Ongi Kuden, 御義口傳)

On lines 64c-66b of verse that say:

"Śāriputra! You should know //64c
That I originally declared a vow, //64d
An aspiration to make all sentient beings //65a
Just like me, without any difference. //65b
Just like in my own vow of long ago //65c
That has now been fulfilled, //65d
There is the transformative influence on sentient beings //66a
That has made them all enter the path to enlightenment. //66b

On this, volume four of Zhìyǐ's Words and Passages of The Lotus Sūtra (C. Fahuá Wénjù, J. Hokke Mongu, 法華文句) *says*:

This is about causing the encouragement of faith.

On this, The Oral Transmission of the Meaning says:

- * I here is a reference to the Blessed One, the Buddha Śākyamuni, the one who said in this sūtra's sixteenth chapter On Measuring the Life of The One Who Has Descended Into This World, 'I have really attained enlightenment for all of eternity'. This is said to be on the Blessed Buddha Śākyamuni's teaching about the gateway that penetrates the source of enlightenment (J. honmon, 本門), but is really about all of us here in the phenomenal reality of sentient existence.
- * **Just like me** is a reference to the last seven of the ten mutually dependent aspects (on cause and effect and their perfect consistency). The nine lesser spheres of life's purpose are a reference to sentient existence while the first three of the ten mutually dependent aspects are a reference to its existential reality. We sentient beings are the parents while the Buddha is the child (we have given birth to). Father and son are one, an undivided entity that is perfectly consistent from beginning to end (J. honmats-kukyō tō, 本末究竟等). In the chapter On Measuring the Life of The One Who Has Descended Into This World, we sentient beings are said to be (endowed with) the timeless three-fold spiritual life (tri kāya, 三身) of the Buddha that is natural, effortless, spontaneous and beyond any self-consciously driven motive (anabhisaṃskāra, 無作).⁶⁵

Now Nichiren and those like him who chant 'Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō' are the ones who are being referred to here, and we should deliberate on this carefully. The original vow of the Blessed Buddha Śākyamuni is two-fold, with one part being specifically for one's own enlightenment and one part being for the enlightenment of all sentient beings generally. Because of this, in chanting 'Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō', I vow to make all sentient beings in Japan attain enlightenment, just like me. This is why the words in the sūtra speak of it in terms of being **just like in my own vow of long ago**. In the end, the Buddha guided and led them, blending his own life with theirs so that it **has now been fulfilled**. The intent of this passage may be understood this way.

In saying that this vow **has now been fulfilled**, the term 'has been' is read as referring to the fact that this fulfillment has already been accomplished. What does it mean in saying this? Generally speaking, Zhìyǐ's explanation is that this vow had already been accomplished when the Buddha's teaching about the transcendental meaning of the mutually dependent

aspects found in all of life's purposes (S. sarva dharma tattvasya lakṣaṇam, J. shohō jissō, 諸法實相) had been revealed. However, we now explain that this vow has been fulfilled through the revelation of 'Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō'.

The passage about making **all sentient beings just like me, without any difference** is vitally important in understanding this.

- * **Just like in my own vow of long ago** is a reference to the sublime nature of the original cause (J. honin myō, 本因妙).^{104B}
- * **(Making all sentient beings) just like me, without any difference** refers to the sublime nature of the original effect (J. honga myō, 本果妙).^{104B}

The sublime enlightenment¹⁰³ of the Blessed One Śākyamuni is in our very own flesh and blood. Are not the cause and effect of the merits and virtues he practiced and earned now in our very own bones and marrow?

Zhìyǐ's explanation was that this passage is about causing the encouragement of faith so that there will be the original fruit of enlightenment. Now, for the ten thousand years in the age after the demise of the Buddha's true purpose (S. saddharma vipralopa, C. mòfǎ, J. mappō, 末法), Nichiren and those like him will chant 'Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō' and enable all sentient beings to attain enlightenment. Is this not the vow now being fulfilled?

With **has now been fulfilled** being about the vow having already been accomplished, this is also a reference to the (practice of) chanting of the title of the sūtra (J. daimoku, 題目) first having been revealed on the twenty-eighth day of the fourth month of the fifth year of the Kenchō era (April 28, 1253), and so having already been accomplished. There can be no doubt that, through this work, the excellent medicine of life's most sublime purpose is healing the sickness of ignorance that afflicts sentient beings. In accomplishing this, there has been fulfillment of the vow.

In being **fulfilled**, there is the work of attaining enlightenment. Volume three of Zhìyǐ's Greatness of Meditation With Introspection & Stillness of Mind (C. Móhē Zhǐguān, J. Maka Shikan, 摩訶止觀) explains perfect enlightenment as being 'perfectly blended and perfectly fulfilled' while sudden enlightenment is being 'suddenly complete and suddenly sufficient'. You should deliberate on this carefully.

Appendix Q

#7 The Oral Transmission of the Meaning (Ongi Kuden, 御義口傳)

On lines 144b-d of verse that say:

“Among all these bodhisattvas //144b

I will simply discard the skillful ways and means //144c

And only teach about the supreme path. //144d

On this, volume four of Zhiyi's Words and Passages of The Lotus Sūtra (C. Fahuá Wénjù, J. Hokke Mongu, 法華文句) *says*:

From ‘Among all the bodhisattvas’ ... there are three lines (lines 144b-d) that are also interpreted as being on the revealing of transcendental knowledge.

“Among all these bodhisattvas //144b

I will simply discard the skillful ways and means //144c

And only teach about the supreme path. //144d

There are five vehicles⁸⁹ that have the receptivity to potentially attain enlightenment:

These are the vehicles of:

1. Human beings (manuṣya, 人)
2. Divine beings in the heavens of meditation (devas, 天)
3. Students learning about life's noble purpose from others (śrāvakas, 聲聞)
4. Those awakened to the conditions of sentient existence (pratyeka buddhas, 緣覺) and so freed from affliction in their own lives
5. Those sentient beings (bodhisattvas, 菩薩) awakening to the transcendental nature of life's purpose

These five vehicles with capacity for enlightenment⁸⁹ are each on paths with many twists and turns that are not that simple. Those training in the general doctrine for all three vehicles and the distinguished doctrine specifically for bodhisattvas each have their own prejudices. They are not straight paths leading directly to enlightenment. Now all of these twists, turns and prejudices are discarded and there is only the one universal path that is straight and true.

On this, The Oral Transmission of the Meaning says:

The bodhisattvas referred to here are those who dwell in the ninth of the ten spheres of life's purpose. On a deeper level of understanding, all sentient beings are said to be bodhisattvas. More specifically, it is now a reference to Nichiren and his followers. This also includes all of the benevolent spirits found in heaven (J. shoten zenjin, 諸天善神).⁴⁷

Simply here refers to the fact that, with there being emotional disturbances,³ so there is spiritual awakening (J. bonnō soku bodai, 煩惱即菩提) and, with there being the existential reality of life and death, so there is spiritual freedom (J. shōji soku nehan, 生死即涅槃). The one universal path cited in Zhiyi's commentary refers to ‘Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō’. Now, in the age of the demise of the Buddha's true purpose (S. saddharma vipralopa, C. mòfǎ, J. mappō, 末法), is it not Nichiren and his followers who are simply doing the work of propagating this one universal path?

Appendix R

#8 The Oral Transmission of the Meaning (Ongi Kuden, 御義口傳)

On lines 155a-156d of the verse that say:

"In the future, there will be people with evil purposes //155a
Who hear the Buddha teach about the one universal vehicle of enlightenment. //155b
Being afflicted and confused, they will not accept this with faith. //155c
In rejecting it, they will fall into the path of evil. //155d
There will also be those who are purified through confession, repentance, //156a
And a resolve to seek the path to enlightenment. //156b
Those who are like this //156c
Will broadly praise the path of this one universal vehicle. //156d

On this, The Oral Transmission of the Meaning says:

- * **In the future** here is a reference to the age in which there is the demise of the Buddha Śākyamuni's true purpose (S. saddharma vipralopa, C. mòfǎ, J. mappō, 末法).
- * **People with evil purposes** refers to those **who hear the Buddha teach about one universal path** as taught in The Lotus Sūtra and **will not accept this with faith ... rejecting it**. This includes (those who follow the misguided interpretations of) Hōnen, Kōbō (Kūkai), Jikaku (Ennin), Chishō (Enchin) and their like.¹⁰²
- * **There will also be those who are purified through confession, repentance, and a resolve to seek the path to enlightenment**. This includes Nichiren and his followers.
- * **This one universal vehicle** refers to The Lotus Sūtra (Myōhō Renge Kyō, 妙法蓮華經). Those without this faith will inevitably fall into the three evil paths.

Appendix S:

The Oral Transmission of the Meaning (J. Ongi Kuden, 御義口傳)

A passage from The Chapter on Skillfulness in Ways & Means of special importance and how it encapsulates the meaning of the entire chapter

“This purpose abides and is defined //111a

By appearing to always be in this world. //111b

- a. **This purpose abides and is defined** (是法住法位) here refers to the transcendental reality (paramārtha satya, 真諦) revealed through the gateway penetrating the manifestation of enlightenment (J. shakumon, 迹門) in the first half of the sūtra (on opening up the three & revealing the one).
- b. **By appearing to always be in this world** (世間相常住) here refers to the relative reality (samvṛti satya, 俗諦) revealed through the gateway penetrating the source of enlightenment (J. honmon, 本門) in the second half of the sūtra (on opening up the manifestation & revealing the source).

These words speak about:

- * The original nature of enlightenment always being found in the hearts and minds of sentient beings &
- * All the purposes found in the tapestry of existence being the very foundation of this enlightenment.

Appendix T

The Oral Transmission of the Meaning (Ongi Kuden, 御義口傳)

On how the Chapter on the Skillfulness of Ways & Means (Hōbenpon, 方便品) is connected with the meaning of devotion to the sūtra's title (Nam-Myōhō Renge Kyō, 南無妙法蓮華經)

On this, The Oral Transmission of the Meaning says:

This chapter teaches about the ten mutually dependent aspects found in the transcendental nature of life's purpose just as-it-is (S. *daśāṅgaḥ yathātatham*, J. *jū nyoze*, 十如是).

- * These ten aspects are found in the ten spheres of life's purpose.
- * With there being skillfulness in the ways & means (of meditation on them), there are three thousand mutually dependent aspects found in these ten spheres.
- * The Sūtra on the Lotus Blossom of Sublime Purpose (Myōhō Renge Kyō, 妙法蓮華經) is at their summit, where there is only a single vehicle of purpose in all the lands of enlightenment (buddha kṣetra, 佛土) found in the ten directions.
- * With there being skillfulness in the ways & means of this sublime purpose, there are the sublimely secret ways & means of the lotus blossom that are pure of any affliction.
 - * Through the five characters of this sublime purpose (Myōhō Renge Kyō, 妙法蓮華經), there is the ninth level of pure consciousness (S. *amala vijñāna*, 阿摩羅識).⁴⁸
 - * Through skillfulness in ways & means (J. Hōbenpon, 方便品), there are the eight levels of consciousness⁴⁸ found in sentient existence.
 - * Through the ninth level, there is spiritual awakening of the Buddha.
 - * Through the other eight levels, there are the delusions of the afflicted.
- * With the title of this chapter being 'On Skillfulness in the Ways & Means of The Sūtra on the Lotus Blossom of Sublime Purpose', there is the non-duality and inseparability (and hence mutual dependence) of delusion and spiritual awakening.
- * And so within the three thousand-fold tapestry of all of life's purposes, there is nothing that is excluded from 'The Skillfulness of Ways & Means in The Sūtra on the Lotus Blossom of Sublime Purpose (Myōhō Renge Kyō Hōbenpon, 妙法蓮華經方便品).

The word 'chapter' (S. *parivarta*, J. *hon*, 品) refers to a distinct division (here, of a book) that contains a collection of purposes (or words) grouped into a shared category of meaning.

- * Just as there are the different meanings of the individual words in the sūtra when read separately, so there are the three thousand mutually dependent aspects (S. *tri sāhasra*, J. *sanzen*, 三千) of life's purposes discovered through meditation with introspection.
- * Just as there are the shared categories of meaning grouped together in each of the sūtra's twenty-eight chapters, so there is the mutual possession (S. *anyonya āśritatva*, J. *gogu*, 互具) found in the ten spheres of life's purpose & their mutually dependent ten aspects.
- * And just as the meaning of the entire sūtra as a whole is found in the (five characters of the) sūtra's title, so all of life's purposes as a whole are possessed in a single moment of thought (S. *eka kṣana*, J. *ichinen*, 一念) (through the Buddha's transcendental vow).
- * This demonstrates that the word 'chapter' is like the three thousand mutually dependent aspects of life's purpose being possessed in a single moment (*ichinen sanzen*, 一念三千), the treasure shared by all the Buddhas. Because of this, this word 'chapter' is found in the title of each and every chapter of the sūtra and, through the single moment of faith that is 'Devotion to The Sūtra on the Lotus Blossom of Sublime Purpose' ('Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō', 南無妙法蓮華經), these three thousand mutually dependent aspects are all perfectly opened up and revealed in it.