

Content

New Years Day	2
Setsubun	3
Buddha's Pari-Nirvana	5
Nichiren Shonin's Birth	6
Spring O-Higan	8
Buddha's Birthday (Hanamatsuri)	9
Founding Day	11
Izu Persecution	13
Urabon	15
Matsubagayatsu Persecution	16
Fall O-Higan	18
Tatsunokuchi Persecution	20
Oeshiki	22
Komatsubara Persecution	24
Bodhi Day (Jōdō-e)	26
New Year's Eve	29

January 1st

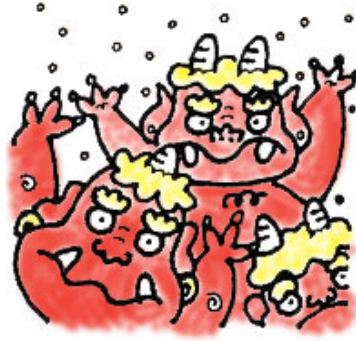


New Years Ceremony Shinnen Shukutō-e

Omonsu-dono Nyōbō Gohenji

The first day of the first month brings about a new day, a new month, a new year and the beginning of spring. One who values this day accumulates one's value inside and is held in high esteem by others just as the moon becomes full moving from west to east, and the sun shines from east to west. To begin with, as we ask where do hell and the Buddha exist, some sūtras state that hell exists underground while others state that the Buddha exists to the west. Upon closer inspection, however, it is preached that both hell and the Buddha exist within our five-foot bodies. As proof of this, we sometimes disdain our fathers or neglect our mothers in our minds. This indicates that our minds contain the function of hell. It is like the seed of the lotus plant that contains both the flower and the fruit. The Buddha also stays in our minds. It is like the fire that exists within a flint and the fortune that can be found within a gem. We ordinary people cannot see our own eyelashes, which are too close, or the end of the sky, which is too far. Likewise, we are unaware of the Buddha residing in our own minds.

(WNS 7, pp. 109)



Transition Period Ceremony Setsubun Tsuina-shiki

Kitō Shō

And yet even though a finger might point to the great earth and miss it, a person tie up the sky, the ocean's tide lack an ebb and flow, or if the sun should rise in the west, there cannot be a time when the prayer of a practitioner of the *Lotus Sutra* is not answered. If the various bodhisattvas, human and heavenly beings, eight kinds of gods and demi-gods who protect Buddhism, the two sage bodhisattvas (*Medicine King and Brave Donor Bodhisattvas*), the two heavenly kings (*Jikoku-ten and Bishamon-ten*), and ten female rākshasa demons, or even one out of 1,000, do not rush to protect the practitioner of the *Lotus Sutra*, they commit the offense of fooling Sakyamuni and the other Buddhas above and in the nine worlds below. Thus they will protect the practitioners of the *Lotus Sutra* without fail regardless if the practitioners are insincere, unwise, impure, and do not observe the precepts so long as they chant “*Namu Myōhō Renge Kyō.*” Do not throw away gold just because the bag that contains it is dirty. Hating the strong smell of eranda will not allow one to enjoy the fragrance of sandalwood. Detesting the dirty water of a valley pond, will not allow one to get the lotus. If they reject the practitioner of the *Lotus Sutra* and do not protect him, they will violate their vow made before the Buddha. As the ages of the True and Semblance Dharma have already passed, those who observe the precepts today are as scarce as tigers in a marketplace;

and finding people of wisdom is as rare as unicorn's horn. We have to depend on a light before the moon appears; where gems do not exist, gold and silver are treasures. As there exists a precedent of returning a favor received from a white crow to a black crow, favors of a holy monk should be returned to an ordinary monk today. How then can there be no answer when a practitioner of the *Lotus Sutra* says a prayer that requires a prompt answer?



Buddha's Pari-Nirvana Shakuson Nehan-e

Kangyō Hachiman-shō

India is called the country of the moon, where the Buddha appears shining in the world as brightly as the moon. Japan is called the origin of the sun. How can it be that no sage as bright as the sun appears in Japan? The moon moves from west to east. It is the omen of Buddhism in India spreading to the east. The sun orbits from east to west. This is a lucky omen of Buddhism in Japan returning to India. Moonlight is not as bright as sunlight, therefore the Buddha preached the *Lotus Sutra* for only eight years of his lifetime. Sunlight is brighter than moonlight. This is an auspicious omen of Japanese Buddhism shining through the long darkness of the fifth 500-year period. The Buddha did not save the slanderers of the Lotus Sutra because there existed no slanderers during his lifetime. In the Latter Age of Degeneration, there will be many formidable enemies of the One Vehicle Lotus teaching everywhere. This is the time when we can reap the harvest of Never Despising Bodhisattva's aggression propagation sowing the seed of Buddhahood. Each of my disciples should exert himself to spread the teaching of the Buddha even at the cost of life.

(WNS 1, pp. 279-280)



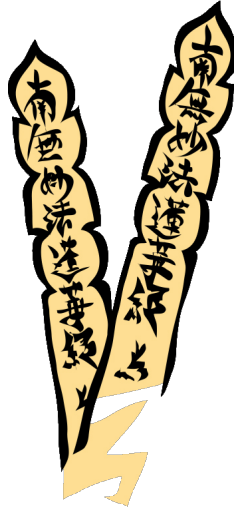
Nichiren Shonin's Birthday Shūso Gōtan-e

Hakiri-dono Goshō

I, Nichiren, was born in the village of Tōgō, in the district of Nagasa, in the province of Awa, in the first year of Jō-ō (1222), at the time of the Emperor Go-Horikawa, the 85th emperor of Japan. It was 2,171 years after the Buddha's Nirvana. I went to Kiyosumidera at the age of 12 in the first year of Tenpuku (1233), at the time of Emperor Shijō, the 86th emperor. I resided in Dōzen-bō's hall for my studies. I was ordained at the age of 18 in the first year of En-ō (1239). After that I studied all the teachings of the Buddha's lifetime as well as other Buddhist and non-Buddhist teachings without fail for 15 years. Unfortunately, at the age of 32, in the fifth year of Kenchō (1253), on March 28th, I realized that the nembutsu is the cause for falling into the Hell of Incessant Suffering. I wondered, "What should I do? If I tell people, who will believe it? On the contrary, they will be offended. If I am afraid of the people and don't tell them, I will be an enemy of the Buddha Dharma and fall into the Hell of Incessant Suffering myself." The sutra says that someone who spreads the Lotus Sutra in the Latter Age of Degeneration will be the appearance of Superior Practice Bodhisattva. So someone who doesn't say anything will be the enemy of the Buddha Dharma.

According to this sutra, everyone in the country of Japan will be Nichiren's enemy. Sakyamuni Buddha was reborn 8,000 times in this Saha World. When he was King Sibi, he sacrificed himself for the life of a dove. When he was Prince Sattva, he gave himself to the hungry tiger. When he was the snow mountain boy he threw himself into the jaws of an ogre for the sake of half a phrase of the Dharma. When he was the lion called Firm Vow, a hunter killed him [and he did not begrudge the hunter]. When he was the king of 1,000 deer, he allowed a hunter to kill him in order to save a pregnant deer. There is no place to hide my life and limb within the three thousand great thousand-fold world. I vow that this merit be given to the believers of the *Lotus Sutra* among all sentient beings. Inspired by the teaching of "we will not spare even our lives" I will cast away my life and spread the teaching of the *Lotus Sutra* to enable everyone in Japan to attain Buddhahood. If I say nothing because I am afraid of the ruler of these small islands, how could I avoid falling into hell and being condemned by King Yama?

(Shutei Hōyō Shiki - Translated by Chishin Hirai Shonin and Ryuei McCormick Shonin)



Other Shore Higan-e

Kanjin Honzon Shō

When the sky is blue, the land is bright, so those who know the *Lotus Sutra* can see the reasons for the occurrences in the world.

For those who are incapable of understanding the truth of the “3,000 worlds in a single thought-moment,” Lord Sakyamuni Buddha, with his great compassion, wraps this jewel with the five characters of *Myō, Hō, Ren, Ge* and *Kyō* and hangs it around the necks of the ignorant in the Latter Age of Degeneration, the four great bodhisattvas will protect such people, just as T’ai-kung-wang and the Duke of Chou assisted the young ruler, King Chen, of the Chou dynasty, or the Four Elders of the Shang-shan attended child Emperor Hui of the Han dynasty in ancient China.

(WNS 2, p. 164)



Buddha's Birthday Shakuson Gōtan-e

Kangyō Hachiman-shō

India is called the country of the moon, where the Buddha appears shining in the world as brightly as the moon. Japan is called the origin of the sun. How can it be that no sage as bright as the sun appears in Japan? The moon moves from west to east. It is the omen of Buddhism in India spreading to the east. The sun orbits from east to west. This is a lucky omen of Buddhism in Japan returning to India. Moonlight is not as bright as sunlight, therefore the Buddha preached the Lotus Sutra for only eight years of his lifetime. Sunlight is brighter than moonlight. This is an auspicious omen of Japanese Buddhism shining through the long darkness of the fifth 500-year period. The Buddha did not save the slanderers of the Lotus Sutra because there existed no slanderers during his lifetime. In the Latter Age of Degeneration, there will be many formidable enemies of the One Vehicle Lotus teaching everywhere. This is the time when we can reap the harvest of Never Despising Bodhisattva's aggression propagation sowing the seed of Buddhahood. Each of my disciples should exert himself to spread the teaching of the Buddha even at the cost of life.

(WNS 1, pp. 279-280)

Kanbutsuge *(Verse for Pouring Amrita on the Infant Buddha)*

We now pour [amrita] on Sakyamuni the Dharma King.
Purity, wisdom, and merit solemnly gather around.
Sentient beings with five defilements leave suffering behind.
May the authentic Tathagata have a purified body of Truth
(Dharma Kāya).



Founding Day Rikkyō Kaishū-e

Shohō Jissō Shō

Whatever happens to you, have a firm faith and maintain yourself as a practitioner of the *Lotus Sutra* and join the ranks of my followers. As long as you agree with me, you will be one of the bodhisattvas who emerged from the earth. And if you are determined to be a bodhisattva of the earth, there is no doubt that you have been a disciple of the Eternal Sakyamuni Buddha from the remotest past. The “Emerging from the Earth” chapter states, “I have been teaching and converting these people ever since the eternal past.” Those who spread the five characters of *Myō, Hō, Ren, Ge,* and *Kyō* in the Latter Age of Degeneration should not make a distinction between males and females, for it would be difficult to chant the Daimoku unless they were all Bodhisattvas of the Earth.

At first only I, Nichiren, started chanting the Daimoku, *Namu Myōhō Renge Kyō*, but then two, three, then one hundred people, gradually began chanting it. This will continue in the future. Isn't this what emerging from the earth means? When an innumerable number of people emerge from the earth and this Wonderful

Dharma spreads extensively, there will be no mistake, just as a shooting arrow never misses the earth, Japan will be filled with people chanting *Namu Myōhō Renge Kyō*. You should therefore establish your fame as a practitioner of the *Lotus Sutra*, and devote your life to it.



Izu Persecution Izu Hōnan-e

Funamori Yasuburō Moto Goshō

When I, Nichiren, was exiled on May 12th, I was stranded on the shore. You, [Yasaburō,] didn't even ask my name, [but seeing that] I was suffering after leaving the boat you still took care of me. What kind of causal connection was there [between us]? You must have been a practitioner of the *Lotus Sutra* in the past, but now you have been reborn as Funamori no Yasuburō in the Later Age of Degeneration and have shown mercy to Nichiren. [Addressing your wife:] A man might be like this; however, I have never met a lady like you, who provided meals, water for washing my hands and feet, and took such great care of me. It fills me with wonder. In particular, [both of you] in your heart took faith in the *Lotus Sutra* and gave offerings to Nichiren for thirty or more days. What was the reason for this? The steward and the people there [in Itō] hated me more than even the people of Kamakura. Those who saw me closed their eyes, and those who heard me cursed. Although it was in May and there was little rice, you secretly took care of Nichiren. I wonder if my parents were reborn in Kawana of Itō in Izu? The fourth fascicle of the *Lotus Sutra* says, “[I will manifest...] men and women of pure faith, and dispatch them to [the teacher of the Dharma] so that they may make offerings to him.” This phrase

explains that the heavenly gods and benevolent deities should transform into men and women in order to make offerings and help the person who practices the Lotus Sutra. There can be no doubt that they must have been reborn as Yasburō and his wife in order to make offerings to Nichiren.



Ullambana Urabon-e

Urabon Goshō

The worst of the evil will not return only to the one who committed the offense but also his children, grandchildren and everyone on down to seven generations. The same is true to the most virtuous of the virtuous.

The great virtue of Venerable Maudgalyayana having faith in the *Lotus Sutra* not only enabled him to attain Buddhahood but also enabled his parents to become Buddhas. Moreover, all the parents in seven generations above and below, and all the parents in the limitless generations above and below became Buddhas unexpectedly. In addition, sons, husbands and wives, their retainers, devotees, and an incalculable number of people all were emancipated from the three evil realms. Not only that, they all entered the first abode and eventually attained Buddhahood. Therefore, it is preached in the *Lotus Sutra*, fascicle three (“Parable of a Magic City” chapter), “May this merit be spread over all living beings so that we and all others may attain Buddhahood together.



Matsubagayatsu Persicution Matsubagayatsu Hōnan-e

Shimoyama Goshōsoku

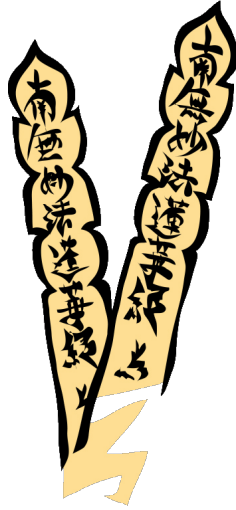
Therefore, first of all, he wrote the one-fascicle Risshō ankoku ron (The Treatise on Spreading Peace throughout the Country by Establishing the True Dharma) motivated by the severe earthquake that occurred in the eighth month of the first year of the Shōka Era (1257). He then submitted it to the late Lord Hōjō Tokiyori, lay priest of the Saimyō-ji temple, in the seventh month of the first year of the Bunnō era (1260). The shogunate, however, did not inquire further, nor accept his suggestions.

The people might have thought that it would not be a crime to kill such a monk, for whom the shogunate had no regard. With the secret consent of monks and lay followers of the Pure Land School, as well as certain men in power, thousands of people attacked Nichiren Shōnin with the intent to kill him in his hut at night. However, he was somehow saved from the attack that night, and those who attacked him were not punished at all because they had acted under the secret consent of those in power. The shogunate thus greatly erred in governing.

After this, the shogunate exiled Nichiren Shōnin to Izu Province claiming that it was unpardonable for them to see Nichiren still alive. Did these people possess so much hate that they could not realize they were committing a crime of self-destruction? Did they break their own vows of the Jōei Code, verified in the names of such deities as the King of the Brahma Heaven, Indra, the Four Heavenly kings, Goddess Amaterasu, and Shō-Hachiman?

Since the teaching that Nichiren Shōnin propagated was quite unique, it may have been something they could not understand at all. Even if they could not comprehend his teaching, however, they should have let him engage in a debate with the monks whom the shogunate believed in. If this did not clarify matters, then they should have asked questions of scholar-monks in India or China. If this still did not resolve things, they should have waited for awhile, and considered that Nichiren Shōnin might have some plausible explanation. Nevertheless, they, those who could not grasp the details, and without realizing the danger of self-destruction, unreasonably broke the all important vow of the Jōei Code.

It may sound self-conceited, but according to the sutras, Nichiren Shōnin seems closely related to all the people of Japan, from the Emperor above to all the people below. To them he has three virtues: first, the virtue of parents; second, that of the teacher; and third, that of a messenger of a ruler. The “messenger to the Buddha,” “eyes” and “sun and moon” mentioned in the Lotus Sutra all mean Nichiren Shōnin. Grand Master Chang-an says in his *Commentary on the Nirvana Sutra*: “He who removes evil from a man, is a man’s real parents.” Nevertheless, the shogunate listened to the false charges made by slanderers of the True Dharma, monks without faith and enemies of the country, and without examining these charges exiled Nichiren Shōnin by bending the law. Were they trying to invite disasters? What a pity!



Other Shore Higan-e

Shōgu Mondō Shō

The most important thing for attaining the awakening of the Buddhas is the five characters of *Myō*, *Hō*, *Ren*, *Ge* and *Kyō*. Why did King Suzudan step down from his throne, and why did the Dragon Girl transform her snake-like body? It is only due to these five characters. The [*Lotus*] *Sutra* says that the question of whether to uphold a larger or smaller portion of the sutra is resolved by depending on only a phrase or a verse, and the question of the length of practice is resolved in a single moment of rejoicing. The width of the 80,000 teachings and the enormity of the eight fascicles [of the *Lotus Sutra*] come down to only this: the expounding of the five characters. Amidst the clouds of the Sacred Mountain, in the mists of Eagle Peak, Sakyamuni Buddha bound together what was of most importance [for easy transmission] so that the Bodhisattvas who Emerged from the Earth could attain this transmission. What was this teaching? It is there in this important

Dharma. The 6,000 pages of commentary by T'ien-t'ai and Miao-le are like a string of jewels and the scrolls of commentaries by Tao-sui and Hsing-man are like an array of gold. however they do not go beyond this. Truly, if we fear birth and death and wish to take delight in Nirvāna, when we carry forward our faith and long for the Way, transience and impermanence will be like yesterday's dream, and the awakening of enlightenment will become today's reality. If only we chant *Namu Myōhō Renge Kyō*, then how could even our ineradicable sins and lack of merit continue? This is the genuine truth. It is very profound. We should faithfully accept this.

(Shutei Hōyō Shiki - Translated by Chishin Hirai Shonin and Ryuei McCormick Shonin)



Tatsunokuchi Incident Ryukō Hōnan-e

Shijō Kingo-dono Goshōsoku

Well, well, when the incident occurred on the 12th you came to Tatsunokuchi with me, and not only that but you intended to commit hara-kiri [to follow me in death]. All I can say is: how wondrous! There may have been times in past [lives] when I, Nichiren, sacrificed my life for the sake of wife and children, property, and retainers. I may have cast myself away in the mountains, in the oceans, in the rivers, on the shores, or on the streets. However, if all of those instances of casting away the body and facing persecutions were not done for the sake of the *Lotus Sutra* or the Daimoku then they did not contribute to awakening then the oceans and rivers where I cast myself away were not the Buddha-land. This time I faced exile and the death penalty as the practitioner of the *Lotus Sutra*. [I was] exiled to Itō and [received] the death penalty at Tatsunokuchi. Tatsunokuchi in Sōshū is where Nichiren cast away his life. It should not [be considered] inferior to the Buddha-land. This is due to the *Lotus Sutra*. The sutra says, “There is only one teaching, that is, the One Vehicle in the Buddha-worlds of the ten

quarters.” That is what I am talking about. The One Vehicle referred to is the *Lotus Sutra*. There is no [other teaching] in the Buddha-lands of the ten directions but the *Lotus Sutra*. That is why the sutra says, “Except when the Buddhas teach expediently.” If so, then where Nichiren faced persecution is the Buddha-land. Japan is in the Sahā World, Sagami Province is in Japan, Katase is in Sagami Province, Tatsunokuchi is in Katase.

Where Nichiren’s life remains should be called the Land of Tranquil Light due to the *Lotus Sutra*.



Nichiren Shonin's Parinirvana Day Oeshiki

Ota Gozen Goshōsoku

According to the *Lotus Sutra*, the Buddha carries on his shoulders and back men and women who have firm faith in the sutra. Tripitaka Master Kumarayana is said to have been carried on the back of a wooden statue of Sakymuni Buddha. As for myself the Buddha took my place to save my life at Tatsunokuchi. This has always been true, today as in the past. You are my followers. How can you each fail to attain Buddhahood? No matter whom you remarry, do not follow him if he does not believe in the *Lotus Sutra*. Have a stronger affirmation than ever.

Ice is made of water, but it is colder than water. Blue colored cloth is colored by indigo, but it will be bluer than indigo when dyed repeatedly. In the same fashion, if you pile up faith in the *Lotus Sutra*, you will be filled with more vitality and blessings than other people.

A tree can be burnt by fire, but a margoso tree will not be.

Fire can be extinguished by water, but the fire of Buddha's cremation will not. Flowers can be scattered by wind, but the flowers in the Heaven of Pure Inhabitants will not. Water can evaporate in a severe drought, but not when it enters the Yellow River. A wicked king named Dammira did not receive any punishments when he beheaded Indian monks. When he beheaded Venerable Aryasimha, however, the king's sword and hand fell to the ground at the same time. When King Pusyamitra burnt Kukkutarama Temple, his head was broken by the sticks of twelve heavenly generals.

Now the people of Japan have become enemies of the *Lotus Sutra*, destroying themselves as well as their country.

Some people, who do not understand me, may call me self-conceited for what I say. I am not self-conceited. As a practitioner of the *Lotus Sutra*, I must speak out. When what I say is proven to be true in the future, people will believe me. I write this now because I am certain that people in the future will recognize my wisdom.

It is said in the *Nirvana Sutra* that the Dharma is more important than our lives, so we should propagate the Dharma at the cost of our lives. My life is insignificant; I have been struck and hated by the people. Nevertheless, because the Dharma is important it will inevitably spread. With the *Lotus Sutra* spreading

I should be more revered after I die than when I am alive. If your remains should be revered, then they should be beneficial to the people. If my remains should be beneficial, I should be revered just as Great Bodhisattva Hachiman. You should know that all men and women who support me will then be respected just as Takenouchi-no-Sukune, who served Great Bodhisattva Hachiman or his young prince.



Komatsubara Ambush Komatsubara Hōnan-e

Nanjō Hyōe Shichirō-dono Goshō

On the 11th day of the 11th month this year, on the thoroughfare of Matsubara in Tōjō, Awa Province, about four or six o'clock in the afternoon, hundreds of nembutsu followers ambushed me. I was accompanied by about ten people, of whom only three or four were strong enough to fight. Arrows shot by nembutsu followers were falling like rain, and their swords were attacking us like lightning. One of my disciples was killed at the spot and two others were seriously wounded. I was also hit and wounded, and faced mortal danger, but somehow I escaped death and am still alive today. My faith in the Lotus Sutra has been strengthened as I experienced persecutions such as this.

It is said in the 10th chapter,, “The Teacher of the Dharma” in the *Lotus Sutra*, fascicle four, “Many people hate it (the *Lotus Sutra*) with a passion, even in my lifetime. Needless to say, more people will do so after my death.” And in the 14th chapter, “Peaceful Practices,” in fascicle five, it states, “Many people in the world

would have hated it (the *Lotus Sutra*) and few would have believed it.” There are many people in Japan who read and study the *Lotus Sutra*. Many people are punished because they steal or commit adultery, but no one has been punished due to his faith in the *Lotus Sutra*. Therefore, none of the followers of the *Lotus Sutra* in Japan have practiced the sutra as it is preached. Only I, Nichiren have truly read it. This is what the chapter of “Encouragement for Upholding This Sutra” states: “We will not spare even our lives. We treasure only unsurpassed enlightenment.” Therefore, I, Nichiren, am the foremost practitioner of the *Lotus Sutra* in Japan.

(WNS 3, pp. 145-146)



Bodhi Day Jōdō-e

Totai Gi-shō

[In the unquantifiable distant past] “five hundred kalpas” ago, Sakyamuni Buddha attained the nominal *Lotus Flower of the Wonderful Dharma* and declared his awakening throughout successive ages. He revealed the authentic doctrine of realization of the truth and the one who realizes it. In this age, he was again born in Magadha in central India, as he wanted to reveal this lotus flower. However, the people had no capacity for it and the time was not yet suitable. That is why he divided the Lotus of the One Dharma into three by expounding the expedient Dharma of the three vehicles according to their inclinations for forty something years in order to draw them in. During this time, people’s natures were all quite different, that’s why he cultivated different kinds of plants and flowers, but never offered the *Lotus Flower of the Wonderful Dharma*. That is why the *Sutra of Innumerable Meanings* says, “After sitting upright [for six years] under the Bodhi tree [at the place of the Way, I could attain supreme awakening.] ... And after more than forty years the truth has not yet been revealed.” At the time of expounding the *Lotus Sutra*, the Buddha discarded the expedient teachings of the four tastes and three doctrinal teachings and other Hinayana teachings. He revealed the One [Great Vehicle] of the *Sutra of the Lotus*

Flower of the Wonderful Dharma. When he opened the three flowers to show the *Lotus Flower of the Wonderful Dharma*, the people of the expedient teachings of the four tastes and three doctrinal teachings received the lotus flower of the abode of “aspiration,” [first of the ten abodes]. Finally he revealed the lotus flower of “opening the near and revealing the far” so that they could go on to attain the fruition of the second, third and tenth of the abodes and ultimately proceed onward to the preliminary awakening and supreme subtle awakening.

(Shutei Hōyō Shiki - Translated by Chishin Hirai Shonin and Ryuei McCormick Shonin)

Hotsugan *(Six Contemplations)*

Contemplate the Buddha,
our Great Compassionate Father, our Savior.

Contemplate the Dharma,
the gate releasing us from birth and death.

Contemplate the Sangha,
the good field producing all bliss.

Contemplate the precepts,
the fountainhead of supreme awakening.

Contemplate the practice of giving,
that perfects the six pāramitās.

Contemplate the Shoten Zenjin,
who protect the Dharma and benefit all sentient beings.

Shichibutsu Tsukai Ge *(Precept of the Seven Buddhas)*

May all living beings

(tog) Avoid all evil,

begin to perform good deeds,

precept of Buddhas

bow with reverence.



New Year's Eve Saimatsu Hōon-e

Shushishin Goshō

Sakyamuni Buddha is our ruler, teacher, or parent. He said, “Only I can save all living beings.” Amitābha Buddha is not our ruler, teacher, or parent. That is why Grand Master T’ien-t’ai said, “The Buddha of the western paradise is different [than Sakyamuni Buddha] and has no causal connection with us. Since this Buddha is different, the doctrine of “hiding one’s true identity and manifesting an accommodated appearance” cannot apply to him. As the causal connection is different, that’s why the relationship between the [rich] father [who hides his true identity but reveals it later] and the [poor] son [who is able to inherit his father’s wealth in the parable of third chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*] does not apply [to the relationship between Amitābha Buddha and ourselves]. [Amitābha is not the true nature of Sakyamuni Buddha, and Sakyamuni is not the accommodated appearance of Amitābha Buddha.] The [*Lotus*] *Sutra* does not teach anything like this. Close your eyes and delve deeply [into the truth of this matter].” It’s true. Sakyamuni Buddha was born as the prince of King Suddhodana of

central India. He left his palace at the age of nineteen to reside on Mount Dandaka, where he climbed the high peaks to collect firewood and went down into the deep valleys to fetch water. After many difficult and painful practices he attained Buddhahood at the age of thirty. He then preached all of his sacred teachings. Although outwardly he expounded various teachings such as the *Flower Garland Sutra*, the *Agama sutras*, the *Expanded sutras*, and the *Wisdom sutras*, inwardly he vowed to expound the Lotus Sutra.

However the capacities of the people were all different and not singular. That's why he didn't preach in accordance with his own mind, but instead taught various teachings according to other people's mindsets. That is why the Buddha had a difficult time for forty two years. Finally, he felt that his vow was fulfilled at the time of the preaching of the *Lotus Sutra*. He also said, "Since the remotest past I have been a deer, or sometimes a bear, or sometimes eaten by a demon, and the merits I garnered [in this lifetimes] will be transferred to the sentient beings who take faith in this *Lotus Sutra*, as [they are] true children of the Buddha. These are my true children! These merits should be given to these people." How can someone attain Buddhahood if they despise

Sakyamuni Buddha, who regarded us as a parent does a child, and don't take faith in the *Lotus Sutra*, that teaches [the Buddha's] great purpose [for appearing in the world]? Keep this in mind and think it over.