

## The Lotus Sutra and Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and Josei Toda

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THE Soka Gakkai is an organization of a new religious movement which is founded on Buddhism. It was established by Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (1871–1944) and Jogai (later Josei) Toda (1900–1958) in 1930. Makiguchi and Toda interpreted Buddhism so as to be well suited to modern times. Therefore the Soka Gakkai is also based on their interpretations of Buddhism. And now the Soka Gakkai has been propagated worldwide by the leadership of Daisaku Ikeda.

A main creed of the Soka Gakkai is that the Lotus Sutra is the supreme Buddhist scripture of all. The Lotus Sutra was created in Mahāyāna Buddhism, which tried to interpret Buddhism differently from Hīnayāna Buddhism for salvation of all sentient beings.

In the 13th century a priest Nichiren (1222–1282) in Japan, for the first time, interpreted the Lotus Sutra to be well suited to the Latter Day of the Law (*mappo*), and he established the Three Great Secret Laws which were, he argued, the only way to attain Buddhahood in the Latter Day. The Soka Gakkai believes that Nichiren's interpretations of the Lotus Sutra were valid on the whole. Furthermore Nichiren thought that a Buddha was a person who attained Buddhahood, namely, the highest state of life, or the noblest character. And lastly he emphasized social responsibility of religion in *Rissho ankoku ron (On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land)*.

In early Showa era Makiguchi and Toda found out the significance of Nichiren's interpretations of Buddhism (Nichiren's Buddhism) and they established the Soka Kyoiku Gakkai (Value-Creating Education Society, the former organization of the Soka Gakkai) in 1930, so they started a new religious movement. In this paper I would like to describe Nichiren's interpretations of the Lotus Sutra in the first part. And I would like to describe how Makiguchi and Toda accepted and interpreted the Lotus Sutra and Nichiren's Buddhism, which lays the foundation of some religious ideas of the Soka Gakkai.

## Nichiren and the Lotus Sutra

### NICHIREN'S CHOICE OF THE LOTUS SUTRA AND HIS UNIQUE INTERPRETATIONS

#### *Two Reasons of Nichiren's Choice of the Lotus Sutra*

After Nichiren took tonsure and became a priest, he studied Buddhism hard. Soon he had a question as follows. "Though there are many sects of Buddhism, what was the final intention of the Buddha Shakyamuni?" And he followed the saying in the Nirvāṇa Sutra that one should rely on the Law (sutras) and not upon persons (priests). So he was engaged in comparative studies of many sutras, and he came to the conclusion that the Lotus Sutra is the supreme sutra of all.<sup>1</sup>

There are, Nichiren thought, two reasons why the Lotus Sutra is the supreme sutra of all. First, according to T'ien T'ai's doctrine of the five periods and eight teachings, the Lotus Sutra is the sutra which shows the final intention of the Buddha Shakyamuni. In the Immeasurable Meanings Sutra (*Muryōgi kyo*),<sup>2</sup> a passage tells that all other sutras which have been taught before it, are not the final sutra and that they are inferior to it. And in the introduction of the Lotus Sutra, there is a suggestion that the Immeasurable Meanings Sutra was taught before the Lotus Sutra (L.S., p.5). And in Nirvāṇa Sutra, which was taught last by the Buddha Shakyamuni, there is a suggestion that the Lotus Sutra is superior to the Nirvāṇa Sutra (*On Repaying Debts of Gratitude*, W.N.D., p. 692). So Nichiren concluded that the Lotus Sutra is the supreme sutra of all.

Secondly as for salvation of all sentient beings, in the Lotus Sutra there are two teachings which have not been taught in any other sutras. The first teaching is that persons of the two vehicles (Hīnayānists) will be able to attain Buddhahood. These two kinds of persons can't attain Buddhahood in other Mahāyāna sutras. And the second teaching is that the Buddha Shakyamuni attained Buddhahood in reality at an inconceivable distant time in the past and has been saving sentient beings since then. So the Buddha Shakyamuni who was born in India was merely a provisional manifestation of that eternal Buddha Shakyamuni. Nichiren thought that the Lotus Sutra tells that the eternal Buddha and his first disciples, Bodhisattvas who rise up out of the ground, will save all sentient beings in the Latter Day of the Law when other sutras can't save. So the Lotus Sutra, Nichiren believed firmly, is the supreme sutra of all especially in the Latter Day of the Law.

*Nichiren's Unique Interpretations of the Lotus Sutra*

Nichiren called the Buddha Shakyamuni, T'ien T'ai (538–597), Saicho (the great teacher Dengyo, 767–822) and himself the four teachers of the three countries, namely India, China and Japan because they made the orthodox faith and disseminated the Lotus Sutra (*On the Buddha's Prophecy*, W.N.D., p. 402).

Using the doctrine of the ten factors of existence in the *Expedient Means* of the Lotus Sutra (L.S., p. 24), T'ien T'ai taught the doctrine of three thousand realms in a single moment of mind in *Moho chihkuan* (*Great Concentration and Insight*). A mind in a single moment has the Ten Worlds such as hell; the worlds of hungry spirits, animals, asuras, and men; heavens; the worlds of voice-hearers (*śrāvakas*), cause-awakened ones (*pratyekabuddhas*), bodhisattvas, and Buddhas. And each of the Ten Worlds is endowed with all Ten Worlds in itself (this is called the concept of mutual possession of the Ten Worlds). Thus there are 100 worlds altogether. These 100 worlds are endowed with ten factors of existence. Thus there are conceived to be 1,000 realms. These 1,000 realms are endowed with the three realms of existence: the realm of sentient beings, non-sentient beings, and the five components (*skandhas*) of body and mind, which constitute all beings, sentient or non-sentient.

Thus the doctrine of three thousand realms in a single moment of mind explains systematically that all beings are endowed with 3,000 realms, which are the real inner structure of all beings. This doctrine shows a view of the world that there is a perfect harmony among all beings. In contemporary words, the doctrine of three thousand realms in a single moment of mind shows what the ultimate Enlightenment is.

Nichiren inherited the doctrine of three thousand realms in a single moment of mind and he said more directly that the doctrine was the principle of attaining Buddhahood for all beings. He emphasized that the concept of mutual possession of the Ten Worlds explained the principle of attaining Buddhahood for all beings. And he said that all Mahāyāna sutras except the Lotus Sutra denied that persons of two vehicles could attain Buddhahood. So strictly speaking, all other sutras did not show the concept of mutual possession of the Ten Worlds theoretically. Therefore Nichiren concluded that none of sentient beings could attain Buddhahood by means of all other sutras.

Moreover Nichiren expressed three thousand realms in a single moment of mind as the seed of Buddhahood (*The Object of Devotion for Observing the Mind*, W.N.D., p. 365). At this point three thousand

realms in a single moment of mind are not only the inner real structure of all beings, which was T'ien T'ai's interpretation, but also the seed of Buddhahood, which was directly the matter of concern for unenlightened sentient beings. Nichiren wrote the relation between three thousand realms in a single moment of mind as the seed of Buddhahood and Nichiren's Buddhism in *The Object of Devotion for Observing the Mind*. "Showing profound compassion, for those who can not comprehend the gem of the doctrine of three thousand realms in a single moment of mind, the Buddha wrapped it within the five Chinese characters, (namely *Myo-ho-ren-ge-kyo*, which is the Chinese name of the Lotus Sutra), with which he then adorned the neck of the ignorant people of the Latter Day (W.N.D., P. 375)." Nichiren argued that three thousand realms in a single moment of mind as the seed of Buddhahood was in the Latter Day of the Law nothing but *Nam-myoho-renge-kyo*. Nichiren expressed clearly that the Lotus Sutra in the Latter Day was *Nam-myoho-renge-kyo*, that is to say, the Three Great Secret Laws, which were Nichiren's original interpretations.

Nichiren compared his *Nam-myoho-renge-kyo* with T'ien T'ai's three thousand realms in a single moment of mind and described the former as actual practice, which was based on the essential teaching of the Lotus Sutra, and the latter as only theory, which was based on the theoretical teaching of the Lotus Sutra (*The Object of Devotion for Observing the Mind*, W.N.D., p. 375). So Nichiren concluded that in the Latter Day Nichiren's interpretations of the Lotus Sutra, namely Nichiren's Buddhism, was superior to T'ien T'ai's three thousand realms in a single moment of mind.

#### THE OUTLINE OF NICHIREN'S BUDDHISM

##### *The Three Great Secret Laws as the Central Dogmas*

As mentioned above, Nichiren inherited the Buddha Shakyamuni, T'ien T'ai, Saicho and propagated the Lotus Sutra. And he showed that his original ways of attaining Buddhahood, namely the Three Great Secret Laws, are well suited to the Latter Day of the Law. The Three Great Secret Laws are *honmon no honzon* (the object of devotion of the essential teaching), *honmon no daimoku* (the invocation, or *daimoku* of the essential teaching), and *honmon no kaidan* (the sanctuary of the essential teaching).

The object of devotion of the essential teaching is a mandala inscribed on paper or on wood with Chinese and Sanskrit characters representing the Mystic Law as well as the Ten Worlds, including Bud-

dhas. Before Nichiren inscribed *honzons*, the statues and the pictures of Buddhas and bodhisattvas had been the objects of devotion mainly. In *The Four Debts of Gratitude*, Nichiren wrote, “The Law is the teacher of all Buddhas. It is because of the Law that the Buddhas are worthy of respect (W.N.D., p. 44).” Nichiren thought that the Law is superior to Buddhas and that we should believe in the Law as the object of devotion. So Nichiren inscribed many *honzons* in which the Mystic Law, that is to say, *Nam-myoho-renge-kyo*, was inscribed at the center and the names of sentient beings of the Ten Worlds were inscribed around it.

The invocation, or *daimoku* of the essential teaching is to chant the sacred title of the Lotus Sutra, *Nam-myoho-renge-kyo*, with belief in the object of devotion of the essential teaching. Before Nichiren, the ways of practicing the Lotus Sutra were, for lay believers, the five kinds of practicing, which are described in the Lotus Sutra such as reciting the Lotus Sutra and copying the Lotus Sutra with hands. And for priests it was to concentrate and gain an insight of the mind which is described in T’ien T’ai’s *Great Concentration and Insight*. These ways of practicing were possible only for those who were the rich and the educated. So many people could not practice by these ways. Nichiren showed an easy way of practicing the Lotus Sutra in order to propagate the Lotus Sutra to people of every class.

The sanctuary of the essential teaching is to erect an ordination platform where the object of devotion of the essential teaching should be enshrined. Nichiren was influenced by Saicho’s movement for seeking permission to erect the Mahāyāna ordination platform on Mt. Hiei to the imperial court. So he seemed to think that the ordination platform of the essential teaching should be erected in the future under permission of the imperial court and the shogunate as milestone of spreading the essential teaching of the Lotus Sutra, that is to say, Nichiren’s Buddhism, abroad widely throughout *Jambudvīpa*.

### *Some Features of Nichiren’s Buddhism*

#### (a) Negation of status system and dignity of life

As I have mentioned above, Nichiren explained by the doctrine of three thousand realms in a single moment of mind that the Lotus Sutra is the only sutra that promises attaining Buddhahood for all sentient beings. Nichiren showed that every person is endowed with Buddhahood in his life. In *The Object of Devotion for Observing the Mind*, Nichiren wrote, “The Buddha Shakyamuni in our lives is the eternal Buddha since time without beginning, who obtained the three bodies more than numberless major world system dust particle kalpas ago (W.N.D., p. 365).”

As every person has a clean world of Buddhahood and a possibility of attaining Buddhahood, all people are substantially equal as the noble children of the Buddha. So the differences of status and social positions in this world are religiously meaningless. In *The Selection of the Time*, Nichiren wrote, "Those concerned about their next life would do better to be common people in the Latter Day of the Law, than be mighty rulers during the 2,000 years of the Former and Middle Days of the Law (W.N.D., p. 544)." In *The Letter from Sado*, Nichiren wrote, "Nichiren, who in this life was born poor and lowly to a *chandala*, the lowest class family (W.N.D., p. 303)." In the Kamakura period when the status system was strict, Nichiren's calling himself as the lowest class extended the circle of solidarity which overcame the strict status system. This was a revival of the Buddha Shakyamuni's opinion which had denied the caste system in India.

The thought that every person is endowed with a world of Buddhahood formulated the thought that life is most precious of all because every sentient being is endowed with a noble world of Buddhahood in its life. In *On Prolonging One's Life Span*, Nichiren wrote, "One day of life is more precious than all the treasures of the major world system (W.N.D., p. 955)."

(b) The doctrine of attaining Buddhahood in this lifetime as a theory of happiness

Nichiren thought that salvation should mean attaining Buddhahood in this lifetime. Nichiren criticized other sutras, because these sutra taught that people would be able to attain Buddhahood after countless kalpas of austere practice and denied that people would be able to attain Buddhahood in this lifetime. To believers of the Jodo sect who thought they would be reborn in the pure land (*Sukhavati*) of *Amitabha*, Amida Buddha in the next existence of life, Nichiren told that the teaching of the pure land of Amida Buddha was only a provisional teaching and that this *sahā* land which we lived was the only pure land. In *Letter to the Lay Priest Ichinosawa*, Nichiren wrote "Amida Buddha dwells in a land that is located a hundred thousand million worlds away and has not the slightest connection with this *sahā* world (W.N.D., p.529)." And Nichiren criticized the teachings of the Jodo sect because they neglected this life and world.

As a step toward attaining Buddhahood in this lifetime, Nichiren emphasized a teaching in *The Parable of the Medical Herbs* of the Lotus Sutra. "Once these living beings have heard the Law, they will enjoy peace and security in their present existence and good circum-

stances in future existences (L.S., p. 99).” So Nichiren admitted positively happiness in this world. To some believers who suffered from diseases or poverty, Nichiren taught lessening their karmic retributions and prayed kindly for them to recover. In *Winter Always Turns to Spring*, Nichiren wrote, “Those who believe in the Lotus Sutra are as if in winter, but winter always turns to springs. Never, from ancient times on, has anyone heard or seen of winter turning back to autumn (W.N.D., p. 536),” and encouraged them to do their best with hope.

Although Nichiren admitted happiness in this world, the ultimate happiness is to attain Buddhahood, which can be obtained through endurance of religious persecution and preservation of faith and practicing missionary work. In *Happiness in This World*, Nichiren wrote, “There is no true happiness other than upholding faith in the Lotus Sutra. This is what meant by ‘peace and security in their present existence and good circumstances in future existences.’ Though worldly troubles may arise, never let them disturb you. No one can avoid problems, not even sages or worthies (W.N.D., p. 681).”

(c) The significance of *On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land*

According to a passage of *The Life Span of the Thus Come One* of the Lotus Sutra, “(From having attained Buddhahood), I (the Buddha) have been constantly in this *sahā* world, preaching the Law, teaching and converting (L.S., p. 225),” Nichiren thought that there was no pure land, the land where a Buddha lived, except this *sahā* world. But Nichiren didn’t think this world was exactly like a Pure Land, an ideal world. In *On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land*, Nichiren described the life of people who suffered from natural disasters, a plague, a famine. Nichiren submitted it to the Kamakura shogunate, because he wanted to save suffering people by alteration of shogunate’s policy. So Nichiren didn’t think “the peace and security of the land” as the peace and security of the court and the shogunate. Rather, he thought it as a founding of an ideal world where all people were secured.

Nichiren didn’t regard people as powerless beings who waited for salvation passively. In *On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land*, he wrote, “The nation achieves prosperity through the Buddhist Law, and the Law is proven worthy of reverence by the people who embrace it (W.N.D., p. 18).” It is the people who should propagate the correct teaching, the Law and found a peace and secure world. In this respect, *On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the*

*Peace of the Land* attached importance to people who participated in this world actively on the base of faith. So Nichiren seemed to insist social reformation not for the dominating class but for people who suffered.

In other words, believers, who believe in Nichiren's Buddhism, should try to found an ideal society in this world. They should not be satisfied with religious activities only in the narrow religious sphere. Because the secular laws are not different from the Buddhist Law, which is meant by a passage of *Expedient Means* of the Lotus Sutra, "These phenomena are part of an abiding Law, the characteristics of the world are constantly abiding (L.S., p. 41)," the believers of Nichiren's Buddhism should try to realize social justice and to found an ideal society on the base of faith.

### **Some Religious Ideas of the Soka Gakkai and the Lotus Sutra**

The significance of Nichiren's Buddhism which I mentioned above has not always been inherited by the Nichiren sects which were derived from Nichiren. Under the long regulation of religions in the age of the Tokugawa shogunate, the significance of Nichiren's Buddhism had been neglected by them. Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and Josei Toda found out the significance of Nichiren's Buddhism. So the creeds of the Soka Gakkai are based on their discovery and interpretations of Nichiren's Buddhism. Some religious ideas of the Soka Gakkai are based on Makiguchi's acceptance of Nichiren's Buddhism in 1928 and his interpretations of it by his original theory of value. And also they are based on Toda's Enlightenments in prison, where he was sent because of his objection to the military government. His Enlightenment was that Buddhahood was one of the state of life, one of the Ten Worlds of life, and that Toda himself was also one of the bodhisattvas who emerged from the earth, which is described in *The Emerging of the Earth* of the Lotus Sutra. So the religious ideas of the Soka Gakkai are formed as the modern development of Nichiren's Buddhism.

The Soka Kyoiku Gakkai (the former organization of the Soka Gakkai) was founded by Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and Josei Toda in 1930. It was an organization of educational reform movement to realize Makiguchi's original ideas of education, namely, Ideas of Education for Creating Values. And Makiguchi thought that to realize his educational ideas Nichiren's Buddhism should lie at the base of the organization, so



the Soka Kyoiku Gakkai had some elements of religious movement.

In 1940 Makiguchi became president of the Soka Kyoiku Gakkai and altered general principles and the regulations of the Soka Kyoiku Gakkai. After then the Soka Kyoiku Gakkai activated a religious movement mainly. Afterwards the Soka Kyoiku Gakkai opposed the religious policy of the military government of Japan and refused acceptance of talismans of Ise shrine (Japanese emperor's shrine). So the Soka Kyoiku Gakkai was oppressed and accused of being guilty of the Maintenance of the Public Order Act and disrespect of majesty. Makiguchi died in prison in 1944 and Toda was not let out of prison until a month before when Japan was defeated.

When Toda reconstructed the organization, he changed its name to the Soka Gakkai. And the Soka Gakkai acquired its own license of a religious corporation independently of the Nichiren Shoshu and developed its own religious movement.

#### THE FOUNDING OF THE SOKA GAKKAI—TSUNESABURO MAKIGUCHI'S RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT

##### *Makiguchi's Career of Religions and His Choice of Nichiren's Buddhism*

In 1928 Makiguchi converted to Nichiren's Buddhism through an educator, Sokei Mitani, who was a lay believer of the Nichiren Shoshu. In his career of religions, Makiguchi had been interested in Protestantism, Zen Buddhism and one of Nichiren sects, which was led by Chigaku Tanaka, who was president of the Kokuchukai (one of nationalistic religious bodies). However Makiguchi didn't believe in them<sup>3</sup> (about Makiguchi's early religious wandering, see my paper, pp. 48–49).

Makiguchi explained that he could not believe in them because these religions were incompatible with his ideas of philosophy and science. Under the influence of Western modern civilization after the Meiji Restoration, Makiguchi trusted in scientific knowledge to a certain extent and he didn't believe in such religions as were incompatible with scientific knowledge.

And as Makiguchi had taken an active part in education, he thought that development of personality, which was formed by self-awakening of social cooperations, was as important as realization of individual happiness. So he sought for a religion which promoted both individual happiness and social responsibility.

So Makiguchi had a criterion for choice of religion and he sought for a religion which met it. At last he found that Nichiren's Buddhism, which he accepted through Mitani, met the criterion. He explained as

follows (*ibid.*, pp. 50–51).

Concerning whether a religion is compatible with scientific knowledge, he wrote that Nichiren's Buddhism had three types of proofs (proofs by documentary evidence, by logical reasoning and by demonstrations of actual facts) which established Buddhist truth. And he wrote that these types of proofs were similar to scientific ways of proofs, which were constituted by rational theories and experimental proofs of theories by demonstrations of actual facts. Although the objects, which many other religions devoted, were personified deity or Buddhas who had absolute powers of salvation, the object which Nichiren's Buddhism devoted, was the Law for becoming a Buddha oneself. He argued that a Buddha led a life based on the Law and attained Buddhahood (*ibid.*), that is, the noblest personality. Makiguchi distinguished between religions which embraced a personified deity or Buddhas and those which embraced a Law, and argued that the latter had an affinity with science. Makiguchi couldn't believe in Christianity because he thought it was incompatible with scientific knowledge.

Concerning whether a religion promoted both individual happiness and social responsibility, Makiguchi might think that Zen Buddhism promoted individual happiness because it taught how to get individual peace of mind, but it wasn't interested in social responsibility. Of all Japanese Buddhist sects, Nichiren's Buddhism took the strongest interest in social issues, and Nichiren's *On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land* showed that it was important for religious people to criticize those in power from a viewpoint of their religious faith. So because Makiguchi thought we should choose a religion which promoted social responsibility, it was natural that he chose Nichiren's Buddhism.

Nichiren attached importance to the saying of the Nirvāṇa Sutra that one shouldn't rely on persons but on the Law. Makiguchi also regarded the saying as important and interpreted the saying as a democratic principle. He wrote that Nichiren's Buddhism was a religion well suited to a state governed by rule of law (*ibid.*, p. 52). So he accepted Nichiren's Buddhism not through Chigaku Tanaka, who worshipped the emperor of Japan, but through Sokei Mitani, who was a democrat.

Makiguchi accepted Nichiren's Buddhism in such a way as mentioned above. It showed that he accepted Nichiren's Buddhism under his own interpretations. Makiguchi had his own ideas of religion and he chose Nichiren's Buddhism as well suited to his ideas of religion. So he interpreted Nichiren's Buddhism originally by his own ideas of religion.

*An Original Religious Movement Led by Makiguchi*

Because Makiguchi attached importance to the saying that one shouldn't rely on persons but on the Law, he read directly Nichiren's text and he tried to understand Nichiren's Buddhism without traditional interpretations which had been handed down by priests of the Nichiren Shoshu.

One of Makiguchi's original interpretations was an interpretation of Nichiren's Buddhism by his original theory of value. Both the Lotus Sutra and Nichiren taught that the laws of society were nothing but the Buddhist Law. Makiguchi interpreted this teaching as following. Both the Buddhist Law and the laws of society teach the laws of cause and effect. The laws of society such as natural sciences and social sciences teach the law of cause and effect which can be applied only to a narrow sphere that each science studies. In opposition to the laws of society the Buddhist Law teach the law of cause and effect which can be applied to all spheres. So the Buddhist Law, Makiguchi thought, are compatible with the laws of society, and the former can include the latter (*ibid.*, pp. 51–52).

And Makiguchi formulated a plan of value science whose aim was to find the law of cause and effect concerning human happiness and to provide guiding principles for people to attain the greatest happiness, based on the assumption that in order to achieve the same effects, one must generate the same causes. Makiguchi thought that the existence of religion was justified only when it provided the value of fulfilling people's prayers for happiness in their lives. So Makiguchi thought that, with the methodology of value science, it was possible to measure how much value a religion could provide and to compare all religions through value science. Makiguchi was confident that the superiority, in terms of value, of Nichiren's Buddhism would be borne out by his value science research methodology (*ibid.*, pp. 54–56).

By the interpretation that Nichiren's Buddhism gives believers rewards and slanders punishments by the Law (*ibid.*, pp. 56–59), Makiguchi asserted that Nichiren's Buddhism gave an individual person value of benefit and developed an original religious movement, which tried to prove experimentally value in human life. When Makiguchi developed the new religious movement, he didn't let Soka Kyoiku Gakkai belong to a lay believer's organization of the Nichiren Shoshu's temples (*ibid.*, pp. 62–65). And he thought that small discussion groups, where Makiguchi and lay leaders gave guidance of religious faith and where people shared common religious experiences, were more important than preaching by priests in a temple. This new religious move-

ment, which was founded on Makiguchi's axiological interpretations of Nichiren's Buddhism, released Nichiren's Buddhism from traditional faith form of the Nichiren Shoshu. The Nichiren Shoshu had been sustained by a system of supporters of a Buddhist temple and held funerals as its important task. Makiguchi changed Nichiren's Buddhism from Buddhism for the next life to Buddhism for this life.

And Makiguchi thought that he should develop Nichiren's Buddhism not only as religion which promoted individual value of benefit but also as religion which promoted social value of goodness. Makiguchi as well as Nichiren believed that social security and peace could be attained by correct teaching, so to propagate Nichiren's Buddhism was in itself good. Because Makiguchi inherited Nichiren's belief that the Lotus Sutra was the supreme sutra of all, he criticized severely that the National Shintoism, which the military government of Japan compelled the people to believe, was a wrong religion. Makiguchi appealed believers of Nichiren's Buddhism to do a great good life that, following Nichiren's admonition against the Kamakura shogunate, one should admonish against the military government under being determined to be oppressed.

Makiguchi criticized the Nichiren Shoshu because they were ready to compromise with the National Shintoism. In spite of Makiguchi's protest, the Nichiren Shoshu decided to receive Shinto talismans from Ise shrine. And when the administrative office of the Nichiren Shoshu ordered the Soka Kyoiku Gakkai to receive Shinto talismans from Ise shrine, Makiguchi refused the demand. After then the Soka Kyoiku Gakkai separated from the Nichiren Shoshu. The Soka Kyoiku Gakkai was oppressed organizationally in 1943 and Makiguchi died in prison in 1944.

#### RECONSTRUCTION OF THE SOKA GAKKAI—DEEPENING OF INTERPRETATIONS OF NICHIREN'S BUDDHISM BY JOSEI TODA

##### *Two Enlightments Which Toda Attained in Prison*

The reconstruction of the Soka Gakkai after the World War II started when Josei Toda experienced religious Enlightenment in prison. Toda read eagerly and repeatedly the Lotus Sutra there.

Makiguchi interpreted Nichiren's Buddhism from his theory of value, and showed usefulness of Nichiren's Buddhism in this life. And he interpreted a Buddha as a person who becomes the noblest person and emphasized that Nichiren's Buddhism had social significance. But he did not relate deliberately his interpretations to the Lotus Sutra and

Nichiren's teachings. He used an axiology of beauty, benefit and goodness, which was developed in the second volume of the *Soka Kyoikugaku Taikei* (*A System of Value-Creating Pedagogy*), as framework of interpretations of Nichiren's Buddhism.

Toda abandoned the Makiguchi's framework for a while in prison, and tried to understand Nichiren's Buddhism directly by reading the Lotus Sutra. Then he came to a passage of the Immeasurable Meanings Sutra, which was supposed to be an introductory sutra of the Lotus Sutra. There was a passage that Buddha's body was explained in 34 negative phrases (Toda, vol. 8, p. 500).<sup>4</sup> After then he wondered what a Buddha was in reality. He chanted *daimoku* and thought about it for some months, and at last he realized that a Buddha was a life itself. He explained his realization in *Seimei ron* (*An Essay Concerning Life*. Toda, vol.3, pp. 5–22) which appeared in the *Daibyakurenge* in 1949.

In the essay, Toda quoted some passages of the Lotus Sutra and Nichiren's texts and explained life as follows. Life is eternal; it has existed in the past, exists now, and will exist always in the future, and continues in conformity with the law of cause and effect. Life exists not only in living beings, but also in the whole universe, which contains inanimate beings. In short the whole universe is life itself and is filled with life force. And Toda accepted an idea of next existence of individual life after this life's death and he explained that individual life after death unites with the whole life of the universe. This essay explained T'ien T'ai's doctrine of three thousand realms in a single moment of mind by Toda's original keyword "life." Toda united the Lotus Sutra, T'ien T'ai's doctrine and Nichiren's Buddhism by using a term "life" and the essay orientated the Soka Gakkai's interpretations of Buddhism by the keyword "life."

After he found out an interpretation of a Buddha as a state of life, Toda read still more the Lotus Sutra in prison and he came to a problem why the Lotus Sutra was taught as a whole. In a morning when he concentrated on the problem, a vision occurred to him, that is, as one of bodhisattvas who emerged from the earth, he attended an ceremonial meeting in an empty space, which was described in the Lotus Sutra (Toda, vol. 3, p. 108, also vol. 8, pp. 517–520). By this religious vision he realized his religious mission that he should save people who suffer by the propagation of the Lotus Sutra in the Latter Day of the Law.

#### *The Ideological Development of Nichiren's Buddhism by Josei Toda*

From Makiguchi, Toda inherited some ideas of religion that religion should provide values in this life and that religion should not be incom-

patible with sciences. Toda explained these ideas in *Kagaku to shukyo* (*Science and Religion*, Toda, vol.3, pp.23-31) and *Kofuku ron* (*An Essay on Happiness*, Toda, vol. 3, pp. 32–40). But there was an originality in these papers that he used theory of life, which he had realized in prison, as framework to interpret Buddhism. Toda explained Buddhism in *An Essay on Happiness* as follows. “Religions have developed to seek truths in human inner world (Toda, vol. 3, p. 34).” Buddhism argues that there are laws of polluting and cleansing life. When each sentient being commits bad and foolish deeds, its deeds pollute its life badly. The badly polluted life can’t be in harmony with the rhythm of the universe, and it loses life force and feels unhappy. There is only one way to cleanse a badly polluted life in the Latter Day of the Law, that is, to practice the Three Great Secret Laws. If a person practices these Laws, he can cleanse and strengthen his life and feel happy.

Because Toda emphasized rewards by belief in Nichiren’s Buddhism, the Soka Gakkai was considered generally as one of new religious movements whose purpose was to give people this-worldly benefits. But Toda distinguished three different kinds of benefits in *Dai riyaku ron* (*An Essay on Great Benefits*, Toda, vol. 3, pp. 148–175). The first kind of benefit is this-worldly benefit that believers can get over poverty and diseases. The second is to obtain vigorous life force on which our daily life rests. The third is to obtain Buddhahood which is eternal happiness and is above this-worldly happiness. Toda explained that a Buddha is a person who continues to save sentient beings with vigorous life force and kind-hearted mercy whenever he is reborn in the cycle of reincarnation (Toda, vol. 3, p. 171).

As missionary works had advanced well, Toda showed in *Kosen rufu to bunka katsudo* (*Spreading the Lotus Sutra Abroad Widely Throughout Jambudvīpa and Cultural Activities*, Toda, vol. 1, pp. 186–195) that they should establish *honmon no kaidan* (the sanctuary of the essential teaching), that is to say, to erect an ordination platform for Nichiren’s Buddhism, which was the unrealized goal of the Three Great Secret Laws. In order to establish the sanctuary of the essential teaching, the Soka Gakkai should develop propagation of *honzens* (the objects of devotion) on a large scale and make people understand the significance of Nichiren’s Buddhism (Toda, vol. 1, pp. 192–3). After then they would be able to establish the sanctuary of the essential teaching, that is to say, to erect an ordination platform for Nichiren’s Buddhism as a national ordination platform. Toda argued in *Obutsu myogo ron* (*An Essay on the Harmonious Relation between Politics and Buddhism*, Toda, vol. 1, pp. 200–253) that, in order to realize policy that social

prosperity would be in keeping with individual happiness, the Soka Gakkai should commit political activities to establish the sanctuary of the essential teaching as a national ordination platform. In Toda's argument a secular purpose that social prosperity would be in keeping with individual happiness (*ibid.*, p. 252) and a religious purpose that they should establish the sanctuary of the essential teaching as a national ordination platform (*ibid.*, p. 200) weren't distinguished. Because Toda's proposal wasn't examined legally, later the Soka Gakkai was criticized that to establish the sanctuary of the essential teaching as a national ordination platform is against the principle of separation of church and state in the Japanese Constitution.

In the Kamakura period when Nichiren lived, it was taken for granted that the imperial court and the Kamakura shogunate protected or oppressed some religious groups and there was no idea that state should be separated from church. So Nichiren seemed to have an idea that, from the case of Saicho's movement to erect an ordination platform for Mahāyāna Buddhism in Mt. Hiei under permission of the court, they should establish the sanctuary of the essential teaching under permission of the court and the shogunate. But in 1970 under the leadership of Daisaku Ikeda, the third president of the Soka Gakkai, it was formally decided that they would establish the sanctuary of the essential teaching not as a national ordination platform but as a private ordination platform which would be erected by many people's contributions. The reason why the Soka Gakkai denied a national ordination platform is that the principle of separation of state and church was constituted in modern times from the critique that the state should not oppress freedom of belief and that the Soka Gakkai was also oppressed by the military government during the war. So the Soka Gakkai thought highly of the principle of separation of state and church which would secure freedom of belief institutionally. And to be better suited to the principle, the Soka Gakkai decided to separate members of assemblies from the managing staff of the Soka Gakkai and to entrust political activities to the Komei Party which had no religious purposes and to restrict themselves to support activity. Now the Soka Gakkai develops such activities as cultural, peace and educational movements which are based on religious movement.

#### Abbreviations

- W.N.D. *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, Tokyo: Soka Gakkai, 1999.  
 L.S. Tr. by Burton Watson, *The Lotus Sutra*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1993.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Nichiren's early important writing the *Kokka shugo ron* (*On Protection of a Country*) has not been translated into English yet. In Japanese version of this paper I cited many passages from this writing. But for convenience of English readers who can't read Japanese, I rewrote some passages and cited them from W.N.D.. There have been many arguments about which texts were really written by Nichiren himself. And there are some uncertain texts in W.N.D.. But I think even if these texts hadn't been written by Nichiren, they were in harmony with Nichiren's religious thoughts in the main.

<sup>2</sup> Today this sutra is regarded as a scripture which was made in China in fifth century. But it had been regarded as Shakyamuni's teaching from its appearance until 1954, when Enichi Ocho wrote *Muryogi kyo ni tsuite* (*On the Immeasurable Meanings Sutra*) and argued that the sutra had been made in China in fifth century.

<sup>3</sup> Makiguchi's writings have not been translated precisely into English. But a few years ago my paper *Tsunesaburo Makiguchi's View of Religion* was translated into English (*The Journal of Oriental Studies*, vol. 5, Tokyo: Institute of Oriental Philosophy, 1995, pp. 48–66). So I would like to cite as many passages of Makiguchi's writings from my paper as possible.

<sup>4</sup> Toda's writings have not been translated into English yet. So I can't help citing his Japanese texts *Toda Josei Zenshu* (*The Complete Works of Josei Toda*, Vol. 1–8, Tokyo: Seikyo Shinbunsha, 1981–1989).