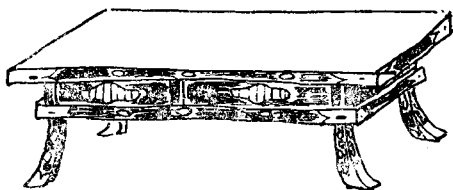


SOKA GAKKAI
AND
THE NICHIREN SHO
SECT (1)



— An Institute Study —

INTRODUCTION

Among numerous unique religious organizations that have come to the attention of the public since World War II, none are more in the limelight today than Sōka Gakkai.^a Its ability to attract members of labor unions, particularly coal miners, has posed a serious threat to union leadership and solidarity. Its success in politics, as indicated by the election of all 76 of its candidates for ward assemblies in Tokyo in April 30, 1958, and all six of its candidates to the House of Councillors of the National Diet on June 2, 1959, made it a focus of national attention. Its astounding program to “take over” the religious life of the nation has shocked many. But the major cause of anxiety and the reason why opposition is beginning to be aroused is the aggressive propaganda method that has brought it into conflict with practically every other religious organization in the country.

This method is called *shaku-buku*^b in Japanese, a term that means, literally, “to destroy and conquer.” The term occurred originally in the Shōman-gyō,^c Dainichi-kyō,^d and other ancient Euddhist scriptures in connection with a parallel term, *shōju*^e

a. 創価学会 b. 折伏 c. 勝鬘經 d. 大日經 e. 摂受

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which means, literally, "acceptance." The former term designates intolerant propaganda to produce a forced conversion; the latter a tolerant approach by means of moral suasion. In his writings Nichiren stressed that with *ignorant* men tolerant, moral suasion could be used; but that with *malicious* men it was necessary to use intolerant methods.

The term *shaku-buku* was of great significance in the history of Nichiren propaganda even before it was adopted by Sōka Gakkai as its instrument for advance. In 1951 Jōsei Toda^a organized his followers into a military system, trained them in its refined pressure techniques, and sent them into society with a commission to compel both the willing and unwilling to be converted. These "troops," mostly young men and women, "gang up" on an individual, force him to submit to a type of "brain washing," and put every conceivable kind of pressure on him until he succumbs. Once committed the individual must destroy the traditional home altar and substitute one approved by Sōka Gakkai. Then he is incorporated into a group which exercises a type of surveillance which generally prevents any relapse into the former religious life.

As might be expected, the numerical growth of the organization has been remarkable. In 1953 its reported membership was some 53,000 households, roughly 200,000 individuals. In 1959 it claimed a total of 1,096,920 or an estimated 4,000,000 persons! This is an astounding record. It alone would appear to justify the careful attention that religious, political, and social leaders are beginning to give to it.

It is not our purpose at this time to present a thorough study

a. 戸田城聖

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of Sōka Gakkai. In this article we are presenting only some brief background information regarding the founder and his successor; his fundamental philosophy, as stated in "The Theory of Value,"^a which gave the organization its name; and a resume of the Nichiren Shō Sect^b with which Sōka Gakkai is affiliated. An outline of Jōsei Toda's *Teaching of Shakubuku*,^c and a study of Sōka Gakkai itself will be presented in a subsequent issue.

I

The Founder and his Successors

FOUNDER

Tsunesaburō Makiguchi,^d founder of the Sōka Gakkai, was born in 1871 in Arahama, Kariha-gun, Niigata Prefecture, the eldest son of Chōmatsu Watanabe.^e When he was three years old he was adopted by the Makiguchi family and became its legal heir. After finishing his elementary education he went first to Otaru in Hokkaidō, where an uncle lived, and then to Sapporo, where he graduated from the Sapporo Normal School and then remained there for some years as a teacher.

In those years Makiguchi was especially interested in geography and in 1901 he went to Tokyo to publish the results of his studies: a book entitled *The Geography of Life (Jinsei Chirigaku)*.^f Success in this venture led him into the publishing business and at one time he assisted in the compilation of a Ministry of Education-sponsored national textbook on geo-

a. 価値論 b. 日蓮正宗 c. 折伏教典 d. 牧口常三郎 e. 渡辺長松 f. 人生地理学

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graphy. However, at the age of thirty-nine for financial reasons he again became a teacher and for twenty years devoted himself to this profession, becoming in time the principal of several of Tokyo's elementary schools.

At the same time he devoted his energy to the study of pedagogy and in June, 1930, he began to publish a series of books entitled *A System of Education based on the Value-Creation Principle* (*Sōka Kyōikugaku Taikēi*),^a in which he propounded his theory of value that was to become the philosophical foundation for his later activities. In this he was helped by his subordinate, Mr. Jōsei Toda, who after Makiguchi's death became his successor.

In 1937 at a meeting held in the Kikusui restaurant in Azabu, Tokyo, Makiguchi and Toda established the Value-Creation Education Institute (*Sōka Kyōiku Gakkai*)^b and became respectively president and chairman of the board of directors. Four years later (1941) they began publication of a new magazine entitled *The Creation of Value* (*Kachi Sōzō*):

In the meantime about 1928 Makiguchi, at the age of fifty-eight along with his protege, Toda, fell under the influence of Sokei Mitani,^d principal of the Mejiro Elementary School and became drawn to the teaching of the Nichiren Shō Sect. Henceforth, he taught that his "Theory of Value" was in accord with the teaching of its head temple, Taisekiji.^e Thus, his philosophy of education was linked with an intense religious faith. It was the latter that was to be the vehicle for the realization of his philosophy.

Makiguchi had only a small group of earnest followers. He

a. 創価教育学体系 b. 創価教育学会 c. 価値創造 d. 三谷素啓 e. 大石寺

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achieved no national reputation. Nevertheless, as the years passed, opposition to his activities began to develop because of the political implication of his teaching and conduct, and finally he was forced to resign his position as principal. In May, 1942, his magazine was suppressed. The following year on July 6, 1943, Makiguchi and Toda were arrested on charges of lese majesty and subsequently twenty-one leading followers were also incarcerated. In view of the tense international situation this was not strange. Makiguchi had ordered his followers not to accept the talisman (*taijima*)^a of the Grand Shrine of Ise and had prohibited them from worshipping the shrine because he said it was counter to the teaching of the Nichiren Shō Sect. Even though the sect officials, fearing repression by the authorities, sought to restrain the organization and ordered the members not to reject the talisman, Makiguchi and his followers maintained that it did no good to pray to the Sun Goddess and ignored the admonition of the sect leaders.

In November 18, 1944, at the age of 74, Makiguchi died in his solitary prison cell at Sugamo prison.

JOSEI TODA

Jōsei Toda, the second head of Sōka Gakkai, was born in Ishikawa Prefecture in 1900, and as a young man became a elementary school teacher in Hokkaido. Later, while he was teaching under Makiguchi at the Nishimachi primary school in Tokyo, he became an adherent of Nichiren Shō Sect (1928) and was closely associated with Machiguchi until the latter's

a. 大麻

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death in prison in 1944.

Soon after his release from prison in July, 1945, Toda, in accordance with Makiguchi's expressed wish, reorganized their followers. In February, 1946, the present name was adopted, and in November, the first general meeting was held at the Education Hall (Kyōiku Kaikan)^a in Kanda on the third anniversary of Makiguchi's death. In July, 1949, the monthly magazine, *Dai Byaku Renge*,^b and in April, 1951, the weekly paper, *Seikyō Shinbun*^c were started. During those years, however, Toda had many difficulties and the future was uncertain.

From May, 1951, the situation changed. Toda assumed the presidency of the organization and inaugurated a program of advance by means of forced conversions (*shaku-buku*). His success in this is well-known. When he died on April 22, 1958, several hundred thousand people, some from distant places, paid tribute at the Aoyama Funeral Hall in Tokyo. Among them was Prime Minister, Nobusuke Kishi,^d and Education Minister, Tō Matsunaga,^e who's interests were primarily political, since neither of them are devotees of the movement.

(The present head of the organization is Takashi Koizumi,^f the chief director)

II

NICHIREN SHO SECT

The Nichiren Shō Sect with which Sōka Gakkai is now closely affiliated is, as the name suggests, a division of Nichiren Buddhism that was founded by Saint Nichiren^g (1222—1282).

a. 教育会館 b. 大白蓮華 c. 聖教新聞 d. 岸信介 e. 松永東 f. 小泉隆 g. 日蓮

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Saint Nichiren was born in a small fishing village not far from the present Kominato in Chiba Prefecture. When he was twelve years of age he entered the neighboring Tendai monastery of Kiyozumi,^a which today is called Tanjōji^b (literally, “birth-temple”) in honor of his birth there. Later he went to Kamakura to learn about Pure Land (*Jōdo*)^c Buddhism and then on to Enryakuji^d on Mount Hiei^e near Kyoto where he studied the teaching of Dengyō Daishi^f (“great teacher”), otherwise known as Saichō.^g During this latter period, he went to Kyoto, Nara, Osaka and Mt. Kōya^h and studied various other Buddhist teachings.

Convinced that the quintessence of Buddhism was to be found only in the Lotus Sūtra (*Saddharma-pundarika-sutra*), he returned to his native village and announced a new formula for the salvation of all mankind: *Namu Myōhō-rence-kyō*ⁱ (“Adoration be to the Lotus of the Perfect Truth!”) This summed up his faith and has since been the identifying characteristic of his followers who incessantly beat a fan-like hand drum and repeat the “Great Title” (*Daimoku*)^j as the above expression is called. At the same time he virulently attacked all other Buddhist schools of thought—Pure Land, Shingon, and Zen—as heresies. Consequently he became *persona non grata* with civil and religious leaders and was severely persecuted by both.

Nichiren was intensely devoted to both the Lotus Sutra and his native land. He believed that Japan was destined to become the center from which the teachings of the Buddha would spread throughout the world, and that he as the descendant of the

a. 清澄 b. 誕生寺 c. 浄土 d. 延暦寺 e. 比叡 f. 伝教大師 g. 最澄
h. 高野 i. 南無妙法蓮華經 j. 題目

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Bodhisattva Visista-caritra (Jōgyō Bosatsu)^a was the one who was destined to bring this to pass in the decadent age of the Latter Law (*mappō*).^b He attacked his opponents with an intensity unparalleled in Japanese history. He spared none from the Emperor down who would not listen to and follow his message. As the center for his world-wide mission he chose Mount Minobu^c in Yamanashi Prefecture in the region of Mount Fuji. There he spent more than eight years just prior to his death, and it is there that his ashes rest.

In addition to a surprising quantity of expository and polemic writing, Nichiren left as his greatest legacy to his followers a *mandala*, that is, a diagrammatic representaton of the cosmos which became the central object of worship as well as the center of controversy for his followers.

At the time of the founder's demise in 1282 there were six leading disciples from among whom Nichiren appears to have been unable to select one as his successor. Instead, he willed that responsibility for leadership, including the custodianship of the temple at Minobu, should rotate among them—an arrangement that soon proved to be very impractical. Consequently, it was decided that one of them should be chosen for this position and Nikō^d was selected. However, Nikkō^e another one of the six, believing that he was the rightful spiritual heir, was dissatisfied and moved to Taisekigahara^f at the foot of Mount Fuji where he established his own temple, Taisekiji.

Nikkō (1246—1333) became a disciple of Nichiren at the age of fourteen and when Nichiren was exiled to the island of Sado^g in Niigata Prefecture, he followed his master there and

a. 上行菩薩 b. 末法 c. 身延 d. 日向 e. 日興 f. 大石原 g. 佐渡

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led a very hard life with him for three years. Later he followed Nichiren to the seclusion of Mount Minobu, and endeavored to propagate the faith in the surrounding area. It is believed that it was upon Nikkō's advice that Nichiren chose Mount Minobu after his return from exile on Sado. At any rate his followers have continued to regard him and his successors as the only true succession of Saint Nichiren.

Nikkō's followers have never cooperated with other Nichiren bodies. On the contrary, for the past seven hundred years they have carried on a bitter struggle against them, as the arch heretics of the faith. In the vitriolic quality of their attacks, they unquestionably have emulated Saint Nichiren. And in their refusal to pay obeisance to shrines they are in accord with his spirit, if not his practice. Nikkō would not permit the local feudal lord to visit Mishima^a Shrine nor make an image of Sakyamuni for the purpose of worship.

The division between Nikkō and the other five disciples of Nichiren was much more than a personal feud. It was also doctrinal. Nikkō believed that his interpretation of the Master's teachings was the only one. What these were is a historical problem that need not detain us here. The present doctrines of the Nichiren Shō Sect were reorganized by Nikkan' (1665—1726) in the Tokugawa period and it is these that are the basis of Sōka Gakkai's teachings today.

There are four basic differences that separate Nichiren Shō devotees from other Nichiren believers. In the first place, the Nichiren Sect, established by the five disciples, and its subsequent divisions, regard the historic Buddha, Sakyamuni, as the

a. 三島 b. 日寛

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Eternal Buddha, and Saint Nichiren as in the true line of succession from him. The Nichiren Shō Sect, however, ignores the historic Buddha, Sakyamuni, and equates Nichiren, as Jōgyō Bosatsu, directly with the eternal Buddha. This is the basic difference between the two.

In the second place, although the central object of worship in all Nichiren temples is a *mandala* either received from or copied after those drawn by Saint Nichiren, Taisekiji regards its *mandala* as the only true one and, therefore, the only one that is efficacious for the salvation of mankind.

In the third place, Taisekiji claims that Nikkō received one of Nichiren's teeth with a small piece of live flesh attached. Subsequently, the flesh is said to have begun to grow imperceptibly and the devout believe that today the flesh almost covers the entire tooth, which is now reported to be in the possession of Taisekiji. Leaders of the sect say that when the flesh completely covers the tooth, the sect will reach its greatest position of influence.

Finally, the Nichiren Shō Sect has as its ultimate goal the establishment of government-sponsored ordination center at Taisekiji. When this happens the sect will then have become the state religion.

Until the end of World War II the Nichiren Shō Sect was not strong numerically. About 1920, for example, it had only 69 temples and some 66,000 adherents. By 1946, however, the sect reported 135 temples and 128,500 adherents. It would seem that in spite of wartime difficulties Makiguchi and his Sōka Gakkai, which was established in 1937, contributed greatly to its growth. By 1957 (December 31) the number of temples

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(141) and churches (17) showed no marked increase but the reported number of adherents was 413,350 !*

* Obviously membership in Sōka Gakkai does not automatically make a person an adherent of the Nichiren Shō Sect.

III

A Brief Summary of THE THEORY OF VALUE

By

Tsuneshaburo Makiguchi

Revised by Josei Toda

I. GOAL OF LIFE

The goal of human life is happiness, the ideal state for each individual. Between unhappiness and the ideal state of happiness there are many stages.

A happy life is the condition in which whatever is regarded as having Value is realized. The question of Value, therefore, is of prime importance, not only for determining the goal of life, but also as the criterion by which each individual is able to break away from whatever his state of misery may be and move toward the attainment of happiness.

II. TRUTH AND VALUE

Truth and value are two very different concepts. Truth is based on cognition and is a statement regarding reality as it is. Falsehood, the opposite of truth, is an incorrect statement about reality, which asserts that reality is what it is not.

Value is determined by the relationship which man has

with something. That which does not concern man, things that are not known by him to exist, are not heeded or regarded as of importance to him. That which affects man's life, no matter how small, enters his consciousness and is recognized as having a relationship with man.

Truth and falsehood have no relationship with the relativity of human existence. It is impossible to deny that truth is true and that falsehood is false. Value is a statement of how a person reacts to that with which there exists some relationship; for example, a thing may be thought to be beautiful or ugly, useful or useless, agreeable or disagreeable. Historically, philosophers have regarded the principal elements of the ideal life to be truth, goodness and beauty. This is incorrect. To be sure, goodness and beauty describe a relationship between man and an object. Therefore, they come within the category of Value, but this is not the case with truth. The state of anything being true or false depends on the objective cognition of reality, not on its subjective evaluation.

III. THE IMPORTANCE OF VALUE

In order to reach the goal of life, that is, ideal happiness, man seeks after that which has Value. In doing so it is inconceivable that he would disregard Value which is inherent in advantage, benefit, profit, convenience, in other words, gain or economic value. It is not surprising that this phase of happiness, especially gain or economic value, cannot be ignored. Yet, strange as it may seem, philosophers generally have seldom, if ever, regarded it as an integral part of happiness and included it in the criteria for happiness. Consequently, their principles

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are academic and remote from the actualities of life.

The Principle of Value makes the basic ingredients of happiness: gain, goodness and beauty. This alone is a trustworthy standard for determining the ideal life. In this connection, beauty or aesthetic value describes the momentary value which has an emotional quality derived from our five senses. Essentially it is what one likes or dislikes. Likewise, gain or economic value, that is, profit, refers to the quality of being able to support and prolong the life of an individual in a way that beauty cannot. Goodness or moral value is the term that is applied to the volitional actions of an individual that contribute in any way to the development of the community of which he is a constituent member. This corresponds to what is called public welfare. The opposites of these three are respectively ugliness, loss, and evil.

A volitional action is regarded by the individual as either gain or loss, depending upon whether or not the community of which he is a member considers it to be good or evil, right or wrong. Consequently, an action that is destructive from the community point of view is never regarded by the individual as profitable. Moreover, that which is regarded highly in one's own community may be considered as evil in another. This is as true in regard to nations, societies, classes and groups as it is for the individual, in which case, the criterion of value is gain or loss, not good or evil.

IV. THE DISTINCTIVE QUALITY OF VALUE

The feeling of attraction or repulsion which is produced when a relationship has been established between an individual and

an object is the sense of Value. Many factors, such as intensity, duration, certainty and uncertainty, proximity and remoteness, determine the effect of any relationship upon the individual. One person may consider a flower to be beautiful, another think it disagreeable, and a third be indifferent to it. Even though the responses may be similar, the degree will vary. If three persons receive a gift of some rice, one may shed tears of gratitude, a second may be less grateful, and a third resent the kindness. This applies to any "good" action.

Moreover, the effect of anything on an individual will vary greatly with time and place. An object may be thought beautiful or profitable at one time and ugly or unprofitable at another. As a flower fades, so the thing itself, anything, may change and create different impressions on the mind. Value is a concept concerning change. There are innumerable changes in Value as regards gain and loss, or good and evil. In the field of economic value, for example, consider the case of two men, one of whom sells an article at \$10,000 profit, while another in the same situation sustains a loss of \$1,000. The former is called a gainer, the latter a loser. Or take one worker who earns a hundred dollars, while another earns none. The latter in any event will feel that he has suffered a loss. Or, again, if one persons gains \$200 and another only \$100, the latter will feel that he has lost in his bargain. Such is the nature of human life.

V. THE STANDARDS OF VALUATION

Realization of an ideal state of life is possible if the following standards are observed.

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1. *Beauty and ugliness*: They are fools who, moved by likes and dislikes, disregard gain and loss, not to speak of good and evil.
2. *Gain and loss*: They are also fools who, blinded by the desire for quick gain, neglect a greater gain.
3. *Good and evil*: A bad man is one who, tempted by private profit, ignores the public good.
4. *Good and evil*: To do no good is to do evil. Doing no evil is doing good. This is at the lowest level, but nonetheless these are very good and very evil.
5. *Major good and major evil*: A moderate or small good becomes a great good. A moderate or small evil, when opposed to a major evil, becomes a major good.
6. *Highest good and highest evil*: The degree of good and evil depends on social position. The higher the social position, the greater a person's social influence. Thus, an evil action by one in the highest social position in the long run will be regarded as the highest evil, even though it is small. The reverse is true if the action is good.
7. *Empty good and empty evil*: Good and evil in disregard of gain and loss are empty, and are impossible of attainment. Disregarding one's personal interest and serving the public is empty good.
8. *Truth and falsehood*: Truth is the awareness of reality as it is. Value means the relationship which man has with something; so truth is not a factor in happiness.
9. *Right and wrong*: The category of right and wrong is different from that of good and evil. For bad men, evil is regarded as right and good as wrong; for a crooked

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person, honesty is regarded as viciousness.

10. *Half-crazed personality*; They are crazy who cannot understand such a simple reason as mentioned above; and they are half-crazy who do not follow it, though they understand it.

VI. THE ABSOLUTE HAPPINESS

The material world and human life must be probed to their depths in order to clarify the real nature of Value. Value is the relationship existing between subject and object. Although scientific investigation of the objective, or material world has developed, the problem of "life," that is, the subjective or spiritual world, is or seems to be unrevealed as it is. Life is the key-point of happiness. If the power of life is weak, the value of beauty or gain cannot be realized, much less the value of good, that is, public service. Religious organizations, which should be largely responsible for the solution of this problem, have very largely degenerated into being mere undertakers. Thus, the question remains unsettled; but this does not mean that there is no solution. The essence of Buddhism, probed deep into the innermost mysteries of this subject, and an explanation was made plain long ago by Sakyamuni in the Lotus Sutra and by the T'ient'ai, the great teacher of China, in his doctrine of "three thousand Worlds in one mind." (*ichinen sanzen*)^a Moreover, the practical method for attaining the ideal state of happiness was manifested supremely by Saint Nichiren, the first Enlightened One, and now the very source of faith and peace of mind really exists at Taisekiji, the head temple of the Nichiren Shō Sect at the foot of Mount Fuji.

a.一念三千