Religious Nationalism
in the Modernization Process

State Shinto and Nichirenism in Meiji Japan

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The following essay treats two examples of the rise of religious nationalism in Japan from the last half of the nineteenth century to the early twentieth century. State Shinto and Nichirenism show how movements within Shinto and Buddhist traditions met the challenges of modernization by invoking time-honored elements from their respective pasts and putting them to the service of nationalistic interest. The essay was originally prepared for presentation at the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations, held at Port Antonio, Jamaica, from 29 May to 2 June 2002.

In his 1993 book, *The New Cold War?: Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State,* the American sociologist Mark Juergensmeyer draws attention to the rise of religious nationalism and argues for a closer look at the phenomenon, both in its history and its contemporary form.

He begins the story of the relationship between religion and nationalism in the West with the transition from the medieval to the modern period, in which the former dominance of Roman Catholicism was challenged by a plurality of Protestant denominations. The ensuing depoliticization of the Catholic church led to the modern separation of church and state, and was also, we may assume, a further stimulus to the process of secularization that had already been set in motion. By the eighteenth century the autonomous nation-state had established itself on the pillars of a new form of nationalism, "secular nationalism" as Juergensmeyer calls it. He summarizes the relation between secular nationalism and the nation-state this way:

> The changes of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries included the development of the technical ability to knit a country together through roads, rivers, and other means of transportation and communication; the construction of the economic ability to do so, through an increasingly integrated market structure; the

emergence of a world economic system based on the building blocks of nation-states; the formation of mass education, which socialized each generation of youth into a homogeneous society; and the rise of parliamentary democracy as a system of representation and an expression of the will of the people. The glue that held all these changes together was a new form of nationalism: the notion that individuals naturally associate with the people and place of their ancestral birth (or an adopted homeland such as the United States) in an economic and political system identified with a secular nation-state.[1]

Juergensmeyer goes on to note the curious coincidence of Western religion's becoming less political as secular nationalism was becoming more religious. In line with thinkers like Alexis de Tocqueville and Ernst Cassirer who pointed out the religious aspects of the French and American Revolutions, he adds:

As in France, American nationalism developed its own religious characteristics, blending the ideals of secular nationalism and the symbols of Christianity into what has been called "civil religion."[2]

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, this blend of secular nationalism with religion spread across the world as part of the ideology of nation-building that was taking place in the former colonies of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The relationship between religion and secular nationalism was no longer merely an issue for Western nation-states in this period but a worldwide problem.

Japan was no exception. Just how the religious factor figured in Japan's efforts to organize itself into a modern nation-state from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century is a complex question. Here I would like to focus on two particular forms of religious nationalism that had a role to play in the process: State Shinto and Nichirenism.

Japan makes an interesting case for the comparative study of modernization. Seated on the fringes of East Asia and possessed of its own distinctive cultural heritage, it came face to face with the modern reality of international relations in the mid-nineteenth century not after any struggle for independence from Western dominance but after a self-imposed seclusion that had cut it off from the outside world, Asian and Western, for more than two hundred years. That said, the distinctive Japanese culture that faced the challenge of modernization was already an amalgam of indigenous and foreign influences. This is especially evident in its religious culture, so much so that even the most identifiably indigenous religious traits took shape only in response to the arrival of religious traditions and customs from abroad: Buddhism from the sixth century onwards and Christianity from the six-

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[1] Mark Juergensmeyer, *The New Cold War?: Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 27.

[2] Ibid., 28.

teenth century until its prohibition during the period of seclusion. Be that as it may, for our purposes here we may consider State Shinto as representative of indigenous Japanese religiosity, and Nichirenism as representative of an originally foreign Buddhist tradition accommodated to the needs and realities of Japan. The relation between these two traditions is essential to understanding the religious situation in Japan past and present.

"National Religion" in Japan

Before discussing religion and nationalism in modern Japan, it is worth mentioning the idea of a "national religion" that the historian Bitō Masahide proposed to describe the fact of a single, unified religion comprised of multiple coexistent traditions: Buddhist, Shinto, and folk.[3] This unified religion, Bitō argues, took shape in Japan roughly during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries when the archipelago was in transition from a period of fragmented, warring states to one of incipient national unity. Though not yet a centralized nation-state, Japan faced the dawn of the modern age with a relative degree of political unity overseeing the self-governance of local village and town communities. The emergence of the local community was not only a political factor but brought other cultural innovations with it in language, literature, and entertainment, as well as in the realm of religion.

From the time of its introduction into Japan in the sixth century, Buddhism interacted with native religious customs, resulting in a syncretistic mixture of Buddhism and the worship of local gods. Meantime, both through its confrontations with and also under the positive influence of foreign Buddhism, the cult of indigenous gods underwent a process of self-understanding that reached a level of theoretical refinement by the middle ages. As we come to the early modern period and the rise of the autonomous local community, we find Shinto shrines being erected in these communities for the religious needs of ordinary people. Thus around the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, what we now call "Shinto" was a communal religion with a distinctive set of ideas, facilities, and ritual practices. Despite the hierarchical structure of pre-modern society, which also affected the relationship between a shrine and its followers, patterns of worship were fairly uniform from the imperial family (worshiping at the Ise shrine) to the Tokugawa shogunate family (worshiping at the shrine of Nikkō Tōshōgū) to the village local community (worshiping at a local shrine).

During almost this same transitional period, Buddhism was finding its place among the common people, reflected in the construction of a large number of

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[3] Bitō Masahide 尾藤正英, 『江戸時代とはなにか』 [What is the Edo period?]. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1992), chapter 11-1. See also his 『日本文化論』 [Treatise on Japanese culture] (Tokyo: Hōsō-daigaku kyōiku shinkō kai, 1993), chapters 8–9.

temples in local communities. Each of the numerous Buddhist sects that had developed in Japan strived to establish relationships with its adherents by taking as a foundation the existing relationship between local temples and their affiliated households. (The traditional Japanese social structure of the household, or *ie*, is also considered to have taken shape around this time.) The bonds between the Buddhist temple and the household came to focus more and more on concern with death and afterlife, leading to the phenomenon of "funeral Buddhism" that has survived in the funeral rites and memorial services of today. Like Shinto, Buddhism reached beyond regional and class differences to spread to the whole of Japan. But by concentrating on death rituals, in effect it accepted a kind of division of labor with Shinto. Bitō explains:

> The tendency is to think of the religious situation at the time in terms the coexistence of two distinct traditions, namely, Buddhism and the cult of the gods (Shinto). But we can also think in terms of the integration of the two in individual belief where people entrusted their fate in the afterlife to the Buddha, and their fate in this world to the gods.[4]

From the standpoint of strict Buddhist orthodoxy, the increasing importance put on funeral rites and the accompanying cult of the ancestors may seem heretical. From a wider perspective, it can be read as a sign of the increasing consciousness of the deceased as individuals still belonging to the household. To accommodate this shift, Buddhism had to accept a number of elements from popular belief and practice, elements which were also adopted by Shinto. This is an instance of what Bitō sees as a single, unified, "national" religion, comprised of Buddhism, Shinto, and folk religion, and supported by the individual consciousness of belonging to a community, whether at the level of the household or the local society.

Bitō's idea of "national religion" in Japan is helpful, and indeed one of the leading religious scholars of Japan today, Shimazono Susumu, begins an account of the shift in the structure of religions—or what he calls the "cosmology-ideology complex"—of modern Japan by referring to Bitō's essay.[5] Like others, however, he reads the term "national" as a strictly geographical qualification that does not imply any shared consciousness of national citizenship. In any case, we may accept Bitō's idea of a Buddhist-Shinto synthesis as solid ground from which to view Japanese religions as a whole. More concretely, the reality of a "national religion" forms the backdrop against which nationalistic religions emerge in modern Japan.

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[4] Bitō, *What is the Edo Period?*, 123–4.

[5] Shimazono Susumu 島薗 進,「一九世紀日本の宗教構造の変容」[The shift of religious structure in nineteenth-century Japan], Iwanami kōza, Kindai nihon no bunkashi, vol. 2,『コスモロジーの「近世」』[The "Early modern period" in cosmology] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2001), 3–5.

Modern history typically draws a distinction between tradition and modernity. But if the tradition itself should turn out to be an invention of the modern age, the distinction collapses or at least needs to be redrawn. The British historian E. J. Hobsbawm explains the idea of "invented tradition" in an introductory chapter to a collection of essays on the subject:

> "Invented tradition" is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past.[6]

From a number of general observations on the invented traditions of the period since the industrial revolution, he comes up with a tripartite classification of rough and overlapping types:

1. those establishing or symbolizing social cohesion or the membership of groups, real or artificial communities;
2. those establishing or legitimizing institutions, status, or relations of authority; and
3. those whose main purpose was socialization, the inculcation of beliefs, value systems, and conventions of behavior.[7]

In a word, the suggestion is that the invented traditions in the modern age are basically related to the establishment of social relations of a community, the legitimatization of authority, and the regulation of belief and behavior.

Hobsbawm concludes with mention of one of the special concerns of the modern and contemporary historian with invented traditions:

> They are highly relevant to that comparatively recent historical innovation, the "nation," with its associated phenomena: nationalism, the nation-state, national symbols, histories and the rest.[8]

Referring in particular to the case of France, he specifies:

> Whatever the historic or other continuities embedded in the modern concept of "France" and "the French"—and which nobody would seek to deny—these very concepts themselves must include a constructed or "invented" component. And just because so much of what subjectively makes up the modern "nation" consists

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[6] Eric J. Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1.

[7] Ibid., 9.

[8] Ibid., 13.

of such constructs and is associated with appropriate and, in general, fairly recent symbols or suitably tailored discourse (such as "national history"), the national phenomenon cannot be adequately investigated without careful attention to the "invention of tradition."[9]

The idea of the modern nation as an invention of tradition would seem a useful tool for understanding Japan's experience of modernization process, as certain recent scholarship in the field would suggest.[10] This is not the place to go into detail, but I cannot pass over one coincidence that comes to mind. In 1912 (the last year of the Meiji and the first year of the Taishō era), the British Japanologist and linguist, Basil Hall Chamberlain (1850–1935), published a short booklet entitled *The Invention of a New Religion*.[11]

Though a mere 27 pages, the piece is an important witness of the changing religious scene at the time. Beginning from the common assumption that the Japanese are unreligious or agnostic, he notes that "this same agnostic Japan is teaching us at this very hour how religions are sometimes manufactured for a special end—to subserve practical worldly purposes." He calls these "manufactured religions" Mikado-worship and Japan-worship, in other words, the twentieth-century Japanese religion of loyalty and patriotism, and explains the manufacturing process this way:

> The twentieth-century Japanese religion of loyalty and patriotism is quite new, for in it pre-existing ideas have been shifted, altered, freshly compounded, turned to new uses, and have found a new centre of gravity. Not only is it new, it is not yet completed; it is still in process of being consciously or semi-consciously put together by the official class, in order to serve the interests of that class, and, incidentally, the interests of the nation at large.[12]

Among "the pre-existing ideas" he mentions the monarchal throne and the primitive nature cult of Shinto connected to the Imperial Family.[13] As Japanese politics

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[9] Ibid., 14.

[10] Concerning the modern Imperial system in Japan, two works deserve to be singled out: Takashi Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy: Power and Pageantry in Modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), and Takagi Hiroshi, *Kindai tennōsei no bunkashi teki kenkyū: Tennō shūnin girei, nenchū gyōji, bunkazai* [A cultural-historical study of the modern emperor system: Imperial enthronement rituals, annual events, and cultural assets] (Tokyo: Azekura Shobō, 1997). On the cultural-historical topics, more generally, see the works included in a recent series, Kindai nihon no bunkashi [Cultural history in modern Japan], Iwanami Shoten, 2001- (ongoing).

[11] Chamberlain had visited Japan frequently between 1873 and 1910. During his stays, he taught at the Imperial University of Tokyo in the late 1880s, and published articles and books on Japanese language and literature, including a translation of a Japanese mythological classic, the *Kojiki* (1883). For a brief biography and list of his writings, see Shōwa Women's College, Center for Modern Literature 昭和女子大学近代文学研究室,『近代文学研究叢書』38 (1973).

[12] Basil Hall Chamberlain, *The Invention of a New Religion* (London, Watts & Co., 1912), 6.

[13] Ibid., 7.

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and militarism prospered with victories in the Sino-Japanese war of 1894–1995 and the Russo-Japanese War in 1904–1905, the prestige accruing to Imperialism and to the rejuvenated Shinto cult burgeoned. Chamberlain rightly points to the schools as "the great strongholds of the new propaganda," where history—or rather, "the national historic legends"—are "so taught to the young as to focus everything upon Imperialism, and to diminish as far as possible the contrast between ancient and modern conditions."[14]

As to the moral ideal, Chamberlain mentions *Bushido*, a high-minded chivalry, and his following comment on it is more than candid:

> As for Bushido, so modern a thing is it that neither Kämpfer, Siebold, Satow, nor Rein—all men knowing their Japan by heart—ever once allude to it in their voluminous writings. The cause of their silence is not far to seek: Bushido was unknown until a decade or two ago! *The very word appears in no dictionary, native or foreign, before the year 1900.* Chivalrous individuals of course existed in Japan, as in all countries at every period; but Bushido, as an institution or a code of rules, has never existed.[15]

According to Chamberlain, the new Japanese religion of loyalty and patriotism, one of whose ideals was crystallized in the form of Bushido, can be regarded as an invention manufactured in a rather short space of time. He summarizes:

> The new Japanese religion consists, in its present early stage, of worship of the sacrosanct Imperial Person and of His Divine Ancestors, of implicit obedience to Him as head of the army (a position, by the way, opposed to all former Japanese ideas, according to which the Court was essentially civilian); furthermore, of a corresponding belief that Japan is as far superior to the common ruck of nations as the Mikado is divinely superior to the common ruck of kings and emperors.[16]

Chamberlain credits the Japanese bureaucracy with the invention of "the new cult, with all the illiberal and obscurantist measures which it entails." And in response to those who might doubt that "not even officials can be so stupid as to believe in things which they have themselves invented," he answers, "People can always believe that which it is greatly to their interest to believe."[17] Here, in 1912, we see Chamberlain claiming that the Japanese bureaucrats were inventing a new religion of loyalty and patriotism under the authority of the emperor. As it turned out, the invention was to survive until 1945, when imperial Japan was defeated in the World War II. The "new religion" of which Chamberlain spoke would later be identified

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[14] Ibid., 9–10.

[15] Ibid., 13–14. Emphasis in original.

[16] Ibid., 14–15.

[17] Ibid., 25–6.

in the postwar period as "State Shinto," a key element in any discussion of religious nationalism in modern Japan. It is to this we turn in the following section.

Emergence of State Shinto

The phenomenon of State Shinto, which Chamberlain considered a "new religion" in modern Japan, has been the object of numerous studies since being dismantled at the end of World War II. Some of the best work to appear has been published over the past fifteen years. Of the literature available in English, I would single out Helen Hardacre's *Shinto and the State, 1868-1988*, a detailed treatment of the relations of Shinto and the State in modern Japan.

Hardacre, a specialist in modern Japanese religions, uses the term *State Shinto* to refer to "the relationship of state patronage and advocacy existing between the Japanese state and the religious practice known as Shinto between 1868 and 1945."[18] Her discussion of the beginning stages of State Shinto after the Meiji Restoration in 1868, takes up a number of interesting questions, three of which are particularly relevant to the focus of this essay.

First, an order issued in 1868 and calling for the separation of Shinto and Buddhism (*Shinbutsu hanzenrei* 神仏判然令) spurred an unofficial movement, mainly among Shnto priests, to destroy Buddhist images and remove them from Shinto shrines (*haibutsu kishaku,* 廃仏毀釈). This movement was active until the mid-1870s. Although the intent of the original order was to establish Shinto as the sole source of religious principles for the country and its people, in fact "the separation of Buddhism from Shinto did not immediately result in the establishment of Shinto as a fully independent religion."[19] In the light of our earlier remarks on the nature of Japan's "national religion," this step can only be seen as an attempted destruction of religious tradition as it had been in the past.

Second, Hardacre notes how Shinto shrines were ranked institutionally with the purpose of bringing "all shrines in the nation under the umbrella of the Ise Shrines."[20] According to the 1868 hierarchy, the Shrine at Ise, dedicated to Amaterasu Ōmikami who was believed to be the divine ancestor of imperial family, stood at the top of a pyramid with other shrines placed below it.

Third, Hardacre refers to the establishment of the Department of Divinity (*Jingikan* 神祇官) in 1868—resurrected from an ancient system dating back to the eighth and ninth centuries—with the aim of carrying out a national unification of religious rites and government (*saisei itchi* 祭政一致). With its reconstitution, "a

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[18] Helen Hardacre, *Shintō and State, 1868-1988* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 4.

[19] Ibid., 28.

[20] Ibid., 28.

central institution for the administration of religious affairs and conduct of state rites had become a reality." The rites and activities conducted by the Department of Divinity included "rites for the spirits of the imperial ancestors, harvest and New Year's rites, as well as maintaining the imperial tombs, the cult of the gods of heaven and earth, and the eight tutelary gods of the imperial house." No sooner had the Department been set up than it was seen to be out of line with the demand for religious freedom, an ideal that was especially urged on Japan from Western countries to protect the work of Christian missionaries in the country.[21] As a result, the Department was demoted to the status of a ministry (the Ministry of Divinity, *Jingishō* 神祇省) in 1871, and in the following year was reorganized into the Ministry of Education (*Kyōbushō* 教部省).[22]

Hardacre also takes up other questions related to ritual reform both in the imperial palace and in the life of common people. The rites performed by Emperor Meiji, including his visit to major shrines (in person, not by proxy) were made public, national holidays were enacted in line with annual imperial rites, and the rites of local shrines were coordinated with those at the Ise Shrines.[23]

All of this concerns only the early stages of the formation of State Shinto, but Hardacre goes on to a broader discussion of the relationship between of Shinto and the State. Suffice it here to stress that in its first years the new Meiji government tried to turn Shinto into an official religion of the State, with mixed success. By "religion of the State," I mean the attempt of the Japanese government to organize, and to authorize through official government offices set up for the purpose, doctrines and rituals related to the emperor and the imperial ancestors. Internally, this meant institutionalizing the hierarchy of shrines throughout the country; externally, it meant clarifying the separation of Shinto from Buddhism.

Recent scholarship tends to restrict the notion of State Shinto system to refer to an institution established subsequent to the separation of sectarian Shinto (religious sects and authorized after the mid-1870s) from Shrine Shinto ("state rituals," *kokka no sōshi* 国家の宗祀), and hence also after the establishment in 1900 of a Bureau of Shrines (*Jinja kyoku* 神社局) as distinct from the Bureau of Religion (*Shūkyō kyoku* 宗教局), both of which were located within the Home Ministry.[24] The "new religion" Chamberlain refers to seems to have been coming to birth at his time as a result of these developments, but there is not time here to detail the full development unfolding of State Shinto in this narrow sense. At any rate, the

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[21] The Meiji Consititution of 1889 will proclaim freedom of religion.

[22] Hardacre, *Shintō and State*, 29–30.

[23] Ibid., 31–2.

[24] The literature on State Shinto is extensive, but see, for example, the recently translated essay of Sakamoto Koremaru 阪本是丸, "The structure of State Shinto: its creation, development and demise," John Breen and Mark Teeuwen eds., *Shinto in History: Ways of the Kami* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000), 272–94.

core idea of a State Shinto created in the Meiji government offers one clear example of religious nationalism in modern Japan.[25] For another example, we turn to the Buddhist tradition.

Nichirenism as a Nationalistic Movement

The institutional reform of religion in the early Meiji period tried to extract Shinto from the "national religion" of Japan, namely, the syncretistic amalgam of Shinto, Buddhism, and folk religion, and to elevate it to the status of a central ideology under the cloak of "state ritual." Faced with the backlash of negative sentiment this aroused towards Buddhism, Buddhist leaders were pressed to find a place for themselves in this emerging "modern" situation. The whole question of the modernization of Buddhism is too vast even to summarize here, but it should be noted that the most remarkable growth was witnessed in movements and groups (including new religions) deriving from the thirteenth-century Buddhist reformer, Nichiren (1222–1282), a strong advocate of faith in the *Lotus Sutra*.[26] The ideological side of this movement has come to be known as "Nichirenism," a term used by the early twentieth-century Buddhist activist, Tanaka Chigaku 田中智学.[27]

Confronted at home by floods, pestilence, famine and other national disasters, and from abroad by the imminent possibility of invasion by Mongol forces, Nichiren developed an idea of salvation that gave special importance to the nation. His engagement with the urgent need of his times to save the nation and its people was to be rediscovered and reinterpreted in modern Japan, as Satō Hiroo notes:

> Nichiren was persistent in his involvement with political issues and state affairs. Insisting on his own religious teaching as the only one that could bring about peace in the nation, he repeatedly made admonitions to the rulers of the land, aiming at their conversion to his teaching. This feature of Nichiren's character was played up by Nichirenists of the modern period to project and establish his image as an ardent nationalist.[28]

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[25] For the characterization of State Shinto as a kind of religious nationalism, see Shimazono Susumu 島薗 進, 「国家神道と近代日本の宗教構造」 [State Shinto and the structure of religions in modern Japan], 『宗教研究』 [Journal of religious studies] 329 (2001): 319–44.

[26] Shimazono Susumu 島薗 進, 『現代救済宗教論』 [Theories on modern salvation religions] (Tokyo: Seikyū-sha, 1992) 107. For recent scholarship on Nichiren, see the special issue on "Revisiting Nichiren" in the *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 26/ 3-4 (1999). The editors, Ruben Habito and Jackie Stone, acknowledge that a number of topics, including "the many faces of nationalistic wartime Nichirenism," remain to be dealt with in another venue (225).

[27] Ōtani Eiichi 大谷栄 ·, 『近代日本の日蓮主義運動』 [Nichirenist movements in modern Japan] (Kyoto: Hōzō-kan, 2001), 15–16.

[28] Satō Hiroo, "Nichiren's View of Nation and Religion," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 26/3-4 (1999): 308.

Elsewhere Satō opens a treatment of what he calls "The Period of Nichirenism" with these words:

> When we consider the various movements in thought and society that have taken place in modern Japan, we cannot do so without taking into account the influence of Nichiren. Included here is an intellectual movement derived from Nichiren, "Nichirenism," begun by Tanaka Chigaku and of overwhelmingly importance in the pre-war period.[29]

Applying a broader definition of "Nichirenism," Tamura Yoshirō classifies three types of Nichirenism:

> The first kind is that which stems from the ardent devotion to Nichiren on the part of some notable proponents of ultra-nationalistic and Japanocentric ideas during the height of the militaristic fervor that led Japan headlong into the Second World War.
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> The second type refers to the thought-framework promoting the vision of a transnational, ideal world society based on universal principles taught in the *Lotus Sutra* and also ascribed to Nichiren. Socialist-oriented activists and writers during the prewar as well as post war era represent this kind of thinking.
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> The third type is that espoused by organized religious bodies that drew inspiration from Nichiren's teaching, and appealed to growing numbers among the masses of people during the same period.[30]

Tanaka Chigaku and his sympathizers are classified in the first type, and new religious movements such as Reiyūkai, Risshō Kōseikai, and Sōka Gakkai, in the third type. (The second type, omitted here, would make an interesting subject for study.) Satō, takes a different tack. Contrasting Tanaka Chigaku and Makiguchi Tsune-saburō 牧口常三郎 (1871–1944, founder of Sōka Gakkai), he refers to the former as serving the imperialistic nation of the time, and the latter as defying it, although both influenced by Nichiren's thought.[31]

Here I would like, if only briefly, to look at Nichirenism in its narrower sense, basing my remarks on the recent work by Ōtani Eiichi.[32] We begin by returning to the context sketched above. In the Meiji period, Buddhist sects were obliged to

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[29] Satō Hiroo 佐藤弘夫,「近代と仏教: 近代日本における山蓮の『発見』」, [Buddhism and modernity: The "discovery" of Nichiren in modern Japan]. Nihon Bukkyō kenkyūkai, ed.,『仏教と出会った日本』(Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1998), 181. The "pre-war period" should be understood here to cover the period up to the end of World War II.

[30] Tamura Yoshirō 田村芳朗,「近代日本の歩みと日蓮主義」[Developments in Modern Japan and Nichirenism], in Kōza Nichiren vol. 4,『日本近代と日蓮主義』[Modern Japan and Nichirenism] (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1972), 2. The summary is from Ruben L. F. Habito, "Review Article: The Uses of Nichiren in Modern Japanese History," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 26/3-4 (1999): 424.

[31] Satō, "Buddhism and Modernity," 1998.

[32] Ōtani, *Nichirenist Movements*, deals with two important characters in Nichirenism; Tanaka Chigaku and Honda Nisshō (1867-1931). The latter has not been dealt with in the present essay.

adjust themselves to the modern age, and the sub-sects derived from Nichiren were no exception. In 1876 the greater part of these sub-sects merged into one, the Nichiren Sect. All together, the sects and sub-sects of the Nichiren tradition amounted to no more than 15% of all Buddhist groups in Japan.[33]

Tanaka Chigaku (1861–1939), a young monk who had studied Nichiren's teachings as a teenager, returned to the lay state in 1879 and in the following year set out to organize a lay Buddhist movement which he called the Lotus Society (*Renge-kai* 蓮華会). In 1884 he reorganized it under the title *Risshō Ankoku-kai* (立正安国会, Society for Establishing the Right and the Peace of the Nation), and again in 1914 as *Kokuchū-kai* (国柱会, National Pillar Society). At first Tanaka was engaged in lecturing to the general public about Nichiren's ideas, but around 1890 he launched into a movement aimed at the reform of the Nichiren Sect itself. 1890 was the year of the Meiji *Imperial Rescript on Education*, and in the following decade a lively discussion on the National Polity (*kokutai* 国体) took place in the press and among intellectuals, reaching its peak after Japan's victory in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895.

With the turn to the twentieth century, Tanaka's work took on new fervor. 1902 marked the 650th anniversary of the establishment of Nichiren's teachings, and representatives from several of the sects in the Nichiren tradition gathered to commemorate the event. Tanaka was among them as a guest of honor. As his doctrinal interpretations began to take clearer shape, Tanaka began to insist that the *Lotus Sūtra* should be set up as the foundation of a National Religion, with the emperor serving as chief petitioner on the ordination platform (*kaidan no ganshu* 戒壇の願主).[34] In addition, he introduced into his Society the practice of bowing religiously to the imperial family, as well as religious feasts commemorating national holidays modeled after the rituals in the imperial court.[35] By 1910, the concept of Nichirenism (the term was coined by Tanaka in 1901) was being spread not only through Tanaka's own lectures and publications but also by a number of celebrities, including a number of scholars and literary figures,[36] and came into vogue among the public at large as a nationalistic ideology advocating loyalty and patriotism. Tanaka himself continued to promote a Nichirenist idea of the National Polity to support his basic Japanocentrism. The Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905 further intensified his religious nationalism, as Ōtani describes in great detail.

[33] Ibid., 30.

[34] Ibid., 100.

[35] Ibid., 119–20

[36] Ibid., 169–173.

Such was the situation as the Meiji era drew to a close and Chamberlain was writing about the invention of a "new religion" of loyalty and patriotism. Besides the religious nationalism of State Shintō (Shinto itself, it should be recalled, was a modern construct as well), we see religious nationalism emerging within the Buddhist world in the form of Tanaka's Nichirenism, not to mention the other intellectual currents and social movements suggested by Tamura's tripartite classification. Together these show how Shintō and Buddhism produced nationalistic movements through collaborating with and reacting against the modernization process in Japan. A fuller portrait of the rise of modern nationalism would have to take into account a number of other elements, such as the presence of nationalism in the education system and the debate about the National Polity. As far as religious nationalism is concerned, however, the two examples cited above, set against the backdrop of the wider tradition of religious pluralism, offers a promising subject for the comparative study of religious nationalism in the modern world.