

# INTRODUCTION

THIS COLLECTION of essays sets out to present to the English-speaking reader an accurate picture of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi's view of history and the educational and religious movements with which he was involved. Tsunesaburo Makiguchi was the founder of the Value-Creating Educational Society (Soka Kyoiku Gakkai), forerunner of the modern Soka Gakkai International, a worldwide cultural, educational and peace movement grounded in religious conviction.

Modern society is very different from the social setting against which the world religions, including Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, emerged to form the basis of the great spiritual cultures of humankind. Some of these differences can be understood through Max Weber's theory of secularization, which suggests that various systems in society, such as education, health and law, have diverged from religion, while religion as a rule has grown separate from the protections of the state and is now to be found more in the faith of individual believers. Similarly, in terms of political systems, while monarchy was once the norm, the trend worldwide is now toward democracy, where nations choose their rulers by voting in elections. In cultural life it was once men and women of religion who played a central role in society as possessors of knowledge; however, these days research and educational institutions function independently of religion, and people of religion are not automatically credited with intellectual authority. Modern science, rooted fundamentally in materialism, has developed enormously, and its influence on the ideas of modern culture has thrown up problems more serious than any in human history.

Changes in culture and society have appeared gradually since the latter half of the 19th century. Tsunesaburo Makiguchi identified these trends with a considerable degree of precision. He thought seriously about the direction humankind should take in the future, the proper roles of education and religion, and the reforms necessary in education and religion to enable the roles to be fulfilled.

Readers of Japanese can now find out more about the development of Makiguchi's ideas from the ten volumes of the *Makiguchi Tsunesaburo Zenshu* [The Complete Works of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi] published by Daisan Bunmeisha, or from the relatively inexpensive popular versions of Makiguchi's works *Soka Kyoikugaku Taikei* [The System of Value-Creating Pedagogy] and *Jinsei Chirigaku* [The Geography of Human Life] published by Seikyo Bunko. Several scholarly studies also have been published in Japanese. Readers of English, however, are limited to the two introductory works by Dr. Dayle M. Bethel. Editor Koichi Miyata's essay on the religious ideas of Makiguchi and the discussion of his ideas on education by Susumu Shimazono may be found in Volume 5 of *The Journal of Oriental Studies*. Unfortunately, a limited number of this edition was printed, and it is not by and large available to the general reader.

With the objective of conveying to English-language readers the basics of Makiguchi's ideas and influence, we decided therefore to publish this special journal issue of three essays and one case study of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi's ideas in practice. "**Tsunesaburo Makiguchi's Theory of the State,**" by Koichi Miyata, follows the narrative of *The Geography of Human Life*, Makiguchi's first book and Japan's first systemic work of anthropological geography. There are two areas of focus in this essay: Makiguchi's views on civilization and history, and his ideas on the role of the state in the lives of its citizens. A running theme in Makiguchi's thoughts becomes readily apparent: that the world should move away from imperialist competition and toward coexistence and cooperation. This theme can be traced to Makiguchi's later thoughts, developed in *The System of Value-Creating Pedagogy*, demonstrating a remarkable consistency in Makiguchi's ideas on coexistence. The overview of Makiguchi on the role of the state points to basic principles he identified: that the state exists to provide safety, freedom and a better quality of life for its citizens; that these citizens should not be sacrificed to the goals of the state; and furthermore that the imperatives of state relations in the imperialist era must shift from competition for territorial expansion to coexistence and mutual enhancement.

In the second essay, "**Value-Creating Pedagogy and Japanese Education in the Modern Era,**" Kazunori Kumagai, contrasts the

education system of Japan, in which primacy was given to the needs of the state and the military, with the educational ideas of Makiguchi, whose philosophical roots can be traced to the humanist tradition. In the modern period of Japan that commenced with the Meiji Restoration, education and its aims were subsumed under the drive for national unification and the attempt to place Japan on equal footing with the advanced capitalist societies. The sought-for parity came at a heavy cost, however, and Makiguchi advocated the humanistic approach of his value-creating pedagogy to alleviate the various strains placed on society by the nationalist education agenda.

Makiguchi called for a number of changes in education: from education as a manipulative tool of a modern state to education for the happiness of children, and from the authoritarian education symbolized by the Imperial Rescript on Education to rational and democratic education. Central to his thoughts on education was Makiguchi's philosophy of value. Because Makiguchi's reform proposals were diametrically opposed to the use of education by the militarist government as a means of mobilizing society in the war effort, they were not to be realized until democracy was introduced to Japan following defeat in World War II. Kumagai's essay clarifies these points in terms of the history of education in Japan.

In the third essay, "**Nichiren Thought in Modern Japan: Two Perspectives,**" Hiroo Sato considers the role of the emperor system in the formation of modern Japan. He compares the Nichirenism of Chigaku Tanaka with Tsunesaburo Makiguchi's reception of Nichiren Buddhism; while both thinkers were strongly influenced by the religious thought of Nichiren, the religious movements which they initiated were radically divergent. Tanaka accepted the religious authority of the emperor as ultimate and viewed the imperial family and Japan as having a special place in the cosmos. He insisted that the world should be united under Japan and reinterpreted Nichiren's ideas in nationalist terms. Makiguchi, on the other hand, believed in the Buddhist emphasis on the equality of all, refused to recognize the religious authority of the emperor, and favored an internationalist interpretation of Nichiren that placed the moral values of Buddhism above state imperatives.

Sato then examines Nichiren's own views on imperial authority to show that Nichiren Buddhism had been misappropriated by

advocates of Nichirenism while, by contrast, Makiguchi's interpretation of Nichiren Buddhism was consistent with Nichiren's intent. There is a stark contrast in the application of Nichiren thought to social reform, specifically noted in their differing views on the idea of the Buddha's land as ideal society and the destructive implications of militarist oppression. The difference is essential to understanding Makiguchi's suppression by the militarist authorities.

Dilma de Melo Silva reports in "**Makiguchi in Action – Enhancing Education for Peace**" on the educational initiatives taken up in Brazil. Translations in various languages of the two English works by Dayle M. Bethel have served to disseminate the educational ideas of Makiguchi to many countries, and experimental education initiatives have arisen in a number of locations. By May 2000, 55 schools in the São Paulo area had joined the Makiguchi Project in Action, involving over 1,100 teachers and some 34,000 students. The report details the project and describes the project's application of the educational philosophy of Makiguchi. Comparison of previous education and the humanistic education of Makiguchi suggests the effectiveness of Makiguchi's ideas in dealing with such issues as school violence and high drop-out rates. The second half of the report deals with the work of the Brazil–Soka Gakkai International (BSGI) Education Division in the area of adult literacy education. The BSGI literacy movement, which is supported by a large number of volunteers, is compared to other literacy projects and its outstanding success highlighted.

It is hoped that this special issue of The Journal will serve to communicate something of the significance of Makiguchi's ideas and influence.

ONE FINAL NOTE is in order regarding Makiguchi's opposition to the state policy of the militarist regime on religion resulted in his oppression and eventual death in prison. On the question of significance in terms of the peace movement in Japan, I would like here to clarify the surrounding historical facts that led to the charges against Makiguchi of violating the Public Security Preservation Law and committing blasphemy.

Ise Shrine received special protection under the state as it was the national shrine to the Sun God Amaterasu Omikami, legendary ancestor of the Imperial House. Its worship was imposed by the state

on the people of Japan. Makiguchi had refused to worship the *taima* or paper amulets from Ise Shrine and instructed the members of the Soka Kyoiku Gakkai to do the same. In and of itself, Makiguchi's action was a purely religious offense. The gravity of his action, however, comes into relief when we take into account the bizarre adaptation by the state of the Public Security Preservation Law, a law designed originally to punish extremist groups attempting to "bring about radical changes in the national polity." By a succession of amendments, this law came to carry a maximum penalty of death and was expanded to target in effect religious expression.

The Public Security Preservation Law was promulgated in 1925 under pressure of the Privy Council in return for approving the Universal Manhood Suffrage Law. Established by the state to advise the emperor on the Constitution of the Empire of Japan (Meiji Constitution), the Privy Council in reality wielded considerable influence in all state matters. It was composed of an elite and powerful group of elder statesmen that represented interests in preserving the emperor's rule as stipulated in Article 4 of the Meiji Constitution: "The Emperor is the ruler of the nation, and has complete sovereignty over the nation."

By emergency decree in 1928, the Public Security Preservation Law was amended to warrant the death penalty. According to Article 8 of the Meiji Constitution, an emergency decree could be issued by the emperor or his state-appointed representative when the Diet was not in session, and it would carry the same force of law. To issue this emergency decree, the government had only to seek review and approval from the Privy Council. The 1941 amendment to the Public Security Preservation Law expanded targeted groups to include any group, particularly religious groups, "desecrating shrines or the dignity of the Imperial household." While refusing to venerate the amulets of Ise Shrine was considered blasphemy before the amendment, it was now a violation of the Public Security Preservation Law and punishable by death. Why was the law revised in this manner? The military regime utilized the amended law as one of many legal instruments to drive pro-war sentiments into the public's mind and increase the mobilization of all areas of society for war.

Of course, the next question is this: How did the state place political instruments of repression at the disposal of the militarists?

The framing of the Meiji Constitution made it relatively easy for the military to take control of all government powers. The emperor was supreme commander of the army, his prerogatives carried out by proxy given to the army and navy General Staff Offices. Neither the Minister of War, the Prime Minister nor the Diet could intervene in military decisions. The only means available to the Diet for regulating the military was the allocation of budget. If the proposed budget was not approved by the Diet, however, the government had the power to implement the previous year's budget and, as in the case of issuing an emergency decree, could push through the budget without Diet approval in times of emergency. The influence of the Diet on the military was therefore minimal because of the way in which the system was constructed. According to the constitution every minister of state was accountable to the emperor, not to the Diet or the people. The authority of the Prime Minister was therefore limited, and specifically the Minister of War had the right to bypass the Prime Minister and express his opinions directly to the emperor. Furthermore, appointees to the position of Minister of War were commissioned officers, giving the military the right to force the resignation of a minister. By refusing to appoint a successor, the military could effect, with minimal effort, the collapse of the entire state cabinet and form a pro-militarist cabinet to serve its own interests.

Toward the end of the Meiji period (1868–1912) the main body of thought in constitutional studies held that the emperor exercised power only as the highest functional organ of the state. This interpretation meant sovereignty rested not with the emperor but with the state, and the state then was accountable not only to the emperor but to the Diet and the people. This functional understanding of the emperor was to develop into the ideological foundations of the short-lived Taisho (1912–26) democracy.

The Showa period, however, began in 1926 in financial crisis followed by the woes of a worldwide economic depression in 1929. With the formation of global trading blocs the economic situation in Japan deteriorated, resulting in the unilateral decision by the military in 1931 to initiate the aggressive take-over of Manchuria in order to secure access to markets and resources. In forcing Manchuria to cede from China, Japan set itself on the path of isolation and eventually withdrew from the League of Nations. An internal coup was effected

in 1932 with the assassination of Prime Minister Tsuyoshi Inukai, bringing about the end of the political party system that had functioned since the end of the Taisho period. From then on it was the militarists for the most part that supplied the prime ministers.

In 1935 the militarist regime denounced Tatsukichi Minobe, the councilor of the House of Peers and constitutional scholar who was the leading advocate of the functional theory of the emperor's role. Relying on the authority of Japan's unique national polity and the emperor, the militarist regime took steps to suppress any liberal debate on constitutional theory. In 1938 the National General Mobilization Law was passed, initiating a new round of the indoctrination programs designed to mobilize all national resources for war. To discourage and indeed suppress popular dissent, severe penalties were adopted for violation of the law. Again, to emphasize the moral value of the war, the indoctrination programs drew heavily on the imperial myths sustained by the Meiji Constitution: The emperor was the sovereign of Japan, born of an eternally unbroken line of emperors (Article 1), and therefore the emperor is sacred and inviolable (Article 3).

Denial of the religious dimension of the emperor posed a threat to the interests of the militarist authorities, who were now charged with keeping law and order. There was continuing wariness of Christians and some Buddhists who regarded God and Buddha, respectively, as the highest religious entity. Their beliefs implicitly placed the Sun God Amaterasu Omikamai below the status of their own religious devotions, and this was seen as undermining the authority of the emperor. The promulgation of the Religious Organizations Law in 1939 empowered the authorities to disband any religious group that refused to worship at shrines; the state thus took wholesale control over religion in Japan. Then in 1941 all households were forced to worship amulets from Ise Shrine, and yet another revision of the Public Security Preservation Law mandated the suppression of religious groups that refused to do so.

In other words, the militarists used the authority of the emperor as grounds for war, and state-imposed worship at shrines and of the Ise Shrine amulets enhanced that authority. For refusing to venerate the amulets, Makiguchi was deemed a serious threat to the authority of the emperor and, by extension, a serious hindrance to the conduct of

the war. During his interrogations by the Special Higher Police, Makiguchi repudiated the myth of the emperor's divine origins by declaring the emperor "an ordinary man who makes mistakes." He also denied the sacredness of the war cause, stating "this war has its origins in the vilification of the laws of the Buddha and is a disaster [to the people]." To the state, no expression of idea or belief was more dangerous to the war effort.

It must be remembered that central to Makiguchi's ideas and influence was the importance he placed on coexistence and cooperation among all peoples. His unequivocal indictment of the state's war policies as the instruments of suffering for the people of Japan and his flat denial of the divinity of the emperor undermined the pro-war ethos. While these events may be interpreted in many ways, I believe that in the broadest sense Makiguchi's opposition to militarism arose from his commitment to the peaceful coexistence of humankind.

– *Guest Editor*