

REVIEW ARTICLE

The Uses of Nichiren in Modern Japanese History

Ruben L. F. HABITO

TAMURA Yoshirō 田村芳朗 and MIYAZAKI Eishū 宮崎英修, eds., *Kōza Nichiren 4: Nihon kindai to Nichiren-shugi*, 講座日蓮 4: 日本近代と日蓮主義 [Modern Japan and Nichirenism]. Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1972.

MARUYAMA Teruo 丸山照雄, ed., *Kindai Nichiren ron* 近代日蓮論 [Modern views of Nichiren]. Asahi Sensho 朝日選書 192. Tokyo: Asahi Shimbunsha, 1981.

AN ADEQUATE PICTURE of the significant sociopolitical, not to mention religious, developments in Japan's modern period cannot be painted without taking the influence of thirteenth-century Buddhist figure Nichiren into account. This is the contention held in common by these two volumes under review. It has been over a quarter of a century since these collections were first published, but the point deserves some attention given the fact that up to recently, with some rare exceptions, Nichiren has been largely overlooked or ignored by scholars outside of Japan. The goal of this review article is to fill in a lacuna left in this regard.

Nihon kindai to Nichiren-shugi is the fourth volume in a series of five under the heading *Kōza: Nichiren*, published in the early seventies. Other volumes in the series address themes such as Nichiren in relation to the *Lotus Sūtra* (vol. 1), Nichiren's life and thought (vol. 2), and Nichiren's followers in history (vol. 3). A fifth volume puts together significant passages from Nichiren's writings related to specific issues as nature and human life, humanity and history, faith and life, nation and world, and so on.

Kindai Nichiren ron is a compilation of essays on Nichiren written by well-known figures in Japan's intellectual scene in the twentieth century. The essays chosen are significant in that they reveal the features that

drew influential Japanese thinkers of the modern period to Nichiren. Editor Maruyama Teruo, in his postscript to the volume, suggests that what we can find in these essays are not so much statements about the historical person of Nichiren as such, but “projections of the respective authors’ own sentiments” (p. 231). The collection thus opens a window not so much to Nichiren’s thought as such, but to the minds of the Japanese thinkers of the modern period who wrote about him.

The introductory chapter of *Nihon kindai to Nichiren-shugi*, written by coeditor Tamura Yoshirō, late Emeritus Professor at the University of Tokyo, offers a general prospectus of the two key words of the title and their interrelation: modern Japan and Nichirenism. Tamura presents a solid case for the thesis cited above, namely, that key intellectual and sociopolitical developments in modern Japan (*Kindai Nihon no ayumi* 近代日本の歩み) on the one hand, and Nichirenism on the other, are to be seen in tandem and can throw light upon one another.

Tamura sorts out three types of thinking included in the term “Nichirenism.” The first kind is that which stems from the ardent devotion to Nichiren on the part of some notable proponents of ultranationalistic and Japanocentric ideas during the height of the militaristic fervor that led Japan headlong into the Second World War. 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 Sūtra* and also ascribed to Nichiren. Socialist-oriented activists and writers during the prewar as well as postwar era represent this kind of thinking. The third type is that which was 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. These three types of Nichirenism all had their respective impact on the shaping of Japanese society in the last century.

The beginning of the modern period of Japan coincides with the formal opening of the country’s doors to the West, after two and one-half centuries of self-imposed seclusion, fostered by a xenophobic mentality that was given official expression in government policy. Tamura gives a short but very illuminating survey of the important events and developments that determined the course of Japanese society from the Meiji Restoration to Taishō democracy and on to the militaristic Shōwa era, paralleling these developments with the three types of Nichirenism he has outlined. With Japan’s opening to the rest of the world, the leaders and intellectuals as well as the masses of the people were overcome by an impelling desire to make their country as strong as the Western nations that knocked on her door. There

were of course radical differences among various groups as to how this was to be effected, and the fluctuating policies of the initial Meiji government and subsequent regimes through the Taishō and Shōwa eras reflected these differences.

Nationalistic fervor arose as a backlash to the pro-Western policies initially adopted by the new Meiji government. Anti-Western sentiments were fanned by what the Japanese deemed were blatantly unequal treaties the government was coerced into signing with Western nations at the time. In the meantime, successes of the Japanese military machine in the Sino-Japanese and the Russo-Japanese wars gave people a euphoric sense of self-confidence on a national level, encouraging Japanocentric ways of thinking among some intellectuals. It was in this climate that Nichiren's thought served as an inspiration and gave religious foundations for ultranationalistic worldviews. The first section of the volume *Kindai Nihon to Nichiren-shugi* is devoted to this theme.

Reacting to and cautioning people against such tendencies, some intellectuals and activists sought other ways of envisioning the restructuring of Japanese society and of determining the way Japanese people could relate to the rest of the world. Some sought inspiration also in Nichiren and the teachings of the *Lotus Sūtra* in laying the ground for an egalitarian, socialist vision of society. Those who followed this course, however, found themselves against the current, and were subjected to political harassment and persecution during the heyday of nationalistic militarism. The second section of the volume seeks to link Nichirenism with revolutionary thought, and examines particular examples.

In its course of modernization Japan took the path of monopolistic capitalism, given further impetus through government patronage and active participation in the promotion of key industries especially needed for militaristic and expansionist schemes. Official policies created a favorable environment for the rise and predominance of a few big plutocratic corporations (*zaibatsu*) that came to control the economic scene. This atmosphere saw the increase in the number of people struggling with low wages and living in subhuman conditions in the shadow of the forward march toward an economically and militarily strong Japanese nation. It is among these masses of people that new religious movements found appeal with their message of alleviation from various sufferings and of a this-worldly kind of salvation. Here again we find Nichiren-inspired groups making their dent in Japanese society. The last section of the volume focuses on these groups, their organizational history, and their spheres of activity and influence.

Let us now take a more detailed look at the contents of *Kindai Nihon to Nichiren-shugi* and examine the various ways Nichiren figured in the shaping of modern Japan. I will refer to the essays in Maruyama's collection *Kindai Nichiren ron* to supplement accounts of individual thinkers whose works are also included in this latter volume.

The first two pieces of the first section look into features of Nichiren's thought that might offer clues as to its appeal for those concerned with the ills of society and their alleviation, and as to how it could be used by those espousing differing political agenda. Tokoro Shigemoto 戸頃重基 analyzes Nichiren's view of *kokka* (国家=nation, country, land, populace), paying attention to the various nuances as well as the ambivalence of the term in Nichiren's own usage. On one hand in certain instances in his writings the term denotes the political entity or "nation," while on the other, for Nichiren its scope embraces the land, that is to say, the natural environment as well as the people living therein. Failure to appreciate this latter aspect easily leads to one-dimensional readings of Nichiren touting him as a patron of nationalism and using his thought as ideological buttress for an absolutistic Tennō-centered nation-state.¹ Yamaori Tetsuo 山折哲雄 follows up with a description of a kind of magical charm *jusei* 呪性 evoked by the nationalistic sentiment in Nichiren's thought. Yamaori notes that while in Nichiren's own case a well-marked international consciousness informed his self-understanding, this international dimension is left out in some modern-day readings of Nichiren, captivated as they are by the powerful magical charm linked with the nationalistic sentiment in his thought.

The three essays that follow deal with prominent individuals who were most influential in propagating ultranationalistic ideas inspired by their reading of Nichiren. Watanabe Hōyō 渡辺宝陽 presents separate essays on the life, career, and thought of Tanaka Chigaku 田中智学 (1861–1939) and of Honda Nisshō 本多日生 (1867–1931). Nakano Kyōtoku 中濃教篤 authors a piece on Ishihara Kanji 石原莞爾 (1889–1949).

Tanaka Chigaku was the founder of Kokuchūkai 国柱会, an organization that became the bulwark of Nichiren-inspired nationalism in Japan's modern history. The name Kokuchūkai (Nation's Pillar Society) derives from a well-quoted saying of Nichiren from his key treatise *Opening of the Eyes*: "I will be the pillar of Japan" (*STN* 1: 601). Tanaka received the tonsure at an early age and undertook training as a Buddhist priest in the Nichiren sect, but later repudiated his priestly status, disillusioned by the state of affairs of the sect. As a lay follower, he set out to propagate nationalistic ideals inspired by Nichiren's teachings.

¹ See also SATŌ Hiroo's article in this issue.

An essay by Tanaka entitled “The Renovation of Our Sect” is included in *Kindai Nichiren ron* (pp. 123–60). In his prefatory remarks he exhorts the reader to take on the fundamental attitude of willingness to offer one’s life and limb (*fushaku-shinmyō no kokochi* 不惜身命の心地) on behalf of the *Lotus Sūtra*, regarded as the manifestation of absolute truth, and join in the task at hand, that is, the thoroughgoing reform of the Nichiren sect, as a step toward the fulfilment of the ultimate goal, of bringing all of humanity back to this One Wondrous Path (*ichimyōdō* 一妙道). And in this overall mission,

our Holy Founder (Nichiren) is no other than the Supreme Commander of this World-Unifying Armed Forces. The Great Empire of Japan is no other than the Great Headquarters. The people of Japan are the soldiers of Heaven. The scholars and teachers of our Wondrous Sect are the officers. The Sublime and Wondrous Practice and Contemplation as taught in our sect is our Declaration of War. The principle of attacks and critiques versus other teachings and the establishment of the truth of our own Sect is our military strategy. Faith is the inner attitude required in this. The teachings of our Sect are the military provisions. In this manner the organization of the Armed Forces for the Spiritual Unification of All Nations in the Universe is structured. Now is the time to mobilize our Great Soldiers, and we must now rectify our inner selves and brace up according to military regulations. The Four Great Sayings (denouncing other Buddhist schools) are the cardinal principles of these military regulations. Our Wondrous Sect’s work of educating the nation of Japan is our way of preparing for attack. The nation of Japan is indeed entrusted with this Heavenly Mission of accomplishing the spiritual unification of the whole universe. The whole universe must be brought to unity through Japan. Through Japan, the Great Spiritual Pacification of the entire universe and of all humanity is to be accomplished for all eternity. (p. 133)

Tanaka Chigaku’s exhortatory tone, backed by self-confident assertions and hyperbolic language, reveals a very powerful personality with a charisma to draw others to one’s side. His use of military imagery to lay out his vision of the unification of all humanity and of the entire universe under the aegis of the *Lotus Sūtra*, with Japan as the “advance troops” teaching and leading the rest of the world toward this ultimate goal, undoubtedly fanned hopes and dreams in many of his readers and listeners, not only of spiritual but of actual military conquest as well.

Honda Nisshō sought reform of the Nichiren sect and of Japanese society using his priestly status to his advantage. Honda's main theme, repeated throughout his many writings, was the unification of all Buddhists through the firm foundation of the teaching of Śākyamuni Buddha, following the basic thrust of the *Lotus Sūtra*. An underlying theme of all these was the compatibility of Buddhist teachings, specifically Nichiren's, with the ideal of a divinely-descended Tennō-centered consolidated Japanese nation-state. Taking up Nichiren's "Four Sayings" denouncing other sects as misleading and erroneous, he also launched critiques against other Buddhist schools, calling on their followers to unite under the teaching of Śākyamuni, that is, the *Lotus Sūtra*. It was Honda who spearheaded the successful movement for granting the imperial title of *Risshō Daishi* 立正大師 to Nichiren, formally proclaimed in a public ceremony on 13 October 1923.

Ishihara Kanji was a military officer and strategist in the Imperial Forces. Drawn to the personality and teaching of Tanaka Chigaku, he became a zealous member of Kokuchūkai and ardent Nichiren follower. Inspired by the ideal of world unification, he laid out the blueprint for the establishment of a League of East Asian Nations as a unified political and economic entity, with the Tennō-ruled nation-state of Japan at the helm. This ideal of unification came in tandem with Ishihara's theory of the world's ultimate battle, largely inspired by the teachings of Nichiren as interpreted by Tanaka Chigaku. In this theory, victory in the ultimate battle of the world will be simultaneous with the imperial establishment of the altar of the true teaching of the *Lotus Sūtra*, as stipulated in the treatise *Sandaihihōshō* 三大秘法抄 ascribed to Nichiren.²

The next section, entitled "Nichirenism and Revolutionary Thought," includes three essays with diverging theses. Sasaki Akio 佐々木秋夫 analyzes the antiestablishmentarian features of Nichiren's thought, while also pointing out how Nichiren was never truly able to identify himself with the masses of the society of his time. Nichiren took a critical stance against the smug nobility and ruling military authorities, but not from a standpoint of solidarity with the farmers and other groups of people seeking alleviation from an oppressive sociopolitical structure. Rather, he did so as a middle-class reformer who aimed not so much to change the power structure as to substitute his own form of religious practice for the kind (specifically, Hōnen's *nenbutsu*) that prevailed at the time. Sasaki cautions against an ahistorical kind of idealization of Nichiren as a social or political reformist, and undertakes a reexamination of Nichiren's social position and role within the

² See SUEKI Fumihiko's article in this issue.

context of his own time, noting strengths and successes as well as weaknesses and failures.

Tokoro Shigemoto contributes another article, entitled “Terrorism and Nichirenism,” describing the thought of three individuals in modern Japanese history who also sought to radically reform society, in the process choosing means and ways of action that amounted to terrorism.

Kita Ikki 北一輝 (1883–1937) espoused socialist revolutionary ideals in a work published at the age of 23, and was later drawn to Nichiren and the *Lotus Sūtra*, becoming a fervent devotee from his early thirties. He referred to one of his own works (*Shina kakumei gaishi* 支那革命外史, External history of the Chinese revolution) as a “Taishō-era edition of the *Risshō ankoku ron*” (*Taishō ankoku ron* 大正安国論). Exuding a prophetic and charismatic air in his writings, he took on the role of a modern-day Nichiren decrying the social ills of his time. Tokoro notes the development in Kita’s thought from that of a socialist idealist to that of a religious zealot who would not balk at any means to attain his goals—leading to actions that merited the label of “fascist terrorist” in accounts of his life and thought. He was executed on 19 August 1937 for his key role in the February 26th incident (*Ni-ni-roku jiken* 二・二六事件), wherein a group of young military officers launched a failed coup d’état attempt and killed several incumbent government ministers and others in the process. The religious fervor that motivated his actions through the greater part of his life is manifest in a letter, written the day before his execution, wherein he bequeathed to his adoptive son the copy of the *Lotus Sūtra* that he had kept and read for over twenty years.

Ōkawa Shūmei 大川周明 (1886–1957), among the most influential theorists of rightist thought in prewar days, was not a Nichiren devotee, and in fact criticized Nichiren in some places in his writings, but is presented as an example of fascist thinking leading to terrorist ways of action spurred on by religious ideals. Inoue Nisshō 井上日召 (1886–1967) is also described in the same mold. A Zen enthusiast in early life, he attended lectures of the Kokuchūkai and read the *Lotus Sūtra*, becoming a fervent lay devotee of Nichiren. He claims a “mystic revelation” that proclaimed him to be the “savior of the world,” and in growing impatient with the state of affairs, he was led to adopt radical terrorist ideas in his program of revolutionizing society.

Tokoro’s essay summarized above seeks to determine the connection between Nichirenism and terrorist thinking and action, presenting the thought and career of Kita, Ōkawa, and Inoue as case studies. However, he fails to make a convincing case, and leaves the reader in doubt as to whether such a link can be established, or whether the sources of the terrorist inclinations of the individuals treated should

be sought in other aspects of their character and thought than their Nichirenist ideas. And while Kita subscribed to socialist revolutionary ideals, he was nonetheless a rightist nationalist (“fascist”), as Ōkawa and Inoue were. Hence from its actual content this particular essay would appear to belong more aptly to the first section of the volume.

Nakano Kyōtoku authors the third essay in this section, describing the life and career of Seno Girō 妹尾義郎 (1890–1961), a noted socialist activist and thinker. Attracted to the ideals presented by Tanaka Chigaku and Honda Nisshō early in life, especially those aspects calling for the unification of all Buddhists toward the reconstruction of society, he later takes issue with the ultranationalistic directions in their thinking. He forms the New Buddhist Youth League (*Shinkō Bukkyō Seinen Dōmei* 新興仏教青年同盟), espousing humanist, socialist, pacifist, and democratic ideals based on Buddhist principles. The League is disbanded as he and other followers are arrested and imprisoned under the prewar National Security Act. He is released after two years due to ill health, and forms the Buddhist Socialist League after the end of the war.

In his work “New Buddhism toward the Transformation of Society” (*Shakai henkaku tojō no shinkō Bukkyō* 社会変革途上の新興仏教) Seno outlines the key points of his thought that serve as the groundwork of his dynamic activity in the postwar period. Here he regards Nichiren as embodying what is the best of Japanese Buddhism and, inspired by his teaching, calls on all Buddhists to unite under Śākyamuni’s banner toward the construction of a society based on mutual trust and love among human beings. From this vantage point, he condemns capitalism as inconsistent with Buddhist principles of equality and social welfare, and calls for a transformation of Japanese society on the basis of these principles. He was well known for the slogan that characterized his ideals: “Carrying the Buddha on our back, let us go out into the streets. Let us go out to the farming and fishing villages!”

The third section of *Kindai Nihon to Nichiren-shugi* focuses on philosophical and literary figures of Japan’s modern period. The first essay, by Motai Kyōkō 茂田井教亨, examines attitudes of three prominent Kyoto school philosophers, Nishida Kitarō 西田幾多郎, Tanabe Hajime 田辺元, and Watsuji Tetsurō 和辻哲郎, vis-à-vis Nichiren. On the basis of a few references found in their writings, Motai laments in his conclusion that these three could not go beyond the stereotyped images of Nichiren in popular presentation, and thereby ignored or failed to understand his thought and its significance.

Takayama Chogyū 高山樗牛 (1871–1902), influential Meiji literary figure who died at the early age of 32, is the subject of an essay by Tamura Yoshirō. After successive periods of fascination with Romanti-

cism (from the age of 24 to 26) and Japanocentric nationalism (from the age of 27 to 30), Takayama is confronted with the prospect of his own death as he is afflicted with tuberculosis. In an anguished state of mind he reads Tanaka Chigaku's "The Renovation of Our Sect" (see above), and finds a ray of hope in the religious vision presented therein, becoming an ardent Nichiren devotee. He takes issue with Tanaka's ultranationalism, however, and writes that Nichiren's message goes well beyond Japan's national boundaries. He sees Nichiren's greatness in not having submitted to political authority in the face of persecution, holding fast to his belief in the absolute truth of the *Lotus Sūtra* that transcends all power on earth. Takayama was also drawn to Nietzsche during the final years of his life, seeing parallel motifs of self-transcendence in the latter's thought with Nichiren's teaching.

Three of Takayama's essays are included in Maruyama's *Kindai Nichiren ron* ("What Sort of a Person Was Nichiren?," "Nichiren and Japan," and "Nichiren and Christ"). In these, he reiterates the theme that runs throughout Nichiren's own life, that is, the absolute superiority of transcendent, spiritual truth over all earthly political authority. Incidentally, it was Takayama Chogyū's close friendship and exchange of letters with Anesaki Masaharu 姉崎正治, renowned scholar of religions who founded the Chair of Religious Studies at Tokyo Imperial University, that influenced the latter to take a more serious look at Nichiren. This encouraged Anesaki to undertake studies that resulted in the classic *Nichiren, the Buddhist Prophet*, based on lectures delivered at Harvard University in 1913.³

Miyazawa Kenji 宮沢賢治 (1896–1933), known as poet, nursery tale author, artist, visionary, and humanist, as well as peasant organizer, is the subject of a short essay by Kino Kazuyoshi 紀野一義. Regarded as a veritable bodhisattva of modern times, Kenji's religious vision derived in no small part from his reading of the *Lotus Sūtra* and of Nichiren. *Kindai Nichiren ron* excerpts some of Kenji's letters revealing his inner life of faith centered in the *Lotus Sūtra*, and also presents a photocopy of the original manuscript of his famous poem found on his lapel after his death—*Ame ni mo makezu* 雨ニモマケズ.

Takagi Yutaka 高木 豊 considers modern Christian writers and their differing views on Nichiren. Of these, Uchimura Kanzō 内村鑑三 (1861–1930) and Yanaihara Tadao 矢内原忠雄 (1893–1961) look up to Nichiren with a sense of adulation, whereas Uemura Masahisa 植村正久 (1857–1925) and Kinoshita Naoe 木下尚江 (1869–1937) present critical standpoints.

³ Published as a book in 1916. An amplified Japanese version was published in the same year. Anesaki mentions his indebtedness to Takayama Chogyū in his preface.

Uemura Masahisa published his views critical of Nichiren in a short essay in 1884, but relied not so much on Nichiren's own writings as on secondary sources available at the time. Takagi also mentions another work written by a Christian harshly critical of Buddhism in general and of Nichiren in particular, published in 1905 by Takahashi Gorō (1856–1935). Here Nichiren is presented in comparison to Mormon founder Joseph Smith.

Uchimura Kanzō is well known in the West as the founder of the Christian Nonchurch Movement (*Kirisutokyō Mukyōkai ha* キリスト教無教会派), as well as for his works in English that had been published toward the end of the nineteenth century: “How I Became a Christian,” “Japan and the Japanese,” “Representative Men of Japan.” In the last aforementioned work, Uchimura selects five persons embodying the best of the Japanese spirit: Saigō Takamori 西郷隆盛, builder of modern Japan; Uemura Yōzan 植村鷹山, feudal lord; Ninomiya Sontoku 二宮尊徳, farmer and saint; Nakae Tōju 中江藤樹, village teacher; and Nichiren, Buddhist priest. Uchimura looked up to Nichiren as a vigorous religious reformer whom he likened to and in whom he saw parallels with Muhammad, Martin Luther, Ignatius of Loyola, and George Fox, among others. While admiring Nichiren, the one major fault of the latter that Uchimura notes is his lack of tolerance—that virtue wherein, “holding on firmly to one's own views, one is able to recognize the beauty and strong points of others' as well” (Maruyama, p. 53). “Nichiren's firmness of conviction is to be respected and admired. His attacks on other teachings and beliefs (*shakubuku, hibō* 折伏 非謗) should not be followed” (p. 53).

Kinoshita Naoe was drawn to Nichiren, but also saw basic flaws in Nichiren's personality. Reading Nichiren's works, Kinoshita sought to resolve two issues with which he himself was wrestling: the question of love for one's country and its relation to one's religious faith, and the question of how to regard one's own public actions that are seen as having failed their mark. His essay “On Nichiren” (Maruyama, pp. 161–91) includes citations from Nichiren's writings that he uses to critique his subject as a failed nationalist and failed political activist. But as Takagi suggests (Tamura and Miyazaki, pp. 192–93), Kinoshita's own struggles as a Christian socialist and antiwar activist in the late Meiji era, seeking directions for his own life and actions in a country and society that for him was taking a problematic turn, can shed significant light on his distinctive reading of Nichiren.

Yanaihara Tadao includes Nichiren among four persons whom he respects and admires the most (along with the prophet Jeremiah, Abraham Lincoln, and Nitobe Inazō 新渡戸稲造). Takagi sums up Yanaihara's esteem of Nichiren, quoting from the concluding section

of this work published by the prestigious Iwanami Press in 1940 (*Yo no sonkei suru jinbutsu* 余の尊敬する人物): “Nichiren, who lived in the Kamakura era, loved truth for the truth’s sake, loved his country for the truth’s sake, and was a person who could stand face to face with enemies of the truth and say a resolute ‘No!’... The fact that such a person existed in the Japan of old is of consolation for us all” (Tamura and Miyazaki, p. 189). Again, as Takagi notes, this was a manifestation of Yanaihara’s own deeply cherished sentiments, written as it was during those times of recent Japanese history when to say “No!” would have meant persecution, imprisonment, or worse.

The final section of *Kindai Nihon to Nichiren-shugi* deals with the “new” religious movements of the last century whose teachings derive from Nichiren and the *Lotus Sūtra*. The first essay by Umehara Masaki 梅原正紀 describes the common features of these movements, such as the centrality of ancestor worship and family bonds, shamanistic elements put to use in solidifying the religious organization, and a tendency to be politically conservative. The next essay, by Kanmuri Ken’ichi 冠賢一, describes the origins and growth of the Butsuryū-shū 仏立宗, a prototype of lay-based religious movements of the modern period inspired by Nichiren, founded by Nagamatsu Seifū 長松清風 (1817–1890) just a decade prior to the Meiji Restoration.

Komatsu Kuniaki 小松邦彰 contributes an essay on Reiyūkai 霊友会 and Risshō Kōseikai 立正佼成会, and Higuma Takenori 日隈威徳 writes on Sōka Gakkai 創価学会. These are relatively well-known groups that need no further amplification here, and the authors succeed in offering instructive profiles of these religious organizations that continue to grow even now, wielding considerable influence in Japanese society and extending their reach to other parts of the world as well (see HARDACRE 1984, METRAUX 1988, WILSON and DOBBELAERE 1994).

Coeditor Miyazaki Eishū writes the fifth and concluding article on postwar developments among the established schools (*kisei kyōdan* 既成教団) of Nichiren’s following, noting institutional issues and organizational tasks. Miyazaki devotes part of his essay to a treatment of the peace movement spearheaded by Nihonzan Myōhō-ji 日本山妙法寺, a group founded by Nichiren priest Fujii Nichidatsu 藤井日達 (1885–1985). Early in his career Fujii considered Japan’s wartime acts as an engagement in a holy war, but after witnessing the devastation of the nuclear bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, he regretted his past attitudes. After the war he undertook efforts for world peace, disarmament, and specifically the banning of nuclear weapons as the basic thrust of his religious organization, for which he and his followers have come to be known.

Nihon Kindai to Nichiren-shugi presents a well-balanced overall picture

of the extent of Nichiren's influence in the shaping of modern Japanese society, combining sympathetic perspectives with objective and critical assessments. The merits of this volume easily stand out as one looks at others of similar intent for comparison. For example, TOKORO Shigemoto, who contributes two articles to this volume, has also written a book entitled *Kindai shakai to Nichiren-shugi* 近代社会と日蓮主義 (Modern society and Nichiren, 1972), covering the period beginning just before the Meiji Restoration up to its date of publication. The book can serve as a handy reference, with its meticulous documentation of names, dates, and facts, with cursory descriptions of trends of thought or movements related to Nichiren's teaching and person in the modern period of Japanese history. However, except for the exhortatory words in the final chapter on ongoing tasks of Nichiren's followers, and sporadic expressions of the author's own personal judgment of particular individuals or thought movements, it fails to go beyond a simple delineation of names, facts, and events, cursorily treated without attempt at correlation or order, save perhaps the chronological.

Another volume that addresses similar themes is *Kindai Nihon no Hokke Bukkyō* 近代日本の法華仏教 (Lotus Buddhism in modern Japan), edited by MOCHIZUKI Kankō (1968), published as part of the ongoing Heirakuji series on *Lotus Sūtra* studies sponsored by Rishō University. This is a collection of scholarly articles by respected academicians and experts in Buddhist studies on themes related to the general title. Contents include, just to take random examples, two studies on Tanaka Chigaku, a survey of Nichiren's image in literary works published between 1903 and 1941, by Ueda Honjō 上田本昌, and a study on Takayama Chogyū by Takagi Yutaka, among others. Also included are thematic studies of modern doctrinal and organizational developments within the Nichiren Sect, a study on Sōka Gakkai, as well as accounts of the state of the art in studies on the *Lotus Sūtra* from various angles. There is appended a detailed summary in English of all the articles in the book, providing non-Japanese readers with a handy prospectus of the volume's contents. But while the individual articles provide excellent treatments of their respective themes, it is no more than a collection of articles brought together under the same general heading of "modern developments," and as such there is no attempt to provide a comprehensive and connected picture as with the Tamura-Miyazaki volume.

In contrast, *Kindai Nihon to Nichiren-shugi* does succeed in providing such a picture, which unfolds for the reader right from the opening pages on through the panoramic vision presented by Tamura's introductory essay. The three types of Nichirenism described by Tamura are given due coverage in the four main sections of the book. The

(ultra)nationalistic type is treated in the first section, the second and third sections provide examples of Nichiren-inspired thinking that challenged or went beyond these nationalistic types of Nichirenism, and the fourth describes the new religious movements based on Nichiren's teaching.

One glaring flaw, however, is the aforementioned placement of Tokoro's essay on Kita, Ōkawa, and Inoue in the second section, instead of in the first. Also, beefing up the contents of the second section with further accounts of how Nichiren followers were persecuted during the wartime era would have given a more vivid impression of the irony of Nichiren's legacy in history—namely, of how some followers used him and his thought for bolstering their ultranationalistic goals, providing ideological and religious support for an expansionist militaristic regime, while other followers suffered harassment and persecution from the same regime (see WOODARD 1959). As one example, briefly mentioned in Tamura's introductory essay (pp. 4–5), a more developed account of the religious dimension of the thought of Ozaki Hotsumi (1901–1944), executed in connection with the renowned “Sorge Incident,” as manifested in his letters from prison published after his death, would have contributed much to this section. For the fourth section, the short-lived Renmon-kyō 蓮門教, an antiestablishment group that inherited the Fujufuse-ha 不受不施派 tradition and melded Shinto beliefs into its teaching, could also have found a place for treatment (OKU 1988).

Maruyama's *Kindai Nichiren ron* can be read as a complementary text to *Kindai Nihon to Nichiren-shugi*, as it provides the reader with first-hand sources on the thought of major figures treated in the latter volume. Rather than his own preface, the editor has chosen to open the volume with an essay by Motai Kyōkō, respected Nichiren doctrinal scholar, on “Nichiren: The Person and His Thought.” This introduces the reader to the subject matter and at the same time offers an example of an approach to Nichiren from within the context of his own epoch, by one who is thoroughly familiar with Nichiren's writings. This opening essay thus stands in marked contrast with the rest of the essays the editor has selected, which (as noted above), are more revelatory of the respective authors' own sentiments than of the intended subject matter (Nichiren).

One religious thinker included in the Maruyama collection who does not receive mention in the Tamura-Miyazaki volume is Soga Ryōjin 曾我量深 (1875–1971), renowned Shinran doctrinal scholar and Shinshū follower, who also served as president of Ōtani University. The four essays by Soga included here were published in 1904, early

in Soga's career, wherein he looks at Nichiren from a wider perspective of Mahāyāna Buddhism and extols his religious vision as one that embraced a social and national dimension.

In his postscript, Maruyama names over twenty other Japanese scholars and thinkers of the modern era known for their distinctive *Nichiren-ron*, just to indicate the ground that he is not able to cover in his collection. In this vein, one name that Maruyama singles out as deserving of closer attention and more detailed treatment is that of Uehara Senroku (1899–1975), noted historian and prominent post-war intellectual. The last section of the postscript summarizes the main points of Uehara's approach to Nichiren, which I will now briefly recap and supplement with more recent documentation, as it does bring up significant issues pertaining to Nichiren studies.

Uehara rejects five kinds of approaches to Nichiren as inadequate. These are what he terms the mystical 神秘主義的, dogmatist 教条主義的, politicalized 政治主義的, general liberal arts 教養主義的, and academic 學問主義的 approaches. Modern Japanese history is precisely a stage wherein these kinds of approaches prevailed, leading to the kinds of ironies witnessed among Nichiren devotees. He then lays out four acceptable (and not mutually exclusive) methodologies toward an understanding and due appreciation of Nichiren. These are the sectarian (doctrinal) methodology 宗義学的方法, the Western (scientific) methodology 西洋的方法, the world-historical methodology 世界史的方法, and the proper Nichiren-centered methodology 日蓮的方法. The first gives due credit to the tradition of doctrinal studies on Nichiren, presupposing adherence to his teaching, done from the perspective and at the service of the community of his religious followers. This kind of approach has undoubtedly served to shed light on various aspects of Nichiren's thought as religious doctrine. The second neither presupposes nor rejects religious adherence, and employs historical, philological, sociological, philosophical, and other approaches based on a variety of Western scientific axioms and methods. The third and fourth are to be considered as Uehara's own constructive contribution toward the understanding and, more significantly, appropriation of Nichiren's thought.

In his academic career as a historian, one of Uehara's repeated themes was the formation of what he termed a world-historical consciousness 世界史認識. This refers primarily to a due recognition of the broad spectrum of interconnected factors that constitute any specific historical event in a given time and given place in the world. With Nichiren taken as the subject of study, this methodology would entail placing within the realm of consideration the global events in the world of his time, such as the movements of Mongols in the Eurasian

continent, as well as other elements that were in turn connected with these movements in Europe and other parts of the world. In other words, a consideration of factors beyond this island country of Japan, namely a global perspective of his historical epoch, would need to be brought into play for a multidimensional understanding of Nichiren. In this connection, Uehara's own main work on Nichiren, still awaiting publication as the last of twenty-eight volumes of his collected works (UEHARA 1987ff.), is given the projected title *Nichiren to sono seikai* 日蓮とその世界 [Nichiren and his world], and promises treatment not only of Mongol leaders Genghis Khan and Kublai Khan but also of Ibn Taymiyah (1263–1328), fundamentalist Islamic thinker, as well as of Louis IX and Francis of Assisi—figures, needless to say, who made a mark in the period of world history in which Nichiren also lived (see brochure contained in published issues).

The fourth methodological approach Uehara describes is his own personal proposal for what one might call an engaged view of Nichiren. This is an attempt at understanding Nichiren from within, that is, from the standpoint of the latter's own self-awareness, considering the social, political, economic as well as religious dimensions that were constitutive of this self-awareness, within his (Nichiren's) given global historical context. This fourth approach is thus inseparable and takes off from the third described above. Uehara himself provides examples of this kind of methodological approach, notably in some of his talks given and essays written after his wife's death in 1969, put together in a collection entitled *Shisha-seisha: Nichiren ninshiki no hassō to shiten* 死者生者—日蓮認識の発想と視点 (*Chosaku-shū*, vol. 16). Uehara's own experience of the death of a loved one gives him a unique inroad into Nichiren's consciousness vis-à-vis followers who had lost their own loved ones, and gives an authenticity and power to his treatment of the theme (*Shisha to Nichiren*, 死者と日蓮, pp. 161–277). Furthermore, Uehara's own dedication to his country and its people, manifested in his own writings and activities as a key figure in the Kokumin Bunka Kaigi (People's Cultural Forum), a civic organization of prominent postwar intellectuals, gives him an "insider's view" that enlightens his treatment of Nichiren's triple sacred vow (*San seigan ron* 三誓願論, pp. 42–108). Also, having devoted so much of his professional and personal time and energy toward forging a vision for a democratic, populist, globally conscious Japan in the postwar period (see esp. *Chosaku-shū*, vol. 25), his deemed failure to win over the majority of the populace to his cause in spite of all his efforts, informs his treatment of Nichiren's retreat into Mt. Minobu (*Nichiren Minobu-nyūsan kō* 日蓮身延入山考, pp. 109–60).

Uehara's place in the history of Japanese thought still awaits due

evaluation. His ideas, encompassing the historical, philosophical, religious, as well as cultural, socioeconomic, and political dimensions, will undoubtedly receive renewed attention, especially as his hitherto unpublished writings are edited and published, and his previously published works, now out of print a generation after his death, are collectively reprinted in a new edition.⁴

The overall impression that follows a perusal of *Kindai Nihon to Nichiren-shugi* and *Kindai Nichiren ron* lends support to what SATŌ Hiroo (1998) has described in a recent work as a “split” (*bunretsu* 分裂) in modern Japanese images of Nichiren. On the one hand, depictions of Nichiren as a fervent nationalist remain on the scene, and on the other, idealizations of him as a social reformer with a transnational religious vision are also projected. In addition, different views of his person and interpretations of his teachings among the splintered groups of Nichiren’s followers contribute to an overall dissonant picture. This is a situation that underscores the need for further corroborative and methodologically well-grounded studies on Nichiren, the person, his thought, and his religion, in the context of his society and his time.

REFERENCES

ABBREVIATION

- STN *Shōwa teihon Nichiren Shōnin ibun* 昭和定本日蓮聖人遺文, 4 vols. Rishō Daigaku Nichiren Kyōgaku Kenkyūjo, ed. Minobu: Minobusan Kuonji, 1989.

SECONDARY SOURCES

HARDACRE, Helen

- 1984 *Lay Buddhism in Contemporary Japan: Reiyukai Kyodan*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

MCGREAL, Ian, ed.

- 1994 *Great Thinkers of the Eastern World*. San Francisco: Harper Collins.

METRAUX, Daniel A.

- 1988 *History and Theology of the Soka Gakkai, A Japanese New Religion*. Lewiston, N.Y.: Edward Mellen Press.

MOCHIZUKI Kankō 望月歆厚, ed.

- 1968 *Kindai Nihon no Hokke Bukkyō* 近代日本の法華仏教. Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten.

⁴ See the article on Uehara Senroku in MCGREAL 1994.

OKU Takenori 奥 武則

- 1988 *Renmonkyō aibō-shi: Kindai Nihon minshū-shūkyō no yuku sue* 蓮門教衰亡史—近代日本民衆宗教の行く末. Tokyo: Gendai Kikakushitsu.

SATŌ Hiroo 佐藤弘夫

- 1998 *Kindai to Bukkyō: Kindai Nihon ni okeru Nichiren no “hakken”* 近代と仏教—近代日本における日蓮の「発見」. In *Bukkyō to deatta Nihon* 仏教と出会った日本, Nihon Bukkyō Kenkyūkai 日本仏教研究会, ed., pp. 181–94. Kyoto: Hōzōkan.

TOKORO Shigemoto

- 1972 *Kindai shakai to Nichiren-shugi* 近代社会と日蓮主義. Tokyo: Hyōronsha.

UEHARA Senroku 上原専禄

- 1987ff. *Uehara Senroku chosaku-shū* 上原専禄著作集. 28 vols. (ongoing). Uehara Hiroe 上原弘江, ed. Tokyo: Hyōronsha.

WILSON, Bryan and Karel DOBBELAERE

- 1994 *A Time to Chant: The Soka Gakkai Buddhists in Britain*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

WOODARD, William P.

- 1959 The wartime persecution of Nichiren Buddhism. *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan* (Third Series) 7: 99–122.