

HELEN HARDACRE

Lay Buddhism in Contemporary Japan

Reiyukai Kyodan



PRINCETON LEGACY LIBRARY

Lay Buddhism
In Contemporary Japan:
Reiyūkai Kyōdan

Helen Hardacre



Princeton University Press
Princeton, New Jersey

Copyright © 1984 by Princeton University Press
Published by Princeton University Press, 41 William Street,
Princeton, New Jersey 08540
In the United Kingdom: Princeton University Press,
Guildford, Surrey

All Rights Reserved

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data will be
found on the last printed page of this book

ISBN 0-691-07284-1

Publication of this book has been aided by
The Whitney Darrow Fund of Princeton University Press

This book has been composed in Monophoto Times Roman
by Asco Trade Typesetting Ltd., Hong Kong

Clothbound editions of Princeton University Press books
are printed on acid-free paper, and binding materials
are chosen for strength and durability

Printed in the United States of America
by Princeton University Press
Princeton, New Jersey

*To my parents,
Gracia and Paul Hardacre*

Contents

List of Illustrations	ix
List of Figures	xi
List of Tables	xiii
Note on Romanization	xv
Preface	xvii
Introduction	3
Chapter 1. The History of Reiyukai	10
Chapter 2. Contemporary Activities and Organization	54
Chapter 3. Reiyukai and the Family	98
Chapter 4. Reiyukai Ritual	127
Chapter 5. Witnessing and Healing	155
Chapter 6. The Role of Women in Reiyukai	188
Conclusion	224
Appendix. Questionnaire Results	231
Bibliography	255
Index	265

List of Illustrations

(Illustrations appear between pp. 142–143.)

1. Kubo Kakutarō, Kotani Kimi, and Kubo Tsugunari, First, Second, and Third Presidents of Reiyukai
2. Shakaden, the Tokyo Headquarters
3. Members Assembling at the Entrance to Shakaden for a New Years Visit
4. Interior of Shakaden
5. The Statue of Shakyamuni Revealed
6. The Shakyamuni Statue at Shakaden
7. Youth Members Getting Acquainted at Shakaden Services
8. Mother and Child Reciting the Sutra Together
9. Reiyukai Sash and Rosary Beads
10. Branch Leader Preaching at Mirokusan
11. Mirokusan Worship Hall Complex
12. Mirokusan Pagoda
13. Women's Group Members Listening to Testimonies at Mirokusan
14. Testimony at Shakaden Mother-Daughter Meeting
15. Testimony at Mirokusan

List of Figures

1. Age Distribution	58
2. Distribution of Age at Enrollment by Sex	63
3. Leaders' Age by Sex and Rank	65
4. Collaterality in Reckoning Ancestors	67
5. Exclusion of Spouses of Collaterally Reckoned Ancestors	68
6. Ritual Posture and Altar Furnishings	141
7. Posthumous Names on the Sōkaimyō	146
8. Posthumous Names of Children	146
9. Posthumous Names of Animals	146
10. Diagram of the <i>Blue Sutra</i>	152
11. Clerical Model of Merit Transfer	153
12. Reiyukai Model of Merit Transfer	153
13. Age at Entrance by Sex and Rank	240–241
14. Distribution of Leadership Ranks	243
15. Acceptance of the Family-State Concept, by Sex and Rank	246
16. Favor Requiring Parental Permission for Marriage, by Sex and Rank	247
17. Favor Stricter Abortion Laws, by Sex and Rank	249
18. Opposition to Legalized Equality of the Sexes, by Sex and Rank	250
19. Affirmation of the Idea that Women are <i>Gōshō ga Fukai</i> , by Sex and Rank	251
20. Acceptance of the Employer/Parent Analogy, by Sex and Rank	253

List of Tables

1. Reiyukai Membership	48
2. Groups Originating as Schisms from Reiyukai	49
3. Breakdown of Membership by Occupation	59
4. Distribution of Income	61
5. <i>Contribution to Household Income</i>	62
6. Proportion of Male and Female Leaders	64
7. Inclusion and Exclusion of Exceptional Cases in the Book of the Past	69
8. The Family-State Concept	110
9. Employer is to Employee as Parent is to Child?	111
10. Care of Aged Parents	111
11. Should Filial Piety Be Legally Required?	112
12. Preference in Living Arrangements	112
13. Abolition of the Ie	113
14. Parental Consent for Marriage	114
15. Adoption	114

Note on Romanization

Japanese terms have been romanized according to the Hepburn system. After the first mention of a term, macrons and italics have been omitted, except in case of terms easily confused with English words, e.g., the English preposition “on” and the Japanese term for debt or obligation, *on* 恩. In the case of Japanese words commonly used in English or frequently herein, such as the place name Tokyo or Reiyukai, I have omitted macrons in first reference and when the term occurs in combination, e.g., the publishing house Tokyodō, or the publication *Reiyukaihō*.

Preface

The debts incurred in writing a book dealing with the deepest beliefs of the nearly three million people who belong to Reiyūkai Kyōdan, "The Society of Friends of the Spirits," are numerous and weighty. I owe to the members of Reiyukai for their aid, patience, and efforts to instruct me more than words can convey. Reiyukai believers strove over a period of four years to help me reach a full understanding of their religion. We became friends in the profound sense, and I believe we have understood each other. In their company I came to admire greatly their strength of character and conviction. I have attempted to portray Reiyukai in a way that will be both recognizable to its members and intelligible to those on the outside; I hope I have served Reiyukai Kyodan well.

In particular I wish to express gratitude to the president of Reiyukai, Kubo Tsugunari. President Kubo graciously extended to me the services of his headquarters staff, and without their assistance I could never have collected the data on which this study is based. Among the headquarters staff to whom I am most indebted are Mr. Kawabata and Mr. Torii of the Overseas Department. Also, Dr. Yuyama and Dr. Ejima of Reiyukai's International Institute for Buddhist Studies (formerly the Reiyukai Library) gave me substantive advice and assistance.

To the leaders and members of the Eighth Branch of Reiyukai I owe a special debt of gratitude. Branch Leader Masunaga Sadako gave me the original opportunity to live among Eighth Branch members when she invited me in 1975 to come to Osaka. She and her husband, Branch Leader Masunaga Tadashi, arranged that I reside in their facilities for eight months. It was through this experience that I was able to understand something of what Reiyukai means in the lives of its believers. I wish to thank my roommates and

daily companions there for their endless patience in answering a steady barrage of questions, for explaining their beliefs, and for sharing their deepest feelings. The three who bore the brunt of my company were Date Katsuko, Wada Akiko, and Okada Mitsuko.

My teacher at the University of Chicago, Joseph M. Kitagawa, is responsible for the absence of many errors that would otherwise have appeared here, though needless to say I have only myself to blame for any that remain. During the years I was in Japan working on this project, his letters of detailed comment and criticism were an invaluable source of advice and encouragement. Since that time as well, I have continued to benefit from his guidance in completing this study.

From the members of the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Tokyo I received much-needed advice. I would particularly like to thank Professors Wakimoto Tsuneya, Nakamura Kyōko (presently of Kawamura Women's College), and Inoue Nobutaka (presently of Kokugakuin University).

I received many useful suggestions from Professors John F. Wilson and Martin Collcutt of Princeton University and wish to thank them for their careful reading of an earlier draft of this manuscript. I benefited much from discussions with Professor Ann Waswo of the Nissan Institute of Japanese Studies at Oxford University regarding the history of Reiyukai in the early twentieth century.

My parents continue to be my best critics and most ruthless editors. They have invested in this manuscript hundreds of hours, since the days when it was a dissertation. For lack of any adequate means of expressing my gratitude, this book is dedicated to them.

Research for this project was generously supported by the Social Science Research Council and a Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Abroad Fellowship. To say nothing of the financial aspect, I am also grateful to the staff of the Tokyo office of the Fulbright Commission, particularly Carolyn Yang and Satō Etsuko, for many happy hours. I also wish to express my gratitude to Yōko Suemoto for her help in proofreading this manuscript.

The friendship of P.L.B. and S.Y. continues to be quite literally a *sine qua non*.

Lay Buddhism in
Contemporary Japan



Introduction



The idea that children owe to their parents a debt of such magnitude that it can never possibly be repaid was expounded by Nakae Tōju 中江藤樹 (1608–1648), a pioneer of Japanese Neo-Confucian thought. Employing in a style typical of his era a single idea as the center of his philosophical system, he emphasized filial piety as preeminent among virtues and spoke of the *on* 恩 owed to parents as “higher than the mountains, deeper than the seas.”¹ The phrase appeared in *terakoya* 寺小屋 school-books and remained a standard tenet of morals courses down to 1945. The notion of this irreparable debt strikes a responsive chord in many hearts today, and Reiyukai dedicates itself to the establishment of a Buddhist ethic of filial piety symbolized by rites of ancestor worship and supported by other family-centered values. In so doing it attempts to imbue the concept of *on* to parents and ancestors with new life, to demonstrate its relevance to contemporary Japanese society.

However, the modern history of this traditionalist concept, especially as it functioned in prewar courses on morals (*shūshin, dōtoku kyōiku* 修身, 道德教育), is not altogether a happy one. In that context the notion of the *on* borne by children to their parents was employed for the purpose of inculcating habits of obedience and docility, not only to parents, but to superiors of any kind, and not only in childhood, but throughout life. Here the phrase “higher than the mountains, deeper than the seas” became a platitudinous tool of indoctrination and intellectual homogeniza-

¹ Bukkyō shisō kenkyūkai, ed., *On*, Bukkyōshisō 4, 4 vols. (Kyoto: Heirakuji shoten, 1978), 4:222.

tion, worthy of all the scorn heaped upon it and similar sentiments by postwar generations who mourn the mental and spiritual prisons created for their elders by a state intent upon creating compliant subjects.

A phrase that embodies such contradictions would be an appropriate motto for a religion which is itself replete with paradoxes—of liberation from a variety of problems on the one hand, and of ever-deeper entrenchment in a narrow range of family-based values on the other. Reiyukai is serious business, a religion whose members demand that it produce results. They are not much interested in “expressive effectiveness” in the sense of cheap, emotional pap to salve the soul into the conviction that whatever is, is best, nor have they time for polite parlor conversation about bygone saints or the pleasures of a heavenly afterlife. In matters religious, all Reiyukai members come from Missouri, and they are prepared to “show” anyone who inquires what Reiyukai has done for them. It solves family problems, heals sickness, and brings countless other tangible, real-life blessings into their lives. They are not crass materialists, but they demand proof, and they get it. When Reiyukai members undergo the process of making Reiyukai work for them, their thought and manner of conducting their lives change, generally so as to be more in conformity with the traditionalist values the group espouses.

Reiyukai Kyodan, “The Society of Friends of the Spirits,” is a contemporary Japanese religion deriving from the Nichiren tradition. It has been in existence for some sixty years, though during that time, fourteen bodies have split off, including at least one that has surpassed the parent organization in size and influence. Nevertheless, the groups which have originated by schism have retained much of the doctrine, organization, and ritual of Reiyukai, and it is clear that its general teachings exert a powerful influence over the lives of several million Japanese at home and abroad. The history of this group is dealt with in Chapter 1, and its contemporary activities and organization are treated in Chapter 2.

Ancestor worship is its central practice, and this in an age when Japanese ancestor worship seems to be generally in decline if not dying out. In Reiyukai can be seen many changes from traditional Japanese ancestor worship which seem to have come about in

response to changes in Japanese society. Doctrine concerned with ancestors has been developed that transforms the idea of an ancestor itself into a more comprehensive sort of deity than the ancestors of Japanese tradition. This theme is dealt with in Chapters 4, 5, and 6, which treat ritual, witnessing, and the role of women.

The growth of laymen's groups in Japanese Buddhism from the Bakumatsu era (roughly 1830–1868) is clearly exemplified in Reiyukai, which sometimes fostered a frank anti-clericalism. On the one hand this was a negative reaction to corruption and lack of concern for the laity among the priesthood. We can see also a desire to establish a positive religious significance for marriage and the family. This inevitably involved the incorporation of the religious aspirations of women. In Reiyukai women play important roles in the group, and ideas about women, marriage, and the family are at the center of the group's thought and activity. On the one hand, Reiyukai continues women's traditional religious roles in shamanistic practices, but their involvement has also led to qualitatively new developments in doctrine, ritual, and ways of making religion a part of everyday life. These developments have entailed giving women a positive role in ancestor worship. As this came about during Reiyukai's early history, it coincided with a period in Japanese religious history when the state was intervening heavily in religion to manipulate ideas about ancestor worship so as to attach a semi-political, patriotic meaning to ancestor worship.

From the point of view of Reiyukai's significance for the history of religions in general, the group assumes importance as one in which ancestor worship forms the center of a voluntary association. Usually the worship of ancestors is associated with tribal societies or with kinship groups forming the basis of traditional society, as in premodern China or Japan. Examination of Reiyukai can perhaps indicate how the beliefs and practices of ancestor worship change when they are extended beyond kinship bounds and are made the focus of a voluntary association. A general discussion of these and related matters is provided in Chapter 3, "Reiyukai and the Family."

The Japanese new religions have been treated by scholars as having only an expressive sort of significance, and it is almost

taken for granted that the main importance of membership is the emotional gratification afforded by joining a group of people with similar problems. There is a tendency to assume that the three problems most commonly faced by members of these groups, namely sickness, poverty, and domestic disharmony, are not, realistically speaking, seriously addressed or altered, in spite of a wealth of testimonial evidence to the contrary. In this study I hope to show that in the case of Reiyukai, in addition to the emotional, expressive significance belonging to the group has for its members, there is also a considerable instrumental effectiveness in solving problems, and that if this were not the case, this group and others like it would not survive.

Since very little research has been done on Reiyukai,² it was necessary to collect primary information on which to base this study. In addition to the few published results of academic

²There are two types of research on Reiyukai in Japanese, journalistic and academic. Leaving aside occasional treatments in the popular press penned purely for sensational value, an excellent journalistic study is Mainichi Shimbun, ed., *Shūkyō o gendai ni tou*, 5 vols. (Tokyo: Mainichi Shimbun, 1976), 2: 115–213, a general study of organization and activities, echoing the opinion of most Japanese scholars, to the effect that Reiyukai is in some sense typical of the combination of shamanistic practices, “this-worldly” benefits, and ancestor worship.

In the works of older Japanese scholars on Reiyukai there is an emphasis on biographical studies of the founders, a trend that may be seen in these works: Saki Akio, *Godai kyōso no jitsuzō* (Tokyo: Yagumo shoin, 1970), pp. 23–96; Saki Akio, *Kyōso—shomin no kamigami* (Tokyo: Aoki shoten, 1955); Takagi Hirō, *Nihon no shinkō shūkyō* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1959). A second line of research traced the historical roots of Reiyukai to mid-nineteenth-century lay Buddhist movements, as in Watanabe Umeo, *Gendai nihon no shūkyō* (Tokyo: Daitō shuppansha, 1950).

The younger generation of Japanese scholars has turned away from general outlines to more specific, usually sociological issues. Kōmoto Mitsu-gu’s works, cited in the Bibliography, address the question of Reiyukai’s penetration into rural areas, and the general significance of Reiyukai in gauging more general shifts in Japanese ancestor worship.

Among Western-language works discussing Reiyukai, few are longer than a page or so. Those by H. Neill McFarland and Harry Thomsen, cited in the Bibliography, apparently rely heavily on devotional literature in English issued by the group. The most comprehensive treatment of Reiyukai in Western-language sources is Werner Köhler, *Die Lotus-Lehre und die modernen Religionen in Japan* (Zurich: Atlantis Verlag, 1962), pp. 235–53; this study considers the frequently encountered combination of ancestor worship and shamanism in the new religions.

research on Reiyukai, I used four major sources of information.

Data collected through participant observation among Reiyukai members is the first source. In July, 1975, I contacted the Los Angeles office of Reiyukai and became a member of the group. I let it be known that I was seeking an opportunity to study the group in Japan, and soon thereafter was invited to go to Habikino City, Osaka Prefecture, where the headquarters of the Eighth Branch is located, and to live with members employed by the branch in exchange for teaching English there. I accepted this offer by the branch leaders of the Eighth Branch, Masunaga Sadako and Masunaga Tadashi. I had met Branch Leader Masunaga in Los Angeles where she was visiting her daughter, whose husband is head of the Los Angeles office. From July, 1976 through February, 1977 I lived with members of Reiyukai's Eighth Branch in a dormitory operated for branch employees and went to the branch office on a daily basis, where I observed the full range of Reiyukai meetings and activities, learned about the management of the branch, and was in daily contact with many Reiyukai members.

Although I was careful to explain to my Reiyukai hosts and informants in Osaka that I was conducting academic research, I was at the same time a member of the organization and participated fully in ritual and other activities. This ambiguity in my position probably was the deciding factor in my being able to collect a great deal of information not readily disclosed to outsiders under other circumstances, but at the same time it encouraged the false hope that I might one day become an evangelist for the group.

In March, 1977 I changed my research site to Tokyo in order to carry out a survey, the second major source of data, administered to a sample of 2,000 members from all branches of Reiyukai in Japan. Carrying out a project affecting all the branches necessitated the approval and assistance of the Tokyo headquarters, and completion of survey design and administration required the better part of the following year, until the spring of 1978. Results of the survey are discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, and a complete text and translation, plus more detailed statistical data, appear in the Appendix.

In Tokyo I presented myself to the headquarters staff and to the president of Reiyukai, Kubo Tsugunari, through an introduction from the chairman of the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Tokyo, the president's alma mater, which left no doubt that I was to be considered an outside researcher. This unambiguous position facilitated my survey research while putting an end to my former use of the method of participant observation.

A third source of data, detailed interviews of twenty-two Reiyukai branch leaders, was carried out in Tokyo during the summer of 1978. Inasmuch as my interviews were arranged through the Tokyo headquarters, it was necessary to submit first a list of questions I would ask. Some of the questions I would most have liked to ask had to be deleted at the request of the headquarters as too sensitive politically or in other respects, and thus the questions and interviewees' initial responses were rather stereotyped. Since in addition the organization requested that an official of the Overseas Department be present at all interviews, interviewees often seemed to feel somewhat constrained and under pressure to give the "right answer." However, in most cases it was possible to establish sufficient rapport to overcome these various factors curtailing free expression at least to some extent; and particularly in the case of female branch leaders, the rather dry list of "official" questions was quickly left behind as interviewees expanded on their experiences as believers and leaders of Reiyukai. I found that questions concerning marriage, the family, and the religious possibilities open to women provide the heart of leaders' thought and concern, and these problems are dealt with in Chapter 6.

The fourth major source of information upon which this study relies is members' testimonies. Existing works on the new religions for the most part tacitly assume that the often extravagant claims of healing and other "this-worldly" benefits cannot be taken seriously except as signifying the psychological, emotional, expressive satisfaction which membership provides, and from this perspective testimonies become inadmissible as a source of information on actual events. Nevertheless, testimonies are continually produced in great number, and the act of presenting a testi-

mony before a group is an important part of group membership. In contrast to existing research, this study assumes that testimonies provide invaluable data for the investigation of doctrine, organization, and religious experience. In Chapter 5 a collection of Reiyukai testimonies is examined thematically with the purpose of showing how membership often results in genuine instrumental effectiveness in solving members' problems.

Chapter One

The History of Reiyukai

Part 1: The Role of Crisis



Most studies on the Japanese new religions explain their origins as the result of crisis. While a crisis may explain (in some weak sense of that word) why groups form at a particular time, it does not account for their persistence once the time of crisis has passed. The earthquake of 1923 played a role in the founding of Reiyukai, but neither its origin nor its continuation can be explained solely by reference to this crisis. To say of Reiyukai that it represents a reaction to crisis would ignore its positive attempts to address the problems of Japanese society and also its inheritance of concepts, beliefs, and rites of Japanese Buddhism. Through the lens of the crisis explanation, we focus necessarily upon reaction and response. The following account, however, emphasizes the founders' positive initiative in formulating a creed and their purposeful transformation of traditional elements to match new circumstances.

Kubo Kakutarō 久保角太郎, as he was known after his marriage and adoption into the Kubo household, was born Matsutaka Kakutarō in the village of Kominato, Awa-gun, Chiba Prefecture, in 1892. He was the family's third son, and the fact of his having been born in the birthplace of the medieval saint Nichiren 日蓮 later inspired him to think of himself as the Nichiren of the Taishō era (1912–1926). At the age of twenty he left home and went to Tokyo where he worked as a carpenter's apprentice during the day and attended Nihon University at night, studying architectural

draftsmanship and engineering. His work took him to the Imperial Household Ministry (Kunaishō 宮内省), and his diligence and seriousness there attracted the notice of Sengoku Masayuki 仙石政敬, a high official in the ministry.¹

Former retainers of Sengoku, the Kubo household were at that time without an heir. Kubo Shin 久保シン, a widow in her fifties, prevailed upon Sengoku to help find a suitable husband for her daughter, who would take the Kubo name and perpetuate the line. Sengoku arranged for Kakutaro to marry into the Kubo house, and it was then that Kakutaro gave up the name of Matsutaka and became known as Kubo Kakutaro. The practice of second and third sons becoming “adopted husbands” (*mukoyōshi* 婿養子) was an accepted one and not particularly exceptional. In fact, one of Kakutaro’s elder brothers, Kotani Yasukichi 小谷安吉, had also been adopted, into the Kotani family. Kubo became a full-time employee of the Imperial Household Ministry after his marriage.²

Kubo’s mother-in-law Shin was an ardent devotee of the Lotus Sutra, and she insisted that Kakutaro be trained by one of the many ideologues of Nichirenshugi, Masuko Yūkichi 増子酉吉. Masuko was a follower of Tanaka Chigaku 田中智学,³ one of the leaders of the Nichirenshugi (literally “Nichirenism” 日蓮主義) movement which was highly influential through the early twentieth century, enjoying its heyday in the Taisho period, when it fuelled the fires of militant nationalism. Nichirenshugi, a term created by Tanaka in 1901, refers to a nationalistic, political

¹Sengoku Masayuki (1872–1935), a Taishō bureaucrat, worked in the Kunaishō, the Kizokuin, and the Ōkurashō. He was elected to the House of Peers in 1920. On Kubo’s early life, see Watanabe Umeo, *Gendai Nihon no shūkyō* (Tokyo: Daitō shuppansha, 1950), pp. 298–302; and Saki Akio, *Kyōso—shomin no kamigami* (Tokyo: Aoki shoten, 1955), pp. 212–16.

²Saki Akio, *Godai kyōso no jitsuzō* (Tokyo: Yagumo shoin, 1970), pp. 34–42.

³Tanaka Chigaku (1861–1939) was originally a priest of Nichiren Buddhism but left the order after a disagreement with an abbot who did not accord sufficient importance, in Tanaka’s opinion, to *shakubuku* (“forceful proselytization”) and Nichiren’s patriotic writings. On Tanaka’s life and thought, see Edwin B. Lee, “Nichiren and Nationalism: The Religious Patriotism of Tanaka Chigaku,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 30, No. 1 (Spring, 1975), 19–35; and the biography of Tanaka by his son, Tanaka Kōhō, *Tanaka Chigaku* (Tokyo: Shinseikaisha, 1977).

interpretation of Nichiren's thought. It was created to distinguish the movement led by Tanaka from sectarian Nichiren Buddhism. Tanaka accorded special importance to Nichiren's *Risshō ankokuron* 立正安国論 and the idea of *shakubuku* 折伏 (forceful proselytization) in creating a number of laymen's groups, the most notable of which were the Risshō Ankokukai 立正安国会 and the Kokuchūkai 国柱会, The Nation's Pillar Society.⁴ Tanaka stressed the unity of Nichiren Buddhism and State Shinto ideology. His thought moved increasingly to the right through the twenties, in opposition to the growth of labor and tenants' unions, political parties, and such religious groups as Ōmotokyō 大本教, (founded in 1892 by Deguchi Nao 出口ナオ), which he thought infringed on state religious ideology. He advocated increased state control of religious bodies through unification of objects of worship, and eventually he proclaimed that the emperor should be the supreme object of worship for everyone.⁵

For Tanaka and Masuko, true Buddhism is inherently political, and genuine followers of Nichiren should create a Buddhism useful in the support and protection of the state. The sympathies of those who subscribed to Nichirenshugi were with the ruling class. Their main concern with respect to the rest of society was that it be orderly, obedient, and loyal. They were not interested in its problems.

During the Taisho era Nichiren's thought was under re-examination from two very different perspectives. One sought to forge a bond between the impassioned patriotism of the medieval saint and the notion of the absolute authority of the emperor and the national polity (*kokutai* 国体). The ideologues of this persuasion, who included Kita Ikki 北一輝 and others associated with militarists and the right wing, perceived a threat in religious and political pluralism. They tended to support the fascist notion that

⁴On the various religious groups founded by Tanaka, see Watanabe Hōyō, "Tanaka Chigaku no shūkyō undō ni tsuite," in *Kindai Nihon no hokke bukkyō*, ed. Mochizuki Kankō (Kyoto: Heirakuji shoten, 1968), pp. 129–58.

⁵On Nichirenshugi see Ikeda Eishun, *Meiji no bukkyō—sono kōdō to shisō*, *Nihonjin no kōdō to shisō*, vol. 31 (Tokyo: Hyōronsha, 1976), pp. 132–42; and Togo Shigeki, *Kindai shakai to Nichirenshugi*, *Nihonjin no kōdō to shisō*, vol. 18 (Tokyo: Hyōronsha, 1972), pp. 113–42.

a subject must ground his every thought and action in his duty to the nation, submitting unconditionally to the imperial will. On this view, the only justification for the existence of a voluntary religious group is its promulgation of a message of patriotism. While one may recognize the existence of degrees of extremism in the propagation of Nichirenshugi, Tanaka Chigaku and his ilk represented the far right of the spectrum.⁶

Kubo was steeped in the sentiments of Nichirenshugi through his training under Masuko, and at the Imperial Household Ministry he imbibed further the air of reverence for the emperor. This experience was a formative influence upon the development of his religious thinking, but there was another aspect of Taisho thought about Nichiren that he found more persuasive and congenial.

Kubo learned about Nishida Toshizō 西田俊蔵 from his brother Kotani Yasukichi around 1919, and although Kubo and Nishida never met, Kubo appropriated many of Nishida's ideas and practices. Nishida was a fuel dealer in Yokohama who took up a religious life after the deaths of his wife and two children in circumstances of terrible poverty. He took the religious name Mugaku 無学, meaning, in his interpretation, "having nothing further to learn." He identified himself with the bodhisattva Jōfukyō 常不輕 (Skt: Sadāparibhūta), a figure in the Lotus Sutra's twentieth chapter whose appearance is promised when the Law has almost been extinguished. He comes as a beggar, but with power to save all beings. Like other contemporary religious figures, Nishida called upon Buddhism to provide ethical guidance in the midst of the confusion of Taisho cultural pluralism. Finding no response from the clergy, he appealed to laymen, proclaiming that the nation must be saved through the power of the ancestors.⁷

⁶Togoro, *Kindai shakai to Nichirenshugi*, pp. 113–42.

⁷Nishida was apparently independent of any other religious group, and he did not establish any group for the propagation of his teaching. However, some of his followers customarily assembled in a house distantly connected to the Matsutaka house. Through this connection Yasukichi learned of Nishida's teaching and told Kubo about them. What became of Nishida after that time is not known. He left no writings, and sources on his ideas are few. See Watanabe Umeo, *Gendai Nihon*, pp. 295–98; Saki, *Kyōso*, pp. 213–15; and *Godai kyōso*, pp. 38–41.