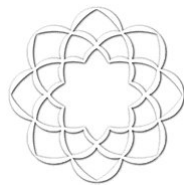


Sōka Gakkai 創価学会



Periodization (according to Takagi Hirō)

1. 19th/early 20th century: „Meiji-revolution“
2. Taishō (1912-1926) and early Shōwa-era
3. After 1945: Postwar period
4. from the 70ties onwards: *shin-shinshūkyō*
新新宗教
5. After 1995

2nd period

Taishō (1912-1926) and early Shōwa (1926-1989)-era:

- Nationalism and Militarism
- Urbanization and beginning of industrialization
- Origin in towns
- More Buddhist-based groups
- Persecutions

History of Sōka Gakkai

- Origins in 13th century:
- Based on the teachings of *Nichiren* and his stress on the importance of the *Lotus-sutra* (= *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra* = *Miao falian huajing* 妙法蓮華經 = jap. *Myōhō renge kyō*)

Importance of *Lotus-sutra*

- Compiled in India 1st/2nd century
- Presenting supreme Truth, revealed by the Buddha himself
- „Easy way“ of deliverance and emancipation
- Important since beginning of Buddhism in Japan: Shōtoku Taishi (6th century), Saichō (9th century)

Nichiren (1222-1282)

- *Daimoku* 題目:
recitation of *namu myōhō rengo-kyō* 南無妙法蓮華經
- Millenial teachings:
„End of Dharma“
(*mappō* 末法)
- Nationalistic aspect



go-honzon 御本尊



Myohon-ji in Kamakura

Lotus-sutra based New religions

- *Honmon Butsuryūshū* 本門佛立宗, founded 1857 by Nagamatsu Nissen
- *Reiyūkai* 霊友会, founded 1925 by Kubo Kakuarō and Kotani Kimi, with important offshoots (like *Risshōkōseikai* 立正佼成会)
- Nichiren Shōshū 日蓮正宗, said to be in the tradition of Nikkō (1246-1333), since 1912

Taiseki-ji 大石寺 at Mt. Fuji



Makiguchi Tsunesaburō 牧口 常 三郎 (1871-1944)

- *Sōka Kyōiku Gakkai*
[Value Creation
Education Society]
- *Sōka Kyōikugaku*
Taikei as the basis of
the teachings (first
volume: 1930 =
“foundation” of *Sōka*
Gakkai)
- Inaugural meeting in
1937



- Initial aims:
reform of the educational system based on the *values* of *bi* (beauty), *ri* (gain), and *zen* (goodness)
- “Religious turn”:
by the late 1930s *Sōka Kyōiku Gakkai* a Nichiren religious *ko* [lay study organization].

Toda Jōsei 戸田城聖 (1900-1958)

- Friend and student of Makiguchi
- „daimoku-experience“ in prison 1943
- Closer relationship with *Nichiren Shōshū*
- *shakubuku* 折伏 („break and subdue“)



Ikeda Daisaku 池田 大作 (1928-)

- Leader after Toda's death 1958
- moderated radicalism (esp. *Shakubuku*-techniques)
- Emphasis on Peace work, education, art, culture
- Break with Nichiren Shōshū 日蓮正宗 1991



Political involvement

- 1955: Tokyo prefectural assembly
- 1964 *Kōmeitō* 公明党
- 1970 formal separation from Sōka Gakkai
- 1993 in ruling coalition
- 1998 *New Kōmeitō*



Main beliefs

Main Beliefs:

- The Lotussutra embodies a human's only escape from the sufferings of this world
- the *daimoku*: the chanting of *namu Myōhō renge kyō*
- the importance of the *(dai)gohonzon*