A consideration of how the works of Nichiren were received by readers:  
——the case of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi——

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To believers of Buddhism, the Buddhist sutras take on a narrative aspect. In this case the narrative has a religious effect, providing principles of explanation for phenomena occurring in the real world and a system of explaining through plot which provides a standard direction to the life of the believer. Phenomena occurring in the real world are not explained away by fortuity, but are located in real time of necessity.

This characteristic can be classified into two categories, ‘significance as a standard’ and ‘significance as a tool of heading.’ In the case of Nichiren (1222-1282), these two characteristics as seen in the Lotus Sutra allowed him to place himself in the real world as a practicer and devotee of the Lotus Sutra, and simultaneously build up for later ages the mythical status of the world of the Lotus Sutra.

Moving along to a later time frame, we can suppose that Nichiren’s works would then function as a narrative for people of later ages. This is because the narrative of Nichiren’s works can be located vertically above time due to the existence of readers who receive this narrative.

Concerning the narrative nature of Nichiren’s works, it has already been confirmed that one’s own experiences are interpreted and transformed into historical fact by paying close attention to narrative actions and the process through which these actions mediate in the process of changing events into history, characteristically resulting in both ‘reality’ and ‘falsehood.’

In this way, if we are to define the works of Nichiren as narratives, we must not question the credibility of these works, but by confirming the relationship of the work with the reader accepting the narrative, we can perceive the role that these works have played. And in modern Japanese ideological history in particular, this way of looking provides a clue to what sort of role the Lotus Sutra and the ideology
of Nichiren have played.

In this paper, I would like to consider the founder of the Value Creating Education Society (Soka Gakkai, 創価学会), Tunesaburo Makiguchi (牧口常三郎), and his written works, in particular The Scientific and Super-religious Experiment and Proof of the Value-Creating Educational Method (『創価教育法の科学的・超宗教実験証明』).

Makiguchi's acceptance of the Buddhist religion gained its foundations in June of 1828 (Showa 3), when he entered the True Nichiren sect. And the influence of Nichiren can be seen in his establishment of 'value' as the 'purpose' of education. Ryuichi Goto (後藤隆一) has already researched the relationship between Makiguchi's value theory and the Lotus Sutra or Buddhism in general. I would first like to clarify the characteristics of the value theory.

Makiguchi advocated "Education through life, and with a better life as its object." He thought that the goal of life was to attain personal happiness, and education's role was to enable the individual to lead a happy life. So his 'life of value' was not to be considered as a separate entity, but to be considered tracing back the causes of actual events from an empiricist and inductive standpoint. However, his laws of causality were not religious; they did not leave the realm of science. This way of thinking relates to the distinguishing of absolute truth and value, in which value is of course not absolute, but is seen within the general sympathetic relationship of subject to object and is changing relatively with time and place. Central to this value he posited the values of benefit, goodness and beauty, with benefit as the most basic principle, to preserve the life of the individual human and thereby develop society through goodness or moral value. Beauty also revives the life of the individual by providing comfortable stimulation, and has an esthetic value which provides healing. By introducing Buddhist ideology into this theory of value, he did not fall into the modern value trap of totalitarianism, but succeeded in the realism of subjectivism on the level of the common man known as individualism. So let us now observe the relationship between Makiguchi's theory of values and Buddhist ideology, in particular the ideology of Nichiren. I would like to confirm this in the Scientific and Super-religious Experiment and Proof of the Value-Creating Educational Method, published in 1839 (Showa 12). By the way, the phrase 'super-religious,' which is used in the title, means 'having surpassed all established re-
ligions,' and is used to signify Nichiren Buddhism as the only correct religion.

First, his purpose in writing this book is explained as follows.

"In comparison with hitherto works, this book raises the question of educational reform, frankly expressing differences, and tracing back to the origin of problems (omission) and the system of knowledge of the value-creating method of education and the value theory it is based on must be summarized in outline. Finally, I will attempt to prove scientifically the mysteries of the transcendent religion of Buddhism that lie at its foundation, and in this way, (omission) in order to yield a final result, it is best to do the most basic acts which produce that result, and in this book I hope to prove somewhat that this is the method of education and the way of life of the greatest value, and my conclusions regarding the way it should be presented to actuate the reform of education and life...."

From his standpoint that it is possible to reform methods of education, Makiguchi applied Nichiren's Buddhism in support of his value theory and in the system of knowledge of the Value Creating Education Society. As one factor of his reform, he presented the condition of 'a correct character, possessing the purity to believe and revere the Three Great Laws of the Nichiren sect and the ‘Nam-myô-ho-ren-ge-kyo ('名無妙法華経') essential to 'The Life-Span of the Tathâgata' when experimenting with the process to select teachers of superior character. His reasoning was that the virtue of the Lotus Sutra is the same as the value of life, and that his own experiences of the past eight years were as predicted in the Lotus Sutra. Regarding this, he quoted from ‘The Expounder of the Dharma’ section of the Lotus Sutra, ‘people show great hostility to this Sutra, even in the presence of the Tathâ-gata. How much more so after the parinirvâna of the Tathâgata!’ and other sutras, and as he appended his theory that the life of Nichiren is scientific proof of the Lotus Sutra, we can consider that Makiguchi and Nichiren had the same sort of experience, and that Makiguchi perceived truth in the Lotus Sutra and in the works of Nichiren, and confirmed his faith and gave meaning to his experiences through these works.

Seeking other reasons for determining faith in the Lotus Sutra as the sole condition for selecting teachers, he quotes this passage from Shinkokuo-gosho (『神國王御書』), ‘Among the sacred teachings, The Lotus Sutra is the mirror of God among the bril-
liant mirrors. The human form may be revealed in bronze mirrors and the like, but the soul cannot be revealed. Not only does the Lotus Sutra reveal the form, but also the soul. Not only is the soul revealed, one can view unclouded the future and former karmas,’ pointing out that the Lotus Sutra reveals the depth of compassion and the honesty of a teacher. Along with Makiguchi’s confirmation of faith that was previously mentioned he adds the reason that, ‘On the other hand, as for the present educational system, in which one must resign oneself to persecution based on the jealousy of fellow teachers, if one is not a really self-sacrificing person, one cannot become a kindred soul,’ and it can be understood that the Lotus Sutra played a role as the selection index prescribing the pure and correct character of the person of the same creed.

Next I would like to confirm this with regard to the value theory. In Chapter 4, ‘The Supervisory Method of Education,’ he shows the ‘classes of viewing the purpose of life’ through five opposing positions: 1. Blind Purpose vs. Clear Purpose; 2. Small Purpose vs. Great Purpose; 3. Temporary Power vs. Reality; 4. The appearance of the Buddha to save men vs. the Subject; and 5. The Removal of Benefit vs. the Sowing of Benefit; proceeding to the goal of ‘the dispassionate Supreme and the Greatest,’ teaching that this view of the purpose of life leads one to the most valuable way of life. Due to lack of space I will abbreviate explanations of each item, but the works of Nichiren are related to the consideration of how to reach the absolute from these opposing positions. One of the works quoted here is the passage from *Oto-gozen-goshosoku* (乙御前消息) which runs, ‘It goes without saying that as it is a merit to cure a blind man, so much more is it a merit to cure all the blind people of Japan’ and shows that we recognize the purpose of the lower scale of concepts comprehensively within the purpose of the higher scale of concepts. The basis for this is in *Shimoyama-goshosoku* (下山御消息), in which it is written, ‘Therefore master Dengyo said (omission) and said: “when the sun comes up, the stars hide; and we know our clumsiness by seeing skill.”’ In this passage the necessity of superior and inferior is taught, and this is said to be the ‘principle of the means of evaluation.’ Here we can confirm that he recognizes the similarity of his thought and that of Nichiren, and we can see that Nichiren’s works played an important role in adding theory to Makiguchi’s ideology.
Finally, I would like to mention the relationship Makiguchi perceives between Buddha, the Lotus Sutra and Nichiren. Makiguchi writes as follows.

"Nichiren appeared in Japan in the period of the last law just as the Lotus Sutra predicted, if its relation to life was not proven by each phrase and expression as unveiled in his life, the entire Lotus Sutra would be just a novel with a bold and splendid plot, and would be merely a work for literary appreciation." He also writes that;

"Equally, although the way of The Lotus Sutra is the greatest and most unsurpassable way of life, it is an oriental way of life known as the bright truth, which flourished during the eight years of Syakamuni's life in which he developed his precepts and the two thousand years following his decease which are known as the periods of the righteous law and of the imitative law, while St. Nichiren's Buddhism teaches the Japanese or global way of life known as the great truth (大白法), which became popular in the ten thousand years of the period of the last law. But the value of relationship of all living things to life is as that of the moon to the sun, or of the great to the greatest."

Introducing here the narrative viewpoint, we can understand by reading the above passage that The Lotus Sutra took on meaning to Makiguchi as a way of life because Nichiren's words brought it to the level of everyday life, and furthermore, in comparing The The Lotus Sutra and Nichiren's works, Makiguchi attaches greater importance to the words of Nichiren. From this we can see that the narrative which provided the standard of behavior for Makiguchi was that of Nichiren's works, and it can be understood that he deepened his faith in The Lotus Sutra through the ideology of Nichiren.

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