

Tsunesaburo Makiguchi's Theory of the State

by Koichi Miyata

1. Introduction

Jinsei Chirigaku [Geography of Human Life] was published in December 1903, immediately before the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War, and it lays out Tsunesaburo Makiguchi's observations on the state and war in the most organized manner of all his writings on the subject. To do justice to his theory of the state, this work must be consulted as the primary resource supplemented by statements on the subject found in his other works. Makiguchi's thinking can be easily misunderstood if, in addition, due consideration is not given to the contextual relevance of the Russo-Japanese War, a crossroads determining whether Japan would become another Asian colony or transform itself into an imperialist state rivaling the West.

Makiguchi characteristically shaped his thoughts through carefully observing social indicators. His proposals tend toward the complex in his analysis and mapping of practical realities with future possibilities. To attempt an appropriation or abstraction of his ideas from their contextual framework would serve only to distort his true aims. The same is true when examining his views on the state and war.

The period in which Makiguchi lived spans the Meiji Restoration to the Second World War. The modern-state passion for imperial expansion was at its height, with Western states vying intensely for hegemony over the world. With this as a backdrop, the sovereign state struggled to secure for itself an acknowledged place in the world and for its people a tolerable living standard.

Makiguchi emphasized that the people's right to liberty, life and property could not be secured without securing the independence of the state. In an expansionist period, the role of the state was significant:

We owe it entirely to our nation that we are able to enjoy peaceful and secure living conditions through defense from the

aggression of great powers externally, and through respect for our individual freedom and protection of our lives and property domestically. It makes it clear that as much as narrow-minded nationalism should be avoided, the other extreme – an empty, hypocritical cosmopolitanism – must not be adopted. (Geography 1: 28)

He described the succession of Asian countries colonized by the West and the consequential loss of pride in Asian traditions of history and culture:

India, already a great nation with a population of 200 million whose culture cast an enlightening light on the rest of the world 3,000 years ago, is now under the reign of Britain with a mere 38 million. East Asian and South Asian countries of various sizes, such as Burma and Vietnam, maintained dignified independence until recently but have been ruined. China, Korea and Thailand remain sovereign states only nominally, and they, too, are on a downfall. (Geography 2: 96)

In light of world trends, Makiguchi pointed out that Japan as well faced colonization:

Our country is surrounded by enemies on all sides. It is nothing short of a miracle that Japan narrowly escaped colonization after opening its door to the rest of the world. (Geography 2: 97)

The unequal international treaties forced on the military government of the Tokugawa shogunate – in no small part influenced by the unexcelled military show of power by Western nations – immunized foreign residents, in the name of extraterritoriality, from prosecution under Japanese civil law and deprived Japan of the autonomy to regulate customs, a tool for protecting and developing domestic industry.

The Meiji government, established after the Tokugawas were overthrown, set out to emulate the West by increasing national wealth and military force. It was a means of safeguarding Japan's independence from the Western threat of colonization. Japan did not abolish extraterritorial rights granted to foreign powers until 1894, just prior to the Sino-Japanese War, or restore rights to levy duties until 1911, the threshold of the First World War.

Such were the circumstances under which Makiguchi thought over the state and war, and wrote *Geography of Human Life*. He first outlines his thoughts on the evolution of civilization and its historical processes leading to contemporary world affairs. While he was inclined to stress the role of the state in the climate of imperial expansionism, he also explored alternative roles the state could play in post-imperialistic times.

2. The Theory of Evolution As the Basis of Thinking

In *Geography of Human Life*, Makiguchi discusses civilization with the theory of evolution as his frame of reference.

The competition for survival is one principle that permeates all life forms, and causes natural selection and evolution. This is attested by the fact that all organisms produce offspring in excess of their own number and at an exponential rate to perpetuate their existence. (*Geography 5: 173*)

He draws from not only the then fashionable Darwinian struggle for existence but also Spencerian social evolution, in which competition spurred evolutionary progress.

The origin and development of society and the advancement of all its elements are determined by the degree of competition for survival taking place within that society. Island countries appear to be backward, still preserving ancient creatures, manners, customs, rituals and tradition no longer extant on continents. Cities are culturally far ahead of the country [of Japan]. Western nations are well developed in contrast to the present rates of development at which Japan and other Oriental nations still remain. All of this can be explained by the intensity of competition. This shows that there is progress where there is tough competition, and natural or artificial hindrance of free competition leads to stagnation, inactivity and retrogression. (*Geography 5: 187*)

Having won the competition with other species for existence, humankind faced increasing competition within its own. Further, the locus of competitive activity was continuing to shift with the passage of time and population growth of society, from among individuals and families to tribes and cultures and now to states.

Makiguchi, however, did not extend an unconditional welcome to the apparent progress of civilization. Illuminating the dark, savage side of it, he warned that this progressive trend had brought about colonialism.

Modern civilization has extended the stage of humanity's struggle for existence to every corner of the world. The two major kinds of motive power, steam and electricity, have made Earth smaller in distance and time, making it one world. What used to be small-scale struggles among tribes has now escalated to large-scale international competition. At this stage, all countries and races are vying with each other, seeking every opportunity to conquer one another, and will resort without hesitation to violent, brutal means. This is the nature of imperialism. (Geography 1: 27)

While Makiguchi admitted competition influenced society, he refused to regard it as the exclusive principle that ruled it. He sought a transition from the principle of competition to that of coexistence as the final stage of social progress.

3. The Four Processes Leading to a Global Sense of Coexistence

As civilization progressed by way of its struggle for existence, effecting a shift in the locus of competition, progressive modes of competition also became apparent to Makiguchi. He identified four stages of competition: militaristic, political, economic and, finally, humanitarian. Although the transition from one mode to the next occurred gradually, all four modes were simultaneously present within the events of civilizational progress.

a. The mode of militaristic competition

As weapons used for human survival became more sophisticated, militaristic competition grew in intensity, brutality and magnitude, according to Makiguchi. He maintained that war, inseparable from international politics, could not be wholly settled by an aggressor's military might. Gains by armed triumph were extremely limited, and losses were far greater.

As times change, nations of the world will no longer leave final settlement of war to belligerents or tolerate a victor's endless

demands on a defeated nation. If one belligerent wins a total victory in war, its gains can never compensate its losses in the end. (Geography 5: 178)

It is quite possible that Makiguchi had in mind the tripartite intervention of Russia, Germany and France that pressured Japan to relinquish the Liaodong Peninsula secured in 1895 from China after the Sino-Japanese war. By international political pressure Japan lost a territory which it had gained by military force.

As competing aggressors developed newer and more effective weapons, achieving an ultimate victory by force became increasingly difficult:

Prolonged war affects every aspect of the nation. National strength is inevitably exhausted in the end. Eventually the public recognizes that what is lost through war cannot be easily compensated by what is gained through war. (Geography 5: 178)

The above observation predicted the real outcome of the Russo-Japanese War. He stressed that military action would result in great losses to the state and its people from an economic standpoint.

Makiguchi repeatedly pointed out that as the public becomes aware of their economic losses brought about by war, the nation grows in reluctance to use force as a means of winning competition.

Nations now avoid and refrain from mobilizing their troops readily. They seek to win by peaceful armaments before attempting to defeat their enemy by force of arms. Thus who wins a war is determined by the degree of armaments rather than the result of actual combat today. (Geography 5: 179)

b. The mode of political competition

Military action was no longer effective in attaining a national objective. With that realization, modern states began pursuit of their interests by means of diplomacy in the arena of international politics.

In this era, a state will seek victory by placing shrewd diplomats at strategic points, looking for and taking advantage of every minute fault in another nation with which to intimidate it, on one hand, and coax it with flattery and money, on the other –

bribing officials close to the sovereign, luring people with immediate petty profits to sway the sovereign, closing clandestine treaties to avoid other states' interference, utilizing what appears to be a privately owned firm to disturb another state's domestic affairs, expanding territory by setting up the terms of another nation's surrender, etc. It was through this particular mode of competition that Great Britain augmented its territory overseas; and other European nations, in East and South Asia. (Geography 5: 180)

The Western powers were effective in manipulating diplomatic relations to expand their colonies. After the Sino-Japan war, Russia without much resort to military force leased the Liadong Peninsula, which China had re-obtained from Japan through tripartite intervention. At the same time, Germany leased from Japan the opposite side of the Thao Zhou Bay. This is an example of results based on diplomacy backed by military force.

c. The mode of economic competition

When territorial expansion through political negotiation no longer yielded economic advantage, Makiguchi pointed out, political competition shifted to economic competition.

Nations will realize eventually that expansion of territory is not in the end worthwhile because it is no longer crucial to their survival unless accompanied by real profit. It also requires enormous resources to assimilate the people of the newly acquired territories. Knowing that [expansionist policies] not only invite other nations' suspicion and criticism but the profit return is small, they will seek tangible gains rather than fight for prestige and jeopardize their survival. (Geography 5: 180)

Owning colonies presented a huge economic burden to the suzerain, what with the costs of maintaining armed forces to suppress rebellion and the extension of governance. Competing for colonies as the means of acquiring resources and markets was losing its attractiveness.

Where political methods created a peaceable competition of armaments, economic competition created a peaceful war for commercial and industrial power. According to Makiguchi, a military

war differed from an economic war in that its range of activity had a designated beginning and ending time. An economic war, on the other hand, was perpetual and seamlessly integrated into daily living. The miseries of the former were readily apparent, but the consequences of the latter were opaquely tragic.

Makiguchi drew attention to the fact that in the absence of an international system to mediate economic competition, nations were vulnerable to natural selection.

[Economic competition] is severely atrocious in the end. In military war, peace can be restored by negotiation of limits to the duration of the war. Yet economic war cannot be curtailed so easily. While mediation by a third party is an option in military war, economic war is entirely left to run its own course. (Geography 5: 181)

Economic struggle solely ruled by the principle of competition tended to widen the gap between rich and poor, creating problems that were more serious than war. In a way, Makiguchi foresaw the North-South problem the world economy continues to face today. The exports of developing countries integrating into the international market were those of production – mainly agricultural products, industrial raw materials and energy source materials – which placed them at a disadvantage vis-à-vis industrialized countries. Industrialization in developing countries was pursued through foreign loans. The sophistication of production technology was another advantage of developed countries – leaving only debt on the developing countries. As pointed out by many economists, it is difficult for developing countries to overcome the strains of these disadvantages without international help. This fact demonstrates Makiguchi's claim – that economic competition in some cases could bring longer sufferings to more people than militaristic competition – to be well-grounded.

Concerning the shift in national objective from military victory to economic victory, Makiguchi stated:

In the past, economic power was developed for the purpose of winning military competition. Today armaments are merely one of the elements to ensure victory in economic competition. Arms were the end and economy was the means of procurement. Now armaments are a means to economic power. The final outcome

used to be determined by military competition. At present economic strength decides who wins the battle. (Geography 5: 181)

d. The mode of humanitarian competition

Makiguchi asserted that international competition toward humanitarian aims would be possible if the final mode of struggle among individuals were humanitarian competition.

The humanitarian mode of competition cannot be found in today's world. But even our contemporaries of advanced, loftier thought are aware that an economic victor is not necessarily the ultimate victor in the struggle for survival. It is therefore easy to imagine that an era of humanitarian competition will follow that of economic competition. (Geography 5: 182)

Humanitarian competition, explained Makiguchi, is toward the expansion of spiritual influence by the "forces" of culture and morality:

It is to naturally inspire others by invisible force instead of the conventional military or political expansion of territory to dominate as many people as possible or economic expansion to achieve the effects of military and political power. In humanitarian competition, invisible force is used to naturally influence and inspire respect in others, in place of the resort to subjugation by authority. This is a method of compassion and reason that attracts and draws others by the power of virtue, contrary to selfish territorial expansion and conquest. It is in accordance with humanitarianism. (Geography 5: 183)

By extension, the other modes of competition would be influenced by it. To Makiguchi's view, the socially marginalized were to be protected and to benefit from the reining in of inhumane competition. Humanitarian competition could effect the transition from an ethos of competition to an ethos of cooperation and coexistence.

There are no simple humanitarian methods. They include any activity within the framework of humanitarianism, be it political, military or economic. Essentially the aim must be to safeguard and improve both one's own life and others' instead of the

fulfillment of self-interests alone. In other words, humanitarian methods benefit both oneself and others, and inspire the conscience to choose cooperative life. (Geography 5: 183)

4. The Reality: A World Centered on Economic War

Makiguchi saw at present that economic competition was the primary mode of interaction among nations and that all other modes of competition were present only to a much lesser degree.

From my view of the nature of competition taking place in these times internationally, nations seem to adopt different modes according to the situation, that is, the extent of their ability to survive. Russia still seeks to expand its territory by the ancient way of political power. Other western countries are pursuing real profit through economic means. And there are early signs of the humanitarian method being employed by the United States. In essence, today is an era of economic competition. Thus all powers at the disposal of nations are concentrated on economic growth, leaving no room for other methods. It is national self-interest that determines international alliances and rifts. (Geography 5: 184)

Moreover, the concentration of a nation's activity in specific areas of economic competition, including the exportation of labor and goods and foreign capital investment, depended on the level of its domestic stability and wealth.

Some nations participate in economic competition primarily focused on labor, a primitive kind of economic power, because of their stage of national development. Japan and China, for example, send laborers overseas to earn menial wages. Great Britain and the United States increase their wealth by exporting goods, taking advantage of their natural resources, primarily iron and fuel, and their competitive advantage in industry. Germany and France choose to invest capital in foreign countries; although exporting goods would be more competitively profitable, their circumstances do not allow it. (Geography 5: 185)

The predominance of economic competition outpaced if not rivaled political and military ventures to expand national territories. Makiguchi

maintained that Russia's continuing expansion policy to control Asian trading ports, intrinsically valuable in the race for economic advantage, could destabilize the tentative peace of the late 1890s. Although he saw the possibility of humanitarian competition arising in a post-imperialism era, he did not discount the imperialism-era momentum of economic competition carrying over. With the current trends, he predicted armed conflict between Japan and Russia to be inevitable and turned his attention to outlining the role of the state.

5. Community, Nation and the World

The role of the state begins to take shape in Makiguchi's outline with the identity of the individual in that state. For him it was a given that human beings cannot exist apart from social being. The interactions of social being take place within three spheres of an individual's existence: the community, the nation and the world.

We realize that we are part of a few hundred to several thousand members of our local communities, of 50 million citizens of our nation, and 1.5 billion people of the world. We are raised in the cradle of our communities and live in the Empire of Japan – where we make our home, associate, compete, make peace and conflict with neighboring nations as with the neighbors next door. With this awareness we can correctly ascertain genuine, solid footing and confirm our true duties. (Geography 1: 28)

Among the three social areas of individual identity – as a member of a community, a nation and the world – Makiguchi placed greatest importance on membership within the nation, locating one's home in the nation of Japan as distinct from the home of neighboring nations. His emphasis on the citizen within and the role of the state was closely linked to what he perceived as the current stage of development in humanity's social life. His emphasis also was a reflection of the preoccupation of the times with imperialism. Next let us look at the way he viewed the state.

6. The Four Duties of the State

Makiguchi believed that the state's activities fell under four categories: (1) activities to safeguard against domestic troubles, such

as the prevention of civil war (2) activities to safeguard from external troubles, such as armed and diplomatic conflicts, to maintain national independence (3) activities related to citizens' rights and freedoms, such as crime prevention, and (4) activities to promote the nation's well-being, such as the establishment of stable economic systems. The level of civilization was indicated by which category received. After the Seinan War (Satsuma Rebellion) of 1877, the first category became almost irrelevant in Japan. But in an imperialistic era, the second was critical.

We have entered an era of aggressive imperialism where nations of their own volition put all their energies at every opportunity into overpowering and dominating others to achieve genuine independence. In such times, the first and foremost duty of the state is to solidify its status with its neighbors. For that purpose, military power as well as keen diplomatic maneuvering is essential. Since no mediating authority has been established internationally, there is no option other than a military one to protect one's territory.... The majority of tax revenues is spent on this purpose. This cannot be avoided in the least when the state's existence and prosperity are at stake. These activities to ward off external attacks are an absolute prerequisite for the state to fulfill other duties. (Geography 5: 15)

This was the sense of crisis Makiguchi perceived in the imperialistic era. Insuring the state's presence served as the basis from which the third and fourth categories of activities could proceed. The second category was therefore the most crucial for the time being in his view.

There were two kinds of functions modern states had initiated to secure the rights and freedom of its citizens: protection of the individual's rights and freedom against interference (or infringement) by other individuals, as in crime prevention; protection of the individual's rights and inviolability against infringement by the government, as in religious freedom, and the guarantee of their political rights, as in the right to vote. The latter was of particular importance to Makiguchi, who considered the Meiji Constitution of 1889 to offer such guarantees:

The latter, finally established by the recent promulgation of the Constitution, primarily consists of the acknowledgement of

freedom of conscience, thought, speech, religion and private association for political, religious or educational purposes. (Geography 5: 15)

Compared to the present Constitution of Japan, the Meiji Constitution did not provide sufficiently for the protection of citizens' rights. It is significant, however, that Makiguchi asserted those freedoms had not been granted until the Meiji Constitution: There was no freedom of occupation, residence or religion under the Tokugawa regime.

Activities under the fourth category, to promote the stability of the national infrastructure, had been adopted recently by European nations. The most advanced nation, in Makiguchi's view, would place highest emphasis on these activities, the objective being essentially the improvement of living standards as integral to the continuation and prosperity of the state. With the modes of competition in use changing rapidly, the existence of the state could not be secured by armed force alone. Without well-rounded and well-coordinated development in all social activities, the prosperity and well-being of society could not be achieved. The Japanese state therefore sought to intervene – even contravene – in an attempt to regulate and thereby promote social development.

The progress of civilization could be measured by the level of awareness that a thriving and content society was more critical to the state's survival than military power. Makiguchi highly valued the state's demonstration of commitment to this fourth category of activities. He further classified them into five areas of intervention:

1. Economic activities to establish an economic infrastructure, develop transportation and communication systems, undertake public enterprises and assure workers' welfare
2. Educational activities to develop and improve public education
3. Moral activities to maintain civil conduct and control gambling
4. Entertainment activities to curtail indecency
5. Religious activities to restrict any religion that "causes substantial mental and physical damage to the public by

taking advantage of ignorance and superstition and employing various material means” (Geography 5: 19)

It is apparent that Makiguchi focused on the role of the state in commitment and service to its citizens’ safety, freedom and happiness.

Equally apparent is the fact that Geography of Human Life reflected the nation-oriented concerns of imperialism that included a foreboding sense of an imminent conflict with Russia. Accordingly, he emphasized the role of the state to ward off external threat as a first priority in guaranteeing its people’s security.

It must be noted here that Makiguchi also argued the prioritization of state duties vis-à-vis the activity sectors he enumerated shifted with the changing times and circumstances. This argument represents the necessary contextual backdrop for his perspective on the relationship between the state and its people.

7. The Evolution of the State’s Objective: From National Citizens to World Citizens

(a) Three progressive stages

Makiguchi examined the evolution of the state’s recognition of its duties and discovered three stages through which the state arrived at its national goals and agenda.

At the first stage, the state finds itself in the process of constructing its identity through unifying internally and fortifying itself externally. The state’s objective was to establish national authority, and its activities corresponded to the first and second modes enumerated above.

The second stage represented the process by which the state became politically stable, already having achieved a degree of recognized authority within its boundaries and autonomy without. At this juncture, the nation has grown accustomed to public order.

The state began to allow its citizens to exercise freedom by affording protection of the individual in civil disputes and even from the state’s infringement to a certain degree. The state’s activities corresponded to the third mode enumerated in the above section. About individual freedom, Makiguchi commented:

[The state] now not only safeguards freedom of individuals against infringement by other individuals but also regards, to

some extent, the individual as sacred and inviolable against infringement by the state itself, which is considered the state's objective in this period. (Geography 5: 26)

To declare the individual "sacred and inviolable" in the era under the Meiji Constitution, which granted such attributes solely to the emperor, suggests Makiguchi's empathy with democracy. Makiguchi wrote in the third volume of his *System of Value-creating Pedagogy* that when he had written *Geography of Human Life*, he had an association with Heimin-sha [The Association of the Common People], an organization of socialists who supported democracy, socialism and pacifism. Makiguchi said that he struggled jointly for the universal suffrage movement (Pedagogy 3: 30).

An era of wealth and foreign trading resulted in this third stage. The state had compelling interest then to ensure its level of prosperity by expanding its sphere of economic influence to the rest of the world. To do so, the state sought more actively to exercise its national authority at home as well. Domestic policy to both regulate and encourage growth of the social infrastructure was viewed by the state as the basis of fortifying its authority and so its well-being. This corresponded with the fourth mode of the state's activities enumerated above.

Japan's economic prowess in the international arena directly related to its ability to regulate all business activities that crossed its borders. To achieve a competitive edge, the state protected domestic businesses by levying duties on imported goods, creating a bureaucracy to administrate customs, and giving preferential treatment to domestic over foreign businesses. By the late Meiji era, Japan had yet to acquire full autonomy to regulate its own customs, and its economic progress still lagged far behind other modern states.

Makiguchi maintained there existed a parallel between the developmental stage of the state and the evolution of what the people wanted. The state could not exist apart from the nation, and so the state had an obligation to work toward the realization of the individual's well-being. The spiritual development of the nation thus reflected on the progress of the state and its objectives.

(b) Exploring a shift in the state's objective: from imperialism to humanitarianism

Makiguchi believed Japan to be at the third stage of development, characterized by the pursuit of capital and trade gains. It was an imperialistic time, typified by the state's objective to shape and solidify its national identity and character.

He posed the following question: Is imperialism truly the ultimate objective of the state?

According to his findings, imperialism was mere egotism manifested on a national level, an equivalent to the self-centered stage of psychological development in an individual. He wrote: "This cannot fulfill the ideals of those who are genuinely advanced and have realized the true meaning of life" (Geography 5: 28). Egotism could not possibly serve as the ultimate ideal of the spiritually evolved.

Experts feared that the increasing focus of the Western powers on winning economic and military objectives could lead to tragically far-reaching consequences. Seeing this as a growing concern for humanity, Makiguchi sought alternatives to imperialism as the state's end.

He considered the German philosopher G. W. F. Hegel's conceptualization: "The objective of the state lies in morality." And English philosopher Bernard Bosanquet's conceptualization: "The ultimate objective of society and the state is identical with that of the individual; namely to realize a life of supreme value" (The Philosophical Theory Of The State). Referring also to the writing of American educator and political scientist John William Burgess (1844–1931), Makiguchi maintained that the ultimate objective of the state was the perfection of humanitarianism and humanity.

Burgess asserted that the state's goal was not only to advance its people's civilization but also to enhance world civilization and the ideals of humanity. Makiguchi concurred with the assertion, in that it corresponded to his belief that the world citizen should be the final destination in the development of the state.

8. Emphasis on a Sense of Community in 'The System of Value-Creating Pedagogy'

The System of Value-Creating Pedagogy was published in 1930, almost 30 years after Geography of Human Life. Although he did not address the role of the state in the later work, the thinking was

consistent with his earlier work. Makiguchi concluded in *Geography of Human Life* that imperialism exemplified state egotism in its relations with other states, and argued for a conversion to a cooperative framework. In *The System of Value-Creating Pedagogy*, he argued that a cooperative system of social activity enhanced society and the individual, and that cultivating this social awareness would create a sense of community that underlay morality.

The struggle for existence is one aspect of life; community life, the other. The same person behaves brutally in atrocious competitive life on one hand and exhibits compassion in community life on the other. It is quite puzzling that both aspects occur simultaneously in the individual's life as well as in society. Yet competitive life arises only from individual consciousness, while community life originates in social awareness. It is futile to encourage moral life in an individual whose mentality is preoccupied with his or her own existence. It is essential to foster social awareness to promote moral life based on a sense of cooperation and harmony. (Pedagogy 1: 216)

If the majority of the state's citizens was interested only in competitive living, both the stability of social order and cooperative relations with other states would be difficult to achieve. Makiguchi called for moral education grounded in social awareness.

Moral education aims at guiding those who are living inferior lifestyles, that is, conscious only of competition for survival, toward a loftier existence, that is, conscious of community life. It requires the development of social awareness, the instruction and discipline to enable them to examine and compare various ways of living. Social life at school provides an excellent environment for this. (Pedagogy 1: 217)

To engage in community life required a developed social awareness and rational behavior:

The Japanese people appear to be emotional, highly inclined to avoid logical thinking. It is a weak point that the entire nation has to rectify if it is to lead a whole social life, and particularly if it is to be in harmony with the nations of the world. Instead, they are under the self-delusion that it is rather their strength, thus perpetuating the weakness. From an objective standpoint, it is

regrettable that this tendency causes unnecessary emotional conflict in a peaceful, cooperative environment, making community life troubling, uncomfortable and dismal – a hindrance to everyone’s productivity. (Pedagogy 1: 201–02)

Makiguchi’s emphasis on community life based on social awareness cannot be construed to indicate a denial or sacrifice of private life. By stark contrast, as economically depressed Japan entered the Showa era in 1926, the military gradually took control of government, and selfless devotion to the nation was forced on the public through a number of instituted measures. Makiguchi firmly denounced the policy-driven sacrifice of private life as senseless and hypocritical.

Values disregarding loss and gain are meaningless. They are theoretical and cannot be put into practice. Values of impractical design or devoid of the realities of life are merely an empty concept. One can realize the ideal of selfless devotion to the nation only once in a lifetime. It is senseless to impose this morality of extraordinary nature on the home front. (“The Criteria of Values”)

Here Makiguchi emphasized that people struggling to survive and raise offspring could not sacrifice their life for the nation. Therefore, he concluded that to demand selfless devotion to the nation was impossible, senseless, and hypocritical.

Such open criticism angered the security police, and the Soka Kyoiku Gakkai’s publication *Kachi Sozo* was shut down for carrying it. Police measures of suppressing speech and press did not deter Makiguchi from criticizing the war-mongering state that took over all private and public life for the war cause. Makiguchi classified good into minor good, medium good and great good. The first is the selfish life of minor good and minor evil that is based on a near-sighted worldview. The second is the anti-individualistic life of medium good and great evil that is based on a far-sighted worldview. The third is the life of great good and no evil that is based on a worldview in which all things are perceived as they are (Complete Works 10: 135).

Makiguchi denounced the militarist leaders as leading lives of medium good and great evil. He criticized a life seeking medium good and great evil as follows:

Striving for minor good is unacceptable to the brave-hearted who do not settle for minor good and minor evil. There are those in current leadership who are respected by the public. Upon close examination, however, their ignoble nature is revealed despite the magnificent façade. For this reason the new Konoe administration is not able to fully live up to its ideals. It cannot transcend its own self-serving individualism under the veneer of conducting greater good. Those who are actively engaged in public programs today, including political parties and groups, educational circles, economic organizations, and charity organizations, who profess to serve the public interest are actually involved in unspeakably corrupt behavior behind closed doors.... Even educators and religionists are unaware of their own hypocrisy and self-righteous egotism as they confine their interests narrowly to their own schools, temples or circles. They are showered with abundant respect from the public for advocating selfless devotion to the great good, yet they are poisoning society with what is ultimately great evil. (“The Significance and Possibilities of the New Administration’s Ideal, the Life in Pursuit of Greater Good”)

Makiguchi was not only critical of the militarist government but also negative toward the Sino-Japanese War and the Pacific War. His views were clearly documented in the Special Higher Police interrogations after his arrest under the Public Security Preservation Law of 1925 for blasphemy of the Emperor and the Ise Grand Shrine. Based on his religious belief, he categorically condemned the state’s glorification of the war as a sacred battle for the creation of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. He was quoted in the document as saying: “I believe that the China Incident and the Greater East Asia War was caused by Japan’s slander of the True Law” (201). He viewed these crises as disastrous to the public as famine and epidemic disease.

Makiguchi accepted the inevitability of states at war on the survival premise of an imperialistic era, where the independence of the state and the safety, freedom and well-being of its citizens were in jeopardy. He firmly believed, however, that war could be averted, given a conversion from a competitive framework of relations to a cooperative sense of community. To him armed struggle was merely an extension of economic struggle. Thus he found it unacceptable for the state to enter into war and devastate the nation’s economic life.

9. Summary

The earlier part of this essay, based on the *Geography of Human Life*, explains the four types of competition and examines Makiguchi's perspective that the state of his times was at the stage of economic competition – or of imperialism – and that the world eventually must evolve into the stage of humanistic competition. In the latter part of the paper, we see Makiguchi's view of the state in which he claims that the objective of state must move from selfish interest to humanitarian interest. We also demonstrate – based on Makiguchi's *System of Value-Creating Pedagogy* and some of his essays on religion – that his humanistic philosophy was consistent throughout his life and that he was critical of the militarist government before and during World War II. I tried to quote as many primary words of Makiguchi as I could. It would be the author's greatest pleasure to have served in some way to facilitate an accurate understanding of Makiguchi's ideas.

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