When the *Lotus* Went Underground:
The Nichiren Buddhist *Fuju Fuse* Movement & Its Persecution in Early Modern Japan
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Japan’s political leaders in the late 16th century and early 17th century sought to break the independent power of Buddhist temples and subsume them within their new administrative order. This policy particularly threatened the Nichiren sect, whose teaching placed the *Lotus Sūtra* above the authority of worldly rulers. Forced to choose between doctrinal compromise to ensure institutional survival or principled resistance and martyrdom, the sect split, and the hardline *fuju fuse* (“neither receiving nor giving”) faction was outlawed and driven underground. Their story illuminates major shifts in religion-state relations at the start of Japan’s early modern period.

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