

APPENDIX A

Timeline for the Temple Issue in the 1970s

October 12: The dedication ceremony for the Grand Main Temple is held. After the completion of the Grand Main Temple, the Soka Gakkai embarks on “the second chapter of kosen-rufu” in which it engages in the construction of community centers, a broad-based approach to the Daishonin’s Buddhism as a life philosophy, and the development of the Gakkai as a religious corporation. The priesthood misinterprets the Gakkai’s “second chapter” as preparation for its independence. Concerned about possibly fewer future assignments to branch temples as chief priests, many young student priests in particular react negatively to the Gakkai’s emphasis on the construction of community centers.

1972

June: The priesthood’s mismanagement of its property is revealed in a land dispute. The deputy chairperson of the Fujinomiya City council and others file a complaint against Nittatsu and Mr. Ikeda over Taiseiki’s illegal use of a city highway for the construction of the Grand Main Temple. This legal problem raises a concern for the priesthood’s management procedures.

1973

May–July: The priesthood misconstrues the Gakkai’s proposal to establish a Nichiren Shoshu International Center (NSIC) as a step toward control over the priest-

1974

hood. Later, Mr. Ikeda meets with Nittatsu twice to explain the purpose of the NSIC, which is to support overseas members. Nittatsu’s misunderstanding is gradually resolved, and he agrees to the establishment of the NSIC and attends the first International Buddhist League (later renamed SGI) World Peace Conference held in Guam on Jan. 26, 1975.

August: The Gakkai offers to help the priesthood conduct an internal audit on its accounting and property management procedures. The priesthood administration reacts strongly, however, alleging that the Gakkai is attempting to intervene in the priesthood’s finances and internal affairs. Mr. Ikeda’s explanations resolve Nittatsu’s misunderstanding.

April: Masatomo Yamazaki, then chief legal counsel for the Soka Gakkai, receives approval from the head temple administration to sell a large tract of its land to a paper

1975

company owned by Yamazaki. The property is then sold and bought again to inflate its price before the Gakkai purchases it for a memorial park. Yamazaki earns a large personal profit from these real estate transactions.

Members of the Myokankai, a group of priests who were ordained under Nittatsu, start to criticize the Gakkai. Many priests who are active in the Myokankai will later

1976

form the Shoshinkai. With the backing of Nittatsu as their teacher, the Myokankai priests start to enjoy dominance over other factions within the priesthood.

January–March: Soka Gakkai youth division members visit active Myokankai members, refute their criticism of the Gakkai and obtain statements of contrition for their mistreatment of its members.

1977

January 15: Mr. Ikeda gives a speech titled “A Historical View of Buddhism” at the ninth general meeting of the Study Department. In the speech, he comments: “Anyone who sincerely devotes himself to the dissemination of Buddhist teachings and works for the salvation of the common people is qualified to receive offerings or support from the Buddhist community. . . . In general we of the Soka Gakkai who embrace the Gohonzon and chant daimoku are ‘great teachers of the Law.’ In other words, we are the true *shukke* or clergy of today. Lay believers and clergy members are in fact absolutely equal in rank” (April 1977 *Seikyo Times*, pp. 9–11). “We have seen that the temples were originally places where those engaged in the practice of Buddhism could gather together, study the Buddhist teachings, and prepare themselves for the task of disseminating those teachings abroad. . . . In this sense, the community and training centers of the Soka Gakkai are worthy of being called the ‘temple of the present’” (ibid., p. 11). Many priests, outraged by those remarks, start to rebut them in the priesthood’s publications.

Summer: Active anti-Gakkai priests of the Myokankai provide the media with internal information to further attack the Gakkai. Weekly tabloids, such as *Shukan Shincho* and *Shukan Bunshun*, start to publish articles slandering the Gakkai. Yamazaki orchestrates these media attacks behind the scene. Using those tabloids, priests intensify their attack on the Gakkai in their sermons, encouraging Gakkai members to sever their affiliation with the Gakkai and join a temple parish.

September 22: Nittatsu issues a notice to chief priests of branch temples, expressing his “regret” over the publicized schism between the priesthood and the Gakkai. But the priests’ organized movement to entice Gakkai members to leave and join a temple parish continues to increase its momentum. The media attacks on the Gakkai continue as well.

December 4: Mr. Ikeda attends a completion ceremony of Jozen-ji’s main sanctuary in Miyazaki Prefecture. In his speech, he expresses his desire for harmonious unity between the priesthood and laity and pledges to support and protect the priesthood while asking for tolerance on the priesthood’s part. With Mr. Ikeda’s initiative and efforts, the situation starts to improve.

January 2: Nittatsu issues an “Admonition” to urge both the priesthood and laity to advance in harmony. In the same month, however, active anti-Gakkai priests continue to denounce the Soka Gakkai in their monthly sermons.

1978

January 18: Yamazaki sends his document titled “Letter From a Certain Believer” to Nittatsu. In it, Yamazaki alleges that the Gakkai is promoting the concept that its president is the true Buddha and attempting to control the priesthood. The document also offers a step-by-step plan to control the Gakkai with the threat of excommunication, and urges the priesthood to bring the Gakkai into submission within several years. The document is read at a meeting of young priests at the head temple the following day. The document undermines the possibility of reconciliation and incites priests to intensify their attacks on the Gakkai and to urge its members to join a temple parish.

February 9: The chairperson of the Nichiren Shoshu

council, the chiefs of greater parishes and active anti-Gakkai priests meet at the head temple to discuss the possibility of excommunicating the Soka Gakkai. They decide to distribute a questionnaire among the priesthood concerning the subject.

February 12 & 14: Mr. Ikeda meets Nittatsu at the head temple. As a result of their talk, the Gakkai's excommunication is averted, and the topic of the proposed questionnaire is changed to how the priesthood can cooperate with the Gakkai. Active anti-Gakkai priests express opposition to this accord.

March 14: At a nationwide meeting of priests at the head temple, Nittatsu instructs those present to work toward a harmonious relationship with the Gakkai.

March 28: The Nichiren Shoshu council passes a proposed agreement with the Gakkai, and the relationship between the priesthood and laity appears to be restored.

End of March: Yamazaki meets with Nittatsu and gives him a document titled "Future Strategy." In the document, Yamazaki recommends that the priesthood continue to apply pressure on the Gakkai with an expressed threat to excommunicate or disband the lay organization. He also instructs the priesthood to demand that the Gakkai acknowledge what the priesthood asserts are doctrinal deviations. The priesthood's response to the Gakkai henceforward proceeds according to Yamazaki's plan. Yamazaki hints to Soka Gakkai officials that if they appoint him as a mediator, harmony with the temple will be restored. Meanwhile he continues to leak manipulated internal information of the Gakkai to the media. Encouraged by the intense media attack on the Gakkai, many priests begin to vehemently criticize it in their monthly sermons.

May 8: The Gakkai appoints Yamazaki as a mediator with the priesthood.

June 30: As demanded by the priesthood, the Gakkai publishes an acknowledgement of its so-called doctrinal deviations in the *Seikyo Shimbun*. The article, titled “Basic Questions of Study,” cautions Gakkai members on the usage of various Buddhist terms and expressions. The issues raised in this article strongly suggest the priesthood’s frustration and insecurity toward a growing lay Buddhist movement. Taking advantage of this article, many priests, in their sermons and other temple activities, continue to threaten and entice Gakkai members to leave the organization and join a temple parish.

August 26: The first Nichiren Shoshu temple members’ kick-off meeting is held at Taiseki-ji with approximately six thousand temple members attending. At the meeting, the participants decide to promote a petition seeking Mr. Ikeda’s dismissal from the position of chief lay representative, a campaign to demand reimbursement of the financial contributions they had made while Gakkai members, as well as a movement to encourage Gakkai members to quit the Gakkai and directly join a temple parish.

September: Anti-Gakkai priests start to accuse the Gakkai of committing slander by having eight wooden Gohonzon made. Although these wooden Gohonzon are produced with Nittatsu’s approval, many priests use the event as a pretext to further attack the Gakkai. To appease these priests, the Gakkai returns seven of the wooden Gohonzon to the head temple. With Nittatsu’s approval, one wooden Gohonzon, produced from a Gohonzon transcribed for the Soka Gakkai Headquarters in 1951 by Nissho, the sixty-

fourth high priest, remains enshrined at the Soka Gakkai Headquarters.

September 25: Yamazaki delivers two documents to Nitatsu. One is titled “On the Current Circumstances,” and another “Regarding the Overseas Membership.” In the first, Yamazaki instructs the priesthood to continue its campaign to disparage the Gakkai and bring its members to temple parishes. In the same document, he recommends that the priesthood administration exclude the Hayase and Abe family factions from key positions within the priesthood. In “Regarding the Overseas Membership,” Yamazaki urges the priesthood administration to establish an overseas bureau to promote its campaign to increase temple parish members outside Japan as well.

November 7: A Soka Gakkai leaders meeting is held at Taiseki-ji. Hiroshi Hojo, then general director, states: “In this vein, we, the Soka Gakkai, frankly admit the next two points: 1) The fundamental principles that the Soka Gakkai must follow through as the lay organization of Nichiren Shoshu were somehow disregarded during the last several years in its orientation, in its direction of advance and in its application of Nichiren Daishonin’s teachings. 2) The attitude the Soka Gakkai took toward Nichiren Shoshu last year was out of bounds. We, executives of the Soka Gakkai, deeply apologize for these two points” (February 5, 1979, *World Tribune*). At the same meeting, Takehisa Tsuji, then vice president, states: “As far as the wooden Gohonzons that the Soka Gakkai carelessly allowed to be inscribed, we have already dedicated them all to the Treasure House of the head temple based on the guidance we received from the high priest” (ibid.). The manuscripts of the Gakkai officials’ speeches for this meeting have been checked in advance by

the priesthood. According to Yamazaki's instruction, the priesthood insists upon inserting the word "carelessly" into Tsuji's statement regarding the so-called wooden Gohonzon incident. A nationwide meeting of priests is held after the Gakkai leaders meeting, after which Nittatsu makes a statement prohibiting priests from further attacking the Gakkai. Active anti-Gakkai priests, however, continue their slander toward the Gakkai and leak a variety of internal information to the tabloid media.

November 14: The priesthood forms its overseas bureau, following Yamazaki's instructions.

January 28: The second Nichiren Shoshu temple members general meeting is held at Taiseki-ji. Active anti-Gakkai priests continue their harsh criticism of the Gakkai. At this meeting, Nittatsu, in a tone rather critical of the Gakkai, states: "The priests have pointed out the Gakkai's errors and united here with you temple members in order to protect Nichiren Shoshu. Their sincere intent is to widely spread the fundamental spirit of Nichiren Shoshu. I ask that you recognize their profound sincerity. Some priests, however, still remain nonchalant although erroneous teachings have been propagated. Yet so long as they are priests of Nichiren Shoshu, I will protect them magnanimously. I am protecting them as priests of Nichiren Shoshu. I ask for your understanding in this regard. I also ask that you please refute erroneous teachings to the best of your ability . . ." (*Complete Works of High Priest Nittatsu*, vol. 5, part II, pp. 614-15).

March 6: Genjiro Fukushima, then Soka Gakkai vice president, openly criticizes the priesthood at the Omuta Community Center in Fukuoka Prefecture. In his speech,

Fukushima comments: “When President Ikeda goes to the head temple, Gakkai members eagerly greet him, calling him ‘Sensei.’ But they do not go near the high priest. Nor do they yearn to see him. Even if the high priest walks by, they simply wonder, who is that old man? So priests are jealous and accuse us of treating the president as the true Buddha...” The priesthood is outraged by Fukushima’s speech, which has effectively nullified the Gakkai’s efforts for reconciliation thus far. (Fukushima later quits the Gakkai and becomes a vehement anti-Gakkai spokesperson, eventually lending support to Nikken.)

March 12: The Nichiren Shoshu Administrative Office submits a letter of inquiry to the Gakkai regarding Fukushima’s comments.

March 13: On behalf of Nittatsu, Taiseki-ji’s Internal Affairs Department submits a letter of inquiry to the Gakkai regarding Fukushima’s comments.

March 31: The Hokkeko Federation (an association of temple parishioners) holds an emergency board of directors meeting and passes a resolution requesting Mr. Ikeda’s resignation from the position of chief lay representative.

April 2: Taiseki-ji’s Internal Affairs Department, dissatisfied with the Gakkai’s response to its initial inquiry, sends another letter of inquiry regarding Fukushima’s statements and other matters.

April 6: Mr. Ikeda meets with Nittatsu in hope of restoring harmony. At the meeting, Mr. Ikeda communicates his decision to resign from the position of chief lay representative.

April 8: The Soka Gakkai publishes an apology in the *Seikyo Shimbun* for Fukushima’s statements under the name of Hiroshi Hojo, then the general director.

April 24: To resolve the conflict and prevent Gakkai

members from being subjected to further abuse from the priesthood, Mr. Ikeda announces his resignation from the position of Soka Gakkai president at a prefecture leaders meeting. He becomes honorary Soka Gakkai president, and Hiroshi Hojo becomes the fourth Soka Gakkai president. The priesthood asks the Gakkai to no longer allow Mr. Ikeda to attend meetings and to refrain from covering his activities in its daily newspaper, the *Seikyo Shimbun*.

April 26: Mr. Ikeda resigns from the position of chief lay representative of Nichiren Shoshu. Nittatsu appoints him honorary chief lay representative.

May 3: The fortieth Soka Gakkai Headquarters general meeting is held at Soka University in Tokyo. At this meeting, Nittatsu states: “For the last few years, truly regrettable incidents have continued and, to my sadness, have caused confusion. . . . In our Nichiren Shoshu, as you are aware, there are believers who belong to the Hokkeko and other temple groups, as well as to the Soka Gakkai. I ask that all of them be on good terms with one another as believers. Let bygones be bygones. Please cooperate in unity for the development of the priesthood as well as for kosen-rufu” (*Complete Works of High Priest Nittatsu*, vol. 5, part II, pp. 620–21). The closure of the conflict frustrates anti-Gakkai priests, who later become critical of Nittatsu and continue to slander the Gakkai.

May 14: Nittatsu appoints Yamazaki as a lay representative of Nichiren Shoshu along with Soka Gakkai President Hiroshi Hojo, General Director Kazuya Morita, Vice President Satoru Izumi, Vice President Takehisa Tsuji and Vice President Einosuke Akiya. Yamazaki’s appointment indicates Nittatsu’s great trust in him.

July 22: Nittatsu dies. Shin’no Abe, then general administrator, claims to have received the transmission of the office of high priest from Nittatsu.

August 6: Shin’no Abe renames himself Nikken and becomes the sixty-seventh high priest.

August–September: Yamazaki meets with Nikken several times and recommends that the priesthood continue to undermine the Gakkai membership. Later that September, however, Nikken rejects Yamazaki, calling him a liar. (On January 5, 1991, at the outset of the most recent temple issue, Nikken delivers his apology to Yamazaki for having called him a liar and establishes an alliance with him to attack the Gakkai.)

November: Yamazaki publishes an article in a weekly tabloid, questioning Nikken’s legitimacy as high priest. Anti-Gakkai priests, who are mostly Nittatsu’s disciples, start to criticize Nikken.

January 9: Nikken asks Mr. Ikeda to issue another apology to silence anti-Gakkai priests, who are critical of Nikken.

March: Yamazaki resigns from the position of chief legal counsel for the Soka Gakkai.

1973

April 2: The *Seikyo Shimbun* publishes an article titled “Reconfirming Our Fundamental Mission” under Mr. Ikeda’s name, though he personally did not involve himself or condone its publication. The manuscript has been prepared by the Gakkai leadership at the priesthood’s direction. The article reads in part: “It is true that the recent troubles with the priesthood occurred in the wake of the basic policy which the Soka Gakkai adopted for the second phase of kosen-rufu, specifically since 1972 when the Sho-Hondo was completed, and also as

a result of guidance which I gave based on that policy during 1977. . . . Now I admit that some of the words I uttered were too self-righteous, too much Soka Gakkai centered, sounding as if the Soka Gakkai were primary and the priesthood secondary. This led some individuals of the priesthood to wonder if the Soka Gakkai might not be contemplating a break with Nichiren Shoshu. It is also true that some of the Gakkai members voiced emotional opinions. I deeply apologize for all this" (May 1980 *Seikyo Times*, pp. 20-22). With this apology published under Mr. Ikeda's name, Nikken attempts to placate anti-Gakkai priests who are questioning the legitimacy of his high office, thus solidifying his position within the priesthood.

April: Yamazaki extorts 300 million yen from the Gakkai in his attempt to bail himself out of large debts created by his failing frozen-food business. Yamazaki threatens Gakkai officials that he will leak more of the Gakkai's internal information to the media and incite weekly tabloids and anti-Gakkai priests to renew their attack on the Gakkai.

June: Yamazaki attempts to extort another 500 million yen from the Gakkai. The Gakkai lodges a complaint with the police.

June: An election is held for the sixteen-member Nichiren Shoshu council. The Shoshinkai, supported by Yamazaki, seeks to gain more than two-thirds of the council; that is, enough votes to change the rules and regulations of Nichiren Shoshu. Sixteen Shoshinkai priests and eight priests from other factions have declared their candidacy. Ten Shoshinkai priests are elected.

July: Anti-Gakkai priests officially form the Shoshinkai.

September: The Gakkai revokes Yamazaki's membership.

- 1981** **January:** Yamazaki is arrested for extortion. About 180 Shoshinkai priests file a civil lawsuit seeking to revoke Nikken's position as high priest.
- 1981-1983** Nikken expels more than 180 Shoshinkai priests, thus solidifying his position within the priesthood.
- 1985** **March:** The Tokyo District Court convicts Yamazaki, sentencing him to three years in prison.