

CONFIRMING
OUR PATH
OF FAITH

TEMPLE ISSUE HANDBOOK

PRESENTED BY THE
SGF-USA TEMPLE ISSUE COMMITTEE

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Foreword

Nichiren Daishonin states in “On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land (Rissho Ankoku Ron),” “Rather than offering up ten thousand prayers for remedy, it would be better simply to outlaw this one evil [doctrine] that is the source of all the trouble!” (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2 [2nd ed.], p. 20). Opposing evil influences is fundamental to the widespread propagation of Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism. Today, Nikken, the 67th high priest of Nichiren Shoshu, and his priesthood exactly correspond to the “one evil doctrine” and should thus be challenged.

What do we mean by *evil*? The word itself has a questionable history, as it has often been used by the evil themselves to vilify the good. The definition of *evil* in Buddhism can be summarized as that which causes or leads people to misery, or that which blocks the way to enlightenment and happiness. Good or evil in Buddhism is defined in terms of whether something enhances and enriches human life (good), or whether it kills the spirit and leads to misery or the destruction of life itself. The ultimate good is that which enables us to tap and bring forth the supreme and precious condition of life called Buddhahood or enlightenment. The ultimate evil in Buddhism is that which denies or tries to suppress that condition, and which uses people’s sincere desire for enlightenment to serve its own selfish ends.

The Lotus Sutra teaches the absolute equality of life — the supreme potential for enlightenment that all living beings equally possess. Nichiren Daishonin called those who opposed or disparaged the Lotus Sutra evil. In one sense, this means that those who oppose equality are evil in the Daishonin’s view. It is easy to see how people who oppose equality in the secular world create misery for others. In most of our estimations, they are evil. It is important to see how this principle applies even more fundamentally in the world of religion in general, and the Daishonin’s Buddhism specifically. Those who oppose the profound equality expounded by the Lotus Sutra and Nichiren Daishonin should be challenged.

In terms of the above definition, Nikken Abe — who holds the position of high priest and chief administrator of Nichiren Shoshu — and the priests who support and carry out his aims, are committing evil. We can say this because the doctrines they teach oppose the absolute equality that is the basis of the Lotus Sutra and the Daishonin’s teachings. Nikken’s priesthood teaches that priests are higher, lay persons, lower; priests are empowered, and lay persons, utterly dependent on that power. They teach that the power of the Buddhist Law flows only through them, and specifically, through Nikken; it is available to us only through his personal sanction. We are permitted to gain benefit from our Buddhist practice only if he wills it. From the egalitarian standpoint of the Lotus Sutra, this is similar to a secular tyrant who, at his sole discretion, arbitrarily bestows or denies freedom to his citizens. If such a secular ruler is evil, then clearly, Nikken is evil.

The fact that Nikken, since 1990, has been trying to use his religious authority to disband and destroy the Soka Gakkai is another reason to view his actions as evil. The Soka Gakkai is a harmonious association of believers in the Daishonin's Buddhism who have been responsible for spreading his teachings throughout the world. And Buddhism defines as one of its most serious sins the act of "destroying the harmonious unity of believers."

The purpose of this handbook is to clarify how Nikken and his priesthood have deviated from the Daishonin's teachings — how diametrically opposed to the Daishonin's spirit, the true spirit of the Lotus Sutra, they have become.

It is our sincere wish that this handbook will promote a deeper understanding of the real nature and significance of what has come to be known as the "temple issue" and why it is important to discern the true substance of what it means to practice the Daishonin's Buddhism correctly.

SGI-USA Temple Issue Committee

The Daishonin's Viewpoint on Admonishing Slander

Most members of the SGI are people who take great pains to show respect to others and to be a harmonious influence in their homes and communities. Because of their compassionate nature, SGI members tend not to seek out conflict or take joy in criticizing others. Therefore, it is not easy or pleasant to confront others about their behavior, even if that behavior may be damaging to the individual, or worse, to many others. But if we truly care, we will confront that person. And if that person does not listen, we will responsibly warn those who may be endangered by that person's behavior.

This is the attitude Nichiren Daishonin takes toward those who attempt to lead people away from the correct understanding and practice of Buddhism. His spirit in this regard can be seen in the following passages:

* * *

“If even a good priest sees someone slandering the Law and disregards him, failing to reproach him, to oust him or to punish him for his offense, then that priest is betraying Buddhism. But if he takes the slanderer severely to task, drives him off or punishes him, then he is my disciple and one who truly understands my teachings.’ Never forget this admonition against ignoring another’s slander of Buddhism. Both master and disciple will surely fall into the hell of incessant suffering if they see enemies of the Lotus Sutra and fail to reproach them. The Great Teacher Nan-yueh wrote, ‘They will fall into hell with evil men.’ To seek enlightenment without repudiating slander is as futile as trying to find water in the midst of fire or fire in the midst of water” (“Admonitions Against Slander,” *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 165).

* * *

“If you see the enemies of the Lotus Sutra and fail to reproach them, fail to bring their slander to the lord of the country, and remain quiet out of fear of others’ reaction, you will fall into the hell of incessant suffering” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1077).

* * *

“If even a good monk sees someone destroying the teaching and disregards him, failing to reproach him, to oust him or to punish him for his offense, then you should realize that that monk is betraying the Buddha’s teaching” (“Rissho Ankoku Ron,” MW-2 [2nd ed.], 25–26).

* * *

“Do not follow even the high priest if he goes against the Buddha’s Law and propounds his own views” (“The Twenty-Six Admonitions of Nikko,” *Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1618).

* * *

“No matter what great good deed one may perform, even if he reads and transcribes the entirety of the Lotus Sutra a thousand or ten thousand times or masters the meditation to perceive *ichinen sanzen*, should he but fail to denounce the enemies of the Lotus Sutra, he will be unable to attain the Way” (“Encouragement to a Sick Person,” MW-6, 24).

* * *

“Though one may have been fortunate enough to be born as a human being and may perhaps have even renounced the world in order to seek the truth, if he fails to study Buddhism and to refute its slanderers but simply spends his time in idleness and chatter, then he is no better than an animal dressed in priestly robes” (“The Fourteen Slanders,” MW-3, 215).

* * *

“The Buddha has constantly warned us, saying that, no matter how great an observer of the precepts a person may be, no matter how lofty in wisdom and well versed in the Lotus Sutra and the other scriptures, if that person sees an enemy of the Lotus Sutra but fails to attack and denounce him or report him to the ruler of the nation, instead keeping silent out of fear of others, then he will invariably fall into the great citadel of the hell of incessant suffering” (“Letter to Akimoto,” MW-7, 206).

SGI President Ikeda’s Guidance on the Temple Issue

The following is excerpted from the Feb. 5, 1999, World Tribune.

“A Revolution Dawns”

Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony is that great musical genius’s roar that proclaimed, “At the end of suffering, there is joy!” It is a sublime and eternal hymn that links all humanity as brothers and sisters, a rousing paean of the people.

On Dec. 12, I was fortunate to enjoy once again the Soka University students’ performance of the Ninth Symphony, which has now become an annual tradition. It was this same symphony that was performed on Oct. 3, 1990, as a song of victory to celebrate German reunification, finally attained after such a long, hard struggle.

It was a few months later, in mid-December of that same year, 1990, that a document from the Nichiren Shoshu Administrative Office titled “Questions Regarding the Speech of Honorary President Ikeda at the 35th Headquarters Leaders Meeting” was delivered to the Soka Gakkai Headquarters. Among other things, the document claimed that singing Beethoven’s “Ode to Joy” — the Ninth Symphony’s choral section — in German was slander of the Law because it was tantamount to praising non-Buddhist teachings, to venerating Christianity. The priesthood took exception to my suggestion at that meeting that we present a large-scale choral performance of “Ode to Joy” in the future.

The document from Nichiren Shoshu criticized me for saying things I never said, and was an attempt to brand me with the labels of slanderer of the Law and of the high priest. We sought to discuss these claims with the priesthood, but the cowardly priests hid and refused to come forth and talk with us. Then, at the end of the year, under the pretext of revising the school's regulations, they eliminated the position of head of all Nichiren Shoshu lay organizations, the post I held, and effectively dismissed me.

Their aim was clear. They wanted to get me out of the way, destroy the Soka Gakkai, and, under the cloak of priestly authority, control all the Soka Gakkai members as if they were their personal slaves.

Nichiren Shoshu began propounding erroneous doctrines found nowhere in the teachings of the Daishonin. They declared, for instance, that the high priest and the Dai-Gohonzon are "two indivisible entities of the object of fundamental respect." Their plan was to create a hierarchy of power and control, with the high priest at the apex, followed by the rest of the priesthood, who stood above the lay believers as their superiors. This completely violates the Daishonin's teachings, which uphold the principles of the dignity and equality of all human beings and state that we are all Treasure Towers and children of the Buddha.

Further, discriminating in this irrational way against art and culture — an expression of our shared humanity — is no different from the Nazis' actions in Germany. It signifies a terrible kind of witch-hunting that totally rejects humanity. If we allowed the priesthood to do this, the Buddhism of Nichiren Daishonin would become a false religion serving only as an instrument of oppression and harm.

It also soon became clear that Nichiren Shoshu was guilty of an astonishing number of violations of Nichiren Daishonin's teachings. For example, Nikken, the high priest, had erected a new ancestral tombstone in a Zen-temple cemetery. Stories of the greed of the clergy in selling their funeral services and memorial tablets for the deceased, along with an astonishing number of incidents of corruption and degeneracy, including profligate spending and licentious behavior, surfaced one after another.

For the sake of kosen-rufu, we of the Soka Gakkai simply could not allow the Daishonin's teachings to be trampled in this manner. Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism exists for all the world's people. We rallied to defend the Daishonin's spirit, and we arose as one. It marked the dawn of a new religious revolution.

On Nov. 28 of the following year, 1991, Nichiren Shoshu excommunicated the Soka Gakkai. What madness! It was the Soka Gakkai that had always upheld the Daishonin's teachings to the letter. The priests' masks were ripped away by this action, and their true nature as the minions of hell was revealed. But the Soka Gakkai members did not quail. We knew, from our reading of the Daishonin's writings, that this madness was an example of the Devil of the Sixth Heaven having entered the body of a high-ranking priest in an effort to destroy Buddhism.

The Soka Gakkai is an organization of people completely dedicated to the widespread propagation of the Mystic Law and is thereby carrying out the Buddha's will and decree. Nichiren Shoshu, on the other hand, which excommunicated the Soka Gakkai, cut off with its own hand the true lineage of faith and returned to the vile behavior it had exhibited during World War II, when it denigrated the Daishonin's spirit and utterly betrayed his teachings.

For the Soka Gakkai, the excommunication released us from the chains by which the envious and scheming Nichiren Shoshu had sought to control the Daishonin's followers, and allowed us to claim our true spiritual independence.

Seven years have passed since then. The outcome of the struggle of good and evil and the workings of the law of cause and effect have been strict and uncompromising. The decline of the crazed and destructive Nichiren Shoshu is clearly apparent. The victims, unfortunately, are the lay believers who practice with the temple, who are not aware of Nichiren Shoshu's evil and have been deceived by the priests.

We declare confidently to all: Look at the exciting and joyful activities of our comrades spreading the Daishonin's teachings throughout the world! Listen to their bright song of hope and life, filled to overflowing with benefit!

The new humanism of the Soka Gakkai, derived from Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, is linking people around the globe, transcending national and ethnic boundaries, and earning praise from all as the light of hope for the new century.

Leaders of diverse fields who seek a philosophy of humanism and peace come to the Soka Gakkai in a constant stream from all over the world. Isn't this brilliant proof of our truth and rightness?

Most despicable of all are those former Soka Gakkai leaders who have betrayed their comrades in the organization and the Soka Gakkai itself, to whom they owe so much, in order to curry favor with the priests. The great liberator of Latin America Simón Bolívar (1783–1830) once said, "Forgetting one's debt of gratitude is the greatest crime a person can commit." The first Soka Gakkai president, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, also used to say, "The final fate of all traitors is a degrading story of suffering and ignominy." The second president, Josei Toda, also took a harsh view of ingratitude and treachery. Though in one respect he seemed a very easygoing and accepting man, he was very strict about the conduct of youth. For he believed that the time of one's youth is vital to building the foundations for the rest of one's life. When it came to the essentials, he could be quite ferocious.

Once, one of his disciples told a lie. When Mr. Toda learned of this, he took the youth to task, thundering: "Are lying and deceit any way for a young person to behave?! Have you become a fox?" He was the epitome of paternal strictness. He once told a young man who was always maneuvering to look good in the organization with the least amount of effort: "If you keep this up, you're going to come to a pitiful end in life. I can discern no desire on your part to live with decency and honor. You are deceitful, and in the end, you're the one who will suffer for it." He said this out of great compassion, out of a deep wish to prevent the young man from going farther astray and losing his faith.

How wonderful it is, in every age, for a person to have a true teacher!

Mr. Toda often used to say about traitors: “Leave those lowly losers be. Betraying the Soka Gakkai is betraying the Daishonin. In the end, they’ll receive the punishment of the Buddha [negative retribution in accord with the strict workings of the law of cause and effect], you’ll see.”

Right human conduct means fighting against evil and cutting it off at its root. The tricolor Soka Gakkai banner of victory waves in the skies of the new century and a song of joy resounds throughout the heavens. The grand march of a new year, of a new century of Soka, has begun.□

I. Refuting Nichiren Shoshu's Doctrinal Errors

The mistakes of Nichiren Shoshu are grounded in their basic assumption about what makes a person worthy of respect and qualified as a teacher of Buddhism. Their assumption, simply put, is that it is role and status, not sincere faith and practice, that qualify one in the world of Buddhism. This misunderstanding is expressed in their erroneous teachings about the heritage of the Law, the Three Treasures, and the Object of Devotion, and culminates in the self-serving doctrine that the high priest of Nichiren Shoshu, Nikken Abe, is absolute and infallible. Nichiren Shoshu (which means the orthodox school of Nichiren) under Nikken's leadership is not merely unorthodox when it comes to its interpretation of Nichiren Daishonin's teachings; it has severed any relationship it might have had with the Daishonin's spirit and intent. This is why we can rightfully call it the Nikken sect.

Nichiren Daishonin states, "But when there are provisional sects or slanderers of the Law in the country, then it is time to set aside other matters and devote oneself to rebuking slander" (MW-5, 104). In accord with the spirit of this passage, we, SGI members and Nichiren Daishonin's disciples, must take it as our responsibility to rebuke the incorrect teachings of Nichiren Shoshu in order to protect and clarify the correct teachings of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

Heritage of the Law

Nikken incorrectly teaches that the "heritage of faith," the basis of the transmission of Buddhism, is secondary while the transfer of authority from one high priest to another — misleadingly referred to as the "heritage of the Law," is primary. Based on this mistaken view, Nichiren Shoshu teaches that the high priest is infallible and that a lay believer's attainment of Buddhahood depends not on that person's faith but upon the high priest.

Distorting the original meaning of *heritage*, Nikken says, "Excluding the heritage of the Law, the Soka Gakkai only refers to the heritage of faith.... The Gakkai is attached to the insignificant part of the heritage" (at the 41st nationwide priests meeting in August 1992).

Nikken has asserted that there are four types of heritage: 1) the heritage of the Law; 2) the heritage that has been carried on from one high priest to another; 3) the heritage of doctrine; and 4) the heritage of faith. Regarding this, he said, "Since the heritage of the Law is the basis of these four types of heritage, there is no heritage of faith apart from the heritage of the Law" (at the closing ceremony of the 44th practice and study seminar of priests held at the head temple in August 1997).

Nikken's view of the heritage of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism — that faith is insignificant and subordinate — clearly differs from what Nichiren Daishonin teaches and what the successive high priests of Nichiren Shoshu have taught.

Nichiren Daishonin states: "Never seek any other way to inherit the ultimate law and manifest it in your life.... Without the lifeblood [heritage] of faith, it would be useless to embrace the Lotus Sutra" (MW-1, 25).

He also writes: "The Gohonzon is found in faith alone. As the sutra states, 'Only with faith can one enter Buddhahood'" (MW-1, 213).

And, "Faith alone is what really matters. No matter how earnestly Nichiren prays for you, if you lack faith, it will be like trying to set fire to wet tinder. Spur yourself to muster the power of faith" (MW-1, 246).

The ninth high priest, Nichiu, said, "Faith, the heritage [lifeblood] and the 'water [transmission] of the Law' are the same thing" (*On Formalities*, 9th High Priest Nichiu).

And the 59th high priest, Nichiko, said, "It follows that faith, the heritage, and the 'water of the Law' are the same thing" ("Notes on Teacher Nichiu's *On Formalities*").

As these quotes attest, the heritage of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism exists in faith itself. Strong faith alone is the way to tap within ourselves the great life-condition exemplified by Nichiren Daishonin, as 26th High Priest Nichikan said, "Embracing this Gohonzon with faith, and chanting Nam-myoho-rence-kyo to it, we manifest ourselves as the Gohonzon of *ichinen sanzen*, or manifest the life of Nichiren Daishonin from within ourselves" ("Exegesis on 'The True Object of Devotion'").

Nichiren Shoshu under Nikken, however, teaches that this heritage is transferred only from one high priest to the next in the form of a supposedly secret ceremony performed between the two men. However, nowhere in the Daishonin's writings is there any mention of such a ritual.

Nikken's differing views of the heritage

Before executing "Operation C," a plan he authored intended to disband the Soka Gakkai, in December 1990, Nikken's teachings concerning the heritage could be summed up by his following statement:

"Therefore, the lifeblood of faith constitutes the basis of the transmission of the heritage of the Law. Put another way, this lifeblood of faith enables the entity of the Law and all the most profound teachings of the Buddha to be transferred from one vessel to another....

"The transmission of the heritage of the Law between the Daishonin and Nikko Shonin essentially exists, as I mentioned before, in the lifeblood of faith.... All in all, the transmission of the Law between Nichiren Daishonin and Nikko Shonin can be applied to everyone through their faith, and this lifeblood of faith is the basis of practice and study to all priests and lay believers of the True Law. Therefore, to say that Buddhism is the type of teaching in which only the high priest can understand the heritage of the Law that was transmitted from Nichiren Daishonin to Nikko Shonin is self-righteous and distorted. Such

a view is totally ignorant of the true meaning of the heritage of the Law. It's a farce. When the water of the Law flows in one's *ichinen* of faith, the beneficial actual proof of attaining Buddhahood will be open to everybody regardless of the level of their wisdom" (at the scroll-airing ceremony at the head temple, Taiseki-ji, April 1987).

From the above it is clear that Nikken once taught that the doctrine regarding the heritage that he now advocates is "self-righteous and distorted."

The 59th high priest, Nichiko, wrote, "When a person has deviated from the Buddha's will, as he embodies evil, impurity, wrong faith and illusion, he will not be qualified to receive the heritage of attaining Buddhahood in his present form" ("Notes on Teacher Nichiu's *On Formalities*").

Nikken, lacking faith in this way, has disqualified himself from receiving the lifeblood of faith of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. In order to justify himself, he has tried to define the all important "heritage of faith" as being insignificant.

Questions & Answers

Q: The Gosho states, "If you confuse the general with the specific even in the slightest, you will never be able to attain enlightenment and will wander through endless lifetimes of suffering" (MW-1, 164). Based upon this passage, the temple claims that since the high priest alone has received the heritage of the Law (the specific heritage), our claiming to receive the heritage independent of him prevents us from attaining enlightenment. Is this not true?

A: No, this is not the intent of the Daishonin's statement regarding the general and specific. Nikken and his priesthood assert that "general" refers to all believers and "specific" refers to priests, particularly the high priest. But "general" and "specific" in this passage actually refer to the heritage transferred from Shakyamuni Buddha to the Bodhisattvas of the Earth in the Lotus Sutra. The Bodhisattvas of the Earth, led by Bodhisattva Jogyo, received the specific transfer while all the other bodhisattvas assembled received the general transfer. The Daishonin's statement here is emphasizing the specific mission that the Daishonin and his followers, in their role as Bodhisattvas of the Earth, have in propagating the essence of the Lotus Sutra. This Gosho passage is not in any way referring to a distinction between priesthood and laity. The temple takes the above Gosho passage out of context, and misinterprets it to assert their own authority.

Nichiren Daishonin writes: "Shakyamuni who attained enlightenment countless eons ago, the Lotus Sutra which leads all people to Buddhahood, and we ordinary human beings are in no way different or separate from each other. Therefore, to chant Myoho-enge-kyo with this realization is to inherit the ultimate law of life and death" (MW-1, 22).

Nikken's misuse of the concept of specific and general to create distinctions and separation between priests and believers is a gross contradiction of the above statement by the Daishonin.

Q: The Gosho states, "It is impossible to understand this Sutra unless it has been transmitted to you" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 398). This passage seems to indicate that there must be a secret teaching that a high priest has inherited from the former high priest. Is this true?

A: Although the Daishonin stresses in the above passage that one must be designated to receive the essence of the Lotus Sutra, it in no way means that, as Nichiren Shoshu claims, the high priest alone is that person. In the text that follows the Daishonin makes it clear that all people are designated to inherit the Lotus Sutra, stating that it is intended for "evil people, good people, those with wisdom, those without wisdom, those who keep the precepts, those without precepts, men and women, inhabitants of the four evil paths, the eight kinds of lowly beings, and all living beings of the ten worlds" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 398). Incidentally the entire contents of the teachings that one high priest transfers to the next high priest, including documents such as the "Transfer of the Seven Teachings on the Gohonzon," have already been disclosed by the 59th high priest, Nichiko Hori. No teaching remains in the Daishonin's Buddhism that is "secret" or inaccessible to any practitioner. What is supreme in the Daishonin's Buddhism is the power of one's faith. As the Daishonin states, "Without the lifeblood of faith, it would be useless to embrace the Lotus Sutra" (MW-1, 25).

Three Treasures

The Three Treasures are: the Treasure of the Buddha (the teacher who is enlightened to the Law and possesses the three virtues of sovereign, teacher and parent), the Treasure of the Law (the teaching expounded by the Buddha), and the Treasure of the Priest (the Buddha's disciples who embrace and propagate this Law). It is important to note that the Chinese-Japanese word translated as "Priest" here derives from the Sanskrit term "*samgha*" which refers to the Buddhist Order — originally the body of believers following Shakyamuni Buddha and propagating his teachings. Treasuring and appreciating the *samgha* was of utmost importance in Shakyamuni's earliest teachings.

Article 4 of Nichiren Shoshu's Rules stipulates, "This school regards the Dai-Gohonzon as the Treasure of the Law; Nichiren Daishonin, the founder of True Buddhism, as the Treasure of the Buddha; and Nikko Shonin, the immediate successor who inherited the lifeblood of true Buddhism from Nichiren Daishonin as the Treasure of the Priest."

We can surmise that Nikko Shonin was chosen to represent the "Treasure of the Priest" or "Treasure of the Samgha" in later years because he embodied the ideal believer and disciple, staking his life to propagate and transmit the Daishonin's Buddhism to the very last.

Distorting the traditional teachings of Nichiren Shoshu regarding the Three Treasures, Nikken has created a new doctrine intended to elevate his status as high priest to the level

of the object of devotion. In a handbook outlining the faith and practice of Nichiren Shoshu published in 1991, the priesthood instructs its believers that the essence of practice is to have “absolute faith and strict obedience” toward the high priest (*Dai-Nichiren Special Edition, The Correct Way of Faith in Nichiren Shoshu*, p. 13). Never before in the history of Nichiren Shoshu and certainly nowhere in the teachings of Nichiren Daishonin can one find a reference to a doctrine stating that the high priest alone should be viewed on the same level as the Gohonzon.

Nikken currently says, “That the Soka Gakkai despises the high priest by stating that the high priest is not on the same level as the Gohonzon” is a grave slander as it opposes the teaching of Nichiren Daishonin and Nikko Shonin who taught the oneness of the Treasure of the Buddha, the Treasure of the Law and the Treasure of the Priest (at the 46th nationwide teachers seminar at the head temple, Taiseki-ji, August 1997).

Actually, to state that the three treasures are on the same level makes sense when viewed in light of the following passage from the Daishonin’s writings, which has already been quoted above:

“Shakyamuni who attained enlightenment countless eons ago, the Lotus Sutra which leads all people to Buddhahood, and we ordinary human beings are in no way different or separate from each other. Therefore, to chant Myoho-enge-kyo with this realization is to inherit the ultimate law of life and death” (MW-1, 22).

This means that the Buddha (here expressed as Shakyamuni), the Law (the Lotus Sutra), and those who propagate the law (ordinary people) are “in no way different or separate from each other.” This is the significance of the oneness of the three treasures. For Nikken to suggest that he alone, or the priesthood alone, belongs to the Three Treasures of Buddhism to the exclusion of all believers is absurd in light of the Daishonin’s and Nikko Shonin’s teachings.

Nikken’s teaching that he alone resides on the level of the Gohonzon in terms of deserving believers’ devotion is in sharp contrast with Nichiren Shoshu’s traditional view of the Three Treasures.

In “The Practice of This School,” the 26th high priest, Nichikan, states, “The Treasure of the Priest of the remotest past (*kuon ganjo*) is none other than the founder of this school, Nikko Shonin.” Traditionally in Nichiren Shoshu, Nikko Shonin, the immediate successor to Nichiren Daishonin, had been regarded as the Treasure of the Priest, one of the Three Treasures.

In contrast to Nikko Shonin, all other high priests, priests in general, and the laity can be looked upon as part of the Treasure of the Priest to the extent that they carry on and propagate Buddhism. As Nichikan states, “A person like me, who has no wisdom and no precept, still can be part of the Treasure of the Priest” (“On the Three Treasures”). In this respect, Nichikan also states: “Therefore, it is obvious that Nikko Shonin is a disciple of Nichiren Daishonin who has directly inherited his teaching in a manner where the water of the Law is transferred from one vessel to another. Hence we revere him as the Treasure of the Priest in the Buddhism of Sowing and in the Latter Day of the Law. We can say that

Nichimoku, Nichido and all the successive high priests can be regarded as part of the Treasure of the Priest; the same is also true for all the lay people of this school” (Ibid.).

Nikken once agreed with these traditional teachings, stating as follows: “The successive high priests are in a position that is lower than the Treasure of the Priest. Therefore your frequent remarks to the effect that the high priest is a Buddha is too much, I think” (at a meeting of junior priests at the head temple, Taiseki-ji, March 1983).

Questions & Answers

Q: Even if Nikken is wrong regarding the Three Treasures, aren't we slandering if we criticize him on that account?

A: The Soka Gakkai seeks to refute Nikken's views in the spirit of Nichiren Daishonin and Nikko Shonin, who severely reproached slander of the Buddhist Law and errors in the interpretation of the Buddha's teachings. In his Twenty-six Admonitions, Nikko Shonin states, “Do not follow even the high priest if he goes against the Buddha's Law and propounds his own views” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1618). This instruction compels us to challenge the teachings of a high priest if they run counter to Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. According to Nikko Shonin, one should not follow the teachings of such a high priest. It is common sense that the higher a person's responsibility or position in the Buddhist order, the more vital it is to correct that person's mistakes regarding Buddhism. Ultimately, this corresponds to protecting the Three Treasures. In fact, by attempting to put himself alone on the same level as the Gohonzon, Nikken is degrading the Three Treasures.

The High Priest As Absolute

Nikken allows senior priests to state that “the high priest is as respectable as the Dai-Gohonzon; they are not two” or “The high priest and Nichiren Daishonin are one, not two” (from a letter to the Soka Gakkai written by senior priests on July 30, 1991). Such a view has never existed in Nichiren Shoshu.

The same letter states: “The foundation of this school is the Dai-Gohonzon of the High Sanctuary of True Buddhism and the high priest, who alone has inherited the Living Essence of the Law directly from the former high priest, ... for the heritage of Buddhism exists in the high priest’s venerable life that is one with the Dai-Gohonzon of the High Sanctuary of True Buddhism. Therefore, our faith in these two fundamentals must be absolute” (Ibid.).

“It is important in faith for lay believers of this school to regard the inner enlightenment of the successive high priests as that of Nichiren Daishonin” (Nikken’s sermon at the 46th nationwide teachers seminar at the head temple, Taiseki-ji, August 1997).

Thus, Nichiren Shoshu under Nikken now teaches that the high priest’s life alone is one with the life of Nichiren Daishonin and with the Dai-Gohonzon. This view is far from Nichiren Shoshu’s traditional view of the role of a high priest—a view once embraced by Nikken himself.

Concerning the position of high priest, Nittatsu, the 66th high priest, clearly states that it is an organizational role responsible for administering the school. Inheriting the role of high priest was not intended to turn that person and that person alone into a living Buddha. Nor, by any reasonable reckoning, could it.

Nittatsu says: “Regarding the Three Treasures of this school, the Gohonzon is the Treasure of the Law, Nichiren Daishonin is the Treasure of the Buddha, and Nikko Shonin is the Treasure of the Priest. In contrast, Nichimoku Shonin is the lord of the chair, which means he is an administrator who is responsible to govern this school and put the matters of Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism in order. The successive high priests after Nichimoku Shonin carry on this task functioning like a tube through which the water of this [administrative] role is transmitted.... Hence the successive high priests are not Nichiren Daishonin” (sermon at a meeting for priests and their family members at the head temple, Taiseki-ji, May 1977).

By allowing priests to teach that the high priest is equal to the Daishonin, Nikken has betrayed his own teacher’s words.

Nichiren Daishonin and Nikko Shonin both strictly admonish us not to follow a teacher who has deviated from the correct teaching: “A disciple should abandon even his teacher if the teacher is misguided” (MW-1, 165).

“Do not follow even the high priest if he goes against the Buddha’s Law and propounds his own views” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1618).

Questions & Answers

Q: Nichiren Shoshu teaches that one can attain Buddhahood only by following the high priest with absolute faith in and strict obedience to him. Is this true?

A: No, the high priest is not the cause for attaining Buddhahood. The important point for attaining Buddhahood is to have faith in the Gohonzon and follow the Gosho, the teachings of Nichiren Daishonin. Nowhere in the Gosho can we find a passage teaching that absolute faith in a high priest is needed to attain Buddhahood. If anything, we should have absolute faith in the Gohonzon and practice in strict accordance with the Gosho. Nichiren Daishonin is explicit that we should “follow the Law, not the Person.”

Q: How could someone who has risen to such a high responsibility in Nichiren Shoshu, the school that is supposed to correctly inherit the Daishonin’s teachings, make such grievous mistakes?

A: The idea that the high priest is infallible, which is Nichiren Shoshu’s current stance, clearly denies the very meaning of the “mutual possession of the ten worlds” and “the attainment of Buddhahood in one’s present form — principles confirming the equality of all human beings. In addition, examination of the history of Nichiren Shoshu reveals that there were a number of high priests who erroneously interpreted Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism. The record shows that they clearly committed serious errors in interpretation and practice, thus impeding people’s correct understanding of faith. How can their errors be reconciled with the priesthood’s current doctrine of the high priest’s infallibility? To cite just two examples:

- ◆ Nisei, the 17th high priest, created a statue of Shakyamuni as an object of worship, something that Nikko Shonin severely admonished his contemporaries and those of future generations not to do. Nissei further wrote a thesis entitled “Zuigi Ron” to justify his erection of the statue of Shakyamuni in the year after he became high priest.
- ◆ Nikkyo, the 62nd high priest, accepted and enshrined a talisman to the Shinto Sun Goddess while urging the Soka Gakkai to do the same. He succumbed to oppression from the military government, enshrining the talisman at the Shoin building on the grounds of the head temple. In addition, he ordered that various Gosho passages that might offend the tyrannical militarist authorities be stricken from copies of the Daishonin’s writings. In that the Daishonin himself expounded his teachings fully aware that they would incur the wrath of the authorities, Nissei’s stance completely contradicted that of the Daishonin. He died in a fire at the head temple in June 1945.

Further, everyone in Nichiren Shoshu knows that the 26th high priest is referred to as the “Great Restorer” of Nichiren Shoshu. The reason why Nichiren Shoshu, then

called the Fuji School, had to be “restored” was that the previous high priests had allowed it to degenerate. The idea of the infallibility of high priests is thus a preposterous fabrication. It is the clearest indication that Nikken and Nichiren Shoshu have abandoned faith in their own teachings in order to justify their actions against the Soka Gakkai.

The Gohonzon

Nichiren Daishonin inscribed the Gohonzon for the happiness of all humanity, intending it to be conferred on those seeking to develop their faith and practice. However, Nichiren Shoshu, counter to Nichiren Daishonin’s compassionate will, stopped issuing the Gohonzon to Soka Gakkai members and denied them access to the Dai-Gohonzon unless they connected themselves to a temple. They used the Gohonzon as a tool to exploit believers and coerce them into accepting the high priest’s absolute authority and the superiority of priests over lay believers. By using the Gohonzon in this way, Nichiren Shoshu has completely abandoned the Daishonin’s spirit and intent.

In response to the priesthood’s withholding of Gohonzon, the Soka Gakkai began to confer Gohonzon that are based on 26th High Priest Nichikan’s transcription. The Soka Gakkai’s purpose was to respond to the sincere faith of its members and follow the original intent of Nichiren Daishonin and Nikko Shonin.

How and why did the Soka Gakkai begin conferring Nichikan Gohonzon upon its members?

Nikken suddenly refused to confer Gohonzon upon Soka Gakkai members:

After excommunicating the Soka Gakkai in November 1991, the temple stopped issuing the Gohonzon to its members. Nikken gave directions to each priest that Soka Gakkai members should return their Gohonzon to the temple because, according to him, only those directly belonging to the temple and consequently willing to accept Nikken’s teachings are eligible to possess the Gohonzon.

Nichiren Daishonin inscribed the Gohonzon to save all humanity. Using it as an object to manipulate and intimidate believers, Nichiren Shoshu has thus disqualified itself from conferring the Gohonzon.

It accords with the Buddha’s will for the organization of kosen-rufu to confer the Gohonzon to sincere members:

The Daishonin bestowed the Gohonzon upon each sincere believer of his teachings. He never intended it for possession by only a few. Nikko Shonin, too, transcribed Gohonzon for believers until the very end of his life — until he was practically too weak to pick up his writing brush. With the priesthood unjustly relinquishing its role of conferring the Gohonzon, that role naturally must be fulfilled. It falls to those who are harmoniously carrying on the Daishonin’s and Nikko Shonin’s teaching to reply to the seeking spirit of ordinary people of the Latter Day of the Law. The Soka Gakkai thus began to confer the

Gohonzon transcribed by the 26th high priest, Nichikan, upon its members by making it available in the form of an *okatagi* (woodblock — indicating reproduced by printing process) Gohonzon. This resulted from a formal resolution made at a meeting of the Soka Gakkai general administrators. That resolution was preceded by an offer from Chief Priest Sendo Narita of Joen-ji temple in Tochigi, Japan, and resolutions by the Association of Priests Devoted To Reforming Nichiren Shoshu and the Association of Youthful Priests Devoted To Reforming Nichiren Shoshu. This resolution to issue the Gohonzon is in accord with the Daishonin's will; for the whole purpose of his inscription of the Gohonzon was to enable people to attain Buddhahood in this lifetime through their devoted practice to it.

What is the *okatagi* Gohonzon?

Printed Gohonzon were originally made by a woodblock (*okatagi*) process, hence the name. They have the same function as the original according to the power of our faith and practice. The process the Soka Gakkai uses to reproduce these Gohonzon is the same as that used for Gohonzon that have been conferred upon its members all along.

Refuting Nichiren Shoshu's contention that the Soka Gakkai's Nichikan Gohonzon is counterfeit:

Regarding the high priest's "sanction":

Nichiren Shoshu's position is that it is the sanction of the high priest that gives the Gohonzon its power and makes it legitimate. They state, "'Sanction' means that the master gives his sanction to the disciple's enlightenment...the sanctioning of the object of worship by the High Priest, who is the only person to be bequeathed the Daishonin's Buddhism, is what makes the attainment of Buddhahood possible..." (*Refuting the Soka Gakkai's Counterfeit Object of Worship*, p. 36.)

Nichiren Shoshu says that the Gohonzon conferred by the Soka Gakkai has no power and is "counterfeit" because it was not made with the high priest's permission. Naturally, no permission was requested or granted, because the high priest had made clear his intention that believers who belong to the Soka Gakkai be deprived of the Gohonzon. However, nowhere in the Gosho is it mentioned that such permission is necessary. Rather, it is a matter of sincerity and strength in faith on the part of believers that prompted Nichiren Daishonin to confer a Gohonzon upon specific persons.

Historically, the *okatagi* Gohonzon has been issued by local temples at their discretion. No permission from the high priest was needed in these cases.

The growth, benefit and joy continually seen in the lives of Soka Gakkai members who have practiced to the Gohonzon issued by the Soka Gakkai since the excommunication clearly disproves Nikken's claim that his personal sanction or permission is somehow the source of the Gohonzon's validity or power. This is known as "proof of actual fact" in the Daishonin's Buddhism. To refute Nikken's mistaken teachings about the Gohonzon with such actual proof is a further cause for great fortune and benefit.

Regarding the eye-opening ceremony:

Nichiren Shoshu contends that the Soka Gakkai's Nichikan Gohonzon has no beneficial power since the high priest did not perform the eye-opening ceremony upon it. Nowhere in the Daishonin's writings, however, is it mentioned that the Gohonzon must undergo an eye-opening ceremony by a high priest. Even before 1990, no eye-opening ceremony was conducted at Hodoin temple in Tokyo, which printed all of Nichiren Shoshu's Gohonzon and distributed them, most often directly, to all other local temples. The power of the Gohonzon is revealed solely through the faith and practice of each believer.

Regarding the fact that the Soka Gakkai's Gohonzon was not issued by the head temple:

Nichiren Shoshu contends that the Nichikan Gohonzon conferred by the Soka Gakkai has no beneficial power since it was not issued by the head temple. Historically, there were many Gohonzon that were issued directly by local temples, not through the head temple. The major local temples made it a practice to create and confer *okatagi* Gohonzon for their believers.

There is no doctrinal basis behind the temple's contention that the Soka Gakkai's Nichikan Gohonzon is counterfeit. This contention is itself a slander of the Daishonin's object of devotion. Based on an authentic original, they are printed, distributed and conferred by the same process that has been used for decades. All Nikken is attempting to say is that anyone who wishes to receive the Gohonzon must go through him. Nikken simply does not like the fact that lay believers enjoy the practice of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism freely and cheerfully without his authority, or without paying homage to him.

The Eye-opening Ceremony

Nichiren Shoshu contends that the Gohonzon needs to have the high priest perform the eye-opening ceremony upon it, but there is no doctrinal or historical basis for this stance. The powers of the Buddha and the Law in the Gohonzon can be revealed only through the powers of our faith and practice.

Nichiren Daishonin refutes the idea that esoteric eye-opening ceremonies should be relied on to empower Buddhist images: “It is the power of the Lotus Sutra that makes it possible to infuse such paintings and statues with a ‘soul’ or spiritual property” (MW-6, 161). The power of the Lotus Sutra means nothing other than the power of our faith and prayer in chanting to the Gohonzon. No special eye-opening ceremony is necessary for the Gohonzon. The Gohonzon in itself is an entity of the essence of the Lotus Sutra and of the Daishonin’s enlightenment.

In making their claim, Nichiren Shoshu states: “One should never worship anything as a Gohonzon that has not been authorized as such by the High Priest, who has inherited the Heritage of the Law, even if it was inscribed by Nichiren Daishonin himself...” (*NST News, Special Issue*, pp. 3–4). The phrase *even if it was inscribed by Nichiren Daishonin himself* is telling. It indicates that even if the Daishonin inscribed his life in the Gohonzon, the high priest has the power, according to current Nichiren Shoshu teachings, to disempower it or close its eyes — to deactivate the Gohonzon. Whether this is done by a special incantation, a waving of a wand, or his sheer will, is not made clear. There is in fact no basis for this in any of the Daishonin’s writings or anywhere in the history of Nichiren Shoshu. It is true that even a Gohonzon inscribed in the hand of the Daishonin will not benefit someone without faith or practice. This is why President Toda said that the Daishonin’s Gohonzon possessed by schools such as the Minobu sect have no power. Because those who possess it slight the significance of the Gohonzon and lack faith, even the Daishonin’s Gohonzon will not benefit them. It is not because the high priest of Taiseki-ji or anyone else has the ability to “turn off” their power, as if by remote control.

Nichiren Shoshu contends that the eye-opening ceremony has always been conducted for all Gohonzon at the head temple. But historic fact proves this to be untrue.

a) From post World War II through the 1970s, all the *okatagi* Gohonzon of Nichiren Shoshu were printed in a major local temple in Tokyo called Hodojin and distributed to other local temples. These Gohonzon, after being mounted and put into boxes, were never transferred to the head temple and never subjected to an eye-opening ceremony by a high priest.

b) After 1979, the office that handles matters concerning the Gohonzon was placed within the Internal Affairs Department at the head temple. According to a priest who worked in this office: “In the case of the *okatagi* Gohonzon, neither before nor after they were mounted did High Priest Nikken conduct an eye-opening ceremony for any one of the Gohonzon. They were simply sent straight to local temples as soon as they were manufactured.”

Discrimination

Deeply rooted in Nichiren Shoshu is the discriminatory notion that the priesthood is superior and the laity is inferior. This is diametrically opposed to the spirit of Nichiren Daishonin and Nikko Shonin who taught the equality of the priesthood and laity—of all practitioners.

Nichiren Shoshu's deep-seated prejudice of its own superiority has become obvious through its own statements and behavior:

- ◆ “It is only natural that there is an original distinction between priesthood and laity in accord with the teachings of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.... If lay believers speak as if they are equal to priests, they lack courtesy and propriety and will destroy the order between priesthood and laity” (Nichijun Fujimoto, General Administrator of Nichiren Shoshu, in a letter to the SGI, Jan. 12, 1991).
- ◆ “To talk about the priesthood and the laity with a sense of equality manifests great conceit. In fact, it corresponds to the five cardinal sins — to destroy the unity of Buddhist practitioners. (Nichijun Fujimoto, General Administrator of Nichiren Shoshu, in a letter to the SGI, Jan. 12, 1991)

In contrast, Nichiren Daishonin's position is one of non-discrimination and absolute equality among his followers, priest or lay person:

- ◆ “For this reason, the Buddha surely considers anyone in this world who embraces the Lotus Sutra, whether man or woman, monk or nun, to be the lord of all living beings” (MW-5, 156).
- ◆ “A passage from the *Hosshi* chapter (“The Teacher and the Law” chapter) reads, ‘If there is someone, whether man or woman, who secretly teaches to one person even a single phrase of the Lotus Sutra, let it be known that he is the envoy of the Buddha’” (MW-1, 10).
- ◆ “Shakyamuni who attained enlightenment countless aeons ago, the Lotus Sutra which leads all people to Buddhahood, and we ordinary human beings are in no way different or separate from each other” (MW-1, 22).

In his “Record of My Disciples,” Nikko Shonin refers to his disciple, Jakunichi-bo, who was a priest, stating that “he is the foremost in faith among Nikko's disciples.” In the same manner, Nikko Shonin writes about Nanjo Tokimitsu, a lay believer, stating also that “he is the foremost in faith among Nikko's disciples.” Nikko Shonin thus did not make any distinction between priests and lay persons.

Nichiren Shoshu justifies its attempts to control the laity by proclaiming that the priesthood assumes the role of mentor while the laity, that of disciple. By this, they mean that the priesthood functions as an intermediary between the Gohonzon and lay believers' enlightenment. Thus they distort Nichiren Daishonin's view that people can attain Buddhahood in their present form by chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo to the Gohonzon.

Even President Toda knew of the priests' attitude of superiority over lay believers, stating: "You can't allow chief priests to be high-handed. It is natural for us to make offerings to them and render our service to the temple. But they have had a bad habit since olden times. That is, they tend to regard lay believers as their subjects or servants" (at the Gohonzon enshrinement ceremony at Shomyo-ji temple in Takasaki City, Gunma Prefecture on Dec. 15, 1954).

Pilgrimages

Nichiren Shoshu, suffering from a lack of participants in their pilgrimage program, has been heavily promoting its members to go on a pilgrimage, referring to the head temple, Taiseki-ji, as Eagle Peak, a Buddha land. This is true even of its members overseas, who have to bear considerable expense to make the trip. In reality, however, Taiseki-ji is now a place where Nikken, the person engaged in destroying Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, resides.

Therefore, it is now a place of slander. Visiting and making offerings there is actually thus an act of supporting the slander of Buddhism and thus itself constitutes a negative cause.

The same phenomena occurred at Mount Minobu. In spite of the fact that Nichiren Daishonin's grave and lodgings were at Mount Minobu, Nikko Shonin left it when Hakiri Sanenaga, the steward of the area, began to engage in practices that ran counter to the Daishonin's instructions. Our leaving the head temple has accorded with the spirit of Nikko Shonin in leaving Minobu. We should not return until or unless it has been purified of slander.

Nichiren Daishonin states, "Even bodhisattvas with their great compassion, if they make offerings to the enemies of the Lotus Sutra, are certain to fall into the hell of incessant suffering" (MW-6, 90).

To visit the head temple today and make offerings to Nikken is to make offerings to the "enemies of the Lotus Sutra" that this passage refers to.

History of the Pilgrimage System

The system of monthly pilgrimage to Taiseki-ji, the head temple of Nichiren Shoshu, was initiated by President Toda in October 1952. Concerned about the destitute plight of the head temple and its priests' plan to open Taiseki-ji for sightseeing to make money, President Toda started the pilgrimage system. His intention was to enable members to worship the Dai-Gohonzon while offering the temple financial support. A total of 70 million people visited the head temple over the next 39 years (1952–91), providing funds for the restoration and vast development of the head temple grounds and facilities.

Unfortunately, after having accumulated vast revenues from the members' sincere offerings, the priesthood, out of spite and resentment, has gone so far as to reduce to rubble the Grand Main Temple (Sho-Hondo) — the most magnificent Buddhist structure of modern times, donated by the members. It is clearly a case of sincerity being repaid with malice. Since the Daishonin always repaid sincerity with even greater sincerity, this destructive act also demonstrates how far Nichiren Shoshu has drifted from the compassionate posture of the Daishonin.

President Ikeda has referred to pilgrimage, proximity to the Dai-Gohonzon and the Buddhist idea of the sacred place:

“Today if you should visit Taiseki-ji, rather than benefit, you will receive the rebuke of Nichiren Daishonin. The effect you will receive will be negative. Nothing has changed at all about the point that the Dai-Gohonzon inscribed by Nichiren Daishonin for the happiness of all humanity is the basis of our faith. However, making offerings to Nikken in order to see the Dai-Gohonzon is to approve of and support Nikken’s slander. Supporting a slanderous priest is to share in his offense. The Daishonin calls this ‘the offense of complicity in slander’ (MW-6, 91), and it means that one becomes an accomplice in crimes against Buddhism. In that case, even if you see the Dai-Gohonzon, Nichiren Daishonin will severely reproach you, saying: ‘What are you doing? Why don’t you fight the Buddha’s enemy? Why do you instead support him by making offerings to him?’” (*The Soka Gakkai’s Spiritual Renaissance*, vol. 63, pp. 29–30)

“Some say that those who do not directly worship the Dai-Gohonzon have no faith and will not attain Buddhahood. This, of course, is a ridiculous and false statement. The Gohonzon enshrined at individual homes carries the same significance as the Dai-Gohonzon in view of the Buddhist principle of *funjin santai* (dispersing the body of the original in different forms)” (Nov. 22, 1993, *Seikyo Shimbun*).

“In one letter to Lord Matsuno, whom Nichiren Daishonin had never met, the Daishonin extends his heartfelt encouragement. Never having met the Daishonin in that time might be comparable to never having chanted to the Dai-Gohonzon in our age. To Lord Matsuno the Daishonin says, in summary: ‘Even though we have never met, you have somehow taken faith in my teaching. How wonderful! You will definitely attain Buddhahood!’ (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1379). ‘What matters is one’s heart’ (MW-5, 289), as Nichiren Daishonin says. Our attainment of Buddhahood does not depend on whether we have physically met the Daishonin, or whether we have physically prayed before the Dai-Gohonzon. In this vein, to assert that those who do not visit Taiseki-ji and see the Dai-Gohonzon have no faith is totally contrary to the Daishonin’s teaching. No benefit is to be gained by seeing the Dai-Gohonzon if one must betray the Daishonin’s intent to do so” (Nov. 22, 1993, *Seikyo Shimbun*).

“The Gosho also says: ‘The practitioner of the Lotus Sutra should regard the place where he is as the Pure Land. Why must you bother to seek it elsewhere?’ (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 72) The Pure Land does not point to a specific location. In the true sense, the Pure Land denotes the very place where we work for kosen-rufu as practitioners of the Mystic Law” (Nov. 22, 1993, *Seikyo Shimbun*).

The Priesthood's Errors During World War II

During World War II, Nichiren Shoshu clearly failed to live up to the spirit of Nichiren Daishonin out of fear of oppression from the militarist authorities. It chose to compromise and subordinate itself to the militarists' state religion, Shinto, to commit slanderous acts and to work with the government in its war effort. Were it not for the courage and effort of Soka Gakkai first and second presidents Makiguchi and Toda, nothing of the Daishonin's correct practice or intent would have remained after the war.

Acceptance of Shinto talisman

Under the direction of the 62nd high priest, Nikkyo, Nichiren Shoshu accepted a Shinto talisman dedicated to the Sun Goddess that the government distributed to each family. This was in spite of the fact that doing so would seriously betray the Daishonin's word and spirit. Calling President Makiguchi and General Director Toda to the head temple, Nichiren Shoshu ordered the Soka Gakkai to do the same. Mr. Makiguchi resolutely rejected the order out of his commitment to protect the Daishonin's Buddhism. Soon after, 21 Soka Gakkai leaders, including Mr. Makiguchi and Mr. Toda, were arrested. In contrast, the head temple bowed to government pressure and issued a notice to enshrine the Shinto object of worship at the Shoin building on its grounds and have all local chief priests enshrine it in their lodgings. Nikkyo died in a fire at the head temple on June 17, 1945.

Elimination of Gosho passages

Fearing the military government, Nichiren Shoshu issued a notice ordering 14 passages to be eliminated from the writings of Nichiren Daishonin in September 1941. It eliminated those portions that might have been construed by the authorities as disrespectful to the emperor and the state-religion, Shintoism. The passages removed were 1) those where Nichiren Daishonin alludes to his identity as the Buddha of the Latter Day of the Law, 2) where he refers to the Sun Goddess, and 3) where he refers to the national sovereign.

Specifically, some of the censored passages were:

- ◆ "I am the foremost sage in the entire land of Jambudvipa" (MW-2 [2nd. ed.], 223). The priesthood feared that this passage may be regarded by the authorities as disparaging to the emperor.
- ◆ "Tensho Daijin (Sun Goddess) and Hachiman are respected as tutelary gods of this country, but they are only minor gods compared with Bonten, Taishaku, the gods of the sun and the moon, and the Four Heavenly Kings" (MW-1, 190). Hachiman and the Sun Goddess are Shinto deities, while Bonten, Taishaku, etc., are regarded as Buddhist gods.

- ◆ “Shakyamuni Buddha is the sovereign, teacher and parent for all the people of Japan. The seven ranks of heavenly gods, the five ranks of earthly gods, gods of ninety generations of kings and these kings themselves are still subjects of Shakyamuni Buddha” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1410). The priesthood feared that this passage may also be regarded by the authorities as disparaging to the emperor.

Revision of the silent prayers to suit Shintoism

Nichiren Shoshu issued a notice revising the contents of the sect’s silent prayers of gongyo in August 1941. Nichiren Shoshu thus directed its believers to pray for the “Sun Goddess, the origin of the emperor of this country,” “Emperor Jimmu, the founder of the emperor’s family” and “the country of the emperor.”

Nichiren Shoshu’s support of the war

Both before and during World War II, Nichiren Shoshu actively cooperated with the government, including providing metal for the military to make munitions and other resources. The high priest himself led prayer services for victory in the war at the head temple on the eighth day of each month, the day that marks the commencement of World War II (Dec. 7, the day of the attack on Pearl Harbor, is Dec. 8 in Japan). Their prayer for and support of an unjust war is more proof that the head temple had drifted far from the Daishonin’s will for peace. Many organizations, after the war, issued official apologies for their cooperation with the government in the war effort, but Nichiren Shoshu has never issued such an apology.

- ◆ **High Priest Nikkyo’s article in the *Shizuoka Shimbun***

High Priest Nikkyo, who attended the national funeral of Isoroku Yamamoto, the commander-in-chief of the navy of Japan, expressed his determination toward victory in the war in a local newspaper, the *Shizuoka Shimbun*, in 1943, stating: “We cannot reply to the spirit of the late commander-in-chief unless we make his spirit our own and continue to fulfill our job here away from the battlefield until we defeat our unjust enemies the United States and Britain.”

- ◆ **Nichiren Shoshu’s supplying the war effort**

Toward the end of the war, the head temple actively responded to requests from the military by supplying them with the head temple’s resources, including timber and even metal from prayer bells. The sect resolved at a special session of its council in September 1943 to provide copper, which was used in the roofs of various buildings on its grounds, hoping that in doing so the government would “make as many bullets as possible to be used on the front lines of the war.” This was reported in the local Shizuoka Prefecture newspaper.

The priesthood's official magazine, Dai-Nichiren, reported in 1944 that materials donated to the military by the head temple shall "become a ship to carry the soldiers, supplies and weapons of the Imperial Army and bullets to penetrate the breasts of fierce enemies as intended by the Buddha." What Buddha was supposed to have ever intended such violence is not clear.

◆ **Opening its facilities for soldiers**

Nichiren Shoshu accepted 200 soldiers every month, starting in June 1943, opening its Shoin and other structures as sites to be used for training. The government authorities praised the sect's initiative in opening the temple grounds.

II. SGI General Director Eiichi Wada's Guidance on the Temple Issue

- ◆ What can each of us do about the temple issue? The “how” of challenging this issue is nothing other than the basics — faith, practice and study. The entire temple issue should be viewed and handled within this context of faith, practice and study.
- ◆ Faith means our prayer. First, let's pray for a great victory in the temple issue. Specifically, we should pray for each person to become happy. Pursuing our happiness and the happiness of others is the basic purpose of Buddhism. Second, we should pray that our fellow members are never deceived by the priesthood — that we all come to understand clearly the essence of the temple issue. Through heartfelt prayer and meaningful dialogue, we can help one another practice correctly. Third, let's pray for the happiness of the temple members. They have been misguided by the priests and are encouraged to make offerings to these slanderers of Buddhism. Thus they are inadvertently making bad causes for their lives. It is our mission to disconnect them from the temple through our prayer. Our aim is to protect them from eventual misery.
- ◆ Our combined prayer, whether chanted individually or collectively, will surely manifest in opportunities to act upon our determination to protect our members and protect Buddhism. This has certainly been the case in other places including Brazil, for example, where, based on resolute daimoku, the members were able to find legal means to get the temple back. SGI President Ikeda said: “It is actually daimoku that determines whether we win or lose. Only through daimoku does kosen-rufu advance.”
- ◆ Talking about practice, the word *practice* means action and dialogue. The word *kyo* of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo also means action, by the way. Our actions are the source of our benefits. To the degree that we move, taking action for kosen-rufu, we accumulate fortune. Everything we do for kosen-rufu is a source of benefit. For example, participating in culture festivals, holding an exhibition, visiting members — whatever we do by moving our bodies for the sake of the Law is a source of benefit. Benefit is not something that just comes to us. When we take action for kosen-rufu, the Buddhist gods — the protective functions in our environment — begin to function on our behalf. Nichiren Daishonin speaks of “gathering fortune from ten thousand miles afar” (MW-1, 272). The Gohonzon is like a magnet that can gather fortune from 10,000 miles afar. To the

degree that we practice Buddhism, the Gohonzon in each of us will shine. The Gohonzon within ourselves is the force that gathers fortune from all over the world.

- ◆ Overall, our practice is propagation, *shakubuku*. This is basic. The temple issue should be seen in this context; our compassionate *shakubuku* spirit should be the basis of our dealing with the temple issue. Propagating the Daishonin's Buddhism among those seeking happiness is our goal. And being victorious in the temple issue and winning over the temple's aims is part of this goal. Shakubuku also means to refute what is wrong and teach what is true. This applies precisely to our efforts with regard to the temple issue.
- ◆ It is especially important to support those SGI members who are in contact with temple members. Those SGI members are the lifelines for temple members; friendships between SGI members and their temple-member acquaintances should be nurtured and cherished. Those relationships are the temple members' avenue to rediscovering the correct practice. These contact persons should also be warmly supported and encouraged, and given an opportunity to deeply study the temple issue.
- ◆ One of the reformist priests in Japan has succeeded in bringing more than 60 temple members back to the Soka Gakkai. What we can learn from his example is the power of cherishing human relationships with temple members and the power of sincere, compassionate, tenacious efforts in caring for others. His efforts were based on abundant, persistent and determined daimoku. One temple member in San Francisco who has returned to the SGI recounts that it was a friend of hers, an SGI-USA member who continued to chant for her happiness, who enabled her return to the SGI. While no one in the temple seriously chanted for her recovery when she became very ill, she learned how much SGI-USA members had been caring about her and chanting for her, even though she had once left the SGI.
- ◆ The third of the three basics is, of course, study. Our study centers on the Daishonin's writings, and President Ikeda's speeches and essays, which are based on those writings. We can see, through study, the clear distinction between the Daishonin's teachings and the new teachings of Nichiren Shoshu. Also through study, we can learn that the SGI is exactly in accord with the heart of the Daishonin's teachings. And by studying what President Ikeda has to say to encourage our faith, we will see a clearer picture of the temple issue.

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- ◆ Since the inception of the SGI in 1930, this organization has remained unchanged in its direct connection with the Daishonin and his writings, which we have made our foundation; the Gohonzon has always been the basis of our faith. In Nichiren Shoshu, however, Nikken is seen as everything — he is the center and has gone so far as to assert that his word is even more important than the Daishonin's. In fact, Nikken allows one of the temple publications to state that he is the “Daishonin of modern times” (June 1991 *Dai-Nichiren*, Nichiren Shoshu's monthly journal).
 - ◆ It is through front-line activities that we can advance kosen-rufu. When all SGI-USA leaders place themselves in the forefront of district activities, we start learning what kind of influence the temple members are having on our membership. It's there that we can diminish the negative influence of the priesthood and increase the Buddha's forces by having courageous dialogue with the people who are being swayed by the temple or the people who are still having difficulties understanding the importance of this issue.
 - ◆ Ultimately it is our behavior that matters most. Members are watching what we do — not just listening to what we say. For example, we should avoid using overly emotional language such as “destroy the Nikken sect” in talking about this issue. Rather, we should be aware that our steady efforts in daimoku and dialogue — cheerfully, joyfully — will enable us to win. The important thing is for SGI members to show actual proof of our practice. President Ikeda always wants SGI-USA members to be joyful and to fully enjoy a correct practice. Ultimately it is our life-condition that proves the righteousness of our faith and practice.
 - ◆ What can we expect to happen in the future concerning the temple issue? Beginning around 1995, Nichiren Shoshu, which did not have much success in recruiting Soka Gakkai members in Japan where the members are well aware of the reality of the priesthood's faith and lifestyle, shifted its focus to countries outside Japan. SGI members outside Japan are usually innocent in terms of their experience with Nichiren Shoshu and can be susceptible to the superficial dignity implied by the priesthood's religious robes. We can expect their efforts to draw in members outside of Japan to intensify.
 - ◆ We have observed the past destructiveness of Nikken, and it is vital to know what Nikken will try to do in the next few years against the flow of kosen-rufu. After destroying all the buildings donated over the years by Soka Gakkai members, including the Grand Reception Hall and the Grand Main Temple (Sho-Hondo), Nichiren Shoshu is now focusing on the year 2002, which will commemorate the 750th anniversary of the establishment of the Daishonin's Buddhism. Nikken's goal is

to have 300,000 people make a pilgrimage to the head temple to celebrate the occasion. At that time, he wants to glorify himself with the completion of a new temple called the Treasure House (Hoando). Toward this end, Nikken has instructed temple members to raise \$150 million over the next three years.

- ◆ Because of the increasing pressure the temple members will face as they are forced to comply with Nikken's pilgrimage and financial goals for the year 2002, we can expect that some are going to become disheartened. They will begin to see the priesthood's true nature. It is at that time that the friendship of the SGI members they are in contact with will be deeply appreciated by them and truly protect them.
- ◆ Nikken reportedly has promised to retire once this new temple is completed in 2002 and the 300,000-member pilgrimage has been held. But even if Nikken should retire, the temple issue is going to last a long time. We can be fairly certain that Nikken's successors will be no different than Nikken himself in terms of their aims and the off-kilter doctrines they promote.
- ◆ There will be no quick solution to the temple issue. It is important that each SGI-USA member understand the issue's essential nature and take it as an opportunity to deepen his or her faith in and understanding of the correct practice of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. Simply using emotional statements against the priesthood will not help solve this issue. What counts is our steady efforts to further awaken ourselves and others to the profound significance of this issue.

Appendix A

Nichiren Shoshu Timeline

Today's temple issue has roots that extend much further back than the founding of the Soka Gakkai in 1930. In fact, problems arose as soon as Nichiren Daishonin died, in 1282. Here's a timeline of Nichiren Shoshu's history:

1282	Before he dies in October of this year, the Daishonin writes his "Document for Entrusting the Law That Nichiren Propagated Throughout His Life," which names his disciple Nikko Shonin as his legitimate successor.
1285	When a statue of Shakyamuni is erected at Mount Minobu and one of the six senior priests, Niko (not Nikko Shonin) calls this an appropriate object of devotion — going completely against the instructions of Nichiren Daishonin — Nikko Shonin leaves Mount Minobu in order to protect the purity of his mentor's teachings.
1289	Nikko Shonin establishes Taiseki-ji as the head temple of the Daishonin's school, at the foot of Mount Fuji. It becomes the center of what comes to be known as the Fuji School, in modern times referred to as Nichiren Shoshu.
1333	After the third high priest, Nichimoku Shonin, dies, two priests fight over succession rights, setting in motion a land dispute that lasts for 70 years and splits the head temple into two factions. Also, by this time, four errant schools have branched off from the legitimate Fuji School founded by Nikko Shonin.
The 1400s	The 9th high priest, Nichiu, unifies the three factions at the head temple, which has fallen into decline as a result of the long dispute.
1482	When a 13-year-old is appointed high priest, in order to counter challenges regarding his qualification, the priesthood begins for the first time to propound doctrines asserting that the high priest is absolute and infallible. (This idea is revived by Nikken Abe to strengthen his own position and power in the 1990s.)

The 1500s	The head temple falls into its most serious decline, one reason being that it is located far from the political and cultural center of the day, Kyoto. The priesthood, in desperation, starts making overtures to priests from a prestigious but heretical Minobu Nichiren-school temple in Kyoto, Yobo-ji. The aim is to elevate the status of Taiseki-ji by inviting priests from Yobo-ji, who are respected in elite circles, to become its high priests. These priests, like Niko during the time of the second high priest, worship statues of Shakyamuni. This heresy continues into the next century.
1718	Nichikan becomes the 26th high priest. He works tirelessly to clarify the Daishonin's teachings and the correct practice of them, reestablishing the importance of the Gohonzon and bringing the head temple back on track. (Today, the Gohonzon that SGI members receive is a copy of one transcribed by Nichikan.)
1872	The government issues a notice to loosen the restrictions that were enforced upon all Buddhist priests by the Tokugawa Government during Japan's Edo period (1600–1865) and allow priests to marry, eat meat, grow out their hair and wear secular clothing. The 56th high priest, Nichio, becomes the first married high priest.
1930	Despite Nichikan's efforts, Nichiren Shoshu has again experienced a prolonged period of decline until the Soka Gakkai is founded in 1930. Under the leadership of presidents Makiguchi and Toda, Nichiren Shoshu's number of believers begins a gradual increase.
1943	During World War II, the Japanese military government requires all sects to accept a Shinto talisman and thereby pay homage to the deity of the militarist government. Nichiren Shoshu agrees to compromise with the government order in this matter, while Makiguchi refuses. Imprisoned as a result of his stance to protect the Daishonin's teachings, Makiguchi dies in prison.
1950s – 1980s	Toda, who was also imprisoned, rebuilds the Soka Gakkai after the war with his disciple, Daisaku Ikeda. The temple, as a result of the Soka Gakkai's explosive growth, experiences a golden age never realized in its seven-century history. Soka Gakkai members donate billions of dollars and hundreds of facilities to Nichiren Shoshu.
1990	Nikken, high priest since 1979, starts enacting measures to exert control over the SGI and devises Operation C (C for Cut), a plan to take control of the now 12 million practitioners who belong to the organization worldwide by "cutting" President Ikeda from his position of leadership. The current temple issue begins as the plan is set in motion.

1991	The head temple excommunicates 12 million people, and the SGI and the temple become two separate entities. Nikken reintroduces the doctrine of the infallibility of the high priest, leading Nichiren Shoshu once again far astray from the intent of the Daishonin's teachings.
1992	A number of temples begin to secede from Nichiren Shoshu in protest of Nikken's distortion of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.
1997-98	Nikken surreptitiously removes the Dai-Gohonzon from the Sho-Hondo, the Grand Main Temple, without informing the general priesthood, and begins demolition of the structure. He states his reason as being that the building was donated by slanderers — meaning the Soka Gakkai members. Nevertheless, he makes no move to return or demolish the hundreds of temples the organization had built and donated over the years.
1999	Notes are released recording Nikken as declaring the Dai-Gohonzon a forgery at a meeting with Jitoku Kawabe at the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo in February 1979. In response to this and the temple administration's deficient explanations, temples and priests begin anew to secede from their affiliation with the Nichiren Shoshu head temple.

From this history, it is easy to see that the Daishonin's teachings have been distorted and denigrated by Nichiren Shoshu repeatedly over the centuries.

In reviewing the above facts, we can be absolutely certain that the SGI is the only organization currently upholding correct faith in the Daishonin's Buddhism. Nichiren Shoshu has become a religion entirely estranged from his teachings. Free of the priesthood's formalistic restrictions and dogma, the SGI has thrived in recent years. Since 1991, SGI members have tried to help as many people as possible understand what is at the core of the temple issue and the true history of Nichiren Shoshu.□

Successive High Priests of Nichiren Shoshu

2nd	Nikko	1282 – 1290	Nichiren Daishonin's immediate successor. Founds the head temple, Taiseki-ji, in 1289.
3rd	Nichimoku	1290 – 1333	Remonstrates with the imperial court more than 10 times.
4th	Nichido	1333 – 1339	Internal strife erupts at Taiseki-ji, plagues it for some 70 years.
5th	Nichigyo	1339 – 1365	
6th	Nichiji	1365 – 1406	
7th	Nichia	1406 – 1407	
8th	Nichiei	1407 – 1419	
9th	Nichiu	1419 – 1466 1472 – 1482	Restores the order of the Fuji School (today's Nichiren Shoshu) that has been split over the issue of the ownership of the land of the head temple. Systematizes the practices and rituals of the school.
10th	Nichijo	1466 – 1470	
11th	Nittei	1470 – 1472	
12th	Nicchin	1482 – 1527	Becomes high priest at 14.
13th	Nichi'in	1527 – 1573	Becomes high priest at 9.
14th	Nisshu	1573 – 1596	Becomes high priest at 18.
15th	Nissho	1596 – 1607 1612 – 1622	Comes from Yobo-ji temple of Minobu sect in Kyoto.
16th	Nichijyu	1607 – 1611 1622 – 1632	Comes from Yobo-ji.
17th	Nissei	1632 – 1633 1637 – 1645	Comes from Yobo-ji. Worships the statue of Shakyamuni. Mixes Nichiren Daishonin's teachings with his own view of Buddhism.
18th	Nichiei	1633 – 1637	Comes from Yobo-ji.
19th	Nisshun	1645 – 1652	Comes from Yobo-ji.
20th	Nitten	1652 – 1673	Comes from Yobo-ji.
21st	Nichinin	1673 – 1680	Comes from Yobo-ji.
22nd	Nisshun	1680 – 1682	Comes from Yobo-ji.

23rd	Nikkei	1682 – 1692	Comes from Yobo-ji.
24th	Nichiei	1692 – 1709	
25th	Nichiyu	1709 – 1718	Develops ties with the Tokugawa Shogunate.
26th	Nichikan	1718 – 1720 1723 – 1726	Restores the doctrinal basis of Nichiren Shoshu by writing his <i>Six Volume Teachings</i> (The Gohonzon issued by the SGI is based on a Gohonzon that he transcribed.).
27th	Nichiyo	1720 – 1723	
28th	Nissho	1726 – 1732	
29th	Nitto	1732 – 1736	
30th	Nitchu	1736 – 1740	
31st	Nichi'in	1740 – 1750	
32nd	Nikkyo	1750 – 1756	
33rd	Nichigen	1756 – 1764 1765	
34th	Nisshin	1764 – 1765	
35th	Nichion	1765 – 1770	
36th	Nikken	1770 – 1776	
37th	Nippo	1776 – 1783 1785 1787 – 1791 1796 1797 – 1799	Becomes high priest repeatedly due to the early death of some high priests who came after him.
38th	Nittai	1783 – 1784	
39th	Nichijun	1785 – 1786	
40th	Nichinin	1791 – 1795	
41st	Nichimon	1795 – 1796	
42nd	Nichigo	1796 – 1797	
43rd	Nisso	1799 – 1803	
44th	Nissen	1803 – 1807 1808 – 1817	
45th	Nichirei	1807 – 1808	
46th	Nitcho	1808 – 1814	
47th	Nisshu	1814 – 1815	

48th	Nichiryō	1817 – 1820 1830 – 1831 1836	
49th	Nisso	1820 – 1830	
50th	Nichijō	1831 – 1836	
51st	Nichiei	1836 – 1851 1865	
52nd	Nichiden	1853 – 1862 1865 – 1869 1885 – 1889	
53rd	Nichijō	1862 – 1865	Deserts Taiseki-ji while high priest. Neglects to transfer the heritage of the Law; Hence the next high priest is elected through discussions among representatives of the priesthood and laity.
54th	Nichi'in	1869 – 1874	Requests the government to allow the sect to remain independent of other Nichiren school; however, the government orders all Nichiren schools to merge despite their differing doctrines to make it easier for the government to control them.
55th	Nippu	1874 – 1885	
56th	Nichio	1889 – 1908	First married high priest. That priests begin to have their own families complicates matters within Nichiren Shoshu and drives the priesthood toward more secular concerns.
57th	Nissho	1908 – 1923	Joins with erroneous sects in petitioning the government for a special title for Nichiren Daishonin, going against one of Nikko's "Twenty-six Admonitions." Transfers the heritage of the Law to two lay believers, who then transfer it to the next high priest, Nitcho.
58th	Nitcho	1923 – 1926	Forced to resign from the position of high priest by coup orchestrated by Nikkai, Nikken's father, who later obtains that position.
59th	Nichiko	1926 – 1928	Chosen as high priest by government-sponsored election in the school.
60th	Nikkai	1928 – 1935	Nikken's father. Schemes successfully to oust the 58th high priest, Nitcho.

61st	Nichiryu	1935 – 1937 1945 – 1946	
62nd	Nikkyo	1937 – 1945	Accepts Shinto talisman from the militarist government. Permits visits to Shinto shrines. Deletes 14 passages from the Gosho to support Japan’s Shinto militarism. Organizes groups at Taiseki-ji to promote war efforts. Places Shinto goddess in silent prayers above Nichiren Daishonin. Allows enshrinement of Shinto talisman at the head temple. Eventually dies in fire at the head temple.
63rd	Nichiman	1946 – 1947	
64th	Nissho	1947 – 1956	
65th	Nichijun	1956 – 1959	
66th	Nittatsu	1959 – 1979	Declares the Grand Main Temple (Sho-Hondo) to be the High Sanctuary of True Buddhism at the time of kosen-rufu.
67th	Nikken	1979 –	Distorts Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism and tried to destroy the kosen-rufu movement of the SGI. Literally destroys the Grand Main Temple. Is discovered to have called the Dai-Gohonzon a forgery.

Note: Years indicated show each high priest’s tenure of office. Some high priests held office twice or more.

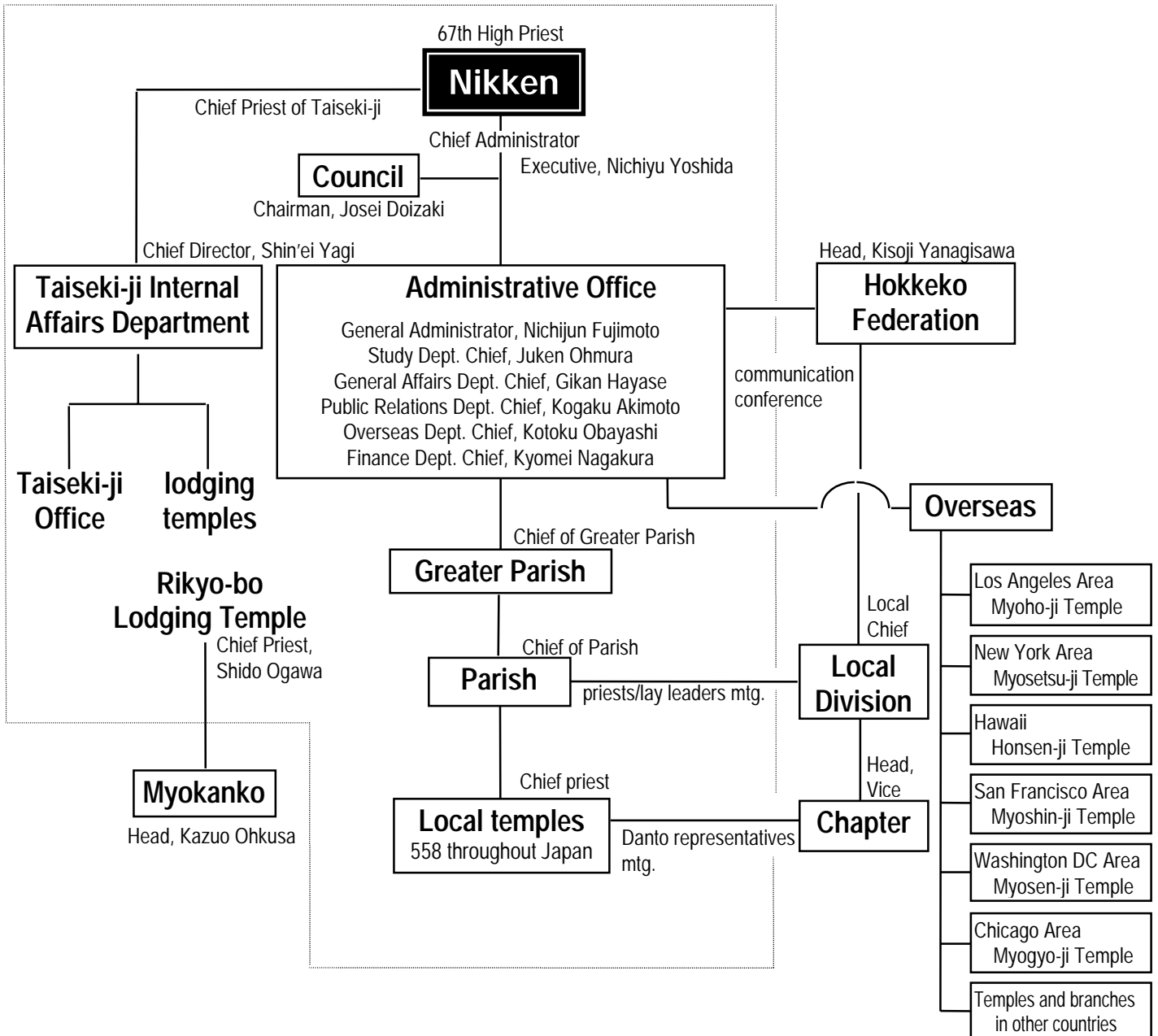
Want to know more? Read the “The Untold History of the Fuji School” series in *Living Buddhism*, which will be published in book form in the near future.

The Current Status of Nichiren Shoshu

Organizational structure

Nichiren Shoshu's structure consists of 1) Nichiren Shoshu, an organization governing all the branch temples, 2) Taiseki-ji, the head temple of the school and 3) the Hokkeko Federation, the lay organization governing all temple members, including those overseas. At the top of these three, holding absolute authority over the sect, is Nikken, the 67th high priest of Nichiren Shoshu, the chief administrator of Nichiren Shoshu and the chief priest of Taiseki-ji.

The Current Structure of Nichiren Shoshu (As of June 1999)



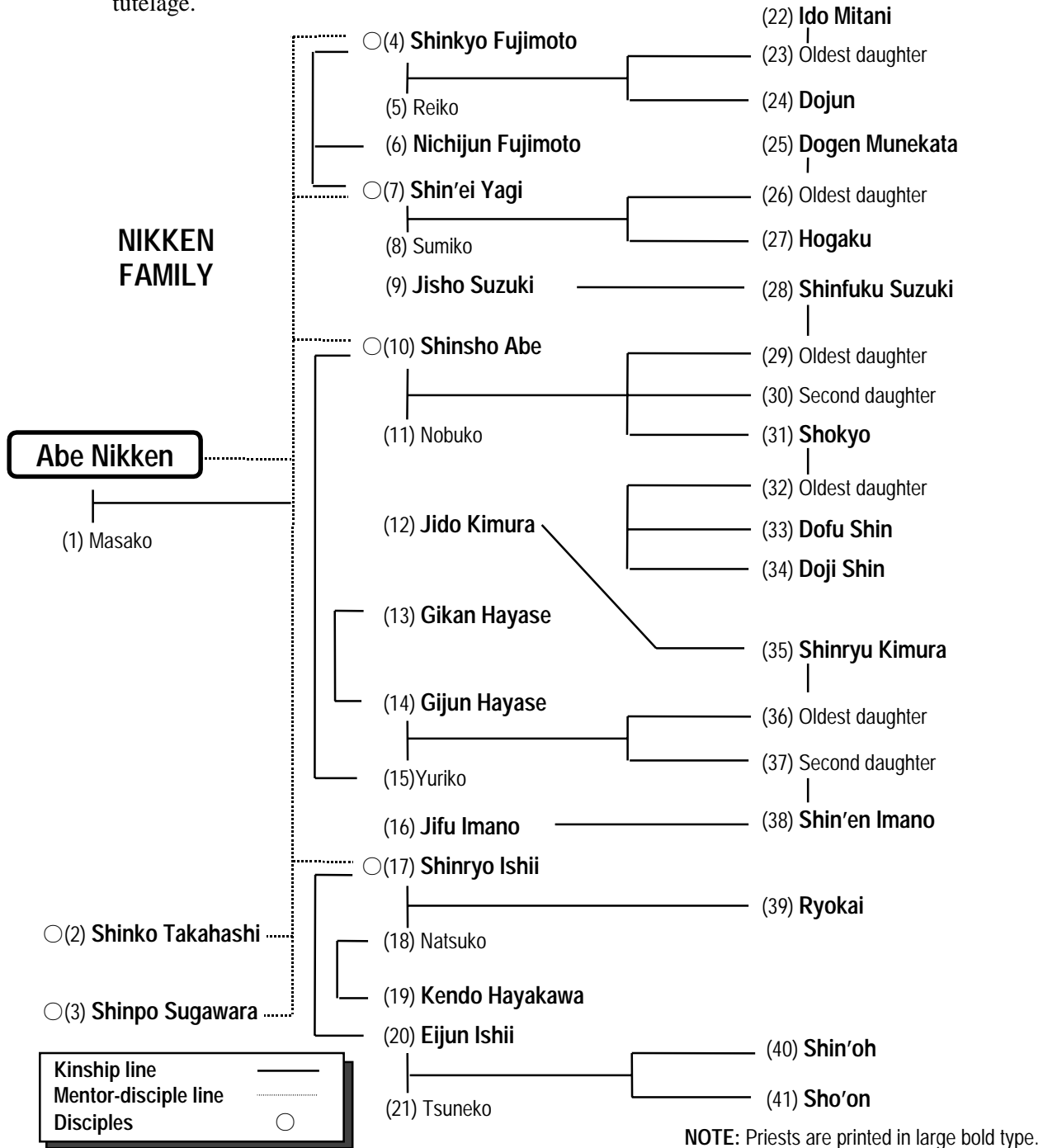
Nichiren Shoshu's Japanese publications

- I. ***Dai-Nichiren***: This is the monthly journal of Nichiren Shoshu. It carries the schedule of the sect's events, personnel announcements, Nikken's sermons, etc.
- II. ***Daibyakuho***: This is the bi-monthly newspaper of the Hokkeko Federation. It contains news of Hokekko events and activity schedules, etc. It is published on the first and 16th every month.
- III. ***Emyo***: Originally an organ of Myokanko, a lay group that belongs to the Rikyo-bo lodging temple at the head temple, Taiseki-ji, this bi-monthly publication has been acknowledged by Nikken as an official organ of Nichiren Shoshu.

Note: Many local temples also issue their own periodicals. NST, the affiliation of temples in the United States, publishes an English monthly magazine called *Nichiren Shoshu Monthly*.

Nikken's "Family"

Major positions within Nichiren Shoshu today are, as shown below, controlled by the Nikken "family," which consists of Nikken's immediate family members and priests who are Nikken's relatives or disciples, and their wives and children. Nikken's disciples are those priests who were raised or trained within the priesthood under Nikken's personal tutelage.



Nikken's 'Family'

(Priests' names are in bold. Descriptions in parentheses indicate relationship to Nikken.)

1. Masako (Nikken's wife)
2. **Shinko Takahashi** (Nikken's disciple, Butsujo-ji Temple)
3. **Shinpo Sugawara** (Nikken's disciple, Honshu-ji Temple)
4. **Shinkyo Fujimoto** (Nikken's disciple, Tokuho-ji Temple)
5. Reiko (wife of Nikken's disciple)
6. **Nichijun Fujimoto** (General Administrator, brother of Nikken's disciples)
7. **Shin'ei Yagi** (Chief Director, Nikken's disciple)
8. Sumiko (wife of Nikken's disciple)
9. **Jisho Suzuki** (father of Nikken's granddaughter's husband)
10. **Shinsho Abe** (General Affairs Dept. Vice Chief, Nikken's son)
11. Nobuko (wife of Nikken's son)
12. **Jido Kimura** (father of Nikken's granddaughter's husband)
13. **Gikan Hayase** (General Affairs Dept. Chief, brother of Nikken's daughter's husband)
14. **Gijun Hayase** (husband of Nikken's daughter)
15. Yuriko (Nikken's daughter)
16. **Jifu Imano** (father of Nikken's granddaughter's husband)
17. **Shinryo Ishii** (Director, Nikken's disciple)
18. Natsuko (wife of Shinryo Ishii)
19. **Kendo Hayakawa** (brother of Tsuneko)
20. **Eijun Ishii** (brother of Nikken's disciple)
21. Tsuneko (wife of Eijun Ishii)
22. **Ido Mitani** (husband of a daughter of Nichijun Fujimoto)
23. Oldest daughter (daughter of Nichijun Fujimoto)
24. **Dojun** (Finance Dept, son of Nichijun Fujimoto.)
25. **Dogen Munakata** (Internal Affairs Dept., husband of Shin'ei Yagi's daughter)
26. Oldest daughter (daughter of Shin'ei Yagi)
27. **Hogaku** (assistant at Myokoku-ji Temple in Tokyo, son of Shin'ei Yagi)
28. **Shinpuku Suzuki** (husband of Nikken's granddaughter)
29. Oldest daughter (Nikken's granddaughter)
30. Second daughter (Nikken's granddaughter)
31. **Shokyo** (Fuji Academy Secretary, Nikken's grandson)
32. Oldest daughter (wife of Nikken's grandson)
33. **Doyu Shin** (brother of Nikken's grandson's wife)
34. **Doji Shin** (brother of Nikken's grandson's wife)
35. **Shinryu Kimura** (General Affairs Dept. Secretary, husband of Nikken's granddaughter)
36. Oldest daughter (Nikken's granddaughter)
37. Second daughter (Nikken's granddaughter)
38. **Shin'en Imano** (husband of Nikken's granddaughter)
39. **Ryokai** (Assistant at Sentoku-ji in Tokyo, son of Shinryo Ishii)
40. **Shin'oh** (Students' Dept., son of Eijun Ishii)
41. **Sho'on** (son of Eijun Ishii)

Nichiren Shoshu's next goals

Nichiren Shoshu plans to hold a pilgrimage of 300,000 participants in the year 2002. This is meant to commemorate the 750th anniversary of the establishment of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. In February 1999, the sect announced that it would gather \$50 million every year toward 2002 for a total of \$150 million. Around \$72 million of this will be spent for the construction of the Hoan-do temple that Nikken plans to build on the site where the Grand Main Temple (Sho-Hondo) once stood. Leading this campaign is Nikken, who calls this pilgrimage an order from the Daishonin. Nikken has said: "Please deeply reflect on the fact that this 300,000-member pilgrimage is an order from the Daishonin. Don't think that this idea came from the current high priest at the time of the 60,000 pilgrimage in 1994. Because you harbor such a thought, you can't be serious enough about this great cause. This 300,000-member pilgrimage is an order we have received from the True Buddha, Nichiren Daishonin" (Nikken's sermon at a nationwide teachers guidance meeting on Aug. 27, 1998).

The Six Temples in the United States

The History of the SGI-USA and Nichiren Shoshu Temple (NST)

The Soka Gakkai in Japan and SGI-USA (then NSA) and its members were largely responsible for the opening and maintenance of the six temples of Nichiren Shoshu in the United States:

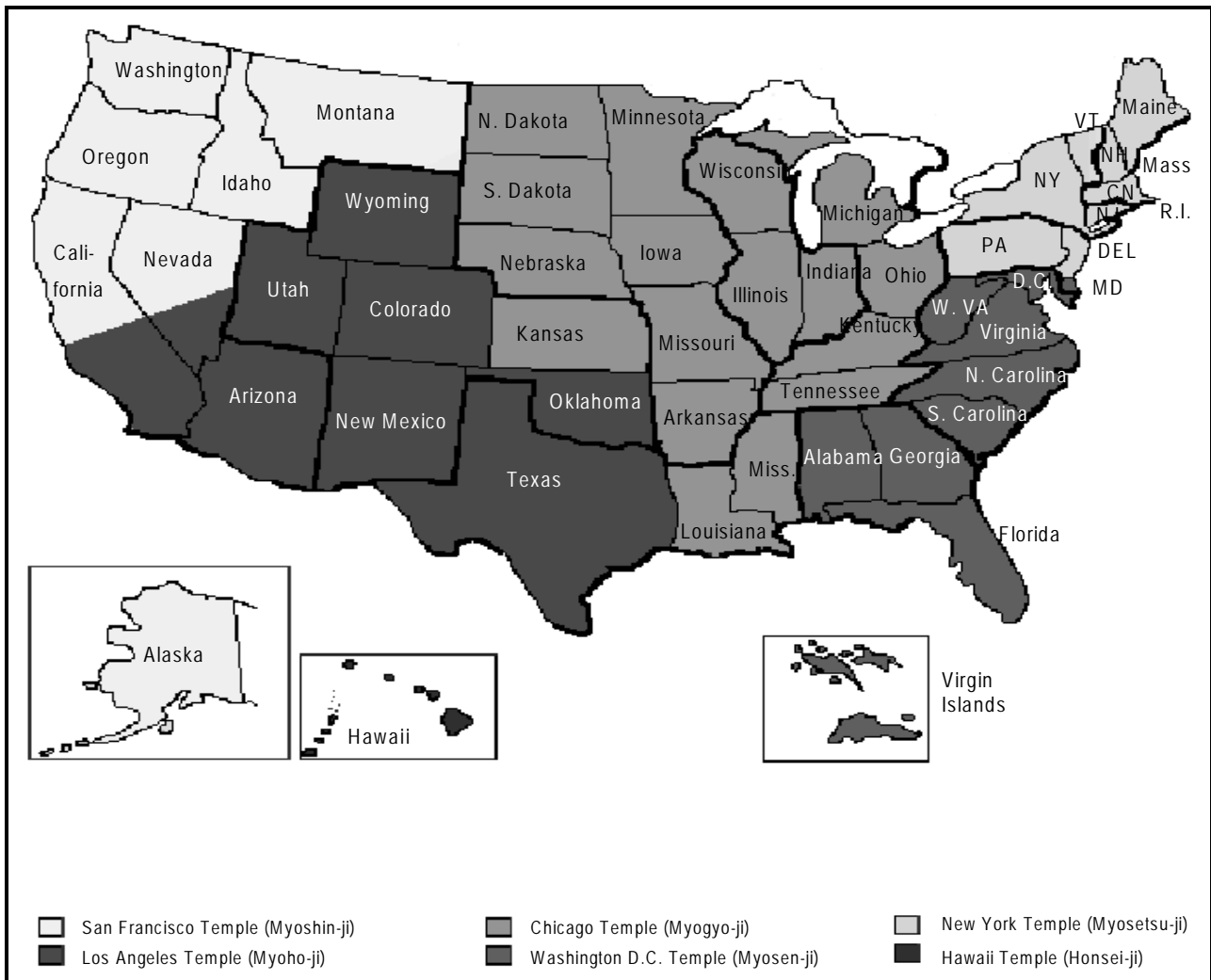
- ◆ NSA members made heartfelt monetary contributions for the construction of each temple.
- ◆ NSA took out a loan on behalf of Nichiren Shoshu to finance the construction of Myoho-ji temple in Los Angeles.
- ◆ Nationwide campaigns to collect offerings from the membership each time Nikken visited the United States were held.
- ◆ Members donated their time and energy to construct, clean and maintain all six temples, and often traveled a long way to do so.
- ◆ NSA provided salary and staff assistance for priests for 23 years, from 1966 until 1979, when NST was legally formed as a religious corporation in the United States. In the meantime, NSA handled all legal matters for all the chief priests, so that they could obtain permanent status to stay in the United States. NSA sponsored the priests and the establishment of the NST organization in the United States.
- ◆ NSA provided transportation, interpreters and security whenever needed by priests or by the high priest.

Despite all this support from NSA/SGI-USA over the years, Nichiren Shoshu now uses each of its six temples in the United States as a stronghold for their attacks on our organization. They should return these facilities rightfully to the SGI-USA members.

The History of Nichiren Shoshu Temple in America

Temple Information	Successive Chief Priests	Remarks
<p>Hawaii Temple Honsei-ji Opened in Honolulu May 27, 1966.</p>	<p>Tokudo Yanasaka (1998–present) Shido Takahashi (1984–1998) Tokudo Takeda (1981–1984) Shudo Sugano (1979–1981) Gensho Nishino (1973–1979) Yogaku Iwaki (1969–1973) Tokujun Furuya (1966–1969)</p>	<p>Tokujun Furuya left Nichiren Shoshu and joined Shoshinkai in Japan in 1980.</p>
<p>Los Angeles Temple Myoho-ji Opened in Etiwanda, Calif., on May 16, 1967. Moved to West Hollywood in May 19, 1996.</p>	<p>Taishin Takano (1991–present) Yosai Yamada (1986–1991) Gen'ei Kudo (1982–1986) Shobo Sakata (1976–1982) Tokujun Furuya (1970–1976) Joshin Suzuki (1967–1970)</p>	<p>Gen'ei Kudo left Nichiren Shoshu and became the leader of the Association for the Reformation of Nichiren Shoshu in 1992.</p>
<p>Washington, D.C., Temple Myosen-ji Opened in Mt. Rainier, Md., on Jan. 22, 1972, and reopened in Silver Springs, Md., on Dec. 6, 1980, as a new structure.</p>	<p>Shoshin Kawabe (1996–present) Rendo Yoshikawa (1989–1996) Daido Nakamoto (1982–1989) Yogaku Iwaki (1972–1982)</p>	<p>Shoshin Kawabe is a son of Jitoku Kawabe, whose father's memo revealed that Nikken held disbelief in the Dai-Gohonzon.</p>
<p>New York Temple Myosetsu-ji Opened on Dec. 4, 1980, as a temple office in Flushing, N.Y., and reopened on Dec. 2, 1984, as a new structure.</p>	<p>Jisei Nagasaka (1988–present) Yosai Yamada (1986–1988) Shiina Hosho (1982–1986) Kando Tono (1980–1982)</p>	<p>Hosho Shiina left Nichiren Shoshu in 1992 to become a reformist priest. Kando Tono joined Shoshinkai in 1982.</p>
<p>Chicago Temple Myogyo-ji Opened in Warrenville, Ill., on June 27, 1981.</p>	<p>Hodo Sugeno (1996–present) Shoshin Kawabe (1991–1996) Taishin Takano (1984–1991) Yosai Yamada (1982–1984) Shudo Sugano (1981–1982)</p>	
<p>San Francisco Temple Myoshin-ji Opened in Pinole, Calif., on June 3, 1984.</p>	<p>Cho'on Shiba (1999–present) Jiho Takahashi (1986–1998) Jisei Nagasaka (1984–1986)</p>	<p>Shiba was assistant priest of the Los Angeles temple under Gen'ei Kudo.</p>

Nichiren Shoshu U.S. Temple Directory



Hokkeko Federation — Nichiren Shoshu's Laity

Hokkeko Federation

The Hokkeko Federation is an organization of lay groups that are directly connected with Nichiren Shoshu temples. It was established in 1962 in Japan. Their headquarters is located in Tokyo. It has another facility in Osaka. Both structures were donated by the Soka Gakkai. Its current chairman is Kisoji Yanagisawa. He is also nominally in charge of Hokkeko's overseas membership, for he is now head of all Nichiren Shoshu lay organizations after SGI President Ikeda was excommunicated.

Its claimed membership in Japan is 300,000, but its actual membership seems to be closer to 100,000. Its overseas membership is growing in number. There are an estimated 2,300 Hokkeko members in the United States.

The Hokkeko group consists of two types of individuals: those whose families have been connected to Nichiren Shoshu over the generations and were not members of the Soka Gakkai, and those who have left the Soka Gakkai and become its members.

Before the temple issue broke out in 1990, the Soka Gakkai supported the Hokkeko extensively since President Ikeda was responsible for the entire lay movement as the designated head of all Nichiren Shoshu lay organizations.

Many members of the Hokkeko were born into families that have had a long relationship with Nichiren Shoshu. They tend to follow the direction of the priesthood obediently and continue to give offerings without questioning the validity of the priests' faith or teachings. These families' affiliation with Nichiren Shoshu temples often stems back to the days when the government required all citizens to affiliate themselves with a temple in their local area, regardless of that temple's denomination. Because this affiliation was originally not voluntary but obligatory, the attitude of faith that has been passed on from generation to generation among these families has been largely one of obligation and formality. The priests' definition of faith, including the idea that the priesthood is superior to the laity, is generally accepted by the Hokkeko.

After the temple issue broke out, the Hokkeko group was pressured by the priesthood to attack the Soka Gakkai. The Hokkeko's resentment of the Soka Gakkai's tremendous growth since World War II also fueled their attacks.

Now Nikken is counting on the Hokkeko group to support his plans for 2002 — especially when it comes to raising the \$150 million to satisfy his personal desires including the construction of Hoando temple.

The Hokkeko members in the United States consist mainly of those SGI-USA members who are misguided about the true nature of the Daishonin's Buddhism and left the SGI-USA due to various misunderstandings or personality conflicts.

Other Nichiren-based Groups

Shoshinkai

- ◆ **Priest in charge:** Shindo Sakai (chief priest of Hojun-ji in Saitama Prefecture, north of Tokyo).
- ◆ **Total number of temples in Japan:** 154 (including branch offices).
- ◆ **Organ publication:** *Keimyo Shimbun*, a newspaper published twice a month.

In the United States, a few Shoshinkai members live in the greater Seattle area. There may be a few others scattered about the United States. They distance themselves from the Hokkeko members (Nichiren Shoshu temple members). Shoshinkai priests from Japan appear to visit their members in America from time to time, less frequently now than in the past.

After World War II, the Daishonin's Buddhism spread dramatically through the efforts of Soka Gakkai members. Upon completion of the Grand Main Temple (Sho-Hondo) on the grounds of the head temple in October 1972, the Soka Gakkai began putting greater emphasis on its efforts to spread the Daishonin's Buddhism worldwide. The direction was to show how the Daishonin's teachings were accessible to society at large and applicable to the people's lives. To facilitate this and to accommodate its rapidly increasing membership, the Soka Gakkai started to build more community centers for its meetings and activities.

There were some priests within Nichiren Shoshu, however, who did not appreciate this emphasis on lay activities. They grew critical and resentful of the organization. These priests resented the fact that the Soka Gakkai was now funneling its resources into building its own facilities rather than temples. Because of their firm belief in the superiority of priests, many of them were displeased by the mere presence of a Buddhist lay movement that was growing in scope and influence. The sight of lay believers interpreting and preaching Buddhism freely in society troubled them deeply.

In December 1976, one of these disgruntled priests published a thesis criticizing the Soka Gakkai in the priesthood's official journal. As tensions arose, Nikken, then Nichiren Shoshu Study Department chief, was designated to mediate between the priesthood and the Soka Gakkai on the matter.

In January 1977, Nikken, along with the author of the thesis, visited the Soka Gakkai Headquarters. After discussing the matter with Soka Gakkai leaders, Nikken offered an apology, which the Soka Gakkai leaders accepted. Disgruntled priests within the head temple claimed the apology was coerced, calling it the Gakkai Kangaroo Court Incident. There was also a feeling that Nikken gave in too easily in issuing the apology. The event was used as a pretext for disgruntled priests to rally against the Soka Gakkai.

The anti-Soka Gakkai priests began to demand that the lay organization apologize for what they considered its irreverence toward the priesthood. They advocated a priest-centered Buddhist movement.

The high priest at the time, Nittatsu, was aware of the priesthood's limitations in spreading the Daishonin's Buddhism in society, but he felt he could not ignore the growing discontent within the priesthood. He asked for the Soka Gakkai to compromise on the issue.

It was in order to ease this tension with the priesthood that the Soka Gakkai expressed apologies for whatever organizational guidelines or doctrinal interpretations had been misconstrued by the priests as being disrespectful. But whenever the relationship between the priesthood and laity appeared to improve through the Soka Gakkai's efforts, Masatomo Yamazaki, then chief legal counsel for the Soka Gakkai, schemed to aggravate the situation.

Yamazaki provided legal advice and service not only to the Soka Gakkai but to the priesthood, which lacked knowledge and experience in legal matters. Under these circumstances, Yamazaki became close to many priests, including High Priest Nittatsu. With Yamazaki's familiarity with the priesthood, however, came his awakening to the reality of the priesthood's corruption.

The priesthood often claims that the Soka Gakkai had long been planning to sever its ties with the priesthood, even before the current temple issue surfaced at the end of 1990. However, it was Yamazaki who attempted to create a schism between the priesthood and the Soka Gakkai by originating this idea. Yamazaki was well aware of the Soka Gakkai's deference and sensitivity toward the priesthood, so he tried to create tension between the two groups — tension from which he sought to benefit personally.

Yamazaki pretended to be a mediator between High Priest Nittatsu, the anti-Soka Gakkai priests and the Soka Gakkai. But behind the scenes, however, he furnished disgruntled priests with various strategies and misinformation, inciting them to attack the Soka Gakkai. Knowing the situation and concerns of the three parties involved, he succeeded in keeping the conflict going and in convincing each side of his importance to their interests, profiting personally from their use of his services. Thus he gained leverage over both the priesthood and the Soka Gakkai.

The situation changed suddenly when Nittatsu died in July 1979. At the time, Yamazaki was heavily in debt due to various business failures, so he decided to take further advantage of the conflict and Nittatsu's death in order to relieve himself of his enormous financial problems.

Meanwhile, Yamazaki's scheming became known to the Soka Gakkai. Furthermore, Nikken, the new high priest, shunned Yamazaki, calling him "a liar." To solidify support for his newly acquired position within the priesthood, Nikken needed the Soka Gakkai's support.

To keep the conflict going, Yamazaki had to encourage the disgruntled priests to demand that the new high priest take a harder stance toward the Soka Gakkai — this was the beginning of the Shoshinkai.

As a result, Nikken pushed the Soka Gakkai to apologize again for various alleged errors. His intention in doing so was to send a message to anti-Soka Gakkai priests within

Nichiren Shoshu that he was capable of controlling the Soka Gakkai and bending it to his will, thus trying to win their respect and support.

It was under these circumstances, on July 4, 1980, that the anti-Soka Gakkai priests formed the Shoshinkai or Society of True Faith.

Unable to pressure Nikken to join them in attacking the Soka Gakkai outright, the Shoshinkai became highly critical of the high priest. On Jan. 22, 1981, 180 Shoshinkai members filed a lawsuit against the high priest. They asserted that the previous high priest, Nittatsu, never officially transferred the office of high priest to Nikken and sought the suspension of Nikken's duties as high priest and chief executive of Nichiren Shoshu.

Because they refused to give up their demands, Nikken began in October 1981 to expel members of the Shoshinkai from Nichiren Shoshu, until the number of priests expelled reached 180. Even after their expulsion, the Shoshinkai priests continued to demand an apology from the Nichiren Shoshu priesthood's executive leadership for their support of the Soka Gakkai.

In December 1990, the current temple issue surfaced with Nikken's decision to implement Operation C, the priesthood's plan to disband the Soka Gakkai. This began with the priesthood enacting a series of disciplinary measures against the Soka Gakkai, including the dismissal of President Ikeda from the position of chief lay representative, the introduction of a permit system for members to visit Taiseki-ji, a demand for the SGI to disband, the excommunication of the SGI and the priesthood's refusal to confer the Gohonzon upon SGI members.

With this significant change in the priesthood's relationship with the Soka Gakkai also came a shift in its relationship with the Shoshinkai. Among Shoshinkai priests, there was a sense of redemption. The Nichiren Shoshu priesthood had finally taken a harsher stance toward the Soka Gakkai, as they had advocated all along. Although many of them wished to return to Nichiren Shoshu, they could not bring themselves to ask Nikken, who had expelled them, for reinstatement. Also, many still may have doubted the legitimacy of Nikken's claim to the office of high priest.

Nikken, though wishing to increase the ranks of those supporting him in his anti-Soka Gakkai efforts, also could not ask Shoshinkai priests to come back, as they had denied his claim to the office of high priest. So Nikken attempted to bring the Shoshinkai back into the fold through a third party. However, this scheme fell through once it was revealed, provoking much internal criticism.

In the meantime, Nikken apologized to Yamazaki for having called him a liar and began to enlist his services and advice in his attacks on the Soka Gakkai and in Nichiren Shoshu's overtures to the Shoshinkai. In a letter, Yamazaki even advised Nikken what magazines would be willing to print scandalous stories about the Soka Gakkai without requiring fact checking or verification.

The tenuous relationship between Nichiren Shoshu and the Shoshinkai continues to this day.

Kempon Hokke Sect

The name of the Kempon Hokke sect has come to be heard more often recently by SGI members in the United States since its lay believers have been very vocal on the Internet in criticizing both the SGI and Nichiren Shoshu.

The Kempon Hokke sect is one of many Nichiren-related sects in Japan. It was founded by Nichiju in 1380, about 100 years after the death of Nichiren Daishonin. Its head temple is Myoman-ji, located in Kyoto. Its registered chief representative (high priest) is Shinsho Yamada. It has some 200 local temples in Japan. Its doctrines are vague about the role of Nichiren Daishonin and denies the authenticity of the Dai-Gohonzon.

Lay Groups of the Kempon Hokke Sect in the United States

- ◆ **Their origin:** In the 1980s, H. Graham Lamont, a scholar of Asian studies and former member of the Minobu sect, developed a tie with Tetsujo Kubota, a Kempon Hokke priest in Japan.
- ◆ **Their split:** The Kempon Hokke sect's lay group is now split into three factions: [1] H. Graham Lamont's group; [2] The Kempon Hokke Kai Samgha created by Bruce and Stephanie Maltz (former NSA members whom Lamont introduced to Kempon Hokke in about 1990. They currently reside in Colorado Springs, Colo.) Maltz has frequently promoted his organization in Internet discussion groups and on the World Wide Web. Lamont and Maltz oppose each other. [3] The Myoman-ji Society of the Kempon Hokke sect, created by Marc Strumpf, who split from Bruce Maltz's group. Strumpf himself then converted to the Butsuryu Shu, another Nichiren-related sect in Japan, leaving a few members behind in the Kempon Hokke group he formed.
- ◆ **Membership:** Approximately 50 throughout the United States. Most of them were NSA members in the 1970s, and through their Internet communications, we can see that their attitude — especially toward both the Soka Gakkai and Nichiren Shoshu — is bitter, angry, aggressive and dogmatic.
- ◆ **Activities:** Kempon Hokke members rarely meet. They communicate mainly through e-mail and by telephone. They seem to conduct propagation activities on an individual level, but mostly through the Internet.
- ◆ **Teacher:** Tetsujo Kubota, the chief priest of Hossho-ji temple in Chiba. He seems to be in charge of foreign propagation. In essence, Kempon Hokke is a priesthood-oriented Buddhism, much the same way as Nichiren Shoshu. However, they deny any mentor-disciple relationship.
- ◆ **Leadership and organization:** The Kempon Hokke's lay groups in the United States reject any leadership or organization.

- ◆ **Object of devotion:** Anyone, believer or not, can purchase for \$200 a mounted copy of a Gohonzon inscribed by Nichiren Daishonin himself. They are using this as a selling point though it demonstrates their fundamental lack of reverence toward the Gohonzon. Also, their teaching regarding the Gohonzon is vague. They do not seem to view it as a supreme object of devotion—as the embodiment of the true Buddha’s enlightenment. They also venerate statues of Shakyamuni.

Note: Many Kempon Hokke members are people who have tended to move from one Nichiren denomination to the other after leaving the SGI.

The History and Doctrines of the Kempon Hokke School:

- ◆ **Meaning of Kempon:** *Kempon* signifies “to reveal the true identity of *kuon* (eternity).”
- ◆ **Founder:** Nichiju, who lived around 100 years after Nichiren Daishonin’s passing. He was originally a scholar of the Tendai school of Buddhism, the Japanese school originating from the teachings of the Chinese teacher T’ien-t’ai. After reading the Daishonin’s Gosho, he decided to practice Nichiren Buddhism. He visited several Nichiren-related temples to study, but found the differences among the various schools of Nichiren Buddhism confusing and could not discern which among them was orthodox. Therefore, in 1380 he expounded the principle of “Succession Through the Scrolls of the Sutra (*kyokan sojo*),” which means that the orthodoxy of Nichiren teachings can be understood only through reading the Gosho and the Lotus Sutra literally.
- ◆ **History of Kempon Hokke:** Nichiju built Myoman-ji temple in Kyoto in 1389 as the head temple of this new sect. They called themselves “Nichiju Monto.” (“Mon” literally means “a gate,” but generally means a religious or philosophical school; “to” means students or disciples.) After the Meiji Restoration, a group of Nichiren schools who advocated the “superiority of *honmon* (the actual teaching)” separated from the rest in 1876. On that occasion, the Nichiju Monto changed their name to “Nichiren Shu Myoman-ji school.” Then, in 1898, they adopted the current name — Kempon Hokke Shu. During World War II, the military-led government forced all Nichiren Schools (sects) to consolidate under the authority of the Minobu Sect, Nichiren Shu. The purpose of this move, along with laws and regulations affecting all religions, was to ensure that all religious groups would support the war effort of the government and not be a source of dissension. Thus the Kempon Hokke sect was combined with Minobu Nichiren Shu, which has advocated the “equality of *honmon* and *shakumon* (the theoretical teaching).” After the war, a part of the group separated from Nichiren

Shu to again call itself the Kempon Hokke Sect, but the rest of the group stayed within the Minobu Nichiren sect.

- ◆ **Summary of Kempon Hokke's doctrines:** a) The "Eternal Shakyamuni" is the True Buddha; b) Nichiren is the reincarnation of Bodhisattva Jogyo, and hence merely a Bodhisattva, not a Buddha; c) One can understand the meaning of the Lotus Sutra and the Goshō only by strictly reading them on one's own, literally and without interpretation. Nevertheless, Kempon Hokke rejects the authenticity of some of the most essential among Nichiren Daishonin's writings and teachings, such as "Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings," "The True Entity of Life," and others. By excluding these it overlooks the important role the Daishonin plays in the scope of Buddhism and fails to grasp the nature of his enlightenment.

- ◆ **Their view of the Dai-Gohonzon:** The Kempon Hokke sect claims that the Dai-Gohonzon is a fake.

Appendix B

Temple Issue Timeline

1989

- Feb. 25 Nichiren Shoshu makes a request to the Soka Gakkai to raise the pilgrimage fee.
- July 17 Nikken builds a family tomb at a Zen temple, Hakusan-ji in Fukushima, and conducts a commemorative ceremony at the site (breaking one of the Twenty-six Admonitions of Nikko Shonin).
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1990

- March 13 Nichiren Shoshu notifies the Soka Gakkai at a regular communication meeting of an increase in the Gohonzon-conferral fee, *toba* memorial tablet fee and the fee for keeping ashes of the deceased.
- July 16 Nikken and some senior priests meet at Taiseki-ji's Tokyo office in Nishikata to discuss how to oust President Ikeda, i.e., how to execute what was later called Operation C. This meeting is later called the Nishikata Conference.
- July 17 The Nichiren Shoshu and Soka Gakkai communication meeting is held, at which the Soka Gakkai raises the issue of unseemly conduct on the part of priests that is becoming rampant throughout Nichiren Shoshu in Japan.
- July 18 Nikken and the same priests who met at Nishikata meet again to further discuss their plot against President Ikeda. Nikken officially names the plan Operation C. This meeting is later referred to as the Council in the Presence of the High Priest.
- July 21 Soka Gakkai International President Daisaku Ikeda and Soka Gakkai President Einosuke Akiya are granted an audience with Nikken. During the audience, Nikken emotionally reproaches President Akiya, calling him arrogant. He also makes an intimidating remark to President Ikeda: "I will impeach you."
- Aug. 29 Nichiren Shoshu announces a "Standard of Moral Ethics for Priests and Their Families" at a nationwide teachers meeting.
- Sept. 2 The Soka Gakkai dedicates a culture festival to Nichiren Shoshu to celebrate the 700th anniversary of the founding of the head temple, Taiseki-ji.

- Oct. 12-13 A grand ceremony to commemorate the 700th anniversary of the founding of Taiseki-ji is held with President Ikeda as the committee chairman.
- Nov. 16 President Ikeda gives a speech at the 35th Soka Gakkai Headquarters Leaders Meeting; an unauthorized recording of which Nichiren Shoshu uses to attack him and the Soka Gakkai.
- Dec. 13 Nichijun Fujimoto, general administrator of Nichiren Shoshu, attempts to hand an inquiry document raising issues concerning the content of the Nov. 16 speech to President Ikeda. Fujimoto withdraws the document as Mr. Akiya requests a dialogue to iron out differences.
- Dec. 16 Nichiren Shoshu, refusing to engage in dialogue with the Soka Gakkai, sends the inquiry to the Soka Gakkai Headquarters demanding a written reply.
- Dec. 23 The Soka Gakkai responds by sending Nichiren Shoshu a written request for dialogue including questions of its own including concerns about the accuracy of the tape transcription.
- Dec. 25 Nikken meets with journalists Isao Dan, Kojun Takahashi and others to discuss attacking the Soka Gakkai in the media.
- Dec. 27 Nichiren Shoshu holds a special Council session to revise its rules so it can dismiss President Ikeda from the position of the head of all Nichiren Shoshu lay societies using the tape of his speech as a pretext.
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1991

- Jan. 1 The Soka Gakkai points out a number of errors in the priesthood's transcription of the tape of President Ikeda's speech at the Nov. 16, 1990, Headquarters Leaders Meeting.
- Jan. 2 Nikken refuses to grant an audience to President Akiya and General Director Morita who request a meeting to discuss matters of the disagreement.
- Jan. 6 Nikken lectures on the Sho-Hondo, misinterpreting former high priest Nittatsu's address on the significance of this structure.
- Jan. 12 Nichiren Shoshu, admitting mistakes it committed in transcribing the tape, withdraws questions at the heart of its inquiry. The basis of the priesthood's attacks on the Soka Gakkai and dismissal of President Ikeda hence collapses, but the priesthood makes no move to reverse its decision or discuss reconciliation.
- March 5 Nichiren Shoshu notifies the Soka Gakkai that lay organizations besides the Soka Gakkai can be created overseas from now on reversing a long-standing policy established during Nittatsu's term. This is the beginning of the priesthood's plan to create direct temple organizations (*danto*) outside Japan.

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- March 30 The Soka Gakkai sends Nikken a second set of questions concerning Nikken's misinterpretation of the former high priest's address on the significance of the Sho-Hondo. Nikken does not respond.
- July 1 Nichiren Shoshu abolishes the Soka Gakkai's traditional pilgrimage system of 40 years and starts a new pilgrimage system, in which each participant needs to have documentation from his or her local temple, thus using access to the Dai-Gohonzon as an enticement aiming to increase the number of direct temple members.
- July 21 At a nationwide teachers meeting, Nikken emphasizes that promoting the direct temple movement (i.e. urging members to leave the SGI and join the temple) is the official direction of Nichiren Shoshu. To make his point, Nikken refers to three things: the revision of the rules of Nichiren Shoshu, the temple's new method of propagating the Daishonin's Buddhism outside Japan and the new pilgrimage system.
- Sept. 27 Nikken's having built a family tomb at a Zen temple and conducted a ceremony on that occasion becomes public knowledge.
- Nov. 7 Nichiren Shoshu sends the Soka Gakkai a document titled "Remonstrance to the Soka Gakkai to Disband."
- Nov. 28 Nichiren Shoshu sends the Soka Gakkai a document titled "Notification of the Excommunication of the Soka Gakkai from Nichiren Shoshu" excommunicating more than 12 million believers without any effort to resolve the disagreement through dialogue.
- Dec. 27 The Soka Gakkai sends Nichiren Shoshu a document titled "Seeking the Resignation of Nikken as Nichiren Shoshu High Priest" signed by 16.25 million people.
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1992

- Feb. 2 Seven priests, including Reverend Gen'ei Kudo (former chief priest in Los Angeles), leave Nichiren Shoshu, forming the Association of Priests for the Reformation of Nichiren Shoshu.
- March 30 A group of young priests directly confront and question Nikken. With this incident, they leave Nichiren Shoshu and form the Association of Youthful Priests for the Reformation of Nichiren Shoshu.
- June 14 A third group of priests leave Nichiren Shoshu to form the Association Concerned About Nichiren Shoshu and Devoted to Protecting the Law.
- June 17 The *Soka Shimpo*, the Soka Gakkai youth division newspaper, first publishes an article about the "Seattle Incident," reporting Mrs. Hiroe Clow's account of Nikken's run-in with prostitutes and police during a Gohonzon conferral trip to Seattle in 1960 when he was the Nichiren Shoshu Study Department chief.

- Aug. 11 Nichiren Shoshu expels SGI President Ikeda as a lay believer (his second excommunication).
- Aug. 28 At a nationwide meeting of priests, Nikken states that he never set foot outside the hotel in Seattle on the night he is alleged to have had an encounter with prostitutes and police.
- Sept. 13 Mrs. Hiroe Clow sues Nikken in Los Angeles District Court for defamation of character in conjunction with the Seattle Incident. Nikken publicly and in print had called her a liar. The suit is later dismissed on jurisdictional grounds before going to trial.
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1993

- April 27 Masatomo Yamazaki, who was imprisoned for attempting to blackmail the Soka Gakkai, is released on parole. Yamazaki later approaches Nikken and becomes a Hokkeko member belonging to the Rikyo-bo lodging temple at the head temple.
- Oct. 2 The Soka Gakkai begins to confer the Gohonzon transcribed by the 26th high priest, Nichikan upon its members.
- Dec. 4 Nikken goes to Spain to open a Nichiren Shoshu office there.
- Dec. 25 Nichiren Shoshu sues the Soka Gakkai in the Tokyo District Court, claiming that the latter's publications' coverage of the Seattle Incident amounts to defamation of Nikken. The Seattle Incident trial is born with the Soka Gakkai as the defense.
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1994

- Jan. 1 Evidence from within Nichiren Shoshu indicating the existence of Operation C is made public.
- June 1 It is revealed that Taiseki-ji has illegally disposed of many of the deceased's ashes. A number of lawsuits by individual believers follow, Nichiren Shoshu losing in nearly every case.
- July 8 The District Court in Pusan, South Korea, fines Nichiren Shoshu priest Hakudo Mori for operating a temple illegally registered as a nursing home.
- Aug. 21 At a Hokkeko leaders meeting, Nikken says that he will resign if the Seattle Incident is proven true.
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1995

- Jan. 20 Priests Chodo Ishibashi and Kan'o Tajima, who were illegally engaged in propagation in Korea, are fined and deported from the country.
- Feb. 24 Police investigate the Korean Nichiren Shoshu office.
- May 4 Myohon-ji temple in Hota, one of the major time-honored temples, secedes from Nichiren Shoshu.

- June-July The Nichiren Shoshu summer training course pilgrimage is held with fewer than the 50,000-participant goal.
- June 6 The high priest of the Minobu sect's Homon-ji temple in Ikegami visits Taiseki-ji and is welcomed there — another violation of Nikko Shonin's Twenty-six Admonitions.
- Aug. 23 Nichiren Shoshu announces its plan to destroy the Grand Reception Hall.



The Grand Reception Hall (front) and the Grand Main Temple (back) were built through the contributions by sincere lay believers

The Grand Reception Hall (Daikyakuden) under destruction.



- Aug. 29 Priest Hakudo Mori is fined in Japan for violation of the Foreign Exchange Control Law in connection with his illegal temple operations in Korea.
- Sept. 29 In the Seattle Incident trial, Nikken makes a radical change in his story, acknowledging that he did leave his hotel for a drink the night of the alleged incident.
- Oct. 2 and 9 Mrs. Hiroe Clow appears in the Tokyo District Court to testify regarding the Seattle Incident.

1996

Sept. 18 Ronald Sprinkle, a former Seattle police officer testifies as a defense witness.

1997

April 18 Seven Nichiren Shoshu priests stationed at the head temple, Taiseki-ji, participate in the *omushibarai* ceremony at the Honmon-ji temple of the Minobu sect. This represents another gross violation of Nikko Shonin's Twenty-six Admonitions.

Sept. 17 Thirty Minobu sect priests visit Taiseki-ji.

Sept. 29 The judge in the Seattle Incident trial decides that Nikken must testify, despite his attorneys' protests.

Nichiren Shoshu changes its rules again making it easier to expel believers.

Oct. 6 Nikken abruptly fires his chief attorney.

Nov. 30 Nichiren Shoshu excommunicates all Soka Gakkai members a second time (third time for President Ikeda).

Dec. 22 Nikken appears in court and presents his never-before-revealed diary that he alleges to have used at the time of the Seattle Incident. This "evidence" is intended to indicate that he was back in his hotel room by the time of the alleged incident. The defense shows that these diary entries have been altered at a later time.

1998

Feb. 2 Attorneys for the Soka Gakkai question Nikken.

March 26 Another major Nichiren Shoshu pilgrimage is held, but again the goal of 100,000 participants is not met. The new Grand Reception Hall is opened.

April 5 Nikken secretly transfers the Dai-Gohonzon from the Grand Main Temple (Sho-Hondo) to the Hoanden.

May 14 A Brazilian court enforces its decision to oust Nichiren Shoshu priests who had illegally occupied the main part of Ichijo-ji temple.

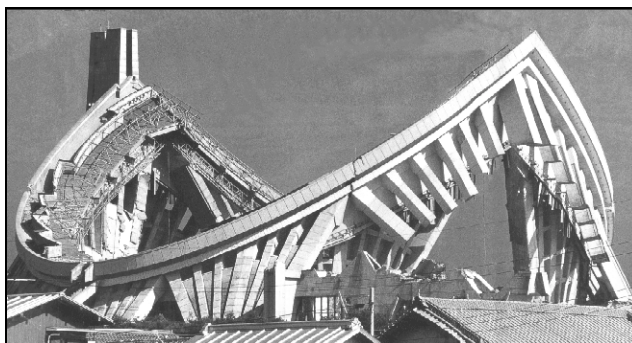
May 18 Attorneys for the Soka Gakkai question Nikken for a second time in the Seattle Incident trial.

June 23 Nikken begins demolition of the Grand Main Temple (Sho-Hondo).



The Grand Main Temple (Sho-Hondo), 1972—1999

The Grand Main Temple (Sho-Hondo) under destruction.



July 2 Argentina's Bureau of Religion bans Nichiren Shoshu as a religious corporation after a priest stationed there, in a sermon and in print, calls Mother Teresa a devil.

1999

- January Nichijun Fujimoto, general administrator of Nichiren Shoshu, and Shinsho Abe, Nikken's son and vice chief of the General Affairs Bureau, begin to tour Japan (through March 31) to put pressure on local priests who are not showing good results in terms of membership participation and donations.
- Feb. 20 Nichiren Shoshu discloses its plan to collect from its members \$50 million per year for the next three years toward 2002.
- April 29 Ho'on-ji temple in Chiba secedes from Nichiren Shoshu.
- July 7 The "Kawabe Memo" becomes public. It records Nikken's past statements indicating his belief that the Dai-Gohonzon is a forgery.
- Aug. 20 Zenchō-ji temple in Hiroshima secedes from Nichiren Shoshu.

Sept. 9 Daien-ji temple in Kanagawa secedes from Nichiren Shoshu.



Reformist priests pose for a commemorative photo in July, 1999.

Appendix C

Suggested reading

- ◆ “The Untold History of the Fuji School,” serialized in *Living Buddhism* from March 1998 through July 1999. This series will be published as a book in the near future.
- ◆ *Soka Gakkai in America*, written by Phillip Hammond and David Machacek, puts the temple issue into perspective from a scholarly view (1999) .
- ◆ *Questions and Answers on the Temple Issue* (1997)
- ◆ *Reaffirming Our Right to Happiness: On the Gohonzon Transcribed by High Priest Nichikan* (1996) is a reference issued by the SGI, which provides a point-by-point refutation of the priesthood’s allegations about this Gohonzon as well as the history surrounding its issuance.
- ◆ *Voices of The New American Renaissance* compiled by the SGI-USA Women’s Division Renaissance Committee, vols. 1–6, give us a glimpse into the Nichiren Shoshu priesthood in the United States.
- ◆ *On the Conferral of the Gohonzon by the Soka Gakkai* published by the Soka Gakkai International provides a collection of reference material (1993).
- ◆ Daisaku Ikeda’s *Selected Speeches: On the Basics of Buddhism* (1993) provides various discussions on the eye-opening ceremony, the meaning of the Gohonzon and the practice and formality of gongyo.
- ◆ The internal condition of the priesthood is explained in *Voices of Protest: Priests Speak Out for the Reformation of Nichiren Shoshu* (1993).
- ◆ *Issues Between the Nichiren Shoshu Priesthood and the Soka Gakkai*, vols. 1–5, (1991–92), provides a thorough background of the temple issue in its early stage; especially, vol. 5, a translation of “The Soka Gakkai’s Request for the Resignation of Nikken Abe As Nichiren Shoshu High Priest,” presents a comprehensive view of the issue.

