

PRIESTS' SPEAK OUT:

WHY THEY
ARE LEAVING
NICHIREN SHOSHU



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WHY ARE MORE TEMPLES LEAVING NICHIREN SHOSHU?

On Aug. 20, another Nichiren Shoshu temple, Zenko-ji in Hiroshima Prefecture, seceded from Nichiren Shoshu, the second temple to leave Nichiren Shoshu up to that point this year.

Reverend Yuren Fujita, the chief priest of Zenko-ji, held a meeting with representatives of the temple parish to explain his decision: He believes that Nichiren Shoshu has deviated from the proper course, and that the heart of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism is no longer found there. With the agreement of the lay group's leader, a resolution to leave Nichiren Shoshu was agreed upon.

Reverend Fujita then sent Nikken a notice that Zenko-ji had severed ties with Nichiren Shoshu. The chief priest submitted a strongly worded "Letter Explaining the Reasons for Secession" to the head temple, and also sent a copy to SGI Deputy President Einosuke Akiya at the Soka Gakkai Headquarters.

Reverend Fujita will now join the Association of Priests Concerned About Nichiren Shoshu and Devoted to Protecting the Law.

Then, on Sept. 9, yet another Nichiren Shoshu temple, Daien-ji in Kanagawa Prefecture, located not far from Tokyo, seceded from Nichiren Shoshu. Reverend Bando Sato, chief priest of the third temple to leave this year, wrote to Nikken pointing to the high priest's statements in the past that the Dai-Gohonzon is a forgery. To Reverend Sato, this means that the high priest has denied the basis of Nichiren Shoshu's faith and hence is only masquerading as high priest.

This summer, it came to light that Nikken, before he became high priest, had stated that the Dai-Gohonzon is a forgery. Nikken's statements appear in a memorandum authored in February

1978 by a priest who until recently has been stationed in Hokkaido, Reverend Jitoku Kawabe. The content of this memo was publicly disclosed for the first time.

In what is now being called the Kawabe Memo, Nikken, then the Nichiren Shoshu Study Department chief, is quoted as saying: "The Gohonzon of the High Sanctuary of True Buddhism is counterfeit. I found this out through various forms of analysis such as examining the brush strokes of the Chinese characters." Nikken believed that the Dai-Gohonzon was forged either during the time of the sixth high priest, Nichiji, or the ninth high priest, Nichiu, well after the Daishonin's death. No other high priest of Nichiren Shoshu has ever expressed doubt in the Dai-Gohonzon, which has always been the basis of the school's beliefs.

Reverend Sato is a middle-level priest who joined the priesthood some 30 years ago. Ever since he was appointed to the Students Department at the head temple, he has been very close to Nikken.

Reverend Sato's departure from Nichiren Shoshu was unexpected among the priesthood, especially by the high priest. His three sons, all Nichiren Shoshu priests, leaving along with him was also an unexpected occurrence.

Currently, the priests who have left Nichiren Shoshu number 44. Many of them are active in reforming it from outside and educating SGI and temple members about the true nature of the temple under Nikken. Almost all of them belong to three different groups: the Association of Priests for the Reformation of Nichiren Shoshu, the Association of Youthful Priests for the Reformation of Nichiren Shoshu, and the Association of Priests Concerned

About Nichiren Shoshu and Dedicated to Protecting the Law.

Nichiren Shoshu has been portraying itself as enjoying an era of its greatest harmony and development since it has parted ways with the SGI. Yet priests have once again begun to leave the priesthood in protest. The priesthood touts the importance of "harmonious unity between priesthood and laity." This condition is fulfilled from their perspective when the laity quietly and diligently follows the directives and guidance of the priests.

Reverend Bando Sato, in his letter to High Priest Nikken, says that "Nichiren Shoshu is supposed to be an organization where mutual encouragement and profound compassion are commonplace. But nowadays Nichiren Shoshu has become a cold-hearted sect where backbiting and purges abound. This solely stems from your [Nikken's] self-righteous and perverse nature."

We should not discount the current distrust for and dissatisfaction with High Priest Nikken among many of the Nichiren Shoshu priests in Japan. The priests who are leaving are making important points to reflect on. After all, they have studied long and hard to become priests and have devoted many years to service within Nichiren Shoshu. As men who know the inner workings of the priesthood, their voices give us an inside glimpse, too.

Reverend Sato's criticism, for instance, that "Nichiren Shoshu...has become an organization that thrusts goals upon its believers," deserves some serious consideration. The goals Nikken has set for his priests and followers are huge — gathering 300,000 members at the head temple in 2002 (which will entail increasing the temple membership dramatically in a short time) and collecting \$150 million for the Hoando's construction. If each of the 300,000 members Nikken wishes for were to contribute, every person would have to contribute an average of \$500. But the actual active Hokkeko

membership stands most likely at little more than 50,000 if that. This means on average donation of \$3,000 per person over the next two years if all 50,000 people donate. Where did these goals come from? What was the motivation behind them? Reverend Sato, who has known Nikken a long time, suggests that the real motivation here is less than pure.

Reverend Fujita tells us that he joined the priesthood because of "a great desire to become a priest and contribute to the happiness of all humanity." Reverend Sato tells us his motivation to join the priesthood was his desire "to save as many people as possible with the great beneficial power of the Dai-Gohonzon." Both of these men became priests to serve the people as the Daishonin had. But now both feel that Nichiren Shoshu has veered from this course of serving the people. It has gone so far astray, they feel, that to be true to themselves and their original purpose, they must leave.

It's clear that these two priests and the others who have severed their ties with Nikken and the head temple are trying to inspire us to take another look at the Nichiren Shoshu priesthood and ask ourselves the same questions they have been asking. We hope that those who belong to Nichiren Shoshu temples and Hokkeko organizations will have the opportunity to be informed of these matters and discuss them openly.



Representatives of 44 reformist priests

The following are the names of those temples that have seceded from Nichiren Shoshu, with the names of their chief priests and the secession dates in parentheses.

1. Choei-ji temple in Tokyo (Gen'ei Kudo, Feb. 3, 1992).
2. Daisho-ji temple in Wakayama (Shojun Ohashi, Feb. 3, 1992).
3. Kenbutsu-ji temple in Kyoto (Kodo Yoshikawa, Feb. 3, 1992).
4. Seyu-ji temple in Shiga (Takudo Ikeda, Feb. 3, 1992).
5. Noken-ji temple in Aichi (Yubin Kushioka, Feb. 3, 1992).
6. Zenko-ji temple in Nagano (Yushin Yoshikawa, Feb. 3, 1992).
7. Koryu-ji temple in Hokkaido (Yugu Narita, Feb. 8, 1992).
8. Myoki-ji temple in Akita (Yuki Okazaki, Feb. 15, 1992).
9. Josetsu-ji temple in Iwate (Shindo Yamamoto, March 16, 1992).
10. Entoku-ji temple in Hiroshima (Yuzon Ishikawa, April 27, 1992).
11. Myoe-ji temple in Saitama (Hosho Shiina, June 16, 1992).
12. Noei-ji temple in Kyoto (Myoei Koitabashi, June 28, 1992).
13. Myodo-ji temple in Aichi (Hoshin Nakajima, July 15, 1992).
14. Daiei-ji temple in Yamaguchi (Yuto Hirokawa, Sept. 24, 1992).
15. Daiei-ji temple in Yamaguchi (Yuho Miyagawa, Sept. 24, 1992).
16. Daikyo-ji temple in Kanagawa (Jisai Watanabe, Oct. 17, 1992).
17. Jisshu-ji temple in Tokyo (Takudo Hosoi, Nov. 2, 1992).
18. Hofu-in temple in Aichi (Judo Narita, Nov. 9, 1992).
19. Hoten-in temple in Aomori (Jodo Nishida, Nov. 10, 1992).
20. Tozen-ji temple in Aomori (Kansho Hamaguchi, Nov. 10, 1992).
21. Joen-ji temple in Tochigi (Sendo Narita, Nov. 12, 1992).
22. Hojo-ji temple in Shiga (Hodo Nose, Jan. 10, 1993).
23. Toko-ji temple in Iwate (Jyunmyo Ohtsuka, Jan. 9, 1993).
24. Hosei-in temple in Tokushima (Shudo Sekiguchi, Jan. 18, 1993).
25. Kairen-ji temple in Fukushima (Doshuku Watanabe, March 28, 1993).
26. Myohon-ji temple in Chiba (Nichio Kamakura, May 4, 1995).
27. Enhon-ji temple in Chiba (Nichio Kamakura, May 4, 1995).
28. Kentoku-ji temple in Chiba (Nichio Kamakura, May 4, 1995).
29. Ho'on-ji temple in Chiba (Kaido Kasamatsu, April 19, 1999).
30. Zencho-ji temple in Hiroshima (Yuren Fujita, Aug. 20, 1999).
31. Daiei-ji temple in Kanagawa (Bando Sato, Sept. 9, 1999).

A CHIEF PRIEST SPEAKS OUT

'LETTER TO HIGH PRIEST NIKKEN EXPLAINING THE REASONS FOR SECESSION'

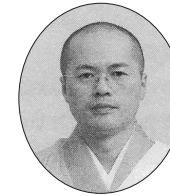
By Reverend Yuren Fujita of Zencho-ji temple

The Daishonin states in his "Letter to Lord Ohta and Others": "If I, Nichiren, do not say this, fearing how society will react, I will become an enemy of Buddhism. Chang-an remonstrates with Buddhist scholars of future generations: 'One who destroys or brings confusion to the Buddha's teachings is betraying them. If one befriends another person but lacks the mercy to correct him, one is in fact his enemy. But one who reprimands and corrects an offender is a voice-hearer who defends the Buddha's teachings, a true disciple of the Buddha. One who rids the offender of evil is acting as his parent. Those who reproach offenders are disciples of the Buddha. But those who do not oust offenders are betraying the Buddha's teachings.' Since I have taken these words of Chang-an to heart, I will stake my life on scrutinizing this matter" (Gosho Zenshu, p. 1003).

Ever since I became a priest at age 31, in 1986, I have been part of the lower ranks of the Daishonin's disciples. Over the years, I have devoted myself to praying for the achievement of the great desire of kosen-rufu and spreading the Law to the best of my ability, although I am a man meager in virtue and heavy with defilement.

However, knowing and hearing of scores of evil doings by Chief Administrator Nikken Abe [the high priest is also the chief administrator], I have gradually developed a suspicion I cannot ignore about where the correct Law and teaching really exist.

And it was revealed last month that Chief Administrator Nikken Abe, appallingly, had once



asserted his belief that the Dai-Gohonzon of the High Sanctuary of True Buddhism is a forgery. This incident inspired me to reproach directly the evil of Chief Administrator Abe and the current sect.

The following is part of my personal feelings, as Zencho-ji now departs from Nichiren Shoshu.

I was astonished at the report in the Association Newsletter of the Association of the Priests Concerned About Nichiren Shoshu and Devoted To Protecting the Law that Chief Administrator Nikken once asserted that the Dai-Gohonzon is a forgery. According to this publication, the chief administrator's outrageous opinion was recorded in a memo taken by Reverend Jitoku Kawabe, chief priest of Nissho-ji temple, after he met with Chief Administrator Nikken. The memo discloses the astounding fact that Chief Administrator Nikken had handwriting analysis done on the Dai-Gohonzon using various methods and came to the conclusion that it is counterfeit.

Needless to say, the Dai-Gohonzon of the High Sanctuary of True Buddhism, inscribed on Oct. 12, 1279, fulfilled the purpose of the advent of the Daishonin, the founder of this Buddhism. It should be the basis of faith of Taiseki-ji, the head temple.

Concerning the supremacy of the Dai-Gohonzon of the High Sanctuary of True Buddhism, Nikko Shonin, the Daishonin's successor, calls it the "Dai-Gohonzon of 1279 endowed upon myself, Nikko" ("The Transfer Document from Nikko to Nichimoku"). The 26th high priest Nichikan, also states, "The Dai-Gohonzon of 1279, or the Gohonzon of the

High Sanctuary of True Buddhism, is the ultimate Gohonzon of all. Its inscription signifies the ultimate of all reasons for the founder's advent. It is the supreme basis of the Three Great Secret Laws. Therefore, it is the true object of devotion for all humanity in the whole world" ("Exegesis on "The True Object of Worship").

However, Chief Administrator Nikken asserted that this supreme Dai-Gohonzon is counterfeit. This is a totally erroneous view — a view deeply connected with the tarnished legacy of the five senior priests who betrayed the Daishonin after his death.

No high priest has ever committed such grave slander in the history of Nichiren Shoshu. I can't fathom the depth of anger on the part of the Daishonin and Nikko Shonin in this regard.

Yet no explanation has come from Chief Administrator Nikken about this, despite how significant this matter is. If the report in Association News is false and groundless, the chief administrator himself should present clear proof of the report's falsity and thereby clear up any doubt within the sect. The fact that he can't provide a convincing explanation means that Chief Administrator Nikken tacitly admits the righteousness of the Association News report.

I thus have become convinced that the justice of the Daishonin and the pure current of faith no longer exist in the sect led by Chief Administrator Nikken. Now that this is the case, I will follow Nikko Shonin's admonition to "not follow even the high priest if he goes against the Buddha's Law and propounds his own views" (*Gosho Zenshu*, 1618).

It is my duty as a Nichiren Shoshu priest to take the erroneous teachings of Chief Administrator Nikken severely to task. This is the fundamental reason why I have resolved to leave the sect.

I cannot forget what happened in the twilight one evening in April 1998: Chief Administrator Nikken surreptitiously carried out his plan to transfer the Dai-Gohonzon from the Grand Main Temple (Sho-Hondo),

just as a thief does his business under the cloak of darkness.

I was told that many senior priests of the head temple had not been informed of the transfer ahead of time. We, many chief priests of local temples, could not believe what had occurred.

This action is no longer such a mystery, now that we know Chief Administrator Nikken once asserted that the Dai-Gohonzon of the High Sanctuary of True Buddhism is counterfeit. In other words, he has been slighting the Dai-Gohonzon in his heart all these years. All along he has been opposed to the Daishonin's correct teachings. This is now clearly evident.

In the final analysis, he has no seeking mind and no faith.

When Chief Administrator Nikken destroyed the Grand Main Temple, it was a grave slander and denial of the former high priest, Nittatsu, who was his mentor and had once declared "the great edifice that should be the High Sanctuary of Homon-ji temple at the time of kosen-rufu."

Also, I have been questioning whether Chief Administrator Nikken legitimately inherited the heritage of Buddhism from the former high priest. Now, learning of his denigration of the Dai-Gohonzon, his grave slander of his mentor and his arrogance, my doubt about the purity of his lineage has changed into a conviction that the lifeblood of Buddhism is not pulsating in his life at all.

Chief Administrator Nikken is applying incredible pressure on the priests and lay believers of his sect toward the accomplishment of a pilgrimage of 300,000 participants and the construction of the Hoando temple in 2002. Toward this, his goal is to collect \$150 million from local temples and their members over the next three years.

The idea of the Hoando temple came out of Chief Administrator Nikken's desire to enshrine the Dai-Gohonzon there. Now that it is clear that

he denies the legitimacy of the Dai-Gohonzon, on what legitimate basis can he proceed to gather such a colossal amount of money from priests and lay believers? Many people in the sect must be questioning the validity of his cause.

On July 26, I was summoned to appear at Josen-ji temple in Tokyo, where I was unilaterally attacked by the sect's General Affairs Chief Gikan Hayase and its vice chief, Shinsho Abe [Nikken's son].

Both of them visited my Zenko-ji temple on Aug. 6 and again denounced my supporters and me. This incident proved Mr. Shinsho Abe's authoritarianism and abnormality, as well as the current Nichiren Shoshu's violent, discriminatory nature that has been frowned upon by many in the sect. This incident was a crystallization for me of the distortion and stagnation that I have been sensing in the sect, ever since I became a priest of Nichiren Shoshu.

After graduating from the Science Department of Kyushu University, I worked in the business world. At that time, a great desire to become a priest and thereby contribute to the happiness of all humanity arose within me.

As someone who had experienced the reality of society, the true nature of Nichiren Shoshu was shockingly anachronistic. The seven years I spent at the head temple constituted the gloomiest period of my life. There I witnessed daily violence, such as bullying of juniors by seniors. There existed discrimination based on family relations, younger priests who were born into priests' families against those of us who joined the priesthood later in life. It all proved the irrationality of the society of the Nichiren Shoshu priesthood.

The sect's manipulative nature came to the surface when Chief Administrator Nikken abruptly dismissed Soka Gakkai Honorary President Daisaku Ikeda from the position of the head of all Nichiren Shoshu lay organizations at the end of 1990 and

excommunicated 10 million SGI members toward the close of 1991.

In those days, I was just an acolyte, and I felt strong indignation at the sect's irrational behavior against the SGI members — especially against Honorary President Ikeda, who had been the most instrumental person in enhancing Nichiren Shoshu.

Though disillusioned at the plight of the sect, I am still determined to create harmonious unity between the priesthood and laity some day. I am deeply resolved to be a priest who is pure in faith, like a lotus blossoming out of a muddy pond, in the same spirit of the Daishonin and Nikko Shonin.

Almost 10 years have passed since the head temple embarked on its present course. As exemplified by the recent disclosure of Chief Administrator Nikken's questioning of the legitimacy of the Dai-Gohonzon, his slanderous acts have now reached the point where they cannot be corrected from within the priesthood.

Thinking people naturally wonder what has happened to this sect to bring it to this point. While the SGI continues to grow constantly as it promotes the Daishonin's mandate of world kosen-rufu, Nichiren Shoshu has been rolling down the slope of self-destruction. When we look at the conspicuous contrast between the two, it is easy to tell the Daishonin's correct teachings reside in the SGI. Obviously, Nichiren Shoshu has distorted the Daishonin's teachings.

I hereby take action to secede from Nichiren Shoshu and to strongly question the responsibility of Chief Administrator Nikken, who has put the sect on the brink of destruction. I thus demand that he resign immediately. I vow to fight the evil of the current Nichiren Shoshu, aiming toward the day of Chief Administrator Nikken's resignation.

To Nikken Abe, Nichiren Shoshu Chief Administrator
From Yuren Fujita, Chief Priest of Zenko-ji

August 20, 1999

ANOTHER CHIEF PRIEST REVEALS HIS THOUGHTS

'My Thoughts on Leaving Nichiren Shoshu'

By Bando Sato, chief priest of
Daien-ji temple in Kanagawa, Japan

To Mr. Nikken Abe, high priest of Nichiren Shoshu



The Daishonin, founder of this school, states in "The Actions of the Votary of the Lotus Sutra": "Even if my counsel is heeded, if I am not given due respect as the votary of the Lotus Sutra, then the country will perish. How ominous that the authorities have turned hundreds of persons against me and have even banished me twice! This country is surely doomed, but since I have asked the gods to withhold their punishment on our land, it has survived until now. However, that punishment has finally descended because these unreasonable actions continued. And if my counsel is not heeded on this occasion, the gods will cause the Mongol empire to send its forces to destroy Japan" ("The Actions of the Votary of the Lotus Sutra," *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 773).

Respecting the Daishonin as the true Buddha of the Latter Day of the Law is the basis of this school's creed and its sense of justice. However, it has become clear that you, the high priest, have committed grave slander, asserting that the Dai-Gohonzon, whose inscription constitutes the ultimate purpose of the Daishonin's advent in this world, is a forgery. Nothing could be more disrespectful toward

the Daishonin than this. It is certain that Nichiren Shoshu will continue to decline and eventually perish if such an exceptionally arrogant person remains its high priest.

Daien-ji is a temple that I take care of for the sake of kosen-rufu on the Daishonin's behalf. However, as long as we must obediently follow you and the current priesthood, we will be unable to carry out the true teachings of the Daishonin and Nikko Shonin or maintain a joyful, vibrant faith directed toward kosen-rufu. If we maintain our ties with your sect, we will only wind up committing grave slander ourselves. In this vein, I am now convinced that parting with Nichiren Shoshu is the true way of the Buddha's disciples. With this resolution to leave Nichiren Shoshu, I share my current thoughts with you.

The decisive factor that convinced me that you are not qualified to be chief administrator of Nichiren Shoshu is the recent leak of the so-called Kawabe Memo, which proves that you asserted the Dai-Gohonzon, this school's most essential object of devotion, is counterfeit.

Shocking indeed were the contents of this

Memo, as reported in the July 7 Domei Tsushin (Association Newsletter) a publication of the Association of Priests Concerned About Nichiren Shoshu and Dedicated to Protecting the Law, a group of reformist priests. According to this memo, in a private meeting with Reverend Jitoku Kawabe at Tokyo's Imperial Hotel on Feb. 7, 1978, when you were Study Department leader of Nichiren Shoshu, you expressed your erroneous view that the Dai-Gohonzon is a forgery. Kawabe's notes include explicit statements from you that betray the orthodoxy of the Daishonin's Buddhism, such as, "I found this out [that the Dai-Gohonzon is counterfeit] through various forms of analysis such as examining the brush strokes of the Chinese characters" and "Somebody copied onto the Dai-Gohonzon the daimoku and seal part of a Gohonzon conferred upon Nichiren that was transferred from Hodo'in temple to the head temple."

When I heard this, I could not believe it. My initial reaction was to wish that the memo was untrue, although upon seeing it I trusted that Reverend Kawabe actually wrote it.

The way in which you and the Administrative Office handled this matter crushed what little hope I had for the future of this school. Pressed by the seriousness of the matter, the Administrative Office hurriedly issued two notices — neither of which was effective in clearing up our doubts. These notices only lent further proof that there indeed had been an appalling conversation about the Dai-Gohonzon of the High Sanctuary of True Buddhism between you and Reverend Kawabe.

Either you or Reverend Kawabe is now obviously lying. Ironically, a second Kawabe Memo was leaked, in which Reverend Kawabe had jotted down his options for coping with the leaking of the initial memo. In it he reveals that one of his options is to "do what I think is right, even if it means quitting the priesthood." The second memo

eloquently displays how confident Reverend Kawabe was in the accuracy of the first memo's content.

All of this notwithstanding, I went to the head temple to attend the teachers seminar slated for Aug. 26-27, with some hope remaining that you would offer a convincing explanation of what had happened. All the priests present were eagerly looking forward to hearing something from you on the matter.

However, neither you nor the executive priests of the Administrative Office addressed the issue at all. You merely focused on something completely unrelated, greatly playing up some new development in the Seattle Incident trial.

Obviously, what you were attempting to do was shift people's attention somewhere else. This made me feel that you are intolerably irresponsible and self-righteous. Many of our seniors and fellow priests were disappointed and some were even angry. A number of them are closing their hearts to you due to your deep-seated hypocrisy.

In the final analysis, that you chose to remain silent, offering no explanation, proved to me that you know that the Kawabe Memo is true. It is now proven that you are a man of grave slander who has advocated that the Dai-Gohonzon is counterfeit.

The Dai-Gohonzon is the source of this school's faith. It is the foundation of its creed. The heritage of the Law that is transferred from one high priest to another boils down to the Dai-Gohonzon. It is clear that the Fuji school's pure current of faith no longer flows in your life. You never placed your faith in the foundation of our creed and once denied it. That you assert the Dai-Gohonzon is a forgery means that you are fraudulently holding the office of high priest. What value does Nichiren Shoshu continue to hold, if its high priest denies the Dai-Gohonzon? Nichiren Shoshu then has nothing more to offer the people.

I became a priest of Nichiren Shoshu in 1978, at age 18. I became a priest because I wanted to

save as many people as possible with the great beneficial power of the Dai-Gohonzon. I wanted to help people embrace the True Law. However, I am now confronted with an unheard of situation — Nichiren Shoshu's high priest denies the Dai-Gohonzon.

Should I continue to follow the high priest with absolute faith in him? Or should I part with the current Nichiren Shoshu? The choice is now crystal clear to me.

Nikko Shonin states in his "Twenty-six Admonitions," "Do not follow even the high priest if he goes against the Buddha's law and propounds his own views" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1618).

And the Daishonin states, "One should abandon even one's teacher if he or she is misguided" (WND, 747).

High Priest Nikken, you gave me special favors when I was assigned to the Students Department. You also favored me by appointing me the first chief priest of Daien-ji temple. And I still remember the many considerations you have extended to me over the years.

However, the primary thing I have to do as a priest of Nichiren Shoshu is to follow the Daishonin's and Nikko Shonin's teachings. If I continue to follow you, it would be a path of hypocrisy. My way of repaying my debt of gratitude to you is to pursue the correct way taught by the Daishonin and Nikko Shonin — to right the wrongs of High Priest Nikken, who has no faith and has committed grave slander. With this belief, I have resolved to free Daien-ji from Nichiren Shoshu. It is my determination to save all of Daien-ji's 500 believers from your misguided ways.

Furthermore, how you dealt with Reverend Kawabe, whom you forced to apologize about this matter in the official Nichiren Shoshu notices after the first memo leaked, is a problem. In these notices, you made him say that "it was all a mistake in my note-taking," and that he "defamed the

dignity of the Dai-Gohonzon." Hence, I expected that you would deal him a considerable demotion or something like that. What actually happened, though, was this: After a long closed-door session with General Administrator Fujimoto, General Affairs Department Chief Hayase and Reverend Kawabe, you decided to give Reverend Kawabe a substantial promotion. He moved to Daigan-ji temple in Tokyo from Nissho-ji temple in Sapporo at the end of September this year.

Daigan-ji is situated in a prime location of Tokyo's Shinjuku ward. Its former chief priest, General Affairs Department Chief Hayase, built extravagant lodging quarters there for himself and his family. Moreover, it is rumored that Reverend Kawabe's son, Shoshin, will be transferred, in another promotion for the family, to this temple as the senior Kawabe's assistant chief priest. For such a young priest to be transferred to a temple in Tokyo is truly unprecedented. Although Nissho-ji is above Daigan-ji in ranking among the branch temples, everyone knows that a transfer from Sapporo to a temple in the center of Tokyo is in reality a promotion.

Again, if the two notices issued by the Administrative Office are true, Reverend Kawabe should have been given a severe reprimand, in the form being transferred back to the head temple with no branch temple assignment. This did not happen. This suspicious promotion of Reverend Kawabe clearly shows that what he wrote in his memos was true — you harbored an appalling notion that no other high priest has ever had.

Justice has been lost in the current Nichiren Shoshu, which is now blindly committed to covering each and every mistake made by the high priest, including spreading lies in official Administrative Office notices, remaining silent before a meeting of senior priests and manipulating personnel matters to appease Reverend Kawabe. You are now at his

mercy; he knows your points of weakness, including your past assertion against the authenticity of the Dai-Gohonzon. Nothing is more condescending toward the people of this school than the manner in which you have handled this issue.

A number of priests, including the Reverends Homyo Yamamoto, Kido Fukuda and Kashiwazaki have been demoted this year because of personal reports to the head temple by Hokkeko members.

But what of Reverend Kawabe? After rocking all of Nichiren Shoshu by spreading the notion that the high priest entertains doubts about the Dai-Gohonzon, he was apparently treated to what amounts to a promotion. It is said that some 120 or 130 priests have thus far written memos of apology in response to complaints from Hokkeko members. Nichiren Shoshu should be an organization where mutual encouragement and profound compassion are commonplace. But nowadays Nichiren Shoshu has become a cold-hearted sect where backbiting and purges abound. This solely stems from your self-righteous and perverse nature.

Now that the Kawabe Memo has revealed the true nature of your faith and character, all the doubts I have had about you have been confirmed.

Another questionable matter that you need to clarify is the issue of your alleged heritage. It is now clear from the fact that you were vehemently criticizing High Priest Nittatsu on Feb. 7, 1978 [also detailed in the Kawabe Memo], that you could not have received any heritage of the Law from him. You have asserted that you received the heritage from him on April 15 — just two months after you had this private meeting with Reverend Kawabe. In no way could High Priest Nittatsu have transferred the heritage of Buddhism to a person like you, who lacked any intention to support his mentor.

Another thing that has been bothering me is the fact that ever since you took office, you have continued to destroy those structures that

were dear to the former high priest. Nothing is as heartbreaking as seeing the destruction of the Grand Main Temple (Sho-Hondo), the Grand Reception Hall, the Six-Compartment Lodging and the Daike-jo Temple, as well as the cutting down of camphor woods and cherry trees in the general lodging area. What enabled you to do this so easily is that your heart is devoid of any appreciation for High Priest Nittatsu. The Grand Main Temple, in particular, was a culmination of all the former high priest's accomplishments. Yet, having already asserted that the Dai-Gohonzon is counterfeit, it must have been quite easy for you to deny your own praise — at one time — of the Grand Main Temple as Study Department chief, and destroy this structure that housed the Dai-Gohonzon.

Also, I wish to cite one last example of your error — the excommunication of the Soka Gakkai. You were able to excommunicate the Soka Gakkai so mercilessly because you had put yourself in the center of everything, instead of basing yourself upon the Dai-Gohonzon. You could not have cut off the Soka Gakkai if you had really been aware of how difficult and important it is to convert even one person to the Daishonin's Buddhism and nurture his or her faith.

In any case, Nichiren Shoshu under your leadership — the leadership of someone who, at the fundamental level, has no faith in the Dai-Gohonzon — has become an organization that now thrusts goals upon its believers. The 300,000-participant pilgrimage slated for 2002 is not geared toward helping believers develop their faith. It is aimed only at satisfying your ego and enhancing the prosperity of your family and relatives. You have said that this pilgrimage is based on an order from the Daishonin himself. But using his name in such a self-serving manner, on the contrary, exactly constitutes failure to pay him due respect.

Also, no one in the school voiced a request

for the building of a new structure like the planned Hoando. Your desire to build it one meter higher than the Grand Main Temple can only be called childish. You destroyed the Grand Main Temple, and now plan to collect \$150 million more from believers supposedly to replace it with Hoando — this is really for no other purpose but to feed your own ego.

The Daishonin states: “Buddhism is like the body, and society like the shadow. When the body bends, so does the shadow” (WND, 1039). It is clear that Nichiren Shoshu’s current incorrigible distortions are grounded in the abnormality of a high priest who, on the deepest level, has no faith.

Daien-ji was completed as the 10th of the 200 temples whose construction was initiated by Soka Gakkai Honorary President Ikeda. Daien-ji’s construction was supported by the sincere donations of Soka Gakkai members in the Yamato area of Kanagawa Prefecture. It was to serve their activities

for kosen-rufu. And I believe that this temple should be returned to those members who made donations for its construction, so that they can use it freely for its original purpose. This is how I feel about this temple. Returning it to them is the right thing to do.

I hereby declare that Daien-ji will sever ties with Nichiren Shoshu. I also strongly request that you, High Priest Nikken, who is lacking in faith to the point where you have denied the Dai-Gohonzon, resign as soon as possible.

Bando Sato
Chief Priest of Daien-ji temple

Sept. 9, 1999

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