

The Untold History of the Fuji School: The Origins of the Temple Issue (2)

This series is based on The Dark History of the Fuji School: Revealing the Origin of the Nikken Sect (Ankoku no Fuji Shumonshi: Nikken Shu no Engen o Kiru) by Hajime Kawai, a vice senior advisor of the Soka Gakkai Study Department.

Chapter 2: Nikko Shonin: The Protector of the Daishonin's Buddhism

(1) Nikko Shonin as a true disciple of the Daishonin

AMONG the six senior priests appointed by Nichiren Daishonin, only Nikko Shonin proved to be a true disciple. He correctly grasped the Daishonin's intent and dedicated his life to propagating Buddhism. He viewed the Daishonin as the original Buddha of the Latter Day and understood that the teaching of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo of the Three Great Secret Laws was implicit in the "Life Span" chapter of the Lotus Sutra. The other senior priests likely viewed the Daishonin as their senior, a person with vast knowledge of Buddhism, but seemingly lacked the capacity to recognize the Daishonin's true identity nor the true import of his teachings. This is the fundamental difference between Nikko Shonin and the five senior priests.

Nikko became a disciple of the Daishonin in 1258, and for most of the remainder of his life stayed by the Daishonin's side, serving his mentor and receiving instructions from him. This allowed him to read the Daishonin's treatises and letters as well. These circumstances helped Nikko Shonin correctly grasp the entirety and distinction of the Daishonin's teachings.

While serving his teacher, Nikko Shonin also visited various places in Kai Province (present-day Yamanashi Prefecture) as well as in Suruga and Izu provinces (present-day Shizuoka Prefecture) in order to spread the Daishonin's Buddhism and teach other disciples. Because of his efforts, many started to take faith, including some priests at the Tendai sect temples Jisso-ji and Ryusen-ji in Fuji County of Suruga Province, as well as others at Shijuku-in temple in Kanbara County.

Nikko Shonin's propagation efforts, however, met with strong opposition. The chief priest of Shijuku-in, for example, persecuted those who converted to the Daishonin's teaching. Furthermore, many Ryusen-ji parishioners were converted due to the efforts of Nisshu and others who became the Daishonin's disciples under the tutelage of Nikko Shonin.

Alarmed by the growing number of converts in his own parish, Gyochi, acting chief priest of Ryusen-ji, conspired to have twenty peasants of Atsuhara District, who had taken faith in the Daishonin's teaching, arrested on false charges. The Atsuhara believers were taken to Kamakura, the seat of the shogunate government, and interrogated by Hei no Saemon, deputy chief of the Office of Military and Police Affairs (the chief being the regent himself) and steward of the ruling Hojo clan. Hei no Saemon insisted they renounce their faith in the Daishonin's Buddhism. This

Title: The Untold History of the Fuji School

Subject: Living Buddhism 04/98 v.2 n.4 p.6 LB9804p06

Author: Hajime Kawai

Keywords: Chap. Fuji History Issue Nikko School Shonin Story Temple Untold

incident is known as the Atsuhara Persecution. Because none of the twenty peasants gave up their faith despite being tortured, the three leading believers (Jinshiro, Yagoro and Yarokuro) were executed and the rest banished. The three executed peasants are known in the history of the Daishonin's Buddhism as the three martyrs of Atsuhara.

Having seen that ordinary people would stake their lives for the sake of Buddhism, the Daishonin felt that the time had come to fulfill the purpose of his advent. On October 12, 1279, he inscribed "the Dai-Gohonzon bestowed upon the world."

Regarding the Atsuhara Persecution, SGI President Ikeda states:

On the surface, it might appear that the three martyrs, having been executed, were the ones who suffered defeat. In fact, however, as a result of their valiant actions to protect the Law, they won eternal honor as believers and supreme victory as human beings.

Further, by their own examples they showed actual proof that faith in the Daishonin's teaching had become firmly established among the people and this persecution set the stage for the Daishonin to establish the Dai-Gohonzon for the sake of the entire world, thus fulfilling the purpose of his advent.

For this reason, the names of the three martyrs will be handed down eternally and will ever continue to shine with brilliance.

We, too, are following the same path. Let us be confident that as a result of the present struggle we will be able to open wide the path of worldwide kosen-rufu. (May 11, 1992, *World Tribune*, p. 4)

As evidenced by his behavior and achievements as the Daishonin's disciple, Nikko Shonin far surpassed the five senior priests. In light of Nikko Shonin's faith, practice, study, character and leadership, which were tested through numerous persecutions, it was natural for the Daishonin to entrust his teaching with his most outstanding disciple.

When Hakiri Sanenaga, a steward of Minobu, and his family were swayed by the erroneous teachings of the five senior priests, Nikko Shonin severed his ties with the priests and the Hakiri family. To protect the integrity of the Daishonin's Buddhism and thus establish the foundation for its future, he left Minobu and moved to Fuji at the invitation of Nanjo Tokimitsu, who maintained pure faith throughout his life. Expressing the intent behind his departure from Minobu, Nikko Shonin states in his "Reply to Lord Hara": "No matter where we may go, it is of utmost importance to carry on the teaching of the sage and establish it in the world. Although I think in this way, all other disciples have committed treachery against the teacher. Nikko alone knows the correct teaching of the original teacher and thus achieves the true purpose of his life. So I shall never become oblivious to the true intent [of Nichiren]" (*Hennentai Nichiren Daishonin Goshō*,¹ p. 1733).

Title: The Untold History of the Fuji School

Subject: Living Buddhism 04/98 v.2 n.4 p.6 LB9804p06

Author: Hajime Kawai

Keywords: Chap. Fuji History Issue Nikko School Shonin Story Temple Untold

In this regard, President Ikeda states:

One must not simply allow evil teachers who go against the master to carry on in their ways—this is the fundamental spirit of Nikko Shonin. It is the spirit with which he abandoned Mount Minobu, where the pure flow of faith had become polluted due to the actions of Hakiri Sanenaga, who had been misled by the evil teacher Niko.

Ultimately, whether we practice in exact accord with the Daishonin's teaching or we turn against it—this alone is what determines whether we are disciples of Nikko Shonin, or followers of Niko and Hakiri.

When we make this our standard of judgment, it becomes perfectly clear that we, the SGI members, are faithfully following and obeying the treasures of the Buddha, the Law and the Priest (Nikko Shonin). (November 1991 *Seikyo Times*, p. 46)

Stressing the importance of rebuking the destroyers of Buddhism, the Daishonin states: "And if there should be eminent priests who keep the precepts and practice religious austerities, and who appear to be spreading the teachings of the Lotus Sutra but are, in fact, subverting them, you should perceive the truth of the matter and reprimand them" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 7, p. 114). Following the Daishonin's teaching, Nikko Shonin continued to point out the errors of the five senior priests.

As Nikko Shonin taught through his own example, unless we remain as vigilant against corruption and reveal injustice whenever it occurs, the Daishonin's Buddhism will eventually be obscured and lost.

President Ikeda discusses the important lesson to be gleaned from Nikko Shonin's life as follows:

After the Daishonin died, his correct teaching was protected because Nikko Shonin stood up alone. Had Nikko Shonin remained silent, then no doubt a history of the "justice of the five senior priests" would have emerged. Instead, Nikko Shonin strictly refuted the erroneous teachings of the five senior priests. (*Lectures on the "Expedient Means" and "Life Span" Chapters of the Lotus Sutra*, vol. 1, p. 72)

If we slacken in our efforts to challenge Nichiren Shoshu's affront on the Daishonin's Buddhism, our next generation will not be able to enjoy the benefit of the Mystic Law. So President Ikeda states at a meeting on December 18, 1994: "If we think: 'It's probably okay to leave it at this' or 'This is good enough,' then such a half-hearted attitude [in rebuking slander of the Law] will eventually destroy our faith and thus the good fortune that we have otherwise accumulated for all eternity."

Also:

Title: The Untold History of the Fuji School
Subject: Living Buddhism 04/98 v.2 n.4 p.6 LB9804p06
Author: Hajime Kawai
Keywords: Chap. Fuji History Issue Nikko School Shonin Story Temple Untold

As the Daishonin teaches, “It is the way of a devil to assume the form of a venerable monk or to take possession of one’s father, mother or brother in order to obstruct one’s next life” (MW-6, 31).

Thus, there are instances where even a venerable priest of high standing may be misled by false teachings, or where, overcome by feelings of jealousy or anger, he loses sight of the True Law, and then, in a complete reversal, turns into a great devil who functions as an obstacle to people’s attainment of Buddhahood and a hindrance to the realization of kosen-rufu.

The Daishonin’s teaching contains not the least falsehood. The essence of the current problem [with the Nichiren Shoshu priesthood] becomes clear as day when viewed in light of the above Gosho passage. (May 4, 1992, *World Tribune*, p. 4)

As Nikko Shonin demonstrated in his struggle to preserve the integrity of the Daishonin’s Buddhism, the Buddhist practice in accord with the present time is to clarify the confusion of the Daishonin’s Buddhism brought forth by the Nichiren Shoshu priesthood.

(2) Nikko Shonin’s establishment of Taiseki-ji in Fuji

IN the spring of 1289, seven years after the Daishonin’s passing, Nikko Shonin departed from Minobu and stayed for a while at the estate of lay priest Yui—his grandfather on his mother’s side—in Kawai of Fuji County in Suruga Province (present-day Shibakawa, Fuji County, Shizuoka Prefecture). He then moved to Ueno (present-day Fujinomiya City, Shizuoka Prefecture) at the earnest request of Nanjo Tokimitsu, the steward of the area.

In October of the following year, Nikko Shonin founded Taiseki-ji at the scenic field of Oishigahara on the Nanjo family’s estate. Dai-bo, a lodging temple was built for Nikko Shonin; it was also called Mutsubo. In the area surrounding Dai-bo, other lodging temples were built for Nikko Shonin’s disciples: Renzo-bo for Nichimoku, Jakunichi-bo for Nikke, Rikyo-bo for Nisshu, Joren-bo for Nichido, Minamino-bo for Nichizen, Hyakkan-bo for Nissen, Ryosho-bo for Nichijo, and Kuj-bo for Nichizon. At this time, Nikko Shonin also designated his “six main disciples” to preserve the Daishonin’s Buddhism; they were Nichimoku, Nikke, Nisshu, Nichizen, Nissen and Nichijo (“On the Matters That the Believers of the Fuji School Must Know,” *Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1603).

On February 15, 1298, Nikko Shonin established a temple to enshrine the Daishonin’s image in Omosu, the area adjacent to Ueno, at the request of its steward Ishikawa Magosaburo Yoshitada. He then entrusted Nichimoku Shonin with Taiseki-ji and moved to Omosu. Nikko Shonin focused on the further education and development of his disciples, who commuted there to receive instructions from their teacher. This temple in Omosu became known as the Omosu Seminary.

At the Omosu Seminary, Nikko Shonin read and gave lectures on the Daishonin’s writings, which he called “Gosho,” meaning “the Buddha’s

writings" ("On the Matters That the Believers of the Fuji School Must Know," *Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1604). [The word *gosho* consists of two characters: *go* and *sho*. *Go* is an honorific prefix, meaning "respectable or noble," and *sho* literally means "writings."] Out of the Daishonin's six senior disciples, Nikko Shonin alone understood the importance of these writings. For the sake of posterity, Nikko Shonin copied many of his mentor's writings. Of those, forty-nine copies of the Daishonin's writings are extant today, including "On Chanting the Daimoku of the Lotus Sutra," "On Securing the Peace of the Land through the Propagation of True Buddhism" (Jp. Rissho Ankoku Ron), the excerpts of "The Opening of the Eyes," "The True Object of Worship" and "The Essentials of the Lotus Sutra." Besides those copies made by Nikko Shonin, there are only three copies by Nichimoku Shonin and two by Nippo still in existence. None of the five senior priests attempted to preserve their teacher's writings.

Furthermore, Nikko Shonin selected the ten major writings of the Daishonin and recorded the location of each of these writings for the sake of future believers. The ten major writings designated by Nikko Shonin are: 1) "On Chanting the Daimoku of the Lotus Sutra"; 2) "On Securing the Peace of the Land through the Propagation of True Buddhism"; 3) "The Opening of the Eyes"; 4) "The True Object of Worship"; 5) "The Essentials of the Lotus Sutra"; 6) "The Selection of the Time"; 7) "Repaying the Debt of Gratitude"; 8) "On the Four Stages of Faith and the Five Stages of Practice"; 9) "Letter to Shimoyama"; and 10) "Questions and Answers on the Object of Worship." He selected these writings as essential for the practitioners of the Daishonin's Buddhism and added to the manuscripts the phrase *the essential teaching of the Lotus Sutra*.

Nikko Shonin dedicated his later years to the development of his disciples at the Omosu Seminary. According to legend, he strictly scolded a disciple named Nichizon during a lecture—for absent-mindedly staring at the leaves falling from a pear tree in the yard—and expelled his student from the seminary, saying: "One who wishes to spread the great Law does not let his mind wander and stare at leaves falling while listening to the preaching of Buddhism" (*Essential Writings of the Fuji School*, vol. 5, p. 227). Spurred by his teacher's strict rebuke, Nichizon traveled throughout various provinces and spread the Daishonin's Buddhism. It is said that after establishing thirty-six temples in twelve years, he was pardoned by his teacher. This story tells us something of Nikko Shonin's dedication to the Daishonin's Buddhism.

A believer named Jakusen-bo Nitcho had become a disciple of Niko, one of the five senior priests who betrayed the Daishonin. Later, he renounced Niko and came to Nikko Shonin. Nikko Shonin named Nitcho to be the first chief priest of the Omosu Seminary, entrusting him with the task of instructing student priests. When Nitcho died young, Nikko Shonin appointed Sanmi Nichijun as the second chief priest.

Nichijun wrote: "I received instructions [from Nikko Shonin] at Dai-bo lodging in the morning and, in the evening, preached at Mie-do [where the image of Nichiren Daishonin is enshrined]" (*Essential Writings of the Fuji School*, vol. 2, p. 124). As he states, Nichijun lectured on the Daishonin's writings, such as "The Opening of the

Eyes” and “The True Object of Worship.” In this manner, many young student priests were nurtured, including six new disciples designated by Nikko Shonin. They were Nichidai, Nitcho, Nichido, Nichimyo, Nichigo and Nichijo.

While Nikko Shonin was at the Omosu Seminary, Nichimoku Shonin stayed at Taiseki-ji. He often visited Tome County of Rikuzen Province (present-day Tome County, Miyagi Prefecture), which was the estate of his Niida clan, and founded several temples. He also traveled to many other areas, spreading the Daishonin’s Buddhism and developing many new disciples. Furthermore, on behalf of Nikko Shonin, Nichimoku Shonin remonstrated with the sovereign forty-two times, visiting the shogunate government in Kamakura and the imperial palace in Kyoto.

During his youth, Nichimoku Shonin began traveling so extensively on foot that he damaged his left ankle severely. But this did not prevent him from traveling for the sake of the Daishonin’s Buddhism.

When at Taiseki-ji, he led a simple life, farming vegetables in the fields. Nichimoku Shonin often sent his homegrown melons to Nikko Shonin at Omosu. In one reply, Nikko Shonin writes: “Since I could not harvest melons in my field at Omosu due to the drought, I am grateful for your rare gift” (*One-Hundred Sacred Admonitions*, p. 192). This indicates that Nikko Shonin as well lived a modest life, farming himself.

Regarding the behavior and lifestyle of a priest, the Daishonin states: “With no knowledge of Buddhist law, most priests in the Latter Day grow so conceited that they despise the original teacher and flatter newfound patrons. Only honest priests who desire little and are happy with whatever they have can be called ‘priests’ in the true sense of word” (MW-1, 165).

Nikko Shonin and Nichimoku Shonin lived in accord with their teacher’s expectations while the five senior priests degenerated into “priests in the Latter Day.” The Daishonin severely condemns this type of priest, referring to him as “an animal dressed in priestly robes” (MW-3, 215).

Regarding the behavior and attitude of priests, President Ikeda comments:

The honest priest must, first of all, uphold the correct teachings of Buddhism. The disciples of the Buddha are those who, no matter what may happen, strive wholeheartedly for kosen-rufu, dedicated to faith and practice exactly as the Daishonin teaches.

In contrast, dishonest and unjust priests are those who, though they appear to nobly embrace the True Law, actually disobey the Daishonin’s teachings and hinder the progress of kosen-rufu. They commit evil acts such as plotting to destroy the Soka Gakkai, which propagates the Daishonin’s Buddhism.

In light of Nichiren Daishonin’s teachings, if priests live extravagantly, they are no longer true priests. (September 23, 1991, *World Tribune*, p. 4)

(3) Nikko Shonin’s “Twenty-six Admonitions”

NIKKO Shonin wrote “On the Matter That the Believers of the Fuji School Must Know” (Fuji Isseki Monto Zonchi no Koto) (*Gosho Zenshu*, pp. 1601–09) and “Refuting the Five Senior Priests” (Gonin Shoha Sho) (*Gosho Zenshu*, pp. 1610–16) in order to clarify the doctrinal differences between himself and the five senior priests. Furthermore, to prevent the destruction of the Daishonin’s Buddhism by corrupt priests, Nikko Shonin penned “Twenty-six Admonitions” (*Gosho Zenshu*, pp. 1617–19) on January 13, 1333 [see p. 16].

In these warning articles, Nikko Shonin clarifies that the Fuji School (i.e., the school founded by Nikko Shonin) is the orthodox school of Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism, while the schools founded by the five senior priests deviate from his mentor’s teaching. Nikko Shonin urges his disciples: “Until kosen-rufu is achieved, propagate the Law to the full extent of your ability without begrudging your life” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1618). He also teaches his disciples to give their utmost respect to those who practice in accord with the Daishonin’s writings.

Nikko Shonin cautions that those priests who seek worldly fame and profit without spreading Buddhism and rebuking slander may not be known as his disciples. Furthermore, he strictly admonishes that even the chief priest of Taiseki-ji (i.e., the high priest of the Fuji School) is not an exception to his warning articles, stating: “Do not follow even the high priest if he goes against the Buddha’s Law and propounds his own views” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1618).

Throughout his “Twenty-six Admonitions,” Nikko Shonin emphasizes that to protect and spread the Daishonin’s Buddhism is of utmost importance. Nikko Shonin’s fundamental stance expressed in these admonitions may be summarized thusly: Those who wish to practice the Daishonin’s Buddhism must regard the Gohonzon and his writings as the basis of faith and practice and strive toward the widespread propagation of their mentor’s teaching. He concludes his admonitions by saying: “Those who violate even one of these articles cannot be called disciples of Nikko” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1619).

On the most important of all the admonitions of Nikko Shonin, that is, “Until kosen-rufu is achieved, propagate the Law to the full extent of your ability without begrudging your life” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1618), President Ikeda comments:

While the SGI has always put kosen-rufu first, the priesthood has always placed its own self-preservation above all else, thereby hindering the progress of kosen-rufu.

Where in the priesthood can one find people spreading the teachings “without begrudging their lives”? In stark contrast, not only do its members lead indulgent lives, but they are even seeking to destroy the SGI and to bring the flow of kosen-rufu to a halt. Such priests are enemies of the True Law and enemies of Nikko Shonin.

Without defeating these enemies of the Buddha, realizing the kosen-rufu of the True Law will be impossible. Therefore, just as Nikko Shonin admonishes, we must continue to pursue them without begrudging our lives. A person who does so will accumulate tremendous benefit.

(November 23, 1992, *World Tribune*, p. 1)

Also:

Nikko Shonin states, "Those who violate even one of these articles cannot be called disciples of Nikko." This is the strictness of the path of master and disciple. The priesthood, which has violated not one but every article, is an "anti-Nichiren Daishonin" and "anti-Nikko Shonin" group that has separated itself from the lifeline of the True Law. (November 23, 1992, *World Tribune*, p. 5)

When we examine the aberrant behavior of the Nichiren Shoshu priesthood in light of Nikko Shonin's "Twenty-six Admonitions," it becomes clear that the SGI is the only group carrying on the orthodoxy of the Daishonin's Buddhism today. Shortly after World War II, Nichiko Hori, the fifty-ninth high priest, said to one of his disciples: "Does the current priesthood have anything other than the Gakkai? The priesthood must be detested if it excludes the Gakkai." The priesthood could call itself Nichiren Shoshu or "the orthodox school of Nichiren" because of its association with the SGI. But now that it has unilaterally severed its ties with the SGI, Nichiren Shoshu has gone astray from the Daishonin's Buddhism.

On February 7, 1333, soon after completing "Twenty-six Admonitions," Nikko Shonin died at Omosu, at age 88. Before his passing, Nikko Shonin had appointed Nichimoku Shonin as his successor in a document titled "Articles Regarding the Succession of Nikko," dated November 10, 1330 (Jp. Nikko Ato Jojo no Koto) (*Essential Writings of the Fuji School*, vol. 8, p. 17). Until his death, Nikko Shonin had continued to lead the spread of the Daishonin's Buddhism, responding to the expectations placed on him by his mentor, who referred to him as "the great leader of the propagation of true Buddhism" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1600). Under Nikko Shonin's leadership, Nichimoku Shonin and other disciples also had made valiant efforts in propagation. As a result, by the time of Nikko Shonin's death, the Fuji School had spread throughout Japan—from Tohoku, the northeastern part of Japan's main land (present-day Miyagi, Yamagata and Fukushima prefectures) down to the southern island of Kyushu (present-day Fukuoka and Miyazaki prefectures).

Because Nikko Shonin spread the Daishonin's Buddhism despite numerous persecutions and protected its integrity when threatened by the five senior priests, he is regarded as the treasure of the *samgha* or group of believers—priests and lay believers alike—dedicated to the transmission and preservation of the Buddha's teaching. The *samgha* has been regarded as one of the three treasures of Buddhism along with the treasures of the Buddha and the Law (i.e., the Buddha's teaching) because, without it, people could not possibly benefit from the treasures of the Buddha and the Law. As Buddhism migrated from India to China and then to Japan, the functions of the *samgha* were fulfilled chiefly by the clergy. Hence the *samgha* came to denote the Buddhist priesthood, and thus the treasure of the *samgha* has often been translated as the treasure of the priesthood.

Title: The Untold History of the Fuji School

Subject: Living Buddhism 04/98 v.2 n.4 p.6 LB9804p06

Author: Hajime Kawai

Keywords: Chap. Fuji History Issue Nikko School Shonin Story Temple Untold

In the Fuji School, the treasure of the Buddha is Nichiren Daishonin because he expounded the Mystic Law, which enables all people to reveal their innate Buddhahood; the treasure of the Law is the Gohonzon bestowed upon all humanity because it is the essence of the Daishonin's teaching; and the treasure of the *sangha* is Nikko Shonin because, as mentioned previously, he correctly transmitted and preserved the Daishonin's Buddhism. Without his efforts, we could not enjoy the benefit of the Daishonin's Buddhism today.

Regarding the three treasures of the Fuji School, Nittatsu Hosoi, the sixty-sixth high priest, states:

In our school, the three treasures are established as follows: the treasure of the Law is the Gohonzon; the treasure of the Buddha is the Daishonin; and the treasure of the *sangha* is Nikko Shonin.... The successive high priests are not same as the Daishonin. The high priest is often described falsely as the Daishonin himself, and this causes problems. I wish to clarify this point." (From a sermon delivered on May 26, 1977)

The current Nichiren Shoshu priesthood, however, propounds that "the high priest is the Daishonin of the modern day" (June 1991 *Dai-Nichiren*) and that "the high priest and the Dai-Gohonzon are one and inseparable" (a document by the Nichiren Shoshu executive priests dated September 6, 1991). These assertions clearly ignore the meaning of the three treasures in the Daishonin's Buddhism.

Regarding believers' reverence for the three treasures, Nittatsu Hosoi also states: "In short, the correct way of our school is to regard the Gohonzon of the oneness of the Person and the Law as the basis of all. In the Gohonzon are contained all of the three treasures. When you enshrine the Gohonzon in a Buddhist altar and exert yourself in faith morning and evening, you are already paying sufficient respect toward the three treasures" (from a sermon delivered on July 27, 1977). In other words, to revere the three treasures of the Daishonin's Buddhism means to regard the Gohonzon as the basis of faith and practice.

President Ikeda comments:

The Nikken sect, claiming that the high priest's inner enlightenment and the Gohonzon are "the two indivisible entities of the object of worship," is using the Gohonzon and establishing an erroneous "high priest creed."

This creed of the high priest and doctrine of the high priest's infallibility are plainly erroneous doctrines that were formulated in later ages. To equate the object of worship with oneself is to have a very disparaging attitude toward the Gohonzon. Even the five elder priests and Hakiri Sanenaga were not guilty of such arrogance and slander.

In the first place, Nikken merely uses the Gohonzon as an instrument to subordinate lay believers and reap donations. He does not have even an iota of faith in the Gohonzon. That is why he can propound such erroneous doctrines. (December 20, 1993, *World Tribune*, p. 4)

The current priesthood's erroneous interpretation of the three treasures clearly indicates its ignorance of the Daishonin's Buddhism as well as of Nikko Shonin's efforts to spread and protect his mentor's teaching.

To be continued

1. *Hennentai Nichiren Daishonin Goshō*—compilation of Nichiren Daishonin's writings published by the Soka Gakkai in 1973. The writings in *Hennentai Nichiren Daishonin Goshō* are arranged chronologically; and it also includes two letters by Nikko Shonin ("Reply to Mimasaka-bo" and "Reply to Lord Hara"), which are not in *Goshō Zenshu*. *Goshō Zenshu* is the first compilation of Nichiren Daishonin's writings published by the Soka Gakkai in 1952.