

Questions and Answers on the Temple Issue Why Does the SGI Issue the Gohonzon?

Q: Why did the SGI decide to issue the Gohonzon?

A: In 1991, Nichiren Shoshu announced its refusal to confer the Gohonzon to any person belonging to the SGI. From this point on, all new SGI members throughout the world were forced to practice without it.

Clearly, the temple's intention was to entice SGI members to leave the organization and become direct followers of the temple. While most SGI members waiting to receive the Gohonzon saw through this ploy, their seeking spirit to receive the Gohonzon remained. Soka Gakkai leaders grappled with how to respond to the members.

Then, in 1993, the SGI agreed to a proposal from Sendo Narita, the chief priest of Joen-ji, a temple in Tochigi Prefecture, Japan, which had severed its ties to Nikken and Taiseki-ji. The SGI, in conjunction with Mr. Narita, announced it would start issuing Gohonzon to its membership worldwide. These would be reproduced from a Gohonzon at Joen-ji transcribed in 1720 by Nichikan, the 26th high priest of Taiseki-ji. Those who had practiced without the Gohonzon were overjoyed at the news.

The significance of the SGI's decision can be seen from two perspectives: First, Nichiren Daishonin inscribed the Gohonzon for the enlightenment of all people. His fundamental desire was to make the Gohonzon available to all who seek to practice his teachings, thus enabling them to establish indestructible happiness.

Second, with the development of the priesthood issue, Nikken Abe abused his position as high priest by arbitrarily stopping the granting of Gohonzon to SGI members with the express purpose of undermining the SGI. Nikken's use of the Gohonzon in this way runs completely counter to the Daishonin's fundamental intent and spirit behind inscribing the Gohonzon.

In light of these circumstances — and based on its responsibility as the body of believers harmoniously practicing the Daishonin's Buddhism in modern times — the SGI took responsibility to make the Gohonzon available to its membership. This decision was made solely to protect Buddhism, to reply to the sincerity of those seeking the Gohonzon, and to further promote kosen-rufu.

Six in a series

Key Points:

- **Nichiren Daishonin inscribed the Gohonzon for all people to attain enlightenment. Making the Gohonzon available to sincere believers is an important responsibility entrusted to the Daishonin's present-day disciples.**
- **In 1991, however, the priesthood unilaterally decided to stop granting the Gohonzon to SGI members. Its intent was to disrupt the SGI's movement.**
- **The SGI decided to confer the Gohonzon in 1993 to fulfill its responsibility as a group of practitioners dedicated to spreading the Daishonin's Buddhism.**

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