

Statements of Protest

The following are excerpts from the international architectural community protesting Nikken's demolition of the Grand Main Temple (Sho-Hondo), which was donated by SGI members:

PART OF OUR mission [at the National Building Museum] is to bring to public attention the great landmark buildings in this country and abroad that are worthy of preservation. Based on the interest of our members and visitors, I believe the general public would be outraged to learn of the pending destruction of a building that is not only an important religious site, but also an important representation of a unique architectural style.... Sho-Hondo should be saved and maintained to reflect its beauty and the faith that made it possible.

— SUSAN HENSHAW JONES, president and director, National Building Museum,
Washington, D.C.

RARELY HAS A building of our own time so pervasively overcome limits of culture and place to speak to all humanity. Perhaps this extraordinary accomplishment has contributed to its proposed undoing, for great accomplishments have, throughout history, excited opposing forces of envy and fear. Sho-Hondo transcends conventional questions of fashion and taste — these are but superficial qualities, at best — and speaks of larger, more spiritual issues. Do not deny later generations the right to experience this creation.

— DAVID G. De LONG, professor of architecture, University of Pennsylvania

I AM MYSTIFIED as to why some Japanese place so little value on their magnificent architectural heritage, when, as a visitor, I find the destruction of such beauty an outrage, not only against Japanese culture and achievements but...for all humankind. How much more should you [Nikken], therefore, as someone who has been given the special task of preserving this great Japanese aesthetic tradition, feel an inner wound at the proposal that the Sho-Hondo temple should be torn out of the very centre of the Japanese soul. I implore you to think of future generations....

— PHILIP DREW, architectural historian and author, Annandale, Australia

THE FACT THAT it is a beloved place of so many speaks to its need for continued service to Japan and the world. Every historical building does not, by its longevity, automatically warrant preservation. The Sho-Hondo exceeds any definition of a building worthy of preservation. It is a remarkable example of the great heritage of the post-war modern buildings.

— DAVID H. GRUBB, chairman of the board, Swinerton & Walberg, San Francisco

[THE SHO-HONDO] SYMBOLIZES the oneness of technology and art.... I believe that architecture is a natural outcome of a country's civilization and culture — the greater the progress of its people, the greater its architecture. To me, Sho-Hondo is an example of the greatness of Japanese culture. To destroy it would be a sad event indeed.

— SUMITA SINHA, architect, London

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