

WHAT ABOUT...?
WHAT ARE THE REFORMIST PRIESTS DOING?
BY TED MORINO, EXECUTIVE EDITOR

How are the reformist priests now engaged in the kosen-rufu movement with the SGI? The 40-some priests who indignantly left Nichiren Shoshu after Nikken excommunicated the Soka Gakkai in 1991 have been engaged in various activities pointing out the destructive function of the current Nichiren Shoshu priesthood.

For instance, the Association for the Reformation of Nichiren Shoshu, headed up by Gen'ei Kudo — the former chief priest of Myoho-ji, the Los Angeles-area temple — has been putting out a publication called *Reform News (Kaikaku Jiho)*. The newsletter is published on an “as-needed” basis to chronicle the continuing activities of the current Nichiren Shoshu priests, as they deviate from and run counter to the spirit and teachings of Nichiren Daishonin.

This association also publishes a small pamphlet series, *The Pure Stream of the Fuji School (Fuji no seiryu)*, which is geared toward awakening temple members to a correct understanding of the Daishonin's Buddhism and the corruption of the Nikken sect. Since these reformist priests operate out of their own temples, they also conduct various ceremonies, including memorial services and funeral services, upon SGI members' requests.

Also, an amalgam of young priests who left Nichiren Shoshu are active with the SGI as the Association of the Youthful Priests for the Reformation of Nichiren Shoshu. They have also taken it as their mission to enlighten temple members to the dangers of their misunderstandings of the Daishonin's Buddhism and to share their own experiences of living within the priesthood.

These two associations work together closely with the SGI organization to protect the kosen-rufu movement. Still fresh in my memory are the efforts of some reformist priests to bring some temple members back to the SGI-USA in recent years.

In the meantime, a so-called temple with a sanctuary was officially opened in Singapore and Ghana, where young priests were dispatched to handle local religious ceremonial needs and educate people about the temple issue. Two such facilities have also been opened in Japan, one in Kansai and the other in the Chubu region.

One other group, the Association of Nichiren Shoshu Priests Concerned About the Protection of the Law, is headed by Hoshō Shiina, a former chief priest of Myōsetsu-ji, the New York-area temple. This group, while having some personal ties with priests still within Nichiren Shoshu, is supportive of the SGI and devoted to revealing the evil functions of the Nikken sect.

Reformist priests are often invited to the Soka Gakkai Headquarters Leaders Meetings to keep pace with the Gakkai's rhythm of advancement for kosen-rufu. Says Reverend Kudo: “We will continue to strive to unveil the ills of the Nikken sect and thereby awaken people to the point where they can correctly answer the question ‘Who and which organization in the world today has actually promoted kosen-rufu on a global scale?’”

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