

**HEAD TEMPLE FACES MORE LAWSUITS
OVER GRAND MAIN TEMPLE DESTRUCTION
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More parties in Japan are initiating lawsuits against High Priest Nikken Abe and Taiseki-ji, the head temple of Nichiren Shoshu, over their destruction of the Grand Main Temple (Sho-Hondo). Reformist priest Bando Sato, who seceded from Nichiren Shoshu in September 1999, joined 28 others from Kanagawa Prefecture, Japan, in suing High Priest Nikken and the head temple on Feb. 3. In the Yokohama District Court, they will seek approximately \$80,000 in compensation for the psychological duress they say they have suffered by the temple's destruction.

According to the document they submitted to the court, they all made contributions for the construction of the Grand Main Temple in October 1965 with the understanding that the Grand Main Temple would be maintained far into the future. Mr. Bando states: "Out of his jealousy toward his mentor, the former high priest Nittatsu, and the Soka Gakkai, Nikken destroyed the High Sanctuary of True Buddhism that should have been protected for all eternity. We can't tolerate his great slander!"

In their petition, the Kanagawa plaintiffs detail the painstaking efforts they underwent to come up with the money that they donated. One says, "While raising three infants, we donated \$760, juggling around our monthly salary, which at the time was only between \$95 and \$190." Another states, "I pawned all the expensive clothes I had bought for my new married life to come up with the money that I donated for the Grand Main Temple's construction."

Also on Feb. 3, in Aichi Prefecture, 21 people brought a similar suit against High Priest Nikken and Taiseki-ji at the Toyohashi Branch of the Nagoya District Court. The Feb. 3 suits bring the lawsuits against High Priest Nikken and Taiseki-ji over the Grand Main Temple's destruction to a total of five. Fifteen Soka Gakkai members from Fujinomiya City, where Taiseki-ji is located, sued High Priest Nikken and Taiseki-ji at the Shizuoka District Court on Jan. 17, seeking around \$219,000 in compensation. Twelve Soka Gakkai members in Numazu City, Shizuoka Prefecture, filed a suit against High Priest Nikken and Taiseki-ji on Jan. 25, asking for around \$79,000 in compensation. And Tadao Nomoto, a member in Hachioji City, Tokyo, filed a suit against High Priest Nikken on Jan. 26 for the return of about \$49,000 that his mother donated in 1990.