

**NICHIREN SHOSHU PRIEST FROM OVERSEAS BUREAU LEAVES THE
PRIESTHOOD
BY JEFF FARR
ASSOCIATE EDITOR**

An administrator in the Nichiren Shoshu Overseas Bureau, Endo Ishida, 47, seceded from the priesthood on July 18. Since 1997, Mr. Ishida, who served in various posts within the priesthood, had been working closely with Overseas Bureau Chief Kotoku Obayashi on the development of Nichiren Shoshu's international movement.

In his formal notice of secession to High Priest Nikken Abe, Mr. Ishida writes: "The corrupt, decadent priesthood at Taiseki-ji has deviated much too far from the spirit of Nichiren Daishonin and his successor, Nikko Shonin. Within the priesthood, I sense not one iota of the spirit to accomplish kosen-rufu. I have no doubt that any priest who still has even a little seeking spirit left must share this feeling. Wishing to express my sentiment in this regard, I realized that if I stayed inside the priesthood, there would be no way to fulfill my role as a priest. I am convinced that my mission is to dedicate myself, even in some small way, to the reformation of the priesthood. Therefore, I proclaim my intention to secede from Nichiren Shoshu."

Mr. Ishida, the first priest to secede from Nichiren Shoshu this year, joined the priesthood as a child in 1964. He served as the chief priest of two branch temples in Japan and as a lecturer and assistant professor in the Fuji Seminary, which trains student priests.