

**I Have Some Bad News for You**  
**By FLETCHER DALTON**  
**Boston**

*To an architect in Atlanta:*

I have no idea whether this letter will reach you, but the news I have is so devastating that I must try to get your attention.

We met in Haiti some 18 years ago, where each of us was involved in various business transactions. As chance would have it, a waiter seated us at adjoining dinner tables one evening.

During the meal, you revealed that you were an architect. We had both traveled extensively and, somehow, the conversation turned to “sacred spaces.” We talked about York Cathedral in England, St. Peter’s in Rome, Notre Dame in Paris, St. John the Divine in New York, Chartres and Reims and so on.

Then you told me of your strong desire to see one of the masterpieces of 20th-century architecture, a temple at the base of Mount Fuji in Japan, which belonged to a sect called Nichiren—something. You wondered how you might be able to see it, because you had heard it was for followers only. You had seen an architects’ model and had studied the plans. Also, you wondered what one had to do to gain admittance to this glorious structure and what people did when they went there.

I remember your look of longing as I described the high sanctuary and told of my visits there. I also remember your willingness to chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo right there at the dinner table. You took down the name I gave you for reference, saying that when you arrived back in Atlanta, you would give the SGI a call.

I truly hope that you were able to visit the temple, because I am writing to tell you that the likelihood is slight that you will see it now. The very priesthood to whom the building was donated by millions of Soka Gakkai International members has scheduled the temple for demolition (such a terrible word!).

It is your loss at having never visited the Grand Main Temple (if, indeed, you didn’t) that I mourn. The spirit of Nichiren Daishonin, the founder of the Buddhism that the Soka Gakkai practices, has long since vacated the structure.

Meanwhile, the Soka Gakkai International continues to grow, to advance and to carry out the directive of Nichiren Daishonin, which is to bring peace and security to the world over.

I send you my best regards and am truly sorry to relate to you this terrible news. The loss of an architectural wonder is a form of blasphemy that can never be forgiven.

I hope we meet again sometime. At least I can share with you photos I took of the building, its columns, its magnificent splendor when the sun shone on its roof, and the view of the temple as pilgrims walked the path leading to the entrance.

Yours truly,

**WT**