

## Statements of Protest

*The following are excerpts from letters by some prominent American architects protesting Nikken's planned demolition of the Grand Main Temple, which was donated by SGI members:*

**I AM ABSOLUTELY** horrified to learn of the intention of Nikken, the present high priest of Nichiren Shoshu, to order the demolition of the Sho-Hondo. This building does not simply belong to this Buddhist sect. It belongs to the great heritage of post-war Japanese architectural culture and is one of the finest examples of modern building culture. It would, in my view, grossly and gratuitously dishonor the culture of your nation to have this remarkable work to be so willfully destroyed.

— KENNETH FRAMPTON, Columbia University's Ware Professor of Architecture

**TO DESTROY SUCH** a significant structure is to create a vacuum in the architectural memory that represents the highest achievements of men and women. At the end of a century that has witnessed so much loss through human insensitivity to cultural and spiritual properties, the demolition of the Sho-Hondo would be a regrettable finale.

— TERENCE RILEY, chief curator, New York's Museum of Modern Art

**THE LOSS OF** a great building is always a cause for concern; the loss of an architecturally significant sacred site that powerfully speaks to millions of followers and reflects the cultural richness of a great faith and a great nation is nothing less than shocking. Such, potentially, is the case of the Sho-Hondo, currently threatened with demolition by the High Priest Nikken of Nichiren Shoshu. It's proposed demolition is inexplicable and, in my view, inexcusable.

— ROBERT STERN, director of historic preservation, Columbia University

**THIS BUILDING IS** not only the result of the great effort of many people to build it, it is also a cultural treasure of Japan and the world in that its design transmits humanity's highest aspiration through the language of modern architecture.... [It's demolition] would be a terrible loss for present and future generations of Japanese and all mankind, and the memory of this shameful act would live on.

— GUSTAVO ARAOZ, executive director, International Council on Monuments and Sites

**THE POSSIBLE DEMOLITION** of this sacred site — built with the funds of 8 million contributors — would be a terrible and unnecessary loss.

— PEG BREEN, president, New York Landmarks Conservancy

**WE WRITE TO** express our dismay at the recent decision of the High Priest of Nichiren Shoshu, Nikken, to demolish the magnificent complex of temple and garden, Sho-Hondo. The future of the temple is of worldwide interest and significance. We wholeheartedly support you in your efforts to prevent the destruction of this extraordinary monument.

— JAMES MARSTON FITCH, founder, Preservation movement in America

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**THE DEMOLITION OF** this building would be both an artistic and environmental catastrophe. I believe that the demolition you [Nikken] propose is nothing short of a crime, and, in an appeal to common, human decency, I urge you to reconsider it.

— ALAN RITCHIE, Philip Johnson/Alan Ritchie architects

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