

ANOTHER NICHIREN SHOSHU PRIEST DECIDES TO LEAVE BY TED MORINO EDITOR IN CHIEF

Yuyaku Hara, chief priest of Koan-ji temple in Miyagi Prefecture, Japan, declared his secession from Nichiren Shoshu on Sept. 29. Mr. Hara, 61, is the third priest to leave Nichiren Shoshu this year, following Endo Ishida, a senior administrator in Nichiren Shoshu's Overseas Bureau, in July and Rando Shuho, chief priest of Kenmyo-ji temple, on Sept. 4.

In his letter of secession to High Priest Nikken Abe, Mr. Hara first protests the Nichiren Shoshu Administration Office's interrogations of local chief priests based upon complaints from local temple members. "The current Administration Office does not trust us, the chief priests, at all," Mr. Hara writes. "Many chief priests are terrified at how the Administration Office has been reacting to believers' letters. Sadly, many chief priests are bogged down currying favor with their believers."

Mr. Hara points out that local chief priests and their families have had to make great sacrifices to survive due to the financial policies of Nichiren Shoshu. Meanwhile, he says, High Priest Nikken has been enjoying a luxurious lifestyle.

Mr. Hara also refers to how Nichiren Shoshu wasted a lot of money on the Seattle Incident litigation, only to lose the case in the Tokyo District Court (Nichiren Shoshu's appeal recently began in the Tokyo High Court).

"There is no justification for High Priest Nikken's decision to destroy the Sho-Hondo," he goes on. "While Japan's economy is facing great difficulty, Nichiren Shoshu is demanding more offerings from believers for the construction of the Hoando [which will replace the Sho-Hondo]."

In the last nine years, since the priesthood's 1991 excommunication of all SGI members, a total of 49 priests have severed their ties with Nichiren Shoshu in opposition to High Priest Nikken's leadership.