

A FORGOTTEN SO-KOTO

**Lay Believer Seiyu Araki:
A Biographical Sketch**

By Rev. Kendo Kanno

Translated by Rev. Kando Tono

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[* So-koto: Chief of all lay believers]

忘れられた総講頭

荒木清勇居士略伝

By Rev. Kendo Kanno

大阪源立寺住職 菅野憲道尊師著

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Photo (on facing page)

Seiyu Ei'ichi Araki in his 50s



Preface

The October issue of “Dai-Nichiren” [the official Nichiren Shoshu monthly organ] in the 14th year of Taisho [1925] begins with the following anecdote, titled “Chatters of the Pulpit:”

Old Renzo Kato and Lay Believer Seiyu Araki were well known for their remarkable skill in debate and proselytization. One evening, when the two were engrossed in discussion on the teachings of Nichiren Daishonin, a man interrupted them and told them that a lecture was going to be presented by a renowned priest of the Minobu sect [the mainstream Nichiren school]. No sooner did they hear this than they rode to the lecture hall bringing with them the complete published Goshu (over 60 volumes at that time). When they arrived, they took a place directly in front of the podium and piled the Goshu volumes beside them. No sooner had the lecturer introduced the main subject, than the two signaled that they had questions. A debate began, and in the end, the two scholars confuted the lecturer. It is said that, because of this, several people were converted to the Fuji School [which later became Nichiren Shoshu].

Lay Believer Seiyu Araki was the first So-koto of the Hokkeko [the Nichiren Shoshu lay believers association]. He excelled in administrative management, debate with other schools, and propagation by writing and lecturing about Nichiren Shoshu during the Meiji period [1868 - 1912]. As a result, he was widely known and recognized as “Lay Believer Seiyu Araki of the Fuji School.”

The fact that the small Fuji School (today’s Nichiren Shoshu), with fewer than fifty local temples, managed to protect the light of Buddhism without sinking beneath the raging waves of the time - the violent societal changes of the Meiji and Taisho [1912 -1926] periods - owes much to the great efforts of the devout and protective priests and believers of the time, including Mr. Ei’ichi Araki (pseudonym: Seiyu). However, seventy years after his death, the current Nichiren Shoshu

authority, vitiated by the Soka Gakkai, fails to commemorate Seiyu Araki's achievements and seems to have all but forgotten his name.

Recently, I enjoyed the favor of conferring with Ei'ichi Araki's descendant, Mr. Koki Fukushige, and he taught me a great deal about this person, who was a sort of benefactor of Nichiren Shoshu, and so I would like to trace his life. However, I intend to try to provide an objective description of him and will do my best to avoid historical perceptions that amount to propagandizing Nichiren Shoshu. Therefore, at times, I will take the liberty of touching upon the darker side of Nichiren Shoshu.

At the beginning of the Meiji period, many people still used a variety of names, such as a common name of a house, a real name, a self-acquired name, a pseudonym; also, it was easy then to change names. As such, Ei'ichi Araki was also called Giheh (his popular name), Seiyu (his pseudonym), and Ei'ichi (his real name). In this biography, please note that I will refer to him by the name most suitable to the circumstance. [The translation will have less variation in his names]

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The birthplace

Ei'ichi [Seiyu] Araki was born about 150 years ago, in the fourth year of Kaei (1851), as the first son of a merchant, Buhe'e Fukushima, at Hagi, of the Choshu clan [Hagi is a city located in modern-day Yamaguchi prefecture, formerly the feudal domain of the Choshu clan. With the Satsuma clan in Kagoshima prefecture, the Choshu clan played a major role in bringing about the Meiji Restoration in 1868. The people from these two clans exerted a strong influence during the Meiji era].

The ancestor of the house of Fukushima, according to tradition, was a merchant who came from Kyoto at the time when the conflict between those loyal to the Emperor, who advocated the expulsion of foreigners, and those who supported the Shogunate had intensified. The Fukushima had also come to the domain of Choshu, along with some courtiers expelled from Kyoto who looked to the Choshu clan for support, and plied the sword trade for the clan. (This happened prior to the time of the famous seven courtiers whom Choshu expelled in the third year of Bunkyo, 1863) [These 7 courtiers, loyal to the Emperor, were defeated in a coup and fled to Choshu. Those were years of enormous and bewildering political upheaval in Japan, though they were relatively less bloody than the total change taking place in the country would indicate.]

Ei'ichi was orphaned at the age of eight and brought up by his grandmother. It is likely he had siblings, but the details are unknown. His grandmother was a highly enthusiastic follower of the Hongwanji Nembutsu sect, and often took young Ei'ichi by the hand to temples. Ei'ichi himself liked listening to the sermons, and so he naturally developed a strong interest in Buddhism from an early age.

The Fukushima family was of the sword-trading merchant class. At that time, in the castle town of Hagi, the atmosphere was thick with national sentiment – loyal to the Emperor and support for the expulsion of foreigners. It is said that the young and impressionable Ei'ichi was adopted into and took the name of the Araki family of the foot-soldier class in order to attain the status of Choshu clan samurai. The time was turbulent and uproarious in the closing days of the Tokugawa shogunate, and Ei'ichi had grown up in the midst of the Choshu clan who were the vanguard of the force in opposition to the shogunate. [The Japanese class system was somewhat fluid in terms of adoption or even purchasing a status. If no son was born in a family, for instance, adopting was common.

The continuity of Japanese society has not been sustained by strict blood lines. Many family-owned Japanese companies have lasted hundreds of years because of this.]

A noteworthy feature of this period is the Shoka-Sonjuku, a private school presided over by Shoin Yoshida in place of his uncle, who was his elder and teacher, from the second year of Ansei (1855), when he was discharged from prison, until the fourth year when he was imprisoned again, and through the end of the fifth year. The school was a treasure house of competent people who helped spur the Meiji Restoration. [Yoshida Shoin, who died at the age of 29, presided over Shoka-Sonjuku for only 2 years, yet he educated young samurai who would play major roles in the Restoration. He was an outstanding educator.]

This widely known private school, located in a renovated storage room the size of eight mats [12'X12'], produced such young samurai as Shinsaku Takasugi, Hirofumi Ito, Koin Kido, Genzui Kusaka, Arimoto Yamagata, Yajiro Shinagawa and others who later brought the dawn of Modern Japan. [For example, among these low-ranking samurai were ones who later became the first prime minister, formulated the Japanese constitution, founded Mitsubishi Corporation, and reigned over the army for more than thirty years. Others became cabinet ministers and one, Shinsaku Takasugi, who died at the young age of 27, managed to fire upon the British legation, fight the allied fleet, block the British from leasing an island like Hong Kong, start a coup with 80 men and sumo wrestlers, toppling the contemporary Choshu government, and then defeated an invading army of 150,000 Shogun supporters with a force only 4,000 strong. These individuals are the heroes of the rise of modern Japan.]

By the way, family posterity reports that this boy Ei'ichi also used the Shoka-Sonjuku school as a playground. It is said that he adored Risuke (Hirofumi) Ito, who was ten years his senior, and that he was treated like an errand boy and had the run of the school. Although there is nothing to prove that now, it is a fact that Shoka-Sonjuku was sponsored by Inosuke Odamura for several years after the 6th year of Ansei [1860], when Shoin Yoshida was re-imprisoned and executed. In addition, it appears that many children between the ages of 11 and 12 entered the school. Shoin's uncle, Bunnoshin Tamaki, also continued to conduct his cram school [he gave an extremely spartan education there to young Shoin], and Maresuke Nogi [later, as an army general, he overthrew the Russian Port Arthur Fortress during the Russo-Japanese war], who was two years older than he was, also attended the school. Considering the case of

the adoption by the Araki family (for obtaining Samurai status) mentioned above, when Ei'ichi was seven or eight years old, it is likely that Hirofumi Ito entered the school at the age of seventeen, so Ei'ichi was probably around him. After that, it is possible that Ei'ichi also entered the school during the Bunkyu period [1861 – 1864] around the age of eleven as the school was ending.

In any case, it is certain that Ei'ichi, as he grew up, spent a sensitive boyhood around the yard of the Shoka-Sonjuku and had a glimpse of the seniors who discussed policy and took actions for the nation in their capacity as loyalists to the Emperor.

Cherishing a high ambition

The Shogunate's failure to subjugate the Choshu domain for the second time, in the third year of the struggle (1867), became a turning point. The country was entering the modern age and the overthrow of the Shogunate was imminent. This battle was a critical, all-out, uncompromising war for Choshu. Ei'ichi was then 16 years old and appeared to be drawn by the force of Choshu to the life of a soldier. In the first month of the next year, the 4th year of Keio (1866), Ei'ichi participated in the Battle of Toba-Fushimi, and, as an escort of Hirofumi Ito, he fought hard and with great energy. As a result, a three-fold set of red lacquered sake cups, each bearing the family crest of the house of Mori, was bestowed upon him by the feudal lord Takachika Mori (later designated a marquis). Ei'ichi's descendants have cared for the cups as a family treasure to this day. Since Ei'ichi was 17 years old at the time and a samurai of low rank, it is likely that he distinguished himself in his own way. Apparently, however, he never spoke of that time to his children. Nevertheless, the splendid red lacquered cups attest to Ei'ichi's great deeds.

Ei'ichi also added to the distinction of his local relations, in that, during the war, he acquired the favor of many men in high office in the new government, which included the domain cliques of Choshu and Satsuma. His personal connections were very helpful in protecting our school later on, as I will explain.

After the battle of Toba-Fushimi, Ei'ichi did not join the expeditionary force which went to the East, but instead returned to his home. [The new government army had driven the Shogunate force eastward; these battles continued for a year.] Three years later, in the 4th year of Meiji (1871), Ei'ichi went to the Osaka-Kyoto area on his own and became an employee of a broker of the Dojima Rice Exchange. [Located in Osaka, the Dojima Rice Exchange functioned as the central market place of Japan where rice was the commodity with which feudal lords were paid, and all rice was traded there. The first commodity futures in the world were developed here, and the Chicago Mercantile Exchange made an announcement that the system it first applied was that of the Dojima Exchange.]

Regarding this matter, Ei'ichi spoke as follows:

I came to Osaka at age 21, and, unlike nowadays, no one then would hire anyone as an apprentice unless he had a guarantor. I knew no one there, of course, and, besides, I had only traveling expenses. In the meantime, it became difficult to pay the accommodation fee of 2 shu, which was equivalent to today's 12 sen and 5 rin. [0.125 yen or about 30 dollars today. It is very difficult to compare monetary values of the Meiji era and today; however, following the author's example, the translator will exchange 1 yen at the time at the rate of today's 20 to 30,000 yen or roughly 200 to 300 dollars.] Finally, relying on a person I happened to know from the old days in Shimonoseki (a port of Choshu), who had boarded the same quickboat, I got a job serving at a rice shop at Dojima.

Thus, without any definite aim, Ei'ichi, who nevertheless cherished a grand vision, travelled to the Osaka-Kyoto district from Hagi, and began serving in a shop of the rice market in Dojima, planning to stay there only a little while. Around that time, social conditions began to settle and became calmer. In addition, in April of that year, the rice market of Dojima, which was responsible for the finance of the country, was authorized to be called the "Dojima Rice Trading Company" and was incorporated by the Konoike, Mitsui, and Isono concerns, [These were the prominent financial houses at the dawn of Japanese capitalism] which had just started rice trading under the new system. Before he

knew it, Ei'ichi had started a career as a rice broker (also known as a speculator) during the infancy of capitalism in Japan.

Also in that year, Ei'ichi converted from Jodo-Shinshu (a Nembutsu sect) to the Nichiren sect, as the result of his search for the correct practice of Buddhism. In December of that year, he converted to the Fuji Taisekiji school, being proselytized by Heiji Morimura, the head of believers of Rengeji temple. There may have been an underlying cause behind Ei'ichi's interest in Buddhism and his apparently spontaneous decision to research and convert to the Fuji school, namely, that of being influenced by the thought of Shoin Yoshida. Shoin had always ardently admired Nichiren Shonin, and declared to his disciples:

I do not necessarily consider the Buddhism they believe in to be good. Rather, it is that he [the Daishonin] did not mind going through any hardships and was not swayed by danger, even of life and death. His boldness and intrepidity were beyond that of any common being. Having been such a person, he succeeded in establishing his school, and from then on, people worshipped him. Anyone who wishes to achieve a deed such as this should be so game and valiant.

Choshu, along with Aki (east of Choshu), was originally a region of the Pure Land [Nembutsu] sect, and this sect was predominant until the late Edo period [1603 – 1867]. During this time, proselytization by Nichiren's followers hardly existed and the Nembutsu belief was the most prosperous. In such a climate, for a person born into a family of the Pure Land sect, Ei'ichi Araki's conversion to the Nichiren sect may have been the result of the ideological influence of Shoin Yoshida. Ei'ichi related what had brought him to his conversion:

My grandmother was an assertive Nembutsu believer and took me with her when she visited temples at various places, so I loved Buddhism very much even in childhood and listened to the teachings

of various sects, not only the Nembutsu sect. However, I was prejudiced against the Lotus Sutra.....

The time of arrival of an opportunity is often strange, and when I arrived in Osaka at 21 years of age, in the 4th year of Meiji [1871] I happened to have the chance to listen to the teachings of the Lotus Sutra and was inspired - indeed, I converted to what is now known as the singular Nichiren sect. In December of the 4th year of Meiji, I was proselytized by a believer with varied and considerable knowledge and a strong faith and practice, and I converted to today's Nichiren Shoshu.

Thus, Ei'ichi Araki who had been pious since his childhood, studied various forms of Buddhism during his adolescence, comparing them and pondering their teachings with a rational spirit and seeking mind, until he at last found his way to Nichiren Shoshu. In addition, as soon as he joined Nichiren Shoshu, he began to devote himself to his practice in a self-sacrificing manner that was at times confronted by the frequently changing policies of the new Meiji government, such as the land nationalization statute and the installation of the general agency of religious affairs.

The Terada-ya Inn at Fushimi

In the turbulent days near the end of the Tokugawa Shogunate, the Terada-ya Inn for ship passengers, near the port of Fushimi [The port of Fushimi was the entrance to the Yodo river, on the way from Osaka to Kyoto. In older times, the boat held a thirty koku rice cargo.], was the Satsuma domain's designated inn, and was crowded with travelers every day. On one of these days, the two factions of the Satsuma clan samurai, the anti-shogunate faction and the supporters of the integration of the imperial court and the Shogunate, clashed, and a sword fight broke out between comrades. This is known as the Terada-ya Incident.

The incident occurred in April of the 2nd year of Bunkyu (1862) when nine samurai, including Yu'emon Suzuki, Kihachiro Narahara, and others under the Satsuma lord's mission, visited their bosom

friends, the masterless samurai extremist patriots (who had voluntarily left the clan for the freedom of anti-shogunate political activities) of the Seichugumi Organization. These individuals, including Shinshichi Arima and others, had attempted to assassinate Kujo, the Imperial Chief Counsel, the Kyoto Military Governor, and others. The mission was based on a strict order. As the lord of Yu'emon Suzuki and the others was a supporter of the integration of the imperial court and the Shogunate, he gave them a strict order to persuade the group around Arima, who were about to rise up and overthrow the Shogunate, or, if they did not obey, kill them.

On the evening of the 23rd [of April], Arima, together with about 50 masterless samurai, all driven by youthful ardor and seeking to risk their lives for the national cause, had already gathered on the second floor of the Terada-ya, which (as noted above) was the Satsuma clan's designated inn. Arima and others went to the first floor to listen to the messengers, but would not comply with their demand. A violent quarrel broke out, during which one of the messengers, Gorobe Michijima, got exasperated and suddenly started shouting "Lord's command!" and slashed Kensuke Tanaka. A rough and tumble fight immediately followed. While Arima was fighting with Michijima, his sword was broken and he slammed himself against Michijima, pinning him to the wall. Arima shouted to his comrade, Sosuke Hashiguchi, "Spear through me! Spear him through my back!" Hashiguchi, obeying his comrade, shrieked "Arima! Forgive me!" and transfixing the two warriors with his sword. In a matter of seconds, sword fights erupted everywhere, transforming the battle into a horrific confrontation, with blood spraying and voices bellowing in every direction. The moment the samurai who had remained upstairs heard the fracas, they came down with drawn swords. Narahara stood in their way, held his sword in front of him, and desperately appealed to the comrades to stop fighting amongst themselves. Thus, the fracas finally quieted down. Though lasting only a short time, the fight was intense; there was blood everywhere and eight warriors had died for the cause.

Witnessing this tragedy, which was later called the "Terada-ya Incident," apparently caused Tose, the proprietress of the Terada-ya Inn,

to change her life. The cries of the young men resonated in Tose's heart, and taking care of these patriots, who were interested in the affairs of state, became her purpose in life. She took care of them with deep sympathy, providing board, laundry and sewing services, treatment, nursing and so on. Because of this, Terada-ya Inn gradually became a kind of hangout of the masterless samurai from Satsuma, Choshu and Tosa. [These were the clans that carried out the Meiji Restoration.] Meanwhile, Ryoma Sakamoto, an influential figure in the Meiji restoration, who was five years younger than Tose, began to visit the Inn and soon became part of the company, as if he were a member of the family. The extant letters from Ryoma to Tose concerned personal matters and prove their closeness.

Five years after this disturbance, the pact of confederacy between the Satsuma and Choshu domains was finally concluded. Ryoma Sakamoto, on his way back to Terada-ya, was drinking a toast with Sankichi Mioshi, when, before they knew it, they were completely surrounded by close to 120 pursuers. Before Ryoma noticed, magistrate officers had pushed in; however, he was snatched from the jaws of death due to Oryu, his lover's, quick-wittedness. In dramatic re-enactments, it became a great scene: while Tose is called outside and detained, the pursuers push in, and Oryu, who was taking a bath, was the first to notice. She ran up the rear staircase wearing a lined robe on her wet body and alerted him to the emergency. Several published literary accounts unanimously accept this version of events. However, tradition in the Araki family has it that the one who was taking a bath was the daughter, Kinu, then 12 years old (and later the wife of Ei'ichi Araki), and it was she who rushed up to the second floor in her waist-cloth and informed the others of the tumult. Kinu has said that she remembered what happened then and that Ryoma showed her his pistol, but did not remember much about Oryu on that day. Since this is the testimony of Kinu, the party concerned, we cannot wholly deny it. However, it may be appropriate to credit both descriptions of the events.

In subsequent days, the Fushimi magistrate visited the Inn in order to investigate these events. He tried to arrest Ryoma and encircled

Terada-ya many times. Tose left behind stories of her experiences, such as hiding in a bathtub with the children and seeing the magistrate officers or Shinsen-gumi samurai arguing. [A special police force for the shogunate that suppressed anti-shogunate samurai.] By the way, Ryoma Sakamoto was killed by assassins the following year, along with Shintaro Nakaoka. On the 15th day of the following month, The Restoration of Imperial Rule was at last realized (that is, on October 14th in the 3rd year of Keio [1867]) at the Omi-ya Inn in Kawara-cho town.

Destruction of Terada-ya Inn by fire and Ei'ichi Araki

Ei'ichi Araki began to frequent Terada-ya because Hirofumi Ito took him there. The time period is not certain, but seems to have been around the time he participated in the Toba-Fushimi Battle as an escort to Ito. Ei'ichi apparently visited Terada-ya frequently after he went back to Kyoto some years later, and he became Tose's favorite. Tose and her husband Isuke, who died when she was 35 years old [on July 23rd in the first year of Ganji, 1864], had one son and three daughters and she also brought up five orphans. Her husband seems to have been a good-natured and generous character. So Tose, woman as she was, managed the Inn and raised many children. However, in January of the 4th year of Keio (the 1st year of Meiji) [The era name of Keio was changed to Meiji in September.], the Toba-Fushimi Battle caused the whole city to burn down and the Terada-ya Inn was also destroyed in the fire.

After the disaster, the Terada-ya family built a temporary hut at the original site and resided there. A letter from Tose to Oryu remains extant, and I will quote from it, translating it into an easier language. (In those days letters were written in a style that is rather hard for modern Japanese readers to understand.)

..... Although I have many, many more things to tell you, I have roughly sketched the general situation, showing how we are depending on other's help and are unable to conduct things as we would like; also, we are building a hut. I will tell you more in detail in the next letter. We, Isuke, Riki, Kinu, and Tose send our best regards. For Otomo-sama, aka Oryo-sama, from Tose.

When Ei'ichi went back to Kyoto and visited them, the family had been forced to live an inconvenient life in the temporary hut at the site of the burnt inn. The letters mention one "Tsuke (her first son, the VII) Riki, Kinu, and Tose" who apparently were family members at the time. It did not take long for a fine young man like Ei'ichi Araki to develop a close relationship as if he were a relative of the Terada-ya family. Tose might have projected the image of the late Ryoma Sakamoto onto this promising young man. She wanted him to be her son-in-law.

By the way, Ryoma Sakamoto, in his "Kanshu-roku," advocated the rise of Buddhism in Japan and urged the country to hold out against the advance of Christianity. Ei'ichi, as mentioned before, had a strong interest in Buddhism, and studied it by himself. As noted above, in December of the 4th year of Meiji [1871] he converted and joined the Rengeji temple at Kitano, Osaka. Ei'ichi was eager to convert Tose as well, and guided the Terada-ya family to our school.

Ei'ichi first married Tose's fourth daughter (possibly an adopted one), Taki, and entered into the family registration temporarily. However, they soon divorced, and he married Tose's 3rd daughter, Kinu, who regarded Ei'ichi as her lover, and they set up housekeeping in the 8th year of Meiji (1875). It seems Ei'ichi's new career as a rice broker went smoothly and, in the beginning of the 9th year of Meiji, he settled down in a residence at 12 of lower 2nd avenue of Kitamachi in Kyoto, and made a fresh start.

In October of the same year, Ei'ichi invited the retired High Priest Nichiden Shonin, who was temporarily staying at Rengeji temple at Kitano of Osaka, to his house and was blessed to have him stay for three days, during which he gave a lecture (a Home Oko) to which he gathered his family and believers of Juhonji temple. It seems he combined the visit with a house-warming in the new home. During that time, with the leader of the Juhonji temple believers, Mr. Kato, he guided others on a sightseeing tour of the Shugaku-in Imperial Villa and cordially offered his hospitality.

However, on the 7th of September in the 10th year of Meiji, spirited Tose, perhaps because of the strain of the events of that year, suddenly

died at the age of 48. [In those days, the Japanese average life span was around 44 years.] The likely cause of her death was pneumonia. Their first son Isuke VII was only 16 years old while Ei'ichi was 28 years old.

Since her death took place right after she converted to Buddhism, it was thought that the funeral ceremony could be somewhat troublesome. There are two different posthumous Buddhist names for Tose. One is recorded on the necrology of their original family temple, Shorin-in of the Nembutsu sect, as "Shinyo Shoen Zeno-ni," and the other is at the Terada family tomb in front of Shorin-in, as well as on the necrology of Juhonji temple [of Nichiren Shoshu] as "Kido-in Myoji Shin'nyo." Researchers into Ryoma Sakamoto's life have been confused by it due to their lack of knowledge of the fact of her conversion and the subsequent historical facts. Myokoji Temple in Shinagawa holds the Joju-Gohonzons endowed to Isuke Terada (by Nippu Shonin in 1882 and 1884), which were offered by the Kisaburo Nishio family, who were relatives of Terada. It turns out that Isuke Terada belonged to the group of Juhonji temple believers in Kujo, Kyoto. Considering the rigid manner of the Taisekiji school with respect to endowing Gohonzons, it is almost certain, from the course of the endowment, that Tose was converted before she died.

At that point, in the 9th year of Meiji, the railroad between Kyoto and Osaka opened and, before the town of Fushimi was revived (from the destruction by fire during the Toba-Fushimi Battle), the days of the sanjikkoku-bune passenger boat ended and rebuilding a boat passengers' inn became difficult. Moreover, losing the gutsy landlady who managed the place by herself apparently made it inevitable that the inn would go out of business. Also, Isuke had moved to his mother Tose's birthplace of Otsu, of Omi county, and his sisters all got married and left Terada-ya. Ei'ichi and his wife Kinu, rather than the house master Isuke, may have taken care of the Terada's family matters and of his sisters, in many ways. Once the arrangements after Tose's death were made, Ei'ichi and Kinu came to Dojima of Osaka and Ei'ichi started a full-scale business as a rice broker and cut an impressive figure.

Ryoma Sakamoto, Terada-ya Inn, and Ei'ichi Araki had another interesting episode which I will talk about in a later chapter.

The Strength of Nichiren Shoshu in the early days of the Meiji period

The agitated days at the end of Tokugawa Shogunate had brought about great disturbances, and the mountain village was not left in peace and quiet. A deterioration of public order, in particular, did not exempt the temples, and Taiseikiji temple also experienced frequent arsons, thefts, and burglaries; this was deleterious to the priests, and their disturbed spirit undermined the sect's strength.

At that time, the Shogunate collapsed and "the Restoration" commenced. The new government [out of their reversionism] proclaimed the Ordinance of Distinguishing Shinto and Buddhism. [Shinto is a belief system that originated in Japan while Buddhism was brought from India in the 6th century.] Furthermore, the policies connected with implementing the "land proposal" law, which would convert the landed properties of Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines to state ownership, and the abolition of the "System of Temple Surety" threatened to take away the chief support of Buddhist society, which was then living in idleness and had been protected for a long time by the temple properties and the Temple Surety System. [The Temple Surety System required every commoner to register at a Buddhist temple to prove that he was a Buddhist believer, and not a believer in a forbidden faith such as Christianity or the Fujū-Fuse Nichiren sect. It functioned as a municipal office of family registration, travel visa issuance and so on.] Thus, on the one hand, Buddhism was excluded by the state policy of establishing Shinto as the national religion. This policy was promoted by a branch of Shintoism started by Atsutane Hirata, whose followers became pivotal members of the new government and who were making the deification of the Emperor by Shintoism a spiritual pillar. It was based on classic texts refuting Confucian and Buddhist influence. [The new government observed that Western civilization has Christianity at its core, and they planned to install Shinto in the position that Christianity holds in the West in order to advance Japanese civilization.] On the other hand, their revolutionary social, economic and political policies were aimed at putting down the old systems and customs as superstitions and social evils. As a result, traditional Buddhist communities were doomed to be left behind.

The new government soon established a policy of religious unity, making Shinto the state religion and a vehicle of oppression of

Buddhism. Specifically, following the Shinto-Buddhism Separation Order, the government informed the 16 head temples of the Nichiren schools in Kyoto that they were prohibited from celebrating the Sanjūban-shin, [The 30 Gods protecting the country and the people, a mixed belief of Shinto and Buddhism; the general Nichiren sects in Kyoto had applied it for proselytizing purposes.] and banned them from inscribing Tensho Daijin [the sun goddess] and Hachiman bodhisattva on any mandala, as a mixture of Shinto and Buddhism. It was a strict order and directed that if these figures were inscribed on any mandalas, these should be burnt. In various Nichiren sect temples in Kyoto this resulted in the discarding of many statues of gods and the covering of the mandalas of the two gods Tensho Daijin and Hachiman with sticking paper [they are protective gods in the Daishonin's teaching].

Shinto followers took advantage of the new government's posture of oppressing Buddhism, and the movement to abolish Buddhism spread further across Japan. The movement was uneven among the regions, but it severely hit Buddhist temples and priests by the 6th or 7th year of Meiji [1873, 74]. For example, the Kagoshima domain, where the storm raged, witnessed the abolishing of 1,066 Buddhist temples and the return to secular life of 2,964 priests. Afterwards, as well, the destruction of stone images and other objects of worship continued nationwide. It is well known that abolishing Buddhism at Kofukuji temple in Nara and at the Hiyoshi shrine of Sakamoto was thorough. [For instance, the successor of Kofukuji and his assistants returned to secular life simultaneously.] Not unlike what took place during the Cultural Revolution in China, many irreplaceable, national-treasure level cultural properties were lost at one throw.

Such a storm of Buddhism-abolishing gravely affected our school as well. For example, at Kyodaiji temple of Tokushima, priests sold the whole temple and returned to secular life, and Nikkoji temple of Tottori and Myohoji temple of Iwaki were temporarily discontinued. Among the adherents of Myohonji temple of Hota, the branch temples and believers at Hyuga were devastated. Hosokusa Danrin, the school to train priests which was annexed to the temple, was temporarily

closed at the time, and was abolished in the 7th year of Meiji since it had no priest or parishioner.

Moreover, the “land proposal” of converting temple properties to state ownership, which was introduced in the 8th year of Meiji, hastened the decline of Buddhist temples. This law converted fields of rice and other crops of Buddhist temples, which had been donated by the Shogunate or feudal lords, into state-owned lands as village yields, concurrently with the abolition of all domains of samurai lords and the establishment of prefectures. Furthermore, forests within temple precincts were all nationalized, except those around the temple buildings. As a result, all of Taisekiji’s forests of about 37 chobu [100 acres] were nationalized along with the cedar tree forests surrounding the Mie-do temple, the Main gate, and the Black gate, and it became impossible to trim trees which had fallen due to high winds.

This decline of the power of our school is obvious from a look at the numbers of priests residing in Taisekiji at various times. Thus, checking the official documents and population registries of those days, we see the following:

The 3 rd year of Kanmon (1663)	53 residents
The 9 th year of An’nei (1780)	150 residents
The 5 th year of Meiji (1872)	33 residents

These are the total of all ordained priests and acolytes residing in the priests’ living quarters, sub-temples and other areas; thus, we can see how much our school’s power was deteriorating. (By the way, the number of priests residing in Taisekiji today is probably around 300.) Regarding the number of branch temples of our school, the official document given to the government in the 2nd year of Meiji lists 41 branch temples but, excluding those without stationed priests, it was fewer than 40 temples. In brief, it comes down to the fact that the Taisekiji sect at that time was sustained by around 50 ordained priests under the High Priest and five to six thousand household believers.

The sect’s influence when Ei’ichi Araki converted was no great shakes in terms of doctrinal studies and practice, human resources and

economics. For all that, the reason this small Buddhist community survived was due to the tradition of protecting the teachings inherited from Nikko Shonin and the awareness of the correct lineage of the Nikko school, was it not?

Nichiden Shonin [the 52nd High Priest. 1817 – 1890] traveled to Kofukuji temple of Nara and various great temples in Kyoto in the 7th year of Meiji and, seeing their strained and decadent condition, entered the following into his diary:

..... Reflecting on that, the decline of our Head Temple and the destruction of its temple buildings need no longer be lamented, as nothing but the accomplishment of correct faith in the great teaching is a matter of great significance. No matter how small a temple is, even at a quarter of a lay person's dwelling, it is most important for us to thoroughly establish our faith in the great teaching.

His devotion from the start ----- On the issue of a central Head Temple for all Nichiren sects

The new government's policy of oppressing Buddhism was met with great confusion and, eventually, after people strongly resisted, it was overturned. Thus, in March of the 5th year of Meiji, the government discarded the Ministry of Divinities and established the Ministry of Religion, and in April it set up the 14 ranks of Public Instructions in order to control Shinto and Buddhist priests. The goal was to have each Buddhist sect bear the responsibility of educating people based on the Three Fundamental Articles of the Creed. These were, "piety and patriotism should be realized," "the ways of heaven, earth and man should be made clear," and "the Emperor and his intention should be respected."

In October of the same year, as part of the new policy, a decree was issued that each of the seven Buddhist sects [including Tendai, Shingon, Nichiren, etc.] would be under the control of a single superintendent high priest. The government also attempted to utilize its newly established Great Teaching Institute to undertake a religious education system for the people and to exercise a measure of control over the

religions. The following year, in January of the 6th year of Meiji, at the opening ceremony of the Great Teaching Institute, a Shinto-style altar was set up in the main hall of the Zojoji temple at Shiba [in Tokyo], where the superintendent high priest of each sect participated in a Shinto-style purification ceremony in accordance with government instructions. For the [integrated] Nichiren sect, Nichirin Ken of Honjoji temple of Echigo was designated as the first superintendent high priest.

The issuance of the decree placing each sect under the authority of one superintendent high priest was intended to integrate all of the head temples and local temples and provide the high priest of an influential head temple with administrative power over that sect, effectively making him the subcontractor for the government's policy on religion. However, for Nichiren followers, who had long separated themselves into different schools [e.g. the Icchi school, Shoretsu school, Fuji school, Fujufuse school and so on] and who had competed and argued with one another for several hundred years concerning how to interpret the doctrines, the proper formalities, and the principles of master-disciple transmission, a reform of the system that allowed each sect to be placed under the supervision of another school was absolutely unacceptable.

On the other hand, some tried to take advantage of these practices of the new government. The powerful seven head temples of the Nichiren-shu sect, who had gained information about the policy of one sect/one high priest before its issuance, were maneuvering under a secret pledge to divide up the various temples of the Nichiren sect in Japan and rule them through the seven head temples. For this purpose, they laid the groundwork by appealing to the government office and secretly pledged to ensure that the role of superintendent high priest would, in each case, be filled by one of the high priests of the seven temples.

A letter written by Nichiden Shonin around this time states, "This will abolish Taisekiji as the head temple and we will end up under the auspices of the Minobu [Nichiren-shu] school; I am anxious about this course of events. The Icchi (Minobu) school is already circulating the

idea that ‘Taisekiji will sooner or later become a local temple of the Minobu school.’ We - both priests and believers - are greatly troubled.”

Suspecting this, Nikkan of Yoboji temple and Nisshi [of Honmonji] took swift action to deter the stratagem by encouraging the head temples of the Fuji school [including Taisekiji], Hon’noji, Honkoji and others, to petition the Ministry of Religion under joint signature. Taisekiji went along with the plan which was intended to block the seven head temples, under joint signature and seal. That was on May 28th in the 6th year of Meiji (1873). However, Nichi’in Shonin [the 54th High Priest, 1829 -1880], the Taisekiji high priest, had already applied to the Ministry of Religion independently to have Taisekiji remain the sole head temple, while also joining the petition prepared by the cooperating head temples of the Shoretsu schools. [Taisekiji is one of the Shoretsu schools, who establish the superiority of the Honmon over the Shakumon. Meanwhile, the Icchi school advocates oneness (Icchi) of the Honmon and Shakumon.] On the 28th of July, Nichi’in Shonin again submitted a petition seeking to have Taisekiji remain the sole head temple by itself. When Nichi’in Shonin went to Tokyo to present this petition, Ei’ichi Araki accompanied him in order to support the cause.

Seiyu (Ei’ichi) Araki, looking back on this occasion late in life, said:

At that time, in the 6th year of Meiji, the Ministry of Religion issued an order stating that each sect should designate a general head temple and all the temples of the sect must belong to it. The High Priest at the time, Nichi’in Shonin, remonstrated with the government without any thought of sparing his life. I, then, with the resolution to accompany him anywhere, went with him to Tokyo, after exchanging the water cup with the main believers of the temple. [When going into a life-threatening situation, people exchanged sake cups filled with water. Samurai facing major battles, or Kamikaze pilots before take-off, also did this.]

He probably had gone as a representative of the temple believers. When I think about it, it is difficult to imagine that the newly-converted young man, only 23 years old at the time, went, first, from the Kyoto-Osaka area to Taisekiji, and then accompanied the High Priest when

he petitioned the government. [The distance from Osaka to Taisekiji is roughly 300 miles, and from Taisekiji to Tokyo, another 100 miles; he made the journey entirely on foot.] Still, Ei'ichi Araki's outstanding ability to act was already being demonstrated. It is likely that, counting on his personal connections with persons in the Choshu clan, he took it upon himself to ask government officials to use their influence.

Nevertheless, despite their efforts, the petition to remain an independent head temple was turned down on the 24th of September, when Nichi'in Shonin, together with the first superintendent high priest, Nichirin Akira of Hojoji temple, was summoned to the Ministry of Religion by an official and strictly cautioned that the petition for independence of Taisekiji was irrelevant and against the government's policy. In addition, it was criticized by other Shoretsu temples with whom Taisekiji appealed to the government for independence, and thus ended up without any effect.

Finally, in the 7th year of Meiji, four Shoretsu schools were approved as "Shoretsu schools of the Nichiren sect," and, in the 9th year of Meiji, the 8 head temples of the Komon [Nikko Shonin's followers] school were admitted by the new government as the "Komon school of the Nichiren sect," and became independent, on condition that the role of high priest would be rotated among the 8 head temples. In this way, it was settled without the sect being put under the Minobu school's administration.

For this small school, which did not have the remotest connection with political power, the realities of society were truly severe. Ei'ichi must have secretly thought about the mission he was chosen to perform.

Temporary concealment of the Gohonzon of Kaidan [Dai-Gohonzon]

It should be noted that, in the recollection by Ei'ichi, there appear phrases such as, "without sparing my life," "with resolution to accompany him anywhere," or "exchanging the water cup with the main believers of the temple," which suggest that the circumstances surrounding his departure for Tokyo were tense. The reader senses that it was

a special situation, beyond the mere petition to the Ministry of Religion for independence as the sole head temple. The phrases seem to indicate that a [temporary] relocation of the Gohonzon of Kaidan was carried out secretly at the same time. It appears there was an agreement among the parties concerned, or they were ordered, to say nothing, and the incident was kept strictly secret afterwards as well, and does not appear in the official records of our school. Let me reconstruct it from hearsay evidence and scraps of records.

The act of making Shinto the state religion, which began with the Shinto-Buddhism Separation Order issued in the first year of Meiji, gradually led to the oppression of Buddhism, and various regions were left in disarray. Many of the Nichiren sect temples subscribed to [a form of] Shinto-influenced Nichiren Buddhism; therefore, various head temples received government notices that use of the Sanju-ban-shin [the 30 protective Gods] and other Shinto Gods' titles was prohibited, and that Tensho Daijin [the sun goddess], Hachiman bodhisattva and others were not to be inscribed on the mandala Honzon. Some temples underwent investigation of their Honzon by government officials, and it was reported that some Honzons were removed. Also, as I mentioned before, the head temples in Kyoto were forced to deal with these matters by placing sticking papers over Tensho Daijin and Hachiman bodhisattva or by putting away statues of Sanju-ban-shin. Nichi'in Shonin and others who heard rumors of these occurrences were very much alarmed, because Shinto followers could force some kind of investigation under any excuse, and even if it was a temporary issue, it was not a moment to relax. In the 6th and 7th year of Meiji, the movement toward abolishing Buddhism had died down, but the aftermath and the frequently revised laws to regulate religion continued. Nichi'in Shonin, consulting with the retired High Priests (Nichi'ei Shonin, Nichiden Shonin, and Nichijo Shonin, [the 51st, 52nd, and 53rd respectively]) and influential believers, planned to secretly remove the Gohonzon of Kaidan and to conceal it, in order to be prepared for any unforeseen situation. They were in favor of evacuating the Gohonzon of Kaidan until the world quieted down.

Rumor has it that a copied Honzon was made and secretly placed in the Gohozo [the Treasure House in Taiseikiji where the Dai-gohonzon was stored]. After that, the Dai-Gohonzon was concealed in this way: first, it was wrapped in straw matting and carried out in strict secrecy, then it was transferred to Tokyo on horseback, escorted by six people. Crossing over steep Mount Hakone on their way, the escorts stayed at Asazo Matsushima's residence at Yumi-cho of Ginza [in Tokyo] overnight. The next day, avoiding observation, they installed the Dai-Gohonzon in the storehouse of the mansion of Viscount Maeda (the clan lord Toshika Maeda of Daishoji domain, an eager believer) at Hongo [in Tokyo]. The believers who escorted the Dai-Gohonzon included Asazo Matsushima (Kakudo, age 47), Zenbe Yamada (Hozan, age 36), Mankichi Yoshino (age 27), Yahe Yamano (age 47), Seiyu Araki (Ei'ichi, age 24), and Juei Tomita (age unknown).

It is said that later, in the 10th year of Meiji [1877], the Dai-Gohonzon was transferred back into the Gohozo of Taiseikiji and, due to his efforts on this occasion, Asazo Matsushima received a Gohonzon as a reward in the same year. This incident is referred to in "The Great Mandala of the 2nd year of Koan [The Dai-Gohonzon] and Nikko Shonin," written by Sazo Matsumoto [Grandfather of Saichiro Matsumoto, the author of "A Brief History and the Doctrine of the Fuji School"], a relative of Tomozo Matsushima, and was well-known among some people. However, it is based on hearsay and is not completely reliable. Recently, a priest kindly showed me that a relevant description of the incident in Hori Nichiko Shonin's diary [the 59th High Priest, 1867 – 1957, who authored many scholarly works], so I offer it here for readers' reference. The diary of Rev. Hori (residing in Josenji temple [in Tokyo] at the time, dated the 7th of December in the 44th year of Meiji [1911]), states:

The Elder Yamada has come, bringing the rest of Nichigon's collection. In the 7th year of Meiji, upon the order of Nichi'in Shonin, a duplication out of camphor board was made in the same width and height as the Gohonzon of Kaidan, in the thickness of 2 sun and 2 bu [2.6 inches], and which was completed in 40 or so days and placed [in the Gohozo]. Then the Dai-Gohonzon was escorted to the

storehouse of the Maeda's residence after an overnight stay at Matsushima's. In the tenth year of Meiji, the Dai-Gohonzon came back to the head temple [Taisekiji]. Thus, we heard the account of hardships he had encountered.

The elder Yamada mentioned here refers to Zembe Yamada (honorific title, Hozan). There are various opinions regarding the year of transference: the reports of the Matsushima family suggest it took place in around the 4th or 5th year of Meiji and this has been considered credible. However, I suppose the 6th year is also a valid choice, for the following reasons: first, it was in December in the 4th year that Ei'ichi Araki converted to our school; secondly, a description appearing in Araki's book: "A thought on the most superior Honzon of the world"; thirdly, the conversation of the Elder Yamada; and fourthly, the honorific description by Nichi'in Shonin on the exact copy of the Honzon of Kaidan, now stored in Rengeji temple [first established in 1771, went through many incidents including an air raid during the war, and currently independent]. The book by Ei'ichi Araki mentioned above records the exact date as follows:

When I was in the prime of life (July in the 6th year of Meiji), I followed the 54th High Priest Nichi'in Shonin, and during my stay at Honshuin temple in the temple precinct of Josenji temple at Koume in Tokyo, I spoke with the then-chief priest of Josenji temple, Rev. Taishun. Rev. Taishun was formerly the chief scholar of Myorenji temple at Shimojo of Fuji [near Taisekiji, formerly the mansion of Lord Ueno, Nanjo Tokimitsu]. One day, while we were chatting, he made a reference to Jinshiro (one of the three martyrs during the Atsuwara Persecution which led to the Daishonin's inscribing of the Dai-Gohonzon)..... (partially omitted)..... I was young then and had not yet spent much time with the Taisekiji school, so I did not pay much attention to what he said and ignored it.

Further, among the Gohonzons kept at Rengeji temple, there is a paper scroll Honzon, which is an exact copy of the Gohonzon of Kaidan, with the honorific description by Nichi'in Shonin which reads as follows:

This Gohonzon is humbly copied so that my prayer may be heard, as I could never tolerate the imperial ordinance of our submission to the authority of the seven major temples of the Nichiren sect, issued in July in the 6th year of Meiji, and I am making a direct appeal to the Ministry of Religion, so that [Taisekiji] will remain the independent Head Temple as before, and at the same time I am submitting a petition to the Ministry. The 54th High Priest Nichi'in.

As set forth in this appeal, what was most unbearable to Nichi'in Shonin, and what concerned him the most, was the prospect of Taisekiji being put under the administration of the 7 temples and being integrated into their dominion. If this were to happen, the extent and kind of the demands that might be made upon Taisekiji by the 7 temples, especially if the demands were to be supported by the new government's authority, was not known, and might even involve a search for the Dai-Gohonzon. The Kansei Persecution [in the 7th year of Kansei, 1795] was still fresh in their memories; in that incident, the Honzons of the head temple of Yoboji and its [84] local temples were investigated. [They derived from the Fuji school after Nichimoku Shonin's time, and stayed close with it. In terms of their teachings and Honzon, refer to the 4th volume of Rokkan-sho in which Nichikan Shonin rebuts their advocator Nisshin's doctrine.] When we look at the situation in this context, we can understand the true source of Nichi'in Shonin's desperate act of submitting a direct appeal and petition for Taisekiji's independence and, in this context, the temporary concealment of the Gohonzon of Kaidan was within the realm of possibility. It also seems to provide evidence that any copy of the Gohonzon of Kaidan was made exactly to measure, including with respect to the disposition of figures and the added inscription.

Nichi'in Shonin must have departed for Tokyo in disguise, so that the real reason for the trip to submit the petition for the Head

Temple's independence; that is, to relocate the Dai-Gohonzon, would escape notice both from within and from outside of our school. Moreover, at the boarding temple Honshuin, they mentioned the topic of a petitioner of the Honzon of Kaidan. This covert action of temporary concealment must have been deeply rooted in the minds of the persons concerned.

In essence, this incident can be seen as a precautionary measure: better to be under the control and administration of the Minobu and other schools than to suffer the aftermath of the movement to abolish Buddhism. Further, I would like to mention that, in the record of copied letters in the Meiji 7th's diary of Nichiden Shonin, he indicates that he is deeply concerned about the conditions at the Maeda mansion at Hongo:

The Head Temple has been especially busy on many issues and has not contacted me at all and I have not heard anything regarding matters at the Maeda mansion in Tokyo. Is everything at the mansion of Hongo alright, and is Rev. Jushoin well? When you have a chance, please be so kind as to convey my best wishes to him.

The 10th year of Meiji [1877], when the Gohonzon of Kaidan was returned to its former place at the Treasure House of Taiseikiji, was also the time that Taiseikiji was recognized by the government to be independent - that is, as Nikko's school of the Nichiren sect - and, as a result, they were free from worry that the school might come under the control of others. The copied Gohonzon was reportedly a scroll or a board, but it is said that it was burned after the Dai-Gohonzon was returned. In any case, the story of the Dai-Gohonzon's transfer to the Maeda mansion gives rise to delicate and complicated issues of faith and practice within today's Taiseikiji school, and even seems to be heavily tabooed.

The first debate ----- the "Kuragaki Debate"

The village of Nose, which is closer to Tanba Province than to the region north of Osaka, is a rural area where settlements are scattered among hills. It faces the Tada manor, which sits on adjacent land, and was the birthplace of the Tada Genji clan, and it is not uncommon to find families with the pedigree of the Kamakura era [1185 -1333] there. The area as a whole was forcibly converted to the Nichiren sect by the feudal domain lord Nose and his clan at the beginning of the Edo period [17th century]. It is well known, therefore, as a province consisting entirely of believers in the Hokke Nichiren sect.

One of the villages there is named Kuragaki village because of its proximity to Mt. Utagaki (Kuragaki or Kurakake) and is praised in the *Man'yōshū*, [the oldest and longest of Japan's poetry anthologies, compiled in the 8th century]. From there, if we look south, we can see the central rice paddies, called the Sengoku valley spread, as well as farmhouses surrounding them in a U-shape. We can also see many well-maintained chestnut groves on the surrounding heights. It is a beautiful village and resembles a typical Japanese hometown.

The house of Jo-no-suke Inoue, established at the foot of Mt. Utagaki, belonged to the family of the hereditary managerial officer of the retainers of the Tada clan. It is recorded in old documents that Inoue organized the county samurai of the region who went to Kyoto to serve as guards of the Imperial Palace, a duty they performed on a rotating basis. The family of the house of Kanbe Oku, also in this neighborhood, was its head family, and both families, in and around the Keio era [1865 – 1868], performed the duty of guarding the Imperial Palace. A license for this practice remains in existence and is held by the Oku family. Kanbe Oku converted to our school during his stay in Kyoto in service to the Palace guard, proselytized by Renzo Kato, the head of the Juhonji temple [established in 1698] believers. It was the beginning of his faith in our school. His conversion is recorded in a written promise by Kanbe Oku, which is still kept in Juhonji Temple, that he loaned 30 Ryo [~\$10K] to the castle of Lord Nose in the 2nd year of Meiji [1869] and the interest (annually 1000 Hiki or 2.5 Ryo) would be given as an offering to the Juhonji Temple. It is also confirmed that several letters from Nichiden Shonin were received and preserved by

the Oku family. Kanbe and Gen-no-shin Oku, the father and son, were earnest believers and, along with Jo-no-suke and Jokitsu Inoue, were of high repute in the region. Consequently, his grandson, Motojiro Oku, was elected a member of the first Osaka prefectural assembly in the 12th year of Meiji. Torahei Inoue, having served as a member of the county assembly, was also elected to this assembly.

Both families, the Inoue and the Oku, converted the local worthies of the village, such as the village mayor or doctors, from families of pedigree, such as the Nakanishi, Hata and Nishida, and others, one after another, to the faith of Nikko Shonin. At this time, in September in the 8th year of Meiji, freedom of religion, or freedom of conversion, was permitted. [during the shogunate era, it was prohibited] Consequently, ten or more important families of Kuragaki village including Jokitsu Inoue and Gen-no-shin Oku applied to leave the local Myohoji temple of the general Nichiren sect and convert to our school. However, Myohoji equivocated and refused to accept the application. Then, in September of the 9th year of Meiji, they all visited Myohoji temple and addressed the request anew with the assistance of Renzo Kato (51 years old) and Ei'ichi Araki (26 years old). They gave several reasons for leaving the temple, such as the historical event of Nikko Shonin's leaving Mt. Minobu, issues regarding the Honzon, and views of the Honmon and Shakumon of the Lotus Sutra. Astonished to hear this, the chief priest of Myohoji temple sought to devise a way to stop the temple's believers from defecting, and this resulted in the Kuragaki Debate.

Inoue and Oku pointed out the slander of the Law committed by the Minobu [general Nichiren] sect, and Nichiyo, the chief priest of Myohoji temple, was at a loss for an answer. Later, though, he issued a 14-article questionnaire, and closed it as follows:

As above, for the sake of us foolish people, I would like to ask you, the two mentors, to fill in the blanks of the letter with answers in red ink. I humbly appeal to you. Sincerely yours.

That is, regarding their errors on issues such as the oneness of the Honmon and Shakumon teachings, the doctrinal basis of our not

enshrining Buddha statues, and our formality of wearing gray robes, he requested responses by filling in the blanks following each question. You can see today that his passages are obscure and include many literal errors. The chief priest of a decent temple should not say things such as “for the sake of us foolish people, I would like to ask...” For a priest, the contents do not display good understanding.

It seems that the two asked for advice again from Renzo Kato in regard to this questionnaire, and their correspondence is published in “the Essentials of the Fuji School Doctrine” [a compilation of essential documents of Nichiren Shoshu edited by the 59th High Priest Nichiko Shonin in 1935, in 10 volumes.] According to it, questions and answers were exchanged three times with the Myohoji temple side over the next year, with the answers being jointly signed by Kato and Araki (at the time he used his popular name of Giheh).

Perhaps having realized that exchanging letters was not doing them any good, the Myohoji side scheduled lectures on the 18th and 19th of October and summoned those who intended to convert to come to Myohoji temple, planning to suppress their action, coercing them by having many priests there to overawe them, under the veil of the lecture presentations. By the way, Ei’ichi Araki had invited Nichiden Shonin to his home at 2nd Ave. of Kiyacho [of Kyoto] from the 12th to the 14th of October and had just seen him off to return to the Head Temple on the 16th.

The incident at Myohoji temple is detailed in a letter by Nippu Shonin [the 55th High Priest] to Rev. Kosho Fujimoto, which is now in the possession of Genryuji temple [of which the author of this book is the chief priest]). Rev. Fujimoto had heard the news, so let me quote it:

(first part omitted)...the fellow believers in your area appealed multiple times to leave their temple and convert to our school. On the 18th of October, Myohoji Temple of Kuragaki Village of Nose requested the presence of an Icchi School [general Nichiren sect] priest named Nichigon, a Second-grade Senior Lecturer at the Intermediate Teaching Institute of Osaka, and circulated an announcement among all within a 4-5 ri [10-13 mile] radius. Once the chief priests

of 14 temples had assembled at Myohoji, they summoned the head believer of our school in the Nose area, Jokitsu Inoue, and more than twenty others, intending to shatter the followers of Nikko Shonin. Taking advantage of the occasion of the two days of lectures on the 18th and 19th, our school responded, with your assistance, by sending Mr. Renzo Kato of Kyoto and Araki, Makino, and Tamura from among the believers in Osaka, and a few others, who all then suddenly appeared at the site of the preaching. Mr. Seiyu [Ei'ichi] Araki spoke first, saying, "we would like to hear your intention of rebuking Nikko Shonin's followers," but Nichigon didn't make any direct reply. Mr. Araki pressed and criticized hard, and then Mr. Jokitsu Inoue pressured them with the strict statement that "the statue enshrined here is a cause for incessant hell," and he could not respond with even a word. As if his mouth were a nose, he was silenced, and thus the believers were determined that their conversion would proceed on their own volition. Once this was firmly agreed upon between them, the matter was settled.

While Mr. Kato of Kyoto was ready as the rear guard, the fresh hand of Mr. Araki as the vanguard brought a great enemy to its knees. As it is said, if a rear guard and a vanguard do not work together there is no victory, and if one in mind and many in body there is no defeat in a battle. The rear guard did not need to advance, as the vanguard broke them, bringing a great triumph for our school, for which your people's great effort is responsible, and I sincerely and particularly appreciate the protection provided by the Three Treasures. Also, Nichigon, the priest in a question, stopped the lecture after the first day, although it had been scheduled to continue for 2 days, and turned his tail and ran away quickly, which is a perfect scream. We here all are highly delighted. I also learned that Mr. Kato wrote an impromptu poem:

Blowing down / the gale from Mt. Fuji / became so violent
the nose-foliage / scattered away

Worthy of applause, Mr. Kato is a man of wisdom, virtue and valor, and I am especially impressed.

Nippu Shonin's fluent writing describes the debate vividly and we can plainly imagine the situation that day, when many chief priests of major temples of the general Nichiren sect of the Nose region gathered and Myohoji invited a leading priest, Nichigon Namikoshi of the Osaka Area Temple Office, and they tried to persuade the believers of Nose all at once. To begin with, Myoken-zan [a general Nichiren sect temple, established in 1603] had long been in the Nose region, and Kuragaki village was particularly an impregnable stronghold of the Minobu [general Nichiren] sect, with an historical background dating from the time of Jakusho Nikken, a restorer of Minobu sect, so it was a matter regarding their dignity. Large scale planning was done and all was supposed to go well. However, as it is described, they rallied at the main building of Myohoji awaiting the time, and then, when it was time to begin the lecture, they unexpectedly encountered the incisive tongue of Seiyu [Ei'ichi] Araki, and through this unforeseen development it ended in the lopsided defeat of the general Nichiren sect priests.

The story may be somewhat exaggerated, but, at any rate, many priests were assembled there, though they did not even enter into the argument. From the start, the case for obstructing the believers' conversion was wrong, and further, the person debating them was tough. The priests may have already known Araki and Kato were formidable. Anyhow, the majority of the general Nichiren sect priests were coasting on the strict parishioner system [under the Shogunate government], merely executing ceremonies and prayers to earn a living. Like today, many chief priests appeared fragile in faith and in their doctrinal studies. Of course, those who were priests only on the surface could never match up in debate with Renzo Kato or Seiyu Araki, who had earnest seeking minds and deep understanding of the doctrines. Besides, there was no way the Kuragaki believers, who were respected professionals in society, could have their minds changed once they had achieved awareness of spontaneous faith and were seeking the correct teaching.

The incident was reported in newspapers at the time and was likely the talk of the Nose region. Because of that, possibly some other villagers joined them on the occasion, and the Hokkeko believers at Kuragaki village were elated. Twenty and some Hokkeko believers with strong conviction took the lead and began to toil hard to build a new temple as their basis of practice and devotion. They continued to contribute as much as their means allowed, and by the next year a believer donated a site, cleaned the shelf-like level land at the foot of Mt. Kuragaki, and built Honmyo-an hermitage. Then, they were able to enshrine two treasures from Genryuji Temple - a board Gohonzon inscribed by Nikken Shonin [36th High Priest], which had been entrusted to Masa-no-jo Oshio, and an image of the Daishonin. After that, Jokitsu (Korai-bo) Inoue became a priest and served the Gohonzon, and in the 14th year of Meiji [1891] it received official approval from Osaka prefecture as a preaching-house and was named Mt. Okura Kokiji temple. Small, but gradually fitted and dignified with equipment, it shone with the teachings of Nikko Shonin's school.

Relocation of Genryuji temple and the Ikeda debate

By the way, the letter of Nippu Shonin I introduced before was addressed to Rev. Kosho (Chikyo) Fujimoto of Genryuji temple. About the time of the Kuragaki debate, Rev. Kosho had been newly assigned to Genryuji at Nagae Osaka and was busy relocating the temple site to Ikeda Osaka.

The origin of the believers' group [Hokkeko] at Ikeda goes back to the time of the Meiji Restoration, when Yoshibeh (Ryosen) Tamura converted to Rengeji temple at Kitano and then made efforts to rebuild Hondenji temple at Sakai [south of Osaka]. In the 4th year of Meiji he proselytized his real brother Seishichi Ishii, who was the heir of the Take Ishii family brewery at Honmachi Ikeda, and further converted his brother Jijun Tamura, who was then the chief priest of Honyoji temple of Ikeda and later became the chief priest of Hondenji temple of Sakai city, to our school.

Around this time, the three brothers Tamura, Ishii, and Jijun (the chief priest of Hondenji) converted people such as the father and son,

Shuken (Koken) Nitta and Isaburo Nitta, and their brothers, and Sasaki, Fujimoto, Furukawa, Hata, Okui, Takagi and so on; thus at Ikeda, a small but firm Hokkeko group grew.

Also, at the same time, Rev. Shunshin Yano of Genryuji at Yaku-shido village of Nagae had died in July in the 8th year of Meiji [1875], and there was no successor priest. All the believers went to Rengeji temple where Rev. Yano was the chief priest, and consequently, the temple was left unattended and let lie waste. At that time, the government office issued an order to abolish any temples in Osaka without a regular income, priest and believers; therefore, it was driven to the verge of extinction. When Yoshibeh Tamura learned about it, he tried to get it exempted from the order. Conferring with Seishichi Ishii, he planned to relocate and reestablish it at Ikeda, and went around to the believers at Ikeda and gained their agreement. By chance, at Tsukigi town of Ikeda, there was a former Zen temple named Hoso-an which the town owned and was managing, and he had a prospect of getting permission for the temple relocation if he purchased it.

So, the brothers Tamura and Ishii persuaded the 19-year old Rev. Kosho (later Chikyo Fujimoto, Nichijo), who was serving in the retinue of the retired high Priest Nichiden Shonin at Rengeji temple, and managed to prevail on him to accept the appointment. On the 24th of February in the 10th year of Meiji he began residing in a humble hut at Nagatsuka as the 12th chief priest of Genryuji temple, and thus Genryuji could avoid the extinction order. It is said to be the only case in Osaka in which a temple without a priest or existing believers avoided termination.

Rev. Kosho immediately started working for relocation, applying to the Osaka government office in April and receiving permission in November. He conducted a ceremony of completing the relocation and enshrining the Gohonzon in late November in the 10th year of Meiji. The believers of Rengeji and Juhonji temples offered great material and spiritual support during the relocation work, as Rev. Kosho had served and practiced there, and he writes in his autographical "The Origin of this Temple":

The chief priest of Rengeji, Rev. Nichiyu, and the retired Rev. Taiyu, with whom I was related in practice, each gave support, getting the believers' faithful offerings and wasting none of them, and thus the new temple was built with no trouble.

Organizers in Osaka included the head believer Heiji Morimura, Tokubeh Ida, Yoshibeh Tamura, Iheh Makino, Ito Toratani, and Busuke Oishi. In Kyoto, they were Renzo Kato, Gibeh [Seiyu, Ei'ichi] Araki (a resident of Osaka who was living in Kyoto at the time), Gohe Kato, Busuke Harada, Seishichi Inoue, and Zenchichi Katsura. They were united in mind and asked for faithful offerings regardless of the amount. On this occasion Renzo (honorific title, Chiyo) Kato published a lecture book regarding the benefit of offering for the sake of establishing a temple. His unparalleled contribution must be recognized.

Gibeh Araki, Yuheh Tamura, and Seishichi Ishii contributed more than words can express. Never take the organizers' efforts for granted. In Ikeda village there were Seishichi Ishii, Isaburo Nitta and his father Shuken, and Zensuke Fujimoto. They all came together and carried out the great task.

At this time, the present site of 188 tsubo [770 sq yd] of land was obtained for 70 yen, comprising the residential building and farmland. The temple relocation was welcomed by the neighboring community as a rare good occasion in recent times, so the land price was reduced by 50 yen [later several sq ft were added to complete today's Genryuji site].

Taking this as a favorable omen some people converted, including Kingoro Terabe, who managed the land-jobbing and then became a believer. The Hokkeko believers of the Nose area now belonged to Genryuji temple and were going to receive edification from Rev. Kosho.

After the relocation ceremony, Rev. Kosho asked Nun Myoju to come from Kyushu to take care of the Genryuji temple for a couple of months, and went to the Tokyo area for Shakubuku. He then went to

Nun Myoju's aid in Kurume of Kyushu. [Nun Myoju Nichijo: 1836 – 1916 was some 20 years older than Rev. Kosho, serving together with him at a temple of a different Nichiren school, and then converted to Nichiren Shoshu with Rev. Kosho. She raised 20 or so disciples, including the future Nichiko Shonin, the 59th High Priest, and Nikkyo Shonin, the 62nd High Priest, built more than 10 temples and was the pioneering advocator in Kyushu, located in the western part of Japan, with about 10% of the Japanese population.] After returning to Osaka together with Seishichi Ishii (later Rev. Koshin Ishii), he traveled for propagation among their relatives and left marks of his activities in Kawanishi, Kobe, Amagasaki, and Tanba-Sasayama. In his local area, Nitta, Sasaki, Furukawa, Hata, and Yamada as the nucleus of Hokkeko members of Ikeda were working hard with ardor to spread the teachings, so a temporary main hall was built in February of the 11th year of Meiji, and a grand inaugural ceremony was executed on the 6th of April, for which many believers visited from Kyoto, Osaka and Nose.

Furthermore, in June of the following 12th year an excellent, though small, main hall was built by Toshikiyo Ono who was representing the chief priest during his absence. For those undertakings, Seiyu Araki of course offered some properties according to his means. Genryuji's existing ten volumes of the Lotus Sutra and the sutra box on the altar are his donations upon the occasion. Three people's inter vivos Buddhist names [usually they are posthumously given] are written on the endpaper of the opening of the Lotus Sutra. It was the first time his honorific title of "Seiyu" appeared. It seems he was entrusted with it by Nichi'in Shonin for his devotion during the events of Meiji 6th [the relocation of the Dai-Gohonzon], but the fact that he was given the Buddhist name soon after his conversion suggests his strong faith.

Goshin-in Myosei Nichijo. (his wife Kinu)

Goshin-in Myoyu Nichimo (unknown)

Goshin-in Seiyu Nisshin (Ei'ichi)

Around this time, Seiyu Araki often traveled between Kyoto and Osaka for business, sometimes staying at Ikeda to assist the relocation and reestablishment of Genryuji temple, and left many marks of

propagation or debates along with Rev. Kosho or Seishichi Ishii. Nippu Shonin's letter dated June of the 11th year of Meiji says,

I heard that a man named Gengo Tanaka is going to have a debate at Makino's home in a few days; however, I also heard that Mr. Araki would be dealing with it, so he alone would be sufficient. I humbly imagine probably a few words will do it.

Here, Makino's home indicates Iheh (Jojitsu) Makino, who was one of the core believers of Rengeji temple at the time and ran Seikan-ro inn at Sakura-bashi in front of the Umeda station [in Osaka] until the wartime. He will appear in this writing again, and he was a firm believer, equal to Seiyu Araki in his congenial spirits in faith. Seiyu Araki and Gengo Tanaka were to have a debate at Seikan-ro against members of the "Shobo Shindo-sha," which was descended from the Kenju Nichiko school, and we see that Nippu Shonin had every confidence in him. The debate seemed to have been settled, but then it was rekindled when Tanaka published the article, "Revealing the slanders of the 8 head temples [Nikko Shonin's followers]," in the 19th year of Meiji [1886].

Ei'ichi received an Omamori Gohonzon from Nichiden Shonin in April of the 12th year of Meiji, and its granting entry reads,

For Gibeh Araki at Ikeda of Settsu [Northwest of Osaka]
(Property of Genryuji temple)

It seems he was staying at a temporary residence at Ikeda. He may have been requested to take charge of Genryuji during Rev. Kosho's absence, or was temporarily residing there for the purpose of the debate. After this event, Ei'ichi wrote his first book "On Refuting the Icchi School [Oneness of the Honmon and Shakumon]," summarizing his experiences of debates with other Nichiren sects in a nutshell, and published it privately in printed form in September that year. It was probably the first publication in print with type in our school after the Meiji era began, which is an expression of Ei'ichi's progressive spirit, as he

was quick to adopt the new publishing technology and make good use of it for propagation.

In addition to this, an autographed record by Seiyu Araki, called “the Two Debates at Ikeda and others” (various debates in the first half of Meiji era) is contained in the Sessen library of Taisekiji. It seems that he compiled these records around the 15th year of Meiji, but that is not quite certain. (Today’s Nichiren Shoshu is extremely secretive and almost all of the documents and books in the treasure house or library are possessed by the High Priest, and even a priest cannot get access to them without special permission. Therefore, the documents directly relating to his activities at Ikeda cannot be perused at this time.)

The social conditions in the 10’s of the Meiji period featured the enthusiastic countrywide movement for political rights, with public meetings and debates being held all over the country amid a boiling climate of opinion. Meanwhile, information and entertainment were plentiful. Various newspapers and magazines were issued, lecture presentations were well-attended, and religious debates and lectures were often overheated and stopped by police. Also, the inflow of foreign cultures resulted in transformations on topics such as freedom of thought and religion, the social system, industries and civilization itself, and the customs of daily life began rapidly changing. So, Buddhist organizations became aware that they were facing a serious crisis, and faced the necessity of modernizing their doctrine and structure. Such was the case for the Taisekiji school as well, though it was a small order, so priests and believers of strong faith followed the trends of the time and were aware of the crisis. In response, they developed energetic propagation activities and tackled the common issues of the time. While other organizations kept declining, their ardent determination to protect the teachings led to recovery from the hard hit of the movement to abolish Buddhism, and finally they were recuperating from the difficult times.

At their head, there were always Nichiden Shonin, Nun Myoju, Rev. Kosho, and lay believers such as Seiyu Araki, the Makino and Kato fathers and sons, and so on.

Osaka Station and Seikan-ro Inn

After the death of his mother-in-law Tose Terada, Seiyu Araki largely completed arrangements to settle her affairs and moved to Dojima-hama of Osaka in the summer of the 12th year of Meiji.

A short time earlier, Osaka station was built near the Umeda Graveyard of Sonezaki village and the single-track railroad between Osaka and Kobe was completed in the 7th year of Meiji. The station building, called “Umeda Sutenshon,” was located west of the current spot, near the Central Osaka Post Office. Whichever way one turned, the surroundings were all farms, rice paddies, and fields, in which a western-style station building stood alone. It took about 2 hours one way to Kobe and the fare was 1 yen [\$200] for first class, 70 sen [0.7 yen] for second class, and 40 sen for third class between Osaka and Kobe, when 1 sho [0.5 gallon] of rice cost 5 sen [\$10]. Compared to today’s fare on the Hankyu, JR, or Hanshin Railways, it was incredibly expensive. Station workers were almost all officers of the former samurai class, so they treated passengers in “Hey, you” style and allowed passengers to ride as if on sufferance. It was far away from ordinary people’s life.

However, even though they could not afford it, steam locomotives were extremely popular and every day many spectators gathered lying on the turf on both sides of station squares, had bento [lunch box] with them and waited for the ding-ding of the bell on the 30-foot high wooden tower which rang 5 minutes before departure. Once the train began moving, they excitedly rose to their feet clapping their hands, and the passengers responded by putting their heads out of the windows and waving. Soon, in the 10th year of Meiji, the entire route between Kyoto and Osaka was completed and a grand inaugural ceremony was held with the Meiji Emperor’s attendance. Gradually, the number of users increased to 5-6,000 a day.

Around that time, Iheh (honorific title: Jojitsu) Makino, the leader of the Rengeji temple believers, opened the “Seikan-ro” tea house near Umeda station, at the site of today’s Sankei Hall, and it was a hit, earning immediate popularity. “The Journal of the Kita-ku Ward” (published in the 30th year of Showa [1955]) says:

..... the Japanese-style restaurant Seikan-ro at Sonezaki (the restaurant was in business at the site of Sankei Hall till the air raid) became the spot where, in a new western-style two-storey building in a corner of the garden, they threw drinking parties and enjoyed viewing the steam locomotives.....

On the 1,500-tsubo [1.5 acres] plot there were several buildings, a large garden and a sea-bathing style hot spring. It was an inn for high-class Japanese cuisine. Every year the surroundings kept developing. The main street in front of Umeda station was improved and in the 19th year of Meiji [1896] the 12-yard wide Sakura-bashi Avenue opened, drawing Dojima nearer and making the location of the Seikan-ro more favorable. Therefore, in addition to travelers, eminent figures in the political and business worlds used it frequently, and it did great business. In particular, it was often used for meetings by the people involved in the Dojima Rice Market, and it grew into a prominent inn of Osaka. For instance, in the 17th year of Meiji, Taisuke Itagaki made a great speech at a convivial party marking the Liberal Party's dissolution, and in the 22nd year, a group of representative Japanese engineers, "The Industrial Engineers' Association," leased a building on the Seikan-ro grounds and opened their office and club, and thus many famous people patronized it. In around the 25th year of Meiji he built a modern two-storey western-style house which received public attention.

Iheh Makino's Seikan-ro also played a significant role for our school. Many priests and believers of our school, including Nichiden Shonin, were provided convenience for propagating activities or pilgrimages to the Head Temple, as well as for traveling to places such as Kyushu [the western part of Japan]. In particular, when the High Priest made regular preaching trips to the western counties, his parties were offered free stays, and in many cases they stayed fairly long. The hall was often used for propagation lectures, and Seikan-ro was an irreplaceable place as a foothold for our school in western Japan during the Meiji and Taisho period [up to the 1st quarter of 20th century].

Seiyu Araki became a congenial spirit of Iheh (Jojitsu) Makino and, possibly by his invitation, moved to 1-17 Hama-dori in Dojima of Osaka city in order to establish himself in earnest as a broker at the Dojima Rice Market, and got an office-cum-residence around the summer of the 12th year of Meiji. We can verify his address at Dojima on a map from those days. It was located 4 houses from the intersection of the northern end of the Oe Bridge and Midosuji Avenue, along the Dojima river where the Tokyo-Mitsubishi Bank building is now. Farther to the west, the Dai building and ANA Hotel were next to each other. The Osaka Rice Market Firm (later the Osaka Dojima Rice Exchange), which set the price of rice for the whole country, was located at that spot. Dojima-hama street was lined with the offices of rice brokers, and he settled his residence roughly in the center of them. Ei'ichi, who was 30 years old, must have moved there filled with secret resolve in his heart.

It seems he immediately invited Nichiden Shonin and asked him for a Gohonzon-enshrinement ceremony, and the occasion is recorded in the July 15th, 12th year of Meiji [1879] section of Nichiden Shonin's autobiography.

Rice market speculator

The rice market at Dojima, much talked of as "the market where one deal is worth a thousand Ryo," started in the early Edo period [17th century] when the wealthy directing merchant Yodoya Tatsugoro at Yodoya-bashi South exchanged the reserve rice of feudal lords of the western counties for cash. [though it doesn't make much sense to convert it to modern currency, one Ryo could be related to about \$1,000. It could purchase one Koku of rice, enough for one person's consumption for one year, which could be produced on about a quarter-acre of land] Later, the house of Yodoya was removed and the market was relocated to Shinchi of Dojima and further developed. A record from the Tenmei era [1780s] says that as many as 5 million bags [1 bag = 130 lbs.] of delivered rice was traded. [the rice from the western half of Japan was transferred to Osaka and traded and cashed at the Dojima market] The economic system during Edo period was based on the annual yield of rice, which cannot be easily compared with that of the modern capitalist monetary system, but it surely remained the

main pillar of the state economy for a while, even after the Meiji Restoration. The Rice Market of Dojima had long been prosperous as the kitchen of Japan in a literal sense for two hundred and some tens of years until it was abolished by order of National General Mobilization Act [a war effort] in the 14th year of Showa [1939].

Let me introduce to you some episodes to display the power of a Dojima Rice Market speculator.

In those days, the master merchants of Dojima-hama street were the main sponsors of entertainment, such as Kabuki performances, so even an apprentice could enter theatres for free by simply mentioning the name of his shop. There was a powerful speculator in the early Meiji era named Heibei Kitano a.k.a. Kitahei. On one occasion an apprentice announced he was working for Kitahei and entered, but then he was teased and stopped, “No fee, no entrance. If you buy up all the tickets of the theatre, I will let you in.” The apprentice got exasperated and yelled “Very well, I will buy them up. I am an apprentice of Kitahei.” Surprised, the doorkeeper inquired about it to the Kitahei shop, and the answer was “If he insists, let him buy them up.”

Before putting on a performance of a play or a Sumo match, one would first head over to greet the Dojima association. One time, before the performance of a Kabuki play, the actors were late for greeting the master merchants, who were quite displeased, and thus delayed the performance for three days. More astonishing is the case of a master speculator Hikotaro Abe; his party in the autumn of the 24th of Meiji [1891] went on a buying binge against sellers over the entire nation and made a profit of hundreds of thousands of yen, which was greater than the amount of the budget of the Imperial Diet back then.

Such cunning and shrewd trades at first started on the roadside session, and when the market got heated, those surrounding threw water over with ladles. Then, in the 9th year, when it had become the Osaka Rice Market Firm, an overhang stage was set up on the Dojima River for the exchange market, and when a counting desk was added it became an indoor session. At that time, the market was said to have an atmosphere as turbulent as today’s pari-mutuel ticket windows. One who won there directly descended the stairs at Dojima-hama Street to

the river, and throwing a party on a river boat, swarmed into the entertainment town of Shinchi. Every evening, they say, Samisen instruments or drums were played there and presented lively scenes like the Tenjin Festival.

When Ei'ichi (Seiyu) Araki moved to Dojima, it seems he was already accepted as a rising broker. To his benefit, the president of the Osaka Rice Market Firm, Kowemon Isono, was a compatriot and seems to have consulted him on a variety of topics, so he gained ground without any obstacles as a broker and a stockholder. His wife Kinu talked about her memories:

When Shohei (Fukushige, the first son. Born in the 11th year of Meiji [1878]) was a baby, there were about 10 clerks as well as a nurse and maids, and he had come up in the world.

Also, among the head clerks who became an apprentice a few years later was Matsutani Motosaburo, known as "Ten'ichi-bo" of Kitahama who later transferred to the Stock Market Exchange at Kitahama and was widely known as an unparalleled speculator. Ei'ichi, with both courage and keen insight to see through the trends, and surrounded with many talented people, would continue his excellent run in the Rice Market world.

Jack of all trades, negotiator

By the way, a mounted Waka poem (a smaller-sized mounting for a scroll), autographed by Nichiden Shonin, has been handed down in Genryuji [the author's temple], which Seiyu dedicated in celebration of the relocation of Genryuji:

Fluttering around the high peaks of mountains in all directions,
Snow lands at the foot of Mt. Fuji.

Plenty of snow from the high peak to the vast foot,

Fuji's heights are supreme in the three countries.

-September 4th, cyclical sign kanoe-tatsu, at Mr. Araki's home,
by Nichiden"

The recorded date of September 4th of kanoe-tatsu (the 13th year of Meiji [1880]) indicates that Nichiden Shonin was again invited to the home of Seiyu Araki, and September 7th is the anniversary of Tose Terada, so it can be guessed that a Buddhist service was also held for her. By chance, a letter by Nichiden Shonin dated the following day exists at Denmyoji temple:

Scheduled to depart today, I was invited to Mr. Araki's residence yesterday. He told me then about establishing a new temple in the Chikugo region. He said that he heard about it through Mr. Makino and, in Tokyo recently, he personally spoke to a fourth rank prefecture officer named Gen Araki who accompanied the mayor of the Fukuoka prefecture. The officer told him it was not necessary to go up to the mayor but any officer in charge would do, and an officer in charge happened to be in Tokyo as well, so he asked the officer about the temple application. He explained that he had not approved it because he was informed that our school gathered people day and night, beat drums and made incantations, badly affecting the villagers' morale. Araki described our school and said it was not at all inclined to engage in such practices. The officer then instructed him to re-apply and assured him that he would be treated properly.....

The letter shows the content of their conversation that day, which was that, in the autumn of the 9th year of Meiji [1876], Nun Myoju-ni Sano (senior to Rev. Kosho in the priesthood) went by herself to the Kurume region and successfully proselytized people of other schools there. Eventually she set up a new temple branch at Shirayama village, and at the end of the 12th year of Meiji she applied to the municipal office for permission to rebuild Denmyoji temple. However, the proposal was met with strong opposition by the villagers, including the village head, and the application was shelved and the plan abandoned. Thereafter, Nichiden Shonin, concerned about the situation, consulted Ei'ichi through Iheh Makino. While Ei'ichi was on a business trip to Tokyo, he met an officer from Fukuoka prefecture and discussed the

situation. The officer's reply was that the locals objected to it, thinking that the nun, Myoju-ni, and others were heretics. He explained the situation and cleared up the misunderstanding; thereafter, he obtained a statement from the officer encouraging him to reapply for permission. Even after all this, the case did not work out because of the locals' stern objection. The location was moved to another site, after Ei'ichi, it seems, had been visiting the municipal office of Fukuoka prefecture while in Tokyo on a business trip.

His involvement was not limited to this case; when the school's negotiations with officials did not go smoothly, Ei'ichi was often asked by the priests to handle the situation. He was, as it were, a jack of all trades, a negotiator. After that, he often became involved in settling various matters, sometimes without any written record of his efforts.

Pioneer of beer brewing

Another thing that was interesting and exciting about this time was that Ei'ichi ventured into brewing beer on the momentum of his rice brokerage business. Japanese beer brewing dates back to March of the 5th year of Meiji [1872], when Shozaburo Shibutani invited an American brewery engineer, built a factory at Nakamachi Dojima, and brewed and sold the first Shibutani Beer.

Shibutani was one of the outstanding entrepreneurs in Osaka at the time; successful in various spheres, he made a lasting impression. The person who learned to brew beer from the American engineer was Kazo Kanazawa, the head clerk of the house of Shibutani, and this resulted in him brewing many beers as the first Japanese beer engineer. However, the first Shibutani Beer did not suit Japanese tastes of the time. It spoiled quickly, as there were no refrigeration facilities or electricity then, and thus it did not turn a profit. Although different promotions were tried, such as free delivery, it was impossible to overcome the beer's unpopularity and reputation for being bad or bitter. In the end, short on funds and with Shibutani's falling ill, the business was forced to close in the 14th year of Meiji [1882].

On hearing this news, Ei'ichi, regretful that the beer brewery was coming to an end, secured the entire operation from Shozaburo

Shibutani, including the engineer, the factory and the facilities, and ventured to continue the business. The “Naniwa Beer” label is the trademark which tells of his achievement. [The original book posts it showing the name of “Araki Brewery” in a large font.] The beer brewery was about 200 meters west of his house at Dojima-hama. They stacked beer there in a cart, gave out beer free to the passing boats on the Dojima River or had passers-by drink it, but the beer still didn’t gain a good reputation. It was seemingly a premature effort. As the market was stagnant, the inventory grew, and thus funding ran out and the business was handed to another person, who didn’t even last a few years. Kinu [his wife], who helped with the business, said years later, “We went to a lot of trouble with the beer.”

It was only when beer-halls came into vogue in the last years of Meiji [early 20th century] that beer was drunk widely by the Japanese people. At the outset, conditions were not ready for expanding a beer market, and no matter who engaged in it, the business would not turn a profit. The enterprise ahead of its day comes to naught if it is not in tune with the current times. The beer brewery was later relocated to Suita [in Osaka], and passed through various hands, including Gisuke Konishi, and is now the Suita Factory of Asahi Beer. In any period, the beginning of a new market is a way paved by many difficulties and failures of pioneers who sacrifice for it. When one quenches one’s thirst with a glass of beer, if one is aware of the bittersweet history behind the efforts of Shibutani Beer or Naniwa Beer, Shozaburo or Ei’ichi are paid their due.

Affair of the tree felling of government-owned forests

At the beginning of Meiji [late 19th century], vast forests spread over the area around the foot of Mt. Fuji. The vicinity of Taiseikiji was also blessed with forests that are nowadays inconceivably bountiful, and in the precincts there luxuriated dozens of large, 5-600 year old trees. From the Black Gate [General Gate] to the Mie-do temple through the Sanmon Gate [Main Gate], the approach, about a half mile long, was enveloped with dense cedar trees, and indeed had a subtle grace.

At this time, however, the Meiji Government's policy of encouraging new industries began extending development in the Fuji region; utilizing ample water and forest resources, papermills, sawmills, and hydroelectric power stations were built one after another. From Ueno Village where Taisekiji is located to the Omiya area, electric stations or papermills expanded. The forests of the entire Fuji region were quickly disappearing.

I've talked before about the "Land Proposal" law, which confiscated the territories of temples and shrines, creating government-owned forests over the whole country. After that, the government decided to sell off those confiscated government-owned forests or undeveloped lands to the former samurai class who had lost their domain fiefs, as a relief measure for them, and to have them settle there. By cabinet order in the 13th year of Meiji [1880], the trees - as many as 370 from the precinct forest near the Sanmon Gate - were sold to a former Tokugawa Shogunate retainer, Seigo Yukioka, who settled in Imaizumi village as a land developer, and at last in the 15th year they were to be cut down, causing much consternation. A letter by Nippu Shonin from the time depicts his concern:

..... at the Head Temple, too, there has been chaos already for 6 months regarding the selling off of the trees around the Sanmon Gate in the precinct to a former samurai, and it still has not been resolved. It is really a big problem, and I am not capable of handling all the issues, with so many things happening all at once.

The Taisekiji side appealed to the officials many times to save at least the forest surrounding the Sanmon Gate, but was bluntly rejected, and the time for the cutting down finally arrived at the beginning of the 16th year. At that time, force was resorted to between the inflamed priests and believers and the buyers, and in April of that year, the buyer side submitted a criminal complaint; thus, the event was becoming more and more complicated.

Having no solution for easing the tense situation, Nippu Shonin and the officer priests had no plan other than writing to the retired

High Priest Nichiden Shonin about the dire plight to ask him for help. Worried about it, Nichiden Shonin thought to himself that there could be no one but Seiyu Araki to solve the problem which had been complicated by the criminal complaint. Thus, he wired a telegram to Osaka and made an appeal to him to settle the matter. Upon receiving the telegram, Seiyu discussed it with the Hokke-ko believers and, as the representative of the Osaka believers, went to Taisekiji right away. He questioned the people involved and immediately interviewed the president of the Shizuoka court [the prefecture where Taisekiji is located], explaining the background and the current state of the event in detail, and prevented it from leading to a criminal case. Once that was done, he petitioned the offices at Numazu and Shizuoka, successfully resubmitting the issue of the felling of the forest trees to the government, thus settling things down.

However, the tree felling affair lingered on, so Seiyu and the interested people of the Head Temple went to the officials at Numazu or Shizuoka many times. In June of the following year, Seiyu appeared at the Department of Home Affairs in Tokyo and spoke to the Chief of the Bureau of Temples and Shrines, Mr. Sakurai, several times and made appeals. Then, he directly visited the offices at Numazu and Shizuoka and brought an accusation against the buyer for breach of the selling-off regulation. It paid off, and finally he was able to abort the sale and temporarily avert the danger of the tree felling. However, it seems to have required a lot of expenditure and compensation, as a letter dated December in the old calendar in the 16th year by Nippu Shonin reads:

.....for 14 or 15 days, as to the Government-owned forest, Mr. Fukuda has pressed for the money, and I have tried to work it out in many ways, and in the meantime, I am delaying it day by day.....

It was a big financial burden to the Head Temple. Because Seiyu Araki was well aware of the financial condition of the Head Temple, as he spent substantial amounts of money for travel, activities, socializing, communication and so on in settling the case, he did not ask for

payment from the Head Temple authorities except for the minimal essentials; he bore his own expenses as his offering and did not tell anyone. Besides, every time he visited the Head Temple, he did not neglect to offer Gokuyo as always. The whole affair finally settled down in December of the 18th year of Meiji [1885]. If it had not been for Seiyu's involvement, it could have become quite an affair, producing arrests, and the whole forest near the Black Gate and Sanmon Gate could have been cut down and the scenery irreparably harmed.

Modest virtue

The modest virtue of Seiyu Araki was not limited to this event. He exerted himself to foster the learning acolytes as well, such as covering their school expenses as they were serving at Rengeji temple during this period.

After Hosokusa Danrin [the private school of our school] was closed in the early years of Meiji [1872, due to the establishment of the new governmental school system], there was an unfortunate period of years for acolytes who aimed to study, but finally a way opened up for them to study at private schools while serving local temples. At the time in Osaka, there was an academy to study the Chinese classics at Awaji town named Hakuen Shoin, presided over by Nangaku Fujisawa, and he made a name for himself in Japan along with Kaitoku-do. So, in order to study at Hakuen Shoin, many acolytes decided to move out of the Head Temple and serve at Rengeji. Among the disciples of Nichiden Shonin were Jiun (Nisshin) Kato, Jikan (Nicchu) Tsuchiya, Jikei Sano, Jiyo Sato, and Jian Matsui. (Nicchu Shonin and others' sophistication in Chinese poetry and verse was the reward of their learning at this time.)

After the 600th anniversary ceremony of the Daishonin, Nichiden Shonin left the Head Temple and moved to Rengeji, in a detached hermitage called Jusho-an, as his final abode. He was covering school expenses for the acolytes serving at Rengeji, as mentioned in one of his letters:

.....Since I came here, I have been paying attention and find Rengeji is having much financial misery affecting six of my

disciples and two High Priest's disciples depending on him, which, including school expenses and so on are not easy tasks to deal with. Of course, there are donations of 3 yen [less than today's 100,000 yen] a month from Makino, Ida and Araki of the Hokke-ko, 1 yen from the Hokke-ko of Ikeda, and, from others, 50 sen [0.5 yen], 20 sen, 10 sen, or 5 sen per month, but these are not sufficient. I also contribute 60 yen per year..

This description shows that, in order to cover the acolytes' school expenses, specific Gokuyo was offered by Nichiden Shonin, and three men, Araki, Makino and Ida, were also offering specific Gokuyo of 3 yen every month. It is to our honor that Hokke-ko of the poor Genryuji temple also offered 1 yen monthly. Living frugally, with no money to spare, the priests and believers cooperated to care for human resource development for the coming generation; that is an example we today should follow, too.

Also, the Nobi Earthquake of magnitude 8 occurred in October in the 24th year of Meiji [1891] causing great damage, with a death toll over 7,000, and more than 140,000 destroyed houses (some completely). As for the damage to our school, Myodoji temple in Nagoya city escaped with only partial damage, but at Kodoji in Iwakura city, the entire newly-built main hall fell, and the living quarters and the main gate fell down. Among the homes of believers, more than 60 houses suffered complete destruction. At the time, the Head Temple and believers all over the country donated goodwill relief money. The "Journal of the Propagation Association" at the time reported the "Chivalry of the believers of Osaka" as follows:

Afflicted victims of the great earthquake in the Owari and Mino region among believers and temples in our school are listed in another section, but what should be greatly admired here is that four men - Kokaku Hashimoto, the chief believer of Rengeji in Osaka, Renjo Ida, the Head of Hokke-ko Jojitsu Makino, and Seiyu Araki - dispatched Mr. Koga Arimoto after the earthquake of Owari and Mino and had him inspect the actual conditions before donating

funds, and again entrusted Mr. Arimoto with more aid to visit the victims. Mr. Araki especially took the lead in dispatching Mr. Arimoto to the area to raise aid money, and, we learned, is making an effort for the reconstruction of the main hall of Kodoji temple. The chivalry of these people is to be most admired and they are the ones who are worthy of the saying, ‘many in body, one in mind’.....

At the time, along with a letter of sympathy, the four immediately sent aid money of 100 yen (today’s currency value of about 3 million yen), and this quick action triggered other temples and believers over the country, and many believers sent support money. It was a phase when Seiyu was shown to be a man of action and when his character was shown to be strong and moral.

Conference to protect the teachings

In the second decade of the Meiji period western goods were imported in large quantities, which led to rapid inflation. After the failed coup, which took place in the 14th year of Meiji [1882], Matsukata, the Finance Minister, adopted a sharply restrictive monetary policy, which caused the so-called Matsukata deflation. This policy plunged Japan into a serious recession, and the prices of rice, silk and other goods fell so low that the country’s rural areas suffered a severe depression.

It should be noted here that the kitchen of the Daibo priests’ living quarters at Taiseikiji was covered by Gokuyo [offerings] made during various ceremonies. With the yield from the Temple’s permanent property, which consisted of about 11 cho [26 acres] of rice paddies and 17 cho [50 acres] of fields, the amount of rice collected annually from the tenant farmers was about 380 hyo [1 hyo = 130 pounds]. They consumed 230 hyo, [In those days, 1 person consumed 2.5 hyo of rice per year.] and sold the rest [150 hyo] to cover various expenses. However, since the introduction of land-tax reform in the early Meiji period [1873], the fields owned by temples had all become taxable. Adding to this, farmers began requesting a reduction or exemption from their farm-rent, since

the country was already in a recession. Even profits from permanent property started to decline.

In the 14th year of Meiji, the 600th anniversary ceremony was held and as many as 2,000 believers from all over the country came on pilgrimage. Together with visitors who lived near Taisekiji, they were very busy for the first time in quite a while, but after that Taisekiji was hard hit by the recession. Also, it seemed that the debt from the anniversary memorial project still remained, and accounting for it resulted in a situation in which the acolytes' education and even repairs of various buildings could not be adequately handled. So, perhaps taking advantage of the widespread movement for Liberty and People's Rights just then, Nippu Shonin sent invitations to the chief priests of local temples, the heads of Hokke-ko, and the chief believers from over the whole country to attend a major assembly at the Head Temple for the Oeshiki ceremony and to discuss methods for sustaining and protecting the teachings on a permanent basis. It was November in the 16th year of Meiji [1883].

Let's look at the opening address by Nippu Shonin that day:

That I, Nippu, have urgently summoned the chief representatives and committees at this time without considering each believer's convenience with respect to his proximity to this region is due to truly unavoidable circumstances, and so I carried out the plan

Lately, our school appears to be sinking into a slump, as the acolytes can't receive necessary educational expenses, and the sub-temples on the site which need repair have no financial resources and therefore cannot make such repairs.....

It really would be a shame if we were unable to ensure that the sacred place where the supreme and unparalleled Dai-Gohonzon resides remained protected instead of becoming a site for a deer lounge. This has arisen from the lack of virtuousness of me, Nippu..

Now, the Head Temple has few able priests and therefore, I would like to consult with you, gentlemen from each region, and enlist your zeal in protecting the Law and trying to restore our declining fortunes. This is the reason I have asked you to assemble to hold a conference to protect the Teachings.

Since the beginning of the Meiji era, the system of head and branch temples and of temple management had not been suitable for the present age; even the continued existence of Taisekiji was jeopardized. Consequently, a plan was put in place to summon the principal priests and believers of the whole country to a conference at which radical reform and modernization of our temple system might be adopted at the administrative, educational, and financial level. 56 priests and believers were gathered. Rev. Jigan Oishi (later Nichi'o Shonin) of Butsugenji temple in Sendai was chosen to be the chairperson of the gathering, while Seiyu Araki was chosen to be the vice-chair. (Nichiden Shonin was not invited as he was retired.)

The session lasted for a week, and for the first time a prototype for new rules and regulations of the school was discussed. Makino, Araki, Ida, and Tamura attended as representatives of Rengeji temple, as well as Kato and Onishi from Juhonji temple. The point of having the Hokke-ko believers of the Kansai area participate [Osaka, Kyoto and the surrounding area including the above temples] was to stress propagation and development of the believers first of all, no matter what type of financial reform might result. The conference passed the proposals as drafted. Rev. Oishi was recognized for his skill and appointed chief of the Administrative Section (later renamed as the Legal Affairs Section), and from then on he lived in Jakunichi-bo temple [in Taisekiji] and attended to the school's administrative matters. The original personnel of the new Administrative Section were as follows:

Section chief	Nichi'o Oishi
Counsel	Nichi'i Fujimoto
Director	Nichigi Tomioka
Assistant director	Toho Yoshida (Finance)

Assistant director Masao Morita (Finance)

In this way, it appeared that structural reform and financial reform of the Taisekiji school would take place; however, due to further worsening economic stagnation, Taisekiji faced immediate economic failure and system reform came to a standstill.

Days constantly on the move

Seiyu Araki was now called on repeatedly by the Head Temple to attend to the tree felling incident and to lead the conference on protecting the teachings, and as he had become involved in these matters, the 16th year of Meiji was a busy year for him. In addition, around this time, a doctrinal debate took place with the head believer of the Eight Chapter school of the Hokke sect, and not a day passed without believers of other schools participating in the event.

The Eight Chapter school was founded by Shojin'in Nichiryu during the Muromachi period [1338 – 1573]. The school's adherents advocated the view that the Daishonin's Buddhism was handed down through the 8 Chapters of Honmon that Jogyo Bodhisattva inherited. The school was started to advocate the superiority of the Honmon over the Shakumon and to criticize the Icchi (Minobu) school, [which advocates the oneness of the Honmon and Shakumon] charging that they were slanderers who compromised with the Tendai sect. Honkoji of Amagasaki and Hon'noji of Kyoto are the head temples founded by Nichiryu. The group is close to us doctrinally, as they presided over the Hosokusa Danrin [school] with the Fuji school, and advocated the superiority of the Honmon. Incidentally, many zealous propagators and scholars appeared from the Eight Chapter school during the last days of the Tokugawa Shogunate. Lay believers also came out and vigorously proselytized and formed Happon-ko (Eight Chapter school believers) of Takamatsu and Butsuryu-ko [believers' groups]. Still today, among believers of the Lotus Sutra in Kansai [around Kyoto and Osaka], there are many Butsuryu-ko and Happon-ko believers, who are called "Honmon-san."

A debate between the leaders of the Eight Chapter school and Seiyu Araki occurred in December in the 15th year of Meiji [1882]. Eitaro Nakajima, a believer in Nose, and Ri'ichiro Hata, a believer in Ikeda, had a debate with a believer of the Eight Chapter school at Kameoka in Kyoto, at that time the leader of all the Eight Chapter school believers. Shingyo Iwasa and Juzan Takeuchi designated Seiyu Araki and Jojitsu Makino the debaters responsible for settling disputes between the two schools on matters of right and wrong. On the 8th day of December, Araki and Makino, along with Ri'ichiro Hata and Isaburo Nitta from the Genryuji believers, visited the appointed house at Kameoka; however, there was no sign that the other side would be coming out at the appointed time; thus, they were "stood up" that day. The next day, they sent a courier to Takeuchi's house in Kyoto and urged his appearance; to their surprise, he was evasive and would not come. Since they had failed to appear for the debate the other side proposed, the matter could not be settled. Consequently, Araki and the others, on their way home went to Kyoto via a detour and visited the home of Takeuchi. However, they were told that he was out and were therefore thrown upon their own resources. They then went to the house of Iwasa, the leader, but he said "Takeuchi proposed it by himself and I had nothing to do with it." He added, "I don't have doctrinal sophistication and I am old. There is no way I will participate in a debate!" So, they left a message for Takeuchi and the next day, December 10th, went back to Osaka. In the end, because of a breach of their agreement by the Eight Chapter school believers, Araki and the others were sent on a fool's errand for three days.

Thereafter, during the 16th year of Meiji, around the middle of May, a believer of Sasayama in Tanba, whose name was Kyusuke Honda, stayed over at a traveler's inn run by Tosaburo Imai at Minatobashi of Osaka; there, the debate issue recurred. Kyusuke Honda was originally a believer of Dokoji temple (of the Soto sect of Zen) at Sasayama and earned a living as a healer; in October in the 10th year of Meiji, he was proselytized by Seishichi Ishii and Rev. Kosho of Genryuji and converted to Nichiren Shoshu. Thereafter, he organized a Hokke-ko and established the East Honjo branch temple (later Kofukuji temple).

Then he had his head shaved and became a disciple of Nichiden Shonin and the first chief priest of the temple (Rev. Dokyu). He was not necessarily well versed in the doctrine, but was a “person of faith,” a description of him given by Rev. Shohei, Seiyu Araki’s son [this book will touch upon him later] who became the third chief priest.

At this time, he may have come to Osaka to purchase altar equipment and related items, as it was the time Kyusuke Honda established the branch temple. The owner of the inn happened to be a zealous believer of the Eight Chapter school and was acting as the group leader; as a result, a debate arose between the Fuji and the Eight Chapter school. They exchanged heated arguments for and against, not yielding an inch to each other, and the debate went on deep into the night, so they departed with a promise that they would settle the issue of right and wrong at a later date. Consequently, Honda visited Seiyu Araki on his way back and called in his aid. In the middle of June, Araki, along with the Hokke-ko chief Makino and the vice chief Hakeyama, visited Imai’s house at Minatobashi. There, an executive believer, general leader Kobayashi, was waiting and, after a hasty greeting, they went into a debate right away.

It seemed Araki had at first planned to have the participants exchange each other’s arguments in turns, but Kobayashi and others insisted, out of fondness for tradition, that first the Fuji school would state its doctrine and then each participant would direct questions to its members. Perhaps because he had been dodged the previous year by Takeuchi and others, Araki easily accepted their position and launched the debate. First, he quoted Gosho [on the Honzon] and began rebutting their doctrine based on the Eight Chapters of the Lotus Sutra. Then, they interrupted him, calling out “question, question,” in the middle of his talk, and the debate couldn’t proceed at all. Meanwhile, when the Eight Chapter school believers entered into debate, there was an uproar, and the proceedings were called off for the day.

Next, on the 21st of June, a meeting was held and they were invited to the Seikan-ro inn that the Makino Hokke-ko leader ran. On that day, about 20 believers of the Eight Chapter school gathered to cheer, and among them was Takeuchi, the chief believer who once had pretended

to be out at Kameoka. Apparently, since that incident, he had determined not to neglect any subject and had engaged in research in preparation for the debate with the Fuji school. Once Araki's speech began, they again bellowed irrelevant criticisms against the Fuji school's doctrines, or raised questions out of context of the Gosho, and from the start to the end they made irregular remarks relying on their numbers; thus, it could not lead them to allegiance. Next, on the 6th of July, they tried a debate at Seikan-ro again, but they ended up repeating the usual questions and the endless assertions and failed to reach an agreement.

We sometimes hear today, too, about a "debate" or "confrontation in public"; however, in reality, this is not a very practical method, since to make verbal arguments in order to engage each other and thoroughly discuss opinions in an impartial manner is quite difficult. Usually, one only repeats one's own assertions and is unable to listen to the other. Against an inconvenient criticism, one intentionally wanders away from the subject or switches the point, so that in the field one is good at, one can employ a strategy to take the opponent down a peg. In the end, the side with louder voices, more talkative and mobilized numbers, debaters better at bluff or tactics, or able, with more advertising power, to make a fuss, simply shouts "we won, we won!" In the eyes of spectators who don't know doctrines well, it looks like the side that wins the advertising battle is the winner. In this case, too, the speeches and questions and answers went nowhere, so Seiyu Araki discontinued the practice and switched to exchanges of letters, and in this way, four rounds of debates were held by the 15th of August. The contents were supposed to consist mainly of a debate on doctrinal positions between the Seed beneath the text of the Juryo Chapter [the Honzon of Monte] and what the Eight Chapters [of the Lotus Sutra] reveal [as Honzon]. However, this method also broke down at the beginning of the debate and they spent their time for naught. Judging it to be high time for a proper discussion, Araki decided to put the whole of the debate in print, as had been agreed upon beforehand, and let the scholars among the public be the judge.

The letters exchanged during that debate were published with the title "Jasho Taihi [Comparison of the Wrong and the Correct]," and also are

contained in “Fuji Shugaku Yoshu [the Essential Collection of the Fuji School Doctrines].” The document illuminates well the level of doctrinal knowledge that Seiyu Araki, then only 33 years old, had reached. In connection with such debates and writings, Seiyu Araki was marvelously energetic, but I guess he had always made more of an effort behind the scenes than had others.

Movement of separation and independence and the Eight head temples

In March, in the 9th year of Meiji [1876], the followers of Nikko Shonin [the 2nd High Priest] became known as “the Nikko school” of the Nichiren sect. At that time, they separated from the Shoretsu school of the Nichiren sect [which advocated the superiority of the Honmon over the Shakumon of the Lotus Sutra] and participated in conferences with the temples on equal terms, as a coalition of Eight Head Temples.¹

Kancho, that is, the set of administrative tasks assigned to the High Priest of the Nikko school, was organized in a rotation among the

¹ Taisekiji, Yoboji [of Kyoto], Honmonji of Kitayama, Honmonji of Nishiyama, Myohonji of Hota, Kuonji of Koizumi, Myorenji [of Shimojo], Jitsujoji of Izu

Yoboji of Kyoto: 1308 by Nichizon. Refer to the 4th volume of Rokkan-sho as for their doctrine.

Honmonji of Kitayama: 1298 by Nikko Shonin. Located 3 miles east from Taisekiji.

Honmonji of Nishiyama: 1343 by Nichidai. 6 miles south west from Taisekiji.

Myohonji of Hota: 1338 by Nichigo. At east of Tokyo bay.

Kuonji of Koizumi. 1334 by Nichigo.

Myorenji of Shimojo. Lord Nanjo offered the site of his mansion and built the temple at the first anniversary of his wife’s death. 1 mile south west from Taisekiji.

Jitsujoji of Izu. 1301 by Nichizon.

Eight Temples. The first appointment went to Nikkan of Yoboji temple, while the general administration office was set up in Jogyoji temple (a local temple belonging to Honmonji of Nishiyama) at Nihon-enoki of Shiba ward of Tokyo.

Despite these efforts, the long-standing feud among the members of the Eight Head Temples continued. For many years they had quarreled over subtle differences in doctrinal positions and various formalities, so that, although they were all members of the Nikko school of the Nichiren sect, the effect was like that of people in the same boat being at cross-purposes.

For example, Yoboji and its local temples were taught to enshrine statues of Shakyamuni and recite the whole Lotus Sutra as their daily practice. This resulted in doctrinal confusion, especially because of interference by the fifteen Kyoto head temples of the general Nichiren sect following the Kansei era of religious persecution. [Kansei-era religious persecution: 1795-1807. After Nichikan Shonin refuted the wrong doctrines of Yoboji in the Rokkan-sho, Yoboji had been changing their Honzon from Buddha statues to mandala Honzon, but the general Nichiren sect pressured them to re-enshrine Buddha statues; in addition, Yoboji endured government persecution and had given in after all.] Some of their local temples changed their affiliation to Taisekiji; consequently, priests and believers of Taisekiji and Yoboji frequently fought like cats and dogs, engaging in all manner of argument and debate.

As a result of this, in December of the 11th year of Meiji [1878] on the occasion of the Fuji School Five Head Temples conference [the 5 head temples of the Nikko school located in Mt. Fuji area, nearby Taisekiji], Nisshi Tamano, originally from Yoboji, who was regarded as the high priest of Honmonji of Kitayama, contributed a letter of reprimand regarding the “Taisekiji Meisai-shi” (or the “Treasure Book”). It was also known as the “Record of Taisekiji in detail” [written in 1823 by the 48th High Priest Nichiryō Shonin] and consisted of material collected from legends and tales written in the middle ages and the early modern period. In the letter, Nisshi Tamano set out 50 questions which demonstratively criticized the Taisekiji Meisai-shi. This became known as “The debate of the two head temples” or “The debate between Nisshi and Nichiden.” Nippu Shonin, arguing against Nisshi Tamano, admitted that the

writing had many errors, and he had difficulty replying. He stated, “I hope that from now on these materials will never be taken out of the school or copied,” and the High Priest Nichiden Shonin agreed. The debate included four rounds of exchanges with Nichiden Shonin, as well. However, Nisshi Tamano was exposed to an epidemic and died suddenly in July in the 15th year of Meiji, so the contest ended halfway through.

The Taiseikiji school asserted, and took pride in the fact, that they were the sole legitimate school, constituted by the Gohonzon of Kaidan and the lineage of Kechimyaku [Line of the Lifeblood], and insisted that they were entitled to be the general head temple and appoint the general Kancho [high priest] of Nikko Shonin’s followers; thus, they were often opposed to and caused frictions with the other seven head temples, who held the position that all eight head temples must cooperate equally.

Prior to the conference to protect the teachings, in June in the 15th year of Meiji [1882], the movement in favor of separating and independence began its work, making the retired High Priest Nichijo Shonin the representative, and the chief believer of all sub-temples of Taiseikiji, Mr. Nisshi Okumura, the person responsible for and to whom they entrusted negotiations. Nichijo Shonin and others planned to obtain an agreement from the general Teaching Institute of the Komon school [Nikko Shonin’s followers] and then appeal to the Department of the Interior. However, the appeal would not be easily accepted, either by the government or the seven head temples.

In June of the following year, during the conference of the Eight Head Temples at the general Teaching Institute, Taiseikiji strongly insisted upon its legitimacy and pressed the others to consent to their separation and independence. Thereafter, the seven head temples approved the change and began to implement a procedure whereby they gradually altered the structure of the group by rebating the contributed funds, and so on. However, on the 11th of August in the 17th year of Meiji, the Grand Council of State issued proclamation No. 19, and the situation changed drastically. First, the Grand Council abolished the Public Instructors who were imperial appointees and made each sect

and school designate a Kancho. Then, based upon its regulations and temple rules, the power to appoint and dismiss the chief priests of local temples was delegated to the Kancho. The government's religious policy had thus been changed from directly administering to granting autonomy to each sect. Nonetheless, the first clause read, "Each sect and school should not vainly advocate splitting or uniting, or bring contention among sects and schools"; hence, it appeared that it was the intent of the government to prevent the existing establishment from engaging in endless splintering.

From this, the Taisekiji group judged that the time was going against them and abruptly decided to give up the application for separation and independence; instead, they requested a withdrawal of the case and asked for reconciliation. The seven-head-temple group was clearly not pleased and the deeply-rooted discord was further aggravated. In this way, Taisekiji rejoined the other head temples and attended the Eight Head Temples' conference in October in the 15th year to establish the sect's regulations and choose the Kancho in accord with the proclamation that had been issued. At the conference, Taisekiji insisted that it was the very general head temple and that the High Priest of Taisekiji should be assigned as the Kancho, thus raising an objection to the system of rotating the Kancho among the eight head temples. Consequently, the conference was thrown into confusion, and after various troubles, they split into Taisekiji and Honmonji of Nishiyama on one side and the other six head temples on the other, and they decided to present an application of separation to the Department of the Interior. However, this application was turned down by the government. In April of the following year, the ongoing conference of the Eight Head Temples to settle the regulations of the Komon [Nikko Shonin's followers] schools was held; however, it fell into confusion over and over again, and after a discussion, it was again decided that they should split. This time, an appeal for the separation of Taisekiji alone and the other seven head temples was presented with both side's signatures. However, it again failed to gain authorization, and when Taisekiji's financial difficulties were taken into consideration, the case for the separation and independence was abandoned.

According to a memorandum by Seiyu Araki, the purpose of his trip to Tokyo in September in the 17th year of Meiji was to deal with the tree felling incident and his personal business, but the case of the conference of the Eight Head Temples happened to occur then, and in response to a plea from Nippu Shonin and other priests in charge, he ended up advocating for separation and independence as the representative of the believers of the Osaka region:

..... I have done my poor best and for 30-some days I truly was engrossed and made my best effort here and there, devoting myself to efforts such as arranging meetings of the parties and so on, but it was not based on my arbitrary decisions. I became engaged in this matter when asked by the High Priest and other official priests in charge.... For the sake of brokering the parties, the cost of entertaining couldn't have been a mere 30 or 50 yen, with which the High Priest and the priests in charge were familiar.....

However, the Eight Head Temples conference of the Komon school consisted only of the priests in charge of each head temple and there is no evidence that lay believers attended it. What Seiyu Araki seems to have devoted himself to, and made every effort to accomplish, was to meet with Home Department officials and politicians for the purpose of gathering information about the government and the petitioning process. Also, in this case, we must pay attention to the fact that he paid all the costs of the project himself.

By the way, to return to our former subject, the movement of separating and independence was not necessarily a matter of consensus of the Taisekiji school. The record of the 10th of June in the 15th year of Meiji [1882] as set forth in Nichiden Shonin's [the 52nd] autobiography says:

.....I heard that Nichijo Shonin [the 53rd] arrived at [Jozaiji temple at] Shitaya [in Tokyo], mainly to petition for the separation from the Great Teaching Institute. I had heard about it before, so I sent an express mail yesterday addressed to both Teachers [at Taisekiji: Nippu

Shonin {the 55th} and Nichijo Shonin] to say that I disagreed with it. However, he has already come to Tokyo, so I have deplored it privately and sent my attendant, Mr. Yaso'o Furukawa, to halt the petitioning, which brought no effect and became the cause of significant indebtedness.

From this, we can see that Nichiden Shonin was not entirely opposed to the petition for separation and independence but thought that it was premature. Besides, some local believers such as Jion Miyazaki, Jijun Tamura and others, presented the "Proposal" at the Conference to protect the teachings, and objected to the separation and independence movement at that time.

By the way, I mentioned the retired High Priests: it had become a custom from the late Edo period [1603 ~ 1868] for the current High Priest to promptly retire and make way for the Head of Studies to become the next in line when a retired High Priest died; this was done in order to preserve the continuity of Kechimyaku [Lifeblood of the Law]. Especially from the 7th to the 10th year of Meiji [1874 ~ 1877], there were as many as four retired High Priests: Nichiei Shonin [the 51st], Nichiden Shonin [the 52nd], Nichijo Shonin [the 53rd], and Nichi'in Shonin [the 54th], prior to the active High Priest Nippu Shonin [the 55th], which in a sense indicates the difficulty of keeping Taisekiji as part of this group at this period.

I would like to make some additional remarks concerning the relationship between Nichiden Shonin and Nichijo Shonin; before this time, in the 1st year of Keio (1865), there was a scandal: a fire burned down the Reception Hall, Mutsubo [Six Rooms] temple, and the Daibo [the priests' living quarters] of Taisekiji, and the active High Priest Nichijo Shonin was so ashamed by accusations brought against him by the general population of Taisekiji that he left a note behind and absconded. Afterwards, Nichiden Shonin went missing but a few months later was found at the Shingyoji temple in Tochigi prefecture [roughly 100 miles Northeast of Taisekiji]. After the fire, the seat of the High Priest suddenly became vacant, so the general public of Taisekiji were puzzled, but for the time being a retired High Priest, Nichiei Shonin, took over

administrative duties, and soon Nichiden Shonin was earnestly invited to resume the seat. Nichiden Shonin felt responsibility as a prior High Priest and unavoidably accepted the appointment and faced up to undertaking a reconstruction, hoping to recover the lost status of Taisekiji. Within four years, after various hardships, he completed the reconstruction of the various temples, turned the seat over to Nichi'in Shonin in the 2nd year of Meiji [1868] and again retired.

Having been relieved of his burden, Nichiden Shonin went on a propagation tour around Japan accompanied by an attendant or two, and refrained from interfering with the administrative matters of Taisekiji. Given this background, Nichiden Shonin, in this period, was rather an exceptional retired figure and he tended somewhat to be avoided, so he was not directly consulted regarding the issue of separation and independence or the Conference to protect the teachings. Nonetheless, he was deeply concerned that, while he was not consulted by the incumbent High Priest or the priest officials on the Tree-felling incident, the Conference to protect the teachings, or the issue of separation and independence, the school's authorities acted as they liked, and the institution again fell heavily into debt.

Nichijo Shonin, after the absconding incident died down, offered an apology and reached a reconciliation with the people; he became engaged in petitioning for separation and independence in the 5th year of Meiji, as a representative of Nichi'in Shonin, but it came to nothing. After this he served as the chief priest of Josenji temple [in Tokyo] beginning in the 7th year of Meiji. I think he had the idea that he might restore his reputation by leading the movement of separation and independence at that time. A record of Nichijo Shonin's activities while he was making an effort for the cause in the 17th year of Meiji [1885] happens to remain in the Sessen Library:

I am sending this letter to you because the chief priest of [Jozaiji temple at] Shitaya [in Tokyo] made a pilgrimage to Taisekiji for the sake of conferring about a loan. We are preparing to sign jointly this month and apply for it next month, so it will surely be given approval in December. What is interfering is the application for

the school's official name, and I am afraid it could delay the approval of independence. Yet, I surely think it will be approved around February or March of next year. If you please, to put the finishing touches on the movement, we should have the priest from Jozaiji temple return the 150 yen, otherwise the financial accommodation from Isetoku [a financier] will be cut off.... If a mortgage security on the land is not possible, I would even like to ask you to mortgage the utensils. If we now alienate the officials of the Department of Home Affairs or the Great Teaching Institute, the situation will become desperate.

So, we see that, for the sake of the movement of separation and independence, which had no hope of success, they had already spent a considerable amount of money, and asked for another 150 yen for activity expenses by pledging the land or utensils of Taisekiji. The expenses of activities for independence,* with its bleak outlook of actually happening, resulted in the financial crisis of Taisekiji, and brought about the situation in which they had to beg the aged Nichiden Shonin to take the High Priest's seat for the third time in order to straighten out the debt.

*If I [Rev. Kanno, the author] may give my opinion on the separation and independence, in the 600 years' history of the Fuji school each head temple was sometimes antagonistic and sometimes opposed each other, but they basically cooperated as being of the same school while preserving the traditions peculiar to each head temple, so there must have been a way to take time and grope for a conciliatory approach.

From the doctrinal viewpoint, among the whole school of Nikko Shonin's followers, the three treasures of the Sowing and the True Cause were the mainstream and were endorsed by Nichiyo and Nichiga of Hota Myohonji as well as by Nichikan Shonin of Taisekiji, while the teachings of erecting Buddha statues and reciting the whole Lotus Sutra was a minority advocated by Nisshin of

Yoboji temple. Also, the local temples related to Yoboji in the region of Tohoku [the northern part of Japan], Izumo and Iwami [in the western Japan], as well as Hokkeji temple of Sanuki [in the southwest of Japan], which was a local temple belonging to Honmonji temple of Kitayama and others, still had an ongoing relationship with Taisekiji. For instance, Nichiden Shonin was sometimes invited by them for itinerant preaching.

In this sense, if they aimed for conciliation among the schools of Nikko Shonin's followers, there was a prospect that all of Nikko Shonin's followers would be united under the doctrines of Nichi'u Shonin and Nichikan Shonin [of Taisekiji], and of Nichiyo Shonin and Nichiga Shonin [of Hota Myohonji]. However, when Taisekiji claims its sole legitimacy based on the authority of the inheritance of Kechimyaku and the Dai-Gohonzon of Kaidan, the other head temples then insist on their own correct lineage of Nikko Shonin's school. Competition arises over local temples and believers and each one's sentiment of confrontation is escalated.

In this manner, claiming the sole legitimacy of Taisekiji tends instead to diminish its prime position among Nikko Shonin's followers and breeds the splitting and dispersal of the followers; thus, taking a holistic view, it was a factor causing damage to the foundation of the whole of Nikko Shonin's followers. In fact, the form of the Honzon of the three treasures of Sowing [our Gohonzon style] depicted in the 4th clause of the "Regulations of Komon [Nikko Shonin's followers]" of the coalition of the eight head temples was withdrawn from the "Regulations of the Honmon sect" employed after Taisekiji seceded, and emotional criticism against Taisekiji has intensified. At the time of the uniting-of-schools issue during the war [forced by the government as a wartime effort], sensible people of the Honmon school lamented that they could find no way other than combining with Nichiren-shu (the Minobu sect), though they searched for a way of combining with Taisekiji, so it remains a big source of difficulty.

From the standpoint of all of Nikko Shonin's followers, it should be asked whether the Taisekiji followers were exclusive and intolerant, and whether they are broad-minded enough to claim to be the general head temple of Nikko Shonin's followers. Clinging to vestiges of feudal times like High Priest worshipping, if they deal with the other head temples of Nikko Shonin's followers with opposition and negativity, they could not possibly provide a bright prospect for all of Nikko Shonin's followers.

The financial crisis of the Head Temple and its causes

As discussed earlier, in the 16th year of Meiji [1883], Nippu Shonin summoned representatives of the priesthood as well as believers from all over the country to a conference aimed at protecting the teachings. One topic of the conference was the issue of debt. The problem of debt arose initially from borrowing a large amount of money to cover the expenses associated with the celebration of the 600th Anniversary [of the Daishonin] in the 14th year of Meiji. Among other things, the temple had to borrow money from the Numazu bank to cover the payment of these expenses at the end of the year. Thereafter, in the 15th year of Meiji, because of the tight-money policy in effect, the so-called Matsukata deflation occurred; this resulted in a recession and, as a result, Taisekiji's debt increased. Thus, as noted above, in order to bring about the school's proposed organizational and fiscal reform, a conference to protect the teachings was held. As a result of the conference, the school's regulations were established, a Legal Affairs Section was formed and a financial levy was begun. At the beginning, the local temples were charged; however, because the official priests and full-time clerks of the Legal Affairs Section were on salary, they did not receive Gokuyo; as a result, various expenses were not covered and this resulted in financial failure. The increase in debt had other sources as well. The government at the time had spent a large amount of its budget on protecting the mining and manufacturing industries, and a lot of zaibatsu [business combines] came into existence. However, the original financial resources for this were the taxes levied based on the land-tax reform and imposed on land-owners. This was a policy of the

government. Due to this policy, land-owners and self-employed farmers often went into the red after paying their taxes. As a result, stories were told of a hill or a field being given up for a bottle of sake. The circumstances at Taisekiji at that time were just like that.

A letter written by Nichiden Shonin in the spring of the 19th year of Meiji states as follows:

The public expenses, such as taxes, and village expenses amounted to over 600 yen over four payments. If the farming rent rice is estimated at 600 *hyo* [a *hyo* is a unit of rice, that is, a bag containing about 130 lbs. of rice], they pay 1 yen each, while the payment should be about 2 yen; that is a significant decrease in sales; in fact, we collected fewer than 200 *hyo*, which is assessed at 384 yen, so the rice paddies and farms are truly troublesome; there are no buyers if we try to sell them, and if we ask for a loan, either at the Numazu bank or the Shimizu bank, they say that they will not give a loan of 100 yen without a land-mortgage over the value of 300 yen; with this and that, we are really experiencing hardship.....

In addition, the amount of crops that year happened to be poor as well, so the tax became larger than the income from the farming rent rice. There were no buyers to whom to sell the fields or rice paddies and no lenders from whom to borrow money on the security of land, unless the land was mortgaged and its appraised value was more than three times its price. They were in a situation in which possessing fields and paddies increased rather than alleviated the deficit.

It was a circumstance common to all large shrines and temples at the time, not only Taisekiji, that the basic properties that they had worked hard to build up, either through development or the contributions of ardent priests and believers since the Genroku period [later 17th century], became almost worthless. This included about 37 cho-bu [about 90 acres] containing the temple estate, rice paddies, fields, and a building lot. Also, as I stated before in connection with the discussion of the separation and independence movement of the Komon Nichiren sect, the official priests who handled the negotiations spent such large sums

on campaigning, as well as on various unexpected expenses including, for example, the tree felling incident, that the loan swelled to about 4,000 yen and Taisekiji became unable to pay its way at all.

The retired High Priest Nichiden Shonin heard about the situation and wrote in a letter as follows:

The debt of the Head Temple has really amazed me. My heart swells with grief. Originally, a retired High Priest's share should have been given to me out of Gokuyo to the Head Temple from various regions, yet even that has not been delivered at all since the 600th Anniversary, and I thought it amounted to very shabby treatment of the poor retiree with no assets. Fortunately, believers' offerings for the preaching at various local temples has kept me from starvation until now, and I did not make a request to the Head Temple; only now am I hearing about the details of the debt, and I understand there is good reason for it. How will things be in the future? It is a grave situation for a powerless retiree who can contribute little, and all I can do is sigh. (this is a summary of the letter)

Unfortunately, the time-worn temple buildings were further damaged and destroyed by a typhoon in the autumn of the 17th year of Meiji and needed repairs. However, due to payment of interest on loans as well as daily expenses, the temples were left unattended. In the autumn, the situation got so bad that they would not be able to cover expenses unless they sold the rice that was usually kept for their own consumption. As a result, the activities of the Conference to protect the teachings did not have a good reputation and, coupled with effects of the recession, there was a decrease in the number of believers making the pilgrimage to Taisekiji. Consequently, the Gokuyo was dwindling, and Nippu Shonin had no choice but to retire (that is, give up the position of High Priest).

Jealousy toward Lay Believer Araki

It seemed that the problems arising from the circumstance of indebtedness also cast a shadow over people's minds. Seiyu Araki had

devoted his life to the group, making every effort for the tree felling incident and the separation and independence movements. Also, his efforts were freely given in response to requests by the High Priest and the official priests concerned, and arose from nothing other than his zeal to support the teachings. However, it seems that there were those who resented Araki's activities, and he once came under false suspicion. Thus, the head of the believers of Rengeji temple, Renjo Ida, heard an unfounded rumor indirectly from believers in Tokyo that went as follows: When Nichigi Tomioka of Rikyo-bo temple [in Taisekiji] went to a financier, Isetoku, to raise money, he was asked about the prospect of repayment. He answered that they had lent Seiyu Araki 500 yen and expected that it would be allotted to the repayment fund. That was not all; another rumor went further, stating that the reason Araki had, since the previous year, run around so eagerly in connection with the tree felling incident, the Conference to protect the teachings, and the movement of separation and independence, could be that he intended to ingratiate himself to the Head Temple and take in a large sum of money. They wanted to know what kind of scheme he had made, and the Tokyo believers would refrain from offering Gokuyo as long as Araki was involved. It was also suggested that His Highness [High Priest] had been tricked by Araki. Such were the rumors.

In any period, there are jealous people who look upon others' deeds in a small-minded way, so that the genuinely good deeds they perform are viewed in a bad light. Slanders of this sort were nothing to Seiyu himself, but the effects of them were such that they could not be overlooked. The Head Temple had been experiencing many serious problems, including financial problems, so that to circulate false rumors was irresponsible and tantamount to holding back the whole group. If those who shared the same faith had serious doubts about his conduct or were suspicious of him, they should have argued with him in person and in this way satisfied their doubts. If such persons do not proceed in this way, but instead criticize people secretly behind their backs and spread made-up stories, they undermine the whole group.

After careful consideration, since his actions were seen as representative of the group, Seiyu determined to have his innocence proven to the chief believers of Rengeji Temple and to ask them to present the facts to the Head Temple. The letter he wrote at the time therefore explains his actions and makes clear that he personally took upon himself a substantial amount of the temple's expenses. At the end of the letter he wrote:

..... The number of days and amount of expenses I incurred for the sake of the Head Temple from May of last year until today amounts to a small sum. During this time, I have not sought my own interest at all. If you please, let this letter serve to question the Head Temple and arrange matters so that my innocence of any wrongdoing is proved. I humbly make this plea.

December 25th in the 17th year of Meiji [1884]

From Seiyu Araki,

For Osaka Head believer Mr. Renjo Ida

and Osaka Chief believer Mr. Jojitsu Makino

In response, both Ida and Makino sent a letter of inquiry to the Head Temple. Thereafter, the Legal Affairs Bureau of the Head Temple notified the central figure of the believers in Tokyo, as well as the two men, Isetoku and Matsushita, writing as follows:

As the attached letter states, a believer of Osaka, Ei'ichi Araki, appealed to the Head and Chief of believers of the region. Consequently, the Head believer has requested the Head Temple, by means of the attached letter, to investigate the facts. The rumors are totally groundless, and the disgrace they bring to Mr. Araki is inexcusable; therefore, we are sending inquiries to believers of the region, namely, Mr. Tokube'e Hori'ike (Isetoku) and Mr. Kakudo Matsushima, asking them to restore Mr. Araki's reputation. We cordially entrust this arrangement to you. Also, just to be sure, we would like to make it clear that we have not accommodated any

believers, including Mr. Ei'ichi Araki, with any loan or any gratuity. Also, we affirm his services as the attached paper states.

The 29th day of July in the 18th year of Meiji
From Legal Affairs Bureau Chief, Nichiyu Oishi
and Officer, Nichigi Tomioka.

One would suppose that they were ashamed of their low position before the fair words and acts of Seiyu Araki. It may be said that he who gives money away tends not to interfere in the recipient's use of it, while he who interferes in a matter is likely to begrudge his offering. Seiyu not only gave money away but also served in a personal capacity and, while doing so, refrained from any unnecessary interference. And, after this matter arose, the believers in Osaka made a sincere effort to pay back their debts. When involved in a project such as building a temple, an earnest believer serves in silence even if making a substantial contribution, while one who fails to contribute tends to criticize others. Thus, a narrow-minded person regards himself in a positive light and may be unable to respect virtuous persons around him. However, thanks to jealousy of this kind, a portion of the virtuous acts of Seiyu were recorded, so that, for us, a loss was turned into a gain.

In addition to his monetary contributions, Seiyu's conduct in exhibiting his dedication to his fellow believers is also worthy of admiration. For example, one can only admire his willingness to undergo hardships, such as, on many occasions, walking to the Head Temple or Tokyo from Osaka and back again, before the time the Tokaido Line was completed, out of his determination to protect the Head Temple from others' thoughtless slanders. [The Tokaido Line, the railroad running 330 miles between Tokyo and Osaka, was completed in July in the 42nd year of Meiji {1909}. Before that, people traveled the distance between the two cities on foot (not even on horse-back or by cart). The trip took two to three weeks, and Seiyu's willingness on many occasions to make the journey further demonstrates his good character.]

The third assumption of the High Priest's seat by Nichiden Shonin

Each person has his strengths and weaknesses; for example, some lack skill in conducting a business while others have a gift for it. Similarly, everyone has his strong and weak points when it comes to propagation, studying doctrines, engaging in formalities, pursuing education, or working in management, and no High Priest is gifted in all of these areas. Nippu Shonin was gentle and sincere and a High Priest of virtue in his daily practices of Gongyo and such, but in managing the Head Temple he created deadlock and, in the end, it was proposed that he resign from the position.

He decided to resign in the 18th year of Meiji and to assign the management of the Head Temple to the Legal Affairs Bureau chief, Nichiyu Oishi of Hodo-in (later Nichi'o Oishi, the 56th). However, Nichiyu Oishi had come to Taisekiji from Sendai [in northern Japan, a small city in those days] only two years earlier, and was "rustic in nature and a poor priest without even a spare robe." Therefore, it was determined that he would not be able to manage affairs for even a day, not to mention for the period of restoration, if he became the High Priest of the Head Temple while it was in great straits. Consequently, the intention of the believers in the areas of Tokyo and Yokohama was that, universally acknowledged as he was, the grand retired Nichiden Shonin must assume the position for a third time. The Bureau Chief Oishi also suggested at every opportunity that they request the appointment of Nichiden Shonin to the position of High Priest for a third time. However, the chief priest of Josenji temple [in Tokyo] informed the believers of his support for Nippu Shonin for the post. Nippu Shonin, though, did not heed this, and issued a notice to all counties on June 12th of the 18th year of Meiji stating that he intended to resign due to sickness and old age and to leave Hodo-in [Nichiyu Oishi] as his successor, and to hold a ceremony of his relocation to Taisekiji on the 22nd of the month. Even though he failed to manage the Head Temple well, he had his pride.

The Bureau Chief Oishi stubbornly continued to decline, so finally they had no choice but to have Nichiden Shonin take the seat for the third time. Thus, the decision was overturned again, Nippu Shonin resigned on the 22nd, and Nichiden Shonin prepared to move to Daibo

temple [of Taisekiji] on the 24th. Who, upon reaching 70 years of age, would have liked to bear the heavy load of debt? It must have been necessary for Nichiden Shonin to summon up extraordinary resolution to agree to be the person in charge of the Head Temple when it was burdened by so much debt. Still, Nichiden Shonin must have felt that he could not turn away from this task if he were to accept responsibility for protecting the teachings.

Once settled in Daibo, he temporarily paused the movement toward separation and independence, wrote off the whole project of implementing the changes which had been set in place through the Conference on protecting the teachings, reestablished a traditional Onakai system, [A responsible priest under the High Priest manages the daily affairs of Taisekiji.] and tried to make ends meet. There were many priests and acolytes and handicapped freeloaders in Daibo, so providing board for everyone was not easy, but he did what he could to avoid any thoroughly wasteful expenses such as overpaying for miso paste and shoyu soy sauce. He applied his own savings to pay back the debts of the Head Temple and, during the seven and one-half months until February of the 19th year, he indeed repaid about half of the debt with 1,300 yen from Nichiden Shonin, 510 yen from the return of private bonds (debt waiver) by the believers in Osaka, and 300 yen of debt subsidies.

During the winter, his physical strength diminished and he became significantly weakened. He could not walk freely, and even had to have his representative lead Ushitora-Gongyo on some occasions. In addition, he was twice thrown from an overturned rickshaw, and the injuries he had suffered from earlier accidents caused him pain, so that performing the duties of High Priest taxed him to the limit. Consequently, he proposed retiring in February in the 19th year and tried to hand over the job to Rev. Oishi; however, fierce opposition from those around him made this impossible. On many occasions after that, he appealed to those around him to let him retire, but on each occasion was forced to prolong his tenure.

When believers saw how the elderly High Priest served the three treasures of the Buddha, their determination to protect the teachings seemed to increase. Thus, it appears that the various debts were paid

back almost in full in the following year, the 20th year of Meiji, in part because they received donations from the manager of Tokyo Yasuda bank, Kasaburo Matsumoto, and his younger brother, Sazo Matsumoto, who would later start the Yokohama fire insurance company. Moreover, from one year to the next, the High Priest dealt with pending maintenance, overseeing repair work that, in the end, cost nearly 1,000 yen. These projects included mending the five-storied pagoda damaged by a typhoon, constructing the Gakurin school, replacing the roof in the Reception Hall, and reconstructing the Mutsubo temple near the Sanmon gate. Reading the letters he wrote around this time, one can imagine his determination, for, in spite of his advanced age, he devoted himself to these difficult tasks. However, since that is not the theme of this work, I will omit further details. In any case, after all, his retirement was prolonged more than three years beyond the date he had originally proposed to step down. On April 29th in the 22nd year of Meiji, he was able, at last, to hand his position over to Rev. Oishi.

I would like to close this section by introducing a comic tanka [short poem consisting of 5 lines], which Nichiden Shonin included at the end of his letter to his disciple, Nun Myoju Sano, in November of the previous year.

Pleading for respite and longing to shirk,
 pathetic as the Kanku-cho,
 Yet again this winter I must accept my fate.

[Kanku-cho = cold-suffering bird]

Retirement of Nichiden Shonin

February 11th in the 22nd year of Meiji [1889] marks a major turning point for modern-day Japan, for it is the day on which the Meiji Constitution was proclaimed and the Diet was opened. With the appearance of these institutions, Japan, both in name and in fact, became a modern state. A constitutional monarchy, Japan now aimed at increasing its wealth and developing a strong military, for the country's goal

was to catch up with and, ultimately, surpass the great powers of the West.

It is said that, in the time of the '30's of the Meiji period, Japan's social environment changed dramatically. Thus, in urban areas, the lifestyles of the general populace were not very different from those of the present day. Nor was such rapid change limited to outward customs and lifestyles; rather, it took on a spiritual dimension in the form of religious ideas, ethical views, and a new value system; thus, as Rohan Koda and Yakumo Koizumi [two famous writers] have pointed out, Japanese people's thinking changed rapidly. Despite these drastic social changes, it appeared that various Buddhist sects were able to recover from the serious damage done to them by the anti-Buddhist movement and by the loss of temple domains. Arising out of efforts at self-reformation, recovery lay in reform of their doctrines, propagation among the common people, and organizational reformation. An important factor in this recovery was the elimination of superstitions or spells by each sect. On the other hand, some sects and temples quickly deteriorated and disappeared in this period, including Shugen-shu [mountain asceticism-shamanism and Buddhism combined], Fuke-shu [a Zen sect], and the Uchiyama Eikyūji temple of Nara. These sects and temples could not respond to the changing times and were too lazy to engage in efforts to help themselves.

In the case of Taiseikiji, merely a minor school among Nichiren's followers, it relied on the strenuous effort of Nichiden Shonin to avoid being swallowed up in the rough waves of violent social and economic change; on the contrary, an expansion of the school's influence came about. As we have seen, Nichiden Shonin, who had drawn in many disciples, went on to propagate the faith in other regions, clear the financial debts of the Head Temple, which before then had continued to increase, and supervise the repair and reconstruction of a number of temples. Unfortunately, old age had inevitably crept up on him. As a result, he could not even manage to conduct Ushitora-gongyo and, at the end of April in the 22nd of Meiji, he designated his disciple, Nichi'o (Nichiyu, Jigan) Oishi, as his successor, and retired. Thereafter, he moved to the learning temple, Renzo-bo [Gakuryo in Taiseikiji],

and was finally permitted to put down his heavy load. Nichiden Shonin spent his closing years at Gakuryo, which he rebuilt by himself while lecturing to young student priests every Saturday on Gosho, T'ien-t'ai's three major works, and other texts. His enthusiasm for protecting the teachings never diminished.

Around the same time, retired High Priest Nippu Shonin, who resided in the Fujimi-an temple [of Taisekiji], supported the new High Priest Nichi'o Shonin by leading ceremonies on his behalf or Ushitora-Gongyo; thus, he was quite well and active. To digress, modern coterie in the temple schools consist of two lines of disciples: those from Renyo-an temple where Nichiden Shonin resided and those from Fujimi-an temple where Nippu Shonin lived. [Both temples are in Taisekiji, a mere hundred yards or so apart.] The school's administration has been managed with these coterie as their center. Also, another retired High Priest, Nichijo Shonin, resided at Jozaiji temple [in Tokyo] and actively and eloquently lectured at propagation meetings of Nikko Shonin's followers. Such meetings were held monthly at the Ibumura-ro Hall of Asakusa [in Tokyo].

Nichiden Shonin, having resolved various doctrinal debates and financial crises, summoned his resources, and devoted his efforts to restoring a number of buildings in Taisekiji, and when he saw with his own eyes that Taisekiji had become stable, he departed to Eagle Peak on the 24th of June in the 23rd year of Meiji [1890] at the age of 74 years. His *tanka* poem composed just before his death reads:

Though immature, may at least the perfume linger on
From this fruit thrice borne on a bough of the Dharma

[The phrase "this fruit" is a translation from the word "konomi," which carries the meaning of "my body" as well.]

Though it may be unnecessary to point this out, the phrase "thrice borne" indicates that he mounted the High Priest's seat three times.

Nichi'o Shonin and the Propagating Association

The first task undertaken by the new High Priest, Nichi'ō Shonin, was the creation and development of a “propagating association.” Nichi'ō Shonin cherished the view that the central issues with respect to re-establishing the school following the Conference aimed at protecting the teachings (held in the 16th year of Meiji), were propagation and the advancement of study. To this end, he first consulted with the leading priests and believers and, thereafter, on August 28, in the 22nd year of Meiji [1889] founded “the Propagating Association of the legitimate Nichiren sect, that is, Nikko's followers of Taisekiji.” This association, with the High Priest as the chairperson and an office at Taisekiji, aimed to bring together priests and believers scattered throughout many counties and to reorganize them in such a way as to promote propagation activities, including lectures, publications and the training of human resources.

The founding of this propagation association was also intended to resolve the dilemma created by the fact that the Taisekiji school, which was within the coalition of schools of the Nichiren sect, was not able to display its legitimacy or to establish an independent structure. That is, among Nikko's followers, for whom the Taisekiji school and the Yoboji school constituted the majority of members, there was a tendency between them and us to vie for leadership as the head temple; in addition, there was also continued friction from doctrinal differences. The cooperation of the eight head temples of Nikko's followers was in name only and the head temples' assertions were far apart; the reality was that they were spending time arguing among themselves. Since Taisekiji kept emphasizing its orthodoxy, there was no way forward other than separating and becoming independent on an appropriate occasion. The launching of the Propagating Association was in preparation for this occasion, as well. The Propagating Association started with the following staff:

- Chairperson of the Association: Nichi'ō Oishi (the High Priest)
- Chief secretary of the head office: Nichu Tsuchiya
- Secretaries of the head office (Priests): Nichidai Hirose, Jiyo Sato, Nisso (Chikyo) Fujimoto, Jisho (Nissho) Abe

- Secretaries of the head office (Believers): Kakudo Matsushima, Seiyu Araki, Doe'i Kato

The Propagating Association at once changed the title of “The Magazine of the Association for Conversion of Nikko’s Followers” to “The Report of the Propagating Association,” and issued a monthly magazine under the Taisekiji school’s direction, including a report on the Legal Affairs Bureau (later the General Administration Office), and introduced doctrines, religious speeches, and various activities throughout the counties. It fell to the dispatch person in charge of each region to look for members. Nisso Fujimoto (Chikyo, Kosho Nichi’i) had already moved from Genryuji temple and become the chief priest of Juhonji; he participated in the school’s administration and prepared a report, which appeared in “The Report of the Propagating Association” (November of the 22nd year of Meiji issue) when he travelled to Kyushu in the western part of Japan to recruit members.

..... This is to inform you that, on the first of this month, I summoned all the believers of my temple (Juhonji in Kyoto) and expounded on the necessity of promoting study and propagation, the benefits of the issuance of publications, and other facts, in detail. All those present, more than I expected, responded favorably and, like plants swayed by the wind, rich and poor, male and female, joined the Association. On the 6th of the same month, I travelled to Otsu of Shiga prefecture [10 miles east of Kyoto]. There, the believers who belonged to the family of Mr. Terada greatly supported the cause and bought and read the Report of the Association with obvious delight....

On the 9th of the same month, I travelled to Osaka and held a conference with all of the believers of the temple, and again, without distinction of persons, rich or poor, whole families, including servants, supported the cause, and praised it as an unprecedented and well-timed plan, and they strived to be the first and foremost to join the Association. Therefore, Ryosen Tamura, Kotoku Minami,

Baisho Sato and others visited each believer's home every day and explained the reasons for establishing the Association, and Renjo Ida, Jojitsu Makino and others tenderly guided and persuaded the believers with great diligence. Within less than a week, over two hundred people had joined the Association.....

On the 17th of the same month, I went aboard Shoki-maru and arrived on the 19th at the Hakata Port; as I had already learned, Seiyu Araki was staying at the port for business. So, I visited him at his lodging, that is, Mr. Heikichi Ishida's home, and discussed our principles with him item by item. He danced for joy and said that he had been eagerly awaiting this very thing for many years; that is, reviving study and propagation, and the publication of a magazine; since he had now heard that it was actually established, his desires had been fulfilled. His concerns on various issues had been taken up by the genuine consensus of the Association; he would do what he could to help, even sacrificing himself if necessary. He then dedicated 10 yen out of what he had on him as the immediate payment for the special donation in Clause 15 of the regulations and submitted it to me. I see that his intention was to advance a great movement for the Association...

Seiyu, prior to that meeting, in February of the 21st year of Meiji, had published, together with Kotoku (Yushichi) Minami, a document entitled "On Questions and Answers between Nikko's Followers and the Icchi [Oneness of the Honmon and Shakumon, Minobu and other Nichiren schools] School." The work was subtitled "A concise record of the whole factual story on the Questions and Answers," and it is taken from the record of an exchange of questions and answers with the head believer of the Icchi school, Mr. Yahe Hatakeyama. In the next year, he invited Mr. [Henry] Olcott, the [first] Chairman of the Theosophical Society of Ceylon, who was visiting Japan to promote joining with Japanese Buddhism, and had a meeting with him at the Seikan-ro Hall with Jojitsu (Iheh) Makino. On that occasion, he gave him "The Collection of the High Founder's Writings" [Collection of Nichiren Daishonin's

Gosho]. Thus, he was engaged in various activities in many quarters. Just then, his old acquaintance, Fujimoto, informed him of the recruitment of individuals to become members of the Propagating Association, and he delighted in this development as if it were his own matter, and despite the fact that he was there for his own business, he immediately offered a contribution to cover expenses associated with the Association's activities. The absolute sincerity of his comment that he "would do what little he could to help, even sacrificing himself for it" must have greatly encouraged Fujimoto: the Report records that he visited Denmyoji temple in Kurume afterwards and recruited some two hundred members or more.

Thereafter, propagation and the advancement of study were the responsibility of the Taisekiji school's Propagating Association. Seiyu, as he reported, also made efforts on behalf of the Propagating Association; for example, he invited Nichi'o Shonin, Rev. Tsuchiya, and Rev. Abe to stay with him on their way back from the Western regions where they had undertaken a pilgrimage. When, in the 26th year of Meiji [1893], the project of re-roofing the Mie-do temple [in Taisekiji] with copper tiles began, he consulted with Rengeji believers who had volunteered to assist with the project, and offered 1,000 yen of special Gokuyo over each of the next three years. For this, he was granted a Gohonzon as a reward.

He was also very interested in advancing the practitioners' studies and nurturing human resources. At that time, Junichiro Shimoyama (professor at the Tokyo Imperial University, Doctor of Pharmacy), who contributed greatly to the Pharmaceutical Society of Japan, was well known, together with his father, Kenji, for being an earnest believer. Shimoyama had been considering to how best to use his experience in the area of pharmaceutical studies to develop the school. With this end in mind, he arranged a meeting with Seiyu Araki to exchange views on the matter. The two men hit it off and agreed on many points concerning the advancement of study and the nurture of the school's human resources. They decided to unite their efforts in proposing to the authorities a plan for raising funds for advancing studies, and

submitted a proposal to the Legal Affairs Bureau of Taiseikiji in December in the 26th year of Meiji.

[As a letter from Nippu Shonin states: “A person named Kenji Shimoyama from Inuyama of the Owari clan, now working in Tokyo, is a great believer. He has made a great effort as to the separation and independence issue....” A former samurai of the Inuyama clan and the chief believer of Josenji [in Tokyo], Kenji Shimoyama was an earnest believer and in the 24th year of Meiji he wrote an offering book [for the believers of the temple] titled “the True Teaching.” His first son, Junichiro, is a self-made man who was a special student [part of the government-sponsored elite] and then first professor of the faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences of the Tokyo University. It was well known that he did not skip Gongyo and prayed in a resonant voice every morning. Praising his achievement, busts of him are displayed at the Pharmaceutical Sciences of Tokyo University, the Entrance Hall of Tokyo College of Pharmaceuticals, and in the City of Inuyama.]

In the 29th year of Meiji, Nichi’o Shonin again addressed the issue of achieving the separation and independence of the Taiseikiji school. To this end, he summoned the key figures involved, including Nisshin Kato (Study Head), Nisso Fujimoto, Seiyu Araki and others, and, through meetings with these individuals, resolved to achieve the fulfillment of his goal. Responding to Nichi’o Shonin’s request, Seiyu Araki worked with the various parties. On the 30th of September of the following year he, along with Rev. Ji’ichi Sato, met with Mr. Kume, the Chief of temples and shrines of the Department of the Interior and, once again, Seiyu presented his plea for the separation and independence of the Taiseikiji school. However, insofar as the request was in opposition to the basic policy of the government, it was still difficult to anticipate approval for the establishment of an independent sect.

Aftermath of Terada-ya Inn and Seiyu Araki

The reason why the so-called “Historic spot, Terada-ya Inn” came up in people’s conversations was because there are sword cuts and bullet marks in the building, which the present head of the house, who claimed he was the 15th master of the Inn, publicized. The question arose as to whether the present building was the same as the original, given that there had been a change of location along with reconstruction. The subject aroused the interest of many researchers and fans, but the city officially admitted the criticism and the matter was settled.

As noted previously, the chief priest of Juhonji temple, Nichijo Fujimoto (Kosho, Nichi'i), as part of the work of calling for new members of the Propagating Association, also visited the believer Isuke Terada, who had moved to Otsu. In his report he states: "... As I travelled to Otsu in Shiga prefecture, I met with the family of Mr. Terada; they sincerely agreed with the goals of the Association and expressed their delight in reading the Association's magazine." We could see that the Terada family had strong faith in the teachings of the Taiseikiji school and it could be gathered from the following records that, after he closed his ferry inn at Fushimi, he relocated to Otsu and settled down there. The propagating Association's listing of donations includes:

*One yen from Isuke Terada of Omi ("Report of the Propagating Association" October of the Meiji 33rd year issue)

*Donation for re-roofing the altar of the Reception Hall of the Head Temple: one yen and fifty sen from Isuke Terada of Otsu town in the county of Omi ("Law Order King" August of the Meiji 25th year issue)

*A report regarding Jian Matsui in the Chikugo Report: "On that day, Mr. Araki of Osaka said that he should go to Osaka at once since Mr. Terada of Otsu in Shiga prefecture reported that the High Priest had come down to Osaka." ("Law Order King" March of the 27th year of Meiji issue)

Reviewing the time of his relocation, taking into account his mother Tose's death, the opening of the railway, and Seiyu Araki's move to Dojima of Osaka, and also granting that the Gohonzon given to "Isuke Terada of Non'in-Myo Hokke-ko" was presented on the occasion of its enshrining at the private Buddha hall of his new home (in those days, many enshrined their Gohonzon in an alcove of the main room), it is probable that he moved from Fushimi to Otsu around Meiji 13. Researchers of Ryoma Sakamoto have considered whether later information about Isuke Terada was known; however, as noted above, he moved to Otsu after Tose's death and then relocated to Osaka. This is proven from a phrase added on to a Gohonzon by Nichikan Shonin and granted to him:

In July in the 34th year of Meiji, the person of the acquisition, Resident of Osaka, Isuke Terada. I have humbly added this note, the 55th High Priest Nippu.

Beginning in June of the 31st year of Meiji [1898], Seiyu was very active as a member of the Osaka Municipal Assembly and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry. In the following year, he assumed the position of director of the Osaka Dojima Rice Exchange, though he resigned after six months. Thus, as he was then “in the prime” of his personal business, it is probable that the family of Isuke Terada relocated from Otsu under an arrangement made by Seiyu Araki, who was known to take good care of people. Also, underlying the faith of the Terada family in the Lotus Sutra, there was always the existence of his three years’ senior, Seiyu.

As to the site of the demolished Terada-ya Inn at Fushimi, the following record in the “Shunshin KeiKyu-roku” (published in April in the 29th year of Meiji) was made by critic Tenshu Nishimura:

..... Terada-ya Inn was burnt down in the ravages of the war at Fushimi, so they removed the ruin, and, in its vicinity, erected a bronze monument and rebuilt the Terada-ya Inn in an area to the west of that site. I walked inside and there the squint-eyed landlord and a greasy large man were talking to each other about past events, and presented me with a book entitled “Life stories of the martyrs of the disasters at Fushimi.” I was then guided to the site and at once saw the bronze monument to the east.... The top is triangular and engraved with clouds, and the title carved into it in ‘tensho’ penmanship, is: “the Satsuma clan’s nine patriots’ memorial letter,” and the epitaph was composed by Dr. Kawada.....

(“Eight journey accounts” published in the 32nd year of Meiji, At the Modern Digital Library in the National Diet Library)

According to this record, after the Terada-ya Inn burned down, the site was cleared and the bronze monument of “the Satsuma clan’s nine patriots memorial letter” was erected there. It is said that Terada-ya is east of it. If this is the current building, except the extended one-

storied part including the bathroom, then it is probable that it was built about the same time as the bronze monument of the Satsuma clan samurai and that the rights of the land and the house were transferred. Anyway, the family of Terada, as their family business was dull, moved to Otsu, and the site of the Terada-ya at Fushimi fell into others' hands.

What sustained Seiyu Araki's activities, which excelled all others, was not only his economic power, but his various personal connections, and these also seemed to have been the source of his activities. Kinu, Seiyu's wife, was the third daughter of Terada-ya as I introduced before, and because the Terada-ya Inn was a hangout of the samurai of the Satsuma, Choshu, and Tosa clans around the time of the Boshin Civil War, Terada was acquainted with high-ranking government officials. Thus, it seems that the daughters of Tose married respectable persons. I say "seems" because there are various opinions on this subject and it is a riddle how many children Tose had and to whom they were married. However, it may be proper to say that she had a son and three daughters. The third daughter, Kinu, and Seiyu Araki had two sons and a daughter. Their first son, Kohei Fukushige (Tose's grandson) was adopted into another family and thus had a different surname; he later became a priest and was given a new name, Shohei. The later part of this book will touch upon Shohei Fukushige.

This is the story as it has been handed down in the family:

*The first daughter, Riki, married First Lieutenant Kasai, later a major general, Brigadier commander of the Imperial Guard. (She was, actually, likely married to Ryuko Tono).

*The second daughter, Kano, married into the Yashiro family. Her sons were Norihiko, who became the deputy director-general of the Ministry of Finance and the president of Sumitomo Banking Corp, and Hitoshi, Dean of Osaka University School of Engineering.

*The third daughter, Kinu, was the wife of Seiyu Araki. Her children were Kohei (later Shohei), Ryuhei, and Shizuko (Aibe).

*The fourth daughter, Taki, was the former wife of Seiyu Araki. One of her descendants is the present master of the house of Japanese and western confectionary Ryugetsu-do at Kita Shinchi. She is a believer of Rengeji temple.

*The fifth daughter married into the Matsuyama family. Her son was an admiral, Shigeru Matsuyama, head of the aviation headquarters, Vice Chief of the Naval General Staff, and mentor of Isoroku Yamamoto (planner and commander of the Pearl Harbor attack).

*The sixth daughter married into the Tanabe family. Her son was the president of Kansai Electric Power Co.

Thus, they were distinguished figures. I was told that Norihiko Yashiro learned English for the entrance exam from Kohei Fukushige at his home at Hongo before he went to study abroad in the United States. However, the view that the fourth, fifth, and sixth daughters were by Tose does not match chronologically and, thus, is likely a misrepresentation. Taking into consideration that Tose's husband died young, the view that her own children were one son and three daughters is more persuasive. The first daughter, Riki, was married to an Army lieutenant-colonel, Tatsuoki Tonoï from the Totsugawa clan, with a go-between by the field marshal Iwao Oyama [Commander during the Russo-Japanese war]. The third daughter Kinu's case is clear. The fourth daughter seems to have been an adopted one, and was the wife of Kisaburo Nishio, a believer of Myokoji of Tokyo. The reported individuals could have been somewhat interchanged. There is also a story that Tose raised many orphans, and the idea that she had a son and six daughters, or that she had many children, was the result of misinterpreting this report. If she raised many orphans, we cannot state with certainty how many daughters she had.

That is not all. An elder from the same hometown, Kowemon Isono, was the chief director of the Osaka Rice Exchange, and it is said that a member of the Fukushige family (believers of Juhonji temple), who were distantly related, was the president of a bank at Sonobe.

Also, many people adored Seiyu's personality and gathered around him, and many merchants and military figures visited his house at Dojima, including army captain Banri. Additionally, Giheh Araki, a believer associated with Myokoji and a resident of the Nakano ward, who ran a foreign trade business at Yokohama, fell for Seiyu's character and became his adopted son, thereby inheriting his given and family names.

Then, how would one describe Seiyu's main occupation? There are no living witnesses from that time, and there are few records of the period, but we can find a vestige of his activities in the material relating to the Rice Exchange. In the 26th year of Meiji [1893], the Osaka Rice Merchant Meeting Place was reorganized by the Commodity Exchange Act into a stock company named the "Osaka Dojima Rice Exchange." According to records kept at the time, Seiyu (Ei'ichi) Araki already held 8 shares as both a broker and a stockholder of the Osaka Rice Merchant Meeting Place, and held a middle-rank of 23rd of the 152 stockholders. The highest-ranked stockholders were those who held positions in conglomerates such as Sumitomo or Fujita. So, as a rising broker, Seiyu had made rapid progress. Also, he was listed as a broker of the Osaka Dojima Rice Exchange on various guides and business directories, so we can imagine the level of his prosperity. In June of the 31st year of Meiji [1898], Ei'ichi Araki was elected to the position of assembly member of Osaka City on the recommendation of the members of Osaka Chamber of Commerce. In October of that year, the first mayor of Osaka City was to be elected. Apparently, there was an incident: Ei'ichi Araki supported the Sumitomo family member, Kichi-zaemon Tomozumi Sumitomo, as a candidate, but mysterious rumors flew around and, unexpectedly, Sumitomo lost to the Kimono merchant, Tahe Tamura.

Also, there is a record from Meiji 32 of the name of a newly elected member of the Osaka Prefecture Chamber of Commerce and Industry, that is, Ei'ichi Araki. Osaka was then about to sponsor an event, "the 5th National Exhibition," on a large scale at Tennoji Park, and it appears that Ei'ichi Araki participated in this event as part of the municipal government. Osaka was then advancing rapidly as a modern industrial city and, among other things, Araki held a seat in the Osaka City Assembly for one term of 6 years; his activities in that capacity are recorded in the minutes of the Osaka City Assembly.

Ten'ichi-bo Incident of the Osaka Dojima Rice Exchange

Among the clerks serving under Ei'ichi Araki was a man named Genzaburo Matsuya. He was a go-getter who had begun to trade stocks

when he was 15 or 16 years old. Later, he became independent with support from a rich farmer in Kawachi, Yataro Koshii, and then began to participate in stock trading at Kitahama [of Osaka]. Soon, he stood out in the trading world, and was nicknamed “Ten’ichi-bo” [The reference is to a man from the 18th century who feigned being the son of a Shogun and tried to profit from it], indicating that he was a distinguished man who could aim to acquire the total market. When he was 25 years old, Genzaburo Matsuya, together with Iwasaburo Sugiyama, the Osaka branch manager of Okayama Bank, who was nicknamed Saigo [one of the three main figures who led the Meiji Restoration], of Bizen county, schemed to take over the Dojima Rice Exchange. That was the root of the incident.

The Dojima Rice Exchange was a private corporation. Matsuya had his eye on it and secretly started a buyout in December in the 31st year of Meiji. By March of the next year, he had succeeded in buying 4,700 stocks out of the 5,000 stocks of the Exchange. In May of that year, by the authority of his position as a stockholder, he appointed Iwasaburo Sugiyama to be the chief director of the corporation, and as the three directors, he appointed Ei’ichi Araki, Shingo Seki, (a sharp businessman of Okayama), and Masatada Hota. This party gained possession of the Dojima Rice Exchange, and it is easy to imagine Matsuya’s sense of triumph when he fully controlled the long-established Rice Market of Dojima, also known as the kitchen of Japan.

Matsuya then planned a big gamble and, consulting with Yahe Koshii and Ishigara of Kyushu, he went on a rice buying binge, all on credit, and, by September, had completed a large-scale buyout of 700,000 koku [koku: about 5 bushels]. But there were wheels within wheels. Because he had the Dojima Rice Exchange and Okayama Bank at his disposal, the checks Matsuya issued went back and forth between the account of the Exchange and the Bank, and it was possible for him to buy shares using unsecured checks endlessly. But such a scheme cannot last forever. There was an accuser who claimed Matsuya had made an awful internal mess, and it became a terrible sensation. The Osaka Daily News issued an extra, and soon the Osaka Detective

Agency began to investigate and the suspicion grew that there was a big deficit in the accounting of the Exchange.

It seems Ei'ichi Araki was not personally involved in the matter and, due to the serious state of the affair, he resigned from his position as director on the 28th of September. It was possible that a friend in the government had advised him; in any case, having learned the truth of the matter, he apparently resigned at once before he could be dismissed. Regarding the incident, Shikanosuke Ikehara of the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce made an official trip to Osaka as an investigator and found that the illegality was a fact. Sugimoto Company Section Manager and others from the same Ministry came to Osaka and conducted an investigation of the books and properties. As a result, the executives were all punished by dismissal on October 16, and there was a suspension of business at the Exchange at the end of the month. Thus, the power of the party of Matsuya came and went in three months' time and the management personnel of the Kashima Bank afterwards replaced that of the Dojima Rice Exchange.

Later, this incident was called the "Ten'ichi-bo incident" and counted as one of the three major incidents of Dojima; as such, it shook the market at the time. The incident amounted to what we now call a kind of insider trading or a fix, but in the early stages of the development of capitalism, perhaps because the laws governing economics were not well established, and despite the fact that it was a terrible incident, there were no arrests and the perpetrators got away with mere dismissal from the management team. It seems such hijacking and information manipulation by rumor were usual in the brokers' society and not regarded as particularly immoral acts to be criticized.

Apparently, Seiyu Araki was, in this incident, set up by his former employee, Genzaburo Matsuya and persuaded to join the board as a member. However, after this incident, he resigned and also retired from work as a broker in the rice market and returned to his role as an individual investor and trader in securities. It was one consolation that the incident was settled without the authorities making any arrests among the participants. Considering that Seiyu Araki had remained and served as a member of the Osaka City Assembly until his term

expired, it would appear that his reputation did not suffer as a result of this incident. However, commodity trading that resembles gambling produces those who make a large profit, while there are those who suffer heavy losses, even without this kind of failure. The world of trading did not make Seiyu Araki special and, before long, collapse was awaiting him too.

The eldest son, Kohei Fukushige, goes to the United States

In May of the 32nd year of Meiji [1899], Seiyu Araki, upon assuming the post of director in the Rice Exchange, sent his first son, Kohei, then 20 years old, to the United States to study. When Kentaro Kaneko, with whom Seiyu had been friends for a long time, said that he was going to the United States, Seiyu pleaded with him to let Kohei accompany him as an attendant. [Kentaro Kaneko is well known to have drafted the Constitution of the Empire and the Imperial House Laws under Hirofumi Ito, together with Tsuyoshi Inoue and Miyoji Ito. He then assumed the positions of undersecretary of Agriculture and Commerce and Minister of Justice during the Ito cabinet and later became a Privy Councilor.]

According to “The People’s Newspaper” of May 16, Kentaro Kaneko was to depart for Vancouver on the 26th of the month aboard the Japan Mail Shipment Company to attend the conferment ceremony for his LLD degree at Harvard University, which he had formerly attended. In order to make the journey, he resigned his position as chief director of the Tokyo Stock Exchange. The family’s tradition has it that Kohei Fukushige [who was adopted by the Fukushige family] went abroad not at that time but later, when Kaneko went to the United States to enact diplomatic strategies in connection with the Russo-Japanese War. However, judging from the years in question, it is almost certain that he had traveled on the occasion of the degree conferment ceremony. Kohei (later Rev. Shohei Fukushige) related memories of the voyage for his family, saying that he received intensive lessons in English from Kentaro Kaneko during the voyage, after he was once asked to buy newspapers at a stand but could not make himself understood in English.

From the beginning, Seiyu Araki intended to make his first son, Kohei, a diplomat, and arranged for him to join the faculty of Political

Science at Chicago University. He had his second son, Ryuhei, attend Osaka Commercial College so that he could become a merchant, and Ryuhei worked for Mitsui and Co., a major trading company, after graduation. However, Kohei later threw away the position of diplomat like a pair of worn-out shoes and decided to become a priest; well, fate is curious.

It is well known from history textbooks and other sources that Kentaro Kaneko went to the United States again in order to carry out diplomatic strategies with that country and to ask for mediation to bring about peace during the Russo-Japanese War. This journey took place in February in the 37th year of Meiji [1904]. He was a classmate at Harvard of President Theodore Roosevelt, and through this personal friendship was able to make favorable deals in connection with America's policy with Japan; during his stay in New York, he attended various parties and gave lectures to lobby public opinion. There are detailed records of the lectures of Kentaro Kaneko during this time, and from these records we know that the United States was more pro-Japanese than one would expect. Kohei Fukushige was studying in the United States then and may have visited Kentaro Kaneko.

In April of that year in America, the Louisiana Purchase Exposition was held. It seems Kohei was learning Eastern philosophy or a divination system at Chicago University due to a recommendation from a friend; it ended up being a mockery of fortune telling. It appears that he set up a fortune-telling stand in a corner of the Japan pavilion, and did some improvised palm-reading. At the time, it was a big hit; the combination of a pro-Japan atmosphere and the popularity of oriental taste brought him large earnings and allowed him to be idle for more than a year. He was then receiving a remittance from home - as much as 250 yen per month - and was spending his college years in leisure; because of this, and his having grown fonder of America, he showed no sign of going home after graduation, but seemed to slide into a life abroad. At the time in Japan, 1000 yen could buy a house of about 100 tsubo [400 sq yd], so he enjoyed a measure of luxury. In that way, he spent a few years loafing; however, he finally returned to Japan

when his younger brother, Ryuhei, went to the United States to bring him home in the fortieth year of Meiji [1907].

Authorization of the separation and independence of Taisekiji

Meanwhile, the many years of effort that Seiyu Araki and others had devoted to their cause finally bore fruit, as they received authorization for the separation of the Taisekiji school from the Honmon sect (Nichiren sect, Nikko's followers) and, with that, their independence. This took place in the 33rd year of Meiji [1900]. Twenty-seven years had passed since Nichi'in Shonin had submitted the "Appeal for Independence as the sole Head Temple" in the 7th year of Meiji, and, finally, on the 18th of September of the 33rd year, the school was officially authorized by the Department of Home Affairs as the Fuji School of the Nichiren sect; thus, the idea of the modern school possessing a judicial personality was born.

In the previous year, Nikko's followers had renamed themselves the "Honmon sect" and had continued to participate in the coalition under a rotating Kancho [High Priest] as had existed previously among the Eight Head Temples. However, taking note of the Taisekiji school's newly won separation and independence, Nichi'o Shonin decided not to assume the Kancho upon rotation. Thus, beginning in January of that year, preparations were made to establish sect regulations and temple laws in the manner already begun by Nisshin Kato, Jikan Tsuchiya, Ji'ichi Sato, and Jirin Hori. The work advanced smoothly and, on the 21st of August, they submitted their appeal to the Minister of the Department of Home Affairs (Judo Saigo) and the school's formation was finally authorized.

Having heretofore been managed by the main-branch temple system and the unwritten laws of Sanpo-sanki [regulations and laws of the Head Temple] since the time of the Shogunate government, the Taisekiji school now became a religious organization run by a system of self-government in accordance with stipulated sect regulations and temple laws. Among the prescribed procedures were: the interlocking system of Kancho [Administrator of the school] and Hossu [spiritual High Priest; thus, today's High Priest possesses both administrative and religious power within the

school], elections for the position of Head of Study and candidates for Kancho, the system of the school's congress, Shumuin [the administrative office of the school] and the school of priests, priests' fees, ranks in the priesthood, temple grades, rules of reward and punishment of believers, and so on. In this way, the school's operating rules were established. In October of that year, the first election of the congress took place and, on the 4th of November, a ceremony was held announcing the independence of the Fuji School at the restored Mie-do temple [of Taisekiji]. The whole school was delighted. Previously, in September of the 34th year of Meiji, the old precincts of Taisekiji were finally repurchased through the efforts of Araki and others. Thus, the Fuji School, both in name and in reality, was firmly established as a religious school, and apparently had resolved its external problems.

However, it appears that establishing a formal system for the operation of the school was not entirely positive. As will be seen, this decision later gave rise to internal complications based on factional disputes within the sect. The administration of the school during the Shogunate government was handled by the elders, who were superior in the areas of study and writing and senior in their role as priests. Choosing a High Priest involved assuming the rank of teacher at the Hosokusa Danrin [priests' school], promotion to the Head of Study, and then attainment of the position of High Priest. It was a seniority system and, as there was little room for a power struggle, it was a very stable system. In recent years, as to the inheritance of Kechimyaku [the lineage of Law], the old system for the appointment of the High Priest has been deservedly acclaimed, but this system, in which "a High Priest freely chooses his successor only on his own will" was regarded as dictatorial and was no longer possible, as it was not socially accepted. The High Priests of Taisekiji had to be chosen and the inheritance handed down in accordance with the customary laws and political system in place.

Nichiren Shoshu, along with other Buddhist sects, was modernized and democratized, and reflected public opinion within the sect through the election of the Chief of Study (the election of the candidate for the next High Priest) and the congress system, so factional strife over the

seat of Kancho/Hossu [High Priest] became intense, even in this small sect. For instance, as early as the 39th year of Meiji [1906], a dispute over nonconfidence in the Head of Study, who was the candidate for the next High Priest, occurred, which resulted in the dissolution of the congress. After that, there were incidents involving a resolution of no confidence in Nicchu Shonin as candidate for Kancho and of the coercion of his retirement, the scandal of the Kancho election between Nichikai Shonin and Rev. Arimoto, and the retirements of Nichiman Shonin and Nissho Shonin. In short, various seniors threw mud at each other over the selection of the Kancho/Hossu [High Priest], who held strong authority.

Regarding this point, Seiyu Araki's "On the Inheritance of Kechimyaku" (included in "The Genuine Nichiren-ism") displays a rather fair standpoint toward the view of Kechimyaku, which had been transformed into faith in the High Priest at the time, but this strays from the current subject, so I will reserve it for another occasion.

Dream of Empress Dowager Shoken

In the closing decade of the 19th century, Russia and Japan began to look at Manchuria as a promising field for imperialist expansion. Russia, taking advantage of the chaos following the Boxer Rebellion, occupied Manchuria and also monitored activity on the Chosun [Korean] Peninsula. The sense of caution in regard to Russia, which clearly intended to invade the south, was further heightened. By the 35th year of Meiji [1902], the conflict was on the way, and the Anglo-Japanese Military Alliance was concluded. [England needed to check Russia from invading Afghanistan, too, but it was incapable of it due to the Boer War and the naval arms race with Prussia. During the Boxer Rebellion, the British ambassador was impressed by the Japanese soldiers he met and he pressed the government hard to tie the alliance with Japan; thus, the United Kingdom gave up its long period of isolationism.] In January in the 37th year of Meiji, negotiations between the Russians and the Japanese were deadlocked; then, on February 6th, Japan, through the Minister to Russia, notified that country of its intention to sever diplomatic relations. On the 10th of the month, Japan declared war.

From the start, the reason for the conflict was competition between the two countries over interests in the Chosun Peninsula and on the continent; the Russian Empire, which, as noted, intended to move southward, and the Japanese Empire, which aimed to prevent this, were destined sooner or later to clash. War was also vital to Japan which had been late in entering the competition, initiated by the Western powers, for the acquisition of new colonies. Thus, even though starting a war seemed reckless judging from the country's power as a nation and its military strength at the time, the will of the Japanese people to fight was surprisingly strong compared to that of the people of Russia. One reason for this was that Russia's forceful manner stimulated Japanese nationalism; in addition, the western powers' invasion of Asia likely provoked anti-West or anti-modernization sentiment. Such public sentiment was heightened in the national Japanese spirit, and there were few who opposed going into battle; public opinion came to a boil and, acting in unison, the nation's citizens went to war.

On the night of February 6th, when the breakdown of diplomatic relations was announced, Empress Dowager Shoken (Empress of Emperor Meiji, who reigned for the 45 years of the Meiji period), who was staying at an Imperial villa at Hayama, had a dream. At that time, the Empress was thinking constantly of the Emperor's predicament, worrying about the nation's future, and spending sleepless nights wringing her hands. Then, as she dozed, a strange samurai dressed in white appeared at her bedside. He was kneeling and appeared to be 37 or 38 years of age. After a little while he lifted his face and announced:

Your Imperial Highness, this is your subject, Ryoma Sakamoto. In the face of the opening of the Russo-Japanese war, please do not worry. I, your subject, will do what is best to protect our Navy, and I know that our victory is unquestionable. Thus, please rest your mind

Having finished saying this, he disappeared into the void.

Of course, the Empress would not have known what Ryoma Sakamoto looked like. The next day, the Chamberlain of Imperial Palace

vassals, Keizo Kagawa, hearing a leaked rumor of the story, thought it was strange, so he ordered a photo of Ryoma Sakamoto to be placed on a desk in the Empress' living room. When she saw the photo, the Empress said that he was exactly the man she had seen in her dream. The photo of Sakamoto was one taken at the time he had been leading the Kai'entai [Sea Support Corps: an association of masterless samurai organized by him] at Nagasaki, which was treasured by the Duke of Yamagata. The story became a hot topic in the offices of the government and was viewed as an omen of victory. It was picked up by the newspapers and immediately spread over the country. Upon the start of the Russo-Japanese war, the deceased Sakamoto unexpectedly became a national hero and played an important role in boosting the people's fighting spirit. Some observed that it was a way of handling public opinion and that this was its intended purpose as far as the authorities were concerned; however, there certainly was enthusiasm among the general public, which welcomed the episode.

Later, in May of that year, the Minister of Communications, Kanetake Oura, took an official journey to Osaka in the Kyoto area and visited the Terada-ya Inn; this triggered a journey, in June, by Seiyu Araki, who took with him the letters and articles of Ryoma Sakamoto that were kept at Teradaya and visited Minister Oura at his official residence in Tokyo, where the objects were displayed. Putting this and the dream together, Kanetake Oura thought it was odd, so he promptly asked for an audience with the Empress and offered them for viewing. On the 25th of August, Baron Kagawa, through Minister Oura, communicated to Seiyu the wishes of the Empress to gift some money as an award for the contribution of Ryoma Sakamoto. And because Ryoma Sakamoto had no kin, she wished to grant the money to the Terada family, who were like his family. In September of that year, Isuke Terada and Ei'ichi (Seiyu) Araki visited the Imperial Palace and were given the money and a roll of silk gauze. The Terada siblings cut the silk and found, sewn into handkerchief-size wrappers, a copy of a poem by Gisei Kato of the Imperial Poetry Bureau entitled "Her Majesty's Dream" along with calligraphy reading "Memorial of the Imperial Present" by the Minister Oura on each of the silk pieces. The family

shared them and have kept them as heirlooms until today. The photo of Ryoma Sakamoto that I put here (in the original Japanese book) is likely the one Araki presented to the Empress and of which copies were made and distributed to related parties. Soho Tokutomi, the most influential journalist and historian of the late Meiji to Showa period, also possessed the same picture. (It is now owned by the Ryozen Museum)

To see the will of Her Majesty the Empress must have been an honor of a kind unimaginable today. Moved by this gift, the brothers Terada and Araki immediately took action to requite her great favor. First, they added a composition to the poem they had received, “Her Majesty’s Dream,” and Araki added his own poem, “Yamato [Japanese] spirit,” which was then published by Yoshikawa Kobunkan Publishers in November. Then he distributed the booklet with the approval of the Ministry of Education, as a textbook for a singing course, so the song was loved and sung by third graders over the whole country. Also, “Yamato spirit” was produced on a record by the Victor company of Japan.

They both also erected monuments using the Imperial money; these were the “Monument of the Loyal Soul of Ryoma Sakamoto” placed in front of his grave at Higashiyama [of Kyoto], and the “Monument in Memory of the Imperial Gift” placed at the site of the Teradaya Inn of Fushimi. It is said (by “Shukujo Picture News” on May 6th of the Taisho issue of “Illustrated Tales of the life of the Empress”) that it was due to the inclination of the Empress as well, and a distinguished lineup wrote calligraphies on both monuments, including titles by Keizo Kagawa, the Chamberlain of Her Majesty’s Household, epitaphs by Kanetake Oura, the Minister of Communication, and tanka poems by Mitsuaki Tanaka, the Minister of the Imperial Household.

The stone “Monument of the Loyal Soul” in front of Ryoma’s grave is about the size of a tatami mat [6” X 3”], and the epitaph by Oura is dated December in the 37th year of Meiji. It took about half a year to engrave and a monument erection ceremony was held on May 14th in the 38th year of Meiji [1904, at the peak of the Japan-Russo war]. Moreover, on the northern side of the monument, a tanka is engraved:

My spirit after death the Emperor will serve
 The Yamato spirit surpassing by far.

By Ei'ichi Araki

Along with the happy news of the victory of Japan in the Russo-Japanese war, the movement of praising Ryoma Sakamoto spread widely in society and added to the gaiety of the celebration of victory. All these events occurred subsequent to the 31st year of Meiji, when Mr. and Mrs. Terada, relying on the advice of Seiyu Araki, settled in Osaka. Behind these events, Seiyu Araki played an active role and there was also backing by Iwao Oyama [the fleet admiral and the matchmaker responsible for the marriage of Terada's first daughter, Riki], and the Minister Oura.

On May 24th in the 39th year of Meiji, the Terada-ya Inn was restored and reopened. There remains a record of the Oeshiki ceremony of Nichiren Daishonin, held in November of the following year, that is, the 40th year of Meiji, at the Terada-ya Inn at Fushimi:

On the 27th of November, the anniversary of the death of Buddha was held at the house of Mr. Isuke Terada at Shimo-fushimi town of Kyoto prefecture. More than twenty persons visited from Kyoto, including Rev. Shinkyo Akiyama of Juhonji temple, the chief believer, Lay Believer Doe'i Kato, Mr. Joshin Harada and so on. From Osaka, Lay Believer Seiyu Araki, Mr. Shozen Muraki and others also visited. Sixty or so of those interested from the town also attended ... A grand service was held.....

(“Byaku-rengé” December, 40th year of Meiji issue)

This record says, further, that at the reopened Terada-ya Inn, Isuke Terada VII, as the petitioner, invited the chief priest of Juhonji temple and held the Oeshiki of the Daishonin; moreover, the believers and some 90 of the town's interested people attended the ceremony together. In addition, many interested residents of the town of Fushimi also joined; the ceremony was unusual and confirms that the local citizens welcomed the reopening of the inn.

The 7th Isuke died in the following year, on the 14th of October in the 40th year of Meiji, at the age of 57 and, in September of the next year, his wife, Hanako, erected a five-ringed pagoda gravestone with Daimoku engraved on it, at the Terada family gravesite at Shorin. The Buddhist names of the deceased were also engraved on it, including those of the 6th Isuke, Tose [the wife of the 6th Isuke] and the 7th Isuke. [The original carries those Buddhist names, with Hanako's own added.] Hanako seems to have continued the family business while still operating in the red; she died on the 19th of August in the 4th year of Taisho [1915]. The couple had no children and Terada-ya was inherited by others who were not blood relations.

Modernization and our school

In the 38th year of Meiji [1905], Japan was victorious in the Russo-Japanese war and the whole country was excited. However, instead of joining the ranks of first-class countries, Japan, suffering from the effects of heavy war taxes, fell behind. This burden eventually spread to every corner of society; the rural areas were exhausted and, with the advent of a socialist economic climate, it seemed that Japanese society would undergo a major transformation. With the appearance of ideas of omnipotent scientism and materialism, anti-religious views increased; at the same time, the use of magical prayers and healing activities appeared and were denounced as superstitions; meanwhile, the old legends and stories of temples and shrines had come to be criticized as myths. As a result of these developments, traditional Buddhism was re-evaluated and Buddhist scholarship, including rational and philosophical studies, flourished.

At this time, among followers of Nichiren were Chigaku Tanaka [1867 – 1939], who founded the lay organization Kokuchu-kai, and Nissho Honda [1867 – 1931] the founder of Kempon Hokke-shu; these individuals took advantage of the trend toward nationalism and were active in advertising Nichiren-ism. Thus, intellectuals like Chogyu Takayama [1871 – 1902], an influential writer despite his short life, and Masaharu Anesaki [1871 – 1949], along with army personnel, including Admiral Togo [1848 – 1934], a fleet admiral who won decisive victories over the

Russian fleet], knocked at the gate of Nichiren Buddhism. It was a time when various schools connected to Nichiren Buddhism gradually came to life.

Although the Fuji school had at last become independent as an officially recognized sect, the work of creating new structures to cope with the trends of the times, including the modernization of doctrinal studies, had not yet begun, and the school's feudalistic culture could not be reformed overnight. At the same time, in an era of rapid modernization, when everything new was respected, there was a tendency to seek novelty; as a result, in the midst of rapid change and social confusion, even dignitaries were remembered through funny anecdotes. In our school for instance, Nissho Shaku (Jiun Kato, Nippu) is a good example of such. Nissho Shaku was a disciple of Nichiden Shonin. Tradition has it that he was born into a merchant's family and introduces him as follows:

He came to the Head Temple wearing two lengths of swords [only a samurai was allowed to do so before the Meiji Restoration] and asked Nichiden Shonin to take him to be his disciple, claiming that he was a reincarnation of Nichimoku Shonin. However, due to being haughty, he was not readily accepted. When he was living in Josenji temple [in Tokyo], he wore a raincoat irrespective of the season, with tanned leather straps hanging from the ends of the cuffs like tassels, put on a pair of lacquered wooden *geta* [sandals] with high soles like those of an *oiran* [courtesan], carried an umbrella of the type popular for women then, held a fan of hemp palm leaf, and walked around in a leisurely manner. Men called him 'oiran priest'. ("A diary at Hatake" by Seicho Takeo [the sub leader of a believers' group to which Mr. Makiguchi, the first president of Soka Gakkai, belonged]).

In his letters, Nichiden Shonin also often sharply criticized Jiun Kato's [Nissho Shaku] imperious behaviors, and it appears the hearsay was likely true. Jiun Kato afterwards made a name for himself by engaging in a religious debate with a Christian sect; he lived in Rengeji temple [Osaka] and the Odawara Teaching Institution [west of Tokyo],

and was later selected as the first Study Head after the Fuji school became independent. In the 39th year of Meiji [1906], the school congress gave him a resolution of no-confidence and there was confusion for a while; however, Nichi'o Shonin then gave him a helping hand and the situation calmed down. At the end of that year, Jiun Kato went to Korea under the pretext of making an inspection of religious affairs; he presented a proposal to the Governor general, Hirofumi Ito that became a topic of conversation, but the next year, having returned to Japan, he became ill and died at Josenji. Various kinds of adverse stories concerning Nichi'o Shonin and Nissho Shonin were also passed down. Today, within the school, some dare attribute apotheosis and absolutism to the person of the High Priest, but they may awaken from their delusion if they learn modern history.

Also at this time, external pressure was mounting regarding the area of doctrinal studies. Debates such as the one between Nichiden Shonin and Nisshi of Kitayama Honmonji in the 11th year of Meiji, or the debate with the Kempon Hokke sect in the 34th year, could undermine the continued existence of the school if the slightest mistake was made. Since studies of doctrine and history from the Edo period, such as "Taisekiji Meisai-shi" [a "Detailed Record of Taisekiji" by the 48th High Priest Nichiryō Shonin in 1822] were not considered valid anymore, when Rev. Jirin Hori (Nichiko Shonin, the 59th High Priest) became the chief priest of Josenji temple [in Tokyo], he set to work in earnest to examine and research historical documents in order to reconstruct an understanding of the history of Nichiren Shoshu which could withstand rational inquiry.

In the wake of these developments, Seiyu Araki, from his experience of participating in debates on the teachings, considered it a matter of the greatest urgency to praise the Gohonzon of Kaidan and block any criticism of it. He therefore continued studying the teachings on his own. In addition, in the spring of the 39th year of Meiji, when he visited Josenji temple of Tokyo, there was by chance a series of Goshō lectures being presented. Seiyu offered to participate in the discussion and, in front of a group including Rev. Jirin Hori, Rev. Koga Arimoto,

Yamada, Yui, Hirata and others, he gave a speech entitled “The Dai-Gohonzon of Kaidan of the Honmon.” A digest of the content states:

1. Ordinary Gohonzon of the Daishonin are endowed on individual priests or believers by an orderly relationship, while the Gohonzon of Kaidan in Taiseikiji is left for ten thousand years to come for the sake of all living beings in Jambudvipa [the world] through both the orderly and the reverse relationships.
2. Gohonzon of Kaidan is the entity of the Daishonin, and when he died his enlightenment was transferred in it.

It was his attempt to rebut criticisms from other schools against a reasonable interpretation of Gohonzon of Kaidan. By the way, today’s Nichiren Shoshu, too, honorably calls the wooden Gohonzon of Kaidan of Taiseikiji the “Gohonzon endowed to all living beings in Jambudvipa,” and the speech of Seiyu Araki on that occasion apparently marked the first instance of characterizing it as “endowed to all in Jambudvipa.”

This speech was carried in the November, 39th year of Meiji issue of “Byaku-Renge” (the official organ of Nichiren Shoshu). On that occasion it was met with severe criticism from the head believer of Juhonji temple, Doe’i Kato, regarding Seiyu’s view of the transference of Daishonin’s enlightenment. Their exchange of debates lasted over a year and, during it, an obstinate paper warfare unfolded involving Rev. Jirin Hori, Rev. Nisso Fujimoto, Rev. Jimon Ogasawara, Yui Ichijo and others. However, likely because the debate lasted too long, the editor announced that he would discontinue publishing the exchange; thus, it finished without conclusion. If they had thoroughly debated the matter on that occasion, the school’s views on Gohonzon could have developed further and other depths might have been achieved, so it was regrettable that the discussion was abandoned.

Dream of fortune and failure

As discussed previously, the 39th year of Meiji [1906] brought with it a temporary economic boom arising out of Japan’s victory in the

Russo-Japanese war and the attendant mood of optimism; as a result, the stock market enjoyed a bubble and a new social class, the *nouveaux riche*, appeared on the scene. However, the economic boom did not last long and the debt arising out of the huge cost of war was passed on to the people. As a result, the cost of the war soon became apparent in the form of the exhaustion of rural areas and the increase in unemployment; ultimately, in the 40th year of Meiji, the stock market plummeted and the number of cases of bankruptcy increased sharply. At that time, Ichizo Kobayashi [1873 – 1957, an industrialist who founded a railway, film industry, and a revue] failed in his efforts to establish a securities company and, as a consequence, was destitute for a time. Later, however, adopting a new approach, he focused on establishing the Mino-Arima Electric Tramline (later the Hankyu Railway) and, in this endeavor, achieved success.

At that time, many dealers who had speculated in the rice market turned their attention to the stock exchange. One of these, following the Ten'ichi-bo incident, was Seiyu Araki. Having become wealthy without experiencing any major setbacks, when the bubble burst, Araki immediately lost 600 thousand yen (roughly 4 billion yen today). It may be that he was overly confident in the Japanese economy and poured all his money into the market before noticing that he was up to his neck in debt. Consequently, finding himself in a serious financial position, Araki wondered whether to remain a stockbroker or resign. Finally, he travelled alone on a night train to Taisekiji, intending to pray secretly to the Gohonzon. When he arrived around noon, a fortuneteller who happened to be doing business in front of the Sanmon [main] Gate saw Araki walking dejectedly and beckoned to him to come nearer. One imagines he walked with a very serious look on his face. Before being told any details, the fortune teller, upon looking at Seiyu's face, urged him to "go home immediately." Seiyu wondered if the person was some sort of oracle sent from the Gohonzon and, without knowing why, he chanted three Daimoku in front of the Sanmon Gate, then hurried back to Osaka where there were guests awaiting him.

At that time, the Osaka-Kobe area was experiencing a development boom and certain people were trying to open a racetrack for

horses at Naruo-hama in Nishinomiya [between Osaka and Kobe]. Japanese horse racing had been established in the 6th year of Meiji [1873] by a group of British individuals who comprised and ran the Yokohama Negishi Horse Race Committee. In the 39th year of Meiji, horseracing was finally established in Japan in the form of the Tokyo Horse Race Committee at Ikegami. As a consequence, people in Osaka wished to open a racetrack there as well, and certain influential local people started a movement to do so. However, they were unable to obtain the permission of the government and, although a considerable amount of money had been raised, the plan was deadlocked.

Those who had visited the home of Seiyu Araki on the day in question apparently were the promoters of the racetrack, that is, businessmen with political contacts, including Seishu Iwashita, Uhe Kunoki, Hogoro Obayashi and, from the Nishinomiya area, Hajime Ido and Shosuke Maeda. Their purpose in visiting Seiyu Araki was to ask him for help in maneuvering around the government officials. "We have no choice but to ask Mr. Araki for this," they had decided, so the organizers visited him together. It was said they had brought a substantial amount of reward money with them. Seiyu was, of course, happy to give his consent, and went to Tokyo at once where he asked the Minister for an interview and negotiated with him directly. No doubt on this basis, approval of the Naruo Race Track project was given immediately thereafter, in June in the 40th year of Meiji. It goes without saying that the people involved were relieved and Seiyu also was nearly saved from financial ruin by the large commission he received. As a sequel to this incident, he told his family that, at the interview with the Minister, he had put money wrapped in cloth under his cushion.

On the 17th of November of that year, the Obayashi Corporation held a race at the Naruo Horse Race Track. Since then, the racetrack has gone through various changes and has evolved into the Hanshin Race Track, the Koshien Stadium, the Naruo Golf Club, and so on. Among horse races, there is a crown race entitled the Naruo Commemoration which may commemorate this occasion.

Around the time that Seiyu Araki lost 60 thousand yen in the stock market, Einosuke Iwayama, a speculator at Kitahama, thrived. He, too,

had made an enormous profit in the market after the Russo-Japanese war, but he skillfully survived the collapse of the market and made a fabulous fortune. At the peak of his career, he joined a group that had arranged for an inspection trip to the United States and learned that wealthy people there contributed large amounts of money to public enterprise; consequently, in the 44th year of Meiji [1911], he donated one million yen (about 60 million dollars today) to the Osaka City Central Public Hall at Nakanoshima. However, Iwayama also was driven into a corner by the failure of the market in the 5th year of Taisho [1916 : the Taisho era lasted 15 years, from 1912 to 1926. The Meiji era was from 1868 to 1912, 45 years.] and ended up committing suicide with a gun before the Public Hall was completed. There are many more stories of legendary speculators who succeeded in the market, but as a rule they failed in the end and their downfall illustrates the harshness of that world. When Seiyu Araki heard the news of the death of Iwayama, it is said that he uttered the words “I too should have made a donation to something worthy,” but, after all, it was too late.

In spite of his investment failures, Seiyu still found it difficult to give up his dream of making a fortune at one stroke, and it seems he continued speculating in the market while hoping for a comeback. People say that his wife, Kinu, tried to stop him, pulling his sleeve and saying, “My dear, stop now,” but he would not listen, and when he had saved a small fund, he speculated in the market in spite of himself. However, if he bought a stock it went down and if he sold a stock it went up, and financial good fortune of the kind he had enjoyed before simply did not come around. The stock market had by then become a world of complicated transactions involving large amounts of capital; as a result, the time for personal intuition and courage, which once would have allowed an investor to make a killing in stocks, had passed.

In his later years, Seiyu observed: “As far as I had Buddhist faith, I thought I could make money, and made light of the essential path of duty which requires modesty and hard work.”

Great fire of Kita Ward of Osaka

It is well said that disasters come when you are not looking. It was at the end of July, in the 42nd year of Meiji [1909], that a great fire occurred in central Osaka, which was developing so rapidly that it was called the Oriental Manchester. It was the greatest fire of the Meiji era, lasting 26 hours. About 20,000 homes burned down, spreading from Temma, Sonezaki, Oimatsucho, Dojima, Umeda, and Kitashinchi, to Kamifukushima of Kita Ward. [In the past, Japan, particularly Edo -today's Tokyo - was frequently hit by large fires due to the building materials of timber-based houses and the immaturity of the fire-fighting system.] A report in "Byakurenge" (August of the 42nd year of Meiji issue) says:

..... Among those who were caught by the calamity are well-known ardent believers of our school who belong to Rengeji temple: as many as 60 houses. It is a real cause of grief that among them there are the honorable ones, including Seiyu Araki, Keihon Makino, Rensei Ida, Shozen Muraki, and Shindo Goto. Among those who suffered most must be the members of the Makino family of Seikan-ro. Only a Western-style house in the rear narrowly escaped the fire, while the ten or more large houses and small pagodas, as well as the three storehouses, containing utensils and clothing, were burned to ashes. Also, it caused the priceless trees in the garden to wither and die.

Next must be Mr. Ida, who lost his mansion, which had stood for several generations, and all the surrounding rental houses. However, three out of the four storehouses [white-washed with super-thick fire prevention mud wall] still exist and this is one consolation. Others also must have suffered to a degree, but it is impressive that they are all worthy believers, and the Gohonzons were, of course, all safely removed.....

It was reported that Rengeji temple escaped from the spreading fire, but many believers were left homeless. On the 3rd of the next month, a delegate of Nichi'o Shonin of the Head Temple visited to express his sympathy. In addition, temples and believers all over the

country sent relief funds. Of course, the believers of Genryuji temple, who had many contacts there, also delivered gifts of heartfelt sympathy. Rengeji temple temporarily stored the Gohonzons, altars, large oblong chests, and so on, that had escaped the fire. The altars were arranged in a hallway of the main building of the temple and family members came every day to serve. Also, Seiyu Araki sheltered, at the time, a large oblong chest in which was stored several Gohonzons and important documents.

First son Kohei's return and entrance into the priesthood

Due to his economic failure in the market and the destruction of his home by fire, Araki's financial base was greatly shaken and he couldn't let his first son, Kohei, remain in the United States. Consequently, he sent his second son, Ryuhei, to the States to bring Kohei home. By then it seemed that Kohei would never return to Japan; however, in the autumn of the 40th year of Meiji [1907], he finally returned home. Kohei, as the frog child is a frog [or, as the apple doesn't fall far from the tree], had strong faith and a capacity for study, which he inherited from his father, Seiyu Araki, and it appears that he had studied general Buddhism and the doctrine of our school in the States by himself. This is shown in part by the fact that he published a thesis under the name Kohei Fukushima titled "Discussing the Sovereignty, Teacher, and Parenthood of the Daishonin" in the "Byaku-rence" magazine right after his return to Japan.

Now, however, Kohei could not be left without work and, therefore, suitable employment was being sought. To this end, Kohei was appointed, in the same year, to the position of counselor of the Korean Protection Agency and accompanied Resident General Arasuke Sone (viscount) to Korea. It appears that Seiyu asked for this appointment for his son, relying on his connection to the Choshu clan and given that Hirofumi Ito was the first Resident General of Korea. [Japan annexed Korea from 1910 to 1945] The title of "graduate from Chicago University with a bachelor's degree in political science" must have been a great advantage for one seeking to serve as a bureaucrat at that time in Japan. Anyway, that he chose the career of a consular officer and took

the trouble to go abroad in search of a new world must have been prompted by Kohei's international perspective arising out of his experience in the United States, and the ideal of the Japanese spirit together with Western learning. Additionally, it was not unrelated to the rise of Orientalist ideals as a reaction to Westernization, which was then inducing moral decadence and mammonism in Japanese society.

However, on October 26th of that year, Hirofumi Ito was murdered by An Jukon, a Korean nationalist, and Kohei's illusions seemed to collapse. Kohei, who had breathed the air of freedom in the United States and traveled to Korea with the dream of establishing a realm of peace and prosperity in Asia, saw the reality of colonial rule and the suppression of the Korean people which was the result of the policy of the annexation of Korea. Consequently, in the 43rd year of Meiji, Kohei abruptly abandoned his consular position and chose to enter the priesthood. He believed it was the Buddhism of Nichiren Daishonin that possessed the philosophical principles needed to resolve the various contradictions within modern society, and he therefore chose to study and resurrect those principals. It is said that calligraphy created by the Resident General, Arasuke Sone, given to him as a farewell at the time he resigned his government position, was passed down to his offspring and is still in the family's possession.

Kohei's request to enter the priesthood was quickly approved, and he became a disciple of Nissho Shonin [the 57th High Priest]. Upon becoming a priest, he was given the name of Shohei and a simple ceremony marking his entrance into the priesthood was held on the 28th of February, when he was 32 years old. About half a year later, Nittatsu Shonin (Seido Hosoi) [the 66th High Priest, 1902 – 1979] entered the priesthood; he was then eight years old. Looking back, he wrote:

Today, on the occasion of the chief priest here having conducted the 33rd anniversary of the first chief priest of this temple [Myojoji temple, about 20 miles northeast of Kyoto], Fuso Acharya Shohei-bo Nitoku Greater Virtue, many believers have visited, and I would like to express my gratitude.

Rev. Shohei was my senior disciple, and the second disciple of the 57th High Priest of the Head Temple, Nissho Shonin. He was born in the 11th year of Meiji [1878]; so, if he were alive today, he would be 100 years old. When he was young, he intended to become a politician and, in pursuit of this goal, he went to Doshisha Middle School [under the old system of education, roughly equivalent to today's high school]. After completing a term of 4 years, he went to the United States. There, in the 32nd year of Meiji [1899], he was admitted to the University of Chicago as a political science major. Then, for the next 4 or 5 years, he educated himself concerning commerce and industry in the areas of Chicago and St. Louis in the midwestern United States. He returned to Japan in the 40th year of Meiji, then went to Chosen [Korea] where he continued to study and observe the political climate. Not satisfied with the prospect of pursuing a career in politics, he decided to follow the Path of Buddha.

It was, of course, owing to the influence of his father, Seiyu Araki, who excelled in practicing the teachings of our school, that his son at last turned over a new leaf and, aspiring to becoming a priest, resolved to practice Buddhism.

Accordingly, in February in the 43rd year of Meiji, he went to the Head Temple and became a disciple of the 57th High Priest of the Head Temple, Nissho Shonin. Then, six months later, I too became an acolyte and went to the Head Temple, so he was my senior by six months. We were quite separate in age, by as many as 25 years, and he understood Buddhism very well, in addition to the English language, since he had lived in the United States. In those days, in the vicinity of the Head Temple, anyone who was in the Middle School came to him to learn English. He also engaged in the serious study of Buddhism. (“History of Myojoji”)

Even though he was a fresh acolyte, due to his career as an elite bureaucrat with a degree from the University of Chicago and his being the first son of the Sokoto [General Chief of all believers], he was received

with great surprise and pleasure at the rural Head Temple and was treated exceptionally during his Shami [in the junior rank] stage of priesthood. Usually, when one becomes a disciple of a High Priest, it is customary to reside in the Daibo [priests' living quarters] as a trainee. However, since it was not necessary for him to undergo training in how to recite the Sutra, he was assigned for the time being to housesit an unused temple, Joren-bo, [in Taisekiji] where he taught the school's doctrines and the English language to acolytes, in place of the temporarily closed Fuji Gakurin [priests' school]. Nittatsu Shonin's just-quoted reminiscence pertains to this time, but Nittatsu Shonin, who became an acolyte at age 8 on the 12th of August that year, did not spend his training years together with Rev. Shohei in the Daibo, though they were fellow acolytes. After more than a year in Joren-bo, which had not been served by a priest, Rev. Shohei received quasi-teacher status and was assigned as the chief priest of the temple. It was an accelerated promotion of two ranks.

Petitioner Seiyu Araki enabled a large repair in Joren-bo in July of the 43rd year of Meiji, as proved by a writing of Nissho Shonin on the base and altar of Nichiren Daishonin's image in the temple. Shohei received the chief priest assignment in the following year, so this indicates he was housesitting the temple before then. It is clear from Nissho Shonin's writing, which also says "Deputy Shohei," and this indicates that Shohei served there for a year and a half until he moved to Yahata-Kyokai temple in Kyushu the following year, in November of the 44th year of Meiji [1911].

In this context, one might ask how Seiyu responded to his son's decision to become a priest and thus discard his earlier choice of career path, namely, that of an elite bureaucrat. Judging by his character and beliefs, it is likely that he agreed with his son's choice wholeheartedly. Seiyu had already experienced the emptiness of worldly fame and wealth and had reached the point of devoting the rest of his life to propagating Buddhism. One imagines that he was extremely delighted that his son had chosen to become a priest and, in this way, to share his father's vocation. In addition, Shohei had shown that he was not careful about having dealings with unprincipled characters, so Seiyu

seemed pleased with his son's reformation and sincerely expected that his devotion to practice and study would change his views in this regard. Seiyu's approval of his son's decision to become a priest is also apparent from the fact that, in November in the 44th year of Meiji, he donated three altar fittings of Ming Dynasty copperware (greens' base, censer, and candlestand) for the altar of Mutsubo of Taisekiji [where priests conduct daily Gongyo, a practice which had existed from the time of Taisekiji's foundation]. It is noteworthy that Seiyu's heartfelt donation was made despite the fact that his household was on a tight budget. It was also in November that Shohei resigned as the chief priest of Joren-bo and headed for his first place of appointment, namely, Yahata Kyokai temple [in Fukuoka prefecture], so the donation may also have served to commemorate that occasion.

The story goes back and forth. Thus, in the month following Shohei Fukushige's entrance into the priesthood, which occurred on the first of March in the 43rd year of Meiji, Seiyu Araki visited the Head Temple. He noted the practice of the time whereby worshipping the Dai-Gohonzon of Kaidan ("private observing") was conducted as the occasion arose, and consequently he had a talk with Nissho Shonin and, as petitioner, submitted an application for permission to worship the Gohonzon of Kaidan monthly, on the 28th day of each month. Nissho Shonin was happy to give his consent to this proposal and, on the 28th of May, promptly initiated the practice of monthly worship. (Later it was changed to every 13th day). Regarding the aim of this practice of monthly worship, Nichiko Shonin [the 59th High Priest] wrote as follows:

The Founder of Taisekiji [Nikko Shonin] was confidentially entrusted with this [Dai-Gohonzon] in the second year of Koan [1279] and took pains to treasure it in secrecy for the just time of the completion of Kosen Rufu, and thus it was not spoken of in ancient times. However, in later times, (perhaps the middle ages), people were unable to wait for Kosen Rufu, which was far in the future, and it became necessary to let those with special connections or of strong faith worship the Dai-Gohonzon privately. Then, at last, it became

a regular practice, as it is today; therefore, forty some years ago, a famous believer [Seiyu Araki] begged that the Dai-Gohonzon be worshipped once a month and so it was practiced, but this procedure did not last for long. (“The Comprehensive Biography of Nikko Shonin of the Fuji Sect” page 277)

He worried that the teachings would spontaneously transform if the Gohonzon of Kaidan, which was to be treasured in secrecy in the Treasure Storage and wait for Kosen Rufu, should be enshrined in a hall before the time of Kosen Rufu and worshipping it would become ordinary practice. Nowadays, it is being advertised as if worshipping Dai-Gohonzon were a purpose of visiting Taiseikiji, rather than a regular practice, which is unbecoming.

Days of propagation

Seiyu Araki seems to have renounced the pursuit of fame and wealth from around this time, and to have begun to devote himself to protecting the teachings. Just then, the head of the Rengeji temple believers and his inseparable friend, Yahe (Kotatsu) Naka, started the Osaka Wire Netting Unlimited Partnership and made a fortune, and began to support Seiyu’s activities financially both publicly and privately. This Yahei Naka was a strong believer and also rendered meritorious service to our school, and with the support of this friend in faith, Seiyu was able to devote all his energy to studying the teachings and preparing lectures and writings.

Let me list some of his efforts:

● March 13 in the 43rd year of Meiji [1910]. A great speech meeting was held at the Friendship Club at Shiba Tokyo under the auspices of the Congregation of the Sole and Consummated Honmon. Seiyu Araki made an official trip as the central speaker.

● The 15th of May, same year. Araki held a propagation speech meeting at Noborito of Kawasaki city.

● The 7th of June, in the 43rd year of Meiji. Inviting Nissho Shonin, he conducted a ceremony at the Araki’s house at Tamaide.

● He made possible an effort for the restoration of Kyodaiji temple in Tokushima.

● The 12th of October in the same year. He attended a convention commemorating the 10th anniversary of Hodokai.

● The 22nd and 25th of July in the 44th year of Meiji. He mounted the platform as a speaker at the speech meeting at Nishiki House of Sakurabashi, Tokyo.

● Spring in the 45th year of Meiji. He undertook mediation with Mr. Makino regarding the issue of the successive chief priest of Hokkeji temple of Sanuki, which ended in failure.

● The 7th of April in the same year. He held a great speech meeting at the House of Shogetsu at Kanda [Tokyo].

In addition to these events, he gave numerous lectures and meetings at various temples and in individual homes.

Due to lack of materials, it is not possible to specify the date on which Seiyu Araki was appointed to the position of Sokoto [General Head of all believers], but it is presumed that Nichi'o Shonin had appointed him in the latter years of the 20's of Meiji. The reason Seiyu Araki was outstanding was that, despite his failure in business, he devoted himself to resurrecting the teaching and protecting the school, in addition to bearing the heavy responsibility of the role of the Sokoto. He did this even though it was a financial burden on him, for it wasn't the usual honorific position of a supporting believer. In particular, as his contribution around this time, we see that in the 45th year of Meiji, he rendered his services in connection with the renaming of the school from "Nichiren sect, Fuji school" to "Nichiren Shoshu." Initially, the Taisekiji school presented an application to the Interior Ministry to rename the school the "Taisho Nichiren Sect," but in the middle of the process, they submitted a new application for renaming it "Nichiren Shoshu." According to the Yomiuri Shimbun Newspaper at the time, the Nichiren sect sent the Interior Ministry a statement of protest. They opposed using this name, and it was thought that "the renaming is going to be denied...." [Nichiren Shoshu literally means Nichiren Correct Sect, therefore, other Nichiren sects did not want to approve the name which

sounded self-praising and derogatory to others.] When Seiyu Araki was placed in charge of negotiations with the Interior Ministry, he offered interviews to VIPs and petitioned, and as a result, the situation was reversed. Thus, on the 7th of June, the name “Nichiren Shoshu” was officially approved, and all the people of the school were delighted.

Seiyu also celebrated the renaming of the sect and, as early as July of the same year, published a beginner’s book called “Nichiren Shoshu” and donated thousands of copies for the benefit of visiting believers to various temples. Given the amount of work involved, from writing to publishing, it is amazing how efficient he was. This was the only book written during the Taisho period [1912 -1926] that set forth the basic teachings and faith of Nichiren Shoshu, and it was enjoyed by many.

On June 15th that year, Nissho Shonin entrusted a Reward Gohonzon to Seiyu Araki, the Sokoto of the whole country, in honor of his achievements, stating: “Year after year for forty years, you have devoted yourself to the protection of the teachings and the support of the school, and every time there was a serious incident, inside or outside of the school, you offered your utmost efforts toward negotiation. Your contributions have been great, and the merits for your teachings are most distinguished.” At the same time, he designated Ichijo Yui the vice Sokoto of the whole country and entrusted a large Gohonzon to him; he also entrusted a large Gohonzon to Zembei Yamada and designated him the Sokoto of Tokyo.

On July 30th, while the feeling of joy in connection with the renaming of the school still lingered, Emperor Meiji died, and the era was renamed Taisho. During the period of court mourning, the High Priest/Kancho of Nichiren Shoshu was Nissho Abe. As a result, many people were hopeful because the era name of Taisho, the school’s name of Shoshu, and the High Priest’s name of Nissho, all contained the character Sho [correct], and they believed they were making a good start.

The ceremony of renaming the school

The declaration ceremony of the renaming of Nichiren Shoshu was held for three days beginning on October 20 in the first year of Taisho (Meiji 45th [1912]), and served as the Oeshiki ceremony [to commemorate the Daishonin's passing] as well. Over a thousand believers from all over the country visited and passed through the Sanmon [main] gate, which had been refurbished in a glowing vermilion as part of the commemoration repair project. The great ceremony started with a memorial service for Emperor Meiji at 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon at the great reception hall. (The renaming of the school had been approved on June 7th in the 45th year of Meiji, and the great ceremony of the declaration had been planned for August; however, Emperor Meiji died on the 30th of July and the name of the era was changed to Taisho {his age at death was 61}. Due to the national period of mourning, the great ceremony was postponed to October.). Reflecting the age, the ceremony was attended by over a thousand believers on pilgrimage from afar, in addition to the chief of the Omiya police station, Ueno village officers, and Ueno elementary school teachers, along with some hundred pupils [they were local public characters].

On the evening of the 20th, volunteers and young priests held a speech meeting at Mie-do temple, and a pre-dawn Gongyo assembly (Ushitora-Gongyo) was conducted and, afterwards, the attendees were treated to a light meal. At two o'clock in the afternoon, the declaration ceremony of the renaming of the school began with the relocation of the Dai-Gohonzon of Kaidan from the treasure house to the great reception hall. This was for the convenience of the attendees who wished to worship the Gohonzon of Kaidan following the ceremony; they transferred it to the altar of the great reception hall in advance and placed it in the treasure chest. In those days, being limited on the occasion of a big ceremony, the Gohonzon of Kaidan was transferred from the small treasure house to Mie-do or the great reception hall for a special opening.

Subsequently, the High Priest and the three retired High Priests attended Gongyo and the chanting of Daimoku with the general population, followed by an address by Nissho Shonin regarding the renaming of the school. Then Sokoto Seiyu Araki made a "progress report."

According to an article in “Byaku-rengé” magazine, which described the event with much respect for Seiyu Araki, the report stated as follows:

..... As to the authorization for the renaming of the school, the Sokoto of the school, Lay Believer Seiyu Araki, responding to a request, slowly proceeded to the front of the platform and spoke throughout of the renaming process with solemnity and seriousness and in concise and appropriate language, and, in addition, in a clarion voice. The whole assembly was struck and observed a complete silence, but some were softly weeping and his speech ended in great applause and hurrahs. Then, the representatives of the priests and believers went onto the stage, one after another, to read congratulatory messages [13 priests’ and believers’ positions and names are listed here].

Having thus finished the declaration ceremony, they continued by opening and worshiping the Gohonzon of Kaidan of Honmon and finally, they returned the Gohonzon back to the treasure house to finish the ceremony. Afterward, using all of the rooms of the lecture hall, the priests’ quarters, meeting places, the Mutsubo quarter, and so on, pristine meals were offered to the attendees. The respectable feast, a celebration of the gathering of priests and believers from all over the country, was attended by an unprecedented number of people and became a subject of conversation later. Following this was the Oeshiki, which was held at 7:00 p.m. on the day of the memorial service, and at 10:00 a.m. on the following day, the 22nd, the main ceremony was held, followed by a viewing of the First Image [of the Daishonin, 4 inches tall which was made while the Daishonin was alive] and the Daishonin’s bone ash. At 2:00 p.m., they moved to the Great Reception Hall and viewed the bone ash more privately. A Gosho lecture by the previous High Priest, Nichi’o Shonin, at Mie-do Temple, was held at 7:00 p.m. and the ceremony ended with the removal of the cherry blossoms which had decorated the altar for the Oeshiki.

Finally, I will introduce what seems to be the end of the progress report by Seiyu Araki at this event, which was published in the “Byakurenge” magazine:

Respectfully pondering, in the golden words of the sacred Founder, first of all, we abhor an inaccurate name, though the content may be good or meaningful. Fuji is a name of good and beauty, and the word of Nikko’s Gate [Nikko Shonin’s followers] also carries a fine meaning. However, what should have been done as each one was added as a supplementary school name? How could it be used without our abhorring it? Now, the abhorred supplementary name is eradicated and we have officially named ourselves “Nichiren Shoshu” [“Nichiren’s Correct-sect”; Taiseikiji had become independent under the new name of the “Fuji School of Nichiren Sect” from the combined “Nikko’s Gate School of Nichiren Sect” in 1900]. It is solely the benefit of the Founder Daishonin and I am convinced that it is from his sacred consideration of great mercy, that even ignorant commoners can easily be informed in one word that the legitimacy and justice of the Daishonin exists in our school. I, Seiyu, unworthy as I am, am deeply moved by the honor of attending today’s grand celebration; therefore, with some humble remarks, I would like to offer my congratulations.

On the 21st of October in the 1st year of Taisho [1912]

Most respectfully, Nichiren Shoshu Sokoto, Seiyu Araki

Seiyu must have been deeply moved by the fact that decency, as an independent school, in both name and reality, had now been obtained as a result of his many years of hard work. However, we realize that his passionate thirst in seeking this result came from his belief that it was solely a benefit from the Founder Daishonin’s great mercy.

Also, in support of the Emperor Taisho’s coronation ceremony, Ichijo Yui apparently volunteered to provide the photo of the Gohonzon of Kaidan which is carried in “Nichiren Daishonin” (published in November in the 4th year of Taisho [1915]) for the Emperor’s viewing, and this photo was also advertised at the opening of the book

“Nichiren Shonin” by Ijo Kumada and the “Validity of the Sacred Teachings” by Seiyu Araki (published in November in the 4th year of Taisho). In those days, unlike those of the current Nichiren Shoshu, they did not have the obstinate attitude of not allowing anyone other than believers to worship the Gohonzon of Kaidan; rather, as the Honzon endowed to everyone in the world, they tried to advance it broad-mindedly, and on many occasions, they even let non-believers worship it privately, as when excellencies and gentlemen or distinguished scholarly priests visited.

Seiyu Araki also contributed an article under the title of “Hope” to a general religious magazine, “Hokke,” and made a daring recommendation: “Let’s make the Gohonzon of Kaidan, the Honzon First Established at Sado [that is, the one inscribed on 7/8/1273, lost in the great fire of Kuonji temple of Mt. Minobu, along with “Kaimoku-sho,” “On Repaying Debts of Gratitude” and other important Goshos, in 1875], and other Gohonzons public and, ascertaining the truth from a fair standpoint, decide which Gohonzon expresses the Daishonin’s true purpose.” (Regarding this issue, at the time of the advance of the Soka Gakkai after the war, the forgery theory was persistently claimed by other sects and schools and the above-mentioned photograph was circulated, so Nichiren Shoshu and Soka Gakkai strictly concealed it, making it taboo as a slander to take photos of the Gohonzon. However, it is ironic that early issues of the Seikyo Shimbun [Soka Gakkai’s daily paper] carried photos of the Gohonzon confidently. In recent years, because of the conflict between Nichiren Shoshu and Soka Gakkai, the authenticity issue has been raised again, but it is not brought up with sincerity and it is a political and sectarian claim with an ulterior motive that does not lead to problem solving.)

On the occasion of the ceremony of renaming the school, Seiyu Araki printed some thousand copies of his book “Nichiren Shoshu,” which I mentioned earlier, and handed it out to all attendees of the ceremony as a charity book of remembrance. More writings were given out as remembrances, such as, Ichijo Yui’s “Photo album of the real scenery of the general head temple,” Zennosuke Yamada’s (son of Zembei Yamada) “Origin of the Gohonzon of Kaidan of Nichiren

Shoshu,” “National Remonstrating Letters of the Predecessors,” and Chujiro Okamoto’s “The purpose and constitution of the Far Benefiting Association.” In those days, earnest believers benefited from printing many copies of their books for propagation and giving them out for free, as charity, as they wished to make connections with people other than believers who were interested in Buddhism. Such a beautiful tradition, i.e., that of a charity book, would be nice if it succeeded.

Also, Seiyu Araki, after the conclusion of the three-day great ceremony, and before the heat of joy cooled down, held a big speech meeting by renting out a theater, called Hanasakiza of Omiya-cho [a town near Taisekiji], with the help of the general head believer of the Head Temple, Tomisaburo Watanabe. This meeting was held at 7:00 p.m. on the 23rd and featured three orators:

- “The lighthouse does not shine on its base [Go abroad to hear of home]” --- Lay Believer Seiyu Araki
- “Remarks” --- Lay Believer Ichijo Yui
- “Nichiren Shoshu” --- Rev. Jikan Doi (Nicchu Shonin, then Study Head)

The meeting was aimed at propagation, targeting the townspeople of the center of Fujinomiya City. Back then, and now, in the center of the city, the Minobu school of the Nichiren sect, and believers of other schools of Nikko Shonin’s followers, were popular and the circumstances were not necessarily favorable. His wish was to have the local people understand this wonderful teaching. Unfortunately, it coincided with the day of a festival holiday which about 150 people attended, but it is reported that three people were converted at this meeting.

Fire and reconstruction of Rengeji temple

I have mentioned that the Meiji Constitution guaranteed freedom of religion and, in the era of propagation under the unified efforts of priests and believers, Rengeji temple at Kitano and Genryuji temple at Ikeda had solidified their foundations. However, on February 20 in the 44th year of Meiji [1911], Rengeji temple was suddenly lost, the victim

of an accidental fire in the daytime, and the main hall and the priests' quarter, all made of zelkova, were burned down. As a result, all of the Gohonzons and precious writings were burnt to ashes in a short time. The cause of the fire was not identified, but it was speculated that, after a believers' memorial service offering a stupa on the altar, a candle was left, still lit, while the priest went back to his quarters. In the next 20 or 30 minutes, the fire had spread and the whole structure was destroyed in the space of an hour and a half. Most regrettable was the loss of the great statue of the Daishonin, which had stood in the main hall and which was magnificent and said to closely resemble him. Also lost was the Gohonzon in the Daishonin's own handwriting which formerly had been kept at the original Genryuji temple. The only comfort was that the fire did not spread; however, the chief priest at the time (Jido Nobumoto) felt responsible for this irreparable occurrence and resigned and left the priesthood.

For all the believers, too, the loss of their temple was like a bolt from the blue, and their extreme surprise and grief are recorded in Sazo Matsumoto's and others' letters included in the "Various Records." Seiyu Araki's grief was also extraordinary. Having lost a large fortune as a result of the earlier failure of the market, he now faced the terrible disappointment of losing his temple by fire, the temple he had served and which was the foundation of his soul, and he fell into the depths of despair. And that was not the only cause for his despair. A chest he had barely managed to carry out when his house at Dojima was lost in the great fire of Kita Ward two years earlier had also been destroyed. The chest, which had been entrusted to Rengeji, was packed with writings and hanging scrolls (like his heirloom), such as Gohonzons, calligraphies from dignitaries, and so on. It is recorded that, after the fire was extinguished, Seiyu, having seen with his own eyes his property reduced to ashes had left there looking so dejected that to watch him was pitiful. Even so, Seiyu attributed his misfortune to poor karma and deficient faith, and deeply repented. However, the next day, when a clerk named Kichihei Ushio was scraping ashes from the place where the chest had been kept, to his surprise he found several boxes of Gohonzons. The chest was very full of the rewarded Gohonzons that

Nichiden Shonin, Nippu Shonin and Nichi'ō Shonin had bestowed on Seiyu for his contributions to the teachings and the school, and when they were all dug out, it was apparent they were mostly unscathed. Some of the boxes were slightly burnt, but the Gohonzons were undamaged by even a drop of water; it is said that those present exclaimed with admiration. Seiyu's faith was, of course, not to be daunted by disaster, but he said he felt revived, just for once, this time. One imagines he encouraged himself, reminding himself of the golden words of the Daishonin: "Although I and my disciples.... Let the gods forsake me. Let all persecutions assail me." Thus, with adversity as a spring, he set to work scheduling days for propagation, lectures, and writings.

Thereafter, Rengeji temple received Rev. Jiko Suzuki, the chief priest of Genryuji temple, as the concurrent acting administrator, and he became engaged in rebuilding the temple. In this endeavor, all the believers' strength centered upon such representative figures as Kotatsu Naka, Renjo Orita and Hirofuji Baba. Two years later, on the 28th of April in the 2nd year of Taisho [1913], the restoration of the main hall was completed. According to a program prepared for the completion ceremony, Kotatsu Naka reported on construction activities, five guest priests offered congratulations, Seiyu Araki orated a congratulatory statement, three representative believers offered congratulations, and believers Doe'i Kato and Koei Onishi from Juhonji temple and Atou Ishida, a representative of the Genryuji believers also offered congratulations on their behalf. Needless to say, all the believers of the two temples created a fund, in this way offering what little they had, according to their ability.

A storehouse with a super-thick earth wall, priests' quarters and altar fittings were completed in due course. On the 3rd of December in the 4th year of Taisho [1915], a ceremony was held to celebrate the completion of the restoration of the temple. The total cost of construction was 28,000 yen: the floor space of the main hall was 63 tsubo [2,600 sq yd] and the priests' quarters were 83 tsubo [3,000 square feet], thus exceeding the former dimensions of the temple. The chief executive, Kotatsu Naka, reported:

..... It has indeed been four years since the fire and thirty months since construction started. During this time, everyone, including the chief of the temple, engaged in raising funds with utmost sincerity, responding by saving his clothes and food, encouraging construction work, handling general affairs, and so on. I think we were able to return the favor of Buddha.....

It shows that this project was literally the whole believers' devoted offering.

Because all of the treasures were destroyed by the fire, many priests and believers made contributions: some donated Gohonzons and writings as new treasures for the temple; Seiyu Araki donated a Joju Gohonzon of Nippu Shonin, a calligraphy of Nichiden Shonin and, later, a Gohonzon reportedly inscribed by Nikko Shonin.

By the way, as to the financing of the reconstruction of Rengeji, Kotatsu Naka bore about one third of the cost and several strong believers contributed the larger part of the rest. In this way, they built a fine restoration. However, regardless of whether the donors were rich or poor, and regardless of the amount of the donation, our school has a good tradition: we offer gratitude equally to the true Buddha Nichiren Daishonin. Whether the charitable believer is one who offers a large sum of several thousand yen or an older woman who offers 10 sen [one tenth of a yen], all are admired equally as disciples and believers of the true Buddha. However, for Seiyu Araki, in the responsible post of Sokoto of the country, the circumstances were troubling and he was never so frustrated as on that occasion when he did not have the wealth to donate a large sum. Yet, as he reached his 60th birthday, Seiyu affirmed his resolution to make his contribution to the Daishonin only with his hands, feet and mouth, that is, with himself.

Genryuji believers and the speech meeting at Takarazuka

It came about that a debate would be held on the 9th of November in the 2nd year of Taisho [1913], at Takarazuka [more than ten miles north of Osaka] between Nisshu Shodo-kai [Nichiren Sect Correct Path Association] and Seiyu Araki. It started when a woman who was a member of

Nisshu Shodo-kai converted to Nichiren Shoshu, and the Association, aiming to prevent the conversion, proposed that Seiyu visit them, on the pretext of studying the teachings. Thus, it became a promise of doctrinal debate. At the beginning, they proposed a condition, namely, that the Association put up three speakers while Seiyu Araki alone would represent Nichiren Shoshu; however, when he visited them on the day of the debate, he saw that the Association had arranged for Ken'yu Matsuno of Shishi'o-kai (which was their umbrella organization at Meguro, Tokyo) to respond to him. Furthermore, they asserted, they would not debate; rather, each side would deliver a speech setting forth their views, and the audience would be left to decide the superiority or inferiority of the speeches. It seems the Association tried not to take risks. At 2:30 p.m., Matsuno started his speech, and after 4:00 p.m., when Seiyu, the later speaker, opened his speech, more than thirty believers from Genryuji and Nishinomiya City came and listened to him. Seiyu spoke for an hour and a half on the concept of Honzon and struck a blow to Matsuno's theory of the Dharma world as Honzon.

Afterwards, Matsuno wrote about the event in the group's organ, "Shishi-ku," twisting the facts and repeating abuse and slanders. Seiyu then published the facts in the magazine "Byaku-rengé" under the title "The whole story of the campaign speech at Takarazuka," and in other writings, including "Waking a sleeping dog," "A beaten dog's barking from a safe distance," "Declaration," and "Refutation of 'Shishi-ku' I, II." He thus rebutted the claims contained in the "Shishi-ku." Although Matsuno's articles were cunning, and contained misquoted passages of Gosho excerpts or doctrines based mainly on theoretical interpretations, his disadvantage could not be avoided.

Prior to that, Seiyu Araki had proselytized Yozo Ishida of Tanakacho of Ikeda [where Genryuji is located]. Ishida ran an acupuncture and moxibustion clinic and, as chairman, had organized the practitioners of these treatments and trained the younger generation. Thus, he was well-known. He became a representative of the Genryuji believers and converted Sokichi Shimatani of Nishinomiya City [west of Osaka]. Shimatani had been his friend from the time they both worshipped

bodhisattva Myoken. With newly joined believers, such as Oda, Ueda, Nakamori, Imai and others, Ishida had organized the Group of Nishinomiya Shoshu Believers; twice a month, with the chief priest of Genryuji, Ishida went there and participated in propagation activities. At this time, they decided to hold a large speech meeting. The event was advertised, a band was hired, and the meeting, which was held on May 3rd in the 4th year of Taisho [1915], was a great success: the space from the hall's yard to the street was filled with people and the speakers included Yozo Ishida, Keihon Makino, Shohei Fukushige, Yodo Sakamoto, Jimon Ogasawara, Seiyu Araki, and Nicchu Tsuchiya.

Taisho Democracy and Nichiren's followers

The liberal and democratic climate that flourished in Japan from the period after the Russo-Japanese War to the later years of the Taisho era [1912 to 1926] is widely known as Taisho Democracy. It appears that Buddhist society was affected by the mood of this era as well. During this period, Nichiren's followers exhibited new developments and entered a productive time. The swell of freedom that accompanied the new movement brought a release from sectarianism and feudal formalism, as well as new forms of literary criticism and the reconstruction of rational Nichiren studies.

For example, in 1882, Chigaku Tanaka [1861 to 1939 ; he had a debate with Nichiren Shoshu, of which all six rounds of letter exchanges were published in the seventh volume of Hori Nichiko Shonin's "The Collection of the Essential Fuji School Teachings." After losing the debate, Chigaku disappeared for a while.] was dissatisfied with the beliefs and culture of the traditional Nichiren sect and decided to return to secular life. He criticized their Shoju [antonym of Shakubuku] style of propagation and convoluted Honzons, and established a laymen's organization, Kokuchu-kai. This organization advocated Nichiren-ism combined with elements of the Japanese national constitution, and Chigaku won many supporters from among the military and certain intellectuals. Their views permeated general society through lectures, publications, and literary movements. In particular, Chigaku's leading disciple, Chi'ō Yamakawa, engaged energetically in research. He published a number of works such as "The Extensive

Dictionary of the Sacred Opus of the Honmon Bodhisattva,” which was a great achievement in both doctrinal and historical studies of the teachings. In addition, he had a great influence on Nichiren followers outside the sects, and was highly valued in society. [Kokuchu-kai activity declined sharply after the war because it had inspired nationalism.]

Also, Nissho Honda of the Kempon Hokke Sect built Toitsu-kaku at Asakusa [Tokyo] and was active in propagating Nichiren-ism and enlightening society. He also proselytized prominent figures such as politicians and military officers, and played a leading role in the effort to unify the followers of Nichiren. In the Nichiren Sect, Ryozan Shimizu attempted to form a movement beyond the differing sects by advocating reform of doctrinal studies and unifying Nichiren’s followers. Meanwhile, Nichiren-shu College (later Rissho University) attempted to reform Nichiren-shu studies, undertaking a positive review of the sect’s history and starting to edit “The Comprehensive Studies of Nichiren-shu.” Among the laity, including such individuals as Saburo Yamada, Ichiro Kobayashi and Shigeru Yano (well established people at the time), there was an effort to find individuals who were learned in the study of Nichiren-ism. They organized the Hokke-kai [“The Lotus Sutra Association”], published the magazine “Hokke,” and built the “Hall of the Sacred Writings” at Nakayama [Hokekyoji temple, East of Tokyo. After the Daishonin’s death, Lord Toki Jonin became a priest, under the name of Nichijo, and turned his mansion into Hokekyoji temple, and preserved many Goshō he and others had received from the Daishonin in order to conserve the Daishonin’s original writings.]

Meanwhile, after a magazine reported that the dowager Empress Shoken had expressed her faith in Nichiren, there appeared on the scene believers in the Lotus Sutra and Nichiren who were members of the Imperial family and the Ministry of the Imperial Household. These individuals, among other things, were promoters of the “Imperial Proclamation of the title of Great Teacher [for the Daishonin].” Under the circumstances, the head temples of the Fuji schools were pressured to abandon their belief in fairytale-like legends and mythology. Thus, in Taisekiji, Hori Nichiko Shonin [the 59th High Priest] intended to compile “The Comprehensive Collection of the Fuji School Teachings [134 volumes, published from 1935 to 1942],” and Nisshin Tomiya of Yoboji and

Shunmyo Hondma of Kitayama Honmonji, working together, opened their respective head temples' secret storehouses and began collecting and researching ancient documents.

The reason the head temples, which previously had raised their fences high with different doctrines and traditions, all began opening their doors was that, in order to adjust their organizations, which had lost their bases of support in this time of rapid change and modernization, and avoid fair censure, they needed to revise their histories, which had been embellished in their own favor. Also, for the sake of the development of renewed propagation, it was necessary to establish advocacy based on rationality.

The liberal atmosphere of Taisho Democracy began bringing about free and active exchanges among the schools; for instance, scholars of Nichiren-shu like Kaiso Inada came to research the Daishonin's handwritings and treasures in the Treasure House of Taisekiji. Similarly, Nichiko Shonin [the 59th High Priest] visited the Minobu Library and, staying for several days due to the favor of Ryochi Shima, freely examined its collection of documents and books. Furthermore, Nichiko Shonin, in the last year of the Taisho era, lived temporarily in a corner of the Administration office of the Honmonji temple of Ikegami [the temple built at the site of the Daishonin passing] and started a special course on the history of Nichiren Shoshu at Rissho University [Nichiren-shu's University] which lasted for several months. Also, in October of the 3rd year of Taisho [1914], the three high priests Nissho Abe of Nichiren Shoshu, Nichiji Koizumi of Nichiren-shu, and Nissho Honda of Kempon Hokke-shu discussed consolidating the followers of Nichiren. Consequently, the following year, the representatives of seven schools assembled and held meetings and lectures in pursuit of the consolidation. This movement gradually fell through, but the issue arose later when those concerned established the movement of the "Imperial Proclamation of the title of Great Teacher Rissho [Establishing the Correctness: the Daishonin's title]" in the 11th year of Taisho [1922].

Debate in the magazine “Nichiren-shu Courier” and inspection by his Majesty of “the Correct Significance of the Sacred Teaching”

I have already mentioned that the lay believer Seiyu published a book entitled “Nichiren Shoshu” when the renaming of “Nichiren Shoshu” was officially accepted, and a revised and enlarged edition of the book was issued with Yahei Naka’s financing in the second year of Taisho. The book was broadly enjoyed by priests and believers of our school. A slight digression: about 40 years ago, the late Kotaro Yamada (the former general representative of Genryuji temple) came nursing a worn-out copy of the book and told me in a wistful tone, that when he was young, he went to Nishinomiya and received lectures based on the book as a text.

A professor of the Nichiren-shu College, Egyo Fujita, published a critical review of the book in the “Nichiren-shu Courier” Magazine. (The organ of Nichiren-shu: No. 648, the 23rd of March, the 2nd year of Taisho [1913]) Taking this as an opportunity, Seiyu Araki challenged him to a debate. He then had a controversy with Egyo Fujita in the Magazine (No. 716, the 12th of July), and a debate with Ryuzan Shimizu, which resulted in a series of 16 installments. He also put three installments in our school organ, “Byaku-rence,” under the title, “Refutation of the Answers of Professor Ryuzan Shimizu.”

In November in the 4th year of Taisho [1915], the entire country was in a celebratory mood upon the occasion of the ceremony of enthronement of the Emperor Taisho. Meanwhile, Seiyu seemingly was absorbed more and more in writing and studying the teachings. Largely because the Terada-ya Inn connection had led him to the acquaintance of high government officials from the time of the Empress’ auspicious dream, Seiyu had personal connections for reporting doctrinal writing concerning the nation to the Emperor. Consequently, as a commemoration of the state enthronement ceremony of Emperor Taisho, through funds provided by Kotatsu (Yahei) Naka, he published “The Correct Significance of the Sacred Teachings to be Established in the Great Nation Japan,” and presented, via the chamberlain, several specially bound copies in gold-brocade, with a crest of circular cranes, to

His and Her Majesties, as well as specially bound copies to each Minister and distinguished person. Common bindings were broadly contributed to the public.

The outline of the book is as follows: on the opening pages appear the title calligraphy by Nicchu Shonin, title calligraphy of “The Minobu Transfer Document” by Nippu Shonin, and title calligraphy by Nichi’o Shonin; in addition, on the opening pages appear photographs of the Ammo-hara plain [a few miles east of Taisekiji], the Treasure House of Taisekiji, and the Honzon of Kaidan. The main part of the book contains 20 chapters covering the teaching of Shu-Juku-Datsu [Sowing, Maturing, and Harvesting], the theory of the Kaidan, and the teaching of Myoji-soku of Kuon, and develops the thought of the True Buddha Nichiren. It also features many charts and constitutes a logically consistent book of doctrinal teachings. The content of this book would later be developed into Shohei Fukushige’s [his son] “Thought of the True Buddha Nichiren.” There is a detailed account of the trip by Yahei Naka to present the book to the emperor, which I introduce as follows, in summary: “Trip for presentation of the book to the Emperor by Kotatsu Naka”:

I informed the governor of Osaka that I would present to the Emperor, the Empress and the Crown Prince, via the chamberlain, a book authored by my dear brother in faith, the lay believer Seiyu Araki, entitled “The Correct Significance of the Sacred Teachings, to be Established in the Great Nation of Japan,” which I had published as a commemoration of his Majesty’s enthronement. He accepted the offering and instructed me to present it at the Imperial villa of Akasaka; therefore, I went to Tokyo with the lay believer Seiyu on the night train on the 16th of January.

The next day, the 17th, we were blessed by good weather and we arrived at Tokyo station on time. We dressed at once and reported to the villa. On our way [to the Akasaka villa] we first bowed to the Imperial Palace by the Niju-bashi Bridge [the stone bridge of the Main

Gate]. Then we entered the villa where we finished the presentation and received a written acceptance of the book.

After that, we visited the grave of General Nogi [a war hero who captured Port Arthur during the Russo-Japanese war; he committed suicide along with his wife after Emperor Meiji died]. There we recited the sutra and chanted Daimoku at the top of our voices in the cold wind and prayed for the repose of the general and his wife along with their two sons [the sons had died in battle during the war]. Because the lay believer Seiyu was an old acquaintance of the general and from the same region, he had once visited the graveyard of the general's two sons and had composed a poem:

The tombstone to which I prostrate myself is low,
yet the honor bestowed by you, my reverence, is soaring.

He had presented it to the general, who accepted it with a smile, and Seiyu told me, with tears in his eyes, that now the general had become a person to be sung to in a poem. (.....)

We left the site, then visited His Excellency Nichi'o Shonin at Senryu-kaku Inn of Gazen-bo [Tokyo]. He came downstairs and greeted us, for which we were very grateful. While arranging seats for us and placing us at our ease, he gave us excessive praise, as follows:

“The book presentation this time is just like the offering of a remonstrance letter to the nation and, besides, is equivalent to executing the undertaking that successive High Priests since both Nichiren and Nikko Shonin have labored under and concerned themselves with.”

Not only that, he celebrated the presentation of the book by regaling us with food and drink, and we both drank many cups in spite of ourselves and left in the evening. (.....) There was clear weather

again on the 18th. At 10 o'clock in the morning, we hired a car and set out as we had planned, having letters of introduction for officials of the Imperial princes by courtesy of the governor of the Osaka prefecture. Thus, we paid a visit to each prince; first, to Prince Yamashinano-miya at Fujimi-cho of Kojimachi ward, then, in order, Prince Kunino-miya at Bancho, Prince Kachono-miya at Sanda-daicho of Shiba ward, Prince Kitashirakawano-miya at Takanawa, Prince Asakano-miya, Prince Higashifushimino-miya in front of Toranomom gate, Prince Fushimino-miya at Kioicho of Kojimachi ward and, lastly, Prince Kan'inno-miya of Nagatacho.

At each Imperial house, we were invited into the drawing room and given a famous brand of tea along with confectionery decorated with the coat of arms. In this way, we were unexpectedly honored. Seeing that this was owing entirely to the teaching, I was moved to tears (.....)

Thereafter, as the presentation of the book to the Emperor contributed to the effort to publicize the existence of our school, in January in the 5th year of Taisho [1916], Oishi Nichi'ō Shonin bestowed upon Seiyu a commendation Honzon. The honorific description on the Gohonzon states:

For prosperity of the great teaching and extensive propagation, in the present and future, in the winter of Taisho Kinoto-U [1915]; and for commemorating the great enthronement of the book titled 'The Correct Significance of the Sacred Teachings' which made the whole country realize the profundity of the teachings of our school and received unreserved praise. Not only that, the work received an Imperial inspection: would others surpass this propagating achievement? His exploits should be seen as great; thus, this is rewarded.

The General Chief of Believers [Sokoto] of the country.
(In possession of Rengeji temple)

Thus, Nichi'ō Shonin praised Seiyū's writing highly and announced that its inspection by the Emperor "made the country realize the profundity of the teachings of our school"; in addition, he gave Seiyū unreserved praise, asking "having reached the level of Imperial inspection: would others surpass this achievement of propagation? His exploits should be viewed as equally great." Because of this, we know that Seiyū's achievement was extraordinary.

Meeting by Zenchi Tanabe to criticize Nichiren Shoshu

On January 21st in the 6th year of Taisho [1917], when the weather was severely cold, a speech entitled "A lecture meeting of the teachings of Nichiren Shonin" was held at the Osaki-hall near Gotanda Station [Tokyo]. This lecture meeting was held chiefly for the students of Nichiren-shu college [a theological college; most of the students were sons of Nichiren-shu temple priests] (later Rissho University). Since the renaming of Nichiren Shoshu, Nichiren Taishou-kai Association (of Nichiren Shoshu) had been focusing on propagation by holding lecture meetings and donating books to the public. The students of Nichiren-shu College then proposed an open debate between Nichi'ō Shonin and Zenchi Tanabe in November in the 5th year of Taisho. However, the participants could not agree on the terms of the debate and, as a result, each side held its own speech meeting and criticized the other's views. On the occasion of the lecture meeting noted above, an invitation entitled "Advanced criticism of the general teachings of Nichiren Shoshu, by the lecturer Zenchi Tanabe" was sent to various parties.

The lecturer, Zenchi Tanabe, had earlier converted to Nichiren-shu from Kempon Hokke-shu and, at the time, held classes at Nichiren-shu College as a representative scholar. Zenchi Tanabe had also been a participant at the debate between the Fuji school and Kempon Hokke-shu school in the 34th year of Meiji [1901]. That debate was regarded as promising to determine each school's future, with speakers Nissho Honda and Zenchi Tanabe representing Kempon Hokke school and Jisho Abe (later Nissho Shonin [the 57th High Priest]) and Nichi'ō Oishi representing the Fuji school. However, when Honda (Kempon Hokke) and Abe (Fuji) took the stage to give their speeches,

the crowd became tumultuous and the police had to order the meeting to disperse, leaving the contest half-done. After that, there was a negotiation aimed at resuming the debate; however, in spite of bargaining on both sides, no agreement was realized and both sides unilaterally advertised that "we won." Now, when I look at the records of both sides, I see that each side asserted its own claims and did not enter into debate comparing the contents of the teachings; as a consequence, neither could claim victory or failure. Nevertheless, the sectarian spirit always seems to advertise matters to its own advantage.

Tanabe, who had not mounted the platform 16 years earlier as the debate was interrupted, was likely to have been well prepared for this lecture. The lecture meeting took place in three parts: on January 21st, February 11th and February 21st. Each part lasted two-and-a-half hours. The first part was titled "Thought of the True Buddha Nichiren," the second part was titled "Thought of 'On that which is secretly hidden in the depths of the text' by Nichiren Shoshu" and the third part was titled "Thought of Kaidan [High Sanctuary]." Each part consisted of criticism based on doctrines of the True Effect, inheritance through sutras, and the theoretical high sanctuary. The audience that filled the venue consisted mainly of students of Nichiren-shu College, as well as some chief priests of local temples in Tokyo, and college staff. The content of the lectures was likely to have been instigative and ridiculing. For Nichiren Shoshu, Ryogen Abe and Ki'ichi Tanabe attended, but no questions were allowed, and they were subjected to one-sided criticisms from beginning to end.

An invitation to the meetings was also given to Seiyu Araki in Osaka but, due to a business commitment, he was not able to go to Tokyo until February 12th. Seiyu Araki at once asked Ki'ichi Tanabe (a lawyer), who was a believer of Rengeji temple and lived in Tokyo at that time, to provide recorded notes of the lectures; two days later, he visited Zenchi Tanabe directly at Nichiren-shu College, and then, on the following 15th, he visited the administrative office of Nichiren-shu at Ikegami and interviewed Zenchi Tanabe and Tomosaburo Kato (organizer of the lecture meeting), and asked them to confirm the contents of the recorded notes and the lecture manuscript. Nichiren

Shoshu also immediately held a regular speech meeting under the auspices of Nichiren Taishou-kai Association at a club in Osaki on February 24th, and Kīichi Tanabe, Ryonosuke Goto, Nichi’o Shonin and Rev. Koga Arimoto mounted the platform and made counterarguments to Zenchi Tanabe. However, about 70 or 80 students heckled the speakers, causing the meeting to end in an uproar.

Meanwhile, on February 25th, the day of the third meeting, the participants heard the “Advanced criticism of the teachings in general of Nichiren Shoshu.” Seiyu Araki was in Tokyo with Ryogen Araki and attended and recorded in detail the critical speech by Zenchi Tanabe. Immediately afterwards, Seiyu Araki took action and, on his own initiative, rented the same venue, i.e., Osaki Hall, sent a notice to various parties under the title “Speech meeting to refute Mr. Zenchi Tanabe, professor of the Nichiren-shu College,” and, on his own, responded to the criticism of the teachings by a scholar representing the Nichiren-shu sect. He took this as his mission as the chief of all general believers.

Refutation speech for 3 hours and 40 minutes

Let me describe the meeting by quoting a reporter of the “Dai-Nichiren” magazine at that time:

The Lay Believer Seiyu Araki, the general chief believer of our school, on Sunday the 4th of March, held a grand speech meeting titled ‘Refutation of the advanced criticism of our teachings by Mr. Zenchi Tanabe’. The effect was, of course, as the title reads. The reason the lay believer Araki held the meeting need not be addressed in particular. Under the circumstances, general criticism of the teachings of Nichiren Shoshu by Zenchi Tanabe had to be fairly refuted. The lay believer took pains to refute Zenchi Tanabe thoroughly but discreetly, with a temperate attitude. He invited the staff members of the Nichiren-shu College and all the officials of the administrative office of the Nichiren-shu sect, including the high priest Kitamura, to attend, and also sent a guide, an invitation, and the prospectus to the leading temples and organizations of Nichiren-shu nationwide. He also inquired regarding the content

of Tanabe's speech and negotiated with him to certify his spoken words. In addition, he made preparations in full detail by himself, paid the cost and, to be sure that the manuscript of refutation was authentic, acted totally on his own.

Blessed by good weather on the appointed day, the Osaki Hall received a lot of people. It is quite satisfying that about 400 priests and believers of other sects attended, and many were distinguished notables. Among believers of our school, over 200 also attended. At 1:30 p.m., Ki'ichi Tanabe stood up and gave an opening remark, and then Araki took the stage. Araki, a lay believer, made a long discourse lasting three hours and forty minutes and refuted in detail Zenchi Tanabe's criticisms. Since he had to refute Tanabe's criticisms for three or four hours, he could not afford to put forward a single useless word. Therefore, he quoted documentary proof and history concerning each word and phrase, and gave a severe blow to each of Tanabe's shallow criticisms, thus beating him thoroughly. It goes without saying that he is well-versed in the teachings, but it should be noted with respect and reverence that, demonstrating his ardent spirit in this way, he refuted to his heart's content Mr. Tanabe's unreasonable criticisms.

The record of the controversy was immediately printed by a supporter of Tanabe and published under the title "A Large Light in the Long Night" on June 19th. (104 pages in B6 size) The first edition of 1,200 copies was distributed to various parties and quickly sold out. As to the content, Araki behaved like a gentleman, showing sound reasoning and documentary proofs, and thus argued in a coherent way. Zenchi Tanabe, on the other hand, criticized his opponent without good reason concerning the teachings of Nikko Shonin's followers. Zenchi Tanabe implied that it was overbearing arrogance for a lay believer to debate him concerning doctrine, and stated:

If it was a priest representing the school it would be another matter, but I don't deal with a lay believer. "Those who think

themselves well versed in Buddhism are the ones who make errors.’ [from “The teaching for the Latter Day”]

Seiyu’s refutation maintained its superiority. The speech was widely read by the Daishonin’s followers in general, and it was said that Nichiren Shoshu was fortunate to have Seiyu Araki.

Recent disputes among religious organizations differ from debates in other fields of study in an essential way. In the case of religious disputes, each side insists on the truth of its doctrine unconditionally and cannot agree on a common footing, such as, in this case, common quotes from the Gosho or sutras, or definitions or concepts associated with various terms. Furthermore, the obsession with turning all disputes in their favor as a way of guarding their organization simply causes these individuals to repeat each doctrine in the manner of a bureaucrat, and it does not seem feasible to ask for a sincere attitude from which to pursue the truth. Rather, the dispute becomes emotional and closes with a parting curse. By contrast, I think the moderate and impartial attitude of Seiyu in this case is extremely valuable and deserves high praise.

I am not asserting, of course, that Seiyu Araki’s comprehension of the teachings was absolute. If one opens the books written by Seiyu and considers his thoughts on history and the teachings, one can’t help but note, from the perspective of the present age, certain limitations in the outlook of the Meiji and Taisho eras. The uncritical acceptance of a national polity centering on an Emperor is also no longer valid and there are problems with his slightly limited view of the nature of Honzon. However, his basic spirit in studying the teachings, that is, his flexible mind, willingness to pursue the truth, and concern for maintaining an impartial and objective stance, are commendable and there is much to learn from his sincerity in seeking a rational perspective. In addition, many people have looked favorably on his gentlemanly manner and practice of being courteous to his opponent.

Hard studies on the teachings and the establishment of Nichiren Shoshu-kai

The writings on the teachings by Seiyu Araki were extraordinary and included more than just the refutation of Zenchi Tanabe. For example, at that time, there was an article criticizing the Fuji school's teaching of not reciting [the whole 28 Chapters of the Lotus Sutra as daily practice] and not erecting statues [of Shakyamuni Buddha] in the Yoboji temple's organ. The article was titled "Montei [Beneath the text of Juryo Chapter]" and was written by Nisshin Tomiya. He then published a rebuttal under the title "Overall view on Montei" in five straight issues of the organ "Byaku-rence," beginning in December of the 5th year of Taisho [1916].

During his stay in Tokyo for a lecture on March 4th in the 6th year of Taisho, he recommended Nichi'o Shonin, the president of the Nichiren Daisho-kai, as the person to unify all the believers' groups and organizations which were acting independently in Tokyo, and he made an effort to mediate among the groups. Meanwhile, he held some meetings with Nichi'o Shonin at the Senryu-kaku during his stay, and, on March 5th (the day after the lecture), established Nichiren Shoshu-kai (later the Propagating Association of Nichiren Shoshu) with Nichi'o Shonin as the president. The first inaugural meeting was held at the Senryu-kaku on March 16th, with an address by the president, Nichi'o Oishi, a supporting message by Seiyu Araki, and an explanation of fundamental principles by Ki'ichi Tanabe. At that point, the new propagating organization was established, uniting the priests and believers' groups of Tokyo for the first time.

Also, it was quickly decided to hold a declaration ceremony at Josenji temple on April 26th. On that day, about 400 ardent believers attended and, after the recitation of the Sutra and chanting of Daimoku, the president, Nichi'o Shonin, declared the purpose of establishing Nichiren Shoshu-kai. Celebrating addresses by representatives of priests and believers followed; the event then concluded with an address by the Head Believer, Ichijo Yui. Moreover, a long telegram from Osaka was read on behalf of the Sokoto, Seiyu Araki. After the ceremony, stalls were set up and the gathering became lively and continued

into the evening to cement the bond between priests and believers. At this time, the magazine “Jinen-myo” (formerly “Hokun”), issued by young priests from the 2nd year of Taisho, was discontinued and merged into “Dai-Nichiren” issued by Nichiren Daisho-kai starting in the 5th of Taisho. “Dai-Nichiren” was then designated the official organ of Nichiren Shoshu-kai.

After this meeting, each time he went to Tokyo, Seiyu mounted the lecture platform at various places and spoke eloquently, like Purna [Shakyamuni’s disciple, supreme in speech]. For instance, Yakichi Hirohashi organized a big propagation meeting in an office of the fire department of Yokosuka city [south of Tokyo; In 1853, Admiral Perry anchored off the coast of Yokosuka and urged Japan to open the country]. Upon being asked to give a lecture, Seiyu Araki, together with Koga Arimoto, Gyodo Matsunaga, and Ki’ichi Tanabe, made speeches there from 2:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. and from 8:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.. Further, an article in “Dai-Nichiren” notes that Ki’ichi Tanabe and Seiyu Araki returned to Tokyo that same evening. Thus, we can gather that he served constantly while on the move without sparing himself.

It goes without saying that each group of believers had respect for Seiyu’s contributions. Not only the Head Believer of the country, Ichijo Yui, but also the influential believers belonging to Myokoji temple at Osaki in Shinagawa [Tokyo], such as Kaburagi, Kaneko and Negishi, and Ki’ichi Tanabe, appreciated Seiyu’s conduct in Tokyo at that time. In later years, around the 7th or 8th year of Showa [1932, 33], according to Koki Fukushige’s [Seiyu Araki’s grandson, who will be referred in the postscript] recollection, while he was working at Myokoji temple as an acolyte of Rev. Koga Arimoto, he went around to believers’ homes to offer a recitation of the Sutra, and he was treated in a surprisingly polite manner, with the words “Oh, you are a grandson of Mr. Araki!” [It was a summertime tradition to chant in front of a display of offerings at the Obon festival in order to pray for dead ancestors.] Among the believers, his grandfather Seiyu was felt to be closer to the people than his father, Rev. Shohei Fukushige, and was loved and respected for longer.

Establishment of Myojoji temple

A great delight for Seiyu Araki in his later life was that Myojoji temple was built at Imazu of Shiga prefecture on the lakeside of Lake Biwa [the largest lake in Japan, located north of Kyoto] in the 6th year of Taisho [1917] by his comrade in faith Kotatsu (Yahei) Naka.

The Chief Believer of Rengeji temple, Kotatsu (Yahei) Naka, was born in the Tsuji family in the same district in the 5th year of Meiji [1872], and went to Osaka at the age of 13 where he served his apprenticeship at Naka Teru and Co. At the age of 27, he was adopted due to the trust gained by his diligence, and inherited the house of Yahei Naka. He then succeeded in business during the industrial development period of the Meiji era, and started the Osaka wire netting company. Thus, he was a prominent self-made man. There are numerous examples of Kotatsu Naka's dedication to the support and protection of our school and Taiseikiji. However, Kotatsu Naka was a person of integrity and virtue and never flaunted his success; rather, he hated to be the center of attention. He was younger than Seiyu Araki by as many as 20 years, but deeply admired his friend and always offered alms for the publication of his books.

Before this period, Kotatsu Naka did his best to proselytize his parents and relatives and encouraged them to develop a strong mind and to protect the teachings. As a result, the number of people converting to the correct teaching in his hometown of Aeba gradually increased. Then, when his elderly parents met their death, he converted the villa of his residence into a temple for the sake of offering prayers to them and for the prosperity of Buddhism. On August 1st in the 6th year of Taisho [1917], Seiyu's eldest son, Rev. Shohei Fukushige, transferred from the Tamba teaching facility (Kofukuji temple) to the villa-temple, having received a written appointment as the first chief priest. It is said that it took about four hours for a steamboat to travel from Otsu to Imazu port, traveling through Biwa Lake [from the southern tip to the northern tip of the lake].

Afterwards, with Kyubei Tsuji and others, he made every effort to obtain approval for the establishment of the new temple; however, due to the policy of the prefecture not to issue permission for new temples, he sought and was given approval to establish a teaching facility

belonging, on paper, to Taisekiji. Then, with the contribution of Kotatsu Naka, they set out to build the main hall in October of the 8th year of Taisho. For this, he offered the temple property of about 5 chobu [13 acres], including the temple precinct of 600 tsubos [3,000 sq yds], together with annexed farms and forest. Thus, Myojoji is a temple built solely through the offering of Kotatsu Naka.

The ceremony to celebrate the completion of the temple was also held as the Oeshiki ceremony on October 13th in the 9th year of Taisho [1920]. Inviting Nissho Shonin from the Head Temple, and one hundred or more priests and believers from the Kyoto-Osaka region, they, along with the local believers, the mayor of the county, the chief of the village, members of the prefectural assembly, and the chief of the police station, attended the grand ceremony. Since posters were also put up nearby, more than 300 villagers gathered in the precincts, so the whole village joined in the celebration. Following the Oeshiki ceremony, the temple opening ceremony started; Kotatsu Naka read an address, Seiyu spoke of the origin of the desire for building the temple, various guests delivered congratulatory addresses, and Shohei Fukushima delivered the address in reply. Then a lecture was given by the High Priest and the Gohonzon was endowed; in the heart of Seiyu, many scenes must have been engraved as memories of this life.

After the ceremony, people cheered for the large-scale entertainment of mochi-scattering [to conclude the event, a tradition of sprinkling mochi-rice cakes from the platform to attendees was observed; sometimes a small amount of change was put in the mochi], followed by a dedication and sumo wrestling matches. In the evening, a big speech meeting was held and it was also reported in the local newspaper that the normally quiet village was bustling until late at night.

It should be noted that eight families of believers could not maintain Myojoji temple or support the chief priest's family by themselves. However, Kotatsu Naka offered 25 yen every month to support the temple life. This monthly Gokuyo [offering] was continued for over twenty years, until in the 16th Showa [1941] the chief believers determined to bear the whole expense by themselves, and declined his virtuous deeds. The chief priest, Shohei Fukushima, was also indifferent

to wealth or gains and was content to live in honest poverty. In fact, it was his intention to devote his life to the study of the teachings at this poor temple in the village.

Argument in the magazine “Hokke”

During the middle years of the Taisho era, Seiyu remained at his home in Dojima-hama and devoted himself continuously to studying the teachings and writing his own works. As a result, not a day of this period was wasted.

Prior to this period, in or about the 3rd year of Taisho, the Hokke-kai [“Lotus Flower Association”] had been established by a number of learned people, including Saburo Yamada, professor at the Tokyo Imperial University, Shigeru Yano, a prosecutor of the Supreme Court, and Ichiro Kobayashi, a professor at Chuo University. Together, they issued a magazine on religious culture, titled “Hokke [Lotus Flower]”; its purpose was to advocate for the Lotus Sutra and Nichiren Shonin. In addition, in the Showa 6th period [1931], the association contributed to the building of the sacred writings edifice which had been created for the purpose of safeguarding the Daishonin’s own handwriting. The impetus for this project was an incident in which a text bearing the Daishonin’s handwriting was thought to be missing from the Hokekyoji temple at Nakayama [in 1922, the cover letter of Kanjin no Honzon-sho was thought to be missing from the Hokekyoji temple, which originally had been Lord Toki’s mansion and kept many examples of the Daishonin’s own handwritings; the cover letter was later found], as well as the start of the practice of providing funding for the protection of examples of the Daishonin’s handwritings. The association’s work continues today, performed by volunteers who have inherited the will of Yamada, Yano, and Kobayashi; thus, over 1,100 issues of the magazine “Hokke” have been published during the last more than one hundred years.

Seiyu Araki frequently contributed editorials to the newly-launched “Hokke” magazine and displayed high spirits among the members of the Nichiren Shoshu party. Let’s list the titles of the articles published by him in the magazine:

- “On ‘On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land,’” August 1917 issue (Interpretation averring that the Gosho should not be seen as only dedicated to the correct teaching, but also the correct teacher)
- “As to authenticity of the Gosho ‘Reply to Lord Toki [“The Battle of Koan”]” September 1917 issue (Inquiry indicating the Gosho is not authentic)
- “On shoju and shakubuku in Mappo” from 1917 December issue to 1918 March issue (Regarding shoju and shakubuku, and the four ways of preaching)
- “Spirit of the people of the great Japan” 1918 February issue
- “On reading Gosho” 1918 issue (Examples showing that comprehension of the Gosho should include differences in people’s capacity, or context compared to other teachings, and for encouragement or remonstrations)
- “After reading studies on Shinran [founder of Nembutsu teaching]” 1918 November issue (Study comparing the Daishonin and Shinran)
- “The view of Nichiren Daishonin on the national constitution” 1920 September issue

Of particular note is that he challenged leading scholars of the time, Chigaku Tanaka and Chio Yamakawa, to a debate.

Also around this time, the institute of study and research on Gosho of the Kokuchu-kai association was working on compiling a “Comprehensive dictionary of the sacred writings of the Bodhisattva of Honmon [A dictionary on Gosho]” with Chidai Nagataki and Chio Yamakawa as the primary investigators. They published the first volume in May in the 5th year of Taisho [1916] and the fourth and last volume in January in the 8th year of Taisho [1919]. This Gosho dictionary contributed greatly to the development of the study of the Daishonin’s teachings; however, each school of the Nichiren sect has its own interpretation of doctrines and the dictionary didn’t begin to cover them all. In this regard, according to Seiyu Araki, the dictionary gave the impression of

lacking the finishing touches appropriate to such a cherished object, because he believed in the thought of Ichinen Sanzen in the depths of the Juryo Chapter as taught in Nichiren Shoshu, the Daishonin's cherished teachings. Therefore, he issued his argument in the "Hokke" magazine under the title "Seeking valuable teachings of the honorable Mr. Chigaku Tanaka" (February and April issues in the 8th of Taisho), as follows:

The 'Comprehensive dictionary of the sacred writings of the Bodhisattva of Honmon' has been published under the supervision of Mr. Tanaka, with extensive citations to books and documents, as well as attentive explanations; thus, it is a precious book, not only for followers of Nichiren, but also for the nation. I humbly offer my deepest gratitude for the effort of you and all members of the institute of study and research on Gosho.

However, when I came to the section on 'Ichinen Sanzen' in the second volume, I immediately had questions, so I read it repeatedly, yet, due to my foolishness, I could not comprehend four or five points. Consequently, I ask respectfully for your instruction in person; however, there could be others who have questions similar to mine, so I humbly wish to make your teachings public and benefit from similar inquirers; may I make bold to ask about your noble teachings in the "Hokke" magazine?

With this introductory remark, he asked about the differences between the Tendai [T'ien-t'ai] view of Ichinen Sanzen and the Daishonin's view. Chigaku Tanaka replied in the September of Taisho issue, the 8th issue of the "Hokke" magazine, in a notice called "To answer Mr. Seiyu Araki." He said that, due to his sickness and business concerns, he had ordered Chio Yamakawa to reply to Seiyu. Chio Yamakawa promptly issued his views and argument in detail in the September 1st and October 1st issues of the "Kokuchu-kai news" of the same year. Looking at his articles, Araki again took up his pen and issued as many as six long

articles in succession, under the title “On the teaching of Ichinen Sanzen.”

I do not have room to touch upon the contents of them here, but looking at the two stately arguments, I can’t help but think of the malice, of the storm of abuses and slanders, surrounding Taisekiji and the Soka Gakkai. We, the followers of Nichiren Daishonin, should be fair or I am afraid we will end up shaming the name of the Daishonin.

We can confirm how fair Seiyu Araki was when he undertook to propagate our school’s teaching and faith in an article entitled “Hope” (August in the 8th year of Taisho issue). This was a study of the petitioner of the Gohonzon, Yashiro Kunishige, but aims at proposing to settle the question of which is the true Gohonzon of Kaidan. At that time, Kokuchu-kai advocated the “First Gohonzon appearing in Sado” while the Nichiren-shu sect was advocating the “Gohonzon of Imperial Offering” which they had given to the Ministry of the Imperial Household. He made a unique proposal, that the Gohonzon of Kaidan of Taisekiji and the Honzons supported by the other schools be presented together at one place, and that authoritative scholars should judge them and decide the truth and superiority among them. The article says:

(For each school and individual, too), the Gohonzon is believed to be the sole supreme one in the whole world, so how about presenting them at a place and designate some highly regarded archaeological scholars, to determine whether they agree with our beliefs or not. They can judge, first, if they are in the Daishonin’s own handwriting; secondly, judge and evaluate the material (paper, silk, or wood) of the Gohonzon to see if they were genuinely inscribed at the supposed time; and thirdly, evaluate their origins and histories. We will have them judged on the above criteria and others. Then the Dai-Gohonzon may be assessed to be the most supreme, and should be defined as the most supreme Dai-Gohonzon to unify the whole world. Then, the general Nichiren sects could esteem it as the central great mandala to reunite them all. We should do away with the conventional habit of turning it to our own

purposes or for our own favor by slandering others' treasure: no, it is the treasure of the nation, no, the greatest treasure of the world.

He then declared to the general followers of Nichiren:

May you concur in my wish. Then, I assure you, I will take full responsibility for upholding and presenting the Gohonzon of Kaidan of the Honmon [Dai-Gohonzon].

If the current High Priest or administering priests hear this, they would greet it with stupefied astonishment, as it is a proposal that seems overwhelming. However, it does not appear that Seiyu's proposal was criticized or even questioned in our school at that time. "I assure you I will take full responsibility" is very broad-minded. Seiyu's assertion could, objectively speaking, be assessed to be fair and reasonable. If it is considered to be an absurd statement, this may, by itself, indicate that they are a stubborn sect entrenched in sectarianism, under manifold spells of taboo and authoritarianism.

Later years devoted to writing and book-presentation to the Throne

The Taisho period [1912 – 1926] saw the full flowering of Nichirenism. It was an era in which the teaching thrived, as lectures were propagated, the study of doctrine grew and expanded, and many books were published among the sects of the Daishonin. Seiyu Araki participated in the expansion: he made arguments in the magazine "Hokke," and was also writing energetically, publishing the following booklet:

- "Nichirenism, the spirit of the people of Great Japan," published in February of Taisho 7th [1918] This book was presented to the Imperial Household Ministry and received the honor of observation by the Emperor and Empress. As its opening, it carried a calligraphy by Viscount Naganari Ogasawara and a preface by Ichiro Kobayashi [one of the three members who established Hokke-kai in the previous section], and it

contained the previously published “Mirror of the Future Great Japan” (school course song), as a supplement. It was published by Morie publisher.

He also published the following books:

- “National policy of the Great Japan and the emperor of the whole world” (Published on April 28th in Taisho 8th. It was also carried in “Dai-Nichiren”)
- “View of Nichiren Daishonin on the national constitution” published on October Taisho 9th [1920] by Yahei Naka, publisher. B6 size 20 pages. There is a calligraphy by Army General Naomichi Osako.
- “A concise comment on ‘Ubuyu Sojo no Koto [‘Transmission Regarding the Warm Water Bath Following Birth] - A deity’s voice and the Buddha’s words”

(Commemorating the 700th anniversary of the Daishonin’s birth) published in January Taisho 10th by Yahei Naka, publisher. There is a calligraphy by Nichi’o Shonin at the opening.

In this way, at his home at 2 Chome, north of Tamate station in Osaka where he had moved around the 7th year of Taisho, he continued day in and day out to devote himself to his writing. Although these were peaceful days, sturdy Seiyu, in addition to aging perceptibly, felt a general decline in his health due to his long years of overexertion. At this time, his wife, Kinu, died. She was 66 years old. The separation from his wife, with whom he was deeply in love, must have hit him very hard, for Seiyu was laid up for several months.

Meanwhile, the year of Taisho 10th fell on the 700th anniversary of the Daishonin’s birth, and each sect of the Daishonin’s followers engaged in propagation activities or commemorative projects for the occasion. In regard to Nichiren Shoshu, each believers’ group instigated a groundswell of propagating activities, such as distribution of handbills by publicity airplane corps and automobile corps, street exhibitions of lanterns with revolving pictures of his biography, holding lantern parades and great speech meetings, or giving book donations of

various kinds. In addition, the crown prince, Hirohito, traveled to Europe for six months beginning in March of that year. In this way, he greatly enriched his understanding of the European experience and returned from abroad with a new appreciation of European culture. This was welcomed by the general public as a national event, and the mood of celebration was overflowing.

On this happy occasion, Seiyu may have expected to perform his last service as the Sokoto. Applying the spirit of his recommendations to the Emperor, he hurried to summarize the fundamental principles of Nichiren Shoshu (despite his ailing condition) and in September he published a book titled “A commemoration of the initiative of His Imperial Highness: Genuine Nichirenism” (Supplementary: On the inheritance of the lineage from the Daishonin), and offered it for the Emperor’s consideration.

Thus, passing through the hands of the Minister of the Imperial Household, Nobuaki Makino, the book was dedicated to Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress, and to His Majesty the Crown Prince, by viscount Naganari Ogasawara (Vice Admiral) through the chamberlain Arata Hamao. Afterwards, on distributing the book widely to the public, a calligraphy by Naganari Ogasawara was displayed at the opening. Naganari Ogasawara, at the time a court councilor in the secretary of the Prince Imperial’s study, being impressed by Seiyu’s sincerity, issued a comment: “Now is time for the Taisekiji school to be beneficial,” in the “Dai-Nichiren” magazine. In view of this, we can imagine his virtue and broad personal connections.

Despite the fact that he was physically and financially burdened in his later years, he put forth all his strength to finish his book and present it to the Imperial family, and I think it was not unrelated that Nichiden Shonin and Nichi’in Shonin [the 52nd and 54th High Priest respectively], with whom Seiyu studied when he was young, made remonstrations to the nation. Having fallen ill, Seiyu knew his days were numbered, so it is possible he intended to carry out his final service. Against the background of presentation of the Founder Daishonin’s teaching to the Imperial family, Seiyu’s desire to be part of such a ceremony can be imagined. Moreover, Seiyu refers at the end of this book to the issue

of the High Priests' inheritance lineage, and he firmly admonished those who engaged in the corrupt practice of worshipping individual High Priests, saying that it was a form of superstition. It shows Araki's far-sightedness among the priests and believers of the school who were apt to become the frog in the well [knowing nothing of the great ocean].

“I will be reborn and serve”

There was a remission in his illness afterwards, but his condition showed little improvement, so he made up his mind and began to put his affairs in order in contemplation of his death. His wife, Kinu, had died in the spring of Taisho 10th [1922] and he also fell ill at that time. He suddenly felt aged and seems to have thought he didn't have much time left, so he resigned from the position of Sokoto and moved to [his son, Shohei's] Myoji temple. He spent quiet days of reminiscence there at the temple in the countryside, where he lived the rest of his life. Yet he did not lose his enthusiasm for the prosperity of the correct teaching, and enjoyed putting his ideas into words.

For example, he responded immediately to a thesis by Nissho Honda [high priest of the Kempon Hokke school and a reformer of Nichiren Buddhism, 1867 to 1931] which appeared in the April Taisho 11th issue of the “Hokke” magazine under the title “View of Religion in the Lotus Sutra,” and which made light of the mandala Honzon. He wrote a blistering criticism of the piece in “Dai-Nichiren,” under the title “Out of kindness.” After that, he wrote to his friends in practice in the September Taisho 11th issue, under the title, “This is my confession,” concerning his views on faith. I am going to post the full text here. [Note: it was translated into modern Japanese. His writing is in a literary style that has become rather difficult for a modern Japanese person to understand, so the author modernized the translation].

Confession of Seiyu Araki

As I expressed last Autumn in the preface to my book, I converted to our school in December in the 4th year of Meiji [1871] and took faith in the Dai-Gohonzon of Kaidan of the Honmon.

In the 6th year of Meiji, the Ministry of Religion issued an order directing each sect to designate a general head temple to which all the temples of the sect must belong. The 54th High Priest at the time, Nichi'in Shonin, without any thought of sparing his life, remonstrated with the government. I, then, with the resolution to accompany him to the last, went with him to Tokyo after exchanging the water cups with the main believers of the temple. It was the beginning of my service.

After that, in Meiji 16th [1883], we established the Conference to Protect the Teachings to reorganize the financial structure of the Head Temple. Thereafter, from May of the 17th year to December of the 18th year of Meiji, I made an effort to resolve several issues, including: (a) the Tree Felling incident involving the Sanmon gate, (b) the long-lasting movement (as long as 15 years from the 18th to the 33rd year of Meiji [to 1900]) regarding the separation of the seven head temples and their independence, and (c) a campaign to officially obtain the school's name of Nichiren Shoshu. In this way, I did my best to help support and sustain the Head Temple for the benefit of the teaching practice.

Of course, during those times, I had the help of my friends in faith; therefore, my efforts amounted to a mere speck compared to the task before me, that is, the task of repaying our debt of gratitude to the Daishonin. I also did Shakubuku among various sects from the prime of my life and had a lot of debates and exchanges with various Nichiren schools. I was blessed with a win every time, but it can be difficult to believe in the correct teaching and, despite the wins, my efforts didn't have as much effect as I had hoped. I attempted, together with the elders, to raise the level of study and propagation, but half way into the discussion an obstacle came up and, unfortunately, the project fell through. I also wrote a few books, and charitable friends offered to help with publication, and thus we were part of the practice of giving instruction to convert others; yet this did not constitute true practice for the sake of enlightenment. Reflecting on my own practice to attain enlightenment, I sat in front of the Gohonzon and did Gongyo morning and evening and this was the best I did. Thus, I engaged in a meager practice with words and thoughts, but out of the three types of

practice, my practice by way of the body, or by deeds, amounted to nothing. This is the main motivation for this confession.

I was born into a family of the Shinshu faith [Nembutsu sect] and from infancy I deeply believed in the doctrine of cause and effect in connection with all things. I also believed that I was born with karma from my previous life, and I became even more convinced of this after I became a believer of this school. The principle of lessening one's karmic retribution, or the principle that this lifetime's cause will become the effect in the next lifetime if it is not realized in this one, has come home to my heart. Therefore, I've become so good at resigning myself to any fate that I am almost suspicious of myself. In the end, I have become so unattached, even in my love for my wife and children, that I wonder if I am cold-hearted. And yet, I find that I have been moved by the thought of profit and loss, that is, by my business.

I came to Osaka when I was 21 years old, but, unlike today, there was then no store that would hire me as an apprentice in the absence of a sure guarantor. Of course, I knew no one, and my available funds were meager. Moreover, I became distressed by having to pay a lodging fee of 2 *shu*, or today's 12 *sen* and 5 *rin* [a little over \$1] a day. As a result, I had no choice but to rely on the person who boarded with me on the old fast boat from Shimonoseki and ask him to introduce me to a rice market trader in Dojima. This became my way of living and, in the end, I became a speculator. In this capacity, either because of benefits, effects from a previous life, or success by fluke, I made some profit and obtained an official license as a broker. Then I was elected a member of the Board of Trade as well as a member of the City Assembly. I worked my way up in this way without a hitch, and saw it all as the benefit of practice, so my faith became even firmer. I came to believe more deeply in the maxim, "It could never come about that the prayers of the practitioner of the Lotus Sutra would go unanswered."

Although I had not prayed for worldly profit as such, I assumed I could make money as long as I remained faithful, and gradually I started to make light of the essential requirements of the path of duty, which are diligence and endeavor. Of course, I stress that his saying - "It could never come about that the prayers of the practitioner of the

Lotus Sutra would go unanswered” - is never false. There is a profound meaning in it, but I hadn't listened to its true meaning, and relied on my own thought that, if I made more money and contributed half for the teaching and kept half for myself (as if I was doing business with the Daishonin - well, of course, not seriously) as I was practicing this teaching, I would be able to keep making money. This, though, was not carried out appropriately by way of my deeds [out of the three types of practice]. Forgetting truth and falsehood in regard to business and people's differences of karma, I thought that I could advance in life without difficulty as long as I practiced Buddhism, but I was living inattentively. After a time, I began to have losses in business and disaster struck my household; then, suddenly, I got flustered and began attending morning Gongyo at the temple and the monthly Head Temple pilgrimage, and asking a priest for prayer. If no benefits were seen from these actions, I thought, some people might stop the practice and have a slanderous mind.

Thankfully, from the beginning of practice of this great teaching, I had engraved the words of Kaimoku-sho in my memory:

“This I will state. Let the gods forsake me. Let all persecutions assail me. Still I will give my life for the sake of the Law.”

So, I have never slandered the Law, but I had a close call.

At that time, a businessman who was a good friend of mine kindheartedly advised me to “quit your insubstantial business,” but as I had no other experience, I continued. However, in trading, if I sold, the market went up and if I bought, it went down, and I ended up unable to alter this outcome in any way. Reflecting on this, I don't know if I made negative causes in my past lives, or perhaps neglected to make the cause of working hard in this lifetime, just hoping for lucky profits, which goes against the teaching that “there is no true effect without a true cause.” In the end, I couldn't make a profit, and I feel totally foolish and ashamed to only realize this for the first time today, when I'm seventy-two. It is because I had followed a vacuous business and neglected hard work during the prime years of my life. It was not

a benefit that I made money at first, nor punishment that I fell into a difficult situation later. Considering them to be benefits or punishment is still in the category of superstition. We would be true believers if we took both profit and loss, suffering and joy, and ups and downs to be benefits, citing the teaching, “Suffer what there is to suffer, enjoy what there is to enjoy. Regard both suffering and joy as facts of life, and continue chanting Nam Myoho Renge Kyo.”

It is wretched that I realized this only at seventy-two years of age. Still, I suppose it is still ten years earlier than if I had recognized it when I was eighty-two, and, if I hadn't noticed it for the rest of my life, I might not have realized it for tens of thousands of eons. Therefore, I have made up my mind to throw everything away and lead a hard-working life from today. I will follow the Daishonin's practice of the Lotus Sutra in his own life and exert myself in practice by way of my body to attain enlightenment, and I will repay those who have bestowed upon me their kindness as much as possible in this lifetime.

I don't think there are any stupid believers like me in the world today, but if there is one, set me as a good example.

I am not suggesting that you make light of faith and apply your energy solely to your occupation. I am pointing out that both obtaining the benefits of faith and practice, and the affluence that comes from hard work, may be seen as accumulating the benefits of a diligent Buddhist practice, from which you will not have regrets when you are old, like me; I urge you to regard your faith and occupation as the wings of a bird or the wheels of a cart, as the teachings alert us to exert ourselves in both faith and precepts. I would like to repent, and presumptuously caution you on this point. The Daishonin says, “It is now the time of Mappo, in which we uphold this Mandala with our bodies, embrace it in our hearts and chant it with our mouths.” Alas, those who uphold the Mystic Law are as few as the specks of dirt that can be placed on a fingernail!

Nam Myoho Renge Kyo Nam Myoho Renge Kyo

I wonder if what the Lay believer Seiyu reflected on and made his confession about in his practice, and what he advised to his fellow believers, is not being repeated today.

When the Soka Gakkai was enthusiastic about their Shakubuku campaigns, many people neglected their livelihoods and ruined their family lives. Even today, there are many members of a sect [Kensho-kai] derived from Nichiren Shoshu who are instigated and swayed by senior members to keep busy with inducement-related activities. Moreover, the top executives have incorrigibly used people's faith as a stepladder and sought fame and wealth by inciting passive and good-natured common believers into enthusiasm. If the Lay believer Seiyu saw how today's Sokoto [Mr. Ikeda at that time] and the top executives act, he would be flabbergasted.

Imperial proclamation of the title “Daishi” [Great Teacher] to the Daishonin

One of the reasons that Nichiren-ism flourished in the Taisho era [1912–1926] was the role it played in the rise of the spirit of nationalism. In this regard, one of Nichiren-ism's highest attainments was the Imperial proclamation of the posthumous title, Rissho Daishi [Great Teacher of Establishing the Correctness] for the Daishonin.

The founding teachers of various Buddhist sects had been given the posthumous title of so-and-so Daishi by the Imperial court, but the followers of Nichiren Daishonin had not had, up to that time, either motivation or opportunity to petition the court for the Daishi title. Therefore, Nissho Honda, et al. [ref. to the section on “Taisho Democracy and Nichiren's followers”] advocated this measure as a new goal for the unification of Nichiren's followers, to make up for the failure of the previous unification movement. In modern Japanese society, centered as it was on the role of the Emperor, such a measure would have been extremely effective in promoting recognition of the group and its engagement in propagation work. In the 11th year of the Taisho era [1922], the time became ripe for the recognition of the movement, and a petition was submitted to the Minister of the Imperial Household via the Minister of Education. On the petition, the names of influential people

in various fields, including the leader of each Nichiren school, were listed. We can see that it was a movement gathering all the resources of Nichiren's followers, together with military personnel, politicians, bureaucrats, and so on.

Petition to grant the title of Daishi for Nichiren Shonin from the Imperial court (.....) September 11th in the 11th year of Taisho

[There are petitioners' names here, including the high priests of nine Nichiren schools, with Nissho Abe of Nichiren Shoshu listed second. A dozen notable public figures are listed afterward.]

Thus, on October 13th of that year, the title of "Rissho Daishi" was proclaimed by the court, and celebrations were held. It was a time when the groundswell of Nichiren-ism was at its peak and pervaded society widely. Seiyu Araki also seems to have collaborated indirectly with the movement, though he did not describe it in concrete terms. On hearing the news of the proclamation, he immediately contributed a congratulatory address in the "Byaku-rengé" magazine under the title "Celebrating the Imperial proclamation of a posthumous title for Nichiren Daishonin." He stated that the teachings of the Daishonin were all about Rissho Ankoku [establishing the correct teaching for the peace of the land] and, thus, the title of Rissho Daishi was most suitable for him.

Of course, at the time, there were some who held the opinion that "It's no good getting the title now." However, this view was held by only a small number, and the majority of the priests and believers of the school seemed to have welcomed the news. Indeed, when considering the spirit of the Daishonin's teachings, which transcend nationalism, it is not something that we can praise unreservedly. The Daishonin's virtue is not affected by whether or not he has the support of the authority of the Emperor, and such support does not reflect the Daishonin's will, insofar as he admonished against an attachment to fame and wealth. On the other hand, we need not jump to the conclusion that granting the title was a slander of the teaching without taking the difference of the time into consideration. And, of course, the strict caution against slander does not entail breaking relationships with

people of other sects and schools. As “On Formality [“Kegi-sho,” by the 9th High Priest, Nichi’u Shonin]” says, we should maintain courteous and respectful relationships in the secular world, irrespective of religion. In the sphere of religion, we also behave according to high standards, whether it involves the comparison of Buddhism and non-Buddhism, Mahayana and Hinayana Buddhism, or true Mahayana and provisional Mahayana [of the “Fivefold comparison”]. For instance, when we cooperate with a non-Buddhist group, or when we cooperate with other Nichiren sect followers to criticize the Nembutsu faith, or when we work together with other Nichiren schools to research the Daishonin’s writings, it is totally fine that we collaborate with others. As to the proclamation, it is not an issue to be viewed negatively when we consider our responsibility to spread the Daishonin’s teachings in real society, and the ways we may teach Buddhism in secular terms [of the “Four ways of preaching”] in a society with nationalistic views centering on the Emperor.

It is easy to comment on anything from an irresponsible place in today’s free-speech era, but such commentary also tends to become self-centered criticism. Moreover, considering the tendency and aim of the Soka Gakkai and its circle, I cannot possibly agree with their scheming criticisms.

On this celebratory occasion, Seiyu Araki contributed his remarks to the magazine “Dai-Nichiren”; these appeared in the November issue of the same year under the title of "Celebrating the Imperial proclamation of the posthumous title for Nichiren Daishonin." In February of the following year, he published "On the Honzon, most supreme of the world," which examined the origin of the Honzon of Kaidan, as a commemoration for granting the title. This book was also dedicated to the Emperor and Empress. A calligraphy by Naganari Ogasawara was displayed on the opening page of the book.

Demise

On September 1st in the 12th year of Taisho [1923], a great earthquake of magnitude 8 struck the Kanto [Tokyo and the surroundings] region, causing an unparalleled disaster, with a death toll of over 91,000

persons and 460,000 houses burned to the ground. In the wake of this catastrophe, society would soon incline toward militarism. Our school did not escape the damage caused by the earthquake; Josenji temple, Hongyoji temple, Myoenji temple, Hodo-in temple in Tokyo and Yokohama-kyokai institute all burned down. The Odawara-kyokai and Kanagawa-kyokai institutes fell, and the Great Reception hall and sub-temples in Taisekiji were partially destroyed; thus, we too suffered unprecedented damage.

As an additional misfortune for our school, Nissho Shonin, the High Priest at that time, died at Minaguchi-ya in Okitsu, where he was staying for medical treatment; his death occurred on August 18th, immediately before the quake, and the funeral was to be held on September 7th, to be led by Nicchu Shonin, who assumed the role of successor from the Dai-Gakuto position. Along with the great turmoil in the Kanto and Tokai regions, this would mark the beginning of an era full of difficulties in the administration of the school, as the situation became more complex and a struggle to eliminate Nicchu Shonin ensued. [Readers may want to refer to “On issues regarding High Priests in modern times” by Rev. Meido Matsuda on this topic]

Seiyu Araki, living in the midst of this troubled society, day by day became increasingly conscious of the weakening of his body and mind, and wrote his last tanka poem, as follows:

For the dotard scant remains to be done
But reborn may I serve once again

On October 28th, his life ended at the age of seventy-three.

He was in a remote area, and there was continuous turmoil of communications and traffic in the aftermath after the great earthquake, so the funeral was held quietly at Myojoji temple with a few acquaintances present. Kyubei Tsuji, who later served as the Chief believer of Myojoji temple, along with others, carried the body to the crematory in a cart. It can be said that the quiet funeral was rather suitable for the Believer

Seiyu, who had abandoned fame and self-interest and wished nothing except to become the foundation of the modernization of the school.

His friends, believers in Tokyo who heard the news of his death, held the first seventh day memorial with the chief priest of Myokoji temple, Rev. Arimoto, as the officiator, and more than fifty priests and believers attended it in his memory, with chanting and prayer, and they talked about his person and his deeds for a long time after a supper. His Buddhist name is “Goshin-in Seiyu Nisshin Koji.”

Erection of his gravestone

In October of the following year, on the anniversary of his death, a gravestone was erected for the Lay Believer Seiyu in Myojoji temple's graveyard at the wish of Kotatsu (Yahei) Naka. Kotatsu Naka had admired Seiyu's personality and continued to support and trust Seiyu throughout his life, and after Seiyu died, his affection did not change. This can be clearly seen in Shohei Fukushima's statement for the Eye-opening service of the gravestone:

Announcing Statement-

I, Shohei, his foolish son, offering incense and deeply bowing, will speak of the late father in front of the grave.

He was born into a poor family, left an orphan at a very young age, and experienced many hardships in life. Although he climbed the stairs of prosperity in the middle of his life, he did not do well at all in his late years and finally died in this far region. Alas, how sad! However, looking at his life as a Buddhist, we see that he has achieved goals that no one else could have attained, such as on the issue of the Head Temple Tree Felling incident, the Conference to protect the teachings for the independence of the Taisekiji school, and the renaming of our school to Nichiren Shoshu. As to his study of the teachings, since it was done during his spare time while he worked at his business as a lay person, of course, it may not have been done thoroughly; however, he was at his best while debating. He often engaged in debates with formidable opponents

and smashed them; thus, he was a leading lay believer of our school. Therefore, it more than compensates for what he lacked. Many of my father's acquaintances, teachers and friends died before him, and he lamented his solitude in old age. Once his business failed, fewer people sought him out, but there were several who still valued and supported his Buddhist deeds after his loss of fortune. In particular, the lay believer Kotatsu Naka often donated money to him and saved him from poverty, and also helped him publish his books, thereby allowing him to achieve his wishes. The reason the father could heal his illness and die peacefully at my temple was truly owing to Kotatsu Naka's goodwill. The late father, facing his last day, wrote a *tanka* poem on a handkerchief and gave it to the lay believer Kotatsu Naka:

Apt to become damp is my handkerchief
 By my tears of gratitude for your compassion
 - Seiyu

The poem is enough to convey the father's love and deep impression. Then, further, Kotatsu Naka erected the gravestone and provided the place for a memorial service. What may the late father say underground?

I, his foolish son, reflect that I am truly foolish. I have not yet established the practice of attaining enlightenment nor contributed much to propagation. I eat the Buddha's food in vain and am wasting my life each moment. I have substantially failed to inherit and develop the father's wish, and have done nothing to please his body or his mind throughout his life. I am indebted to everything between heaven and earth, yet I have not returned even a fraction of the favor; facing the gravestone, which expresses the warmth of the lay believer Kotatsu Naka, I do not know what to say.

However, I have not abandoned my wishes, and I think of myself as one of the kindred of the Bodhisattvas from the Earth. May you,

father, lend me a few more years' time, comforting yourself at the Dharma residence. Then, I will not fail to meet you at the assembly of Eagle Peak with a big grin. Also, I will hold my dearest wish to repay the favor of the lay believer Kotatsu, to whom the late father owes a great deal.

Words cannot express what is in my heart. I chant Nam Myoho Renge Kyo, the word in fact of the whole Law, and offer it to the gravestone.

This is on the sixteenth day of October in the thirteenth year of Taisho [1924]

Monk Shohei, most respectfully
(From "A History of Myojoji Temple")

"A Postulation on the True Buddha Nichiren"

Shohei Fukushima truly felt that he owed a debt of gratitude to the compassion of Kotatsu Naka. Rev. Shohei had a self-indulgent nature with respect to worldly customs, and this undisciplined side had tended to make Seiyu grieve. Shohei had prostrated himself in front of his father's grave and, on bended knees, had expressed his remorse from the bottom of his heart, calling himself "his foolish son" as many as three times, and vowing, with tears in his eyes, to repay his father's favor. His father's teaching, and the true sincerity of his Buddhist friend Kotatsu, had awakened him. This being so, Shohei devoted his life to the study of the Buddhist teaching for years after this time in order to repay his debt of gratitude for his parents' favor. Shohei remained totally abstinent, although he loved drinking, and reformed himself. A great book called "A Postulation of the True Buddha Nichiren," published three years later, in September of the 2nd year of Showa [1927], is the fruit of that effort.

Nichiko Shonin [the 59th High Priest] contributed the preface to "A Postulation of the True Buddha Nichiren." It recounts that, for a time, Shohei had indulged in composing poems, devoting himself to Zen,

hard drinking, and casting off all restrictions, and thus was a constant source of worry to his father, Seiyu. However, late in Seiyu's life, Shohei changed his mind and started earnestly working on a study of the school's teaching. As a result, Seiyu finally was relieved. According to Nichiko Shonin:

The old man (Seiyu) told me about his [son's] major change rejoicing, and this reminds me of his contented smile in front of my eyes..... The late Lay Believer Seiyu Araki was a rare believer in modern times. A man of devout faith who was concerned for the future of our school, he once lamented that our school was dull. He then had his beloved eldest son become a priest in order to increase our school's prestige. That person is the author of this book, Rev. Shohei Fukushima. He told me how much the publishing of the book would delight the Believer Seiyu, as well as himself.

The circumstances of how Rev. Shohei awakened to the study of the teaching is described in the author's preface:

I have benefited from my parents far beyond the average person. Although I was given opportunities to study in various fields, none of them was a success, and even after I was thirty years old, I was still supported by my parents. I entered into the priesthood afterwards, but without performing my filial duty even for a day. I lost my parents a few years ago. What's more, my understanding of the teaching is enlightened by my father, and now, I weep day and night thinking over my great debt to my parents.....

He says that he has at least offered this book to repay his debt of gratitude to his parents.

People closely related

In the author's preface he lists the name of a sworn brother, Gibeh Araki, and expresses gratitude for his kindness, along with the benefits and support in study he received from Nichiko Hori, Tai'ei Horigome

[later the 65th High Priest Nichiju Shonin], and Matsumoto [Rev. Taiyu], as well as the financial support of Kotatsu Naka. This sworn brother, Gibeh Araki, had admired Seiyu Araki since youth, and he at length became his adopted son and inherited his first and family names. It is not clear whether he was a blood relation. He became a devout believer through Seiyu's proselytizing, and was successful in the trading business in Yokohama; he then expanded his business and started a cannery in Otaru [Hokkaido]. At that time, he consulted with Seiyu for a suitable man for the project, and Seiyu recommended his nephew Nishio. So Kisaburo Nishio left for his new post as manager of the factory in Otaru.

This Nishio also became an earnest believer under Seiyu's influence, and often held propagation lectures and created a group of about 30 households he had proselytized. In September in the 9th year of Taisho [1920] he managed to establish the Otaru Institute of Propagation (today's Myoshoji temple) together with a locally influential figure, Mr. Ochi. However, Nishio failed to exhibit an aptitude for business and was unable to run the cannery effectively. The story passed down to the descendants of the Fukushige family was, "He was prodigal and let the cannery go bankrupt." So, his conduct was damaging to Seiyu's reputation. Nishio, however, looked for a chance to make a comeback by going to Sakhalin in the 14th year of Taisho [1925]. There he did his best to establish a new business as well as a new location for propagation. He visited many places and, in October of that year, established the Karafuto [Sakhalin] Institute of Propagation in Maoka town where Rev. Koga Arimoto visited for lectures. [Today's Kholmsk. The Southern half of Sakhalin, was a Japanese territory from 1905 to 1945.]

As for Gibeh Araki, he settled in Nakano, Tokyo, and belonged to Myokoji temple. He was also an earnest believer who inherited his devotion from Seiyu. He died in 1945

Around the first year of Showa [around 1925], a study session was held every month with Taiei Horigome of Kanki-ryo [later Shorinji temple] of Nakano, Kikuju Oishi, Shohei Fukushige and others invited as lecturers, offering his home as a meeting place. There were usually forty or fifty participants there, and Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, the first

president of Soka Gakkai, began attending the meetings. Eventually, these monthly lectures at Gibeh Araki's house were developed into a monthly lecture at Kanki-ryo of Nakano. Moreover, the family of Gibeh Araki afterwards prospered, and it is said that a descendant became the manager of the Ikebukuro branch of Mitsukoshi, but this is not confirmed.

By the way, the second son of Seiyu Araki, Ryuhei (who died in 1944), visited America to pick up his brother after graduating from Osaka University of Commerce and got a position at Mitsui & Co after returning. He was then relocated to Fukuoka, but it seems that he was not blessed with good health, so he left the company and concentrated on medical treatment. It happened that his younger sister was married to a banker, Mr. Aibe, and lived in Dalian city [in China, ceded to Japan after the Russo-Japanese war in 1905], so he often crossed the sea, where he helped Hango Okumura, Juzaburo Inomata and others who were working hard as believers of our school with propagation. Eventually, this group developed into thirty to forty households, so in Showa 14th [1936], he set up the group, Hosshin-kai of Nichiren Shoshu, and invited his brother, Shohei Fukushige, to come to Dalian. Thus, it seems that many of the people who were taught by Seiyu Araki had strong faith and were also leading the way in propagation overseas, and this points to a significant thought. Given that the wish of Seiyu Araki was to propagate the correct teaching, and that it was he who had proposed the significance and name of "Gohonzon endowed to all living beings in Jambudvipa" for the Gohonzon of Kaidan [Dai-Gohonzon], it may be that he will be reborn and will spread the Daishonin's Buddhism throughout the world.

Chronological record of Seiyu Araki

[The original of this record includes his writings, such as 18 books and 41 articles; however, they are omitted here as none of them is available in English. It also has a list of 5 articles by those he debated, as well as 8 articles about him written by his relations, but they also are omitted. The original includes the source of each item, but they are omitted here.]

1851 Born into the Fukushige family of the Choshu clan in today's Hagi city of Yamaguchi Prefecture. Bereaved of his parents when very young, and was raised by his grandmother. At 8, was adopted into the Araki family.

1868 Jan Participated in the battle of Toba Fushimi at the age of 17 as an escort of Hirofumi Ito.

1871 Went to the Kyoto-Osaka district on his own and was employed by a rice market trader at Dojima [Osaka]. Converted to the general Nichiren sect, then later became a Fuji Taisekiji school believer at 21 years of age.

1873 Jul Accompanied Nichiden Shonin to submit a petition regarding the issue of the integrated head temple and to temporarily move the Dai-Gohonzon to be concealed in the Maeda mansion at Hongo, Tokyo.

1875 Converted Tose, Mistress of the Terada-ya Inn at Fushimi, Kyoto, to the Fuji school and married her third daughter, Kinu.

1876 Feb The eight head temples of the Fuji school were allowed to separate from the general Nichiren sect and became independent as the Komon [Nikko's followers] school of the Nichiren sect.

1876 Apr Stayed in Kyoto and then settled in Osaka.

1876 Sept 20 The Kuragaki Debate arose versus Myohoji temple when some of their believers from the Nose region left that temple to join the Fuji school. Renzo Kato and Gibeh (Seiyu) Araki responded to it and settled the issue the following year.

1878 The eldest son, Shohei, was born. A debate between Nichiden Shonin and Nisshi Tamano occurred.

1880 Sep 4 Invited Nichiden Shonin to his home in Dojima.

The end of 1881 In Dojima, Osaka, he took over the Shibuya beer business at the start of Japan's brewing industry, but it failed. After that, the technique and facility were transferred to Gisuke Konishi.

1883 Apr Around this time, the tree felling affair involving the government's confiscation of a forest surrounding the main gate of Taisekiji occurred, and at the request of Nichiden Shonin he engaged in negotiations with the government until the affair was resolved in December two years later.

1883 Aug The conference to protect the teachings was held for the perpetuation of the Head Temple, as there was significant debt to be worked out, and priests and believers from all over the country gathered. Jigan Oishi (Nichi'o Shonin) was the chairman and Ei'ichi Araki served as the vice-chair.

1885 Apr He had a debate with Mr. Hatakeyama, the leading believer of Hondenji temple of the Icchi [Minobu] school, regarding the conversion of Mr. Yushichi Minami.

1885 Jun Nichiden Shonin assumed the High Priest's seat for the third time. Araki continued to contribute to the separation and independence movement.

1889 Apr Presented the collected Goshō to Mr. Olcott, the president of the Ceylon Theosophical Society.

1889 Aug 27 The start of The Propagating Association of the Legitimate Nichiren Sect. Kakudo Matsushima, Seiyu Araki, and Doe'i Kato were appointed headquarter secretaries as representatives of the believers.

1889 Oct 19 Araki was on a business trip to Hakata, where Rev. Fujimoto visited him, and he immediately vowed to make his best effort to support the Propagation Association and donated 10 yen.

1891 Jun 12-21 Invited Nichi'o Shonin, Rev. Tsuchiya, and Rev. Abe to his home on their way back from preaching in Shikoku.

1891 Nov 7 Mr. Araki and his colleagues took the initiative in sending donations to the Great Kanto Earthquake rescue effort.

1892 Oct Donated 50 yen for re-roofing the Reception Hall and the Mie-do temple of the Head Temple.

1892 Oct Presented the second petition for buying back the Head Temple's old precinct from the government. Assumed the official Koto [Chief believer] position around this time.

1893 Oct. Became a shareholder of the Osaka Rice Trading Company with 8 shares. (23rd standing out of 152 shareholders)

1893 Dec Was endowed with a reward Gohonzon for the re-roofing of the Reception Hall and Mie-do temple.

1893 Dec Regarding the establishment of the fund for study, he submitted a proposal in support of Mr. Junichiro Shimoyama.

1894 Jan Araki family made a New Year's visit to the Head Temple.

1896 Nichi'ō Shonin summoned leading priests and believers such as Rev. Myokaku Shaku (the Chief of Study), Rev. Fujimoto, Mr. Araki and so on to the Head Temple and held a series of conferences for the petition of separation and independence. Araki worked for its realization.

1897 Sep 20 Ji'ichi Sato and Seiyu Araki met with Mr. Kume, the Director of the Department of Internal Affairs, regarding the appeal of separation and independence.

1898 Jun 3 Elected as a member of the Osaka City Council on the recommendation of the members of the Osaka Chamber of Commerce.

1899 May Became a director of the Osaka Dojima Rice Exchange. He resigned in September of the same year.

1899 May 26 Sent his eldest son, Kohei, to the United States as an attendant to Kentaro Kaneko and to study abroad at the University of Chicago.

1900 Sep 18 The separation and independence of the Fuji (Taisekiji) school from the school of Nikko's followers was approved.

1901 Sep Debate between the Fuji school of the Nichiren sect and the Kempon Hokke school.

1901 Sep Buy-out of the old precinct of Taisekiji was permitted.

1903 Mar The 5th Domestic Expo was held in Imamiya, Osaka.

1904 Feb Diplomatic relations between Japan and Russia are broken, and the war between Japan and Russia began. Dream of the Empress Dowager Shoken, in which, on the evening of the outbreak of the war,

Ryoma Sakamoto appeared on the Empress's dream pillow and said that he would protect the Japanese Navy.

1904 Jun 1 Retired from the Osaka City Council after his term of office expired.

1904 Jun Seiyu Araki visited the official residence of the Minister of Communications, Oura, with the relics of Ryoma Sakamoto.

1904 Sep Isuke Terada and Seiyu Araki visited the Imperial palace. Received gift money and a roll of glossy silk.

1904 Dec Erected the Monument of the Loyal Soul of Ryoma Sakamoto at his grave in Higashiyama, and the Monument in Memory of the Imperial Gift at the site of Terada-ya Inn.

1906 The proposal of distrust concerning the Chief of Study (Nippu Kato) was submitted and the assembly was dissolved.

1907 Kohei Fukushige returned from the United States.

1909 Jul Great fire in Kita-ku, Osaka, and his home in Dojima was burnt down.

1909 Kohei Fukushige was appointed as Counselor of the Residency General and accompanied Viscount Sone Arasuke, the Resident-General of Korea.

1910 Feb Kohei Fukushige abandoned his career as a diplomat and entered the priesthood under Nissho Shonin. Was given the priest's name of Shohei.

1910 Mar Seiyu Araki visited Nissho Shonin at the Head Temple and petitioned for the monthly worshipping of the Dai-Gohonzon.

1910 Mar Lectured at speech meetings of the Sole Honmon Association at the Shiba Club in Tokyo and at Noborito.

1910 Jun During Nissho Shonin's stay at Rengeji temple, Seiyu invited him to his house at Tamaide.

1911 Feb 20 Rengeji temple was burnt down by an accidental fire.

1911 Jul Made two lectures at the speech meeting at Nishiki-tei of Kyobashi in Tokyo.

1911 Oct Presented a congratulatory speech at the 10th anniversary assembly of the establishment of Hodo-kai.

1911 (end) Around this time, after the destruction of Hokkeji temple in Sanuki by fire, Keihon Makita and Araki mediated regarding the successor chief priest, but it ended in failure.

1912 Jun 7 The change of the name of school to "Nichiren Shoshu" was officially approved. Araki was instrumental in the authorization.

1912 Jul 30 The Emperor Meiji passed away, and the era name was changed (to Taisho).

1912 Oct 20 The declaration ceremony of the renaming of the school was held at Taisekiji. Araki made a progress report.

1914 Around this time, the integration movement by Rev. Nissho Abe et al began.

1915 Nov The Taisho emperor's coronation ceremony was held.

1915 Dec 3 The Araki family donated a Gohonzon by Nippu Shonin and the analects of T'ien-t'ai at the ceremony of the completion of Rengeji temple and enshrining of the Gohonzon.

1916 Jan Seiyu Araki and Yahei Naka visited the detached palace and the house of each crown prince to donate the book, “The Correct Significance of the Sacred Teaching.”

1917 Mar 4 Held a lecture, “Refutation of the advanced criticism by Mr. Zenchi Tanabe of our school’s teachings” at Osaki Hall in Tokyo.

1917 May Nichi’o Shonin unified the propagation groups within the school and set up Nichiren Shoshu-kai, and published the magazine “DaiNichiren.” Seiyu Araki and Ki’ichi Tanabe also worked for it.

1917 Aug Rev. Shohei Fukushige was appointed the first chief priest of Myojoji temple in Shiga prefecture.

1921 Feb 11 His wife, Kinu, died at the age of 66.

1922 Oct 13 Imperial proclamation of the title Daishi to the Daishonin. Worked hard to gain the title.

1922 – 23 Became ill and moved to Myojoji temple.

1923 Oct 28 Araki died at the age of 73.

Posthumous Buddhist name, 強信院清勇日進大居士
“Goshin-in Seiyu Nisshin Koji.”

His last tanka poem,
For the dotard scant remains to be done
But reborn may I serve once again.

1924 Oct 28 A tombstone was erected at the Myojoji temple at the request of Yahei Naka.

Postscript

This book is a compilation of the revised and enlarged "A Forgotten Sokoto - A Short Biography of Lay Believer Seiyu Araki," serialized in 15 issues of the monthly temple bulletin "Enichi" starting in April of Heisei 11th [1999].

In Heisei 10th [1998], around noon on a day when azaleas in the temple precincts were in full colorful bloom, two gentlemen visited Genryuji Temple with a book. I was not acquainted with them until then, but they seemed to be true-hearted, with an air of wanting to talk about something important, so I asked them to come to the guest room. Self-introductions began right away, and I found that one was Mr. Koki Fukushige (residing in Sakai), a son of Rev. Shohei Fukushige, and the other was his friend, Mr. Masaharu Inomata (residing in Fukuoka), and the book they presented was a newly-published "Illustrated Faith, Practice, and Study," by Shohei Fukushige.

I was told that Mr. Fukushige grew up in Myojoji temple, was in the priesthood for a short time before the war, serving at Myokoji temple. He was forced by circumstances to quit the priesthood but continued his faith, and he became concerned by hearsay about Nichiren Shoshu in recent years. In particular, as he personally experienced the scandal surrounding the election of the Kancho/High Priest at the beginning of the Showa era, he was critical of the school that had fallen into a power-oriented and High-Priest-worshipping phase. Therefore, he published the book of articles by Rev. Shohei Fukushige, financed by the charity of the Inomata brothers, who had been proselytized by the Reverend, and he intended to present it to various groups and help to awaken the school.

I knew that Rev. Shohei Fukushige was the author of the famous book, "A Postulation on the True Buddha Nichiren" and was the chief priest of Myojoji temple in Shiga prefecture, and also that the Lay Believer Seiyu Araki was the first national Sokoto and very active in

debates and propagation during the Meiji and Taisho eras; however, I did not know that the two were the father and son.

As I had read articles and books by the Lay Believer Araki in the past, I asked about him, and then, unexpectedly, he spoke of things I had never heard before, going on as to the Terada-ya Inn, the brokerage at the Dojima Rice Exchange, the pioneering beer brewery, his ancestors, and so on, and being very curious, I was busy taking notes. I forgot about lunch and by the time I noticed, the conversation had lasted for nearly five hours, and naturally even I felt tired.

Afterwards, he visited several times, during which we got along well, and we began looking forward to his visits. In the meantime, I felt there was something karmic about this encounter, and I came to the thought that if I didn't put together Mr. Araki's biography now, no one would know about him in the future. However, his life was about a hundred years ago, and Mr. Fukushige's memory was replete with hearsay and imagination, and when I actually looked at the literature of that time, some of the ages or persons were not correct, so if I just put them into print as they were, it would contain falsehoods. Most of the facts needed to be verified, and I had to be prepared for a considerable amount of time and effort.

For instance, the facts about the siblings of his wife Kinu, that is, the children of Tose of Terada-ya Inn are still not resolved, and various sources mention it in different ways; there were said to be one son and two daughters, or one son and six daughters, or many children, or many adopted children, and so on. I asked him several times for information about the six daughters' husbands, but they were either people not corresponding with the time or there were other better-fitting candidates, and thus I have not come to a definite conclusion about this. Of course, though, without Mr. Fukushige's instruction, this book was surely not possible.

After that, I obtained many of his traces from the magazines of the school, from "Various Records" edited by Rev. Jundo Nose, from local history materials in the Prefectural Library, and so on, and finally I was ready to compile a biography. About a year had already passed before I started the serial.

When the serial started, Mr. Fukushige and Mr. Inomata were greatly delighted, and often brought precious photos or materials. However, when the serial was around the fifth part, Mr. Fukushige contacted me by letter from a hospital and informed me that he was ill. It read "It is a monotonous hospital life, but I make it my daily work to send Daimoku from my bed 300 times each to those with whom I have had a relationship until now, so it keeps me sort of busy. Thank you for your work on the biography, I will leave it to you to complete." I went to see him around October, and though he was behaving bravely, he was likely in the terminal stage of cancer and looked quite weak. His obituary arrived around the end of the year. Then, a few years later, I heard the news of the death of Mr. Inomata in Fukuoka, too, which made me keenly feel the transitoriness of people and time.

Looking back now, I cannot help but think that the two appeared to make me write about a benefactor of our school whom we should not forget. Although our exchanges took place over a short period, from the beginning I promised them to make it into a book so that it would last as a record. After that, I collected more materials from time to time, and 20 years passed before it was adequate. Though much is still left undone, I decided to fulfill my promise to them by completing it.

If anyone knows of incidents or documents not included here regarding Seiyu Araki, please instruct me by all means, as I have finished writing for now.

Translator's note and acknowledgement

The original book provides detailed references to the sources of all of the quotes cited in the text, but since there are no translations of them available in English, I have omitted the sources.

This is a biography of Mr. Seiyu Ei'ichi Araki written by the chief priest of Genryuji temple in Osaka, Rev. Kendo Kanno, and the author tells us how he came to write the book in the postscript. Little was known about Mr. Araki, as the title "Forgotten" indicates, while his son, Rev. Shohei Fukushige, was a familiar name to even young priests in Nichiren Shoshu because he wrote the book "The Thought of the True Buddha Nichiren" and others. On the other hand, as to his father, Mr. Araki, it was this book that enabled me to learn about his life and contributions for the first time. The book offers systematic descriptions of Nichiren Shoshu and of Japanese society at the time, and thus it makes interesting reading for a wide audience.

An impression I got from the book is that, if you view life as the most important thing you will end up with a limited set of values, which may be characterized as utilitarian or Epicurean. In contrast, when we come into contact with a significance that extends beyond life, we can actually embody the value of our own life more deeply. There are certain times when we may become conscious of this, though we are usually unaware of it. Accepting our life as it is and also encountering the reality of death, we may look back and sense that we had to live our life like this, as the opposite of a life that seeks personal interests. Yet, there is a key to how we can realize freedom in a life so defined. We may find hints of it in the protagonists of Greek and Shakespearean tragedies, while in Japanese traditional literature, from "The Tale of Genji" up to modern authors like Yukio Mishima, a different stance toward the weight of fate is indicated; that is, the Japanese have traditionally taken in fate with a sense of gravity. Araki's life embodied such a paradox, combining limitations and freedom, as he confessed in the last chapter, called "I will be reborn and serve." As a free person who lived in the Buddha's law, Mr. Araki shows us the rich potential of the ordinary person's life.

The author, Rev. Kendo Kanno, was born in Fukushima prefecture in 1949 and became an acolyte under the 66th High Priest Nittatsu Shonin at the Head Temple Taisekiji in 1960. He was one of twenty or so boys whom Nittatsu Shonin made acolytes for the first time after he became the High Priest in the previous year, and he continued doing so until 1979, the year he passed away. Rev. Kanno graduated from Waseda University in 1971 and was assigned as the first chief priest of Renshoji temple, newly built at the Daishonin's birthplace in 1974.

An article he wrote in 1976 about Kosen-rufu, published in the official annual study report circulated among priests, had a few lines of criticism of the relationship of Soka Gakkai's activities to Kosen-rufu. He was then called before a kangaroo court for several hours by Mr. Minoru Harada (the current 6th president of Soka Gakkai) and Mr. Isao Nozaki (later a vice president), acting under the instructions of Mr. Ikeda at the headquarters of Soka Gakkai. The article had been brought to the attention of Soka Gakkai by the then chief of study, Rev. Shin'no (later Nikken) Abe, possibly to dodge a reprimand from Soka Gakkai by acting on its side. At that time, Soka Gakkai took the stance of "the year '77 line," harshly criticizing the priesthood. As a result, however, the kangaroo court became a trigger for the priesthood to stand up against Soka Gakkai's views on the teachings as well as the Nichiren Shoshu study department led by Rev. Abe.

He has been the chief priest of Genryuji temple, which appears in the text many times, for more than 40 years, and wrote many articles in addition to this book.

I asked Laura Midwood for assistance when I started translation of this book, and she was willing to accept my request and immediately started to help with it. During this period, Laura was going through changes in both her address and her job, so I particularly appreciate her dedication during this busy period of life to proofread my translation. The second edition was edited by Robert Epstein

Rev. Kando Tono, December 2022