

SIGNIFICANT DATE: April 2, 1958 — President Josei Toda's Death
One Person of All-out Commitment
By JOHN KASAHARA, New York Correspondent

We often hear and read about the concept of the oneness of mentor and disciple but many times do not understand the true depth of this idea. This April 2, the 40th anniversary of the passing of the Soka Gakkai's second president, Josei Toda, is another chance to take a look at the relationship of mentor and disciple.

Born in 1900, Josei Toda lived to be 58. Although this may seem like an early age to die, each and every one of the seven years that he was the Soka Gakkai president he spent working for and realizing a grand dream. This was the dream of world peace based on Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, following the dream of his mentor, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, the first Soka Gakkai president.

Toda was inaugurated the second president in 1951. His goal then was for the Soka Gakkai to introduce 750,000 households to the Daishonin's Buddhism before he died. The struggles that he and the young Daisaku Ikeda faced together in this campaign, as detailed in *The Human Revolution* novel, are unimaginable. But through what he learned from President Toda, young Ikeda led the campaign and helped Toda make his dream a reality — 750,000 did indeed join.

SGI President Ikeda has never spent a day without thinking of his mentor in life. He often speaks of how President Toda reprimanded him — but with the realization that it was out of his great compassion that he did so. Josei Toda found Daisaku Ikeda as a young man, taught him everything he knew about life and Buddhism, and educated him to become a world leader.

President Ikeda often talks about the power of a single disciple. He says: "Strength is not a question of numbers. One person of all-out commitment is enough." In building the organization, President Toda needed that one person. And Mr. Ikeda stood up to be that person.

There are many times in my life when I feel that like I am alone in my battle for victory. Those are the times when I need to engrave President Ikeda's spirit in my heart — that the one person must be me. I feel that I have to have the conviction, determination and dedication to fight under any circumstances, even if I must do it alone.

When we feel alone in facing our obstacles, we have to remember to boldly, courageously face the Gohonzon first and continue on the path we have chosen.

So, in commemorating April 2, I think of how Josei Toda was the foundation of the spread of worldwide kosen-rufu and how President Ikeda stood up and carried out his mentor's goal of spreading the Daishonin's Buddhism throughout the world. Now, 40 years later, I know that it's my turn to stand up and carry the torch that my mentor has kept so brightly lit, to take it into the next century.

President Ikeda says that "greatness as a human being is not determined by social position or academic credentials. The most respectable people are those who work for kosen-rufu as Nichiren Daishonin's disciples."

That's what I want to do.

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