

Like the Moon Shining Brightly in the Cold of Winter

I am reminded of a passage from Nichiren Daishonin's writings that my mentor, Josei Toda, and I spoke about as we walked along the street one chilly winter night, gazing up at the luminous full moon:

The moon shines more brightly around dawn than it does in the early evening, and is more luminous in autumn and winter than in spring and summer. In a similar fashion, the Lotus Sutra is even more effective in bringing benefit to living beings in the Latter Day of the Law than it is during the two thousand years that make up the Former and Middle Days of the Law. (WND-1, 94).

Mr. Toda said with deep feeling: "How wonderful is the great compassion of Nichiren Daishonin, the Buddha of the Latter Day of the Law! His teaching [of Nam-myoho-enge-kyo] shines its brightest to bring light and relief to those who are suffering the most in the most troubled of times."

In the February Campaign¹ of 1952—the year we celebrated the 700th anniversary of the Daishonin's establishment of his teaching²—I rose into action with a vow to repay my debt of gratitude. I was convinced that the time had come to spread the great light of Nichiren Buddhism, which I had learned about from my mentor, so that it could brightly illuminate this corrupt age.

This was in the period when the scars of war were still fresh in Japan, and people were struggling with serious economic hardship, illness, and other challenges. Many were confronted with truly harsh obstacles of destiny.

I had just been appointed an adviser to Tokyo's Kamata Chapter, and with the firm prayer that I would see every single member there become happy through the great power and benefit of the Mystic Law, I called out: "As President Toda's disciples, let's use this

¹ February Campaign: In February 1952, President Ikeda, then an adviser to Tokyo's Kamata Chapter, initiated a dynamic propagation campaign. Together with the Kamata members, he broke through the previous monthly record of some 100 new member households by introducing the Daishonin's Buddhism to 201 new member households.

² According to the traditional Japanese way of counting, Nichiren Daishonin established his teaching on April 28, 1253.



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campaign to make a breakthrough in our personal problems and each show actual proof of changing our destiny!"

They responded with determination and, through challenging themselves in chanting daimoku and telling others about the Daishonin's teachings, transformed themselves into courageous, active Bodhisattvas of the Earth. As the momentum of their efforts to reach out to others grew, they happily shared experiences of overcoming illness, unemployment, and other difficulties through their Buddhist faith and practice. This chain reaction of benefit and joy resulted in the record achievement of introducing Nichiren Buddhism to 201 new households in a single month. It created a breakthrough for the realization of my mentor's cherished wish [of achieving a membership of 750,000 households].

I fondly recall that our organization in ever-victorious Kansai also made its start around this inspiring time.³

With faith based on the spirit of oneness of mentor and disciple, there is no barrier or obstacle that we cannot surmount.

Now, as we celebrate the 70th anniversary of the February Campaign, our precious members around the world, with our youth in the lead, are striving once again to take a dynamic step forward in our movement for kosen-rufu and in their own lives.

The Daishonin writes: "For those who have profound faith, it is as though a full moon were illuminating the night" (WND-1, 94). With deep prayer, action, and unity, let's illuminate this important year like the brightly shining full moon!

Now is the time
to create
a golden history,
inviting our friends to join
our dance of mentor and disciple!

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³ Osaka Chapter was established on January 15, 1952.