

**SIGNIFICANT DATES**  
**FEB. 11: THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF JOSEI TODA'S BIRTH**  
**CELEBRATING A LIFE OF NOBILITY AND GRACE**  
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*Shin'ichi quietly placed his hand on his chest. In the inner breast pocket of his coat, he carried a photograph of his mentor, Josei Toda. He would never forget the time that Toda, ill in bed at the head temple just prior to his death, told him he had dreamt he had gone to Mexico.*

*Toda had said to him: "They were all waiting. Everyone was waiting. They were all seeking Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. I want to go—to travel the world on a journey for kosen-rufu.*

*"Shin'ichi, the world is your challenge; it is your true stage. It is a vast world." (—The New Human Revolution, vol. 1, "Sunrise," p. 8)*

**Oct. 2, 1960.** Japan Airlines Flight No. 800 takes off from Tokyo, bound for Honolulu. Rising above the clouds, Daisaku Ikeda sets off on his first visit overseas, on a mission for world peace.

**Oct. 2, 1999.** The Soka Gakkai Special Memorial Exhibition commemorating the 100th anniversary of Josei Toda's birth opens in the town of Shioya (birthplace of President Toda), in Kaga City, Ishikawa Prefecture.

Some 156 commemorative items, panels and gifts display SGI President Ikeda's unceasing actions and history of dialogue with various leaders, intellectuals, artists and citizens of the world. Representing only 0.5 percent of the approximately 30,000 items President Ikeda has received, each item evokes a beautiful bond of friendship and trust.

Four large photo panels of the Himalayas, Andes, Rockies and Alps taken by President Ikeda, cover the right wall; paintings of plum trees by Soto Ten, one of China's most famous painters, cover the left. In the center stands a line of three bronze statues: Napoleon crossing the St. Bernard Pass; Gandhi embracing the children of India, and a bust of Rabindranath Tagore.

Nearby stands a glass case displaying replicas of two Nobel Prizes for Chemistry and Peace, presented by Linus Pauling Jr., to President Ikeda. "Lotus flowers" by Houshorin, a famous painter of Hong Kong, bloom next to a vase painted with plum trees, presented by the Bright Society International Club in Korea. Against the back wall stands a line of medals received from Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador, Austria, France, Paraguay and Africa. Like a line of soldiers, they protect this citadel of peace.

At the entrance is a painting of President Ikeda standing next to his mentor, Josei Toda. Next to it proudly stands a bust of President Toda. The overhead lights seem to shine in his eyes...it's almost as if he were saying: "My dream. It's come true."



In *The Geography of Human Life*, authored by Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (first Soka Gakkai president), he describes the sea as a "place that opens to the world," suggesting that the lives of those born near the sea are also open to the world.

Josei Toda, the second Soka Gakkai president, was born on Feb. 11, 1900, in the town of Shioya, Kaga City, located along the Sea of Japan.

*The splendid, raging waves of the Sea of Japan  
the roar of the waves crashing against the shore  
bring back memories of the Port of Shioya.*

—From President Ikeda’s poem, “Song of the North Country” (Feb. 17, 1988, *Seikyo Shimbun*)

The seventh son, Josei Toda came from a family of fishermen; his father was a sailor, and worked for the Northern trade fishing line known as the *kitamaebune*. The family moved to Atsuta Village in Hokkaido in northern Japan when Mr. Toda was 2. “Napoleon,” his nickname as a child, as he was even then somewhat of an idealist, spent the first two years of his life in Shioya.

At the height of the fishing industry, Shioya boasted a population of 20,000—today it’s down to 990. A vast number of cats usually sit on the pier, along the emerald green Daishoji River, waiting for the fishing boats to come in from the Sea of Japan.

President Toda’s birthplace is usually bursting with flowers—daffodils in February, plum blossoms in March, apricot blossoms in April, and for a brief two or three days white lilies bloom among the weeds and grass in September.

*The past still remains in the house that my mentor was born in, where my mentor spent the early years of his childhood. The black tiles of the roof, the cracked foundation stones; there is a well...the source of the water is rich, and still flows unceasingly. Yearning for the virtue of my master, even now, the flow of visitors is never-ending.*

*Only once during his lifetime, he was said to have visited his own home of birth. Then there was a woman living there. One cold day, with the collar of his coat turned up, a tall man came to visit her. “I have heard I was born in this house,” he said to her, a light shining in his eyes. He fondly stroked the pole in the entranceway. “Please take care of this house forever. Good luck to you,” he told her.*

*That man was my mentor, Mr. Toda. It was the year before he was imprisoned, at the end of autumn. Perhaps he wanted to keep the memory of his birthplace in his mind before his impending great difficulties* (—From “Essays on *The New Human Revolution*,” April 2, 1999, *Seikyo Shimbun*, tentative translation).

Shioya District Leader Yuji Adachi summarizes the feeling of the members of Shioya by saying, “We have tremendous pride and joy at being able to be alive and practicing Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism from the soil of President Toda’s birth, on the 100th anniversary of his birth. That is truly a wonderful thing.”

It is ironic that President Toda, who suffered oppression from the national militarist government, was born on Feb. 11, National Founders Day, which commemorates the founding of Japan as a nation. It was on this day that the first emperor of Japan, Emperor Jimmu, was said to have ascended to the throne. *Kumo no ue no hito*—“one who dwells above the clouds”—is a phrase that describes those who seem to lead lives of nobility and grace. Indeed, President Toda’s life and spirit were of the highest nobility, soaring above the clouds into the skies of peace.

*(I would like to thank my friends, the members and the people of Ishikawa for their support in writing this article.)*