

**SIGNIFICANT DATES**  
**AUG. 24: SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S ANNIVERSARY**  
**OF JOINING THE SOKA GAKKAI**  
**STARTING ON THE PATH OF HUMAN REVOLUTION**

**BY ALEXIS TRASS, LOS ANGELES**

Aug. 24, 1947, is the date that SGI President Daisaku Ikeda formally joined the Soka Gakkai. He joined only 10 days after his first discussion meeting, on Aug. 14.

It was a time in Japan when people had little hope for the future, with the devastating effects of World War II still lingering in their minds. Remembering the harsh reality that anything could change in an instant—and not necessarily for the better—was all that was needed to plunge people into despair. Young Daisaku was no exception, but at the same time, searching for the correct philosophy on which to base his life, he wanted to believe in something.

He agonized over how to solve his problems and battled with feelings of inadequacy when he realized that he often was unable find solutions on his own. He was naturally intrigued when a school friend invited him to a meeting about “life philosophy.” This meeting turned out to be exactly what Daisaku was searching for.

Upon arriving at the meeting place, he was immediately struck by Josei Toda, who was leading the meeting. Toda, who would later become the second Soka Gakkai president, had a very direct way of speaking and an ability to answer questions in an ideological framework.

To young Daisaku, Toda’s answers made sense. He felt that Toda was a man he could trust.

Daisaku asked people about Toda and learned that he had been imprisoned for two years for his opposition to Japan’s participation in the war, and he protested the government-mandated allegiance to Shinto and the suppression of religious freedom. This was a decisive factor in Daisaku’s decision to make Toda his mentor. Because Daisaku had lost a beloved older brother in the war several years before, he was determined to devote his life to realizing world peace.

He later wrote of his first impression of Toda: “A man who had locked horns with militarism and endured two years in prison glowed nobly with the strength of his convictions. It wouldn’t be too much to say...that at 19 the question of whether or not a person had gone to jail for opposing the war had become a primary criterion for my trust.”

So what is the significance of Aug. 24 for us? Let’s imagine for a moment that President Ikeda was not able to attend that first discussion meeting. Or that he did attend but opted not to join the Soka Gakkai. Would the SGI be what it is today? Would most of us even be practicing Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism? The short answer to both questions is probably not, but there is so much more to Aug. 24.

We can think of Aug. 24 as the day that Daisaku Ikeda encountered the heart of the mentor–disciple relationship and began his path of human revolution. His decision to take Toda as his mentor in how to live a value-creating life would fundamentally alter the course of his destiny and ours as well.

We all want to be better human beings and effect change in the world—however big or small the outcome. One of the ways we do that is to find a model for what we aspire to be and dedicate our lives to putting his or her spirit and vision into action, building on his or

her contributions to world society. President Ikeda did that, and we can see that the results of his efforts for world peace go beyond what he could have ever imagined as he took faith in Buddhism 54 years ago.

*Aug. 24 is also celebrated in the SGI as Men's Division Day.*

Title: Starting On The Path Of Human Revolution  
Subject: World Tribune 08/03/01 n.3357 p.2 WT010803p02  
Author: Alexis Trass  
Keywords: Aug. Concepts Dates Disciple Gakkai Human Ikeda joins Mentor Path President Revolution  
Significant Soka Starting Study Terms Tribune World