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The Eighth Day

I HAVE received from you twenty pieces of rice cake as round as the full moon, and one bamboo container of refined sake as delicious as sweet dew. You should think of your joy at the start of spring as if it were the waxing of the moon, the rising of the tide, the grasses growing lush, or the rain falling.

The eighth is the day on which Shakyamuni Buddha, the father of all people, was born. On that day thirty-two mystic phenomena occurred. First, flowers blossomed and fruit ripened on all the plants and trees. Second, every kind of treasure welled forth from the earth. Third, without a single drop of rain falling, water welled up in all the fields and paddies. Fourth, night became as bright as day. Fifth, not a single sorrowful voice was heard throughout the entire major world system. All of the other signs that appeared were as auspicious as these. From that time on, for a period of over 2,230 years, the eighth day has been selected for the holding of auspicious events.

Moreover, now when everyone else in Japan has abandoned Shakyamuni Buddha, what roots of goodness from the past, I wonder, account for your believing in the Lotus Sutra and Shakyamuni Buddha, and for all of you not only gathering on the eighth day and making offerings, but sending flowers and incense to Nichiren deep in the mountains? How truly praiseworthy!

With my deep respect,
Nichiren

The seventh day of the New Year
Reply to all of you

Background
Nichiren Daishonin wrote this letter at Minobu on the seventh day of the first month in 1282 to Shijō Kingo. The Daishonin expresses his gratitude for the celebratory New Year's rice cakes and sake from Kingo and other believers in the Kamakura area. Kingo had also reported that a group of believers would meet to commemorate the birth of Shakyamuni Buddha on the eighth day of the month. The Daishonin praises this, observing that in a country
where most people have abandoned Shakyamuni, they not only believe in the Lotus Sutra and Shakyamuni Buddha, but also send offerings to the Daishonin deep in the mountains.

**Note**

1. Good omens mentioned in the Sutra of the Buddha's Marvelous Deeds in Previous Lifetimes. They are said to have occurred when Shakyamuni Buddha made his appearance in the world.