

Advancing Our Movement by Demonstrating the Principles of “Faith Equals Daily Life” and “Buddhism Is Manifested in Society”

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Hi everyone. My name is Antonio Choi, and I am presenting the Study Podcast for August. Your district may not be holding your study meeting this month, but I hope you’ll have the time to study the article on your own.

This August is the 75th anniversary of President Ikeda’s joining of the Soka Gakkai as well as the month for the Men’s Group general meetings. This is a significant month for us to renew our determination to repay our debts of gratitude to our mentor. We are studying his lecture entitled “Advancing Our Movement by Demonstrating the Principles of ‘Faith Equals Daily Life’ and ‘Buddhism Is Manifested in Society.’”

In this lecture, President Ikeda focuses on the point that the heart of our Buddhist practice is showing actual proof of the principles that “faith equals daily life” and “Buddhism is manifested in society.” In the opening paragraphs, he introduces words of founding Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi:

Mr. Makiguchi declared that “the supreme essence of Buddhism is demonstrating a way of life of the highest value,” which he called “the way of life of great good.” He added that the purpose of our organization is to demonstrate, study, and guide others to the way for creating this supreme value—unsurpassed happiness—in our daily lives, through how we actually live.

Now let’s study the first Gosho passage, which teaches that Buddhism encompasses all worldly affairs.

**The [“Teacher of the Law” (19th) chapter of the] Lotus Sutra states,
“[The doctrines that they (teachers of the Law who accept and uphold**

the sutra after the Buddha's passing) preach . . .] will never be contrary to the true reality" [cf. LSOC19, 304]. T'ien-t'ai commented on this, saying that "no worldly affairs of life or work are ever contrary to the true reality." A person of wisdom is not one who practices Buddhism apart from worldly affairs but, rather, one who thoroughly understands the principles by which the world is governed. (WND-1, 1121; "The Kalpa of Decrease")

In this well-known passage, the Daishonin quotes T'ien-t'ai, who says that "no worldly affairs of life or work are ever contrary to the true reality." We learn that the benefits of practising the Lotus Sutra are embodied in our daily lives, words and actions. Sensei explains,

Mr. Makiguchi placed great importance on members' experiences in faith. He saw these experiences of members translating faith into daily life as "actual proof of a life of great good" and "evidence of attaining Buddhahood in this lifetime."

Following the quotation of T'ien-t'ai, the Daishonin states, "A person of wisdom is not one who practices Buddhism apart from worldly affairs." With these words in mind, the Soka Gakkai members around the world strive to reach out to those who are suffering, bringing forth the compassion and wisdom of Buddhism, and contributing to others' happiness. Our experiences are a driving force for spreading the Mystic Law.

President Ikeda also makes an important point that "'Faith equals daily life' also means that daily life equals faith. In other words, that every aspect of our lives constitutes Buddhist practice." Our struggles in work, parenting, study, care-giving, illness, relationships, finances, and so on, are all Buddhist practices to lead us to attain Buddhahood.

Now let's study the second Gosho passage and learn how Nichiren Daishonin encouraged his disciple Shijo Kingo, a Men's group member, to overcome his major obstacles.

It is rare to be born a human being. The number of those endowed with human life is as small as the amount of earth one can place on a fingernail. Life as a human being is hard to sustain—as hard as it is for the dew to remain on the grass. But it is better to live a single day with honour than to live to 120 and die in disgrace. Live so that all the

people of Kamakura will say in your praise that Nakatsukasa Saburo Saemon-no-jo [Shijo Kingo] is diligent in the service of his lord, in the service of Buddhism, and in his concern for other people. (WND-1, 851; “The Three Kinds of Treasure”)

Shijo Kingo had incurred the displeasure of the feudal Lord Ema due to the false accusations of his colleagues. When Lord Ema fell ill, Kingo treated him and he recovered from his illness. Kingo regained his trust, but in return this aroused the envy of his colleagues, who even tried to kill Kingo. This passage is part of the Daishonin’s advice to him.

In it, the Daishonin says, “It is better to live a single day with honour than to live to 120 and die in disgrace” (WND-1, 851). He teaches us that happiness and life’s worth are not measured by the length of our time in this world, but by how rich, meaningful, and purposeful our days have been.

The Daishonin goes on to say, “Live so that all the people of Kamakura will say in your praise that Nakatsukasa Saburo Saemon-no-jo [Shijo Kingo] is diligent in the service of his lord, in the service of Buddhism, and in his concern for other people.” Here, by “diligent in the service of one’s lord,” the Daishonin teaches us the importance of becoming an outstanding employee at our workplace or excelling in our profession. “In the service of Buddhism” means to practice steadfastly, always basing ourselves on faith in the Mystic Law. “In concern for other people” means caring qualities, like a sincere interest in others, that earn the respect and trust of those around us as we live our lives in society.

President Ikeda explains,

The Daishonin urges us to live in such a way that we win the praise of those around us. By doing so, in accord with the principle of “the Buddha nature manifesting itself from within and bringing forth protection from without,” our virtues naturally emanate from our lives and bring the benefit of protection from without. To have others speak in our praise is a sign of the trust and respect of the people around us and in our communities.

He continues:

As members of the Soka Gakkai, we embrace the Mystic Law, putting the teachings of Buddhism into practice in society, and uphold faith for absolute victory, always employing “the strategy of the Lotus Sutra” (WND-1, 1001). Let us proudly continue our struggle as indomitable champions and invincible people of wisdom and win without fail.

In this lecture, President Ikeda shares his own experience as a young man when he struggled with the crisis in Mr. Toda’s business. He was determined to chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and fight with all his youthful energy and commitment to protect his mentor. He says,

I fully believed in the truth of the words: “When the skies are clear, the ground is illuminated. Similarly, when one knows the Lotus Sutra, one understands the meaning of all worldly affairs” (WND-1, 376).

Filled with gratitude at being able to learn from and fight alongside such a great mentor, I pressed on through the maelstrom and ushered in the resounding victory of Mr. Toda becoming second Soka Gakkai president. May 3 this year marks the 70th anniversary of that joyous occasion.

Those days of unremitting struggle are the golden history of my youth and the true Buddhist practice for human revolution.

In the closing section, President Ikeda says,

True victories are the victories we achieve each day. Without accumulating those daily triumphs, there can be no great victory in life...

[Y]ou—noble champions of humane ideals and values who practice the Mystic Law—must not be defeated. Win with genuine faith! Win in your daily lives! Win in society! Win in life! Win forever!

Let’s continue to expand friendships and share our experiences in this friendship month. Thanks for listening, and have a wonderful summer!