

Study for May 2018

Faith, Practice, and Study: The Basics of Nichiren Buddhism—Part 2 [of 3]

The Practice of the Soka Gakkai: Carrying Out Bodhisattva Practice in the Present Day

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Hi everyone! My name is Sachie Motohashi and I am so happy to present to you the podcast for the May study material.

It has been a few months since we have changed our format to a podcast, rather than a video. The podcasts, and also our past videos, are not meant to be shown at study but rather should be used as a tool to prepare for the meetings beforehand. Because of this purpose, we hope that this new format allows for more flexibility in accessing the content presented by the Study Department members.

May is a significant month for the members of the SGI. May 3rd marks the 67th and 58th anniversary of President Toda and President Ikeda's inauguration as second and third Soka Gakkai presidents. May 3rd is also Soka Gakkai Mother's Day. It is the month where renewed determinations are made and a kick off for the second half of the year.

This lecture is titled "The Practice of the Soka Gakkai: Carrying Out Bodhisattva Practice in the Present Day." It is the second part of a three part series. In the previous instalment, we studied about the importance of faith and the conviction that "winter always turns to spring." This month's instalment is about the two aspects of practice – practice for ourselves and practice for others. Many districts may choose to not hold a district study meeting for this month; however because of this three-part series, parts of this material can be included in the June study meeting as well.

President Ikeda begins this lecture by talking about Mahatma Gandhi and how true meaning of religion is seen through our every day actions. Throughout the lecture, President Ikeda often refers to examples of members around the world encouraging others, strengthening human bonds and their admirable efforts to expand the movement of kosen-rufu. In our study meetings, let's continue to encourage all participants, members and guests, to share experiences of their struggles and victories.

Diligent practice encompasses practice for oneself and others. President Ikeda says:

Practice for ourselves means efforts for our personal benefit, and specifically refers to our daily practice of gongyo. Practice for others means efforts we make so that others can also receive benefit, and specifically refers to teaching others about Nichiren Buddhism and spreading the Mystic Law. All our various activities for kosen-rufu, no matter how modest, constitute practice for others.

What this means to me is that your seeking spirit in strengthening your faith, practice and study just listening to this podcast constitutes practice for others! By building unshakable conviction, by advancing cheerfully and by sharing our personal experiences, we encourage others and that is the most noble way to live.

President Ikeda uses the quote from the gosho “On Attaining Buddhahood in This Lifetime” referring to a tarnished mirror which requires daily polishing to remain clear. This first gosho passage clarifies what constitutes “practice for ourselves.” What we must remember here is that the Daishonin refers to daily polishing and a daily practice. With so many things around us nowadays serving our need for instant gratification, I can often become impatient, wanting situations to change quickly or relationships to improve overnight. What I am then reminded of is the action of Bodhisatta Never Disparaging who, with incredible patience, respected everyone around him, even those who abused him, and continued day after day to live with the conviction that everyone will reveal their innate Buddhahood.

As practitioners of this Lotus Sutra, we strive to transform our deluded state of life into an enlightened one and help others do the same. The tarnished mirror that the Daishonin refers to does not change. It does not become a different shape or change the material that it is made of. The only difference between a tarnished mirror and a clear mirror is the daily diligent practice of polishing it. Likewise, our daily diligent practice of gongyo can transform our life from one of delusion to enlightenment.

President Ikeda quotes Josei Toda who said:

No matter what happens, you can win with daimoku. You can change hardship into strength, reveal your Buddhahood, and shape your own destiny. Just as you are, you can help all kinds of people become happy.

How incredibly encouraging! Let’s continue to share our personal experiences that support what President Toda said!

Along with practice for ourselves, we must also engage ourselves in practice for others. President Ikeda uses the passage from the gosho “Letter to Jakunichi-bo” to illustrate the importance of our mission as practitioners of the Lotus Sutra. In this gosho, the Daishonin urges his disciples to exert themselves to convey and spread the Lotus Sutra, in other words, practice for others. The three presidents, through their own example, have demonstrated the true greatness of Buddhism. There are numerous examples of members around the world, especially pioneer members, who

have done the same. Let's continue to study and share these stories through reading *The Human Revolution* and *The New Human Revolution*. These materials are invaluable in creating a solid foundation for our organization. We have been fortunate to have the history of SGI Canada in Volume 1 and 30 of *The New Human Revolution*!

My own examples of sharing this practice with others have not been smooth. When I reflect even in my most recent efforts, they have not all been "successful" in the individual jumping in to begin their practice. Rather, at times, it has felt quite disappointing. However, as Mr. Toda said:

Sharing Buddhism shouldn't be something painful or unpleasant. It should be done with joy.

Although this isn't always the case for me, I know that when I bring my uncertainties and worries to the Gohonzon, something is transformed for me and I can bring forth appreciation and the courage to chant for each individual's happiness. A good friend of mine who has been chanting for the past few years has recently shared with me that she would like to receive Gohonzon! I recall only about a few months ago when she shared that she didn't feel ready to receive the Gohonzon but I continued to chant and share my own experiences with her and encourage her to have specific prayers to see the greatness of this practice. Although I am so happy that she has decided to receive the Gohonzon, what was even better was the journey of her life in becoming happier and stronger.

Let's continue in this journey to live the happiest life and respond to President Ikeda with triumphant victories! I hope you have the most joyful study meeting in this historic month of May! Let's strive to make 2018 a year of brilliant achievements!

Thank you for listening. If you have any question regarding the material, please send an email to study@sgicanada.org.