

Creating a Century of Humanism in Which All Can Shine – Part 3 [of 5]

Putting Faith into Practice and Showing Actual Proof of Happiness

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Hi everyone! My name is Antonio. This month, we will continue studying President Ikeda's 5-part study lecture series called "Creating a Century of Humanism in Which All Can Shine". We will study Part 3 titled, "Putting Faith into Practice and Showing Actual Proof of Happiness".

This month is the 61st anniversary of President Ikeda's first visit to Canada. In his message given to us last year on the occasion of the 60th anniversary (of Canadian kosen-rufu), he said.

With the vast land of Canada as the stage of your activities, you have created the most beautiful unity of "many in body, one in mind," and while planting deep roots of trust and friendship in your communities, you have steadily expanded your ranks of Bodhisattvas of the Earth....

The pure spirit of true compassion to help others become happy, and the life force to live with complete security and peace of mind to the very end, limitlessly wells forth from our lives.

Now, let's move on to this month's study material. President Ikeda begins his lecture by talking about a tradition of Soka Gakkai's discussion meetings:

He says:

Mr. Makiguchi called these gatherings "discussion meetings offering experimental evidence" and "discussion meetings proving the way of life of great good." He regarded them as opportunities to share the process and results of putting the teachings of Nichiren Buddhism into practice.

This also applies to our discussion-based district study meetings.

For the SGI members, the daily life is the venue for Buddhist practice. In this month's material, we will learn about the importance of moving forward with a steady effort based on faith, encouraging and supporting each other in our daily lives.

The two Gosho passages President Ikeda has selected in this instalment both teach us the principles that "faith equals daily life" and "Buddhism is manifested in society." The first Gosho Passage is from "The Gift of Rice".

The true path lies in the affairs of this world. The Golden Light Sutra states, "To have a profound knowledge of this world is itself Buddhism." The Nirvana Sutra states, "All of the non-Buddhist scriptures and writings in society are themselves Buddhist teachings, not non-Buddhist teachings."

When the Great Teacher Miao-lo compared these passages with the one from the sixth volume of the Lotus Sutra that reads, "No worldly affairs of life or work are ever contrary to the true reality," he revealed their meaning and pointed out that although the first two sutras are profound, since their meaning is still shallow and fails to approach that of the Lotus Sutra, they relate secular matters in terms of Buddhism, whereas the Lotus Sutra explains that in the end secular matters are the entirety of Buddhism. (WND-1, 1126; "The Gift of Rice")

In this Gosho passage, the Daishonin teaches that the path to Buddhahood does not lie in isolation from the day-to-day affairs of life, but in the daily life in society.

In it, the Daishonin quotes a well-known passage, "No worldly affairs of life or work are ever contrary to the true reality", clarifying that every aspect of our daily lives and the world we live in reflects the principles of Buddhism. Many Soka Gakkai members including myself have engraved this passage as a guideline for

“faith equals daily life”. It is contributing to our work places and society at large that is the Buddhist practice to improve ourselves and the true path to attain Buddhahood.

President Ikeda says:

The light of Buddhist wisdom and compassion illuminates our troubled world and is a source of courage and hope. That’s why we work positively, based on the Mystic Law, for our own and others’ happiness and for the welfare of our communities and societies.

President Ikeda further teaches that members putting this principle into practice and applying it in their daily life is a tradition since President Makiguchi.

President Ikeda says:

[W]hen our members demonstrate the validity of this principle by actually putting it into practice, and when the supreme law of life for which humanity is collectively thirsting—that is, the Mystic Law for attaining Buddhahood—becomes easily accessible to all, then people will naturally want to share its benefit with everyone and help them attain unsurpassed happiness.

Practicing Buddhism as a way of life and sharing our experiences of receiving benefit—that is the essential practice of Nichiren Buddhism initiated by Mr. Makiguchi and the starting point of faith and practice in the Soka Gakkai.

Let’s move onto the second Gosho passage from “The Object of Devotion for Observing the Mind”, which explains the principle that Buddhism is manifested in society.

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; “The Object of Devotion for Observing the Mind”)

About this passage, President Ikeda teaches us:

The phrase “knows the Lotus Sutra” means to have a deep understanding of the essence of Buddhism. Because of the relationship between Buddhism and worldly affairs, one who thoroughly grasps the teachings of Buddhism can also understand the essence of all matters in society.

In terms of our daily existence, this means that by embracing the Mystic Law we can bring forth wisdom and show actual proof of our Buddhist practice in our work, our lives, and every aspect of society.

Of course, it does not mean that as long as we pray, we can get by even without making efforts. Sensei advises against such an attitude quoting Mr. Toda’s guidance in relation to business. He says:

Mr. Toda once commented: “There are those who have the simplistic idea that because they have the Gohonzon, they’ll naturally receive benefit even if they don’t put any thought or effort into how they conduct their business. This is a big mistake and must be categorized as slander of the Law [because it goes against the teachings of Buddhism] ...

People who fail to notice the weaknesses in their business or consider ways to improve it should seriously reflect on themselves. It’s vital that you keep studying and learning about your business and strive to do better. My wish is that you, my dear fellow members, will come to ‘understand the meaning of all worldly affairs’ as quickly as possible in the context of your own work and lead secure lives.”

Towards the end of his lecture, President Ikeda introduces the words of two sociologists of religion, Bryan Wilson and Karel Dobbelaere, who expresses their expectations for the Soka Gakkai, which aims to build a century of humanism through the spread of the human revolution of each individual. They recognize the Soka Gakkai as a religion of the 21st century.

Sensei concludes this third installment of “Creating a Century of Humanism in Which All Can Shine” by saying,

The inner transformation of each person will bring about a great change in society as a whole.

Let us raise ever higher the banner of “human revolution as the key to world peace” as we boldly and triumphantly open the way of Soka humanism!

I hope you have wonderful SGI Canada day and a joyful study meeting. Let’s continue to strive for Canadian kosen-rufu together with President Ikeda. If you have any questions, please feel free to send them to us at study@sgicanada.org.

Thanks.