

LIVE DILIGENTLY AND PROUDLY AS SOKA GAKKAI MEMBERS BY JOSEI TODA

“No worldly affairs of life or work are ever contrary to the true reality,” means that the Gohonzon and our jobs are inseparable. If we deeply understand the meaning of the Gohonzon, how can we slight our jobs? We should carefully ponder this matter.

The following is a translation of an essay by second Soka Gakkai President Josei Toda. The original article was published in the December 1955 issue of The Daibyakurenge, the Soka Gakkai’s study journal, and reprinted in Collected Works of Josei Toda, vol. 1, pp. 175-78.

The True Object of Devotion for Observing the Mind” reads, “Volume five of Great Concentration and Insight says, ‘The realm of the environment also has the ten factors. Thus an evil land has appearance, nature, entity, power, and so on’ (WND, 356). Here “the ten factors” also refers to the ten worlds. Our nation of Japan is not excluded from “the realm of the environment,” so it also has the ten factors, and therefore the ten worlds. Which of the ten worlds then does the condition of our land reflect? Needless to say, it is an evil land. Immersed in the four lower worlds,¹ people are suffering beyond description.

We are all too familiar with how hard it is to live in this country. That is probably why many of us took faith. It is also why I pray morning and evening to the Dai-Gohonzon: “Please relieve the people of all their suffering.”

There can be no doubt that pure faith produces benefit. However, if people are negligent at work, they will never succeed in their careers. It is a great mistake to imagine that as long as we have faith, benefit will appear and we will somehow become successful without exerting ourselves at work twice as much as others.

I want to strongly proclaim that each of us should devote ourselves to our work! In “Reply to a Believer,” Nichiren Daishonin states, “Regard your service to your lord as the practice of the Lotus Sutra. This is what is meant by ‘No worldly affairs of life or work are ever contrary to the true reality²’” (WND, 905).

“Your service to your lord” means our jobs, and the “Lotus Sutra” the Gohonzon. The Daishonin’s intent is that we must consider our jobs as if they were the Gohonzon. If we are not diligent at work, then our negligence amounts to slander of the Law.

Those who feel no joy toward their jobs are like those who lack joy in faith. No matter how much they may chant daimoku, they cannot possibly succeed in society.

“Worldly affairs of life or work” indicates our jobs, through which we sustain our living as members of society, and the “true reality” is another name for the Gohonzon. The passage “No worldly affairs of life or work are ever contrary to the true reality,” therefore, means that the Gohonzon and our jobs are inseparable. If we deeply understand the meaning of the Gohonzon, how can we slight our jobs? We should carefully ponder this matter.

As I mentioned before, our nation [Japan] is an evil land. Unless we work hard, exerting our utmost, we cannot live happily. Each of us must get out of debt and poverty as quickly as possible. We must cherish our work, think hard, and make every effort to succeed. If we

work for a company or someone else, we should delve into and take delight in our jobs. It is important that we live with the resolve to fulfill our responsibility at work.

I sometimes hear that there are young men's and women's division members who dose off at work. What a shame this is for a member of the Soka Gakkai! I hope they will read "Reply to a Believer" not merely with their eyes or minds, but through their actions. I hear that there are such people among men's division members as well. This is truly disappointing. I hope that all Gakkai members will rid themselves of such attitudes and lead lives more exemplary than others in society. In other words, I hope that they will live diligently and proudly as members of the Soka Gakkai.

I want to reemphasize the Daishonin's intent when he states: "Regard your service to your lord as the practice of the Lotus Sutra." We members of the Soka Gakkai must look upon our jobs as the Gohonzon, developing a sense of adoration and deep respect toward our work. Those who do so are in accord with the true Buddha's intent and possess resolute faith. If we strive in our daily lives with this spirit and do not neglect our Buddhist practice, we are sure to be protected by the true Buddha. Please live diligently and proudly as members of the Gakkai, and win in your daily lives. □

1. The four lower worlds are the four lower states of the ten worlds, that is, the realms of hell, hungry spirits, animals and asura (a type of demon in Indian mythology). In the Daishonin's Buddhism, the ten worlds signify the states of people's lives. Therefore, the four lower worlds represent the life-conditions of hellish suffering, hunger, animality and belligerence.

2. This passage appears in T'ien-t'ai's Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sutra as a summary of the following passage from the "Benefit of the Teacher of the Law" chapter of the Lotus Sutra: "The doctrine that they preach during that time will conform to the gist of the principles and will never be contrary to the true reality. If they should expound some text of the secular world or speak on matters of government or occupations that sustain life, they will in all cases conform to the correct Law."