

Podcast—SGI Canada Level 2 Study Exam

Hello everyone. My name is Sadaji. I'm presenting this podcast to assist you in studying "On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land" for the SGI Canada Level 2 Study Exam. SGI President Ikeda's lecture on this Goshō is published in the Level 2 Study Exam PDF file, as well as in the August issues of *New Century*, *Ère Nouvelle* and *Chinese New Century*.

To save time, I won't read the Goshō text in this podcast. Nevertheless, the most important aspect of studying the Goshō is to read the text over and over and engrave the passages in our hearts, internalizing Nichiren Daishonin's firm conviction and spirit.

Ikeda Sensei talked about studying the Goshō in his essay, which was published in the December 2022 issue of *New Century*:

Studying the Daishonin's writings rouses the Daishonin's indomitable fighting spirit in our hearts and causes our beings to resound with his great compassion to alleviate the sufferings of all people. When we read the Daishonin's writings, boundless courage surges within us, along with immense passion and wisdom for finding a way forward, no matter what difficulties or obstacles we face. (p. 26)

Regarding the exam questions from "On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land", the study material is Sensei's lecture, but the questions will be based on the Goshō text, the background, and the essential points as elucidated by Sensei. Sensei's additional guidance is not used for exam questions. This is standard for the content of Soka Gakkai study exams.

Let's now review key points from the study material. The references are based on the English PDF file of the exam study material. As noted in the footnote on page 6 of the study material, "On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land" is a treatise of remonstrance with the government authorities, submitted by Nichiren Daishonin to Hojo Tokiyori on July 16, 1260. It was addressed to Hojo Tokiyori because he was the de facto ruler of the Kamakura government. As explained on page 7, the catalyst for writing the treatise was the great earthquake of the Shōka era. Witnessing the people's suffering, the Daishonin was driven by an earnest wish to free people from sufferings and wrote this treatise to admonish the ruler.

The title "On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land" was chosen by the Daishonin himself. As described on pages 13 to 14, "Establishing the

correct teaching” means promoting faith in and acceptance of the correct teaching of Buddhism. “The correct teaching” is the Mystic Law that enables all living beings to attain Buddhahood. In a broader perspective, “establishing the correct teaching” means establishing in our hearts the principles of respect for human dignity and life that are taught in the Lotus Sutra so that they are established as the underlying and guiding principles of society. “The peace of the land” means realizing peace and prosperity in society as well as safety and security for all individuals in their daily lives. Here, “land” refers to where people dwell; it is not defined narrowly as the nation-state, nor is it restricted to any particular country.

We, members of the Soka Gakkai, study “On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land” as a practical guide for building a peaceful society rooted in the people.

This treatise is structured as a dialogue between a traveler or guest, representing Hojo Tokiyori, and a host, representing Nichiren Daishonin. It consists of 10 parts, or more specifically, 10 questions from the guest and 9 responses from the host. The reason there are only 9 responses is that the final section concludes with the guest’s pledge. This study material focuses on Parts 9 and 10.

By the explanation up to Part 8, the guest accepts the idea of “establishing the correct teaching for the peace of the land” presented by the host. In Part 9, he expresses his intention to discard erroneous teachings that slander the Lotus Sutra, and to earnestly seek the correct teaching of Buddhism. The host, pleased with the guest’s understanding, urges the guest to put an end to slander of the correct teaching. This is because the threat of war loomed. Several sutras are quoted in the treatise, among which the most well-known is from the Medicine Master sutra, which speaks of seven calamities. According to this sutra, seven calamities will occur if people turn away from the correct teaching and continue to rely on erroneous teachings. As discussed on page 8 of the study material, in this treatise, Nichiren Daishonin predicts that if slander is not put an end, the remaining two calamities—the “calamity of revolt within one’s own domain” and the “calamity of invasion from foreign land”—will occur. Throughout his life, the Daishonin made three remonstrations to the authorities, during which these predictions came true. These predictions were made not as detached prophecies, but to prevent people from suffering.

Let’s move on to the first Goshō selection from the 9th responding answer from the host. In it, it says:

If you care anything about your personal security, you should first of all pray for order and tranquility throughout the four quarters of the land, should you not?

This is a very famous passage. The Daishonin is saying that if we are concerned about our own safety and security, we should first pray for the peace and safety of the society in which we live. This is why the Soka Gakkai promotes the movement for kosen-rufu and establishing the correct teaching for the peace of the land. The Soka Gakkai is putting these words of Nichiren Daishonin into practice.

The next Gosho selection found on page 12 of the study material is from the 9th response as well. This section represents the conclusion of the treatise. In it, he says:

Therefore, you must quickly reform the tenets that you hold in your heart and embrace the one true vehicle, the single good doctrine [of the Lotus Sutra]. If you do so, then the threefold world will become the Buddha land, and how could a Buddha land ever decline? The regions in the ten directions will all become treasure realms, and how could a treasure realm ever suffer harm?

The Daishonin teaches that everything begins with the transformation of our minds or hearts—our human revolution. “The one true vehicle, the single good doctrine” refers to the ultimate good taught in the Lotus Sutra, which is the Mystic Law. When the Mystic Law is upheld as fundamental, this real world we inhabit, called the “threefold world,” will become a Buddha land—a society where the Buddhist spirit of respect for human beings and life is vital and alive. It is a world that values the ideal of realizing happiness for both ourselves and others.

Now let’s move on to the last Gosho selection on pages 16 to 17. In this final part, the guest declares:

But it is not enough that I alone should accept and have faith in your words—we must see to it that others as well are warned of their errors.

The guest fully accepts the host’s words and vows to set forth immediately to speak out against slander of the Law, to bring safety and security to the society, and to pray for peace in both the present and in future existences. This vow of the guest concludes this treatise. “On Establishing the Correct teaching for the Peace of the Land” begins with the guest expressing concern over the plight of Kamakura, and it ends with a shared vow between the guest and the host. This spirit of the treatise embodies the

spirit of the three founding presidents of the Soka Gakkai.

“On Establishing the Correct teaching for the Peace of the Land” is a writing of remonstrance, but for those of us living in a democratic society in Canada, the Daishonin’s statements in this writing serve as a practical guide that each of us can implement. I do hope that this Level 2 study exam will encourage faith for all participants and that you experience joy of the Goshō study. Finally, I would like to end this podcast by quoting words from Sensei in this study material.

The original aim of Buddhism is not to be satisfied simply with the attainment of one’s own enlightenment. True enlightenment impels one to take action for the happiness of all people... While courageously challenging our own human revolution, let us create a groundswell of dialogue, reaching out to talk with one person after another, to change society and bring peace and happiness to all people.

Thank you everyone for listening. If you have any questions, please feel free to send them to us at study@sgicanada.org. Thank you.