

**BACK TO THE BASICS
PRACTICE FOR ONESELF AND OTHERS
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Sometimes I think to myself how easy life would be if I could just go to work every day and come straight home without having to go to any meetings or doing any SGI activities. Or if I did not have so many phone calls to members to make at night, how relaxed my life would be.

Then I remember that what I am really dreaming of is a self-centered life. Though on the surface this may seem like a great way to live, it is in fact the sure way down the wrong path.

The reason why most of us are able to practice today and lead lives of value is because someone had the compassion to take the time to teach us about Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. If it were not for these people and their "practice for others," then surely many of us would still be leading lives without any hope, without a noble sense of mission. As practitioners of the Daishonin's Buddhism in the SGI organization, we all have found a great reason to live — not just for ourselves but for the happiness of the world.

Whether at work, at SGI activities or at home, there are always people around us who are suffering or in need of encouragement. Though our own lives may be hectic and not necessarily full of great things at this moment, I believe that it should be our greatest joy to reach out to those yearning for inspiration, chant with them and share SGI President Ikeda's and the Daishonin's writings with them.

The Daishonin says that "if you light a lantern for another, it will also brighten your own way" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1598). Based on this quote, President Ikeda once added: "Please be confident that the higher your flame of altruistic action burns, the more its light will suffuse your life with happiness. Those who possess an altruistic spirit are the happiest people of all" (Feb. 8, 1993, *World Tribune*, p. 4).

With this spirit in mind, let us all become victorious in our lives and help others to do the same. Practice for oneself and others is the great light illuminating the way for all of us in the 21st century.