MESSAGE TO LEADERS

Thank you for your tremendous efforts to support others through one-on-one encouragement, while making your districts shine as an oasis of hope and peace. Together we are strengthening our movement for the sake of humanity.

May Contributions provide vital funds to advance kosen-rufu and support our growing membership. Let’s create the most joyful May Campaign!

Let’s be sure to encourage members to create their personal Soka Victory by challenging themselves, based on faith. Contributing to advance kosen-rufu with appreciation for this practice is a powerful cause that cannot fail to bring benefit to the lives of those who participate.

We hope that this Guide is helpful to you. Thank you very much for all that you do!

USING THIS ENCOURAGEMENT GUIDE

Feel free to draw from this Guide when promoting May Contribution at the April and May Discussion Meetings and on Home Visits. Contents are below:

- Overview: Purpose & Benefit of Making Contributions
- Discussion Meetings & Promotion Ideas
- Contribution Guidelines for New Members
- Guidance and Encouragement
- Contributions Today

WAYS TO GIVE:

- Online at www.sgi-usa.org/contributions
- By phone at 855-744-2030
- In person or by mail

Please do not give or collect cash outside of SGI-USA Buddhist Centers. Thank you!

* Please review the latest guidelines regarding contributions from our newest members. Thank you!
FUELING KOSEN-RUFU’S ADVANCE

- The principles of Buddhist Humanism are urgently needed to transform the lives of individuals and our society today.
- Our continued expansion efforts, supported by members’ contributions, will ensure that we build a strong foundation for the eternal future of American Kosen-rufu.
- Making financial contributions and other causes to advance kosen-rufu will help to transform society and further our human revolution.
- Members’ contributions support the practice of our growing membership, activities, Buddhist Centers and new projects.
- Contributions also support efforts to reach new people with a message of hope to empower them to transform their lives.
- Offerings have been a part of Buddhist practice, dating back to Nichiren Daishonin and Shakyamuni’s time, and throughout the history of the SGI.

ADVANCING OUR LIVES & HUMAN REVOLUTION

- Making offerings give us an opportunity to express appreciation for our practice.
- Contributions provide vital fuel for our kosen-rufu movement. That’s why making financial offerings, with a sense of mission and appreciation, is a powerful cause that leads to benefit.
- Challenging ourselves to contribute propels our human revolution. It expand our hearts and capacity by shifting our focus away from ourselves, toward a larger purpose.
- Making offerings is an integral part of Buddhist practice which elevates our life condition and builds our fortune over time.
- Like the heroic disciples of Nichiren Daishonin, Shakyamuni and the many sincere contributors of the SGI, we are making offerings to support the spread of the Law.

ADDITIONAL REFERENCE MATERIALS:

Living Buddhism: April & May issues have guidance, experiences and other information.
World Tribune: Look for the April 5th Contribution Insert and various issues through April and May.
SGI-USA Website: For videos and written experiences, study and information, please visit our website at: www.sgi-usa.org/contributions
MAY PROMOTION IDEAS

• Ask a member to share a well-prepared faith experience related to appreciation and contribution at your April and May discussion meetings.
• Invite members, especially youth, to share why they choose to contribute to SGI-USA.
• Describe the purpose and spirit of May Contribution using this packet’s Summary Page.
• Prepare a study presentation using materials from this packet or one of the publications on the topic of contributions.

PREPARING A CONTRIBUTION EXPERIENCE

A contribution experience is a faith experience with a strong contribution component. Here are some points you may keep in mind if writing or helping someone to prepare their experience:

• How did you pray and challenge yourself to contribute? (without details re. dollar amounts, etc.).
• What inspired you to contribute?
• What obstacles did you face along the way?
• What different actions did you take in faith to meet your goal and overcome obstacles?
• How did you change your life through this process? And how did this manifest in your environment as benefit? (For example: gaining fortune in the areas of family/relationships, health, stabilizing your finances, etc. may be part of the experience.)
• How did your relationship with Sensei influence this process and what is your determination for your life and kosen-rufu toward the future?

“I hope that all the leaders here today will thoroughly explain the significance and correct spirit of making offerings to their members. Then everyone can participate proudly and joyfully. Helping people truly understand the importance of offerings through individual, heart-to-heart dialogue will spur them to joyful action. Let’s join forces and resolve to write a fresh page in the history of kosen-rufu.” (The New Human Revolution, vol. 4, p. 107–08)
THE HEART AND JOY OF OFFERING

“The benefit of making offerings to the Lotus Sutra is boundless. Through that benefit, we can triumph over any obstacle and devilish function. And nothing is stronger than a person whose life is instilled with this confidence.”  (The Hope-Filled Teachings of Nichiren Daishonin, pp. 4-7)

“Donations to support the Gakkai’s organizational activities represent offerings for the advancement of kosen-rufu. Faced with members’ growing insistence that they be allowed to help finance the organization, [Second Soka Gakkai President Josei] Toda sensed that the time had finally come to open the door to such a development.

Still, Toda remained extremely cautious. He felt it imperative that finances for kosen-rufu derive from donations made with the utmost sincerity and purity of intention. . . . Financial contributions to the Soka Gakkai were not the same as donations to other organizations, because it was essential that offerings for kosen-rufu be based on faith. As long as the contributors possessed such sincere and ardent faith, they would not fail to receive immeasurable benefit…” (The New Human Revolution, Vol. 4, 107-8)

“The benefit that accrues from making contributions is clearly spelled out in the Gosho. If we were to contribute to kosen-rufu just as the Gosho teaches and then failed to receive actual proof, then Buddhism would be false. . . . Confident of the good fortune we are attaining, let us continue to advance joyfully, harmoniously and in high spirits.” (The New Human Revolution, vol. 10, pp. 171-2)

“This last third month, you donated numerous strings of coins. As a result, this year, we have been able to support over a hundred men at this mountain dwelling and they are able to read and recite the Lotus Sutra and discuss its doctrines all day long. In this evil latter age, this represents the foremost Buddhist practice in all of Jambudvipa.”  (The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, vol. 1, p. 990)
The Wealthy Man Sudatta

“In India there was a wealthy man called Sudatta. Seven times he became poor, and seven times he became a wealthy man. During his last period of poverty, when all the people had fled or perished and only he and his wife remained, they had five measures of rice that would nourish them for five days. At that time, five people—Mahākāśyapa, Shāriputra, Ānanda, Rāhula, and Shakyamuni Buddha—came one after another to beg for the five measures of rice, which Sudatta gave them. From that day on, Sudatta was the wealthiest man in all India, and he built Jetavana Monastery. From this, you should understand all things.”

(WND, vol. I, p. 1086)

From Sensei’s Gosho Lecture on The Wealthy Man Sudatta:

“Nichiren Daishonin reveals through . . . the wealthy man Sudatta—a lay follower of Shakyamuni—that the act of offering something precious allows one to accumulate immeasurable good fortune and benefit. . . .

No matter how difficult or challenging our circumstances, we must never be defeated in our hearts. There is no need to despair or belittle ourselves. . . . The Daishonin teaches that we simply need to do the very best we can, in our own way, for the sake of Buddhism and the happiness of others. The “treasures of the heart” that we accumulate in the process will enrich our lives, bring us happiness and benefit and give rise to unsurpassed fortune. . . .

In this letter, Nichiren writes that Tokimitsu, no doubt concerned about the Daishonin’s impoverished condition as New Year’s approached, had managed to scrape together one thousand coins and present them to him as an offering. Nichiren again expresses his deep appreciation and highest praise for Tokimitsu’s devotion. . . . The Daishonin warmly highlights not only the dedicated efforts of Tokimitsu, but those of his wife as well. . . . By reassuring Tokimitsu’s family members, the Daishonin enabled Tokimitsu to strive even harder.” (The Teachings for Victory, October 2014 Living Buddhism)

Please find additional guidance, experiences and information online at www.sgi-usa.org/contributions
NEW BUDDHIST CENTERS SUPPORT OUR EXPANDING MEMBERSHIP

Eight new centers opened this past year. Three more will open soon.

REACHING MILLIONS OF PEOPLE ONLINE

SGI-USA's Social Media Program has reached millions; introducing new people to the SGI and providing encouraging content for members as well.

VENUE RENTALS

Events, rehearsals and meetings provide opportunities for training and encouragement. Contributions support SGI-USA's rentals of outside venues and related expenses, including last year’s Lions of Justice Festival.

SGI-USA 2017 EXPENDITURES

- SGI-USA's YouTube Channel has been viewed 2.76 million times.
- Our three gongyo instruction videos were viewed over 750,000 times.