SOKA SPIRIT
CHANTING SESSIONS

► PURPOSE

1) Chant Nam-myoho-rengo-kyo to establish the correct teaching for the peace of the land.
2) Hone our abilities to recognize devilish functions internally and externally.
3) Learn the essential spirit of President Ikeda and the SGI.
4) Unite around the current SGI-USA direction and focus.

► SUGGESTED AGENDA

- Daimoku and gongyo led by central figure (1 hour)
- Study presentation by youth member (5 min)
- Encouragement by region–national line leader (7–10 min)

► RESPONSIBILITIES

- Fukudoshi
  Two–three youth should be assigned to support daimoku as fukudoshi for 20–30 minutes each. For tips on being fukudoshi, please see p. 2.
- MC
  One youth emcee, with the support of seniors in faith, should be assigned to welcome the members and move the meeting along. For tips on being emcee, please see p. 2.
- Study Presentation
  One youth, with the support of seniors in faith, should give a well-prepared study presentation (5 min) based on the Soka Spirit curriculum. Please see the Soka Spirit study guide.
- Encouragement
  A region–national line leader of any division should share encouragement related to the current organizational focus and convey the spirit of the week or month.

Note: The Soka Spirit toso is a wonderful training opportunity for the youth. If there are no youth for the responsibilities above, please work with the region or zone to find youth support.
TIPS ON BEING EMCEE

- The emcee’s voice should be stirring, powerful and brimming with life force.
  “Emcees must have the determination to bear full responsibility for the meeting and use their voices to transform the atmosphere into a place of joy in seeking the Law, a true Buddhist assembly” (The New Human Revolution, vol. 25, p. 187).

- Get a good night’s sleep and eat a proper meal.
  “An emcee needs to enunciate, so that everyone can hear and understand what is said. Facial expressions are also important. An emcee mustn’t look tired or unwell. When you’re going to take on the crucial role of emcee, you need to get a good night’s sleep the day before” (NHR-25, 189–90).

- Pay special attention to timing during the meeting and be able to respond quickly.
  “There are times when you need to jump right in and speak to keep the tempo upbeat, and times when you need to take a breath and pause. If you lack that crucial sense of timing, you can possibly ruin the meeting’s mood” (NHR-25, 191).

- Chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo prior to the meeting.
  “It’s vital that you chant with strong determination to make the meeting you’re moderating a success. The purpose of Soka Gakkai meetings is to advance kosen-rufu, and they are the contemporary versions of the assembly of the Lotus Sutra. As such, serving as an emcee at a meeting is to carry out the noble work of the Buddha” (NHR-25, 192).

TIPS ON BEING FUKUDOSHI

- Maintain a consistent and dynamic rhythm together with the person leading.
  “You must first listen carefully to the voice of the person leading gongyo and stay in rhythm with it. It’s important to neither get ahead nor fall behind. In addition, you should try to ensure that the rhythm of gongyo is dynamic and exhilarating like a fine steed galloping across the open plains” (The New Human Revolution, vol. 25, pp. 192–93).

- Avoid slowing down.
  “When a large number of people are participating, both the sutra recitation and chanting tend to gradually slow down, but you mustn’t allow yourself to be dragged along. You should try to lead everyone at a lively tempo” (NHR-25, 193).

- Pronounce the words in the sutra clearly.
  “It’s also necessary to pronounce the words in the sutra recitation clearly. You should strive during your own daily gongyo to do your very best at all times, making sure you aren’t slipping into sloppy pronunciation habits, and that you’re breathing in the appropriate places” (NHR-25, 193).

- Strive for a resonant, clear, powerful, refreshing gongyo. (NHR-25, 193)
December Curriculum: Week 1 (Dec. 6)

Preparation: Please read the material, seek from seniors in faith about it and chant abundantly throughout the preparation.

Intro: Today, we will review material from *The New Human Revolution*, vol. 23, study guide in the December 2020 *Living Buddhism*, titled “Establishing Indestructible Happiness Across the Three Existences,” found on page 44.

Context: At a meeting in July 1976, Shin’ichi Yamamoto, the character depicting Ikeda Sensei in the novel, spoke to young women’s division representatives about the four sufferings of birth, aging, sickness and death, based on this passage from Nichiren Daishonin: “Therefore I should first of all learn about death, and then about other things” (“The Importance of the Moment of Death,” *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2, p. 759).

Excerpt From *The New Human Revolution*:
Nichiren Buddhism offers a fundamental solution to the problem of death. If you dedicate your life to kosen-rufu, you will not only achieve a state of indestructible happiness in this existence but be able to walk a great path of joyous life eternally across the three existences of past, present and future. ...

So long as you live dedicated to kosen-rufu and assiduously practice your faith, your life will be united with the fundamental Law of the universe, the Mystic Law, and you’ll be able to calmly overcome all sufferings.

An undercurrent of benefits flows within those who earnestly practice this Buddhism. Though powerful winds may blow and the sun beat harshly down, in the end such practitioners will be richly nourished and bear the fruits of happiness. (NHR-23, 250–52)

Presentation (5 minutes): For the presentation, please read all the sections above, starting with the Intro, and use the following question as a guide to connect your personal experience with the material:

• How have you been able to develop a stronger self through your efforts for kosen-rufu?

Reminder: The Soka Spirit curriculum can be found at [www.sgi-usa.org/monthly-downloads/](http://www.sgi-usa.org/monthly-downloads/)
December Curriculum: Week 2 (Dec. 13)

**Preparation:** Please read the material, seek from seniors in faith about it and chant abundantly throughout the preparation.

**Intro:** Today, we will review material from *The New Human Revolution*, vol. 23, study guide in the December 2020 *Living Buddhism*, titled “Daimoku Is the Driving Force for Conquering Hardships,” found on pages 44–45.

**Context:** At a meeting in August 1976, Shin’ichi Yamamoto emphasized the importance of advancing based Nichiren’s statement: “There is no true happiness for human beings other than chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo” (“Happiness in This World,” *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 681).

**Excerpt From The New Human Revolution:**
In the Lotus Sutra we find the words, “They [who have heard the Law] will enjoy peace and security in their present existence and good circumstances in future existences” (*The Lotus Sutra and Its Opening and Closing Sutras*, p. 136). But various obstacles arise in the path of kosen-rufu, and life is a battle against our personal karmic destiny. “Enjoy peace and security in their present existence” doesn’t mean that life will always be smooth sailing, with no troubles or challenges. It describes a life state in which, even when we experience difficulties and trials as fierce as angry breakers, we are able to courageously and serenely overcome them, never retreating a step. …

No matter how much we’re suffering, we should rouse faith in the Gohonzon and chant with the spirit “I won’t be defeated!” If we can do that, the courage to face our troubles will well up from within. We’ll be invigorated and filled with joy. The way to solving all our problems will open before our eyes.

Steadfast prayer is the key. Chant intensely every day, whether others are noticing or not—that’s the driving force for everything. (NHR-23, 316–17)

**Presentation (5 minutes):** For the presentation, please read all the sections above, starting with the Intro, and use the following question as a guide to connect your personal experience with the material:

• How has chanting enabled you to develop the spirit to never give up?

**Reminder:** The Soka Spirit curriculum can be found at [www.sgi-usa.org/monthly-downloads/](http://www.sgi-usa.org/monthly-downloads/)