SOKA SPIRIT
CHANTING SESSIONS

► PURPOSE

1) Chant Nam-myoho-reng-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)
February Curriculum: Week 1 (Feb. 7)

We will view the 1st Soka Gakkai Headquarters Leaders Meeting video. (29 minutes)

**Video Description:**
On January 7, 2021, the 1st Headquarters Leaders Meeting (HQLM) was held at the Hall of the Great Vow for Kosen-rufu. This meeting kicked off as the first Headquarters Leaders Meeting at the suggestion of Ikeda Sensei.

Ikeda Sensei sent a celebratory message to the meeting emphasizing that Nichiren Buddhism is a supreme philosophy that illuminates and dispels the sufferings of all humankind. He also encouraged his fellow members to pledge together to advance on the shared journey of hope and victory—the journey of oneness of mentor and disciple.

Please coordinate with your region SVP (Soka Video Player) handler to prepare the video in advance. The video can be found under the Headquarters Leaders Meeting Tab.

Since the duration of the video is 29 minutes, here is a **suggested agenda** for the Soka Spirit meeting:

- Opening Words from Zone through National Leader (3–5 min)
- January 2021 HQLM Video (29 min)
  - January 2021 headquarters leaders meeting program
    - Experience: Jeon Jeong Mi, Young Women’s Leader [South Korea]
    - Commemorative Performance
    - Ikeda Sensei’s Message read by Senior Vice President Hiromasa Ikeda
    - Greetings: National Women’s Leader Kimiko Nagaishi
    - Speech: Soka Gakkai President Minoru Harada
February Curriculum: Week 2 (Feb. 14)

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. 25, study guide in the February 2021 Living Buddhism, titled “Fostering Youth Through Our Own Example,” found on page 50. Ikeda Sensei appears in the novel as Shin’ichi Yamamoto.

Context: At a leader’s meeting on March 11, 1977, Shin’ichi Yamamoto spoke about the fundamentals of fostering young people in their efforts to share Buddhism with others. He refers to the passage in the letter “The Wealthy Man Sudatta,” where Nichiren Daishonin writes, “Teaching another something is the same as oiling the wheels of a cart so that they turn even though it is heavy, or as floating a boat on water so that it moves ahead easily” (The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, vol. 1, p. 1086). As February is traditionally the month of sharing Buddhism in the SGI, let’s learn from the following guidance from Sensei.

Excerpt From The New Human Revolution, vol. 25, pp. 13–14:
“It’s important to remember ... that we cannot simply tell young people who have no previous experience in sharing Nichiren’s teachings about the significance of propagation, encourage them to do their best and expect them to succeed. Most people would still feel unable to do it.
“We need to show them through our own example how to introduce Buddhism to others.
“One effective way is for seniors in faith—men’s and women’s division members who have succeeded in explaining Nichiren Buddhism to others—to share their actual experiences.
“It’s also necessary to occasionally go together with young people when we engage in dialogue about Buddhism, teaching them in the midst of actual Buddhist practice an example of what to do. ...
“When people think something is beyond their capacity, they will hesitate to act. But if they think they can do something, they’l take action.” ...
Encouragement and guidance serve to identify the things holding us back, remove the obstacle and rouse our courage.

Presentation (5 minutes): For the presentation, please read all the sections above, starting with the Intro.
To close the presentation, use your answer to the question below to guide you in sharing how the study material connects with your personal experience. You do not need to read the question out loud, simply share your response to it.

• How did seeking from a senior in faith enable you to break through your hesitations?

Reminder: The Soka Spirit curriculum can be found at www.sgi-usa.org/monthly-downloads/
February Curriculum: Week 3 (Feb. 21)

For this week's study, we will view the video titled, “The February Campaign—A Model for Advancing Kosen-rufu.” (15 minutes)

**Video Description:**
This segment recounts the historic campaign that became the model for breaking limitations. In February 1952, Kamata Chapter achieved a record-breaking propagation result of 201 households. This was made possible by the selfless struggle enacted by the youthful Daisaku Ikeda, who had been appointed chapter advisor. How did a 24-year-old youth with less than 5 years of Buddhist practice leave behind such a history of expanding the kosen-rufu movement? We will explore this based on Ikeda Sensei’s speeches and interviews with individuals.

Please coordinate with your region SVP (Soka Video Player) handler to prepare the video in advance. The video can be found under the following:

Archive Videos > Select English for language > Under Category, select “Special collection” > Scroll down to “The February Campaign—A Model for Advancing Kosen-rufu” and click the image.
February Curriculum: Week 4 (Feb. 28)

**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. 25, study guide in the February 2021 *Living Buddhism*, titled “A Fighting Spirit for Kosen-rufu Ignited in the Rain,” found on page 41. Ikeda Sensei appears in the novel as Shin’ichi Yamamoto.

**Context:** Nichiren Buddhism teaches that one who propagates Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is bound to encounter persecution and difficulties. Furthermore, it is precisely by making sincere efforts in our Buddhist practice that we can expand our own life state and eradicate our negative karma. One member who was experiencing tremendous difficulties, including recently losing his job and the illness of his children, travelled more than twelve miles to a friend's house to introduce him to Nichiren Buddhism only to be ridiculed. After missing the last train and walking home in the rain, he encouraged himself by remembering the following guidance from Shin’ichi Yamamoto.

Excerpt From *The New Human Revolution*, vol. 25, pp. 60–61:
There are times when you will be attacked or experience slander and abuse when you try to share this Buddhism with others. You may have many kinds of bitter experiences. But that’s all exactly as the Lotus Sutra and Nichiren Daishonin’s writings predict. Just grit your teeth, resolve not to be defeated and keep trying. It’s an opportunity to expiate past offenses. That and transforming your karma are the points of Buddhist practice. Once you’re certain of that, all your sufferings will be transformed into great joy.

**Presentation (5 minutes):** For the presentation, please read all the sections above, starting with the Intro.

To close the presentation, use your answer to the question below to guide you in sharing how the study material connects with your personal experience. You do not need to read the question out loud, simply share your response to it.

- Has there been a time when you shared Nichiren Buddhism with someone and it didn’t go as you hoped? What were you able to learn or gain from that experience?

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