SOKA SPIRIT
CHANTING SESSIONS

★ PURPOSE

1) Chant Nam-myoho-rengyo 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)
March Curriculum: Week 1 (March 7)

We will view the video titled “The Vow of Lions—The Way of Successors.” (16 minutes)

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 Vow of Lions—The Way of Successors”
> Click the image
March Curriculum: Week 2 (March 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 study guide in the March 2021 Living Buddhism, titled “Battling Devilish Functions,” found on page 52. Ikeda Sensei appears in the novel as Shin’ichi Yamamoto.

Context: Wishing to encourage Soka Gakkai members, Shin’ichi Yamamoto related his own experience as a youth, when he struggled to rebuild second Soka Gakkai President Josei Toda’s business after World War II. It was a time when Shin’ichi’s health was extremely poor, his finances were being depleted and he had been pushing himself beyond his limits day in and day out. He shares the following with them.

Excerpt From The New Human Revolution, vol. 2, revised edition, p. 87:

“Should you feel stuck, please challenge to overcome your own weakness, summoning the great power of faith. ...”

“In the long course of our lives, we may occasionally feel like giving up our faith and just having a good time, free from all responsibility. Or we may become ill or be plunged into grief by the death of a loved one. This is our struggle against the hindrances of earthly desires, illness and death.

“Buddhism’s greatest significance lies in overcoming such impasses by chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, attaining a state of absolute happiness and realizing the most meaningful of lives. Therefore, whenever you encounter a difficulty, I hope you will view it as a struggle against an impasse, as a battle against obstacles and, resolving that now is the time to win, boldly forge your path in life as you challenge your destiny head-on.”

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 have you been able to overcome a recent impasse in your life by winning over your own weakness through chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo?

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

We will view the video titled “Advance Boldly in Life” (Voice-over). (8 minutes)

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 “Speech”
> Scroll down to “Advance Boldly in Life” (Voice-over)
> Click the blue Voice-over image
March Curriculum: Week 4 (March 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* study guide in the March 2021 *Living Buddhism*, titled “A Good Omen,” found on page 40. Ikeda Sensei appears in the novel as Shin’ichi Yamamoto.

Context: From the beginning of 1974, people around the world faced great economic hardships due to ongoing wars in the Middle East. Shin’ichi Yamamoto encouraged the members about the key to demonstrating actual proof of faith in a society rife with turmoil.


Shin’ichi Yamamoto ... read a passage from Nichiren’s writing “Great Evil and Great Good”: “When great evil occurs, great good follows. Since great slander already exists in our land, the great correct Law will spread without fail” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 1119). With firm conviction, he then said: “Nichiren lived in a time of upheaval and turmoil—a time racked by major earthquakes, internal strife and the invasion of Japan by the Mongol forces. Despite all this, however, he declared that it was not a time to be pessimistic, for it was in such an age that great good in the form of the widespread propagation of Buddhism would occur.

“We are now advancing kosen-rufu amid the worst economic crisis this country has faced since the end of World War II. Undoubtedly, many of you are experiencing indescribable hardships. But whatever obstacles may come your way, please have absolute confidence in Nichiren’s conviction that ‘When great evil occurs, great good follows.’ Let’s take this as an opportunity to make spirited and dynamic strides forward in our movement for kosen-rufu!"

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.

- Based on your Buddhist practice, how are you resolved to utilize this challenging time to make spirited and dynamic strides forward in your life and for our movement 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/)