

**DISTRIBUTE TO:** District through Territory Leaders, Zone and Territory Offices  
**FROM:** SGI-USA Organization Center  
**SUBJECT:** **Key Points for Leaders on Zoom**

In these extraordinary and challenging times when effectively all contact with our members is online or through other social media, we as the national team so greatly appreciate the flexibility, patience and good cheer you have shown during these past six months. Thank you!

Realistically, we're faced with circumstances wherein it may not be possible to fully "reopen" until a safe and effective vaccine is ready. While we are all chanting for the earliest possible reopening, it seems that we will be "online" with activities and visits through the end of 2020 and possibly beyond.

For this reason, we would like to reconfirm that it's part of our mission and responsibility as leaders, even in an online environment, to be role models for our members with our words and actions.

Although the advent of Zoom, etc. as a key medium for Buddhist activities is new, and most leaders as well as members are participating from home, key principles laid out by Ikeda Sensei for leaders hold true in all circumstances.

In *The New Human Revolution*, vol. 23, p. 285, Ikeda Sensei lays out principles for leaders to adhere to, two of which are:

- Take good care in your daily words and actions
- Take good care in your personal appearance

And although the context may be different, Sensei affirms the following in NHR-25, pp. 27–28:

"...leaders who don't have [specific roles] at [a] meeting should all be gathered as close to the front of the stage as possible, eager and enthusiastic to absorb everything they can. ..."

"On the other hand, if they are sitting at the back of the room with bored expressions, as if the meeting has nothing to do with them, they destroy the atmosphere of the meeting and bring everyone down. It's even worse if they stay outside the meeting room, engaging in idle conversations in the hallways. This is a kind of desecration of a Soka Gakkai meeting, which is, after all, a Buddhist assembly.

"My point is, one's commitment to unity is manifested in one's everyday words and actions."

Based on the principles above, we would like to affirm the following points for all of us as leaders to model, implement and encourage others to adhere to at Zoom meetings, whether centering, speaking or just attending without a specific role:

1. Let's dress respectfully and appropriately and use appropriate virtual / real backgrounds.
2. While it's OK to have snacks and water, etc. on hand, let's refrain from eating meals on Zoom in such a way that it appears that the SGI Zoom meeting is a lesser or secondary activity.
3. If driving or in transit, please turn off video and set audio to "Mute".
4. While it's OK for guests who live elsewhere to attend, we should not invite members from other organizations/countries to our meetings due to differences in how activities are carried out.

Whether visibly engaging in ongoing other conversations—or distractedly doing other things—there are many situations and cases which cannot be covered here for the sake of brevity. But in general, and in accord with Sensei's principles above, let's keep in mind that an SGI Zoom gathering constitutes a "Buddhist assembly" and should be attended, especially by leaders, with a joyful, yet serious and committed attitude.