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)
April Curriculum: Week 1 (April 4)

In accordance with the “2021-ORG-033 First Sunday Virtual Kosen-rufu Gongyo Meetings” memo, the first Sunday of each month will be a virtual Kosen-rufu Gongyo Meeting. This will replace the Soka Spirit encouragement meeting for the first Sunday of each month.

Suggested Agenda for April 4:

(6 min) Ikeda Youth Ensemble Performances from the March Youth General Meetings
  • Fife & Drum Corps: https://vimeo.com/526662012, Password: march1958
  • Dance: https://vimeo.com/526662126, Password: march1958
  • Brass Band: https://vimeo.com/526505023, Password: march1958

(5 min) March Youth General Meeting Report

(7 min) Faith experience by member or practicing guest

(5 min) Announcements
  • Leadership appointments (if applicable)
  • Activity announcements (if applicable)

(40 min) 2nd Headquarters Leader’s Meeting Video

(10 min) Closing encouragement

Explanation of the 2nd Headquarters Leaders Meeting:

On February 28, the 2nd Headquarters Leaders Meeting was held at the Hall of the Great Vow for Kosen-rufu.

Ikeda Sensei sent a message to the meeting stating, “True champions of humanity are those who take responsibility for working for the happiness and security of the people and the peace and prosperity of society. These are the defining qualities of capable individuals of principle and integrity that the world is waiting for.” He also encouraged his fellow members to advance by building a great Soka castle of capable people that will open new horizons for the future of humanity.

HQLM Meeting Program:

1. Ikeda Sensei’s Message: read by Senior Vice President Hiromasa Ikeda
2. Program by Tohoku Region Youth Division
3. Experience: Yoshiki Okabe, Chapter Leader [Miyagi Prefecture, Japan]
4. Performance
5. Experience: Chan Oi Mooi, National Women’s Leader [Malaysia]
6. Speech: President Minoru Harada

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.
April Curriculum: Week 2 (April 11)

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 April 2021 *Living Buddhism*, titled “”Treasures of the Heart,”” found on page 44.

Context: Ikeda Sensei reunited with pioneering members who had joined the Soka Gakkai 20 years ago. While hearing how families had transformed their destinies over the years, he offered the following encouragement to refresh their spirits.

Excerpt From *The New Human Revolution*, vol. 25, pp. 134–35:

“The state of happiness attained through accumulating abundant treasures of the heart is an inner state of being, but it manifests in our expression, our words and actions and our character.

“Our words and actions will be brimming with gratitude, joy and certainty. We’ll be considerate of others, not motivated by selfish desires but by a compassionate desire to be of service to others. We’ll also be accepting and warm, with a friendly smile for everyone.

“No matter how long we live, we’ll always be filled with a spirit of self-improvement, dynamism and vitality. We’ll exude a youthful spirit, as Nichiren Daishonin said when he wrote, 'You will grow younger' (“The Unity of Husband and Wife,” *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 464).

“Some people, in contrast, are always complaining, criticizing, dissatisfied, unfulfilled, envious and resentful. This is not only an expression of their personal unhappiness but also increases their unhappiness.”

What is the decisive factor in establishing a life state of absolute happiness? It is not one’s wealth or social standing. It is not one’s position within the Soka Gakkai. It is established through carrying out one’s human revolution by cultivating one’s life through earnest and consistent Buddhist practice.

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 develop a richer heart through SGI activities?**

Reminder: The Soka Spirit curriculum can be found at [www.sgi-usa.org/monthly-downloads/](http://www.sgi-usa.org/monthly-downloads/)
April Curriculum: Week 3 (April 18)

We will view the video titled “Unseen Virtue Brings About Visible Reward” (Voice-over). (9 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 (Voice-over) “Unseen Virtue Brings About Visible Reward”
> Click the blue Voice-Over image
April Curriculum: Week 4 (April 25)

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 “Changing Poison Into Medicine,” found on page 50.

Context: On January 17, 1995, a major earthquake struck west-central Japan, where over 6,000 people lost their lives and 45,000 people became homeless. When Ikeda Sensei heard the news, he immediately took steps for the Soka Gakkai to mobilize relief efforts, and offered the following guidance.

Excerpt From The New Human Revolution, vol. 30, found in the Oct. 5, 2018, World Tribune insert, p. 3:

“I would like you to pour your entire beings into encouraging everyone on my behalf. Some of our members will have lost loved ones who were also practicing Nichiren Buddhism. Please convey this message to them:

‘Though everything else might be destroyed, the good fortune and benefit we accumulate in our lives through our Buddhist practice will endure eternally. Nichiren Buddhism teaches that if we chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo even once, we can attain Buddhahood. Our members who have lost their lives, therefore, have most certainly transformed their karma in this existence, and will be able to embrace the Gohonzon again in their next existence and lead happy lives.

‘In accord with the principle of “changing poison into medicine,” we can positively transform everything through faith in the Mystic Law. Nichiren Daishonin writes, “When great evil occurs, great good follows” (“Great Evil and Great Good,” The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, vol. 1, p. 1119). No matter how painful things may be now, please believe that you will absolutely become happy. Indeed, please become happy without fail. I am praying and hoping that you will rebuild your lives splendidly, with inner strength and fortitude.’”

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.

• Sensei writes, “No matter how painful things may be now, please believe that you will absolutely become happy.” How can you apply this encouragement to your current or recent struggle?

Reminder: The Soka Spirit curriculum can be found at www.sgi-usa.org/monthly-downloads/