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-ренge-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)
June Curriculum: Week 1 (June 6)

June 6 Kosen-rufu Gongyo Meeting Suggested Agenda

As a reminder, the first Sunday of each month will be designated as a virtual Kosen-rufu Gongyo meeting. This meeting will replace the Soka Spirit encouragement call on the first Sunday. Please find a suggested agenda for the June Kosen-rufu Gongyo meeting below, as well as instructions for the SVP video.

SUGGESTED AGENDA

1. **May Contribution Promo Video (3 min)**
   - Link: [https://vimeo.com/551597613](https://vimeo.com/551597613) (Password: May2021!)
     - This video will be uploaded to the link above shortly before June 6.

2. **Faith experience** (emphasizing appreciation, as well as the human revolution that the member did as a result of doing contribution.) (7 min)

3. **Announcements** (5 min)
   - Leadership Appointments (if applicable)
   - Activity Announcements (if applicable)

4. **Words of Encouragement** (10 min)

5. **Video: The 3rd Headquarters Leaders Meeting** (21 min)
   - Select the voice-over option to accommodate participants who will join by calling in.
   - We will not show the entire video due to time. Please start the video at the 19:48 mark.
   - 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 “HQ Leaders Meeting”
     > “The 3rd Headquarters Leaders Meeting” will be at top
     > Click the “Voice Over” image

Please have the emcee announce the following before showing the video: “This video has been approved to show at this meeting. We ask that you do not make any video or audio recordings. Duplication and rebroadcast of this video in any way is prohibited. We appreciate your support and understanding. Please enjoy!”
We will view the video titled “Practice for Oneself” (6 minutes)
(Please select the voice-over option to accommodate participants who will join by calling in).

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) “Practice for Oneself”
> Click the blue Voice-Over image

Please have the emcee announce the following before showing the video:

“This video has been approved to show at this meeting. We ask that you do not make any video or audio recordings. Duplication and rebroadcast of this video in any way is prohibited. We appreciate your support and understanding. Please enjoy!”

**NOTE:** Since the video includes guidance from Ikeda Sensei, words of encouragement should come before the video.
June Curriculum: Week 3 (June 20)

**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 Ikeda Wisdom Academy study guide in the June 2021 *Living Buddhism*, found on page 41. This section contains excerpts from Ikeda Sensei’s *Teachings for Victory* lecture on Nichiren Daishonin’s “Letter to the Brothers.”

**Context:** In “Letter to the Brothers,” Nichiren addresses two brothers whose father opposed their practice of the Daishonin’s teaching. The father went so far as to disown his elder son two different times to try and have at least one of them give up their faith. Nichiren explains to them the nature of the devil king of the sixth heaven, a personification of negative functions that try to sway us in faith.

**In his lecture, Ikeda Sensei says:**
“The devil king of the sixth heaven is the fundamental negative impulse that resides in the depths of people’s lives. This devilish nature or negativity gives rise to the desire to control others or even take others’ lives and causes destruction and war. To conquer this devilish nature, we need to bring forth our inherent Dharma nature, or fundamental nature of enlightenment, which exists along with our fundamental darkness. Toward that end, it is vital that we continue striving in faith, practicing Nichiren Buddhism ourselves and sharing it with others.”

**Key Point:** Anyone can be influenced by the devil king of the sixth heaven, or the fundamental negativity innate in life. This is because we are not defeated from without but from within, by our own negativity. No matter how long we have been practicing, by striving to develop the basics of doing gongyo, chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, sharing Buddhism with others, studying and engaging in SGI activities we can develop the wisdom, fortitude and courage to transform and winning over our negativity.

**Presentation (5 minutes):** For the presentation, please read all the sections above, starting with the Intro. To close the presentation, please respond to the prompt below.

- **How has developing a consistent practice enabled you to win over yourself?**

**Reminder:** The Soka Spirit curriculum can be found at [www.sgi-usa.org/monthly-downloads/](http://www.sgi-usa.org/monthly-downloads/)
June Curriculum: Week 4 (June 27)

**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 Ikeda Wisdom Academy study guide in the June 2021 *Living Buddhism*, found on page 41. This section contains excerpts from Ikeda Sensei’s *Teachings for Victory* lecture on Nichiren Daishonin’s “Letter to the Brothers.”

**Context:** In the following excerpt, Ikeda Sensei shares his mentor’s guidance about the function of the devil king of the sixth heaven, the fundamental negative impulse that resides in the depths of people’s lives, which appears on the Gohonzon.

**In his lecture, Ikeda Sensei says:**
“In one of his lectures, second Soka Gakkai President Josei Toda commented on the devil king of the sixth heaven being inscribed on the Gohonzon: ‘The devil king of the sixth heaven is depicted on the Gohonzon. So when we pray to the Gohonzon, the devil king obeys the Gohonzon. The devil king will issue orders keeping the leaders of his devilish forces in check. The original enlightened potential of the devil king is manifested through the Gohonzon. Indeed, all entities depicted on the Gohonzon display their innate dignified attributes when illuminated by Nam-myoho-renge-kyo.’

“Continuing, he went so far as to say, ‘The devil king of the sixth heaven then changes for the first time into an entity that helps and benefits others.’”

**Key Point:** When we chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo to the Gohonzon, we can bring forth the most positive and beneficial attributes in everything. Even the most painful suffering can become the fuel for the greatest joy and happiness. Everything hinges on our own determined prayer to use each obstacle to bring forth our greatest wisdom, compassion and courage, and open the path of Buddhahood for all those around us.

**Presentation (5 minutes):** For the presentation, please read all the sections above, starting with the Intro. To close the presentation, please respond to the prompt below.

• **How are you using your Buddhist practice to create value from something negative in your life?**

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