SOKA SPIRIT
CHANTING SESSIONS

► PURPOSE

1) Chant Nam-myoho-RENGE-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)
May Curriculum: Week 1 (May 2)

**MAY 2ND 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 May Kosen-rufu Gongyo meeting below, as well as instructions for the SVP video.

**SUGGESTED AGENDA**

(7-9 min) Ikeda Youth Ensemble Video Performances

- **Dance Video:** [https://vimeo.com/543715758](https://vimeo.com/543715758) | PW: SGI2021!
- **Fife and Drum Corps Video:** [https://vimeo.com/543715665](https://vimeo.com/543715665) | PW: SGI2021!
- **Brass Band Video:** [https://vimeo.com/543715002](https://vimeo.com/543715002) | PW: SGI2021!

**Ikeda Youth Ensemble videos will be uploaded to the links above on Saturday, May 1.**

(3 min) May Contribution Promo Video

- **May Contribution Promo Video:** [https://vimeo.com/543752569](https://vimeo.com/543752569) | PW: SGI2021!

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

(5 min) Announcements

- Leadership Appointments (if applicable)
- Activity Announcements (if applicable)

(18 min) Video: “Taking Leadership for Kosen-rufu: Inauguration of the Third Soka Gakkai President” (Instructions below*) (Note: Since this video does not include guidance from Ikeda Sensei, encouragement from the central figure should follow this video.)

(10 min) Closing Encouragement

**VIDEO INSTRUCTIONS**

We will view the video titled “Taking Leadership for Kosen-rufu: Inauguration of the Third Soka Gakkai President”

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”
> “Taking Leadership for Kosen-rufu: Inauguration of the Third Soka Gakkai President” will be at top
> Click the image
**May Curriculum: Week 2 (May 9)**

**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 May 2021 *Living Buddhism*, titled “Expansion Arises From a Chain Reaction of Joy,” found on page 49.

**Context:** In February 1952, a young Daisaku Ikeda led Kamata Chapter in introducing a record-breaking 201 new member households to the Soka Gakkai. He explains how they were able to achieve such an astonishing result.


“I believe that the time we are in now, with Josei Toda as our president, is a precious opportunity for the development of kosen-rufu. ... How much our organization can grow and how many capable individuals we can foster in the next few years will decide our victory. There is not a more crucial moment in the history of Buddhism than now.

“That’s why I decided, as his disciple, to stand up and take action with the spirit of not begrudging my life. ...

“When we decide to challenge ourselves to respond to our mentor, courage and joy well up from within us.

“I repeatedly called on the members to engage in this struggle in order to transform their karma and life state. All the members were struggling with serious financial, health and other problems.

“The aim of our Buddhist practice—our chanting and our activities to share Buddhism with others—is to transform our karma and become happy. Soka Gakkai activities are actually for our own benefit. There is no suffering that cannot be overcome through our efforts to chant and teach others about Buddhism. Mr. Toda was unequivocal on this point.

“The members all firmly resolved to transform their karma, roused their fighting spirit and started to make great efforts. ...

“Then, one after another, members began experiencing results such as overcoming illnesses or finally finding a job after being unemployed. ... On hearing their stories, the number of people who were inspired to join the Soka Gakkai or existing members who were roused to make greater efforts to share Buddhism with others just continued to grow.

“When a ripple of benefit and joy spreads, it gives startling momentum to our activities.”

**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.

• **Please share an experience or determination that reflects Sensei’s statement, “There is no suffering that cannot be overcome through our efforts to chant and teach others about Buddhism.”**

**Reminder:** The Soka Spirit curriculum can be found at [www.sgi-usa.org/monthly-downloads/](http://www.sgi-usa.org/monthly-downloads/)
May Curriculum: Week 3 (May 16)

We will view the video titled “Unseen Efforts Lead to Victory” (Voice-over) (9 minutes).

*Note: Since this video contains guidance from Ikeda Sensei, encouragement from a central figure should come before the video.*

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 Efforts Lead to Victory”
> Click the blue Voice-Over image
May Curriculum: Week 4 (May 23)

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 May 2021 Living Buddhism, titled “The Path of Upholding the Correct Teachings Is Always Fraught With Difficulty,” found on page 50.

Context: At a commemorative gongyo meeting in 1977, Ikeda Sensei urged the members to be prepared for anything on the path of kosen-rufu, based on the following passage from Nichiren’s writings: “Shakyamuni Buddha had all the thirty-two auspicious features, his body a golden color, his face like the full moon. And yet when evil persons looked at him, some saw his color as ashen, some saw him as sooty, and some saw him as an enemy” (“On Losing Faith and Falling into Evil,” The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, vol. 2, p. 1079).

Excerpt From The New Human Revolution, vol. 26, pp. 18–19:

“For our part, we are ordinary people, followers of Nichiren Daishonin. We are making kosen-rufu a reality exactly as the Daishonin instructs. Though we are unexceptional beings who have been disparaged by others, we are carrying out the noblest of missions. It is inevitable that we, too, will encounter all sorts of trials and hardships.

“That is why Mr. Makiguchi and Mr. Toda were jailed for their beliefs, and Mr. Makiguchi ultimately died in prison. I have also faced continual opposition throughout my life. In the light of Nichiren’s writings, the Soka Gakkai will continue to face harsh obstacles.

“But we mustn’t allow ourselves to be defeated. We must not flinch.” ...

The path of upholding the correct teachings is always fraught with great difficulties—it is unflinching faith that awakens us to this truth.

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 a recent challenge or hardship, how were you able to or how are you determined to advance in your human revolution?

Reminder: The Soka Spirit curriculum can be found at www.sgi-usa.org/monthly-downloads/
May Curriculum: Week 5 (May 30)

**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 May 2021 *Living Buddhism*, titled “Living With Our Mentor in Our Hearts Is the Wellspring of Courage,” found on page 51.

**Context:** Ikeda Sensei discusses the meaning of this passage from Nichiren Daishonin: “Each of you should summon up the courage of a lion king and never succumb to threats from anyone. The lion king fears no other beast, nor do its cubs. Slanderers are like barking foxes, but Nichiren’s followers are like roaring lions.” (“On Persecutions Befalling the Sage,” *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 997)

**Excerpt From *The New Human Revolution*, vol. 26, pp. 359–60:**

“What is meant by ‘heart of a lion king’? It is the towering spirit of Nichiren Daishonin, his powerful wish to lead all people in the Latter Day of the Law to enlightenment. This is also the spirit of President Makiguchi and President Toda, who rose into action to realize kosen-rufu, just as the Daishonin teaches.

“‘Lion’ in ‘lion king’ is written with the Chinese characters for teacher and child, representing mentor and disciple. In other words, when disciples align their spirit with their mentor and stand up with the same commitment, they can summon forth the bold and fearless heart of the lion king within them.

“Each day, I tell myself: ‘As a disciple of President Toda, I will respond to his aspirations! I will create a record of kosen-rufu that would make him proud!’ By doing so, no matter what difficulty I may encounter, I can bring forth the courage to never become disheartened.

“Those who always remember their mentor’s spirit in their heart, who are always living together with their mentor, will never stray from the correct path in life, the path to happiness. When we live with our mentor in our heart, we cannot allow ourselves to be cowardly or lazy; we are spurred to be courageous, challenge ourselves and cast aside our arrogance. We may be able to deceive others but not our mentor in our hearts.

“We have a truly great mentor in President Toda. Those who, no matter where they are, always carry their mentor in their hearts are true disciples.”

**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.

• **Please share a quote from Daisaku Ikeda that encourages you to face challenges in life.**

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