1. REFRAIN from eating meals, as an SGI Zoom meeting constitutes a faith activity.

2. TURN CAMERA ON during activities which involve discussion and engagement.

3. MUTE when not speaking.

4. OTHER DISTRACTIVE BEHAVIORS: COOKING/CLEANING
The Nine Consciousnesses
SGI-USA July 2021 Discussion Meeting
Human’s Curiosity With the Subconscious

“We don’t see things as they are; we see them as we are.”

- Anaïs Nin, French-Cuban-American diarist, novelist, writer
Key Points

1. Within the nine consciousnesses, our Buddha nature corresponds to the ninth level of consciousness.

2. Our current life condition determines how we perceive our environment.

3. Through our Buddhist practice, we can “purify” our senses and view our lives based on our Buddha nature.
What are the Nine Consciousnesses?

1. SIGHT
2. SOUND
3. SMELL
4. TASTE
5. TOUCH

6. MIND-CONSCIOUSNESS
   (INTERFACE BETWEEN OUR FIVE SENSES AND EXTERNAL WORLD)

7. MANO-CONSCIOUSNESS
   (AWARENESS OF SELF, EGO)

8. ALAYA-CONSCIOUSNESS
   (KARMIC STOREHOUSE)

NAM-MYOHO-RENGE-KYO

9. AMALA-CONSCIOUSNESS
   (PURE, FREE FROM ALL DEFILEMENT, BUDDHA NATURE)
The Body is the Palace of the Ninth Consciousness

The Gohonzon exists only within the mortal flesh of us ordinary people who embrace the Lotus Sutra and chant Nam-myoho- renge-kyo. The body is the palace of the ninth consciousness, the unchanging reality that reigns over all of life’s functions.

- Nichiren Daishonin, “The Real Aspect of the Gohonzon,” The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, vol. 1, p. 832
Our State of Life Determines How We Perceive Our Environment

Persons whose six sense organs are pure will be like lapis lazuli (a precious gem) or like bright mirrors in which one sees the major world system (or the thousand-millionfold world). Now when Nichiren and his followers chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, they see and understand the ten thousand phenomena, as though these were reflected in a bright mirror.

- Nichiren Daishonin, *The Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings*, p. 149
Purifying Our Lives Through Our Buddhist Practice

Buddhist practice is said to “purify” the senses and the other levels of consciousness so that we can perceive all phenomena clearly and accurately. Again, the sense organs are the interface between the small universe of our lives and the cosmos. To purify our sense organs, then, means to completely harmonize our lives with the universe, “tuning in” to its rhythm. One who has purified the sense of sight will find even the most mundane scene to be a miracle sparkling with life. And one who has purified the sense of hearing can hear Mozart in the cacophony of a baby’s cries.

- Ikeda Sensei, Unlocking the Mysteries of Birth and Death, p. 154
Winning in the End

[Mrs. Terasawa’s experience] is truly an example of the purification of the sense of hearing. It is the state described by the line of the sutra: “Because the faculties of his ears are so keen / he can distinguish and understand all these sounds” (LSOC, 296). This is describing an expert on humanity, a master at dialogue. Also, these are the characteristics of someone who has purified the tongue. The sutra says: “If with these faculties of the tongue he undertakes to expound and preach in the midst of the great assembly, he will produce a deep and wonderful voice capable of penetrating the mind and causing all who hear it to rejoice and delight” (LSOC, 301).

Mrs. Terasawa is doubtless reaping the wonderful effects of all her efforts.

1. Share how your Buddhist practice has changed the way you view obstacles.

2. How does the idea of “purifying” our lives through chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo impact your perspective on your current struggles?
Slide 1:

**This slide is NOT part of the discussion meeting presentation. This slide is to outline basic Zoom etiquette. This slide can be shown at the beginning of a discussion meeting as members/guests join the meeting. The presentation starts from slide 2.

Slide 2:

- Hello everyone! Thank you for allowing me to share today's presentation!
- Today we will be studying about the nine consciousnesses!

Slide 3:

- The human consciousness has long been a matter of curiosity and study.
- Psychologists like Carl Jung have dedicated their lives to understanding the subconscious.
- Today, we have many scientific instruments that can read the human brain or look out into deep space, but no instrument can read the inner workings of our hearts.
- Buddhism looks into the human consciousness and can explain on a more profound level the inner workings of our lives. Ikeda Sensei says, "Buddhism is the science of the spirit, the medicine of the heart" (*Unlocking the Mysteries of Birth and Death*, p. 155).
- The French-Cuban-American writer Anais Nin also wrote: "We don't see things as they are; we see them as we are."
- We will see how her words relate to Buddhism as we study the nine levels of consciousness.
- Now, let's get started!

Slide 4:

- We have three key points for today’s topic. They are:
  1. Within the nine consciousnesses, our Buddha nature corresponds to the ninth level of consciousness.
  2. Our current life condition determines how we perceive our environment.
  3. Through our Buddhist practice, we can “purify” our senses and view our lives based on our Buddha nature.

Slide 5:

- First, let's look at each level of the nine consciousnesses.
- Referencing this diagram, the first five consciousnesses represent our five senses: sight, sound, smell, taste and touch.
- The sixth, which is called mind-consciousness, takes in the information received from our five senses and processes how we perceive our environment.
• We process the outside world through these first six consciousnesses, but this is often influenced or distorted by our deeper levels of consciousness.
• Going deeper, the seventh level is called the mano-consciousness and is said to be where our ego or self-awareness resides. Our subconscious impulses, for example the impulse for self-preservation, is believed to derive from this level.
• Next, the eighth level, called the alaya-consciousness or our karmic storehouse, is where the latent effects from all of our past thoughts, words and actions, even from past lifetimes, are stored.
• Other Buddhist philosophies have also studied the eighth consciousness, believing this to be the deepest level.
• However, if we stopped here at the karmic storehouse, that would mean that the karma from our past causes would determine our present happiness in life.
• Nichiren Buddhism, however, teaches that we have the ability to completely transform our karma, and that we can do so by tapping into the next level of consciousness, the ninth consciousness.
• This level is called the amala-consciousness. Amala in Sanskrit means “pure” and “unsullied.” It indicates a level of consciousness that is unaffected by karma. In other words, the ninth consciousness is our Buddha nature.
• Chanting Nam-myoho-reng-kyo enables us to tap our Buddha nature and, like a volcano, our most enlightened state of life gushes forth when we chant, breaking through the limitations of the first eight levels of consciousness and cleansing our lives of impurities.

Slide 6:

• Nichiren Daishonin writes: “The Gohonzon exists only within the mortal flesh of us ordinary people who embrace the Lotus Sutra and chant Nam-myoho-reng-kyo. The body is the palace of the ninth consciousness, the unchanging reality that reigns over all of life’s functions.”
• Because the ninth consciousness is at the core of all phenomena, all people have the inherent ability to tap into that power.
• By chanting Nam-myoho-reng-kyo to the Gohonzon, we, as ordinary human beings, have the power to bring forth the world of Buddhahood in any circumstance. Saying that “the body is the palace of the ninth consciousness,” Nichiren reminds us that we already possess the infinite wellspring of wisdom, courage and compassion within our own lives.

Slide 7:

• Now that we learned a little bit about the nine consciousnesses, let’s go over our second key point for today: Our life state determines how we perceive our environment.
• This goes back to the quote from Anais Nin about how we see things as we are.
• When our life condition is low, everything we experience is seen from that perspective. Beautiful music may sound flat and great food may taste bland. It also affects how we react to those around us.
• For example, let’s say our friend, who genuinely cares for us, calls us out on something negative we are doing. If our life condition is low, we may get defensive or argue with them.
• But Nichiren Buddhism helps bring out our Buddhahood in all situations.
• The Daishonin says: “Persons whose six sense organs are pure will be like lapis lazuli (a precious gem) or like bright mirrors in which one sees the major world system (or the thousand-millionfold world). Now when Nichiren and his followers chant Nam-myoho-reno-kyo, they see and understand the ten thousand phenomena, as though these were reflected in a bright mirror.”
• So when we chant and bring out our Buddha nature, if our friend calls us out, instead of being defensive or upset, we can appreciate that they are looking out for us and respond positively to them.
• Being aware of and tapping into our ninth consciousness allows us to transform our negativity, doubts and fears into appreciation, confidence and courage, making it possible for us to create the greatest value in every situation.

Slide 8:

• This brings us to our third key point: Through our Buddhist practice, we can purify our lives.
• Thinking of the volcano diagram, the ninth consciousness, our Buddha nature, is at the core of everything. Through chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, the “lava” of the ninth consciousness erupts and permeates all other levels of consciousness.
• Ikeda Sensei explains: "Buddhist practice is said to "purify" the senses and the other levels of consciousness so that we can perceive all phenomena clearly and accurately. Again, the sense organs are the interface between the small universe of our lives and the cosmos. To purify our sense organs, then, means to completely harmonize our lives with the universe, “tuning in” to its rhythm. One who has purified the sense of sight will find even the most mundane scene to be a miracle sparkling with life. And one who has purified the sense of hearing can hear Mozart in the cacophony of a baby’s cries."
• By chanting and harmonizing with the universal Law of cause and effect, we imbue our lives with wisdom and appreciation, and can experience joy in any situation.

Slide 9:

• Before getting into our discussion, let’s learn from the real-life story of Kyoko Terasawa, who lost both parents when she was 4 and lived a life of struggle for many years. At 53, she was introduced to Nichiren Buddhism. Through practicing Buddhism, she completely changed her life and became very happy.
• Filled with immense appreciation, she vowed to contribute to kosen-rufu through promoting SGI publications and expanding people’s understanding of Nichiren Buddhism.
• At work, in a Tokyo skyscraper with some 40 shops, she perfectly embodied Nichiren’s words, “You should base your mind on the ninth consciousness, and carry out your practice in the six consciousnesses,” by chanting every day to support and inspire those
around her. She often went out of her way to help other shop workers and gained the trust of many, who happily agreed to subscribe to SGI publications.

- She reached a point where she could tell a person’s life state just by hearing their voice. Even if they seemed happy, she could tell if something was lacking in their voice.

- Sensei says: “[Mrs. Terasawa’s experience] is truly an example of the purification of the sense of hearing. It is the state described by the line of the sutra: “Because the faculties of his ears are so keen / he can distinguish and understand all these sounds” (LSOC, 296). This is describing an expert on humanity, a master at dialogue. Also, these are the characteristics of someone who has purified the tongue. The sutra says: “If with these faculties of the tongue he undertakes to expound and preach in the midst of the great assembly, he will produce a deep and wonderful voice capable of penetrating the mind and causing all who hear it to rejoice and delight” (LSOC, 301). Mrs. Terasawa is doubtless reaping the wonderful effects of all her efforts.”

- She is a superb example of how to purify our lives through determined prayer and dedicated action to inspire others and advance kosen-rufu.

**Slide 10:**

- Thank you all for listening thus far. Now for the fun part: discussion!
- Let’s use these questions as a starting point, they are:
  1. Share how your Buddhist practice has changed the way you view obstacles.
  2. How does the idea of “purifying” our lives through chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo impact your perspective on your current struggles?

(Please feel free to utilize the Zoom breakout room feature)