SOKA SPIRIT
CHANTING SESSIONS

➤ PURPOSE

1) Chant Nam-myoho-rengyo-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)
August Curriculum: Week 1 (Aug. 1)

Kosen-rufu Gongyo Meeting Suggested Agenda:

- Faith Experience
- Announcements
- Words of Encouragement (Since this video is guidance from Ikeda Sensei, closing encouragement should come before the video on the meeting agenda.
- **Video: The 4th Headquarters Leaders Meeting** (Voice-over). (25 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 “HQ Leaders Meeting”
    - “The 4th Headquarters Leaders Meeting” will be at top
    - Click the image for the voice-over option

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!”
August Curriculum: Week 2 (Aug. 8)

**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 study guide for volume 28 of *The New Human Revolution* in the August 2021 *Living Buddhism*, titled “Giving Our All to Each Encounter,” found on page 45.

**Context:** In 1978, Ikeda Sensei attends as many as five gongyo meetings in Tono, Gifu Prefecture, a place where local members had incurred unjust harassment from a group of Nichiren Shoshu priests. Sensei pours his life into giving encouragement to the members with a desire to do whatever he can to raise the spirits of all those who have come to meet him.

**Ikeda Sensei writes:**

“Faith ultimately means to be without doubt. ... Striving for kosen-rufu entails a struggle against devilish functions. ... This may be in the form of persecution by the authorities, unexpected occurrences or events that stir up doubt. That’s why I hope that no matter what happens, you will engrave the word ‘faith’ deeply in your hearts, advance along the great path of kosen-rufu and become happy without fail.”

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

- How can you challenge doubt or devilish functions with your Buddhist practice?
- How have you challenged your weaknesses with your Buddhist practice?

**Reminder:** The Soka Spirit curriculum can be found at [www.sgi-usa.org/monthly-downloads/](http://www.sgi-usa.org/monthly-downloads/)
August Curriculum: Week 3 (Aug. 15)

We will view the video titled “Resolutely Advance on the Path of Soka” (Voice-over). (9 minutes)

Since this video is guidance from Ikeda Sensei, closing encouragement should come before the video on the meeting agenda.

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) “Resolutely Advance on the Path of Soka”

> 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!”
August Curriculum: Week 4 (Aug. 22)

**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 study guide for volume 28 of *The New Human Revolution* in the August 2021 *Living Buddhism*, titled “Ironclad Unity Is the Key,” found on page 51.

**Context:** Ikeda Sensei discusses the importance of unity based on Nichiren Daishonin’s words, “If any of Nichiren’s disciples disrupt the unity of many in body but one in mind, they would be like warriors who destroy their own castle from within” (“The Heritage of the Ultimate Law of Life,” *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 217).

Ikeda Sensei writes:

It is crucial that we respect one another as fellow members and advance together in harmony and unity. Unity is the force for advancing kosen-rufu.

According to the sutras and Nichiren Daishonin’s writings, devilish forces are sure to arise, competing with one another to obstruct the advance of the Soka Gakkai, the organization dedicated to realizing kosen-rufu. They will appear as external forces, such as oppression and persecution by those with power and authority, as well as from within, in the form of envy and resentment among members.

We must be especially vigilant against negative functions that seek to corrode our organization from within. If members are jealous and bitter, if they bear grudges and make disparaging remarks about one another, no matter how hard they strive in faith, they won’t be able to feel a sense of joy, and the benefit and good fortune that derive from their practice will diminish. ...

Being harmoniously united is proof that all of you are transforming your life state and carrying out your human revolution. ...

External forces that seek opportunities to impede a movement search for a breach in unity. They try to drive a wedge between mentor and disciples, and among fellow members, fomenting hostility and conflict. That’s why possessing ironclad unity that leaves no gap for devilish functions to creep in is a force for protecting the members and making a great advance for kosen-rufu.

**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.

- **What actions can you take to create unity in your family, workplace, SGI organization or other circles?**

**Reminder:** The Soka Spirit curriculum can be found at [www.sgi-usa.org/monthly-downloads/](http://www.sgi-usa.org/monthly-downloads/)
August Curriculum: Week 5 (Aug. 29)

**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 study guide for volume 28 of *The New Human Revolution* in the August 2021 *Living Buddhism*, titled “Conquering Arrogance to Become a Champion,” found on page 52.

**Context:** While talking with a member, Ikeda Sensei perceived in his attitude a strain of arrogance and disdain for fellow members and gave him strict guidance based on the following passage from Nichiren Daishonin’s writings: “Now, if you wish to attain Buddhahood, you have only to lower the banner of your arrogance, cast aside the staff of your anger, and devote yourself exclusively to the one vehicle of the Lotus Sutra. Worldly fame and profit are mere baubles of your present existence, and arrogance and prejudice are ties that will fetter you in the next one” (“Questions and Answers about Embracing the Lotus Sutra,” *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, pp. 58–59).

**Ikeda Sensei writes:**

“You worked hard to share this Buddhism and your business went well. This is nothing but a benefit from the Gohonzon and the power of faith. But if you start to become arrogant and allow your faith to tarnish, you will find yourself deadlocked once again. That’s why it’s important to conquer any arrogance dwelling in your heart.

“Of course, chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and sharing this Buddhism with others will bring you benefit and enable you to overcome financial difficulties. But in order to attain Buddhahood in this lifetime—in other words, to establish a life state of absolute happiness—we must steadily persevere in faith throughout our lives. Perseverance is the key to faith. If you let arrogance go to your head, it will destroy your faith.” …

“Having observed many people, I can tell you that the majority of those who eventually stopped practicing were those who fell prey to arrogance. Arrogance causes us to become self-centered and unable to work in unity with others, eventually leading us to serve as a destructive function in the organization dedicated to kosen-rufu. I say this for your sake, for I hope you will become a champion in faith.”

**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.

• **Is there a piece of guidance from Ikeda Sensei that spurs you to win over your weaknesses and continue on your path of human revolution?**

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