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-reng-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)
October 3rd Kosen-rufu Gongyo Meeting Suggested Agenda

Week 1

Suggested Agenda:

- Faith Experience
- Announcements
  - Distinguished Pioneer Awards
- Gohonzon Conferrals (in-person only)
- *Video: “Conveying the Mentor’s ‘Truth’ for Posterity—Writing The Human Revolution” (15 minutes)
- Words of Encouragement (after 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 “Special Collection”
  > Scroll down to “Conveying the Mentor’s ‘Truth’ for Posterity—Writing The Human Revolution”
  > Click the 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!”
October Curriculum: Week 2 (Oct. 10)

**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 30 of *The New Human Revolution* in the October 2021 *Living Buddhism*, titled “Dictating *The Human Revolution* With Every Last Ounce of Strength,” found on page 43. The video we saw last Sunday was also about Sensei’s intense efforts to write the novel.

**Context:** In August 1980, Shin’ichi Yamamoto, the character in the novel representing Ikeda Sensei, resumed the serialization of *The Human Revolution*. Severe shoulder pain kept him from writing, so he was dictating each installment to an editor. One day, the editor found Shin’ichi feverish and lying on the floor. He patiently waited until Shin’ichi was ready.


After about 10 minutes, Shin’ichi slapped the tatami [floor] with his hand and sat up.

“All right, let’s begin! Let’s leave a chronicle for the future. Everyone is looking forward to reading these installments. Can’t you just picture their happy faces? The thought that it’s all for the sake of the members fills me with energy!” …

He picked up his notes and said to the editor: “Let’s get to work, then! Are you ready?”

Shin’ichi began to dictate. As he went on, his voice grew stronger. …

After about 15 minutes, Shin’ichi began to cough. Even after his coughing let up, his breathing was rough and labored.

“Let me rest a while,” he said, and he lay down on the tatami again.

After about 10 minutes … Shin’ichi’s breathing had become a bit easier. He slapped the tatami again forcefully and sat up.

“OK, let’s continue! Everyone is waiting. Our members are doing their best while enduring much bitterness. Just the thought of it fills me with emotion. That’s why I want to lift their spirits even a little. I want to rouse their courage.” …

In this fashion, he composed the manuscript and revised it several times. After he made additional revisions to the galley proof, it was printed in the newspaper. Once the serialization resumed, he wouldn’t be able to stop halfway. That is the arduous nature of composing a serialized novel. For Shin’ichi, it was an all-or-nothing struggle, and he dictated each installment with every last ounce of his strength.

**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.

- **Sensei has poured his life into writing *The Human Revolution* and *The New Human Revolution*. Is there any guidance from these novels that has impacted your life? How?**

**Reminder:** The Soka Spirit curriculum can be found at [www.sgi-usa.org/monthly-downloads/](http://www.sgi-usa.org/monthly-downloads/)
October Curriculum: Week 3 (Oct. 17)

We will view the video titled “Spreading Seeds of Happiness With an Indomitable Fighting Spirit” (Voice-over). (6 minutes)

*Since this video is a speech from Ikeda Sensei, words of 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) “Spreading Seeds of Happiness With an Indomitable Fighting Spirit”

> 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!”
October Curriculum: Week 4 (Oct. 24)

**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 30 of *The New Human Revolution* in the October 2021 *Living Buddhism*, titled “The Priesthood’s Domineering Attitude Toward Lay Believers,” found on page 46.

**Context:** In early 1979, Nichiren Shoshu priests had begun to attack and criticize the Soka Gakkai once again. Regarding this, Ikeda Sensei recalls this passage from Nichiren Daishonin’s “Letter from Sado”: “Neither non-Buddhists nor the enemies of Buddhism can destroy the correct teaching of the Thus Come One, but the Buddha’s disciples definitely can. As a sutra says, only worms born of the lion’s body feed on the lion.”

**Ikeda Sensei writes in *The New Human Revolution*, vol. 30, pp. 18–19:**
The priests, who claimed to be Nichiren’s disciples, harassed and oppressed the Soka Gakkai, which did nothing but selflessly propagate the Law, just as the Daishonin had instructed. This unthinkable state of affairs had persisted from the prewar days.

When viewed in the light of Buddhism, however, the situation becomes absolutely clear. The Daishonin tells us who it is that will destroy Buddhism. ...

It is the followers of Buddhism who will destroy it, not non-Buddhists and others who denounce Buddhism. The Lotus Sutra states that “evil demons will take possession of others,” describing how the devil king of the sixth heaven will take possession of priests who will then sow confusion and disunity among believers. In this scenario, those wearing priestly robes will trample on the Daishonin’s spirit and obstruct kosen-rufu.

So it was that, during Toda’s lifetime, too, the Soka Gakkai suffered unreasonable attacks from Nichiren Shoshu priests. Shin’ichi was reminded of a stern warning delivered by his mentor: “Kosen-rufu will never advance without the Soka Gakkai. Those who seek to destroy the Soka Gakkai, a harmonious community of practitioners, are in fact obstructing 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 causes can you make/are you making to create unity in the SGI, your workplace, family or community?**

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

October Curriculum: Week 5 (Oct. 31)

**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 30 of *The New Human Revolution* in the October 2021 *Living Buddhism*, titled “Practice and Study Are Like the Two Wheels of a Cart,” found on page 52.

**Context:** At a study conference in Hawaii in 1981, Ikeda Sensei discusses this passage from Nichiren Daishonin’s writing “The True Aspect of All Phenomena”: “Exert yourself in the two ways of practice and study. Without practice and study, there can be no Buddhism. You must not only persevere yourself; you must also teach others. Both practice and study arise from faith. Teach others to the best of your ability, even if it is only a single sentence or phrase.”

“Practice” here means our actions for the happiness of ourselves and others—in other words, chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and sharing it with others. “Study” means learning the teachings and principles of Nichiren Buddhism. Those who exert themselves in both practice and study are genuine disciples of Nichiren Daishonin. Unless we persevere in these two ways, we are not truly practicing Buddhism, the Daishonin says. …

The two ways of practice and study arise from faith. Neglecting practice and study means losing one’s faith. Faith means wholeheartedly embracing the Gohonzon and striving earnestly and steadfastly for kosen-rufu, undefeated by any threat, attack or temptation.

Practice and study are like the two wheels of a cart, while faith is like the axle. No matter how knowledgeable someone may be about Buddhist doctrine, without practice, they are like a cart with only one wheel and will inevitably veer from the correct path of faith. …

We are not studying the teachings of Nichiren Buddhism to become professional Buddhist scholars. I wish to reaffirm that the purpose of our Buddhist study is to deepen our faith, attain Buddhahood in this lifetime and advance 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 one of the prompts below.

- **How has Buddhist study impacted your faith and practice?**

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