SOKA SPIRIT CHANTING SESSIONS

► PURPOSE

1) Chant Nam-myoho-ренge-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 FUKUDOSHII

- 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)
November 7th Kosen-rufu Gongyo Meeting Suggested Agenda

Week 1

Suggested Agenda:

- Faith Experience
- Gohonzon Conferrals (in-person only)
- Leadership Announcements
- Video: “The SGI Will Win Eternally Based on the Oneness of Mentor and Disciple”*
  - (12 minutes starting from 7 min 55 sec)
- 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 “The SGI Will Win Eternally Based on the Oneness of Mentor and Disciple”
> Click the blue “Voice-over” image
> Please start from 7min 55sec

Reminder: The following disclaimer is required to be read aloud 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!”
November Curriculum: Week 2 (Nov. 14)

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 November 2021 Living Buddhism, titled “The Spirit of Genuine Practitioners of Nichiren Buddhism,” found on page 49.

Context: In June 1981, Ikeda Sensei met with members in New York and discussed with them essential points for advancing kosen-rufu in America.


If you have a difference of opinion, never become emotional or hostile to one another. Always return to the starting points of the Gohonzon and kosen-rufu, and chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo with unity of purpose. …

When each of you firmly base your lives on the writings of Nichiren Daishonin, you will be able to work together harmoniously, without disrespect, resentment, envy or hostility. …

Before criticizing others, we should look at our own words, actions and thoughts in the light of the writings. That is the spirit of genuine practitioners of Nichiren Buddhism. …

Members in the United States and in all countries need to conduct their activities harmoniously while observing and respecting the local customs and laws of the land as good citizens.

The Daishonin teaches: “If the spirit of many in body but one in mind prevails among the people, they will achieve all their goals.”¹ It is important for members to unite in a shared commitment to accelerate the flow of worldwide kosen-rufu and ensure that it continues forever.

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 have you initiated unity through changing your own perception or behavior?

Reminder: The Soka Spirit curriculum can be found at www.sgi-usa.org/monthly-downloads/

Note:
1. “Many in Body, One in Mind,” The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, vol. 1, p. 618.
We will view the video titled “Faith to Transform Sufferings Into Happiness” (Voice-over). (8 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) “Faith to Transform Sufferings Into Happiness”
- Click the blue Voice-Over image

Reminder: The following disclaimer is required to be read aloud 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!”
November Curriculum: Week 4 (Nov. 28)

**Preparation:** Please read the material, seek from seniors in faith about it and chant abundantly throughout the preparation.

**Intro:** To commemorate November 28, the 30th anniversary of our Spiritual Independence from the Nichiren Shoshu priesthood, we will study Ikeda Sensei’s Afterword to *The New Human Revolution*, published in the March 2019 *Living Buddhism* and in the newly published volume 30 of the novel.

**Ikeda Sensei writes:**
A major catalyst for the dynamic development of the Soka Gakkai, which was energetically advancing worldwide kosen-rufu, was its attainment of spiritual independence from the corrupt and ossified Nichiren Shoshu priesthood.

The Soka Gakkai had stoically endured the terrible treatment by priests who were openly contemptuous of believers. It had sought to maintain harmonious relations between the priesthood and the laity and continued to sincerely support Nichiren Shoshu. All of this had been solely for the sake of advancing kosen-rufu, the cherished wish of Nichiren Daishonin. But priests of Nichiren Shoshu became increasingly dogmatic and flaunted their clerical authority. ... Growing ever more authoritarian, they adopted an unjust policy of extreme discrimination against the laity, and they sought to establish a system in which lay followers were completely subjugated by the priesthood, with the high priest at its zenith. This was a betrayal of the Daishonin’s spirit and a violation of the Buddhist teachings of respect for the dignity of life and the equality of all people.

If this were to continue, the fundamental principles of Nichiren Buddhism would have been distorted in a way that it would no longer resemble a teaching for realizing happiness and peace for all humanity. With the rallying cry of “Return to the spirit of the Daishonin!” the Soka Gakkai rose up to carry out a religious reformation and remonstrated with the priesthood. Nichiren Shoshu’s response to the Soka Gakkai, the organization striving for kosen-rufu in exact accord with the Daishonin’s intent, was to issue a call for it to disband, followed soon after by a notice of excommunication.

November 28, 1991, the day Nichiren Shoshu sent that final notice, became the Soka Gakkai’s Spiritual Independence Day, marking its liberation from the fetters of the priesthood. The dark clouds hanging over the Soka Gakkai’s future were swept away and the path to worldwide kosen-rufu suddenly opened wide before us. It was the dawn of a new day when the Soka Gakkai would soar freely into the twenty-first century as a truly global religious movement.

**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.

- **Based on the above, what is your determination to advance and protect our kosen-rufu movement?**

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