

Sample Questions for the Intermediate-level Exam

This year's Intermediate-level Exam will be held Sunday, Oct. 24, throughout the country. Actual questions for the exam will be based on the sample questions that follow. The page numbers that appear in parentheses at the end of each question will direct you to where the answer can be found. We hope this information will assist you in preparing for the exam. Good luck!

— The SGI-USA Study Department

Part One Lectures on the “Expedient Means” and “Life Span” Chapters of the Lotus Sutra, vols. 2 and 3

Q1:

What is the significance of Shakyamuni revealing that he first attained enlightenment in the remote past rather than in India in his lifetime? (vol. 2, pp. 7–8)

Q2:

Describe the Bodhisattvas of the Earth. (vol. 2, p. 15)

Q3:

What is the significance of adding *Nam* to the title of the Lotus Sutra? (vol. 2, pp. 25–26)

Q4:

What is the meaning of the phrase “At that time,” which begins the “Life Span” chapter? (vol. 2, pp. 26–27)

Q5:

Why is the interpretation of Thus Come One’s secret and transcendental powers important from the viewpoint of the Daishonin’s Buddhism? (vol. 2, pp. 34–35)

Q6:

What is the meaning of “time without beginning” (*kuon ganjo*) from the viewpoint of Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism? (vol. 2, p. 49)

Q7:

Explain the phrase “casting off the transient and revealing the true” in terms of Nichiren Daishonin’s example. (vol. 2, pp. 55–57)

Q8:

What is the true intention of the “Life Span” chapter? (vol. 3, p. 7)

Q9:

What does the doctrine of the true cause and true effect state? (vol. 3, pp. 10–11)

Q10:

Why did Shakyamuni “enter extinction”? (vol. 3, pp. 26–28)

Q11:

How is the principle of mentor and disciple revealed in the “Life Span” chapter? (vol. 3, pp. 29, 179)

Q12:

What is the purpose and meaning of the *jigage*, or verse section, of the “Life Span” chapter? (vol. 3, pp. 84–93)

Q13:

What does Nichiren Daishonin state that the *jigage* represents? (vol. 3, p. 85)

Q14:

What are the three enlightened properties or bodies? (vol. 3, pp. 97–102, 127)

Q15:

What are the three treasures that lead people to happiness? (vol. 3, p. 152)

Q16:

In the phrase “single-mindedly desiring to see the Buddha, not hesitating even if it costs them their lives,” what does “not hesitating even if it costs them their lives” mean? (vol. 3, pp. 121–22)

Q17:

What does the phrase “single-mindedly desiring to see the Buddha” in the previous question mean? (vol. 3, p. 126)

Q18:

How is the SGI “constantly making many kinds of music”? (vol. 3, p. 148)

Q19:

What does the passage “I am always here preaching the Law” mean? (vol. 3, pp. 108–09)

Q20:

What is the Buddha’s constant thought or vow? (vol. 3, p. 176–82)

Part Two**“The Opening of the Eyes” (1) from *Learning From the Goshō: The Eternal Teachings of Nichiren Daishonin*****Q21:**

In “The Opening of the Eyes,” Nichiren Daishonin proclaims: “I, Nichiren, am the richest man in all of present-day Japan.” The next sentence in this passage suggests that the Daishonin developed this rich inner state, which President Toda described as “invinci-

ble” and “free from fear,” because he had done what? (p. 49)

Q22:

Shijo Kingo received “The Opening of the Eyes” on behalf of whom? (p. 50)

Q23:

What did the Daishonin wish to convey to his followers in “The Opening of the Eyes”? (p. 50)

Q24:

What is the meaning of the title, “The Opening of the Eyes”? (p. 50)

Q25:

In this writing, what does the Daishonin declare himself to be? (p. 50)

Q26:

Through the Nirvana Sutra, the Daishonin points out that even a “good” Buddhist practitioner becomes “an enemy of Buddhism from within” if he or she sees someone destroying Buddhism and fails to do what? (p. 51)

Q27:

How does Chang-an describe someone who befriends another person but lacks the mercy to correct him or her? (p. 51)

Q28:

According to Chang-an, what does a true disciple of the Buddha do upon seeing someone who is destroying Buddhism? (p. 51)

Q29:

How does Chang-an describe someone who eliminates evil from a destroyer of Buddhism? (p. 51)

Q30:

How does Chang-an describe those who fail to reproach someone who destroys or brings confusion to Buddhism? (p. 51)

Q31:

How did the Daishonin’s followers react to the persecution that befell them during the Daishonin’s exile to Sado Island? (p. 52)

Q32:

At the end of “The Opening of the Eyes,” the Daishonin addresses the confusion of many followers by posing the question: In propagating this teaching, what merit does it bring, what can you gain, if you arouse the enmity of those around you? How does the Daishonin answer this question? (p. 52)

Q33:

Why is it necessary to reproach someone who tries to subvert Buddhism? (p. 53)

Q34:

What is the ultimate benefit of reproaching the destroyers of Buddhism? (p. 53)

Q35:

What results does taking action in Buddhism yield? (p. 53)

Q36:

What was the source of the Daishonin's strength that enabled him to triumph over government persecutions? (p. 53)

Q37:

With what intention did Shakyamuni, Taho and the various Buddhas from the ten directions gather in one place in the eleventh chapter of the Lotus Sutra? (p. 55)

Q38:

According to the Daishonin, which Buddhist priest "would tightly shut the gates to the Lotus Sutra in the Latter Day of the Law so that no one would have access to it"? (p. 54)

Q39:

According to President Toda, how is it that the Daishonin could accept the persecutions of the three powerful enemies? (p. 56)

Q40:

Had the Daishonin not spoken out and proclaimed the correct Buddhist teaching for the Latter Day of the Law, he may have led a peaceful life, but what, in his own words, would he have been lacking? (p. 57)

Part Three**"The Opening of the Eyes"(2) from *Learning From the Gosho: The Eternal Teachings of Nichiren Daishonin***

(Page numbers in parentheses are from the book, followed by the page number where the chapter appeared in the March 1998 issue of Living Buddhism.)

Q41:

What was the Daishonin's purpose in writing "The Opening of the Eyes"? (p. 61) (LB, pp. 6-7)

Q42:

Who perfectly possesses all three virtues of sovereign, teacher and parent? (p. 61) (LB, p. 7)

Q43:

What is the virtue of sovereign in modern terms? (p. 61) (LB, p. 7)

Q44:

What is the virtue of teacher in modern terms? (p. 61) (LB, p. 7)

Q45:

What is the virtue of parent in modern terms? (p. 61) (LB, p. 7)

Q46:

Which chapter of the Lotus Sutra explains the three virtues of the essential teaching? (p. 61) (LB, p. 7)

Q47:

Which virtue does the phrase “This, my land, remains safe and tranquil” refer to? (pp. 61–62) (LB, p. 7)

Q48:

Which virtue does the phrase “Constantly I have preached the Law, teaching, converting” refer to? (p. 62) (LB, p. 7)

Q49:

Which virtue does the phrase “I am the father of this world” refer to? (p. 62) (LB, p. 7)

Q50:

Explain the relationship between the three virtues and the SGI’s movement of peace, culture and education. (pp. 63–64) (LB, p. 8)

Q51:

What does Nichiren Daishonin say about the followers of the Tendai school in “The Opening of the Eyes”? (p. 64) (LB, p. 8)

Q52:

The first president of the Soka Gakkai, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, said that, “Of all the Nichiren schools existing today, Nichiren Shoshu most closely resembles the Tendai school of the Daishonin’s time.” Why is this so? (p. 64) (LB, p. 8)

Q53:

How was Shakyamuni Buddha regarded by the followers of non-Buddhist teachings? (p. 65) (LB, p. 8)

Q54:

Those people who thought they were only criticizing T’ien-t’ai and Dengyo were in fact doing what? (p. 66) (LB, p. 9)

Q55:

What does the Daishonin say about being “praised by fools”? (p. 66) (LB, p. 9)

Q56:

President Ikeda says that we should conduct ourselves in such a manner that we win the praise of who? (p. 68) (LB, p. 9)

Q57:

What characterizes the *saha* world? (p. 69) (LB, p. 9)

Q58:

T'ien-t'ai states that the method of propagating Buddhism "should be that which accords with the time." What is it that does not change with the time? (pp. 68–69) (LB, p. 10)

Q59:

What does the Daishonin say of those who propagate the Mystic Law in the Latter Day of the Law? (p. 70) (LB, p. 10)

Q60:

How does the Daishonin conclude "The Opening of the Eyes"? (p. 70) (LB, p. 10)

Part Four***Questions and Answers on the Temple Issue Pamphlet*****Q61:**

A passage in the Lotus Sutra reads, "And since hatred and jealousy toward this sutra abound even when the Thus Come One is in the world, how much more will this be so after his passing?" (LS10, 164). How does this passage apply to the Soka Gakkai's situation? (p. 4)

Q62:

The Daishonin states: "If you propagate it, devils will arise without fail. Where it not for these, there would be no way of knowing that this is the true teaching" (MW-1, 145), and "When I examine these passages, I know that if I do not call forth these three enemies of the Lotus Sutra, then I will not be a true votary of the Lotus Sutra. Only by making them appear can I be a true votary" (MW-4, 20). What do these statements indicate? (pp. 5–6)

Q63:

In late 1990, it became clear that the priesthood of Nichiren Shoshu had been conspiring either to take control of or disband the SGI organization. What was the name of their plan? (p. 7)

Q64:

What was the Soka Gakkai's response to the priesthood's initial nine questions accusing President Ikeda and the Soka Gakkai of misdeeds? (pp. 7–8)

Q65:

What action does Nichiren Daishonin state believers should take at "a time when truth

and error” in Buddhism “stand shoulder to shoulder”? (p. 9)

Q66:

By developing our understanding and conviction about the temple issue, what insights can we gain into fundamental issues affecting humanity? (p. 10)

Q67:

Name two of the ten ways in which Nikken has acted counter to the teachings of Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism. (pp. 11–12)

Q68:

Nichiren Daishonin states, “There should be no discrimination among those who propagate the five characters of Myoho-renge-kyo in the Latter Day or the Law, be they men or women.” In contrast to this, what did Nichijun Fujimoto, Nichiren Shoshu’s chief administrator, state in a letter to the SGI in January 1991? (p. 13)

Q69:

Nichiren Daishonin states: “Never seek this Gohonzon outside yourself. The Gohonzon exists only within the mortal flesh of us ordinary people who chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo.” In contrast to this, what does the Nichiren Shoshu priesthood assert? (p. 14)

Q70:

The Daishonin states: “Only I, Nichiren, at first chanted Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, but then two, three and a hundred followed, chanting and teaching others. Likewise, propagation will unfold this way in the future” (MW-1, 93). When Soka Gakkai first and second presidents Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and Josei Toda first encountered Nichiren Shoshu, it was a tiny and impoverished Buddhist denomination. Nevertheless, what did Makiguchi and Toda do to realize the Daishonin’s prediction? (p. 17)

Q71:

Presidents Makiguchi and Toda refused to follow the high priest’s instructions to incorporate worship of a Shinto amulet into Soka Gakkai members’ practice, basing themselves on article 17 of the “Twenty-Six Admonitions of Nikko Shonin.” What does this article state? (p. 18)

Q72:

What is the significance of the SGI’s decision to issue the Gohonzon? (p. 20)

Q73:

Nichiren Shoshu has called the Gohonzon issued by the SGI counterfeit and unable to lead to benefit because it claims that it has not been authorized by the high priest through the “eye-opening ceremony.” In contrast, what was Nichiren Daishonin’s view of the “eye-opening ceremony?” (p. 22)

Q74:

Refuting what is erroneous and unjust in terms of the Buddhist Law is a profound good cause. SGI members have returned their Gohonzon transcribed by Nikken in exchange for the Gohonzon transcribed by 26th High Priest Nichikan issued by the SGI. What

erroneous teaching of Nikken's concerning the Gohonzon are SGI members refuting by praying to the Nichikan-transcribed Gohonzon and showing actual proof of benefit and growth? (p. 24)

Q75:

Based on his writings and in light of his experience in Kamakura, how would Nichiren Daishonin view false and malicious reporting on the Soka Gakkai by segments of the Japanese mass media? (pp. 27–28)

Q76:

In his letter "On Practicing the Buddha's Teachings," the Daishonin states, "From the very day you take faith in this teaching, you should be fully prepared to face the three kinds of persecutions" (MW-1, 99). According to the text, how should we view criticism and attack by entrenched authority? (pp. 27–28)

Q77:

Why should the SGI not agree to meet with the priesthood under their stated conditions? (pp. 29–30)

Q78:

Nichiren Daishonin writes, "It is important to speak with even greater conviction to those who slander [the Mystic Law]" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1123). We should therefore speak about the reality of the temple issue with conviction and compassion. What traits should we employ when talking to temple members or others? (p. 32)

Q79:

What is the Soka Renaissance a struggle against? (p. 33)

Q80:

What can we hope to gain through dialogue about the temple issue? (p. 34)

Part Five

"An Explanation of Nikko Shonin's Twenty-six Admonitions" by SGI President Ikeda

(Page references are from the April 1998 issue of Living Buddhism.)

Q81:

What was Nikko Shonin's primary motivation for writing the Twenty-six Admonitions? (pp. 16, 21)

Q82:

What is the original spirit of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism? (p. 16)

Q83:

How do Nikken and the priesthood interpret article #1, which states, "The doctrines of the Fuji school must not differ in the least from the teachings of the late master"? (p. 17)

Q84:

What is the similarity between the five senior priests of the Daishonin's time and Nikken? (p. 17)

Q85:

What was fifty-ninth High Priest Nichiko's major contribution? (p. 17)

Q86:

Why are the priests of Nichiren Shoshu like "parasites in the lion's body" of the Daishonin's Buddhism? (p. 18)

Q87:

The essential spirit of Nikko Shonin is to treasure and base oneself on what? (pp. 17-18)

Q88:

According to Nikko Shonin, how should we regard and treat capable practitioners who are our juniors in terms of position or length of practice? (pp. 19, 22)

Q89:

According to the verse section of the sixteenth chapter of the Lotus Sutra, what is the Buddha's constant thought? (p. 19)

Q90:

In contrast to the priesthood, how has the SGI fulfilled the thirteenth admonition, "Until kosen-rufu is achieved, propagate the Law to the full extent of your ability without begrudging your life"? (p. 21)

Q91:

What does Nikko Shonin state in article #17 that makes it clear that he did not consider the high priest infallible? (p. 23)

Q92:

In the spirit of article #17, what did President Makiguchi refuse to do upon being summoned to the head temple in June 1943? (p. 23)

Q93:

Fundamentally, what about the behavior of High Priest Nikken caused the SGI to refuse to follow him? (p. 23)

Q94:

Why does Nikko Shonin tell us not to "accept offerings from slanderers of the Law" in article #22? (p. 25)

Q95:

How is the SGI following article #16, "Even though they may be lowly, you should deeply respect and regard as your teachers those whose understanding of Buddhism sur-

passes your own?" (pp. 21–23)

Q96:

How did Nikko Shonin view a high priest who deviated from the principle of sexual abstinence? (p. 26)

Q97:

How did Nikko Shonin view those who violate even one of these admonitions? (pp. 16, 27)

Q98:

What actions by the SGI and the successive presidents have protected kosen-rufu and kept Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism alive? (pp. 23–24, pp. 25, 27)

Q99:

Who does the phrase "skilled in difficult debate" originally refer to in article #26? (p. 27)

Q100:

According to the example cited in the text, who did Nichiren Daishonin appoint to represent him in a debate with a scholar of what sect? (p. 27)