

**SGI-USA STUDY DEPARTMENT GUIDELINES FOR 2001
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In an essay titled “Making the Gosho Part of Our Lives,” SGI President Ikeda writes: “As we stand on the threshold of a new century, I want to reconfirm the basic path of the Soka Gakkai. That is, the Soka Gakkai will always advance in complete accord with the Lotus Sutra and Nichiren Daishonin’s writings. It has been the Soka Gakkai’s firm, unchanging position, since the time of its first and second presidents, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and Josei Toda, to practice in accord with the Buddha’s teaching, just as the Daishonin instructs.”

And he writes of his own experience with study: “The harder the times I faced, the more eagerly I sought the Daishonin’s words. And each time that I did, I found new courage. An inextinguishable sun arose in my heart, breaking through the darkness. During the great campaigns that I waged in Osaka—the golden struggle of my youth—I always based myself on the Daishonin’s writings while earnestly fighting on the front lines” (May 5, 2000, *World Tribune*, p. 8).

At the end of the essay, President Ikeda strongly encourages us to make serious efforts in study. He concludes: “Leaders who are genuinely committed to realizing kosen-rufu will read the Daishonin’s writings every day, even if only a line or a paragraph, and make it a living part of themselves. I also hope that the youth, in particular, will study the Daishonin’s writings thoroughly, as they strive to achieve their goals. Those who do not, I have found, tend to be shallow and frivolous. Study is the marrow of the SGI. Unless we are armed with compassion and an understanding of the principles of Buddhism, we cannot carry out kosen-rufu. My dear, courageous comrades! Let’s do our best! Let’s stride with energy and enthusiasm on the vast open road leading into the 21st century.”

SGI-USA Study Department members will take the spirit of this essay as our own determination and strive to accomplish the following goals in 2001:

- 1) Study and promote *The Writings of Nichi-ren Daishonin* and President Ikeda’s guidance every day to deepen our faith and further improve our lives.
- 2) Make study the basis of promoting Soka Care on the front lines of our kosen-rufu movement—the district.
- 3) Take the lead in the Soka Spirit campaign to refute erroneous teachings and provide a clear and correct understanding of Buddhist principles for the peace and prosperity of humankind.

Study Activity Guidelines:

1) Individual Study Activity

We will challenge ourselves to read the Daishonin’s writings every day, even if only a line or a paragraph, as President Ikeda encourages us. Many members have *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, which was published a little more than a year ago. We want to encourage each member of the Study Department to have his or her own copy. Scheduled to be available later this year are a CD-ROM version of *The Writings of Nichiren*

Daishonin, a compilation of daily passages of the Daishonin's writings, a compilation of passages by subject, and more to support our individual study efforts.

2) District Study Activity

District or group discussion meetings are the foundation of kosen-rufu activities and a place where people can learn of the humanistic philosophy of Buddhism. The Study Department recommends dedicating a 10- to 15-minute portion of discussion meetings to studying Buddhist principles. Study articles will be published in the *World Tribune* or *Living Buddhism* as supporting materials.

3) Chapter Study Activity

A) Bimonthly study of the Daishonin's writings in even numbered months.

It is recommended that bimonthly study meetings of the Daishonin's writings be held by chapter and led by chapter, area or region leaders. Each area, region or zone should hold preparation meetings led by area, region or zone leaders, supported by the study committee the month before the meetings. The materials will be selected from *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin* (see the Feb. 2 *World Tribune*; the February study material from "On Repaying Debts of Gratitude" will be in the January issue of *Living Buddhism*), and a study guide will be published in odd-numbered months in *Living Buddhism*.

B) Other study meetings in odd-numbered months

It is recommended that smaller meetings be held at the chapter or district level in every odd-numbered month, so that there is at least one study meeting for members to attend every month. *The Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra* is recommended as material and preferably will be studied in dialogue format rather than in lecture format. (Volumes 1 and 2 are now available, and more volumes are scheduled to be published this year.)

4) Area, Region and Zone Study Activity

A) Curriculum Study and Examination

The current study curriculum will be completed at the end of this year, and it will be revised for 2002 and beyond. It is recommended that meetings for curriculum study be held at the area and region level every month toward the Entrance and Advanced examinations to be held this year. The schedule of exams is as follows (see the Feb. 2 *World Tribune* for more details):

- April 22 (Sunday): 2001 Entrance-Level Examination
- Oct. 21 (Sunday): 2001 Advanced-Level Examination

B) Kosen-rufu Prayer Meetings

Mini study presentations (10–15 minutes of encouragement based on a passage of the Daishonin's writings) are recommended to be a part of the program for monthly kosen-rufu prayer meetings.

C) Introductory Meetings

The Study Department in each area and region should take the initiative to hold large-

scale introductory meetings to share Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism and the humanistic philosophy of the SGI with people in society.

D) Study Conference

It is recommended that an extensive study conference (day-long or weekend-long conference to study various subjects and materials) be held at the area, region or zone level for promoting study throughout the organization. Through such an event, the importance of the Soka Spirit campaign can be shared.

5) Nationwide Study Activity

A) FNCC Study Conference

At the Florida Nature and Culture Center, the Study Department will sponsor a "Study Conference" twice in 2001. These conferences will be open for all members who are interested in the intense study of Buddhist concepts and philosophy. The schedule of the conferences is as follows:

- FNCC Study Conference No. 1: June 14–17
- FNCC Study Conference No. 2: Dec. 6–9

B) Study Department Planning Committee Meetings

Nationwide Study Department leaders and staff will hold planning committee meetings with the representatives from throughout the nation to discuss and plan the future direction of our study activities.