

SGI USA MEMO

DATE: December 23, 2009

MEMO NO: ORG—053

DISTRIBUTE TO: All Leaders
FROM: Study Department—Jeff Kriger
SUBJECT: 2010 Study Curriculum

Thank you very much for your support of our programs and activities to promote the study of Nichiren Buddhism and the humanistic philosophy of the SGI throughout 2009. The fourth Buddhist Learning Review held in October, thanks to all your efforts, was a great success, with more than 30,000 members participating. In 2010 we will celebrate several important milestones in the history of our movement: the 35th anniversary of the SGI, the 50th anniversary of President Ikeda's inauguration as the third president of the Soka Gakkai and the launching of the worldwide *kosen-rufu* movement with his first overseas trip and the 80th anniversary of the founding of the Soka Gakkai.

President Ikeda today has been pouring his energies into producing a steady and ever broadening stream of study material that delves deeply into the humanism, universality and power of Nichiren Daishonin's teachings and the spirit and mission of the SGI in putting them into practice. To resolve at this time to deepen significantly our study and understanding of this Buddhism, and to absorb and put into action everything our mentor is striving to teach us, will become a source of great victory and fortune for all of us.

Monthly Study Meetings

Just as in 2009, the monthly study meetings, primarily held at the chapter level, will focus on SGI President Ikeda's lecture series published in *Living Buddhism*. Pre-lecture video recordings will continue to be provided via streaming online at: www.sgi-usa.org/leaders (password: sgiusa). Distribution of DVDs, however, will be discontinued.

Discussion Meeting Study

World Tribune will continue to carry "Writings for Discussion Meetings" in the third issue of every month. These articles will cover passages from Nichiren Daishonin's writings and focus on basic Buddhist terms and concepts addressed in those passages. Rather than announcing the passages and topics for these articles at the beginning of the year, we will instead be choosing them on a monthly basis. The reason is to remain open to valuable suggestions and requests for passages that arise during the course of the year in connection with supporting our dynamic organizational activity schedule.

New Study Program and Examination System

SGI-USA will initiate a more comprehensive study program in 2010-11 with the initiation of two annual graded study examinations—an Introductory Exam every October and an Essentials Exam every April. Beginning in October 2010, the Introductory Exam will be administered at district-level venues and in a format similar to the Buddhist Learning Reviews that have been held through this year. The only difference

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will be that this will be a graded exam. Each individual will fill out an electronically readable answer sheet and hand it in prior to the review and discussion portion of the gatherings.

Below is an outline of the new program. More detailed information will be forthcoming in the first half of 2010.

Purpose of Study Program and Examination System

- Study to solidify our personal practice of faith and accomplish human revolution.
- Study to develop the power to encourage others.
- Study to deepen our spirit of the oneness of mentor and disciple and to never discard our faith.
- Study to create an unshakable foundation for *kosen-rufu* in America.
- Study to correctly transmit this philosophy to the world.

Introductory Examination (October)

- Material
 - Excerpts from the *Living Buddhism* monthly study material (President Ikeda's lecture series) and basic Buddhist terms and concepts.
 - In addition to appearing in *Living Buddhism*, the exam material will be published as a single study guide in June and made available in SGI-USA community center bookstores as well as online.
 - Material should be studied from August through October at study meetings held specifically for this purpose.
- Eligibility
 - In Year 1 (2010), we invite all members to take the Introductory Exam to 'enter' the new study program. Those who previously passed the Leadership Development Program need not take the Introductory Exam to move forward in the new study program, but may certainly take it if they choose.
 - In Year 2 (2011) and beyond, all members who haven't yet passed the Introductory Exam should take the exam.
- Implementation (using the Buddhist Learning Review model)
 - Every October, beginning in 2010
 - Given at the district.
 - Experienced members and leaders should each help a newer member study and prepare for the exam.
 - Grading (pass/fail) and recordkeeping will be done at the Zone or Territory level.
 - Passing will be a requirement for taking the Essentials Examinations.

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Essentials Examinations 1 – 3

- Material
 - Key concepts from the previous 12 installments of President Ikeda’s study series in *Living Buddhism* and “The Essentials of Nichiren Buddhism” Series previously published in *Living Buddhism* and/or a new overview of Buddhism text planned by the SGI study department. The content to be presented each year will be announced at a later date.
 - Material will be published in December 2010 for the 2011 exam, and in each December prior to the 2012 and 2013 exams, and made available in SGI-USA community center bookstores as well as online.
 - Material will be studied from January through March at study meetings held specifically for this purpose.

- Eligibility
 - All those who have passed the Introductory Exam or completed the Leadership Development Program.

- Implementation
 - Every April, beginning in 2011. There will be three Essentials Exams given over a three-year cycle: the first in 2011, the next in 2012, and the last in 2013. After that, the cycle will repeat for another three years, though the material may be modified.
 - The Essentials Exams can be taken in any order; they are not sequential or different levels. One should take the Essentials Exam is given in the April following becoming eligible by passing the Introductory Exam.
 - Passing will be a consideration, but not a requirement, for leadership appointment.
 - Implementation details will be announced at a later date. This exam will be administered at venues set up specifically for that purpose.
 - Grading (pass/fail) and recordkeeping will be done at the Zone or Territory level.