

# Buddhist Learning Review

## QUESTIONS

**The Review is designed to encourage open discussion and help members deepen Buddhist learning in order to transform their lives.**

The SGI-USA Buddhist Learning Review offers all members an opportunity to confirm and deepen their understanding of Nichiren Buddhism, as well as to gain the insight and wisdom necessary to transform their problems and lives.

The Review is designed to be an enjoyable activity in which all members can engage in open discussion on a variety of study topics. It can also be a helpful self-assessment tool for gauging individual progress in Buddhist learning.

Nichiren Daishonin states, "From the beginning, I pursued my studies because I wanted to master Buddhism and attain Buddhahood, and also to save the people to whom I am indebted" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 202).

All efforts in Buddhist study can help to deepen faith and establish a compassionate and correct Buddhist practice that will lead to absolute happiness.



**Spiritual nourishment—**Members take notes during a study conference, Weston, Fla., August 2008.

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### The Review Activity

This activity may replace regularly scheduled October study meetings or be held at the most appropriate venue. It is recommended that the Review activity be conducted at the district level and facilitated by leaders at the chapter level or above, where feasible.

For those unable to participate in the Review activity, leaders may administer the Review through other means, such as a visit to a member's home.

### Study Materials for the 2009 Buddhist Learning Review

The following study materials can be found in the *SGI-USA Buddhist Learning Review 2009 Study Guide*, available for purchase at local SGI-USA bookstores. You can also download the guide online at [www.sgi-usa.org](http://www.sgi-usa.org). Click "Study and Publications" and then "Buddhist Study."

#### Buddhist concepts as discussed in:

##### "The Writings for Discussion Meetings"

- > Faith, practice and study (Dec. 19, 2008, *World Tribune*, p. 7)
- > The three proofs (Jan. 16, 2009, *World Tribune*, p. 7)
- > Absolute and relative happiness (Feb. 20, 2009, *World Tribune*, p. 7)
- > The devil king of the sixth heaven (April 17, 2009, *World Tribune*, p. 7)

##### "The Life of Nichiren Daishonin," parts 1 and 2

- > (March–April 2009 *Living Buddhism*, pp. 40–45, and May–June 2009 *Living Buddhism*, pp. 34–39)

#### From SGI President Ikeda's lecture series "Learning from the Writings: The Hope-filled Teachings of Nichiren Daishonin"

- > "On the Buddha's Prophecy" (November–December 2008 *Living Buddhism*, pp. 58–76)
- > "Winter Always Turns to Spring" (January–February 2009 *Living Buddhism*, pp. 52–68)
- > "Letter to Misawa" (May–June 2009 *Living Buddhism*, pp. 40–57)

#### Soka Spirit

- > The Errors of the Nichiren Shoshu Priesthood (March–April 2009 *Living Buddhism*, pp. 31–39)

NAME

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**Hope-filled writings—**  
President Ikeda reads from  
Nichiren Daishonin's writings  
at a meeting, August 1972.

# SGI President Ikeda on the Purpose of Buddhist Study

**What is the purpose of study?** It's to enable us to gain some practical ability or knowledge so that we can contribute to society and to the happiness and welfare of many people. ... Some [of Nichiren Daishonin's writings], of course, are very doctrinal and complex. But we do not necessarily have to understand all of the Daishonin's writings. The important thing is to have a keen desire to read [them] and to expose our lives, even for just a short time each day, to Nichiren Daishonin's spirit. Having such a seeking mind enables us to securely anchor our lives in the orbit of true happiness, in the path of attaining Buddhahood in this lifetime.

(*Faith into Action*, pp. 167–68)

“**In adversity, it is necessary** to cry out, ‘Hope! Hope! And yet again hope!’”—this was the message that the French writer Victor Hugo sent from his place of exile to compatriots suffering under an oppressive regime. No matter how adverse the circumstances, as long as we have hope, we will never be defeated; as long as we have hope, we can keep moving forward.

Nichiren Buddhism is a teaching of hope. It is a great philosophy, affirming that we possess within ourselves the infinite power to surmount all hardships and break through all obstacles. Nichiren Buddhism also teaches the practice by

which we can tap this infinite power in our lives, backed by solid examples of actual proof. As such, it is an inspirational teaching that has the power to generate unceasing hope in the hearts of all people.

The writings of Nichiren Daishonin fully elucidate this philosophy of hope as well as its practice and proof. They are a source of illumination that endlessly encourages and inspires. Nichiren composed these hope-filled writings for his followers and for all humankind in the midst of daunting and often life-threatening struggles. My mentor, Josei Toda, the second Soka Gakkai president, once said: “Nichiren, while himself experiencing serious illness and harsh persecution,

exhorts us to forge ahead and shape our own destiny right in the midst of such obstacles. We are truly fortunate in this regard. I, too, have learned this from Nichiren, who engaged in a life-and-death struggle to impart his teachings.”

Let us strive to read with our lives—that is, to put into practice—even a line or two of Nichiren's writings, which overflow with his spirit. Basing ourselves on his teachings and pursuing study to strengthen our Buddhist practice are traditions of the Soka Gakkai.

(July–August 2008 *Living Buddhism*, pp. 51–52)

**A true member of the Soka Gakkai** is someone who has developed his or her faith through active participation in discussion meetings. After all, Buddhist study and discussion meetings comprise the foundation of the Soka Gakkai, and are the driving force for *kosen-rufu*.

(*The New Human Revolution*, vol. 13, p. 147)

*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin* is a compilation of teachings for victory. It is the driving force for all success—be it winning in life and society, triumphing over negative karma or defeating devilish functions.

Nichiren Buddhism is a philosophy of inner transformation empowering people to the highest degree, enabling them to develop strength, wisdom and richness of heart. Each word and phrase of Nichiren Daishonin's writings is infused with the spirit of the Buddha to draw forth people's inherent potential. Nichiren's intense, compassionate wish as the Buddha of the Latter Day of the Law is to help his disciples and all people achieve victory in their lives. This wish resonates powerfully through each of his writings.

Nichiren's writings are a wellspring of everlasting victory, holding the key to success and prosperity for all people. As long as the SGI keeps forging ahead with Nichiren's words as its foundation, it will continue to develop and thrive forever.

(To be published in the November–December 2009 *Living Buddhism*)

## Taking the 2009 Buddhist Learning Review in a Foreign Language?

This year, the Buddhist Learning Review can be taken in seven languages—Cambodian, Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Portuguese, Spanish and Thai.

The Review will be available for free download in each of these languages at [www.sgi-usa.org](http://www.sgi-usa.org) starting Oct. 1.

Language versions of the Review can also be found here:

**Japanese:** Sept. 11 *World Tribune*, Japanese Language edition

**Chinese, Korean and Spanish:** Sept. 18 *World Tribune*, in the respective language editions

**Cambodian, Portuguese and Thai:** as SGI-USA Memos to be issued by Oct. 1

If you have questions, please send an e-mail to: [study@sgi-usa.org](mailto:study@sgi-usa.org)