

## SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR THE ENTRANCE-LEVEL EXAM TO BE HELD APRIL 22

This year's SGI-USA Study Department Entrance-level Examination will be held Sunday, April 22, 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. The actual exam questions will be in multiple-choice format, so this sample test is more difficult than the actual test will be. Also, of the following questions, only 40 to 50 percent will appear on the exam, which is expected to consist of 25 to 35 questions. We hope this information will assist you in preparing for the exam. Good luck! (The study material for the Entrance-level Examination has been compiled into one booklet—the *SGI-USA Study Department Entrance Exam Study Material*—for those who don't have the original source materials cited. The booklet is now available at SGI-USA bookstores nationwide. Please see the Feb. 2 *World Tribune* for the study material for the upcoming exam.)

— *The SGI-USA Study Department*

**Questions 1–17 are based on *The Life of Nichiren Daishonin*, pp. 13–35 (published by NSIC, 1993 edition; also reprinted in the December 1997 *Living Buddhism*; also in the booklet *SGI-USA Study Department Entrance Exam Study Material*, pp. 25–49).**

**Q1:**

What was the practice that Nichiren Daishonin proclaimed on April 28, 1253? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 15; (*The Life of Nichiren Daishonin*, Chapter 2, pp. 13–14; booklet, p. 26)

**Q2:**

Describe the significance of the Tatsunokuchi Persecution in terms of Nichiren Daishonin's identity. (*Living Buddhism*, pp. 17–18; *The Life of Nichiren Daishonin*, Chapter 7, pp. 56–59; booklet, pp. 28–29)

**Q3:**

After the attempt to execute Nichiren Daishonin at Tatsunokuchi proved unsuccessful, he was exiled to a cold and forbidding place that he was not expected to return from. What was this place? (*Living Buddhism*, pp. 18–19 and *The Life of Nichiren Daishonin*, Chapter 8, p. 61; booklet, pp. 29–30)

**Q4:**

What did the Daishonin teach his disciples in response to their discouragement over his exile? (*Living Buddhism*, pp. 18–19; *The Life of Nichiren Daishonin*, Chapter 8, pp. 61–62; booklet, pp. 29–30)

**Q5:**

During the Sado Exile, the Daishonin completed the theoretical foundation of his teachings. What two works written during this period established the theoretical

framework for his inscription of the object of devotion? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 21; *The Life of Nichiren Daishonin*, Chapter 8, pp. 68–69; booklet, p. 35)

**Q6:**

Nichiren Daishonin repeatedly stated in his writings that a Buddha is what? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 18; *The Life of Nichiren Daishonin*, Chapter 7, p. 58; booklet, p. 29)

**Q7:**

After what event did Nichiren Daishonin start inscribing the Gohonzon? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 23; *The Life of Nichiren Daishonin*, Chapter 11, p. 94; booklet, p. 34)

**Q8:**

The inscription of “Nam-myoho-rence-kyo” and “Nichiren” on the Gohonzon indicates what principle? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 23; *The Life of Nichiren Daishonin*, Chapter 11, p. 95; booklet, p. 35)

**Q9:**

Following a Chinese proverb that says if one’s warnings go unheeded three times by the sovereign, one should leave the country, the Daishonin retired to Mount Minobu and prepared for the great task of eternalizing his Buddhism. Retirement did not mean a life of leisure for the Daishonin. What three things did he do at this time? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 25; *The Life of Nichiren Daishonin*, Chapter 10, pp. 84–85; booklet, p. 38)

**Q10:**

To foster the faith of the disciples he was training at Mount Minobu, the Daishonin gave an important series of lectures. What were these lectures on, and under what name did Nikko Shonin set them down in writing? (*Living Buddhism*, pp. 24–27; *The Life of Nichiren Daishonin*, Chapter 10, p. 89; booklet, p. 38)

**Q11:**

In what way did the behavior of the Daishonin’s followers after the persecutions surrounding Tatsunokuchi and the Sado Exile differ from their behavior following the Atsuhara Persecution? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 29; *The Life of Nichiren Daishonin*, Chapter 11, p. 94; booklet, p. 40)

**Q12:**

What activity by Nichiren Daishonin’s followers caused the authorities to persecute them? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 27; *The Life of Nichiren Daishonin*, Chapter 11, p. 90; booklet, p. 39)

**Q13:**

Who did Nichiren Daishonin name as his legitimate successor? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 32; *The Life of Nichiren Daishonin*, Chapter 12, p. 106; booklet, p. 45)

**Q14:**

Why did five of the six senior priests abandon the Daishonin’s teachings after he died? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 34; *The Life of Nichiren Daishonin*, Chapter 13, p. 112; booklet, p. 47)

**Q15:**

What slanderous acts did the five senior priests commit? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 34; *The Life of Nichiren Daishonin*, Chapter 13, p. 112; booklet, p. 47)

**Q16:**

Why did Nikko Shonin leave Mount Minobu and establish Taiseki-ji temple near the foot of Mount Fuji? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 34) and (*The Life of Nichiren Daishonin* Chapter 13, p. 113; booklet, p. 47)

**Q17:**

What was Nikko Shonin's purpose in writing "The Twenty-six Admonitions"? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 35; *The Life of Nichiren Daishonin*, Chapter 13, p. 114; booklet, pp. 47–48)

**Questions 18–32 are based on 'On Attaining Buddhahood'; SGI-USA Study Program Entrance-level Textbook, pp. 6–31; the booklet SGI-USA Study Department Entrance Exam Study Material, pp. 3–9.**

**Q18:**

How do the Daishonin's teachings about the Mystic Law differ from the views of most other religions? (Textbook, p. 10; booklet, p. 4)

**Q19:**

What does it mean to "perceive the nature of your own life"? (Textbook, p. 21; booklet, p. 6)

**Q20:**

What is the Daishonin trying to illustrate by using the analogy of a poor man counting his neighbor's wealth day and night? (Textbook, p. 21; booklet, p. 6)

**Q21:**

What attitude will lead us to feel that our practice is an "endless, painful austerity"? (Textbook, p. 23; booklet, p. 6–7)

**Q22:**

What constitutes the attitudes of non-Buddhists according to this letter? (Textbook, pp. 22–23; booklet, pp. 6)

**Q23:**

What does this letter emphasize as a key element in our Buddhist practice? (Textbook, p. 23; booklet, p. 7)

**Q24:**

What attitude prevents us from experiencing "great joy" in our practice? (Textbook, p. 22; booklet, p. 6)

**Questions 25–26 are based on the following passage:**

It [the Jomyo Sutra] further states that if the minds of the people are impure, their land is also impure, but if their minds are pure, so is their land. There are not two lands, pure or impure in themselves. The difference lies solely in the good or evil of our minds. (MW-1, 4; WND, 4)

**Q25:**

What Buddhist principle is illustrated by this passage? (Textbook, pp. 26–27; booklet, p. 7)

**Q26:**

What does “the good and evil of our minds” mean? (Textbook, p. 25; booklet, pp. 7–8)

**Q27:**

Where is the Buddha land? (Textbook, p. 25; booklet, p. 7)

**Q28:**

According to Nichiren Daishonin, what beliefs constitute inferior teachings? (Textbook, p. 21; booklet, pp. 5–6)

**Q29:**

When would chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo still be considered practicing provisional teachings? (Textbook, p. 20; booklet, p. 5)

**Q30:**

The Daishonin teaches us that when chanting to the Gohonzon we should “summon up deep conviction that \_\_\_\_\_.” (Textbook, p. 23; booklet, p. 7)

**Q31:**

What action of Buddhist practice does the Daishonin compare to polishing a mirror? (Textbook, p. 29; booklet, p. 4)

**Q32:**

According to this letter, what is “the direct path to enlightenment”? (Textbook, p. 9; booklet, p. 4)

**Questions 33–41 are based on ‘The Real Aspect of the Gohonzon’;** *SGI-USA Study Program Entrance-level Textbook*, pp. 32–53; the booklet *SGI-USA Study Department Entrance Exam Study Material*, pp. 10–16.

**Questions 33–34 are based on the following passage:**

Never seek this Gohonzon outside yourself. The Gohonzon exists only within the mortal flesh of us ordinary people who embrace the Lotus Sutra and chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. The body is the palace of the ninth consciousness, the unchanging reality which reigns over all life’s functions.... The Gohonzon is found in faith alone. As the sutra states, “Only with faith can one enter Buddhahood.” (MW-1, 213; WND, 832)

**Q33:**

What is Nichiren Daishonin urging us to seek within our own lives? (Textbook, p. 39; booklet, pp. 12–13)

**Q34:**

What is the meaning of the passage “The body is the palace of the ninth consciousness, the unchanging reality which reigns over all life’s functions”? (Textbook, p. 42; booklet, p. 14)

**Q35:**

No one has unwavering faith from the outset. How can we define faith at the beginning of our practice? (Textbook, p. 49; booklet, p. 15 )

**Q36:**

When we chant daimoku to the Gohonzon we experience the interaction of the four powers. Two of the four powers are 1) the power of the Buddha and 2) the power of the Law. How can we activate the power of the Buddha and the power of the Law in our own lives? (Textbook, p. 41; booklet, p. 13)

**Q37:**

Shakyamuni’s disciple Shariputra was considered to be the “foremost in wisdom,” yet even he could not attain enlightenment through his wisdom. How did he attain enlightenment? (Textbook, p. 46)

**Q38:**

Even though doubts are natural and unavoidable, it is important to strive for doubt-free faith. Instead of worrying or tormenting ourselves, what should we do when we have feelings of doubt or insincerity in our practice? (Textbook, p. 51; booklet, p. 15)

**Q39:**

What two actions express faith in Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism? (Textbook, pp. 51–52; booklet, pp. 15–16)

**Q40:**

What point is the Daishonin trying to teach us in this writing through the examples of the Emperor of Han and Li Kuang? (Textbook, pp. 51–52; booklet, p. 16)

**Q41:**

Down the center of the Gohonzon, inscribed in Chinese characters, are the words “Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, Nichiren.” What Buddhist principle does this indicate (include the component parts of that principle)? (Textbook, p. 38; booklet, p. 11)

**Questions 42–54 are based on ‘Happiness in This World’;** December 1997 issue of *Living Buddhism*, pp. 7–13; *Learning From the Gosho: The Eternal Teachings of Nichiren Daishonin*, pp. 233–246; the booklet *SGI-USA Study Department Entrance Exam Study Material*, p. 12).

**Q42:**

How can we elevate our inner life-condition? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 7; *Learning From the Gosho*, pp. 235–236; booklet, pp. 17–18)

**Q43:**

Why does Nichiren Daishonin state that “There is no greater happiness for human beings than chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo”? (*Living Buddhism*, pp. 7–8; *Learning From the Gosho*, pp. 235–237; booklet, pp. 17–18).

**Q44:**

What enables us to experience the “joy derived from the Law”? (*Living Buddhism*, pp. 8–9; *Learning From the Gosho*, pp. 237–238; booklet, p. 18)

**Q45:**

How is “joy derived from the Law” different from the “joy derived from desires”? (*Living Buddhism*, pp. 8–9; *Learning From the Gosho*, p. 237; booklet, p. 18)

**Q46:**

Why is attributing the cause of our happiness or unhappiness to someone else contradictory to the teaching of the Lotus Sutra? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 9; *Learning From the Gosho*, p. 237; booklet, p. 18)

**Q47:**

Practicing with what determination in our Buddhist practice contributes to the development of our state of life? (*Living Buddhism*, pp. 8–9; *Learning From the Gosho*, pp. 237–238; booklet, pp. 18–19)

**Q48:**

How does the phrase “Happy and at ease” relate to our lives? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 9; *Learning From the Gosho*, p. 236; booklet, p. 19)

**Q49:**

What does it mean to be a Buddha of absolute freedom? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 10; *Learning From the Gosho*, pp. 239–240; booklet, pp. 19–20)

**Q50:**

What does achieving “peace and security” mean? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 11; *Learning From the Gosho*, p. 241; booklet, p. 20)

**Q51:**

What is the Buddhist understanding of “life’s hardships”? (*Living Buddhism*, pp. 12–13; *Learning From the Gosho*, p. 244; booklet, pp. 20–21)

**Q52:**

Why does Nichiren Daishonin tell Shijo Kingo to “strengthen your faith more than ever”? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 13; *Learning From the Gosho*, p. 246; booklet, p. 22)

**Q53:**

What is the meaning of Nichiren Daishonin’s advice to Shijo Kingo to “just chant Nam-myoho-rence-kyo, and when you drink sake, stay at home with your wife”? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 12; *Learning From the Goshō*, pp. 243–244; booklet, p. 21)

**Q54:**

What is the purpose of our practice of faith? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 7; *Learning From the Goshō*, p. 233; booklet, p. 17)

**Questions 55–66 are based on ‘Questions and Answers on the Temple Issue’**— Questions 55–59 are based on the “Introduction” from the temple issue pamphlet and from the December 1997 *Living Buddhism*, pp. 36–41; the booklet *SJI-USA Study Department Entrance Exam Study Material*, pp. 53–60.

**Q55:**

What is it about the nature of Buddhism that challenges those interested in passivity and unquestioning obedience from believers? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 36; booklet, p. 53)

**Q56:**

What passage from the Lotus Sutra regarding persecutions applies directly to the SGI? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 36; booklet, p. 53)

**Q57:**

How does Buddhism characterize opposition by authority? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 37; booklet, p. 54)

**Q58:**

What is the meaning of obstacles to our Buddhist movement? (*Living Buddhism*, pp. 36–37; booklet, p. 54)

**Q59:**

What does opposition from the priesthood mean to the SGI? (*Living Buddhism*, pp. 37–38; booklet, p. 55)

**Questions 60–62 are based on question 2 in the temple issue pamphlet:** “Why is it important to know about the temple issue?”

**Q60:**

How can we benefit by understanding the temple issue? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 38; booklet, p. 55)

**Q61:**

What is meant by “correct faith”? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 38; booklet, p. 56)

**Q62:**

In terms of the future, why is it important to understand the temple issue? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 38; booklet, p. 55)

**Questions 63–66 are based on question 4 in the temple issue pamphlet:**

**Q63:**

What is Nichiren Shoshu's position on the equality between lay members and priests? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 39; booklet, pp. 57–58)

**Q64:**

How does Nichiren Shoshu's view of the Gohonzon contradict Nichiren Daishonin's view? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 40; booklet, p. 58)

**Q65:**

Nichiren Daishonin clearly states what it means to receive the heritage or lifeblood of faith. How is Nichiren Shoshu's view different from the view of the Daishonin? (*Living Buddhism*, pp. 40–41; booklet, pp. 58–59 )

**Q66:**

How does Nichiren Shoshu and the SGI differ in action and commitment to kosen-rufu? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 41; booklet, pp. 59–60)