

# Institute for Japanese Studies Lecture Series

Discipleship through Classical Music in a Japanese Religion:  
Beethoven, Buddhism, and Youth Cultivation in Soka Gakkai

2020-2021

**IJS**  
LECTURE  
SERIES

Thursday, October 1

3:30-5:00 pm

Online



## Levi McLaughlin

Philosophy and Religious Studies  
North Carolina State University

Soka Gakkai is Japan's largest lay Buddhist organization. With a claimed membership of 8.27 million households and close to two million adherents in 192 other countries and territories, it is Japan's largest following of the medieval Buddhist reformer Nichiren (1222-1282) and Japan's most successful religious export.

Why is the only museum at Soka Gakkai headquarters filled with pianos? Why did Ikeda Daisaku, Soka Gakkai's Honorary President, sing the praises of Ludwig van Beethoven? And how did Gakkai adherents transform playing Beethoven into a Buddhist practice? This presentation will reconsider definitions of what counts as "religious" as it proposes an alternative history of Japanese aspirations for social legitimacy, cultural sophistication, and enlightenment.

**Levi McLaughlin** is Associate Professor at the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies at North Carolina State University. His work deals primarily with religion and politics in contemporary Japan.

Please register for this event on our website:

[easc.osu.edu/events/mclaughlin](https://easc.osu.edu/events/mclaughlin)



Free and open to the public

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