

**Enjoying the Process**  
**SGI-USA Women's Chief Wendy Clark Talks About the Upcoming Women's Commemorative Meetings, Feb. 27**

*SGI-USA Women's Day is Feb. 27. Each year, women in the organization commemorate the day in special ways. The World Tribune recently interviewed Women's Chief Wendy Clark, who shared her thoughts about this significant day.*

Q: How did Feb. 27 come to be SGI-USA Women's Day?

A: On Feb. 27, 1990, women from across the country met with SGI President Ikeda at Soka University of America to make a fresh start in the SGI-USA. That was the day SGI President Ikeda gave us his well-known "clear mirror" guidance, which we have been studying every year since. It is also Mrs. Ikeda's birthday. Because of the significance of the day and the guidance, soon after we chose to call Feb. 27 SGI-USA Women's Day, and each year has been another milestone.

Q: Will the "clear mirror" guidance again be the study material for this year's meeting?

A: Each area can choose for itself what to study. We've been studying this speech for seven years now, and while it contains timeless concepts and encouragement, we are free to learn from any material at our meetings.

Q: What's this year's theme?

A: "Actively Closing the Gap" was designated as the women's action theme for the entire year. This can be the theme for the meeting, or people can choose their own theme. But again, we haven't assigned any specific material to be studied. That will be up to each area to decide.

Q: What special emphasis would you like to see women take toward this meeting?

A: To me, preparation is the key. I'd really like to see women enjoying the process of preparing for this meeting.

I recently reread and was touched by an interview of Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, the psychology professor at the University of Chicago who wrote the 1990 bestseller *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*. One of his ideas is that people are happiest when they are actively involved in something — that is, enjoying the process, not the result. One example he used was of Olympic athletes, who he said are most happy in the process leading up to winning a medal. But once they've got the medal, the happiness soon fades until they get involved again.

Q: What specific preparation do you have in mind for the women's meetings?

A: Home visits. Our organization begins and ends with human relationships. Buddhism is about encouraging one person at a time. I'd really like to see women doing lots of visits and talking to friends and neighbors about this Buddhism. We should talk and listen to people to the point they may say, "Because of talking to you, I've been able to deal with my difficult situation better...."

Often, so much energy is put into decorating the meeting place or organizing the meeting itself that the human touch gets lost. There's hardly any time to visit and talk with other women. I'd like to see home visits be the priority in preparing for this year's meetings.

Q: One of General Director Zaitso's six challenges for this year is to make the districts priority No. 1. How do you see these women's commemorative meetings enhancing the districts in February and beyond?

A: Often, when women get together to plan these meetings, they come up with many exciting, innovative and unique ideas. The creativity is boundless, and I appreciate it so much.

But these great ideas take a lot of time and energy to pull off. Women virtually disappear from their own district activities because they're so busy preparing for their commemorative women's meetings.

This year I'd like to ask everyone to keep in mind what our priorities are and to be honest about what they can reasonably accomplish in the time they have.

Challenging ourselves to make a good meeting is one thing, but let's not get sidetracked and spend too much time on superficial details. Let's make a conscious decision to stick with the most important aspect of these meetings: human relationships.

Again, home visits are the key. If women concentrate on encouraging dialogue leading up to the meetings, then the entire district will benefit. In this way we can make districts priority No. 1.

Our women's commemorative meetings are the end result or the flower. It's temporary.

But if we concentrate on home visits and develop close relationships with other women — now that's something that's more permanent. I'd hate to see a fantastic meeting but nothing lasting remain afterward.

Q: Will all the meetings be on the district level?

A: No. We've left that detail up to each joint territory to decide.

But even in those areas that decide to have meetings on the territory or headquarters level, districts can still be made the focus if we all make home visits the priority.

Q: What is your vision of the ideal meeting?

A: Where everyone is excited to come to the meeting because it is a celebration. It goes back to the idea of the process; that we enjoy the process, then enjoy the meeting itself.

With that said, I'd also like to see the leaders challenge themselves to create inspiring meetings. Talking about his attitude at meetings, Shin'ichi Yamamoto said in *The New Human Revolution*:

I'm not doing anything special. I just always exert myself with the burning resolve that "I must not let any of the precious children of the Buddha become unhappy" and a keen awareness that "now is my only chance to lead these people to happiness." This unwavering determination is the power that opens people's hearts. (vol. 1, p. 138)

When we have this same attitude, then the substance of the meeting will be inspiring and people will be encouraged. Experiences are especially important, for when a woman shares her life's story based on faith, people are moved. At the same time, these meetings

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are great opportunities to invite our friends and neighbors and show them the support and warmth that exist in the SGI-USA.

All in all, my greatest wish is that every woman enjoy the process and that this meeting be the catalyst for making closer friends.

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