

INTERVIEW
From Theory to Action: I Will Do It!

SGI-USA Women's Division Chief Wendy Clark talks about the women's division theme and motto for 1998 and the spirit of the upcoming women's division commemorative meetings in February.

Q: What is the SGI-USA women's division theme for 1998?

A: It is "Actively Closing the Gap: Moving from Theory to Action." And our new motto is "I will do it."

It's been eight years since SGI President Ikeda's historic visit to the United States. We've made great progress in our faith and practice and built a strong foundation.

As we stand at the threshold of the 21st century, I feel we need to take the next step to build on this foundation. America is looking for people who will act as true bodhisattvas, people who don't wait but say, "I will do it." The time for action is now. "Moving from theory to action" means taking full responsibility for our happiness and the people's happiness.

Q: How does this theme relate to the SGI-USA's focuses for this year?

A: In 1998, the Year of Victory of the People for the New Century, the SGI-USA is focusing on three major areas: supporting members' quests for happiness, nurturing youth and strengthening families. I am encouraging each woman to embrace the "I will do it" spirit in these three areas. "I will do it" really means "I will be the one to make it happen."

Q: How will the women's division support these focuses?

A: To accomplish SGI-USA's focus on these three areas, we want to take action toward propagating this Buddhism. We want to help members practice the Daishonin's Buddhism correctly. In January, with the "I will do it" spirit, we will focus on reading and promoting the *World Tribune*. In February, toward the women's division commemorative meetings, our focus will be on propagation.

As many of us noticed last year, one year goes by so quickly. Without a plan of action, broken down month by month, time can just get away from us.

Just as I consider the members my family, I also have adopted the *World Tribune*. I try to make every effort to treat this child well, with love and care, to spend time "promoting" it in a way that will help it grow.

The *World Tribune* is our direct link to President Ikeda, a place where members can read and be encouraged by his guidance. President Ikeda's determination in naming the *World Tribune*, after all, is that it will become the voice of world peace. To actualize this is to say, "I will do it."

Q: Are there any special plans for the 8th Women's Division Commemorative Meeting?

A: On Feb. 27, 1990, a new era for the women's division began when President Ikeda

presented us with the “clear mirror” guidance. We’ve held commemorative meetings every year since as opportunities for each and every one of us to renew our determination for our world peace movement.

While this guidance is our prime point, there may be many other materials that the members wish to use. The size of the meetings will be determined by each region, based on geography, size of the organization and the weather.

While we all focus on propagation, each region can decide how best to mark this important occasion.

We want to have 100 percent participation and for everyone to bring a friend. This is a great opportunity for us to bring guests and introduce them to the practice of Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism.

It’s also a great opportunity to do home visits. Our organization begins and ends with human relationships. Buddhism is about encouraging one person at a time. I hope we can do lots of visits, particularly since we’ve just finished or are finishing our reorganization. Home visits will help members become acquainted with their new district family.

In conjunction with our home visits toward the February meetings, we can also support the youth division meetings commemorating March 16. Through friendly dialogue, we can find out who our members’ children are — youth whom we can invite to the youth division’s March meetings.

Q: What spirit do you hope that members will keep in mind as they plan these meetings?

A: As President Ikeda said in his New Year’s message, seeking to meet friends and fellow human beings is the way to create mutual understanding. Dialogue is the key to building a network of joy and peace. More important than external trappings is a genuine atmosphere of conviviality. One-to-one dialogue is the only way to give our activities richness and depth. Each of us can weave irreplaceable threads in a beautiful tapestry of friendship.

It’s our great joy that we have an opportunity to join with President Ikeda in his quest for peace. Let’s have happy meetings!

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Author: Wendy Clark

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