

## WOMEN'S ACTIVITY GUIDELINES FOR 2002

The following guidelines are intended to provide support in discussing and determining the best way to carry out women's activities in each zone.

### **Commemorative Meetings (February)**

Please see the guidelines provided in the accompanying article on this page. Further support material will be presented in the Jan. 11, 2002, issue of *World Tribune*.

### **Planning Board**

The planning board is intended in general to:

- Facilitate women's activities for the region.
- Provide support and assistance as needed for the region women's leader.

These functions may include administrative and secretarial assistance, serving as a conduit for the collective voice of the women's division membership (communicating needs, concerns and ideas), making proposals for activities and carrying out such proposals. At the same time, the planning board provides training for the participants—an important step in raising the next generation of leaders.

Although each planning board operates according to the needs and resources of their region, the following are some points to consider:

- Establish diverse representative participation—for example, include members from a range of life experiences, ages, lengths of practice, organizational positions, skills, etc.
- Set a term limit. In many areas, this is two years.

### **Sophia Group**

The Sophia Group, the women's study group established by SGI President Ikeda in May 1990, provides a supportive environment for women to expand their intellect (Sophia, in Greek, means skill, intelligence and wisdom). The purpose of the Sophia Group is to foster women with a deep understanding of and conviction in Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism and the mission of the SGI.

Its goal is to empower its participants to take what they learn and infuse their districts, communities, workplaces and homes with the Soka Spirit of justice and equality.

#### **'Sophia 101'**

In 2002, we propose launching a new phase for Sophia Group participants. Our intention is for every woman who wishes to have the opportunity to study the history of our kosen-rufu movement through a one-year study group called "Sophia 101." General guidelines include:

- Study of *The New Human Revolution*, volumes 1 and 2
- Small group size (4–12 women)
- Meet once a month
- Facilitated, preferably, by someone with previous Sophia Group experience.

#### **'Sophia Advanced Group'**

Many women have benefited from the camaraderie and motivated learning that are hallmarks of the Sophia Group and have expressed a keen desire to continue the learning process. We propose the formation of small study groups that would be free to choose

from additional study material, including *The New Human Revolution*, *The Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra*, *For the Sake of Peace*, *My Dear Friends in America*, or novels that President Ikeda has discussed in his speeches and essays.

### **Mothers/Parents of Young Children Group**

Acknowledging that families come in all shapes and sizes, each zone is free to choose whether to have a Mothers Group, a Parents of Young Children Group, or both. This group provides support and encouragement in faith for parents of young children (ages newborn through 5), especially new parents, and to assist parents in fostering their children's budding faith.

Participants are encouraged to consider:

- Seeking encouragement from seniors in faith who have a long-term perspective on parenting.
- Inviting input from child development professionals.
- Developing a regular study curriculum. One suggestion is to read *Friends for Peace*, which usually appears in the first *World Tribune* issue of each month and includes study material for the Boys and Girls Group. Its topics are relevant to all ages, and it provides support for parents as they explain Buddhism to their children. Another possible source is the dialogue with President Ikeda, Matilda Buck and Ed Feasel that ran the July and August 2000 issues of *Living Buddhism*.