



ORGANIZATION MEMO

DATE: NOVEMBER 17, 2017

MEMO: 2017-ORG-045
REVISED

DISTRIBUTE TO: District through National Leaders, Zone and Territory Offices
FROM: SGI-USA Women's Leader – Akemi Bailey-Haynie
SUBJECT: Sophia Group Guidelines 2018

Revision is highlighted in yellow on page 2 of this memo.

In 2018, SGI-USA's sole focus with all activities and efforts will be to raise youthful lions and to build momentum each and every day toward our 50,000 Lions of Justice Festival in response to our vow to our mentor. Every member of SGI-USA is encouraged to do one youth shakubuku and ensure that this youth participates in this significant event. ALL Sophia Group activities should also be conducted with this single purpose in mind.

President Ikeda named this gathering of Women's Division members "Sophia" in May of 1990 (the Greek word 'Sophia' means skill, intelligence, wisdom) with the intent that its members expand their intellect for the sake of personal happiness, the happiness of others and the protection of our kosen-rufu movement.

Purpose of Sophia Group:

1. To develop leaders based on the oneness of mentor and disciple; and
2. To support the transition of recent YWD graduates into the Women's Division.

Eligibility:

All women's division members who subscribe to the SGI-USA publications are eligible to join. The monthly meetings **for 2018 will begin in March** and conclude in December. This is also an opportunity to encourage new women's division members who have joined the district.

Study Material:

The material will be *The New Human Revolution*, found in current and recent issues of *Living Buddhism* OR any volume(s) of *The New Human Revolution*, 20-26. Every Sophia Group member should bring her own copy of *Living Buddhism* and/or *The New Human Revolution*, to study at the meetings. No copies of the material should be made or handed out.

Focal Points and Purpose:

- The 4 pillars of SGI-USA 2018 direction: discussion meetings, shakubuku, study, and member care/personal guidance;
- Deepening understanding of the oneness of mentor and disciple;
- Understanding the history of the SGI and the significance of the district discussion meeting;
- Infusing the spirit of these points into the district discussion meetings.

Each Sophia Group member should have a clear mission to use this training not only in her own life but also for the sake of others, especially translating it within her district to:

- Contribute to the success of 4-Divisional monthly district discussion and introductory/study meetings, and

- Make effort toward the success of the SGI-USA study exam program by imparting the joyful spirit to study within the district especially with new members.

In order that Sophia Group members have a clear awareness of these points, a Sophia Group mission statement is provided to read at each group's monthly meeting.

Other languages:

Due to the limited availability of this material in various languages other than English, each language-based Sophia Group should determine the most appropriate material to study based on the availability of President Ikeda's officially published translated writings.

Group Size: The size of the group should be small enough to accommodate meaningful discussion, ideally no more than ten women per group.

Facilitators: Facilitators should be selected and assigned by the appropriate level (region or chapter) of women's leaders. Prior Sophia Group experience is not necessary. With the spirit of continually raising more successors, leaders should select individuals they feel confident will fulfill this important responsibility and keep the Sophia Group activity fresh and vital. Furthermore, facilitators are asked to ensure that the Sophia Group Mission Statement is read at the monthly Sophia Group Meeting, all year long.

There will be a Facilitators Training call available to listen to effective Wednesday, February 7, 2018. A Facilitator Year-End call will be available to listen to Wednesday, November 7, 2018.

Orientation Teleconference: In order to instill the mission and purpose of Sophia Group, and provide training and inspiration, facilitators for 2018 will have the opportunity to participate in a territory or zone level Sophia Group Facilitators Conference in January 2018.

Sophia Group Mission Statement 2018

To be read at the beginning of each Sophia Group Meeting

A keen enthusiasm for studying the Daishonin's Buddhism is the hallmark of Sophia Group members across the country. Our focus in 2018 is to continue in our efforts to create harmonious families. In pursuit of creating 'LION' districts filled with happy, joyful members, we will infuse the joyful spirit to study into our districts in the most natural and effective way through member care, shakubuku and home visitation.

We, Sophia Group members, are committed

- To the 4 pillars of SGI-USA activities: discussion meetings, shakubuku, study, and member care/personal guidance;
- to deepening our understanding of the bond of the oneness of Mentor and Disciple,
- to understanding the history of the SGI,
- to understanding the significance of the district discussion meeting,

We, as Sophia Group Members, will actualize what President Ikeda refers to as "our 'living' study movement, in which ordinary members earnestly study the Daishonin's teachings and put them into practice in their daily lives." (December 2, 2011 *World Tribune*, p. 5). This is study for deepening our faith.

Frequently Asked Questions

- **Who can participate?**
All women's division who are currently subscribe to SGI-USA publications.
- **If a woman's division has participated in the past, is it ok for her to join again in 2018?**
Yes, whether or not a woman's division has participated in Sophia Group previously, as long as she can make the one-year commitment, it is ok for her to join Sophia Group again in 2018.
- **Is this year a one-year commitment?**
Yes, to join Sophia Group requires a commitment to throughout the 2018 term (March – December).
- **After the one-year term, can we participate again?**
Yes, all women who are subscribing to SGI-USA publications can sign up to participate again in 2018.
- **What level should we hold Sophia group gatherings?**
This can be discussed and decided by the Region and/or Zone women's leaders.
- **How do we pick facilitators?**
Facilitators should be selected based on their ability to plan, support and facilitate the meetings. It is an excellent opportunity to include recently graduated YWD as co-facilitators.
- **How do we involve recently YWD graduates?**
Let's reach out and encourage newly graduated YWD to participate in the 2018 Sophia Group. This will create a wonderful opportunity for them to build bonds of friendship with other women's division.