

## FROM OUR READERS

### Vivid Cover

I JUST want to congratulate you on your outstanding cover [*Ikuurdi Dancing Figures from North Cameroon*, by Clarence Washington] for the historic first issue of *Living Buddhism*. I think that it truly reflects what we stand for and where we are going. The cover creates an image full of zest for life with vivid colors and action through movement. The wide range of shades of color is symbolic of our determination to create unity in such diversity. The fact that the multitude of beautiful colors blend so well together definitely reminds me that if I bring out my own inner beauty with the purpose of enhancing that beauty through interacting with the beauty of others, then diversity is not a problem but something to be in awe of. What a great start!

MARY SILVA  
Orlando, Fla.

P.S.: I loved the article on “The Nine Consciousnesses and Jung’s Theory of the Collective Unconscious” [December 1996 *Seikyo Times*]. It was so clear and concise. It was the first time I enjoyed reading about the topic and actually understood it! I’m so glad I didn’t do my typical attitude of “Oh, no, I can’t read this—too long, beyond my comprehension, and maybe boring.” The article was just the opposite. Thanks!

### Ages Questioned

REGARDING the article “Dedicated to the Enlightenment of Humanity” on the life of Nichiren in the February issue of *Living Buddhism* (pp. 14–15), the ages given for key events in the Daishonin’s life are different from the ones I previously learned throughout my practice with the SGI. Please clarify this discrepancy.

EIKO HEFFRON  
Aliso Viejo, Calif.

*We received several inquiries regarding the article on the life of Nichiren. The ages given for different events in Nichiren’s life differ by one year from previously published ages. The article published in the February issue uses the Western custom of determining one’s age. In Japan, a person is considered one year old at birth, two years old after twelve months and so on.*

### Confederate Flag

IN the twenty-nine years I have been practicing Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism, I have learned that although as humans we are of different races and have different personalities and character traits, one thing we all have in common is that we are all human beings. Nichiren Daishonin makes it perfectly clear that no one human is superior to another. I believe this to be true without question.

With this in mind, I would like to refer to a recent article in the February *Living Buddhism* titled “A Cure for Racial Disharmony in Our Society”; specifically, on page

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19, there is a picture of Ku Klux Klan members holding Confederate battle flags.

I'm a leader in the Sons of Confederate Veterans, a patriotic, historical, educational, benevolent, non-political, nonsectarian, non-racial organization. There are many Americans of African descent who proudly belong to the Sons of Confederate Veterans. I wish to state that the Sons of Confederate Veterans has nothing to do with the Ku Klux Klan whatsoever.

To clarify, first of all, the Confederate battle flag is not a flag of prejudice or race. The Confederate battle flag was born in July 1861 after the battle of First Manassas. General Beauregard determined that the Confederate soldiers must have a flag so distinct from that of the enemy that no doubt should ever again endanger his cause on the field of battle.

So as you can see, the flag was designed to identify the Confederate soldier in battle—not to harass Americans of African descent.

I have four ancestors from Texas who fought honorably for the Confederacy. I'm very proud of them and my heritage. Speaking of my heritage, I'm not a white man—I'm a Scottish, English, Irish, French, Native American.

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