

FROM OUR READERS

MODERN BUDDHIST HEALING

I ENJOYED the article by Charles Atkins (in the May 1997 *Living Buddhism*). I, too, grew up in this Buddhist practice where in the pioneer days there were a lot of myths about “how to” practice—can’t do this, don’t do that. Through the years I came to see that great people like Gandhi studied Eastern philosophy and understood the power of prayer, along with current New Age philosophers Deepak Chopra, Wayne Dyer and Shakti Gawain.

The more I study Buddhism, the less I fear the thought of death. And, with the passing of my father recently and of my mother thirteen years ago, I have realized that death is a part of the cycle of the universe. In “Dialogue on Life” by Daisaku Ikeda, he says, “When a human being is old, ill and weary of his experience on earth, it is necessary that the life force within him be rejuvenated through death.” So when Nichiren Daishonin states, “Suffer what there is to suffer and enjoy what there is to enjoy,” he doesn’t mean that we should enjoy our suffering but as President Ikeda says: “It is impossible to experience indestructible and inexhaustible joy until we accept suffering as it is and undauntedly challenge it. This will open up the path to enlightenment.”

SHIRLEY ZAGOREC
Orlando, Fla.

GREETINGS FROM MALAYSIA

MY heartiest congratulations to you for giving *Living Bud-dhism* such a beautiful metamorphosis.

The obvious facelift apart, the most welcome change is in the new spirit it now projects. How encouraging indeed to see good quality journalistic techniques at work! As a practitioner, your fine magazine has always been a great source of strength, inspiration and encouragement to me. It shall be so all the more from now on.

Over the past decade, in Malaysia, the kosen-rufu movement has made good progress. We have earned not only public acclaim but also official trust and recognition. In 1989, when our country hosted the Fifteenth Sea Games (nine Southeast Asian nations participated), in our capital city of Kuala Lumpur, we were given the privilege and honor to present two truly awesome displays—one gymnastics and one human graphics—for the opening ceremony. We stole the show.

In September, we will be performing again for the Sixteenth Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur. We will undertake a gigantic human graphics (17,000 strong) for both the opening and the closing ceremonies.

STEVE CHONG YON FAH
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COLLECTIVE KARMA

IN response to the various opinions offered in the last few months to Jeffrey L. Towery’s letter published in the April 1997 issue, I would like to add a few more points. In all of these opinions, it strikes me that it would be easy for those offended to assign blame and for others to take a position of horror and guilt. Neither of these has anything to do with Buddhism. All Americans have the collective karma to be living in a country where many people were treated unjustly. Guess what, people still are treated unjustly in our country!

We ALL own this karma whether our skins are black, white or brown. The Civil

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War was nearly 150 years ago, and no one who lived then is still alive. For all we know, some of us whose skins are black in this life could have been slaveholders in a life of that period. Inversely, some of us who honor our Confederate ancestors may have been their slaves then. We truly don't know what our role has been in the past, or the more distant past karma which dictated the role we played then. We only know that this karma belongs to us all because we are all here now with its effects. The difference is that we now have the change to change it.

If there is one thing that Buddhism has taught me, it is to own my past: bad, good or in between. The Confederate flag is, after all, only cloth and dye. It didn't make people treat other people badly. They were doing that already. When I see the Confederate flag, it reminds me not only of how far we have come, but of how far we have to go. Let's use the sadnesses and negativity of the past as a springboard to strive for peace, justice and great happiness in society.

Let's get on with kosen-rufu so that this kind of thing doesn't happen again anytime, anywhere.

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