

## WORLD TRIBUNE MAILBOX

### Overcoming Racial Animosity

Concerning Tommy Lee Ray's experience in the Jan. 31 *World Tribune*: While I'm happy for Mr. Ray in overcoming his negativity toward Caucasians and Japanese, I must point out an unsettling tendency evident to me during my 20-year practice. Whenever there is an experience in overcoming racial animosity (whether printed in our publications or delivered at large meetings in past years), it has always concerned a black member challenging him or herself to change.

Never in all my years of faithfully reading the *World Tribune* or attending activities have I ever read or heard a Japanese or Caucasian leader or member give an experience in overcoming his or her racism or ethnic bias toward blacks, Latinos, American Indians or others. I can only think of three possible reasons for this: 1) Despite the profundity of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism and the history of racism in our society and the SGI-USA, no Japanese or white leader or member has ever had such an experience; 2) Such experiences have indeed occurred but were not communicated to our top leadership or the editorial staff of our publications; or 3) They were communicated but leadership and/or staff decided it was in the best interest of the organization not to share them with the general membership and reading public.

Regrettably, this is like a two-wheeled cart with one wheel missing, or a three-legged stool absent one or more of the legs; they cannot adequately carry out the function for which they were designed. I'm forced to ponder: Who is Mr. Ray's experience — and others like them over the years — meant to reassure? There are those like myself who have remained in the SGI throughout the years despite never feeling fully embraced by the organization. When I and others of like temperament see such experiences being shared by individuals of other ethnic, cultural or racial backgrounds, we'll know that the SGI-USA has upped by a notch or two its sincerity in carrying out its mission for world peace. Thank you.

— ROBIN AZI, Richmond, Calif.

Tommy Lee Ray's experience was really interesting, articulate and powerful. He proves, once again, that "it could never come about that the prayers of the practitioner of the Lotus Sutra would go unanswered."

— LAURYL A. JACOBS, Brookline, Mass.

### 'Question of the Month'

I think it was brave of you to replace the "official" page 2 "Editorial" with the diverse opinions of SGI-USA members. Many newspapers are often distinguished by the opinions of their editors — *The Wall Street Journal* is a good example, with its potent and often scathing editorials. Maybe what sets the *World Tribune* apart from other newspapers (and what sets Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism apart from other religions) is that it doesn't endorse an official position on any issue. Rather, it recognizes the value-creating potential of all different views.

The SGI-USA is the sum total of its members. When I read the *World Tribune*, I'm not looking for an organization to tell me how to practice Buddhism; I'm interested in what

Title: Mailbox: 03/07/97

Subject: World Tribune 03/07/97 n.3129 p.3 WT970307p03

Author:

Keywords: 03/07/97 January June Mailbox Opinion Tribune World

individual members have to say about their Buddhist practice. I'm glad that the editors of the *World Tribune* have opened up the paper to editorial diversity, helping to create a publication that has a truly dynamic relationship with its readers.

— LISA JONES, West Hollywood, Calif.

*Editor's note: We are striving to be the best of both worlds — an authoritative source on Buddhist philosophy and SGI happenings as well as an outlet for the diverse voices of the members.*

Title: Mailbox: 03/07/97  
Subject: World Tribune 03/07/97 n.3129 p.3 WT970307p03  
Author:  
Keywords: 03/07/97 January June Mailbox Opinion Tribune World