

## WORLD TRIBUNE MAILBOX

### Dialogue and More Dialogue

I'd like to really, REALLY thank you for your article "A Liberally Conservative Point of View" (Aug. 21). The quote from SGI President Ikeda is one I completely and totally agree with ["an atmosphere of lively discussion, where people can say or ask anything...is bright and joyful. In such an environment, there is growth, the rhythm of kosen-rufu — of moving forward — is there"]. Not only because it refers to the atmosphere I personally prefer in our organization, but more so because (in my humble opinion) unless and until that atmosphere becomes a reality that permeates our "Society for the Creation of Value," kosen-rufu in America will remain the dream of a small group of sincere people, rather than the inevitable reality of an ever-growing, happy, vibrant group of sincere people....

Only a couple of years ago I couldn't honestly encourage people to subscribe to our publications. Now it's easy to tell everyone, members and non-members alike, that they're really missing the boat if they don't get the *World Tribune*. Because it's the truth, not because it's "our duty as good Buddhists" to do so.

It IS, as you say, a work in progress. As are our lives. As is our organization. As is everything. I simply wanted to take a moment to say that I think your article pushed the SGI-USA and American kosen-rufu a little further in the right direction. I only wish it'd been on the front page.

— MIKE BENNETT, South Pasadena, Calif.

While I have not been a member that long, I have met a great many people in the SGI. I am always impressed with the diversity of the organization and was quite stunned to read the response to the so-called culture clash. If more questions, disagreement and discussion are needed, do it!

While we do enjoy a relatively open society in this country, conformity was a mainstay through as recent a time as the '60s, even '70s. (Ever have someone ask you if you are a commie because you happen to have a beard? I have.) And, yes, much of the country is still conformist.

Let us cherish each individual and take pride in our involvement in the SGI!

— TED SCHAEPPERS, Queens, N.Y.

Thank you, Lisa Jones, for your wit, clarity and insightfulness. I especially enjoyed "Making the Organization Our Own" (Aug. 28) and "A Liberally Conservative Point of View" (Aug. 21). Thank you, Ted Morino, for educating us on how to chant correctly and for the many articles over the years that are often studied and restudied. Your articles often become the center of discussion at meetings. Please come to Marin County soon! And thanks to all the staff for providing a weekly paper that, as Lisa Jones puts it, "educates rather than indoctrinates" and "stimulates thought rather than controls it."

— ELIZABETH LYNN, Fairfax, Calif.

### Elevating the 'Mailbox'

I like knowing we're making room in our organization for differing viewpoints. I like knowing that we all are striving, and sometimes really struggling, to respect and transcend

Title: Mailbox: 09/18/98

Subject: World Tribune 09/18/98 n.3209 p.15 WT980918p15

Author:

Keywords: 09/18/98 December July Mailbox Opinion Tribune World

these differences to achieve our common goal of world peace based on Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

Mr. Anderson ("Mailbox," Sept. 4) has a point about some of the letters being kind of antagonistic, but isn't this just like real life? We are only human, and I'd bet anything that more than a few of those sharp sounding letters were written by people who later wished they'd softened their tone a bit and who learned from their experience. I know I've certainly walked in such shoes.

— M. LAVORA PERRY, East Cleveland, Ohio

I read with some concern the letter from Dale C. Aderson suggesting that the *World Tribune* discontinue the "Mailbox" section. In contrast, I find the open discussion and dialogue refreshing and encouraging. I believe this openness establishes a model for our discussion meetings. Let's not be afraid of expressing our doubts and concerns, and yes, even our complaints.

It is the atmosphere of pretending that everything is sunshine that enabled the priesthood to establish itself with so much evil strength. If anything can be learned from the temple issue, it is that in order to promote kosen-rufu, we must always promote open dialogue.

With that in mind, I wonder why the *World Tribune* found it necessary to parenthesize "(after requests from members)" when referring to Mrs. Ikeda's participation in a dialogue (Sept. 4). As a member of more than 30 years, I have prayed for the day when it was acceptable for women in the SGI to step forward and participate in dialogue without apology. I believe this is President Ikeda's spirit...

This is more than feminist politics. It is an expression of confidence in every member's ability, no matter how long they have been practicing or what their position, to contribute without fear or constraints.

— MARLA SORRELLS, Everett, Pa.

In order for us to live together in harmony, we must learn to express our diverse opinions without attacking the dignity of others. Dialogue is not easy. It takes patience and hard work. Obviously, we are not there yet. But remember, we are a very young organization taking on an unprecedented challenge. Fortunately for us, we have the Gohonzon. So let's chant to elevate the level of the dialogue in the "Mailbox" column to a manner befitting the great goal of kosen-rufu! After all, "the voice does the Buddha's work."

— ANNE-MARIE AKIN, Chicago

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