

WORLD TRIBUNE MAILBOX

There's No PC Way

I have read the opinions of many members who feel “uncomfortable” about the SGI’s backing of the contingent in the San Francisco Lesbian/Gay Freedom Day Parade or questioning whether this is the “proper” way to propagate Buddhism, or that the SGI should not endorse or promote any particular group.

The SGI was originally created to support educators, later it was instrumental in the formation of a political party in Japan. “Faith equals daily life”; how can we as an organization not involve ourselves in every aspect of society if we are to remain faithful to that statement? SGI President Ikeda is constantly challenging us to speak out for justice; how can we do that if we limit the scope of our participation in the world around us to activities that won’t “rock the boat” or draw the line on individuals or groups that don’t fit our picture of “proper” Buddhist practice?

I have to point out that one should question what about that event made you feel “uncomfortable”? I am sure that Rosa Parks made a lot of people on the bus she was on uncomfortable when she refused to give up her seat to a white person. Pure Land practitioners didn’t particularly like the way the Daishonin insisted that their religion led to the hell of incessant suffering.

I participated in an event that made me proud to be part of a humanistic organization, when just about every other religion in the world condemns me for who I am. It brought great hope and joy to a lot of people who are misunderstood and hated, many times by their own families. It was a great joyful cause to spread the Daishonin’s teachings, and that is the bottom line.

There is no such thing as a “politically correct” way to spread the Daishonin’s Buddhism, no way to avoid “rocking the boat” as the Lotus Sutra itself asserts, just a sincere desire to bring happiness to others and fight for a just society.

— SAM PIZALATO, San Francisco

A Mission To Propagate

Members who have joined in the last 10 years may not understand how we practiced in the United States when we called the organization NSA (Nichiren Shoshu Academy, Nichiren Shoshu of America, or Nichiren Shoshu Soka Gakkai of America). But I still defend those days as a necessity in order to establish what we enjoy and have today.

Where else in the world is there a lay society so devoted to eliminating human suffering? Who else embraces a strict but compassionate doctrine, a law of causality that encompasses three virtues of parent, teacher and sovereign? And where are the people who pray daily for their deceased ancestors and fellow comrades now gone and offer appreciation and prayer for the realization of peace throughout the world and the happiness of all humanity? Besides the monks who isolate themselves in monasteries,... most common individuals worry only of their own survival.

I’m not a man of numerous academic credentials or well traveled. But I do know, in history, in any revolution, many mistakes were made during its infancy. I believe we are pioneers still blazing the trail for future generations. So where is the manual other than the Goshu to establish kosen-rufu?

I feel deep gratitude for the fortune to be introduced in this lifetime to the teachings of Nichiren Buddhism. We of the Soka Gakkai International are unique as we have finally set

Title: Mailbox: 10/16/98

Subject: World Tribune 10/16/98 n.3213 p.15 WT981016p15

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Keywords: 10/16/98 December July Mailbox Opinion Tribune World

the momentum to fill the dreams and realizations of those famous and renown statesmen, philosophers and poets. As the Daishonin states: "If one uses the Lotus Sutra to pray for the welfare of the land, it will prove to be a Great Pure Law for the safety and protection of the nation, insuring joy and prosperity to everyone from ruler on down to the common people" (MW-6, p.190).

So our only real mission of worth is to propagate this teaching. I envision 1 million members by 2005 in the United States alone. How easy it is to become complacent, unaware of valuable time passing in an instant,... only to find deep regret that more effort was not done. We are constantly warned not to end our lives with deep regret.

When I read from President Ikeda's encouragement, "Ours [revolution] is the crystallization of man's noblest endeavor, a universal, eternal revolution carried on to benefit all people on earth." How can one hesitate and not share this great teaching with his fellow man? "Their struggle brings about their own human revolution, and the circle of unity they form is the Soka Gakkai [International]."

— DENNIS HALL, Seattle

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