

WORLD TRIBUNE MAILBOX

Millennium Service

I enjoyed the article on President Ikeda's message and coverage of the Millennium Service 2000 at the Martin Luther King Jr. International Chapel at Morehouse College in Atlanta (April 28 *World Tribune*). It was nice to see the SGI there in support of their humanistic service, even though it was of another faith. By the SGI having dialogue and reaching out to the community, we can bring peace and understanding among all.

— PHILIP RAY,
Ventura, Calif.
Surfhike@aol.com

Use of Language

Bravo to Ross Dreiblatt and thanks to the *World Tribune* staff for printing his humorous perspective (March 25 *World Tribune*) in response to Dave Baldschun's perspective (March 17 *World Tribune*). I appreciate Mr. Dreiblatt's well-articulated argument—even though he used numerous non-English words, all of which I understood—to make his point about the main point of Buddhism, which is the happiness of all people. It made me laugh. It made me happy to be a member of the SGI-USA, where people can voice their opinions and have such fun doing so!

— DEBORAH MULLIS,
Winter Park, Fla.
damullis@earthlink.net

Personally, I want to commend Ross Dreiblatt for his perspective (March 25 *World Tribune*). I am much of the same mind as he is. I have been involved in this organization since April of 1974 when I attended my first activity. It has grown and evolved, as has the members within it. We have become a more diverse membership, and reflect that in many ways.

As is pointed out in Mr. Dreiblatt's perspective, we are a diverse population in this country. We cling to parts of our individual culture, yet in many instances, embrace additions from other cultures. I honestly feel that it is to our advantage to retain the "Japanese roots" without losing the hardy individuality we each cherish. I see no problem with the "vocabulary" of Buddhism remaining as it is. We will lose much if we continue to homogenize and create a blander element of Buddhism. Just an observation...as I said, I attended my first meeting in 1974 when we reflected even more of the Japanese culture than we do know. The members around me were kind, considerate, and helped me learn about this new and exciting thing...i.e. Buddhism, and I did not feel that I had lost anything in the bargain. The focus should be on our practice of this Buddhism, rather than a continual rehash of the vocabulary. Believe it or not, this discussion has been going on (off and on as it were) for the last 26 years that I am aware of. Yet, I still go to Kosen-rufu Gongyo, chant daimoku and do gongyo. Let's keep to the basics!!!!

—CYNDY SHUBERT–JETT,
Oceanside, Calif.
halcyns20@aol.com

It is obvious the use of the word *Sensei* stirs up strong emotions for many — my husband included. He is born American of Japanese descent and second-generation SGI member. He never learned to speak Japanese, so while in college he enrolled in a Japanese-language course. On the first day of class, the teacher asked to be referred to as Sensei. My husband was so distraught over the fact he would have to call his Japanese-language teacher Sensei that he dropped out of the course. In his mind at the time, only President Ikeda could be called Sensei. For that reason, my husband lost out on an opportunity to learn something new.

In my opinion, Dave Baldschun (March 17 *World Tribune*) has valid points we should seriously consider if we want to make this Buddhism universal and not limited, as in this instance, to a parochial mentality.

—PAMELA SELEY,
San Marcos, Calif.

Keeping Connected

I have always appreciated your paper and find it to be very valuable in keeping me connected with the SGI. In the latest edition, the experience of Mr. Frank Castanheira (April 21 *World Tribune*) really hit home with me. There are so many similarities in his background and mine and I applaud him for the efforts and success he has made. I am also in the San Francisco area, fairly new and not well connected with anyone here except for my work, and would like to know if there is any way to correspond with Mr. Castanheira. Or if there is some way to find which chapter he attends that maybe I could get myself there. Without the *World Tribune*, I think I would drift too far from the organization, and I owe much to all of the dedicated people who make this paper available. With gratitude and appreciation,

—RON IRWIN,
San Francisco
rontirwin@earthlink.net