

WORLD TRIBUNE MAILBOX

Grieving Is Important

In reply to Dixon Hamby's April 25 "Perspective," "I Cried Today" — bravo for continuing to speak out against war! I've been involved in cultural exchanges with Vietnam since 1993, and I urge him and all Americans to seek out the voices of the Vietnamese as they are expressed in literature and art today. There are now available many translations of contemporary and classical Vietnamese literature and a number of art exhibits that focus on the work of Vietnamese painters and artists. When Americans are exposed to the healing and forgiving grace of Vietnamese citizens, we can't help but begin to heal ourselves. As we look at Vietnam's long and powerful history, we humanize our former "enemy" and take responsibility for our government's action. This is a lot like the regreening that is taking place in Vietnam's destroyed forests — it is slow and difficult and tedious at times but a real miracle nonetheless.

— EDITH SHILLUE, Arlington, Mass.

Dixon Hamby's "Perspective" was a beautifully written testament to the need to express our horror at the events happening in the world today and thus begin to seek an end to them. Daily papers report the brutal murders of children and the slaughter of refugees with such regularity that, without nurturing our grief over the victims, we will indeed find our hearts turned to stone. Like Mr. Hamby, I find that it is necessary to shed tears over these unknown victims and then to strengthen my resolve to face the evil with Mr. Ikeda, Mr. Hamby and my fellow bodhisattvas.

— JOHN GALLAGHER, Duncanville, Texas

Thank you (and Dixon Hamby) for the excellent essay on the importance of grieving. It shows a maturity and realization that the fundamental joy of life does not mean that we simply pretend that everything is wonderful or that we are insulated from the pain of the world. This is well attested to in the Daishonin's teachings: "And yet I cannot help but grieve as I recall the words of the *Ninno Sutra*: 'Once the sages have departed, then the seven disasters are certain to arise'" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 6, p. 45); and "How could sensible people not abhor this world?" (MW-7, 139); and "Can anyone who understands the true situation fail to sigh in sorrow?" (MW-7, 204).

Of course, Buddhism does not teach us to wallow in grief or to despair and become defeatist: "I, Nichiren, and my followers alone rejoice amid our grieving" (MW-5, p. 151). And SGI President Ikeda has written: "People [of earnest faith] are experts at life who make friends even with suffering. While skillfully keeping company with life's hardships, they can find cause for delight in any situation whatsoever" (*Lectures on the "Expedient Means" and "Life Span" Chapters of the Lotus Sutra*, vol. 1, p. 126).

— ED RIPPY, Oakland, Calif.

Title: Mailbox: 05/16/97

Subject: World Tribune 05/16/97 n.3139 p.3 WT970516p03

Author:

Keywords: 05/16/97 January June Mailbox Opinion Tribune World