

WORLD TRIBUNE MAILBOX

True Success

I was ready to write a letter to the *World Tribune* with complaints about the overemphasis many articles put on Buddhism's relationship with success in one's career, the attainment of possessions (or good food at SGI Seminars) and any other false symbols of "making it" in American society. Lately, I have noticed how people I know perceive their lives as being successful or not. Both Buddhist and non-Buddhist friends or acquaintances often remind me of the strong influence our society has on our daily attitudes, which ultimately permeates all aspects of our lives.

By acknowledging the power societal standards have in controlling our personal decisions, we can take back the freedom that is originally ours. In transforming my complaints into praise, I turn to Dixon Hamby's honest and insightful look at grief in "I Cried Today" (April 25 "Perspective"). He talks about men being raised in an atmosphere which scrutinizes those who express grief. He encourages us all to feel the sorrow that is universal and avoid becoming numb to the suffering we see every day. This is the message Buddhism has to share. This is the kind of idea that will bring human beings together.

When I read journal entries in the *World Tribune* that mention expensive delicacies and limos pulling into driveways, I cringe with the feeling that there are many others out there reading and feeling separated from such a world, either resenting or envying this luxury. And this makes me grieve.

Nichiren Daishonin refers to the five visions which give one the ability to see at different levels — the highest vision looking through the Buddha Eye. In allowing ourselves to cry, we cleanse our minds, open our hearts and let our Buddha Eye "penetrate any of the worlds in the ten directions" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2 [2nd ed.], p. 105). Thank you Mr. Hamby for your strength in surviving Vietnam, the wisdom of your advice and the heartfelt message of your story. I look forward to more articles in the *World Tribune* with similar clarity of vision and reflections of true success.

— SURISA LANGBELL, San Francisco

Good Stuff

In the opinion section, I enjoyed "A Letter to Tiger" (May 9 "Perspectives"). I started to play golf, too, and related to the article. I was able to clip it out and give it to my stepson who is a golf fanatic. It helped me to do a little continuing *shakubuku*.

Enjoyed the "It Isn't Easy" article (May 9 "Essay"), as it related to my early childhood in an affluent residential neighborhood [in Los Angeles]. In the early '60s, the area was all white. But as African Americans moved in, there was white flight, as was happening throughout the United States in urban areas. My parents and I remained along with several other white families. I remember bringing home some African-American playmates from elementary school and my father pulling me aside, telling me I couldn't associate with them. Through my practice of Buddhism, I've been able to interact with all types of people in a positive way. Good article.

— PHILIP RAY, Ventura, Calif.

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