

WORLD TRIBUNE MAILBOX

Fresh Language, Please

I read with interest the following excerpt of an American-educated SGI-USA leader's speech that appeared recently in the *World Tribune*: "Let's live with and infuse our districts with 'freshness and vigor.' Let's 'run with all our might' toward the 21st century. United as comrades, let's create an unprecedented history for humanity, while experiencing many personal victories along the way."

From a public relations perspective, I think it's important that we speak and write in a style that is clear and representative of American culture. The above sort of rhetoric reads as if it were written in Japanese — a language that employs very flowery language to express emphasis — and translated into English — a language in which restraint and spare word choice best communicates strength.

Moreover, I think that many SGI members are either consciously or subconsciously very, very tired of these cliches, which mean nothing anymore because they've been so recycled and overused. I think that peoples' minds glaze over when they hear this stuff now.

Wouldn't it be progressive if we not only infuse our districts with "freshness and vigor" but infuse the language we use with freshness and vigor as well? If the voice does the Buddha's work, it seems to me that members would be encouraged if at least the American-born leaders speak and write in a more natural and direct manner. I believe that this is an extremely important issue that the SGI-USA needs to address. Thanks.

— JEFF OURVAN, Tokyo

Why Mentor and Disciple?

When I joined SGI-USA, I was not told I would have to accept the Daishonin as my master and strive to be his disciple. I was also never told that I would have to accept SGI President Ikeda as my master and become his disciple, too.

In the May 2 *World Tribune*, in the article "A Promise to My Mentor," Betsy Eppsteiner states, "As a disciple of Nichiren Daishonin and President Ikeda..." The mentor-disciple series that you are publishing is troubling because of its implication that we have to accept a mentor, acknowledge that to have "strong faith" we must have a mentor and this "mentor" be President Ikeda or the Daishonin or both.

This is a complex issue. If indeed we should have a mentor in order to practice correctly, let's very clearly incorporate this tenet into our Buddhist religion rather than leave it up to each person's opinion.

And just because someone chooses President Ikeda as his master, does this conversely imply that President Ikeda has selected him?

These misleading ideas about the "mentor" create confusion in the membership. The concept of having a mentor is complex and personal. It should remain in the hearts of the membership or be fully put forth as a tenet of this practice with substantial validating documentation.

— BOB DORF, Kansas City, Mo.

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