

WORLD TRIBUNE MAILBOX

Quick To Judge?

Having met Bill Endsley and being a big fan of Kirk Condyles' photography, I want to respond to Bob Zuehlke's letter in the June 13 issue.

I was at the Florida Nature and Culture Center when the photo mentioned was taken. I found Bill Endsley to be generous (he wrote a very good poem and presented copies of it as a gift to all the people participating in the publications), to have a great sense of humor and a tremendous passion for the issues involved in publications. If Mr. Zuehlke would read his *World Tribune* and not just look at the pictures, he would find that Bill Endsley is also a very capable writer.

As for Mr. Zuehlke's bigoted statement about "hokey Japanese exercises," the movements being made were led by American women who are professional physical therapists.

Concerning what editor would run a picture like the one mentioned, my opinion is only a good one.

As for how Bill Endsley would look to a non-member, I feel we should all use Mr. Zuehlke's letter as an opportunity to reflect on ourselves — on how, as practicing Buddhists, we are still capable of viewing people and situations we know nothing about and judging them negatively.

— NELLDA GALLAGHER, Duncanville, Texas

Mr. Zuehlke's letter set me thinking. In it, he criticizes the shirt "I'm chanting as we speak" as "weird and stupid." A lot of us grew up in a world of Christian thinking, where going to church and talking to an outside entity (like God) isn't "weird and stupid." If we grew up in a Buddhist-dominated society (like China or some of the other Asian countries), then going to church would seem weird and stupid. Just because it's different and not what we're originally used to, doesn't mean it's weird and stupid. It's narrow-minded and very biased to think in such a manner.

Furthermore, his comment that people are doing "hokey" exercises is offensive. Consider: Weight-training as an exercise wasn't existent before 1800s. Does that mean it's "hokey"? No, of course not — more and more people nowadays are taking up the exercise. The same applies to exercises from other countries: Just because it's new and different to you, doesn't automatically mean that it doesn't work. Mr. Zuehlke should consider actually learning about other exercises before making such a judgment.

Lastly, regarding the comment about Bill Endsley looking like a cult member: To anyone not having experienced the SGI or Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, or Buddhism in general, our organization may be viewed differently, whether good or bad. Why? For the same reason: They have really no idea what the religion is or what the organization stands for, what it's trying to achieve. Does everyone remember the first time they were introduced to the SGI? (I'm speaking mainly to people who haven't experienced Asian religions before the SGI.) Sure, it seemed a little weird at first, but as we got to know the people who comprise the organization, we realized how great and beneficial the SGI can be to all humankind. To base opinions on outside appearances is very superficial.

— RAYMOND CHEN, Bayside, N.Y.

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