

WORLD TRIBUNE MAILBOX

Don't Trivialize Racial Problems

I read this morning the article “A Magic Eye for Tolerance” by Jan Sibert (“Perspective,” June 13) and found it quite interesting until I got to the portion which stated that “Part of the problem, in my opinion, is that most minorities try to make other people change — enacting legislation, extracting promises that can't be kept, or just raging in pain and frustration. From almost every minority, we hear cries like....”

The message is very disturbing to me as an African American member who has been practicing for over 22 years, because it trivializes the very serious racial problems that we have in this country. It attempts to point the finger at the victims or the people of color (not minorities) who feel the brunt of the racism in this country and tell them to solve the problem.

Racism is a complex issue and unless people fight for change, meaning enacting legislation, fighting for justice — and responding to articles such as this one in our *World Tribune* — people will still think that the problems are with the minorities themselves.

Yes, we do have to be responsible for our lives and continue to review our own biases and prejudices and make change to open up our lives. Yet, we also must work in the greater society to make this country one that is based on equality. I hope the *World Tribune* will evaluate the articles it publishes with a little more sensitivity to its readers, especially people of color.

— DIANNE JACKSON McLEAN, Union City, Calif.

I read through Jan Sibert's article as if I were wandering through a loosened gold mine. I nodded in agreement with Sibert's experience until the gold mine pivoted into a minefield with the statement “most minorities make other people change....”

As an African American, I assert that Ms. Sibert's statement is reflective of those who understand little about racism and institutional discrimination. Ms. Sibert's viewpoint is further outrageous given the history of domestic terrorism in the United States that was perpetuated by slavery and segregation. The legislation we currently adhere to is a remedial response to gross inhumanity and injustice. The laws are also a mechanism by which this nation, which espouses the strongest democratic philosophy, can exhibit avenues of parity among people rather than parody.

I do agree with Ms. Sibert that we each do need to develop the magic eye for tolerance. However, the majority of the oppressed have already demonstrated their refined perspective through their survival and success stories. Buddhist believers in particular have to carve a more sensitive recognition of those who have taken responsibility for their lives and to offer dignified suggestions to further assist their progress. Ms. Sibert needs to re-examine and pinpoint who needs to develop the magic eye for tolerance.

— JOYCE G.D. LAW, Augusta, Ga.

Write for Bodhisattvas, Betty

A suggestion I would like to make is that the Betty B. column might benefit more people if its approach were to firmly take root in the Buddhist view of respect for life and its responses, avoiding arbitrary or impertinent judgments, hold unwaveringly to what Buddhism teaches. The element of humor would not have to suffer and only be enhanced, I believe, were this inviting column geared more to bodhisattvas and the “bodhisattva” in all of us.

— AUDREY MARXER, Los Angeles

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