

WORLD TRIBUNE MAILBOX

Too Repressed

In most Asian/Eastern cultures it appears to me that emotionalism (crying, etc.) is often equated with weakness.

Many articles I have read over the years in the *World Tribune* will share stories of women (most often) who have had some great tragedy, expressed very little emotion, and boldly gone on to fulfill their mission.

One recent example of this is in one of SGI President Ikeda's speeches in which he relates a story about Madame Deng (April 10). Madame Deng talks about the weakness and meaninglessness of crying. She continues on to say she cried only once over the death of her husband because of her sense of mission to help her people.

However, the many modern holistic healers that I have been to for treatment of the various ailments of my mind and body would strongly disagree with that type of holding back of emotion....

Crying is not only an emotional release; it creates a certain chemical change in the body that is very healthy....

For some people, it is discouraging to have courageous, emotionless models to look up to rather than real, crying, feeling people who overcome their sorrow in their own way and at their own pace.

I am not in any way saying that the many people who do not show their emotions are not experiencing the deepest hurt and sorrow inside their lives about their losses.

What I'm saying is that we, as the SGI organization, need to appreciate the healthy view of expressing our feelings and emotions.

— CATHY ROBINSON, East Northport, N.Y.

Heroic Standards

I am truly appalled by Stan Klemanowicz's smug, self-righteous letter ("Mailbox," June 19) lambasting Paul Robeson, a towering figure who along with many others "unsparingly gave up their lives, liberties and fortunes in the quest for freedom."

Ours was a country decimated by laissez-faire capitalist depression. Russia was an impoverished, illiterate nation emerging from feudalism. Yet despite countless obstacles, it guaranteed all citizens a job, a free education and health care (all of which we still do not have). For many, it offered a beacon of hope in a despairing world.

Tragically, the Bolshevik experiment proved these adages: Absolute power corrupts absolutely, and hindsight is 20/20. Long after disillusionment, however, in the United States blacks were proudly lynched and some were even subjected to "scientific experiments" like the monitoring of untreated syphilis and intentional radiation exposure.

Unswayed, despite unrelenting slander and persecution, Paul Robeson, through culture and music, devoted his life to cultivating warm bonds of friendship with all people throughout the world regardless of race, nationality or ideology.

Just *who* are your heroes, Mr. Klemanowicz?... For me, it is a certain Japanese gentleman, notorious for having cavorted with dictators behind the iron and bamboo curtains.

— MARK ANTON, New York

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A Long Way To Go? Or Going Too Far?

Kudos to Lisa Jones for her strong, clear-eyed “Worldview” on the Stonewall riots and the gay rights movement (June 19).

When House Majority Leader Trent Lott can calmly, publicly equate homosexuality with drug addiction and kleptomania, it’s easy to see that there’s quite a long way to go in breaching ignorance and creating understanding on this fundamental human issue.

I’m heartened by the *World Tribune*’s brave and forthright stance.

Maybe the *World Tribune* could get braver still by profiling a gay SGI couple’s relationship and how their Buddhist practice has strengthened it.

— WILLIAM ROUTHIER, Boston

I think that there has been an attempt to make the SGI-USA an arm of the anti-family coalition — the Gay and Lesbian Alliance, the Children’s Defense League and the National Organization of Women. These groups are out of touch with most American people and especially the world.

The world is moving toward conservatism, free enterprise and moral values — not liberalism, welfare state policies and situational ethics. I appreciate efforts by the SGI to engage in ecumenical dialogue. But talking to the Dalai Lama, Louis Farrakhan, Yassar Arafat and Unitarians is “goodness by the inch.” (No specific reference, just the general tenor of the dialogue.) Why not approach Pat Robertson, Dr. James Dobson, Thomas Sowell and the Pope?

— ROBIN R. BECK, Momence, Ill.

Just writing to tell you how pleased I am to see Lisa Jones’ “Worldview” in the June 19 issue! I’m certain that every gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered SGI member or friend of the SGI is totally delighted by its appearance there.

It is important to see that our beloved organization can acknowledge the struggles we (GLBT people) have endured, and the optimism we can bring forth due to our magnificent practice.

As she points out, “there’s reason to celebrate social progress and greater freedom — and to protest the still extant forces of bigotry and repression.” I will do it! Thanks again.

— ADRIENNE LANDAU, Cambridge, Mass.

Breakfast of Champions?

I tried with patience to read through your article by Craig DeRousse about his “Breakfast at Nikken’s” (June 26 “Seize the Day”). I honestly have to say that it feels like another tabloid article to me. As a member for 27 years, I honestly have a difficult time with articles in our newspapers when tabloid journalism is involved.

I *did* truly believe what Mr. DeRousse had to say. I did not doubt it at all. I just want to express that those who left the SGI-USA did so mostly because of their immediate leadership problems.... There are “leaders” who still function the old way and keep good people from the organization....

It makes me sad that whatever I read in the *World Tribune* and *Living Buddhism* is never enough when it comes to trying to get someone back from the priesthood. When are we going to learn from our...mistakes — and for a change, do it right!

When are we going to re-evaluate our leadership (all levels) and be able to say: “We do have the right people in place, just as SGI President Ikeda stated and wanted. The organization is a true SGI organization!” Well, until we strive toward that goal, what else can we tell our members?!

— KAREN ROACH, San Pedro, Calif.

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Taking It Seriously

I just moved to New York from Los Angeles in February. I work very long hours, and consequently I don't get to many meetings.

It is hard to start over so far from home, and many times I feel alone. But every morning and evening on the subway, I get to read the *World Tribune*.

It really helps a lot. I could say that 10 times and not properly emphasize how much encouragement I have received from our newspaper. Every day I read SGI President Ikeda's guidance or an encouraging experience or the thoughts, opinions and ideas of different members around the country.

Thank you very much, everyone at the *World Tribune*, for doing such a fantastic job of putting together such a great publication. And the fact that you manage to do it weekly is amazing. I can only imagine the craziness of meeting deadlines and rewrites, etc. You have a big job (and a great honor), and you take it seriously.

— HEIDI BERGMAN, New York

I have been an SGI member for nine years and 10 months! I am e-mailing you to let you know that I am very pleased with the "Seize the Day" pullout. I feel that it is a great source of information for our youth today, with youths killing youths in the schools. I feel it is a source of the sort of guidance that is very necessary nowadays so that youths are not as easily swayed. Keep up the good work.

— KARL MONROE, via e-mail

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