

## WORLD TRIBUNE MAILBOX

### A Thriving District

To Debra and Harry Tolliver: It was so nice to see both of you and your thriving district in the July 23 *World Tribune*. I see you are making great strides with your district, and I'm sure you will continue to grow and develop greatly, becoming a chapter, area, etc. Keep up the good work.

—PATTI WOOLMAN,  
Pasadena, Calif.

P.S.: You and Debra look great, as do all the members.

### Modernization Trends

To the computer-minded, to the lover of reference texts, to the bodhisattva who wants to find exactly the right words to say, the CD-ROM encapsulation of the SGI-USA publications is a dream come true. No longer do we have to run around searching through piles of old papers to find some key guidance. Moreover, like the "WT-Express," now the medicine of the Goshō and President Ikeda's guidance can stream right across our monitors.

I really enjoyed working on the beta edition of this CD. In doing so, I took the opportunity to invite another member, one who doesn't subscribe, to help me. He was very impressed and is earnestly considering renewing his subscription. Similarly, another member of my district (Mayfair, in Chicago) has decided to begin studying again in earnest and wants all the back issues of *Living Buddhism* in order to read "Dialogue on the Lotus Sutra." She is really excited to be able to access these articles electronically. For my part, I would appreciate getting all the publications in electronic format — as they appear — not necessarily in lieu of the paper versions, but as a very handy study tool, for preparing summaries for meetings, cutting and pasting guidance for my altar or for friends.

Please keep up with these modernization trends. Let's bring enlightenment to people using the cutting edge of technology.

—JOSH SAMOS,  
Chicago, Ill.

### A Vocabulary of Peace

As we enter a new century and reflect on the old, I believe it equally important to welcome in the new paradigm. In this regard, I would like to suggest that the SGI develop and refine a vocabulary of peace. After 28 years of practice, study and reading the *World Tribune*, it would be my great pleasure for a shift to occur in the presentation of written materials. When one talks of peace and uses words like fight, beat, win and the like, the cause for peace is at a reflective distance. With so many words and so much at our disposal, surely our perceptual verbiage can move toward peace. I truly believe that what we say and how we say it as well as what we write for posterity suggests more than just the cutting edge.

—JESSICA C. SHORT,  
San Francisco

## **A Wonderful Experience**

Thank you to Shelley Fine for a wonderful experience (Aug. 13 *World Tribune*). You made me feel as if I were there with you. Congratulations on your courageous and sincere actions to spread the Law.

—ALAIN BERGER,  
Van Nuys, Calif.

## **Inspiring To Read**

The paper you put out is fantastic. It is so inspiring to read and enjoy. I have only been a member for six months unofficially, then I got the Gohonzon July 11 this year. I look at the *World Tribune* and feel as if I should practice more and study more. Just wanted to say that it is a great paper.

—CHRISTINE PINSTON,  
Fullerton, Calif.

## **An On-line Discussion Group**

I recently ran across Dixon Hamby's perspective (Jan. 17, 1997, *World Tribune*) about the importance of the Web in propagating Buddhist values. As I read through the list of wonderful people whom he met through his website, his words encouraged me: "People freely share information...and inspire and challenge each other."

I thought about the importance of an on-line discussion group in my life and how I have been able to create value with it. During discussions about a television show we share an interest in, I once made a comment about the show's actor, a Quebec native, that triggered a strong response from a Quebecoise. At the time, I had been studying and chanting about diversity and, concerned about her feelings, I privately apologized to her for my (accidental) insensitivity. Our conversation took an unexpected turn. She revealed for the time to anyone the toll that prejudice has taken on her family and her yearning for a world in which every single person is fully accepted. She lives in a world in which no one speaks freely about bigotry for fear of repercussion—her entire family has divided over the issue of French-language dominance and Quebec independence. She receives no support in her environment for being bilingual and loves the on-line discussion group because she can speak freely in English. I shared with her my Buddhist philosophy and gave her total support for wanting to be a global citizen. Her gratitude overwhelmed me and we've developed a warm friendship in the freedom of cyberspace.

In private, I've supported list-members through hard times and let them know I chant for their happiness. I've not done a very good job of sharing this practice face to face (that's one of my weaknesses) but in cyberspace, I've grown courageous with new friends whom I've never met when circumstances are appropriate; first I chant and then I write. Without exception, they've written how much they appreciate that, although their beliefs are very different, I've been able to say the right thing when they were suffering and taught them something new.

Without labeling it Buddhism, I've also shared the values of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism in the group discussion. When I stumble over how to be hopeful and uplifting

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about the show's values, events of the day, a difference of opinion, I turn to the *World Tribune* and find the words I need. As Dixon quoted, President Ikeda said: "The value of friendship cannot be overemphasized. World peace begins with friendship."

—DONNA PARTEN,  
Sacramento, Calif.

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