

## WORLD TRIBUNE MAILBOX

### Apology

We apologize for any misunderstanding or hurt feelings our printing of a letter under the heading “Authoritarian Leadership” in our March 31 issue might have caused. When we receive communication concerning a possible conflict or difference of opinion among individuals in our organization, it has been our policy not to publish it. Instead, we have tried to follow up through the SGI-USA organization to help responsible parties in that area to be aware of the problem and engage in dialogue to resolve it. This is because in any disagreement among individuals, each party has a different perspective—otherwise there would be no disagreement. By publishing the perspective of one party, and by printing the name and city of the person submitting the letter, we inadvertently may have done a disservice to those mentioned in the letter and may have contributed to, rather than resolved, any misunderstanding. This was an oversight, for which we wish to apologize both to all the parties identified in the letter and to the writer of the letter.

—WORLD TRIBUNE STAFF

### District’s Growth

I received the WT E-Mail Express for March 31st yesterday. It is sooooo filled with goodies from President Ikeda and Mr. Wada! I was so excited by the contents that I forwarded it to all the leaders in my chapter:)

Tonight is our third monthly discussion meeting for the year. We have over the three months continued to use *The Human Revolution* and *The New Human Revolution* as our guide for developing our district. Because of our efforts I can say, without reservation, that our district is the happiest one not only in Amsterdam (I or II) but probably in the entire Netherlands:) We have gone from a district whose attendance ran around 30 percent to one whose attendance runs close to 70 percent. In addition, we had two people receive the Gohonzon early this month and have five more we are working with for May. One of those has been over to my house two mornings this week to work on her gongyo.

Having put the guidance from the March 31st WTExpress into effect several months ago, I feel so connected to the forward movement of kosen-rufu. I also have felt a fantastic renewal of determination for the happiness of our members and those in the SGI worldwide. In relation to the worldwide part, I have, using the Internet, found [an American friend in faith] and renewed that connection. He and I e-mail each other every day. Our efforts here are actually encouraging him now in his efforts in his chapter in [the U.S.]. I am soooooo happy...understatement of the decade:)

—ELIZABETH CLARK,  
Amsterdam, The Netherlands  
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### Use of Language

Dave Baldschun has stirred up a hornet’s nest with his recent article about Japanese

terminology (March 17 *World Tribune*). SGI President Ikeda has given us frequent guidance about the importance of dialogue, including many details on how it should be conducted. Now that there is an emotional issue on the table, we will find out how many have been paying attention.

—BOB SIMMS,  
Tarzana, Calif.  
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Though he is clearly well intended, I must strenuously object to Dave Baldschun's article "Advocating the Universality of Buddhism" (March 17 *World Tribune*). He has clearly been inspired by the words of President Ikeda, who he quotes at length, but his proposed application of this guidance would do more harm than good. We should not encourage anglicization of Buddhist terminology and not abandon use of the Japanese word *Sensei*.

Around the world U.S. citizens are notorious for their deficiencies in foreign-language speaking, and in our multi-cultural society the excessive use of English has created painful tensions (both in society and within SGI)....

As a language teaching professional, I found myself admiring Sensei's guidance to Japanese members to learn English and adapt to U.S. society, but I've longed for him to give such strict guidance to U.S. members who lack basic foreign language skills and yet call themselves members of an international organization. To embrace at least one of the languages of our multi-linguistic membership is a true "language revolution." This is the reason I joined SGI in 1994—because it was full of colors and languages that other Buddhist organizations I encountered were not. When he suggests that we make it so our organization is "perceived as [an] American organization" what exactly does he mean? For me and many other members it means a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual community.

When Mr. Baldschun calls for us to not "make it even more confusing" for new members by using so many "foreign words," he is asking us to dumb down a sacred text....When President Ikeda teaches us that we should not mimic Japanese society and culture, he is merely doing what any true teacher would, encouraging us to find our own voice. But the greater context of those comments is that they took place in the early '90s, when our organization was confronted with the effect of years of misapplication of his teachings and poor practice—effects we can still feel.

Mr. Baldschun states that he wants to respond to Sensei's guidance and "take action accordingly." As a Buddhist and a teaching professional, I encourage all long-time members to work patiently and consistently with new members so they can feel comfortable embracing the foundation of this practice through its language. Japanese members have been doing this with U.S. members for over 30 years, I think native English speakers can at least make a similar effort.

—EDITH SHILLUE,  
Boston  
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I wish to commend the article published in the March 17 issue of the *World Tribune* written by Mr. Dave Baldschun, titled "Advocating the Universality of Buddhism."

It is my opinion that the time has arrived to review our behavior as followers of Nichiren Dai-shonin by changing the language we use to describe our practice and various aspects of our organization. This is America. As Mr. Baldschun points out, President Ikeda has

constantly reminded us of the importance of expressing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism in a way that is compatible with the customs and traditions of America. Let's take another step in our individual and collective human revolution by improving our communications to all human beings. I would be glad to be a part of any effort to find American English alternatives to the Japanese terms we currently use.

—ROD BURKE,  
Santa Monica, Calif.

## **The Environment**

In the interest of seeing the forest through the trees, please allow me to "log on" to the Hotchkiss affair, of which Dr. Tomo Kawaguchi seems desirous to position himself to deliver the last word through his assertion that global warming and population growth are "not topics of debate among *World Tribune* readers."

Mr. Hotchkiss' main point (Oct. 1, 1999, *World Tribune*), I believe, was that environmental extremism poses a greater threat than environmental degradation. I tend not to agree with that premise. But I violently disagree with the idea that he shouldn't have the right to express his views in our newspaper as convincingly as he is able.

As SGI-USA members, we pride ourselves on our willingness to confront the array of problems now facing humanity. However, does this mean we need be of monolithic opinion on secular matters?

Dr. Kawaguchi should, I believe, refute Frank Hotchkiss' statements with facts of his own or expend the energy to write a similar article. The *World Tribune* should not be instructed on what is or is not a debatable issue.

As for the doctor's directive that "it's really up to us to think about what the SGI-USA can do about these issues, not discussing whether such problems exist or not," I suggest by holding imminent culture festivals in an environmentally responsible way with minimal use of spray paints and other toxins.

—MAURICE PATRICK McCARTHY,  
Daly City, Calif.

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