

## WORLD TRIBUNE MAILBOX

### Gongyo Workshops a Success

Our district recently held its first gongyo workshop using Cindy Carrillo's article in the Nov 17, 2000, *World Tribune* (p. 6) as the format. I had been leading our monthly, traditional slow gongyo meetings for several months, and the members attending had improved.

But this meeting was different, full of joy and enthusiasm. After a moderately paced gongyo, we each took turns reading her article. Then we practiced some of the "problem" areas. Some of us have been doing gongyo for over 20 years and had come just to support. Instead, all went home feeling supported after experiencing the fun, joy and powerful exhilaration of this particular activity. The benefit and impact of just wanting to improve our gongyo was immediately apparent in our lives.

— ROCHELLE K. MELAMED  
Delray Beach, Fla.

### Rejuvenated Through Evening Gongyo

Mike Lisagor's article "Beware the Five Minute Prayer" (Jan. 19 *World Tribune*, p. 10) was uplifting. My job as an electrician for security alarms, fire and burglary and security cameras involves being on the road sometimes 12 or more hours a day, so it's easy to rationalize skipping evening gongyo because of being tired. As a result of Mike's article, even though I had a busy week and sometimes drove 200 miles a day, I came home and did a sincere gongyo and chanted at least a few minutes. I noticed I wasn't as tired the next day. Thank you, Mike.

— PHILIP RAY  
Santa Barbara, Calif.

### Don't Forget About Nutrition

It seems depression is very popular these days. On the same day I received the latest *AARP Bulletin* and my Feb. 9 *World Tribune*, and they both featured articles on depression. Both publications recommended therapy, medication and meditation but not in the same order. Nowhere in the articles is nutrition considered. Yet the symptoms Lee Wolfson listed from the DSM-IV can be caused by a variety of nutritional deficiencies.

I am not advocating eschewing medications, but I believe a nutritional assessment should be included in considering a treatment protocol for mental illness. And I understand that medication can't be discarded abruptly should one want to go an alternative route. For example: Valerie Kurita's experience (March 2 *World Tribune*, p. 3) about how her son was able to replace his medication with megavitamin therapy (and prayer). But it took a year to gradually reduce the medications by half.

There are many examples of vitamin, mineral and fatty acid deficiencies that can

contribute to depression. There are also medical causes such as hypothyroidism, hypoadrenia and other hormonal imbalances. The important thing is to consider the whole person. That is what is meant by a holistic approach and moreover, I believe, would be consistent with our Buddhist practice.

— SYLVIA ELBAZ  
New York

### **Perseverance in Practice Can Heal Depression**

I want to thank Terri Johnson for sharing our experience about challenging depression in the Feb. 9, 2001 *World Tribune* (p. 6). Her account so accurately portrayed severe depression as a lifelong battle that Buddhism has the power to eradicate. Each year of my own Buddhist practice, I have watched my depression lift a little more, so that now it never has the power to paralyze me the way it used to.

Each of us who suffers from depression heals ourselves in different ways, but I believe the key for all of us is to continue persevering in our Buddhist practice no matter what, even if some days we can only chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo a few times. Then, without fail, life will get better beyond anything we ever imagined, and real joy emerges. That's been my experience.

Also, since I began participating in Soka Spirit activities a year and a half ago, I feel I have blasted through my depression 10 times faster than in my previous 16 years of practice.

— KALI SAPOSNICK  
Boston

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