



CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	80/05
2. Advertiser	Freedom Furniture Ltd
3. Product	Housegoods/services
4. Type of advertisement	TV
5. Nature of complaint	Discrimination or vilification Religion – section 2.1
6. Date of determination	Tuesday, 12 April 2005
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement portrays various pieces of furniture and also pieces of cutlery and crockery moving around a living room in what is designed to appear as a coordinated “dance” sequence. A small sculpture of a seated Buddha which forms part of the Freedom range of products is also shown to move in a side to side/sway motion. The depiction of the Buddha lasts for approximately one second.

THE COMPLAINT

Comments which the complainant/s made regarding this advertisement included the following:

“This kind of ad is inappropriate and is offensive.”

THE ADVERTISER’S RESPONSE

Comments which the advertiser made in response to the complaint/s regarding this advertisement included the following:

“The commercial does not discriminate against any person or section of the community. The commercial simply features a statue for a very short period of time which is a product within the current Freedom accessory range, as with all of the other items in the commercial, and makes no references whether direct or otherwise, as to people of Buddhist belief.”

“It was not the intention or the effect of the commercial to be disrespectful or disparaging of Buddah or the Buddhist faith.”

“The dramatic execution of that idea shows all Freedom products moving in a room. The Buddah statue is simply treated the same as any other product in the Freedom range and is not singled out or featured in any prominent way.”

“The statue is not animated or altered in any way... ”

THE DETERMINATION

The Advertising Standards Board (“Board”) considered whether this advertisement breaches section 2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics (the “Code”).

The Board found that the depiction did not contravene the provisions of the Code relating to the portrayal of people (and, in particular, religion).

Further finding that the advertisement did not breach the Code on any other grounds, the Board dismissed the complaint.