

My Experience With Hodgkin's Disease

WHEN I was 36 years old, I experienced a rapid deterioration of health at the beginning of 1987. I was a businessman and Chicago-area native when I began to experience severe back pain followed by drenching night sweats, insatiable itching, chills, nausea and constant fatigue. By the time all the symptoms had reached their peak, I was diagnosed with fourth-stage Hodgkin's Lymphoma and given a dismal prognosis.

Cancerous tumors were behind my ear, on both sides of my neck, in my sternum and abdomen, with a golf-ball-sized tumor fused into my spine at the L-3 level. A team of oncologists recommended a six-cycle regimen of aggressive combination chemotherapy known as MOPP BAPP followed by complete nodal irradiation.

I had been practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism for thirteen years and began to apply the method of chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo in a life-and-death battle with my illness and the side effects of treatment. With the blessing of my doctors, I followed his protocol to the letter and used chanting to bolster my immune system.

I imagined my white blood cells exploding with spiritual energy like the halos of holy light seen in religious paintings. Every morning and evening I would imagine my insides bathed in holy light that would destroy cancer cells and revitalize healthy cells. Four months into my treatment, I became deathly ill.

Suffering from a high fever and compromised immune system, I was hospitalized in an isolation room, unable to continue further treatment. Feeling that death was rapidly approaching, I asked visitors to leave and began to chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo with all the strength I had left, aspiring to crown my life with victory.

Early in the morning of the second day of hospitalization, I had a near-death experience where it seemed I was greeted by thousands of Buddhas who took me on a fantastic journey, "a nirvana of eternal light." After what seemed like a hundred years, but was in actuality only several minutes, I awoke happy and refreshed. My fever had broken and I felt revitalized inside. Two days after this near-death experience, I was given a CT scan that indicated there was no more evidence of cancer. I have been cancer-free and in perfect health since 1987.

The team of doctors who worked on my case was totally impressed not only in my ability to tolerate my treatments but also in my ability to strengthen my immune system through my practice of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. My medical records are currently on file with the Veterans Administration in Hines, Ill. □