

SIGN POSTS: Changing the ‘Weather’ for the Better
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A truly wise man will not be carried away by any of the eight winds: prosperity, decline, disgrace, honor, praise, censure, suffering and pleasure. (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 206)

This was the first passage that I ever studied and chanted about. In it, Nichiren Daishonin teaches Shijo Kingo not to be swayed by superficial ups and downs but to constantly seek self-improvement.

My first district leader gave this passage to me as I was about to finish graduate school and start working as an actor in New York. I remember thinking: “What’s this? I know that I shouldn’t be discouraged by the things that don’t work out in my career — but can’t I at least celebrate my victories?”

At that time, I suffered from deep, debilitating depressions. Being a high-energy person, I covered them well. But still I would always interpret my colleagues’ comments in the worst possible ways, thinking a hurtful meaning was lurking beneath every comment.

As I emerged into the “eight winds” of theater, film and TV work, I came to realize this industry is equivalent to a hurricane! Individuals with more responsibility and decision-making power can openly do and say things that wreak havoc with your well-being. (An article in *Buzz* magazine aptly described these interactions that go beyond impolite as “full frontal rudity.”)

But seeing this reality helped me understand my mission: to change this tendency in the business, starting with my own behavior. With my evolving capability and character, honed by my human revolution, I am standing up with grace and integrity in the face of my sometimes coarse, inhumane industry.

I remember a scientific theory about the possibility of a butterfly in the rain forest positively affecting global weather; in the same way I am determined to have a positive affect on every production I am a part of, in large or small roles, daily changing the “weather” for the better.

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