

**SIGN POSTS: From Illness Arises Faith**  
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**From illness arises the mind that seeks the Way. (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 5, p. 280)**

In 1278, Nichiren Daishonin wrote this in a letter to Myoshin-ama, whose husband was critically ill. He explains to her that her husband's illness has a profound meaning: It has encouraged him to seek enlightenment through the practice of Buddhism. Although I grew up with Buddhism most of my life, like Myoshin-ama and her husband, only illness, when it afflicted one of my best friends, got me to practice.

I was busily preparing for my final year of college when my friend, who went to junior high, high school and college with me, found out he was in an advanced stage of lymphatic cancer. He was given a year to live.

I was so desperate to help him that I sought advice from my chapter chief for the first time. He passionately explained the unlimited power of faith, urging me to introduce my friend to Buddhism. So I started my daily commute to the hospital. Some days I told him about the greatness of Buddhism, which I feigned to be fully convinced of. Other days I said nothing about it. But everyday I prayed strongly for him.

After visiting my friend for some 40 consecutive days, he told me that he had been quietly chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo to the ceiling at night. We started to chant together, as much as his circumstances allowed. He was at first weak and emaciated from radiation and chemotherapy, but gradually his cancer went into remission — eventually complete remission. During this long process, many members from my district encouraged him as if he were their own son. Through this experience, I became convinced of the immense power of the Gohonzon as well as the SGI's humanism.

A few days ago, I received a phone call from my friend. "My wife just had a healthy, beautiful baby girl!" he said. I thought again of the passage "From illness arises the mind that seeks the Way." Because of his illness, both of us learned the Way that leads to absolute fulfillment in life.

**WT**