

SIGN POSTS: No Doubt, No Hesitation
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What we call faith is nothing extraordinary. As a woman cherishes her husband, as a man will give his life for his wife, as parents will not abandon their children, or as a child refuses to leave his mother, so should we put our trust in the Lotus Sutra.... (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 5, p. 303)

I recently visited my brother and his wife. They had just become the proud parents of a baby girl. My niece was only a month old. She cried, she slept, she ate, then she got rid of what she ate and then she slept again. A very uncomplicated life. But from this little life, I learned something.

When I began to practice, I was almost child-like. I chanted to feel better. I didn't know what to expect. I knew that I felt like an awful, angry person and wanted to change that. There was no strategy. I just trusted that if I got in front of the Gohonzon and chanted those words, things would get better. And things did get better. But then something changed. I began to analyze everything and the child-like simplicity of my practice disappeared. Everything became complicated, confusing.

But children's lives are focused. True, they spend most of their time drooling, lying in wet diapers and getting passed between strange relatives. But when they want something, they're clear. When a baby wants to be with his or her mother, you know it. When babies cry, there is no hesitation. They're very direct.

Listening to my niece's soft wailing at 2:00 in the morning, I began to think about my practice. When I pray to the Gohonzon, I should be just as clear. I should face the Gohonzon without doubt or hesitation. As Nichiren Daishonin states over and over, the sound of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo permeates the universe. I simply have to believe it. This is faith.

As we grow older, we sometimes begin to think everything over so much that we lose the spontaneity we were born with. But faith is not a matter of contemplation. It's not a mental process. Faith is a heart-wrenching, almost child-like belief in our prayers. It's a trust that our prayers will be answered.

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