

SIGN POSTS: To Be a Better Son
By SHIN YATOMI
SGI-USA Youth Division Study Committee

In general, it is the son's duty to obey his parents, yet on the path to Buddhahood, not following one's parents may ultimately bring them good fortune. (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 141).

Here Nichiren Daishonin encourages the Ikegami brothers to carry out their faith despite their father's opposition. The Daishonin assures the brothers, who are torn between faith and filial duty, that their unwavering practice will eventually lead their father to happiness.

I share similar circumstances. My atheist father vacillates between disliking and being indifferent toward my practice. My mother, who has practiced with the Nichiren Shoshu priesthood since 1991, detests my association with the SGI.

About a week before Mother's Day, my mother left me a message. I had been sick with severe bronchitis. It was, my mother said, punishment for chanting to the "counterfeit" Gohonzon.

Her message infuriated me. I dragged my weary body to the Gohonzon and started chanting while coughing and gasping for air. How could she say that? Was my sickness really a punishment?

My anger was overwhelming, and fear crept inside. But I said "No" to these voices. I know that this Gohonzon is absolutely true — both from the Daishonin's teaching and my experiences. I have to prove to my mother the greatness of this Gohonzon and of the SGI — through my growth that she cannot deny.

My resolute prayer melted the anger and drove out the fear. It gave me a renewed sense of appreciation that I'm joining millions of other SGI members in their noble struggle to protect and validate the Lotus Sutra (i.e., the Gohonzon) when it is slandered by the priesthood.

The next day, I sent a card to my mother, expressing my thanks and affection for her on Mother's Day. This was a small yet important victory for me. Yes, I grew a little to be a better son than before.

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