

**SIGN POSTS: Precious Friends**  
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**Even the treasures of the entire universe cannot equal the value of a single human life.**  
*(The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, vol. 1, p. 267)*

I recently moved into a larger apartment. Two friends had a place and they were moving, so I could take it after they moved out. The whole situation began and ended within a week, and before I knew it I was in a new home. It's nicer, it's bigger, it's air conditioned — good stuff.

During the very hectic week of the move, every once in a while someone would say that they were chanting that I could get the place. It's something I've heard before — "I'll chant for you" — and I've usually just found it to be polite. Nothing more. I say thank you, forget about it, and go on with whatever I am doing.

But this time, it was different. When I walked into this new domicile, I felt that I was there in large part because of my friends. I didn't think I was going to get the place; I'd basically given up. So I was there not because I had connections with the former tenants. I was there because I had the fortune to have people include me in their prayers.

It is always nice to have things and stuff. Always good to have a nice place to put your things and stuff. But I think it's even nicer to have friends. The Gosho passage above was part of a letter written in response to an offering, a gift of rice. It was Nichiren Daishonin's custom to thank those who supported him. There is a special quality and value that only human life can exhibit, and he was keenly aware of it. If you lined up every jewel in the galaxy side by side, they would not compare to the value of one life. It would seem to follow that friendships among people are just as precious. To practice Buddhism, one can't exist in a vacuum. Interacting with and treasuring others is part of the process.

Have all of my problems ceased because of my new apartment? No. Has this new home lightened my karma? Hardly. But every time I walk into this place, I think of the people that helped to get me here. And how much I owe to those who have chanted for me in the past and never heard me say thanks.

**WT**