

SIGN POSTS: Applying Nichiren Daishonin's Writings to Daily Life Protection Even in Death

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**To be guarded by the Four Heavenly Kings and their retainers is a great honor....
And furthermore, Shakyamuni, Taho and all the other Buddhas of the ten directions
will come of their own accord and watch over one through all the hours of the day
and night, which is an honor beyond the power of words to express. ("Reply to the
Mother of Lord Ueno," *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 7, pp. 243–44)**

During the holidays, I found out that a friend of mine had died a tragic death. I was overwhelmed with grief, and although I tried to be courageous, inside I was suffering. However, I faced the new year with tremendous hope and excitement toward challenging whatever I needed to for my life.

The new year had just started when I heard news of my girlfriend's mother's passing, and again I was faced with news of death. The deaths of these two people were under different circumstances, but the sorrow and suffering that their family and friends were going through were the same.

Growing up, I always feared dying. It was something unknown, and frankly I never really wanted to think about it.

But I learned that, as a Buddhist, in order to live fully, I needed to understand death. And through trying to understand death more, I first came across this Gosho.

It encourages me because Nichiren Daishonin is reassuring the recipient, Ueno-ama Gozen, that definitely her son, who has died, will attain enlightenment. He assures her that the Lotus Sutra is the highest teaching, and that only through faith in this sutra can people attain Buddhahood and be protected by all the Buddhas.

Although these recent deaths sadden me, through my faith I have hope. They are protected and will be reborn again — and this process is “an honor beyond the power of words to express.” Through my prayers I can touch their lives somehow; this is the greatest offering of all that I can give them.

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