

**IN MY LIFE: Always Present**  
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**When one embraces this mandala, all Buddhas and gods will gather around him, accompanying him like a shadow, and protect him day and night.... (“Upholding Faith in the Gohonzon,” *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 5, p. 177)**

Nichiren Daishonin wrote this letter to a woman named Myoshin-ama upon bestowing the Gohonzon on her. Here, he compares the Buddhist gods’ power to that of a parent, thus assuring her that, because of her faith, she and her infant will always be protected.

At times, it is easy to forget that these protective forces are always present. When we chant, we reawaken these protective forces.

I sometimes forget that they are with me. In March, I moved out of an intolerable living situation; things went bad with my roommate. (I am out almost \$1,000 because I committed myself to a sublease without realizing what I was getting into.)

I had to look at myself and see what I needed to change. I realized that there was something wrong with the situation *and* with my life. From the day that things went bad, I chanted an hour every day. My “protection” came in the form of my realizing that I needed to take more responsibility for my life, especially when it comes to money.

Since this internal change, my environment has responded with protection. I was offered a graduate teaching assistantship for the fall at the university I attend. I also moved out, and I began to spend more time with my boyfriend; he recently proposed. I started a great summer job with TWA, too, that would not have been possible if I were still living in the same place.

These experiences remind me that so long as I “embrace this mandala” — that is, practice faith — everything turns into a benefit, one way or another. These benefits showed me that no matter where I live, these protective forces are always present. Especially when I challenge myself.

**WT**