

**IN MY LIFE  
LIFETIME ENDURANCE  
BY LYDIA FORT  
SGI-USA YOUTH DIVISION STUDY COMMITTEE**

**Be diligent in developing your faith until the last moment of your life. Otherwise you will have regrets. For example, the journey from Kamakura to Kyoto takes twelve days. If you travel for eleven but stop with only one day remaining, how can you admire the moon over the capital? No matter what, stay close to the priest who knows the heart of the Lotus Sutra, keep learning from him the principles of Buddhism, and continue your journey of faith. (“Letter to Niike,” *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 1027)**

This passage has been one of my most treasured for many years. In particular, the middle portion, about the trip from Kamakura to Kyoto, has been a touchstone. I could easily relate the undertaking of a long, treacherous journey to various situations in my life where I felt I could not see something through to the end. (For example, the many papers I dread writing in the battle to complete my undergraduate degree.) That journey from Kama-kura to Kyoto helped inspire me to complete things knowing that I would savor the sweet victory of accomplishment.

Recently, I had been feeling discouraged about my seeming inability to overcome an illness that has plagued me since I was a teenager. My doubt and feeling powerless to affect change in my life regarding this illness were draining me.

During the most recent flare-up of my condition, I started down my usual road of “Why hasn’t this changed yet?” I sat down to chant, crying in utter agony to the Gohonzon: “This illness is ruining my life. I can’t let it take control over me.” Deep down, I knew not to give in to negativity. Hadn’t I seen some progress? I would overcome it. I would just have to fight harder. I would be more resolute in my health regime, in chanting Nam-myoho-rence-kyo consistently, in reading Nichiren Daishonin’s writings every day, in connecting more deeply with SGI President Ikeda’s vision for humanity and in developing more compassion for my fellow SGI members.

Rereading the famous Kamakura to Kyoto quote, the words “Be diligent in developing your faith until the last moment of your life” reverberated within me. What hit home was that I needed not just endurance in the face of obstacles but endurance to develop resolute faith over the entire course of my life.

And suddenly it made sense to me that my illness is my great fortune (as I had heard from a senior in faith but couldn’t quite muster up her enthusiasm about). My illness is the key to my human revolution and the way in which I will establish true happiness and a life free of regrets. And isn’t this the purpose of our Buddhist practice?

I think so, and I will continue on in my journey knowing that my victory is assured.