

**The Buddha's Work**  
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**If there is someone, whether man or woman, who in the time after my passing secretly teaches to one person even a single phrase of the Lotus Sutra, let it be known that he is the envoy of the Buddha, sent to carry out the Buddha's work. ("The Pure and Far-reaching Voice," *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 5, pp. 142–43)**

Nichiren Daishonin quotes the Lotus Sutra in this letter written to Shijo Kingo, one of his key disciples. He wrote to Shijo Kingo while he was exiled on Sado Island, explaining in the beginning of the letter that the impact of one person can be immeasurable, like the impact of a ruler on a country. He also states that a ruler's support can greatly affect the prosperity of Buddhism.

How does this concept of one person's impact apply to my life? Years ago, I introduced a friend to Buddhism. She started to chant but said that it didn't work for her. Consequently, she has remained slightly negative about the practice since that time. I became hesitant to talk about Buddhism to friends.

Flash to three years later. Things have changed. I am now a graduate teaching assistant in the religious studies program at the university I attend. I help teach a class called Living Religions of the East, where we explore religions of Asia, such as Buddhism in India, China and Japan, including Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. The students are very open to Buddhism — and I have let my Buddhist beliefs be known to help them understand the material.

I have used my voice to teach these students about Buddhism in a compassionate way. And I've realized that whether the others listen or not, that shouldn't stop me from teaching them about this wonderful practice. We don't teach Buddhism for the result but because it's the right thing to do. This is the spirit of the Buddha, as the Daishonin explains in this passage.

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