

SIGN POSTS: See How It Works
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The nature of cause and effect is like the relationship of flower to fruit. Or it is like the case of a single flame, no bigger than the light of a firefly, which...burns first one blade of grass, then two, then ten, a hundred, a thousand and ten thousand.... A dragon who places one small drop of water in its hands and ascends to the heavens can cause rain to fall upon the major world system. When performed as an offering to the Lotus Sutra, even a small act of goodness produces benefits that are equal in magnitude to these. (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 7, p. 149)

In this letter when Nichiren states that “as an offering to the Lotus Sutra, even a small act of goodness produces benefits that are equal in magnitude to these,” I reflect upon all the activities and meetings I have participated in, including Fife and Drum Corps performances, over the 11 years of my practice. Although I intellectually understand the concept of cause and effect, it is not until I look at what my life was like when I first started practicing that I can really see how it works.

I was a 17-year-old, magenta-haired punk rocker with a lot of attitude — and more seriously, a young person with no real sense of hope or dreams. I realize now that all of my “small acts” over the years have resulted in the rich development of my life and sense of purpose. In the process, too, I have developed my dream of working with art and exhibits — which is what I am now doing!

I also think our individual efforts as Buddhists have a collective effect on society. I have been asked what the SGI — often described as a world peace organization — actually does for world peace. Do we help the homeless? Do we take political action? My response is “Yes and no.” “Yes” as individuals and “No, not really” as an organization. However, as Nichiren teaches in this letter, our individual “small acts” are in the end what secure world peace — just as flowers bear fruit, as causes have effects.

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