

Many in Body, One in Mind (Itai dōshin ji)

[If Hōki-bō, Sado-bō and others, as well as the Atsuhara believers are] united with the spirit of many in body, one in mind (*itai dōshin*), they will achieve everything, whereas, in the case of one in body, many in mind (*dōtai ishin*), they will not accomplish anything. This has been proven in more than 3,000 volumes of Chinese non-Buddhist literature....Although there are many people in Japan, they will find it difficult to accomplish anything because of disunity. In contrast, I believe that despite their small numbers, if Nichiren and his followers have the spirit of many in body, one in mind, they certainly will accomplish their great purpose and the Lotus Sutra will spread. No matter how numerous evils may be, they will never defeat the single truth. (Gosho, p. 1389)

Explanation of the Gosho Passage

When “many in body, one in mind” (*itai dōshin*) occurs, many things can be successfully accomplished, but when there is “one in body, many in mind” (*dōtai ishin*) nothing can be achieved. This is established in more than 3,000 volumes of non-Buddhist texts.

Although the people of Japan are numerous, they find it difficult to successfully accomplish anything, since they are “one in body, many in mind.” Nichiren and his followers are “many in body, one in mind,” so although they are few in number, they are able to achieve great things. I have the conviction that, without fail, the Lotus Sutra (the true Buddhism of the Three Great Secret Laws) will be propagated. No matter how substantial, evil forces can never be victorious over a single truth.

Explanation of the Major Terms

- 1) **Many in body, one in mind (*itai dōshin*):** Many people joining forces to unite by upholding one mind, even though there are many different bodies.
- 2) **One in body, many in mind (*dōtai ishin*):** Although people may appear to be similar, they possess differences in mind and thoughts. Also, people who belong to the same organization but possess scattered, disjointed minds.
- 3) **More than 3,000 volumes of Chinese non-Buddhist literature:** A large variety of scriptures that are not associated with Buddhism.
- 4) **The single truth:** True Buddhism (the Three Great Secret Laws) expounded by Nichiren Daishonin.

Background and Summary

This Gosho was written in the eighth month of the second year of Kō'an (1279), when Nichiren Daishonin was 58 years of age and two months before he revealed the Dai-Gohonzon of the High Sanctuary of the Essential Teaching. He wrote this letter in Minobu and addressed it to Nanjō Shichirō Jirō Tokimitsu, the lord of the Fuji-Ueno region of Suruga Province (currently the entire area of the Head Temple).

He begins the Gosho by thanking Tokimitsu for his offerings of winter garments and coins. He then states that faith and practice based on many in body, one in mind (*itai dōshin*) are necessary, in order to overcome the persecutions frequently encountered by the Hokkeko believers of Atsuwara. Next, he explains that slanders against true Buddhism that are rampant in society have no chance of being victorious over the true Law. Finally, he concludes the Gosho by praising Tokimitsu for the loyal service he has offered him until now.

Reference from Gosho passages and High Priest guidances

On the Heritage of the Ultimate Law of Life and Death (Shōji ichidaiji kechimiyaku-shō)

All disciples and believers of Nichiren should chant Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo with the spirit of many in body, one in mind, overcoming all differences among themselves, just like fish being inseparable from the water in which they swim. This is called the Heritage of the ultimate Law of life and death. This is called the heritage of the ultimate of life and death. This is also what Nichiren is trying to propagate now in the Latter Day of the Law. When you are so united, even the great aspiration for kōsen-rufu can be fulfilled without fail. (Gosho, p. 514)

Directions of High Priest Nichinyo Shonin

First and foremost, Nichiren Shoshu temples are established as fortresses of the Law to propagate the great Law in the various regions. When we understand their significance and objective with our very lives, we can fathom the significance of their existence and their essential mission. Above all else, the unity between priesthood and laity and the absolute solidarity based on many in body, one in mind are supremely important for the temples to actually demonstrate their true function as temples. The kōtō, the vice-kōtō, the kanji, and the entire membership must exert their utmost efforts to propagate the Myoho-Renge-Kyo, in solid unity under the leadership of the teacher priest, based on many in body, one in mind. As a result, our great objective of absolute worldwide kōsen-rufu can become a reality without fail.

...By contrast, in the following passage from the *Letter to Ben-kō Nisshō* (Ben dono-goshōsoku) the Daishonin teaches us that nothing can be accomplished when the minds of individuals are scattered and dispersed:

Although I have been praying emphatically with all my might, there is no sign of proof up to now. This seems to me that some of you have discarded your faith. (Gosho, p. 998)

The Daishonin indicates that he has prayed so hard that he almost crushed his brain, but the effect of his efforts is not manifested. He surmises that the reason is because there are “some of you who have discarded your faith.” In other words, there is someone whose mind is characterized by “different bodies and different minds”. The Daishonin explains in today’s passage that “being many in body, one in mind will enable people to be successful at all things. However, being one in body, many in mind, they cannot expect to achieve anything.”

In fact, this unity based on many in body, one in mind is the key to a successful victory, as stated, “With the spirit of many in body, one in mind (*itai dōshin*), they will achieve everything, whereas, in the case of one in body, many in mind (*dōtai ishin*), they will not accomplish anything.” However, we must understand that unity based on many in body, one in mind, does not simply indicate a close friendship or a buddy relationship. It actually represents a condition in which every single Hokkeko member, who possesses a personality, appearance, and form distinct from others, focuses on the single objective of kōsen-rufu and is of the same mind and struggles together. (Dainichiren, June 2016)