

BUDDHIST CONCEPT: Many in Body, One in Mind
Individuality + a Great Goal
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In and of itself, the concept *many in body, one in mind* sounds easy to apply. Although we are all different, we just have to unite in our hearts for the great goal of kosen-rufu.

But it's not that easy.

When individuals interact with one another, there can be many boundaries and barriers that interfere with effective communication, not to mention progress. Many times I face tasks that require me to work with several types of people — people who have differing views based on their background, culture and upbringing. Cultural and ethnic diversity definitely play a role.

As Nichiren Daishonin writes, “If *itai doshin* prevails among the people, they will achieve all their goals, whereas in *dotai ishin* (one in body, different in mind), they can achieve nothing remarkable” (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 153). If I allow barriers to come between myself and others, nothing remarkable will happen, according to Nichiren Daishonin. My question then becomes how to eliminate barriers.

I firmly believe that eliminating them starts with us. We each have unique ideas about how things should be done or how different situations should be dealt with, but through sincere daimoku to the Gohonzon, we can combine forces for the greater good of everyone. “All disciples and believers of Nichiren should chant Nam-myoho-rence-kyo with one mind,” Nichiren Daishonin says, “transcending all differences among themselves to become as inseparable as fish and the water in which they swim” (MW-1, 23).

Ultimately, we are all working toward our individual happiness and the happiness of others. Only because kosen-rufu is a great goal, only because it requires our purehearted desire to change ourselves for the better and relieve others' suffering, can we unite the way the Daishonin describes. When we combine our hearts and determinations into one, we rapidly grow in our lives, and our districts develop, too. We have people from all walks of life in our districts; they work in different fields in society but come together with one common goal in mind. As powerful as one individual is with the heart of a lion, imagine how powerful are many people with the same heart!

Uniting for kosen-rufu, of course, does not mean suppressing our individuality or our feelings. If we do that, we might create something that looks like strong unity but is actually weak. Even when we have the same goal, we'll never all agree on everything, nor should we. By *one in mind* the Daishonin did not mean that we should all think alike but that we should put our hearts together.

The extent to which I can commit myself to applying this concept to my practice will determine how much I can grow.

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