

**BACK TO THE BASICS  
MANY IN BODY, ONE IN MIND  
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All disciples and lay supporters of Nichiren should chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo with the spirit of many in body but one in mind,” Nichiren Daishonin writes, “transcending all differences among themselves to become as inseparable as fish and the water in which they swim” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 217).

Is the Daishonin asking us here to discard our individuality and participate in SGI activities as if the organization were the Borg collective? Not at all.

The Daishonin celebrates the uniqueness of cherry, plum, peach and damson blossoms—the uniqueness of each individual. And the SGI has long celebrated the power of a united yet highly diverse group of people. This is why SGI President Ikeda is constantly reminding us that every person has a unique role to play, one for which only he or she is qualified.

Discovering one’s purpose in life, that mission and identity—and then striving with all your heart to share those gifts with society—is, after all, what living an effective, happy life is all about!

The human body is a living monument to the powers of synergy (perhaps the closest English equivalent to *itai doshin*), the mysterious ability of complex systems to manifest qualities that transcend the specific properties of their component parts. Our present human form is the product of millions of years of evolution.

But large-scale human societies have existed for less than 10,000 years, a mere instant of geological time. Religion, commerce and politics are common methods of uniting individuals into a larger, more effective and robust “organism.”

The Daishonin’s deepest wish, and the goal of the SGI, is to help all people of the world discover their shared heritage of humanity. We do this by promoting peace, culture and education; by introducing others to the practice of Buddhism, and most important, by living the most humane, compassionate life each of us can possibly live.