

Question: What is *Itai doshin*?

Itai doshin means to be of the same mind, even though we are many in body. We all have different faces, characters, and talents. No one is the same. This is the meaning of “many in body.” When we all have the same goal and work together to achieve it, this signifies “same mind.” The Daishonin states the following in the Gosho, “On *Itai Doshin*”:

If *itai doshin* (many in body, one in mind) 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.

(Gosho, p.1389; MW-1, p. 153)

Our individual power is very small. However, when people who have different talents or characters move together with one mind toward achieving a single goal, they are able to produce tremendous power, and any hardship can be overcome. This is what we call *itai doshin*.

What is the purpose of our *itai doshin* in Nichiren Shoshu? This is the crucial point. Even if many people unite and produce tremendous power, if the objective is incorrect, then such unity is meaningless. When we unite with many people toward the wrong goal, we are not manifesting the true significance of *itai doshin*.

Let’s consider the meaning of *itai doshin* from the standpoint of our Buddhist practice. The great goal of Nichiren Shoshu practitioners is to spread the Daishonin’s Buddhism throughout the world (kosen-rufu). When the priesthood and laity cooperate and practice together with one mind, based on upholding faith in the Dai-Gohonzon and following the guidance of High Priest Nichinyo Shonin, then true *itai doshin* is realized.

In order to advance toward kosen-rufu, we must do Gongyo consistently, chant Daimoku sincerely, and take action to do shakubuku, in order to spread the teachings of the Daishonin’s true Buddhism.

Each temple conducts Shodaikai sessions led by the chief priest. Do you participate? If one thinks, “I am chanting at home, so I do not need to go to the temple,” this is a big mistake. The many members of the temple must work together and unite with the chief priest, aiming toward one goal—kosen-rufu. The Daishonin states:

Though numerous, the Japanese people will find it difficult to accomplish anything, because they are divided in spirit. On the contrary, I believe that although Nichiren and his followers are few in number, because they act in *itai doshin*, they will accomplish their great mission of propagating the Lotus Sutra.

(*Gosho*, p. 1389; *MW-1*, pp. 153-154)

Propagating the Daishonin's Buddhism all over the world truly is a daunting task. Therefore, all the Nichiren Shoshu priests and lay believers truly must achieve *itai doshin*, based on the guidance of High Priest, Nichinyo Shonin. If we do this, we will be able to achieve kosen-rufu without fail, no matter how small our numbers are in the beginning. How do we unite our minds as one? We can achieve this when many of us gather at the temple and chant together with the chief priest.

Itai doshin is extremely important not only in Buddhism, but also in our daily life. Sports events or music performances are good examples. If the players on the team or the musicians in the orchestra are separate in mind, the results will not be satisfactory. It is necessary to cooperate together with one mind in order to be successful. Everyone wants to win. If we do our best, however, that is good enough. The fact that we work hard together is the true treasure. Please remember the Daishonin's words:

If *itai doshin* (many in body, one in mind) prevails among the people, they will achieve all their goals...

(*ibid.*)