

BACK TO THE BASICS
THE ONENESS OF MIND AND BODY
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The field of psychosomatic medicine today is continuing to shed new light on the profound interrelationship of mind and body. Studies have proven that emotional factors give rise to physical changes in the body. At the same time, physical stresses can greatly affect a person's emotional state.

The philosophy of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism goes further to reveal this relationship as the oneness of mind and body. The word *oneness* here is translated from the Japanese Buddhist term *funi*, meaning two but not two. The idea is that mind and body are two in their phenomenal aspect but one in their essential aspect or essence.

Perhaps we can understand this inseparable unity of matter and spirit more deeply through the analogy of an iceberg floating in the ocean. We could think of the tip of the iceberg showing above the water's surface and the invisible large mass below the water as two separate phenomena, each being part of the same iceberg and functioning in a different way.

The unseen mass below, responding to undercurrents and exerting a constant influence on the ice above, would correspond to the mind. The ice sticking out from the water would correspond to the body, its physical appearance revealing continuous changes affected by whatever is happening below. Part of the iceberg is below the water, and part is above it, but they are in fact the same iceberg.

It is the same thing with human beings. Our mind is invisible. But behind our physical appearance, our mind is generating various forces both conscious and unconscious that are reflected in continuous physical changes. Our mind and body are really different expressions of the same individual self.

Moreover, just as the iceberg's surface above the water and mass below are inseparable from the sea itself, our mind and body is an individual expression of and inseparable from the greater life of the entire universe.

Through our practice of the Daishonin's Buddhism, we can harmonize our mind and body with the boundless sea of our total environment. We are able to connect with the underlying, all-inclusive essence of the universe, the Mystic Law, and express it in our daily lives as an awesome fighting spirit to win happiness for ourselves and others. "This fighting spirit, this unswerving commitment," SGI President Ikeda explains, "makes a person's body and mind, a person's life, healthy" (Feb. 2 *World Tribune*, p. 10).

The Daishonin's teaching of the oneness of mind and body is, then, a most profound teaching of human health. In his "Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings," the Daishonin explains that in Buddhist practice, "devotion of one's life means both the physical law of life and the spiritual law of life. The ultimate principle reveals that these two laws are an inseparable aspect of every single life" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 708).

This supreme principle was actualized by the Daishonin in the form of the Gohonzon, which he inscribed for all people's happiness. By chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo with faith in the Gohonzon, we are able to draw on the infinite Mystic Law that underlies the microcosm of our being and the entire universe, thereby infusing our mind and body with Buddhahood, the most powerful harmony and joy.