

**SONG IN PRAISE
OF NATURE**

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Prayer to Visualize Grand Harmony Between Nature and Human Beings, Song in Praise of Nature by Masanobu Taniguchi

Song of Water and the Forests by Seicho Taniguchi

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**PRAYER TO VISUALIZE
GRAND HARMONY
BETWEEN NATURE AND
HUMAN BEINGS**

In the True Image of the world created by God, nature and human beings are always in harmony as one. Nature supports and sustains human beings, gives them ways in which to express themselves, and gives them joy. Human beings are grateful for this, love nature, nurture it, and make it abundant. There is no gap and no strife between them nor is there even distinction or difference between the two.

The Japanese calligraphy on the preceding page by Rev. Masanobu Taniguchi, reads EMMAN GUSOKU MIMYO; English translation - *Harmonious, Complete, Exquisite and Delicate.*

The physical body that has been given to human beings to express themselves is made of the same material composition as nature which surrounds it. So, human beings get oxygen from nature and make it energy, drink water and make it their lubricating oil, and can assimilate food to maintain and grow their physical bodies. Blessed are those who can visualize the wisdom, love, and life of God in this flow of the material world, deep within the circulation of molecules and atoms. Material things are the results; God is the source. God saw that True Image of all living in perfect and

complete harmony, sustaining one another, and proclaimed it to be “very good.”

To not look at the True Image, and to view the “individual” as reality and the center of the world, is delusion. When they focus on an “individual’s loss and gain,” human beings lose sight of the Grand Harmony between themselves and nature. It is foolish for human beings to note deficiencies and inadequacies in nature and think of nature as being an obstacle, try to place it under their control, and change its composition and use it for their own advantage. Looking at

a part of nature as being hostile and destroying it is shameful. By doing this, human beings lose their sense of oneness with nature, and cause the decay of nature's blessings, including that of the power of self-healing, and even lose their reason for living.

If human beings think of nature as being their enemy, as a reflection of that deluded mind, conditions then appear from nature to be treated as being hostile. Though human beings may chip away at the mountains, cut down forests, dam rivers, fill up lakes and oceans, and focus only on prosperity for themselves

alone, that is not God's will. That is a failed creative work that does not in the least bit resemble the True Image-world that God proclaimed to be "very good." The time shall always come when that which is not the True Image shall face destruction and ruin. That is the collapse of that which is false and the self-destruction of karma.

However, we must not consider this to be "God's wrath." We must not look at the tsunami traveling at unfathomable speed, destroying vast expanses of farmland as it pushes its way forward and think of it as the

actions of God, filled with anger and fury. God does not destroy mountains to fill the seas. He does not make the beaches into agricultural land. He does not build factories. He does not make airports or nuclear power plants. They are all acts of human beings thinking of their own profits without considering the extinction of plants and animals. Earthquakes hitting the Japanese archipelago and the area in and around New Zealand are a part of the movements of the earth's crust which have happened repeatedly since ancient times, and are definitely not anomalous conditions. They

appear to be so because of the narrow outlook of human beings, the timeframes of their thinking being so short, and because they are so self-centered.

There is no way that human beings only will prosper and live eternally abundantly while driving many living things to extinction and destroying the giving and sustaining system within nature. The composition of the world of Grand Harmony is such that all living species flourish only when they help, supplement and complement, and give to one another. Human beings not recognizing that,

and instead thinking of other living things as “tools,” or “the enemy,” or moreover, even as a “hindrance,” are changing a world that is by nature stable into an unstable one. Human beings need to learn from that “failed creative work.”

A major earthquake is not the “wrath of God”; it is a “lesson from the Bodhisattva Who Reflects the Sounds of the World.” It is when we no longer have them that we realize just how many blessings nature has given us. We are being taught that no matter how many man-made structures, fields, harbors,

roads, power lines, Internet systems we build, if we ignore and neglect nature’s exquisite and expansive structure and energy and make the foolish mistake of trampling it down and violating it, life in a civilized world will be destroyed instantly. The Bodhisattva Who Reflects the Sounds of the World, who is our true nature, is teaching us human beings, “Be more humble,” “Realize that you are a part of nature,” “Restore the you who is one with nature.”

Do not think of the unfortunate who were victims of disasters as having touched upon the “wrath

of God.” God is the Creator of the perfect, harmonious True-Image Pure Land so there is no need whatsoever for Him “to get angry.” When humankind cannot awaken from its deep delusion and it is no longer possible to stop global warming and climate change that comes from the continuing destruction of nature, there is a need for something or someone to be the catalyst to awaken people from their sleep. Artists who continue to create their artwork relying on their addiction to drugs are unable to recognize the faults in their work. That is when someone who will say emphatically, “This

piece is wrong!” will appear. When this continued cry from the “voice of God within” of one or two individuals does not reach many people, it becomes necessary for a group to join in a chorus to call attention to this—to say, “This work needs to be redrawn; it needs to be redone!” Those who have expressed the sorrow or the disasters of the phenomenal world have carried out that very precious and noble role. These people, indeed, are our conscience, and are the spokespersons of a *child of God’s* true nature. They are Bodhisattvas Who Reflect the Sounds of the World.

With humility, we now listen to the precious teachings of the Bodhisattva Who Reflects the Sounds of the World, and along with expressing our heartfelt gratitude and appreciation, with new resolve, we proceed towards the expression of the True Image of the world created by God. Dear God, thank you very much.

(March 17, 2011)

SONG IN PRAISE OF NATURE

One day, the Angel
Emerged from the Palace of
Crystal in the sky
And descended into the
green forest.
The forest was mist-wrapped
and penetrated by
the rays of the morning sun
with its many bands of light
spread wide.
The high and low chirping of
the birds
Resounded through the forest.

The Angel sang in praise of the
world of nature —

“Though God is the
sole existence,
He has given birth to this varied,
diverse and
infinitely abundant nature.
Nature on the earth
vividly reflects
The state of the individual being
the totality,
And the totality being
the individual
Thereby revealing God’s
infinite aspects.
Although the forest may seem to
be a single mass of life,
If we go to the forest and
look carefully,
It is the abode of countless
living species,

The place for the coexistence of
diverse forms of life,
And the stage for
mutual improvement.
All living species,
Give to one another,
Support one another.
Though the species compete
with one another,
Even in harsh circumstances,
They are rich in movement
and change,
Extending a beautiful harmony
to every corner of the forest.
As if expressing the infinite
of God,
Each living thing
Spreads into its surroundings,
Seeks to move upward,

Goes down into the depths,
Moves great distances,
Alters its form,
And while imitating
 other species,
Also manifests its originality.
These ecosystems are spheres
 for the mutual prosperity
 of all life,
And while maintaining
 their individuality,
They form countless cooperatives
Completely covering the surface
 of the earth.
This is truly the manifestation of
 the infinite within
 the finite.
And the state of the finite
 coexisting within the infinite.

In this way, God's idea
 and creation
Is inexhaustible, no matter how
 much is brought forth,
And uncountable, no matter how
 we may try."

After the Angel sang,
A cherub appeared from
 the forest
Looked up at the Angel
 and asked —
"My Teacher,
The magnificence, diversity
 and infinite mystery
 of the natural world often
 overwhelms me.
Yet are not these
 diverse ecosystems

the product of desperate
struggles and fights?”

The Angel replied —
“I say to you,
Do not be misled by
such terms as
struggle for existence and
survival of the fittest.
These terms would lead to
the thinking
That *there is death for defeat
in the struggle*
and *one is the fittest by
annihilating another.*
Such principles of cruelty
and heartlessness
Cannot make living things of
the natural world flourish.

Such naive and simple views
Cannot explain the diversity
of the habitats
of living things
Or the multitude of the modes of
existence.
Life is the expression of God’s
infiniteness.
Life manifests in every
environment on the earth,
Scientists report with surprise.
In hot springs that exceed one
hundred degrees Celsius,
In permafrost well below
zero degrees,
In the bitterly acidic runoff water
from mines,
‘Extremophile’ micro-
organisms thrive.

In the human body, even in
stomach acid that breaks
food down,
And in the body of a termite also,
Know that there are
numerous microorganisms
That help their hosts and coexist
with them.
Living things do not kill
one another.
By giving life to one another and
developing new habitats,
They create diverse ecosystems.
Biologists also recognize this.
Giving life to one another and
creating new habitats
Are indeed expressions of God's
love and infiniteness.
If it were not for this,

The various and diverse
living things
That have evolved over a
long time
Could not have prospered on
the earth.
You must now know,
In the four billion six hundred
million years
since the earth was born,
All life phenomena came forth
from nothingness,
Starting as unicellular organisms,
And as the multicellular
organisms further branched
and evolved,
They expanded their abode from
seas to the lands,
From the swamps to dry land,

To the tropics, temperate zones
and frigid areas.

Their journey to establish
strongholds for life
to flourish

Was not a process of
incessant struggle among
individual lives.

It was not the result of a blind
struggle for existence
between individual lives.

I say to you,
Awaken from the delusion that
peace is born from conflict.

Be rid of the delusion that good
is born of evil.

The birth of phenomenal life
on earth and the process
of prosperity

Is like a calligraphic work and
painting drawn by Real Life,
Is like a symphony performed by
the Grand Life.

I say to you,
Awaken from the delusion
that sees things of
dissimilar shapes and forms
as being *different*.

Remember the teaching,
‘Outward appearances
are no more than the shadow
of one’s beliefs.’*1

The truth that ‘Every one of the
countless souls are also
reflections of the one Spirit
of God’*2

Must extend to all life.
When you know that all lives are

brothers and sisters,
It will be clear that the process
of the flourishing of life on
the earth
Is the expression of God's
Wisdom, Love and Life."
At this moment, the cherub said
in return —
"Even so, my Teacher,
That the strong live on by
feeding on the weak
Cannot be seen as an exception
but as the rule of the world
of living things."
The Angel replied —
"Do not think that the nature that
appears before your eyes
is God's creation.
Do not mistake phenomena

for Reality.
Do not forget the teaching,
'All that you can perceive
through your senses are merely
shadows of the mind
and not the principal Reality.'^{*3}
The workings of nature that
appear on the earth
Are not God's Creation *Itself*,
But no more than the projection
of your beliefs
Upon sensing only a portion of
God's Creation.
That is why it is taught,
'The senses perceive nothing
but the shadow of beliefs.'^{*4}
I say to you,
When you see the appearance of
the killing of one another

And the helping of one another
in the phenomenal world,
You must not think that
you have seen the totality
of God's Creation.
It is taught that in the world of
God's Creation
'Good is the only power,
Good is the only life,
Good is the only Reality.'^{*5}
It is when your beliefs do not
agree with God's Creation
That you see living things
preying upon one another.
When the mind of *giving life*
to one another
expands within you
And reflects in your daily lives,
The *giving life to one another*

also expands
in the world of living things."

When the Angel had thus taught,
The cherub bowed to the Angel
And further asked,
"I certainly understood the
meaning of the teaching
that the environment is
a shadow of the mind.
If the natural environment is also
the reflection of
the mind of humankind,
The quarrelling mind of people
Must manifest as the confusion
of the natural world.
Nevertheless, my Teacher,
Although human beings, who
are 'children of God,'

might not quarrel with
one another
And continue at length their
peaceful economic relations,
Why is it that the destruction of
nature increases
all the more?"
The Angel replied —
"Human beings are still in the
process of expanding
their consciousness.
They have yet to open their eyes
to the True Image of 'nature
is I' and 'I am nature.'
Since they are caught up
by individuality
And cannot see the totality,
They are under the illusion that
their worth increases

By battling with nature
And taking from her.
Moreover, there are still many
people who aggrandize
their desires
And find it difficult to
manage them."
The cherub asked again,
"Have not the consciences and
desires of individuals
Been given to them by God?
If the cause for nature's
destruction is found in both
these things,
Why has God not taken them
both away?"
The Angel answered —
"You must not forget that God
made human beings

In His own 'image.'
Since God is All of everything,
People, who are His 'image,'
 have been given everything.
It is through people that God
Puts all things in their
 proper place
And manifests the order of grand
 harmony upon the earth.
Therefore the consciousness of
 the individual
Is developed to the highest
 degree in human beings.
I say to you,
Never forget the greatest
 characteristic of a
 human being.
Of all the living things on
 the earth

A human being is foremost in the
 ability to think about others.
Isn't that why Buddhism
Teaches 'the Four Immeasurable
 Minds are the bodhisattva's
 Pure Land'?
Jesus Christ, too, teaches,
'Verily I say unto you,
 Inasmuch as ye have done it
 unto one of the least of these
 my brethren,
 ye have done it unto me.'
The feeling of the oneness of
 oneself and others
Is indeed what makes a human
 being a human being.
The Four Immeasurable Minds
 are God's Love
And proof that 'human beings

are children of God.””

The cherub again asked in
return —

“My Teacher, are not
God’s Love

And the Four Immeasurable
Minds incompatible with
individual consciousness?”

The Angel taught:

“The purpose of
individual consciousness

Is to know oneself to the
fullest measure.

It is to become aware of your
original nature
that is a ‘child of God.’

Many people

Deceive their own true feelings,

And just as others tell them
to do,

They want,

They take action,

They grow bored.

Those who do not correctly
know themselves

That is to say, those who believe
‘I am a physical body’

Think that each physical body is
separate from that of the other,
And can never be one.

They fear a clash of interests and
isolation,

They follow blindly and
are fickle.

They reflect their fickleness
on others

And try to evade their

own responsibility.
Yet those who know themselves
to the fullest measure
Hear the voice of God
within themselves.
Since they know that in God
there is no 'other,'
They can think about others
as though the others
were themselves.
In other words,
They are conscious of the fact
that the self and others
are one in God.”

The cherub asked again:
“Nevertheless, how can the
inexhaustible desire of
a person

Be compatible with the
awareness of the oneness of
oneself and others?”
The Angel answered:
“Desire maintains and develops
the physical body.
It is the common 'flame' of
living things.
It is the 'flame of life.'
Without this, living things would
not be able to live on this earth.
Without this,
Human beings also could not
maintain and develop their
physical bodies.
I say to you,
The true purpose of a human
being is not the maintenance
and development of the

physical body.
It is to manifest the glory of God
on earth.
The physical body is merely
a tool to express our Divinity.
As long as our desires express
the Divinity,
They are the 'flames of life' that
sustain God's glory.
Depending upon the skill
of control,
the flame brings about either
good or bad results.
When the flame of a jet engine is
properly controlled,
We quickly traverse immensities
and arrive at our destination.
However, should the flame
Exceed the engine's control

and explode,
Death and destruction would
visit us immediately.
Therefore, I say to you,
Do not forget to properly control
your desires.
Make your desires
Subordinate to the goal of
expressing the Divine.
Do not confuse your desires for
your true mind.
Our desires burn brightly
Because we think that we are
lacking in something
And we attempt to make amends
for that feeling of lack.
That is to say,
Desires arise from the delusion
of not

Knowing your true nature of
a ‘child of God.’
You are children of God,
children of Buddha.
Freely control the ‘flame of life’
And use it for the purpose of
God who resides within.
And then,
Press on to realize your
inner ideal.
At that moment,
Your innermost ‘true mind’
will be filled with
deep satisfaction,
And God’s voice will whisper
to you,
‘Well done, Well done.’
In this way, when human
beings elevate

their consciousness
And come to see God, who is
deep within,
as being their ‘real self,’
The struggle between nature and
human beings will vanish
And the order of grand harmony
will appear on the earth.”

When the Angel had thus taught,
The mist shrouding the forest
quietly floated away.
Bathed in the bright sunshine,
The leaves of the trees all shone
with light.
The birds flew high in the skies.
Their colorful coats glistened,
And the sounds of their birdsong
Receded quietly and slowly into

the sky.
This forest that brims with life
and knows no want
Gave expression to the peace
and prosperity
of the world of God.

(End of the Song of Praise)

*May the True Image of all
living beings be manifested and
the World of Grand Harmony of
Nature and Human Beings be
realized through the merits of
this Song of Praise.*

*1 Masaharu Taniguchi, "Seikyo Tenshi no Kotoba," p. 11.

*2 *Ibid.*, p. 8.

*3 Masaharu Taniguchi, "Seikyo Kanro no Hou," p. 13.

*4 *Ibid.*, p. 12.

*5 *Ibid.*, pp. 42-43.

Source: Masaharu Taniguchi, *Kanro no Hou, Tenshi no Kotoba* [Holy Sutra Combined Ed.] (Nippon Kyobunsha, 2002)

SONG OF WATER AND THE FORESTS

Seicho Taniguchi

1.

Winds begin to blow,
And it starts to rain,
From deep within the mountains,
Trickling down along the rocks,
Flowing, streaming forth
Water clean and pure,
Nourishing the forests,
Satiating rice fields,

People and insects,
Frogs, and birds,
Everything with life,
It sustains and it supports,
Becoming the rivers,
Flowing into the seas,
Giving strength and power,
To the whales and to the fish.

With the very great
Power of the sun
Shining on eternally,
It becomes gathering clouds,
Typhoons and
Hurricanes,
Becomes the heavy rains,
And the rivers vast and large

Never-endingly,
Everywhere,
Water goes on flowing,
Always, never ceasing
Filled with gratitude we are.

2.

It begins to rain,
Trees grow lush and thick,
Grow abundant, rich in fruit,
Animals are nurtured.
Oh, the clean and pure,
Water and the sky,
Give so richly, abundantly.
The leaves wither and fall,

Continue to create
Through the years,
Bountiful, fertile, rich land
Sustains, supports all things,
Though they may be felled,
Saying not a thing,
Giving strength and power
To the people and animals.

With the very great
Power of the sun
Shining on eternally,
Forests grow so very thick,
Bearing typhoons,
Monsoons,
Bearing heavy rains.
And the stormy winds,

Never-endingly,
Everywhere,
The refreshing winds of green,
Always, never ceasing,
Filled with gratitude we are.