SONG IN PRAISE
OF NATURE

MASANOBU TANIGUCHI

SEICHO-NO-IE
INTERNATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
8240-2103, Nishiide Oizumi-cho,
Hokuto city, Yamanashi,
409-1501 Japan
The Japanese calligraphy on the preceding page by Rev. Masanobu Taniguchi, reads EMMAN GUSOKU MIMYO; English translation - Harmonious, Complete, Exquisite and Delicate.

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 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,
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’ microorganisms 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.’
The truth that ‘Every one of the countless souls are also reflections of the one Spirit of God’
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.’

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 consciousness 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.

*2 Ibid., p. 8.
*4 Ibid., p. 12.
*5 Ibid., pp. 42-43.
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.