Gosho Theme : Oneness of Life and Environment

**Setting the context**

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*Esho Funi (* non-duality of life and its environment. )

The principle that life and its environment, though two seemingly distinct phenomena, are essentially non-dual; they are two integral phases of a single reality.

In the Japanese term *eshō-funi*, *eshō* is a compound of *shōhō*, meaning life or a living being, and *ehō*, its environment. *Funi*, meaning “not two,” indicates oneness or non-duality.

It is short for *nini-funi*, which means “two (in phenomena) but not two (in essence).

*Hō* of *shōhō* and *ehō* means reward or effect.

It indicates that “life” constitutes a subjective self that experiences the effects of its past actions, and “its environment” is an objective realm in which individuals’ karmic rewards find expression.

Each living being has its own unique environment. The effects of karma appear in oneself and in one’s objective environment, because self and environment are two integral aspects of an individual.

Foundation

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*The Treatise on the Great Perfection of Wisdom* by Nāgārjuna (c. 150–250) introduces the concept of the three realms of existence

which views life from three different standpoints and explains the manifestation of individual lives in the real world.

These three are

The realm of the five components of life [ The five components are form, perception, conception, volition, and consciousness.]

The realm of living beings

Each as a temporary combination of these components and

the realm of the environment

The realm of the five components of life [ The five components are form, perception, conception, volition, and consciousness.]

Form means the physical aspect of life and includes the five sense organs—eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body—with which one perceives the external world.

Perception is the function of receiving external information through the six sense organs (the five sense organs plus the “mind,” which integrates the impressions of the five senses).

Conception is the function of creating mental images and concepts out of what has been perceived.

Volition is the will that acts on the conception and motivates action.

Consciousness is the cognitive function of discernment that integrates the components of perception, conception, and volition.

Form represents the physical aspect of life, while perception, conception, volition, and consciousness represent the spiritual aspect.