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oneness of life and its environment [依正不二]

二] (**Jpn** *eshō-funi*): Also, 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. *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 realm of living beings, each as a temporary combination of these components, and the realm of the environment. T’ien-t’ai (538–597) included this concept in his doctrine of three thousand realms in a single moment of life. According to Miao-lo’s *Annotations on “The Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sutra,”* two of these three realms—the realm of the five components and the realm of living beings—represent “life,” and, naturally, the realm of the environment represents “environment” in terms of the principle of oneness of life and its environment. These three realms exist in a single moment of life and are inseparable from one another. Therefore, a living being and its environment are non-dual in their ultimate reality. Nichiren (1222–1282) writes in his letter *On Omens*: “The ten directions are the ‘environment,’ and living beings are ‘life.’ To illustrate, environment is like the shadow, and life, the body. Without the body, no shadow can exist, and without life, no environment. In the same way, life is shaped by its environment” (644). He also writes in *On Attaining Buddhahood in This Lifetime*: “If the minds of living beings are impure, their land is also impure, but if their minds are pure, so is their land. There are not two lands, pure or impure in themselves. The difference lies solely in the good or evil of our minds” (4).

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