

Supreme Master Ching Hai

A Master from the Himalayas

Three-time invited lecturer for the United Nations

Recipient of the World Peace Award and the World Spiritual Leadership Award



Live Our Lives With Love And Wisdom
Be Veg, Go Green, Save The Planet

A collection of spiritual teachings by
Supreme Master Ching Hai



I do not belong to Buddhism or Catholicism. I belong to the Truth and I preach the Truth. You may call it Buddhism, Catholicism, Taoism, or whatever you like. I welcome all!

Since the ancient time there is always a way to go back to the kingdom of God, there is always a way to see God.

I dream that the whole world will become peaceful. I dream that all the killing will stop. I dream that all the children will walk in peace and harmony. I dream that all the nations will shake hands with each other, protect each other and help each other. I dream that our beautiful planet will not be destroyed. It took billions of years to produce this planet and it's so beautiful, so wonderful. I dream it will continue, but in peace, beauty, and love. Yes, that is my dream.

**Contents and original words in this book are permeated with
grace and blessings of Supreme Master Ching Hai**
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A little message:

In speaking of God, or the supreme spirit, Master instructs us to use original non-sexist terms to avoid the argument about whether God is a She or a He.

She + He = Hes (as in Bless).
 Her + Him = Hirm (as in Firm).
 Hers + His = Hiers (as in Dear).

Example: When God wants, Hes makes things happen according to Hiers will to suit Hirmself.

 As a creator of artistic designs as well as a spiritual Teacher, Supreme Master Ching Hai loves all expressions of inner beauty. It is for this reason that She refers to Vietnam as 'Au Lac' and Taiwan as 'Formosa'. Au Lac is the ancient name of Vietnam and means 'happiness'. And the name Formosa reflects more completely the beauty of the island and its people. Master feels that using these names brings spiritual elevation and luck to the land and its inhabitants.

 The logo's characters, SM, stand for Supreme Master, signifying the Supreme Master power within everyone. The logo is an interweaving of red and gold colors. Red symbolizes the physical body, while gold represents the radiant Buddha nature or kingdom of God within.

 Abbreviations - 'Q': Question; 'M': Supreme Master Ching Hai.



Preface

This book is a compilation of original quotes sampled from numerous lectures, interviews and informal talks given by Supreme Master Ching Hai. Excerpts from oral teachings were gathered over the course of several years by one of the fellow disciples. What began as a sampling of her own favorite quotes given by the Master, soon became a voluminous collection of material. With the help of many fellow disciples who transcribed and translated dozens of lectures, a book began to take form. Through dedicated patience, devotional love, help from fellow disciples and the grace of the Master, this work is now presented to you. The entire contents of this book are the original words of the Master, recorded verbatim. Editing has been done only on the order of quotes, and on the grammar and punctuation of the transcriptions themselves.

Through the spoken words, a living Master can bring ancient wisdom to life. To experience these discourses in person, the seeker is affected on all levels of understanding, beyond space and time, far beyond any mental concept. These types of Masters, having become fully conscious of their supreme nature within, offer a perfect mirror of the most noble and divine qualities within each of us, a reflection of our own potential for self-mastery. As one comes into contact with this perfect image, one's life begins to turn away from fear and self-doubt and to move toward more tolerance and compassion, more hope and joy. Such is the experience that countless hundreds, thousands, millions of people have had in the presence of Supreme Master Ching Hai. She speaks above and beyond general philosophy and theology, echoing the Truth, which lies directly in the hearts of all seekers. This kind of experience is beyond the words alone, but rather an invisible connection all of us share with the infinite. Through Her words, Her eyes and Her voice, one can obtain limitless blessing and inspiration. With Her help and the practice of the Quan Yin method of meditation, one can quickly progress along the path to full enlightenment.

Supreme Master Ching Hai is world-renowned for Her great wisdom, sense of humor, humility and deep compassion. She has traveled to all parts of the world dedicating Herself and Her time in order to teach others that the Truth we all seek is not far away. Her multicultural background (She is fluent in five languages English, German, Chinese, French and Aulacese) allows Her to express one ageless Truth in a multitude of ways, so that each individual receives his or her own answer, according to his or her own needs.

Through daily practice of a non-denominational meditation technique call the Quan Yin method (contemplation of the inner Sound stream); we can all attain understanding of the great joy, compassion and heavenly bliss described within religious and spiritual scriptures around the world. More than just a simple meditation technique, this living teaching brings to anyone who sincerely desires it the ability to carry the meditative state into all parts of their lives. It offers each of us a way to have true love and understanding for our fellow beings, to play our part in society while still keeping our mind clear of worry and attachment, and a way to find freedom here and beyond this world.

All of this, Master Ching Hai offers free of charge and conditions to anyone seeking the Truth. She does not personally accept any donations, all of Her public lectures are offered

free of charge, and initiation into the Quan Yin method of meditation is given to anyone who is truly dedicated to their own spiritual development. Master says that a spiritual Teacher should never charge the student for what they already own. She simply opens the door to our own inner wisdom and then guides and protects us until we have fully realized our own treasure inside.

May the Truth guide you along the path to your own great awakening.



Introduction

Every human being has, at one time or another, wondered about the deeper meaning of his or her life. We witness on a daily basis the suffering caused by our ignorance, often feeling helpless to change it. But we are also blessed with brief glimpses of deep insight and joy, which bring temporary comfort and hope to our lost souls. Regardless of the tides and turns of our lives, the recurring questions still remain, 'Where do I come from? What is the purpose of my life? What am I here for? And where am I going after I die?' Should we search for answers to these questions, we would open the door to a multitude of philosophies and practices, some safer than others, some quicker than others, yet not an easy choice for anyone to make.

Searching alone may seem like wandering in a maze, not knowing what turn to take next. Countless road signs may seem to point in different directions, leaving us confused and constantly searching outside of ourselves. We seek relief from an undefined longing, a void which lays buried behind the distractions of our lives. But the day we find ourselves in the presence of a true spiritual Master, we know that the search has come to an end, for this living Teacher proves to us that complete liberation and self-mastery is possible in this lifetime and we only need to claim it, for it is ours.

When we take away all that divides us from the world around us, we find that only love remains, and this is our true essence. Once a living Master introduces us to our own divinity, all of our previous illusions of self-identity begin to fall away and instead of having to learn more, we begin to unlearn, to let go of useless, negative habits and ways of thinking. Our path is now set before us on our journey back Home.

When a traveler is lost, he must find a higher vantage point in order to obtain a better view. The higher he goes, the wider and clearer his vision becomes. Soon, the ominous dark shadows that once petrified him are discovered to be only mere shrubs in the wilderness! Likewise, the higher we go on our inward journey, the more our fears and false limitations are revealed to us. We learn to see them for what they are and let go of them just as we would discard an old worn-out garment. As we shed the outer appearance of ourselves, we no longer see separation and we feel united with everyone. The color of our skin and the language we speak may vary, but our innermost fears and aspirations are identical. So as we get to know our true selves, we gain comfort and understanding both within and far beyond ourselves.

If you feel that you are ready to embark upon such a journey, this book should provide you with priceless guidance and blessings, much needed in our present times. Supreme Master Ching Hai addresses in a very specific way some of the most frequently asked questions posed by seekers around the world. She clarifies often-misunderstood concepts without oversimplifying them. This collection of Her teachings is very much like a practical guide to your own treasure hunt. It will provide you with an overall map, warning you of obstacles ahead, teaching you how to prepare yourself. With Master Ching Hai by your side, you will surely find your way Home.



The heavenly cardinal Supreme Master Ching Hai

Throughout the ages, mankind has been visited by rare individuals whose sole purpose is the spiritual upliftment of humanity. Jesus Christ was one of these visitors, as were Shakyamuni Buddha and Mohammed. These three are well known, but there are many others whose names we do not know; some taught publicly, and were known by a few, and others remained anonymous. These individuals were called by different names, at different times, in different countries. They have been referred to as Master, avatar, enlightened one, savior, messiah, divine mother, messenger, guru, living saint, and the like. They came to offer what has been called enlightenment, salvation, realization, liberation, or awakening. The words used may be different, but in essence they all mean the same thing. Visitors from the same divine source, with the same spiritual greatness, moral purity, and power to uplift humanity as the holy ones from the past are here with us today, yet few know of their presence. One of them is Supreme Master Ching Hai.

Master Ching Hai is an unlikely candidate to be widely recognized as a living saint. She is a woman, and many Buddhists and others believe the myth that a woman can not become a Buddha. She is of Asian descent, and many western people expect that the savior will come from their own culture. However, those of us, from all over the world, and from many different religious backgrounds, who have gotten to know Her, and who follow Her teachings, know who and what She is. For you to come to know this will take a measure of openness of mind and sincerity of heart. It will also take your time and attention, but nothing else.

People spend most of their time earning a living and taking care of material needs. We work in order to make our lives, and those of our loved ones, as comfortable as possible. When time permits, we give away our attention to such things as politics, sports, television, or the latest scandals. Those of us who have experienced the loving power of direct inner contact with the divine know there is more to life than this. We feel it is a pity that the good news is not more widely known. The solution to all of the struggles of life is sitting quietly inside, waiting. We know that heaven is just a breath away. Forgive us when we err on the side of over enthusiasm and say things that may offend your rational mind. It is difficult for us to remain quiet, seeing what we have seen, and knowing what we know.

We who consider ourselves disciples of the Supreme Master Ching Hai, and fellow practitioners of Her method (the Quan Yin method of meditation), offer this book to you with the hope that it will help bring you closer to your own personal experience of divine fulfillment, whether it be through our Master or any other.

Master Ching Hai teaches the importance of the practice of meditation, inner contemplation, and prayer. She explains that we must discover our own inner divine presence, if we want to be truly happy in this life. She teaches that enlightenment is not esoteric and out of reach, attainable only by those who retreat from society. Her job is to awaken the divine presence within, while we lead normal lives. She states, 'It is like this. We all know the Truth. It's just that we forgot it. So sometimes, someone has to come and remind us of the purpose of our life, why we must find the Truth, why we must practice

meditation, and why we must believe in God.’ She asks no one to follow Her. She simply offers Her own enlightenment as an example, so that others may gain their own ultimate liberation.

This book is the original verbal teachings of Supreme Master Ching Hai. Please note that the lectures, comments, and quotes by Master Ching Hai contained herein were spoken by Her, recorded, transcribed, sometimes translated from other languages, and then edited for publication. We recommend that you listen to or watch the original audio or video tapes. You will get a much richer experience of Her presence from these sources than from the written words. Of course, the most complete experience is to see Her in person.

For some, Master Ching Hai is their mother, for some She is their father, and for others She is their beloved. At the least, She is the very best friend you could ever have in this world. She is here to give to you, not to take. She takes no payment of any kind for Her teachings, help or initiation. The only thing She will take from you is your suffering, your sorrow and pain, but only if you want this!



A biography of Supreme Master Ching Hai

Master Ching Hai was born in Aulac. Her father was a highly reputed naturopath. He loved to study world literature and was especially interested in philosophy. Among his favorites were the writings of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu, and these were available to Master Ching Hai as a young child. She read these and other Buddhist texts before She entered primary school.

Although Her parents are Catholic, they were open to Buddhist thoughts. Her grandmother was a Buddhist. Master loved to spend time with Her grandmother, and she taught Her the scriptures and Buddhist worship. Master Ching Hai developed a very open attitude toward religions due to this background. She would attend a Catholic church in the mornings, a Buddhist temple in the afternoons, and in the evenings would listen to lectures on the holy teachings. This left Her with many spiritual questions, such as 'Where did we come from? What is life after death? Why are people so different?'

At one time, there was a shortage of doctors and nurses in Her town, so Master helped in the hospital after classes. She washed patients, emptied bedpans and did errands in Her efforts to ease people's suffering.

Master has always had a soft spot for animals, and would often take a wounded animal home, care for it and release it. When She saw an animal slaughtered, She would cry, wishing that She could prevent such unnecessary suffering. She has been a vegetarian, and has always been repulsed by the sight of killing or of meat, all Her life.

She worked for a time in Germany as a translator for the Red Cross. She translated between the Aulacese language, German and English, and also volunteered to work long hours in the service of Aulacese refugees. She did so at the expense of Her own health and comfort. Her work with the Red Cross put Master Ching Hai in contact with refugees from many countries. She was continuously faced with the suffering and turmoil brought on by wars and natural disasters. Master suffered a great deal trying to alleviate the pain She saw, and She realized how impossible it was for any one person to stop the suffering of humanity. This drove Her more strongly toward finding enlightenment, as She realized that only this could help alleviate mankind's pain. With this as Her goal, She practiced meditation even more seriously. She sought out new teachers, read everything She could find, and tested many different methods. She felt, however, that these efforts were not working, and that She was not experiencing the spiritual phenomena She read about in the scriptures, nor was She reaching the enlightened state. This was extremely frustrating for Her at the time.

While in Germany, Master Ching Hai was happily married to a German scientist, with doctorates in two fields. He was a kind, attentive and supportive husband. He became a vegetarian, traveled with his Wife on pilgrimages and was very supportive of Her charitable works. Eventually, Master felt that She needed to leave Her marriage in order to pursue Her spiritual goals. She discussed this at great length with Her husband, and their separation was with his agreement. This was an extremely difficult decision for both of

them, but Master felt very strongly that this was the right decision. She needed to devote Her undivided attention to the pursuit of enlightenment.

After leaving Her marriage, Master sought to find the perfect method, which could lead one to attain liberation in one lifetime. In the Surangama sutra, Shakyamuni Buddha said that the Quan Yin method is the highest of all methods. None of Master's teachers knew it, so She traveled and searched everywhere for the right Master. Finally, after many years, She found a Himalayan Master who initiated Her into the Quan Yin method, and gave Her the divine transmission that She had sought for so many years. After a brief period of Quan Yin practice, She became fully enlightened. She continued practicing and improving Her understanding, and remained in retreat in the Himalayas for some time.

Eventually, Master Ching Hai traveled to Formosa. One evening, during a typhoon with heavy rain, as She meditated in a room behind a small temple, a group of people knocked at Her door. Master asked them why they had come, and they answered, 'Quan Yin Bodhisattva (The Goddess of Mercy) replied to our prayers and told us about You, saying that You are the great Master and we should pray to You for the method to reach liberation.' Master tried to send them away but they would not go. Finally, Master, touched by their sincerity and devotion, agreed to initiate them, but only after several months of purification and their agreement to adhere to a vegetarian diet.

Shy by nature, Master Ching Hai did not seek out students to teach. In fact, She ran away from people who sought Her initiation. This happened in India, and in the United States where She was living the unassuming life of a Buddhist Nun. When She was 'discovered' for the third time in Formosa, She realized that She must not run away from the inevitable tasks that lie ahead. She began sharing with all who wished to hear Her message of Truth, and She began initiating sincere students into the Quan Yin method.

Master Ching Hai's work has spread by word of mouth from this first small group in Formosa to many millions of people around the world. She has traveled and taught throughout Africa, Latin America, the United States, Asia, Europe and Oceania. Many people from all walks of life, and from many different religious backgrounds, have made great spiritual progress with Her help. Grateful friends and disciples are to be found all over the world, ready and willing to help others learn from their beloved Supreme Master.

In addition to helping countless numbers of people through Her spiritual teachings and initiations, Master Ching Hai has used Her boundless love and energy to assist those who are suffering or in need. In recent years, Her humanitarian efforts have touched the hearts and lives of millions of people all over the world. Master does not discriminate between suffering caused by spiritual ignorance, material privation, or circumstantial events. Wherever there is suffering, She will help.

Some of Master Ching Hai's humanitarian activities in the past few years include aid to: The homeless throughout the United States; victims of fire in southern California; victims of many floods in the Midwest United States, central and eastern Mainland China, India, Malaysia, Aulac, Holland, Belgium and France; disadvantaged elderly in Brazil; those displaced by the eruption of Mt Pinatubo in the Philippines; disaster victims in northern Thailand; destitute families in Formosa and Singapore; lepers in Molokai, Hawaii; spiritual communities in India, Germany and Uganda; families of mentally retarded children in Hawaii; victims of the 9-11 tragedy in New York and victims of the Los Angeles, Turkey and Formosa earthquake; veterans of the United States; orphanages in Aulac; institutions of medical research on AIDS and cancer in the United States; and many, many others. Of

course, we must also mention Master Ching Hai's never-ending and tireless efforts to help the Aulacese refugees, those both inside and out of refugee camps.

Although She has not ever sought acknowledgement of any kind, Master Ching Hai has been recognized and honored for Her humanitarian work by government officials throughout the world. For example, October 25, 1993 was proclaimed 'The Supreme Master Ching Hai Day' by the Mayor Fasi of Honolulu Hawaii, and February 22, 1994 was likewise proclaimed by the six Governors of the States of Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, Kansas, Missouri and Minnesota. She also received the 'World Peace Award' in Honolulu, and the 'World Spiritual Leadership Award' at a ceremony in Chicago on February 22, 1994. Congratulatory messages were sent to Her at the Chicago ceremony by many government officials worldwide, including Presidents Clinton, Bush, and Reagan.

In recent years, Master Ching Hai has also devoted Herself to creative expression of the beauty She enjoys within. Her creative works include paintings, decorated fans, lamps, dress and jewelry designs, and songs. Many of these items are made available for purposes of fundraising.

Master Ching Hai has told us that She is not always enlightened. She lives a normal worldly life, and knows from experience about our problems, our heartaches, passions, desires and doubts. She also knows the heavenly realms of kingdom of God, and how to get there from here. Her sole function at this point in Her life is to help us with our journey from the suffering and confusion of the un-awakened state to the bliss and absolute clarity of total divine realization. If you are ready, She is here to take you Home.

Master Ching Hai takes an unusually broad view of all religions. She has studied and taught the words of Jesus, Buddha, Mohammed, Lao Tzu and many others. She always emphasizes the similarities among the great teachings, and lets us see through Her eyes how all the great Masters are preaching the same Truth. She often explains how different religious opinions have arisen, due only to the difference in opinions of different people in different countries at different times.

Master Ching Hai gives initiation and a variety of lectures to interested students and people, according to their backgrounds and cultures, including Christians, Moslems, Buddhists, Jews, Hindus, Taoists, or atheists, et cetera. She speaks fluently in English, German, Chinese, French and Aulacese languages. Those who wish to learn and practice the Quan Yin method with Master Ching Hai are welcomed to receive Her initiation.



Live our lives with love and wisdom – Be veg, go green, save the planet

SAVE THE PLANET THROUGH LOVING KINDNESS ¹

So, after we save the planet, of course, people will be different. They have to be different now in order to save the planet already. So, your part is to be positive. Save the planet first and things will change after. It's not you alone who can save the planet. It's the people who change their consciousness. If they would be veg, go green, and do good, then that means they have changed for the better. Their consciousness has gone up to a higher level; then of course, they merit the earth and could continue to live here and also their children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and so on. At that time people will be in a higher level of consciousness and things will be clearer to them and to all. We will live in peace and love.

You have to envision a positive world, the heaven on earth that you would like it to be. You have to envision the nobler world, the positive world, the beautiful world, the heaven world.

Saving the world is a compassionate act. Even if the world is not saved, you are. You are saved by your loving kindness. Your merit will be multifold because you want to save others. This is the point that many of you still don't get. If you want to save the world, if you want to do anything toward this goal, you're enlarging your nobility, your heavenly attribute. So, if you spread the encouragement to save the planet, if you go veg, if you go green, if you do good deeds or you help others because you want to save other beings' lives on earth, then you have a saintly quality. You reawaken your holiness. It's not just about saving the physical planet and the physical lives. It's also about how great you are for wanting to do so and actually partaking in this life-saving crusade.

So, if people do want to be veg, go green, and do good because they want to save the planet, then their spirit is noble. They have elevated themselves. And I hope you continue the way you're doing. Even if you cannot save the planet, you save yourself. Let's put it this way: If we cannot save the whole planet, we will be able to save some souls, the ones who will walk the way with us, the ones who, due to your diligent spreading of the news, will return to their original noble self. Those people will be saved at least.

A VEGETARIAN EDEN ON EARTH ²

Q. *Master, are the recent disasters around the world somehow connected with the billions of animals slaughtered every year for human consumption?*

1. Teleconference with New York Center, U.S.A., July 13, 2008 (Originally in English).

2. Teleconference with Surrey Center, United Kingdom, June 12, 2008 (Originally in English).

- M. Of course, they are. ‘As you sow, so shall you reap,’ and ‘Like attracts like.’ Scientifically and spiritually speaking, we have been warned. So, all the disasters that have happened around the world, of course, are connected with humans’ unkindness to their co-inhabitants. That’s the price we have to pay for what we have done to the innocents who have done us no harm, who are also the children of God, who have been sent to earth to help us and to cheer our days. Because, generally, humans also had very good merit before they came to earth. That’s why they became human, because of their good merit. So, from their good merit, there has been give and take and deductions and additions. Otherwise, if things had not been canceling out some of the bad retribution, then it would have been worse. Or the earth might have disappeared altogether already, but luckily the humans also do have some good merit, and it has not run out yet. That’s why we are still hanging in here.
- Q. *Master, if the world were to go a hundred percent vegetarian right now, what kind of earth would we live in and what effect would this have on the world economy? Also, how great would the changes be and how long would it take to see the effects of these changes on our environment?*
- M. If the world were to go a hundred percent vegetarian right now, the good effect of it would be seen within more or less sixty days, or eight weeks. Within eight weeks we would see an immediate effect. Of course, you’ll also see almost immediately. But to see the whole big picture, you can realize it within eight short weeks. And what kind of earth would we live in? It would be Eden again. We will have sudden peace, and sudden realization of sameness between all nations, between all humans and between humans and animals. The realization will dawn upon us. There’s no need for explanation; people will suddenly understand that we’re all equal. We and all co-inhabitants, animals alike, are equal. And people will have respect even for trees and plants.

I really wish that we could have it right now. Things will be more lushful and abundant. People will feel happier, even without reason; they will not know why they feel happy, and food will be enough everywhere. Rivers will run plentiful again. Disasters will cease. Heaven will smile on humans, and good wishes will be fulfilled.

That is a kind of Eden. If we were to be vegetarian, all of the humans on the planet, that will be the effect. That’s what we wish to have.

Practice non-violence is number one

- Q. *Master, is the world doing enough, and are we as initiates doing enough to save the planet at this critical time?*
- M. Well, you have been doing fine. Most of the initiates are doing their best, and sincerely. But the world... no. They’re doing something; they are trying but they are not doing it fast enough and they are not doing enough. And even the ‘something’ they are doing is often off track. I’m sorry, I have to be blunt; I’ve been too polite all these years and it doesn’t work.

Now, the thing is, most often the world is doing things that are second or third important in line. Like you have the throne, with number one in line, number one in line, number three in line and so on. But they are not running after the Crown Prince. They are running after the second, the third, the fourth or fifth and the eleventh.

The number one thing that is most important is non-violence to humans and animals. Of course, that means vegetarian diet; that means completely abstaining from all animal products. That is the thing that has been ignored up to now. Some people have spoken out; even some government officials and organizations have spoken out about that, but too little. If we stop killing, if we practice non-violence to humans and animals, if we stop all the killing, then all bad effects will stop, almost instantly. There will be no end to happiness and freedom, of any aspects, body and mind, if we stop the main cause of disaster, that is the killing. The main cause of disaster is the violence of the people, mostly from the people. We have to stop all this. We have to stop all the killing. I keep saying it again, and again and again. We have to live and let live. We have to respect and save lives. But tell me, who will be wise enough to listen? And who will be strong enough to carry this out? That's the point. Perhaps everyone knows this, one way or another. But it needs a strong will to carry out. Not just knowing, but practicing. Practicing is very important.

We have to respect all lives, including that of our so-called enemies even. Directly or indirectly, we have to stop the killing. We have to all be vegetarian and abstain from all animal products. And that's how the killing will stop. Everything else is secondary.

- Q. *Master, Oprah Winfrey is well known by many people around the world and she recently has gone vegan for twenty one days. And a lot of high-profile people are realizing the benefits of a vegan diet, and in turn are influencing a lot of people around the world. Master, is this a good turn in the right direction?*
- M. Yes, it is. And bravo to Oprah. She has done the most glorious thing in her entire career, methinks. And I think she will continue in this direction. She's a wise woman, and she has a huge bunch of followers. So, if she continues in this direction, she will do a great service to herself, humankind, and her believers. I think she's very wise; she will do it because, I think she puts something in her blog, saying, 'How can you proclaim to be a spiritual seeker, when you have no compassion for animals at all?' So, I think she's a wise woman. I think she will continue that and it will be very great.

After all, what is the good of gnawing or biting on a dead corpse, for such a dignified human as us? As the human who can conquer the moon, can explore Mars, and do many other incredible feats, how can we not conquer our own appetite? Because the appetite of most humans has caused untold suffering to the weak and defenseless animals. And we even have an abundance of food choices! It's not that we don't. So, if people just stop and think about this, they will realize how unfortunate it is that we have fallen into this trap that we have to kill to live, or that 'If I live, you must die.' This is a very pitiful situation for human beings. If anyone takes a little time to think about it, this is really, really tragic.

So, I hope people will realize it in the long run. If they stop and think about it, this is a really very tragic situation that the humans have fallen into, to let themselves be deprived of compassion or the loving instinct of a human. To succumb to this kind of cruelty, this is really a pity. It's not what humans intended to be at all.

Every effort counts in saving the planet

- Q. *Master, more and more news reports are mentioning going vegetarian as a solution to address climate change. For example, on June 3, 2008, BBC2 'Newsnight' featured a program about measures to tackle climate change, and the headline said something like this: 'Is it time to turn vegetarian?' It said the best solution would be for*

us all to become vegetarians. So, it seems that people of the world over are getting the message. Do we still have time to save the planet, though?

- M. Yes, they are getting the message. But it's not enough. I want more of that, and on every television channel, every billboard, on the sidewalk, in every house and in every newspaper. This should be the topic that we talk about every day. Not the whole newspaper or the whole program, of course; but I mean some part of it has to be devoted to the most urgent need of our time, which is the climate change, and to stop it.

But nevertheless, they are doing something, and I am grateful. And I want to tell you some good news. The message, if people listen to it and do more, then of course, we can save the planet! Right now, because of all the efforts that people have put into action, like planting trees, and driving less and sustainable fuel, we've gained more time to change the world. Also, many people have turned vegetarian, and some of the news media have helped to remind the public. And the governments also have done something or have thought about it. All this, however little, positive energy that people sincerely put their efforts into will bear fruit, and the more people turning to vegetarianism and preserving the planet, the further the deadline will recede. And then we will have more time, more and more time.

We have to thank the people who have changed to the vegetarian diet, and thank the governments who have put effort into preserving the environment, and we have to thank some of the news media who have been putting in efforts to remind people about our deadly situation. So, if you guys continue helping to remind people, and if the government gives us more blessing and the news people continue the trend of giving the public more knowledge, then we still can save the planet. I do hope so. Thanks to the BBC2!

We salute the wise and courageous leaders

- Q. *Master, prince Charles recently expressed his concern about the urgency to fight global warming in an article titled '18 Months to Stop Climate Change Disaster.' It was published in May 2008 in the Telegraph newspaper in the United Kingdom. And being a member of a royal family and other people in such high positions in the political field, and so on, they're being advised what they should and should not say to the public. I was wondering what words of encouragement Master would offer these leaders to help them speak the truth and get their important message through.*
- M. I am very grateful to His Royal Highness and other courageous leaders in the world for stepping out of their boundary and speaking out for the sake of everyone. Even if the public does not appreciate their goodwill, heaven will take note. And they will have a great reward hereafter. It is, of course, very difficult to be in the position of authority. I understand that and I'm glad you understand their position. Of course, they've been told what to do and what not to say. But the advisors are not always wise. So, I think the leaders themselves should act according to the intuition of a highly developed human being. To be a leader is to be endowed with bravery, compassion and nobility. That's why you are a leader. It's not easy, of course, to be in the position of a leader. That's why leaders are few.

In a nation, there's only one king, one queen, some princesses, some princes, one president and one prime minister: Very few leaders, compared to the multitude of this world. But fewer even still are brave leaders, courageous leaders, righteous leaders

and wise leaders. To such wise and courageous ones, we offer full support and respect. We pray that heaven gives them more strength and more wisdom to carry out their noble duty. Of course, bravo to prince Charles, and other leaders. Prince Charles has been an environmentalist for many, many years. And he's getting always more and more vocal about this. And I hope he continues to set an example for other leaders because as I told you, leaders are few, and fewer still are those who are wise and courageous. Being a leader, we must know what is good for our subjects and what is not. What is good, we have to encourage or facilitate for them to do. And what is bad, we have to stop, to protect them. That is the true meaning of a leader.

He's a good man, a gentleman. I have always liked him. He's honest and straightforward. Being a prince, he is true to his heart. That is a very good quality. And he's not swayed by glamour or praise and gain. He's really a truthful man, and I really pray that he will have more strength to continue and do better and better still for his subjects and for the world, to make an exemplary, noble figure of a leader, for the world to follow.

The unimaginable cost of killing

- Q. *Hallo Master! Recently a Supreme Master Television crew visited the island of Skye in Scotland, and they interviewed the founder of an animal sanctuary where they rescue farm animals. Rima Morrell, the animal sanctuary founder, who is also an author and animal telepathic communicator, when she was sitting with one of her pigs, he started sending messages saying, 'Now is the time that humans have to stop killing animals for food.' And the message seems really urgent. So, the question is: 'How can we help stop more people from eating animals?'*
- M. Yes, I have been asking myself that question, and you also, for many years already. This is a very frustrating question, because we don't always have the immediate answer, knowing that the habits of humans are hard to quit. I just hope that heaven has been warning enough with so many frequent disasters and incurable diseases, so that people truly wake up this time and stop all this cruelty to our co-citizens of the world, namely the animals and each other as well. If anyone would stop and think about it, it is really incredible how we still kill each other or even think of killing each other these days, not to talk about the poor defenseless innocent animals.

Well, all we can do is spread the news and explain to people as much as you can, hoping that your words or my words fall into some wise ears. Most humans do have telepathy, but they have completely lost it. So, they cannot hear directly the animals' cries of suffering, their cries of sorrow or their cries of advice, because they have been covered up tightly with a veil of ignorance from the king of illusion, from maya, from the so-called devil. So, it's very difficult for them to hear anything. But I just hope that at this time of peril, maybe they will wake up. So, we try to tell them anything that is convincing. Maybe they can wake up; maybe some of them will listen; maybe half will listen or maybe two-thirds will listen. I hope all of them will listen. I hope I will live to see that day.

I'm telling you truly because, as much as I love the animals, I know that their suffering has an end. Even if one animal suffers by abuse, torture or massacre in the slaughterhouse, they have only that life and then they will be free to heaven. It breaks my heart; I don't want to imagine how they suffer. But even then, it's not as bad as what the humans have to go through because of mistreating animals. So actually, I'm more sorry for the humans than the animals, do you understand? [Audience: Yes.]

If they are abused and badly treated, then they will be in a higher heaven. But the humans who have done all this to them will pay terribly. And that's what I'm worried about. Even though I love animals so much, the physical suffering, we will endure one way or another, even humans, too. But the spiritual suffering, this spiritual loss, it's a terrible loss. And humans commit terrible acts against themselves every day, causing them to lose spiritual merit because of killing animals, because of killing each other and because of eating animals. So, you see, it's the humans that I'm worried about.

We're trying as best as we can to awaken their real knowledge. But it's not easy. I thank you for all you have been doing. I thank you for bearing all this frustration with me. And thank you for still having unwavering faith that the humans will change. Maybe they will change and maybe we can still save the planet. We just have to continue. Okay? [Audience: Yes. Thank You, Master.]

The powerful vegetarian message

- Q. *Hallo, Master! We have recently interviewed a musician lady who lives near the stone circle in south England. She told us she used to be vegetarian for many years, and then she went back to eating meat. But on the very day she and her mom watched Supreme Master Television, they went straight back to vegetarian diet again. And she cries every time she watches the channel, she told us. And she said after going back to vegetarian, her conscience feels great, and she feels pure, better and cleaner.*

She also said the channel informs people of the important issues of our time and the challenges we all face, and people are blind to it, about how and why to be a vegetarian. And she thinks people should start watching Supreme Master Television because to her, this is how the television should be and this is what television should be used for.

- M. Right, yes. That's why we're doing it. I also met some people who had been vegetarian before and they went back to a non-vegetarian diet. And after meeting me and talking to me, and seeing that I eat vegetarian, they became vegetarian again! Personally, also I'm working; I am also a 'mini-Supreme Master Television.' All of us can have some influence in some way. That is cool. But it's just not fast enough for my patience. Anyway, we're doing what we can, and it's not just for other people; it's for us also, for our children and grandchildren, our friends and family members. They all are important. It's a pity that the world is not doing it together with us! If it were, then we'd have Eden on earth right away, within eight weeks! Within eight weeks all disasters would stop. That's how heaven is created. Where do you think heaven comes from? Heaven is a place where all beings act in the same way, not uniformly, but in the same level of compassion, the same level of love, and the same level of spiritual knowledge or understanding, the same level of nobility. That's what heaven is. And we can turn this world into heaven anytime. If human beings just turn around, all will be forgiven. Heaven is forgiving, because they did not know about the killing of the meat diet, they did not know anything much about killing. Of course, they knew a little bit, but no one emphasized it; no one really made it like a matter of fact. If the government, the media and all the people who have the power can wield their power in a correct way and inform or educate the public to make them know what is right and what is wrong, and that vegetarian diet is a must and the only diet that everyone should follow, then it will be done!

Look at how many people have decreased smoking. Even if smoking cigarettes has not been banned completely and has just been banned in the public only, look at the

percentage of people who have decreased smoking and how much disease has been minimized. How much money of the taxpayers has been saved, just in a few months? You watch television; you know this. You know the effects immediately. Look at that! And it's not even banned completely yet. Can you imagine if it's banned completely someday, or if meat has been banned, or has been advised to be less and less, can you imagine how good it'd be?

The government is supposed to govern goodly and rightly. So, this is the time the government should do their governing like a righteous, natural thing! Just like children have to go to school. In some countries, the law obliges parents to send the children to school. So, maybe one day we will oblige all the people to leave the animals in peace, just like the way we want to be left in peace. We don't want anyone to cut our throat, so why go out and cut some other being's throat and drink blood from it and eat their corpse. And we call that civilization! It's the twenty-first century, my goodness. And so many Masters have been on earth, teaching us already that we shall not kill, we shall not eat meat, we shall not drink alcohol, we shall not take intoxication... We have been taught so long, century after century! So, this is the time we should be the human being that we're supposed to be.

Okay, we made mistakes; we didn't know it before. But now is the time! We should do research, we should know about it. Everywhere there is plenty of vegetarian diet advice, books and recipes. Even in our television, we have ten-thousand-and-one international delectable recipes daily, offered free of charge. They can always download and keep it in their family and try it all. It's beautiful, it's tasty and it's harmless to anyone. There's no excuse anymore to sink your teeth into that piece of flesh which is rotten anyway. I don't know how human beings can consume such a thing. It's below dignity and it's unhygienic; it's unhealthy; it's poisonous; it's ignoble. Pardon my bluntness. I've been polite for too long.

So, it's about time we wake up and change our behavior, to be noble and to be dignified as a human being. And all the animals will be living in peace, without fear, without suffering, that's the main point. The main point is that we will have Eden on earth.

BE VEGETARIAN TO GIVE OUR CHILDREN AND THE PLANET OUR BEST LEGACY ³

[Mr. Lee Yong-Jung, Secretary-General of the People's Coalition for Children's Health, former head of the policy research team for children's health on the Presidential Commission for Sustainable Development: I have been listening with interest to Your discussion, which I think could be summed in the three words: Spirituality, vegetarian diet, and co-existence. I want to raise several issues that are related to foods and a sustainable society. We are surrounded by foods that are poisonous to our bodies. When we are exposed to these kinds of foods, the balance of micro-organisms in our body will be broken and we might have to fight a war with these micro-organisms that make up half the world's organisms. The diseases that we might end up getting will be atopy, splenitis, asthma, and ADHD, which have tripled compared to twenty years ago. High blood pressure, cancer, and diabetes have also tripled. Problems that manifested in Korea include avian flu, noro virus, and antibiotics microbes, all due to poisonous foods.]

3. SOS international seminar on global warming videoconference, Seoul Center, South Korea, May 22, 2008 (Originally in English).

There is a need to examine these poisonous foods. The first one is chemical additives in processed foods and food packaging. The second one is the overdose of antibiotics that are pumped into livestock in factory farming. The third is the overuse of pesticides. The fourth one is genetically modified foods and mad cow disease-affected beef. This problem is serious when we consider our dependency on foreign foods, which is about seventy-five percent, compared to twenty-five percent of our domestically grown foods. When investigating them, these food problems are interwoven with global warming, methane gas, and carbon dioxide issues, which lead to children's health problems, as well as the survival of humanity. You have summed up these complex issues into one simple issue, which is vegetarianism. Although I understand, I wonder whether we do not need more comprehensive approaches. For example, we have to practice sustainable agricultural approaches and we have to change our patterns of thinking. We have to change our food paradigms. We need to educate people that through our food choices we can save ourselves and humanity as a whole in a more concrete educational system. That's what I think.]

It seems not that easy to tackle, but it's actually very easy. If you have a child and you know what is good for him, then you definitely want to give it to him. And if you know what is bad or poisonous for your child, you will take it away from him at all costs. So, it's just the habit thinking of humankind, the feeling that this is not doable, but it is. Just take away that piece of meat, and replace it with protein from the vegetable kingdom. Nowadays, we have vegetarian food available everywhere; it's very simple. Even if we don't have available food, all kinds of beans, rice, lentils are packed full of vegetarian protein, and they will make your life much, much more comfortable, healthy and wise and are very, very spiritually elevating. I don't understand why it is so difficult for the government or for any parent, or anyone who is responsible in this matter, not to change the habit of giving the children what is healthy for them. You want your children to be healthy, yes? And so, we do the research, we know what is the up-to-date best for the children. Vegetarian diet, without milk or dairy products even, is the best diet thereof for everybody at all ages. So, why don't we give them the best?

For me, it's simple. Just give them the best food, and then everything else will come along. You will see the benefit. And if it doesn't benefit, you can always change back to the meat diet. But I'm sure you – I mean the parents and the teachers, the ones who are responsible for children's health – will like the vegetarian diet. You will see their improvements in all aspects of life, not just health but in intelligence, vitality and the peacefulness of their character. You'll have less to worry about with your children's violent behavior. Thank you for being concerned about the children. They are our future. Thank you, Mr. Lee Yong-Jung. The people have to do it. The government can do or not do it; this is up to the parents to choose.

Conscience and compassion in society

[Mrs. Lee Hui-Jung, Secretary-General of the Korean Parents Association for Correct Education: Right now in Seoul, in front of the Cheonggye River, students are participating in a candlelight vigil gathering. This is to protest against importing meats that may have mad cow disease. This meat could be used in their school meals. So, students are protesting because they don't have any choice in uniformed school meals. That's why they are having a candlelight demonstration at the Cheonggye River, because they do not want to eat 'mad cows' meat. Their parents are protesting as well, because they do not want to have this beef in their children's school meals. The protest shows that students are seriously concerned about the current educational environment and the problems of the current school meal system. I think children generally have more sympathy compared to

adults, and that's why they have come out to the streets to protest. They saw some clips on the internet about how animals weren't treated humanely and from that they felt that animals were like them because their educational environment is not so desirable. It's so competitive; they have to study till midnight or in the early morning in their school rooms. It's like they are in a cage, a little cage without having much choice, so I feel that our students empathize with those confined animals.

Although their sympathy becomes dull as they grow in this kind of educational environment, they are still pure enough to feel this pain, so they have compassion towards these animals. Unfortunately, the more we are educated under these kinds of circumstances, the more we lose our sense of consideration for our co-inhabitants. Our school environments should be set up so that our children can spend time in nature, where they can be near animals. However, our children are confined in terms of space and time in the current educational system. They are forced to complete their curriculum.

Our educational environment should cultivate children's compassion for the needy and the weak, including animals and the suffering of confined livestock. Our educational system needs to be designed to encourage concern towards our planet and our co-inhabitants, and to promote solutions to our current planetary problems through education. But in reality, it is not designed that way. My question for Supreme Master Ching Hai is: We are forcing our children to become desensitized from their own empathy for our planet by putting them in this kind of educational environment in the name of competition. What can we do in order to encourage their ecological empathy? So, I would like to ask You about these matters.]

Thank you for your concern, Mrs. Lee. And by the way, I would like to convey also my sympathy and my gratefulness to the students who are expressing their opinion right now in Seoul concerning the beef imports, and concerning their love and care for the animals. I am very impressed by their attitude, because as students they are quite busy and it's not like the curriculum in the school would have informed them or taught them anything about animal cruelty or how to be kind to animals. But they do know about it; they do research about it, and they do take action about it, and I'm very glad. I do hope this will even spread further into other schools and whole nations and keep people aware of the harmful effects of animal products as well as the unkind treatment that we humans measure upon them, the poor innocent defenseless brothers and sisters.

So, I thank you and I thank them on the animals' behalf. Concerning your question about how to raise children rightly, this is a very, very important question and the parents and the teachers should get together to discuss this. And the leader of this movement for the teachers and the parents should be more equipped with all the concrete scientific and convincing evidence of the better diet for the children, meaning the animal-free diet, absolutely free from animal traces. Even eggs and milk are harmful because they're derived from animals. The animals have been fed with chemical substances, all kinds of hormones, which drive the children crazy. So, if your children's behaviors are not according to your liking, please do not blame them alone. They are born nice, innocent and sweet. They have been brought up by us and we have not given them the due goodness, due care or the due best standard that they so deserve, because we also, as parents, have not been fed this due attention that we also need. So now, we have to change the course of history. We have to research; we have to know for sure that the vegetarian diet is really absolutely healthy, the best in all aspects for our children. Get the evidence. Get all the studies necessary, all the scientific and convincing evidence, and get together to spread this information.

And decide together that we have to change the diet of the children. When you change the diet everything else will change. Their behavior will change, their intelligence will improve, and you will be a happy parent and they will be happy children. You want the best for your children, and that is the best for them. The vegetarian diet, you must give them that, and then everything else will come along. Believe me; trust me; you try and you tell me. It will do no harm. It just helps you to save more money on groceries. You go straight to the vegetarian section; you don't need to go anywhere else. Vegetarian diet and no alcohol, no cigarettes, no drugs also.

For optimal health, choose natural and fresh

And by the way, a message to the vegetarian-producing people. Even with vegetarian food, we have to also be careful we don't put additives, too many preservatives into it; we don't put any harmful substance into vegetarian food. And we don't put too much glutamate or too much salt. Those things are also not very good for health. So, the vegetarian diet should be fresh from the local market. That would be the best for your children – local market, and the fresher the better. Not just vegetarian but the fresher the better, and the healthy vegetarian products. To all the producers of vegetarian food, please be aware of this.

Thank you for your question. Your question is of paramount importance because it's concerning the children and the society at large. Thank you, Madam. I wish you all the success. I wish the children's movement that you mentioned just now, the students' movement, will spread all over your country and into the world, and that all the students will follow suit. Everyone will heed their cry for help for a better life that they deserve. Thank you so much. Heaven blesses you and blesses their movement.

[Mrs. Park Kyung-Yong, Head of the Korean Association for School Meals: I am in charge of preparation of school meals for students. My question is related to earlier questions. The government has made a regulation that thirty percent of school meals have to be animal source protein. In order to keep the regulation, we provide beef, chicken or pork every day for school meals. If we add up the amount of consumed beef and other meat that is served for school meals around the country, it would be a staggering amount. It means the number of animals slaughtered for these meals is huge as well. I have never considered this a serious issue as a worker, but after attending this seminar I think that I need to reconsider the meat consumption in our school meals. In addition, I think we need to set new government policies and regulations. I think we need to use protein product alternatives to animal fat and protein such as soy, since as everyone knows it provides such high-quality protein. We are currently including more vegetarian choices for our school meals. But, I thought we might need to take meat consumption more seriously as an issue to discuss and develop menus that use alternative protein sources. I realize that we needed to provide greener meals, vegetarian menus for school meals. Since You are vegetarian, I wonder whether You could provide some vegetarian menus and recipes for school meals. And if You have any advice on alternative school meals, I would like to refer to that when we design our school meals.]

Oh, wow! Very good question, Mrs. Park. Very good endeavor. Thank you so much. You see, this is a very good start. First of all, in my humble opinion, you will be blessed by wanting to do this, and then you will continue to have strength to do it. You have to inform the facts to the parents' association, and to all the parents that you can. You can give leaflets to each of the students to bring home or to the school board and ask permission to distribute it to the children. Get all the facts about how good the vegetarian diet is and all the facts about how bad the meat diet is. And then get their support. Inform your students.

Inform everyone that you know in your society, in your world, in your school. And then, get them all the materials necessary so that they understand what you are talking about and support your ideas. We have to give them the facts, we cannot just tell people, 'Okay, be vegetarian. It's good for you.' We have to evoke their intelligence and curiosity; we have to provide them with all the materials that are convincing and truthful, and then they can decide together, 'Okay, we choose this diet.' The majority of them will choose it. I do hope they do, after you diligently inform them of all the facts about how good the vegetarian diet is from the scientific point of view, because people only believe in science.

And then comes the moral issue. You can show them some of the cruel pictures, cruel videos about how the animals are being treated, being slaughtered, and ask them a question, 'How would you feel if it were you?' If people see the evidence and are faced with the cruelty of how the animal has been treated, I'm sure that they will decide to get a vegetarian diet. Right now, it's a worldwide trend that everyone knows the vegetarian diet is good and the meat diet is very harmful. They recalled millions of kilograms, millions of units of meat because of the harmful effect, everywhere in the world. Up to date, there are many countries in the world that do that. So, get all this evidence and show it to them. You never know what you're eating. It's better to choose the healthy diet. You see, importing meat and all that, you never know if they're good. The government cannot control every piece of beef for you, actually. There are loopholes everywhere. There are also lobbies; people will turn a blind eye and all that or take it for granted that the meat is safe. We're talking about health standpoint only, not to talk about the moral obligation to our weaker, smaller, defenseless brother and sister co-inhabitants. We cannot be cruel. We have to be kind. We have to be loving and compassionate because we are human. Every time you see someone treat someone nice or do something good, you say, 'That's very human, that is humane treatment.' You see? Because we are human, we have to give every other being human treatment, including our own neighbors. Okay so, because we are human, we have to be kind, we have to be compassionate because that's our nature. Don't let anything else make us forget that.

Thank you for your question and I wish you all the luck and blessing from heaven. And I love you for doing this. Thank you.

By the way, in SupremeMasterTV.com we have all kinds of free to download international cooking recipes for you. It costs you nothing if you want to download and use them. Or, you can contact our Centers in Korea to ask for free recipes. Also, SupremeMasterTV.com provides in this matter all scientific and convincing information and evidence for you to download if you need to use them to inform other people and to convince them about the idea of changing the diet for the children in school.

Of all the ways to save the planet, the animal-free lifestyle is best

[MC: There are many ways to cope with global warming and climate change. Supreme Master Ching Hai, You have suggested the most efficient and effective ways, including using sustainable energy, planting more trees, saving energy wherever we can in our daily lives, and perhaps most importantly, using products that are animal free. Using animal free products also includes adopting a vegetarian or vegan diet. Could You please share with us more details about these solutions?]

We have covered the moral, ethical, scientific and physical benefits of a vegetarian diet. Not only because of moral or ethical or physical benefit, but because this is the easiest way for every one of us to contribute to saving the planet. Before the governments even do anything, before the technical developments are being offered, we already stop global

warming if we forsake that piece of meat and replace it with a piece of vegetarian protein, which looks similar, tastes similar, and is even better in every way – for our health, for our spirit, for our intelligence and for our next life in heaven. We will be blessed right now even, not to talk about the afterlife. So, I guess everyone should join in and be vegetarian; that's all I am saying, because it's the best and the fastest way to save the planet, and everyone can do it. There's no need even for technique, new energy or for the governments yet. We do it; we do our part. That's why I emphasize the vegetarian diet. And if the governments join in and help us to promote more, wow!

Thank you so much. If they have developed better technology and produce it fast enough for us to use, thank you ever so much. But the vegetarian diet, we must start right now. That's the best way, the fastest and the safest way for us and for our children. If you love your children, try the vegetarian diet. Thank you.

BE VEGETARIAN IS ENOUGH TO SAVE THE PLANET ⁴

Even if everyone in the whole population of the planet eats only half vegetarian, we can save the planet already. That's the best and the quickest way. Because meat is not only about the land, it's about the water, medicine, energy, pollution from transportation, and the conscience; that's what makes people sick.

So, if you can tell people to be vegetarian, that's the best thing you can do for them and for the planet. Then we can even keep all the airplanes; we can keep all the cars; we can keep all the things now, because CO2 is not as bad as 'conscience sickness,' and not as bad as spending so much water on animal raising, and wasting land, and deforestation and transportation. If we eat vegetarian, we still can keep all the airplanes, cars, trains and even everything as usual. We don't even need to rely on the government, because the government cannot always do everything. The government cannot forbid people to eat meat, for example. Maybe they can, but they don't want to do it.

So, the individual is the best to save the planet. Just go vegetarian, and we'll save a lot of methane gas, a lot of transportation pollution, a lot of wasted water and land – land that we can cultivate, with enough food for everyone. And the food we feed the animals, we can feed the hungry. We would never go hungry. The whole planet can be fed if people go vegetarian. And then we can even keep all the styles that we have now, like the airplane. Of course, it's the best if we don't. But even if we still have cars, airplanes and trains and so on, if the planet's people are vegetarian, then we can save the planet still. Not everyone knows that. So, tell whomever you can to save the planet. But even if we cannot, then we cannot.

One more thing about the climate that everyone worries about: If we have the blessing of the government, it would be good. But otherwise, everyone can do it. Just be vegetarian, and we can save it. We can save a lot. Because of the bad karma, 'As you sow so shall you reap,' if we do bad things, then we get bad things. It's not just about the physical energy or even the ways of war and all that. The bad karma will come back on us, and no one can save us, not even God. Because even if God tells us to do this and we don't do it, Hes lets us be free. If you want to make a mistake, it's your freedom. God is not someone who controls you all the time. It would be good if Hes does some controlling, but Hes doesn't do that.

4. Group meditation, Monaco Center, Monaco, May 4, 2008 (Originally in English).

So, we have to control ourselves; we have to know what's good and what's bad. Read the bible or the scripture of your religion. Really study well to see what the scripture tells you to do. All the tips in any scripture of any religion tell you how to survive here, how you can save the planet, how to live well and how to go to heaven afterwards. It's all in the scriptures; it's not me saying anything.

THE TRUE MEANING OF DETACHMENT ⁵

To be detached doesn't mean that you become a stone or wooden statue. Being detached means that you have to do what you have to, but that is not important. If you don't have to, or if you can't do it, it is okay, too. If you have to do it, you do it and then forget about it. You don't kill yourself over some problem of the world or a personal setback. You try to solve your problem as best as you can at that moment. Maybe tomorrow you see things differently, and then you do it differently. Today, you see it that way, and you do it that way. But then you are not overly grieved about this thing, and you forget it. We do still have sorrow, happiness, stress and all that; but the thing is that we forget it quickly, we overcome it fast.

More detachment comes later; as the days pass by, you become more detached in a very subtle way. So, even though sometimes you are angry or you are crying, you feel that you are very detached from that emotion. You still let the emotion show but you are detached from it. In the depths of your heart, you know this is nothing. I can cry, but I can also stop. And why should I stop? Why should I make the effort or trouble to stop? If you need to stop, then you stop; if you need to cry, just cry. You just know that you are in control of that emotion. It is okay. To be detached means that: Okay, you see yourself cry, but then you aren't overwhelmed by it. You let it be. You don't make it a more important issue and cling to that crying or that sadness all the time. Just let it be, and then move on.

THE OTHER HIGHER HALF OF OUR TRUE SELF ⁶

There were some people who were very good disciples, like you, who came to a good Master, not like me [Laughter] and asked, 'Master, is there a good way to enlightenment, the very best way? Can you show me the best way to enlightenment?'

The Master said, 'Yes. I can, but it'll take some effort on your part. Are you willing to make some little so-called sacrifices? You have to be vegetarian, keep the five precepts – no drugs, no alcohol, no cigarettes, no McDonald's hamburgers, no fish, no shrimps, no eggs. Are you willing to forsake all that for enlightenment?'

The good disciple said to the very good Master, 'Why do I have to do all that in order to get enlightenment? I don't like that!' [Master laughs.]

So, the Master said, 'Well, you ask for enlightenment and I'm telling you the way. It's up to you.'

The disciple scratched his head for a while and said, 'Master, is there a better way?' [Laughter] 'Is there some other way that I can get enlightenment without going on a vegetarian diet, where I can eat meat, hamburgers, and fish; where I can smoke, take drugs whenever I want just for the experience, and I can do all kinds of things that I want?'

5. International four-day retreat, Washington D.C., U.S.A., December 25, 1997 (Originally in English).

6. International four-day retreat, Washington D.C., U.S.A., December 23, 1997 (Originally in English).

Because God has given me free will, why should I not do this, not do that? Then I cannot do anything! Is there any better way, like having no need for a vegetarian diet, no need for the five precepts, and even no need for meditation? Is there any better way, any quicker and more convenient way?' The Master said, 'I will tell you if I find such a thing later.' [Laughter]

If I find some way that requires no effort, no meditation, no vegetarian diet, and no precepts, then you can just get enlightenment for nothing. If I ever find such a thing, I'll tell you. For now, we have to be satisfied with some humble efforts on your part, like the vegetarian diet, the five precepts, the meditation, and some other efforts like group meditation and adhering to the teachings of the old Masters, like Jesus, Moses, Buddha, and Mohammed. No matter whom you choose, they are the same teachings that you will have to exercise here because other Masters haven't found anything better. I too cannot find anything better for you except all this that I'm telling you.

You read any bible, the Christian bible, the Vedas, the Buddhist bible, the Koran, the Sikh's bible, the Granth Sahib, they say the same thing. There's only one way to enlightenment, and that's the correct way. There's only one way to live our lives, and that's the virtuous way. There's only one way to be yourself, and that's the noble way. We cannot be animals and then become God-realized at the same time. Even though animals have a God nature, their God nature is sleeping. So, when we want to go to the higher levels of our true selves, we have to do a little bit of trimming.

Last month when I was invited to India, I told some of the Indian people there – our disciples and some others – that we are all God. Even stones have God nature. We've all heard that everything comes from God, and nothing that is a being is not from God. We all know that.

But now as human beings, we have the opportunity to climb to a higher level of God consciousness, that's all. The reason why we do not exercise our free will to do anything absolutely the way we want is because by doing that we will stay here at the lower level, the lower half of the scale; and the other half of the scale of God consciousness, we will not know.

We're all here already, and that's why we do not continue to do anything we want, like committing crimes, taking drugs, alcohol, and meat. Whatever you like, that you can do, because we have free will; but that is the lower scale of God consciousness. We are here already, we know it already, we have experienced it already, and we don't want it anymore. We want something that is elevated, and that is why we have to forsake the lower way of living. That's all.

It's not that because you live in a lower way, you're not God. You are, by all means; we all are God. Even animals are God; trees are also God-made and a part of God. We are even more so, a part of God, but nevertheless, we have sunk to a lower level of consciousness.

Attain the complete self by our free will

In order to know the complete self, the whole, the total God, we have to know the other half. It's not that we can do everything and then we'll become a total God. No. Up to now, we've already done everything there is that we shouldn't do; and we know only the other lower half of the nature of God. That's why we suffer, that's why we can't think straight, that's why we don't know what to do for the best, that's why our life is such a mess and in

misery, and the world is as it is: Suffering, war, fear, and a lack of everything, even material comforts.

We don't need to do that anymore. If we want to know the whole being of ourselves, the whole God, the sum and total of God, then we have to learn to know the other half, the higher half. That's the reason why we should not commit all kinds of so-called 'lowly actions' of physical existence and we should forsake the eating of meat and the taking of intoxicants that muddle our head and blur our vision, such as alcohol, drugs, cigarettes and the like.

It's not that you cannot do what you want, or that I'm strict, or God is strict and says, 'Oh, you have to be vegetarian or you'll go to hell!' It's not like that. It's all our free will that we want to know the total God now, from the day that we got initiated and we vowed to be a more noble being. That's all our own free will.

Sometimes we get mixed up, thinking, 'If I'm God, you're God, everyone is God, then we're free to do what we want. Everything is God anyhow, so what's the problem? Why do we have to be vegetarian? Why do we have to keep the precepts? Why do we have to do this, do that? It's more noble? What for? Everything is God anyhow.' Everything is God, but we do not know everything yet. We only know the lower level of physical existence, the physical manifestation of God, and that is why we have to know the other half in order to be totally God, to be one with God. It's not that everything is forbidden to you, but you do it with your own free will. Now do you understand? [Applause]

If we don't understand this, we get very mixed up, and we will be very confused. There are so many teachings on the whole planet, and more at the astral level. At the upper levels, there are other teachings and if you go and encounter some of the devas and heavenly beings, they will teach you something else. So, we have to know the basis of why we want to be enlightened, why we have to be more noble, be more Godlike. It is because the other half of God is a higher consciousness. It's more noble. It has more wisdom, and it's the other half of ourselves that we are missing. We have to attain that other half in order to be whole, to be wholesome, to be total, to be what we truly are.

That's the purpose of enlightenment, of being more moderate in our way of life, being modest, being humble, being noble, and walking in the way of beauty, in the way of glory, and in the way of Truth. It's not that if we eat meat, we are not God, or that God can do anything He wants. Yes, He can, but we are only half-God, yet. [Master laughs.] We are God, but we only know half. We're half-God until we totally know the other half, then we become one with God.

THE TRUE MEANING OF AHIMSA ⁷

Reverends, Maharajis, Matajis, dignified officers, and high ranking representatives of the government of India, thank you for your blessing.

Thank you so much for having patience with a good student like me. When we made our acquaintance yesterday, you were very happy with me as a good student of Indian philosophy. So, I showed up again, as requested, out of the kindness of the organizers. Today, I am making another exam report to you, my gurus. I hope you will find it acceptable.

7. The world convention on reverence for all life, Pune, India, November 23, 1997 (Originally in English).

As you know when you teach us students you want feedback on whether the students have understood your teachings or not, and you always make an exam so that you can measure the progress of the students. So, here you are; here's my progress report. Please give me a good grade. Anyhow, today I'm reporting to you about ahimsa.

Three dimensions of ahimsa

There are three dimensions to ahimsa. The first, and the most obvious, is the physical dimension. The second is the mental dimension, where emotions are included. The third is the spiritual dimension. So, ahimsa, in my humble opinion, is not only non-killing and non-harming of sentient beings or our fellow human beings, but also protecting their lives. Not only just being negative or inactive, like passive, like, 'Okay, I don't kill, I don't scold, don't cause harm physically but protect.' And about these things the Indian people know very well what to do. So, I'm not going too far in this.

So, we go to the mental level. Second is the emotional aspect, our mental aspect. Suppose we cause harm to anyone, including ourselves, emotionally or mentally; that, according to my very humble understanding, is also ahimsa. So, ahimsa means we try not to hurt anyone emotionally, deliberately; of course, we cannot avoid it when we do not understand what the other people's feelings are, and then that is excusable. Whenever we can, we try to avoid. This probably goes a very long way; actually, the whole precept of Hinduism consists of five or ten precepts, including not stealing, not telling of lies, no sexual abuse, no intoxication and all that. I think it all boils down to the word 'ahimsa.' For example, taking intoxicating substances, and then hurting other people's feelings and causing them sorrow, worries and anxieties, that is also ahimsa.

Suppose we take another's spouse without consent of the other spouse I don't know, I don't interfere in other people's private lives; but without consent, we would cause sorrow, troubles and pain to the other spouse, and in turn, also cause a lot of mental distress, emotional upset to the children and to whomever are concerned in that family. So, I guess that's also called ahimsa. That's why Indian philosophy always emphasizes ahimsa. This is the mental and emotional aspect.

As to the spiritual aspect, suppose if we do not understand the teachings of a great sage from ancient times, and we try to interpret them in a wrong way to suit our own purpose, our personal gain, may it be political, may it be financial, may it be fame and glory, whatever. That is also ahimsa, because we cause people to regress in their spiritual practice. We cause people to degrade themselves and lessen their glory in the eyes of the Lord, lessen their own Godly quality. That is the greatest ahimsa in my very, very humble opinion. Please tell me if I'm wrong. [Applause] Thank you.

There is a great teacher in India, I've forgotten his name, who tells one joke like this. One time he told his students to tell him how high the wall in front of them was. So, everyone quickly wrote on a paper a report to him, saying, 'It's about two meters and a half.' Everyone said 'about' or 'approximately' and the teacher said, 'You have all answered wrong. The correct answer is 'I don't know'.' That's true. When we don't know, we say we don't know. When we know, we say we know, and that is knowing.

So, whatever I learn from great Indian sages of the ancient or the modern times, whatever I understand, I tell the people that is the thing I understand and know, and you can take it or leave it. And if I don't understand the other thing, I say, 'I have to study more, and when I understand, I will come back to you.' This is very cautious, because I don't want to cause

ahimsa in the spiritual aspect. I think this is more detrimental than emotional ahimsa or physical ahimsa. Isn't that right sirs and madams? Yes? Thank you.

The method, which emphasizes the inner Light and Sound, is the best way to communicate with God

I'm done with the first part. The second part is that life is joyful. Every religion emphasizes that heaven is here and now on earth. Right now if we know it, if we get in touch with God inside, we're joyful all the time. Heaven is here. That's correct; that's true. But that true joy is, if we are connected with God. That's what the Indian sages always tell us, 'Go inside. Meditate inside.'

You can meditate on a mantra, you can meditate on God's name, you can kiss the stones, perhaps, or kiss the plants, whatever, so that you can get in touch with God. Whatever your way is fine. He doesn't say you have to do things in a particular way. But through my search, through my spiritual thirst for wisdom – I went all over the place, learned with many teachers – I found that the methods imparted by the Indian sages of olden times and the modern time are the best.

The ones that emphasize the inner Light and Sound, they're the quickest. If you meditate on all the mantras or have another concentration, you will see the Light and hear Sound, too. But if you meet a Master who can impart it to you directly, quickly open the door, you'll see it right away. You don't have to make so much effort. From then on, you continue all the time. That's what I was fortunate enough to have imparted to me. I'm just reporting to you. You know already, anyhow.

So, after that, we have choice. We have choice all the time, but righteous choice, noble choice; choice, but not hurting other people, choice but not at the expense of other people; the choice of being faithful to your wife and husband, and knowing truly that the spouse is God, and hurting others is truly hurting yourself; because you have the choice of knowing God, and you know that you have to behave like God. That's what my teacher taught me. That's how I experienced it through my own humble journey in search of the true wisdom.

Men and women are different than animals. The animals they just eat, sleep, and have sex. They don't have any knowledge about morality, obligation. They might have love between mates, some of them do, and very faithful. But many animals are not like men and women; they don't have the higher consciousness of God. We're all God, like our reverend, minister and other distinguished speakers before us. We all have God inside, we're all God, even stones and all that. But different beings are bestowed with different levels of consciousness, and human beings are the highest in this consciousness. So, human beings behave like God; animals do not. We are human, so we have a distinguished difference – we have love.

Sex with love is different than sex just for enjoyment, in my humble opinion, because God is joy, God is love. But God is not hurting others. Suppose we take the spouse of other people and have sex for physical enjoyment. That is okay with God. God does not judge us, but how about the other one? We hurt her, we hurt him, and we don't like that. As God we want to represent the highest, the noblest idea of divinity, and that's why we choose to live righteously. We live the life of ahimsa. We choose it, because we know that we are God, not that God will judge you. You can do what you want, of course; you can have fifty wives, fifty husbands, God will never say anything. But is that the way we want to represent God? I don't think so.

Love on the higher level is for all humanity. You can love fifty women, you can love five hundred, you can love fifteen million galaxies of inhabitants, but it's different than personal love. There are two levels, personal and impersonal. On the personal, we have to take care of our family, love our spouse and children, and discharge our duty the best we can. That's personal. On the impersonal, we have to serve human beings with a very, very undiscriminating and unconditional love.

That's what the sages of India, for thousands of years, since the beginning of creation, have been teaching us, and have been showing as an example. The sages are the embodiment of love and unconditional sacrifice. They would not teach us ever to harm other sentient beings in the spirit of ahimsa. That is the three dimensional level of ahimsa. On the other hand, of course, God gives us free will.

Keep noble and pure

So, there is another point that I have just noted from the other speakers before. They all tell us to live righteously – all of these speakers, the distinguished ones here. So, why should we do that? If God doesn't judge us, if God is undiscriminating, you can do what you want, that's true. This is the only life, perhaps, that you know; why worry about moral obligation, about loving responsibility, about being faithful, about being loving, kind? Just enjoy!

Enjoyment is fine, but enjoy in a noble way, not in the animal way. That's what the sages tell us. We can do anything we want and degrade ourselves to the animal level; that's our absolute right. But is that the way we want to live? I don't think the sages of India taught us, ever, this way. Am I right? [Audience nods in agreement.] Thank you.

There's another point about why we have to keep ourselves noble and pure. Because people can see us – the seers, the sages and the pure in heart can see our aura. If we do something right, we are God-realized, we are God-loving and one with God, our aura is golden, is brilliant. If we do something wrong – we hurt other people emotionally, physically, mentally or spiritually – our aura is dark. People can see us, so we cannot cheat. That's why we have to keep ourselves beautiful. Yeah, like me. [Laughter and applause.]

I don't know what my aura looks like so I tried to make it golden with the Indian embroidery. I don't have a very good habit of wearing this, but I try hard. That's why I came late; please forgive me. I had to walk like a fair lady...

So, as much as we put on make-up, we put on ties and beautiful dresses to represent God to the world, outside, we must also put on make-up, a beautiful dress of purity, Godliness and holy love, inside, so that we can represent the true God within us.

Thank you very much for your patience. [Applause] End of the report. Please give me a 'ten.'

THE RIGHT WAY ⁸

There's only one way to live our lives, and that's the right way. There's no other way. The choices in our lives make us God or anti-God, even though Indian philosophy teaches us that we're all God, and God is within us. But if we make the wrong choice, we go in the

8. The world convention on reverence for all life, Pune, India, November 22, 1997 (Originally in English).

opposite direction. God creates both light and darkness, good and evil, so that we'll be able to understand, to know, to exercise our wisdom to choose the right way. Some of us tend sometimes to give in to weakness and forget that the price of strength, the price of honoring our own ideal is greater than material gain, much, much greater. We have to strive for that. We have to honor ourselves by choosing the right way.

God gives us free will; of course, He never says, 'You must do this, and you must do that or I will punish you.' Punishment comes from us, comes from our own conscience. We know what's wrong and what's right, and when we do something wrong and don't feel good, that's our punishment. It's worse than hell when our conscience feels very, very bad about what we've done. And when we feel good about it, that means we're doing God's will. So, He gives us the free will to choose, and lets us remind ourselves and the world that we have to choose His way. That's the only way to represent ourselves if we think that we're God.

THE IMPORTANCE OF KEEPING THE PRECEPTS ⁹

Those people who don't want to follow me to practice should just try to remain vegetarians and keep the five precepts in order to come back in human form again. The five precepts are good for people to come back as human beings, whereas one could end up becoming something else lower than human beings, if one goes below these precepts. It is like going to school. There are elementary schools and high schools. Based on which standard are we able to be qualified for elementary school? And which standard for high school, which standard for college?

There are also gifted students who are able to jump directly to college from high school and it is also possible that some jump directly to college from elementary school. They are very few in number, like those who have become completely enlightened. They are still young and they also have practiced for years, but the reason that they became saints is that they are gifted. The gifted saint, [Master laughs.] not wooden statue of a saint. [Master is playing with words.]

For example, in following Supreme Master Ching Hai, practice is just too hard, sitting is just too long for us, and we have to be a vegetarian. Then just keeping the five precepts is fine. It means no killing; no telling lies; no committing adultery, only one husband and one wife; no drinking alcohol and gambling; and so on. Then one will, someday, be able to come back as a human being again. It's not that I am threatening or forcing you to keep the precepts for me. It's just the law of nature.

If we are able to keep the precepts ourselves then even if we do not practice to become saints or Buddhas, we are entitled to come back as human beings living healthy and happy lives with less suffering. If we are unable to keep the precepts, our standard is indeed lower than that of human beings and then we'll come back as other beings, for example, animals, ghosts, demons and the like. They are one level lower than human beings. If we are above the five precepts and we continue our practice to keep many other more subtle precepts, then we are entitled to become saints or Buddhas.

For example, sometimes we think that if we do not go to bed with just anyone and by not going to bed with another person's wife, we assume that we have not violated any precepts. But it is not so. Having that thought alone or just a lustful look is already a violation, if we do it deliberately. The degree of violation is less when we do it

9. Group meditation, Los Angeles Center, California, U.S.A., July 13, 1997 (Originally in Aulacese).

unintentionally. But it is not that we don't commit any violation at all. It is also considered a violation but of a lesser degree.

When we are already married and have children but we still intentionally use our words to seduce others, entice others with our eyes or invoke something impure in our hearts, that alone makes us violate the precepts; since violations include thoughts, speech and actions and not actions alone.

Thought creates speech and speech creates action. If we don't have any thoughts, we are unable to say anything. Without thoughts, our body would not be able to act. Therefore, there are three kinds of violations. The delicate ones are from our mind. The coarser ones are in our actions. And when we add our words, it's finished. Hence, we should be careful at all times. If we want to come back as a human being, we must keep the precepts properly.

I'm not saying not to touch anyone's hand or foot, not to kiss anyone, then it means I have not violated any precepts. It's still considered a violation anyway, if we intentionally have desired thoughts and constantly look at others with lustful eyes everywhere we go. We indeed commit a violation. It is because we have trained ourselves into bad habits.

Our thoughts are recorded in our body cells

Our minds automatically follow the created path and continue on their way. Then it is more difficult for us to restrain them. Whatever the mind thinks, the body will follow. This is because our cells record all the things dictated by our minds. It records all the things that our minds have focused on. It then lives in our genes, our cells, in the structure of our bodies. Then it accumulates more and more each day and is difficult to be cleansed away.

Therefore, you see that it is tough for people who are alcoholics to give it up. The more they drink, the harder it is for them to stop. When people smoke, it becomes a habit, which urges them to smoke constantly. The mind has already registered it: 'Eh, how come there is nothing today? Each day I record exactly how many milligrams of nicotine have been consumed, so how come we have nothing today?' Then it continues asking. It becomes a habit. It's just like the extramarital affairs between a man and a woman, which could become a bad habit, a habit of being indecent, being seductive.

It is natural that our bodies keep demanding these things. Sometimes since it has accumulated too much, our whole body, all our cells continue having the craving for these things. At that time, our mind is so weak that it is unable to fight back. Thus, we keep falling down on that road. The more we fall, the more we are dragged down. When it gets too heavy we are unable to stand up again. Then one has to come back. One must come back as a human being in order to satisfy the insatiable desires. Not until he has been beaten up, struck down, and unbearably buried, is he able to open his eyes, able to get tired of it, and able to stand on his feet. It could take a long time, a few hundred years even.

We should train ourselves to be alert right away

Therefore, when our minds induce us into doing such things, we must alert ourselves; we must wake ourselves up at once and immediately recite the holy names. We must quickly get back on the right path, and then it'll go away. Otherwise, if we keep obeying our mind to do this and that, we'll be dragged down with it. Even if we practice meditation, it'll be a

waste of effort. We only meditate two and a half hours a day, and we may not be able to sit long enough anyway.

However, if all day long we drag ourselves down with such thoughts, then we will, indeed, go down. It drags us for twenty one or twenty two hours while we drag it for only two and a half hours counting the time in which we nod our head back and forth. It is not long enough at all. Two and a half hours is meant for us to train ourselves into living a life of purity. We no sooner have adequately trained ourselves then it drags our whole being away. Therefore, we are unable to catch up.

We also go outside and eat carelessly, eat the wrong food. We eat anything that resembles vegetarian food. Since we are not yet purified, we won't be able to tell the difference. When our level of purity is higher, then we'll be able to tell the difference immediately upon tasting it. When our stomach reacts to something, we will later vomit or our body will feel uneasy. Then we quickly know that we have eaten something impure during the day. Or during our meditation in the evening, we'll have horrible or low level experiences. We also quickly know why. Or else, the inner Master will come and tell us that we have eaten something impure during the day. For example it's like that.

When we are able to see the inner Master, we are already at a high level. Otherwise, how could She come and tell if we were not able to see Her at all. We were there ourselves but heard nothing. Truly, Master is with us twenty-four hours a day. However, since we are blind and deaf, we can't hear anything. We just listen to the bad recordings of our minds. If everyone was able to hear the inner voice of Master, then there would be no one who would violate the precepts, no one who would be prone to seduction.

I give everyone the opportunity to fight for themselves. If I happened to choose them, then there would not be many left who would be able to sit here. Even the high level practitioners could be affected by others when going outside. There is also the surrounding magnetic field. There are many kinds of things around, so practicing is not always easy. It's not only that spiritual practice is already difficult for us, if we bring more trouble to ourselves then we are finished.

Even God and saints are helpless. It's not that we violate the precepts then someone will do us harm. We lower our level ourselves, and thus someday we will have to pull it up ourselves. It is like a student who fails to study hard and makes trouble in school or something. He will definitely stay in the same grade or be kicked out of school. Thus, he will have to come back to school again after he is fed up. We have to start from the beginning; we have to prove to the teacher that we are okay now.

You should take care of yourselves. Try to remain vegetarian and keep the precepts. Sometimes if we practice diligently, we will know immediately if we have unintentionally eaten any meat based foods. When we go home, we may find a lot of pimples on our face. If not, ghosts may come and pull our feet during sleep at night. We may see nothing but total darkness during our meditation. We might become ill, with a stomachache and headache.

We may be angry at Master for no reason. [Master laughs.] It's true; you can check with the people who have fallen in their faith. I can tell you that ninety-nine percent of it is due to eating wrong food or violating the precepts. Gradually, you may leave me completely, because they are two opposite paths and the more we walk on them, the farther they are away from each other. Even if we don't leave each other, how can two people, one heading north, the other heading south, be able to meet each other again?

It's not that you leave me at all, you just separate yourself from your self by yourself. Since the two magnetic fields are different, it's not possible for us to like each other. It is referred to as like attracts like. If people walk a different road then sooner or later they'll leave us. Therefore, the people who left me are, in fact, not leaving me at all; they're just leaving their own selves. They leave behind their ideal, their vow; they leave behind the path of honor, the gracious path that they selected in the past in favor of the other in darkness, with no end in sight, the road that has no future.

Of course, everyone has his own right to choose, and no one is able to force another against his own will. Therefore, during the initiation I never forced you to follow this path for the rest of your life at all. No coercion whatsoever. I gave advice and that's all I did. I advised that you stay on the beautiful road that you chose. Otherwise, if we choose to walk on the other road then it'd be all wrong. We'd be distanced from each other later on.

Therefore, you should know immediately those who have left me. First, they are back to being meat eaters. Second, they violate the precepts. The magnetic field is different by itself, because our bodies are representative of what we have eaten.

For example, when we eat animal based foods, the food itself is contaminated with poison, which comes from the animal when being killed. We become toxic and ill as well. This is only the physical aspect. The spiritual aspect is different. The consciousness of an animal is different from that of human beings. Plant or vegetable based foods are less conscious and are unlike that of the animal, which is too strong. Because the animals themselves also desire to live and are afraid to die, they have their own stronger magnetic field.

Therefore, they know how to walk, how to mate, how to love each other, and how to fight each other because of the opposite sex. They also know how to fight for their material possessions, their own sanctuary, whereas, trees or plants never engage in this kind of fighting. They belong more to the static group. They stand still. They only rely on the wind to carry their pollen to each other so that they'll be able to blossom and bear fruit.

Animals are more active. They naturally search for the opposite sex in order to have their offspring. So, they also have their own jealousy, their own possessive nature which is extremely cruel. The carnivorous ones are more cruel. For example, the elephant, the rabbit or that kind only bite back or attack us when they get over irritated. As for the tigers, no need to say. We don't need to annoy them, they annoy us. They look for us to have a bite to eat. If not, they look for other animals. For example, it's like that.

Animal qualities and magnetic fields affect us

Therefore, by eating plant based foods, our karmic burden will be less. By eating vegetables, we don't consume with it the cruelty found in animal foods. And now, the animals, due to their magnetic field and their beastly nature, must remain animals. Their intelligence is different than that of human beings. Their emotions and reactions are different because they are only animals. Thus, an animal has its own body structure, magnetic field and its own level of consciousness.

If we happened to eat its meat, its level would obviously be mixed with ours. If we continue to eat more, someday the animal qualities will become greater than the human ones and we will have to become animals. It is so clear that there is no need to be superstitious; there is no need to refer to Buddhism or the law of cause and effect by which one reincarnates into different species.

For example, there is a glass of pure water, nothing in it. Then you drop something like a few drops of ink in it and the water still remains clear. If you continue putting four, five, six, seven drops of ink in the water, then a moment later the whole glass will become as dark as the ink itself. It is turning into ink, because the more drops of ink we have will make it become ink. We can write with this ink, because the ink nature is different from water.

Similarly, human beings' qualities are different from those of animals. If we absorb too many animal qualities, later we will become animals ourselves. At least eighty percent of our being would become like that. With roughly seventy percent, it will make us become an animal for sure, because the animal portion is more than that of human after all. For example, with sixty to seventy percent we still remain a human being, but we have more animal qualities. Therefore, you see many people that appear to have animal qualities. They don't have human virtues. We can refer to them as that sir or this madam who happens to commit murder, theft, fraud, or tells lies just like singing a song every day. It has become a bad habit. They are human beings with too many animal qualities.

Meanwhile, there are animals, which, regardless of their being animal, have intelligence, wisdom and emotions that slightly resemble those of human beings. It is possible because of their human qualities. They happen to possess more of them than other animals. With eighty percent animal qualities they will behave more animal than human. Whereas, animals that possess human qualities, roughly forty or forty-five percent, will become half man, half beast. That's why we see them being so intelligent, so emotional.

There are also people who resemble animals because they have trained themselves to be like an animal. They learn to act like animals. They are unable to control their animal qualities. They accumulated too much day after day, so someday they definitely will be an animal themselves. Even if they became human beings, they would not be much like a human being at all. They would not have the personality of good, decent people. They would not feel ashamed of doing anything immoral.

Then you already understand. [Applause] It's not that I am forcing you to keep this or that precept in a coercive way. It's only my advice. The wisdom, the ancient and secretly kept methods of spiritual practice have been left behind by the enlightened Masters. The law of evolution in the universe is just like that. If we know this law of nature, we'll live an easy life. If we don't violate any law then we should not be afraid of any kind of punishment. That's all.

Just like living in the United States of America we should know the laws of this country. If we drive recklessly, we will be caught by police and our driving privileges be suspended for a year, for example. We are already aware of the law but we still violate it. Sometimes we can get away with it but it is also difficult. We can do it once or twice, but if we keep doing it as a bad habit, someday we won't be able to get away with it anymore.

We should control ourselves so that we can be our own masters

Whenever we violate the precepts, we should quickly stand up. Then at least we are violating the precepts in the mind only, not in a physical way. If we physically violate them, then there won't be any way to fix it. Don't say that I am strict with you. It is not so. You can do anything you want anyway since it is your life. Freedom of choice. But we should know that each choice has its own consequence. Don't think that because I have chosen this I am great, I am free. It's not freedom. We have the freedom to murder, to steal, and also the freedom to go to jail. [Applause]

Therefore, on this earth, no one has the right to forbid others at all, because everyone is Buddha, is part of God. But we should know our Godly quality, our Buddha nature. We should live in accordance with Buddha's, God's standard to be able to come back, to control ourselves in order to become our own master.

Becoming a teacher, not a teacher of others, but a teacher of your own 'self' is indeed difficult. Being a teacher of others is quite easy. Since ancient times, every enlightened Master has become his own teacher. By becoming a teacher of your own 'self,' others will automatically be attracted by our magnetic field and power. If we just kept on talking, no one would believe in us. Our actions speak louder than our words. Emerson, an American philosopher, once said that: 'What you are doing speaks so loudly that I can not hear what you are saying.'

If you like me, it's because you like yourself, you wish to become like that. Feeling this way is correct, it's the way we want to live our lives. Therefore, what we like is the true nature of that person, not his physical form. We like what he does, what he represents. Just like when we fall in love with someone, it could be that we are first attracted by that person's physical appearance. But after having lived together for quite a while, we are then attracted by that person's love, nice character and way of living, not the physical appearance anymore. We would get used to watching the physical appearance every day, so we would get bored of watching it all the time no matter how good looking it was. [Applause]

A REPEATED REMINDER ¹⁰

We begin our journey after initiation. You will find definitely that your life begins to take a turn for the better. Even after the convenient method, if you practice for a while, you will also feel your life change, much better than before. Is that not right? [Audience: Yes.] That's why you came for more. Today, you have been introduced to more than before and, of course, the blessing, the happiness will be manifold more. You will enjoy a much better, smoother, peaceful life. Everything that was too difficult for you before, becomes easier. All the problems that you could not solve before, you can solve them now, much easier, quicker and more clearly. So, just take time to do your meditation every day.

Be careful what you eat so that you do not contaminate yourself, make the cells become confused, make the brain confused, as these will consequently hinder your spiritual progress. It's not that God cares what we eat. But if we poison our systems by intoxicating things, or impure food such as meat or animal products, then our cells – the cells of the body and the brain cells – will also become contaminated and confused. Thus, we will not be able to think clearly and we will not be able to sit calmly in order to find the source of our happiness and wisdom. We have to sit calmly; not only sit but practice daily. Daily activities would be more calm and more inward, so that we can contact with the real source of our Godlike quality. From there, we take care of every daily problem and pain, and make it become happiness.

If we confuse our cells, brain, blood, the 'sentimental department' will be also confused. Then we cannot think straight anymore and when we sit in meditation, we'll become very restless, agitated. Even if we can sit well in meditation, our vision would be clouded with negative influences from the poisonous things that we have taken into our bodies. So, it's not that God cares what we eat, I care what you eat, or whether you eat a little meat then you go straight to hell. It's not true. Just that if we want to be Godlike, we must care about

10. Group meditation, Los Angeles Center, California, U.S.A., July 6, 1997 (Originally in English).

everything we do, that everything we eat is pure, so that we become pure also – body, speech and mind.

I do not care what you eat; but whatever you eat will affect your meditation practice, your mood, your temperament, your personality, your character, your value of life. Everything is hanging on that. As long as we are in the material world, every material thing affects us. That's why we must take care to eat pure foods, foods that have less karmic burden, that have less suffering for our sake.

Animals suffer a lot. They fear death; they cling to life; and if they're forced to die prematurely for us, of course, their fear, their hatred are retained in the flesh that we eat. That's why we've become aggressive, agitated, discontented and sometimes violent, like the feelings of the animals before they died.

Plants also have feelings – not really feelings just reactions; but they don't have that much of a life span, as long as the animals. The fear in plant is not so intense. Besides, they can grow again. You cut one branch of a tree and it grows another two, three branches sometimes. So, if we cut some trees, it's all right. But plant more trees, or we cut a branch and let it grow three more, it is okay. We don't worship nature, we use it, and we also protect it for our sake. Human beings must always come first.

Some people are very fanatic. They say, 'Okay then we don't eat plants because plants also have life.' I say, 'Okay then go die.' We don't worship fanaticism, we do everything in a middle way, a very mild manner. Just the same in the way we behave – we don't meditate all day. We meditate two and a half hours only. We discharge all our duties first, then we are peaceful, then we can sit for meditation.

You don't have to sit and meditate two and half hours one stretch; just one hour maybe, and if you're tired then get up. In the morning, meditate more; or the next time, when you're not too tired, then meditate a little bit more. Then it adds up. Two and a half or three hours, it's okay. But sometimes when you get together for one or two weeks or a few days, you can meditate all day. That's also good for you. That's to compensate for those days that you missed or you didn't meditate enough.

So, everything we have introduced is helpful to you, very beneficial. There are no rules, no regulations and not really any precepts. They are just a noble way to live our lives, because if everyone lived their life the way you do, this world would be a paradise. It would be truly like that.

We have a lot of wars and trouble, disasters in the world, because most of us don't live the beautiful way that God intended us to live. Most of us don't live the Godlike quality that we have within ourselves. We bury the God quality and develop the worldly qualities too much; so our lives are very unbalanced, everything becomes more materialistic and it in turn, invites disaster and competition. Through competition, wars and conflicts arise internationally.

So, the way we walk our lives is the best way, the noblest way, the way that everyone should walk. But not everyone does walk, and that is one pitiful fact of this world. I'm just telling you this to remind you that the way you have chosen from today to walk your life is perfect, so try to remember, remind yourself to continue this way. The old initiates also try to remember that the way you have chosen is perfect. There's no better way, no better choice to live our lives than like the way we do now. Doesn't matter what other choices you make, you would suffer. So, the only choice we can have is here, the way we do; the way

we practice spiritual wisdom; the way we refrain from negativity; the way we control our lives, make them become noble and purposeful. There's no other choice. Even if you want to make another choice, it's no good for you, you know that. That's why you should stay and you know you would.

I'm just telling that this way is the best choice that you have made and I hope that you stay with your choice, because it's good for us, good for the world, an exemplary life for everyone else to follow. We cannot wait for the neighbor to do it. We do first and then the neighbor will follow. From one person, many other persons will follow. But it started with only one, with me, so you could see the example. Who knows how many other thousands of lives will become more shining, more happy because of your one individual shining example?!

So, you are very important. One person is important, two persons more important, the whole group has a lot of importance to this world. Many wars will be avoided, many disasters will be minimized because of your spiritual energy, since the day you got initiation. You will notice, maybe even your neighborhood will become better, nicer looking; and you'll see some shining light around the road that you walk, around the trees, the flowers that you will enjoy, and everything will become better. Because of you, many other people will follow and enjoy the same benefits. So, I also thank you for joining us for the benefit of this planet. [Applause]

I wish all the best for you and God's blessing will be with you forever, that's for sure. That is for sure. [Applause]

WHAT IS THE USE OF MAGICAL POWER ¹¹

What is the use of us in having magical and psychic power so we can change a sick person into a healthy one, an ugly person into a beautiful one, but inside him still rotten, inside him still sick, inside him still ugly – plagued with all kinds of negative thinking, of ignoble ideals of the harmful kind of wishes unto other people and himself? What is the use if we know tomorrow what will happen to us and we try to avoid it, but just for one thing, and inside we have not changed? Next time the bad karma will also come and we cannot continue all our life avoiding bad things, because what will happen will happen, if we do not change from inside. If we change from inside, then we really will have changed.

Even if sometimes we are able to manage to change our bad luck into good luck all our life, suppose we have psychic power, we can always see the future – like tomorrow something will happen and we try to avoid it by doing this and that. Maybe tomorrow we will have a car accident, then we stay home, we don't drive the car. Or tomorrow someone will kill us at that corner, so we don't go that way, we go another way. Suppose we can manage to avoid accidents and bad luck all our life, how about next life? Next life we might not be human beings again, and we might not be allowed to even use psychic power, or we might not even be in favorable circumstances in which we can exercise our knowledge of psychic power. We might be in hell already. Who's going to help you to avoid the fire of this punishment?

The Masters, since ancient times, have always emphasized that we walk in beauty, we walk in virtues, and we walk in Truth. That is the only safeguard for us, because whatever we do affects us right away. Even if we do not understand, even if we try to deny it, even if we try to avoid it, it will come eventually. Unless we forsake everything, renounce the

11. Group meditation, Surabaya Center, Indonesia, March 19, 1997 (Originally in English).

whole world, go into the Himalayas, sit in a cave all alone, then probably nothing will happen to us. Nothing will happen to us this life, but next life it will come, because whatever has not been washed away will always be there.

Suppose you dirty your shirt – there's a fleck on it. Then you try to avoid looking at it, pretend that it didn't happen, pretend that the black spot doesn't exist, and you just put the shirt away. Do you think that it will disappear alone? The same with karma. Even if we try to avoid the outcome of our last life's bad or good deeds and we run away somewhere in a cave and sit there alone, next time we have to come back and pay.

The same with magical or psychic power. It can alter the situation, it can postpone the phenomenon of bad luck just for a while; but it's still there and it will come back later, maybe even stronger.

AS VEGETARIANS WE WOULD ATTRACT THE DEVAS, BODHISATTVAS, AND BUDDHAS TO COME TO OUR COUNTRY ¹²

Our food today is all free of charge. Anyone can just walk in, eat, and walk out. I have to thank the Thai fellow brothers and sisters for putting in a lot of effort to organize this special event. They have prepared over a thousand portions of food, for every interested person. The food is international. There is Thai food, Au Lac food, Chinese food, French food, what else? I mean, a lot more. And the chefs who cooked the food for you today are also from different countries. They flew in specially for you. Later, I think we will have the opportunity to taste this kind of delicious meal again in Thailand in different parts of the country.

Thailand is a Buddhist country, so I think vegetarianism is very suitable, because the Buddha always emphasized a peaceful way of life like ahimsa, means non-killing, not harming other sentient beings. So, a vegetarian diet is a Buddhist way of life and it will bring more peace, more prosperity, more harmony into this great kingdom of Asia.

Thailand is my favorite country. I told you many times already. I just wish the country even more and more prosperous, more and more peaceful in many aspects of life. The Buddha always emphasized that we should love all sentient beings as our brothers and sisters, as our relatives and friends. Vegetarianism is the way to show this love. The Thai people are famous for being loving and hospitable to the whole world. So, if we move one step further, like being a vegetarian, I think, we would attract even more. We'd attract devas, the Bodhisattvas, and the Buddhas in all the directions to come to our country.

Of course, the Buddha also said that if we didn't have anything to eat, we could have a kind of convenient meal, like if the meat has already been killed, or if the animal has already died, then we could eat the meat. But the Buddha said that if we have vegetarian food available, then we should follow the vegetarian diet. Nowadays, the vegetable, vegetarian food is easily available to everyone, especially in Thailand, because Thailand is rich in many aspects, everything grows in abundance in Thailand. So, there is a good reason for us to return to the natural diet and the more loving kindness way of life like the vegetarian food and the non-killing diet.

I'm not going to take very long, because we wish you to enjoy the food, that we have prepared for you with our love and our sincerity. You will see for yourself that vegetarian foods are really delicious and nutritious. I can say even more nutritious and more delicious

12. International retreat, Bangkok Center, Thailand, January 20, 1997 (Originally in English).

than the meat diet; and it's bloodless. When we eat vegetarian food, afterwards we feel very light, no conscience, no burden of guilt. We feel like we are full of life and full of vitality again, to do anything we want.

I think a lot of Thai people, especially the Bangkokians, already are very familiar with the vegetarian diet. Because one of your governors, one of the most famous, Kun Chamlong was vegetarian. I think, we also have to thank Mr. Chamlong for bringing this healthy and loving way of life into the Thai society. I'm not his fan, I don't know him personally. But sometimes I buy food from his restaurants. Everyone who is a vegetarian is also my special friend.

Many other people also have made an effort to bring this healthy and loving kind of way of life into Thai society. But I think Mr. Chamlong was one of the pioneers and the most enthusiastic and ardent believer in the vegetarian diet. I'm not here to advertise for him, since he already lost his campaign for governor. I just want to thank him, purely from a vegetarianism standpoint; because, many years ago, when I first came to Thailand, I had nowhere to go for vegetarian food. These few years, when I've come back to Thailand, everywhere I can eat vegetarian food. This is due to Mr. Chamlong, one of the pioneers in introducing vegetarianism into Thailand. That's why I especially thank him and anyone else I don't know today. I think, if more people were vegetarians, our society would be less violent, more peaceful and more loving. And people would learn to live a simple, natural, healthy and more Buddhist way of life.

I think you can read more information about the vegetarian diet and the short introduction in the menu that we have given to you. Anymore questions I think you could contact our people or Mr. Chamlong's people. We are not together, so don't misunderstand! It doesn't matter, you can ask. If you have more interest or more questions about vegetarian food, we are willing to help you or anyone, any society, Thai vegetarian society, which is also very big, in Thailand, in Bangkok, you may contact them, contact us, contact Chamlong-society, whoever you prefer, to inquire more about vegetarian food and to taste, to sample what is nutritious and delicious – a way of life without any killing, without any blood, without any burdened conscience.

I'm not going to talk a lot, because maybe you like to eat better than to hear. Let's serve the food and go on with your program. Thank you. There is a lot of food, enough for everyone. Kopkunkaa! [Means 'thank you' in Thai.]

I didn't know she was here. Madam Chamlong. It's beautiful that she came. It's good that I said something good about Mr. Chamlong, I didn't say anything bad. We'll ask her to say something to us. Please. [Madam Chamlong speaks.] Kopkunkaa. It's the first time I have the honor to know Madam Chamlong. I'm very happy and honored. [Madam Chamlong: Thank You very much.] I hope next time I'll know your husband, too. Say hello to him.

LET THE LOVE FREE ¹³

To truly love someone is to set them free

I don't have to take you with me because you're too many. My heart... [Master laughs.] would break. It is already beginning to break now because you're going.

13. Group meditation, Los Angeles Center, California, U.S.A., December 30, 1996 (Originally in English).

Take care of yourselves. Take care of your family members like you would take care of me. That's the best way to serve God, because we cannot love everyone, really, I mean not personal love – so strong. So, at least we must love our family members. If they want to join us, it's all right; if they don't want to join us, it's all right because all of them are Gods, all of them are Buddhas (fully enlightened beings). There's no need for them to do anything they don't want to do. Same with you. We are all free.

Set yourselves free, set your family members free, in your heart only. But hold on to them because if you have a very nice family, very sweet relationship with your relatives and friends, you feel very happy. It's almost like heaven. Despite the fact that we meditate, we follow the precepts or if we're enlightened inside, in the physical existence we still need friends, we still need personal warmth and love. So, take care of your 'treasure' at home. Do not think that after you're enlightened, you don't need anyone. Even if you don't need, you must care because they need you. And that's why they're with you. The reason why we are together with someone is because there is an affinity, there is a necessity that we join together somehow to learn to love each other. If you cannot love a human being, maybe you just take care of a dog. Let him teach you how to love – unconditional love. The dog would not care whether you are a vegetarian or whether you eat hot dogs. He loves you all the same.

Similarly, we must have such devotion for our family members. After one week of separation, you will probably feel more closeness to them and more appreciation. That should be so. And that should continue every day of your life. Make every day special. Don't wait for your relatives or friends to treat you nicely. You treat them nicely. Why not? The problem with us is that we always wait for someone else to treat us nicely. Then we're disappointed and cry. We should be the ones to treat them nicely and the result would be obvious. You believe in karma, the cause and the consequence.

Perhaps in the beginning of your journey to your spiritual Home, you probably felt that maybe your family members didn't understand you. But you must understand them. If you think you are enlightened, you have better knowledge now and you've discovered all the knowledge inside, you must be the ones who understand your family members. So, no more complaints to me. They are all Buddhas. If they choose to stay here longer in this world to do their other work and their other training, their enjoyment, let them be. They don't all have to be vegetarians, and don't all have to practice meditation. Not everyone must do it. They do what they want.

Allow everyone to walk the path of their choosing

Everyone has freedom. The same as you have freedom to choose to walk this way, to walk in Truth, beauty and virtue, they have the freedom to choose to walk the other way. You must understand this, and no more quarrels. No more 'you-must-follow-me' kind of attitude. No one must follow anyone. We all have to follow ourselves, because we are the Buddhas, we are God's children. They follow themselves. That's the course of their lives. Some have a 'map' that they have charted for themselves before they descended into this world. You have no right to interfere into people's way of thinking and their choice of life-style; and not because of the different choice of life-style. We should not make a dispute between each other.

We can always have different opinions, but we can love each other – no problem. You can love birds, dogs, cats, elephants, all kinds of beings. They are different from you, are they not? They eat differently to you. If you love an elephant and you force it to eat tofu, that's ridiculous. That's unfair for it. It'll die.

In China there is a story about a king who loved a bird so much that he trapped the bird and put it in a golden cage studded with diamonds, rubies, sapphires, etcetera. Every day he fed it all kinds of delicacies that he loved like spare ribs, beef steak, hamburgers, McDonald's chips, Kentucky chicken. He also fed it whiskey, vodka, rum, etcetera, because these were the best things that the king could think of to offer to his most beloved pet. But as you know, birds don't drink whiskey. Or do they nowadays? No. Okay. And birds don't eat chicken. Birds only eat some kinds of grain, drink pure spring water, and sing and fly in all freedom with the vast sky above it and limitless universe around it. So, if the king loved the bird, he should have set it free. Let it be what it is – a bird. Let it chose what it wants to eat. Let it fly whenever it wants to fly. Let it sleep when night falls. It lives with nature and it's happy.

Similar to us, everything good for you might not be good for someone else. Vegetarianism, meditation – everything good for you because you like it, because it benefits you. But other people might not want to try. So, that's no reason for us to be distant from them. You must always show your love, doesn't matter how people treat us. It's how we treat people that is important. Why just criticize people all the time and say that they're no good, they're bad, they're cruel. Don't have to. We have to do what we want to do. Other people do what they want to do.

Make love a habit

There was an Indian Master. Once when he was crossing a river on a boat, he saw a scorpion – this is Indian folklore. The scorpion was drowning in the river. He extended his hand and tried to take the scorpion into the boat for safety. The scorpion stung him and he dropped it, crying: 'Ah! Ah, ah!' [Laughter] After a while, the Master put his hand back into the water and tried to rescue the poor drowning scorpion. But the scorpion stung him once more and he cried, 'Ah! Ah!' After a while, he extended his hand again into the water and tried to pick the scorpion up onto the boat for safety. Before he reached the scorpion, his disciple stopped him. 'Don't do that, Master.'

The Master said, 'Why, I want to rescue it.' The disciple said, 'It will sting you again, won't it?' The Master said, 'Yes, it will.' The disciple said, 'So, why are you rescuing it? You will only suffer again.' The Master said, 'The habit of the scorpion is to sting anything that touches it. It cannot change that. And my habit is to help anyone who comes in contact with me. I also cannot change that.' [Applause]

So, make a habit of always extending your loving kindness, doesn't matter how people treat you. You may be firm sometimes. Some people stubbornly disturb you sometimes with their misunderstanding, even though you have tried your best to explain. Nevertheless, never forget your loving kindness inside. And whatever way you can, and whenever possible, always extend this loving kindness from inside, because that is you, that's the real you, the unlimited love which is Godly. Because of the situation of the world, because of the hardships of life, of the trials and tribulations that we encounter daily, we tend to withdraw within ourselves and shield the love that we once had in abundance and lock it away somewhere.

From today, from the day of initiation, from any day, we must open that lock and let the love free. That is the only way to make your life happy. That's the only solution. If you ask me how to be happy, that's the only solution, unlocking the love within you and let everyone share it. It doesn't matter if he still locks his, she still locks hers, you open yours first and later, they will open theirs. No one is really a hard nut to crack. No one is truly very, very difficult and unrelenting inside. They just get 'stung' by the poison of life, so-

called contact with the difficult-to-exist world and they just close themselves and defend themselves all the time.

Just like an oyster. When you touch it, it closes. Even if you want to stroke it, comfort it, it just closes immediately out of habit. Just like a bird, if you shot it, wounded it before, every time it sees a bent tree or branches, it's afraid; it thinks it's a bow. But from now we already know. We know that even if we protect ourselves with the hard shell outside and lock our love inside, that won't make us happy. That won't protect us at all. We rather die happy than live miserably. [Applause]

Understand family members is important

Try to understand your family members, your husbands, your wives. If your husband is serious and rather hard to get on with, maybe his work is too demanding for him, taxing his energy and nerves. You find out what drags him down and maybe try to help him. Or maybe your wife, being a woman; being so delicate, so fragile, so pure, but because of the economic situation, she has to plunk herself into the harsh world of men, of competition, of power, hunger and fame searching. So, she feels less feminine than she should be. She feels more defensive and more tired, less passionate towards you. You also must find out how things affect her at work or anything that affects her. Then you help her, show your sympathy and understanding. That's how your love will grow stronger and stronger.

If you are parents, your children, when they grow through adolescence, they have a lot of changes in their hormones, in their bodies. They're clumsy, they are very, very anxious and scared about the changes from a child to an adult. It scares them. Unconsciously, they know they're going to face the world very, very soon and they are not sure whether they are ready for it. They're so pure, so weak inside, so fragile, like a newly hatched chick. Try to understand their difficulty in adapting, try not to be too harsh, not to be authoritative, too demanding; but talk to them, find out what is bothering them, what really makes them feel good. I cannot tell you all the details. You imagine the rest.

Like sometimes you have been married to each other for a long time, and you don't think you should buy your wife a rose anymore. You should! Not on her birthday, any day. Surprise her. Or take each other out for dinner. If the husband doesn't take you, then the wife takes. Yeah, take him to a candlelight dinner, buy him a rose, surprise him. See what an idiot he looks like, [Master laughs.] if he will look very surprised. You can see his reaction. Even the children, sometimes they follow Master Ching Hai and the parents forbid them and things like that. There's no need to worry. You just do your children's duty and then everything follows. Even if your parents don't like your Teacher, it's okay. It's not possible that everyone likes me, not possible.

I don't expect anything. You like me or not like me – it's up to you. I hardly have contact with the people that like me or not like me, the same. They like me, they come; don't like me, stay away. Very simple. But you must do the children's filial duty. Open the door for the mother – car door, house door – whenever you can, whenever you see. Move the chair out for her to sit on or push it back in. Don't let it stay there. When you go to restaurants, or even at home. Take care of the elderly in this way, and they will be touched by your love. They don't have to follow me. Your parents are independent individuals as well as your children, also independent souls.

They came to you for some reason, not necessarily to practice the same method with you. That might not be their reasons for coming to this world at this time. There are many reasons for human beings to be together, as family members, as husband and wife, as

sisters, brothers, friends and relatives, etcetera. Among them is to practice together. That's just one of the reasons, and it's not always included in all the reasons that you have to be together. So, if your family members are not willing to practice with you, let them be. Be kind to them, love them as usual. This you must do, if you say you follow me. That has been the only thing I've wanted since the beginning of my teaching up till the present day, and it will continue to be so.

If you cannot do this little thing, then don't ask me why your life is in trouble; why your family is not in harmony; why your relatives don't listen to you and respect your Master. You don't make a very good representative of mine if you don't serve them, you don't love them. Serve them and love them unconditionally, not with the thinking that 'Okay, I'm going to love her so she will follow Master Ching Hai.' No, that's also not unconditional. We have to do it because we must. We have to do it because that's the way it has to be. We have to do it because we have to represent love and nothing else. We have to do it because that's the only way, means and weaponry to destroy all hatred, all discomfort, all troubles in this world and in your small world as a family unit.

That's the only reason you must do it. Not because they have to follow me, not because they have to love you in return, not because they think you are great. No need for anything else, but to be loving for the reason itself.

Always listen to the inner Master

I know some of you still have some questions, which are all nonsense. Some of you older initiates know, in the beginning when you first get initiated you are eager to come and say, 'Mama, I want to ask this, ask that,' all the time. If you don't have the opportunity to ask me, or you had the opportunity to ask me, a few years, a few months later, you look back and see how ridiculous you were. There's no need at all to ask so much, because all the answers you get inside. You just look inside, because you are the master of yourselves, master from heaven. None of you are not a master. None of the people in this world are not the master.

If you really have questions and you want to ask me, you can write a letter, anytime. You can send to me or not send to me, but write it down; because as soon as you write it down, the answer will come. Listen to it, listen to your intuition, the inner voice, which is quietly telling you what you need, what you should do at every moment of your life. Just write down what you want to ask, formulate clearly what you want to know, and sit quietly for a moment and the answer will come. If you're too noisy and you couldn't get the answer yet, it will come later, when you're still, when you meditate. No problem. You are in God's hands. You are in your own destiny. There's nothing that can befall you. Besides, life is dangerous – it always ends deadly. So, nothing else to fear. We are already in a dangerous game. No one escapes it. In the end, we die.

You are already in it. Nothing else can make us fearful or afraid. We came with nothing, we will go with nothing. So, renunciation is a must, all the time. Must remember this. We might die tomorrow, or any second, so there's nothing really so important. Most of us are middle aged, like me – I mean I'm old for middle aged, but don't tell anyone this. I give us fifty more years, all right, sixty. And for the young people, I don't wish you to die so young. Stay there, do some work. When we are gone, nothing matters anymore. So, many things that have happened, that mattered to us so urgently – fifty years ago, forty years ago or thirty years ago, they don't matter anymore today, right? All the sorrow, all the sickness, all the sadness, all the impossible desires – gone. Similarly, fifty, sixty years from now, also

gone. Gone out of existence. Of course, we will begin in some other existence. But this existence will not matter to us at all once we've left.

Okay, I've talked too much. I wish you a happy journey home and a very lucky, prosperous, enlightened new year. [Applause]

Before you leave the hotel, don't forget to thank the staff members, whomever you meet. They took care of us so kindly and so understandingly, even though we are such a huge crowd. It scared them somewhat. It's good that you had a good record last time in Chicago. Maybe that's why they let you in. Otherwise, you'd be standing outside of the hotel, just reading the name only. This is a very high class hotel. For them to accept us like this, it's very generous, kind and trusting of the hotel management. We also wish them a happy new year. If you see any of them, just shake hands, good-bye. Oh! Too many thousands of people – don't shake hands. [Laughter] Just say, 'Happy New Year' if you can. If you cannot, pray for them inside your heart, and pray for everyone in America as well as the world. That's it. Love you. [Applause] Thank you. Sorry, you can never have enough of me. You never will. That's the way you are. See you. Remember, take care of your families. Thank you.

FULFILL OUR DUTY ¹⁴

I really tell you. It happens – it takes a lot of strong willpower from my part to keep you. Not your willpower alone. Because everything you do affects me. If someone wants you and they pray to me, I'm in trouble. I'm in trouble all the time. How about all these domestic problems. A husband wants to leave home – follow me – and the wife stays at home, lonely, praying to me. Sooner or later we have a quarrel, me and the husband; then he has to pack.

Where else would he go but home? Then they are happy together; meanwhile still criticizing me, 'Oh, the Master is not as I thought. She got mad, She kicked me out. She was angry. She was unreasonable. She was... ah, God! I'm so disappointed in Her.' Yes! Some people not only left me, afterwards they had a bad illusion about my attitude – negative thinking – because of the way I kicked him home. I had to kick him, otherwise he wouldn't go home if I'm always sweet to him.

Yes! One couple – I got along well with one, but the other one prayed that he'd come home. So, we just had a quarrel. I had to kick him out. He hasn't forgiven me yet, because his ego was hurt. I had to kick him, really hurt him terribly, so that he could leave me. Otherwise, he would never leave me. He loves me so much. He likes to be around me. That I understand. But how about the wife? She likes her husband more than she likes me. Fine! I understand that. But he had to go home, so one of us has to be the bad guy. It's me, always.

How could he be the bad guy? He is a disciple. Already devoted and wanting to come to me and nothing could change him. But both of them are my disciples. Each one prayed for a different purpose. Sometimes I cannot choose. It's very difficult to be a Master, do you know that? Sometimes I cry too because I have to do things I don't like to do. For the sake of what? If the husband loves me more than his wife, if the wife loves me more than her husband, then she comes to me, he comes to me. But the husband wants her, more than she wants Master. Then I say, 'Then you come along, both of you! Then both of you have

14. Speaks to those who wants to leave home for monkhood, international five-day retreat, Long Beach, Los Angeles, California, U.S.A., December 28, 1996 (Originally in English).

me and husband as well.' 'No, I like family life better.' Well, that's her choice. But that choice puts me in trouble. That's the problem.

So, think twice, think two hundred times before you follow me, I mean closely. Be a resident for good. All this devotional talk and vows – watch out for me. I love all of you. I would have loved to have built a big house, big village, so that all of you could come any time. Be my guest, be at home. I'd have allowed that, more than anything. But it is not practical in this world. You have too many ties, too much karma and the maya force is very strong.

Don't think the disciple next to you is the Buddha all the time. He is worked by maya too, by the dark force too, to drag you down, to drag you out, to test you, to give you trouble, make you struggle. That causes troubles for me. He cannot trouble me directly, so he troubles you. Then you trouble me. That is very convenient. So, please stop having the illusion about following the Master – big disciple, the foremost, runner-up or whatever. Just stay where you are and try to work as best as you can.

I can make use of all of you. But where would we go, where would we stay? What would we do with all your wives, husbands, kids, families, brothers, sisters and friends. Even brothers, sisters and friends make trouble. Some people follow me and then their relatives sell me, because they get mad. Not follow me like a resident, just come eat vegetarian, meditate, and improve your qualities even. I have never taught you anything that is bad for you or your family. Did I? Never. Everything is good for you and for them. But they don't like it. They don't like that you love someone else besides them.

Yes, that's it. The way you love me, they don't like. 'Why? She has nothing to do with you! She is not even a blood-tie, nothing. Who is that Supreme Master Ching Hai anyhow? Why do you listen to Her and not me? Doesn't matter if She says the right thing and I say the wrong thing, as long as you listen to Her, it's wrong. You must listen to me!' Things like that.

The family member would dictate: 'Why? You have always listened to me before. Now you've changed. You can't! You have to listen to me all the time, even if I know that I'm wrong!' That's the human nature. Then they go out and sell me to the newspaper or whatever.

The newspapers are not always guilty. They listen to all kinds of gossip and then they print what they know. For me, I live through all this, no problem. Just by the way, so you have to think more about what you want to do. It's not as easy as we think. Things are not so simple. It may be simple and pure at this moment only, or for a few days and weeks. Then it develops differently.

So, any one of you who wants to follow me, wants to go with me, please think about it. Don't bother, don't rush and it's okay where you are! I told you already, you have to make a village where you live! If you cannot attract anyone else, then make a village for yourself alone! Why? You are the chief, you are the village inhabitants, everything. You control your world! Right! This is also a village. You are with the Master, you are with God. Three of us, it is crowded enough for a village.

DO WHAT IS RIGHT ¹⁵

The same with whether we should answer to people when they talk bad about us. You can answer, you also not answer, it's the same. Makes no difference to us. If we like to answer and we think it's proper, okay, why not. Pass time. Can do it, fine. If not also fine. There's nothing really important. Win or lose, bad or good, good reputation, bad reputation, fifty years later you and I all face each other in heaven. All good bad reputation, who cares. All the good kings, all the bad kings, where are they now? All gone. Whether we criticize them hundred thousand times over or condemn them thousand life sentence, make no difference to them at all. So, we have to look beyond the immediate. Go beyond the future even. We don't have to even, we don't have to. It becomes effortless now, at least after some time with you. We look at everything as being so light and humorous. Therefore, when people look at us and they predicted, they predicted all wrong.

They predicted the way of the world, it's all wrong. Some people report to me, saying that we like to help the Americans because we want to be famous. That's nonsense. How about the Cambodians? How about the Africans? How about the Chinese in China that we don't even know? How about the Philippines? How about the South Africans that we don't even know? How about North Korea, that we could not even set foot in? Couldn't even talk. And the people there don't even know it's from us because we donated through the United Nations both times. And many like Bosnia, Chechnya and Rwanda, many of the war-torn countries, we always send money and medical supplies or something through different organizations. No one even heard of the Supreme Master. So sad. [Master laughs.] No one cares, we don't care. We're only happy to have the opportunity to serve, to share what we have; because like this, it flows. It's not stagnant, like water in the tank. If it kept for itself, later it becomes rotten. Water is rotten and the tank becomes rotten, too. No use for the tank, for anyone.

Money is there only to flow, to be used, to be helpful only in different ways. It's not for us to just keep there and do nothing. Not that I go out everyday and force people to take my money. Don't get me wrong and don't ask me for that. When necessary, according to our means and according to the necessity and the importance of that event. Sometimes we help one person and that person affects the whole country or the whole world. Then that person is important. Like if you help a president or a prime minister out of trouble, in turn he is more light-minded so he can devote himself to more important state issues and thereby affect neighboring states, affects the whole world and brings peace to the world instead of making the king or president worry about pennies. It is terrible. It's so low, so materialistic. Such a pity that a leader of a great nation, any nation, should be in debt, should be a suspect of any kind of crime. Either you respect him as your leader or you get him down. How on earth would you have a suspect as your president? Even if a suspect, in the polices' eyes is untouchable. Of course, you're innocent until proven guilty. If that's what they say when you are a suspect, you're already done, eighty percent. If you don't have a good lawyer, don't have good luck, then good bye, honey. When you are called a suspect, people already look upon you differently. They don't want to have anything to do with you. That's why your president, not many people help, because they're worried, perhaps, to get involved with the law. Difficult for business and reputation. In such case, very difficult.

Not that you always have to help a lot of people in order to be righteous or to be reasonable. Sometimes help one person or two persons, it depends; and that person helps the whole world. Like if you help Jesus or if you help Buddha, what do you think? It's not to

15. International five-day retreat, Long Beach, California, U.S.A., December 28, 1996 (Originally in English).

help Him personally. It's to help the ideal, the noble heritage, the spiritual awakening of humankind, if that person is alive, is comfortable, is supported, is helped, is understood, is protected, for example. Because these species are rare. Even though we are all Buddhas, but not everyone realizes that he is a Buddha. That's the difference. Even though we are all children of God, but not everyone realizes that he is the son of God the way Jesus did, for example.

So, these people you can count on or important national leaders. If they are righteous, if they are doing good for their nations or humankind, we must support them; because righteous people, selfless people, selfless leaders are rare. If we find one, we must help. If really we believe that he is good, she is good, we must do it, we must stand up for our beliefs. Otherwise, what for do we practice? Suppose you are American citizen, and if your country or your government is in trouble, and I tell you, 'Oh, don't get involve; you are Buddhas.' What kind of useless Buddhas are you? Anyhow, in this world, it's funny. If you do it, people say, 'You are spiritual group, why you do this thing?' And if you don't, they'd say, 'What kind of spiritual group are you? You do nothing for us, what's the use? We don't need you!' So, if sometimes people don't accept our help, oh, it's a blessing. We don't have to do anything anymore. If we do it, it's fine. If we don't do it, it's fine. So, no problem. Don't feel anything if people reject your help. It's good. Maybe your help should not be given there. Keep it. And like this later in the future, no one can blame you that you didn't do anything. We did a lot of things. Normally, we did them quietly, until people dug it out and said, 'Ha! You did this, you did that!' So what? Whatever we did is all good. Even though we did it quietly.

It's just so funny that we didn't want the world to know, and now everyone knows, everything. Even many things that we never even reported in newspapers, like we helped the veteran's hospital. I did it personally. I just wrote a cheque with the head of the veterans, whoever, I forgot his name. His name is Bob something. I promised him two hundred thousand dollars, and just wrote it – two hundred thousand dollars, for the veterans, central headquarters. I signed my name and said, 'Keep this. This means money. It was not a cheque because I didn't have a cheque. But I just wrote Supreme Master and my name. I said, 'This you give to my people, that will be money.' He couldn't believe it. He said, 'This, money?'

In America, you have a credit card or cheque. You don't just write your name on a piece of blank paper – no letterhead even, no address, no phone number, nothing, and say, 'Take my word for it. [Master and audience laugh.] That's why he didn't do anything about it. Gave it was almost a year, and then I asked my finance minister, 'How come my account's still the same? Suppose to be two hundred thousand dollars less. I see it didn't go anywhere, the two hundred thousand dollars, how come? No one claimed for it?' They said, 'We didn't know anything about it.' Maybe that veteran chief thought I was, you know, in the head, wires or something like that; made a joke, April's fools. So, he didn't even think about it, didn't even push for it. I said okay, 'Get in touch with, you know, Bob, I don't know his name, but if you ask the Los Angeles brothers.'

They didn't even bother to trace us. They thought it was a joke, a piece of blank paper – no letterhead, no telephone, no name, nothing, and just signed. Two hundred thousand dollars for so-and-so, signed, 'Ching Hai.' They didn't even know who 'Ching Hai' was, at that time. It was personal, I just did it.

I don't know if they reported it in the magazine or not. Maybe they did. Just casually mentioned, because we did it through the bank. No big deal, no ceremony, no photograph taken even. Didn't even know given to whom. Of course, we knew the address, the

hospital, but no person, not even. No newspaper even knew about it. I don't know how lately they dug it out and printed it. It had been two years already.

Many things we don't care. They predicted that we wanted to be famous so we gave to the Americans. Their predictions are not true. I am not a fortune teller but whatever they predicted about us, it's wrong. If we wanted to be famous by helping the Americans, there are many better ways to do it than this. Some officers, are bigger. There are many ways, channels to do it, and do it bigger – with photographs, television, thank-you ceremony. We don't care.

Some occasions the government knew because you did it through the government, like Hawaii. Sometimes we cannot do it alone. We have to ask the government's permission, whether they need it or not, or we don't know where to go and who needs. The government knows better in some disaster areas. The government has the list of the people, or the lists of poor people. Most of the time if we want to help poor people, we have to go through the government because the local government have the lists of the poorest people, or the people who are truly in need. We can't just go to any door and knock, 'Hey, you need my money or not?' They'll kick you, you know where. [Laughter]

In some cases like this, then the government knew about us and then gave an award, which was embarrassing sometimes; but never mind. I have gone through worse embarrassment than that. It's a kind of honorable embarrassment, mixed. Otherwise, these are small cases. The cases that people don't know are bigger than that. So, whatever people have predicted about us it's not correct. They do not know us. They cannot know such a thing exists, such a group. It's not even a charitable group. We don't even make big money, just ordinary folks. Well, I make some money, because I don't spend so much. You don't know the secret of making money. I'll tell you how.

THE SECRET OF HOW TO MAKE MONEY ¹⁶

How much you save and how much you spend

I was talking about the secret of how to make money and they wanted to hear all the time. So, I cut the talk. I said, 'We have to go down and share with all the people because we all want to make money, don't we?' Oh, yeah! You can buy a book like 'How to...' Anyhow, the secret of having money is not how much you earn, but how much you save and how much you spend. Many people over spend, spend unnecessarily; and in the items you buy, you could pay less for the same quality. You don't have to shop around too much, but sometimes. If you happen to see something that is good and a reasonable or cheap price, you can buy them. If you don't see them, then forget it. You don't miss anything.

When you go to a retreat, like for example in Cambodia last time, or in Formosa, you had nothing with you. But you didn't die, did you? You lived! And how well. Walking, running and the guard pushing you from behind. 'Quick, quick, quick! Master has already come down, quickly!' And you still lived. You ate simple food, no telephone, no husband, no kids, nothing. You were okay. And you wore simple clothes. No problem. Very simple.

Similarly in our situation, in our house, we can also have simple things. I don't mean you don't have anything. But there are many things, the values are the same but the price is different. You know the difference between shops. You don't have to always spend a lot of money in order to look good, for your house to look special. It can look special but not

16. International five-day retreat, Long Beach, California, U.S.A., December 28, 1996 (Originally in English).

expensive. Sometimes I go shopping, because I want to look for something that I like – sofa or something. Sometimes I pay only about two hundred or three hundred dollars, the big set of sofa, including the glass table and everything. But in other shops, it costs four or five times more – same style, same quality. I don't understand this.

All the millionaires, the rich people, they don't always look like one. They don't always drive in limousine, Rolls Royce or Cadillac. They normally drive ordinary cars, because they don't need to show off. They feel good within, the security for themselves and their families. They have savings to last for years to come, for emergency, for anything they need, should the need arise. Meanwhile they still continue to generate money out of their saving income. So, they feel good, they don't need to show off, they don't need anyone to know that they are rich. They just wear casual clothes sometimes, and go shopping in very ordinary shops. Their houses are also comfortable but ordinary. The furniture is not always antique, or anything extraordinary. Just comfortable, cosy. Enough for them to feel good.

So, the secret of making money and being rich is not only how much you earn. It's how you manage your money. Many people, even rich, unfortunately after the second generation. Like the father was very diligent in making the money and saving it. But after the children or grandchildren have no ambition to do the same. They didn't earn it the hard way, so they don't value the money. So, if they are left with a big inheritance, very soon they squander it, and are left with nothing. Often like this. Then commit suicide, because they do not know how to save. They think the parents are very rich and they can spend, spend, spend and it will never finish – the money. But it finishes. The Au Lac people have an idiom. They say, 'Even if you sit there, do nothing, and eat, you can eat the mountain flat.'

The rich people teach their children how to save

Similarly, truly, why we can help so many people, it seems like I have a lot of money, but it is because I save. Not that I consciously save, but I just know logically how to keep the money. If you earn a lot, but you spend a lot, then it amounts to nothing. You just keep the car companies rich, you keep every other shopkeeper rich, but not yourself. You have to watch how you spend. Maybe you have to make a budget of your own – how much to spend every month, and don't go over that.

Many rich people, not only they look ordinary in many ways, but they know how to save. For example, when the toothpaste is nearly finished, they don't just throw it away in a half, but they squeeze it. They use some knife or something to flatten it. You do it also, sure; but the rich people teach their children to do that. Maybe you don't know how they earn money, but at least you know how they save money. And saved money is earned money as well, whatever you saved is what you've earned, too. In turn, that money will create more interest; then make more money for you. Even if you don't do anything, you put the money in the bank, it earns interest for you. Then you can live on that, too.

So, whatever you save is yours. Whatever you spend is someone else's. And every time we go to the retreat, or something like that, it's not only that you want to see me, or that you want to practice spiritually; but it's also a very natural opportunity for you to put everything down, to be free of material bondage, to be free of the preconceived ideas and notions that we need this, we need that, we need everything in order to survive. It has been proven, that even if you go on like this, you survive.

The wisdom to enjoy all situation

In the old times, when I didn't have many of you, just the so-called left-home people, we lived with bare necessities. I had a tent, they had a tent. My tent was sometimes smaller than their tents, because I'm smaller. We gave tents according to size. And my size is SM. That's why they say SM. Small size! [Laughter] Then each one of us, including myself, would have a sleeping bag and a thin, warm blanket. Not woolen, just a warm blanket inside, in case it was a cold time. If it was too cold, you were entitled to have another sleeping bag! You requested, then you got one. So, each lived in a tent like that, very simple. We didn't have much. We just ate enough.

Now, even if I have a lot of things – I sometimes have a house, a cave or whatever, more furnished – nothing more happens. I'm still the same. I just get older every day. That won't help me. Nothing helps me. I stay the same as before, I live the same, I eat the same – almost. It's not much different whether I have more material possessions or I have less. I've lived through the poorest and the richest, nothing changes!

When I was in the Himalayas in India, I didn't have much money – I had to stretch my money very long, as I didn't know how long I would stay there. Sometimes I just ate chapatis and peanut butter. Chapatis that I made myself, too; they were even cheaper than buying them. It was very simple. You have a plate, which you use to eat, then you just have wheat flour, water and salt. That you can buy anywhere. You knead the flour and water, put a pinch of salt in it. Knead it the way you knead bread or pastry, but without yeast. Then you flatten it with your hands. Don't even need a rolling pin, just your hand. Flatten it and put it on the fire. You collect the wood from the forest and then you just cook it. After a while, you turn it on the other side and that's it. Put peanut butter on top and you are on top of the world, feeling good. Water you can drink from the spring or from the Ganges, no problem.

Sojourn in the Himalayas

I live like that many, many months. Sometimes I ate only raw food if I went too high. You can't cook. You can, but it takes half a day to boil a little, two centimeters of water. I'd say, 'Forget it. I'll drink it cold.' You can't boil cabbage if you don't have a high power of gas. If you just collect wood, it's most of the time already damp from the snow.

The mountains in the Himalayas are nonstop – always covered with snow, even in summer, just less. The army digs a road between the mountains, so you can walk between the two mountains of ice. But the ice is always there, even in summer. They have only two seasons – snowing season and no-snowing season. The pilgrims normally go in the non-snowing season. If you happened to stay there too long, then you'd just be snowed under and stay there until next year, if you are still alive. Then you drink snow or whatever. Some people do that, it's okay! Do not try it!

Even in winter you can pick some of the herbs, some of the wild plants in the Himalayas and eat them. Some of them don't look so much like, but taste like spinach. Except that they are a little bit red on the stem, not green; they taste exactly the same. Don't go there and eat nonsense. You have to know which plant to eat. Don't say the Supreme Master Ching Hai said that and just taste everything whether it tastes like spinach or not. Before you know it, you'll already be finished. Don't make yourself become a laboratory.

I didn't even have a tent. Can you imagine in the Himalayas no tent? But sometimes you find a roof or a so-called house. The house is not really a house the way it is here. That

kind of house, you can see the stars through the roof, you can see through the walls, and the wind is very free to visit you any time of the day and night, bringing in the snow as well. Very generous. The floor is very wet. It's not cemented, because in the Himalayas people just put the wood together to make a very simple flat, grass hut. There are no facilities, no cot. You lay on the floor.

I was very clever, I used a very thin mattress, thinner than yours. Not this kind. There is a thin like plastic sheet, one side gold and one side silver. You can use that, too. When you unfold it, it's like a piece of paper tissue only, so thin. I couldn't afford to carry so many things, I could hardly carry myself! The higher you go, the heavier it becomes. The same luggage became heavier. Even your feet became heavier, got swollen with this snow, soaking into your shoes. Didn't matter what kind of shoes you had, the snow can managed to get in and soaked your feet. You know, like the way you soak bread in water, it becomes double the size. So, if you go to the Himalayas, can't carry many things. So many months like this, I went from one place to another. I also survived.

I just tell you, we can live through anything. We can survive, because if our spirit is strong, we have a noble purpose and a higher ideal, we can just look into that ideal and we forget everything else, truly like that. Like the way of the Tibetan air-traveller, they don't have aeroplanes there, so they travel like flying in the air. They just have to fix themselves on some point in the horizon or on some stars. Then they just concentrate on that. At that time, when you talk to them, they don't hear you. They don't know what's going on. Even if they get hurt, sometimes knock into branches or something or get bruised, they also don't know. After, they wake up from the trance and stop their voyage.

Master your life

From my own experience, whatever I have, or not have, it's no problem! You are still happy, and you manage your life accordingly. When I didn't have too many material possessions, life was already fun all the time, because I had to think of how to survive. Every day I had to invent some new ways to enjoy. Always surprise, always new, always very happy and always contented, because every day you are a master of yourself, a master of your own situation, and you just feel good, feel so confident of your ability to survive. Truly, if there is a necessity to compare, then I must tell you that when I had nothing I had more fun, because I was more creative.

Now I can have everything I want because it's already settled down. I don't have to run around the world and I can have a fixed place sometimes, at least for a few months or a few weeks. Then things are too organized, too many disciples, they buy all kinds of things. I'm also busy now, also have to be creative, like which one to throw away and which one to scold for buying nonsense. But it's more annoying than when I had nothing, was master of my own life, decided everything for myself, and controlled every situation. There is not much to control, but every day you know what is what.

I don't like surprises! I don't like that every day people buy things that I don't like and then tell me later; or do something not according to my instructions and tell me later; or do something according to their own opinion and instructions and tell me later. Then I have to clean up the mess, because it was wrong. I don't mind if they always decide the good things, but most of the people that are around me are not up to my standard. I don't care whether my standard is good or not. My standard is my standard and I don't like people to mess about with it and decide for me, what I must have, what I must wear and what is good for me. I don't like that.

The people around me always make the same mistakes. Doesn't matter if I scold them, beg them, I reason with them, I explain to them, I tell them, I frighten them, I fire them, doesn't work. Habits are difficult to change, I understand that. But my understanding doesn't help my feelings. And they continue because now my financial situation is not that bad and I don't have the time to always go shopping for myself. So sometimes, I have to rely on them. Sometimes I don't even rely on them; they just go do it themselves, because they think Master needs this, Master needs that.

If I say, 'I like bananas,' then every day bananas everywhere! If one cook happens to cook something nice and I say, 'Wow, this is a nice dish that you made!' Then I have it week after week until I nearly die from it. I beg them, 'Please! Even if it's nice...' I'm very polite, but to the point you can't bear it anymore and you have to tell it. Sometimes I explode. I say, 'How can you have so low intelligence? Even if it's a good thing, you can't just have it every day and so often like this.' Ah, you cannot believe it, the problems of having.

Before, having nothing was easier. Before, when I didn't have everything I was very happy, more happy, because I bought what I wanted and I know where my money went. I was happy when I could save something. I felt I was creative. Not because of the money, but the value of my intelligence, that I could save that, that I could live with such a few things and make it so nice.

Whenever we can buy some good things, yeah, with a very low price and other places are higher price. And it happens, that that thing we like so much, the color, the taste, the style we like. Then we are very happy! Not because of the money only! But just lucky, we are creative and we are resourceful. And that's what we are happy about.

So, I regret to tell you that to have everything is not always as good as you think. On the contrary, if you don't have enough things or you just have barely enough, that's the best. Then your IQ becomes higher, because every day you have to think, 'Can I save some money, where can I go for better shopping, and what kind of food can I cook today, which is nutritious, good, tasty and also economical?' Then you are happy with yourself. Everything creative brings happiness to humankind, because it's new, it's exciting, it's interesting. If every day the same and people serve you all the time, you feel bored after a while. I guarantee, money back guarantee. Anyhow, that's the end of how to be rich and how to keep your money. You take care and then you will know the difference.

CREATE A SPIRITUAL VILLAGE WHEREVER WE LIVE ¹⁷

You know what, it's very nice to have a village. I always dream like everyone of us. All of us have a dream like we should have a kind of spiritual village where we can live together and all the people work together and all that will be nice! But I don't know if this kind of idea really is acceptable for this kind of planet or not. It seems difficult. There have been many different groups who have tried also. Some were successful for a while but not without going through a lot of trouble; and also it depends on where you are.

If you're in India perhaps you're safer, because Indian people and the country, normally, are more accustomed to spiritual groups and all kinds of spiritual beliefs and systems; and no one cares. The Buddhists go to the Hindu temple, the Hindus go to Bodhi Gaya and bow to the Buddha, and the Muslims go together with the Sikhs, whatever. Occasionally, you hear of some violence, but that's just a small fanatic group. Otherwise, the religious

17. International five-day retreat, Long Beach, California, U.S.A., December 28, 1996 (Originally in English).

atmosphere in India is very, very harmonious compared to other places. So, if any big spiritual group survives, mostly it's in India or Tibet; but now in Tibet no more.

If there is suddenly a vast rush of big positive energy concentrated somewhere, then immediately you attract an even bigger negative energy to come, because this world is a world of negative energy. Not because the world is negative. It is because the inhabitants of this planet are so accustomed to the negative atmosphere and they generate it by their thoughts, actions, expectations, brainwashing, customs or habits; they generate a kind of negative feeling, negative atmosphere around them; and they expect things negatively. They say 'in God we trust' but they never believe God can make so many miracles. They never dare to ask for anything because they think if they ask they won't get it anyhow. So just, 'Okay, I pray to You but I know You won't give it, so it's okay, whatever.' You know, their faith is not deep enough to change this planet's atmosphere into positive energy.

The positive and negative power

Therefore, whatever little positive energy we can create or any real spiritual group can create sometimes attracts more negative obstacles. Not that 'like attracts like,' like people say but 'opposites attract it has to be.' Otherwise, this world is not balanced as it is. Otherwise, this world would not be called the earth planet but would be named perhaps planet X5077, something like that, or heavenly abode or more civilized planet.

Sooner or later, every planet, any planet will evolve with the time and with this spiritual understanding. But if we evolve material-wise and not balanced with the spiritual power, then the world or planet, or any particular planet, would be destroyed in time. And that is what they call 'the end of the world.' Not this world particularly, any world that is created and when it happens to be unbalanced by the outweigh of material advancement versus spiritual development, then disasters occur; any planet after a while.

For example, a planet is just formed and it goes through evolution from caveman to being civilized, etcetera, it develops until one day they find atomic energy, electronic energy. Then troubles begin. At that time, if the world's citizens happen to discover very high energies, very advanced matter like atoms, and if they don't have enough spiritual understanding to control their knowledge of physics, then trouble begins. Then they will use it for bad things or accident can happen because of not enough intelligence to handle this dangerous but otherwise would be useful matter.

So, in this world, as you can see, there are not too many spiritual practitioners as compared to non-spiritual practitioners. I mean, some people say they are Christians or they are Buddhists, or maybe of other religions but they may not necessarily practice the true religious doctrine that was suppose to be imparted to them. When you look around you, you'll find examples in plenty.

In this case, if we gathered together somewhere for so long a period of time and the energy just keeps building up, then of course, something may happen because the negative power outweighs the positive at the moment. Even though we developed, developed, developed, and it has brought a great deal of benefits to the world, but still sometimes at our expense because well, many people do not understand the things that cannot be proved by material realization. But I'll tell you, even if we practiced spiritually, the material side will also have fulfillment if only you have faith.

God can make anything happen. Hes made the whole world, the whole universe, can you imagine? Look around you. How many miracles in front of you? These are miracles. Can

you create one like that? No. Can you create any particle of your body the way it is? Everyone is so unique even though we all have a nose in the middle, eyes on both sides, even two ears as well; but we don't look the same. How can that be? Billions of people, rarely anyone looks the same except twins or doubles. These are rare cases. Even then, some things are different – fingerprints, hair, eye color, thinking, lifestyle, ideals. There's something different all the time. So, if we ask for miracles, I think it's a boring subject. Miracles happen all around us everyday, every second, every minute. Look at your body and see the whole miracle from the head to toes.

So, you see, the idea of having a village together, well I don't think it's impossible; but we might spend too much energy fighting for it. Maybe just as well stay home and spend that energy to develop ourselves, go to group meditations sometimes, and mix with the world. Because that's also a way that we can bring the message into the world. Suppose if we stayed together in one place only, maybe it would be good for us, somehow it would help us, that we wouldn't have too many temptations, we wouldn't have too many negative influences.

Up to now we have tried many times, for example the first, Taiwan – spiritual group had a life span of ten years. Well, it was a long life, for me, for a young, new aspirant, inexperienced, naive, stupid, believing that the world would think the way you do, that's what I used to do. Because I was so true to myself, I was so convinced that whatever I say people must believe me because it's the truth. [Master laughs.] Many years later, I found that things were different; but never mind, it's okay. Then we tried again in Cambodia also. Actually, we went there to help the people but then a lot of people liked to stay there, and work together. They thought maybe they could do both, work there helping the people and also at the same time stay together and meditate. But you see, it was not that simple.

Anyhow, we should create a spiritual village wherever we live, I think that's the idea. We have to attract more. [Applause] Ahh! About time you gave me some encouragement. [Applause] No! It's okay! Enough, enough! My ego will burst. [Laughter] What I mean is, the idea is to bring heaven into the home, so that every home is Buddha's land, every home is heaven. It's difficult, I know, but this can be done.

Yes, otherwise, it's also very nice to stay together, for our sake, it's so beautiful. But how about your families, your friends, your associates, your boss, your work; they need you. They need your spiritual energy also, they need your loving presence to understand more about the God within themselves. If you bring that God to me, to our initiates and stick together, altogether all the Gods sit there, God number two, God number one, God number three, [Master laughs.] how about the society? Yes, they need us.

Even though they don't know they need us, it's also fine. We don't need recognition. But as we practice along, we know they need us. If the world has no light at all, it would be dark. Better one light here and one light there than no light. Better dim light than no light. So, we have to light up our surroundings, make a spiritual village with the Center as ourselves. We radiate loving energies, we make shining examples, we make a kind of heaven for the people to take refuge in wherever we live, we must create heaven, and that is our spiritual village.

So, we should not have one spiritual village concentrated in one spot of the planet but we have it everywhere. Now you see, we also have Belgium, Hungary, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Chile, Costa Rica, Germany, South Africa, Portugal, Korea, China, Malaysia, Cambodia, Canada, anywhere. Indonesia, you see that, Thailand, Hong Kong. We are very rich, it's better. [Applause]

We have tried, we have tried the alternative. So, we also know what it is like to stay together in one place and work together; it's also fine. I still have my group, working staff. They work, scattered everywhere, different places, but still together. This is enough. It's enough for one group to work, and the other group has a different job to do. You have to be the center of the light in the society where you live, where you work, where you have your root. You have to develop from there, you have to branch yourself everywhere like a big, big, big, tree so people will take refuge.

The prince of the universe

Everyone must be a Supreme Master, everyone must return to your position as a Supreme Master, as a Buddha, as the son and daughters of God. There's no need to take refuge anywhere but inside yourself because you are God, didn't the bible tell you that? Yes. God made man in His own image. Remember? At least we are the children of God, we must walk like God, we must act like that, like the prince of the universe. No need to take refuge anywhere, no need to run around to any spiritual village or do anything special, go to the Himalayas, nothing! Because you are God wherever you are, remember? Don't be weak. [Applause]

It's okay to have a Teacher, it's okay to adore a Teacher because She's beautiful, like me [Applause]... God! [Applause] I'm just joking! Don't look! It's okay to have someone so that you can have an example or to have some kind of hook to hang your emotional overflow there for a while, or for some purpose, but you have to spread. Take the root here, the root must spread everywhere in order to sustain the whole big tree, and the tree must branch itself, big shade, so it protects a lot of beings.

In a Buddhist scripture, there is story about the Banyan tree, Bodhi tree, very big. Five hundred monks could take refuge underneath its shade to practice meditation. In the old times they didn't have tents like we do and they don't build houses or big buildings like this, no air-con, just took refuge under the trees; and that's how they practiced. There was a very famous master called Long Shu Bodhisattva, Long Shu master. Long Shu means Banyan Tree master, because he always stayed under the tree and five hundred disciples stayed together there. Would you like to stay under a tree like that, in West Virginia, Christmas time? [Master laughs.] Brrr! When the snow is higher than your head? [Master laughs.] Let's be practical.

Spiritual village in India

Now, you see, like in India it's more convenient because the weather there is warm and the people's needs are very, very little. They live very close to nature. They don't compare. They don't have a neighbor to look upon, like the rich or something like that. Most are the same. Even the rich in India don't look so glamorous like in America or elsewhere. When I was in India, I knew a few physicians, but their houses were bare, really bare necessities. Their so-called clinics, you went in and you saw one or two wooden benches perhaps. And in the evening, they put wood sheets, big and thick like this, on top. Then they'd sleep on it. It became a bed. The clinics were like that, and there was only one kind of cabinet. Inside there were a few aspirins or something that I could even handle myself, help-yourself-clinic. [Master and audience laugh.] They didn't earn that much money either because most of the patients were so poor. Some other doctors I knew, one family, the wife was a doctor and the husband was a lawyer, but their house also had barely anything compared to your houses. So, even the rich in India don't make other poor people too envious. Their life is a little bit simple, contented with whatever they have.

So, if they have a spiritual village together, they also have bare necessities, very simple living. Also the climate is hot, they don't need anything. They only need some chapatis to eat, and then they meditate. They drink water from the river or dig a well together, and they plant rice. Some spiritual communities in India grow their own food, because they believe the food outside is so contaminated. They'd rather plant their own wheat, rice, fruit. It's fun. Sounds very romantic. But I don't know if you, a householder used to luxuries like in the American standard, would be able to last there very long. Some of you could, but not all of you. Besides, your families would object, your friends would make trouble, and the government would make trouble for the Master, etcetera. Chain reaction, you know. The idea of a spiritual village, I think we had better just leave it for a while. If it comes, it comes.

Come to Formosa

Actually, I did not start in Taiwan in the first place with the idea of having a spiritual village at all. I didn't have any village. To tell you the truth, when I first started I didn't even have a house. I stayed in a disciple's house, but that was after a long time. When I first came, I just stayed in a temple like every other nun or temple worker, cleaning the bathroom, cleaning the floor for the people to come in and worship the Buddha. Afterward, I don't know how I became famous; I forgot. Someone dug me out somehow. God, yeah! He played [Master laughs.] some game. Then after a few times I had some students. When I came down, I stayed in their house, but always on the move. Sometimes I stayed in this house, sometimes I stayed in another house. Later, so many people followed me. Like you want to do now, like the sister from South Africa who wants to follow me; they just followed. Some of them had no obligations with their families, like they were bachelors or they didn't have a husband, they didn't have a wife, or their parents said, 'Okay, go where you want. You've grown up. Some parents are very easy and understanding, some parents are not. So, those with understanding parents, they so-called left home and ran around with me; and wherever I stayed, they stayed.

At that time, I was wearing a monk's robe so it's very easy to follow me. They just want to become monks and nuns, too, and that is very simple in Taiwan or in Thailand. To become a monk and nun there is common practice, so they just joined and shaved their heads, that's it. [Master laughs.] They stuck to me, so what do I do? At that time I was just new, I thought everyone was the same like me. It's okay if they wanted to be nuns, it's okay with me, no problem, why not? But later, it got a little more complicated. Some of them just came without parents' permission or anything, and later we had problems. So, after a while we said, 'Only with parents' permission then you can come.' As things developed, when you were confronted with more problems, then you had to seek solutions; otherwise, we didn't care. I didn't care.

Then we rented a house. At that time we had so many people that we couldn't stay in one room in a disciple's house anymore, so we rented a small room. Then we worked – handicrafts or something together to pay the rent and sustain ourselves. That was in the beginning. Later, they sold the house, so we became homeless. [Master laughs.] We left home again! We wandered around, we camped next to the riverside, then we bought some tents. At that time we did not earn so much money, we didn't think about money. Just as things developed, because more people came and I had to earn more money to pay rent and things like that. I didn't take donations for personal use, even from the beginning already.

So more people then we had to kind of organize and make more work. Then we bought tents. At that time, one tent for four persons. Now we're richer, one tent one person; one person two tents even! [Master and audience laugh.] That was later on, in the later years,

when we developed more. More people joined me, then we had to buy more tents. In the beginning, we didn't have that much money, and we didn't take donations, even tents, so we bought a tent for four persons; some persons were long, some short. When he slept his toes stuck out, and mosquitoes visited him every time, [Master and audience laugh.] same toes. Later, I said, 'Okay, never mind. If we have more money, we'll buy some more tents. So, the long persons could sleep square-wise, [Master laughs.] corner to corner. The long persons stuck together to sleep.

The birds don't even lay their eggs there

Very cheap, in the beginning. The piece of land that I bought for the people in Miaoli some of you know, was dirt cheap because no one went there. What the Taiwanese said was, 'The birds don't even lay their eggs there!' [Laughter] It was such a desolate place, that's what they meant. Even birds don't come and lay their eggs there; it meant it's a very bad place. No survival chance because no water, very dry. There was nothing around there, and the soil was not very fertile, it's a kind of very sticky soil which people use to make bricks. It was a very special clay, very sticky. You couldn't plant so many things there. You had to really work hard to make the land loose, then you could plant something; but it was not so much. So, not too many people stayed around there and not many people bought land.

Then we came and bought some from the second-hand owner; we didn't know much about it. He said he could sell it to us, sell the rights to us and then we can cultivate it and plant something there. But, recently, in the recent few years, I think other companies, other groups want to take it back. I'm not sure what they want to do with it but someone said to sell it for radioactive waste, to make it a waste place, something like that; and that can make a lot of money. I'm not sure whether that's the reason or not, because what for they destroy our place. They didn't do anything, just destroyed it and left it there. Some of the damages are unlawful, even the government did that. But it's okay. This world is temporary. Whatever we lose, it's okay. We didn't bring anything into this world so whatever we lose, it's fine. We're not bothered about it so much.

So, you know, in the beginning it was very cheap; and I bought only a small piece of land. About how much? Two thousand US dollars for four or five hectares. Cheap, huh? Or not? You go and buy, now it's two hundred thousand. Couldn't even buy. Different. It was so cheap. Then we settled there. At that time, there were so many monks and nuns hanging around me already, I needed that place for them. I couldn't just hang around the river all the time. Also during that time, we had a lot of other people, so-called lay followers, came to us. So, we had the place. It was convenient also because the place was cheap. We bought it, they came, then we developed it. We bought more and more with the years, and it became Miaoli Center.

Anyhow, together in one place is not always very convenient. It's very good but we had to struggle a lot. It was so convenient for people to come there and blame us for everything that happened to their children. They would say, 'Oh, look here, my daughter's following You...' Even if she didn't follow me, she went with the boyfriend somewhere. I never knew and then they came and blamed us. I'd say, 'Go search anywhere for your daughter who I have never seen. [Master laughs.] Sometimes it was too convenient. Because we stayed there in one place all the time, anyone could come and say anything to us. It was also a disadvantage somehow. It was not always good, but it was good for the disciples. It was good for the international community when they wanted to come to see me or when we had a retreat. If they were sentimental, they'd think, 'Oh, Master has stayed there. It's Her

place, holy ground. Go and take some stones. [Master laughs.] Go home and put in the tea to cook.' [Master laughs.] Stupid! [Laughter]

Heaven is within you

So, when we had Miaoli, everyone was happy, remember? When you went there you felt good. It was true also because the spiritual atmosphere built up with the years and you liked it. When you went there you felt like at home. But I think even if we don't have Miaoli or we don't have any other place, it doesn't matter. Heaven is within you. Maybe God wants it that way. [Applause] Some people think if I lose Miaoli or if I cannot go to Miaoli, I would feel very bad. I did feel bad, for a couple of minutes. [Laughter] I said, 'Wow, that beautiful place we built with our hands, why did they destroy it?'

I felt sorry because that was the most beautiful place in Taiwan, and we made it so beautiful. You hadn't seen the back mountain. Some of the foreigners didn't go behind the mountain because we spoiled you, we let you put the tents in the front garden where it was more convenient for you. The back mountain was two kilometers away, you'd have to walk back and forth and we were worried that you were tired after the long journey. So, many of you hadn't seen the caves that we made by hand, ourselves. Beautiful!

We dug out the mountain, because we wanted to protect the landscape. The mountains were very difficult. The back mountain had two shapes, one was a little bit flat and a little bit sloping like this, and the other one was so slanted like this. But when we dug caves into the mountains, and you looked down there, it was so beautiful. We wanted to also protect the landscape and the environment so we didn't destroy the mountain's shape, we kept it. So, we just dug into the mountain and then built it inside. Very beautiful, very beautiful! If you have the chance, go and have a look. I can have a tour guide and earn some money. That may be the best job for me. [Master and audience laugh.] Then I'll pay taxes to the government. They probably won't say anything and then while I guide you on the tour I can blah blah spiritual issues. Yeah, let's change our job, that's good! [Applause]

Well, the difference is the name. Just because you call me 'Master,' you make me problems. And when you call me the 'Supreme Master,' you make more problems, make supreme problems for me. [Master and audience laugh.] If you just call me a tour guide, who cares? I'm a tour guide, too, I'm a spiritual tour guide. I will guide you back to heaven, how about that? Free! [Applause] Not that there is a place somewhere called heaven but we must remember the heaven within us and I just remind you I have the way to do it and because of me reminding you, you have found your own heaven. So, that is the truth.

That was a beautiful place, so when I heard that some people want to destroy it but for some reason... because sometimes they misunderstand, they thought their daughter was with us but she wasn't. Anyone who stays in Miaoli Center must have the expressed permission from their parents in writing, signature and stamp, then we accept them. Yeah, you know that. We didn't do anything against the parents but some of them still could not understand. I also understood their point of view, their problems. When their daughter runs away somewhere and they think maybe she has a connection with us – because all the friends are already there, maybe their daughters have also joined their friends; and in a moment of sadness and worry, of course, they will say anything and they'll do anything to vent their anger. Then they just pour it down on us.

We never say anything because we understand the troubled hearts of the parents. But they just found the wrong place, that's all; and a lot of damage is done sometimes through the public's misunderstanding. But that is the case with every spiritual Master, every

spiritual group, even any famous person, even if he / she is good. First, people build them up to the peak of their glory and honor, and then they begin to pull them down. That's a very natural phenomenon in this world. I do not expect a hundred percent success in this world, even though I know God can do anything. Just let it be.

God takes a holiday!

God can do anything; but God doesn't do it, because we have to do it. God is not there to do everything for us, if we don't want to do it ourselves. We have to ask for it, we have to want it, we have to create our world. We have to take matters into our hands, we have to realize the Godness within us, the powerful energy that we possess. We have to develop that, we have to remember it, we have to make use of it, we have to walk like a God on earth. Then and there we realize that God is us. Otherwise, God can do everything, of course, otherwise Hes is no God.

But why should God do everything? God has already created the whole universe for us, created everything. Now, we are in it, it's up to us to make use of ourselves, to make whatever we want to become by our own power of faith, of no-knowledge, of self-knowledge, of self-realization. Otherwise, God is no use, I tell you the truth. God has already done Hiers job, the poor man needs a rest. Hes cannot, Hes needs a rest, vacation. [Master and audience laugh.] Actually, if God does everything unasked, then why are we here? How can we realize how powerful we are. So, it's up to us to make a God out of ourselves, or to make anything else you want. The decision is yours.

I talked so much again. Oh, God, talked like a preacher. You know everything already. You want to hear it again, again and again, same thing, like you eat rice everyday. The Chinese, that's why their eyes look like rice, slit. [Laughter] The Americans everyday eat bread, the Germans everyday eat potatoes, not everyday, very often – staple food. For example like that. So, maybe you like to hear about God everyday. To hear it is nice, but you have to make use of it. My God, it's so difficult to become God. Yeah, why not? Would you rather be something else?

If already everyone – every bible, every scriptures, every religion has declared that you are the son of God, now what else do you want to be? Why do you deny it? It is because of the mind, the brain, the social custom make us think that we're low, we're weak, can't even believe that God would bless us with everything. Ask anything, you'll have it, but you dare not. Most people dare not dream that God will give you this, give you that. Why not? That's what the old guy is there for. Many people don't ask Hirm, so Hes just takes a holiday, Christmas for example. God is within you, God is yourself.

The problem is our weak faith

Every lecture boils down to the same topic. That's the only thing you must do: Remember yourself, remember you're powerful, remember that you can create anything you want, with the power of your faith, with the power of your self-realization. But sometimes because we are so used to having less, we do not dare to believe that we can have this, that and the other. That's fine, that's fine. We also don't need to have so much. We also don't need to be millionaires, be rich or anything like that, but it's possible.

It's possible even with spiritual knowledge, to be anything you want, to have anything you want, provided you want it enough, and know that you'll get it. Most of the time you say, 'Okay, I don't think I'll get it anyhow, but I'll just ask Hirm.' That's what prevents us from having what we want, because we already expected that the guy would not give us. That's

also okay. If you have enough to eat, fine. If you have enough clothes to wear, it's okay. No need to want too much, also fine. But it's not impossible. I just wanted to tell you.

So many people have already proved it to you. By the power of the mind alone, they can move objects, they can walk on fire, they can walk on water, they can pierce knives through their head from ear to ear and nothing happens, not even one drop of blood comes out. Even with the power of the mind alone, astral power, you can do that. They say that America is a land of opportunities, maybe it's true. The American people have a strong will, they believe they can do it, they demand all the time, better and better. They do not hesitate or feel shy to ask anyone or even God to fulfill their dreams. That's the way we should do it. So, do not try to run away from home, take refuge somewhere else, or even take refuge in the Master, the Master is you. You have the Master inside, what's the difference between us. Maybe your IQ is even higher than mine, who knows?

There was an American film with John Travolta, I don't know the title; but the film described a man with the power of moving objects, also the power of knowing some events that are happening in far away places, and can predict something or can read other people's messages through the air. Many people, even though they saw it, they didn't believe it. They didn't believe it was just a concentration of the mind and they wanted to operate on his brain in order to find out, for scientific research, what was the difference in his brain, between him and someone else, the so-called ordinary people.

There is no difference. They can operate until all the nerves are cut into thousand, billions of pieces, they will find no difference. There is a slight difference between human and human anyhow, but there is no difference as such if you concentrate your mind. Just a power of concentration. If you operate the physical brain there's not much difference. So, it's even dangerous to be talented, to boast of your psychic power. Remember? That's why I tell you not to talk to people of your achievements. It's not safe because other people are not ready for this. They don't know more than the material existence.

Many scientists believe only in the things they can touch and can prove. So sometimes, it is difficult for geniuses to survive in this world. So many geniuses have come and gone unnoticed, unrecognized and even harmed by society just because they're so ignorant. They do not know what the genius knows so they do not believe, so they seek to harm him, harm her, or sometimes they seek to prove it materially to the extent of hurting that genius, that talented or that spiritual being for that matter. I remember America has a very famous psychic, Edgar Cayce, you know him, right?

Some people didn't believe that he had the concentration power to leave his body and go into some other person's body or search something else somewhere else. So, they tried to experiment, stick needles into his fingernails. Do you know that or not? Well, read his books. Even I know – I'm so ignorant about American culture, I still know. They stuck needles in his nails, just to make sure that he didn't feel anything. My God, he didn't feel at that time, but when he woke up, he did feel. Poor guy. So, that's how the society treats geniuses or extraordinary persons sometimes. Not at Jesus' time only. Any time, humans do weird things sometimes. Nothing surprising. I can tell you many other instances like that in other countries, but enough of that. There is no need to dwell on this matter, so depressing.

Actually, according to some of the research and my opinion, we have a lot of advance technologies, advance medicine, advance ways to end suffering in this world right now – even at this minute. There is no need to have hunger, no need to have suffering, no need to have disease, incurable disease anymore. We are already so advanced – we have

found many substances to combat even the most deadly diseases. But sometimes the society as a whole chooses not to do so, just to protect the economy. I think, you know better than I do.

So, it's not that God doesn't give us everything, it's not that God cannot do the impossible things. It's us, it's we who are the obstacles because our faith is sometimes so thin. We cannot believe that if God gives us a means to cure the disease, then He would give us another means to sustain the medical working system and don't let it go bankrupt. If God gives us a means to find free energy, free electric, then He would give us another means to sustain the whole industry, and not let people go without work. They will find other work somehow, they will find other things to do. We should live a more simple life with fewer wants. We wouldn't have to struggle so much, working, earning money, for example. There are many geniuses who can prove to us that it is workable, that this world can become a paradise, even materially, in one instant.

But so it must be that the faith of the people of this world is so little, so thin that they are so afraid to take any chance. For example, if all the sick people were cured so easily, then what become of the health care system? Your famous theme. Even just to talk about health care, people already go berserk, not to mention real medicine, real miracle cures for the people. Anyhow, maybe I talk to much. You don't have to believe it.

I have the right to say anything I want, and you have the right to believe whatever you want. We both have the right to do things the way we want.

I say what I believe, but you don't have to believe what I believe. You can believe it, or don't believe it, it's up to you; or you can do research my suggestions, my comments, then find out for yourself whether what I say is the truth or not. You have the option. You can choose. But at least I tell you something and then you have the chance to prove it, whether it's correct or not. If I didn't tell you, you may not even know that it exists. You wouldn't even have the chance to prove your IQ. So, do some research yourself.

God has given everything already!

Don't ever blame God again in any prayer or in any second of your life – that God makes so much misery, God doesn't give us medicine, God doesn't give us enough food, God doesn't give us this, that and the other. God has given everything already, long time ago. But many people, sometimes they are in power and stop this blessing. Maybe it's the planet's collective karma that helps the obstacles to materialize. So, we cannot also blame that one person, this person or the whole constitution somehow. We have to look through the history. Maybe we have done so many bad things.

Actually, so what? God is always forgiving. If He is not forgiving, He is not God. For Him there is no bad, no good, no evil, nothing; only for the children who are learning, who are making mistakes, who are learning by mistakes, who are trying to remake themselves into real Gods by different experiments. Some people succeed in making themselves into a God in a few lifetimes remembering that they are a God, or choose the right way. Some people tumble along the way and take a longer time, but they are all in the process of making, remembering a God out of themselves. Sooner or later, we all realize.

I just wanted to tell you this to let you know that nothing is impossible with God. Even to make this world into a paradise is not impossible. It's just because of humankind, the habits. Our habit of being so negative, thinking negative, expecting negative, and having no courage to hope for anything big. The faith in God is very weak. So, we are always

afraid that if this happens, we'll lose our job. If free electricity comes, we'll lose our electric company, if free or good medicine comes, the doctors will go out of business or medical care will have no work to do, etcetera. It'll never happen. If we have another way to do things. God will find another way for us. Besides, if we didn't have to pay so much for electricity bills, then we wouldn't have to work so hard in the beginning. There are a lot of taxes and a lot of expenses.

So many things, so many inventions, so much research has been successful we could have paradise any minute we wanted, if only we wanted. But sometimes we choose to live in misery. That's fine with God, but don't blame the poor old guy. That's all. Because this is injustice, it's unfair. He always sends some geniuses, always send some teachers, always sends good friends to remind us of the glory of heaven and to help us to heal ourselves, to be rich, to be famous, to be beautiful, to be in abundance of everything, to be whatever we'd like to be.

Not that we want to be famous, not that we want to be rich, but this is the way we should be, we could be. Just that the society as a whole, like a big constitution, has its own law, unwritten agreement. They make every obstacle possible for every other soul. Even the developed souls have to struggle through this institution. So, it's difficult for us. Never mind, you are on your way, I think, you are happy and you know. That's the secret between us, don't tell other people. Well, you can tell, if you want, but then you make me become more famous and then I'm in more trouble. Actually, to tell you the truth, to be a Master is the lousiest job you ever can get. Don't ever apply for this job, I tell you. [Laughter] You can if you want to; but I warn you it's not easy. Pfoof! My God, I cannot believe there is such a job! I don't know what it is like to be president, but, pfoof, to be a Teacher is terrible. Spiritual Master, terrible, very, very lousy. No pay, [Master and audience laugh.] only get blame. Sometimes get blame for nothing. You know what, if people say they're jealous of me, say I'm a Master or something, then you say, 'No, no. She doesn't look like a Master, She looks like a tomboy, [Master and audience laugh.] very funny girl.' Tell them, so they don't get so jealous of me and make trouble for me.

THE WISDOM OF LIFE ¹⁸

In heaven, we have only one name – that's the name of love and wisdom. [Applause] Thank you. So, don't worry that we are apart from each other, because we are not really apart. We are the same, the same substance; and as long as we go in the same direction, sooner or later we will meet each other again or we will arrive at one point, one destination. So, meditate everyday and enjoy the privilege of the sainthood that you have been admitted into. The Light and Sound are there sometimes to assure you that you are doing okay, you're going in the right direction. Whenever the Light is very intense and the Sound is very, very clear that means you have entered deep into the higher consciousness; when the Sound is faint or the Light is dim that means you are just at the border of higher intelligence.

So, these are the measurements for you to know yourself, how far you have advanced, not for anyone to really judge you, whether you are a higher Buddha or you're a lower Bodhisattva. There is no nonsense like this. We're all going Home. Someone goes slower, someone goes faster, just like here. If you are a lot hungry, then you run fast to the kitchen. If you've just eaten biscuits in the tent, then you go slower; or if your legs are longer, you walk faster. The Asian people with shorter legs like me walk very slow. That's why we have become a snail family! [Master and audience laugh.] Last time we bestowed

18. Group meditation, Raising Center, Cambodia, July 30, 1996 (Originally in English).

upon ourselves all the titles: Golden snails, silver snails – all kinds of snails – stainless steel snails, [Master and audience laugh.] ordinary snails.

Only the Light and Sound can help us

Only the Light and Sound can help us in any kind of situation in this world. So, for us, any kind of karma, any kind of bad burden from the past, present or future, there's nothing else in this world that we can rely on. These, the Light and the Sound, are the only methods, the only equipment that God has bestowed upon us when we descended into this world, so that we can protect ourselves, so that we can remember the kingdom of God, so that we can dissolve any difficulties and obstructions on our way of finding the kingdom of God. Any troubles in this world – be it in your business, in your family circle or in the personal love relationship – are there actually just to make trouble for you, just to sidetrack you from the journey back to the kingdom of God. And God knows that beforehand, so we are given this equipment, the Light and the Sound, so that we can slash them all asunder and then advance further. Without Light and Sound, we never can make it back home... never, ever. Just like without the airplane, you can not make it here to Cambodia so fast and trouble-free.

So, anytime you have any problem, be it with yourself, with any of your love ones or any of the employments or businesses, anything, you just sit down and meditate. The problem will become clearer to you and then you'll know how to solve it, or the problem will just disappear itself in time. Sometimes we panic, really because the world seems to press upon us for certain things, or at a certain time and certain demand. We panic and say, 'Oh, my God! I cannot make it. I have only one more day or half more day and I just don't want to do something else. I want to do this thing right now and other things just come making demands on me. But then after we meditate for a while, the world withdraws its demand on us, or the problem just goes somewhere else and then we panicked for nothing. [Master laughs.] So, just keep cool. C-O-O-L, cool. [Laughter] Keep cool, baby, [Master and audience laugh.] and everything will be all right.

Listen to your intuition inside. Sometimes it's difficult. You have to see which is the strongest voice and remain steadfast on that strongest intuition, because sometimes you feel like you should do this, continue to do this job, but some other people come and demand you to do the other job, and the other people come to tell you this is better and it's no use now. It's going to be no use. You'd better run fast to the other direction and do this, that and that. But then you feel inside you should do this, but it makes you feel like in a struggle and torn apart from different directions. Then sit down and meditate and listen to your own Buddha voice, the intuition voice inside, the silent voice that tells you what to do. Or at least stay calm and you can see clearly for yourself which direction is better for you.

I tell you all these from experience. I'm not telling from a book. Books don't teach us this kind of thing, not too many. And it always works, because where else can we run to and what else can we use to deal with the world as it is, huh? So much overwhelming suffering, so much nonsense, so much pressure upon us, the small creature; and sometimes we really don't know what to do and it makes us feel very, very anxious, very restless. Meditation on the Light, on the Sound are the only things we can do at that time of necessity. But anyhow, you can pray, too. Praying doesn't mean 'Oh, please do this, please do that for me,' or, 'Please, help!' You can say that but at the same time, you must believe that help is already there. If you don't believe that, it's very bad for you.

Faith is the best prayer

Only faith can bring the things into actualization, because actually we are God. We are Buddha already. Help is always there. We don't even need help. If we are the Buddha, we know what to do, no? So, believe it. If you cannot believe in your own Buddha nature, then believe in the Master power, the Master's Buddha nature. Then that will help you, because even if you didn't have a Buddha nature, supposed you didn't have, supposed you were not the Buddha, then okay, at least someone else, like the Master, would not leave you in trouble. The Master would immediately know, would know before you even called, and would already have tried to find a way to help you. So, just believe in it. That's the best prayer for you. Believe that it will be done as best for yourself, whatever happens it will be the best for you and you will see it in the future, very soon, that is the best.

So, anytime any problem and you want to pray for yourself or want to pray for anyone, just believe in it. You can ask Master to help or ask your own Buddha nature to help, but you must believe that it will be done and it is being done, it has already been done. Then, it's okay. Remember the bible also says whatever you pray for, believe that it has been granted to you, then it will be done. It's the way it is. If you keep crying, 'Oh, please help me! Why don't You help me? It has been five minutes... it has been ten minutes. I'll give You another ten minutes.' [Master and audience laugh.] That's not the way.

You must believe. Your faith in yourself is the greatest healing power of any illness, of any problems that you might encounter. You must believe this, because you are the only Buddha within yourself. We are all the Buddhas, but the Buddha inside knows what to do already. The soul knows what to do. If you cannot believe, just believe the Master power will help you, because it will. It does help anytime. What's the use of having a master and then the master doesn't do anything for you. Even an ordinary father, mother would try their best to help their children; ordinary teachers would try their best to help the students. How would a spiritual Master, having access to all heaven and earth, just leave you alone in darkness and in trouble?

So, there's nothing we cannot solve with faith in ourselves or in the Master power, because actually the Master power is your power. You and I are one. So, if you cannot believe in yourself, okay let it be, because you feel separated from the Master, fine. Then believe in the Master power. If you really think the Master is good, why would the Master not help you? And the Master power is omnipresent; there's nowhere the Master is not. Anywhere you call, it's just the Master right there, twenty-four hours, remember! So, everywhere you stay, everywhere you live, whatever you face, don't panic, just believe. It will be solved if you can't solve it yourself. Try your best. If you cannot, then the Master will help you. That's what the Master's there for. Until you find your own Master power, the one who knows must help.

You are the answer you're looking for

Just like the teacher, before you know English he must help you to know English, to see, to learn, to teach you ABC, and to repeat this sentence, that sentence, and to read all these articles until you know them yourself. That's what the teacher is there for; but you also must know, learn yourself, and believe in your own ability, because you can do anything you want. You are the Buddha, never forget. Even if you cannot believe it, don't forget it. Don't forget what I've told you, because what I've told you is the truth. Don't believe anything less than this about yourself.

Have confidence, not pride but confidence within yourself because you are that which you are searching for now. There's nothing else but that inside you, what you search for. The one who is searching and the one who is searched are only one. Have you thought about who is searching for whom? Who is the one that is telling you to search that person, for that being? It's you yourself. Only God can know God. Only Buddha can feel longing for the Buddha nature, longing for your Home. If your home was not in the palace, if you had not been the prince in the palace, you would never miss the palace, you would never long to go back to the palace, understand?

So, if in your heart now you find yourself longing to go back to the kingdom of God, or for God realization, it is because you're God. You have been God, and now you have forgotten or something else that separated you, that's why you long for. Don't fear that we are not together because we always are, we always will be. But for the fun of creating a lot of things, we have been separated as it is right now. It's also fine, no? Don't you think so? Yes! Suppose we're all one already, me, you are one, only one face in the whole room here, only one big body like this, wouldn't it be terrible? [Laughter] No fun, huh? Everywhere is my head, everywhere is my arms, everywhere is my feet, nothing else I see here. [Master and audience laugh.] No men, no women, nothing, and no winking eyes sometimes. [Master laughs.] Then nothing to do, understand?

We should be really thankful for the creation as it is, so that we can enjoy each other, so that we can have something higher to long for, to hope for, to aspire for. Otherwise, 'Okay, I am sitting here. I am God. I am Buddha,' and that's that, you know? 'I want nothing, I wish nothing, I see no one, I do nothing for no one. No one loves me, I love no one because I am me, me and you, you are I, I and you.' That's that, and also no fun, huh? So, creation is all right. It's just that if we suffer so much from our wrong choices, previously, then we must change now.

The five precepts or the ten commandments we must keep because that's your salvation. Do not think the body is not important. The body is important. Without the body, the mind cannot exist there. Without the mind, the soul has no experiences in this world. The mind and gray matter – the brain – are different. The mind is invisible. The brain is the material instrument with which the mind uses to touch, to know the things around it. So, don't confuse the mind with the brain. But the mind is also very, very strong. So, you have to feed yourself adequately, bodily, so that your body is strong and keeps long, so that you can practice better and you can benefit the world longer. Don't disregard your body. Give it enough care, proper hygiene and protect it from weather, hunger, accidents and sickness. You have to think always positive and strong. Anytime you're ill, either you willed yourself to be sick or you probably let someone else affect you by your own will. Then just meditate more, take proper medication, and make yourself feel better.

Don't think that the five precepts are from any strict Buddha or rigid Bodhisattva trying to control your life. No, no, no! The body is not made for alcohol, cigarettes, drugs and all kinds of strong stimulation. That's how we shorten our lives, and that's how our ancestors, or parents shortened their lives and imparted this knowledge to us of the shortened life span. Otherwise, we would live longer. So, you heard that Jacob and whoever it was in the bible lived long, long, long years. Oh, they had about eight hundred children or something like that, remember? Also in many of the Chinese legends, they lived until eight hundred years or many thousands of years. Still there are some people who live that long. Actually, we could live very long, longer than in this kind of life, about a hundred years. Like this, too short. That's why sometimes we wonder why life is so short. What can we do in this kind of hundred years span.

We were not meant to live a hundred years. We are meant to live long, long, long, longer than this; but because of ignorance, self indulgence in all kinds of poisons, our genes from our ancestors kept shortening and shortening and imparted to us this kind of weak body. Then when we come here, we're also influenced by society, like okay, take a glass of alcohol or whiskey is cool. It's sociable, it's high-society. Actually, it's no good for us; anything that contains alcohol is terrible for your body. It shortens your life. It dulls the mind. It confuses the vision.

That's why if you have a risky sickness or an operation, doctors always advise you: Don't drink alcohol two weeks after the operation, don't smoke, don't have this and the other. Then why? Even if after sickness we should not drink alcohol or before or during the sickness we should not drink alcohol or take drugs, then why should we do it ordinarily? It is very harmful. So, if you want to live a healthier life, if you want to live longer, take care of yourself and your family, then stay away from all these toxins. It's not a rigid rule. It's just a natural way to live our life so that we'd be more healthy and clearer in our mind, not drugged all the time, not groggy and sluggish.

The only secret of longevity

Actually, our lives should be joyful, active and meaningful. We can learn a lot of things with our time, learning just for the sake of joy, for the sake of learning. You can start learning how to play the piano, guitar, dancing just for exercise, or learn golf, football, baseball, tennis, anything you like to do. You still can always start because your body will obey your command and the cells will start to produce younger cells. Because you want to live so they say, 'Oh! You want to live, fine. We do, why not?' The cells just listen to the command of the mind. So, make sure your mind is healthy, lively, active and you want to live, then you will live longer. That's the only secret of longevity.

Also, you can take some vitamins, if you believe in them, because faith is also in the medicine. If you believe vitamins are good for you, of course, your faith is invested in the vitamin pills and when you take, it's good for you. Of course, vitamins can help supply some of the missing elements, because sometimes we don't take enough nutrition or we take too much of one kind and not the others. Actually, if we are active, we're strong, and our mind is healthy, it can convert any kind of food into a healthy diet and make us healthy; but stay away from the poisons – alcohol, cigarettes, drugs. Drugs, I mean those heroine kind, marijuana, things like that. These are poisons for you, and these poisons are expensive. You're stupid! Pay so much money for poison. Whiskey is not cheap! Anything alcoholic is not cheap, hmm?

Drink fruit juice, drink water, mineral water or tap water if it's clean enough, if it's drinkable. These are good for you. Eat wholesome foods. Eat fruits, vegetables, tofu, vegetable protein. All these are very good and prolong your life. Eat nuts, [Master and audience laugh.] nuts are good for us nut-cases. Actually, to the world we are crazy, you know? So, if we are already seen as crazy, there is nothing else to worry about. Just be as crazy as you want. All kinds of margarine, all kinds of things that are good for you; olive oil, anything natural is good for you so don't spare your body the nutrition that is needed. But don't over eat, because that also will make you feel very bad and sleepy. Even if the food is good, eat as much as your body needs. If it's too much the body also cannot digest and a lot of it is wasted outside.

Even if I don't have a good example for you about eating, you'd better listen to me. [Laughter] The doctor can be sick but he can also cure you, can heal you. Even if a doctor has the same sickness, he can still cure you because he is a doctor. He knows how to

heal people, so don't come to the doctor and say, 'Oh, my God! He looks so...! Last year he had a liver operation, how can he cure my liver problem now?' It has nothing to do with it. Maybe his lifestyle is not so good or maybe he was poisoned by some of the environmental toxins, like some time he went to India and got hepatitis, things like that. Very difficult when you go around the world to keep the hygiene condition intact, unless you bring all your kitchen with you, the staff, too; and they cook for you everywhere you go, which is inconvenient. In hotels they don't let you cook, so you have to eat the hotel food; and sometimes the cook, he just tastes it, and donates some of his saliva free of charge into the food. That you don't have to pay for, but then you pay a lot for doctor's bills later. That's all troublesome.

Sometimes I am also ill, because I run around too much. I stay in hotels, I eat restaurant food. I eat anything because sometimes people invite me, and I eat with them so as to make them feel good. If I sit together with all the guests and demand my own food, my spoon, my fork and everything like that, oh God! Then they would feel very uneasy.

So, don't look upon my body and sickness and my hospitalization sometimes, feeling that my advice to you is not worthy. It is very good advice for you, all the precepts and all the things that I've imparted to you are good for you. Just live according to them and your life will be longer, your health will be more strong, and your economy will be better than before – you'll save a lot of money for medical bills, for doctors and for suffering. Not only save the money, you save the suffering. You don't have to go to the hospital so much. If possible, you just eat at home, cook yourself, I mean cook for yourself. [Laughter] Cook for your husband and your children.

Now and again, of course, you want to enjoy you go out to eat. That's all right, but pray a lot before. Make a lot of five names, cleanse it with Light and whatever power you can get from anywhere, from ten directions, eat it, and believe that it's clean and wholesome. That's the only choice. Even if you don't believe it, try to. What is the use of not believing in the food? Even if the food is bad, would it help you to believe it is bad; it would not. So might just as well believe positively that it's good, that it has been cleansed by the Buddha power. Then it is, because nothing that the power of the Buddha cannot do, nothing that God cannot do for you. He can make poison become nectar, so if you have to go out and eat, try to believe this. It probably won't help you every time but it helps a lot of times, depending on your karma and your faith.

Sometimes very difficult because you talk to the person next door and he leans to you, talks, and donates some saliva at the same time. At that time, you're busy listening to him and forget to pray, [Master and audience laugh.] but just pray in advance, and pray after, 'Please, whatever I have eaten, [Master and audience laugh.] I know You take care of it, so it's all right.' Try to believe it. Otherwise, what can I do for you? What can I tell you, because your life is like this. Our life is like this. For you, it's easier because every time you travel, you just come to my Center and our Center is as clean as possible already with people taking gloves, and cover all their noses and their mouth, so that the bacteria or whatever don't come into your food.

Extra-terrestrials from outer space

Our world is covered with bacteria and a lot of disease, but we're already much immunized to this system. If other people from other planets, suppose if there are some from other planets, if they came here they'd get sick very quickly. So, if they come here they have to equip themselves with a lot of sterilization, masks, suits and gloves, everything. That's why sometimes you look at the extra-terrestrials they look very weird, don't look like humans so

much. Actually, they are very beautiful; except the bad ones and the ugly ones, they are from a different dimension. But most of the advanced extra-terrestrials they are very beautiful. Some are very high, taller than us, three times bigger than the Americans, some. Some are higher than that, bigger, but some are average like us. Some are smaller, but they mostly are very beautiful and friendly. I suppose. I heard. [Master laughs.] I am told; I read it, okay. [Laughter] So, don't ask me anymore. [Laughter] You can read it in books, and ask those abductees, things like that. They'll tell you stories. Don't ask me. I only read, tell, and learn like you.

According to the Buddhist sutra, there are other beings as big as that. One time, namely the reverent Meguada something. Oh! I forgot his name, he was the one who was very good to his mother; his mother was in the hell. I don't know the Sanskrit name, I just forgot. One of the biggest disciples of the Buddha, one of the ten foremost disciples of Buddha, flew up to some other planet to visit other terrestrials. He stopped in one of the planets and at that time, some of the people there were having lunch. The bowl for rice and food, so big that he stopped at the edge of the bowl and he looked like a fly. So, the beings talked to themselves and said, 'Oh, God! This is a strange fly. We have never seen such in our place.' Actually, it was the disciple of the Buddha, an Indian monk, but because people there were so big that even just to land on the edge of one of their rice bowls, he looked like a fly to them. So, when you look at the fly on top of your bowl, maybe consider, [Laughter] maybe from another planet. Try not to kill them, because maybe they're some monks from somewhere on other planets, who knows? [Laughter]

So, even within this planet alone, we already have so many different looking people. How could it be the same for us – if the whole galaxy, the whole universe looked the same? It could not be the same. Perhaps some of the other planets have been keeping their tradition of a healthy diet, the secret of longevity, whereby our planet has lost it, because of disaster, because of our stubbornness or because some accident has befallen us that we have forgotten the secret of life. So, we have degraded into this stage of living and into which our life span has become so much shortened than it is necessary for us to do things in this world.

If our life would be longer, probably we could do a lot more, but I don't know. The world has to have peace first. Then they have to sit together and talk about how to preserve this planet, how to purify the atmosphere so the citizens in this world will lead a better life, have a better future for our children. But if they continue to make war like this, even within their own country, within their own party, then I see no hope. Even if our life is healthy and stronger, war can destroy it anytime. They just drop an atom bomb and we're finished, with all our healthy cells ready to live [Master laughs.] three, four, five hundred years. So, maybe in the future, we'll know how to live a better life, or we'll be born in another planet, which is better for our health, long life and spiritual progress.

The vibration makes a difference

That's what we are trying to do, bring you to a better environment. You still will have your body, it's just finer. Every being has the body, it's just the vibration is faster or slower. If it's faster then we don't see it much or it's invisible. The faster, the more invisible; the slower the vibration, the more visible. Our finer body has been condensed into this block of material that is visible to all the naked eyes by slowing down the vibration of the energy. You can see when you're young, you sometimes use like a yo-yo or something. You spin something. When it spins very fast, you don't even see it, the thing, right? Or the electric fan there. It's moving very fast now so it's like almost transparent whereas it has four wings. When it stops you can see the four wings and through the four wings you can not

see anything. But now because it's moving so fast you can see right through the four wings. And this is not even that fast compare to so many things in the universe.

Everything that your naked eyes don't see doesn't mean it doesn't exist. That's why sometimes during concentration time you step beyond the border of visibility and then you see the other world, other people surrounding you. Buddha is also around here, no where else He can go. All the beings also surrounding us; or if you left your physical body and went around with the astral body, also people don't see you but you can see other people. You can hear them, but they cannot hear you, they cannot see you. Just like after a person is dead, if he came back to see his relatives and friends, no one hears him, no one sees him, and he becomes very frustrated. So sometimes, he has to try very hard to materialize for some time, maybe seconds or a few minutes and then people say, 'Oh! I saw ghost!' [Laughter] Actually, they were in a finer body.

We also were in a finer world, then we tried to come down here. We had to slow down, slow our vibration so that the matter would be solid so we could have this. Actually, it's energy only. There is nothing really material about us, about our body even. Just that it was materialized by a slowing down process. So, revere your body to use it for a noble and good purpose. Take care of it as long as it should last for your purpose of realizing yourself and helping our brothers and sisters to go back to where they belong so that they have eternal happiness and don't have to suffer in the dark here, where they should not even though they have chosen to do it. But when it's time, they should go Home. We should be around and help them – pull them out of the darkness, and bring them back, go together with us Home.

Good night. Thank you. [Applause] Every time I speak differently. Sometimes I say the material body, don't care. That is for the people who indulged themselves too much in sleeping, eating, sexual indulgence and forget their real purpose. You can have all these as well, but beware, be moderate. The spiritual purpose is always the foremost. Take care with other things, slow down with other things. Go back Home, it should be the main goal of our life.

Good night. [Audience: Good night.] See you again. [Applause]

A GREAT GAME OF THE CREATOR ¹⁹

Actually, each one of us is a Buddha, a God, at least part of God, part from the whole. Anything that is a part from the whole means it has the same quality anyhow. So, we are the mini Gods, and we are the Master. Each one of you is a Master, the Supreme Master at that.

The plan to return to the kingdom

But because you have created your own situations and circumstances in which you can thrive and you can recognize your own mastership, that's why you suffer a lot and you have to undergo a lot of ungodly situations and qualities – kind of carrying around ungodly qualities and doing many so-called ungodly things. When we descend into this world, we forget we relinquished our right as a God, as a Buddha, as a Master so that we can undergo the journey that we have planned to undergo. We can call upon ourselves misery, disaster, darkness, so that we can experience the opposite of Godlike character, so that we can reclaim ourselves with all right and glory that, 'I am God and there is nothing better

19. Group meditation, Raising Center, Cambodia, July 22, 1996 (Originally in English).

than me because I have tried them.’ I have told you already. And that is why I also told you that we cannot force people into returning to Godhood if they don't want to, because they have laid down their own plan of enlightenment, their own project of returning to the kingdom. Nevertheless, as a God, of course, we can always call it quits. Normally we don't, because also as God, we stick to our own project and we even ever create anew. So, if we are clever, we can also create new situations and don't stick to the old one, or create extra situations so that even though we stick to the old one, we are more comfortable when we have a new plan also. From the new plan will spring new opportunities and new situations so that we can return to the kingdom of God quicker than others.

A king relinquished his throne

But normally it's difficult, once we relinquished our power and come into the dark region of creation, very difficult to reclaim the Light again. It takes a lot of effort. For example, if a king relinquished his kingdom to someone and gives his throne, temporarily even, to someone. Oh! It's difficult to come back after ten or twenty years and say, 'Hey, you know. It used to belong to me, now step down.' After twenty years, maybe no one remembers that you were king even. And how can you get near the kingdom without passport? Talk about that first, or visa? Then who will let you go near to the palace, not to talk about stepping to the throne and saying to the king at the present time, 'Get down, you.' Before you could approach the king, you'd already be in jail, and you'd be in more trouble than not. And maybe you lost all your money while you were on the journey, and then you could not even get back to your country, not to talk about going to the throne and reclaiming your own glory and power. Of course, in the kingdom of God no one is sitting there on your throne, claiming it, and not giving it back to you. It's just that the situation gets worse and worse along the road, if you do not try to remember who you are. And even if you try, it's difficult. How can you remember God when everyday your wife and kids want bread and water to survive; and you yourself need the minimum to survive even. In some of the situations, it's really desperate. You can't remember God if your stomach keeps howling inside. It's saying, 'Ooooooh! I'm hungry! I want something.' Yes, the voice in our stomach will be louder than the voice of God, even the Quan Yin Sound. So, it's very difficult for us once we've left the kingdom of God to remember it again. Nevertheless, Masters will be sent. The Masters are those who already have undergone the journey, know every trick and trade in the business, and then can help us with a hand and bring us back. It's better that way. But eventually, any soul will return to its own glory in time; takes longer or shorter depends on its desire. Some souls can desire to come earlier. But some souls decide to stay longer, despite the suffering and the hardship, so that they can create more and learn more about the opposite direction and qualities of God. So, when they return they will feel more secure, more confident about what they are.

The suffering souls need a most special Master

These are greater Masters even, with a lot more experience, a lot more power, a lot more talent, and a lot more of the know-how technique, how to deal with every and each situation in this world. Sometimes these kinds of Masters have already mastered their own destiny and reclaimed their own kingdom and power, but they still decide to come back again and again into the physical world in order to help other souls who need more help than ordinary souls. Some souls are more clever or they laid down an easy plan for themselves to walk, so they can go quicker, or they don't suffer so much. Some souls laid down hardship for themselves. Well, no one can choose the same path all the time. The souls will not choose the copy cat way to walk their journey. So sometimes, they choose a very, very delicate and very difficult and intriguing path to walk; and they encounter a lot of

trouble, a lot of misery, a lot of hardship, a lot of suffering and an insurmountable task sometimes. They need a really special Master, if there is one, if there is such a Master available or willing to sacrifice their bliss and happiness in order to come down to share the journey and the suffering with these kinds of souls. Sometimes it's too hard for the soul to bear, then it will cry out, 'Help! Help, heellllppppp.' [Master and audience laugh.] Even a very, very faint sound from the soul will be heard by the Master. If it cries from its heart, then the Master will come, without initiation even. Even if the soul's time has not come and can not meet the Master in the physical body, the Master would appear invisibly, in a dream or in a vision to help that soul; because every soul needs help when they undergo this kind of journey into this terrible domain of darkness. Not that darkness presides over this world or the nether world in that matter. It's just that we called upon ourselves darkness, so that it covers our soul, covers our entire journey, or some part of our journey, so that we can not see the Light even though it is right in front of us. So, the soul, in desperate situations, calls out for help and the Master or the Godhead is always in the near. Never any soul walks the lonely path alone. There's always assistance of the so-called guardian angels, the Masters of higher order. Depends on how difficult the situation the soul gets himself into, the higher or the lower order of help will be despatched. Normal situations, maybe just angels or guardian spirits. In the more difficult situations, the desperate situations, the Master must come. The Master of the highest order must come in the most emergency cases. Never a soul walks lonely in darkness. No eternal hell. But sometimes if the soul created too much difficulty for itself... I mean, before it got into this world until it got into the difficulty, it has already mired itself into darkness, into misery already, and separated too long. Because it created so much trouble, or so much misery for other souls as well by doing so, by trying to deny its Godliness, it created so much misery, so much so-called sin already, then it would feel it does not deserve help. Therefore, it could not even call out for help. Therefore, there is such a thing as hell, but not permanent. There is no such permanent hell. But for us, for a miserable and lonely soul at that time, hell is eternal. Every misery second is eternal to any soul who suffers that kind of situation. Any long period of happiness is seconds to us. It never lasts so long; it seems like a flash, and it's gone. Suddenly, sit here and lecture ends already? [Master and audience laugh.] 'The barbecue finished? Come on, I have just sat down. [Laughter] I have just eaten about twenty chapatis, twenty hams [Laughter] or sausages and vegetarian chickens, not much.' [Master and audience laugh.] Such happiness, hours we spent together, or days even seem so fast. But miserable time, wow, it lasts like eternity, and that's why we call it eternal hell. There's no such thing as permanent hell, or eternal suffering, eternal damnation. Don't you ever believe in this. It is in a sense because suffering lasts so long, and it's terrible. Whenever you get hurt, or when the doctor has to operate on you or something, oh my God! It seems like you want to run out of it any second if you can. When you are bandaged all over and your hands are tied on the bed, or tied with a serum bottle, blood bottle or the blood-squeezing bottle hanging all over your body because they want to take the extra blood from the wound, so that it runs out and doesn't clog your system. Hanging all over, my God! You feel like you are suffocating! It happened to me two weeks ago, I know what it is. It's still fresh in my mind. I said, 'I never ever want to see a doctor again. Never ever. I'd rather die!'

Nevertheless, in any situation, doesn't matter how bad the soul has created circumstances for itself, each soul is a Master, is God, is a Buddha. Never make any mistake about this. It's just that it takes a longer time to realize Buddhahood. If we find ourselves in an undeserving situation and deny ourselves the right even to pray for help, at that time, we suffer terribly. We suffer so great a loneliness that is equal to the worst hell that you can imagine. We feel like we're the most terrible being, and we suffer. Whatever we did to others, we suffer the same, same feeling; and that's what is called hell. That's why we, as a practitioner, since we already know the way of God, should never ever create new

situations again in which we have to suffer the same consequences that we created. That's why we must keep the precepts, keep our mind, speech and actions pure. Not because I say so, not because God will punish us; but because we will suffer, we will get very far away from Godhood, and we will feel very miserable and unworthy indeed. That's why we must recite the five names all the time, because those are God's qualities that you are reciting. It's not the names, and also it is the names, the holy names of the five Buddhas, five Gods in the five levels of consciousness. They represent the God qualities in the different levels. It's just like I say, 'My foot, my knee, my solar plexus, my heart, my chest, my neck, my mouth, my eyes, my forehead;' they're all mine even though they have different functions, different levels. No one would like to look at my feet all the time, but nevertheless, they are my feet. It's okay. Once you've touched my feet, it's my body, too.

Create the condition, then overcome it

Why does the soul create for itself difficulty instead of choosing God level? I told you yesterday already. You have to create situations so that you can recognize your power of overcoming it, of winning all these that are not yourself, winning the opposite to your power. In order to win the opposite of your power, you have to create it, and then show your strength. Otherwise, what is the God there for? Okay, now fancy God sitting there all the time and saying, 'I'm God, I'm God, I'm God. Everything is beautiful.' And Hes eats, Hes couldn't even eat. Hes is a God, Hes doesn't need food. And Hes says, okay Hes would dress up. What for does Hes dress up, if Hes is already a God? No one sees Hirm. Hes is a God, one and only. What should Hes do then? Hes just says Hes is a God, almighty, all pervading and nothing else. Then there'd be just like a foggy or brilliant Light all over the place, and that'd be it; no me, no you, no flowers, no trees, nothing. So, in order to enjoy it more also, to prove that Hes is a God, Hes has to create something. If Hes creates another God, what is the use? Two God sitting, facing each other [Laughter] and saying, 'What now, my love?' So, Hes has to create something to play with, to prove the power, or just to be God. God is creative. Oh, putting it that way, maybe that's Hiers job, Hes has to create. And in order to create a lot of things, Hes has to set Hirmself apart and each one is assigned a different function, just like a theater. Hes cannot play alone, even though Hes is the director. Hes has to assign Steven one role and the other one must be the bad guy. If everyone is a good guy in the movie, how can you play it? Now you got it? As actors and actresses, you'd be assigned different roles, and you wouldn't mind. You'd play the bad guy or you'd play the good guy, the money is all good. [Laughter] The fame is still good all the same.

Similarly, as God or as part of God, we did not have any fear to undertake anything before we came into this world. We just said 'Okay!' to any role that was assigned to us. As a God, how would you fear anything? So, in order to make it more abundant then each God has to create situations for Hirmself, and no copy cats.

God's creation is abundant

How can a God copy another? [Master and audience laugh.] Hes has to make it more dramatic, more creative. Whatever Hes creates is fine. Hes can create good, Hes can create evil, Hes can create bad, Hes can create favorable situations. Whatever it is, it's God. I mean God doesn't care. How can a God care, 'Oh, that's scary. I don't want to go in there.' [Master and audience laugh.] Or, 'Oh, no, no. That's a bad role. I don't want to play that. It is bad for my reputation.' As God, you would never ever think anything like that. In fact you don't think; just automatically create. Now that's the danger. When we come into this world, we have already forgotten our power and our glory, and we create always a new thing. That's why we become more and more complicated each day. Then one day

we will suffer a lot and called out, 'Help!' Because at that time... sometimes we have forgotten also that we're God, and with the mind trying to create also something. The effect of this creation and that creation matched together make a third creation. The third creation breeds another fourth creation, and the second and fourth mixed together make it become seven other creations, all different characters. Even have a little bit diluted of this kind of character of the first creation but not the same. That's why all persons do not look alike. And your children, doesn't matter how much they look like you, they still don't look like you that much. They look like the cross between you two or not at all. As a God, even if God is divided into different parts, God cannot tell God, 'Don't create this or don't create that.' God is always ever free. There is no evil in God's terminology, but that doesn't mean evil doesn't exist, please, please. There's no evil in God's plan. They are just different creations so that things become more complicated, more colorful and more exciting, like a thriller or spy movie.

Like Arnold Schwarzenegger... if he's the one who plays a good guy, and no other character accompanies him who plays the bad guy, how can he destroy the enemy? How can he blast the bomb into their camp, or how can he become a hero (in the film) of his country if there is nothing else for him to play with? Other actors and actresses, doesn't matter how bad the roles, they play; because the director already assigned Arnold the good role. You cannot two play together the same role. Never, even in a family; because in the family there's only one boss, and normally it's your wife. [Master and audience laugh.] There's no need for you, not necessary at all, to play that role. So, just keep aside and be the deputy, okay? Someone has to do something else, right? You be the good guy and play the second part.

Similarly, before the creation began, each of us wanted to do something; or, God, the God of all Gods, of all of us, or the main part of the whole, told us, 'Okay. Let's do something. We are all sitting here together in one and as one, and all is nothing. It's all boring, so we'll divide. Each will go a different direction or do different things, okay or not?' They said, 'All right!' [Master and audience laugh.] Then each one does something. Why not, huh? So now, if I say to my feet, 'Please walk!' Would my feet say, 'Come on, me? Why? Why do I have to walk everyday? I'm so tired of it already. I want to do something else!' [Laughter] What can the feet do now? Can they eat something? [Laughter] No, not at all. The feet can only walk. If the feet refused to walk, then the whole thing would be in trouble. Could not exist, could not function. The feet or the hands, it's just like if the hands complained, 'Oh, I work all the time. I work everyday just to feed him, the mouth.' [Laughter] 'And I have to walk,' the feet said. 'Yeah, me too. I have to walk miles, or have to carry the whole body so that he can eat. No, we won't work anymore.' Now the feet and the hands went on strike. Ah, the mouth has nothing to eat. [Laughter] Okay, that's good for a while, and they feel good, the hands and the feet. But after a while, what happens then? The heart slows down, the liver complains, the gastric system goes berserk, producing gas all the time, but nothing to digest. After that, the feet and the hands also become instant noodles in hot water. The way you cook it, you soak it, [Laughter] and nothing functions, they get tired. So they decided to work again.

Same with us. Sometimes we suffer because we have forgotten that it's our assigned job, and we complain and we don't want to do it anymore. We die, we commit suicide, things like that. But we have to come back again and finish the job, because the whole creation depends on each one of us to function. Think of it, how important you are in this universe. You're not just a nobody, even if you're not enlightened, even if you're not a Quan Yin practitioner, even if you're very lowly; anyone is a part of the whole. That's why I told you never to mistreat others, never to complain about others, never criticize them. Whatever you can change, change. Whatever you feel uncomfortable about others, you tell them of

course, but not in a bad spirit. Tell them and change it. If they cannot, then avoid it. I never tell you to 'love thy neighbor, the tiger.' If it's a tiger next door, don't love it. [Master and audience laugh.] Don't go and find a tiger, hug it, and say, 'I am proving my love to all creation equally.' It's not possible to do that. Avoid, if you can, whatever situations you cannot change. You can just drop them. Create new situations, and enjoy anew. But the best thing for us is we always have to create something so that we can always remind ourselves as God and try to also create situations so that other people will be reminded – freely, willingly, who they are, if we can. That's our duty, but not forced upon by tricks. Just logically let them understand, let them remember, because the soul understands logic and reason and that's the only tool we can use in this world to help the souls return to the kingdom of God. That's the agreement between each of the souls before they descended into this world – that other souls could help them to quicken the journey, but not magic, not any miracle thing like those that they do in the inner world, in the secret between the veil.

Behind the secret curtain

Between the curtain of darkness is Light, is the inner world of peace, harmony, miracle, fulfillment, contentment and love. Behind that curtain is our private household. Anyone with Quan Yin power can enter behind the curtain and have a private meeting with the Master, with all the master souls to get help, and come out again to survive in this world. That's why mostly you pray to the Master, you see only the Master inside helping you. No one else knows about it. Even the passenger next to you often doesn't see the Master. Sometimes they do, but only rarely. You understand what I mean? Every miracle, every help must be rendered in secret, because that is the agreement between the souls. You know why we can do that? Because at that time, the soul is allowed to step back into the kingdom of God for a while, into this five spiritual worlds instead of remaining in the physical world. So, whenever we want to get help, if we cannot bear this world and if we've forgotten our wisdom, we've forgotten our Buddha nature, we must step inside that curtain where our private house is, where we regain part or the whole of our Buddha nature again. We step back into the kingdom, into the circle of sainthood and there we can have a secret meeting and say, 'Oh God, really my job is difficult. [Laughter] Give me some tips quickly.' [Master and audience laugh.] Of course, as master souls together, we're allowed to discuss as adults, as Masters together already; but when you step back out of that black curtain again, back into the darkness, into the physical world, you're not allowed to be a Master anymore. You forget immediately what you are, just like the day you descended on earth. That is part of the agreement. That's a part of the game of the universe.

So, if you understand all this, suffering is not real suffering anymore. It doesn't mean it won't hurt you if someone stabbed you on the leg, shot you, cursed you, humiliated you, or tried to do something harmful to you. It hurts still; but over all, this wisdom helps us to sustain our peace. Only the physical body suffers, the brain suffers; but we have, somehow, this basic peacefulness within us most of the time. So, even if we suffered for a while, we regain our smile immediately, almost, or very quickly. That's the good thing about remembering who you are and regaining the Godhood. Each soul is already a Buddha, so he can anytime try to create something new for himself if he doesn't like the thing that he created. He can either walk the whole journey or he can create something aside so that there's another effect that comes out of it. Then he continues that way and he doesn't have to continue this way, too. Once you walk into the Master's circle, you can forsake whatever plan you have still in front of you, whatever effect or extra plan, the branches of the plan that you made before or created out of the karmic connection with the old pattern of life and the old creation that you made. Can create new or walk right here. Then the path is still there but unwalked, left; and grass, mud, everything will cover it and

nothing more. That's how karma can be acquitted, can be left, can be burnt away, can be erased, no problem.

Why Master cannot deliver all sentient beings

The Master can do that, just drag you to another direction: 'Come here, you!' [Master and audience laugh.] Because at that time, the soul wanted it. If the soul didn't consent, then it would not be possible; because soul is a Buddha (God). How dare you! No one dare do anything to a Buddha or try to influence a Buddha, and the master soul knows this, too. Even though he, at that time, doesn't remember he's a Buddha. But the Buddha must respect the Buddha all the same, because the Master knows. The sentient being doesn't know, or the disciple doesn't know, but the Master knows it. He is the Buddha soul, so if he says 'no' then it's 'no.' Ah, that's why you always ask me, 'Why does the Buddha or the Master not just drag him, blind him into love, [Master and audience laugh.] turn his heart and his mind, use miracles?' No! Can't. No one can do. [Master and audience laugh.] If can do, then no need Buddha, no need Lao Tzu, no need Jesus even. Others already would have done it before Him. Or if no one else came before Jesus, then at least Jesus would have been enough. One! The one and only son of God, He did it, enough. He would have turned all the world into angels. You and I would already be sitting up there and drinking tea by now. [Laughter] No need to work so hard, see what I mean, honey?

Yes, that's why I never am in a hurry to try to force anyone into the Quan Yin method, so you don't worry. See, you have printed a lot, millions and millions of copies of sample booklets in all the different languages, how many souls come here to me? Every month you have how many new brothers and sisters born? Your Mother is really slow. [Master and audience laugh.] It's not my fault, because the soul sometimes decides that it doesn't want to go back to the kingdom so soon. It likes to create even more situations. Normally, the soul would try to create the quickest, possible situation for itself so that it can go back to the kingdom of God. But because the creation is not always fixed, so whatever you created sometimes breeds another creation, another situation, and so and so and so. God is free. God is not predictable. God is not the one who predicts the future and says, 'I'll create this, and it will become that. Then I will get that and I will get this.' Ah, then it's no fun anymore. But even if God knows that, our physical brain, and body functions don't know. Therefore, we still suffer, there's still fun, because we have forgotten what we are doing and what we have done. Even consciously we create new situations everyday, but we also sometimes don't know it, and we blame the neighbors, blame the hardship, blame the suffering, or blame God for this. Actually, it's all our own doing. But I tell you what, there is no such thing as a theater drama plan like God already created everything, assigned someone a role, and the role remains like that. You know what I mean? Maybe he's a bad guy, okay, but eventually he will become good. That's not predictable. Each soul must create his own creation and journey, and therefore you see each one will beget something that he has created and that makes life different every where, every time for every one. The soul can be tired after playing too long and now it wants to rest. Then it calls out and the master soul, who has already finished or who is willing to come and help such a soul, will come to it; or will be born in its vicinity and then meet it, born in its world and create something so that they both will meet. But that soul must be really yearning, must really want to go Home. Otherwise, everyone is free. You go, you stay, who cares. Each soul is the creator itself and makes its real creations for itself. Actually, each one of us is a Buddha, a God, at least part of God, part from the whole. Anything that is a part from the whole means it has the same quality anyhow. So, we are the mini Gods, and we are the Masters. Each one of you is a Master, the Supreme Master at that.

THE SECRET OF BRUSHING TEETH ²⁰

Did you brush your teeth? Brush them thoroughly, otherwise they will decay. Do not only brush your teeth, but also your tongue as well. Talking about brushing teeth, I'll tell you a secret, don't use too much toothpaste. Each time just use a little bit, the amount about as big as the head of a chopstick, like a garden pea should be enough. If you use too much toothpaste, your teeth will turn black. There are some children who brush their teeth very often, and their teeth are still black. Brush your teeth three times a day, after meals or sweets, and when you brush your teeth, brush them up up, down down, and around. Brush your tongue as well, so you won't have bad breath.

More work, more cleverness

Only when you are grown up, then you'll know how hard it is to earn money. Some parents eat little, spend little, because they want to buy things for us. Therefore, we should show filial piety to our parents. In school, we should study hard, make our teachers happy. When we get home, we should help out with the housework. Then we will become clever. Lazy children become more and more stupid. That's true! Do you think I am clever? [Children: Clever!] Yes! Because I started to work when I was young; I helped my parents and the servants with the chores at a young age. Use your brain, only then will it become clever. Everyday we have to look for work to do, then the brain will become clever. Do whatever you are able to help your parents. If you can not wash both your socks, then wash only one. Wait until you grow up, then you can wash both socks. Learn to wash your own clothes. Later, you will get use to it.

FIND A WAY TO SURVIVE ²¹

No matter what kind of life we live, we have to find a way to survive. We can do it! God will arrange it, but only if we find our own God within. Then Hes will take care of us. When we work for the worldly boss in this world, he pays us a salary. At least it provides us with food to eat, a place to live, and gives us clothes to wear, not to mention working for God. How could Hes not take care of us? Besides, we are God! [Applause]

So, when we encounter difficulties or unpleasant situations, talking to ourselves (higher-self) is good enough. At this time, our wisdom will automatically emerge to handle the matter. If Hes really doesn't handle it, then that means that our time is up [Master and audience laugh.] and we have to leave! If we have to leave, then we leave! Haven't we said that we are already fed up with this world? Even so, we don't ask for death day and night. We used to demand to live longer, but now we don't ask for death day in and day out. Let it be natural.

In any circumstances, we have to try to make things better. If the circumstances aren't very good, then we think of a better way to improve them. There must be a way. When meditating, we think about the problem, and then the answer and suggestion will naturally come. At that moment, that is our inner Master answering us. If by any chance our inner ear is deaf, [Master and audience laugh.] Hes will try to think of another way to tell us, such as letting us accidentally hear someone singing a song that happens to teach us how to do it. But if you hear that Hes says 'go die,' you had better not follow it. [Master and audience laugh.] Sometimes they sing nonsense like, 'If you leave me, I will die.' Then don't listen to it. [Master and audience laugh.] Even if you are lovesick, it is not such a big

20. Speaks to the audience of young people, Raising Center, Cambodia, July 21, 1996 (Originally in Chinese).

21. Group meditation, Raising Center, Cambodia, July 19, 1996 (Originally in Chinese).

deal, no need to die because of that. There are still a lot of other people in this entire world. Dying for one person is too senseless! [Master laughs.] A lot of situations are created by yourselves, maybe you wanted to do these in your last life.

If we practice well, we will communicate easily with our inner Master and will do things smoothly. Our thinking will be exactly the same as Master's. In this case, I will be very happy and you will feel happy and at ease, too. You won't know why but you will be very relaxed and feel that you are doing the right thing. In doing anything, you will feel completely satisfied, even without anyone praising you. We will still know that we are doing the right thing, because we communicate inside. If we do not communicate inside, our ego, our desires for fame and gain will be overwhelming, then whatever we do is wrong. If we are stubborn and arrogant about what we are doing, then we will mess everything up, whether it is a big matter or a minor thing. So, we should practice more to cut our ego. Otherwise, you can sit there for a hundred years and still just be rotten eggs. And you blame God, blame the Buddhas that they don't take care of us. We are Buddhas and God, too! Who do we need to take care of us? Right? [Audience: Yes!]

WE ARE BUDDHAS ²²

Respect but being natural

I hope that the more you are enlightened, the more you are natural. But the problem with us is, the more you kind of respect me. I don't know why that is. Respect is okay, but being natural is better. Respect in your heart, and just a very ordinary respect, like you would respect another Bodhisattva next to you, because they all are. Just the way I respect the nurses and the doctors, that's it. That's enough. I respect them but I still require them to do the things for me that they should. I still ask them the questions that I am not clear about – what their special skill is and how it's going to be done. You understand what I mean? Not that I respect them so much that I dare not ask them anything, from the doctor or let him do what he wants, or don't tell him I'm not pleased with this and that, in a polite way.

Respect we do have but the self-respect must also be there, and the naturalness. We have to live together. We must live our life, together or alone. We must live, we must be natural so we can breathe, we can move, we can enjoy life as long as it lasts. Otherwise, we restrict each other too much, or build a prison for each other. Then what is the good of becoming Buddha, becoming imprisoned and isolated like that? No more fun.

I don't feel disturbed that I live among you at all. At the moment I do. Please don't try to find out where I live, and that's the best for me and you. Otherwise, I will be in trouble again that you are concentrating on that spot and thinking that's a holy ground and go and collect the dirt from there, things like that.

Everywhere is holy, because everything is God-made. Nothing is man-made except the terrible atmosphere that we try to create with our own habits and the wrong choices or no-choices. The choices in our lives make a difference. We are all God and Buddha but because of the choices in our lives we have become different individually. So now, if you have made the choice to become a Buddha again, or to recognize your own Buddha again, it's very simple! Just turn around. Turn your life, make a different choice now. Think what the Buddha would do now, what a loving being like a Buddha, what a compassionate being like a Buddha would do in this situation, in this kind of circumstance. Every time like

22. Group meditation, Raising Center, Cambodia, July 19, 1996 (Originally in English).

that. Just act like a Buddha, think like a Buddha, speak like a Buddha, and that you are a Buddha.

You must act out Buddha's authority

You already are! It's just that you make yourself different, because you choose not to act like a Buddha. You choose to act like an idiot or devil, or whatever. Oh, that's your choice, it's all right. But don't blame God or Buddha when you suffer from the consequences of your choices. Don't blame me that you have not become a Buddha after you have been imparted the Quan Yin method and you have not found your nature. You already have it, why do you have to find it!? There's nothing to find anymore. You already are the Buddha! It's you! You just have to recognize it and act it out.

Choose the Buddha's way. Choose your original way of being. Be a quality person. Be something that you want to be, like a Buddha. It's all right if you don't want to be a Buddha, for me; because it's your choice. You do what you want with your life; but if you really choose to be a Buddha, then you must do it. You must act out that Buddha quality. That's all there is. There's no need to become Buddha anymore because you already are a Buddha. You must act out that authority. You must realize your quality, and that's all there really is to do.

Now, the five precepts, for example. It's not a must that I impose them upon you. It's a measurement so that you know what you are, where you are going, where you have reached up to now. This is a kind of Buddha's quality, or at least noble human being quality. You would not like to kill anymore. If you were a Buddha, you wouldn't like to. You wouldn't like to take lives that you have created, or maybe God has created. God has created life not to be taken away, you know that. If it's your own creation, because you are a God or Buddha, then the more so you don't like to destroy what you have created. So, that means no killing, under avoidable circumstances. If you still think, if in your heart you still have this vicious quality, still like to kill people, or even kill, disturb their mentality just for your own good, then you must know that you have not reached the state of Bodhisattvahood or sainthood. That's all there is, it's a measurement for you. If you've found, by chance, by thought or by any habit, that you have kept the precepts during your life, or up to now, or at least after initiation up to now, then you know your qualities have been refined. You have become more noble now. You have reached the state of near the original quality that you have, like Buddha nature or God quality.

There is nothing like, if you don't keep the precepts Buddha will punish you. You will punish yourself; because as a Buddha you know what is right, what is wrong, and if you deliberately have done something against this kind of Buddha quality or God nature, then you'd feel terrible. You'd feel like you are Buddhaless, Godless, and that's what makes you suffer. That is hell. It could be long, it could be short. It depends on how deep is your deliberation in judgement, against your own absolute purity. That is what hell is. There's no hell ready-made for you. There's no God who sits there and pin-points a finger saying you're good, you're bad, you're all this. You are Hirm. So, make sure that you do not commit anything that is less noble than God, and less noble than a Buddha. That's how you are a Buddha. That's how you become Buddha, the Master of your own self. Get the choice that you must make.

There's no need for me to sit every time in retreat and remind you to be good, to be holy, to be Buddha, and things like that; because you must do it. There's no choice for you. If you want to become Buddha, if you want to recognize your noble quality again, there's no

other choice for you but to discipline yourself to return to the noble road that you have strayed away from.

It's easy to become Buddha

There's no need for anyone to tell you what to do. You know exactly what to do. Just ask yourself. Always check inside, and always have to be integrated within yourself to see what kind of quality you have. That's why the spiritual diary is there for you, so you know everyday how far you have gotten and how much further you want to be. It's very easy.

To be a Buddha is very easy. Just act like one, think like one, speak like one, because you already are. All you have to do is be it! If you refuse yourself, you deny your own compassion, your own love, your own mighty power, your own highest position, then of course, even if there is a true, a one and mighty Buddha, or one mighty God, the one and only, could not even save you if you deny yourself. That's why we have strayed from Godliness. That's why we have strayed from Buddhahood and we descended into a lower existence. We get into hell, we get into suffering, etcetera, because we deny ourselves. But it's all right. This is a process of learning. You wanted to learn that way, it's okay.

But if you are ready to return, you're fed up with it, you don't want it, then you must know now it's time to change, to return, to turn your head and walk back. Walk back to where you have come from and that's all there is. Like before, we behaved badly, we killed people, we stole from people, we slandered people, we did all kinds of bad things; now we have to return. Just don't do anymore of these kinds of things and you become Buddha again. That's why you can become instantly Buddha, can become instantly enlightened. That's why the Buddhists say if you just throw down the butcher knife, you become Buddha. Just turn your head, that's it. Walk back, very easy. There's nothing more to do to become Buddha than just return to where you are, because you already are Buddha. How many times do I have to tell you. I will continue until you realize this. It's like a mantra, 'I'm a Buddha, Buddha, Buddha...' [Laughter and applause.] But it doesn't help much, it might help me only. Keep on saying, 'I'm a Buddha, I'm a Buddha!' Then only I become a Buddha. [Master laughs.] Well, try to remember. Try to remind yourself that you are a Buddha and nothing less.

Of course, it's difficult. I wouldn't tell you, I wouldn't cheat you that it's easy, because your mind won't let you think that way. Your habit is all-binding because you would think, 'Oh, I'm so lowly. I'm so sinful. I have been so bad, how can I be a Buddha or how can I become a Buddha?'

Turn your head and walk back

You can! Just return. Just walk back, that's it. Doesn't matter how far you've walked north, just turn your head and walk south. One day you'll reach. If you don't turn your head and walk back, you never will. Doesn't matter how long I accompany you and tell you to walk south, you will never reach south if you continue walking north. Very simple. Just return. Before we had bad habits, now we have to have good habits. Before we thought lowly, now we have to think nobly. In any situation, act just like a Buddha. Be noble. Be yourself. That doesn't mean you have to give your head to everyone to chop if they want to. It's not that way. You have to know what a Master should be in any situation; what She would do; what a Master like yourself would do in that given situation or those given circumstances; what a Master of the universe would do. Think about it and then do it. Maybe it's not exactly as a Master would do but at least you proclaim yourself that you are a Master, because you are. What else are you? You think you came from the devil like some

doctrines has stated? What do we have a God for? Doesn't Hes have enough power to create us that Hes has to leave it to a devil to do it? Does a devil have more power than God that he can create human beings like this and God cannot? What does God do then, all Hiers daytime, nighttime and lifetime? What does Hes do in eternity? Nothing? What kind of useless God is that? So, don't recognize the devil as your father.

We have to recognize God. We do not have a God as a Father / Mother even. We are God! We are a divided nature of God. We're just one part of God, but still God. You have a birthday cake and you cut it into ten pieces because you invited ten friends to come together. Do you think one piece of the birthday cake is different from the next? No! You cut it maybe a little smaller because you are not skillful, or bigger than the next piece, but it is all birthday cake, the same cake, the same quality. That's why you invited all your friends to share it. Similarly, everything around here, everything about you, everything under you, behind you, above you, underneath you, around you is God. Just divided into different ways, just like a birthday cake. Sometimes it's written 'Happy Birthday' and then one person gets an 'H,' the other one gets a 'Y,' the other gets a 'T' or 'U,' something like that. Or, 'Happy birthday to Michael,' one gets 'Mi-' the other one gets '-chael,' but that makes no difference. It's still the same cake, and same quality. Nothing different from that.

So similarly, the person next to you – the shorter one, the black one, the white one, the yellow one, the red one – they're all God, all Godly quality. But because of the way they choose to express their own experience, that makes the difference. So, one person would choose to be a bad boy or things like that, go out and even murder people.

That is when the devil is created; because, to all human kind, that kind of action is the devil and you cannot say the devil is not there. Devil is anything that's against the Godly quality, against the creative power within us; because God only creates and doesn't destroy. So, if we choose the destroying path, the damaging path of the opposite, then at that time we act like a devil because we want to deny the almighty power of God, deny ourselves. We like it that way. Some of the people do it like this; they just deny, deny until the end of the denial and they're fed up. Then they return and recognize their Godly quality again. They say, 'Okay, okay, okay. That's no good. That's not a very good experience. I've suffered, and other people have suffered for that too, so I had better change it.'

Forgive yourself because you are God

Similarly, if anything we do in our life we think it's wrong then we just change it, and that's all. Okay, we might suffer from the consequences, but the earlier we change the less grave consequence we have to bear. That's the best repentance. There's no need to sit there and pray to Buddha, to God to forgive you. No one will forgive you. Whatever you did, you did. There's no need to ask for forgiveness, just change it. That's the best repentance, the most sincere, because then you forgive yourself because you are God. Who else can forgive God but God Hirmself?

If you are repentant within your heart the God in you knows, 'All right. Good that we're returned. We've come back to where we belong. That's all right to go to the south instead of continuing to the north.' Then you will face the south and you'll be nearer to the south. That is the forgiveness that you've made for yourself and you created for yourself.

No one can force you to turn south if you don't want, even if you pray on the road for a hundred years, 'Please, please, please lead me to the south. Please lead me to the south.' What is the use of that? Just turn your head and walk back. Is that not easier? Yes, that's the way to do it with us. If anything we think is not God, everything we do is wrong, just

forget it, don't do it again, and do the opposite. Before you were stealing and hating people and now you're giving, you're forgiving people. That's it! That's God. God is love. God is forever forgiving. It's that simple. No need to repent and all that kind of trouble and starve yourself for seven days in order to clean your sins. There's nothing to clean your sins except yourself, your determination to change. Very simple to clean your sins, by acknowledging them – that they are wrong, they are ungodly, they are not like what a Buddha would do, and you just change them and do the opposite.

That's the only repentance that I recommend to you, and that's the only effective way to do it, there's no other thing. No need to tell me how bad you are and ask my forgiveness. I don't forgive you. I never will, because I have nothing to do with your badness or goodness. I don't own you, your life. I don't owe any judgement to anyone; but it's you, yourself.

Walk in the right direction

Whenever you want to change, the situation will change. If you turn and walk southward, you will see more and more of the south. It has nothing to do with my forgiveness, my turning you, helping you, or blessing you. Nothing! You just walked the other way and that's when your life changed. That's why after initiation you have been determined to change your life by measuring yourself according to the precepts. You know why after initiation your life has changed for the better? Because it's you, you're determined to return. You walk back to the south so, of course, you see more and more of the south's scenery everyday and then say, 'Oh, wow! Now I'm in the right direction.' Of course, you are in the right direction. If you turn and walk to the right direction then you are in the right direction, and that's all there is. Of course, with the precepts and then trying to quiet down to remember your quality inside by meditation everyday, you remind yourself. Then you become more and more Buddha everyday.

The Buddha deserves the best, and that's all there is. The nearer you're to the Buddha yourself, the more noble you become, the higher position you'll reach. That means you are nearer and nearer to your original position, the most high, things like that. Of course, your life will become better, what else can it be? That's very simple. No need my blessing, anything! I will bless you anytime you need. If I have any blessing, please take it. But remember, the great blessing is you, that you are determined to bless yourself with your noblest quality, with your highest position in the universe that you are.

If you don't do that you will always be a beggar, begging for my blessing, begging for the dead Buddhas' blessings, anyone's blessing you have to beg for like a beggar. But if you return to your own original nature and you keep your noble purpose in your mind – always trying to remember your noble position, noble quality, then you deserve only better, better, better and best.

Where does the blessing comes from

That's very logical. No need to think that I'm the Buddha and I bless you so that your life is better. There's no need to be like this. We are all one. I bless you, you bless yourself, is all the same. If you don't bless yourself and allow me to bless you, it's the same – it's also Buddha. So, the Buddha nature blesses you, it's not from me, not from anyone, it's the Buddha nature in the whole universe that we make use of and bless ourselves.

So, no need to worship me and make me become an idol to you or things like that. You can if you want to because I will not take the liberty to interfere in your process, in your

growth or in your time, and tell you what to do; but I just tell you that finally you will have to admit that you are the Buddha and that's the best for you. In the infancy state, you probably have to seek Buddha's blessing or any Master's blessing, and that's all right, too. But you will remember the total and then you'll know who you are. That's the best for you, instead of always seeking the blessing from me.

I don't know what else I can tell you. What now? But did you understand anything? [Master laughs.] You say it but you will forget. [Applause] If only you really understood it, it would be so good for you. Never mind, take your time. If you want to play the fool, it's okay. Play around, play around it's okay. Also gives me some job to do. [Master and audience laugh.] The problem is even though all the Masters say the same thing, 'You are sons of God. Whatever I do you can do better. You are the future Buddhas. You and I are equal, etcetera, etcetera.' We still cannot realize it. That's the most difficult part. Not that we don't know; but we cannot masticate it, we cannot digest it, we cannot make it become the whole Truth within our being because of the mind, because of the accumulated worldly knowledge about everything about ourselves – how bad we are, how bad we have been and things like that.

So, you just have to forgive yourself, forget the whole journey that you have done, just return. You have not been anything sinful that can not be forgiven. Just forgive yourself. Because you wanted to experience that way, so now you know it's no good and you want to experience something else. That's all right. You are God, you do what you want. You have the right to experience suffering, badness, worse situations, if you want to; because you are free, you are God. Can you imagine a God that is not free to do what He wants whether it's bad or good in the eyes of the mortal? Of course, not.

God, Buddha are free. So, you do what you want, but then you know it. You know the consequence is different, that's all.

No karma

Now you don't want that kind of consequence, you just leave it. You don't need to take the karma for it. Probably if you still linger there, you'll take some of the effect; but if you jump out right away, you won't. You set the house on fire, you say, 'Oh, now it's a mistake! Terrible!' The house is burning, it's hot. Jump out! At least you save yourself. So, anything you have done bad in the past, just forget it. You have suffered some consequences, but that's done. Let's not suffer anymore. Let's not stay there and suffer more than that. That is good. Then, once you jump out of a situation you're free. No more consequences will affect you. Understand that? So, no karma. [Applause]

Sorry I didn't give you a chance to clap, it's to exercise; [Master laughs.] but I wanted you to concentrate, to listen to all this because it's good for you. Good for you, better for you than to praise me with your applause, clapping hands, and loud hurrahs. Better that you concentrate and understand. It is difficult, I know, sometimes. But don't make it more difficult than it is by telling yourself that you cannot do it, that you are sinful, that you are bad, and things like that. We're not! We're the Buddha. Okay, we made some mistakes, now we just begin anew. Whatever consequences we have suffered, that's gone. We don't suffer anymore if you walk out, turn. Many people cannot do it, I know it; and that's why you have come here. That's why the world is suffering as it is, because they cannot tell themselves to return.

That's why Buddhas are rare. Not because everyone is not Buddha. They are. They just don't make the choice, don't make the effort to get out of the water, to get out of the mud,

clean themselves, and be renewed, refreshed. They think they cannot do it. The mud is too far, the water is too much, their efforts are too little, and they're too weak, etcetera, etcetera.

Get out and wash clean

The more they remain there, the weaker they become, the more dirty they get, and the harder to convince themselves to get out. That's why the Buddha must come, to rescue another Buddha [Master and audience laughs.] out of the mud and tell him to go wash, 'Go wash and see yourself in the mirror. You're not like that. You're not dirty like that. Take some vitamins, eat some food, then you'll be strong again. Look at yourself, you're okay.'

Sometimes the people remain so long in the mud, so frozen in the water that it takes some time to recover. That's all there is, that's the problem with us. After initiation, it takes time. Sometimes it takes a longer time because we have remained too long in the water, frozen ourselves. All the systems have become rigid, difficult to revive it. Difficult doesn't mean impossible. So, just get on with your job of recovery and the doctor and nurse are there to help you. But you must take the vitamins, you must eat the food, you must take the medicine that the doctor has prescribed for you.

Even like I was hospitalized the last two weeks, I had to take the medicine, too. Whatever the doctor said, I did it. No problem. Then you get better, no problem. But if you don't take the prescribed medicine or the advice from the doctor then it takes a longer time, that's all. Not that the doctor will kill you or do anything to you. He will not do that. He probably feels sorry for you and he probably has to work harder, longer to nurse you back to health again. That's the problem with some of us sometimes because we don't try to help ourselves. Either we are lazy, we think we are too weak to do it, or we like to stay sick. Some people like to stay sick, I don't know why. So that they get sympathy, get attention, perhaps.

MASTER ONLY CARES TO SET YOU FREE ²³

I have asked you before not to be proud of your harmonious family, your peaceful surroundings, your material gain and your whatever benefit that you think comes to you through the blessing of the Master or through the practice of the Quan Yin method. It is true that the Master will bless us with whatever we desire; but we should not be satisfied with that and feel proud of that achievement, because this is just nothing. The stinking fertilizer is necessary for the flowers, but the flowers are what we want, not the fertilizer.

She cares to set you free. If a Master, as great as Jesus, has told us like this, then we should take care. We should know what the Master wants from us, and what we truly want from a Master.

If our family becomes more peaceful, harmonious and loving toward each other, then it's fine. Thank God, thank the Master power. Should it not be so, thanks God that you don't have an extra person to take care, to have to pay attention to, to have to worry whether he is pleased, she is happy with you or not.

23. International seven-day retreat, Raising Center, Cambodia, May 13, 1996 (Originally in English).

You are freer if no one loves you

You are freer if you have no one to love you. Truly, it is like that. Anything has a price. Even if a person loves you, you must take extra care of him or her, so that he is happy; because if he is not happy, you are not happy. But if a person hates you, pooh!... nice, good-bye. Nothing for you to do, nothing for you to worry about. It's not my fault if you hate me. That's good.

We don't wish people to hate us; but actually, the kind of love that we can have in this world is almost bondage. Even the good relationships are only bondage; because in thinking of them, we forget to set each others free. We demand from each other attention, love in return and all these kinds of things. Rarely the love between a couple flows freely without attachment, without demand, without command, without really any condition and without effort.

Mostly you must make an effort in order to keep it, and any effort takes time and energy. Any person who you love around you, you must take time and attention, even if you don't want to. You just have to pay attention and we are diverted from the one-pointed concentration inside. Not many people can concentrate inside and outside at the same time. Even if he or she can, there must be time and it's time consuming. While you pay attention to these things, you can not pay attention to that thing. Even if you can remember both things at the same time, you can only do one thing at a time. You can not pay attention to this one and then also at the same time fully pay attention to the other things.

So actually, we are perfect alone. We know what we have to do and what time to do what. But, unluckily, this world is made of many beings, including human beings; and we have to interact with them all the time if we have to do something, or else just go to the Himalayas, or some other mountain, be alone, do things yourself, that is also good. Maybe sounds very useless, but it is good.

I don't know if it is useful to stay in the world and teaching human kind, when most of them only desire material benefits, and cling to their personal happiness and achievements, at all cost. Most of you profess that you love me so much and you love to see me so much, would be better everyday; but it is not true. As soon as I ask you to come and help me, work for me, be near me, you say, 'No! I still like my family life. I love my wife, my kids, my husband' and my whatever you name it. Every time you come here you say, 'Oh, Master! We miss You. We miss You so much, please stay longer. Please stand there.' Something like that. I don't know what you really want, and I don't think you know what you want either. [Master laughs.]

Let go of the ego, then we are one

If you honestly ask yourselves to make a choice then you'll truly know what you want. Even after, if you love me so much, you have weighed the pros and cons, and you have decided that within your heart you love me more than your family members, more than your position, money or whatever education, and you come, then at that time, you still have to face your ego. You have to kill yourself before being able to become one with me.

These persons are rare. Everything attracts you. If you are able to help me in some kind of work, then you become attached to that work. You attach to the importance of that work, and your importance of doing that work, and you forget whom you are working for, for what purpose is the work there. You forget that you work because of me, because I ask you to do it, and because of the benefit to others that you do it.

EGO TRICK ²⁴

Don't let the ego trick you because sometimes it comes in so many different forms that we think we don't have it. 'Why I love the Master so much,' for example, 'I love the brothers and sisters so much, I'd do anything for them.' Yes, you'd do anything for them, but the way you want. And you busy yourself with being a good girl, good boy and charitable person, etcetera. In fact, you cause more trouble than help, because you don't do the things people require you to do. You busy yourself with any other things to make your days so busy, and you look so good that people cannot even scold you. They dare not even scold you. You'd do anything, anything except the things that other people want. So, the ego can always trick us into thinking that we're virtuous, good and egoless; but it's not true. So, every time we do something, we must think whether this thing is needed or not; because sometimes the people feed on the charitable actions, like they would feel very good that they did something good.

Similarly, the practitioners like us can also sometimes be very deluded into thinking that we are good, that we are very charitable, that we're very egoless by being busy all day and doing everything, that everyone knows that we are busy. But it's not necessarily beneficial.

RECOGNIZE HOW GREAT WE ARE ²⁵

It's very difficult to tell any of you that you are Buddhas and that you are similar to me, or at least more or less. You don't want to reach a complete degree of sainthood for some reason. Maybe because you want to be closer to the feeling of human beings. Maybe because you do not yet recognize how great you are. Maybe because you do not have the opportunity to completely make use of your sainthood, of your wisdom. Therefore, you don't recognize yourself as a saint. I am the one who was pushed into this position, where every minute of my life, every time, every turn of the corner, I have to make use of my wisdom, because of your demands. If you hadn't asked me all these questions, I wouldn't even search my mind for all the answers. Besides, I don't need any answers. I am just satisfied the way life is. What I am now, I wasn't before. I must tell you the truth. No one is a saint when he is born. When we are born into this world of maya, of illusion, we have to undergo all the procedures of a human being. Like we have to be ignorant again, we have to suffer all the illusionary desires, and then the disappointment of not fulfilling the desires, and all that kind of thing; until one day we have enough of it and say, 'Okay, that's it! Now, whatever I have, I have. If I don't, I don't.' That's the time when you reach complete liberation. You liberate yourself from all your own problems, from your own self-made prison, your own also learned prejudices of who you are. Actually, if you trace who you are, you are not there. Who is doctor so-and-so, by the way? Before he was born, who was he? For example, before he is born, no one knows who doctor so-and-so is. Now he is born into the so-and-so family. Then everyone calls him that from his birth, so-and-so. So, he grows up with that name, and then he gets a university degree. That adds more to his individuality. So, he recognizes himself as such, as a university law graduate. Then he knows more about books. He learns from books and he learns this and he learns from business and that. All this knowledge we call doctor so-and-so. Actually, if the knowledge is you, then you are just knowledge, you are just nothing. Because if you didn't learn all these, then you'd never exist. If you didn't learn how to speak, if you didn't learn how to eat, if you didn't learn how to dress yourself, if you didn't learn at university, what would you be? So, most of us identify ourselves with all that we learned, all these habits we do, then we think that's 'us.' Therefore, we have different individuals like Mr. So-and-So and

24. International seven-day retreat, Raising Center, Cambodia, May 11, 1996 (Originally in English).

25. Group meditation, Paris Center, France, April 25, 1996 (Originally in English and French).

Mrs. So-and-So because she learned different things. She has had different experiences from life. She learned lessons from different books and she makes her own judgements from what she has learned also. He makes his own judgements. So, we are all separated.

Otherwise, we are never separated. We are the knowledge house. We are together without the bodies. As soon as we assume the body and we assume more knowledge from different sources, we identify ourselves differently from the neighbors. That's when dividedness starts. That's when we start to get into the trap of ignorance. We forgot our origin. So, the more you learn, the farther you are from knowledge.

WE MUST HAVE A SACRIFICING SPIRIT ²⁶

Without a sacrificing spirit, we cannot grow up. In this way, it is useless even if we practice for several hundred years. To be devoted only to ourselves and not to others is not the way of the Bodhisattvas (enlightened saints). We should then realize that we are still far from being qualified as such. Whenever we do not consider others, we should know that we are associating with maya, the negative power. This is the only difference between a Buddha (an enlightened being) and maya. Once we are selfless in our thinking toward others, we have become a Buddha. Minding only ourselves and forgetting others, we become evil. We can clearly weigh ourselves by this scale. Don't ask me what level you are at or if you have reached Buddhahood!

You believe I am a Buddha. It is because I only consider others all the time, to the point of me forgetting my own benefit, disadvantage, future, body, comfort, reputation and need. I no longer care for anything. I would sacrifice my life for others regardless of whether I am successful or not. We cannot measure this by success or failure. It is not necessary to be successful each time we do good. Not so! It depends rather on our vow to save the dying, on our sincerity to sacrifice and devote ourselves for the sake of other beings.

THE DEATH OF MARPA'S CHILD – BE AWARE OF THE EPHEMERALITY OF THIS WORLD – HURRY UP AND PRACTICE! ²⁷

Recently, several fellow practitioners that I knew passed away, and I also felt a little bit affected. Though I know this is illusionary, I felt as if I was lacking something.

When death occurred to the child of Marpa, Milarepa's master, he cried so sadly that his disciples flocked around him and asked, 'Master, didn't you say that the world is only an illusion? Why are you crying so brokenheartedly just because your son has died?' Marpa answered them, 'Yes, everything is illusionary, but the death of a child is the greatest illusion of them all!' [Master and audience laugh.] He couldn't bear it.

When the birth or death relates to us or to our relatives and friends, our feelings are involved. Then we realize clearly that the world is indeed ephemeral. The world is truly unreliable. If it is other people's business, we wouldn't be so deeply affected emotionally. We might even talk light-heartedly, 'Well! Never mind! The world is ephemeral; people come and go all the time.' [Master laughs.] We may even console them. However, when it concerns our personal feelings, or when it happens to our relatives or friends, we will have different feelings.

26. Group meditation, Raising Center, Cambodia, March 27, 1996 (Originally in Chinese).

27. Group meditation, Raising Center, Cambodia, March 27, 1996 (Originally in Chinese).

Sometimes because we, ourselves, cannot perceive the impermanence of the world, God gives us some mishaps, using the so-called shock treatment to awaken us. Only then will we be deeply impressed.

This world is really not a permanent place. Wars, calamities or sorrowful situations also function as an effective but bitter medicine to help us understand what we are here for. Whatever you want to do, then do it quickly; otherwise, time is running out!

Only when our relatives, friends or our loved ones pass away, then we are truly shocked and realize that it could happen to us tomorrow. At that time, we feel we should pursue spiritual practice quickly, and understand our inner self as soon as possible.

HOW TO PLAY AND BE WITH CHILDREN ²⁸

One of my children, recently, she took leave from school to come and play. Because I cannot accompany and play with her everyday, since I am busy with you, she had been enjoying only the air conditioner with the attendant. She did not bring many toys with her, only a few books to draw in. She had said she felt bored and wanted to go back to school. Wherever I go I bring her along. This is playing with her! I came here to group meditation and also asked her if she wanted to come along. I say to her, 'Let's go together!' She puts on a pretty dress and feels that I am taking her out to play. This is a convenient trick. Making the best of the situation to be with the child is playing, and the child enjoys being with us.

Explaining some things to her when the occasion arises, asking her to help me carry this book, she feels that she has accomplished a lot in being able to help me. Asking her to help pull the zips, to help me put on the bangles is playing with her while teaching her to be a grown-up.

Teaching a child to be a grown-up

I do not play chess or play the electro-mechanical toys with her everyday. No, no. Our way of playing is different. I can work and play at the same time with her. For instance, while I am reading the newspapers, I would say, 'Now I am reading the newspapers, you read your books over there. Let's read together.' This way, she is already happy. Like two adults reading the newspapers. Perhaps I would ask her, 'Can you understand this book? Read whatever you understand and practice your English.' We both would think of a way to play. It is not just playing with dolls or stuffed bears from morning until night that children consider playing, or that taking here do not have the time, we think of many ways of playing: For instance, cooking with her, teaching her to wash the vegetables. When I do not have the time, I let the attendant look after her, to be her baby-sitter. While washing clothes, she brings her along and tell her to do some washing. Now, she is washing one of her socks everyday. [Laughter] She told me, 'Today I have work to do, washing socks and then help sweep the floor a little.' In this way, the child is very happy.

Find ways for them to play. Playing is not just going out to buy many expensive toys all the time. On the contrary, if you bring them along more often while working, their IQ will improve; they will become smarter, livelier and more careful. Also, they will understand the parents' work more. Later, you will be able to communicate with them easily. Whatever you say they will understand your problem. Later, when you tell them how hard you had

28. Group meditation, Raising Center, Cambodia, March 27, 1996 (Originally in Chinese).

worked the day before, and so on, they will understand and will empathize with you. If you lock a child up and let her play while you work by yourself, then sometimes the parents are not able to communicate with her because she does not know what the parents had been doing.

You can try to find ways to play with small children. It is very simple! Sometimes helping me take my socks off, carry a pair of shoes – carry it up, carry it down. This is one of the ways to play with children. Of course, I can do it myself or ask the attendant to do it. I can also just leave them there and soon someone will straightened them up. But I want to involve the child, so I tell her, 'Help me carry this up. Help me carry that down! Later, we have non-alcoholic beer together.' For example like that, and this would be very interesting for her.

Then, we each grab a bag of rice biscuits. She likes rice biscuits very much. Well, I would say, one bag each, open it and then go choose whatever drink you like. It becomes a game. How else could I have time to play with her? We can also play during breakfast. We race each other to see who finishes breakfast first, etcetera. That is fun. She likes it.

Sharing with children

Young children do not demand much. As long as we pay attention to them, share with them, they are happy already. They do not ask for dolls everyday. Because no one plays with them, then they play with dolls. This is just a very small part.

In this way, she is already very happy – to be able to spend time with me is enough, no matter what we do. As a result, she practices the spirit of serving people. She feels very proud helping me carry a book, carry my shoes up and down, helping me to carry an umbrella, or whatever. I can do these things myself, but she feels a sense of accomplishment, like an adult.

When we both have a bag of rice biscuit, sitting on the floor, each of us opens up a drink, which I let her choose. I open the refrigerator and say, 'Take whatever drink you like.' She feels that she has already grown up! I don't force her and say you should drink this or that. No, no. She knows that she cannot drink milk everyday. She'd get tired of it. Thus, I tell her to choose a can and I would also choose one. Then we drink to each other's health and would eat and have a chat like two adults entertaining each other. I do not know your definition of playing. I feel that we both could play all day long. Many things can be played. She is very happy.

As children grow older, the more you share with them the happier they are. Not that you buy many toys for them that they are happy. If you play with them, then they are happy! Of course, they like toys, too, but toys cannot replace the parents' love. If you play with them everyday, talk with them more, explain to them more, they will become very smart and be one with the parents. When they grow up they will be like friends, because they have been with the parents. Whatever you do, they know. You just mention it, they understand. No need to wait until they grow up because by then it would be very difficult to explain if you were not used to communicating, only throwing toys at them.

Inventing new methods of play

Though I do not have the time, but because of the child, I have to take up the responsibility. Her parents died. She only has me left. Thus, I try to think of ways to play with her. Playing should not have to be toys or going to the park. I can play with her

everyday, whenever I have the time. I can tickle her. She loves it very much. I can throw her onto the bed. Wow! She loves it! Sometimes we play 'skating.' I pull her by the hands and skate and skate. This is called skating. But playing this way is very tiring. It needs strong muscles. We play this occasionally, so she was not tired of it. I skate once or twice and wanted to 'slip' away. [Laughter] (Skate and slip away sound similar in Chinese.) She weighs twenty-something kilos, and I am only, at most, twice her weight. We can play with anything. Using a pen to draw, teach her to color many things. With just a pen, we can play a lot of things. Like drawing things for her to guess, she loves it.

As long as the parents accompany the child, he / she enjoys it no matter what you play. Small children like us to pay attention to them and share with them. No matter what you play, they will enjoy it. Small children are very curious about the world, since they do not know it. Thus, whatever method of play – I didn't have toys to play with when I was young. I created my own way – drawing, playing chess, jumping around, or play with chopsticks. Many things can be played. Why the need of toys? Also, no need for a lot of space. Great, now you understand!

MASTER YOUR LIFE ²⁹

There was a joke about love between family members. A millionaire had a car accident. He was brought to the emergency room. Three of his sons walked up and down the corridor outside, waiting anxiously for the doctor to come out. When the doctor came out, the three of them ran to him and said, 'Doctor, is there any hope?' The doctor said, 'No, no hope. He just has a little broken arm, he'll be well in one week.' [Laughter]

The answers and the questions are perfect examples of this, like the way you react to me because sometimes I answer your question not the way people expected it – doesn't look like it fits the question, but it does. I just answer the inner question, not the outside. Sometimes you formulate it in a long winded way and it just turns around and around all the time. I know exactly what you want. Like that doctor, in normal circumstances we would think the three sons would be asking about the well-being of the father but the doctor knows. Perhaps he knows too well. [Laughter]

Yes, the practitioners of enlightenment are like doctors, they can diagnose our sickness without us knowing, know the innermost of our wishes. Sometimes more than we do. That's why we live the way we do now. We're cheating ourselves every day. We think we are okay. We think we are good. We think we are noble. We think we are perfect, that's why no one can touch us. No one can tell us anything. No one can scold us or correct us because we are already perfect. We already know what to do. We just know, but we don't do. That's what makes the difference between a Master and someone else.

The Master is not born perfect, I must remind you. I have done a lot foolish things in my life, youthful foolishness. I was foolish, made a fool of myself. I ran out of school and went see movies when I should have been sitting there in mathematics lessons, et cetera. I did a lot of bad things, too. I raced a motorcycle a hundred twenty kilometers per hour, with only Honda. I broke the exhaust pipe. The Honda can go faster but it made a lot of noise. I didn't care about other people's ears, I only cared that I raced better than the next one. [Laughter]

I didn't tell you I was born perfect. If I was good in school maybe it was because I was born with a little more IQ. But it didn't mean that I really strived to be good or was consciously

29. Group meditation, Los Angeles Center, California, U.S.A., March 13, 1996 (Originally in English).

being good. So, the Master is not a perfect person. Never is, never will be. You must know. But the Master is the one who can master his or her mistakes, can learn from them, and vow to make it better, every day. Just like being a genius is continuous hard work to keep it, similarly mastership is the same. Mastership is all about mastering yourself, nothing else. If anyone else follows you, it's just by the way, just because of your aura. Your true sincerity attracts them from inside. That's why you don't need to talk. You don't even need to tell them anything. They believe you. Mastership is like that. Do not believe that I was born perfect, I am at the moment perfect, or I will ever be perfect. No! I'm learning like you. But I have mastered myself. I don't let my mind dictate to me what to do. Because I know the mind. I make friends with it, we make a deal, saying, 'You do this and I do that, both of us don't bother each other. If you do it well, I'll also reward you. I feed you well, don't I?' I tell it, 'I give you anything when you want it.' Just that now it doesn't want much, because it knows it cannot get much with me, so it forgets it. Even when it wants to sleep, I say, 'No, get up and work.' Then it has to do it. So, it gets used to it after ten years. It says, 'It's no good talking to this girl. She's very stubborn. She just does what she wants, and no good arguing.'

That's all there is to a Master, continuous striving for perfection, for a better, nobler personality. A better ideal not really personality because when you talk about personality you mean you still want fame and all that. You know you still have ego, wanting to be proud of yourself; it's not true. Just that you think whatever you want to do, whatever you think is noble, is the highly idealist, benefits others, is good, then you must try to do it. Doesn't matter what the cost, just do it and don't talk. That's the only difference. Otherwise, what is the difference?

If we were to be operated on right now, neither brains would be much better. Maybe I am a little bit higher IQ or you are higher, but that doesn't mean that we are much different. Our brains are the same. Our will-power is the same. Except that you exercise to make it grow stronger or not, this is your free will. Most of us abuse our free-will in a harmful way, in a retarding way, slowing our progress to higher consciousness.

Don't ask me why we have to strive higher. It is more comfortable to be a noble being, to be a wiser being, than just always to be ignorant, sluggish, slow, lazy and a 'couch potato' just laying there and waiting for things to happen. It's better not to worship me, better not to follow me, just follow my example. Worship the result that comes out of my effort and then do it. Do the same, similar, then you'll become Master in no time.

Teach yourself to do what is better than ordinary people, to do the things other people cannot do when it benefits humankind and yourself, to endure what other people cannot endure when it benefits people and betters your judgment and wisdom. Do whatever in your power to know yourself – that you can, to discover that your greatest strength is still further to be discovered, that you are nobler than you are at present, that you can do many other things that are a lot of benefit to yourself and other people. Then when you die you know. At that time it might be too late to look back and regret, but you'll feel very painful. That's why when most people die they are in agony. They haven't finished the things that they should have done, and their conscience strikes them. Their mind controls the body and the conscience affects the physical being. So, if your conscience doesn't feel well, you feel sick, you feel painful.

Sometimes you feel very sorrowful in some situations. Then you feel pain in your body and muscles, too. Sometimes some people put you into a terrible situation or frightening, then all the muscles become painful. First it is different, then later it becomes all painful. Sometimes you can hardly move. Sometimes you are in deep sorrow, the whole body is so

tired like you have been running for a hundred thousand miles non-stop. Sometimes you have some trouble, then you cry for many hours. After that how do you feel? Sometimes relieved but very, very exhausted. Is that not so? [Audience: Yes.] Especially if that trouble really bothers your heart, really makes you feel very, very sorrowful, then your body also feels like collapsing. And if you have a strong will-power and tell yourself that it's nonsense, whatever happens, happens; now get on with it, forget it; go do other things; cheer yourself up, find something else better to do; then you will forget.

Many people don't have this will-power and intelligence to discriminate between passing moods. They sink themselves into the mood and that makes them more and more miserable every day, weaker and weaker, and they become sick – psychologically broken. Then it takes a long time to heal. Sometimes cannot heal. They are broken completely – their mental defense system. Then they have to go to hospital, or stay there for good, becoming a mentally incapable person, being a burden to themselves, their relatives, friends and the society.

So, it's very dangerous to let go of your will-power and the purpose of noble sacrifice. You must always strive to do better all the time. Don't make any excuses for yourself. You can excuse other people but never yourself. Introspect every day, see if you have made any progress. Otherwise, don't tell me anything. Don't tell me that you want to help humankind, you want to spread the Truth, and that you understand the Truth.

There is another joke about the Truth. There was a Zen Master who had some disciples. One of them wrote to the Master every now and again after initiation. Of course, just like you write the spiritual diary and send to me, or sometimes to report to me what kind of 'progress' that you have made. So, that disciple had written to the Master and said, 'Master, I am really deeply involved with enlightenment right now. I spend all my time in search of my inner true self.' The Master read only the first line and then kicked it into the dust bin.

A long while later he wrote another letter to the Master, 'Oh Master, now the whole universe responds to my innermost thoughts. How incredible the Truth is! How magnificent human wisdom is! How great is the universal power!'

The Master just blew his nose with it, [Laughter] and threw it in the toilet. A third letter, he wrote again, 'Oh Master, I have compassion now for all humankind and all the underprivileged beings! Even an ant, I hear his heart throbbing, I feel his soul striving! Oh Master, what a wonderful discovery! I will strive even more, I promise you! I will be your best disciple, you will see.'

So, the Master wiped something with it. [Laughter] You know where, I won't say it. [Master and audience laugh.] Then threw it in the toilet. He felt hopeless.

The fourth letter, the disciple reported again, 'Master, now I am one with the universe! Everything is me, I am everything! There's nothing that is not me. I am everything. Oh, I congratulate myself!' [Laughter]

The Master didn't even bother to touch it. He just let the wind blow it to anywhere it might go and didn't want to say any anymore. Now, for long time the Master said, 'Don't bother writing to me anymore. You just waste the paper and pen.' So, the disciple didn't write anything anymore.

Many years passed by and the Master was kind of feeling a little bit sorry, being so harsh to him last time. Remembering his fantastic disciple – long time no see no hear – so he kind of sent a message to him and said, 'Hey! What's happening now?' [Laughter] Perhaps he missed his nonsensical, 'big universal' letters. 'How is your spiritual progress?'

So, the disciple wrote back, two words only, on one big piece of paper: 'Who cares?' [Laughter and applause.] Do you know how the Master reacted now? Yeah! He went and drank coffee or tea or non-alcoholic beer with '7-up.' [Master and audience laugh.] That's the way.

Only when you know that you are okay then you don't care. Otherwise, doesn't matter how much you write to me, 'I love You, the universal power, compassionate me,' and whatever, all this is nonsense, all theory. That's why many teachers of theory, whenever they open their mouths, they talk about compassion, enlightenment, wisdom and all that; but they don't do anything about it. Don't even know, they just talk about it. That's very boring, very difficult to make them realize that we don't need talking.

Why I'm talking all the time is that you like it. [Audience: Yes.] Besides, I don't talk to teach you. If you think I'm teaching you, you're wrong because I'm hopeless with you, too. I know I can't teach you anything. I just amuse you with my different expressions, hoping that you might catch something you like and hold to it. Then you'll remember me and won't forget to practice. One day you'll know everything yourself, not through my teachings, maybe thirty percent through my teachings. But it's more or less just so that you'll remember me and then we can connect inside.

To be honest with you, I don't believe that anyone can teach anyone at all. But whatever I can do, I just try my best just because you ask for it. You demand it so I do it. Not because I believe I can teach you by words, by talking, by language. But I believe that we can establish a very deep connection with each other, and through that deep connection we communicate inside. That's the only teaching that might perhaps happen. Otherwise, you already are Buddha. You are an entity just like I am.

What is the need for me to tell you what to do? You have everything I have. Just that through the inner connection with each other, you are willing to be reminded of your true self inside through my inner true self. Then our inner true selves will become one together, merge again in the whole, and there's no teaching at all. Originally, there was no need and there will never be any need for any soul to learn anything, because the soul is born perfect. It's just that we, the human brain, the ego, are not born perfect.

That's why we make mistakes and we have to learn to control the tendency of falling into the mistakes again because it's comfortable, because it's easier to just go along with it than to check ourselves. That's why many noble ideas in society cannot be realized; because most of the people go with the trend of the majority of the people and don't want to stick out, and don't want to go for what they believe is the best, the noblest way of life.

Many people they say they like my teachings, they want to be enlightened, they want this and that. But vegetarian, 'Oh, it's inconvenient. What will people think? What will my parents think? What will my children think? What will my wife think? What will my friend think? What will my colleagues think? What will my boss say?' Everything is very important to you, except your own liberation, except your own survival. That is ridiculous. After all, no one can help you if you die tomorrow. If you go to hell, your boss, your wife, your mother, your father, doesn't matter how many persons you have surrounding you, you go alone. It's very true everyone knows. Maybe you know, not everyone else knows.

So, take care! Remember. We might die tomorrow. I've had many disciples who have died already. Not that I am sad about it, just that life will end. Believe me, it will. Mine will, too. I'm happy when it will. I don't wait for it; but if it comes, it's okay. What I means is, we can't live forever and we don't have time tomorrow. What happens if you don't have time tomorrow?

Most of the time we believe that tomorrow we'll have more time than today, and we never do. Tomorrow we will only have more work to do and less time, because yesterday's work we haven't done, the future work is still waiting, and tomorrow's work is there. So, we always cheat ourselves every day that we are okay, that we have time now. We can get away with it, fine, but not finally. Finally, we will understand that we are the loser if we keep listening to the mind. I'm afraid of many things, I have told you – including flying. I don't like flying. I'm not afraid to die in the airplane but I hate the narrow space in airplanes. I hate the smoke that flies everywhere. Doesn't matter first class, second class, or non-smoker, the smoke doesn't care. Free 'gift' for everyone, one cigarette for all. [Master and audience laugh.] That's very economical. I hate all of this. I don't like. But if I have to do something, I do it. Doesn't mean I like it. I don't care whether I like or not like it, if the thing must be done, I just do it.

I can have my opinion, whether I like it or not like it. It's okay. I tell my mind, 'Okay you don't like it, I accept it, but we must do it.' I don't tell it that it must like it. I don't have to bother about the mind, whether it likes or not likes; whether it's in the mood or not in the mood to do it. I accept everything that it blah, blah inside, but I do what I want. That's the difference between a Master and a disciple. That's all there is. If you want to be a Master quickly, master yourself, master your decisions, master what you want to do in life, what you hope, what is dearest, best and the most beneficial to your growth and your fellow beings because the soul is ever clever, wise and pure. But if it is always being caged in a defiled body with a very terrible friend like the mind, then it cannot use its mighty power.

Just like you lock yourself in your own house. How can you get out? Even if you yourself, lock yourself inside a house, still you are locked. Doesn't matter who locks, as long as you still lock yourself inside, you are inside. If you don't want to open the door with your own key and go out, it's your own fault. Doesn't matter how clever you are, if you're locked inside, you're still locked. You cannot say, 'Well, I locked myself, it's different.' There's no difference. If you stay inside one month without food, without drink, without friends, without telephone, without communication, you are locked inside and then you die.

Similarly, if we don't stand up for what we think is correct, perfect and right, then we never will. And no one can do it for us, not even a Master. The Master can only tell you the road, but you have to walk. Of course, when you're sick, unable, the Master will carry you. But She can't carry you forever. It's no good for you, makes a cripple out of you. Think about it.

EXERCISE OUR NOBLE IDEAS ³⁰

Everything is like muscles – needs exercise. Even noble ideas must be exercised often in order for them to grow and stay firm and stable. Everything is an exercise. For example, before you didn't know how to meditate. You could not believe that you could sit there two or three hours doing nothing. You got itchy here and there. But now you've gotten used to it. You derive benefits from it, so you like to do it more. It's a kind of exercise. Just like people when they workout every week, maybe everyday or twice or three times a week, their muscles develop. If muscles, the material things, can develop, how much more the

30. Group meditation, Los Angeles Center, California, U.S.A., March 13, 1996 (Originally in English).

subtle things, like ideas and thoughts. So, the more we develop our noble ideas, the quicker they grow and the more stable they are planted in our subconscious. And we just carry on this way and the 'muscles' of nobility and high ideals will continue to stay that way, keep healthy all the time or develop even more. The Mr. Universes are not born with muscles like that, it's the result of many years of hard work. One bit after another until they have fully developed. Similarly, don't sit there and think that you'll become noble. You must exercise, do something. Don't sit there and think that you can do anything you want any minute of your life, and that will actualize into reality. No, you must do it to prove it to yourself and to build the 'muscle' of actualizing your own idea and nobility. Don't just sit there and think that you are noble, you are okay – do something to prove it. Then you can tell yourself: 'Oh yes, I really am courageous, I really am noble. I really can do what I want any minute of my life. If it benefits other people, I really can put down my selfish desires,' or things like that. Do something. Actions speak louder than words. Everyone knows. Ah! Just talk! That's why I became Master and you are students; because you talk, you think, but you don't do anything. That's the difference between us, nothing else. You have the same brain, same Buddha power, same God, same Mother / Father, same freedom to move, same body – some are bigger – same will-power, except I exercise my will-power's 'muscle' and you just sit there and read books about exercising or look at the advertisement of the muscle-building machine but don't move. I have a lot of muscle-building apparatus in my house, but I never touch them. Having muscle-building apparatus in your home doesn't help anything; never mind, just looking at a picture, thinking about it, or imagining, 'Yeah, yeah. It will do me good.' It will, but it doesn't. It will, but I don't know when.

So, everything must be exercised, must put words into action, must put the ideas into realization. Just dreaming about work doesn't bring you money. Same with ideas, noble purposes, morality, anything. Anything must be practiced everyday. Why do we spend a lot of time exercising muscles and things like that, and we don't spend more time exercising our noble ideas? The latter is even more important.

UTILIZE OUR TALENT TO FULFILL THE MISSION OF THIS LIFE ³¹

It applies to everyone. Sometimes we come down here and God gives us a lot of 'equipment,' including good looks, robust health, super intelligence, many talents in order for us to protect ourselves in this world, and to have the work done in a more comfortable way; because He knows it's very difficult to work, very difficult to play a perfect role on this stage of the universe.

So, we are allowed to take with us whatever God thinks is fit, or you think you need, for the work of this world. But then, these instruments, like talents, good looks, intelligence, super strength, et cetera, also have side-effects. They will give you vain feelings; and will give you the power to conquer people and draw their attention, love, admiration, respect, for yourself. But this is the point. You should draw people only so that you can help them to liberation and higher consciousness, not for your own benefit, not so that you satisfy your own desire of having more women around you, more men to worship you just because you feel good like that.

That is a problem, too. Every instrument has two sides. If you use it well, it will serve you well. Many people come down here to do some work; but then, not many return, because it's very difficult to return once we come down. That's why there is a need for an enlightened Teacher to come down to accompany you, telling you, 'You must not do that,

31. Group meditation, Los Angeles Center, California, U.S.A., March 13, 1996 (Originally in English).

must not do this, if you want to go back Home. You must refrain from many of the traps in this world, then you can go back quickly, et cetera, et cetera.'

But then, when we come to this world equipped with all the talents, intelligence, good looks, health, luck, money, everything, we're too comfortable. We do not remember where the blessings come from. We think it's due to our own personality, our talent, our good looks, our intelligence, our luck, that we have all what we have. It's not true. In exchange for this, we have to do work. We must help people. We must use our instrument, our apparatus for the universal purpose. Otherwise, we will fall more than we can ever imagine, after using up the universal blessings.

That's why many kings, queens, and all that, they fell miserably. They go to very low levels of consciousness. Once they are in power, they have everything, everyone bows to them – to their every wish. Then, it's very difficult for them to come out of this luxurious trap and try to serve humankind with their power and position. When the king is endowed with all this wealth, power, ability and many helpers, the purpose is that he can use these to benefit his country as well as the world. But he can also use these to benefit himself. As a king, he has everything.

That's why we have free will, but it's dangerous. We don't know how to use it. It's very easy for a king to always demand things for himself and to try to take care of himself instead of taking care of his subjects, because everyone loves themselves the most, to be honest: 'Today, I have a headache, tomorrow I have a toothache;' or 'Today I want this, tomorrow I want that. I'm always occupied with what 'I' want. Then because I am too occupied with what 'I' want, 'I' inevitably forget what everyone else wants. I don't have enough time.'

And most of the people who take care of themselves already have a lot of trouble and are occupied most of their time. Look at most people in the world. They're working about ten hours a day, to do what? Do you think all of them have a high, noble ideal? They do that for the benefit of mankind? That's secondary. That is the side-effect. All the schools are teaching people: 'You have to graduate with good points, so that you can have a good job, a house, a beautiful wife and beautiful children; then your children and your wife can have this, that and the other.'

That's the motive that most schools brainwash into the students' minds. So, they grow up with it, and then they do everything just to fulfill that purpose. It's honestly so.

There's not much to be done, not much really that we offer to the world. I don't say everyone is like that. Just the majority, and the majority is a frightening figure. So, whatever we say, it comes just to survival. Whatever we do, it comes just to food and comfort. Whatever job you take, it boils down to that.

Remember, check yourself. It's not that you have to do everything, go anywhere, and do anything, but think about it. Make a more noble time, pure life, so that you know you're truly noble. That's all.

You really came from a noble heritage, from heaven. That should be your self-satisfaction, no one else's. You don't need praise and blame because only we know what we are worth. No one can really read our minds. Some people can, but to a certain extent only, and when we are in their vicinity only. When we are alone in our dark night, no one knows. No clairvoyant bothers to look into everyone else's mind on this earth and burden himself with

all the garbage, with the people's turbulent thinking inside. So, we are a secret entity, and we'd like to keep it that way. Meanwhile, we have a big show for the world.

You saw the film called 'The Mask'? That's what we are. Most people are like that. We put on a 'mask;' and in a different situation, a different mask. Then I think there will be the time when we must sit or lie down and inwardly check our own dark corners; see what is there. That's the best way we can improve ourselves. Otherwise, no matter how long I speak, no matter how many examples I make for you, no matter how much I explain, no matter how many actions I bring up so that you can learn, you won't; because, the first thing is to be honest to yourself.

You know what you want, you know what you do everyday, not everyone else knows. We have to see whether we live a life worthy of it, with all this food and drink that we cost the world everyday. If you say, 'I work, I earn my money,' it's true too. But when? Since when did you work? And the work you do, is that really enough to cover everything? How about the twenty years before, when you cost a lot of paper and pens doodling in school, not doing homework; cheating on the exams; or throwing paper at teachers and putting your hands behind your back and sitting there like a solemn student, a good one? For example like that.

The twenty years before, we did nothing for the world. We just existed. We made demands on our parents, teachers, friends, relatives and anyone. Then maybe the forty or twenty years of the last period of our life, we cannot do much. Sixty years, you're finished. Or sixty five, depends, huh? We have a lot of free time before and after the working period. In this free time, we don't do much for the world, and during the working time, we don't do much, either. To earn our living, that's the only motive for working.

Of course, there are some people who do work for the world – research and things like that. Their idea is just to serve the world really, and they don't profit too much out of it. Sometimes they do – the commercialized scientists. We have them everywhere. If they don't commercialize their inventions, then other people would come in and commercialize them for them; then have a lot of money out of it. The motive everywhere is money, to become rich and famous. That's why not many scientists can offer their inventions to the world.

For example, if you are very famous, or you invent something which is really beneficial to humankind, but by your invention you will harm many other businessmen – like Tesla Nicholas, the things he invented some people use them today, but when he was alive, he was rejected, almost prosecuted. So, he had to live in hiding; tried to do his best in his own capacity and on minimal finances. That's why his ideas have not been realized fully. If they were realized fully, many companies would have declared bankruptcy. So, they found a way to do away with him, in a different way.

Sometimes we blame God for making our life miserable here: 'No conveniences and electricity bills are too high,' things like that; and 'Why doesn't God send some genius and help us?' When He sends some we abuse their power, make them miserable, or damage their property, talents, things like that. So, very difficult.

Jesus came down, people killed Him. Buddha came down, many people slandered Him. It was difficult for Him to work, too. So, we don't blame God anymore; we must do something in our power to help speed up humankind's evolution, including our own. Otherwise, what else can I tell you?

A SECRET OF DOING THINGS ³²

At anytime, everyone should have a pen and paper with them. When I tell you to do something, you should note it down immediately. Otherwise, you will forget after a while. Or during our meditation, we remember that we need to do this or that tomorrow, we should also write it down at once. Only in this way can we work efficiently!

I also do the same. That is why I asked you to buy these note pads for me. I place them everywhere, because I work throughout the day. I can't simply say, 'I'm sorry! I have forgotten.' I place them even beside my bed or in the bathroom, because I do not want to neglect my responsibilities. I even put them where I eat. Sometimes while I am eating, I write down what I need to do. Otherwise, I'm afraid that I might forget.

If you say that you do not care about such trivial matters, then you are much greater than I; because even I have to take care of these matters. I put these little notebooks everywhere, just in case I need to write something down. It's because we should be responsible in what we do.

However, none of you do this. You are not responsible. So, when you are asked, about anything, you always say that you have forgotten. You could not remember what you were supposed to do. You also forget what you need to do tomorrow. I told you to do something; and then a while later, it was not done.

I cannot do everything by myself. If you really love me like half of what you say, these things would never happen. I really have doubts about your love. If you truly love me like half of what you say, you wouldn't ill-treat me mentally this way. No one can bear this. This was requested, and that was done.

Also, wear gloves when you work; otherwise, you might get hurt. Like when you do cement work, you should wear a mask and gloves, or else you will get sick, and then you don't know why. Sure, you can take medicine for it. We can afford the medicine! But it would be too late. Why breathe in all that dust? It is bad for your lungs.

When you spray chemicals or fertilizer, or those who plant grass or trees, you need to wear a mask; because sometimes fertilizer is very toxic. It contains chemicals in order to keep the vegetation growing well. Buy the less toxic kind if you need to buy some. Avoid using it if you can, because sometimes the chemical contents cause an allergy reaction. Also, those who do woodwork in the workshop or those who spray paint have to wear masks to protect themselves.

It is not alright just because we can afford the medicine. Why take medicine? Is it not better to protect ourselves in the first place? Why wait until we are in such agony that we are dying for the medicine? Sure, we can take medicine. But why? Prevention is better than the cure!

We, spiritual practitioners, are very sensitive. Of course, we have better bodily resistance than others. However, the world is getting more and more toxic, and our resistance can not keep up. I hear that recently there are many new germs and infectious diseases. All kinds of people come here; you should protect yourselves more.

32. Speaks to the local residents, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, February 25, 1996 (Originally in Chinese).

Protect your bodies and your souls, but not your image! I don't mind being painted red and green, because in my heart I am not affected. You have not yet put any make-up on and your hearts have already moved. I get fed up with wearing different clothes, but you don't. I wear them for my work, and you wear them because you like to. I sing and write poems in response to people's requests, and to please others. You sing because you like to. So, there is a big difference, because what you do is for yourselves.

Why won't people get tired of seeing me? It's because everything I do is for others, not for myself. I don't have the smell of selfishness, and so people won't get tired of seeing me. People won't get fed up with whatever I do, all because the smell is different. They know immediately that what I do is for them, and not for myself. Therefore, you cannot fool others. Do you understand? The smell will arise and people will know what you are after; and regardless of what you say, you cannot fool anyone.

ILLUSION ABOUT MARRIAGE ³³

It's a true story. I know a person, not a friend, just an acquaintance. While we met, probably a few years ago, he told me that he was not married. I said, 'Why not?' He said, 'Well, I have not had the time yet.' Yeah, very busy and all that. So, I said, 'Okay, so when is the time then you will marry?' He said, 'Yes, of course, I like very much to get married and I've some person already that I want to marry.'

I asked him, 'What is the reason you want to get married?' He told me, 'Well, it's a very sad life to be a bachelor.' For example, when he has a glass of juice or drinks something in the morning, then hurries to go to work and puts the glass on the table without cleaning or putting it away, after he has worked all day long, he comes back in the evening, [Laughter] the glass is still there. No one moved it away or tidied up for him. So, he feels like it's pretty untidy, cold and unwelcoming. He would like to get married. It would be better.

After some time, I heard that he was married. I said, 'Oh, good! Congratulations! Ah, now you are married.' He said, 'Yes.' I said, 'Well, I wish you all the best luck in the world. I still remember the story you told me about the empty glass on the table which you put in the morning after breakfast and it still stayed there until after you got back from work in the evening. So, what happened now to the glass story? Did it change?' He said, 'Oh, yes, it changed. There are two glasses on the table when I come back.' [Master and audience laugh.] [Applause]

A TRUE MASTER IS ALWAYS IN ACCORD WITH SENTIENT BEINGS ³⁴

When we pursue spiritual practice, all of our potential will burst forth. If it can do good to sentient beings, I will use it; if not, I will dump it in the trash can. I don't need these artistic talents, but some people do. Someone came for initiation after listening to my music, because he was a musician and he liked my music. Some people, after seeing the clothes I designed turned vegetarian, began to practice the convenient method, and then came for initiation. He also brought many other people in his profession to receive initiation. This is because like attracts like. When he saw that I design clothes the way he does, he felt a lot of affinity and trust. After reading my poems, some people changed their minds and understood that I was really a person with ideals, that I was not the way people said I was. The criticisms and attacks softened into trust and respect. They switched to a vegetarian

33. Group meditation, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, February 19, 1996 (Originally in Chinese).

34. Group meditation, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, February 19, 1996 (Originally in Chinese).

diet and prepared to meditate. Someone saw me dance and was delighted. He said to himself, 'Well, this person doesn't look so serious. Probably She is very enlightened.'

Because he saw that I 'dance' worse than him, he felt good. His ego was satisfied a little, but it didn't matter, that he still had a little ego. When he came to practice, I took 'good' care of him and let him see who's better. [Laughter] He loves dancing, doesn't care how I dance. He's happy even though I dance like a child, and he's even happier when I'm worse than him. It wouldn't be so wonderful if I were better than him. He would be sad. But seeing me worse than he is, he thinks, 'An enlightened Master is no more than that. Well, I will learn from Her so that She can never be a threat to my business. She won't attract my customers, so I'll follow Her.' [Laughter]

Without any explanation, just seeing me doing the same thing as he does, he feels delighted. All of us are like this. In Bodhisattvahood, this is called 'Tong Shih,' meaning doing the same thing; it's a practice in Bodhisattvahood. When we deliver sentient beings, we have to do the same things and act the same way as they do. Then they will feel an affinity and will trust us. He will feel that we are like friends instead of feeling isolated, afraid or estranged. We like people we are familiar with. Who likes strangers? The friends we like, we usually find them to chat or dine with. If something happened, we'd ask for their help. [Audience: Yes!] We wouldn't go and find strangers. Right?

In this world, the more similar the better

Because we're used to our friends, we trust them and get along with them. We look like each other and our magnetic fields are compatible. If our magnetic fields differ, we clash. We are most afraid of conflicts. Once there's conflict, we usually withdraw into ourselves. Once withdrawn, we never feel like going over there again. So, in this world, the more similar we are to sentient beings, the better it is. Gradually, they'll know where you're different. Just like when you have a big jewelry business, but you live with robbers and beggars or walk the same road as they do. Then you should do things their way. If you don't wear the same clothes as they do but, instead, wear beautiful clothes and a crown with a golden diamond here, shiny and sparkling, wouldn't you be asking for trouble? You wouldn't be able to get along with them, and you'd also threatened your own safety. Whatever we do it doesn't matter to us, as long as we know it very clearly in our minds. A rich businessman has jewels all over. Even his belt is lined with jewels. Doesn't he know he has many jewels? Even if he wears rags like a beggar, or wears special clothes like a robber, he will never become a robber. He only dresses like one. Will he ever forget that he's a jeweler? No way. He wears their clothes just to guard his jewels, to move about conveniently, without attracting too much attention since they walk on the same path, and to be integrated with them so that he can feel comfortable and unthreatened. He can talk with them without causing harm to himself, and he can convert them when the opportunity arises. Wouldn't it be better this way? Why would you flaunt all your jewels and let them know you're different, that you're rich? They wouldn't be able to take it.

THE BEST OFFERING ³⁵

I enjoy the talents that God has granted me for the good cause of mankind. So many people come to me because of the clothing I designed, because my artistic tendency appeals to their artistic tendency – appeals to their love of beauty. Some people come to me through the music because my music appeals to their inner nature, their own ability to

35. Group meditation, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, February 17, 1996 (Originally in English).

produce music or to listen to music. Some people love my paintings so they feel acquainted with me and make an affinity with me and become fellow practitioners.

Therefore, from so many angles of abilities, God has drawn Hiers children to Hirmself, through my physical instrument – for example like that. There's nothing that's useless. We must know how to use things, and then they become useful.

When I see the people offer things to the Buddha, and then they're reborn again and again with a piece of silk on their bodies or two coins in their hands, I'm afraid. That's why I don't accept your offerings. I would rather you offer it to yourselves and then let me help you take you out of this suffering sea forever. It would be the best thing that you have ever offered to any Buddha, enlightened Master.

But of course, in each yuga (age), Masters use different ways to teach people. At that time, that man only offered two golden coins. If the Buddha did not accept, there would have been nothing else to offer. He didn't know yet of the supreme teaching or maybe the Buddha was in a hurry and the man only wanted to offer two golden coins and wanted nothing else to do with the Buddha. What else can you do?

Sometimes people offer me small things, I also accept. I accept their offering merits. Either I take it or not take it, it's the same; and I give them something else so that also creates an affinity without me having to take things from them. We will give them sample booklets or something like that. Then they slowly develop the mind for enlightenment. That would be best for them. That's why we spend our money not only on charity but also on spiritual charity. We print a lot of free booklets and news magazines in case people are interested. That is a gift to mankind that we can give. Better than the material charity we do.

The proper help

We run around the world sometimes whenever we know about a disaster; or whenever we can help, we always help. Sometimes I'll help until there's the last penny in our account. It seems to look a lot to you; looks like I still have about three, four behind me, but it's not true. That is all we had at that time, but I know God will give again. So, if necessary, I will give everything. If it's not necessary, we give whatever is needed or whatever we have, that's all.

So, when people are starving, you give them some money or bread. Not only a sample booklet of Master speaking at the United Nations, not only a Quan Yin method advertisement, but money and bread. After he fills his stomach, maybe he will listen to you, maybe not; but don't expect anything. If he dies with a sample booklet while hungry, he also doesn't know anything. If before he dies he doesn't read it, do you think he'll read it after he dies? [Master laughs.]

THE FOUR LEVELS OF STREAM WINNERS ³⁶

Stream winner – that means he probably practiced the convenient method. He has conquered the currents of life and death, of transmigration; and perhaps during his concentration, while he practiced the convenient method, the Buddha probably blessed him and let him hear the sound current now and again so he conquered the stream, the sound current stream.

36. Group meditation, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, February 17, 1996 (Originally in English).

But for those people at that time, most of the Masters never took people in one lifetime, not all of them. So many people would have to come back for seven lifetimes, and then they would get liberation. They'd meet another enlightened Master, actually practice the Quan Yin method, become disciples, then they'd be liberated. They are the ones who are supposed to be 'stream winners.'

Some people would come back four times after they'd encounter the Buddha – enlightened Master. Maybe they'd just listen and rejoice in their hearts, be prepared to follow but then they wouldn't. Maybe next year, maybe after two years, or something like that. Then their sons would have grown up and they'd follow the Master. Many people tell me things like that. They'd comment, 'Wow, You are fantastic,' or 'You talk very nice, I like it. Everything You say is true, but I'm not married yet. I want to know what marriage is like.' [Master laughs.] 'My son has not grown up and is not married yet. When he's married, I must drink wine and eat meat first to rejoice and then after that I will follow You. But then after that, another daughter is going to get married, then the daughter will give birth to another son, I have to take care of the grandchildren,' and blah, blah, blah.' I never see the man again. Perhaps I will be sixty-one aeons later. [Master laughs.]

So, someone who follows the Master is called a 'once returner.' Of course, you know very well, he returns once more, and then he'll be liberated. And others, 'never returners.' Now it's very clear that he will be liberated in this lifetime. This is the one that practices the Quan Yin method diligently and wants liberation badly. Some become arhats. That is even higher. The arhats can teach people, can impart the blessing to them.

GREAT WAYS TO PREVENT MOSQUITO BITES ³⁷

The insect that kills the greatest number of human beings is the mosquito; it kills millions of adults and children each year. The number of human beings killed by mosquitoes far exceeds that of any wars, natural disasters or assassinations. This tiny but extremely vicious demon kills at least four million people every year! Many more people get all kinds of strange diseases because they are infected by the mosquito.

We have to protect ourselves, because there are more mosquitoes in the world than we could ever kill! We could not kill them all even if we wanted to, so don't be 'silly' ('kill' and 'silly' in Chinese have a similar pronunciation), we should just endeavor to protect ourselves. Cover the children with mosquito nets when they sleep, just like you would cover a wok, [Master and audience laugh.] and let them sleep inside. You can do the same for the bigger kids as well – it is convenient.

You don't have to kill the mosquitoes, just use mosquito nets and window screens! Your window screens are most inviting – with mesh holes so large that even I can go through. [Laughter] I heard that even Master's transformation body can go through those small holes, not to mention the mosquitoes.

When buying window screens, choose those made of a fine mesh to prevent the tiniest mosquitoes from entering. There is a type of screen made of very fine mesh that can stop the mosquitoes while still maintaining ventilation. What is the use if the mesh holes are so big? At night, mosquitoes can see very clearly from outside the mesh just like looking through binoculars. So they go in. They would say, 'Since the door is open, I'll just go in easily.'

37. Group meditation, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, February 11, 1996 (Originally in Chinese).

Even when you have installed window screens, do not switch on the lights too early. Try to see things with your naked eyes or use a flashlight, and switch on the lights later in the evening when the mosquitoes have gone to sleep.

About five to seven in the evening, it is dinner time for the mosquitoes, [Laughter] so there are plenty of them around. They disappear at about nine to ten! If possible, do not switch on the lights when they come out to eat. Switch on the outdoor lights instead of the indoors ones; so even if there were some mosquitoes inside, they would go for the light outside. Should you switch on the lights indoors, mosquitoes will come in even if there were originally none inside!

THE LOTUS FLOWERS IN HEAVEN ³⁸

We are beautiful anyhow. If we have self-confidence, we are beautiful. When I was young, I never thought that I was pretty. I still do not feel that I am pretty. Sometimes when I look into the mirror, I feel that my eyes are too small, [Laughter] and my nose is too short. Observing others, I think: 'Well! How wonderful if I could have her nose, her skin or her eyes!' I compare myself to others everyday; consequently, I feel that I am not pretty. In fact, we don't have to care about these things, we are all right.

There was a man who had no money to buy shoes, and so was very frustrated. One day, when he was out, he saw a very happy man chatting delightfully with people; he even danced and sang. When he looked carefully, he found that this man had no feet! His two feet were missing, so he didn't have to buy any shoes! [Master laughs.] Perhaps that was why he was so happy. Since that day, he no longer felt frustrated by having no money to buy shoes.

In fact, it is not necessary for everyone to be the same. Roses are beautiful, but if the whole world grew only roses, what do you think? Wouldn't it be very boring? [Audience: Yes.] Therefore, some people do not like roses. You are all fond of roses, and say that roses are the best, but I do not like them! I like roses just as much as I like chrysanthemums. Sometimes I also like the tiny flowers called 'impatience,' because they don't need much care. [Master and audience laugh.] They are open everyday, even on rainy days. In cold of winter, or when a cold front prevails, they still stay open, and also in summer and autumn. You simply give them some water while singing, then they will grow. Even if you do not give it any water, it will still grow with a little rain. I only wish we could be like the 'impatience' flowers! We don't have to be roses; they are very troublesome and delicate. They bloom only once or twice a year, and are full of thorns. Strange! [Master and audience laugh.] Just because they are somewhat pretty, they becomes so arrogant; you will bleed if you touch them. Why should it be like this? Not everyone likes roses; they might be beautiful, but people may not like them.

I love the lotus flower; it grows in a dismal and dirty place, but it is very fragrant and clean. When it blooms, the nectar in the blossom is clean like a mirror – very pure, transparent and beautiful. No bees will come to prick it, no flies will come near; it is very clean. I heard that the lotus flower came from a very superior level long ago. Someone stole it from above and planted it here. That is why it has become so ugly now. [Master and audience laugh.]

The lotus flowers above are even more beautiful. Some are big and some are small; they look like transparent jade, very beautiful. It will start to fly when you step on it! Wherever

38. Group meditation, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, February 11, 1996 (Originally in Chinese).

you want to go, just think and it will take you there. You don't have to instruct it: 'Hey! Driver...' [Master and audience laugh.] You don't have to tell it, 'I want to go to Taipei.' Just step on it, and it knows whether you want to visit Amitabha Buddha or the Quan Yin Bodhisattva. It takes you to wherever you wish to go. In the superior worlds, the clouds function in the same way, too. As soon as you get on one, it will take you away! When you want to stop, just think, or even before you think, it knows and will stop immediately. There is no troublesome traffic jams like with our taxis here! In the higher level worlds, nothing happens even when one cloud collides into another. There is no need for any traffic regulations. The clouds and the lotus flowers just fly around freely, very comfortable!

Practice more then you can ride on the lotus flowers and clouds. You will fall down if your karma is too heavy – this I must warn you! [Master and audience laugh.] It knows who is karmically too heavy; it knows where you want to go and when to stop; it also knows who is not entitled to the ride. These clouds and lotus flowers are not material things, so if we still have any material aspects inside, we cannot match their properties, and would fall down if we try to ride on them. [Laughter and applause.]

MASTER'S PHYSICAL BODY IS MUCH MORE PRECIOUS! ³⁹

Some people are not content with seeing my transformation body, so they still come to see me. I don't know why they act like this. Perhaps it is because the physical body is very rare; every enlightened being has a manifestation body. [Laughter]

It is easy to see the manifestation body, but more difficult to see the real body, which only exists when an enlightened Master is living in this world. After the Master passes away, only the manifestation body is left. Of course, it is more desirable to see both the transformation body and the real one.

Ordinary enlightened beings have only manifestation bodies but not a real physical body, so they cannot help sentient beings. Likewise, Shakyamuni Buddha still has His manifestation body, but He cannot initiate us nor give us any help. Perhaps He can guide us to a living Master, who has a physical body, to get initiated.

Everyone loves the real body because it is rare! There are too many manifestation bodies the universe is full of manifestation bodies of enlightened beings, who are omnipresent. Physical bodies are rare – there are only a few. Only when the enlightened beings come, then sentient beings can see their real physical bodies.

To manifest in the physical form, a very complicated procedure is required, integrating many aspects in the universe – causation, the merits of sentient beings, and the will of the almighty. Therefore, it is more precious to see a real body than a transformation one.

However, my words are only for you; don't tell anyone else. [Laughter] I don't know why I have told you these things today, which normally shouldn't be told! Hearing this statement, people might think that you are very arrogant, praising the physical and belittling the manifestation body.

When you enter the inner worlds during meditation, you can see many transformation bodies; not only that of the Master, but also those of previous Masters such as Amitabha

39. Speaks to fellow initiates from Mainland China, international three-day retreat, Hamburg Center, Germany, August 25-27, 1995 (Originally in Chinese).

Buddha or Quan Yin Bodhisattva, et cetera. Depending on where you have reached, you can see the light bodies of the enlightened ones.

It is very difficult to see the real physical body, therefore Shakyamuni Buddha said that it is extremely difficult to see a real fully enlightened being. It is already so difficult to secure a physical body for oneself, much more so than to see a fully enlightened being in the body. This is why everyone loves to see the physical body of an enlightened being; it has always been the same since ancient times, not only in this era.

Should you observe someone who many people love to see, that person must be a spiritual practitioner who has attained the Truth. Regardless of what he looks like, whatever language he speaks, whether he gives lectures or doesn't speak, whether he touches you or gives you anything, if everyone still loves to see him, then he must have attained the Truth!

It was mentioned in Chuang Tzu's book: One day, a disciple of Confucius asked him, 'In a certain place, there is a certain person who is a lame hunchback, yet he has as many disciples as you do. In his daily life, he never says or teaches anything, but everyone wants to stay with him; men want to be his friends, and women want to be his wives. Everyone loves him. Would you explain why, master?' Confucius replied that it was because that person had attained the Truth.

THE BEST WAY TO GLORIFY OUR LIFE ⁴⁰

As practitioners, we don't have to always prove to people that we are good. We live a life of goodness, Truth and beauty. It's there for everyone to see. If they want to see it, if we can, then they see it. Otherwise, in life we should be flexible, we do everything when it's a profit to other people.

Of course, in the context of the moral standard and ethical regulations of our group, of our ideal, we live the noble ideal that we propose to other people. But nevertheless we do not shine too brightly, then put down everyone else around us and make them feel bad and humiliated. If we do that, we will not be successful in leading them into our ideal, into our noble way of living. So, we are good but not too glorious, not too showing off. A truly humble person doesn't know what humble is, he's just like that. Whatever he does, he just thinks about people and then he does things accordingly. He doesn't mean to be. He doesn't show himself as a very very moral, virtuous and good person in order to impress anyone. But he truly lives the life he believes that he should.

Even if he does lives the life that he believes, people do not feel uncomfortable being around him. That 'I'm holier than thou' kind of attitude, 'I'm better than you' kind of appearance, it's better just to be ordinary. But this is not to pretend to be. We should reach that state in which we are ordinary but we do not even feel that we are ordinary, we are good but we don't even feel that we are good. We live the good life but as normally as we breath and as we move our legs and arms and body in expression.

Then at that time, people will love us but we are very ordinary. People will respect us without any position in society. People will follow us even without us preaching one word of goodness and virtue to them. They will just see us and they will just like us, they will just feel comfortable, not suppressed, not humiliated. They will just take us as a friend. At that time, we would be successful in transmitting whatever ideas that we try to follow or we

40. International seven-day retreat, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, October 27, 1995 (Originally in English).

believe. But even at that time our life itself becomes an ideal, becomes itself a doctrine, becomes an eloquent lecture without any language.

Otherwise, the worldly languages are so much. We can't always try to translate what we want to say into their language and it takes a lot of effort. So, whenever you practice better, well and sincerely, everywhere you go you will feel that people are attracted to you without any reason. On the airplane, on the bus, on the train, in the market, in the school, on the street, anywhere people just come to you, are friendly to you, and they will ask you some questions. Then accordingly maybe you can impart to them the precious knowledge that you have acquired by your effort and through the Quan Yin method. So, that is the best way to glorify your life.

WALK THE WAY OF LOVE ⁴¹

You came on your own accord. I didn't even know you before. I probably will not know you in the future. I mean physically. You have chosen the noble way that you will walk from now on. I wish you success in your endeavor – that you keep your noble purpose and promise. That's all there is for yourself. Should you decide that you don't want to keep your promise or the noble way you chose, it's alright. No one will come and knock at your door, telephone you, and tell you what to do. Never ever. In fact, you must keep your own purity in order to come back to us again after today, because initiation doesn't guarantee you lifelong membership of heaven. You are free to come to heaven with us or free to go back.

Anyhow, heavens are within ourselves. I only help you to rediscover them. So, whether you call me Master, friend, sister, whatever, it doesn't matter at all. Just tradition that when someone teaches something, we call them Teacher. Just help each other. If we don't keep a tranquil life – like everyday we drink so much, get drunk like this – we can't even drive a car and can't even work, never mind concentrate. So, no drinking, no intoxicants that make you cloud your mind. If you drink now and again a glass of wine, I will not kill you perhaps; but you'd better stay away. [Laughter] Why? Because you can't control yourself, that's all. Wine is not bad. It's you, it's we who can't control one glass, another, and two, three. And next time, again and again. If you drink once in a while, you won't go to hell perhaps. But if you drink once again and you have not mastered yourself yet, then you'll drink again. You become addicted, that's the problem. It's not the drinking, it's the addiction that makes you degrade and makes the whole thing mess up your life. Therefore, we invite you to stay away from all these harmful effects – pornography and all these things – that cloud our clear thinking and clear mastership of our life. That's all. No precepts, don't say, 'I am holier than thou.' Nothing like that. Or 'You have to do this, you have to do that, otherwise you'll die.' It's not true, you'll die anyhow. [Laughter] It's not true that if you don't do what I say, you'll die. It's not so. It's just whatever I tell you, it's for your own sake; for the quickest, the most effective way; the safest way for you to tap into the inner power, to realize your own greatness, realize after all that you are the master. You have to decide what to do. You choose the way you go. You choose to walk in love, beauty and virtues. That's your freedom. That is your freedom to choose to have responsibility of your noble way of living. I am just here whenever you need me. If you come, I tell you what I know. That's all. Don't think I am your Teacher or anything like that, because you have to teach yourself.

Everything I've told you, you perhaps know already, except the initiation, the inner transmission that I'll give you later. You have it. Just you forgot how to tap into that power. Therefore, we are weak. We don't have power. Whatever we pray doesn't come true.

41. Group meditation, London University, United Kingdom, April 20, 1995 (Originally in English).

Whatever we want to do, we can't do it just because we forgot the greatest power within ourselves. We have to recover that. That's all there is. No fee, no charge, no membership, nothing – now, ever or after. You never will hear from me that I ask one penny from you for anything I do for you. In fact, I am the one who gives all the time. And whatever you want to give, you give. If you don't, you don't. It's all right. No problem. If you give, give to the poor, the needy, whether I am there or not there, whether I tell you or not tell you. That's how you help yourself. We have to practice. At the same time, we have to take care of this world. That's the way we do. We don't tell you to go to the Himalayas, follow me personally behind my back and do anything for me. No, no. You just have to awaken your own greatness and then use that to help yourself get out of the transmigration, get out of the ignorance, get out of this suffering, get out of this weakness, get out of this don't-know-nothing business and be a wise person. Be strong, courageous; do what you want; and tell your mind, tell the million, billion cells in your body to do what you want. That's what I want to teach you – to be a master of yourself, not to call me a Master and then follow me everywhere like an idiot. It's not the way. Must be master of yourself. The cells in your body listen to what you say, listen to what you want. So, you must train them from today to do what you want. If you want them to be vegetarian, they'll listen. If you want to walk a noble way, they will listen. If you want to meditate, they will listen. That's the way you train yourself. Be a master of your house. Up to now, we are the slaves of any influence from outside – any dog, any cat. Anything can disturb us, can tell us what to do. We've lost ourselves. We've lost our independence, our mastership. So, from today, you have chosen to come back to your own power. That's all there is.

I will show you how; and from today, you walk the way you choose. You do, you know. The body, the mind, the brain just have to do what you want. Not you do what the brain wants. Like when you are meditating and the brain says, 'Go and take coffee. Go and see X-rated movies.' Then you follow like a dog. We're not dogs. We do what we want. The body, the mind, the cells must do what we want. So, don't tell me being a vegetarian is difficult. Don't tell me meditation is difficult. No! You have to make it possible. Everything is possible. People can go to the moon, go to mars.

We go further than that. Why not? Only if you control your own rambling mind. Make it do what you want – right now, anytime you want. That's the purpose of practicing meditation. That's the purpose of keeping the precepts. You can keep the precepts and not go to heaven. Even you don't keep the precepts, maybe you won't go to hell; but keep them. Why? Just to show that you're strong, you are master of your habits, you do what you want. Don't bargain with me. Half a day vegetarian. Another day not vegetarian. It's okay with me. You do what you want. You eat what you want. God doesn't care what you eat, but you must care. For millions of years, we walked in darkness. We just did what the mind told us to do; what the habits, or what our friends, sisters and brothers told us to do. We never truly had the ownership of this house. So, from today, you do. That's why the precepts. That's why the vegetarian. Vegetarian is from love. We love all creatures. We love the weaker person, weaker creature not because if we eat vegetarian we'll go to heaven. No, I tell you not; because the cow ate vegetarian before it was born, and he never became a Buddha for that. Don't be proud of anything you do. You just do it because it's the way to do it. It's the way to master your own destiny and habits. You control your future. The past is gone. We can't do anything about it. We can only from today build up the future – the noble, pure, clean, charitable, compassionate, loving future for all beings. Then wherever you go from today, you are the representative of love, compassion, of noble God qualities. That's the way you have chosen to live your life from today. I hope you have the strength, courage and guts to keep. That's all there is. Should you fail because of influences from society, or any excuse you make for yourself, stand up. Do it again. Always begin again. Don't give up, because this is the only way we can live a

truly human life, if we really call ourselves human. Otherwise, we're just like animals – work, make love, make children. Make a living and then die. What else is there? Don't animals do the same? Some of them are more clever than us. They do better. They don't pay taxes even, we have to.

WATCH MASTER'S VIDEOS IS THE BEST METHOD TO CALM THE MIND 42

Watching videos calms your mind and answers many of your questions before your meditation. It helps you a great deal. Don't think it's useless and then you just run around or do something else. Listening to holy chanting or videotape lectures will help you a lot. Even if you do not truly pay too much attention to it sometimes; but sometimes you will, because some of the sentences will shock you awake or calm your nerves.

If paying attention to the talk on the screen calms you, then it will help you in your meditation. That's the purpose. It's not that you have to look at me everyday on the screen for any reason. The group meditations also help you a lot because of the collective energy. So, I hope you always abide by my instructions, not abide by my body; because my instructions will give you lasting good, not the body.

MASTER IS THE MOST LONELY PERSON 43

I have to be father, mother, judge, the policeman, angel and Yama king at the same time. The king of the nether world, you don't know him. My friend, if you are not behaving yourselves, I'll send you to him, saying, 'Well, take care of them.' The king of the nether world, the lord of karma, he takes care of our give-and-take so that we will be clear when we leave the world. If we are not clear, we can't leave. We have to come back.

The Master sometimes takes on the role of that kind of lord karma, part of it; so that She can immediately cleanse the karma of the so-called disciples – doesn't matter how painful it is for both sides – so that he is clean so he can leave this world easily. It's very, very difficult.

I'm very happy for you and for myself that you have always understood and forgiven me, even though you don't understand what I do sometimes. You don't understand why I scold that person, why I send that person away, or why I treat that person more special than you. You perhaps don't understand all the time, but I'm very grateful and happy that you always forgive me.

Even you don't know it's right or wrong, you forgive me. That's already very good for me and good for you because that means you are very generous, you are very tolerant, you are very gentle, very wise inside. That means you have matured in wisdom and spiritual practice. That's very, very good for you. Of course, if you forgive me, I feel very relaxed and no pressure, no misunderstanding, bad energy. That's good for me, too. But above all, it's very, very good for you. That's why I'm happy. I hope you continue in this spirit, trying to understand things at a deeper level of consciousness and not from the outer appearance.

42. Group meditation, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, July 3, 1995 (Originally in English).

43. Group meditation, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, June 4, 1995 (Originally in English).

If you didn't understand me, I would be the most lonely person in this world. It would also give you a lot of pain in your heart; because you are harboring this kind of misunderstanding, this kind of negative energy towards me. That also hinders your spiritual practice. So, for either side, it's no good.

Sometimes I feel very, very lonely, because surrounding me are not always good and forgiving people. They always have their negative traces, maybe from last life, or maybe from this life, they learned from society.

Even children, very, very unforgiving. Sometimes when they see me at work, if I scold someone else, they get scared too, and then they don't like me. That sometimes makes me feel very painful. Not because I've lost them, but because it always happens that you can never do your job without having side effects to some degree. You cannot, with so many people. I cannot always avoid unpleasant moments for everyone or for the children.

So sometimes, when I see people have misunderstood me or shied away from me, I feel hurt also. I feel very lonely. But nevertheless, my job has to be done. So, whatever the price, I pay.

Eventually, when we all go up to a very high level of consciousness, we all look down together, then we'll all have a good laugh; because we were all very stupid then, taking theater for real, looking at the reflection in the mirror for the true image. So, we will be laughing at ourselves at the final moment when we join together at a very, very, very high level of wisdom.

For that very noble and high goal, I sacrifice everything and I can go through any hardship, misunderstanding, negative thick fog of energy because I know eventually there is nothing there at the other end. There's only brightness, beauty, grace, love and harmony at the other end. That's how I can continue. Otherwise, to be a Teacher of any kind is a very lonely position. When all the students have graduated, grown up, have a good job, and understood and appreciated you, you will probably already be in the grave or have suffered a lot of psychological pressure, sickness.

Why is an enlightened Master so lonely? It is because, even though there is someone who understands the Truth, he doesn't understand it completely; he can only understand after he has practiced for a period of time – which could be a very long time. The enlightened Master must educate and care for him painstakingly and laboriously before he attains this fruit. Before reaching this attainment, this person is still not stable. He may believe today, but he may change his mind the next day! That is why it is so arduous to be an enlightened Master.

When we read Milarepa's story, we know how his master Marpa treated him, very unkindly and sternly. However, by doing so, this master also felt very pained. Even his wife didn't understand him and was always on Milarepa's side. She even helped him to cheat the master – her husband, because he refused to impart the method to Milarepa at that time.

Milarepa was the greatest and most prominent enlightened master of the Esoteric sect. Before meeting his master, he had practiced many methods – heretical paths and magical powers. He harmed many people and so incurred very heavy karma. He followed Marpa with strong faith. Dreading his heavy karma, he was very earnest in seeking the Truth. He was very anxious and agitated, and pressed his master to impart the method to him. However, his master refused, because Milarepa was still impure then. His karma was so

heavy that even if he had been taught the method, he would not have been able to practice it.

Therefore, Milarepa's master tested him for seven years before transmitting the method to him. In these seven years, the master had a bitter life. Everyday he had to punish Milarepa, tell him to build houses and then to demolish them. To his master, whatever Milarepa did was wrong and bad, and he was rewarded with scoldings and beatings.

The reason was not that his master was vicious by nature, but that Milarepa's karma was exceedingly heavy. Therefore, the master had to first cleanse his karma thoroughly by instructing him to practice ascetically; by imposing humiliation, scoldings and beatings on him; and by letting him work laboriously. In this way, his heavy karma and vicious character was cleansed, after which his master transmitted the method to him.

However, Milarepa felt extremely painful during these seven years. Anything he did he couldn't please the master and make him impart the method to him. From the views of outsiders, it seemed that Milarepa's master was very cruel.

The truth is, his master was also in great pain himself. He didn't like to punish his disciple; but, to cleanse Milarepa's heavy karma, he had to use very stern methods. Though very pained within, he had to carry on.

Even his wife did not understand his ways and blamed him everyday. She said, 'Milarepa works so hard, and is so pious and good. Why do you still refuse to transmit the method to him, and treat him so severely instead?' Here, we can see how lonely an enlightened Master is.

Marpa's wife spent her entire life with him and they practiced together. We would think that she should understand him, right? [Audience: Yes!] In the end, even she couldn't understand, not to mention the outsiders or the other disciples.

Therefore, Shakyamuni Buddha said that only a Buddha can understand the wisdom of a Buddha. Even a Bodhisattva cannot understand; only a Bodhisattva of high level can understand a little.

Jesus Christ also said, 'Don't give pearls to swines.' He told His disciples, 'To you people who understand, I'll explain clearly in words and ways; I won't tell the people outside. I'll only tell them stories to help them understand, but I will not tell them everything.' Therefore, Jesus Christ was also lonesome.

Shakyamuni Buddha said that only a Buddha can understand a Buddha, but how many Buddhas can you find in this world? So He was really lonely. Only after He had practiced for a very long time did He then find His first disciple – Mahakasyapa. He trained him for a long time to make him a Buddha, and to succeed Him. Other people simply didn't understand.

Ananda was closest to the Buddha by attending to Him for over twenty years, yet he didn't understand the Buddha. He didn't achieve the great enlightenment. Only after Shakyamuni Buddha had left, and he was scolded by Mahakasyapa, then Ananda practiced hard to reach enlightenment. So, even Shakyamuni Buddha's closest disciple didn't understand Him; no one did.

I read from the scripture that, when Shakyamuni Buddha was dying, only Ananda was by His side. Shakyamuni Buddha told him, 'I will soon enter nirvana! Quickly tell the five hundred disciples outside, so that they can come back to see their Master for the last time.' Ananda hurriedly went to summon them. At that time, these five hundred disciples were having fun outside and doing their things, unaware that their Master was to leave the world soon. He was about to leave them! Receiving the message from Ananda, they hastily went inside to bid farewell to Shakyamuni Buddha, and then went out to play again. They were really like children, ignorant of everything.

When reading this scripture, I almost shed tears. A very great Buddha, famous even today, had only Ananda by His deathbed. He summoned the disciples to come back, but they soon went out again!

Shakyamuni Buddha told Ananda that He could stay in the world of samsara, but Ananda didn't understand His implication and so didn't request the Buddha to stay. Since Ananda didn't ask, the Buddha could not stay; so He had to leave the world.

From this, we know that, even the closest disciple cannot understand the Master, not to mention the people outside. Therefore, it is natural for a spiritual practitioner to be lonesome. However, we have never thought about this. We think that attaining Buddhahood is the greatest happiness, the most glorious position. It is true that they are happy; but as long as there are sentient beings in pain, the Buddhas cannot be happy. They are happy when they enter nirvana. In this world of samsara, they can never be happy, because when sentient beings suffer, I suffer; when sentient beings are ill, I am ill. It is stated clearly in the Vimalakirti sutra. Originally, the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas have no pain or illness; but because sentient beings have illnesses, they are ill, too.

When reading the scriptures, we fail to catch the main points or grasp the profound meanings in them. We only worship the Buddha and pray for His help and blessings, and so on. We never pray to Him to give us Buddha's wisdom, and that is why we have not gotten it. The Tao Te sutra also mentions that the Truth is not to be explained in words. Though Lao Tzu understood it, he could not explain it to many people, only to a small group. Therefore, Lao Tzu was also very lonely.

When the master Dao Sheng gave lectures, no one listened to him. It was said that not more than fourteen persons had listened to him. Therefore, he went into the mountains and talked to the rocks. Have you heard of this story? Do you know about it? [Audience: Yes!] People said that he was a heretic. Master Dao Sheng lectured to the rocks on the mountain, and then asked them whether they agreed or not. The rocks nodded. [Master and audience laugh.]

Therefore, do not think that we, humans, are the cleverest. Sometimes rocks are smarter than us. We, humans, are not enlightened; but a dragon girl became enlightened. We learned from the Buddhist scriptures that only humans can become Buddhas, isn't that right? However, in the Lotus sutra, Shakyamuni Buddha told us a story contradictory to this. He said that a dragon girl had also become a Buddha, and immediately – that quick [Master snaps Her fingers.] The dragon girl was not an adult; she became a Buddha at the age of eight!

KEEP THE MIDDLE WAY IN SPIRITUAL PRACTICE ⁴⁴

When the karma has come, there is no use doing anything to make up for it. If it has not yet come, then you don't have to force yourself. For example, my clothes, they are very soft. Should they be caught by the thorns of a rose, could I take them away immediately? They would be torn. I have to disentangle them slowly and carefully; in that way, I can protect both the rose and my clothes.

When the time comes, we take all of them out. Everything will be fine, after we have taken the last thorn out. There's no need to pull so fiercely. Both would be destroyed, the rose and my clothes.

So, practice can't be too extreme. We pass through many stages in life. We should do certain things at certain stages. Since we cannot avoid it, it's useless to force ourselves in order to avoid it.

LIVE FOR THE TRUTH ⁴⁵

Each enlightened Master has their own incredible way to deliver sentient beings

The most important thing for you, is not to look at me to see what I'm doing – whether I'm good or bad – but to see yourself, whether you're truly, sincerely wanting to know your power or not. If you do, you will know it. If you don't, doesn't matter how good I am. Even if I'm God, doesn't matter. The most important thing is you, not me.

Even if I am God incarnated, I can't help you if you are full of garbage, full of doubts, full of serious mental complications. If you don't want to know how great you are, if you keep doubting me, that means you have forgotten to try to realize how great you are, what kind of power you have. As soon as you focus on anyone else, good or bad, you forget yourself. You forget to concentrate inside and to find your home. That's a problem with you, not me.

That's why Buddha came, Jesus came, Mohammed came, Socrates. Every great Master has graced our earth, but how many people were enlightened in their lifetimes? Less than we have now; less than I have, you know, disciples. They had less than I have. Why? Not because they were not good, not because they didn't have power; it was the people themselves who were limited, who obstructed themselves with their own mental garbage.

So, don't look at me. Don't tell me I'm good or bad. Don't criticize what I'm doing. Okay, if I'm bad; but that's none of your business, because your business is to find out how great you are. If you ever doubt me, that I have the power to take you Home or not – that you may have – but then find another master quickly before you die. It's none of my business whether you stay with me or not. If you believe me, you stay. If you don't, go find another master, similar one, better one or whatever you like; but do it quickly before you die without enlightenment.

Every Master has different things. If they don't dress up nicely, then they have cars, or they have wives, or they have children. Everyone has something for you to doubt. If you want to dig up the garbage in their toilets, there's always something for you to dig up. If you really just put your nose in such toilet places, all you will find are toilets. That's no problem, I

44. International seven-day retreat, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, May 5-12, 1995 (Originally in Chinese).

45. Group meditation, Paris Center, France, April 28, 1995 (Originally in English).

assure you; but that is not the main point in the house. That's not the main focus of any master. Every master has their own way to help people. The Buddha said that there are eighty-four thousand methods of helping sentient beings, including being their wives, their officers, the head of state, a princess, a beggar, even the slave for that person in order to help him, her or that family; and also being co-workers, being the same. Like, whatever you do, I do, to help you, to have the same ideal as you; so later to make you see the Light. First, I must win your confidence. For example, doing the same work as you, wearing the same dress, acting in the same way, perhaps; but all the way, I am different inside. I know that, even if you don't know. My purpose is very clear. Even whatever I do with you, I am not with you in that sense. Therefore, that's one of the methods that Buddhas use.

Have confidence in yourself

You, the ones who meditate so little, the ones who have no faith in your great self and your fortune to meet a living Master, you have so much degradation for yourselves. You've so little respect for yourselves that you think you'd never have the fortune to meet a living Master. That's why you doubt me! You understand what I mean? You don't doubt me, you doubt yourselves that you are so little, you are so sinful, so ugly, that you could never meet a true living Master. You could not meet a true living Master, a good one, a loving one, a compassionate one. It's you! You have no confidence, no faith in yourselves. You understand what I mean? It's you!

Look at yourselves, if you think you deserve a living Master, then you know me. If you don't, God can't help you, Buddha can't help you. You'll transmigrate again and again and again, and it's no one's fault.

Make sure you really want my help, make sure you want it. I can die for you, but make sure you want it. Make sure you really want to know your greatness. Make sure you really want to know God, then I could die for you.

I told you I could die for you and I meant it! This life of the physical body, doesn't matter how good it looks to you, means nothing to me, absolutely, if it comes to your liberation and your happiness. I swear to God that I would die for you, anytime, if you truly need it! I more than die for you everyday. I tell you, the death of the body is no suffering. It is the mental anguish that you impose upon me. This is more than death.

Wake up before it's too late

I don't mean to complain to you. I must tell you the truth, so that you wake up. Wake up now before it is too late. I'm anguished, I'm suffering because I know your trouble, I can't help. I want you to be happy, but you always make trouble for yourselves and make me suffer for nothing. If you see any fault in my teaching, if I ever teach you anything bad, harmful to yourself and to mankind, leave me immediately; don't have to hang around.

I never bind anyone. I never said, 'You must stay with me forever.' Did I? So, if you stay, make sure you know what you want because I know what I want. I only want to help you, unconditionally. Whether you help me or not help me to help other people is your business. The more you help, the more your love expands and the higher the level of your consciousness, that's all. It's good for you. Otherwise, you cannot damage me anyhow.

Money, I can always earn; reputation, well, mine is already bad and good – up and down. It depends on who looks at me; depends on whether that is a dog looking at me, a cat

looking at me, a human being looking at me, an angel who looks at me, or Buddha looks at me. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

That's the same with spiritual understanding also. If you're beautiful inside, you see me beautiful. If you are high level, you know I am high. If you are not, doesn't matter how much I advertise myself, it's no good.

Remember the vow you made in heaven

I'm never short of money; because God entitled me to have so much money through different ways, through different talents to do my work on earth. It's only a pity when you, yourself, don't help. You don't get the merit, not me. And the people who don't know us also, they're lost in the sea of suffering. You don't help me, no one helps them.

You can never really damage my work, even if you've finished all my money, even finished everything, all my reputation and everything. I still don't lose anything because I never wanted to gain anything in the beginning. I will never hurt myself, or you will never hurt me. It's just that you have not fulfilled your promise before the Mother / Father, before you came to this world to do the work. You have forgotten. You let this ego interfere. You let the people, the preconceived ideas, make trouble for you and you lose the good opportunity for many decades.

You must have the courage of a mighty soul to say what is true, whether you die for it or you live with it. If you are a coward, if you are a hesitating person, who can help you? And who will help me? If you had helped me, we could have conquered the world in these ten years.

But never mind, as long as you help yourselves, that's all I want. Even if you don't help me, you must know what you want from me. Then I can give you accordingly. Only when you know what you want, and ask for it, then I can give. Even a good thing, you can't force it on people.

GROUP MEDITATION BENEFITS ALL MANKIND ⁴⁶

If we want to walk all the way to the spiritual mansion of the most high, if you have a companion supporting in spirit, it is very, very incredible, the energy that each of us radiates. It is incredible when it's put together. For example water, if it's only one cup, it is not much. If it fills the cup, it's all right for the cup. But when many cups are put together, many hundreds or thousands of cups are put together, it becomes a swimming pool. Then more, it'll become a lake, and then it'll become a river, and become an ocean.

That's why group meditation is extremely, extremely important to you. You probably have learned that by your own experience. You feel clean, energized when you go out. Is that no so? [Audience: Yes.] It is because you share energy. You say, 'Well, one cup is okay. Two cups, all right.' But one cup you can not clean with. If you put together it becomes a lake; all of you can swim in it and it will still be there. You know what I mean? Maybe just put one cup on your body, not only your body is not cleansed but the water is gone. So, it is a privilege for us to go to group meditation. It's really, really a great benefit to mankind as well, because if the lake is there, not only you are benefited but many other people in the society who didn't put the water in the lake can also get benefit.

46. Group meditation, Singapore Center, Singapore, September 26, 1994 (Originally in English).

THE BEST WAYS TO GO THROUGH THE UPHEAVALS OF OUR WORLD

47

[At the end of the twentieth century, the world situation is changing rapidly. Many people are longing and waiting for the golden age to come to open a new page in our history. On the other hand, they are scared by the various rumors of the impending end of the world. Responding to this hot topic, Supreme Master Ching Hai has answered questions of some initiates and non-initiates and delivered some exquisite discourses: 'Just to be vegetarian, to meditate, that's a preparation for eternity, not for destruction. Destruction comes and goes. Eternity is always here. We prepare for God, not for destruction; because at the end of our lives, when we lay down in the coffin, it's also our own destruction anyhow, whether the world still goes on or not goes on. So, the most precious preparation is for God, going back to the eternal.']

- Q. *What can we do physically, what can we do spiritually to prepare for this upcoming destruction that is going to happen in the world, as one of the things You have said is to become a vegetarian?*
- M. I don't know if we can stop. We were discussing the facts only. I didn't really predict anything, yet. I just said what we are doing now and what is affecting the world, as a matter of fact. It's scientifically factual, everyone knows. Not that I predict in the year 2000 the world will be gone. I didn't say anything like that. We were just saying things like, what we are doing right now; for example, cutting all the forests. This all of you know affects the world. So, we were talking about a vegetarian diet as a benefit thereof.

I guess it's a little bit late now to stop all this. It's going on every day in every corner of the ignorant population and perhaps it's too late to stop. But we can minimize it and we can strengthen our spiritual selves in order for miracles to happen. That is also to influence our community with our spiritual strength and knowledge that they will go our way.

Whatever destruction might happen or might not happen, we are very safe, we are very secure in our knowledge in God. At least we are not frightened. We do not go berserk. We will know what to expect, whether we lose our lives, it's not a big deal. I told you already, life is a joke. Only life eternal is real. We just get caught, get hooked into this instrument for a while and then we're scared to lose it. But it's nonsense, because we have a more beautiful instrument elsewhere and anywhere to use. Just to be vegetarian, to meditate, that's a preparation for eternity, not for destruction. Destruction comes and goes. Eternity is always here. We prepare for God, not for destruction; because at the end of our lives, when we lay down in the coffin, it's also our own destruction anyhow, whether the world still goes on or not goes on. So, the most precious preparation is for God, going back to the eternal.

Yes, you can do. Pray for the whole world because looks like we are going to have trouble, as predicted by many of the clairvoyant people in the world, including your American famous Dixon or Cayce. So, you'd better pray and meditate. We don't have too much time. We never have too much time.

I hope you believe in what I say. I wish you would. And whatever we can save, we save. Whatever is damaged, well, that will be God's will.

47. Group meditation, Honolulu Center, Hawaii, U.S.A., September 3, 1994 (Originally in English).

Our world has been through a lot of upheaval, change. This is inevitable. There is no need to say we are superstitious and think that the world will end or something like that. We don't have to believe it. It will happen one day or another. Or it doesn't have to end. It's sometimes destroyed in some parts and it will inconvenience a lot of people and destroy a lot of people's lives and property. But this is not something that's superstitious. The world has always changed according to the mental expectations and the life attitudes of the people of this planet. It will change sometimes.

So, the best thing is we look to God. Now that we already have the connection with God, it's all right for us, whether we come or we go, whether we stay or we go back to Hirm. At least we don't fear. We have no fear but we have to also sometimes pray for God's grace for our brothers and sisters in case they still can be saved in some ways, and 'please God hasten the means for them.' You also try to work in your community, spreading the gospel, telling them that only God can save them.

God saves us doesn't mean that God always will protect our houses or protect our bodies, but Hes will save us afterwards, after all the ephemeral things have gone. Hes saves us eternally. We will be there eternally.

There's nothing to death and life because we don't die and we're not really born. Just we get caught in some of the instruments here and then we think we are Mrs. Smith and Mr. John and things like that. We are all over the place. We are the whole universe. We are not in this body. We're hooked up to a little part in this body, that's all. Just like electricity is caught in one wire or another. Actually, it is not the bulb, this is the electricity. It's just a shell that we happened to get trapped into. We use it sometimes just for some purpose.

The Mother / Father can take care of the whole universe, just a bunch of you is nothing. Actually, the power of the universe, the Supreme Master power does everything and regulates all things. But knowing this sometimes make us feel also frustrated. Why doesn't Hes let us be virtuous and holy, wholesome instead of letting us go through all these tribulations, tests and suffering? The best way is to have free-will, the choice in the beginning of our lifetimes.

At the beginning of all lives, we have choice. We have a voice inside telling us this is better, this is good, this is not. But sometimes we like to play, we like to do the things that are not according to the parents' teachings; like children, and hurt ourselves. That's the problem. Sometimes when our parents say: 'Stay away from fire.' 'Don't play here. Don't play there,' we do it just for the sake of curiosity. Then God lets us learn the hard way. The easy way, is up to us. Therefore, some people stay holy, wholesome, some people go astray. But that is only for a while. They will suffer the consequences, then they will awaken from and through the suffering, become wholesome again, and turn back the right direction.

Therefore, sometimes people are also right in saying that suffering is a blessing in disguise from God. Otherwise, if we are always happy and have everything in our life smoothly, we don't appreciate and we do not try to listen to God's will. Truly it's like that.

That sometimes probably is the effect of the suffering. During suffering times we turn inward more, we pray more; because at that time, we know whatever it is, that there must be something, we have to rely on that thing. Nostradamus, he also said that, in

this coming time, probably there would be a lot of disasters, a lot of trouble that even some people who never believed in God before would begin to pray to God and the saints. That's what he said. Probably, that's the way it will be. God tries to help us, to turn our minds back to the source of all blessings and eternal life. Do not worry even if you lose your life, you don't lose anything. I told you already, life is a joke. It's a setup for us to play around and to learn whatever we're curious about. That curiosity wants us to learn; and when we're fed up with it, God will help.

Even if God does destroy the planet, we are not too worry. Of course, we try to save it. It's a beautiful planet. It's the only one we have at the moment. But if He has to do it, it doesn't matter. So vast, the universe. A lot of planets that we could go to and run around. Don't worry. But be good, otherwise, we may not even have that privilege. That's the problem.

Even though God is very neutral – no male, no female, no good, no bad and no judgment – but the way we do things carries in itself the consequences. Just like God or our parents love us anyhow, whether we're bad or good, their love will not die. But if we do bad things that are not according to the parents' warning, then we bring harm upon ourselves. We bring sometimes disaster, sometimes injury, sometimes damage to our beauty. But still after we get damaged, the parents love us. They might love us even more but that doesn't help us. Their love won't die but we damage ourselves. That's the problem only.

Therefore, we just have to be good, be virtuous, be Godlike, so that we are near to God for our own benefit.

A SAINTLY WAY OF LIVING ⁴⁸

If you think, 'Oh, I am a meditator, I don't need to take care of the outer appearance.' It's wrong. The outer is the inner, because actually we don't have an outer and inner. Everything is inside the universe. How can you make this corner of the universe lousy, dirty, messy while you claim that you belong to another universe, which is more beautiful, more clean, more fabulous, and thing like that? It's not correct. Then we still live in discrimination, thinking that this world is no good so we'll make it even worse and we will immigrate to another place anyhow! But this is not yet to come. We're still living in this world.

We have no right, no right absolutely to damage, to spoil, to ruin this only house for the whole population of the earth planet. You don't have the right to ruin any corner of this world whether you like it or not. And in the name of meditation, of a practitioner, don't make yourself a laughing subject or a degrading subject for other people to look down upon. Whatever you do, you represent the most high; because we follow the highest path, we worship only the most high. So, we have to represent Him in speech, actions and thought – at least, speech and actions. Though people do not know much of what you think; but at least your speech, your actions are easy to detect. So, please remember this.

Now, it is similar to inside progress. Sometimes we think we have already improved, but actually in many other corners of our soul, our spirit is still not yet looked after.

The Light and the Sound are the elements inside that cleanse our souls and our thinking. Our virtuous life will be more evident after we practice the Light and Sound. But the

48. Group meditation, New York Center, U.S.A., June 20, 1994 (Originally in English).

outside also we should take care; because the more we are elevated, the more we see that cleanliness is necessary. It is the way of life. It's not that someone is cleaner than the other, or someone loves more cleanliness. It is the inner, the inner expression of beauty, virtue and Truth – the saintly way of life. We should live a simple life, not the poorest life. A simple life, not a messy life. Simple is different. If you happened to go into my tent, or visit my tent, my tent is just like any of your tents but it's spotlessly clean. Everyday it is cleaned, everything is in order. It's not that it's too much order like I have to measure how many millimeters I fold my blanket and things like that. But it just looks beautiful and comfortable. Very inviting, very welcoming, very warm; and you know that it belongs to you.

Be consistent within and without

I am also very sorry every time I have to point out to someone, specially the close disciples, how dirty they are and how messy they've made their environment become. But I have to do, someone has to do it for you. Do not say that I am too over critical. I just want to point out to you that your level must match. Inner and outer must match because we live in the universe. There is no need to say inner, outer anymore actually. Inner and outer is just a way of speaking in the beginning of the practice. Afterward, you should level the frontier. There is no more, because it's the universe we've born in, with the most high. We live with it everyday. We're swimming in it. We're breathing in it. We're eating in it. There is no outer-inner universe. It's only the universe. Everywhere in the universe is okay. It's perfect, as long as we make it perfect. Suppose you go to the Buddha's land and you are messy just the same like in the Center. The Buddha's land will become what? Messy land. Yeah! [Laughter]

It is just very logical to say that the inner level matches the outer arrangement, the environment duly, how you arrange your life. Now, look around you and you'll see my logic. It's not that I'm over critical. The human beings, where do they live? Huh? Houses, palaces, mansions, buildings, don't they? Where do the pigs live? Huh? Pig stalls. Where do the horse live? Horse stalls. Do they look the same? The two houses, the horse houses and the human houses, look the same? Huh? Same smell? Everything, same arrangement? Tea table, teacups and everything in the horse stable are the same? Same or not same? [Audience: No.] [Laughter] No. Okay. And where do the pigeons live? They live in cages, or on some branches. Yes, yes, yes, nests. So, every being has their standard of living.

Now, suppose you are saints. But you have to live as a saint, you have to form your saintly standard.

Cleanliness is human nature

Because we are practitioners, we should be more clean even. That is an automatic thing. It should not be even taught. No one taught me when I was young to keep my clothes spotlessly clean everyday, that even the principal of the school always took me out as an example. I was so embarrassed always standing in front of hundreds, of thousands of people to make an example for them.

I was only in second or third grade of primary school. I washed and ironed my clothes everyday myself because I did not trust the servants to do it. I thought, 'They come from poor families, they can't do it. They can't do the way I want and they are not used to it.' So, I did everything alone. I earned the prize from the principal of the school. I earned it myself

actually. If the servant had done it, then it was the servant who made it clean. It was me. So actually, it was me who earned the prize.

These things should not be taught, they should come automatically. If anyone tells us that we should be clean, we should be thankful for it instead of being upset, feeling offended, feeling degraded or something like that or looked down upon. It should not be so. Many times we have a temptation to resist a teacher's teaching and we only regret afterward. It's all right. It's all right to learn by mistakes, but the fewer mistakes, the better, the quicker; because the more mistakes we make, the more time we waste, the more burden we feel sometimes in our conscience, and we spend a lot of time feeling regret and correcting our mistakes instead of pushing forward and doing something more important and more fulfilling for our life. That is all. [Applause]

Even though they are not so clean, they will be after today, after I have cleaned the whole house from inside and outside. And I will give them some pattern to follow – after today you have to do like this. Actually, it's difficult, very difficult. I already cleaned the whole area and made the picnic table there for its good looking. Normally, they didn't exist – the table, chairs and thing like that. Then they would come with their cups or their umbrellas and put them right on there immediately. Because there was nothing there for them to put things, so they didn't. Now there are something there, so they immediately use them. Ah! It's terrible. Everywhere they make it become like a storeroom.

The question with many of our houses is not that we don't have enough room, it's that we don't organize things well. We spread everything out and everywhere becomes like a storeroom. Just now when I came to New Jersey... everywhere. Sometimes when I come back to a Center, everywhere is like a storeroom; there is no space. The storeroom, of course, you can not go in to sleep. But then the living room you put umbrellas, shoes and plastic bags, everything. Everything that when you happen to pass by and leave there, it stays there forever. It's a part of eternity, perhaps. So, you have to represent it by putting things forever somewhere and anywhere.

So, when I went back to the Center, the one that was supposed to be the living room was full of boxes. Everywhere was boxes. But the living room also had boxes. The corridors also had boxes. The dining table full of boxes. So, what is the use of putting a dining table there? Really it is not that we don't have enough place, because if we didn't have enough place, I couldn't make all these things disappear. After I came, I said, 'All these things must go, go, go. Go storeroom. This goes there, goes here.' Then nothing was there. This is how we clean the inside, and clean the outside also.

A method of training by Zen Masters

Remember in the Zen stories, many Zen Masters let the disciples first come to do some labor work, like cleaning the hall, sometimes shining the Buddha's statue. All these things are not nonsense, really. Actually, some Zen temples a long time ago – you know long time ago when there were still good and enlightened Zen Masters – they still kept the Buddha's statue. Not that they were attached to the Buddha's statue. They knew it already, but still they thought some people are very much attached to the Buddha's statue still, so they kept them. So, they let the newcomer disciples shine the statue everyday, and dust the Buddha. They cleaned the table for the Buddha and changed the water, changed the flowers everyday, cleaned the floor. That's what kept them busy and concentrated, and not thinking nonsense. Also to give them good habits of being clean and being orderly, putting things in order and returning things back to where they belong. That was the rule, strictly followed in most of the Zen temples. Even till now.

I think it is a very, very good way of training people, only if they train together spiritually as well. Not letting this habit become like an empty ritual and just keeping the outside clean and inside nothing. So, these are the two extremes. Sometimes we see some people just keep the outer rituals of any kind of religious sect; and some others just keep the inner, everyday sitting twenty-four hours in a cave or something like that and don't worry about the world, and don't dust themselves even. These two extremes we should not follow. If we just keep the cleaning outside, the Buddha outside, and we do not know anything inside, or our concentration just rises a little bit because of the cleaning, then it's not enough. We have to do both.

So, I hope this is not too much nonsense for you. By the way, it's good for your house also, and it's very practical. Everything that doesn't belong to the living room just don't leave it there, very simple; and you'll see how your life will improve with the spacious house, with the cool feeling, with the warm welcoming atmosphere when you come home.

Keep your place holy clean

Do not complain that your husband runs away or your wife fails. If everyone just makes the house become like a garbage place, no one likes to go there anymore. That's why most people go out drinking late at night, go to the clubs, go dancing, go anywhere, damaging their health, their spirit, wasting their time. Just because they can not stand it at home. They feel nothing, nothing there in the home to keep them. Whereby I stay at home all the time. I hardly walk out of the door if I have nothing to do. I hardly walk out of my own room door because I am comfortable there. It's my heaven. What for do I walk out into a messy world and no one else cleans? If a house is comfortable, it's like a sanctuary. It's like a church. You feel peaceful.

That's why many people including non-initiates like to come to my place. This morning I had a guest. He just loved my place. He said, 'Oh! It's so quiet.' And you feel even your soul become quiet just by the environment alone. You only hear, now and then, a little bit here and there, the birds chirping. Nothing more. And the rushing of the leaves among the trees. Nothing there. No disturbance. No dust. No confusion. So, even in that kind of environment, where everything's so clean and cool, you will feel cooled down. You know, the passion, the lust, the anger, the ambition, everything becomes just calmed down.

Very important to keep your place holy, clean for yourself and also for the sake of this world, for the sake of the universe. It is a corner of the universe. We live in it. Even if we lived in heaven, it's also another corner of the universe only. Why don't we respect the corner that we stay in now? It is a dedication to God. Clean your house as a dedication to God. Cook the food with love as a dedication to the universe. Do everything as a dedication. There is no menial work. There is no dirty job. There is nothing that is not worth your attention, because everything composes this universe. Every little particle of the universe belongs to the whole, and we taking care of a part means we take care of the whole. So, do not think this is a dirty job – I clean the garbage, I clean the floor.

I do things myself when my time and schedule allow. I cook also. You know that. There is nothing that I don't do, and there is nothing that I don't do well, because I am dedicated. My soul, my body are very dedicated to the work I do. It's not that every time I do something, I say, 'I dedicate this to God. I do it because of dedication. Da da da da...' But it becomes natural, you know like your own nature. It's very natural just like you love someone. You don't have to recite it. You know you just love him or her, and you do everything out of love. Similarly, a person who practices the way of love. You know, Light and Sound are supposed to make you grow in love and wisdom. So, if we practice the way

of love, we should do everything with love; and everything that comes out of love is naturally beautiful and perfect.

Do everything with love

If you do anything that is not yet perfect, or not yet beautiful, know that your love has not yet completely developed. You have not completely used the power of love, which is inside you.

That's the way to reflect, to know if we've progressed or not. Don't always write letters and ask me, 'Master, am I already in the seventh level or not? Or do You think I am on the eighth?' What is the use? Everywhere is inside the universe. While you live here, you are the saints. While you live in the Buddha's land, you're also the saints. You live anywhere as a saint. There's no need to choose one place or another. Heaven is just illusionary talk before we know the real heaven within ourselves. If after practicing for some time, you still long to see heaven and Buddha and all that, I think you should just meditate for two years in the Himalayas and reflect on yourself. This is no use. Heaven is here and now. Anywhere you go, make it a heaven. If you're happy, it's heaven. If you're not happy, even if the situation around is very merry, very boisterous, you still feel miserable. Is that right? [Audience: Yes!]

THE COMMUNICATION METHOD IN THE HIGHER WORLD ⁴⁹

In the higher world, we do not need to communicate in words at all. We radiate magnetic waves and others can receive them. Language is just a form of magnetic waves, or a kind of vibration. After we get used to listening to this kind of vibration, we will know what others are saying, mountains or water. If we receive another kind of systematic training, we are able to communicate with magnetic waves, instead of any kind of language. It is like all the world uses the same language, and when we think about something, others are able to receive. Because thinking is a kind of force, radiating its wavelength to others like a magnetic wave. They will receive and understand it.

Sometimes you say that no matter where the Master is, She will answer our prayers. A lot of people have told me about their experiences like this. Most of them are fellow initiates; however, many non-initiates have also experienced this. It is not that I have a radio here and overhear what you think about inside. Instead, we have another kind of magnetic-wave communication system, so we know others' thinking. We do not need to record it in the worldly language. We understand what long and short magnetic waves mean, the speed used for the emergency wave, and the meaning of slow and gentle waves.

An enlightened Master knows the meaning of the varied wave forms radiated from the suffering beings, and responds with messages to help them or tell them what to do. In this situation, we say that this enlightened Master saves the suffering beings, or they received messages from within and escaped the disaster. The enlightened Master and the suffering beings are one within; they have the same kind of vibration inside, even though they have not found their own real selves. However, the enlightened Master knows how to communicate with the real selves of the suffering beings, tells them how to overcome their crises. They receive helping messages just like we receive messages from the radio.

49. Group meditation, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, April 12, 1994 (Originally in Chinese).

Enter the united planets' network

That is why we need to practice the Quan Yin method. The Buddhist sutra mentioned that the Buddha speaks a kind of language understood by all sentient beings. We use magnetic waves, vibrations or passwords to communicate. There is only one language in the universe. Whoever understands this password, knows how to receive and radiate it, can communicate with the whole universe.

The universe is like a network, and each planet is related to the other. If we can enter the network system of the united planets, we know everything. We will be saved if we encounter any difficulty, and our prayers will be answered. We all have radios at home, and we are able to receive messages at home, which are transmitted from the radio station. If we switch to that channel on the radio station, then, we are within the broadcasting network. If you do not have a radio at home, you can not receive anything even though the radio station is next to you.

The highest bi-directional communication system

Similar to this, the practitioner is the one who enters the system in which all beings are one. No matter where we are, the master station can receive our emergency requests, know what we are going to say. The radio and broadcasting station is uni-directional, but our system is bi-directional like the telephone. For example, you understand whatever I say and I understand what you say, too. We are able to communicate both ways. It is the highest communication system even without any equipment.

However, if we have not practiced to a high level, the communication seems to be one way. Only the Master can receive your message, but you can not receive the Master's message. We may feel we receive something; however, the message seems not clear to us, because there is some obstacles in between. Maybe we have not tuned our instrument completely. Sometimes we make a phone call or turn on the radio, we hear a lot of noises and can not get a clear message, then we have to fix it promptly. Maybe we are far away from the radio station and blocked by mountains or barriers. Like the cordless telephone, it can not get through in mountains.

However, our communication will not be obstructed by the mountain unless we obstruct ourselves with barriers like mountains and block Master's blessing. We doubt Master, or we are not confident enough, so we think we are not worthy to be saved by the Master. We are used to thinking we have heavy karma, or we feel arrogant and would like to be on our own rather than rely on others. There are many reasons for us to be blocked in our own prejudice and put ourselves in a prison without communicating or feeling the oneness. That is why we can not receive messages from the Master. For example, if we wear a raincoat, then we will not be affected by the rain.

THE SUPREME MILITARY STRATEGY ⁵⁰

The ego is a terrible thing. So, what we should fight, what we should criticize, what we should be on guard with... it is the ego not the other person. It is enough to take care of ourselves and control our own temper, and bad habits and all kinds of ego tricks. Never mind if we left it unguarded and then go attack a neighboring country. You know, you don't have enough army to even protect our own country so don't attack other country. That is the problem with us. It is just like a strategy in war. Only if people attack us then we use

50. Group meditation, Los Angeles Center, California, U.S.A., March 13, 1994 (Originally in English).

our defense. Otherwise, we don't need to spend so much money on army, first. Second, if our defense is not enough, don't attack other country because you'll murder yourself, you commit suicide. But that's what we do all the time. We don't guard our own country, the five senses, the deadly enemy. We don't guard ourselves; we don't guard our mind; we don't guard our thinking; we don't guard our talk. You just try to watch other people. And even if that person is really bad, you are taking in all the bad things because you pay attention to it. Just like you're receiving things; otherwise, how do you know it is there? If you open a door and ask five persons to come in, you have to have them. If they are outside, you don't notice them, you don't ask them in. You don't have them in your house. Is that not so?

WISDOM ONLY COMES WHEN WE USE IT ⁵¹

The same with wisdom, if you don't talk to other people, don't let them ask you questions you'll never know how much you've gained during this everyday meditation. You think you've gained nothing, sometimes you have, many of you have, because you have experiences and your life has become smoother. Apart from that some people asked me: 'Master, but I want wisdom. I don't have any wisdom. I see Light, I hear Sound, my life is better, I feel very good; but where is my wisdom? I want to see my wisdom.' Yes, your wisdom only comes when you use it. If today you were not here and expected me to come, all this would have not come out. Even though I have it inside, but I don't have to use it, don't talk to you, so you never know what I know. I don't also know what I know! Therefore, whatever you have you must use it in order to realize that you have it. See what I mean?

Even physically, mentally and intellectually we all have to use our treasure inside in order to realize what we have. Otherwise, don't sit there and complain: 'Master, I don't have wisdom.' Talking nonsense. You have to talk to people, and then realize how high a level you have risen to now, compared to yourself before, or compared to that person who has not been initiated. Doesn't matter what position or what religion he belongs to, what kind of rank he has in that religion. The higher you talk, the better you know how wise you are. Before, if you talked to this high ranking kind of religious figure, you feared. You bowed to them and you hold your hands trembling. Now you talk to them, you see how you have progressed? If you want to know your wisdom, try this method and let me know how you feel.

WE ARE STEPPING INTO THE GOLDEN AGE ⁵²

Sometimes we are touched. It is not because of the Master, I don't think. People make a big deal out of any master, call them even the Supreme Master; but I think, it is you that makes things happen with your sincerity, your openness of your deepest intelligence and love within yourself that you'll experience some time or another on different occasions, this kind of blissful experience. We sometimes experience this, less or more in some degree, through deepest prayer and/or sometimes when we are in very deep sorrow or experience some untold sufferings – we feel that the blessing from God is very near.

Meditation or contemplation is just another kind of opening our sincerity and longing to be a kind of receiver for the abundant blessing and love which is always present throughout the universe. Perhaps sometimes coincidentally or through the arrangement of the highest intelligence, we feel more blessing in some places or in encountering someone special. Maybe because that someone is also in the same frequency with us, in the same sincerity,

51. International retreat, Bangkok Center, Thailand, January 2, 1994 (Originally in English).

52. Public lecture, Portland, Oregon, U.S.A., December 4, 1993 (Originally in English).

longing and openness to God like we are. At that moment, the two united forces experience the blissful feeling or the so-called awakening.

Many of our people in this world think they are okay. They don't need to change their lives, don't need to do anything, don't even need enlightenment. Therefore, they don't search for it. Even if the teacher or a good friend, unconditional out of love and devotion, comes to them, to their door, they still reject him.

That's what makes our world the way it is, still now. We have not learned the unified power. Many of us have not learned yet to use the greatest blessing that is in abundance everywhere in the universe, just have to stretch out our hand and fetch it, and everything in our life will become smoother, all our desires.

We are not okay

Many of us always blame God, or blame circumstances or situations that are unfavorable to us. Many things we ask are not given. We blame the society, sometimes the governments, our parents, even our schools, anything we can lay our hands on. But if we stop to think deeply or fairly a little bit, we should think: What do we contribute to the society, our nation, the world at large to make it become a better place; instead of waiting for it to be better by itself, which is sometimes impossible.

God doesn't create us here so that we just lay in our rose bed everyday, waiting for bread and butter. We are here to learn, to learn to grow as well as to learn to use our limitless power of love and creativity in order to make a better world wherever we happen to be incarnated. If we do not learn to do this, then we have to return again; and that is what people call reincarnation. The unfulfilled desires or the unfulfilled mission, which is dormant within us, will be always awake inside, reminding us time again and again that we have not yet finished our job.

Many people think that we are okay, we are doing right; but we aren't, we are not truly okay. One fifth of the population of this world is hungry. Another large portion of the population, our brothers and sisters, are undernourished. That is according to scientific research, it's not from me. You can read that in the newspapers or demand for the proof. Many portions of our beautiful planet are still suffering under war, conflict, violence and many other disasters man-made or by nature. It's because we are not okay.

Even sometimes we can't do our hair alone, just to talk about small things. We don't know how to clean the house properly. Sometimes we can't even help some people in need the way they want it. We make more mess out of our good intentions. Even if we want to help, we can't. That's why many projects are failing, many good leaders have become kind of almost useless, despite their very, very best intentions to help the world and their people. Why? Because we are not okay. We are not okay the way we should be okay, not the way we think we are okay.

If everything, many things in our life go wrong, if many of our desires go unfulfilled, if our next-door neighbor suffers, or if we suffer in any way, that's because we are not okay. It is time that we face up to our own shortcomings, our own accumulated, undesirable habits in order to reshape our beauty, our Godly nature so that we can do what we want to do in perfection, or at least, near perfection. At least, don't make a mess out of our good intentions whenever we want to help or we want to better ourselves, our family or our environment.

Enlightenment is the way of life

Enlightenment is not an advertisement from our disciples for you or anyone to come and just to research, or maybe curiously see what's going on. It is a way of life, it is a survival fact. It is a necessary ornament in our life here and after.

If we have any religious beliefs, we know there is life after death. If we don't have any religious beliefs, we should know that there is life after death, because there is a lot of medical research on death, near-death or after-death experiences. This kind of information is available to us nowadays, in abundance. Many books about enlightenment and about bettering our inherent powers, et cetera, are available in the markets. These are good for us; yet in a sense, not always that good. The Americans, the ones who read a lot and love to read, are very intelligent. They hunger for knowledge so they read a lot. I read a lot, too – before, between and I still continue to read. It is because sometimes I have to know what's going on, what's the trend in the society in order to respond to it or to explain, to kind of solve some of the doubts, which result from these books or intellectual food.

Why I said this, is that sometimes all this information is not always good for us. Because we love to read, we eat everything from the intellectual supermarket, and sometimes we have indigestion or we stuff our brain with all kinds of intellectual information without truly having personal experience. So we think we know. 'Oh! Yes! I know, Yogananda – the Light. I know what it is, Sant Mat – Light and Sound. I know Master Ching Hai. She teaches the same. So I don't have to come and listen to Her.'

It's not that we come to listen. We must come so that we have the true experience, if we already did not have; if we had some portion of the enlightened experience, but we do not know how to go further with it, how to nourish it, or how to live with it or to integrate this enlightened wisdom into our daily productivity in order to serve the world.

Make our world into heaven

We must make our world into heaven, not run to heaven; because everywhere is heaven. God created only heaven, until we messed about with our computer brain, kaput one; I mean damaged, or not very in order. Enlightenment is the way to put ourselves back in order. It's not a kind of far-fetched heavenly mythology the way we think, but it is just daily experiences of our great resource of love and wisdom, which God bestowed upon us before we arrived in this physical dimension. If we think that heaven is somewhere high above the clouds, then we are in trouble; because we have to wait at least sixty or a hundred years in order to go there. With suffering and all kinds of misery in this world, we don't have to do that.

Life is meant to be joyful for the children of the most high. If you are the children of the king or the president, now you go to school, how do you feel? You have guards, you have a special Rolls Royce, you have all kinds of privileges, even all the school look upon you with reverence, love, admiration, envy and many things. You feel you know your status.

In the bible, it is stated that we are the children of God, and He's king of all kings. Now, we live in this kind of life and we worry about pennies, everything frightens us – even just a bullet, that big. One thousandth of your weight could frighten you into losing your sense of dignity and even begging for your life. We'd do anything just to be alive, just to keep this physical body functioning. This is not a life of dignity. This is not the life of the children of God, if we truly understand what God means. God is the owner of the whole universe and we are the children. Can you believe it?

Just talking about it and never knowing it, is not the way of enlightenment; and we think we are okay! As long as there is one person suffering in this world, as long as there is still war and famine going on in our neighborhood, we are not okay; because we share the responsibilities of this house that we live in. It is a big family, extended, because we can't live together in one room and we don't have to. We need variety. We need different talents in order to make the world colorful and interesting. That's what God wants us to do.

We have so much talent, each one should contribute something. Even with all our talents we can't contribute as much as we'd want or we can not be as useful as we'd like to be; because we are not yet okay. We lack something. We lack the true wisdom, the true love which lays sleeping within each of us.

Use God's love and power for the best

There shouldn't be any master; there shouldn't be any teachers; there should be only spiritual friends, spiritual brothers and sisters; because we inherited the same portion of great wisdom from God. There is no difference between any master and any of the audience who sits here, and no difference between him and any child or any older citizen; because we all have the same portion of love and power within ourselves. If we don't use it, it's the greatest waste on earth. It doesn't matter how much we recycle materials, we still waste. The greatest waste is that we don't know we have wisdom, we don't know we have God's power, we forgot that we are the children of God.

It's okay, you say you know it already, you read the bible, everyone knows they are the children of God. But what makes the difference whether you know that or you don't know that? Because you are just the same as yesterday, you don't truly know. You only intellectually heard about it and that makes the difference.

If anything I said today makes sense to you, it is because I recognize this wisdom within myself and I know you have that within yourselves. It's just you don't want to use it. You reject it, you deny it, or you feel too inferior about yourself. We didn't do anything that wrong. If you did or if we did, it was because we did not know. Now it's time to know what is the righteous thing to do, so we can change very quickly. How much time do we spend everyday in order to take care of this body? We know it won't last long, but still it's necessary to take care of it. Now if we don't take care of our real body, then we are in even more trouble.

Most of the suffering in this world is due to ignorance of the greatness of our position. No other reason! Because we're ignorant of it, we identify ourselves with the habits that we learned from maybe television as a youngster, or maybe from neighbors, from books. We do many things that our conscience within us tells us that this is not correct, but we still do it because many people do it. Then we run into many problems. Sometimes we know we shouldn't take drugs, for example; but we feel empty within ourselves, we feel frustrated. Sometimes we have talents, we don't know how to use them, or where to use them. Society sometimes rejects us for some prejudices – race problems or our appearance doesn't please them. So, we fill this void with all kinds of cheap substitutes which, in the long run, ruin us mentally, physically and spiritually. It is because we do not know that we are great, or how to make use of our greatness.

I'm not here to collect your money, tell you what to do, or make you into any condition that is difficult for you. I just want to help you find your great wisdom, your greatest ability again, in order for you to better your life. Because when you better your life, I better my

life, too; and my children, my friends' children, my sisters' and brothers' children, we have a better and better environment to live in because we are all connected with each other.

Suppose you don't keep America clean and safe. Could I sit here and talk to you? So we owe each other everything. Suppose the farmers don't grow any crops. Even if we have money, can we fill our body with nutrition? No! So we owe each other everything. I can not say that I come to teach you anything. Please don't have this notion despite all this supreme what... Never mind, because we are all supreme.

We came from the supreme source before we descended into this physical body and we'll go back to the supreme source when our time comes. There is no denying our supreme status. If you don't want to acknowledge it because you are humble, or because you feel you are not up to it, it's up to you; but I don't want to deny my status because I know. There's nothing arrogant about it. It's just admitting you are, without any pride, without any fuss, without false humility; because false humility is also false, it's not true.

We should be true, beautiful and virtuous in spirit, speech and actions. That is a perfect human being. Even if we don't want to follow this method of immediate enlightenment, we can try other things; at least to think, so that we can focus back again within ourselves, to remember who we are, and to truly understand the sentence that we are the children of God, or for Buddhist, we all have Buddha nature within ourselves. That means we are equal to the Buddha, instead of worshipping the Buddha.

We should worship in the right way – to recognize ourselves so that the Buddha (enlightened Master) has less work to do. If we truly want to worship a Buddha or any saint, we should become one; so that they have less burden, less worry and one more companion to uplift mankind.

That's why some people don't like it when I say, 'Don't worship the Buddha. Be one!' And I can show you how to be one. I can make a Buddha. Not by sculpturing or carving, but by pointing into your own Buddha qualities; and you have to recognize them day by day until you're fully convinced. There is a way to recognize them; face yourself until you're fully convinced that you are Buddha. That is the time when you are equal to all the Buddhas (enlightened beings) in the ten directions and three periods of time – past, present and future.

Change ourselves changes the world

We are stepping into the golden age, so we have to change. We have to leave behind all these old useless conceptions of how a saint should be; or we should leave behind the dark thinking, the negative expectations of the world and ourselves. Do something!

We start from ourselves, we clean our house. If our house looks filthy, we clean it first. If there's anything we don't like about ourselves, change it! Replace it with more positive, more virtuous qualities. For example, before when we saw any homeless person we didn't bother about him. He could stand there on the highway for hours under the sun, wanting to work for food. You'd say, 'Oh! No! I can not take a stranger into my house. That's dangerous!'

Yes, but we could give him food. We don't need to ask anything from him. Then sometimes we pass by a homeless person, we feel nothing. We don't want to help because of our slow reaction habits, so we don't help him. When we get home, we feel

something is wrong. 'I should have helped.' But then we cover it up quickly, 'No!' and watch television or do other things.

We don't want to listen to our conscience, that's why the world will never get better. If it is the case, whatever we think makes the world better, at least a more comfortable place for ourselves and neighbors, we can share. Begin with sharing, then we will feel a subtle change in ourselves more love will pour into our consciousness. We will be aware of something, that is the beginning.

That's why the five precepts are just a suggestion that we should change some of the corners of our life which we do not like. It's not that we should feel so guilty or blame ourselves, should we fail some of it; but it is a goal so that we go forward. For example, we try to be more loving instead of violent or angry; be more giving instead of trying to take; we should be more faithful to our partner instead of having another mistress, or it could be mister. [Master and audience laugh.]

You always blame the man, I don't know why. There are women also, who want to play Madam Butterfly, [Laughter] flying from one flower to the next. There are two kinds of flowers – male and female flowers. You know that! These brighten our world more and create a more calm atmosphere around us so that makes us better. That is all good, also a kind of meditation. We meditate anytime anyhow in our life. We just meditate mostly on the wrong things. So now, we just use that meditation power, switch to the right thing, that's all. When we think too much about how to make money at the expense of others, that is also meditation; we meditate on money. [Master and audience laugh.] We use all our concentration power, or our mighty thinking power in order to get that piece of paper, and on that piece of paper is printed 'In God we trust.' [Master and audience laugh.] Isn't that paradoxical?

Our God is money sometimes! [Master laughs.] You see, 'In God we trust' means we have to know God. If we don't know God, how could we trust? It's very easy to say, 'In God we trust,' but how? Who is Hes? What does Hes look like? What did Hes do for me? What will Hes do for me that I have to trust Him? So, we must know that is what enlightenment offers. We have to be enlightened in order to know what God is, who Hes is, and what does Hes do to help us everyday in all details of our activities. That is the thing we know after enlightenment. We know more and more.

If we did know God before, in some of the blessed incidents; then we'd know Him more and more everyday through a meditative attitude, through a very scientific way of maintaining our enlightened awareness. If we are enlightened once or twice, we still feel not yet there. If someone is hungry for a long time now, and you give him just a little bit of water and bread, will he be satisfied? Of course, not.

Only God dwells within us

So, immediate enlightenment means you have a taste of enlightenment and then we tell you how to nourish it, keep it everyday, and expand it until you truly know the whole spectrum of enlightenment, know your real self. That's when you know God, because only God dwells within us.

Does the bible say there are two persons dwelling within our temple? Did Jesus say that? Did Buddha say there are two Buddhas inside one is Buddha and one is a mundane person? Did He say that? No! No bible, no scripture says there are two persons in this house, in this body. So, who is that inside? Only God!

If we cast aside, we overlook our habits, our accumulated knowledge of mundane nature, then there is nothing there except God. The habits, the knowledge, the pH person, is not the real self; we were not born with it, and we will not die with it. So, this 'only real one' is God, our true self; but most of us have forgotten.

You keep asking me, 'How can we have immediate enlightenment when we meet You?' You are already enlightened before you met me. Just you don't know it and you forgot; because you identified yourself with Mrs. so-and-so who works eight hours a day, who has three children, who gets angry sometimes, and who is loving sometimes. All this is not you. You just accumulated it, you just reacted to the environment and the necessity of the time; but it's not you. We were not born with all these.

Therefore, we are truly Godlike but we are also part of God. Actually, we are God. You may not believe it now, but think about it when you go home. We are breathing in God, we are living in God, we are born from God, and we'll go back to God. Where can we go, where could we have come from except from God? Do you think we came from the carpet, from the ceiling or even from the drop of blood your father sent to you before you were born? Is it the food you eat that makes you become you, then should we call ourselves B-burger, [Laughter] C-cabbage or vegetable grocery shop, instead of a person or a human being with an intelligence? Even if you feed the cow or the dogs all the food which you eat, they will not be as intelligent as you. If you give a drop of blood from your father to the dog or to any other thing, will it become a human being? No!

So, what is it that makes us the way we are? It is God power and it's all over the universe. It's in the air. It's everywhere that we walk, everywhere that we stay. It just happens to be housed in this instrument, in some of the instruments, and it houses itself just like an electric power. It houses itself in a bulb of light, in a refrigerator or in some motor generator. The electric power is all over. It's the same power everywhere. It houses itself in some instruments only; therefore, the God-power is housed within us.

We are one of the instruments that happen to contain the God-power for a while. Catch it, just like a current of water flowing from a waterfall or from a mountain very high. Someone happens to dig a hole or a swimming pool, get the water into it, and the water comes in and out again, connecting it with the river. The water in the pool is the water from the river. In Hong Kong, we dug a swimming pool, actually we didn't dig it. Where I stay, is a mountain. You'll be surprised to know Hong Kong has mountains, very quiet, next to hundred-story buildings. You just walk five minutes out and you see the whole Hong Kong; and you turn in five minutes, and there is a retreat mountain with all fruit trees – green, beautiful and quiet. That's where I stay in Hong Kong.

Now, we have a kind of mountain, so there are many levels, terraces. You see level after level. So, between the two different levels we surrounded it with rocks and cement, and made it natural looking. We led the water from the stream nearby into the pool. And under the lower layer, I grow vegetables – big ones; that is when I have time. I don't always do that. The water from the swimming pool when I swim will go onto the vegetables, so I don't have to work too hard.

The water just goes in and out all the time, and it is always fresh; because we clean it now and again, to take out all the moss, the green stuff that covers our pool. We put a lot of big pebbles, shining and beautiful like ornamental pebbles. They're cheap, one dollar for ten kilos; but beautiful. They were put in the water, and sometimes become covered with green, so we wash them.

The fish come in also. They are very expensive fish. They sell it for about twenty-two hundred US dollars for one fish; but that big. It can grow that big, [Laughter] but not much different. He is a kind of very stupid pea fish. So, the fish surprised me one day. He is supposed to be a stupid fish – very slow and does nothing; but because they are a rare species now, many people want to catch them and buy and sell them. We don't. We don't make money out of that, we protect them. No one can come in our territory and take, because our territory is filled with this fish. I could be a millionaire in no time, [Laughter] opening a fish market.

Now, this fish is very special. On top is dark brown, underneath has bright orange spots – under his stomach, hands and all that; and he can swim in the water as well as go on the dry land. He can survive on both, that's why people like him. I thought he was a very stupid fish; but one day he surprised me, because they can talk with each other lovingly, just like a loving couple.

One was kind of angry and turned around, and he just kept following. Just stopped in front and looked him in the eyes, and did like this. [Laughter and applause.] Like when you want to make up with your lover when she is angry. That one! Just like that! Can you believe it? I was so touched, and thought, 'My God, I'm sorry. I apologize for thinking that you are stupid, [Master and audience laugh.] as you make a better lover than we.' So, after a while, the female agreed. Then they both swam with each other and had no more of this argument.

One day he surprised me more, because he's a very slow action fish, stupid-like. Like this, very slow in the water. When I came to the pool, I saw one of them. I was surprised, and said 'Hey! You there, come up!' Just a joke, you know. Then he came up. Then he zoom like this to me where my hand was, he touched, and he went down back again. I said, 'Hey! Can you understand me? Then come back again.' He did as requested three times in a row just to show me that he is not stupid. [Laughter]

Now I spend all day repenting to God and apologizing to this creature. Fancy being a Supreme Master and didn't know the fish is intelligent. [Master and audience laugh.] So I feel very bad. But it was good, there were other witnesses with me; not that I made up a story at all. [Master talks to Her attendant.] You remember the fish, it came from the pool three times. Yes! Yes! He was there and he tried to go and fetch the movie camera. But when he (the fish) saw the black eye of camera looking at him, he said, 'Uh-uh! I don't want to be on television.' [Master and audience laugh.]

He didn't want to be famous! Probably he was scared, and I thought: That's right! That's right! I told him, 'Don't photograph him in this way, because people will catch them more, make commercial out of it, and they will be in danger.' They are already an endangered species.

He is very intelligent, you see. He knows when to come up, when not. Three times he came in a row in one minute. I said, 'Come up!' and he came right away. Then he went back down and I said, 'Come up again,' and he came. Just right where I am, not to sideways. Just zoom like this, straight!

Love for all beings from being vegetarian

After you see all these things, it's good not to eat fish or meat. Actually, if we can love a dog, why not love a cow or pig; because they are the same. This is one of the reasons why we should be vegetarian, love for all beings, extending love. Enlarge our love, enlarge

ourselves, to the whole universe. We shouldn't even cut the flowers or eat vegetables, but still we have to do what is minimum, what's less suffering. The flowers when we cut them, they can sprout again and make more flowers. Vegetables when we cut a branch, they can sprout a few more branches. So it's not that bad.

Even though all beings have feelings, plants have the least feelings, because ninety percent of the constitution of vegetables is water. That's why they have less consciousness than animals or human beings. We human beings are a combination of many things, and that gives a good environment for intelligence to activate. For example, even though you are very intelligent, you need a good computer in order to program some intelligent things, some distinguished program.

Similarly, God-power needs this body which is a composition of different elements, in order to manifest inside into the outer world. That's why we have more feeling, more intelligence, because God-power can make use of many of the tiny instruments within ourselves in order to spread out the blessing, the message and the intelligence. In the plant, God-power cannot do that, because there are not enough instruments. That's all. Just like the bulb here. If the electric bulb is a 100-watt, then its electricity can be brighter than in a 20-watt. If we damage the 100-watt bulb, it is more expensive, more of a waste than a 20-watt bulb. This is why we try to economize. This is why we should eat the least conscious thing possible, like vegetables. Is that logical to you? [Audience: Yes.]

I don't try to push you into guilt or things like that, but we discuss the possibilities of why and how. That's why to kill a human being is the most terrible crime, to kill animal is second to it, and a plant is not much. They can grow again, even from the root. But the animal, even if you cut only half of its head, won't grow again. Therefore, we have to believe things when they're logical; not because it's the guilt-inflicting theory or because we have to do that because some of the teachers say so or some of the religions say so.

I do not feel that we are unintelligent beings, that we could swallow anything, especially the Americans. They are no-nonsense folks. They don't just eat anything. So, we have to tell them whatever is logical. Even if people do not accept it today, they can think about it later. Sometimes I believe also, that during the course of my speaking, sometimes it's too fast – you sometimes listen to one sentence and you miss the next, and also it's difficult. So, if you want to listen again, you can get the tape. All the tapes we sell are without profit. It's like a good quality empty tapes, because we don't believe in selling God for profit. We make profit other ways, by mundane talent like dress designing, lamp producing, painting pictures. All these things we are allowed to make. It's our mundane talent, so we get the mundane profit; but not to sell God for profit. We don't even collect money, get a member's fee, or anything to do with God's teachings; because it's all free for every of Hiers children. It was free for me. It will be free for every one, as long as I can afford it. If I cannot afford, then I stop. Very simple!

Now, can you see why we are God? God-power is omnipresent, is all-pervading everywhere; and we are just one of the beholders. Just like my swimming pool – the water came from the nearby stream, led in by a pipe, and we have a hole underneath or on top so that it will flow out again into the river without stopping a portion of the water. The water in the pool, even though it's surrounded by stones and cement, is still water from the river and is connected in some other way.

If our swimming pool is blocked from connecting with the spring for some reason, then we have to unblock it. Maybe the pipe is blocked, the pipe is damaged, or the hole is blocked;

so we have to unblock it. Enlightenment is the unblocking of our obscurity to our own nature, to the God connections within ourselves, and to the whole power of the universe.

Q. *What are Your views on transmigration?*

M. As I have mentioned earlier, transmigration is another word for reincarnation. It is a very Eastern terminology. You don't hear it that often in the bible, because the bible is also not always complete, as all of you know. It has 'transmigrated [Master laughs.] for two thousand years or some time, so some things may be missing there. The true bible is locked up somewhere and we are never allowed to see it. But some of the newly-dug from the ancient sites – the bible in some part has come out, and some of it would mention reincarnation.

For example, I just remember one part like someone asked Jesus whether He was the reincarnation or continuation of the last prophet like Elijah or such-and-such. They mentioned about two, three previous prophets before Him who had already ascended. Jesus did not answer yes or no. If the question, the conception about reincarnation was wrong – that a prophet even reincarnated to help the people, then He would have said, 'No, no, never. No reincarnation.' But He didn't answer. Probably He answered yes, but He was a very soft-spoken person. [Master laughs.]

You see, afterward there was no correction on that question. As I understood: That about over two thousand years ago, at the time of Buddha and Jesus, et cetera, when you are silent on some topic, that means you agree. If people ask you, sometimes three times, and you are silent, or if you have an invitation from a disciple, and you are silent, that means you accept it. So, in that case, we can have a glimpse of some segments of the bible about reincarnation. Otherwise, it's difficult to prove that.

As you have read in many books about Jesus, that He has been in India and Tibet, and studied with Buddhist teachers and so on, so for Him the theory of reincarnation must have been very familiar. We would be surprised if He didn't teach that to His disciples. Maybe the bible, some portions of it, are lost. Sometimes translation is not accurate, and everything like that; because at the time of Jesus was very chaotic the situation.

He had to sometimes hide for His life, and the disciples practiced in fear. So, not all the things Jesus taught would have been recorded. Also, He taught only three-and-a-half years before He was terminated. How could He have taught everything in such fearful and limited circumstances, as well as a handful of disciples? It was very difficult.

Transmigration is nothing very difficult to understand. For example, we live day to day. Yesterday you wanted to do something and you could not or you didn't finished it. So today, you wake up, you try to finish it or try to find a way to do it again. Anything we have not finished in our life, and at the time of leaving this mundane world we still desire, we want to do it, and we feel very sorry that we have not finished it, then surely this desire is the powerful force that will give us another chance to do it again. So, we will be again and again given the physical instrument to do, to exercise our God-power in this world, to manifest our wisdom into this world until one day we finish our desires, and we are done with all our jobs. Then we'll go back Home.

That is the situation of the people who desire enlightenment. They feel they have nothing more that they want to do in this world. Maybe their mission is finished. It has just naturally pushed them into the position or into the state of mind of wanting to go Home. They don't know where Home is and what that is, but they want to return to the source. That is when people want enlightenment.

Therefore, people say, 'When the student is ready, the Master will appear.' You can't force enlightenment upon people. Therefore, Jesus couldn't force. Buddha couldn't force it. Not all the people in India were enlightened at the time the Master was alive. Not all the Jewish people were enlightened at the time Jesus was there. So, transmigration stops when we feel that we want to go Home – nothing in this world interests us anymore.

As long as we still feel interested in something, and we couldn't finish all this in one lifetime, that means we still want to stay in this world. It's just a compelling force that we cannot help. Therefore, enlightened and unenlightened persons are all alike. But the enlightened person lives a better life, smoother, more wisdom. He can do many things with less effort.

Many people ask me, 'How can You be a Master – You go around the world, lecture, and take care of disciples in different countries, and still paint, compose music, sing songs, make songs, and all that?' I say, 'Why, it's easy. It didn't take much time to paint. A few hours to compose music – I composed twelve songs in four days. No big deal! Write poems and anything. When you're truly inspired and have time, you just do it very fast. To design clothes, this didn't take me ten minutes, no problem.'

But before I was a little bit enlightened, everything was difficult. I didn't even have an idea to paint. When I painted in my high school class or somewhere, I can't remember, I liked to paint a horse and it looked like a turkey. [Master and audience laugh.] So, my teacher said don't bother wasting the paint, I'll just give you the mark, [Laughter] something like that.

- Q. *Is our subconscious mind a link to infinite intelligence?*
- M. The subconscious mind is a kind of bridge. It's not the real self yet. It's a bridge to the infinite intelligence. That is correct.
- Q. *How do we face problems and suffering in front of us?*
- M. Whatever we can eliminate, try to eliminate. If we cannot, then pray to God to help us overcome or for that person to overcome the suffering. Get enlightenment, above all. It's easier to digest all this suffering and easier to think of the way to help, when we are enlightened.
- Q. *Do You believe that God guides us all the way since we were born?*
- M. Yes, but do we heed Him? Do we ever hear Him? If we did, many of us wouldn't have run into difficulty, and our world wouldn't have been the way it has been or the way it is now. So, we have to open first our power of understanding. We have to reconnect ourselves with God in order to hear Him, to know what He wants us to do, to know the correct way.

That's why we offer the connection with God again. That's called enlightenment, finding the kingdom of God, or whatever you want to name it. We can't just list the whole list of terminologies enlightenment, get back to your Buddha nature, become Buddha, go back to the kingdom of God, know yourself, know God, God-realization, self-realization, etcetera, so we say enlightenment and immediate.

- Q. *Jesus said He is the only way; if He was open-minded, He would have said, 'Well, I am the way Buddha is, so too, Krishna.'* [Audience: *I just think that Jesus or that 'I' they were talking about was omnipresence and omnipotence.*]
- M. Yes, yes. Therefore, it boils down to His love and wisdom. So, Jesus said that 'I,' meaning 'love and wisdom, omnipresence, the God-power' is the way.

It's just like, for example, Krishna, said: Love Me alone, and 'Me' is capitalized. Follow Me alone. Surrender all unto Me, then your life will become better et cetera. Buddha said the same thing: Follow the Buddha, and don't follow anyone else. He means the real self, the omnipresent, the almighty power which at that time probably manifested mostly in that 'electric pole' (means in Buddha Himself). [Master laughs.]

Just like the electric power is brightest in this light at this moment, and all the other lights are a little bit dim. It means, you have to have faith in that electricity, but not necessarily in the light. Because the light was very bright, electricity was most at that time. You go near the light, so you can read, you can see all the things, and recognize yourself in the mirror if you want to make-up, for example. It doesn't mean you have to believe in this light, but in the electricity that houses that light.

So, every living Master that houses the power of God, God can use any, anytime because God is not so limited. He is not so poor to have only one son. Please! He has so many ways and means to bring His children into Himself. Don't you think? [Audience: Yes.]

I wish to send you all the love I can just to help you to open up. But if we do not yet have good affinity, then you can wait. Meanwhile, study the bible, believe in God, believe in Jesus. It's good for you. Study the bible doesn't mean you know the words only, but put that into action. For example, the ten commandments, we should try to abide by them. That is the good way of a Christian.

Before I got enlightenment, I slept with the bible every night. I looked at it every time I was in trouble. Without the bible, I couldn't sleep. Sometimes I alternated. In the morning, I would read the Buddhist scriptures that comforted me and sometimes lifted me up into some kind of very blissful state. It helped also. If you truly revere the bible, you deeply believe in it, and study it very sincerely, it helps you immensely.

We are just talking another alternative way should you be interested. If not, please just believe in the bible and try to keep the commandments. Put all the loving things that God teaches you into action. That's all.

WE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN AND WILL ALWAYS BE ENLIGHTENED ⁵³

Curiosity is a natural state of mind

Most of us have many questions, and it doesn't matter how many answers we get, we still have more questions. When we were young, we asked our parents many questions. Some were never answered, and as we grew up, we asked our teachers, friends and various wise people many questions, as well, some of which were also never answered. I, too, had many questions until I achieved so-called enlightenment, and at the beginning of my enlightenment, I still had questions about very unimportant issues. But these I only understood after a long period of time.

Some questions that we ask ourselves and try to attach ourselves to are very unimportant, and this makes trouble for us. But it doesn't matter because sooner or later all these concerns will fade away. As we grow higher into spiritual maturity, we become calmer and more placid in our thinking and viewpoint on life. So, when people come and ask many questions, I always try my best to satisfy them, but it's still difficult for some to understand the answers despite our best intentions. It's because they're using their limited understanding to try to grasp something that's beyond it.

I also used to have many questions myself so I very well understand those who come to us and ask questions. It seems that they can never get enough answers, but that's the way the mind is. We always feel curious because the mind is always inquiring; that's why it collects a lot of information each day, whether bad or good. The mind doesn't have the power of discernment. And most of the misery, dissatisfaction, prejudice and discrimination among us and with various subjects in life comes from this inquisitive nature of the mind, which takes in all kinds of data, possesses it and makes it become its own.

We should consider carefully before believing

So, we should be careful about what we read and what we hear because if we don't select discriminately, other people's ideas, theologies or philosophies, which are sometimes not quite correct, will sink into our minds and become our own. And we'll think it's we who think this way, who accept this, that and the other. Then later, when other information comes to us that's more correct and more helpful, we reject or doubt it because we've already recorded some idea or theory that seems contradictory to the new data.

And this is one of the problems we encounter in our lives and in the world that has produced or given birth to many things, such as hatred, discrimination and conflicts between religions, between nations, between neighbors and between people. So, whatever theories, teachings or ideals we take in, we should first or at least later examine as to whether they have any grounds, any use in our daily life or for our spiritual progress. Otherwise, we'll have a lot of trouble struggling between different ideals, groups or systems of thought.

There's nothing that we should take on faith without consideration or proof. We need to prove everything, even spiritually because it's a science. It's the highest science, but it's still a science. The Masters of the past, present and future are those scientists who know many things about the universe that we ordinary people probably find difficult to understand or believe. But then they also teach us or guide us into this science so that later we ourselves also become a master or teacher, at least of ourselves because to be

53. Public lecture, San Francisco, California, U.S.A., November 27, 1993 (Originally in English).

master of ourselves is the most difficult task. And to be able to do that, we must have the strongest power, which is the power of God or the universal intelligence that we've had all along.

When He was alive, some people accused Jesus of telling lies and being blasphemous because He said He was one with God, that He was the son of God and that He and the Mother / Father were one. But we've forgotten, and even nowadays people still think this way. We've forgotten that except for God, there's nothing and no one else who lives within this temple.

The soul never reincarnates

The 'I' that we assume ourselves to be never really existed because when we're first born, we don't know much; we don't even have a name. So, we don't even have the 'I' because if you boil it down to the 'I' that exists from the time we're babies, what is it that you call the 'I,' or the 'her,' or the 'she' or the 'he'? What is it? Can you identify a baby with any entity that we call the 'I' or the 'he' or the 'she'?

When we grow up, we get a lot of knowledge from teachers, relatives or friends and then we begin to have an identity, to become an individual, perhaps one who's described as an angry person, an irritated character, a loving person or a wise person. But where do these wise, loving, angry, lustful or greedy individuals come from? We weren't born with them; they weren't the 'he' who was born in the beginning. They're only the input that we collect and then identify ourselves with.

So, the theory of reincarnation actually shouldn't be taught to people because we don't have an identity that reincarnates. Perhaps what reincarnates is this tendency to cling to the information that we got, whether bad or good. And then that clinging tendency goes and finds one instrument after another to satisfy the longing that we haven't gotten from the previous so-called birth.

So, after the knowledge, wisdom or God self that resides in this body passes out of or leaves this temple, he, she or it will pass to another temple. Just like when we go from one church to another, we're the same person. And actually, in the universe there's no one entity that exists but a whole mass of energy in a loving field, sometimes just divided into different sections.

It's just like an electric current that's in a bulb and in a wire; it goes through a microphone, which is of a different shape. It goes into a refrigerator, a different shape again, and into an electric fan, a different shape again. But the current inside is exactly the same. Similarly, we've never been separated from the most high, the highest power. We've always been the supreme. But because of our tendency to identify with the information we get and the habits we collect from the environment and from our circumstances, we have an individual, an entity that thinks of itself as separate from the whole.

So, after we're enlightened, through our own effort – I repeat again, through our own effort or through a spiritual friend – we see things differently. Then, even though we still have an individual shell, we know we aren't that, and at that time, all our answers appear naturally, or we don't have any more questions. That's the best way because no question is a good question! When we're enlightened, we rise above this position of bad and good, of the discriminating nature of the mind. And then we see: 'Ah! That was just my shell, my clothing. I'm here, me.' It's different.

The more we identify ourselves with material knowledge and possessions, the less we know how great we are. Some who have a lot of intellectual knowledge find it harder to meditate and harder to attain the higher wisdom than less educated people because these people have less to wash away, less to disentangle or 'un-knot.' Just like with our house, when there are too many things inside, it takes a longer time to clean it up in order to bring in new furniture. But if we only have a few things, it's quicker.

Be friends with your mind

So, it's very easy to believe that we can get liberated in one lifetime because actually we're already liberated. We've always been liberated, and we will always be liberated. What makes us feel bound and unfree is the tendency to clutch onto the mass of knowledge or habits that we call 'I' so that we forget to look at the real thing. I think many of you understand this. Actually, the enlightened people or the brilliant, higher-level people don't need a lot of lecturing or explanation. Just one word or one sentence is enough, and that's also a kind of sudden enlightenment.

We've always been enlightened, and we always are enlightened. It's just in a little bit of obscurity, that's all. It's not easy to bring home these abstract ideas with simple, ordinary words. But when we understand this, it's deep inside us and becomes part of us, and we feel very easy and elated.

But that's one of the intellectual enlightenments only. In Zen meditation, they sometimes call it 'sudden enlightenment' or 'immediate enlightenment,' because one word from the Teacher can set you free in part, or maybe set you free a great deal or completely. Then why do we have to meditate after we're enlightened or after we've already understood what the Master or Teacher wanted to say? It's because we have too many habits and too much knowledge from the past; so one time isn't enough to convince us that we're enlightened. We'll probably forget it tomorrow or the next day.

Thus, we need to repeat the experience of enlightenment again and again until our mind also accepts it. It's not enough that the soul, the real self, recognizes itself because the self has always known the self anyway; our great self already knows itself. But because we're in this world, we have to do everything with an instrument; that is, the mind or the computer. That's the tool we have to use for working in this world, for bringing the blessing and power of love into our chaotic environment in order to make a better world for our children and many generations to come.

The mind is a very powerful instrument; it's what hinders us life after life so that we can't know God and can't know our real position in the universe. So, we cannot overlook the mind; we must befriend it. We must let it know why we do this and why we do that until the mind completely accepts and becomes our good friend; then we can be very happy and relaxed. Otherwise, if the mind doesn't agree, we can forget about meditation. It won't yield any fruit because you sit in meditation and it keeps asking you questions: 'Why do you sit? What for? I want to go to the movies or see a girlfriend. Why are you sitting here like an idiot? Coffee is better and cake is nice,' – all these kinds of things.

So, apart from transmitting the silent knowledge of the real enlightenment, spiritual Teachers still have to give oral teachings to the people in order to satisfy the inquiring nature of the mind. The mind is always asking questions and weighing things because the input that it received before contradicts the data it's receiving now, or it may not even understand the new information but it says it's not the same.

That's why many of us can't understand that one religion is no different than the next. It's because of the mind. After we're enlightened, however, we go beyond the mind. Then we see differently, and truly understand that there's no difference, ever. It's such a simple thing that after enlightenment we shake our heads and can't believe that we couldn't understand it before. It's as easy as seeing each other now, but we couldn't see each other without enlightenment. That's a very, very complicated situation created by the king of illusion to keep people in darkness. After you're enlightened, you'll be very surprised to discover many times that so simple a thing, something that's so easy to understand, you were never able to understand before.

The teachings of the Teacher, Master or spiritual friend are called oral teachings, which are the theoretical part of spiritual practice. But the more important part is the one that's transmitted in silence twenty-four hours after the Teacher has accepted a person as Her new younger friend or new student.

So, the theoretical teaching of any Master, past, present or future is just a small part of the whole. If we only learn the theory, we can get somewhat enlightened, or we might at least become an ethical person. For example, we'll understand the need to keep the precepts, to spread love instead of using violence, to share with our neighbors instead of stealing and so on. But after a Master passes away, the theoretical teachings are unavoidably left behind in the records of disciples or other people who attended Her sermons. And the later generations lean on this recorded information, perhaps in order to practice or have guidelines about what to do to find God. Because of their thirst for knowledge, they grasp at anything in order to understand God, and from that, religions begin to form.

At the heart of all religions is the same Truth

That's why before Christ, we didn't have Christianity and before Buddha, we didn't have Buddhism. The Buddhists came from Buddha or Bodhi, which in Sanskrit means enlightened or enlightenment. So, an enlightened person is called a Buddha. And Christ is the Hebrew name for enlightened; a person who is enlightened is crowned as Christ. So, after Christ went back to the Mother / Father, we formed the religion called Christianity, and it was the same after the Buddha left.

One term for Christianity in German is Christ so Christianity is easier to understand and relate it to. And Buddha came from Bodhi so the people who follow the Buddha and the Buddha's teachings are called Buddhists. And after Lao Tzu, who taught the Tao, went away, they formed Taoism, and then came the Taoists. So, we already have at least three religions, and we're in trouble! It's okay if each of us can pursue what he or she wants to study and believe, whether false or true. But the problem comes when we start to argue and fight among each other because of philosophical differences. Then we truly disgrace ourselves and our ascended Teachers because they always preached peace, integrity and love.

Thus, it doesn't matter now whether we believe that Christianity is the greatest religion or that Buddhism is the highest belief system in the world; we don't need to argue. Instead we should seek to know our true religion, the true religious essence, which Buddha left behind, which the Teacher of the Tao left behind, which Christ left behind. And then we'll know that the only, the best and the quickest way is enlightenment.

The living Master reconnects us with our enlightened self

Many people can get enlightened to some degree by themselves through the teachings of a Teacher, or through their own effort due to their sincerity and longing. But many people can't. And even if we can get enlightened ourselves, there are many things that still need to be cleared up by a living friend, a living Teacher who has gone all the way, back and forth because the spiritual road is invisible, but it's still like any other road. We can master it, we can walk it and complete it, but this is only a mundane way of speaking. Because the universal wisdom is so vast that we can never in one moment or even one lifetime make use of it all. So, even if we say we've completed the journey, we still don't use all of our wisdom at once except when we need it.

Many people come to me and ask if I know the future of the world or if I know her future or his future and so on, and I say, 'I don't!' I don't look into the future; I only look into the present and know what I have to do in this moment. That's enough for me. Sometimes if necessary, I can glimpse into the future or even into the past, if you want to know it. But that's only if it's truly necessary and beneficial to someone or to the world; then God lets me know it and that's enough. Otherwise, we burden ourselves with too much knowledge of what's going on.

So, have no illusions about enlightenment but see it as it is, that we've always had our true nature. And now if we want to know it, there's a way because it's always been there. If we're truly sincere in meditation, every answer will come when we need it. You don't need to write a letter to the Master because we're always connected, even more so after initiation. We'll be connected forever until you become a Master.

I speak too much sometimes; I don't know if you believe half of what I say, but the Truth always comes out and I sometimes can't stop it. It's because God speaks through my mouth and then when I forget to stop Him, He goes on and on all the time about all the secrets. And then people sometimes think that I'm boasting, but it's all the Truth. If you go to a doctor, he should tell you that he's able to cure your sickness. Otherwise, what good is it to go to him? If you come to a friend for enlightenment, he should tell you of his ability, that he's capable of helping you recognize your enlightened self.

Sooner or later any of us can become a Light bearer because we already are the Light. It's just that we're too busy with all this data – all the work we have to do and all the financial problems we have to face – that we forget how great we are, we forget to use our great wisdom to tackle all these small problems. We just try to fix the problem itself; we become fixed on the problem and get engulfed in it or swallowed up by it so that it's difficult to solve. But if we look back and know where we stand, or if instead of putting all our attention on the problem, we step back and remember that we're not the problem, we can see it more clearly. That's why we need meditation. We have to go back inward to remember who the owner is, who the boss is and what we need to do.

FORGIVE YOURSELF ⁵⁴

The spiritual food

Thank you that we have the opportunity to see each other and also to have a devotional day to God, in whatever form and name we may call this Supreme God Head. I have to thank you and all of the people who have made the effort to push me here, because

54. Public lecture, Fremont Hindu Temple, Fremont, California, U.S.A., November 25, 1993 (Originally in English).

otherwise I wouldn't do anything. [Master laughs.] So, every time I have a chance to give a lecture or to be in a gathering, I will be again thankful and thankful, cause then I feel that I am doing something right. If nobody demands or requests or pushes me into this kind of work, then I won't do anything. Yes. And I also don't feel anything about it. I mean I don't feel regret or I don't feel remorseful that I don't do the job.

I don't know why such a beautiful job I never desire to do. I don't know why. But every time I do it, I feel it's good, you know? It's good that I should do it, but then I never desire to do it again. Then somebody pushes me out to give a lecture, then I am grateful again that I will do it. Do you know what that is? Must be laziness, I think. [Laughter] I really don't understand myself. People just say that, 'When You are enlightened; You are Master, You are supposedly to know Yourself.' But I must confess that I don't know! [Master laughs.] I don't know. I can just equally be happy stay home and sleep. [Master laughs.] So, I really don't know. But when I am here, I am very happy and grateful that I am here. When I am in bed and sleep, I am happy and grateful that I sleep. But I truly am grateful that you have pushed me to come here and you know, I feel just good, very good, that probably I become a little bit useful.

Also a temple is useful, that we can gather together and have a nice devotional day to the Supreme God. Or do you just came for lunch? [Laughter] No? I didn't make a mistake, no? You came for God, right? [Audience: Yes.] Okay, good, then you are entitled to lunch later. [Laughter] Surely, if we don't have spiritual food, it doesn't matter what we eat; it will never satisfy us, mentally and physically. Therefore, we keep getting hungrier and hungrier, again and again, and even we eat a lot of nice food and vitamin we still get sick and sometimes distressed and indigestion. In the Bhagvad Gita, it is mentioned that the food which was prepared for offering to God first and then we eat it, should be very nutritious and full of blessing for us. If, however, we prepare the food just for personal satisfaction then we truly make mistake. And that will give us a lot of dissatisfaction, and sometimes trouble, indigestion and all that. Actually, in the Bhagvad Gita it says stronger than this, very strongly, like: 'You eat in sin if you don't offer first to God.' So, it's not me who spoke like that; it's Krishna. [Master laughs.]

The heartbreaker

Now, everything is the same; it's not only food. All of you know the Bhagvad Gita or not? That is the book of wisdom of ancient India. It is about five thousand years old. Yes, it was spoken by the Supreme Master of that time, Krishna, the beloved black beauty. [Master laughs.] His complexion was dark, you know, like many Indian people, but he was so beautiful and handsome that people call him 'heartbreaker.' It's also because he breaks everybody's heart when he leaves. [Master laughs.] And wherever he goes, people love him, adore him and make offering to him, just following him madly. I hear that he had about seventy thousand wives, no, sixteen thousand wives. Well, the Indian people, sometimes they exaggerate things, [Master laughs.] but he must have a lot of followers. It's not really wives, you know, disciples. Probably mostly were women, because probably he was very handsome, I hear! I wasn't there. Maybe I was there but I forgot. [Master laughs.] So, the Bhagvad Gita is the record of the teachings of the Master, Krishna. You can find much wisdom and guidance in this book. I still look at it from time to time. I still do, yes, because it is very beautiful, concentrate and wise. Sometimes you get solace and calmness by reading that book. If you truly understand and digest it, it is a wonderful masterpiece of wisdom. Many of the Masters of the past have connection with the Indian law, therefore we could not not to mention India and the Bhagvad Gita. Even Milarepa, do you know? The great yogi of Tibet. Even that great yogi of Tibet, his possession consisted of a pot and the Bhagvad Gita. Now, in that book it is mentioned that not only the food that

we should first prepare in the spirit of offering to God before we take it, but also everything else we do in life must be an offering, must be a sacrifice, to the supreme spirit. In that case we will never reap any bad or any good result out of that, because bad result or good result bind us to this material world. Even if sometimes we cannot help ourselves, we lose our temper; we get angry, and we know we shouldn't. And then sometimes we feel very very sorry for a long time, after our anger has already subsided.

Forgive yourself

But I tell you, forgive yourself. Forgive yourself anytime. Whatever you do, just make offering to God and let it be, whatever the outcome, because we are not the body anyhow. We are not the action. We are not the doers of anything in this world. Even if we are; suppose we are the doers, we still have to forgive ourselves. Forgive ourselves when we make mistakes or when we cannot help with our habits, like anger or sometimes greed and sometimes lustful thoughts, because these things also arise from circumstances. It's not truly the self; it's not truly the soul that desires all these things. So, we always have to try again and again, and forgive ourselves after all, I mean, above all. Because the inside is God, the supreme wisdom, we can't scold it; we can't abuse it; we can't be rude to it. You understand what I mean? So, if we are angry with ourselves, we should be angry only with our habits, our accumulated habits. Or we should blame the situation also, not to blame the supreme wisdom, the real self, because the real self never err, never make any mistakes.

Suppose we are even the doers and we are in society like this, sometimes we get angry. It's not always our fault. Most of the time it is not. Sometimes everything can make us angry. For example, you work in a company and you work with the wrong personnel, right? Whatever you tell him, he just doesn't understand. Or he understands but he does the other way around. He just makes you angry and angry. Even you forgive him again and again, he repeatedly does that. A very small thing, even a small thing irritates our minds and makes us feel miserable. So, it is good that we know that there is something else above the mind and above the body. The body is composed of only material substances, like earth, water, iron. Well, our iron inside is much enough to make a few nails. Do you know? [Master laughs.] And water, earth and maybe fire, the vital fire so that the body would be warm and all that.

Meditation is a way to reprogram our thinking

The mind is consisted of what? It's just a collection of all kinds of information, bad and good. It is just like a computer, whatever you program it, and when you push the button, it comes out the same, right? One of our fellow practitioners, he has an electric organ, and he programs it into different musical rhymes, and he can play it again from the cassette. So, the same thing with our brain. It would be empty; it would be absolutely blank, just like a brand new computer, until we start to record things and information, and sometimes good, sometimes bad. If we happened to record the good information and when we want to make use of it, then the good information comes out. If we happened to record the bad information, then of course, the bad information comes out.

So now, to meditate, to pray to God or to study the holy scriptures is just a way to reprogram our thinking, our way of life. Because we reprogram it in a good way, the result that comes out is always good, or at least not as bad as before, or at least not all bad. Even though we can't help to record some more bad information daily, the number will be less than before, right? It's because we keep recording good things, like we meditate; we meditate on God name, we meditate on God power and we get the God power coming

through us, filling us with joy, virtues and goodness. Then even the bad information comes in, it has no room, and also maybe minimized. And because of the goodness and the powerful energy from God, through meditation each day, we will be able to dilute or maybe digest completely any information that is harmful to our minds and our souls. That's why we cannot not to meditate! We cannot not to study the holy scriptures.

Understanding the holy scriptures after enlightenment

Many people don't like to study holy scriptures, why? Because they don't understand. So, I hear that many of the holy men from churches, or from temples, they complain that the young people or the people of today do not like to study scriptures; do not like to study holy book. It is because most of the holy scriptures are too profound, too sophisticated, too deep, sometimes too difficult for the modern man, for the layman to understand. But we have one solution, first, we have to open the understanding power, then we can understand the bible or the scriptures. Anything you get into your hands, any book, you will be able to understand. I also could not understand much of what is said in the bible or in the Bhagavad Gita or in the Buddhist scriptures or in the Lao Tzu's books and all that. Kon Tzu and Lao Tzu's books I read. I understood somehow but not as profound, not as deep, as I do now. After our power of understanding is open, the wisdom is made to be useful again, then we can understand many things.

So, if we do not understand the scriptures, and the best thing is first to get enlightenment. Enlightenment means you open the power of understanding, and then the heavenly Light, Godly Light, will shed all understanding upon any object that we wish to study. So, that's why even now in college, people teach the students many kinds of meditations, at least to calm their turbulent minds. And if they have a better meditation, the good kind of meditation, which can even open the seat, the door of wisdom, the power of understanding, then so much better for them. Therefore, many of the students who study in college but at the same time meditate, they find it easier to master any subject that they want to study. And they are always very good at school. This is a fact that everybody knows by now.

The water in a cup is one with the ocean

Why is there reincarnation? It is because we do not know the real self and we chase after the container of the self. Therefore, we chase after one to another. For example, the water in the sea is all one. If we happened to put it in a cup, or we put a cup into the sea like this and then we seal it, then the water in the cup is separated from the ocean. But as soon as the cup is broken, it become one with the ocean again. And if the water inside the cup is attached to the container and then after it's broken, it goes to seek another cup. Then it will forever be separated with the ocean. Similarly, our real self is not contained in this body, never! It's because it's all pervading, and this is just one of the station, one of the things, that contains a little bit of ourselves. Therefore, when we broke this limitation, we will be one with the whole. We don't have to break the body to go out, [Master laughs.] there is a way to go out. For example, we don't need to break the cup to free the water in the cup; we can just, you know, where it is leaking or there is a hole somewhere, and so even the cup is still there and the water is still inside, but at the same time the water is in and out all the time and connected with the whole ocean.

Similarly, our cup here, the body, has a hole, and it is blocked. It's made blocked so as to keep the soul, the water of life inside, but we can open it. Similarly, some of the cups, you know, are all made like this, [Master takes up a cup.] but there is a hole in the bottom and then they use a plastic cover to cover it, right? Or sometimes medicine bottle also. We just

take a little cap, plastic cap or something, and then we can connect with the content inside. So, there is a place where we can be connected with the whole universe while still keeping this instrument, the body. That is the third eye center, the seat of wisdom, the seat of the soul. If it is opened, by any mean at all, by our own perseverance, power of desire for liberation or through a Master, then we will be connected right away with the whole universe, with the most high, which is all over the places. The power of the most high is not only contained in this body but it's in the air right now. It's everywhere. It's in every blade of grass and the leaves of the trees, in all creation. It is easier to open it if we have an experienced guide, you know, who has already been connected with the whole universal power. Then he is very powerful because he doesn't use individual power anymore. He uses the whole universal power, because he is already connected. Just like the water in the cup, even though it's still in the cup but it's always connected with the ocean water through the hole; and there is always fresh water coming in and out, even though it is still contained in the cup. Therefore, a Master, or an enlightened person, is like that. The initiated person is the one who has this connection, has the button open, and the Master is the one who realizes the universal power.

Be the Master of your own destiny

Even though we all have it, the Master is the one who realizes it. It's just like if two persons have the same amount of money inherited from the father, but the one who knows it, who knows where it is can use it. The other one, even though he has it but he puts it somewhere or he never knows where it is, can he use it? He cannot! Similarly, we are all the same, but if we know where to use our universal power, then we will become masters of ourselves, masters of our destinies, and we can lead many others to become masters of their own destinies as well. Otherwise, even though we are equally great, we don't know our greatness and that's a waste of time. Therefore, we have to come back again, again and again in search for this treasure, until we find it, then our journey ends. Very simple! We are here to search for this forgotten treasure and we never give up until we find it. That's why our lives are never satisfactory because we always know there is something else, something greater than what we have right now. We always somehow know that we are not this container, the flesh, because after we so-called die, the body is still there, but we cannot move; we cannot do anything; we cannot love any person; we cannot open our mouths; we cannot do anything at all! That means we are not the body. Something in the body is there to make the body move and work while we are living. Something in the body left when we die so we cannot move any of our bodily instruments. So somehow, we know; very deep in our hearts we know. Well, I know! I don't know if you know. [Master laughs.] Do you know? You must know.

That's why sometimes when you have time, when you are in trouble especially, you sit down and you don't want to be with anyone; just want to be alone. Then you think, and then you feel better and better, because you thought there is something there, something that sometimes comforts us in silence. I used to be like that before I know the Quan Yin method. I used to pray a lot. I pray to Buddha and I pray to Jesus. I am afraid that one of them cannot hear. [Master laughs.] So I pray to anyone I know. Sometimes I pray to Krishna, Hindu God. [Master laughs.] There is no Hindu God; there is only God, actually. Just sometimes God resumes an Indian form or a Chinese form, so we call this Hindu God or Chinese God, actually there is no such thing.

So sometimes, when I was in deep sorrow, before I know the Quan Yin method, I prayed very deeply, just to be alone; not to pray very loud, but to truly lament inside. Then I felt like something lifted me up, and I felt so soothing and so smooth and I felt that there was

nothing to worry about. That is the time when we realize that something is greater than life; something is always there to listen to us.

Most people pray, and they say they don't have any response. It's because they don't pray deeply enough. That is why we have more response when we are in deep sorrow because we are truly sincere at that time. We pierce through all the layers of pretending of hypocrisy and we pierce through our false self and we get in touch, somehow, even briefly, with the true self. That is when we get the response. But I suggest that we don't have to wait until we are in deep sorrow to do this. That would be too traumatic. Yes. We have a better way to do it. We practice it even when we are not in sorrow; that would be better.

The link between a true Master and God

We practice before we die; that would be better. So, when we die, it is just like walking from one room to the next. No problem! And we can walk out forever. We can break the whole cup and be united with the whole ocean, or we can keep it; we can seek another cup in order to satisfy someone else's longing or to help someone else. It's like the Master, sometimes the Master reincarnates again and again, into different bodies, in order to help mankind. Some Masters just like to enjoy heaven, enjoy nirvana and never want to go back again. Some Masters never, never ever incarnated on this earth, with no intention to do so. Some Masters incarnate again and again in order to help the children who are suffering, who have the great treasure but don't know how to use it; therefore, being very poor, poor and miserable.

In India people appreciate the Masters very much. They worship the Master even more than God because of this reason. They say, 'Oh, if both the Master and God appear right now, I would only worship the Master. I don't care about God.' [Master laughs.] It's just a kind of adoration and gratefulness to the Master. Actually, they worship the Master because of God; they worship God because of the Master. Without the Master, they don't know that true God exists or not. Yes. Without God power, the Master is also nothing, understand?

We are much greater than our intellectual understanding

So, we all come from God, whether Masters or not Masters. The Master is the one who knows God, and the non-master is the one who doesn't know God yet, but they still have God; they are still from the same. I told you about the story of the cup, the ocean water in the cup. So, at the time of initiation, you know already, the button is pushed open so that we can get in touch, somewhat, to God, at least for some moments. Then we continue to do that everyday, until we completely realize that we are one with God; there is no separation.

You see, there are many things that the initiated persons understand and know, but it's difficult to put them into words. Me also. If nobody demands anything from me, I would not even think of God. Do you know what I mean? He is just kind of always standing around or He is just inside me. So I don't even think of Him. I don't talk about Him. I don't miss Him. I don't seek Him anymore. Just for other people's sake I talked about God. I talk about these things. Sometimes it's difficult for me to talk about God. Maybe that's the reason why I don't desire to go for lectures or anything like that, because I am just satisfied wherever I am and whatever I do. The initiated people are mostly like that. Many of them have this satisfaction right away at the time of initiation and continue forever.

Some of them have to wait sometime to realize that they have found the treasure. Why is it so? Some people's curtains are thicker than the others, because we are obstructed by intellectual understanding and by many of the knowledge that we have accumulated during our lifetime, and we are proud of it and cling to that. That's why we have forgotten that we are greater than this knowledge, greater than the Ph.D. certificate, greater than the name that we are proud to have, like Dr. So-and-So, or such-and-such position. We are greater than this, greater than any king on this earth. Sometimes we don't even realize that we have this ego and that we are trapped into this ego, the maya net. We don't even realize it until we practice more and more. And the more we practice, the more we realize that we are obstructed by our own habits, by our own collections of garbage, of a lot of nonsense thinking.

The secret to attain the whole world

Similarly, everyday we are busy with our daily work and we busy with our worldly knowledge and we think we know that much, this much, and then we forgot that we are the great ones. We know more than that. We know above all these things, including these things. Now, the greatest power, the great wisdom, is so big like that, for example, so great, so pervasive, and then we use that great wisdom just to understand a little bit of the worldly knowledge, for example, the medical knowledge or the lawyer knowledge or anything, and then we cling to that. The whole wisdom we use just to pay attention to this corner of the knowledge. Therefore, we forgot the whole. Do you understand what I mean? That's it. And we thought that we are very great already, we are this doctor and that Ph.D.. I don't mean to talk about you. I said 'we,' meaning including myself. Sorry!

So now, we think we know that much, we are beautiful, we have this and this certificate and that. In fact, we lost the whole ninety-nine point nine nine nine nine percent of our great wisdom just to pay for that much worldly knowledge. In the end we have nothing because this is ephemeral; this knowledge will change. We know many medical definitions or many medicines have been proved outdated and then replaced by another. Or scientific facts have always been changed, removed and replaced by another idea, and then it would be replaced again and again, as mankind progresses into a higher consciousness. Therefore, it doesn't matter how much knowledge we gain from this world or from the brain power of research, we will never have the whole thing, just one little point in the universe. Just like the water in the cup is proud that he is so big and he doesn't know that he is the whole ocean, you know? When he is connected with the whole ocean, he became the ocean. I guess you understood what I say.

Masters and religions are crutches

- Q. *Master, why Krishnamurti said, 'Gurus and religion are crutches?' So he refused to be their crutch for his students.*
- M. Why didn't you ask him? I am not responsible for anybody else's teaching. Everyone has his own independent thinking and philosophy, provided he keeps it for himself. Probably what he meant is that if you are too attached to religious dogma or to any Teacher at all, then you will be handicapped. In that sense he is correct. The Teacher or the Master is not the one on which you lean, but from which you gain experience and wisdom and then you walk yourself, okay? Most of the time if a Teacher is worth Her salt She should teach the student this way. Do you know what I mean?

But never mind! Even then, if a student of any Master should feel that he is not yet able to develop himself, then he can pray to the Master, in the initial stage of his

spiritual practice. Later when he grows up, he just automatically drops the Master. It's just like a person; not everybody can walk straight. I need an umbrella to walk; my legs are weak sometimes. But when my legs are okay, I don't need it. Yeah? Somebody, sometimes they are naturally born handicapped or accidentally handicapped, and then they need the crutch. It's okay with him. Can you just kick him out and say, 'You don't need the crutch. It will make you dependent!' Understand? [Audience: Yes.]

So, we cannot just say like this, black and white; to say that the Master, the guru or the religion are no good absolutely for people. It's good to someone. Right? If you don't need it, it's fine. If you need it, stay a while until you don't. So I don't preach anything extreme. In my opinion, religions are also very good for many people. At least they learn the virtuous way of life. They fear God. They fear the law of cause and retribution, and many people became good. I tell you the truth. But as long as we know that this is not the ultimate. Do you know what I mean? Yes, not the ultimate, just like, for example, the Master, in the physical body is not the ultimate, you know? The ultimate is inside the Master, and inside you! Through the Master you will find the ultimate. That's fine! If you have not found it yet, you can rely on the Master, to help and carry you for a while, and then you can walk. It's fine. But there is no such thing as extreme as to throw everything altogether. Is it not so? [Applause]

- Q. *Master, how long have human beings been on this earth?*
- M. Wow! I have to count with my fingers. [Laughter] Do you know how long? What for do we know how long? It's enough to work everyday! It's been a long, long, long time. Some have reincarnated. Some have been liberated. Some come back again and again. So, if you want to count this, it's difficult. You can say, aeons has past.
- Q. *Does one have to give up all other teachings, gurus, et cetera when initiated by Master Ching Hai? If one doesn't become initiated, can one still pray to Master Ching Hai and receive Her blessing?*
- M. You don't have to give up your teachings and your teacher; I told you already; nor religion, you don't have to give up religion neither. For example, I am initiated; I still talk about Bhagvad Gita. I still talk about the bible, the Buddhism and all the things, all the Masters, even past Masters. So I didn't give up anything! I just enrich myself with more wisdom, more knowledge from different Masters, past, present and maybe future. The future Masters, you can meet in the higher sphere because they have not yet descended on earth, but while in meditation, you can see the future Masters as well and learn from them. So you lose nothing; you only gain. Okay? If you are not initiated and you pray to the so-called Master Ching Hai, I don't know if She helps you or not? You have to ask Her at that time. [Master laughs.] Maybe She does; maybe She doesn't. It depends on how sincere you are and your karma.

The world is the best school for practicing

- Q. *Master, when I meditate, I cannot keep my mind concentrate at here. It runs all over the place and it talks about all kinds of different subjects. How do I concentrate and meditate better?*
- M. Is that the initiated or not? [MC: Are you an initiate?] Because I would answer differently. Who asked that question? [Audience: Yes.] That's why we have to go to group meditation. Because the concentrated power will help us, and we have to take

time; some people can concentrate right away; some people take a longer time. I have mentioned previously in the lecture. Also forgive yourself. The situation in this world is not conducive to our tranquil meditation and calm thinking, but try again and again. In this world, we have an advantage, that because this world is so difficult for us to practice, God's blessing is with us many folds. So, we walk one step and the Master power will walk a hundred steps to help us.

If we are in heaven and practice, it's not that lucrative. Therefore in heaven, if you want to practice, it takes a longer time. For example, here we practice one day it is equal to one hundred days in heaven. That's why many devas, heavenly beings, they like to be incarnated into human bodies, in order to practice faster. It's because here we have all kinds of rubbing force, like karma and situation and disaster and war and suffering and happiness, all these mixing. It's a kind of a high degree fire to forge us. These fires will forge us into a strong, useful tool for ourselves and for the world.

While we are practicing here, we have also the opportunity to help our fellow beings, and therefore we gain more merit as well. For example, you meditate alone at your home, so you have only one personal merit. But, if you, through your effort or through your eloquence, you offer your place, for example, for a hundred persons to meditate, then you have a hundred more merit to add up to your personal merit. So, you have a hundred times more quicker, you understand what I mean? Or you get another hundred persons to come in to get initiation, these merits are also yours. Because after all we are one, the more we connected with more people, the more expand we become and the greater we become, in terms of merit. Mathematical wise speaking, it is like that.

So, it is better than in heaven. In heaven everybody is having a good time and so they take it easy. They don't have the motivation behind them to push them to concentrate. That is why I say when you are in deep sorrow or when you are despair you pray better, and sometimes you meditate even better. At that time you remember the Master more; you say, 'Oh, Master, please, please, please...' [Laughter] And then you get better experience that day, bigger Light, stronger Sound or feel more elated, more near to God. So, it is good to practice in this world even though it is difficult.

I am happy that many of our fellow initiates practice very diligently. Some come to the Center just to look around but later... Well, they don't look around that long because everybody closes their eyes. So, they feel embarrassed after sometime and they also close their eyes, and then they see something inside, instead of looking at pretty girls outside. So, there is a very good advantage of having a temple or having a Center, where people come together and do the same thing, concentrate and one-pointedness thinking of God; that helps very much. So you take your time. You can look around for a while, and then when you are fed up with it, you close your eyes and meditate with all the people. Okay?

The mind is always having trouble to be controlled; that's why we have to practice everyday. Otherwise, I would tell you, 'Get initiation and you are the Buddha.' No more work! Right? It is because our habit is long term. It has been many thousands of years of time, maybe more! So, to take one lifetime to clear all these is hard work, but it's worth it. Or you want to stay here a thousand more years to continue to do that? Well, it's fun! So, that is why I tell you to have to meditate longer time, two and half hours or three hours, because the first twenty minutes is struggling. Just go on, go on with it and after about twenty minutes, it begins to settle down. After half an hour, you begin to enjoy, and forty minutes, you are gone. [Laughter]

Learn to balance yourself in life

Q. *For what purpose has mankind been created in this life form? Is there any humanlike life in another planet in the universe?*

M. Yes. There are human lives in other universe, in other planet. And for what purpose? I don't know. That you have to ask the creator when you go up there. I never ask Hirm why, cause I don't ask many questions. I am kind of a quiet person. [Master laughs.] Okay.

Q. *How do we know to liberate ourselves from suffering, painful emotions at the right time when we want so bad to let go of the lives, the circumstances around us? But it's so hard to see through because of the people we are attached to, and know that there is more to life itself than just ourselves and love of someone else we couldn't let go?*

M. I told you, just forgive yourself and try again. Sometimes in some circumstances we are able to control ourselves, but with some great effort, and some other times we don't want to control ourselves or we can't control ourselves. In either way you just do what is good for you at that moment. Okay? Don't worry much about the emotion. It is only the waves on the surface of the ocean. It is not the ocean's fault. It is the wind. It is the rotation of the earth that makes the waves. So, the ocean cannot blame itself all the time, and says that he makes waves, he makes troubles for the boats and he makes trouble for the people, et cetera. He cannot help himself. The ocean cannot help herself or himself. Is it him ocean or she ocean?

MC. *Whatever You want to call it.*

M. We never know. Well, let's make it a she because I am Ching Hai. Ching Hai means 'pure ocean.' Actually, in India they name it Vishudananda. I think I have to change my name into Indian name now to attract more Americans. [Master laughs.]

The other day one of the American disciples said to me, 'Oh, all the Americans like Indian teachers only, so that's why You don't attract so many of them. You attract only the Au Lac people and the Asian.' I said, 'Okay! Why don't I change my name?' He said, 'Do You have an Indian name, by the way?' I said, 'Yes, I do, Vishudananda.' [Master and audience laugh.] That's the translation of my name. Anything 'Ananda', Da Da Da, will do. [Laughter] Sounds very much Indian. [Applause] Now you may call me, Ananda, Vishudananda. It sounds very Indian, right?

Q. *How do we attain inner peace or happiness in everyday life?*

M. Slowly. After initiation, the more wisdom, the more this peace and grace from God we receive, the more peaceful our lives will be, but only if you don't become a Master. I can't promise you a peaceful life if you want to be a Master. But if you are a disciple, everything's perfect. [Master laughs.] [Applause]

Q. *Dear Master, I always make the same mistake that I don't want to make. I feel there are two of me inside, one good and one bad, how can I stop this?*

M. Well, maybe that's the balance proportion in your life that you need to learn. Actually, we can't be too good all the time. You will break! Yeah? You see the man in the

circus, when he walks the rope, he has to walk this side, that side. You know what I mean? One time he dips in this side, the other time he is siding to this side. Otherwise, if he walks just like this, he will fall down. This life has two sides anyhow; one is positive, and the other is negative; one is happiness, and the other one is misery. Sometimes we can't help ourselves to dip from one side to another. It's okay! Forgive yourself. Try if you can; if not, forgive yourself. Alright?

Do other things in contradiction to that, to counter attack this habit if you think it's bad. For example, if you are normally very stingy; don't want to give to people, now force yourself to give. Every time you want to take, you give instead! So, next time you dare not want to take any more, because every time you want to take, you lose the business! [Laughter] For example, if you want to take one dollar, then force yourself to give two dollars. So, next time you dare not to want any more! Or if you normally like to look at other woman besides your wife, so every time you want to do like that, just go home and look at your wife. So, next time you are fed up, and you don't want any more. Maybe you try it. [Applause]

The reason that many prophecies never come true

- Q. *Some religions are saying the end of the world is coming. What is the true meaning of this saying?*
- M. No religion ever says that!
- Q. *Only the Christian religion, right?*
- M. What? Christian religion says so?
- Q. *I mean, the bible.*
- M. The bible doesn't say that we end at the year 2000. The bible just has some revelation about some kind of destruction of the world, but that is one man's experience only. And we, some of the people, sometimes have this kind of experience. When you enter into some kind of destructive past, when you have seen it before in your previous life, and now you saw it and you thought it would be this time for this earth. It is not true. Maybe you see the end of the other galaxy, the other planet, and you mistaken that for this world. Or sometimes you see it in the past, mistaken for the present time. Sometimes you see it in the very, very, very remote future and you miscalculate the time; you think that it is now. That is why many prophecies never come true.

Just recently somebody in Keeth has predicted the end of the world and she shifted three or four times. Supposedly, it should be on Friday, then Friday was holiday, so it became Sunday, then on Sunday it never came. [Applause]

But never mind, the end of the world comes when we die anyhow, so make preparation for that day. Be prepared so that when we leave this world, we go with God, instead of going with the angel of death. That would be the end of our world.

- Q. *What is the relationship between compassion and mindfulness?*
- M. Mindfulness means you concentrate well. Compassion means you love other people. Compassion, you have mercy, you love other beings, love animals, love people. You

don't want to harm them. You want to help them when they're in need. That is compassion. Mindfulness is the concentration degree you get when you meditate.

- Q. *Earlier You said that if when you open your mind to the universe, then you can gain the wisdom, knowledge and will be able to understand any book. My question to You is, what if you were born with not so bright a mind? How can you be able to learn the knowledge from the universe once you open your mind? Learning new knowledge would take time and hard work. For me, in the past I had tried to learn to become a professional person. I failed because I am dumb. Can You show me the way?*
- M. Not being able to learn in school doesn't mean you are dumb. Maybe you lack courage, maybe you lack good teacher, good friends or good circumstances, or maybe you lack patient. Some people learn quicker; some people learn it a little bit slower. But that doesn't mean you are dumb; doesn't mean you are stupid. Not to know your own great wisdom is the true stupidity. [Applause] So, I invite you to come for the initiation and get to know your greatness, then you will understand many things. It is because everything I say is just a big mouth, talk too much. Anything without experience is just advertising. It doesn't matter how much I tell you the orange juice in my cup is very good and is very nutritious and good for you and a lot of vitamin C, and you drink it, it quenches your thirst. But if you don't ever come and drink it, it doesn't matter how much I say, it is all big mouth. Do you know what I mean? It's nonsense! Talk too much. So, the best thing is just to drink it. Get enlightenment! [Applause]

Any living Master will respond to our prayer

- Q. *I feel lost. I have searched and searched but have not found Home, that is what I am supposed to be and what I am supposed to do. How does one find Home here on earth?*
- M. Get enlightenment. Home is very near. It is next to you. It is nearer than your skin. But if you don't have the Light, you can't see it. You can't see things in the dark; it doesn't matter how near. You might have a feeling about what it is, but you don't see it; have to have the Light. The Light of God will shine on everything you want to search for, including Home. But this is all abstract speaking, really you have to have experience, and that comes only with diligent practice after initiation. You know how to practice and you do it and then you realize day by day.
- Q. *Why is it that after so many years of religious teachings and past Masters that the world has not gotten better but much worse?*
- M. It is because the past Masters cannot teach you. You have to look for a present Master, who can answer your question, help you when you are in doubt and take you by the hand back to the kingdom of God. We need a person to person contact, not the past lives. Just like it doesn't matter how great the beauties of the past; you cannot marry her! She cannot produce any children to you; cannot produce the love feeling that you have with a living wife.
- Q. *I was taught in my fundamental Christian church that we were to pray only to God, not to Jesus, not to virgin Mary, not to the angels, not to anyone or anything but only to God, the Mother / Father of Jesus, the creator of the universe. Why then are people praying to You as a Master, or to any master?*

M. I don't know. That's their problem. [Master laughs.] Just like before, somebody asked me if he doesn't want to get initiation, that means he doesn't want to get direct contact with God, can he pray to Master Ching Hai? What can I do about that? Well, if she prays, she gets the response, so she continues to pray. But I always advise that you go for initiation, and get contact directly with God and pray directly to God. That's the best way. But if somebody doesn't want to choose that way and want to choose the second way, easier way, no vegetarian, no two and half hours meditation, no rules, nothing, just want the benefits, then she will pray to whoever gives her something. And it happened that probably she prayed to Jesus or Buddha and didn't get any help, so she prayed to Ching Hai. When she gets help, she keeps praying again. People are like that; they like profit. Yeah! [Applause] You know, the truth is that any living Master will respond to our prayer.

But then when that Master passed away, people continue to pray because they learned that from their parents, from their ancestors. They continue to pray and they forgot the difference between a living Master and the past Masters. So, they continue to pray to the past Masters and sometimes they blame that they don't help them. But actually, when you pray to any Master that means you pray to God anyhow. Do you know what I mean? Because the Master is connected with God, you just pray to God. What is there inside except God? You think you pray to Ching Hai? Who is Ching Hai? When you think of Her, who is She? What is that? Only God resides in Her body; nothing else there! So, you pray to Her and She is connected with God, then it's the God that you pray to, understand? [Applause]

Get enlightenment and know all the answers

MC. *He would like to know if it is so wrong that he separates his parents for a good cause, because one of his parents does not allow the other one to practice meditation. And he would like to know if his action is related to karma? And if he practices this meditation, will that correct the wrong action of separating them?*

M. Never mind, you should let time take its course. And whatever concern your parents, you don't worry. You don't worry because the time will come when things will change. If you try to force the issue before time is right, you incur some trouble and sometimes you incur, of course, the karma.

Q. *Master said that water in the cup is the same with water in the ocean, but because of our egos which separates water of the cup from the ocean. Is it right that meditation means making a hole at bottom of the cup to have the water merge with the ocean?*

M. Initiation means that. Yes! Open the connected hole and so the water can come in and out all the time. So, the water in the cup is the water in the ocean, and the water in the ocean is the water in the cup. Yes. Everyday when you meditate, it's just like water flowing in and out all the time, making it fresh so that the water in the cup does not become rotten.

Q. *How should one meditate?*

M. You meditate the way you want. If you don't know, you come for initiation and we help you, okay? Actually, you should not ask me any question at all! Because it doesn't matter how many answers you have, what's the use? The best way is that we get enlightenment and know all the answers, or we get to the state where we don't care for any answers at all. And then we set ourselves free, forever, from any

inquisitiveness, from every desire to know things. That is the time when we know everything. Whatever we need to know we will know right away, and whatever we don't need to know we still know it, but inside, we don't use it. Understand?

Q. *My husband has a terrible skin disease, for eight years already. I love him very much and I have tried many ways, doctors, medicines, religion, meditation and hope to cure his disease.*

M. All kinds of meditation as well?

MC. *Yeah, meditation too.*

M. He meditates, himself?

MC. *Yeah.*

M. Or the wife?

MC. *It doesn't say. But it's getting worse and worse everyday. Now every time I look at him, my tears fall. And even worse, I began to dream about other man when I am so sad. Am I bad and disloyal? How can I cure my mind and my sadness?*

M. No! You are not bad. Just the situation is bad. She forgot to mention that if her husband meditates or she meditates. Her husband should meditate and pray for himself.

Q. *Is God a person, a being, a supernatural entity or what?*

M. All that, all that and more.

Now, everyone when we have sickness, we should try to first accept it; secondly, try to find a way to cure it. There must be some way to cure things. Above all, we have to pray to the supreme power to help us. We pray, but pray deeply. Sometimes the diseases are caused by past karma, past reaction, past retribution, that we have done something wrong or harmed somebody else's appearance, therefore now we have to reap this result. But after sometimes if the karma wears off, then it begins to get better. There are many ways to cure skin disease. I have seen many people with a lot of very bad looking skin, but they still have a cure for it. So, maybe you didn't search enough. You have to ask for many more ways to do it, or tell your husband to pray himself, or meditate.

I cannot guarantee you that initiation will cure your disease, or your husband's disease, because I don't want to attract people to come to our group just because of the physical condition. That is not enough to liberate you, because we are still clinging to the material instead of wanting God, the giver of all things. Once we truly want God, He will give. If we only want things, you know what I mean? Sometimes He gives, sometimes He doesn't. That's the trouble.

In India there was a story about a king who liked to give all his things to his subjects. So, he arrayed all his treasure around and told everyone to come and take whatever they like. And people took diamond, took gold or took treasure, took antique cups and all that, and then everybody was happy and went home. One girl only, she didn't want nothing. She just walked straight up to the king and she said, 'Are you also a gift?'

[Laughter] I only want this gift.' So, of course, the king was very surprised and happy that somebody wanted him for his sake, not the things that he gave. Of course, the king married her and then everything belonged to her, no? [Laughter] Yes. [Applause] The story is like that. Do you know the story? And there is another story to prove it.

The story of Shiva

There was a story about Shiva. Do you know Shiva? The god Shiva, is he here, by the way? [Master turns and looks behind Her.] Yeah, yeah, that's it, with a half moon and the tridad. Shiva was one of the past Masters. He was supposed to be the god of destruction. He destroyed negativity, actually, not people. Some people misunderstand so they worry that he'd destroy them so always keep blackmailing him with all kinds of fruit and cakes. [Master laughs.] So, in the past, he meditated very deeply in the Himalayas. He never woke up from the meditation, never ever. Nothing stirred him. This is a legend from India. I don't know if it is true. I just tell you the power of God.

He meditated all the time in the Himalayas, deep in the meditation, never stirred. But some of the gods in heaven were afraid that he didn't have a wife, so he would not pass down other generation, the holy seed or something like that, the sacred bloodline, so they worried very much, because he was so holy and they wanted to have another generation of this kind. So, they sent out a beautiful, beautiful fairy. Her name was Parvati. She was very beautiful and her figure was enough to make all the men fell down. But she couldn't stir him. She tried all her best to kind of dance around him or make all kinds of things, but he never stirred out of meditation. So, finally, she was fed up, so she went to the other side of the mountain, a little bit longer way, selected a mountain range and she sat there and meditated. She said, 'Now, all this is nonsense! I meditate on God and I get liberation and eternal bliss. That's better than to chase a man who is like a stone, and has no feeling, nothing!' [Laughter] 'And me, so beautiful like this and he never stirs!'

She was fed up, angry and frustrated, so she went to the other mountain, Mountain Kailash, which is the most famous and holy mountain according to Indian belief. It is very high and it has also a very beautiful lake in the vicinity, called Mansarouar. So, she stayed there and meditated, and after sometime she attained the blissful state. So, Shiva, suddenly, during his deep meditation, he felt something stirring him. There was some very strong, powerful feminine energy. It was kind of disturbing him. Not disturb, also disturb but made him feel good and still excited somehow. So, he opened his third eye, had a look and said, 'Wow! There's a beauty over there.' So, that was how the romance started. You know the rest.

So, that's the power of meditation, the power of God. It even makes the god stir. Do you know what I mean? It made the most ascetic yogi excited. [Master laughs.] Well, if you want to get a husband, it may be a good advice. [Laughter] Actually, when you don't want it, you get it.

Parvati was trying her best to charm him but she did not succeed because she tried with the ego, with the limited power of possessiveness and mundane thinking. But when she became holy, her attraction became different. Why? Because his vibration was very holy, his standard was very high. If she used her mundane vibration and energy to attract him, how could he come down? You know what I mean? You have to be at least equal in order to attract the opponent.

Actually, it's like that. Many people have no attraction before, then suddenly after initiation and meditation for sometime, they begin to attract people. You know, not necessarily physically, just attract them. They just love them and they just want to be near them. It is because of your vibration, your loving God energy. You cannot conceal it. It just radiates out and then attracts people like magnet, because the souls in themselves are also Godlike. So, they just feel attracted to you, the same that people are attracted to the Masters, but that is by no means a crutch. It is just a self attracted to a higher self. So, after sometimes, they just realize that both of them are one. Therefore, who is there to get the crutch? Who is there to rely on whom? So actually, that is also the answer to that question about Master and religion are crutch. It depends. Okay? So, have lunch! [Applause]

THE UNIVERSAL NETWORK ⁵⁵

All the answers come from ourselves. We are the wisest and also the most ignorant, depending on our own choice. If we are whole, united, then we are strong. It's the same with the physical dimension: United we stand, divided we fall. It's very simple, but very wise. Similarly, in the spiritual dimension, if we are alone, we are very weak, lonely, and afraid. If we are united with the whole universe of which we are a part, we are strong. Since we are a part of it, we must be connected with the whole, somehow. Think about it. Is it not so? Then why don't we try to find the way to use this connection to work? It's a network. Once you realize that we are in the network, everything you do has the support of the whole cosmic power and that power is great; it is strong. That's how we can accomplish many things.

TURN TO OUR INNER WISDOM TO GET TRUE ANSWERS ⁵⁶

Answer yourselves through your own wisdom

It doesn't matter what question you ask me; the basic question is that you forgot your wisdom. That's why you ask me; otherwise you don't need to. I'm supposed to know everything, or at least many more things than you do. That's what you think. But when you think about it, I have the same brain as you, and I eat the same food as you do, or at least similar food. In fact, I eat less than you do. So, if it comes down to that, I have even less wisdom or less energy! So, why do you look to me for answers, when the answers are all within you?

I have the best way to answer you, which is to help you answer yourself. That's the only way; it's the best way and the most everlasting. And that's our way of life: Helping people recognize the kingdom of God or the great spirit that sustains the whole universe, sustains your life, without which you're just a dead corpse, useless. Those same eyes will not see anything, that same nose will never smell any fragrance and that same mouth will never open again. But we forget that. We abuse it in eating and drinking, but we never ask the most essential function of our spirit or God.

The wisdom bank

It's the best thing, the highest power in the whole cosmos. If we forget that, we have too many questions and can never answer them. And if we forget that, our life is never

55. Group meditation, Houston Center, Texas, U.S.A., November 13, 1993 (Originally in English).

56. Group meditation, Houston Center, Texas, U.S.A., November 13, 1993 (Originally in English).

satisfied. It doesn't matter how much money you have, or how beautiful your wife or handsome your husband, it won't make you completely happy. And it will never make you stably happy. You can be happy now and then, like when you drink whiskey and feel happy for just a few minutes. But then, you have a headache the next day.

Most of the happiness in this world has side effects, just like drugs. That's the problem. Otherwise, we don't mind carrying on with this world the way it is. It's just a kind of illusion. Today you're happy and tomorrow it gives you more trouble. It's not intentional or not even that we do anything bad. It just happens that most of the happiness in this world has negative side effects. That's the bad thing about it.

So, what are we to do? There's a storehouse of resolution, of problem-solving power that lies within us. That's the great spirit. That's what makes us alive; that's what makes us move and talk and recognize each other and love one another. And whenever we turn to that spirit, we never go wrong. It's just that we go along with it inside us all the time, but we leave Him aside; we never ask His advice. We never ask for help from this spirit, the spirit of God, the greatest spirit, the most high.

It's our highest intellectual power; that's all it is. There's no such thing as a person with a long beard or anything. But He is always there; the power is always there. And whenever we ask for help, it's really always there. But we must know how to ask. Usually, we ask by talking a lot. We sing a lot of prayers and we make a lot of noise, but we never listen to the advice of the spirit. And then, that's why we don't have the answer.

When you pray, enter into the closet

Suppose you ask me a question and then you keep talking all the time. How can I answer you? Similarly, most of us pray in the wrong way or in an ineffective way. We can also pray, but we should pray in silence. In the bible, it says, 'When you pray, enter into your closet, and having shut your door, pray to your Mother / Father who is in secret, and your Mother / Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.' And 'When you pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites, for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men.' What does it mean to do this? It means that you communicate with God, alone. You can sit with hundreds of thousands of people, but you have to be alone with Him, with the spirit. That's the way to solve your problems and answer your questions.

That's why I never ask questions because I alone answer myself. I alone am responsible for all my actions and non-actions, and for all my thoughts, speech and interactions with other people. I'm responsible. Each of us is responsible. It's a very easy way of life, but we choose the hard life. Everyone asks me, 'Wow, how can You be vegetarian?' Or, 'You meditate; that's kind of tough, isn't it?' And I say, 'No! Your life is tough; mine isn't tough. I have an easy life; everything is easy; everything is clear to me.'

THE SECRET OF MASTER'S GOOD HEALTH ⁵⁷

My health is good even though I am fragile, and sometimes I am sick. But my health is good compared to many other people. I have it easy, because I have it with the spirit. I turn to the highest reservoir of all strength, wisdom and blessing; I don't work alone. I don't work with the limited physical strength and the very narrow brainpower. I work with the

57. Group meditation, Houston Center, Texas, U.S.A., November 13, 1993 (Originally in English).

greatest storehouse of intelligence; therefore, I am never in conflict. That's why my life is easy.

The lives of all the Quan Yin practitioners who meditate, who quiet down and listen to the advice of the inner power, [Master points to Her wisdom eye.] are easier, day-by-day. We turn to the greatest strength for help; we don't work with our limited, fragile physical body. When we have trouble, it is because we work with the limited computer, the brain, and we work with the limited muscles, the body. We don't know, and we forsake the higher efficient power.

MASTER THE EPITOME OF UNCONDITIONAL LOVE⁵⁸

Master suffers the ignorance of the people

We are united. We have to show it somehow, we don't just talk. We don't just say, 'I love my neighbor,' or 'I and you are one.' But then when they are suffering, 'Oh! It's okay. Nothing to do with me.' So, when you are sick, I am sick also. While I am here, I have everything that you have. Otherwise, I only have pleasure. It's good to be a Buddha, and everyone can be. Also someone said to me, 'Well, if You are in operation, You can just leave Your body and enjoy heaven when You come back.' Well, you can do that as a disciple, but I cannot; because if I do that, I only enjoy the things and don't suffer with you. If I don't suffer, you suffer more. So, I don't run away. Now, you always have the illusion about being a Master, that you will enjoy a lot more than while you are ignorant, being a disciple. It's not true. The more you long for God, the nearer you are to God. The nearer you are to masterhood, the nearer you have to understand the Master position. It means you sacrifice. Masterhood means sacrifice. It doesn't mean joy. Yes, you have joy. That is a very stable joy. It is not affected by the chaotic situation of the world. But you suffer, suffer for everyone. If you don't want to be in that situation, then you have to want God less. You have to enjoy the world more and forget God, forget Master. Then you will be a little bit further away from the furnace, from the powerhouse. You are further from the position of the sacrificed lamb, then you don't suffer so much and then you enjoy more.

Just like the cook in the kitchen now, he has to cook for us. If he wants to enjoy the way we do, he has to leave the kitchen, let someone else cook. So, someone has to cook for all these people to enjoy. For the Master it is the same, or if anyone loves the Master so much. I don't mean you love me personally, or any other master. I mean when you love the Truth so much, when you want nothing else but God, then you are very near to the Master, Master power, Master qualities. That's when you don't enjoy. I am sorry to say, that's a very paradoxical thing; but that's the way it is. So, if you don't want all this sacrifice unintentionally, you want more a kind of heavenly mansion or heavenly wisdom Light and all that kind of fancy stuff, then you don't yearn too much. That's why in Zen they say, 'The more you desire enlightenment, the less you get.' Because you obstruct yourself with your desire. But a logical way of speaking is that you are too near. You want it too much, that you are so near. You desire that thing so much that it is you, it becomes you. You are obsessed with it so you have to take on that quality. The way you want God that much is a saintly person who wants it.

58. Group meditation, Houston Center, Texas, U.S.A., November 12, 1993 (Originally in English).

Master never enjoys this world

Now if you are a saint, you are a Master, a kind of master soul, then you cannot enjoy, because the whole world is suffering; and your soul inside will have to take on the suffering of other people – of the ignorant, of the desperate, of the dark experience of the people around the world. So, the way now, I don't enjoy the way I did. Now, you enjoy. I am the cook. I cook in the kitchen all the time. I cannot sit at the table with you, with all the fancy clothes and with people serving you like this. While I cook, I don't even get to see you. Similar with the Master.

Therefore, the more you yearn for God, the less you see. I am sorry to say it, if everyone else tells you differently. If you yearn halfway, you get a half. If you yearn too much, you see not much; you suffer because you will be too near to God. God knows everything, God knows the suffering of mankind. And in this world there is more suffering than joy. So, many Masters never enjoy this world. But it's good, because they don't come to enjoy. If you want to enjoy, then you have to come back again, be an ignorant person and start to enjoy again. If you are already a professor of mathematics or English, and you want to sit in the class and get taught, get served, and get loved by a teacher again, that's ridiculous. That's the only way you get the same attention again as when you were a student. Most of us have been students in our life, and we regret afterwards that we didn't enjoy the student time. Well, I did. Everyone told us when we were students that is the best time that we could have, but we never know. We don't appreciate it. We want to be a professor, right now, or better yesterday. [Laughter] When we became professor or teacher, then we thought, 'Wow, it was good to be a student!' Carefree, and everything was easier, youthful. No responsibility and we just party here, party there, and girlfriend here and boyfriend there. Everything was just so easy. But then, you cannot go back to being a student again, because you have already become a professor. Even if you now take off your clothes, throw away your degree, and go and sit again with the students, you don't have the same experience and then you complain. Why? You say, 'Why don't I enjoy the way she does. The other students enjoy, why don't I?' Because you've passed that enjoyment, you can't go back, you can't turn back the clock.

The three stages of enlightenment

So, you have to recognize yourself, whether you are a beginner on this path in which you enjoy more than everyone else, or you have not yet reached the beginning stage of spiritual practice, or you've passed beyond the enjoyment stage.

There are three stages of enlightenment, language speaking. The first is the ignorant stage. You haven't even begun to want to practice. You have not even gone further than materialism. The second path is that you are enlightened. You see the Light, you see God, you see heavenly mansions, you see all kinds of things while you are in samadhi, you enjoy all of this bliss. The third path is that you've passed that. Just like in school, first you did not enroll in university. You are a nobody. You're just a high school drop out or nothing. Now, you enroll. Enrolling is the second path and you begin to learn something in the university. The third path, you've graduated.

We practitioners have different levels. Just be at ease with yourself – that's where you are, and don't ask for more than you can digest at a time. Don't ask ridiculous things, like you are already a professor, for example, and want to enjoy the student's life; because the age is different, the mentality is different. If you ask me, as a Master, can I do everything for you? Yes, I can. But what for? What for do you want heaven anyhow? We should make this world into heaven, not escape into it. It's okay when you sit and you have heaven

naturally; but if you always desire it, it's also queer. We are not beggars. If He doesn't give you, don't bother. He is not generous enough, maybe. It is His fault.

And if a creator can afford to make such a mistake as to overlook you, then the more so we don't need to see Him. Selfless service I see nothing now. I am only here twenty-four hours. I don't have time to even see you all here, even sometimes if I flash around. I don't even have time to pay attention to all these heavenly signs, because I use my time to serve you. But still, despite all my blackness or no visionness, you still revere me as a Master, why? It's not because of my visions now? They're all gone. Because of my love, because of my non-asking anything. I only give. I don't want anything from God and I want nothing from you. That's very important. So, we have to serve selflessly and everything else will come. It's difficult to tell you all this because you always hear, 'Seek you first the kingdom of God, then all the things shall be added onto you.' But what is the kingdom of God? The kingdom of God is not for yourself alone. If I have a kingdom of God, everyone must fit in. Otherwise, I don't go there, I'll wait for everyone. What's the good of me sitting there alone, or with you, or with a few disciples enjoying the kingdom of God and the whole mankind are crawling, groveling on the earth suffering and all that? So, the kingdom of God comes after everyone else is enlightened, if it comes to that.

I believe to work for everyone else's happiness than to work for my own. So, if you continue on that path, you have more satisfaction than any vision can give you. So, don't get strayed from that, you are doing okay. Just do that. Just serve people, and you'll have more satisfaction than any vision, than any Light or any Buddha's appearance can give you. I tell you the truth. So, let's be the cooks, not the guests all the time. We can be the guest sometimes also. But you have been and you were not satisfied. You thought the guest must be more than that. Because you cook all the time, and sometimes you go to the restaurant, you imagine that a guest would be such-and-such. But the guest is only there just to eat. That's it, and you pay your money and then you go home – no big deal.

True spiritual practice is gentle and graceful

Similarly, if we have spiritual visions, sometimes because we expect too much, we think a vision must be this, that and the other. It's not. It's a very ordinary thing. It's not like an electric shock that you know when it comes, or when it goes. It's very gentle. The transition between materialism into the spiritual spheres is very, very gentle. Therefore, it's not a kind of astral projection that you know when you are out of the body, because it's not the way of true spiritual practice. True spiritual practice eases the self into different dimensions in such a very gentle and graceful way that you don't even know you were there, because you had no more ego while you were there. Otherwise, you know, 'Now, I am on the first, now I am on the second, now I am on the third. I am the saint – third degree or third year.' It's no good. I'll tell you why.

Because we are already always there where we want to be. So, what's the point of knowing where you are going and what degree you've reached? It's okay for some, to lure them onto the spiritual path. But it's not for everyone, and it must not always be like that. For example, maybe when you first graduate from law school, you are proud. Yes, you probably tell everyone about it, make many parties because you want to celebrate your graduation as a doctor of law. But after some years you don't even remember that you are a lawyer. Occasionally, people ask you will remember; but without any pride, without any elation or without any happiness, nothing; because you are just that. Nothing new to you.

When you are empty, then you are full

Similarly, some of us are so acquainted with spiritual elation that it becomes like breathing. That's the way it should be actually. It's not always I sit here watching the Buddha's land, because then we are still separated. We are not in the Buddha's land, we are watching the Buddha's land. We and the Buddha's land are two. The nearer masterhood, the more ignorant you will become again. That's a paradoxical thing of life. That's why in the Tao Te Ching, Lao Tzu said, 'The wise are like the fool, ignorant.' Yes, you become like recycled again. But it doesn't mean you are ignorant the way you were ignorant before. It's not the same. Before you were ignorant and now you are truly ignorant, ignorant in the real sense. Before you were ignorant, but you thought you were wise. You cheated yourself into wisdom and thought that you knew everything. But now, you know that you are truly ignorant; and that's when you are wise. Because when you are empty, then you are full. The universe is yours. When you are full of all garbage, then you are outside. I am talking to all the people, the invisible beings as well and also to myself. I've had that feeling also, sometimes before. It's hard to be a Master, because you deny yourself everything, including visions, including the knowledge of the so-called computerized data. I only know what I must know and at that right time. That's it. That's all we need for the moment. Otherwise, it's burdensome to carry all this wisdom with you and show everyone that you are a Master. It's not the way.

LOVE GOD, TAKE CARE OF HIERS CHILDREN ⁵⁹

One of the rabbis, he was always fed up with the people who always came to see him, so he asked for seclusion. He went on retreat and saw no one. Normally, Father Abraham would come to see him every... I forgot the name of it, because it's a Jewish name. [Audience: Passover?] Maybe Passover, yes, yes. The ascended Abraham probably would appear to him every Passover. But that Passover, he didn't appear. So, the rabbi panicked and kept always praying and praying. Finally, Father Abraham appeared to him and said, 'Well, you wanted no one at your door, so I thought I was included. How can I come into a house when you don't welcome anyone?' That's what Father Abraham answered him. So he understood.

Then, from that day on, he welcomed everyone and he suffered the love of the people, the way I do. So, Abraham came to him all the time. Even past the Passover, he also came; because that's the way he wanted. If you welcome him, you welcome his children. That's what it is. So, that's why I always tell you, don't run around taking care of me. Take care of our guests, take care of our brothers and sisters, take care of whoever needs taking care of. It's okay that everyone likes to run around taking care of me and wants me and all that. But you don't realize that I am in all of you. You take care of each other, that's you taking care of me. I only need a little amount of attention. I don't need all of you taking care of me. You run over me, step over me, overwhelm me with love and attention. And all the brothers, sisters just stand around, and no one cares about them. It's me, too! It's me who you left behind there or didn't take care of. I know everything, I feel the feeling of the person. You don't feel it, but I do. So, if you don't take care of them, that means you bother me, because I will know that. I will be bothered.

59. Group meditation, Houston Centre, Texas, U.S.A., November 12, 1993 (Originally in English).

FIGHTING THE SPIRITUAL WAR ⁶⁰

[In 1993, after a fire in California, Master invited disciples to participate in a spiritual gathering at Laguna Beach, Los Angeles, to pray for the victims. Master's talk at that gathering inspired us to reflect on the spiritual implications behind disasters. An extract of the discourse is taken to enlighten and to encourage everyone.]

Whatever happens in our lives, it is a kind of maybe unbalance between the negative and positive. It is the negative force at work and that we have to reckon with. So, we have a choice between the negative and positive. It's very simple. Every time we think negative, we switch back to positive. Every time we want to speak negative, switch back to positive. Every time we want to hate someone, think twice and switch it to love because it doesn't help you to hate someone, right? [Audience: Right!] [Applause] And we can enjoy all richness, all luxury and all the beauties that God has bestowed on us, but we must remember the owner. We must remember God, and God is ourselves, our highest nature, nothing more. [Applause]

Always think positive

Therefore, we have the choice to think positively. Everything that is beneficial to other people and ourselves at the right moment, that is positive. And everything that hurts you and hurts other people, that is negative. So, every time we have to consider what is negative, and what is positive and that is how we fight. And when we always think positively, speak positively, and love people, and always act in a positive way, which means properly, in the right time and beneficial for ourselves and to other people, that is when we are siding with the positive force and the positive force has one more storehouse of power to overcome the negative energy in this world. [Applause]

Now if we have more positive energy in this world, then we have more beauty, more fortune, I mean, not in a money way but in environmental atmosphere and in all the things that we do, it will be smoother and more successful for us. And if we have more negative force, then we add to more disaster, more trouble, more wars and more bickering amongst neighbors.

We have the choice, so don't think that the disaster here or anywhere is maybe the karma of the people here alone; we also are responsible. Every time we think negative, we are responsible for disaster in the world, understand? Or our neighbor's. So, try to think positive all the time. Try to be loving and kind, and try to control our negative thinking. I know you know it, but sometimes you forget to make use of it. That's all. So, try to make more use of it. Think positive. Speak positive. Do things in a loving way. Think in a loving way. Every time there is a negative tendency, you switch it off, and pull yourself back again. That's the only way. I have no other secret. I am trying to do the same.

Sometimes disaster is also good for us, good for humanity. Yes, like they learn to work together, protect each other, love each other, and share the hard times together. And people's hearts become more tender. And hatred dissolves between misunderstood neighbors and all that. And so people in disaster will begin to reflect the ephemeral nature of life. And then they will begin to understand that material security is not everything reliable that we need. Look at millions of homes, just six minutes finished, five minutes.

60. Public lecture, Laguna Beach, Los Angeles, California, U.S.A., November 6, 1993 (Originally in English).

When I read the newspapers lately, there were many things that were very interesting. For example, even the doctors, they admit now that people with religious faith sometimes heal better, or at least they have more strength in endurance and acceptance of their health conditions. They are more optimistic, more cheerful, because they trust in God. Even if they don't see God like we do and they don't see God helping them, but they still have faith in God, and this faith helps them with their diseases and the doctors know about that now. Also, in times of disaster, when people have faith in God, they feel better. Like this fire; some of the victims because they have faith in God, they just accept what it is and they feel better within themselves; more acceptance and not too much misery. But most of the people in times of disaster, they get into some kind of a shock, and it will be a long time before they can recover.

Practice loving kindness and compassion

America is getting better. I saw in the newspapers, like on television programs, now they're cutting down on violence. And on the music radio programs, they want to cut down all kinds of violent music, all kinds of music that glorifies gangs, drugs or sexual tendencies – something like that. And I was very happy. For the first time, they did right. No, I am sure there are many other things that the Americans have tried to do right for a long time. But it takes some power behind that to push them. So, we try to supply a little power, together with other spiritual groups, to make the world a better living place.

But that doesn't mean that we don't have disasters any more. That doesn't mean we don't have disease in the whole because the majority of mankind is still clinging to the negative habit, even though many of them know it's not good for them. And therefore, they probably need some kind of shock like that to shock them out of their dream. But I don't like it. I don't like that, because it's too painful for the people.

Therefore, we try to minimize their pain, with our care, with our material comfort and spiritual support. Otherwise, what are we here for? What are we in this world for? If we always blame God for everything and say it's their karma, it's their bad retribution, then what are we here for?

Just like your children, if they did something wrong and they hurt themselves, of course, you know that is a consequence of the bad doing of the children. But still you help them when they get hurt, when they are wounded, when they are sick, even though it's due to their own foolishness, their own actions. Still we help them and we love them all the same, right? So similarly, this is also good for us to practice loving kindness and compassion. Everything we do is for the whole, not for ourselves.

The world is getting better, it seems, everywhere. But it looks chaotic at the moment. Why? On one hand, it seems like the world is getting better. Every nation has more freedom. All the restricted countries are open now, have become more free. And the people of different nations have gotten together now. The worst enemies before are becoming friends now. That's very good for our world. Very, very good. But why, why does it look chaotic at the same time? Who knows? [Audience: People can't handle the freedom.] You got that from me last night. [Laughter] Who else? [Audience: The karma works faster!] Yeah, it could be that also. It could be that the karma works faster for them so that they are cleansed. In the same sense, it is like when you want to build a new house or you want to clean the whole house, it looks messy, right? It looks messy at that moment, but then it becomes better in the future. Or sometimes you go to the doctor when you are very sick, and he gives you medicine. Then it has a counter-effect and you

become worse than before, it seems like for a very short period of time and afterward, you get better. So, that's it.

God is eternally reliable

We can never be sure how to protect ourselves from this world. So now, the most protection we can get is from where? From ourselves, from God. That's the most permanent, because at least we know that we have something else besides all these material possessions. Then sooner or later we will return to that where we have everything, we have the whole kingdom. [Applause] So, at least, even if we encounter any misfortune, we are secure; we don't go berserk; we don't go into shock, have mental problems, or things like that. So, at least even that, the society has less burden with people like you. You are capable mentally to stand up, to grow again.

I'm glad to inform you that none of our disciples who live in that area have any problems. I mean no houses were burnt. Because many of our people are living in that area, Santa Anna and all that. So, it's good for you; you have to help those who are in need. Otherwise, it would be you that we have to bring food, toys and blankets to your house.

Now if we have a very simple life, it's easier to help people and to help ourselves. And also we have security from our spiritual practice. So,, we never fear, very seldom we fear. I fear sometimes when I go into that tube for a medical exam. It looks like a tunnel, like a coffin, like the tunnel before you go back to this world that separates this world and the other world, the life and death tunnel. A long tube like that and it's very low. And when you look, it's right in front of your nose; you feel closed in. But then I made it. After the third time I said, 'That's it. I'm going to lie here and it's done.'

It's okay to have fear, because it's a habit. And sometimes you collect the fear feeling from the atmosphere also, it is not necessarily yourself. Sometimes because we are practicing and we become more sensitive, we collect it from other people to share with them the difficulty, the fear, or the feeling of that place or at that moment. But that's what we are there for.

Share the responsibility of cleaning the planet

Nevertheless, our fear is not the real fear. We can conquer it. That's the difference. And we know how to do it. We know how to conquer it. But we are made like that, so that we help in cleaning the planet. Every Quan Yin practitioner shares the responsibility of cleaning the planet in some degree or another.

Therefore, when you're sitting here meditating together in a group, it's not that you do it for yourselves, for your five generations' liberation, for America or for your family alone. It's for the whole planet. And the more people that do that, the better. Unfortunately, not everyone realizes that. Their level is only up to thinking of the immediate benefit. Therefore, sometimes it's difficult for them to join us in this noble task force.

It's not that we don't care. It's hard to care sometimes. But that's the karma. So, we have to be patient and wait until one day the karma is over and then we can help. We can't force the issue. We can't step over the lord of karma's head and then do what we want, because it's not good for the people.

Just like in the family, our big world here is like a family, and there are some parents who watch over the children – us, like the children. So now, whoever is nice, quiet and good will

be rewarded, so that they develop more and make a shining example for the others to follow. And the children who are naughty, repeatedly naughty, then the parents have to do something like spanking or no ice cream for one week, for example, like that. Then the children will learn to behave better. Right?

Now, the lord of karma is like our parents, who represents the highest almighty to take care of the children here. So, he has to do his job. Because people don't remember the karma of their past lives, they sometimes blame God, saying, 'I am doing good this life. I am not doing anything and you still burn my house.' They forgot just thirty years ago, before they were born what they did; something like that, or where they have been. Understand what I mean? It is very easy to forget what we have done last year; never mind last life, many lives.

Do everything unconditionally

So, when you practice for enlightenment in a spiritual way, you have to know we do it with no conditions. Even if we follow the Quan Yin method, practice the highest way, we still have to accept some minor or sometimes even major problems or disasters that come to us. But luckily they are fewer than ordinary people who don't practice. Yes.

If you come to me with a kind of contract, then you are in for a disappointment. Some people misunderstand our motive. I never promise you riches. I never promise you a life of ease, a bed of roses. I never promise you you'll get anything you want, even when it's bad. So, we practice to eliminate the ego. The one that wants everything even when it's nonsense, when it's not possible, the one that always wants to push everyone else to work for him, wants things for nothing, wants things when he doesn't work for them, wants to serve himself first and does not consider in that circumstance whether it's correct or incorrect, that's the ego. Also God doesn't owe us anything. It's only for us, for our benefit that we should meditate, that we should become good; because that's good for us.

COMPLETELY COMPREHEND MASTER'S TEACHINGS AND BECOME SELF RELIANT ⁶¹

Be strong and be a giver, not a taker. That's the way of a saint. Because if you call yourself a saint or think you practice saintly conduct but always go on depending on someone else, that's nonsense. If you can't take care of yourself, how can you say that you'll take care of other people? If a Master can't even afford to take care of Himself or Herself, how can He or She boast of taking care of the whole world or other disciples? A Master takes care of disciples spiritually; there's no doubt about that. That's the duty of a Master, but you can't trade that for material support.

You're learning to become a saint. You're learning to be a Master, or to train yourself for a 'master's degree' in the way of being a Master, in the noble way. So, you have to first take care of yourself. Then you can say, 'I know how to take care of others.' That's why I've told you many times: Don't bow to the small gods and all those things that depend on you to live because sometimes people bow to beings such as local gods or other strange gods. And they say, 'If we don't bow to them and give them offerings, the gods will be hungry and in turn won't protect us.' But that's ridiculous! If that god depends on you for food and finances in order to protect you, he's nothing better than a gang leader because a gang leader goes around collecting money from pimps in exchange for protecting them. If God is

61. Group meditation, Los Angeles Center, California, U.S.A., October 29, 1993 (Originally in English).

such an exchange agent or is in an exchange business, then we can go and bow to the bank or the exchange bureau office.

So, what's the use of bowing to any god to protect us? We are God; we protect ourselves. Otherwise, at some time or other we'll be disappointed because we can't always ask other people for help all the time in life. Sooner or later our conscience will begin to get stirred up and we'll feel very bad about it. Or asking for help will become like a habit and then we'll lose our power of independence and that would be very expensive!

The power of independence, the spirit to struggle for survival is more valuable than money. We can't buy it. So, keep it. If you want to be strong, if you want to be a protector, if you want to be a guardian of the weak and needy, of the younger spirits, you have to be strong yourself.

This life is actually very simple. If your house is too big or if the mortgage is too high, buy a smaller house or rent it to someone who's wealthier. Don't get yourself into financial trouble and become a dependent person because then we lose our pride; we lose our self-respect. These things can't be sold for money. That's why I always tell you to support yourself. You should never be dependent.

Of course, we sometimes experience disasters and unexpected circumstances. Then we have to think fast or we might receive some help. For example, if there's really an emergency such as a fire and all the houses burn, if the people have insurance, it's fine; but right after the disaster they have nothing; they're on the street. So, of course, they have to get help from someone else. No one will say anything against that. If it were me, I'd also do that. I'd also receive help. If I were on the street and cold and had nothing to eat and someone offered to help me, I'd accept that. I'd have no pride.

Don't be too proud to accept help when you need it. Because later you'll be strong, you'll work and you'll help again in society, maybe with the next disaster. That's no problem. So, when you're in trouble, don't say that Master says you have to be independent and that you can't receive help from anyone. Don't say, 'So now, I have to die.' In that case, I'd tell you, 'Okay, die! You're too stupid to live.' [Laughter and applause.] I'd tell that person to die, the quicker the better, for our society as well as for all of you.

So, be flexible. Learn my teachings and assimilate them; digest them and use them for different circumstances. You have to know what's right and what's wrong. Don't always say, 'Master says it's like this,' and then it has to be like that. That's brilliant idiocy; it's no good. Whatever you learn from the saints of different teachings, make it your own. Learn and be flexible. Buddha said the same thing. So, don't blame me; don't say I'm teaching differently than Buddha. Don't say that I don't wear the same clothes as the Buddha. The Buddha said, 'My teaching is like a raft. After you cross the river, you don't carry the raft in your hands, on top of your shoulders; if you do that, it becomes your obstacle.'

When you cross the river from this side, you need the raft to carry you across the river, but once you arrive at the other shore you won't take the raft with you everywhere. Before, the raft was helping you; it was your helping instrument; but now, it's an obstacle! If you carry the raft on your head all the time, you'll bump into the trees and the people around you. So, you'll get tired if you say, 'The raft is the one that helped me so I have to be faithful to it. I have to sleep with it and carry it with me to my grave.' Isn't that ridiculous?

Give of yourself to compensate for the world's kindness

If a practitioner isn't flexible and doesn't learn to adapt to situations for the benefit of humankind, that person is dead. He or she is a dead Buddha. Only an 'alive' Buddha, a living Buddha, is good for the world. That's why I've taught you to take care of yourself.

So, do your job correctly, work and use your wisdom to at least take care of your family. Whatever's to spare, you can use to help the desperate. You can then contribute to the world not only to help cleanse the atmosphere spiritually, but also financially, physically and in many other aspects. We have to develop ourselves in all directions to become a perfect being. If you say you're a perfect being but develop only one aspect such as wisdom, what's the use of that wisdom?

Since we've been living in this world from the time we were born, we owe a great deal to the earth, at least physically. But now that we're grown up, we can stand on our own feet and repay some of that kindness. Thus, each person has to be responsible for his or her own finances and family. This I've told you again and again. And whatever I teach you will benefit you for a long, long time. It will benefit the whole world in the long term. So, try your best to follow it.

APPRECIATE GOD'S GRACE AND AVOID DISASTERS ⁶²

Not many people appreciate God's grace and thus they handle His grace disrespectfully. So, the guardian angels of justice have to sometimes remind humanity with earthquakes, fires, floods and so on. That's why the best gift we can give to humans is to teach them to avoid disaster altogether, not just to relieve it.

But because there are many people who don't heed this message and have their individual or collective karma, we should always put forth an effort for them, be patient and wait until they grow up spiritually. Then maybe they'll in turn help other younger souls who don't yet understand that they should first seek God before anything else and then they'll have everything.

NO MORE TRANSMIGRATION ⁶³

We are born from God, and we are one with God. No matter how long we have run around in the cycle of transmigration, thinking we are heterodox or orthodox, we have never left the Tao (the Truth). Heaven and hell are also in the Tao; they are only a little distance apart. Just like a wave in the sea. Sometimes when there is a strong wind or when the earth moves vigorously, the wave will rise higher. Actually, it is still linked with the sea, still on the sea surface, still one with the water. It might think that it is great and no longer has any relationship with the water, yet when it falls down, it still has to go back to the water in the sea or river. This is very logical! Of course, the sea wave doesn't understand these things. It just rises and falls innocently, so it has no karma, and will not have to transmigrate. It doesn't know what is transmigration.

It is all because our mind is too complicated, thinking we are incurring karma, that we are separated from God, that we are sinful and lowly human beings. Then we forget we are forever with God. If after we die, we have no such concept about transmigration, and have

62. Group meditation, Los Angeles Center, California, U.S.A., October 29, 1993 (Originally in English).

63. Group meditation, Laiyi Center, Pingtung, Formosa, October 24, 1993 (Originally in Chinese).

no greed, we would float as if we were in the air, and definitely would not transmigrate again. We transmigrate because of our senseless concepts; we cling to the mind and keep trying to grasp anything that it desires. The soul and the mind are connected. In order to experience, the mind says, 'We have not yet finished with our game!' [Laughter] Then both of them have to come back. When the mind has learned all its lessons, and the souls is aware, then they will not come back to learn again. We are tired of this world even before we leave! We have enjoyed everything and have no more attachment. We have realized it thoroughly: We are tired of fooling around here life after life. Then this time, we definitely won't have to come back again.

THE POWER OF THE SOUND MEDITATION ⁶⁴

Only through the Quan Yin can we get through all kinds of levels of consciousness. That's why we see many people who meditate on the Light but haven't yet gotten to the level at which to contact the Sound, and their lives don't change much.

With many kinds of meditation that are on the intellectual level, like asking the meaning of koans (Zen Buddhist riddles), or that focus on a lamp, people see Light also, but their lives don't change much. Because some Light levels are below the elevating Sound level. Some people meditate on the Light, and in samadhi, or in moments of extreme concentration, they will also contact the Sound automatically. And at that time, they're also doing the Quan Yin. So, they have the Sound and Light together. But they don't know how to get to the Sound without effort because they haven't been connected with the Sound by a competent friend, a competent guide. So, it's easier for us because we know how. In the modern day, 'know-how' is the key to success. So, know-how also applies in the practice of meditation. Therefore, even if we haven't been in true samadhi, and we still get some taste of the benefit of the sound current, it helps to revive our body and spirit.

THE ENLIGHTENED WITNESS ⁶⁵

We don't reincarnate, but a part of our habits, our collective information reincarnates. So, this part of us, which is called the intellect, or maybe the sixth consciousness, collects all kinds of karmic information. And then it recycles it again, like a Coca Cola bottle, or like some of the things in the United States now that they encourage people to recycle. It's the same thing; our 'bottles' are recycled. Each time they can be used, and they are still connected with other materials in this world, then we call it reincarnation; it's just a kind of recycling. The Coca Cola substance inside doesn't reincarnate, only the bottle does. Still, people can recognize that, or not recognize it. But the substance is still there, so they recognize it as recycled; we see it as recycled.

The things from which this bottle is made are not reincarnated; this is our real self, our soul. Each time we want to experiment with new things, we bottle ourselves into a new recycled substance or subject; that's it. But then again we're used to identifying ourselves with all this substance and information, so we say we reincarnate. But it's not true. We never die, and we are never born. We have always existed; we are the witness of all things created and destroyed in this universe. We always are the witness. But then sometimes we identify ourselves with the subject that we witness and with the circumstances in which we witness it, so we suffer or we have joy.

64. International four-day retreat, Honolulu Center, Hawaii, U.S.A., October 22, 1993 (Originally in English).

65. International four-day retreat, Honolulu Center, Hawaii, U.S.A., October 22, 1993 (Originally in English).

Just like when we watch television, and we forget that it's only a movie, and we cry, or we laugh. We support this one, and we want to kill the other. Both of them have nothing to do with us, none of them are our enemies or friends, and none of them are real. But we hate that one: 'Oh! That mustached one, he is a bad guy, kill him, kill him!' You sit in front of the screen, and you say, 'Kill him! Kill that guy quickly!' Or 'Get out, get out! He'll kill you! Get out, quick! This way, this way!' Like the personage on television or the screen will actually listen to us or hear us, but they don't. They do what they have to do according to the director, not according to us. Therefore, many of the movies' outcomes don't suit our taste; we want to change them. But what's the use? If we change it, it's not that movie any more. So, the movie has to exist the way it is. Actually, we fool ourselves many times, and we can prove that every day; no need to talk about reincarnation, illusion or anything of this world, we can prove it.

I'll tell you a foolish story about myself. Yesterday or the day before yesterday, when I first came to Hawaii, they rented an apartment for me and our many staff members, like the ones who have to work close to me; also we have guests. It's a rented place for ten days, not much, cheap, but very big and near the beach. I was thinking to invite you there, but I don't know how to house you. It's big, but it's not that big! It's big enough for ten persons, but not for thousands. So now, the relativity of our world: Sometimes we say, 'Wow, it's great!' But it's not that great compared to other things. We are always in illusion until we compare it against another background; then we know we are wrong.

It's similar with many practices. They practice, they eat vegetarian, they meditate and they are very good, but good to what point? Against our Quan Yin practitioners, they are just like half-cooked, half-baked cookies, for example! So, we know the good things and the great things in this world have their limits, compared to the Truth or the limitless almighty power of God.

Magic mirror

Now, come back to my foolish story. I went into the room, fantastic, everywhere it had big mirrors, so I can see how pretty I am. [Audience laughs at Master's 'preening' gestures.] And in the bedroom, there was a big mirror; I knew it was a mirror. Everyone immediately knew it was a mirror; there's no fooling about that. In the bathroom, there were also two windows, and from the two windows, you could see through to the sea.

Then when I looked into the mirror, I saw four windows. And I kept thinking, 'How come the sea is over there?' I thought my place was situated on the edge of the water, and was surrounded by the sea. So, I could see the sea in that window, and I could see the sea through that window. And I fooled myself for two days. Can you believe it? Until one day I happened to look out of the real windows, and I saw there was no sea over there. And I said, 'How come?' I looked back to the wall again where the mirror was and said, 'Wow, there is the sea!' And even then, I did not understand.

So, they say the sage is like the fool. Actually, afterwards I remembered, 'Oh, yes, it's the mirror!' But it was difficult to find out. You can't believe it. Because I was not used to this kind of scenery, two windows became four, that I hadn't seen before. And the sea was inside the wall. But it looked so real that I was mesmerized with the beauty of the sea through the windows and I forgot about the mirror. Really, I did! But it hit me like that: 'My God! You are the Supreme Master, okay, but You don't realize the difference between the windows and the reflection of the windows.' So, I laughed at myself, and had very good fun when I realized that.

But it surprised me that I didn't realize it was a reflection from the window. It really surprised me for many days. How could I be fooled so easily? Just because I love the sea, I focused on the sea. And I thought, 'Wow! You can see the sea through the windows; fantastic, we have four windows and on all four sides is the sea.' I was happy with the sea, and I forgot that it was an illusion. It's not that I couldn't find out, it's just that I was too fixated on the sea.

So, similarly in our daily life, most people are fixated on the object of their beloved desire. And then they forget the illusion, they forget the magic mirror. It's not that they can't find out; when they are ready, they'll find out. The Master will come, or they will wake up themselves. Actually, when the Master comes, that means they wake up themselves. Otherwise, who can tell them they have it inside? Just like me: I have my eyes, the mirror is there, I can always find out, but then I am too fixated on the vision of the sea, and enjoying that. And it looked so real; I thought it was four windows. I'm telling you the truth; I'm not kidding you. I'm not telling a story to make a smooth gap between our lectures; it's a true story. I am that foolish. Can you believe it? And now, you follow me! [Laughter] So, be careful where you're going with the mirror.

Reflection versus reality

We are fixed in our illusions up to now, or still, sometimes. Therefore, we can't find the truth between illusion – the reflection or the shadow – and the real. So, we play up and down; we enjoy it. And sometimes we hit ourselves and we say, 'How come?' It's not there because it's not there; it has never been there.

Similarly, our life is so real to us that we can not understand or believe that it is an illusion, that there is another real life, the true object of this shadow life. But when we close our eyes, we shut all our senses, and truly look for the real subject, then we realize, 'Oh, there is a fantastic world, and that is real.' It feels good there, it feels real, and it feels better than over here. So, that's when I look through the real window; the real wind is caressing my face, and all the trees outside are waving. Whereas in the mirror, it's a little bit different. I discovered that the four windows are different. Because in there are no trees, and out there are trees. And then I realized, 'Ah! This is a different reflection only, so the angle is different.' So, the reflected picture is missing some part.

Therefore, in our real life, it's the same thing. The reflection is never perfect, because of a different-looking angle. And now we are not satisfied; that's that. You feel something phony about it. Then sooner or later, we will desire the real, and the reality will hit us. And then we know: There we are. That's why we make mistakes; that's why we stumble so far.

CHERISH THE EARTH'S PRECIOUS RESOURCES ⁶⁶

Our planet is suffering from severe devastation in this age, as trees are cut down and mountain forests destroyed indiscriminately. Many beautiful places have been ruined and reduced to deserts. New deserts are emerging every year. Take a look at the statistics and you will know. Consequently, the earth's climate has changed drastically. It has become peculiar with the occurrence of many typhoons and earthquakes, and sharp fluctuations in temperature. Mercury readings soar high in places with normally cold climates and plunge low in places with warm climates. Our bodies can hardly adapt to the changes. For instance, we may be accustomed to living in Hong Kong, where the weather turns cool in September and October, and becomes really cold in November and December. Our

66. Group meditation, Shatin Center, Hong Kong, September 11, 1993 (Originally in Chinese).

bodies have already adapted to these annual variations, and a sudden change brings physical discomfort. We may become ill and have lots of trouble.

Caring for nature

Human beings have enormous destructive power. They care little about society or the future, and are concerned only about their immediate personal benefit. Therefore, a considerable part of the earth's resources have been destroyed, which in turn has affected the world economy. Should a torrential downpour occur where no effort has been made to conserve soil and water, there will be no trees to absorb the rain permeating the soil, and it is later released slowly like a river. The result is a flood disaster. When floods occur, many houses are destroyed, crops are submerged in water, and the global economy suffers. Recent floods in the United States have incurred losses totaling billions of dollars, and the United States has yet to completely recover from these disasters. This is all caused by humankind's destruction of the environment.

If every group, unit, and individual can act like our group and care lovingly for Mother Nature the way I teach you, then our world will be different. We may think that only communist or extremist countries wage wars that destroy our planet and jeopardize human lives. But in reality, they are not the only ones; even small groups, small units, or individuals can destroy the earth. They do it bit by bit every day. This is chronic destruction. War causes one-time damage, and the after-effects disappear in a few decades. When people realize that war brings no benefits, they call for a cease-fire and begin reconstruction and restoration efforts. However, the chronic destruction that goes on daily throughout the world is difficult to restore. It causes damage and creates risks that are no less than those caused by war.

I do not teach you these things because of money. For example, sometimes I teach you how to pick fruit, take care of trees, and spray unhealthy trees. Trees become sick sometimes. Worms grow inside and devour them, then the trees fall. Therefore, you must take care of the trees when you have time. Those who know how to do it should teach those who do not. Work together. Each one of you can tender a few trees. And when fruit grows, we can pick it.

Implications of spiritual acts

Every action by a spiritual practitioner carries symbolic significance. When we act with the intent to preserve, this power of loving concern will spread from our corner of the world to the whole planet. The earth will be conserved, crops will be protected, the global economy will be sustained, and everyone will have food to eat. The world will have adequate resources and sufficient food for everyone. We do not do this so we can save a lot of money; in fact, little can be saved in this way. It is merely a symbolic action. Having the spirit to conserve and the heart to contribute demonstrates the power of conservation and positive strength that we want to share with the world. If this power of conservation pervades every corner of the globe, the world will be much safer.

When everyone is engaged in destruction and no one makes any effort at conservation, of course, the positive power will diminish until no protective power is left and only the negative, destructive power prevails. Therefore, we must try to maintain a balance. We may be few in number, but our power is great. We spiritual practitioners can focus our minds to such an extent that even though we are doing only a little bit, the outcome is comparatively more significant and the impact greater than our efforts. Therefore, do not say, 'Well, it is merely a few acres of land. How much benefit can we bring to the world?'

Why should Master take all this trouble?' When each person does a little bit, the combined effort is enormous. In the world outside, everyone causes a little bit of damage. All actions should begin from individuals. Therefore, when you do a positive deed, bear in mind that you are doing it for a symbolic purpose.

When we do it, our protective power can offset the destructive force in the world. Even though we cannot completely compensate for past actions, at least we can try to maintain a balance. Otherwise, if everyone is being destructive and no one is committed to conservation, the world will become a desert sooner or later. Now there is less and less forested land; the same is happening here around us. All the surrounding mountains have become bald like a monk's head. Therefore, we must balance it a bit symbolically. If we had not preserved the forests here, this place would have become barren. Do you think it would have looked nice? Fortunately, we still have some green and richly forested areas here. In the summertime, you can sit under the trees to read, meditate, cool off, chat, rest, or lie in hammocks. Had we not taken good care of this place, the trees would have become sick, withered, and finally died. The whole place would have become as bare as the mountains over there. How would you have felt then? Wouldn't it have been a lot worse than it is now?

Jeopardizing both the earth and humankind

If the natural environment is slightly destroyed and humankind adds to the damage without anyone taking care of Mother Nature, our planet earth will one day become like Mars. Do you know about Mars? Why is it called Mars (the Chinese term for Mars is 'Fire Plane')? It is because there is only fire up there and the planet is red. There is no life, at least not on its surface. I hear that there is life underground, however. This is because the planet suffered severe devastation in the past, and there was a war with other beings. Although they battled only because they had no other alternative, the karma remains. They killed each other with chemical bombs, which made the planet barren. Besides, humans cannot live there because the surrounding atmosphere is still highly toxic. The non-toxic atmosphere of our planet earth contains oxygen; therefore, we can live. But perhaps our oxygen is not pure, so we cannot live long and our life force is weak; we cannot enjoy a long life. On Mars, or other more dangerous or worn-out planets, the atmosphere is in even worse condition. Pervaded only by toxic gases and no oxygen, it allows no life to survive.

Today, the humans on earth have enormous destructive power and have created plenty of toxic gases. For the sake of money, people give no thought to the future, or about the people around them, not even their own children or future generations. Therefore, the air on earth is becoming increasingly toxic, and people are afflicted by more illnesses. It is difficult to cure their illnesses because their immunity is growing weaker.

Cherishing God's grace

Trees generate oxygen to maintain a balance in the air in our environment. Without them, the earth will have only floods and fires; it will be hot and dry like a desert; the atmosphere will become unbalanced. This is because trees absorb carbon dioxide for circulation and transformation, and release oxygen that is beneficial to our bodies. If we look at green plants frequently, our eyes will feel relaxed, we will feel good, and our bodies will feel very comfortable. Therefore, trees are vital to human beings. When we take care of them, we also take care of ourselves. This has nothing to do with money.

This is symbolic conservation of nature. We do not worship nature; we preserve it. Sometimes we have to cut trees for a greater purpose or out of genuine necessity. But when we don't have a reason to do so, we should preserve them all. It is a symbolic action. We do not do it for money, nor is it because I am fastidious that I trouble you. You may think that it is not worthwhile, because you can buy a lot with a few dollars, but the meaning is different. Everyone wants to buy and no one wants to plant. Since God has bestowed the great nature on us, we ought to take good care of it to show that we cherish what He has given us. And He will give us more. For instance, parents give some money to their child, and the child manages and runs a business well. As his business prospers and expands, the parents trust him more and are happy to give him more wealth. Then he will prosper even more. If the child squanders, wastes, or loses the money, will his parents give him more? Of course, not! This is very simple and logical.

Therefore, when we possess anything that we think is good, we ought to cherish it, take care of it, and make it even better. Since we spiritual practitioners have great power, we create a more tremendous impact doing the same thing that non-practitioners do. It is because we do it with focused attention and love, which is very much different than the way people outside do it inattentively or for money. We thus have greater influential power that brings greater benefit to the world. Therefore, bear in mind your own power when you do anything. Otherwise, spiritual practitioners are no different than non-spiritual practitioners. Then why should you practice spiritually and expend so much effort? Do you feel that you have improved when you go to group meditation? If you are truly sincere, you will feel yourself improving, and you will make progress.

TRANSCEND GOOD AND EVIL, FOCUS INWARDLY TO REACH GREAT ENLIGHTENMENT ⁶⁷

Our God nature is great and infinite. We ought to develop and recognize it every day instead of just being content with a little enlightenment. This is absolutely not enough!

The God nature is great and infinite

You must meditate more! Otherwise, not only will you do things poorly, but you will also feel mentally uncomfortable. If you've meditated a lot, you look at everything cheerfully and you're mentally relaxed. Isn't that right? [Audience: Yes!]

Meditation doesn't mean just sitting there cross-legged. You also have to focus inwardly with sincerity and concentrate inside, ignoring worldly matters. If we can remain in this state for twenty-four hours a day, our aura will become very comfortable. We'll look at everything light-heartedly, and won't keep it in our minds for a long time.

Don't think that it's enough to be enlightened. Take Shakyamuni Buddha for example. After He was enlightened, He continued to meditate daily to make Himself more enlightened. Our God nature is not that limited. So, don't be overjoyed at just seeing a star or the moon. Don't think that it's enough to be able to see the inner Light, or the Amitabha's world, or the heavenly realms every day. Our God nature is great and infinite, and we ought to develop and recognize it each day instead of just being content with a little enlightenment. This is absolutely not enough!

67. Group meditation, Shatin Center, Hong Kong, June 26, 1993 (Originally in Chinese).

Transcend gossip and rise to great heights

Some spiritual practitioners aren't cultivated enough, or don't even meditate at all, but then they complain that their lives aren't comfortable. When our lives aren't comfortable, we should meditate more! Only through meditation can our lives become a little more pleasant. Otherwise, we're engulfed by the bad atmosphere of the world. How can we find ease under such circumstances?

Thus, you had better ignore these senseless, trivial matters. The less you know about the things of the world, the better it is for you. Don't care about too many trivialities. You ought to transcend and ascend. Only then can you practice with tranquility, attain greater enlightenment, experience results in meditation and have motivation. Otherwise, caring about these trifles all day long will make it very difficult for you to meditate with concentration. If you just sit there wrestling with the chaotic, distracting thoughts that constantly emerge, how can you possibly sit still?

The best way for us is to soar high and ascend, transcending all the gossip in this world. That's why I'm always changing in this aspect or that aspect, just to let you learn this lesson. You have to learn faster, and not confine yourselves in these petty, useless and worthless corners of your life.

Don't be hooked by a tiny thorn

Each time we're angry or critical, our hearts become narrower and can't accommodate all. It's like when your clothes are hooked by a little thorn on a tree, and you can't free yourself unless you pull out the thorn, however tiny it is. So, we shouldn't mind our neighbors or our Master, or the good or bad in anyone. Only then can we meditate wholeheartedly. If there's any garbage in our hearts, we'll be stuck there; we'll be hindered.

Why have you progressed so quickly in your spiritual practice? It's because I change a lot, and you can never 'catch' me in time. [Master and audience laugh.] You're not fast enough to get attached, to praise or to cling to any form. All you have to do is follow my teachings to practice, and you'll benefit and progress, and then be happy, joyful and cheerful. However I act is my own personal matter. It has nothing to do with you. It's the Master's power, the universal power, and not I, this person, who is helping you. Therefore, don't mind what I do, and especially don't care about the rights and wrongs of your neighbors and fellow practitioners. Of course, if you feel that they've done something wrong, and you can't stand it anymore, then you may talk to them. If they don't listen, forget it. Don't keep it in your mind for long.

Sometimes when we're angry with someone, do we meditate badly? [Audience: Yes.] The more you try to forget him, the more his disgusting face appears before you, [Laughter] just like watching television. However, a television is easy to turn off, but his image is out of control and keeps appearing right in front of your wisdom eye. It's truly intolerable!

Thus, try not to mind about the good and bad aspects of other people. Let the big ones become small, and the small ones turn into nothing. Try your best to forgive and understand others. The more we forgive and understand, the better it will be. Don't be angry with people. When we're angry for a long time, cancer may develop in the body. You all know that anger is the most harmful emotion to the body.

Dissolve anger to benefit yourselves and others

When you're very angry, try your best to reduce your anger; if it's only a small anger, try your best to reduce it to nothing. Later, just laugh and forget about it. This is better for us. We can control our emotions; it's not that we can't. If we can control them, then it's very good for us.

I've tried this. Just as we adjust the sound volume higher or lower, we can also adjust our anger. It's up to us. If we turn our anger higher, we'll be in a bad mood the whole day, and it's also harmful for other people. If we turn down our anger a little, later it will seem as if nothing has happened. It's good for us and for everyone else as well.

BE OUR GREAT SELF ⁶⁸

You don't need anything, don't ever feel that you need anything. Do not hang on to this mother attachment you had when you were a child. We should grow up. We need nothing. Even if we die, so what! Everyone dies one day. But now we will not die because we have found eternal life. Even if our cover material is destroyed, it's nothing. It's only an apparatus. If your car is kaput, you buy another one. When our body is gone, we create another – in time, when the time comes, when we need it. We have creative power, so fear nothing.

If you think I am worthy of being your Master, then learn from my example. I am not proud to tell you this. I just tell you the truth at the sacrifice of my image that you might think I am arrogant. But I have to tell you everything, so that you learn fast. I have long ago forsaken my reputation, because many people still misunderstand sometimes. Despite all my sacrifice and selfless service, still people misunderstand. Sometimes the new disciples also. I've long ago become used to no reputation, because I don't need it. Reputation is also excess garbage, because our soul is God, is one with God. God is the most glorious being. So, who can damage God's reputation?! Not with all these empty newspaper words or empty television screen. It's nothing.

So, have no fear because we have nothing to lose. We have never had anything because we have everything. We never lose anything because we have the whole universe. When you stay in a house, that is your house. So, when we stay in this universe, it's our universe. Even from an intellectual stand point, we are the Masters of the universe. So, do not look down upon yourselves, and remember who you are. You need nothing. You beg nothing. You only give. You give from your energy, from your good quality, from your Godly quality. So, don't worry about every little thing that bothers you. Nothing bothers you if you don't let it.

Do not identify yourself with the little problems that the world gives you. They are just like dust that cling on your body when you're walking on the road. You can leave it there, or you can shake it off. So, it's up to you. But don't always complain if you want to leave the dust there. Be your great self! I rely on this great self, therefore I did the things I did. Your great self, my great self, only one great self. That is what we call God. There is no other God besides this. So, try to find this God, rely on this God all the time, and don't worry about the dust. We can always wash it with the Light and the Sound.

I hope you will understand how beautiful you are. I think many of you already feel this after the initiation, or felt it during the initiation. Some of you still can't catch up. But do not forget

68. Group meditation, Berlin Center, Germany, May 5, 1993 (Originally in English).

this. Be a God on earth! Walk like God! Do things like God! Talk like God! Do everything that is good and beneficial to others. Talk about everything that's good and beneficial to others. Think about everything that is good and beneficial to yourself and others. Don't dirty yourself with all kinds of low level thinking, speech or actions. That is below your dignity. Remember, you are great gentlemen.

Even though you are ladies, do not act the way weak children do, because you are not weak. Don't believe you are weak, and make an excuse to get sympathy from others, because it's also garbage. You have too much baggage already. How can God want sympathy? What for?

So, I hope you will find the way to walk like God. When you feel down and discouraged, you think of me – that I am not stronger than you, I don't have a good background like you, I am not born in a great country like you. And I can do the things I did. So you can.

TO BE ONE WITH THE GROUP ⁶⁹

I have never thought of any Center as mine. Not for a single minute, a second or even a tiny fraction of a second have I thought that. I was very happy for our fellow initiates every time we were able to buy a Center. I regret that I do not have enough money to buy one for every location. However, in the last three, four years it has been better; we have been able to pay off many Centers and do not have to pay any mortgages. You know that I don't like to have debts. If I died while still owing someone money, then I would have to come back to pay it, and that would be very tiresome! What I am saying is that you should make yourselves comfortable here, and consider me as one of you. Actually, I do not have any personal rights in this Center, because I seldom stay here. You are the owners of the place. We do not have any possessions in this world; we only borrow them to use temporarily.

Life in America is not that easy, working hard everyday from sunup to sundown just to have a little extra. It can mean living on credit with debts to pay for forty to fifty years. People live just to pay their debts, so life here is not at all what it was in Au Lac. Therefore, many Au Lac people found it was difficult when they came here. Likewise, this is true in spiritual practice, like when we've just joined a group, or even after a long time we find out there are different opinions because of different levels of understanding and misunderstanding. So, before you misunderstand someone, or are ready to debate about something, you should consider whether you have understood correctly what the other person really meant, or whether what you are about to do is what the Master would want you to do. Constantly reflect on your inner self in order to get in touch with your inner wisdom. Your wisdom will not misguide you.

Why do other practicing groups have problems and obstacles? Because they forget to look at themselves, they forget to overcome their desires for fame and profit. Of course, for practitioners of the Quan Yin method the desires for fame and profit becomes less and less, but a new practitioner may forget, because it's an old habit. So, you have to remind each other. Most of the time, the opinions we carry on the outside, such as at work, are different from what we use in the practicing group. When we practice, the mundane outside opinions and working attitudes we bring into the Center can sometimes cause conflicts among us.

69. Group meditation, Los Angeles Center, California, U.S.A., April 4, 1993 (Originally in Aulacese).

For example, if some initiates haven't wanted you to work for the Center, you get disappointed and upset, then leave saying that you can't practice. Your personal emotions are harming the whole group, or something like that. That is only one example, but you don't understand, and you are not open enough, then you stand there criticizing inside, 'Why do they treat me that way? Is it because I am a newcomer to the group? Is it because I am not initiated yet that they treat me badly?'

Wherever we go, we have to act accordingly. Sometimes perhaps it is because people hold separate meetings for particular members, and we aren't allowed to go inside. However, after a while they'll let us in. We shouldn't take that matter as a reason to complain. Wherever we go, we should respect the rights and customary rules of the organization.

Similarly, religious groups also have rules and regulations that help build cooperation, eliminate complications in their communal lives, and avoid wasting too much time. If within a group, everyone has the same ideal, compromises with each other, and serves with a noble ideal, then it would be very comfortable and pleasant. Once you step in you don't want to leave. You want to stay forever. [Applause] So, I also feel very happy like you, seeing our group doing so well.

The greatest enemy our organization and we ourselves have is nothing but our ego, our own pride. Having others scold us or degrade us is not so important. We know that has nothing to do with us, so we can push it aside. However, if we cannot get rid of our ego and pride, it is difficult to cleanse them away, because they come from within, they are inner sicknesses. The sicknesses on the outside, physical things, are not a big deal, a little ointment and medicine can resolve the matter.

Many times when we work for Master, even though we have not made any mistakes, but sometimes it is because of collective karma, we feel very heavy, and we don't know where this feeling has come from. We just feel very oppressed, unstable and disturbed, but we don't know why. At that time, we should pray to the Master inside to help us overcome our hardships. There is no other way. We should then meditate more, do more Quan Yin, and it'll be better. We will feel that all our questions have been answered.

We have to go to group meditation, so we have the chance to rub against each other. [Applause] In going to group meditation not only will we improve spiritually, but our personality will change. If there is no rubbing against each other, we will not know our sharp corners and our thorns, so we cannot change. After we interact with each other for a while, some conflicts will arise, and when we go home, we will think it over again, 'Ah, I was wrong today.' We will know, right? If we never face any challenges, how will we know how high our level of martial arts is? With no one to practice with, how will we know our own level? That's why we have to go to group meditation. Whoever goes to group meditation a lot will definitely improve. I see that very clearly. Do you? [Applause] Therefore, by practicing in our group, we improve not only spiritually, but also in our personality.

At the Center, we have to help each other and divide the work. For instance, if all fellow initiates agree that a certain person has some skills, then request him to do some work in that area. If that person doesn't accept, then find someone else. We shouldn't fight with others to do the work. Fighting for the work even when we lack the skills will result in obstructions for everyone as a whole. We have to know our own potential and capability. If we have some talents, but no one knows, then volunteer: 'Let me work for one or two months, and if you see that I can't do it, then choose someone else.'

We always have to be like that. Understand? Don't always be fighting for the job and say, 'This is my job. I've always done this. No one else may do it.' Don't be like that. If we lack the skills, then step aside, because here we are working for the universe, for heaven sake, not to gain a little fame or to have satisfaction in our job. Doing it like that is creating karma for yourselves.

Yesterday the driver said to me that sometimes during his meditation, he travels to a place where it is very bright. There, he saw a lot of sick people, some had lost their arms, some had lost their legs. Each of them had lost some part of their body. That means their body was not whole. He saw Master passing by this place to heal these suffering people one after another, and to see what She could do to save them or to take them out of this suffering place, to see if they could be useful doing some work. Because yesterday Master said that sometimes She goes to visit hell to look for those who have improved in order to bring them up, he asked whether that was the same case as what he had seen.

Taking this opportunity, I explained to him that the missing parts of their bodies represent the mistakes in their spiritual practice and the work they have done. They had made someone suffer in many previous lives or the last life. Since they had created suffering for someone, they must suffer the same and therefore their body was not whole. Actually, healing their body is done in the high realm and not down here. The bright place is where bright Light is used to heal people with missing body parts. It takes a long time but eventually it will get better. Those who want to get healed faster would come down here and follow Master to work, using the merits that they earn to remedy their previous mistakes, and then their soul will come back as a whole again. That's all.

Therefore, when you work you are helping yourself, and not only for the public. When you are working not for reward, but only from love, then everything will go very smoothly. We need not worry that this work will bring benefit for us or for someone else. We only do because things need to be done at that moment. This way we will feel that our spiritual life is improving day by day. We will have more endurance; the more we work, the more we offer, the faster we will improve. We don't need praise from anyone. We know this ourselves. We know this during meditation, right? If we sit there but there is no peacefulness inside, because of too much greed, anger and lust, then we know that we have not travelled very far. We know that we are still at the astral level.

Enter the true world

Sometimes the sufferings in life make us feel tired. Only then can we give up our material desires. Otherwise, we could never be totally fed up with the world. Seeing only this world, you will not know how superior and how beautiful the inner realms are. Then how can we give this world up when we are supposed to? Do you understand? Not until this world gives us great suffering, makes us feel pressured, makes us feel heart broken, do we then start to have the desire, the question in our minds, 'Is there another world that is more beautiful and lasts longer than this one?' Then the power of the universe brings us a light of hope, and lets us meet a guide, who will lead us to a more beautiful realm. Therefore, sometimes pain and suffering are also blessings from the universe.

Sometimes it is also very good that an enlightened Master's physical body is ephemeral because if a Master lives forever, we will rely on Her. Subconsciously we rely on: 'Oh! If I don't see Her today, I will see Her tomorrow. If not tomorrow, the day after tomorrow. If not the day after tomorrow, then next month. If not next month, then next year. She will still be there. She won't die. What should I worry about?' Then we no longer have the desire, the sincerity to seek the inner Master, and only rely on the outside Master. So, we make no

progress in our spiritual practice. Do you understand? Sometimes it is also good for you that I do not see you often.

So, whatever arrangements God has made are fine. But sometimes the arrangements are not satisfactory for our mundane minds, so we say, 'Oh God! If I were You, I would do it differently.' And then we start to mess things up. Sometimes we blame God that He has made a mistake; but in fact, we do not understand the Truth. We do not know that God has done right, because we see only the outside, not the inside.

Life in this world is only a shadow cast by the true world. Therefore, only when we meditate, do we feel happy. We see that this world is without disasters; nothing can affect us, feeling that our body has disappeared. It is because we have already entered the creator's true world which is perfect, flawless, free of pain and suffering. We experience pain and suffering because we are still in the false world. Similarly, there is Buddha's pureland wherever you go. That is why even when you are sitting in the bathroom, you can also see Buddha's realm appearing, and perceive that this world is the Buddha's world. This is the meaning of the saying: 'When one's heart is pure, the land is pure'.

If you don't practice often, or have not entered into deep samadhi or reached the majestic realms, you can only see the outside world. When we practice diligently or enter samadhi, we can see the worlds inside. We will know that the outside world is the shadow of the true world, and we can see such beautiful and wonderful realms inside. We can see the true realm just as we were sitting there. Thus, it is said, 'Buddha (the almighty power) is in our heart.'

So, if we are still attached to any aspect, even though no one blames or scolds us, we should know that our levels are not high yet. We have to know ourselves, reflect upon ourselves, make progress, and cut off our shortcomings. That is all! We need to know that we must become our own enlightened Master. Except ourselves, no one is our Master.

OBEY THE MASTER IS BETTER THAN FOLLOW THE TEACHINGS ⁷⁰

To do everything for the Master, according to Indian philosophy, it's the highest attainment, it's the highest devotion, because sometimes we have different ideas about how to serve a Master. We think we do this and that and other. Actually, we don't do what the Master requests us to do. But what is the problem in this? What is wrong with this that we don't do what the Master requests. Will we go to hell? No! We make the Master angry? No!

Maybe the Master pretends to be angry or scolds you or something like that. Or whatever way the Master uses is to open your understanding, let you know that in this situation where you are wrong, try to teach you to become better next time. But the Master will not be truly angry inside. Just like loving parents never truly hate their children. They just sometimes pretend to smack their bottoms or scold them or give them some kind of reprimanding in order to rectify the children, so make them become better persons in the future. That's all. But parents always love children dearly.

Now so, why is it that if we don't obey the Master, that we are not a good disciple? Not because the Indian philosophy states so. We don't have to believe everything in the religious book. We don't have to believe it just because the Indian scripture says so or Krishna says so, or Buddha says so, or even the so-called Master Ching Hai says so. But why? Why do we have to respect the Master and obey the Master all the time? Is that

70. Group meditation, Melbourne Center, Australia, March 13, 1993 (Originally in English).

because the tradition says that if we don't obey the Master, we are no good? We are afraid of people who will say we are bad disciples? No! Because we have no more ego. Ah! That's it.

And that not just because Master says you have to obey the Master, so you do it blindly. It's just because your level is so high that it doesn't matter what Master says, you just take it as natural. That's okay. You have no more self. Yourself is so restrained, that you don't even have the ego anymore to argue with the Master. We have absolutely lost ourselves in the unity with the Master. Not because I say so, so you do it. It's just because at that moment your level is very high already, so you absolutely have no more discrimination what the Master says right or wrong, whatever She does right or wrong. You just know it's right, and according to the circumstances, you do it.

In that case, if the Master requests it and if it's truly necessary, you do it. That's the best practice. But in order to be able to do that, we have to have this high level. It's not that because I say you to do it, then tomorrow you do it. No, very seldom! You say, 'Yes, yes! I understand. Everything I do whatever you say.' And then tomorrow, 'But that I won't do. That can't be...' Then your brain, your ego starts to confuse you, starts to make you trouble, because it's the habit, understand? Because since childhood we learned that this is no good, that is no good, and the Master is like this, the Master should be like that, the Master can not wear this, the Master can not speak like that. So, when we are confronted with this similar situation, we immediately have this prejudice, this preconceived notion about what the Master should be or the Master should say or what anyone else should do and should say in such circumstances. But we don't consider the differences between the background.

Why do we absolutely obey the Master? Just because we are already in the high level, or at least we have trained ourselves, to restrain ourselves, ego self, until we reach that effortless self restraint, we don't restrain. We are self restrained, but we don't even make effort to do it. That's the best way. And then whenever we are confronted with any similar situation in life, we immediately have the correct answer from our wisdom. We have trained a new habit, that is very flexible. From previous life times and life after life, we have been trained in a very rigid framework, that whenever you see this, you do that.

So, to obey the Master doesn't mean always giving Her a lot of food and making Her house become a supermarket of all kinds of things, but to do what is requested, what is beneficial to the Master and for the whole mankind, because what benefits the Master will benefit the society, the human beings at large. We always have to be flexible in everything we do. That's why we obey the Master. Just because we want to be trained to be flexible. Understand what I mean? Not because any Master is so dictatorial that whatever Master says you have to do it. It's not true. Because our mind is so fixed in one direction or another, that the Master has great difficulty in breaking it apart, and then to retrain us again to become very supple and easy to manage. So, that's why the Zen Masters or the Masters of old sometimes they do something very sudden, or shout to your head, making you break your own thinking.

Only when we truly implicitly obey the Master then our mind becomes already very soft. And we can deal with all circumstance in true justice, and not with preconceived ideas, prejudices, because we are so used to flexibility, so used to all kinds of sudden changes, we are so used to immediate action, spontaneous action, not preconceived action. That's the best way.

Now for example, everyone says to you, 'The water is very dangerous, don't jump in there. You'll get wet and you'll get probably drown...' But once we're trained, all the time, already, we have taken a few gulps of water, but then later we are not afraid of water anymore. When we jump into water, we know what to do. Right? Just because we have trained ourselves in a new habit.

Everything is a habit. We learn the way of wisdom is the way of flexibility. Learn to use your intuitive understanding for every dealing in life as well as in heaven. That's why we need to learn. Not that we don't know already. We know enough, but we don't know how to use it in a correct time.

FEARLESS BODHISATTVA ⁷¹

You must maintain your faith. Always think positively, then any situation will improve. Sometimes we encounter undesirable situations in some places. But because of the positive thinking of disciples, and by just explaining to them then the situation will be improved.

However, it is different if we send someone who is not courageous. The situation will get worse. Therefore, the most important thing is that you must practice well. Having practiced well and developed our inner power, we become fearless Bodhisattvas. We accept reality, but we are not afraid. Besides, we see more clearly the cause of the situation. Otherwise, we are very upset. When the situation is bad, we would feel distressed and blame ourselves.

The main thing is that our conscience must be stable, showing that we are doing the right thing. Don't mind about other things. Success and failure are not the chief objectives in this world. Look further and you would see that failure is sometimes success, while success turns out to be failure. Who knows? It is more precise if we see with our wisdom eye and from the view of a spiritual practitioner. Otherwise, we are oppressed by the situations in our whole lifetime. We live as if we are dead. We have no personal rights, no daring spirit, no courage, and we are not worthy of this human life. We don't have to fight with others to show our courage. We are courageous inside. We know what we are, and that is good enough. We know our conscience. No need to show our courage by debating or fighting with people. This is not what I mean. Internally, we should be optimistic and full of positive love, so we could overpower the negative force. Otherwise, we are easily conquered by the negative force when we encounter it, because our positive power is inferior. Then our whole life is under oppression. Sometimes we were born in a suppressed condition, because God wants us to learn the fearless spirit, and the lesson of courage. Should we give in to the situation, we will never learn our lesson. It is only bad for us. There is not much changes to the universe. As we are not entirely enlightened, we think we are doing harm to the universe or the world. Actually, He has arranged different things in different corners of the universe. There is not much that we can do. Therefore, it is not entirely our fault. If we can do better, the universe would always give us a chance, so that we can change our interior, and feel great. [Master laughs.] We feel comfortable. We understand our personality, our spirit. Having learned this lesson well, we don't have to come back anymore. There is no good or bad situation really. Just that we are not prepared, haven't practiced well and then our wisdom will develop, we will naturally know how to deal with each situation with a clear and understanding conscience. Successful or not, our conscience is peaceful, then we have attained the Truth.

71. Group meditation, Surabaya Center, Indonesia, March 2, 1993 (Originally in Chinese).

ONENESS ⁷²

Being one means that I understand you, and vice versa. We, two, support and agree with each other; we, two, know why the other does things in a certain way. But it doesn't have to be the same. It's not like the world's monopolies and dictatorships. That's not oneness, and it's not what I mean. To be one occurs when both understand that the other is always doing the right thing in the way they speak and act. Under similar circumstances, both will respond similarly. The words can be different, but they will have the same meaning. One may not do things in the same way but the direction and goal are almost the same. The results will be almost the same.

LET YOUR ACTIONS BE CONSISTENT WITH WHAT YOU UNDERSTAND ⁷³

That is how most of you fail. You withdraw when you are faced with responsibilities; you find an excuse to slip away, talk about something else, or pretend not to understand. People become annoyed and drop the idea of using you, just for instance, and then you succeed in escaping. However, what have you escaped from? You are not only avoiding doing the job, you are also missing an opportunity to learn. Sooner or later, you will still have to learn the lesson, and it will be more difficult then.

Suppose you do not study well in elementary school, then it will be increasingly difficult for you to study in high school. You will fall further behind in your studies and become unhappy. That is why some students take their lives by jumping from great heights or into the sea. They play truant and run away from home because they cannot keep up with their studies.

This is why people suffer in this world. Instead of working hard to help ourselves clear our obligations and karma, we always want to slip or run away. But we can never escape! We will come back in the next lifetime, when we will find the lessons more difficult and we have heavier interest to pay. We will be more frustrated, troubled, and agonized. We will not be able to handle it, and will bring harm to our body, our life and things that we cherish and like.

Do you understand why life is so painful? You are the one who created the miseries! The saying 'we create our own frustrations' is so true. We not only bring trouble to ourselves, we also cause trouble for anyone who is related to us. That is why we have individual karma as well as collective karma.

If we truly love the world and want to deliver sentient beings, we must first perfect ourselves. Ancient sages were correct in saying: 'Cultivate yourself, stabilize the family, manage the country, and then pacify the world.' They did not elaborate in detail, so you just read and recite the saying without realizing anything. You do not digest and absorb the powerful truth behind the statement. Therefore, although people recite the scriptures, chant the Buddha's name, or whatever, they still remain ignorant.

This is also true with my teachings; if you do not cherish and practice them sincerely, you will remain the way you are. Maybe you will be a little bit different – now you cross your legs every day and have become a vegetarian. Perhaps your thinking has become a little

72. Group meditation, Tainan Center, Formosa, February 21, 1993 (Originally in Chinese).

73. Group meditation, Tainan Center, Formosa, February 21, 1993 (Originally in Chinese).

bit arrogant, 'I am a spiritual practitioner.' That does you more harm than good. You must be cautious. This is not good enough for spiritual practice.

You must truly be one hundred percent honest with yourself. We have to know our faults, but that does not mean feeling inferior or miserable. Once we recognize our faults, we should rectify them as best as we can. To make a mistake once is enough; do not repeat the same mistake. This way we can get rid of a fault each time. By eliminating one or two faults each day, we really could become faultless one day!

Faults are not that bad, but they hinder us from becoming a perfect being. If we keep making the same mistakes, there is no time for us to practice our good points. This is the problem, not others' criticisms. We are the masters of our own life, and it is up to us to be good or bad. So, we should choose that which is better for us. If we are busy making mistakes and then correcting them, that is, if one mistake needs to be rectified several times, then we will be completely occupied and have no time to learn better lessons. This is why faults are detrimental to us. I wonder if you understand or not. Sometimes you understand at the moment, but go back to your habits the next day. Just try your best!

RELAX AND THE WISDOM WILL EMERGE ⁷⁴

Sometimes our fellow initiates don't want to continue their business anymore after they have practiced for a while; they have no more desire for fame and wealth. However, since we are already in the business, we should fulfill our obligations. Though we no longer do business with the 'life-and-death' spirit as before, we can do it even better, and in a more relaxed manner than before. The reason is: Previously, we were so concentrated on the tussle that we were blind, and were not smart. When a person is nervous, busy and keen in struggling and fighting, he does things badly. Is it not so? [Audience: Yes!] It is the same with any work.

On the contrary, as we don't want to do it now, we just do it casually; but the results are even better. The logic is very simple. Since we are mentally relaxed, and we don't have the intense fighting spirit for fame and profit, our wisdom and intelligence will suddenly and naturally emerge. Therefore, the more relaxed we are, the better we can do our works.

THE KARMA HAS DISAPPEARED! ⁷⁵

Why do most people reincarnate in the cycle of life and death? It's because they are reluctant to leave this world, and so they want to come back again. There is something that they can't give up, so they want to come back to enjoy it. Or, some people have serious guilty feelings and so they want to come back to repay their debts. However, we no longer have karma! Our past karma has been burned by Master and now we don't create new karma anymore. We keep the five precepts and are vegetarian. We don't owe anything in the world. If we earn money for our own use and don't accept any offerings from others, then do we owe anyone?

The karma in our storage is very simple to get rid of, a fire can do it. With the San Mei fire (holy fire), the whole world can be burned, let alone your little karma. Only the present is important. In the present and future, we are not creating any new debt so we will not owe anyone. If we are no longer reluctant to leave the world, then why would we want to come

74. Group meditation, Laiyi Center, Pingtung, Formosa, January 31, 1993 (Originally in Chinese).

75. Group meditation, Laiyi Center, Pingtung, Formosa, January 24, 1993 (Originally in Chinese).

back? At the time of dying, although we try our best to think of something that we like, we just can't find anything. What we think of are all very painful and very terrible so that we only want to run away fast. Therefore, spiritual practice is not blindly believing but is, instead, logical.

Even if you do not believe that I can incinerate your past karma, you still have other logic to believe. For example, a farmer has saved a lot of taros or rice in his storage for the next season's planting, or he has saved the seeds of a new crop. However, when the planting season comes, he does not take them out but keeps them in his storehouse. So, the longer he keeps them in there, the more rotten they become. They can be eaten by insects, become rotten, or be carried away by mice and ants. Then they have no chance to develop and no chance to sprout. No one gives them water, no one gives them enough soil, and there is not enough sunshine. They lack everything. Therefore, they will become rotten themselves.

Similarly, our past karma, it remains in our memory. When it has a chance to come in contact with the outside, it will develop further. Now, we don't do that anymore and we don't give it any chance to develop. For example, now we no longer make mistakes like we did in the past. In the past, we did many things wrong. If we continue to do a wrong thing now, it will trigger our past mistake and develop into present or future karma. However, we don't do that anymore, so that it has no chance, no material and not enough conditions to develop further. Do you understand? [Audience: Yes!] Therefore, we should keep the precepts, we should be vegetarian, and we should meditate. Even though we meditate, we still create a little bit of karma each day. In case we have created new karma carelessly, we can do the Quan Yin to wash it out. Therefore, we are very safe and have no leakage to let the karma sprout.

FREE YOURSELF FROM PRECONCEIVED IDEAS ⁷⁶

A disciple once asked his Zen Master, 'Master, what is the meaning of spiritual practice? And what is the meaning of enlightenment?' At that moment the Zen Master was planting trees, so he said, 'Spiritual practice can be likened to transplanting this tree from here to a more suitable place, and then watering it every day, administering fertilizers, and so on. Slowly, the tree will grow. The same is true with spiritual practice.'

Likewise, we usually focus our attention on the outside, on the wrong places, and make ourselves frustrated and agonized. An enlightened Master teaches us how to direct our attention toward more useful places, which will be helpful to our soul and develop our inner power. Then we will return to our origins and finally realize that we are not this body, not those senseless and ephemeral thoughts. We are originally the wisdom and the love power; we are absolutely free.

Actually, there is nothing that we need to learn or do. If we simply discard everything that we have learned, and refrain from doing those things that we want to do, then everything is fine. That is right! It is precisely these senseless, undesirable materials that we have learned that fill our minds and bind us. They give us ideas about what a human being should be, what an enlightened saint should be, and what an enlightened Master should be. In the end, we become shackled by these preconceived ideas, and thus cannot be liberated. If we can get rid of all these concepts, we are already half liberated. Then we

76. Group gathering, Kaohsiung International Airport, Formosa, January 3, 1993 (Originally in Chinese).

can go on to cast aside what we want to do in order to become an enlightened saint, and everything is settled.

CONCENTRATION AND SELFLESS DEVOTION⁷⁷

We have to concentrate on everything we do; otherwise, we might have an uneasy conscience, which will bring forth a negative aura. And then, even if Master doesn't blame us, other people will. We'll then be baffled and wonder, 'Why am I always scolded?' It's because our own atmosphere is not good, and this makes other people uncomfortable. Our aura is invisible, but spiritual practitioners can see it with their wisdom eyes, and their wisdom can perceive it. So, we cannot cheat anyone! After being scolded, our first reaction is usually to be angry with the person who has scolded us and to feel resentful toward him, or we may feel unhappy with Master instead of examining our own behavior, motivation, and heart.

When we are reproached by anyone, we should examine ourselves at once. If we know that our motive is very simple and pure, we should know it is all right. At that time we will feel at ease; if we find that we have done something wrong, we should retrospect on ourselves. Don't blame others all the time. When anyone rebukes us, if what he says is correct, then he can be our teacher; if what he says is incorrect, we can just consider it our karma. [Laughter] That's the simplest way to deal with it. What else can we do? When we live with other people, we can hardly avoid friction sometimes, due to our different characters, levels of spiritual practice, or karma from past lives. Therefore, we cannot expect everything to go smoothly every day.

This world is very fair. You don't have to worry that your merits or sincerity are overlooked because we know it ourselves! We are God; we have God inside. Why should we worry that others don't know it? Didn't you say you have a hundred percent faith in Master? Do have faith in yourself as well! God is within us. It's also said that Master is omnipresent. Then why should you feel anxious that others do not know, and compete for credit or show off? We have to be honest with ourselves all the time, and be simple and pure in doing everything without being contaminated by any purpose at all. As a result, we'll find that we're more and more liked by people, and Master will also notice us.

It is best if we do things with truly unconditional devotion, in order to offer our services, and then we'll have everything. In the past, when I stayed at others' ashrams, I wasn't attached to seeing the masters all the time; nor did I demand that they glimpse me or anything else. I just offered my services: cleaning the staircase, mopping the floor, watering the plants, et cetera. I just did the work that no one wanted to do, especially washing dishes, which was the least desirable job. After people cooked meals and ate a lot, the bowls and chopsticks were left there like a mountain. I washed them every day, and was very happy. It ends up now that there're people who wash dishes, clean the staircase and mop the floor for me.

So, don't expect anything; just serve. God will arrange our fate. We shouldn't expect too much. We practice spiritually in order to be liberated from our desires for fame and fortune, and our competitive mentality. If we can't be liberated now, when will we be able to? If we cannot see heaven while living, how can we see it after we leave this world? We won't be able to get used to it! [Master and audience laugh.] Because when we get used to something, it's hard to change, and our habits come back to us, and then we struggle.

77. Group meditation, Laiyi Center, Pingtung, Formosa, January 3, 1993 (Originally in Chinese).

Whatever we do, if we have a clear, calm conscience, that's correct. You don't have to ask Master, nor should you do it for anyone. After we do it for a long time and get used to it, it will naturally become second nature to us, and we will sense and know what we should do. We will do whatever work is left undone. By that time, we won't dislike any work. What you're doing now is public service work, all of which I have done before. It's no big deal. No work is menial. Before I had so many disciples, I also mixed cement, built Centers for disciples to live in, built toilets for disciples to use, et cetera. There was nothing I couldn't do. Just because there're so many of you now, and you have enough talents, I just let you do the work! Even if I did it myself, you would feel sad, right? [Audience: Yes.] There're many 'heroes' among you, who must be eager to protect and help me maintain my figure! [Laughter]

Of course, there's no interest or pay for the work we do, but we have glory, we have honor. It's an honor to serve people, to serve sentient beings, and to serve our fellow practitioners. That's our highest award. Otherwise, it's easy to obtain worldly fame and wealth; as long as we work hard, we can get it. It is just that this work is a kind of glory. We do not work for reward or to win Master's favor. It would be a kind of bribery if we had that kind of motive. We should work because we are willing to do it ourselves and we enjoy doing it; that's the highest prize. There's no need to expect anything else. It's the same case with Master. Not many people in the universe can do my job, but I can. That makes me feel good! Even though I'm not very willing to do it, it's all right. I just do it; why should I expect any blessing from it? [Applause]

BE A NATURAL PERSON ⁷⁸

You have to be cautious and self-confident. Listen to your inner intuition. Today, that attendant said that he had been amazed by an inner feeling telling him that he should rush over and light the way for me. I was then walking on a dark, rocky path. That was his immediate feeling and reaction, yet he and the other one were standing there like a couple of rocks. This is how we often make mistakes. We don't listen to our inner intuition. I have already told you: Eat when you are hungry and sleep when you are tired. By reacting naturally, you can not go wrong. Do not be veiled by preconceived ideas, or deceived by the thought 'because people say this or that'.

Sometimes after you hear what I say, you start to act recklessly with the excuse that I have taught you to be natural. That is not being natural; that is scheming. Therefore, I give up; I am at my wit's end. I don't know what to say; I dare not speak any more. You are so good at 'interpreting' my words to suit yourself. Suppose I were to say that there is no need to separate from your two wives, if you already have them. Then most probably someone would wait until he had two wives before he came for initiation. [Laughter] He would say that it did not matter because that was before he was initiated. [Master laughs.] Sometimes people deliberately create trouble. Why do you deceive yourselves? You should listen to your real self! Natural responses can not be wrong.

I long so much to meet a truly natural person. I yearn for that more than you yearn for an enlightened Master, but I cannot find a 'human.' This is incredible! Why would a human behave like that? What do we have to fear in doing the right thing? What could be wrong in lighting the way for someone without a light on a dark, rocky road? If I had scolded you for doing that, it would have been all right for you to scold me. If I had been so bad, you could have scolded me and enlightened me a bit.

78. International seven-day retreat, Santimen, Pingtung, Formosa, December 23, 1992 (Originally in Chinese).

That was a very simple thing. You knew within, but you took no action on the outside. At that moment, you failed to listen to your own self. This kind of situation occurs daily. Every day the inner Master power is trying to function and help us, but we stop it. That is why we are agonized. We have to do it sooner or later, but we are a bit slow and suffer a little, because destiny cannot be changed. Sometimes it is very obvious to us that we should do certain things. If we are held back by preconceived ideas, fear, or some other reasons, then we feel very vexed and depressed. It is because we do not listen to God's will and our own self. Most people in the world suffer very much because of that. They contaminate each other, telling each other what is bad about this and wrong about that. But then they still do it, and with guilty feelings. They cannot enjoy fully, nor are they able to say no. At the end, they are trapped in misery, living a very painful life, with no freedom at all.

We live on the great earth beneath the vast sky, without any barriers or obstructions. However, each of us is carrying a portable prison on our body all the time, ever ready to confine ourselves in it, lock ourselves in, and be tortured. Then all we get is pain, suppression, boredom, stress, and tension. Therefore, we must not wait until we die to get liberation; it should be achieved now, in this lifetime. Just demolish your own prison and then you will become an absolutely free, natural, and peaceful person. The more tense and stressed we are, and the more we confine ourselves, the worse we become. Normally, I enjoy seeing you very much. It is only because you are scared of me that you imagine a lot of things to separate us. As a result, I feel uncomfortable seeing you; the more nervous you are, the more uncomfortable I feel. The more nervous and ill at ease you are, the more likely you are to make mistakes. And the more mistakes you make, the more I scold you. The more I do that, the more nervous you become. And the more nervous you are, the more I scold you. It goes on in a circle and we drift further and further apart. Isn't that too bad?

Therefore, vexations are created by ourselves only, nothing else! There are no obstacles, nothing. Really, there is nothing happening in the world. This is how most of you create trouble for yourselves, by hindering yourselves from developing, and depriving yourselves of relaxation. When you are not relaxed, your mind is blocked and, of course, you cannot act rightly. It is our destiny that we ought to do such-and-such things, but the happiness or pain in doing them is generated by ourselves. When we are too uptight, our mind is blocked and we act in an unhappy way. There should perhaps be just a little pain, but we multiply it several hundred times, just because we are too uptight. Sigh! Sometimes I feel that you are so pitiable that I don't know what to say! You really don't have to live in such misery!

HELPFUL TIPS ON THE SPIRITUAL PATH ⁷⁹

Spiritual practice and physical matter

Sometimes we think that our lives would be very uncomfortable if we lacked physical things. But then, we could still preserve our lives and keep our hearts incorruptible. Sometimes too much money can be harmful to our lives and cause our morality to waver. If we lose this body, it won't matter. However, if we lose our longing for the Truth because of money, it will be very difficult to get it back again.

That's why Shakyamuni Buddha said that the path of the renunciate is broader, simpler and purer; while the path of the layman is narrower and more difficult to walk on. This is

79. Group meditation, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, October 10, 1992 (Originally in Chinese).

because the layman inevitably develops relationships with other people, and they pollute or fight with each other over fame and riches. Mundane possessions and relationships are not necessarily bad. It depends on how we use them. Having a husband, a wife or possessions may not be bad. Sometimes we don't know how to manage them; then they aren't good. Once we attain a certain level in our spiritual practice, we lose interest in the money, fame, possessions, love, desires and passions of the world. However, this doesn't mean that we've turned into a piece of wood, but that we've transcended all these things.

For example, when a child starts to learn the ABCs, he makes progress and the rate of his progress is very obvious. After he goes beyond the ABC level, he's able to recognize words. He studies every day, but doesn't feel that he's making any progress. By then, there's no need to test his ABCs, for he's already above that. It's not that he doesn't recognize words or isn't making any progress; it's just that he's at a different level.

Why are worldly possessions and passionate relationships not beneficial to spiritual cultivation? In reality, these things aren't bad. But if one becomes lost in the mundane passions and loves worldly people more than God, then of course, his level is not high because he's weighted down inside this world. For example, if one side of the scale is heavier, naturally it sinks lower than the other side. If the weights on both sides are equal, then there is balance. Hence, this doesn't mean that we can't practice spirituality if we still have mundane possessions or passionate relationships. The main point is the attitude of our mind toward these things.

If we're troubled or overly concerned about someone or obsessed with certain feelings day in and day out, then we should realize we're not yet free of the net of passion in the astral realm. Or if we're saddened by the loss of some possessions, then we're still inside the astral realm. If certain losses occur that may create difficulties and hindrances for the family, then of course, it doesn't matter if we worry a little. But if the loss is not going to have too big an effect on the family, and we still feel very attached to these possessions and worry too much, then we should realize our level is still not very high.

We measure our level not only by sitting and seeing the Light and listening to the Sound. In spiritual practice, we should be careful every hour of the day. It's not only the two and a half hour meditation period that counts as practice. We have to be on constant vigilance, knowing when our level is falling or rising. We should watch our own responses when people scold us, and see if we feel that our ego or self-respect is hurt. Or when people take our things or damage our property, see if we react strongly. This way we'll know if our ego has arisen at that moment.

Of course, we have to protect our property, feelings and families. However, protection is different from excessive craving and attachment. Every one of us has the right to protect our own emotions, family and possessions. However, if we feel very miserable and painful about these things and are unable to let go, then we must hurry to do more meditation.

What we call renunciates are those who can completely renounce those things that worldly people regard as very important and greatly needed, and cling tightly to. They have no difficulty leaving these things. Neither do they cry bitterly when they leave them behind. They clearly understand and truly want to let go. Of course, they may feel a little sad about parting with certain souvenirs or friends and relatives. However, it doesn't mean that they don't want to leave or are still attached to them.

The importance of Quan Yin

For those of us who are practicing the Quan Yin method, Quan Yin (contemplation on the Sound) for at least one hour each day is essential in order to erase the effects of the world on us, and for our spirit to attain genuine bliss. Of course, even if you only practice a little bit, you can still get a joyful feeling, but you won't feel completely happy.

Of course, it may be difficult to do Quan Yin for one whole hour, but you still have to try your best. Sometimes the situation improves after practicing for twenty minutes. The body becomes more stable and the spirit more inspired. Then the body feels nothing. By this time the initial atmosphere of excitement and instability will be gone. All will be well if only we endure it for a while.

Practice within the Truth

There's a book about people who practiced the Quan Yin method a very long time ago. It says that when we practice, even when we're in touch with the Truth for a very brief period of time, say a couple of hours, or half an hour, or dozens of minutes, we can still manage to cleanse eons of heavy karmic burden.

The book also says that there are many aspects of spiritual practice. We can listen to a lecture by a Master, take a look at Her or join Her disciples in group meditation. If one can't see the Master or listen to Her lecture personally, one can read Her scriptures or listen to Her recorded lectures or follow Her directions about spiritual practice. All this is considered spiritual cultivation and staying within the Truth. All this can cleanse the heavy karmic load that we've accumulated over eons, and make us relaxed, happy, comfortable and uninterested in quarreling with anyone.

The benefit of coming close to spiritual mentors

Sometimes we need someone to remind us of the benefits of spiritual practice in order for us to remember to practice. Otherwise, we come in daily contact with many mundane beings or beings who are not at such a high level, and their non-practicing aura drags our level down a little, so we become like them, busily engaged in worldly and mundane matters and then we forget our most important goal.

That's why it's really useful to be with spiritual mentors and saints! That means it's useful to be in the company of fellow practitioners and the enlightened Master! It's useful not because we see them or listen to them talk. Sometimes even when we don't hear them speak, the aura of their spirituality serves as reminders and gives us spiritual encouragement. Then we think of spiritual practice naturally. Sometimes just being near them makes us feel very comfortable and gives us the desire to meditate, so that we no longer want to think about mundane matters again.

That's why in India they say to see your Master every day if possible; if not daily, then at least every two to three days. If that's not possible, then see your Master at least once a week; and if that's not possible, then at least once every two weeks; if not, then monthly. If that too isn't possible, then see Her once every few months; if not, then once a year. If that's still not possible, then at least once in a lifetime! If even this isn't possible, then you'll see the Master at the time of your death. At that time She'll surely come to take you. Therefore, in the end you'll still see Her. However, we must have affinity with the Master for Her to come.

That's why the saying goes, 'It's not easy to meet Shakyamuni Buddha.' We don't necessarily see a Master even if we live with Her in the same world, or hear Her words if we live with Her in the same era. If we're the same age as the Master, or live in the same country or same village, it doesn't necessarily mean we can receive Her blessings because sometimes we lock ourselves up. Our heart is very important! That's why some people, like many fellow practitioners in China and Au Lac who can't see the Master, have never seen the physical Master, can see the Master's inner Light manifestation form. It's because their hearts are with the Master. This is also considered spiritual cultivation. The heart is very important!

Heart-to-heart with the Master

If we're good at heart, then it's simple for us to be one with all and in contact with the saints. If our hearts are segregated, it's like we've built a wall around ourselves. The saint didn't build the wall. We built it and set up the obstruction ourselves. We're not necessarily with a saint even if we come close to him. Our hearts have to come close. In this way even if we're thousands of miles away from him, we don't seem to be separated spatially. If we're near a saint but our hearts aren't with him, it's the same as being separated by distance.

Once during Shakyamuni Buddha's lifetime, a disciple found a huge ant in the Jetavana Grove. Buddha told the people that seven Buddhas had come and gone and given discourses in this place, but this ant was still there as an ant. It had no way to transcend the level of an ant. This is like the story we heard today about Sariputra previously being a venomous snake. This is the first time that we've heard about this. We used to think that he had high ethical standards in his past lives, which was why he could become one of the ten great disciples of the Buddha. Never did it occur to us that he was formerly a venomous snake. As a snake, he had made good affinity with Shakyamuni, who saved him after attaining Buddhahood. Why was he a snake for so long, for thousands and millions of years? According to the scriptures, it was because his heart had not opened up and therefore he remained a snake for hundreds and tens of thousands of years. Once our hearts open up, immediately there is no more karmic hindrance.

We come to follow an enlightened Master and learn from Her. This means that we're prepared at heart to disentangle all the evil ideas, attachments and bondages to the world that we've accumulated over many lifetimes. Once these areas have been straightened out, the karmic burden from the past several lifetimes will be erased. Only then will we be able to come close to saints, and see the Light and hear the Sound of the real self, the inner Sound.

WHY THERE ARE INCREDIBLE BENEFITS FROM GROUP MEDITATIONS

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The merit derived from group meditations is many times greater than that of one person meditating at home for days, months or even years, depending on the number of participants in the group meditation. Therefore, the more the participants, and the longer we meditate in group, the more difference it makes to our spirit. Many people I can tell just by their looks whether they go to the group meditations or not. Fellow practitioners are aware of this, too. There are obvious disparities. If you attend the group meditations often,

80. Group meditation, Tokyo Center, Japan, July 12, 1992 (Originally in Chinese).

don't attend for a period of time, and then attend the group meditations again afterwards, you will feel different, feel that you are not so pure.

We gain more blessings for our country when more people attend the group meditations. Don't need to wonder: How can our nation derive blessings just because a few of us are meditating together? It is true! Just like several people are living in a big house. It is enough if one of them is rich and willing to contribute. He will repair any of the leaking areas in the house and thus benefit the whole family. Even if dozens of people stay in that house, no problem. This would benefit himself, and all the residents would feel secure. Such is the case with one family. In the same way, definitely other people would benefit from the spiritual practice of just the few of us.

Just one light by the roadside, wow! It is useful to so many people, thousands and thousands of passers-by. The lamp loses nothing, but becomes even more functional when more people are using it. Therefore, though many people in our world might not be practicing spiritually, it is sufficient if we do. Otherwise, it would be even worse if no one was practicing at all. Just like when the entire village has no light, there would be total darkness. If we could have one or two lights, it's better than none! The highway is very dark, yet we could see a long distance if there were several lights. So, practice more diligently, benefitting yourselves and everyone. This is what I love most.

THE MYSTERY OF THE WORLD BEYOND ⁸¹

Welcome to the United Nations. And please pray together for a while in your own belief that we are grateful for what we have, what we are given, and we wish, we hope that those who have not enough will be given the way we are given; the world's refugees, the war victims, the soldiers, the government leaders and, of course, the United Nations' leaders will be able to accomplish what they want and live together in peace. We believe what we ask will be given because it is says so in the bible.

Thank you! It has been a long time since I was here. Have any of you been here before, I mean been to my lecture before? When? Oh, yes? So many? Thank you. You know today the theme of our lecture is 'Beyond this world,' because I don't think I would like to talk to you about this world anymore. That you all know. Yes? You know this world we have the United Nations, we have America, New York (Big Apple), but beyond this world, we have other things. I think all of you who came here would be interested to know. It's not something like Stephen just said about miracles or anything fantastic that you cannot believe. It is something very scientific, very logical and very important.

We all heard that in different kinds of religious bibles or scriptures, it is mentioned that there are seven heavens, there are different levels of consciousness. There is the kingdom of God within, there is Buddha nature, et cetera. These are some things that are promised beyond this world. But not many people have access to what is promised in these scriptures, not many. I wouldn't say none, but not many. Compared to the population of the world, people who have access to the kingdom of God within or what we call, 'what is beyond this world,' are very few. And if you are in America, probably you have many opportunities to read a lot of books that describe things that are beyond our world. And some of the movies that the American people made are not altogether fiction. Also, there are some movies made by the Japanese that are also not all fiction. Because these people

81. Public lecture, United Nations, New York, U.S.A., June 26, 1992 (Originally in English).

have probably read some of the books that have been written by those who have been beyond this world or they themselves have had some glimpses into the kingdom of God.

So, in the kingdom of God... what lies in the kingdom of God? Why should we bother about the kingdom of God if we already have enough work to do in the world and we have a job, we have secure houses, and we have enough loving relationships, et cetera? Precisely, because we already have all these, we should be concerned about the kingdom of God. It sounds too religious when we say the kingdom of God. It's actually just some level of higher consciousness. The people in the old days, they say that it is heaven, but in scientific terms, we can say, it is a different... a higher level of knowledge, a higher level of wisdom. And this we can have access to, should we know how.

So, in the late... lately in America, we have all heard of the latest invention... that people even have a machine to put you into samadhi. Have you experienced this? You haven't? No? It's in America on sale. Four hundred to seven hundred, depends on what level you want. They call... this is for the lazy people who don't want to meditate, just want to be right in samadhi. Now, in case you don't know, I'll be brief about that. They say that this kind of machine can put you into a relaxed, mental attitude state... relaxing state, then you would achieve the high level of IQ. That's supposed to give you high knowledge, high wisdom and then you feel great, et cetera. And this machine uses some selected music, outer music, so you need earphones, and then they put some electric, probably currents that stimulate you, then you probably see some flashes. So you need also a blindfold. The earphones and the blindfold, that's all you need for samadhi. This is very good, and four hundred dollars, very cheap. But our samadhi is even cheaper, it costs nothing, and it's forever, forever. And you don't need to charge with battery or electricity, plug in, plug out, or in case the machine goes out of order, you don't need to go and fix it.

Now, even if the artificial light and the artificial music could make people become so relaxed and so wise – it is supposed to give them this. But I have read on a newspaper what it's supposed to do, I haven't tried it myself. So, that's why it is very hot and has sold a lot, I heard. Even these artificial things could put us into a relaxed mood and increase our IQ, then could you imagine how much the real thing can help us in our wisdom? The real thing is beyond this world but it is accessible to every man, should we want to contact with it. This is the inner heavenly music and the inner heavenly Sound. And depending on the intensity of this music... of the inner Light or inner music, we can push ourselves beyond this world, go into a deeper level of understanding.

I guess it is just like the law of physics. You want to send some rocket into... beyond the gravity, you have to have a lot of pushing power behind that, and also when it flies very fast it also emanates some light. So, I guess when we go fast into the beyond, we also... how to say? Oh, I speak Chinese too much. We can... radiate, yes, some Light also, and also we can hear the Sound. The Sound is the kind of vibration power that pushes us into the higher level, but it does that without any noise, without much trouble and no cost and no discomfort to the experienced. That is the way to go into the beyond.

And what is beyond this world that is better than our world. Everything that we can imagine and cannot imagine. Once we experience it, then we know. No one else could tell us really. But we have to be persistent in that, and we have to truly be sincere, otherwise no one else can do it for us. The same like no one else can replace you to work at the United Nations' office and you get pay for that. The same as no one else could help us to eat and then we get satisfied. Therefore, the way is to be experienced. We could listen to someone who has experience to tell us, but we cannot gain much experience from that. We may have experiences one time, for a couple of times or some days due to the power of that

person who experienced God. Then we might see some Light or hear some Sound, very naturally without our effort, but in most cases, it doesn't last very long. So, we have to also experience it and do it ourselves.

Beyond our world, there are many different worlds. We could just put an example, like the one a little bit higher than us. What we call the astral world in the western terminology. In the astral world, they have even one hundred and more different levels. And each level is a world of itself. And it represents our level of understanding. It's just like we go into the university. And then each grade as we go through the university, it represents our understanding more, about the university's teaching and then slowly we move to the graduation. In the astral world, we will see many kinds of so-called miracles and we probably will be tempted also by miracles and we probably will have miracles also. We can heal the sick, we can, how to say... sometimes see something that other people cannot see. We have at least six kinds of miraculous power. We can see beyond the ordinary boundary, we can hear beyond the limits of space. The distance doesn't make a difference to us. That's what we call the heavenly ears and the heavenly eyes. And then we can see through the people's thinking, and what he has in his mind, sometimes we can see, et cetera. These are the powers that sometimes we acquire when we have access to the first level of the kingdom of God.

And within this first level, I have already said that we have many different other levels which offer us a lot more than language can describe. And when we get there, we will... if we..., for example, have many more abilities. Then we will even develop our literature talent which we didn't have before. And also we know many things that other people do not know and many things come to us just like gifts from heaven, sometimes financially, sometimes, how to say, career-wise and sometimes many other things. And we begin to be able to write poems or maybe we can draw pictures, and we can do something that we have not been able to do before and we couldn't imagine we could do that. That's the first level. And we could write poems and write books with the beautiful style. And we could have been a non-professional writer before, but we could write now, for example. These are very material benefits that we can get when we are in the first level of consciousness. Actually, these things are not God's gifts. These things are in heaven inside us and only because we have awakened them, they became alive. And then we can make use of them. So, this is some of the information about the first level. Is it okay? You want to hear more? Yes. Alright. Have you heard this before? You have! Yeah, you did! Who told you? Oh yeah, and then does he say something else? Okay.

Now, when we go to the higher level, for example, then we see many other things, and we achieve many other things. Of course, I cannot tell you everything. Yes, because of time, for example. Also, it's not necessary to listen to all the beautiful things about cakes and candies and never eat them. Therefore, I just kind of advertise a little bit. And if you want to eat them, that's another thing. We can offer real food later on. Yes! Just in case you want to eat these things.

Now if we go a little bit beyond this level to the second level, what we call 'second,' just for the sake of simplifying matters. The second level, then we will probably have a lot more abilities than the first one, and including the miracles. But the most striking achievement we can have at the second level is that... the eloquence, and the ability to debate. And no one seems to be able to conquer a person who has achieved the second level because he has tremendous power of eloquence, and his intellect is at the peak of his power.

Most of the people who have ordinary mind or very simple IQ cannot match this person because his IQ has opened to a very high degree. But it is not only the physical brain that

has been developed more, it is the mystical power, it is the heavenly power, the wisdom that is inherent inside us. Now it begins to open. In India, people call this level 'Buddhi' means intellectual level. And when you achieve 'Buddhi,' you become a Buddha. That's where the word Buddha came from – 'Buddhi' and Buddha. Now, so the Buddha is precisely just that. It's not finished. I am not going to introduce you to the Buddha only, there is more than that. So, most of the people call an enlightened person a Buddha. If he doesn't know beyond the second level, he would probably feel very proud about it. Yes, thinking that he is a living Buddha and his disciples would be very proud calling him Buddha. But actually, if he only achieves the second level in which he can see through the past, present and future of any person he chooses to see and in which he has an absolute eloquence of speech, then it's not yet the end of the kingdom of God.

And any person should not be proud of this ability of reading into the past, present and future, because this is the akashic record, as you know in the western terminology. All of you who practice yoga or some kind of meditation will understand akashic record which is a kind of library like the one we have next door in the United Nations. You know, with all kinds of languages in it. You see Arabic, Russian, Chinese, English, French, German, everything in your library next door, all kinds of languages. Should you have the ability to read all these languages, you know what's going on in that country. Understand? So, similarly, the one who has access to the second level, he will understand, he can interpret a pattern of a person very clearly, the way you see your own biography.

There is much more to be gained from the second level of consciousness. But when one reaches the second level, this is already fantastic, already a living Buddha, because you have opened the 'Buddhi,' the intellect. And we know many things, many things that we could not name. And every so-called miracle would happen to us, whether we want it or not, because our intellect just opens and just knows how to contact the higher source of healing, of arranging so that our life would become smoother and better. And our intellect or 'Buddhi' has opened so that it can have access to all the information necessary from the past and from the present in order to arrange and to kind of rearrange or kind of make up for something we did wrong in the past. You understand? So that to correct the mistake and then to make our life better.

For example, if we did not know that we have offended our neighbor by some unintentional action, and now we know. You understand? Very easy! If we did not know and the neighbor is silently against us and trying to do something sometimes behind us in order to harm us because of misunderstanding or because we did something wrong to the neighbor. But now we know, now we know why it happened. So, it's easy. We can go to the neighbor or we can telephone, or we can have a party, invite the neighbor in and then we clear the misunderstanding. Similar things when we get to the intellectual level, we automatically, I mean silently, understand all these and silently arrange all these or contact with some source of power which could help us to arrange these things, to better our way of life, to better our course of life. So, we minimize many accidents, many unwelcome situations and unfavorable conditions of our life. Understand? Yes! Yes! Therefore, when we get to the second level, this is fantastic already.

Therefore, what I have explained to you is very scientific and very logical and no need to think that a yogi or meditation person is some kind of mystical person or an E.T., you know, extra terrestrial. They are terrestrial beings, like any one of us, who have developed, you know, because they know how. In America, we say everything depends on know-how, so we can learn everything. Right? We can learn everything. So, this is a kind of beyond this world science, in which we could learn also. And it sounds very strange, but the higher the things, the more simple. It's more simple than we go to high school or college with all

these very complicated mathematical questions and problems. The second level... second level, there are many different levels also. I mean within the second level there are many levels, too. But I just make it brief because I cannot be detailed in all of the secrets of heaven. Yeah! Anyhow you will know all these also when you travel along with a Master who has already traveled. So, it's no secret. But it is too long, you know, if we have to stop in each level – which has a lot of levels, sub-levels and we have to examine everything; it takes too long. So sometimes, a Master just takes you briefly from one level after another, very fast. Cha! Cha! Cha! Because if you have nothing to do with mastership, then you don't need to learn so much. It'll give you headache. Therefore, just take you through and back home, because even then it takes a long time. Sometimes it takes a whole lifetime. But enlightenment we get immediately. But that is only starting, just like enrolling you know? The first day you enroll in the university, you become immediately the university student. But that has nothing to do with a Ph.D.. After six years, four years or twelve years then you graduate. But you immediately became, how to say, university student, if that is a real university, and if you enroll, you truly earnestly want to become a university student. Right? So, both sides have to cooperate.

Similarly, if we want to go beyond this world, for example, just say for fun, because we have nowhere else to go in New York. We have known everything about the Manhattan, Long Beach, 'short' beach and every beach. Now suppose we want to take a trip to the E.T.'s place, to see what's going on, all right? Why not? Since we pay a lot of money to go to Miami, Florida, just to have a bath in the sea, so why couldn't we sometimes go to different worlds beyond this world to see what our neighbor planets look like and how do the people fare themselves over there? I don't think it is anything strange about that. No? It's just a kind of a little bit further traveling and mental traveling, spiritual traveling instead of physical traveling.

There are two kinds of travel. So, it's very logical and very easy to understand. Now, we are at the second level, okay, second level. What else should I tell you? So, that's how we continue in this world, but then we have the knowledge of the other worlds at the same time. You understand? Because we travel. Just like you are an American citizen or you are any other citizen of the world, but then you travel from one country to another just to know what the neighbor country looks like. And I guess many of you in the United Nations are not native Americans, no? Yes. So you know now the same thing. We can travel to the next planet or the next level of life in order to understand. Because the distance is so great that we cannot walk, we cannot take a rocket, we cannot take even a UFO.

Some worlds are longer than UFO could fly. UFO! Unidentified object, yeah, okay! A flying object, yes! Now, there is a facility within us which is faster than any UFO can comply. That is our own soul. We call it spirit sometimes. And we can fly with this, without any fuel, without any police, or traffic jam or anything at all. And no need to worry that one day the Arabs don't sell oil to us, because it's self-sufficient. Never goes out of order, except when we want to damage it by violating the universal precepts, violating the harmony of heaven and earth which is very simple to avoid. We will tell you how if you are interested to know. For example, I'll be brief, okay? I am not a preacher. Don't worry. I don't take you to the church. Just for example.

There are some laws in the universe that we should know, just like when we drive the car, we must know the law of the traffic. Red light, you stop; green light, we go. Drive left, on the right, et cetera... highway, how much speed. So, there are some very simple laws in the universe, in the physical universe. You understand? Beyond our world, beyond this physical universe, there are no laws, no laws at all. We are free, free citizens, but we have to get beyond that in order to be free. And as long as we still live in this world, in the

physical body, we should as much as possible keep within the law, so we don't get into trouble. And then our vehicles don't get damaged so we can fly faster, higher, without problems.

So, these laws have been written in the bible, of your Christian bible and in the Buddhist bible or in the Hindu's bible. The very simple ones like we don't harm the neighbors, we don't kill, 'thou shall not kill' and not commit, you know... outside loving relationships and not stealing, et cetera. And not taking intoxicants, that includes the drugs today. Probably the Buddha knew, in the twentieth century, we would invent cocaine and all that, so he said no drugs. The drugs include all kinds of gambling and anything that makes our mind... how to say, attached to the physical pleasure and forget the spiritual journey. If we want to fly fast, high and without danger, these are physical laws just like the laws of physics. When a rocket wants to fly, the scientist has to observe certain laws. That's all, okay? So, how much more must we be careful because we want to fly higher than that, higher than the rockets can fly, faster than the UFOs. But there are some more details that could be explained, should you be interested. And that will be at the time of initiation. Now, we don't want to make you bored with all these precepts which you say, 'I know already. I know already. I read it, them in the bible. Ten precepts, right? Ten commandments.'

Actually, many of us read the precepts but are not very deeply concerned with them, or not deeply understood. Or maybe we want to understand..., the way we do, but not the way it's exactly meant. Therefore, it doesn't harm sometimes to remind us, or to listen to a little bit deeper meaning of that, again. For example, in the bible, in the Old Testament, the first page, God says, 'I made all the animals to befriend you and to help you, and you shall rule over them.' And then He says He made all the food for the animals, each one a different kind. But He didn't tell us to eat them. No! And He says, 'I made all the food, all the herbs in the field and the fruit on the trees which are delicious to the taste and pleasing to the eyes. These shall be your food.' But not many people pay attention to that. And so many of the bible followers are still eating flesh, you know, without understanding what God truly meant.

And if we come into a deeper scientific research and we will know that we are not for flesh eating. Our system, our intestines, our stomach, our teeth, everything is scientifically made for vegetarian diet only. No wonder, most people get sick, get old fast, get fatigued, and get sluggish when they were born so brilliant and intelligent. And they end up a little bit duller each day, and the older they get the worse they feel. It's because we damage our vehicles, our flying objects, our UFO. So, if we like to use this vehicle a little bit longer and safer, then we have to take care of it in a proper way. Now, for example, we have a car. You know, you all drive cars. Now if you put the wrong petrol in it, how would it happen? What would happen? It would drive just probably a few feet and then stop. And you don't blame the car. It's just our mistake, we mistakenly put some fuel which doesn't belong there. Or if our petrol has some water in it, right, it probably can run for a while, but it has trouble. Right? Or if our oil has become too dirty and we didn't clean it, it will run for a while but then we will have trouble. And sometimes it explodes just because we didn't look after our car in a proper manner, right?

Similarly, our body is like a vehicle which we can use to fly from here to eternity, to the very high level of scientific wisdom. But sometimes we damage it and we don't use it for the proper purpose. For example, our car is to drive many miles to bring us to the office, to our friends and to different beautiful scenery. But then we don't look after, we put wrong petrol, or we don't take care of the oil, we don't take care of the water tank, everything. And then it doesn't run very fast. It doesn't run very long. And then we just run around in our lawn, in the circle of our backyard. That's all right also. You understand? But it's just

we waste our purpose of buying a car. It's just a waste of money and time and our energy. That's all. No one is to be blamed. No police will charge you anything for that. It's just that you waste your car, waste your money when you could go very far and see many things, and enjoy the different scenery.

Similarly, our physical body, we can live in this world but then we can take care that within this physical body, we have other instruments, that we can fly beyond that. Just like an astronaut, he sits in the rocket. The rocket is his instrument. He should take good care that he should not violate the physics' laws so that his rocket will fly safe and fast. But the astronaut inside is important. That rocket brings him to his destination. But the rocket, you understand, is not the main object – the astronaut, the destination. And should he use that just to run around Long Island then it's also a waste of time. Understand? A waste of the money of the nation.

So therefore, our body is very precious because within this sits the Master. That's why in the bible, it says, 'Know you not that you are the temple of God and almighty God dwells within you,' the holy spirit, the same, the same thing. If we house the holy spirit or the almighty God, can you imagine how terrible is that, how terribly significant! But many people read this fast but do not understand, do not realize the greatness of this sentence, and do not try to find out. So, this is why my disciples, they like to follow my teachings because they can find out who sits inside and what lies beyond this world, apart from our everyday struggle, money earning and striking and all these physical problems. We have more beauty, more freedom, more knowledge within. And should we know the proper way to contact this, this is all ours because we have them inside. It's just because we don't know where the key is and we have locked this house for a long time and now we've forgotten that we have this treasure. That's all. So, the so-called Master is the one who can help us to open the door and show us what originally already belongs to us. But we have to take time and walk into it and check every item that we have.

So anyhow, we were in the second world. Are you interested to go further? [Audience: Yes! Yes!] You want to know everything without working? [Master laughs.] All right. But at least somebody could tell you what another country looks like when he has been there even though you haven't. Right? At least you are interested, maybe you want to go. Okay. So now, after the second world, I haven't finished all the second, but you know we cannot sit here all day long. So, after the second, you may have more power. If you are determined and work for it, you will go to the third.

The so-called third world. It's a higher step. The one who goes to the third world has to be absolutely clean of every debt of this world, at least. You understand? If we owe something to the king of this physical world, we cannot go up. Just like if you are a criminal of some nation, you are not clear of the record, you can not pass beyond the border to go to another nation. So, the debt of this world includes many things that we've done in the past and in the present and maybe in the future days of our physical life. Now, all these have to be cleared, just like we clear the customs, before we can go into the world beyond. But when we are in the second world, we start to work, you understand, with any left-over karma of the past and this present life. Because without past karma, we cannot exist in this present life.

The Masters have two different categories. One without karma but She borrows the karma to come down; the other one is like us, ordinary beings, but with cleansed karma. So, anyone could be a would-be Master, you know, a future Master. And sometimes the Master descends from the higher world with borrowed karma. How does it sound to you, to borrow the karma? [Master laughs.] It's possible. It's possible. For example, before you

came down here, you have been here before. Yes? And you have given and taken with different people of the world for many ages or many hundred years. And then you go back to heaven or to your abode which is very far away, different levels at least to the fifth level. That's the house of the Master, the fifth level. But beyond that there are more levels, okay! Now so, when we want to come back again due to compassion or some assigned job from the Mother / Father, for example, then we come down. And because of the affinity with the people in the past, we could borrow some of their account, you know, karma. Only debt, nothing, nothing beautiful about the people. We can borrow some debt and then we pay it, understand, by our spiritual power slowly until we finish the job in this world. So, this is a different kind of Master, yeah? And there are also ones who are from this world after they practice they immediately become Masters here, just like they graduate. Yes. Therefore, in the university just like we have professors and have the students who graduate and become professors afterward. Understand? There are long, long time professors, and newly graduated professors, et cetera. Similarly, there are these kind of Masters.

So now, if we want to go to the third world, we must be absolutely clean of every trace of karma. Karma is the law of 'As you sow, so shall you reap.' Yeah? Just like we plant an orange seed, then we get oranges, an apple seed, we have apples, so these are the so-called karmas. It's the Sanskrit language for cause and retribution. The bible doesn't talk about karma but it says, 'As you sow, so shall you reap.' That's the same thing.

The bible is a shortened form of the teaching of the Master, and anyhow His life was also a shortened form. Therefore, we don't have much explanation in the bible. And many of the bible versions have been also censored in order to suit the so-called leaders of these movements; not necessarily always spiritually-minded people. You know in every kind of aspect, people sell and buy everything. Brokers... there are brokers full of every aspect in life. But the bible, the true bible, we know is a little bit different, a little bit longer, more precise and easier to understand. Anyhow, because we cannot prove much of it, so we don't talk about it in case people say we are blaspheming. So that we can only say something that we can prove.

And you would ask me then, 'You talk about this second world, third world and fourth world. How can You prove it?' Well I can! I can prove it. If you walk along with me, the same path, you will see the same thing. Understand? But if you don't walk, then I can't prove it to you. That's of course. That's of course. Therefore, I dare talk about these things because there is proof. We have proof with hundreds of thousands of disciples around the world. So we can say things that we know. Now for example, if we go to... but this you have to walk with me, you have to walk. Otherwise, you cannot say, 'Wow, You walk for me and tell me and show me everything.' I cannot.

For example, if I am not in the United Nations in this room, doesn't matter how much you tell about this room, I have not actually experienced it. Right? So we have to walk with whomever is experienced guide. And I have some of the disciples in this room who have different nationalities, they have had some of these experiences that I have just told you, partly and some fully. Yes, yes.

And so, after the third world, this is by no means everything. What I told you is just a part of things. That's kind of traveling story, relating things in a small portion and not very detailed. Even when we read a book about some country, it's not the actual country. Right? Therefore, we have many books about traveling, about different countries in the world, but we still like to go ourselves over there. Right?

We know about Spain and Tenerife and Greece, but these are only movies or only books. We have to go there and to actually experience the joy of being there and the food they offer and the delicious water of the sea and the beautiful weather and the friendly people and all kinds of atmosphere that we cannot experience by reading books.

So anyhow, suppose you have passed the third world and what next? Of course, you go to the higher, the fourth. And the fourth world, this is already out of extraordinary. And we cannot just use the simple language to describe all these things to the lay persons for fearing of offending the lord of that world. Because that world is so beautiful even though there are some parts of it are very dark, darker than on electric-cut night in New York. Have you experienced the whole, complete city in darkness? Yes! It's darker than that! But before you reach the Light, it's darker than that. It's the kind of a forbidden city. Before we reach God's knowledge, we are stopped, over there. But with a Master, with an experienced Master, you can pass through, otherwise we cannot find the road in that kind of world.

When we reach different levels of... planes of existence, we have experienced not only spiritual changes but physical changes also, intellectual changes and everything else in our life. We look at life in a different manner, we walk differently, we work differently. Even our work, our daily work takes on a different meaning and we understand why we work this way, why we have to be in this job, or why should we change that job. We understand our purpose of life, so we no longer feel restless and agitated, yes! But we wait very harmoniously, patiently for our mission on earth to finish, because we know where we are going next. We know while we are living. That's what is said, 'dying while living.' Yes, yes! And I suppose some of you have heard of something like this before, but I don't know any master who can speak differently, [Master laughs.] except that we have to experience the actual joy of the inner experiences. How can anyone who describes... I mean a Mercedes Benz differently. Right? It has to be the same thing. So, any people who own a Mercedes Benz, who know the Benz, he would describe the same thing, understand, but that is not the Benz.

So, even though I speak to you in a very ordinary language, but these are not ordinary things and these are the things we have to experience by ourselves, with work, sincerity and with a guidance. It's safer that way. Although it perhaps happens, one in a million that we can make it ourselves, but with danger, with risk and with very not secure results, not very safe. Some of the people in the past... for example Swedenborg. He had kind of made it himself. Or maybe Gurdjieff, he was supposed to have made it himself, go all the way alone. But when I read some of the people, this work, they have not been without danger and a lot of trouble. And it's not necessarily that all of them reach the highest level.

So, after that, you go to a higher level. After the fourth, you go to the higher level. The house of the Master which is the fifth level, all the Masters came from there. Even though their levels are higher than the fifth, they will stay there. It's the residence of the Master. And beyond that, there are many aspects of God, which are difficult to understand. I'm afraid to confuse you, so probably another time I'll tell you, or maybe after initiation when you'll be a little bit more prepared; and I'll tell you some terrific things about your imagination. How sometimes it plays wrong about many ideas about God.

Q. *You mentioned the Master can borrow people's karma. In that case the karma is erased, for these people? What is the consequence for the people?*

M. Yes, yes, yes. Oh! The Master can erase anybody's karma, if that's what the Master chooses to do. In fact, all the disciples, at the time of initiation, all the karma in the

past has to be erased. I just only leave you the present karma, so we can go on to continue with this life, otherwise we die immediately. No karma, cannot live here. Therefore, the Master has to erase the store karma only, so the person is clean, and leaves a little bit karma for him to continue this life, to do what he has to do in this life. And after this, finished. That's why he can go, otherwise how can he go? Even if he is clean in this life, how clean? And how about last life, you understand? Yes. Okay.

Q. *Thank You.*

M. You are welcome. Very intelligent question. So I think you have been very attentive. Anymore? Please.

Q. *What is the goal of Your practice?*

M. What is the goal? I haven't told you? To travel beyond this world, go back to kingdom of God, know your wisdom, and be a better person in this life even.

Q. *And is there karma in all realms?*

M. Hum, not all realms, up to the second realm only, because our mind, our brain, the computer, is manufactured in that second plane. When we go down all of the way, all the way from the higher planes down to this physical plane, supposedly to do some work. Right? For example, even the Master goes from the fifth plane down to the physical world, then he has to go through the second plane and pick up this computer and fix it in, in order to work in this world. Just like a diver, you know, who dives into the sea. He has to go through a preparation of a mask, of oxygen and everything. Even though he himself doesn't look so ridiculous, but when he wears the oxygen mask and the diving clothes, he looks like a frog, you know. That's how we look like sometimes with our... this computer and the physical hindrances. Otherwise, we are absolutely beautiful. Even though you think you are beautiful now, you are so ugly compared to what you really are. Understand? Because all the instruments that we have to wear in order to dive deep into this world to work. So, after we pass the second level to go upward, we have to leave our computer there, we don't need it up there anymore. So, just like when a diver reaches the shore, he discards all his oxygen mask and all his equipment to dive, yeah, and he looks the way he was. Yeah?

Okay! Yes, you continue if you wish. Here, here. We have only one microphone, so poor.

Q. *Thank You, thank You, Master. You said that at the end of the second world, before you're gone up, that you leave all your karma behind or you have to resolve or clean all your karma. Does that mean that also all of the karma of the past lives that you come into this life with, too?*

M. Yes. Because no computer to register anything. We only have karma because we have this computer, the mind, the brain which is meant to record every experience of this physical world. That's why we have it. Bad or good we register it in here. That's what we call karma. Karma is what? Just the experiences, bad or good, our reactions, our learning experiences in many lifetime. And because we have a kind of so-called conscience, we know we should be good and sometimes we did bad. Therefore, we call that is karma. And the bad things weigh down on us, just like a lot of garbage, luggage, because the law of gravity; it pulls us down and makes us difficult to climb

the mountain. Understand? Because of a lot of moral disciplines in this world, a lot of rules, a lot of customs, lots of habits, in different nations, bind us within these so-called conceptions of good and bad, guilt and innocence. Therefore, when we interact with people of this world, we have experiences of good and bad, guilt and innocence according to the custom, habits of that nation, laws of that nation. Understand? And it becomes a habit that we think that way, that we do this, we are guilty... we do that, we are bad person. And this, all is recorded it in here. That's what makes us transmigrate and makes us bound into this physical world or a little bit higher world. But not high enough. We are not, not..., we are not free enough. We are not light enough to float above. You understand? Because of all this conception... preconception.

Q. *Is it predetermined that we will reach a certain level each lifetime when we are born?*

M. No, we have free will to run faster or slower. Yes. For example, your car, you put in a hundred liters of petrol. I don't know how much you put in car. I don't know how to drive a car. But you can go faster with it, yeah, and reach the destination quicker or you go slower. Okay. It's up to you. Yes.

The gentleman, next door. Or you want to speak more, yes? No?

Q. *Well, I just want to ask You... the angels, what level are they?*

M. What level are they? Oh! It depends on what kind of angels?

Q. *The guardian angels.*

M. Hum?

Q. *The guardian angels.*

M. Oh! The guardian angels, they could be up to the second level. Angels are less than human beings, less prestige. They are to serve us.

Q. *And they never go beyond that?*

M. No! Except when they can become human beings. They are all very envious of human beings, because God dwells within them. We have all the facilities to become one with God, the angel doesn't. It's complicated. I talk to you another day. Okay! They are things made for our use also, you see; the different kinds of angels. Yes. For example, if it is made by God, then it's made to serve us, you understand? And they should not... don't have to go beyond that. Understand? But they could, yeah. Sometimes something is made without a proper arrangement to improve. You understand? For example, in your house something you made for your own comfort, you understand. Even though it's very fantastic. For example, you sit here and you can turn the lights off and on all over your house and garden, and turn on and off the television, because you invented it for yourself, but this is only to serve you. Because even though it's better than you in some aspects, like it can sit here and control everything and you can not do that by human effort. But that doesn't mean it's better than you. Understand? It's made for the sole purpose of serving you. Even though it's better than you, but it's not. Okay! All right. It can never be human being, the computer. Okay.

Yes, sir, yes, sir.

- Q. *Master Ching Hai, I want to know... that because we are in the body now... could it be that we could have fallen from being liberated from this body before? Have we always been in this state or have we been in a better state before, or just in this state? What is the good attitude or a good disposition to quickly move ahead?*
- M. To quit the body and move ahead, ah huh. Yes, we can if we know how. Yes. There are many different methods for leaving the body behind and go beyond this world. Some go not far, some go very far, and some go to the end. So, according to the comparison that I have made with my different research since I was young. Even though I look still young now, but I was young then, you know. Our method here is the best, yeah! Goes to the farthest one, the farthest one, the far end. There are many other methods, if you choose to experience, you can choose. There are many in the market, some go to the astral world, some go to the furthers..., the third or the fourth, but not many can go to the fifth, yeah. So, our method, our practice is to take you to the fifth before we set you free. Understand? Let you go alone. And beyond that we can approach a different aspect of God, beyond the fifth plane, but it's not always pleasant, yes. We always imagine that the higher the better; it's not always true. For example, sometimes we go into a beautiful palace and we were invited into the living room of the Master. We sat there and we were served with cool drinks and beautiful eating and everything. And then we thought we should go a little bit deeper into the house, have a look. And we would venture into the garbage place and you know many other things in the house. It's not always important. Yeah? And also into a power house you know, we went into the electricity house which is just behind the house, beyond the house, and we got shocked so then we die there. So, it's not always necessary or recommendable to go into deeper, but we could do that for the sake of adventure. Yeah, okay.
- Q. *Master Ching Hai, I have two questions. One is, what world do past life memories come from, if you were to have the memory of the past life. And secondly, how do past lives relate to karma?*
- M. To your present, right? To your karma?
- Q. *To the present karma and to one's present understanding? Are they part of the excess baggage?*
- M. Yes, yes. They relate very much. First question, where does the past karma come from?
- Q. *Past life memories. Yes.*
- M. You can read the past life record, that's for sure. And the past life records, as I have told you, came from the akashic record. Yes. And this is a kind of library in the second world which is accessible to anyone who can reach there. Not everyone can go to the United Nations' library and have accessed to it. But I can, for example today, because I'm invited to talk in the United Nations. Right? Not everyone can come in, but you can, because you are a kind of residents here. So similarly, when we get access to the second world, we can read the past life, yeah! Also, when we access into the first world, some of it, we can have some glimpse of the past life of a person. But that's not very high and not very complete record. And how do these past life experiences relate to the present karma? We can say that these are the

experiences we have learned in order to cope with this present lifetime. You understand? What you assimilated in the past, you will bring into practice at this present lifetime. And similarly, too many unpleasant experiences in the past would make you frightened, when you see some symbol that is very much similar to the past life... For example, if last life... just now, you drop off from the staircase, yeah, by accident and then hurt yourself badly and in the dark, and nobody helps you. And now when you walk down the staircase, you would feel a little frightened, especially when it is deep and dark underneath, you would feel a kind of struggle whether you go or not. Or if last life you have already studied and researched deep into some scientific field. This life you will find yourself still very interested... interested in... This is Chinese tongue-twister. [Master laughs.] I'm sorry. Is my English still clear enough? Yeah? [Audience: Yes] Okay. Thank you. So you still feel very... you have kind of a pull to any kind of scientific research, even though you are not a kind of scientist now. Any kind of thing like that. That's why Mozart, he was so..., a genius when he was four years old. He went straight to the piano and he became famous up till now, still. Yeah? He was a genius because he had practiced in many other lifetimes until mastership, but then he died after that. Understand? Before he reached the peak of his career, he died and he wasn't satisfied just to leave... to leave his career because he loved music. So, he came back and all his learned experience from his past musical talent came back to him, because he had so strong desire to continue when he died. Understand? And some of these people learn many things from the astral world or the second world before they are reborn in this world again. Therefore, they are fantastically gifted with science, or with music, or with literature, or with any kind of inventions, which other people don't know. You see, kind of very extraordinary inventions that other people cannot understand it and cannot even dream of inventing. Okay? Because they have seen them, they have learned them.

Therefore, two kinds of learning in this world or in the world beyond. Those who are gifted and excellent, like genius, they are the experts from the world beyond, like in the astral world, the second world... sometimes from the third world, if he chooses to come back. Yeah? They are excellent. These are geniuses. Okay? Yes?

- Q. *Specifically, what does Your initiation involve and once one is initiated, what would the day-to-day practice involve?*
- M. Okay. Yes. First of all, it's all free of charge and no binding involved, except that you have to bind yourself, should you want to continue to go further. Hum? So, the conditions – no experience required. Yeah? No previous knowledge about any yoga, or any meditation required. But then, you have to commit yourself to a lifelong vegetarian diet. No eggs. Milk okay. Cheese okay. Anything else without killing is okay. Egg because it also involves of half-killing, even though it's how to say... infertile. And also it has kind of quality to have a tendency to attract negative power. You know, that's why many people of the black and white magicians field, or many voodoo people – so-called voodoo, they use eggs to draw some of the entities from possessed persons. If you know it or not? You know? Oh, that's fantastic! At least, I have immediate proof, if not immediate enlightenment, for you. [Laughter] And after initiation... the time of initiation, you experience the Light and the Sound of God. Yeah? The music of the spirit, it draws you up to the higher level of consciousness. You will understand the taste of samadhi – the deep peace and joy. Yes. And after that, you continue to practice at home, if you are serious. If you are not, I cannot push you, I cannot bother you any more. If you continue and you want me to help you all the way, then I continue. If you do not... you see that's the way. And two and a half hours a day meditation. Wake up early in the morning.

Before you sleep, meditate two hours; and maybe half an hour in the lunch time. When I am not here to speak, you have one-hour lunch. You can hide away somewhere and meditate. That's already one hour. Yeah? And in the evening, you make one more hour or half an hour. In the morning, get up earlier one hour. Regulate more of your life, you know, less television, less gossip, less telephone, less newspapers, then you have a lot of time. Yes, truly we have a lot of time but sometimes we waste away our time. Just like our car running in the backyard instead of going to Long Island, yeah. Are you satisfied with that? Or...? Yes? Yes, and nothing more. No conditions for you, nothing else, except you commit yourself to this lifelong practice. And everyday you experience different changes for the better, and different miracles for your life, not that you wish for it. It will happen anyhow. Understand? And then you truly experience what's heaven like on earth, if you are really serious about it. That's how many hundreds of thousands of our disciples still hang on, still hang on to me after many years, because they have better and better experiences, because they are serious about it and they do practice.

Hum. Yes, please. Yeah, in front or right behind. Gentleman first. [Master laughs.]

Q. *Please explain the nature of consciousness.*

M. Nature of consciousness, okay. It's hard to explain but you could use your intelligence to imagine. It's a kind of wisdom, you know, like you know something better than you ever did before. Yes, you know something that is beyond this world, and you know something in this world which you did not know before, and you understand many things that you do not understand or you did not understand before. That's the consciousness.

And also, when you open this consciousness, or the so-called wisdom, you will understand truly who you are and why you are here and what else is beyond this world, and who else, beyond or apart from our worldly citizens. Understand? There are many things. So, the level of consciousness is a kind of different degrees of understanding, just like a graduation in college. The more you learn, the more you know, until graduation. Are you satisfied? It's difficult to explain something that is abstract, but I have tried. It's a kind of awareness, you know. It's difficult to explain awareness. When you go to different, higher levels of consciousness, your awareness is different. You know things different, you feel different. You feel just absolutely in peace, tranquil, blissful. You have no worry, and everything in your daily life becomes clear to you. You know how to handle things and how to take care of problems better. Hum? Even it benefits already in the physical level. And inside you, how you feel – that only you know. It's difficult to explain these things. Just like you are married to the girl you love, how you feel – that only you know. Hum? No one else can feel it for you. Yes.

Q. *Honorable Master, thank You for the insight You have given us. I wonder if You would like to address Yourself to something that is in my conscience. Why are so many Masters on earth today giving us a chance to learn so quickly, whereas that in the past it has been so difficult? Can you address Yourself to that?*

M. Yes, sure. Because in our times, the communication is better. So, we know better about the Masters, not that in the past, Masters did not exist, or Masters were inaccessible. Of course, it is true that some Masters are more accessible than the others. It depends on Her choice, or Her willingness to give, or Her affinity with the people at large. But then, in any age, always there are one, two, three, four, five

Masters. Depends on the need of the time. Just we are more aware of the presence of many different Masters, maybe different degrees of Masters, because in these times we are fortunate to have the mass media, to have television, to have radio broadcasts, and books, which we print in millions, in thousands of millions of copies in no time. Yes. In the olden times, we want to print a book, we have to cut the whole tree down first and chop them with very unsophisticated axes, which are kaput in no time and no use in another time, and have to polish it with stones and all kinds of things, and to carve one word after another. And when you want to transfer a whole set of bibles, it takes a whole convoy. You understand? Big trucks, if you have a truck at that time. So, that's why we know of many Masters. You understand? Yes, so it's lucky, this is very good for you that... you can shop, you know, you can choose what you want. So, no one will be able to cheat you and say 'I am the best.' Yeah, you can have comparison and use your wisdom, intelligence to judge. 'Oh, this one is better,' or 'I like that one better.' 'Face looks terrible.' 'Oh, that one – ugly.' [Laughter]

- Q. *So, my question to You then would be, since You have talked about shopping, would You consider initiating someone who has been initiated by another master?*
- M. I would only if that person truly believes that I am more able to take her or him to a higher level and faster. Otherwise, it is better to stick to one's own master if one still feels very much attached, and has much faith in that master. If you believe your master is the best already, then don't change. If you still have doubt and if you still have not got the Light and Sound which I have mentioned, then you should try. Yes, because Light and Sound are the standard measurement for a real Master. If anyone who is not able to impart you immediate Light or Sound he is not a real master, I am sorry to say. The road to heaven is equipped with Light and Sound. Just like you go to dive into the sea, you have to be equipped with oxygen mask and all that. There are things for different purposes. Okay? That's why you see all the saints with the halo on them. That's Light.

When you practice this method, you radiate the same Light like they draw on the picture of Jesus, and people can see it. If the people are psychic, you know, they can see your Light. That's why they draw Jesus with the halo and they draw Buddha, with the Light around them. You can see practitioners, in high degree, with this Light if you are opened. [Master points to Her forehead.] Many people can see that. Have any of you seen, who are here? You? What did you see?

- Q. *Well, I can see auras, auras...*
- M. Yeah, but auras are different from Light. Auras are different colors, sometimes black, sometimes coffee, coffee color, and sometimes are yellow or red. Depends on his temperament at that time. But when you see a person with a strong spiritual aura, you know it's different. Right? Yeah.
- Q. *I don't really have a question. I just..., I used to do raja yoga for a while.*
- M. Raja yoga. Yeah.
- Q. *And I thought I saw also auras. I mean at that time, I didn't have much knowledge, You know...*
- M. Understand.

- Q. *Understanding.*
- M. And you don't see it now? You only see it sometimes?
- Q. *No, I don't meditate now.*
- M. Oh, that's why, you lost your power. Should meditate again, huh?
- Q. *Yeah!*
- M. If you still believe in that path, you should meditate. It helps you to some extent. It would not harm. Okay?
- Q. *I saw in Your leaflet that there are five precepts. Once you are initiated, you have to live according to these five precepts?*
- M. Yes, yes, yes. These are the laws of the universe.
- Q. *I don't understand sexual misconduct.*
- M. It means if you have a husband already, please don't consider the second.
- Q. *Okay. [Laughter]*
- M. Very simple. Keep your life more simple, no complication and quarreling over emotions. Yes. It causes hurtful feelings for other people. We don't harm other people, even emotionally. That's what it is. We try to avoid conflicts, try to avoid suffering, emotionally, physically, mentally for everyone, especially our loved ones, that's all. Okay? If you already have one, don't tell him. It hurts more when you tell. Just solve it slowly and quietly, and don't confess to him. Because sometimes people think if they have an affair, and then they go home and confess to his wife or her husband, that's very wise and very honest. It's nonsense. It's no good. You already made mistake, why you bring garbage home and let other people enjoy it? If he doesn't know about it, he doesn't feel that bad. You understand? The fact of knowing hurts. So, we try to solve that problem and not to have it again, and that's it. Better not to talk to the partner about this, because it will hurt them, hurt the partners. Yeah!
- Q. *I have noticed that many spiritual Masters have a great sense of humor. What is the relationship of humor to spiritual practice?*
- M. Oh, I see. I guess they are just feeling happy, and relaxed, you know, and light-hearted about everything. And they could laugh at themselves and laugh at others, laugh about ridiculous things in this life when many people cling so tensely and taking so seriously. After we practice somehow, we just get loose. You know, we don't feel so serious any more. If we die tomorrow, we die; if we live, we live, you know. If we lost everything, we lost everything; if we have everything, we have everything. Yes, we have enough wisdom and ability after enlightenment to take care of ourselves in every situation. So we are not scared of anything. We lose our fear, we lose our anxiety. That's why we're relaxed. We feel detached to this world. Whatever we gain or lose doesn't mean much any more. If we gain a lot of things, it's only for the benefit of people, then we offer; and for the benefit of loved ones. Otherwise, we don't consider ourselves or our life that important to go through all of the struggles and

sufferings to preserve it. If we preserve it, it's all right. It doesn't mean we sit in bed all day on the nail bed and then meditate. But we do work. You understand?

For example, I still work, huh! I do my painting, and my handicraft works to earn my living. So I don't want to take donations from anyone. And even my earning is so much I can help people. I can help the refugees, the disaster victims and all that. Why shouldn't we work? But we have so much talent and abilities, and life is so easy for us after enlightenment that we feel there is just no need to worry. You understand? We just naturally relax. That's how the sense of humor is born. I guess that is what it is, huh? Do you find me humorous? [Audience: Yes.] [Laughter and applause.] Yes. [Master laughs.] Then maybe... I must be a Master of some kind, huh? [Laughter] Okay. [Master laughs.] Let's hope so, for your sake huh, so that you didn't listen to an unenlightened person for two hours, waste your time.

Okay. Any more question?

- Q. *Master Ching Hai, a rush of questions are flooding my mind. And I'll just say them all, and You can answer any or none of them.*
- M. Okay. One hundred and eight.
- Q. *And they're questions that we, as seeking souls, always ask and we get theories and stories, and I'd just like to hear what You have to say about them. The first is 'Who are we? Who am I? And how did I get to be in the predicament that I have to get back Home?' You know, how did I leave Home and why is it important to go back Home? And You talked about going back to the fifth realm, and it not necessarily being important to go further than that. But if there is a further than that, then what is the purpose of it? What relationship does it have to me if I don't necessarily have to go back there? Those kinds of questions?*
- M. Okay, one at a time. Okay, I think I'll answer this group of questions first. So, the first group consisted of 'Who are you? Why are you here and why you have to go Home? And why the fifth and not the sixth?' Right? Simple. It's getting humorous now. [Laughter and applause.] Okay. Pertaining to the question of 'Who am I?' you can go and ask the Zen Master, which is abound in New York state. You can look in the yellow pages and find one. [Laughter] I am not specialized in that. And the second, 'Why are you here?' Maybe because you like to be here, hum? Or else who can force us to be here since we are the children of God? The so-called children of God are like God Himself. No? A prince is similar to the king, yeah, in some aspects, or more or less like the king, or the future king. So, only when he likes to be somewhere, then he'll be there. Hum? Anyhow, we have free will to choose to be in heaven or to be somewhere else to experience for ourselves. That's probably you have chosen to be here in the beginning, many ages ago, to learn something more adventurous, you know, something more frightening. Some people love scary experiences, you know. For example... the prince, he can be in the palace but he could be wandering in the jungle, you know. Because he loved to be exploring things in the nature. It could be that way. Hum? It could be that we were so bored, bored in heaven, because everything was made ready and served to our palace doors, so we want to do something for ourselves. Just like the royal household, sometimes they want to cook for themselves and they don't want the servants to be near. And they smear themselves with ketchup and oil all over the place but they love it, you know. Doesn't look very princely, but they love it. Yes, yes, yes. So, for example, I have people who drive for me. Everywhere I go, people would love to be my driver. But sometimes I

like to drive for myself. I drive on my small tricycle, non-smoking tricycle, yeah, electric plug-in, ten miles an hour, no, ten kilometers an hour. I like to go around like that. Yeah? Because everywhere I go, people notice me a lot, so sometimes I want to go somewhere that the people don't know me. I'm very shy except when I have to talk in the lecture, because it has become kind of duty now since people dug me out and made me famous up till now. I cannot run away so often but sometimes I do run away, you know, for two three months. Just like a, you know, pampered wife who runs away from husband. And so, it's my choice, you see.

So, perhaps you have chosen to be here for a while. And perhaps it's time now that you want to go because you have learned enough of this world, and you feel that there is nothing more that you want to learn, and you are tired of traveling. You want to rest. Go Home, have a rest first, and then see whether you want to go again or not, on an adventurous journey. Okay? That's all I can say up to now.

And why do you have to go Home? And why the fifth and not the sixth? That's up to you. After the fifth, you can go anywhere you want. There are many more levels upward. You understand? But it's just more comfortable, more neutral to stay there. It's too powerful, further upward, maybe like that. You can go for a while, but maybe you wouldn't like to rest, for example. For example, your house is beautiful, but there are some parts of the house are for rest room and you wouldn't want to rest there forever, even though it's beyond your house. You know, it looks like up the hill and the higher, more beautiful, but it's not the place to rest. Or in the electric-power department in your house, the generator – noisy, loud, heat, hot, and you know, dangerous. So you wouldn't want to be there even though it is very helpful for your house. Understand? That's all.

There are many aspects of God that we could not imagine. We always imagine the higher we go, the more loving. But there are different kinds of love. There is violent love, you know, strong love, mild love, neutral love. So, it depends on how we can bear, God will give us different degrees of love. Right. Different levels, offer some different degrees of love from God. Okay? But sometimes it's too strong, we feel..., we feel we are torn into ribbons.

Q. *Hi. I see so much destruction going on around me, environmental destruction.*

M. True.

Q. *Cruelty. Cruelty to animals.*

M. It's true.

Q. *I just wonder how You perceive this and what You can recommend to people who are trying to release themselves from this world in the spiritual fashion, to help them cope with their surroundings and cope with all the devastation that is going on around them. And do You think that going beyond this world is enough for us to recognize what we are leaving behind, or do You feel we in this plane have a duty to try to alleviate the suffering? And will it do any good?*

M. It will. It will. At least for us, for our conscience so that we feel we are doing something and we have tried our best to relieve the suffering of our fellow beings. I do all the same. Whatever you ask, I am doing. I did, I do, and I will. I have told you already, our finances are distributed to different organizations, sometimes, or different

countries, when there are in disasters. And I would not like to boast much about it, but since you ask... And for example, we gave one million dollars US to Philippines last year for their release of their... relief of their Mountain Pinatubo. And we helped the flood victims in Au Lac, and the flood victims in China, et cetera. And we are trying to help the Aulacese refugees now to release... to... to help with the United Nations' burden, you understand, provided the United Nations wants us to help. But we are trying. Yes, understand now? We help them with financial support, and also we could relocate them if the United Nations lets it happen – with the blessing of the United Nations. Understand? Yes, so we do all these things that you have requested and also because, since we are here, you understand, we might just as well clean our environment as much as possible. Therefore, we help with the suffering and we help with the moral standard of the world. Yeah? Both spiritually and physically. Yes. Because some people don't want to take spirituality from me. They only want to take physical help. So we help them physically. And that's what we do, that's why I have to earn money. That's why I don't want to live on people's donations. Understand? All my monks and my disciples have to work, just like you do. And then, apart from that, we help spiritually also, understand, and help with the suffering of the world, help to relieve the suffering of the world. We have to do this. It doesn't mean we sit in samadhi all day long and enjoy ourselves. That's a very selfish Buddha (enlightened being). We don't want to have Him here. [Laughter]

Q. *I just have one more question. I was wondering if You knew anything... I heard many reports that the Dalai Lama eats meat and I was just wondering if You knew if that was true and how he would excuse that.*

M. I don't know why you asked me, you have to ask him.

Q. *I just wondered if You had heard it or if You knew anything about that.*

M. You see, I very much not like to talk other people things, especially when that person is not here to defend himself; should things not be the way we understood. All right, please excuse. He is a lovable person as far as he can be. And anything else is his own responsibility and choice of life.

Q. *Thank You Master Ching Hai, for having the patience with us today, [Master: It's okay.] for answering our questions and being so generous. You spoke about a level where one is aware that they have powers that come from that awareness. Now, what if You are aware of the powers, You don't know that You have them but You are aware of them. You may even feel like You do. How do You access it or not access it? If You don't access it, how do You not become impatient with the process that's going on around? Like You see the process taking a slow, mundane way when You know You can just pray or do something else to bring about a better or quicker resolution.*

M. Yeah, understand.

Q. *What does that mean and how does one access it with the blessing that it will come out okay? Do You understand what I mean?*

M. I understand, I understand. What you meant is that when we have the power to change things and when the things around go in a bureaucratic way and a slow way, how would you have the patience to bear it, right? Or would you just pray or do some magic or point a finger and push it, right?

No, I have patience, because we have to work with the pace of this world in order not to bring it into chaos. Yes. For example, a child cannot run. Not because you are in a hurry or you want to run that you make the child stumble and fall. So we have to be patient. Even though we have the power to run, we walk with the child, yes. That's why sometimes I am also frustrated and impatient but I have to teach myself to be patient. That's why I have to go and bow my head from one president after another for the refugees, even though we want to aid all the financial support. We would give all we have, everything, millions of dollars, or billions even. We have to go through the bureaucratic system.

Give Caesar what belongs to Caesar. Understand? I am not going to wield my head or to point a finger at the United Nations even make them run. No, no. We cause disaster in this world if we use physical, magic power. Understand? It has to go the way it goes. But we can elevate people's consciousness by spiritual healing, by spiritual wisdom, understanding. Impart to them the knowledge that they are willing to do it, you understand, and cooperate. That's the best way, not to use magical power. I never intentionally use magical power in any aspect of life. But miracles just happen around the spiritual practitioners. That's very natural, but not intentionally. You understand? Not trying to push things. Yes, that's no good. The child cannot run. All right? You satisfied with my answer? If any of my answers don't suit you, please let me know, because I can explain further.

But I trust you are very intelligent, being the most chosen and intelligent people of all nations. Therefore, I don't elaborate very much, yeah. Any more question? Yes, behind there. It's good that we have United Nations, I have to say, by the way. Yes, yes. We eliminate many of the world's conflicts and wars, even though we cannot completely minimize. But I read your books of United Nations. Everyone is United Nations. And I have followed some of the United Nations' work. And I must praise its effort and efficiency in rescuing hostages where other people cannot rescue, all the power of the world cannot rescue and one United Nations' commissioner did it.

Yes, and many other things concerning disaster relief, refugee problems. You have about twelve million refugees, I heard, responsibility. No? It's a lot of work, and the wars and everything. So, it's good that we have United Nations, yeah! It's very good.

- Q. *Thank You, Master Ching Hai, for sharing Your wisdom with us. I have a question. It's about the escalating world population and its accompanying problem of further environmental abuse and the further greater demand for food. Would You like to comment something on this escalating world population? Is this a world karma? Or is this going to create certain kind of karma in the future?*
- M. Hum, to have more people for this world is also very good. Why not? More crowded, more noise, more fun. No? It's not that we are overpopulated, really. We just not spread out evenly. People just condense in certain areas of the world and do not want to move to another area. That is all. Yeah, we have so many vast areas of wild land that have not been used. Many virgin islands, many vast... you know, plateaus which are only green with forests and nothing there. Hum, people just like to concentrate in New York, for example, [Laughter] because it's more fun here. Yes, because if a government or any government is able to create jobs, you understand, and industry... and employment of different kinds in different places and people would go there also to work. They just condense in some places because it's easier to find employment here, or safety. If the safety, security and employment opportunity presents itself in those other different places, people would go there also. They would

go for security, for their livelihood. That's very natural. Yeah? So, it's not that we should fear about overpopulation. We should be more organized to give people of the world more benefit of employment opportunities and housing and security. Then everywhere is the same. We would never be overpopulated.

And about your question concerning food, you should know better. Because in America, we have so much information concerning how to preserve the world. Vegetarian diet is one of the best, to preserve the world's resources, to feed the whole population of the earth. Because we waste a lot of vegetarian food, energy, electricity, medicine, to raise animals. Understand? Whereby it could feed other people directly. And many countries of the third world nations, they sell their protein-enriched vegetarian food for cheaper price. But that is not a help to the other world nations' populations. If we spread all the food evenly and vegetarian diet will help this, not only for ourselves, not only for the animals, but for the whole world.

One of the research something... magazines, they already said that if want... if everyone in the... how to say... Oh, last time, I was in the United Nations, I mentioned that already. I've forgotten. If we eat vegetarian, the world will not be hungry anymore. And also we have to organize, yeah, organize. I know some person, he can make rice bran into nutritious food and milk even. And we have talked last time about that. He said he spent about three hundred thousand dollars and he can feed six hundred thousand people in Ceylon – the poor, the under-nourished, the mothers, and all that. Yeah, it was fantastic. Because the way we do it in many parts of the world, it's that we waste the natural resources, not that we don't have enough. God wouldn't put us here to starve. Actually, we starve ourselves. So, we have to rethink... rethink, reorganize, and that needs the blessing of many countries' governments. They have to bless us with their absolute honesty, cleanliness, and you understand, dignity, and the will to serve people instead of serving themselves. If we have this blessing from all the countries' governments, you understand, we have no problem really. No problem. We have to have good leadership, good economic organization and ruling talents and honest governments. But that can come about more rapidly when many people or most of the people or all the people become spiritual. Then they know the discipline. Then they know the precepts. Then they know how to be honest and clean. And they know how to use their wisdom then. Then they can think of many things to do and reorganize our lives. Understand? Otherwise, if you just run for power with your pocket money or with the money collected from the public and then you try to collect the same money again before you run out of power then. It does not help at all. It does not matter if you sit on gold mine, we die all the same of poverty. The leaders of many nations have to be aware of their power and responsibility, have to think of the people, reorganize the system. Uh! Yes.

- Q. *That seems to be very difficult because as I see, much of the... as I understand, much of the environmental abuse today has to do with a growing population's demand for more living space, for homes, for living the way we in the twentieth century know and want to live. Say the jungles in Brazil. The environmental abuse there. The destruction of the forest there, the rain forest. The land, it's being defoliated and that results in floods. And these are not unrelated to the problem of overpopulation.*
- M. Yes, everything is related to each other, of course, in this world. And the only solution is to solve it from the root, not the branches. And the root is spiritual stability. Understand? So, all we have to do is to try to spread the spiritual message, what we know, and keep to the spiritual discipline. That's what people don't have. It's okay to plug yourself in the electric machine and have some lights and some buzzing music

and get samadhi. But if you don't have moral discipline, then you only use the power for bad things sometimes. Can't control it. You understand? That's why we in this group, we keep... teach people the precepts first. Precepts are important. We have to know where we go and maneuver our power. Power without love, without compassion, without proper understanding of the moral value, then it's no use. It becomes black magic, abuse. Yeah. That's where black magic comes from. Understand?

So, it's easy to get enlightenment, it's hard to keep it. In our path, if you are not truly disciplined and morally equipped, the Master will take away some of your power so that you cannot abuse it and do bad things to the society. Understand? That's the difference. Master has control. The Master power, the Master power, okay?

Yes, I am very happy with all of your intelligent questions. Very intelligent. People do these things because they are not wise enough, you know, like abusing the land that you have said, or doing something just because of their lack of wisdom. Yes, so the root is wisdom, spiritual practice. Get enlightened. Yes, man.

- Q. *I've read a couple of Your books and I've listened to several of Your tapes.*
- M. You have! Amazing! So we knew each other then.
- Q. *I am intrigued by the concept of asuras.*
- M. A.S.U.R.A.S... What is that? Asura! Asura! Ah, astral! Ah, asuras! Yes, yes, yes. This is the Sanskrit language for astral entities, astral entities. Okay, now. I didn't know you speak in the Sanskrit. Right so!
- Q. *So, my question is that I know that I struggle to do the right thing to do my practices and I know that I am struggling against something that is struggling against me. And my question is how do I get beyond the struggle? How do I win?*
- M. That's where fun is. If something is too easy, you know you lose the challenge and you don't even want to win it. Yes. Therefore, we have two powers inside us. We call 'yin' and 'yang' in oriental terms, and Chinese. Uh. We call negative and positive in the western terminology. Negative power just pushes us to do something which is against our will, and positive power helps us to conquer that tendency. And sometimes we lose, sometimes we win, depends on our spiritual discipline and power. So, try to struggle and continue. Just like the United Nations struggles with refugees' issues and the wars in the world. Sometime you win at the end, it takes some struggling.

I thank you for your attention. All the best.

HOW PEOPLE REGRESS ⁸²

People who have worked hard since a young age or who try to work hard whenever they can, they are more clever, sharp, very fast and very clear-sighted; because they have practiced a very long time. So, practice makes masters, because both of the jobs are similar. Most of the circumstances you can judge, if you are used to diversity.

82. Group meditation, New York Center, U.S.A., June 25, 1992 (Originally in English).

I also have had this experience, because since I was young, I loved to work. I loved to be of help. We had servants in the house, but I always ironed my own clothes, washed my own clothes. I even brought water for my parents to take baths and cooked tea for my father. Sometimes I learnt to cook and I took care and helped the servants voluntarily. We had about three, four servants at that time. No need for me to work, I always liked to work. Probably that's why I am good at many things, just because I am used to adjustments.

For example, if you do something a long time, sometimes you don't need to measure, you just look and you know how much is needed. It's very fast. The same with many other things, the more you use your brain, the more it will become alert and intelligent. Otherwise, you just become more and more stupid and then regress into stone or tree. That's how people regress. So, don't ask me how people can become animals or regress to a lower nature of life. They make it that way. They make themselves that way.

There was a story about a man in Formosa. He is a kind of medium, he can go to hell or to heaven. That man was very pure from childhood – ate vegetarian. He never married and he meditated. He also knew about me. When I first became famous in Formosa and appeared in public, he also came to have a look, he pressed himself on the window. Since that day, he doesn't do medium work anymore. He said: 'Great Master has come. We have to stop all this work in respect to Her. We don't need to do all this work anymore.' He had about two hundred thousand strong followers. He just dropped it. He went to hell and he went around the world to check out. Sometimes went to heaven – maybe it was not very high. The things he recounted when he came back or during the voyage, I know to be true. So he must have been very genuine.

This guy went to hell. He recounted and someone else at the time took notes of it and he made some books about hell. One story about hell was like this, very simple. Oh! Not hell, about our human life was like this. He was walking around and saw many things in this world with different eyes – probably astral projection. He saw a couple, just walking on the street, jumping and dancing by the way to rock-and-roll music, and just so happy. Happy, jumping around like that. Suddenly, they came across a pig sty. The mother pig just happened to have given birth to piglets. These two souls were kind of attracted into this business and they became pigs just by dancing and not paying attention to where they went. That was one story.

Another story about hell, how people became pigs and animals. Many people who die, who do not have enough merit to be born as humans again immediately or to be born in heaven, will be in so-called hell for a while. They will be punished or something terrible done to them to clean their karma, burn out all the bad things, cut off all the immoral ulcers from their souls, so they can be born again. The king of hell will give them an audience and ask them what is it that they want now – what kind of position they want, and what kind of life they want to lead – as now they will have the privilege to be born as humans again.

One by one, they answered. Some of them said: 'Oh! I am so happy to be free of hell now. I am sure that I am going to be a human being, very honored, very happy and going to be a very good person. For example, I want to serve and I want to do this.' Then they will give you a good position like being a nurse, doctor or whatever to give you a good chance to serve people.

Another person said: 'Oh! Since I have been in hell very long – very terrible, miserable – now I want to enjoy life. I want to have beautiful surroundings, beautiful clothes and a

lovely voice so that I can sing and charm all the females. I should have a beautiful abode next to a river and should have plenty of food so that I don't have to earn money to get it.'

The king of hell said, 'All right.' So, he told his subordinates, the devils, to bring him exactly what he needed. So, what did they bring him? A beautiful, feathered bird, such shiny feathers. That's what he wanted. He wanted beautiful clothes, no need to earn them. So he had them fixed permanently. No need to wash even, no trouble. He didn't want a troubled life; he wanted just to sit there, eat, drink, and sing. So, they gave him a big, beautiful, feathered body and a nice voice, so he could sing all day long, then placed him next to a tree in the forest – a lot of berries, wild fruit and beautiful surroundings. He had drinking, eating, beautiful feathers, and nothing to worry about. That was what they gave him. Exactly according to what he wanted. So, do not blame God for our position. It is what we wanted.

Another guy also came up from hell and wanted a similar thing. 'Wow! I have always been burned in hell and my flesh looks like it's all gone. I'm skinny and burned out. I want to get fat and even fatter. Looks like a lot of blessings to be fat.' Most people think to be fat and big is a kind of meritorious life. 'I have had such a hard life in hell, I want to make up for it now. I want to just eat, drink, sleep, and get fat. I have been very skinny up till now because all the fire in hell drew out my blood, burned all my fat and flesh. I want people to serve me, bring food up to my door, up to my mouth even. I don't want to go anywhere, don't want to earn money for it. Give me that kind of life! Then I don't have to worry about food, clothing and everyone serves me.'

The king told the subordinates to bring his 'outfit' for this life. Do you know what it was? A pig's skin. They put it down for him and he immediately became a pig. After that he drank a kind of liquid and forgot everything about his past life; he just enjoyed being a pig. Every day people brought food to his mouth, washed him, brought drinks for him, and made him fat. He didn't have to do anything at all. That was the kind of life that he wanted, so he got it. Otherwise, how can you have a human life; doing nothing, no responsibility. You get food and drink brought to your mouth, without doing anything. Do you think there is a human life like that? No. So they had to give him a pig's life to satisfy his desires. That was very justified because it was according to what he wanted.

'Your Mother / Father gives you.' Is that not so? 'Whenever you knock, you shall be given.' Now that you often ask, you'll be given. If you ask for the impossible thing, you get the impossible life. That's what it is.

That's how many people run into trouble and are born into lower levels of consciousness. Just because of the misconception, just because they want things for nothing, just because they want to go against the law of karma here in this world. Once we are above the law of karma, then it's okay, we are in heaven, we're in nirvana. Whatever we want, it will be supplied; we don't even need to want. But when we are still in the three worlds – with physical bodies, physical needs, physical demands – we have to make also physical contributions. That's why the bible says: *With the sweat of your brow, you earn your bread.* No other way. We have been in Eden, we have been in heaven, but we left the circuit. Now that we are in this world, we have to obey the law, take care of ourselves, and our businesses.

Freedom doesn't mean that you fly in the sky; I stay here, I open the mouth, and wait for the berries to come. Freedom means that you have great responsibilities, means no one should have to tell you what to do, but you know what to do. You have freedom by choice if you know everything; what to do and take care of your life and your work. No way before.

If you still let people tell you what to do because you don't know what to do yourself, then you are not free. Doesn't matter how much you want to be free, you are not, because you are bound within your own ignorance. You let your mind cheat you into thinking you are free and you are okay. But you are not.

So, there is much work for you to do and your level is up to you. Even if I take you to the fifth and you are not up to it, you are still on the first; even if I am, for example, a university professor but you are still at the kindergarten state: If I take you to the college by my own power and position, what do you do there? You cannot do anything. You don't understand. Even if I love you very much, I cannot help you to be intelligent at such an age.

So, it's up to you. Try to polish your own power, manner and way of life. You have to know, you can choose whatever you want. But then, do not blame anyone if you are not free, if you are not progressing, if you are not respected, or if you are not good for yourself. That's all. Otherwise, it doesn't concern anyone, what kind of life, what kind of level you choose to be in.

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE ⁸³

We also have a destroying nature inside us. Depending on each person, the destructive tendency is higher or lower; but try to control it. Otherwise, you carry on the whole time with your destructive spirit and that's very negative. We have both negative and positive inside, but we only use the negative when necessary. It's not that I'm saying we can't use it, because a negative power, when you use it in the right place, is very good.

Just like the children at home, you're always positive with them, encouraging them, loving them, and telling them all good things. But when they're too naughty, when they try to be stubborn, are not obedient enough and do wrong things – harm other people or the neighbors – then you have to use a so-called negative attitude; but actually in that case, it's positive.

You have to scold them, or maybe punish them lightly, like they have to kneel, they have to stay at home when you go out or you cut down on some of their enjoyments, pocket money or whatever. These look negative because 'Oh! Parents are always supposed to be loving, forgiving, smooth and soft spoken, so why punish the children?' But they deserve it, they have to be.... Otherwise, they can't turn to the positive.

That's when negative power is for a useful purpose. Don't say always that the negative can't be used or the positive has to be used all the time. If you use positive power or a positive attitude in the wrong way, it becomes negative. For example, your child is very naughty – you have given him everything already, but he tries to go out to steal just for fun, or just because he associates with bad guys; or he gets drugs and goes out and breaks into people's cars – and you tell him but he doesn't change. If you still keep rewarding him, loving him, forgiving him, then you are negative. Then your attitude is negative. You're spoiling him, you're harming him, you're harming his future, because one day the police will catch him, the neighbors will catch him, or another strong guy will hit him, break his bones, and break everything of his future and your heart as well. In that case your positive attitude is absolutely negative.

So, we have to understand this yin-yang nature, and make use of both accordingly. Not to dislike one and cling to the other, but to know how to use them. That's the art of living, that

83. Group meditation, New York Center, U.S.A., June 24, 1992 (Originally in English).

is wisdom. Otherwise, how else can we survive in this world with ourselves and our loved ones. There has to be some limit. It's the same with me. So, don't always expect me to give you candies and smile all the time. I have to do some of my negative work, and turn it into positive, turn these negative people into positive. Otherwise, you'll never grow up.

BRING PARADISE TO EARTH ⁸⁴

Try to have some consideration, not for other people, but for yourself – to elevate yourself to a much higher sensitivity of consciousness. We cannot always remain at a very coarse level with rough ways of handling people's emotions and the environment. If we are sensitive to other people's feelings and needs, it doesn't mean that it's good for that person only, or good for other people only; it's also good for us. It means that we are highly developed souls. We are very sensitive. We understand before people speak. It means that we have reached the level of Amitabha's western paradise. As the sutra says, 'In the western paradise, people don't need to speak, and each understands perfectly the other person's desires and expressions.' We have to bring paradise to earth, and not wait until we die to be there. It is a wrong conception to run to some level somewhere and then forsake the world. We have to better the world as much as our ability allows. Otherwise, not only can we not elevate ourselves, but we also damage the world. We make it worse.

THE DOG THAT CIRCLED MASTER ⁸⁵

In the past few days since our retreat began, a dog has been walking around my quarters every day. He walks in circles, making seven rounds each time. After the seventh round, he sticks out his tongue to cool off, and then repeats the circling again. This has become his daily routine and I have no idea how many rounds he has made. If he does not see me, he barks a few times. The sound is unbearable. [Master imitates the dog barking.] [Master and audience laugh.] If he does not see me after the seventh round, he barks, and each time the pitch is different. When he is tired, it goes 'ou' (lower note); and when he is not, it goes 'oh, oh' (higher note). [Audience: 'He must be an Indian dog.'] The Indian dog goes circling around the Buddha (an enlightened being). At first, I thought he was hungry and gave him some food. But he was not hungry. How could a hungry dog move around like that the whole day!

He only circles my house. He is very disciplined and does not run around wildly. He follows a definite path. [Master demonstrates with Her hands.] If he is tired by the fifth round, he takes a two-minute break before resuming. At the end of the seventh round, he takes a longer rest.

Sometimes I talk to him and say, 'Okay, stop circling around!' But he thinks I want him to go on, and continues doing so. If I am quiet, he stands guard in a very dignified manner. Strangely, he only circles my house and moves down after finishing his rounds. The female initiates thought he was a stray dog and tried to chase him away. But he refused to leave. He ran up to my house instead. Every time he is chased, he just runs back up and starts circling again, thinking that he hasn't done enough rounds. When residents try to chase him away, he just stares at them. [Resident disciple: The other day when I was on guard and tried to chase him away, he even tried to bite me. How ferocious!]

Bite you! Really? He had not finished his rounds yet, so how could you chase him away? You do not know his habit. He was trying to tell you, 'You are only one of the guards,

84. Group meditation, New York Center, U.S.A., June 18, 1992 (Originally in English).

85. Group meditation, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, May 17, 1992 (Originally in Chinese).

nothing more! You are a first-rank guard. I am a third-rank guard. We are not much different.' [Laughter]

He makes seven rounds each time and walks the same path on every round. You people on guard duty know that. It seems to have drawn a line on the ground, and walks the same course every day. He only moves around my house, and nowhere else. He may be a Tibetan dog. Tibetan people also walk in circles around the Buddha. How strange that he has been making daily rounds over the past few days, not going anywhere else or doing any other thing! Also, he is not noisy. He barks only when he does not see me, [Master imitates the barking.] as if to tell me, 'Here I come!' [Audience: It is reporting for duty to Master.] He has reported for duty clearly enough. However, I say, 'Don't report anymore. I do not like noise.' He only barks if he cannot see me; he does not dare bark loudly, but in an unpleasant kind of tone. If he can see me, he does not bark. It is fine seeing me once a day.

In the beginning, when he passed by my door, he would come inside a bit to see if I was there. Now he does not come to the door to take a look. He just moves around the house, round and round like this, stopping to rest after every seven rounds.

QUAN YIN METHOD IS ALL ENCOMPASSING ⁸⁶

Recognize your ability

As you go on developing your mastership, you will master slowly, slowly, one by one the arts, and you know many things by the way. One by one, you'll master them. Not one by one, one hundred, one thousand by one thousand. It's just because you have no opportunity to use these, so you do not know what you have yet. When you suddenly encounter trouble, danger or problems that you have to solve, then you know what you have.

Faith

What is faith? Not the blind belief, but the higher, the nobler idea of who you are, of what you can do, and of how great you truly have been and will be. That is the faith, the true faith. Not the faith in my power, not the faith that I could heal you, I could help you, but the faith that the almighty power is within me, within you, and that can do everything. You do not follow a Master, you follow the great principle of the universe of which the Master reminds you.

Follow the highest Master

Do not follow anyone if that person talks nonsense and counters your evolutionary process. Follow anyone whose teaching is grand, is noble, is high, and inspires you to become greater, to have more confidence and more wisdom in yourselves. That's the highest Master. The Master might have different personalities, might not suit your taste; how the Master dresses, how the Master speaks, how She eats Her meals, She might eat bread and you eat rice, or She eats rice and you eat bread, but that doesn't matter, doesn't matter at all. If the Master knows the highest principle of life, the noblest ideal of mankind, and teaches you that, that is the right Master. Don't look for the miracles, don't look for personalities, don't look for the outer appearance, don't look for Her way of life. Look for the principle that the Master teaches, which is very logical and evolves upward. Anyone

86. Group meditation, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, May 12, 1992 (Originally in English).

who teaches downward is the devil; anyone who teaches upward is the Master of high order.

The real teaching comes from the Master

Everyone can say that we are God, that we have Buddha nature inside. But saying and having the power behind it is different. The real teaching is not verbal; therefore, I don't mean anyone who talks good, who tells you good principles, that's a great Master. No, I mean the real teaching, the teaching that comes from the whole being of the Master, from the whole vital principle, from the whole energy of the Master. You don't listen with ears alone. You listen with all your soul and you understand it by your own wisdom. That is the real teaching. Not by words because many teachers teach by words. I don't mean that. The real teaching is the invisible power that goes with the words, with every promise that the Master makes to you. That will be fulfilled. So we must know. There is a difference between a copy and an original.

THE WAY TO ETERNAL WEALTH AND PROSPERITY ⁸⁷

Through spiritual practice, we can unearth our wisdom, and then we can do everything smoothly. That's why I say, 'Spiritual practitioners are the ones who help the world the most.' Despite all our good intentions, however we can be of little help to the world if we do not have talents, wisdom or virtues.

As I said before, if the people or government of a country are immoral, even if they have the best economic projects and the best technologies, the wealth and prosperity of that country won't last. Just observe the fall and degeneration of several powerful nations in the world, and you'll know what I say is true. Conversely, some nations that were small, weak and scarce in financial resources have developed rapidly and steadily. It's because these nations are highly moral and respect spiritual faith, human rights and dignity.

Take Singapore for example. It's small in area and has few financial resources. So, how did it develop so well as to earn the respect of the world? It's because the Singaporean government respects the people. The government truthfully works for the people, not for its own power or to secure positions. In that country all religions are respected. The government holds spiritual practitioners in high esteem. When I went to give a lecture there, you all know how they respected, loved and admired me. It was because they knew what I say is right. In that country there is no discrimination among religions. Whatever your faith or whatever religion you come from, as long as you're enlightened, what you say is logical, and you're truly virtuous, they'll follow you to learn.

Hence, we can't afford not to practice spirituality. It's because regardless of the kind of work we do, be it in the artistic, political or economic fields, we still have to develop our wisdom to its greatest potential so that we can achieve perfection in our careers and serve the world.

Spiritual practitioners are the best citizens of the planet

When I teach you how to pursue spiritual practice and guide you strictly, I don't only observe your shortcomings and ignore your good qualities. But since these qualities were there in the first place, there's no need to mention them. We're supposed to have these qualities originally so why bother to praise them? We need to change because we have

87. Group meditation, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, May 10, 1992 (Originally in Chinese).

flaws. Our shortcomings make us regress, separate us from others and sometimes hinder us from developing our compassion. That's why we must axe those shortcomings. We don't have to change our profession, social status or level of wealth. All we need to do is rectify our shortcomings, and then we'll do our jobs better, become richer and develop our talents better.

All that our fellow initiates need to do is focus on spiritual edification, and then their talents will improve continuously. We don't abhor the world or try to escape it. We practice spiritually for the sake of fully developing our talents, abilities, virtues and wisdom. In teaching you about spiritual practice, I have never demanded that you all become monastic practitioners and go into the Himalayas. You practice at home and meanwhile take care of your family and develop the country. This is the only goal of a spiritual practitioner. What's the use of spiritual practice if we cut ourselves off from the masses? Where else can we use the merits derived from spiritual practice, except in serving the masses?

Therefore, spiritual practitioners are really good citizens, truly good citizens of the world. Whether they're presidents or taxi drivers, spiritual practitioners are always peaceful and pure at heart in everything they do. They're extraordinarily clean and honest, very contented and amiable. Anyone who sees them likes them, and then they ask how they've become like that and whether they have any secret formula. This gives us the opportunity to spread the good news. If each fellow initiate could share the Quan Yin method with two persons each month, or let them know the benefits of our spiritual practice, the whole world would be completely delivered very soon! It doesn't matter even if they don't practice the Quan Yin method; at least we let them know the moral aspects, remind them of their responsibilities as a human, of the golden era and the innocence, virtues and magnificent spirit that we had before we came into this world.

It takes more than words to persuade someone to pursue spirituality. We ourselves must first practice well, and then our words will have a powerful backup. Also, once they believe us, we still have to continue helping them, because they may be afraid of the vegetarian diet or of meditation. So, we still have to take care of them with every step they take. We must not just speak to them casually, and then forsake them even though they don't know what to do. This is not the way. We should remember the difficult situations we encountered when we, or other fellow initiates, first pursued spirituality. Sometimes we were misunderstood by worldly people or by our family members. We have to be aware of such problems. When we help others, we should help them thoroughly. The purpose is not to get more fellow practitioners, but to purify the world.

Develop your unlimited potential and talents

Having practiced the Quan Yin method until now, you have already derived many benefits, and are aware of the many changes in your actions, speech and thoughts, and in your family. Then of course, you should help others to receive the same benefits, and let them become better, more intelligent and capable persons. Having embarked on the spiritual path, we can develop all our talents a hundred percent. Therefore, it's not sufficient to just become a good doctor or a good construction worker; we still have other talents to develop. These talents and wisdom will only be unearthed after we practice the Quan Yin method. This is my personal experience.

We don't need much from the world, yet we're capable of contributing a lot. Thus, we seem to be very rich people, and in fact, we are really very rich. We lack nothing at all because we practice the Quan Yin method! So, in this world, we don't have to be wealthy

or powerful in order to live a good, prosperous and meaningful life. Instead, we should have virtues and wisdom, and then we'll have everything we want.

That's why the bible says: 'Seek you first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.' What's the kingdom of God within? It's the greatest power and capability within that God has bestowed on us. Since our Mother / Father is almighty, being His children, we ought to be like Him. Even if we can't believe that we're as almighty as God is, at least we should be close! At least two-thirds! God is almighty; He irradiates the whole universe. Then at least we should have two-thirds of this power and illuminate two-thirds of the universe!

This means that we are powerful. However, in our oblivion, we busy ourselves with insignificant roles, struggling in the material dimensions, and forgetting our greatest ability. The kingdom of God is within us; the God nature is within each sentient being. Any great Master would say the same thing, yet worldly people don't understand, then chant the scriptures daily without knowing their meaning. Only we Quan Yin practitioners understand because we've found the kingdom of God. We know who God is, and where God's nature lies. We can apply it in our daily life. Although the spiritual achievement of fellow initiates may differ and their degrees of realization may not be the same, they have all entered the kingdom of God.

Integrate spiritual practice into daily life

Ancient Zen Masters didn't teach disciples how to meditate when they first came to them for training. In stories about them, we don't hear about their disciples meditating every day. Most of the time, we hear about them chopping wood, grinding grain, cooking meals or perhaps striking the bell or scrubbing the floor! The same happens here. Sometimes I instruct the monastic disciples to do a lot of work that exceeds their so-called capabilities. However, this is good; it's training! If I tell you to do the same thing every day, that will confine you in the same corner, and you'll have no chance to recognize your other talents. You'll have no chance to realize to what extent your wisdom has developed. We have capabilities far exceeding our imagination, but we don't have a chance to use them so we're not aware of them. Therefore, fellow practitioners, please do not fear hardship, do not fear work, and do not fear new tasks. Try it yourself. You can do anything because 'I can do everything. [Applause]

I have numerous disciples. Of course, you initiated people are my closest disciples. Otherwise, I have innumerable visible and invisible believers, uncountable! Of course, there's a difference between disciples and believers. Disciples are those who follow me to learn from me. I teach them how to practice spirituality through personal instruction so that they can teach other people and benefit five, six, seven, eight, a hundred generations of their families. Believers are those who believe in the ability and power of the Master, and who pray for liberation for themselves as 'a person' alone. This is called 'Hinayana.' But you initiated disciples are my 'Mahayana' disciples.

Although I have plenty of disciples, can have anything I want and believe there's nothing that you would refuse to give me, I still work to fulfill my own financial needs. Why do I paint pictures, make handicrafts and even do plasterwork myself? Because I want you to learn from my example, let you know that an enlightened person is capable of doing anything. Also, I want you to know that we spiritual practitioners are not parasites in the world.

We have grown up and become knowledgeable. If we still can't take care of ourselves, how can we take care of the world? If we spiritual practitioners or so-called enlightened persons have to ask others to do everything for us, are incapable of doing anything, are very slow and sluggish, and rely on others, servants or disciples for everything, then what kind of enlightened Masters are we? So, it's not my intention to boast about my talents; I never had these talents. I just do what I need to do, and then find that I have such talents. Just like you, I don't predict the future. I simply react naturally in any situation that arises, and depending on the circumstances I just handle it accordingly. So, don't be afraid of any event in your life. When experiences come, first calm down and then you'll know how to handle them!

Dissolve natural disasters and man-made catastrophes with the way of love

Of course, there are things that we can't handle because they're related to the multitudes of the world. Their collective karma and complex systems, their government, mindset, customs and habits are quite unlike ours. To avoid trouble and conflict, we do the best we can without engaging in too much confrontation with the world. Thus, it appears as if we're incapable of handling some aspects because they're related to the mundane. If the problem concerns only us or our fellow practitioners, we can solve it immediately. Between us, Master and disciples, and among our fellow practitioners, there's never been anything that can't be handled. Isn't that true? [Audience: Yes!] We're truly one because we practice the Quan Yin method.

We know about these things so we're happy and delighted. Now whenever we can share the news with someone, we try our best. However, don't force people. Just let them know that there is such an option, and then let them decide. It doesn't matter if they choose otherwise. We love the whole world, including fellow practitioners, non-fellow practitioners, believers, non-believers, enemies, friends, enemies of enemies, friends of enemies, enemies of friends, and so on. We love them all. [Warm applause.] It's because people in this world practice discrimination that they struggle, kill each other and reduce our beautiful, fertile planet to one that's poor, weak, backward and miserable. We thus become inferior to other planets. We Quan Yin practitioners should spread our indiscriminating love to the whole world. Only through this way of love can we dissolve all natural disasters and wars, and turn foes into friends. [Applause]

We should act with sincerity, fairness and impartiality, and without discrimination. The people of the world will thus follow and learn from us. When we act in this way, the world will become more and more peaceful. You must bear this in mind: People practicing the Quan Yin method must have wisdom and influence the whole world instead of being influenced by the ignorant multitudes!

LET THE LIGHT OF SPIRITUALITY ILLUMINATES THE UNIVERSE ⁸⁸

Our true birthday is the day of our initiation. As the bible says, 'Unless we are born again, we cannot enter the kingdom of God.' And in the Tao Te Ching (the book of the Way by Lao Tzu, the major philosophical work of Taoism) it is stated, 'If we cannot become a child again, we will not be able to understand the Tao.' In this sense, the time of initiation is our true birthday. However, since we possess the physical form, from the standpoint of secular customs, our birthday is the day when our material body enters the world. If we're born on an auspicious day, we'll grow up to serve the world and become a great person like Jesus Christ or Shakyamuni Buddha.

88. Group meditation, Hishu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, May 9, 1992 (Originally in Chinese).

We have two great annual festivals: The first is the birthday of Shakyamuni Buddha and the second is that of Jesus Christ. Each year we celebrate the birthdays of these two greatest and most renowned enlightened Masters in the world. When celebrating the anniversaries of their births, we should remember their grace. They took great pains just to edify this obdurate world, sacrificing their private lives, moments of comfort and youthful bodies in the process. And we must strive to practice diligently so that we can become like them, or at least become able to follow in their footsteps. Each of us can become as great as they are. The choice is ours to make. If we consider ourselves to be very weak and small, we will be weak and small, but if we think that we're very great, we will become great.

Master your thoughts

Thoughts are of paramount importance while faith is the mother of all paths and merits. If we have no faith in ourselves, all the saints from all the dimensions and all times can't save us. Even if Jesus Christ came again, He wouldn't be able to do anything for us. Thus, we need to understand that if we want to progress and attain the great wisdom, we have to work hard; no one can help us. If we spend all our time worshipping a certain great Buddha or great Master, but forget that we too have the same great wisdom within ourselves, we're wasting their efforts. We're acting contrary to their teachings.

Shakyamuni Buddha said, 'I have attained Buddhahood, and you will also become Buddhas in the future!' Jesus Christ also told us, 'The works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do.' We should take their words to heart for they're very important. If we don't remember them, there's nothing else in the world that's worth remembering.

Life after life, we've been brainwashed and have followed many systems that haven't been beneficial for us and have belittled us. We even prostrate ourselves before a piece of wood, a tree or even a rock. I wonder how much lower you can degrade yourselves! Even going to hell isn't as terrible as having an incorrect concept. Most people in the world immerse themselves in decadent lives and concepts because they don't want to change this kind of thinking. They don't want to accept the Truth, to stand tall, fight for themselves and regain their own rights. That's why they suffer life after life.

However, our earth isn't the worst; there are even worse planets in the universe. In this world, we still have the freedom and right to change our thinking. We aren't poisoned to the extent that no cure is possible because all the ignorance here is of our own choice, but we're too lazy to change. In contrast, the inhabitants of some planets have virtually no chance to change because they're controlled by beings from other planets who employ many different kinds of horrible weapons, which are more a kind of technology, to manipulate the inhabitants of these planets and make them live like zombies.

It would be very terrible and miserable if our thinking were monitored like this. It might be all right if only our bodies were controlled, but if our thoughts and wisdom were restricted, we would be in grave trouble. Many people are being influenced constantly, but they're oblivious to it. For example, when we recite the scriptures or read books, if we don't understand what they mean and yet make no effort to understand them, we might trust someone to explain them to us. However, this may not be what they really express. That person may not understand them either, yet we place our trust in him and let him guide us in our thinking and religious beliefs. Eventually, the two parties may sink together to the same ignorant level, and this will be really troublesome.

Many people in the world believe blindly like this, accepting many things that haven't been verified or have never benefited them. Not even our ancestors, parents or elders benefited from them, but just because everyone believes them we just join the group. It never crosses our minds to question whether these systems or philosophies are true or not. Will we be able to get any verification of them? This is how many people pass one day, and then a lifetime.

Spiritual practitioners brighten the whole universe

I believe that in recent years, as the number of fellow practitioners has increased, our world has become more comfortable and purified. Many wonders are occurring in places around the world. In fact, so many unimaginable things have occurred that even our fellow practitioners are amazed. However, we really shouldn't be surprised because as I've said before, for we who practice the Quan Yin method, the Light within us is infinite, and our inner peace and love are inconceivable. There's no wall that they can't penetrate and no boundary that can block them out.

When we cultivate ourselves spiritually in Formosa, it not only benefits the Formosan people, but our Light permeates the whole world. Let's not mention the intangible benefits; just talking about the tangible benefits is enough. Do you know how many fellow initiates we have in the whole world? In how many countries can we find our fellow initiates? Let's not mention their invisible energy and infinite love power, but first look at their lifestyle: They're vegetarians, they don't kill or steal and they love their neighbors.

Also, they're truthful, reliable and peaceful; they're very good citizens of the world. This is enough already. Just observing the tangible results of meditation and personal cultivation is enough. There's no need to mention the invisible potential or intangible benefits that we bring to the world.

Our fellow practitioners do business honestly. They're very frank, proper and upright in everything they do. Also, they don't kill animals because they want to preserve lives. We observe a vegetarian diet in order to extend our love to all beings, not just humans. If everyone could be like our fellow practitioners, there would be no more war. So, our spiritual cultivation really yields benefits. Of course, the invisible forces, the intangible miraculous powers, are known only to our fellow initiates. If we revealed them to outsiders, they would sound like fairytales; people would be skeptical. That's why I say, 'Don't talk about them with outsiders; only with our fellow initiates.'

In the past few years, I've really been touched by your love and support. Of course, I seldom praise you or express my appreciation, but I believe you all know what I think. It's enough for us to understand each other even though we seldom express it. We're different than worldly people in that we refrain from praising each other a lot. Instead, we point out and help to rectify each other's shortcomings and imperfections. Only this is important.

Spiritual progress knows no bounds

It takes more than a year or two to truly understand Truth, goodness and beauty. There's no end to achieving the infinite wisdom of God. No one can claim that he's comprehended the whole because that would mean it's limited. An ocean, however vast, has an opposite shore. But we can never completely grasp God's wisdom and the energy of the universe. We can't say that we've learned enough or that it's enough to practice spiritually, observe a vegetarian diet and meditate each day. It's never enough! Even now, I'm still refining myself, every single day!

If we claim that we've realized it all, we're looking down on God. The universe is so immense that no individual can ever come to understand everything! However, when someone has attained the ultimate Truth, we say that he's reached Anuttara Samyak Sambodhya for he has entered that level. But there's no boundary or specific position related to this level. Hence, don't imagine that it ends with the attainment of Buddhahood. It's just that, after becoming a Buddha, it becomes easier and more convenient for us to comprehend; it's less difficult than before. For instance, after we graduate from the university, learning becomes more convenient because we have personal experience and we aren't subject to teachers' restraints. But that doesn't mean that we've gained knowledge of everything in the whole world.

Our disciples reach the level of non-regressing Bodhisattvas when they're initiated, and they're entitled to continue learning, become great individuals and be as great as Shakyamuni Buddha or Jesus Christ. In fact, many of our fellow initiates are almost as great as they are. However, this world doesn't need very many Jesus Christs and Shakyamuni Buddhas so please just practice in peace and silence. Don't let others know, or other planets will come to borrow you and take you away. Other planets may not have any Buddhas so they might borrow my disciples! Should they really want to do that, they'd have to send dozens of UFOs for you! They'd also need to offer me a few UFOs to facilitate my preaching work. Only then would I lend you to them. [Master and audience laugh.]

Share the good news about the Truth

So, I'll do what's good for the world, whether it means preaching overseas or staying in one country. The essential point is that our infinite power will fill the whole world. The Master isn't simply this flesh, nor are you. We're truly very great, but very few people know it. Every day there are people in the world who worship mountains, rivers, deities, ghosts, wood or rocks, and gain nothing but degradation. However, we have to be patient; we're all in the process of educating ourselves. All we should do is tell them the good news. It's good if they choose to walk with us; if not, it's all right, too.

However, we really have to progress for the good of the whole world. Look at the few countries that have chosen the path of regression and see how they suffer! If we make a wrong choice our whole life is wasted and sometimes it's too late to change. Also, the economy or vital strength of the country is debilitated. A wrong move pushes us back tens or even hundreds of years. So, of course, we should choose the path of progress!

Even after we've been initiated into a very good method, we still need to retrospect every day to see if we're making progress. If we're not, we need to improve quickly. Otherwise, it will be of little benefit. After practicing spiritually, we should use our wisdom and might every day. Otherwise, it'll rust, and we'll possess it as if we didn't possess it and it'll be wasted. If we don't share with others what we've realized through enlightenment, we won't know that we have such great spiritual wealth.

Sometimes fellow practitioners tell me stories, saying that when people ask them questions or when they talk with non-initiates, they can suddenly speak very fluently, the way I do. This is all because you're utilizing your wisdom at that time. If you haven't encountered such an opportunity, you can't make use of it and you'll think that you have no wisdom. So, the more we employ our wisdom, the more we recognize it. The more we share the good news with other people, the more fulfilled our merits will become. Should you think that you've made no progress or received no benefits in your spiritual cultivation, quickly join in the preaching work, [Master laughs.] and strive diligently to share our

teachings. Then you'll know immediately whether you've gained any wisdom or made any progress.

MORALITY IS THE FOUNDATION OF POLITICS ⁸⁹

In this world politicians cannot give their people a peaceful life by means of some kinds of intelligent political projects or a very good plan. Morality should come first. When people have morality, the world will be peaceful, safe and happy. There is no need at all for any politics, no need for any argument, no need for any weapons, no need to control people, or no need to have any police or army. There is no need for anything. It is a pity that leaders of many countries in this world do not quite comprehend this.

If you go and say to certain politicians, 'I have a way to help your country to become a happy and peaceful one.' They will definitely say to you, 'What our country needs is food and money.' They do not consider morality. They do not think of 'Seek you first the kingdom of God, and then everything else shall be added onto you.' I am not saying that there are none. It is just that there are only a few. Even if there is a good leader, it is also troublesome when the people below him are not good. Most of them merely bought their positions. Those who have money can get inside. [Master laughs.] Generally, it is like that. Then those who have talents cannot serve their country if they do not have much money; no one listens to them.

In ancient times, kings and governments looked for great enlightened Masters, great spiritual practitioners who had morality and wisdom, to consult them about matters of ruling the nation. Some countries also do this nowadays! But there are very, very few. That is why the world is falling, and has many wars and disasters. It is because a leader can affect the whole nation. People listen to what he says. At least he has the chance to voice his thoughts. All the television or radio stations and newspapers broadcast his thinking. If his thinking is good and noble, of course, the whole nation will be affected. It does not matter whether the people like it or not when they first hear it. Having listened to it, their mind must have recorded it. They record the good ones, and the bad ones also, so the influence is incredible!

If you go to take a look in hell, you will see that it is full of leaders of the world. It is horrible; just that they do not know this! It is because one person influences so many people, and in turn the whole world. If he leads people astray, of course, he will incur an incredible amount of karma. So, if we are ordinary people, before we become very advanced in our spiritual practice, when we do not have wisdom or many talents, we still have a chance to be saved, a chance to attain eternal liberation. If we do not have any talents, morality, love and wisdom, and we climb up to a very high position and be one of those important persons, then we are finished! [Laughter] It is really very dangerous. Do you understand? Our karma will increase thousands of millions of times.

For us small people, how many people can we influence? The most we can influence is our children. We can only set a bad example for our children, or the wife or husband. Is that not so? And there are also friends and relatives, if they listen to what we say. Therefore, we do not have a big influence. If we were big people, of course, our influence would be incredible. We would also attract the kind of negative and low level force that is similar to ours, making the whole world even more negative, more shaky, heading further toward that direction, and consequently increasing the negative force even more. The karma would become heavier. That is why hell is full of kings. It's terrible, very terrible!

89. Group meditation, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, April 29, 1992 (Originally in Chinese).

It is the same with the so-called spiritual practitioners. If they have not truly attained the Tao, do not truly understand, do not have the right method, and do not possess Truth, virtue and beauty within, and then they go up onto a stage and influence people, leading them astray, then the karma they will have is incredible. That is why hell is full of those kinds of religious and political leaders. Many of them are having their 'training' there. [Laughter] In some cases they have to wait for a very long time. They have to wait till those people who had been brain washed by them become enlightened and liberated before they can be saved. Can you imagine how long they have to wait? That is why it is said in the Buddhist scriptures that there is a 'timeless hell.' Because too many people were hurt and misled, you have to wait till all of them become enlightened and liberated before your sins lessen. That takes a very long time!

It is just like, if at some time, you were poisoned a little bit, your mind became unclear. Then if someone hands you more poison, you will drink it also. You become more and more poisoned. So, it is very difficult to wait for those people to be liberated. It takes a very, very long time. That is why people who mislead others have to wait even longer. It is best for us spiritual practitioners, not to be greedy, not to chase after positions! Do not hanker after the kind of position that has important responsibilities. If we do not have talents, abilities or wisdom, truly we will hurt ourselves. We will also cause damage to the world, and obstruct the evolution of the universe.

The best thing for us to do is to improve our virtues and wisdom. Then we can do whatever God wants us to do, because by that time we are ready. It is like when we are wealthy, we can put our money anywhere. We can be in any business. Is that not so? It is a concern only when we do not have any money. If we want to have our own business or to be a boss before we have any money, and sit there worrying that we will fail in business, that is creating trouble for ourselves. We cannot say that God does not save us. It is really unimaginable that when our own karma is already so heavy, we still want to shoulder the karma of a whole nation or a big group!

The so-called spiritual practitioners, because they do not realize this consequence, they dare to get up and talk nonsense, to accept people as their disciples and to teach people the wrong things. If they knew that there is hell awaiting them, they would not dare to make such a move, or would not dare to talk about anything. It is not good just to have many disciples. We should know what we are teaching them, and where we are leading them, because all does not end after we stay in this world for a hundred years. We still go on. Our lives continue, one after another. It is only a matter of where we will live, in heaven or in hell, in nirvana or in the world?

USE BRAIN POWER FOR ANALYSIS AND ACTION⁹⁰

If we want to progress in our spiritual cultivation, the best way to do so is to introspect on ourselves more. We should find out our shortcomings and anything illogical in our actions. We must analyze and review ourselves daily. If there's anything that we've handled improperly, we should find out the reason. Was it because we didn't utilize our brains properly or didn't analyze the situation carefully when we acted? Or was it because we didn't give careful consideration to our options? We must be careful to remind ourselves! Otherwise, we're all 'refugees.' Whatever people say, we agree with; whatever people teach us, we accept. Then we become garbage bins!

90. Group meditation, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, April 25, 1992 (Originally in Chinese).

We have very good brains. Each person's brain is more or less the same. But why is it that Shakyamuni Buddha could use His intelligence to good advantage while we can't use it properly but waste it instead? Thus, we must remain vigilant. Whatever the situation may be, we should always analyze it and check thoroughly to see whether or not it's correct. Shakyamuni Buddha said that, even regarding what He said, His disciples should analyze it clearly before they believed it. We shouldn't blindly believe anything that people say, but believe only when it's logical. He elaborated on this very clearly and even cited His own words as an example to educate His disciples. Thus, we ought to be cautious. Any ideas, either new or old, if they're illogical, unsuitable, too troublesome, too complicated, and do not benefit us or others, then we shouldn't act on them.

THE MORE WE WORK THE MORE ENLIGHTENED WE BECOME ⁹¹

We work for ourselves, because only when we work frequently will our minds react quickly, and when we encounter problems, we will manage to overcome them. This becomes a habit, and later when we encounter difficulties or problems, we can deal with them promptly and solve them quickly. People who do not work very often respond slowly. They may have good intentions, but they cannot work quickly because they lack common sense regarding work. They are not used to reacting promptly, and are thus not very careful when doing their jobs.

We need to work more often in order to become more mindful. The more we work, the more careful we become through experience. Knowledge and intelligence come from experience, not just from studying. It is the same when we do any kind of work. The more we work, the faster we react naturally and the more capable we become. We can train ourselves to cultivate this habit.

My quick reactions and ability to perform all types of jobs did not come only after I was enlightened. I have been this way since childhood, because I like to do things. When I was about eight or nine and still studying in primary school, we had three or four servants at home. However, I fetched water for myself, and collected and chopped firewood. Occasionally, I cooked for my parents, brewed tea for my father, and heated bath water for him. I washed my own clothes, ironed them, took care of myself, and refused to have the servants wait on me. That was in primary school. I took care of myself starting from grade two. That was how I trained myself to react quickly. I didn't descend from heaven to become a saint, and tell you to do this and that. You can see that I can do anything, like cement work and carpentry. I can do everything myself, and do it better than professionals. Since our fellow practitioners are used to transplanting trees, they now do it better than the professionals. They dug up and planted all the trees on our hills. Even the professionals were amazed by the way they did it, and exclaimed, 'Wow! We have never seen anyone do such a good job of transplanting trees!' To move a tree, they not only dig it up but also bind its roots with rope. They really do a beautiful job with the rope. Even the professionals do not tie it this way, because they don't have the enthusiasm. Besides, they want to save time, finish the work quickly, and go home early. They only care about the money and lack the spirit of commitment. Even if they have this spirit, no one binds the roots so painstakingly in beautiful layers.

The soil attached to the roots can only be preserved when it is wrapped in the way our fellow practitioners do it. Otherwise, the soil falls off. So all the trees are growing tall. Most of them have continued to grow after being planted. Only a few have fallen leaves, perhaps because the trunks or branches are too weak, or the soil came off during the

91. Group meditation, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, April 25, 1992 (Originally in Chinese).

planting process. But mostly they were beautifully bound in neat layers. Trees purchased from outside are not wrapped so nicely. Nevertheless, you do not cherish all this. I know it because I saw it. I don't mean to praise our fellow practitioners. This is how it should have been done, so there is nothing to praise. It is just that people outside are doing it incorrectly, and our fellow practitioners are doing it right.

Our fellow practitioners are doing it the real professional way, because they are adept. They also realize that we badly need trees here. One more tree planted is one more source of joy for us, and one more piece of beauty added to the Center. Tens of thousands of people coming here will enjoy the benefits, and I will also be happier. That's why the initiates do it so painstakingly. They do it so well because they do it with devotion. Outside people only aim at earning money. They only want to finish the work quickly, so that they can do more jobs. That is where they differ.

We should use our intelligence to figure out ways to do things. For instance, the other day, I told the fellow practitioners to use wooden boards to move the trees, because it was better, faster, and less strenuous. When we are used to doing things, we naturally react quickly. My brain is the same as yours, so why can't you do what I do? By dissecting our brains for analysis and comparison, you will find that the brain in each one of you is the same as mine, containing the same material inside. You can't say that my brain is better than yours in any way. Since you have the same brain as I do, why don't you use it? Isn't it a great pity not to use it?

If you want to spoil yourself, to sink lower, and continue to decay, and be lazy and slovenly, it is your own choice. You can't blame God; you can't blame it on karma or anything. It is all because you don't utilize your brain and let it function. My brain has the same quality as yours. To be more precise, my brain is even smaller than yours, and lighter in weight, so you ought to be smarter than I am! If we make a serious calculation, I am at a disadvantage. How can you still be looking for excuses?

So, make your own choice. Should you be willing to use your brain and force it to work, and be strict with yourself, then I don't have to be strict with you. When you demand of yourself strictly, it shows that you love me, because you save a lot of my vitality. I don't need to reproach you and feel sad. Many unhappy moments can be avoided, and the relationship between us, Master and disciples, will not be impaired. Much time can be saved for doing better work, and for me to enjoy tea with you, to share some important wisdom in the universe.

Don't think that you are great when you help me! Neither should you generate a kind of very busy or exciting atmosphere, just because you are doing some work or contributing a little effort. This will only make things worse, because people will think that we have accomplished it, and so there is no need to help. Whereas others can't do our work, each one has his own work to do. God gives us this talent precisely because He wants us to do this job, and not another job. It is also all right to do the other job, but then we have to come back again to finish the job that we have left undone. This is because that job was specifically given to us to learn a lesson.

Every job is only a means for us to learn and grow. Actually, we do not do any work. You should not complain and think that you are working too hard. It is only a means for us to learn. God uses this method to educate us, let us become enlightened, and give us a chance to develop our talents, cultivate our personality, beautify our demeanor, and develop our mindfulness. Every job is the same, because we can only learn other things through this method.

If we are truly mindful in our work, we can learn something from doing any task. It is like following an example that will lead us to realize other things. Therefore, sometimes when we work, we suddenly realize many truths. Work is a way to temper ourselves, helping us to measure our personality, stamina, talents, and level of enlightenment. So you shouldn't be afraid to work. Fear of work is also a kind of phobia. The more we work, the more enlightened we will become.

HOW TO GOVERN WITHOUT GOVERNING ⁹²

Create the affinity to help

Sometimes we can do ordinary work quickly, such as writing a love letter or asking for a raise, because it concerns us. We know what we want, therefore we place our priority there. Thus, we learn very fast without obstruction. But when we are doing things concerning others or the world, we get stuck there; because we don't have enough merit to do such work.

It's not true that we can smoothly do whatever work we want to do. Perhaps it is because we never helped others in our previous lives, or we have more karma in the past by doing more destructive work than helping others. Therefore, now even when we, as spiritual practitioners, try to help others to compensate for our past mistakes, the negative forces still obstruct us. It's our maya from within, not from without – such is karma. Karma is the accumulation of our past habits, recorded in our subconscious mind. Even when we are reborn into a new body, the impressions still remain with us and become the fixed karma in this life. The circumstances encountered in this life are the results of the merits or mistakes of our previous lives.

If we do not practice spiritually, even if we want to help the nation or the world, we still can not do it. Sometimes I ask you to do work not because I want something, but to give you the opportunity for spiritual practice, to earn merits, and to help others in order to create the affinity to help, and in turn, be of greater help in the future.

Practice doing work that benefits others

The more merits and good fortune we have, the more smoothly we can carry out Master's work as we are used to doing it and are familiar with it. A talented person, if not familiar with the work, he may not do it well. The same with spiritual practice. If we haven't done much in our previous lives to do work that benefits others, even if we sincerely and willingly want to do it in this life, we can still encounter lots of obstacles, due to the lack of practice. Our system, our emotions and spirits are not used to it. If we ask it to do work now, it would be very clumsy, since it is so used to destroying things. Therefore, when you push the button, it starts to destroy. However, after practicing the Quan Yin method for a long time, we can adjust ourselves. The more we meditate, the more we communicate with our inner selves, the more we contemplate the Light and the Sound, the more light-hearted and energetic we will be to help others. At that time we do not need to ask to serve, we will have the opportunity to serve. Naturally, there will be opportunities for us to serve, and we will serve spontaneously, not thinking that we are serving at all. Therefore, it is said, 'Discipline oneself, take care of one's family, govern the nation, and then pacify the world.' At that time, our body, speech and mind are all empty. 'Empty' does not mean we disappear or when other people hit us, we have no feelings of pain, like woods. That is not

92. Group meditation, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, April 12, 1992 (Originally in Chinese).

‘empty.’ It means that we do not care at all about what we possess and we do not like wealth or fame.

We work and contribute only because there is a need at that moment. When there is a need for us to do, we do it. After we have done it, that's all. There are no other purposes to it. Of course, we should help those who need help. When others need help, we just help. Helping is like not helping at all. In the Diamond sutra it is written: ‘Give without giving is the true giving.’ When we help others, it is like eating food or washing our hands. We don't feel especially proud for washing our hands. That state of mind is just like that. Whatever we do, we do it as if for ourselves. It is very natural. If we don't practice spiritually, no matter how much goodwill we have, we still can not do it well.

Who can pacify the world

Why is our world in such a mess? So full of misery and war? It's because the so-called leaders do not discipline themselves. They do not completely become empty. While they are serving, they still want others to know and to have results. They want appreciation and rewards. They want recognition, therefore they struggle for fame and profit and forget to serve. They are too busy grabbing fame and profit, then they are overcome by greed, hatred and ignorance. Their hatred and contending attitudes become dominant and they can not do the right things.

I told you to practice the Quan Yin method, not to ask you to leave your job or to leave the world, but to ask you to do an even better job and serve others better. There is a Chinese saying, ‘Discipline oneself, take care of the family, govern the nation, and then pacify the world.’ He has no problem governing nations no matter how much money you pay him or how many things you give him he will still serve others because he needs nothing! A person like that can truly govern the nation. If he still wants to govern, it is not good. When he has no desire to govern, then he can govern well. He does it naturally. If he is called upon to govern, he can govern. He does what he can do. He does when there is a need. He doesn't mind what kind of work. Whatever he does is to serve others. Whenever there is a need, he does it, whether it's sweeping the floor, mixing cement, laying bricks, or being a king. If one can achieve this level of doing for the sake of other's needs, not because of any personal intentions, then he can govern any number of nations, no problem. If one hasn't reached that level, he can not even govern himself, not to mention letting him govern a nation or pacify the world. Many people are eager to govern a nation or to pacify the world without first examining their inner attributes and abilities; such people can mess up this world.

Goodwill is truly useless. Without moral character, whatever amount of goodwill is just empty talk, jokes and lies – totally useless. Everyone can go out there and shout, ‘I want to govern a nation. I want to help the poor. I want to change this, I want to change that.’ But without changing themselves, without becoming empty, and without being selfless, whatever they do just becomes messier and worse. Understand?

Being humble is the key to helping others

You will understand many things when you work with me. My work is really difficult to do. When we do outside work it is very smooth and easy to make money, very simple. Of course, there are difficulties, too; but it is not as difficult as doing my work. Doing a little of my work, you will feel lots and lots of pressure, and you will make mistakes in everything. No matter how much goodwill you have, how hard you work, or how much effort you put in, you still make mistakes. Then you will understand how many obstructions you have. I don't

need you to do the work. I just want you to understand yourselves in order to rectify yourselves and become more humble. When we are willing to rectify ourselves, we can help others more readily. Then without trying earnestly to help, you will spontaneously help others.

THE BENEFITS OF MORNING MEDITATION ⁹³

I think it is best to meditate in the morning; it is very easy, then to have inner experiences and see the Light, because at that time we have a relatively clear mind after having had enough sleep. After the right amount of sleep but still with a little bit of sleepiness left, this is the best time for meditation. Of course, it is most difficult to get up, just as when we have had some food but are not completely full, and still want a little bit more. This is the best time for meditation.

After a night of rest, many difficulties, obstacles and karmic hindrances are washed away. These impressions and negative influences from the previous day are all washed away and forgotten! All of our causes and effects are paid off in our dreams. So we are very fresh when we wake up in the morning. Therefore, it is very easy to see the Light when meditating, easy to communicate with the highest qualities within us.

Some people work at night and sleep during the day. Depending on your situation, you should meditate after waking up. If you can't get up at seven o'clock, then get up at nine, but you should still meditate, at least for a little while. Otherwise, our minds will not be stable, and we will view good as bad and vice versa. We will easily be contaminated by other people's karma and be pulled down. Our level will drop quickly, or it will be hard to progress, even if it doesn't drop. We will not be able to have a cheerful mood, and anything we do will not go very smoothly. If someone offends us, we will not be able to forgive him, and we cannot think about anything clearly. So, meditation is very important.

PRACTICE INNER AND OUTER PEACE ⁹⁴

It's very difficult to live in this world and maintain a peaceful spirit because all around us there's so much pressure, so much violence, so many bad influences and so much injustice. Sometimes it's difficult for us to keep balanced, to keep our peaceful manner and spirit. The only hope for us is that we have to practice inner peace by meditating every day, by trying to remember God, by trying to awaken our own almighty loving power within ourselves. That's the purpose of practicing the Quan Yin method.

At least one hour of listening to the Sound every day will put our mind into balance, into a restful mood so that we'll be able to control our temper, to master our inner spirit. Otherwise, there's no cure for us. In no other way can we keep peace in the world.

It's difficult, especially if we're in a position where we have to deal with many people of different temperaments, of different backgrounds, and if we're in a position of responsibility, then it's even more difficult. So, we must try our best to meditate to save ourselves, to be in balance. That's how we can save the world because if each of us in this world remains peaceful and loving, the world will be peaceful and loving. At least if the great majority of people in the world have such a peaceful, loving attitude, the world won't be in danger. The majority, or at least the group of people that loves balance, will influence

93. Group meditation, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, April 12, 1992 (Originally in Chinese).

94. Group meditation, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, April 10, 1992 (Originally in English).

their neighbors, will make the rest of the people peaceful and loving. That's how we make peace in this world; that's how we stop war.

Otherwise, I've seen many congregations talk about peace, but they talk about peace in this country, and the next moment war breaks out in another. And when this one has finished then the next one starts. The wars never stop! Our world has never enjoyed one peaceful moment. There's always war somewhere because the whole of humankind hasn't been all together in unity, to realize that the only way for us to survive in this world is to love each other, to have peace within ourselves.

LEADING THE WORLD INTO A NEW ERA ⁹⁵

Our life, our time here is very short. We have to make the best use of it. Don't ask people to serve us. We have to ask how we can serve people, all the time. And you will never go wrong.

Inside we use our wisdom, our good vibrations, our virtues to bless the people and the environment. Outside, we use our time, our physical fitness, our cleverness, our talents to help wherever and whenever we can. If we do this wholeheartedly, we'll always feel fulfilled, satisfied, and we will never ask for anything and we feel we always have enough.

Sooner and later, we will have to be the torchbearers; I mean in the spiritual field as well as in worldly achievements. We will have to be the forerunners, in shining examples of the sacrifice of love. That's how we rescue the world. That's how we lead the world into a new age, into a new spirit of serving and loving each other.

As we move along spiritually, we also move along in helping the world: By beautifying the environment and by helping with the poor and the needy. We have to help the whole world, not only one nation. That is our vision of the future. And we must do it within our capacity.

You must endure everything that everyone else cannot endure, do anything that everyone else does not want to do, and work in any field which brings benefit to humankind.

That is the way of the great man. That is the way of the great woman. And we must be these great people. If we want the world to be great, we must be great first. If we want the world's people to be good, we must be good first. If we expect the world to be a paradise, we must live like paradise people on earth.

THE AU LAC REFUGEES IS A BLESSING FOR THE WORLD ⁹⁶

Au Lac people have great blessings spiritually, but not in the worldly sense. Some of them are saints. Some have practiced very well, to a very high level. They have sacrificed their attained position and descended as refugees in order to help the world, sowing spiritual seeds in many countries, only Master knows.

Therefore, I strive everywhere to help them, not only because they are my compatriots, but for the whole world. However, whom can I speak to about these things? Who wants to listen to me? I offer all my property. I bow down to each president, as well as all the high

95. Group meditation, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, April 10, 1992 (Originally in English).

96. Group meditation, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, April 3, 1992 (Originally in Chinese).

officials, petty officials, even the doorman. I lower my dignity and receive a lot of humiliation. I am not ashamed to face the Au Lac refugees, as I've done my best, but I feel sorry for the world.

Eventually, the refugees will 'go back.' They will still have their high position spiritually. It's a pity that the world is still blind, ignorant, uncompassionate. They don't understand loving others is loving themselves. They don't know helping others is helping themselves, helping their country. They do not realize how much blessing the refugees have brought to them. The world is blind, deaf, deaf to my words, blind to understandings. They cannot clearly see things that are so obvious.

Never mind! All is ephemeral. Good or bad are just like this. We save the world if we can! Should we fail, we will still go 'Home,' no big deal. None of our business. There is nothing we can do. I have really tried very hard! I was half way through my Asian preaching tour when I heard that two Au Lac people had tried to commit suicide, because they were about to be sent back. They have not died yet, but are dying, burned. They burned themselves with petrol. Though they are not dead, their injuries are very serious.

Death is better than half alive and half dead, which is very painful. This is really true! I immediately rushed to the Philippines from Japan. I was supposed to rest in Japan for a week before I went to Korea. However, on my second or third day in Japan, I had to go to the Philippines begging them. Preparing to offer all my property, I explained to them: We are only investing to provide employment opportunities for the Au Lac refugees. The subsequent profits will stay in the Philippines, to be used by their government, for their people. Apart from paying the wages of the Au Lac refugees, all the profits yielded later, no matter how much, I won't take a single cent. All the money will stay in the Philippines. I won't even retrieve the capital or the interest, because we are trying to help the world!

Most people think that they are helping the Au Lac refugees. The truth is the opposite! It is the Au Lac refugees who are helping them! They don't realize it. The Au Lac people have great blessings, so their country is rich in natural resources and produce. Simply sow the seeds and food will grow. The fruit smells so fragrant. I have been to many countries, but I have not seen such good fruit. Rice is easily grown. If there are no calamities, no wars, the rice produced by Au Lac is more than enough for Asia's consumption! Our farming produce grows easily, without using advanced machinery, but we still reap more than enough.

As well, they have the inclination for spiritual practice. On the map, you can see that the physical shape of Au Lac is unique, like the Tai Chi figure in Taoism, an S-shape, isn't that right? Isn't it the shape of the Tai Chi figure in Taoism? There is an S in the middle, right? You see, Au Lac is the only country appearing in this shape! Backed by the mountains and facing the sea, there is a whole mountain range. Long mountain ranges produce talented people, spiritual land bears great people! Age after age, many great spiritual practitioners, big heroes and great philosophers have been born in that country, but the world does not recognize these facts.

Why do we have so many war disasters? The country is a spiritual land, therefore many demonic forces want to grab or occupy the place. They want to stop the spiritual atmosphere from developing. Therefore, even though I was born in Au Lac, I still had to leave before I could develop. Even then, I had to be born in Au Lac. The land there is highly spiritual. I was born in the middle region of Au Lac, attracting all the spiritual energy from across the nation. [Master laughs.] I was born in the middle part of Au Lac, yet I still

had to leave to spread the Truth. Otherwise, why should I be born in Au Lac? Isn't that right?

I only lived there for over ten years. Before the communists came, someone had arranged for me to leave. Otherwise, I would be one of the refugees, very troublesome, and you would not have seen me. So I still had to leave when the time came. I was born there, but I am okay. [Master laughs.] I was born there because the geographic features there are good. Most people do not understand these things.

Au Lac is very spiritual. Many people in the world, many prophets, fortune-tellers have prophesied that there would be a Buddha from Au Lac. However, they did not know where to look! There were prophets in Japan who had predicted the same. Then some Au Lac people also knew that a Buddha would appear in Au Lac. They knew, so they searched everywhere. Our fellow initiates also know of a person who looked for the Buddha everywhere. When he finally read Master's book, his search was over. This is what I heard! [Laughter and applause.]

CREATE THE PERMANENT HEAVEN FOR OURSELVES AND LATER GENERATIONS⁹⁷

If everyone lives according to what the bible stated, and everyone sees God within, sees the Light of God, the kingdom of God, hears the Sound, the Word of God or the Buddha nature, then our world becomes a paradise; because this Light and this Sound make us become saints, make us become Buddhas. And the worlds where the Buddhas live are nirvana. The worlds where the saints live are heavens, or the kingdom of God.

Tune in with God power

Many other planets have this kind of heavenly atmosphere because all the beings on those planets practice tuning in with God power and have all their desires fulfilled, all the power in their hands and all the peace within themselves and within their neighborhood. On those planets only goodness is generated, with no negativity like on our earth. Our earth is not the only planet in this universal galactic system. There are many other planets similar to ours. Some are more civilized, while some are less developed. We don't have time to talk about all these; we can talk about our earth first. That's the most practical and necessary.

If you understand the atmosphere, when anything in the material sense is light, then it rises up. It goes more to the upper atmosphere, like the heat or things like that. And whatever is heavy or cold stays a little bit lower in the atmosphere, or is lower due to gravity.

Maintain a high vibratory frequency

Similarly, goodness will stay more or less above negativity. In our world of goodness and badness together, goodness is of course above. But it's not that we are free from negativity. We have it attached to our neighborhood or to our lower state. The other worlds have only goodness. These places are called heaven or the kingdom of God. We can attain these planets or we can visit them now if we have the same quality or are in the same vibratory frequencies as the beings on these planets.

97. Group meditation, Singapore Center, Singapore, March 3, 1992 (Originally in English).

So, to practice in the kingdom of God or to attain nirvana is no mythical story, but it is a very clear-sighted and very scientific way of life. Should we want to live that way, it's not difficult. It's just the way of life that we choose.

Achieve temporary heaven every day

God doesn't give poverty to this earth. God doesn't create hell. It is we – by our mistakes, by inter-reactions between each other, by choosing the wrong action at that decisive moment – we create hell. So now, we can think it over and create heaven, at least temporary heaven, so we can rest for a while. Then we are free from the burdens of this world for a while, and we can think of what we want to do next, whether we want to return to earth again or pursue the highest stage of heaven; we can decide. So, the temporary heaven can be achieved by doing good deeds, by believing in God, by prayers, by sincere repentance of our mistakes, by trying to do always what is best for the society and for ourselves and by trying to be vegetarian as much as possible. I can offer you the replacement of a piece of tofu now and again. It's cheaper, easier to digest and has less guilt, less sin and less karma. Karma means, as you sow, so shall you reap, or the law of cause and retribution. So, this is the kind of temporary heaven that you will create for yourself now.

Being vegetarian is truly to save the world

We try to be vegetarian as much as possible. Being vegetarian is not a religious way of life only, but it is a way to save the world from starvation and poverty. We have much research to prove that. We waste a lot of human's and earth's products and resources in order to feed cows and pigs – many years, a lot of quantities of medicines, proteins, beans and all kinds of vegetables in order to raise one pig. And we eat it in only a very fast time: Five minutes, if you eat that slowly. Someone might make it in one minute!

Therefore, if we are vegetarian, it is not only because we are religious people, but it's truly to save the world. Our world has been in poverty, in some parts of the world, and has been in starvation because we do not work with each other to save each other. There are many so-called charitable works and relief services; that's no doubt. But that is not the root of the problem. The food deficit is not rooted in Africa only, or in some of the Asian countries. It is rooted in the meat-eating diet, in all the energies, all the technologies and many other intelligent activities that are poured into raising meat, instead of analyzing a better contribution to the world population or better nutrition for all the people.

As you know yourself by now, scientists have proven that the vegetarian diet is very healthy. All the hospitals are built for whom? Meat eaters! Most of the people there are non-vegetarians. So, if we feed ourselves with the poison, then we have to cure ourselves with the hospital equipment. We make double-trouble for ourselves.

Create the golden age by living a saintly way of life

It's the root we have to cure, not the branches. To help with relief work or to donate some food for the poor is not the solution to the starvation problem of the world. The root lies in each of us, that we must help; we must save some of our energies and world resources for our brothers and sisters. The underdeveloped country might sell its protein products to the developed country, which feeds them to its cows, for example, but then the underdeveloped country starves. Instead, we have to share; we have to help each other.

Of course, I am not a politician. I can only try to tell you to help in my way, in my own small capacity. The world leaders have to work together if they are interested in the well-being of all nations, not only of our nation. But it is good enough that we take care of our nation already. I am always grateful and boundlessly happy when I see any nations prosper, living in cleanliness, saintliness and in harmony with each other: For example, like Singapore.

We could make it into a golden age again by living the way of the Christian, the way of the Buddhist or the way of the true Hindu, et cetera. Take care of our moral responsibilities, help our neighbors as much as we can, sacrifice some of our wealth and our desires of the palate in order to help in developing the world, and help the other needy brothers and sisters.

Building for future generations

In this way, we contribute our efforts to build a better nation for the future generations to come. It is not a loss. It will be to the benefit of our children, grandchildren, nephews and our brothers' and sisters' children. It will not be lost. We've no need to take care of the present generation alone, and we've no need to think that 'the world is better, but we will die and we cannot benefit from it.' Our children will! Even if we don't have children, we should not think in such small terms, but think of the joy of other people who are born after us, who will live in such peaceful harmony and a plentiful world. That should give us enough joy, enough reward, without any material gain. And this is the way of the gentleman: This is the way that Lao Tzu, Confucius, Buddha and Christ have endeavored to teach human beings since many thousands of years.

What I am telling you is not new. It is just that we have forgotten and that some of us have not tried to live that kind of life, so we do not know how to go about it. But we can try it now; we can try tomorrow and see how things go, see how much better we feel, see how beneficial it is for our nation and for the world at large.

HEAVEN AND HELL ⁹⁸

We may liken hell and heaven or goodness – I mean positive energy – to energies. In the universe, all matter, all things, are created by energy, and we call that the 'creative force,' or we might call it the 'creator.' Because the energy has been scattered in different directions, all the energy has now scattered all over the place in the universe and become different worlds and different beings. These beings will acquire their individual states of thinking or levels of consciousness, and according to the inter-reactions among each other, they will generate another kind of energy.

This kind of energy, we will divide into two categories. The first one we can call 'positive' energy, or we say God nature, heavenly force, or Buddha nature. The second category, we can name 'negative' power, evil or dark force, or the opposite of goodness. Now, the goodness and the positive energy are side by side with the negative. Whenever any beings, be they devas, angelic beings, earthlings or worldly people, generate goodness, tolerance, loving compassion, and cooperation with each other, then this energy will be categorized as good, the God force, or positive power. And then the more we think good thoughts, the more the beings generate this kind of goodness, the more positive power we have in our atmosphere, in our world. Whenever we or any beings generate hatred, bad thoughts, or any kind of negative tendencies, actions or speech, we add it to the negative

98. Group meditation, Singapore Center, Singapore, March 3, 1992 (Originally in English).

storehouse of the atmosphere, which is what we call the evil force. This force will breed more hatred, more wars, and more disharmony in our world or in any world in which these people happen to reside.

So, that is the reason why we should always generate goodness in our thoughts and in our deeds. In thoughts, deeds and what else? Speech, yes, to derive the goodness that we have sown. That is why in the bible it is stated, 'As you sow, so shall you reap,' and in the Buddhist scriptures, it is stated that if you do good deeds, you'll get good results; if you do bad, then you'll reap the results thereof. Most scriptures mention the same things. In order to reach heaven, it is logical, now we know that we have to tune into goodness, to the positive part of the world. And the more we step into goodness, the nearer the goodness, the more we merge into this heavenly quality and the more we are near to heaven. The negative force may exist in our neighborhood, but it will not affect us. For example, we have lights in our house, neon lamps, and outside our house may be darkness, but when we step into our house and stay there, we can read, we can work, we can play, we can see our loved ones and all the surroundings. The darkness outside will not affect our light inside the house. So, that is a very simple and a kind of basic explanation about good and evil, heaven and hell.

If the negative power is very strong, then it creates a kind of very condensed atmosphere. Whoever happens to be drawn into it by his own or her own actions will experience the so-called hell, where the most intense agonies, repentance, and guilty feelings will torture them until they have paid off the bad thinking or deeds that they have done before. We can avoid that. We can avoid this stage of agony, which is called hell, if we turn to goodness now.

There are two kinds of heavens. One is temporary and one is permanent. The so-called temporary heaven can be earned by doing good deeds, by avoiding evil, and by practicing religious penance or believing in some religion or the God of your faith, by prayers, reading scriptures, and trying to live accordingly as much as you can. Another kind of heaven, or kingdom, or what we call the ultimate kingdom of God, is the permanent, eternal, everlasting one that requires more effort and that requires the grace of the almighty, the God nature, or the God within us.

ONLY THE ENLIGHTENED CAN KNOW GOD AND BENEFIT HUMANITY

99

In the olden times people who practiced with a Master would call that Master 'the Lord.' Calling the Master 'Lord' means God and they would say, 'The Lord is omnipotent, omnipresent,' and so on. Actually, they didn't know of any invisible God. They knew of the Lord who lived with them, smiled with them, ate with them and talked with them. And so it is that from the so-called scriptures, we learn to know the Lord; we learn to know what we call God.

But actually, from the beginning 'the Lord' was a Master of some kind. And the disciples wrote about their experiences, saying, 'My Lord is so merciful: Hes helps me in disasters; Hes teaches me the path of Light. I see Hirm as Light; I see Hirm come to me as Light. I see Hirm talking to me as thunder, as the sound of many waters,' and so on. Thus, we learn from these scriptures to know the so-called Lord, but we don't know who that Lord is! Because Hes is really the disciple's Lord, not our Lord. That disciple knew Hirm personally; we didn't.

99. Group meditation, Kuala Lumpur Center, Malaysia, February 27, 1992 (Originally in English).

So, there's no need to talk about the Lord if we don't know about Him or Her, and no need to call that the impersonal Lord or the personal Lord because there is none. As long as you yourself don't nourish the Lord within you and don't recognize the power that the Lord within you has, no Lord exists for you, no Lord whatsoever. Because you don't know Him. The Lord is only inside you according to your level. The more you practice, the more the Lord will become obvious to you, and then you can write many songs praising the Lord.

Actually, it's you; it's your level. Now that you recognize the goodness within you, the power that you possess, you know that this is what's called 'the Lord.' And the more you grow, the more glorious God or the Lord becomes and the more you know how glorified the Lord inside you is. That's how we know the Lord; there's no other way. It doesn't matter how many people praise 'the Lord, the Lord, the Lord.' If you don't know Him, what's the use for you?

So, the only way to know the Lord is to know Him personally because even if another person realizes Him and tells you that his Lord has done many wonders for him, that Lord won't help you. He can't! You have to realize your own Lord and make Him yourself. That's why I don't tell you to worship God or to worship the Buddha: I tell you how to make Buddhas. Making God, that's the power we have. [Applause]

Even though there's a God, if you don't realize Him, you'll never know. Even though God exists, or God exists for him or for her, that God is of no use to you. That's why many followers of this tradition or that religion might keep saying, 'God, God, God,' but they don't ever know what God is. They can never make use of that God. So, what's the use to you if that God exists? Whether you praise Him or curse Him, it's all the same because He is just non-responsive. So He is actually non-existent! And yet you keep praising, and this is most blasphemous.

But never mind; each one has to learn his or her own lessons. It's just that when I talk to you, I can't avoid making these strong statements so that you wake up and understand the logic of making your own God, so that you understand why the bible said, 'The kingdom of God is within you.' And then you understand why the Buddha said, 'Buddha is your heart, is inside you' because you make Him. You wake Him up. You make Him grow; you realize how much power He has, and then you make use of it for the benefit of yourself and humankind.

That's when you know Buddha or God, and then you can praise Him; you can call Him God or Buddha or the Lord or whatever you want. But make use of Him; don't only praise Him and worship Him. You can worship and you can praise, but only after you know how much power He gives you and how much power He has. And you only know this when you realize inside that there's nowhere else you'll find Him. [Applause]

Master empathizes with the suffering of all beings

I cry sometimes – for you, for other people, for the world, for all the people who need help and don't know how to get it, for all the people who swim in ignorance and don't want to get out, for all the people in the hell realms suffering for many thousands of years and no one cares.

There are many reasons for me to cry. I know it's all illusion, but they don't. It's no good that I alone know that's it's all illusion but the sufferer who suffers doesn't know. And sometimes I can't make them know because they don't want to know. They truly don't want to know, and that can make me cry because their suffering makes me suffer.

Without a Master we cannot know God

The grace of the Master or the grace of God is very, very important. Throughout the ages, people have praised God, saying, 'The Lord, the Lord of mercy, the Lord who cuts the chains of my ignorance, the Lord who cuts asunder my chains of transmigration' and so on. But this is actually ascribed to the living Master at that time only. There is no other God besides the Master.

If you have no Master, you won't know God. You can only know God through a Master, because the Master teaches you how to know God. Then you know that you are also the Master; you are God. And then you praise the Master because the Master is so merciful: 'Without the Master, I couldn't even know God!' So, the Master is placed before God because God really is non-existent apart from your own enlightenment, your own realization. There is no other God. [Applause] I hope you understand that. It's really abstract, but so logical. If you don't understand, I really, really admire your ignorance! [Master and audience laugh.]

Initiation is the breakthrough and meditation is the practice of divine power

By the grace of the Master and the God power inside, at the time of initiation we can get cleansed. Even though we might not be very pure at that moment, in the presence of God's power we get cleansed. So we get through! We break through the prison door, and for a while we can see the Light and Sound that exist beyond material existence. That's why we call it instant or immediate enlightenment.

So, we hear the Sound, meaning that we have contact with the higher worlds. We're fixed now; we're no longer disconnected, and we see the Light, meaning that we're pure or clean enough to break through. It's just like the sun that's outside when you're inside the door. If you don't walk through the door, you won't see the sun even though it exists. The same is true for the Light and Sound of God: They exist, but because we're closed up, encased in this prison of our own prejudice and thoughts from our inaction for many lifetimes, we can't see.

So, at the time of initiation, the Master gives us a chance to break through, once and for all. But we have to keep going. There are many more 'beyonds' to discover, not only during initiation. The initiation is only the beginning, but even then this beginning is a very high beginning. Because many people work their way up from one chakra to the next up to here [Master points to the wisdom eye.] for ten years perhaps before they can see the Light.

But we begin from the wisdom eye. The Master gathers up the whole power and transmits it to you there. Then you can see the Light, and from there you go up. The wisdom eye is the door of heaven, through which you can go to many mansions. But this is only the beginning. Even if you go to the fifth world in one day during initiation, you have to go again every day to get used to it. Because the higher worlds have higher frequencies, and our burdened soul is not very familiar with that yet.

So, we have to practice getting used to this higher kind of life. That way, when we leave this world, we're ready. We're prepared enough in our knowledge of other frequencies to be able to adapt to the new dimensions.

Make every minute count

Whenever you have free time, you should meditate. There's no need to always meditate in the early morning or in the evening. Those are your regular hours, but in between, whenever you have time to rest just sit and meditate. Every minute you earn is added to your storehouse of merit.

Meditation is very important. Now that you want to earn your place in heaven, you must work for it and prepare yourself for it. So, if you think you truly aspire to a higher way of life, to be of higher service to the universe and become a saint or a wiser being in order to work with the wiser beings in other levels, then just work for it until you take your exams and get qualified. But you must work every day. It's just like going to school: You work and work every day. So, any of your spare time you should reserve for meditation.

Meditation provides all the answers

Whenever you have problems, just meditate more; ask the inner Master and the answer will come. Should the answer not come or should you not understand the answer, you can write me a letter. Sometimes as soon as you finish writing, you already understand and the answer is there. But in case you still don't understand enough, you can put the letter in an envelope and send it off to me.

Make effective use of your God power and wisdom

I hope you do your duty and stay true to your promise as a savior of humankind. Because what you do affects the whole planet. You will see that, in deep samadhi, when you arrive at that stage.

At least you know that what we're doing isn't wrong. I've told you many times, and if you don't understand – because sometimes when I speak you might be distracted or looking at my clothes so you forget my words – you should get the videotapes and watch them again and again. Each time you'll understand more and understand differently.

Be diligent in learning both the logic and the practice. They go hand in hand. Because otherwise, you'll just be using blind faith and not knowing why you're doing it. Then again you might know even without me telling you. If you practice well, you'll know all the answers. You're wise; you have God power and wisdom. Make use of them.

Appreciation of God comes through knowing a Master

There are many tales in Indian folklore about the Lord and the Master that are sung as songs and say things like, 'If God appeared before me and my Master appeared before me, whom would I bow to? I would bow to my Master first. God doesn't care about my transmigration through the cycles of this life and death existence. God has thrown me into the sea of suffering, but my Master lifts me up. He or She saves my soul; He or She carries me through this stormy life. So I worship my Master.'

Truly, without the Master, how can you know God? How will you know that God exists within you, that you can make use of this God power to save yourself, save your life and your energy, save your relatives and friends and make use of your existence? Only the Master can show you the way to do this. I know from my own experience that it's beautiful to know God inside. And what we call the inner Master and the inner God power are really the same thing.

REACHING A NEW ERA OF UNIVERSAL CONSCIOUSNESS ¹⁰⁰

As a Chinese saying goes, 'We need to cultivate ourselves, harmonize our families, before we can govern the country and bring peace to the world.' When this enlightened Master spoke on 'bringing peace to the world,' most probably he was referring only to China, and not the whole world in a broader sense. Nevertheless, we can now extend its definition further, for all the countries on earth can now communicate and engage in exchanges. I believe that one day this communication and exchange will no longer be limited to countries, but will be extended to other planets as well. We ought to expand our thinking and we must start preparing now. Otherwise, when the time comes, we, or our children, will be caught unprepared.

When I was little, I had a great dream, a great aspiration. I wished that when I grew up, some immortals or heavenly beings would descend to teach me and open up my wisdom, and that they would teach me how to fly to heaven and then fly back. I don't know why I had such an aspiration when I was little, but my dream eventually came true! Therefore, it's also good that we sometimes have dreams and aspirations. If we're truly sincere and focus our thoughts on that wish, one day it will come true. The Americans also have a proverb that goes: 'If you don't have a dream, how will you have a dream come true?'

Prepare to be a member of the galaxy federation

Therefore, we should be mentally prepared now. Perhaps one day we will have a kind of inter-planetary hierarchy. This isn't just a dream; I have faith that it will come true one day. As to when that will be, it depends on how well we earthlings prepare ourselves, and when the other planets want to communicate with us. In fact, they started to communicate with us long ago. For example, UFOs and beings from several stellar systems have been appearing for a very long time, but they're still very cautious. If we were capable of communicating with them, they would teach us some superior knowledge.

Some people are capable of communicating with other planets. Sometimes they write books or make movies about it. Extra-terrestrials from other planets may sometimes want to come and communicate with us, but they're afraid of us, because we earthlings are rather unfriendly and barbarous. If we were to give a thought to what happened to Jesus before, we would acknowledge this comment as being true. However, instead of blaming ourselves, we should try to find out what we need to rectify.

First of all, we need to broaden our thinking until it encompasses the whole universe, instead of just thinking about our family and country. We're humans, 'the Masters of all beings in creation.' As such, our thinking ought to be very broad and vast, to deserve our status as the Masters of all beings in creation. Perhaps we still don't understand why we're so great, and why we're the Masters of all beings in creation. However, we still need to start changing our thinking, broaden our thinking. There's no harm in having some sensational or incredible dreams; perhaps one day they'll come true.

How are we going to change our thinking? We can read some good scriptures, and learn broadminded thinking and the spirit of pursuing spiritual practice from them. Besides, we can listen to people's lectures. Some people are very good spiritual practitioners; they're capable of communicating with sentient beings in numerous worlds. For instance, when Shakyamuni Buddha was alive, He knew of many different realms, different planets. That's why we have the relevant scriptures with us today. For example, the Amitabha sutra

100. Group meditation, Kuala Lumpur Center, Malaysia, February 25, 1992 (Originally in Chinese).

describes the Amitabha Buddha's world. Others like the Universal Door Chapter in the Lotus sutra also depict many other realms. In our time, there are also many people who do the same as Shakyamuni Buddha did; they're capable of travelling the universe instead of just round the world.

Can you imagine that two or three hundred years ago, people were not even aware that the American continent existed? Today America has become one of the superpowers in the world, having influence over the whole world. However, she did not even exist several hundred years ago! Unlike modern people, people of that time did not have so many convenient machines like the airplane, fax machine, telephone, video recorder, camera, and so on. However, in a short span of time, the Americans have founded their own nation, built and developed it, and educated their citizens. In no time at all, they have transformed into the number one or number two super power in the world. In only a few hundred years, the Americans have achieved so much. Can you imagine what more stunning things will happen on our earth in the next few decades or next few centuries? Therefore, the inter-planetary hierarchy that I talked about just now may not be merely a dream.

Columbus was the hero who discovered America. Some time before that, he had seen America in inner visions; he knew it in advance. However, he couldn't reveal to others that he had seen the land where he was heading; therefore, some people thought he was crazy at the time. In their small ship, and without sufficient food, they just sailed across the ocean on a seemingly uncertain course. In fact, Columbus had already seen everything in a dream. However, at that time, if he had told people that he had seen it in a dream, and that they would definitely find it, surely most people wouldn't have believed him.

In fact, many people then were sceptical. When they were about to reach America, there was no more food on the ship. They had to eat the leather soles of their shoes. The crew members sailing with Columbus were very angry, blaming him for leading them on a course to death. They didn't believe in the existence of the new continent of America, and almost killed Columbus. Facing such a predicament, Columbus remained patient and confident. It's precisely because of his great patience and confidence that America, a strong country of today, came into being.

The same thing happens to an enlightened Master who is beginning to disseminate the Truth. Many hindrances, difficulties and humiliations confront Her. All of these She has to endure alone. People around Her, including Her disciples, may not be able to understand Her tolerant spirit and painstaking intent. 'Everything is most difficult in the beginning.' However, the Truth will eventually shine forth. Therefore, although Jesus Christ was crucified, His teachings and name continue to be passed on. Today, two thousand years later, we still know about His stories.

One day in the future, extra-terrestrials from other planets will appear to us and communicate with us openly. Then we can learn from them and exchange experiences with each other. Therefore, we should now get ourselves ready in body and mind. How do we prepare? We ought to rectify our undesirable lifestyles. Also, if we don't have enough understanding about the world and the universe, we should begin to research gradually. When we observe the many unfair happenings in the world, we should manage to help and change them.

However, the changes must first begin from ourselves, and the best way to change is for us to connect with the power of God, and let God's power change us. In this way we don't have to worry about doing things the wrong way or being deceived by our ego. Otherwise,

we might think that we've changed, when in fact we haven't. We have to practice introspection. If we find that we still have heavy desires for fame and profit, and heavy greed, anger and infatuation, then we must improve. However, this isn't easy. Without the power from the enlightened saints, from God, it's not easy to change ourselves.

God is the greatest love power

God truly has great compassion; He will give us everything. However, we have to know how to receive it, and we have to wait patiently and believe in God sincerely. And belief alone isn't enough; we also need to communicate with God. Only when we are in communion with God will we understand what good situations He has arranged for us, in what aspects He has taken care of us, and what beneficial things He has bestowed upon us. Otherwise, even if we've prayed sincerely and God has already responded to us, we aren't aware. Sometimes He might have given us some good stuff, but we're ignorant and think that it's not good because it's not what we expected. And then we blame God for not giving us what we've prayed for, which in fact will be bad for us. However, we're ignorant and don't understand, so we think God isn't compassionate and isn't helping us. I'm saying this from personal experience.

Having practiced the Quan Yin method, anything that we pray for, as long as it's good for us, we'll get sooner or later. It's just a matter of time. Why does it require time? It's because God needs to make arrangements. When a person prays for a certain thing, sometimes it's not purely that thing alone, and also it doesn't concern him alone, but could involve a lot of people. Therefore, when God wants to arrange something for a certain person, sometimes He must first take care of many people related to him. Or the time is not yet right. Should God give it to him too early, it could be bad for him. So, God has to first give it to other people, and give it to him later when the time is right and the situation is ideal. Only then is it good for him.

God truly represents love. If we say God isn't good, or think that God has created many difficulties and let the world suffer greatly, then we're doing Him a great injustice, and truly misunderstand Him. Ever since I've known God, He has always been very good to me. He is my best friend, the best lover, the best husband, the best father, the best mother, and He is everything. However, I can't show you my realization and feelings toward God, and the so-called kinship and love between us. Nevertheless, I know very clearly that He is the greatest love power, and the greatest rich man. There's nothing that's beneficial to me and other sentient beings that He wouldn't do.

Perhaps someone may ask, if God is the greatest love power, why are there still suffering, difficulties and catastrophes in our world? It's because we don't know how to accept God's grace or communicate with Him. We walk in the wrong direction and ask for the wrong thing. I can guarantee that if everyone practiced the Quan Yin method, the world would have been in peace long ago. It would be just like our group, very peaceful. Even when thousands or tens of thousands of people get together, we're still quiet. Each of us is doing our own thing, and everyone is very happy and contented; every face is glowing. All of us fulfil our obligations in society. When we play, we play wholeheartedly and joyously. When we work, we also work wholeheartedly and happily.

Most of our fellow practitioners work very fast. Whatever they pray for will definitely be realized. As long as they pray for the right thing, God will definitely give it to them. The same applies to me. But because I seldom pray for anything, I have very little to share with you. However, as for my disciples, almost each of them can write a thick book about their experiences after they practiced the Quan Yin method and purified themselves throughout

their actions, speech and thoughts. Such experiences include how well God treats them and pampers them, how God bestows much grace on them, and so on. On my part, I can only talk about how God helps me in my preaching mission, takes care of my disciples, and helps me bring joy and happiness to many people. Furthermore, He also helps me a lot with respect to finances, wisdom and organization. If there were no God, I would be a useless person, and my achievements would be 'zero.'

The way to accept God's grace

Therefore, I would like to introduce to you this gentleman called 'God.' Or you may address Him as 'God nature' or 'Godhead.' He is a very nice gentleman, a very nice rich man. If we truly know how to reach Him within and ask for His help, He will help us in every aspect. He will try all kinds of methods to help us, through many people and various situations. Most people only look for God from the outside, so they have not found the real God. Therefore, their prayers aren't answered. All the teachings and stories that I tell you are the personal experiences of me and my disciples. I don't get them by reading books or the scriptures. I have already experienced the greatness of God; I have found out where He is; I can see Him every day. Therefore, I can guarantee that all these things are genuine.

I used to be a Catholic, and had heard of the existence of a God. However, at that time I didn't admire Him because I virtually did not know where He had taken care of me. The world that I saw at that time was full of pain and injustice, which made me feel very resentful. I wondered why God didn't take care of His children, but let them suffer so much instead. Now I understand, but I can't tell you all that I have comprehended, because language can't possibly express God's love. I can only tell you frankly, clearly and definitely that God is absolute love and absolute generosity! Only if we know how to find Him and communicate with Him, will we have everything. He will help us in every way. This is absolutely true!

Suppose if by standing on one leg or kneeling here all night worshipping God, I could let you realize how I adore God, I would do it. Sometimes I really don't know how to express my gratitude and joy; I don't know whom to talk with. Our fellow practitioners can understand, but it also depends on their level. The more advanced fellow practitioners are more able to realize God's love, because they've received God's infinite blessing. The more they meditate and purify their actions, speech and thoughts and keep a vegetarian diet, and the more strictly they observe the precepts, the more they will be able to perceive God's love.

It's not because we're vegetarians, or because we meditate or think of God that He takes care of us. This looks as if we're bribing God or doing business with Him. This isn't the case! It's because only after we've become vegetarians, observed the precepts and purified our actions, speech and thoughts, will we be able to realize how God has been taking care of us. Previously, we were hoodwinked by all kinds of distracting thoughts. God takes care of us and tells us what to do, but we don't listen. We head in the opposite direction, toward troubles and complexities. God has been giving us things, but we discard them or let them drain away. When a cup is placed upright, it can hold water inside. But if it's turned upside down, all the water inside will drain away. Or suppose we were wearing a raincoat, even if we walked outside in the rain for a whole day, we wouldn't get wet.

God's love exists forever. It's always by our side, within and without us; it's everywhere. However, we cover ourselves up with our preconceived ideas and habits acquired from many lifetimes, and then we say God's unfair and He never blesses us. The truth is that

we've failed to place the cup upwards. In practicing the Quan Yin method, it's as simple as turning an upside-down cup back in the right position! Therefore, from that day onward, we're always filled with nectar, filled with God's grace. The method is very simple really, if we only know how to do it.

Those who practice the Quan Yin method never know what 'fatigue' means, except when they're burdened by the karma of sentient beings. We work a lot but spend very little, because we don't eat much and don't sleep much. Every day we only eat vegetarian food, observe the five precepts and live a simple life. This afternoon a disciple said to me, 'Master, if everyone in our world practices the Quan Yin method, there will definitely be no war or famine. We'll work very quickly; we'll help and trust each other. The world will surely become heaven!' I agree with him.

Although Quan Yin method practitioners will get whatever they pray for, we actually seldom pray for anything except in an emergency. We have fewer and fewer desires. We work to earn enough money to spend, and vegetarian food is cheap. Furthermore, in observing the five precepts, we don't steal or drink alcohol, we don't snatch other people's husband or wife, and we don't abuse drugs. We consume less food than before, our life is simple, and naturally our expenditures shrink. Therefore, we don't have any financial problems. After finishing our work for the day, we meditate whenever we have time, so we don't fool around indulging in pleasures or doing bad things. Going home after work, we meditate or join group meditation. Every day we listen to Master's teachings. We virtually have neither the time nor the intention to do any bad things at all.

However, this is only my dream. Whether it will come true or not still depends on God's will. If the whole world or at least half the population practices the Quan Yin method, it can really help the world a lot. Then we can offer support to some outstanding scientists and doctors. Some of them have invented very good tools that can cure people; some tools can even cure all illnesses. However, due to lack of financial support, these tools haven't been developed. Some scientists have invented very good machines capable of benefitting lots of people in a short time, but they lack support. Conversely, some people are jealous and sabotage their projects, so as to deter their development.

If all people practice the Quan Yin method and are mutually supportive, contributing to society selflessly, and serving God and humankind wholeheartedly, then everyone will be able to develop his / her talents. The scientists will then invent all kinds of machines to benefit people. The doctors will also come up with many prescriptions and tools to heal all illnesses. In this way our world will not only be spiritually elevated, but also have many advanced means to cure diseases and make our life comfortable. At that time we won't want to go into nirvana at all. This may only be my dream, but it can come true. If I have your blessing, the blessing of all of you, it will definitely be realized!

BECOME LIBERATED BY GETTING A GLIMPSE OF THE MASTER ¹⁰¹

If the Master wants to do it, it'll be done, not the way we think of in this world but in the spirit. It's in the invisible way that the Master takes care of people. That's why the Indian people respect the guru, the Master very much. They just love to see, to get just one glimpse of the Master.

I know of one Indian Master who passed away in the 1940s and who traveled by train when He was alive. And one day a man was just on the right side of his train in the fields

101. Group meditation, Kuala Lumpur Center, Malaysia, February 24, 1992 (Originally in English).

doing farming. And the Master just looked out the window of his train car at that moment. And the man happened to look up at the same time just like that, for one second and then the train passed by. And three days later the man died, and he saw the Master appear to him and take him up before he died. And he told everyone around, 'I saw Master such-and-such appear. He has come now and he said he's going to take me up.'

And it happened that one of the Master's disciples was beside the man and when he heard the description he said, 'Is He the one in this photo?' And the man said, 'Yes.' Just one look and he got liberated.

In the Buddhist tradition, we also have many such stories. For example, when he was alive the earth Store Bodhisattva promised that anyone who even heard his name he would take care of. So, the ways of Bodhisattvas or saints are limitless. It's impossible for us to judge or understand or even realize them.

START WITH NIRVANA AND END UP ON EARTH ¹⁰²

Export to other planets

It's terrible. Even the excess fruit could be decomposed and made into fertilizer again. Why throw it into the sea? For example, let it become an organic plant or an organic plantation with the natural fertilizer. Why should they throw it away?! Anyhow, it's all disorganized; every nation is self-interested. I wouldn't say all the nations, but many are like that. Each one jealously guards each other's so-called secret, which the whole world already knows, which all the Buddhas knew. They think it's a secret. They guard all their secrets, but don't help each other that much. And the one who does help, the others try to exploit them, make fun of them, and try to give them pressure so that they cannot give any more; so they cannot help any more, or they may cause a lot of troubles. Our world is rich in everything. We could feed the whole, entire planet and export to the next thirty three more planets, to those who don't have earth to cultivate, or to those planets on which minerals have been destroyed, or to those whose atmosphere has been poisoned by 'star wars,' [Master laughs.] something like that. We could export to them, give them fresh fruits and vegetables, and then import their UFOs instead. Yes. We could exchange. Import their excellent equipment, machines, and we could export to them our tofu, [Laughter] red beans, rice, wheat, et cetera, and even cats, dogs and birds for them to look at. They don't have that many, on some of their planets. The atmosphere was destroyed, so they can hardly keep people there. They keep down the population, because they have to recycle their own atmosphere, oxygen and all kinds of things. So, they cannot afford to keep pets. So, we can even export our atmosphere; give each one of them one packet of oxygen from the earth with love. Yeah! We can do that.

If the world leaders only realized how harmful it is to be self-interested; how short-live that kind of attitude is towards themselves; and how harmful it is in the long run, to their own and even later generations, to their children; if they realized that there are other planets, other civilizations in the whole universe, which we should interrelate and try to communicate with, try to learn from and try to benefit from each other, then they would stop arguing and warring with each other. They should try hard at least to seek the way and put all the financial resources or energy into finding the way to make peace instead of war.

102. Group meditation, Kuala Lumpur Center, Malaysia, February 23, 1992 (Originally in English).

But how can I talk to anybody now? Should we begin to search for presidents, one by one? Shoot them down with our light beam energy and loving, T.L.C., [Laughter] tender loving care. We'll shoot them with T.L.C., tender loving care. We give them each three packets of love. But if they swallow them... If I approached the world leaders, they might think that I want something from them, because everybody wants something from each other. So they might think in this way. It's very seldom that somebody does something and doesn't want anything in return. Well, I do want something in return. I want them to take care of the people, to truly devote their lives for the benefit of their nations and also for the whole planet, to make good for what we have done wrong, to beautify our planet and to try to make contact with other worlds beyond our world, in order to improve our techniques, our machines, our way of understanding, our way of life, and to elevate the suffering of our world and also the other worlds, if possible.

World leaders should think on a vast scale

If we truly are the world leaders or national leaders, we must think broadly and do things on such a vast scale; think in such a large pattern of thought, instead of just taking care of a small group of people, politicians, a group of nations, a group of interested people, or our aids, our group, or our supporters or even our nation alone. We degrade ourselves if we think in such small terms instead of broadening our mind and enlarging our heart. It's very difficult, but we might make it. If the world goes bad, up to a point of time, then people will awaken and will be together. We'll stick together. That's why sometimes we are not awakened, and God has to use disaster as a consequence, also as a remedy, to shake us out of our slumber. But this is too tragic, and the effect will last a long time. It's better if we awaken ourselves before the disaster comes.

For a while we become shaken, and then we fall back into our bad habits again: Unable to learn from the past, previous beneficial experiences, in order to improve. I hope that we have gone down enough for the world leaders to realize that they must change our way of life. They must think larger than life. They must think beyond the borders of their nations. They must think beyond the atmosphere of our planet. Otherwise, it is a waste of our greatness, to think, to work and to live just like animals or ants to feed our stomach; only taking care of our surroundings, relatives and friends, or nation. Don't ants do that? Don't bees do that? They are even more organized than some of us. They are even more supportive to each other than some of us. They are even more loving toward each other than some of us. They share equally among each of themselves the portions of their earning. They work together; they put things together and they share with each other. We have enough. We have too much. Our world is still very rich, very rich in everything, in minerals and in all kinds of resources. Even if we don't have oil, we'll find something else to run our cars. The UFOs don't have oil. They don't need oil. Can you carry enough oil from Mars to here? Seventy-eight million kilometers away, is that right? The nearest planet is Mars, right? Anyhow, it is as near as our fuel can go and come back. It's not that near, actually. It's not like going from here to Hong Kong; we all know!

There are different kinds of fuel that we can use for different purposes. In the higher worlds they don't need oil like we do. It's too troublesome and too heavy. They use different kinds of energy, not necessarily the sun's energy. We have other kinds of energy which are in the atmosphere. I think some scientists have begun to find out, but have not put it to use. Because sometimes when the scientists find something out, somebody else will try to brake him down, and not let the public know about it or support him. Maybe he ran out of financial support; he could not experiment further, or someone else is after him and steal the patent and destroy it, or use it for a very bad purpose, or try to sell it. It's a lot of money

and nobody wants to buy it. It will get stuck there, somewhere in the hands of no one, doing nothing. Understand?

Our planet, as long as we still have people who have this kind of mentality, we'll go nowhere into the future, into the worlds of civilization, into the worlds of a worthwhile human life: The true, dignified and respectable human life. Very difficult. Therefore, I think our job is not very bad, yeah? We can try to educate people: At least to be honest, to work hard, to rely on themselves and to find their wisdom. So, even whatever small work they do, they do it with their heart, with devotion. And even if they can't do their work, at least they are honest to the society. They don't cheat people. They don't make trouble. They are patient, and they serve. Or at least, they do not cause trouble. Then they will not have jealousy or provoke people to break down other people's successes in science or in whichever field they happen to work in.

The practicing group with confidence and love

Most of our disciples, whenever they meet other disciples, on the street or anywhere else, if they run into one another in a strange land, they just feel they're brothers. And they know they can trust that person. They know that person will help them, will love them, or at least will not harm them. Is that right? [Audience: Yes.] Therefore, if the whole world is like that, what do you think? I bet you. I dare challenge any other so-called religious organizations to produce such brotherhood. Is that not so? You name them, and you'll find none. Yeah? None of the other so-called brotherhoods can trust each other the way we do. Right or not? [Audience: Right!] [Applause]

Of course, we still have our failures and our personalities, but we know we can trust each other, and we know we have love. We know we can give love. We know we give whatever we have. On this we have confidence with each other. If we create the world like this we don't need to go to heaven; no need to discuss nirvana. We'll stay right here. [Applause] Therefore, we started with nirvana and ended up in the earth. That's fine. Our motive is actually not to run away from our duties or from our earth. It's just that if we could not stay here and if we could not change it, then we have to go. [Master laughs.] Is that right?

So, if you love our world; if you are a down to earth person; if you think the earthly people are still worthwhile and trust-worthy, then save them; save them with your wisdom, with what you know about the practice, about compassion, about love and about the Quan Yin method. That is our duty. And even after all, if everyone changes to Quan Yin and a vegetarian diet, and you still don't like this planet, well, other planets are ready. Other places are waiting for you. We have plenty. 'In my Father's house, there are many mansions;' that is for sure. The one who can come up can always go down, but the one who is down cannot always come up.

Stable practicing with firm belief

In case you have any doubts at all about our method, or about our motive or about my teachings, because you are a new comer, or because you have not had such a shaking experience like your neighbor, who related his beautiful experiences, or because you have been on another path or another practice, or because you have eaten the wrong food intentionally, may I remind you to start again, to have a firm belief. You have my word of honor that I am never for self-interest.

Never for one second do I think anything to benefit my own body or my relatives. I always say that, and everyone can bear witness to it. For example, my family in Au Lac, for the

first time have a television since I left just two months ago. Understand? Just because I sent them a few thousand dollars. And why do they have a television? Because they want to watch my videos. [Applause] So, from this example, you might as well know I am not for self-interest, not even the interest of my family.

Of course, I help them when they call for help. If they don't call, I ignore them. I think they can live. I don't worry much about their physical well being. As long as they live, it's okay. I let God take care of them. But of course, I will not let them starve or die or anything like that. If I can help others, I help my family, but not by giving them richness and fame. Who am I? I'm just as helpless as you, not to give them richness and fame. I don't even let the disciples come and bow to my parents, or look at my house. Even then if it's for my glory and for my parents' glory, I forbid them to come. The ones who come, I forbid them to come back to see me.

There is no use making glory out of material existence, out of two or three bodies. The best glory you'll find in meditation, in bettering yourself, in making yourself become a very beautiful citizen of this world. That's how you glorify me. There is no other way. Therefore, have your faith again in your own choice of a good path, a good Master and good teaching. You can call me Master, it's okay. I am no more glorified if you call me a beggar. But you call me Master because you realized that this is the one who knows what we want to know; this is the one who has realized what we want to realize. This is our goal to reach. Understand? She is a representative for what we want to become. She has mastered herself, so we called her 'Master.'

Sooner or later when we master ourselves, we can call ourselves 'Master.' The one who masters himself or herself is the true Master. And that's the only purpose for calling me 'Master.' Otherwise, I am no more glorified than before I took over this business. It is the same! Yes, and there's no self-interest. And our path is truly the correct one, the one that benefits people most, the fastest. Our disciples progress faster than any other disciples from any other organizations worldwide that I have ever come to know of.

Put in all your energy to get the most benefits

I can tell you in all honesty, and you can try to find out. You may take your time to learn to know other paths. I am not jealous. I have no fear. I have no fear that you'll run away from me. I only fear you'll lose your time and feel sorry when you come back again, saying, 'What a waste!' [Applause] Do you understand? So, find out what you want to know and then be firm on your feet. Understand? If you truly must find out about me, do find out, by all means. If you truly want to find out if there's better path than ours, please do it and fast. Don't sit there hesitating, wasting both of our time. Do you understand? If you find another, better one, I am only too happy to let you out, because the less disciples, the less tiring it is for me. And I might come and join you. We can both become fellow practitioners. I could sit there like you now, enjoying the discipleship: All nice and taken care of, and loved, with no responsibility. And I could run from one place to another like you do, following one guru. It's very romantic and healthy.

As you know, I have not forced you into believing this, and I have never used any magical power or any ways apart from logical speaking to coerce you into this group of crazy people. [Laughter] You have chosen to come! Yes? If you have chosen something, make sure it is good, because if you have chosen a bad thing it is also a choice. It's also a waste of energy and time to follow something which is unproductive. And once you follow something you must make sure that it is okay; it's good; it's correct. And once you make sure it's correct and beneficial, stick to it, to get the most benefit out of it. Put your whole

energy into it, otherwise you'll gain only half, and it's a waste of time, and you might just as well leave. Is that right? [Audience: Yes.]

It just like a marriage, once you have chosen a partner, try to work with each other to protect the marriage, because if you are miserable in a marriage you can not work outside also; you have no energy, no interest. Both have to work for the marriage. But after you work hard and you think you have chosen a good partner, but it doesn't work somehow and you both don't want to mend it, then it's better not to. Yeah? Don't torture each other, wasting each other's time and energy. If you think it is good for you or you cannot live without it, then you must work for it. Everything we must work hard to maintain.

Take care of the world with our hearts

Our world can become as beautiful as nirvana. It is that the world's people don't work towards it; otherwise, it can be as beautiful as any nirvana can be. All the money that is wasted in arms, in wars, in killing each other, in capturing each other and in chasing each other around the world, we can use to pave all the streets in the whole planet and plant all the beautiful trees, all the exotic flowers, and the most nutritious fruits and food, even just to look at. Yeah, I don't need to eat! If we have too much, we can look at them, and let them fall down and decompose and become fertilizer again on their own. We can smell their fragrance and we can look at our planet and we make it become a beautiful paradise. Our roads don't need to be paved in crystal and gold, like the worlds of Amitabha Buddha. We will be content with cement or with black tar. It's clean and it's good enough for us. We can walk, with no mud, but even mud is beautiful too if it is clean; if there's no garbage lying around; if there's no radio active batteries running all over the place; if there's no plastic and rubbers infiltrating the whole area; if there's no gasoline car pollution pumping in our nose. We can use the money, resources and energy to invest in science to find the way to run our cars better than we do now; to find the way to give people more security and to share it equally, not like in some or systems so-called communism in which they pull everybody down to a poor standard, rather to raise the poor to a rich level. That should be the way, not the other way around. I am not a politician, but I'm just talking logic. I don't like politics, but sometimes you cannot separate politics from the so-called religious or moral teachings, because in the old times only the wise ruled the nations.

Ideal leaders are good instruments of God

Therefore, we had the period of Yau, Shwen, the Golden Egypt, Golden Greece. Do you understand? There's no need to say that the practitioners should not mix into politics. We don't mix; we don't even want to. If we mix in, we cannot do anything. But we can talk logically and make you understand why politics fail. It's because it is not true politics. True politics will stand, will benefit the nations and the world. Right now we have a few very good leaders. I, myself, also like them. If I could I would support them. Not that I would go and shake their hands and tell them that I support them, but I will, in my way, so that they can stay longer in power. In an invisible way I might help them, so that at least the world has some Light, has some good instruments for God to work through, so that at least our world won't become hell. [Applause]

If we cannot help the world in a different way, then we should meditate. We better ourselves; we moralize our standard. That is also a great help. In a world that is full of weakness and injustice, if we have so many groups of beautiful people who don't take the lives or animals, who even eat sparingly of a vegetarian diet, who aren't so greedy of anything and who help us when they can, in their own ability, initiates or non-initiates, then

we've already done great services to this world. By and by, slowly, others will take our examples. We teach by example, not by words.

Of course, I teach you also by words, because from words you know why I am doing this and why you should do that. Also it is beneficial, but if we only talk and don't do anything, then it's no use. It can even be harmful, because we waste our energy and other people's time listening to our garbage. Is that not so? When a fruit looks like fruit but it's not nutritious, then it is garbage. No? Right. When the theories are empty words, without support from self-exercising power, and support from the action power, then it is also garbage, empty words, wasting energy and time.

People could have spent all that time listening to something more worthwhile; or could have found someone else better to listen to; or they could have spent all that time sleeping – it's even more productive; or maybe, by chance, they come across some good books and read some good things; or a Master or a fellow practitioner or something that might benefit them more, than listening to empty nonsense. Therefore, if we talk, we must speak what we know and what we truly are convinced with, then it has force; then it has energy, and it benefits people.

Why most people's prayers won't come true

That's why most people's prayers won't come true, because they put no energy into it. They just talk with their mouths or they think very fleetingly with their weak, feeble energy. Therefore, their thoughts won't come true; their prayers won't come true. They don't even have enough energy and supportive spirit to pray. That's not a true prayer. The true prayer always comes true. Because if there's energy in it, it will attract the object of their desire. If there are no attracting energies, nothing comes. If you put two pieces of thing together, one a magnet and the other a piece of wood which you painted to look like a magnet, the attracting power of both pieces are not the same. Only the true magnet attracts iron or metal. The other one would never attract anything. It doesn't matter how long you put it there, and it doesn't matter how much it looks like a piece of magnet. Understand?

Therefore, when you, the practitioners of the Quan Yin method, pray, it happens, because you have power. Now you even have the power to pray for what you want. You didn't have it before. You didn't know what prayer truly meant. You just said, 'Oh! God, give me this. Oh, God, give me that.' Do you think God is so cheap? [Laughter] Even a piece of pin will not be attracted to a piece of wood or ordinary iron. How would God be attracted to you, to your 'blah, blah' nonsense?! Understand? And you don't even mean what you say, and don't even believe in what you pray. So, prayers begin after you know a Master, because the Master awakens in you, the prayer power, the power to pray, the power to think, the power to use your own energy to make things come true. [Applause]

So, after initiation, mostly what you pray, if it's good for you, comes true, and what is no good for you, the Master will not give. [Laughter and applause.] If it is no good for you, the Master will not give, not grant it. Yes. Just like children when they want too much candy, the parents say 'No.' Right? If they want one or two pieces it's still okay, but if it's too much, exceeding their dinner and lunch, then 'No!' Sometimes they want to play with fire, then the parents also say, 'No!' You have not grown up enough to handle fire, to be able to play with fire, to experience that fire is no good. To wait until you know is too late. When you grow up enough, you can handle it; you can have experience with fire. Understand? Even now you're too small; you know fire is no good, but you don't know how to handle what's no good. When you grow up you'll still know fire is dangerous, but you'll know how

to handle it. Therefore, you can play with it. Understand? Fire is still the same but you are different.

We cannot imitate an enlightened Master

Therefore, some things can be done by one person, while other people cannot do it. Or what the Master can do you cannot do. The Master can give initiation and take people's karma, but you shouldn't imitate. [Laughter and applause.] The Master can do many things that you cannot do. But you will! You will do it in future. When you grow up in your strength, in your power and in your self-realization, then you can do exactly what the Master does, and you might do even more! If God wants to give you more responsibilities, you can do everything. It's not the outside actions of the Master; it is the inner wisdom, the way the Master knows why She or He does that. We cannot know! Sometimes we know. Sometimes we don't know. We just think, 'Oh, Master just talks, invites people to eat dinner, drinks tea and touches people on the forehead. I can do all this, and more!' [Laughter and applause.] Yeah. 'Recite the five names, I can do that also. And all Her books, I might be able to write also.' But, it's different. It is not the appearance of things that counts; it's the invisible power behind it.

Therefore, even today, when we were talking outside with the journalist, you happened to hear somebody say, for example, that in Costa Rica we have a disciple who is a very devoted to our path now, and he loves me very much. He always cries like a baby when I leave or when I come. And he practices very well, and he has very good experiences. I don't mean the best, but fairly good and he moves fast, but he was initiated before by another so-called master, before he knew me, and that was long ago. It was probably the same technique and path, but he could not bear it. He had a terrible reaction, so he stopped. Understand? And after that he progressed. After our initiation, meeting me, he progressed very fast.

There is another one from America. He was also initiated by one of the famous gurus in India, who also teaches the Sound and Light like I do. But he didn't progress, for ten or twelve years. And then he fell into another path and got tricked, all kinds of things happened, and he ended up worse than before. So he lost all confidence and stopped practicing all together. And probably did some sad, you know regretful things even. But after he met me, he was confident again, started practicing again and moved so fast. And he asked me, 'Why? It was practically the same teaching, why was there a different effect?' [Applause]

Even though they teach the same so-called Sound and Light, it's different! This I also know myself. Some teach this Light and Sound for money also. How much per lesson! For lessons you must first pay money, every month so much, until a couple of years pass and then they give you initiation, with no guarantee of Light and Sound. Maybe one or two get it, but a low Sound. I don't mean to criticize anyone; also I won't tell the names of this person. But what I mean is it's not the outside actions that we can judge and imitate, but it is the inner power, which we must achieve in order to accomplish anything, especially in spiritual aspects. Do you understand? It's not by imitating the Master, by walking like this or by wearing like that. We touch here; we touch there, and we wave here, wave there and give candies. [Laughter] This is not all that the Master does. There's so much more and behind that, there is love; there is power; there is blessing; there is extreme care and attention from the most high, from the ocean of love and mercy. [Applause] It is difficult if you don't practice. If you're not high enough, you cannot know these things.

But when you receive things, you might feel there is a difference when you get something from the Master. You might not even feel it at all. But by and by, it will also help. For example, one of our practitioners said that his wife got blessed three times by the Master before she saw the Light. First time, no. Second time, no. Third time, 'Wow!' she said, 'Got it! Got it!' Yes, some people are slow. I know one practitioner; he said that he had heard nothing at the time of initiation. He was one of those small leaders of another faith. When he came to us, he took initiation. But because of the previous, maybe, preconceived ideas, he got stuck somewhere. It took one week before he got his first Sound. But he worked hard, and has meditated a lot. He finally climbed up, 'up there.' I appreciate his effort. He's one of the best supporters and most faithful practitioners at the moment. But he worked very hard after his initiation. Yes. Very hard.

But that's rare; to get it one week after initiation is rare. He heard nothing. He was so angry because he was a kind of leader, and every one else got it, and he was on the top and he got nothing. He was frustrated and angry with himself. But it was because of his position that he had obstacles. He thought that he was some kind of fantastic intelligence of the world, you know? And he can talk well. He knows all the scriptures, and when he talks, it's nonstop. He knows many stories and he can talk nonstop. He thinks he's okay, being vegetarian and all that for long time, except egg maybe. So, he thought that he was ready, prepared a hundred percent, a hundred and eight percent. And then he was so disappointed. Yes, it's true.

Don't be cheated by your mind

When we think that we are very good, or excellent, we might be cheated by the mind. The mind loves glory, loves praise, love fantasy, and thinking that we are good. On the other side, the mind also degrades us. It might sink into depression and an inferiority complex, and cheat us of our glory also. It goes two ways. Yes. The most cheated system in this world is to make people worship where they should not: To worship wood, to worship stone, to worship all kinds of lifeless objects, thinking that Buddha will know about it. The Buddha might know but we might not know, because we haven't found the connection inside. So, even if the Buddha wants to talk to us, we cannot listen. If our telephone is disconnected, how can we hear the other side? It doesn't matter how much we bow to the telephone over here. [Applause]

This is the trap of maya, that nobody knows! People love to hang on to something, and to glorify themselves: That they are religious; that they know philosophy; that they are practicing something. Therefore, maya, the king of illusion, sets up these kinds of traps, to let them satisfy themselves and stick there forever: That I am worshipping. I am religious. I am Buddhist. I am that. I am this. I am all things. I am busy. I am practicing.

You make God the way you want Him to be

There are all kinds of material attachments to religious orders, just to satisfy their mind. But it cheats them out of their precious time, by not letting them think of anything better, or try to find anything better. So, they keep telling you to worship the wooden statue and one day you'll realize he is a Buddha; yes, maybe, but a wooden one, a wooden Buddha. [Laughter] The Buddha always said, 'Buddha is inside you.' And then Jesus said, 'God dwells within you. You are the temple of God.' What did they mean by this? You make God the way you want Him to be. You make Buddha the way you want Him to be. Understand? According to your realization, your level, your power, the Buddha is that. [Applause]

For example, I teach you the Quan Yin method, without a method, but we have to call it a method. Otherwise, If I said to people come here and I'll give you nothing, no method, nobody would come. But after a while you realize that there is truly no method. It's only the Master power that helps you. Right? Otherwise, people would sell methods outside for one hundred dollars and you would get nothing. Or if other schools, so-called gurus, also give you the same method, you might get nothing. Right? They also tell you sit here and concentrate there. They also touch you. They can touch for two thousand years. Your head is still your head. [Laughter] It will not become the Buddha's head, because what's yours is yours.

Now, after I give you the Quan Yin method, for example, then you meditate. You try to search within yourselves to find what kind of power that you have, what kind of capability that you have forgotten, how much intelligence that you have not used, who you are and what kind of position you have in this universe. You search and search, and you'll find it. And then you find up to the first level, then you'll find that you are very loving now. You are less stressful than before, and so you think, 'Oh! God is that. God helps me. God can help me to heal stress and to heal my sickness.' You get cured from some disease, at the first level. Sometimes when you touch somebody, that person gets cure too, and you have healing power! You'll say, 'Oh! God has healing power. God is that. God has love. God gives me love. I feel loved now, and I feel I love someone else.'

But that love is still on a weak level. Never mind, you feel better than before. And by eating vegetarian you feel your body is better. You can think better than before, and you love your neighbor better now. So, you begin to declare that your Buddha is love; your Buddha is healing power; your God is healing power and magical power. Understand? Hes can make a lot of magic and things like that. You know God is there. You know there is a God, and that Hes has such-and-such qualities. And for a little while longer, you practice and you get up to the second level. Now, suddenly, whenever somebody asks you a question, you can talk with eloquence. You can reply to them in a way that they never have heard before, in a way you never dreamed you could reply before. You understand all the sutras and all the bibles in the world. You understand that all the five religions say the same thing. Yes, in one word, you have eloquence.

Smooth enmity with the love from spiritual practice

You can also sometimes see into the past, into other people's past and future. You know why you are connected with each other like this. You can regulate, invisibly or visibly, some of your karmic ties with other people, so suddenly your relationships smooth out. Suddenly, two enemies may come back loving each other, because invisibly, in your practice your Master power has smoothed the past enmity out of your life and your relationship. So, you begin to declare, 'God has intellectual power! God is Buddha! God is enlightenment! God is eloquence! God is that!' So, your God has grown a little bit taller. [Laughter] That's how you make God and how you make Buddha. You say, 'Oh! God has a kind record so that we can see everything inside.'

Then you begin to listen, and you can hear the sound of thunder or the sound of many waters. So, it declares in the bible that God speaks in the voice of thunder, and like the sound of many waters. That's how they declared their God. When they saw the big flame of light, they said, 'God comes in a big flame. God is like a big flame.' So, their God differs. Your God now differs from the God before, or differs from another initiate who has only reached the first level, or differs from another initiate who has reached the third level. His God is different from yours, but it is the same God, whom, pitifully, is being seen by different eyes and different angles. Just like when the Buddha was alive, He told the story

of the four blind people who touched an elephant; who described the elephant. The one who touched his ears said, 'Wow! The elephant is like a fan, a big fan.' And the other one who touched his trunk said, 'Oh! The elephant is like a big pillar.' And the other one who touched his nose said, 'Oh! The elephant looks like a water hose.' And the one who touched his tail said, 'Wow! The elephant is like a broom stick.' This is how ordinary people see God. And this is how practitioners and people at different levels see God and make their own God.

Therefore, it is said that God is within you; that Buddha is in your mind. That is the meaning of it. [Applause] Now you know that you can make Buddhas and you can make God. So, I would advise you to make the best God out of it. Our God must be the supreme, the most high, to be worthy of our time, energy and attention. Time is money! We might just as well buy the best God. [Laughter] Now you understand why God is not there for you to worship, but demands us to make use of His power. If we don't make use of this God by our own power, then when we pray and nothing is done, we cannot blame anyone else. From the top of the hierarchy to the lowest level of hell, you have only yourselves to blame. You've gone the wrong way. You walk the wrong path. You approach things in the wrong direction, with the wrong method.

The best way to worship God

The Quan Yin method is for you to realize that God is you, the way you make Him. God can be as low as a worm, if you are that. If you don't raise yourselves higher than the worm's level then God will forever stay as a worm. If you raise yourselves higher, the higher your God is, the higher God is glorified. So, glorify God by your own power of meditation and realization. That's the best prayer. That's the best glorification for God, the most significant prayer and the most significant job that you could ever do for God. [Applause] If we say we worship God, Buddha, Allah or whoever you say, and we remain in ignorance, then we truly despise God; we truly disgrace God and Buddha.

Therefore, Buddha said, 'If you believe in Buddha, but do not understand Buddha, you disgraced Buddha.' That is the truth. How do you disgrace Buddha? By remaining in ignorance and letting others see that you are an ignorant God, that you have no belief in God anymore, because God is ignorant due to your own ignorant thinking and view point. You think God is like that. 'I pray to Him, but He doesn't hear. I am crawling here, but He doesn't see.' It is not God who does not see. It is you who does not know that God sees, and who does not directly receive God's blessing, because you build a lot of obstacles around yourself. You, yourself, deny the benefit and the blessing from God, because you think, from a conditioned mind, from many generations, that you're not worthy; that you're wrong; that you are ignorant; that you do all the wrong things against your God's nature.

Therefore, even now, when you pray, this kind of thinking subconsciously prevents you from knowing you are God, knowing the benefit of God. Then you think God is only that. God is only for you to pray to, to complain to and to demand from, but it is not so. Every God is truly different. Depending on how you think and on your level, God is different. Not that there are so many Gods, but our view points differ, so God differs. Do you understand now why we must understand and realize God in order to say that we truly worship God? [Applause] Therefore, what the Buddha said is not wrong. If you don't understand Buddha, don't just blindly believe in Buddha or you'll disgrace Buddha.

Anyhow, you are on the right path. I think you may have realized it by now, otherwise you wouldn't have come to see me. Even those who failed also came to see me, or wanted to

come to see me, at least. They might not have the face to come, but never mind! If they want to practice slowly outside, without control, without somebody to keep reminding them, nagging them, then they can stay home and slowly crawl. Those who want to follow me faster, must work hard and be fast. I like you to be fast. You can never be too fast for me, [Applause] because the world is in need of such fast working people. The world is so desperately short of these fast thinking, intelligent, conscientious, moral and honest people. Therefore, the more the better.

Work fast in spiritual practice to serve the world

The faster you know how great your God is, the better. You can spread your love. You can impose your God for other people to see. When they see you, it's like they see God. They might tremble with fear. They might feel exalted with love, or they might just feel different. That is how God blesses people, through you, because you have slowly risen up to God's level. Understand? That's how we bless the world. That's how we worship God. That's how we truly pray.

At that time we don't even pray, but God blesses you and everything and anyone who sees you. Understand? At that time, you are already a Master. Or you have not reached mastership, but you've already possessed, more or less, to some degree, this kind of power, this kind of love, this kind of benediction. So, this is how we serve the world. And then we can say God truly is love. [Applause] And people will praise you.

Okay, enough with theories, [Laughter] but my theory is not only a theory. You feel the power. You feel the force. Why? Because I have realized what I say. I did not read it from books. Understand? I realized it within myself. Therefore, whatever I say benefits you, and you believe it because it has a convincing power. Anyone else who repeats my words, might just be empty words. Yes. So, we have to practice and realize ourselves, and then even if we repeat the words of the Master, it has the same power, because it becomes our own. Understand? [Applause]

I thank you for inviting me here. Also thank you for your exciting love at the airport, and today and in three to four days to come. I thank you for working hard to achieve the goals of my trip. Because my trip is also your trip, my work is your work. Whoever benefits or gets benefitted from me and from you also, from all of you who cooperated, who helped, who mentally or even physically supported this work. Everyone is a benefactor of mankind. This is the way of Bodhisattva. This is the way of sainthood. There's no other way, no need for shaving your head, no sticking in the Himalayas, no need for anything, no sleeping on a nail bed. Yes, just be ordinary and have wisdom.

Beautiful you are! I am glad that you have improved, and I am glad your faith is firm. I know you have been through some tests, but that's how we know our level. That's how we know whether our discrimination is sharp or not; whether we know the difference between a true Master and a false master; whether we know how to recognize goodness in a Master or not, or if we just listen to rumors and all kinds of gossip that is polluting to our mind. If we repeat that, polluting other's minds, it will be like a disease that keeps spreading. So, when we speak, it's better to speak of goodness. If we absolutely cannot avoid it then we have to say something, but only in order to teach people or to tell them to improve. Otherwise, there is no good in talking about negative things, whether is it true or not. The one who spreads it is the one who is affected most, the first. And the one who hears it is also affected, if he listens to it or if he believes it. Understand? Okay, good night!

WHY WE HAVE TO MEDITATE ¹⁰³

We have wars, floods, starvation, and refugees all over the world. This is all because we do not use our wisdom; instead, we rely on our ego, mind, and arrogant habits. We think that this is the same as that and there is no difference. There is a difference! Even clothes are different sometimes. Different fabrics cause different physical sensations. The cool air from an airconditioner is different than the cool air outside; we cannot say that they are the same just because they are the same degree in terms of temperature. They are not the same! They are different materials.

For instance, when we climb high up into the mountains where it is colder or even snowing, we do not feel very tired because the air up there is natural. It might be very cold there, but after we inhale the oxygen in the air, heat will be generated and the body will make suitable adjustments. On the other hand, when we are in an air-conditioned room where the ventilation is not good, we feel tired despite the cool air. It is not very good for our body. When we leave an air-conditioned room, we don't seem to be able to quickly adjust physically, and our faces are pale when we get up from sleep. If we live or work in an air-conditioned room for a long time, our faces might appear greenish. Yet we will look pinkish even though it may be much colder in the mountains.

Of course, we should develop our freedom, but we have to find out which is the better thing to do. Just because we are free does not mean that we simply do whatever we want. We should use our brains and wisdom when we act; use them since we have them. Do not act blindly and willfully. Whether we buy good or bad things, it takes the same amount of time, and most probably we pay the same amount of money, or perhaps more money for the bad things. Therefore, in whatever we do, we should try to use our brains and wisdom; that will save us a lot of time and energy, and benefit both others and ourselves. This is why we need to pursue spiritual practice; the reason is very logical.

Concentrate our life energy

If we use a magnifying glass to focus sunbeams, we can ignite a fire beneath them, at the point where the rays converge. Otherwise, even if there is plenty of sunlight, we cannot make use of it. Similarly, our life force is dispersed throughout our bodies, and even outside. When we pay attention to something, we give it power; we give it our life force. Therefore, by focusing all our attention on one point, we can solve any problem. We can make a fire that will burn all obstacles. It is very logical, nothing mysterious.

Avoid superstition in spiritual cultivation. Try to understand clearly why we practice this method, and why we have to focus on this point. [Master points to the wisdom eye.] When we think, don't we use this spot and knit our brows? We knit our brows because we want to concentrate; we do it naturally. Accordingly, we know that we should focus on this spot to prevent our energy from leaking out, or being wasted on outside distractions. Doesn't the power grow stronger when we concentrate it in here? And then, isn't it faster for us to make a breakthrough? Yes! For example, with one hand, you can only push open a door, but with both hands, you can break it if you want. This is very logical and simple, nothing mysterious. Spiritual practice is a scientific matter; so have no doubt about it. Probably you will protest and argue with me, 'How can our energy be dissipated if we just look at things outside?'

103. Group meditation, Shatin Center, Hong Kong, February 20, 1992 (Originally in Chinese).

It does dissipate, otherwise, how can hypnotists gain command over people? They send out their energy to control someone. How can you say that they are not using their power? They are! Some people practice on focusing their thoughts, and make things rise or fall in the air at will. There are even people who can kill others with their thoughts from a long distance away. You can still find them in Tibet or perhaps China. Our focused thought is very powerful. Do not think that when our attention is diverted to other things, our life energy is not wasted. Yes, it is! It does waste our wisdom.

For instance, to attain perfection in something, we must look at it or think of it attentively. This applies to everything, even to playing music or doing the laundry. When we do the laundry, we have to look at the stains carefully before we decide how to clean, scrub or wipe them off. In the case of an artist, he must be very focused in mind to create a good painting or sculpture. There are times when you see a man or woman whom you like very much, and then can you say that you are not wasting your energy? You are! If you keep watching him, he will sense something and may even be charmed by you after a while. You are using your power to attract him. You cannot deny that you are dissipating your energy!

Therefore, we should concentrate all that power that might have gone to waste, and save as much of it as possible, just like saving money. If we spend money lavishly even when it is not necessary, we will never have enough money. If we spend appropriately, one dollar saved means one dollar earned. As our savings increase, our lives will become better and we will not have to work so hard. After we have saved a big sum of money, we can easily buy anything that is important and necessary. Without money, we cannot even buy trivial things. Therefore, let us save first, and then we can buy whatever we want.

In the same way, as we dissipate energy into the outside world each day, we retrieve it through meditation. Whenever you can save some time, save it; it is better than none. In twenty-four hours, we should set aside two and a half hours, which is one-tenth of our time, to replenish our life force and concentrate our energy, and then we will have enough to spend during the rest of the day. Just as we have time to spend money, we should also have time to earn it. We work eight hours a day to provide for our spending in twenty-four hours.

Now we only save two and a half hours on meditation to provide for our consumption in twenty-four hours, and I don't think this is illogical. Actually, I think this is too little! Therefore, initiation doesn't mean that all has been accomplished; you still have to go home and continue to work. Receiving initiation is just like registering for work in a factory. The boss has hired you, but that does not mean that you will be paid every month. You have to go there and work every day; you have to be responsible to the boss, and then you will be paid for each day you work. Similarly, we meditate each day to earn our wisdom and power, and then we will observe more incredible events. This is neither magical power nor blessed reward; it is the energy that you have saved up. It emerges and lets you solve many problems that were once impossible. It's very logical!

Previously, we were rich, but we spent foolishly, buying anything we saw even when we did not need it. We spent the money buying things that we had no room for. Gradually, they became a troublesome burden. We had too many things, and there was not even room for us to dwell in, so we felt distressed and uncomfortable. Now that we have disposed of all those things, we will not buy things foolishly anymore. Now we have more room and more money saved. Later when we see something very important, very beautiful, and comfortable that suits our taste, we can buy it with our savings. When we buy it, we know we really like it. We feel comfortable; the money is well spent and the thing

is good, so we think it is incredible. 'Why have I never been able to buy this?' We might even think that it fell from heaven into our house. Not at all! It is our money. We have saved a lot of money, so we can buy this valuable thing now. When we were spending foolishly before, we dared not even look at such valuable things, not to mention buying them!

Previously, we wasted too much vitality and energy looking at the outside, thinking that it would bring us consolation and comfort. The truth is, it only brought us frustration. It was like buying too many things foolishly, making our home so crowded that there was no room left for us. We felt suffocated and oppressed. We had many things that we couldn't handle, karmic hindrances that we could not eliminate, or cause and effect that we could not escape. The enormous power that we save up helps handle the previously unmanageable karma, reducing it a little and making us more comfortable, or letting us handle it in other ways. Therefore, our life often becomes more comfortable as we advance in spiritual practice.

However, we really have to practice with our heart, and with true sincerity. Sincerity can help us concentrate; if we are not sincere, we practice casually, sluggishly, or may not even do it. This is very logical. I have to cite a worldly example to let you understand. For instance, when you are sincerely in love with someone, you fear no hardship. No matter how far his home is, you still go to see him; no matter what his temper is like, you accept him. You can endure anything just to marry him. If you are not sincere about him, you see him as though you don't see; you don't feel anything. You do not miss him or feel like going to see him. Neither do you feel like getting married to him or winning his heart. Since you do not try your best, of course, you won't get him, because that is not what you want. Most probably you want someone else or something else. Perhaps you want to take a vacation or have some fun. You do not miss him. Naturally, you will not win him. On the other hand, he doesn't care much about you, either. Because you are not sincere, you fail to attract him or touch his heart.

It is the same with our wisdom and incredible power. Only when we really want them will we try our best to get them. Our minds and souls will strive to get them. If we do not want them, we will not get them. Isn't this logical? [Audience: Yes.] We concentrate on getting something only when we really want it. Otherwise, we don't care whether it comes or not. Therefore, it is most important that we are sincere in our spiritual practice. Don't put on a show for others. It doesn't mean that you conceal the fact that you are meditating; but you must avoid boasting about it.

Why you should not reveal your inner experiences to others

When people ask what you are practicing, you should answer, 'I am practicing the Quan Yin method, and I feel very good about it. I meditate for so many hours each day, and I am a vegetarian.' Just don't tell them about your inner experiences. Why? If you tell them, they might not believe you. They might scoff at you. Most people in the world would not believe you! When I talked about other planets yesterday, people questioned me: 'How can You prove that those planets exist? Can it be Your imagination?' There have been so many reports in the newspapers and on television about UFOs and extraterrestrials, yet people do not believe it! Imagine what they will think when we talk about our inner experiences. Since we cannot show them a UFO, [Master laughs.] how can we make them believe us?

I have the 'bad luck' of being chosen to serve as an enlightened Master, so I have to talk about everything and make a fool of myself. Someone has to make the sacrifice! Since God has already given me this assignment, or 'business,' I have to do it. Otherwise, when

we reveal our inner experiences and spiritual level, very often we make a laughing stock of ourselves, and bring about an opposite effect. We talk because we want others to believe us and pursue spiritual practice; instead, they might laugh at us and attack us. This can impair our faith. When people repeatedly say that this is our imagination, we might by and by come to believe that it is indeed our imagination. As a result, we may want to quit, which can be troublesome! It is not wrong for us to talk about such things, but very often we will have no more inner experiences after we talk, and then we will regress in spiritual practice. Therefore, it is better to keep our inner experiences to ourselves and refrain from talking about seeing any Buddha or Light, or hearing any Sound. Should people ask, you may tell them, 'Well! Among those of us practicing the Quan Yin method, some of us can see the Light and some can hear certain Sounds.'

Give them a general remark instead of telling them that it is you who hear the Sound. You may say, 'I too have some of these experiences. Of course, I have some experience, but I cannot tell you about it.' That would be enough. We don't have to seal our mouth completely. If we say nothing, then how can people learn about this Quan Yin method and the benefits that can be derived from its practice? And how will people want to practice together with us? Say what you have to say, but do not discuss your inner experiences and the detailed instructions given at initiation. Without my permission, you must not reveal them because you have not learned them well. It is useless for you to talk about these things.

For instance, if you have just learned the first few words of the English alphabet, and then you go out to teach others, what use can there be in that? That is the reason. I am not forbidding you to do anything. Neither am I creating a mystery. However, there is something you must not forget: When we do something in this world, if we brag about it, most likely we will not succeed. If this is true for worldly deeds, then it is also right for us to keep our spiritual practice a secret. This world belongs to maya the king of illusion and its lackeys are everywhere ready to attack and hinder spiritual practitioners. When they hear that we have within us a treasure, comfortable and good feelings and things like nirvana, they will try to obstruct us. They are jealous, and they do not practice spiritually because they don't want to. Knowing that it is very beneficial for us to practice this method, they will surely attack us. That is the way of this world.

When you have money and position, people will hate you; or when you are successful in teaching people and have plenty of disciples, people will also attack you. There are conflicts and disputes in many religions because the adherents fail to practice well. Therefore, instead of becoming God's children, they become slaves and tools of maya. That is why we should heed those more difficult points on our spiritual path; that's all! I am not imposing any strict prohibition or regulation upon you. No, I am not! These are simply secret tricks that we must know to protect ourselves on the spiritual path.

Travel to other planetary worlds with the spirit

Of course, it is okay to lie down when we meditate, but it is also easier to fall asleep. We fall asleep even when we sit up; imagine what will happen when we lie down. I have the same problem, because I too fall asleep when I lie down. However, that doesn't mean that sleeping is useless; we need enough sleep.

Our bodies need replenishment, and our souls need to rest. Choose a suitable time to meditate, a time when you are not very tired. Why do we prefer to meditate in the morning and evening? It is better to meditate in the morning when we have had enough sleep. Of course, we are reluctant to get up, but we had better get up because it is the best time for

meditation. Of course, that requires courage and sincerity, otherwise it is very difficult to do it!

Sometimes when you are sleeping, you will be pulled up. Usually you are not aware when this happens. Occasionally you are aware, but that only causes troubles. For instance, yesterday a fellow practitioner told me, 'Master, very often my soul goes out when I am asleep, and I see myself lying there. I tell myself that it is my physical body; and I become scared and then come back.' I told him that since we have been confined to the body all the time, it would be fun to go out for some time. The physical body won't run away when we are not around. It only runs around when we are in it. It is we, and not the body, who run around. Otherwise, when someone is dead, the body remains unchanged, and the eyes and ears are still there, so why doesn't the body run around? It won't scream when you hit it, and it won't respond when you scold it. This indicates that the body cannot function on its own. It can only move about when we are inside. Therefore, when you go out and see that the body is there, it is too great. It won't go away; don't worry. If you are scared, then seek my help. 'Master, please protect me!' It would be great if you let me take you up! This is why I do not let you know when I sometimes take you out while you are sleeping. It is troublesome if you are aware! I can't drag you out. It is just rotten and stinky flesh, yet you cling to it with all your might. You have been inside it all your life and you go out only once in a long while, yet you cling tightly to the body. Who would believe you when you swear, 'I really want to be liberated from birth and death,' if you can't even let go of this rotten flesh and skin; where can you possibly go?

There are many planets in our universe. Do not have doubts about that. You know when you look up and see the stars! There are the planets, some of which are inhabited and others not. Some are highly civilized, while some are very backward. Our earth cannot possibly be the only planet in the entire universe; it would be such a big waste! Would the creator be so stupid as to create only this earth? There are innumerable planets! Recently, scientists have made some explorations up there, and it seems they have proof that some planets are inhabited but they cannot go inside. The inhabitants of some of the so-called spiritual planets do not have a body like ours, so we cannot see any humans there. That doesn't mean that they do not exist.

These spiritual planets are superior to our earth or other earths. When we say 'earth,' we refer to planets like our earth, our world. We call these material planet 'earths,' because everything there is material, visible, tangible and palpable. The other kind I call 'spiritual planets' because I don't know how to name these spiritual worlds. In the dimensions of highly developed spiritual beings, they have no physical bodies. We have to elevate our vibrations to match their level exactly before we can feel or see their existence. We cannot see them because we are too coarse.

Let us not talk about the superior worlds but take an example closer to our world. Some people can see the souls of dead persons, but other people cannot, because their vibrations are different than those of our physical body. They still have bodies, only different ones. A tent is like a house, but the material is different. We can easily tear it apart with a knife or even our bare hands. Wooden houses are made of a different material and are sturdier; and then, houses built of concrete are even stronger.

People in Hong Kong build houses out of glass, which looks more beautiful, light and comfortable. It is very comfortable looking out from inside. If everything in Hong Kong were built of concrete, so tall and coarse, I am afraid no one would be able to stand it. The narrow space would drive people crazy and make them feel confined. Therefore, the buildings in Hong Kong are very close to those in more civilized worlds. In some worlds,

houses are built of crystal. The house seems to be there, but there is no feeling of confinement. People can walk through the walls because they do not really exist even though they are there; they are soft and very comfortable. There are no tall, enclosed walls to block the view. The interior is very spacious, thanks to the intangible walls. The buildings with the big glass windows we build are closer to those of the higher civilizations, although these more civilized worlds are not necessarily spiritual worlds. I am not saying that they are the highest worlds; we can say they are worlds belonging to the heavenly realm.

Only people in this realm want to build such houses and love living in them. It is closer to that kind of world, that is all. They subconsciously remember that there are such buildings in the world where they used to live. People in other places do not think of building these kinds of houses; they would not even think of them, much less build them. Only people closer to this kind of civilized world will conceive and build these kinds of houses and love to live in them. However, I am only citing this as an example of common logic. Wherever spiritual practitioners live is fine. Crystal buildings are not at the highest level. Houses are not important. When we have become accomplished in our spiritual practice, we can build our own house. Whatever house we think of will be manifested. Depending on our imagination and talent in building, we can build anything. The house is built even before we ascend to that realm. Our blessed rewards will determine what kind of house we have.

When Shakyamuni Buddha was alive, His cousin was one of His monastic disciples. He didn't practice well but indulged in worldly pleasures instead. Very often, he would steal back home to see his pretty wife. Shakyamuni Buddha was at His wit's end, as the monk wouldn't listen to His advice. One day when this monk was asleep or in meditation, he found himself in a very beautiful world where he was greeted by many goddesses and angels. There were sweet music, beautiful scenery, and glorious palaces. He was invited to live in a palace, where the goddesses waited on him, entertaining him with dances and songs, and serving him with the best wine and food from heaven. He asked the goddesses, 'Will you please tell me where I am? Whose palace is this? It's so beautiful. And you beautiful ladies, which household do you come from?'

The goddesses told him, 'This palace is reserved for the cousin of Shakyamuni Buddha, whose name is such-and-such.' They pretended not to know who he was. 'If he practices well, he will come up and live here. We are his maids.' He noticed with great delight that these maids were hundreds or thousands of times more beautiful than his wife. The wine and food were delicious; the peaches and other fruits were wonderful, many times bigger than those in our world. He asked, 'Can I stay here from now on? I am that person, and this house, as well as all of you, belong to me. Well, I am here to stay!'

Their reply was, 'No, you can't. You have not become accomplished in your spiritual practice. Only when you have done so can you come and stay here. We will be here waiting for you. Today, we are only showing you what your future abode is like.' It was like taking a look at a house to see whether we like it or not before we decide to buy it. 'Now that you have seen your dream house, you can come later and we will be waiting for you. It won't be long, just a couple of days.' 'What? Just a couple of days? Didn't you say that I have to practice down there for a couple of decades?' he asked. They replied, 'That is right! Here a couple of days is equal to a couple of decades down there!' [Master laughs] Very much disappointed, he fell abruptly. He could not stay there because he had not practiced enough to remain stable at heart. Besides, his time had not come yet.

He was very upset, because he really missed that place. Suddenly, Shakyamuni kicked him down to hell for a visit. He had just come back from heaven, and now he was in hell.

There he saw many horrible ghosts with long fangs, big noses, dark eyes, terrible hair, and faces that were terrifying beyond imagination. You might have seen them in the movies. There they punished people by sawing them into pieces, roasting them with fire, and punishing them in many terrible ways. Those being tortured were screaming loudly in great pain.

The demons took the cousin to a huge pot filled with boiling oil. He asked, 'Why is this pot empty? No one is in there!' The reply he got was that the pot was reserved for Shakyamuni Buddha's cousin whose name was such-and-such! Should his spiritual practice be lousy, hell was waiting for him! They then showed him many tools used for cutting, sawing, and slicing a person before putting him into the pot to cook. They explained the complicated procedure step by step, about what would be done to his body, which part would be deep-fried, which part sauteed, and how many times he would have to go through it. They read a whole big menu, which made his hair stand on end. He exclaimed, 'Oh! No! I don't want to come here! I don't belong here! I belong in heaven.' The answer he got was, 'You have to practice hard to go to heaven, but hell is ready to welcome you at any time.' The cousin, now extremely terrified, screamed out aloud. Then Shakyamuni Buddha took him home.

Therefore, heaven and hell are all in our hands. The decision is ours to make. Don't blame anyone for being bad to us, or blame God for not saving us, because God is us, our own self. If we do not want to save ourselves, who will? There is no one else around! Each person in the universe is an independent soul. We are aware of our goodness and evil; we know what we need and what we should do. No one will care about us. If we perform good deeds, we will reap good fruits. If we do evil deeds, we will get bad retribution. This is crystal clear; we are our own masters, and we decide our own future.

Never mind if we have erred in the past; we can choose a different future to compensate for the past. After the initiation today, I cleansed your karma from many previous lives. This is being done invisibly, as if pressing a computer button to activate the deletion. However, should we repeat the same mistake, it will be recorded again. To prevent incurring any karma in the future, we ought to keep the precepts and observe a vegetarian diet, so as to avoid undesirable affinities with sentient beings. It is for our own good that we do good deeds. When we love and care for suffering people, it is as though we are loving and caring for ourselves, through creating good karma. However, despite all the good karma or bad karma that we have incurred, if we do not become attached to them, we can escape the retribution caused by them. Whether the karma is good or bad, we still have to come back. The best way is to have no good or bad karma, then we can go back to the heavenly kingdom.

Attain without attaining

You have sat here for a very long time without feeling restless. You should have experienced the power of tranquillity. Of course, the power of Buddha or God will not strike you like an electric shock. 'Wow! It is coming! The blessings are coming!' [Master mimics electric shock actions.] [Laughter] It is very serene. Since it is our own power, it is no stranger to us. It is so comfortable and natural that we are not even aware of it. Are we aware of our own existence? Of course, not! We are so used to ourselves! Only when there is a stranger present will we feel a difference in the atmosphere.

Therefore, very often you are not aware of the benefits you derive from meditation. You feel as if there are none. They are so natural and gentle that you have to be very attentive and focused to know what you have attained. As the Heart sutra states, 'There is nothing

to be attained.’ However, Confucius' books say that we will ‘attain.’ Actually, they are referring to the same thing; there is no conflict between them! There is no conflict between the Heart sutra and the Great Learning, except that the expressions are different. They are both correct in saying that there is ‘something to be attained’ or ‘nothing to be attained.’ This ‘object to be attained’ is not something that we can calculate or show to others, so we cannot talk about ‘attaining’ it.

It is not a sensory feeling like an electric shock or a terrible fright; it is sometimes, though. If we have heavy karma or a bad atmosphere, we will be shocked when God's blessings come to blast out the negative force. Then we will feel the shock, because that is a strange phenomenon. God's power and maya are total strangers because the latter is an outside force or entity. Our own power will feel alien from it. We will feel the shock as if we have gone through a battle. Otherwise, if we are not heavy in karma or possessed by outside entities or energies, we will feel very comfortable, as if nothing has happened. It is absolutely tranquil, and can hardly be detected. Anyway, we will notice it when we see the Light or hear the Sound.

Sometimes when we hear the Sound, we expect something sensational to happen. For example, when you are told at initiation that you may hear the sound of thunder, you will keep expecting the thunder to come: ‘How come I still have not heard the thunder?’ It is perfectly fine if you hear some other sounds! Even the sound of inner thunder is not as shocking as outside thunder. It is a loud rumbling Sound that seems very much like thunder, but it is not the same. It is not to be compared with worldly sounds. Otherwise, you may wonder, ‘He mentioned the sound of thunder. Is this the one?’ Your doubts will disrupt your concentration, and the thunder will also vanish! [Master and audience laugh.] Just now a fellow initiate said that he didn't hear anything except the sound of ‘Om...’ Is this not one of the Sounds? It is! Sometimes you expect too much!

Take it slowly! This is only the first day. Many more wonderful things will occur in the days to come. As you practice more diligently and save more of your energy, many incredible things will happen. You will experience the phenomenon of ‘being resistant to burning by fire and to killing by the sword’ as mentioned in the Universal Door chapter. You will understand what this means. You may be reciting this passage every day, but you are easily burnt by fire, and get killed immediately by a sword. You have never really experienced it. Actually, that is a symbolic phenomenon, which cannot be described in words.

Ancient people wrote it down because they had experienced it themselves. Here we keep reciting this passage from the Quan Yin Bodhisattva Universal Door chapter: ‘Being resistant to burning by fire and to killing by the sword,’ but it doesn't really happen! Since it is not our experience, how can we keep on reciting it? It is useless, anyway. That was only other people's experience. For instance, someone is eating cookies and he says, ‘These cookies are very sweet and crispy. They are really delicious!’ Wouldn't it be ridiculous for us to repeat his words? He has eaten them, so he knows, and he writes it down to express his feelings. Since we have not eaten them, we know nothing about it. What can we express? What use is there in reciting other people's experiences? Therefore, recitation is futile.

It will be beneficial for you to recite the Universal Door chapter now, because you understand the meaning therein. First, it describes seeing the Quan Yin Bodhisattva and other wonderful visions, and mentions the merits of the Quan Yin Bodhisattva. Then it goes on to describe experiencing the Sounds of Brahma, tidal waves, and supraworldly and other fantastic Sounds. The first part describes meditation on the Light, while the

second part describes meditation on the Sound; it is a clear and detailed report of inner experiences. However, people later have just recited the words without knowing what they mean!

For instance, this fellow sister just now spoke of seeing my manifestation form. She saw me in her dreams throughout last night, and she wanted to come very early this morning. Just now while meditating during the initiation, she again saw my radiant manifestation form, which looked very much like the physical Master outside but was more beautiful and wore prettier clothes. [Applause] Before I came here, she saw my photograph and thought that she had seen me before, but in different clothes. She had seen me in red, but then I wore yellow at the lecture, so she felt that there was something wrong. Now, I am wearing these clothes today, and she remembers! These were the clothes she saw. I have many different clothes in various colors, some very shocking, to suit the tastes of different people. They sometimes see me in different forms within.

The clothes are not important, but I wear them to let people recognize me. Very often they see me from within even before they meet me. If I don't wear certain clothes, they cannot recognize or communicate with me, and they forget the affinity they have with me from their last life. When they see me in these clothes, they remember subconsciously and they practice more quickly and more steadily. There are many such stories, but one is enough; here we don't have time to hear so many. Suppose we do not see the Light, but we can sit here feeling very comfortable and tranquil, as though in samadhi, then it is also a very good experience. Day by day, we develop our love, intelligence, and wisdom, and our life becomes more stable, as we feel supported, very confident and safe; this is also an experience and benefit derived from spiritual practice. We do not pursue spiritual practice just to see the Light. The Light only serves to assure us that we are on the spiritual path, and properly connected, so that we can have peace of mind. If we have not seen the Light, yet we have peace of mind, and we know that we are safe and have a place to go, then it is a very good experience.

There is no need to compare ourselves with others. Therefore, I advise you not to reveal your inner experiences to others, not even fellow initiates, unless I say it is okay.

WHY GOD DOES NOT SAVE THE SENTIENT BEINGS IN HELL ¹⁰⁴

Some people ask me: 'If God is so powerful, then why doesn't He take pity on the people in hell; why does He leave them to suffer great agonies there? Why doesn't He just forgive them and free them from hell?' It is because they have not acquired enough 'human' qualities; they still possess the demonic spirit. Were they allowed to come up, they would do great damage to the human world.

Similarly, if prisoners who committed serious offenses were set free before they had been completely reformed, they would continue to kill people and destabilize society. Sometimes we might wonder why the government has to build prisons and employ police, but then, not every person in society is benign; people do err sometimes. An initially benign person may have done misdeeds because he was threatened or is mentally unbalanced. Therefore, he will continue to disturb the world if he is not confined in jail or a mental institution. Similarly, hell is there for people to reform themselves, and they are free to go when their reformation is complete.

104. Group meditation, Shatin Center, Hong Kong, February 20, 1992 (Originally in Chinese).

This world is also a prison

The same goes for us worldly people; our world is also a kind of jail, except that it is less strict than a prison or hell. Here, some people suffer more and some suffer less. However, we all seem to be living in a prison because we cannot get out or communicate with other worlds; we are trapped in our bodies and in the atmosphere of the earth all the time. People in some other worlds are freer than we are. They can travel from one planet to another and from one world to another. However, they don't often come to our world, just like people who have nothing to do with prisoners, they don't often visit a prison. Even lawyers, those with power, or those who are in the highest position such as kings and presidents, do not visit a prison often. Although they can do so any time, they are busy with other things.

Our world is in a similar situation. You always ask why the great saints don't come down here to save us as there are so many of them up there. It's because this world is a prison and we are prisoners. So, why would anyone care about us and come to see us? None except those who have affinity with us, our family members and friends, or our lawyers. Who else would visit us? If a lawyer doesn't come to prison to see you, it is very difficult for you to get out or change anything even if you have been wronged. Once you are in, it's very difficult to get out.

We say that this world is like a prison, because the people here know only this world and no other worlds. However, some people in this world can go out to see other worlds. For example, of the many inmates in prison, some can go out if they behave themselves and were not convicted of capital crimes. Occasionally the guards take them out to have some fun or exercise. Although they are still prisoners, they can go out for some fresh air and feel more free; they can go out to see cars, pretty girls and children running around, which is better than always staying in prison. Some inmates are not locked up or chained. They can work, do gardening, sweep the floor, cook, or walk around in the prison rather than being locked up in their cells. But some inmates are locked up in tiny cells. The situation is different for the many inmates in prison.

The soul of a spiritual practitioner is free

Similarly, most people in this world cannot visit other worlds or other planets, but some spiritual practitioners who have less karma and are released on bail are free to run around. They are just like prisoners who can go out to work, sweep the street, collect garbage, or do community service to make up for their crimes. Some inmates cannot go far from the prison while some can go farther away in police vehicles, where they work all day before returning to the prison. In the same way, most people in this world cannot visit other worlds whereas we Quan Yin method practitioners can often go out. If we are diligent in our practice, behave ourselves, and concentrate when we meditate, we can go out.

Sometimes we aren't even aware that we have gone out, but when we wake up, we feel as though we have just fallen very quickly from somewhere or we've suddenly perceived very bright Light, then we know that we have just come back from a very high realm. I mentioned yesterday morning why you are not aware of it – because it would be troublesome and you would be scared if you were aware of it. The person who sees his own body lying there after he has left it becomes so scared that he goes back quickly as if his body looked so pretty that other people would snatch it away. [Master laughs.] Sometimes at night, I take you up to learn, otherwise you cannot make progress in your practice. You are very busy during the day and doze off when you meditate. How can you have time to learn? So, I have to make use of your sleeping time and let the guardian

angels take care of your bodies while I take your souls up to learn and have fun. Of course, you may not remember it after you come back, because your mind is only a tool like a computer. We have a way to connect, or disconnect, our souls and our minds as we desire. Those of you who are initiated have a way to disconnect your souls and your minds, at least when you sleep or meditate, depending on your power of concentration.

When you sleep, your mind disturbs you the least. It knows that you don't do anything at that time, so it doesn't need to record anything. Since it knows that you are sleeping, it relaxes and thinks that it has nothing to do. At that time I quietly take your soul away without letting your mind know about it. So, when you come back, it still doesn't know, except if you are kicked by your wife or disturbed by your husband, you may suddenly wake up and perceive a very bright Light or feel very light and have an indescribable feeling. Then you know that you have just come back from a high realm. Have you had the experience of seeing Light when you wake up from your sleep? [Some in the audience answer: Yes.] Some of you have.

Different people have different degrees of freedom

The situation is different for the people in this world. Some of us can rise up to high realms and some cannot. We are still prisoners, but we have a little more freedom. Some people are waiting to be released and some are allowed to go out to work, depending on how serious their crimes are. Those of you who can go to very high realms have almost fully paid for your crimes and your lawyers have had your cases settled and made a good arrangement for you, so you will be released soon. You are only waiting to be released when the paperwork is done. Some of you who cannot go up very high have been more sinful or your lawyers have not had your cases settled yet.

A fellow initiate just told me, 'Master, I felt that I had dozed off during meditation, but when I woke up, I felt I was going up but suddenly woke up from it.' I said, 'That was because your power of concentration was not strong enough.' We work all day and our concentration is dispersed. If we have not practiced well or have only practiced for a short period of time, although we can go up to a high realm, we cannot stay there or cannot go higher. That's why we must meditate and practice every day.

If you could stay at the level that you attained at the time of initiation or even go higher than that, why would you have to meditate every day? I might as well tell you just to eat and sleep every day. This is the same as learning any other thing. For example, when we go to college, we have to study every day, otherwise how can we graduate? We also have to study every day when we learn English, Chinese, Japanese or anything else. When we are admitted to the class, it means that the teacher is giving us a chance to learn from him and to become a teacher in the future. Although we have enrolled for the class, we have to study every day. To enroll for an English class is better than not to enroll at all. Some people want to learn English, but they may not be knowledgeable or competent enough, so the teacher may not accept them. When we enroll and the teacher accepts us, it means that we are good enough and better than others, but we still have to continue to learn. This is the same as going to college. After graduating from high school, only the better ones go on to college. They may have to take entrance exams before they are admitted. So, those who have been admitted are good enough, but it doesn't mean that they have graduated from college. They must study four, or perhaps eight, years in order to graduate. Similarly, after you are initiated, you are very good and are like saints in a saintly group, but you are not high-level saints yet. You must take time to practice. Therefore, please be diligent in your practice.

THE MYSTERY OF THE UNIVERSE ¹⁰⁵

Our earth has a pretty advanced civilization. We have many tools and machines that can make our lives more comfortable. However, in the eyes of a spiritual practitioner, our earth is not quite civilized enough. There are spiritual practitioners who can travel to other planets and worlds in their spiritual rather than physical form. They can observe other planets and worlds and perhaps learn something that could benefit the people back on earth. Some people can do that; some have written books on their out-of-body experiences.

Myriad civilizations and realms

This is not new to the Buddhist tradition. Shakyamuni Buddha, for example, knew and introduced many other worlds and planets to us. He spoke of the Medicine Buddha's and the Crystal Buddha's world in the east, the land of Amitabha Buddha in the west, and myriad worlds, as many as the sands of the Ganges. However, not all of these worlds are civilized or of supreme levels. Some worlds are more backward than ours. Some are not so backward but neither are they civilized. Some are more technologically advanced but they differ from this planet in their way of life and spiritual level.

For example, some worlds can manufacture UFOs that can travel very fast from one planet to another. Some worlds produce UFOs for export to other planets. Perhaps our earth would be able to purchase a couple of UFOs some day. This is not impossible. In the past, we never dreamed that we would travel from America to Hong Kong. And before Christopher Columbus landed on America, no one had imagined that it existed. Similarly, we will be able to travel to other planets at a greater speed than UFOs. We can use our wisdom, our soul, our inherent energy, to send ourselves out, and we will be able to go anywhere we want.

I realize that our world has undergone tremendous transformation recently. Many things have taken place. However, we still lead stable lives and our earth is still inhabitable. Some planets are in far worse situations. In UFO-producing worlds, for example, spiritual practice may not be very popular because the beings there are tightly bound by machines. In some places there may have been an overproduction of robots made in such likeness to the living beings that one could hardly distinguish them from one's own kind. Sometimes the beings become too dependent on and accustomed to using machines that they become estranged from one another and have difficulty communicating. They would rather talk to robots.

I am not here to recommend these worlds or claim that civilized worlds are better than ours. Some are good and some are bad. Except for the truly great spiritual worlds, others are pretty much like our earth. They are just a little more, or a little less, civilized. Those of us who practice the Quan Yin method would certainly prefer to go to the higher levels and become liberated from the worlds of reincarnation. Reincarnation is not unique to our earth only. Reincarnation, hatred, war, and disputes are common to many other planets at our level. The situation is worse in some worlds because they are more developed, their weapons and poisons being more powerful, and their destructive capability even more terrifying. So, our earth is still quite dependable.

We know that many countries and places are not as good, peaceful, or prosperous as Hong Kong. It is not that God is unfair. If we human beings happen to encounter or be

105. Public lecture, Hong Kong, February 19, 1992 (Originally in Chinese).

born into this kind of situation, it is because we have chosen the wrong path for many lifetimes or hundreds and thousands of years. We did not write this present situation from the time of our birth. If we practice spiritually, we will be able to see our history of many thousands, millions, and billions of years. A person's soul is very special and his history very interesting. One is more than what one is known as Mr. Wang, Mrs. Liu, or Charles. There is a long and great history behind everyone. This can be verified. There are many worlds in our universe. When we human beings die, we move on to another world. Death is not the end of everything. There are worlds where we can learn about our past if we go there. Even if we do not practice the highest method, we can see both our past and future. However, a great spiritual practitioner can only find his past, not the future, because he can escape from his past karma, and create and control his own future.

Some of you may be practicing spiritually and know about these things. You understand immediately when I discuss these topics. Perhaps you have had this kind of experience and visited the mysterious universe. Those who do not know about it may find it a little unfamiliar. However, this is no big deal for spiritual practitioners. Just like when you learn English, you can speak English. Those who do not learn English, of course, do not understand you, while those who do, understand you as soon as you open your mouth. You can question and answer each other in a lively and distinct way, whereas those who do not know English, cannot. This is just a question of knowing and not knowing. It is the same with the many sciences in our world. Some people study medical science and some study engineering. They become experts and understand what each other says and does, but outsiders like us do not understand them. Some sciences are supraworldly, such as those related to research on life on other planets and finding out about our past and future. The highest attainment of a spiritual practitioner is what Shakyamuni Buddha and Jesus Christ called 'liberation from life and death, and return to the Home.' Where is our Home? It is in a very, very high world. I am not referring to the distance, but rather, to the highest supreme world. There is nothing on this earth that can compare with it. We may not want to stay on this earth and want to go back to the source from where we came. A long, long time ago, perhaps thousands, millions, or billions of years ago, we came here, to live together, open up and develop this world, and share our feelings and experiences. Some of our experiences are good and some are bad. Good experiences make us better. Bad experiences sometimes make us better and sometimes worse. Many good and bad experiences are imprinted on our subconscious, which records behavior and experiences like a computer. If we record only bad experiences, then we become bad people. If we record only good experiences, we become good. This is a learning process.

Sometimes we make what we call free choices, which we refer to as free will. When we first came down to this world, we can judge which experiences we want to absorb, learn, and cherish, and which to reject. However, sometimes we neglect ourselves, become sluggish, and stop caring about what is good and what is bad. The experiences bind us and we react each time according to them. If we consider it a good experience, we react in a certain way; but when it is bad, we also react in the same way. It becomes a habit and as we become more accustomed to it, we react in the same way more and more often. Our reaction is the same when faced with the same kind of situation. This is what we call karma, or being trapped in cause and effect. This is a habit that has formed over many lifetimes. It is a natural reaction. We record it and yield the same output each time.

That is not our true self; it comes only from our brain. Our subconscious is like a computer. When we enter the inner world, we can see our own computer and know about our past actions. This is no mystery. If we do not think our brain is like a computer, then how do we learn things? The evidence is very clear. We can learn! When we learn English, we remember English. If we learn Cantonese, we remember Cantonese. It is like a tape

recorder, a computer that collects and releases the data. This means that there truly is a so-called computer inside us, which we call the subconscious. Death does not destroy this subconscious, because it is not a material thing; it is a spiritual computer. We may say that it is invisible, but that does not mean we cannot see it. It is invisible only to our eyes, our physical eyes. To our wisdom or heavenly eye, it is not invisible. What I have been talking about is not of a very high level, but it is difficult to talk about things of a higher level. [Master laughs.] I talk about these ordinary things so that everyone can understand.

If you heard what I have just said, that some people can see the past and future, don't think that I am being mysterious. No. I am only referring to a kind of computer that we can see. A visible computer can be seen with the physical eyes, while an invisible computer can be seen with the invisible eye. The difference is that we use different tools in different ways. I don't think that there is anything extraordinary or mysterious about it. Maybe it sounds mysterious the first time we hear about it, but actually it is not. It is very scientific and very logical.

We have been going through reincarnation life after life, because we cannot, and do not know how to, delete things in this invisible computer. We can erase things in an ordinary computer or robot. We can dismantle it and loosen its screws so that its hand goes here and its head goes there. Then the robot is gone. Or we destroy our computer by just pushing a button. It will be gone because it is only a material computer, a material machine. However, our inner computer [Master refers to the mind.] is more powerful because it is not material. Unless we know how to delete the information with an invisible method, it will remain with us life after life and attract us back. When we die, we will take the computer with us because it is not material. Our physical body will decompose, but not the computer or the soul. Our true self still will be encased in another body.

Manifold layers of the body

We have many bodies of different levels. For example, the physical body is thick and coarse, visible and palpable. Another kind of body is sometimes visible to our physical eyes but is impalpable. There is yet another kind of body that we can neither see nor touch but which we can feel. We can see it if we attain a higher level. Then there is a kind of body which is quite unlike the body. It is a brilliant Light, a power, and a great love. That is our true nature, our true self.

If our true self has not shed its coarse outfit, the outer box or clothes like the physical body, the computer will remain with us life after life because we still have a form, which may be invisible but it is visible in another world. Sometimes we hear about a person coming back to make trouble after his death. Sometimes he appears to some people. Such things do happen. They do. Although his physical body has decomposed, his soul is trapped inside his astral body. What we have here is the 'physical body.' There is another kind of body called the astral body. It is still a kind of encased body. Our true soul, or true self, isn't like a body. However, if we attain a certain level, it is convenient for us to manifest a body. Then we can appear to people. However, this is different from the situation where the soul of a dead person appears to cause trouble.

I have mentioned earlier that our computer records many things and there is no escape from the experiences. This is because once we have had these experiences, we think that it is all there is. We come back life after life because these experiences and information are here waiting for us. Death is not the end. The information is still here. We come back again for the information because we are not satisfied, not having studied enough about

certain things. We have desires that we have only half-fulfilled or just started to enjoy when we die. So, we want to come back again and enjoy them with another physical body.

The science of this world is not very good. This microphone would have been unnecessary during lectures in another world. In some worlds where languages are not used, a Master just stands there like a beam of Light. She seems to have a body with no fine details. She is just a brilliant beam of Light, glowing and flashing for the audience to understand Her. Those worlds do not speak many languages, so neither translation nor machines are necessary. On our way to the lectures sometimes, the car just lies down and refuses to move in the street. The machinery in this world isn't good enough. I hope that some day we can at least travel to other planets in UFOs to look at their machines, civilizations, or methods of spiritual practice, so we can bring information back for our people's reference. It'll be more convenient. I can only talk about it, but I can't prove it – not unless you practice the same method I do. If you practice diligently, you will see the things I see. You will know that what I have said is true. There is no other way to prove it.

For instance, if I don't learn Cantonese from you, when you say which Cantonese poems or traditions are beautiful and interesting, or when you speak about Cantonese history, I cannot believe or understand you because I have not learned the same things you have. However, I will do my best to explain it all to you because I believe that your souls within understand me. Your inner wisdom knows, while the brain may not, but what makes human beings the greatest is that we have the inner wisdom. It is this wisdom that has brought us here for the lecture. It is this wisdom that told us that it is better to come. It understands many things that the brain doesn't, because the brain is just a machine.

For instance, some robots resemble human beings but actually are not human. We have heard about UFO explosions, or seen strange-looking beings left behind by UFOs or disembarking from them. These may not have been living beings but robots made almost identical to the beings. Sometimes we mistake them for something else. There may be a kind of tool that helps us distinguish robots from beings because their inner structures are different. They have mechanical features, screws and computer chips inside, and not hearts, lungs, and stomachs. They cannot digest food. This will tell us what they are. Once we get closer to the robots, we will discover that they have no emotions. They are not like living beings. They do not know what love is. They cannot love others. But they are very smart and can make demands, sometimes very serious demands. Let's stop talking about these things.

Erase recorded data in the mind

Now, let me discuss how we can liberate ourselves from the computer that records all good and bad things life after life. There is a method for that. Those of us who practice the Quan Yin method can erase the records. We can erase the good and bad things, keeping only what we need. This is the only way to forget influences from the past that will lead us to liberation. This is called liberation from life and death. Those of us who know how to use the computer can erase all the information we have input into a computer as soon as we press a certain button. The same goes for the invisible computer. If we know the way to do it, we can delete the information quickly. That is why we can be liberated in one lifetime and become enlightened. What does enlightenment mean? Why do we become enlightened when we erase the information recorded in the computer? The information in the invisible computer inside us has masked the wisdom and the Truth that we should know. Our brain is filled with information from the past which we have collected and learned on earth. The true information, which we had before we came to earth, is hidden behind the mess of information collected from many lifetimes. If we can delete the messy

information, our true wisdom and true self that we had before we acquired good and bad experiences will appear. It will shine again when we have washed and brushed off the dust that covers it.

Some worlds don't have many computers. They are only wealthier than our world. The beings there don't need to do anything for food or clothes. They can use their will power and desire to create these things. They can do it. But their worlds are not the state of nirvana or the land of the saints. We can call them leisure worlds where there is nothing to do.

You may ask me, 'Well, you always advertise for other planets and tell people to go and live there. Why don't You advise people to stay on earth? After practicing spiritually, can we still stay here?' Yes, you can. My only fear is that you cannot develop your talents well. We get into danger here when we do things differently from others. Sometimes when people discover a good scientific method or invent a good machine, or find a good method to save human beings, others may become jealous and cause them harm. A typical example is Jesus Christ, who was crucified after only preaching the Truth for a little more than three years. If you are a Buddhist, perhaps you haven't read much of the bible. But I've read the bible and I know that Jesus spoke the Truth. The history and the wars that were recorded in the bible were not spoken by Jesus. The bible is not the same as what He said. The biblical records covered events dating back to the creation of the world – additions that were included in the bible and not spoken by Christ. What I am trying to say is that even a person who spoke the Truth, who advised people to do good and keep the precepts, was still not able to live.

Nevertheless, there is still hope for us. If each one of us practices spiritually, we will all know the code of ethics and understand the philosophy of Confucius and Lao Tzu. If we work on applying it along with advanced scientific studies in our world, our earth will not lose to any other planet, except for the very spiritually advanced ones. Our planet can attain a very high level because it is quite good. We can grow things here. We have many mineral resources, like diamonds and crystal. We have lots of diamonds. They will not be so costly if we are to open up all diamond mines on our earth to the people. Women everywhere will be able to wear diamonds. It will no longer be expensive to wear just a tiny one on the fingers. We have many, many diamonds, but not many are currently available because of their high price.

We can make many good tools with diamonds and crystals. The beings on other planets use these minerals to produce machines that can make their lives very comfortable. They produce UFOs and do many things for their good health and to serve others. Originally, diamonds were not ornaments for the people. They were a very precious mineral that could be used to make good scientific and civilized machines and tools. We cannot make use of them at the present time. We do not have scientists who are good enough to invent advanced equipment by blending diamonds, crystal and gold, et cetera. We may have them in the future. If we get a chance to contact other planets and learn from them, then together with the wisdom and support of the earthians, we can make our earth magnificent. I also hope that the time will come soon when the people on earth will have greater comfort.

Our earth is better than some other planets. Some planets aren't as good as ours. Their land isn't as good as ours; they can't grow things; they have fewer minerals, less gold and fewer diamonds than we do. But they live in different ways. Their situation demands that they survive in different ways. Their way of life is not as good as ours. They can hardly compare with us in terms of comfort and natural lifestyle. Although their machines are

more advanced than ours in certain aspects, they cannot compare with us when it comes to the comfortable and natural lives we lead, to the amount of trees, fruit and agriculture that we have. Of course, there are planets that are more beautiful than ours; however, practitioners of the Quan Yin method do not want to go there. I am only giving you a brief introduction so you know about it. We have better places to go to. The planets that produce machines are similar to our earth, but they are not spiritually advanced. Some spiritually advanced planets do not even use machines. They can travel without UFOs and are highly knowledgeable. They can communicate without language. But our earth isn't that advanced. The most advanced machines that we have are rockets. We don't have UFOs yet. Perhaps we will in the future.

Ways to improve world civilization

I think there are two ways to make our world more advanced. One way is to practice the Quan Yin method, develop ourselves, and find our true wisdom so we can follow other planets. Another way is to import UFOs and go up to see other planets. Or it will be such a waste of our earth. Our air is very good. There are many things in the atmosphere besides oxygen that we can utilize. Perhaps scientists will discover in the future that we do not need gasoline, coal, or electricity, and we can come up with a very fast airplane that uses natural atmospheric gases surrounding our earth. We have many gases that we can use. Then our earth will not be filled with the bad odor from many cars, which pollute the air and are bad for our health. Our earth is rich in resources. Our soil is very good. If you do or want to do spiritual practice but don't want to go to other planets, fine. But you still need to practice to make our earth better. If we don't want to live on earth, but we practice spiritually, we will have greater wisdom, do our work better, and be more capable of serving society. Our future generations will benefit from it.

Each day, every one of us works long hours, eight or ten hours. Sometimes we become so exhausted that we cannot help society as much or as quickly as we would like. We who practice the Quan Yin method can develop our abilities more. Even if we do not want to leave the earth, it is good too because we can serve the world more. We can go to other worlds to learn, because we have no good schools here. At the present time, our earth does not have great schools of science that teach advanced sciences. So, we should practice the Quan Yin method. If you have found a better method or are practicing a good method, that is fine. If you cannot find one, you can try practicing the Quan Yin method and you will gradually develop your wisdom. Or you can go to other planets to learn, so that you can serve the world when you come back.

If we continue to lead stable lives and do a little work each day, I am afraid that our world will not improve quickly. Even if great scientists will come here from other planets to invent machines and educate us in many aspects, we still have to prepare ourselves in advance. We have to be prepared with a high level of wisdom so we can assimilate the advanced knowledge and sciences they will teach us. No matter what, we should practice the method of wisdom to develop and nourish our wisdom. Then we can do anything. That is why Confucius said that we should cultivate ourselves and establish family harmony before we can rule the nation and bring peace to the world.

We have all heard about self-cultivation, and we have all worked toward that. It is not that we haven't. We all do. Because we are human beings, we practice the human method. We try to be a good son, a good parent, and a good citizen. We try to do our job well. We serve the country and show filial obedience to our parents. We help others and refugees who are weak and in need. These are all ways of self-cultivation. However, there are more beneficial methods of a higher level, such as spiritual practice, the Quan Yin method. They

increase our understanding of how wise and capable we can become, how we can contribute to society, and how we can make our earth better. If we don't feel like going to God's land, we need more talents to stay here so that we can serve the public and make the world more glorious and comfortable for future generations.

Our present world is not uncomfortable, but it is not comfortable enough. Some places suffer severe shortages, while others are too extravagant. We cannot depend entirely on science or money. For example, we all know how strong and powerful nations have collapsed despite their flourishing economy and advanced technology because they depended solely on them. We have seen that happen. So, unless we dig out the eternal wisdom deep within us, no matter how blessed or civilized our country is, we do not know how long it can last. This is not very secure. Many big and powerful countries have fallen under economic breakdowns because we have not realized our greatest wisdom and capabilities.

So, I would like to contribute to you this method, which can bring back your great ability and wisdom so you can do anything with it. You can use it to dash to the eternal blissful world, the Buddha's land, heaven, or the kingdom of God. You can also visit other planets to do research. If you want to stay here to serve humankind, it is fine, too. This is my way of introducing the Quan Yin method. Of course, whatever the method we want to learn, there are requirements to fulfill. Here, our emphasis is on being a vegetarian to avoid negative reactions. Being a vegetarian is also good for your body, health, and mental state. [Master points to Her wisdom eye.] I want to allow you some time to ask questions. When you do, I will explain more.

Q. *Is there a way to prove what You said about alien planets as not being an illusion?*

M. I don't need to prove it because I have explained it already. For example, we have enough proof already if we want to know whether there are other worlds. Some UFOs and aliens from other worlds have visited our world. Newspapers have carried reports on these things. There are movies and television programs about them. There are also pictures of them. You read more newspapers than I do, so why do you ask me? You have to read only a little to know that other worlds do exist. Of course, if you want to know everything about those worlds, you have to go there yourself. For example, you have never been to London, but you want me to bring London over here to you. How can I do it? You have to go there yourself. For example, you have never been to the United States. But I have, so I tell you about it, and that there is a place called the United States, but you want me to prove it. How can I do it? Even it is hard to prove that the United States exists, not to mention other planets. However, we can prove it, because we have seen UFOs from other worlds, right?

Q. *How do the beings in a more spiritually advanced planet survive without food? They have nothing to eat and things don't grow there. How do they live on this kind of planet?*

M. This kind of planet has its own way. Its land isn't fertile and is poisonous because of earlier wars with other planets, when the rich land was destroyed and turned poisonous. But beings can live underground. They do not live above the ground. So sometimes, we send rockets to some planets and we find no one living there. It is because the beings have hidden themselves. They use a scientific method to plant things. They also recycle. With recycling they can use the same thing over and over again. Water can be used repeatedly. Air can be used and purified again and again. Their machinery is more advanced than ours, but they are less fortunate than we are.

Some planets are drier and their climates are bad, so their lives are harsher. But their machinery is more advanced. In some aspects, they're much more advanced than we are.

TRUE MASTERS AND ASTRAL BEINGS ¹⁰⁶

If we see a person bound by affection for another, we know that he is at the astral level. If he is eloquent but with no affection for others, we know that he has gone beyond the first realm and has reached the second. If a person has no feelings for others, and does nothing good or bad, or has great creative talent, we feel that he has gone to the third realm. We do not know his inner visions, but we can tell a little by what is shown outside. What if he possesses all three qualities? For example, he has affection for others, he is eloquent and creative, then we know that he is at the third realm. But if he is very clumsy and can not accomplish anything, we know that he is still at the astral level. It does not matter how good he is with his words.

Then is it true that a true Master who has reached the fifth realm has no affection for others? I mean that he has passed the third realm and reached the fifth realm, and then he does not have any astral sentiment! Is he not the same as those who are ignorant? [Audience: He can control it!] Since he can control it, why does he still have it? Why does he need affection? [Audience: In order to understand others!] In case he wants to teach the people at that level, he can use it.

For example, now that we walk on the spiritual path, we have no desire for money. We do not really need much money. We do not want to be high ranking officials. However, in case we are already high officials, we need not throw away our positions, but we should use our positions to help others. If we have plenty of money, we can use it. There is no need to throw it into the sea. We can give it to the needy. Therefore, it is not that sentiment is not good. It is not that eloquence or creativity are not good. We can use them wisely and should not discard them.

If a person only has those abilities but does not have countless transformation forms and does not do any good deeds, then we know that he is not a true Master! He is merely an astral being. If he also has astral sentiment, or he seems to have affection for or have whatever relationship with people, as well as billions of transformation forms, transcendent powers, great compassion and indiscriminate love, then we know that he is not stuck at the astral level but possesses those qualities and uses them as the situation requires. Do you understand? [Audience: Yes!] This is the difference between true Masters and people who are ignorant or at the astral level.

BARRIERS SET UP BY ANGELS TO CONFINE HUMAN BEINGS ¹⁰⁷

The other day, didn't I tell you a story about how we are being shut up in here, locked on the outside, and watched by the angels and celestial guards? [Audience: Yes] Perhaps you would ask me how they can confine us. They use the three realms!

The first barrier – like the prisons in our world, there are three or four gates. When I went to Hualien to visit the prisoners and to deliver a lecture, I had to pass through several gates before I could reach them. On the outer most wall, there is a barbed wire on top. Heavy criminals were bound by iron chains, and they couldn't even leave their own cell,

106. Group meditation, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, December 30, 1991 (Originally in Chinese).

107. Group meditation, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, December 28, 1991 (Originally in Chinese).

never mind walk out through those gates. However, some prisoners could move about freely; they could work sweeping the floor, planting and watering trees. They had greater freedom; some of them could pass through some gates and go out until they almost reached the outer most wall!

The situation is similar for us spiritual practitioners. Some pass through three or four gates and reach the fourth realm, but they are stopped by the wall. Only when they have gone out of the main gate and the great wall, they are truly free. That is how we are imprisoned within the three realms. Then, how are we confined by the first realm, the so-called astral world?

Bound by feelings of affection of the astral world

What is the situation within the astral world? Here they use affection and feelings to bind us. There is no need to use force, scolding or iron chains. Can you understand the situation? Therefore, all human beings here are involved in affection. It could be between man and woman, or even woman and woman, or man and man.

Affection is a much better tool than iron locks and chains. Most of us cannot escape when we are bound by affection! It is difficult for us to leave when we want. It takes tremendous willpower, intense penitence generated from within, or very great courage, very sincere longing, to get help from the enlightened beings. Then they will give us a push so that we can transcend the astral world.

If any of us are still bound by affection and have lots of love affairs, we know we are still within the astral level. Then we'd better stop boasting, and try to realize that we still have not overcome the first barrier. That is why since ancient times, people always respect monastic practitioners. They think they have at least gone beyond the astral level – the first gate.

Like the inmates in the prison, some of them have committed very serious crimes, so they are confined in a cell so small that they can't even stand up straight. Some even more serious criminals are even bound by chains, and they can never pass through the first gate. Some inmates can go out of the first gate and join the work on the prison grounds, so they are more free. Naturally those jailed in small cells envy them very much. In their cells, they can't even see the sun or other people. Even their relatives and friends are not allowed to visit them, not even the lawyer. They are waiting for death – their execution. Of course, they really envy the inmates who can get out of the first gate, and move about freely.

Similarly, we think that monastic practitioners have surpassed the level of affection and are free of these feelings, so we respect them. Otherwise, what is the difference? They cannot be regarded as monastic practitioners unless they have surpassed the level of affection. This is a kind of lock!

It is very difficult to pass through the first barrier, but once we have overcome it, the other barriers are easier to surpass. Only when a prisoner has behaved well would the guards allow him to move around and join the work. After a while, observing that he is doing well in his work, they have more confidence in him. Very soon he can go out of the second gate easily. If his behavior continues to improve, it would be easier for him to get out – not out of the prison, but to be allowed to work more, and earn more confidence from the guards. He wouldn't be heavily locked up, beaten, or reprimanded.

Realm of karma – Difficult to escape the law of karma

We call the second barrier the realm of karma. How does it bind us? What have the angels created for us? Even after we have passed through the first barrier, the angels have prepared a second one, so we cannot go up immediately to attack them, create trouble, make a mess of heaven, and ruin the peaceful atmosphere of the universe. Therefore, there are barriers after barriers to stop us, and to let them observe us. If we could reach the heavenly kingdom right after we have conquered the first barricade, they would be in trouble. So, there is another barrier. What method do they use this time? They control us with the law of cause and effect. But how? The way is: Whatever we do in this world, no matter good or bad, will yield fruit. Therefore, we must come back. If we have done bad deeds, we come back to suffer; if we have done good deeds, we come back to enjoy. While enjoying we might do evil things by the way. The more we enjoy, the more likely we will fall in the trap. When the situation turns bad, we suffer and become frustrated, and so are more inclined to do bad deeds. Whatever situations are deadly for us, these are the traps!

We created this situation because we were bad. Previously, the deities, celestial beings and angels felt sympathetic to our backward and painful conditions after we had been condemned to earth, so they spoke to God: 'Let us go there to educate them again, or at least to minimize their suffering.' When God first kicked Adam and Eve down here, He meant to let them suffer! They had to work hard to earn their daily bread. By the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread, as mentioned in the bible. God 'blessed' them!

After a very long time, as their offspring didn't commit any sin, and the evils had only been committed by their ancestors, the angels and celestial beings were sympathetic to them. Not able to stand the great suffer on earth, they beseeched God: 'Please let us go to help them. They have been behaving well. They are only their children and grandchildren, and they are no longer malicious. The guilty ones were their ancestors; please give them a chance...'

God, being merciful after all, said, 'Okay!' The angels came and taught us many magical powers, and ways to improve our lives – how to make efficient machines to make our lives more comfortable, and less painful. Some more advanced scientists came from above to teach us scientific technologies that were secrets of the universe. Unexpectedly, after we had learnt part of it, we wanted to learn all. Before we had learnt it well, our evil thoughts and greed emerged. We were proud of being able to produce many things. Thinking that we were comparable to the angels, we forced them to teach us everything.

The angels said, 'Take it easy! Concentrate on doing this first and let us see how you do. The other things can only be used when you have improved in morality and wisdom. It is not the time yet. We cannot teach you the superlative magical powers of the highest realm now.'

However, they insisted and threatened the angels: 'We know how to do many things now! We can produce all kinds of weapons, and we have many magical powers. Since you refuse to give us more, we will rob you.' They were like the martial art students who want to fight with their master. Though they were only novices, they thought they were powerful enough to challenge their teachers.

Naturally the angels refused. 'No way! Superlative magical power and wisdom must go with great virtues. Otherwise, you will do evil things, or you simply will not be able to use them.' They wouldn't listen, and decided to rob. They had all the weapons ready, and then

charged up to threaten the beings there. They really succeeded in reaching there, so the guards of the universe reacted. They used more forceful magical powers and weapons to destroy our weapons, and then sent our people back to where they belonged. Some of them didn't make the return trip, and died there. The story was roughly like this.

Since then the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas didn't trust us anymore, and would not give us anymore magical powers. However, the magical powers that were learnt in previous lives had not been eradicated, so there are still some traces remaining in some of us. This is why some people can suddenly perform madras or magical incantations though they have not learnt them. These are impressions left over from their previous lives. They include those who can make atomic bombs, black bombs, white bombs and so on; they are all bad guys! [Master and audience laugh.]

After destroying our cosmic weapons, the angels locked us in here. How did they manage to lock us up? They couldn't use chains, nor could they use ordinary magical powers, because we had learnt them all. We knew how to break through and escape. Therefore, they devised a flexible way to subdue our forces – with feelings of affection and karma. They created a system of karmic laws in which we are born and destroyed. They virtually don't have to have anything to do with us; it is truly incredible! Whether you may have done good or bad things, you must come back, reincarnate. This is really great! Since then we have been chained until now. We can never escape; no matter how hard we try, we just can't go up.

Like the main gate of a prison, you can only get out by going through it. Dig a tunnel or try anything, sooner or later you will be captured by the police. Once you are caught, your penalty will be increased, and you will be locked up more tightly. That is why most people fail to get liberation practicing and meditating on their own. They try to dig a tunnel or make a hole in the wall, but that only leads to more serious consequences. We say they are possessed. Therefore, the law of karma is a chain, a lock or a gate keeping us here. That is how it works. It is devised by the angels. Otherwise, how can they keep us here?

Wow! We used to have great magical powers. It took us just minutes to go to Jupiter, Mars or the sun. Equipped with powerful weapons and great magical powers, no one could stop us. We had great wisdom, but we only used it to do evil things. The human beings then were still barbarous and immoral. They wouldn't listen to moral teachings!

Perhaps the angels thought that we were as benevolent as they were, so they didn't pay much attention to morality. They didn't teach people to observe the five precepts and get the initiation before they practiced meditation. They only taught them how to meditate. Meat eating was not prohibited, and the precepts were not observed, so people didn't develop their moral and benevolent aspects. If a person is immoral and holding a high position in the government, the greater his power is, the more harm he could do to the people.

In the olden days, the angels made a mistake by neglecting to develop our morality, and concentrating solely on taking care of our material aspects. They saw human beings in great pain, shedding tears and sweat the whole day long yet didn't have enough to eat, not knowing how to use fertilizers in farming, and ignorant to most civilized things. They gained very little in whatever they did, because God had sentenced, 'By the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread.' Hes didn't say that we could save up something and put it in the bank; Hes only said 'Eat just enough to survive.' Anyway, there were no banks then! Hes didn't think about it; Hes said it was good enough that we had enough to use. God was truly honest and clean. Hes never thought about banks or loans. [Master laughs.] Such a

system didn't exist then. So, when the celestial beings saw human beings in great pain, they cared only about the material aspects, and forgot that morality was more important. If people have no morality, they would only become worse when given many material things. They could neither cherish it, keep their wealth, nor share with other people. When they have the power and wealth, they would use it to do evil things.

If you watch the television, read newspapers or books, you may find that our history was full of high officials who were corrupt. They exploited the people and stole their wealth. The higher their position was, the worse they became. Eventually, the whole government was corrupted. If those people were not high officials but poor farmers instead, they wouldn't have the chance to do so much harm. At the most, they could only do minor things like cheating their neighbor out of a piece of land, or earning more money from people through dishonest transactions. Since they were officers, they could deceive many people. The higher their rank was, the more people they could intimidate. Therefore, it is very dangerous to have a high official who lacks morality.

Similarly, no one taught our ancestors about ethics. The angels were so benign, merciful, and virtuous themselves; so they never thought that we lacked ethics. There must be a reason for God to condemn us to earth; the lack of morality was precisely the reason. Otherwise, we would be eligible to live in heaven! We came here because of our flawed quality, just like a student who has to stay behind for another year.

Observing we were short of material things, the angels took pity on us and quickly gave us help, just like when we go to give relief to the disaster victims. When we went to help the victims in the Philippines, we also gave priority to material supplies, because we worried that they might starve. Therefore, when we went to the Philippines, Au Lac or Mainland China to ease the disastrous situations, we seldom talked about other things. I only reminded them: 'Our material help rendered to them is only temporary. At least take care of their soul, and teach them to pray inwardly to God for help, so that they can be liberated from suffering forever. Furthermore, advise them to be a good person, and try to be a vegetarian, and so on. Introduce some teachings to them to help them to understand.'

Otherwise, they would think that it was good enough just to take along rice, food and money. It might be good for a couple of months, but only to sustain the physical body. We might have the body today but may lose it tomorrow; it cannot be saved permanently. When we help people, it is really not important to take care of their body, because it is ephemeral. It may be lost in a traffic accident tomorrow, or in an earthquake, or washed away by a flood. There is nothing we should be proud about in doing the relief activities. It is really nothing to help sustaining their physical bodies for a couple of months!

If these people died later, they would still suffer the same painful things when they come back. If they managed to escape the flood here, they could run into a huge fire in another place. Or they would be born again and then run into a fire disaster... nothing is for sure! So, we took the opportunity to tell them about the way to liberation, advise them to become a vegetarian, or to sincerely repent and pray to God for help. Then perhaps they will meet an enlightened Master when they come back next life. This is the genuine disaster relief. Otherwise, we may have saved them this time, yet they might soon meet another disaster. Who can guarantee there won't be anymore floods, earthquakes or volcanic eruptions?

That was the first time for the angels to get in touch with humans, so they didn't give it thorough enough thought! Previously, when our monastic disciples went to render relief, they also didn't think things through thoroughly. God also doesn't think too much about it, because He is enjoying grape wine and delicacies in heaven! If human beings are in

great pain, it is their business; God doesn't suffer, so He doesn't know! That is why you may notice some wealthy people who are apathetic to the poor. They are not particularly vicious or stingy, but they don't know what sufferings the poor have that need their help. Being healthy ourselves, we cannot discern the pain of people who are ill. It is just like what people say: We cannot realize the painful intent of parents without ourselves giving birth to babies. This is very true.

I also have the same experience. Only when I am ill will I think about the pain of ill people. Therefore, when I am ill, I won't pray for my own recovery, because I fear I might forget the pain of the ill people when I have recovered. So, I just let it be, and I won't pray! When I do pray, I would ask God, 'If it is possible, let me fall ill for other people, if only my illness or suffering could be exchanged to give them happiness.'

After the angels taught us some magical powers, the viciousness and brutality within us emerged, and it was too late to restrain them! We didn't develop our morality at the same time. They only taught us magical powers but not the ethics, so it was too late then! We already got the magical powers and power, and it was too late to train our morality. Therefore, the angels had to use these methods to bind us.

You may ask me: 'The first barrier is feelings of affection, and the second barrier is karma. That should be sufficient, but then why is the third barrier necessary? And what is the fourth realm for? It is for safety's sake! Observe the prisoners in a prison. They are chained, and there are many gates inside reinforced by barbed wire and an outer wall guarded by many police officers. They also have a system that can stop escapees immediately, like the electric fence for instance. When someone climbs it, he is shocked and fall down! There is no need to catch him. They also have radar and alarms. If someone crawls out, the alarm screams, letting the whole world know.

No exit from the three realms before the ego is eliminated

Similarly, people on earth are already in great pain for being shut behind two gates and not being able to escape. Yet they still put up a third gate. What is the third gate for? It is in case a person is very clever, and knows that bad deeds will lead to bad retribution, and good deeds will also lead to good retribution, what if he didn't do any good or bad deeds, and so enters the third realm? If there wasn't another wall in the third realm, he would have gone straight to the heavenly kingdom!

Though he didn't do any good or bad things, it didn't mean that he was benevolent. Perhaps he had conceived a very good plan, as he knew that he would be bound by whatever he did. He decided not to have any feelings of affection! 'We can always wait until we get up there. There are beautiful celestial ladies above, so why be confined here? From today, we decide not to have feelings of affection among ourselves, refrain from doing any good or bad things, and see if we can go out or not.' We still couldn't get out, because the angels had thought of it. They are smarter than us; perhaps they were afraid of us, because we were really 'terrific.'

So, there is a third barrier after the second one. How does the third barrier stop us? We have no feelings of affection, and we have not done any good or bad things, then what else can confine or control us? Do you remember what is the characteristic of the third realm? It is the power of creation. The Brahma is the creator within the three realms. The so-called creator that we know is only within the three realms. The creator recognized by most of us is this Brahma.

How can the angels bind us while giving us this power of the creator at the same time? It is because, though we have reached that level, we still have the ego. We still remind ourselves not to do good or bad things. Since we have the power, intelligence and will to control ourselves, we still have the ego. If we have the magical power to create something, we'll be even more arrogant. Although this arrogance is a nobler one, it is still arrogance: 'Wow! I am great! Now I can write poems, play the piano, paint, and do anything. Many of my abilities have emerged!' Consequently, we become more arrogant. As we are still within the three realms, we cannot control the ego. We have not trained our morality, suppressed the ego everyday, and learnt to be humble; so the more we have achieved or created, the greater is our arrogance. That is how we are stuck there.

Or we will be very proud if we have become wiser or more fluent in debating: 'I am better than he is, as he lost the debate to me. I am a graduate, he is not. I can do this while he can't...' Just for example, or: 'I am remorseful, he is not. People say that Master loves people who are remorseful! You see I am remorseful. I am really great!' Can you imagine that even repentance can lead to arrogance? Anything that we can create can make us feel proud. Therefore, it is extremely difficult for us to transcend the third realm. Everyone just keeps transmigrating within the three realms, thinking that they are supreme and very great.

People who are humble would say: 'Wow! I am very humble; I am humbler than he is. Who is humbler than I?' People who are close to Master would think that they are great: 'Master trusts me! There must be something special about me.' Those who cannot get close to Master would console themselves: 'Those people close to Master are demons. [Master and audience laugh.] I am not seriously ill, so Master doesn't call me to Her side.' [Master and audience laugh.]

The angels were really ingenious; I truly admire them! This is the only way to control human beings, because we are extremely clever, aren't we? We can make anything. We can go to the bottom of the sea, traverse outer space, and land on Mars. We have not even spared the moon; only the sun is too hot, [Master and audience laugh.] so we don't dare to get too close.

Otherwise, the sun would soon be trembling. It fears that we might go and rob its heat energy, [Master and audience laugh.] and leave it frozen to death. [Master and audience laugh.] We have already started to steal its heat, haven't we? [Audience: Solar energy.] We are making this and conceiving that. The sun is beginning to shiver.

Wow! It is horrible! Who can stop us? We even massacre our own kind, so who can intimidate us? People of this country are killing those in another country; this person is killing that person; it is an atmosphere of struggling for life and death! Fighting is going on everyday. We don't even have sympathy on our own kind, who else would we be afraid of? The angels are invisible to us, and they also have no relationship with us, so we'd just steal from them if we could. The system within the three realms that confines us here is truly incredible, and is more powerful than any magical powers that we have learnt. Otherwise, with the magical power that we had learnt then, we could break through thirty realms, not to mention only three! Previously, we could tear open the defensive layer of the planets and go up.

Originally, each planet had its defense shield. People couldn't break through if they didn't know the method. The angels were so stupid that they taught us how to dissolve the magnetic field; subsequently we managed to break through. Otherwise, we could never do

it. It is just like each nation has its frontier guarded by the customs and police officers. Only when you have a visa will they allow you to enter and live there for a limited period of time.

Originally they didn't mean to strike our earth so forcefully. As they wanted to destroy our powerful weapons, they had to use very great force. Not only our earth was affected, several planets close to us or on the same orbit as us were influenced by the blow. Consequently, the plants on some planets completely vanished. No humans could live there, and the soil became unfit for agriculture. It became very dangerous on these planets, because there was no air or protective atmosphere. Humans would die if they lived there, so they dug holes and lived underground. Even the trees and flowers were moved underground. Houses were also built there, with a protective shield above them. If they wanted to go out, they had to open the gate quickly and rush into the UFO. When they came back, they again rushed down from the UFO. They could not expose themselves to the air, or they would be killed. The atmosphere was so highly toxic that it was lethal to both plants and humans.

For instance, we know that some gases are poisonous and lethal. We will get ourselves killed if we are careless. Those planets affected by the blow produced a toxic atmosphere that was lethal to life forms. Of course, the situation would improve after several thousand years, but not recover fully. Therefore, we cannot say that, when we alone or our planet has done something, we are the only ones to bear the consequences. Sometimes other people are also affected.

At that time we went up to attack several planets, and naturally they retaliated. Though the Buddhas told them not to do it, that was their natural reaction. As a result, they also incurred karma that they had to repay later. This was really troublesome.

The fourth realm – A safety zone shielding the pure land

Finally, there is the fourth realm – the last safety zone. It is similar to the prison that we put the prisoners in. Though they might have gained more freedom, learnt to be smarter, and look better outwardly, we cannot let them loose on the streets because they are still prisoners! They have not paid for their crimes or served their term. Having too much freedom may make them feel restless and act rebelliously. So we still need an outer wall. They are free to pass through several gates without the guards interfering, but they must go back to sleep in their cells at night, to keep them from doing bad things. They are not sure what they are thinking of inside. They only look good on the outside, but we cannot read their minds. That is why the wall is necessary.

Similarly, we have supposedly become very benevolent when we have reached the third realm. For instance, we are not bound by any feelings of affection, we can control ourselves, we have wisdom, eloquence in speech and the power of the creator. However, no one knows whether or not we are virtuous within, and have reached the egoless state. So we are not allowed to go up at will. What if we learn some reckless things, and then come back to hurt people? We might even attack the angels like what we did before. Therefore, it is not safe enough to have only three barriers!

We will regain our freedom at the fourth realm. We are more free since we have no karma, and we have power and wisdom. However, our inner soul is still under observation. Therefore, the higher we go, the more trials we will encounter. Sigh! The Gods / Buddhas dare not trust us anymore. What if we attack their thrones with guns and knives? [Master and audience laugh.] We might threaten the Quan Yin Bodhisattva, or demand Shakyamuni Buddha to surrender: 'Quickly summon all Your disciples [Master and

audience laugh.] and tell them to obey our orders!’ Seeing that Shakyamuni Buddha was being held hostage, they wouldn’t dare to do anything, and all the angels would surrender. Can you imagine what kind of situations could happen?

That is why the fourth realm is so vast and dark, so long and difficult to pass through. It is the last protective zone of the superior worlds. When we reach the third realm, we are already something. We have magical powers, are clever, able to invent things, and free from the bondage of feelings of affection. Wow! We have strong willpower and incredible power! If we go up to plunder their world, the Buddhas would be in grave trouble. It would be too late to stop us!

Therefore, the fourth realm is the most difficult to pass through. Without an enlightened Master as guarantor, we can never make it. We are allowed to roam about freely in the third or even the fourth realm, we can stay there. We can fly around freely, and enjoy the Light of sixteen thousand suns; but that is all, nothing more. We can go anywhere except upwards. The hidden passage will not appear to you unless you have an enlightened Master guiding you. It is like a secret door that requires a secret code to open. Only one or two persons know it, just like a national defense secret. Some buttons or secret codes are known only to a limited number of people in the defense department. No one else knows; because they fear it will be found out by enemy spies, then they will be in trouble.

Now you know what the four realms are for? Isn't it a very logical system? [Audience: Yes.] It is nothing mysterious. You don't have to guess blindly or doubt my words. 'Why is it like this? Is it really like this?' Do you have anymore doubts? [Audience: No.]

PURIFY THE WORLD WITH PURE THOUGHTS ¹⁰⁸

You know thoughts are very important, very powerful – the existence and quality of God – so that at that moment, or at least, when we meditate, or we remember God, our thoughts are holy and pure and unconditional. So, we don't create anything bad – only holy vibrations and powerful blessing.

So, when these powerful blessings and this thought power are generated around us and within our environment, they rise up, and then other people who are also holy and practicing, they also generate the same thought, same blessing, same power. And like attracts like, and these attract each other and make it become a very powerful force, which defeats all the evil, negative influence in this world.

And that's how the world will become purified and improved day by day. That's how we help the world without having to do charity work even, without having to go out and preach. Yes, of course, when we go out and preach, we bring, momentarily, some high vibrations within, into the minds of the audience and raise them up for a while, or maybe permanently, or maybe for a long time. And maybe these persons go home, and then they carry these vibrations with them, and they nourish them, and they become stable in this holy atmosphere. And they grow holy, too – pure and stable. But it takes a powerful person to do that. Otherwise, we are not influencing people. On the contrary, we will be influenced by them. Because the mass – the majority of the people – are many more minds put together, and we have only one. If we are not strong enough to cover all the minds up, then they will engulf us, and we are in danger.

108. Group meditation, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, September 25, 1991 (Originally in English).

Nevertheless, we do not need to do that. We can just sit in our corner, in a quiet corner of our bedroom and send out good thoughts, good vibrations, powerful blessing into the world and the universe at large. That's why we must meditate in order to purify our thoughts.

Every time we remember God, every time we remember the holy names of God, we are empowered with purity, holiness and blessings. And whoever is in the same consciousness, same level with us, will be united with us at that moment. And we add it to the force, to the positive force to purify the world and to make the world a better and better place, and to help those people who have similar minds with us to be more enforced, and to help those who come in contact with our thoughts, come in contact with our presence, to have more power, to raise themselves up. That's the best way to help the world.

Of course, when we help the world, we help ourselves, because we are living in it. The cleaner the atmosphere, the better for us even, not only for our neighbors. So, helping others is helping ourselves. So, every time we should generate a very pure thought, unconditional love, and good will – all the time – without wanting anything in return. This is the best way. Even if we have not reached the holy stage or very great Bodhisattva or Buddha stage, at least we should keep ourselves pure and uninfluenced by the negative power around us. Because in the world many people who do not practice this goodness and who do not have real faith in God, they generate bad thoughts all the time, and they make the environment filthy by their own thoughts and deeds, and even speech.

And if we are not covered by a holy shield, by our own mental protection, and by our own purity and good will, then we will be drowned by this massive negative power around us. That's why we must always repeat the holy names of God, which are charged by the Master power at the time of initiation. That's what we call spiritual lineage, or dharma bloodline. If we don't have the bloodline or the spiritual lineage, we repeat the names like an empty word; it has no power.

Truly it is so. It is just like material well-being. A person who has no money cannot give other people money. Even though he signs a check, it will be an empty check – no support, no bank account to support it, the check. Similarly, the spiritually empty person cannot charge other people with spiritual power, cannot revive other people's spiritual power. Even though the spiritual power is invisible, it is existing. It must exist in order for a saint or a Master to reawaken in the people, within people, their own spiritual power. Otherwise, it cannot just suddenly stand there and make fire by itself. Even though fire comes from wood, it needs something, or it needs another piece of firewood to burn it, or to make the fire within itself develop.

Similarly, the Master is the one who has developed Her or His own spiritual power, which can influence thousands, millions, the whole world, and the whole universe. The stronger the Master, the larger the influence. And this we can know by coming in contact with that Master. We feel very calm when we sit with a spiritual Master. And if we go out with other people, some people who are evil-minded or very fierce, we feel very restless and frightened. This is the invisible influence of the inner being, which we cannot tell, but we feel.

So accordingly, we try to live up to the Master's standard. So, we meditate; we try to purify our thoughts. The best thought is non-thought. Therefore, if you repeat the holy names of God, that's enough. That's the best thought. They are very neutral, very holy, and very powerful. At that moment you have not the need to invoke the daily mind, the mundane

mind. Because however good we think, sometimes it is still conditioned by the customs of the country, by the habits of the mass of our people, and by the trend of the society.

Therefore, the best thought is that we just think of God. Because God is almighty, powerful. God can do everything. That means at that moment, we submit our will to God's will. Let God rule the universe, and we feel unburdened.

WHY WE HAVE TO GO TO GROUP MEDITATION ¹⁰⁹

Have you noticed that all the guardian deities in the temples look very fierce? They have menacing faces! But why? It is because they were demons before they became guardian deities. You can read in the Buddhist scriptures some stories about how the demon king or demons devoted themselves to Shakyamuni Buddha. They vowed to become guardian deities in order to redeem their previous sins, so that their levels would be elevated, which enable them to practice becoming arhats and Bodhisattvas. It is impossible to jump directly from the level of the demons to that of Bodhisattvas; the gap is too big! Having been demons before, they must first change into good humans, and then further become Bodhisattvas or Buddhas. Before they can be born as good humans, they have to go through the stage of guardian deities to redeem their sins. Once they have become good humans, they can immediately jump to the level of the Buddhas or Bodhisattvas. If they really have strong faith, and can find an enlightened Master and a good method, of course, they can climb to the level of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas quickly. To achieve this, the demons must go through the stage of being humans. For instance, we cannot go directly into the university from primary school; we have to go through the stages of secondary school and junior high school. Humans are similar to the junior high school students, who upon graduation can go to university. Primary students can only go to secondary schools.

It is the same with the demons who are used to evil habits. Their level and thoughts are inferior to the humans. Though they have great magical powers, those are merely magic. They don't have the benign nature and wisdom of the humans, so they cannot become humans right away! To become Bodhisattvas, they must first become humans. The heavenly warriors and guardian deities look so horrible because they have just been promoted from the level of the ferocious demons. If they cannot even change their outer appearances, you can imagine their inside qualities. They look menacing outside, because they are fierce inside.

Why do the snakes and tigers look so vicious and fierce outside? It is because they have identical inner quality. After death ferocious people will become tigers and snakes. Those crafty people always like to 'bite' [Master laughs.] or harm others with tricks, so they will become snakes. Even when they become humans again, they are still poisonous.

In mystical legends like 'The Meritorious Book Of The Gods,' or other historical stories, you may read about some pugilists who practiced the highly poisonous skills. With a slight movement, or just by moving close to you, they can make you unconscious, dazed and poisoned. These stories were true, because the negative force is very strong, and can be infected to others. These people are poisonous throughout, and you will be poisoned just by being close to them. When you get close to some people, you may feel their deep, deep desires for lust, fame or wealth. Suddenly you will also be a little affected, too. Sometimes you get close to some people who have strong desire for fame and wealth and listened to some of their words, though you originally have no desire to do such things, suddenly you feel like doing them. But this desire will leave you when you go home. The

109. Group meditation, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, September 15, 1991 (Originally in Chinese).

negative force can affect people deeply. Mostly people who don't practice spiritually have a very poisonous atmosphere. They have strong desires for fame and wealth, and are overshadowed by an intense negative force.

In the pugilistic novels you can read about the Taoists practicing poisonous skills. With a flick of their hands, their enemies were poisoned. This is true! Without having to move a limb, they can poison you just by getting near you! It is true that the senior practitioners of the poisonous skills have great poisonous power. It is so intangible that we can't see it, but the influence is there. Invisible influences are even more powerful! We can guard against visible ones, but not the invisible ones. We are not aware! Without any preparation at heart, we are easily contaminated.

I teach you to always reflect on the Tao, on spiritual practice, on liberation, and always remember to recite the holy names. This is a way to protect ourselves. Since we don't know who is who, it is safer to always be on guard. We don't know who is who, and in fact we shouldn't bother knowing who is who. Why should we know? A tiger is a tiger, and a kitten is a kitten. They are what they are, and why should they concern us? Anyhow, we still have to protect ourselves against possible influences.

We don't want to stay here as ignorant human beings any longer. We prefer to become superior sentient beings. Even if we cannot help others, it is fine that we can help ourselves. We are tired of this world. It is not our ideal abode; we want to live somewhere else. For instance, you have already graduated from primary school, so you have no reason to linger around there anymore. You should look for your classmates in the secondary school, study with them, encourage each other, and exchange experiences and ideas with them. You shouldn't stay in the primary school where you can learn nothing, and will be pulled down to their low level instead. They will keep asking you questions or talk about primary school matters. Even if you are not affected, you wouldn't have time to think about your studies in secondary school. This is simple logic. For example, I can speak English very well, but I spend all my time with people who speak poor English. Eventually, I would forget my English. Even if I didn't forget, I wouldn't have the time to use it.

Similarly, why do we have to go to group meditations, and to hang around with our fellow practitioners and virtuous people? Only then can we realize our level, and what we should do. If we always mix with people who are lower in level, naturally we will regress! Even if we can avoid the influence, we wouldn't have time to think about high level things! We busy ourselves with inferior matters, and our attainment gets stuck there and becomes useless. Even if we can keep our attainment, we have no chance to use or develop it. Isn't that right? [Audience: Yes!] We are not being discriminative, but things of the same nature attract each other!

Do you know why I have been so strict with you lately, and tell you to vow before you enter to the group meditations – 'I have not violated the precepts. I have kept a pure vegetarian diet. I sincerely come to seek the Truth...' It is because you are still new on the spiritual path, and you are not stable enough. What makes it even worse is that you mix with chaotic people! Whom can you protect when you can't even protect your own life? Therefore, we don't want to force those who have no intention to pursue spiritual practice. Forget them, even though they are initiated.

I initiate all of you without discrimination, because you request it. If you can't carry on with your practice, then stop coming here to annoy us. I have no desire for fame and wealth. I won't think that it is better to have more disciples, or love hearing people say: 'Wow! There

are so many people going to their group meditation each time.’ What is the good in having more people? If they are not diligent, they will only annoy or contaminate the other fellow practitioners. It would be more terrible if they deliberately offended the precepts. So, let it be if they don't want to practice anymore; I have to protect the good seeds.

For instance, you have a basket of delicious fruit, but one or two among them is rotten. If you don't discard them, the other fruit will also become rotten later. Or when a few leaves on our tree are being eaten by insects but we don't pick them off, very soon the whole tree will be infested. To get rid of the insects, you must bear to part with the half-eaten leaves. The insects will lay eggs on the leaves. If you don't pick them off, the whole tree will be destroyed later.

Therefore, we have to be incisive in spiritual practice. I am not being strict. What good can it do me? No matter what, they have been initiated; and yet I have to take the trouble to give them other forms of education. Let society educate them; let karma temper them; they will recover one day. However, they cannot mix with you. They are being too loose. They think everyone can go in, whether or not they are good in spiritual practice, strict in keeping precepts, or observe the vegetarian diet. If this is the case, you might as well mix with everyone, and there is no need for the initiation. Then you are free to come and go, or to become a vegetarian or not, and I would feel more relaxed.

However, this is not the way! Spiritual practitioners should be honest. I can't deceive you like this, nor do I want to be deceived by you. I am a straightforward person. Good or bad, I will say it clearly. I cannot tolerate ambiguity or equivocation; this is not being incisive! So, don't blame me for being strict. I do it for your own good. You might see me scolding someone very fiercely sometimes, but I am not being vicious. The really vicious persons are those who kill, defame and malign people! I am not being ferocious in rectifying your faults. Do you want me to stop doing it? [Audience: No!] Can you refrain from washing a dirty cloth just because it is very pretty? Of course, you have to wash it; you have to rub it briskly to clean the dirty spots! The dirtier it is, the harder you should wash it. Isn't that right? [Audience: Yes!]

Bravely practicing the path of the Bodhisattvas

It is not easy to get close to me. If you are contented knowing nothing or are laid back, then it is fine. In case you want to quickly become a Buddha, get liberation, attain the Truth, and realize many things, then it would be very difficult. Your mind cannot stand it; it is not accustomed to becoming a Buddha or Bodhisattva. When I teach you how to become a Buddha or Bodhisattva, you should work speedily, be responsible, and be persistent in doing your work despite what time it is, day or night, even when you are sleepy or hungry. Then you cannot stand it, because you are not used to it.

In this world we are used to the practice of working for five days and then resting for one day, or working in the daytime and sleeping at night. The situation of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas is different. They have to stay alert all twenty-four hours to handle the intangible work. Sometimes it's also the same with tangible works. It is all right to skip sleeping for several days! They won't care if they are physically tired or not, and will work whenever necessary. They wouldn't think: 'Now it is time for me to rest. Today is Sunday, Moon Festival, New Year's Festival. Today is my birthday.' You will be even busier on those days, because more people will pray to you, and want to see you. When they have holidays, they love to come and see you. The intangible work goes on round the clock despite what time it is!

You can't hope to attain the level of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas if you are unwilling to do their job! You sit on the king's throne, yet you do nothing to manage the country, and know nothing about politics. It can't be like that!

THE LIFESTYLE OF THE GOLDEN ERA – OMNIPRESENCE ¹¹⁰

When we suddenly encounter a catastrophe or karmic hindrance, we're shocked and can't think straight. So sometimes, you may hear monastic disciples say that I always ask them to do things suddenly. Being sudden is also good; karmic hindrances also come very suddenly, don't they? Thus, we ought to train ourselves to respond quickly at all times so that we can protect ourselves and get used to that vibrational energy. Then when we later become an enlightened Master, we'll be able to ascend to heaven or descend to hell in no time at all. If, at such times, you still ponder whether it's the right time to go to hell or heaven, it'll never work.

The faster we are, the easier it'll be for us to be omnipresent later. We won't have to come and go; it will seem as if we had never come or gone because we're so extremely fast that we transcend the worldly concepts of time and space. We simply connect different areas of space together, transforming them into the same point. It's like an ant trying to crawl from one end of a piece of paper to the other; if we fold the paper, the ant can cross over in one leap. That's the logic in transforming space; though there's a different way to do it.

There are secret tips to learning martial arts or any other thing; not only diligence is required. Under the same theory, the enlightened saints have their own ways of doing things. They act extremely quickly without moving at all. That's why they're venerated as being 'omnipresent,' that is, motionless. They're motionless, but they can accomplish anything and go anywhere. They're present in every place without having to go there. Only this is true magical power; only this is the true supreme level in spiritual practice. It requires no effort! So sometimes, you say that Master's transformation body has been here and there, doing this and that, or saving you in this or that place, but actually I never went anywhere or took any action. Also, I never performed any mudras (ritual hand gestures). You can see that I haven't moved at all! Have you, monastic practitioners by my side, ever seen me recite any incantations or perform any mudras? Never! Most probably at such times I'm sleeping, playing a musical instrument, playing chess, reciting poems, singing songs, planting grass or correcting someone. I could be doing anything. It requires no effort.

Take the example of a tai chi expert, a brother initiate. He doesn't have to lift his finger, yet anyone who touches him falls down. This is only when people touch him; he doesn't touch them! Anyone who touches him accidentally falls down by himself. Some people have practiced martial arts to such a superior level that they don't have to move their hands. They're different than those who use a lot of force, kick fiercely and look rather brutal. When such people encounter someone more powerful, they're brought down. For martial arts experts who use very little force, an opponent cannot bring them down. This is the theory of 'softness subduing sheer strength.' In the universe, softness always subdues sheer strength. Anything that has lesser strength but is more intangible, more formless and more pliable is more powerful.

You see, air is vital to us, and dripping water can penetrate rocks. The longer the water drips, the deeper it penetrates. 'Chi' – the vital life force – can sustain the body and even the whole universe. This invisible vital force – the vibration of Sound meditation – is even

110. Group meditation, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, August 11, 1991 (Originally in Chinese).

more inconceivable. Nothing is better because it is the Mother of the universe and gives birth to all forms of creation. When we get hold of it, we'll have all the secrets of the universe in our hands. Getting hold of the mother means getting hold of the children, and we'll know where the whole family is. This is simple logic. It's just like in the ancient battles, if the general was killed, the whole army would become like a headless snake, fall into complete disarray and be easily defeated.

Similarly, all the scriptures that we study mention the vibration of the universe, the Sound, that is, the Tao, the original power. Getting hold of it means getting hold of everything. If we get hold of other things, for example, magical powers or intelligence, we've grabbed only one small part, one corner, but not the head. For humans or other creatures, once their head is caught, they're doomed. Isn't that right? That's why we say that the Quan Yin method is the best, the most original, the fastest and the highest. There's nothing better. This is really true. No matter how much you research, this will be the ultimate conclusion. I'm very happy to have found this method and that you too have gotten hold of it. We're indeed very fortunate!

THE TRUTH BEHIND WAR VICTIMS ¹¹¹

Ghosts exist and so does hell. However, everything is created by the mind. Depending on what we've done in this life or the previous life, we'll harbor the same atmosphere or expectation when we die. After death we'll be frozen into that dimension to which we were habitually accustomed during our lifetime. You may have occasionally come across newspaper or television reports about research on people who died a sudden death, or on those who were killed by soldiers or suddenly lost their lives during war. Apparently they fell into a state of shock as they were not mentally prepared. The silver cord was severed abruptly, totally unexpectedly, so they couldn't accept it. They seemed to suddenly become frozen in a certain dimension, as though they were trapped inside a box, unable to escape. Therefore, they believed that they were still fighting the battle, still in the army. They continued to shout war cries every day and kill anyone who got in their way. They would see illusions and regard anyone they saw as their enemies. They just continued fighting. Such people who are killed in battle or die all of a sudden are really miserable. Without an enlightened Master, they can never get out of that dimension.

The same thing happens in the case of suicide. The perplexed and agonized feelings a person has at the time of suicide remain after the person is dead. Death can't liberate one from the suffering, ever! It is just like if we fail to learn well during our youth, we can't become a learned person when we're old. So, the atmosphere of war is most terrible. Many ghosts can't get out of their dimension. If, after a very long time, these souls manage to get out of that dimension and be reborn as humans, very often they're still inclined to live that kind of life, battling and being full of wrath. This world causes great harm to people. So, most spiritual practitioners are against wars, but can't express themselves openly. If they kept protesting, they'd become like revolutionaries, and that could lead to misunderstanding or to them mistakenly being identified as politically motivated. Nevertheless, they are against war in their hearts because it is bad for people. It's bad whatever the excuse. It's bad for people; they can't even die in peace.

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THE QUAN YIN METHOD TRANSCENDS TIME AND SPACE ¹¹²

Spiritual practice repairs the mind

Although after initiation you're liberated from birth and death, you still have to practice spiritually. Because if your mind doesn't allow you to become an enlightened saint, it will be difficult for you. Your mind will tell you, 'You, a saint? Don't be ridiculous!' Or others might also say the same thing. Without self-confidence, it will be useless being a saint of any kind. Even if you've become a saint, what purpose could it serve? We still need to have a deportment that befits the superior realms. Before we've become well-trained or practiced diligently, our mind won't be convinced. It will assume that we're cheating, and refuse to let us ascend. It's we who obstruct ourselves. So, we still have to diligently practice spirituality to thoroughly convince our mind and allow it to realize that we're now different, that we really befit the status of an enlightened saint. Only then will it totally accept this status, and we'll have no more problems.

Spiritual cultivation is thus a process of repairing the mind. Life after life, the mind records too many undesirable things and ensnares us with a guilty conscience. That's why we have to train and rectify it, illuminate it with Light every day, educate it and also brighten all our bodily cells. Every single bodily cell is imprinted with all the good and bad impressions, or karma, from many lifetimes. That's why sometimes people only need to take a look at you or your body to be able to tell what you did in previous lives or what you've done in this lifetime. It's because each of our cells, each vibration of our bodies, distinctively records all our actions, behaviors, thoughts and desires. We can't cheat anyone.

We've heard that after we die, when we go to see the Yama king (the king of hell), we'll see a mirror that shows the details of our entire life as clearly as we watch television, except that it runs very quickly and in a relaxed way. This is absolutely true. This is our personal 'video recording' function. Therefore, spiritual practitioners can perceive and identify who is who, what they've done in previous lives, what they're doing now, and what they'll do in the future. Our personal record is encrypted in our bodies and in our mind, or in the atmosphere around us. Each of us – whether we practice spiritually or not – has such an aura. But the more we practice spiritually, the lesser this aura will be.

Develop protective power by continually remember Master

Now when we mingle with people in society, we definitely run into such an atmosphere. The more we practice spiritually, the more sensitive we become. Don't ever think that longer practice will strengthen your protective power. It will, but your sensitivity will also increase many hundreds and thousands of times. Do you think that Jesus Christ didn't suffer when He was nailed to the cross? He was in extreme agony! He felt greater pain than others because His body was different than those of ordinary people. He was highly sensitive, as all His bodily cells had changed completely. In this world, such individuals are in great danger, are very pitiful, very miserable and very helpless.

Whatever we do – good, bad, evil or charitable – will become attached to our bodies and be distinctly recorded. Whether we're spiritual practitioners or not, we can detect this if we know the secret method. So, if we mingle with people in society, inevitably we're sometimes contaminated by their auras. Our blessed rewards fly onto their bodies, even if they don't want them. When you have two pipes or barrels full of water, one at a higher level than the other, the water will definitely flow from the higher to the lower one. So, if

112. Group meditation, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, August 11, 1991 (Originally in Chinese).

you want to protect yourselves, to close off the water pipe, you should constantly recite the holy names. This is the only way.

Sometimes there's still some leakage because you forget that the Master is always by your side. However, as soon as you seek help, you'll receive an immediate response. If it's a matter of carelessness on your part, of course, Master's power will rescue you. But if you willingly do something bad, you do it despite knowing that it's wrong, and you refuse to let me intervene, then of course, I can't help you! Don't blame me then. You'll continue to sink lower. It doesn't matter if you forget about me, but don't refuse me. Don't think that you're great and can solve all your problems by yourself. No! No! No! This world isn't a place for fun. The positive and negative forces are almost equally powerful. They're both aspects of the power of the universe, which anyone can use. It only depends on where it's being applied. The negative force is also very powerful. It's not something that we can play or have fun with. This is one aspect of nature with which we should not casually meddle.

WHY ANANDA WAS NOT ENLIGHTENED ¹¹³

Sometimes the attendants around me hear things that the public don't. However, they took it for granted and didn't cherish it. When I repeated it to the public or gave a similar discourse later on, they thought, 'Oh! I've heard that. Nothing special!' This manner results in indolence and the lack of cherishing.

As the Buddha's attendant, Ananda failed to attain enlightenment during his twenty-five year service. It was all due to his over-dependence. When the Buddha gave a speech somewhere, he could always hear what others couldn't. He learned everything by listening to the Buddha chatting with only a few persons or speaking to several hundred people. He was right beside the Buddha! However, later on, when someone asked the same question and the Buddha replied again before hundreds of thousands of people, Ananda thought, 'Oh! I've memorized all this. I don't need to listen to it again.' He didn't treasure it. Furthermore, while talking to the multitude, the Buddha's blessing power was different than when talking to one person. We receive double the blessing power for listening twice. Even though we've listened one hundred times, we've failed to assimilate it, not to mention listening just once.

HIGHER SPIRITUAL ATTAINMENT BRINGS GREAT WISDOM AND BLESSING ¹¹⁴

Nothing in this world belongs to us. Even if we do something good, it's not we who did it; Creation prearranges all things. Therefore, we say, when we're one with God, one with creation, there's no individual 'I' because we know that everything is arranged by God.

Perhaps you might ask me, 'Since everything is arranged by God, why does He often arrange for us to run into difficulties? When we pray for this, why do we get that instead? Why do we get undesirable things although we've prayed for good things?' The answer is very simple. It's because, in the universe, there're good things and bad things; there's black and there's white. It depends on where our hands reach, and we get hold of the things there.

It's the same when we look at the human body. Take the example of a beauty; her body structure is exactly the same as that of an ugly person. If we grab her foot, we'll discover

113. Group meditation, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, August 7, 1991 (Originally in Chinese).

114. Group meditation, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, July 21, 1991 (Originally in Chinese).

that it looks just like the foot of an ordinary person; it won't be shaped like a hand or a mouth. If we want to look at her mouth or kiss her lips, we have to move upward a little bit. However, should we wish to kiss her feet, we have to bend downward. Of course, the foot of a beauty may look nicer than that of an ugly person, but it's still just a foot, however beautiful it may be.

SPREAD POSITIVE VIBRATIONS TO EVERY CORNER OF THE WORLD

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If we have any plans at all, they should be plans for more meditation, for group meditation. We should devote our spiritual energy each day to praying to God to bless the ignorant beings that we are. We should pray to God to help and forgive us even if we are full of sins. I cannot make any more plans! Even if we possess all the wealth and property in this world, we cannot help too many refugees.

When our karma is heavy, we cannot make use of any money that we may have. Even when the food is placed in front of us, we cannot eat it or we cannot swallow it. Therefore, it is best to rely on the spiritual aspects because the best help we can receive is from our spiritual practice. We can use the positive atmosphere that we gain from our practice to pray for the Buddhas' and God's blessings on the world, to forgive ignorant humankind. This is the only way for us to avoid disasters; otherwise, no matter how much money we have or how many organizations there are, I am afraid they will not be enough! Even if we have money, we cannot bring it to the needy when the karma comes; even if they have property, they cannot take it with them.

So, we must continue to do our spiritual practice diligently and spread our positive vibrations to every corner of the world. In this way we may be able to help some people. But we may not be able to help them, not even temporarily, if we rely only on money or organizations. Sometimes when people have too much karma, it will prevent us from helping them even if we are willing. Besides, we cannot help them if we practice poorly. Sometimes at the time we help others, if we have enough spiritual merits, it will be easier for us to overcome obstacles and help people more smoothly.

CONCENTRATION AND PROFESSIONALISM ¹¹⁶

Most of you fail to do things well because you lack concentration, and just carry out one profession only. Suppose you grow up, study medicine, and become a doctor. Whether you are a good doctor or not will depend on whether you possess concentration and are compassionate at heart. You may not even do well in your professional career. Suppose you have learned to be a business person, an engineer, or a certain type of professional, and you improve constantly as you gain experience and undergo more training. But even then, your performance may not be very good. That is why some doctors perform better than others, and some architects have greater achievements than their peers. The cause lies in their different levels of concentration and intelligence.

Why are enlightened Masters able to do everything? It is because they are always in a state of concentration. They concentrate all their actions, speech and thoughts on whatever they are doing. They can also concentrate simultaneously on other areas and have billions of manifestation bodies. They can dance in one place and have billions of

115. Group meditation, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, June 30, 1991 (Originally in Chinese).

116. Group meditation, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, June 28, 1991 (Originally in English).

manifestation bodies at the same time. This is because their minds are never defocused; they have reached the state of never lacking concentration.

The sun shines on every corner of the earth without having to consume anything; however, a candle can only illuminate one spot and yet its radiance is short-lived. This is where a spiritual practitioner differs from an ordinary person. Why do we see things that others cannot see? It is because we possess concentration. Why are we able to do everything so perfectly and better than others do, and even better than the experts, if necessary? It is because we are always concentrating.

My heart and mind are forever concentrated on whatever I am doing, and they are never distracted and never drifting on to other things. Even when I think about other things, only one part of me is doing the thinking, so I can still do a lot of work at the same time. Ordinary people can never do that. If you are not trained or if you are not used to it, you cannot work with concentration. You can do your work well, not because you are focused, but because you are a professional. Being a professional is different than being concentrated. Being a professional, you are only good at one particular job, and even then, you may be good at it only because you have done it habitually.

When we spiritual practitioners practice and attain a superior level, we don't have to be professionals to do our jobs well. We can perform even better than the professionals because we are focused on wisdom, which lets us accomplish everything perfectly. And because of this difference, we are able to do anything. Once we attain wisdom, we can do anything, for wisdom can illuminate the whole universe and create the whole universe. Is there anything that it cannot do? It does those things that are necessary and leaves the unnecessary things alone.

A TRANSCENDENTAL SCHOOL ¹¹⁷

Human beings are the most precious and wisest beings in the world. Therefore, you can go to school at such a young age, understand what the teachers teach, and become increasingly intelligent and better. If you were to put a bird in school, would it learn anything? [Audience: No.] However, we humans should be worthy of our behavior, otherwise, we're no better than animals.

We humans also have the qualities of animals; for example, when we enjoy bullfighting or cockfighting. What do we look like when we sleep too much? [Audience: Pigs.] And what do we look like when we eat too much? [Audience: Pigs.] Still pigs? [Laughter] Are pigs so bad? They have both of these qualities. [Laughter] I mean we human beings also have animals' qualities, but that doesn't mean we are lousy. Why do we have these animals' qualities? It's because we have bodies like theirs. Animals also have eyes, noses, ears, and mouths. Some animals also have hands, and some don't have hands, but they have wings. So, we just can't get away from animals' qualities.

However, human beings have an advantage: We can control these qualities, increase or decrease them, depending on how strong our willpower is. For example, sometimes when we eat too much, we can retrospect and tell ourselves, 'Oh, you don't have to eat so much. Eat just enough! Otherwise, you will soon get sleepy, or you may lose concentration in school. When the teacher teaches, you will begin to snore.' We can warn ourselves like this, and then we'll eat less. Or when it's time to go to school, but we have not had

117. Speaks to the audience of young people, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, June 16, 1991 (Originally in Chinese).

breakfast, we can tell ourselves, 'It's time to go to school. That's more important. I can eat when I have time.'

But a pig can't do that. If a pig goes to school, it has to eat until it's full before it's willing to go. Even if you put the food aside, it will rush to get it. Therefore, although we humans have animals' qualities, we still have wisdom and willpower, with which we can control ourselves and develop other good qualities in ourselves. But animals can't do that, not even the intelligent ones. They can't learn as much as we humans can.

People are different in terms of intelligence and talents. Some are smart; others are awkward. The difference comes from their knowledge or inborn talents. Some are born clever; some have to study long to catch up; others are still awkward even if they go to school. Although they can become a little more intelligent than before, the difference is barely perceptible because they don't study hard.

However, since we practice spiritually, we understand everything very quickly. That's why some schools also teach their students meditation. But the meditation has to be very short, because they are mostly not vegetarians. Of course, they practice ordinary methods only. But they still benefit a lot, even if they practice like that. Their intelligence grows and they become smarter.

Originally, we humans came from very high dimensions, where we already knew everything. Our minds are full of all kinds of materials and they'll be of use if we know how to operate with them. Our brain is just like a computer that's full of all kinds of materials from the universe. It's just that most of these materials we can't utilize because we don't know how to operate it.

We practitioners have to find the right 'keys' and then we can understand everything, we can do anything, and we can do everything much better than ordinary people. It's because after we practice, our inner wisdom adjusts itself automatically and the inner Master presses the right keys for us whenever we need anything. It provides us with the necessary materials. This is nothing mysterious! If anything we request comes true, it's because we have it originally. It comes out when we press the right keys. There's nothing mystical about it!

Sometimes we don't know how to choose the right keys because we haven't learned how. Thus, we pray to God for help because we will know how to choose the right keys, and miracles will happen. Every request is answered because we've found the right keys. After we practice well, we don't have to pray to God for anything. We have everything we want because we know how to find the right keys.

We meditate, keep a vegetarian diet, carry out charitable acts, and observe the precepts. All of these things are part of spiritual practice. The more we practice, the more we know how to handle our own things, the more we know how to use our abundant inner materials, and the more we know what to use in various situations. You have heard many miraculous stories about great practitioners performing magical feats or performing miracles in the Himalayas. They can do these things because they practice, not because they have magical power. Each one of us can have this power. Whatever Jesus can do, we can do also, provided we know how.

The same goes for school. Before you started going to school, you couldn't even read the ABCs, but now you can. Why? There's nothing miraculous about it: It's because you have

learned them. Those who have not learned them can't read the ABCs however simple they are.

Spiritual practitioners go to a different school, one that's higher than universities. Our worldly knowledge ends at the universities. Secondary schools are higher than primary schools, and universities are higher than high schools, but that's the end of worldly knowledge. If we want to know greater things, we want to know about the universe or other mysterious things, we have to practice spiritually.

After we graduate from the university, we should go to Buddha's or God's school if we want to enhance our wisdom. It's just another kind of school. But this kind of school is different from ordinary schools because it doesn't involve organizational work. There are no written tests, and there are no tuition fees, and students don't have to go to school every day. That's why people don't think it's a kind of school. Of course, we can do as ordinary schools do, but I think people who can go to this kind of school are already mature. They are good enough and don't need the kinds of disciplinary methods that are used to control children. So, this kind of school is freer.

Although this kind of school is freer, students have to study very hard. They have to meditate at least two and a half hours a day and strictly observe the precepts. It's stricter than ordinary schools in this respect. And there are still tests although they are not in written form. Ask your parents. They have a lot of tests. Sometimes if they can't pass the tests, their levels drop. But that doesn't matter since they can take the tests again! We have no deadlines for the tests. It doesn't matter when or how many times you take the tests! You can continue to take the tests as long as you have patience and sincerity. In this school you also learn a superior kind of knowledge.

Therefore, it's also a kind of school here. I teach different knowledge, which is superior to that of the university. Worldly knowledge cannot compare with this knowledge because there are many mystical things that cannot be explained through worldly knowledge. Universities have their good points; many different subjects are taught there. However, we teach everything here, and it's taught inwardly without the use of language. Our school is thus a superior school.

Now you're still in primary and secondary school, so you should study hard and do your homework carefully. But you shouldn't do it for fame or fortune. You shouldn't do it because you want to become a boss, run a big factory or become a president. You should do it as part of your responsibility, to please your parents and teachers, to fulfill your duty as a member of society. After we complete our education, we go wherever God arranges for us to go, and do whatever God arranges for us to do because we know God will take care of everything.

Read good books from a young age and cultivate good ethics

When I was a student of about your age, I loved reading books. We should not only read books from school, but also other books that are worth reading, such as scriptures and books about ethics or life philosophy, which are very nice and interesting. If we read many books, we won't misbehave outside, and we won't have too much free time, so our minds won't be misled. You're still young; it's okay. After you grow older, you should read more books and do more research. There are many kinds of books in this world. Some are scientific books and some are medical books or theological books. We can read and research any books that are beneficial to us.

If we learn to be a good person at a young age, we won't bring trouble to other people when we grow up. Therefore, we should learn basic ethics from childhood. If there's anything you don't understand, ask your parents first. I think your parents are very good. They practice spiritually, and they have good morals and common sense. They're older than you are and have learned with me longer than you have. Ask them first about things that you don't understand. Ask before you grow up; otherwise, it will be too late.

Some initiates come to learn with me when they are old, and I become tired when I teach them. There's an Aulacese saying that goes, 'Bend the bamboo when it's tender; you cannot bend it as you like when it grows up.' Similarly, my parents trained me strictly when I was young. Sometimes I didn't like it, and I'd say, 'Oh, I'm just a kid! Why are you so tough on me?' However, after I grew up, I appreciated my parents very much because everything I do right is to be attributed to my parents' strict discipline. If I do anything wrong, it's my own fault.

Although you're still young, you'll grow up very soon. I felt I was like you yesterday, but I became like this very quickly; [Master laughs.] I've gotten a few extra strands of white hair. Time really flies! When you're still a student, you have plenty of time, so you should study hard, and look for good books to read; otherwise, you won't have time for it after you grow up. Ask your parents if it's true that they don't have time to read books. They can't be absorbed in the books when they do read, because they're always dealing with this and that, busy with financial problems, and busy with daily troubles so they can't concentrate on reading.

If you're not a good child now, who can help you after you grow up? Bad kids become bad adults, and they make families and society unstable, and bring chaos to their country. Therefore, for society to be sound and stable, it has to depend on you, the future pillars. You should behave well from now on, and cultivate your manners.

Do you remember the story about Mencius' mother moving her residence three times? [Audience: Yes.] If it weren't important to study well at a young age, Mencius' mother wouldn't have exerted so much effort to move! Now that you have such good parents and a good learning environment, you should really study well. Read any good books you know of. Ask your parents if you don't know of any. Ask them to find some good books for you. When you have free time, don't play too much. Have enough fun. Do some physical exercises to keep fit. That's enough. Read some meaningful and moral books. You should learn basic ethics from a young age; otherwise, it'll be too late.

When I was little, I liked moral books very much, such as books that teach us not to steal under any circumstances, or not to take what doesn't belong to us. After I grew up, there was a time when I drifted. But I wouldn't steal even if I had no money on me. Once, when I was in Au Lac, a friend let me live in his house, but he didn't know that I had no money and I didn't tell him. One day, I was very hungry, but I had no money. It was wartime, so I couldn't receive money from home, which put me in an urgent situation. My friend put all his family's food on the table, and it looked delicious and smelled good. I didn't eat it although I had gone hungry for days because they had not returned home by that time. I didn't tell them about my situation. I tried to get a job or find some other way to settle the problem. I did so because I had been trained that way from the time I was young.

My friend's family trusted me very much, and they left me at home when they went out. I didn't touch their property or steal their food because I had learned that from when I was young. My parents didn't wait to teach me only when the circumstances arose, which might have been too late. Just like when you learn Chinese, you should learn when you are

young, and then you can speak it fluently later. You will learn how to use all kinds of words, and then you will speak Chinese very well. There was another time when I lived in Paris. I didn't have much money with me, because I was an overseas student. I lived somewhere first and then I had to move to the other place for some reason. I needed money to move, but I didn't have very much money at the time. You know, things are very expensive in Paris! The rent is much higher than in Taipei. So, you can imagine how difficult it was for me, a foreign student, to be forced to move immediately!

One evening, I was looking for a job, one that offered living accommodations, so that I could resume my education. It was okay for me to study at night and work during the day. I went to look for a job, but did not find one. On my way home, I passed by a park, and a man thought I was a 'street girl,' so he showed me a lot of money and wanted me to go home with him. Of course, I said, 'No!' He first showed me two hundred US dollars, and then raised it to four hundreds. I said, 'No' again. Then he raised it to six hundreds, so I warned him, 'If you say another word, I'll call the police!' The man became frightened, and then he finally realized I was not that kind of woman so he ran away. Six hundred dollars was a lot of money at that time.

Why didn't I forget my honor or morality for the sake of money? Because I had read good books from the time I was young, and it became a habit of mine to resist worldly fame or fortune in any situation. I liked to read moral books such as Chuang Tzu, Lao Tzu, or the Buddhist scriptures. Others like 'The Story of The Gods', 'Spring and Autumn', 'Tales of The Three Kingdoms', 'Tales of the Eastern Zhou Kingdoms', 'The Thousand Flower Mansion', and tales of Chengyaojin (a humorous and loyal character in Chinese folklore) are also books containing moral lessons. In these books, good people obtain good consequences, and receive special protection or help whenever they encounter disaster. Bad people are found out sooner or later, and are punished in the end. These stories teach us and firmly build up our ethics.

If we cultivate our basic ethics at a young age, we'll not waver in any situation; otherwise, we'll fail our first test. We'll harm other people or seek fame and fortune in dishonorable ways. We'll not mind even if we sell ourselves or hurt our honor.

Therefore, I think you should form the habit of taking care of the moral aspects of your life since you are little and not just read your textbooks, or just learn foreign languages or math. That's not enough; although they make us a little more intelligent. They make us know how to do business, or teach us how to find good jobs, but they cannot build up our moral concepts or protect our souls or dignity. Therefore, if your school doesn't teach you about ethics, you should train yourselves, or read some good books. When you have free time, don't indulge yourselves in meaningless games. You can play games, but don't overdo it; otherwise, you'll waste a lot of precious time.

You remember and absorb everything you learn at this age, so it matters what you absorb! Keep away from immoral books and violent movies. Choose the right movies or books so that you can develop a good spirit, and nourish healthy ethics. You should cultivate this habit at a young age and refuse immoral publications and films. You don't have to wait for your parents to forbid you and then protest against it. You should be responsible for yourselves. Even if you're still young, you're human beings. You have eyes, a nose, and ears, just like I do. So, if I could read good books when I was young, you can do it, too.

From now on, you should begin to discipline yourselves, and get prepared for your future life; or else, you'll have no time for it after you grow up. At that time you might make boyfriends or girlfriends, and concern yourself with romance. You might also be concerned

with taking on family responsibilities after you get married. You might be involved in earning money after you find a job. So, how can you find time to train yourselves? Therefore, this is the best time to train yourselves because you don't have much responsibility now, and your parents take care of you very well, buying clothes for you and cooking for you, so you have nothing to worry about.

So, cultivate your moral concepts from now on, and make them sound and healthy. Then you'll become a good citizen after you grow up. You'll become a good husband or wife, and you'll be good in every respect! 'Cultivate yourself, discipline your family, govern your country, and bring peace to the world.' You should undergo all this training when you are young, otherwise when will you have the time to do it later? You should learn from our ancestors, you should learn from the good scriptures passed down from the ancient Masters, you should learn good morals and precepts, and you should train yourselves from childhood!

THE WAY TO REJUVENATION ¹¹⁸

When we meditate on the Sound, our internal vibrations change, new concepts emerge, and new cells are born. We seem to be born anew, and this is the system of 'rejuvenation.' Anyone who meditates diligently will definitely have their body and mind changed, as well as their thinking. They will feel as if they have been born anew. There is no better way than meditation. Thus, if we want to be liberated from birth and death, alleviate suffering and help the world, we must first meditate and cleanse our karma so that we know how to properly help others.

CONVERSATION ABOUT THE TRUTH ¹¹⁹

[This is a conversation between Master and an old friend that She met in the Himalayas when She was searching for the Truth. This friend is now a fellow practitioner of the Quan Yin method. A marvelous affinity which began in the snowy sacred mountains is now continuing at the Costa Rica Center. This fellow practitioner had studied with many famous masters in various parts of the world, and has practiced many methods. Touched by her desire for the Truth and eagerness for knowledge, the Supreme Master Ching Hai was naturally inspired and spoke freely without reservation. The eloquent dialogue of questions and answers between them was indeed 'the conversation about the Truth'.]

- Q. *If there is a person in this world, a person who feels very bad physically. Can that soul who feels so bad physically take another body, the body of another person like a transplant of bodies?*
- M. What for? To suffer more?
- Q. *No. Maybe that person is doing very well, a very great job and the others want that person to continue in that job.*
- M. Nobody needs anybody that desperately. Nobody is so important. Yes. Even if you don't have a Master, another Master will come. Yeah! But probably you won't like it. [Laughter] It is just that you're used to with the similar face and change another face, you would say, 'No, not that one.' [Master laughs.] Ah! That's the only problem. That's why everybody keeps waiting for Jesus. Yeah. They think if another messiah comes

118. Group meditation, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, June 13, 1991 (Originally in Chinese).

119. Group meditation, San Jose Center, Costa Rica, June 2, 1991 (Originally in English).

he has to look exactly like Him in the picture. If somebody introduces Master Ching Hai, they say, 'No.'

- Q. *Why does everybody have a different form of body? For example, the faces are different. What does the face mean? What does the face of the people represent?*
- M. Do you think everyone should look alike? Then this is too boring. At least you never fall in love, and no babies are born. That's the difference. That's at least one of the reasons for the different faces. Okay? Yeah. You would never be born if your parents looked the same.
- Q. *I would like to know what's the meaning of the 'face,' in a spiritual life.*

The attractiveness of an enlightened Master

- M. Nothing. Only the atmosphere. But usually most of the people when they practice, well they are very bright in the appearance. But the atmosphere is important. People would like to be around that person who practices well. Not the face. [Master hums.] Okay? Because if you are to come to see Miss World 1970, for example, and the people tell you to stick around her all the time and look at her all the time, [Master laughs.] you would not do that. Understand? You would get bored after a while. You will notice even the most beautiful people after we look intensely at their face for sometime we get very tired. We get tired and we want to rest. But I know some so-called masters, some masters. They don't look very beautiful or handsome but people just keep staring at them and they never get tired. Yeah! Sometimes they just walk around all day long just to wait for one glance, one glimpse of the Master. Uh? Or they travel many miles just to see the Master and when they leave they feel very bad. Okay. That's it? Why you ask this question?
- Q. *Because sometimes I can see people have a very good Light, like You. This means it is coming from Your soul and I can see from Your face You give me peace. I am very grateful to You because I am no good but You love me so much, thank You.*
- M. What is the difference between my face and other people's face? Similar, no? Of course, not. I mean, of course, I couldn't look like you fellow practitioners but it makes no difference what kind of face. It is the love that emanates from a person, not the face, okay.
- Q. *That was my question and I wanted everybody to know this.*
- M. Yeah!
- Q. *You don't see the faces You only see the heart.*
- M. Yeah! Oh, I see. You want to see my heart? [Master laughs and sighs.] There are some Masters who are very old. They have creases and lines, you know, wrinkles all over their face and not anything attractive but people like them, because of their practicing merit, the love that they have. Uh huh! Some people say, because my voice is very nice, or my face is very nice, my eyes are very beautiful, so people like me. It's not true, because I have some disciples who are blind, who are deaf. They always come, every week when I am there; even on retreats, seven days. They never see my face, but they see inside and what they describe is just exactly how you see me now. Of course, inside is more beautiful huh? [Master laughs.] Yeah?

- Q. *Master Charan Singh he already took maha samadhi. He was a very big master in Beas in India. He used to initiate all the people except the ones who were blind.*
- M. Uh why?
- Q. *So, that is what I wanted to ask You because You said You have blind disciples.*
- M. I have blind disciples. Everybody knows it. Yes, it is the rule. It is the general rule that a person must be, uh the five senses must be perfect, in order to be initiated by a Master. That is the general rule since ancient time. Buddha also said that. But somebody must initiate them, no?
- Q. *One day a disciple wanted his mother initiated and the mother was blind so he didn't tell the Master. He asked him uh, 'Please, Master Charan Singh, my mother, can she come and be initiated?' 'Yes, yes, you bring her I will initiate her.' So, when he brought the mother, the master saw that she was blind, and he said, 'But I told you I can not initiate blind people, so I can not initiate your mother.' The disciple got very, very upset and he said, 'Please, Master, please, please, this is my mother, please do it.' So, the master did a miracle and during the initiation he gave sight to the mother, and initiate her. Meanwhile she could see.*
- M. Uh huh, meanwhile only.
- Q. *Only meanwhile.*
- M. ... and afterwards?
- Q. *And afterwards the blindness returned.*
- M. Some of the people who came for a lecture also, uh got their sight back in Formosa, but without coming for initiation. They did come for initiation afterward, but they wrote a letter or they told the story that they, their sight was restored during the lecture.
- Q. *And it stayed like that?*
- M. And it stayed like that. She had been blind since childhood, over twenty years.
- Q. *But for example, when You initiate them if they are blind, do You initiate them anyhow?*
- M. Anyhow! They got visions all the same. They saw the Master inside. [Master laughs.]
- Q. *They saw the Master here.*
- M. And this person always feels when I come near. The blind person, one of the persons, she always feels when I am around. She smiles and I know. I tap her shoulder and she knows. So we feel very close.
- Q. *Is it because, the Masters they don't initiate because the Masters can catch some of the karma of that individual?*
- M. Yes.

- Q. *You see. I thought the reason why he did not initiate the blind people was because he was saying that that's the worst karma a person can have.*
- M. Oh! There is worse karma than that!
- Q. *Worse than that! Like what?*
- M. To be blind physically is better than to be blind spiritually. Someone who doesn't see the Master but recognizes the greatness is better than someone who sees the Master and does not know.
- Q. *But for example, when You initiate the blind person, do You catch anything of the sins of these people?*
- M. I catch all the time.
- Q. *All the time.*
- M. I catch when people just pray at home. I catch it when people know about my name. I catch it when people know about my story. I catch anywhere. I catch when I see people.
- Q. *So, how do You dissolve this karma?*
- M. That's my job. [Laughter] Wait until you become a Master and then I'll tell you. Now its difficult to understand. I do it by spiritual discipline, by the merits from my billion, trillions of years of practice, by the incredible physical endurance, and I do it by the boundless love. Okay.
- Q. *Yes, thank You.*
- M. In the Buddhist discipline also, when somebody, the five senses are not in order, one of the five senses is not in order, the Buddha... He is not accepted in order of the Buddha. There were many other kinds of pre-conditions to be initiated in Buddhism when the Buddha was alive. But I've vowed to save the worst. So, nobody comes to me without hope. Among our disciples there are the worst people you could imagine. Even the Buddhas in the ten directions could not rescue them.
- Q. *Yes. Lord Buddha told us that there are five unpardonable sins. Now these sins for example are if we kill a Buddha, another Buddha.*
- M. Yeah, if we kill a Buddha or make a Buddha bleed.
- Q. *Right, or arhat, we kill an arhat or father. If we kill our father or our mother, or we split the sangha.*
- M. Or kill our father or... mother. Yeah, we make trouble in this...
- Q. *He said that these are unpardonable.*
- M. Yes.
- Q. *Then You accept these types also?*

- M. Also.
- Q. *Then how...?*
- M. Otherwise, who accepts them?
- Q. *Right, nobody would!*
- M. Yes.
- Q. *Huh, but then how can these people... then... if the Buddha said unpardonable?*
- M. I use my love to transform them.
- Q. *Then this is perhaps Your Christian side because Lord Jesus, He was always all forgiving, even the worst sinners, the criminals. Now, do You have to take on the karma of these people?*
- M. Yes. The law of karma has to be respected. But when the Master takes on the karma it's not like when the disciple takes on the karma. For example, when Jesus was persecuted, yeah, nailed on the cross, then many of His disciples or followers would be forgiven the sins. But if you pick anybody on the street and tell them now, you will be nailed for everybody else's sins, nobody else would get forgiven. Nobody had any benefit. Understand? The body of the Master is different from the body of other people, even though it looks the same. For example, all the cars look similar. Yes, but the Mercedes car and the Volvo car have different structure and different endurance. Now, can you imagine at the time of initiation, when the Master has to initiate thousands or hundreds of people. She has, the Master has to house at least enough blessing power to give to each one. Understand? To give to, at least, to hundreds persons or thousands persons depending on the number.

Now, when one person receives, only his individual share, he has already opened the eye of wisdom and can see the visions and the stars and the heavens and hells and everything. And that force must be strong to clear all the karma of ten thousands of years of that individual, one, alone. And the Buddha said only one person's karma or sins, if it had shape, the whole universe could not contain one person's sins, one person's karma.

In order to burn all the sins and karma of one individual, including all the five generations, at least, of him, you know how much force it takes. If not he could not hear the Sound, he could not see the Light because he is burdened and locked with his own karma. Now all that force has to go through the body of the Master in order to come out. And when She initiates thousands of people then the force must be more. Then the ordinary person cannot house this power. Even good power will make you collapse. Understand? Just like in order for this light to shine it has to contain so much voltage of electricity. This bulb might look similar to the other bulb but it has different structure. It can contain more power, more electric power. In order to give you such a brilliant Light. She has Herself to be able to stand this kind of electric voltage. Yeah. So therefore, the body of the Master is no doubt different. But most of the time the Masters do not mention these things, unless when asked. Most of the Masters are very humble. And it is not necessary to talk about things when it is not the time. Understand? And also, it has to be the right audience.

- Q. *Tell me another thing. Lord Buddha used to teach at four different levels according to the people, the audience, but Lord Jesus used to always teach at the some level. He never said that He had different types of teachings.*
- M. What four levels?
- Q. *There are four types of individuals. There is the one which is very very developed. Then according to the intelligence of the people, He gave different teachings.*

An enlightened Master's different way of teaching inside

- M. Yes, yes, that is inside only. The initiation is the same. Internally, the Master teaches each one differently, and even the closest friend would not know. Even husband and wife they have different teachings inside. Not only four levels, four thousands level, four millions, et cetera... yeah!
- Q. *So Jesus would do the same?*
- M. Yes, same. Jesus didn't have as much time to teach. He had only three and a half years and He got nailed. Also you must know that when Jesus was giving the teaching it was very difficult. The political sensitivity at that time was preventing Him and His disciples to be free in the preaching of the doctrine. Anybody famous was envied by the church and emperor's government at that time. And you must know at that time, you know, the spiritual level of the people was very low. In all the churches, they slaughtered all the time, just to offer, to make offering; slaughtered all the animals. And the smoke rose to heaven and blackening all the churches' ceilings and all the hands of the priests were bloody. And the terrible odor filled the many comers of the sky of Egypt, and Palestine, et cetera...
- Q. *What about the Buddha, tell me.*
- M. But the Buddha... But the Buddha He was lucky. He was born in India where the spiritual discipline was already strong and most people were vegetarians and they worshiped the saints. And the political rivalry at that time wasn't very dangerous. Also Buddha was born a prince. Everybody knew that He forsook the whole kingdom. So, no king would imagine that He would try to become a king and make a rival out of Him, uh with Him, with them.

But Jesus wasn't very aristocratic at the background, and there was a rumor that there was somebody who would be born and be king of the Jews. So, everybody was scared that Jesus would make a revolution and then become king of the Jews. So the Roman government was very nervous. You see you must also look at the historical background to understand why Jesus and Buddha were different the way they were, and why Christianity developed the way it had and Buddhism spread out the way it had. That is the mundane level. Okay. There are other levels that we must consider also like the arrangement of the heavens and the spiritual understanding of the people at that time. Okay. But Jesus was lucky when He was nailed on the cross; He died in glory. He died at the pitch of His career. Should He have lived longer He would probably have been made to suffer many more things than that... below His dignity even.

- Q. *Now for example, You see Jesus always said that He was just fulfilling. Whatever He did, whatever words He said, whatever His actions were, He was only fulfilling the scriptures.*
- M. 'I came not to destroy the law but to fulfill.' Well, every Master does the same. When they come they only explain the scriptures more clearly for the people. Yes. Without a truly enlightened Master, not many people understand what the scriptures are all about. You see a lot of misunderstanding. You know all the scriptures, in most of the scriptures the writing is all forbidding meat-eating, but you see the churches from very high to the low, bishops and the followers, everyone eats meat and drinks wine. God said, 'Who told you to kill all these she goats, bullocks and he bullocks to offer to me? Your hands are full of innocent blood. You should stop all these sins, otherwise when you pray, I will turn my head away, won't listen to you. Repent and stop, otherwise I will not forgive you.' Is that not so? Yeah. If God forbids even us to kill to offer to Him, how could we dare to eat ourselves and offer to ourselves? No? It's illogical. Yeah. Ask all the Pope's officials to answer you this one question alone. One sentence only, don't need to talk the whole bible. Everyone is spiritually blind without a living Master. Therefore, to be blind physically is nothing. I consider these people, who come to me blind to be very, very, very enlightened indeed, better than millions outside who have eyes but could not see. Therefore, the bible says, 'See and you see, but you do not perceive; hear and you hear, but you do not understand.'

After initiation everything becomes clearer to each initiate. They wouldn't have known it before. That is called 'illumination,' yeah, 'enlightenment.' We are enlightened. We know the Truth, because the Master has shed Light on the Truth, on the unrevealed Truth in each bible, in each scripture and let us know the Truth inside. Even so simple like the sentence I just mentioned about the bible, but how many Christians know? How many of them know? Let alone understand, they read it everyday. They read the bible everyday. And in the church the priest knows the bible by heart. They must know in order to pass the exam. No? But they will not pass the exam in heaven, if they do the contradictory things, with the bible. 'Meat for the belly and belly for the meat, and God will destroy both meat and the belly.' [Laughter and applause.]

Women are degraded blindly

- Q. *And Master, what would You say about the bible and the Dharmapada, they, both of them, they talk about women. We are both women so this is quite an important subject. In the Dharmapada Lord Buddha mentions that He did not want women to enter the order.*
- M. I don't blame Him. Women are dangerous. Can you imagine, can you imagine the whole sangha, all bachelors, all men with beauty and strong bodies and physical sexual drive with the physical body. Now, enters a few women. What do you think? It's already difficult enough for them to struggle alone and there now comes some temptation. What do you think? It is even more difficult. But anyhow, the Buddha was also considering the social custom of India at that time; also the difficulties in the sangha because they always had to move around under very difficult conditions and harsh conditions, and a woman probably could not bear it. Even some men could not bear it never mind women. Some of the monks when they just follow me they just say, 'I cannot catch, cannot catch up, I cannot catch up with Master. It is too much. It is too fast. It is too much.' They all complain but after a while they all get used to it. It can be harsh sometimes.

When I was in Philippines. There were a few monks and a few lay people with me. Including one man and one woman newly arrived, newly followed, that were new practitioners. The man slept all day long and the woman could barely catch up. Now, whenever I turned around and asked for woman... There was also one uninitiated man around in the group. He was a political man because I had to deal with the Au Lac refugees, at that time; so we had to work with some uninitiated political persons. And he was scared seeing the way I moved. [Master pants to show he was out of breath.] He was huffing, huffing like that. And one day I asked him, about that woman. I said, 'Where, where is that, such-and-such, the woman? Where is my woman disciple?' He said, 'Dead.' [Master laughs.] 'She is half dead.' I said, 'What? I am leaving and then she didn't even come to the airport to send me off. What kind of disciple is that? What is she doing? Nothing much.' And he sighed very miserably and he said, 'Oh Master, she is just an ordinary woman.' [Master laughs.] I said, 'What you mean? What do you mean she is just an ordinary woman? What about me?' I didn't really understand. I didn't mean to make difficulty. I was so surprised. I wanted to tell her to do something for me when I left, but she wasn't there, so I was very, you know, kind of excited. And he said, 'Oh! Nobody can do the way You do.' Straight like this. [Master laughs.] 'You're not, not a woman. You're not from this world. Nobody can catch up with You.' He made it straight in my face like this. He said, 'Not even a man can catch up with You never mind a woman.' And I was so startled, I had to think, I had to think. So I couldn't say anything. I still keep thinking ever since, whether it is true.

Q. *You know one day, I was in the Himalayas in Jhotirmath. The Shankaracharia is there. He is the Pope of the Hindus. You know a woman, a female body is not allowed to stay there. I was in my sanyasi (monk's) clothes, no hair and they thought that I was a male.*

M. So they allowed you.

Q. *So they allowed me and I didn't tell them anything. I just played the game with them. I lived together with all the other monks, we had lunch together. My voice sounds like a male, I hit them on the back so I behaved like a man and I was totally accepted. When I went to take a shower, I put my feet on the door like this, so the other monks would not open it and find out that I am a nun and not a monk. Now it was around six o'clock and we had been with the Shankaracharia for several hours talking and he was giving us a lecture. To me he seemed like a very enlightened being. Then naturally, I felt he was very enlightened, this supreme Pope of the Hindus. But then I heard a female voice coming from downstairs. At that time we were all on pilgrimage at Jhotirmath and there were thousands of pilgrims. This nun was of the Saraswati Math which is the same Math (order) as the Shankaracharia. There were several men there and she was the only female. She was answering them because they were attacking her. She had bleeding feet because she was walking in the pilgrimage without shoes. She was answering them because they were kicking her out of that place. They were treating her in a very vicious way.*

M. Very vicious. I know, I know, I know. They really hate woman. They think women are dangerous. But they do not know the reason, they're, not logical. They just blindly follow the rule and any woman that comes there will be beaten and kicked out. They don't care what happens to you. They just have to keep the rule. That's it. They keep the precepts blindly without considering, no understanding.

- Q. *With no understanding and without following the teachings of the Shankaracharia. The first Shankaracharia said, 'We are all one.'*
- M. They think a woman will pollute their order and make them impure, by their presence alone. They feel a woman is inferior to a man.
- Q. *They feel that she is the devil. They have reached that point.*
- M. Yes.
- Q. *So naturally, they treated her like that, with contempt and no compassion at all, because it was evening already and freezing cold with snow. The nun couldn't walk any more because she was already exhausted and bleeding.*
- M. Yes, fanatic.
- Q. *Fanatic, You know. And with her there was another monk, also of the Saraswati Math, but he didn't say anything. So, she was standing there like with twenty men against her. So, I just couldn't stay comfortable with the monk's bed and sleep overnight there, then see the Shankaracharia at nine o'clock in the morning like we had arranged. I couldn't do it. I had to defend her because I am also a female body. So I came out.*
- M. You were there just for that.
- Q. *Just for that only.*
- M. Just to teach them a lesson.
- Q. *To teach them a lesson and I knew they all thought that I had a monk's body.*
- M. It was arranged so that you be there.
- Q. *God made this, You know.*
- M. Otherwise, nobody could be as blind as you figured, to take you for a monk; a 'monkey' maybe.
- Q. *Monkey, yes, but a monk! They all thought that I was a monk, all of them. They all believed I was a monk, only male. They never thought me to be a female. So naturally, You see I didn't want to deceive them. I just played whatever they put on me and continued playing it. So naturally, when this woman came out screaming for help. I went to her defense. I told all of these monks that all of them had come from a female body. You were born from a female. And that, I couldn't really understand, because in Hinduism they really venerate the Mother. The Divine Mother is very important to them.*
- M. Yes, yes, yes.
- Q. *But they would not give her any space, not even close to the bathroom in any sheltered place. We were on a high hill. That meant that she had to walk down that hill with bleeding feet and half dead, all that hill.*

M. Then they worship the Divine Mother.

Q. *They do. The Divine Mother, they do. But they did not see this in this poor nun. So naturally, I felt responsible to take care of this nun and get a place for her where she could sleep and eat. So, I told them the truth, that I didn't have a male body but a female body, also.*

M. Precept is to protect the practitioners. We shouldn't attach to it without flexibility and then cause harm.

So now, you keep your precept, at least...

Q. *To speak the truth, yes. So then, You know, I took this poor nun with me as well as the other monk of the Saraswati Math. The people, the other men were horrified, and I told them that I wouldn't see the Shankaracharia.*

M. Horrified.

Q. *Yes, horrified. And I told them that if the Shankaracharia taught us that we are all one, then we also have to show this in our acts. Then with the other monk we took this poor nun. You know, it was all filled up, the whole place, with thousands of pilgrims. Can You guess where we got a place for this nun who is a Hindu nun? It was with the Sikhs.*

M. What? Oh! Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes.

Q. *The Sikhs. You know the Hindus and the Sikhs were fighting and killing each other.*

M. The Sikhs accepted them when there was no other place.

Q. *The Sikhs were the only ones who opened the door for the Hindu nun. Then I saw the absurdity of religion.*

M. Yes. Yes, yes, yes, yes. Only love that counts; not religion. Sikhs are fine individuals.

Q. *They are beautiful. I spent time with them and studied with Sikh saints.*

M. Yes, Hindu people are also fine individuals from what I have seen, but there are also some fanatics like what you have seen.

Q. *Yet there are other saints, other Hindu saints who don't make a difference between a male and a female. But You see, it is difficult to find a female saint. You are the second one I have met in my life, because they are not there. It's always male bodies who take the sainthood.*

There is neither man nor woman in the kingdom of God

M. They are stronger, so they took all the places. Woman can not fight with men, so they give up. Also woman normally don't have a big ego. If some people have so big, a great competition going on, she would rather say, 'Okay, then you sit.' Women are trained, in the family, to take the second place, also in the saint kingdom. Males are normally very aggressive and have ego, a big ego. No wonder they occupy all the seats even the saint seats. That's what happens. All the women have done great

service to mankind. Without woman no male was ever born and after they are born they continue to attack woman and degrade woman; after woman has carry them, fed them, and nourished them, and educated them. Anyhow, that's the battle of the ego. In the kingdom of God, there is no male, no female. Okay. I feel like a female when I want to feel like a female and I feel like a male when I want to feel like a male.

Q. *True, I do the same.*

M. According to the situation.

Q. *Yes.*

M. And the necessity of the moment. Otherwise, I am neither male nor female. If I am a male, I couldn't be Buddha. If I am a female I couldn't be Buddha. If I am a female I couldn't be a Buddha either because if you are fixed in a frame, you couldn't be Buddha. You have to be flexible.

Q. *But do You know, they have said that there have been so many Buddhas and they are all male. There hasn't been one female. They are all male Buddha names.*

M. You didn't read the Lotus sutra? The Buddhist Lotus sutra? When the Buddha was alive, there was a Bodhisattva called Manjusri. When all the Bodhisattvas assembled together, they asked Manjusri, 'Ah, You have been teaching all over place. Has anybody become Buddha under Your teaching?' Manjusri said, 'Yes, yes, there was one little female dragon. She became Buddha. She was only eight years old.' So, that is a curse on all males. No male ever became Buddha so young, including Shakyamuni Buddha. They have to be over thirty, in a male body and in a human body. That little dragon girl, eight years old became Buddha. They play jokes sometimes. Now if a little dragon girl can become Buddha why couldn't I, why couldn't I become a Buddha? Yes. If she's only eight years old, how much time could she have had to practice? At the most is eight years, yeah. And she could become Buddha already. I am over thirty years, forty. How can I not become Buddha? Illogical!

So, you see, they are fighting with themselves. Yeah! I don't care about the scriptures even. Because at one time, at one point, Buddha spoke to different disciples, and at the other time He spoke to a different group of disciples. Oh! He said many things. And some of the scriptures were not even spoken on earth, therefore the levels are different. For example, the scripture of the Earthstore Buddha, Bodhisattva. It was spoken in heaven. When we open the sutra, it immediately introduced that the Buddha went to such-and-such heaven and all the Bodhisattvas assemble there together. Okay. And the disciples, the advanced disciples went over there and heard everything, recorded it, came back, wrote it again down. Therefore, how can we explain the differences or sometimes the paradoxes between the scriptures? It is because the Buddha taught the earth people differently, and taught heaven people differently, and taught the Bodhisattvas differently. There are many scriptures, were not spoken on earth, like the Flower Gallon scripture; not about the earth.

Q. *The Heart sutra.*

M. Well, that is another thing. The Heart sutra the Buddha spoke to the uh... to one disciple only, to Sariputra.

- Q. *Oh, Sariputra! So... because he was the one who could understand what He was saying.*
- M. Uh, huh. Okay. So, everybody else just catch it and then read aloud and then, and how you say, recite it everyday without knowing anything. It's not the level of Sariputra – the people.
- Q. *It is like when I started to study the Lotus sutra I couldn't understand it either.*
- M. Oh, it's very easy.
- Q. *Difficult, difficult.*
- M. It's easy now.
- Q. *Yes, yes, yes.*
- M. You read it again.
- Q. *Okay, I will try.*
- M. I often mention the Lotus sutra especially the chapter of Quan Yin Bodhisattva.
- Q. *Tell us.*
- M. If you understand Chinese, it would have been clear, you'd be clear about it. I cannot tell again the same thing. It's in a different language.
- Q. *Yeah, tell us, tell us, tell us.*
- M. No, I am not in the mood now. It has to be in the right time. It has been recorded in Chinese, especially this time, in the retreat. Why don't you ask someone to explain it to you in Spanish. When the retreat video or tapes come out, you explain that part for them. [Master instructed one of the practitioners.] Well, you could ask me what you don't understand. What you don't understand you could ask me.
- Q. *For example, You know once Buddha was asked by a man who believed in God if there is a God, another man who didn't believe in God, if there is a God, and then the Bodhisattva was sitting there also waiting for an answer. Then Lord Buddha...*
- M. Gave three different answers.
- Q. *... Three different answers.*
- M. Is that right?
- Q. *Right yeah! So He acted like a mirror in a way but He never gave an answer. Explain. Please explain.*
- M. Tell me what answer you don't understand. Ask me and I'll answer.
- Q. *You know the first man who believed, He just answered what the man already believed. He said 'Yes, there is a God.' To the one who didn't believed He answered,*

'There is no God.' So He contradicted the first answer. [M: The third?] To the Bodhisattva of course, He didn't talk at all.

The reality of God

M. This was very compassionate. He should have beaten him, beaten him. Yeah! Fancy entering Bodhisattvahood already and still asking that silly question. Understand? For the man who believed there is God, he was so firm in his faith, and that so-called God comforted his life and kept his life in order and disciplined. Therefore, the Buddha did not want to break that pattern without having the time to build a new image of God for him. For example, I also always mention about God. If people believe in God, and they keep their life pure and disciplined and also meditate on God, then why should I say there is no God? It is no good for them. It confuses them and breaks everything that they ever cherished and built up; and they base their life on it. Okay.

And for the one who believed that there is no God, probably that man was enlightened. You know, he knows there's no such God as we imagine God. But we have to be enlightened, to know that God is a force of power, love and wisdom. It's not the so-called God that most people believe. You know the imagination of human beings; there is no such God. That's what he meant. The second man meant that there is no such God. But the Buddha of course understood what he meant and understood his level, so he confirmed it, 'Yes, yes, no God.' When that person already understood what God is, means it is not a personal kind of person, or somebody who you imagine would do this and that for you at your request, and things like that, then the Buddha just confirmed it. He said, 'Okay, you are fine. That's good.' That doesn't mean the Buddha is an atheist. It's just that He truly understood what God is. Not simply a norm but the true God. A God without having to say, God. Do you understand? A wisdom, a loving power and all compassionate.

Q. *The universal, not one person not the single person.*

M. Yes, yes, not the God like most people think.

Q. *I believe it.*

M. And the third, the Bodhisattva, of course, he shouldn't have asked this silly question, if he called himself a Bodhisattva!

Yes, okay. Anything else? Oh! Yes, yeah well, the Bodhisattva did say, 'Why did you answer the first man yes and the second man no?' Silly question, of course! Yeah! First, it had nothing to do with him. It's not his business whether the Buddha said yes or no. Yeah! He should have understood. Anything else? You are clear?

Q. *Yes. Now we look at Jesus. We see that Jesus totally penetrates the old scriptures of the Jews and He becomes part of that message of the messiah.*

M. Come on, you are finished?

Q. *So, when I look at the Jews, and then I question myself. Lord Jesus knew He had to die the way He died, because He went once to ask God, 'Please Lord, can You take this cup away from me?' He didn't want to die like that.*

- M. Means, can you take this bitter cup from me? He didn't want to drink that; or that is the human part of any Master. I would ask the same thing, if I were to be crucified. I ask the same thing when God demands me to do something that I don't like to do; I do it at the end. The Master does many things superhumanly and endures every situation, and has infinite patience and love. But doesn't mean the Master loves to do anything or everything. Well, they are scared, too. They don't like it, too; but they have to do it. If they love to do everything, then what is the value of their sacrifice? Understand?
- Q. *Yes, I understand.*
- M. For example, you love money very much. You care about it, and you earn a lot of money, because... you want... you work hard for money. But when necessary you give it to someone. Not because you don't like the money. If you don't like money, why do you work so hard? But because you had to do it for the sake of other people. Therefore, the money you offer is even more valuable, because you like it. If you give something away that you don't like or you wanted to get rid of... then what... what is the point of talking about it?
- Q. *But why would God want Jesus to die the way He died?*

Sacrifice is the reason for a Master's body

- M. Otherwise, His disciples would not be cleansed of the sins. The body of the Master is for two reasons. First, for the disciples of the physical world to be able to see. They couldn't see the astral body of the Master. Second, the body of the Master is for sacrifice. It is to receive all the things that the disciple has to get rid of, to deposit the sins of the disciples. And then to be... has to be cleansed out. For example... you know the garbage collector. First, they have to collect... they have to bring the garbage up to their body. No? They have to use their hands to take the garbage can and then put on the car. And then afterward, dump them into the sea or in the garbage area. But meanwhile their body must be dirty and smell of garbage. The garbage will not stay with them, the smell will not stay forever. But they have to wait until they go home and wash it, and have time to wash it. At least, when they fetch the garbage, the garbage is with them, even for just five minutes or five seconds. Understand?
- Q. *The Buddha also had His disciples, but He didn't have to die like that.*
- M. There are some reasons. First, the Buddha was in India. India was... a country of holiness. For many thousands of years people were vegetarians, and reading scriptures, and practicing, and worshiping the saints. They are pure in the heart. Second, the Buddha also suffered, but differently, mentally, yeah! One day He couldn't stand it. He left all the disciples and went to the jungle alone, for three months. Of course, the Masters don't often mention about the inner suffering, but there is. It is there. No Master escapes it. And sometimes the inner suffering is so great, too much, it surfaces on the body like a very unreasonable sickness or something like that, or outside attack, or criticism. You see, the inner suffering is worse than the outer suffering. It's worse than hell... sometimes. Sometimes when the Master is smiling, or making jokes, or dancing, or eating, even with the disciples, nobody knows what's going on inside. The Master often suffers behind closed door. You remember Milarepa?

- Q. *Oh yes, I do.*
- M. Even he didn't have that many disciples. He didn't have that many disciples. He wasn't that famous at that time and he hid himself in the Himalaya caves. He didn't even go in the cities and make himself available to lecture in open public. Only some came to him by word of mouth. And you know, even at that time, to go to the Himalayas to see him, this was an incredible thing even; so not many people could do that. You know how inaccessible the Himalaya regions are? So, you can imagine not many people came to see him. Even then he suffer from poison. Some people were jealous and poisoned him. That's why he died. That's why he died. And he knew it, but then he accepted it. Just like Jesus knew He was going to be crucified, but He accepted it. No choice, no choice. When God wants, you have no choice.
- Q. *Why does God want things like that?*
- M. To clean the sins, to clean the sins of the disciples.
- Q. *Couldn't Hes invent a positive way of cleaning the sins of the disciples?*
- M. No, because this world is not positive. This is a world of the negative power. Once you enter this world you have to do according to the law of karma. Otherwise, you upset the kingdom of this physical world and it becomes chaotic. And everybody just does what they want and they always get away with it. Killing, stealing, and doing every bad thing, and nobody gets punished.
- Q. *As You know, Ramana Maharshi died of cancer, and also Swami Shivananda. Did they also take the...?*
- M. They did. That's only the last part of the play. There were more dramatic things going on while they were alive.
- Q. *What about Swami Vivekananda who didn't die like that?*
- M. How did he die?
- Q. *I don't know. I didn't hear that he had any cancer or leprosy or any thing like that.*
- M. But he had other things. Not all die from cancer or are crucified. No?
- Q. *Like Sri Aurobindo just had a samadhi and the mother also.*
- M. The inner suffering, the internal suffering and the mental suffering is worse than physical suffering. I told you. But I told you, there are also different levels of Masters. If you don't initiate disciples, and don't take their karma, you don't have to suffer. Vivekananda wasn't a master of their level.
- Q. *And Sri Aurobindo?*
- M. Don't ask me. Otherwise, everybody would scold me. Masters are different from teachers.
- Q. *But all of them have to go through meditation. That means the key for masterhood is always meditation.*

Jesus Christ practiced Quan Yin method

Q. *There are different meditations. For example, Jesus, what type of meditation did He do?*

M. Quan Yin.

Q. *How do You know?*

M. I know.

Q. *So Jesus also had the omniscient mind.*

M. What?

Q. *Jesus also had the omniscient mind, omniscient mind.*

M. Yeah, yeah, yeah! He did.

Q. *He did?*

M. Oh, please don't ask me! If I tell you many truths. It's okay you can ask me. You ask intelligent questions, you continue. Other people I don't want to hear. And for other people they have asked so many thousands of times already and they have abused me many thousands of times, already, and I won't let them do it again.

Q. *Like Jesus was with the Essenes. The Essenes were a holy order which were by the Dead Sea. Do You know about it?*

M. Yes. He was from the Essenes' order, who were always vegetarians, since thousands of years, and they had a lineage of transmission, at that time.

Q. *At that time?*

M. They were the 'White Brotherhood' who transmitted the Light and the Sound. And at that time it was very difficult to enter that order. And you had to take vow of celibacy, and never to transmit the teaching... outside openly. Anybody who entered that order must be introduced by some elder members and had to pass through many years of tests before they could get the initiation of the final order. Then they could wear the white robe. And this order, they were fantastic. They were 'love incarnate.' And Jesus was the one who broke the promise of keeping silence. But it was by the order of the most high, of course. He got inner message. Otherwise, nobody of His order had ever preached openly like that before. First, because of the vow. Second, because of the danger. Therefore, after Jesus was crucified. Oh no, after He openly preached, and at that time or before His crucifixion, all of the 'White Brotherhood' were watching Him closely, trying to protect Him, in many ways. But they couldn't help it. It was they who snatched Him from the cross, or from the cave.

Anyway, I talked too much. I talk too much about unnecessary things. Ask some other question.

Q. *Yes, tell me about the Egyptians.*

M. Egyptians?

Q. *Yeah, the Egyptians. Egyptians! Egyptians they were high initiates also.*

M. Yes, because at that time they had a real living Master – Moses. When Moses was there, they were initiated, some of them were initiated by him and kept the lineage, for a while. And at that time, that was why they believed they were the children of God. Just like you believe you are the children of God now, entering the sainthood after initiation. With a real living Master, anybody is a high initiate; without, neither Egypt, nor Palestine nor anyone is highly initiated. It's the inner power that opens, through the Master. It's not the outside scriptures and rituals.

Q. *Now tell me, why did Moses make these two mistakes? One was that he killed, remember, he killed those Egyptians, and then he left for forty years to the desert.*

M. That was before he was enlightened.

Q. *Also, when he disobeyed the Father, when the Father told him about the water. He didn't have faith and he continue to...*

M. Yeah, that's the human part of Moses.

Q. *That's the human part of Moses.*

M. There are many nonsense. For example, you know God... Oh, there is so much something nonsense in this scripture... I don't want to talk about it... Is it okay? Can I talk?

Q. Yes.

M. For example, we say God made the world in seven days, six days. But then when He wanted to make the ten commandments it took forty days and when... and supposed to be very holy and untouchable, I mean respectable. But when Moses came down and saw everyone making merry, and drinking, and making silly, he broke them! He broke God's commandments, that took forty days to make. He broke them, yeah! He broke the stones that inscribed God's commandments. It was supposed to have been written by God's hand. Is that not so? Okay. And then, when people repented, okay, He came and made them again and this time quicker!

If you asked me again, we would be in trouble. I might talk, and my talk might not please the church or anybody else. Sometimes I don't talk because I don't want to offend people. No offense?

Q. *No, they say you don't offend.*

M. Okay, all of you are Christians. What shall I do?

Q. *I am both. I'm Buddhist and Christian. Listen, and then when God gets angry. How can a God get angry with Hiers people?*

M. This is an interpretation of humans. When we say God is angry, it means the law of karma is at work. And at least the lord, the god of karma is angry, not the almighty.

- Q. *Therefore, Moses could not enter the promised land, only see it, for this reason. His own karma came upon him. Is that it?*
- M. It is a kind of collective karma of the group, of the Egypt... of the Jewish people. Because God had helped them through many disasters and showed them many miracles during their 'exodus.' Helped them, saved them, and gave them food and drink, and they never had to worry about anything; but then they disobeyed God. You see? And they wanted something opposite to God's order. They disobeyed God's commandment. Therefore, what they refused, they can not have it again. Or at least, it will have to be reconsidered after a long time. For example, you go to see a doctor and you have emergency, and the doctor immediately wants to take care of you. But then you look at the doctor, and then you don't like it, and or you get cured, and you are ungrateful, and you say, 'Ah, I don't want to see you. I want this. I want that!' And the doctor, of course, cannot argue with you too long, he has to take care of other people. Then later when you feel sorry, you want it again. No! there is someone else in the line and you have to wait. You refused it! The doctor is operating on someone else and he cannot just leave him open, unfixed, and go and take care of you because you were before. You refused your appointment. And then you say the doctor is angry with me. It is not true.
- Q. *Now then tell me the fight between the Jews and the Arabs that is still going on today. God said that Hes will punish these people now because they disobeyed Hirm. Hes is going to disperse these people upon the world and then Hes will have the Arabs fight with them all the time until the end of the days.*
- M. Yeah, that was because they worshipped the jealous God. They worshipped the lord of the second world. They worshipped the lord of karma which is the second world, and that God punished them. If they had worshipped the almighty, or if their Master Moses was a very high order saint, they wouldn't have to go through this. Also, once you miss a chance, you have to go through suffering for many, many generations, many thousands of years, until the circle ends, and you are truly fed up with everything, and you truly repent. Then a Master will come and rescue you.

One of our fellow practitioners, when he saw me first time, he listened to the lecture and then he went home. He did not want to get initiation. He refused it. He thought it was not necessary. He thought he was a good man. He practices, and he just meditates off and on, and he does only good things, and he doesn't need a Master. And a woman, a woman Master! 'And the Buddhist scriptures say woman can not become Buddha,' so he said. But he was a good practitioner, from a previous life. He had the merit of meeting the Buddha and of becoming enlightened. Apart from his big ego, he had his good part. So, when he came to see the lecture, he felt, he knew, he saw a vision, and he saw a lot of Light and Buddhas there. He knew that the so-called Master Ching Hai is not ordinary. He knew it, not that he did not know, but he refused it. He said that he didn't need it, he alone was enough. He had good merit, and he always made offerings to Buddhist temples and charity, and everything is okay, alone. So he went home. And then some of the disciples kind of pushed him, 'Why don't you get initiation? It is a very good opportunity. You never know if you die without initiation, you never know when a Master will come, you know anything could happen. Go get initiation.' And then he was kind of, how you say, shaking in his own conviction.

- Q. *Could the Supreme God be manifested in a body?*

- M. Hes could be manifested in a body.
- Q. *Whatever body Hes wants? The different disciples of different religions when they pray to God and they are sincere, they are true devotees of the Lord, all of them. Can they really communicate with that One of the fifth level?*
- M. Mostly they communicate with the lord of karma.
- Q. *The lord of karma is from the second level. The Jews call him Jehovah, but that wouldn't be the same as Yama the lord of death?*
- M. No. The lord of death is in the hell region, on the first plane.

The lords of the different levels

- Q. *So, it seems like the Supreme God puts different lords in charge different levels.*
- M. Yama works with lord of karma, okay.
- Q. *So they would work only until the end of our days here on earth.*
- M. Yes. They would work until the end of their position.
- Q. *Do You mean, in the kalpa like for example there are four kalpas for the Hindus, in that sense?*
- M. Until the lord... until their karma is finished.
- Q. *That's serving, You mean, they're purifying? It is complicated. But when they are in that position they have God's power to execute their work. Now the rishis and saints, they can interfere with those laws, because in many stories it tells You that they change those laws.*
- M. Yes. The Masters are above all these. Normally the Master does not use Her Master position to suppress them. They just cooperate with them and take the souls across their region; but never suppresses them. Just like an advisor of the president. He has power over all the ministers and even the guards at that gate. But he would never come and say, 'Hey you, you are only the guard of the gate.' He would not. You know. He would respect him and come in. Show his card, and wait for the guard to open the door, and allow him to come in. He wouldn't just drive through the gate, without talking to anybody, even though he is very familiar in the palace. He respects every person's job. But of course, when he wants to take somebody else, who normally would not be allowed in the palace, he can. And because of his presence, and how you say, his guarantee, the guard would let anybody come in with him to the president. Otherwise, nobody can come into the president's palace. Understand? Any ordinary person that goes with an influential person, to the presidential palace, can go through.
- Q. *You know, the Lord Buddha once said, He said, 'If I could take you all out of all this suffering and ignorance, I would do it immediately, but I can't.'*
- M. Yes! Yes!

Q. *So, in a way, He is not omnipotent. But the Lord is omnipotent. So...*

An enlightened Master saves people with logic

M. The Buddha is, the Buddha is omnipotent, but we have to use our will.

Q. *Why can He not just liberate us all?*

M. No! Then it's no fun. [Laughter]

Q. *But there's more suffering than fun.*

M. People like suffering. The Buddha and Jesus can not force people when they are not willing to follow. People have free will. That's the difficult part. And this is the negative world. They have to work according to the order of this world. They can not break everything. This is the kingdom of the lord of karma. If you enter this kingdom you have to work accordingly. The saints are allowed to come here to reason with people, to talk logically to people, and to entice them to come out by their own choice, and wisdom and will, not by magical power, not by hypnotism. That's why the work of the Master is difficult and full of suffering. Otherwise, anybody can be a Master, and one Master is enough to take the whole world up, empty. But it's not allowed, because some people have to be left here all the time, in order, so that other saints will come out and make connection with heaven. Because as long as people are in this world other beings can evolve. You remember the bible, the Old Testament?

Q. Yes.

M. God has commissioned mankind to rule over, to be king of the animals. That means we have to take care of them, teach them, and help them evolve. And when the other animals come up to become humans, then there must be some other humans already more evolved, more wise, to teach those new born humans. Understand? There are trees, rocks, minerals that have to evolve and become human beings. If they come up and nobody teaches them, then they go back to the kingdom of minerals and trees again.

Q. *How can a plant learn, for example, what is good and bad?*

M. They learn slowly, with many thousands of years experiences, by absorbing the teaching from the energies, from the surrounding atmosphere. But their understanding and digestive system is slow. They have to be in such kind of atmosphere for many, many thousands of years until they finally awaken and know 'Ah! Yes! That's it!' And then they will be given the human body. They are young souls. Just like it's easier to tell your bigger brother and sister what to do, but it's difficult to explain to a younger children, child what it is you want. It takes a long time for them to understand you. It takes a long time for them to enter college, and when they enter college, some professors must be there to teach them. Not everybody can become a graduate and go outside of the college, and nobody there to welcome the new comers, new students. Not everybody should become college teachers. But the primary school teacher is also important. No?

I talk too much. Don't you think it is enough?

MEN'S DEEP AFFECTION ¹²⁰

I know it's not easy for men to practice. They're more easily agitated, more active and more competitive. They have more loving feelings. Everyone thinks women are more affectionate. Actually, men are more affectionate. Their affection is too deep to express. Shedding one or two tears, women will be okay. [Laughter] They pour out their feelings, shed tears, 'washing' everything away.

However, men cannot cry. Men can't just say anything. Men are not so talkative. They hide their feelings deep inside – very deep and concentrated; so they have more sensual desires. Their sensual desires are stronger, because they keep all their feelings deep inside, never let go. Everything is collected there. There are no outlets. That's why it's more difficult for men to practice.

Everywhere it seems that female practitioners are more numerous than male practitioners. Not because they are lousy. Why are men afraid of women? Because their affection is so deep, not because women are dangerous. They are not dangerous, anyhow. I'm a woman. I know it. [Laughter] Nothing dangerous. Just a little bit imprudent. What I mean is, they just say what they want to say then it doesn't matter anymore. If men get angry, their anger lasts longer and is deeper. But it is seldom like this for females.

We should know our shortcomings, and try to improve ourselves. It doesn't matter! It is good to know that. In the future, if you have something on your mind, you can cry. [Laughter] Tell someone that you love her then you will feel better, feel more comfortable. [Master laughs.] That's true. Sometimes if you say it, you feel more comfortable.

Men can cry also

Why do I sometimes have a lot of pressure? Because some things I can't say to just anyone. If I tell you, I will only give you trouble. You won't understand either. I don't have a partner to talk to, [Master laughs.] so the pressure is very great sometimes.

However, you shouldn't be like this. Men are human, too. They shouldn't pretend they are 'men.' No crying, but still 'boo-hoo'! [Master mimic the way men cry.] [Laughter] You won't lose your face if you cry. It makes you feel very comfortable. God has made this 'system' so that our inner resentments have an outlet.

Like a water tower, it has a hole. If the tower is too full, it will overflow. The sink has a hole inside, too. If it is too full, even something clogged at the bottom, the water still can run out. Any system is similar to this.

So, if you got something on your mind, you'd better find a friend to talk to, or tell it to the one you like. No matter whether they agree with it or not, just say it. I mean, for example, if you have a very strong feeling toward someone. Just tell her but don't expect that she will accept it. It's okay if she doesn't; you just say it. At least, you will know whether she accepts it or not. If you just keep it inside, it is more troublesome.

When we get angry with someone, we feel too shy to complain. It's the same when you are angry with your wife, just tell her. Sometimes you misunderstand her. Sometimes she misunderstands you. If you talk it out then she will understand better. Sometimes she

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doesn't understand right away, but afterwards she might think it over, 'Oh, you're right!' Then the situation will change. You should give it a try.

Most men don't understand themselves, did you know that? They think they are apathetic and have no feelings, because they can't cry and express their feelings. No, men are most affectionate. People normally think men are betrayers – easy to forsake their family. It's not true. It means it's easier for men to leave the family. No! Mostly people who run away from families and leave their children alone are not men, but women. [Master laughs.] Just check the statistics. I didn't check, but that's what I've noticed. Men have more sense of responsibility. Though they don't love their wives very much sometimes, they still stay at home. Most women always squabbled, are agitated and jealous. Their reactions are stronger.

Men's feelings are deeper. Mostly men are the ones who obstruct their wives from practicing. Some women sneak out or run away at times. Their husbands don't even want them to go out. Not because they are dictators, but they love their wives very much. There is no husband who doesn't love his wife. It's rare to find a man who doesn't love his wife lifelong.

Sometimes they go outside to take a look at other women. Surely, if they see a pretty one, they also fix their eyes on her; but they won't give their love to her so easily. It is always the women who run back to their parents, men don't. Very rarely men run back to their parents, always women. [Laughter] It's not so? [Audience: Yes!] This means men's emotions are steadier, deeper. He knows what he wants, but women are more imprudent.

You don't have to misunderstand yourself. Emotions are useful. You don't need to ignore or hide them. If we are full of emotions, the power in us will be enormous. Emotions are very useful. We can concentrate them on practicing, and it would be very good. Therefore, most of the Masters are men. My destiny is bad. I don't know why. How come a person like me with my female qualities can be a Master? It's because I have male qualities, too; not only female.

You, men, should try to understand yourselves more. Do you understand your mind a little bit more now? [Audience: Yes!] Although I'm not a man, I do understand you better. It is strange! Have you ever understood yourselves very well? You have? [Audience: Not very often!] You wouldn't think you are so affectionate. Those who run back to their parents' home are always women. Women get upset easily, [Master laughs.] but men are more prudent and steadier. They know they love their wife, why should they run away? They think it's no use running away.

I've seen many wives who have ran away from their families, leaving their children there. Their husbands still brought them up. It's very hard, but they are willing to do that. Originally, we thought that only women could take care of children. It's not true, as long as we have the loving and caring affections, we can do anything.

Just like in the animal world, who teaches them to look after the babies? We human beings can learn this by language. We also have nurseries or many materials for baby-care. Some pregnant women go somewhere to learn baby-care before they give birth; they learn what they should do. But animals don't have this kind of system. They cannot print information books. They can take care of babies very well, too, right? [Audience: Yes.]

Some animals, like the apes, they keep holding their baby in their arms, even after the baby has died. The mother keeps holding the dead baby until the body is putrid. Then the mother ape herself also gets infected and dies, because they have love for their children.

So, do not think only women can look after children. Why do women look after the children? After giving birth, she thinks it belongs to her. [Master laughs.] Sometimes she regards her husband as an outsider, the third party, 'There's only two of us.' [Master laughs.] That's why when a baby is born, the couple's relationship is affected. It is because the wife loves the child so much that she forgets who is the most important person. From day to night she only takes care of the child, and almost forgets her husband.

Another reason is, men usually go out to work. They are very compassionate, thinking their wife is frail after having given birth to the baby. So, they should stay at home while they go out to work very hard to support the family.

Therefore, from ancient time, it has always been women looking after children; not because they are more capable. Most people misunderstand this. I know that it is because men are more compassionate. No wonder most gurus are men.

So, you don't have to despise yourselves. Men's love is not like women's; women are apt to reveal their feelings. They do all the embracing, weeping, wailing, making a lot of noise or something like that. But men have a steadier compassion. It's just very normal, very common and very usual. Even men themselves don't recognize their own compassion, because they originally had it. So they take it for granted.

It is like we, practitioners, don't recognize our greatness either. We only know that we make progress everyday. That's it. We just get used to it. Except when someone talks to us, then we discover that their level is far below ours. Then we realize – practice makes us different. Though we know the difference, we don't feel arrogant.

Similarly, men's compassion is more natural. Because they already had it, they don't feel anything great. When women have a little bit of compassion, they exaggerate, talk a lot, and make it known nationwide. They only do a little good, and everyone knows it. Just like me, I'm worldwide famous, not only nationwide. Everyone knows I have compassion. [Master laughs.] [Applause] However, even if the whole country knows that, I myself know nothing about it. It's different.

Attain the Truth with the spirit of sacrifice

So, I think since ancient times, most male practitioners have become gurus. That's for sure. Today our viewpoints have to change a little bit. We should not always listen to what people say. That's how it is. Fewer women sacrifice themselves and say, 'Let me go out to work. You stay at home and look after the children.' They think their husband should feed them. Even though some women are not yet married, they have this expectation already. Getting married is being fed by someone, and having someone to rely on, lacking the idea of independence.

It's not all their fault, either. Maybe it's because of the way they think, their weaker bodies by nature, and their more frightened characters. Also they are brought up to think that a woman should be dependent on a man. So, that is not only women's fault, but the system of the whole world makes it like that also.

Actually, women do have this kind of attitude. They're used to it, perhaps their thinking is more narrow. That's why you don't see a lot of women sacrificing. It's rare for women to have this kind of thinking, 'I'll go out to work and let my husband stay at home and play with the kids. He might be happier this way.' Even though it is tiresome playing with kids, it's also very comfortable.

So sometimes, we women think that looking after children is such a hard job, and men go out working and are very free; but that's not so. Men go out and work really hard! Sometimes they have to tolerate the boss's temper, the pressures from the job, colleagues' jealousies, and so on. But when we women stay at home taking care of babies, it is very comfortable; because babies are so cute. Looking at them, you already feel very comfortable. Babies are the ones closest to God – their eyes are so bright; their faces are so innocent; and their skin is so soft; the hands are so cute, so small and so chubby. Every movement they make is so lovely. So, many people like babies. We say that we sacrifice ourselves looking after the children at home, but that is not true. We know taking care of children is a rewarding and fulfilling job.

Very few women leave their children behind and go out to do something for a long time; except, practitioners of the Quan Yin method, we go away for one or two weeks to attend seven-day retreats. That's different. But if she meditates longer, she will also miss her children; and she won't be able to bear it any longer, because she is used to looking after them. If you men were asked to take care of the children, you would also become very attached like that. They'd like this job. There is no one who doesn't like kids.

So I think men are more affectionate. That affection is the devotion for sacrifice, not the affection for hugging. Men's love is different. When a man loves someone, he will sacrifice for her to make her happy. Sometimes he doesn't even have many clothes for himself, but all the money is given to his wife. Then she buys cosmetics, hundreds of pairs of high-heel shoes and fashionable clothes. He is happy when he sees her happy. He is very delighted and proud when he sees his wife is very satisfied. Therefore, his love is the real love.

Today I know the difference. Strange! How come I can analyze things like this? [Master and audience laugh.] I'm not a man. [Applause] Maybe I have done the research – researched inside, by sometimes being close to some men. It is just for my research, studying their actions, studying their states of mind. Then I can take good care of you men; because I can't always take care of those women. They have enough so I need take care.

They're happy that I'm a woman. 'Master is a woman!' They feel happy and arrogant. So, no need to say anything more. But I feel that you men have been neglected a little bit. I do not know how Shakyamuni Buddha cared for His male students when He was alive. He was very strict. I am a woman, perhaps I have neglected you a little bit. That's why I study so hard. Maybe from studying so hard the answers emerged; just become enlightened.

Therefore, I realized some things today. The thoughts cross my mind very naturally, as soon as I saw you. I didn't do it on purpose, nor did I do any research. Everything is arranged. Do you understand that? [Audience: Yes, we do.] Your love is very close to a Bodhisattva's. You have the spirit of sacrifice. When you love someone, you like to see them happy. You are willing to do anything that will make them happy. It means you really have the spirit of altruism instead of egoism. When someone's happy, you're happy. This is real love for others. It's called 'altruism.'

No wonder you get better results when you practice. It is no wonder that most Masters are men. That's nothing strange! Furthermore, there is a background influence from society for men to practice, but your love is also an important factor.

Mostly, men go out to work and support the family. Even before they marry, they have to support their parents, family and sisters, too. It is men who have the spirit of sacrifice.

Spiritual practice can really benefit your family

Besides, when the country is chaotic, men must go to war. They know that maybe they won't come back, but they still go. They leave their wives, families and parents behind for the country. Even though they're forced to do it sometimes; sometimes they are willing to go. Although men are destined to do this, it implies that men's spirit of sacrifice is already there. The love is very natural. It is already there. I don't know why most men cannot recognize their virtue.

Very few men tend toward spiritual practice. Maybe it's because they are so responsible. They think that they should work, support the family, take care of parents and sisters, et cetera. Then they forget the most important thing which is to take care of their souls. If we give our parents and sisters millions and billions of dollars, or properties, it won't be better than our one day's practice. It won't be better than our few minute's, one hour of practice, not to mention one day. One day is too much!

Of course, we should give them a comfortable life if possible. If no one can look after our parents or our sisters, we should perform our duty. If someone can do it for us, we don't need to do the physical caring so much. It would be better for us to take care of their spirit. If we practice, they will get more benefit. Even their material life will be taken of care by the creator because of our merits.

It is said, 'When one attains the Truth, nine generations will be liberated to heaven.' Anything the ancients said reveals wisdom from their own experiences. Otherwise, why do people in every country say the same thing? In China, it is said, 'When one attains the Truth, nine generations will be liberated to heaven.' The same is said in Au Lac and India. In India they say five generations are liberated. They just say a number, five generations randomly. Five or nine makes no difference.

Great Masters think alike

It means there are Truth seekers everywhere, and their attainment of the wisdom is almost the same. That's why they all say the same thing. Great minds think alike. It means people who have great wisdom usually say the same thing. Sometimes you study the scriptures. Reading the chapter that Jesus said on the Mount Sinai is exactly the same as the Buddhist scriptures about 'the way of Bodhisattva.' You may compare the bible and the Koran; they say the same thing. You can also check the Heart sutra scripture; all the same, nothing different. Shakyamuni didn't make a deal with Jesus. [Laughter] They both didn't plan to say the same thing. They didn't know each other. Also they were born at different times and in different places. Some people like Confucius, Lao Tzu, Socrates, and other Masters from different nations, they all said similar things. It is strange! Sometimes you read or listen to what I have said, which was not adapted from the scriptures. But afterward I read the scriptures and find, 'Ah! It's exactly the same as what the scriptures have said.' [Applause] Most things I teach you are from inside. Like today it is the first time I have talked to you about men's affections, first time in the world. [Applause] Is that not so? [Audience: Yes.] It is also the first time for me to hear about it.

[Laughter] I've never thought about these things. I've never spoken about them before. Today I just thought about it while I was talking to you. It was the first time. I have never heard of these before. It is always said that women are more affectionate. Today I didn't feel that way.

Most people say men are bad, I don't think so. That's because we human beings are not easily satisfied. Our affection is very deep, especially men's! How can it be so easy to give yourself completely to a woman at first sight? So, we keep part of our affection and only give it a try. [Laughter] When we feel that the partner doesn't suit us, we stop. We try another one to see whether we can give her our whole love or not, but it's still hard to trust anyone. We feel something wrong, and then go find another. It's not that our love is ever-changing, but we haven't found the one we can trust completely, the one we can give our deep and steady love. Is that not so? [Audience: Yes!] [Applause]

It is not easy to find an ideal partner. Sometimes someone looks right, but after both of you talk for a while, you find it is a different story. Sometimes it is still not evident after the conversation. Because it is not easy to express our feeling, so they still misunderstand anyhow.

For example, you ask your love, 'Do you like red clothes?' And she says she doesn't like red that much. So you stop talking. Actually, you should say that you'd like her to wear red clothes. [Master laughs.] [Applause] But you don't say it, you don't make it clear. You just ask her whether she likes red clothes or not. Of course, if she says no, then you think she doesn't like it. So you don't want to force her. Both of you are too polite, [Laughter] and you feel unhappy for the sake of this trivial thing. Then you go out and look for the woman in red. [Laughter] It is so silly! We should say what we want, no matter whether they like it or not. Then discuss it later. Do you know how to express it in the future? [Audience: Yes!] [Applause]

However, if families are not in harmony, it is also because of men; because you always keep everything inside. You don't try to speak your mind and you don't try hard to protect the affection and marriage. You think it will get better by itself, because you are over-confident. You think that it is enough for you to know that you love your wife, and think that she certainly should know it! You think in this way, but how does she know?

Women have less of a sense of security. Do you know about that? Though you've said it one hundred times, she still doesn't get it. [Laughter] Sometimes the reason why your wife doesn't treat you well is also your own fault. You don't understand a woman's heart. That's why she always complains. All because she wants you to say you love her, that's all. Nothing more! If you can express that, she'll feel secure. You need not to do anything else.

If your marriage is unhappy, you can't meditate well

Why do I talk about these things – marriage and affection? Someone may think that I am over-doing my Master's business. No! If your marriage is unhappy, if you don't get along well with each other, you can't be into samadhi. Your heart is suffering. Everything is a mess. Those unhappy things always trouble you, and you cannot recite the holy names, let alone get into samadhi. [Laughter] [Audience: Yes!] At that time your wife is more important than Master. [Laughter] I don't blame you for this. It is just a fact. At that time you even throw away the samadhi. [Laughter] You may say, 'I don't care about it! I don't want it! I don't want that!' Even though you want it, you cannot get it anyway, because of your bad mood.

I need to learn all these things so that I am able to teach you. I've learned those already. It's hard to avoid and control them. Of course, for our practitioners, the more we practice, the better we can control our affection; but there are some people who still are affected and suffer, due to human affection. So, it is necessary for me to address some so-called mundane affairs to you by the way, because there is no difference between mundane affairs and practice.

No matter who brings us the happiness, when we're in a good mood, we're in nirvana. When we are happy, we're in nirvana, we're in paradise. When we are happy, then we can love anyone, we can forgive anyone, and we are willing to give anything. If we are in a bad mood, we don't like to do anything, we don't want to take any responsibilities. There is no way even if we want to. There is no inspiration. You'll throw everything away, including the world. So we say Buddhist doctrines and the worldly laws work together. That's it! So you have experienced by yourselves.

AHIMSA AND VEGETARIANISM – A SECRET PRECEPT FOR ATTAINING EVERLASTING LIFE ¹²¹

If you earn your money by blood, it will weigh down your conscience. It's not that I forbid you to do so; I'm just telling you the secret behind these things. Any profession involved in killing, directly or indirectly, will hurt you. It will hurt your soul because it's your own principle that you're trespassing on or harming, not someone else's commandment.

You yourself wouldn't like to be chopped into pieces and fed to people or animals. If we take away any life, we take away a portion of our own life. And we have to pay for it in some way or another to make up for the hole we've dug or the portion of life we've caused to be lost. We have to fill the role that we took away by force. Because if that role was to be played by that animal until a certain year's time and you just take it away, directly or indirectly, you're taking part in a crime. So, we have to partially play that role somehow, to fill the hole or replace the missing part.

For example, in the theater there are different parts or roles. And if you knock down one of the actresses or if the director fires one, he has to look for another person to fill that role. If not, he'll have trouble. He will have caused the loss of a job, wages and money, and the whole performance will be spoiled. And he's the one who'll have the trouble. So, if you help the director to do that or if you knock down that actress yourself, then you'll also have more trouble. Somehow you'll have to pay for it in some form, either money-wise or by going to court or going to jail or even by playing that role yourself.

As for why we should not eat eggs, it's because the egg represents the cycle of reincarnation; it gives the impression of being able to be reborn. Also, eggs attract negativity. Those who practice voodoo know this. They use eggs to attract entities from people when they want to cast out negative spirits from some possessed person. They break eggs to attract that soul to leave. Because when the deceased or disembodied spirit sees the eggs, it's attracted; it thinks it can be reborn again in a body. So it goes into the egg. Then they take the broken egg and throw it out. And also the smell is unpleasant, whether fertilized or unfertilized.

This understanding is a secret precept for attaining everlasting life, not a commandment that I'm handing to you by force or by some kind of authority. It's just a secret formula for entering the kingdom of God.

121. Public lecture, Denver, Colorado, U.S.A., May 14, 1991 (Originally in English).

Live for the present

- Q. *I hear from a lot of different sources about the end of the world, at the end of the century, in terms of ending an era.*
- M. Aquarian age and golden age?
- Q. *Yes, impending changes and physical changes. Is there anything that relates to this practice?*
- M. Yes. It also happens because you've changed. Well, it happened to you individually: You've changed, you got initiation, you are vegetarian, you feel better now, you're wiser. In that case, it's true; the whole of humankind gets uplifted and turns themselves toward goodness and God. So, in that sense, this clairvoyant prediction is true.
- Q. *Well, a lot of people have made prophecies about the year 2000 – significant changes, but not necessarily for the good, more likely the opposite. Because two thousand years ago we had Buddha, Christ and so on, so the 2000 mark seems to bear some significance throughout history.*
- M. So, you want me to become another prophet, make another prophecy, right? My prophecy is: Let's wait and see. The surest way is live until the year 2000 and then we'll see it happen. It's more fun!

You see, if you're reading a detective book and someone tells you the end, is that fun? I don't like to spoil the fun. What will happen will happen anyhow. Whether you say it or not, where can you run to? How can you run out of God's hand? Let Him play what He wants. We'll watch.

We have no fear of anything. We play the game. Let's have that attitude. It's better than to know what'll happen in the future. Let's have the attitude of: 'Whatever will happen in the future, I'll face it.' That's more brave, more courageous and more fit for your dignity, than just to want to know things about the future and feel fearful, or resentful or anticipate some kind of boredom, or disappointment, relief, and things like that. It's no good. It affects our natural growth, and affects our surprise.

I don't like to know anything about the future. If I have that gift, please ask God to take it away from me. I like to enjoy surprises. Don't you? Can you imagine being born and knowing everything about your life? Wow, better to be dead, no? Would you like that? Born with a clear book about every detail of your life until you die: How many hairs will be greyed, how many teeth will be lost, how many lovers you will have, and how they will treat you. You enjoy all the pleasure and pain beforehand. You'd like that? And when you eat, when you taste it again, it's like second-hand stuff, like already digested food. That's right! No fun! I wouldn't like it.

The real wisdom is not to know the future. It's just to know the present! Enjoy everything at the present, and don't worry about the past and the future. The most wise person is like that. The wisest person knows nothing, and doesn't want anything; has no desires and no fears, because no ego. Who is that person who wants to know things and what for? What is the good of knowing things? What is the good of having anything and knowing anything? Must have a big ego to want to know all this, or to know all these things.

- Q. *I'd like to know if there is any relationship between negative energy in the world and things like natural disasters – volcanoes, earthquakes and things like that?*
- M. There is a relationship. Negative energy comes from our own bad thoughts and actions throughout the whole world. It gathers into a force and it affects us. Just the law of cause and retribution, nothing else. Don't blame any devil for anything. We are the devils, we are worse than devils. I mean people. Devils, they only punish those who are sinful; but human beings, sometimes we don't know who is who, and punish everyone – repay goodness with bad, sometimes betraying. Look at what Judas did to Jesus; look at what Buddha's cousin did to Him.

You know what human beings are like. Don't blame the devils. I think the devils have more of a sense of justice, of good and bad, of repayment, of how to requite kindness. The devils are very fine. Some of them are good. If you treat them well, they water the plants for you; they stay on guard in the garden; they don't let other things come and harm, take, and smell your flowers. Some gurus, they keep devils around to guard their house, guard their flowers. The devils do that out of favor. If they like that Master, if the Master is good to them, they will do everything. Devils are a little bit underlevel.

FOCUS ON THE TRUTH TO ATTAIN THE ULTIMATE TRUTH ¹²²

No one is perfect, but it's all right if you don't regard yourself as an ordinary human being. However, this isn't easy, because you have become accustomed to despising yourself life after life, and have lost track of your identity. You learn worldly knowledge and develop worldly talents blindly, caring only about surviving in this world. You have forgotten your greatness, so now you will train yourself again and rediscover your identity; it's that simple. Once you have rediscovered it, you can do anything you wish without running into difficulty, without having to give up your career, hobbies, relatives or friends. You can continue to embrace your lover. What it means is: When you realize who you are, everything is the Truth; and before you realize it, nothing is the Truth; this is the only difference.

Once you attain Godhood, you will sing and dance as you like – no problem, I can guarantee that! I mean that once we know who we are, we even become better in our worldly hobbies and talents. Therefore, I'm not asking you to forsake the world, but we have to be mentally prepared to forsake it in exchange for the Truth. We have to be ready to renounce it if and when it's necessary. If we're in this state of mind, we can soon reach deep into the Truth, into the vast ocean of wisdom. It's good enough to be mentally prepared without having to do it. We should have the determination and spirit to put the Truth before all else, and then the obstacles will definitely be removed from our spiritual path. If we don't have the spirit of renunciation, it would be useless even if we became a monk.

As I recall, there's no secret behind my attainment of the Truth. All I had then was pure sincerity. I pursued spiritual practice without any ideas, demands or any person on my mind. I was naturally like that. Even if you asked me to die for the Truth at that time, I would have done it, as I was not attached to anything in the world. Whether I had food or not, I would persist in my spiritual practice. I never complained, nor was I distracted from the Truth by food.

122. Group meditation, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, April 9, 1991 (Originally in Chinese).

I remember, when I was in India, I offered all my money to the so-called masters that I met, so I was left without a penny. I never anticipated that I might sometimes yearn to have some biscuits, candy or ice cream. I had a better appetite at that time and ate a lot each day. Since I had no money then, every day I dreamt crazily about having some biscuits, but I couldn't get any. Only when I went out with people occasionally, would I swallow anything I was offered like a hungry ghost. Even then, those things didn't distract me from my aspiration for the Truth. That's the only quality of mine that I can remember, and that's why God loved me, and let me have a taste of what the 'Truth' is like.

Therefore, I want to impart this secret way to you. Should we want to attain the Truth quickly, apart from securing an experienced master, we also need to have a sincere aspiration for the Truth; then it's enough. God doesn't require us to offer money, or to be a pure vegetarian. We observe a vegetarian diet to reduce our obstacles, and to refrain from incurring blood debts. God never imposes harsh demands of any kind on us.

For instance, when we go to school, the teachers never demand that we go to bed late, get up early, or learn this or that. They don't make harsh demands on us; but as students, we know that we can't study well unless we get up earlier and go to bed late. Also, when we're studying, we refrain from indulging in pleasures. Didn't we have a tough time when we were students? We sacrificed everything, and pleasures were very rare. Only occasionally would we go to dances or parties; we couldn't go every day. It wasn't because our professors or teachers forbade us, but we knew we must not be lazy and that was the way to successful learning. If we were sluggish, we'd have to stay another year, or fail the exams.

We spiritual practitioners also have to follow some secret guidelines, for instance, being a vegetarian to keep our body, speech and mind pure. Free from the annoyance of subtle guilty feelings, our conscience will be at peace. We also have to take good care of the family and observe monogamy. Why? Because if there is turbulence and bad feelings within the family, we can hardly continue with our spiritual practice. Our minds will be distracted, and we can't focus on spiritual cultivation. The precepts are there to help us, to give us more time to concentrate, just like when we're studying in school.

Another example is that we refrain from watching bad movies and reading erotic publications. This is meant to prevent us from getting stimulated, and then forgetting our inner self and our aspiration for the Truth. Keeping the precepts will not take us to Godhood. No! No! No! Let me cite another example: A student never goes dancing or indulges in pleasures, but can he graduate without studying? He can't! These are only helpful ways. In the same sense, you won't reach Godhood by keeping the precepts, being a vegetarian, or chanting the scriptures. At the most you can only acquire some knowledge and know more about ethics. Attaining Godhood requires an entirely different lesson of training yourself to discover and dig out your treasure from within.

Someone asked me: 'Is it enough to just take the precepts as our teacher?' What do you think? It's not enough! I'll give you one more example. For instance, when we're in the army, we have all kinds of regulations telling us what to do and what not to do. All soldiers must observe these regulations. However, if a soldier is only good at obeying the discipline but not at training his skills of fighting a battle, resisting the enemy, and defending himself and the nation, is he a real soldier? Of course, not! Nevertheless, soldiers, especially new recruits, must follow the regulations.

Now you must first discipline yourself, and when you've become a general, you can do whatever you want! You'll tell others to follow the regulations while it's all right for you to be

a little lax. It's because you've already gone through the training, and reached a higher rank than they have. It's time for you to train others instead of getting trained.

Therefore, when you've reached Godhood, perhaps I won't comment anymore about what you should do, but not now. Now you still have to follow the rules and train yourself to be disciplined. Otherwise, you'll be distracted and can't concentrate on our ultimate goal. For new spiritual practitioners, they had better keep the precepts strictly to build up their faith in the Truth. Therefore, don't ask me, 'Why are You so strict?' I'm not strict! I just offer you the secret ways of spiritual practice. If we're too casual in spiritual practice, it will be difficult for us to learn the supreme techniques. Therefore, new practitioners should follow the instructions of the teacher. It's very difficult to follow the Master's instructions. You all think that you can do it, but you may fail when the test comes.

It was written in an Indian scripture: The Muslim commandment says that not only should you not consume alcohol, even your clothes and your prayer rug must not be placed near alcohol. However, there's another saying that goes: If your enlightened Master tells you to soak all your clothes in alcohol, you must comply. That means you must do whatever the teacher tells you, and this is really difficult! There's an ancient Chinese saying which says: Upon entering a temple, you should offer your acts, speech and thoughts to the Dragon God Dharma Guards, which means total surrender. When you're totally free of your own ideas, ego, and human prejudices and thoughts, then you've reached the state of total renunciation. However, it's very difficult; from my observation, very few people have passed this test.

When I was in India, I once met a world-renowned master. I was coughing very severely, perhaps because I was allergic to dust. When I was there, I swept the floor every day. I observed that no one was willing to do the job, and the staircase was filthy and heavily covered with dust. Even the screens on the windows were very dusty, so I cleaned them thoroughly. Perhaps I didn't take good care of myself when sweeping the dust, so it went into my lungs and made me cough for several months. I coughed until I felt like my lungs were going to explode and I couldn't stand it anymore, as if I would die very soon. Day and night I coughed and could neither sleep nor meditate. Then the master there summoned me. I believed in him very much then; I believed in every master. [Master laughs.] Strangely, I had extraordinary faith. Whenever people said that someone was an enlightened master, I would believe it without testing him. That was how I treated all the masters I met.

At that time, I happened to believe in this master. He summoned me when he noticed that I was coughing very severely. I thought he would give me a secret remedy to stop my coughing, perhaps by using some miraculous power. When I went in, he asked me to drink a cup of liquid. After I drank it, they checked the bottle. Then both he and his attendant turned green. They were shocked. Oh, no! That was massage oil! I drank a large cupful of it. It was good enough that I didn't die from it. I must have had very strong life power. Both of them were pale and frightened, but they didn't let me know it; I found out later.

After that they came every day to ask me: 'Are You feeling okay?' I said, 'Why? I'm all right.' [Master laughs.] However, I felt really awful when I drank that medicine; I felt so bad that I wanted to vomit, but I didn't dare. How could I throw up the medicine given by a master? I regurgitated and swallowed it again several times until I swallowed it all. Phew! It was really terrible! It was sticky, spicy, bitter and oily. Good grief! I had never drunk any medicine that tasted so bad. Only later did I find out that they had given me the wrong thing. Yet I still didn't doubt him and stayed on for quite a while. Other ordinary people

might have said, 'He can't be an enlightened master! If he is, why would he have given me the wrong medicine and almost killed me?' But no suspicion was aroused in me!

Most probably because I was so simple at heart, and so dumb, God became more merciful toward me and let me realize the Truth sooner. I have very few secret ways. All I have are these very simple and easy ways, and I have told you all. Should you want to attain the Truth, your heart has to be as pure as a child's; be pure and simple in doing everything, then you'll soon attain the Truth. If you're complicated, dispute too much, debate too much, think too much about right and wrong, and take victory and defeat too seriously, don't blame me if you're very slow in attaining the Truth; your frustrations are self-created.

There's nothing really serious about the world. Sooner or later we'll all die, and our graves will be covered by plants in no time. So, before we enter our graves, we should try our best to live more happily, do what we love to do, and do it wholeheartedly; serve the world, take care of ourselves, take care of the family; enjoy all the beautiful things that the world provides for us. Sometimes ugly things are also a kind of lesson, and have their beautiful aspects. When we observe things through more enlightened eyes, we discern beauty in everything. Have you noticed how pretty the frogs are? They're very cute, aren't they? We can see the lovely side in everything.

Therefore, let's do our best to treat this world as a temporary paradise, and treat all the people around us as Gods and enlightened beings. Although they don't recognize themselves as that, we should still respect them and treat them as we would ourselves; be strict but also forgiving; be loving but also detached. Then we'll be more relaxed in our actions, speech and thoughts, and we'll naturally attain the Truth by practicing in this way.

Don't rush, don't be nervous, and don't force yourselves. It doesn't matter what level we've arrived at, as it differs between individuals. By and by everyone will understand. I can only promise you that you won't have to come back to suffer in this world, won't go to hell, won't become animals, and will definitely ascend. However, the level that you can reach depends on your confidence and sincerity in your quest for the Truth. You can't hold me responsible; I can only guide and teach you. It's up to you to go slower or faster, and keep yourself going in the right direction or the wrong one.

STEADFAST IN THE TURMOILS OF THE WORLD ¹²³

The Au Lac freedom seekers

Au Lac's history goes back four thousand years, and never has there been a case where they had to leave the country to go begging for love and food from foreigners. This is the very first time, and it proves that your fleeing and quest for freedom is a legitimate one. Only those who do not have any wisdom, love or compassion would not be able to recognize that. It needs no explanation. The risk you've taken, fleeing for your lives in a tiny boat without food, water, fuel, money and security, seeking freedom should be enough to show the unbearable conditions under the communist regime. Only the deaf and blind would not understand this. In the past four thousand years of history, no one has ever had to leave the country. There were times when we encountered poverty, misery, wars, wicked rulers; not always at peace or wealthy, right? But has anyone left the country? Wars, thousands of years being overruled, a thousand years by the Chinese, a hundred years by the French, and then twenty to thirty years of civil war, yet no one fled the country. Then why in times of peace do we have to flee the country? That is the thing the

123. Public gathering at the Bataan Refugee Camp, the Philippines, April 5, 1991 (Originally in Aulacese).

world has to ask and answer itself. If they won't, then we have to let them know. The Aulacese are very courageous; they risked their lives at sea, and killed themselves to glorify freedom. I'm not encouraging suicide, understand? It's a big waste. Because you've brought all of your valuables and skills with you risking your lives in order to come here, and then die. What a loss! Slow down and find a way out. Sometimes we have to pray so that the conditions will change, improve. You should console to your fellow countrymen, your relatives and friends with the things I've said. The sun will shine tomorrow. There are no endless nights, no days that shine forever. There is a constant alternating of positive and negative energy field. We must have hope in order to live. If we are dead, we won't know what is going to happen?

Diligent practice alters fate

Therefore, the diligent spiritual practice of a person can alter the fate of the whole world, the universe and of themselves. The proof is that in the recent years, there are many different groups of meditators that have begun to eat vegetarian. Even the Americans, the Englishmen are vegetarian and practising meditation. Ever since I started preaching, a lot of Aulacese have become vegetarian and have started to practice spiritually. Those refugees who have reached the free countries follow the spiritual path as well as those that are still in the camps. Even though the conditions are very unfavourable, lacking all comforts and food, they still keep the vegetarian diet.

There are so many people in the Hong Kong refugee camps that are practising my meditation method and keeping the vegetarian diet, and more than a dozen of them that have renounced and become monks. Because of spiritual practice throughout the world, the communist countries in eastern Europe have collapsed. Gradually, Au Lac and China will follow in the near future. Thus, we shouldn't lose faith. We should try to follow the spiritual path with the capabilities we have from within.

There is no way to avoid our own karma except by practising spiritually in order to change it. Therefore, Buddha didn't teach His child anything except to follow the spiritual path. He wouldn't allow His wife to do anything other than to practice spiritually. His son, barely nine years old, had already shaved his head to become a monk, His beautiful wife also became a nun. Why did He advise His son, Lahaula to become a monk instead of being a king? Because He knew that all the riches, pleasures, fame and power in society are nothing but illusion, like time passing by, like morning dew on a leaf. He knew that following the spiritual path, becoming Buddha is the only eternal way. Now, someone asks: 'How can I become a Buddha by just practising? I have no hope so forget it!' That is just an excuse. You don't need to shave your head in order to do spiritual practice. You can practice at home. When Buddha was alive, there were four types of spiritual practitioners. The renounced men and women were called monks and nuns, the men and women who practised at home were called laymen, laywomen. That meant that they all practised. At anytime there are always monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen.

Not reborn as refugee again

Whatever method you follow, you should try your best to follow it until you get deep into samadhi. That is when you attain the ultimate goal of that method. You just can't stand there commenting on which method is better. It's not necessary. Any given method is good. If you keep talking and never practice, then none of the methods are of any use. There are people who recite Buddha's name, kind of a meditation on the Buddha's name. They merge into samadhi, merge into Buddha's land, and were able to see Amitabha Buddha. Now if you want to achieve this level, first you must follow the guidance of a true

Master; second, you must practice properly, must be a vegetarian, recite Buddha's name clearly. You cannot one day eat vegetarian, and the other eat meat; it would be very difficult for your practice. If you are not a complete vegetarian, becoming a Buddha is very hard, maybe only a fraction of it is gained. Some are vegetarians for only four days each month; they become Buddha for only four days and the remaining twenty six days, they come back down here. Maybe you do it like taking a trip, right? For example, you live in Formosa and once a year you take a month's vacation, going to America for fun. So, maybe you think it is the same, twenty six days on this earth and then four days in Buddha's land. Being vegetarian for four days a month is not enough. If you want to become a citizen of Buddha's land, then you must be a vegetarian forever, you must sincerely, truly contemplate on Buddha's name, until you see Buddha, then you know you have gotten it. But seeing Buddha is not yet the highest level. At that time there's still the 'I' that sees Buddha. When you become Buddha yourself, then that is a very high level. However, if I keep talking about this, you will think: 'There She goes, preaching again, wanting us to become Buddhists, to practice spiritually.' It's not like that, nothing like that at all! I only want to say that if you want to live a more comfortable life, not to be born as a refugee again in your next life, then you must start immediately. Don't wait until death comes, losing this precious body, then even if you want to practice, it's too late.

Human body is precious

I've tried so many methods already, have gone from heaven to hell, and have discovered that only through the human body can one practice and achieve spiritually, exactly what Buddha taught us before. Now, there is an exception. Those who practised during their lifetime and were not able to reach the Buddha's level yet, then when they die, lose their human form, they will go to different realms. There, their Master will continue to teach them and they'll still be able to reach the Buddha's level from there. But if we do not practice spiritually now, in this life, and have not met a true Master, then when we go to different realms, neither will we be able to find the way, nor will it be possible to practice spiritually. We must start from here and go up. Therefore, having a human form is a great blessing, very difficult to get a human form. So, if you don't start now, it's a big waste, we will remain here in the future. From human form we can go to Buddha's land, Buddha's level. From other realms it is difficult to reach that. From human to Buddha is just like going from high school to university. But we cannot go from elementary to university instantly.

Au Lac is a holy land

You should take notice that Au Lac is a holy land; geographically speaking only. We have not yet talked about the spiritual aspect of it. Have you noticed the shape of Au Lac on map? What does it resemble? Does it resemble the letter S? Have you seen the shape of the symbol of Truth? It is a circle with an S shape in the middle dividing it in two, one side is white and the other is black. Have you seen it? It's kind of strange for a country to be shaped like that, resembling the symbol of Truth. Have you seen that picture? It's round, the symbol of eternal Truth. A circle with an S shape down the middle, right? One side is white with a black dot and the other is black with a white dot. What do you call it? Oh, yin yang. The shape of Au Lac is similar, right? You see how good geography is. By just looking at its geometric shape, you can tell that Au Lac is a holy land with gifted skilled people. For these reasons it is troubled with many trials, afflictions, to train, to discipline our spirit, our soul to be as bold, courageous, enduring and patience as the children of the 'heavenly dragon.'

From every misery hardship comes goodness, in every unfortunate circumstance there exists God's divine plan to make it better. Therefore, we now must accept our lives, away from our home, as they are. However, those living in this camp are the luckiest ones. This camp is nice, clean, seems elegant, and everything is provided for. The temple is big, the Buddha statue is grand, even the church is also very beautiful. You have everything including a courtyard to play ball. Entering this place, I feel like I'm in an model dream village in the sky, heaven; it doesn't seem like a refugees' village. I have never seen any refugee camp that's as pretty as this. This is the most beautiful camp. The Philippine government and its people are very, very generous and good-hearted. Tears fell when I went on television thanking the Philippine government and people for their gracious attitude, their compassion towards the Au Lac people. Of course, there have been misunderstandings while working with each other, or due to the numerous people the quantity of goods is insufficient, or at times has not been pleasing for everyone. But as a whole the people and government of Philippines are very good-hearted, right? They've never treated the Aulacese badly. Other camps are filthy, dirty. They don't care who you are. They overpower, rape, and do discriminating things to you. I dare not say this publicly in the world news fearing that the people from those camps might harm the Au Lac people, suppress them. I'm thankful their government has taken in the Aulacese as refugees but I cannot forgive the irresponsible actions from the workers, the military-like-management there. We must be thankful for the good things, yet the things that are bad, we must say they're bad. Unfortunately, in this scorching time, this crisis, the more we talk about it the more it will do harm to the refugees. So, in the mean time, I'll be patient, I will try to find a way to protect the ones that have been refused, see if I can reason with them so that they can stay or arrange a way for other countries to accept them. Therefore, we are forced to 'sacrifice' those few that are being suppressed to save the many. Evidence of the suicides, being suppressed, I have it all. It will be used at the proper time in case of an emergency. That's our last resort, understand?

United Nations and the refugees

I was also straightforward with the United Nations in saying: 'We have proof of those bad, vicious, wrong actions. We could broadcast them. However, the reason that we haven't done it is because we want to protect your reputation and also because we are grateful for the help that you have given our people in the past ten years. These things that have happened are unfortunate and were not your intention, but because of it, the screening process was developed. And due to the slow processing of paperwork, strict rules and confining of the refugees inside the camps for too long, the people get agitated and thus an unpleasant environment is created.' I suggested that they use the money to open up some kind of factory in the countries where the refugees are so that the Aulacese will have jobs to be able to support themselves and keep their dignity, instead of being dependent for food. No one can stand this; they all are very upset. We are not born to be a burden on society. Our principles would be damaged then and bad things would result. I told the United Nations directly: 'We know a lot of things, but we don't want to take it to any judicial system or say anything. The first reason is that we are still thankful to the United Nations and neighbouring countries for those years of assisting the many refugees in their time of need. We are very grateful and will always remember it. Secondly, it was not your intention. The third reason is that we don't want the workers in the camps putting more pressure on our people. So, for now, we will keep silent. However, if you do not heed our requests, or continue to do those immoral things, then we will be forced to take action, bringing the truth to everyone.'

I also want to let you know that I'm very grateful to the United Nations. Even though I argued or disagree with them on the refugee matters, I really admire the United Nations'

generosity in taking charge to help the Au Lac people, the refugees, at the beginning of their hardships. I'm also touched by those countries throughout the world who went to great expense to feed and help the Aulacese when they were destitute. Even though it's not enough, there are camps that do not have enough, life is miserable, but 'a piece of bread in times of hunger is as much as a meal for the well fed.' [Master cites an Aulacese proverb.] In representing the Au Lac people, I always acknowledge that fact and not forget their good deed while debating with them. Whatever is good I'll say it's good, and whatever is bad I'll say it's bad. It's like a beautiful girl that has cancer, the cancer cannot be pretty, understand? The tumor cannot grow on the beautiful body and become nice and pretty. A beautiful person is a beautiful person, a tumor is a tumor; it must be removed! It goes something like that.

Launch a new life

It's not that I'm neglecting or encourage you to disregard the favor from the United Nations and other neighbouring countries. We have to follow our Aulacese tradition of being receptive to guests, friends, and always find ways to return the favor. You are one of the fortunate ones getting ready to go to a foreign countries, I have nothing more than to share the happiness with all of you. There's nothing left to say, no more tears to weep for you, the only thing left is overwhelming happiness. [Bataan is a transit center where refugees are waiting to go to the third country for resettlement.]

Just a reminder to you, if you want to hear, that when you're out there make the best of all of your skills, talents and time as well as your body, soul and mind to gather, study and merge into a new life. Be a good citizen of that country to pay tribute to your second homeland, accumulate new customs that are righteous and beneficial for you and that country, and raise your children virtuously. Later on, if our country is at peace, we will return and be one of the pioneers to rebuild it, making it more heavenly and filling it with talented people. Our country has always been very prosperous and has never lacked food. The plants, trees are plentiful, the land is fertile. There are many minerals, resources all of which await your expertise, to be exploited upon returning, all await your money, assets to bring back and contribute to your homeland. You should never forget that you're Aulacese. Even though we do not discriminate among the races, but each nationality has its own culture, responsibilities and should construct their own nation. A nation that's more civilized will affect the whole world. If every nation is self-sufficient, self-supporting and has close relations with each other, then the world will be rich, strong and peaceful, without any country invading, attacking one another for lack of food or the necessities in life. No outbreaks of war due to the stronger country taking advantage of weaker, more harmless country. Therefore, protecting your family is like defending for your country. Defending your country is like safeguarding the world. Do you understand? Freeing yourselves from the communist regime is not enough. There are still many other duties.

Set an example as a good citizen

You are the ones that God, Buddha, has arranged to be in the foreign countries to learn, study the rights and wrongs, and to increase your skills and wisdom. Later when you return, you will serve and help beautify the country, a very wondrous country, no other countries are anything like our country, Au Lac. You have to be good citizens, setting examples for others to respect, to follow, and not always remain a week citizen. If you say that you love your country, then make it better, brighter, right? It's not only important to fight and destroy communism. The second important factor, no less than the first one, is what to do once the communists are gone. Who will lead the country? What must be done to be better than the communists? Once they're chased out, the land will be empty and if

no one does anything then it's fine! But the communists will return because poverty still remains, the competitive selfishness is still there. As long as the uncivilized still exist, communist will be there. Do you understand? I'm not talking about religion at all. I'm talking about life. There is no one among you that are presently following my path so why should I talk about that? I'm just stating what your responsibilities are as a citizen. We are kind, gentle people who do not know how to fight battles, wars, kill people, therefore we have lost to the communists' cunning schemes, sadistic tactics, but not because we are cowards. Do you understand?

You are ordinary, simple, too kind, so that's why you've lost. Now we're going to fight the war with our minds, hearts devoted with love for the country. We will use all of our skills and time to study the good things, refrain from luxuries, abstain from drinking and parties; we will not do things that are harmful to our bodies and minds, defaming our country. Our country is falling into ruins, the people are wretched. How can one sit there cheerfully toasting drink after drink, right? You must keep in mind, how can you be happy enjoying the materials of the world? I'm not forbidding you to drink. But you should think about it, how can one enjoy playing cards, doing those things, having the pleasures in life? You must uphold your mind, heart and soul, body, strength to perform good deeds, practice virtues, set a good example for those in the homeland who have not had the skill to go overseas to learn, and teach the people to better themselves. Those are the responsibilities of the people who have fled and are in the foreign countries. It's fortunate that there is war therefore the majority of talented people get to go overseas. A long time ago, while there was still war, it was difficult for us to go to the foreign countries to improve our skills, right?

The spiritual practitioners are the real soldiers

Within the bad there exist the good. Just like roses have thorns, we can't always look at the thorns, we must gaze at the rose. We keep it fertilized not because we love thorns but because it will bear flowers, roses, so we ignore those thorns. We can trim the stem where the thorns are, but we leave the roses alone. Even though we keep the plant fertilized and the thorns grow bigger, we don't want to stop taking care of it because we want the thorns to be dainty. If we stop caring for it, the roses will also stop growing. That is how the good exists within the bad. This is not the time for us to sit here hating the communists or to call upon people to come and fight them. We must do something, prepare ourselves for when the communists disappear themselves. Then there's no other place for them to stand later on.

So, you see I'm also a fighter against communist, but in a gentle, harmonious, secure way; there's no way for the communists to influence the people that have followed me. That means the communists have lost quite a few members. In America there are many that were with the communists. Now they all follow me, have received initiation, have become vegetarians. There are only a few that are still stubborn, that's all. It's a fight without actually fighting the communists, ending communism but without killing the people. It only changes them that's all. The ones that are practising spiritually are the real soldiers. Don't think that they don't know how to fight wars. They do, but with different tactics, more beneficial, long lasting, saving themselves at the same time as fighting.

Mentally prepare to rebuild the country

You could also do something similar. Increase your wisdom, knowledge and skills, widen your avenues of understanding in the world of freedom, so that someday when you return to Au Lac, you will be able to propagate sturdy, prominent concepts; concepts that are

encouraging, progressive, enterprising for our people. Thus, there won't be any place left for the communists to stand anymore, right? Only when the people are weak, backward, without a firm belief in independence, then that's when they can be deceived and influenced by the communists. Once you're accidentally in, you can't get out. Right now you have a crucial task. When you leave here, you must study conscientiously the advancement of technology, educate your children properly, what is right and wrong, so that it will be useful when you return. Au Lac will not always be communist. You have to mentally prepare yourselves to return and rebuild the country, understand? That's all, thank you!

QUAN YIN METHOD IS THE MOST EXACT SCIENCE ¹²⁴

Practicing the Quan Yin method is a matter of science that's more exact than the most exact science in the world because worldly science sometimes seems correct to us, but tomorrow someone else will prove that it's incorrect. But the science that my fellow practitioners and I are studying right now is not incorrect at all. For example, each person has a different level, but the path on which he or she travels is exactly the same so we know that it's exact.

For example, suppose ten people get initiated at the same time, but each has a different level. If some of them are at the same level, they'll see exactly the same thing or have similar experiences. But people's levels are different from each other's. For instance, say four of these people are at the first level, three are at the second level, two are at the fourth level and one is at the fifth. In such a case, all of those who are at a certain level will have experiences specific to that level. So we know that this science is quite exact.

VEGETARIANISM MAKES US HEALTHIER ¹²⁵

Nowadays, some so-called doctors are still very inclined to the old theory that people need meat to survive. But you can find plenty of books using research from other scientific work, and many other doctors who say that meat protein is harmful, toxic and bad for the body. And they have proven a thousand and one percent of it. So, don't listen to one theory alone and be convinced about it. We don't need a meat diet, not at all. No one needs it. Actually, many people are cured of sickness after beginning a vegetarian diet. Is that courageous enough instead of listening to the other theory? We can be hypnotized into believing in one type of theory and convince ourselves of that theory, and then believe that meat is essential to us. But it's not true.

WHAT CAUSES WAR ¹²⁶

My friends, let us have a few minutes to pray for your noble work, that you will fulfill your mission, and to pray for the peace that we all work for; and then, we will start. Please pray in your own way with your eyes closed; contact your God inside.

Thank you. I am very honored to be here, the best place in the world, and to see the most selected and intelligent people of all nations.

Welcome to the United Nations. I have told our president here that the United Nations is probably the best thing since 'sliced bread,' and she said that she had never heard anyone

124. Public lecture, Stanford University, California, U.S.A., March 16, 1991 (Originally in Aulacese).

125. Public lecture, Boulder, Colorado, U.S.A., March 9, 1991 (Originally in English).

126. Public lecture, New York, U.S.A., March 6, 1991 (Originally in English).

use that phrase before. I said I also don't use it except in the right place because I am afraid people would not understand, and also because there are not many things that are better than 'sliced bread.' But the United Nations truly is. I have read some of the work that you have done for the world, and I pray that God will bless you with full health, power and intelligence in order that you may carry out your work.

I do not feel like this is my first time here or the first time I have spoken to you. I feel very close and friendly, so please feel that way too, in case you don't. Before I came here, while I was in the car, I just closed my eyes for a few minutes, and then I saw the entrance. Yes! Because I asked the lady who drove, 'Do you know where the entrance is?' She said, 'Yes, yes. We should be there soon. It is in such-and-such a place.' I thought it was her first time. I was thinking she might go to a wrong entrance. I just slept for a little while, and then I saw 'visitor's entrance.' Probably I have been here before or we have been in United Nations' conferences in many other lives. Who knows? I saw the entrance while in the car before I actually came here, so it might not be the first time that we are together.

Someone in the United Nations had invited me to come here to address the assembly and it was, oh, a long time ago. It must have been eight months ago, and at that time I wasn't thinking of coming here at all. When I was asked, I said, 'Well, maybe. Let's see.' Because then I was thinking, 'Well, the people who work in the United Nations probably have different interests from mine. I am just a spiritual person, and the people in the United Nations are probably working in so-called politics.' That's what I was thinking, in my 'unenlightened' manner, you know? Please forgive me. Then I thought the ones who work in politics would not be interested in what I have to say. But then later I thought I could not think that way. Politics is not the sole issue of the United Nations. They have worked on humanitarian issues, as well as on peace and on many other kinds of relief for the world. They also practice meditation; this I heard afterwards. Then came the war of the Middle East, many issues about the Au Lac refugees and the policies of Au Lac. Some of the Au Lac refugees who didn't want to be repatriated committed suicide and things like that. So, I thought it would be a good time for me to come here, to understand more about your work and also to have a nice talk together.

It should not be that we let the United Nations shoulder every burden and responsibility, and put blame on them. Everyone should work together with the United Nations, because we are also citizens of the world. No one should just stand outside and watch the United Nations work, and then blame them or criticize them. We should come in and work together. That's what I think, therefore I've come here today. Whether I can help or not, that is another question; that is God's will, but my goodwill is with you.

Therefore, I've studied your books, your pamphlets and whatever I could get, so that I could be in the United Nations, be one of its members, an invisible member, a volunteer. You cannot fire me because I am a volunteer. [Master laughs.] I will be here forever. I am the permanent member. You cannot sack a volunteer, you know? You cannot fire a member who volunteers to work forever. So, here I am, you have a new member anyway. Welcome or not? [Master laughs.] [Someone in the audience answered 'Yes.'] Thank you.

Someone has suggested that we talk about war and peace, since it is the current theme of the world. I would like to be brief about war and be long on peace. You see, everyone of us knows about war, but we do not truly know what is the cause of it, and how we should eliminate it. It sounds like a novel, a fairy tale, but we can do it. We can eliminate it. Because after a while, people will be tired of war, whether they are the winners or the losers. Even those historic warriors, like Alexander the Great, Napoleon, Arjuna of India, they all finally got tired, too. So, why wouldn't we, the modern warriors, not be tired and

want to learn how to avoid these things? But if you want to avoid it, it's not only our will be done; it's God's will. We must act according to what God wants, and in order to know what God wants, we have to be prepared; prepared in our speech, in our body and mind, to listen to what God says and not to what we say. We always pray for peace, and we don't know what God is trying to say to us about it, how to get peace. Therefore, we do not understand how to go about even though inside everyone knows, everyone likes to stop wars and to preserve peace in the world.

The United Nations is the first agency to worry a lot about war, and to put most of its efforts into regaining peace. It has always been doing this since its founding day. I doubt if the world would be as it is today without the United Nations. We still have war, some famines or refugee problems, but without the United Nations, I think it would be worse. You understand what I mean? You couldn't do your perfect work without the cooperation of many nations. So, it is not entirely the fault of the United Nations if we still have wars, other political issues and unsolved issues at the moment, because some members of the world just refuse to cooperate. I know it's very difficult for an organization like the United Nations to move the whole world when some of them just stay there stamping their feet like children and just don't listen, just do their own thing and want their own way. For that I am very sorry. The work of the United Nations is very, very tough, very difficult and delicate, and needs a lot of patience, diplomacy and strength. May God bless you with all these any time you need them.

Before Alexander the Great died, he instructed his subordinates that they should put him in the coffin with both hands stretched out empty, to teach the later generations not to go into war, not to accumulate any possessions because when we die, we have nothing. But it is sad that some members, some citizens of our world or some nations didn't fully understand this lesson. Let us hope they will.

Most of the people who make wars are the ones who are too well protected, who speak from their own chambers, from their own sofas, and who don't go out into the battlefields to fight in danger. Therefore, they bring forth this kind of disaster to other people, including their own citizens, because they do not truly sense what danger in battle is and what suffering means when one is wounded or tormented by the casualties of war.

When Napoleon Bonaparte of France was standing in the battlefield between France and Austria, he was so shocked and so hurt because of the casualties. There were about fifteen thousands of soldiers who died from both sides. He wrote a very desperate letter to the king of Austria at that time, saying: 'Please let us make peace. Let us stop the war.' He wrote to the king that: 'You have not been in the battle like I have, so you don't know what it is to stand here along with fifteen thousand corpses around you and to see the daily suffering of the soldiers.' And that's not all. How about those who stay behind? Yes, I think most of you have watched the film 'Born on the Fourth of July,' and you know what it is like. There are the after effects also, not only the immediate effects.

I don't know which radio station it was that interviewed me a few days ago in Texas. He asked me, 'Is the war good or not? Should we, as spiritual people, resort to war, like they do now in the Middle East?' I said that we should stop the cause, not the consequence; it's too late. If we don't want oranges, we should never plant an orange seed in the ground, or at least we should never water it; we should take it or pluck it out of the ground when it is little. But some people like to nourish war for whatever reason you might know. You know probably better than I do. Some of the people that I know said to me, 'Well, we have to take care of the people of this country, therefore we have to make wars in order to have the benefit thereof for our country.' That's very good, very patriotic from this view point, but

in the long run and from a spiritual standpoint, it is a loss, because later on the karma will come. Karma is the consequence of what we sow. Like it says in the bible: 'As you sow, so shall you reap.' When the cause is not good, the consequence cannot be good. If we try to make money, have fame or nourish a group of people or a nation from the benefits of war, then later that cause will also feed back on us, and we will become the victims. We cannot sow an orange seed and get an apple; that is the physical law of this world. As long as we are in the physical world, we must obey the physical law. No one can avoid that, even if he is a Buddha or a Jesus Christ, let alone we who are the ordinary beings!

Therefore, the people who make wars have not studied the Bhagavad Gita the Buddhist doctrine of the law of karma. And they might not have even glanced at the bible which says: 'As you sow, so shall you reap.'

A long time ago when the Buddha was alive, He told a very interesting story of how war started. Since ancient times – since people began to appear on this earth – the cause of war, the seed of war had already been sown. So now, what we are having everyday is just a consequence of that, a continued consequence or an unavoidable chain reaction.

The story goes like this. In the beginning of time, after this world of ours had been destroyed, there was nothing here. Everyone had gone to different worlds according to the desires and the tendencies they had when they were still in this world. Some were sent to probably a more miserable condition, some would sleep for a long time, and some went to so-called heaven. Most of the people who were virtuous went to a place called Yin planet. 'Quan Yin' has nothing to do with our method, okay? It is just a place called Quan Yin. Now, people stayed there in glory for long, long, unimaginable periods of time. After that, this planet came into being. At first it was just nebulous and uninhabitable. After a long, long period of time – you must imagine it was billions and billions of ages – and then this world come into being.

Slowly, the first group of people, those who stayed in this so-called Quan Yin planet appeared in this world. At that time this world had no leader, no beings, nothing. One of the beings from that higher planet saw that this world was empty, the throne was ready, so he came down. That was the first being, whom we called Brahma. Well, according to the story. Don't say I said so; it's what Buddha said. Okay?

Then suddenly he saw that he was so alone; that wasn't good, so he said, 'I wish some more beings would come to me.' Then they came, all those beautiful people from the Quan Yin planet. They called it Quan (Light) Yin (Sound) because on that planet people were nourished by Light and Sound only. They were not in need of solid food like we are now.

So slowly, many of them came to this world and settled down, but when they came here they lived in Light and glory. They could fly anywhere they wanted and be anywhere instantly. There was no need for vehicles or any physical transportation, no need for any language. They could still understand each other perfectly. They could still be very free in their own way, in their glory, and they lived in glory for long, long ages, trillions of years. Then slowly, this world became more solidified, more beautiful, more visible and more glorious. Some of these beings walked around the sea or flew around the seashore, and saw some kind of foam from the sea. This foam looked so beautiful, so shiny and smelt so nice. Many very strange fragrances emanated from this kind of foam which floated on the sea. Some of them were curious, so they just landed and tasted some of it.

First they looked. It was so beautiful and it smelt so irresistible, so they tasted it. It was so nice. They never ate anything before and they didn't think they would need it. They never

thought there was such a thing, so nice and tasty, so they ate more and more and more. Eventually, everyone knew about this beautiful foam on the sea, which tasted good, smelt nice and looked beautiful, so they all came and ate. The more they ate, the more they became heavy. Their appearance changed. Their power changed and slowly they could not fly very long distances anymore. Slowly their Light, their aura became shorter, and more dull in color. But they didn't notice that much. Anyway, it was too late to change. The foam was too good. The more they ate, the more they wanted it, so they could not stop eating. After everybody ate, the foam was gone because they ate too much.

Then something else appeared on earth, a kind of weed that grew all over the place. Anyone could take it and eat it. It was kind of crawling weed. People liked it also. Because there was no more foam, they tried the weed, and the weed was also tasty, nice, beautiful and fragrant. So, they ate, and everybody ate. The more they ate this weed, the coarser their bodies and spirits became. They could hardly fly anymore. Their physical bodies began to change for the worse, not for the better. They were beautiful and glorious before. Now they looked more coarse, and some sounds began to emanate from their mouths. There was no need to speak before but now they had to make some sound in order for the neighbors to understand them. It was just some babbling, but it was sound. They could not stop eating now. They had become like addicts. Oh! It was so beautiful, so good, so they kept on eating.

After that something else came. The beautiful weed was not there any more, and they went searching around for something else to eat. The earth offered something, like rice or wheat. The earth began to offer these kinds of things, and people ate them. But these things grew outside, in the fields. From where they lived, they had to walk some distance and take them home. These thing did not grow over the place like before. So, they took them home and them, and everyone had enough everyday. But slowly they began to be lazy and said, 'Why should I go everyday to field and get what I need? I can take enough for two or three days, then I don't need to go everyday.' So they took three days. Their neighbors saw this and did the same thing and other neighbors also did the same thing. Some people who were more greedy and took for ten days, others took twenty days.

Slowly the wheat supply disappeared because everybody took much more than they needed. After a while, the trouble started because the ones who had a lot feared that the ones who didn't have would come to steal, and things like that. So now, a council was formed by the people to settle these disputes and to make the laws. That was why the government of the world was formed – because of eating nothing more noble. Then they divided the earth in different pieces; this part was for Mr. So-and-So, and that part was for Mrs. So-and-So, and no one was to violate to division.

The more they ate these things, the coarser they became and their bodies began to change. Some changed into a woman's shape, some changed into a man's shape – what we call men and women nowadays. Before that, there wasn't any shape; everyone was exactly the same, living in glory and love together. There was no physical attraction between each other. But after they ate too much of all these things, there was fighting, stealing and disputing, and things began to change so tragically. People began to look at each other with wonder and attraction.

Those who ate less would still be more beautiful, and those who ate more became more ugly. The ugly chased after the beauty. The beauty would be the woman. Yes, probably because we ate less. [Master laughs.] Therefore, until now women are still being called the beauty. So then, the so-called man began to chase after the woman because they were more beautiful. Everyone loves beauty because of that – because we were born beautiful;

we were from the beauty. That's why up until now, everyone loves beauty, and all the women put on all that beautiful make-up just because they remember deep down in their memory that they had been beautiful, or their real self is beautiful. So, whatever their appearances on earth are, they are not satisfied. The men too, no matter however beautiful his wife is, he still likes to look at another beauty, because he remembers in the old days everyone was beautiful, more beautiful than his wife even. So he cannot be satisfied with looking at one beauty. That's the cause of unfaithfulness. It's not that he is really bad, it's just that instinctive nature inside us.

Even greed, the hoarding of money and possessions and the love of beauty came from the noble root that we have been in a more glorious world, where all things were in plenty. We had everything that we needed without even asking, and we were all beautiful and glorious. That's why we still love all those shining jewels, make-up, beautiful men, beautiful women and like to have a luxurious life. It is because we had them before, and we miss them now. Therefore, we try to get them back as much as we can, as much as our ability here will allow us. Therefore, all those so-called bad habits and instincts in men stem from a very noble root. If we knew it, we would feel more sorry rather than blaming ourselves or accusing others for chasing after beauty, money.

So, once we understand this through spiritual practice, we will leave all these things. We will have them, but we will not crave them. Whatever we have, we are satisfied and use them. We will not be slaves to these things, and we will not crave or try all means to get them, or even maybe start a war because of these things.

Now, after these events, people began chasing each other, and physical attraction began to happen. They started to have couples. Other people who looked at this wondered why it had never happened like this before. They wondered why one being did such things to the other being. These people became ashamed of being attracted to each other physically and doing things physically. They were ashamed, so they had to go out of the city of the inhabitants and build their own huts or caves. Consequently, houses began spring up and separate dormitories began to appear.

That's how it happened and that's how we started our history, according to Buddha, okay? If you want to blame, blame the Buddha. Don't blame me. I don't know if this story is true or not. I wasn't there. [Master laughs.] I don't know if I was there or not. It was a long time ago, and I've forgotten now. I might have been there, but it has been too long now, billions or trillions of years ago. Who would remember all these things? Who wants to remember, right? We have enough to do now, with the Middle East war, the Au Lac refugees and what-not.

After that, because people started building houses, hoarding things for themselves and dividing the land, everything began to get worse. Some people who were diligent planted a lot of things and had good crops, and other people who were lazy just came to steal. That's how wars began, and they continue until now because there are those who have a lot and there are those who have too little. Those who have a lot don't want to share with those who have too little. Those who have a lot work diligently and look down upon those who don't have much because of their laziness or, maybe, misfortune.

So, the Buddha concluded that the cause of war is the lack of sharing between people; it is the greed within us. Those who take too much leave none for the others. Nowadays in our modern times, the scientists have done a lot of research and they think that the cause of war may be starvation. Many countries are starving and many countries have too much,

and things like that. But, not really, we don't really have to much. We are just using it incorrectly and waste it.

They also did other research. For example, someone in Toronto, who has a vegetarian restaurant and a vegetarian magazine, told me that according to the research, if in North America each person would eat a vegetarian meal once a week, then we would have enough food to feed sixteen million people a year. I was startled and said, 'How could be?' But it worked out that way. It is not because of the food, it's the many things concerned with food. In order to produce this food, the land has to be cultivated, but now it's wasted for the feeding of the cows. All the water, medicine transportation, et cetera, used for the cows, pigs and other animals everything concerned with meat diet had reportedly wasted a lot of human resources, and that is the cause of starvation in many countries. It takes a lot of food protein, medicine, transportation and water to feed a cow and these things come from underdeveloped countries, too. This protein and food could have been distributed in a different way in order to feed the whole world instead of feeding a cow, and then we eat the cow – second-hand stuff anyhow.

So nowadays, many people believe that a vegetarian diet can save the world and minimize a lot of war, and I think I do not oppose this idea. Maybe in the very near future we should try, at least to see how it works, and then we can comment. But I believe it will work, provided each of us supports this idea and tries to cooperate. It is understood that not everyone will cooperate. Since the beginning of time, not all of us cooperate, because we all want to be the boss. Somehow, in our own way, in our own environment, we always like to be the boss. Why is it? It's not bad either. This also stems from the noble root that we have been in power, we have been angels, we have been saints. We have been in heaven, where everything is under our command. And now, we have lost our way and stepped down to this physical world and have lost most of our power, so we crave for power. But the thing is we crave and find power in the wrong way. As a result it harms us more than offers us any power. That's all.

The way to get back our power is to purify ourselves, to get in touch with God. I have done it myself and I can say that I have succeeded, to some extent. These are not empty words, that I am telling you, they come from my experience. Should you like to try it, it is highly recommended. You may try to find your own way, do it yourself or you may try to find someone who you think is intelligent enough and experienced enough, to guide you to get in touch with your own real power. Once we have that real power, we have everything else. Even if we don't have everything else, we are satisfied. That's what it is. It is not that we have the whole world in our hands, but we are satisfied with whatever we have, and we will not crave for our neighbors' things. We will not be too attached to the things of this world, but we will have plenty. Truly it is like that.

The bible says: 'Seek you first the kingdom of God and all other things shall be added unto you.' That I have found to be the truth. It is the whole truth. And in the Buddhist sutras, for example in the Surangama sutra, it also says that: 'Once you get in touch with this inner Buddha nature through practicing the Quan Yin method, the worldly things will go on smoothly, too.' We can also have other things. And this I have also found to be the truth. Therefore, even bible says similar things. You can find many other example in the Indian scriptures, Jewish scriptures and other scriptures. That's why we hear that the rich people are blessed by God. It might be true in some sense, but the richness of this world has not always been the symbol of the blessing of God. It just denotes our virtuous way of life in the last period of our existence, before this existence, and that's all. The blessing of God come directly, without virtues even, once we are connected with this God power.

Now to sum it up, I have to tell you what God is. According to Christian bible, God is the 'Word.' In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. That is what we call the 'Yin,' the vibration, the Tao, the Buddha nature in Buddhist terminology, or sound current in the Hindu terminology. Once we get touch with that so-called 'Word,' we are in touch with God because the Word is God. God is not a figure with a long beard or with a stick, standing there telling you what to do. God is a power, a loving current that we can use to mold our life and to make things come into being by this creative substance. Therefore, for the ones who are in touch with God, everything they wish for will come true; and for the ones who are not in touch with God, it doesn't matter how long they pray, things hardly come into their lives because they are not in touch with what they want to talk to. If we want to talk to our friend and the telephone is disconnected, or we are too far away from the telephone, or if we don't pick it up, then how can we talk to them, to the police or whoever? Therefore, we must first make the connection and then wish. Well, does this seem too far fetched now or not?

I am on tour now all over the United States, and before I left for the United Nations' conference, my disciples told me a story about how their wish came true. For example, even when the airplane was already on the runway, and one of our disciples was left behind, he prayed, and the airplane came back to get him. Yes! I said I could not believe it, but they said, 'Yes, yes, it's true. We are here!' We always make jokes like that. I said I didn't believe it, but I knew it was true. So then, I said to them, 'Okay! Since you can pray so efficiently, then you should pray for others. You should not always pray for yourself. This is selfish.' They said to me, 'Whom should we pray for now?' I said, 'For example, for the peace in the Middle East or for the Au Lac refugees who want to be integrated as citizens into other countries.' They answered, 'Yes, we don't mind praying, but they're too far away; their karma is too heavy. We don't know if we can pray for them or not.'

That's what they said and it struck me that it's really true, because the Au Lac refugees are not in touch with God yet. My so-called disciples – I would call them friends, but if say 'friends' you wouldn't understand, so I say 'disciples' – are in touch with God, so whatever they want comes true.

Therefore, it's not that we don't want to pray for ourselves or for other people, but we have to know where to talk, to whom to talk, and where to get that power to realize our prayers. Because all the power is within us, all things are already inside, we must know where to get them and to use them, but most of us don't. I have realized that it is truly 'Seek you first the kingdom of God and all other thing shall be added unto you. The kingdom of God doesn't come by observation. The kingdom of God is at hand, within you.' That's what's said in the bible.

How is it that it's within us and we don't know it? Because we don't know where it is. We don't know where 'within' is. Is it in the heart, in the lung, in the vein or in the liver? We don't know where it is.

So, if someone knows, then we can be shown. I have been taught where the kingdom of God is, and I make use of that everyday for my own and for other people's benefit. I keep telling people that it is so easy to get in touch with your own power, to fulfill all your wishes, to be in heaven on earth and to forget everything else. The war will cease itself. It has worked within our group. No one after initiation feels like fighting any more, arguing about nonsense, or desiring more things than what they necessarily need. It really works with thousands and thousands of people. It always works, so I know it is the truth.

But most people are not ready for this message. They cannot believe that they have this kind of power. I am always amazed why people look down upon themselves so much. Aren't we all children of God and made after Hiers image? Do we not all have Buddha nature inside? Or even are we not all children of Allah? And if we are Hiers children, we have the same power, at least similar, more or less the same, so why should we look down upon ourselves? We are God's princes and princesses, and does that mean something or not? It may seem like an empty saying, but it's true. It is just like that.

If you are the daughter or son of a king, you must know your power, you must know your position; but most people don't know. Everybody just knows, 'Ah! We are the children of God. God made us after Hiers image. We are the likeness of Hirm.' Yes, but that's it. Then, we go out and struggle for every penny and pray for everything, and it never comes, because we never pray to the right source. We don't go to where our wishes can be fulfilled. It is so easy, easier than eating bread. Because it is so easy, people tend to look over it. This is very sad, but I shall be patient. I shall be patient.

So actually, we talked about war and ended with peace. If everyone of us wants to have peace within ourselves, we must practice the kingdom of God. We must get in touch with this God power, which is very easy to do. We can do it instantly because God is within us. Hes is not very far away. The kingdom of God is within us. Why should we go to distant church or temple to get it? And why should we take a long time to get it?

That's why we call our method 'instant enlightening' or 'immediate enlightenment.' 'Instant' is just what my disciples call it, but I don't like the word 'instant.' Actually, my original words were 'immediate enlightenment and eternal liberation.' Once we are enlightened, we are forever enlightened and liberated. Liberated from what? From the cycle of birth and death, being reborn and reborn again, suffering and suffering again. For example, your work in the United Nations is the best job, the noblest work one can find because here you serve the whole world, not only one company or two companies, one family or two families but the whole world. Your work is the best. I advise everyone to stay and not to leave the United Nations for as long as you can. But even then you have your suffering, frustration and headaches. Do you see? Things are not as perfect as we want.

There is a better life, a more perfect life inside. Once we are perfect inside, our outside life will be perfect, too. We can use our inside wisdom and power to make our work more efficient, faster and more beneficial to the world. So actually, if we want to be in any important position or be successful in any field, we must get the proper power to work for us, not our minds. There are two levels of power. The first level, the lower level, is the mind, the automatic reaction and action. Yes, that is the mind. The other higher level power is all grace, love and miracles. By miracles I don't mean changing the weather or..., but we can do that, too.

For example, my disciple just prayed and the airplane had to run backwards to get him, the only one left behind. Formally, they didn't want to have anything to do with him, because they said that his ticket did not have the price on it, or something like that. There was something wrong, but we paid for the ticket. Something bureaucratically wrong, that's all. And the airplane had to come back. This is also called a miracle. But we don't do it on purpose. We just pray, and the one who is in touch with God can pray for anything, provided we pray with our own power. Do you understand? If we pray for someone else and that someone else is not in tune with God, then it's difficult for the prayer to be answered. It is not that we don't want to help them. Otherwise, Jesus would have prayed for at least the Jews; or the Buddha would have prayed for at least the whole of India. Do

you understand what I mean? Even though we are enlightened, we can not change the world. We can only reason and bring them into changing themselves.

Therefore, we have to begin with ourselves. We cannot sit and wait for miracles. No one can change the world, not even thousands of Buddha or millions of Jesus. They would have done it if they could. Miracles do not happen in this way, where karma is concerned. We have to clean ourselves. We have to bathe ourselves. Take our medicine in order to cure ourselves. The best doctor can only give us medicine but cannot take it for us. Therefore, it is a very sad and difficult thing to pray for other people when they are not in tune with the prayer fulfilling source.

The best way is to get in touch with God and then pray. We don't even have to pray, things will happen. This I know for sure. This I have experienced. And many, many thousands of my disciples have also experienced this. All of them know it is true. I would like to present it to you today should you feel interested, and should you believe that there is a solution to war. By changing ourselves, by having peace within ourselves, we'll have peace in the world. Each one must do it. Even if we could not influence the whole world, we light some torches; at least peace would be more and war would be less. This in itself would be a great achievement.

Our world is better now compared to the old times because many Masters have stepped down to earth and taught us many great laws of civilization. We have improved. That's why our world has become more civilized, more bright, more comfortable compared to thousands of years ago. That's due to many, many great enlightened Masters who have elevated our understanding. Even though they taught just a group of people, but the teachings that they left behind, the vibration and the seeds continue to grow and benefit the whole world on a large scale and have lifted up the whole consciousness of mankind to a higher level. Therefore, our world is getting better and better everyday. Due to some great Masters and some of their disciples, our world has become better and better.

You may join them. I am not saying that you must come and study with me. It is not so. Study with whomever you like, who you feel is the most enlightened, who will be the most beneficial to you, and who shows the way the most clearly to you; but do something. Get in touch with your own wisdom and power, and use it to work for you. It is better than just using a brain-computer, fumbling with it everyday and feeling headaches, frustration and difficulties. Nothing is so difficult if we use our great wisdom to do the work and not the small intelligence of the habitual computer-brain. Thank you very much.

BE RECONCILED WITH OUR ENEMY ¹²⁷

If we read the bible, the Buddhist texts, or any other religious scriptures, we see that it is always stated that the kingdom of God is within us, we are the temple of God, or we have Buddha nature within us. Now, why don't we make use of this Buddha nature or the kingdom of God within to deal with things, instead of using just outer material power, which is unstable, unreliable, and causes a lot of misery and the loss of the lives of many talented, young, beautiful, creative, intelligent human beings, which is a waste.

It takes tremendous creative power from God or the universal force to create a human being. It takes a lot of intelligence, time, money and love to raise one human being. Now, in just one second, it is destroyed, along with thousands and millions of others in war. That

127. Group meditation, Virginia Center, Virginia, U.S.A., February 17, 1991 (Originally in English).

is very, very miserable. It is very unfair of us to do these things. It doesn't matter if we are right or wrong in war, it always creates misery for both parties.

We understand that even our enemies have souls, sentiments, intelligence, compassion and understanding. It's just that we don't sit together and talk. We don't make friends. We're not supposed to make friends with our enemies, so we sometimes forget that they are also human like us. Therefore, it is easy to slay someone whom we do not think much of or whom we don't hold in high esteem.

LIVE IN THE WORLD WITHOUT FRONTIERS ¹²⁸

I hope that one day the world will be without frontiers, so that neighbors can come and go to neighboring countries, have a cup of tea, drink a cup of coffee, talk together, and go back home on the same day or in the same week, without any problems about documents, without any trouble, without any interference from policemen, and all kinds of terrible bureaucracy. There should never be any refugees at all, let alone people refusing them. Every person should have the right to travel where he or she wants, and to make a living where it is suitable and favorable to his or her condition. Until that day, our world will remain in suffering, conflict and war. We should not bother to ask ourselves why. The reason is very obvious. It's because we are possessive. We think this is mine, this is ours, this belongs to us. We have forgotten to whom all these things belong. We have forgotten that God is the only king. And we do not act according to the rules of this almighty king. We never think in this life. Everyone just takes care of him or herself. Even if people have too much to eat, and too much to drink, they don't give it to their neighbors in need. Therefore, war is inevitable.

TIME WITH MASTER IS PRECIOUS ¹²⁹

Perhaps no one, including any Master, has the right to blame us. It's just that probably we have to come back to learn again, or probably we have to learn in a hard way or through suffering. Or probably we have to wait a while, many lives, to see another Master again, because we have refused the golden opportunity when it is easily available. That is not very convenient.

All day long we work – eight or ten hours – just to do a little bit of worldly things, which are ephemeral and not lasting; and we don't complain. And we even earn just a little bit of money – enough to eat, enough to clothe ourselves, and enough to have a roof above our heads. But when we want to become a perfect person, to become Godlike, we work only two and a half hours a day and we don't want it. It's too much. So, what kind of logic? If you come from San Jose up to here – one hour, half an hour – to see your so-called Master, if you call me even Master, you say: 'Too much.' Why have you invited me from Formosa up to here? Thousands and thousands of miles and thousands and thousands of dollars! All from my own pocket, effort and time. I never complain. Then if you come to see me, you say: 'Ah, it's too long. Ah, too far. Ah, too much. Aye ya, too tired, no car. Ah, the bus, the bus is lousy.'

The government has to pay for the bus, maintain the bus, make beautiful roads and you cannot even go to the bus station and step on. Then you blame. Maybe you say the government doesn't look after you. You don't want to use the service just because you have to walk about five or ten minutes from the bus station to here.

128. Group meditation, San Jose Center, Costa Rica, February 9, 1991 (Originally in English).

129. Group meditation, San Jose Center, Costa Rica, February 4, 1991 (Originally in English).

But I tell you, I have to walk, too; from the aeroplane to the customs office and sometimes it's very long, ten, twenty minutes – no problem – and I walk to the airplane, too. I walk everywhere. Yeah, I walk from the airport gate to the aeroplane and vice versa. Walk to the luggage place and take the luggage out and in, back and forth, check-in, check-out; walk to the ticket office; and walk to the ambassador's office. I beg everywhere so that I can come here.

Do you ever consider all this or not? I don't think you do. Otherwise, you would not tell me the bus is too far, or think it is too long and too cold or whatever. Or that you don't have the money to buy a cushion for meditation – you're joking with me. If you have money to buy coffee and tea, you have money to buy a meditation cushion. Don't make any excuses with me because I'll be sick – that you have so little understanding.

You call yourself doctor, professor, teacher, master, secretary of the..., manager of such-and-such a big government office and a lawyer of broken marriages – all kinds of titles you clothe yourself with. You don't even treat a good friend the way she deserves. And you expect God will shower all favors on you, and whatever you ask. God must immediately give you, even give you yesterday. Would be better that God gave you when you were born, born with all kind of favors.

Now you say you don't need to learn with any Master. Do you? Or you don't? Do you have enough wisdom? You are a human of perfection? Already born with perfection? Know how to be a human? You don't even know how to be a human yet, let alone to be a saint. You don't know how to be a good friend yet and you want to teach humankind. You don't have enough logic to teach yourself how to have a good manner within the society and you dare to teach anyone. How can you serve people in this way? What kind of intelligence do you offer with this logic? Oh, I suppose you don't think I am good enough to be a Master. I accept it. I don't ever say I am good enough to be your Master. Maybe not.

True love is transmitted in silence

All because they have too much intelligence but too little love. Those with much wisdom and intelligence know how to take, how to protect themselves, how to get, how to invade, how to rob but know not how to give. So, intelligence doesn't serve us in a good way. So, we come to someone who has love to learn how to love, because love cannot be taught in schools, it cannot be read from books. It can only be transmitted in silence and by example, by the vibration, by the energy of the one who possesses love. Now if we think we have enough intelligence, we know everything, we can take care of our life, and we don't need to learn anything, then we make mistakes. Yeah, mistakes, because when we examine our way of life, we know we lack many things, we lack much love.

If we only earn enough money to feed ourselves, to clothe our family, to have all our comforts and we care not for the service of the public, care not to examine our inner purity, then we still are not yet complete. We are not yet perfect, we lack much of the so-called compassion. We still lack wisdom because should we look at the lives of the animals, don't they do the same? They take care of themselves, their immediate family members and they're happy. That's why they are called animals.

But we are human. We should be a little different, don't you think? Just because we have a car to go to work and the animals have to walk on foot that doesn't mean we are better than them if our motives are not better. Now if we learn meditation, we want to be

vegetarian, we want to be a saintly person, and then we feel better than other people – ah we don't have good logic. What is the good of all this external show?

Now if sometimes you organize a kind of big meeting and you want all kinds of great Masters or international yogis or something to come to Costa Rica so that you can serve them, you can see them, and you can learn from each other, that's very good.

You even want to give them money to come. Some of them don't have money to come, you would feel sorry, you would care, and probably find some way to donate some money so they could buy aeroplane tickets to come here. That's very touching. And now, you care not for the one that has already come with Her own money and ticket. So, what kind of logic? Especially, if you have come and learned something with that person and you have accepted that person as your friend.

Is there any good person who only cares for another country's citizens but cares not for his own country's citizens? Is there that kind of person? You would go and take care of your neighbor's country but you never care about your country? Is that okay? Should the president do that kind of thing? Would you send a lot of money and care, doctors and nurses to maybe a very far country friend but you care not when your neighbors next to you are dying? So, this is the kind of logic that you might take around with you every day and never think whether it's logical or not.

So, it's good that I am not here very long, otherwise I'd trouble you. You'd have to come and see me everyday or sometimes or often. But humans are like this. Sometimes when the person is not very near then we appreciate his or her beauty more. Just like a mountain over there is clearer than when we climb up. But then, when we climb up, we discover many beauties that we could not see from afar. So, do not think that from afar it looks better. It might look clearer generally, but we cannot discover many beautiful details that please our eyes and ears, and make our hearts feel very pleasant.

For example, we have hills in front of our house full of beautiful wild flowers. When we pass, we can only see a little bit. We see that there are flowers there, there are flowers on the hill. But when I walked, I climbed up the hill and saw the panorama for myself, it was so breathtakingly beautiful. So beautiful, so beautiful. So much different than when you look from afar. And that we can only know and appreciate when we go in the heart of it, into the garden on the hill.

So beautiful that I tried to paint but failed for three days now. I couldn't paint. Maybe God didn't want me to paint. [Master laughs.] Hes is afraid I'll make a mess of Hiers beautiful garden. Hes didn't trust my talent. When I went up it became rainy and windy, and when I came down the sun shone – making fun of me all the time. When I came down Hes laughed. So, tomorrow I will try again and if it's no good then I'll thank Hirm and then goodbye.

God always hears us but we sometimes ignore Hirm

In any kind of science, if we want to be perfect in that science we must learn, we must practice, and then we must be near to those who teach us if we are interested in that field. Of course, if we are not interested then no one can say anything. But then, do not blame the teacher or do not blame God that we are not expert in that field.

So many people stumble in life and have many difficulties; or many feel exhausted and frustrated in body, speech and mind and they wonder why, or say: 'God doesn't help me,'

or 'God doesn't hear me.' But it is not true, it is we who don't hear God. We don't care to listen to Hiers message every day.

For example, we have to go to school about four or eight hours a day in order to learn what the teacher wants to teach us, to become wiser and more intelligent each day, and to get our graduation or master's degree. Then by each day we learn. Each day we're more intelligent, we know more things, we can do more things, we can tackle more things, our lives are more organized, we have more understanding, and we have a more comfortable job and a more comfortable life. So now, just like if we don't sit in meditation for one, two or three hours a day and listen to God's teachings, or come to be near our teacher who represents the teachings from God, bringing the message of God to us, then how can we get wiser and how can our life get more comfortable?

Sometimes we pray, we say: 'Oh God, why don't You come to me? If You exist, please come!' But if God comes, do we have time for Hirm? I doubt it. I don't think we have time for God. So, don't blame Hirm if Hes doesn't come. We will say: 'My mother just came. My father just died. My children are ill. My job! My boss! My bank account! My electricity bill! Oh God, my God, please go away, I don't have time for You! Oh my God!' [Master laughs.]

Can you imagine how we would treat God if Hes came? Hes has come many times to us. Hes comes all the time in the garb of the fleshy body, in the garb of humans. It's the same when we are with a wise person, then we'll be wiser. If we are with stupid people all the time, we get more stupid. We have to accompany that person's level otherwise he doesn't understand us and that's how we are dragged down. Therefore, we choose a friend. Therefore, people come to wise Masters in order to awaken the wisdom inside themselves. That is very, very logical.

If I already know English and now if I stay in England, in America or always among English speaking people, then my English improves each day. But if I am among non-English speaking people or speak English like chopping vegetables, then of course, my English will become like theirs. I've already notice that my English is getting like chopping wood – wood-chopper – because in the last twenty years I have not been in England. I have always traveled around and everywhere people don't speak perfect English. So, my language talent has become stunted – doesn't grow. Every day I speak Chinese, Spanish or the Au Lac language! [Master speaks Spanish and laughs.]

You see, these are very clear things. So, if we think we are already too wise, then we don't need a Master. But if we think, if we cross-examine ourselves and know that we have something missing, then we should go and find someone who has that quality and try to make up for it. If God can teach us directly from within then we don't need a Master. But we know that it's not possible for God to be in touch with us directly even though Hes is within us. Therefore, Jesus had to come, Buddha had to come, Mohammed had to come, Socrates, et cetera.

It is true that we can learn from everyone, but from someone maybe we can learn more and from someone we learn less. From someone we learn good things, from someone we learn bad things or at least not to do bad things like them; they're also our teacher. At least they teach us not to do bad things provided we have enough discriminating power to know what is good, what is bad.

Some human beings are with God, some human beings are with the world, some human beings are a little bit inclined towards the negative aspect of humankind. If we are with those persons who are with God then we become influenced by their Godly qualities. If we

are with those who have the worldly qualities then we're imbibed more with the worldly qualities. If we are with those with negative tendencies, then we're also affected by their negative traits.

Every day we are in touch with so many personalities, so many persons and we do not really know who is with the negative – sometimes we don't know clearly – and who has human tendencies. Therefore, we are sometimes confused and we are affected by them, with or without our knowledge. Therefore, sometimes we feel tired and confused and our spirit feels very depressed.

So, if we know someone with Godly qualities, saintly wisdom, we must by all means, any time possible, be near such persons in order to be affected a little bit in a different direction and get pulled up instead of pulled down or stay in that low level all the time, every day. Especially, when this kind of occasion is very rare, because we can be in touch with anyone, but with saintly persons, how much time? How many saintly persons? How many occasion that we meet such persons? And how many saintly persons in this world?

It is okay if we don't believe in that person, if we think that person is not good enough for us. But if we do believe, if we know that person definitely is beneficial for us, for humankind, is saintly, is wise, then we must run. We must make excuses to come, not make excuses to stay away because it's good for us, for us and us alone.

A hungry soul needs to be fed

If we know that food is good for us, should we make excuses to stay away from the kitchen? We can be hungry one or two days but not too long. When we are hungry, when we don't have enough nutrition, we know what happens. Our body becomes tired, we get dragged around, we cannot move, we cannot think so much and we cannot work. Our soul also gets hungry sometimes if we don't look after it properly.

And how do we know when our soul is hungry? When we cannot survive well in this world, when we are tired mentally, when we are depressed, when we cannot think correctly, and when we cannot cope with the pressure of this life. When our body gets sick, that's also because the soul is oppressed; when our bad tendencies overpower our goodness.

If we are honest with ourselves and cross-examine every day then we know that our soul is very, very tired, exhausted and hungry. When we cannot recognize what is good from bad, what is the most important issue in life and what is the second important issue in life, then we know that our soul is oppressed.

Do not think that those who go out and murder people, steal, do all kinds of violence, or violate the neighbors are the bad persons. No doubt we don't say that they are good, but they can be awakened in no time or they may change when their situation improves. But if we do violence to our soul, that is the most serious crime. By denying our soul good teachings, by denying our soul its spiritual food, by denying our soul the presence and the company of virtuous, saintly persons, we are doing violence to ourselves. Just like when we make an excuse and deny our body the food that it deserves that makes our body strong and healthy. The same, we retard our spiritual progress by denying our soul the food that it badly needs.

To do violence to others is more pardonable than to do violence to ourselves because sometimes we do violence to others because we cannot help it, because that person annoys us, makes us angry or denies us something and we have an excuse; and because

of our ignorance and because sometimes it's difficult to love others because of the differences between personalities. But, not to love ourselves – that is a terrible thing.

When we work, when we feed ourselves, when we clothe ourselves, we only love our bodies alone, we do not love the soul, and the soul is our real self. How do we improve our spiritual progress if we are not all the time mixed and in the company of the spiritual group, with spiritual people who have the same motive, same ideal, same goal, same way of life, same way of thinking?

We are not yet strong enough to walk alone or else we would have become a saint, become a Master. If we check ourselves, our behavior every day, we know that we are not yet Masters, if we're honest. We know we are much too selfish, much too self-centered, much too ignorant to reach the level of so-called Master, of Jesus or Buddha.

Walk the spiritual path requires effort

If after examining such and we know our level, then we must learn, we must practice more, we must open our hearts to all kinds of noble influences, all kinds of noble company. We must take advantage of these chances. If we still believe that to improve our purity, to improve our wisdom is the highest purpose of humanity, then we must make an effort. But if we do not believe in this, if we think being human beings means only to grow up, to eat, to work, to earn money, and to die, then okay, then we don't need to make an effort.

Then we just live like that and carry on day after day, day in, day out: Working, eating, sleeping, making love, producing children, earning money, and then dying. No need to meditate, no need to be vegetarian, no need to read ethical books, no need to do any of these mentioned items. And don't tell anyone, don't make excuses that it's too tiring, it's too much, it's too this, too that and the other.

Don't we make effort in all undertakings? Effort is necessary in all kinds of transactions. Effort is needed in studying, needed to work, needed in maintaining marriages, needed in maintaining our bodies, needed in maintaining even our hair! A few strands of hair take two hours in the beauty salon. Don't you tell me that you don't need an effort for meditation and you don't need to go see a Master because you're too tired, too long, too this and that and the other. How about your hair?

Ask yourself how many hours you spend on your ephemeral body – all the eight, ten hours working just because of this body. All the study – many years – just because of this body. You study for ten, twenty years because you want to have a good job, maintain your body and your family's bodies. What else? And you work for thirty more years after studying, also just because of the body or maybe for the bodies of your family members or the bodies of your beloved citizens. So now, how can we say we don't need any effort?

We refuse the effort for the soul – it's not logical! And the soul is the most important thing. Without the soul the body is no use! Go to the cemetery and find so many bodies there. When people die they also make them up, make their lips beautiful here, and make coiffeur and beautiful clothes. But what is the use of that body then?

Now, effort is needed or not? It's needed just even for your lips. If you want to have rosy lips you have to go to the beauty shop and choose the beautiful color that you need. It sometimes takes two or three hours and you bear it because you like to be beautiful. And this is an ephemeral thing. It's here today maybe gone tomorrow. And if for the soul, for

something eternal, we take two, three hours a day, or come to see the teacher and we say it's too much.

Suffering or liberation is a matter of choice

Then we ask ourselves: 'Why did God make the world like this? Why you – we the people – suffer so much? Why do I suffer so much?' It is very clear. We choose it! We choose suffering, we choose ignorance, we choose not to move, we choose not to improve, we choose not to change, we choose not to be pushed, not to be civilized. That's all our fault. The world suffers because it wants to suffer. Because we make effort – too many hours spent for the ephemeral things and too little hours spent for the eternal wisdom. That's why we are not wise, that's why we do things with topsy-turvy wisdom, that's why we cannot get away from the circle of birth and death.

If everyone made a little effort to learn in wisdom, to learn to recognize our greatest intelligence inside and then use it in everyday life, the world would not be so suffering like this and everyone would become wise. Everyone would know what is the right thing to do, how to have consideration for other people; all people would cooperate in wisdom and no one would suffer at all.

If everyone waits for the neighbor: 'Oh why doesn't she go to meditate? She didn't find a Master, why should I? Why should I go to study with a Master? Why should I meditate and be vegetarian, no one else does it?' Everyone then waits for each other and that's it.

Now everyone else is supposed to be ignorant, you are supposed to be the better ones. You already know how to meditate, you know to be vegetarian, you strive towards Light and wisdom. You're supposed to be the better half of humankind, and you also stay there and sleep away your time! How can you expect others to follow your example?

Am I too harsh with you? If I am, please forgive. If you forgive me, God will forgive you – good karma. But if no one tells you, you will not tell each other.

Manage our time wisely

Everyone likes to skip school. No children are willing to go to school. All the parents have to push, teachers have to be stern. Otherwise, if you just allow the children what they like, then they will never do the right thing because they don't know. Left alone, children will go play in the park all day, watch television, or do this kind of video machine – ping, pong, pong. No doubt, the teacher is not always strict and also takes the children to the park and plays with them; and the mother, father also play with them sometimes. But there are times for playing and times for learning. Time for your family, time for your friends, time to work, earn money, and take care of your bodily needs. But time for spiritual aspiration must be included. Of course, we cannot do that twenty-four hours or every day, but when the occasion arises we must take the opportunity.

We already do too little for our spiritual progress. You see, for any job, for any study, for any bodily comfort we put in the full time – eight hours per day, ten hours per day and sometimes extra work in the night. Sometimes you have to take supplementary schooling at night – extra, apart from your ordinary schooling – and just to have a master's degree in English or chemistry. And that's one or two subjects for just a very short time, just a very, very ephemeral thing. Learning to be in eternity, learning to be a saintly person, to be Godlike, and we put only one or two hours a day, see the teacher only occasionally, and we already make excuses. So, what kind of logic do you think that is?

To be a disciple or to be a practitioner suffices not to be vegetarian and suffices not to be initiated. Vegetarian – a cow is a vegetarian since inside the stomach. And initiation – even cows came for the initiation when I gave it. They come for initiation anytime. Whenever I'm here the cows come to see me. They come all that way, very far from the other field up to here, and stand or sit in front of the meditation hall, waiting for initiation. Yes, they did! People said they didn't ever come until I came. They also filled in the initiation form! They filled it in their way! They cannot write so they swallowed them. You know the story. When I was here the first time and the pickup truck was full of vegetables and some initiation forms behind, they didn't eat the vegetables they just swallowed the initiation forms and some of my lecture notes. They stole them and our initiates chased after them wanting to take them back. They were so nervous that they just swallowed them. [Master laughs.]

We could not take them back so they think they are also initiated. Any time I come they also come for group meditation. [Master laughs.] They have darshan, they look at me. When they came here and our disciple tried to drive them away, they didn't go, they just looked at him as if to say: 'You and I are equal – fellow initiates – why do you drive me out?' Something like that.

Do not feel that you are initiated and you are vegetarian and that's enough. If you think that is enough, it's just like you think that to enroll in the university is enough and no need to go to the university or see the professor every day, every week or every two or three days. Or like the cows, just swallow the initiation form, be vegetarian, and that's enough. But they are even better, they come to see me any time I am here – very faithful disciples [Master laughs.] and vegetarian all the time. Never fail. This, I never need to worry.

They would never pretend to make a mistake by eating cake with eggs, or drinking something with a little bit alcohol in it only. And they do their meditation every day, with or without Master. After they eat – full – then they will sit there and meditate on their food on the grass. That's their meditation.

The same like us, just after working and eating we sit there and meditate on television, or meditate on our worldly desires and problems. So, what is the problem? No problem. Everyone meditates on their own beloved object. Like this I really should retire. No need to come anymore. No need to bother you. Both of us happy. Mm?

Do you think a Master is only there to fulfill your needs when you want it, and you don't need to have any obligation? That's also okay as far as the Master is concerned, but you don't progress. You waste your human time, the precious time to develop our wisdom – no, to recognize our wisdom. Wisdom cannot be developed, wisdom is already perfect and there, we just need to recognize and use it.

But if we do not give time to recognize and use it, then we waste it. God has given us the human body and entrusted us with wisdom in order that we serve ourselves and this world while we are here. If we do not do this, then we fail in our duty towards God and towards ourselves. That's all.

Perhaps no one, including any Master, has the right to blame us. It's just that probably we have to come back to learn again, or probably we have to learn in a hard way or through suffering. Or probably we have to wait a while, many lives, to see another Master again, because we have refused the golden opportunity when it is easily available. That is not very convenient for us, that's all.

ACQUIRE A FASTER VIBRATION ¹³⁰

When your vibration is very low and very slow and you think slowly, you work slowly, and you speak slowly, what can you do? What kind of work can you do? What kind of service can you offer? Your level is so low and your vibration is so slow. The lower the vibration, the lower the level of life. So, you see that the stones are solid; they cannot move. The trees can move a little bit, but only with external help. Then we come to the insects that can move, and then the fish and other animals, but they think slowly still. But now we are human beings; we must be faster. We must have a higher frequency, a faster vibration; otherwise, we cannot catch up, we cannot go, we cannot grow up, we cannot develop, we cannot improve, and we cannot progress. We cannot stay slow like that all the time, like when we were animals, like when we were stones, trees, or insects. We are different now. We cannot cling to the older vibrations anymore. We must move fast.

Because we have been animals in our last lives, or stones and trees in our past history, that doesn't mean we need to be there all the time, that we need to stay at that level. We must know now that we're at a different level. We must move. We must improve. We must make use of this opportunity to think fast, to do things fast, and the energy must run faster. Then we can run faster, faster, faster, until we have vibrations as fast as the Buddhas and God, so that we can become one with them, be as intelligent as they; then we become God.

We cannot stay there and make excuses for ourselves and blame the Master for pushing us. I have to push you. Otherwise, you will stay there forever. I have to stir you up to life, make you work fast, think fast, speak fast. You have to raise your vibration up to a very faster level: Faster, faster, faster, still. Intelligent people react very fast. They think very fast. And the Buddhas and the saints, their vibrations are very fast; therefore, they work very fast. They can work a hundred thousand jobs at the same time because their vibrations are so fast. So fast that they just look like they're not working at all, but they're working all the time, twenty-four hours, and at every kind of job at the same time. Because they move so fast, it looks like they don't move. That's why they say 'doing but not doing,' because of that.

For example, if I'm a slow person, it takes me maybe so long to give her a piece of candy. If she is also slow to receive, then it takes one minute to receive a piece of candy. Then I take my hand back again. [Master demonstrates by very slowly handing a piece of candy to a practitioner and slowly withdrawing Her hand.] Maybe I take another piece of candy, give it to the next person, and with difficulty, I take my hand back. I sit here, [Master leans back in chair and sighs.] very tired! [Laughter] Now you see, I'm working. [Master very quickly tosses a piece of candy to a nearby practitioner.] There's a difference. It takes about half, or maybe one-third, of the time that it took before. It's the same action, same benefit, same thing. In the first action, it took so long and required so much effort. And the second action, chuck, chuck, [Master demonstrates a quick hand movement.] like this. It doesn't look like I do anything. Now for the time it took me to pass over two candies before, now I can pass over hundreds of candies, or at least ten candies. The faster, the more candies.

The Buddhas, or the saints of the greatest order, also work like that, but so fast that it seems to take no time to give these things and take back their energy, or take back their actions. So, it's just like they don't work at all, just like they perform no action because it is so fast, back and forth, like no time, no seconds – not even a split second. It's just like

130. Group meditation, San Jose Center, Costa Rica, February 2, 1991 (Originally in English).

they're everywhere; they don't move at all because they move so fast, faster than any worldly imagination, faster than light. The saints can do hundreds, thousands, billions of things at the same time because they are so fast. They don't need any time to do anything. It looks like they're doing everything at the same time because they don't need any time at all. It looks like they are omnipresent, but it's actually the way of working like that.

Even in our time, with electronic help, we can speak to different persons at the same time if we use the same microphone, or use a communications system. It just looks like our voice is right there to the listener, even though they are thousands and thousands of miles away and across two or three oceans and hundreds of mountains. They still hear our voice just like we are there because the action of the electronics carries our voice so fast, just like we are there. Our voice travels so fast with the electronic help that it sounds like we are right there. So, like this, you understand the actions of the saints: Fast, thousands, millions, of times faster than that. They don't need to use electronics. They have a different system of energy, that's all.

So, like that, you can have a little bit of comparison and you can understand the way of working of the Masters. It's just a multiplying of the speed limit, and that's all. Very simple. And people make it so mysterious and think it's impossible. Why not possible? It's very easy and a logical thing. Just a higher kind of civilization, that's all. Just like thousands of years ago, we didn't know of airplanes, we didn't know of telephones, we didn't know of television, and now we're more civilized. We have a different civilization and we have this system. If thousands of years ago, people heard of our system, they would say, 'Ooh! We're angels. We are from heaven. We're a different people.' No, we're just human beings; we're just more civilized. Masters are just those who came from the highest civilization of the universe, that's all. We have never heard of this kind of civilization, so we are a little bit shocked. But maybe later we learn with them, and we become used to it. We just join their circle, their intelligent circle, and their civilization, and we become used to it. It becomes very common to us, just like we pick up the telephone and think nothing about it anymore. We just dial the numbers and talk, and for us, it is very common.

Now you have become a little bit more used to the system so you just use the wireless telephone and connect with me all the time, no? [Master chuckles.] And ask for what you want, and you got it. Our telephone system is worldwide, universal, universe-wide, costless, and takes no time. There is no need for an apparatus, no need for wires, no need to pay, and no need to ask for installation – nothing. It never goes bad, never gets damaged, [Laughter] and you don't need to use any numbers. Everyone has a number but there's no need for numbers. If I had to remember all of your numbers in my head, I think my head would explode. [Laughter] And not only are you connected with the Master, you're also connected with each other. Sometimes you can know what the others are doing or asking, to benefit each other simply by thought, simply by inner communication.

PUBLIC SERVICE IS THE FASTEST WAY TO CLEAN KARMA ¹³¹

I'll tell you an example. I was at an initiate's house and they were planting trees. But they were planting trees for themselves, to earn money, and it was their own personal work. Here, you plant trees, but it's not for yourselves; it's for everyone – for the initiates, for the practitioners who come and enjoy. We have just one motive, which is to serve others. Of course, it's also for ourselves, but it's not a personal business at all.

131. Group meditation, San Jose Center, Costa Rica, February 2, 1991 (Originally in English).

There, they also cook, but they do it only for themselves, to satisfy themselves. Here you also cook, some are planting, some are doing videos, some are doing cassettes, or some are doing other things, but all with the same motive, which is for humanity, for all beings at large. And this is so comfortable and so beautiful for me. I don't know how to express it, but I feel the grand difference when I am in the Center.

That's why I said to you that when you work in this kind of service, your karma is cleaned fast. For example, if you pay one dollar, one dollar, one by one, it takes a long time. But if you pay all at once, it's fast, immediately gone. Now, to do this kind of job, it's just like you pay all at once because many people will use this. Therefore, your debt is gone. If we do it only for one person or only for one employer, for the self-serving motive to earn money to take care of our body and our life, then of course, the benefit is like that only. But when we do this kind of job, not for ourselves to gain any benefit, to get any money from it, but for the benefit of many, many people, then of course, our job is on a grander scale. The merit is greater and therefore our karma is cleaned very quickly.

We owe the world so much and now we pay so much also. Only in this way can we pay back quickly. Otherwise, how? We owe so many people; we owe the whole humanity many things. If we don't pay the whole of humanity back again, but we pay one person, two persons, three persons, oh, it takes ages! We live in this world; we owe the whole world. Some we owe some grass, some we owe the road, some we owe clothes, some we owe rice. Only by paying the whole world back can we be cleansed. We owe to many people, so we have to pay to many people. And this kind of job allows us to pay many people at once because many people will use this Center. That's how we pay the whole total. That's why our karma is cleaned so fast.

We are born in this world. We owe many persons. This one for rice, this one for clothes, this one for... Everyone is our benefactor, and some we can pay by direct contact, like our father, mother, children, or teacher. We give them money, we give them love; some of these persons we can pay. Others too far away, maybe we pay by taxes or benefit them something. Maybe a little bit further over there. But we cannot pay another country. If it's in our country, maybe we can pay taxes and make it equal somewhat. Medical techniques, chemical discoveries and everything from different countries, imports, exports, et cetera, how do we thank them all or pay them all, directly or indirectly?

So now, we have a Center here; Costa Rica. You come here and make toilets, dig for water, plant trees, and build the meditation hall. You cut the grass, make the road, make the yard for people to sit in, and all the international people come here and enjoy. So, you pay the whole thing all in one go.

LET SPIRITUAL PRACTICE BECOME A HABIT TO FACE ALL CIRCUMSTANCES¹³²

We must practice every day so that in emergencies and at the time of death, when we're very agitated and when we're suffering and in pain and in fear, we won't forget. Not that we practice every day in a peaceful and normal condition, and when danger comes, when we need God the most, we throw Him out, forget all the guru's blessings, and the mantras all go fly out, of the window. Yes, that's why we practice every day, that we should not fear in time of danger and keep our balance and tranquil mind so that we don't lose ourselves.

132. Group meditation, San Jose Center, Costa Rica, December 26, 1990 (Originally in English).

If we have to die at that moment, we die in remembrance of God; and our next birth will definitely be of a very high level. If we don't remember God at the time of death, where we will be born is not guaranteed. So we must practice every day for that moment. And for dangerous situations, because in dangerous situations, we don't know if we will survive or not. So, when we're in a normal state of mind and in normal conditions, we must practice, practice so it becomes a habit, so that even in danger, we will not, cannot forsake this habit; because when we're in an emergency or near death, that's when we need it most. We practice all our life just for that.

I remember when I was still with my husband, I did not have the Quan Yin method yet. I repeated the names of Quan Yin Bodhisattva, meditated using the breathing method, and also recited the sutras. That was my practice. Every morning, every night, I did this. All the time, I repeated the Buddha's name.

Now once we went on a weekend holiday to a very faraway place in the countryside, I think he wanted to go skiing, so we had to go to a very high mountain where there was a lot of snow. Now when we came back, it was very dark and late, and the road was very slippery because there was ice on it. It was very late in the countryside, so the people probably did not think to put sand on it. And we didn't put chains on our tires. My husband is a good driver, but as he drove down the hill, suddenly the car swerved and wanted to turn. It didn't, it only wanted to. Before that I warned him; I said suddenly, 'Be careful.' I just said that and the car began to go out of control. He tried very hard to gain control, very dangerous. I put my hand on his heart and said, 'Don't worry. Quan Yin Bodhisattva will protect us.' I said it very calmly and very matter of fact.

Suddenly the car just stopped going down hill; it was of course on the steep side of the road. It ran off the side of the road and fell into the snow. So, we struggled to open the car, got into the snow, and came up. We were not wounded and the car had no problems. We walked just a few hundred yards and found a farmhouse. How wonderful, the farmhouse had a truck with a crane that could lift the car up.

So, in no time, our car was back on the road again and we just drove back home. No problem. So, even if we just practice a little bit, we can feel calm in times of trouble. So, believe in it, have faith and practice. Whenever you remember, repeat the five names. Whenever you remember, pay attention to your third eye. The repetition and the attention here will help us to draw our current up to the third eye center. Then from there the sound current will lift the soul, or lift us up. Not the repetition and not the attentions at the eye alone do the work. The Sound is important. Its very strong energy will lift us up.

Normally, we hear the Sound, but it's very feeble. Only when all our attention is drawn up to here, then the Sound can lift up us to very higher worlds; because up there is a center where we can make contact with the higher world. But we must go up there to make the contact. What you experience sometimes or at the time of initiation, that's just extra blessing. Otherwise normally, it takes long, long years of practice to empty ourselves up to that point. Once we're up there, contact can be made with the higher world.

The Sound is important. We have to meditate, meditate, meditate and practice until all the currents are habitually drawn up here (wisdom eye) whenever we want. Then we can go whenever we want, and we don't suffer. Most people suffer at the time of death because their currents are still lingering around every pore of the body. When the time comes it suddenly has to push up and then force out, very violently, involuntarily, with so very much suffering, like a thousand ants biting us.

Now, by the practice of meditation, we get used to the drawing of the currents up to the point at the third eye center. So, when we die, it's just like when we meditate every day. Also, when we have the help of the Master, the currents draw up fast and naturally. We leave the body before we even know it. At the time of death, Master comes with all glory, beautiful music and beautiful scenery in heaven. So, we don't feel any suffering and we don't feel attached to the ugliness and darkness of this world.

THE PERFECT EXAMPLE OF A GREAT SAINT ¹³³

Two thousand years ago, a great being was born among us. He is so great that we have no words to praise Him. Only God knows His greatness. We mortals cannot understand. We can understand only when we become as great as He is.

Now we often ask ourselves, 'Why is it that Jesus had to die so quickly when He had just reached the peak of glory in His mission, that is, to spread the message of God?' If He had not left the earth in such a short time and in such a tragic way, probably, His name would have been forgotten by now. God sacrificed Him in this way so that the whole world would remember, so that we would treasure a messenger of God, by whichever name He came.

Since ancient times, our world has always been in trouble. People always err and forget God. So, God always has to send messengers to remind us. But Jesus was one of the most remembered because of His greatness, and also because of His very short stay with us, and the way He left us and was resurrected. Now we say, 'The great son of God, He had such great power and did so many miracles. Why didn't He change His own destiny? Why did He have to die in such a tragic way?' But He had to do it, otherwise we would not be shocked out of our sleep. We would think the world is forever or the Master is forever.

There were also some other Masters before Jesus, but now people do not remember them as much as we remember Jesus. When we remember Jesus, we remember God, and we derive some blessing because Jesus was the son of God. In other words, Jesus was God personified on earth. He had to leave us very early. He had His purpose. He wanted to shock us out of our slumber.

Many thousands of years later, we are still shocked, if we remember this story, because of the ephemeral nature of our existence on earth. Even the son of God had to die! Everyone must go, eventually. If even a man as great as Jesus cannot preserve this ephemeral body and also cannot be protected from the violence and ignorance of the people of this world, how can we feel safe? That is why He submitted Himself to the punishment which He did not deserve. He suffered for the sake of everyone!

If we say Jesus used His blood to wash away our sins, it is not exaggerating. It is the truth, because each time we think of Jesus, we learn something. At least we remember the ephemeral nature of our world and our body, or at least we learn humility, because such a great one had to suffer in such a way. He was so humble that He surrendered Himself to God and said, 'Whatever God wills must be done!' Otherwise, He could have escaped. We know that He had a lot of magical power, including the power to be invisible, but He chose to obey God's arrangement. So, when we think of Him, we can say, 'Who are we to be proud, to forget God's will and not to surrender?' But these lessons are hard to learn. If all people can learn these lessons well, then Jesus' sacrifice was worthwhile and we are worthy to be His followers and worshippers.

133. International seven-day retreat, San Jose Center, Costa Rica, December 18-24, 1990 (Originally in English).

Mother earth

Now you see God can even destroy the whole world if the world is not good. If we are not good, then just like machines which are rusted and of no use, we have to be destroyed and made into new instruments. The same substance made into new instruments. For example, when you go to a garage or someplace, people buy or tow back ruined cars or damaged metal parts and apparatus. Then they press them into big lumps of metal, put a lump here and a lump there, and they will be made into new apparatus, new instruments. These useless metal pieces will become useful again.

They're not lost; they're not wasted; they're not thrown away, but just made into new things. This is similar to all kinds of hells or retributions. It's just to melt us to destroy some of the bad qualities, to make us into new, useful persons again.

Sometimes we think the earth is an inert place, with no feelings. But sometimes we feel that she has some power, some feelings and some arrangement. She supports everything, and transmutes all dirty things into beautiful things. But sometimes she can't bear some bad people. So, she kicks them out through disasters; or swallows them up, digests them, and puts them in the bottom of her stomach, out of sight.

You see now. Even though if we don't have wars, we have natural disasters. It seems this is a natural evolution or natural arrangement, to regulate the world, to make things maybe more beautiful or more balanced, and to destroy some decayed and useless part of the world, or maybe some very ugly mentalities in some part of a population in the world.

Sometimes we cling to the existence of the world. Of course, we feel sorry when some things are destroyed. But maybe it's good; because to us, these are beautiful, but in God's plan, they are not. For example, some very rich families, when they move into new estates, the old houses are destroyed, and all the things inside are burned and thrown away. Many poor inhabitants in the surrounding areas would feel very sorry about the houses and the things inside. But for the rich people, they are garbage and of no use whatsoever. They have many more beautiful things. They will replace them after the old things are destroyed and made invisible. And in place of those old and ruined houses, they build palaces.

But this is difficult to accept, because really our world is not easy to understand. God is even more difficult to understand. So, never mind if you don't understand Him, that you don't understand the world. We can try at least to understand ourselves, who we are, to find our real nature, our real purpose, and then, maybe we'll be happy. At least we can start from ourselves. It's good to trust God. But since every wise person has told us that God is within us, then we can try to find it. To find ourselves means to find the God within. I hope God blesses us. If I can help you in any way, I will try. But everything works according to God's will.

ENLIGHTENMENT IS THE TRUE AND LASTING ANSWER ¹³⁴

All wars come from ignorance. If we are ignorant, we don't know how to stop hatred, we don't know how to stop aggression and possessiveness. The higher the position we're in, the more danger we may cause for humanity; so first, you'd better be enlightened, and then serve the world with greater understanding.

134. Group meditation, San Jose Center, Costa Rica, December 16, 1990 (Originally in English).

Enlightenment brings unity to all

If everyone truly practices what the bible teaches, or what the Buddhist sutras teach, they will never quarrel with each other. All religions will be happy with each other and celebrate in the same church: The Pope coming to the temple and the monks going to the church. There would be no problem.

There's only one religion: The religion of God, of love and of understanding. There's only one church, one temple: The temple of enlightenment. Come to that temple; then we'll know all religions of the world.

LIVE A BALANCED LIFE IS THE TAO ¹³⁵

You should pursue spiritual practice in a moderate way. It's okay to become a saint tomorrow, so why must you rush to make it today? You have waited for many lifetimes, so what is the big deal in waiting just a few more days? The more you are anxious, the more you obstruct yourself.

In ancient times, there was a person who followed an enlightened Master to practice. One day he asked his Master, 'Master, how many sincere persons like me can you find in this world?' His Master replied, 'The universe is full of disciples like you.' [Master and audience laugh.] Still skeptical, the disciple asked again, 'Master, I am truly sincere. If I were to renounce everything, including my parents, wife, children, relatives, and friends, then how many years of practice would I take to reach sainthood?' His Master told him, 'If you are diligent, you can achieve it in five to fifteen years.' The disciple asked further, 'This is too slow. If I refrain from eating and drinking, and even skip sleeping, and only meditate with my legs crossed twenty-four hours a day, when do you think I can become a saint?' His Master said, 'In this way, perhaps it will take you thirty to fifty years to become a saint.' [Master and audience laugh.] Do you know why? He was being too anxious. Who did he think he was? Who cares whether he becomes a saint or not? Who would need a person like him?

Shakyamuni Buddha was very magnificent, and India was a holy land. Lots of people were vegetarians, and knew that they should pursue spiritual practice. Yet, He delivered no more than several tens of thousands of people. Even after His departure, some people still defamed Him. Other religious sects said that He was a heretic, an evil practitioner, and a demon! Similarly, people also slandered Jesus Christ. The two of them are still defamed by people today. It is because they were predestined to become enlightened Masters, and were assigned by God to deliver people, so they had no choice but to come to deliver sentient beings. When sincere aspirants pleaded with them to impart the Truth, they didn't have the heart to refuse, because they didn't want to break their hearts. Therefore, there is no big deal in becoming a saint; eventually, everyone will become a saint.

Shakyamuni Buddha used to have a disciple who didn't sleep even at night. It seemed that he meditated in the day and chanted the sutras at night, until later his eyes almost became blind. Shakyamuni Buddha told him, 'The way you are practicing will soon make you maya instead of a saint. When you play the zither, and the strings are stretched too tightly, can they produce any sound?' The disciple answered, 'No!' 'And if the strings are too loose, will any sound come out?' He said, 'No, none.' Then Shakyamuni Buddha said, 'The best way is the middle way.'

135. Group meditation, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, October 19, 1990 (Originally in Chinese).

Therefore, a balanced life is the Tao; an ordinary mind is the Tao. We should not crave for anything. Craving to become a saint quickly is also a kind of greediness. We ought to be moderate in whatever we do. How can you demand a newborn baby to ride a bicycle? You may be anxious to see him grow up and become a capable person, but you must not rush him. He cannot even walk steadily, so how can you ask him to run? Even if he forces himself to run, he will soon fall down. When a toddler learning to walk tries to run, won't he fall down in just a few steps? As a result, he will break his nose and injure his body, all because he is too anxious.

We should first take good care of our mind. Check whether or not we have a pure and noble ideal, that we have reined in our greed, wrath and infatuation, that we are loving and patient enough to others, that we are magnanimous, understanding and generous enough to tolerate others' mistakes. When we have achieved all these things, it is still not too late to become an enlightened Master or saint. Before we have reached perfection, who can benefit from our becoming an enlightened Master? We have not yet erased our guilty feelings, or cleared up our preconceptions and ignorance. Being still very narrow-minded, we cannot tolerate many people. Our love is still too insignificant to love a lot of people. Then what is the benefit of rushing to become an enlightened Master? Even if all the saints and Masters pour all of their power into such a narrow-minded, agitated and ignorant person, what is the use?

Endowed with power but not love, one will become maya. There is no significant difference between maya and a saint. Both have similar power, but the saint has love, which maya lacks. Maya is very selfish, demands everything and takes all. He only criticizes and never forgives. The saint not only criticizes, but He also forgives. He criticizes when it is the right time to do so, in order to help people to progress, and let them realize their own shortcomings. When it is time to forgive, He will, giving people due encouragement to live on, without being burdened by heavy feelings of guilt.

To really become a saint, we have to be perfect in every aspect, not just a particular aspect. If we are only magnanimous, but never criticize, then it is also no good! For instance, at times when you should criticize and educate people, you praise them instead, then you will only spoil them and ruin their judgment ability in spiritual practice. That's why I say, 'One must be balanced in yin and yang to become a saint.' We should penetrate all aspects of this world. Living in the world, we still need to eat, sleep and interact with people; therefore, we ought to be normal. As to our inner level or spiritual progress, we should just keep it to ourselves, and refrain from revealing it through our outer deportment.

THE WAYS TO ELIMINATE THE EGO ¹³⁶

This is very difficult. It's even harder than breaking off a love relationship. Why? It is because the ego is the self-pride of humans. Therefore, to eliminate the ego is very difficult, as we have been used to being the father, the mother, the Buddha, the God for such a long time. However, there are ways to eliminate your ego. Just look at your practice diary each day and see if the things you've done are good. If the good deeds are few, and the bad ones are many, and if we are full of greed, anger and hatred, then we know that we should be ashamed of ourselves. Then, gradually, we will become more humble, and we'll not dare to criticize others, because we can see that we are charcoal-black. Is that not so? If our own feet were soaked in mud, how would we dare to use a torch to shine on others' feet. So, our ego is lessened.

136. Group meditation, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, October 10, 1990 (Originally in Aulacese).

Otherwise, you can stay here. I'll give you a few scoldings each day, and your ego will be fine, because you have nowhere to hide in here. I will pick out your shortcomings everyday and elaborate on them over and over again. Then you'll not dare to be egotistical anymore. Do you understand? But humility and self-inferiority are two different things. The so-called inferiority complex is different. It means that one feels that he is very lowly and useless. I yell and scold at you, but within that there is love, support and blessing.

But in the outside world, people oppress you because of fame or wealth. For their own interests, they make our lives very miserable, break our hearts into pieces and crush our self-confidence totally.

So, the two kinds of reprimands are different. One is in competition with us. The other is to help us eliminate our egos. In scoldings of the latter type, there is hidden love. So, sometimes we feel that there is a kind of soothing fragrance, a soothing, compassionate atmosphere. Therefore, even though you have been scolded, you always seem to miss that person. You cannot forget him, nor can you hate him. But in the outside world, even though they might use sweet talk, we may still fear them. We fear that they might conjure up a plan to cheat us. We feel that they are frightening as if they have in hiding a knife ready to use on us.

When you practice the Quan Yin method, gradually the ego will be lessened. This method allows you to use the Buddha's Light, God's love, the source of infinite power or our own true selves, to erode the mundane ego. It is not that we use our limited human power to control it. Many people practice by strictly disciplining themselves. They dare not do this or that; dare not open their mouths too wide when they laugh; dare not walk with big strides; dare not run; dare not do anything. Even then, the ego still cannot be eliminated. Why? It is because they are using the mind and their mundane experiences to eliminate their mundane egos. Both of them are at a mundane level, therefore it's difficult.

Here we use the infinite wisdom of Buddha which is beyond the ordinary level. Therefore, it purifies the mediocrity. Understand? Our egos will naturally dissolve, so we don't need to restrain them that much. But otherwise, even if we spend our whole life trying to control the ego, it is of no use. Even though we can control it, we only do it superficially. For instance, we used to have a bad temper; we yelled and screamed at people, hit and struck them over trivial causes. But after we find some way to practice, we train our personalities. What are our personalities? Up until now, we were cruel and short-tempered, but now we try to train ourselves for the better. Each day, when we get mad, we will tighten our lips, swallow the lump in our throats, or we will go into the bathroom, slam something with all our might, and then come out laughing, 'Ha ha ha ha...' That is the training to have a good demeanor. But it is only for training you to change your characteristics, meanwhile the real problems are still hidden inside. When the situation occurs that is so sudden and urgent, they will reappear unexpectedly.

Sometimes the resident disciples here are in the same situation. Each day they behave very docilely, acting as if they truly believe in me. One day I used a special method, one that they would never have expected. For example, I slammed on the tables and chairs, yelling and screaming loudly, as if I was really mad. Then their egos popped up. They tried to teach me and said, 'Oh, Master, what is it that matter?' At that moment, I laughed to myself, and I knew how strong their faith was. I know how and what they think of me. Therefore, often in normal circumstances, when I treat them well, they will not reveal their latent character. Understand? Many times I have to corner them into a dead end for it to be exposed. So, the ways in which a Master treats others cannot be judged.

The dust and garbage under the bed have to be poked and dug out. If we don't use a long broomstick, we won't get it all out. If these things are not dug out, we cannot see them. Everyday we just sweep on the outside, and we think it's very clean. But the dirt hidden deep in the corner, nobody sees. We only realize it when we dig it out. If we don't get it out, we are not aware of it. Nevertheless, it is there if we get it out. Tempering the character is not as good as practicing the way of the Buddha nature inside. Therefore, only the Quan Yin method will gradually lessen your ego.

As you practice for a while, you will notice that you have changed greatly, or you will see that the fellow practitioners around you have changed a great deal. When we've practiced for a long time, our friends will be greatly surprised, 'How did you change so much?' It's not that you have changed all by yourself, but it is your own Buddha nature that has naturally cleansed all the stains of the mundane life. Do you understand? Only practicing spiritually will bring good results; no other kinds of training will do. But if you are close to a living Master, it will benefit you greatly. The Master can do it faster, digging out all of your garbage. Wherever you try to hide it, the Master will use a big, long broomstick to poke it out, whether you like it or not. Usually we hide it very carefully, covering it up with a cloth. Although we feel uncomfortable when all the dirt is being dug out, somehow we also seem to like it. So, never mind, shovel it all out in one go, so it's finished. Then we know that our house is clean; that's all.

RENOUNCE EVERYTHING AND BE HAPPY ¹³⁷

When we're in the higher dimensions, we see everything in the innumerable worlds emerge and disappear in a fraction of a moment, just like bubbles! We can't even say it takes place in a moment. Things disappear almost as soon as they emerge. It's the same with all the illusory worlds we see in the higher dimensions.

We seem to go through long periods of suffering because of our ignorance. We're trapped in the cage of time and space; that's why it seems to be a long time. In reality, it's not that long. To God, it's even shorter than a second or a fraction of a moment. It can't be considered time. It passes really quickly! But since you're trapped in a corner, you can't see the whole and you think that you're just there. This isn't true! You're omnipresent. You're just stuck there and can't fly out. Then you consider yourself to be there, and you're just that one or this one.

Sometimes little birds or insects get stuck on our windows. Since the windowpane is transparent and the room is lighted, they don't realize that there's a window and they crash into the pane. Their heads become swollen and their eyes blinded, and in a short while they unconsciously fall on the floor. They don't enter through an open space, but fly right into the windowpane.

We do the same! We should renounce everything, even our happiness, and then we'll be fine. We shouldn't even ask for peace, health, success, reputation, riches or family. We should ask for nothing at all. Then we won't suffer! It's just that we ask for too much so we get stuck here and there, with our nose caught in there, too. And then we cry out for help.

137. Seven-day retreat, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, September 28 to October 3, 1990 (Originally in Chinese).

THE RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL SON ¹³⁸

Only when you have become a child again can you enter the kingdom of God

When Jesus Christ grew up, He went out to preach and glorify God. He traveled to many places introducing the true doctrine to people. Here is a story told by Him when He was preaching in a certain region. The story was about two sons. Jesus Christ had no discrimination, and He treated everyone very nicely regardless of who they were. He often mixed with all kinds of people – the poor, the sick, the elderly, the ugly, the beautiful and children. He loved all of them and had very good relationships with them. The people also loved and respected Him very much. Jesus Christ really pampered them, especially the children.

People from all walks of life brought their children to see Jesus Christ, and asked Him to touch their heads to bless them. Jesus Christ had many principal apostles, or you can say His good friends, who would bar the children from seeing Him if too many of them had come. 'Please! Don't disturb Him! Why are you troubling Him like this?'

Then Jesus Christ would say, 'No, no, no! Don't stop them. Let the children come. The kingdom of God belongs to the children or people who have a pure heart like that of a child. Should we want to return to the heavenly kingdom, we must become as innocent as a child.' Taking this opportunity, Jesus Christ told us that we must become like a child to return to the heavenly kingdom. We should not be too complicated. We must not mind too much about everything. Even when we have grown up, we still should preserve a heart like a child.

To fulfill our obligations to society, naturally we should go to work when we have grown up, get married, or study hard. However, we should keep our heart pure just like when we were small. Don't compete with others; don't long for profit and fame; don't be mean and calculating, be forgiving instead. People may have treated us badly but we should treat them well and love them. Such is the heart of a child. If we can preserve this heart of a child, no matter how old we have grown we are still God's children.

We won't go to hell or fall into undesirable situations. Our life will be smooth; at least our heart will always be happy. We will face any problem cheerfully. No obstacles will make us feel frustrated or worried as we can overcome them. We will easily forgive others, and we will feel very free. We may be rich or poor, our position may be high or low, and despite where we are living or whom we are staying with, we just won't mind. Such is the heart of a child. It is not definite that we cannot be a child again after we have grown up.

Children can easily forgive others

Jesus Christ was a big child, and so was Shakyamuni Buddha. They were very affectionate and pure – not complicated in mind. Therefore, they didn't mind what people had done to them. They wouldn't fuss about or remember enmities, nor would they try to take revenge. In His whole life, Jesus Christ only did good things and worshipped God. He never did anything harmful, or competed with others for power, wealth or fame. He taught people to do good deeds; He spread God's love to the whole world, and saved many souls.

138. Group meditation, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, July 23, 1990 (Originally in Chinese).

Nevertheless, some people were still jealous of Him because He was too famous and loved by too many. Out of their love for Him, people revered Him as king – the great king. Worldly people think that being a king is the highest position on earth, so we revere whomever we love as the great king.

Consequently, the real king was jealous, and feared that Jesus Christ would challenge him and seize his throne. Jesus Christ was crucified due to this jealousy. However, He kept His child-like heart even when He was nailed to the cross. He begged God to forgive those ignorant people who didn't know the Truth. A child can easily forgive others, and will not harbor enmity against them.

Since Jesus Christ often mixed with all types of people, the so-called monks or monastic people at that time criticized Him. Each religion has their monastic people. For instance, the pastors and nuns of Catholicism and Christianity are monastic people, so they are respected by people. There are also Buddhist monks – the bhiksus and bhiksunis. The Hindu monks are called swamis. Other religions also have their monastic people. Though they wear different clothes and live in different ways, they are regarded as monastic people.

Being monastic means that they have renounced everything for God, to serve God, and to spread God's Truth to the multitude. They put aside their human emotions and affections for their families, consider the whole world as their family, and see all men as their brothers. Their ideal is really noble and great, so they deserve our veneration.

We shouldn't revere only monastic people of our religion and not those from other paths. This is wrong! Of course, in every religion, there are some monastic people who don't understand this ideal, but seek money and fame in the name of their religion. They are not really monastic people. They wear the same clothes but their hearts are not the same. Fortunately, there is only a handful of them.

The real monastic people

Monastic people truly deserve people's admiration, not because of their outer appearance, but because of their inner ideal. They are really keen in serving the multitude, and their hearts extend to the whole world. This is why we admire and respect them, not because of their attire. It doesn't matter what clothes they wear because they have lofty ideals and are broad-minded. They care little about personal feelings, and they see the whole world as one illusion – all beings are one; there is only one God, one Truth and one Tao. They want to spread this Tao to everyone, and to remind us this Tao is the only way that we should quest.

To these people who have severed their personal affections, we call them monastic people. Monastic or 'leaving-home' means to forsake the binding affections of one's family. Every religion bears the same ideal to extend its heart, and go beyond birth and death.

When Jesus Christ was alive, some of the so-called monastic people (rabbis) of Judaism complained about Him. They criticized Him for mixing with prostitutes, beggars or very poor people who were the lowest in society. He mixed with them, made friends with them, and taught them some doctrines. The rabbis thought that was a shameful and inappropriate thing to do. They thought that Jewish people were the best, so the teachings should only be imparted to the Jewish or people belonging to the higher classes, and not to the so-called lowly people who were despised by society. In their opinion, the prostitutes were the untouchables, and they were so bad that their lives could never be changed.

However, Jesus Christ could change them. He would, and He had the power. Any bad persons would change for the better after following Him, or after looking at Him once.

No one is good or bad

Good or bad people are created by the social circumstances. Someone might be a good person for many lives. Suddenly, if he was cheated in this life, or his family is separated because there was a war in his country; perhaps he suddenly lost his parents and so his security – lost as in what to do, he becomes a so-called bad person. These kinds of people may become prostitutes, villains or even robbers, yet they may not be bad in nature.

If our heart is pure, it will shine with some polishing, just like gold. Gold is gold even if there are tons of earth burying it. When we first excavate a diamond, it is covered by a heavy layer of dust. After cleaning and polishing it, a diamond is still a diamond, and its value won't depreciate because of the dust.

Similarly, our heavenly kingdom or the innocent God nature within will never be contaminated by dust or karma. It is only our misunderstanding! Therefore, I often tell you that no one is a sinner to me. Only because our minds don't understand, so we cannot forgive ourselves and make a mess. If there is someone to remind us or tell us the Truth, we will know how to dispose of the karma, how to forget or change our so-called habits, then we will be exactly the same as the Bodhisattvas or saints.

That was why Jesus Christ said that we are all God's children. However, we must revert our heart back to the state of an innocent child, and be determined not to submit to the bad habits again.

Two sons

The monastic people then criticized Jesus Christ for acting improperly against the canon as He mixed with all kinds of people. Therefore, one day, Jesus Christ told them a story relevant to this issue. The story was like this: A person had two sons. The younger son demanded his father to give him his share of the family wealth, which his father duly granted him. Upon receiving the wealth, the younger son went out enjoying pleasures, traveling around the world, and spent all his money foolishly. Eventually he became penniless! Coincidentally, there was a famine at that time in his country, so everyone was starving. He went to work on a farm where many piglets were being raised. He was so hungry that when he saw the piglets eating the food in the trough, he wanted to fight for it with the piglets. He was very hungry and homesick.

One day, he talked to himself: 'Oh! What an absurd life I am leading here. Even a laborer of my father has more to eat than I have now. They have more than enough to eat while I am starving here. This is illogical. It's about time I went home. I will apologize to father and tell him how sorry and remorseful I am for my ignorant behavior in the past, and that I was young and stupid. I will admit that I am not fit to be his son, then perhaps he will accept me as one of his workers. That would be fine, too! At least I will have enough to eat.' He kept telling this to himself on his way home.

Seeing that his son had returned, the father ran to embrace, greet and kiss him. He was so happy to see his child home again. He told the servants: 'Quickly get some new clothes for my son, and bring him lots of good food and things to drink.' The father was busy telling people to get the food, and then he said, 'Come! We should celebrate.' He told the servants and his family: 'We should celebrate the return of my son. My younger son is

home!'

Delightfully he prepared a big feast and invited everyone. When the older son came home, he was angry and jealous. He complained to his father: 'I've worked for you for so many years, but you have never held a feast for me, nor have you given me any special things. Today you have all the best food and clothes for your rotten son. You also give him the best to drink, and even hold a big feast to celebrate his return. What is this all about?'

The older son angrily pressed for an explanation, so the father then said: 'Don't be angry. You know very well that all my property is yours. There is no need to hold a feast for you because everything is already yours! As to why we have to celebrate today, it is because we originally thought that we had lost your brother. Now that he is found again, we have reason to rejoice.'

The father had no discrimination. To him, his wealth was not as dear as his son, so he didn't mind spending a lot of money – letting bygones be bygones. He was very happy to see his younger child come home safely.

So is God. He doesn't mind how great we have sinned, as it was all in the past. If we are sincere to repent and to be a good child again, He will welcome us Home. This is precisely what I am reminding you of all the time. Therefore, you can rest assured and don't be anxious. Our spiritual practice may be good or bad sometimes. Sometimes we see great Light and hear God's deafening Sound, but sometimes we seem to have nothing. It is because we are veiled by the so-called preconceived ideas, or our pure heart is affected by social influences. Then our guilty feelings will emerge again, and we will think that our sins are too heavy to deserve God's grace and love.

We always deserve God's grace and love

The truth is we are always worthy. How would God mind how much you have ruined His wealth? He is the creator. He can always create a wonderful and vast world or universe. He wouldn't mind. As we destroy, He creates again, no problem. For instance, we have killed human beings or animals before, or have broken the rules of the world, now we repent sincerely and ask for God's forgiveness. We humbly become His slaves or servants, and meditate everyday.

If we can admit that we are God's children then we don't have to meditate. If we think that we are very worthy, we would be proud of ourselves and wouldn't repent, meditate, or check up on ourselves everyday. However, because we are still humble and are remorseful for our past karma, God will forgive us. We have the same position as those heavenly children who have not offended the precepts, nothing less.

Only because we are not Home yet, so we are still repenting here. When we reach Home and see Mother / Father, we are all the same. He will give us the best clothes to wear, the best abode in heaven, all the best things to enjoy, and an eternal life just like Him. Therefore, you don't have to rush. Prepare for it well while you are here; you can enjoy as soon as you reach Home.

THE BOY JESUS IN THE TEMPLE ¹³⁹

Do you know why Jesus Christ was so famous? Because He was an enlightened Master! An enlightened Master is a great person who has wisdom. Jesus was born in heaven, and then helped people when He grew up – with respect to their souls, not money. Jesus Christ didn't have money, but He had great virtues and wisdom. Therefore, He was loved by many. As He was growing up; His parents loved Him deeply. He was good at learning anything and was benevolent, so many people loved Him. God also loved Him. He looked very dignified and was very clever.

Every year His so-called parents, Joseph and Mary, went to Jerusalem for the Jewish holy festival (Passover). During this festival, they would say prayers of gratitude to God to thank Him for helping the Jews, life after life, since ancient times; especially for delivering them from slavery in Egypt. Therefore, once a year they would hold a celebration to thank the inner God and the inner Master. They must have had an enlightened Master then. Jesus was twelve years old and was more than happy to accompany His parents. There they would celebrate an exciting, delightful and boisterous festive day.

When it was time to go home, His parents, Joseph and Mary, prepared to return. Assuming their child was either in front of or behind the group of travelers, they didn't notice that Jesus was not with them. Usually children seldom stay close to their parents; they either walk in the front or behind. In the evening, they discovered that Jesus was missing. They started to search among their friends and others for Jesus, only twelve years old, where could He have gone? Joseph and Mary were so worried that they couldn't sleep the whole night.

Early the next morning, they returned to Jerusalem to look for Jesus. After a whole day of searching, they finally found Him. Guess where He was found? [Audience: The temple.] Right! In the temple! They eventually found Him in the temple, sitting among the spiritual practitioners asking the teachers and priests about spiritual practice, about God's law and about morality, which were things adults discussed. Everyone there was so amazed and delighted to see a twelve-year-old child having such intense interest in spirituality, so respectful toward God and with the ability to ask so many intelligent questions.

As you know, if we are not intelligent enough, we may not be able to ask a question even if we have one. Just like when you are in the school, the teacher may ask you: 'Do you understand? Any questions?' Then, some ask very clever questions, but some ask stupid questions. Jesus Christ was not stupid; He asked very clever questions, so everyone was amazed and delighted.

'I must be in my Mother / Father's House'

When His parents found Him, His mother, Mary, asked Him, 'Child, why have You done this to us? Why did You leave without saying a word? We have been so worried that we couldn't sleep.' She reproached Him just like your parents would if you were not behaving well, or when they found you after you had been missing. Usually the mother has more to say. As His mother began to chide Him, Jesus seemed surprised at what she was saying. He thought His mother shouldn't question Him like that, so instead of answering her, He asked, 'Why didn't you know that I would be here? You should have known that I would be in my Father's house!' He meant the temple. He was amazed and asked His mother, 'Did

139. Group meditation, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, July 8, 1990 (Originally in Chinese).

you not know that I would be in my Father's house?' Mary and Joseph didn't know how to answer His questions. Perhaps they were not as enlightened as Jesus was.

Parents are not necessarily more clever than their children. Very often this is the case. Some children are geniuses; they are already great when they are only ten, seven or four years old. They can ask many questions that their parents could never answer. At that time they had forgotten that Jesus was not an ordinary child and that His Mother / Father is God. God only borrowed their bodies to give birth to Jesus, and to bring Him up for a certain time; they were not really Jesus' true parents. Nevertheless, Jesus went home with them, and was obedient and nice to them just like He used to be.

Why was Jesus Christ so interested in the temple and God's teachings? Do you children know the answer? [Audience: I know.] What do you know? [Audience: It was because He is the son of God!] The son of God, right! It was because He is the son of God! He had this enlightenment when He was born. He had practiced spirituality for many lifetimes, and He is the son of God.

I would like to ask you another question. If He is the son of God, then who are you? [Audience: Human beings!] So, you are human beings! Who do you think you are? [Audience: We are spiritual practitioners.] You are spiritual practitioners, at least you are slightly better than Him. You are initiated and He is not. Correct! We are spiritual practitioners, not bad!

Is there anyone who has any different ideas? Who are we? [Audience: Sons of God!] Sons of God? Who is that? Who dared to say this? Show your face and let me see you. So, you are the son of God. When did He tell you? [Audience: We are all God's children. As human beings were created by God, so we are God's children. That was what Master told us.]

So, it was my words. [Master and audience laugh.] There is no point in quoting my words. I thought you realized it yourself. All right, if we are all God's children, then why are we different from Jesus Christ? [Audience: It was a different time and we are of a different race.] You are too enlightened. Since we are from a different race, should we reincarnate as Jews to become God's children? What do you mean by different races? Didn't you just say that we are all God's children? [Audience: They were from a race different from the Chinese.]

We are all God's children

We are all God's children, sons of God. However, some of us are obedient and some are not. There may be three or four children in a family born of the same parents, but some are obedient and some are naughty, some are clever and some are not. Some are pretty, but some are ugly. Some are disabled, and some are even mentally retarded. They are born of the same parents, who did not discriminate when they gave birth to the children. They would not make the decision of wanting one child to be born wiser than the other. And when they have another baby, they could not say, 'Wow! I dislike this baby even before he is born. I want him to look ugly.' No parents would have such thoughts. Parents give birth to children and love them wholeheartedly. Nonetheless, some children are ugly, some are pretty; some are obedient, some are naughty; some are stupid, some are clever. All the same, we are God's children, not only Jesus Christ. It was only because He had already recognized His Mother / Father, so He could say with confidence, 'I know who my Mother / Father is.'

We are separated from our parents, severed from our Mother / Father. So, we don't recognize Hirm. The truth is, we are all the same. We have the same status as Jesus Christ, no difference at all. He was very diligent because He deeply missed His Mother / Father – the real Mother / Father, the God in the heavenly kingdom – so He persistently pleaded with God, His real Mother / Father, to show Him where He is and reveal to Him their true relationship. However, we don't miss our Mother / Father. All the time, we only miss our worldly friends and relatives. Since we don't long for our true parents, they cannot force us to think about them, nor could they appear to us. We are too busy to think about them. Why are we so busy? Because we are engaged in worldly matters, fame and wealth, all kinds of things, and in taking care of our so-called friends and relatives in this world.

In this story, Jesus Christ didn't say: 'You are my parents.' He really knew that He is the son of God, so He told His parents: 'How could you not know that I would be in my Mother / Father's home working for Hirm?' He had this realization when He was only twelve. He knew who He was. He knew the power of the creator, but He didn't understand the ephemeral human relations and emotions. He didn't recognize the ephemeral human feelings. Well! Jesus Christ realized this when He was twelve, and He admitted that His true relationship is with God. However, He was still filial to His parents and continued to be an obedient child.

So, our children who pursue spiritual practice should do the same. We know that the world is ephemeral, and that we are related to our friends and relatives by karma only. We know our true parent is the creator. However, while in this world, we still have to be obedient and respect the elderly, our parents and teachers, and love all our friends and relatives, just like what Jesus Christ did. If Jesus Christ respected His parents, we should do the same, and even more so! He knew that His Mother / Father is God, the most high, yet He still fulfilled His obligations to the world. We should do the same, and even more so, since we have yet to attain this realization!

BE SIMPLE BUT ELEGANT ¹⁴⁰

We should have a job, take care of ourselves physically, and fulfill our obligations to our parents, society and country; but we should also spare two and a half hours for ourselves. The eight or ten hours we spend on worldly jobs are only for our physical body and don't do us very much good, because we get tired, sick or exhausted when we work too much. But we won't get tired when we meditate. The more we meditate, the better and more powerful we become, so it really pays off to meditate.

Even though we work eight hours a day but don't get so much benefit from it, we still do the work because we're supposed to do it, and because we have this body, society and customs that require us to do it. In contrast, the two and a half hours we spend meditating can benefit the whole universe, the whole world, the whole society, our ancestors, descendants, relatives, friends and anyone we love. So, this two and a half hours is the time we really work. If you want to find God, you don't have to go anywhere. Just sit at home meditating. As soon as you calm down, He'll come to you. There's no need to look for Hirm. It's very simple, nothing difficult.

The method we are practicing is wonderful. We can meditate anytime we want. When we are tired, we can meditate for a while, and then we will feel very comfortable. When we are bored, we can also meditate, so that we have something to do, something to rely on,

140. Group meditation, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, July 1, 1990 (Originally in Chinese).

something to make us feel elegant. The people outside like drinking, smoking, seeking promiscuous relationships, and then end up harming their own bodies and minds and contaminating their own spirits. In contrast, we meditate, which is very much like the elegant way of spiritual practice in the ancient times. I feel very proud of this method and a life like this, because we can always meditate and practice spiritually.

THREE KINDS OF SPIRITUAL PRACTITIONERS ¹⁴¹

There are three kinds of spiritual practitioners. The first one believes in God and obeys Him. The second one works for God. The third one, or the highest one, becomes one with God. He who is one with God or becomes God comes spontaneously and without expectations. He comes out of sincerity, not out of greed. Sincerity is different from expecting something. I don't know how to differentiate them for you. It comes naturally and is difficult to explain. Sometimes we may confuse expectation with sincerity, but actually they are different.

The first kind of person likes to worship God and obeys God. He is very satisfied and happy with the idea of having a God that he can worship and pray to, who is higher than him and takes care of him. He does not ask for anything else but this.

The second kind of person recognizes God and likes to work for Him. Whatever he does, he does for God. After a while, however, he becomes more fond of the work than of God. He begins to find himself more and more work to do, but he forgets his ultimate goal is God. This kind of person has a lot of merit. He does a lot of good things, like delivering sentient beings, giving lectures, building temples, and becoming a monk, et cetera. But after he does these things for a long time, people begin to worship and adore him. They believe he is a virtuous person and keep praising him. The more they praise him, the more he indulges in the work. Gradually, he becomes attached to doing good deeds, never able to become one with God. These two kinds of disciples cannot attain the highest level, one attached to worshipping God and the other attached to working in order to please God.

The third kind of person may also worship God and do good things to please God, but he knows these things are only secondary. He would like to realize, 'Who is God?' He doesn't just want to worship God or please God by working. Instead, he wants to know who God is. He wants to 'catch' Him. This kind of person will ultimately become one with God. Very few people can attain this level.

LIBERATE YOURSELF FROM THE ILLUSION OF HABIT ¹⁴²

All happiness, anger, sorrows and joy arise from habit. Therefore, we must see through these illusions. We must realize that nothing is really good or really that painful; we're simply bound by our habits.

Society's moral codes and traditions also originate from habit. As we progress in our spiritual practice, these traditions and customs won't be able to bind us anymore. Nonetheless, we must continue to coordinate and cooperate with people in the world so that we won't bring trouble on ourselves. We want to live a peaceful life in order to focus on our spiritual cultivation, but that doesn't mean we care about these senseless traditions and customs.

141. Group meditation, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, June 10, 1990 (Originally in Chinese).

142. Seven-day retreat, Santimen, Pingtung, Formosa, April 1, 1990 (Originally in Chinese).

Shake off your habits to become a truly free person

Since ancient times, spiritual practitioners have periodically put aside their daily tasks to practice diligently in groups. This is the way to progress. We transmigrate life after life because we follow the dictates of our habits. If we become a certain kind of person in this lifetime it's because we've been such a person in previous lives. Likewise, we engage in certain types of activities because we performed them in the past. However, if we don't occasionally renounce our habits and do something new, after we die we'll have to come back again. The influence will grow stronger and make us repeat the same actions each time we come back.

That's why Masters or Zen Masters in ancient times occasionally roared at their disciples or suddenly hit them with a cane to shock them and thus temporarily cut them off from their past influences. Only then could the Masters or Zen Masters impart new information to their devotees. It may have been just a little bit, but it was sufficient. Later it would sprout and grow, transforming the disciples into new people.

Similarly, nowadays a Master may command us to do work that we detest or are unaccustomed to in order to break the shackles that bind us like horses or pigeons that always take a fixed route and continue to do so even after they're set free.

We humans are also like this. Why do we reincarnate life after life? It's because if we're in the habit of doing certain things in one lifetime, it will influence us to do the same things when we come back in the next life. We have minds that record all our actions and likes, and replay all these tendencies each time we return, making us engage in the same behaviors and preventing us from going beyond our past level. Sometimes when we want to do a good or bad action, it's simply affected by past habits and not due to the fact that we're really good or bad.

There are times when I ask you to do seemingly meaningless tasks that you may find boring and illogical. But even then you must carry them out according to my instructions. By occasionally doing such work, you break your attachment to longstanding habits and preconceived ideas – those rotten concepts and actions that bind you tightly.

Similarly, we should once in a while put down our habitual work and daily routine to attend retreats for a few days. At these times we let go of everything, become like a child and realize, 'There's nothing to be done in this world.' Even without us, the world won't go kaput or fall apart. We should bear this in mind.

Now that we're still in the world, we must continue to work because even though a brake has been applied to the wheel of habit, it has not yet been brought to a complete stop. It will take some time for the wheel to come to a standstill. If we step on the brake too hard, the car will overturn and put us in danger. Since we're already in this world, we just live on and fulfill our duty. However, we should understand that it's only the inertial momentum of our past habits that hasn't come to a complete halt.

Apart from doing things that we're accustomed to, we also have to add fresh ingredients. Otherwise, we'll come back and do the same things again like being a carpenter or soldier. Even if we didn't become a soldier, we'd still retain a domineering, authoritative personality.

Therefore, you shouldn't listen to your mind all the time. When I tell you to do something you should act accordingly, put your mind entirely into the work and focus on

accomplishing it. In this way your past influences will be temporarily cut off. If not, they'll continue to repeat themselves, and you'll have to come back again.

While working, we should make no judgments about whether the job is good or bad. Trouble arises when we discriminate or show preferences. As soon as we prefer one task over another the mind immediately begins to record it, saying, 'Ah! He likes this job.' And when we come back the next life, this recording will be played back to us. Our predilections account for our transmigration. If we have no preferences in doing our work, we'll 'do without doing' and won't become bound.

For this reason it's important for us to periodically drop everything and go into retreat together for several days. This practice reaps the greatest benefits for those who aren't completely enlightened. Although we meditate at home each day, our minds are still filled with turbulent thoughts and we have to struggle against many habits as well, so it's not very effective.

Without the guidance of an enlightened Master, we indeed repeat the same responses every day. When someone calls us, we turn and look back; when people scold us, we get upset; when someone looks at us with loving eyes, our hearts throb. [Laughter] We do such silly things throughout our lives, being constantly controlled by external situations, beguiled by our minds and bound by past influences. So, we aren't really free and have no distinct personality! Don't you think this is pathetic? We're just like cows led by the nose ring.

So, don't think that we're already free. At times we should put down everything and meditate more to allow our innermost power to emerge and cleanse our past tendencies. Only then can we live in freedom. Otherwise, we're constrained by these habits and repeat the same actions life after life.

The husband, wife, father, mother, children and friends that we now have were our relatives and friends in the past, or were related to us in some way. For instance, they might have been our bosses in past lives. These individuals who once had a deep influence on us come back in this lifetime to dominate us again. Or, perhaps we dominated them before, so we've come back to dominate them again in this life. Past propensities are like an ever-spinning wheel that we simply can't bring to a standstill.

So, we have to add fresh ingredients and actions from time to time to temporarily cut off the patterns recorded in the mind. Only then will the wheel stop and we'll have a chance to ponder questions such as 'Who am I in the first place?' and 'Why are we here?' If not, we simply engage in the same work each day, washing clothes, eating, et cetera and remain controlled by outer conditions as our lives are filled with misery and suffering and lack meaning. It would be a great pity if we lived like this for a life.

Since times of old, all the sages and saints have been able to realize themselves, understand the past and future and attain enlightenment and liberation because they've spent time thinking. In contrast, we're just like slaves and animals doing whatever other people tell us to do. We turn our heads when we're called and get angry when scolded. Everyone behaves in exactly the same way and that's very nonsensical! Now that we've had enough of this situation, we need to stand up, revolt against our minds and ask, 'Why have I been doing such nonsensical things all my life?'

The saga of Milarepa – A Master’s painstaking efforts to educate his disciple

Masters don’t really need their disciples to do any work; they only want to teach them. And although they know their students absolutely abhor certain types of tasks, the Masters still tell them to perform them. Training disciples is truly a painstaking job! For example, you all know the story of Milarepa and you all pity him. In my opinion, however, his Master was the truly pitiable one because Milarepa was very vicious when he was young. Just because someone stole his property, he learned black magic on his mother’s orders so that he could seek vengeance and kill his foe. It took several years to master this magic, but during that time, the thought of killing was constantly in his mind. This is called ‘intentional killing’ and shows that he was very vicious, obstinate and unfeeling. Fear of going to hell arose in him only after he had committed the act and his black magic master told him about the resulting karma. Thus, Milarepa sought an enlightened Master only because he feared hell, and not because of the noble ideal pursued by ‘Arhats’ and ‘Bodhisattvas’ like you.

Milarepa’s Master had to educate people like him. Under today’s laws, individuals such as Milarepa would be sentenced to life imprisonment and labor, yet his Master lived with such a criminal every day and even had to civilize him. How was it possible to edify him? Milarepa was full of malice before the murder he committed. His only thought was to take his enemy’s life out of vengeance, but once he did it he was filled with guilt. It was really difficult to enlighten him! Even then, his Master forgave him and didn’t treat him like a murderer but instead patiently cared for him and taught him by every means possible. He was indeed a pitiable Master! Sometimes you can hardly stand living with ordinary benevolent people, let alone a criminal!

Milarepa was a stubborn character and when he killed he did it thoroughly. He planned it for several years, and made sure that his foes were killed completely. In seeking the Truth, he also persisted to the end. He wouldn’t budge even when his Master rejected him. As soon as he went to his Master’s residence, he put his gear in place, intending to stay there permanently, and even when his Master said, ‘No,’ he didn’t care. His Master beat and scolded him daily; commanding him to repeatedly build and demolish houses for many years, yet Milarepa persisted. It’s really difficult to teach such a stubborn person!

Everyone admires Milarepa for his strong, unwavering faith, but I think he was merely obstinate. Even in plotting his killings he persisted to the end. He was a very intractable person in the first place, and would always persevere till the end in whatever he did. How can you educate a person like that? Nonetheless, having found him courageous and penitent, his Master taught him with great patience. Just by making a small offering of repentance, he gave his Master seven years of tribulation.

However, you all know how changeable ordinary humans are, being repentant one day and full of wrath again the next. Milarepa did just a tiny bit of repentance, yet he was salvaged. His Master observed how his stubbornness made him act obstinately without wavering from his preconceived ideas. So, the Master used many seemingly irrational methods to break through his willful preconceptions. It was not that his Master needed him to do anything.

The Master had numerous disciples and could have asked someone else to build the house that Milarepa built. So, why did he have Milarepa build it alone, demolish it after it was completed and then rebuild it again? The Master told him to carry stones up a hill to build a house, and later asked him, ‘Who ordered you to build it?’ This question was intended to confuse Milarepa about his habitual stubbornness. When reading the

scriptures, you should develop a comprehensive understanding to get the whole picture instead of just browsing through them unmindfully and thinking, 'Oh! Milarepa really had very strong faith! Oh! Milarepa was really pitiful!' But you don't realize who the truly pitiful one was.

Enlightened Masters are merciful at heart and promptly render help when they find a person expressing a little regret or yearning for the Truth. You see, Milarepa made very small gifts to his Master, offering only half of the token amount of gold dust he had and keeping the other half for himself because he thought his Master was greedy for hand-outs. So, he presented only half of the gold dust he had. You can see how 'sincere' he was! Milarepa was going to live in his Master's place, eat there, drink there, sleep there and learn the Truth, yet he made only half an offering.

Then to let Milarepa know he wasn't a greedy man, his Master immediately discarded the gold dust. So, in fact, Milarepa made no offering. His Master repeatedly asked for offerings day and night just to have an excuse to scold him and refuse to impart the method to him because the time had not yet come for Milarepa; his mind was still immature. We know this just by observing his behavior in making only half an offering. It was a small quantity of gold dust yet he 'saved' half of it for himself. Later he complained that his Master refused to impart the method to him, but the true method is not to be imparted so easily! You can't just come in and force a Master to impart the method to you. It is similar to a wealthy person; he is free to give his money to anyone he wants. No one can force him, because the money is his.

Milarepa was a very headstrong person but his Master was very good, being extremely patient, teaching him arduously for seven years, waiting until he matured and then imparting the method to him. Since Milarepa was exceptionally stubborn by nature, his Master did not allow him to live continuously in the same cave and made him move to a new one after a time. Such asceticism is not the appropriate approach to spiritual practice for everyone. So, do not think that we can attain the Truth simply by practicing in the way Milarepa did. This is nonsense! Our personalities are different than his!

For instance, Shakyamuni Buddha didn't need to practice so extremely because He was already merciful at heart and felt empathy for others who were suffering. So He didn't have to go through such torment. His spiritual progress was smooth and rapid except for a certain period when He blindly followed an ascetic regime out of ignorance. He had found many people practicing asceticism and knew no other way. It was only afterwards that He realized it was wrong to engage in such techniques.

So, don't wonder why I never tell you to practice ascetically like Milarepa, but instead allow you to pitch tents here at Santimen and have fun in the water. In the daytime, I even let you take shelter and hang up your hammocks to sleep, rest or meditate. You meditate more only in the evening. Since we have mountains and rivers here, I let you enjoy them by the way, practicing spiritually and having fun at the same time.

FOLLOW AN ENLIGHTENED MASTER ONE WILL NEVER FALL ¹⁴³

Brahma's net

Being spiritual practitioners you can help a lot of people. Any people related to you are also related to me. Anyone related to me is related to the grand spiritual order. I am not

143. Seven-day retreat, Santimen, Pingtung, Formosa, April 1, 1990 (Originally in Chinese).

working alone; I have many colleagues in heaven and on earth. We are connected like a network. Therefore, the relationship with one of us extends to the whole group. For example, some people might die in a traffic accident or by assassination, or by committing suicide. Yet, just because they have seen you once, have an acquaintance or relationship with you, or have heard the Master's name, they will be saved and taken to another sphere when they run into trouble. [Applause]

What will happen to them after they are saved? They have a different destiny from those unfortunate people! They will be taken care of in a special place – just like being treated by special doctors and nurses in a hospital. This resembles the situation when a person is injured in an accident. Someone who notices it, and there's a telephone, will call the hospital to send an ambulance. The injured one is rushed to the hospital to be resuscitated. In the same way, people who are related to us – the spiritual practitioners – will also be saved. At their dying moment, the angels come to greet them. Or someone special might come to take them; it depends on the individual situation.

Our working staff members are many in number, and are designated to receive the souls of people who die of different causes: People killed in disasters, by assassination, by committing suicide or who die of normal causes. Some are specialized in greeting those who practiced the chanting of the Buddha's name, or took care of superior spiritual practitioners. No one is neglected. We just press the corresponding button according to your situation, then someone will come to receive you. It is very convenient. 'Brahma's net' is extremely vast, and overlooks no one. However, if you have no relationship with any spiritual practitioner, or you have not practiced spiritually, you might be neglected. No one will care about you, and you will suffer for millions of years in vain! People who go to hell, or the solitary souls, are those who never have any relationship with spiritual practitioners.

Different sentient beings are treated in different dimensions. Human beings do not only live on this planet; we are related to heaven and earth. Before we become a Buddha, both heaven and earth will take care of us. However, we must first be connected to them. If not, we are like living alone in a remote village, without a telephone, electricity, friends or neighbors. After we die, people will not discover our dead body until after a very long time.

The care system of the creator

We know that there is a very efficient care system in society. For instance, when we are sick, our neighbor will send us to the hospital. With a telephone call, a doctor or a nurse will come to our house, or an ambulance will take us to the hospital. However, we could be neglected by this system if we live alone and have no friends. No one knows that we are ill, perhaps because we have no telephone at home, or because we are too weak, too old or too ill to take care of ourselves. Therefore, we are neglected. It is not that the system does not care for us, nor that the government has failed to set up a system to handle emergency patients. Similarly, the creator has set up many systems. Each spiritual practitioner has their specific duty according to the level that they have attained. Even after they leave this body and go to heaven, they still have duties. They will be assigned a job according to their ability and spiritual attainment. After we have become a Buddha, we may choose to work or not. Before that, everyone has their own duty, and we must work to elevate ourselves. Actually, we don't work just for elevating ourselves. Being spiritual practitioners, after we have gone to heaven, we will take pity on this miserable world, and want very much to help. We volunteer to help; no one ever forces us. Anyway, we also benefit from our work. We earn more blessings, and our level of attainment gets higher. Without participating in this work, our blessings will be exhausted after a while, and we will

drop down to suffer as a human being again. We may even fall to hell, or become an animal, an insect, a frog, and all sorts of sentient beings.

By working within this system in heaven, it is as though we are insured, too. Working for others is working for ourselves, and the same applies to the situation in this world. This is why I often say, serving others is serving ourselves. Don't ever think that we are helping people. We are given the opportunities to earn merits. However, do not think about the merits either! You will have them naturally; they will be less if you think of them.

We have all types of staff members, and so numerous in number that they fill the universe. They help the world a lot! However, they can help us only after we are dead. After death, we don't have the physical body and the brain anymore, so it is easier for them to help us. In a different environment, and receiving direct help from them, we will believe. Now we are in another situation living in this world and having this physical body. How can we believe even if some beings come from above and tell us things about the future? The levels, worlds and beings that they talk about are all strange to us here on earth; so it is difficult for us to believe. The scriptures often mention many different worlds. There are so many because each world has a specific function. However, if they can only help us after we die, it would be too tiring and burdensome for them! So many people die everyday. Some of them still embrace their bad thoughts after death and refuse to change, and make it a very difficult job for the beings in heaven! It is a very slow process educating people in heaven. Therefore, some beings have to sacrifice themselves. They come to this world to teach humans to change their way of thinking, and to communicate with their life-saving power. Then people can save themselves, and save a lot of trouble for the heavenly beings. Furthermore, through the process of their self-rectification, they will also improve the world's ambiance. By having relationships with those who have been corrected, other people do not have to be corrected anymore in heaven, or at least they won't be overlooked by the life-saving net. Therefore, the work on the earth is the most important.

Since ancient times, many Buddhas and Bodhisattvas sacrificed themselves to come and share our suffering and pain. They do the same senseless actions as we do, and eat the same tasteless food without spirit as we eat. They live a boring life with us just to remind us to start correcting ourselves while we are here.

When one person has corrected himself, several people benefit! Some doctors and nurses work only in the hospitals, and their job is to treat patients suffering from illnesses or pain. They render treatment only when the patients come to them. Some of their colleagues are more self-sacrificing in spirit. They go to the backward and poor places to educate the people there. They take along medical supplies and teach the people how to give inoculations, how to take care of themselves hygienically, and immune themselves from diseases. While easing people's suffering and pain, they also save a lot of hard work for their colleagues in the hospitals. Similarly, some Buddhas and Bodhisattvas also come here to heal the problem from the root. When our world is sick, the whole universe will be troubled. If we are healthy, the universe will feel relieved. The heavenly beings will feel lighter in burden, because we also help here. If they have no contacts on earth, they cannot give us help from heaven, even if they would like to help. Like what I have just said, the system cannot care for someone who is lonely, who has committed suicide, or is poisoned spiritually, if he has no relationship with spiritual practitioners. They cannot pick him up; they will lose him! Even worse, he will be stuck in a very deep place, and it takes an extremely long time to save him. So, it'll be too slow. If the person has a relationship with spiritual practitioners, he would fall inside the 'net' and be rescued easily. It is because the relationship has been established! It is just like when I can find your address

by looking up your name in the telephone directory, or by checking the registration number of your car. It is very easy!

Therefore, we do not practice only to benefit ourselves. Discernibly, we will benefit many people – anyone who is related to us. Therefore, the meditation is very important in the Quan Yin method. It is crucial to get the initiation from the Master, but it is also important to maintain this communication system. Meditation is the most important! Never mind if you are not very clear about some moral or customary issues. Take it slowly, it is not serious, only that you may feel uneasy at heart. You will not degrade; with the Master around, you won't fall very deep. If your mind is in harmony, you will feel much better. If we have too much conflict with social customs, we cannot practice spiritually. An unstable mind will affect our spiritual cultivation. We can't meditate stably, and our guilty feeling will pound on us until we cannot bear it anymore. If we can't stand it, it is impossible for us to attain a high level. Our wisdom cannot develop if we are pessimistic in mind.

So, just take care of those moral issues as much as possible, and do not blame ourselves too much. They are not really that serious. What I mean is, all the worldly concepts, moralities, precepts, scriptures and religions are not really superior. The further we keep away from them the better. Just do our best to be in harmony, but do not indulge too much in them. Otherwise, we cannot break through, and we will have a knot in our heart – still attached to what is right or wrong. But before you can do it, be surrendered! Contemplate diligently on the Sound, meditate more, and be brave; you will realize it later.

As human beings, if we have no wisdom and do not practice spiritually, we are more or less like an animal! There are two types of influences that we may receive – one is inferior and the other superior. When we have communication and a relationship with the supreme ideal, we are standing on the superior side. From there we send out Light to illuminate this body, which will also affect the world, and be related to the world.

If we practice the Quan Yin method, we have contact from this side to the other side, and we can receive superior power sent from above. For those people who don't practice the Quan Yin method, they are mostly affected by influences from the inferior aspect, from society or from lower worlds like the astral level. That is why most of their prayers cannot reach God. Their prayers are intercepted by beings in the lower dimensions, who will then help them. They do help, but people will owe them a lot for the little service that they render. When these people die, they will take them to their world to control them, make them slaves and servants. Even when they return to this world as humans, because of this relationship, they will be captured again. This is how people keep transmigrating within the three realms.

I have over-praised them by mentioning all the three realms! Most of them are only entangled with the astral beings, though there are superior and inferior astral beings. Even spiritual practitioners are of no exception. Only by practicing the Quan Yin method can we transcend this dominating power, and attain the supreme power beyond.

Why do you see the Light at the time of initiation? Why do you continue to see the Light, and feel very comfortable and rescued? It is because the Master has erased your low level influences that you have collected from your previous lives, and which have been recorded in you. The Master also connects you to the supreme power. From that day onwards, you are no longer subjected to inferior influences, but only to the superior ones.

Why do we often encounter tests before or after our initiation, or even during the time of initiation? It is not the Master testing us; they are influences from the inferior beings. They

are jealous. The most severe obstacles usually come before the initiation. It is already fantastic that people can come to the initiation! The negative force creates so many barriers on the road by making many things happen. There are still many obstacles after the initiation, because they are furious. They know they cannot seize us anymore, yet they make a big fuss. They will use our relatives and friends to annoy us, and hinder us from pursuing spiritual practice. They also make us doubt our method, our Master and our fellow initiates. They only let us see the bad side and not the good side. We may even see the good things as bad. Though our previous influences have been cleansed, a faint tinge remains. When we run into a similar situation, it may emerge again.

If we are not truly sincere in seeking the Truth, the inferior powers will come again to grab us, or annoy us. They do not really want to capture us, but they want to control us again. They are only 'beginning' to do it, and we already feel great pain and distress. You can imagine how much worse it would be if they really succeeded in seizing us. They are only besieging us, and we are already in such great trouble.

Rely on oneself is the best

Most people can get what they pray for, but that also depends on what type of force you are related to. The saints of all directions and times, the angels or Maha-Bodhisattvas belonging to the life-saving net or system, are always near us; but so are the evil beings from the negative force. Depending on which side we have prayed to, we will get help from that side. Most people get the 'blessing' from the inferior beings, because they are not connected to the supreme power.

Therefore, we must always be thinking of the life-saving power. However, even when people are very sincere and reach a superior power, it is still not God! They are only the working staff in heaven who respond to people's prayers. The God power is within us, and the best thing is to contact with this power. Otherwise, whenever we pray, we are relying on other people and not ourselves.

We get in touch with this power at the time of the initiation. Therefore, we must always remember Hirm, remember our supreme power, the Supreme Master – our own enlightened Master, our wisdom. If not, we are being controlled either by the good power or the bad power. Even if the good power is helping us, it cannot help much. The most it can do is to help us earn more money, and avoid some minor mishaps. However, if we are exempted from some minor mishaps, sooner or later we have to compensate for it; it is only a matter of time! Having earned more money today, we will lose some tomorrow, next year, or next life. We have no way to bypass the law of karma, so we have to compensate for everything. It is different if we are initiated. We truly get what we want, because it is obtained from the supreme power. The supreme power is limitless and almighty, so we can never exhaust it. Whatever we have obtained from it, It won't take back. If we get what we want from the good power, we have to repay eventually. It is disastrous if you get it from the bad power, because it charges high interests.

So, it is better that the initiated people not pray for anything. In case the bad power overhears our prayer and comes to help us, what would we do? Even if our prayers are heard by the good power, it is still troublesome receiving help from them. We still owe them something. The best way is to pray to the Supreme Master – our supreme power, or pray to God. However, we had better not pray for material things. As most people pray and receive help from either the good or bad powers, these powers will continue to help them after they die, depending on which power they have got in touch with.

We, the initiated people, have no need to pray or ask for anything. The great wisdom – the Supreme Master within us – will take care of us. The inner Master will take good care of us. It is better that we don't pray for anything, and just live day by day. We just meditate everyday and pray that we will have greater faith, and attain the great wisdom quickly. Don't pray for other material things. Spiritual practitioners definitely will not die of hunger!

THE SECRET TO RECTIFY BAD HABITS ¹⁴⁴

If we sincerely wanted to change, we can change some of the good or bad things. Most of the good or bad influences were formed when we were young. As a child, whatever people did to us, our feelings would be distinctly recorded in our mind. As we grow up, these memories accompany us. Therefore, our actions and responses are exactly the same as when we were young. It is not that difficult to change these good and bad influences. Though we are ignorant of our past lives or karma, at least we can avoid incurring future karma; and this is already good enough.

It is very simple to rectify our bad habits. Go home and think about it: Was there anything that pleased us when we were young? When was it that something unpleasant happened and gave us pain? Write everything down one by one. What was our reaction when we suffered, or when we were happy; write down all of them. Everyday, write down any good points that we have, in our diary. If there are any faults that we abhor or if are disliked by others, and which we want to correct, also record them in our diary. Introspect on ourselves everyday to see how many good and bad things we have done. In about three months, we can improve a lot. If we do not deceive ourselves and are sincere in our introspection, we could possible rectify all of them in a few years.

If we can rectify ourselves and increase the good qualities in us, our life will attract many of the so called blessed retributions. It is recorded in the scriptures: By doing good deeds, we shall be rewarded with blessed retribution. Since our atmosphere is good, we will attract good things to us, and then become even better. The bad atmosphere will attract the bad things, and then become worse. Therefore, spiritual practitioners are becoming better, while the non-practitioners are becoming worse and worse. This is the reason.

It is absolutely accurate for the Chinese to say that 'things of the same nature attract each other'! Whatever the ancient people said was always true, because they had the experience, and they knew it from the wisdom derived from spiritual practice. This is a little secret method that I offer to you today as a reference, if you wish to give it a try. You may pursue spiritual practice; and at the same time, you may introspect on yourself, and pray to the highest God, the highest Buddha, the highest holy Mother or any God that you like or believe in most. Pray for their blessing, so that we will become better and better to benefit the country, our family and ourselves.

THE SECRET OF THE SCENT OF PERFUME ¹⁴⁵

We often think that the scent of perfume in this world is beautiful. But actually it's not! The process is just an absorption of numerous little micro-organisms into our noses. Those who put on perfume are only absorbing countless complicated beings into themselves. That's the way our personality can become complicated. It is like many people living in the same house. It can be caused by the scent of perfume or some beautiful things.

144. Group meditation, Taipei Center, Formosa, March 2, 1990 (Originally in Chinese).

145. Group meditation, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, February 25, 1990 (Originally in Chinese).

You may not know that the world outside and the people who are beautiful in appearance may hurt us. Every time we smell some scent, no matter if it's from us or from others, it will provoke a thought, regardless of whether we knew we had or didn't have that type of thought. Everything we absorb through our six senses will excite some thought within us, and most of the thoughts produced from the mundane world are low level. The low level thoughts within us will then get connected to the low-level beings around us.

It's like electric waves. If it is transmitted it will be received by someone. So, it is as if the beings are transmitting the signals and we are receiving them. If we open the same channel, then it will come into our being. Like we have a radio, and the radio station broadcasts twenty-four hours. If we turn off the radio, then we won't be able to hear it. As soon as we turn it on, we'll receive the signals again.

Anything that belongs to the six senses – whether appearance, sound or taste – will attract our attention. Then our brain will produce some thoughts. Good attracts good and bad attracts bad. Most of them no matter good or bad, it's still from the beings in the three realms. Our thoughts are related to many beings, which in turn attracts them. Look at those who gamble. They attract the astral beings who like to gamble. Those who like to drink alcohol attract those spirits who like to drink, so they get worse, and cannot give it up. It's the same way with gambling. Although they have a sense of guilt, know that it's not good for them, and want to stop it, they can't. It's because those invisible beings are more powerful than us. They have no physical body, so it's easier for them to control us. The more we're controlled, the more beings we attract. We can't possibly beat them on our own, so we become weaker. They use our bodies to eat, drink, and have fun.

So, we had better not put on any perfume. That's why one of the precepts for monks or nuns is: Perfumes or cosmetics to adorn oneself are not allowed. There is a reason behind it. It's not that all precepts are old-fashioned and don't fit our times. No! Every time we smell these things, it will excite our desires. This is what we've learned over many lifetimes. For example, a good perfume means there's a beautiful woman, which then connects to lust related desires. So, all of a sudden, it opens our subconscious minds. Like attracts like! Our open minds will therefore attract those beings with similar desires.

Some people have particularly strong desires. Those who like to gamble or like women, after they die will go to that kind of level. Spirits with similar desires live together. They will encourage each other more so that their desires get stronger, so it's hard to get away from them. When we open certain channels of thought in us, even just thinking about it, these beings will quickly sneak in. If it's a scent, they'll come in through the nose. If it's love songs, they'll come in through the ears. If it's sexual images, they will come in through the eyes. If you love to eat good food, they will come in through the mouth. Therefore, we have a saying 'Vow to liberate these numerous beings.'

Every day we absorb countless invisible beings inside us. They come in, occupy some of our being, and control us. So, if we like to eat, we will like to eat more and more. If we like to gamble, we will like to gamble more. The same thing with drugs. It's all because they are controlling us, make us want more and more, and strengthen our desires.

These beings first create their capital city in us, then an administrative department, ministry of internal affairs, foreign affairs, et cetera. They gradually develop and expand within us, [Laughter] and finally become a whole government that controls us completely. If there are all these different governments within different parts of our being, the forces from these foreign countries are controlling us, then you are not yourself anymore and you have

lost yourself! We will be more and more a stranger to ourselves, since we cannot control ourselves but instead are controlled by our desires!

All those beings' desires are living inside of us, controlling our rights. Everyone shares a part of us and controls it. Then we are stuck completely. Some want money, some want food and drink, some want to make merry and have fun, some want to gamble, all kinds of desires. Some people have everything! This is the reason.

When you are initiated, you get rid of everything! I send all of them back. I say, 'Bye, bye! Go away!' [Master and audience laugh.] 'This is not your place!' [Applause] But sometimes they will resist, if they are more evil and mean. Like vicious people, they don't understand the law. Thus sometimes, you see criminals beating up the police.

Similarly, although I represent the Truth and the higher levels and they're supposed to listen to me, but sometimes the evil beings do not. They are enraged that I took away their good things and thus they don't have anything to enjoy. Some even attack me because they are clinging to what they had. That's why sometimes I get affected by them and get tired. You know how tired you get when they attack you. It's the same thing when they attack me. They cannot attack you so they turn to attack me for interfering in your business. That's what happens when an enlightened Master takes away people's karma.

BLESSING THE WORLD IS THE DUTY OF SPIRITUAL PRACTITIONERS

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Good spiritual practitioners have blessing power wherever they go. Fully charged with their magnetic fields and loaded with merits, they enhance the vibrations of things they touch and the ground they walk on. Sometimes people enjoy being near these practitioners, seeking a touch, taking a look, or just offering them food; and they are changed from within.

Tonic for the soul

The milk or tonic we drink, and sometimes even the mineral water that contains many minerals, does not appear to be nourishing. Our naked eye cannot discern any minerals in the mineral water. It seems no different than ordinary water, when it is actually very nourishing. While physical substances contain physical nutrition, speech of a higher level or spiritual nature carries spiritual blessings, too. Tangible things have tangible power that ensures our physical well-being, but intangible things have intangible power that nourishes our invisible body – our soul – and keeps us mentally healthy.

The physical things in this world contain only physical nutrition. But as human beings, we are more than just this body. We have a spiritual nature as well. Our thinking comes from this invisible spirit, whose existence cannot be denied. We may say, 'Today I am in high spirits or in low spirits,' or 'I am spiritually drained.' Everyone knows that the spirit exists, but no one can describe it or pinpoint its whereabouts.

Likewise, we cannot say that spiritual practitioners have no blessing power. We know that they do, which is why we feel very comfortable when we sometimes come near highly spiritual and ethical people. If we have not been in their proximity for a long period of time, we miss them very much. They are the invisible food that nourishes our invisible spiritual body. It is like watering plants. If we water their roots, they feel comfortable, turn lush green, flourish, and bear many flowers and fruits. This is because water contains many

146. Group meditation, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, February 18, 1990 (Originally in Chinese).

nutrients. Similarly, if we nourish our spiritual body with the invisible water, it too will grow big and strong, relax, and blossom.

Water from the Ganges River is definitely blessed, and these blessings become attached to physical things. For instance, when we water a plant, water permeates its roots and is transported to the cells of every little leaf. The plant is nourished by the nutritious water. Similarly, spiritual tonic can be absorbed by the cells of any physical body in its proximity. The more tonic the body absorbs, the stronger and better it becomes. And the more internal changes occur.

As long as we water and fertilize a small plant, it will absorb everything, and grow stronger, taller, more beautiful, and different. So will our spiritual body. When we come close to such spiritual nutrition as the magnetic field, morality, and love of great practitioners, our spiritual bodies flourish and feel comfortable. This is unlike physical comfort, for our physical bodies look the same, while our spiritual bodies feel comfortable and relaxed because we have consumed spiritual food. Therefore, a single spiritual practitioner can benefit many people.

The world needs spiritual food

A river benefits many beings, including plants and vegetation. Sometimes a river may flow underground, but it continues to nourish vast fields, countless trees, fruit, minerals, and animals. Its influence reaches far and wide. In the same way, we spiritual practitioners are blessed with an invisible blessing power. It is so rich and nutritious that anyone who comes near will benefit and develop very well. That is why there are spiritual practitioners who develop their power life after life in order to bless this world.

There are many people doing different jobs in this world. Farmers plant crops; road builders pave roads; drivers transport us to various destinations; and spiritual practitioners bless people's souls and spirit. We all have to work, but that does not mean that we should all be road builders or farmers. Some people have misconceptions about this. They think that everyone should be a farmer in order to help the world. But that just helps the stomach, and leaves many other aspects without help. We need different people for the many kinds of work; we need doctors, road builders, train pilots, airplane pilots, mechanics, and most of all, farmers of spiritual food. These are few in number. [Master laughs.] Many people plant vegetables and fruit, but few plant spiritual food. Therefore, we practice the Quan Yin method, by which we plant this kind of food. It is our responsibility.

FROM BIOLOGICAL ATTACHMENT TO THE MAGNETIC FIELDS OF FOODS ¹⁴⁷

Whatever our faith or belief, we all know that animals have souls for they can move on their own initiative. Any sentient being that can move by itself, has the intent to move and has a mind that commands its movements forms ties of affinity with many other beings, gains many experiences and develops its intelligence, all of which result in attachment. When such sentient beings become attached to their intelligence and accumulated experiences, they become emotionally involved with life and fear death. Because of their fondness for a longer life, more experiences, increased activity and the opportunity to establish affinities with and learn from other beings, their hearts become filled with affection for life, fear of death, and feelings of hatred, kindness and gratitude.

147. Group meditation, Kaohsiung Center, Formosa, January 10, 1990 (Originally in Chinese).

If we eat animals, we unconsciously step into their magnetic fields, which are characterized by a strong desire for life and apprehension about death. We get stuck, just as we do when we step on glue and our foot is glued to the spot and loses mobility. Stepping on sand is all right, given its non-adhesiveness. Everything has a different quality. But if we step on the animals' qualities of life attachment and fear of death, their hate-filled magnetic fields cling to our souls, trapping us, pressurizing us and depriving us of our freedom.

Plants do not move without being blown by the wind so they have less experience and intelligence. With this lower level of awareness, they also have less attachment. For plants, it isn't a grave matter to die and be reborn because they have few experiences and attachments. Animals, by contrast, have more experiences since they can move of their own accord. For example, a dog may go looking for his girlfriend, and then look around further the next day, thinking, 'Wow! This one is more beautiful than the last one!' [Master and audience laugh.] Attachment grows from such occurrences, which is why they cling to life. Under the influence of these phenomena, all animals become fond of life and fearful of death. But this is not the case with plants because they have too little experience to cling to. So, when we consume plants, their magnetic fields do not become attached to us.

Thus, we can't say that animals and plants are alike. If that were so, then it would be as good as saying that chewing gum, sand and stones are alike, and that's not true. Sand and stones do not stick to us when we step on them; only chewing gum does. Everything has a different quality so we can't say that animals are the same as plants. They're absolutely different. [Applause] We can understand this through observation. It isn't because Master Ching Hai said so, or the Bodhisattvas said so that we understand it. It's extremely simple and logical; we know these things just from observation.

Everything in the universe has a different quality. So, when we choose our diet, of course, we should select foods that create less of a burden for us and allow us to practice more easily and progress more quickly. Only then will we not be bound or pulled down by very heavy magnetic fields.

MAINTAIN THE STABILITY OF THE UNIVERSE ¹⁴⁸

Nowadays there are certain happenings, such as changes in the weather, famine and all kinds of diseases inflicted upon our world. Some people with little faith blame God again. Everywhere I lecture, people ask me, 'If there is a God, why do such-and-such disasters happen?' But these people should remember it's not God who does all these things. It is we who have made all these troubles. For example, a few nations always test the atom bomb and hydrogen bomb, which disturbs the structure of the atmosphere, shaking the stability of the earth. They think they can just shoot missiles into the air and it will create no problems, or do it in the ocean and it will make no problems. These practices still make problems, because the universe is constructed with many kinds of materials, some with solid substances and some with invisible substance. So, by disturbing the invisible substances, they also disturb the stability of the universe, and interfere with the natural evolution of nature.

148. Group meditation, Panama Center, Panama, November 29, 1989 (Originally in English).

DEATH AND ENLIGHTENMENT ¹⁴⁹

Tonight I would like to offer you some ideas about what happens after one leaves this world, because when we are living in this world we already know what to do. Most people do not know what happens after we depart from this world. I would like to also make a comparison between enlightenment and the experience of so-called 'death.'

Actually, when we die we do not die, we just change physical appearance; or sometimes we just forsake our physical appearance for a short period of time; or maybe even long period of time, maybe many hundreds of years, maybe many days, maybe many thousands of years. Then we may come back again to this world to express our wisdom and experiences through a physical instrument again.

Enlightenment is dying daily

In the bible, one of the saints stated that he died daily. In other places, it is stated that it's important to learn to die so that you may begin to live. Also in other places, it's stated something like if you forsake your life then you will gain life. So, when we read the bible and come across such sentences, we may become very puzzled. How is it possible that we die in order to live? How is it possible that one can die daily? How is it possible that we must forsake life in order to gain life?

I think many of you would have read a book called 'Life After Life,' in which an American doctor has collected many stories about people who have died and come back to life; and nearly all of them expressed the same experiences. That is, after they died, or they left this physical body, they felt a great sense of joy and freedom; they were able to fly to some far away country in some kind of vehicle that looked like a tunnel and then were welcomed by some beings who were full of Light, love and assistance.

When we experience so-called enlightenment, we have similar experiences to some extent. That's why we heard that 'I die daily.' The enlightenment means we are connected with the higher frequencies of the higher worlds. Now, in this universe, we are not the only beings and also our lives in this world are not the only life that we've ever lived. So, if we get the so-called enlightened experience, that means we are at that moment connected with the higher world and sometimes relive our past glorious experiences in the glorious world.

We have not always been human beings. We have sometimes been Buddhas, angels, saints, Bodhisattvas. Bodhisattva means saint in Christian terminology – just a non-translatable term from Sanskrit. Bodhi means enlightened, sattva means being. Now we have lived many lives in different worlds. Sometimes we have lived our lives in a very glorious and intelligent world. But when we came to this world, most of people forgot their past. So, when we get enlightenment, then sometimes we will remember these past memories. Then we can trace back to where we belong, where we came from, and we begin to realize how great a being we are.

Just the same with the dying experience of some people. When they go through the so-called dying experience, most people will see a kind of reflection of all their life's experiences, which flashes before their eyes like a movie. But mostly these so-called dead persons can only have the experiences of this life shown to them in the other worlds. But the enlightened person can see many, many lives back, thousands or hundreds of many

149. Group meditation, San Jose Center, Costa Rica, November 22, 1989 (Originally in English).

thousands of year's time and not only the experiences in this world or in this life – many worlds.

So, after such a knowledge, the person realizes that he is not an ordinary person, but a Buddha or a Christ consciousness. That is how Jesus proclaimed Himself to be the son of heaven, and the Buddha proclaimed Himself to be the enlightened one, the Buddha. Buddha also means Christ. Christ means the level of God consciousness. So, Buddha is a Sanskrit term for Christ. Christ is the Hebrew term for Buddha. If we reach this kind of level of understanding and wisdom, we will also realize that we are Buddhas, we are Christs.

If we do not get the highest enlightenment, then we can only experience some kind of – like the death experience. We can go to some kind of astral world or little higher world after we leave this world. But if we have the higher level of enlightenment or higher level of attainment through daily meditation and practice, then we can reach higher worlds, which represent the higher wisdom, and the higher glory.

Jesus said, 'In my Father's house there are many mansions.' Yeah, that's what He meant. In the bible it's also recorded that someone was caught up in the third heaven. In the bible it didn't say how many heavens, but if there is a third heaven, there must be a second and a fourth.

Similarly, in Buddhism the Buddha has described many different Buddha's lands, and many levels in one Buddha's land. For example, there is a land of Amitabha Buddha. This land has divided itself into nine levels, from the lowest to the highest. Those with meager virtues and practice will stay in the lowest level for many thousand years. He will stay there until finally he gets the greater awakening through daily learning with the higher Buddhas or enlightened beings, then he will also go to the highest level.

I think it is similar to our school, like in high school we have many classes. Now when we have the so-called enlightened experience, it is similar to when we die – we just leave the physical body temporarily and we come back again, just like those after death experiences in the book of the American doctor.

Prepare for death

What makes dying so painful and difficult is the inexperience of death. If we have learned how to die every day, then it's very pleasant. Most people when they die, they are so fearful that they may lose this world. Because they do not know that there are better worlds, more beautiful, more pleasant, more happy awaiting them, they cling to these well-known surroundings, also cling to the loved ones. This makes us struggle between the spiritual body and the physical body and that's how it results in pain.

If we know dying is just a kind of rebirth, then we will not fear. We will look forward to it when the time comes. Now how to prepare for that beautiful day? Many people prepare for birth, for weddings, but do not prepare for death. Actually death is the biggest day. It should be the most important day. In birth we only have our physical bodies, limited freedom and very slow process of growth. But in death, we gain a vaster freedom, a more beautiful and flexible body, a greater wisdom and more beautiful world to live in – for resting, for learning, for improving, for progressing.

So actually, death is a very helpful event to speed up our evolution, to make us ascend quicker to higher wisdom. But in order to gain this status after death, we should also take care that the experiences we summon during this earthly life are of a more pleasant type,

more virtuous, so that when we leave this physical world, we will have no regrets, no guilty feelings and no attachments, so we just ascend very quickly and very happily.

When people leave the physical body, there are some other obstacles adding to their pain – they are the crying, and grief of the loved ones who are left behind. Most people cry when their loved ones die, and grieve for many months, many years. Well, that for us is also understandable because we've lost a loved one, a good friend, a companion and we do not know where that friend has gone to; if his or her life would be better after this world; if anyone takes care of him. Therefore, we grieve and feel attached to that departed soul. Consequently, this sentiment will also hold up the departed soul and inhibit him in some way; also lessen the intensity of his joy and limit some of his freedom.

So, the best way and the correct way is not to grieve when a loved one dies. I know this is difficult, but it's the higher kind of sacrifice and love. We should feel happy that the soul is released from the physical limitation, from this 'prison house;' that the soul is freer to fly anywhere, to learn many things, and to do the many things that he loves to do. But because we cannot glimpse into the after world, we can't rejoice at the death of a friend or a relative.

We can learn to glimpse into the after world through a very scientific method. We can learn to know how to die; we can learn to look beyond this life into many other planets, many other dimensions and feel secure and assured of the happiness of the life after this life; and we can see also where our loved ones have gone. Also we can choose our place to go after we leave this physical world. In this way we will never fear death and we will not cry if someone leaves us. Or at least if we cry we don't feel such a burden, a heavy sense of loss and sorrow. We might cry in joy and gratitude.

Our lives are more positive after enlightenment

When we have such experiences of beyond this world, we call this enlightenment. There are many levels of enlightenment. And at the time of initiation with a competent Master, we will have some part of this enlightenment experience. We can see beyond this world into some glorious worlds and have the experience of leaving the body and coming back again, exactly like when we die. Then we know how pleasant dying can be, we will lose the attachment for this world, and we will lose any kind of heavy sense of sorrow and misery.

Some people say that after they have come back from the other world to this world, they feel that they do not like this world anymore because they have known a better world. But also paradoxically, they love life. It isn't that they become depressed or want to die. It's not so, because they know life is a continuous process, and that they never die. That is what makes people more positive, more encouraged that they try to live a more fulfilling life, a more beneficial life, a more conducive life to society and to themselves.

That's why we read in many scriptures that all the saints always work ceaselessly for humanity's benefit. They dedicate their lives, energy and wisdom to the service of humankind, especially in the spiritual field. Look at the life of Jesus. We do not have to say that He was a very great son of heaven. It's enough to look at His life to know that He was a saint. Now we know that He walked every day from place to place, enduring much hardship and poverty, in order to preach the Truth, in order to remind people of God. He did not need to do that. You remember He multiplied the bread and fed about five thousand people, and you remember He made water into wine. Such a man would not need to endure poverty. But He chose to do so in order to serve humankind; in order to

awaken people to the Truth, the principle of God, to help them come out of misery, of ignorance.

Now let's come to the life of Buddha. No need to say that Buddha was not a Catholic, was not a Christian. He was as much Christian as Jesus. Jesus was as much Buddhist as Buddha. Now what did the Buddha do? Exactly the same as Jesus. When we read the Buddhist sutras, we know Buddha had limitless power and also in worldly life, He had a very high position. He could have been the king of the nation, but He forsook it all and endured poverty and hardship, traveling from place to place, humbly begging for His food so that He could preach the Truth. He did not need the food even. But He did so as an act of humility, as an act of grace so that those who gave it to Him, may it be so little, would receive some blessings in return; would learn the act of giving and selfless service. The same with Jesus, He didn't need to beg for food or He didn't need anyone to offer to Him. He just did so, so that people gained some blessings and wisdom.

What makes these saints so selfless is that they have gained knowledge into the ever continuing life, that they have gained happiness from enlightenment. They also want to share this joyous experience with others, because they know how miserable it is to be ignorant and that many errors, many mistakes, many crimes come from ignorance. There are no criminals in the world. The greatest criminal is ignorance! If we know the secret of life, if we know how to love life, if we are enlightened, we would not commit any crime. Therefore, anyone who makes mistakes, commits any crime at all, they are not to be blamed. Ignorance is to be blamed.

Therefore, the saints instead of condemning people, they teach people how to get out of ignorance, how to know themselves, how to put their great wisdom to use. I mean how to make use of their wisdom, because everyone has wisdom hidden within ourselves. That's what we call the kingdom of God, glory, knowing or love. When we find this kingdom of God, whether by our own effort or by learning from someone who knows, we begin to feel a sense of fulfillment! We begin to feel the love and positive attitude towards life. That's why all the saints in the past worked very hard to enlighten people; even though by doing so, they had to endure many kinds of criticism, misunderstandings and hardships, sometimes even risking their lives.

In the case of Jesus and Socrates, also Buddha, many people wanted to kill them, blacken their names. But despite all of the difficulties, the saints always endure for the sake of people. The saints are the greatest peace-makers, the greatest politicians, who always bring peace to the world – the kings without any thrones because they don't need anything in this world.

Jesus said that His kingdom was in heaven. Buddha forsook the earthly kingdom. They have a greater kingdom within, we call the kingdom of God: 'Seek you first the kingdom of God and all other things shall be added onto you,' it is truly so.

After we have gained the kingdom of God, we have no desire for the kingdom of this world. Remember when Jesus was in the desert meditating, and the king of maya came – devil, satan came to Him and said: 'If You bow to me, I will give You the kingdom of the three worlds.' Jesus said: 'Go behind me.' Means go away. He did not need this, not even the kingdom of the three worlds, not one world. The kingdom of the three worlds, included the third heaven, but Jesus did not need this. When Buddha sat under the Bodhi tree for forty-nine days, the so-called negative force tried to seduce Him in many ways, offered Him many things; but He did not want. So, for those enlightened souls, even though people praised them as kings, it's not in the sense of the worldly kings. But worldly people cannot

understand this due to their ignorance and jealousy, which is common within the human brain, within the human behavior.

When Jesus was alive, many politicians at that time were jealous of Him; and because of that, they killed Him. It was because they misunderstood Him. If they knew, truly He didn't care about anything in this world, they wouldn't fear His influence.

Establish a heavenly 'telephone' connection

Enlightenment is always necessary, even if we want to be in this world, even if we do not want heaven. In China we say, 'First be enlightened.' Means cultivate yourself, then we can take care of the household; then further, we can take care of the nation; and further, we can bring peace into the world. So, if we practice self-cultivation, we contribute to peace in the world without having to say anything, without having to be in any peace conference. Peace will rain upon the world automatically, naturally.

How to practice self-cultivation in everyday life? It's very simple. We should remember the commandments, try our best to keep them. If we fail, we try again. Yes, always turn to God, to the Buddhas for help and guidance. A Buddha means an enlightened Master of the past, present and future. If we truly ask them for help, they will give us help.

Many people go to the church, go to the temple to pray. But sometimes it is difficult to get in touch with these Buddhas or the God-power. Therefore, we feel that our prayers are not fulfilled, because our connection is severed. Just like our telephone is disconnected; so if we talk on the telephone, it is a useless attempt. We can only make noise and the neighbor would hear us, but not our needed person in the distance. Even though our friends are a very long distance away, through the connection of the telephone wires, we can talk to them like I am talking to you now.

Similarly, even though God is supposed to be very far away in heaven, or the enlightened Masters are supposed to be in the Buddha's land somewhere very high, very far away, through a connection, although invisible to the eyes, we can contact them and get help from them. That contact is offered through the so-called initiation or what we call true baptism, like John the Baptist did, like Jesus did. That is why the necessity for a physical Master. Otherwise, Jesus didn't need to come here, Buddha didn't need to come here, many other saints didn't need to come here. They know our calls, but we cannot receive their answers. So they have to come here and make the direct link between heaven and earth. Then we are no longer separated from the universe.

Of course, whenever the saints come to this world, not many people will come to them, not all of the world anyhow, but some will come. Just like we have some public telephones, better than none at all. So, through these public telephones we can make contact with other people, even though we don't have a private phone ourselves. Similarly, those who follow the saints, the higher disciples will act as a public link between heaven and earth. Maybe not too many, but it's still useful. Of course, the more the better.

Similarly, if we ourselves have a telephone, then we can directly and every time connect with heaven. Masters, like Jesus and Buddha, offer this kind of service – to establish the heavenly 'telephone.' Then every time we pray, our prayers will be answered. We will know it intuitively or very clearly, visibly; it depends on our level of practice and understanding. Some people are higher in consciousness, some people are lower. It depends on their background and their strength of practice in this life.

Some kinds of diseases are incurable, even though they are very common diseases. I am not talking about new diseases which have no medicine at the moment. It is because these diseases are deeply rooted in the past life, and the doctors and the scientists cannot go beyond the present conditions into the very far past existence in order to find out the root cause. If these people however get enlightenment themselves, they will know how to cure themselves. They cure by their own wisdom, by their understanding of why this has happened. Oh, they can know this intuitively or it can be visibly clear. It depends also on their practice. If we are highly elevated souls, we will see things more clearly and visibly. If we are some kind of so-called beginner, then of course, we do not see things very clearly but only intuitively. But even just knowing a little of our real life would help us immensely.

Therefore, the saints always encourage people; emphasize that people should be enlightened, should get in touch with the kingdom of God, with the God-power. We can do so during this lifetime. We need not wait until we die and go through the painful experience of so-called death. If we wait for the dying process to take over in order to learn, in order to get contact with heaven, then our learning would be very limited, our level of understanding would not be so high. If we learn to die during this life, we have more chance to advance into a higher wisdom. And we can do so just like we learn any kind of hobby, new science or new subject. We learn side by side with other duties. We can keep our normal lives and positions, but we save some time every day to learn this beyond-life science.

To learn this science, we have no need for academic titles, any educational background or any financial status. It is all free of charge, because the wisdom that we gain is from ourselves. Therefore, any real Master never charges the student any money, because it's our own treasure that we discover again.

If I tell you that in your house there is a hidden treasure. Well! Do I have any credit for it? I can't claim any credit for it because the treasure is yours. I only know where it is and just tell you.

God's power works through a living Master

The kingdom of God is within us. Buddha nature is within us. The bible, the scriptures tells us so. And it's truly so: 'Know you not that you are the temple of God and the holy spirit dwells within you.' If the holy spirit dwells within us, we should find Him, and ask Him what He is doing there all the time. Why He leaves us in darkness. Why He doesn't hear our calls. Why He doesn't take care of our lives and make them better. He is dying to help us, but we didn't ask or we asked the wrong way.

In the bible it says: 'Knock and it shall be opened. Ask and it will be given unto you.' But you say you have been asking every day in the church and at home. Why haven't you receive? You forgot what Jesus said: 'Ask, but in my name. Then God will give to you!' Do we have to ask God in His name? And: 'No one will come to the Father except through me.' Does it mean that Jesus is bigger than God? Yes? No. It's only His job. For example, if we want to see the president, we can't just drive through and go in. We have to ask his secretary, make an appointment with his deputy or whoever is in charge of the appointments for guests. Is that not so? Doesn't mean the secretary, the deputy or the person in charge is greater than the president. It's just his job.

So now, you also would tell me, 'But I ask Jesus every day. We are a Catholic country, Christian country. You don't tell me what to do. You're Buddhist.' No, I am not Buddhist, I am 'Godist.' Buddhists, Christians are all 'Godists.' We just call God different names in

different countries. Just like here you call your wife 'querida.' In America they call her 'my wife.' In Chinese they call her 'tai tai.' In Au Lac they call her 'vo toi.' So many different names for one title.

So, why is it if we ask God in the name of Jesus every day in a church and we also don't receive any grace or Light? It is because Jesus has left the physical world. His job is done here. So, we have to find someone else who is a comforter, as Jesus has promised to send after He left the world. Those so-called comforters are those who do the job of Jesus, continue the work that He had not finished, because Jesus said that only as long as He lived in the world, He would be the Light of the world. He did not say He would be forever the Light of the world; only as long as He lived in this world.

Then He promised to send the comforters afterwards. Someone who is able to comfort and replace our beloved ones, must be at least similar in capabilities and standard. So, He means after He is gone, there will be other Light givers coming to this world. Just like before Him, there were other Light givers. Therefore, someone asked Jesus if He was the reincarnation of such-and-such great past prophets, He did not object. Understand? It's the same spirit, power that goes into different bodies to serve humankind. Therefore, Jesus said: 'Not I, but it is the Father that works through me.' And saint Paul said: 'I live, but not I, Christ lives in me.' It means the same spirit works through different physical instruments, because all the greatest enlightened saints are one with the Father, one with God or one with the Buddha nature. Therefore, all the enlightened Masters reaching a certain stage are titled Buddha, because they share equally the power they have, the same wisdom, same capabilities.

If any of you would like to have this enlightened experience, I would be happy to serve you; because I continue the tradition from Jesus and Buddha to serve mankind in this way. Just like you serve your country by being a doctor, an engineer or a lawyer, I serve your country, I serve the world, the whole world in my way. We just do different jobs. There is no need to praise me or to be surprised at my job or my statements. I have just studied different subjects and graduated in a different school. So, I do a different job than you do. Just a job!

MEDITATION IS A KIND OF EDUCATION ¹⁵⁰

Meditation is a kind of education, a kind of learning process. It's just like when you go to college, you ask your professor or teacher something, and then you must sit quietly and listen to his / her instruction and wisdom. If the student just goes to college and asks the professor something, and then walks out immediately and does something else, will he ever be wise? So, even though the professor is in front of him, he gets nothing, because he doesn't give him / her a chance to speak.

Meditation is like any other science in our lives. We must learn. We must be willing to accept the wisdom that will be given to us. And like any other science and study, we learn by listening and by practicing. When we sit quietly in silence, there will be a lot of information, blessing, love, and energies pouring into our being. We will feel differently after meditation. And the longer the period and the longer we meditate, the wiser, the more peaceful we become. This is how the world will become peaceful.

150. Group meditation, Sao Paulo Center, Brazil, November 11, 1989 (Originally in English).

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE MAKES THE WORLD MORE CIVILIZED ¹⁵¹

Brothers and sisters, let us join in a few minutes of prayer to your own God, your own good self or your own Buddha nature. Pray that our seminar will be a helpful time for you. Thank you.

Well, brothers and sisters, you are the children of the great intelligence, the great wisdom. I suppose you do know something about yourself. Do you feel it sometimes – the greatness within your own heart, the Father or the Mother, which is the creator or what we call the Buddha nature from which we came and to which we will return, if we so desire?

There is free will, absolutely free, for each individual to choose between this world and the higher kingdom. Most of the people prefer to stay here and some people prefer to go Home, go back to the kingdom of God or to the Buddha's land. It's just that – let us not be deluded about what we want. If we truly prefer to stay on this earth, to be useful to humanity and the earthly citizens, then we must also consider some conditions, without which, our life, our sojourn in this world will not be very pleasant. If we wish to go back to the kingdom of God or to become a Buddha, to go back to the Buddha's land, then we should also consider some factors which will enable us to go there.

Now let us first speak of the conditions which enable us to stay in this world and lead a comfortable, pleasant life, in case some people prefer to stay. Our planet is a very beautiful 'spaceship.' We can say 'spaceship,' which carries a lot of sentient beings in mid air and circles around. Our planet gives us a lot of comfort and joy, gives us a lot of treasures, and sustains our lives through many ways and means. But then we also have a little duty towards our mother earth, to help her to remain in such a powerful position so that she may be able to help us. In order to do so, all the religions have taught us what to do. But if I may take the opportunity, with your permission, to remind you a little bit; also for the sake of those who will listen to the tapes of this seminar in the future.

Please do not have the opinion that I'll be your lecturer, teacher, Master or whatever. Forget all about this. Just take me as your brother, sister, daughter, just a well-wiser, a sincere person, who would like to offer whatever She has in Her best ability. It is just like if you are an engineer, then you try to help the society with your knowledge of techniques. If you are a doctor, then you try to help the society elevates by eliminating the suffering of humanity, treating their sickness, et cetera.

I was born with the tendency to have spiritual knowledge; and as much as I've attained some of this spiritual knowledge, I am obliged to feed it back. Just like what we have learned in college about machinery or medical treatment, we have to offer back again to the society later on. So, I'm only doing my duty and I'm grateful to you that you have given me the permission and the welcoming atmosphere to do my job.

We only use five percent of our intelligence

In order to put our society back in a pleasurable condition, we should also observe certain precepts, mutual respect and understanding. The way most of the people live their lives is harmful to themselves and harmful to other beings visible and invisible. If we do not believe in the invisible existence of other beings, at least we believe in the existence of our own race, humanity, and all the animals who are the citizens of the earth.

151. Public lecture, Columbia University, New York, U.S.A., November 3, 1989 (Originally in English).

Lately, there is a kind of fashion, that people are becoming vegetarian. That is a good tendency, because as we know, everything carries energy. Every action is registered. Nothing is lost, as far as we can prove by science. So, if we have caused some violent condition, then the violent atmosphere will hang around us or our planet and that causes some disasters. That's why we always wonder, 'How come there are so many wars?', 'How come so many earthquakes, so many disasters are befalling our planet?'

Now there is nothing from nothing. The bible states very clearly: 'As you sow, so shall you reap.' Now we do not see what we have sown, we only see what we reap sometimes. It is because our intelligence is so limited. According to science we only use five percent of our intelligence. Now fancy we only use five percent, then how can we know so many things? There must be many things that we have not discovered, that we do not understand. This we have to accept. There is no escape from this.

Two thousand, six, seven hundred years ago, the Buddha said to His disciples, 'Be careful about the water you drink. You have to filter your water before you drink and repeat some sacred words in order to avoid killing beings in the glass of water.' He said there are eighty-four thousand beings in a glass of clear water. Now eighty-four thousands is not exactly eighty-four thousands. It is a way of saying plenty in Indian custom. So, the Buddha said to the disciples that they had to filter their water.

In India at that time, to filter water was not something very popular like we do nowadays. Now the Buddha had seen this already ahead of His time, that there are bacteria in the water. Of course, the people in His time found it so difficult to believe Him, as they could not prove there are any sentient beings, or what we call bacteria, in a glass of clear water. But nowadays, due to scientific advancement, we can prove it so easily.

Great practitioners create a more civilized world

It is good that our society today has become so advanced, so intelligent. The scientific research and hard, diligent efforts have brought a lot of comfort into our lives. Now we could wonder to ourselves: Why didn't we have these a few thousand years ago, all these electronic apparatus? We were not that intelligent. We were not advanced in science. So, suppose there is a God, then why didn't He make people intelligent before? What happened to those God's children a few thousand years ago? Did God treat them like adopted children? Not the real children?

So, you see, the advancement of our world has been brought about by the diligent efforts of those so-called practitioners, the bearers of Light in this world, the yogis, the realized ones, the mahatmas, the Masters. Those greatest ones are more beneficial, are working in a greater dimension. But even the so-called less high level yogis, practitioners, bearers of Light, are also making their contribution to the whole atmospheric change in order to bring about our worldly condition today. If these practitioners of Light, bearers of Light, did not exist and had not been existing throughout the centuries, then our world would not have come to this condition as it is now.

So, we are grateful to science and the discovery of scientists for all our comforts and all the advanced apparatus. They have brought comfort into our lives. But we truly forget what is the 'behind' benefactor, the invisible one, which brought about this condition. If these so-called practitioners or bearers of Light were absent from our world environment, then the world would become like hell. There would be no symbol of virtue, no examples of higher living, no Light. It would be like a countryside without any electricity – all dark, like in the olden days.

Therefore, what makes our world different from hell is that we still have Light-bearers; and what makes our world different from heaven is that the Light-bearers, the virtuous people are fewer in number. If there were none at all, it would become hell. Hell is the absence of Light, of virtues. If we have more Light-bearers, then our world would become heaven. That's what makes all the difference.

Everyone would like to live in comfort and in a heavenly world, but not all people make an effort to build a heaven for themselves and those surrounding them. So, we should refer back to our religious scriptures like in Christianity, in Buddhism, in order to know how to build up a heavenly environment for our world. This I would not like to emphasize too much. Maybe it will bore you because you'll say, 'I know all this already.' You would tell me, 'I know the bible from the first page to the last. I am a Christian. No need to tell me.' The Buddhists would also tell me, 'I know the five precepts of the Buddha. I am a lay person, I took refuge in the Buddha, maybe forty years ago. I have a dharma name, a Buddhist name – special.'

A Buddhist's name is like a Christian name, when you are baptized, I think you have a saintly name Maria something or Joseph something. According to Christian tradition, apart from your own name, you have a Christian name. Now in Buddhist tradition it is a similar thing. When you take refuge in the Buddha, the sangha and the dharma, you are also given a name. Some beautiful name like Perfect Light, Buddha's Light, Wisdom Light, Perfect Wisdom, Perfect Virtues, Liberation, Great Soul or whatever.

It is good to have these names, whether Christian or Buddhist. But it's better if we live up to our names. If we are given saint Francis, then we should try to read the biography of this saint. See what he did to become a saint, how he lived his life so that now he is revered throughout the centuries and throughout the world. If we happen to have the name Ananda – Ananda means bliss, ecstasy, happiness, boundless joy in Sanskrit, according to Hindu tradition; then we should see to it that we also attain this bliss through virtues, through diligent practice in inner contemplation of our inner bliss.

Our real self is that bliss, is that virtue and connection with God. If we forget our real self, then we are very lonely and we suffer much arduousness in this world. Once we are connected with this real self, things begin to take a turn for the better; and we will be more clear about which direction we take and what things we do to offer to ourselves, the society at large and also to the whole universe.

Everything we do affects everyone in this world and the next. Every religion mentions to us that all things, all beings are one in essence. Just like our body has many parts. If our hands hurt, it affects our whole body also. Just because the universal body is so great, and we the many beings in this great body cannot understand, cannot see the whole universal body, so we may not believe that our actions concern any other beings. Should we develop the kind of celestial eye, wisdom eye, we would see this for ourselves that we are indeed connected with all beings. Then we would be very careful about what we do.

Jesus Christ, Buddha had developed this kind of eye of wisdom. Therefore, they knew what are the laws of the universe; what to do in order to beautify our world; also to make our lives more pleasant, more comfortable and more suitable to our taste. Therefore, they laid down the rules from the heavenly abode, about our behavior and the direction we should take in our daily living. These rules are very valuable, what we call precepts or the commandments of God. Should we follow these, our lives would be much more smooth. But that is as far as the worldly connection is concerned – the worldly contribution is concerned.

The quickest way to the kingdom of God

If we kept the precepts, we'd be nice to our neighbor, we'd love our enemies, et cetera. Then the world would be in peace, be a nice place to live in, and would endure much more longevity. So, if our world is peaceful, it would also affect our lives and we would also feel very peaceful. If we live in a house and the house is damaged or in not good condition, then our health and our comfort would be affected. Similarly, if we live in the world full of chaos and trouble, we'd have no peace. So, to help the world is to help ourselves.

Now that is only if we want to stay in this world. But if we want to go back to the kingdom of God, to the Buddha's land or to become Buddha, there are more subtle conditions and rules which we should know. Apart from keeping these precepts, following a virtuous life, being tolerant, and helping others, we should also be connected with the kingdom of God. What is the kingdom of God? It is very easy to see, provided you are willing to give your effort and time and sincerely wish to be there. You can find the kingdom of God through your own purity, sincerity and one-pointed devotion. But the best way, the quickest way, is to find someone who has already the access into the kingdom of God and then you just follow. They just hold your hand and take you up. Therefore, Jesus Christ had to be born in this world in order to lead some of His contemporaries, sincerest ones, God's lovers, back to the heavenly mansion. Therefore, Buddha had to descend to this world in order to take some of His devotees back to the Buddha's land.

In every nation, in every period of worldly existence, there will be always such personalities like Jesus or Buddha. This is very good news. We worship Jesus and Buddha, and that is very good. But rarely do we know we could become as great as Jesus, as great as Buddha. That is actually the sole purpose of their coming into our world. That's why Jesus emphasized in the bible, 'Whatever miracle I do today, you can do even greater tomorrow.' He promised us. We can become as great as He was, even greater. Buddha also said, 'You can all become Buddha. I have already become Buddha, you will become Buddha.' No one has claimed the monopoly, the sole possession of Buddhahood. No one can do that. If anyone ever does, he doesn't know anything about Buddhahood and Christianity.

A true Christ is a power which can be handed down from one person to another. Just like you earn a lot of money, you can give away as much as you want. As true as we have material possessions, we can also have spiritual power – the invisible possession which we can hand down also. It's not 'handed out' because we all have this inside ourselves. It only needs opening by an expert.

It is just like when we go into this room; we are not acquainted with the electricity board, with all the switches in this room. So, we have to learn it by trying to discover ourselves, or we have to go the quickest way – to the manager. The one who is in charge of this room, he knows everything. He has been here everyday. He knows where the switchboard is, which light is connected with which switch. It's the best way. So, he can open it in seconds, put on the lights, and help you to connect with all the things that you need for today's seminar.

Awaken all our power of wisdom

Similarly, Christ or Buddha, they have known the kingdom of heaven. They have come and gone many times, if not many millions of times already. So, they can help us to also go there and make us comfortable with all the things we need. Once we come into this room and find the manager of this room, we can find all the things we need.

Similarly, Jesus has told us that: 'You should seek first the kingdom of God and all the things shall be added unto you.' The kingdom of God is the inborn intelligence which most of us do not use. Just like I've mentioned many times already – five percent of our brain power. Now if we have access to the whole brain power – one hundred percent, we can do great wonders. Using five percent we can make airplanes, we can make rockets to go to the moon, to go to the galaxies, do many wonders, cure many sicknesses, discover many great things, invent so many computers and machinery, and make fast cars and jumbo jets. Now ninety-five percent is still there unused. If we wake this power of intelligence up, then we will know so many more things, we can do so many more things, we can invent so many more things, we can create numerous things.

That is what it means by the kingdom of God, the wisdom of the Buddha or the Buddha nature. But apart from that we still have much more. The subtle power behind this brain power is what we call soul power. That is our real 'face,' our real person. We have no doubt about the existence of a real person within our body, that we are not this physical body. The physical body is only a house to live in while we are in this world – a hotel room. Otherwise, why when we die the body is still there and we cannot move anymore. So, it must be something else behind the body, behind the brain, that moves the whole machinery, thinks, walks, eats, and sleeps. That is our real self.

The real self is hidden behind the veil of what we call illusion or maya, in Sanskrit. Illusion is something of a play which makes us forget our real self. It is just like when we watch television, films or theater performances so intensely that we forget ourselves. Then we cry, laugh, and feel sorrow and fear with the personages on the stage. We forgot that we are, maybe, the senators of the state, or the wife of a very important person. We glue ourselves to the screen, laugh and cry with those people, and get angry and excited. After the theater or the movie is over, we wake up to the reality, to who we are, and we go home. We do not stay in the theater anymore and we do not glue ourselves to the television screen anymore.

The theater, the movies and the television are only temporary things and they can even attract people so much. You know the television addicts' problem. Sometimes you switch on and you cannot switch off. It does not matter what it is, you just have to look. It's very fascinating, always changing, always making excitement, and always new. We sometimes forget our duties, our jobs, our work and we watch the television.

Our life is a greater stage and it's a longer performance. No wonder we forgot our real self. Our life stage is more interesting even, more intense, more colorful, more dramatic and more enchanting than the theater performance. Therefore, we keep glued to this screen of life and forget who we are. That's all there is to the illusion play. Once the illusion stops, the play stops. That's when we are awakened.

When we are awakened, we are enlightened. If we are completely awakened and shake off all these impressions from the theater performance so that it doesn't make us feel sorrow, cry, laugh anymore, then we say we have become like Christ or become a Buddha. We know it's all a dream. At that time we are completely awakened. Then we are mighty. We can control everything we need to control, but then we let everyone free as far as they don't want to be controlled. We let everything go but we can do everything we want – not harmful things to people, just all good things.

Once we are completely awakened or enlightened, we have all the wisdom that is inborn within ourselves. With a little intelligence of our five percent brain power, we can create so many great things like the Empire State Building, so many advanced and wonderful

apparatuses. With this inborn, new found wisdom, we can create heaven. We can create comfortable environments, life and all the things we wish.

Everyone has the power of creation

Some of you would have heard of the miracle performers in India, China or maybe America even. These are nothing of wonders. It's just that they use that creative power. They know more than the average person about how to use their own intelligence. Just as we can make use of our five percent brain power to create airplanes, boats, rockets, scientific apparatus, et cetera, we can use more of this creative power in order to create much more advanced, more wonderful and more unimaginable, excellent things. That's all there is to heaven, all the comforts and all the miracles. It's all creative power, and we have all this within ourselves.

To use this creative power just to make some flowers, some oranges, candies is nothing at all. It's just a very little thing in the creative play of our brain power. The more we know, the greater things we can create. Scientists have created many wonderful machines and apparatus to serve human life; but if the scientists had more access into the kingdom of wisdom, they would create heaven out of nothing. Just as much as we use materials of this earth to create spacecraft and all kinds of vehicles and apparatus, we can use invisible materials to create all kinds of things which we need for this life and the next.

Therefore, Jesus said, 'Seek you first the kingdom of God and all the things shall be added onto you.' That's why Buddha forsook all the earthly kingdom, possessions and pleasures; because then He possessed much more property. He knew He was richer than any king on this earth. Otherwise, how could one just live a life of a beggar for forty-nine years when the kingdom of His nation was at hand? He could at any time go back to His throne, become a great king, rule over His nation, and enjoy all the comforts. But He didn't return, because He was richer than when He left.

He had anything He wanted. He could go to any heaven, any land, any planet, any galaxy; and had all kinds of treasures, all kinds of things that He wanted; but He didn't even want these. After we know all the secrets of the universe, after we possess all the treasures of the heavens, we desire nothing anymore. We become happy within ourselves; whatever comes, comes. We become like a child. We do not desire and the desires of this world will not burn our hearts any longer, will not have anymore control over us. That is the advantage of becoming enlightened.

Only by enlightenment can one truly love others

Many people also have the wrong idea, that if we want to become enlightened or we want to practice, we must become a monk or a nun or go to the Himalayas. I did have that idea. I thought I must do it. But that was my stupidity. I wasn't enlightened then. You do not need to do that. We can live within our family life, carry on our worldly duties, and become enlightened at the same time. It is just like we can do so many jobs with our hands and our brain power. We can also do our worldly jobs and become enlightened.

With such a limited intelligence as we have now five percent of the brain power, we still can accomplish so many tasks. Just like if you are a physician, you still can grow your vegetables in the garden when you go back home, you help your wife clean the carpets even, or you can do all kinds of hobbies. Now fancy you have more wisdom, then you can just do more – cannot do less. Don't need to forsake the world in order to do the will of

heaven. You can only do more and offer more; you do not have to decrease your responsibility.

That is the logic of enlightenment. But since I have become a nun like this, I'm used to it, so I stay like this. It doesn't hurt me at all. We do not need to do this. We can do many things with our wisdom. It encompasses many things. We can love God and love our family members at the same time. The love of God will not interfere with our love for family life and family members; because if God is love, if Buddha is compassion, then our family members have to be included, not excluded. We can include more people even. Instead of only loving our family, husband and wife, we can love also our neighbors, our enemies. That's how we become after enlightenment.

Jesus said, 'Love your enemy.' He didn't only preach from the lips. He really experienced that. After complete enlightenment you bear no hatred to anyone and you see things in a better light. You see why people do this thing to you, why people do that thing to that person. You will not have any guilty feelings for what you do and you will not have any hatred towards anyone who harms you, because you see the causes and consequences of all things in the universe. That's how we can leave hatred. That's how we can love our neighbor, our enemy.

It's not easy to tell people to love their enemy and then they will love them. They understand the message, but to carry out the message is another thing. It's easy to quote from the Buddha and say, 'All beings are pure from nature. You have no sin. There is no bad, no good.' But it is hard to convince someone not to feel guilty, because they do not see the cause and consequence. They cannot do things without the ego, and then they get blamed for it. Once we are enlightened, we see things from a higher point, from a higher intelligence, and we see nothing happens by accident, or nothing is by our own doing. It is hard to explain this to you. It's easier to get enlightenment than to explain enlightenment.

God has many names

If we hear the name of Buddha or the name of the teaching in any scripture, we will have some merit, some virtuous merit, in order to be born in heaven again. Otherwise we go to hell. So, people tell us, 'Now I don't believe so much in hell, but there is hell nevertheless. Just that I would not go there, so I don't believe in it.'

There is the law of hell and the law of heaven. The law of hell is a very low class law set up to catch people in their transmigration of this illusion. The law of heaven is that of gracious blessing and love, unconditional forgiveness, which will draw people back to the kingdom of God or to the Buddha's land to enjoy their deserved happiness and everlasting joy. The law of hell, or of this world, is governed by the king of maya, which is what we call the 'director of illusion,' the director behind the stage of the illusionary game. The law of heaven and Buddha's land is governed by those gracious, loving, compassionate, merciful beings who are the co-workers with the almighty God or the highest Buddha.

When we call God by different names it is all right. You may call your wife 'my darling,' 'my apple pie,' 'my sugar candy' or 'honey pie,' whatever you want. Similarly, we have to allow people of different mentalities and different preferences to call God by different names. It is so logical. I'm so surprised that most people don't understand this and fight over the names. It's okay if you call your wife 'cookie' and if the neighbor calls his wife 'apple pie.' It's the same thing. If we call God by the name of Allah, Jehovah, the highest Buddha nature, the Anuttara-Samyak-Sambodha, the almighty, the beloved, the Father, the Mother, the creator, God or anything else, what does it matter?

Therefore, many people think that I preach many religions at once. No, no. I only preach one – the religion of Truth, the religion of wisdom, the religion of love. What we call God almighty or the highest Buddha, is our own wisdom, our own survival power, intelligence, which we could use at anytime, if we wish to do so.

You become very normal after you become a Buddha

In case we do not know where to open the gate of wisdom, we may search for some expert. That's all there is to it, so simple and so matter of fact. We don't need to make anything become so mystical, so difficult, so hard to believe and unreachable. If I can reach this wisdom, you can. I have not proclaimed that I have reached the whole wisdom in order that you praise me or give me a lot of presents or something. I just say so in such a way as you would say you are a M.D., because you have graduated from a medical school and in order that people know so that they trust you and that you may help them. I say this in order to set an example for you, to give you hope, to give you inspiration, that you too can do it.

Sometimes people criticize me for saying that my disciples always praise me, saying that I'm a Buddha, I'm a what and what. For a long, long time I never said I'm what and what. But people always heard from my disciples. Then they came and attacked me for what I did not say. 'What? You are a Buddha? How can You be? How dare You be?' So many questions like that arose many times.

So, I'm fed up. I'm tired of being humble. I say, 'I'm a Buddha. So what? What's the matter with it?' So openly. But after you've become a Buddha, you become very normal, very lovable, very cute. Nothing great, nothing very special happens, just that you discover your own treasure and your own power, and you use it. What is the big deal about discovering your bank account that you have forgotten about? There's no virtue, no great thing about spending your own money. Everyone knows that.

Similarly, there's no great thing about discovering your own power and your own wisdom, and using them for the benefit of yourself and for anyone who needs it. Apart from this discovery of your own wisdom and power, you are ordinary. You just add more power, that's all. Whatever other people do, you do. They walk, you walk. If they sleep, you sleep; they eat, you eat; they work, you work. It's alright. You're like before. You are now just extra-charged by extra power.

It is similar to the case of a medical student. After he has graduated from medical school, he becomes a M.D.. Now, he didn't change anything, did he? The look, the outlook are the same, the friends are the same, his activities are the same, and his behavior won't change. What has changed is that he has extra knowledge, extra talent, extra abilities to help others, including himself and his family, with his medical expertise. People make Buddha become a very mythological figure, a very great being, a very mystical figure, that no one can understand, no one knows, no one can touch, no one can see; make Christ become the world owner, and no one else can attain His level. This is wrong. This is incorrect information.

Just because you have discovered your lost treasure, it doesn't mean you will change anything in your habits and behavior. You will not become a wooden statue or a stone Buddha. You will have similar feelings, you have the same power of reasoning, you still have the same capability to work in your job, if not better. You can serve the society with more power, more vigor, more clear-sightedness and more concentration. Apart from your physical ability to contribute your talents to society and the world at large, you have the

invisible wisdom which can be manifested and used as the power to supply blessing, encouragement and joy to the people around you.

So, for these reasons we can see that no one should deny enlightenment, no one should deny the right to their own wisdom and power. Wisdom is something very intangible, invisible; but it can be felt once we want to use it. We cannot see it but we can feel it when we turn on the light. We can use it when we turn on the fan, television or all the apparatus. That's how we know electricity exists.

How do we know God, wisdom or the Buddha nature exists? We know by the manifestation of this power. We discover this power and then we put this power into use. We use this wisdom for useful purposes, useful things. Just like electricity is invisible, but we can turn it into light, into the power for a record-player and use it in a refrigerator, fan and all kinds of useful things. Now if we have this inborn wisdom, we can use it and make it into anything we want, including to build our own heaven. Then no need for God even.

Therefore, sometimes people who are very enlightened or completely enlightened, for example, like the case of the Zen Masters, after they get enlightened, they speak in such aloof terms like, 'There is no God. There's no one.' Or they say, 'I'm just drinking tea,' or something like that. They never express much emotion about God or the divine being. It is difficult to understand them and we may sometimes mistakenly address them as atheists; but it is not so.

Similarly, in the case of the Buddha, after He was completely enlightened, He even denied that there's any God. He used another name, Anuttara-Samyak-Sambodha. It means the highest Buddha. The highest Buddha or the highest God are similar things. The highest Buddha or the highest God live within us. That is the wonder of all wonders. That means what? Do you know? That means that we are God, we are Buddha. If the Buddha doesn't live in here, who else then? The owner is a Buddha, so we are the Buddha, we are God. It's easy to speak, to tell, to repeat; it's not easy to realize that.

Therefore, we humbly or arrogantly live everyday without realizing our true person. So, we suffer, we feel burdened, we feel lonely, we feel desperate, we feel helpless. It is because we do not know our great status – that is the real self, the God or the holy spirit that dwells within ourselves. 'Know you not that you are the temple of God and the holy spirit dwells within you.' Also, 'Lo and behold, the kingdom of God is within you.'

Buddha said, 'Buddha is in your heart.' It means Buddha is within yourselves. If the Buddha is within yourselves, then we are the Buddha. What else? There's no one else in here, only Buddha lives in here. Then we are the Buddha, is that not so? If no one else lives inside, only the spirit of God, the kingdom of God, then we are the kingdom of God, we are God. It's very logical, even without enlightenment. We can not argue about this.

The next step is to find this kingdom of God, to find this power of the almighty which is hidden within ourselves. Now that I have found it, I might inform you. If you want to find it, then I will offer you my service, free of any condition.

Q. *When you attain enlightenment what happens to the personality?*

M. Do you mean if you are a very angry person, will you become more calm? It happens. Yes, it affects our personality to become more perfect.

- Q. *Buddha emphasized meditation, now Catholics struggle to learn meditation in a Buddhist way. In Catholic meditation we use some bible, use the words to learn, read, use word meditation. In the Buddha's way meditation is emptying the mind. How we can use this way of meditation to reach God?*
- M. Once we are enlightened, we know things differently, from the ordinary understanding. Before, I also did not understand what was meant by 'emptying your mind'? What's the kingdom of God? What's Buddha nature and all these terms? It was so big for me. After enlightenment, everything is like a child's game. In the Catholic tradition, some have meditation. You know that Christianity has many retreat centers, many hideaways, what we call secret orders. No one can enter even. What do they do? They contemplate, they pray, they meditate.

What's meditation? I'll tell you. After prayer or maybe worshipping God for long hours, our arms ache from tearing the beads apart and our knees are sometimes tired. So then, we might just drop down and sit there or kneel there in silence, to have a rest. At that time God's instruction will come. That's meditation. We have to be quiet in order to listen. We always talk and God has no chance to tell us. So, the prayer is the talking, the demand; and meditation is the listening. Most people just keep praying all the time or always make noise or always talk, and God has no chance to tell them what to do. No wonder their prayers are unanswered. God has no opportunity.

So, the meditation is a must from a logical standpoint. Whether you are Buddhist, Christian, Muslim or whatever, I don't care. If you cannot make time to listen to God, then God can never be communicated with. Even if you talk to a friend – you telephone, you talk and then you must listen. Even if you ask me, you must first ask, and then now you must be quiet so I have a chance to tell you. How can we treat God even worse than a friend. We keep talking all the time, and give Him no chance. Meditation is the time of quiet listening. That's all there is, and God will come.

- Q. *You say a genuine Master should not perform miracles, yet Jesus performed miracles and healed people.*
- M. Remember what Jesus said to His mother: 'Why do you tell people that I can perform miracles?' He was very reluctant to do this. Because His mother had already told people to prepare water and leave it there, this forced Him to do it. Many other times He cured the lepers, He cured the sick people; but He waited until no one was there and went and told the person to get up and get healed. When He saw people come after Him, He immediately disappeared. Do you remember? He hid Himself. He didn't want to let people see. He also told the patient not to tell other people. But that person came out and told everything.

So, even if Masters have miracle powers, they seldom openly use them to attract the attention of the masses. They only want to attract the sincere seekers for the kingdom of God; because if you are after miracles only, then miracles are all you will have not the kingdom of God. If you are after the kingdom of God, you seek the kingdom of God, then all things shall be added onto you. You'll have miracles and all things. Therefore, most Masters avoid attracting people by miracles, for fear that they will pay their attention only to that part of the God power and forget the whole.

- Q. *My life is in danger. Do You feel it?*

M. I understand; but whether yours or mine, everyone is the same. Whether you know it or not, our lives are always in danger at any moment. So, if you want to protect yourself, then get enlightenment. Use your wisdom to protect your own life. No one else can do it!

Q. *To be a lifelong vegetarian, without meat-eating is prevent from killing. But can we eat eggs?*

M. Eggs contain half of the life. They unite together and become a chicken. This is the first reason why we should not eat eggs. Now some eggs are unfertilized, but still they contain half of the life in them.

The second reason is that chickens they eat all kinds of worms with bacteria and disease. So, when we eat them, the eggs are not that pure not good for our delicate system. The more we practice, the more we become very sensitive. It's dirty.

The third reason is that all the black magicians, witches, they use eggs to attract so-called dead souls, controlled souls. If we eat them, we also attract these souls to ourselves. We add more negative nature to our own beings. It's not very helpful for spiritual progress, so we don't eat eggs.

Q. *As the Buddha asked His disciples to filter the water, do we have to filter our environment and our actions so we may attain enlightenment easier?*

M. Yes, we do! Therefore, the emphasis is on keeping the precepts, the commandments.

Q. *What do You think of astrology?*

M. Doesn't change much. Doesn't help much. We have to change from a higher plane of consciousness. Not just by knowing what happens tomorrow. We have to change our life, our way of living in order to better our life and smooth our path not by consulting an astrologer; because he might tell you to avoid one disaster, but the next will follow. You cannot always have an astrologer in your pocket. Whereby you have your wisdom all the time with you and this is the best 'astrologer,' the best guide to tell you everything. In the course of time, even he doesn't tell you.

It takes care of you even if you are not yet at a very spiritually perceptive stage. The Master inside will take care that you do not run into so much trouble, and smooth your path for you. That's the best thing to do; not to consult an astrologer. Besides, once we are very highly developed in wisdom, we are above astrology. No one can read your palm any longer. No one knows under which star you are influenced anymore. Finished, you are above the stars, the sun and the moon. Nothing affects you.

Q. *Why is there so much suffering in this world? Is there innocence involved in suffering?*

M. No one is innocent. Except we are born again, we are not innocent. Born again means repenting our past misdeeds and promising God to lead a better life, a virtuous life. Then God's grace will descend on us, will help us, clean us, purify us, and make us become a child. Then we can say: 'I am born again, I am innocent.' After the initiation we can say we are innocent.

If we follow the virtuous path, then we will always be innocent; but not before that. We are burdened with the so-called original sin, or the past karma. We cannot say we are innocent. We, everyone of us, are responsible for the condition of our world today. Whether knowingly or unknowingly, we have done some damage to the world. We must repent. We must change our way of life. We must live in wisdom, in virtue.

Q. *If there is only one God, Buddha, why are we God ourselves?*

M. Because we are all one. It is an illusion that we are many. After enlightenment, you see we are all one. It's only one spirit, one unity, one great being in all of us. For example, the sunshine, is it the whole? Sun rays are from the sun. It's a part of the whole. But because the sun has to shine in different directions to benefit in different aspects, therefore we have many sun rays. We cannot say that a sun ray is a separate sun ray. It's an illusion to say a sun ray is a separate sun ray. It is not at all. It's an illusion, ignorant, to say that the waves are different from the ocean. Is it not true?

Q. *What's wrong with occasionally having a beer or a glass of wine with friends?*

M. It looks like nothing is wrong, but people start from there. People start from a glass of harmless wine and a beer with a friend, and become alcoholics. They couldn't suddenly become an alcoholic, no? It develops from a glass of beer, a glass of wine, and becomes more habitual – take more and more and become possessed with it. So, don't start. Don't play with fire. Also any drop of wine, anything that's alcoholic dulls your wisdom, kills your memory, takes you further from the Truth, makes you forget who you are, and disconnects you from the glorious path and your highest wisdom. Therefore, we better avoid it.

Many people were born mentally damaged. It's due to them having killed their own wisdom with too many intoxicants in the past, like alcohol, drugs or such things. So, do not play with fire! We do not know how much we can control ourselves. No one knows until it is too late. All mistakes come from the overestimation of our control of will power. It's easy to say, but hard to practice. So, better not to try. Now you see the world is already very mysterious and foggy. Why do you want to add more confusion to your mind? Our vision is already blurred, already not clear. Why should we add more to our unclear mind with alcohol or drugs?

Q. *Why can't people control themselves sometimes?*

M. I told you already. It's easy to control people, but not easy to control ourselves. It's because we do not learn controlling. Also it's because of the karmic set-up which we do not understand. Some people we see for the first time, we fall in love with. We call this love at first sight. Someone we've just met for one second, we want to start a fight with him. It's not that we do not want to control our emotion or anger, we just can not because of the karmic background.

Maybe that person was in love with you before or made some nice, good impression in your mind. So, when you meet that person for the first time, you feel overwhelming love and sometimes mistake it for love at first sight. It's affection from the past. The one whom you want to get into a fight with, it was maybe because in a past life he was angry with you all the time and troubled you a lot.

- Q. *Can an ordinary person, a worldly person, also get enlightenment? Can they attain the supraworldly state? Please explain, Master!*
- M. Of course! No one is an ordinary worldly person! You are only cheating yourself. The most high is in your heart, so how could you be an ordinary worldly person? No one is an ordinary worldly person, but you deliberately make yourself one! We do not wish to know that we are the almighty. Everyday we just earn money, sleep, eat, raise children, and never seek anything else. It is all right to work, eat, sleep, and have children; but we should also be enlightened, know why we are doing this, and know that we are the most high. If you are not enlightened, and engage only in worldly work, of course, we will stay forever in the world, and forever be an ordinary worldly person.

THE ETERNAL LIFE AND THE LAW OF THE UNIVERSE ¹⁵²

My brothers and sisters, I am very happy and honored to be with you tonight at this very old, respected and famous university of America and of the world. I have long admired and heard of the name of Harvard University. So I am feeling very honored to be here tonight. This is due to the generosity of the administration of the college and also to the help of Mr. Tavanty and many others. When I saw you, I saw your glittering faces and shining purity from your hearts, I feel happy. So, I hope that this meeting, which started very well, will end splendidly; that I may serve you something within two hours' or three hours' lecture; that I may satisfy some of your inmost longing for God or Buddha nature or the Tao, or that you may have a little memory of who you are or where you have come from.

Now, this section of this university is the law. People here study the law of the nation, or nations, mainly study the American law, no? The law of American country. Is that right? [Audience: Yes.] So, every country has different laws, but mainly to protect human's rights, to protect the order of the society, and that people are living harmoniously together. That is the purpose of the law of every nation. Now, the law of every nation, of course, depends on the character, the traditions and the wishes of the majority of the people in that country. They may agree together to bring such-and-such laws into practice in order to protect the lives of the people at large. Now, when we look at our human stand-point, the laws are made by humans. But when we look from a transcendental view which is above human capacity, then we see sometimes, even though laws are made by people, they are governed by some other kind of invisible force. This invisible force we call in Sanskrit 'karma.' Karma is the Sanskrit name for the law of causes and retributions. Like we say in the bible, in Christian terminology, 'As you sow so shall you reap.' So, when some Christian people question me that only the Buddhists believe in karma, I smile and tell them the Christians also believe in karma.

The universe is governed by universal laws

Every good and grand religion has to teach people the law of karma. Otherwise, why do they bother to teach people to do good and be good, if we have no retribution later or any at all, or after-life at all? Why bother to be good, to do good? Because if you are bad, you are kind of naughty and sinful, you still only have this life. So, the law of karma and also consequently the law of reincarnation is very, very common. And every religion openly or secretly or I mean not hintingly, teaches this kind of law. It is the same like we have the law in every nation in order to protect the order of the society. The law of the universe is also there to protect the order and the well-being of all beings in the universe.

152. Public lecture, Harvard University, Boston, Texas, U.S.A., October 27, 1989 (Originally in English).

If we live in a country, we must know a little bit about the law of that country in order to live in harmony, also not to harm ourselves by committing some or transgressing the law. Now, when we think it over, we are not only living in a nation, but we are also living in the universe. And every nation is a kind of a room in a big mansion. So therefore, it is an obligation to us, also to have to know a little bit about the universal law. After we study the law of different nations we might notice that sometimes one law in this nation doesn't apply to the other nation. For example, in our country like Au Lac, or maybe America, you can have only one wife and one husband. That is the law. Is it so in America also? [Audience: Yes.] Now if you have a second or a third, your wife or husband can take you to court and make trouble.

In Tibet it is entirely different. Now a woman can have many husbands. One woman can marry the whole brothers of one family. No, I'm not joking. You may read it yourselves. You know if you read the books by Swami Vivekananda. Have you read any? Some of them, no? He told his experience about this. He said when he was shocked and asked a brother why they are doing such a thing. Why are they married to only one woman, five or six brothers. And the brother said: 'In Tibet, it is considered selfish not to share any good thing with your brothers.' So then, he keeps pondering about the relativity of law and sometimes morality in this world.

Now in every country, we have to live up to the law of that country in order not to cause problems, heartbreaks to ourselves and to the others. So, we cannot say, 'Well, Tibetans are like that, so we Americans learn to do the same.' We can not. Because we Americans are Americans. We have our own emotions, our own background of tradition, and our own judgment. We can't just imitate anyone at all. The same like the Au Lac people, the Chinese, or any other country's people. They cannot imitate the other country's tradition. They may respect their laws. But there are other kinds of invisible laws concerning emotions and a way of living that they can not imitate.

The law of the universe is ever abiding

Then now we consider that when we live in every nation, we have to follow that nation's law. So now, when we are in the universe, we must also follow our universal law. That law will protect us from degrading into a lower grade of existence. For example, when we are in a country, and we commit some crimes or transgress some law, we will be put in jail or have some kind of fine. No? [Audience: Yes.] Now if we live in this universe and we commit something that is not suitable to the law of the universe, then we also have to be put in some kind of other existence which is not very pleasurable for us. That is what we call karma, the law of retribution, 'As you sow so shall you reap.'

Therefore, when we want to live in harmony and do not incur displeasurable situations for ourselves, we should study some universal law. Universal law is not made by man, and is not changeable like human's law. When we see the human's law, it varies from country to country. And even the standard of morality varies from country to country. So, it is hard to tell people in one country to accept the other country's law. But the universal law is always and always the same. For example, in the bible it is stated that, 'Thou shall not kill. Thou shall not commit adultery. Thou shall not steal. Thou shall love thy neighbor, love thy enemy, et cetera...' These will never change.

If we want to know God or our so-called Buddha nature, God or Buddha nature, for me, is the same thing. I have experienced that thing. You may call it God or Buddha nature. I know it is the same thing, just a different way of speaking. Now if we want to experience our Godly nature or Buddha nature, or what we call the 'real face,' we have to follow this

law. And to follow this law is not the only thing that we must do. But that is the precondition if we want to know God or we want to know Buddha nature. So, in the bible, it is said, 'Verily, I say to you, except you are born again, except you become a child, you can not enter the kingdom of God.' In Taoism, Lao Tzu also said that we have to be pure again as a child.

Also in Buddhism, one of our great patriarchs was Hui Neng. Hui Neng was the sixth patriarch of Zen Buddhism in China. But he was originally, historically Au Lac born. Now I will not argue about this, because the Chinese wanted to claim him. So, we also offer to them. It is all right. He is universal anyhow, but just for your information. Because I have to speak the truth, always speak the truth. If you want to know more about who he is, you can talk to me later. We don't want to discuss about his birth place or birth rights, just a little mentioning. Now, he said like this, 'When I meditate, I only look into my own fault, I don't look into the others' fault.' That means you become pure, you don't criticize others, you are just like a child. Now, aren't they the same sayings? Yes? [Audience: Yes, they are.]

You are right. Because anyone who is enlightened and who has a glimpse or many glimpses into the true nature of Godhood or Buddhahood will say and express the same opinion. They can not say otherwise. They can only say the Truth and nothing but the Truth. The Truth may be strange, may be unfamiliar to many people. But nevertheless, very familiar to those who have wisdom and who are already feeling acquainted with the Truth. We may say to ourselves, 'I have never learned anything before;' 'I have never been to church;' 'I have never been to any Buddhist temple;' 'I haven't even read any sutras.' But that doesn't mean you do not know the Truth. You might have known them or might have known the Truth already in your previous life. Now it will take just a little more water for the seed to germinate again.

Exploit the brain power to fully develop our underlying power

I have just mentioned about Master Hui Neng. He was illiterate. He couldn't read, couldn't write. But he was famous for many centuries and even more famous now, since the Zen Buddhism, or Chan or the China Buddhism is making its way to the west. Because the God nature or the kingdom of God is within us, or the Buddha nature is inborn within us. This is what we call 'wisdom' in scientific terminology, or what we explain as the ninety-five percent of the capability that we have not used. Understand that? Because the scientists have proved that we use only five percent of our wisdom, of our brain capacity. The one who can use a hundred percent of his wisdom or intelligence, that is the Buddha, that is the Christ, that is the Lao Tzu, that is the Krishna or Mohammed, or whoever you believe has the greatest brain power in our world. They are the ones who know the secret of access into the whole kingdom of our intelligence. That is what we call the kingdom of God.

Everything lies within ourselves. The nirvana is the same thing. Buddhas, Christ are all born out of this kingdom of God. No one has been born without this kingdom of God or without this Buddha nature, just like the waves are born from the ocean. Now, is there any way to gain control over this a hundred percent of our intelligence? Yes, there is the way. There are many ways. There are short ways, long ways, big ways, small ways, easy ways and difficult ways. Some people do them with prayers, fasting, austerities or all kinds of effort. These things we have read in the books of ancient wisdom. How people sacrificed everything in order to find God and to find the Buddha nature. But nowadays, if we follow these rigorous paths, it is too hard, too time-consuming. We can't just go into the jungle and leave the society behind.

In the ancient time, people had less desires and less comfort in life. Even though they wanted, they couldn't have it. Nowadays we have more temptation due to more comfort. Sometimes we don't want this and that. But the neighbor has it, and the wife will not let us rest until she obtained the same, or the husband vice versa. In the olden days, people would be satisfied if they had just a few clothes or a little bit thing to eat. There were no newspapers, communication, no television, or not such-like. Therefore, people were not tempted to want more things. So, their time was more in plenty. They could use it to practice on their hobby like to find God.

To find God is the most pleasurable hobby

Now, to find God is also a hobby, anyhow. For me, it is a hobby. It is a very pleasurable hobby. Now people have different hobbies, but the greatest hobby, they forget. That is how to find God, how to find the Buddha nature within. It is not as difficult to find God as to earn money, I may tell you. We work very hard, eight to ten hours a day, and even then it be squandered away very fast if we are not careful. And even if we are careful, we can make the ends meet a little bit, and a little bit more for the old age, nothing more. But if we find the kingdom of God, it lasts forever. Whatever intelligence, wisdom, happiness, joy we find, it will always be ours. Never ever will be squandered away. Never ever anyone can steal it from us. And even then our material gain will also be on the way. Therefore, in the bible, it is said, 'Seek you first the kingdom of God and then all the things shall be added unto you.'

That is why the ancient people they know where the everlasting happiness is, so they practice a way of life, the Tao, practice the Buddhist way or the Christian way. You see, I was born as a Catholic and a Buddhist, both, so I have to speak for both. I hope you don't mind. Also since Dr. Tavanty already mentioned that we, the Au Lac people have the tradition of open-mindedness, freedom of thought, and freedom of belief. So, I have to carry on our tradition to be faithful to our Au Lac tradition. In Au Lac a Catholic husband and a Buddhist wife go hand in hand to the church in the morning and go to the temple in the afternoon. Most of our people do not discriminate or make a big fuss about who is the best one and what is the highest religion. If you are happy with your religion, fine! I'm happy with mine. We may learn from each other some good points.

Anyhow, who are we to judge the Buddha? Who are we to judge Jesus Christ? We weren't even there then. We didn't even know how great they were, what did they do. We can judge from the good laws they left behind for us, from the good preachings, from the outstanding examples of their sacrifices and love. Then we know Jesus was all right. Then we know Buddha was great. We cannot criticize them in any way at all. For what they have done for humanity, neither of them should be criticized. Whoever follows Christ they should be a good Christian. Whoever follow the Buddha they should be a best Buddhist. That's all our duty. Not to criticize or not to compare.

Get enlightenment and behold God immediately

So therefore, in every speech, I wouldn't emphasize people to follow me, to cut their hair to become a nun or to become a Buddhist even. If you are Christian, you remain there. If you are any at all, you remain there. Even if you are an atheist, I also try not to convince you the existence of God. I will only want to show you the existence of God or of the Buddha nature, and then you will believe. Because if we do not see God, if we do not see the Buddha nature within us, it is very difficult to believe, no? So, we cannot blame the atheists for not believing in God. It's not everyone that are blessed with not seeing, however

believing. So, for some who are not believing by not seeing, we offer the opportunity to see God or to see Buddha nature. That is what we call immediate enlightenment.

Knowing your own nature, and knowing the kingdom of God within that we may believe. Because when we are enlightened, whether we are Christians, or Buddhists or Taoists, we find the same stuff, we find the same wisdom, the same kingdom, the same nirvana. There is no difference. I have been there. I found no difference. It is one place, the same. Actually, to say 'a place' is also a way of speaking only. But must not necessarily be a place if you are enlightened. It is a state of mind. It is a higher level of consciousness, of thinking, of knowing, of understanding. That is also called the kingdom of God or the Buddha nature. It is not necessary that you fly to a beautiful place every day.

Enlightenment manifests itself in many ways. You may see beautiful places, planes of consciousness, planes of existence. Or you may manifest wisdom, and virtues in everyday life in order to serve yourself, your immediate family, your nation, and the whole world. When the famous Indian Master Sri Ramakrishna was still alive, I expect that you heard his name, no? [Audience: Yes.] We couldn't say he was a Buddhist, so don't say I advocate Buddhism only. I'm very equal-minded to every great saint.

So, when he was alive, of course, he had many visions about God and he had many kinds of samadhi. His disciples were also very eager to have similar kinds of samadhi. I expect you know what samadhi is, no? If you do not know, then I explain. Samadhi means when you are in a kind of higher level of consciousness and you lose outer connection with the world. You are in communion with God. You only see heavenly kingdom. You do not see the misery and the pain, and do not experience the misery and the pain of the world or any discomfort of your body and mind. You are in bliss, in ecstasy. That is what we call samadhi. There are different levels though, but I'm not going into it tonight. If you have any questions later, we can go deeper into the subject.

Love is an experience superior to samadhi

Now, his disciples saw him many times everyday in samadhi, in a deep, blissful state, in deep nirvana. They also wanted the same. One of his outstanding disciples was Swami Vivekananda, who is very famous in your country. He asked the Master, 'Could I have the same level of attainment like you?' And he ask many times like that, because he had got none. So, the Master scolded him, 'You fool, there are higher levels than samadhi.' Now, what is the higher level than samadhi? That is of loving, of devotion. Love all creatures as our own selves. Love the enemies as friends. Love the neighbor. Love God above all, and surrender everything to God. That is higher than samadhi.

But there is a trap here. We the Buddhists can also say that, we love the Buddha, worship the Buddha, and we love our neighbor, we love our friends, our enemies, that is it. But there is a difference between saying and really doing. Most of the human beings are incapable of such a great love, because we are not trained in this way.

Only enlightened people are capable of such a great love, and compassion and tolerance. Therefore, we see in many nations in many periods of time, people always fighting over ideas, over territories, over financial benefit. But they always say that it is in the name of love for their nation, love for their religions, love for their groups or their kinsmen. Maybe it is true that they love their country, so they go and fight and invade other countries in order to benefit their own. But that is too small the love, it's too limited.

The love of Buddha and Christ includes the whole universe, no races, no colors, no finances, no status. Therefore, we see the disciples of the Buddha have many social positions, different social position, different in races, different in colors, different in social status, and different nationalities. The disciples of Christ also the same. All kinds of disciples, all kinds of nationalities, all kinds of personalities, all kinds of different beliefs will unite themselves under the wing of an enlightened Master. Because the enlightened Master's love is so great. It encompasses everything, and no one feels excluded. And such enlightened souls would never fight or side with one person or one nation or any sect or any religion but preach universal love, universal Truth, and equality to all. Therefore, Jesus said, 'All are children of God. Whatever I can do today, you can do even greater tomorrow.' He didn't say, 'I'm the only son of God.' He said, 'We are all the children of God. In the house of my Mother / Father, there are many mansions and all are welcome.' So, Buddha also say the same thing, 'All of us can become Buddha. I have become Buddha, you will become Buddha. All beings have Buddha nature.' These sayings denote similar ideas, understand? That is the equality of mankind in the eyes of God or in the wisdom of the Buddha.

We can enter the kingdom of God while still living on this earth

I have not started my mission seriously before two years. When was the first initiation? That was in India. Must be in 1983, when I started, forced to start. Now is 1989. Six years, only six years since I started my mission. But I have found that truly everyone inherits the kingdom of God. Everyone has the Buddha nature. And everyone can see the Buddha nature in no time, provided he or she is willing to, is convinced that he and she can see and is willing to let a teacher help to open the door for them. All can see, all can enter into the kingdom of God. There is no one, rich, poor, small, big, weak, strong, intelligent, stupid, has been refused into the kingdom of God. No one ever, not as far as I know. Therefore, I believe what Christ said is true. We just have to become a child again and then we can enter the kingdom of God and right now on the earth. Why? Because the bible says, 'Lo and behold, the kingdom of God is within you!' The bible didn't say the kingdom of God is very far away, twenty thousand light years distance. [Master and audience laugh.] No! No! No! It says, 'The kingdom of God is within you.' And the Buddha said, 'The Buddha is within you.' So now, both of them saying the same thing. If we want to find the Buddha, if we want to find God, we have to go within.

But how to become a child? It is not easy, we think. Truly it's not easy, if we do it all by ourselves, but if we have the grace of God and the blessings of the living Buddha. The living Buddha is not the body. It is the power of love that flows into one body and to bless the whole world, understand that? So, when the Buddha was alive, He said He was Buddha. It doesn't mean He was proud of His own personality, His ego as Buddha. No! No! It means He already destroyed His own ego. He had no longer an ordinary 'I,' but He was one with the Mother / Father, one with the universe, with the creative force. So, when Jesus said 'I'm the son of God, I and my Mother / Father are one,' it didn't mean that He was very arrogant and proud of Himself as an individual ego-self. But He knows that He had lost Himself, and merged into the ocean of consciousness of the great wisdom.

So, how to become a child? It's very easy. We need a so-called cleansing process. First we must vow to follow the commandments of the bible or the Buddhist scriptures again. They both say similar things. The first in the bible is 'You shall not kill.' In Buddhism, also, you do not kill. And in Hinduism also the same – ahimsa, no harm to other living beings – that means ahimsa. From that ahimsa stems the commandments of the bible, of the Buddhist sutras. Christ also had been in India for nineteen years. Buddha also had to learn first from the Vedic scriptures. Then He became Buddha by His own right. So, if we follow

the commandments of the bible or the Buddhist scriptures and we start to change our way of life, then from that day on, also by the grace of God, we will be cleansed, be purified like a child. And then when we are purified at that moment, we see the Light of God, we see the kingdom of God or so-called Buddha nature.

So, when Jesus was alive, He gave people baptism, to baptize people. But even He Himself had to go through the process of baptism. He said, 'Let the law be done.' Why did He have to do that? Even though He was already great, and John the Baptist knew He was great. But because He knew that He had to set an example of humility, of believing in grace of God to the rest of humanity. All His whole life is an example of humility. The Buddha Shakyamuni also the same. Shakyamuni was a prince, very rich in all means, very talented. He could have the whole nation, and luxury. But He went around forty nine years, even after His enlightenment, to beg. His begging doesn't mean that He couldn't work or He is unable to work. Just to show many thing, many examples to humanity. The first is to show us the desirelessness for the world's possessions. The second is to show us that we all have to depend on each other in order to live. No one is higher, no one is lower. He was the first one to preach equality, to break down the caste system of the untouchable idea in India. He taught by His own example and humility. He didn't only preach by mouth, by words, but He taught by His life example.

Embody the great love of Christ into your life

Every great Master does that. Jesus also did the same. He walked barefoot. He had nowhere to lay His head. Now in our days, in these modern days of our time, we couldn't follow exactly like Buddha or like Jesus. But we could follow it in our hearts their ways of living. We have to feel a detachment for this world, and that is also renunciation. We live in the world, but we live without the world. We shouldn't crave so much for the material comforts. We have them just to sustain our life, but knowing in our heart truly that the greatest ones like Buddha and Jesus never care for them. We follow Buddha in this way, by detachment, by desirelessness. We follow Christ in this way by detachment, by desirelessness, and also by love for our people.

Now, the American people have shown some of their Christianity love, of the Christ love in some of the world's interactions with other countries. For example, the American country has accepted many refugees from different nations. That is a part of Christ love. That is how we follow Christ. And as for the Au Lac people, I also have to thank the American sisters and brothers who have opened their arms and received some of our truly in need refugees from Au Lac. That is also a part of Buddha's compassion. Therefore, I believe that if you are a good Christian, you are also a good Buddhist. There is no difference between a Christian and a Buddhist, as long as we do good to others.

Therefore, I never discriminate between the Buddhist believers and Christian believers. Christian people did good to mankind in many ways, and Buddhist people did good to mankind also in many ways, just maybe different ways of doing and working. Take care that I do not go too far into this political situation. But I cannot help not to express my opinion. Actually because if we cannot make use practically what we learned from Christianity or what we learn from Buddhism, then what is the point? Is that right? So, we show our religious mind through our own actions. Therefore, if we say something about the world's situation, and the amnesty, and the compassion of the American people or other countries, that's also very fit! This fits in a religious lecture.

But what I want to express is something more concrete than just like that, because some people want to know God, not only to serve God in human frame, but also want to know

the God, the transcendental God, the transcendental Buddha nature. We see that Buddha became Buddha by what way. We see Christ how He had become so great. There is a reason, there is a way to achieve this greatness. Just like any science. Just like you want to study in university, you have to have such-and-such condition; you must have some money, some qualifications from high school; you have to pass some exams. Now if we want to become a Buddha or Christ, apart from this great love that we show to other human beings, like in human work, in amnesty work, in social service, we have to know our real nature; we have to know where we come from; we have to know how great we are.

Journeying back to our source

Now we have been great in the past. We have come from the kingdom of God. If we haven't come from God, then where have we come from? God created all things. If we haven't come from this Buddha nature or the Tao, then where have we come from? We must start from there, from that greatest source in the universe. So therefore, we have been great always. It's just that we forgot, that is the Truth that we forgot. Now, there is a way to remember these things again by walking backward to the higher source, where we have come from. Just like you follow the river down to the sea. Now if you want to go back to the source of the river, walk backward. So, the kingdom of God is within us, so walk inward. There is a way to see the kingdom of God within, to see the Buddha within. That is what we call the enlightenment method. Go back to the original. The Buddha had followed this method to become Buddha. Jesus Christ had followed this method to become the son of God.

Now if we say we are all sons of God, we are already Buddha, so why we need to practice? Yes, we are. But we forgot. That is no use for us now. We have to remember again through diligent effort to go back into the past, to our own deep memory.

That is what the scientists call ninety-five percent dormant intelligence. In that ninety-five percent lays many things. Now, with only five percent, we can already go to Mars; we can already go to the moon. We can already make airplanes and rockets and all kinds of comfort to life. What much more if we could use the ninety-five percent? The kingdom of God is ours, if we know how to use it. We know we are Buddha. Everybody tells us we are Buddhas, or we are the sons of God, but we don't know where that greatness is. We only know that we are miserable everyday, or not everyday but I mean most of many days. I'm sorry if you are happy, but I see the majority of people. Though they have money, have good family, status, everything is ephemeral. Look at our country, the Au Lac country, it had been glorious, peaceful. We had many things; we were very rich in minerals, in agriculture, in culture. But then suddenly, we have nothing. Suddenly, all is turned upside down, everything destroyed. People had to leave the country, so dangerous on the sea, and they had to fight for survival. Many people who came to your country have been heroes in our country, have been generals, top leaders, millionaires, billionaires in our country. They are not just all poor. They are not just all illiterate. They are not just all useless, helpless people. They have been in the glorious past, they've been the men of wisdom, of social standing, of rich, of culture. It is just the ephemeral life turns sometimes and makes people become nothing that humiliate our people.

Maybe it is good for them, I do not know, that we have to learn sometimes to come down, to be humble, and to know there is a greater force than our own hand and human brain can control. Then we have to turn back to God, to turn back to practice to become Buddha, to rely on this great force of the Buddha nature or kingdom of God. That is maybe the reason why we have to learn sometimes through disasters to know God. Otherwise, we

keep having success in our life and being so successful, we are carried away with it, and we forgot where we come from. We forgot that we are greater than just a lawyer. We are greater than just a president, we are greater than just a millionaire. We are God's children; we are Buddhas. So, this birthright we have to claim. It doesn't matter through what. Through happiness, through longing, or through disaster.

Life is ephemeral so practice before it's too late

We have to be awakened through many means. Therefore, I said earlier, there are many ways to find the wisdom within. If we don't long to find it ourselves, sometimes the creator will send disasters to wake us. So, we see that many times, in time of stress and disaster, we pray more honestly, more sincerely to God than when we are well-off, than when we are in happiness, or in stable condition. Is it not so? So, when we have pain, or our family have people died, or some disasters, then we pray. At that time we remember God very clearly. 'Please, please, please...' So many prayers. Now, we do not need to wait until a disaster befalls us in order to remember to practice to become Buddha again or to be like Christ. We should do it when we have time, at leisure, and good conditions. So that we do not have to have experience disaster. What we call in Au Lac: 'To prevent is better than to cure.' We all know this. Every nation will say the same thing. But we just don't do it. We just don't prevent things. We just do things, and then reap the result and then we cry. Now we have been through life, thirty, forty, fifty years now. We should have known a little bit more about this ephemeral nature of life. We should turn back to God now, so that the day we leave this world, God opens the kingdom for us, Buddha welcomes us. Not the darkness, not the evil plane of existence what we call satan power, or the negative power, or the power of maya.

So, I'm here like everywhere else, just to offer you a way to find your own greatness. With God, well and good. With Buddha, it's also well and good. Without God, without Buddha you still can find your greatness. Because you are that, you are born from God. You are bound to go back to God, whether you believe or not believe. You are that, you cannot escape anyhow. So, I just want to offer you what I have found as a treasure, hidden treasure within myself. And I know that the hidden treasure is within you as well. I would like only to help you to know your greatness, your self-worth. And then you live in the world as king, as saint, as Christ did, as Buddha did. And not having inferiority complex, and not doing your work well, and not sleeping well, having guilty conscience, having sickness, disease body and mind. That is my purpose. Now I will end my lecture. Thank you!

THE SUPREME EYE ¹⁵³

If we want to see our own nature or our Buddha nature, we have to see through a different eye, through a different perception. This eye is what we call the wisdom eye or Buddha's eye, the heavenly eye, or what the Christians call the single eye. Jesus said, 'If thy eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of Light.' What does that mean? Should we put our eyes together and make them become one like cross-eyed people? No, even like that we will see no Light. So, the eye that is mentioned in the Buddhist scriptures, the Christian bible and the other scriptures is not the physical eye, but the single eye within our wisdom, within our ocean of consciousness. Actually, there is no eye. But because we can see everything from heaven to hell, from this world to the Buddha's land, we call that an eye. So, to open this eye we need someone who can show us the way to do it, just like when we want to drive a car, we need someone who already knows how to drive the car to help us.

153. Group meditation, Los Angeles Center, California, U.S.A., October 14, 1989 (Originally in English).

VEGETARIANISM AND PEACE ¹⁵⁴

If we did not eat meat, no one would kill, no one would raise cattle. All the food would stay where it was and they could eat it and become healthy and strong. It'd be good for every nation, and it'd be good for our nation as well. We waste a lot of money on arms and on raising animals. All the arable land is wasted nowadays on raising cattle, pigs and the like, or most of it. So, if we used these areas to cultivate wholesome, healthy food, I think the nations would benefit more and our nation would have more peace and no need for armed defense.

If every nation lived according to the bible, according to the Buddhist teachings, 'Thou shall not kill. Thou shall not steal,' et cetera, then the world would have no more need for peace conferences, and would not need to waste so much coffee, champagne and cake at round table discussions that go nowhere. The more we talk about peace, the more war we have. It is because we go about it in an inconsistent manner. If everyone practiced meditation and ate a wholesome diet without any killing involved, the world would have long since been in a peaceful state and we'd have no hunger. There's no need to give away your property; just give up the meat-based diet. That'd be enough to save the world, as well as your own and the nation's health.

Activate your inner power of immunity

As we all know, most sickness comes from eating meat because of the antibiotics fed to animals, because of the anxiety that produces toxins in an animal's meat. Because we eat all these antibiotics, our body loses its self-resistance to disease. Our body normally can fight disease, but because we're fed so much antibiotic-filled meat, our body becomes weakened, and the resistance system goes out of order. Therefore, any kind of disease affects us and ends our lives. It's a pity.

Now, most people think that if we pray to Jesus or Buddha, that's enough. But I think we should add to it meditation and a virtuous, wholesome way of life. Then we speed up our wisdom and liberation. For example, if we practice together in our method, which we call the Quan Yin method, just listen to the instructions of God within, see the wisdom of God with a heavenly eye and keep a vegetarian diet and a virtuous way of life then we fear no sickness. Many of our initiates overcome sicknesses overnight. I mean dangerous ones normally needing operations or resulting in death. Some people just come back from the death bed, out of the power of their virtuous life and the power of the Godhead that protects them. If we open this power within through a correct technique, then that power which we call the Buddha nature or Buddha within us or God within us will protect us twenty-four hours a day, and will protect us even after we leave this body.

DISSEMINATE GOD'S GOSPEL EVERYWHERE ¹⁵⁵

Every one of us must bring the message of God, of love, of tolerance, of compassion to others, reminding each other all the time. Not only in the church, but everywhere, in the street, in the restaurant, in the hotel, in the market. We have to always remember. We remember ourselves and remind others.

154. Public lecture, Berkeley University, Los Angeles, California, U.S.A., October 13, 1989 (Originally in English).

155. Group meditation, Kuala Lumpur Center, Malaysia, October 2, 1989 (Originally in English).

KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM ¹⁵⁶

We humans have two kinds of knowledge – one that we acquire through learning and the other that we possess naturally. That which we acquire by learning is called intelligence, knowledge, or memory. It means that we collect and learn about material already discovered by others. The second kind of knowledge is that with which we are endowed from birth, and we call it 'innate wisdom.' Most people work very hard to acquire the first kind of knowledge by collecting material and developing their memory. This is very good and should be encouraged. If we do not collect information about the world, we will not realize how advanced it is and we will lag behind the civilized world, remain undeveloped, and have difficulty communicating with other people. However, we should not neglect our innate wisdom, either. Most people do neglect it, which sometimes costs them their worldly knowledge, too.

Sometimes when we read newspapers or watch television, we learn about certain research studies, like the recent experiment with meditation by university students in Europe and America. They learned very common meditation methods that were not very advanced. They didn't have to be very diligent to achieve some results; they meditated for about twenty minutes daily and yet got stunning results. The research on these students showed a drastic difference in their intelligence, reactions, and memorization power before and after they began meditating. Before they learned meditation, their reactions were slower, their memory was not as good, and they were less intelligent. The changes were highly noticeable. They, now, react more quickly, have better memory, and are highly intelligent. They can learn much faster than before.

Why is this so? It is because when we meditate, we come into contact with the innate wisdom that has always existed within us. Once the connection is established, this innate wisdom provides us with much supportive power, awakens the long forgotten knowledge within us, and lets us develop the power or instincts that we have always had. We have heard that scientists today have discovered that most human beings use only a very small portion of their brains. Even then, we are capable of building airplanes, traveling by spaceship to visit the Moon Goddess, going to Mars, et cetera. We have already discovered many mysterious corners of the universe. Imagine what we could do if we used our entire brain capacity!

Why were the students able to develop their intelligence after they learned to meditate? It is because they tapped into the functions of the brain. Perhaps meditation lets us fully utilize the knowledge, intelligence, and hidden functions of our brains. I myself have noticed that sometimes when I have many problems to solve, all I have to do is sit down quietly for a while, and the answer will come. This is also called meditation. There is nothing esoteric about it. Meditation or contemplation means that we should quiet down, concentrate our minds, refrain from thinking about other things, and focus only on one matter. This is called meditation or contemplation. The ordinary kind of meditation or mind concentration is a little bit different than meditation with a purpose. Sometimes when we have a problem and we quiet down, calm our minds, and focus our thoughts on that problem, very soon the answer will appear. Sometimes when we are in bed at night and have put down our day's work, a sudden solution for our daytime problem will flash into our minds. This is a result of mind concentration.

If we can achieve such good results just by sitting down or calming our minds for a while, imagine what we could accomplish if we did it with deliberate effort. We could solve

156. Group meditation, Shatin Center, Hong Kong, September 22, 1989 (Originally in Chinese).

greater issues by setting aside a certain period of time each day for ourselves! This is not impossible or illogical. There is nothing deceptive or misleading about it. This is not advertising the mysterious, either. Instead, it is very logical and scientific. We are in a scientific age, where human beings are highly advanced.

Thousands or tens of thousands of years ago, the human race was very underdeveloped and its intelligence very low, yet there were people who became fully enlightened beings or great sages. Jesus Christ, for example, shocked the world during His time. So, imagine what could happen today. There ought to be more of these people, and there are. There are lots of enlightened beings in this era, many more than before! First, we human beings have gone through many trials and tribulations, and through this process of natural evolution, we have become more intelligent and can react more quickly. Second, we are scientifically advanced today and have access to a rapid network of transportation and communication. We find great hope in this era, which is highly favorable for spiritual practice. Materially, we are free from want; and spiritually, we are very relaxed.

HUMILITY IS CLOSE TO THE TRUTH ¹⁵⁷

The humble are very close to God and the saints. The pure-hearted are closer to the Truth. The more arrogant we are, the further we are from the Truth. Why are we so far away from the Truth? Because we rely on the world! If we did not rely on the world, we would not be proud. If we rely on money, power, intellect or social status, we are relying on the world and the ephemeral. The Truth is not of this world, nor is it ephemeral. Therefore, the more we rely on this side, the further we are from the other side. That's a logical explanation and shouldn't be difficult to understand.

Those who have no money or power, those who are advanced in years and uncared for, are more humble. Therefore, you often find me being very good to those people and the prison inmates. I'm not very nice to you sometimes. I'm sorry about that, but that's the way it is. I don't treat them well intentionally, or treat you less kindly deliberately. I'm just a mirror that reflects how you are. Don't blame the way I treat you, or compare: 'Why is Master so nice to that person but not so nice to me?' If I'm good to someone, you just need to take a look at him and you'll know why. He is not necessarily more handsome than you are. No! Maybe all his teeth have fallen out and he doesn't have a single relative or friend. Maybe he doesn't have a penny and I even give him money. But I'm good to him because he is pure and humble at heart. He is not tainted. He doesn't have obstructions before him, nor an attachment or something to rely on. His heart is infinitely vast. He is almost one with the universe.

If we have something to rely on, that is limiting ourselves – we become the official, the virtuous person, or the one with the Truth. We still have a boundary with one corner unopened. The humble and the pure do not have anything to rely on. To have nothing is to have everything.

157. Group meditation, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, August 13, 1989 (Originally in Chinese).

THE KEY TO BEING ENERGETIC AND HAPPY ¹⁵⁸

Why do artists like to sleep more

Through research, it was discovered that people who sleep more than average are more introverted; but they are more creative. Artists are relatively languid and slow in their movements.

Musicians also seem to be lazier and like to sleep more. They are not as active, and do not get excited or make friends easily. They don't like a hustle and bustle environment or crowds, and prefer to be alone. They can do temporary work that takes short periods of time, but can not have enough patience to execute large plans. They don't have the patience and interest.

Artists do not like to engage themselves in ordinary work. They do not care for the nine-to-five office working life, or some sort of grand plan. Most artists are poor financially. Is it not so? [Audience: Yes!] So we call them 'artists.'

Part of the reason that they sleep so much is that their dreams are longer than those of the average person. People who sleep only very little have shorter dreams. [Laughter] It is said that: The more introverted one is, the more complicated one's subconsciousness will be – more complex than the lively and active people. Therefore, they must have more sleep in order to solve their so-called psychological problems.

Now, those who sleep a lot have an excuse to do so. [Laughter] I have provided you with such good information, [Laughter] so you know how to reply. We should no longer be afraid of others accusing us of sleeping too much, and there is no need to have a guilty conscience. [Laughter]

The inner awareness

However, if we do not sleep for more than seventy-two hours, we will find that we change a lot. We cannot concentrate and think, act energetically or display our intelligence, and we feel rather dull and obtuse. Our reactions are so slow, and we can't do anything about it. We don't know how to react.

There was a man who saw that his Master did not have any sleep for days. He also observed that other Masters were more or less the same; and even if they slept, it wouldn't be for too long. It is because true Masters have become one with the inner awareness. They are connected to it, so they don't have to sleep.

Sometimes I was very busy with my work and did not notice that my attendant was very tired. He kept nodding, and I didn't realize it. Then he asked for a leave, in order to have a retreat; and I didn't know why. [Laughter] He was with me for only a few days and he wanted to have a retreat, because he couldn't take it anymore! I didn't understand.

Now I know, after having read this book. [Laughter] From now on, if you want to have a retreat and have some sleep, you can remind me. The true Masters can work from within for twenty-four hours a day. No problem! Three or four hours of sleep is enough for them. If the situation requires, they can also go without any sleep.

158. Seven-day retreat, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, July 29, 1989 (Originally in Chinese).

The path to being happy

Some spiritual practitioners are very contented, lively and at ease, because nothing is stuck in their minds. They are more ingenuous, and do not feel any restrictions or pressure. Therefore, they don't need much sleep, and still remain very relaxed and energetic. It truly is so.

If you recall, when we were happy, cheerful, no matter for what reasons, no matter if we were with friends, husband, wife or children, we could chat happily all through the night. Even though we only slept for one or two hours, we still felt that we were full of energy. When we were miserable, carrying a guilty conscience, or when karma came, we felt very, very tired, no matter how much we slept. That was why I told you this morning to relax, relax, and relax!

Love your family, truly love them, and they will love you, too. Then, due to this love, we will feel very lively and happy. It will be easy for us to accept people from outside, and to love others. Try it when you return home. This is the path to being happy. [Applause]

Turn your family into a heaven

Most people owe their success in their career to having a secure family. Members of their families have more affection for each other. They are more united and cooperative, and not complicated. Both the husband and wife give a harmonious atmosphere, so they are not easily affected by the trials outside. They are also not easily troubled. When we are happy, we do not mind about others' mistakes as much. We are not concerned or troubled. If we refuse the love from our families, refuse the love from people close to us, then we will not be successful in whatever we do. We will feel so miserable that we cannot bear even ourselves; and of course, we cannot bear other people.

The disorders and troubles in society all come from dissonance at home. It is because we don't have good friends who are willing to make sacrifices, to offer sympathy to each other, accept each other, and respect each other. We don't have anyone who truly knows us well and can be a friend for life. Understand? [Audience: Yes!]

That was why I said not to turn your home into a hell. Because we live in it, we need to look after it, organize it, repair it, make it look beautiful and turn it into a heaven. It is not out of compassion or brotherly love that we love others. We love others because we want to be comfortable and happy. The more we offer our love to others, the more others will love us. When all the people love each other, how comfortable that will be!

OUR VIEW SHOULD BE FAULTLESS ¹⁵⁹

Your outlook should be faultless. Everyone should be viewed as perfect; this is best for us. Don't forget that each person has a perfect Buddha inside. What else could there be inside our Master? There should be more or less a bit of Buddha inside. [Master laughs.] [Applause]

Hes teaches us meditation, to do ethical things, correct our bad qualities. That, of course, is helpful to us. We can adore Hirm, and we can praise Hirm. This is also praising ourselves, purifying ourselves. If we make our views become faultless, become perfect, this would make ourselves become perfect.

159. Seven-day retreat, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, July 29, 1989 (Originally in Chinese).

Why does criticizing and censuring a Master have the heaviest karma? It is because we use the dark thinking to contaminate our thoughts. We do not allow our thoughts to become faultless. We create karma.

It is not the Master who wants to punish us. It is not because we censure Him, then He would sue heaven. Nothing like that! It is we who have hurt ourselves, because we think things that are black, dark and low.

If our heart is very pure, our views are faultless, then we are becoming more and more pure, more and more faultless and more and more perfect. The person can be imperfect, but our outlook should be perfect all the time. Otherwise, we hurt ourselves.

THE FALLEN ANGELS OF OUR ERA ¹⁶⁰

Sometimes we can transform an undesirable situation into a beneficial one, like the old man who lost a horse then becomes lucky! (A Chinese proverb.) In every situation there is always something good. We can perceive it as long as we remain optimistic.

Truly you are not influenced much by the outside in here; you don't see any crimes and you don't know any of the gossip. You may consider it a time for spiritual practice. It gives you more time to contemplate your ideals and make plans for the future, or adjust your time schedule to do something more interesting, since you have so much time on your hands. It is also very good.

In here, you have no responsibilities; no one comes here to bother you; no one calls you on the phone and nags you all day long; no one comes in here to puff smoke right in your nose; no one gets drunk and beats you up. In here, you don't have the chance to bargain or compete for fame or fortune. This is a perfect opportunity to purify your hearts and think about your future, or organize your idle hours to do something more meaningful.

It is easy to be in a state of happiness. If we want peace, we should search within, not without. We all know that since ancient times, many of the rich and powerful people were not necessarily stable within themselves, while the monks or the so-called Taoists or the spiritual practitioners were very, very happy, even though they might have worn rags and lived in huts hidden in the mountains. Therefore, happy or not, it should not depend on the outside.

We are all prisoners, more or less! Some people are locked up in a building, while others are bound by their minds; that is the only difference. Being locked up in a building is the most simple and hopeful; it is not so easy to break free of being confined by the mind. For example, we are imprisoned for a period of time because we made some mistakes, and when the time is up, we are free to go. However, if we are imprisoned by the mind of ignorance or by the desires of greed, anger and obsession, then it is not so easy to break free or know when we will be free, perhaps, not even when we die!

A NEW ENLIGHTENED AGE ¹⁶¹

God truly gave only comfort. If at this moment He gives us some sorrow, it is to remind us of the ephemeral nature, to remind us that we have to get back into the safety of the fortress, of the kingdom of God. Anytime we forget God again, He will remind us. He will remind us in a gentle way first, and then after, if we do not listen to this gentle advice, then

160. Group meditation, Hualien Penitentiary, Formosa, July 27, 1989 (Originally in Chinese).

161. Group meditation, San Jose Center, Costa Rica, June 8, 1989 (Originally in English).

Hes may push a little harder until Hes pushes very hard. So, if we are not pushed so hard by God, then please don't wait until Hes pushes us too hard; and if Hes already has pushed us so hard, then please quickly go back into the kingdom of God, and enjoy all the comforts Hes offers inside.

THE WAY TO BALANCE YIN AND YANG ¹⁶²

A reporter came to interview me today. 'Where does this power of maya, or the negative power, come from?' he asked. 'It comes from God,' I replied. 'How can that be?' 'The bible says, 'God created the universe and everything. There is nothing that is not created by God.' So, if God didn't create this power of maya, who did?' 'You are right. But why did God create this negative power?'

The positive aspects of the negative power

I told him that the negative power is very useful to us, when we learn how to transform it into a useful force. For example, electricity is also very dangerous. We get shocked and might even get killed if it flows through us, or if we come too close to a high voltage point. However, if we have learned how to make use of electricity, we will have no problem. Money, for example, also induces many people to break the law, violate the precepts, and commit evil acts. However, if we have learned how to make use of money instead of being enslaved by it, it is very useful to us as well. Instead of being controlled by money, we manipulate it and become its master. If it is the other way around, then we cannot survive without money. Some people are very greedy for money and would steal it, or kill or resort to evil ways to acquire it. At this time, money becomes a negative thing. If we know how to make use of it, however it becomes positive.

Let's take electricity, for instance. It is bipolar; only when the negative and positive poles are connected will electric current be generated. Likewise, there are two kinds of power in the world. On the positive side is God's power, which encompasses compassion, love, care and benedictory power. On the negative side is the power of maya, which confines people to this world, and tests their greed, anger, infatuation, wisdom and strength in surmounting obstacles. By its origin, this power is neither good nor bad, but it becomes good or bad, depending on how we use it. The negative power helps us learn how to overcome and transform it into something useful.

All the enlightened Masters – Shakymuni Buddha, Jesus Christ, Mohammed, Socrates, and Plato, among others, descended to this world to teach human beings how to overcome the negative power, the power from the left, and how to integrate it with the positive power. We Chinese call it the 'integration of yin and yang.' It is better to have both yin and yang. Why? Do we humans lack yin or yang? No, but most probably we have too much yin and too little yang. We are not balanced and easily become like leaves waving in the wind without self-determination. If we follow the ways of the world, and follow our greed, anger, infatuation, and desires, then we are following the way of the yin, the negative power. At such times, the enlightened Master will advise us to take some yang supplements. Otherwise, we will be too inclined toward the left; we will have too much yin and be forever bound by this yin.

162. Group meditation, San Jose Center, Costa Rica, June 3, 1989 (Originally in Chinese).

An enlightened Master is like a plumber or electrician

What is yang? It is the positive power, the power of compassion and love, which is enlightening, radiant, blissful, and charged with blessing power. It comes from 'above,' while the yin power comes from the world, or from 'below.' The former pulls us up while the latter drags us down. In heaven, or the abode of the angels, there is plenty of yang, so the heavenly beings have no idea what pain and suffering are, much less can they sympathize with suffering people. In this world, we have too much pain and anguish. Suffering is on our minds all the time. We think very little about happiness. We have very little idea what happiness is, for we have very few moments of joy, while we have plenty of painful times.

Let me cite an example: We work for more than eight or ten hours a day. When we are home, we enjoy only a few bowls of rice. Our moment of joy is mealtime, but we have to work ten hours in exchange for it. When we are happy being with our spouse, we say we are in heaven, but we forget how many obligations are attached to this happiness. For twenty, thirty, or forty years after marriage, we have obligations toward that person and our children. From dawn till dusk, we work hard to earn money for our food and clothing and to take care of our children until they are twenty, twenty-five, or even thirty. And it does not end here. Later, when they are married and have children, they bring their kids for us to take care of. Therefore, in this world, heavenly moments or happy times are very rare. We have to exert a lot of physical and mental effort before we can earn a little happiness. [Applause]

Why do we seek the yang? How can we find it? We are unhappy because we have too little yang; we are exhausted by work and have very few joyful moments. At the time of initiation, I help you to turn on the resource of yang. We can compare this to two water taps, one for cold water and the other for hot water. The cold water tap is the negative power and the hot water tap is the positive power. Once the two taps are turned on, and the cold and hot water flow together, we can take a comfortable and delightful bath without catching a cold. We will have fewer physical ailments and will have the energy and spirit to face the future, as well as all the worldly vexations, work, and obligations. If we are healthy, it may be all right to take a cold bath every day; otherwise, our life could be in danger.

We have suffered too much pain and vexation in this world. Just like having taken cold water baths for too long, we yearn very much for a warm bath. This is why I come to tell you that there is another tap that brings you hot water. Turn it on along with your cold water tap and you will feel much more comfortable. You won't fall ill so easily. If you are ill, you will feel much better, rather than worse. However, the tap is now blocked. The tap is there and the water is in the pipe, but the tap is blocked. Just allow me to fix it and you will have water immediately. At the time of initiation, I am like a plumber or electrician. I connect the wires for you and you have electricity. I repair the tap for you and you have water. I am worried that you might fall sick and become incurable after taking too many cold baths every day.

Spiritual practice is not a losing business

Some people might object, 'No, no! It is more economical to take cold water baths.' Well, I agree, but you may end up paying much more to the doctor or pharmacy later! Some people may say, 'I don't want to be initiated by You. Transmigration is okay with me. I can endure the agonies of this deluding world. I don't want to go to heaven, because to do so I have to become a vegetarian, which is troublesome! I cannot quit eating meat because it is really delicious.'

Or they may say, 'Not killing, not stealing, and no sexual misconduct! Oh, it is very difficult! There are too many complicated and troublesome precepts. The price I have to pay for initiation is too high; I don't want it!' However, you should know that it will be even more painful when they roast you in hell! It will be more agonizing than observing the precepts and giving up meat and fish now.

Others may complain, 'I won't be able to get initiated and meditate for two hours! It is better to spend these two hours indulging in worldly pleasures. I care only about the present. Who can tell the future?' We can tell the future! It will be too late to repent when we die. No one will come to accompany us. Those moments of pleasure only give us more trouble. For instance, all the meat, fish, and alcohol that we enjoy will bring physical discomfort later. Hospitals are full of meat-eating and alcohol-drinking people; vegetarians seldom fall ill. And when we die, all our karma will go with us; no one else, not even our relatives or friends, can go with us.

If we practice spiritually with an enlightened Master, get initiated, and practice the Quan Yin method with our spouse, not only will we enjoy family bliss in this life but we will also be together in the eternal life. We sacrifice an hour or two to meditate together and then we will enjoy each other's company forever. Won't that be much more worthwhile? [Applause] This is definitely not a losing business! By practicing spiritually with me, you only gain profit; you won't lose anything.

The law of yin and yang is such that if we have too much yin, we will be trapped in this yin dimension. This is causation. We have planted yin, so we will have yin. If we have planted yang, we will go to heaven. However, if we nurture both, balancing between yin and yang and integrating positive with negative, we will become a well-balanced being – a saint. A saint is not all yang, but is comprised of both yin and yang. We can see this from the symbol of Taoism, which is half yin and half yang, yet with a dot of yin in the yang, and a dot of yang in the yin. This is what it means. A Taoist, a being who has attained the Truth, should possess both yin and yang, instead of being all yang or all yin. If he were completely yang, he would not realize the yin qualities of sentient beings. He would not be able to tolerate sentient beings and understand their hearts. He would not be able to communicate with them and ease their suffering. If he were too much inclined toward the yin, then he would be just like us, eating, drinking, indulging in pleasures, ignorant, unenlightened, and powerless; he would not be able to help us.

The positive power or life-saving power is within us. This is the meaning of the 'original benevolent nature.' Now we are stuck here, shrouded by karmic hindrances and unable to see beyond them. If there is someone who can release the yang energy and repair it for us, then we will be benefited. Such is initiation; the Master helps the fellow practitioners or disciples discover their compassion and love, and then this merciful power of love takes care of them every day. We Catholics call this 'God;' knowing this merciful love power is knowing God.

The magnetic field of a spiritual practitioner

If we do not pursue spiritual practice, where will we go after death? Does hell exist? Does heaven exist? The answer is yes! What is hell? It is created by our own karma, our dark thinking, and our wrong actions; these generate a kind of magnetic field or atmosphere. Nothing vanishes; everything is conserved in this universe. The words we speak do not disappear; the thoughts we think do not fade away. There is a special thing that registers our actions, speech, and thoughts. Whether they are right or wrong, our actions, speech, and thoughts turn into a special kind of sphere that surrounds us and follows us wherever

we go. It envelops us when we are alive, and the scientists call it the magnetic field of a person. After we die, this magnetic field takes another form and continues to hang around our astral body. It is not easy to dissolve this magnetic field. Only a very great and powerful spiritual practitioner can accomplish that. It takes several hundred years for this magnetic field to slowly dissipate and shift to another dimension, or be absorbed by some situation or beings, and then fade away.

Suppose we have a large factory where a lot of cooking is done. Lots of fumes will be generated and a thick dark cloud will form. This dark cloud will not dissipate immediately. In places where there are many factories, the sky is filled with dark clouds, which is detrimental to human health. There are many such places on earth that are engulfed by dark clouds, and because there is insufficient oxygen, both adults and children have to use oxygen masks.

Similarly, our inner atmosphere also generates fumes that create a delightful or unpleasant aura, making people feel comfortable or uncomfortable. We are the first ones to be affected by this aura and other people will feel the impact as well, just like smoking causes harm to a person and brings discomfort to those who inhale the fumes around him. We spiritual practitioners are most helpful to others. We take good care of our actions, speech, and thoughts, and refrain from doing or speaking bad things to harm ourselves and others. Meanwhile, we absorb the yang energy from above; we absorb God's power, which blesses us and makes us wiser and more capable of using the intangible miraculous power to help others and ourselves. This power to which I am referring is not the kind of 'hula hoop' miraculous power used to flaunt ourselves. I am referring to the supreme miraculous power of the Buddha and Jesus Christ. We spontaneously help people even without knowing it. Yet, we can feel it distinctly. Sometimes we are conscious of it, though not deliberately. It is like a flower that is naturally fragrant, but which does not purposefully emit fragrance.

As the actions, speech, and thoughts of we spiritual practitioners become purer, we have greater wisdom and power. Anything we do benefits us and others as well. We then become greater and greater, and naturally radiate a very pleasant and serene aura that benefits others, instead of radiating a dark and tiring atmosphere, which reflects the carrying of heavy karma, as we did before.

When Jesus Christ was alive, many people knew about His great power. Once, a critically ill woman stealthily touched His robe, and was cured of her illness. We cannot say that Jesus Christ used miraculous power to save her. He didn't! He didn't know who had just taken some of His power. So, He looked around and asked, 'Who touched my robe just now?' The woman was afraid, so she stood out and repented, 'I just touched Your robe and now I am cured. Thank You very much! Please forgive me!' To this, Jesus Christ responded, 'Good! It's your faith that has healed you.' This is real miraculous power. Jesus didn't do anything deliberately. He Himself was the miraculous power! Anyone who was related to Him or had contact with Him would benefit.

The inner Sound

We have also heard the story of how Jesus Christ helped a deaf man regain his hearing, but it might not have been the same as physical hearing. As I understand it, this 'hearing' was the 'hearing within.' I have disciples with hearing impairments, yet they can hear the inner Sound of heaven and God. Ordinary people have normal ears but they cannot hear this Sound; they hear only the sound of the world rather than the sound of God; they are deaf. Although those deaf people who come and become my disciples can not hear the

disputes of this world, they can hear the best Sound, the most beautiful, pleasant, wise, helpful, and life-saving Sound. Listening to this Sound is better than listening to external disputes! It is no big deal being able to hear the sounds of the outside world. It is more important to hear the inner Sound!

We don't need ears to hear this inner Sound. If we can hear it by ourselves, then it is fine. If not, then we should find a Master who can open this hearing faculty for us, and seek Her help so that we can hear the inner Sound. However, even if we can hear it by ourselves, it may not be from a superior dimension. Sometimes we have already heard the Sound or seen the Light, but we still need to find an enlightened Master to confirm our experience and level. The Master can use Her power to help us go beyond this limitation and elevate our level. Some of us may have practiced spiritually in our previous lives, therefore we are able to hear the Sound and see the Light in this life. But without an enlightened Master, we cannot attain the ultimate level. The enlightened Master comes from the ultimate dimension, so She knows the path and can lead us to this realm.

Open the positive power

- Q. *Master, I can understand Your explanation of the positive power, but could You elaborate on the circumstances under which this positive power can help us? You have given us many examples, but could You please cite another example?*
- M. The positive power is doing a lot of work in this world. We may not feel it, but it is actually helping us. When we have opened and used this positive power, we will always feel very happy. Suppose you see a poor, sick and lonely man, and your sympathies are suddenly aroused. You give him some money and take care of him for a while. For that, you feel very comfortable. That is the positive power helping that person and you. It is not just a superficial action or feeling. Later, if you fall sick, people will give you much help, much more than what you have given. Suppose you have helped someone with a hundred dollars; later, when you are sick, people might help you with ten thousand dollars. Or if you often help sick people when you are in good health, then you may never become ill in the future. This is how the positive power helps us.

However, we seldom use this positive power because we are too weak and are usually dominated by the negative power. This is why we need a living Master to help us turn on the tap of positive and almighty power. It is not working well now; we can only get a few drops from it every day. Once the Master has repaired it and we turn it on, more water will flow out than we can ever use. It will supply us with lots of water, and no more repairs will be necessary. We won't have to wait for it drop by drop, collecting only a tiny bit after a whole day. Any time we turn on the tap, the water will gush out very fast.

The positive power is within us. For instance, every day after initiation, we communicate with God, the self nature, and the saints. We see Jesus Christ, the prayers are realized immediately. We are connected to the almighty power and have more things than we will ever need. This is the true positive power. From then on, it will take care of our soul. In this world, it will take care of our daily life, and we will be fine in every aspect! The Quan Yin method can heal all illnesses, including those arising from vexation, ignorance, greed, anger, and infatuation. It can cure the illnesses of hell, hungry ghosts, and animals. The only way open to us will be to heaven, the pure land. We will not go to hell or come back to suffer the pains of the human world. Of course, we can come back as a human if we want to. If we want to

help others, we can come back and reincarnate as a human. However, this will be voluntary, and different from cases of people being dragged down by karma to suffer transmigration, pain, and ignorance.

The positive power is inconceivable. Before it is opened, we are in great pain and loneliness. But once it is opened, we can feel ourselves grow greater and more powerful. We become happier and more contented, and freer of needs and attachments to the material world. Then we can easily renounce the world. Now that your positive power is not yet opened, despite the fact that I have been talking for a long time, you still can not fully understand. When it is opened at the time of initiation, you will understand and know how this positive power can help us every day. What can we say when it is not opened? It is just like not knowing what to buy when we have no money. But when we have money, we know we can buy some bread, bean curd, or gluten. [Laughter] We can even get married.

The negative power can also benefit people

- Q. *Master, just now You introduced the positive power. Could You explain how the negative power can help us?*
- M. If we can control the negative power, then it can also help us. For instance, people say that money is a source of temptation. It makes us kill, causes divorce, forces brothers and sisters apart, disrupts the family, lures people to accept bribes and become corrupt officers, and turns good people bad. However, if we know how to make good use of money, the more money we have, the better. If more money is given to those who are greedy or bewitched by money, they will only crave more. But people who can make use of money instead of only possessing it will spend generously. It is good for them to have lots of money, so that they can help the poor, the orphaned, and the widowed, or build hospitals for the sick. In this way, money is not evil.

The negative power is just like an electric pole that is negatively charged. Without a negative pole, the lamp cannot shine. Therefore, the negative power and positive power are actually the same power doing different tasks. It becomes bad only when we do not know how to use it. Therefore, we need an enlightened Master to tell us how to use the negative power to benefit ourselves. Once we practice the Quan Yin method, we will realize that there is actually no good or bad, no positive or negative. We see it differently only because we do not understand. To an unenlightened person, even the positive power may not do him any good. Not knowing how to use it, he might use it to do evil things. For instance, if an unenlightened person notices that another person is very kind, he may take advantage of the benevolence of that person and borrow money for drinking and gambling purposes. On the other hand, an enlightened person can turn even negative power into something beneficial.

COMPLETELY TRANSCEND THE LIMITS OF LIFE AND DEATH ¹⁶³

One of the Catholic saints said, 'I die daily.' What does it mean that 'I am dying daily?' We are living, and he said he is dying. He said he dies a hundred times daily. That means dying while living. You die but you don't die. You just transcend the limits of death, and then you live forever. Once the fear of death is transcended, is understood by our own

163. Group meditation, San Francisco Center, California, May 25, 1989 (Originally in English).

very weak and scared soul, then we are forever eternal. We are normal, and we are immortal. That's what he meant.

Yesterday a fellow practitioner said when he meditated just a few minutes, he immediately saw the Light and the tunnel. You know, the dark tunnel and inside there is Light. And he flowed through it, like sailing on a boat. That's what he said. Now what is that? You have seen on television and you have read books about the experiences of near-death persons. They see this great tunnel, and then they have to float through it, and then they see the great beam of Light, and then someone explains to them that they are dead. But their time has not come, and then they have to come back to the earth again. So, some of these persons come home. One said she cried on and on for two weeks because she had to leave that wonderful world and come back to this terrible one. That is the limit between life and death.

Some persons experience that while they're near-death because if they have been virtuous, when they die, they can immediately go to the region of Light. But this region of Light is not the highest one. There are others higher. This is only a kind of frontier between our world and the other worlds. It is just the beginning of the other worlds. The other worlds are higher, higher and higher, with limitless spheres of Light. And the higher you go, the more speechless you become. There is nothing to say anymore, and nothing to talk about.

I talk about this because yesterday this man, and other men, experienced it. They transcended the limits of life and death. They died and they came back again. They had the same experience as those recorded by the doctor, whose many hundreds of patients experienced near-death, or dying and coming back again to life. So, this is what we call born again, or transcending life and death, or being free from life and death.

Once you know how to die while living, you will no longer fear death, and you'll know how to do it anytime. And when your earth time is over, you will know it even in advance. Your Master will come and tell you, 'Hi, three more days, and your time is up.' Or, 'In a week's time we will go to another place, so please prepare. If you owe people money, give it back quickly, or if your children need something like life insurance, you have to take care of such things.'

A Master will take care of you in every minor detail after the initiation. That is His or Her job. She does a lot of work, even paperwork or bureaucratic work. Because we live in this world with many complications, the Master cannot avoid taking care of even these things, even though Her job is not that. But without that, the devotee cannot be free. So, we often hear of transcending life and death or being free of life and death, and we don't know what it means. Initiation means exactly just that: To transcend. Then you know what life means and what death means, and you have no more fear.

THE IMMORTAL SILVER CORD ¹⁶⁴

Why do the dead suffer a lot? It is because most of them are separated from the sound current forever. There is a silver cord in every one of us when we are alive. It follows us wherever we go, automatically expanding and contracting as we travel to and from other planes. If we know how to play the silver cord, we can make it generate beautiful sounds to make us happy, nourish our souls, and take us back to our real Home. For those who

164. Group meditation, Taipei Center, Formosa, May 21, 1989 (Originally in Chinese).

do not know how to use the silver cord, it is used only once at the time of their death, when it is irreparably severed. That is very sad.

That is why many people who have died are unhappy. When they were alive, even though they did not know how to play the silver cord, they had it anyway, and their souls knew that there was still hope. For example, I have a mandolin. Although I do not have very much time to play it, knowing that I have it comforts me, and I can play it as soon as I have the time. When I did not have it previously, I used to think, 'Oh, it would be nice to have one!' Now I have it. Although I do not have enough time to play it, I know it is there. It is better than having nothing.

When we are alive, the silver cord exists. Even if we do not practice the Quan Yin method and have not used this cord, it is there and there is still hope. When we die, it is gone. We do not know when we will have enough blessed rewards to become a human being and have this silver cord again. Animals do not have it, so they do not have the inner music. Well, they do have this cord, but theirs is too tiny to be played. It is not good enough to be fully functional.

Most people go through a lot of suffering after they die, because there is no Sound from this silver cord and there is no hope. Those who are initiated are different. Their silver cords exist forever, taking them to and from higher worlds, so they are always free and never lost or separated from the highest spiritual plane. With the silver cord functioning properly, they are really alive. Otherwise, the cord would be gone when they die, and there would be no hope. And if, according to the Buddhist law of causality, some of them should become animals, there would be even less hope for them. That is why people who have died are so miserable, unable to hear the external and inner Sounds.

Quan Yin practitioners are very happy at the time of death, knowing in advance when they will die; the silver cord remains unsevered, continuously generating pleasant and nourishing Sounds for their souls, taking them anywhere and then bringing them back. It can extend to the ultimate borders of the universe and to the depths of hell, so they are free to go anywhere. Therein lies the difference between ordinary people and the initiated ones when they die physically. The initiates never really die. Only those whose silver cord is severed die.

Living people who cannot hear or see externally are very unhappy. The blind and the deaf are not so happy because they do not have the outer sounds and sights to entertain them. It is the same with dead people. That is why they are unhappy. If we cultivate this silver cord and keep it from dying, then we can be immortal and will always have Sound and Light to nourish our souls, comfort our hearts, and make us joyful. Now we have them twenty-four hours a day, so we are happy all day long.

WHY NO LIGHT ¹⁶⁵

Why do you sometimes hear the Sound but not see the Light when you practice the Quan Yin method? Because of breakdowns – television breakdowns. Therefore, we need to repair it very diligently every day. How? We have to be pure in thought, speech and action. We should not hate anyone, we should endure everything. No matter how others treat us, we have to use endurance and love. That is the way to repair our breakdowns.

165. Group meditation, Taipei Center, Formosa, May 21, 1989 (Originally in Chinese).

Why do we have breakdowns? Because our angry atmosphere becomes a very hard substance. It stands in front of us and keeps us from the Truth. We ourselves create all our breakdowns. When we are angry, we form a very dense and unpleasant magnetic field. The thick, dark and unpleasant magnetic field covers us like a wall and keeps us from goodness. It covers us and is very close to us just as though it were our clothes; very dirty ones which make it impossible for us to connect with the good magnetic field. That is why we cannot see the bright Buddha's land; we only see the painful karma.

That is why we have to purify our thoughts, speech and actions, and keep the precepts in order to repair our broken-down television and watch it every day. The television outside takes money, cables and performers, but the inner television doesn't need any of those. A little repairing is enough. We have to use this television every day, watch it every day, then we will develop a habit and be able to use it whenever we want to.

BEWARE OF MAYA'S TRAPS ¹⁶⁶

We practitioners should be clear in our understanding, so that we are not deceived by anyone. But each time maya tests you, a few of you will fail. Don't listen to anyone else's words but Master's! Otherwise, you will be trapped by maya. If you imprudently listen to others' words without discrimination, you are degrading your own level. You are acknowledging their superiority over yours. Then you become their subordinate.

There are too many false masters in the world. Adding one more is no big deal. However, it would be a pity if you people with wisdom were deceived. Why not be a master of your own self? If you believe everything others tell you, and do not use your own wisdom to discern, then others will laugh at your lack of wisdom and poor practice.

If you are helping with Master's work in any way you have to be even more vigilant, lest you show any arrogance. When we help others, it is like we are working for ourselves. We should not feel complacent about our work. If we do, we will fall into maya's trap. Say you went to work every day, and the boss paid you ten or twenty thousand dollars a month. Would you think that this was something worth being complacent about? Would you feel yourself to be extremely competent just because you were helping the boss in his work? No! Instead you would be petrified that you might make mistakes, or that you were not worthy of the job. You would worry about getting fired if you did not perform well. Is it not true? [Audience: Yes.]

We should also be ever so humble, so cautious, and so careful when we are helping with God's work. We are doing very little work anyway, so what's the big deal? We work to gain merits, to cleanse our karmic debts, and to learn to become a saint. It is a chance for us to learn some lessons. Therefore, we should be grateful for this learning opportunity. There is nothing to be complacent about! Any time we feel complacent about our work, we should know that maya is coming to test us.

Or if we are impatient to become a Buddha, maya will definitely come to test us. He will tell us that we have already become a Buddha. Maya may not always be this blurred image that appears to you in your meditation. He may make use of a person who comes to ring your doorbell telling you, 'We are good friends. I know you have already become a Buddha. I know you have already reached the eighth realm.' To me it is 'Zhu Ba-jie'! [Laughter] ('Zhu Ba-jie' is the name of Piggy in Journey to the West, a Chinese literary classic, and Zhu Ba-jie sounds similar to 'the eighth realm of the pig' in Chinese.)

166. Group meditation, Taipei Center, Formosa, May 2, 1989 (Originally in Chinese).

Our practice is not that difficult. It is not difficult to become a saint or to teach others. It is teaching ourselves that is difficult. We have to discipline ourselves first. We have to keep out our desire for fame and gain and clean up all our filthy thoughts. Only then can we help to clean up others. If we are very filthy ourselves, and we proceed to clean others, then we will contaminate them. Even worse, maybe they were not that filthy to begin with, but since our whole body is soiled, when we try to clean them, we soil them or dirty their clothes, making them even filthier.

Hence, helping sentient beings is not difficult, but helping our own self is. There is a Chinese saying: 'To have a victory over oneself is the most difficult thing.' It is not difficult to defeat millions or billions of people. One can use violence, force, money, or even eloquence. But it is really difficult to defeat our own self because we cannot deceive ourselves. We will not be able to sleep at night. Your guardian angel will come and ask you about your level, saying, 'How dare you claim to be a Master or a Teacher for both human and heavenly beings?'

And then after a while, the black and white messengers from the king of death will also come to 'greet' you. [Master and audience laugh.] They will tell you, 'Your time has come.' At that time Master will not care for you because your time has come, and you have to go with the messengers of death. You will have to take care of yourself because you have refused to acknowledge Master's protective power. Master will not force you to accept Her protection. If you want it, Master will give it to you. But if you do not want it, Master will take it back.

There are more than a few so-called spiritual practitioners in the world, and many have magical powers. But we have to discriminate between that kind of coarse power and God's power. God does not force people. He uses logic and great wisdom to help open our wisdom, and then we understand and accept Him by our own will. But maya uses tricks, magic power, oppression, sweet talk, and deception to force us to believe him. Even though we will wake up eventually, what a waste it is if we fall into his trap! We will have wasted our time for nothing, and will have descended to a lower level. Furthermore, our heart will be injured, and it will be very hard to recover. It is a difficult task to clean up our doubtful mind to begin with. Now our doubts deepen. Once we have fallen to a lower level, it is not easy to climb back up again.

We practitioners should possess a pure and simple mind, but simplicity does not mean stupidity. A pure and simple mind means that we don't think bad about others, nor do we curse others. We do good deeds, and we help and comfort others. Whatever we can do, we try our best to do it. We don't suspect others without discrimination. On the other hand, a stupid mind follows whatever other people say, and then the mind becomes greedy for magic power, spiritual status, and flattery. Once we drink the poison of flattery, we will become poisoned, and then we will lose the power of judgment. We will not be able to judge whether others' words are logical or reasonable, or whether that type of person is worthy of our praise, or whether we should look into those people's eyes.

Why are you in such a hurry? You have to take some time to make your judgments. If you cannot judge by yourself, you have a Master to ask since She is still here. There are still many things that you do not understand, so you need to ask Her. But you do not even ask Master because you think nothing of Her! A few of you are very confused. You band together secretly trying to revolt against me. What a joke! You think Master does not know what you are up to! I watch you through my 'telescope,' and laugh. It's like watching children making a mess and feeling pleased with themselves. Then you get possessed by

demons, and you are even happy, thinking that your parents are not aware of what you are doing.

In order to take up the responsibility of a Master, I have to give you warnings. I do not want to interfere in your childish games. It doesn't mean anything to me if I lose any number of you. However, you have to consider carefully and understand clearly what others are doing. Master is still in the world, so you can always ask Her in case you have any questions. If She is not able to clear things up or to give you explanations, then go ahead and make decisions by yourselves.

You have already been initiated by Master, so at least you should respect Master's responsibility for you. I am not asking you to respect Master personally, but I have to remind you of certain things. I am responsible for you; I have to take you beyond the three realms before my duty is finished. If you left me midway on the path, I would feel that I had not done a good job, and then both of us would be very miserable.

The universe has its own laws. We cannot do everything at will. The world of spiritual practice is full of danger. We cannot fool around at will; otherwise, we may hurt ourselves as well as others. And then hell will await us. Here is an example: Devadatta was a cousin of Shakyamuni Buddha, and when Shakyamuni was still living, he revolted against Buddha and took with him many disciples to set up another sect. He also became a so-called master, just like Shakyamuni. However, after Shakyamuni passed away, He entered nirvana and rose up to a very high level, with great glory and honor. The whole universe has faith in Him. And then He attained a higher and higher level up there. But do you know where Devadatta went when he died? [Audience: The hell of flames.] Yes!

Therefore, we have to be careful in our deeds. Don't crave to be a master. Mastership is not a position or a title. Mastership is not only a Master's spoken words. Mastership is another type of power, recognized by the whole universe. It is not that simple. You see a Master talk, and you think that you can do the same, and that you can be a Master, too. No, No! Everyone can make an advertisement about biscuits, but whether the advertiser has any biscuits to offer you is an entirely different matter. We cannot deceive others with mud biscuits and tell them, 'They are just like real ones.' When people eat these fake biscuits, they will have stomach problems, or they will die.

THE EGO AND SOUND MEDITATION ¹⁶⁷

The ego arises from habits

Where does the ego come from? We can say the ego is a kind of personality, a personal mental attitude. Where does the personality come from? The personality is nothing great; it's not our original self; nor is it our enlightened God nature. It's just our personality, born from habits that are continuously accumulated. Every time we're born, whether as a human, a wild animal, a heavenly being, a hell being, a domestic animal or a demon, we possess certain habits. Each kind of being has its own particular habits and they are all learned.

For example, if we were tigers, of course, we'd be fierce. Every day we'd hunt for food and kill animals. This is how we'd live in that lifetime. Then if we were immediately reborn as a human after dying as a tiger, traces of our vicious animal nature would remain. We'd have a violent temper, love to devour meat and be very vicious. We wouldn't be easily

167. Group meditation, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, April 29, 1989 (Originally in Chinese).

compatible with others or forgiving, and we'd enjoy squabbling and always overdoing in trivial matters.

If after our life as a tiger was over we were reborn as another kind of animal, perhaps a more benign one like a lamb, of course, we'd 'baah' our way through life and be very benign. Even if the tiger's qualities were still in the animal that we had become, it would have little chance to manifest. We'd gradually forget them and then this vicious nature would diminish. We'd stop killing and eating meat. Our animal qualities and killing instinct would diminish. If after we left the body of the lamb we were reborn as another lamb, we'd become even more benign and 'baah' our way sweetly through another life.

If we were reborn as a human being after our life as a lamb had ended, of course, we'd look rather sheepish. We'd be very benign, and we wouldn't look very awful. We'd be docile and easily controlled and we wouldn't get along with others! Our palate would be easily satisfied. We might prefer to eat weeds, and go looking for leafy or wild vegetables. Thus, we can see that each person has his own distinct personality since each collects different habits.

During our incarnations as animals, should we die as a tiger and be reborn repeatedly as another tiger or as some other fierce beast such as a wolf or snake before we were finally reborn as a human, our qualities would not be much different than that of a demon. That's why we find that some people are very fierce for no reason, and communication with them is almost impossible. It's because they've just transitioned from the life of an animal and taken on a new body. They've been reborn repeatedly as an animal, and very often, as a fierce beast. This isn't coincidental. Otherwise, why isn't everyone reborn as an animal, while continuing to be reborn as a fierce beast? It's probably because before they took the animal form, they had incurred lots of bad karma, having taken too many lives or been forced into the situation by destiny and letting violence overtake them.

For instance, we know that some criminals are imprisoned. The government's original intention in doing so was to teach them a lesson and give them a chance to repent, rectify their lives and become benevolent. However, they get worse in prison. Out of wrath, some try to escape and seek revenge when they succeed. They commit more crimes and it becomes increasingly difficult for them to pull themselves out of the situation. They may encounter unpleasant situations in prison and may misinterpret other people's good intentions. Sometimes their inferiority complex may mislead them into believing that they've been ill-treated though the police treat everyone equally. This feeling may intensify in their heart and they may seek vengeance when they get out by commit more serious crimes, thus end up receiving a harsher punishment. This harsh punishment in turn evokes greater hatred in them, which causes them to fall further until they finally become truly difficult or impossible to reform.

When we're fierce beasts, we're steeped in karma. Should we fall into such a situation, if we fail to reform or repent and continue to commit more vicious acts, we'll remain permanently at the animal level and have much difficulty rising to the human level again. Even if we wanted to become humans, it would take many, many lifetimes before we could succeed.

When we're tigers, we collect a tiger's qualities, vicious actions and habits. Our magnetic field becomes a vicious aura. And when we become human, this magnetic field is registered in our so-called alaya consciousness, where the good and bad thoughts and deeds of our past lives are recorded. With its massive recordings, it reacts spontaneously

to similar situations. This means that if a person or situation stimulates us, that quality immediately emerges because we forget that we're now humans, not tigers.

If we humans want to avoid such situations, we should check for the animal-like qualities that we possess. And then we'll know that we have very heavy karma. But what is karma? In the past we collected many habits. As we transmigrate, we collect and record far too many vicious actions, just as on a recording tape. When the button is pressed, it plays back. And what's this button? It's the opportunities or occasions we encounter that turn the recordings on automatically.

So sometimes, we're very fierce to people, but we don't know why. It's because the button has been pressed. A particular person happens to say something that we'd heard in the past when those words upset us. Now when we hear something similar, we immediately get upset. Or perhaps in previous lives when we were humans or animals, someone set traps for us. Now whenever we see something that resembles such traps, just in appearance, we become afraid. We have no idea why a particular kind of box terrifies us. Some boxes look similar to the traps that we encountered in our past lives so we dread and abhor them. That's why some people prefer round furniture, or hate square furniture or like triangular furniture. This is all related to past life impressions.

The conditions that we like, dislike, abhor or love constitute what's called the ego. 'I' only like it this way; this suits 'my' taste – this is called 'ego.' The 'ego' means the personality. Such-and-such is 'my' habit; this is what 'I' think; 'I' can't change; 'I' don't want to change, or this is what 'I' am and 'I' can't change! This is called the ego, but in fact, the ego is the personality; it's nothing mysterious or incomprehensible.

Only the vibration of Sound meditation can cleanse karma

To stop ourselves from getting more steeped in karma, we have to avoid our habits and prevent them from emerging. If a habit emerges, it will grow stronger, and we'll become even more irascible. For instance, in past lives, we may have been wrongly accused of committing crimes that we didn't commit. And we may have been beaten and painfully hurt, or persecuted by those in power. Then in our current life, we might meet someone who persecutes or hurts us for justifiable reasons. In fact, we're in the wrong, and it's right for him or her to persecute us. However, someone had wrongly accused and persecuted us in our past lives and we hated it. And when we encounter a similar situation again, we can't tolerate it and attempt to take revenge or counteractions. Thus, we deepen the animosity in our heart and let the malicious atmosphere grow denser and stronger. In the end it forms our spiteful personality. So, if we want to avoid this situation, whenever we want to take revenge on people, we should immediately tell ourselves: 'Will tit for tat ever end?'

Each time we perform an action or learn a new idea, a new channel is created in our brains for storing the new material. This is for storing animosity, that's for love, this is for jealousy, and that's for fame and profit. Each spot is taken up by a different quality. The more habits we have, the more boxes or channels fill our brains. Originally, these boxes or channels can disintegrate by themselves. It's very simple. If there's nothing inside, they'll fuse together and be reduced to nothing. However, there's a substance called 'gray matter' in our brains that fills these channels or boxes. All new ideas and actions are registered in the gray matter, which fills up the empty channels in the brain, much like a computer that maintains records exclusively.

We can never erase the things or qualities that we've newly learned. So, we have to practice the Quan Yin method to flush away the bad habits inside. There's no other way to cleanse them! You've often heard about brainwashing a person, but brainwashing with words is not thorough enough. Our brains are very small, yet they can record everything, in infinite volumes. That's the trouble. Having recorded too much, it can't be erased quickly enough. We have distracting thoughts every day, all because we record too many things.

Therefore, if I'm now brainwashing you with words, I'm merely adding more channels and boxes. It's futile! You're already filled with old preconceptions and ideas. If I add more new ones, they'll simply mingle with the old, and it will be useless. The old ones will continue to function while new ones develop, and it only becomes more complicated.

That's why I say, 'Truly, spiritual cultivation requires no language!' So, during transmission of the Quan Yin method, I don't speak and make no new additions. I'm chatting with you now only because there are knots and problems within you so I have to explain a little to solve your inner conflicts. Otherwise, I don't speak. Why do I have to talk so much? You already know more than enough. For instance, if you're not Buddhists and know nothing about the Nirvana sutra or Diamond sutra, you will not ask me questions about the scriptures, and I too will not need to speak so much to explain things to you. I speak a lot because you speak a lot. You've gathered too much garbage so I have to use many ways to remove and incinerate it.

So, the Quan Yin method isn't words; it's the vibrations, the electric current, the God power that cleanses our distracting thoughts and wrong ideas. It doesn't add any channels or boxes inside us. That's because, if we want to use a certain thought to eliminate another thought, there will be resistance. It doesn't mean the old thought is cleansed! No, we're simply adding another one. Consequently, it becomes more crowded and we become more agitated. Therefore, all great spiritual Masters say, 'The more learned and knowledgeable one is, the more difficult it is for one to attain the Truth.' We simply heap things within us, squeezing them together until nothing can develop. Good and bad things mingle together. The good things cannot develop, and the bad things cannot be cleansed; it becomes heavily congested. Now you understand why the more learned one is the more difficult it is to become enlightened!

So, only the Quan Yin method is logical. It's not Zen riddles or some kind of chant which will only add more to our brains. Instead, we cleanse it. That's why I tell you that, although I've instructed you to recite the holy names and meditate on the Light, it's not effective if you don't practice Sound meditation. This is so because chanting the holy names and meditating on the Light also add extra things; although these additives can control other things and make us forget worldly vexations. Suppose we're angry with someone and want to get even or scold him. Now when we recite the holy names, we forget the hostility. It means that we can use these benevolent holy names to control our distracting thoughts and stop them from troubling us. It doesn't mean that they've vanished, or been cleansed by chanting the holy names or Amitabha Buddha. No! We add tens of thousands of repetitions of the holy names every day, to control the distracting thoughts. After that, we should use the Sound meditation to erase them, including the holy names! [Applause] I'm very glad that you understand.

That's why I say, if someone doesn't practice Sound meditation every day and yet claims that he's been completely enlightened or become a Buddha, he's lying. Some people also say that when one becomes a Buddha, meditation becomes unnecessary. It means not doing the ordinary kind of meditation, where we tax our brains chanting the holy names, just reciting two names and forgetting the rest, or reciting one and forgetting the other four,

or reciting the first and forgetting the fifth, or struggling with distracting thoughts. 'Good grief! I have so many distracting thoughts. My God! I hate that person. My God! Amitabha Buddha, Amitabha Buddha. Good grief! That person is really disgusting. Amitabha Buddha, Amitabha Buddha... Oh! I'll surely get even with him tomorrow. Amitabha Buddha, Amitabha Buddha...' Oh! What a painful struggle it is. This is called meditation because we're training our minds and suppressing our distracting thoughts, hatred and habits.

Buddhas are in constant meditation

It's not true that a person doesn't meditate after becoming a Buddha, but he meditates without struggling. He still meditates without having to sit in meditation so we say he doesn't meditate. Now when we meditate, we know that we're meditating. A Buddha doesn't know that he's meditating; he meditates effortlessly. This is what Lao Tzu meant by 'doing without doing.' He didn't mean that we should sit the whole day long, remaining oblivious to the world, not managing the country, not taking care of the family, not bathing our body or doing the laundry and not even eating. This isn't 'doing without doing;' it's being insane. [Laughter] Thus, when some people say that once we become a Buddha we don't need to meditate anymore and instead we just enjoy gambling and singing karaoke all day long, this is becoming the devil. This is becoming a negative Buddha instead of a Buddha like the Amitabha Buddha.

So, when you notice that someone isn't meditating or reciting the holy names, you know he's ignorant. This is only befitting for the lowest astral realm; he's been deceived! A Buddha (enlightened Master) doesn't meditate, yet he does meditate. Why? He has to bless the world; he has to bless his disciples. If even we ordinary humans can derive such great merit from meditation, imagine what happens when a Buddha meditates. He can't shirk his responsibility. If a Buddha comes here and doesn't meditate, then what does he want to do? Besides, he also needs to replenish his inner spirit and vitality. Don't we feel physically comfortable and mentally happy when we meditate? Though we don't have a desire for inner levels, we attain them all the same!

We cannot remain physically healthy just by eating. Many people eat, yet their bodies are weak. For us, we only have to meditate for an hour or two, and we're happy in spirit, and can work tirelessly throughout the day. Therefore, even a Buddha needs to meditate to restore his power. Eating food alone cannot sustain his body. If he were only an ordinary person, then even if he ate a lot, he still wouldn't be able to take on the numerous responsibilities of a Buddha. Since a Buddha eats very little and has to shoulder so many responsibilities, how can he not meditate?

He does meditate, except that he doesn't struggle hard like we do or meditate with so much effort. A Buddha meditates in a very relaxed way. He enters samadhi soon after he begins to meditate and he's in samadhi even when he's not meditating! He's in samadhi twenty-four hours a day and he can meditate at any time. This is called meditating without meditating. Spiritual cultivation is not all about meditation. Even then he still meditates to set an example for his disciples. Otherwise, everyone would think that he had become a Buddha and didn't need to meditate anymore, but just enjoyed worldly pleasures. In that case everyone would be the same, and everyone could do it. Since there would be no need to meditate, lazy people could also claim that they had become Buddhas. What a wonderful excuse! No way!

Remember that after Shakyamuni Buddha became a Buddha, He meditated every day. That's why the scriptures mention that every time Shakyamuni Buddha came out of samadhi, He would begin to give a discourse to His disciples. They never mention Him

giving a discourse after coming out of the washroom, or after enjoying karaoke, singing, dancing or gambling. Never! Therefore, reading the scriptures without really understanding them will bring us harm. Our spiritual practice will be impaired. We'll boast and thirst for fame and gain, and thus hurt ourselves.

Humility is the most important element in spiritual practice

So, humility is the most important element in spiritual practice. Anyone who tests our patience is our teacher; people who beat and scold us are our teachers, training our tolerance and giving us a chance to reflect. This is also good. It's not bad unless such actions hurt the public, then we must try to stop them. If he's only testing us, then let him test us to the end; the harder it is, the better it is for us. Gold shines more radiantly when tempered in fire. Genuine gold fears no fire!

I'm not just telling you this; I practice what I say. I have to do it because I'm your example. So, don't ask me why I'm totally unmoved when people slander me. If I can't even tolerate that, then what can I tolerate? How can I teach people to be tolerant? Unless it causes harm to the public or other people, then I'll think of a way to stop it. If it hurts only me, it's all right!

Now you know what the ego is and how to eliminate it. Don't allow your ego to grow stronger and confine you like a wall. As such you'll believe that you're this person and this is what you are. That's the ego. You'll just carry on and do the same wrong things, and subsequently you'll become even worse. If no one stops it for you, you'll become worse. You'll think that it's fine and feel happy about it. Finally, it will become a habit, just like smoking and drinking. Though you know that it's bad for your body, you'll still become heavily addicted to the habit as you drink more and smoke more.

This is why we must learn to be humble. We shouldn't add more to the habits that we've accumulated through many lifetimes, and we shouldn't let them grow stronger until they become irreparable later. We already have a great many bad habits. If we don't minimize them but add more, how can we handle them? There's no way to minimize them even if we want to. When can we finish reducing them? We've collected so much. It's already difficult enough for us to avoid getting more, not to mention that we need to erase those firm habits, and even traditions, that we've gathered through many lifetimes! That's why we have to use this supra-worldly power, the vibrations of the Sound meditation, to cleanse them quickly. Ordinary brainwashing is useless. Only practicing the Sound meditation is the true 'brainwashing.'

You ask me how to avoid the ego. I advise you to do more Sound meditation. If you're aware, endeavor to check and control yourself. Don't add more to or repeat the habit. If you can avoid it, then stop. If we're not aware of our ego, then there's nothing we can do. That's even worse. We must do more Sound meditation! Do more Sound meditation! Do more Sound meditation! It cleanses us automatically; there's no other way. [Applause] Now you realize that the Quan Yin method is truly great! Without it, we can never cleanse our myriad habits!

WHY WE SHOULD RECEIVE INITIATION ¹⁶⁸

Many people have great faith in me. They adore me. In their hearts, they understand my teachings; they know and believe what I am talking about. They think it is good enough to

168. Group meditation, Laiyi Center, Pingtung, Formosa, April 11, 1989 (Originally in Chinese)

take my photo home and worship it, or take three of my books home and read through them in two nights. Then they become very arrogant and regard themselves as my disciples. Can it be that simple? When people ask them to receive initiation, they say, 'What for? I am more sincere than you are! I have greater faith in Master than you do!' They think that it is enough.

That is not the same. They are like children who have never been married. They know the theories but have no real experience. Even young adults, who know more than children, do not understand what marriage is about, its joys and difficulties, since they are still single.

Similarly, we read in the scriptures about how the disciples of Shakyamuni Buddha and Jesus Christ beheld the Light; heard music; saw the Buddha or God; and experienced the third heaven, the fourth dhyana heaven, and many other extraordinary heavens. We have heard about the eighth-grade Bodhisattvas, the arhats, or srota-apannas, but we have no idea what a srota-apanna is or how a person changes after he attains the srota-apanna level or arhatship. What does he achieve within? How does he think and what does he see? Does he possess powers or wisdom that are different than ours, which is why he is venerated as an arhat?

Suppose in this world there are two persons who look alike, but one has learned science and the other has learned carpentry. Of course, they are different. The carpenter knows that a doctor has a very good profession, and is highly intelligent and capable of saving people, et cetera. But he doesn't know how to perform a doctor's job. He doesn't know how the doctor has changed internally, how he saves people, how he diagnoses his patients just by looking at them, or how he knows that a patient is seriously ill just by feeling his pulse. The carpenter cannot do that. Otherwise, why do we call the doctor by this title? He has mastered skills and accumulated knowledge that are entirely different than that of the carpenter. We cannot say cutting down a tree is the same as performing abdominal surgery just because they are both done with sharp-edged tools. They are not the same! One involves a tree and the other involves a human. Trees are not complicated, but there are many organs inside a human body that need careful handling. A surgical operation is not just a simple cut made with a knife!

Likewise, many people can read, recite, and explain the scriptures. They can tell when the scriptures were written, by whom they were written, and the meanings therein. However, they do not genuinely understand because they have not had the divine experience. They have not had the experience of being an arhat, an eighth-grade Bodhisattva, a tenth-grade Bodhisattva, a Buddha, or even the most elementary srota-apanna, sravaka, or pratyeka Buddha. That is why we have to practice the Quan Yin method. Otherwise, why should we bother to pursue spiritual practice?

People are delighted to hear that everyone has the Buddha nature. They think that that is enough. It is not! We do not know what the Buddha nature is. We have to practice the Quan Yin method in order to realize the Buddha nature and arhatship; to know how we feel, what authority or powers we will gain, or to what extent we can save people, when we have attained the level of an eighth-grade Bodhisattva. The same goes for a doctor. The more he learns, the more capable he is of saving people; and the more he practices, the more experience he gains. Some doctors don't even need to feel your pulse; they can tell your illness just by looking at you.

Enlightened Masters help us deal with the karmic net

It is the same in spiritual practice. Many spiritual practitioners don't need to check our destiny in order to save us. We don't need to show them our ancestral history, tell them what we have practiced before, or recount the good or bad deeds we have committed. We don't have to say a word and they will know everything simply by giving us a glance. They will know everything about us, right from the time we first descended to this earth, all our actions in our previous lives, and whether we have been beasts, kings, humans, officials, men, or women. Only then can they handle that intricate karmic net for us. People who can tell fortunes are quite good already, but they can only tell us events that occurred in the last few hundred years, or at the most, the past few thousand years. That is nothing; they simply cannot read the karma that has accumulated in all our previous lifetimes.

At the time of initiation, I advise you that we should refrain from using magical powers because they are too insignificant and limited. People who can read previous existences can at the most trace the karma that people have collected in the past few hundred or thousand years. They cannot see right back to the primordial times when an atom was transformed into a sentient being, and how he or she went through many lifetimes of reincarnation for billions of years. Only a Buddha or an enlightened Master can read such personal records. Only such a Master has the authority. [Applause] Karmic records are stored in certain exclusive places that are out of bounds to the ordinary human being, the average fortune-teller, and people with the ability to read previous existences. These people don't have the identity card! Entry is permitted only to superior enlightened Masters, who are related to these places. Fortune-tellers cannot tell what is in these records. Even if they know, they cannot do anything with it.

For example, some fortune-tellers may be able to help us change our present karma a little bit. They may tell us, 'Oh! Mrs. Wang, you are being overshadowed by the negative energy! There is something wrong with the geomancy in your house. Quickly move your house around and everything will be fine! You should also spend some money on making offerings so as to earn blessed rewards or benefits for the future.' That can be done sometimes, because that person can read the karma we have incurred in our last life, which is making us suffer in a dark corner now. He can see it; and he can help us untie the karmic knot left over from a previous life. However, sometimes our karma might have been created very long ago, several thousand years ago, and the karmic fruit has not yet matured. Then even if the fortune-tellers are aware of it, there is nothing they can do to save us from undesirable karmic retribution. They can do nothing.

Only enlightened Masters can enter these places where the complete records are neatly maintained. It is their work to completely erase age-old karma. Otherwise, it will be futile for us to pursue spiritual practice to attain liberation. It will take billions of eons to erase all the karma! Even then it will not be completely erased. Why? Because each time we come back, we will create new karma and be bound once again. Before we have completely cleansed the karma we have collected, we will have taken on more new dirt. No fortune-teller or person with supernatural powers or the ability to read previous existences can enter these places because he does not have the power. He cannot do anything to help his clients take care of their age-old karma.

Since enlightened Masters are omnipotent, they can cleanse all the karma of our previous lives in an instant. Their power is incredible! If we do not have a chance to meet these Masters, however many blessed rewards we earn, they will not be enough because our karma is too heavy and our bad retributions too numerous! No matter how diligently we worship the Buddha, it will never be enough. We can study all the scriptures but still be

unable to open up our wisdom, because we are engulfed by the dark clouds of karmic hindrances from our previous lives. We can read the scriptures over and over again, but still be like the blind! Though they are very clear, we cannot understand their meaning because we are blinded by garbage and karma.

The difference between the initiated and the non-initiated

Many people think that it is good enough to just believe in the Master, but it is not! You must be willing to let me cleanse you. I cannot do it if you are unwilling, because it is your home. If you are determined to cling to your own garbage tightly, no one can take it from you. It is useful to some extent for people when they have faith in me, read my books, or worship my photos. It cleanses them on the outside, but not on the inside. Those who are initiated let me cleanse them inside out, whereas the non-initiated person who has faith and reads books is cleansed only on the outside. We alone cannot handle the karma that we have accumulated over many lifetimes. There is too much garbage and it has not been removed for a very long time.

Life after life we have gathered too much undesirable dirt. It takes a more experienced person who knows how to handle garbage, to enter our house and scrape away the dirt completely. Some houses are so old that it is necessary to redo the ceiling, repaint the walls, and remove the carpets for cleaning. Every corner has to be cleaned, new flooring installed, and the walls repainted before the house becomes habitable. Similarly, our house within, this mind of ours, is full of dirt as well. The flooring is already kaput. Our moral concepts and noble ideals have given way to decadence, leaving behind only secular concepts and habitual greed, anger, and infatuation. We cannot fix it all single-handedly. For initiated people, the Master will go inside and cleanse it thoroughly.

Many people have the wrong notion that it is enough to take my photo home and worship it. Their habit of worship is deep-rooted. They worship the earth deities and even the tree gods. When they hear about my powers, they take my photo home and worship it, too. That is useful, but only on the outside. I have made a very clear analogy just now. Therefore, if we truly desire liberation from birth and death, and truly want to remove our filthy spots, there is only one way, that is receive initiation. So, please do not be misled in this regard. I find that there are many people with misconceptions about this. It is very unfortunate, not because they do not have faith in me, but because they misunderstand.

Therefore, I am especially emphasizing this point today for your clarification. [Applause] I am not trying to force or coax you into receiving initiation. I only want those of you who have been misled to understand clearly the significant difference between getting initiation and not getting it!

Even those people who do not have strong faith in me after receiving initiation are better than those who do believe in me but are not initiated. It is like loving a person very much without getting married. What's the use? This is different than not loving a person as much but living with him or her every day, experiencing marriage, and enjoying the world together. There is a big difference! Isn't that true? If you love a woman, would you prefer to love her outside her door every day, or would you rather marry her? [Audience: Marry her!] Yes! So, don't tell me that it is good enough just to love the woman, that you love her more than her fiance does. What use is it to love her so much if you are far apart? If you really want her, then marry her. To be liberated from birth and death, to receive genuine help from the Master, and derive the greatest benefits and blessing power there is, you should receive initiation!

WHY WE NEED A LIVING MASTER ¹⁶⁹

Many people ask me, 'Why do we have to find a living enlightened Master to transmit God power to our world? We have heard that God power is omnipresent. Can't we just pray and ask Him to bless us? Why do we need a living Master?' I wish that it could be so, that God's power could bless us directly, and help us become enlightened, attain sainthood, enter the heavenly kingdom, attain the Truth, and reach the blissful dimension that we seek. But the creator did not arrange it this way. Let us take a look at this world. If we want to have children, we must first get married. God does not 'hoola-hoop' to create a baby and drop him or her down from heaven right before us! If we want rice and vegetables, we must sow the seeds and have a farmer nurture them in order to reap a good and plentiful harvest. We do not know who established this law of creation, but without it our world would be in chaos. Everyone would be praying for anything and everything they wanted. Our ordinary human minds are ignorant. We often pray for the wrong things and turn the world upside down. On second thought, this law may not be so bad, after all.

Earthworms, for example, turn acidic, coarse, and sterile soil into fertile, arable land. Why doesn't the creator do the job? We don't know. The fact is, thanks to the earthworms, we have good soil for farming. Earthworms serve some function, as do humans. For example, a husband and wife together can produce children, which cannot be accomplished by reciting mantras or through miraculous work by the creator. It is said that 'all sentient beings have a divine nature,' but we don't know how this comes about. We also know that Jesus Christ once said, 'We are all God's children!' But we don't understand how this is so. Being God's children means that we have the innate ability to create. Without us there can be no humans or children. Even the savior had to be born through human beings in order to come to this world. Don't you think that humans are great? All sentient beings have an innate yearning for life, and this nature is the power of creation, the merciful love of God. He desires that all sentient beings should live and spread all over our planet.

We are the children of God, yet we cannot communicate with Him directly. This is very difficult for us to accept, but such is the law of creation. For example, although we know that our children are the children of God, they still have to be born through us. We can grow many species of flowers, fruits, and trees on the same soil, but each plant absorbs the nutrients it needs and yields different flowers or fruits. Likewise, although we are all born from God, we all look different. Each person is like an individual flower, fruit, or tree absorbing different nutrients. These nutrients are karma in Buddhist terminology. What exactly is karma? Everything we do in this life or all that we did in our previous lives will transform into a magnetic field and attract similar qualities to our body, making us what we are.

It is said that one can become an enlightened Master through many lifetimes of spiritual practice. The Buddhist scriptures say that sainthood can be attained after trillions of years of practice. Perhaps this is because we need to acquire many qualities and functions before we become perfect and fully equipped. This is very true. However, this truth seems to contradict my theme 'Immediate Enlightenment and Liberation in One Lifetime'! [Laughter] It is true that it takes trillions of years to attain ultimate enlightenment, but then, why do I say 'Immediate Enlightenment and Liberation in One Lifetime?' It is because we attain immediate enlightenment when our time comes. Those who have already practiced spiritually for eons become enlightened immediately! Otherwise, how would they know that countless eons have passed?

169. Group meditation, Chiching Temple, Ilan, Formosa, March 31, 1989 (Originally in Chinese).

For many lifetimes, we have had many enlightened Masters, including Jesus Christ, Shakyamuni Buddha, Lao Tzu, Chuang Tzu, Confucius, and Mencius, yet the world is still full of people. This means that not many people have been liberated. Very few people have! All the while, we have been transmigrating within the 'six paths,' as the Buddhists call them. What are the six paths? After we've been angels, we fall from heaven when our time comes to become beasts or hungry ghosts, or to go to hell, et cetera. We can never transcend the six paths of transmigration until we have attained the highest level of consciousness. The six paths of transmigration lie within the three realms. What are the so-called three realms? In addition to our world, there are three other worlds to which we can ascend or descend. But it is very difficult to even go and take a look at these three worlds. To do so, we must pursue spiritual practice.

Different methods are like different vehicles

We can reach the second realm by practicing Zen, by asking questions like 'Who am I?' 'Who are you?' and 'Who is chanting holy names?' and by deliberating over Zen enigmas. By practicing yoga, we can also attain the first or second realm, or at the most, the third realm. But that's as far as we can go. We need a more powerful method to go beyond that, and that is the Quan Yin method, which brings immediate enlightenment. If we want to go to Kaohsiung in southern Formosa, we can go by motorbike or car. To go to the offshore islands of Penghu, we have to go by boat. For distant places like the United States, flying by plane is faster. Therefore, if we want to transcend the three realms, we need some means that can help us to go beyond these realms. We cannot make it by asking questions in worldly language. No matter how efficient our worldly language is, it remains, nonetheless, a language of this world. No matter how fast a car can run, it is a vehicle for the road only; it cannot cross the sea or traverse space.

Similarly, there are many methods of spiritual practice. I introduced some methods to you for practicing at home because I needed to comfort some people who were with us yesterday. There are many other methods, but I could never teach them all to you, even if I wanted to.

I can offer you any method you want, but some are more dangerous while others are safer. The methods that I taught you yesterday are the safest ones. They are safe for those who are not in contact with me. It's better not to practice other methods if you cannot be by my side every day! Otherwise, you may develop mental, physical, or other problems after some time. That is why I don't teach you.

Many Indians are still practicing very complicated methods today because they happen to meet such masters. Perhaps they have a more complicated fate, but that is what they practice. For instance, they may take a clean, soft, narrow strip of cloth about five meters long and roll it up. With the help of a little water, they swallow the cloth, leaving one end outside. Then they do some abdominal exercises to clean their stomach and intestines before slowly pulling out the cloth. There are many more weird methods that I dare not speak about here because they don't sound very good. For example, they practice on the male and female organs, about which I dare not elaborate for fear that it might send many old ladies rushing home! [Master and audience laugh.] Sometimes they insert a cloth inside the nose and then slowly pull it out. This cleans the nose thoroughly, and they regard it as cleansing their karma. However, I don't think that karma can be cleansed away with cloth. It can only be cleansed thoroughly through merit, virtue, benevolence, and the power derived from spiritual practice. Since karma is intangible and created by the mind, it is only right that we cleanse it also from the mind.

In India today many people are still practicing in seclusion high in the Himalayas. There are some places in very high altitudes that are extremely cold where humans have never set foot. These people come down only once a month or rely on food brought by other people. They practice seriously and never leave the mountains. To reach these places, they must travel on foot or by levitation. They walk as though they are flying. No one can catch up with them. They cannot bring any luggage. Therefore, they must first practice the tantric warming method to transfer the heat from the solar plexus to other parts of the body. It will keep them warm and they won't have to wear any clothes. Or they may cover themselves with a flimsy piece of cloth and walk all the way up. Since it is a very long journey, they cannot bring many things. There are no motorcycles in the snow-covered mountains. One misstep and they will end up at the bottom of the deep Ganges valley. It won't be necessary to recite the death mantra because they will be reduced to dust before they have uttered a single word. They have to practice many different methods in order to survive in those places.

Milarepa, a well-known master of an esoteric sect in Tibet, used to practice many methods so that he could survive in the Himalayas. He practiced levitation so that he could fly. He also practiced the tantric warming method so that he could warm his whole body with abdominal heat. He wore no clothes. When an occasional avalanche cut off the roads, he would starve for three to four months since there were no passersby to offer him food. In ancient times, traffic was inconvenient and life was very simple; therefore, people practiced many of these kinds of methods. We can also practice these methods today, but most modern people are physically weak and mentally exhausted. They do not have the patience to walk that toilsome journey and practice so many complicated methods. Very few people can withstand the Himalayan climate. When I was in the Himalayas, it was very difficult to cook any food. It took a long time for food to get cooked when the air pressure was so low. The food remained cold, however long I cooked it. I stared at it and it stared back at me; it simply would not boil. So, I just ate it raw after washing it in the Ganges. That tasted nice, too. Despite the bitter cold, wild vegetables manage to grow in the Himalayas. I was very surprised. Wild vegetables are edible, but don't eat too much, or you will look like them – greenish and hairy. [Master laughs.] That was why Milarepa's body was covered with greenish hair when he lived in the Himalayas. When people saw him, they asked, 'Are you a bardoba?' Bardoba is the Tibetan word for 'ghost.' [Master and audience laugh.] He answered, 'No! I am a human!' Then people asked, 'If you are a human, why do you look like this? Why do you have green hair all over your body?' Yes! We will become whatever we eat.

This is what happens to our physical body. Mentally our thoughts make us what we are. We have all heard of this before. But then why can't we attain the Truth just by thinking that we have achieved it? Wouldn't that be simpler? You can go home and try thinking every day, 'I have attained the Truth. I have attained the Truth. I have attained the Truth...' Will you succeed? You don't have to recite this! It is futile. If we do not have an enlightened Master, recitation is futile. Lots of people recite the name of Amitabha Buddha constantly, but they never become Amitabha Buddha. However, if we meet a Master who has attained the Truth and He / She tells us how to do so, then it is useful.

Why can't we contact God power directly

Why is that so strange? Just now I said that many people ask me, 'Why must we have an enlightened Master in order to get the lineage of the method? Why can't the God power transmit it directly to us? Since the Goddess of Mercy is omnipresent and responds to all prayers, why doesn't She just appear to us instead of doing so through an ordinary human form?' Here is the answer. It is true that the Goddess of Mercy is omnipresent, but we can

never behold Her. We cannot see Her even if She is right before our eyes because our thoughts and vibrations are too coarse and totally different from Hers. For beings who have reached ultimate enlightenment, the vibrations of their bodies are so subtle that they seem invisible to us.

In the book 'Autobiography of a Yogi,' Paramahansa Yogananda, a famous Indian yogi that practiced very well, mentioned his grand Master Babaji, an immortal who has lived for over a thousand years! He has been living in the Himalayas for a very long time! One day, his millennium-old grand Master came to visit his Master. Very excited, his Master quickly went inside to prepare tea. When he came out again, Babaji was nowhere to be found! Why? Because He had hidden in the sunlight! I have told you this story before. How can we hide in the sunlight? Can you imagine a person hiding in the sunlight and making himself invisible to others? This is a fact that only spiritual practitioners can understand. One of our fellow practitioners just now reported that I sometimes disappear. Where could I have gone? 'The physical body has its weight; how could She run away so fast? How could She disappear into nowhere? She has hidden Herself in the Light, so people cannot find Her!'

Some bodies are very subtle, and we cannot see them unless our heavenly eye has been opened. We lose sight of them when our ordinary human mind stirs. When we meditate with the Quan Yin method, sometimes we see the dimension of God. Suddenly we become overjoyed and God disappears. Is God afraid of us? No! God vanishes because our mind is no longer its usual self. Later, when we have practiced and reached a superior level, instead of seeing fully enlightened beings, we ourselves will become fully enlightened beings. This is a very high level that very few people can attain. Apart from Quan Yin method practitioners, I dare to say that no one will ever reach this level! [Applause] And not every practitioner of the Quan Yin method can attain it. Yesterday we talked about master Chinshan who had an exceptional and incredible healing ability. Do you know how he healed people? He used body dirt, bathing water, sputum, nasal secretions, ear wax, et cetera. Do you want to take that medication? [Laughter]

Even when enlightened Masters do come to us, it is difficult for us to get any blessings because we have a discriminating heart. Even when they have manifested into a physical body, we still have difficulty believing in them, not to mention when they are intangible and invisible. Most of us cannot recite the holy names with undivided concentration because we do not believe in the past or future masters whom we cannot see. This is the problem! We do want to believe in them, but we cannot do that easily because we cannot see them.

One day, master Chinshan was asked to heal a lay person, the wife of a high officer. As soon as he entered the house, he embraced and kissed the woman, and spat sputum into her mouth. The woman fled. She had never met such a master before. And, of course, her angry husband took her away immediately. When another woman heard about the incident, she lamented, 'What a great pity! You don't know how he heals people. Anything from his body is miraculous medicine.' Even if that is true, we cannot blame most people, because it is impossible for ordinary folks to swallow that. If it were me, I definitely would not have accepted it! [Laughter] My apologies to master Chinshan. [Master and audience laugh.] I am just being honest!

The supreme way to save the world

Sometimes enlightened Masters dare not venture outside to save people because the world is topsy-turvy. We regard the really good things as bad. Conversely, we consider the evil things or drugs that make us arrogant, sick, or angry to be good. Nonetheless, some

enlightened Masters do not use these methods because they are beneficial to few people. We cannot blame sentient beings, because their ordinary minds think differently and their concepts cannot be changed immediately. Therefore, I use more comfortable methods because I know that those methods are not feasible. How can we do things that way in this age? It was unacceptable even in those days. Many people dared not accept his treatment and left as sick as when they first came.

Some enlightened Masters do not need to use that method; they don't use any method. We have heard that reciting the name of Amitabha Buddha or the Goddess of Mercy can benefit and save us. Is this not a lot more comfortable? By reciting the name of the Goddess of Mercy, we can realize our dream of begetting a son, getting promoted, having a long life, or transforming into a male body. However, this kind of enlightened Master is rare! We might have heard about the Goddess of Mercy and Amitabha Buddha, but they seldom come here! Besides, there are many people who do not have a chance to hear their names! Take the people in Africa, for example. How could they know about the Goddess of Mercy or Amitabha Buddha? Then are they deprived of salvation forever? Wouldn't that be a great pity? Let us temporarily forget Amitabha Buddha and the Goddess of Mercy, and direct our attention toward the more fantastic enlightened Masters. We don't have to recite their names; even before we know about them, they have been saving us already. They are the Supreme Masters and are extremely rare. Even if they do come to this world, we won't recognize them. Even when they declare, 'I am an enlightened Master,' we won't believe them. Of course, they usually do not make such a claim. So, how do we know about them? It is extremely difficult to meet great Masters who can save our lives.

It is not always useful to constantly recite the name of the Goddess of Mercy, because we cannot see Her! We can only hope that God will manifest and incarnate into this world and communicate with us through a physical body. Only then will there be hope for us. I mentioned yesterday that when God does come here, Hes might not be dressed in the same attire as we imagine, so we feel disappointed. Sentient beings will forever be disappointed because even God cannot satisfy the mind of every person. Some people like Hirm to be in male form, others prefer Hirm in female form. Therefore, we had better negotiate with our ordinary human mind first and try to convince it, 'Whether Hes is man or woman, big or small, and however Hes looks, we will accept Hirm! You should try this way!' [Applause]

Master's grand vow

When I first came to Formosa, I attended a seven-day saint-chanting retreat, which means we had to chant the saints' names for seven days. 'Namo Amitabha Buddha, Namo Goddess of Mercy, Namo...' The whole day long we chanted the names of three to five saints non-stop, until our voices were hoarse by the time we got home. That is what you do at a saint-chanting retreat. I had some response when chanting the holy names. I was then practicing the Quan Yin method, but since I had nothing to do, I wanted to observe how the Formosan people practiced spiritually. So I visited a famous Zen Master. I liked spiritual practitioners regardless of their level. I liked their aspiration for the Truth, their simple lifestyle, and merciful vow to save sentient beings. I liked them all.

When I chanted the holy names with them, I received some response and made contact with Amitabha Buddha. A thought came into my mind. I felt that sentient beings were in great misery, so I started crying. It was during a repentance ritual and we were chanting the name of Amitabha Buddha, but I was shedding tears. I complained to Amitabha Buddha, 'Sentient beings are in such great pain but not all of them know Your holy name.

By the time they learn to recite Your name, they might have gone to hell!’ And then I said, ‘Should I become a Buddha (an enlightened Master) one day, people will not have to recite my name. As soon as I am aware that someone is suffering, I will go render help!’ [Applause]

Any vow that is made sincerely will be realized. This is my personal experience. I had made several vows before, and all of them came true. I would like to share this with you. Should you really want to help sentient beings, please be sincere, and you will attain the Truth quickly! Helping others is the fastest way to attain the Truth, but you must also practice the Quan Yin method. When we long to attain the Truth, our sincerity will touch God. When we want to help suffering sentient beings, our sincerity will touch the heavenly beings, and eventually our vow will be realized. However, the vow will not be realized the instant it is made; we must work hard to find an enlightened Master. The Master will appear indicating that our time has come! If we make such a grand vow, the Master will appear and superior beings will come to help us. Very soon we will be enlightened and attain the Truth!

Ordinary people do not make such grand vows, but they do make vows like wanting their children to graduate with the best grades, their daughter to marry a high-ranking official, a promotion, or to become the most beautiful woman in the world. Few people forget their own lives and blessings to make wholehearted vows for the well-being of others. Of course, those people were spiritual practitioners in their previous lives; therefore, such a noble ideal was recorded in their subconscious. No one taught them that! Besides, other people may not be able to teach us anything. It is true that many people are teaching others. For instance, we all have religious beliefs; many believe in and know about Buddhism, about the compassionate Goddess of Mercy, and the loving Jesus Christ. We all know about these things, but we do not develop a very merciful and loving spirit. Sometimes we make the same vow as they did, but we are not sincere! We think we are sincere, but after we have made the vow, we become scared, ‘Oh, come on. I was only joking!’ [Master and audience laugh.] That is why few people succeed in their spiritual practice.

To succeed we must be very sincere and practice very diligently with the help of a great Master. Why do we need a great enlightened Master? I have just explained why. Now, let me elaborate on that again. Rice seeds can grow into crops and yield rice. However, if there is no one to sow the seeds in the wet soil, they will not sprout. After they have sprouted, if there is no one to take care of them, transplant them in neat rows, apply fertilizers and insecticides, and irrigate them, they cannot survive either. Even in worldly things, we need the attention of an expert in order to have fruits, and much more so if we want to attain the Truth. We cannot succeed by searching blindly on our own, or by seeking guidance from another ordinary human that is not an expert. We need an enlightened Master because even after we are enlightened, we still need to enhance our level and develop our newly opened wisdom. Otherwise, it will wither and die.

The method of oneness

Many people think that daily chanting the holy names is good enough, but I don't think so! Yesterday I taught you a more powerful way to chant the holy names, but please do not blame me if you cannot become fully enlightened, because one cannot attain sainthood simply by chanting them. Why? Because that is a ‘discriminating method.’ It discriminates between God and ‘I.’ I chant the holy names and I worship God, but that doesn't involve the concept ‘I am God.’ You need another method to reach the state of ‘I am God.’ Actually, it is not really a method. Rather, it is a lineage, an invisible force, the transmission

of which can only be possible from a person who has attained mastership, or a disciple authorized by this Master. You do not have to learn it from the Master; you can learn it from a disciple sent by the Master to transmit the method! Since the Master has given inner permission to this disciple to pass on the lineage, it will work! We can believe that.

Milarepa was once subject to a seven-year punishment by his master in order to cleanse the bad karma he had incurred through his earlier use of black magic. His master refused to transmit the method to him until seven years had passed. During these seven years, Milarepa was so anxious that he tried to learn the method behind his master's back, but did not succeed. One day Milarepa conceived a plan with the help of his master's wife who forged a letter in the Master's name and stamped it with his seal when he was sleeping. Milarepa took the letter to one of his master's disciples who lived far away. This disciple had the Master's permission to transmit the method, so Milarepa went to him with this lie, 'Master asks you to transmit the method to me.' This senior disciple believed him, so he offered Milarepa a seat and began transmitting the method to him. But it didn't work! How can one cheat his master? Milarepa thought that his plot would work, but he had failed to deceive the wisdom of an enlightened Master. He had no choice but to return to his master and humbly beg him with great effort.

We can entrust someone to transmit this method, and we can revoke the authorization too, because it is the Master, and not that person, who transmits the method. Even when I transmit the method to you, it is the Master power doing it, not Ching Hai, this ordinary human body. The Master means the inner Master! When our inner wisdom is mature and ready to accept enlightenment, it will need the help of a cooperative power outside, and then it will be opened. For instance, eggs are supposed to hatch into chickens, but mother hens must sit on them to give them warmth every day before the young chickens can emerge. Similarly, we have the enlightening nature and wisdom within, but without the help of an outside Master to open it, we cannot use it. This is the natural law of creation, just as eggs need the hens to sit on them to give them warmth. Even when there are no hens, we have to use artificial warmth to hatch them. Otherwise, the young chickens will not emerge by themselves. In the same way, we have heard that we all have the divine nature, and that God or the supreme power is omnipresent and can help us anywhere, anytime. However, before we have met Hiers representative in this world, we simply cannot catch Hirm.

CHANGE OUR CONCEPTS AND NOT THE OUTER ENVIRONMENT ¹⁷⁰

What we need to change is our concepts and not the outer environment. If this is already the situation for us, then we should be patient and try to live happily. When the time comes, everything will change. Just like winter, it is over in three months, the same with spring and summer. There is nothing that remains the same everyday. Look at how our emotions change from day to day; sometimes we are happy, sometimes we are depressed, and there are times when we are half happy and half depressed; sometimes we are irritable, and sometimes we are more at peace, et cetera. Therefore, we must learn to be patient. When the time comes, the situation will change on its own. Even the most glorious era fades away when its time is up. When we are the most miserable, it will also change for the better. So, search within and find the happiness in your true self, and you'll be fine!

170. Group meditation, Ilan Penitentiary, Formosa, March 21, 1989 (Originally in Chinese).

LIFE'S TRIALS MAKE US STRONGER ¹⁷¹

Have you become a little bigger? [Audience: Yes.] Yes, you have become bigger and swollen inside. [Laughter] The better we practice, the 'bigger' we become. This is real strength. Physical strength is useless. Real strength comes when the Light within us grows stronger and brighter. Although I cannot nurture you physically, I do nurture the Light in you so that you grow 'bigger' and 'bigger.' [Laughter and applause.]

However, when we attain the high levels, we become smaller instead of bigger. Only an ocean of Light exists. The higher we are, the smaller and more purified we become. We are small then but we don't feel the smallness. We can grow big quickly, or become even smaller or even nothing, just as we wish.

When we are at a high level, we do not immediately see the God of that level just as we want. Instead, we must have good affinities with that God, who can then manifest to us. Otherwise, He is invisible though omnipresent. He is not a crude physical body that can be seen as soon as we get there. That's not the way it is! If He is willing to be seen, He will adjust His vibrations – the intensity and density of His Light, in order to become visible to us. He will show us one or two manifestations, even if it's just in the form of Light or a transparent body. Otherwise, we cannot see Him at all.

Love brings us closer to God

But that realm is not the highest level. At the highest level, there is nothing but a very peaceful and loving power. We have not the slightest idea how to address Him. We cannot embrace Him but we feel embraced and loved. We don't know who He is, but we do know there is someone or something. We can feel an extremely compassionate and loving force. And that is God, Buddha or creativity.

In this ephemeral world, we are God as well. When we love our children, neighbors, and fellow men, we represent God's quality. We develop our love within and express it through actions. The more we develop our love, the closer we are to God, the Buddha, the Tao, and the creativity, because they are love.

Therefore, when the founders of religions descended to this planet on behalf of God or Buddha, they taught only love and compassion. They were closer to God, the Buddha, and the supreme love, so they had the greatest love. Therefore, we feel that God loves us and will take care of all who come to Him. Whether a thousand or a million people come to Him, it seems like He is taking care only of us. Did you ever experience that? [Audience: Yes.] [Applause] God is like that.

Touchstone on the spiritual path

Similarly, things do not always go smoothly for those of us who are spiritual practitioners. Sometimes we think things are going well but they really are not. It is not necessarily good for our spiritual practice or wisdom. Neither is it always good for us physically. It does not necessarily help with our progress in a certain aspect. At that time, we may spoil ourselves, relax too much, indulge in too much physical fun and merrymaking, squander our precious time, listen to our minds only, and take little care of our spirit. Sometimes you may be brought to the test, either by Master or fellow initiates, or by outside situations. At

171. Group meditation, Taipei Center, Formosa, February 28, 1989 (Originally in Chinese).

that time we think things are not going smoothly and there is much to endure for us to live on. But later on, we will make rapid progress.

Therefore, sometimes when we think that things are not working out in our spiritual practice, business, or life, it is actually the most favorable and beneficial situation for us, because our spirituality will then develop, sprout, and bloom. This is just like giving birth, when you undergo the greatest suffering, isn't it? [Female audience: Yes.] Therefore, we have to make some form of sacrifice in order to get something in return. Sometimes we have to pay with some effort, and be more independent, in order to achieve breakthroughs. Nothing comes easily.

I have so many disciples, but they didn't come all at once. I searched very hard and long for an enlightened Master, and went through so many tests. You feel that you suffer when I scold you, but actually it's nothing. The tests I went through were a million times more painful than yours. Your tests are no big deal. You feel upset when tested by me or fellow practitioners. But you dare not do anything when outside people test you. For example, if you are scolded by your boss, you can do nothing. You dare not show your anger, for you are afraid of losing the chance to make money. When you do business outside, you put up with rude and unsatisfied customers. But I cannot scold you because I do not pay you. [Laughter]

We should compare these situations so that we can pass the spiritual tests. When people scold or even slander us, we won't have any problem if we regard it as a test from the saints or God; otherwise we won't make any progress.

Tough tests make good practitioners

The clothes, the glasses, and other things you wear are made through a laborious and difficult process. The cotton dress, for example, is not like this originally. It is made from cotton flowers from cotton plants grown under the sun; the flowers are gathered, filtered, stripped, pressed by machine or hand, then stretched, boiled, machine processed again, and dried in the sun. It requires a lot of effort and the process is painful. If cotton could talk, it would tell you in tears how hard it has been 'practicing'!

You should know when you look at your clothes. You don't have to listen to my lecturing so much. Your glasses are another example. Just think where they come from. How much does the glass have to be heated to make it into lenses? The raw material has to be heated to very high temperatures, liquidized, and cooled in a mold, before it becomes lenses of different shapes and sizes. This is an arduous process, just like it is being forced. And it has to be polished and you have to get your eyes checked before it can be turned into a pair of glasses just right for you! Oh, the sentient beings toil immeasurably!

A small thing, like a pair of glasses takes so much effort, not to mention becoming a saint! You must be joking if you say so! You can't pass even the smallest test! And you get angry when I scold you a little! We should learn to be tolerant. If we can't put up with the scolding of our fellow practitioners, family members, Master, teachers and friends, how can we tolerate it when we have to deliver thousands or millions of sentient beings! They are all different in character and some are vicious. At that time we will know we are short of patience, and regret not having learned better from our Master.

Pass on the heritage

This is the reason that the Tibetan yogi-saint Milarepa remains famous today. He followed his Master for seven years, and suffered daily torment without complaint. He begged his Master for the dharma every day, but dared not complain for fear that his Master would refuse to train him. Thus, he didn't complain when his Master kicked, beat, scolded, and treated him 'unjustly.' This is an excellent example of a good disciple. This is why Milarepa has remained famous throughout the history of Buddhism. This is truly passing on the heritage to future generations. We are still familiar with his name and aspire to be tolerant like him. We call him 'the transcendental man.'

Besides Milarepa, many worldly people, like past or modern politicians and heroes, had to go through many trials and hardships before they became famous. For example, the British monarch has to be trained at a military academy before he ascends to the throne (it's the Royal British tradition to train their future king in a military academy). In the military academy, people don't care who you are, but beat and scold you like everyone else. They could command you to do dirty or rigorous work. They may order you to undress yourself and go outside when it is snowing. You have to accept the order. You cannot say, 'I am the prince of Britain.' They will just say, 'I know. Your mother has told me to give you more lessons.'

Children, including princes and the children of important officials, are intentionally sent to military academies, because it is difficult for parents to teach them at home. It is more convenient to send them for training outside, where there is very serious discipline. Otherwise, they won't have the chance to experience difficult and unfavorable situations, and when they ascend to the throne, they will just spoil themselves and indulge in merrymaking, which will be bad for the country and people. They won't be patient in dealing with other countries; that's for sure.

Spiritual practitioners should endure tests bravely

We practitioners should not wonder why we suffer so much. We should read some books about such examples often, so that we become more open, patient, and humble. We should check if we have achieved what those great people achieved. Therefore, we should train ourselves more and study more. When we are scolded, we should recite the holy names and thank the people who scold us. [Laughter] Really! We should do this, and then we will feel a change. Later we will wonder why the person who scolded us is looking up to us!

We should train ourselves instead of pampering ourselves, because we don't know when God will select us to benefit sentient beings. It's not like an election to be an enlightened Master to benefit sentient beings. It's not that we advertise ourselves and deceive people so that they will vote for us. It's not that people will advertise for us and make us famous so that people will elect us. It's not true! Advertising does nothing for God. He just picks you after watching you down here with a telescope and says, 'Okay, that guy is nice! He is very good!' And then you are selected. Maybe you are selected to deliver one or two persons, which is blessing enough for you; enough to buy a ticket to fly up there! [Laughter] Maybe you are selected to deliver hundreds, thousands, or even more people, then your mission becomes crucial, because it's difficult enough delivering just one person, which involves delivering five generations of that person's family! Its reward is high.

Therefore, we should remember to pass the tests at times of adversity. We must be mature people. Not only should our energy be vitalized, but our minds should be more

open as well. We should understand that the world is just a big illusion and fantasy, so why bother becoming attached to anything! Why should we contest for this vanity fair! Why should we explain our 'unfair' situation? Sooner or later, we will all be gone. The king will be gone, and so will the garbage collector. Nobody stays here forever. Therefore, even if we are confronted with some unfavorable situation, we have to live on and test ourselves. The more we endure, the less we feel we have to 'endure,' and then we find ourselves at a higher level. We don't have to measure our spiritual level only by seeing visions or hearing the Sound of the divine. [Applause]

THE CORRECT ATTITUDE IN WORKING FOR MASTER ¹⁷²

When you come here to practice, do not rely on your work achievements. Because we all help each other in spiritual practice, everyone makes some contribution. Even those fellow practitioners who have never put up a lecture poster, never helped me do anything, or never contributed any money have helped me a lot, too. Their coming here is already a help. Their practice is already a help. Their faith in me is already a help. They have been helping a lot by trying their best to be good, observing the precepts and a vegetarian diet, and keeping their own thoughts, words and deeds pure.

If you can offer some extra help in addition to that, then it is for your own good. It is your own merit. What is there to talk about? For instance, you help post a few posters. There is no way to know if anyone will see them. However, you have already gained merit. When you help in my work, you will have merit, regardless of success or failure; so there is no need to talk about it.

The more you help in my work, the more merit you will have. But you should not rely on this type of achievement, or it will be ridiculous! And besides, some people are sentenced by the heavenly king to come down here. If they do not do well and gain merits here, later they will not be able to go back up there. For example, the Monkey King, Pigsy, the Water Spirit and the White Horse (characters in the Chinese literary work Journey to the West) have to help their master bring back the Buddhist scriptures and will attain liberation only after their mission has been accomplished.

Therefore, in helping to do my work, you have no idea whether it is your own merit or your karmic debt. But whatever it is, just do your best, and don't talk about it. Maybe some people will think that it is because of your karma that you have to help me, just like the Water Spirit and Pigsy. That only makes it worse! They do not acknowledge your contribution; instead, they say you have karmic debt and make you feel more miserable! So, when you do anything for me, just do it quietly. If you talk about it, after a while, there will be obstruction from maya. Some of you have experienced this already.

Sometimes during retreats or group meditation, you are allowed to talk about your inner experiences. It is all right when I allow you to share them in my presence. However, if you happily reveal yourselves afterwards without my permission, saying, 'That day Master said that I had attained a level of...' If you continue to speak without discretion and then feel proud of yourself, you will encounter maya's obstruction after a while.

It is not that I want to scold you. I just want to remind everyone that this 'self-pride' will bring us trouble. If this maya of pride emerges, it will be bad news. Some people may degrade or be kicked out without being aware of it. Only later will they feel the pain, but

172. Seven-day retreat, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, February 13-18, 1989 (Originally in Chinese).

then they will not know how to turn back. Maybe only after the karma has been eliminated can they return to start anew from scratch, and that is not good!

That is why I often say that you can only share your experiences with my permission. Without my permission, don't talk about it. Even if we talk with no pride but with much humility, we will still encounter hindrances because others may come to bother us. Hearing that our experience is so good, sometimes they may come and ask, 'Hey, what has your level of spiritual practice been recently? What's the big deal in telling about it! I admire you so much!' Then they open their eyes so big. [Laughter] Ah! At that time we cannot bear not to tell, and the more we tell, the more trouble there will be!

And then they will agree with us, making us feel great about ourselves, as though we can slash demons and kill monsters. And after a while, we will lose this power. And when people keep complimenting us, we have to keep matching up with their imagination. Suppose we originally do not have this power, or have not yet reached this level, but people keep praising us, and then we feel ashamed to pull down our face. As a result, our level keeps floating up in the air, without a seat. Then we are unable either to come down or go up. Therefore, there will be obstructions!

It is the same with our merits. It is best not to let others know. It does not matter if others come to know about it naturally. We do not have to take the initiative to talk about it. Otherwise, we will really get into trouble! I know too many such examples, but I do not want to reveal names. It will do so for these people to know it themselves. From now on they should repent and mend their ways.

LEARN THE SPIRIT OF INDEPENDENCE ¹⁷³

We have to learn to be independent because who is going to accompany us at the moment of death? There was no one with us when we were born, so of course, there will also be no one else with us when we die. Therefore, we have to learn right now to be independent. The more independent we are, the more worthy we feel, and then we will not be defeated or shaken. At that time we will know who we are, and know our own abilities and what we can accomplish.

After we are put to the test, drilled and polished, we will have experienced everything. After that we will not be easily cheated or oppressed. Also, our hearts will not be easily swayed. Therefore, every situation is meant for us to learn, and the more we learn, the better we become. This is the reason I do not want to spoil you.

I can feel that you are progressing, becoming more and more confident, more independent, and gaining more of a sense of responsibility. You are becoming responsible for yourself and are able to take care of yourself. When we are not being spoiled, we feel great! Perhaps when we newly arrive at the Center, we have a sense of strangeness, feeling that no one is taking care of us. The fellow practitioners all seem very cold. No one greets us. We have to set up our own tents, and fill our own bowls with rice. [Master and audience laugh.] Nevertheless, after we endure it for a while, we feel, 'Yeah! It's great! I can bear it, and it's nothing.' At that time we know we can take care of ourselves. What we were unable to do before, now we can do; whatever situation we were unable to endure before, now we can. Before we would care about this little 'I,' but now we care no more.

173. Seven-day retreat, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, February 13-18, 1989 (Originally in Chinese).

TONIC IS NECESSARY FOR THE WINTER OF SPIRITUAL PRACTICE ¹⁷⁴

The weather changes constantly. Sometimes it brings us discomfort. Sometimes it is fine, and we feel cheerful, relaxed, happy and carefree. This is what we are like when we practice well in spirituality and everything goes smoothly. We keep our precepts clearly, we are stable in meditation and strong in our faith; we have peace in our family and success in our work and business. So we feel great. At that time we think that Master is blessing us, or God and the saints are helping us.

But sometimes we encounter difficulties in spiritual cultivation, just as we feel uncomfortable when the cold, wet winter sets in. We seem to waver in keeping our precepts and our faith is not very strong. We seem to have regressed or come to a standstill in our spiritual progress, and we feel very sad. That's the 'winter of spiritual practice.' When we practice smoothly, we can call it 'spring' or 'summer.' There are seasonal differences as in spring, summer, autumn and winter, and so there are similar differences in our spiritual practice. We can't be the same every day. That's why there are times when we err, want to quit, are reluctant to practice or find no fun in practicing. We may feel depressed, but don't know why. This is the character of the 'winter of spiritual practice.' At this time we should quickly have tonics to nourish ourselves.

For instance, if we don't feel well or strong in the winter when it's wet and cold, we can see a doctor of Chinese medicine and take some tonics. Or we can eat more nourishing food or an extra meal every day to build up enough physical power to last until spring. In the spring we don't eat that much, and in the summer we eat very little, but we feel very comfortable, and aren't as tired or depressed as we are in the winter.

When our spirituality doesn't progress smoothly, it's like the wintertime. But we'll get over it after a while. When we're in the 'winter of spiritual cultivation,' we're likely to get confused, quit, or be cheated. We may feel dull, make no progress or be reluctant to practice; or unsatisfying, obstructive situations may arise. However, we should know that everything will be all right after a while. At that time even if we make mistakes, regress in our practice, or lose faith, we should just forgive ourselves. If possible, we should quickly get some 'tonics!' For example, we can attend retreats, go to see Master and meet initiates more often, go to group meditation more, read more of Master's books or listen to Her tapes, et cetera. All these are our 'spiritual tonics.' We'll feel much better after taking them. And then we'll be able to continue practicing until 'spring' comes. During the springtime we'll feel much better and won't need that much tonic.

SECRETS FOR LASTING MEDITATION ¹⁷⁵

What should we do if we want to meditate a lot and not feel tired? The secrets are: Talk less, don't look around, don't think of others' goodness or badness and just recite the holy names twenty-four hours a day. If you feel unstable in doing the Sound meditation, then recite the holy names for several minutes before doing the Sound meditation again. Should you feel any part of your body ache or become numb, just take no heed of it! When you are in samadhi later, you don't sense that the whole body exists. Therefore, don't scratch around. When you get tired of doing Sound meditation, change your posture and do Light meditation. Your legs will then be very grateful to you for that. For they ache a lot and the head is taut from the previous posture. If you change your posture and do Light meditation at this moment, it will feel much better. So, you should do the Light and Sound

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meditations alternately, and they will be helpful to each other and you can meditate longer without tiredness.

Some of our fellow practitioners can meditate for the whole night. It is because they do the Light and Sound meditations alternately. But don't do that too frequently and change your posture in five minutes, for this is useless. For the longer time you remain in the same posture, the better. The Light and Sound meditations are helpful to each other. When having sat for too long in Light meditation, and sometimes you feel tired and achy, you can change your posture and do the Sound meditation in this way. You will then feel much better, for there is seemingly something to rely on. This secret in practicing meditation is quite unknown to many.

FREEDOM OF THE MIND ¹⁷⁶

We have to train ourselves to be humble and unhampered. Whatever Master teaches, just say okay to it. Whatever She does is Her job. What does it have to do with you? If She doesn't want you to go out, don't. And then see what happens. All we have to do is discipline our inner power, or the egoless power, rather than race against Master to see if She can ever find an excuse for scolding me. Don't you know that a Master can scold Her disciples for no reason at all? If you don't believe it, be a Master and see if it's true. It's very simple, so don't argue with me that I am wrong or illogical. What logic do we spiritual practitioners need? What can right or wrong mean to us? We make a lot of trouble because we are not free from our egos. As long as we haven't gotten rid of our egos, we still have a long way to go.

If we want to win a gold medal in the Olympics, we can't just stand there saying, 'I'm sorry, your honor, but I am not feeling well today. I couldn't hear you very clearly. My leg was killing me.' No one would listen to you. The referees and the umpires are not there to argue whether you are justified or have a good reason. They are there to decide who reaches the finish-line first. That's all they want. We have to train ourselves to be someone who wins, not someone who would waste his time arguing.

There is no arguing at that time. No one can be good or bad; nothing can be right or wrong. There is no 'because,' 'so,' 'but' or 'however' either. No one will listen to you at that time because there is no such thing in the Buddha's land / kingdom of God. You can't say, 'I am but a short distance from the Buddha's land. Let me in. Let me in.' There are no words of argument and no competitive atmosphere in the Buddha's land as there are in our world.

If we want to become an enlightened being, we have to discard those childish and silly arguments, as well as words like 'I can't do this!' I have no idea how much longer you can practice with me. Because we count by the seconds. Only those who get there are the winners. Those who are a little way from it are a long way from it. We are to become enlightened beings and be liberated in one life.

That's why we have to be different from others. We who learn from the Master will become Masters at long last. We will become the best and perfect beings. We can't keep arguing or making excuses for ourselves.

And don't tell me other Masters or teachers aren't as hard on their disciples as I am on my disciples. They have nothing to do with us. When little kids play games, they are not very

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particular about the results. The Olympics, nevertheless, is no child's game. They count the seconds. If you win, you win. If you lose, you lose. There is no such thing as 'almost.'

Any method that is 'almost' like the Quan Yin method is still a far cry from it, and I know where the differences lie. Our Quan Yin method is a big 'ship' taking us to the other shore. If we see anyone in the ocean of suffering, we can pull him up and take him home, all because we're on a big 'ship.' Other methods just offer a wooden board. People hang on to it and drift in the ocean, but only end up dying a little bit later. That's the difference. It may seem to have saved our lives, only to let us bake in the sun a few more days before we finally drown. It doesn't really mean anything.

Well, sometimes I do think about retiring, because it's very difficult to deliver sentient beings. They are either stubborn or obsessed with their fame. After doing a little work, they feel they are an important person. How can anyone become a Master like that? That's why many people practice but very few become Masters. If we can't do well on the little things, the enlightened beings will not assign important tasks to us, since we are still working at the human level, not at the selfless one.

NEW YEAR, NEW PERSON, NEW ATMOSPHERE ¹⁷⁷

Many people misunderstand the meaning of the New Year and other festivals. On every grand occasion or New Year, we should expend more effort to reflect and introspect on ourselves, and how we can serve the world better and contribute more to our relatives and friends or the country. The occasion is not to be used every time as an excuse for making merry; instead we should be refining our coarse behavior and speech.

Of course, everyone is aware of this. I just take this opportunity to remind you. You don't have to listen if you have done it already. If you have not done it, or have forgotten to do so, then you ought to be reminded!

Change your attitude and start anew

Now that the New Year has come, we can do something new, change programs, and probably we will feel different. We can begin to change some of our habits, or change some of the jobs we don't like to do, and instead do the jobs we like to do. For instance, we all wonder where we come from. Who are we after all? Why did we come to this world? How do we leave the world when we die? Who leaves the world? Where are we leaving for? Normally we are too busy to question and study these holy questions. But this year, we can decide to do it. By doing so, we celebrate the New Year in a really nice way.

ALWAYS KEEP THE HEART INNOCENT LIKE A CHILD ¹⁷⁸

The simple people will all attain the Tao. The most important thing is a pure heart, a heart that does not discriminate, a heart that does not differentiate between pain and happiness. Do you know what the Zen Master Seng Tsan said? 'It is very difficult for those people with hearts that discriminate to find the great path.' What he meant is that those people with equality, simplicity and contentment in their hearts are able to find the Tao more easily.

Lao Tzu also said that one can only reach the Tao when one becomes like a child. Jesus Christ also said that unless you become innocent like a child, you cannot enter the

177. Group meditation, Penghu Center, Formosa, January 26, 1989 (Originally in Chinese).

178. Group meditation, Laiyi Center, Pingtung, Formosa, December 1, 1988 (Originally in Chinese).

kingdom of God. Buddhism and Taoism say the same thing. The bible also says similar things. Islamism also says the same.

Islamism teaches their followers not to criticize others. No matter how he is, it is God's will for him to be so. The meaning is that we should be like children and not criticize others. Then, it is right!

OMNIPOTENT QUAN YIN INSURANCE ¹⁷⁹

We should practice spiritually, otherwise it will be a great pity and we will be pathetic! Even if we become a king or a Brahma (lord) within the first three realms, nobody will save us or make us offerings after we die. We will leave empty-handed. At that time we will feel very frustrated, and lonely without company. Therefore, I feel sorry for those people who do not practice spiritually! Every time I think of them, I cry. Once they fall, it takes unthinkably long periods of time – trillions of years – before they can rise again. It is not that easy. And when they come up here again, they do not necessarily come in human form at once. Even if they do, they may not necessarily be able to hear the name of a Master, or find a Master who can offer them protection, love, care, guidance, and comfort, or hold their hands and pull them higher. It is not easy to find that kind of Master.

Those of us who practice the Quan Yin method can leave when the time comes, even when we are sick. However, when we leave, we already have insurance and a place that we can depend on. We have the protection of an omnipotent insurance company. [Laughter and applause.] This is the safest way. Those who do not practice the Quan Yin method leave in a flash. There is not enough time for God and the saints to come and save them. Their souls do not have a place to depend on.

However, we who practice the Quan Yin method feel very safe. Even if we fall ill, we need not be anxious. We know that there is no problem. Our souls are calm and peaceful. I do not know how to explain in words why we feel so at peace. Our minds do not know, but our wisdom does. Our souls know. We feel great. Therefore, even if we cannot avoid karmic retribution or fixed karma, we do have insurance. So we have no problem.

For example, when we drive, we know that we may have a traffic accident. Our car may be damaged. Hundreds of thousands of dollars may be gone in a flash, or we may sustain injuries. However, because we have insurance, we dare to drive, even cars worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. When accidents occur, the insurance company will make reimbursements, which are sometimes higher than the costs or losses incurred.

Our omnipotent Quan Yin insurance company is more powerful and beneficial than that! Hence, even if our 'vehicle' breaks down, we are not afraid. After a while, we receive full compensation. We have another body, a better instrument, excellent clothing, a better residence, and a better world for us to enjoy. It is not that we have nothing when we lose this world. There is a better world waiting for us. That is why we feel very happy and safe. Our souls know. Inside they surely know.

Hence, it takes trillions of eons before we have a chance to become acquainted with the Quan Yin method. If we do not cherish this opportunity, even God cannot save us when He comes. It is really like this!

179. Group meditation, Laiyi Center, Pingtung, Formosa, November 2, 1988 (Originally in Chinese).

THE KEY FOR SPIRITUAL PROGRESS ¹⁸⁰

I would like to tell you some secrets about why some people progress quickly in spiritual practice while others are slow. Do you want to know? [Audience: Yes!] [Applause] Have you heard about the story of Milarepa? If some people have not, I will tell it one more time briefly.

After Milarepa's father passed away, all his inheritance was cheated away by his uncle and aunt. Although his father had asked them to take care of his wife and son, they did not take care of them but made them into workers who lived a poor life without enough clothes and food, and they were treated like workers. Therefore, Milarepa and his mother held great hatred towards them.

Later, Milarepa's mother asked him to learn black magic; so then he used the black magic and killed all the members of his uncle's family, totaling more than thirty people. Because of this karma, Milarepa encountered numerous obstacles in the process of his spiritual practice. But he became regretful and afraid only after he committed the killing. His master who had taught him the black magic also told him, 'You must find an enlightened Master quickly in order to save yourself. Once you find one, you have to come back and save me. Otherwise, both of us will go to hell because the karma created by killing with black magic is too great!'

Hearing these words, Milarepa was of course in a hurry to find an enlightened Master. But the Master he found refused to teach him anything, no matter how much he asked. Every day the Master only told him to do hard laboring work until he was very tired. Sometimes his Master would ask him to move a huge rock uphill and later told him, 'This is not right. Move it back.' But once he moved it back, the Master would ask him to move it uphill again. The Master also asked him to build a house and then pull it apart; then after pulling it apart, he would then ask him to rebuild it. However, after seven years of testing, the Master finally imparted to him the method of spiritual practice.

We have heard that one glimpse of an enlightened Master could be counted as initiation, as long as you have sincerity. Why didn't Milarepa get any result after living with the Master for seven years and working very hard each day? Why didn't the Master teach him the method of spiritual practice? It is because he had created very heavy karma.

Only true repentance can eliminate karma completely

We have heard that as long as we repent, any karma will be eliminated. Then why did it take Milarepa seven years to erase his karma even after he repented? It might be because he did not repent sincerely. If our power of repentance is limited, the karma will still exist even after we repent. We may think we repent thoroughly, but we have not.

Milarepa even wanted to cheat his Master. When his Master asked him to work, he complained and even said to his Master, 'You just told me to do that. Now you want me to move it back again. It's all your idea!' He was not grateful towards his Master, but instead, he argued with him. Milarepa had no idea how much headache his Master had to bear for him. His Master had to hold his sympathy and use the hardest way to help him cleanse the karma. Can you see that? Had Milarepa really repented, he would have understood his Master's painstaking efforts no matter how painful. He would have said, 'My karma is so

180. Group meditation, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, October 29, 1988 (Originally in Chinese).

heavy that even though I am in a great pain, it is not enough to pay it off. I am not in more pain than those killed by me.’ He should have thought that way.

However, at that time he did not think like that, but complained each day, ‘Why didn’t Master teach me the method? I treat him so nicely. Why didn’t he treat me nicely?’ Later he plotted to cheat his Master through the Master’s wife and a disciple in order to learn the method. He lied to the disciple, saying, ‘Master asks you to teach me the method.’ That shows that his ego still existed, thinking that Master treated ‘me’ badly.

Why is that? It is because those who can kill have a very cold heart. After killing, they forget the heavy karma they created. Only those who have a cold heart can destroy so many lives. It is very difficult for those people to make progress in spiritual practice because they are surrounded by a cold aura, which attracts other cold energy. If our heart is cold, we cannot attract a warm loving atmosphere. That’s why our progress is slow. Therefore, it is said, ‘The most difficult thing is to obey a Master completely and to accept a Master’s instructions completely.’

Very few people can do exactly what I tell them to do. Even if you don’t fight back outside, you struggle inside. You think, ‘Master says this and that every day. I don’t think those things are right, but She still asks me to do them.’ Or, ‘Master is just a woman and so young. She is not a professional in this. How much does She know about this?’ Most of you think like that, fighting inside, which makes it difficult for you to progress. It is because you cannot return to childhood and cannot be as innocent as a child. In the bible, it is said that we have to become like a child in order to receive the kingdom of God. Lao Tzu also said, ‘We should return to childhood to attain the Tao.’ They used different verses, but the meanings conveyed are the same.

That’s why I have told you not to kill and strictly keep the precepts. Even if we know we have a cold heart, we should still try to control ourselves, instead of letting our heart stay cold forever. We can control it. If we have a cold heart but have not done cold-blooded things, then our magnetic field will not be too cold and won’t attract too much of those slow, indifferent, difficult and blocking atmospheres. You have to know the law of ‘like attracts like,’ which means things of the same quality attract each other.

The karma that we have created cannot be erased by simple repentance because any actions, thoughts and ideas we have will stick to our magnetic field. Once the thoughts are sent out, they cannot be taken back, and sooner or later they will grow. Therefore, we’d better not create any new karma. As for the old karma, I can help you cleanse it. You have to pay for the new karma by yourselves because if you break the precepts knowingly, the karma is different than that created in the past when you were ignorant.

So, please keep the precepts strictly. If we kill any sentient beings or want to hurt someone, the bad thought will bounce back one day and hurt us. However, we can make up our mistakes by other means to improve the situation. For example, if we committed killing in the past, we can now try to save lives. If we did not love children in the past, we can now raise someone else’s children, to compensate for some of the wrongs we did before. Because of our guilty conscience inside, we cannot repent to the degree of being completely guilt-free. No matter how hard we repent, there will be some guilty feelings left that stick to our magnetic field and won’t let us be free. That is the so-called karma, which won’t allow us to go with peace of mind at the time of death. Our magnetic field will pull us to a place with the same atmosphere. That’s why some people go to hell and others go to heaven. It is all due to the law of ‘like attracts like.’

The secret of spiritual progress

Why do kind and pure people make faster progress in spiritual practice? It is because the simple-minded ones do not argue too much, nor do they know how to argue. They progress quickly because they are like children, believing in Master completely and having no doubts at all. We have a lot of people like that here. That is why they progress quickly. They look like nothing special from the outside, but they love Master the most, trust Master the most and care about Master the most. Whatever Master says is fine with them. They have no doubts about Master inside, nor are they against Master outside. When you see them, you know they progress fast.

Some people look very obedient and seem to respect Master as well, but later after talking to them for a while, you know that their egos are big and they don't have complete faith in Master. Sometimes they will say that themselves. If you know enough people, you are able to tell those who truly understand Master's teachings and completely believe in Master. You cannot tell only from their appearance.

The speed of your spiritual progress doesn't depend on Master alone; it also depends on your reaction to Master. How much you believe in Master and react to Master is how much you progress. Let me tell you a secret of spiritual progress: Don't tell any others. [Laughter and applause.] Whether or not we make progress all depends on the purity of our heart. Sometimes we would like very much to become pure, but we cannot. It is because we have done cold-blooded things in the past and now the karma stands as a wall in between and blocks us from believing in Master completely and surrendering our body, speech and mind completely.

Some people seem to practice very diligently, meditating four to five hours every day, but they are still attached to the world and crave fame and profit. So they will not progress either. They will very likely have to be reborn one more time because they still think about this world and want to stay. Master will arrange for them to come back again and learn with another Master in order to progress. Some of the initiates here learned the Quan Yin method in their previous lives, but they only practiced halfway because they were attached to the world or were not sincere enough and had doubts in Master, so they must come back.

That is, in essence, the same as the story I told you before. There was a person who wrote a letter to me, saying that after initiation he prayed to Master sincerely every day and recited Master's name every day and truly believed in Master. As a result, he made incredible progress in just two months and went to places with the brightest Light during his meditation. However, he began to have doubts because he remembered what his previous master said: 'If both of your yang and yin spirits go out, you could be possessed.' So he started to doubt my teachings and suspected that the method that he was practicing was not correct. His level dropped immediately. He couldn't go up again. So you can see how much maya can block us.

Those who know too much and have learned too many methods cannot make any progress, either. Knowledge is different from wisdom. The more knowledge we have, the less wisdom we have. So, the pure and the dumb make faster progress. However, you should be careful once you progress; don't regress and don't be arrogant, and especially don't reveal to others. If you tell others and let them think you are great, then you are finished. Your level will go down immediately. That's why I don't often allow you to tell your inner spiritual experiences, because it is difficult to avoid arrogance. When everyone starts

to praise you, you will feel extraordinary that no one else has such good spiritual experiences as you do. Then you will be in big trouble.

Faith is the foundation of all methods

If you surrender to the Master power completely and have one hundred percent faith in Master, you will progress very fast. Are there such people here? If there are, it is very rare and they will make fast progress. Some people come to see me every time, attend my lectures and come to the center and set up their tents every weekend, but they may not necessarily have true faith in Master. They might just follow others to believe. For example, they might feel discourteous if they don't go to see Master, or they will be bored at home anyway if their husband or wife go to see Master. So they just come along.

Even in that case, it is good for them. They may become enlightened after hearing a word or two here. They may later be influenced by the fellow initiates. So, group meditation is very useful. If we are alone, it is not easy to practice and sometimes we may regress because of not keeping good company, good friends and fellow initiates. Sometimes we wonder why we don't have any spiritual experiences and cannot progress, because we are not aware of our heavy karma.

In the ancient times, Masters didn't teach so many people openly, because they were afraid that they didn't have enough time to take good care of the disciples. Nowadays, we have Master's audiotapes and videotapes, but we still have a hard time believing in the Master. People in the old times only saw their Master once or twice and listened to the Master's lecture two or three times. They couldn't record much of what the Master had said. Their notes could be too messy even for themselves to read. They might write down the wrong words and read them carelessly after they went back home. So they couldn't deepen their faith. Once when Shakyamuni Buddha gave a lecture, five thousand people left the site because they didn't believe that the method He taught was the highest. They thought they knew everything already. How could there be a highest method! And these were monks and nuns in the ancient times, not just ordinary lay persons.

So we can see that it is all the same in any time. Truth is difficult to understand because we have been bound by traditional customs too tightly. We have gotten used to them after growing up with them for decades since being young. So, by the time we meet Master, we cannot believe Her easily.

The modern time is not bad. We have a lot of tapes to listen to again and again. If I speak too fast today, or if you are too intoxicated by looking into my eyes to listen, you can listen to the tape again at home. Our heart should be like a child's, very pure and receptive, in order to make fast progress in our spiritual practice. Otherwise, I cannot push you, but only stand by and wait.

Even if you don't believe in Master or cannot sincerely repent, you should try your best, and then you will get results. Take Milarepa, for example. Although he was hard-headed and his heart was cold, he still achieved results in seven years. We may be slower than he was, but we can achieve results in ten years at the most. So, give ourselves some time and take it easy. Even if it takes us twenty years, it's still better than nothing.

Let go of outer rituals to progress faster

You may be slow or fast, but you should do your best. Since you have already learned with me, you might as well continue. If you go to find another method, it is still same. In the

case you don't practice well, you will have to be born again and chant Amitabha every day, which is also boring. Morning chanting and evening chanting won't do any good. If you really want to chant sutras in the morning and in the evening, you can still do that, but meditate afterwards. If you really need to bow to a wooden Buddha statue, you can, but you should still meditate afterwards.

Even so, we had better let go of those rituals. When we go to a university, we should not linger on in the elementary school. I am not saying that the outer things are not useful; they are, but only for kids. For example, a pacifier is very useful for kids and babies. We cannot say that it is useless, but it is useless for adults. If no one needs to recite sutras or bow to a Buddha statue, why are so many people doing it? If the pacifier is not necessary, why will the baby stop crying when we put one in his mouth? That means that pacifier is necessary for them. It is just that we have grown up and should not use it anymore. It would look odd if we continue to suck on the pacifier.

That's why I advise you not to bow to wooden Buddhas. We should quickly leave behind the outer rituals in order to progress faster. If you really cannot put it down, you can bow to wooden Buddhas, but you need to practice meditation, too. Don't spend all your time on bowing to wooden Buddhas and spare none for meditation. Otherwise, it will be too bad for us in climbing up. Everyone else has graduated from the university, but you are left behind in the elementary school. Now that you have already registered in a university, you might as well take university courses and don't be attached to the elementary school.

If you have any questions, you should meditate more and then you will have the answer. That is the best answer you can get. Read the books of my lectures more often as well because you have not completely understood the meaning. The more you read, the more you will understand and the more new things you will discover.

QUAN YIN METHOD IS THE MOST ADVANCED SCIENCE ¹⁸¹

The Quan Yin method offers you an incredible power of communication. With it, you don't need a telephone. You don't even have to lift a finger or write a thing. As soon as a thought arises, the line is connected. This is the situation in the pure land (high heaven). Others can instantly perceive your thoughts. You don't need to speak or tell others your name. This is the state of the higher realms. If you want something, others will know right away. If you need something, the Lord of that realm will immediately radiate Light to where you are and help you. He doesn't need to know your name, because in a higher level realm, names don't exist; and there are no individuals. All beings are one. Though we may manifest in different forms or show different spiritual levels, there is no intrinsic distinction among beings.

It is like a radio station that doesn't need to know your address. As long as you have a radio and tune in to that frequency, you can receive the signals from the radio station. It is the same with a television station. It doesn't need to know your address, the size or brand of your television set, or when you purchased it. The television station doesn't care which company produced your television set, who bought it, or who owns it now. As long as you tune in to its channel, you are connected to the station. Similarly, initiation is like turning on your 'radio' so that you can conveniently communicate with the 'station' every day. This is our intrinsic 'telephone system.' No matter where you live, you can communicate with Master whenever you think of me. You know it's true. [Audience: Yes!] It is not me who goes anywhere. It's just that the frequency of the vibrations has changed.

181. Group meditation, Taipei Center, Formosa, October 25, 1988 (Originally in Chinese).

The state of having countless transformation bodies is called Tathagata, which means 'neither coming nor going,' or 'present everywhere at the same time.' This is very scientific. It is just a matter of changing vibrations. In a scientific sense, light is a higher form of electronics. The common form is the electricity that is utilized under human control. However, when we touch an electrical device, the light turns on immediately by itself. That is more advanced, but the light is the highest state of electronics. Today, with great scientific progress, many things have become computerized or are controlled electronically. They use some form of light there.

Playing the traditional piano requires much manual operation. But today, we have the electronic organ. It is smaller in size, and can produce many kinds of music, such as that of the flute and the piano. Isn't that great? It is an electronic device. The music of the higher levels is similar, only it is even more advanced. It is so advanced that music comes without an instrument. This is the highest form of music, the highest vibration, and the highest state of electronic device. The inner Light and Sound are the highest state of electronics that the most sophisticated scientists have long been looking for but have yet to achieve.

Therefore, spiritual practice is the highest science. If you practice the Quan Yin method with me, you will be practicing the highest science and logic. It is not a superstition or a prostration to deities or spirits for merit. It is not mysterious or ambiguous. One doesn't have to jump up clumsily or talk nonsense without even knowing what one is raving about. That is being possessed. What is maya? It is a kind of power with little knowledge. What is Buddha? It is the one with scientific wisdom. That is all. The more we practice spiritually, the more we understand science. If we only study science without practicing spiritually, our scientific knowledge will be limited. Spiritual practice will take us beyond science and ahead of scientists. They have been to the moon, but we can go beyond the moon. They wanted to make more discoveries and travel to more planets but without success. The farthest place they can now go is the moon. They brought back some rocks and many scientists gathered together to study these rocks. [Laughter] They cut the rocks and studied them, 'Yes! These are really rocks!' [Laughter] Then more scientists came to have a look. They, too, saw only rocks. Even to the most gifted scientist, they were just rocks. It was no fun. They spent tons of money and mountains of effort. If they had put their effort, money, and devotion into spiritual practice, well, [Master snaps Her fingers.] they would have known lot of scientific things and become saints in no time.

THE CELESTIAL SCHOOLS IN HEAVEN ¹⁸²

Today I'm going to answer the following questions for you: Why are some children bright while some are not as smart? Why are some people born talented and some are not?

When we pray in our hearts for something, sometimes it's useful and not necessarily useless. If we pray very sincerely, our prayers will be realized whether we practice the Quan Yin method or not. As for you who are practicing the Quan Yin method, I have told you how to pray. Pray for the highest rather than selfish, secular things. Only then will you receive superior blessings. For instance, you may pray for liberation from birth and death, pray that Master will help you to meditate persistently and diligently every day and to endure this world while waiting for your time to come so that you can go Home. You should not pray for such things as becoming a genius, or the best scientist or the most famous doctor.

182. Group meditation, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, October 23, 1988 (Originally in Chinese).

However, some people outside do pray for such things; even children pray for them. They pray that they can enter a good school, become the smartest student, graduate smoothly and so on. So, some higher beings, perhaps teachers or angels from the astral worlds, come to these children when they're sleeping and silently take their souls to schools in heaven to learn music, science or literature in their world. Then the children return superb and excellent and become increasingly so as they continue to learn.

If we can go up there through astral projection, we will see many schools especially for educating children from our world. Our earth is not the only planet in the universe; there are many planets similar to earth. They have the same civilization, same lifestyles and same thinking. The children there also study in these 'celestial schools;' children from many planets go there. Usually, only children who are brighter, more outstanding and have more blessings are eligible to go up there to study these worldly things.

Therefore, some children are outstanding, superb and clever and can play beautiful music or write poems at a very young age. For example, for ten consecutive nights the ten-year-old child of a Taipei initiate dreamt that he saw saints and Bodhisattvas in heaven. He learned many things from them, and after coming back could write superb poems. This is not surprising. As for you who practice the Quan Yin method, I also take you to heaven to learn a lot of things when you're sleeping. However, our school is different than their schools; what you learn is the great wisdom.

Sometimes I also take you on tours of those places, which is why some fellow practitioners can suddenly write poems though they had never been able to do so before. Also, some have never been interested in painting, but now they can paint when they give it a try and some have never been keen about playing music, but now they love it, learn it very quickly and play beautiful music. Or there are many things that we were once incapable of doing but which we can now do very smoothly, and even better than professionals. It's all because I take you to learn in the superior schools at night. When I take you up to heaven, you also observe their superior ways of doing things. That's why we can sometimes understand techniques immediately by observing other people at work. Even though it's not our specialty or line of work, we can still understand immediately, sometimes even better than the professionals. Have you ever had such an experience? [Audience: Yes!]

So, after practicing the Quan Yin method we find it easier to do things and understand everything we read. Some people who used to be dumb can now write poems, write articles and speak eloquently; when reading books or scriptures they can understand them clearly and when observing other people at work they can also understand immediately. Sometimes when watching someone at work, we may think, 'Why is that person so stupid? Why is he doing it in this way? But then, I'd embarrass him if I intervened.' We may think, 'How frustrating! He's so slow and dumb! He's wasting a lot of effort for nothing. If I were him, I would have figured it out long ago.' However, sometimes the other party is a professional and won't listen to us, thinking that he knows his trade, he's the expert and we are laypersons. Every time we engage people to work for us, they tell us, 'You're lay people. You can't understand!' Then I say, 'Okay, never mind. We can take our time to study it!'

There are matters in which I had initially not wanted to intervene. However, when it concerns our fellow practitioners and their spiritual practice, I have to intervene and say, 'That's not the way to do it. You should do it this way!' On some occasions I have to do it personally, and then it's somehow improved. There have been many such incidents. So, we have to observe people's progress in spiritual practice before we can really tell who the true experts are. If you are already an expert in a certain field, you can do things even

better and smoother after practicing Quan Yin method. If you are nonprofessional, when you attempt to do something new, you can still do it. Go home and give it a try. Try doing something you have never done before and you'll find that the condition has changed.

ALWAYS REMEMBER THE ORIGINAL PURPOSE OF LIFE ¹⁸³

A complex life is exhausting

What a pity! We invented the computer and learned how to use it so that our lives would be more comfortable and relaxed. But little did we realize it would aggravate our problems. Our initial intention was to make life simpler and more relaxing but eventually the more we invent, the more complicated life becomes and the less time we have.

This isn't your fault, but you live an exhausting life. You're stuck to the computer, working fifteen hours a day. How can you stand it? I admire you. If I were you, I would have collapsed long ago, right by the computer. Because this job is very dull, cold and without emotions and you have to work fifteen hours a day, by the time you get home your mind and body are overcome by fatigue. Even if you sleep for seven hours, it isn't enough, so of course, you fall asleep when you meditate.

I truly sympathize with your situation. I don't blame you; I only blame your job. Get a new job or cut your workload in half and earn half the pay. With fatigue, of course, you cannot sit in meditation! This is an outcome of the situation; it's not that you don't want to meditate. Because of such lifestyles it's more complicated to deliver people in this era. It's not very easy because people don't have time. It's not that you don't want to follow me in spiritual practice but your life is too exhausting. After initiation, though you have tried your best to get up and meditate, you end up falling asleep again. Initially, you sleep lying down and after getting up you sleep on in another position. There's no difference. You're very pitiful!

If Shakyamuni Buddha had to work as much as you do there is no way He could have become a Buddha; I can guarantee you that. No matter what kind or what level of Bodhisattva He was, He couldn't possibly have accomplished it. Just as situations make heroes, situations also make Bodhisattvas. For example, if Mahatma Gandhi had not been born in India, he would not have become a hero. Or even if he had been born there but not in that era or under those circumstances he would not have become so famous either.

Create a situation conducive to spiritual practice

If we want to become saints, we have to create a relaxing situation for spiritual cultivation. I'm not telling you to shave your heads and leave home; I just want you to choose an appropriate job. If our job is too exhausting or if we're bound too tightly by the world such that we cannot rise higher, we should get a new job or cut our workloads in half. We don't come to earth to work until we die; we come to find our God nature, to elevate ourselves spiritually through our human bodies. And we should realize that our ultimate goal is to ascend to the superior realms and not be shackled here.

So, if we find that a certain job is not beneficial to our spiritual progress or our quest for the Truth, we should know it's not an ideal job; we need to get a new one. We ought to arrange our lives so that we have time for spiritual development. This is most important. Earning money is not good enough. Don't be deceived by this world! Who is ultimately

183. Group meditation, Taipei Center, Formosa, October 18, 1988 (Originally in Chinese).

going to spend the money we make? We cannot wear more than three sets of clothes each day! We wear only one set at a time; no matter how gorgeous the clothes are, we can't put on three sets at the same time. Likewise with food, we don't eat much. Why should we tire ourselves out like that? Working fifteen hours a day will drive us crazy!

Don't be bound by material things

As such, it's really difficult to pursue spirituality in this era, when people have less wisdom. The more civilized they are, the less wise they become because their time is occupied. For instance, today we have telephones so it's only right that we call our friends or chat with someone. Now that we have television, we should watch it. Otherwise, it'd be a pity. Since we have cars, we should drive them around. Sometimes we have nowhere to go yet we drive around the city aimlessly because we're bored. When we do have some time, we have to wash the car, repair it and take care of the insurance. There are so many things to do!

So, delivering sentient beings in this era can be both very convenient and inconvenient, because everyone is very busy. We're so busy that we don't have the time to think of liberation, to wonder, 'Why are we here?' We don't have the opportunity to think, 'Hey! I was not born to be a slave to this computer!' So much of our time is occupied yet we still have not awakened. We devote fifteen hours to it, but to what end? It's for nothing.

Previously, our world was fine without computers. I don't mean that computers are useless. We can use them, but we should not be enslaved by them. Most people forget that cars are here to serve us; instead, they become enslaved by cars. Is that not true? Some people polish their cars until they shine and are reluctant to drive them. The cars are on their minds day in and day out. They become slaves to their cars. Some people even forget about their illnesses in their zeal to earn money. They dare not eat what they want. They want to wear beautiful clothes, but cannot bear to spend the money. They never help their relatives and friends just because they want to hoard more money, the more the better.

They forget that money is there for us to spend, not for us to work for. So, it doesn't matter what we use or in which era we were born. As long as we know where to stop and are not enslaved by material things it's fine.

Be broadminded and encompass the universe

We should be broadminded in our spiritual quest, doing it for the world rather than for an individual or family, or even for just five generations of our family. However, at least doing it for five generations of our family is slightly better than practicing for fame, gain, longevity or miraculous powers.

When we pray for Master's help, the broader our minds and the greater our will is, the greater is our power. But if we pray only for our own benefit, our prayers are not very powerful. They're useful, not entirely useless, but much weaker. We reach a level in spiritual practice where we don't care about any situation, letting Master take care of us if we fall ill, not caring if we win a lottery or even if we're penniless. We don't pray for anything; we only think, 'Master, since You know everything, I have no need to say it.' Then we can say we've reached a very high level. We don't care whether we have Light when meditating on the Light or whether we have Sound when contemplating on the Sound. That's the time when we have a dispassionate mind and are most contented. That's the state of one who has attained the Truth.

After following me in practice, some people still ask this kind of question: ‘Master, my husband is...’ or ‘My son is...’ or ‘I am...’ I do not forbid you to ask these questions, but we should be more broadminded to include all sentient beings in the world. Only then can we say we are sincere in seeking the Truth. Only then will our level be elevated and will we become less restrained and more powerful and attain Buddhahood more quickly.

If we think constantly of only one or two people, we’ll be influenced by them – I mean we will reap their karma. Because when we think of someone, of course, his or her energy reaches us, whether it’s positive or negative, large or small, from the Buddha power or the maya power. We’re influenced by whomever we think of. So, we should think of the most high, who is the most powerful and is free of karma so that we can benefit from it.

If we love the karma of this world more than we love God or our almighty wisdom, we naturally give the world a chance to drag us down. So, the broader our thinking, the greater our wisdom and power and the more we benefit. I’m not strictly forbidding you to think of your spouses or children. You may think of them, but they should only be part of the whole. Don’t make them the most important aspect, but include them as part of the universe. When we pray, it’s best that we pray for the Master power or God power to alleviate the sufferings of the world. In this sense, of course, both we and our relatives are included. This is the best kind of prayer.

God is the true benefactor sustaining everything

Why can we not attain liberation? Let me tell you a ‘state defense secret.’ It’s because we mistake falsehood for the Truth. We borrowed the womb of a person to come here, and we come to think she is our mother. We feel obligated, highly obligated, but we forget the one who gave birth to our mother. God gave birth to her; He also gave birth to us. God took care of her and let her grow up. Now God also takes care of us, and yet we forget who our true benefactor is. When someone gives us a dollar or two we’re grateful and say, ‘Thank you, thank you very much!’ When someone serves us a meal we also say, ‘Thank you, thank you very much!’ And when anyone gives us an injection we say, ‘Wow! I’m grateful!’ But we forget the one who is really taking care of us, who is taking care of the doctor and giving him power so that he can save us.

The one who really saves our lives is God; the one who really sustains us is God; the one who really loves us is also God. What I mean is the supreme power, which is also our original wisdom. Sometimes we forget our true benefactor because of this false benefactor. That’s why we cannot gain liberation. For instance, the letters we receive are from our mother or lover, not the postman. The postman only delivers the letter; he has no idea what it says. However, as we know who has delivered the mail, we say, ‘Thank you, Mr. Postman!’ There is nothing wrong with this. However, when we thank someone in this world, we regard him as our benefactor. This is why I tell you not to worship me. I am merely a postman delivering the gift to you. This gift is originally yours so do not worship this postman. When he’s worshipped, his ego grows bigger and bigger as he thinks that he is the one doing it.

In this world our physical bodies are not great. Our God nature is within us. You have the God nature and so do I. Since you have forgotten your God nature I have come to open it for you. That’s all. There’s no need to worship anyone. Outside people think that I like fame and profit and enjoy being worshipped so I give lectures to the public. This is not true! If it were I might be overjoyed to have you worship me every day. This is not the case. Don’t I scold most often those who worship me? [Audience: Yes.] So, don’t be ignorant and engage in such superficial politeness.

Shakyamuni Buddha said something similar: 'I am just the finger pointing at the moon; I am not the moon. Follow my finger and you will see the moon.' However, people of the world turned Him into the one-and-only Buddha. During His lifetime He was the only one. This is no longer true, but most people don't realize the truth. Wherever and to whomever you explain this, no one accepts it. That's why people believe 'Shakyamuni Buddha is superior to Jesus Christ,' 'Jesus Christ is superior to Shakyamuni Buddha,' 'Lao Tzu is superior to Confucius,' or 'Shakyamuni Buddha is superior to Confucius.' People of the world cannot free themselves because they mistake falsehood for the Truth.

Dissolve karmic relationships and help others on the spiritual path

Each of us has an affinity with not just one person but with many people. We have lots of parents. In whichever era we're born, we always have parents; whether we're born as animals, heavenly beings, astral beings, insects or trees we have parents. The parent of this guava fruit is a guava tree. [Laughter] Never in any one lifetime were we born without parents. Therefore, life after life, we have numerous parents. Each time we reincarnate into this world we choose a pair of parents. Even if we don't choose them, someone else does because the parents have affinities with other people besides us. We have many ties of affinity. That's why it's so difficult to sever these affinities and this karma.

Each time before we come here we make a vow up there to develop ourselves in order to become a superior being, a saint. But in the end, when we come here we become attached to 'my mother,' 'my father,' 'my wife,' 'my sons' and 'my grandsons.' Then we're finished! We're trapped in this web, cannot walk away and cannot realize the Truth. If after we descended from above we could remember the vow we made, it would be too simple!

In our descent, how can we come down here if we don't have a pair of parents to give us a body? We can come precisely because we have an affinity with them. They're just a vehicle like a taxi. It's more convenient to take a taxi from Taipei to Kaohsiung. If we cannot find a cab, we have to take the train or airplane. All these are merely vehicles. However, people in general cannot understand this truth. The mother thinks, 'He's my child.' The child also identifies the mother as his parent so they're tied to each other. If parents and children are all enlightened and realize that they're in this illusory world to help each other find an enlightened Master to practice spiritually, such a family is the most blessed. By helping each other in their practice they progress very rapidly and then ascend together. Even if they do not have an affinity for a long time while they're here, they can stay together after going up. Isn't that more wonderful? [Audience: Yes!] In clinging to each other here, they can at most only bind each other for a hundred years. After that they all have to go their own way, which is even more agonizing!

If you truly love your children or your parents, you should persuade them to join you in practicing the Quan Yin method and then you can ascend together, never to part again. Isn't that the best way? [Applause] Yes! Though we provide our parents and children with money here, it isn't much. They still suffer, fall sick and remain ignorant. When we go up later, they will still be crawling around here.

Be filial by introducing the ultimate method to your parents

Shakyamuni Buddha said that the most filial children are those who persuade their parents to pursue spirituality and tell them about the true method. We are the most filial children when we help them realize the Truth and attain enlightenment, not just give them money to spend. However, if our parents have no money, we cannot forsake them and let them starve while we seek the Truth. This is also not the right thing to do. If there is someone

who can take care of our parents and keep them from starving, it will be very good! It shows that we have a wonderful destiny!

The sixth patriarch Hui Neng was an only son and had no money so it was not convenient for him to go out to seek the Truth. But later someone helped him and gave him some money. He then gave the money to another person and entrusted him to take care of his mother. Having done that, he left home immediately. That is the way of an enlightened person. Shakyamuni Buddha practiced spiritually and attained Buddhahood so His mother was able to go to the Trayastrimsas heaven after her demise. If Shakyamuni Buddha had not attained the Truth, or if His mother had not given birth to Him but to an ordinary human, perhaps she would not have ascended to the Trayastrimsas heaven. Then it would be difficult to say where she might have gone after death.

Being a queen she also incurred heavy karma. Every day she did nothing but consume food grown by other people while dressing herself in the finest fashions. She lived in a palace built with other people's tax money and labor and had people waiting on her every day. All this produced karma that she owed to sentient beings so how could she have gone to the Trayastrimsas heaven? Hell is full of kings; most kings of ancient times went there due to the karma they owed the people. If a king was not moral and failed to take good care of the people, good grief! All foolish kings and tyrants go to hell. The greater their power when they're alive, the lower they go after their deaths.

We spiritual practitioners bring intangible benefits to our parents. The greatest benefit is elevating their souls instead of taking care of their ephemeral physical bodies while they remain ignorant and foolishly waste their lifetimes. If we cannot deliver them spiritually the best approach is for us to practice spiritually and share our blessings with them intangibly. Otherwise, we'll be the most unfilial of children!

WE CREATE OUR OWN HEAVEN AND HELL ¹⁸⁴

When you hear someone say that it's not necessary to keep the precepts or purify the body, speech and mind in spiritual practice, you should know that they're joking. They are not serious in spiritual practice and treat spiritual practice like a children's game.

Since ancient times, no spiritual practitioner has been able to attain the ultimate Truth very easily. Only those superior beings from beyond the three realms who don't have any problems and have very few obstacles can attain the Truth soon after embarking on the spiritual path. Even if they have obstacles, at the most it's just seeing some demons, or it's like Shakyamuni Buddha, who, when He was about to reach Buddhahood, saw the maya king transformed into His wife, son or a pretty woman to seduce Him. That's all. However, at that time He simply said, 'You are all but illusions!' Then He controlled the illusions and conquered them. That was the obstacle that confronted Shakyamuni Buddha; otherwise, He didn't have any obstacles and attained Buddhahood after practicing for six years. If the method we practice is not the right one, even after six hundred years or six hundred eons, it will bear no fruit because we cannot cook rice from sand. But if we practice the Quan Yin method we will definitely succeed!

Also, we spiritual practitioners should ensure that our actions, speech and thoughts are pure regardless of whether our level is within or above the three realms. When we hear people say that we've transcended the three realms, we shouldn't believe them immediately. Instead, we should first introspect ourselves, and if we're still bound

184. Group meditation, Tainan Center, Formosa, October 13, 1988 (Originally in Chinese).

somewhere that shows we're still within the three realms because we're still chained, still not relaxed or free. At that time, we should quickly practice spiritually and then very soon we will go beyond the three realms.

Every Buddha has to practice very hard before attaining the Truth. Jesus Christ said that He was the son of God, yet when He was practicing in the desert, the maya king still came to tempt Him. He practiced very hard and when He was about to attain sainthood, the maya king said to Him, 'All the three worlds I will give to You if You worship me.' And Jesus Christ said, 'Get thee behind me, satan!' This meant that He was telling the devil to go away and out of His sight. In fact, it's not an easy thing to become the king of the three realms.

It's best for us to always focus our thoughts on the supreme power. We should think of Hirm intensely while craving to go back to the highest realm and not linger in any other realms. In this way we can create a very positive, intense atmosphere and use it to build our own heaven the way you build your own meditation center. First you conceive and design it and then get together to build it. That's how you have this Center now.

Similarly, if we don't conceive of a good design of heaven, after we go there we won't be able to find anything. But if we have a superior concept of heaven's design, we'll go to a superior realm because 'all is created by the mind.' It's very simple for us to create heaven or hell. So, don't forget the almighty power within and pray every day to Hirm for help by saying, 'I want only You! As for the other things, it's fine if You give them to me; it's also all right if You don't. It's fine if I can have enough to make a living, but if I don't, I also don't mind. Really, I only want to go Home. I don't want to again become a deva, a human or an asura who has to transmigrate in the cycle of birth and death.'

That's why I teach you to purify your actions, speech and thoughts. To pursue spiritual practice we must observe the precepts. However, when we're advanced on the spiritual path we naturally observe the precepts. The more advanced we are in spiritual cultivation, the more sensitive we feel, and so we observe the precepts spontaneously. At that time there's no need to emphasize the precepts, samadhi or wisdom; we naturally attain them. Only then do we have the true precepts, samadhi and wisdom. We have wisdom as though we don't have it and we don't think we have it. It's as natural and simple as breathing, washing our hands, washing our faces and going to sleep.

It's not necessary to deliberately renounce the world. We just need to persist in spiritual practice and the world will naturally let go of us one day. Don't worry about being bound tightly by the world. Even if sometimes I'm rather stern and reprimand you for not being able to let go, and for continually clinging to this world, you don't have to become agonized or irritated. Instead, you should introspect and persist in spiritual practice and sooner or later you will be able to let go. Sooner or later, all the fame, profit, money, all those things will mean nothing to you. It doesn't mean we can't use these things, but we don't care about them. We use them if we have them and if we don't have them it's also fine.

Therefore, when we think about things related to fame and gain, we're chaining ourselves. In the very beginning, before anything came into being in the universe, there was absolutely nothing. We should trace our thinking back to that time. Everything was originally nothing. Before a flower came into being, what was it? Who were we before we were born? Nothing existed in the first place. Everything comes into being through the convergence of causation so we mustn't be attached to these ephemeral things, all of which things come into existence only due to causation and they will disperse when the causation ends.

To really understand this truth, we need to practice for a long time and then one day we'll naturally realize that this is indeed the Truth. Having attained this realization, we will never lose it. Now as you listen to me telling you all this, it still belongs to me. I'm just letting you have a glimpse of it; you still don't have the 'money' to buy it. It only becomes your property after you have bought it so you must continue to practice. It's not enough to just listen to me and then think, 'Since everything is nothing and all karma is originally void, we have no need to practice anymore. This is too great! Whatever Master says is true. Just believe in Her!' This won't do because you have not yet really understood.

So, we must be pure in our actions, speech and thoughts. The purer we get, the fewer disasters and illnesses we'll have. We can't blame anyone for any situation we run into; all the heavens and hells are created by us.

ALL DISASTERS ARE CREATED BY OUR BAD THOUGHTS ¹⁸⁵

There are many worlds and many realms in the universe. Our world is called the physical world, where everything can be seen, grabbed, touched or obtained. In addition, there are other worlds that are created by the mind, the nearest one being the astral world. Most of the time, our thoughts are low-level and ferocious or 'good' by so-called worldly standards. These thoughts fly to a place nearby, the astral world, which we call the atmosphere.

Sometimes we contract a disease or an infection, or disasters, war or catastrophes befall us. These are all created by the ferocious thoughts of earthly people. We shouldn't complain, 'I'm such a good person and have performed good deeds since childhood. How could I get such an incurable disease?' Or, 'My country is so good. People believe in God and worship high and low. Why does disaster strike us?' No matter what happens, there's a reason for it. We earthlings or our countrymen once had or currently have bad thoughts. Even though bad thoughts arise for only a short while and aren't put into action, the thought-energy still exists. The thought-energy seems to have its own knowledge and intelligence, which we call elements. But thoughts have no soul and therefore no God power. Knowledge is thus comparable to a computer, which has no soul but can calculate with logic.

However, fierce and incorrect thoughts are more powerful than the computer. We can destroy a computer but it's difficult to erase a vicious thought. No matter how much time has passed, these thoughts continue to exist, coalesced with thoughts of similar magnetic fields, and sooner or later, find an opportunity to explode and release their energy.

If we stop using a computer or have used it for too long, it breaks down by itself or crashes at the push of a button. All recorded materials naturally disappear. But there's no way to erase ferocious thoughts. They don't disappear by themselves. Once they arise, they continue to exist and develop into an atmosphere surrounding us, our earth, our country, villages and cities. Then they turn into diseases, disasters or wars.

What is disease? It's the atmosphere looking for similar thoughts and then entering their magnetic fields. This is what we call 'like attracting like.' The atmosphere waits until you have certain thoughts, or looks for those who often have similar thoughts and enters their magnetic fields because there's a gate. It's very easy for two thoughts of the same kind to mix together, penetrate our magnetic field, our brain and our nerves and destroy our resistance. Then we get cancer, suffer from neurological problems, or contract some disease that no one has ever heard of. It's highly possible that those with vicious thoughts

185. Group meditation, Tainan Center, Formosa, October 13, 1988 (Originally in Chinese)

generated bad auras in their past lives, and have therefore come back to absorb the bad atmosphere they had previously generated.

So, we should blame no one. We created everything; however, we can avoid these things. For example, if we keep our body, speech and thoughts clean and pure twenty-four hours a day, bad auras can't enter us. Things of different natures can't absorb each other. When something different enters, it gets alienated, just like oil and water don't mix altogether. We spiritual practitioners can eliminate a lot of karma. We may have generated vicious thoughts in the past, but we create fewer of them now. A karmic atmosphere that would have penetrated us completely in the past now only seeps in a little. Perhaps we'll itch here or hurt there, or have a temperature for two or three days, but these problems will not develop into cancer. Or we may have a small accident. Maybe our car will crash but we will not die; we'll only be slightly bruised or wounded.

Therefore, when we're in this mundane world, we should purify our body, speech and mind in order to protect ourselves. Once we go beyond the three worlds, there will be no problem. There will be no cruel atmosphere. No one will have vicious thoughts. Only pure people can go there.

CHERISH EVERY MOMENT FOR SPIRITUAL PRACTICE ¹⁸⁶

This world really has nothing worth clinging to so we should hasten to practice spiritually. Every moment, every minute, is precious because we never know how much time is left for us to practice. It's just like an airplane with a limited amount of fuel. For example, for a flight from the local airport to New York a fixed quantity of fuel is pumped into the plane. And if the pilot doesn't head straight for New York but wastes his fuel circling above the airport putting on a show, later when the fuel is exhausted, the plane will drop.

The Tao comes first and the mundane world second

It is not easy for us to leave this world because there are so many beautiful things in it. Many people want very much to leave this world, but cannot because of its many beautiful things that they fall in love with at first sight. If we have not seen more beautiful realms, of course, we will think that this world is the most beautiful; so it is not easy for us to go away. But never mind, we have practiced the Quan Yin method, one day we will know which realm is really beautiful. Perhaps we still do not know it, but there are fellow initiates who do. After listening to their descriptions, we already can feel the inspirational power urging us to practice spiritually and we want to be like them.

Someone wrote to me saying, 'Master, can You please take back this blessing power? After the seven-day retreat, I feel so blessed that I don't seem to be able to cope with this world.' [Laughter] Isn't that being stupid beyond words? [Audience: Yes.] Some people pray to Master, hoping to receive a few more blessings; but then, someone feels that the blessings are too powerful and want me to take them back. Why should I take back the blessings?

This blessing power is not controllable. It is not that I press a button here and you have the blessing. It is not like that. You want me to take it back, but I won't! [Master and audience laugh.] When it is given, it is given. What is there to take back? It is not like cows regurgitating the grass they have swallowed to chew it again!

186. Four-day retreat, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, September 24-27, 1988 (Originally in Chinese).

The blessing power is very precious. Very few people can transmit it. You cannot have it even if you exchange the whole world for it; and here you ask me to take it back! If I really do, you will be meditating for nothing and suffering even more than you do now. It is because previously you had not had that uplifting experience of not clinging and non-attachment to the world. Now you have experienced it and realize what is good. If I really take that away, you will feel more miserable than before you began spiritual practice. Previously you did not know what happiness was, and you could live on. Now that you have known happiness, you will not be able to live on once it is taken away.

I once told you a story about an Indian woman who received immense blessings. Perhaps she had just returned from a seven-day retreat. She remained elated every day. Whenever she was making chapatis (round Indian flat bread), she fell unconscious; her soul would fly out and leave her body behind. The flour would fall all over the place and her whole body would be stained with flour and become white. Things were strewn around, the pan in front and the chopsticks behind. You know that kind of situation. Or maybe no one does.

Then the hungry husband came home and saw his wife lying there. There were no chapatis. The butter was left here and the milk spilled over there. It happened like that every day. He thought that his wife was lazy and slept too much. So, he beat her, and the wife went to her Master and cried, 'Master, please take back your blessings.' Just like our stupid fellow initiate! She begged her Master a few times saying, 'My husband beats me every day. I cannot bear it anymore. Look at the bruises all over my body.'

Then the Master said, 'You should bear this. The blessings are very precious. You can go into samadhi any time. Not many people can have this.' Because her inner Sound was very powerful, her soul was pulled out whenever the Sound came, leaving just the body behind. Our body is just like our clothes. When the soul goes out, it is like a person taking off his clothes and leaving. However, she said, 'But I can't bear it. There is no peace in my family. Every day my husband beats me when he comes home. Please! You must take back the blessings.' Master said, 'All right, I will.'

After her Master took back the blessing power, it became even more unbearable. The woman came and cried again, 'Master, it is worse now! It was better before. Even when my husband beat me, I could sometimes enjoy the experience of samadhi. Now, although he does not beat me, I can no longer hear the inner Sound. There is nothing! That won't do!' You know disciples are all like that, fond of creating trouble for the Master. Then her Master said, 'Go away, and don't bring me trouble. You want it today and do not want it tomorrow. It cannot be this way. This is not something to be joked about.' The woman left and continued to suffer a lot. Of course, her Master would still take care of her when she passed away. But after that day her whole life became meaningless, and there was no more experience, nothing! That is because she considered the mundane world more important than her spiritual practice!

Therefore, we cannot chop and change again and again in our spiritual practice. We should realize that this world is ephemeral; so are all the pleasures, anger, grief, happiness and suffering. We should not lose our eternal treasure for these ephemeral things. We receive blessings, enter samadhi in meditation, and have wisdom. These things are the most precious. We cannot trade them for anything in the world.

Many spiritual practitioners were threatened in ancient times; history tells us that spiritual practitioners were not very safe sometimes. When Jesus Christ was alive, His disciples were intimidated and punished. For example, people cast stones at them, beat them and killed them, using barbarous ways to punish those who followed Christ and practiced the

esoteric method. But they persisted in their practice resolutely. They were willing to die for the Truth. It is the same in India today. Many spiritual practitioners are misunderstood by others and subject to oppression, threats, harassment and punishment, but they still continue their spiritual practice.

Not very long ago, the Sikhs were also suppressed by some government or king, and many people were killed. But they did not waver and continued to practice spirituality. A master of the lotus sect in Japan was also threatened, suppressed and chased away when he preached in public. Some of his disciples were also killed by people in power, but the rest remained firm.

The government of Formosa here is very kind, allowing its people to have religious freedom, and it is even better that they are protected by its laws. But you are aware that I also encounter calamity sometimes. What you know is only a very small part that is exposed. There are many things you do not know and I have not told you. What I mean is that even if we have mundane problems and troubles, still we should not trade our fortune and merits in spiritual practice for worldly comforts in life because these are too valuable!

We should bear any difficulty or trouble we have in our spiritual practice. We should regard any adversity as a test to measure our confidence and courage. We should not withdraw, with shaken confidence, crying and complaining when a situation arises. What kind of spiritual practitioner is that, with no courage and acting like a child?

When we practice spirituality, we should check on ourselves, instead of keeping our eyes on others. We should look after how much courage we have, and whether our faith is strong. We don't have to look at how well or poorly others are practicing. It is enough already to look at ourselves. Each day we take care of our courage, our conduct as a great human, and our faith in the spiritual path, not allowing them to diminish, waver, or be destroyed. This is our responsibility.

If any fellow practitioner puts the Truth first and this mundane world second, he will be liberated for sure, no matter how quickly or slowly he progresses in his spiritual practice, or how much or less his experiences are. This is the best way to measure it. The world exists only for the purpose of tying us down. All the pleasures, anger, grief and happiness in this world are there to test our confidence and courage, our attitude as great humans, and our faith in the Tao.

It will be too cheap if everyone who practices casually also can become a saint! What then would a saint be if he is just the same as the ordinary person? If anyone can become a saint even though he cannot tolerate anything, do anything, or pass any test, then what good is a saint? How can he be worthy of praise by humans and heavenly beings? How can he be worthy of being a 'Teacher of heavenly beings' or a 'compassionate Mother / Father of the four forms of birth'?

So, if you want to be a saint, you should clearly understand that any unfavorable condition is there to test us. We should live on bravely. Even if it is very painful, things will get better in a couple of days. The darkest and longest night will only last till the next morning. The night cannot last forever; neither can our suffering. We must have learned this lesson as a child, that no painful situation will last forever. Even the most painful situation will not last too long. The happy situation will last even less time. So, this world offers nothing for us to hold on to, nothing for us to become attached to!

Only one thing is eternal, and that is our inner Sound. It is always present and takes care of us every day. After a while we can rise and reside in that eternal place, where there is no night or day, no spring, summer, autumn or winter, and no pain like we have here. But when I say this, maybe someone will think, 'Every day would then be the same and it'd be so monotonous!' It would not be monotonous! It is because our mind is still at the level of the mundane realm and we cannot imagine that kind of realm. That is why after reading the Amitabha sutra, some people have asked me, 'Who wants to live in that kind of realm?' And I've answered, 'That realm is not as boring as you imagine.'

Only after we have personally experienced it will we know the pure land and want to live there. Otherwise, we cannot understand just by listening to others talk about it. When Shakyamuni Buddha was in the world, He had a disciple who was a queen. As a queen, she already enjoyed the most beautiful things and the happiest situations in the world. However, when she visited the pure land, she was eager to stay there. She asked Shakyamuni Buddha, 'Can I live there after I pass away?' The place she had seen was that beautiful!

ERASE YOUR HABITUAL WAYS OF ACTING THROUGH THE SOUND STREAM¹⁸⁷

The mind – A collection of habits from many lifetimes

You're always controlled by your mind. You listen to it constantly. Whatever the mind tells you to do, you do it immediately. That's why, life after life, you haven't been able to stand on your feet, or become a saint or your own master. Each of us has the Master within. The Master is our wisdom, but we fail to recognize it, or we don't use it well and are constantly deceived by our minds. In fact, the mind is just a tool that can't distinguish between good and bad but simply reacts out of habit.

Suppose you've enjoyed eating rice since childhood. The mind knows this and says, 'Ah! I've been eating rice every day of my life. So I should always eat rice.' It thinks in this way. So, if later you go to America, where rice is not readily available and you can only have bread every day, you feel uneasy. This is not a reaction of the self. It's the mind telling you, 'It's awful to eat bread every day. I must have some rice today!' Most Chinese travelers make it a point to have rice at all three daily meals, for they can't endure a regular diet of bread and potatoes. Like us, the American people have eyes, ears, noses and tongues, yet they have no problem eating bread and potatoes every day. However, if you ask them to eat rice each day, they can't bear it either. So, we know it's a problem caused by our minds and customs.

What is the mind? The mind is nothing but a piece of equipment that's similar to a recorder. Whatever you record, it plays back to you when you push a button. Thus, we should absolutely not listen to this instrument. For people controlled by their habits, life is boring because they do routine work all day. These habitual patterns comprise our minds, yet we mistake them and our minds for our self, making it impossible for us to recognize our true self.

Whether we're American, Chinese, French or of any other nationality, our true self is the same. The primal self that existed before we developed the practice of eating rice or potatoes, or of drinking beer, is the true self. Later we change into another person after following certain behavioral routines and customs. We believe that we're the ones who like

187. Seven-day retreat, Ilan Center, Formosa, August 12-18, 1988 (Originally in Chinese).

eating rice or potatoes, or drinking beer, but actually that's not our self. This person is created under the influence of customs and patterns, by our desires in life, by bodily needs; it's not the true self.

Spiritual practitioners are best advised to listen to the inner Master rather than to their habits or minds. The more we listen to the mind, the more we fall under its spell and can't break free of it. If we aren't cautious, our whole life will become very boring; much like that of a stone. We'll live each day in the same way, with the same thinking, same customs and same actions, but without the least bit of wisdom.

If we wish to attain wisdom, we must make use of it practically. For example, if we don't use the money in our possession, can it benefit us in any way? We may have lots of money, but if we save it all in a bank or store it in a corner, but work hard each day, using only what we earn and leaving all our other money stored in the bank or a corner, it becomes useless, and one day it will just rot!

By this same theory, if we fail to quickly recognize our independent self and its freedom from reliance on anything, we'll fall under the control of our wants. Our attention and energy will become focused on long-established behavior patterns. Such attention, given its great power, will form a mold once it integrates itself with many of these patterns. For example, this mold might have a preference for rice, women, alcohol and tobacco. All of these tendencies will then combine to form a certain blueprint, and the next time we transmigrate, we'll act in more or less the same way and add in more new behaviors.

Suppose a person had certain ways of acting in his previous life and also in this lifetime; though he's born in a different place, he still retains his previous-life patterns and also develops several new ones to make the situation even more complicated. So, there are times when we don't know what kind of person we are. We're happy today but unhappy tomorrow; we're okay today, but awful tomorrow; today we speak like Asians, and tomorrow we speak like westerners. We can't be independent or be our own master. We can't decide for ourselves, all because we're controlled by our habitual behaviors. The mind is nothing but a collection of these patterns. So, in order to change ourselves, we must first change our traditional ways of acting.

The truth is, the individual does not exist in the first place. We come from the same power, which makes use of certain tools to gain experience and learn lessons. However, we assume that these lessons are our selves and confine our great energy within a mold, thus limiting ourselves and placing our true self under the control of habitual patterns, which may dictate to our almighty power when it's time to eat rice or smoke tobacco. This power doesn't need to do such things, but does them only because it's under the mind's control.

Get rid of your longstanding habits through the Sound force

In practicing the Quan Yin method we use the inner nectar to cleanse patterns accumulated through many lifetimes and thereby liberate ourselves from the cycle of birth and death. Otherwise, the mind becomes filled with habits, and with each transmigration more are added. As these ways of acting multiply and become more complex, it becomes increasingly difficult for us to escape. Only the nectar of the inner Sound stream can cleanse these complex patterns and render them void. Only when all the behaviors that are capable of controlling our almighty power are erased can we fully recognize our true potential. As we cultivate our spirituality, we come to better understand that we absolutely don't need these things.

Many people stop smoking immediately after they're initiated because the inner Sound force erases their smoking addiction and their true self suddenly realizes that they don't need it anymore. I never compel them to quit; compulsion doesn't work. You know it's very difficult to stop smoking. So, how is it that these people can quit immediately after initiation? Some have been smoking or drinking for decades. It's really fantastic that they can eliminate their addictions all of a sudden! This power is truly incredible! Some people don't even need to wait until initiation to change; right after seeing me, they go home and rid themselves of all desire for tobacco, alcohol, meat and secular things!

Some people are open-minded, so the influence takes effect more quickly. But some are stubborn so the effect comes about more slowly. We say such people have a stronger ego and heavier karma. People with heavy karma have accumulated too many habits life after life over a very long time. Some people have been addicted to tobacco for many lifetimes so it's not easy for them to discard it immediately upon meeting me. Some, on the other hand, have only been smoking for a couple of lifetimes, or only in this life so as soon as they see me they no longer want to smoke. It's faster to erase the problem in such cases. It's just like clothes being easier to clean when they're not very dirty. Just soaking them in water makes them clean. Some clothes have been worn for a long time, for many days without being washed so they can't be cleaned even if you scrub them hard. So, some clothes take a longer time to wash, while others require a shorter period. However, you have to use soap and water to wash dirty clothes; there's no other way. Similarly, there's only one way to cleanse karma – that is, with nectar. If anyone tells you that there's another way, they're deceiving you! Regardless of the method you practice, if you haven't heard the inner Sound or received the inner nectar, it's useless!

The Quan Yin method is the matchless and ultimate spiritual method

Any method by which we can hear the inner Sound force is the Quan Yin method, the right method, the true method. This is just like the fact that anyone who gives you water to thoroughly clean your clothes is correct, regardless of the language he speaks or the method he uses. Whatever container he uses, it's the right one as long as it contains water. He could be using a golden bowl, but if it contained oil, your clothes would be ruined! Or if the liquid he gives you looks like water, but is actually beer, perfume or milk, then it's also no good! So, whatever method or container he uses is right as long as he brings water in it for that's what you need.

So, any form of practice by which we can hear the inner Sound is the Quan Yin method, the true method! Some Zen Masters were purer or had practiced in previous lifetimes so they could also occasionally hear the Sound in their meditation. At such moments, we can say that they were practicing the Quan Yin method for they then experienced the Sound. The so-called Zen masters might not have had to practice for a very long time before hearing the Sound. Some might have practiced for a very long time, but their spiritual level remained unstable. They experienced the Sound stream on and off, and didn't know which Sounds were good and which weren't. They just listened to the Sound without guidance, wasting much time and exposing themselves to danger.

Similarly, if when we're sick, we might not see a doctor but instead buy medicine at a pharmacy. There we find many supplements, vitamins and medicines for abdominal pain or headache, and randomly buy some and take them. Little do we know that the same headache symptom could have different causes, and it's the same with abdominal pain. So, even when taking supplements we have to pay attention to many things, such as dosage, duration of administration, whether it should be taken before or after meals, and so on. We have to find out about all these details.

This is similar to practicing the Quan Yin method. If we don't receive clear guidance from anyone, we may do it in the wrong way. We think that the more supplements we take, the better it will be, but that may not be true. That's why I don't ask you to meditate on the Sound all day long. I also don't teach you to spend two-thirds of your meditation time on Sound contemplation. Instead, I instruct you to meditate on the inner Sound for one-third of the time. I also tell you which side you should listen to, and which side you shouldn't. It's just like taking supplements. Should they be taken before or after meals? How large should each dosage be? How many times a day should they be taken? All these details need to be determined clearly so that our body gains the greatest benefit. Otherwise, there may be side effects.

There are others who also teach listening to the Sound. You can find them in Au Lac, in Formosa and elsewhere. However, it seems that they've only stolen a part of it, and don't know the complete method. Even then, however, there are still benefits, but also obstacles, of which I've seen cases. Only our Quan Yin method is clear and precise, just like a prescription issued by an experienced doctor. He knows what dosage is good for each patient. He gives accurate prescriptions so that there will be no side effects. However, there are people who have not graduated from a medical college but run clinics and cause harm to many people. This is similar to the so-called masters who come out to teach publicly. Their objective is money and fame so their teachings may be incorrect, confusing and harmful. So, it's not easy to pursue spirituality.

Each day, our souls are severely influenced by our habits so we ought to practice diligently, just like filthy clothes that have to be washed many times. A fellow initiate once asked me, 'Master, why do You say that it's good to have a one-day fast every one or two weeks?' It's because we want to break the cycle of transmigration so that the chain is severed and we become freer. Our own master says, 'I don't want to eat today,' so I just don't eat. It shows that we're in charge, we're our own master. I don't mean that starvation can make you a saint. No! You should know what you'll become if you starve yourself to death! [Laughter] [Audience: A hungry ghost!] Right! A hungry ghost! So, give up the idea that fasting can lead to sainthood. You should understand the logic behind it instead.

Now we use the inner nectar to cleanse our worldly habits so that we can be free. As a result, we can survive under any circumstances. We just use or eat whatever we have on hand, and the environment doesn't affect us. We just eat any vegetarian food that's available, and we're happy in any situation. This is a truly desirable condition. Having a lot to eat and a comfortable life isn't really desirable. No! No! That's a life of slavery. Instead we ought to set ourselves free. If we aren't free now, we can't be free after we die and go to paradise. Though we're in paradise, our minds keep thinking about coffee, milk and buns. But what if those things aren't available there? Naturally, we'll fall back into the human world. Yes! If you desire worldly things, you have to come back and find them here!

MAKE USE OF OUR WISDOM ¹⁸⁸

When we're independent, we're aware of our abilities, intelligence and shortcomings and thus know how to deal with them. Otherwise, we have no chance to use our wisdom, so it may become blunted. Hardships and uncomfortable or imperfect situations are just what benefit us most.

You should not think that crossing your legs and meditating is all there is to spiritual practice. No, it's not true! In this way, we cannot utilize our wisdom, which only makes

188. Seven-day retreat, Ilan Center, Formosa, August 12-18, 1988 (Originally in Chinese).

sense when it's being used. Suppose you live in this way: You stay in the mountains and lock yourself up in meditation, which takes you to very high levels and beautiful visions, and then you eat after meditation, and go back again to your high levels. Does this kind of life benefit our society in the physical aspect? No! Does your wisdom benefit anyone? No! It's said that working is also a kind of Zen, and so are eating and sleeping.

Whenever you work, it's your inner Master who works, not your physical body. So, when working, we should be aware and bear in mind that it's our inner Master who works with our hands the whole time. For instance, if we see that there is no water here but there are many people who have to use the bathroom, the inner Master will think of a solution. This place should be enlarged; the grass over there has to be cut, and some more bathrooms and several faucets need to be installed.

Suffering makes saints

You always spoil yourselves, which is why your wisdom doesn't develop. You see, all the enlightened saints throughout history have trained themselves or have been trained in unfavorable situations before getting enlightened. Even if they did not train themselves on purpose, they would be trained by the situations in their lives in order to become enduring persons.

You may find it hard to believe if I tell you all the hardships I have undergone since I was a child. You've heard that I was born into a well-to-do family and remained wealthy after being married, but these are just a part of my life. For example, people asked me, 'Where are You from, Master?' Of course, I answered, 'I'm from Au Lac.' 'What did your parents do?' I said, 'They were doctors of Chinese medicine.' Then they asked, 'Were You married?' and I said, 'Yes.' 'Any children?' I said, 'No.' 'What did Your ex-husband do?' I said, 'He was a doctor.' Then they ask, 'What kind of doctor?' and I said, 'He was a dentist and a surgeon as well.'

So, people assembled these answers and wrote my biography. But the information in it wasn't complete. As for my 'real biography,' you wouldn't believe it. So, it's enough to be like that; otherwise, it could make a big book! Actually, I have suffered much since I was very young, not because of the circumstances, but because I liked to train myself in unfavorable situations. At the time, I did not really feel any pain, but now when I look back, I find them very torturous!

Thus, in unfavorable situations your wisdom lights up, and becomes quiet and thoughtful, then you know what the Truth is. It's your real self who thinks when you're thinking. And so does your real self arrange these situations. Why? Because at such times you suffer from your previous karma, which was caused by you. For example, your true self 'arranges' that someone comes to punish you or scold you by creating an unpleasant condition. Actually, this is caused by your own karma. It's arranged in this way by your true self.

Let's say you physically attacked many people in a previous life. If you're going to be liberated in this lifetime, the previously attacked people will complain in their souls, and you'll know it in your soul. Your true self knows it by recording the condition with a special machine, which records everything in a fair way so you understand that you should let the previously attacked people seek revenge. That's the way it is. Therefore, you should know it's you scolding yourself when someone else scolds you, and you shouldn't blame anyone else.

Sometimes people come to see me, and look sweet and humble as if they prostrate themselves as soon as they see me. But I still scold them whenever I see them. You don't understand this, but it's okay, because you can't penetrate the subtle karma and ego, or the delicate causes and effects. You only see the superficial instead of the essential. That's why you think these people are good. On the contrary, some of you may look coarse outside, but are very good inside. We come to know about this after we spend some time with them. Have you ever had this kind of experience? [Audience: Yes.] That's what I said.

Nourish the seed of inner wisdom

Nevertheless, we should not worry about this – no matter how the person is – good or bad; with ego or egoless, all will be liberated after practicing the Quan Yin method. This is the best news. It's said in the scriptures that the seed of inner wisdom is planted at the first time you are awakened by the inner Sound. But most people have no idea what the Sound is or what 'contemplate the original self' means. You will understand this more and more after you believe in and practice the method. The pressure on your shoulders will become lighter, and you'll feel more and more relaxed. This means that your seed of wisdom is gradually growing and you will one day become a sage.

The Quan Yin method is too simple to be considered an ultimate method for gaining enlightenment. People would cherish the method if it were more complicated. So, although Buddhist sutra chanting and pilgrimages require much effort (some of the Tibetan ceremonies require a thousand and eight instruments in order to make a service for their Lord and are very demanding), many people are still fascinated and piously worship wooden statues.

You proclaim that I'm a living Buddha, but I don't believe it! You don't really know who I am. Because if you did, you wouldn't be as relaxed as you are when you come here. You would be different. But since my vibration is not too intense, you don't feel that a living Buddha is here. That's why some woman rolled her pants legs high and rested in an impolite way when she came here. Would you do that in a solemn temple? [Audience: No.] As soon as people see Buddha's statue, they immediately chant, 'Amitabha, Amitabha, Amitabha...', and bow all the way in from outside the temple.

In countries like Thailand, Burma, Au Lac and Sri Lanka, there's a gate far away from the ashram. People have to take off their shoes before they enter and then go inside with bare feet; sometimes you even have to bow all the way in from the gate. It's already like this to bow only to a wooden statue. For the purpose of looking cool, some of you behave so vulgarly here, even before me. I recommend that you wear long pants so that you'll look more dignified. What sense does it make if you wear long pants and then fold them high? Why bother?

Ignorant beings, upside-down world

Thus, sentient beings are very ignorant. They show their respect in the wrong place and wrong way, and worship whatever is not deserving instead of what is deserving. Think about it with your wisdom. Is what I say true? Everything is upside down in this world. That's why Shakyamuni Buddha was hurt, attacked and falsely accused; Jesus Christ was crucified; Confucius was slandered and driven away from as many as six countries.

Nevertheless, in each and every temple, offerings of incense, flowers and fruit occur nonstop, and it's the same in any era. Some temples have only one statue, but they still

make it into a solemn ceremony. Even if a statue of the god of the earth has its special honor, every day you can see people come in with fresh flowers, clean water and fragrant incense. And people do the cleaning voluntarily; sometimes they even bathe the statue, and do it very well. Many temples of the god of the earth are very big, and no one talks about waste or anything, but it happens to me, and I live in only one room.

And the god of the earth never stays in a hut like mine. It has to be put in a very solid place, which is colorfully decorated, carefully cleaned and filled with fresh flowers. As for my room, sometimes my attendants used to do the cleaning and leave the used water there for three days. At that time, there was no electric light so I used the water to rinse my mouth at night because I thought it was clean! This is a true story from my own experience. But you see there's always clean water before Buddha's statues in every temple, and the poor guy doesn't even need it. Don't you think this world is upside down?

Faith is the origin of all merit

So, you should understand that the Truth is simple and you should cherish it. The more you cherish it, the more you understand it. The more you believe in my real nature, the more you find your own real nature within. You can never realize your own real nature if you don't believe in an enlightened Master. If I'm not an enlightened Master, who is? None of you here can realize your own real nature. Because you come to learn from me, if even I'm not an enlightened Master, who is? When can you realize your own real self? Thus, the more we respect the Truth, the more quickly we find it and the more deeply we understand it. The more we believe in the enlightened Master who teaches us the Truth, the more quickly we find our own real nature within. The more people we help to step onto the spiritual path, the more merit we obtain. So, I say, 'A spiritual practitioner has no merit if he only practices in mountain caves, because he doesn't benefit others.' We receive wisdom from God but we don't make use of it to help others. So, we say it's okay to practice spiritually as either a layperson or a renunciate. It's only best if we practice hard and truly want to benefit sentient beings – it doesn't matter if we've attained sainthood or not. If we have good intentions, we'll become a fully enlightened being, who looks like an ordinary person. As long as we fully realize our own real self, we become a fully enlightened being.

The right concept of spiritual practice

We should not be too serious about spiritual practice, but regard it as something interesting. Seriousness is something inside and is an eagerness to become an enlightened being, which we all know, but should not show outwardly on purpose, as in dressing specially or displaying oneself solemnly, saying, 'I'm practicing spiritually and care nothing! I must achieve sainthood. Everyone, leave me alone!' We should not behave like that. We should be natural.

Diligent practitioners are those who do not forget the Truth at any time, who really want to know their true selves, and who really want to be liberated from life and death. They think about these things even at work. It doesn't necessarily mean they're reciting the holy names all the time. It's okay if they occasionally forget, but they truly want to be liberated inside and they think of everything related to spiritual practice, such as the Master, the Quan Yin method, and the group of fellow initiates. They only want to become wise, enlightened people. These people are the diligent practitioners or those who are always in Zen.

Spiritual practice doesn't mean meditating all day long. If you're distracted during meditation, it's no use. Beginners concentrate more easily when they sit for meditation.

Say if we stroll around and look at things we encounter and our attention goes outside, we forget to be concentrated. Therefore, when we begin to practice, we had better sit longer and be more concentrated. Then afterwards, when we go anywhere else, we'll be concentrated inside at any time. At that time, even when we're not sitting, we won't be distracted. It's the same when we're working.

I've told you clearly that you can rely on each other among our fellow initiates, instead of relying on ephemeral worldly relationships, especially with those who aren't initiated. When it's time to leave this world, they'll go their own way, and we'll follow Master and the initiates. You shouldn't rely on those who cannot go with you at the time of departure. That's why we say, 'Be one with the Buddha, the dharma and the sangha.' The Buddha means the living Masters, the dharma means the precious Quan Yin method, and the sangha refers to the whole group of our fellow practitioners. Sangha doesn't mean saints. It means 'a group who seeks the Truth,' 'a group knowing the Truth.' We should rely on them because they are our eternal friends.

Don't spoil yourselves too much; don't give others excuses to pity you. It's useless! There are many miserable people in this world. You're the most fortunate! Your life is comfortable enough! You have a living Master and the Quan Yin method, and you're destined to be liberated in several years or an even a shorter time. But those people who don't practice the Quan Yin method have to reincarnate again and again, and suffer a lot.

THE REAL MEDITATION ¹⁸⁹

All of you are attached to visions in meditation, considering them to be real spiritual experiences, and visions that you see when you are not meditating just do not count. But actually, at that moment you are really meditating, because 'Zen prevails in everything.' Meditation doesn't mean that we sit tight and regulate ourselves. That is the incorrect way, because at that time, we meditate with our ego, and that's why we have no experiences. We should do it in a natural way in order to attain enlightenment.

If you are as relaxed in your meditation as when you see me, that is real meditation. We have heard the story about someone becoming enlightened while chopping logs, and another case about someone else getting enlightened upon hearing a few words from an enlightened Master. That is it. Why don't you have an experience after hours of sitting vexed in meditation? It is because you do it with your ego, your mind. You focus your attention too hard; you push yourselves too much, so you become attached and nervous. That's why you have no experiences. That is not real meditation. It is just a kind of drill.

Real meditation takes place at any time. That's why some of you have good experiences when you are asleep or when you look at me attentively. That is meditation, for your attention is focused at that time. You concentrate because you are delighted to see me or listen to me, and you put aside your prejudices at that time. That is when you meditate, isn't it? That's when you have a normal experience.

Suppose you sit there with your brows knit, thinking, 'I want to meditate. Oh! How come I have no experience? Why has it not come yet? Oh! When will it come?' [Laughter] You are rushing yourself, rushing the enlightened experience. But these experiences never hurry. They come as they may, and go as they want. They don't attach to anything; as the Diamond sutra says, enlightenment comes when we do not attach to anything. We should follow this paragon in order to attain enlightenment.

189. Seven-day retreat, Ilan Center, Formosa, August 12-18, 1988 (Originally in Chinese).

When you gaze at me in a very pure state of mind without the slightest disturbance, you have all the experiences that you should have. Some of you, while attending my lectures, have seen the lecture hall turn into a world of extremely brilliant Light. That is the pure land. That is what is meant by the saying 'the pure land is right in front of us.' Our world is a physical one, but when we concentrate spiritually, it becomes the pure land at once, and devils can become saints in our eyes.

Some of you complain to me that you do not have such good experiences after you join group meditation. Actually, that's because your ego has come out and your love has diminished. The fellow initiates are not affecting you. You should not blame others; instead, you should retrospect on yourselves. That's why I don't like those who complain; it's just that I don't say so. These people expect me to blame others, but I won't be biased.

Some of you have many things on your minds when you look at me. You see as if you don't. Then you had better not look. Even as you look at me, many things are going on in your minds. You are wondering whether you should recite the holy names, as if you want to drive me away. [Laughter] If you should remember to do that while looking at me, it means you want to drive me away quickly and that makes me feel uncomfortable. You should look at me like a child who has not seen his parents for a long time, and then you will have inner experiences, which will be the best that you can have.

We should not think that we meditate only when we close our eyes and sit there vexed and with our brows knit. No, no! That's just a kind of practice. We sit quietly to express our sincerity. Although we can't sit peacefully sometimes, we continue. We wait for God in our meditation. Sometimes we have experiences when we are sincere, but sometimes we cannot concentrate and say to ourselves: 'Well, whether I am sincere or not, that's all I can do for now. Please help me, God.'

Therefore, we should meditate every day and consider it a duty, just like how we eat when we don't want to. We should make it a habit to think of God as soon as we wake up in the morning, and think of God again after we get off work and return home in the evening. Because we are too busy every day, we cannot think of God sincerely; therefore, we should do it early in the morning after we get up, and again in the evening after we return home. But this doesn't mean that we can think of God completely; we just do our best. We do it when we are working as well.

So, it is our greatest blessing and merit to listen to a lecture by an enlightened Master. Because we can see the Master continuously for two or three hours, we can be elevated by His / Her vibration, or our bad karma can be cleansed to some degree by His / Her Light, and then we will have inner experiences. Like when you come, you cannot see me continuously for two or three hours, so you don't get as much blessing as you would at a lecture. It is such a great blessing to be able to see an enlightened Master for two or three hours at a stretch! Not everyone has this chance. One glance in eons is good enough, not to mention two to three hours! Beings on some other planets have never seen or heard an enlightened Master before. They have had no contact with a Master. Therefore, you should seize the opportunity to see a real Master for a couple of hours. Many people, initiates or non-initiates, have experienced enlightenment during my lectures.

So, meditation doesn't mean only sitting. It is meditation when we wholeheartedly concentrate. That's why you have experiences when you are working. Sometimes we have no experience in meditation and we feel frustrated, because we meditate with our ego. That's not the natural way to meditate. But it's okay. You still get merit. Just meditate sincerely. The result does not matter.

Let me tell you why you don't have inner experiences when you meditate. It is because you are not completely free of attachment at that time, and you are not really concentrating. We think we are, and we frown and wonder, 'Why hasn't the manifestation of Master come?' Sincerity and longing are different from attachment. However, it is difficult for beginners to distinguish between them. It does not matter. Just do your best. It counts as long as you intentionally meditate and think of the Master, no matter whether you meditate well or not, or are distracted or not. Your efforts will be recorded and you will be elevated on any excuse. [Applause]

For example, you work for someone who sells clothes. Sometimes there are no customers, and you sit there and fall asleep. But the boss will still pay you for the time you stay. At other times you are busy the whole day long, and the boss pays you the same. As long as you come to the store, you get your monthly salary. It is the same with meditation. You should meditate, regardless of the experience. Your efforts will be recorded and I will 'pay' you someday, so that you can pay for your 'fare' to heaven. [Applause]

WE CAN DISCOVER THE WHOLE UNIVERSE ¹⁹⁰

Many people in our world have invented lots of wonderful tools, such as computers, airplanes, and spacecraft that can take us to the Moon and Mars. Although they owe it all to their inner power, they have used only a very small portion of it. Yet, before they create these things, they have to consider very carefully and reach inside for this almighty power. If we really know this power well, we will discover many, many things, not just a few machines, spacecraft, or computers. We will be able to explore and discover the whole universe. We will know every planet, moon, and star. We will understand the languages of the ants and birds. We will be able to read the state of mind of any sentient being. We can save them only when we know their state of mind. Otherwise, we will not be able to tell what the ants or birds need, much less read a human's mind. However, this wisdom is beyond description. I can only say: Knowing but not knowing is genuine knowing.

Let me explain this briefly. Under most circumstances, most of us 'know' something, that is, our minds do. Suppose I put two flowers together with another two flowers. That makes four flowers. I know this very clearly because my mind does the addition based on my knowledge. However, there are things that are beyond the realm of knowledge and the imagination of the mind. But we still know everything; we can do and invent anything. We can go anywhere without having to travel by plane or spacecraft.

The best spacecraft invented by our scientists today can fly only as far as the Moon or Mars. And when it lands at its destination, there is little it can do. The scientists cannot become acquainted or communicate with the living beings there because these beings are invisible. They realize that the temperatures are very high on Mars. On the Moon, there is not much they can do but collect rocks for research or as souvenirs. They devote so much money and effort just to bringing back some rocks for research! These rocks have little to offer besides, since Moon rocks are more or less the same as those that we have here. The dust on the Moon and on earth is not much different, either.

By practicing the Quan Yin method, we can travel to Mars without a spacecraft, if we really want to. We can do many things there, and we do not run about on the heated surface of Mars and then rush back to earth, because we have nothing to do there. Once we open our wisdom eye, the gate to wisdom, we know everything and can do anything. But our mind doesn't have to know about these things; it is not supposed to know about them.

190. Group meditation, Tainan Center, Formosa, July 7, 1988 (Originally in Chinese).

Sometimes it may be aware of them but it has no idea why things happen the way they do. It can only enjoy the experience without knowing why. It cannot do calculations like adding two and two to make four. It just cannot explain them. Neither can I, but I do know that these things exist. Our fellow practitioners know it, too. It's not just one or two of them, but hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands, and billions who know it.

The earth's atmosphere will improve if more people practice the Quan Yin method

Today there are many people practicing the Quan Yin method. This is the best news there is. Why is this so? Because the more people practice the Quan Yin method, the better the earth's atmosphere will become. Otherwise, we may not survive. The atmosphere now is very terrible. Many strong nations are taking part in a nuclear power race. The push of a button by one person could mean the complete disintegration of the earth. We won't have to wait until there is a war. Let's say that someone decides one day that he doesn't want to live anymore and he wants to take us all to his paradise. If he has control over that button, then we are in grave trouble. The people controlling those buttons are ordinary human beings; they are not saints or God. As such, sometimes they feel good physically and at other times not so good. They might have taken alcohol or drugs or quarreled with their spouse. Such unhappy situations can affect their decisions, which are made by the mind. This is extremely dangerous for us, and we have no other means but this almighty power within to protect our lives.

If we know where this almighty power is, of course, we will be able to get it. Just like when we know where a gold mine is, we can dig out the gold and use it. If we know where our bank is, how much money we have in our bank account, and how to withdraw the money, then we can get money from the bank every day. It's very simple. The Quan Yin method is not exactly a method. It shows us how to discover our almighty power. We have always had it, but we cannot use it because we don't recognize it. At the time of initiation, I will tell you how to use your almighty power; it is very simple. Just now I was holding this tissue paper, but because I was busy looking at people, I was not aware of it. However, if someone tells me: 'Hey! There it is!' I just look at it and discover it! It is very simple.

This almighty power has always been with us. We don't have to buy it or get it from someone. No one controls our almighty power, and no one can hide it. It has been in the open all the while, ready to serve us and to let us use it anytime. It is a great pity if we don't use it. It is just that our attention is constantly distracted by the outside. We look outwardly, worship the saints outside, and seek external powers. We worship deities and ghosts, mountains and rivers, and saints' relics, which are bones in another form. Do we want to become bony saints? That was why Shakyamuni Buddha said: You can never reach the state of God realization (neither going nor coming; omnipresence) by seeking it through worldly languages or physical appearances which are but perceptions of outer sound and vision, unlike the internal Sound, which is intangible, formless, and omnipresent. Only such is the real God realization, which means that we don't have to lift a finger and it is already there! We don't have to look for it and yet it is there. Such is the state of God realization.

It is very easy for us to find this state, but we must know where it is. Just take a look and you will know. Just like when someone reminds me that I have this tissue paper in my hand, I only have to take a look at it and then I know, because it has always been there! Therefore, Jesus Christ said, 'The heavenly kingdom is within you. You are the great temple, the grand church of God, and God dwells within you.' Such is the meaning of His words. That was how He managed to find God so easily and be His son. His disciples also had no problem finding the power of the holy spirit. Shakyamuni said, 'God is within

your heart.' Precisely because it was in His heart could He find it so easily. Otherwise, if it were not there, He could not have found it in six years, sixty years, six hundred years, sixty thousand years, six billion, or six trillion years.

The world is pure when our minds are pure

When we say that God is within our heart, we do not mean the physical heart. We mean that it is within us. Since this concept cannot be expressed in words, for the time being, I will say that it is within us. I use the term 'within' to differentiate it from 'without,' or the outside. The outside refers to such situations as worshipping wooden Buddha statues. I am sorry, but those are really just wooden statues! What else could they be? Stone Buddha statues are more or less the same. We may make pilgrimages to the mountains or rivers. If God is in the mountains, then He has discrimination, if He lives only in a temple, then He has discrimination. Or if God dwells only in a church, then He too has discrimination. But really He is omnipresent. Instead of dwelling only in our heart, He is in the heart of everyone, every flower, tree, rock, and grain of sand, and in every strand of our hair. Within everything, there is God, the God nature, and the Truth. We shouldn't have to look for the Truth anywhere else; we should seek it here. We are transforming this world into heaven. That was why Shakyamuni Buddha promised us clearly: 'The world is pure when our minds are pure.' [Applause]

Just moments ago, we heard that our fellow practitioners have wonderful experiences regardless of where they are. However, some of them have more experiences and some have fewer. It is because some are more diligent, and some are not; some have stronger powers of concentration, and some don't, but they still have a little bit of it. It is because this God nature has always been here waiting for us; we already have it within ourselves. It's just like the tissue paper that has been there all the time, waiting for me to see it, and then I become aware of it. It's very simple. Enlightenment is as simple as that.

What is enlightenment? The moment we realize our almighty power, we get a glimpse of the glorious dimension of this power, but that is just a part of it. We can never finish discovering the universe, and we will continue to learn even after we have become enlightened Masters. It would be too boring if we stopped learning after we became enlightened Masters! In the outside world, for example, after we get our Ph.D. degree or complete our teachers' training, we still have to go on learning. We cannot even learn all the things in this world, let alone all that is in the universe! I cannot tell you that there is a highest level waiting for you; there isn't.

By practicing the Quan Yin method, we can go beyond the three realms, and once we do, that's when the learning process begins. We do not practice the Quan Yin method to transcend the three realms and then stop there immediately. This is not the case. It is beyond the three realms where we begin to learn the Truth. Otherwise, why did Shakyamuni Buddha meditate every day? He went into samadhi during meditation and when He came out of samadhi, He would say a few words.

In some realms, there is no birth, death, deterioration, or destruction, but on our earth, we have all of these phenomena. There are many realms where there is no birth, no destruction, no contamination, and no purity. They exist forever. Only after we have reached these dimensions can we attain immortality, which is impossible in this world. Many people ask why we do not practice for physical enhancement. They think that instead of practicing for the upliftment of the heart, one should first practice for the physical body to achieve longevity. They have misunderstood the method of Lao Tzu, of Taoism. They have heard that Taoist practitioners can attain immortality. However, we know that all

the ancient Taoist practitioners left us; none of them ever stayed. If they became immortals, then where are they? Stop dreaming anymore. [Applause]

The path to immortality

There is a path to immortality. I can tell you in which world you can stay immortal. Such worlds will never be destroyed, and so we can live there forever. Even if I told you all the details and we could find a way to become immortal here, this world is not immortal. So, please do not ask such questions! [Laughter] You should wake up and use your own wisdom to decide which is the ultimate way, and where our eternal abode is. Don't build houses on water or sand.

Once when I went to Taitung to give a lecture, we pitched our tents by the riverside. One day there was a heavy downpour, so we moved quickly. Half an hour later, the river overflowed. If our tents had still been there, they, as well as all the people and vehicles, would have been washed away. We shouldn't build houses in such places! Because no matter how sturdy our house is, one day it will be washed away by the water.

Therefore, do not seek immortality here. Instead, we should find a way to move from this world to another world, where the conditions and environment are conducive to immortal life. We can live forever only in those places. This world, not to mention our fragile life, can perish within seconds. Therefore, I am really amazed that people believe in practicing to gain immortality. You should see the truth clearly and practice a logical method to get logical results. There are still people who run around telling everyone that they are practicing to gain immortality, trying to make others think that they are great. I don't know them, and I don't want to know them, either. When I heard about them, I laughed. That is really building castles in the sand!

Many people ask why we practice the Quan Yin method rather than other methods. It is simply because this is the method we should practice in the first place. We practice other methods only because we do not know this true method. We guess blindly and try everything we can until we find this true method and realize: 'Oh! We have wasted so much time in futility!' Suppose there were a few entrances to our venue here. If you didn't come in through these entrances but instead said, 'All entrances are the same. So, let's go through any entrance!' They could all be entrances, but they would lead to other places! We want to leave this ephemeral world, transcend the three realms, and attain immortal life. Thus, we should practice the method of immortality. Only when we have found and arrived in an immortal world can our dreams come true.

We know that such worlds exist because many people have been there before and have told us about them. Jesus Christ, Shakyamuni Buddha, Mohammed and others have told us about the existence of worlds that are eternal, happier and more glorious than this one. You may not believe in the words of the ancient people because you are uncertain about whether they are only myths. We have no way to verify with Jesus Christ whether the words in the bible were indeed His own words, or were added by other people later. We cannot ask Shakyamuni Buddha whether He had really been to the western paradise and if it really exists. Therefore, we may be skeptical. However, we should have no doubt that there are people today who can go there. [Applause]

We can go today; this I can guarantee you. Our fellow practitioners can go. Everyone can go. So can the teacher who was here yesterday. One of our fellow practitioners who is a cab driver can go, and so can you. Just now that person with a Ph.D. had a very good experience, and you too can have good experiences. The title of Ph.D. is not important.

We should discover our greatest inner wisdom, which is above all worldly intelligence and beyond any imagination. The more I talk, the lazier I become, and the more difficult it is for me to talk. Every day I feel very frustrated because I don't know how to translate this most important and beautiful thing into the ephemeral language of this world in order to introduce it to people who have never experienced it. Suppose we have tasted some cookies and know how sweet, delicious, and fragrant they are. But some of us have never eaten the cookies. So, how can we share with others our experience to convince and persuade them to buy the cookies?

The Quan Yin method measures our spiritual level accurately

Our spiritual practice doesn't begin only from the moment of initiation. Yesterday I told you a story about Master Kong Hai. He learned the secret ways in three months instead of the twenty years normally required by people. His Master told him: 'You have completed your learning. You don't need to learn any more.' I also told you yesterday about the story of another monk from the Tendai sect (of Buddhism). He begged Master Kong Hai to accept him as his disciple and teach him all the secret ways. But he wanted to accomplish it in three months, because he thought he could do it, too. Master Kong Hai told him, 'No, you cannot complete your learning in three months,' because Master Kong Hai had begun his spiritual cultivation when he was a little child. Before he arrived in China, he already had an intense aspiration for the Truth; he already knew the secret ways. Knowing them doesn't mean that he learned them. It was his inner realization. Owing to his intense and firm aspiration for the Truth, he had already attained some of the secret ways. Therefore, when he was in China, he learned only the final step in three months.

This is why many people have experiences of the higher dimensions when they first receive initiation. It is because they have practiced spiritually in the past. Some people have fewer experiences because they are less focused and weaker in faith. I don't mean that they do it deliberately; it is often related to their spiritual background in the last life. However, we should try to see and know our spiritual level. The Quan Yin method can measure our spiritual level accurately; we cannot deceive anyone. Suppose some people come and tell me that they have practiced for decades, but at the time of initiation, we can know where their true level is. Yet there are people who have never practiced before and may not have any religious beliefs, but after listening to my lecture, they believe. Their aspiration for the Truth emerges and they decide to practice spiritually. When they come to receive initiation, they have superb experiences because they have practiced in the past, or because of their inner yearning.

Before I found the Quan Yin method, I traveled to many places, visiting ashrams, churches, and temples, chanting sutras and scriptures and worshipping. I yearned very much to realize the Truth. I often went to churches and joined their choirs, but there were times when I didn't feel like singing. I loved to pray to God alone in the church. I prayed only for one thing: 'God, if You really exist, please let me know You.' That was my prayer, the same one every time. I think this is the highest prayer, because everything else is ephemeral. Trivial things like gaining powers, healing illnesses, preserving good health, and winning a fortune do not deserve our attention.

Suppose a king offers all his treasures and jewels to his people, and men and women come to choose from among the jewels, gold coins, antiques, and other precious things. However, this is only a part of the king's wealth. A woman walks by all these things without choosing any of them, and goes to the end of the hall and asks for the king. She only wants to see the king because she likes him and has never seen him before. The king is overjoyed and marries her. Now all his possessions are hers! [Laughter and applause.]

Therefore, it is said in the bible: 'Seek you first the kingdom of God within, and everything else shall be added unto you.' I hope that all of you will quickly find this heavenly kingdom and heavenly heart within you, and then all will be yours! [Applause]

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE CREATES A PERFECT TOOL FOR GOD ¹⁹¹

If we do not practice spiritually, we will not know when God wants us to be His tool, and our actions may incur bad karma. It is said that 'Karma does not exist originally.' Suppose God wants more people to know about me and wants me to do more in sharing the Truth, let more virtuous people know about my teachings, and let more people come to my lectures. Since I am not responsible for publicity matters, God helps me through other people, particularly those who have money and authority, because they own many religious magazines and newspapers. When God works through them, they use expressions of recommendation and praise, if they are aware of it. But if they do not practice spiritually, the God-power may become poison for them; what should have been praise turns into words of defamation.

Therefore, God's grace is of little use to those who do not practice spiritually. An average spiritual practitioner who shares my teachings with millions of people is blessed with infinite and inexhaustible merits, and attains sainthood very soon. However, for those who do not practice spiritually, even a big mission or assignment from God turns into bad karma. People pray for God's grace, but if they do not practice spiritually, God's blessings will be of little use to them. When we have indigestion, even gourmet dishes become toxic when eaten, and we cannot digest tonics even if we take them. You all know this theory. Suppose we have a stomach problem; drinking milk will only produce more toxins in us. However, milk is good for children and makes healthy people even healthier. If we have a gastrointestinal problem, we cannot digest even the best food, which only turns into toxins. Therefore, we should try to purify our actions, speech, and thoughts to be able to digest the superior blessings from God. Otherwise, the more God blesses us, the more trouble we will have. Take the mission group we just mentioned, for instance. If they had accomplished this work for me, they would have earned considerable merits. They would have flourished, benefited, and attained sainthood. Unfortunately, because they are not enlightened, they failed to accomplish this task and incurred bad karma with their actions. Sometimes they perform their jobs with negative thoughts, not realizing that the work is an honor from God. The same assignment, the same mission, and the same result may bring them only bad karma instead of blessed reward.

This is why we have to practice spiritually. Only when we do will we realize that karma does not exist originally, and there was no karma in the first place. It is our toxic mind which turns God's arrangements into karma. Therefore, we must practice the Quan Yin method to cleanse our mind of any preconceptions and garbage, then everything that goes in will reside in a pure abode and become nectar water. Otherwise, no matter how much we do and how diligently we work, it is all for our ego, for fame and profit, and will not yield any blessed reward. We do not know that it is the arrangement of God, our highest almighty power, to perform work through our physical body and mind. This is beyond the understanding of our mind.

Once we have purified our actions, speech, and thoughts, everything we do is correct and any action is appropriate. Therefore, we must practice spiritually. Now you have a clear picture of how the blessing power descends from above. It is our negative thinking that finally turns it into a toxin within us. That is why the Sixth Patriarch sutra says, 'When your

191. Group meditation, Tainan Center, Formosa, May 13, 1988 (Originally in Chinese).

thinking is neither good nor bad, then you are in the Tao.’ The Tao does not incline in any direction, but this does not suggest that the Tao means doing bad things. Only when it is done through the mind does it become bad.

Therefore, it is most important for us to pursue spiritual practice. This is mentioned in all scriptures, but strangely, few people understand it. We must first cultivate ourselves and foster family harmony before we can govern the country and contribute to world peace. However, people rush to maintain world peace, thinking that this is the most important phase and the other three are trivial matters not worthy of concern. How on earth can they ensure world peace? Suppose we want to build a house; we must first lay the foundation. Without a foundation, the higher a building is, the more troublesome it will be and the sooner it will collapse. Therefore, pay no heed to advice that you can practice without observing the precepts. I have made myself very clear on this point.

CONCEIVE A PLAN FOR ATTAINING SAINTHOOD ¹⁹²

Many people first have a dream before working to realize it. Starting from today, we should also conceive a plan to reach sainthood so that we’ll be completely prepared. First, we need to draw up a timetable and scheme, and then slowly turn the plan into reality. Although we have yet to build a house, we already have a blueprint. We’ve decided the size of the house, and it should have two bathrooms, a living room, three bedrooms, a kitchen, and so on. Then, we engage workers to build the house. Isn’t that how it works? The same goes for achieving sainthood. We must have a plan. We must have aspirations and self-confidence to implement the plan accordingly. Without self-confidence, we can’t accomplish it perfectly.

HELPING OTHERS IS HELPING OURSELVES ¹⁹³

True charity is to give and immediately forget, or it is not an act of charity. No one in this world needs charity; it is we who need to give it. They (the beneficiaries) are manifestations of saints who have come to test our compassion, to see whether we can forsake our material assets, ability and time, and if we can help ourselves. Sometimes we do not treat ourselves well like when we are hungry, and we don't want to eat but prefer to wait just because we are lazy, don't want to prepare the meal, or have other things to do. Likewise, when we ignore others' suffering and fail to render charity, we are mistreating ourselves. Treating others badly is the same as treating ourselves badly. If we do not eat when we are hungry, but run around busy working instead, sooner or later our stomachs will go kaput. It is true that we need the brain and other parts of the body, but the stomach is ours too. Repeated abuse could lead to grave consequences. Similarly, at a particular moment in time, we may have no need for those who are destitute and miserable; they cannot help us when they are sick, but they are also one of us, fellow citizens of the earth. If all sentient beings on earth were happy and wealthy, would this not be a beautiful planet? When everyone is happy, we too will be happy.

Sometimes a person in anguish can shake the cosmos. There is a type of saint revered as the Pure Ocean saints who provide special care for the grieving. For example, someone in the universe may be in deep anguish because he is being treated unfairly or badly, or he is ill. When he grieves, the whole universe shakes and our vibratory power is disrupted. Therefore, the Pure Ocean saints handle and take care of the unfortunate, seeing to their needs and fulfilling their expectations. Otherwise, the vibrations of their hearts will grow as

192. Public lecture, National Chiao Tung University, Hsinchu, Formosa, April 2, 1988 (Originally in Chinese).

193. Group meditation, Chiali Center, Formosa, December 2, 1987 (Originally in Chinese).

their anguish intensifies, and the whole universe will shake. Many things will be destroyed, we will feel unstable, the weather will change, and the climate will be in a mess. Farmers' harvests will be affected because rain and sunshine come at the wrong time, resulting in droughts and other natural disasters.

Therefore, we are taking care of ourselves when we take care of others. Because we do not understand this logic, we question why we should give charity to others, help our neighbors, or make people happy. It is all because we want to protect ourselves. When we help others to pursue spiritual practice, we are contributing to the peaceful atmosphere around us, and this is beneficial to our spiritual cultivation. Even if we are not that diligent in spiritual practice, we will still enjoy rapid progress because everyone is at peace in a stable and harmonious atmosphere.

Therefore, we do not practice alone; we should check whether our neighbors also want to practice spiritually. You may have observed that some people do not only practice spiritually but also encourage others to do the same. They find various ways to help other aspirants discover the Truth, and these people are happier. Look at your fellow practitioners, colleagues, neighbors or just any one. The more they help others, the more their hearts open up. They become increasingly relaxed, happy, and free from obstacles. This is the way of a saint. Instead of practicing alone, we should try all means to help others pursue spiritual practice, because we are helping ourselves by helping them. There is nothing great about helping others to practice spiritually, bringing people to listen to the Truth, or to see the Master. This is nothing to take pride in, because we are only helping ourselves.

DREAMS AND SPIRITUAL CULTIVATION ¹⁹⁴

Illnesses cured in dreams

Sometimes when we reach a certain level in spiritual practice, we're more likely to run into obstacles. Just ignore them and persist in your spiritual development. The more obstacles we have, the more humble we should be and the more we should persist in spirituality. Sometimes when you're physically ill, you may wonder, 'Shouldn't I become healthier as I practice more?' Not necessarily! You might be healthy in the beginning. For instance, your illness is healed immediately upon seeing me, and then you think you should practice faster [Master laughs.] because you're greedy! Since your illness is healed within five minutes after seeing me, you think you'll get even healthier by practicing more. Most people are more concerned about their bodies, wealth and safety. They think that by practicing more, they'll become healthier and extremely strong, just like Xue Renguei (a formidable general in ancient China) or Hercules. With an effortless wave of his arm, ten men would fall down. [Laughter] This is what some people imagine they'll become by following me in practicing the Quan Yin method. They will, but they'll also attain many higher levels and become very different!

Sometimes when we reach a certain level in spiritual evolution, we may feel not very well physically. Why is that so? As I've mentioned before, it's because the 'power' is very strong, while the body is too weak to withstand it. When the vibrations of our bodies change too quickly, we may feel as if we're sick. However, we're not really sick; don't worry. If our faith isn't firm enough, we can easily drop out when we reach this level because we think, 'It's weird! Why do I have more illnesses after following Master?' It's not true! It's only because your vibrations have changed. Inside this human body there are

194. Group meditation, Taipei Center, Formosa, August 30, 1987 (Originally in Chinese).

already many toxins and toxic gases. When we're angry with or hate someone, the toxic gases remain in the body.

I was talking about dreams just now. Why have I started talking about illnesses? It's because there're cases when illnesses are healed in dreams. One of our fellow initiates stopped coming after he was initiated. But when he was ill, Master's spiritual manifestation form went to treat him. Later when he was healed, he was so moved that he came to see me again. Otherwise, we wouldn't have been able to see him. He just vanished after the initiation because he didn't have faith!

The purposes and importance of dreams

For most people dreams are very important. If they don't dream when they sleep, they may fall sick. What are dreams? Sometimes when we have no way to express our opinions in the daytime, we can release or give vent to some of them in our dreams. Otherwise, we feel very tired and stressed. Or perhaps we hate someone or are angry with someone in the daytime, but we have no way to express it, or it's inconvenient to speak out – sometimes because we don't want to disrupt the harmony in the family or because we dare not speak out. For example, when we're angry because our boss is in a higher position than we are, or our Master is at a higher level than we are, [Master laughs.] we dare not voice it. Instead, we vent our anger in dreams.

People who practice martial arts usually have the means to burn off their poison so they don't need to dream too much. However, for most people, dreaming is very important. Without dreams, we may fall ill because we haven't dispelled the toxic gases in our bodies. Therefore, ill people can't sleep well. And when they can't sleep well, their illness gets even worse because excessive toxic gas and undesirable thoughts accumulate in their bodies. Even good thoughts, when accumulated in the body excessively, are too much.

When we dream, it means that our daytime struggles come to a halt and the toxic gases can be released, or our unsatisfied desires are realized. In dreams, we can imagine and enjoy a little, just to comfort our minds somewhat. For example, someone who loves money dearly would most probably see himself as a wealthy person in his dreams. At least, in his dreams, he can relax and enjoy the pleasure of being rich for an hour or half an hour. This is better for him because he won't be as agonized in real life.

The world is a big dream

Sometimes the state of one's dreams can affect one for an entire day. For example, after a nightmare, don't we wake up still feeling horrified? [Audience: Yes.] If we have too many nightmares, we feel frightened even after a day or two. Thus, dreams can affect us more or less the way real life does. Sometimes if we have very bad dreams, we wake up very hot-tempered, and treat other people awfully. It's also bad for the body and spirit of the one who dreams.

That's why I teach you to meditate, focus your mind on the wisdom eye, think of good things and recite the holy names before going to sleep. In this way at least we can minimize the influence of the negative atmosphere in our surroundings. In this world, even if our thinking isn't bad, the atmosphere of the society and family can still affect us, and make us bad, stupid, nervous and less benevolent.

Mo Tzu (the founder of Mohism, who emphasized universal love and peace in ancient China) called society a terrible dyeing vat. Even saints will be contaminated if they come

here! Shakyamuni Buddha was originally the Huming Bodhisattva descending from the Tusita heaven (a Buddhist heaven of full knowledge and satisfaction where no greed or worldly desires exist). He was very intelligent and could walk at the time of birth. He learned anything immediately, better than all His teachers. However, He was still ignorant; only when He was almost thirty years old, when He went outside and observed the suffering of sentient beings, did He awaken and turn to spiritual pursuits. He was originally a Bodhisattva and had practiced spirituality life after life, having gained more merits than He could ever use. That was why He was able to deliver so many sentient beings. Nevertheless, He was still contaminated upon arrival in this world. Lao Tzu, Confucius and Chuang Tzu (great philosophers of ancient China) were all contaminated. They only woke up after a certain period of time, and then began to practice spiritually. Therefore, they weren't saints from birth.

After we attain the great enlightenment, we clearly discern that the world is just like a dream. At that moment, it's like we've awakened from the dream. The dreams we have every day are merely small dreams while this world is a big dream, which is more difficult to wake up from. When someone is having a nightmare and screaming out loud, he needs another person to reassure him: 'Hey! Wake up! It's all right!' Similarly, in this big dream, we also need an enlightened Master to remind us, but whoever doesn't want to be reminded and wants to carry on sleeping we just leave alone. These people are seriously ill and they're also dreaming. Since we can't wake them up, we just let them go on sleeping. It's as though they're anaesthetized and can't wake up. However, they'll get well by themselves after some time. Thus, those who want to pursue spirituality may come. If they don't want to, we cannot force them.

I've often told you that we Quan Yin practitioners can go to superior dimensions to learn in our dreams. Because in the daytime you're so busy and the resistance of your mind is so strong that I sometimes find it hard to teach you. Therefore, I teach you in your dreams. There're people who can go to the fifth realm in their dreams, but this is very rare. Most people only go to dimensions within the three realms when they dream. Those who can go to the fifth realm in dreams are extraordinary people. In fact, such 'dreams' aren't really dreams because we can remember and be aware of everything after we wake up.

In India, there was a person who, before practicing the Quan Yin method, dreamt of the Lord of the fifth realm, who told him everything. When he woke up from his dream, he set out to search for a Master and practice the Quan Yin method. So, it's also very important to have dreams. If you don't get enough sleep, there can be trouble because your life will be unbalanced. However, some people practice in a very tough way and don't want to sleep. You don't have to force yourself too much. Should you feel tense mentally, then you have to take it slowly. If you feel that you're still fine, then it's all right to miss your sleep.

But we shouldn't always wait for the Master to teach us when we go to sleep every day. In the daytime, we should also educate ourselves and realize that this world is only a dream, and then use our minds properly to expand our imagination and develop our creativity. We should use our imagination for the better and richer aspects, imagine that we should have reached the fifth realm, and then we'll really make it one day!

Hell, too, is nothing but a dream created by our own thinking. Sometimes our ambiance and actions are just like bricks and concrete that turn into a wall when they're mixed. What we build with our undesirable thoughts and actions is hell. Though intangible and formless, it's reality to sentient beings in hell. Hell is a place of great suffering. I guarantee that it exists. The prison of this world is also a kind of hell. So, if hell exists even in this world, how could it not exist in the intangible dimension?

When we're frustrated, we feel that this world isn't beautiful at all, the food isn't delicious, and our husband or wife suddenly looks very ugly. It's because when we're frustrated or in sorrow, the world is no good for us. Even if we were living in a palace, it would be like living in prison. So, our mood can affect the external environment. We practice spiritually in order to train the mind and let it think increasingly of the good aspects. In this way the aura of our surroundings becomes increasingly purified. By purifying ourselves, we purify the planet. If everyone were happy, wouldn't the whole world become happy, too? Therefore, spiritual practice is beneficial!

Transcend the dream of the illusory world

Through spiritual edification, one day we'll wake up and realize that this illusory world is nothing but a big dream. Otherwise, we'll never wake up, but just go from one dream to another and remain in dreams forever. It's like dreaming at night; sometimes we might go from one dream to another or from one place to another. For example, we might first dream of being threatened, of someone trying to kill or beat us, and later our money is snatched by people. After that, we dream of marrying a beautiful woman, and later we're arrested and sent to jail. In this way we move on from dream to dream.

Similarly, if we don't wake up in this world, we'll continue our dream in other worlds, like the asura world. There, our dream goes on for a hundred years, two hundred, three hundred, five hundred or a thousand years. After that, we might go to hell and dream for a couple of centuries or five millennia. Next, we'll come back to continue our dream as earthworms, cows or birds, and can never get away. When we dream at night, we don't know that we're dreaming. Sometimes even if we're aware, we can't wake up. Likewise, when we're birds, we don't know that we're in a bird's dream because our vibrations have changed. Although our souls are forever the same, forever perfect and pure, we're engulfed and can't move.

For example, we have hands and feet that we can move, but when we're tied up, we can't walk though we have feet, and we can't work though we have hands. Or suppose someone puts us in a box and then throws it in the river. Although we know how to swim, we can't swim in there. Although we're aware of the dangerous situation, we can't save ourselves. Sometimes we might not even know. Perhaps we're knocked unconscious, and then we aren't able to save ourselves. In such case it would be useless even if we finally came to realize it because we'd only find ourselves at the bottom of the sea or river. Most probably we'd have just two more minutes to live.

In the same way, if we don't take care of our souls now and set them free, in the future, our souls will continue to be confined and just move from one box to another or from one bag to another. No matter where we're thrown, we're unable to resist, and this is transmigration. Thus, we practice spirituality to train ourselves so that we know in advance how to react at the moment of death, and how to save ourselves when we're tied up; instead of not knowing what to do when the time comes.

It's not only at night, but also in the daytime that we have dreams, which is called 'daydreaming,' like someone dreams that he's very important, very strong in his faith, practices very well, and is a very moral person. In the end, however, he turns out to be nobody, and fails in spiritual progress. Thus, he's merely cheating himself and cheating the Master. Hence, don't dream too much. It's good enough to practice diligently and truthfully, be repentant and humble, believe in the Master and respect the Master. For these people, regardless of the situation, I will definitely take them up. Even if I have to go to hell for them, it's worthwhile because these people are simply too good! They deserve it! Even if I

have to sacrifice myself and give all my merits to them, it's also fine. Since ancient times, such people have been worthy of receiving the Master's blessing.

When you move an enlightened Master, He or She can give you the three realms or the whole world, or let you become a king, a great spiritual practitioner, or an enlightened Master or saint. As long as the Master is willing to give out of love, you'll have all the blessings. Even if you're a criminal destined to go to hell, or a murderer, you'll still be delivered to the level of the arhats. Do you remember the story of how Shakyamuni Buddha delivered a murderer? The man had killed ninety-nine people, and wanted to kill the Buddha as well, but the Buddha still delivered him to the level of a liberated saint. It's because a great Master possesses inexhaustible merits. As long as He or She is willing and you're also willing to be delivered, you can be elevated to any level. Therefore, it's very useful for you to do something that touches the Master's heart!

Have noble dreams

Refrain from harbouring trivial and selfish desires because we become what we imagine. This is very important! Our imagination is rich and powerful. The higher our level of spiritual attainment, the more our imaginings will be realized. Therefore, we ought to be cautious. We should have good expectations so that we can benefit ourselves as well as other sentient beings instead of hurting ourselves and others. Therefore, you're aware that as your spirituality progresses, you seem to experience more satisfactory situations. Is that not so? [Audience: Yes.] Whenever you need something, it immediately appears as though it has come from heaven. That's because when we have a rich imagination, and the power gets stronger, we're able to draw down something from heaven for us to use.

The higher we rise in spiritual practice, the more easily we become contented. However, we still need to teach ourselves and train our thinking to aim for good things whenever we want something. We should want to be liberated, reach the fifth realm and seek to become wise and powerful. Only these aspirations are valuable. Don't desire anything else because they'll come naturally. The Master will take care of the material aspects, but you must be contented. You shouldn't think that it's not enough when I've given you two bowls of rice, and complain in your heart, 'Why not give me three bowls?' This is not the way. Enough is enough. The same goes for eating; I've advised you not to eat too much. Eighty percent full is enough. If you eat too much, you'll become very full and tired, which is not good for your spiritual development. You'll even have problems with thinking. On the other hand, if you eat too little, you'll be tired and your body will feel unwell. You might have difficulty walking or climbing hills. Thus, in whatever you do, just be normal and ordinary – not too much, and not too little.

If we haven't yet reached a certain level in spiritual cultivation, we'd better be cautious. Before doing anything, first consider and ask yourself, 'Do I have a good intention in doing this? Is this an important matter? Should I do it or not? Is it useful to do this? Does it correspond to the Truth?' Every day before doing anything, always question yourself in this way, and you won't make mistakes. This is the same as what I've said: 'In doing anything, always think that you're doing it for Master.' What's the meaning of 'doing for Master'? It means you should consider, 'If it were Master doing this, would She do it in this way? Would She react in this way? Would Master be happy with the way that I'm doing this?' This is the meaning of 'doing for Master,' which also means offering all your actions, speech and thoughts to the Master.

This is not to say that you should let me eat your flesh, control your thinking and speak for you. That's not the way! You should still think independently, move your body by yourself

and answer with your own mouth. However, you should do good things with your body, think of benevolence with your mind, and speak beneficence with your mouth. Even when you scold, you should scold for a beneficial reason instead of scolding people out of anger or to make them feel bad. The important points that you should remember are: Refrain from daydreaming; if you have to dream, dream good dreams, dream about the fifth realm, think in the way beings in the fifth realm would think, act in the way beings in the fifth realm would act. Only then can you say that you're having 'good dreams.'

THE SECRET OF VIBRATION ¹⁹⁵

Plants experience sensations

An experiment was once conducted by some scientists, who measured the vibrations of the leaves and stems of plants before burning them, at which time it was discovered that the plants shook very violently out of fear. They also did another research study and discovered that whenever a kind-hearted person who loved plants approached places where trees and plants were grown, the trees and plants would appear to be very happy. However, when someone who disliked plants or had unkind thoughts entered those places, the plants would tremble violently, and generate resisting instead of welcoming vibrations. Scientists have experimented on both resisting and welcoming vibrations. Because of this research they know that trees also experience sensations. That is why some people can grow trees and plants while some others cannot.

Now I'm going to tell you my own story. Since childhood I have liked trees and plants. Before I became a renunciate, our house had a huge garden. The lawn was green and the garden was filled with green plants. It was very beautiful and comfortable. I watered every day and took very good care of the plants. And I disliked it the most when someone would harm them. I got very upset, because I could feel their pain, and that would hurt me, too. I don't like that. We really shouldn't harm plants without any reason.

Love creates miracles

When I was in India searching for the Truth, I lived in an ashram, where there was a tree, the kind that grows in the desert. Its leaves were full of thorns. It had been chopped so badly that it could no longer grow any roots. Some plants will grow roots if we cut them a little below the leaves and then put them in some water. But if you cut above the leaves, the roots will not grow. At that time I felt sorry for that desert plant. It was very pretty and I thought it was such a pity. But other people didn't want to plant it because its roots would not grow and it wouldn't be able to revive. One fellow practitioner at the ashram said to me: 'If You wish, why don't You take it back and have a try? You have the power.' I said: 'Okay. I'll give it a try.' I planted it in the soil and it came back to life. It was alive all the time when I was there, even though it had no roots at all. It was able to come back to life! Seeing its new leaves grow, I knew it had come back to life with joy. Because each day I had been there meditating and reciting the holy names, it was affected and didn't feel anything bad, so it started to grow again.

When I was in the United States, I stayed in a Chinese temple. Originally, there were no potted plants there, only one or two tiny, yellowish things, which had been planted for several years already but were still tiny, looking rather sickly. Perhaps they did not have enough nutrients, or perhaps nobody ever took good care and watered them. I didn't think twice and began to water as soon as I saw any trees. I watered them every day. Two

195. Group meditation, Hsin Dian Center, Formosa, July 21, 1987 (Originally in Chinese).

months later, they had developed very quick, my room was filled with potted plants and there was no room for me to sit anymore. People were very surprised. At that time I didn't have any money to buy fertilizer for the plants. I was not a professional tree grower, either. All I had was love. I meditated and watered every day and didn't think much. I watched the leaves grow bigger and bigger, and the plants multiplied. By the time I left, I was afraid that there would be no one to take care of them, so I gave them away to the devotees. They were so happy that they grabbed them right away.

There was another plant that had been there for several years and didn't grow much. After I came, more branches began to grow on the lower part. It also grew taller and bigger. When I left, the abbot said, 'This is too big to give away. But after You are gone it just might die.' I said: 'It will probably live for another two years.' And my words came true. Two years later when I returned, the plant had just died. I came back too late. The abbot told me: 'It just died.' He asked me, 'Has it been two years since You left last time?' I said, 'Yes!' At that time I remembered what I had jokingly said, and it had really died after two years. Therefore, we can tell that trees have feelings. Because I took care of them every day, they grew very big and green. Their leaves grew so big that they became different than other ordinary plants. I didn't give them much except water every day. Sometimes when there was some leftover tea, I would give it to them, too. I would also dig some soil from outside and put it in the pots. Because they grew bigger and bigger, I gave them more nourishment. As a result, they grew too big.

Evil brings destruction

At that time there was a person who created heavy karma by taking a monk home to be her personal possession. People there discriminated against her. Even though nobody liked her, she would still come. One day she came and slept in the room where all the potted plants had been stored. At that time there was no seven-day retreat, so I put all the plants outside, close to my room and the other room. She only slept there for one night. When I got up the next morning, many leaves had turned a coffee color and died, as if someone had burned them with fire, or as if they had been too close to the cooking stove and looked burned, even though they were not really burned. My heart was hurting very much. I collected them all and showed them to the abbot, who said, 'There were too many people and not enough oxygen,' I said, 'There weren't that many people.' He didn't understand, so I didn't want to say too much. Shaking my head, I put all those leaves in the garbage. You see how formidable it was! We were both humans, but I slept with the plants every day and there was no problem at all. How come she came and slept for just one night and the plants became like that? You know, many people slept here and they didn't destroy our plants overnight. We meditate a lot here every day, and there has never been anything wrong. Many people used to sleep here and there was never any problem. So it wasn't because of too many people.

Heavy, evil thoughts and karma from humans can affect plants. You see, those plants were affected very badly and it was evident. It would not be hard to imagine how much more human minds can be affected. That's the reason we have to be very careful. That's why most Masters like to hide in the mountains, as do their disciples. They don't like to leave the mountains. The real Masters are reluctant to leave the mountains. If they live in the city, they also hide themselves and will not advertise that such-and-such a great Master lives here. The more famous the Master becomes, the more She wants to hide. The more people know about Her, the more She hides. If She were not known to a lot of people, maybe She wouldn't care much. If She were known to too many people, She would try harder to hide. She really dislikes it. The human magnetic field is terrible. A person with heavy, evil thoughts and who doesn't practice can burn other people to death.

Spiritual practice benefits sentient beings

Therefore, our minds affect others. Don't think it's good enough for us to be vegetarian. It doesn't do us any good if we eat vegetarian food but can't stop evil thoughts. We should meditate more. Shakyamuni Buddha said, 'Don't make friends with evil people. Don't get close to them.' He was speaking to beginners in spiritual practice. Because they didn't have enough strength and their spiritual power was not strong enough for self-protection. More spiritual practice will help. The more you practice, the more influence you have.

When we recite the holy names silently, many people will benefit. When you are used to reciting them, wherever you go people will be benefited, while you might not know. Even when you don't know them, you still benefit them. The power of reciting the holy names is that great! The more you recite them, the more benefit there is and the more people will benefit. If a person completely understands the Truth and reaches full enlightenment, the level of the whole world and all of humanity will be elevated. Even if other people don't practice, they still make progress.

A SPIRITUAL METHOD OF MAGNANIMOUS LOVE ¹⁹⁶

After we are initiated, we may feel living in this world is like being in a dream; our parents, partner, children and relatives all seem like strangers to us. Even then we should treat them nicely, and fulfill our obligations. It is because we still have karmic connections with them. All sentient beings have a connection with us, whether they are initiated or non-initiated, good people or bad people. They may be heterodox or orthodox believers, they may have or not have religious beliefs, yet they are all related to us. All goodness, evil, sadness and happiness concern us.

We are, more or less, responsible for the situation of the world, because of our past thoughts, be they good or bad ones. Together with other sentient beings, we created this world and the present situation. Therefore, we cannot say, 'That person is really bad; he has no connection with me.' We are related! It's possible that we had many bad thoughts and ideas in the past, or committed many mistakes. These bad thoughts and mistakes have accumulated life after life, and have been transformed into the present situation. Therefore, we have heard the saying, 'All is created by the mind.' It is only because of our mind that this world exists, that there is goodness and evil on earth. So, we must practice spiritually to rectify our past errors and the bad things that we have done.

We are responsible for the world because we did many bad things in the past, which account for the bad situations that are now occurring. Therefore, we have to rectify the bad aspects. We practice spiritually not only for ourselves, but also for our relatives, our country, our world and the universe. They are all connected to us. No matter whether they are good or bad, it is all because of us that they have become like this. Therefore, spiritual practice concerns both internal and external aspects. We cannot say, 'I want to be a spiritual practitioner, so I am going to forsake my parents and spouse.' This is not the way. We should remain the same as before. It is a different situation if we really feel the urge to become a renunciate. It is because we want to offer our body, speech and thoughts to the Buddhas of the ten directions and sentient beings. We want to sever our connections with the world to make it easier for us to practice spiritually, and to progress faster. This is our choice. We become renunciates because we want to offer ourselves to the Buddhas (enlightened Masters) of the ten directions and the three times of time, and to sentient beings. This is a different situation.

196. Group meditation, Hsihu Center, Miaoli, Formosa, July 5, 1987 (Originally in Chinese).

If we are not prepared to become a renunciate, then be filial to our parents, no matter whether they are good or bad. Even if our parents have done something wrong, try to counsel them with moral doctrines, and explain to them in a filial, gentle and respectful manner. Try to reason with them. In the event that they do not want to listen, or even reproach us, as we have failed to let them understand our way of thinking and our logic even after a very long time, we still cannot become unfilial children. Similarly, we should talk to our partner or siblings with sweet and gentle words, and counsel them or explain to them with logical reasoning, to help them understand; instead of sitting in one corner crying and blaming our spouse. Since we haven't tried to make them understand, how can we blame them? Most probably they dislike what we are doing, so they misunderstand us even more, and make trouble for us.

Influence your family with love

In fact, this is also our responsibility. Our faults make them suspect us and feel uneasy, and then they blame our Master. Therefore, we cannot blame them, we can only blame ourselves for not being wise enough, not being able to discuss and not having sufficient power to convince our kin. We should be more penitent, and simultaneously, love and respect them more, using greater love to care for them. Let them feel that, regardless of whether they are good or bad, we won't reject them. Only then they will be touched and believe us. Then we can pursue our spiritual cultivation peacefully, and gradually convert them back to the correct path. This is our responsibility, and this is the way to deliver sentient beings.

Spiritual practitioners should not become oddballs. If you scold your husband because he refuses to practice spiritually, or when he disagrees with you, you quarrel with him, don't speak to him, don't buy things for him, stop having relationships with him, and estrange him, this is not beneficial to anyone. Shakyamuni Buddha said: 'All sentient beings are our kin, and we should love and respect them.' Jesus Christ also said: 'Love thy neighbors and also thy enemies.' Though He didn't say that you should love your friends, it is a very natural thing to do. It is very natural to love someone who is good to us. Everyone can do this. Of course, we'll love people who are good to us, and will treat them nicely in return. But to the people who are not good to us, we also have to respect and love them, forgive them, and be nice to them, so as to edify them.

We are not doing this only because we want to influence them. We should remind ourselves: 'Those people are so pitiful. We have such great blessings to have our Master, to have good doctrines, teachings, and the method. We have the blessed rewards and wisdom to pursue spiritual practice. They are so pitiful. Perhaps their time hasn't come yet, so their mind is still blocked, and they do not have the wisdom to practice spiritually like we do. Therefore, they are truly pitiful. We should be more compassionate to them, and endeavor to love, respect and protect them.' Just because they do not understand or cannot understand, don't be angry with them, or criticize them. This is wrong! This is not befitting the demeanor of a spiritual practitioner, and this is not being compassionate and having universal love.

Be more patient and magnanimous to people wherever we are. However, there are times when I don't treat disciples this way. I might throw someone out, but it is not because I don't love him. When I scold someone or being very severe to him, I am trying to make him change quickly, eliminate his karma faster, shatter his ego, and erase his errors rapidly. I know what I am doing and he knows also what he is doing. However, when we don't know, the safest way is to be more compassionate to others.

The amusing saint

Before I became a renunciate – when I was a teenager – people used to call me a living Buddha. I didn't know what a living Buddha was then. However, several of my friends and relatives addressed me this way. Some called me 'the amusing saint,' or 'the comical saint,' which actually meant a queer saint, a funny saint. Some people called me 'the living Buddha,' but they didn't really think I was a Buddha. What they meant was, my personality, behavior and the way I treated people were as good as a living Buddha. They thought I was very nice. The way I did my work and treated people was very relaxed, not so serious. Therefore, some people called me the 'comical saint,' 'amusing saint,' or 'funny saint.' There were also people who said that I was a living Buddha in a more serious way.

People in England also said the same. They said I was a living Buddha. In Germany, they said I was funny and amusing saint or a Bodhisattva. The friends in Au Lac also called me a living Buddha. I was not practicing any spiritual method then. Though I chanted the Buddha's name and read the scriptures, I was not that serious in spiritual practice; I was just like an ordinary person. I was only a teenager, and had not yet become a monastic person – still very young! From primary school to high school, even until I was over twenty years old, in whichever country I stayed, people always called me by these names. It was because they observed that I was behaving like a Bodhisattva or a saint.

I didn't know why they called me by these names, but they were serious; they really thought so – they were not joking! Of course, it was also a joke – but a serious one! They truly had that feeling, and they meant to praise me. If ordinary people could treat another ordinary person so well, being spiritual practitioners, naturally we should treat other people even better. We understand more doctrines than before. I knew little about the doctrines then, and I didn't have an enlightened Master. Though I had been reading the scriptures since childhood, including the Tao Te sutra, the Buddhist scriptures, the holy bible and others, I was not graced with the teachings of an enlightened Master; so I didn't know much about the doctrines. At that time, I just treated people naturally. Of course, I should treat people even better now.

Severe reprimands arise from profound love

However, it seems that I sometimes act conversely. I seldom scolded people before, but now I do. Why? It is because I have to teach the close disciples quickly, making them progress faster. Therefore, don't think I dislike a person when you see me scold him. You are wrong! Precisely because I like him, I scold him. Otherwise, I would just ignore him. At home you only care to scold your own children. Would you go to the neighbor to scold their children? Even if the child next door goes out to steal or kill, you wouldn't care; because he has no relationship with you. Therefore, you wouldn't think of punishing him. Though you might abhor his actions, you are not really concerned. You don't have the earnestness to go to his home to punish, care and worry about him. You wouldn't go to his home to explain the doctrines to him, or to scold him, punish him, tell him to kneel, or beat him, would you? [Audience: We wouldn't.]

Generally, parents always hope that their children will be better than them. If you were a farmer, you would dream that your child would one day become a congressman or senator, perhaps even the president, or a person of high status, for example, a Ph.D., a lawyer and so on. Though many parents are not well educated, not wealthy or not in a high position, they still work very hard and exert all their efforts, sacrificing time and money to let their children enjoy a comfortable life, a high status and receive a good education.

All parents hope that their children could live a life which is more comfortable, more elegant, more wealthy and more useful. So do I. When I scold a person or a disciple, or when I am very strict with him, it is with the hope that he will become better than I. For instance, I am not humble enough, but I hope my disciples would be more humble and less arrogant than I am. Or I am not wise enough, but I still hope that my disciples would be wiser and smarter than I. Or my level is not high enough, so I hope your level would be higher and better than mine. Though my power seems insignificant, I hope my disciples would have greater power than I.

Suppose my level is only at the stage of an initially resolved Bodhisattva – one who has just resolved and cannot be called a saint, yet. It means one who has just resolved to learn to become a saint. Even then I hope my disciples would quickly become tenth-level Bodhisattvas or the highest saint. It is because I hope my disciples would be better than I, more powerful, progress in spiritual practice faster and better than I in every way. This is why I am so strict with disciples. Also because most of you understand my character, understand my teachings, and understand that my supra-worldly love is different from human passion, I can afford to be stern with you. Since I know what my job is, I have to do it.

Being humble and gentle is the best way to communicate with people

If our relatives have yet to understand our moral conduct, our ways of thinking, our level or spiritual method, we should be more magnanimous toward them. We must not scold them, beat them, or force them to believe us; we ought to be smarter. Even when we are spreading the teachings or the Truth, don't let them feel that we are educating them. Try to be gentle, speak in a normal way, just like you are having a casual chat over a cup of coffee. Don't let them sense or feel that we are trying to convince them to become Master's disciples. Otherwise, you will scare them. You cannot say: 'You must listen to me. Do you realize the power of my Master? You have to understand, or you'll go to hell. If you don't believe in my Master, you are the most unworthy person. You are really dumb! Don't you know that my Master is the supreme enlightened Master? Can't you see that a living saint is here? Can't you see that our method is the highest? You are truly pitiful, truly dumb and have no wisdom.' You must not talk like this. No one likes to listen to these things. Most people who are not spiritual practitioners have very high self-esteem, very big egos and deep attachment. They think their way of thinking is the best, their perceptions are the highest, their religion is peerless, and their concepts are the most correct. Should we hurt their self-respect, then we'd be in trouble.

Therefore, don't let them sense it, don't let them think that we want to educate and convert them into our fellow practitioners, or make them a Buddhist. Don't talk about religious matters with them; let them believe what they believe. If they believe in Laoism (Taoism), then let them remain good Laoist followers, and tell them things about Laoism. I have given some talks about this. I have expounded a little on the Tao Te sutra. Tell them: 'The Tao Te sutra is great, but there are some points that we do not understand very well.' Don't say 'you' don't understand; you have to say 'we' don't understand. 'Perhaps 'we' can help each other by discussing and making cross-references.' Then you may express the level that you have realized, the thoughts that you have understood, and your opinion. Definitely do not criticize their opinion.

You may say: 'Your philosophy is very logical, but I also have an idea. Please listen patiently, and see whether it's logical.' Don't retort immediately: 'Your view is wrong! You are wrong! You are so stupid! This is not true!' You should first accept his idea, because he has the right and freedom of thought. They have the right to think and realize whatever

they want to. To communicate with people, we must not look down upon them. We also have to put ourselves in their place and see things from their point of view, then we can understand and communicate with each other. That is how we can save people.

Be as magnanimous as the creator

The more we practice spiritually, the better we should be able to understand others and treat them magnanimously. We should be more capable of accepting other people's opinions and their levels of understanding, as well as respecting their freedom of thought. This is a free universe! The creator has created so many things, including big trees, tiny grass, elephants, cockroaches, frogs and many other things. Since Hes can accommodate them all, why can't we tolerate the thoughts of our relatives, friends and people we know? We should be able to do the same to attain the Anuttara-Shamyak-Sambodhi, the highest dimension, the highest level. Perhaps we cannot understand now, because we have not reached this level; but we have to learn. We have to assume we are the best, the highest person. Through our learning, one day we definitely will become the highest, the most magnanimous, the most compassionate and the most patient persons. That is a real spiritual practitioner.

In the process of spiritual practice, avoid becoming a weird person, and getting estranged from people. The so-called severance of relationship refers to the inner aspects; those on the outside should remain the same. We cannot say: 'I have no relationship with them.' Since we have 'vowed to deliver infinite sentient beings,' how can we accomplish this if we can't even deliver one or two persons? Therefore, the purpose of our spiritual practice is to make us become more loving, more patient, and more noble. Spiritual practice doesn't only mean to cross our legs and practice the Quan Yin method. Of course, this is spiritual practice, but there are other things that we have to practice on the outside.

'Love' is a spiritual method, 'magnanimity' is also a spiritual method, allowing others to feel free. Otherwise, we will chain ourselves within the three realms, and cannot have freedom. It is because we have interfered with the natural system of existence in the universe. We try to transform a cockroach into an elephant. We want to force an earthworm into becoming a butterfly. This is ridiculous, and definitely cannot be done! Lao Tzu said, 'Nothing is matter with the world. We don't need to do anything in the first place, and there is also nothing to be done.' Should anyone wish to join our spiritual practice, and have the same ideal as ours, then we help him. Otherwise, we don't have to be anxious to convert him.

To be a living saint

If sentient beings can be forced into pursuing spiritual practice, why have they not all become Buddhas now that billions of years have passed? There must be a reason! Therefore, if people do not believe us, don't be anxious and do not hate them. They can hate us, we allow others to hate us, but we forbid ourselves to hate them. Compassion and universal love is our spiritual method. Let our quality exude from within ourselves, let people be aware, and let them feel that we are a living Buddha. Let them feel that we are the 'amusing saint,' and let them feel that we truly are like a living Bodhisattva.

I hope that you can achieve this. I also believe that you can achieve it soon, and can continue to always do it. However, you also have to cooperate with me. If you lock up your mind and do not let me come in, I cannot teach you or communicate with you. I can only teach you when you sleep, because your mind is more relaxed then. It is too tired to resist! The body is also too tired to resist, so it is easier for me to teach you then. Though many

disciples seldom meditate, when they sleep, they often dream of the Master coming to tell them something, to answer their questions, or to help them. It is because the mind is more gentle then. For you, the initiates, your sleep is no longer the same as that of ordinary people. Therefore, your dreams are also inner experiences which should not be revealed to others. If you must talk, then talk to me, or write in the diary. When the real incidents happen, you will know that the dreams are true. Then you'll know that the dreams are your spiritual experiences. It is the Master coming to give you advance notice, or take you to practice or learn something at 'night school.'

THE PURE-TRANQUIL-OCEAN BODHISATTVAS ¹⁹⁷

There are many grades of Bodhisattvas: First grade, second grade... eighth grade to tenth grade Bodhisattvas, and also the Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas. Mahasattvas are Bodhisattvas of the highest grade – the bosses of all Bodhisattvas.

However, there is another kind of Bodhisattva who does not seem to save people. We revere them as Pure-Tranquil-Ocean Bodhisattvas. Their merits are as vast as the ocean – very pure and tranquil, so they are the Pure-Tranquil-Ocean Bodhisattvas. Their power is like the ocean and they work in absolute silence. Like pure water, no one can perceive their existence, though we are still aware of the manifestation form of the Bodhisattvas. The Pure-Tranquil Bodhisattvas are superior to the Mahasattvas.

In the universe, there are many levels waiting for us to attain, and many positions for us to achieve. Therefore, being new to the practice, there is nothing we can be proud of. Possessing only trivial magical powers, some people boast arrogantly. What is the use of knowing a little bit about the past, present and future? Even if we know that the world will be destroyed tomorrow, we cannot change anything. As well, during the time between now and tomorrow, we would be extremely frightened, and wouldn't be able to sleep or eat. For those who do not know that the world will end tomorrow, at least they can sleep sweetly and enjoy twenty-four hours more of peaceful time. Therefore, it is really useless to know about the past, present and future.

To pave our future, we should begin with our present actions. In our daily life, endeavor to be a moral person, clearly observe the five precepts that I taught you: Do not kill, do not steal, refrain from sexual misconduct, do not lie, and do not consume alcohol. It is enough to keep these five precepts strictly; no need to talk about too many commandments. Should you be able to keep the five precepts clearly, it doesn't matter even if you don't believe in me, do not practice the Quan Yin method, or do not want liberation from birth and death. Even though you don't believe in me, you still have to be a good person, and keep the five precepts well; so that at least you can come back again as a human. Otherwise, there is no other way.

I have never taught you any bad things. You may not believe in me – the person, but you should believe in my teachings. I only teach you good things. It is simple if you want to be a human being. Simply keep the five precepts strictly, then you won't have any trouble. By strictly observing the five precepts, even though you do not practice the Quan Yin method, you can still be a human being. Otherwise, it is not easy to get the human body again.

The human body is very precious, without which we would not have the six sense-organs and the six senses, which are essential for our spiritual practice. Of course, we know the six sense-organs and the six senses are the most disgusting obstacles, but we must also

197. Group meditation, Taipei Center, Formosa, December 17, 1986 (Originally in Chinese).

use them in our spiritual practice. We cannot pursue spiritual practice without them. Understand? Truly, we don't need the ears to hear the inner Sound, but how can we listen without ears? The visions in meditation are also not observed with the eyes; but without this body, we also cannot perceive, cannot see the Buddha's world. We would be ignorant about heaven or hell, or the western paradise. Therefore, the human body is very precious.

It is easy if you don't wish to become a human; it is only difficult if you wish to become one. However, it is even more difficult to become a Buddha. It is difficult enough just to become an ordinary Bodhisattva; but to become a Pure-Tranquil-Ocean Bodhisattva, there are many more ordeals. To become a Pure-Tranquil Bodhisattva – a formless, supreme Bodhisattva, one must go through innumerable inconceivable, indescribable and severe tests, which are extremely difficult to pass. We may have transmigrated into this world millions of times, yet we have never heard of such severe tests; we could never hear of them.

If we have read extensively, we would have read about the great spiritual practitioners of the past, about the ordeals and painful sufferings encountered on their spiritual path. However, even the most outstanding and painful ordeals could not match those suffered by the Pure-Tranquil-Ocean Bodhisattvas, both in frequency and intensity.

The Pure-Tranquil-Ocean Bodhisattvas are almost the same as the Buddha, except that the Buddha is 'inactive' while the Pure-Tranquil-Ocean Bodhisattvas are 'active.' They travel the universe taking good care of it, and keeping it in good order. Their responsibility is to take care of the universe, while that of the Mahasattvas is to save human souls and bring them Home. Whoever wishes to go to the western paradise should study under the Mahasattvas. They manifest themselves in this world to save people and bring their souls back to their Homeland – the heavenly kingdom, the western pure land.

You often chant the names of the Pure-Tranquil-Ocean Bodhisattvas, but without knowing who they are. Even if they'd appear before your eyes, you would not know. Only the Mahasattvas know who are the Pure-Tranquil-Ocean Bodhisattvas. Ordinary people could not possibly know, because they do not wish to reveal their level and power. They look very ordinary, very commonplace, more ordinary than any person. Even when they are in this world, no one knows that they are Bodhisattvas. They absolutely refrain from showing any magical power, and simply work silently, totally unnoticed by ordinary humans.

The work of the Pure-Tranquil Bodhisattvas is different from that of the Mahasattvas. They absolutely refrain from intervening with people's karma, while the Mahasattvas do. They can save a person from hell and take him to heaven; or take any person, heavily burdened with karma, to the western paradise. In the same situations, the Pure-Tranquil Bodhisattvas just observe on one side without taking any action. Their work is to take care of the functioning of the universe and maintain the existence of the universe. They don't save people. You may be starving to death or are being roasted by hell-fire, they are simply oblivious. To us, the ordinary humans, the Pure-Tranquil Bodhisattvas may seem very cruel and remote; but they are not. It is only due to the different nature of their work.

However, it is not simple to become a Pure-Tranquil Bodhisattva; I don't think you can pass the trials. To become a Pure-Tranquil Bodhisattva, the training system that one must go through is extremely strict and severe. This agonizing training process cannot be described in words, and is totally unheard of and inconceivable by ordinary humans. Just like in the army, there are various types of training: Infantry, navy, air force, spy, and the

most risky – special task force. Trained even to kill enemies face to face, the training of the special task force is the most arduous. Right?

To become Bodhisattva, different training is also required to attain different grades. Therefore, to become Pure-Tranquil Bodhisattvas, extremely arduous practice is required. Arduous practice alone does not make one a Pure-Tranquil Bodhisattva, but it is essential to go through the most bitter training. Pure-Tranquil Bodhisattvas are specially selected; we cannot become one just by wishing. Any spiritual practitioner who has not surpassed the three realms has no hope of being selected.

All the Pure-Tranquil Bodhisattvas are selected in the fifth realm. No one can become a Pure-Tranquil Bodhisattva within the three realms, as we still have to transmigrate. Our lessons in this world still have not been learned, so we won't be picked to undergo the most severe training. One must first become a Bodhisattva of the fifth realm, and be willing to become a Pure-Tranquil Bodhisattva, before one is qualified for selection. However, once selected, one has to undergo the most severe training, which is even more painful and severe than the system in hell.

There are many levels in spiritual practice, and the road of cultivation is very long. Therefore, as a new practitioner, one should not boast and exaggerate. I tell you not to reveal your experiences to others for your own good, not for me. You can tell the whole country if you like, I will not be affected. You only hurt yourself by divulging your own treasures.

So, practice in silence; because we have to protect our level, and climb slowly to become Buddhas, Mahasattvas, and superior Bodhisattvas. If a new practitioner has some magical power, and goes out to advertise himself because he is not stable within, you should know this kind of person is unreliable. Upon seeing these people, an attained spiritual practitioner can tell that they are experiencing obstacles – suffering from the 'Zen Symptom' we often mention. People not suffering from the 'Zen Symptom' will not go out bragging.

Spiritual practitioners should be humble. The higher their level, the more humble they are and the more they fear that people may detect their level and power. Some people are still okay in the initial stages of their practice. However, after attaining a trivial level and having some experiences, they brag everywhere. They talk so much that they run into many evil obstacles. The higher their level, the more evil obstacles there will be.

Therefore, the most terrible mistake in spiritual practice is talking about experiences. Having talked too much, the experiences become distorted in nature, or they simply do not come anymore, leaving only illusions. It is because the concentrated power is wasted, and the spiritual ambience is damaged. Originally, the spiritual ambience is a protective wall. However, as one leaks out too much, the devil will dig a hole in it and enter. In spiritual practice, we dread boasting and arrogant attitudes. The prouder one is, the greater his trouble.

I also know that it is not very easy for a spiritual practitioner to believe in a Master. Therefore, if you do not believe in me, it is not your fault. It is due to the atmosphere of this final stage of the dharma. This is why the present era is called the final stage of the dharma.

Spiritual practice indeed not easy. It is said in the Surangama sutra: In the final stage of dharma, if a person is truly sincere in his practice, though he might have only practiced a

little, the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas will come and render great help to him. Unfortunately, few people have the sincerity and faith for serious practice. Most of them choose the easier and more relaxed way, reluctant to take the difficult and austere path. To practice our method, one has to be a vegetarian and meditate for at least two and a half hours each day. Besides, we are forbidden to kill, lie, commit sexual misconduct, steal and consume alcohol. To most people, this is too strict and arduous.

Even in this world, if one wishes to get a Ph.D. – become a doctor or lawyer, or to earn prestige in society, one must study assiduously. Isn't it true? Naturally, it must be more arduous for those who wish to become a Buddha or Bodhisattva, and be liberated from life and death in one lifetime.

In this final stage of the dharma, for a little bit of our sincerity, the Buddha and Bodhisattvas will help us a lot. This is really great. Otherwise, your two and a half hours meditation is nothing really! Shakyamuni Buddha meditated all day long. Many people meditate for ten to twenty hours without gaining anything. If the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas did not help us with their power, we would get nowhere in our practice.

Actually, spiritual practice is not really so bitter; it is more difficult to eliminate the arrogance, and even more difficult to keep this big mouth from leaking. Arrogance and exaggeration are the most difficult to rectify. Practitioners who do not have much experience or progress in their practice are mainly hindered by their arrogance. They talk too much. They are still new to the practice, yet they talk so much.

Shakyamuni Buddha also forbade His disciples to brag. Maudgalaputra possessed magical power, but the Buddha forbade him to use it. I also give you the same advice. As you practice, magical powers naturally come, but you must not boast about them. If you have the power to read minds, better not to let anyone know. Otherwise, people will be afraid of you, fearing that you will read their mind whenever they come to see you. Then no one would dare to come to see you. Right?

Should you possess other powers like 'heavenly legs' or 'heavenly eyes,' keep it a secret, too. Other people may harm us if they know about it. There are no advantages. Some people would be jealous, as they would hate us for being higher than them. If we talked about something that they dislike, they would think of ways to harm us with black magic. Just like Maudgalaputra. He loved using magical power, but eventually he was harmed by heretics with black magic.

Therefore, I have kept advising you and warning you not to reveal your spiritual level to others. Nevertheless, some people still cannot remove this shortcoming. Being part of their personality, it is very difficult to change them, and this causes great troubles. If we notice this type of person, better keep away from him, and do not listen to his words. Otherwise, you will be infected, as with an infectious disease.

When we live with a person with evil obstacles – you don't even have to live with them, just by sitting close to them, you are already infected with half his problem. When you go to visit a patient – mix around and have contact with him, half his illness has passed to you. You have to accept half his karma. Otherwise, why do the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, when they manifest and come to this world, become ordinary humans after they are born? They first become ordinary humans, and then practice to become Buddhas or Bodhisattvas. Although they are manifestations of Buddhas or Bodhisattvas, they will still be contaminated by the world if they do not pursue spiritual practice.

Take Shakyamuni Buddha for example; you all know that He was the Prabhupala Mahasattva descending from the Tusita heaven. His mission was to save the people on earth. However, for thirty years after He was born, He didn't do anything to benefit sentient beings. He was a prince who didn't have to work, only enjoyed worldly pleasures everyday – having no idea about spiritual practice.

When He was born, He could walk seven steps. Still aware of who He was, He said, 'I am supreme, in heaven and on earth.' However, as He grew up, He also became ignorant, even more ignorant than ordinary people. Surrounded by so many pretty girls, He simply enjoyed the world everyday, and thought about nothing else. He was deliberately surrounded by a comfortable environment, badly pampered by His parents, and flattered by His subordinates. They kept Him from knowing any undesirable situations, and forbade anyone from reminding Him to pursue spiritual practice. Therefore, before He reached thirty, He was an ordinary human. He was the manifestation of a Mahasattva, and had attained Buddhahood long ago. Yet, when born in this world, He inevitably became an ordinary human.

Therefore, this world is really horrible. Without pursuing spiritual practice, even the one incarnated from a Buddha or Bodhisattva will definitely get lost. Therefore, under any circumstances, He must practice again.

You often ask me: 'Doesn't every person have a Buddha nature? Why are we still ordinary humans?' It is because, after coming to this world, we are 'infected' and 'delivered' by the ordinary humans. The world is just like an epidemic region. At first only one person gets the disease. Soon it spreads to two or three persons. Then to more and more people until the whole region is infected. Sometimes all the people and even animals in a town are killed, not even a kitten or puppy can survive. So, infectious diseases are truly horrible.

Similarly, when the Buddhas or Bodhisattvas come to this world, they will also become ordinary humans if they do not pursue spiritual practice. Originally, we were all Buddhas, possessing a Buddha nature. Then why are we not aware, and do not perceive it? It is because we have been 'delivered' by this world for a long time. Now that we have just begun to practice, how can we know immediately? However, through diligent practice, sooner or later we will become Bodhisattvas. 'Those who practice will become Bodhisattvas; those who do not practice will become ordinary humans' – this logic is definite, and there is nothing else to be said.

You can that the even Shakyamuni Buddha took six years of practice to become a Buddha. Jesus Christ practiced for over a decade, and finally became a great Master. The sixth patriarch Hui Neng was already enlightened when he met the fifth patriarch Hong Ren, yet he had to hide himself and practiced for sixteen years, after the fifth patriarch Hong Ren had passed the dharma to him. Bodhidharma did not deliver sentient beings during his time, because his power seemed insufficient still. [Master laughs.] No one listened to him, so he talked to the wall for nine years. I heard that because of his prolonged meditation, he could not walk afterwards. In later generations, we often saw his pictures portraying him walking – that was the image of his manifestation body for people to see.

The saying goes: 'He who stays near vermilion gets stained red, and he who stays near ink gets stained black.' Mixing with bad people, one will become evil; mixing with virtuous people, one will become virtuous; staying with learned people, one can learn something; staying with foolish people, one will also become an idiot. A person who speaks English fluently would also forget, if he has not spoken English for thirty years. To speak English

one must practice everyday. If you stay with a non-English speaking person for a long time, later you cannot speak English, or cannot speak fluently.

Just like me, I do not speak Au Lac language very fluently now because I have not spoken it for a long time. I even have a problem with my English. [Laughter] However, there won't be any problem after I have stayed in the United States for a few days. However, if I carry on speaking Chinese everyday like this, thirty years later, perhaps I won't be able to speak English at all. So, it is with spiritual practice. By staying with a certain type of person, you will eventually become like him. This is why one must be careful in choosing a real Master in spiritual practice.

Now do you want to become Pure-Tranquil Bodhisattvas? [Audience: Yes.] Some people would immediately put on a long face just after a trivial scolding from me. How can they expect to become Pure-Tranquil Bodhisattvas this way? [Laughter] It is not simple to become this type of Bodhisattva. Once you have vowed to become a Pure-Tranquil Bodhisattva, you are in great trouble. Even an ordinary master has so many troubles, can you imagine those of the Pure-Tranquil Bodhisattvas?

In this universe, besides the Buddha, the Pure-Tranquil Bodhisattvas have the next highest status. The supreme position in the universe is the highest Buddha, the Anuttara-Samyak-Sambodhi. Pure-Tranquil Bodhisattvas are the second highest. They are above the laws of the universe. They go to heavens and hells just like we go to the markets to buy food. They go wherever they wish, and do whatever they like. Nothing else is more superior than they are because the highest Buddha is originally motionless – the Anuttara-Samyak-Sambodhi is absolutely still. Therefore, in reality, the Pure-Tranquil Bodhisattvas are the highest.

Q. *May I ask, Master, is there only one Buddha?*

M. No, the Buddha means the power. For instance, in England, the queen is of course in the highest position; but she does nothing, and does not intervene in politics. She is only a symbol of the supreme position. However, Mrs. Thatcher is the most famous, and every country knows about her. Any person in the position of the prime minister is always the most famous. She is more well-known than the queen. Everyone is afraid of her, and she can do whatever she wants. Of course, the position of the queen is supreme, but not as powerful as the prime minister. Right? The queen does not go from place to places, does nothing, and will not change any laws. However, the prime minister has to do everything. She is very stern, and is sometimes rejected by other people. For instance, Mrs. Thatcher is famous for being a stern prime minister. People call her the iron lady because she is very staunch in attitude, and has great power. Even the queen of England can do nothing about her. She can only advise her, 'Please don't be so stern, try to give in a little bit sometimes.' However, she simply won't give in. Isn't it the case?

So are the Pure-Tranquil Bodhisattvas. In this universe they have the highest power. Be more diligent if you wish to become one. However, I am afraid you cannot endure the most severe training system. Therefore, take it slowly. Become a Bodhisattva first, then climb slowly. However, if you vow wholeheartedly, one day you will definitely become a Pure-Tranquil Bodhisattvas. We can become what we are determined to be – this is definite. But it may not be realized so quickly – perhaps in the next lifetime, or several lifetimes later. However, if you are willing, you may eventually succeed.

- Q. *Will the Pure-Tranquil-Ocean Bodhisattvas come to this world?*
- M. Yes! Why not? They are everywhere.
- Q. *Will they have karma when coming to this world? Will they also be infected by this world? [Laughter]*
- M. No, they won't have any karma, nor will they be infected by the world.
- Q. *Do they also come to this world with their manifestation bodies?*
- M. They are different from the manifestation bodies of the Mahasattvas. They are the law, and they possess all their powers – fully equipped with magical powers, and can become whatever they want. Their magical power, their power and their authority are always there. They are different from ordinary Bodhisattvas.
- Q. *In this case I would like to become a Pure-Tranquil Bodhisattva.*
- M. I know you want to be a Pure-Tranquil Bodhisattva, [Laughter] but it is not that easy. Talk about it again when you have reached the fifth realm in your practice.
- Q. *May I ask, Master: Do the Pure-Tranquil Bodhisattvas have to go through the process of birth and growing up, when they come to this world?*
- M. It is not always necessary. They are different from ordinary Bodhisattvas.
- Q. *Do they come to the world only for their work?*
- M. Right! They come and go as they wish.
- Q. *But the ordinary Bodhisattvas must first be born when they come? Is that right?*
- M. Right! The ordinary ones must first go through birth, which the Pure-Tranquil Bodhisattvas don't have to. They can transform themselves into anything they wish. Instantly, they can become a fly or a stone, but there is power within this stone or fly. Whatever they have transformed themselves into, they are fully aware that they are the Pure-Tranquil Bodhisattvas. They vanish or come into being as they wish. They can transform themselves into a human or a dog as they prefer. However, this transformed dog is no ordinary dog, and is free of karma. When in the human form, they will not be infected with the karma from other people, nor will they be contaminated by the society. Whatever form they have taken, their consciousness is always fully awake. The Pure-Tranquil Bodhisattvas are at the highest position. If there is really a highest God, then they are only slightly lower than God. God is number one, they are number two. Understand?
- Q. *Where do the Pure-Tranquil Bodhisattvas receive their training?*
- M. They are trained in the superior dimensions.
- Q. *Will they remain forever Pure-Tranquil Bodhisattvas, or will they eventually become Buddhas?*

- M. They are forever Pure-Tranquil Bodhisattvas. They can become Buddhas if they wish, but they don't have to.
- Q. *Master, You said the Pure-Tranquil Bodhisattvas are absolutely apathetic to outer influences. Suppose a sentient being happened to meet the manifestation body of the Pure-Tranquil Bodhisattvas, will they help him?*
- M. They won't help.
- Q. *Why?*
- M. It is because there are other Bodhisattvas doing that job!
- Q. *But they can still save people by the way!*
- M. Why should they save you? The Pure-Tranquil Bodhisattvas have no relationship with you. They take care of the whole universe, not only one or two persons, or groups. They are different from the Mahasattvas.
- Q. *If they found a dying person, would they save him?*
- M. How can they save him? If you are not a doctor, how can you heal patients when they come to you? They cannot do this type of work. They are too busy to care about matters concerning one or two persons, or even the whole world. They are very busy, extremely busy! They have no time to care about one or two persons.
- Q. *Would Master please illustrate with an example, the severe training that the Pure-Tranquil Bodhisattvas would have to undergo?*
- M. This cannot be described in words because there is no such training system in this world. [Laughter] I have just told you that this training is more severe and painful than in hell. It is beyond your imagination.
- Q. *How can there be such evil things in the superior worlds?*
- M. These are not evil things, but essential training.
- Q. *Can every person become a Pure-Tranquil Bodhisattva?*
- M. This is decided by their selection. Once you are picked, they will train you slowly.
- Q. *Who makes the decision?*
- M. The Pure-Tranquil Bodhisattvas do. They select whoever they want, and we won't know about it in advance. We only know after we have been selected, because we will have to go through certain ordeals or sufferings. However, you won't be picked while still in this world – this I can assure you. [Laughter] Talk about it after you have reached the fifth realm. You can only possibly be selected, after you have surpassed the three realms.

PRACTICE THE QUAN YIN METHOD GIVES US A PROTECTIVE SHIELD

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All illnesses stem from our minds. Originally the so-called 'I' didn't exist. Therefore, the concept of 'I am ill' didn't exist. When an illness first begins, if we have a firm attitude about rejecting it, don't allow the concept of 'I am ill' to come into being, then the illness will run away immediately.

However, you're all too weak. You often feel, 'Oh! I have a pain here. I have discomfort there.' Frequently, having these thoughts is like pushing a door open. The door is open only a little bit in the beginning; however, since you keep thinking about 'becoming ill,' the slightly opened door will be pushed wide open by the power of your negative thinking. As soon as the door is wide open, the illness will quickly invade your body. If you always have a clear consciousness at every moment, and don't allow any bad things to come in, then nothing can invade you.

Getting sick is like digging a hole on our outside layer first. Originally, there's a layer of protective energy covering our bodies. It guards us against the invasive negative power outside. When we get sick, it's just like having a hole poked in the layer of protective energy, so that the illness can directly enter our bodies, through the hole. That's how we get sick. If the layer of protective energy remains intact, the illness can't get in. Spiritual practitioners are generally healthy, so they don't get sick; whereas, non-practitioners are easily disturbed by outside influences, and that is equivalent to opening the door first, and inviting illnesses to come in. Therefore, if we keep calm, a disastrous atmosphere can be resolved naturally. Our 'fixed karma' can be changed in this way, just like a light can dispel darkness.

Some people believe in fortune teller's predictions; like on such-and-such a date they will get such-and-such illness, or have such-and-such an accident or disaster. Then they'll have fearful thoughts in their minds. As soon as they have fearful thoughts, it's like opening a small door in their bodies, and then all kinds of bad things can come in naturally.

If a practitioner has a pure spirit and concentrated mind, the protective layer of energy around his body is like a diamond shield, and it can't be penetrated by any illness. Even if we really have some illness, we shouldn't let it perplex us. When we know that we're ill, we should practice even more diligently, and use our power to drive it away. This body is our house, and we are the owners. Without the invitation of the owner, how can anyone come in? If you can drive it away with a firm attitude, no illness will stay. Even if it's the invasion of a small cold, a sensitive person can feel it at a very early stage. However, those who don't practice and aren't sensitive won't be aware of such things.

If we want to sense the invasion of illnesses, we must keep an absolutely clear consciousness, and let our bodies stay in a highly alert state. Once we feel the invasion of an illness, we should immediately meditate, recite the holy names, and firmly tell ourselves, 'I don't want the illness. Illness isn't the Truth. I don't want anything that's forced upon me. I only want the Truth.' Then the illness will run away. Those who have practiced a long time, and have strong minds, can eliminate an illness in one or two seconds. Those who don't practice don't have this will power, and therefore they don't believe that they have healing power.

198. Group meditation, Taipei Center, Formosa, August 26, 1986 (Originally in Chinese).

In fact, our bodies naturally have resistance to illness, and can heal themselves. Many doctors tell their patients, 'These medicines are for you. But you should mainly rely on yourself to cure the illness.' It's because we're great beings, and there's nothing we can't do. However, the amount that you can do depends on how much you believe it. In other words, this latent and limitless power can appear differently, because of the extent that each person applies it.

We Quan Yin practitioners are more powerful than others are. This involves the power that we use to drive illnesses away. If you get ill, it's because you want to be ill. Your mind may not want it, but your body does. Therefore, we should educate our actions, speech and thoughts. If certain parts of our bodies like to be ill, we should gradually teach them with the correct concepts, like we teach children. If they don't understand, we can give them some medicine and tell them, 'Okay, you're safe now.' When we let our bodies truly give up the illness, they'll recover.

However, people normally do the opposite. They try to look after their bodies in every way, but ignore their spiritual practice. That's why I teach you to keep your actions, speech and thoughts clean. If your thoughts are clean but your body isn't, you'll be in the situation that your mind is perfect, but your body is still vulnerable and can get ill. Therefore, we should use our minds to teach our bodies. We should teach them that there actually isn't a so-called 'I' who can get ill, to let them truly give up everything, and give up the idea of 'getting ill,' and then they won't get ill.

Illness is actually not karma. The real karma is our ignorance. Because of ignorance, we have dark and impure souls. If our souls are purified, there will neither be God nor maya, not to mention illness. Originally, we didn't have illness. Therefore, in the Heart sutra, it's stated, 'All dharmas amount to emptiness.' They neither arise nor cease, are neither tainted nor pure, and neither increase nor decrease. Hence in emptiness, there are no forms, no feelings, no perceptions, no mental formations, and there is no consciousness; there are no eyes, no ears, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind; there is no vision, no hearing, no sense of smell, no sense of taste, no sense of touch. If there is nothing, how can we get ill?

Because we cling to our bodies, we have so much trouble. We should do more Quan Yin and meditate more, and then we won't have any trouble.

THE SECRET TO SPIRITUAL PROGRESS ¹⁹⁹

Sometimes you might feel you haven't made any progress in your spiritual practice and that it seems like a waste of time. Do you know why? Spiritual practice includes our speech, body and mind. For example, you've developed your mind very well in your spiritual practice and cleansed it of evil ideas and impure thoughts. Every day you only think about the living Master, the noble teachings and the practicing assembly. You only think about Quan Yin spiritual practice, et cetera.

In this case, your mind has become very advanced and 'civilized;' but your 'body' may still lag behind in development and is not in line with your advanced 'mind.' At that time, you may feel that your spiritual progress has come to a standstill. In some other cases, you may have a pure body and mind, but your speech hasn't been cleansed of its karma yet. There is another case, in which you have kept silence for some time, not speaking as

199. Group meditation, Hsin Tien Center, Formosa, August 22, 1986 (Originally in Chinese).

much as you normally do. However, your body hasn't been cleansed of its karma, so you can't make any progress.

This is like when parents are walking with their child. The parents are walking very fast, but the child, distracted by flowers, stones and streams along the road, forgets to move along. The parents have to stop and wait for him until he catches up. It's the same with your speech, body and mind. If any of them lag behind, the other two cannot move along. All three have to be balanced and coordinated in order for you to make progress in your spiritual practice.

You may feel that you have improved a lot at the three or seven-day retreats, but that is not because the Master gave a lot of blessings to those who attended the retreats and withheld the blessings from those who didn't. It's because during these retreats, your speech, body and mind were at their purest. First, your body didn't move a lot, waste energy, or work too much, so you didn't feel very tired. Second, you didn't talk, scold, or criticize other people. Third, you didn't divert your thoughts elsewhere. You just listened to my lectures and meditated. There was no time left for you to think about other things. Consequently, your speech, body and mind were almost all purified. In this pure and harmonious state, they were open to all the blessings from God or from the Master, so you improved a lot.

In the meditation center, your mind can't stray too far, because I will pull it back the moment it gets distracted. Maybe you were just thinking about your husband and children; but once you saw me sitting here, you could not think about anything else but me because I was sitting right in front of you. Maybe you were whispering with another initiate, but as soon as you saw me, you behaved quietly and nicely, fearing I would scold you if you didn't meditate.

I'm like a kindergarten teacher who has to keep all the children in line. Here you can't look at other people's eyes, only mine, so you won't get affected by the bad vibrations radiating from their eyes. The only thing you will receive is the positive energy that the Master bless you with. In this situation, your mind is concentrated, your body is not restless, and your speech is purified, so you can make spiritual progress very quickly.

It's not that the Master don't give you blessings when you are talking. But why can't you receive the blessings when you are talking too much? It's because you would become agitated and lose the blessings. For example, I want to give you something, but you can't stop moving even for a second. Then you cannot receive whatever I want to give you. For another example, when you pass the tollgate, sometimes you may miss the receipt from the toll collector after you pay the toll, but a toll collector never misses the money from you. This is because the toll collector is in a stable position; but you, the driver, are in a moving state.

It's the same with your spiritual practice. If your speech, body and mind are balanced, you will receive all the blessings. If you keep wandering, even the greatest power is useless to you. It's like when you're bathing your child. If he runs around, you can't put the water on him. Instead, you may get yourself all wet. Similarly, if you can't take my blessings, they will come back to me entirely.

That's why you had good spiritual experiences during retreats, which were even better than those experiences you had after practicing for months or years at home. During retreats, your speech, body and mind developed together, so you were more peaceful and purified than usual. Some people who were ill at home had no problems in the retreats or

got much better and even recovered. Why was that? It was because all your diverted energy was turned inward during the retreats. When you did the Light and Sound meditation, there were no telephones, children or neighbors bothering you. You could meditate whenever you wanted without interruption.

When you are home, there are all kinds of inconveniences and limitations, but during retreats, if you like, you can meditate all night without sleep, because you don't have to go to work the next morning. Even if you feel tired the next day, you can sleep while you are meditating. But you cannot do the same at home. When it's midnight, you force yourself to go to bed even if you're feeling good in your samadhi, because a busy tomorrow is waiting for you.

The Quan Yin method that we are practicing can cure all diseases. However, our speech, body and mind have to develop at the same time. Any one of them that lags behind will delay our progress.

THE SACRED RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MASTER AND DISCIPLES²⁰⁰

At the time of initiation, I say to you, 'Congratulations! From today on, you're completely free. You've become a free, liberated person!' However, perhaps only half of you believe me. But it doesn't matter. Being liberated means being liberated; whether you believe it or not doesn't change the fact. However, you still have to walk with me. After walking for a while, you'll realize it more quickly. The more you meditate, the sooner you'll understand it. One day not long ago, an enlightened Master in India, accompanied by four or five disciples, went out to handle a matter. Halfway on their journey, one of the disciples was bitten by an extremely poisonous snake, the most venomous and deadliest snake known in India. In an instant, the disciple's face turned purple, then blue and several other colors. Everyone concluded that his death was surely imminent for no one had ever survived a bite by such a snake for more than five or ten minutes and there was no antidote.

'Please don't tell Master,' the injured disciple implored his peers. 'Walk on with Master and leave me here. In no time, I'll be dead and liberated. It doesn't matter.' Then, just as the other disciples were pondering what to do, their Master realized what had happened and retraced his steps to see his stricken disciple, being anxious about his condition. But the disciple beseeched him, saying, 'Master, please don't worry about me. I'll soon be liberated. No problem!' Next the Master said to his other disciples, 'I've heard that this bite can be cured by rubbing the wound with some kind of herb.'

The other disciples did as instructed and treated the victim with the herb, and sure enough, he was healed. The disciples knew very well that it was not the herb but the power of their Master that had saved him; for how else could someone in such a hopeless condition have been healed through the rubbing of leaves on his wound? Deeply touched, the grateful disciple fell to his knees before the Master, saying, 'I'm just an insignificant disciple. Why have you so mercifully shouldered my karma? Why did you do that?' And his Master merely responded, 'No! I didn't. Now let us continue with our journey.' Such is the relationship between Master and disciples.

Cherish the rare opportunity to have an enlightened Master on earth

Great Masters are manifestations of God. They are very compassionate, but in this world, their power is limited and they can't reveal their true identity or what they're capable of

200. Group meditation, Taipei Center, Formosa, July 8, 1986 (Originally in Chinese).

accomplishing so it is known to very few people, even few disciples. For instance, after saving his disciple, this Master instructed his disciples, saying, 'Don't tell anyone about this incident. You must forget it immediately.' The episode later came to light only when a disciple discussed it in a book he wrote, but by that time the Master had already left this world.

Such is the way of humankind. A great Master comes to teach us, but we don't recognize Her / Him. Even when some people follow Her / Him to learn, they're wishy-washy and don't comprehend their Master's identity. The great Masters become famous only after they leave the earth, and then the whole world venerates them. It was only in this way that people learned about the existence of Jesus Christ, Bodhidharma, Shakyamuni Buddha, Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu. But then it was too late! We only recognize the great Masters after they've left, not while they're on earth. What a pity! Such is the way of people in this world.

Any followers come to learn from a Master, but after a long time they still don't realize who their Master is. Hearing that they need to meditate, they say, 'Oh! Meditation is too hard for me.' Hearing that they have to go and see the Master, they say, 'Well! What's the use in seeing Him or Her?' Hearing that they're supposed to attend the Master's lectures, they say, 'Well! It makes no difference if I go to lectures given by other masters so why should I go to this one?' [Master laughs.]

But after a great Master departs from this world, everyone suddenly learns about Her / Him, understands how great She / He was, and learns about the many things She / He did while living. It's because the great Masters don't talk about their many deeds that even their disciples are unaware of them. In times of difficulty, we seek the Master's help and express appreciation for Her / His assistance. But even then She / He says, 'It's nothing! I didn't do anything.' [Master laughs.] She / He might even reprimand us, saying, 'Nonsense! Superstition!' [Master and audience laugh.] These Masters never advertise themselves in the first place. Any master who publicizes his magical or other powers is not a genuinely enlightened Master.

It is the greatest blessing to practice spiritually under an enlightened Master

Great Masters bless their disciples in many ways. Some are blessed by a mere glance, some by a touch on the head, and still others in secret ways. Most disciples don't know how their Master helps them or what She / He does for them. However, whether they realize it or not, meeting this kind of Master makes them the most blessed and protected disciples. Much of their karma is erased by a mere touch on the head by such a Master.

In India, people revere a living Master more than they do Shakyamuni Buddha or God. 'Although God is very high, I cannot see Him,' they say. 'To me, my Master is the highest! I cannot see the Buddhas but I can see my Master. I don't know what the Buddhas are doing, but I know what my Master has done to help me!' Originally, the great Masters also come from God; they are manifestations of the Buddha nature. However, they remain silent about it. Even if they do talk about it, people don't believe them.

Several hundred years ago, there was a very great Master in India. One day, one of his female disciples reached the fifth realm in meditation. There she saw her Master – an enlightened Master in the fifth realm. After this experience, she rushed to see him, saying, 'Master! You haven't been telling the truth! You've been deceiving us by saying that you're just an ordinary human being who has no magical power or ability to do anything. However, today I saw that you're God! You're an enlightened Master in the fifth realm.'

You're the highest; no one is superior to you! Why have you been withholding the truth all this time and not revealing your true identity?' Her Master replied, 'If I had told you, you wouldn't have believed me so I chose not to speak about it.'

It's one's greatest blessing to meet such a Master. However, She / He can't reveal too much in this world. Besides, She / He doesn't want to discuss it; for what purpose would it serve to reveal it?

The Czar of Russia and his exiled subjects

A long time ago, a Czar of Russia disguised as a civilian traveled to Spain to master shipbuilding techniques. In the course of his training, he met some compatriots who had been exiled for offenses they had committed. Forbidden to live in Russia, they went to work in Spain, where they lived miserable lives in pathetic conditions. They missed their families and homeland very much, but couldn't return because of the Czar's orders.

This Czar worked with them every day, and came to understand their nostalgic sentiments. Deeply touched, he told them, 'I'm a friend of the Czar. I know him. Should you really want to go home just follow me. I'll ask the Czar to pardon you so that you can go home.' Some of the people believed and followed him but others didn't for he looked just like an ordinary worker. They didn't believe that he would have such great power to negotiate with the Czar so a few of them refused to follow him.

Those who chose to return to Russia with him saw great crowds turn out to welcome him. People greeted him in every city he entered. 'Perhaps he's a powerful man, a high-ranking official of enormous influence, or a person of high status and great fame,' they speculated. As they approached the Czar's palace, more and more people came to welcome him, and the celebration banquets became increasingly grand. They speculated further, 'Oh! He must be the highest chancellor or a relative of the Czar. He must have been telling us the truth.' Finally, when they entered the palace and saw him sit on the throne of the Czar, they realized that he was the Czar himself. At that time, all their sins were forgiven because the Czar held the highest authority. It was he who had exiled them, and now he also had the ability to let them return.

The same goes for us who have been initiated. We come originally from the supreme force, and now this supreme force has come to take us home. It's that simple! As in the case of this Czar, he could exile people and bring them home because he had the highest authority that was subject to no other person's command.

Initiates can immediately behold the God nature and reach sainthood

As recorded in many Indian scriptures, if you meet a Master who possesses the supreme power, there is virtually no need for you to do anything – no need to worship, no need to prostrate, no need to repent, no need to accrue merits, no need for anything. Yet you will be perfectly well and fulfilled in every way because originally we are this supreme power. From it we come and to it we shall return. That's why we say, 'Behold the God nature and reach sainthood.' This 'nature' is our self nature, not our personality. This is what the ancient Zen Masters meant by 'immediate enlightenment' – immediately beholding the God nature and reaching sainthood. Most probably we still can't believe that we're saints, but even so we're still saints. We're free and liberated all the same. When the time comes, we'll know it naturally.

This is similar to the story I've just told you. Those workers who had some faith in the Czar followed him home, and the moment they reached the palace they beheld the truth. They had already been freed when the Czar told them that they could return home. When they were still in Spain, the Czar said to them, 'You may go home now,' and from that moment on they were free men. They didn't have to wait until they reached the palace to be freed. However, it didn't matter. Although they had been skeptical, as long as they followed the Czar, they understood everything when they arrived home.

Similarly, at the time of initiation, I say to you, 'Congratulations! From today on, you're completely free. You've become a free, liberated person!' However, perhaps only half of you believe me. But it doesn't matter. Being liberated means being liberated, and whether you believe it or not won't change the fact. However, you still have to walk with me. After walking for a while, you'll grasp it more quickly. The more you meditate, the sooner you'll realize it. If you don't meditate, although you'll understand it eventually, your life will have little meaning. You'll only live a sluggish life, causing trouble for yourself and being plagued by illness, heavy karma and deprived of enlightenment.

This is because we ordinary humans can't understand God. Even though we have eyes, we cannot see, just like the blind. We don't know what God has done for us or how He has helped us. Instead, we worship wooden statues and beg for blessings every day. We even worship deities and ghosts, and pray for safety and protection. Though we're rich inside, we go begging outside!

WORLDLY SOUND VERSUS SUPRA-WORLDLY SOUND ²⁰¹

Let us first talk about the ordinary sound in this world, and then we will talk about the supra-worldly Sound – the Sound of God. Since ancient times, music has played an important role in our lives. It would be difficult to imagine how frustrating life would be without music in this world. Classical music is more mild and gentle; it makes the listeners feel happier, more peaceful and benign. That's why there used to be many noble and benevolent people in ancient times. Modern music is more stimulating. People who have been exposed to this kind of music since childhood are very difficult to teach. Such music represents the personality and demeanor of contemporary people. In mental institutions, doctors often let the patients listen to soft music to calm their emotions. When we are bored or exhausted from work, listening to music will slowly pacify our minds.

Everything in the universe vibrates

Everything in the universe vibrates, and this vibration becomes sound. This is similar to the vibrating waves transmitted by radio stations, which, when picked up by a radio receiver, are converted into sound. All things in the universe, whether stone, plant or human, vibrate at their own specific frequency. It is precisely because of this difference in frequency that it is difficult for animals and humans, humans and humans, and even husband and wife, to communicate with each other.

The vibrations of some people are coarse, and this makes us feel very uncomfortable when we come into contact with them. Conversely, some people are very gentle in vibration, speech, and aura and we feel very comfortable and happy upon seeing them. We feel very happy when we go to a place where the vibrations are close to ours. When a person with a bad aura enters a certain place, he will immediately make people feel very agitated and restless. It is because his vibrations are low and heavy, or we can say that he

201. Group meditation, Taipei Center, Formosa, March 6, 1986 (Originally in Chinese).

is very vicious, has heavy karma and lots of devilish hindrances. He is excessively heavy in yin (negative) energy while we are more inclined to the yang (positive) energy, and so we become incompatible. As a result, we feel agitated and restless.

Not all places on this planet vibrate at the same frequency. All kinds of metal ores of different densities are distributed around the world. Therefore, there are many places where non-spiritual practitioners find it uncomfortable to dwell. However, to real spiritual practitioners, every place is a pure land, everywhere is the holy land. But it is easier said than done. How many people can really attain such a level? This disharmonious atmosphere is discernible even to the average person who does not practice spiritually, with the exception of a few very ignorant people and those who are as insensitive as timber. The more advanced one is in spiritual practice, the more sensitive one becomes, but when he eventually attains the highest level, every place will be the same to him.

Whomever we are with, we are affected by his vibrations. If his aura is very gentle, we too will become gentler. If they are excited, we will also become excited. We often hear that the saints shoulder the karma of the people because they can take upon themselves the bad influences or vibrations generated by others, which is the so-called karma, and give them their superior vibrations in exchange. Relying on their power derived from spiritual practice, they can quickly cleanse the karma. The length of time required depends on how much karma they have collected. Before they can cleanse this karma, they will still be affected. They could get ill, be defamed, or even killed.

One such example was Jesus Christ, who was crucified because He took upon Himself the karma of sentient beings. As for Shakyamuni Buddha, we might not have heard any story about Him bearing karma for people, but it was so recorded in the scripture. A man killed ninety-nine persons and was about to kill the Buddha, too. He failed to do so; instead, he was delivered by the Buddha. This man eventually became an arhat (liberated saint). If the Buddha did not shoulder the karma for the man, what happened to the karma that he had incurred by killing ninety-nine persons? He killed so many people and yet he became a saint! Was it not against the law of karma? It was not, because the Shakyamuni Buddha had immense merits and infinite blessed rewards, which were sufficient to repay all the karma for that man without any problem. That man was not exempted from karmic retribution; Shakyamuni Buddha had assumed his karma.

This is why since ancient times, anyone who aspires to be liberated must first find such great Masters. Being a novice in spiritual practice, it is very difficult to repay so much karma just relying on our own power. Those great Masters have accumulated great blessings through spiritual practice over many lifetimes. While guiding us on the path, They can also carry the luggage for us because they have sufficient power. Humans have human power, and spiritual practitioners have spiritual power. This power might be indiscernible to us but it is so infinite that no physical power can compare. You have heard that your five generations will be elevated after you are initiated by me. It is this spiritual power that pulls them all up. Therefore, this power derived from spiritual practice is most precious; it cannot be bought at any price or taken away by even the greatest authority.

Sometimes when I go to lecture at a certain place, I feel very relaxed and can speak fluently. At other times, I may feel oppressed; I feel very tired and cannot speak. The same happens when I give initiation to people. Sometimes it goes smoothly without any problem. At other times I feel like I am dying. It is due to the different vibrations of the people who come to the lecture or initiation. Their individual vibrations are the so-called karma. What actually creates these different vibrations? They are created according to the law of karma, and are related to the karma that we have incurred in previous lives.

Originally we are all enlightened saints. Jesus Christ also said that we are all the children of God. Then why are some people so rich, some so poor, some so clever, some so dumb, some so benign, and some so evil? The first reason is that, although we are originally enlightened saints, we are degrading all the time while in this illusionary world and so forget most of our wisdom. The second reason is that we are being influenced by outside situations.

Tangible and intangible worlds

This world is different from the higher dimensions. The superior realms will help us progress spiritually, becoming more relaxed and noble. However, the situations in this world can easily make us regress and become more foolish and evil. In the paradise in heaven, we will have whatever we want without the least suffering, while in this world we must struggle against nature in order to survive. Even Shakyamuni Buddha had to beg for food or use the things in this world to survive. This is a tangible world with forms, and there are discriminations. There are such things as cold and heat, beauty and ugliness, man and woman. This world is different from the paradise in heaven, which is an intangible world with no form or discrimination.

Therefore, when we come into this world, we become outwardly inclined sentient beings. When we see food, we have thoughts about eating it; when we see anything, thoughts of like or dislike arise. Since our mind is constantly occupied by things that we like, we forget our great wisdom. On and on we become more and more alienated from the almighty power of the universe, and become lonely beings.

Originally, all things are ours, but because we think only about a couple of things that we like, unknowingly we confine ourselves within a small boundary. From an entity without any discrimination, (in the paradise in heaven, all beings have the same golden body, and there is neither man nor woman) we become full of discriminations. As we wholeheartedly love a couple of things or persons, we become more lonely and severed from the almighty power of the universe. Our power grows small and will be completely drained in no time.

For instance, a person living in the middle of the Ganges River is surrounded by water and has an inexhaustible water supply. Suppose that person is attracted by something ashore, he will leave the Ganges to go after that thing. As he is too fascinated by the situation, he forgets how to return to his original abode. Then, when he is thirsty, he can only look for water nearby, and of course, that would not be enough.

As a result we become weaker and weaker as our wisdom runs out. When we do not have enough wisdom, we become greedy. Insecurity makes us want to grab more things, and from this greed, wrath and infatuation emerge. These thoughts form a special magnetic field that engulfs us. Since the situation of each person is different, his magnetic field is also different. Since like attracts like, greedy or easily excited people will naturally attract excitement to their magnetic fields. Similarly, gentler people will attract gentler situations. This is the cause of the so-called karmic hindrances.

We often see people who always make a mess of their work. It is because their magnetic field always attracts destructive power or obstructive energy, foolish energy, or devilish energy. They simply cannot attract the great wisdom to them. Some people have very strong animal instincts, also because of their magnetic field. Or we can say that their life-after-life habits have not been rectified. When our magnetic field improves, it indicates that we are beginning the ascent. The time required for the rectification is related to our purity

at heart. It is mentioned in the scriptures and the Tao Te Ching that we must have the heart of a child in order to return to the heavenly kingdom.

It is not easy to change our habits or magnetic field, which absolutely cannot be done by practicing some breath-counting method or yoga exercise. Since the development of habits is controlled by the mind, we must change the mind in order to change our habits. Methods contemplating on the solar plexus, on bones, water, or breathing are simply not enough. Only the Quan Yin method is the ultimate method.

Sound of God

This Sound is the 'Sound of God,' the Sound of our original nature, which existed even before anything in this universe came into being. This Sound is the 'sound beyond this world,' therefore, it is inaudible to the hearing faculty of ordinary humans. However, all sentient beings can listen to it, except that they will hear different sounds according to their individual levels. Everything in the universe vibrates, and so they have Sound – even stones have Sound. But it is too subtle to be heard by the human ear; we can only hear it with our wisdom. Therefore, we say contemplate on the Sound rather than listen to the Sound. If all sentient beings have this Sound and wisdom as well, then why can't they contemplate on this Sound? It is because they don't have the key and so do not know where the Sound is. Therefore, we must first find a Master who can open the door for us.

Why is this Sound so important? It is because all things in the universe are linked together by this Sound. All the realms, from high to low, are linked to each other through this Sound. Just now, we mentioned that the vibrations of some people are incompatible with others', so they have difficulty accommodating with each other. For the same reason, our vibrations are not accommodating with the animals or certain places, and we find it difficult living with animals or staying in those places. If there are people who can live in those places, it does not mean that they are better than we. Most probably, their vibrations are very low or close to the animals, so they do not feel anything.

Pigs and frogs can live happily in very filthy places, and this amply illustrates why some people can live happily in unbearable places without feeling anything. Their auras can cope with those places; our vibrations are higher and gentler and cannot accommodate those lower vibrations. Therefore, we cannot live there, but that does not mean they are more capable than we are. So, benign people often have difficulty staying with vicious people.

Should anyone want to change his destiny, he must rely on this highest Sound. Now we only have a very small portion of it and it is not very high in vibration. Precisely because our vibrations are low, we are living in this low-level world together with the animals. After all, birds of a feather flock together.

However, there is a type of Sound that encompasses all sentient beings. This is 'God's Sound,' the Sound of original nature. By contemplating on this Sound, we can elevate our vibrations and spiritual level. Superficially, we may look the same as we did, but our body will emit Light. Everyone loves listening to our lecture and it is easy for us to deliver people, because our vibrations have become gentler, putting people's minds at ease and leading them to liberation. Their vibrations will be enveloped by ours; we will provide them with good vibrations that dissolve their bad vibrations. When the blood of a patient is not functioning well, the doctor will replace his bad blood with good blood. When the water in the bucket is dirty, we have to empty the filthy water before filling it with clean water. However, before our vibrations have become good enough, we cannot exchange them for

other people's bad vibrations. Otherwise, the result would be terrible. We must first practice spiritually if we want to deliver sentient beings.

Just now, we mentioned that all things in the universe have the Sound, and all things are created by this Sound. In the Tao Te Ching, it is mentioned as the 'Name' or the 'Tao.' Lao Tzu said: 'The way that can be spoken of is not the constant way; the name that can be named is not the constant name. The nameless was the beginning of heaven and earth; the named was the mother of the myriad creatures.' This Name or Tao refers to this Sound or vibration. Perhaps the ancient Chinese usage was different, but it actually means the same thing. I think you will be able to understand this.

Tune in to more superior Sounds

Everything in the universe is born from this Name or Sound; we are also part of it. But because we are human beings, we possess the highest part of it, and we are most likely to possess all of it. Animals are not high enough in level to possess this Sound completely. Through practicing on this Sound, we can elevate ourselves incessantly, we tune in to more superior Sounds until we are in total possession of it. Then we will be able to coordinate with all sentient beings in the universe. Since all sentient beings are part of this Sound, which we have in total possession, to us every place is the pure land, every person is a saint, and all sentient beings have God nature. Only then do we attain the true realization; otherwise, all we have is hearsay or 'thus have I heard;' we cannot distinguish whether they are true or false.

Having personal experience is different from reading the scriptures or about someone else's experience. We read about others' experiences when we read the scriptures. Practicing the Quan Yin method, we will have our own experiences. We may compare them with those recorded in the scriptures and see whether we are having the same experiences as those of the ancient people. Sometimes our experiences could be even higher than theirs; it does not mean that we are superior to them, but that their spiritual level might not be very high when they wrote of this experience. So we may be slightly higher than their level at that time.

We should know how powerful this Sound is. All sentient beings have this vibration or Sound, and we influence each other. This world is different from the western paradise in the sense that here, we have animals, bad people, good people, nervous people, calm people, happy people, and miserable people. It is a mixture of different atmospheres that makes it very difficult for us to practice with peace of mind in such a confused state. There are always many obstructions or bad influences distressing us. But then if we can persist in practicing with concentration, we will progress very fast.

Many heavenly beings like to incarnate as human beings because this physical body is essential for pursuing spiritual practice. We often think that this body is useless, but then we cannot practice spiritually without it. This body is very precious. Take good care of it. Take enough nutritious food to sustain it, but don't be voracious. Protect the body from excessive cold, heat, exhaustion and overwork. Ascetic practice is not good; it is punishing ourselves, which is the greatest sin. We are saints of the past, present, and future. We ought to respect ourselves. How can we punish ourselves through ascetic practice? Of course, it is different if the situation is truly unavoidable.

For instance, you may have heard that when I was practicing in the Himalayas, I ate only raw vegetables every day. It was because of the high altitude. The air was thin, the temperature and the air pressure were low, and it was very difficult to cook rice or

vegetables. It was much simpler to eat raw vegetables; all I had to do was to wash them in the water of the Ganges, sprinkle a little salt on them, and then eat them. I did not deliberately want to practice asceticism. I once practiced in seclusion in a mountain temple in Formosa, and there I had a summer retreat for three months. Every day I only ate some coarse rice with sesame seeds and salt, and drank a little water. No one was taking care of me at that time. Should I have gone to the market every day to buy vegetables, what kind of a retreat would that have been? It would have been a 'vegetable retreat.' [Laughter] It was due to the circumstance. I ate what I could find; definitely, I was not practicing asceticism deliberately. Ascetic practice cannot make one an enlightened saint; it will only turn you into a bitter person. Our life is bitter enough, so why should we want to practice asceticism?

The Sound is the greatest power and supreme wisdom in the universe

To become an enlightened saint, we should practice the Quan Yin method, and contemplate on this original Sound with our wisdom. This Sound creates all things in the universe, and it is the greatest power and supreme wisdom in the universe. What else can we rely on in our spiritual practice if not this great power and great wisdom? Why should we rely on this dark little abdomen (the solar plexus) or our ephemeral breathing instead? What does it matter if our body moves slightly in meditation? How could we practice if we stop breathing when we die?

If we are practicing spiritually with this great power, it does not matter if our body moves a little, or is even injured. Since our own Master has established connection with this Sound, He has been liberated and has no relation with the body, and naturally, we can continue to practice. He will continue to take care of our life and help us to progress. Therefore, we cannot rely on anything else but this greatest, highest and most original Sound. This most primitive Sound existed before we came into being, and before anything in the universe came into being. And, even after the three realms are destroyed, it will continue to exist. Only by relying on this eternal power can we practice spiritually to reach the state of eternal existence. One can only reach the ephemeral level if one practices by relying on the ephemeral breathing.

In the Surangama sutra, Shakyamuni Buddha said that all other ways of spiritual practice are only temporary methods and not eternal ones. Only the Quan Yin method is the eternal, ultimate and most correct method of spiritual practice. We will agree with Him after we have practiced the Quan Yin method.

In the bible, it is mentioned that the universe, 'In the beginning was the Word (Sound), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. Everything was made by Hirm (Sound), and there was nothing made that was not made by Hirm (Sound).' The Tao Te Ching also talks about the same. Lao Tzu said: 'The way that can be spoken of is not the constant way; the name that can be named is not the constant name. The nameless was the beginning of heaven and earth; the named was the mother of the myriad creatures.' It was when this 'name that cannot be named' came into being that the universe and all things were born.

The Upanishad, the most famous Hindu scripture, also mentions the same thing. 'In the beginning was the Word.' This Sound existed when creation began. When this Sound came into being, everything came into being. This Sound is God; this Sound is creation. They all talk about the same thing, because in the first place, Shakyamuni Buddha, Lao Tzu, the bible, Hinduism, and Islam all raise the same doctrine. After practicing the Quan Yin method, we can understand the scriptures when we study them. When we have

attained the great enlightenment, we will know that all scriptures actually talk about the same thing.

THE SUPRA-WORLDLY THERAPY ²⁰²

I would like to tell you something about the other worlds. We have many bodies; there are different names for them; let's just say the physical body and another kind of body, the psychic body. The people who drink wine, and who smoke and take drugs, or something like that, are doing damage to their spiritual bodies, the material body and also the spiritual body. And after they die, the people in heaven have to heal them, cure them and help them like a medical doctor does here. After a long course of this kind of treatment, these people recover and then reincarnate as human beings again. They undergo many experiences like that until they learn their lessons, then they want to practice spiritually, and then they can become higher.

On another planet we call 'Venus,' they have many small 'hospitals' like that for different kinds of people. And the people who live in that pure land are very highly intelligent people, very spiritual, very high level. They are mostly nearly Masters, most of them can become Masters. And they don't use medicine or equipment to heal these kinds of people. They use different kinds of energy, rays or Light to heal this kind of patient.

Just like here in this world sometimes we use different laser rays to heal people, to treat cancer. These people are only like higher scientists, better scientists. Masters are just more highly developed scientists. They know how to change the energy in the atmosphere, and make you become different. Just like if you're a good scientist in this world, you can change sunlight into energy, into electricity.

'Venus' is just one of these heavens. Don't be attached to the name. Because there's not only one heaven; there are many heavens curing people like that. Many sentient beings of other pure lands also help us all the time. They use the energy of Light to help the patients there, the people on earth, and the beings in hell. They help a lot of poor people and desperate people, praying people and suffering people.

You often hear of people who kill themselves for certain reasons. But that's not the only way to commit suicide. There're two kinds of suicide. To kill this material body is very bad but it's not the worst. When you kill your spiritual body it's even worse. You can kill it by taking alcohol, by taking drugs, by taking care of just the material life, and never going to church, never going to temple, never going to any spiritual discourses, never meditating, never practicing spirituality, never reciting any holy names, never getting in touch with the virtuous teachings of any religions, and every day you're just sociable, have liquor and meat, go dancing and listen to music, watch television, read newspapers, and do all kinds of things except taking care of your soul. This is destroying the spiritual body. This is terrible.

If you have relatives who practice spirituality, who have faith in the Truth, then at least you can go to heaven after you die. It doesn't mean that you go with them, but you can ascend to heaven because of their merits. But after going to heaven, you lie there like a dead body.

202. Group meditation, Taipei Center, Formosa, August 3, 1985 (Originally in Chinese).

Normally after you die, you have a Light body, but these kinds of people have no Light. Their appearance looks like this body, but with no feelings. Because your mind is so much attached to material things, in your mind, you bring this body with you to heaven.

It's not the same body, but they create another body that looks like this body in their minds. That body looks like stone, or like wood, with no feelings, no thinking, no intelligence. Because their relatives practice or have faith in the Truth, they have a little of this merit so they can go with them to heaven because of the blood linkage. But they don't have a clear consciousness up there, they don't know their relatives. The angels take them, and put them into the hospital. And they lie there for a long, long time like a piece of stone.

And then all the good people, the people there have to heal them with their Light, their own power, and use their power and their love to pour into that body, to pour their love and energy of Light into that body. For a long time it's like that, and then they can begin to live again. Then they can recognize their families, their loved ones who live there. Then they are happy together.

But that's so, if these people are not too heavy, with heavy karma, otherwise even if many people help them, they can't receive their help. Some are so heavily bound in their own bad thinking, in their own bad way of life, that they can't receive this loving help. So they become forever lost in the darkness. This kind of case is very sad, of course, but there are some cases like that.

And therefore the people who meditate, or at least who go and listen to the words of the bible, or the Buddhists, at least they are in contact with the higher power and there are some protective things. The higher power protects them a little. The more you practice, the better.

Of course, if you're in direct contact with the Light of God, you can see the Light in this life already. And you'll definitely go to the higher region. Like in our method, you see the Light on the first day you get initiation. Otherwise, all the people who do it slowly see the Light after they die, or slowly see the Light later after practicing for many years. Because in the higher world they only use Light for everything, to make babies, to make clothes, to make houses, to make trees, to make every comfortable thing for themselves; everything is made of Light. And even in heaven, there are also different levels, like in our country there're some rich, poor and middle class. But in the high heaven, they don't fight with each other.



Initiation into the Quan Yin method of meditation

Supreme Master Ching Hai initiates sincere people longing to know the Truth into the Quan Yin method of meditation. The Chinese characters 'Quan Yin' mean contemplation of the Sound vibration. The method includes meditation on both the inner Light and the inner Sound. These inner experiences have been repeatedly described in the spiritual literature of all the world's religions since ancient times.

For example, the Christian bible says, 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.' This Word is the inner Sound. It has also been called the Logos, Shabd, Tao, Sound stream, Naam, or the celestial music. Master Ching Hai says, 'It vibrates within all life and sustains the whole universe. This inner melody can heal all wounds, fulfill all desires, and quench all worldly thirst. It is all powerful and all love. It is because we are made of this Sound, that contact with it brings peace and contentment to our hearts. After listening to this Sound, our whole being changes, and our entire outlook on life is greatly altered for the better.'

The inner Light, the Light of God, is the same Light referred to in the word 'enlightenment.' Its intensity can range from a subtle glow to the brilliance of many millions of suns. It is through the inner Light and Sound that we come to know God.

The initiation into the Quan Yin method is not an esoteric ritual or a ceremony for entering a new religion. During the initiation, specific instruction in meditation on the inner Light and inner Sound is given, and Master Ching Hai provides the 'spiritual transmission.' This first taste of divine presence is given in silence. Master Ching Hai need not be physically present in order to open this 'door' for us. The transmission is an essential part of the method. The techniques themselves will bring little benefit without the grace of the Master.

Because we may hear the inner Sound and see the inner Light immediately upon initiation, this event is sometimes referred to as 'sudden' or 'immediate enlightenment.'

Master Ching Hai accepts people from all backgrounds and religious affiliations for initiation. We do not have to change our present religion or system of beliefs. We will not be asked to join any organization, or participate in any way that does not suit our current life style.

However, we will be asked to become a vegetarian. A lifetime commitment to the vegetarian diet is a necessary prerequisite for receiving initiation.

The initiation is offered free of charge.

Daily practice of the Quan Yin method of meditation, and the keeping of the five precepts are our only requirements after initiation. The precepts are guidelines that help us to neither harm ourselves nor any other living being. These practices will deepen and strengthen our initial enlightenment experience, and allow us to eventually attain the

highest levels of awakening or Godhood for ourselves. Without daily practice, we will almost certainly forget our enlightenment and return to a normal level of consciousness.

Master Ching Hai's goal is to teach us to be self-sufficient. Therefore, She teaches a method that can be practiced by everyone, by themselves, without props or paraphernalia of any kind. She is not looking for followers, worshippers, or disciples, or to establishing an organization with a dues paying membership. She will not accept money, prostrations, or gifts from us, so we do not need to offer these to Her.

She will accept our sincerity in daily life and meditational practice to progress ourselves to sainthood.

The five precepts

1. Refrain from taking the life of sentient beings. *
2. Refrain from speaking what is not true.
3. Refrain from taking what is not ours.
4. Refrain from sexual misconduct.
5. Refrain from using intoxicants. **

* This precept requires strict adherence to a vegan or lacto-vegetarian diet. No meat, fish, poultry, or eggs (fertilized or non-fertilized).

** This includes avoiding all poisons of any kind, such as alcohol, drugs, tobacco, gambling, pornography, and excessively violent films or literature.



The Supreme Master Ching Hai's teachings on line

Real Video / Multi Languages

www.Godsimmediatecontact.org/video/

(in U.S.A. with Windows Media Video & Real Video; Available in multiple languages).

Sample Booklet of Master's Teachings

For a free download of Master's sample booklet, The key of immediate enlightenment and eternal liberation (available in 50 languages), please visit:

www.Godsdirectcontact.org.tw/eng/publication/sample/sample.htm

www.Direkter-kontakt-mit-gott.org/download/index.htm

www.Godsdirectcontact.org/sample

E-news Magazine

Found in April 1990, the E-news magazine provides up-to-date, detailed reports of Master's work and life during these years.

www.Godsdirectcontact.org

E-Book

Free download of The key of immediate enlightenment – Questions and answers 2. Just go to one of the following Internet sites then double-click the file from your desktop to open the book. (Total file size is approximately 14MB for one executable file and 5.5MB each for 3 zip files; no special software is needed to open or run it.)

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Quan Yin WWW Sites

For more information about publications, as well as information about the Quan Yin method, please visit the following websites:

www.SupremeMasterTV.com/

www.Godsdirectcontact.org/

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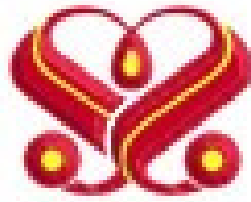
www.Loveocean.org/

www.Mycelestialpets.com/

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www.Lovinghut.com/



How to contact us

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Supreme Master Ching Hai International Association Publishing Company Limited, Taipei, Formosa (Taiwan)

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Introduction to our publications

The Key of Immediate Enlightenment

- * A collection of Supreme Master Ching Hai's lectures.
- * Available in Aulacese (Vols. 1-16), Bulgarian (Vol. 1), Chinese (Vols. 1-10), English (Vols. 1-5), French (Vol. 1), German (Vols. 1-2), Hungarian (Vol. 1), Indonesian (Vols. 1-5), Japanese (Vol. 1-4), Korean (Vols. 1-11), Mongolian (Vols. 4 & 6), Polish (Vols. 1-2), Portuguese (Vols. 1-2), Spanish (Vols. 1-3), Swedish (Vol. 1), Thai (Vols. 1-6), and Tibetan (Vol. 1).

The Key of Immediate Enlightenment – Questions and Answers

- * Question and answer sessions between Master and spiritual practitioners.
- * Available in Aulacese (Vols. 1-4), Bulgarian (Vol. 1), Chinese (Vols. 1-3), Czech (Vol. 1), English (Vols. 1-2), French (Vol. 1), German (Vol. 1), Hungarian (Vol. 1), Indonesian (Vols. 1-3), Japanese (Vol. 1), Korean (Vols. 1-2), Polish (Vol. 1), and Portuguese (Vol. 1).

The Key of Immediate Enlightenment – Special Edition

- * A collection of Master's lectures during the 1993 world lecture tour.
- * Available in Chinese and English (Vols. 1-6).

The Key of Immediate Enlightenment – My Wondrous Experiences with Master

- * Available in Aulacese and Chinese (Vols. 1-2).

The Key of Immediate Enlightenment – Special Edition / 7-day Retreat

- * A collection of Master's lectures during a 7-day retreat in Formosa, 1992.
- * Available in Aulacese and English.

Letters between Master and Spiritual Practitioners

- * Available in Aulacese (Vols. 1-2), Chinese (Vols. 1-3), English (Vol. 1), and Spanish (Vol. 1).

Master Tells Stories

- * Available in Aulacese, Chinese, English, Japanese, Korean, Spanish, and Thai.

Aphorisms

- * Gems of eternal wisdom from Supreme Master Ching Hai.
- * Available in combined language editions of Chinese/English, English/Japanese, English/Korean, French/German, and Portuguese/Spanish.

I Have Come to Take You Home

- * A collection of quotes and spiritual teachings by Supreme Master Ching Hai.
- * Available in Arabic, Aulacese, Bulgarian, Chinese, Czech, English, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Indonesian, Italian, Korean, Romanian, Russian, Polish, Spanish, and Turkish.

God's Direct Contact – The Way to Reach Peace

- * A collection of quotes and spiritual teachings by Supreme Master Ching Hai.
- * Available in Chinese and English.

Coloring Our Lives

- * A collection of quotes and spiritual teachings by Supreme Master Ching Hai.
- * Available in Chinese and English.

Of God and Humans – Insights from Bible Stories

- * A collection of quotes and spiritual teachings by Supreme Master Ching Hai.
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God Takes Care of Everything

- * Illustrated tales of wisdom by Supreme Master Ching Hai.
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- * Available in Chinese and English.

Secrets to Effortless Spiritual Practice

- * Available in Chinese and English.

Living in the Golden Age Series – The Realization of Health – Returning to the Natural and Righteous Way of Living

- * Collected excerpts from the lectures of Supreme Master Ching Hai.
- * Available in Chinese and English.

The Dogs in My Life (Vols. 1-2)

- * Stories by Supreme Master Ching Hai.
- * Available in Chinese and English.

The Birds in My Life

- * Stories by Supreme Master Ching Hai.
- * Available in Chinese and English.

The Noble Wilds

- * Stories by Supreme Master Ching Hai.
- * Available in English.

Supreme Kitchen – International Vegetarian Cuisine

- * A collection of culinary delicacies recommended by Master and fellow practitioners from all parts of the world.
- * Available in Aulacese, Chinese/English, and Japanese.

Supreme Kitchen – Home Taste Selections

- * Available in Chinese/English.

DVD, VCD, Video, Audio & MP3

- * Almost all of Supreme Master Ching Hai's lectures, interviews and talks with groups of practitioners during the past decades have been recorded and are available on audio or videotapes, as well as VCD and DVD, subtitled in multiple languages. Detailed catalogs of Master's videotapes, audiotapes and books are available from www.smchbook.com. All publications are offered at near-cost prices. Direct inquires are welcome; please contact your local Center or the Formosa headquarters smchbooks@Godsdirectcontact.org with any questions or requests.

Supreme Master Ching Hai's Art World:***Poetry***

- * Wu Tzu poems (in Aulacese, Chinese, and English).
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- * The dream of a butterfly (in Aulacese, Chinese, and English).
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- * Series of paintings by Master.

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- * Collections of music and songs composed by Master.
- * Poetry recited by Master Herself.
- * Available on CD, audiotape, videotape & DVD.

Benefit Concerts

* Long Beach, CA (1996), Washington, D.C. (1997), and Hollywood, CA (1998). These benefit concerts held in honor of Supreme Master Ching Hai, feature Her poetry set to music by world-famous composers and performed by renowned singers and musicians.

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Animals are celestial beings, just like humans. We can talk to each other from deep within. Love is our common language, the celestial language.

The books entitled *The Dogs in My Life*, *The Birds in My Life* and *The Noble Wilds* share the loving feeling between any pet and their Master. The deeply personal relationship between a human and an animal companion is intimate, touching and full of unconditional love. Reading these books helps us to build an interactive intimacy with our own loving pets.

We invite the readers to experience the beautiful and blissful love between a humanitarian and spiritual Teacher and Her noble, loving pets. Supreme Master Ching Hai has millions of adoring fans around the world, but none so close as Her own loving pets.

Book descriptions

In the newly released *The Dogs in My Life* (Volume 1 & 2), the first publication lovingly written and personally designed by Supreme Master Ching Hai, readers will rediscover the simplicity of the love and rejoice in the sincerity of friendship, as exhibited by the 10 canine friends, with names like Benny, Lucky, Happy, Goody, and Hermit. Learn about the Scholar, Fruity, Princissa, Chip Ahoy, the Shadow Hunter, and others; listen to their engaging tales. They all have diverse life stories and distinctive personalities, yet their devotion for their 'human pet' is unequivocal, and their humor, intelligence and many other noble qualities are truly from the same source.

Following *The Dogs in My Life*, Supreme Master Ching Hai wrote another book entitled, *The Birds in My Life*, for the twenty-three beloved winged members of Her household. In this beautifully illustrated book, each feathered creature is described in a biography lovingly composed by Master, together with pictures from the bird's daily life and captions with 'bird talk.'

Each of these beautiful birds comes from a different background and has an interesting and unique personality. Some of their stories will move us into tears, while others may make us smile. Their cute mannerisms have brought much joy and laughter to Master. Hidden inside these tiny creatures are highly developed and loving souls. Master said that She has often been touched by the expressions and actions of the birds, and even inspired by them. She hopes that all of us will understand other living beings such as birds, and love and respect them as equals.

With a rhythmic, meditative tone, the words of *The Noble Wilds* flow gracefully along the pages, complemented by the luminous photos of God's creations in nature. Turning the pages, one is transported to Amoura, the place where the lady lives and is visited by cherished beings of the wild. The lady is none other than Supreme Master Ching Hai, and

The Noble Wilds is yet another of Her simple but deeply touching gifts. Written, photographed and compiled personally by Master, this precious gem opens the door to a world of unique beauty. Here, the reader can witness firsthand the noble spirit and dedication of our co-inhabitants whose homes are under the open sky the swan, the goose, the squirrel, the beaver and even a tiny garden snail. Although generally shy of humans, these animals allow themselves to be photographed, and indeed can even be seen eagerly approaching the lady's gentle offering of favorite foods. The love conveyed is unlike any other full of dignity and grace, yet as deep and enduring as the eternal. All books are printed by soy ink for environmental protection. Such ink is not only nontoxic but also very helpful for environment of the mother earth, which is a good example of 'time to act.'

Through these books, we will understand how deeply our animal friends can feel and how intelligent they can be. They are absolutely loyal to partners, friends and human caretakers. They can be very sensitive and tender in expressing their love, and when they lose a loved one, they suffer the same sadness as humans do. That's why Master Ching Hai says, 'If humans could love each other that much, peace and happiness would be ours forever.' These three hundred pages of wonderful pictures and stories will lead us to a world populated by beautiful birds and help us understand their lives, their deep emotions and thoughts.

Read *The Dogs in My Life*, *The Birds in My Life* and *The Noble Wilds*, and fall in love with some of the most special beings on earth. *The Dogs in My Life*, *The Birds in My Life* and *The Noble Wilds* are also available online at: www.amazon.com/dp/9866895084/ ; www.amazon.com/dp/9866895149/ and www.amazon.com/Noble-Wilds-Supreme-Master-Ching/dp/9868415233.

These books are beautiful gifts for yourselves and your loved ones. Have them delivered as soon as possible to our doors and begin experiencing God's love and blessing flowing on every page!

About the author Supreme Master Ching Hai

Supreme Master Ching Hai was born in central Au Lac (Vietnam). At the age of eighteen, Master Ching Hai moved to England to study, and then later to France and then Germany, where She worked for the Red Cross and married a German physician. After two years of happy marriage, with Her husband's blessings, She left Her marriage in pursuit of enlightenment, thus fulfilling an ideal that had been with Her since Her childhood. This began a time of arduous pilgrimages to many different countries that ended only when She met a perfect living Master in the Himalayas. Master Ching Hai received the divine transmission of the inner Light and Sound, which She later called the Quan Yin method of meditation. After a period of diligent practice, She attained perfect enlightenment. To satisfy the longing of sincere Truth seekers, Supreme Master Ching Hai offers the Quan Yin method of meditation to people of all nationalities, religions and cultural backgrounds. Her message of love and peace brings spiritual liberation and hope to people throughout the world, reminding all to uphold Truth, virtue, and beauty in life.



Alternative living

Change our life
Change our heart
Change our diet



No more killing
Be healthy and loving

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Foods	Protein concentration (% by weight)
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Corn.	13%
Rice.	8.6%
Soy beans, kidney beans, chick peas, lentils, et cetera.	10 – 35%
Almonds, walnuts, cashews, hazel nuts, pine nuts, et cetera.	14 – 30%
Pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds, sunflower seeds, et cetera.	18 – 24%

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- The recommended daily allowance: 50 grams of protein (average adult).
- Calcium from vegetables is more absorbable than from cow's milk.

- To diminish the real threat of a worldwide pandemic from bird flu;
- To avoid the danger of mad cow disease (BSE) and pig disease (PMWS), et cetera; and
- To stop the continuing gruesome sacrifice of billions of our sweet domestic animals, marine life and feathered friends daily.

It's wise to change to a vegetarian diet for good:

- It's health;
- It's economy;
- It's ecology;
- It's compassion;
- It's peace; and
- It's noble.

For more information, visit our websites: www.Godsdirectcontact.org / www.SupremeMasterTV.com.



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