



The Supreme Master Ching Hai

The Key of Immediate Enlightenment 1



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Book 1

The Supreme Master Ching Hai
International Association Publishing Co., Ltd.

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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, meaning “beautiful,” 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.

“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!”

~ The Supreme Master Ching Hai

“By attaining inner peace we will attain everything else. All the satisfaction, all the fulfillment of worldly and heavenly desires come from the Kingdom of God – the inner realization of our eternal harmony, of our eternal wisdom, and of our Almighty Power. If we do not get these we never find satisfaction, no matter how much money or power, or how high a position we have.”

~ The Supreme Master Ching Hai

“Our teaching is that whatever you have to do in this world, do it, do it wholeheartedly. Be responsible and also meditate every day. You will get more knowledge, more wisdom, more peace, in order to serve yourself and serve the world. Do not forget that you have your own goodness inside you. Do not forget that you have God dwelling within your body. Do not forget that you have Buddha within your heart.”

~ The Supreme Master Ching Hai

Walk the Way of Love

Footsteps of a Living Enlightened Master

We will search high and low
For a little love,
For a little love,
To share with all beings
In all corners of the world.

Supreme Master Ching Hai is a world-renowned humanitarian, environmentalist, author, artist, designer, musician, film director and spiritual teacher, whose love and care for humanity extend beyond all racial and national boundaries. Since the early 1980s she has also been one of our planet's most dedicated ecological pioneers, promoting environmental protection, biodiversity preservation, reforestation, sustainable living and most importantly, the organic vegan diet, the quickest, most effective way to solve the climate crisis.

With unwavering determination, she devotes her time and resources to awakening the world to the disastrous impact of climate change and to the vegan solution. From 2006 to 2008 she launched the Alternative Living and SOS global-warming-awareness campaigns. She also publishes a news magazine, writes books, produced the 2005 vegetarian documentary *The Real Heroes* and the TV series *The King &*

Co., broadcast on Supreme Master Television, a 24/7, global satellite channel offering news on climate change, the vegan diet and other uplifting topics. Since 2007 Master Ching Hai has also shared her knowledge with environmental experts, government leaders, VIPs and concerned citizens through over 27 climate-change conferences in 13 countries broadcast live on satellite TV and radio.

As a result of these efforts, her motto “Be Veg, Go Green 2 Save the Planet” and “Be Vegan, Make Peace” has spread around the globe, inspiring humankind to embrace the healthy, sustainable vegan lifestyle and thus evolve into a higher state of peace and harmony.

Through her kind example, Supreme Master Ching Hai also reminds us of our inner goodness and love for all of God’s creations. The profound insights she gained through her spiritual attainment allowed her to identify the root cause of human suffering, social discord and environmental degradation: the violence we inflict on other beings, including our innocent animal friends. Out of compassion for the weak and voiceless, Supreme Master Ching Hai thus wrote the #1 international bestsellers *The Birds in My Life*, *The Dogs in My Life*, and *The Noble Wilds*. These literary gems, available in various languages, reveal the deep thoughts and feelings of our treasured animal co-inhabitants, highlighting their divine nature and unconditional love.

Her Early Years

Born in central Au Lac (Vietnam), Supreme Master Ching Hai studied in Europe and worked for the Red Cross. She soon realized that suffering exists in all corners of the globe,

and her yearning to find a remedy became the foremost goal in her life. She then embarked on a journey to the Himalayas in search of spiritual enlightenment and eventually received divine transmission of the inner Light and Sound, which she later called the Quan Yin Method. After a period of diligent practice, Supreme Master Ching Hai attained the Great Enlightenment.

Soon after her return from the Himalayas, at the request of those around her, Supreme Master Ching Hai began sharing the Quan Yin Method, encouraging her students to look within to find their own divine greatness. Before long, she received invitations to give lectures in the Americas, Europe, Asia, Australia and Africa. Supreme Master Ching Hai's compassionate heart is also reflected in her care for the less fortunate. Funds generated from the sale of her artistic creations have enabled her to support her mission of comforting God's children in need through worldwide disaster relief and charity work.

Beautify the World We Live In

Although she seeks no acknowledgement for her humanitarian work, Supreme Master Ching Hai has received numerous awards from governments and private organizations around the world, including the World Peace Award, the World Spiritual Leadership Award, the Award for Promotion of Human Rights, the World Citizen Humanitarian Award, the Award for Outstanding Public Service to Mankind, the 2006 Gusi Peace Prize, the Los Angeles Music Week Certificate of Commendation, First Place Silver for the 27th Annual Telly Awards 2006, the Presidential Active Lifestyle Award from former US President George W. Bush, and the

2010 President's Volunteer Service Award from US President Barack Obama.

In addition, October 25 and February 22 were proclaimed "Supreme Master Ching Hai Day" in the US by government officials in Hawaii and Illinois. Congratulatory messages were sent to her during the Illinois proclamation ceremony by former US Presidents Clinton, Bush and Reagan.

And to commend virtuous individuals and encourage others to be inspired by their examples, Supreme Master Ching Hai has also created the Shining World Awards series, recognizing deserving humans and animals for exceptional heroism, compassion, leadership, bravery or intelligence.

Master's Dream

Supreme Master Ching Hai thus selflessly dedicates her life to creating a beautiful future for our beloved planet and its precious co-inhabitants. Throughout history great visionaries have had dreams, and Supreme Master Ching Hai expresses hers as follows:

"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 takes billion, billion and trillions of years to produce this planet and it's so beautiful, so wonderful.

I dream that it will continue, but in peace, beauty and love."



Real Doctrine and False Doctrine

Spoken by Supreme Master Ching Hai
October 20, 1986
Taipei, Formosa
(Originally in Chinese)

To spread the doctrine I need this body, a car, some other things, and lastly, an audience. However, when there are people coming for the lecture, perhaps the car would be out of order, or there would be no one to drive it, or I would get sick. But have you ever heard that on any day I was so sick as to fail in giving the appointed lecture on time? Even in sickness I still got up and talked, and therefore you never have doubted that I would. In this world, spreading the Truth is not easy, because everything in this world is made of Maya material.

What is the meaning of “made of Maya material”? It means that our bodies, our food, our clothing, etc. all come from Maya power (the negative aspect of nature). To spread the Truth here we have to work with the negative power, and it is not easy. What is the Truth? It is something we cannot grasp, something difficult to talk about clearly except only a little at the most, for the transcendental Truth normally is not to be

spoken or to be described in the worldly language. Therefore, to propagate the Truth by using the body or other material instruments is not simple, because the worldly material things are mostly too defiled – they do not belong to the wisdom category – to be used to express the great and living wisdom.

First, for the preacher to use the limited, dull material instrument to explain the unlimited, living wisdom is already something extremely difficult; second, for the listeners to comprehend and grasp the great intelligence which is something so noble, vast and beyond human's imagination is neither easy. It is not simple for either side.

Anyone who wishes to understand the Truth must use his wisdom to realize it and experience it. Transmitting the Truth must be done through the heart, through inherent wisdom. It is not possible to use human language. Chanting the holy verse and reciting the Buddha's names and preaching are only ABC steps. After listening to them, one may become curious and like to know more to raise his own level a little and not to just stay at the ABC level day after day because it would be a loss. That is why the initiation to Quan Yin Method of meditation is necessary. It is our method of transmitting wisdom and the Truth.

It is a method, but actually there is no 'method.' The essential part lies in the initiation – the heart to heart (consciousness) transmission – and not in doing exterior things such as talking about something or telling you what to do.

At the time of initiation Master will tell you what not to do, to put down everything and to desire nothing in order to find your own Nature. Does this sound very contradictory? No. Because most people generally try to find their Real Nature by outer rituals, hanging on to exterior forms and praying to something or someone other than themselves. In our method I want you to put all this down and not to remain attached to them. Therefore I tell you to quit needing this or that. But just “don’t need” is still not the method, not the ultimate. Nevertheless, if one can really ‘put down,’ even just a little for a second, one can also experience enlightenment.

Transmission of the Light is a very simple process; but it is also not easy. It is simple because one can have the enlightening experience at the transmission immediately; but one must first find someone who can do the transmission, and this is what is ‘not easy.’ It is not that transmission of the method is complicated, or that to become enlightened is impossible; it is finding someone to help us get enlightenment that is really difficult.

Transmission of the Light can be done individually or in groups, depending on the Master. Therefore we know that some of the ancient Masters had only a few students. Very few people knew Lao Tzu; Confucius had hundreds of followers; Hui Neng the Sixth Zen Patriarch had more, and Shakyamuni Buddha had even more; Jesus had twelve great disciples. Perhaps He gave transmission to more people, but these twelve were the more enlightened.

Probably you have often wondered that since the Quan Yin initiates are all enlightened, then why are some more enlightened than other fellow initiates? Why is it that only some of them can succeed the Master to further spread the Truth? All this has to do with the practicing process. It is not that one can reach Buddhahood immediately after the initiation into the Quan Yin Method, though everyone is originally a Buddha, not just after the initiation. Initiation only helps you to open the wisdom-eye, enlightening your inner knowledge to recognize your own Buddha Nature, and must be followed by further continuous practice. It is impossible to realize too much at initiation. Both those acquiring greater or smaller enlightenment need further practice. The more we practice, the more we know our Real Nature and our position in the universe.

For example, there is a prince who left the royal palace when he was a child and came across some beggars who took him home and trained him to also become a beggar. He has grown up not knowing that he was a prince. Every day he goes out to beg for food. The king has been missing him and searched for him every day, and sent someone to look for him everywhere. Maybe the prince has some special mark on his body. One day, the king's man finds the prince and tells him that he is a prince, "Believe me. I will take you back to the palace and you will become the future king." The prince, having grown up in a beggar's home and gotten used to the life there, cannot believe the king's man immediately. Therefore, the messenger has to make a great effort to persuade him, reminding him day after day, "I assure you that you are truly a prince. I can give

you proof, if you want. The prince's clothes are here for you to wear, the horse is there for you to ride, if only you will."

The prince lacks courage to admit the fact, for he has been a beggar too long; so that the king's man has to keep on telling him patiently about the glorious palace and the many good treasures therein, which all belong to him. But the prince still dares not imagine that he can have all this. The king's man is not there to turn the beggar into a prince; the beggar was originally the prince.

Then one day the prince decides to accept the proposal: "OK. I might as well give it a try for my fortune. I will leave it to you to take care of my life, and see what will happen." Seeing him put on the prince's clothes and ride on the horse, all other officers present come to prostrate themselves before him, which convinces him more – though not yet completely. Troubles still lie on the road for the king's man to take him home, to educate him in the royal manners and bearing for a real prince, which will be a very different lifestyle compared with his previous low beggar's lot not daring to look up to others. He still has plenty to learn, from personal style to inner wisdom.

In like manner, we were the Buddha in the beginning; but life after life we have been controlled by the Maya power and suffered so much pain. We just cannot escape life; everywhere there are troubles. Perhaps today it is better, but tomorrow obstacles will come, and other days it may be worse. Each time we cannot help being confronted by suffering without knowing

why. For so little, say just three or four meals a day and some clothes to wear, we have to always do the never-ending work twenty-four hours a day. Why?

Therefore, when the Buddha or Saints manifest themselves in this world, it is because they have seen our sorrow. We were originally their kin and they want to help. However, not being able to make us understand and recognize our noble Real Nature in a short while, they have to use a lot of encouraging talk and explanations such as “Originally you were the Buddha, the noble and free...” until one day people will be led to believe a little. Then they will keep on, “Come. I will show you the way to freedom, a way to know your Real Nature.” Then through the initiation you will recognize this Nature which does exist; by and by you will come to know your Real Self. The lectures are only to encourage you to practice until you know your own noble Self completely.

The same is true with the above mentioned prince. Because the road to the palace is long, half way home he might change his mind and say, “No. No more can I believe you. As a longtime beggar, how dare I meet the king? How can I suddenly become a prince?” So, he probably wants to go back to his old home, back to his previous way of life as a beggar. Everything in his past only reminds him that he is merely a ‘foul beggar’ who has suffered people’s abuse, who has no friends of his own, and who enjoys no one’s love or care. It is very difficult for him to convince himself that he is a prince. How arduous it is for the king’s man to bring him back to the royal life!

Therefore, from ancient times, it has never been easy for any great Master to teach the mass. They must encounter all kinds of difficulties; they have to fight with our habits and prejudices; they have to fight against our mundane way of thinking. A great Master who appears may not necessarily be welcomed by the public. Some of the people who come to listen will not believe him, and even criticize him and slander him, because they only stick to their mundane way of thinking. Since ancient time, rather than believe in the real Masters people would worship the fire god, the wind god, water spirit, etc., because they've lost their Real Self and they've become lonely, afraid of the unknown and the great universe. All things seen are so mysterious and frightening. We fear the burning sun and the hot fire which destroys everything it comes in contact with. "Why is the mountain so high? Why is the sea so deep and vast that we cannot see the other shore? Why is the wind so mighty as to blow to pieces anything standing in its way, even the large trees and big houses?"

After having been separated from the Almighty Power (the Real Self), we have become very lonely just like a lost child who is not able to find his home and becomes frightened of everything in the dark wilderness. As a consequence people are driven into superstition. Worship of ghosts and all kinds of spirits arises from this background. It is the same from ancient times until now. Therefore the Masters all have to fight very hard against such superstitions and are able to win only after a long period of time. Those with deep rooted ignorance and superstition are not easily converted, but they still have to be saved. The job of the Master would be easier with those who have faith.

To change superstition is just like fighting a battle without material weapons but with the thinking process, which is even more troublesome and terrible than political war. That is why Buddha said, *It is difficult to deliver sentient beings*. It is because our mind, which originally was not ours, only cooperates with us in worldly work, but not in our search for liberation. It will obstruct us from freedom, posing all kinds of questions such as: “For what purpose do you practice? Here in this world you have all things you need, like clothes to wear, food to enjoy, family and friends for comfort! Why do you meditate? Where do you want to go beyond this world? This world is the only, most beautiful thing you know of. How do you know if there is another world or really a Heaven? Could it be that the Master tricks you?” Like this the mind will run around with all these skeptical thoughts.

Therefore, the ancient Masters would test the students many times before and after admission, to prepare their minds for a new way of thinking, just as in preparing the ground to grow vegetables. On the mountains we also grow vegetables. For a long time no one had lived in that house before we went there. Therefore when we first arrived, the weeds were already very tall, overrunning the roads and pathways. So we had to cut, pull up, and remove all the weeds. Now there is no more grass. Then we prepared the soil with fertilizer and started to plant vegetables, which are now ready for eating.

In the same manner the false concepts and the fixed old decayed ideas must be washed away before the new and real thoughts and philosophies can be transmitted, because false

ideas and the Truth cannot mix together. Likewise vegetables cannot grow healthy with weeds; there is so much grass that one cannot even walk there, let alone grow anything! After vegetables are planted, we still have to take care of them every day; otherwise grass will invade the soil and worms will destroy the crops. Grass comes out not only from the soil, but also from the sky – from seeds flying around and falling on the soil to grow up so fast. If for just a few days we have not paid attention, the weeds will sprout again.

That is why after the Quan Yin transmission, one must practice diligently and continuously. It is necessary to listen to the Master's teachings and to see the Master and fellow practitioners once a week or once a month or so, and to participate in the occasional retreats, in order to renew our determination and vigor in practice. Otherwise the neophyte will forget and lose himself in the whirlpool of the world very easily.

As was said in the beginning, this world is the Maya's (the dark force's) territory, a land of Maya's material with all kinds of temptations. The great Buddhas who come here from the higher world to take their kin Home, to make them become noble beings instead of the dark force's slaves are in fact the 'intruders' who interfere with the work of the dark force. They have to fight with Maya, because the beings released from the Three Worlds will become greater and higher than the dark force and will never have to return to this dark world again to suffer; and that means Maya will lose a dear soul, a good slave, which makes him unhappy and then causes many troubles!

We have seen that since ancient times any real great Master who came to this world to rescue sentient beings would suffer a great deal. It has never been an easy task to deliver the world's citizens. Even when they could deliver a limited number of beings, they themselves would encounter a lot of criticism and obstacles.

Shakyamuni Buddha also encountered a lot of opposition. Some wanted to kill Him, some criticized Him saying He was teaching the 'outer path' (heterodoxy), etc.; Jesus Christ, before He could preach long enough, was already nailed to the cross; Confucius was driven out from several states; Lao Tzu had only a few believers, though He is now even more famous than two thousand years ago. When He was alive, no one recognized Him and He became famous only a long time after He had died.

Why is it that ancient Masters have become more famous than present living Masters? It is because after the living Master left this world, the Maya king (negative force) would make use of the Master's fame for his own purpose, changing the Master's true preaching to the opposite direction to serve the negative philosophy. That is why the Truth a great Master preached while descending to this world would become superstition after some time.

For example, Lao Tzu had never taught people to worship Him or anything or any symbol, much less to sacrifice animals as offerings to Him. He did not say that He would bless anyone, or that after His death people should make offerings to Him

or worship Him. In the Tao Te Ching (the Virtues Sutra) He only taught people to find the eternal Tao (the Path), to be connected with and united with the Tao as the only way to find the Truth. This was the most important point that Lao Tzu emphasized in Tao Te Ching. It is no doubt the highest ideal.

However, if we have a look at today's Taoism, we will see how this perfect ideal has fallen. At each and every Taoist temple there is always the sacrifice of animals' flesh, offered to 'whom' I do not know; because there is no doubt that Lao Tzu has been frightened of it and has run away. Being a great and compassionate Master, how could He ever stand to eat sentient beings' flesh? The same with Confucianism. It was originally intended to encourage people to become highly moral and erudite, but has turned to many flesh sacrifices – swine, beef, etc.

Buddhism has almost fallen into the same stage. In almost all the Buddhist countries, it has become 'small vehicle (Hinayana).' Most of the monks and nuns in these countries are married, eat meat, and drink wine. In the Dharma-ending age there are many things which go against what they should be. When Buddhism was first spread into Tibet, the intention was to convert the natives, but on the contrary Buddhism was converted by the local sect and became Lamaism.

China has a great and long tradition of many thousand years in literature and moral development, where Buddhism spread quickly far and wide, lasting for many a glorious, golden days before it met with a lot of opposition and fell to the ground. Buddhism in mainland China almost died out. At present, it

seems that only in our little ‘potato Formosa’ is there still a little section of old Buddhist tradition, where the monks are keeping celibacy and vegetarian diet. (I am not quite sure if this is so; I just guess it is like that. If not, where else in this world can we find the real Buddhist tradition?)

Nevertheless, Buddhism in Formosa is still not quite exactly the original one, because it has been combined with Taoism into a mixture of religious philosophies and ways of life. In India, the original Buddhism contained no morning and evening recitation of verses and sutras, which are prevailing in every temple nowadays, with many things to recite other than the Buddha’s name which normally is enough for recitation. It may not be bad to do so, but originally the daily devotional recitation was intended for monks and nuns who lead a quiet and simple spiritually practicing life.

In Au Lac, the lay people are not allowed to recite the Surangama Mantra or other secret mantras. Even though I was already a vegetarian before leaving home, and doing devotional service every morning and evening, reading scriptures and bowing to Buddha’s image and reciting Buddha’s name, my Qui-Yi (devotion) master still did not permit me to recite the Surangama Mantra. He did not allow me to do the feeding of the spirits till much later because, as he said, “First, the lay people have husband-wife relation; second, to recite the mantra at home, where the atmosphere was different from the temple, would not be very fruitful and, worse still, might bring about many undesirable reactions. For one not purified enough to recite the mantra, not only can he

hardly get any response but he risks the invoking of devils' disturbance."

In this respect it is very chaotic now. There are some people who go out and buy themselves some kind of Buddha's statue to worship every day, and 'bless' some water and food to give to the ghosts. It is not good to do so because the ghosts cannot enjoy it; and even if they could, they would come back every day in increasing numbers to trouble us, creating a very negative atmosphere around us; and we have no power to control them. That is why many people reciting mantras have become mentally disturbed.

Many people came to see me with such problems. Sometimes I would help, but other times not, when the case was too serious for me to spend too much time on it. Since this kind of people like to play 'big hero' and 'saints' to 'rescue' others, to interfere with others' karma, they should now save themselves first. I could not care that much. It is too troublesome to take such complications which would consume much of my time and energy, which I could better use to save others who are more ready for the Path, more ready for quicker liberation. Ignoring one hundred people to save only one individual would be a real waste of energy and not fair.

In Formosa there are many such cases. People take the mantras home and confusingly recite them every day, and then learn some kinds of secret gestures, with the aim of trying to save poor ghosts this way. Or after practicing a 7-day Nien-Fo (reciting Buddha's name for seven days) or 7-day Zen retreat,

they go home to perform it themselves; or after going to the temple for a couple days learning a little about the rituals, they go home and become a ‘master’ overnight. The atmosphere in the temple and home is not the same. A man who wants to do these things must possess real power to avoid troubles. A man who feeds the ghosts must also have the capacity to control them, lest they affect his mental state or harm his family or relatives. In Formosa there are many people who like to rescue ghosts. Everywhere I go I can hear, “We must liberate sentient beings.” Their motive to liberate sentient beings is very good, but whether they are able to do so or not is another matter.

Some people, after reading just the Sutra of the Sixth Zen Patriarch, or a copy of the Diamond Sutra and seeing that the sutra says, “Meditation is very good,” would guess how to meditate and do it themselves. Or when they go to the temple and see that the monks and nuns sit like this or that, they will imitate them and meditate at home themselves. What kind of meditation is that? This is not ‘meditation’ but ‘imitation.’ Meditation is good, but imitation only leads people astray and causes a lot of complication in the long run. Therefore, many people after doing so suffer mental disturbance themselves. It is because some of the priests disclose too much about the secret mantras and secret method, even those which cannot be publicized, which are not supposed to be learned by ordinary people because they would not be able to handle the released psychic power, and would instead derive more harm than good.

Therefore, the ancient Masters were very careful in choosing disciples. They would not transmit the Dharma

indiscriminately without previously testing the neophytes; instead, the Masters would observe the candidate for a long, long time before giving him any secret. This is a more secure way because the 'qualified' disciples will not likely leave the Master halfway and misunderstand the teachings and end up criticizing the Master.

Two opposite situations may arise from longtime recitation of the mantras to rescue the ghosts: suffering or not suffering mental disturbance. The reason why one suffers mental disturbance is because his merit is too meager and his ego is too large. "I am so good; I am so compassionate. I recite the mantra to liberate sentient beings, and I give away food every day to help the hungry ghosts." This great 'I' ego will cause the 'I' to suffer mental derangement. After reciting some mantras for some ghosts, they felt a sense of superiority, which results in the ego standing in the way, fighting with the inborn morality and modesty, causing some kind of struggle within their mind. If the struggle is not resolved, the disturbance, called the 'Maya (negative force) disturbance' will occur. Although Maya represents the negative force, he does not like such negative and proud people and will come to disturb them.

The reason why one would not have to suffer mental disturbances very probably lies in the fact that he has accumulated much merit derived from very hard practice in his previous lives. But this merit is still not enough for him to become liberated, to be a Saint. So he has to come back to this human life, to get married and have children, and then becomes tied up with a lot of worldly obligations like most

people. Nevertheless, he still has such stored merit from previous lives.

Anyone who truly has compassion and the will to save sentient beings never will feel superior or proud. The Buddha and Maya will not interfere with those who deeply and sincerely wish to help others and save the hungry ghosts and recite the mantras for the sake of liberating the dead. However for those who have not practiced in this life, their store of merit... all be used up in one lifetime and leave nothing for themselves to bring with them when they leave this world; neither have they any merit left for them to be reborn in a higher world. Most people do not know this consequence because they cannot see the Truth.

To further explain this I will cite two allegories. There are two persons, each having no money of his own. The first one wants people to believe that he is very wealthy, so he goes out to borrow money from others to spend on himself as well as on other friends and invented for he likes being praised and becoming known. Every day he just keeps on borrowing more and more, going beyond his capacity to repay, until one day he is caught and put in prison. The second one is a person who really wishes to give to poor people though he does not work to earn anything, except having the inheritance from his parents, which he spends day after day till it decreases to nothing.

Similarly, merit can also be dissipated and wasted away. Therefore, in order not to be in debt or become empty-handed, it is necessary for us to look for an unlimited source of supply

of infinite merit to rely on. After finding it, however much we want to spend would be no problem at all. Otherwise, it is dangerous for us to do things indiscriminately. This infinite store of merits has its source. Find this source, and get connected with it, then we will have everything we need and even distribute it to countless others.

So, as I have just said, if you have found this source, you can give any merit to any others as much as you like without you yourself being harmed. However, people who find this treasure would never go out and loudly broadcast their ability, neither would they openly, noisily recite any mantra to save any beings. They do not even need to do this, which is only what the negative force has invented and not what Buddha or Jesus Christ taught. What is there to recite? Originally there had not been such things till pure Buddhism was mixed with other kind of superstition to become what it is now (in Formosa), just as it was deviated into Lamaism after spreading to Tibet and became no longer pure.

That is why the true, holy Buddhists would not do such things. Have you ever heard that the Sixth Patriarch Hui Neng recited any mantra for saving ghosts or did the noisy, so-called morning and evening devotion service? He did nothing like that. He just simply turned to face the wall and meditated. Pai Chang the great Zen Master was also the same. He never did any 'funeral service' by reciting all those noisy mantras and sutras, did He? No. I myself also have never heard that Buddha did morning and evening rehabilitation or any of other outward performances.

Even if Buddha did so, He Himself had the power to do these things to benefit others. Whereas you cannot, for you are not Buddha and have not yet reached the highest level as He did. So, what is the use for us to recite mantras or sutras? Actually it is not necessary for Buddha to ‘do’ these things because He could just sit in any corner and accomplished anything He liked without going to any special place to recite any mantra or sutra but just ‘using’ His all-pervading mind. All that was needed was His power, His manifestation to accomplish. Therefore it is said that Buddha had thousands of manifestations (Light bodies), never did He have to really move a finger at all!

To tell you the truth, Master “neither comes or goes,” but surely people have been seeing me coming to aid them when necessary. It is not me, this physical body, but my transcendental bodies that go down the mountain to help them. Right now I am lecturing here. This is a physical Master who lectures you, who will feel the pain if you beat her, but most of the other work is usually done by my manifestations (Light bodies).

After finding our Real Nature, we will begin to really help the world, without moving our hands, without any sense of being grand, being a savior of the race, etc. because there will be no one who would be saved by us, there will be no separation whatsoever between ‘I’ and sentient beings or any of such feeling. Without thinking any particular thing we will have everything be done naturally, spontaneously; hence the saying of Lao Tzu: ***Doing without doing.***

As I have just said, enlightened Masters often became even more famous after they die than when they are alive. Why? Because the Maya king (illusion) would pervert the real Master's doctrine to cause all things to become chaotic and topsy-turvy, so as to confuse the Truth-seekers. Using the past Master's great name he would find a seat and a religion with all sorts of mixed superstitions to bind people. People will believe this to be the Truth spoken by the prophets and will blindly follow it and be tied up in the wheel of life and death and become the Maya king's subjects, without knowing anything about true liberation. Like this, they will have false belief, thinking that they have found a religion and their thirst for the Absolute will thus be quenched!

There are many people searching for the Truth without knowing where to find it and how to get it. They would be overjoyed at hearing others telling them that by worshipping the Buddha's statue and praying to Buddha they will attain liberation and the Truth. They follow this idea and think there is no option but to rely on Buddha who is still so famous now even though He has been gone for more than two thousand years.

These people really love to prostrate themselves at the Buddha's image, believing it to be the way to attain liberation. Little do they know this is only the tricks of the Maya king, who does not wish us to find our true Self, our inner Buddha which we all possess. He would lead us astray to worship outer images and do any kind of useless worshipping to busy ourselves; and even then he would make us believe that

we are great and we have real faith and the wisdom of the way to liberation, that “I am so good, for I am performing worshipping service morning and evening, going to the church every Sunday or to the temple every day offering flowers, incense and fruit to Buddha or to Jesus or to the Father in Heaven, etc...” He fools us into feeling proud of all these stuffs without knowing these are only the bonds which bind us in the lower Three Worlds, which keep us forever in the circle of life and death and far away from bliss and liberation.

In that way even the sincerest practitioners would only reach the so-called ‘Second World,’ with very few reaching the ‘Third World,’ not to mention the other higher worlds above. The Second World is still in the Maya king’s domain, and the third is still part of his throne. This illusory world, including our bodies and minds, are all made by the power of the three lower worlds. When we are above the Three Worlds, we do not need any of these instruments such as body, mind, thought, speech, eyes, etc. Here in this world we need so many devices and the more we have, the more complications there are. “No mind” is a better situation for us. But in this world we still need the mind and the body because without them we cannot exist.

Therefore, if we want to help all beings and if we want to recite any secret mantra to rescue any ghost, we must first become a Buddha, a ‘supra-Master.’ To achieve this end is the ultimate aim of all real Truth-practitioners; and to reach this aim we must find our true Self, our greatest source of Power within, till we become a different class of being, that is, all

powerful, all merciful and all pervading, like Buddha or Jesus Christ. Perhaps someone might tell you that some secret words or secret hand gestures (mudras) are powerful and useful, but they will not work when you yourselves use them. These are only things which have no real benefits.

Therefore, a real enlightened Master would never use these to teach a disciple; rather, he or she will show us how to look into our own powerhouse – our Real Nature. After that, anything we wish to do is up to us, because we will have the real Power of our own, the so-called Buddha Power or Master Power. With this inner Power we can accomplish anything, we can save anyone we like, we can appear anywhere with our Light bodies and help whoever in need, whether they know us or not. There is no need to work hard at morning and evening prayer services, no need to pray for hours on end or to do mudras and sacrifices, which are not of real and lasting value. They only serve to separate us from the Lord and make us even more busy and thus have no time for the unification practice to become one with the Lord of the universe. In a way they even do harm to us, as we waste precious time attending to the outer performances and lose some of the merit and virtues accumulated from our previous births, leaving ourselves nothing to take along into other higher worlds. Then we have no required blessings and merit to help us as the booster to soar into the higher domains, and then naturally we will be reborn to this earthly world again to be a human being or maybe a lower being such as animals, ghosts, etc. Is that not pitiful for us?

While we have this physical body, we should utilize it to achieve our great aim; that is, to practice the unification with the Lord till we are able to save countless sentient beings – not just a small group – whether they are ghosts, devas or human beings. That is why Buddha is called “the Teacher of devas and human beings,” and “the Father of the four forms of birth.”

Remember the prince in the story I have just told you as an example? Although having received from the king’s minister some pocket money, some nice clothes to wear, and a good horse to ride, instead of using them he gives all the money, the horse and clothes to others without considering that the road is still so long and he should first use those necessities to go back to the palace to become the king and have all the treasures in the palace, with which he can help himself and his people easily whenever he wishes.

As the minister could not have brought many things with him on the road except few clothes and only enough luggage for traveling, actually the prince should make do with these few comforts and the little money for his journey to the palace. He should use them carefully to reach home first. It is not the question of being stingy, if the prince does not give his meagre, recently obtained possession away to those needy people on the road; it is just that he must first reach home where all the power and treasures await him. Only then can he freely distribute them to his people who are in need.

Similarly, instead of merely using our human brains to think, or listening to the common ideas of others or following actions

of others indiscriminately, we should first consider carefully what benefit will be derived from such actions and whether these benefits, if any, are boundless or limited, and what is the best way to get the greatest benefit from the least amount of trouble.

Before my renunciation I also helped many people. I am telling you this not because I want to boast about myself but just because I want to give you an example of my personal experience. At one time the Aulacese refugees in Germany confronted many difficulties in language and customs. There were not many who could speak German, English or French, so I devoted most of my time to help them every day.

After working for the Red Cross which deals with international disasters, I realized that there were even more refugees, more misery in the world. Not only the Aulacese, but the world at large – the Africans, the Afghanistan, etc. – were all in turmoil. Only then did I truly realize that my power was so limited and my ability so insufficient. Then I thought of Shakyamuni Buddha, who once said that it would be best to leave home for the concentrative practice in order to become the Buddha to help many, many more sentient beings than a worldling could. Thus I made up my mind to do so.

There was not anything of great value to be a monk in so many temples that I had been to, except all those morning and evening sutras recitations – which I had long learned since my childhood – or the hand gestures, head gestures, or even ‘foot’ gestures. (Laughter) I did not see any spirit coming to

eat the sacrifices, nor did I see any actual benefit these things could do to the public. So, I began to wonder: “If Buddha’s disciples could have so many transcendental experiences, according to the Surangama Sutra, and if it was true that the Bodhisattvas could practice to reach different levels, to hear and see the devas or to enjoy various wondrous Sounds and Light, according to the Lotus Sutra, then why have all those things never happened in the whole course of my practice?”

Therefore I decided to look for an enlightened Master to fulfill my expectations for the inner levels – hearing the Sounds and seeing the Light as mentioned by Buddha, even just a little. It was not because of the eagerness to become a Buddha immediately or to see the entire universe instantly, but only because of the desire to get a little proof or verification to ensure that it was the right path I was taking. There had to be some special evidence, just as the bridge outside this house is the landmark of our place, to show it was the proper road leading me home.

But I did not have any of those experiences. It is said in “the Chapter of the Universal Door” (a Buddhist sutra) that ***By reciting Quan Yin Bodhisattva’s name one would not get hurt even if one fell in the fire.*** But if you try putting your finger on a lighted matchstick and at the same time recite the Quan Yin’s name as said, you will see what could happen! (Do not try with your entire arm unless you want it all burnt.) Also, it is mentioned in the same sutra that ***By reciting the Quan Yin Bodhisattva’s name one will float when one is dropped into the water.*** And I tried, but got myself almost drowned before

someone over there hurried to save me!

At that time I thought: “There must be at least something to convince me to keep on practicing, for I cannot wait till I die. How can I know what would happen then? What if Amitabha Buddha would not show up to pick me up? If I cannot even be paid a little now, what good would it do that the ‘boss’ would possibly, just possibly, give me billions of dollars after I die?”

That was why I had to look for an enlightened Master to get the real experiences stated in the sutras. Of course it is not possible to have all the experiences in one day, because it takes a long, long time. For instance, it took Shakyamuni Buddha six years of practice to reach Buddhahood. But if we have some enlightened inner visions first, we will feel safe that the way we follow is the homeward way. It is not that we look on these inner visions as happiness; it is because they can lead us to happiness. When we have the inner Light and Sound, our life begins to change, our wisdom opens, and our levels of power and thinking speed up.

It is just as when the minister first found the prince. Very probably the prince himself cannot suddenly show much change in his habits or manner although his outer appearance has already taken on a fresh and new look, with clean and nice clothes, with fragrance emitting from his body, and his pocket full of money, and a strong and beautiful horse to ride on and plenty of servants loyally waiting on him. It is not the same at all as when he was a poor pitiful beggar. What will become of him after reaching the king’s palace is easy to imagine.

The same is with us. It requires those inner visions to serve as the prince's clothes, money, servants and horses, etc. before we can reach the capital. Otherwise what is the use for us to become the 'prince' only after we die – not to mention at that time we won't be aware if we will have become a prince or not?

I have discovered this kind of inner peace, so I would also like to share it with all of you. The minister is not the king and he cannot make you a prince, but he can report to you that you are in reality already a prince who only needs to find the way back to the palace and become the king of the nation. To learn the way with the Master is about the same. My duty is only to tell you who you are. So do not bother to criticize any of my appearance or actions. How the Master eats her meals, how her voice sounds, all these things have nothing to do with your own status or your own kingdom. I come only to tell you that your position is very high, the highest in the world, and that if you want to recover your lost position I will help you get it back.

That is why when we come to learn at a Master's feet, do not criticize her actions or look at her appearance, for she is only an ambassador appointed by the king to escort you back home to enjoy your original status. What you should do is to follow her without bothering about her personal affairs. How she dresses and how she walks have nothing to do with you. It is good enough for you to only follow her footsteps to get Home quickly!

However, most people who seek for the Truth and who seek out a Master would commit similar mistakes. They would depend on the Master's outward appearance. Some don't want to study with a woman, some not with a man; some will say she is not good looking, not attractive or not dignified enough, and so on. All these things are rarely connected with our Real Nature and it would be a great pity if we unfortunately pay much importance to them and overlook the inner Power of the Master. As for the great Masters, it does not bother them at all whether you listen to them or not, because before going out to spread the doctrine such Masters already know that the road ahead will not be a smooth one. They know that sentient beings will be difficult to convert; but because of the compassionate nature they always return life after life to save sentient beings out of their mixed up illusion. To them, all beings are their kin. For example, if our parents or brothers or sisters do something wrong, we will all the same love them and find a way to help them out so that they can realize their mistakes. We do so because they are our relatives, is it not so? Suppose we have a problem child, a short tempered and bad one. We still take care of him, giving him food when he is hungry and clothes when he is cold, instead of throwing him into the river. Is it not so?

In this world there are plenty of people who appear to be very nice and sweet and polite; but they cannot, with only these virtues, help us reach the Truth, the ultimate liberation because these good manners have really nothing to do with practicing for the Tao. We should not depend on outside actions or worldly manners to judge a Master. Whether the Master we

meet is good or bad is only the reflection of our own karma, of our ways of perceiving things, or just the Master's personality. The Master cannot change her personality to suit and please every disciple, is it not so?

To save sentient beings is really a very hard task. It is not only their complicated minds but also their personal tastes that have to be dealt with. Some disciples may like the Master to dress in yellow, while others like red, and still others green. Then many different clothes are offered for the Master to wear and rejecting any of them would hurt someone's feelings. Sometimes when they offered food and if I did not eat, it would appear to them that Master disliked them. After a while, those who had heavier karmic burdens would even leave Master due to these petty preferences. I cannot help it, if they are so clinging as to harm themselves in this way. After all, how can one comply with everyone's wishes?

It is similar to keeping a pet. Some people like the birds very much while their neighbors do not and might even try to kill the birds to shut their mouths up because every day the birds just keep on chirping and making noise. Everyone has his own preference. This body, this brain and the world are what they should be. It is not possible to change them according to your own wish. Anyone who really wants to realize the Truth should make his own efforts to practice, without caring about the Master's physical form which is not the Truth itself but only the guidance for you!

If you have found such a real Master, you should diligently

practice so that after a period of time you will see the Master within yourself, who will appear to take you up to the higher worlds to really study the Truth. A really good Master will be able to do so. When you know the Truth, you will no longer be bound by tradition or by the various worldly concepts. After practicing for some time, you will be able to see the inner Master who only belongs to you; at that time the Master within you is for you alone. While in this world, she still has to use the physical body to teach many beings and act differently in dealing with various people. She cannot only associate with you especially and please you alone.

Even Shakyamuni Buddha could not possibly satisfy every one, and neither could Jesus Christ, a powerful saintly person who performed many miracles and helped many people, such as healing the sick, bringing the dead back to life, and transforming water into wine, etc. Even such a great person still fell into the hands of some cruel people and was crucified! There were people who did not like Them when They were alive, and even now there are still many who do not.

I can give you some proof of the inner Power and show you the perfect way of life. Then you go ahead and save yourself. Do not bother with my appearance and actions, which have nothing to do with your own life and death!



The Supra-Worldly Sound

Spoken by Supreme Master Ching Hai
April 24, 1987(DVD#872)
Penghu, Formosa
(Originally in Chinese)

There are two kinds of sounds: the worldly sound and the super-worldly Sound. The worldly sound is very important to our sensual and mental comfort, but the super-worldly Sound draws us back to God or the Buddha Land.

First we shall discuss the worldly sound and its importance.

We all know that an infant cries for many reasons, but most of the time not for food or for a change of diaper. If we then give it a little hug or speak to it or sing a song, it will stop crying. If we let it hear the ringing of bells or other melodious sounds, it will laugh instantly and start kicking in the air with joy and happiness.

Why is it that children love these sounds so much? It is because when they were in the mothers' wombs, they have already heard these melodies; the only difference is that these

Melodies in the womb were that of transcendental nature. While in the mothers' wombs, they were connected with this Super-Sound or the Source of All Love, Bliss and Power, which is simply described by many as God, Tao or Buddha Nature. This inner wondrous Sound we shall discuss later.

The fetus, while in the mother's womb, eats nothing. Inside there is no air, no sunlight, and the body hangs upside down in the watery space, but it does not matter to it at all. The fetus grows at an incredible rate under such conditions, that if it continued to do so it would be as tall as the sky after being born.

When it is in the mother's womb, it is in constant contact with the inner Sound, which nourishes and comforts it. But after it is born, it is disconnected from the Sound; then it begins to feel lonely and unhappy, and cry at the first contact with the outer world! No child has ever been born laughing. It feels a great loss as the Sound is severed from it. Moreover, as its delicate skin is exposed to the rough air and polluted environment of our world, it feels an almost unbearable pain at birth; but the child cannot speak for itself, so we can not understand its pains.

So, when the baby hears some melodious sounds it will stop crying for a while, feeling somehow comforted, mistaking those for the blissful Sounds it used to hear while still in its mother's womb.

There are people with weakened nervous systems who have to rest in some hospitals which are specialized in this field. The physicians there would recommend their listening to

some soothing and sweet music, which helps them to some remarkable extent to rebuild their mental equilibrium. Sometimes, after a day's hard work, we come home and listen to some peaceful music, and then we also feel a sense of calmness and peace. We feel relaxed and comforted a great deal. Is it not so? Even the laborers in the field or in the factory work better with music to accompany them. So, obviously, music is very necessary to our mental and physical well-being. Since time immemorial, music has been a must to humankind in this world. Even animals feel attracted to music. Plants are supposed to grow faster with it.

If the outer melody is so important to all beings, the inner celestial, wondrous Sound must be even more enchanting and full of Grace and Blessing. It vibrates within all lives and sustains the whole universe.

Even if there is lots of worldly music at home, even when we all have the TV, radio and tape recorder to entertain us, we still feel sometimes unsatisfied, as if something were missing, but we know not what. So we go out to find some peace and comfort in the country side, in the mountains, at the riverside..., listening to natural sounds of the wind blowing through the leaves, to the birds singing, and to the rushing sounds of the river. Then there are people who keep dogs, cats, birds or other pets and who grow vegetables and house plants, not because they cannot bear the city's atmosphere but because of the need to surround themselves with natural substitutes, which are much closer to our inner Nature and thus bring some comfort to our souls.

Many nations forbid the destroying of the natural environment or the hunting of wild beasts. It is also because of the necessity to balance human inner peace and security.

Even as the sounds of the outer world affect human existence to such an extent, we should know that there is the super-worldly Sound, known as the inner Melody, which has far more incredible Power; the contact with which brings all solace to our restless hearts and solves all the mysteries of life! 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 the contact with it brings peace and contentment to our hearts. This is what the Bible means by ***In the beginning was the ‘Word’ (Sound), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God; everything was made by this, and nothing that was made was not made by this.*** The Buddhist sutras or Buddha’s spoken words also mentioned the inner Sound, the supra-worldly Sound, such as the sound similar to sea waves, to the beating of drums, to the blowing of trumpets, to the sound of thunder, of heavenly beings, of bells, of the conch, of seashells, etc... The Surangama Sutra says that all Buddhas rely on this Sound Stream to save sentient beings, and the Bodhisattvas (Saints) and other beings rely on this Sound Stream to go back to their original Source. There are also the mention of the position of the liberated Saints, known as the Stream Enterers; others as the Sound Hearers, or ‘Shen Wuan’ in Chinese term.

In the Fa-Hua Sutra, which talks about the Lotus Method, Buddha declared that those who practiced this method would

be able to hear all outer and inner sounds equally clear, even the sounds of devas (heavenly beings) and ghosts and the sounds of different worlds and beings, because their inner hearing was opened. These sounds are very familiar to those who practice the Quan Yin Method – or the Lotus Method. They represent a higher consciousness, a higher wisdom than that which exists in our world. It is the incredible effect brought by the contact with these sounds that we treasure.

Higher Sounds represent the higher worlds of higher wisdom. After listening to such Sounds, our whole beings change, our whole outlooks and viewpoints alter greatly for the best. Our karmic burdens or the bad influences of past misdeeds fall off and the bondage of this physical world breaks away from us. All this visible and more invisible Grace follows the minute we are reunited with this Sound, the Source of all Love, Bliss and Knowledge. We do not have to wait for long and arduous years of prayers and ascetic practice to reap the due Blessing. For ***Lo and behold, the Kingdom of God is within you.*** The wondrous Sound will cleanse off all the undesirable traces of the so-called previous karma, or as the Bible says, ‘the original sin.’ It is like a mighty river which carries along with its current all ugly garbage.

Since all things are made of this Word or Sound, sin or karma is of no exception! So we can rely on this original Source of all things to cleanse off its own mistakes! This Inner Sound is the Great Creative Force of the cosmos. It is a Vibration that sustains and nourishes all things. Its manifestation in the outer world can be heard as the natural melodies such as the sound of the wind, the water, the birds, insects, etc., which are the lower

manifestation that can be heard by the physical ears. There are more subtle and higher Sounds which are inaudible to the mortal sense, because they vibrate in the higher dimensions different from that of our physical world. To catch these higher Sounds we must raise our own levels to those worlds beyond our senses. For example, now you are in this lecture room and can only hear Master speak; if you want to listen to the sea waves, you must go to the seashore. Similarly, to hear the inner and higher Sounds we must bring our consciousness to those higher levels.

The way to these higher dimensions lies in the Sound itself, which we simply follow back to its original Source. All the worlds, high or low, are “stringed” together by this inner Sound; all these worlds are made by this Sound or Word. The so-called original sin or karma is also made by it. As defilements are made by this Vibration or Sound Stream, we must rely on its own more powerful Source to cleanse off its own rough obstacles or offspring. Perhaps it was for this reason that Gautama Buddha declared that ***Defilement is enlightenment!***

This is not at all against logic, if we think carefully: the first time we transmigrated into this world, where did we get these defilements? From where did they come to attach themselves to us, the helpless and innocent? So we should know that originally there was no sin, no defilement, for all things without exception were made by this inner Sound or Word. If we have ‘sin,’ it is only the superficial appearance, the infection of the outer environments. It was not inborn within us. Understand?

However, even if you hear Master say that we had no defilements originally, by no means will all your defilements vanish, because only understanding intellectually will not do. To get rid of this great burden which we have collected since time immemorial, the inner all-powerful Vibration or super-worldly Sound is needed.

Of course, listening to the Saints' discourses or coming into contact with such persons does help us in cleansing some of the surface and rough defilements, and even reading holy scriptures would produce some purifying effects. But there are some deep-rooted and subtle traces of impurity which cannot be washed off so easily. It requires constant purification by the Sound Stream from the inside. Hence it needs the practice of the Quan Yin Method to listen to the inner wondrous Sound Current.

Because this Sound Stream has incredible Force, if we come in contact with it, any particle of sin will be gradually washed off. This invisible Force or Sound Stream cannot be perceived by ordinary senses. If we want to get in touch with it, we must raise our level to that of the higher worlds, where the Sound Current begins to be audible. At these levels we know and see things of the higher dimensions, and our wisdom is not that of the ordinary human beings but is raised up gradually to that of Godly Nature.

When we are still at this lower level, we can only perceive the sounds of this world, such as the sound of the birds, of the water, of the wind, of the insects, etc., or any other sounds of this physical dimension. If we want to hear the higher Sounds and see the higher worlds, our higher senses must be developed

or opened. To have this fortune, we must seek someone who has not only her own inner perception developed to the highest degree but also has the ability to help us develop our own.

Therefore it requires a Guide, who is a Master of the Way, who is like a traveling guide, who knows everything on the road ahead. If we want to go to the higher worlds, only reading about them will not do. The religious scriptures only describe these worlds, just like a land map. To really know the land, we have to go there in person. And if we go with a guide, it is safer and quicker for us. Reading the map serves to stimulate our desire to visit the place. Similarly, reading the scriptures makes us more eager to search for those true worlds. If we do not have a sense of discrimination and are forgetful of its lower purpose, then we are bound to be trapped in this lower mental level of understanding without being able to rise to the Ultimate reach.

There are those who have the key to the higher dimensions, who can open the new worlds for us and let us step inside for a visit or a permanent residence.

We often say that we have defilements or sins. How do we know this? It is because our life is full of problems and misery, sometimes even without any apparent reasons. Although on the surface our life seems to be satisfactory, especially on the material side: we have plenty of money, we have a good marriage and lovely children; everyone envies our social status. But in reality we may not even feel happy, and we can hardly escape all the pains and sorrow that human beings must experience. This is the so-called karma or the effect of

our wrong doings in the past or in the present. Sometimes the effects come almost immediately, and sometimes not so quickly or so obviously. Whether bad or good, every action must bear fruit at some time in a person's life. We then reap what we have sown previously. This is the unmistakable law of cause and effect, as the Bible also mentions: ***As you sow, so shall you reap***, and as Buddhists call: 'karma.'

Furthermore, as we are disconnected with the Almighty Power, which is manifested as the Super-worldly inner Sound, we feel always a sense of loss and loneliness in this world, no matter how much material comfort is offered to us, or even if we are given the whole world. In fact, the higher the position, the greater the burden. "Uneasy lies the head that bears the crown." Worldly achievements are never the highest. Worldly happiness and enjoyments are never of everlasting nature. The soul within us, the Real Man always longs for the highest and the noblest Bliss; and in this world nothing of material nature will offer it any real value. Therefore, we often feel such unavoidable loneliness creeping in at any moment, making us forever feeling insecure and dissatisfied.

Only when we are reconnected with the inner Sound Current, that Source of all Glory and Bliss, and bathe ourselves again in this Water of Immortality, will we then know the happiness and joy heretofore unknown to us.

For example, our body is whole and healthy; but if suddenly someone severed one of our arms, would we thus not feel painful? Even though the cut-off arm is still there for us to see,

having not changed its shape, but it is now separated from our body and therefore has no more life and use. It looks strange, pitiful and dead! In no time, it will become rotten. If we, however, want it to resume its original function, the arm has to be reattached to its previous place of our body.

In Germany, the surgeons have already succeeded in the art of reattaching the severed limbs to the body of the patients. This is a very difficult task, sewing each and every single cell back together to give them life again. After the treatment, the separated limb can resume its original function. At that time the limb begins to feel contentment, and the body also feels joyful after the ‘happy reunion.’

The same with our invisible ‘Light body.’ If it is disconnected with the great Power Source, called the inner Sound Current, we feel the inevitable pains and sorrows of this material world. If, however, we are again connected with this Source of all Love and Harmony, we will again experience great joy and bliss. While we are separated from this Inner Sound or priceless treasure, we run into countless troubles. It is like a broken arm severed from the body after an accident: it is covered with dust and looks dead and miserably out of shape. All this is not the fault of the poor broken arm, but because of the accident.

We human beings are also the same. Since our birth we are disconnected from the Source of all Power and hence running into many predicaments without real solutions. Even if we are unwilling to face them, they would run forward to meet us. This is what is meant by so-called fate. Sometimes it is caused by

the outer environment or circumstances. For example, a man, a good citizen, has a family and life without material difficulties. Then one day a disaster happens, and all his possessions are gone. On top of that, his wife becomes ill and his children are in danger of dying from hunger. But he has not yet been able to find a job and no one is there to help him. Facing this desperate situation, in order to save himself and his family, he has to go out and steal something and therefore commits an unlawful act. It is the circumstances that forced him to act against his own will, not that he normally would do so.

Similarly, we originally had no sin. It is only the outer dust that attaches itself to our outer coat. If we are connected again with the Water of Life, it will wash all the undesirable defilements away, giving us the primal Glory that we all inherit. While we are still disconnected from this Source of Power, if we are fortunate enough to meet someone who is steeped in this Sound Stream and can even lend us some from her own Treasure, we will automatically derive some Grace and Blessings from God, as the person herself is in daily contact with God or the Source of all Love and Glory, and just a glance from her God-laden eyes is enough to fill us with Joy and Bliss. We could even soar into Samadhi (God ecstasy) ourselves, and forget all our worldly burdens.

This is the real Love of the Highest, or so-called the Real Saint, the Real Master. If we come to their feet, a great deal of our karma will be washed away; but it will be best for us, if we ourselves know where the Sound Source is and bathe ourselves therein. Even if I myself know where the Source of the Water

is and can quench your thirst for a while, it is still limited and if I stop giving it to you, then you will have none. But if I show you where the Water Stream is, then you will have a supply forever, and can even give it to anyone who needs it.

Just a while ago, I mentioned the story of the severed arm. If it is not set back again to its original place on the body, the color of its flesh will change and it will die and become rotten in no time. The same with us. If we do not find the union with our Source of Life, we will die and wither like dry twigs.

I think there are many countries which have this kind of surgery service nowadays, is that not so? In West Germany there are hospitals specialized in this work, though not many. There are also not many doctors who are skilled in this field, because if one wishes to perfect his task one must devote many years of his life to it. Furthermore, the work demands whole-hearted attention and tremendous patience. Each and every single cell has to be mended and sewn back together in such a delicate fashion, as if the arm had never been severed from the body; otherwise the blood cannot flow through, and the cells will die out, then the process will be a waste of time and effort. It is indeed an extra-ordinary life-saving task. No wonder people look upon these surgeons as “God.” These doctors not only practice hard during their apprenticeship, but also have to work even harder after they are qualified. Surgery of this kind demands hours or even a whole day of delicate attention and single-minded labor. During the time of surgery, no doctor can move away from his work or be careless with his movements. The hands have to be perfectly still and steady, for any wrong

move will spoil the whole work! After a successful operation of this nature, the severed arm will 'live' and function as normal. Isn't it an incredible event?

A human life is very similar. We are mostly unhappy with our lots, no matter how many material comforts life offers us, because we are separated from our Great and Real Self. Just like a severed limb, if we are not 'sewn' back to the original place, we will be 'rotten' in time and meanwhile feel the misery of separation. To be united again with our Selves, we must seek out a perfect 'Surgeon,' who is able to 'sew' us back to 'Life.'

So let us be 'sewn' back to that original Self, the Source of all Power and Love, of all Bliss and happiness, of all satisfaction and Glory. This Source of eternal Joy is within us, is called God, the Kingdom of Heaven, Tao, Buddha Nature or the Great Self. Now we are the small self, which is a part of this Great Self. Because we are separated from the Great Self, we feel such an unexplainable loneliness, we feel miserable and unhappy like the arm that has been severed from its body, without a spark of life in it. Only after it is reunited with the body does its blood begin to flow once more through its veins and it begins to live again.

The Sound Stream is the only Power that helps us to be united again with our Great Source. It unites the whole cosmos together. Actually all things are 'stringed' together by it; only sometimes, as in the case with the most of us, the connection is obstructed. If we do not seek some way to repair it, then the connection may be lost forever (or almost forever); then we

will be dragged along the wheel of transmigration in the lower worlds, being born again and again in the realms of Asura, humans, animals, hungry spirits or hells, not being able to rise to the free and noble spiritual worlds of Saints and God.

As mentioned above, to become a specialized surgeon, who can unite the severed limbs back to the body and make them function again as before, one must possess a high degree of intelligence and real love for humankind, apart from not fearing hard labor and sacrifice and self discipline; even then, one still has to pass through many tests in order to be selected. And as those professors who are capable in this art are also very few, so if there are too many candidates, then most of them can only stand by or watch the performance, not having the chance to practice by themselves before they have waited a long time. At least it was so in one of the hospitals I knew of in Germany. The whole situation makes it difficult to become such a specialist in the art of surgery. After one is qualified, not only can one save the life of many but also can teach others to be like him. No wonder people respect such persons as “God.”

Now, to unite just a severed arm to its body demands so many conditions and strenuous work as well as extra-ordinary discipline. Can we imagine how many thousand times more so, if one is to be the ‘Doctor of the Soul’?

As we know, while sewing the broken limb back to its body, those surgeons have to devote their whole concentration to the task, even if it means to go on without food or rest for long hours, because the cells will die quickly, and any mistake or

undue delay means life and death to the patient concerned. For as the limb reaches the surgery room, it has been chilled for hours, not having the freshness of ordinary flesh. If prolonged too long, the cells will become completely useless. We must appreciate greatly their work pressure under such circumstances and have sympathy for these physicians. It is all for the sake of the patients that they have to sacrifice thus.

The same with a Real Master, who can unite the soul back to its Real Self again. There is no selfish motive of the Master but her whole heart and mind which are all dedicated for the well-being of others. While saving the souls of the disciples, the Master has to undergo much untold hardship and pain due to the karmic load which is passed on to her, in order to set the disciples free of their enormous burdens. No one can imagine the discomfort and pain a Master has to go through for her beloved children. She washes them and makes them shine again in glory while she herself bears all the consequences from their past misdeeds. She does all this and never utters a word of complaint, like a loving mother sacrificing all for her children's comfort, like the loving doctor who is dedicated to the well-being of his patients.

Since ancient times, the Real Masters have been like those doctors, healing the wounds of human souls and uniting them back to the Source, bringing them back to Life again, and wiping out all their tears and sorrow of separation. Having attained the highest Power, they distribute it freely to those in need.

The Quan Yin Method of meditation – the method of

transcendental hearing and seeing – will help anyone to become such a soul-healing Doctor. Welcome to practice with us. The more people the better; the world needs such noble volunteers. There are so many trials and tribulations in this bitter sea of existence, so we should all work hard to attain the highest degree in order to serve human beings as well as all other beings at large in healing their hearts and souls.

Q: *Dear Master, yesterday I attended Your lecture and You gave me some 'blessed food.' Back at home, while reading some of Your discourses, I ate the blessed food also. Then suddenly there was some power raising within me. I felt so comfortable and it was new to me. Is there really some power in those cakes?*

M: You yourself have experienced it, then why ask? Your very question has proved the answer. (Laughter) Anything the Master gives you carries 'life saving Power' in it. If you fear to be saved, then you had better not eat them again. (Laughter) Otherwise you will be blessed and may not have to transmigrate to this miserable world again. If you still love this world, don't eat the cakes blessed by Master!

Q: *Previously, I have tried self-taught meditation and heard some inner sound; but for fear of running into the net of illusion, I stopped practicing. Is it correct?*

M: Right. Inner Sounds vary greatly; some are good and helpful for the spiritual progress, while some are bad and should be ignored. A real and experienced Master will teach you how to discriminate them and even protect you from all harm. If you are without such a Master, it is correct that you have ignored it!



The Advantage of Quan Yin Method

Spoken by Supreme Master Ching Hai
March 7, 1987
Taipei, Formosa
(Originally in Chinese)

During the forty-nine years of His mission, Shakyamuni Buddha only preached the same method of liberation in all the Buddhist scriptures. He used all kinds of parables to bring people to notice the Quan Yin Method of meditation. Yesterday a girl asked me, “What did Buddha talk about in the Lotus Sutra?” To this question my disciples have heard the answer dozens of times!

The Lotus Sutra spoke of the Quan Yin Method, of the inner Sound. However, if one has never practiced this method before, it’s not easy for one to believe. In the Lotus Sutra, Shakyamuni Buddha called the Quan Yin Method ‘the Lotus Method’; in the Diamond Sutra He called it ‘the Diamond Method’; then in the Amitabha Sutra He called it ‘the Pure Land Method.’ Therefore it is possible that we cannot easily

understand and accept the method because of all these different definitions. Buddha had to use different explanations to indicate the same method because people had different backgrounds and inner intellectual levels; it's not that He had different methods to teach people. I have mentioned this previously and the reference thereof will be supplied to you later. If you will read it attentively at leisure, you will be able to understand it better.

Today is the fourth day of my lectures here and I have talked about many things, but the essential point I want to drive home is that the best method to cultivate oneself for the Truth is the Quan Yin Method. It is not that I love talking or have so much time that I have come here and preached all these days. It is because I want to make it clear to you that most of the so-called methods are not at all the perfect method of liberation and that only the Quan Yin Method is the highest one. However, up to now I only advertise, introduce, and praise it; you have not learned the method yet. Is it not so?

It is because the living Master, while transmitting the Life Impulse (of the Quan Yin Method), does not use any language that the disciples will get the Dharma; and it is because he or she doesn't use any language to transmit the method, that we never find its description in any scriptures. All the Zen masters of old transmitted this method 'without sutras, without written or spoken languages,' for with written words one can transmit nothing of this Life Impulse. Sutras or scriptures are merely written documents which render some judgment, some references for our general use while studying the ways and

inner visions of the ancient cultivators in order to compare theirs with our own, or to understand what the enlightened levels, ideas and expressions of the old Saints were after they became enlightened. This is the purpose of the scriptures, but the scriptures can by no means transmit the Life Impulse.

In the story of ‘The Journey to the West,’ we see that the Great Master Hsuan Tsang, while on his journey to search for the Tao, had to confront numerous obstacles. He had to overcome so many so-called ‘Maya delusions’ during his journey from China to India, and how many times he seemed to be defeated! His disciple, the Great Monkey Suen Wu Khong, always protected his master in fighting with the demons and ‘clearing’ the road, so that at last they could obtain the sacred ‘texts’ and the supreme method of liberation. But this book is not ‘Hsuan Tsang’ himself. That’s why by only reading ‘The Journey to the West’ we cannot progress much. We can neither obtain the ‘sacred texts,’ the method, nor the least feeling of Hsuan Tsang during his pilgrimage and the many difficulties he had to face. We cannot even understand the power that Suen Wu Khong possessed. We can at best only imagine the contents of the story. Is it not so?

The Surangama Sutra, the Lotus Sutra and the Diamond Sutra all praised the Quan Yin Method as the highest way of practicing for perfect enlightenment, but we still cannot grasp what this method is. Many people read the Surangama Sutra and know the Quan Yin Method to be the highest method, but few or none know how to practice it – they can only guess.

For example, they go to the seaside and listen to the waves, or go to the stream and pay attention to its continuous current, thinking that this is the way of ‘Quan Yin’ (contemplating the Sound). There are also some who believe that the Quan Yin Method means reciting the name of Quan Yin Bodhisattva (Goddess of Mercy in Buddhism) like this: ‘Namo Quan Yin Pu Sa’; others think that they should recite the Ta Pei Chou (Mantra of Great Compassion); and still others think that this method means you should ignore all the unpleasant sounds, for example, even if someone scolds you, you should not raise anger in your heart. Still there are some who consider the Quan Yin Method as the practice of contemplating on the quality of compassion (because they think Quan Yin Bodhisattva, also called Avalokitesvara, is the Goddess of Compassion). For example, I sit here and imagine that I am surrounded by different people. Maybe in the front are those I love, behind are those I hate; on the left are my friends and relatives and on the right are the people I don’t know. Then I imagine that I send them all my sincerest goodwill from my heart, wishing them all peace, happiness and love, etc. But all these and more are not the Quan Yin Method!

It is enough just to read the sutras attentively to know that all these methods mentioned above have no profound basis and that they are only derived from the imagination of ordinary people. The Mercy of Quan Yin Bodhisattva is infinite, because She is a Bodhisattva (enlightened Being, Saint). If we have not attained the same level of enlightenment that She has, how can we imagine and measure Her compassion? Our human imagination is limited, but the quality of compassion

of Quan Yin Bodhisattva is boundless. If we could ever imagine the scope of Her compassion, we would have reached Her level just by using our worldly human brains, and then there would be no need to practice any method for the supra-worldly wisdom!

If by reciting the Ta Pei Chou for many hours we could obtain ‘thousand arms’ and ‘thousand eyes’ as She did, I am sure that in Formosa alone there would have been numerous Quan Yin Bodhisattvas since long ago. The Aulacese Buddhists and the Tibetans have recited mantras very conscientiously for who knows since when, but no one has ever become a Bodhisattva of any kind. Most people who recite Ta Pei Chou – this ‘Mantra of Great Compassion’ – do not have enough compassion. I’m sorry to say so, but this is the very truth!

I see that they are still under the control of lust, anger, attachment and greed. The more they recite, the haughtier they become. They feel ‘superior’ because they ‘practice,’ they ‘recite the secret lores,’ they ‘worship’ the Buddha, they are ‘merciful,’ they are full of this and that... Their arrogance grows so big that no one can discuss anything with them, no one can teach them anything new or any higher method. Because their ‘ego’ occupies their whole brain, there is no place to put in anything new and useful. They think they know all there is and they understand all.

That is why if we do not understand the true method, it is difficult to practice and easy to get trapped in arrogance, in our personal ‘ego.’ Before practicing, one may still have

a little humility which, however, becomes thin and even disappears after one has practiced just a little bit. Someone asked me whether there is any benefit from reciting the sutras and whether it is good to recite them. Bodhidharma said it was no good, but I say it is good. (Laughter) Because I do not feel like fighting with you; I only like to make friends. If you love reciting the sutras that much, why not?

For example, if you like to eat sweet cakes, I see no inconvenience; then what is wrong with reciting sutras? It is better than gossiping, anyway, no? So, if you wish, by all means recite the sutras. In this regard, they will give you some benefit. But for me this benefit is not enough. It can only give worldly or heavenly rewards. If reciting sutras blindly without any idea of what they mean could serve the purpose, then a tape recorder could become a Buddha! (Laughter) The recorder could receive even greater merit than we, for it can recite better than we do. We may make some mistakes in reciting when we are tired or sleepy, but the recorder doesn't. It will not sleep or feel tired.

Many people think that to cultivate the Tao (the Truth) means only to recite sutras and pray to the image of the Buddha or the Saints. They think that's all there is to it. From this develops the inevitable proud attitude. Only those who read the sutras for the sake of information, for the sake of comprehension and in order to search for the Truth can avoid the pitfall of arrogance, even though they do not understand the deep meaning of the scriptures. In this manner reading the sutras is beneficial. It allows us to reflect on how the ancients practiced

and gives us proof of enlightenment, as well as a push on our search for the Tao – some encouragement, so to say! It brings about by and by our desire to practice, to seek an enlightened Master, and to learn the method of self-cultivation. But if we are attached to the idea that reciting the sutras would ‘grant’ us the worldly or heavenly rewards and then we desire these rewards as the fruit of our veneration, then we have the wrong view. Then the more we recite, the more we imagine that our rewards have grown. We may not truly know what the rewards are and may never see or touch them, but we think we have plenty! Then we feel superior and become attached to the ‘I’ ego all the more; we feel proud, and this is very dangerous!

In the Surangama Sutra there are several methods of self-cultivation mentioned. Each of them offers some special advantage and aid in concentration of practice. If one believes in any method and practices diligently, there will surely be some good results – this we have to admit. But I tell you, even if you recite your own name, it would also bring some good result. You can try it. Concentrate on your name and recite it constantly, then within a week you may enter Samadhi. But you must really concentrate in order to get results. Go ahead and try it. Now, let your Amitabha Buddha or Jesus take a rest somewhere and replace Them with your own name for a while, (Laughter) then you will see the result!

Evidently, reciting the name of Amitabha Buddha brings some benefit, for ‘Amitabha’ is a Sanskrit name which is very close to the Sound of the inner universe. When one has not had the contact with the Sound of the universe within, concentrating

on the name of Amitabha – listening to the Sound of Sanskrit – would serve somewhat.

I have heard that long ago, there was a custom in China to use beans instead of the prayer beads. Each time when they recited the name of Amitabha, they put aside one bean in a jar. Afterward the beans would be given to people for charity to create affinity with them. There was a story about an old lady, who could not afford to buy new beans for the recitation and had to use the same beans over and over again. Each time when the recitation was over and the beans were all used up, she put them back to their original jar and started using them anew. After sometime, the beans became ‘lively’; when the old dame recited the name of Amitabha Buddha, one bean would automatically jump from one jar on this side to the other jar on the other side! She no longer needed to use her own hand to pick it up, as the beans did the work themselves.

Do you believe this story? Have you heard it before? Do you have any idea why it happened thus? (Someone replied: “It’s because the old lady recited Buddha’s name with very strong faith.”) But why is it that others, who had recited Buddha’s name all their lives, had no such power of faith? (Another person replied, “Because she got the response from Buddha.”) Where did the response come from? Why is it that others did not have the response? It was not possible that in the whole of China there was only one person who recited with faith and others didn’t! In such a big country like China which has so many people reciting Buddha’s name, how come only one had such a result?

If one practices leisurely, one would not understand this. But after one has practiced diligently, one would see that in the universe there are plenty of other kinds of sentient beings. Some of them are superior in position, some are of higher inner levels, some very small and some so fine and subtle in nature that our eyes cannot see them, that our ordinary perception fails to detect them. But they are all there just the same, and sometimes they would appear to tell you that your food is over-cooked! It is just because we cannot see them that we ignore their existence.

When these mini beings see that we are working hard, sometimes they amuse themselves and play jokes on us or help us a little. After all, they have nothing in particular to do. Some of them are lovable, some of them are mischievous. Strictly speaking, they are not demons; they are the elements produced by nature. If I say they are the beings produced by natural transformation, perhaps it will be easier for you to understand. That's why it is said that the trees, the plants have these kinds of elemental 'spirits.' Everywhere there are some portions of intelligent elements which are produced from nature by transformation. (Buddha Gautama said that there are four kinds of beings: beings born as fetus, beings born first as eggs, from the humidity, and by transformation) Buddha's statements were very scientific; over two thousands years ago He already said the beings that we could not see were numerous. It was with His wisdom-eye that Buddha penetrated into the depth of nature's secret system and saw many things.

Our ordinary eyes cannot see these subtle beings, which

are the products of natural transformation. There are some who are rather nice and would help us somewhat, and there are some who are rather naughty and love to make troubles that cause people to argue. It is their nature to provoke catastrophes. Sometimes when we are talking, these kinds of spirits would come and surround us, and then we perceive that the environment is very bright. If someone who doesn't practice at all saw this, he or she may think that Buddhas or Saints appear there shedding some illuminating light to help us. However, not all light is good! This kind of light is not of positive nature; it belongs to the light of the dark force. These natural elements also have light, but if our wisdom-eye is not open, we cannot distinguish it.

In the Bible it is also stated that there are two kinds of light which were created by God: the light of the day and the light of the night. How come there is also light in the night? It only means the bad force, the dark force, understand? Since there are plenty of these kinds of beings in the environment, sometimes when we are burning the incense they would come and make the smoke of the incense spiral upward. They just want to play with us a little, but we then believe that the Buddha communicates with us by this sign! It is not so; it is the elemental beings which are amusing themselves, that's all! This happens often.

For example, if we are on the road and driving smoothly, without any problem, then suddenly, for no reason an accident happens to us, and after that other car accidents would follow one after another at the same place. This is due to these

elemental beings. That's why we have often heard that such and such place is haunted, has bad atmosphere, etc., and that all who pass that place must make an offering of some kind lest any accident should occur. After repeated accidents, the place really becomes occupied by such atmosphere, as many such 'spirits' frequent the place. They would make some obstructions on the road to cause accidents and other kinds of trouble for the passers-by. This amuses them!

There are people who are extremely susceptible in character. They get excited or angry easily. Yesterday, I spoke of the magnetic field and that whatever good or bad happens, it is all created by ourselves. It is our own bad or good thoughts that constitute our being. Sometimes it is due to circumstances and backgrounds. Those who practice self-cultivation with a reliable method do not attract many of those so-called catastrophic kind of elements, and are rarely sick. Those who practice the Quan Yin Method are the most secure. I am speaking from my personal experiences. To cultivate with this method means to be with the Greatest Force of the Creation, which is the Inner Sound I spoke of yesterday. In the Surangama Sutra it is called the Sound Current or Sound Stream; in the Christian Bible it is the Voice (of God) or the Word. ***The Saints (Buddhas) follow this Sound Stream down to this world to save sentient beings, while the beings follow this Sound Stream up back to their original Abode.*** It is the Music Stream, the Voice, the Word; it is what Lao Tzu said ***The Name which cannot be named.***

When we are not in connection with this Music Stream or the

Word that cannot be named, we would feel extremely lonely, isolated, because there is no one, no other force to help us; there is only ourselves. But at the moment when we enter this Sound Stream, it is as if we have participated in a Grand Assembly. The Grand Assembly has a grand force. A human's force is too limited, but the force of a united Assembly is great and other evil forces cannot enter. In this world there is black and white, and the bad and the good. When we are connected with the good force, the bad one leaves us alone because we have departed and left their group. They also know well that we have departed from them for good!

That is why when we leave this world, the demons, the angel of death will not even come near. They know enough to leave the cultivator of the Quan Yin Method alone. Because when anyone practices the Quan Yin Method, his or her magnetic field changes; it is no longer like before. It attracts only the good things, it no longer absorbs the bad elements, because the Music Stream helps us to change, to cleanse the bad magnetism and only leave behind the good one. Formerly our magnetic field had "holes"; there was the good, and there was the bad; the good attracted the good and the bad attracted the bad. But now, thanks to the Sound of the Universe, the living Life Impulse, the Force of the Creation, the Original Power, which changes our magnetic field, bad influences are cleansed away. It is like a surgical operation which removes the diseased part of our body and restores our health and all goes well.

To practice the Quan Yin Method is the same. Because we use the Great Force to repair our insufficient power, all misery

will be cleansed off and there is no more unhappiness, except when we do not practice well, when we are not careful or not truly following the instructions of the Master. But this kind of situation is rare. It is sufficient to communicate with this Force once to be secured for always. The connection will not be broken. But if we do not exercise this Force, then evidently we will not have plenty of it.

For example, if after the death of our father we inherit a great fortune but do not look for it, nor go to the bank to get this money, and we do not even bother to find out where the inheritance is, then naturally we will receive none of it at all. But in fact we are rich. People all know that we have inherited a great sum of money, but to use it or not depends on our needs, that's all. If we use our riches, our life will be much more comfortable and we will have many good things in life; if we do not know how to use it, our life will be as poor and hard as before and we will not have much comfort in our life. However, everyone knows that we have money in the bank, which was left behind by our father!

Those who receive the initiation and practice the Quan Yin Method after the transmission are put in contact with this Great Force of the universe, and begin to participate in the Great Assembly of liberated beings; but they must grow slowly to match it. It is only after initiation that we truly begin to develop the human quality. Before that, we are only half human! Now we are complete. But to those who do not practice hard enough, their lifestyles and characters, etc. will not change much.

Just after a short time, maybe for a few weeks, those who cultivate themselves diligently will soon discover the advantage of the Quan Yin Method and what real Force this method offers. One would see the obvious change that takes place in one's life, in one's character, appearance and magnetic force. It is never the same as before. Even without promoting oneself, people would know that one has something extraordinary within and they would be drawn toward him or her to benefit somewhat from his or her hidden soothing Force. It is similar to the water which fills up a cup and must flow out by itself; it is like a sandalwood tree emitting its fragrance freely in its surroundings. Quan Yin Method is the one and only method of liberation of the Highest Order in this universe.

It is best that the whole world use the same 'Sound,' practice this Sound, then we have no need of other languages, we could use this same language of Quan Yin. There is only one Sound, one 'Word' and all will understand! It is what Buddha Gautama meant when He said that the Buddhas speak only one language, but everyone can understand it differently according to their inner levels of attainment. The Inner Sound, the Word is just like a telephone system; it is sufficient to connect the wires with different parts of the world to communicate with anyone that has the connection with this system. There will be no difficulty at all.

Once the communication is established, one is no longer isolated. One can get in touch with anyone that one wishes to contact, be the person in the West or in the East. No matter how far it is, just dial a number and then the police, our

neighbors, our relatives or the physicians will come to our side to help us when we need them. Is it not so? Formerly, before there were telephones, no one would know we had troubles or were in need of help; some people must have died in their houses and days would pass without anyone knowing it! Now most people have telephones and it is very convenient. Even when we are terribly ill and can not move, we just make a call and then the ambulance will come to take us to the hospital or the taxi will come to fetch us... It is really convenient!

The communication system of Quan Yin is also the same. It is like an electric wire which connects all the houses, all the people in different parts of the world. Once we establish this connection, we are in the communication network and can at any moment be in touch with others, no matter where they are. The more we practice this method, the more we will get to know other beings. It's similar to taking advantage of the telephone system: the more we use the telephone, the more we have the advantage of getting in touch with friends, with those who will understand us, sympathize with us, and help us when necessary. Since all beings have within themselves this Inner Sound, this Music Stream, if we enter this Stream which connects all beings, we will be able to understand them, from the birds to the ants to the elephants...

If someone in America calls our names, we would hear. If someone in France thinks of us, we will know right away. We could even use our 'transcendental body' to go and visit him. If that person cultivates the Quan Yin Method diligently, he can also use the 'transcendental body' to come to us. It is a

similar principle as that of the television, or that of the new telephone system, by which one can see the other party talking on the other side of the line.

However, the Quan Yin ‘system’ of communication is much more advanced and much more efficient. It does not need any bill, money or wires. And no one else ever knows with whom we are in contact. It is not necessary to make any arrangement, any gesture or dial any number. It is not necessary for us to speak a word or think of any idea. The Quan Yin system is the simplest, the most automatic, the fastest one. It is possible that after practicing the Quan Yin Method, we can communicate with the Buddha or Saints in the higher dimension, and with the lower beings in the lower worlds. An old Eastern religion mentioned this state as: “Above requite the kindness of the four great benefactors and below save the beings in the three suffering realms.” (Four benefactors: Motherland and the government thereof, parents, spouses and friends, teachers. The three realms of suffering: Hell, hungry ghosts, animals) At this moment one can really say the phrase and fulfill its meaning; but before practicing the Quan Yin Method it is not possible. Because when we have not yet the communication with the Force of Creation, it is not possible for us to say “I want to rescue others”; we cannot even rescue ourselves, nor know where we would be tomorrow or when we would leave this world, not to speak of saving others!

Most of you in the audience understand Mandarin, at least 90 percent of you do; and to those who don’t, it does not matter, because your inner wisdom will. In fact it is enough to look into

the eyes of the Master to get direct transmission, direct Grace and Blessing. Why shouldn't we then communicate with each other in this way? Oh yes, come back tomorrow and we will just look into each other's eyes for two hours. (Laughter)

Really, when those who practice well come to see Master, they have no desire to talk; they just like to see Master, and try to catch Master's eyes. If they cannot see Master for some time, they will feel as if something dear is missing. So, they come to see me, then we look into each other's eyes, without speaking, then they depart, and I go back to meditation... This is what happens in the relationship between the Master and disciples!

This is why I said that our method is a 'silent method.' We do not talk much. When I transmit the method, I don't speak; during the 7-day retreat, I talk even less than usual. When the disciples come to see me, it does not mean they have anything special to talk about. Of course, you have heard that we must 'contemplate the Sound,' we must meditate, but we are very quiet then. When we contemplate the Inner Sound, no one sees what it is, no one knows what we are contemplating. This Sound, our inner degree, no one is able to check, to control, or to steal away. No one can force us to leave our inner world for any reason.

For example, we are Buddhist believers and prostrate every day in front of the Buddha's statue and light the incense, etc. But there are those who believe in their religions and don't believe in our method of worship. If there should arise some conflict, they might want to destroy our faith, to attack our

shrines, and to burn all our ritualistic emblems. Then there will be an obstruction, a troublesome situation for us. Where, then, will we turn to for worship? It is because we need these outer emblems that others notice what we are practicing and attack us. But if we practice the Quan Yin Method, no one can know or detect it. We can do it on the bus, at the busy train station or at the corner of a park, or even in the bathroom, in the storage room, etc. Any time, anywhere we can contemplate the inner Glory of God or our Real Self.

After practicing for a certain length of time, even when we are not contemplating we are always in the company of this Inner Sound. It will never leave us again. It is our most faithful companion. It is our most loving servant and the least egoistic of all our friends.

Any time when we need help, it is by our side doing all to help us; any time we are in trouble, it is there to solve our problems by all means. It does all kinds of jobs for us just for our comfort. It is not even necessary for us to wish for anything or to desire anything in particular. We will become the Buddha automatically, and naturally. This is why we are told that ***Walking is Zen, sitting is Zen, lying is Zen, and standing is also Zen.*** (Zen means Ch'an in Chinese or Dhyana in Sanskrit, which actually refers to the Essence, the True Face, the Origin of all things and not just the 'meditation.')

But before one attains this level, it is better for one not to talk too much about Zen or Ch'an, saying that Ch'an should be like this or should be like that, etc. For those who have attained the

higher level of the inner world where Ch'an and life become one, to listen to others discussing about Zen would make them feel extremely funny! But these people would never say anything against it, as they know language does not serve in this field. Also they know that there are very few people who will understand their talk – if they ever want to talk about it. Very few people would have enough wisdom to accept the highest method, which is also the most simple and natural one.

Just presenting a little aspect concerning the Quan Yin Method is of course not the transmission of the Quan Yin Method. The transmission needs no language. If anyone wants to obtain this method, he has to wait till I stop speaking, meaning when I am completely silent! Do not think that after listening to me talking so much you have obtained the Quan Yin Method.

The Quan Yin Method includes three parts. The first part has to do with our wisdom. In this world, every one needs the brain in order to be able to 'think' about certain things. For example, one thinks of her husband, another thinks of his wife, a third thinks of his study, and others think of their jobs; some think of stories in the novels, and others think about some problems, about their ambitions, etc. But it is said that if one thinks of Amitabha Buddha, the problems would be less or even disappear. We know through study that Amitabha represents the Infinite Light of the Universe. Amitabha Himself is the boundless Light, not a personality. Even so, if someone 'sees' Amitabha, it means he is still in the world of "sound and form." He is in no way at the top of all the worlds.

What is the meaning of ‘Infinite Light’? It represents the Inner Brightness, the Inner Illumination that we all possess. We possess numerous qualities, such as anger, jealousy, ignorance, anxiety, arrogance; but we also have inborn compassion, mercy and tolerance, etc. When we invoke the name of Amitabha Buddha, we simply remind ourselves of our bright, illuminative quality that lies dormant within us. When we invoke the name of Quan Yin, the Goddess of Mercy, we subconsciously remind ourselves of our own merciful inborn quality; when we invoke the name of Mahasthamaprapta (Ta Shi Chih Bodhisattva), we would remember in our subconsciousness the great Force of the universe. This is the significance of recitation of Amitabha’s name, or the names of the ‘Trinity Buddhas.’

The ‘Trinity Buddhas’ are Amitabha, Avalokitesvara and Mahasthama. We should have the Infinite Light like Amitabha, the great inner Force like Mahasthama, and the boundless compassion like Quan Yin. So the ‘Trinity Buddhas’ represent our best qualities within us. When we invoke their names, it means we wish to attain these highest qualities; however, even with the sincerest intention, our recitation alone doesn’t serve us much. Because we do not actually know who the real Amitabha is, when we invoke His name, there is no real communication.

For example, we have heard that a long time ago in Chinese history, Si Shi was an extremely beautiful lady, though we have actually never seen her. It is only a hearsay. Therefore it is impossible to imagine how she looked, except to refer to our own

spouse. But we cannot even compare them as we do not know how Si Shi looked like. It is possible that she was much more beautiful than our wives. But she has long left our world, so we cannot imagine her beauty or even think of her. Is it not so?

It is the same thing with invoking Amitabha, Quan Yin Bodhisattva or other past saintly personalities. It doesn't do us much good, because there is no actual communication with the real 'person' of Amitabha; we have never seen the Infinite Light, we have no real contact with this Force of the Universe, or with the real Name which 'cannot be named,' which we discussed previously. If we invoke Quan Yin without any real contact with the compassionate nature of Quan Yin, then it is of little use. It is after all only a way of aiding our concentration and reducing our daily anxieties and not much else – especially when we recite mostly only with the lips and not with the heart!

When we think of our wives, we often think: “Yesterday I had a quarrel with her over just a little thing. She was such a terrible person, and would not give in. I will divorce her!” (Laughter) If we continue thinking this way, we will arrive at many past troubles between the husband and wife. So if at this instance, we think of Amitabha, then we would somehow forget the dispute; we forget the impossible wife or the aggressive husband, so we have less problems. In this way, reciting Amitabha would have some effect: to lessen the passion in the human mind; but that is all. It will not help us to attain the ultimate level of liberation, nor will it bring us the rebirth in the Western Paradise. Even if we just want to go to America, we

must first buy an airplane ticket to enplane. How could we, just by lip service, go to the Western Paradise of Amitabha? It is not logical, no? It is not so easy to go to the Western Paradise.

Reciting a Buddha's name would reduce some of our worries, and consequently our mind becomes clearer and more intelligent, so our spirit would be more at peace. This is the benefit one derives from invoking Amitabha's name. But even then, we must use our wisdom to understand why there is a benefit. Most people recite only with the lips and do not get much benefit. When they are reciting, if someone comes to provoke them or ask some questions, they may instantly become angry; if their children want their attention at the time when they are reciting, they might even use the prayer beads to beat them. (Laughter) That is how people 'recite' the Buddha's name!

Amitabha represents the Infinite Light, Quan Yin represents Compassion, and Ta Shi Chih represents our inner Force. However, apart from these, we have other qualities which we have not yet developed. So, there are people who recite eighty-eight Buddhas' names with the wish to have more success. There are some who recite ten thousand Buddhas' names, many ten thousand Buddhas' names... In fact there are numerous Buddhas in the whole universe. Why? Because each time a being becomes a Buddha, he enters this Great Assembly of the liberated great beings, he becomes someone who is totally free; and since the creation began, there have been numerous beings who have become Buddhas. So the number increases all the time. It may happen that after I 'become a Buddha,' or after my Nirvana, people would recite 'Namo Ching Hai Buddha.'

(Laughter) And then, there is one more Buddha on the list!

But why is it that the more one recites the Buddha's name, the more vexations one collects? Why has one's wisdom not yet opened? Why can't one get the Buddha's quality? Do you know why? It is just as if you only stay at home and recite, "Milk, milk, milk..." will you get milk? Of course not. If we want milk, we must go to the shop where milk is sold; then even if we do not say the word 'milk' there and just make a gesture instead, the shopkeeper will give us milk right away. Otherwise even if you recite 'milk' for ten million times, you will have nothing. (Laughter) It's the same with money and other necessities. If you just stay home and invoke the word 'money' over and over again, it is useless. You must go to the bank. Just give them a cheque, then even without a word, the employees of the bank know what you need; probably they can even recognize you before you say anything, for you have come to the bank often and your name is well known there. Your money is deposited in the bank and it will be given to you at once.

That's why those who are advanced in the cultivation of the Tao would say, "what is the use of reciting Amitabha?" They themselves have reached Buddhahood, they have become Amitabha's friends. For them it is no longer necessary to say anything; it is enough to look into each other's eyes! For example, when we do not know each other, we must make an appointment by telephone or writing before visiting each other. But when we have seen each other a few times, then it is not necessary to talk much. We can just look into each other's eyes to understand. Similarly, to really recite a Buddha's name

is to know that Buddha. It is in this fashion that we can really think of a Buddha. At the moment, we could just recite the name very often; but it is only of little use if we do not know what a Buddha is! It is the same as if someone stays at home and recites money instead of going to the bank to withdraw it. Even if we recite a lot of Buddhas' names, still we have only recited one part of the Buddha's 'family'; we do not know how to recite the whole, the complete, or the greatest Buddha. I do not say that one Buddha is greater than the other, I just mean that their work is different. Do you understand?

That's the reason why Shakyamuni Buddha praised Amitabha Buddha and ask people to recite Amitabha's name – but actually His real Name cannot be named. Since you do not know this, you cannot recite clearly and correctly. To believe that using the mouth to recite Amitabha's name is good enough is just as one thinks the advertisement of the cookie is the cookie. In fact the cookie is one thing other than the advertisement, and the advertisement is anything but cookies! We recite Amitabha, for instance, who represents our illumination within, but we have not discovered or developed this quality; we recite Quan Yin Bodhisattva who represents our compassion, but we have little of this quality; and even if we have these just-mentioned qualities, there are still plenty more that we do not have. That's why there are still many 'holes' existing!

The ancient soldiers, for example, used the armor to protect themselves. The armor covered their whole bodies, except the eyes. If an enemy wanted to kill one of these soldiers, he

must look for the unprotected part of his body and pierce his knife there; otherwise he had to wait till the soldier took off his helmet or his armor. Similarly, when we recite the Buddhas' names with our tongues, it leaves a lot of holes – the armor is not good enough because it can only cover one part when there are other parts left unprotected.

Amitabha is only the Lord of the Western sphere. In the East there is Yao Shih Buddha (the Medicine Buddha), and in the South there are other Buddhas; in the ten directions there are plenty of Buddhas who have different names and work. There is not only the Buddha of the West. There are Buddhas in the ten directions and of three periods of time (past, present, future). So until when will we be done with the recitation? Each world has a Supreme Master or Lord. If we do not know them, then no matter how we recite, we are only reciting a part of the Buddhas, and that is not enough. Reciting any Buddha's name may all bring some merit, but, remember, their work is different.

For example, if we want to go to the presidential palace, we must first know the address. If we do not go to see the president directly, but instead we just look for the servants of the palace, then we would not accomplish what we intend to. They are obviously not the highest positioned persons in the palace. Although reciting the Amitabha has some benefit, He is just the Lord of the Western Paradise, not the Lord of the whole universe. Each world in the creation has a Supreme Master or Lord. If we know these Lords, then reciting their names would bring noble result and lasting benefit of the Highest Order. But even if we know someone to be a Savior

and the Lord of the higher world, still this knowledge doesn't help us at all if there is no one to 'recommend' us to Him.

That's why it is emphasized strongly that we must find a real Master, as a real Master is a friend of the Lord, the Most High; He will take us to the Lord and present us to Him by saying, "This is my disciple and my friend." Then it is useful to us. For example, we all know who the president of the United States is. Even though I know his name and that he is the highest representative of America, it won't help me any, because there is no one to take me to the White House and introduce me to the president of the time. There is no one to say to the president, "Here is Master Ching Hai. She is so good and so and so..., and if she needs some help, please do your best for my sake." And then tell me, "This is our president. Whenever you are in America or elsewhere, if you need help, let him know and he will certainly do his best..."

The same, if we only know Amitabha Buddha's name, it will not help much. It is to know Amitabha Himself that helps, because the name does not represent Him. Anyone could choose the same name. In America, some people have the same name as the president, but this doesn't help them the least. Similarly, if we want to call any Buddha's name for His help, we should first find someone who knows this Buddha and presents us to Him. After the introduction, this Buddha will recognize us and will grant us protection. Understand?

I also know the name of the present president, but when my visa expires, I still have to leave this country whether I like it

or not. The president will not help me, as he does not know me. His name serves nothing in my case, since I cannot come to him for help. But if someone has already written to the president, introducing me in advance: “One day my friend Ching Hai will come to you for help, so I hope you will oblige...” and tells me afterward that she has written to the president to introduce me and ask for his help, then all will be taken care of. Do you get what I mean? Certainly this is just an example.

People recite the Buddha’s name and it is most possible that they have never seen one; but it will not be the same if a real Master tells you to do it. Of course, this Master herself must first know the Buddha whom we want to contact. Shakyamuni Buddha told people to ‘contemplate’ on the Amitabha Buddha, because He knew Amitabha. He also took His disciples to the Pure Land, or so-called the Western Paradise, and ‘guaranteed’ to Amitabha that His disciples would love to live in the Amitabha’s Land (the Pure Land) and that they all did not take animal flesh, and that they cultivated proper conduct and virtues and meditated on Amitabha’s name, etc. So Amitabha Buddha would be touched and promise to save these souls of Shakyamuni Buddha’s disciples and accept them into the Pure Land after their worldly sojourn would be over. That’s why Shakyamuni Buddha’s disciples at that time ‘contemplated’ on Amitabha. But nowadays, we just use the lips to recite His name; isn’t that too strange?

I have mentioned earlier that Amitabha is just the Lord of the West, not the Lord of the whole creation. If you recite the Western Paradise with the lips, but in your heart you think of the

East, then you could never get to the West. Therefore it is best to invoke the Buddha of the Highest Order because no matter where we would fall, it will all be in His domain. However, the Name of the Highest Order is not in the holy scriptures of any religion because the real 'Name' cannot be named. If one likes to speak it out, one cannot. We can only 'know' and realize it. It is done through a Living Master. It could be that the Master is a friend of the Buddhas, or that she works for the Buddhas, or possibly she is the servant of the Buddhas. This doesn't matter, because at least the servant knows the Buddhas and can take us to meet them. For example, if we know the king's favorite cook, isn't it good for us? It is even better than to know other big government officers, as the cook is very close to His Majesty. He could even recommend us to the king someday. Being able to know the Buddhas' servant is even more fortunate, for it is the shortest road to the Buddha's Palace.

It is not necessary to try and estimate the inner level and power of the Master. It is sufficient to be sure that she is the servant of the Buddha, that she knows the Buddha, that she can take us to see the Buddha finally or even immediately. That's all that counts to us. It's just as if we know the cook in the Palace, he may recommend us to the king. But to know even the higher officers won't help; the higher officers themselves may even tremble on seeing the king!

The high officers might not even be able to see the king so often except on occasions of great national meetings. Maybe they are in charge of the security section and because of their work they could not even see or go near the king but stay on

the outer area to protect the palace. So there is no chance, even, for them to speak to the king about us. It is the same, if we want to know the Buddha. We must find someone who already knows the Buddhas. A servant of the Buddhas is just like the errand-boy in an office, who knows the boss of that office. If you know him, he will take you to the boss directly. If we want to see the boss, we should look for this boy; and if we want to know a Buddha, we should look for the Buddha's co-worker, or servant even.

We must be patient if we want to practice the Quan Yin Method. But we will have some inner visions in order to measure our progress and to know the highest Name of the Buddhas in the universe, the 'Name' which cannot be named. The name that we can use our tongue to pronounce is not the real Name. Similarly, a statue of the Buddha is not the Buddha. If we want to know them, there is the Way, that is, through the Quan Yin Method. But this takes time and perseverance on our part. To practice self-cultivation is simply to rely on oneself after one has found a Real Master and obtained a Real Method.

Since we all have the habit of 'contemplating' something, 'thinking' about something, such as our husband, wife, kids, business, etc., in order to minimize our vexation we 'think' of Amitabha, of the Pure Land. However, as mentioned, He is only a representation of our illuminating aspect. If we truly want the great benefit, then there are even better, higher aspects of the Buddhas whose Names represent the entire cosmos and the Eternal Truth. Although the Real and Ultimate Name cannot be uttered in worldly language, as we are in the habit

of always ‘thinking’ of something – most of which give us all kinds of vexation – the Master will also introduce to us the highest Names of the Lords for us to ‘think’ of. These Names are the most beneficial, the most forceful in the entire creation. They are the Lords of the Universe. Even just invoking their Names would bring great changes in our life, open our wisdom, and bestow upon us limitless merits. But they must be transmitted through a LIVING REAL MASTER.

So our Quan Yin Method also offers some kind of “recitation of Buddha’s Names” as just a small part of the practice, and there are of course other parts. Nevertheless, it is not merely reciting Amitabha’s name as the present Pure Land sect does; it is the Name of the highest Buddha, charged by the inner Force of Self-realization and God-realization of the Living Master. If the Master transmits the inner Force to the name of Amitabha, then when you recite Amitabha, there will also be the response. It’s due to the Power of the Master, not the mere name. Before this, reciting Amitabha is just like an electric line without electricity, without connection to the Power house. After the initiation into the Quan Yin Method, if you still cannot put down Amitabha, then you can include Him in with my permission – though it will make a rather crowded assembly! (Laughter)

It is all very well for us to say that we have plenty of money, but if our pocket is empty, no one will believe us. It is not by reciting ‘money’ that people will believe us. It needs something real. If for example we play at being the big millionaire when in fact we are very poor, our manner would

betray us so that no one will believe our empty words. From the way we speak people would detect our motive and insincerity. Is that not so?

Another example is, when someone threatens to kill us, if we put on a courageous appearance and say to him, “I fear not..., I... fear... not... I... I... I... have a gun my... my s... eel... f,” then just from our own trembling attitude the enemy knows that we are scared and have nothing to protect ourselves with. Similarly, if we recite the Buddha’s name without a power behind us or any backing force, then the demons would not fear us. They would still come and disturb us and cause us untold trouble and suffering.

The Quan Yin Method also includes recitation of Names of Buddhas of the Highest Order. The Holy Names which the Master charges would afford limitless protection, provided we look for it and surrender to it. When we have trouble, it really helps us; when we call, it really responds. Just as we begin to call on the Buddhas of these Orders, the demons have already gone out of sight, without being able to harm us or even our dear ones. Not only us, but those dear to us are also under the protection of the Master. This is the real ‘recitation’ of the Buddha’s Names!

Reciting these holily charged Names also permits us to see Amitabha, ‘Infinite Light’ of the cosmos. We will then always be in this Light, sleeping with the Light, eating in this Light, standing, talking, and working in this Light. It will never leave us. The Light will be everywhere. That’s why it is called the

‘Infinite Light.’ It will protect and help us develop our wisdom and all heavenly inborn qualities, which at the moment still lie dormant within us. It will guide us day and night to the highest destination, and if we want, to the Western Abode.

Apart from reciting the highest charged Names of the Buddhas, the Infinite Light, we will also, through Quan Yin Method, come in contact with the inner wondrous Sound Current, the Music Stream that is often mentioned in various scriptures of the world religions. The transmission of ‘heart to heart’ from the Real Living Master permits us to realize this Inner Power, this Inner Sound Current, which is the highest manifestation of the Lord of the Universe. To know this Sound is to know the Lord; we will get nearer and nearer to Him via the Sound Current. All Bliss and lasting happiness and eternal Glory belong to those who practice Quan Yin Method under the guidance of a Living Representative of the Most High – the Gracious Master.

We have often heard that Zen doesn’t need language. This is the meaning of ‘heart to heart transmission’: The Master transmits the invisible Power to us to help us open and develop our wisdom and heavenly virtues. The transmission takes place without any word. Any time there is the word involved, there is no real transmission, or there is only incomplete transmission. That’s why the Sixth Ch’an Patriarch said it was a ‘formless method.’ This method Shakyamuni Buddha described as *Neither produced nor destroyed, neither pure nor defiled..., and There is neither tongue nor eyes, ears, nose... It can be neither perceived nor tasted..., it can be*

comprehended neither through mind nor intellect...

There is nothing – this is the real Quan Yin Method; but then it is not ‘nothing.’ It is the ‘Name which cannot be named’; it cannot be said nor described in ordinary language, but everything is contained in this Sound Current, in this Name without name, in this Original Word. ***In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, and all things are made by it, and there is nothing made that was not made by It...*** It is only one special condition that while transmitting this method, there is no language, no gesture of any kind, but one gets the method all the same. One gets the Power, the Grace of God, of the Buddha. And each disciple, at the first contact with this Sound Current or inner Force, obtains some proof of the inner worlds and inner Grace. He is secured of eternal liberty. He knows it and feels it. He is sure about it. It is just as two and two makes four. A great burden of heavy karma would fall from our shoulders, and we feel for the first time the heavenly Bliss so much spoken of and promised in all religious scriptures!

It doesn't mean that when we do not use any language in transmission, there is no transmission. It is because the method, the Power is formless, so language is not necessary. It's just the same as love, as electricity, etc., which has no real form, but they do exist. So, the transmission is the ‘heart to heart’ or ‘spirit to spirit’ seal. Only our inner spirit is involved and understands the process, but our mind and intellect may not even suspect it. Our inner Power will open, our spirit will be elevated. It is done in a quiet and automatic fashion;

there is no need for language. It is like an electric wire. After it is connected with the power source, automatically there is electricity; the lights will be illuminated, the fans will move, the heater will radiate heat...; no one has to explain anything.

If someone practices alone without a Master, without the Quan Yin Method, even if he works hard at it for eon, he will never arrive at God's Throne. He arrives nowhere near even. Only the disciple of the Quan Yin circle knows the road to freedom. They alone have this 'privilege.' The world is full of so-called 'spiritual cultivators' but the population has not become less. It is because most of the people practice with an incompetent master and with an inferior method; there is no real Inner Power to uplift and sustain their souls to eternal Plane of Existence; they tumble somewhere along the Tao. It is indeed painful to see this. It is as if when we are hungry, we find no food but just fill our belly with stones!

In all the scriptures, Shakyamuni spoke of the Quan Yin Method as the shortest road to salvation. He said that all the Buddhas in ten directions and of the three periods of time had to cultivate with this method to attain the Most Exalted Nirvana, and that practicing 'Quan Yin' is equal to reciting billions of other names of Bodhisattvas.

This is just a short sum of the limitless merits that one may derive from practicing the Quan Yin Method – the most precious Jewel in this world, the highest offering to humankind. But this you will realize only after the initiation!



Any Method of Practicing for Enlightenment Is “Quan Yin Method”

Spoken by Supreme Master Ching Hai
February 12, 1987
Penghu, Formosa
(Originally in Chinese)

Today I'd like to talk about the Diamond Sutra. Any sutra is identical with the Diamond Sutra, as they all speak on the same method of practicing for enlightenment. The scripture 'Diamond Sutra' is actually not the real diamond 'sutra' (sutra – 'Jing' in Chinese character; here it means 'the Way of the universe'); it is only the name of the written record of a sermon once delivered by Shakyamuni Buddha when He had to introduce the real diamond 'sutra' by means of language.

One day I transmitted the Quan Yin Method of meditation to a lady who was 'possessed.' Do you know what it's like to be 'possessed'? One would get into this state if he practices casually by himself or was taught by an incompetent teacher, or practices a bad method, or he himself was not pure

enough. The word ‘possessed’ means being possessed by evil spirits: the devils expel one’s soul from one’s body and use the body to do various topsy-turvy things such as making hand signs (mudras, or secret gestures), ‘foot’ signs, ‘head’ signs or talking weirdly, etc. The possessed person would hear some whispers telling him to do so and so; he would behave abnormally and wander in his speech unconsciously. Sometimes he cannot restrain himself from doing what the devils compel him to do. We call him ‘possessed’ if one gets into the above situation.

So, it happened that I transmitted the Quan Yin Method to this kind of ‘possessed’ person – a woman who was a friend of one of my fellow practitioners. (I’ve often called my students fellow practitioners, as we practice the same method together.) My student brought her friend who had been possessed for years to me, and I transmitted the method to her because of my student. In spite of having been possessed for years, this lady was still a very good person, keeping the vegetarian diet, worshipping Buddha, reciting Buddha’s name, and meditating, etc., for she also longed for liberation. Unfortunately she turned out to be in that situation as a consequence of her previous incorrect practice or having not been taught by a good Master.

This woman looked quite normal both in her appearance and in her daily talking with people. No one would be aware of her being possessed at first sight. However, during the initiation, out from her body came several evil spirits fighting with one another very fiercely. At that time other fellow practitioners

present all got frightened at the sight of the lady’s face which was turned to look horrible by those devils. The voices of the devils sounded very hideous; one of them spoke like a dog barking, and another one like a lion roaring. Some spoke Hakka – a southern Chinese dialect which that lady herself had never used before; and others also had a mainland Chinese accent in their speech.

I told her to recite the charged Names of the Buddhas, but she dared not. Although she could read aloud ‘Amitabha,’ she could not, and dared not, and did not want to read out the other Buddha’s Names and the method I taught her. When finally I had to command her to do so, she mispronounced the words in a completely different way which made all other fellow practitioners there feel the creeps. Some words which came out of her mouth were just like the barking of a dog! Some of the devils in her body were milder and so they scolded others, “Stop that and recite properly! This is a very good Master for whom we should show our respect.” The initiation on that day was just like a noisy party. One of the devils told others, “I do not admire this Master. But I must respect Her and obey Her commands because She holds the power of the Diamond Method.” How daring they are, holding such a ‘party’ at a Master’s place!

Why have I told you this story? Originally I did not want to talk about this kind of thing, considering that you might bring me more ‘possessed’ cases to give me more troubles. I don’t like that. To speak frankly, it is very troublesome and not so easy to save a possessed person, as it takes much power and

time; it is even much more difficult than saving a normal person. Do you understand? Sometimes even a normal person cannot follow my instructions, not to mention a possessed person who is more hindered from believing a Master.

Then why am I telling you all this? I said just a moment ago, “Any sutra is the Diamond Sutra.” Shakyamuni Buddha mentioned the same thing, saying, ***Any method of practicing for the Truth is the Diamond Method.*** Even the devils mentioned above also knew about this Diamond Method, namely, the Quan Yin Method. In the Diamond Sutra, Buddha instructed Subhuti (one of Buddha’s ten chief disciples) to practice the Diamond Method; but in other sutras, He used the name Quan Yin Method to teach other people. Yesterday I told you, “In the Chapter of the Universal Door (a chapter in the Lotus Sutra) it is called the method of Universal Liberation (Pu-men); while in the Amitabha Sutra of the Pure Land sect, it becomes the method of Amitabha or Pure Land; then in the Sutra of the Sixth Zen Patriarch it is the method of ‘Prajnaparamita’ (Great Wisdom).” Later I’ll tell you why.

Do you remember my telling you yesterday that in the Amitabha Sutra there is the description about the Sound, the inner exquisite Music? In the Surangama Sutra ‘Quan Yin’ (contemplating the Sound) is mentioned, and twenty-five Bodhisattvas respectively spoke about the Sounds they had heard while becoming enlightened. In the Chapter of the Universal Door (Pu-men Pin) it is thus said, ***The Sound of Sanskrit and the ocean tide are superior to the worldly sound.*** Here, if it is the sound of the ocean tide of this world

that the sutra implies, then the people here in Penghu (a small island beside Formosa) would have all become enlightened, for they hear the sound of the ocean tide at their doors every day. Is it not so? So, certainly it is not what Shakyamuni Buddha meant.

Suppose the ‘ocean tide’ in this sutra means the ocean tide in this world, then, what about the sound of Sanskrit? How can people listen for it? Should they go to the mountains or the seashore? No, it cannot be heard anywhere in this world. Sanskrit is an ancient Indian language. Then, could it be possible that we can obtain enlightenment simply by going to India to listen to people speaking Sanskrit? Certainly not. Then, what exactly is the ‘Sound’ which is ‘superior to the worldly sound’? Where can we find it and listen to it?

What Shakyamuni Buddha mentioned is the ‘inner’ Sound, the Sound of enlightenment, also called the Buddha Sound. It is this inner Sound with which Quan Yin Bodhisattva practiced to achieve God-realization, and not the mundane sound heard in the outer world. That is why it is ‘superior to the worldly sound.’ Now I’ll make it easier for you to understand that the Chapter of the Universal Door, the Amitabha Sutra, the Paramita Sutra and the Surangama Sutra all spoke of the same thing.

The Surangama Sutra is not the real Surangama ‘sutra,’ but just a written introduction, nor is the Diamond Sutra the true Diamond ‘sutra,’ which is obtainable only through the transmission of an enlightened Master. Why have I said so?

After Hui Neng, the Sixth Patriarch of the Zen sect, heard others reciting the Diamond Sutra and became enlightened immediately, He still had to go to Hong Ren, the Fifth Zen Patriarch, to ask for transmission of the Diamond Method. Why?

Because the written Diamond Sutra is not the real Diamond Method. Let me give you an example. Suppose I am now advertising a kind of cookie here. I repeatedly say that it is a very good cookie: it is good for health, it's of the best quality, it tastes most delicious, it is a cookie of the first class, and that it is so rare that it cannot be easily bought by the common people. If you record my words with a tape recorder, you may listen to my advertisement at home. But even if you repeat my words for many times you still will never know what exactly the cookie is like, for you yourselves haven't eaten it yet. If you do not understand what I mean in the advertisement, you may even mistake my words for the cookie! But certainly this will not happen, as the common knowledge about cookies enables us to discern.

The sutras, however, talk about 'the supreme, most profound and mysterious method' which is beyond our human comprehension. We cannot ask Shakyamuni Buddha about it, as He has been gone for more than 2,500 years. We ourselves think that reciting the Diamond Sutra is good enough and is all there is to the method. But it is not so, because the Diamond Sutra, as I've repeatedly said, is not the real Diamond 'sutra.' Any sutra which can be read, which can be seen with eyes, can be heard with ears is not the real 'sutra.' The real Diamond

Sutra is attainable only through silent transmission by an enlightened Master, and so will the real Prajnaparamita ‘sutra’ be understood, and the real Chapter of the Universal Door be heard, and also the real Amitabha ‘sutra’ be experienced.

I think it is better not to lecture on the sutras today; indeed, as I don’t know how to express to you in words what I’ve come to realize. Just now I was still shaking my head and wondering what I could say to enable you to understand the state I’ve reached. It is truly not easy! Maybe I can try to let you understand by this analogy: Water is called in various names in different languages like Formosan dialect, Mandarin, English, French, German, Spanish, etc. To German speaking people we should say ‘wasser’; to French, “l’eau”; to English, “water”; and to Chinese, “shui,” and so on.

Shakyamuni Buddha delivered His sermons in the same manner. He told those who liked the name ‘the Diamond Method,’ “This (the Quan Yin Method) is ‘the Diamond Method’”; and to people who liked Amitabha Buddha and the Western Pure Land He said, “This is the method of the Pure Land. Practice this method and you surely will be able to go there.” It’s true that they can go there because the Quan Yin Method will enable them to hear the beautiful Sound which is exactly the same as that described in the Amitabha Sutra (a scripture on the Western Pure Land). On the other hand, Shakyamuni Buddha told those who were fond of Quan Yin Bodhisattva, “This is the Quan Yin Method. Follow this method to cultivate yourselves and you will become very close to Quan Yin Bodhisattva, and you will hear the Sounds of

Sanskrit and the ocean tide which are superior to the worldly sound, just the same as Quan Yin Bodhisattva does.”

After hearing what Buddha said, those fond of Quan Yin would undoubtedly be very pleased and responded, “Yes, yes. Please transmit me this method.” Those who liked Amitabha Buddha would say, “OK. Please hurry to initiate me into the method of the Infinite Light (Amitabha), as I’d like very much to communicate with the Infinite Light and to hear the beautiful Music of the Western Pure Land.” To the people who were accustomed to practicing Zen (meditation), Buddha would tell them, “This is the method of Prajnaparamita, which provided supreme Power and great wisdom. Follow this method and you’ll become enlightened immediately.”

Sometimes those who practiced Zen had the thought that the method of the Amitabha sect was for the common people, and they themselves were different because ‘they’ practiced Zen. Therefore Buddha would tell them, “This method is the Zen method which will surely lead you to enlightenment, and great wisdom.” In Sanskrit the words ‘Maha prajnaparamita’ mean ‘great wisdom,’ and this is why Buddha told those who aimed at Maha prajnaparamita that it is the method of great wisdom.

Buddha had to teach people the method in various names, so as to ferry them to Nirvana by the most appropriate means. It’s just as in order to ask for water you must call water in whatever language necessary. It doesn’t matter whether the names are the same or not. Although Buddha used different descriptions for people of different backgrounds, the method

He propagated was actually one and the same.

The method to enlightenment cannot be found in the sutras. It cannot be written, as no language is used during the transmission of the method. I will give you some explanations before and after transmission in order to introduce the method, but in actual transmission I just sit still, without a move or a word. It requires no eyes, no ears, no mind, no brain, no body, as nothing is necessary; and anything including the body, speech and mind must all be forgotten and put down. You need the body to sleep, the ears to listen to all the topsy-turvy gossips, or the ‘advertisement of the cookie.’ But you need none of the six sense organs nor anything else when you actually ‘eat the cookie.’

When someone can believe me immediately, it means he has innate root of wisdom, a deep root of wisdom; and it also means he has such a pure mind that he can trust me at first sight despite not having listened to anything from me yet. He has already the inborn root of wisdom and an affinity with me. But certainly it’s better that we do not believe in anything too early before it is proven.

We have heard that once Hui Neng, the Sixth Patriarch, and also known as the most famous Master of the Zen sect, went to Hong Ren, the Fifth Patriarch, to ask for the method. One midnight after eight months had passed, Hong Ren called Hui Neng to his room and transmitted to Him the Diamond Method. After having received the method, Hui Neng left to seclude Himself for the practice of the method. And it was

after He had practiced the method for sixteen years that He finally came out to propagate the method.

In the first chapter of ‘The Sixth Zen Patriarch Sutra’ it is mentioned that Hui Neng introduced the method which He Himself had practiced to thousands of people, calling it ‘the method of Prajnaparamita.’ That is to say the Diamond Method is the method of Prajnaparamita. And then right at the beginning of the Heart Sutra it is thus related, “When Bodhisattva of Sovereignty-contemplating entered the profound state of Prajnaparamita, He realized the emptiness of all five substances and the liberation from all suffering...” This means He acquired the great enlightenment while entering into the state of deep meditation with the method of Maha Prajnaparamita.

Do you know who Bodhisattva of Sovereignty-contemplating is? (*The audience reply, ‘Quan Yin Bodhisattva.’*) And what was the method which He practiced? (*Answer from the audience, ‘The Quan Yin Method.’*) Right. Then, doesn’t it mean that the method of Maha Prajnaparamita is the Quan Yin Method? We may change the above words in the Heart Sutra into: “When Quan Yin Bodhisattva achieved the very profound state with the Quan Yin Method, He realized the emptiness of the five substances and the liberation from all suffering...”

What has this proved? That the method of Maha Prajnaparamita is the Quan Yin Method. And since Hui Neng, the Sixth Patriarch, received His method from Hong Ren, the

Fifth Patriarch, we can further understand that they and Quan Yin Bodhisattva all practiced the same method.

We don't use the organs such as the ears, the eyes or the mind to practice the Quan Yin Method. That's why we say 'Quan Yin' (contemplating the Sound) instead of 'Ting Yin' (listening to the Sound). To “contemplate” means not using anything including the six sense organs, as I've just said, because we 'contemplate' with wisdom. In China there was a Zen Master of the Tsao Tung sect who wrote a book (I don't know the title) about instructions on the practice of his sect. In the book he pointed out that to practice the method of the Tsao Tung sect one does not use any of the organs like the ears, the eyes, the nose, the body, the mouth or the mind, just the same as we do in practicing the Quan Yin Method. Then, doesn't the method of the Tsao Tung sect sound like the Quan Yin Method?

In the Tao Te Ching, Lao Tzu (the founder of Taoism) also mentioned that the 'wordless Word' (the Name which cannot be named) is the origin of all creations. (Chapter one of Tao Te Ching: ***The name which can be named is not the real Name. 'Nothing' is the beginning of the universe, and the 'Word' (Name) is the origin of all creations.***) What He meant is, in the beginning there was nothing until the 'wordless Word' started to create the universe.

The same doctrine is mentioned in the Bible: ***In the beginning was the Word (Sound), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God; everything was made by this and nothing which was made was not made by this.*** Anyone who has

ever read the Analects of Confucius knows that once when Confucius listened to a ‘certain kind of music’ he was so exalted that he completely forgot himself. Even after three months he was still highly gratified by the exquisiteness of the Music which, as we should understand, must be the inner Sound, for the worldly music would not have been so attractive and could not produce such a lasting effect.

In the Indian sutras, including the Vedas, it is also mentioned that the original Sound of the universe is similar to ‘OM’ which they called ‘Shabda’ (the Sound). From the story of Master Hsuan Tsang we know that he and other masters went to India in different times and studied the method of ‘Shabda.’ In the Koran, Mohammed talked about the Sound of the universe as well, but in another name. In the scriptures of other religions there are still many different callings such as: NAM, ANHAD-NAAD, UDGIT, SARMAD, KATHA, and KIRTAN RAGA...

In fact, all great Masters spoke of the same thing. This I came to realize only after practicing the Quan Yin Method. Before that it’s quite possible that I would never know what are all the likenesses and differences among their teachings.

One day, I transmitted the method to a Bhiksus (Buddhist monk) who formerly had practiced the method of the Tien Tai sect and reached a certain degree and then came to a standstill and could not break through. He was so sincere and humble, prostrating himself before me again and again to ask for initiation. Originally I was not inclined to transmit to him, as I was apprehensively thinking, “Since the Bhiksus always

have the thought that they enjoy a higher position than the Bhiksunis (Buddhist nuns), why then has this Bhikus come here and prostrated himself before me for the method?” Therefore I was afraid that he would not understand even if I transmitted the method to him. But it turned out that he could.

After the initiation he said, “This method looks so much like that of the Tien Tai sect.” And I replied, “Yes it is, originally.” It is the Tien Tai sect, if they have a real Master to transmit the method; it is the Tsao Tung sect, if they have a real Master, and so is the Quan Yin Method, the Zen sect, the Amitabha sect, the Chapter of the Universal Door sect, etc. Without transmission from a real Master, one would only be orally reciting the external texts and would not accomplish anything of inner value, for he does not have the transmitted power from the Living Master. Anyone who knows only a part of the method and transmits it to others is not transmitting the real complete method. He himself will not have enough power to guide people up and will stop half way up because he doesn’t know there are other higher realms, nor does he know how to go higher.

They are all the same – the Tien Tai sect, the Tsao Tung sect, the Lin Ji sect, and the Pure Land sect, the Quan Yin Method, and the method of Prajnaparamita – if they have the real Masters and the power of transmission; otherwise they are not. The language labels people put onto the method are not important, as there is actually no language used during the transmission, there is no ‘method’ to be spoken of or to be ‘transmitted.’ But without transmission there is no ‘method.’

That's why it is called 'the formless method' by Hui Neng the Sixth Patriarch of the Zen sect.

Yesterday I said, "Any sect was originally the same." The differences have arisen because the real method was interrupted and lost after the enlightened Master had passed away without a competent successor to continue the transmission of the method. But some time later in some other place like India, Formosa or mainland China it's very likely that a good disciple might appear, who has achieved the perfect enlightenment in that place and continues the transmission of the method, although in another language and in another name. It is not necessary that he propagates the teaching in the same area and speaks the same language as his or her master.

Hui Neng the Sixth Patriarch, for example, received from the Fifth Patriarch the Diamond Method, the real Diamond 'sutra,' the real 'sutra'; but when He propagated this method He said "It is the method of Prajnaparamita." Quan Yin Bodhisattva practiced the Quan Yin Method; but He told Sariputra that it was the method of Prajnaparamita. Yes, they all are the same method. It became the method of the Lin Ji sect, of the Tsao Tung sect after being spread to mainland China. 'Lin Ji' is the name of the founder of the Lin Ji sect. In like manner, after Shakyamuni Buddha passed away people named His doctrine 'Buddhism'; and after Jesus Christ we call His teaching 'Christianity'; then after Lao Tzu we call it 'Laoism' (Taoism). Actually their doctrines are the same.

True Masters always teach the same doctrine and transmit

the same method to liberate the living beings from suffering, because there is only one method which can help people reach eternal liberation, and that is the Quan Yin Method. No matter what it is called: the method of the Pure Land, of the Universal Door, of Prajnaparamita or of the Diamond, any method able to liberate us is the Quan Yin Method.

The inner Sound can release us from suffering. That’s why in the Surangama Sutra Buddha praised the Quan Yin (Sound-contemplating) Method for its mysterious Power. He said that Buddhas in ten directions and of three periods of time (past, present, future) should all practice this method to achieve ANUTTARA SAMYAK SAMBODHA – the Supreme Perfect Enlightenment, which in Catholicism is named ‘the Lord.’ For Catholics the highest is the Lord, and for Buddhists it is the Supreme Perfect Enlightenment. It is ‘Supreme’ because nothing can be higher than it and nothing can transcend it. What ‘the Lord’ means to Christians equals to what ‘the Supreme Perfect Enlightenment’ means to Buddhists; they both mean the highest ideal and greatest wisdom.

It’s because the later generations, who are not enlightened enough and do not understand the scriptures of their religions, have translated the scriptures incorrectly and added many mundane opinions into them, that the present doctrines of the religions have deviated further and further from that of their original founders. As we know, Buddhists have divided themselves into many different sects and clans, as have followers of other religions. If they had realized the essence of all religions, they would not have disputed or fought with one another.

In Au Lac there was a master who taught the method similar to the Quan Yin Method. He said that ‘ANUTTARA SAMYAK SAMBODHA’ is ‘the great empty Samadhi.’ What he meant by ‘empty’ is: in the great state of Samadhi there is nothing and no one; no human beings, no ‘I,’ no ‘you,’ no ‘he,’ no so-called ‘sentient beings’ or ‘Buddha.’ That’s why he said it’s ‘the great empty Samadhi.’ Many people who believe in Buddhism and did not understand nor like his teachings said he was a heretic. But I don’t think he was, for he also taught people the six ‘Paramitas’ (six ways to perfection) of Buddhism: Charity, precepts, patience, diligence, meditation and wisdom.

It’s quite possible that he did not teach the Diamond Sutra, that he did not hold a Diamond Sutra in his hand and explain the text, saying, “The first way to perfection is charity, the second is precepts, and the third is...” But it makes no difference. He propagated the method in his own manner. He also told people to practice virtues, like no killing, no stealing, no drinking, no adultery and no cheating. He did not use the name ‘Five Precepts’ of Buddhism, but he also told people “to be a human of good morals, not to kill or to commit adultery...” which are the same as the Five Precepts.

He also taught the Quan Yin Method. Most likely he had learnt the method from an enlightened Master and after having achieved the perfect enlightenment he also transmitted the method to others. However, instead of naming it the ‘Quan Yin Method’ he called it ‘the mysterious non-doing method of Buddhism.’ The ‘non-doing’ he said is the same as the ‘non-doing’ of Taoism, which means “doing without the sense of

ego; doing, but not doing.”

I had not studied with him, nor had I met him; but when I first read the method he described in his book, I knew at once that it was the Quan Yin Method. Originally the method could not be written, but from time to time he revealed a little in his book, and that’s why I knew it was the Quan Yin Method. Had I not practiced the Quan Yin Method, I would not have understood what he said and I might also have said he was a heretic. But after practicing the Quan Yin Method, my true wisdom was opened, which has enabled me to penetrate everything so clearly, just as when one looks in a clear mirror which lucidly reflects every object. One can see things so clearly because there is no dust on the ‘mirror.’

When we cannot see things clearly we often attack each other’s religions, as we think ours is the best. Believing in a religion without really understanding the doctrine will not benefit us much, although we might be able to get some blessed reward in the human’s or the devas’ world to comfort us somewhat. But this is almost useless to us, for we still cannot realize who we really are. We still cannot recognize our own Buddha Nature and find the way back to Buddhahood.

Therefore, some Buddhist teachers, including Zen Masters, commented that the sutras meant nothing more than fuel for cooking! Sometimes I say so too, when I am so disappointed in the sutras because they can not give the readers liberation from suffering. Sometimes, people who were so tied to the sutras came to argue with me, rather than to ask for the method. They

said it was mentioned in the Diamond Sutra that one should recite the Diamond Sutra in order to be enlightened and to be a Buddha. But this is not true. The Diamond Sutra told us to ‘perform’ rather than to ‘recite’ the ‘sutra.’ Performing the precepts is different from reading the precepts, and so is ‘performing’ a sutra different from reciting the sutra.

One should not think it is good enough just to read aloud the words of the ‘Bodhisattva’s vows’ after he took the vows. How could that be enough? He should practice the ‘Bodhisattva’s vows’ and perform the way of a Bodhisattva. The same is with reciting the sutras. It is useless just reading out the sutras. Buddha certainly has known about what the sutras say, so what is the good of repeating the sutras in front of the Buddha’s statue? And since the people at large do not understand the sutra, what is the good of reciting the sutras to them? One can understand the sutra only after he truly does the practice himself.

I had started to recite the Diamond Sutra ever since my childhood because everyone said it was very useful. But after reciting for all those years, I still did not acquire any enlightenment. I don’t know whether it was useful for Hui Neng the Sixth Patriarch or not, but it was not for me. Through reciting the Lotus Sutra, or the Nirvana Sutra, I could hardly get anything in particular, let alone any enlightenment. I could not understand in the least what Shakyamuni Buddha said in all these sutras!

But after having practiced shortly the Quan Yin Method, I was

able to realize the contents of the sutras so clearly that I also had the idea to burn them away, because I no longer needed them. One will not derive any benefit from the sutras until he can truly understand the sutra. Even if he worships it by putting it on his head and bowing and kneeling step by step, it is still useless. If he is not yet enlightened to recognize who he himself truly is, it is no use for him to worship Buddha, to be Buddha’s disciple, or even to shine Buddha’s shoes. Buddha said we should be the Buddha; He did not say we should worship Buddha. One may worship Buddha as he wishes, but first he should know who is the Buddha. How could you miss your fiancée every day if you have no idea what she looks like?

That is why Buddha said, ***Believing in Buddha without understanding Buddha is slandering Buddha.*** Once when Bodhidharma saw a man reciting the Nirvana Sutra He asked, “Why are you doing this?” The man replied, “It is said that reciting the Nirvana Sutra will make me enlightened and reach Buddhahood.” Then said Bodhidharma, “Give it to me. I want to burn up this thing which turns people into fools!” This is what is meant by a Chinese allegory, “Drawing a cake cannot satisfy one’s stomach.” There is not any power of Dharma transmission nor any method in the scriptures, which are only the introductions of the method. We do not use any language in the actual transmission. That is why it is said, ***Zen needs no language.***

For example, up to now I’ve praised the Quan Yin Method for more than one hour, saying that anyone who knows ‘Quan

Yin’ will derive boundless merit. What I mean is ‘to practice the Quan Yin Method’ will give one boundless merit. Those who merely listen to the records of my words will also get some blessed rewards, but not the ultimate liberation. In order to reach ultimate liberation we must practice the Quan Yin Method, we must practice ‘Quan Yin,’ or we must practice ‘the Chapter of the Universal Door.’ What is to ‘practice’? It means ‘to cultivate and perform.’

For example, it is to perform the precepts, not just to recite the names of the precepts that will give us the benefit. What is the good of merely reciting the Five Precepts – no killing, no stealing, no adultery, no lies and no alcohol? Many people declare themselves to be Buddhists because they take refuge with ten or fifteen or fifty Buddhist monks and collect many, maybe fifty, Buddhist Dharma names (the name the Buddhist monks bestow on their students according to the lineage of their sects), still they enjoy eating meat and drinking alcohol. They don’t really understand what it means by ‘no killing.’ Granted they take refuge with fifty masters, and they have fifty Buddhist names, still it is useless if they themselves don’t live by the precepts. It would be better that they reduce to ashes their ‘certificate of devotion’ to show their honesty, otherwise they are only cheating. What kind of Buddhists can they be in this way?

Buddha is most compassionate. But He will laugh when He sees that human beings are fooling themselves. He will say, “What are they doing? They don’t understand the Five Precepts and they are just blindly making themselves busy!

What’s the use of going to the monks and collecting Buddhist names?” Understand now? Many people still eat meat even after receiving the precepts!

Yesterday I talked about eating meat. Eating meat is indirect killing, and so is rejoicing at others’ killing. People would not sell meat if there were no one waiting for meat at the table. In the Lankavatara Sutra, Shakyamuni Buddha indicated very clearly to Bodhisattva Mahamat: “The prime reason why people kill other living beings is that there are people who demand to eat. If only people can stop eating flesh, there will be no more killing. That’s why people who eat meat commit the same sin as people who kill!”

Q: *Does it require any condition to practice the Quan Yin Method?*

M: As I said yesterday, no special condition is required. Anyone may practice this method, but he should keep the precepts, which actually are nothing but the common standard obligation of morality. The law already interdicts commitment of stealing, and ‘not harming others’ is the basic principle of morality that we should observe. As Confucius once said, ***Do not do to others what you don’t want to be done to you.*** This is an old saying in China, so you do not have to wait until you cultivate wisdom to know this precept.

Why do we encourage others to kill for us if we ourselves don’t want to be killed? If dying means an agony and terror to us, so too does it mean likewise to the animals. How can we be so merciless as to disregard the suffering of animals and enjoy

the result of their suffering? How can we satisfy our appetite on their agony? We should have long restrained ourselves from killing, even from harming any living things. Therefore ‘no killing’ is actually not any precept at all. If we wouldn’t dare to eat the corpse of our relative, how could we eat that of other living beings?

The bodies of animals are so dirty. Normally we cannot imagine that we hug a pig or a goat or a chicken and kiss it, or even sleep on the bed with it. Why is it that now we even feed our noble mouths with their corpses? Originally our mouths are for us to talk about virtuous things and recite elegant literature and poetry, but now they have become the gates of graves. We’ve turned our noble bodies into a grave yard. Some people dare not sleep in the grave yard, but they are not afraid of sleeping with a cemetery in their bellies. Animals also like to live and have a fear of death as we do; so it is not fair for us to force them to die.

Plants and vegetables cannot speak human language, but if we have developed our wisdom-eye we will know they are inviting us to eat them. You will hear them say, “I’m ready. Pluck me for food.” But animals and poultry, etc., are totally reluctant to die or to be killed. It is not the way of a gentlemen for us to catch those small, weak and helpless animals, which can not defend and protect themselves, which are less clever and strong than us, and chop their bodies into pieces!

Do you know military tactics? During the fighting in a battle, the two participating armies will keep on fighting to the end, if

they are equal to each other in force; and when they are not, the victor will not kill off the weak enemy who has been defeated. But in contrast we savagely kill the feeble animals which are even much weaker than the defeated participator in a battle. They are not able to defend themselves against us, and at the sight of a human being they will run to escape in panic. But then, we still continue chasing them until they are caught and taken home for food! The fish live in the ocean and do no harm to us, but we catch them with a net. Animals lead their lives in the mountains and have no concern with us, but we hunt them and eat them. It is incorrect for us to do all these things, because it is against the Tao (the Way of the universe, the Truth).

Vegetables do not have the sense of fear, as they consist of more than 90 percent water and have only a little sensibility and consciousness; while animals have about as much consciousness as human beings. That is why horses and dogs are very faithful to their human caregivers. They can recognize their caregivers and be loving toward them. We can even say that animals feel about the same as humankind. Sometimes when their caregivers died, they would feel so sad that they did not want to eat and even grieved to death a few days after their caregivers died. Some dogs and horses are indeed that loyal to their caregivers.

Therefore we should not eat animals, for they are about as clever as we are and feel about as much as we do. We shouldn't force them into death, and nor should we, seeing others killing them, rejoice to eat them and enjoy their suffering. What is our motive in wishing to be the Bodhisattva? It is because we long

to be liberated from our own suffering as well as to release other living beings from theirs. If we cannot even deliver the living beings away from our tables, when will we even be able to liberate them? Before we could be any Bodhisattva, all living beings would have been ‘delivered’ into our stomachs! (Laughter)

Therefore, in order to become a Bodhisattva we should first have a compassionate mind; we should treat all beings as our relatives. If we don’t learn to be a merciful Bodhisattva now, how will we be able to go to the Western Pure Land (Western Paradise) – a land only for Bodhisattvas of great merit and mercy? The Amitabha Sutra has already said that one with only a little blessed reward in the human’s or devas’ world cannot go to the Western Pure Land.

The extremely important aspect of practicing the Truth is compassion; every religion lays emphasis on this. Therefore it’s impossible that we can go to the Pure Land without first having a compassionate mind.

I remember when I was a little child I planted a flower which we called the ‘longevity flower.’ If one wants this flower to thrive, one has to pull out its bud when it grows up to a certain stage, otherwise it will grow in small size, springing into merely two or three leaves and bearing only a few flowers. If you pick the bud, it will grow strong and big and flower freely. Isn’t it so? Besides this flower, parsley and most of other vegetables also yield two or three or more if you pluck their fruits. Is it not so? Just using your physical eyes is sufficient to notice this.

Therefore vegetables like us to eat them, for they can grow big and yield even more fruits. But if we don't eat them in time, they will be depressed and very probably each plant will just bear one single fruit and soon withers after we pluck the fruit. If you don't believe this, go home and try to plant two 'longevity' flowers; pull out the bud of one of them, and you will soon see the difference between their growing.

So, plants and vegetables are willing to be plucked and eaten. When we cut a tree branch, the tree will sprout new leaves very soon. But if we slaughter a chicken or a cow, will it keep on growing? No, a single chop is enough to end its life. It's enough to use our physical eyes, not necessary our 'wisdom-eye,' to see that the plants and vegetables like being eaten and of service to us, while animals dislike being slaughtered.

To practice the Quan Yin Method you should every day spend at least two and a half hours in 'Quan Yin and meditation' so as to have enough power to cleanse off your karmic hindrance and go to the Western Pure Land or whatever Buddha Land you wish to go. The large amount of karmic hindrance that we have accumulated from the previous and present lives has prevented us from going there. We should practice until we are able to 'contemplate' on the Buddhas with a one-pointed mind. But this is not possible if we don't follow the right method. To achieve this you have to meditate for at least two and a half hours every day. Only this is the real 'recitation' of the Buddha's Names.

To 'contemplate' means to think. We may say that in the two

and a half hours we really and only think of the Buddhas. This is the real ‘recitation’ of the Buddha, the one-pointed mind contemplation. During the two and a half hours’ meditation we lay down everything of the world and offer our body, speech and mind completely to the Buddhas. We have twenty-four hours a day, so two and a half hours shared with the Buddhas only means about 10 percent of it. Yet most people have so many excuses such as “I’m too busy. I’m a layman and have a husband, or a wife, and children to take care of. I must work...,” etc.

As mentioned above, to practice the Quan Yin Method we must offer to the Buddhas our ‘body, speech and mind’ for two and a half hours every day, using our real Self to contemplate on the Buddhas. Therefore we don’t have to wait until entering into Samadhi to acquire a one-pointed mind; if we can sincerely meditate every day as the offering to the Buddhas, offering the Buddhas our real Mind, it is the one-pointed mind.

It is not so easy to achieve the state of Samadhi. You have to practice very hard first. It’s absolutely impossible that by reciting Amitabha Buddha’s name every day one can get a one-pointed mind someday. We have to practice the real offering to the Buddha. Every day for at least 10 percent of a day’s time we must use our real Self to think of the Buddha, to contemplate on the Buddhas. Then we will come to the state of one-pointed mind.

So these are the ‘rules’ you should observe if you want to practice the Quan Yin Method: you should be a vegan, you

should meditate two and a half hours every day, and the rest are nothing particular. Contemplate on the Buddhas when you meditate, but first you should know how to ‘contemplate’ correctly. What I’ve told you up to now it is only the surface, is only a picture of the ‘cookie,’ or it is just a glass which contains ‘water.’ ‘Water’ is in the ‘glass.’ You have not drunk the water, nor have you tasted the cookie.



The Mystery of Wisdom-Eye

Spoken by Supreme Master Ching Hai
February 16, 1987
Penghu, Formosa
(Originally in Chinese)

Today I want to talk about why it is that Shakyamuni Buddha said *We all have Buddha Nature*, but we cannot find it? We have also heard that *Buddha is in our heart*, but why can't we discover it? Buddha said *Everyone of us is a "Buddha,"* but why are there still bad people and good people in this world? These are the things we are going to discuss today.

A few days ago I talked about the Pure Land and the defiled land. Do you still remember? Between these two lands there is a world which separates them. That world is very black, very dark, without any road or any light. We have heard that in the Pure Land, or so-called Western Paradise or Amitabha's Land, there is no distinction of the sexes, no sin and no hell. For Catholicism this world is called Heaven or the Kingdom of God, and Shakyamuni Buddha called it Buddha Nature or our Original Face. Jesus Christ also talked about Heaven. He said, *Heaven is within you*. But why can't we find it? If one

has the Kingdom of God within him, then one must be very kind, is it not so? But, as we all know, not all the people in the world are kind. Therefore we will ask ourselves, “Why?” The reason is that there is no communication between the defiled land and the Pure Land.

The whole state of the universe is like this. Within the Three Worlds there are six directions of reincarnation (existence): human beings, heavenly beings (deva lokas), Asura (spirits), hungry ghosts, hells and animals. Above the Three Worlds is the Pure Land (the Kingdom of God), the Buddha’s Land. We often say, “The Light of Buddhas is always shining,” which means the Light of Buddhas is infinite and shines everywhere. But why do the Three Worlds not have such light and have thus gotten into such chaos? The reason is that there is a dark and black world which lies between the Buddha’s Land and the Three Worlds and separates them. (Please refer to pictures on the last page of this lecture.) When I speak of the universe, please do not just regard it as the world outside; it is also within ourselves, we ourselves are the small universe. The small universe which is within us reflects the situation of the universe outside. Therefore, there is also a dark world within.

Between our head and our four limbs there is a dark place which hinders our wisdom from passing through, and even if some wisdom does appear, it will become impure and incorrect. Therefore, it often happens that we are thinking of doing something good in our brains, with our wisdom, but when we put it into practice, the end will turn out to be bad. The dark place is just like a door which is currently closed,

which should be opened to let our wisdom flow out. When it is opened wide, we will see the Light of Buddhas, which is the true wisdom, our inner Self.

Therefore some people call this ‘the wisdom-eye,’ ‘the third eye’ or ‘the Buddha-eye.’ (Master points to the center of Her forehead) But you should still be careful because there are two doors here. One leads to the highest place within the Three Worlds, which is called “Brahmadeva” in Buddhism. If this door is opened, you will also have some wisdom and blessed reward. The other door leads to endless worlds above the Three Worlds. The ‘wisdom-eye’ I am talking about is the door which leads to the Pure Land above the Three Worlds.

To most people both the two doors are shut; to some people the door within the Three Worlds is opened a little. If it is opened wider, one may see some light or some sphere, which only belongs to the level within the Three Worlds (meaning it’s just of the second class!) Only those who practice the Quan Yin Method will have their wisdom-eye opened and the Light of Buddhas will always shine on them. If the door is completely closed, the Light of Buddhas will not be able to reach us from the Pure Land; even though it could come, it would be defiled while going through the dark place. Therefore we may say that below our forehead is the impure land, and above the forehead is the Pure Land, or Heaven. (Please refer to pictures on the last page of this lecture.) It doesn’t matter what you call it because they are only the different language labels we put on it. For one who practices the meditation of the Quan Yin Method (Transcendental seeing and hearing), who has their wisdom-

eye open, the Light of Buddhas will always be with him. The more we practice, the more we will see the Light of Buddhas, and by and by we will become our own Masters, and while going through the dark place the wisdom we develop will not be defiled to become incorrect information for us.

Therefore, there is no communication between the Pure Land and the impure land because of the hindrance of the dark wall between, which stops us in the Three Worlds from going out and stops us from knowing the Pure Land, or the Kingdom of God. The Three Worlds is just like a jail and it is this dark, high wall which separates the jail from the free world above.

The Pure Land has much to do with our wisdom and body. For example, the Pure Land is in the upper part of our body, in our brain; below this (Master points to the wisdom-eye on Her forehead) is the defiled land. Therefore, if a man is intelligent, we often say that he has brains. Don't we? The brain is the commander-in-chief of our body. If the order from the brain cannot be sent out, one may do many things incorrectly, and then we say, "He has no brains," or "His brain is not good," etc. Above the wisdom-eye is the world beyond the Three Worlds, the Pure Land, Buddha Nature or Heaven. Below the wisdom-eye is the Three Worlds, the defiled land, the place of the endless circle of birth and death. We see if a man is very intelligent, his forehead will be wider. Everything below the forehead is only the system of excretion.

With the guidance of an enlightened Master, the Truth-seekers will become wiser and wiser, otherwise they may go astray

because they might have the wrong ‘door’ opened. If one practices alone, one might also get some so-called supernatural power because there are many ‘power centers’ in our body. Here (Master points to Her wisdom-eye) is the commander-in-chief, and the next is the throat, then the heart, the lower part of abdomen and so on. Some practitioners say that they can get the nectar (elixir of Life) by curling their tongues to reach the upper jawl, but this is not the real Amrita (nectar), which the Quan Yin Method practitioners are sure to get even though we don’t move our tongues. Those who develop the centers below the wisdom-eye may also get some supernatural power, but those power centers are still within the Three Worlds and cannot let us surpass the stage of ‘birth, existence, decay, and destruction.’ Therefore by practicing with power centers below the wisdom-eye one cannot transcend the Three Worlds and obtain eternal liberation.

If you want to practice in order to go up over the Three Worlds, you should start your practice from the wisdom-eye. But some people start from the lowest center, and then go slowly upward to the higher ones. It is too slow this way. They spend their whole lifetime to go up to the wisdom-eye, which to them is the highest, but in our system we start directly from the wisdom-eye. In the old times, those who practiced Yoga in India had much leisure time to do all those steps. But now most lay people do not have so much time because you have to earn your living on the one hand and do the practice on the other. If you practice in that slow way, you might pass away before you could reach the highest. So, one should find the best method if one really wants to practice for the Truth.

If a man practices by himself without a competent Master, it is quite possible he might develop by himself some center in his body, like the solar plexus (abdomen), which consequently will be heated, and then the person will become hot-tempered; he may even turn out to have a strong sexual appetite. When a certain center is opened, if one himself cannot close it, there will be the so-called negative spirits to enter the center and occupy one's body because the person does not know how to protect himself. Therefore when we practice, we should have an enlightened Master to take care of us, teaching us the good, secure method lest we should get into trouble and danger.

Many people have come to ask me the same question. They said it seemed that before they began to do spiritual practice (with other methods), they did not have any evil obstacle on the way, but after the practice they started to have more and more trouble; they felt so many 'spirits' coming into their bodies to disturb them and they wanted to know why. This is because they followed a wrong method and thus opened a wrong center, or their masters did not have enough power to protect them. After one begins to practice, some of the centers in his body will be opened; for example, even if you meditate this way (*as Master demonstrates), some center will also be opened. If you try to control your breathing at random, you will tap and set in motion the solar plexus in your abdomen, which is a 'heating center.' Then you may increase in temper and get angry easily, or have an unusually large appetite for sexual indulgence, etc. You will lose control over your passion.

The Western Pure Land has much to do with us. Our body is a small universe beyond the outer great universe. Above the wisdom-eye is the Pure Land and below it is the impure land. As there is wisdom here (Master points to Her forehead), no matter what we want to do or to think about, we have to use the brains. Sometimes when we cannot figure out something, we will frown, such as when we try to recall the place where we met someone before. Is that not so? At that very moment, if we focus our thought on the third-eye or wisdom-eye, it will be easier to solve the problem. This is where our wisdom dwells. Therefore people call it the wisdom-eye, the third eye, the Truth-eye, the Buddha's eye, heavenly eye and so on.

When we look at the Buddha's image, there is a wisdom-eye symbolized by a red dot at the center of His forehead, which means He has opened His wisdom-eye. The wisdom-eye of the ordinary people remains closed if they don't develop themselves or do not have a real Master to help them. This closed door, as I said just now, has much to do with the dark world in the universe. The wall – the dark place – stands between the Pure Land and the defiled land to block the infinite, supreme Light from lightening the place below. However, if we open our wisdom-eye, the infinite Light (Light of Buddhas) will smoothly flow down, just like a previously blocked road to restore its good condition. The road is there all the time, though obstructed for the moment.

If we have opened our wisdom-eye, wisdom can travel directly from the upper part of our body to our four limbs and the whole body. Then whatever we do will be straight and clear

and wise because at that time wisdom can flow down without any obstacle, to have communication with the system of our body.

Therefore, the wisdom center is the highest in practice. All of the other centers are only the excretion system. As you know, our eyes shed tears and have secretion, our noses hold dirt and drip, our ears have ear-wax, our mouths water and sometimes have phlegm and our anuses excrete. The lower, the worse. All the nine openings in our body produce dirty things because they are the system of excretion, just like the system of 'birth, existence, decay, and destruction.' So, it is dangerous and impermanent for us to practice with these centers.

Now I am only giving you a brief description, but during initiation I will explain more clearly and tell you in detail what kind of things are in the different worlds. Here I can't talk about them in public. Even if I talked more publicly, it would be useless and in case you tried it at random, your mentality would be disturbed or you would become possessed. In the process of initiation everything will be explained clearly. To prepare for the initiation, you should first have your body, speech and mind purified. This you all have known. Then I will tell you everything you need to know about the practice. So, I will not talk much about that now, and what I've just told you is only a little of it.

Sometimes you meet someone who is very intelligent. It is because he has cultivated wisdom in his previous lives and now some of the wisdom is revealed; his wisdom-eye has

opened a little, not completely closed. So, he is both intelligent and virtuous now. If one has developed more wisdom in his past lives, his 'wisdom-door' is now more open. Using the wisdom-eye we can see which part of a human is open and which is not. However, it does not matter whether your wisdom-eye is closed completely or not; if only you can find a real enlightened Master, whose Grace and Love is boundless, he or she will help you open it. He or she has the 'key.' It is very quick, just as you put the key into the lock and open it so easily. You will not have any trouble if you have the key.

Therefore, from ancient times till now, all the Truth-seekers in the East and West have laid great emphasis on having a living enlightened Master. We worship the former enlightened Masters because we respect and admire them, and hope someday we can become another Shakyamuni, Amitabha, or Jesus Christ. They have left the world and can't open the door for us. They have handed the 'key' to other enlightened Masters of the present time. If you want to open the door, you should find those who are holding the key now. They haven't passed away, so they can help you.

There is no communication between the Pure Land and the defiled land. In order to receive the communication, there must be someone to bring the 'key' from the Pure Land to us, who are now in the defiled land. The key would not come down directly from the Pure Land; even if it did, it would be lost in the dark domain in-between which we have talked about before. The supreme Buddhas' Light will be 'swallowed' in that dark world as well. If our wisdom-eye is

not opened, our wisdom won't come down to our body system below the wisdom-eye and we cannot control our actions. So, sometimes we will get angry though we do not want to; we wish to do something good but we spoil it all instead. The reason is that we do not have the true wisdom which is now blocked by the dark world.

Similarly, if we want to bring the Buddhas' Light into this world, we should have some tool to protect it, just like the wire to bring us electricity. Electricity cannot come here without the wire. We cannot get electricity unless we have something to protect and preserve it. Another example is the pipe that brings water down from the upper mountain. Without the pipe, the water would be dirty and undrinkable. So, a living Master is just like a clean, good pipe that brings clear and pure water to our house safely.

Provided we open the wisdom-eye (so-called the Buddha's eye, the Dharma-eye), we can become the Buddha. That is why the sutra says, *When the "flower (meaning the wisdom-eye)" is open, one will see the Buddha, or When one sees one's Self, one becomes the Buddha.* It is truly so simple and there is nothing. But for most people, they don't believe that it is so easy to become a Buddha. Why not? Shakyamuni told us *Buddha is in our heart.* If so, why can't we find it quickly? It is only like money put in a bag. As long as we know where the bag is, we can get the money right away. Therefore, if we know where our 'heart' is, we can find the Buddha then. Jesus Christ also said, *The Kingdom of God is within you.* If this is also wrong, then both of Them were liars. But this is

impossible. They are two great Masters! If They had deceived us, we would not have admired Them so much, even up to the present time. They and Lao Tzu are among the most famous. For two or three thousand years, They have become more and more famous. More and more people believe in Them and admire Them. This means Their teachings must be correct. Not all people are stupid; some of them have developed themselves and become enlightened, so they can tell whether what Shakyamuni and Jesus Christ said is correct or not. Had they been wrong, these people would have let us know. But for over two thousand years, so many people, so many Truth practitioners, young or old, all have admired these two Saints. It indicates that what They said is right.

At the beginning of the lecture, I told you why some of us are very intelligent and some are stupid, some are kind and some are wicked. It depends on whether the wisdom-door is opened or not and whether the Pure Land and the defiled land have communication or not. Someone may ask, “Why should we practice for enlightenment?” The reason is that since we, the small universes, are related to the outer great universe, if we are unsafe and in a mess, then the outer universe will also be the same. When we, the small universes, can become connected with the great universe and become one with it, then everything will be in harmony. This is the *All is created by the sole mind* in Buddhism, and the *I and my Father are one* as Jesus said, and the *Attainment of One* as Lao Tzu also mentioned. (Chapter 39, Tao Te Ching: *From the ancient times till now, all beings that attain ‘One’ can exist. After attaining the ‘One,’ the sky becomes serene, the land*

becomes tranquil, the deities become powerful, the valleys become rich, and all beings prosper, and the king and the noble ones become good examples to the whole country.)

So, when we practice for the Truth, it means we want to put the small universes in order and make them become our own masters. Otherwise, it will often happen that when we don't want to be angry, we can't help it, and when we want to say something soft and kind, we can't control our mouths so that what we say becomes something that hurts others. We don't mean to strike others, but our hands act faster than our wisdom; perhaps originally our wisdom won't let the hands strike others, but when our wisdom goes through the wall of the dark world, it becomes the opposite. Therefore we can't control ourselves, we lose our sovereignty.

When we can't control ourselves, then our outer world will also be in chaos. If we can, then the world will be at peace. This is the reason why we say, "All is created by the sole mind." We have often said, "When our mind is pure, then the world will be pure, too." It is not when you can control your husband that your family will become peaceful. Nor will your family be peaceful if you strike your wife and give her a lot of pressure. If you want peace, you should change yourself first, and then your wife will change. Even if your wife won't change, your own mind will not lose peace. Jesus Christ said, ***If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.*** Since there is no more hatred in your mind, and you don't feel like striking anyone else, you will have a peaceful mind and you won't feel uncomfortable about being offended.

Before commencing the spiritual practice, whenever someone struck us, we would do the same in return; but after the practice we will say, “There is the other cheek and it would be so even if you strike both.” The situations of being struck are the same, but our states of mind that decide our reactions are quite different. It is not because we have changed the world, but because we have acquired a peaceful mind. Ups and downs in the world will have no more influence upon us. We are then absolutely our own masters. Our wisdom will take over the situations whether to get angry or not. We will never be controlled by the six perceptions caused by our six physical sense organs (hearing, smelling, seeing, tasting, touching, and thinking). We will never be dominated by the dark world in-between. We can control our own body; whatever we want it to do, it will do.

Therefore Hui Neng, the Sixth Patriarch of the Zen sect, told us, “The Western Pure Land is not so far-off.” It is here. (Master points to Her wisdom-eye) If we practice a good method, we will experience that all kinds of spheres are here. (Master points to Her wisdom-eye again) We don’t need to climb so high or fly upward to reach the Western Paradise. In fact, there is no ‘where’ for us to go. That’s why we often say, “When our mind is pure, the world will be pure, too.” It is because our body, the small universe, has a lot to do with the outer great universe. Lao Tzu said, ***One who practices the Truth will know what is happening in the world even though he does not go out of his gate.*** (Chapter 47, Tao Te Ching) After one has practiced well, he, the small universe, can

communicate and become one with the outer great universe, and therefore he is everywhere at any time, he can know anything in any place.

Therefore, after one becomes a Buddha, we call him Ju Lai. Ju Lai means that he neither comes nor goes. Though he is here, he is anywhere at the same time; we call him a Buddha or Ju Lai. Not only could Shakyamuni achieve the state of Ju Lai, but also everyone of us in the modern times can. I have told you this not because others have said so, but because I personally have experienced it, and I can assure you of it.

The real situation of Ju Lai is like this. When a person who has attained the Tao (the perfect wisdom or the ultimate Truth) is sitting here, people may also see him/her elsewhere preaching to others or teaching in heavenly abodes, etc. That's why we call Buddha 'Master of Heaven and human' or 'Father of the four kinds of birth.' When you go to the Pure Land, you may see Him; when you go to hell to have a look around, you may also come across Him there. Because Ju Lai in Chinese means 'so coming, so going (omnipresence)'; no matter where you go, you may see Him. He neither comes nor goes because He is not this physical body; He and the Dharmadhatu (the universe) are one. He becomes the Reality, He and the universe are the same. There is no time or space which can separate Him from all beings because He and all beings are one and all beings can see Him at any place. He is not all beings, but He is within all beings!

If there is no communication between the Western Pure Land

and the Three Worlds, the Three Worlds will be in disorder. Similarly, if the wisdom in the upper part of our body can't communicate with the parts below our forehead, everything will also be in disorder. The situation is just like this. A landlord of a house is not at home and something is wrong with the telephone. Although the slaves and servants are in, they are not intelligent enough and are in the habit of receiving commands only. So now all of a sudden, the landlord is not in, and the telephone is out of order, and they don't know how to write a letter. Then all will be in disorder because they don't know how to put everything in order.

We often hear that when some people meditate, they can enter the state of Samadhi and travel around the world, to see what's happening in America, to see how the world has been in trouble. This is only a usual case that one's soul body goes out, and not the state of Ju Lai. They call it 'astral projection' in English. It has nothing to do with Ju Lai. These two are completely different.

Now I will explain this by some simple pictures (please refer to the third picture on the last page of this lecture). This is the drawing of a human. There are many layers of body outside the inner part, which is our original Essence, our Master, the Reality, Buddha Nature, Heaven, or our real soul, you may call it whatever you like. Our supreme Nature is now kept in bondage in the center and can't go out. But one can practice 'astral projection' to go out. It is not that he has attained the Buddha Nature, just that he uses his astral body (inside which are still other layers of body and the soul) to go out and leaves

the body of flesh behind. Our body consists of seven layers, which are called ‘the seven heavens’ in Catholicism, and in Islam they give the same explanation; these are all related to our bodies.

Therefore, astral projection is not the state of Ju Lai, or Buddha Nature. With Buddha Nature, you don’t need to go anywhere and you know what is happening everywhere by just being right here. You still eat, sleep, walk, and talk, but you are everywhere and you know everything. For example, although I am sitting here, perhaps someone in Taipei will see me there, whether he is meditating or not. (This depends on his level in practice) When he needs help, my radiant form will come to his aid. This is different from astral projection, which means you have to take other layers of body besides your flesh body with you. You take them to many places and then come back to your flesh body with them – as if you put on the clothes on the wall or open the door to come home. The house is still there. It’s similar to when you take all the baggage with you to travel and afterward bring back all the baggage, money and everything else.

This is not the condition of Ju Lai. A Ju Lai appears everywhere not only when he is meditating; he is simply everywhere. Although the physical body is walking, eating, sleeping, preaching, or doing any other daily routine, he is at the same time in every place and solves any problem. He can help all sentient beings, including his disciples.

The same condition is expressed in Pu-men Pin (the Chapter of

the Universal Door in the Lotus Sutra). What does ‘Pu’ mean? It means ‘universal,’ like universal salvation. ‘Men’ means the door, the method for enlightenment. What Shakyamuni meant in this chapter was, after practicing the Quan Yin Method we can be everywhere and know everything; we can become Ju Lai. We ourselves become the ‘Universal Door’; we become Quan Yin Bodhisattva (Avalokitesvara or the Goddess of Mercy). Whenever any sentient being in any place asks for help, we can immediately see and hear him and come to his help. We see and hear with our wisdom-eye, which should not be confused with the deva-eye or the deva-ear (celestial ear). These are neither ‘Pu-men’ nor the level of Ju Lai. A Ju Lai knows everything in the universe by his Buddha Nature, so we say he is ‘Pu’ (universal). If we practice the Quan Yin Method, we can also become ‘Quan Yin.’ Therefore we call this method ‘Pu-men,’ the ‘Universal Door.’

“Pu-men Pin” speaks of the method of liberating sentient beings universally; it tells us how to become like Avalokitesvara, but it is only an introduction and does not tell us about the method itself. When we realize the true meaning of ‘Avalokitesvara’ (Quan Yin), we will become ‘Quan Yin.’ We often recite the name of ‘Quan Yin’ but in fact this is not Her real name. Her name can be heard only with the special hearing because ***The name which can be described is not the real Name***, which means we can’t explain the Name in worldly language. Her real name is not ‘Quan Yin’; this you would not know until you practice the Quan Yin Method. All that can be described or written down in language are not the real “Name.”

Since ancient times all enlightened Masters have described the same thing. We don't need to argue about the differences of the names. All we need to do is to take good care of ourselves, be good persons, and follow their doctrines. We don't need to quarrel over which Tao (the Truth, the Path) is better because we ourselves don't even understand what the Tao really is. Therefore, don't say which religion is better, because we don't really know about other religions. ***When the Tao can be described in the common language, it is not the eternal Tao.*** We can talk about it only when we really find it; before that we are still the ignorant and can only guess wildly and thus create karmic hindrance of speech. Only after realizing the Tao will we really understand what is good and what is bad. Before that we had better keep quiet, as Lao Tzu also said, ***Those who know don't talk, and those who talk don't know.*** (Tao Te Ching, Chapter 56)

Therefore we can be sure that one doesn't really know what the Tao is if he likes arguing about what the Tao should be. How can the Tao possibly be talked about? While I give you the transmission of the Method, I don't talk either. What I am talking about is not yet the transmission, but just an introduction of the Method to let you know a little bit about your inner Nature. This is not any actual experience. The actual experience still belongs to me alone; only I myself know it and you don't, yet.

The Tao which can be described is not the real Tao; the name which can be spoken of is not the real Name. From this we know 'Quan Yin' is not Quan Yin Bodhisattva's real name.

Her real name is most beautiful and ‘surpasses all the sounds of the world.’ It is the sweet Sound which can’t be heard with the ears of ordinary people. So, ‘Pu-men Pin’ (the Chapter of the Universal Door in the Lotus Sutra) is not Pu-men ‘method’ (the universal method). One can obtain the universal ‘method’ only through transmission by an enlightened Master. ‘Pu-men Pin’ is just an introduction of the experiences some people acquired with the Pu-men ‘method.’

Today, someone told me that all the beautiful sights described in the Amitabha Sutra meant nothing to him and he didn’t care to go there at all. We know that a part of this sutra introduces the Western Pure Land, saying that the earth there is made of gold, the leaves on the trees are made of jewels, and the songs of birds are wonderful, and the eight virtues water, the lotus blooms of different colors radiating different wondrous Light, and so forth. But I agree with him. If these are all there are in the Amitabha Land, I have no desire to be there, either. Whether the ground is of gold or earth has nothing to do with me. I don’t even desire gold or jewels in this world, so why should I desire those in the Pure Land? Therefore we should understand clearly that we go to the Pure Land not because we are desirous of those precious jewels or the beautiful sights there. That Shakyamuni Buddha introduced this Pure Land was for people to recognize it when they reach there. Decidedly we do not practice the self-cultivation with such a ‘low’ motive as to desire those wonderful objects of the Western Pure Land.

When we reach the Western Pure Land, we will become very

happy and very useful beings, useful both to ourselves and to the whole world. We will have great Power to release all beings from suffering; we will become Quan Yin Bodhisattva, Ta Shih Tzu Bodhisattva, and the infinite Light Amitabha Buddha. That's why we should practice, in order to reach these levels, and not because of the desire for the beautiful sights of the Western Pure Land.

Naturally, the Buddha's Lands are all significantly magnificent and it's not possible that when we reach there, we will still see the temples or palaces made of earth or straw, (Laughter) or any dirty sight like the marketplaces in our world. That world is magnificent, beautiful, tidy, wonderful and brilliant, with still many other marvelous things. Although Shakyamuni did mention something about it, it is not enough. How could we use human language to describe the Pure Land, Heaven? But since He described a little part of it, people can understand a little more.

However, in fact, all these were not described by Buddha. It was the experiences of one of His disciples during meditation. Buddha took this disciple up to the Pure Land during her meditation, and after coming back she put down all the sights she had seen. Amitabha Sutra is not Buddha's preaching in this world. It was a direct experience of Buddha's disciple.

If you have read another Buddhist sutra related to Amitabha, the Quan Wu Liang Show Ching (the sutra of Infinite Life), you will know that Queen Vaidehi saw the Western Pure Land because Shakyamuni took her there by His 'transcendental

body.' Truth-practitioners all know that this is not the sphere for one to experience if one's soul has not reached that high level. It is not a level of ordinary people. Since Queen Vaidehi had reached a high level in practice, during meditation she could go there with Buddha's transcendental body and afterwards she wrote down the experience. Some people hold the view that Buddha flew in person to the jail to teach her this sutra, but I am afraid this is not logical. There are two reasons. First, because Shakyamuni Buddha had endless transcendental bodies, He didn't need to go everywhere in person. (Also one should consider the impossibility of breaking through the walls of the jail!) Second, Buddha had so many students, so He didn't have that much leisure to come up to all of them in person.

This is what I meant when I said a Ju Lai is everywhere. If we are sincere enough, we will see our Master's radiant form (transcendental body, Ju Lai). According to the levels we have reached, the Master in her radiant body will take us to the world we deserve. This is the way in which the Amitabha Sutra came; Buddha took His disciple to the Pure Land and the disciple wrote down all the experiences after coming back. It is a kind of practicing diary.

For example, after initiation you write down what you have personally experienced or seen. You may write down something like this: One day when Master Ching Hai was teaching the Quan Yin Method, also called the Pure Land Method, I saw Amitabha Buddha and many views in the Pure Land, like the seven-treasure pool, the eight virtues water, and so on. You wrote down all of these. Then some time after,

someone who doesn't practice this method may happen to read what you have written, but it doesn't mean anything to him because he doesn't know what the eight virtues water is like just from your words. The eight virtues water is really a very beautiful thing. It's really the happiest time when we touch the Pure Land, which is not for the ordinary people to experience. It means you have already a higher inner level; you become a Bodhisattva (Saint), which is good for yourself and for all beings because you are then very powerful and can come to anyone's rescue easily.

Therefore, we practice to reach the Pure Land not because we are desirous of the beauty of it, but because when we reach it, it means we have attained the position of the Bodhisattva, and that's what we need. When we have the qualifications of a Bodhisattva, certainly our souls will live in a solemn place. For example, after you graduate from a university and become a doctor, will you still live in a small, dark room like before? Since you are a doctor now, of course you will live in a better, cleaner place which will be suitable for your position. Although you study medicine for the people, for the patients and not for the beautiful house, nevertheless you will have a good house naturally afterwards.

For example, after I transmit the Life Impulse (Dharma lineage), someone may write down all the beautiful sights of the Western Pure Land which he himself has seen during initiation. For other people, what he has recorded does not mean anything, but it means much to him when he sees it. He feels comfortable, happy, easy; and his wisdom greatly develops because he has reached a different mental state, he

has attained a higher level. It's all this that means a lot to him. It's not because he can see it, but because the great change that took place for his betterment. But, since others haven't experienced it, they cannot understand why it means so much to him. Only he himself has changed. One will feel very happy and will acquire much supernatural power and much wisdom when one sees the Western Pure Land. If we only read another's diary about another's own experience, certainly it doesn't mean much to us. Similarly, we don't feel anything special when we read the description about the Western Pure Land because we haven't experienced that level, we haven't seen it ourselves.

For example, someone may say that during initiation he saw 'Quan Yin' (Avalokitesvara, the Goddess of Mercy), but probably someone else who hears this will ask, "Does it mean anything for you to see Her?" For the second person it makes no difference, but the first one may add that there is more than just to meet the eyes; besides the Goddess he also saw the beautiful palaces where She lived in. "All my body and consciousness were changed when I saw Her!" The state is beyond his description. It is not only seeing Quan Yin Bodhisattva, that is all; but also his entire body and consciousness are changed when he sees Her. His wisdom is also not the same as before. It's this inner change that is the most pleasant thing to him.

Because his wisdom reveals, he feels happy; because the flower of wisdom is blooming and he realizes eternal life, he feels so exalted. When one sees the Buddha, one gains eternal

life. Eternal life means no birth, no death and the release from the bondage of all matters, from all suffering. The situation to recognize the Buddha Nature and become a Buddha is also the same. Not that we want to acquire the Buddha Nature, but that we want to become a Buddha. Why do we want to become a Buddha? Because we want to have wisdom and power to help the suffering beings; we then are able to understand their suffering because formerly we were one of them, and now we have the power to help them. Don't we feel joy then? If we feel this is our responsibility, then we have a right view and we can become the Buddha. We should look at Buddha, at Avalokitesvara and follow Buddha's teachings.

We want to become a Buddha not because we are desirous of the beautiful Pure Land, the supreme position, the supernatural power or the great wisdom, but rather because we want to be a good citizen or a tool of the universe to bring peace between the great universe and small universes, for we see the world is in a mess and people are killing each other. Human beings should be the noblest in the world, but most of them waste their time in eating, drinking, playing, and fooling around. Every day they repeatedly work, eat, sleep, and then die. What is the meaning of their lives?

But life, in fact, is not so easy even. The lives of many people are full of suffering, quarrels, struggles, disagreement between husband and wife; we see bankruptcy, killing, and accusation everywhere. Everyone is under the control of birth, old age, disease and death. No one can just eat, drink, fool around comfortably all his life and pass away happily. If we could, then life would be very nice and no one would want to seek

release from its bond. In reality, birth, old age, disease and death control us. The lives of human beings are almost the same as those of animals: animals eat, sleep, and raise their children, too. Although we are more intelligent than they are, the difference is not much, because we haven't developed ourselves. It's really a pity we waste the time of one hundred years!

If we make the most of the one hundred years to develop ourselves for the ultimate Truth, we can become the Bodhisattvas. All the universe will belong to us. We can do whatever we want to help others and go to any place easily without any plane tickets. Of course you still need a ticket for your physical body to board a plane. Even if I have supernatural power (only an assumption) and can fly in the sky, can fly to you, and fly to other disciples in other places, I don't think I can live long, because someone would regard me as a bird and shoot me down with his gun. (Laughter)

So, supernatural power is not very useful. You can be any place even if you don't use supernatural power; though your body is here, your transcendental bodies will be everywhere. That is why we say Shakyamuni is a Ju Lai and had endless manifestations (radiant forms or transcendental bodies). He is different from 'Suen Wu Kong' (the great monkey in an ancient Chinese legend 'The Journey to the West'), who needed to pull up some hairs and then blew out a mouthful of air on them and changed them into many more 'Suen Wu Kongs.' This doesn't mean Suen could have endless transcendental bodies (radiant forms). It was just a kind of

magic power. Those ‘Suens’ transformed from his hairs would disappear in two or three minutes and become hairs again. These are not endless radiant bodies. Don’t be confused.

Endless transcendental bodies means ‘so coming, and so going.’ His body is here, but he also appears everywhere and knows everything. He doesn’t need to do anything special and just eats, sleeps, talks as ordinary people do. Do you want to be a Suen or Ju Lai? Of course, only Buddhahood is eternal and never-ending, while Suen is still within the Three Worlds and can’t go out of the control of the ‘Buddha’s palm.’

After you become a Buddha, it doesn’t mean you don’t need to eat or sleep any more. A Buddha’s appearance still looks like that of an ordinary person, also eating, sleeping, and working. But while he is doing these things, or when he is talking or meditating, he is also helping all beings spontaneously. On the other hand, when an ordinary person is eating or sleeping, he doesn’t do any good to anyone else. One doesn’t do any real good to oneself, let alone to others!

So, after you become a Buddha, you look the same as ordinary people, but in reality you are different. A Buddha eats, sleeps, or works, but at the same time he is doing a lot of invisible work which we can’t see. While we engage in all the daily routines, we just do them, and nothing else. Our bodies are here and can’t have endless transcendental bodies, ‘so coming and so going.’ We are not Quan Yin Bodhisattva and cannot liberate sentient beings universally. This is the difference between Bodhisattvas and ordinary people; otherwise there’s

nothing to say about them! Anyone can become Ju Lai. As long as he knows the key, he opens the door, and tries hard to develop himself. Shakyamuni practiced for six years, and Hui Neng (the Sixth Patriarch of Buddhist Zen sect) practiced for sixteen years. At last they reached Buddhahood, and we will achieve the same if we take the time and trouble to do so.

Shakyamuni said, *All beings have Buddha Nature*. This means animals also have it. Then why can't they become the Buddha, and only human beings can? It's because we have 'consciousness' and 'subconsciousness' to judge things, we have a high degree of judgement and wisdom. Animals also can judge things, but they can only tell what is dangerous, and where they can get food to eat or water to drink. They may have sharp noses, but they don't know how to tell virtues from evils. They don't know right from wrong, but a human does. We may choose Heaven, hell or the world. But since not everyone of us has the same high degree of wisdom, some will go to hell though he chooses Heaven, and some take the wrong paths instead of the freedom from the bond of births, deaths and rebirths.

Therefore, if we ourselves don't know the Way, we should seek an enlightened person to lead us in the beginning, and then we must go forward ourselves. We must become enlightened people and enlightened Masters by ourselves because we ourselves are our own wise 'masters.' Just as anyone can become a doctor if he is instructed by a qualified doctor, the way to become a Buddha is also the same.

Therefore Shakyamuni Buddha said, *All beings have Buddha Nature*. We can also become Buddhas in this life. Buddha was not wrong; this is really true. I have enough personal experiences to assure you that what Buddha said is true. Even if you can't become a Buddha in this lifetime, at least you can become a Bodhisattva, the highest Bodhisattva. This I can assure you. I am not a 'Bodhisattva,' but I can 'make' Bodhisattvas. It's just as a man is not a car, but he can make a car. If you want to become a Bodhisattva, I will tell you 'how' next time, when I come here again.

Q: *If a person develops himself and becomes a Buddha, is he the same Buddha as Shakyamuni or a different one?*

M: They reach the same level. But they are neither one, nor two.

Q: *If a person doesn't receive initiation, nor does he cultivate himself for enlightenment, is it possible for him to hear the mysterious Sound? If so, how can he tell which is true, which is false?*

M: It's possible, but it's not the real Sound, and he can't hear it any time he wishes, nor will he know what kind of world the sound represents.

But my method is complete. It can tell right from wrong, and it has protective power. You won't have any obstacles from Maya to disturb you, and the more you practice, the higher level you will reach.

Anyone who practices the Quan Yin Method will hear the inner Sound and see the inner states at any time. If he cannot

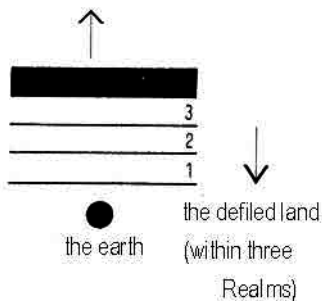
continue to see the states everyday, then they are not the true inner states. The true inner states which come today will appear again tomorrow. For example, this temple is here and real, not just a vision, so whenever we come, we can see it. If it only comes from our dreams or imagination, we cannot see it every day.

An enlightened Master knows what kind of inner Sound you will hear at a certain level. After he gives you initiation, you can hear it at any time every day. The initiation assures that you can hear the inner Sound, and if you continue to practice hard, your level will become higher and higher. From what you hear, you will know what kind of level you have reached. Before initiation the Master will explain clearly what kind of level it is when you hear a certain Sound. It's just like a map which directs you with signs and you will know the place when you get there.

Therefore, human lives are very precious. I would not give initiation to a dog because the Buddha Nature it has is too little to know how to make use of the Method, even if I gave it the transmission. But we human beings can. We can understand the Master's language and follow Her instruction. Even if we don't, it doesn't matter, because our 'sub-consciousness' can. When I keep silent, I still can give you initiation. Talking is just the introduction before initiation. We leave out talking and you just do as I do, and that's enough; you get the Method without my any word or any motion because the Ultimate Truth doesn't have a 'real form.' The 'Truth without form' that the Sixth Patriarch Hui Neng transmitted is just the same as what I transmit!

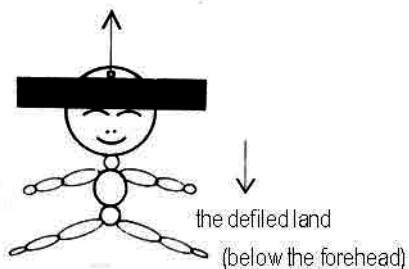
what I transmit!

the Pure Land (above three Realms)

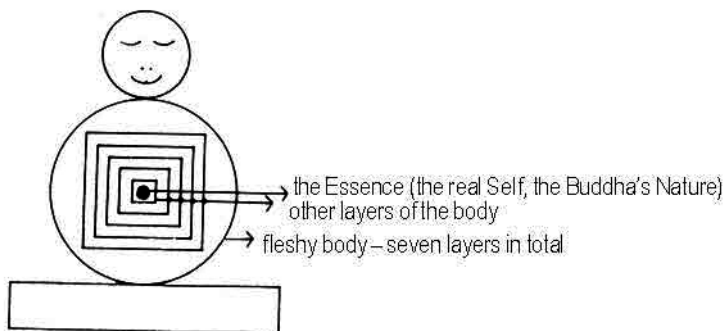


Picture 1

the Pure Land (above the forehead)



Picture 2



Picture 3

Remarks: "Illustration is given only to let people easier understand the Essence, which originally can't be explained in language." – the Master



Asura

Spoken by Supreme Master Ching Hai
March 13, 1987
Taipei, Formosa
(Originally in Chinese)

It has been a long time since I saw you last. Today I want to talk about the situation of Asura (spirits of one of the six directions of existence). Would you like to listen to it?

In Formosa many people teach others meditation or mudras (secret gestures) or things like that. It is said that in the beginning of the practice the students could experience something, but later on they met with a lot of trouble, with many of them becoming possessed. Therefore, many people have come to ask me about this. They said those ‘teachers’ seem to have a certain magic power and they teach others to jump here and there and do some topsy-turvy things. Some people are curious about it and like it because they have never had a chance to learn mudras (secret gestures) before and there they can learn them, or at least they can learn to hop in the air with their bodies shaking. But after some time these students all meet with a lot of trouble. Many of them came to

ask me about this and complained about it, but many others still believe in this kind of thing. Therefore, I will talk about this today. It will be really interesting.

This happens not only in Formosa, but also in Germany. When I was in Germany, I met many cases like this. Those people didn't follow the real Masters. They heard some inner sound all day long, not the real wonderful supra-worldly Sound but some noisy talking which lingered around their ears that they were not able to eat well or sleep well. They were so disturbed that they became weak and nervous. In fact it was nothing mysterious. The noisy sounds came from the beings of the low-level Asura world.

When we die, we can't go to Heaven if we don't have great merit from the practice for the Truth. Some blessed reward may enable us to become the devas (*heavenly being still belonging to the Three Worlds), but only one with great merit can become a Bodhisattva, with very few able to reach Buddhahood. But this is not our topic today. Those who don't have much blessed reward but don't create heavy karmic hindrance will not go to hell or become the wandering ghosts after death. Instead, they become the low-level beings – Asura, living in a place which is nearest to the Earth. A little further is the heaven (not the Kingdom of God).

The Asura world is divided into two planes. One is 'heaven,' and the other is 'hell.' Both planes are in the Asura world. Those who are in 'hell' don't have any freedom, like prisoners in jail. While those in 'heaven' enjoy much freedom and

can come and go as they please. They also have some magic power. They like fighting, making fun of others, and bringing much trouble to human beings. They tell human beings to do this and that but in fact, sometimes, they just want to fool around with people or have fun with them and mean no harm.

Some people's souls – or 'masters' – are more sensitive. Sometimes when their souls leave their bodies, Asura beings will come to occupy their bodies for a while, maybe with the intention to use their bodies to do something bad or to enjoy the worldly pleasures. Sometimes one's body can be occupied by many such beings, then we say one is possessed. We can hear him speak in many different voices which don't belong to the person himself. Sometimes it's not what he wants to say, but he just loses control of his mouth. He would make a variety of sounds because there are many Asura beings staying in his body at that time, talking and doing just what they please, and the person can't help it.

Some Asura beings who are not so malicious will simply leave after having had enough fun with us. In this case the possessed person won't be hurt much. But some Asura beings are greedy. They like the human body and want to own it forever, so they won't go away once they have occupied it. They enter the human's body just as if people move in an unoccupied house and won't leave even if they are forced to.

Those who don't practice the right method, don't follow a good Master to get the protective power, and have more sensitive souls will easily come across those low-level

Asura beings. When they enter your body, you don't notice it immediately. Sometimes you just hear someone talking in your ears but you cannot see anyone around. Sometimes you may see them. It depends on how sensitive you are. Some people who can see the devils can also see the Asura beings approaching.

When Asura beings come up to you, they won't let you see their true forms. They also have some magic power, so they will transform themselves into some divine images, like Shakyamuni Buddha or Amitabha Buddha. They can even change into my image. However, Truth-practitioners who have the guidance of a perfect Master can tell them apart right away.

For example, when an Asura being changes into my radiant form and talks to you, if you are my disciples, you will be able to tell immediately whether it's my manifestation or the transformation of an Asura being. But if you haven't followed me to practice or don't have the guidance of an enlightened Master, you will be deceived into believing that they are the real Amitabha Buddha, Jesus Christ, Avalokitesvara (Quan Yin Bodhisattva) or other Buddhas and you will prostrate yourself before them. Then you will do whatever they charge you to do, which often are some topsy-turvy things. Then they may also instruct you to teach other people, to give others initiation, and to do some hand mudras (secret gestures) and hop around excitedly. Sometimes you will hear some voices talking inside you telling you to do something, mostly useless things. Although the 'phony Buddhas' can foretell some trifles, most of what they say is false and wrong. For example, they might

tell you something will happen tomorrow, but actually it does not. Perhaps only one percent of what they say will come true.

When those spirits come up to you, the real Truth-practitioners will detect it, but the non-Truth-practitioners won't. When these Asura beings occupy our body or stay in us temporarily, they will ask us to do many things or even to fight with others.

Eight months ago when I was in Germany I stayed in a temple, where I knew of an Aulacese woman who was disturbed by a noise all day long. Those demons spoke ill of her son and daughter-in-law and told her that they both did not treat her well enough, but actually it was not the case. Those evil spirits did it on purpose in order to provoke disharmony. Later they also told her to fight with others at the place where she worked or even to wield a knife and run after others, attempting to kill them. Although she never killed anyone, she caused a panic around her and finally she was fired. Nor could she stay peacefully at home, often having quarrels with her son and daughter-in-law as she was suspicious of them. In fact she suspected everyone because those Asura beings would tell her that no one was good toward her and such and such a person would come to attack her in five minutes or would do something bad to her in two hours or so. Like this from time to time the possessed woman was provoked, convinced, and then fought with others, although all the things the evil spirits said were untrue.

Those Asura beings enjoy making people quarrel because their nature is such that they like fighting. People who like fighting

when they are alive will be led to the direction of Asura after death, where they will continue to keep this bad quality. They make use of those sensitive people, who have poor wisdom and thus are apt to believe others, to fight with each other. Then these Asura beings will laugh and amuse themselves.

Sometimes they change into the image of Shakyamuni Buddha, Quan Yin Bodhisattva, Chi Kung (a past believed Buddha in China) or other small gods to deceive people. They will say that they are such and such gods who have come to teach human beings, charging the person to worship them. They also preach some ‘sermons,’ which sometimes also make sense because they have learned some before. Well, if human beings can learn, why can’t they? They may first listen to others preaching and then repeat that again to others, telling the listeners to worship them or make offerings to them. At times they will ask people to marry more and more wives because they love enjoying sex. But they themselves don’t have the human’s body to enjoy it, so they tell the possessed person to have more women, or to eat meat or something special, and then they use the person’s body to enjoy all those things they like.

Those who smoke or drink are also under the influence of Asura beings. Truth practitioners who have their wisdom-eye opened can see that those who smoke, take drugs, gamble, or drink are surrounded by a host of invisible Asura beings. Even just the smell of cigarettes makes them pleased. They can’t smoke, drink, gamble, or take drugs because they don’t have the body and therefore they make use of those sensitive and weak-willed people, and urge them to do these things.

The more these people drink, the more they want to drink, because the Asura beings who surround them will bring more and more Asura beings to share it. The more Asura beings there are, the more the possessed person must drink. That's why it is not so easy for a hard drinker to get rid of the habit. This is also true with those who smoke, take drugs, gamble, and so on. In Chinese we call them the 'gambling ghost' or the 'drinking ghost.' I think this is not merely a joking matter or a common prejudice, but a very realistic simile.

However, those who practice the Method of Quan Yin can break off the bad habit very quickly. Otherwise it's not so easy. I have many students here who smoked before; actually only some, not many, as not so many smokers want to seek after the Truth. Several of them originally smoked three or four packs of cigarettes a day, but after the initiation they quit smoking right away. One of them is here in the lecture hall but I don't want to show you where because perhaps he doesn't like it to be known. Not only does he himself not smoke any more, but his friends have also been influenced by him and have stopped smoking.

It is also the same with drinking. There was someone who had been drinking for the past fifty years of his life, and after initiation he gave it up at once. After practicing the Quan Yin Method he got rid of the smoking, drinking, and eating meat naturally, immediately and completely. This surprised his friends greatly and they wondered why he had changed so much. They could hardly believe it. But this is a modern true story, not an ancient legend.

Do you believe that drinking comes from the influence of Asura beings? Can anyone of you here see this situation? We are under their influences because some of them are evil, some mischievous and others are fond of drinking or smoking. We ourselves might know which kind of Asura is coming into us.

There are people who aren't good in practice, who don't practice the right method, or who practice without a correct purpose; they practice, but they themselves aren't pure enough. For example, they do the practice only with the aim to get more fame, wealth and some supernatural power; or they can not get rid of their desires and are still attached to eating meat, drinking, indulging in sex, etc. If it is too much, Asura beings will take advantage of their bodies to do wrong things. These are the worst Asura. The worst Asura will make them quarrel with others. The bad kind of Asura only make us drink, smoke, and so on.

Asura beings make use of not only Truth-practitioners, but also the ordinary people. The worst Asura beings like best those who don't lead a pure practice or practice for impure purposes, while the smaller Asura beings only make those who are sensitive or have less willpower get addicted to smoking, drinking, or taking drugs, which ruins their bodies and spirits. These are the really pitiable people because although they don't like and don't do these things, their bodies are used by other beings due to their own weakness.

This situation happens so often that you will get trapped in trouble if you are not careful enough; those Asura beings will

make you believe that they are the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas. Originally we humans have the intelligence to judge it. We will doubt: “Why would a Buddha want to enjoy those bad things? Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are supposed to be the noblest, wisest and most merciful. Why would they like to have many wives, to eat animal flesh and drink?” At this point, however, the Asura beings will try using their big reasons to convince us; and since our bodies are occupied by them, we will believe them. Once we are controlled, we can’t go away and we will do whatever they say. Then we lose our own rights and we become weaker and weaker, losing our own abilities by and by until we have to depend on them completely. We don’t seem to be existing any longer, and then we ourselves become Asura beings!

If our master is not in our body, then the body will no longer be of any use to us. We call it our ‘master,’ our ‘soul,’ our ‘original face’ or ‘wisdom.’ Without this ‘master’ or ‘soul,’ our body is no longer ours to use; it becomes the instrument of Asura beings.

The world is full of Asura beings and other beings, which you can see if your wisdom-eye is open. There are many beings other than you, like devas and Asura beings, who are also here listening to my lecture. It’s not only my physical body, but also my inner Master, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas who are giving you the lecture. You can’t see all these because your wisdom-eye is not yet opened. Therefore you may think that only you human beings are here.

There are so many Asura beings, ghosts and devils in this world. Not ‘everyone’ you see is a human being. But you can’t tell who is what as your wisdom-eye is not opened yet. Once you can see all these, you might get frightened because you will come to know which person is no longer a human being.

Sometimes Asura beings not only disturb us directly but also make use of our family to trouble us. For example, when we want to practice, they may try to interfere with us and if they cannot succeed in this way, they will try to use our family members to disturb us and obstruct us from practicing. All of these are due to the influence of Asura. Even those high-level Asura beings still belong to the Three Worlds. I don’t want to call it ‘the heaven where there is neither thinking process nor non-thinking process’ or other Buddhist terms. It’s too complicated. I want to make it simple, so I just say the First World, the Second World, the Third World, and so on. It would be easier for you to understand.

The First World is full of Asura beings, and the Second World is for people who have greater knowledge and more good deeds when they are still alive. In the Second World there are still many, many different planes, the statements of which you can find in Buddhist sutras, so I don’t want to waste your time here. If you like to know the names of the spheres, you may look them up in those dictionaries of Buddhist terminology, or Buddhist sutras.

Since in the Second World there are many different levels, some beings in this world are not so friendly, who will trouble

us when we practice to reach a higher level, like the level of the Second World. They are mightier than Asura, so the disturbance they make is also greater. It's difficult to reach the Second World, but it's even more difficult to see Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, as all the gates along the path are blocked by many troublesome beings who won't let us pass.

Of course, Asura beings also have some supernatural power. They may lend us the power of the 'devas-eye' (divine sight, unlimited vision). They have this ability because they have no physical body and therefore are not bound by it and are more free than we are; they can fly freely and fast. They can see invisible beings because they themselves are invisible, too. They can see more clearly than we do, so sometimes they can read what is in people's mind and foretell a couple of things. But this is useless. If someday they go away, we will go back to be the same as we were before, knowing nothing special, or even will become more stupid, weaker than before because we will have forgotten how to use this physical body again. Each time they want to use our body, they push our soul aside as if we were dead; our soul stands beside and knows what is happening but we can't control it because our bodies are under their control.

Just now I said that many sensitive people are controlled by evil spirits because they are more ignorant and they easily believe others. Certainly these people will be used by Asura. Another kind of person who will be used by Asura is, the Truth practitioners who don't have a good Master to guide them, who don't have a good method to protect them, or whose

motive for practice is impure. They aim at supernatural power so that they can earn fame, wealth and admiration, etc. Asura beings will be happy about this. They will make use of these people's greed and show them some supernatural power to make them believe that they are Buddhas or Bodhisattvas coming to teach human beings. They will say, "I've come to teach you because I saw how much you like to practice for the Truth." They also preach, tell you many things, and take you to some false spheres to have fun.

So, the most important thing for the Truth practice is that we should have a noble ideal. A noble ideal means to seek our own liberation as well as other sentient beings' liberation from the circle of birth and death. Besides such a noble and pure goal, a safe and right practice requires the highest method and a highest enlightened Master. It's not just counting the breaths that is the practice, this is only an elementary technique.

As I've just mentioned, a practitioner who desires supernatural power will be taken in by the 'Buddha' which is the disguise of Asura beings and be taken to such false spheres like the false 'Western Paradise.' Asura beings have the ability of imagination, especially those having more blessed reward, who can create false spheres. They imitate a little part of the Western Paradise to let that person have a look around. As the ordinary person who hasn't been to the real Western Paradise, he doesn't know if what he sees is true or false. It's just as if we are hypnotized or we get drunk. We agree to whatever others say, not having our own wisdom and brains to judge. We are unconscious of whether what we see is a Buddha or not and

we prostrate ourselves before him, or we don't even dare to go near him for fear that it might be a disrespectful thing to the Buddha. Then how can we tell them apart?

The false Buddha will say, "You are a Buddha now (or a Bodhisattva, an Arhant, etc.) and you have a mission to teach others." They will teach us a method and tell us what to do. Therefore, we see that so many so-called 'masters' nowadays also can make people feel some 'response.' These people feel themselves jumping, shaking, or doing some hand mudras (secret gestures). They can hear some voices in their ears or they can foretell what will happen tomorrow or the day after tomorrow. Asura beings can cure people of some diseases, but only the minor ones, because their power is limited. However, people then believe them more and more and will do whatever they say.

Sometimes Asura will make a UFO and give us a ride to go around. We then think they are from some heaven, but in fact it's only Asura beings with the UFO which carries us to the Asura world. Since that world is also very beautiful, we will easily mistake it for Heaven or Nirvana once we are there. We are unable to discern. Their world is hundreds of times more beautiful than ours, with the females there very, very pretty. Therefore, if we don't have a real Master to guide us, we will be lost, whether we get there by ourselves or Asura take us there. When we see the beautiful scenes, we will feel that that world is really wonderful and once we believe in them, they will lead us there after we die.

If we don't have any blessed reward when we are alive, we will go to hell immediately after death. Those having a little blessed reward may go to 'the first-class hell,' the heaven in the Asura world. 'The second-class hell' is the real hell, but actually both of them are hells as they are still in the Asura world. Even in the world of Asura, we may have a very long life-span, say up to one thousand or two thousand years, or even millions of years. This will make us feel that it's the ultimate world, the eternal land or the Western Paradise, not knowing there are still higher worlds.

Some people think that they have reached Buddhahood after practicing for a period of time, saying, "All the Buddhas have come to teach me," but in fact it's not so easy to see a Buddha. We must practice very hard with a very sincere, pure heart, so pure that it's like a transparent gem without the slightest impurity. But even though you do sincerely want to practice for liberation, for perfect wisdom in order to liberate sentient beings, you still should find a real enlightened Master first. Only after following him or her to practice for many years will you possibly see one or two Buddhas. Some people think that it's easy to achieve the practice because they can see 'Buddhas' any time they wish. Maybe they think that they are more particular, but this is impossible.

Even if we want to become a doctor in this world, we must spend a long time studying hard in order to succeed. If we want to be a teacher, we have to study with some other teachers for many years until we will have enough knowledge and experience to become a qualified teacher. No matter what

you learn, you have to work hard for a long time. It's not easy even just to learn worldly knowledge, let alone learning to become a Buddha. So how can some people think they will achieve so quickly? These kinds of people think that the laws of the universe have nothing to do with them, but they are wrong. All beings in the world, no matter what, have to follow the laws of the world. Even Shakyamuni Buddha was no exception.

That's why Shakyamuni Buddha said that we, from the Buddhas to sentient beings, all benefit from the four benefactors: Motherland and the government thereof, parents, spouses and friends, and teachers. As long as we are living on the Earth, no matter if we are the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas or sentient beings, we are indebted to the four benefactors. A Truth-practitioner is no exception. We should assume a grateful attitude, we should respect the laws on the Earth; otherwise we only ask for trouble.

Both Shakyamuni Buddha and Jesus Christ taught us to put 'virtues' in the first place above all other things. Without virtues or compassion, one is not qualified to do any practice; even if he practices he will only become a 'Buddha without virtue.' Such kind of people are already not welcomed in this world, so how is it possible that they can be admitted into the Western Paradise and become the Bodhisattvas of 'no virtue'? In the Surangama Sutra it's said clearly that a Truth-practitioner who eats meat or drinks will only be a Maya king (prince of darkness) at most. He will not be any kind of Bodhisattva.

This is just one of the many examples. People who follow a bad practice think they are higher than the laws of the universe and so it's all right for them to eat meat of other beings, to have however many husbands or wives, to tell lies, cheat others, to collect a lot of offerings. They claim to have achieved Buddhahood and that their fruition is higher than the law of the universe.

Even if you've reached liberation you still have to abide by the commandments strictly. Only when you respect the laws can you achieve eternal liberation. Even when a Buddha or Bodhisattva loses his mind for the Truth or virtue, he will fall down again. For example, a president is the highest representative of the country; but if he commits a crime, won't he be arrested by the police, judged by the laws, and put in jail? He can't do whatever he wants just because he is the president. Such is also the case with Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

Sometimes because of your personal situation, you can't keep the vegan diet, or you can't live up to the rules of practice because you think you are only an ordinary person. In such case I can understand your situation, because you don't do it on purpose. Still you can't avoid the karmic hindrance you have thus created. Whether you mean it or not, the law of karma is that every cause will bear an effect. Reasons such as your husband or wife being against your practice and therefore not wanting to cook vegan food for you or there being no place for you to eat vegan food, etc. are understandable because they do happen.

However, some people who eat meat, drink wine, indulge their passion, etc. still think they are the Buddhas. This is not possible. The people I've just mentioned still must confess that they are not successful practitioners because they can't keep a strict vegan diet or live up to the rules due to their family conditions or their work. At the same time other people think they can eat anything and do whatever they wish. They indulge in sex, they kill, eat meat, drink wine, steal, cheat, and do all kinds of these things, but they still think they are Buddhas. How can there be these kind of Buddhas? We don't even welcome them, let alone worship them as 'Buddhas' and respect them as our 'masters'! It would be truly illogical.

Many people have claimed that they themselves are the Truth-practitioners, but hardly any of them have become a Buddha. It is because they don't really understand the laws of the universe and are taken in by Asura beings who say, "I am such and such Buddha coming to teach you. Now you have reached Buddhahood, you don't need to care about those trifling things any more. In practicing for the ultimate Truth you must not be so clinging." They will talk to us in this way in order to let us think that we ourselves are great, that our level is already so high that we don't have to care about the laws of the universe. It will be really troublesome if we do think this way. Therefore, a Truth-seeker without enough wisdom is easily deceived and can't escape from Maya's obstruction, which is very big. He will not be able to get away even if he wants to. The evil spirits will pull him back and put a big 'stone' in his way to block him from twisting free.

The guidance of a good Master, a living enlightened Master is absolutely necessary because, firstly, he or she will teach us the basic rules and ethical conduct required for the practice. He or she will tell us to have a very pure heart, a noble ideal, so that we won't go astray and be deceived by evil spirits.

Secondly, when we see our inner Master during meditation, we will recognize her because we have known her already. Her radiant form will appear to us, looking the same as her physical body. When we don't have a present Master and we see any of the past masters during our meditation appearing to take us to somewhere or to teach us, we will not be able to discern whether this is a real Master of the past or not, because we have not seen him before. Shakyamuni Buddha died two thousand and five hundred years ago, and Jesus Christ, about two thousand years ago. We know Them only from the pictures or portraits which come from the later generations' imagination. So, if we see Them when we meditate, we can't tell if They are true or not. But we can recognize our present Master's radiant form because we know her.

When we meditate and go to the higher world, we will see our Master there. If we have any trouble or face an obstacle, he will help us to solve it. He will take us to a higher sphere, where we will truly see the past enlightened Masters. Otherwise we would only see the false ones, if we practice blindly without a correct guidance, because we don't know what Jesus or Shakyamuni looked like when They were in this world. In the Asura world there are so many such false examples.

That's why on the path to enlightenment we need a living enlightened Master to guide us. When we go past the world of Asura, the Master will tell us what we shouldn't look at, or he will cover the scenes that will not be good for us to see; then we will only see the vast darkness or light as if our sight is blocked by a curtain. In this way the Master helps us pass the Asura world and after that the Master will draw up the 'curtain.' The Master must do so lest we, before we have enough power to overcome illusion, would be fascinated by the scenes of the Asura world which are far more beautiful than those in our world. Otherwise we will think that it is our destination and would like to stay there; and once we get attracted to it, we won't believe our Master any more even if he tells us the Truth. Asura beings will say, "Your Master is nothing. Come with me and I will take you to Amitabha Buddha." In this way they will lure us and deceive us and it will be too late when we find we are deceived.

Therefore, when you practice the real method it's possible you may not see any sphere immediately, for your Master will not let you look at it if it's a low sphere. But you will see some proof, like some Light or a road to let you know where you are though you can't see the whole sphere. It doesn't do us any good to see these low spheres, which will only lure us and make us lost and trapped. Once you like their world, they will lead us away and use all tricks to make us believe them until finally you will become their subjects!

We should know that even if we really see an inner Buddha, there is nothing to be so pleased about because it is still not the

ultimate. You should surpass the stage of ‘sound and form’ to find your own real sovereignty. When there is still the sound, the form, the ‘Buddha,’ the ‘I,’ there is still the contrast of ‘two’; it is still the stage that “‘I’ see the ‘Buddha,’” which means it is not yet “I am the Buddha.” Therefore, when you see the Buddha or your Master during meditation, it is because the Master wants to guide you to a higher state. After you have practiced for a certain period of time and reach a certain level, you will find that you seem to reach a ceiling which is impossible for you to break through; at that time no one can help you except your own Master. He will pull you up above the obstacle and then you may go on again.

That’s why the guidance of a perfect Master is necessary. It is still nothing to be proud of when you can see the Master appear during your meditation to take you to the higher world, as at this point you still have the conception that “I have a Master,” “I admire my Master.” You are still not at the stage that “I am the Master.” You should become the Master yourself. We ourselves are the great ‘enlightened’ Masters, which is the highest level, the highest state. Before we can recognize that we ourselves are the enlightened Masters, we should have other enlightened Masters to guide us on the way. So, in the Zen sect they say, “Chop whoever we see during our meditation, be he a Buddha or Maya.” However, most people can only repeat this saying and don’t have any actual experience themselves. They think it’s “not desiring to become a Buddha or praying for anything.” That is great, but that is not the meaning of the saying. You cannot fulfill the saying “Chop the Buddha” if you yourself have not had a similar experience.

If you haven't seen any Buddha at all, what do you 'chop'? One 'chops the Buddha' because he wants to reach a higher state.

In India, there was a very famous Truth-practitioner who had cultivated himself for decades before he became a great Master. Before he reached Buddhahood and achieved the 'diamond indestructible body,' that is, the ANUTTARA SAMYAK SAMBODHA (perfect wisdom), he worshiped a goddess' statue very much, just as we worship Quan Yin Bodhisattva here. He paid his high respects to the statue and longed to see its manifestation. So, after a period of time his dream came true; the statue became alive and he could talk with the goddess every day. Each time he went to the temple the statue would walk down to talk with him and teach him. He liked the goddess so much that he became so intimate with her. But later on he met his Master and after listening to his Master's teaching he knew his level was still nothing.

For example, if we do like Quan Yin Bodhisattva, Jesus Christ or St. Mary so much, one day we might get communication with them. We might see them, talk with them, etc. Then we would think it is so marvelous. But no matter how close to them we may be or how much we admire them, these are only the outward things. Seeing them cannot help us find our Real Self, make us realize what power or right we originally have, or reveal to us the Truth of the universe. We get none of these.

After the Indian practitioner (mentioned above) met his Master, he immediately knew that what he had seen before

was not the ultimate. Then he tried to practice very hard the method his Master taught him and also made rapid progress. But each time at a certain degree, he would stop and couldn't break through it because each time he was about to surpass the stage, the goddess he admired previously would stand before him and would not let him pass. For a long period of time he couldn't overcome this obstacle of 'sound and form.'

One day he complained to his Master about this. His Master said angrily, "Why not?" and took a pointed stone, pressed the point upon the center of the disciple's forehead till it began to bleed. The ordinary people would think his Master was very cruel to have done this which seemingly was killing the disciple, but this brought the disciple the immediate result because he then knew how to overcome the illusion of the goddess. From then on he meditated with all his heart. When he saw the goddess appear again he chopped it into two pieces with his 'sword of wisdom.' Then he finally overcame the obstacle. It might sound very easy, but it is not. You can't imagine what it would be like until you really meet with the situation.

A real Master won't teach us to practice with the lower centers in our body. There are many centers in our bodies that we can develop, which we call 'chakras.' We can all get a lot of power from developing the lower part of abdomen, our heart or nose, etc., but these are not the centers that lead to the ultimate. If we begin our practice with the centers below our wisdom-eye, it will not be easy for us to reach the higher level of sphere because we will get used to concentrating our 'mind' on those

lower centers. Therefore the great Masters will not teach people to focus their attention on the lower centers. All of those centers below the wisdom-eye are systems of excretion and they all look very dirty. The states you can reach by practicing with the systems of excretion are still in the endless round of 'birth, existence, decay, and destruction' which is not the eternal.

We've often heard that there are many methods of practice, but we don't know which is the best. Many people claim that they are the highest masters, with some of them practicing the control of breathing and some others the lower part of abdomen, etc. They also get something, but not the eternal thing. This we will know if we consult the holy scriptures, or we will know these methods are not the highest method after we ourselves do the Truth-practice for a period of time.

An advanced practitioner does not watch TV, does not go to the movies, or listen to music, etc. Do you know why? It is because we already have paid too much attention to the outside world, to many outward things. Every day we open our eyes and see the fascinating world, and our ears also lead us to a variety of sounds. It's already not easy for us to "listen inward to our own Nature," to draw our attention back to our inner world. If we still like to listen to the worldly music, our attention will be even more distracted. That's why if we want to practice for the ultimate, we should elevate our mind and draw it back inside. We must do 'inward practice.' Therefore great practitioners don't listen to worldly music or desire any worldly pleasures. Since it's already very difficult to have drawn their mind back,

it is out of question that they would still like the outside music, which would distract their attention again!

I've just told you that many people develop the centers below their wisdom-eye, which only belong to the state of 'birth, existence, decay, and destruction.' They are not eternal. Do you know in which part of our body is our wisdom? Now, if we first leave alone wisdom or supernatural power, isn't the most important part of our body the brain? No matter what we think, we use our brains. We have to rack our brains to solve the problems or to take care of troubles. Therefore if we put our most important consciousness on the lower centers below our brain, will it make sense?

For example, when we have a problem to be solved, don't we frown and focus our consciousness here? (Master points to the center of Her forehead) Sometimes if we use our brains too much, we will lie down and let the blood stream to our brain and after that we may go on thinking again. Our brain is very important; inside it is our wisdom which dwells in some certain structure of our brain, which enables us to think. We have this ability by nature. But some people focus their consciousness on the nose, the throat, the heart, the lower part of abdomen or even the genitals. Don't you think they are doing the upside-down thing?

In the Buddhist sutras it is said a dead person will become a hungry ghost if his abdomen is the last part which remains warm; if it is his heart, he will be born a human being again; if the knees, then an animal; if the forehead, then a deva;

and if it is the top of his head which cools off finally, then he has gone to the Western Pure Land. Then why don't we begin our practice from our forehead, instead of letting our consciousness go to the lower center? Originally we put our consciousness here (Master points to Her wisdom-eye) to think, but why do we contrarily let our consciousness go lower when we want to practice for the highest wisdom? The stomach is used only to digest food, and the heart is used to help the blood circulate through the body. And some people even practice with their genitals! What good does it do? The genitals can't do any thinking, except giving birth and excreting. However, in India, Formosa and America many people practice with this center. It's because they don't really understand what the Tao (the Truth, the Way) is, they don't know how to practice correctly, so they just begin with this center which seems to give them some happiness.

After hearing that "The Buddha is in our heart" some people start their practice with their heart, which actually is only an organ for the circulation of the blood and can not do any thinking at all. And those who want to develop the lower part of their abdomen might end up 'being digested by their stomach'; (Laughter) they follow their abdomen to go downward. To practice with the nose is similar. We all know what our nose is for. The tongue should be used to eat vegetables, to eat vegan food; but some people put dirty meat on it, some use it to drink, and some use it to gossip on useless matters and sow a lot of discord. The tongue can't think, without the brain it can't even move. Without the brain, food can't be digested in the stomach, and the heart will stop

beating. When a man is dead, his body and all of his organs like the eyes, the ears, the heart, the stomach are still there, but they all stop working. Why? Simply because their ‘master’ went away.

Therefore the practice should start from the brain. Our brain is originally at the higher part of our body. If one ignores this and forces it to go down to the lower centers, the result is that it will be excreted together with all the vegetables, wine and meat, and one will have less and less brains. Then how can one get any wisdom from practice? (Laughter)

Some people practice the method of controlling the breathing. But without the brain we can’t breathe, and after we die there will be no more breathing, nor was there any breathing before we were born. Therefore breathing is not an eternal thing at all. The way some people try to control their breath. But suppose the brain is dead, we can’t control the breath at all. If everything depends on the brain, why don’t we begin the practice right away with the brain? We make the brain so tired because it has to control the stomach, the nose, the heart, the genitals and even the breathing. Why don’t we make good use of it directly, and immediately? Why do we make it work so hard, and in vain? We just ask it to work, but we don’t really make a good use of it, and that’s where the problem is.

If we really want to cultivate ourselves for the greatest wisdom, we must depend on our brains. Ordinary people only use a very little part of the brains. We often say that great

Truth-practitioners have great wisdom; and this is because they have the ‘know-all’ to make use of much, much more of their brains, with some of them even able to fully develop the function of their brains to know everything in the universe, to know the entire creation, whom we call the Buddhas, or enlightened Saints, Masters, etc. To be a Buddha actually is nothing mysterious. It’s just that they have developed much more of their brains, while we use too little; so we are stupid and they are wise.

Some people call brains ‘wisdom,’ some call it the ‘soul.’ It is in the center of our forehead. If we want to practice for perfect enlightenment, we should forget all the centers below the forehead, as well as the breathing control which is impermanent. We should begin only with our wisdom-eye. As to ‘what’ to practice, you will know it only after initiation. Today I only give the lecture, not initiation, so you can’t understand it. The lecture is only for your reference, but after initiation you will understand it immediately. In the process of initiation I don’t talk at all! Talking is unnecessary at that time. Although I don’t talk, it is the most powerful and useful moment when you can derive the best benefit. I’ve talked so much by now, but you may still have got nothing or just made out a little bit. The time I am silent is when you shall get the real ‘Life Impulse’ (Dharma). What I’m talking about is only an introduction, a joking matter, a talk, a debate or making friends.

The most useful part of our body is the wisdom-eye. We’ve often heard that in the center of our forehead is the so-called

third-eye, wisdom-eye, Buddha's eye, Dharma-eye, or Bodhisattva's eye. Although we call it the 'eye,' in fact there is no eye. But since it can see everything, we still call it the 'eye.' It can see, hear, touch, and understand everything; it knows everything. That's why we call it 'wisdom-eye.' If you want to use it, you must first open it with a key; otherwise it won't be useful even though you have it.

We don't use our mind to think of the higher states; our wisdom will know them automatically, those states which are beyond the capacity of our brain. We don't bother to think of the Buddha, of Dharma, of Sangha (the monk order), but we will naturally experience the real meaning of them. This is the real situation of having wisdom. But now we haven't found the wisdom and therefore we have to think; to think that we 'want' to become the Buddha, that we want to see the Buddha, and that we should go to the Buddha Land to see what it is like and what a Buddha is like. If we still expect to see all these, then we're still at the ABC level. When our wisdom is really developed, we can see everything naturally without thinking, we will know everything without expecting, and we will understand everything without any reference. This is the real development of wisdom. Everyone of us has this wisdom, but we can't use it because it is not open yet. We don't know where it is even though we already have it.

But a real Master knows it and will tell us where it is and how to use it. We use it every day until we use it perfectly, until all the 'brains' or 'wisdom' is fully ours; then we say we 'reach Buddhahood.' Now I have told you that there is wisdom in

this, but you still don't know how to use it. You will know only when I give you the initiation. No amount of talking is useful in this regard. When I give you the initiation, I don't need to say anything at all.

I can tell you that there is no wisdom in any center below the forehead. Wisdom dwells only in the 'third-eye' (the 'wisdom-eye,' the 'Dharma-eye') at the center of the forehead. You don't know there is wisdom in here because you don't know how to open it. Only a real enlightened Master, who is just like an expert in opening the 'wisdom-eye' for others, can open it for you and then you can use it at once. We call the 'moment' that our wisdom is opened 'enlightenment.'

Last week a teacher took about fifty junior high school students to our meditation Center. Although only young boys, they also could become enlightened. I helped them a little, and they all had experiences of enlightenment. I am so glad that children also can practice the method. If we have the right 'door' opened, children can also have enlightening experiences. All beings have the wisdom. It's just that they can't use it because it is not open. What a pity!

Q: *Please tell us what the key point of life is like?*

M: I'll show you the 'key point of life' during the initiation. It is useless to talk about it now. During that time, I won't say anything, but you will get the 'key point.' ("When will You give it to me?") (Laughter) We don't have enough time now, but it is not so difficult if you insist that I transmit it to you now. ("I am sorry. What I mean is when can You open the 'door' for me?")

It depends. If there are many who want initiation, I will spare a free day to give you the transmission. But you should first prepare yourself, purify yourself. If you only want to remain like the ordinary people, then I don't have much to ask from you. But if you aim at becoming the Buddha, the Bodhisattva, you should first bring forth a compassionate mind, getting rid of the bad habit of eating sentient beings' meat. Otherwise you could never become any Buddha or Bodhisattva.

It is OK for you to eat whatever you want if you only practice the ordinary methods. For example, if you practice the method of controlling the breathing or the lower part of abdomen, you don't necessarily have to keep a vegan diet. But now, because it is the great Bodhisattva you aim at, you should start to take the whole vegan diet right away, completely abandoning the habit of eating meat. This actually is the most basic and most important view of morality. How could you be interested in becoming a Bodhisattva, who is to deliver sentient beings to Nirvana, but you still eat them, 'deliver' them into your stomach? (Laughter) Then you will have no more sentient beings to 'deliver' to Nirvana. You originally mean to become a Buddha or Bodhisattva and then ferry all beings across the sea of suffering existence, but now you bring them into your stomach. It would be too embarrassing, no?

Q: *Can a Truth-practitioner be a match maker?*

M: Better not. Isn't there any other work he can do? (Laughter) Is this his job? (*No*) Then don't do it. Let them find their own mates by themselves. You see, many people don't need a matchmaker to get married. (Laughter) (*The questioner, "My*

neighbor told me that his son is very obedient but doesn't know how to meet a girl friend. Now he is thirty-one years old but still isn't married yet.") Then he has a good chance to renounce the world and become a monk, because he can't find a marriage mate. (Laughter) With such a teeming population here (Formosa), you still dare to get married? Perhaps one day children here will have no food to eat, and monks and nuns will truly have only 'one meal a day.' (Laughter) Fewer children to come means the government will save more money. Tell him to be a monk. You shouldn't be a matchmaker.

It's his own cause and effect that he can't find a wife. Don't you think it's better not to have any wife? After you have a wife, if you want to eat vegan food, perhaps she won't cook it for you because she doesn't agree with you about your practice. Then she will be an obstacle to your development of wisdom. It's hard to find a wife or a husband who wants to practice together with their marriage partner. Mostly the couple will obstruct each other in practice. Therefore, don't be a matchmaker. Let him go naturally. One won't have any trouble without a husband or wife. Marriage is not the most important thing in life, so let the matter take its own course. Don't try to interfere in others' karma (cause and effect), otherwise you'll only create karmic hindrance for yourself.

Q: *Master, You've just told us that the fundamental conditions for a Truth-practitioner are to have good virtues, a pure mind, and a noble ideal. Please tell us what is a noble ideal.*

M: This you should have known, so you don't need to ask me. *(The questioner, "Not exactly. Could You give me an*

example?”) Yes. What is your purpose of cultivation for the Truth? What do you want to achieve? Do you want to be a Buddha? (Answer, “*Basically I want to be a Buddha, but I don’t know what it’s like to be a Buddha. What on earth is a Buddha?*”) Now I’ll explain. We practice to become a Buddha because we see the suffering in the world and therefore we want to have Almighty Power to help our fellow beings. For example, someone wishes to go to the Western Paradise; then after you become a Buddha you may take him there, and very fast. You may even take whomever to go there. Once you become a Buddha and develop great wisdom, you can also open the door to wisdom for whoever wants it. This is what we call a noble ideal. Never mind if you would become a ‘Buddha’ or other names; the name is not important. For example, you want to be a doctor because you see many people suffer from diseases and you resolve to relieve them of their pain. After you succeed, people will call you a ‘doctor’ or any other term. Not that the calling is important, but that to have a noble ideal to save others from suffering is important.

Now ask yourself why you want to do the practice. Is it to be free from the Three Worlds in order to be free from your own suffering, or is it to help others surpass the Three Worlds of transmigration because you see them suffering? If this is the kind of ideal you have, then you have a noble ideal. Liberate yourself from the Three Worlds because you are tired of the unfair world, because you want a higher level of sphere where there is no birth, old age, disease and death but everlasting happiness. And then you can come back to liberate your relatives and friends. This is the noble ideal. No matter ‘what’

you may become, it's good enough that you keep this ideal.

Q: *Is the so-called Three Worlds the highest? Is there any higher world than this?*

M: Of course there are higher worlds than the Three Worlds. Otherwise what will we do after we surpass it? In the Three Worlds everything is in the circle of birth, existence, decay, and destruction and will be ruined sooner or later. That's why we should surpass it. Beyond the Three Worlds is the land of eternity and everlasting happiness.

Q: *I've often heard my friends say that all things in the world arise due to our mind. Is it true?*

M: That's why we should cultivate our body, speech and mind; because they will bring us karmic hindrance. We create karma because we think, we speak, and we act. After we practice and become an Arhant or a Bodhisattva, we won't have any more karmic hindrance as we've cleansed it. We are beyond the law of karma and will no more be influenced by anything, unless we vow to come back again to liberate sentient beings. At that time it's that we are willing to come back here, not that we are under the control of karma again.

Q: *Would You please tell us how powerful our mind is? Is everything in the Three Worlds under its influence? or does it have its influence only in this world?*

M: In the Three Worlds there is still the influence of this mind. In the Third World there's no more karma, but it's still in the circle of birth, existence, decay, and destruction. Not only the world we live in, but also all the entire Three Worlds will be

ruined some day. So it's not eternal liberation if one is still in the Three Worlds.

(“Then what exactly is the true liberation?”) True liberation means we should go beyond the Three Worlds. For example, we should reach the Fourth, the Fifth. But when a person reaches the Fourth World, which is one of the ‘formless realm,’ it doesn't mean he has attained eternal liberation. The Fourth World is neither inside nor outside the Three Worlds. It is on the border. There are many levels in the formless realm, and this Fourth World is the lowest one. Although it is beyond the Three Worlds, we regard it as being in the Three Worlds since it's not so useful. It's not useful even if you get there. You still are not liberated and you cannot but stay there. You may go down to the lower worlds again, but you can't go to the higher worlds. Since its situation is so particular, we count it as in the Three Worlds, but territorially it is not. Shakyamuni Buddha used a simpler way to describe the universe: in or above the Three Worlds. But this is not the point; I don't want to argue. I only want to tell you the Fourth World is not so good, and this you will know after practicing for a period of time. Now it makes no difference whether people regard it as in or above the Three Worlds. I'll talk about it more clearly during the initiation, as the ‘secrets of the universe’ can't be revealed in public.

Q: *What should I do if I see some sights or hear some sound during meditation or recitation of the Buddha's name?*

M: What Buddha's name are you reciting? (*Quan Yin Bodhisattva*) Then you may go on with it. (*What should I do*

if I can't fall asleep?) Then don't sleep. It's still not the real practice for the Truth, the way you are doing; it's only recitation of the Buddha's name. Shakyamuni Buddha didn't teach people to do that kind of thing. It's just that we misunderstand His method and think that practicing the Quan Yin Method is reciting the name of Quan Yin Bodhisattva; but it's not so. To practice 'Quan Yin' (contemplating the Sound) is a method of a very high level, is a very high method. It's not using your lips to recite the name. But I can't teach you now except to tell you to go on chanting 'Quan Yin Bodhisattva.' If you really long for liberation and want the initiation, you may enroll your name at the front desk. The Quan Yin Method is not to be transmitted in public.

There is no talk involved while teaching you the method. I will be silent, but you'll get it. But if you still like chanting 'Quan Yin,' then you may continue it, then when you see any inner sight you won't be able to tell if it's true or not. This I can't help, because you are not yet on our path. If you need it, you may turn back this way, then I can give you a hand. Otherwise you should stop.



Let's Make the Change -Protect the Environment

Spoken by Supreme Master Ching Hai,
June 4, 2009
Veracruz, Mexico Conference,
(Originally in English)

Bienvenido, respected dignitaries, media members, notable speakers, and all noble conference participants: Hola! (“Hallo” in Spanish)

As a very concerned citizen of the world, I humbly greet you, thank you and respectfully salute all of you here today who have come with open hearts and minds for the welfare of this beautiful and beloved planet that we call home. I am deeply grateful for the conference that is being held here today in Veracruz, Mexico, to address the urgency of global warming due to climate change, which sadly, has killed hundreds of thousands and affects hundreds of millions of humans, not including other species. It is my hope that it will raise higher awareness and inspire action toward the most serious international issue of our time.

The information communicated and the noble work being

done here today is of paramount importance. It is an honor to share the planet with dedicated people such as yourselves, who strive for the betterment of others. We all know that climate change is a grave issue; we all know what it is, and that the current critical condition of our planet calls for immediate and wise action from every one of us. Please do take note of all info from this conference today and spread them far and wide to save our world from perishing.

I take the opportunity to inform you of the general urgent scenario, though perhaps some of you, or many of you, have already known.

A. General Urgent Scenario

You see, our current course of climate change is worse than the worst case scenario projected by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), with the damaging and often fatal effects already being seen through such extreme events as hurricanes, flooding, droughts and heat waves.

Even if the world reduces greenhouse gas emissions, the planet will take time to recover from the gases already in the atmosphere. This is why it is necessary to focus on short-lived gases, namely methane. Methane traps at least 72 times more heat than CO₂, averaged over a 20-year period. Methane's biggest source is the livestock industry, which is indeed one of the top causes of global warming that must be stopped.

But first, please allow me to share just some of the latest

evidence of the impact, the impacts of climate change on humans' and animals' lives.

B. Polar Ice Cap Melt

Here we have first, Arctic melt. The Arctic, or North Pole, may be ice-free by 2012, 70 years ahead of IPCC estimations. Without the protective ice to reflect sunlight, 90 percent of the sun's heat can enter the open water, thus accelerating global warming.

The change in Arctic ice cover is dramatic, with climatologists saying that only 10 percent now is older and thick ice, while over 90 percent is newly formed and thin.

Another Arctic change is the thawing of permafrost, a normally frozen layer of earth containing methane stores. The thawing of this layer in recent years has caused methane to be released, with atmospheric levels that have risen sharply since 2004. Further global warming beyond a 2-degree Celsius rise could cause billions of tons more of methane to be released into the atmosphere, leading to mass extinctions of life on this planet.

As the massive ice sheets of Greenland and the Antarctic continue to melt as well, catastrophic sea level rise and stronger storms are expected to follow. If the entire West Antarctic sheet melts, global average sea levels would rise at least by 3.3, 3.5 meters, affecting over 3.2 billion people, that is half of the world population, who live within 200 miles of a coastline. And US scientists from the National Snow and

Ice Data Center now say that if all of Antarctica were to melt, the sea level could rise to a much higher level than expected, some say even up to 70 meters, which means more deadly to all lives on Earth.

C. Lands Sinking and Climate Refugees

Next problem: We have lands sinking and climate refugees. Right now, at least 18 islands have completely submerged around the world, with more than 40 other island nations at risk from rising sea levels. A report from the International Organization for Migration stated that there may be 200 million, or even up to 1 billion people, who will be climate refugees by 2050, or within our lifetime. These are people who must leave their island or coastal homes due to rising sea levels or permafrost melts that cause entire communities or nations to sink and collapse.

D. Glacier Retreat and Water Shortage

Next problem we have: Glacier retreat and water shortage. Most of the planet's glaciers will be gone within a few decades, jeopardizing the survival of more than 2 billion people. One billion of these people will suffer the effects of the Himalayan glacier retreats, which have been occurring at a pace more rapid than anywhere in the world, with two-thirds of the region's more than 18,000 glaciers receding. The initial effects of glacier melt are destructive floods and landslides. As the glacial ice retreat continues, reduced rainfall, devastating droughts and water shortages are the result.

E. Oceanic Dead Zones

Next: Oceanic dead zones. Climate change is creating areas of sea known as dead zones, which now number more than 400. These arise due to fertilizer runoff largely from livestock, contributing to the lack of oxygen which is necessary to support life.

F. Record Heat

Now we have also record heat. The past decade has twice, at least, seen the hottest average annual temperatures ever recorded in our planet's history. In 2003, a record heat wave hit Europe, claiming tens of thousands of lives. Heat waves also preceded the worst wildfires ever in Australia's history.

G. Storms Increasing

Next: Storms increasing. The intensity and duration of hurricanes and tropical storms have been noted to increase by 100% over the past 30 years, which scientists at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the USA say is likely due to climate-related increases in ocean temperature.

H. Wildlife Disappearing

Next we have wildlife disappearance. Leading ecologists say that the decline of wildlife due to species extinction is so rapid that there is no modern comparison. Scientists also now predicted that the Earth's 16,000 endangered species may become extinct 100 times faster than previously thought.

I. Drought and Desertification

Next, we have drought, desertification. In Nepal and Australia, wildfires this year have been severely intensified by drought conditions. In Africa, people in Somalia, Ethiopia and Sudan, to name just a few, have been crippled by drought. According to the United Nations, desertification, which often results from felling too many trees and damage that occurs from such activities as cattle grazing, is affecting the well-being of more than 1.2 billion people in more than 100 countries at risk.

Precious fresh water supplies are also drying up, such as aquifers under the major cities of Beijing, Delhi, Bangkok and dozens of other regions such as the Midwestern United States; while the rivers Ganges, Jordan, Nile and Yangtze have been reduced to a trickle for much of the year. In China's worst drought in five decades, vital crops were lost in at least 12 northern provinces, costing the nation billions of US dollars in drought relief to farmers with losses.

J. Human Health

Next we have the human health problem. According to Swiss-based research, climate change is already responsible for some 315,000 deaths a year, with another 325 million people who are severely affected. This comes in addition to an economic loss of US\$125 billion every year. The worst affected are developing nations in Africa, with other very threatened areas being in South Asia and small island nations.

Solution

Okay, we have enough with the problem, but we have solutions to this problem. It might not be that early, but it's still not too late, we still can rescue our home, planet home. Okay, the number one solution is vegan, organic vegan. Veganism will save our world.

I will report to you one by one how the vegan diet would save our world.

Luckily there are easy actions we can take. I will list them for your reference. Now, many of these areas where we are seeing such devastating effects of climate change, such as Arctic melt, lands sinking, water shortage from glacier melt, and even storms increasing are all directly related to the Earth's temperature increasing. So, we must cool the planet, first and foremost. And the best way to stop global warming is to stop producing the greenhouse gases that create the heat. Logical, no? Yes.

We already know about the efforts to reduce emissions such as from industry and transportation. But changes in these sectors are taking too much time – more than we can afford at this rate, at this hour. One of the most effective and fastest ways to reduce the heat in the atmosphere is to eliminate methane production. Methane not only traps up to 72 times more heat than carbon dioxide does, it also goes away from the atmosphere much faster than CO₂. So if we stop producing methane, the atmosphere will cool more quickly than if we

stop producing carbon dioxide. See what I mean?

Organic vegan will produce a beneficial cooling effect as it will cut down methane and other greenhouse gases which are fatal to our survival.

1. Eliminating Methane

We can start by cutting down on the biggest methane producer in the world, that is, animal raising. So, to cool the planet most quickly, we have to stop consuming meat in order to stop the livestock raising industry, and thus stop greenhouse gases, methane and other toxic gases from animal industry. If everyone in the world would adopt this simple but most powerful practice of an animal-free diet, then we could reverse the effect of global warming in no time. We would then have time to actually be able to adopt longer-term measures such as more green technology, to also remove the carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. In fact, if we neglect to stop meat production, either all these green efforts will be canceled out in effect, or we may lose the planet before we even have a chance to install any green technology such as wind power or solar power, or more hybrid cars, for that reason. Please also keep in mind that although livestock has been reported to generate 18% of global greenhouse gas emissions—which is more than the world's transportation sectors combined—this is actually an underestimate. Because recently revised calculations have placed it at generating possibly more than 50% of total global emissions. I repeat: Livestock has been recalculated as to generate possibly more than 50% of total global emissions.

More than 50% is from the livestock industry. So that was the number one solution.

2. Eliminating Other Gases

Now, number two: eliminating other gases. Besides methane, other lethal toxic gases are emitted by the livestock industry as well. It is the largest source at 65% of global nitrous oxide, a greenhouse gas with approximately 300 times the warming potential of CO₂, it also emits 64% of all ammonia, which causes acid rain and hydrogen sulfide, a fatal gas. So to stop livestock production is to eliminate all these deadly gases, as well as methane.

3. Halting Dead Zones

Number three: Halting dead zones. There are other huge benefits gained by halting livestock production. Oceanic dead zones, for example, are caused primarily by fertilizer runoff from agriculture that is mainly used for animal feed. Dead zones are a serious threat to the ocean's ecosystems, but they can be revived if we stop polluting them with our livestock-related activities.

Stop fishing, too, then marine life will rebound. Since the heavy fishing that caused the sardines to disappear from the coast of Namibia, eruptions of harmful gases have created a dead zone that is destroying the area's ecosystems due to the absence of that one humble but eco-beneficial, powerful species. Can you imagine? Just the sardines. So we have to stop fishing as well as using all animal products, to protect our

living ocean and water bodies, which is crucial to our survival. You know it.

4. Stopping Desertification

Now number four: we have to stop desertification. We can. Desertification is another climate change effect that is linked to livestock, again. For example, in Mexico, recent research stated that 47% of your country has already taken the toll of desertification, has become desert, due to damage from the cattle industry. And another 50-70% of the country of Mexico is also suffering from some degree of drought. Overgrazing by livestock, which occupies nearly a third of our Earth's land surface worldwide, is a major cause of desertification and other damage, and is responsible for more than 50% of land erosion. Now, we must stop livestock grazing to protect our soil and protect our life.

5. Stopping Water Shortage

Number five: We can stop water shortage. While droughts are plaguing more populations, we cannot afford to waste water. Meat production uses massive amounts of water, as you know. It takes up to 1,200 gallons of fresh and good clean water to produce just one serving of beef. In contrast, a full vegan meal costs only 98 gallons of water. That is like 90-plus percent less. So, if we want to stop water shortage and to preserve precious water, we have to stop animal products.

6. Banning Deforestation

Now, six: we can stop deforestation. We have to ban deforestation. And we have to plant more trees, of course. Wherever there's erosion or empty land, we have to plant trees. Now, deforestation is also largely driven by meat production. With the United Nations estimating that deforestation accounts for approximately 20% of all greenhouse gas emissions, nearly all deforestation itself is related to meat production. Eighty percent of cleared Amazon forest is designated as a cattle grazing area to prepare the animals for slaughter, and the remainder is planted as soy crops used also largely for animal feed. So to stop animal products is to protect our precious forest, the lungs of our Earth, and the crucial factor for our survival.

7. Alleviating Financial Cost

Now, seven: We have to alleviate financial cost. Our leaders are worried about the cost of mitigating climate change. However, the good news is, if the world shifted to a reduced, or meatless diet, animal-free diet, then we could reduce the cost by half or more. That means we would reduce tens of trillions of US dollars. If the world shifted to a vegan diet we could save more than 80% of the cost, or approximately US\$32 trillion.

8. Minimized Health Cost

Number eight: We must minimize health cost. The health risks of eating meat are more and more evident these days. Livestock are routinely given excessive hormones and

antibiotics, which then, when consumed as meat, can in turn endanger human health. There are also toxic byproducts in slaughter places such as ammonia and hydrogen sulfide. These poisonous substances have caused deaths among workers due to their extreme toxicity.

As a so-called food, meat is simply one of the most unhealthy, poisonous, unhygienic items that could ever be ingested by humans. We should never eat meat at all if we love and cherish our health and our life. We will live longer without meat, and be healthier and wiser without meat. Meat has been scientifically shown to cause all kinds of cancers, also heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke and obesity. The list goes on and on and on. All these diseases kill millions of people every year. Millions and millions of people die due to meat-related diseases, making millions others seriously sick and disabled as well. There is no end to the tragedies which are caused by a meat diet. Meat eating is a no-no. We should know this by now through all the scientific and medical evidence. Please stop eating meat. Just even for your health's sake. You want to live long for your children and your grandchildren, and live healthily. We did not even mention the filthy conditions, the confined environments where the animals are kept until their slaughter, which promote the transmission of diseases such as the swine flu virus. In fact, some meat-transmitted diseases like the human form of mad cow disease are tragically fatal in every case. Whoever contracts mad cow disease is doomed to die, sadly, sadly and sorrowfully. Other contaminants such as E. coli, salmonella, etc., can also cause serious health problems, long-term damages, sometimes even leading to death.

In short, simply saying no to meat will make us richer, healthier, and most importantly, it will make us a wiser person, and a great hero. Because it is the only timely way that we ensure the survival of our children and grandchildren.

Closing

To conclude my report: Respected, honorable, wise, beloved, esteemed audience members, we now can see how imperative it is to stop the warming of the planet with the greenest of all green policies and actions, the most compassionate, the most heroic, the most life-saving action, that is, the vegan diet, organic vegan to be exact. It's better for your health as well. It is the long-term insurance against climate change. We must be the solution and encourage others with all the convincing and supporting scientific, physical and moral data that is available to us - so they do the same. Adopting a plant-based diet can halt as much as 80% of global warming, eradicate world hunger, stop war, promote peace, and it will free up the Earth's water as well as many other precious resources, offering a lifeline for the planet and for humanity. In short, it will very quickly halt many of the global problems facing us right now. Therefore, it is vital that we change our lifestyle. It's very easy to do it, setting a noble example for others to follow, and doing our part to bring the public's attention to the urgent climate change issue and its solutions; the foremost being the vegan diet, to safeguard our precious planet. It is time to walk the talk, because there is not much time left now.

In coming here today, it is quite clear that all of you already know that the issues at hand are very urgent and need to be resolved immediately. Thank you all statespersons, media members, speakers, conference participants, ladies and gentlemen, for all your time and care in coming here today. And thank you all noble persons involved in organizing this awakening event. I truly appreciate your sincerity and willingness to join with those who share the same goal, for taking initiatives to inform the public and for wanting to implement prompt actions. Together we can usher in a new golden era, where we can all live the noble qualities of love, compassion and benevolence as was intended, live up to the principles of nonviolence and forgiveness, exemplifying the human standard of virtuous living, righteous living, and live a more sustainable life in peace, joy and harmony with each other, with all our co-inhabitants;- humans, animals, plants, trees alike.

I am quite sure that this conference will contribute greatly to the worldwide efforts of all nations to save our planet. My most heartfelt gratitude to all who took part in making this a reality. May Heaven bless you, your loved ones and your countries. And may all your noble endeavors be graced with glorious success!

To watch the Supreme Master Television coverage of this videoconference, please visit:

<http://video.Godsdirectcontact.net/magazine/WOW1021s.php>

The Benefits of a Vegan Diet

Information compiled by Association members

A lifetime commitment to a vegan diet is a prerequisite for initiation into the Quan Yin Method. Foods from plant sources are permitted on this diet, but all other foods from animal sources including eggs should not be eaten. There are many reasons for this, but the most important comes from the First Guideline, which tells us to refrain from harming any living being, or Thou shalt not kill.

Not killing or otherwise harming other living creatures is of obvious benefit for them. Less obvious is the fact that refraining from harming others is equally advantageous for ourselves. Why? Because of the Law of Karma: *As ye sow, so shall ye reap*. When you kill, or cause others to kill for you, in order to satisfy your desire for meat, you incur a karmic debt, and this debt must eventually be repaid.

So in a very real sense, the keeping of a vegan diet is a gift which we give to ourselves. We feel better, the quality of our lives improves as the heaviness of our karmic indebtedness diminishes, and we are offered entrance into new subtle and heavenly realms of inner vision. It is well worth the small price you have to pay!

The spiritual arguments against eating meat are convincing for some people, but there are other compelling reasons for being a vegan. All of them are rooted in common sense. They have to do with issues of personal health and nutrition, ecology and the environment, ethics and animal suffering, and world hunger.

Health and Nutrition

Studies of human evolution have shown that our ancestors were vegetarian by nature. The structure of the human body is not suited for eating meat. This was demonstrated in an essay in comparative anatomy by Dr. G.S. Huntington of Columbia University. He pointed out that carnivores have short small and large intestines. Their large intestine is characteristically very straight and smooth. In contrast, vegetarian animals have both a long small intestine and a long large intestine. Because of the low fiber content and high protein density of meat, the intestines do not require a long time to absorb nutrients; thus, the intestines of carnivores are shorter in length than those of vegetarian animals.

Humans, like other naturally vegetarian animals, have both a long small and large intestine. Together, our intestines are approximately twenty-eight feet (eight and a half meters) in length. The small intestine is folded back on itself many times, and its walls are convoluted, not smooth. Because they are longer than those found in carnivores, the meat we eat stays in our intestines for a longer period of time. Consequently, the meat can putrefy and create toxins. These toxins have

been implicated, as a cause of colon cancer, and they also increase the burden on the liver, which has the function of getting rid of toxins. This can cause cirrhosis and even cancer of the liver.

Meat contains a lot of urokinase protein and urea, which add to the burden on the kidneys, and can destroy kidney function. There are fourteen grams of urokinase protein in every pound of steak. If living cells are put into liquid urokinase protein, their metabolic function will degenerate. Furthermore, meat lacks cellulose or fiber, and lack of fiber can easily create constipation. It is known that constipation can cause rectal cancer or piles.

The cholesterol and saturated fats in flesh also create cardiovascular disorders. Cardiovascular disorders are the number one leading cause of death in the United States, and now in Formosa.

Cancer is the second leading cause of death. Experiments indicate that the burning and roasting of flesh creates a chemical element (Methylcholanthrene), which is a powerful carcinogen.

Most people assume that meat is clean and safe, that there are inspections done at all butchereries. There are far too many cattle, pigs, poultry, etc, killed for sale every day for each one to actually be examined. It's very difficult to check whether a piece of meat has cancer in it, let alone check every single animal. Currently, the meat industry just cuts off the head when it has a problem, or cuts off the leg which is diseased.

Only the bad parts are removed and the rest is sold.

The famous vegetarian, Dr. J.H. Kellogg said, **“When we eat vegetarian food, we don’t have to worry about what kind of disease the food died of. This makes a joyful meal!”**

There is yet another concern. Antibiotics as well as other drugs including steroids and growth hormones are either added to animal feed or injected directly into the animals. It has been reported that people eating these animals will absorb these drugs into their bodies. There is a possibility that antibiotics in meat are diminishing the effectiveness of antibiotics for human use.

There are some people who consider the vegetarian diet not sufficiently nourishing. An American surgical expert, Dr. Miller, practiced medicine for forty years in Formosa. He established a hospital there, where all the meals were vegetarian, for staff members as well as the patients. He said, **“The medicine given to us by modern science has improved greatly, but it can only treat illnesses. Food however, can sustain our health.”** He pointed out that, **“Food from plants is a more direct source of nutrition than meat. People eat animals, but the sources of nutrition for the animals we eat are plants. The lives of most animals are short, and animals have nearly all the diseases that humankind has. It is very likely that the diseases of humankind come from eating the flesh of diseased animals. So, why don’t people get their nutrition directly from plants?”** Dr. Miller suggested that we only need cereals, beans and vegetables to get all the nourishment we need to maintain good health.

Many people have the idea that animal protein is superior to plant protein because the former is considered a complete protein, and the latter is incomplete. The truth is that some plant proteins are complete, and that food combining can create complete proteins out of several incomplete protein foods.

In March 1988 the American Dietetic Association announced that: **“It is the position of the ADA that vegetarian diets are healthful and nutritionally adequate when appropriately planned.”**

It is often falsely believed that meat-eaters are stronger than vegetarians, but an experiment conducted by Professor Irving Fisher of Yale University on 32 vegetarians and 15 meat-eaters showed that vegetarians had more endurance than meat-eaters. He had people hold out their arms for as long as possible. The outcome from the test was very clear. Among the 15 meat-eaters, only two persons could hold out their arms for fifteen to thirty minutes. However, among the 32 vegetarians: 22 persons held out their arms for fifteen to thirty minutes, 15 persons for over thirty minutes, 9 persons for over one hour, 4 persons for over two hours, and one vegetarian held his arms out for over three hours.

Many long distance track athletes keep a vegan or vegetarian diet for the time preceding competitions. Dr. Barbara Moore, an expert in vegan and vegetarian therapy, completed a one hundred and ten mile race in twenty-seven hours and thirty

minutes. A woman of fifty-six years of age, she broke all the records held by young men: **“I want to be an example to show that people who take a whole vegetarian diet will enjoy a strong body, a clear mind and a purified life.”**

Does a vegan get enough protein in his diet? The World Health Organization recommends that 4.5% of daily calories be derived from protein. Wheat has 17% of its calories as protein, broccoli has 45% (dry base) and rice has 8%. It is very easy to have a protein rich diet without eating meat. With the additional benefit of avoiding the many diseases caused by high fat diets such as heart disease and many cancers, veganism is clearly the superior choice.

The relationship between over consumption of meat and other animal source foods containing high levels of saturated fats, and heart disease, breast cancer, colon cancer and strokes has been proven. Other diseases which are often prevented and sometimes cured by a low-fat vegan diet include: kidney stones, prostate cancer, diabetes, peptic ulcers, gallstones, irritable bowel syndrome, arthritis, gum disease, acne, pancreatic cancer, stomach cancer, hypoglycemia, constipation, diverticulitis, hypertension, osteoporosis, ovarian cancer, hemorrhoids, obesity and asthma.

There is no greater personal health risk than eating meat, aside from smoking.

Ecology and the Environment

Raising animals for meat has its consequences. It leads to rain forest destruction, global heat rising, water pollution, water scarcity, desertification, misuse of energy resources and world hunger. The use of land, water, energy and human effort to produce meat is not an efficient way to use the Earth's resources.

Since 1960, some 25% of Central America's rain forests have been burned and cleared to create pasture for beef cattle. It has been estimated that every four ounce hamburger made from rain forest beef destroys 55 square feet of tropical rain forest. In addition, raising cattle contributes significantly to the production of three gases which cause global warming; is a leading cause of water pollution and requires a staggering 2464 gallons of water for the production of each pound of beef. It only takes 29 gallons of water to produce a pound of tomatoes and 139 gallons to produce a one pound loaf of whole wheat bread. Nearly half of the water consumed in the United States goes to the growing of feed for cattle and other livestock.

Many more people could be fed if the resources used to raise cattle were used to produce grain to feed the world's population. An acre of land growing oats produces 8 times the protein and 25 times the calories, if the oats are fed to humans rather than to cattle. An acre of land used for broccoli produces 10 times the protein, calories and niacin as an acre of land producing beef. Statistics like these are numerous. The world's resources would be more efficiently utilized if the land used for livestock production was converted to

raising crops to feed people.

Eating a vegan diet allows you to “tread more lightly on the planet.” In addition to taking only what you need and reducing excess, you will feel better when you know that a living being doesn’t have to die each time you eat a meal.

World Hunger

Nearly one billion people suffer from hunger and malnutrition on this planet. Over 40 million die each year of starvation, and most of them are children. Despite this, more than one third of the world’s grain harvest is diverted from feeding people to feeding livestock. In the United States, livestock consume 70% of all the grain produced. If we fed people instead of livestock, no one would go hungry.

Animal Suffering

Are you aware of the fact that more than 100,000 cows are slaughtered every day in the United States?

Most animals in Western countries are raised on “factory farms.” These facilities are designed to produce the maximum number of animals for slaughter at the minimum expense. Animals are crowded together, disfigured and treated like machines for the conversion of feed into flesh. This is a reality that most of us will never see with our own eyes. It

has been said that, **“One visit to a slaughterhouse will make you a vegan for life.”**

Leo Tolstoy said, **“As long as there are slaughterhouses there will be battlefields. A vegetarian diet is the acid test of humanitarianism.”** Although most of us do not actively condone killing, we have developed the habit, supported by society, of eating meat regularly, without any real awareness of what is being done to the animals we eat.

The Company of Saints and Others

From the beginning of recorded history we can see that vegetables have been the natural food of human beings. Early Greek and Hebrew myths all spoke of people originally eating fruit. Ancient Egyptian priests never ate meat. Many great Greek philosophers such as Plato, Diogenes and Socrates were all advocated vegetarianism.

In India, Shakyamuni Buddha emphasized the importance of Ahimsa, the principle of not harming any living things. He warned His disciples not to eat meat, or else other living beings would become frightened of them. Buddha made the following observations: **Meat eating is just an acquired habit. In the beginning we were not born with a desire for it. Flesh eating people cut off their inner seed of Great Mercy. Flesh eating people kill each other and eat each other... this life I eat you, and next life you eat me... and it always continues in this way. How can they ever get out of the Three Realms (of illusion)?**

Many early Taoists, early Christians and Jews were vegetarians. It is recorded in the Holy Bible: *And God said, I have provided all kinds of grain and all kinds of fruit for you to eat; but for the wild animals and for all the birds I have provided grass and leafy plants for food.* (Genesis 1:29) Other examples forbidding the eating of meat in the Bible: *You must not eat meat with blood in it, because the life is in the blood.* (Genesis 9:4) God said, *Who told you to kill the bullock and the she goat to make an offering to me? Wash yourselves from this innocent blood, so I may hear your prayer; otherwise I will turn my head away because your hands are full of blood. Repent yourselves so I may forgive you.* (Isaiah 1:11-16) St. Paul, one of Jesus' disciples, said in his letter to the Romans, *It is good neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine.* (Romans 14:21)

Recently, historians have discovered many ancient books that have shed new light on the life of Jesus and His teachings. Jesus said: *People who have animals' flesh become their own tombs. I tell you honestly, the man who kills will be killed. The man who kills living things and eats their meat is eating the meat of the dead men.*

Indian religions also avoid the eating of flesh. It is said that, *People can't get flesh without killing things. A person who hurts sentient beings will never be blessed by God. So, avoid taking flesh!* (Hindu Precept)

The Holy Scripture of Islam, the Koran, forbids the eating of dead animals, blood and flesh.

A great Chinese Zen Master, Han Shan Tzu wrote a poem which was strongly against flesh eating: ***Go quickly to the market to buy meat and fish and feed them to your wife and children. But why must their lives be taken to sustain yours? It's unreasonable. It will not bring you affinity with Heaven, but make you become dregs of Hell!***

Many famous philosophers, scientists, leaders, athletes, writers, and artists were/are vegetarians and vegans, including the following: Shakyamuni Buddha, Jesus Christ, Mohammed, Tsong Khapa, Aristotle, Virgil, Horace, Plato, Ovid, Petrarch, Pythagoras, Socrates, William Shakespeare, Voltaire, Rabindranath Tagore, Leo Tolstoy, Sir Isaac Newton, Charles Darwin, Albert Einstein, Albert Schweitzer, Nikola Tesla, Leonardo Da Vinci, Benjamin Franklin, Mahatma Ghandi, Abdul Kalam, Janez Drnovšek, Martina Navratilova, Carl Lewis, Leona Lewis, Michael Jackson, Brian Greene, John Robbins, Coretta Scott King, Colin Campbell, James Cromwell, Bill Clinton, Dennis Kucinich, James Cameron, Maneka Gandhi, Michelle Pfeiffer, Ellen DeGeneres, Bryan Adams, Woody Harrelson, John Salley, Moby, Mike Tyson, Pamela Anderson, Heather Mills, Joaquin Phoenix, Casey Affleck, Tobey Maguire, Alicia Silverstone, Jessica Chastain, Petra Nemcova, Serena Williams, Venus Williams, Natalie Portman, Anne Hathaway, and Emily Deschanel.), to name a few.

Albert Einstein said, “I think the changes and purifying effects that a vegetarian diet have on a human being’s disposition

are quite beneficial to humankind. Therefore, it is both auspicious and peaceful for people to choose vegetarianism.” This has been the common advice of many important figures and sages throughout history!

Master Answers Questions

Q: Eating animals is killing living beings, but isn't eating vegetables a kind of killing too?

M: Eating plants is also killing living things and will create some karmic hindrance, but the effect is very minimal. If one practices the Quan Yin Method for two and a half hours every day, one can get rid of this karmic effect. As we have to eat in order to survive, we choose food which has the least consciousness and suffers the least. Plants consist of 90% water, thus their level of consciousness is so low that it hardly feels any suffering. Furthermore, when we eat many vegetables we don't cut their roots, but rather we help their asexual reproduction by cutting branches and leaves. The end result can actually be beneficial to the plant. Therefore, horticulturists say that pruning vegetation helps them grow large and beautiful.

This is even more evident with fruit. When fruit ripens, it will attract people to eat it by its fragrant smell, beautiful color and delicious taste. It is in this way that fruit trees can achieve their purpose of propagating their seed over a wide area. If we do not pick and eat them, the fruit will become overripe and will fall to the ground to rot. Its seed will be

shaded from sunlight by the tree above them and will die. So, eating vegetables and fruit is a natural tendency, which brings to them no suffering at all.

Q: Most people have the idea that vegetarians are shorter and thinner, and flesh eaters are taller and bigger. Is this true?

M: Vegetarians are not necessarily thinner and shorter. If their diet is balanced, they can also grow tall and strong. As you can see, all big animals like elephants, cattle, giraffes, hippopotamuses, horses, etc, eat only vegetables and fruit. They are stronger than carnivores, very gentle and beneficial to humankind. But flesh eating animals are both very violent and of no use. If human beings eat many animals, they will also become affected with animal instincts and qualities. Flesh eating people are not necessarily tall and strong, but their life span is very short on the average. Eskimos are almost totally flesh eating, but are they very tall and strong? Do they have a long life? This I think you can understand very clearly.

Q: Can vegetarians eat eggs?

M: No. When we eat eggs we are also killing beings. Some say that commercially available eggs are unfertilized, so eating them is not killing living things. This is only seemingly correct. An egg remains unfertilized only because the appropriate circumstances for its fertilization have been withheld, so the egg cannot complete its natural purpose of developing into a chicken. Even though this development has not occurred, it still contains the innate life force needed for this. We know that eggs have innate life force; otherwise, why is it that ova are the only type of cells which can be fertilized? Some point out that eggs

contain the essential nutrients, protein and phosphorus, essential for human bodies. But protein is available from bean curd, and phosphorus from many kinds of vegetables such as potatoes.

We know that from ancient times till now, there have been many great monks who did not eat meat or eggs, and still had a long life span. For instance the Ying Guang Master ate only a bowl of vegetables and some rice each meal, and yet he lived up to the age of eighty. Furthermore, egg yolks contain a lot of cholesterol, which is a major cause of cardiovascular disorders, the number one killer in Formosa and America. No wonder we see that most patients are egg eaters!

Q: Man raises animals and poultry, such as pigs, cattle, chickens, ducks, etc. Why can't we eat them?

M: So? Parents raise their children. Do parents have the right to eat their children? All living things have the right to live, and no one should deprive them of this. If we have a look at the laws in Hong Kong, even killing oneself is against the law. So, how much more unlawful would killing other living beings be?

Q: Animals are born for people to eat. If we don't eat them, they will fill the world. Right?

M: This is an absurd idea. Before you kill an animal, do you ask it if it wants to be killed and eaten by you or not? All living beings desire to live and are afraid to die. We don't want to be eaten by a tiger, so why should animals be eaten by humans? Human beings have only existed in the world for several tens of thousands of years, but before humankind

appeared, many species of animals had already existed. Did they overcrowd the Earth? Living things maintain a natural ecological balance. When there is too little food and space is limited, this will cause a drastic reduction in population. This maintains the population at an appropriate level.

Q: Why should I be vegan?

M: I am vegan because the God inside me wants it. Understand? Eating meat is against the universal principle of not wanting to be killed. We ourselves don't want to be killed, and we ourselves don't want to be stolen from. Now, if we do that to other people, then we are acting against ourselves, and that makes us suffer. Everything that you do against others makes you suffer. You cannot bite yourself and you shouldn't stab yourself. In the same way you should not kill, because that is against the principle of life. Understand? It would make us suffer, so we don't do it. It doesn't mean we limit ourselves in any way. It means we expand our life to all kinds of life. Our life will not be limited within this body, but extended to the life of animals and all kinds of beings. That makes us grander, greater, happier and limitless. OK?

Q: Would You speak on vegan eating and how this can contribute to world peace?

M: Yes. You see, most of the wars that happen in this world are due to economic reasons. Let's face it. The economic difficulties of a country become more urgent when there is hunger, lack of food, or a lack of equal distribution of food among different countries. If you took the time to read magazines and research the facts about the vegan diet, then you would know this very well. Raising cattle and ani-

mals for meat has caused our economy to go bankrupt in all aspects. It has created hunger throughout the world – at least in the Third World countries.

It's not I who is saying this, it is an American citizen who did this type of research and wrote a book about it. You can go to any bookshop and read about vegan research and food processing research. You can read, "Diet For a New America" by John Robbins. He is a very famous ice-cream millionaire. He gave it all up in order to be a vegan, and to write a vegan book against his family tradition and business. He lost a lot of money, prestige and business, but he did it for the sake of Truth. That book is very good. There are many other books and magazines which can give you a lot of information and facts about the vegan diet and how it can contribute to world peace.

You see, we bankrupted our food supply by feeding cattle. You know how much protein, medicine, water supply, manpower, cars, trucks, road construction and how many hundreds of thousands of acres of land have been wasted before a cow is good enough for one meal. Understand? All these things could be distributed equally to underdeveloped countries, then we could solve the hunger problem. So now, if a country is in need of food it probably invades the other country just to save its own people. In the long run, this has created a bad cause and retribution. Understand?

As you sow, so shall you reap. If we kill someone for food, we will be killed for food later, in some other form the next time, the next generation. It's a pity. We are so intelligent, so civilized and yet most of us do not know the cause of why our neighboring countries are suffering. It is because of our

palates, our tastes, and our stomachs.

In order to feed and nourish one body we kill so many beings, and starve so many fellow human beings. We aren't even talking about the animals yet. Understand? Then this guilt, consciously or unconsciously, will weigh down upon our conscience. It makes us suffer from cancer, tuberculosis and other kinds of incurable diseases, including AIDS. Ask yourself, why does your country, America, suffer the most? It has the highest rate of cancer in the world, because the Americans eat a lot of beef. They eat more meat than any of the other countries. Ask yourself why the Chinese or communist countries don't have that high a rate of cancer. They don't have as much meat. Understand? That is what the research says, not I. OK? Don't blame me.

Q: What are some spiritual benefits that we get from being vegans?

M: I'm glad you asked the question in this manner, because it means you only concentrate on, or care about, spiritual benefits. Most people would care about health, diet and figure when they ask about the vegan diet. The spiritual aspects of a vegan diet are that it is very clean and nonviolent.

Thou shalt not kill. When God said this to us, Hes did not say do not kill human beings, Hes said do not kill any beings. Didn't Hes say that Hes made all animals to befriend us, to help us? Did Hes not put the animals in our care? Hes said, take care of them, rule over them. When you rule over your subjects, do you kill your subjects and eat them? Then you would become a king with no one else around? So now you understand when God said that. We must do it. There is no

need to question Hirm. Hes spoke very clearly, but who understands God except God?

So now you have to become God in order to understand God. I invite you to be God-like again, to be yourself, to be no one else. To meditate on God doesn't mean you worship God, it means that you become God. You realize that you and God are one. *I and my Father are one*, didn't Jesus say so? If He said He and His father are one, we and His father can also be one, because we are also children of God. And Jesus also said that what He does we can even do better. So we may be even better than God, who knows!

Why worship God when we don't know anything about God? Why use blind faith? We must first know what we are worshipping, just like we must know who the girl is we're going to marry before we marry her. Nowadays, it's customary that we don't marry before we date. So why should we worship God with blind faith? We have the right to demand that God appears to us, and to make Hirmself known to us. We have the right to choose which God we would like to follow.

So now you see that it is very clear in the Bible that we should be vegans. For all health reasons, we should be vegans. For all scientific reasons, we should be vegans. For all economic reasons, we should be vegans. For all compassionate reasons, we should be vegans. As well, to save the world, we should be vegans.

It is stated in some research that if people in the West, in America, eat vegan only once a week, we would be able to save sixteen million starving people every year. So be a hero, be vegan. For all of these reasons, even if you don't follow

me, or don't practice the same method, please be a vegan for your own sake, for the sake of the world.

Q: If everyone eats plants, will it create a food shortage?

M: No. Using a given piece of land to grow crops provides fourteen times as much food as using the same piece of land to grow fodder to feed animals. Plants from each acre of land provide 800,000 calories of energy; however, if these plants are used to raise animals which are then eaten as food, the animals' meat can only provide 200,000 calories of energy. That means that during the process 600,000 calories of energy are lost. So the vegan diet is evidently more efficient and economical than the meat diet.

Q: Is fish all right to eat for a vegetarian?

M: It's all right if you want to eat fish. But if you want to eat vegetarian, fish is not a vegetable.

Q: Some people say that it is important to be a good-hearted man, but it is not necessary to be a vegan. Does this make sense?

M: If one is truly a good-hearted person, then why does he still eat another being's flesh? Seeing them suffer so, he should not be able to bear to eat them! Flesh eating is unmerciful, so how can this be done by a good-hearted man?

Master Lien Ch'ih once said, ***“Kill its body, and eat its meat. In this world there is no one more cruel, malevolent, atrocious and evil than this man.”*** How can he ever claim that he himself has a good heart?

Mencius also said, ***“If you see it alive, you can't***

bear to see it die, and if you hear it groaning you cannot bear to eat its meat; so the real gentlemen keep far from the kitchen.”

Human intelligence is higher than that of animals, and we can use weapons to make them unable to resist us, so they die with hatred. The kind of man who does this, bullying small and weak creatures, has no right to be called a gentleman. When animals are killed, they are terribly stricken with agony, fear and resentment. This causes the production of toxins that stay in their meat to harm those who eat it. Since the frequency of the vibration of animals is lower than that of humankind, they will influence our vibration, and affect the development of our wisdom.

Q: Is it all right just to be a so-called “convenient vegetarian?” (Convenient vegetarians do not strictly avoid meat. They would eat vegetables out of a mixed vegetable and meat dish.)

M: No. For example, if food is put into a poisonous liquid and then removed, do you think it will become poisonous or not? In the Mahaparinirvana Sutra, Mahakasyapa asked Buddha, “When we beg and are given vegetables mixed with meat, can we eat this food? How can we clean the food?” Buddha replied, ***One should clean it with water and separate the vegetables from the meat, then one can eat it.***

From the above dialogue we can understand that one cannot even eat vegetables which are mixed with meat unless one first cleans them with water, not to mention eating meat alone! Therefore, it is very easy to see that Buddha and His disciples all kept a vegetarian diet. However, some people

slandered Buddha by saying that He was a “convenient vegetarian,” and that if alms-givers gave meat, He ate meat. This is truly nonsense. Those who say so have read too little of the Scriptures, or don’t understand the Scriptures they have read.

In India, over ninety percent of the people are vegetarians. When people see mendicants in yellow robes they all know they should offer them vegetarian food, not to mention that most of the people have no meat to give anyway!

Q: A long time ago, I heard another Master say, “*Buddha ate a pig’s foot and then got diarrhea and died.*” Is this true?

M: Absolutely not. It was because of eating a kind of mushroom that Buddha died. If we translate directly from the language of the Brahmans, this kind of mushroom is called the “pig’s foot,” but it is not a real pig’s foot. It’s just like when we call a kind of fruit “longan” (in Chinese this literally means the “dragon’s eye”). There are many things that by name are not vegetables but actually are vegetarian foods, such things as the “dragon’s eye.” This mushroom in Brahmanic language is called “pig’s foot” or “pig’s joy.” Both have a connection with pigs. This kind of mushroom was not easy to find in ancient India and was a rare delicacy, so people offered it to Buddha in worship. This mushroom cannot be found above the ground. It grows under the ground. If people want to find it they must search with the help of an old pig which likes very much to eat this kind of mushroom. Pigs detect it by their smell, and when they discover one, they use their feet to dig in the mud to find and eat it. That was why this kind of mushroom is called the “pig’s joy” or “pig’s

foot.” Actually these two names refer to the same mushroom. Because it was translated carelessly and because people did not truly understand the derivation, the following generations have been caused to misunderstand and mistake Buddha for a flesh devouring man. This is really a regrettable thing.

Q: Some meat-lovers say that they buy meat from the butcher, so it's not killed by themselves, therefore it is all right to eat it. Do You think this is right?

M: This is a disastrous mistake. You must know that butchers kill living beings because people want to eat. In the Lankavatara Sutra, Buddha said, ***If there was no one eating meat, then no killing would happen. So eating meat and killing living beings are of the same sin.*** Because of the killing of too many living beings, we have natural disasters and man-made calamities. Wars are also caused by too much killing.

Q: Some people say that while plants can't produce poisonous things like urea or urokinase, fruit and vegetable growers use lots of pesticides on the plants, which are bad for our health. Is that so?

M: If farmers use pesticides and other highly toxic chemicals like DDT on crops, it can lead to cancer, infertility and diseases of the liver. Toxins like DDT can diffuse into fat, and are usually stored in animal fat. When you eat meat, it means that you take in all these highly concentrated pesticides and other poisons stored in animals' fat, which have accumulated during the growth of the animal. These accumulations can be as much as thirteen times that in fruit, vegetables or grains. We can clean the pesticide sprayed on

fruit surfaces, but we cannot remove the pesticides deposited in animal fat. The accumulating process occurs because these pesticides are cumulative. So consumers at the top of the food chain are the most harmed.

Experiments at the University of Iowa showed that of the pesticides found in human bodies almost all came from eating flesh. They discovered that the pesticide level in the bodies of vegetarian people is less than half that in meat-eaters. Actually, there are other toxins in flesh besides pesticides. In the process of raising animals, much of their food consists of chemicals to make them develop faster or to change their meat color, taste or texture, and to preserve the flesh, etc.

For example, preservatives produced from nitrates are highly toxic. On July 18, 1971, the New York Times reported, “The great hidden dangers to health for meat-eaters are the invisible pollutants in meat such as bacteria in salmon, remnants of pesticides, preservatives, hormones, antibiotics and other chemical additives.” Besides the above, animals are injected with vaccines, which may remain in their flesh. In this respect, the protein in fruit, nuts, beans and corn are all more pure than the protein of meat, which has 56% water insoluble impurities. Research shows that those man-made additives can lead to cancers, other diseases or deformed fetuses. So it is even proper for pregnant women to eat a pure vegan diet to ensure the physical and spiritual health of the fetuses. From beans you can get protein; and from fruit and vegetables you get vitamins and minerals.

Some Benefits of a Vegan Diet:

Source: www.SupremeMasterTV.com/harms-benefits-flyer

- * Lowers blood pressure
- * Lowers cholesterol levels
- * Reduces Type 2 diabetes
- * Prevents stroke conditions
- * Reverses atherosclerosis
- * Reduces heart disease risk by 50%
- * Reduces heart surgery risk by 80%
- * Prevents many forms of cancer
- * Stronger immune system
- * Increases life expectancy by up to 15 years
- * Higher IQ
- * Conserves up to 70% clean water
- * Saves over 70% of the Amazonian rainforest from clearance for animal grazing
- * A solution for world hunger:
 - Frees up 3,433 million hectares of land annually
 - Frees up 760 million tons of grain every year
(half the world's grain supply)
- * Consumes 2/3 less fossil fuels than those used for meat production.
- * Reduces pollution from untreated animal waste
- * Maintains cleaner air
- * Saves 4.5 tons of emissions per US household per year
- * Stops 80% of global warming

PLUS MORE...

SAVE YOUR LIFE: BE VEG. GO GREEN.

For more information, please visit

www.SupremeMasterTV.com

Veganism:

The Best Solution to the Global Water Crisis

Water is essential to the survival of all living things on Earth. However, overuse of our planet's water supply, as revealed by the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), has placed this precious resource in jeopardy for future generations.

Below are some startling facts reported at the SIWI's annual World Water Week conference held from August 16-20, 2004:

** For several decades, the increase in food production has outpaced population growth. Now much of the world is simply running out of water for more production.*

** Grain-fed meat requires some 10,000-15,000 kg of water for every kg of meat produced. (This amounts to an efficiency rate of less than 0.01%; if any ordinary industrial process ran at this level of efficiency, it would quickly be replaced!)*

** Cereals require 400-3000 kg of water for each kg of grain produced (i.e., 5% of that needed for meat).*

** Up to 90% of all managed water is used to grow food.*

** Countries such as Australia, where water is already scarce, actually export water in the form of meat.*

** In developing countries, meat-eaters use resources equivalent to 5,000 litres (1,100 gallons) of water a day compared to the 1,000-2,000 litres (200-400 gallons) used by people on vegetarian diets. (Reported in the Guardian 8/23/2004).*

Also, in a further note, not derived from the SIWI report, increasing areas of Amazon rainforest are being cleared to

grow soybeans. However these beans are being fed to beef cattle. It would be far more efficient to feed them directly to people!

As many initiates will recall, Master addresses the environmental effects of meat production in Her lecture “The Benefits of a Vegan Diet” contained in The Key of Immediate Enlightenment sample booklet: “Raising animals for meat has its consequences. It leads to rain forest destruction, rises in global temperature, water pollution, water scarcity, desertification, misuse of energy resources and world hunger. The use of land, water, energy and human effort to produce meat is not an efficient way to use the Earth’s resources.”

So in order to significantly reduce the amount of water consumed globally, humanity needs a new approach to feeding the world, and the vegan diet meets this need.

For related reports, please visit:

<http://www.worldwatercouncil.org/>

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/3559542.stm>

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/2943946.stm>



Source:

http://www.suprememastertv.com/bbs/board.php?bo_table=featured&wr_id=129

Good News for Vegans

The Essential Vegetable Protein

A vegan diet is not only of great benefit for our spiritual practice but it's also very healthy for us. However, we must pay special attention to the balance of nutrition and make sure that we do not lack the much needed vegetable protein.

There are two types of protein: animal protein and vegetable protein. Soybeans, chick peas and snow peas are some of the sources of vegetable protein. Keeping a vegan diet does not simply mean eating fried vegetables. Protein should be included to complete the nourishment a person requires.

Dr. Miller was a vegetarian his entire life. He practiced medicine and treated the poor in the Republic of China for forty years. He believed that we only need to eat cereals, beans, fruit and vegetables to get all the nourishment we need to maintain good health. According to Dr. Miller, "*Bean curd is 'meat' of no bones.*"

"As soybean is very nutritious; supposing if people could only eat one kind of food and they ate soybeans, they would be able to survive longer."

Preparing a vegan meal is the same as cooking a meal with meat, except that vegan protein ingredients such as vegan chicken chunks, vegan ham or vegan meat slices are used in its place. For example, instead of cooking "saute shredded meat

with celery” or “seaweed soup with egg,” we can now cook it as “sautéed shredded vegan meat with celery” or “seaweed soup with bean curd sheets.”

If you are in countries where these vegan protein ingredients are not readily available, you can contact your local Center of The Supreme Master Ching Hai International Association and we will provide information on some main suppliers and vegan restaurants for your reference.

As to how to cook vegetarian food, you may refer to *The Supreme Kitchen* that’s published by The Supreme Master Ching Hai International Association, or any vegan cookbooks.

In order to obtain a list with vegan/vegetarian restaurants around the world, please visit:

<http://www.godsdirectcontact.org.tw/eng1/food/restaurant/>
<http://www.lovinghut.com/index.php>

“Initiation is not really initiation... you just come here and let me help you help yourself. I have not come here to make you disciples... I have come to help you become Masters.”

~ The Supreme Master Ching Hai

“Everyone already knows how to meditate, but you meditate on the wrong things. Some people meditate on pretty girls, some on money, some on business. Every time you pay full attention, whole-heartedly, to one thing, that is meditation. I pay attention only to the inner Power, to the Compassion, the Love and Mercy qualities of God.”

~ The Supreme Master Ching Hai

“Initiation means the beginning of a new life into a new order. It means that the Master has accepted you to become one of the beings in the circle of Saints. Then you are no longer an ordinary being, you are elevated. In the old times they called it “Baptism” or “Taking Refuge in the Master.”

~ The Supreme Master Ching Hai

Initiation: The Quan Yin Method

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 visions have been repeatedly described in the spiritual literature of all the world’s religions since ancient times.

For example, the Christian Bible states, *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* (John 1:1) This Word is the inner Sound. It has also been called the Logos, Shabd, Tao, Soundstream, 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, 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 you. The Transmission is an essential part of the Method. The technique themselves will bring little benefit without the Grace of the Master.

Because you 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. You do not have to change your present religion or system of beliefs. You will not be asked to join any organization, or participate in any way that does not suit your current life-style.

However, you will be asked to become a vegan. A lifetime commitment to the vegan 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 Guidelines are your only requirements after initiation. Keeping the guidelines prevents you from harming either yourself or any other living being. These practices will deepen and strengthen your initial enlightenment experience, and allow you to eventually attain the highest levels of awakening or Godhood for yourself. Without daily practice, you will almost certainly forget your 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 you, so you do not need to offer these to Her.

She will accept your sincerity in daily life and meditational practice to progress yourself towards Sainthood.

The Five Guidelines

1. Refrain from harming any living being*.
2. Refrain from speaking what is not true.
3. Refrain from taking what is not belonging to oneself.
4. Refrain from sexual misconduct.
5. Refrain from using intoxicants**.

* This guideline requires strict adherence to a vegan diet. No meat, dairy, 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 or video games.

But still, despite all this obstruction and ungratefulness of humankind, we continue to do good. We still continue to improve ourselves to do what is right, because it is right, because it is the challenge of this world that we always keep the way of God, we always keep the commandments of conscience. That's how we rise above all differences, all the praise and the blame to be a noble being.

(Extracted from A Saintly Mind Expects Nothing in Return.)

~ The Supreme Master Ching Hai

After you get complete enlightenment, you know everything, even many lifetimes in one flash; because with enlightenment, we cross the border of time and space limitations. When there's no time involved, then we know many things without having to spend a lot of time. So, sometimes we sit in meditation for many hours, but we feel like it's only one minute. We know many things that take many centuries to understand. That's why we must search for this inner wisdom. All the answers lay within.

(Extracted from The Way to Find the Treasure Within.)

~ The Supreme Master Ching Hai

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!

(Extracted from We Are Stepping into the Golden Age.)

~ The Supreme Master Ching Hai

Publications

To elevate our spirits and provide inspiration for our daily lives, a rich collection of The Supreme Master Ching Hai's teachings are available in the form of books, DVDs, MP3, MP4 and CDs.

In addition to the published books and tapes, a diverse array of Master's teachings can also be accessed quickly and free of charge from the Internet. For example, several web sites feature the most frequently published News magazine (see the "Quan Yin Web Sites" section below). Other featured online publications include Master's poetry and inspirational aphorisms, as well as lectures in the form of video and audio files.

Books

Picking up one of Master's books in the middle of a busy day can be a lifesaver. Her words are a clear reminder of our own true Nature. Whether reading Her spiritually informative lectures in The Key of Immediate Enlightenment series or the deeply compassionate poetry contained in Silent Tears, gems of wisdom are always revealed.

In the list of books that follow, available volume numbers for each language are indicated in parentheses. For more information about obtaining these and other books, please see the "Obtaining Publications" section.

The Key of Immediate Enlightenment:

Aulacese(1-15), Chinese(1-10), English(1-5), French(1-2), Finnish(1), German(1-2), Hungarian(1), Indonesian(1-5), Japanese(1-4), Korean(1-11), Mongolian(1,6), Portuguese(1-2), Polish(1-2), Spanish(1-3), Swedish(1), Thai(1-6) and Tibetan(1).

The Key of Immediate Enlightenment - Questions and Answers:

Aulacese(1-4), Chinese(1-3), Bulgarian, Czech, English(1-2), French, German, Hungarian, Indonesian(1-3), Japanese, Korean(1-4), Portuguese, Polish and Russian(1).

Special Edition/Seven-Day retreat in 1992:

English and Aulacese.

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Taipei, Formosa.

E-mail: smchbooks@Godsdirectcontact.org

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The Key of Immediate Enlightenment Book 1

Author: The Supreme Master Ching Hai

Transcribers: Formosa Lecture Transcribing Team

Editors: Worldwide Book Group

Design and Layout: Book Department

Published by: The Supreme Master Ching Hai

International Association Publishing Co., Ltd.

Rm. 16, 8F, No. 72, Set. 1, Zhongxiao W. Rd.,

Zhongzheng Dist., Taipei (100), Formosa, R.O.C.

Tel: 886-2-23759688 Fax: 886-2-23757689

Email: smchbooks@Godsdirectcontact.org

<http://www.smchbooks.com>

The Supreme Master Ching Hai © 1989~2015

First Edition: September 1989

Second edition: September 1991

Third edition: March 1994

Fourth Edition: November 2010

Fifth Edition: September 2011

Printed in Formosa, R.O.C.

ISBN: 978-986-6895-43-2

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