



*Pebbles
and
Gold*



THE SUPREME MASTER CHING HAI

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Biography of The Supreme Master Ching Hai

The Supreme Master Ching Hai was born in Central Au Lac (Vietnam). At the age of eighteen, Master Ching Hai moved to England to study, and then later to France and then Germany, where She worked for the Red Cross and married a German physician. After two years of happy marriage, with Her husband's blessings, She left Her marriage in pursuit of enlightenment, thus fulfilling an ideal that had been with Her since Her childhood. This began a time of arduous pilgrimages to many different countries that ended only when She met a perfect living Master in the Himalayas. Master Ching Hai received the divine transmission of the inner Light and Sound, which She later called the Quan Yin Method. After a period of diligent practice, She attained Perfect Enlightenment.

To satisfy the longing of sincere Truth seekers, the Supreme Master Ching Hai offers the Quan Yin Method of meditation to people of all nationalities, religions and cultural backgrounds. Her message of love and peace brings spiritual liberation and hope to people throughout the world, reminding all to uphold Truth, Virtue, and Beauty in life.

Apart from setting a noble example, Supreme Master Ching Hai also encourages others to beautify the world through inspired creativity. Expressing Her inner joy through diverse media such as painting, poetry, jewelry and clothing designs, and musical compositions, Master Ching Hai seeks to enhance the outer as well as the inner beauty of all people with whom She comes in contact. Her artistic creations, displayed in exhibitions throughout the world, remind us of the inner spiritual realms. Her poems have served as a source of inspiration for many renowned composers, who have adapted the poems to music and performed the compositions to worldwide acclaim.

At a banquet honoring The Supreme Master Ching Hai in 1993, Mayor Frank F. Fasi of Honolulu, Hawaii, proclaimed: "The Supreme Master Ching Hai brings love to places around the world still plagued with hatred. She brings hope where there is despair, and She brings understanding where there is misunderstanding. She is the light of a great person, an angel of mercy for all of us."

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Foreword

Pebbles and Gold is a collection of the very first poems composed by The Supreme Master Ching Hai. Many of the poems included in this collection have been obtained from relatives and friends who cherished and were able to preserve them.

The poems in *Pebbles and Gold* were written during The Supreme Master Ching Hai's youth. Central to each is the theme of love, sometimes personal and sometimes universal. Just as the view from under the sea is richly different than what can be seen from looking down at the ocean's surface, the poems composed by The Supreme Master Ching Hai contain a depth of meaning that extends to worldwide humanitarian concerns and divinely inspired love for all beings.

In the first section are poems written in the early school age years of the Poet. The verses are pure and innocent, yet they also reveal dreams for an entire generation:

I am still so young,
I yearn to live in innocence,
Not wanting to listen
To the roaring guns
And the piercing explosions!

(*To Mr. Comrade, 1962*)

Even as a young student, The Supreme Master Ching Hai's open and loving heart was unavoidably affected by Her profound understanding of war and the suffering of human life. This tension manifests as compassion, bringing a vivid clarity and depth to Her poems:

Abruptly one day, winter turned bleak and clouds saddened
As news came: my teacher departed,
Some bullet had punctured his heart!
Bright blood flowed, heedlessly soaking the grass!
Soft, green blades turned to red mass.
His wife knelt down at his side,
Face covered in mourning white!...

(Mourning Mr. Binh, 1965)

Growing up in a country that was full of upheaval, The Supreme Master Ching Hai soon recognized that true peace is born from within the heart of each human being. She expressed this understanding as a loving rebuttal to the longstanding belief in the inevitability of war:

Writing sad poems, I started at age eight.
Though not becoming wiser at such a tender age,
Men grow old quickly; wartime causes such haste.

If you aspire to be audacious heroes,
Be formidable, conquer the self,
And naturally, on Earth peace will prevail.
Use gunpowder to make firecrackers lighted red
Happy Spring celebration sounds will fill all walkways instead,
With young and old dressed in their best.

(The Self-Triumphed Hero)

In the section of *Pebbles and Gold* that depicts personal love, each poem is like a brilliantly illuminated candle that radiates The Supreme Master Ching Hai's spontaneous expression of human feeling through an elevated vision of reality to all earthly beings:

When Spring commences,
I set my affection on butterfly wings,
Soaring toward a world, infinite,
Where there is someone, beautiful as a dream!...
(*Four Seasons of Love*)

This irrepressible 'candle' held high by The Supreme Master Ching Hai is also a symbol of transformation. The romantic love referred to in Her poems can also be recognized as describing the universal love that lights the way to ultimate liberation:

Because we are in love, the Earth is so ravishing,
Because we are in love, the world becomes joyful!

I believe only in love,
Everything else on Earth lacks meaning.
Even if this world is leveled to the ground,
Even if the seas dry up and mountains wear down,
Love will live forever in the infinite universe.
(*When We're in Love*)

We are honored to invite fellow poetry lovers into the literary garden of *Pebbles and Gold*. May this collection of splendid verses inspire you to linger over their heavenly fragrance and come ever closer to your true Self.