



Master Tells Stories

The Supreme Master Ching Hai

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A Little Message

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

She + He = Hes (as in Bless)

Her + Him = Hirm (as in Firm)

Hers + His = Hiers (as in Dear)

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

As a creator of artistic designs as well as a spiritual teacher, Supreme Master Ching Hai loves all expressions of inner beauty. It is for this reason that She refers to Vietnam as “Au Lac” and Taiwan as “Formosa.” Au Lac is the ancient name of Vietnam and means “happiness.” And the name Formosa, 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.

The Story of the Two Potatoes

Today I would like to share with you a nice story about how difficult it is to surrender to one’s Guru, to one’s Master. *It is difficult to be a Master. It’s more difficult to find a Master. Then it’s even more difficult to believe, trust, and surrender to this Master.* The story goes like this.

There was a Master who was very perfect, the greatest one, but was not what we’d imagine a “Master” to be. Sometimes he’d scold his students. (Laughter) Yes, he might even beat one or two – just like Milarepa, the great Tibetan yogi and his Master. This Master did all kinds of things that we’d imagine a Master should never do. For example, if we came and said, “The Master would never get angry,” he would get very angry.

We have to be crazy to be a Master. (Laughter) If you are normal, you cannot be a Master, because in this world everything is opposite, is upside down. What is good, we think is bad. What is bad, we praise and think is good. Only when you are completely enlightened can you see the funny side of all things in this world. Then you can be crazy, very happily crazy – a very balanced craziness.

One day, this “crazy” Master told one of his disciples to take two potatoes and go and eat them. He emphasized again and again that the disciple must eat two potatoes – both of them

together. Then he called him again and said, "You must eat two potatoes."

The disciple took two potatoes from the Master's hand, went to the street, sat down, and began to eat. Now, it's very easy to eat two potatoes, no? You would think it's not a hard test. Anyone can eat two potatoes. So he was eating and asking himself, "What's the Master up to?"

He was thinking like that. But since he had been following his Master for a very long time, he knew that whatever the Master said, there was a reason and he must obey. So he sat there and ate. Having finished one already, he began to peel the other. Then came a beggar, very hungry, nearly dying, saying, "Please, please give me that potato, because you have eaten one and I've had nothing for many days. I'll die if you don't give it to me!"

Now, what would you do? Should you surrender to your Master or to compassion? The Master emphasized that he must eat the two potatoes together and the rule is that you never disobey.

And the hungry, not to give food to such a hungry person would be very cruel. He sat there, wavering back and forth in his mind between his Master and the beggar. But then the beggar was crying, fell down on the ground, and was nearly dying, so the disciple immediately gave the remaining potato to him. Then he went home and the beggar disappeared also.



He went home and reported to his Master what had happened. The Master scolded and screamed at the disciple. He was screaming out of sorrow because he was feeling sorry for the disciple, not because the disciple had disobeyed him. The second potato was blessed with the highest spiritual enlightenment, complete enlightenment, while the first potato was blessed with worldly wealth, success and fame. He said, "How stupid you are!" Then he sighed, "Maybe it is your destiny. So poor you couldn't get it!"

After that, the disciple was always successful in the world, gaining a lot of money and fame, but he did not become a Master, meaning he never reached the ultimate goal, the highest position in the universe.

This is the problem with most of us. We think we can handle everything and know everything. We think we don't have any ego. We think it is very easy to follow and surrender to a Master. No, it isn't easy. Even to eat two potatoes you have a problem. (Laughter)

So, it's hard to dream of doing any other difficult task because we have so many preconceived ideas, we have so many prejudices, social customs and the background education... which have been solidified for many thousands of years. We have been brainwashed with them and it's difficult to wash it out in a short time.

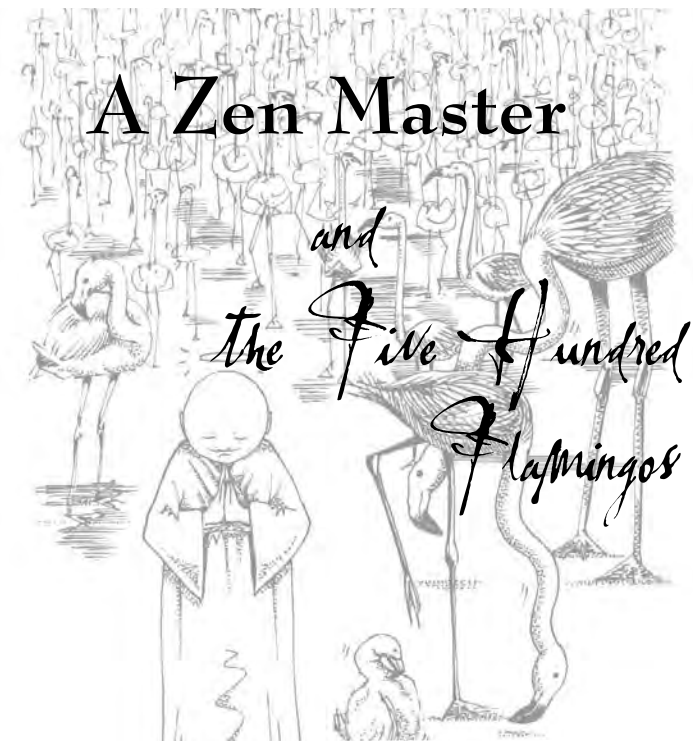
We always think we know all that is right and wrong. What do these prejudices have to do with our enlightenment? They obstruct our way. Whenever the Master tells us to do one thing, we do the other thing because we think, "No, no, I know it. My mother told me so, my teacher in school told me this, and my priest in the church has told me that."

We do exactly the opposite of what the Master desires us to do, and the Master always has to struggle with our prejudice. Most of us

are blind, deaf and dumb. Only the Master can see clearly. The rest of the people see only in a hazy way or half way, or do not see at all. We think we see, but we don't. We think we understand, but we do not. It is truly great, the illusion of this world. It is truly amazing, the great work of Maya.

It cheats us into believing in anything that we should not believe. We follow it very faithfully, very nicely and obediently until the one who is awakened, enlightened comes along to shake us out of this illusion. But even then, we don't wake up so quickly. Just as in the morning, the alarm clock rings but you say, "Ah... oh..." and it keeps on ringing. Then you turn it off and go back to sleep.

That is why we have so many religions and we have so many so-called paths to liberation. But what do we see? Our world is more and more populated every day. That means, from our world, no one has been liberated – or very few. Otherwise, why hasn't the population decreased? If many had been liberated and gone Home – become angels, become God's assistants, God's sons and daughters and lived in paradise forever – then the world would be less populated.



Long ago, there was a monk who practiced very well. He had been a monk for many lifetimes, yet he couldn't get liberation from birth and death! *You might have become a monk, observed the precepts very strictly, and been very virtuous, but if you cannot get enlightenment, the best you can hope for is to reincarnate and become a monk again. It is actually very good because you might not be able to become a monk even!*

This monk reincarnated as a monk many times for five hundred years – a senior monk each time, and he became increasingly virtuous. Though he was not enlightened, he kept

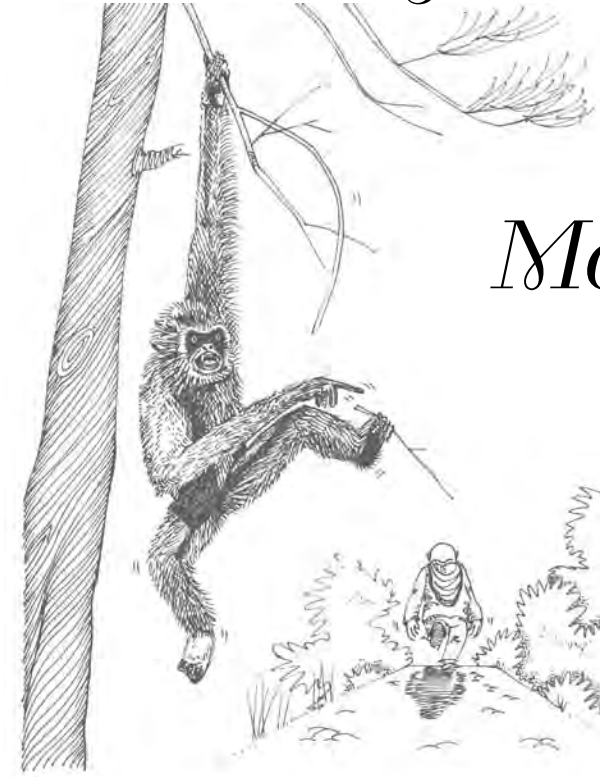
the precepts strictly and was very virtuous and honest. The last time he was a monk, wherever he went to beg or lecture, there were always five hundred flamingos that followed him. People were very curious about this phenomenon. Someone who had the ability to see with their heavenly eye said that the flamingos were really his disciples from a previous life. Then, he had five hundred disciples, but he couldn't lead them to liberation because his spiritual power was not strong enough.

His disciples always wanted to go with him whenever he went out – to receive offerings, to attend honorable feasts, or to give lectures. They complained: "Master, you often said that all monastic people are equal! However, each time you go out to enjoy something, you seldom take us along."

The truth was their master knew that they didn't have sufficient merit to deserve the praise and offerings. Being ordinary human beings, his disciples didn't understand, and they just loved material things. He didn't have any choice, so he took them along when he went out. Later, when the five hundred disciples died, they couldn't reincarnate as monks again but became flamingos instead! Only their master could come back as a monk. So, every time he went out, there were five hundred disciples – now flamingos – with him, just because of their precious master and disciple relationship.

Since he couldn't liberate himself, naturally he couldn't liberate his disciples, who must shoulder the retribution themselves. If your Master has tremendous power, He/She can eliminate the minute karmic hindrances that you have incurred. This is why you need an enlightened Master!

The Monkey –



Monk

A long time ago, there was a monk who became a monkey. When the Buddha came into this world to preach the dharma, the Truth, there were many monks who studied under Him. There were some monks who had already attained Sainthood, but many people did not know that. Other monks sometimes made fun of them because some of them didn't look very good and looked a little bit "funny."

There was one monk who was very, very naughty. Every time he saw one of those monks running down the hill, he'd say to him, "You look like a monkey running down that hill."

Because he criticized that monk – called him a monkey, for five hundred lifetimes, he had to be born as a monkey.

So take care, and don't laugh at the monks because between "monk" and "monkey," the only difference is two letters. Anyhow, if you make fun of an ordinary monk, maybe it is all right. But if that monk has already attained Sainthood, then you'll be in trouble. You never know which monk has already become a Saint or which monk has already attained a very high level of spiritual practice, so you had better take care.

Especially the Quan Yin messengers that I send to your country according to your request to teach you the Truth, you had better take care not to make fun of them, and not even try to attract them physically. According to Buddhism, if we try to waylay a monk who has been studying under a living Master, it is a very terrible sin.

The Parrot's Advisor

This is a Jewish story called "The Parrot's Advisor."

There was once a parrot who lived in a palace, an extraordinary parrot of so-called "royal blood." That parrot was gorgeous, most beautiful, probably somewhat resembling "me"! (Laughter) Its caretaker was a princess who loved it very much. They both got along very well, because the parrot was not only beautiful, good looking and elegant, it knew proper etiquette as well. It drank tea like this, which is considered having good manners. It walked with a royal air, with hips swinging side to side, advancing one step and retreating six steps... etc. So, this parrot was extremely elegant. Let's call it "Lady Parrot."

Because the parrot belonged to the royal family, it was adorned very beautifully. Even though it was just a parrot, as long as it lived in the royal palace, it was a member of the royal family. That parrot could talk and could perhaps even recite the Holy Names. It was very smart, was even fluent in the human language. Its cage was grandly decorated, made of gold and studded with diamonds, pearls, agate, coral... oh, many precious stones!

Every day, the princess sent quite a few so-called attendants

to serve this parrot. Each day it lacked nothing. It wore different hats on its head, different pearls on its tail and different rubies on its wings. Various precious stones were woven onto its wings every day. Its whole body shone brightly. Then at meal times, wow, blessed food was delivered to its cage. It did not have to go look for food.

The water that it drank was drawn from the creeks of Yang Ming Mountain, as it was said that the water there tasted better! Furthermore, this water was very soft, very mild for bathing. Therefore, there was a eunuch who went to the Yang Ming Mountain every day to fetch one bottle of water. Occasionally, on the first or the fifteenth day of the month, or on Sundays, for a change of taste, another eunuch would go to Miaoli to collect the water from the Nectar River.

The parrot itself was very colorful! Some of its feathers were green, some were blue, and it was very shiny and bright. It is said that the parrot was very sharp. If Master had not yet blessed the Nectar River water, then it would refuse to drink it. It would demand that the eunuch recite the Holy Names, and only after the eunuch had recited the Holy Names many times, blessing the water from the Nectar River or from Yang Ming Mountain, would it agree to drink it. (Laughter)

Unlike some of you here, who would swallow the food even before offering it to God first. It's OK. If you've already swallowed it, then let it be. There's no need for you to regurgitate it to offer it to God. Just pray to the inner Master to bless the food at the solar plexus. The blessing power works just the same. It would not be blocked by the linings of the stomach. There's no problem. The blessing power can pass through the throat and down into the stomach to bless the already swallowed food.

Oh, now we've come to the second part. I have no word to

describe the beauty and the wisdom of the parrot! This parrot knew how to maintain its looks every day so that it was always so beautiful. It didn't become beautiful in one day. Since it was born, only by drinking the Nectar River water, and eating delicious blessed food which had already been blessed by the Holy Names and offered to God, did it grow more and more beautiful each day.

Furthermore, the parrot meditated for two and a half hours every day. It was a pure vegan, and would not even eat one insect. In case it swallowed one by mistake, it would regurgitate every single hair of the tiniest caterpillar. It had decided to become a vegan when it was young, ever since hearing that all of its ancestors had practiced the Quan Yin Method of meditation. The parrot had practiced to such a high level that the princess loved it very much. Maybe its atmosphere was quite good. Its beauty radiated from within.

One day, the princess heard that in a certain country, in some distant place, there was a kind of very rare perfume that she didn't have in her own palace. So, she asked a eunuch to go get it for her. This eunuch was actually the best friend of the parrot because he talked to it every day. Eunuchs in the palace are usually very bored. Since they cannot have girlfriends, what do you think they live for!? Because of that, he usually felt bored, and as it happened that the parrot was there, he talked with it about his private affairs every day. Wow! The two were considered close friends!

The day before the eunuch left, of course, he went to tell the parrot! Although it was a secret mission, he couldn't hold it back from his best friend, and went to say good-bye! Sayonara! Upon hearing that the eunuch was going on such a long trip, of course, it would miss him very much. So the scene of their

farewell was kind of touching.

Though that parrot cherished its friendship with the eunuch very much, what did it cherish even more? (A: The princess) "Freedom!" What princess! The princess was the one who tied it down! Why treasure her? Only you would treasure Satan. The world ties you down, yet you treasure it, treasure this life, treasure this body thinking that this body is so great, so beautiful and so strong, etc. This body is what ties our soul here, locks it here.

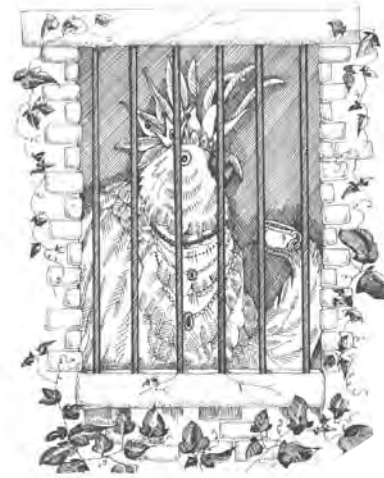
We concentrate on this body from morning until night, making it beautiful by coloring it red and green, like me. Then we forget our real Self, forget we are not this body. Now I have also forgotten my soul because it has run away. There is only this body left, and whatever it does, doesn't matter.

Thus, it treasured its freedom above all, thinking of flying away day and night. Even though it was there putting on red and green powder, painting on lipstick and whatever make-up, etc., its heart was only thinking of flying away and nothing else. Of course, it had to eat and had to wear those beautiful clothes because in the palace, you had to be polite and courteous. But its mind concentrated on the 'wisdom eye' the whole day long, thinking only of escaping.

So it told the eunuch, "Ah! We are good friends. I want to ask a favor of you! Please don't forget."

The eunuch said, "Of course! I would do anything for you." They were such good friends!

Then it said, "When you are out traveling, if you happen to come across anyone who looks like me, those parrots are my relatives and friends. You have to tell them that I'm trapped here! I am suffering greatly, and really not free. All of the good food here means nothing to me. Those pearls, precious stones are of no value to me. Can you ask them if they have any way



of rescuing me?"

The eunuch said, "OK! I'll try my best. I will definitely find some parrots and pass the news on to them."

This eunuch, since he also worked in the palace, he didn't lack anything, but he was also someone else's slave. He understood the value of freedom; thus, he understood this parrot very well! So he decided to help it.

He was gone a long time, looking for the perfume for the princess. While enjoying the scenery on the way, one day he came across a large flock of parrots which looked very much like the princess' parrot in the palace. He then recalled the request of the parrot in the palace. He went to greet those parrots, and told them the painful situation of the parrot in the palace.

Among this flock of parrots, there was a master who was the real master of the parrots. It taught them to practice the Quan Yin Method. Thus, they went to different places to meditate together every day. On that day, they were on their way to Miaoli for the big group meditation. Oh! That was in winter, perhaps they were going to Pingtung! Pingtung is warmer. This real master was also very clever, with much wisdom! Having practiced for hundreds of thousands of millions of eons, it looked very magnificent, tranquil, glistening with wisdom, shining with golden light, and its wisdom eye was wide-opened.

After the so-called real master heard about the painful

situation in the palace, it immediately fell over and died, seemingly dead. It just fell down onto his hand and died, leaving no signs of vitality, showing no signs of life, dead, absolutely dead, one hundred percent dead. No matter how hard the eunuch shook it, it couldn't be awakened, really dead. He gave it some water and opened its mouth, trying to cram something into it, but it did not eat, completely dead. Not a feather moved and not an eyebrow, eyelash twitched; it lay there completely "kaput."

This eunuch was very disappointed as he hadn't gotten any advice yet. He didn't get a chance to talk with it before it died. So, he just threw it on the roadside and left. But as he threw it on the roadside, that parrot immediately flew away, tat, tat, tat, la, la, la!... It flew to Pingtung, joining its companions who had gone ahead for the big group meditation. Uh! That eunuch was shocked! He couldn't understand it! How could that be! He was stunned and stood there puzzled for a long time.

Eventually, he went back to the palace. He couldn't just stand there stunned for the entire day. The parrot in the palace was very happy to see the eunuch. They both held hands and feet, embracing and kissing each other, saying a lot of good things!

"You've lost weight," one would say.

Then the other would say, "You've gained weight."

Those pointless, worldly, astral mannerisms.

That eunuch wanted to tell it many of the interesting things about the trip or some unusual things, but eventually the parrot didn't want to listen. "Those are useless, please don't say anymore! What you ate? What you played? Which karaoke you went to? What dance you did? Which beautiful girl you

saw? They are useless, you're a eunuch. Why talk about those beautiful girls!? They're useless as well. Who you danced with is of no concern and of no interest to me! Ayah! No, don't talk about those things!" the parrot said. "Did you meet any of my relatives, my people?"

The eunuch replied, "Yes! Yes! I met a large flock. They seemed to be on their way to group meditation. Each of the parrots had a very big glistening wisdom eye! I was shocked! I respected them a lot. They were very dignified with a look of a lot of blessed merits! Their lower jaws were lowered, their tummies were very big, and their shoulders were very solemn. Flying in the air, they looked like angels..."

Then the parrot grew impatient, "I didn't ask you how they looked! Did they tell you anything? Did they say how I could be liberated?"

Then the eunuch said, "No, no! They seemed not to speak your language. Although their wisdom eyes were opened, their mouths were not, and they could not speak the human language. Thus they did not tell me anything. However, since you've asked, I just remembered something that was very difficult to understand. That is, after I told them your story, there was one who flew onto my hand. Before I could feel happy, it died.

It 'pretended' to be dead, lying there. Then no matter how I shook it, fed it with water and good food, it didn't eat and did not drink. I gave it very fragrant, very rare food, but it did not eat. Very good water from the Nectar River in Miaoli, and it did not care. Didn't eat and didn't drink. It just pretended to be dead.

When I thought that it was dead, I threw it by the roadside. After being tossed away, it immediately flew away very

freely and serenely. It even said good-bye to me. Good-bye... It spoke quite a few different languages. Originally, I thought it couldn't talk and that it was dead. But it turned out like this. Strange! Until now I still can't figure out what it meant."

After listening to this, this parrot pretended to be unaffected by it! "Fine! Fine! Thank you very much! I also feel strange. This story is very strange. How could it be so strange!" Then they both returned to their own homes. The eunuch was busy with his chores and that parrot was busy eating and drinking.

The princess came to see the parrot every morning! The next morning when she came to see the parrot, she saw no parrot in the cage, only a dead body lying there. The princess was very angry and scolded those servants, "You killed it, you killed it!"

Anything said was of no use. She ordered them to throw the dead parrot out. When the servant threw it out of the window, at that moment, the eunuch realized the plan of the parrot he had met.

What do you understand? (A: Pretend to be dead.) Pretend to be dead! Right! Then we have to pretend to be dead to this world too. We know the value of the world. We know that the human body is very difficult to obtain. But we do not tell the King of Maya. What is the King of Maya? It is our brain. Don't listen to it. Don't play with it. Don't think that the world is very good to us. If we are dead to the world, then our souls will begin to revive.

Thus, since ancient times, any real practicing master would tell us to feel dead to the world, meaning we don't cling to anything and don't cling to this world, like being dead. Then we can be free. In fact, if we, from morning till night, feel responsible for people, feel

embarrassed, are courteous, then we accompany one another because we are afraid to hurt others' feelings or afraid that others will say we are no good... etc. Really, we waste a lot of time!

Today, we accompany this person at his birthday party; tomorrow, we accompany another person at his funeral party; the day after tomorrow, we go to another home accompanying another one at the wedding party; then the day after, we go to be a witness in the court room for their divorce because we are kind, courteous, etc. Then how could we have the time?

Today we receive this person's talkative telephone call; then the day after we answer to another person's senseless conversation. Also there is newspaper-reading, television-watching – at least watching the news, knowing who killed whom. Then the next day what? If we have a lot of relatives, we would really be busy to death. Thus, to be able to find time to practice in this world is very difficult indeed! If we are tied down like this, basically we are not able to get out. If we do not pretend to be dead, would there be any other way? No!

What is pretending to be dead? We pretend to be deaf and dumb. Let them misunderstand, let them scold us, it does not matter. We still have to have a boundary, knowing what is the priority. Whatever we can do, we do. The other things we cannot do, we have to let them be. We have to pretend to be dead – pretending not to know the courtesy, pretending not to know today is his birthday, pretending not to know tomorrow is his funeral.

If our time permits, if it is possible with our lives, of course, we can have any kind of courtesy! If our lives are already so busy, and we are tied down so much, we have to find ways to untie some of the knots, at least to free both our hands, or else if we're all tied up, how to move? We cannot pretend to be dead one hundred percent, but we

could pretend eighty percent. Eighty percent is quite free already.

Like the parrot, if it didn't pretend to be completely dead, it could pretend eighty percent. Pretending to be ill is OK too. They would definitely take it out to see the doctor. Then it could think of ways to fly away. But that would be more risky. Pretending to be completely dead is better. People would throw it away. After that, it would fly away.

It is the same with us practitioners. We lack nothing in this world, but in fact, we also don't feel free. What we are longing most for is our liberation. What is 'liberation'? Oh! We wouldn't have any desires, no greed! Our lives would be tranquil, contented. Our insides would be very happy. On the outside, we'd be able to take care of our situations. Then we would have been liberated in this life.

When we really die, since we are liberated in this life, then in the next life we would also be liberated. Because we don't cling to the world when we are alive, then when we die, how could we cling to anything? Like the parrot, it had all the good food in the cage, yet it didn't want to eat. How could it cling to it after it was able to fly and had its own freedom? Thus, practitioners are like this parrot!



The Story of the Saddle

This is a story of the saddle. Originally, there were no saddles for horses. It was later, perhaps derived from the benefit of some spiritual practice, that saddles were invented.

There was a man named Liao Hu. Unlike us, being kind, he was a very, very mean and very, very vicious government official. He died when he was sixty-two years old and went to see the King of Hell. This King of Hell was from Formosa and was somewhat peculiar; he was black on the left side and white on the right. I wonder why? (Laughter)

The King of Hell flipped through the book of sins and merits to see what good and bad deeds this man had done before his death. He found out that this man had created so much bad karma, and had never given to any charity. He had never been to Hong Kong to protest on behalf of the refugees.

(Laughter) He had never given any offerings to the temples and had never been in a church. He had never given money to the beggars and never donated a penny to Tse-Chi Charity or any other charitable organizations.

Liao Hu was not a vegetarian; he didn't eat meat because he was very stingy. It wasn't because he wanted to become a Saint that he didn't eat meat. Therefore, I have told you that being a vegetarian won't make you a Saint; it depends on your purpose. This man didn't eat meat because he didn't want to spend money to buy meat for the rest of the family. Sometimes when he craved it, he would hide in the bathroom and eat a piece of meat all by himself. Then he'd come out after he had finished eating so his family wouldn't know. This is how bad he was.

He had never attended the Supreme Master Ching Hai's lectures. (Laughter) So the King of Hell looked around and couldn't find anything to save him; there was only bad karma, no merit at all. Once, a disciple of the Supreme Master Ching Hai tried to give him a sample booklet; it was free. But he refused because he said the booklet would take up space in his plastic bag for groceries. (Laughter) How could anyone possibly save him?!

So the King of Hell said, "No Good! Forget it! Forget it! I have tried my best to search every corner of the book, but it is full of bad karma. Now you have to be born as a horse to pay for your past bad deeds."

So saying, he made a hand mudra and a foot mudra, and gave him a kick. Thus he fell and was born as a horse. This horse had its name on an ID card. That was how it was known that it was the reincarnation of Liao Hu.

This horse named Liao Hu grew bigger and bigger. It ate a lot of grass and was very satisfied. In its past life, it didn't want to buy meat, not even tofu, so eating grass was all it had, and it was quite contented. It never complained about eating grass; besides, it was all free! Even being a horse, it was still very stingy. It would eat the cheap, rotting grass, and save the fresh grass to sell to the other horses. (Laughter)

When it grew up, its master put it to work. It had to carry firewood, cooking oil, rice and other necessities home.

Sometimes, it had to pull a wagon with forty or fifty fat people on it.

Oh! It couldn't bear it, but if it didn't keep walking, the horseman would whip it. It hated the whole situation and couldn't take it anymore. The

horseman was

mean to it also. He would

kick it, whip it, and treat it cruelly. When he rode the horse, there was no saddle, so it was quite uncomfortable and even painful for the horse.

This horse had just been reincarnated from a human being. It still carried the temperament of a human instead of a horse. So it was very annoyed, very sad and finally went on a hunger strike. It quit eating for three or four days and then died. Some of the disciples of the Supreme Master Ching Hai took pity on it, and recited sutras, sang Hallelujah, and prayed



for it. But even then, its karma was still too heavy, so it went down to see the King of Hell.

The King of Hell was angry and kept yelling at him, “Are you trying to escape your bad karma? Can you? No, you cannot! I’m telling you, if I want you to be a horse, then you’ll be a horse; if I want you to be a dog, then you’ll be a dog. You cannot escape in such a way. Don’t you know that until you have fully paid for your bad deeds you cannot run away?”

The King of Hell scolded him until his own face was red-hot. “You cheated me! Your time was not up yet, your karma had not been paid in full, and now you went and starved yourself to death on purpose. This is cheating!”

So now the King of Hell made him into a dog. He waved at him from head to toe and gave him a kick. Thus he fell into the womb of a mother dog and was born.

Even though he was a dog now, Liao Hu still had some human qualities and intelligence. He was feeling very sad, very annoyed, very miserable, very worried, very depressed, very helpless, very powerless and very bored (which in Chinese sounds similar to his name Hu, Liao). (Master and everyone laugh) But he dared not commit suicide again, knowing that the King of Hell would punish him even more.

He sat there and thought, “I cannot starve myself now! Even though this dog food is really unappetizing, I have to eat it. Otherwise, I don’t know how the King of Hell will punish me!”

He thought and thought using his own dog thinking. Then, oh, suddenly he was enlightened! He said, “Now if I bite my master hard, he will kill me. Ha! (Master and everyone laugh) Then I would die without having committed suicide!”

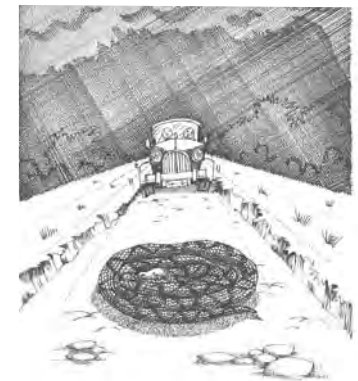
He got started right away. He recited some sutras, “Da,

da, da, da....” in order to liberate himself while he waited for his master to return. After smoking and drinking, his master came back. The dog wagged its tail, then bit the master’s behind and front. It was so painful and he was drunk and angry, so he picked up a big bat to hit it. The dog was kaput!

He went to the Kingdom of Hell again. The King of Hell was mad and of course, scolded it severely again. “You bad dog! How dare you cheat me again! Now, hmm, you’ll get fifty lashes first.”

After the beating, he was to be born as a snake. Gosh! Being a dog wasn’t that bad, but to be a snake is really troublesome. The more he tried to escape, the worse it got.

As a snake, the King of Hell threw him in a dungeon and locked him up so he had nowhere to go. Nevertheless, he was able to dig a hole and slip away. Now he dared not commit suicide or bite others, knowing that would only make him more guilty. So, mm, he thought and thought with his snake brain, and finally decided to crawl into the middle of the road to lie down and sleep. (Master and everyone laugh) That person was full of ideas – sleeping in the middle of the road at night! In ancient times, there were no street lights.



So when a car went by, he was chopped into a few pieces and liberated!

Looking at the pitiful sight, the King of Hell decided he had had enough punishment. Finally, he was victorious! The King of Hell felt sorry for his suffering and misery, and couldn't bear to punish him anymore. Ah! The King of Hell was quite compassionate after all! He must have practiced the Quan Yin Method. Half way only, that's why he was half white (Laughter) and half black! So he was forgiven and was allowed to be born as a human being.

Once again, he was to be a government official. But he was reminded to be virtuous and to govern his people wisely and kindly. He must not be greedy or corrupt; he must not be vicious or mistreat people. "Otherwise," the King of Hell warned him, "I will not forgive you! You must also keep the Five Guidelines."

He even told him to go find the Supreme Master Ching Hai to get initiation! (Applause) Just kidding! These kinds of people are very hard to save. It's better he doesn't come to us!

However, he really looked Her up! She taught him to keep the Five Guidelines, be a vegetarian, meditate two and half hours every day, attend group meditations, speak up or protest for others in suffering, etc. From that day on, he became a very good person, and later, a very virtuous government official. He would instruct his subordinates to use saddles when they rode the horses, not to kick the horses with their heels, and not to whip them too hard, as he remembered how much he had suffered when he was a horse. He was also very generous and gentle with his people. Therefore, later all his bad karma was erased.

Dangers of Magical Power without Wisdom

There is another story about some eager students who went to study with a master. Because the master had a lot of magical powers, they also wanted to have some. However, the master always refused and refused, telling them that they were not ready for anything like that. It is very dangerous to have spiritual powers without virtue and wisdom. But the students didn't want to listen to all this. They saw the master doing all kinds of miraculous performances, and they wanted to have some. Especially the one that raised the dead back to life again; they loved to play that. So, they kept pressing the master all the time until one day the master gave in and taught them the secret formula for raising the dead back to life.

With this new discovery, they were very happy. So they just left the master, because they thought that was all they wanted. They went together somewhere else. During the journey, they went through some very desolated places. For many hundreds of years no one had lived there. There were some bones on the road; they wanted to test the power of their newly learned skill. They did the mantra, hand gesture and foot gesture, bla, bla, bla like this. Suddenly all the bones flew into



the air, stuck together, and formed the original appearance of a live animal. All the flesh came back to life, then the horns, then the fangs also grew out again. It became a dinosaur from many millions of years ago. It was so huge. It chased and ate them, liberated them.

That is also one of the dangers of being a copycat.

Copying the master without having the wisdom of a real enlightened person, without having the power to control our curiosity, without having the compassion to do the things in the right

moment just when sentient beings need you to help and not because of your curiosity or because you want to show off your power, is very dangerous. That is why in our spiritual practice, we do not encourage people to use magical power. If you have any, you had better not use it.

As I have told you already, it is some kind of borrowed substance from the universal powerhouse, and it is not a higher powerhouse. Whatever you borrow from a lower existence, you must pay back with interest. If you have it from the most high, from the natural circulation of supreme wisdom and power, then it belongs to you, to the God power, and you don't have to pay back.

There was one master, I don't know the name. He was getting older and older. Then of course, his eyes became blurred with age, so much that he could not see the disciples and could not recognize the surroundings anymore. One psychic healer... (sometimes they put their hands on you and they can heal you, things like that) said to the master, "You come to me, entrust yourself to me, I can heal your eyes, make you see again."

But the master said, "No, no. I see what I need to see already, inside. Other things don't matter so much."

That is the right attitude for any spiritual practitioner. For us, we should never feel greedy for magical healing, magical power and all these kinds of convenient things. They are temporary, only offer a little relief and in turn, we lose a lot of things. There is nothing within the Three Worlds that we can get for free. Only on the Fifth Plane is everything in abundance and no charge. Everything else is made from material substances, in this world and within the Three Worlds. If we take too much for ourselves, then there will be a shortage somewhere else. Therefore magical power is nothing but to take something from somewhere else and bring it to another place.

Too Greedy



Here is an Au Lac story. A long time ago, there was a very poor family. When the parents died, they left some farm properties to their two sons. The elder brother was smarter, more conniving, and knew more about worldly schemes. The younger brother was not very sensible, but he was kinder, purer and had faith. After their parents passed away, they started to divide up the properties.

The elder brother was married, while the younger one was not. The elder brother said to the younger one, "It's better to let me take care of these properties. Since you have no wife, no children and you don't know how to take care of these properties, it would be useless to give them to you. However, since I know that you're a very good brother, I'll let you have a starfruit tree. The starfruit tree in that corner is yours and the rest of the properties are all mine. OK?"

The younger brother said, "OK." (Laughter)

Then, every day the elder brother worked on the farm. He became prosperous and lived well. The younger brother also lived well on his starfruit tree. When the starfruit were ripe, he picked them and sold them. The tree was quite big and bore much fruit. If he couldn't sell all of them, he would take the remaining back to make starfruit juice and preserved starfruit. He was quite resourceful. He preserved some in sugar, some in salt and some in vinegar. He produced many kinds of starfruit products, which became very, very famous. Many people liked them and came from faraway places to buy them. So he earned enough money for himself and lived comfortably and contentedly. He wasn't very rich, but he was easily satisfied.



One day, he went out to buy some things for making preserved starfruit. When he came back home, he saw that almost half of the fruit had been eaten up. He felt very sad. Then he saw a crow still on the tree, continuing to eat his starfruit. "Oh!" he thought. "How can it be?" So he asked the crow, "Why are you eating my starfruit?"

The crow said, "I'm hungry!" (Laughter)

It was very simple. The crow ate because it was hungry.

"When you're hungry, don't you eat?" asked the crow.

He said, "Of course I eat."

"Then why did you ask me?"

The younger brother was dumb and didn't know how

to argue, so he was a little dazed. He thought, "Of course, when the crow is hungry, it eats. Why did I ask? (Master and everyone laugh) However, this tree is all I have. If it's eaten up, I'll be finished, I'll starve tomorrow and have no food to eat."

Then he told the crow what he felt.

This crow was a strange crow; it didn't look like an ordinary one. Its beak was very long. (Laughter) A crow doesn't have ears, but this crow had big ears with an earring hanging there. (Master and everyone laugh) Its feathers were curly and very fashionable. Its clothes were quite beautiful. Although it was a crow, its clothes were of all colors.

The younger brother said to the crow, "It's not that I begrudge you the starfruit. Of course, you can eat them when you're hungry. You're welcome. However, frankly speaking, after my parents passed away, my brother left only this tree for me. I have to rely on it to live. I'm dumb and I can't do other things. I would die without this tree. This is my pitiful situation. It's not that I begrudge you the starfruit."

Upon hearing this, the crow was touched and said, "Well! You're such a nice person. All right, all right. It's no problem. Since I've eaten your starfruit, I'll repay you with gold. Is that all right?"

Then the younger brother said, "All right!" (Master and everyone laugh)

He could only say "OK" or "all right," nothing else. He wouldn't refuse people.

So the crow said to him, "Tomorrow, early morning at three o'clock, I'll come here to pick you up. Now you go home and find a piece of cloth to sew a bag this big, this long and this wide. Tomorrow I'll take you to get pearls, jewels and gold."

"OK!" The younger brother went home and made a bag

this big, this long and this wide – no more and no less.

The next morning, as expected, the crow was waiting there for him. The crow said, "All right. Now you get on my back. I'll fly you across the sea. While flying, you can't speak and can't open your eyes. No matter what happens, you shouldn't disobey my order, or you won't survive."

The younger brother said, "OK!"

After he got on the crow's back and held its neck, it flew.

Suddenly the crow became very big. The younger brother felt comfortable sitting on it and fell asleep. He could do Quan Yin (meditation on the Sound) there, no problem. (Laughter) No, he couldn't do Quan Yin, he could do Quan Guang (meditation on the Light) only.



We spiritual practitioners don't speak if we aren't asked. Besides "OK" and "all right," we shouldn't say anything else. The Bible also says the same thing: When asked, you should only say "OK" and "All right." You shouldn't talk nonsense. This means that we should conserve our speech and not talk.

This younger brother practiced the Quan Yin Method of meditation and was very good. When he was told not to speak, he didn't speak. Shortly after he started to meditate, he went into samadhi. Then they arrived at the place.

Oh! That place had beautiful mountains, beautiful beaches and all kinds of things. Pearls and jewels were piled into a huge mountain. Trees and everything were made of pearls and

jewels. The leaves were all of gold and the branches were made of pearls and jewels. Everything was from pearls and jewels. There were no stones, only pearls and jewels everywhere.

Then the crow told him, "Now you pick all your favorite pearls and jewels and put them in your bag. Then we'll go home immediately."

The younger brother said, "OK!"

He put his favorite and the most precious things in his bag, hung the bag on his belt, and jumped on the crow. As the crow flew him back, he closed his eyes and meditated again. He entered samadhi; then they were home.

From that day on, the younger brother was rich. He sold the pearls and jewels, built another house, married a beautiful girl, and then raised a beautiful kitten. (Laughter) He lived a very comfortable life.

A long time afterwards, upon hearing that the younger brother suddenly became very rich, the elder brother came from a very faraway place to visit him. The elder brother asked the younger one how he suddenly became so rich.

The younger one said, "Well! It was thanks to you and your merit. It was all due to your blessings. I became rich because you gave me the starfruit tree. Thank you, brother!"

Then he prostrated to his elder brother.

The elder brother asked, "How did the starfruit tree make you rich?"

Of course the younger brother told him everything.

Well, the elder brother's desire was aroused, "Oh! It was certainly my merit. All right, now you can move to my place to live. The properties are all yours. This starfruit tree is mine. (Master and everyone laugh) We'll exchange now. You've had the starfruit tree for too long. I was going to exchange with

you, because we should take care of our parents' properties in turn. I've taken care of them for many years and become weary. Now it's your turn. You go back there. Now I'll take care of the starfruit tree. OK?"

The younger brother said, "OK!"

He then moved to his elder brother's place.

The elder brother set up a hammock and waited under the starfruit tree every day. As expected, one day, a crow came and ate the starfruit. The elder brother pretended to be annoyed and said, "If you eat my starfruit, I'll starve to death." He then "Da, da, da..." imitating his brother's tone.

Then the crow said, "No problem. Since I've eaten your starfruit, I'll repay you with gold. OK?"

The elder brother said, "OK!"

The crow then said, "Wait here for me tomorrow morning at three o'clock. You should sew a bag of this length and this width. Then I'll take you to pick pearls, jewels and gold."

The elder brother immediately went home and cut some cloth. However, what he cut was as big as a Quan Yin shawl. (Master and everyone laugh) It was this long and this wide. He put two pieces together and that was it; he made full use of it. (Laughter) He sewed a bag this big.

Ah! He went there to wait at two o'clock in the morning. However, the crow wouldn't come early. It was on time. At three o'clock, it came to pick the elder brother up. So the elder brother got on its back. He was told to hold onto its neck, not to speak and not to open his eyes.

Well! The elder brother was very bad. He didn't practice the Quan Yin Method and wasn't a vegetarian, so his karma was heavy. The crow could hardly fly across the sea. The crow used special magical powers and made it over. The elder brother

heard “Hu! Hu! Hu!” and felt the wind blowing strongly. After flying for a long time, he almost asked, “Have we arrived there yet?” (Master laughs) Fortunately, the crow slapped him with its wing. Then he knew; he remembered and didn’t ask anymore.

Finally, they got there. Well! It seemed to be a very long journey. It was long for the crow as well as for the elder brother. Both of them were exhausted. After the crow put him down, it immediately went to take a nap. “You go pick your favorite pearls and jewels. I have to take a nap before I can take you back. What have you been eating to make you so heavy? Were you born in the year of the elephant?” (Laughter)

We were all born in the year of the horse or the rat, but he was born in the year of the elephant. Maybe his karma was heavier. (Laughter) After the crow took a nap, the elder brother still hadn’t finished picking his pearls and jewels. Whatever he saw made his eyes light up. He wanted everything. He couldn’t part with this or that. He kept selecting. After a long time, he still hadn’t finished.

Finally, the crow woke up and said, “You can’t do this anymore. Just take anything. Time is up. We can’t stay here any longer. If we stay here, we won’t be able to get home. Quickly get on my back.”

At that time, he quickly put everything in his bag. Well! It was very, very difficult for him to get on the crow’s back. The crow said, “No, it’s too heavy. You should take some out, or I won’t be able to fly.”

The elder brother was greedy: he took only one pearl out and threw it down.

The crow said, “No, no. It’s not enough. Take out some more.”

So he took out another pearl this big and threw it down.

“Well!” the crow said. “No! If you don’t take out more, we can’t fly. I can’t fly up now.”

The elder brother truly couldn’t part with them, but he threw down a handful anyway. Then the crow said, “We can’t stay anymore. We have to leave. Time is up.”

It took the crow a great deal of effort to fly up. On their way, there was the sea beneath them and nothing else in sight. A typhoon came and it was strong; the crow’s wings were not balanced. It tried its best to stay balanced; however, the wind was too strong and the crow swayed and became unstable.

Then the elder brother said, “If you fly like this, I’ll die. What are you doing?” Then he opened his eyes, “Wow! The sea!”

Since he opened his mouth and eyes the pearls and jewels slipped from his hands. The elder brother and his pearls and jewels fell down together.

He was told to make the bag this long and this wide, but as a result of making it too big, of course, the crow couldn’t bear the weight. We human beings are similar to the elder brother. We’re too greedy, so sometimes we end up with nothing.



It's a Topsy - Turvy World

There was a great enlightened Master and he had a disciple. The disciple had followed him for only a short time. The enlightened Master had already attained the Truth, and he often traveled around the world to liberate any person with whom he had affinity. The disciple followed him everywhere. This Master was so pure and upright that he was reluctant to even beg. Therefore, he always hid himself, and walked on the concealed mountain paths. On the way, he just randomly picked some fruit or wild vegetables to eat; he ate whatever was available. In this way, and after a long time, of course the disciple couldn't stand it anymore!

One day, the disciple went into town alone, hoping to find a wealthy household from which to beg. Eventually, he came to a household where many people were rejoicing and having a feast. Everyone could go in and eat the food. Extremely delighted,



he went in and filled himself to the full. He also took some back for his Master. Since the disciple had brought the food, the Master ate it. While eating, the Master laughed and said, "It is a foe and creditor coming back to claim and pay a debt. There is nothing to rejoice at!"

The disciple was perplexed by these words and didn't understand what his Master meant. A baby has just been born to that family. They are overjoyed and have invited everyone to the feast. They are so happy, yet the Master said that it is their foe and creditor coming because of a debt. He thought, "Perhaps Master has eaten too many sour fruit, so his mind is not very normal."

He didn't say anything, though he still had some faith in the Master, so he didn't leave.

That family had prayed many years for a child. Now that they were given a son, they planned to celebrate continuously for many days. The next day, the disciple again went to beg for food. Since this household was entertaining guests free of charge, it would be a great pity if one did not go to enjoy it! In a delightful mood, he hoped to enjoy the food again.

Unexpectedly, before he entered the door, he saw everyone running around in confusion and crying noisily. There was no food at all. Yesterday, the parents of the child were very happy, but today they were lying on the floor blaming God. It happened that the child who was born yesterday had just died.

Having had nothing to eat, he wandered around to see whether there was anything left over. People were preparing for the funeral, so there was nothing to eat. Therefore, he just quickly snatched something and ran away! No one paid any attention to him. He went back and told his Master, "Master,

something has gone wrong! The child who was born yesterday is dead now. There is no good food today, so I just brought you something left over from yesterday.”

The Master then laughed loudly. The disciple asked him, “What are you laughing at? Their child is dead and they are so sad. Why are you laughing?”

The Master said, “The world is topsy-turvy! The foe came yesterday, then they were happy. Today the foe has gone, then they are sad!”

The disciple questioned the reasoning of this statement, and his Master explained, “Originally, that child was the neighbor of this family. He lent some money to them before, which they never repaid. Later, when they became rich, they forgot the debt. After their neighbor died, he reincarnated as their child, hoping to consume their entire wealth. Because of the birth of the child, they entertained many guests and spent all the money. The amount that he wanted to reclaim was spent in one day, so he had no reason to stay any longer. He left after the debt had been paid.” (Applause)

We human beings experience delight, anger, sorrow and happiness, all because of ignorance. We don't know why we are delighted, why we are angry, why we are sad, and why we are happy. It is very difficult for us to judge who is our relative or friend, and who is our foe. Unless we pursue spiritual practice, we have no way to find out.

The Apprenticeship of Moses - Silence and Acceptance

*Y*ou know Moses? Everyone knows. Now, Moses was the great man of the Ten Commandments. He was supposed to have been in connection with God. He was supposed to have known God. He was supposed to have heard God, and then he was supposed to have gotten the Commandments directly from God. But then, even though they were God's Commandments, in between, they were broken, changed many times. I wonder why? Perhaps, it was not God's temper, (Master laughs) it was Moses'. Like my temper, his was very big. (Master and everyone laugh)

He was very angry, and he threw the stone tablets which contained the Ten Commandments from God. I think later he made them again. Probably took him another forty days to carve the stones into letters. Takes a long time.

So now let's see what else Moses did during his lifetime. This is a short story about Moses when he was still in apprenticeship of masterhood. He was not yet a Master, so his temper didn't have time to flare up yet. But still you can see

something here. Moses was supposed to have been a Master later on. So before he led the people from the land of Egypt, he apprenticed with a great Master.

The first discipline that this Master imposed on Moses was that of silence. The two of them wandered through the countryside one day, so the Master imposed the discipline of silence upon him. The Master probably accepted Moses as his disciple, and probably had seen that he was a potential Master for the future.

But nevertheless, as you know, to teach anyone is very 'easy.' (Master and everyone laugh) But to make him believe, understand, and uphold your teachings is very difficult. It's OK you can teach, but if he listens or not, that's another matter. And that matter is very important, crucial and very, very difficult.

So Moses began his apprenticeship with the Master, and the Master told him to keep silence whatever happens. Keep silence means keep your mouth... shut. But it's very difficult.

Then, the master said, "Doesn't matter what happens, you have to keep silence. Don't talk at all until I allow you to."

Moses said, "D'accord (French). OK."

Then the two of them wandered through the countryside for many days, sometimes stopping here, sometimes stopping there – stopped in a hotel. One day they passed by very, very beautiful countryside. The beauty of it was so extraordinary and dazzling that Moses couldn't help but open his eyes to look, and then opened his mouth as well. He didn't open it alone, he made some sound out of it, "Oh! Master, isn't that beautiful?" (Master and everyone laugh)

But the Master forgave him. "I told you to keep your mouth s-h-u-t, shut." (Laughter)

Moses said, "Oh, oh, forgive me, Master. Forgive. Forgive.

I will shut up. I will not talk again."

When they went further down the road, they came across a river. There was a mother crying on the bank of the river because her baby happened to have been swept away by the current. The current was very, very strong. Moses wanted to save the child and the Master did not let him. Of course Moses also could not do it because the current was very strong.

He said to the Master, "Master, you are powerful. You're almighty. Can you save the baby? How can you keep silent and just stand here!?! The mother is crying. You don't see? The child is drowning, and you keep silent!"

The Master said, "Sh! Silence!"

He also gave him a good look like this. (Master displays a serious, rigid gaze) (Laughter) You know that look very well, from someone I would not mention the name. (Laughter) When She is angry, She looks like that too. Her eyes become twice bigger than usual. (Laughter) Now, you know that person. Someone called something Tzu, Tzu, Tzu – I don't know that person.

Even though Moses obeyed the Master and kept his mouth shut, after the baby drowning incident, he was very, very troubled in his heart. But he could not ask anything. He kept criticizing the Master all the time. He said, "This must be a very insensitive man; has no compassion, no love for humankind. He



preaches all the time that we must be compassionate; we must have love for humankind; we must help the needy, the troubled, the ones in danger and all that; we must help humankind. And here he was standing around, watching the baby drowning, the mother helplessly crying, and he did nothing.”

He was having doubt in his heart – very, very much doubt and very, very much troubled, a lot of critical thoughts about the Master, but he just kept his mouth shut. Even though Moses begged him for magical power and things like that, the Master did not help. He knew it was not correct to criticize the Master, but he couldn’t help it, and he couldn’t dispel all this negative thinking about the Master for a long period of time.

Then, during the course of their wandering around the country, perhaps they went around to see other disciples. Before they didn’t have cars like today, so probably they had to go on foot. Sometimes they could go on horse carts if they had money. Perhaps the two didn’t have that much, so they wandered around on foot.

One day, they came to the seashore. They both saw a boat sinking with the whole crew members. So Moses’ big mouth could not help to open again. He said, “Look, Master! The whole boat is sinking. Did you see that? And the whole crew members are sinking. Can you do something about it?”

The Master said, “Sh-sh-sh! Keep silence.”

That’s all he said. Moses, of course, didn’t say anything else



and kept silent. But his criticizing thoughts kept increasing and increasing many fold. Very troubled was his heart – very, very heavy and troubled.

When he got back home, he complained – not to the Master but to God. He said, “God! You told me to follow this guy, but You don’t know what kind of guy he is.” (Master and everyone laugh)

God said, “Don’t talk nonsense! How do I not know?”

Moses talked to Hirm like that and continued to say, “But You don’t know, God. He saw a child dying and he saw a ship sinking with the whole crew members – thirty-odd people on it all dying, and he didn’t do anything. Not even move his heart or blink his eyes. That’s the person that guy is. And, You told me to follow him.”

So God said to him, “It’s you who don’t know. The child who drowned was a person who was meant to bring a very great war between two nations, in which many hundreds of thousands of people would have died and millions wounded. So it was good that the disaster had befallen him, and that he drowned – saved a lot of people’s lives. For that sinking ship, that was a ship of pirates. The pirates were supposed to go and make a very big plunder near the seashore port, very near to where they sank. It was good that the ship sank and all the pirates died. It saved the people of that town from being robbed, killed, raped, and all kinds of bad things done to them by these pirates. Now you know that all the innocent people were saved by the incidence of a baby drowning and the sinking pirate ship.”

Of course, Moses kept his mouth shut – finally, (Master and everyone laugh) and his “inside mouth” shut too. That is important. Not that because outside he doesn’t speak, inside he

is quiet.

So you see, Moses was supposed to be a future Master of some kind at least. And during the disciple apprenticeship, he was such a difficult and ignorant student. Can you imagine how much harder it is for any Master to teach ordinary humankind with lesser intelligence, lesser wisdom and lesser merit? Because to be a Master, he must be a very great person – a lot of merit and a lot of wisdom already. Very high-level person. Now to teach such a high-level person, the Master must go through a lot of hardship like this.

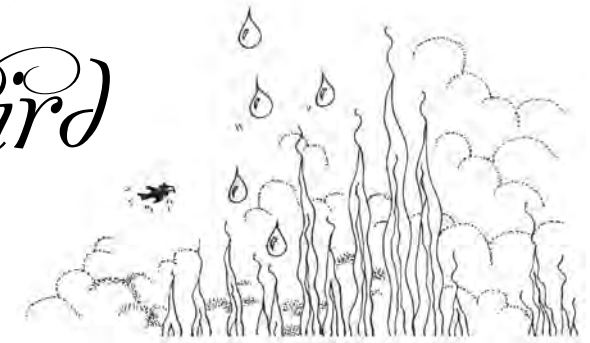
You just think if Moses obeys him and keeps silence, that's good enough? No, it's not. It's not what he does outside; it's what is inside that will project some kind of harmful energy, and sometimes very discomforting energy to the Master. Even though the Master keeps silent and bears it all, it doesn't mean that it doesn't hurt. It might not hurt the body of the Master, but it might hurt the mental or the energy field of the Master. Not the wisdom of the Master, not the compassion and the love, and not the real person of the Master, but it hurts his mental ability, maybe. Maybe it hurts even his body. If something is too great a burden for the mental ability to bear, then it will come out and affect the body as well.

So mental and physical both would be affected, if the energy is so strong and so negative. Mostly, when the disciple is so close, such as Moses to his Master, then this energy would affect him very, very strongly and directly, and it would be very unbearable. But the Master, of course, would keep silence and wouldn't talk about it since there was no evidence because Moses kept silent. No one would know that he was attacking the Master with his mental projection, which is just as hard-hitting as any physical beating outside. Believe me.



The Bird

that Saved the Forest



Now I want to tell you a story for little kids! It's about one of Shakyamuni Buddha's previous lives. There are a lot of stories of His previous lives, and this is about Him being a parrot.

Once Shakyamuni Buddha reincarnated as a tiny parrot.

This parrot lived in a small forest. It lived very happily without a worry in the world. Besides meditating two hours a day, it just flew around the clouds and trees, singing and dancing. All the animals in the forest liked it very much, so it went around visiting friends. They all carried 'ID cards.' No one was a stranger around there. So no matter where it went, it greeted everyone saying "Hallo!" Because it thought that God had given it the ability to fly, it felt really lucky and happy!

One day, the sky suddenly clouded and the world became very, very dark. Then a bright flash of lightning came! The lightning hit a dry dead tree. Around the tree was a lot of dry grass, so a fire started. The wind blew the fire around. Immediately, the whole forest was on fire. The animals ran all around looking for places to hide. Terrible! But they didn't know where to go because they lived right in the middle of the forest and there was no where to go! No matter where they went they saw fire coming towards them. They were trapped in an ocean of fire. They were in pain! Some could not breathe anymore – everywhere was smoke and there wasn't enough oxygen!

This tiny parrot, previously Shakyamuni Buddha, just flew around and around. It flew into the fire and smoke, and kept on yelling with a microphone: "Run quickly! There's a fire! Go there! There's no fire there, quickly!"

But the forest was too big, and the parrot too tiny to be heard.



There was a loud noise of wind and fire all around, so its tiny voice was lost in the fire and wind. Many animals got burned, and choked to death in pain. It still kept on yelling: "Go quickly to the river!"

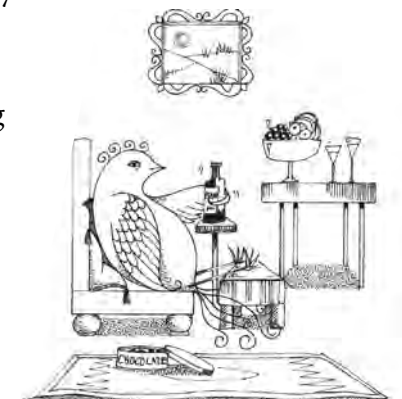
But a lot of animals could not run there.

During the emergency situation, it had the idea of using water to put out the fire. So it flew to the river, soaked itself with water, flew back, and dripped the water down onto the forest. Even though it knew it wasn't enough, it kept doing that again and again. It continued to think: "I'm doing my best."

So it sacrificed itself, flying back and forth to the river to soak itself up with water and fly back to the forest to drip down a few drops of water. It wasn't any use, but it still did it, again and again, until it turned all black and greasy. Its body was covered with ash. It looked like a crow rather than a parrot. It kept on doing it, even though it was very tired. Then it said to itself: "I am just a little bird. What can I do at a time like this? At least I can do the best I can. I will fly as long as I can."

At that time, the gods and angels in Heaven were sitting up there sipping nectar wine. They were sitting on their golden thrones in their beautiful, shiny palace. There was light all over so there was no need for electricity. They were eating and drinking happily, eating heavenly delicacies, and drinking that sweet nectar wine. They were kind of drunk, but very happy.

Suddenly they looked down into the forest because they saw smoke coming



up from there. They looked down and saw this little tiny black spot, flying around and around the forest and the river. It was difficult to recognize what kind of bird it was. They saw it soak itself in the water, then fly back to drop water on the raging forest fire.

One or two of them, with large mouths eating blessed food, said: "Ha! Do you see that stupid, little bird? Its brain is out of order! (Master and everyone laugh) How is it possible that it could put out the huge forest fire with just a few drops of water from its wings? Incredibly stupid! Of course, it's just a bird!"

They just laughed at it up there while watching it. They thought it was funny. But one of the gods in the group saw what was happening and was touched. So he transformed himself into a big bird. The huge bird flew down to where that tiny parrot was! The tiny parrot was still flying back and forth, fluttering its wings to drop water down onto the forest.

All of a sudden, the parrot saw this huge bird. It never saw such a beautiful bird before. Its wings were the colors of the rainbow! Its eyes were as big and shiny as a steel cup. Its whole body glowed with the elegant power of love. The parrot all of a sudden felt very comfortable! But it still didn't forget its duty; it kept on fluttering its wings and dropping water down. Even though it was very tired, it still went down into the river and soaked itself in it.

The huge bird flew after it, saying: "Hey little parrot, don't be stupid! Go take some rest! Don't go into that burning forest! You have to wake up before it's too late or else you'll just die in there!"

The parrot wouldn't listen. It said: "I don't have time. I don't have time even to listen to you! I have an important task in my hands! I have to do my duty. I'll do as much as my weak

body can do! I don't have time to listen to you!"

So it kept on flying back and forth to the river and the forest. It still wanted to put out the fire and save the animals that were trapped in there. It even said to the big bird: "I don't need a consultant now. All I need is help! I need water! I don't need those empty statements from a consultant."

It kept on going about its business, not caring about the big, pretty bird. This big bird, who was actually a god from Heaven, was very touched to see how the parrot sacrificed itself for the animals of the world. The big bird was not able to forgive itself. The god felt ashamed and thought: "What am I doing with all this blessing and enjoyment that I have? Every day I just eat cookies, drink milk, enjoy nectar wine, being of no use whatsoever!"

He saw that this little animal had such a contributing, sacrificing spirit, so he was very ashamed of himself. He looked up to Heaven. He saw the angels and gods enjoying themselves, looking down into the world full of pain and sorrow, thinking it was fun, like watching a show! He thought that he shouldn't live that way. Seeing this little parrot with so much compassion, with such a brave and sacrificing spirit, he thought that he should do something to help the parrot. It seemed like a better thing to do than to drink wine or milk and eat cookies every day in Heaven and not do anything else.

Those are just heavenly blessings. A lot of people practice spiritually so they can go to Heaven and live a very comfortable life. But this god thought that being in Heaven enjoying the blessings was too boring and it made him feel ashamed. So he decided to help the parrot! He said: "I shall help the parrot!"

He thought of how touched he was, seeing how the parrot helped others to try to relieve their pain. He saw how the

animals, running back and forth, were suffering. He was very moved, so he started to cry! He cried and cried; his tears were like rain. He was flying around and around crying, and his tears dropped like a heavy rain.

The forest fire quickly went out! The little parrot was also washed by the rain, and became pretty once again. It saw that it didn't have to work anymore, and that the animals were all out of danger. It started to laugh out loud. It sang: "Go! Go! Go!" (Master and everyone laugh) (Applause)

The animals that were out of danger all knew that it was the little parrot that made this happen. They all saw the bird flying back and forth. They knew that was why the god was touched enough to come down and help. They were all singing, dancing, clapping, and cheering the parrot. And they all lived happily ever after, just like before! (Applause)

Although this story has a child's spirit, there are some things we can learn from it. Living in this world, no matter if it's for our home or for our country, we have to do whatever we can to help others. It's our duty. We don't have to talk about great things like pacifying the world. All we have to do is our daily activities well, then that's good.

So take care of your house, keep it tidy and nice looking to welcome your family members home; give the kids a clean environment and keep them healthy; then you have done your great duty. Sometimes when we see disasters somewhere, like floods, earthquakes, fires, we should do our best to help, just like what we often do. It's our duty. There are a lot of things we don't know about and can't help. But we do what we can do. We don't have to think: "There's so much suffering in the world. It would take forever for me to help." All you have to do is help with what's happening in front of you or with what you know about.

The Story of a Bird



This morning, before we left the house, there was a bird. It probably flew so fast it hit the glass window and dropped dead in front of my nose. That was the bad part, but the worst part was not that. There was another bird next to it – sat there, not moving for half an hour or a very long time, until I discovered both of them. It sat there because it was waiting for the other to get up and fly away with it. The way it sat there, didn't move one inch!

Normally birds, even if they sit, they would move their heads here and there. But that bird, it sat like it was dead, watching over the body of the other bird. Probably, it was too shocked to move or it was thinking, "Why don't you get up and fly away with me?" Maybe it knew that bird was already dead but it still waited, wondering whether it might get up. Looked like it was dead too because I walked up and down beside it, kept calling someone, and it never moved.

So I said to that person, "Come, maybe both of them are dead."

Then she just went near it, and it flew away – the other one. The one dead was still dead. I was so touched by the