

ZHUAN FALUN (VOLUME II)

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Neither the vastness of the universe nor the enormousness of the cosmic body shall ever become known to man by exploration. The minuteness of matter shall likewise never be observed or measured by man. The profundity of the human body is such that it exceeds human knowledge, which can merely scratch the surface. Life is so complex and diverse that it shall forever be an enigma to man.

September 24, 1995

A wicked person is born of jealousy. Out of selfishness and anger he complains about supposed “unfairness.”

A good person always has compassion in his heart. Free of discontentment and hatred, he sees hardship as joy.

An enlightened person has not any attachment. He quietly observes the people of the world lost in illusion.

September 25, 1995

He who disregards
ordinary sorrows and joys,
A cultivator is he.
He who has not attachment
to worldly loss and gain,
An Arhat is he.

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Teaching the Fa at Lantau Island

Some people do not succeed at cultivation during their lifetimes, nor do they make a vow to continue cultivating in their next lives, and so they are apt to reincarnate as ordinary people and have no further chance to cultivate. In that case what they cultivated in their previous lives is converted into good fortune. Many officials of high rank are the reincarnations of monks, for instance. They endured great hardships while cultivating and accumulated some blessings, and thus they became, though their cultivation was not a success ultimately, high-ranking officials or emperors.

If they made a vow that they would cultivate again in their next life, were they not to succeed at cultivation in this life, that act would help to form a karmic affinity in their next life. They would possibly continue their cultivation in the same discipline in the next life, and it might well lead to a karmic affinity for cultivation. If a person makes such a vow, he will not be under the care of the earthly deities of low levels after he reincarnates. His master will take care of him, following and watching him as he reincarnates, ensuring that he is born into a family that will facilitate his cultivation. And thus he will again have a chance to cultivate.

A good portion of the monks in some monasteries won't manage to succeed at cultivation. The primary reasons they won't succeed are that many attachments are not cast off, they don't know how to cultivate, and they have not gained the *Fa*. Some people think that they can successfully cultivate Buddhahood by chanting *sutras*, but they won't succeed if they fail to shed human attachments. Their minds are focused on Buddha, after all, though, so after passing away they wander about in the temple, and follow along as others cultivate. That's how it is for them. You can't quite call him a ghost, but nor can you call him a monk, since he is not a human being. Mankind's predicament is quite a mess at present. Another thing is, some Buddha statues have no Buddha on them, and some false Buddhas are the forced result of the worship some people have done. Nowadays some people will tie a red strip of cloth to a tree and go worship it, and they worship mountains, or a rock. They will worship a Buddha statue after it is made, despite its not having been through image consecration. Such worship has brought false Buddhas into being. [These false Buddhas] look exactly the same as real Buddhas, but they are fake, and will do bad things in the guise of Buddhas. This happens quite often.

Heaven sets forth strict conditions for the achievement of one's ultimate rank (*zheng-guo*), contrary to what people imagine. In reality, Buddhism ceased to be effective with the arrival of modern times. Many people no longer know how to cultivate, and cultivation is now hard to do. A plethora of interpretations of the Buddhist *sutras* are now found in Buddhism. One monk will give one explanation, while the next will turn around and offer another. But explanations of that sort can lead people astray, and they all serve to undermine Buddha Fa. People can arrive at new insights only from the original words and meanings present in the Buddhist *sutras*, and only that way can they arrive at even a small measure of insight. But even if it's just a tiny bit of truth they have grasped, with that, they have improved. And upon reading again, they will become clear about another truth, and again will have improved. At different levels they will arrive at different understandings. Some monks have tried to set forth the meaning of Buddhist *sutras*, and some have even written books that try to explain Buddha Fa, setting forth rigid interpretations, claiming that this sentence means such and such, that one means this or that, and the next one... But the sentences originally uttered by a Buddha have different connotations at different levels, stretching all the way to the realm of Tathagata. The monk who does that, meanwhile, is at a low level of cultivation and has not come to understand the truths of a Bodhisattva or Buddha. Yet he

tries to spell out what the Buddhist *sutras* mean, when in fact that is no more than his own understanding in his own realm. His words do not contain higher meanings, and will only lead others to a low level of understanding, trapping them there. He has actually steered people down a crooked path. When he says, “What the Buddha meant was that...” people will be limited by it. People will interpret things in that manner, and none will be able to cultivate to higher levels.

Interpretations of this sort have proliferated over the generations. When people talk about the Tripitaka [the “Three Baskets”]—*sutras*, rules, and treatises—the *sutras* are to be considered differently; neither the monastic rules nor the philosophical treatises can be thought of as on the same plane as the *sutras*. The treatises in particular are full of haphazard comments on Buddha Fa, and diminish the meanings that the Buddha Fa originally had. Today’s monks use lay terminology to explain the Buddhist *sutras*, but they have failed completely. The original meaning of what Buddha Shakyamuni taught was just as it appeared, and any interpretation would be a deviation. This is one reason why it is hard for today’s monks to succeed at cultivation. Monks don’t know this, however, and when they cannot understand the originals of the Buddhist *sutras*—which happens, since they were composed with early classical grammar—they seek out reference works. But those reference works are full of irresponsible interpretations that the authors made based on their own minute understandings. This has been a problem throughout history. This was the case in ancient times as well, so don’t blindly believe books written long ago. They are no exception, and have in fact served to undermine the Buddha Fa. Buddha Shakyamuni said that his Dharma would be no good after a certain number of years, and that when the Age of Law’s End arrived demons would come to damage the Dharma. This is one of the reasons.

Buddhism is no longer found in India, and this owes to the irresponsible acts of monks there. One would take [the *sutra*] to mean one thing and the next person something else, making for a tangled mess of different views. Whatever the interpretation arrived at, it was not the meaning Buddha Shakyamuni had intended; the original meaning had been lost. That is why Buddhism no longer exists in India.

It’s fine to discuss together with others the insights you have arrived at, as in that case it is you talking about your own experiences and insights into a Buddha’s *sutras*. There is nothing wrong with that and it won’t have any negative consequences. What is worst is using one’s own words to set forth the meaning of passages from a Buddha’s *sutras*. Each original sentence is not limited to merely the understanding that presents itself at a particular level. You may find a principle articulated in there to be so right and so good, but when you elevate and improve further, you will find that that same sentence contains yet a higher truth.

Buddha Shakyamuni spent forty-nine years imparting his Dharma. At the beginning he was not at the Tathagata level, and some of the *Fa* he taught had been taught many years before. But he taught continually, and what he taught in his later years, prior to his *nirvana*, was vastly different from what he taught earlier. That is because he himself went through a process of constantly arriving at new insights and improving, and he himself was continually doing cultivation. But the fact is, he did not leave behind for mankind the canon of the universe; it is people of today who call it *Fa* or *sutra*. When Buddha Shakyamuni was alive there were no *sutras*. The content was the product of people later recollecting Buddha Shakyamuni’s words, and there were errors in the compilation process. The true meaning of some of what Buddha Shakyamuni said was altered, but man at that time was allowed to know only so much anyway. None of this was accidental; rather, it was fated to be so. This was because in the past no one dared write down cultivation things in crystal-clear terms and leave them to human beings.

People had to figure out everything for themselves. Human beings are in delusion and don't know anything. It's just very hard for them to gain insight into things.

What Buddha Shakyamuni left to man during his lifetime was primarily the monastic precepts. When Buddha Shakyamuni eventually approached *nirvana*, one of his disciples asked him, "Now that our master is leaving, whom shall we look to as our master?" Buddha Shakyamuni's reply was, "Take the precepts as your master." And in fact, the precepts he left behind could guide cultivators to Consummation (*yuan-man*). The precepts were ordained while he was still alive, whereas later generations enshrined as *sutra* things that they wrote down at a later time by drawing on what he had said in the past. I am the first to have truly bestowed cultivation things to human beings; this has never been done before. I have done something no predecessor ever did, and given people a ladder to Heaven.

Religions exist for two purposes, in fact. First, they truly make it possible for those who are good and can cultivate to attain the Way; second, they can ensure that human society's morality remains at a relatively high level. Those are the two things religions are to do. What I am imparting is not meant to be a religion, however. But nevertheless, truly imparting the *Fa* and saving people will have the same effect: That is, to truly have people find the Way and cultivate, to offer you a path; and to allow the many people who have heard the *Fa* and read the book to understand some principles, even though they might not want to cultivate, and thus they will not deliberately do bad or harmful things thereafter. So the outcome is the same, with human morality being kept at a relatively high level. That purpose is served as well. Truly imparting a practice and teaching people—doesn't that amount to saving people?

In pre-historic periods, some human civilizations lasted longer and some shorter, with some being of considerable length. In each period, the path to developing science that mankind took was different. People today operate within the framework of modern scientific development and cannot know that there are other avenues by which it could develop. The fact is that the science of ancient China was completely different from that which came from modern Europe. That of ancient China focused its studies directly on human life and the universe. The ancients dared to explore things that were intangible and invisible, and they were able to confirm their existence. The sensations one has while sitting there doing meditation grow increasingly strong, eventually to the point that the sensations not only become pronounced, but also something palpable and visible. Something formless thus transcends itself to become something with form. So the ancients took a distinct path, one exploring life's mysteries and the connections between the human body and the universe—a path completely different from today's empirical sciences.

The moon, in fact, was created by prehistoric man, and its interior is hollow. Prehistoric man was quite advanced. Today people hold that the pyramids were built by the Egyptians, and have tried to determine where the stones were transported from. But it is nothing of the sort. The pyramids in fact belong to a prehistoric culture, and were submerged at one point beneath the sea. Because of subsequent changes on Earth—namely, multiple shifts in the continental plates—the pyramids emerged anew. With time, the number of persons in that area grew, with the new residents gradually coming to realize the functions [of the pyramids]—that is, they could preserve things for great lengths of time. They thus placed human corpses inside them. But these persons were not the ones who built the pyramids; the Egyptians merely discovered them and made use of them. At a later point the Egyptians erected smaller versions of the pyramids based on the originals, and thus confused scientists.

Today man is merely able to view things in light of current knowledge, with the most noticeable result being that the many rules and axioms defined by the multitude of scientists

practically stifle people. Darwin said that man evolved from the ape, and people everywhere believe man did evolve from the ape. Consequently, they have gone about deriving this and that from the theory. Right now, science has discovered certain things that reach far beyond the history of modern civilization, yet people dare not acknowledge such things and instead regard them as impossible, and keep advancing things haphazardly and speaking nonsense. One day there will emerge a science of the human body. The physics, chemistry, and other scientific disciplines of the future might well be developed on a different basis, one not necessarily altogether that of the West. The axioms set forth by today's empirical science are quite narrow, and acknowledge only that which is visible and tangible; anything indiscernible to the eye or touch is not acknowledged. Its scientific axioms are not scientific whatsoever, and have completely boxed man in. When a person discovers via scientific means things normally invisible and intangible, is that not science? Should it not be considered science?

A true understanding of matter bears little semblance to that of today's scientists. When today's scientists study things such as neutrinos and atoms, they believe it's not safe, as the particles will give off radiation if not placed in a lead container. This is their perception, based on existing theories that are within their own investigative reach. That's just the little bit that they can know, however. In reality, all objects are alive. Buddha Shakyamuni said the same. Regardless of which dimension it is, the matter found there exists materially while at the same time being alive. Neutrinos, atoms, gamma rays, and matter at even more minute levels can all be controlled, but one has to reach the requisite level to do so. The *gong* that we develop through cultivation actually has powerful radiation that the cultivator is fully capable of controlling. Today's science is exploring how the universe was formed, offering up every which theory and trying to pin down its composition. A higher understanding is that the universe is comprised of time and space. And in fact, at the most fundamental level the universe is comprised of energy. The tinier the substance, the greater its radioactivity, and this is the essence of what happens at the most fundamental level. Today's scientists wouldn't go so far as to acknowledge this, for their knowledge is not at that point.

Matter on an extremely microcosmic plane—in a state that is ultra-miniscule—constitutes an original matter that is in fact not alive. It is a form of original matter that can't be conceived of using a normal human being's way of thinking. This original matter is terrifying, for any object that fell into it would be dissolved and disintegrated. The original matter, strictly speaking, cannot be called matter. The universe has a special property, called *Zhen Shan Ren*. Why is it that the minute particles of objects all contain *Zhen Shan Ren*? As it turns out, *Zhen Shan Ren* is in fact able to assemble and hold together the most original matter—that most original entity that can't quite be called matter—and thus assembles and holds together the most original thing, forming the tiniest type of primitive matter. After forming that, various kinds of extremely tiny particles of matter are assembled based on that, and these tiny particles are in turn regrouped to form the soil, stone, metal, light, and time found in different dimensions—the basic materials of the universe. These further give rise to and produce larger forms of matter, resulting in myriad objects. So, when all things and objects are created from this special property of the universe, they naturally have in them the restraining quality of the *Fa* of the universe. Thus, all matter has Buddha nature—that is, *Zhen Shan Ren*, the element that constitutes the universe. And this is Buddha Fa, also known as the *Dao*.

All things are alive and contain Buddha nature; it is merely that they are susceptible to becoming fatigued. With the exception of the special property, *Zhen Shan Ren*, any form of derivative matter faces grave danger upon becoming fatigued—i.e., the weathering and

decomposing of a material thing. In other words, objects disintegrate. Broadly speaking, when objects disintegrate, it means that the lower levels of the universe deteriorate, that the *Fa* ceases to function. When the law in people's hearts stops functioning, human beings turn vile, being no longer bound by moral values. When human morality is maintained at a normal state, the *Fa* can remain constant and steady; this is feasible as long as the human heart doesn't turn vile. But failing that, a human being must go through transmigration, and so no matter what he becomes in the cycle of rebirth—be it a plant, an animal, a material object, cement, or sand—whatever it may be, he will still carry with him his karma. And so, looking at it from this perspective, when mankind degenerates, it is not merely human society that is degenerating, but rather, all things. In the Age of Law's End, Earth, certain dimensions of the universe, flowers, grass, and trees all have karma.

With the existence of transmigration, it is possible that a human being will be born a human in one life and an animal in the next. Transmigration is not in fact limited to reincarnating as one of six categories of lives [as traditionally thought]. The six are merely what Buddha Shakyamuni described. A life may reincarnate as a human being, a celestial being, or an *asura* demon, just as it may reincarnate as something like a wild animal, a domestic animal, or a material object.

If man's science is to develop to a certain level, first and foremost the standard for human morality has to rise, lest something like a cosmic war break out. Human beings will never be able to reach the realms of Buddhas through technology. Why is that? What Buddhas and celestial beings have at their command are sciences and technologies higher than those of mankind. Put another way, if human beings want to aspire to such heights, they cannot do so merely through means of science and technology. If scientific and technological means were in fact capable of such breakthroughs, natural disasters would truly occur. That's because if human beings were to reach a realm of such heights through technology and gain divine powers of that magnitude, but their minds were still filled with combativeness, greed, sexual desire, various wants, jealousy, and all sorts of attachments, including to fame and gain—if they were to bring attachments of every sort there—chaos would befall the heavens. So that scenario is absolutely not allowed to take place.

The only way for human beings to reach such heights is via cultivation. Only by ridding oneself of attachments and desires through grueling cultivation and by assimilating to the special property of the universe—*Zhen Shan Ren*—is it possible to reach a level that high. What is science, anyway? What Buddhas and Gods are in command of is the highest science. Their understanding of matter is supreme, and at microcosmic levels they can perceive matter to a certain microcosmic degree, as well as larger forms of matter that exist in the universe. At present, the way human beings conceptualize it, there's this material thing here, then there are molecules, and then further down there are atoms, etc... And as for matter that's higher, they believe that planets are the largest. But planets are not the largest form of matter; there are others even larger. Buddhas are capable of seeing significantly large forms of matter as well as significantly minute ones at the microcosmic level. Even with such abilities, however, Buddhas, including Tathagatas, still cannot see the origin of matter; even Tathagatas cannot see how large the universe ultimately is.

The beings in the heavens say that it's very hard to cultivate, that cultivation is almost impossible. And why do they say that? Because Buddhas do not have any hardship to endure. Buddhas in the heavens have no hardship. All they have are pleasant things, joyful things, and they can have whatever they wish—the ultimate life of leisure. Think about it, then: Having vast divine powers and no hardship, how could they cultivate? It is really hard for them to improve.

It's easier for human beings to cultivate, but if humans don't reach that higher realm, none can ascend there. It's akin to a bottle that is full of dirt not being able to rise to the water's surface. It is definitely the case that a person cannot ascend there without self-purification.

The great wisdom of a Buddha refers to the great wisdom within his realm. A Buddha whose level is twice as high as a Tathagata understands the truth of the universe at a much higher level. When he talks about three thousand chiliocosms, he doesn't mean that every single grain of sand has them. The great awakened ones have found that some sand and rocks have them. But some rocks don't. Granite, for one, does not. With some rocks, when you pick one of them up you see an extremely vast world, and [the beings present there] look like human beings. They don't sense vibration even if you throw [the rock], for that is just how they exist; if you set it down somewhere or even if it is submerged in water, no water can enter its dimension.

It is a vast world. The way human beings view the sizes of objects is actually wrong. There is no such thing as "size" in the way that ordinary people conceptualize it. You see that that's how an object is, but that is only how it manifests to ordinary people. Be it a piece of paper, a painting, or a very thin sheet of paper—any one of them can have Law Bodies (*Fa-shen*) on it. Ordinary human beings find it inconceivable, but they are merely ordinary people.

In fact, in our physical dimension on Earth man is not the only type of humanoid. There are humanoids who reside in the seas. In the past some people made this public, but ordinary society couldn't accept it, and branded it a myth. But actually, what was said was true. When the continental plates begin to shift, many sea beds emerge. There are humanoids on the ocean floor, several kinds. Some of them resemble us, and some are rather different. Some have gills, while some are human from the waist up and fish from the waist down; others have human legs with upper bodies that are fish.

Lessons from Buddhism

Today, some monks have written many books. But what have they written? Black *qi* permeates each word and line. These persons can't see it themselves; the things inside are a chaotic mess. Phenomena like this are rampant in the Age of Law's End.

Buddha Shakyamuni's Dharma came into being in India, so how is it that it vanished there? While Buddha Shakyamuni was alive, the things that he taught and what he required of people were adhered to. When Buddha Shakyamuni taught his Dharma, if someone didn't understand it, he could inquire with him. And if he did something wrong, Buddha Shakyamuni could correct him. After Buddha Shakyamuni's departure from this world, many monks gave faulty explanations based on their own interpretations of Buddha Shakyamuni's words. Supposing Buddha Shakyamuni cultivated to a level the height of a house and the average monk managed to cultivate only one foot high, could that monk understand all of the true underlying meaning of the Dharma at different levels all the way to the celestial rank (*guo-wei*) of Tathagata? Buddha Shakyamuni's words, at each level, contain the cultivation method at that level. That is why a cultivator can cultivate upward on the basis of the understandings he reaches at various levels. When he cultivates to a new level there will always be *Fa* there to guide him. And for that reason he arrives at a new understanding of the same sentence of *Fa* whenever he reaches a new level. With the original text of the Buddhist *sutras*, you would gain a new understanding with each reading. When you improved further and read the *sutra* again, you would gain new understandings again. Just like this, as you kept learning and changing and improving your understanding, your cultivation level would elevate.

As soon as some monks discussed Buddhist *sutras* through the lens of their own interpretations, and did so using ordinary people's terms, or wrote books of that sort, they immediately dragged people into their own confines. They would put forth interpretations of a Buddhist *sutra*. Buddha Shakyamuni's words were of a very high level and contained so much deeper meaning. Yet those monks had enlightened to none of it. That was because their cultivation levels were low! So their words, when taken to heart by Buddhists, lead and confine people to the monk's own cognitive framework. It seems like a good thing they were doing, as it appears they were encouraging people in the study of Buddhism. But weren't they in reality undermining Buddha Fa? Undermining Buddha Fa can assume different forms. Some saboteurs praise it and disrupt it at the same time. Such damage is the hardest to detect and see through, and the most damaging. Buddha Shakyamuni's Dharma is no longer passed down in India precisely because of this.

Many people are trying to explain what Buddha Shakyamuni taught, saying that what he meant was such and such. But that is merely what those persons have come to understand at their own levels. Some people's celestial eyes (*tian-mu*) are open, and they have seen some truths at various levels. But [what they have seen] is not as high and profound as what Buddha Shakyamuni saw at the level of Tathagata, and the dimensions they have broken through to are not as vast. And people whose celestial eyes are open at very low levels can see only but a few dimensions, and those they do see are at very low levels. There are different truths in different dimensions, so when they say that something is such-and-such way, that's not really the case. Those who irresponsibly interpret the *Fa* are leading people into the confines of their own understandings. So tell me: Are they protecting the Buddha Fa or disrupting it? That is why no one is allowed to change a single word of the *sutras*! Just enlighten from and cultivate by the *sutras*' original teaching! No one is allowed to arbitrarily interpret even a single word of the

Buddha's *sutras*. It is all right to talk about one's own individual understandings, however. People may share thoughts with one another, saying: "I have come to realize something... now I have come to see the following meaning..." "I feel that it indicates that I didn't handle something well, so I should improve in certain ways..." or "This sentence is referring to me, hinting that I didn't do well. This is great." When that person improves and reads it again, he will find that the same sentence provides new insight. That is how a person improves, and it is in that manner that people enlighten to and understand things.

Nowadays there are monks and lay Buddhists who have written a lot of things and who regard what they have written as *sutra*. But only the *Fa* taught by a Buddha is *sutra*! How could those things that they write qualify as *sutra*?! And yet they call them *sutras*. Worse yet, many lay Buddhists and monks are pursuing fame and material gain, and they love ostentation. They are delighted with themselves when others praise them. A cultivator should really carry out his cultivation. Real cultivation is about getting rid of human attachments. Things such as the pursuit of fame and gain among ordinary people, being combative or a show off, having a jealous heart—all human desires and attachments need to be eliminated. So when it comes to those who have a strong desire to get ahead of everyone and showcase themselves in the secular world, one can imagine how many attachments they will exhibit. True cultivators find such people really hard to look at. There are also those who cultivate Buddhahood and yet have an intense desire for money and wealth. They don't say it out loud, but the instant their heart or mind stirs, people at high cultivation levels or Buddhas know it.

Here the focus is on those who do cultivation full-time [as monastics or clergy], but the same in fact applies to many who are studying Buddhism. Are these people really learning Buddhism? What do cultivators cultivate, after all? Cultivation is about none other than removing attachments. Very, very little value should be placed on ordinary human desires. Why is it that many people who have obtained the *Dao* have headed deep into the mountains and are unwilling to stay in monasteries in the Age of Law's End? The reason they entered the mountains and forests is that they found that many persons residing in monasteries were not doing true cultivation. Many of the monks there had attachments they didn't want to give up, they schemed against one another, and those were no longer places of purity or true cultivation. Hence, those cultivators avoided it by going far away.

Then of course, there is overt harm done by cults and demonic practices. These are easy to identify, and with one glance one can tell that they are evil. Harm done in the name of Buddhism, however, is the most severe. Why did Buddha Shakyamuni say that his Dharma would no longer be able to save people in the Age of Law's End? Today is the Age of Law's End. Monks can hardly save themselves, let alone others! I have described the things that happen in the Age of Law's End, and some people have suddenly realized the truth. The developments in today's society are terrifying. Just take a look and you will see that all sorts of false, wicked, evil, and chaotic things have emerged!

So here we have laid out these truths, but no specific persons have been named. Many monks have written books, and on the surface it seems meant to promote Buddha *Fa*. But in their very bones it is about fame and personal gain. People ask me, "What about so-and-so?" To which I've replied, "Despite his great fame, he wantonly interpreted the Buddhist *sutras* and marketed himself. He has long since been condemned to Hell, in fact."

Sutras, rules, and treatises—with the exception of the *sutras*, these serve to undermine the original meaning of Buddha *Fa*. Nowadays there are people who talk about the "Three Baskets." But in reality there are not three baskets: There are only the *sutras*, and a *sutra* is a *sutra*. The

others can't be placed on equal ground with the *sutras*.

The Decline of the Human Race and Emergence of Enlightened Beings

The decline of man didn't begin with the time of Eve, as indicated by Jesus. This Earth has gone through more than one civilization and primitive period; there were prehistoric civilizations that were destroyed. In some cases Earth was utterly destroyed or replaced, with a completely new one being created. Hasn't mankind talked about catastrophes that end the world? It has been religions that have talked about this, in fact. After a certain time passes a large catastrophe occurs, and after some time a small catastrophe takes place. In a small catastrophe people are wiped out on a local scale; when a certain area has turned very bad it is destroyed. There are earthquakes, the submerging of continental plates, the spreading of sandstorms, or famines and wars. A small catastrophe is localized, while a large catastrophe affects most all of mankind. A large catastrophe occurs only after the passage of many years. The shifts that take place on Earth, like the movement of objects, follow certain patterns. The large catastrophe that unfolds with its shifts is what leads to mankind's annihilation. There are a small number of people who survive, however, and inherit some of the culture that predates history, and they live a life similar to that in the Stone Age. Since all tools of production will have been destroyed, the ensuing generation has an even worse predicament, for much will have been forgotten. So the population begins to increase from a primitive state, and over time there emerges again civilization and advanced technology. When the human race again deteriorates, catastrophes again unfold. There is thus cyclical change wherein there are periods of formation, stasis, and degeneration.

In other words, the degeneration of man is an inevitability. But in each age when civilization comes about, invariably there are divinities who send great enlightened beings to the human world to save people. The purpose is to prevent the disproportionate degeneration of the human mind in relation to substances and material on Earth. All matter that makes up the Earth of this universe has a special property. Only with this special property is it possible to form primitive, formless things into matter that has form and life. But it is forbidden for the human mind to degenerate before matter does. That is why each time a civilization or culture comes about among human beings, there appear great enlightened beings. Great enlightened beings have emerged in all periods of prehistory. In the current civilization, beings such as Jesus, Shakyamuni, and Lao Zi came to tell things to people. In the civilized areas of different periods, there were different enlightened beings who were responsible for teaching people how to return to one's original, true self. They enabled those who could obtain the *Dao* to achieve Consummation; showed ordinary people how to cherish virtue; and required that mankind maintain its morality at a relatively level state, thus ensuring that the human mind would not degenerate so easily. When finally one day all matter in the universe was to degenerate, they would then be hands-off. But that is an extremely long process.

During those times, what the enlightened beings try to do is prevent man's degeneration and, in doing so, enable those who may progress in cultivation to truly attain the *Dao* through cultivation. Man did not, as Darwin claimed, evolve from the ape. That is a case of man degrading himself. Human beings all fell here from the many dimensions of the universe. They no longer met the requirements of the *Fa* at their given levels in the universe, and thus had to drop down. Just as we have said before, the heavier one's mortal attachments, the further down one drops, with the descent continuing until one arrives at the state of ordinary human beings. In the eyes of higher beings, the point of a human being's life is not for you to merely be human, but rather, to have you awaken quickly on Earth, this setting of delusion, and return. *That* is what

they really have in mind; they are opening a door for you. Those who fail to return will have no choice but to reincarnate, with this continuing until they amass a huge amount of karma and are destroyed. That is why Earth has witnessed many catastrophes.

From another perspective, however, Earth is but the garbage dump of the universe. There are countless galaxies and planets within countless vast universes, and on each planet there are beings. Human beings deny the existence of other dimensions, so they are unable to see those beings. They exist in other dimensions of the same planets [as the ones that we see], not our dimension, and thus ordinary people cannot see them. It's similar to how human beings say that the Mars of this dimension is hot, but if one were to break through this dimension, it would prove to be somewhat cold over on the other side. Many people with supernatural abilities gaze at the Sun, and after doing so for a while find it no longer to be hot. And after gazing again, they find that it is dark. Looking yet again, it is seen to be a cold and refreshing world. In this material dimension it manifests in one way, while in another material dimension it manifests otherwise. So, there are living beings found everywhere, and that includes human beings. And when they are not in line with the standard of a given level, bit by bit they drop. It's analogous to a school student failing to advance to a higher grade, only in this case they ultimately fell to the point of being among ordinary human beings. The human beings in the universe who are bad fall downwards, falling to the very center of the universe—Earth.

A person who dwells in the human world goes through reincarnation, and there is no guarantee he will be reborn as a human being. He might reincarnate into any of a number of different material things, different plants, different animals, or even microorganisms. And throughout the course of his reincarnations, the wrong that he does is always carried with him, and that is karma. What a being can carry along are namely virtue and karma, and they are always with him. If someone whose karma is large reincarnates as a tree, that tree will have karma. And if he reincarnates as an animal, that animal will have karma. The bricks, soil, rocks, animals, and plants on Earth can all have karma. Why is it that the medicine taken by or injected into patients in the Age of Law's End is not as effective as in the past? It's because today's human beings, having generated an enormous amount of karma, carry strong karma on them, and thus the medicine's original efficacy is gone and it's not in the least capable of treating that condition. Yet if a larger dose of medicine were administered, the patient would be poisoned. Today many diseases are incurable. Such is the state of the entire planet; everything has in fact degenerated to a grave extent. Jesus was able to bear man's sins, and Buddha Shakyamuni spent forty-nine years saving people, laboring tremendously. Didn't they set out to broadly save sentient beings? Then why didn't they just send everyone right up to heaven? Because people did not meet the standards of higher planes; for this reason they couldn't go there. Each level has its standard. If you are not qualified to be a college student, can you go to college? The reason you can't go [to heaven] is that there are far too many things you can't let go of, and your body is too encumbered. Wherever your moral standard is, that's where you are. The only way [to ascend] is analogous to attending school: If you can make it to the next grade or year, then you will go there. The rest will turn ever more degenerate and be destroyed. When garbage turns foul it shouldn't be allowed to contaminate the universe. It thus has to be destroyed.

Broadly saving sentient beings is what Buddhas preach and make a practice of. Or, more specifically, it is at the Tathagata level that saving sentient beings is of concern. Buddhas whose level is twice as high as Tathagata do not look after the affairs of ordinary human beings. Were they to do so, the utterance of just one sentence of theirs would cause changes among ordinary humans. So they cannot look after them, as their power is too great. For a greater Buddha, Earth

isn't large enough for so much as his toe; and for a still greater Buddha, Earth is too small even for his hair follicle. The words a Buddha utters are *Fa* and, when spoken, cause immediate changes. For this reason they never get involved in affairs on Earth. The only ones who make a practice of broadly saving sentient beings are Tathagatas and Bodhisattvas.

Tathagata Buddhas refer to human beings as ordinary beings, but even higher divine beings at very high levels look upon Tathagatas, upon reaching that plane and looking back, as ordinary beings. In the eyes of a divine being at that high of a level, human beings don't amount even to microorganisms. Upon taking a look, [they would say,] "Such a rotten place, demolish it! Destroy it!" Earth is such a place. Those who show pity toward human beings are the Buddhas in closest proximity to human beings. Jesus was at the level of Tathagata, and so was Lao Zi. Those at higher levels don't care about human affairs. If human beings call out to them, they cannot hear it. A human being's so much as calling out their names amounts to insulting them. It's like a sound coming from a lump of feces, calling out your name.

Scholarship and Cultivation Are Two Different Things

Jesus, like others, was at the Tathagata level. In the past, Tathagata was the lowest status among Buddhas. It used to be that those below Tathagata status were not referred to as Buddhas; they were called “Bodhisattva” or “Arhat.” Each Tathagata has his own heavenly kingdom (*tian-guo*). There are over one hundred Tathagatas in our Milky Way. That means that there are over one hundred worlds of Buddhas’ heavenly kingdoms. Each such world is ruled by a Tathagata. The Tathagata in each heavenly kingdom world has his own set of cultivation methods, his own set of methods for saving people. The formation of one’s world is directly related to one’s own cultivation. The creation of one’s world is the product of cultivation. But these worlds are not something that modern man can create through cultivation. They came into being countless eons ago.

There is an issue here. As ordinary people, we might think that as we cultivate it’s good to enrich our minds by learning more cultivation methods and coming to know more of what’s taught in different religions. And people regard such things as their ordinary people’s wisdom and knowledge. Actually, they are not knowledge in the ordinary sense, and you can’t view these things with ordinary concepts. Why is it that a human being has to focus on cultivating his *xinxing* in cultivation, and why do the Daoist practices emphasize virtue? Because this universe has a *Fa*, a special property. This special property of the universe has different requirements for different beings at different levels. Human beings are at this level of ordinary beings, so they need to meet the moral standard set for ordinary human beings. Why is it that they can’t make progress [in cultivation] unless they take virtue to be important? It’s because the levels beyond ordinary human beings have standards for heavenly beings, and if you don’t measure up to them, you won’t be able to go there. Why can divine beings in the heavens fall? Why can an Arhat fall when he fails to cultivate well? The reason is that they no longer meet the standards at their respective levels.

So, there are over one hundred heavenly kingdoms in this Milky Way, and each heavenly kingdom has one Tathagata presiding over it. The qualities and composition of his heavenly kingdom are formed by his cultivation method. We have found that, be it in religious practices or other cultivation ways, the motions at the surface are quite simple—a meditation with conjoining of hands (*jie-yin*) will do. Even in the case of the Daoist school, which requires more motions, there are only but a few and they are simple. Then how is it such practices manage to reach the lofty realms of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and Arhats? It’s because the true development and transformation of *gong* is extremely complex. The person’s very cells have to be evolved and transformed, a whole array of divine powers have to be developed, and there are a great many things yet unknown to man—things that are appropriate only for certain levels—and these too must be developed. To use an analogy, they are more intricate than even the most complicated precision instruments known to the human world, and are simply beyond man’s reach. There is thus a saying in the cultivation world, which goes, “Cultivation is up to you, while *gong* is up to the master.” In other words, a true cultivation method... Even though people of the Daoist school have discussed cultivation methods, those represent merely principles at the surface level and an aspiration. They are merely conceptual. If one truly aspires to cultivate real *gong* that’s comprised of high-energy matter, he needs to have that aspiration of his own accord, the desire to do it. But the real evolving that takes place in other dimensions is extraordinarily complex, and beyond the means of human beings. It is all done by the person’s master.

Then, there’s an issue here. If you mix things from other practices into your cultivation,

problems will come about. In the past, monks were not allowed to have contact with other practices, and for generations monasteries strictly prohibited monks from reading the texts of other practices. Today's monks are a mess. It used to be that monks couldn't have any worldly possessions, and they were utterly forbidden from reading the texts of other practices. The reason is, it's essential to make him stay with one single cultivation method, holding fast to one cultivation discipline. Only when his mind and thoughts are filled with the content of one practice will he be able to steadily cultivate higher, making his way up a singular path. Otherwise, if you mix in things from other practices it is akin to putting a camera part into a television set—it will immediately break. I'm just illustrating a point. If a person mixes things into his cultivation, his whole practice will be fouled up, and he will no longer make progress. Furthermore, it's hard to discern the true things from the false, and if you mix in wicked, false things, you will likely end up having cultivated completely in vain. Even your master would have no remedy, for it would be a problem of your *xinxing*.

The [process of] developing and evolving *gong* is extremely complicated, but people have treated it as if it were some ordinary human theory. "I'll learn a little from Christianity, a little from Buddhism, a little from Daoism, and a little from Confucianism." They may refer to it as "several teachings under the same roof," but that's in fact nonsense. This is the biggest problem that has arisen in the Age of Law's End. Every human being has Buddha nature, has a wish to cultivate, and wants to be good. However, people have treated these things as ordinary human theory. It might be the case with ordinary human skills that the more you know, the better. But a person [who mixes in other practices] is only compounding the mess at hand. He will have no way to cultivate, and have not a trace of *gong*.

Buddha Nature

A notion, once formed, will control you for the duration of your life, influencing your thinking and even the full gamut of emotions, such as your happiness, anger, sorrow, and joy. It is formed postnatally. If this thing persists for some time, it will become part of a person's thinking, melding into the brain of that person's true self, at which point it will shape his temperament.

The notions that are developed will obstruct and control a person for the remainder of his life. A human notion is usually selfish—or worse—and thus generates thought karma which, in turn, controls the person. A human being is to be governed by his master soul (*zhu yuan-shen*). When your master soul becomes lax and is replaced by notions, you have unconditionally surrendered, and your life is now under their control.

The self that is you is the innate self, and it does not change. But a human being tends to easily form notions when perceiving things, and that notion is not you. If you can manage not to form any notions, when you look at something you will have the perception of your own kind, innate nature—the view of the true you—and look at the matter charitably. The more the true you comes to the fore, the higher your plane of thought is and the closer your thoughts are to being True, and thus the greater the extent to which your thoughts embody the realm of your innate, kind nature. The extremely, extremely microscopic particles that comprise the human body make up the nature of a human being, something that never changes. When the boundaries that confine a person's thinking are removed, man's kind disposition, temperament, character, and traits become readily apparent, and that is the true you.

The master soul will not change on account of the person having developed a notion. The master soul will not change its intrinsic qualities on account of the notion that the person developed. It can however be the case that, owing to various human notions and forms of karma, a person's innate nature is buried, covered up, fully encased, and unable to shine through. But it will not change. That is because karma does not have matter as fine or as tiny as that in it. Karma is produced among ordinary human beings, so it is a substance of ordinary man. It's not possible for that material to be so microcosmic, whereas when the life of a human being is created, extremely microcosmic substances are used. That is why karma cannot penetrate it. It is merely that the person's original nature has been buried. One's original nature has its own way of looking at things. If you can truly remove the notions formed after birth and recover the perception of your original nature, that will be where you came from, the earliest notion that you formed—that is, the notion you had at the place where you were first created. But it is very hard to vanquish thinking and notions acquired after birth, for that is what cultivation is all about.

The *Fa* has different manifestations at different levels. At a certain level, it has its manifestations at that level. If you are a being born at that level, your thinking is going to mirror the notions of the *Fa* at that level. When your true original nature returns, that will be the level at which you will grasp things, and that standard is you, yourself.

Karma doesn't have the standard *Zhen Shan Ren*; it evaluates things according to the standard held at the time when notions were formed. It may turn a person into what ordinary people call a "cunning fellow" or "worldly" person. When this happens, it is a case of different forms of thought-karma produced as a person cultivates acting up, and they will impede cultivation. If people were not impeded by karma, cultivation would be easy. Karma such as this was formed under specific circumstances and in the context of the moral standards of the past few years, so it evaluates things in light of those standards. If large amounts of this material are

formed, the person will be under its sway for the rest of his life. When the notion that was developed thinks that something is good or bad, that person will think so as well and think that things should be done accordingly. But his real self no longer exists. His real self is completely encased and smothered by his unkind, acquired notions. He no longer has his own, true standard for telling good from bad.

A notion is formed inside the brain's thoughts, and the thought karma generated by a notion is a cluster of karma that takes shape atop a person's head. What about a kind thought (*shan nian*), then? Shakyamuni's school has taught that the mere starting of a thought means karma. And in fact, what is referred to as a "kind thought" is seen to be otherwise if measured with a higher standard, or with the requirements of the higher standard of *Zhen Shan Ren*.

This means that an ordinary person who inhabits this world cannot find himself. And such a notion controls a person for not just one lifetime, but continually onward. Only when a change takes place will it be eliminated. Failing that, it will continue to exert control. When the notion gets progressively stronger, the person's real self will truly cease to exist. It is now said that the karma is piled up layer after layer. And it has indeed reached that point. Just look at ordinary people. They know not what they spend their days on, nor for what they live!

People have different spiritual potentials (*gen-ji*) and powers of insight (*wu-xing*). That's the idea. Some persons can come to realize these things, which means the person's Buddha nature can be recovered, and there is still hope for him. Some persons cannot realize them, however, and that means that he is buried too deeply in acquired ways of thinking. There is no hope for him, in that case.

In the Dao without Cultivating the Dao

Cultivation is named as such because it provides a method of cultivating oneself, a path to walk. There was a saying in the past to the effect of, “This person doesn’t cultivate the *Dao*, and yet he is in the *Dao*.” While following a lesser path, he values “nothingness,” or “emptiness.” He lives out his life in this world by following the course of fate. He is at peace with the world. He thinks, “Give it to me if it is meant to be mine, and if it is not, I don’t want it.” He does not follow the typical forms of cultivation. He doesn’t even know what “cultivation” is. Yet there are masters taking care of people like him. And he seldom gets into disagreements with others. This is what people used to call “In the *Dao* without cultivating the *Dao*.” Ordinary people can also, like them, manage to refrain from seeking things, but ultimately they will not gain a celestial rank. Such a person will not gain *gong*, and can merely store up limitless virtue, a large sum. And many people will do harm to him, for a good person does not have it easy. But this results merely in a large amount of virtue. If he takes up a practice, it will naturally turn into a great deal of *gong*. If he doesn’t take up a practice, he will probably be blessed in his next life, becoming a high-ranking official or making a fortune. By contrast, most of the people who are in the *Dao* without cultivating it have special backgrounds, of course, and there are people looking after them. He’s in a state of not cultivating the *Dao*, and yet his thoughts, his realm, are in the *Dao*, and so in the future he will return to his original place. Without cultivating the *Dao*, he is cultivating it—someone is transforming *gong* for him though he doesn’t know it. His life is full of misfortune, and he suffers and pays off his karma. His *xinxing* quietly improves over the course of his life, and such is always his state. These are people with special backgrounds. It is hard for an ordinary person to do this.

Confucius left to man a way of acting that is befitting a human—the Doctrine of the Mean. Lao Zi taught a method for cultivation. But as it turns out, Chinese people combined Confucian ideas with those of the Daoist school. And, beginning in the Song dynasty, Buddhist ideas started to find their way in. Thereafter Buddhist thought thus changed beyond recognition. And after the Song dynasty, Buddhism incorporated things from Chinese Confucianism, such as filial piety and the like—much content of the sort. But the Buddhist school doesn’t actually contain anything like that. The Buddhist school takes human matters lightly, and in its view, who knows how many parents a person has had over his many lifetimes. Only when you let go of all such attachments and cultivate with a quiet and calm mind can you meet with success. They are attachments. So, after Confucian thought was introduced [into Buddhism], the attachment of familial affection arose.

The Story of Creating Man Out of Clay

Human beings exist here at the lowest of levels, and above there are layers upon layers of heavens. A Tathagata is at this level. Jesus belonged to the level of Tathagata, as did Lao Zi. What they could see at that level was limited to that which was there and below them. They could see very little of what was above them, let alone much further above. This was due to their levels dictating how much wisdom they possessed.

Then as for the idea of creating man out of clay that Jesus knew about, it was an expression that he was using which came from the being he regarded as Lord—“God created man out of clay.” Was he referring to the clay that ordinary people know of? He wasn’t. It wasn’t clay as ordinary people know it. Rather, in higher dimensions all material, including clay, is high-energy matter of a more microcosmic plane. Then at what point was the “man” that he described created? Was it done before the dawn of civilization on Earth, or at some other time? There was actually an account to this effect contained in a distant legend, and he told it to people—i.e., that God created man out of clay.

But in reality, it’s not the clay from this human side. The clay on the other side has power, and the things that make up that side are, if brought over here, similar to *gong*. What he meant was that [man] was created on the other side. Celestial beings have skin finer and more delicate than ours here. That is due to their not having cells that are comprised of the same layer of substances as ours are; theirs are comprised of finer and tinier substances. When they were pushed over into this dimension of ordinary man, it turned out they were the same as man. It was just that they looked extraordinarily beautiful with an especially delicate appearance. This meant that a larger bodily layer of cellular matter had to be added for man. And it is thus that human beings assume the appearance they do.

The people in the heavens have bodies, too, and they look the same as us when they fly over here. Underneath the large mountains of China are buried the corpses of celestial beings. When they died their bodies were buried under the mountains. These people look about the same as human beings, contrary to what was described in the scriptures. When Jesus was in the world he actually didn’t leave people any scriptures. Rather, it was people after him, his followers, who wrote them, and they did so in accordance with their own times. Buddha Shakyamuni did not leave behind any scriptures, either; it was likewise his followers who wrote them. So it was a case of their followers having heard what was said, but failing to grasp what the original meaning was, what kind of people they were referring to, or in what historical context the things described took place.

[Jesus] said that man was created out of clay, which left ordinary people puzzled, thinking “Our bodies aren’t clay.” The idea is that the clay at extremely high levels is superior to the material of our flesh bodies. The higher the plane, the more superior it is.

In a considerably remote time prior to the existence of low-level man, the beings above created man in other dimensions. The moment I would say to a dimension that something be formed, it would immediately take form. And any object could be created at the mere thought of it—trace a finger in the air and it would form, albeit in other dimensions. In other words, what was said in the past about creating the world, about creating a plane of the heavens, or what the Buddhist scriptures said in regards to creating the universe—those things were all manifestations of the power of Buddhas. What this tells us is, positive karma, good karma, and evil karma were all generalized by them as “karma.” So those things were created by Buddhas.

A Buddha of great power really can create a plane of the heavens instantly, and the higher the

Buddha's level, the more magnificent is the heaven he makes. And what's more, he needn't use his hands; merely opening his mouth and saying so is sufficient. And for an even higher Buddha, a single thought is enough—with just a thought it is brought about. That's why Buddhas whose levels are higher than that of Tathagata cannot manage ordinary human affairs; at the formation of just one thought, things on Earth would immediately change. But even a Tathagata Buddha doesn't handle things directly here. Rather, he merely gives guidance, and Bodhisattvas put things into action.

The Confines of Modern Science and the Breadth and Profundity of Buddha Fa

Even with the Dharma that Buddha Shakyamuni imparted, human beings have been able to sense the vastness of Buddha Fa. But the *Fa* is simply enormous—truly so. What Buddha Shakyamuni taught was, given his level, Tathagata Fa. And even that seemed very high to ordinary people. In the past, only a Tathagata could be called a Buddha. Neither a Bodhisattva nor an Arhat was a Buddha; neither had reached the realm of a Buddha. So it used to be that whenever someone said the term “Buddha,” it was referring to a Tathagata. But Tathagata is not the highest status in the universe; rather, it is the lowest level of Buddha. And among the Buddhas, only those at the lowest level look after ordinary human affairs. Buddhas of too high a level cannot do so, for the moment they opened their mouths, changes on Earth would occur. How could that be allowed? They can’t get involved in the least. It is thus Tathagatas alone who look after human things. Tathagatas don’t personally handle things, however. It is Bodhisattvas who do things to save people. So even just attaining the level of Tathagata is extraordinary.

At the microscopic level [a Tathagata] can perceive three thousand chiliocosms in a single grain of sand. In Buddha Shakyamuni’s teachings there is the theory of three thousand chiliocosms. He said that in the Milky Way there were three thousand planets resembling that of man, containing lives identical to human beings. There are in fact more than three thousand. He also said that there are three thousand chiliocosms in a grain of sand. That is, in but a single grain of sand there exist three thousand worlds like this that man inhabits, something unfathomable. When the celestial eye is opened, one can see things as if they are magnified, and see tiny things such as those at the microcosmic level. But, just imagine this. There are three thousand chiliocosms in a single grain of sand. Then, the three thousand chiliocosms in that grain of sand have seas and rivers in them, don’t they? Then, are there another three thousand chiliocosms in the sand of those rivers? So, even Buddha Shakyamuni had not seen the origin of matter. He thus said, “Its smallness is such that there is no interior,” meaning that it is so small that the origin of matter is imperceptible.

Today physics can merely figure out that a molecule is made up of atoms, and that an atom is made up of a nucleus and electrons. Further into the microcosm there are quarks and neutrinos. And that’s as far as it can go, that is all. Then what is, moving further downward, the origin of matter? Not even microscopes can detect quarks and neutrinos. Their existence is known only through the help of other instruments. As for answering what lies further down, man’s technology falls woefully short. As to large things, man believes that planets are the largest objects. But that’s not how Buddha Shakyamuni saw it. What Buddha Shakyamuni saw was in fact very sizable. He discovered that planets were not the largest. Peering further upwards, he couldn’t see the zenith, however. In the end he thus said, “Its largeness is such that there is no exterior.” So his statement that, “Its largeness is such that there is no exterior; its smallness is such that there is no interior,” meant that it is so large there is no boundary to it, and so tiny that its bottom cannot be seen.

Living beings are complex, and the structure of the universe is extremely complex. The knowledge possessed by man today has reached its peak. Having peaked, it has become something that limits the development of man’s science. For example, many accomplished scientists have set forth axioms in the fields of physics and chemistry. Within the confines of those axioms, what they say indeed holds true. And it’s fine to build upon them. However, truth is a many-tiered thing. When you surpass their axioms, you will find that the axioms have in fact served to limit people.

Things are no different for the science of recent times. Some people set forth a definition of science, and so something is considered “science” only if it conforms to that definition. And when you stay within its boundaries, everyone thinks that is science. When you go beyond its definition, you discover that it has served to limit mankind’s advancement. Nothing that is intangible or invisible is allowed for there, so the limitations it imposes are significant. The Buddhas, Daoist deities, and Gods we speak of exist in other dimensions that man cannot touch or see. Then if those beings were to be discovered using the methods of today’s science, wouldn’t that make them scientifically proven? It would! But the West has set forth a definition of science, and anything that modern science is unable to explain gets categorized as theology or religion, without exception. It dares not acknowledge such things.

Western science has gone to an extreme. The Buddhist school holds that everything goes through the stages of formation, stasis, and degeneration. Formation means taking shape, while stasis means remaining in a certain phase. The science from Europe, confined by the framework it established, now finds itself unable to advance further. Were it to keep probing downward, what might be discovered would be something beyond the boundaries of its science. So it categorically lumps these things together as religion or theology. But if someone discovers things that don’t exist in the present body of scientific knowledge, and does so by way of man’s modern science and technology, or discovers things that are intangible and invisible and studies them with the scientific method of our day, isn’t that scientific? The problem is that the definition of science has long been set in stone, and anything beyond its boundaries is categorically denied. No room is thus left for further progress.

And there are some scientists, figures who are considered “accomplished” in certain fields, who have set forth a great many axioms. These scientists, such as Newton and Einstein, were very accomplished by the standards of ordinary people and could perceive far more than the average person. And the axioms they set forth, as with their scientific legacy, stands as a wealth of valuable knowledge. But that said, any research that takes place or understanding that’s arrived at via working within the boundaries of their thought is bound to observe certain patterns. If those who come after them work completely within the theoretical frameworks of these scientists, posterity will never surpass them nor experience new breakthroughs.

When someone’s discovery or invention surpasses the confines of previously held axioms, it will be realized that the axioms set forth had been restricting people. That’s because there are higher forms of knowledge, and higher truths, to be found at higher levels. A good example is our knowledge of matter. It used to be that the smallest particle of matter known to man was the atomic nucleus. That’s no longer the case, however, for now there are quarks and then neutrinos. The point is that human beings have continually learned more about such things. But a new axiom itself will, upon the discovery of something else, serve as yet another restriction. Such is the case. The fact is that such axioms usually serve to limit people.

Einstein was no ordinary person. He found what religion, and even theology, taught to be true. Man’s understanding of the physical world is limited to the knowledge of human beings, much like the scientific axioms that have been set forth. Were people’s research to truly probe deeper, and their endeavors to progress further, they would find what religion has taught to be true. The lives that exist on a plane one level higher than man thus represent a science and technology one level higher, and their understanding of the world via the science and technology at their command surpasses that of ordinary human beings. That is why Einstein, upon having reached the pinnacle of human science and technology and then probing deeper in his work, found what religion taught to be fully real. In recent times many scientists and philosophers have

ultimately turned to religion—and these are persons of quite some accomplishment. By contrast, those who are currently paralyzed by the limitations set forth by contemporary science and their blind faith in it categorically brand those things [beyond the reach of science] “pseudoscience.”¹

¹ Or, more literally, in the context of mainland China, “feudal superstition” (*fengjian mixin*).

“All Practices Return to One”

The saying that “all practices return to one” is something normally taught within the context of one specific cultivation way. The Daoist school holds that there are thirty-six hundred practices, all of which can lead to the *Dao*. The Buddhist school holds that it has eighty-four thousand practices by which one can cultivate Buddhahood. If someone tries to combine several different religions and practice them together at the same time, however, that is something altogether different [from what the saying refers to]. How could human beings know divine matters? What they are trying to do is just utter nonsense.

In the old China there was a group known as “Way of Unity” (*Yiguandao*). The group, which came into being in the late Qing dynasty, promoted the integration of five religions. It was a heretical sect, and from the moment it appeared in the Qing, people sought to vanquish it; the emperors of the Great Qing sought to destroy it. Early in the Republican period, the Nationalist Party (KMT) likewise sought to destroy it, executing its members in droves. When the Communist Party took power in the revolution, it similarly killed the group’s members by the dozen. Why did that happen? Nothing in ordinary human society is in fact by chance. The unfolding of history merely follows along with celestial changes. Thus, whatever happens in human society is not merely the product of someone doing something on the spur of the moment. In other words, it was not ordinary people who wanted to crush it; rather, it was Heaven’s will. Higher beings wanted it destroyed and would not permit its existence. That nonsense about “integrating five religions” was a serious case of undermining the *Fa*. It was a case of demons acting out among men.

Not even Celestial Worthy of Primordial Beginning or Buddha Shakyamuni was so bold as to suggest the union or fusion of Buddhist and Daoist. How could that happen! Even within Buddhism itself, it is taught that no two cultivation ways can be mixed together. Those who practice Pure Land can’t practice Zen, for example. The two can’t be mixed. And those who cultivate Zen cannot practice Tiantai or Huayan. You simply cannot blend different ways together when you cultivate. And why is that? It’s because evolving *gong* is something extremely complex. You have only one body, and it resembles a type of raw material being fed into a machine. Your *gong* is produced in that machine. Everything has to be meticulously arranged for you—be it the method used to save you, each step that is to be taken, the form in which each type of *gong* is evolved, etc. But if halfway through your journey you were to be put into a different machine, what would be the outcome? Could you still cultivate? You tell me. You would be a complete mess. You would become a heap of scrap.

Many people have failed to progress in their practice precisely on account of cultivating irresponsibly like that. What Buddha Shakyamuni truly meant by “no second cultivation way” (*bu er fa-men*), was that there cannot be mixing in cultivation. Later the saying “no second cultivation way” was misunderstood, and taken to mean something else. But mixing practices is strictly forbidden. The Way of Unity taught about the “union of five religions”—something Heaven’s laws forbid. Yet now the group has resurfaced in Taiwan. In the Age of Law’s End no one is going step in, and that is because no one is managing human affairs in this period. Man has turned ever worse, so all [divine beings] have let go of their hold and no longer look after things. Nor do they save people. Those who profess a faith in the Buddha or worship him aren’t interested in rigorous cultivation. Rather, they merely want wealth or to dispel adversity. It is that bad.

People still think that what it [the Way of Unity] teaches makes sense, however. The

thoughts in the mind of a cultivator, as well as someone with religious belief, are quite crucial. Some cultivation ways depend completely on faith and don't include any techniques, so when your mind has other things mixed in, it will foul up what your practice cultivates. It was never meant to include any such physical movements. Besides, demons now pervade the human world, and are bringing about mankind's ruin. Doesn't everyone possess good thoughts (*shan nian*)? That is precisely what demons are out to destroy, causing you to fail at cultivation.

Zen Buddhism Is Extreme

There are two types of people, namely, those who are extreme and those who take the middle road. From the outset Zen Buddhism has been in the extreme category, and it does not amount to a cultivation system. Controversy has always surrounded Zen. Though people have cultivated according to Zen's methods, they have actually been under the care of Buddha Shakyamuni, owing to their intention to cultivate Buddhahood and their seeking goodness. Zen doesn't constitute a system. Boddhidharma does not have his own heavenly kingdom, and thus cannot provide salvation to people. The fact is that Boddhidharma himself, back in his day, took Buddha Shakyamuni to be the founding master. Though he is called Zen's patriarch, he was in fact Buddha Shakyamuni's disciple—a disciple of the twenty-eighth generation, and one who very much venerated Buddha Shakyamuni. Working from Buddha Shakyamuni's theories, he focused his enlightenment on "nothingness," and this didn't depart from the tenets of Shakyamuni. With the passage of time, Zen went downhill. Later generations came to regard Boddhidharma's approach as a cultivation way in its own right, and believed it to be supreme. His wasn't supreme, however. Zen was actually declining with each successive generation, and Boddhidharma said it himself: His teachings would only extend for six generations.

Boddhidharma gave a relatively large amount of weight to the "nothingness" that Buddha Shakyamuni taught, and held Buddha Shakyamuni in great esteem; he was known as his disciple of the twenty-eighth generation. But the generations that followed were completely trapped in extremes. And once that became the case, it arrived at the stage of degeneration, where Boddhidharma and Shakyamuni were seen almost as equals. People began to venerate Boddhidharma, and considered Boddhidharma's theories to be the one and only Buddhist truth. This basically amounted to going astray.

That's because Boddhidharma cultivated to a low level and reached only the celestial rank of Arhat—meaning, he was merely an Arhat. How much could he really have known? When all was said and done he had not reached the level of Tathagata. The gap between his level and that of Buddha Shakyamuni was phenomenal! And for this reason, his teachings are closest to the philosophy of ordinary people, and his theories are easiest for ordinary people to accept—particularly those who treat religion as a form of philosophy or ideology. Those who take an academic approach and study Buddhism as philosophy tend to accept his theory the most. It closely resembles ordinary philosophy.

Buddhas are to be found on every plane, however high one may go. [But according to Zen,] you cultivate and cultivate, and then, supposedly, nothing exists. In their cultivation they don't even acknowledge so much as human beings. Living, visible human beings are right here before us and yet they don't acknowledge them as real. It's even worse than with those ordinary persons of poor spiritual insight who say, "I'll believe it if I see it, and won't if I don't." These people don't even acknowledge what they do see. Why live, then? Why bother opening your eyes? Shut your eyes, don't lie down, don't stand... Nothing exists, right? They've gone to extremes. Boddhidharma said that his Dharma could be passed down for only six generations. It's folly how people today still cling tightly to this doctrine that was never valid in the first place. It's a dead end that they have gone down. They don't acknowledge themselves, don't acknowledge Buddhas, and how about planet Earth? If they don't acknowledge even their own existence, what's the point of having a name? And what's the point of eating? You could just go hungry all day, not look at what time it is, and block out all sounds...

And after all that, everything is gone. So doesn't that discredit Buddha Shakyamuni? If

Buddha Shakyamuni didn't teach anything, what was he doing for forty-nine years? Do they know what the true meaning of "emptiness" is in Buddha Shakyamuni's teaching? When Buddha Shakyamuni [said that he] didn't leave behind any *Fa*, he was saying that he didn't truly teach the cultivation method or the *Fa* of the universe. What he spoke about were only things at his cultivation level, and what he left to ordinary people was Tathagata Fa—in particular, cultivation experiences and lessons learned. The real Dharma that Shakyamuni imparted when in this world was the rules and disciplines (*jie-li*), and he discussed certain insights of different levels, which is the *Fa* at a certain level. But Buddha Shakyamuni didn't want people to be trapped at his level, and thus said, "I have not taught any Dharma in my life." He said that because he knew that the Dharma he taught was not the highest. A Tathagata is a Buddha, but not one at the highest level. Buddha Fa is boundless. A cultivator shouldn't be limited by his Dharma. A person with a great spiritual potential (*da gen-ji*) can cultivate even higher, where insights both higher and deeper, as with corresponding manifestations of *Fa*, await.

Levels in the Course of Cultivation

One's cultivation level is something that some cultivators come to know in the course of cultivation, rather than something all who cultivate will necessarily know. Most cultivators will know it only after having reached a state of enlightenment or having reached high levels surpassing Triple-World-Law. Those who do know can discern their levels from the colors of the *gong* that comes forth from their bodies. It can be discerned from the person's *gong* column or the body itself. In Triple-World-Law cultivation, the *gong* that emerges first is red, and when the person's level elevates, it becomes orange, then yellow, then green, etc., with there being nine colors in all—i.e., red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet, colored, and colorless. To see which level you are at, one look will suffice. If you have attained a translucent body and continue to cultivate upward, it will be Beyond-Triple-World-Law cultivation that you do. You will have gained a celestial rank and begun the initial phase of Arhat Fa cultivation. Doing Beyond-Triple-World-Law cultivation means that you have surpassed the Three Realms and are no longer subject to reincarnation. If you end your cultivation at this stage, you are an Arhat. If you continue to cultivate onward, you will be cultivating at the eminent rank of Arhat, and that level has coloration as well. However, the colors of red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet here are different from those in Triple-World-Law. The colors in Triple-World-Law cultivation are dense, similar to those of human beings. But at that [Arhat] level, they are translucent gradations of red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet, colored, and colorless. With further cultivation, there are more sets of nine colors, with the difference being that they are more translucent, more exquisite, and more beautiful. It repeats in this manner over and over. Where a person is in cultivation can thus be discerned.

But people aren't allowed to see this, and things aren't so apparent to ordinary people, because there is the matter of insight (*wu*). If what the body cultivated were displayed in plain view, what would be left to insight? Everyone would cultivate, everyone would do it. Who wouldn't? Everything would be so real. Even people with unpardonable sins, incorrigible as they may be, would come to learn it. There would be no question of insight. And if that were the case, cultivation would be impossible. Some people say, "I'll keep my eyes open, and if I can see things clearly, I'll learn it." But that won't do. If such a person could see everything, with things being crystal clear, that would be the end of his cultivation prospects. He wouldn't be allowed to cultivate. The reason is, a person needs to emerge from the delusion by way of insight, and only that counts as cultivation. If a person achieved total insight and could see everything, he would not be allowed to cultivate. And why is that? Because it wouldn't count if he were to cultivate, for he would have seen that everything [cultivation talks about] is real. He would have seen the causal workings of the quarrels people have, and that those who take advantage of others give virtue to them. If reality were fully laid out before him, of course he would take up cultivation. But would that count as doing cultivation? It would amount to grabbing something that's there for the taking. Human attachments wouldn't be removed that way.

A person has to come to his own realizations while removing human attachments in the midst of strife. Were he able to see everything as if it were crystal clear, it wouldn't be cultivation. Why is it hard for a Buddha to raise his level? Because he has no quarrels and sees everything clearly. How can he cultivate? It is harder for him to cultivate. And that is why they want to go among ordinary people and cultivate. Only when one cultivates in delusion is rapid elevation possible. It is possible, though, that some people will see a little bit as they cultivate. But the details won't of course be revealed to any human being.

When a person cultivates, the matter of insight runs throughout, start to finish, and he has to cultivate amidst delusion. The West values faith, and stresses this from beginning to end. Without faith, everything else is out of the question. As long as you have faith, there will be a response [from God]. When some people have repented before Jesus' image, their minds really have sensed that Jesus was listening and that there was someone responding to their questions. Such is the means of cultivation in the West. Religious faith is a type of cultivation. When Jesus was ready to receive his followers in his heavenly kingdom, if the person's body was devoid of *gong* or energy, the person could not enter Heaven. And on top of that, the bad thoughts the person formed among human beings and the karma on his body would lead the special property of the universe at high levels to restrict him; and in the case of someone who was really bad, both his body and soul would have disintegrated [had he gone there], with nothing remaining. That scenario is untenable. So it won't work without *gong*. The *gong* is thus evolved for the person on the other side as his faith grows, as he goes through confession, and as he continuously tries to improve and be a good person. Although he develops *gong*, he is not told about it, for [in the West] they have taught only about being a good person; they have not taught about *gong*. The same holds true with Buddhist monks. They don't do any [*qigong*-type] exercises, so how do they develop *gong*? Their *gong* grows even though they aren't told that they have *gong*.

Buddhist and Daoist

The Daoist school practices solitary cultivation; the Daoist religion should not exist. The Daoist religion is in fact the product of reforms that took place in recent history. There was never such a thing as religious Daoism in any prehistoric era. The reason is, the Daoist school does not aim to offer salvation to all sentient beings; instead, it teaches solitary cultivation, and the practice of quietude. So it cultivates insight into *Zhen*. Of *Zhen*, *Shan*, and *Ren*, it focuses its cultivation on insight into what is True, it nurtures one's innate nature by cultivating *Zhen*, and aspires to return to what is original and true. The *Dao* dictates that cultivation be done in quietude, so [the Daoist school] really has no wish whatsoever to broadly save sentient beings. When a Daoist has finished his cultivation, he will be a roaming deity or a wandering immortal. There are mountains and waters in the heavens just as here, and he will stay on one such mountain. The Daoist religion was in fact born of ordinary human beings' attachments. People are fond of banding together and forming some kind of power base, as they crave recognition and personal gain. So things like this tend to come about.

In reality the Daoist religion does not exist. A Daoist teaches his disciple to cultivate in solitude. Although the Daoist religion was created and it has many disciples, not all of them receive the true teaching. If a master finds a good disciple, he will teach him the true things. And if there are no good disciples, he will opt for a carefree and easy life, doing whatever he would like to. [He can do that] because he has attained the *Dao* and the true freedom that comes with it.

Buddhist is Buddhist, and Daoist is Daoist. Mixing together the teachings of the two schools is completely out of the question. What we are practicing, however, is truly enormous. Our practice is based upon the universe itself, and everything is encompassed. Our foundation lies with the Buddhist school, and what we have, be it our main tenets or our characteristics, is Buddhist. But this *Fa* transcends both Buddhist and Daoist. Different understandings are found at different levels, and different manifestations appear at different levels. Those in the Falun Paradise have their knowledge, while beyond the Falun Paradise there is higher knowledge, and still higher above, there are even higher forms of knowledge.

There is another topic, namely, that of the primeval gods. There is no point in discussing this with today's cultivators, however, for it is unfathomable to them, being beyond their reach. It is thus that I speak only of the two schools of Buddhist and Daoist. Speaking at too high of a plane doesn't work; people cannot accept such things. They are not allowed to know.

No Demonstrations When Saving People and Teaching Fa

Teaching the real *Fa* to ordinary people who cultivate as monks—monks who haven't enlightened—is useless, as they know nothing. The monks who have enlightened aren't to be found in the secular world; they have gone deep into mountains and forests. They know about me. It's only ordinary people who do not. Many accomplished cultivators know about me. They have sometimes quietly approached, taken a look, and then departed. There have also been some who came and said a few things. Despite the fact that they have cultivated in the mountains and forests for hundreds or thousands of years, their cultivation levels are not high. That's because the path they take is arduous and not the Great Path of cultivation. They cultivate via lesser paths, and for that reason have not achieved their ultimate rank despite having cultivated for a long period of time. They don't mix with the secular world, however, so their supernatural abilities are not locked and they are capable of fully displaying their divine powers. Those who cultivate in the secular world usually have the bulk of their great abilities locked. Were they not, a mere thought might move a building to a different location—something impermissible. Disrupting human affairs is absolutely prohibited. People would think that such a person's level was high. An ordinary person thinks that whoever is able to demonstrate his abilities is at a high level. What *qigong* masters demonstrate in public displays are merely lesser abilities and skills, things so meager as to be pitiable. Those things are really nothing. Yet ordinary people think those are of a high level.

I refrain from giving demonstrations when I teach the *Fa* specifically because I have explained the purpose of my going public in perfectly clear terms. Were I to give demonstrations while teaching *Fa*, that would be imparting an evil way. Doing it that way, people would come to learn your techniques, not the *Fa*. Buddha Shakyamuni similarly avoided this approach back in his day. Doing healings is fine since, after all, the workings of it can't be seen. All that's apparent is that the person feels better. How did the healing happen? It's up to you to believe the whole thing or not. The person is better now, but do you believe that he is? An onlooker can't tell whether he is still in pain. Since one's powers of insight are still involved, doing healings is okay. Once upon a time Jesus and Buddha Shakyamuni did the same. Lao Zi was the exception. Lao Zi knew the human world to be too perilous. He hurriedly wrote his five-thousand-word treatise [on the *Dao*]² and headed out through the pass, going west.

The human world is extremely complex. Just looking at a person here on Earth, there is no telling which dimension he is from. The divinity in that dimension still wants to have charge over him. What matters is whether this individual can discern; if he can, then he will be able to return [to where he came from]. But he [that divinity] may know that this human being is no longer up to the task, so he can do no more for him. He doesn't want to let him go, however. Back when Jesus came forth to save people, [these divinities] thought that he was meddling in their affairs. "This person is mine, and it should be to my place that he is saved to. Why have you encroached upon our domain?" They wouldn't stand for it. It was because of such a mindset [that they acted as they did]. If you think about it, it's not right. Jesus didn't care who belonged to whom. Saving people was the goal of his coming. He saw that all beings were suffering and wished to give them salvation, to allow them to ascend. So as it was, Jesus affected the many divinities of a variety of dimensions. Ultimately their disagreements intensified to such a tremendous extent that they manifested over in the human world, just as human conflicts might,

² i.e., the *Daodejing*, often translated as *The Classic on the Way and Virtue*.

and the entire brunt of it landed upon Jesus. Jesus could not free himself of it, with the only option being death—he was thus crucified, thereby dissolving the enmity that existed between them. With Jesus' ordinary body of flesh gone, there was no Jesus there to make enemies with, and that put an end to his countless troubles. That is why it's said Jesus gave his life for all of humanity. That is the idea.

Buddha Shakyamuni likewise experienced great hardships teaching his Dharma. He constantly did battle with the seven religions then in India. At that time, early Brahmanism was powerful. In the end, Buddha Shakyamuni departed without having achieved the true goal he set out to achieve.

Lao Zi left after writing his book of five-thousand words, leaving things for posterity to carry out. That was how it was supposed to be done, and it was Heaven's will. That's because the Daoist school was not to be made into a religion; the formation of the Daoist religion was a mistake. A Daoist teaches solitary cultivation, the cultivation of *Zhen*, and cultivating quietude, so things are passed on to one select disciple. It is done that way because he selects his disciple, and will teach only someone who is good. He cannot offer salvation broadly, and doesn't have the desire to do so. He cultivates *Zhen*. While you might see a group of disciples at a Daoist temple, only one has been chosen, and he alone will receive the transmission. The rest just serve as a foil. So there shouldn't be a religion in the Daoist school. In the past they always did solitary cultivation in the mountains.

What Confucius taught were principles for personal conduct, not cultivation. His teachings have benefited the Chinese people, nevertheless. The Doctrine of the Mean can enable someone to gain an invincible position. Things go in the opposite direction after reaching an extreme, and thus something or someone might well fall after reaching the peak. That's the point of seeking "the mean," to always hold fast to the middle ground. When a person doesn't seek to be the highest and is comfortably higher than those below, that person will never fail. Anything, when carried to an extreme, will reverse course. This is in reference to ordinary people.

There are many cultivators deep in the mountains and forests who have seen events of the past and future transpiring. Yet none of them have gotten involved in those affairs, and nor have they wished to. Their detachment stems from knowing that those events are the result of celestial changes. [They know] that's how things are supposed to be.

Whoever defies the will of Heaven will face consequences, and so people don't dare to do so. Everyone sings the praises of Yue Fei, yet why couldn't he save the Southern Song dynasty? Wasn't the Yue family so powerful? Such was the will of Heaven. Yue Fei was bent on preserving the Song, but he just couldn't succeed, for in reality he was going against the will of Heaven. The Song dynasty was destined to perish, but he insisted to the contrary, and thus went against the will of Heaven. I'm just illustrating a point here. "The best laid plans of mice and men often go awry," as it's said. I am not saying that Yue Fei was bad. I was just explaining the idea.

What a person considers, from his human vantage point, to be right, may not necessarily be right. Whether it was the First Emperor of Qin or Emperor Wu of the Han dynasty, whichever emperor it was or whatever he did, those who come after such a figure will pass judgment on him. Ordinary people see things from their own individual perspectives and through the lens of their inherent notions, and what they believe to be good or bad is not necessarily so. Also, the criteria by which a person determines whether someone or something is good or bad revolves around himself: "If he's good to me, then I say he's good. If what he does benefits me, then I say he's good." So that person he approves of may or may not be truly good. The only criterion with

which to judge what is good and bad is the special property of the universe, the *Fa*. It will never change, it is the truth of the universe, and it is the single criterion by which good and bad are to be determined. The First Emperor of Qin killed many people in the course of unifying China. He killed the rulers of many states, and everyone cursed him. The rulers and peoples of various states were brought under his rule, and everyone thus hated and cursed him. They all judged him from their own perspectives. His unification of China was inevitable. It was the outcome of celestial changes. Had he not acted in accord with the will of Heaven, he would not have succeeded and unification would have failed. Human affairs are thus no more than that. As cultivators we never comment on them. A cultivator will not take an interest in politics, lest he be a politician, not a cultivator.

When mankind reaches a certain point in time, its karma is enormous, and it is beyond redemption. Enormous karma such as that is something man can never pay off. He accumulates, over the course of many lifetimes, karma so massive that it is impossible to pay off, and thus these people are destined to be destroyed. What is meant by “be destroyed”? Small disasters take place and destroy people. War is the most expedient way, and that’s why history is what it is.

The founding emperor of each era had certain warrior entities incarnate alongside him, protecting him and helping him wage war. That was specifically what those warrior entities were meant to do. So their efforts would bring them no merit, but neither would they generate karma—they were just carrying out their task. How many people, even over the long course of history, have seen this for what it is?

What a Buddha Does is Save People, Not Bless and Protect

The Buddhist school is not in the least about helping people to get rich. Illness is caused by karma, so neither has it shown people how to regain health. When Shakyamuni's teachings talked about "broadly saving sentient beings," he was referring to freeing people from the hardship of ordinary existence and delivering them to the other shore, *nirvana*. That was what Buddha Shakyamuni taught. It was about your ascension to a heavenly kingdom. The same was true of what Jesus taught, and neither was higher than the other. It's just that modern people don't get it. They talk about how Buddha can bless and protect people, heal you of disease, make you rich, and how the great awakened ones have boundless power and can save people. Ordinary people mistake a Buddha's offer of salvation for protection, and then ask Buddha for blessings, protection, and wealth, they ask Buddha to heal them, and so on. But Buddhas don't in fact get involved in such things whatsoever. That is a perverse idea that arises from the corruption of modern man's thinking, and it is degenerate. The Buddhist *sutras* never implied anything of the sort originally. I thus often discuss this matter, and say that while you might burn incense and pray to Buddha in hopes of wealth, Buddha couldn't care less whether you get wealthy.

You want to pray to Buddha in that way, but a Buddha has no interest in your achieving wealth. Just the opposite, he asks you to cease your greed. If you really have trouble getting by in daily life, then he might provide material means, but only so as to ensure your personal welfare. He won't have you get rich if you aren't supposed to. And illness, in the eyes of a Buddha, is the result of karma owed from one's previous life or lives. When some people prostrate themselves before a Buddha statue looking for money, they do indeed get money as a result. But what kind of wealth do they actually get? There was no Buddha on that statue. It was a false Buddha rather, which came into existence via worship. Or it might be a fox that attached itself there, or a snake, a weasel, etc. It helped you make money since, in effect, you worshipped it and asked it for money. But if it's going to help you make money, there are strings attached. There is a principle in the universe, namely: no loss, no gain. It capitalizes on this principle, as it desires a human body. A person kowtows in search of money, so [it says], "Go right ahead!" If the things the person carries aren't good, it will ignore him, and he won't make any money; his worship will go unanswered. If it determines that your body carries good things, it will let you get money, for then it can take those good things from you. If you want money, of course it will give it to you. But the person involved isn't aware of all this, and what he loses is apt to be irrevocably gone. A person lives more than one life, and [after such worship] he is apt to lead a more wretched life the next time around.

The Decline of Mankind and Dangerous Notions

If back in ancient China someone spoke of cultivating the Way, people would say he had a “virtuous foundation.” Those who talked about Buddhas, Daoist deities, or Gods were considered really good. Yet, today, talk of cultivating Buddhahood or the *Dao* invites laughter. Mankind’s moral values have undergone enormous changes. They are sliding downward a thousand miles a day, so quickly. With the erosion of their values, people have actually come to believe that the ancients were ignorant and superstitious. Man’s thinking has changed dramatically, and it is frightening. Consider that Buddha Shakyamuni once said: The changes in society with the Age of Law’s End will be truly terrible. Case in point, in today’s society people have no law in the heart (*xin-fa*) that might serve as a restraint, especially in China. This is true in other countries as well, though it assumes different forms. In mainland China, the Cultural Revolution shattered the so-called “old thinking and ideas” that people had, and forbade people to believe in the teachings of Confucius. People were left with no moral restraint or moral code, and weren’t allowed to have religious beliefs. People came to disbelieve that doing wrong would lead to karmic retribution.

When people no longer have the inner-law in their minds serving as a restraint, won’t they dare to do just about anything? This is the most serious problem that mankind now faces. Some foreigners don’t dare to go to China for business, especially on account of how quick some Chinese youth are to knife or kill someone. It’s awful. China is now worse than other countries. A major factor is that when overseas movies or TV programs that portray gang warfare get into the mainland, viewers mistakenly think that Hong Kong and other countries are really as chaotic as they’re portrayed. They’re not like that, however. That’s merely cinematic dramatization meant to draw thrill-seeking viewers. The reality is, people living abroad have far better character and are more civilized than people in China. Yet Chinese youth mimic those things. Because China was isolated for some time, its people mistakenly think, after suddenly seeing those things, that that’s how things are abroad.

The gangster businessmen depicted in the TV series *The Bund* have been eagerly imitated in China. Yet it was only a portrayal of the old Shanghai of the 1930s, and took artistic license, at that. Real life wasn’t like that. Hong Kong’s gangster movies and TV programs have had a terrible influence on mainland China in terms of people’s thinking. Mankind’s values have changed, and in China too we now see homosexuality, drug abuse, drug trafficking, organized crime, promiscuous sex, and prostitution. It’s gotten out of hand! There’s a saying about how when a poor country bumpkin strikes it rich, look out. He has no self-control and will dare to do anything. Isn’t it scary to see mankind reaching this point? What will become of mankind when things go still further? The concepts of good and bad are now inverted in people’s minds. Nowadays people admire those who are ruthless, those who will go to any lengths, and those who will kill and maim. That’s what people esteem.

Man’s drastic moral decline is unfolding throughout the world. People’s notions have changed dramatically. Nowadays, what’s beautiful is not as popular as what’s ugly; what’s good is less welcome than what’s wicked; what’s clean and tidy is less appealing than what’s sloppy. Consider a specific example. In the past, for example, professional singers had to be well trained in vocal technique and musicianship. Whereas now, who takes the stage but somebody who looks terrible, with long, unkempt hair spilling forth... “Agghhh!” He yells at the top of his lungs. And then with a little television hype, he becomes a star. But the sounds he makes are awful. Hideous things have come to be seen as beautiful owing to the decline of people’s values,

and people fanatically chase after such things. The same holds true for fine art. Dip a cat's tail in ink and let it run about, and it's dubbed a work of art. And then there's that abstractionist and impressionist stuff—what *is* that? It used to be that the more beautiful and pleasing to the eye a painting was, the more people would enjoy it. So what exactly *is* that stuff?? It is the outcome of “artists” seeking to liberate human nature. Human nature, in the absence of a moral code, amounts to one giant display of demon nature. Could beautiful things come about when people are in that state? People's notions are becoming distorted as we speak.

What were those artists pursuing? They were talking about the emancipation of human nature—no inhibitions or restraints, and doing whatever one pleases. Buddhism teaches that, without a moral code, without moral values to keep man's mind in check, what people will display is demon nature. Just take a look at today's works of art! Ordinary people have no idea what's behind those. That stuff is just one giant showing of demon nature.

Take for example the toys sold in stores. In the past, people would buy pretty dolls. Nowadays, the uglier something is, the faster it sells. Things with skulls, demons, and even things that resemble feces are being sold as toys—and the more horrible the appearance, the faster it sells! Doesn't this indicate that people's notions are changing, and changing for the worse?

When I discuss what has happened with society, people immediately get it, which indicates that man's innate nature has not changed. However, mankind has slid to a terribly dangerous point. When I talked about homosexuality while giving classes in the West, I said, “These wanton sexual practices in the West have gotten almost as bad as incest.” Someone then brought up that “homosexuality is legally protected by the state.” Good and bad are not to be gauged by the approval of some individual or collective. Human judgment of good and bad is based entirely on people's own notions. People think, “I think he's good...” or “He's good to me, so I would say he's good.” Or he has formed a set notion, and, if according to his notion someone is good, he will say that person is good. The same holds true with groups. When something is in the group's interest or it furthers a certain goal, the group will say that it's good and consent to it. But it is not necessarily truly good. The truth of the universe, the Buddha *Fa*, is the sole, unchanging criterion that measures human beings and everything that exists—the sole criterion that determines what is good or bad. I told them [the students in the West], “To be perfectly frank, your government may approve of it, but your Lord does not!” Each time mankind has reached this point, it has in fact been in grave danger and out of control. Now that it has become what it has, if it goes further, what will it be like next?! Buddha Shakyamuni said that during the Age of Law's End a multitude of demons would reincarnate as human beings and become monks in monasteries who damage the *Fa*. Taiwan, in particular, now has many renowned monks and lay Buddhists who are actually demons. They extol themselves as the founders of religions, but fail to realize that they are demons. They had laid out their entire lives before reincarnating and coming here, and they live out their lives in accordance with the damage that they plotted. The human world is terrifying. Many of the well-known, supposed “masters” in India are possessed by giant pythons. Among the *qigong* masters in China, quite a large number are possessed by foxes and weasels, though there are snakes as well. The Age of Law's End is a time of chaos. The head of Aum Shinrikyo in Japan is the incarnation of a demon from Hell who came to the human world to foment chaos. Human beings are right in the middle of all this, and, being here in the human world, they don't have a chance to think about such things. They can sense that something is amiss with the world, but have no idea how bad it is. Once it is spelled out, people are startled.

It was thus not on some mere impulse that I decided to impart this *Fa*. And I have encountered various kinds of interference along the way. When you teach something virtuous, someone else is going to preach something wicked, and some will masquerade as being virtuous and even exhort people to do good. But their purpose is not to advance the cause of good. Rather, they have motives that couldn't bear the light of day. The *qigong* movement started off being good, but has since taken a dark turn. It's hard to identify a domain that is pure.

Humanity During the Final Kalpa

Many of the world's true religions can no longer save people. This owes to the scriptures of a number of these original, true religions having been tampered with by later generations; their doctrines were misconstrued by those who came later, and are now regarded as a field of study. For example, Buddhism is studied as if it were philosophy, and whatever facets of it can't be explained with modern science are explained away as the imaginings of ancient folk or reflections of backwardness. Monks and priests merely read texts, but don't get down to the task of cultivation. The temples and monasteries have become microcosms of society, with infighting and jockeying for position. Some monks even capitalize on Buddhism's woeful state and make a profit from it; their attachments are so abundant that they don't even measure up to ordinary people. As such they can hardly save themselves, let alone others! And then there are some famous Buddhist monks and Daoist priests who lead people astray by wantonly writing books interpreting the Buddhist *sutras* and holy scriptures, working off of their personal conceptions and their minute knowledge of the *sutras*. The words of the great awakened ones have profound meanings within and can convey Buddha Fa's guidance at each level and realm that cultivators progress through as they unceasingly elevate. Any action that alters the great awakened ones' original words amounts to an undermining of *Fa*.

Those explanations, which purportedly help people understand the *sutras* and holy scriptures, depart radically from the true underlying meaning of the Buddha's words. They are two completely different things. The tiny bit those authors have grasped is but their own, barely-higher-than-ordinary understanding, and they know nothing of the underlying meaning at higher levels, since they have not cultivated to those heights. If they have not reached the Tathagata level, how could they know the true, higher-plane meaning of the Tathagata's words? Their writings serve only to undermine the *Fa*, and cannot save people. Books such as these, written for fame and gain, are leading people who cultivate in Buddhist disciplines into the authors' frame of thought. Some go so far as to advocate that religion cater to the dictates of today's society, which changes religion's essence. Buddha Fa is immutable and incorruptible adamantine Divine Truth. One can well imagine how great are the sins and karma incurred when people try to adapt Buddha Fa to the ways of immoral man, as opposed to having man ascend by following Buddha Fa. Those who have written books wantonly interpreting the Buddhist *sutras* have gravely interfered with the True Fa, and in fact have long since been condemned to Hell.

Human beings have done a great deal of wrong life after life, amassing tremendous amounts of karma. This is a factor that contributes to their lack of righteous faith. There are some people who did cultivation in a previous life and didn't cultivate well and failed at it. They were unable to shed various attachments, but did accumulate certain blessings. When they then reincarnate as human beings, they typically have "supernormal" abilities, and with their celestial eye can see a smattering of things on a low plane in other dimensions. Then, spurred on by the human pursuit of renown and profit, they start up this or that religious group. To all appearances they are teaching people to be good, but nestled deep in their hearts is a longing for renown and profit, and unspeakable motives. The great awakened ones have their own paradises (heavenly kingdoms) to which they can deliver people. But where could these figures save people to? The same holds for false *qigong* masters. Some of them have wanted to be a Buddha, and some think that they were a Buddha in a previous life. And then there are people possessed by animals who shower praise upon these *qigong* masters, calling them "such-and-such generation grandmaster," and so on. These false *qigong* masters in turn become so pleased with themselves, but it's all just

self-deception. All such figures are demons incarnate who have come to wreak havoc upon the world.

Evil has turned the human world into an absolute mess. False religions, cults, and a great many reform religions have been spreading for many centuries, and it's hard to tell true from false. Though the tenets of those heretical or shamanic practices are wicked, there are still people who believe in them and venerate their leaders. Doesn't this tell us that people's values are lost? And why do people engage in those demonic practices? Most such people seek a means of harming others, they set out to do harm, and they don't give thought to what will become of them down the road. The true, original religions can no longer save people, having entered the Age of Law's End. Myriads of demons have descended upon the world, where they undermine the *Fa* and wreak havoc. Human beings no longer have inner-law to restrain them, nor do they have moral norms. Spurred on by hordes of demons, they stop at no evil. Moral values and standards are sliding downward as fast as could be. Man's very way of thinking and concepts have changed. The beautiful is less attractive than the ugly; the virtuous is less popular than the wicked; good is less desirable than evil; clean-cut is less valued than unkempt; what's new is less preferable than what's used; fragrant is less favored than foul. Men sport long hair while women cut theirs short—a reflection of rising *yin* and receding *yang*, an inversion of *yin* and *yang*. Works of art are devoid of moral norms and seek to liberate human nature, making for one giant showing of the demonic. Then there's the "impressionist" and "abstractionist" stuff, with its wild smearings, which are accepted as art by modern people and their perverse notions. Just dump a pile of garbage somewhere and it becomes the work of a "distinguished" modernist sculptor. And as for music, you see that "techno" and "rock-and-roll" stuff, with people climbing onstage in elegant halls and blaring that noise. With a little hype from radio and television, blind or handicapped singers with hoarse voices and those with repulsive looks become stars. And with children's toys, the uglier and more sinister they look, the faster they sell.

Mankind, in this mental state devoid of virtuous thoughts, seeks after drastically different things than before. For fame and gain, people resort to killing, arson, and framing. All that matters to them is money, not friends or family. Human relationships completely hinge now on money. You thus see unconscionable and outrageous acts of every sort being committed for money. Products, promotional items, and sound and video recordings that promote promiscuous sex are everywhere. For money, people will harm others without hesitation and produce, traffic, and sell drugs. Those miserable drug addicts will stop at nothing—stealing, robbing, and cheating others for money—to buy those expensive drugs. Television programs, newspapers, magazines, and literary works are full of casual sex. People go so far as to commit incest across generational lines. Repulsive homosexual behavior meanwhile bespeaks of a filthy, deviant state of mind that lacks rationality. Organized crime is so rampant there is no place it doesn't reach, yet it appeals to young people who, driven by their demonic side, crave violence. Crime bosses have become the objects of admiration, and people flock to them.

Many great awakened ones and prophets previously predicted that mankind would at this time have a massive disaster to worry about. Today's mankind is even worse than what the prophets predicted, and good people are ever fewer. Because of the many wrongs people did over the course of their many lives, and the enormous karma they thus accrued, people meet with trouble the moment they step out the door. But they don't realize that they are now paying for the wrong they did in their previous lives and eliminating that karma. When others mistreat them, they don't show tolerance or forbearance. Rather, they think, "You wronged me, then I'll do even worse to you. I won't fight with people unless I'm provoked, but when that happens, I'll be

sure get them back, and more.” So they then accrue new karma before paying off the old, and the karma on their bodies mounts to a terrifying extent! Human morality is sliding downwards rapidly and is on the verge of dire peril. Everyone, life after life, has in fact been adding fuel to the fire of human morality’s great demise. Each time the world has met with disaster, it has been a time when human moral values had vanished. Such is what transpires in the period of the final kalpa.

True Cultivation

My truly cultivating disciples, what I have taught you is a *Fa* with which one may cultivate Buddhahood or the *Dao*. Yet you air grievances with me when things that ordinary people deem important don't go your way, rather than being worried about your own inability to let go of human attachments. Is that cultivation? Letting go of human attachments is a mortal test on your way to becoming a truly superior being. Every disciple who does true cultivation must pass it, for it is the dividing line between cultivator and ordinary person.

The truth is, when you feel pained by things that hurt your prestige (*ming*), your worldly interests (*li*), or your feelings (*qing*), that very fact indicates that human attachments haven't been let go. Remember my words: Cultivation itself is not painful, rather, the key problem is your inability to let go of human attachments. It is only when you are supposed to let go of reputation, self-interest, and feelings that you experience pain.

You fell here from a world that is holy and pure, a realm glorious beyond compare, because you developed attachments at that level. But after falling into a world that is, by comparison, utterly filthy, instead of hastening your steps as you cultivate back, you hold on to filthy things in this foul world and refuse to let go, and even agonize over petty losses. Do you realize that for the sake of your salvation the Buddha once begged for alms among ordinary people? And today I open this great door and teach the Great Law in order to save you. I have never regarded the countless ordeals I have gone through as hardship. So what could you possibly have that can't be let go? Can you carry those things that you can't let go of through the gates of heaven?

Be Clearheaded and Use Good Sense

I once told some students that the presence of overly drastic thoughts means thought-karma is at work, yet now many students blame all inadequate thoughts that come up in ordinary circumstances on thought-karma. That's not right. If you no longer had any bad thoughts of your own, what would be left for you to cultivate? If you were that pure, wouldn't you be a Buddha? We are dealing with a wrong perception. Only when your mind fiercely projects filthy thoughts or curses Teacher, Dafa, other people, etc. and you cannot purge or suppress them is it thought-karma. There is also some thought-karma that is weak, but it is different from regular thoughts or ideas. You must get this straight.

Discernment

Muddy and turbid is the human world; fish eyes are confused with pearls. Quietly, unannounced, must the Tathagata descend to the world. As he spreads the *Fa*, meddling by wicked practices is sure to ensue. *Dao* and demonic spread in parallel, together inhabiting the earth. Discernment (*wu*) is key when true and false are mingled. It takes a superior being to tell them apart. Indeed, there are predestined ones who will, with their capacity to discern, come in steady succession, entering the Way and gaining the *Fa*. Knowing upright from evil, they will obtain the true scriptures, unburden their bodies, enrich their wisdom, fill their hearts, and sail smoothly aboard the Vessel of *Fa*. How marvelous! Diligent, sparing no effort, straight to Consummation they progress.

Those who are lost in the world, struggling to discern, live for money and die for power, finding pleasure or worry in but a trifling profit; doggedly they vie and fight, creating karma all their lives. Should such a person hear this *Fa* he is sure to laugh, with the word “nonsense” rolling off his tongue; his mind is sure to find it hard to understand or believe. Such is the inferior man; hard is he to save. So voluminous is his karma that it encases his body, seals off his wisdom, and renders his original nature no more.

Why One Sees Not

“What is seen can be believed; what is not seen cannot be believed.” Such is the view of the inferior man. Man is lost in illusion and creates abundant karma. With his innate nature lost, how could he possibly see [the invisible]? Discernment comes first, seeing follows. Cultivate the mind and eliminate karma, and then, once your innate nature emerges, shall you see. But, seeing or not, the superior man can achieve Consummation by relying on discernment alone. Among the masses, some see while others do not, this being determined by one’s level and spiritual potential. Cultivators often do not see on account of their pursuit of it, which amounts to an attachment; without its removal they thus cannot see. Often it owes to karma, an unfavorable setting, or is dictated by the method of cultivation; there are a multitude of reasons, as it all depends on the individual. Even in the case of someone who can see, there will be that which is indistinct. And only then, with clouded vision, does the Way remain to be discerned. If what is seen is as clear as if experienced firsthand, with nothing vague, then this is someone whose *gong* is Unlocked. He can cultivate no further, for there is nothing left to discern.

Studying the Fa

When educated people learn Dafa they should pay attention to a most prominent problem: studying Dafa in the manner that ordinary people study political ideology, such as studying by selecting relevant quotations from eminent persons against which to measure one's own conduct. This will hinder a cultivator's progress. There are also those who, upon hearing that Dafa has profound, underlying meaning and high-level content that can guide cultivation at different levels, attempt to delve into each and every word, only to find nothing. These habits, formed through prolonged study of political doctrine, are a factor that impacts your cultivation, for they lead you to misconstrue the *Fa*.

When studying the *Fa*, you should avoid searching for parts specifically relevant to some particular matter. That is in fact an attachment in a different guise (with the exception being urgent problems that need a solution). The only way to study Dafa well is to study it without any specific goal. With each complete reading of *Zhuan Falun*, you have made progress as long as you have gained insight. Even if you have come to only one new insight after reading it, you have truly improved.

In cultivation, upward progress is in fact something gained bit by bit and is unbeknownst to you. Keep in mind: What you gain should come naturally, free of pursuit.

How to Provide Assistance

In different regions there are many assistants who have an advanced understanding of Dafa, and they are able to set an example and run our practice sites well. But then there are some assistants who haven't done so well, and this mainly manifests in how they go about their work. If they, for the purpose of getting things done more easily, run things at practice sites via giving orders so that students will comply with them, that's a problem. Studying the *Fa* is a voluntary act. If the person studying doesn't have his heart in it, then no problem or issue will be resolved, and conflicts will surely arise. If the approach isn't changed, it will cause the conflicts to intensify, with the effect of severely compromising people's *Fa*-study.

Worse yet, some assistants often, in order to make practitioners believe in and obey them, circulate rumors or sensational things so as to boost their own standing, or try to distinguish themselves with something out of the norm. None of that is allowed. Our assistants serve others out of their own initiative, and are not Master. Much less should they have an attachment such as this.

So how are we to do the assistant's job well? First, you should place yourself among the students and not think of yourself as above them. If there is something you don't know how to do, then humbly discuss it together with everyone. And if you mishandle something, then sincerely tell the students, "I'm a cultivator just like you, and it's hard to avoid mistakes in doing this work. I mishandled it. Now let's do it right." If you sincerely wish to see everyone work together to do that thing well, how do you think it will go? Nobody will say you're no good. Just the opposite, people will think that you have learned the *Fa* well and are magnanimous. Dafa is right here with us, and all of you are studying it. Each and every action of the assistant, good or bad, will be measured by students in light of Dafa and seen for what it is. Once you look to build yourself up, students will think there's a problem with your *xinxing*. Only by being modest can you handle things well. One's stature is established by having studied the *Fa* well. Could a cultivator possibly be without fault?

What is “Emptiness”?

What is “emptiness” (*kong*)? The absence of any attachment is true emptiness, not emptiness in a material sense. But then there is Zen Buddhism, whose Dharma has expired and which has nothing left to transmit. In this final age, when the *Fa* is in disarray, it still has students who cling obstinately to its doctrine of emptiness, acting demented and irrational, as if they have grasped the very root of philosophical truth. Yet its founding patriarch, Bodhidharma, himself once proclaimed it to be a Dharma of only six generations, after which there would remain nothing left to transmit. Why is this not understood? If it’s said that all is empty, no *Fa* exists, there is no Buddha, no appearance, no self, and nothing exists, then what was Bodhidharma? If there is no *Fa*, then what is Zen’s doctrine of emptiness? If there is no Buddha and no appearance, then who was Shakyamuni? If you have no name, no appearance, no self, no existence, and all is “emptiness,” then for what reason do you eat and drink? Why wear clothes? Would it be all the same if your eyes were gouged out? And yet look at how attached you are to human emotions and desires. When a Tathagata speaks of “emptiness,” it refers to the total absence of human attachments; being “free of defilement” is the true meaning of “emptiness.” The cosmos is inherently material in its existence, its formation, and its continuation. How could it be “empty”? A *Fa* imparted by anything less than a Tathagata is condemned to a short life, its teachings sure to vanish. The *Fa* of an Arhat is *not* Buddha *Fa*. Realize this! Realize this!

Be Steadfast

You are full of confidence when Master is present. When Master is not present, you have no interest in cultivation, as if you cultivate for Master and took it up on a whim. Such is a major flaw of the average man. Shakyamuni, Jesus, Lao Zi, and Confucius have been gone for over two thousand years, yet never have their disciples felt they could not cultivate in their master’s absence. Cultivation is something that falls upon you yourself, and nobody can do it on your behalf. A master can only, at least on the surface, tell you the *Fa*’s principles. It is incumbent upon you to cultivate your mind and sever the cords of desire, gaining the illumination of wisdom and removing all doubt. If you took up this path on an impulse, your heart is sure to be less than steadfast and you will surely lose your grounding when you venture out into the secular world. If you cannot hold firmly to your faith, you will end up with nothing after a whole lifetime. Who knows when another destined chance will come. They are hard to come by!

Buddhism’s Teachings Are the Smallest and Weakest Part of Buddha Fa

Sentient beings! Don’t use Buddhism to measure the Great Fa of *Zhen Shan Ren*, for that simply can’t be done. That’s done only because people are used to calling the *sutras* of Buddhism “*Fa*.” The cosmic body is in fact so vast as to exceed a Buddha’s knowledge of the universe. The Daoist Taiji theory is likewise but an understanding of the universe at a lesser level and, on the plane of ordinary man, no longer constitutes a real *Fa*; rather, it encompasses merely a few, limited phenomena from the periphery of the universe with which people can cultivate. Since ordinary people are the lowest plane of man, they are not allowed to know the true Buddha Fa. But people have heard that sages have said: “Paying respects to Buddha can sow the karmic seeds of the opportunity to cultivate,” “The chanting of incantations by cultivators can invoke the protection of higher beings,” “Observing the monastic rules can allow you to reach the standard required of a cultivator.” Throughout history, people have always looked into and debated whether the Awakened One’s words inherently amount to Buddha Fa. What a Tathagata says is an embodiment of Buddha-nature, and it can be called an expression of *Fa*. But it is not the universe’s true *Fa*, for, in the past, people were strictly prohibited from knowing the true embodiment of Buddha Fa. What Buddha Fa is, was something that could be discerned only after cultivating to a higher plane; thus, even less was it the case that human beings were allowed to know the essence of cultivation. Falun Dafa has, for the first time in all the ages, revealed the special property of the universe—Buddha Fa—to human beings. It is equal to bestowing upon man a ladder to heaven. Seen in this light, how could you evaluate the Great Fa of the universe with things from Buddhism’s past?

What is “Wisdom”?

People think so highly of human society’s celebrities, scholars, and various experts. In reality, they are terribly insignificant, for they are ordinary people. Their knowledge is but the small, trivial content that the modern science of human society has come to know, and that is all. In the immense universe, looking from the most macroscopic level to the most microscopic, human society is precisely situated most centrally, at the outermost layer, and at the very surface. And the lives there are the lowest form of existence, so their knowledge of the material and spiritual is sparse, shallow, and pitiable. Even were someone to master all of mankind’s knowledge, he would still be an ordinary person.

Waiting Until Retirement to Cultivate

There is a certain percentage of students who are endowed with a good spiritual potential that attended my lectures and yet, because they are busy with their jobs, have stopped practicing. What a pity! If they were average, ordinary people, I would say nothing more and leave it at that. But these are people with promise. Human morality is plummeting with each passing day, and ordinary people are drifting along with the tide. To return through cultivation becomes for them, as they depart ever further from the *Dao*, increasingly difficult. Cultivation is in fact a matter of cultivating the mind, and the complicated setting of the workplace, in particular, provides exactly a good opportunity to elevate your *xinxing*. Once you retire, won't you have lost the ideal setting in which to cultivate? With not a hint of discord in sight, what will there be for you to cultivate with? How will you improve? A human life is only so long, so while you might often have nice plans, do you really know whether there will be sufficient time left in the future [for you to cultivate]? Cultivation is no trifling matter, but rather, more serious than anything in the human world; it can't be taken for granted. Once you miss the opportunity, who's to say when you will gain a human body again in the cycle of reincarnation. Fate transpires but once. Once the dreamlike illusion you cling to is over, you will realize what you have lost.