

The Flying Carpet of The East

By Living Buddha Liang-Sheng, Sheng-Yen, Lu



Translated by Shan Tung Ph.D., Bekka, and Karin Greenway

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iii. About Living Buddha Lian-sheng



Living Buddha Lian-sheng is a prominent religious figure throughout the world. As of 2003, over 5 million people have taken refuge in his True Buddha School. With over 300 chapters worldwide, the True Buddha School is recognized as a major component in Buddhism today. Living Buddha Lian-sheng has written over 160 books in Chinese on varied topics such as Tantric

Buddhism, Geomancy, Zen Buddhism, and Taoism. Many of these books are now being translated into English and various other languages. Living Buddha Lian-sheng is also an exceptionally talented artist. His undeniably beautiful paintings bring tranquility, prosperity, love, and happiness to people's lives. Currently, Living Buddha Lian-sheng is on spiritual retreat.

iv. Foreword

These are not parables. They are not invented to teach a moral lesson. The events described actually happened. This is a true account of the beginnings of the spiritual path followed by Lu Sheng Yen.

Lu was born in Taiwan in 1945. He was raised as a Christian. In his early twenties he had the unique experience of being called upon by a spiritual entity. The spirit, channeled through a woman who was a medium, told him many facts about his life and thoughts that left him amazed. Lu Sheng Yen continues to have direct experiences which make the spiritual world as real as it was in the days when Jesus walked among on Earth.

His accounts of his experiences are written in lucid, easily understood language. Anyone can read them. The contents, however, are profound. A belief in the contents changes reality. The world as the reader knows it will never be the same again.

Master Lu had 17 books published in Taiwan when he began to write about his spiritual experiences. Currently he has 152 titles in print and he is considered one of Taiwan's most popular writers. The subjects include information about the miracles of healing, discussions of the spiritual realms, teachings about meditation, principles of feng shui, and profound ideas about mysticism.

This book is the first of his works to be translated into English. The selections are from his first spiritual book, *Conversations About the Spiritual Realm*, and from his fourteenth book, *The Flying Carpet of the East*.

v. Translators

Shan Tung Hsu Ph.D

Bekka

Karin Greenway

With thanks to Rebecca Johnson, Deloris Tarzan, Jacqueline Hunt and Joanne Sturm for typing and editing.

- Chapter 1 -

The Miraculous Experience

One night, in 1969, I had an unusual dream about climbing a tall mountain. At the summit stood an ancient temple. I walked in without hesitation, as if I were returning home.

In the temple stood statues of many gods. Some appeared gentle and compassionate; others looked wrathful. Still others were solemn and dignified. I tiptoed to the center of the temple hall and there in front of me stood a very old Taoist Abbot. He pressed his palms together in front of his chest and said, "I've been waiting a long time for you."

"Sir, I don't know you," I replied. "How could I have an appointment with you?"

"How can we not know each other?" he asked. "We have experienced three religions together, and traveled four seas. We have met once every five hundred years. Even if you should sink to the lowest hell and become a vicious demon, I would still recognize you."

"Sir, what do you mean?" I asked.

"You will not understand unless you get hit," said the Taoist. He raised his duster and hit me on the head. Startled, I woke from my dream.

I seldom dream. That was the first dream I'd ever had that was still vividly clear to me when I woke. That morning was Sunday, and my mother wanted me to accompany her to the temple. So although I was Christian, I decided to go with my mother to the Buddhist Temple near my home. I went not to burn incense, nor to bow to any gods, but as one would go to a tourist spot. I looked down on people who bowed to gods, especially well-dressed men. It amused me to see them kneel before statues with such serious expressions on their faces.

The temple was not big. It was called Yu-huang-Kung (Jade Emperor's Palace). The monk in charge was Shih Hui-ling. I didn't recognize most of the god statues. A festival was in progress that day. The temple was packed with people elbow to elbow. It was smoky with burning incense, so I went outside to stand under the temple eaves. I looked back inside and noticed among the crowd a lady wearing a royal blue dress. She appeared to be in her fifties. She knelt in front of the statues and seemed to be having a conversation with them. Many people surrounded her. She was answering their questions. Suddenly the woman stood and shouted, "Who is Lu Sheng-Yen? Who among you is Lu Sheng-Yen?" I heard her calling me, even though I was standing outside.

My mother also heard. She moved forward and asked, "Please tell me, why are you looking for Lu Sheng-Yen?" ,

"It is not I looking for him," the blue-dressed lady replied. "Hurry and bring him here. The gods have something to tell him."

I came in and stood before her.

She was ugly. One eye looked up and the other looked down. Her mouth was twisted. People surrounding her explained that one of her eyes looked to heaven and the other eye looked to hell.

"Are you Lu Sheng-Yen?" the lady asked.

"Yes," I replied, "Why have you called me?"

Without answering, she knelt again and began mumbling. Then she turned toward me. "You are a Christian, aren't you?"

"Yes," I replied.

"You have a college education?"

"Yes."

"Do you understand the dream you had this morning?"

I was astonished! How could she know about my dream? I hadn't told anyone about it, not even my mother! It was just by chance

that I came to this temple. How mysterious this all was! She continued to question me.

All my answers were "yes" and "correct." Everything she said was true. Finally she said, "The Bodhisattvas want you to spread their good will by expounding on the Dharma, help to clear away confusion, strengthen virtue, and abolish evil. You have a great responsibility now. The Bodhisattvas choose you to spread the Dharma".

"Me? I know nothing!" I replied.

"It is true that right now you know nothing, but if you kneel beside me many things will be revealed to you. Come. Kneel down and close the palms of your hands together," the blue-dressed lady said.

I imitated her gestures and knelt. A crowd surrounded us, including my mother and the monk in charge of the temple.

As soon as I closed my eyes a miraculous thing happened. I saw a ray of light appear in front of me and in the light three Bodhisattvas appeared, each sitting on a lotus flower. Seven glistening colors emanated from their bodies. I reminded myself that this wasn't a dream. It absolutely was not a dream! I was seeing it with my own eyes in broad daylight!

The Bodhisattva in the middle said: "Study the teachings of Buddha wholeheartedly. "

Another said: "Wholeheartedly turn to virtue." Then they vanished, and there appeared a huge shiny red cloth stretching down from heaven.

On the cloth were written two golden words: Loyalty and Justice.

I heard a voice say: "Today the Jade Emperor gives you the two words: Loyalty and Justice. They are to be the two basic principles you live by in this lifetime. To find out what you should or should not do, ask your heart first. As long as you can openly face heaven

and earth, you will be open to the Tao which is eternally present everywhere."

"Did you see it?" the lady asked me.

"Yes, I saw and heard, but how is this possible?" I asked.

"There are many, many things that are unbelievable. Today you experienced some. In time you will understand more. You will see and hear and feel what most people are not able to experience. Slowly the gods will teach you."

It was difficult for me to believe what had just occurred, yet it was so real I couldn't help believing.

- Chapter 2 -

A Temple Story

In the Yu-huang Kung temple, the blue-dressed lady told me the following story:

On the Chung-Shan Road of Hua-lien City lived a man named Li Tien-Szu. He painted and made sculptures for temples, such as painting dragons on temple roofs, even though he didn't believe in religion or gods. One day Lee Tian Sie went to the Golden Mother's Temple in Hua Lien to work, and after he finished he walked around the temple and approached the Golden Mother statue. For no special reason, he placed the palms of his hands together and bowed his head. He found he couldn't raise it back up. His head wouldn't move! It felt like a thousand pounds.

Panic-stricken he screamed. Monks anxiously rushed over to him. When they observed what was going on they promptly knelt and asked the Golden Mother for guidance. The blue-dressed lady, the one who told me this story, was there at the time, and she also reverently prayed.

The Golden Mother said to her "This person doesn't believe in me, but does have an affinity with me. I want to let him know that gods do exist in the universe. Ask him to bow to me twelve times. Then I'll allow him to get up."

Li Tien-Szu obediently bowed twelve times, and found himself able to raise his head. "Oh my!" he cried, "Gods really do exist!" .

Since then the painter has believed in the gods. Whenever he has the chance he tells people about his experience.

The blue-dressed lady belongs to the Yao-Chih School of Taoist practices. If you invite her to your home for the Worship of ancestors ceremony, she can tell you who your ancestors were, when they died, what they looked like, what kind of rings they wore and what physical features they had.

She also can tell you what your ancestors want to say to you now. Her readings are very accurate.

How can anyone outside your family know about things relating to your ancestors, especially if they passed away before you were born? There is much in her life that is hard to understand. Yet there are facts about her that can't be denied. As a matter of fact, unusual things continue to happen to me too...

- Chapter 3 -

Travelling Through The Great Void

After I visited the temple with my mother, I returned to my apartment. So much had happened that day that I went to bed to think about it. I couldn't fall asleep. Suddenly, I smelled incense. I closed my eyes. In a misty haze I saw a circle of light surrounded by a shimmering golden aura. I felt my body float up into the air and fly through the circle of light. I heard the wind blow. It felt as if I flew a very long distance, and then discovered myself in an entirely different world. Somehow it was clear to me that this was the world of the great void. I was guided there by some kind of force. I met many Bodhisattvas whom I couldn't recognize.

They bowed in salutation. I saw lotus flowers as large as car wheels, in many colors, and on every lotus flower stood a boy. Each boy held in his hand a different color lotus. Ladders, surrounded by gold-armored gods, came down from the sky. A beautiful mist floated up from the ground.

I saw an elaborately carved palace with golden light reflected from its windows. The palace had two pillars that stretched up to the clouds. I heard a voice tell me that one pillar represented Kun-Lun Mountain and the other represented Sumeru Mountain.

I walked to a huge temple on one of the mountains. There stood a man and I heard a voice that told me to check the truth of this by reading on a specific page in the sutras. I was told never to reveal my origin to anyone.

I travelled on to many other places. I saw and heard things I had never seen or heard before.

When I awoke it was seven o'clock in the morning. I rushed over to the Tai-Chung Jui-Ch'eng Bookstore which specializes in Buddhist books. I found the sutra and page that I was directed to look up. Astonishingly enough, there was written the name of the person I was told about! I was stunned, filled with both joy and sorrow. Now I understood the reality of reincarnation. I wondered

how I could deny the experiences I'd had last night and the days prior. They were so unusual, yet so real.

I thought, "If I don't cultivate myself in this lifetime then when will I?" Before leaving the bookstore I bought many Taoist and Buddhist Sutras. At that time I didn't know the difference between the two.

After the experience of traveling through the great void, I hoped to experience it again, even if only for ten minutes.

- Chapter 4 -

The Invisible Teacher

It was two days after my visit to the great void. I was asleep when suddenly I heard someone calling my name. From experience I knew that something unusual was about to happen. I sat up in bed and looked around the room, but I couldn't see anyone. Outside the window the moon was so bright I could read my watch by it. It was one a.m. I got out of bed, put a jacket over my shoulders and turned on a light. It blinded me momentarily.

I heard a voice say, "Sheng-Yen, stand still, don't move. I've come to teach you. Close your palms now and I will teach you the sequence of the footsteps. Remember the footsteps carefully."

Although I saw no one, I wasn't afraid. I closed my eyes and placed the palms of my hands together. An unknown force lifted my foot. Even if I tried putting my foot down I couldn't. Then my feet began walking in a peculiar pattern. If anyone had happened to peek into my window they would have thought I was crazy. An unknown power moved my feet. I practiced the pattern over and over in order to remember it.

"What is this movement called and what is it good for?" I asked.

"It is the Star Worship Step. It can be used while worshipping your ancestors and while communicating with the gods. It can be combined with mudras and chanting. Don't underestimate the power of this step. This method has not been taught for thousands of years. Do not use it unless necessary."

"Then what method should I use in ordinary circumstances?"

"Sheng-Yen, all you have to do is say, 'The Disciple of Tao, Lian Shen, who follows the original and ultimate dharma, requests such and such gods to come to me.' That's enough. In the future, at the right time, I will guide you to your teacher who lives in Lien-t'ou Mountain. You have an affinity with him. He knows many sacred methods that you will learn."

"It all sounds like a fairy tale, very hard to believe."

"For the time being don't concern yourself about it. I came to teach you today and you experience the teaching. This is a fairy tale itself in your world."

May I ask you your name?"

"I come from nowhere and I go to nowhere. Originally, I had no name. Why don't you just call me your Spirit Master?"

I can never see my Spirit Master, but he is always with me and he often wakes me at midnight to teach me. I treat him as my teacher and he treats me as a brother. I can tell him everything that's deep in my heart. I can feel his presence and talk with him. When he teaches me mudras, my hands automatically move into various formations. I have learned the Kuan Yin mudra, the Five Thunder mudra, the Amithaba mudra, the Sword mudra, the Lotus mudra, and many others. He also taught me Buddha's method of making offerings to spirits.

Once I asked him, "Master, what is the purpose of life?"

"It is very precious to have a physical body. Take this opportunity. Use the body to cultivate the soul."

"How should one cultivate? How can one attain Tao?"

"There are many paths. The one chosen depends on the person's character, personality and inherent qualities. The methods are designed to meet the individual needs of the practitioner. For example, the methods taught by the Jade Emperor embody the first principle of Tao - the Formless. Since it is without form, without specific structure, it is very difficult for most people to follow. The methods taught by the Upper Pure Ones involve eighteen paths. Each path has seven levels. The methods taught by the Great Pure Ones have twenty paths. Each path has nine levels. Li Liang-feng reached Tao through divination. Yen Chun Ping reached the Fairy Paradise through astrology. Huang Ch'eng Shih reached enlightenment through service. Chang Tao Ling reached enlightenment through delivering souls. Although the methods are

different, the Tao is the same. You ultimately realize Tao as long as you walk on the path that is right for you."

"Master, what paths have you been through to reach Tao?"

"People call me Mr. San-shan-chiu-hou (Three-Peaks-Nine-States). I realized Tao through the study and practice of the dharma, the Upper Path."

My Spirit Master teaches me intermittently. I learn a great deal from him. During each visit he teaches me one mudra and one chant. I have changed from a Christian who could recite parts of the Old and New Testament to a Taoist practitioner!

"Master," I asked him once, "What do you think of Jesus Christ?"

"Jesus Christ is the savior of the world; the same as Buddha. The methods are different; the principle is the same. There are many saviors, not just one. There are many paths."

"Then there is no conflict?" I asked.

Then Master continued: "In Christianity, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are three in one. In Taoism, the Upper Pure, Jade Pure and Great Pure are one. In Buddhism the dharma body, the transformation body and the spiritual body are the trinity. The same truth holds for all of the thousands of paths to enlightenment".

- Chapter 5 -

The Worship Of Kuan Yin Bodhisattva

Before I began worshipping the Bodhisattvas, there was not one Buddhist statue in my family's home. My mother worshipped ancestors. My family never anticipated that their home would hold a large shrine. At first, I kept my study of dharma secret even from my family and co-workers. At that time Master San-shan-chiu-hou gave me my dharma name: Lian Shen (Lotus Reborn).

One evening I asked, "Master, may I set up statues of the Bodhisattvas and worship them?"

"Yes," he replied. "Actually there is a good reason for you to do so.

In the future your family's home will have a large shrine."

"What Bodhisattvas should I worship?"

"Anyone who pleases you most."

"May I worship a Statue of you?" I asked.

"Most people don't know my original face. Even in the Taoist sutras my name is hidden. I'm in everything, everywhere, yet no one recognizes me. How can you worship me? Besides, I've gotten used to not being called upon, so don't worship me? Worship the other Bodhisattvas."

Is there any merit attained by worshipping the Bodhisattvas?

"Buddha says:

To give rice to 100 unrighteous people is not as good as to give rice to one virtuous person.

To give rice to 1,000 virtuous people is not as good as to give rice to one person who follows the 5 precept vows.

To give rice to 10,000 people who follow the 5 precept vows is not as good as to give rice to one Srota-apanna (one who has entered the stream of holy living).

To give rice to one Srota-apanna is not as good as to give rice to one Sakrdagamin (only once more to be born).

To give rice to 10 billion Sakrdagamin is not as good as to give rice to one Anagamin (non-returned).

To give rice to 100 million Anagamin is not as good as to give rice to one Arhat (free, exalted one).

To give rice to one billion Arhats is not as good as to give rice to one Buddha.

To give rice to one billion Buddhas is not as good as to give rice to all the Buddhas of the past, present and future.

And yet to give rice to 100 billion Buddhas of the past, present and future is not as good as to give rice to one common person. '

"Lian Shen, to give rice means to make an offering. Do you understand?" "I understand," I respectfully answered.

One day I went to a department store in Tai-Chung. I was in the ceramic section when suddenly I saw a statue of Kuan-Yin Bodhisattva. It looked different than the other Kuan-Yin statues I had seen. It was about 8 inches tall, was a light green color with a grayish undertone, and a solemn, dignified face. The figure sat on a lotus flower. I liked it right away and inquired about the price. The salesman said: "This Kuan-Yin has already been worshipped by other people. The vase she holds is broken. The person who owns it asked me to sell it for him because the broken vase is a bad omen. If you still want it, how about 15 yen?" "Fifteen yen? Wow, that's really inexpensive!" I immediately bought it and took it back to my apartment. I put the statue on my desk and lit a stick of incense.

That night I had a dream. I saw a vast ocean. A beautiful lotus flower emerged from it, and on the lotus flower sat Kuan-Yin, with a devout and serene face. She came closer to me and smiled. In the sky behind her shone a bright cloud, and on it stood a gold-armored god holding a weapon. Later I learned that his name is Veda Guardian and that he is the guardian of Kuan-Yin. He thundered out: Lian Shen, the Buddha has commanded me to give you the name of your shrine: Tz'u-hui-lei-chung Temple. Remember, remember."

Then both Kuan-Yin and Veda disappeared and I woke up, recalling what had occurred. I looked at the Kuan-Yin I had bought earlier that day. To my surprise, the Kuan-Yin in the dream looked just like it. I got out of bed and respectfully bowed to the Kuan-Yin statue three times. As I bowed I smelled incense, then felt my spirit master present.

"Master, did I do it right?" I asked.

"Lian Shen, because you worshipped Kuan-yin today, once in the future Kuan-Yin will save your life."

"Save my life?"

"Yes," my Master said. "When the time draws near I will tell you more."

Later his words came true. It was an amazing experience.

During the period I was worshipping Kuan-Yin, the man I worked for, Captain Chuang, talked to my parents and said, "Mr. Lu, I've been noticing that your son is behaving peculiarly. He even worships Kuan-Yin in his apartment. Do you think there's anything wrong with him?"

"I don't think so," my father replied. "He is very sincere in his beliefs and when I talk with him he seems to have a clear mind. Is there a rule against worshipping Buddha in your organization?"

"No, but I feel he's acting strangely. He predicted that I will get transferred to Taipei in the middle of July. When did he learn divination?"

The middle of July is still half a year away," Captain Chuang said.

"Divination? I didn't know that about my son!" my father said, startled.

Later that year, on July 17th, Captain Chuang transferred to Taipei.

After that he always mentioned to people that my predictions were very accurate. The method I learned, taught by Master San-shan-Chiu-hou, was the use of the hexagram of the I Ching. He said the hexagram contained the transformation of the whole universe. Full mastery of it allows one to know everything on earth, past, present and future.

- Chapter 6 -

Studying At Lien T'ou Mountain

Through the guidance of Spirit Master San-shon-chiu-hou (Three-Peaks-Nine-States), I went to the Lien-t'ou Mountain to ask Master Ch'ing-chen to become my teacher. In the Taoist tradition there is a ceremony for initiation called Kuo-Kung-fe (a ceremony of walking through fire.) Master Ch'ing-chen performed the ceremony and I formally became a Taoist practitioner.

There are many mountains in Taiwan. Most people are not familiar with the one called Lien-t'ou; it is actually a small peak on another mountain. Master Ch'ing-chen came from mainland China. When I met him he was about 80 years old. As a young man, he studied the Tao in the temple of Ch'ing-Ch'eng Mountain. His family name was Chang, the same as the Heavenly Master Chang who founded the Taoist religion. Since Master Ch'ing-chen had come to Taiwan he had been living in seclusion in a thatched hut, tilling a small portion of land. He worshipped the three Pure Ones: Upper Pure, Jade Pure, and Great Pure. Master San-shan-chiu-hou told me Master Ch'ing-chen had been cultivating himself for over 50 years and had learned many spiritual secrets. He could travel out of his body at will. He also told me that although Master Ch'ing-chen didn't accept students, if I went to him he would accept me. He said that I would learn a great deal from him.

When I arrived at his hut, Master Ch'ing-chen was meditating. He opened his eyes slightly and asked, "Why have you come here?"

"In accordance with Master San-shan-chiu-hou's guidance I have come to learn from you," I replied. I knelt and bowed my head.

"When is your birthday?"

"May 18, 1945, noon," I answered.

Master Ch'ing-chen appeared startled. "You were born on the same day and hour as the Heavenly Master Chang! Get up, get up, don't bow down to me! I recognize you!"

I felt as if I had met Master Ch'ing-chen before. I thought for awhile, then suddenly remembered he was the Abbot in the dream I'd had, the one who said he had an appointment with me and hit me over the head with his duster. Master Ch'ing-chen also had a duster. I told him about my dream and he laughed loudly.

Master Ch'ing-chen taught me how to write symbols on rice paper and how to energize it for healing. He taught me prayers for calling upon helpful energy. I learned Taoist alchemy—a sacred method for increasing health and vitality, and restoring original energy.

Master Ch'ing-chen told me: "If you are able to return to your original nature you will become a great celestial being. To restore your original nature is to re-establish the Ch'ing-ch'i and Shen (vital energy, the life force and spiritual force.) You should bring the energy back to its source.

To be able to separate your soul from your body at will is possible. It sounds like a fairy tale, but it can actually be done. The ability comes from spiritual cultivation."

I studied with Master Ch'ing-chen by visiting him on weekends and on holidays. During the week I had an ordinary job to perform. Yet I took my study very seriously. I practiced diligently. Master Ch'ing-chen encouraged me to study hard so I could serve people in the future. He taught me the Diamond Protection Chant—protection from evil energy, and many others.

He said: "To rescue and deliver human beings requires great compassion. Teach the people the divine laws. All beings in all the worlds need to hear the teachings and be liberated." He added, "As long as positive energy exists, negative energy will also exist. Yet, don't concern yourself with negative energy. Be concerned only with positive energy. If it is dominant, then negative energy will be sublimated. As long as you abide in positive energy and cultivate the highest realization, you will eventually reach Tao."

Once he asked: "Lian Shen, would you like to learn how to read the past and the future?"

"Yes, I would," I answered.

"Study the Juang-Chi Sutra in depth and then I will teach you divine reading and everything will be known to you."

Master Ch'ing-chen awakened my soul. If a person's soul is awake he is able to see into spiritual realms. Some people can see, others can hear. Some people are able to use the help of spiritual beings to foretell future and past events. This method is different from those methods such as astrology, face reading, palm reading and bone reading. Not many people know how to do spiritual reading, because to do it your soul must be awakened.

- Chapter 7 -

A Temple Affair

On January 9th, 1970, it was the Jade Emperor god's birthday. Two plays were being staged in front of the Yu-huang Temple. The priest in charge also arranged a parade in which the Jade Emperor's statue and other Dieties' statues were honoured. It was a big event for the temple. Devotees stood in front of their homes holding incense to show their love for the gods as the parade passed. Throngs followed the procession as statues carried on shoulder carts moved slowly through the streets.

When the parade was finished, the statues were returned to the temple and placed on the altar with the Jade Emperor god in the center. On his left was the figure of Lao Tzu, and on his right the god of infinity and the Golden Mother. The temple was crowded with pilgrims and hazy with incense smoke.

While everyone was involved in burning incense and worshipping, a woman dressed in rags suddenly appeared, her mouth foaming with saliva.

She knelt, scratching the ground with outstretched arms and crying out to the Jade Emperor god, "Justice! Justice! Give me back my life!". She seemed to be insane.

The crowd stirred and people gathered around her as she yelled and pleaded for help. "Give me back my life! You murdered me! I want my life back from you. Oh, Jade Emperor, deliver me or return my life to me. How painful!. . .Ha! Ha! I will not let you go so easily!"

She was laughing and crying in despair and confusion, alternating between screaming, laughing, clapping her hands, and bowing her head over and over again. Her tangled hair flew loosely around her head, heightening the appearance of one demented.

The priest in charge, Shih Hui-ling, stood behind her. He prayed to the Jade Emperor, but the crazy woman continued with no

indication of recovering. In fact, she became worse. She smashed a candle and a fruit offering, sweeping it onto the floor with her arm.

Some people tried to restrain her, but she scratched and bit at them.

No one knew what to do. The temple was very crowded and became more so as people clustered in to watch, yet no one could do anything to ease the situation.

Finally, a tall man walked toward her. Some people recognized him and said that everything would be taken care of now because Master Ch'ien of the Nine Heaven Temple had arrived.

He stepped forward, holding a bowl of water in his right hand, while his left hand formed the sword mudra. He filled his mouth with water and sprayed it into the air. "Bright and luminous, the sun rises from the east. This sacred water will wipe out all evils," he intoned.

The woman was dazed. She glared at Master Ch'ien and yelled, "This is none of your business!" She reached out to grab him. Master Ch'ien continued to spit mouthfuls of water. The woman clawed at him until he was bleeding, but he continued to make the sword mudra, calling out, "Take the command of the Prince General."

The woman became frantic and began swinging her arms.

People stepped back.

Master Ch'ien at last was exhausted and turned to the priest. "I can't handle her. The entity is too powerful."

Mother and I had watched it all. I turned to her and said, "I think I can handle it."

I had confidence. I took off my coat and stepped over to the woman. I closed my palms together and chanted silently the Diamond Protection chant. The crazy woman dropped her hands.

"Who are you?" she growled. "Don't mess around with me."

"My name is Lian Shen. I'm a disciple of Master San-shan-chiu-hou.

I have come to ask you to stop this revenge. One should dissolve feelings of revenge instead of letting them accumulate. Otherwise, the cycle will continue without end. It's alright for you to ask the Jade Emperor for justice, but you shouldn't interfere with the temple fair."

"In my previous life I was murdered by this woman. Now I possess her body and I am asking the Jade Emperor for justice. This is a rare opportunity because the Jade Emperor is here today. I have to get even. You shouldn't meddle. I respect you as a Taoist practitioner so I am not going to fight with you."

"Good friend, if I can deliver you, would you then stop this nonsense?"

"Can You?" The woman burst out laughing.

A buzz of worried chatter surrounded us.

I asked Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva to be the witness. Silently, I chanted the deliverance chant and circled the crazy woman 33 times to the left, then 33 times to the right. I continually changed my hand Mudras as I circled. It was a method taught to me by Master San-shan-chiu-hou, and it was the first time I had tried using it. I didn't know whether it would work! I was nervous.

Remarkably, the crazy woman slowly closed her angry eyes, stopped swinging her arms, and sat quietly. By the time I had finished the chant, the entity had vanished and the woman had regained her normal state of consciousness.

"How come I'm here?" she cried.

The crowd applauded. People surrounded me. One of the woman's neighbours said, "She has been crazy for nine years! No doctor was able to cure her. This is the first time she has recovered. Thank God! Finally she's cured!"

I was grateful to Master San-shan-chiu-hou. His method worked the first time I tried it! I was elated, and so was my mother.

However, Master Chien was embarrassed, "Actually this healing was done by the power of the Prince General God," he said. "That guy Lian Shen merely took advantage of the situation. How could just a few mudras expel the entity? It was really the power of my sacred water."

I didn't say anything. I was disappointed in human nature. I thought about Master Ch'ing-chen. He was truly an advanced master, yet he chose to live alone. Had he chosen seclusion because he had become so disappointed in human nature?

- Chapter 8 -
Visiting The City God Of Peng Hu

Captain Wei and I were flying to Peng-hu, an offshore island near Southwest Taiwan. We were going to do some surveying on the military base there.

"I've heard that you are a sincere believer in Buddha," he said.

"Yes, I am. How about you?"

"Me? I don't believe in anything," Wei said. "As far as I'm concerned, as long as I follow my conscience that's good enough. I have had people preach to me before, and I've attended church a few times. I heard that as long as you believe, you will be saved. Christianity and Buddhism seem the same to me. My wife wants me to worship Kuan-Yin, but I think that as long as I hold respect in my heart that's good enough. Why is it necessary to do such tedious things as burn incense and bow?"

"You have a point," I conceded. "If everyone had as good a heart as you that would be great, but it's also true that some people experience the presence of the Bodhisattvas."

"Oh, you must be talking about spiritual reading. I'll believe that when I see it. I was told you have this talent, but unless you prove it to me I won't believe it. You may think I'm stubborn, but if indeed it is true, maybe I will convert to Buddhism."

The flight to Peng-hu took 30 minutes. Peng-hu is famous for its wind. From the plane window I watched blue waves tumbling on the ocean. When we landed, the wind was blowing with gale force. The doorman at the hotel said it was like this every day.

Captain Wei and I toured the town. He told me that he and his wife had lived here some years before. His wife used to be sickly, and she went to Kuan-Yin Temple to pray for better health. She promised a special offering to the Bodhisattva of Compassion, Kuan-Yin.

By the time we got back to the hotel it was nine o'clock-too early to go to sleep, but there was no place to go for entertainment. Captain Wei reached into his pocket and grabbed a handful of coins. He stretched his closed hand in front of me and said, "Let me test how accurate your spiritual reading is. Guess how many coins are in my hand. If you guess right I will believe in Buddha, otherwise you will treat me to a movie."

This kind of test always took me by surprise and I didn't like it. Yet I had to face it. I closed my eyes, placed the palms of my hands together, and silently prayed, "Disciple Lian Shen, in accordance with highest dharma, respectfully invites any gods in the vicinity to come to me. I need help," I repeated over and over. Finally, a god appeared. He was very colorfully dressed in a robe with a dragon on it. He looked very stately. He emanated rays of light. Of course Captain Wei couldn't see the god. At that time I could see most of the gods, except the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas who exist in the formless realm.

"I'm the god in charge of this territory," the being said. "I don't know what you need, but you used a dharma method to call upon me."

"I feel really embarrassed bothering you like this, however, the Captain has given me a test. He has asked me to tell him how many coins are in his hand. I'd like to answer him. Could you please find out for me?" I was thinking that to bother the city god over such a trivial matter must really anger him.

The city god replied, "How trivial. Why are you so foolish as to do this sort of thing?"

"If I can answer accurately, I can convert one more person to Buddha. There is great merit in that. Just this time, please? I won't ask again."

"There are fourteen." The god disappeared.

I told Captain Wei there were fourteen coins in his hand. He counted out the coins one by one. He hadn't known how many were in his hand.

He came to the thirteenth and found one left in his hand. There were exactly fourteen!

Captain Wei looked at me. "Amazing," he said. "Your readings are really very accurate, aren't they? I will keep my promise. When we have time I will escort you to all the temples in this town. In the meantime I am going to fulfill for my wife the vow she made to Kuan-yin by visiting the Kuan-Yin Temple with a special offering."

Captain Wei did keep his promise. After we finished our work he escorted me to all the temples in town, both Taoist and Buddhist.

Finally we went to the City God's temple. The City God was sitting in the middle near the altar. He saw us come in and immediately got up from his chair and said to me, "Oh, now I recognize you! You are the disciple of Master San-shan-chiu-hou. No wonder you can use such a high chant to call upon us. I apologize for my rudeness."

"Oh no, no. I have come to thank you for your help. Now the captain has converted to Buddha. One day, if he becomes a Buddha, it will be all because of you."

"Oh don't say that," the City God humbly said. I saw two guardian ghosts wink at us.

By the time Captain Wei had returned to Tai-Chung, he had changed.

He became a very devoted Buddhist. He printed many of the sutras to give away. He worshipped Buddha in his home. The Weis had three sons and Mrs. Wei had been praying for a girl. Later, she was blessed with a fourth baby, a girl. They were very happy. His wife's health improved and Captain Wei became even more devoted.

- Chapter 9 -

The Temple On Brush Tip Mountain

In Chu-Nan City there is a mountain called Brush Tip. Some 50 families live there, all farmers who cultivate crops on the terraced land.

My assistant and I were there on a surveying assignment, staying temporarily at a military post. We got to know the residents quite well.

At the time there was a big celebration at the new Yu Ta-jen Temple and my assistant and I were invited. The residents were very generous and hospitable, inviting as many guests as possible to the feast. Some families invited several dozen guests. Others invited several hundred.

We were having a great time toasting and drinking when an old man at our table suddenly sighed and said, "Hmmm, it's too bad, this mountain used to have very good energy. Unfortunately . . ."

"Unfortunately," I interrupted, "the dragon's body has been cut in two. "

The old man looked surprised. "Young man, you know the Feng-Shui."

I pointed to a low area on the mountain and said, "That point of the mountain has the name 'Two Dragons Point to the Sun.' Long ago, because of the high and pure energy of this place, a high ranking official was born there. Later, an industrial company dug clay out of the mountain to make bricks and the energy was disturbed.

The company soon discovered that the clay wasn't suitable for making bricks, and left without filling in the hole, leaving a gap in the mountain.

Because of this, the center of the dragon is ruined, and the energy of the mountain has been slipping away. That is why the Yu-Ta-

jen Temple has been built-to prevent the energy from continuing to slip away. The festival today celebrates this event. Am I correct?"

The old man replied, "Oh my! Oh my! Dear brother, who is your master? Who taught you this? I have studied Feng-Shui for 40 years. I learned from the Fukien San-yuan School. I thought I was the only one who could recognize the energy here! Yes, this is why I built this temple.

It is unbelievable that you can recognize the energy too. Tell me, who is your teacher?"

"My Feng-Shui teacher was Master Ch'ing-chen. He was a Taoist and he lived on Lien-t'ou Mountain."

"Master Ch'ing-Chen? I've never heard of him," the old man said, shaking his head.

"He was a hermit. Not many people have heard of him," I explained.

"How about taking a look to see how well this temple has been built?"

Without giving me a chance to respond the old man grabbed my arm and took me to the front of the temple. My assistant, Mr. Huang, and a few other villagers followed along. I walked around the temple. It was quite small. It held an 8-inch tall figure titled "Yu Ta-jen" and other figures whose names weren't familiar to me. After looking around the temple I said: "This temple has three doors, seven posts, and is divided into five sections. The incense holder is placed upside down. All of this is designed to absorb back all the earth's energy that has been lost."

The old man was astonished. "Don't tell me you have already studied the Earth Spirit Sutra?"

"What Earth Spirit Sutra?" I asked, really not knowing what it was.

"The Earth Spirit Sutra is the most sacred of knowledge. Everyone who studies Feng-Shui dreams of being able to know it. The knowledge is not written down. It is acquired through direct

transmission. It cost me my entire fortune to learn only a little of it from the San-yuan School.

Who is Master Ch'ing-chen? How could he have given you such precious knowledge? How much did you pay him?"

"Not a single dime."

"I'm not kidding. Really," I sincerely said.

"According to your judgment," he said, "when will this temple become prosperous?"

I looked at the hexagram design on the ceiling and said, "In 12 years."

"My dear brother, I very much admire you. You are correct. I put 12 houses on the design. If you do any Feng-Shui as a profession you will make a fortune. I've never met someone so young who has such great knowledge!"

"Sir, please tell me, who is Yu Ta-jen?" I was curious because I felt no energy in the figure.

"You've found out already. It's not appropriate for me to talk about that here." He took me outside and very solemnly said, "I am Yu Ta-jen."

"Oh, is that so?" I nodded my head and said no more.

The old man had written his birth date on the eight hexagrams on the ceiling design. Then he had taken a piece of his hair and fingernail and put it inside the figure. He will die in 12 years. He himself knew this.

When he dies his spirit will stay in the statue in the temple to enliven it and he will receive people's worship. This is a very special soul transformation method. Master Ch'ing-chen taught it to me also. However, unless one really knows what he is doing, he shouldn't try .

Another experience happened on Brush Tip Mountain:

Because of the numerous hills and valleys on the mountain, it was difficult to move the surveying instruments around. Once my assistant grabbed his instruments and went running down a hill to set up for a measurement of the hill's height. As he was on his way down I stopped him, calling: "Wait a minute. It is really difficult to get down there. Let me 'read' it."

"Are you going to use spiritual reading?"

"Yes, I'm going to give it a try," I said. I mobilized and extended out my psychic energy and measured the distance. The latitude was 63 meters. However, I was afraid my reading wasn't accurate so, in the end, I asked him to go down the hill anyway.

His instrument read 65 meters - two meters different than my reading.

That was strange. Why was my reading two meters off? My assistant came hiking up the hill and after catching his breath he said: "The bottom wasn't flat. The place where I stood was two meters below the flat ground. "

"Ah, now I see. Thanks!" I said.

- Chapter 10 -

The Smile Of Goddess Ma Tsu

As a surveyor, I traveled to all kinds of places. One unforgettable experience I had was the smile of the Goddess Ma-tsu in Liu-chia in Southern Taiwan. There is a famous dam there called Coral Lake Dam.

My co-workers, Mr. Chang and Mr. Huang, and I were assigned to survey there. While I was there my Spirit Master, San-shan-chiu-hou, was with me. He taught me every night.

I remember it was winter and the weather was freezing. I'd be awakened at midnight by my Spirit Master to get up and go out. The teachings he had for me were to be learned in the cemetery. I remember those cold winter nights. The sky was often clear with brightly shining stars. I remember the white tombstones lined in rows.

My Spirit Master taught me a method for calling on and commanding the spirits by using the mudras and chanting. It was part of my training to learn black magic so that I would have a complete education. It was not intended that I would ever use this knowledge, but knowing about it was necessary.

He said, "This technique is not usually taught by traditional schools. However, in the future you are going to teach the dharma and so it is good to know the techniques of all schools. Great Wisdom encompasses all the dharma in the universe. The heart of Great Wisdom shines everywhere and is beyond imagination. The unrighteous methods cannot affect you and in the future you will also learn Buddha's dharma. Then you will encompass all three religions: Christianity, Taoism and Buddhism."

One evening Mr. Huang and I wandered downtown. Mr. Huang got a haircut and then we stopped by a small temple near a market. The sign on the temple read: Liu-chua Buddhist Chanting Group." We entered. In a room to the left people were chanting. I closed my palms and bowed to the Bodhisattva statue in the center room.

As I raised my head I saw a colourful cloud in the sky. A goddess with a smiling face descended from it, standing on a pair of beautiful lotus flowers. She wore wonderful, colorful robes and a hat with a nine-dragon design. With a gentle smile she said, "Lian Shen, how have you been?"

"Bodhisattva, do you know me?"

"Yes, I have visited the Yu-Huang Temple in Tai-Chung and I have visited your altar. Don't you remember?"

As a matter of fact, I didn't remember. There are so many deities in the universe. Each deity has his or her own responsibility. I have met many of them, but I really had forgotten that this Goddess, Ma-tsu, had visited me. I replied, "Honorable Bodhisattva, please forgive me, I really don't remember. "

"It's all right that you don't remember. I have a request to make."

"Please instruct me."

She continued, "The resident priest of this temple has been sick. I'd like to ask you to write a Fu (paper charm) to cure him. After you have written it, give it to the people of the temple and come back tomorrow. You will be surprised at the results."

She disappeared.

I walked straight to the altar, drew the Fu and energized it. I gave it to the people who were chanting, explaining to an old man what had happened. He didn't say anything, but some of the women there were curious.

"Are you a medium?" one of them asked.

"I come from Tai-Chung. I am not a medium. The goddess I saw told me to come back tomorrow," I answered.

"Fine. Leave the Fu here. Come tomorrow," the old man muttered.

Mr Huang and I left the temple.

"They don't believe you," he said. "Why bother with it?"

"Can't blame them. If I hadn't met the blue-dressed lady, if I hadn't learned all these things from my Spirit Master, I'd never believe any of this either!"

Huang and I returned to the temple the next evening. As we stepped in, the resident priest and a group of women came forward to greet us.

"Your Fu was very effective! I've been ill for over two months and now I'm up and out of bed," the priest said. "This is a wonderful recovery. The burden is lifted. Thanks to Bodhisattva and thanks to you too. "

Relieved, I bowed to the Bodhisattva and turned to leave.

"Sir," said one woman standing nearby, "can you help me with a Fu for my young son? He has been ill for a long time. He has been taking medicine which has helped, but the illness comes back again and again. Also, my mother has been coughing for a long time. Can you help?"

"I ask you sir, please give me a Fu also," said another woman.

The women had drawn close around me now, each asking for help.

I knelt in front of the figure of Ma-tsu. She appeared before me, though not as clearly as before.

"Lian Shen, now it's time for you to get busy. Go ahead. I will help you," she said.

I began to write the Fuses for each one.

Later, I learned that the Fuses were very effective. I was at the temple for a third evening and many more people were there. The word had spread that a young man with divine power had arrived. The whole town had heard that the Fu could cure everything.

I continued to write them for people and until midnight, every night I did divine readings to answer questions for people. They offered money to me and taxi rides, but I refused. This was the work of God and not my work.

"Sir, if you don't accept my money, you do not honour me," one lady said.

I'm sorry. I really do this for the Goddess Ma-tsu. It is to her credit, not mine. That is why I cannot accept your offer."

While I was there, I got to know the two entities who guard Ma-tsu, Thousand Mile Eye and Thousand Mile Ear. The names were conferred upon them because of their divine abilities to see and to hear.

I had seen dozens and dozens of people during those days in Liu-chia.

When it was time for me to leave, hundreds of people were at the train station to see me off.

The most wonderful experience I had, however, was the unforgettable smile of the goddess, Ma-tsu.

- Chapter 11 -

Conversation At Feng-Lin Temple

Feng-Lin Temple is in a village near Kao-hsiung Harbour by the ocean. I love the ocean and I often stroll on beaches at sunset, watching the horizon that connects the ocean to heaven. I meditate on every wave. Life is much like the ocean-up and down, in the constant motion.

One evening at sunset, I felt as I was gazing, my heart merge and become one with the great golden red expanse of the sky and the ocean.

Then the sky became darker and the wind blew strongly, making the waves larger. It seemed I was the only one who existed in the world.

I was about to leave the beach when I noticed a lantern waving in the ocean, appearing and disappearing with the waves. As it drifted closer, I saw that the lantern led the way for two guardian spirits walking on the water in front of a chair. Over it gleamed the words: "The Holy Mother of Feng-Lin Temple." After a moment, both the chair and the guardians disappeared.

The next day I asked a villager if there was a temple called Feng-Lin in the village.

"Yes," an old man answered, "there's the Feng-Lin Temple where they worship the goddess Ma-tsu."

That evening I went to the Feng-Lin Temple. I had a habit of worshipping in the temple of every place I visited regardless of the size or the kind. I lit incense and bowed to the Holy Mother.

I heard her voice say, "Devotee, have you already achieved the ability of divine healing?"

"Yes, I have come to ask the Bodhisattva for knowledge."

"What would you like to know?"

"I'd like to know the way to stay in good health."

The Holy Mother Ma-tsu answered: "Pay attention to what you eat. The five tastes are acrid, sour, salty, sweet and bitter. These five tastes are to adjust the Ch'i of Yin and Yang. It is necessary to have them all in daily life, yet it is important to be moderate. Without moderation the five elements in your body will be out of balance. Then one gets sick. If you use the five tastes in moderation, they will be good for you. People in ancient times didn't cook very much. That's why they lived longer. When man discovered fire and complicated his diet, all six emotions were aroused. This covered up their spiritual awareness. Here is the important key to health, dear one. Are you listening?"

"I am, Holy Mother Ma-tsu."

"The food you eat should be whole and simple and balanced. Most people know this already. However, the key to health is not food, but thought. When thoughts are pure and whole, health is assured. You are what you think, not what you eat."

"Oh, yes, I see."

"Hmmm," she continued, "I see red, gold and white light emanating from your face. You must be a very spiritually evolved soul. I also see the God of Virtue following you. May I ask where you received your spiritual training?"

"Bodhisattva, my name is Lian Shen. I was originally a Christian. Later I took a divine decree from the Golden Mother to learn from Master San-shan-chiu-hou and from Master Ching-chen. I have come to this place on a surveying assignment. Yesterday I saw you making an inspection of the ocean. This is why I came to visit and worship you."

"I do not know Master San-shan-chiu-hou, but I have heard that Master Ch'ing-chen is a pure-hearted Taoist. Very good, very good."

"Bodhisattva, Master San-shan-chiu-hou is not a person, he is a spiritual entity. I call him my Spirit Master. He is a celestial being in the formless realm."

"Forgive my ignorance. Lian Shen, if you have time, please visit often."

Later, when I worshipped the Golden Mother in my home shrine, I sent a Fu to notify the deities in all ten quarters of the world. The Holy Mother of the Feng-lin Temple came to visit along with many other deities.

- Chapter 12 -

The Hong-An Temple

My good friend Mr. Hu lived in Tsou Twin near Tai-Chung. Once while visiting him, I passed by the Hong-An Temple and peeked inside.

Three statues stood on the altar, one with a red face, one a blue face, and the third a black face. A banner read, "Lords of the Three Halls."

I asked Mr. Hu, "Who are the three gods in the Hong-An Temple?"

"I was told they are Lord Tsang, Lord Lee and Lord Moh," he said.

"I've heard that their presence can be felt strongly."

"I've become more and more interested in visiting temples and worshipping the gods," I said. "Even when I'm just walking by, somehow I feel as if I've missed something if I don't go in."

"Sheng-Yen, I've heard people talk about you. Everyone said you are psychic. Do gods really exist? Does every temple have a god or Buddha present there?"

"Not necessarily. I visited one temple in the vicinity of Tai-Chung where they worshipped Sakyamuni Buddha, Manjusri Bodhisattva, Samantabhadra, the guardian Veda, and the temple guardian. I saw the statues of the Bodhisattvas. They seemed very dignified and I felt joy in my heart. I immediately knelt; then, unexpectedly, a land god with a long white beard came out from beneath the altar and said, 'Don't kneel and bow. Stop! Stop! Don't don't!' I was surprised!"

"What happened next?"

"The land god sighed and said, 'I am the land god in charge of this territory and this temple was taken over by "such-n-such" master 40 years ago. This priest is very wicked and all his disciples live in a less than honorable fashion. The temple precepts have been

disobeyed and the vows of the monastic life are not upheld. The energy of Buddha has not been present in this temple for 40 years. The guardians of this temple were going to punish the priest and his disciples, but the priest still has merit left from previous good karma. The retribution will come 50 years from now. The temple's spirit guardians have left. The statues are empty. Only lower entities exist here. The monks and nuns still carry on the daily rituals everyday. They don't know that for the last 40 years the Buddha has not been present here.' The land god shook his head and disappeared."

"You saw and heard all this?" my friend asked.

"Absolutely! I walked around that temple. It was well built, yet I couldn't pick up any energy. I felt sorry for the monks and nuns who lived there!"

"That really happened? That's amazing! Some time we'll go back to the temple and you can check to see if any gods exist there."

My friend and I visited the temple a few days later. The man in charge was a good friend of his. My friend told him about me and he smiled in disbelief and said, "Oh, is that so?"

I used a divine reading method to converse with deities there. Next I turned to the man in charge and said, "Sir, there are six mediums who live here. However, the mediums quarrel with people over money, and one of them doesn't follow the temple regulations."

The man in charge was shocked. At the time there were three mediums in the temple. When they heard what I said they were very concerned.

One of them said, "What you just said is absolutely true. Do the gods have any instruction for us? What can we do to make this temple prosperous? "

"The gods would like harmony in this temple. If there is harmony, the temple will become prosperous. Do not worship the gods only because you know they exist. It is a great blessing to have a human body. It is important for us to realize this and cultivate ourselves

spiritually. This life is meant for more than eating, sleeping, and satisfying our external desires. Worship the gods and cultivate in order to see your original face!"

I taught the mediums a method of sending away unwanted spirits and they were grateful.

When I took the bus back to Tai-Chung I felt an entity follow me.

When I got on the bus he got on. When I got off he got off. He followed me to my apartment and came in. I lit incense, put it in the incense holder and then there appeared a red faced god.

He was one of the three Gods from the temple. He acknowledged me with hand gestures, smiled and said, "I am from the Hall of Tsang. I am aware that you communicate with the spiritual world, so I followed you to ask from whom you studied."

"Honourable deity, you don't know?" I asked.

"No."

"That's just what I expected. You are a disciple of a great master. Lian Shen, would you stay in my temple?"

"Forgive me, but I already have a shrine in my home. I enjoy worshipping privately. I don't want to become a medium. That is a worthy practice, but I want to cultivate myself in order to reach the highest realization. Then I can be of help in the teachings of Buddha. To realize one's own nature is to exist forever."

The entity considered what I said, then replied: "What you say is true. Mediums, although able to help ordinary people, are sometimes confused themselves. If in the future you need help from me, just hold an incense stick in the direction of my temple and say the temple's name. I will surely come to help you."

"Thank you, honorable deity."

The god slowly disappeared.

- Chapter 13 -

Saved By Kuan Yin

When I was eighteen I lived in Kao-hsiung City and studied at the Vocational School. One evening my friend Huang and I visited the night market near the Ten Thousand Dragon Theater. The market had more than a mile of stalls filled with food, clothes, medicine, and herbs. It was crowded and busy. While we were walking around, we passed a fortune teller's booth.

An old man sat in the corner alone. Business wasn't so good. When he saw us he yelled,

"Hey, young man! Let me tell your fortune. Free for you!"

"Well, free? Let's give it a try."

Naturally, then people began to surround the booth. The man, though old, had a lot of spirit in his eyes. He studied Huang's face then looked at his palms and asked his name.

Next he asked him to pick a hexagram from the book of I Ching.

The old man studied the hexagram then looked at my friend and said,

"Well, you must be Hakka* from Mei-nung City."

**Hakka is the name for a particular group of Chinese people.*

"Yes!" answered Huang.

"Judging from the appearance of your face, you are of average intelligence. According to your palm, you will have a lot of struggle in the early stages of your life. The hexagram says that the best thing for you to do is to find a steady civil service job with the government. You will not be receiving much help from your relatives. There is no fortune to receive. You are to be a self-made man. Do you know that recently your grandparents' tomb site has been changed? The Feng-shui has been changed."

"Yes, I know. It was at the beginning of this year. We were looking for a new site for them."

"If my reading is correct, this site was picked by your elder brother. He put some Fu there so that some of the energy from the ancestors would go to him. Therefore, although you might have a stable life, there is only a slender chance that you will accumulate any fortune at all."

"That's right! The tomb site was picked by my eldest brother!"

The old man turned and looked at me. At that time I was shy, skinny and short. He pulled me close and studied my face and hands. He asked me to pick a hexagram. His eyebrows knitted closely together in a frown.

"Are you the oldest son in the family?"

"Yes."

"Your face is very complex. Your future is not fixed. You have a unique character. It is peculiar. You have lots of fortune indicated in your hand. Your face and hands tell me that you are good at writing. For the time being, your family is just average. You will establish your life by yourself. The hexagram I will tell you about, but don't be shocked or frightened. "

"Tell me."

"According to the hexagram you come from a very high realm. There is some conflict, however, so that it is likely that your body will come to misfortune when you are 28 years old. You might die. You'd better pray more. Worship Buddha."

"But I am a Christian!" I protested.

"Christian? Well then there's nothing I can do," he said.

After that, many people in the surrounding crowd asked for readings.

My friend and I stayed to listen. His readings seemed to be accurate and I began to feel uncomfortable!

In 1971 I was twenty-seven years old. I hadn't forgotten what the fortune teller had told me. One night I asked my spirit master, San-shan-chiu-hou, "Master, a long time ago a fortune teller told me I would die at 28. I don't know if this is to come true or not. If it is to be, then I don't have much longer."

"Lian Shen, the reading you got was accurate, yet the energy in the universe is ever changing. The fate of the entire universe is changeable, not to mention one small person! Do you remember when you worshipped Kuan-Yin? I told you then that a promise was made that your life would be saved by her."

Around Christmas in 1971, I was not a vegetarian. I enjoyed eating meat and fish. At lunch one day I suddenly got a headache. I felt dizzy and nauseous. Everything I had eaten was vomited.

I felt my forehead. No fever. I went to see a doctor and he said I was healthy.

At dinner my mother cooked my favorite dish: fish stew. After I ate it the same problem occurred. I began to vomit to clean my stomach. This happened several times more until I finally learned that I was only well when I ate vegetarian meals.

Some people will think this is psychological, but I don't think so. Once my sister steamed some rice for me using fish juice. Even that caused me to vomit. Any meat at all triggered me to vomit. It was painful. I asked my spirit master why this was so.

He answered, "You have gone through a cleansing process which has been purifying for you."

I stopped eating meat in December, 1971. One day in December of 1972, my young sister was using oil to stir-fry some vegetables. The oil had previously been used to fry sausages. I ate the vegetables and was surprised to find that I didn't get a headache or vomit! It came to my mind then that exactly one year had passed.

I asked my master why this had happened.

"Your karma has been paid off. It's over. Before, you couldn't eat meat and fish because the gods forced you to pay your karma. Every day and night they watched over you. The gods have watched you. Now the gods have left. Your choice of foods is up to you now. If you don't believe it, go to your altar and see the Kuan-yin statue. Then you will understand. "

I went to my altar and looked at the Kuan-yin. The figure's ceramic glaze had crackled, with lines crazed all over it. Even the face was covered with cracks! How could it have happened?

Later I learned that it was true: according to my fate, I was supposed to die at 28. However, the year I spent as a vegetarian and Kuan-yin's promise saved my life.

- Chapter 14 -

Visiting Mr. Chu Fei

Mr. Chu Fei is a devoted Buddhist and the chief editor of the Buddhist-Muslim magazine, Bodhi-Tree.

I thought, "Since he works with this knowledge all the time he must be wise. Maybe I can learn something from him." I decided to pay him a visit in Tai-chung City.

I told him right away of my spiritual experiences and of my interest in continuing to learn. Chu shook his head and exclaimed that such things were impossible.

His wife began to chant for me, reciting the Great Compassion Chant.

"Mrs. Chu," I said, "I do this chant every day too."

"Oh! Really!" she answered, somewhat embarrassed at having been presumptuous.

I think, in Mrs. Chu's mind, if I was not mentally disordered I must have been possessed. The chant is very powerful in expelling evil. I practiced it so often that I could say it backward, forward and inside out.

Chu, having been silent for awhile, finally said, "I think that what is happening here is that your heart is possessed by evil. There is no medicine for that."

"People on spiritual paths are like logs floating on rivers," I said.

"The stream carries them along. If the banks of the river, the undercurrent or decay don't cause damage, eventually the log will reach the ocean.

People on the spiritual path, if they are not disillusioned or entangled by evil, and if they maintain a clean and simple heart, are guaranteed by the Law that they will reach Tao. It was my

good fortune to have these spiritual experiences. Yet you say it is the work of the devil."

Mr. and Mrs. Chu stared at me without answering. Finally, Chu said, "Mr. Lu, please forgive the limits of our knowledge. You might wish to visit our teacher, Li Ding-nan. We are all his students. He has worshipped Buddha much longer than we have and he is much wiser. Maybe he can answer your questions. Your experiences certainly are unique!"

I thanked them and bowed to their Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva stage and to their stage of Buddha. When I left the house I began to wonder, "Is this really the work of the devil?" As I was doubting, a circle of light appeared in front of my eyes. In the center of the brightness was a Bodhisattva wearing the Five Buddha Golden Crown.

"I am the Bodhisattva of Chiu-hua Mountain. I notice that you begin to doubt yourself. That is why I come to say to you: maintain your nature. Your original nature is cultivation. Ask for nothing. This is the way you should place yourself. Keep in mind always that you are Buddha."

"Lian Shen, Buddha is non-Buddha and non-Buddha is Buddha. If you think it is an obstacle to live among the non-Buddha, it will be an obstacle for you to live among the Buddha too. Now you are in a trial period. I have come to tell you: do not doubt yourself."

After this message was finished the light zoomed away from me and disappeared into the sky. I found that I was standing at a crossroad.

- Chapter 15 -
Visiting Mr. Li Ping-Nan

In the Buddhists' circle, Li Ping-Nan is well known. Although he is not a monk, his reputation is greater than that of many advanced monks. He has lectured extensively on the sutras.

He is especially well known for expounding on the Amitaba sutra. Because he teaches in universities and often helps students to establish study groups, the younger generation holds him in high regard.

"Amitaba," he said when he answered his door. He was an old man. He pressed his palms together in greeting and asked me into his house.

I explained that I had come for guidance. I told him of my experiences and asked him to help me understand my path.

"Is all that you're telling me really true?" he asked.

"Absolutely true!" I answered firmly.

"I think this is not God; this is evil. All the gods you have mentioned are non-Buddhists. Only Buddha is the ultimate. The difference between these gods and Buddha is the difference between the non-ultimate and the ultimate. The gods mentioned, such as the Land gods and the City gods, ought to be ignored. It isn't a matter of belief or not, it is just that Buddha is the One. All these entities, these non-Buddhists, do nothing except enjoy their merit in heaven. They themselves are not free from reincarnation, so how can they deliver people? Be careful! Evil is powerful, but it never can overcome non-evil."

"But San-shan-chiu-hou directed me to worship and chant to Buddha. How could this then be evil?"

"Don't you know? Even chanting to Buddha can bring you in touch with the devil!"

I thought for a moment then said, "What? Chanting to Buddha can bring me into contact with the devil? Then what should I do? Chant or not?"

"Well, you will not understand this for the time being. You should just study the sutras and ignore whatever these beings or entities might say. Don't listen to them. Otherwise they will continue to suck your energy. You will become weaker and weaker. You will die."

"Wait a minute, Mr. Li. San-shan-chiu-hou and all the other dieties I ever met have all been very loving and compassionate to me. They have taught me to take refuge in Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. They said that I should wholeheartedly turn to Buddha, Dharma and Virtue. Is all of this wrong? You know, I have also found myself getting more and more healthy. There is nothing wrong with my body."

"Well, I don't understand it." He pulled a book from his bookshelf: Introduction to Buddhism. "The next time there is an initiation ceremony you should get initiated. This is what you should read." He handed the book to me.

I said "I have read the Transmission of the Lamp, the Altar Sutra, and all the other Buddhist extras. I have a large library of sutras in my home. "

"This may be too elementary for you, but still it is worthwhile," Li answered. He was surprised I'd read so much.

That evening San-shan-chin-hou came to me and asked, "Well, what do you think of Mr. Li and his comments?"

"Master! You know?"

"Yes. I was there."

"Master, what did you think of what Mr. Li said?"

"Buddhism and Taoism, like the red flower and the green leaves of the lotus, are one and the same. What can be learned is that the

Tao and the Buddha are inside the Self. There is no outside. Too often it seems that the blind lead the blind. In truth, one cannot avoid evil in the world or be drawn to goodness in the world because the world is created by the Self."

- Chapter 16 -

Deliverance

One evening, in July of 1972, I was sleeping. I awakened, hearing a noise near the corner of my ceiling. It sounded like a bug.

I listened more carefully and heard some voices; some conversation.

One said, "Whew, why don't we just stay here? Tomorrow we will have a big meal."

Another said, "I wonder which master is in charge of the deliverance ceremony tomorrow at the Fa Hung Temple? If he is good he can get these handcuffs off me and free me from this bondage."

I heard chains clanking and hitting against each other.

"Hey," said another voice, "be quiet. Don't wake any people up!"

The next morning I telephoned Fa Hung Temple. "Is there a deliverance ceremony today?"

"Oh, yes, Do you want to register your ancestors' names? Hurry then because we need to write down the names for the ceremony." (A deliverance ceremony is to help the deceased enter into heaven.)

That evening I went to the Temple. I saw the master sitting in the center, wearing the Five Buddha Crown. Beside him were nuns holding the ritual ceremonial implements.

The chanting was loud. The master's fingers formed the deliverance mudra. My spirit master had shown me that mudra. I opened my psychic eye and became aware of spirit entities there. It was very crowded. Two ghosts had a big bamboo pole between them carrying away a heavy bag of rice. The scene was interesting because the actual rice bag remained where a worshipped had placed it, while the entities carried away the Ch'i (energy) of the rice.

I realized then that when the entities talk of eating a big meal it is not the actual food that they eat, but rather the Ch'i (or energy) of the duck, pork, fish or beef. This was proof to me that what we eat as food is actually Ch'i.

As I watched, a big black shadow came upon me and said, "Virtuous man, I beg you to open my handcuffs!"

"Why don't you ask the master there? Why do you ask me?"

"The master has already chanted the mantra. The work has been done. My handcuffs are still on! I asked the ghost king and he pointed to you as my helper."

"Well then let me try."

After the experiences I'd had, talking with this ghost was not surprising. Ghosts don't bother people much unless there's a reason. I silently chanted the Reborn to the Pure Land Chant three times. The handcuffs stayed on the ghost. He shook his head in anguish.

I said silently in my heart, "Devotee and disciple Lian Shen, following the natural methods, commands the dieties . . ." My palms were closed.

Suddenly my palms moved by themselves into a chopping stroke, a mudra. I heard a clanking sound. The handcuffs fell off!

The ghost bowed to me several times then ran to the altar. Many ghosts with handcuffs followed him back to me. I continued to chant and to form the Madras. One by one the ghosts received blessings. They happily bowed to me and then left. As I continued, a crowd of people gathered to watch me, wondering what was going on.

In the deliverance ceremony there are some masters who know what they are doing, but there are also many who just go through the ceremony. They cannot see the ghosts at all. They have no idea whether or not they are of help.

I've seen a lot of ghosts. People ask what the ghosts look like. Like human beings, all ghosts are different. Some are friendly, some are fierce. When humans draw pictures of ghosts, they show blue faces, long teeth, long tongues, wild hair. In truth, ghosts are not much different than humans in form. They aren't really scary at all. It's easy to make friends with them.

On my own altar I had at that time about 20 forms of deities. Once, while I was burning incense and worshiping at my altar, I saw a lotus flower descending from heaven. On it sat a Bodhisattva wearing the Five Buddha Golden Crown. His face was like the full moon loving and compassionate. His left hand held a stick.

"Lian Shen," he said, "I am the god from hell. Why is it that since you have an altar, you don't hold a deliverance ceremony?"

"How can I? People would laugh at me. That kind of ceremony is for monks to perform. I am just an initiate; a devotee. Perhaps I could invite a well-known master and I could assist."

"Lian Shen, where do you think the Ten Dharma Realm is? Ten Dharma Realm is actually no Dharma Realm! All is empty and void. Therefore, how can you think that someone besides you should be in charge?"

"But it is illegal to hold a deliverance ceremony in a private home! I'd have to register! "

"Well, then do it."

"Should I join the Buddhist's association or the Taoist's association?"

"Is there any difference? Think about it and decide." The Bodhisattva smiled and disappeared.

I joined the Chinese Taoist Association and the Chinese Buddhist Association.

- Chapter 17 -

Conversations About Zen

Hsieh Tng-hua and Hsu Wen-chen, both from Taipei, came to see me to discuss spirituality.

Hsieh was the editor of the Morning Light magazine and a talented writer. Hsu was a medical student who wrote often. Both of them had heard talk about me.

"What is God?" Hsieh asked curiously.

"Please tell me which God you are asking about," I answered.

"Are there many Gods?"

"Countless. Immeasurable."

"How come we cannot see them?" Hsu asked.

"If you can see, you are awakened already. You cannot see because you are deluded. Most people on earth are deluded. God is spirit and spirit is formless. Only the psychic or spiritual eye can see the gods."

"What evidence do you have?"

"Me."

"One person doesn't count. You have to have evidence."

"There is no dharma beyond the heart. If there were dharma beyond the heart, it would not be right dharma. If I can see Buddha, that is my heart talking. There is no instrument, no other evidence. I am the heart. The heart is me. If what I say doesn't count to you then there is nothing else, no instruments, no evidence that can be counted."

The two men looked at each other for awhile, not knowing what to say.

"What do you think about birth and death?" asked Hsieh.

"There is no birth and no death," I answered. "Birth is the beginning of death. Death is the end of birth. Death is also the beginning of birth and birth is the ending of death. From the eye of the Buddha of infinite light there are only soul bodies. The manifestation of the physical body is an illusion, although it seems real to us."

Hsieh asked, "Is this the Buddhists' theory of transmigration?"

"This is the most natural and ultimate key teaching of Buddha. It isn't mysterious. The only difference is the delusion on awakening. To see delusion is to see transmigration. To be awakened, or enlightened, is to see through reincarnation or transmigration. When I speak of transmigration to people I am addressing those people in the devas realm, the human realm, the asuras realm, the hungry ghost realm, the hell realm, and the animal realm. All the beings in those six realms are still ruled by reincarnation".

"Is the Tao of Heaven God?" asked Mr. Hsieh.

"Yes. The Tao of Heaven is the Tao of God. God is the purified soul. Yet, all those souls walking the proper path, living the virtuous life, can enjoy the accumulation of their merit even after death. Reincarnation is still necessary. Only awakened souls are truly free of reincarnation.

"Are you subject to reincarnation?" Mr. Hsu suddenly asked.

"Well, if I tell you, you might not believe it."

"Tell me; I'll believe it."

"It is up to me if I am going to be reincarnated. I have a choice to do it or not do it."

My answer surprised them. They both seemed to feel that my answer was different than most people's. Actually, the words came out of my mouth naturally. As a matter of fact, there was great meaning in my answer.

"I am very interested in Zen. Can you teach me some?" Hsu began to reveal the purpose of his visit.

"If you are interested in Zen I can teach you. The Heaven Dragon".

"What is the Single Finger Zen?"

"One finger is one State. If you can stay in one state then you have one point of view. When you have one point of view it will be of benefit to your life."

"Thank you. Thank you. Makes sense."

"According to what you said, if you worship something and call that thing God, then that is it, right?" asked Hsieh.

"Well, you are close."

"Yes. Then if I regard a woman's nipple as God then is the woman's nipple God?"

"That makes sense. Would you regard a woman's nipple as God?"

Hsieh thought for a moment. I took Hsieh and Hsu to my altar. There stood the forms of Golden Mother, Shakyamuni Buddha, and Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva. At that moment there were many people worshipping at the altar.

"Why do they worship a wooden statue?" Hsieh asked.

I didn't answer him directly but asked, "Do you feel this altar is solemn and dignified?"

"Yes. It is," they both said.

"Then that's it! In their heart, when they worship their god, they feel God is there. If both of you feel dignified at this altar then they can feel it too. Can you deny this feeling and say that feeling is not true, not real? That is what Zen is. Do not belittle or look down on this feeling."

I recited a verse from the Transmission of the Lamp.

"Great wisdom said 'When Bodhisattva saw the Buddha nature it was through his eye, not his heart.'"

"Question: 'How can you use your eye to see the nature of Buddha?'"

"Answer: 'If you can only see through your heart you are still in a dark cave. Only when you can see through your eye can you know completely. Therefore the nature is like a great void. All the manifestations of this world come from this great void. Nature, the great void and all the things of this world are all the same. All are one thing.'"

"Mr. Lu, what do you think nature is?" Hsieh asked.

"It is spirit."

"Then what is spirit?"

"Spirit is the original nature which was one with all the manifestations in the world."

Then I did a reading for both of them about their past and their future.

Some things in the future we don't know accurately, but everything in their past was read so clearly they were astonished. It looked as if it was a fake. They spent almost half the afternoon asking me questions.

All people are curious about their past and future. As far as these matters are concerned, most people seem to understand some aspects and to misunderstand other parts. Many intellectuals wave a hand and pronounce that these knowings are mere superstitions and imaginations.

In truth, years of study does not lead to greater spiritual wisdom because it is the heart, not the mind, that knows God.

- Chapter 18 -

Treasure Under The Banyan Tree

Near Kao-hsiung City is a village called the Big Tree. An old man named Chuang lived on a nearby rocky mountain. He came to see me carrying very heavy luggage. His eyes indicated to me that he had Yin-Yang-vision - he could see both our world and the realm of spirits. He came to tell me a story:

"No matter how hard I try, people just don't believe in the world of the shadows. They don't know that great numbers of entities are a part of reality. So many shadow-entities swarm around us it seems as if we are in a crowded market. One day before my neighbour died, I actually saw his shadow wandering around outside! I knew that he wouldn't live much longer . . . I came here to show you something. Look at this!"

He opened his luggage. I was stunned! His case was filled with silver and gold nuggets!

"What are these? Nuggets?" I asked.

"Yes! Nuggets of the Ch'ing Dynasty."

"Where did you get them?"

"I'll tell you a story about these."

He said that on the mountain where he lived were a great many entities. It was so noisy with them that often he couldn't sleep. Yet, Chuang was a gentle person and the entities happily befriended him. Sometimes after they'd been particularly noisy, the ghosts would send a delegation to apologize.

One evening Chuang woke up at midnight and saw an entity dressed in the official costume of the Ching Dynasty standing beside his bed. Chuang was startled, but the ghost bowed to him.

"Are you a man or a ghost, an entity or a soul?" Chuang asked.

"I was the district governor of the Ch'ing Dynasty."

"Why do you come to me?"

"Everyone in our realm knows that you have Yin-Yang eyes. You are kind and helpful. I need some help from you now. I have no desire to stay in the realm I am in. There is much suffering there, just as there is on earth."

"How can I help?"

"Please follow me."

The entity led Chuang fast and effortlessly, flowing as in a dream.

They crossed mountain after mountain, river after river.

Finally, they arrived at a mountain where a huge banyan tree was growing. The entity pointed to the thick entangled roots and said,

"Beneath the ninth air root from the right you will find a vase full of treasure. " He turned and pointed to the lights of a distant city. "That is Shih-lin."

"Yes. Remember the direction of Shih-lin near Taipei and remember to count nine roots from the right," said the entity.

Chuang then followed the ghost home to the Big Tree.

The entity had been a county governor in the Ching Dynasty. He had buried his treasure under the banyan tree to save it for old age and for his children. However, he'd had a heart attack and died, having told no one about the banyan tree. Even in death he was not peaceful because of that unfinished business. He became earthbound, unable to continue in his cycle towards reincarnation. Since Chuang was such an honest and trustworthy man, the entity asked him to divide the treasure into three parts; one part to be donated anonymously to charity, a second part used to print the sutras, and the third part which Chuang could keep as thanks.

The entity said, "The heart is the center of the human being. The more empathy in the heart, the more clear it is. As the heart becomes more clear, spirituality grows. One turns to virtue. Therefore, to change society nothing more is needed than the

sutras. Though people these days don't think there are gods and spirits it is important for them to realize that indeed the heart is god. The heart is spirit."

"With one thought heaven or hell exists."

"The treasure buried under the banyan tree became the stumbling block of my transcendence. Now I have let go of this burden and I am free."

When Chuang awoke he sat thinking. "Impossible!" he said to himself. "We couldn't have travelled several hundred miles in such a short time! "

He told his children of his experience and everyone thought it was ridiculous.

The next evening the entity appeared again at the foot of his bed and did so for several nights. Chuang knew he had to respond.

He took his grandson and a shovel and a bag and headed to Taipei.

At the train station in Taipei people eyed the shovel and the bag with suspicion.

It took Chuang three days to find the banyan tree. He counted the air roots and at the ninth he scraped at the soil. Almost immediately he felt a ceramic Jar.

As promised, he found silver and gold nuggets, and many coins.

"I'm going to have a sore back carrying this home," the old man said.

"Let's keep it! No one will know!" urged his grandson.

"Do you want to become a hungry ghost? If you are greedy you will surely suffer for it."

Chuang closed his luggage case and looked into my face.

"The world is like a dream, isn't it? We are like players in a theater. But there are other theaters, other realms. When you write

your books you can tell this story that I've shared with you. I'm leaving now. Don't reveal my identity when you write."

Once someone asked me if any entities had contacted me about searching for treasure.

Yes, they have.

- Chapter 19 -

Journey To The Lotus Kingdom

I have been reluctant to write about this particular learning I've had. It is too difficult for most people to believe. Furthermore, it seems I might be revealing some truths which I ought to be silent about.

One day I was initiated in the Hsuan-Tsang Temple of Sun Moon Lake in Nan-t'ou. My master for the initiation was Tao-an.

At that time in the temple the energy was rather strong. In my psychic vision I couldn't see whether the Hsuan-Tsang Master was present. However, I did see the Four Heaven Kings. One of them was my good friend who whispered,

"Tonight is a night for some good things to happen for you."

"I don't care," I said. "I've never been rich. I am outspoken. I've made a lot of friends and I've also made some enemies. Whatever good luck comes I wouldn't get too excited about it."

That evening when I closed my eyes, a golden light appeared to me, almost as bright as the sun. The experience was much like the time I traveled to the Great Void. I realized then what the Heaven King meant about good luck.

The circle of light was something like seeing a solar eclipse. The rim was shining brightly while the center was dark. I felt my body become lighter and lighter and I flew into the center of the circle of light. My body was moved by some unknown force to another world. The moment I flew into the new world I saw wonderful beauty all around. I could rest on the clouds or ride on a flying carpet. Mountains and rivers beneath me looked smaller. I was like a bird looking down on the world, in a fairy land above the clouds.

Ahead of me I saw a rainbow gate, and as I entered it I saw golden palaces. I felt that I was in a dream. Everything was fresh, sparkling and grand. I smelled the heavenly fragrance of lotus flowers.

Far away I saw lotus leaves with wonderful colors reflecting from them. As I looked around I realized that the entire kingdom was supported by lotus flowers! Palaces floated on layers of them. The fragrance of lotus permeated the air.

In the Lotus Kingdom there is a virtuous and beautiful Bodhisattva named Lotus Light Buddha. I humbly bowed to him.

He said:

"Like the waves moving in the ocean, human desires never cease. When you know the Tao, the stopping of time and desire, you will see Buddha."

He continued, "Lian Shen, while you are here I have a gift to give you. There are five lotus flowers in front of you. Pick the one you want."

As he spoke, I saw five flowers appear, each shining with a golden light. On the first flower contained a dazzling collection of silver. The second contained gold. The third flower was filled with crystal, jade and pearls. The fourth was even more compelling: it contained bundles of money.

"You can use this," said the Lotus Light Buddha.

"Maybe for others; I don't think I need it."

The fifth flower contained volumes of the sutra. I looked closely.

There were 49 years of Buddha's teachings.

"I need this!" I said. As I spoke the four other flowers disappeared.

Vibrations of light emanated from the flower. I merged joyfully with the light and became one with the lotus flower.

As I said farewell to Lotus Light Buddha, I closed my palms and stepped backwards. My feet were resting on something so light and soft it was as if I walked on nothing at all. I looked down. Beneath my feet was a lotus pond, deep and clear with a mirror-like surface. With every step I took, a lotus flower emerged to support me.

The fragrance of the Lotus Kingdom is lodged in my memory now.

Whenever I smell the lotus, my thoughts turn to Buddha.

- Chapter 20 -
Between Men And Pigs

Many people say that I live in illusion. Some say I use black magic. Others say that I'm a hypnotist. Indeed, I do appear strange. Though I seem crazy to strangers, it's true that when people get to know me I'm just ordinary.

A young man named Tseng Tzu-ch'i traveled a long distance to see me.

He talked to me for about an hour, then he said disappointedly,

"Mr. Lu, I came to see you because I believed you were some kind of saint. Why do you speak so ordinarily?"

I smiled. "I am ordinary! I use ordinary language. Remember, Buddha's mind is an ordinary mind. There are large numbers of ordinary people who think and act as if they are not ordinary. You have a desire to see my mysterious abilities? There's nothing mysterious. All I do is tell people what they cannot see."

"Sir, can you prove anything to me?"

"I can, yes. But it is up to you according to your ability to see what I show you."

"How then?"

"Tell me when you were born."

"July 16, eleven p.m."

"Well, I think this will work for you."

I went to my library, picked up my paint brush and dropped it into red ink. I held the brush tip to my open mouth and exhaled sharply from my solar plexus. Then I put a red dot on each Tseng Tzu-ch'i's eyelids.

"Now it's up to you," I said. "I think maybe you should go to the market. You might make a discovery. You have 49 minutes."

Whether you see anything or not you don't have to come back to see me," I said.

An hour later there was a loud excited knock at my door.

"Hey! I told you you didn't have to return. Why are you here?"

"I have to tell you! It scared me nearly to death!"

His expression showed surprise, horror, and fear.

"I didn't want to believe it! I saw it! I'm not crazy! It was real! What can I do now?"

"Don't be so excited. Tell me slowly."

"I followed your suggestion. When I left here I got a taxi and went to the market. I noticed that my vision was becoming foggy. I was seeing residual light around people. At the market I saw two rows of booths selling pork. The pig odour was very strong. Then I looked up and saw something that scared me to death!"

"What did you see?"

"Mr. Lu, I cannot believe it! The pigs' heads hanging there were human heads! Their eyes were full of sadness and grief. I looked down the two rows of booths. All the pigs' heads had become human! All the pigs' feet were human feet! I was so terrified I couldn't move! I wanted to scream. Yet the salespeople were talking to me in normal market sales conversations, 'Fresh pork here. How many pounds do you want?'"

"So, did you buy any?" I asked him calmly.

"Mr. Lu! You're joking! How could I buy men's heads and feet?"

"Well, go home. Don't tell anybody what you saw or they'll think you're crazy. I think you ought to go to the market. Get some pork and make some stew. Act like an ordinary person."

"Oh no! No! I couldn't do that!"

"Take it easy. Don't take this too seriously. As you relax you'll be able to see reality better."

"I have to take this seriously! I saw it. There is no way that I could eat that now!"

"You fool!" I scolded.

I was told later that Tseng Tzu-ch'i could never eat pork again. Even the taste of it caused him to vomit. He told others of his experience and, of course, they thought he was crazy. He suffered a great deal.

Is there any difference between humans and pigs? No. Yet according to the form, humans are humans and pigs are pigs.

- Chapter 21 -

Impressions Of A Small Village

The first time I came to visit I was surprised to be familiar with this village. There was a long bridge, and a whole mountain of plum tree plantation covered with white plum flowers. When my bus entered the village I became emotional and sentimental. Under the bridge I saw an outcropping of blue granite, and next to the granite a large white rock. I thought, "I not only remember this place, I have sunbathed on this rock and swum under this bridge. Now I remember, right past this bridge is a land-god shrine."

I asked anxiously, "Is there a shrine just up on the right side of the road here?"

"Oh yes!" Miss Fan answered without thinking.

She looked at me curiously. "I thought you said you'd never been here before. "

The bus turned to the right, and there was the shrine. The bricks were old and darkened from weathering.

"If I am right," I said to Miss Fan, "we still have to pass a small bridge to get to the village and the bridge's name is Justice. I hope my memory is correct."

Miss Fan looked at me with wide eyes and said, "Yes. There is a small bridge there, but I never paid attention to the name of it."

There was a bus stop just before the bridge and we saw its name clearly: its name: Justice Bridge.

"You must have been here before," Miss Fan said.

"No, I've never been here in this lifetime."

"Then how do you know the name of this bridge?"

"I don't know, but under this bridge, a long time ago, the people were raising ducks. There used to be lots of ducks."

Past the bridge, we saw a big flock of ducks and a small house with a thatched roof. A man stood by the river watching the ducks. It all looked more and more familiar.

Miss Fan's father operated grocery stores here. He'd heard of my reputation as a Feng-shui master, and he had asked his daughter to bring me to the village.

"You are a strange person," Miss Fan said.

"Not at all. Today my head is very clear," I replied.

When we got out of the bus my heart was floating. It seemed there hadn't been much change in this village.

Miss Fan took me to see her father. In addition to two grocery stores, the family owned orchards of oranges and plums, and a bamboo forest.

Her father was the local representative for the village.

"I suppose you have never been to this small and remote village," her father said to me.

How could I answer his question? Actually, I had never been here in my thirty-three years of life, yet I could not say that I'd never been here. I muddled through. It was difficult to describe my feelings. I felt as if I was returning from far away to my hometown. I felt nervous, anxious and somewhat afraid to see people I once knew well.

"Mister Fan, at the end of this street there was a family who lived in the red brick house. The name was Shih. Do you know them?"

"Oh. That is the house of Grandmother Shih. Now in her family there is only her servant. The Shih family used to be the richest in the village. Mr. Shih was a generous and good-hearted man. He financed a lot of public construction here. After he passed away his descendants moved to larger cities or to foreign countries. Only his wife, Grandmother Shih, stayed. She couldn't leave the memories. Now they hardly leave the house. Every morning they chant and pray to Buddha."

"How long since Shih Shan-pen passed away?"

"Oh, it's about thirty-three years. I was only twenty years old then. On the day of the funeral everyone in the village was involved. It was almost like a temple fair. The tomb was built on his land. It's the largest one in the village. I'll take you to see it if you like. We have to pass that place anyway to get to my grandfather's tomb."

Mister Fan didn't ask me anything more. I kept my head low. Miss Fan watched me carefully. I had tears in my eyes hearing them talk about Shih Shan-pen and Grandmother Shih.

When we climbed the mountains to see Mr. Fan's grandfather's tomb I led the way. Mr. Fan said "Hey, it seems you're very familiar with this mountain road."

I studied Shih Shan-pen's tomb carefully. Then I visited Mr. Fan's grandfather's tomb. After that I made an excuse to leave and I went to the door of Grandmother Shih.

Coincidentally, when I arrived Grandmother Shih was opening the door. She wore a blue top and dark pants and she moved slowly. Her face was worn and wrinkled, but a flower pin adorned her hair. In her hands were her prayer beads. She was mumbling and chanting. I recognized her profile. I was so touched that I reached out to her. "How are you, Grandmother Shih?"

"Who are you?" She gave me a curious look.

"I am Lu Sheng-yen." It was difficult for me to answer her that way.

"I know your name is Pi-fang and your old servant's name is A-sang. You have three-sons and one daughter. One of them just passed away four months ago. Your husband, Shih Shan-pen, passed away thirty-three years ago."

"You! I don't know you! You come to investigate me?" She was annoyed.

"No, no," I said nervously, "I didn't come to investigate you; I just know your past," I immediately explained.

"Crazy people." She turned around mumbling and closed the door.

I heard her yell for her servant inside the house, "A-sang! A-sang! A-sang!"

I had lunch at Mr. Fan's house after thus, but I didn't have much appetite. Mr. Fan called a taxi to send me back to Tai-Chung. He had business there too so we left together. When the taxi passed Justice Bridge Mr. Fan said, "This bridge was donated by Shih Shan-pen himself."

We reached the land-god shrine and Mr Fan said, "This shrine was also built by Shih Shan-pen. People say he built it in memory of his father."

At the bridge Mr. Fan pointed to the stretch of blue granite and said, "The kids like to play in the water here. They sunbathe on the rock."

I was silent all the way, saying goodbye to my past in my heart.

I was wondering how much longer I would keep my physical body.

"Am I crazy?" I thought. "No. I am very clear. Now, I have a little bit of understanding."

I realized heavenly secrets cannot be revealed. All God's arrangements move in cycles. If everyone knew their past, the difference in age, the sequence of old and young, and the relationships and titles, even time would no longer exist.

What a mess the world would be in!

- Chapter 22 -

Strange Hair

When I walked to the door of my office I saw a gentleman standing outside under an old tree. He was about fifty, and he wore a Sherlock Holmes hat. When he saw me, he called,

"Mr. Lu! Mr. Lu!"

I usually ignore strangers. Since my books have been published, too many people seek me out. Sometimes I am even afraid to go home!

Whenever people seek me out I hear so many difficulties. They ask me to use my psychic power to help them. Too much of this creates a disturbance in my life. I constantly move my residence, but people find me anyway.

"Mister Lu! Please wait. I have something very unusual to talk with you about."

"What is it?"

"It's about my strange hair." He looked very pale.

"Strange hair?"

He took off his hat. I saw that on top of his head was a patch of coffee-colored hair. The rest of his hair was black. His face was strange too.

I looked at the hair and then watched his face more closely. I saw his expression change. His eyes sunk in deeper. His nose flattened. His lips became larger. The gentle looking face disappeared. Instead, his face looked like a monkey's!

"You! That's monkey hair!" I said in shock. I was astonished!

"Yes. It's monkey hair," he said as he put on his hat. "I have given my hair to a doctor to examine. It has proven to be monkey hair."

This is his story:

His name is Hung Tsu-wang. He lives in Yi-lan City. He is fifty-four years old and very healthy. Three years ago he accidentally fell and hit his head, and since then he has had strange, fast-growing coffee-colored hair. Along with his unusual new hair came a change in behavior. His mild and gentle nature became wild and reckless. What's more, every evening from ten to eleven Mr. Hung has had a change of expression in his face, and finds himself jumping around like a monkey. Sometimes it is more serious; he makes monkey sounds. He has become fond of peanuts, bananas and wine.

If he loses too much control, his family locks him up. In about an hour he returns to normal.

"Have you had any relationships or entanglements with monkeys?" I asked.

"No . "

"Really?"

"Really!"

"Well, if you haven't had any entanglements with monkeys then it may be some karma from a previous life. I will take a look tonight in my meditations. You go home. Tomorrow I will give you my answer."

"Tomorrow! I cannot stay in a hotel! I have to go home. Maybe I can come back in a few days. I hope you can help me since no one else can!

Every evening at ten o'clock I have to take a shot to get calmed down. There's no other remedy we know of."

That evening I sat and silently chanted and called his name, his birth date, and his address. Then I concentrated. I started to see a circle of yellow light. In the circle an ocean appeared. Next, I saw an island and a palm tree. I saw a boat in a harbor. There were many Japanese soldiers getting off the boat.

I saw a circle of the Japanese men having their meal and drink.

One soldier had a monkey on a leash. Another soldier stood up, took out his knife and killed the monkey. The monkey screamed. Blood splashed all over. The soldiers yelled in excitement. They intended to eat the monkey.

I looked closely at the soldier who held the knife. It was Mr. Hung.

A few days later Mr. Hung came to see me again. "Have you ever been in the Japanese army?"

"Yes, before the end of World War II, before the Japanese surrendered. We were drafted."

"Where did you go when you were in the army?"

"Sumatra. "

"You killed a monkey. You killed a monkey in Sumatra? Is that true?"

"Oh!" Hung cried out. His face paled. Sweat appeared on his brow.

He thought awhile and then said, "Now I remember it! Now I remember it! At that time nobody dared to kill! I was young. I killed the monkey and everyone ate the meat. Yes! That happened. What can I do now? What can I do now?"

For such a thing I had no remedy. This was the retribution of killing. I was surprised that it came so fast.

"Before you fell, where had you been visiting?"

"The day before I went to Chi-lung to see my friend. He is a seaman. He had just returned from South Indonesia, Sumatra. Does this have something to do with it?"

Taiwan was occupied by Japan for sixty years. The occupation ended when World War II was over. Taiwanese men were drafted to fight for Japan during World War II.

"It might have accelerated the retribution," I told him.

"Can you help in any way?"

"I'm sorry. I can't. " When I looked at his strange hair I was sorry that I couldn't help. There was nothing I could say.

Although I can see things in the past very clearly, I don't have the power or ability to change one's karma.

I could only give him my blessing and hope that this karma would be resolved soon.

"It's your karma," I said softly. "You will have to resolve it."

"How do I do it?" He was depressed.

"Follow the nature of your heart. Chant to Buddha."

- Chapter 23 -

The Magical Bowl

Master Ch'ing-chen is my direct personal teacher. Although we were not together for too long-only two years-the memory of his face and voice is vivid in my heart. He told me that he studied from Ch'ing-ch'eng Mountain (Sichuan Province, China). He learned a great deal from the temple there. Every time he thought about teaching someone, he was afraid he might teach the wrong person; therefore, he never accepted students. I went to see Master Ch'ing-chen after I was guided by my spirit teacher, Mr. San-shan-chiu-hou. If not for him, Master Ch'ing-chen would have never received me as a student.

Master Ch'ing-chen is an overly cautious man. He hardly leaves the mountain where he lives. His appearance is that of an honest farmer. The only difference is that in the thatched roof house where he lives, he worships Upper Pure, Jade Pure and Great Pure. Pictures of those gods line his altar.

He lived on Lien-t'ou Mountain for more than 20 years, but nobody knew he was a master with great knowledge and spiritual achievement. I studied with him on weekends for two years before he died. Before his death he said, "After I am gone you will be alone. The road ahead will be difficult. You will suffer much. If I hadn't accepted you as a student you could have lived a more peaceful life. However, since I accepted you, you will have trials and challenges. Can you endure?"

"Yes, I can." I answered.

"In this world one of the most difficult things is to save, or deliver, people. After I die you should keep in mind always that as long as you maintain a righteous heart and righteous thoughts you will have the guardian in heaven to help you. You should not concern yourself with any other trivial matters."

He repeated this lesson to me many times before he died. I never forgot it.

I remember one Sunday when I went to Lien-t'ou Mountain. A friend and classmate named Shang had invited me to his house to visit. I had never been there before.

That day when Master Ch'ing-chen put one hand on top of my head at the crown chakra he said gently, "Your mind is not here. Do you have something else on you mind?"

"Master, to be honest with you," I answered, "today I had a very close classmate invite me to his house. He has invited me many times before. Every weekend I come here and I turn him down. Today he invited me again. I feel obligated to go to visit with him."

"Well, in that case, why don't you just take off early?"

Master Ch'ing-chen then went into his house. In awhile he brought out an exquisitely delicate porcelain bowl. The rim bore a carving of two white rabbits. The bowl was half full of water.

"Lian Shen," Master said, "this bowl is the treasure of the Temple of the Ch'ing-ch'eng Mountain. This bowl's name is Jade Rabbit Water Shadow Bowl."

I looked at my teacher with wonder. I didn't know the purpose of the bowl.

"Lian Shen, what's your friend's name and where does he live?"

His name is Shang Tzu-ch'iang and he lives on the Chang-nan Road in Nan-t'ou City."

My Master took a brush and wrote something on yellow rice paper, then he burned the yellow paper into ash and spread the ashes into the bowl.

My teacher looked at the bowl for about five minutes. "Lian Shen, your friend is taking a nap at his house now. He is tall and sturdy. His left eyebrow has a dark mole. He has a very sharp chin. His face indicates that he might fall easily into danger or accidents. He should learn to be more gentle and soft, otherwise he might die

early. His family is rather wealthy. His bedroom is nicely decorated. Come over here and take a look."

I stepped forward and looked. I only saw dark ashes floating on the water, nothing else.

"Close your eyes first," said Master. "Rotate your eyeballs clockwise twenty-one times and then counter-clockwise twenty-one times and then look again."

I closed my eyes and did as he said then opened my eyes again. Miraculously then I saw a circle of white light in the bowl. At first it was foggy, then it slowly disappeared. Gradually I saw a bedroom with a person sleeping there. I looked more closely. It was, without a doubt my friend Shang Tzu-ch'iang.

Seeing him there in the bowl I called, "Hey! Shang Tzu-ch'iang!"

I saw him wake. He looked around to see who was calling. Seeing no one, he settled back down to sleep again.

"Master! This bowl . . . !"

"This bowl is very marvelous. It can transmit the shadow picture and the voice, but only those who have the trained psychic eye can see it. To ordinary people, the bowl is useless. But for people who develop their psychic eye this bowl will be useful, because everything in the world can appear in it. In the future I will leave this bowl to you.

"Master! Thank you!"

"You can leave now," he said.

When I arrived at my friend's house it was four in the afternoon. An old servant answered the door. "Shang Tzu-Ch'iang woke up and rode away on the motorcycle," she said.

As I turned to go I heard a voice from the sky saying, "Stay for two more minutes. Your friend will be back."

At that moment I realized I existed in my master's magic water bowl.

He was watching me. I turned to the old servant and said, "Well, he will be back in two minutes."

The servant wondered what was going on. Yet after two minutes my friend did return. He waved to me from far away and nervously said,

"Lu! I knew you were coming today! While I was sleeping I heard you call me! I rode my motorcycle out and then I heard a voice from the sky that told me to return! Strange things are happening today! It's good that you're here! Come in! Please come in!"

While I was in my friend's living room I told him what his bedroom looked like. He looked at me in amazement. "Yes! My room is exactly like that!"

Then I told him, "In this world there is a bowl called Jade Rabbit Water Shadow Bowl. It can transmit picture and sound."

But he just shook his head saying "No. No. I don't believe it. You're kidding. "

Master Ch'ing-cheng didn't tell me, when he passed away, where he hid the bowl and I never found it. My friend, as Master Ch'ing-cheng predicted, died in a traffic accident.

- Chapter 24 -

The Great World Of Silence

On the other side of the noise in our lives is the Great World of Silence. While we are sitting near the ocean we listen to the waves pounding the shore. Yet beneath this is silence. Most people are not aware of this aspect of silence. They don't believe it exists.

Although it is the silent world, it does exist. As sure as there is day and night, this other world exists! There is a material world and a spiritual world. The material civilization is progressing rapidly; there is a great change in the silent world too.

When I meditate in this Great Silence, all troubles go away. Life and death no longer are real. There is no feeling of loneliness. History becomes short, and there are wisdom stars everywhere. I feel I can reach out my hand to touch the stars.

Once I traveled into space. I allowed my body to float up. I ascended through layers of clouds to another world. Celestial beings welcomed me. Flowers bloomed everywhere. The peoples' bodies were wonderfully fragrant. Nature's colors were different; all beautiful and bright.

"Where am I?" I asked one celestial being.

"This is the Great World of Silence," he answered.

"Do I know anybody here?"

Then I met my acquaintance. His form had changed, yet his heart was still familiar to me.

"Uncle Tzu-chih! You are here!"

"Lian Shen! You've come here too!"

"No. No. I still have to return."

"Well then hurry and return!"

"No, Uncle Tzu-chih, I don't mean that. I'm still alive, you know. I still live in the human world."

"Oh! Oh! I understand. You can travel beyond your body."

"Is there anyone else I know who travels here?"

"Yes, there are some. But not many people can leave their bodies. Some visit here in their dreams, but their consciousness is not very clear and their forms are not definite; just like steam in a tea kettle. The dreamers don't stay long. Sometimes I'd like to remind them of some thing, but when they wake up they never remember."

"Do you miss the human world?"

"No. Once you go back there it's difficult to return here, you know."

When Uncle Tzu-chih was in the human world he was a waste paper collector. His name, Tze-chih, means printed paper. He was a Buddhist, yet he spent his days with garbage. His heart was, and is, very pure. Every time he picked up papers with letters printed on them he burned them. He was aware that the knowledge, represented by the printed words, came from the saints. Burning was a way to keep the knowledge pure. He advised people always to respect printed paper. Once he picked up lots of lost money. He took it to the police and refused a gift from the people who lost it. He often donated anonymously. He chanted to Buddha, never stopping. When he died he didn't have a dime left.

Without anyone knowing, he was able to help in the deliverance of many people. We met three times when he was alive and talked easily. Before he died he reminded me to take care of his "students" so that they could return to the Great World of Silence.

I hadn't expected the chance to see him again.

"Ying-chen (one of Tzu-chih's students) has left the spiritual path. I am sorry to see this happen," said Uncle Tzu-chih.

"Oh! That pure and innocent little girl?"

"Yes. I observed her. She's lost the purity and innocence of her soul."

"I will look for her to see if I can help her." I said.

"Please do."

Fifteen minutes later I woke up.

The second evening I was standing in front of Pai-li Night Club. I was alone and, silently, I watched the night club sign flashing. A limousine stopped in front of the club. From the car emerged a woman with a long white dress. She was smoking a cigarette. A gentleman was with her. Holding her around the waist, he escorted her into the club.

Then I heard an announcer say loudly, "Miss Lu-Lu has arrived."

"Yes. Miss Ying-chen has changed," I thought. "She no longer sells lottery tickets in the street. Her clothes used to be so plain and simple."

This woman looked like a prostitute.

"Ying-chen," I called to her.

She turned and seemed not to recognize me. I was afraid I'd called to the wrong person. She wore artificial eyelashes. Her look had changed.

"I am Lu Sheng-yen, friend of Uncle Tzu-chih."

"Lu Sheng-yen! Oh, you are the one who is famous for spiritual readings! Great! Do a reading for me! Let's see when I will become famous and make lots of money!"

"You don't remember me?"

"I do! I do! You are Uncle Tze-chih's friend. You are the famous author of spiritual books. Even you, like all men, come to the night club. All crows are dark."

"Me! No, no, no."

"You needn't deny it. Life's like this. You don't have to pretend you are a saint. Why don't I cancel two time slots? You can do a psychic reading for me."

"Ying-chen, . . . "

"No! Don't call me Ying-chen: I am Lu-lu now."

The band started playing the blues. The lights were dimmed. Lu-lu came toward me like a white shadow. I smelled her makeup. I left in a hurry.

On the way home I thought about the difficulties that arise because of our entanglements in the physical world.

I prayed for her.

- Chapter 25 -

Astral Travel

In the summer when it's hot I take it easy. Once when I closed my eyes for an afternoon nap I felt my soul leave my body to travel to a different place.

I found myself on a strange road, with an old man rambling toward me.

"Aren't you Lian Shen" he said when he came nearer.

"Yes! I am," I answered in surprise. "Venerable sir, who are you?"

"I am the blessing god at the T'ou-pien Mountain."

"I remember that mountain. I went with some friends to visit and to see some land there. I stopped by your shrine to pay my respects."

"Yes, yes. This is why I know you are Lian Shen he answered. "Since you are here now, if you are not going anywhere I'd like to take you to see a couple of interesting things."

The blessing god said no more, but began to move very fast. I didn't have time to think about it-I just followed.

My experience in astral travel is that the world traveled to is much clearer than the world of dreams. No physical boundaries can stop you in the astral world. You can walk on water; you can fly up to the mountains; you can walk rivers or enter into houses. Doors can't stop you. You can travel very fast.

The old man took me to a deserted mountain. There I saw a thatched roof house. Inside was a skinny corpse in a coffin. The old blessing god and I hid behind a rock to observe. In a while we saw heaven open. A celestial being came riding down to the mountain on a cloud. The mountain's colors became luminescent with golden tones of light.

Land gods arrived to guard the celestial being. The celestial being humbly knelt before the coffin. Respectfully, he paid homage to the skinny old body, kneeling three times and bowing three times after each kneeling. Then he stood and dust fell away from him.

The celestial being ran his hands lovingly over the body caressing, touching ever so gently.

He then disappeared into the sky.

"What's going on?" I asked.

"The celestial being has paid his respects to the corpse. That body was the celestial being's physical body when he was alive. The higher soul comes back to see the old bag which carried the higher soul. It is called, 'To use the not real to cultivate the real.' To reach the state that the celestial being now is in, the body had to suffer much."

"Yes, I answered, "I can understand that."

"The spirit came down to this deserted mountain to pay respect to a corpse because when it was alive that body could carefully follow the precept, cultivate his nature, and spread blessings with a good heart. Hence, his pure soul could reach the celestial world.

While I was realizing this idea, the blessing god moved again and I had to follow.

We traveled and traveled, but this time we didn't walk on a deserted mountain or a small trail-we went to a busy city. We zig-zagged through traffic and crowds. No one could see us. Finally, we arrived at a big house.

The blessing god entered and I followed. The main room was huge, with a beautiful carpet on the floor.

White cloths hung from the ceiling bearing written messages:

"Return to heaven," said one; "You exist forever," said another;

"Always in my heart," was on still another; "Return to Western Paradise."

Behind the white curtains, I saw a huge, fat body resting in a coffin.

The cloths indicated that he was the director of a business association, and had been the president of many companies.

The blessing god instructed me to wait behind the sofa. Soon I saw a strange animal appear. Its body stunk and its eyes popped out like a goldfish. It had a big mouth and a tiny neck. He walked step by step on skinny legs toward the coffin looking at it angrily, brandishing a whip.

Fiercely, he whipped at the corpse, and spat on it, shouting and swearing. The face of the corpse turned blue, then looked very frightened. The white fine skin became covered with patches of blue and red. The muscles began to shrink and smell horrible.

"You!" the angry ghost yelled out. "This dirty body ruined me!" He was in anguish.

The blessing god said, "Lian Shen, this is the regret of this angry ghost. While he had a physical body he indulged in all kinds of desires. Now he regrets his actions, but it's too late."

"This person had lots of chances to do good for society. Why didn't he do it?" I asked.

"This is called disillusion. People don't cry until they see the coffin" (*An old Chinese expression meaning people don't respond to a situation until a direct confrontation occurs*).

The blessing god said. "When you return to earth you should write of your experiences here, in hopes of awakening some people in the world. "

"I don't think people will believe this! To them it would sound too much like a fairy tale," I said.

"If people have affinity they will believe it. If they don't, let them laugh at it. Life is but a dream anyway. It's time for you to wake up." He pushed me and I woke up in the human world. I looked at

my watch. I'd only slept an hour. My arms and legs were as sore as if I'd walked a great distance.

- Chapter 26 -

The Hat Kingdom

I rarely dream, but whenever I do it seems there's a revelation there.

Dreaming is different from astral traveling. There are two kinds of astral travel: in one you can control your coming and going whenever you wish; in the other you can't. Often astral travel reflects reality, but dreams are much more disorganized. Sometimes you remember dreams and sometimes you don't.

One evening I was meditating about the idea of normal and abnormal, natural and unnatural. I thought about the contrast and about how it might relate to good and evil. That evening I dreamed I returned to an ancient city. The entrance to the city had a big sign that said Hat Kingdom. Upon entering the city I saw that everyone wore a hat. Different professions were represented by different hats. One man, a sturdy soldier, noticed I had no hat.

"Who are you? Why don't you have a hat?" he said.

"Forgive my ignorance. I didn't know when I arrived here at Hat Kingdom that everyone has to wear a hat."

"Yes. In this kingdom, from king to beggar, everyone has to wear a hat so people can know who and what you are."

"What is the philosophy behind the hat?"

"You ask Sun Po-t'ao about that."

"Who is Sun Po-t'ao?"

"He is a man in the human world."

After the dream I barely remembered the man's name. I wondered if there really was such a person.

A few days later, I'd nearly forgotten the whole thing, the receptionist in our office called me. "Mr. Lu, there is a man from Kang-shan (city) to see you."

"Tell him I am not receiving any people now."

"He says his name is Sun Po-t'ao."

"Sun Po-t'ao! Oh! Ask him to wait! I'm coming right away!"

I remembered the man in the kingdom of the hats had told me to speak with Sun Po-t'ao. And here he was-Sun Po-t'ao, a real person!

My first glance at Sun Po-t'ao focused on his big round white grass hat. He was dressed entirely in white, and looked clean and neat. I guessed his age to be about 40.

He grasped my hand in a firm handshake.

"Mr. Lu! I have heard about you and admired you for a long time. Today I am here for no other reason except admiration. We are all disciples of Buddha. We are all on Buddha's path. I have read your books. I know you have great wisdom. I have come to give you a push. Don't become discouraged because of blame, criticism and misunderstanding. The more slander you receive the more accomplishments you will achieve. Don't be afraid. Don't get discouraged."

"Thank you Mr. Sun . . . While you're here, I'd like to know one thing. Do you wear a hat every day?"

"Oh, yes! Yes!-' He touched his hat. "Many people call me Dr. Hat. There's much to be said about hats."

"I'd like to hear about it."

"First, hats have different sizes. Some are big, some are small. So are people's heads. Big heads should wear big hats. Small heads should wear small hats. Otherwise, the hat will be too loose or too tight. It is important that the hat fits. If it fits, it is natural. If it's natural, it's right. Life should be lived the same way. If you live very naturally then you are happy. You have harmony."

"Second, you wear different hats in different seasons. In the winter you wear a wool hat. In the summer you wear a grass hat. You

wear more clothes if you're cold, less if you're hot. I have many hats. For different occasions I wear different hats. Also, I change hats depending if it's day or night. The colors of my hats change too. There's a real art to wearing hats. In art we are looking for beauty."

"Third, there are many varieties of hats. There are men's hats, women's hats and professional hats. Students wear student's hats, soldiers wear soldiers' hats. Gentlemen have their own styles of hats, and farmers have straw hats. What one is looking for is the completion of style. If the style is complete, then it is real and true. If the farmer wears the gentleman's hat or the student wears the soldier's hat, confusion and disorder results. Disorder is not natural and beauty is gone. Truth is gone. When the right hat is worn, purity and truth are apparent and real. This is normal."

"Mr. Sun, you have said some wonderful things. The hats teach a valuable lesson."

"Thank you."

"Mr. Sun, do you know of a place named Hat Kingdom?" I asked curiously.

"Hat Kingdom? No. Never heard of it."

- Chapter 27 -
Red Blood Shadows

Since my miraculous encounter eight years ago, I have been in constant contact with the spiritual realm. I am amazed at everything I see. My perceptions and values have been changed a great deal. I am still not always willing to talk about all these new discoveries. Yet there is this one discovery that I feel I have to talk about.

I found that beneath the beautiful clothes of some women there are red blood shadows. They exist in the married women as well as single women.

Within the shadows I can see immature and abnormal entities. Some women have more than one. The entity emanates white light. Since the shadow is bloody red it is easy to tell how many entities are there.

One late afternoon, when I passed by a street in a Tai-Chung City, I happened to glance at the top of a maternity hospital. I saw a huge floating blood shadow as big as a water pond! I was frightened and shocked! How and why should a blood shadow be there? It was like a sunset, heavy and bright red.

Even more frightening, in the shadow I could see a tangle of abnormal entities, like a nest of white worms crawling over each other. It was horrifying. I felt my hair raise and my skin prickle and I became dizzy and thought I would vomit. I could smell the bloody odor. It was intolerable.

Just as I was overcome, a woman I recognized walked out the side the door of the hospital. Her name was Tsai. She had come to me for a reading, two years ago. There were blood shadows against her body.

"Oh! Mister Lu!" She was embarrassed to see me.

"This is number four, right?" I said in a straightforward manner. Two years ago when I saw her I told her she had had three, and now I saw the fourth white entity in the blood shadow.

She nodded.

"You should take care of your body. Do not destroy yourself."

"I don't feel much meaning in living," she answered.

"Don't say that! There is value and meaning in every life! You must find your own bright direction. Accomplish this and fulfill your life."

"You told me before I would have five children. Now I guess I only have one chance left!" Miss Tsai said.

"Then you must take care of yourself. It is your last chance."

"I think I must have cancer. I feel tired and dizzy, and my face is so pale that if I don't put make-up I look like a ghost. I have no appetite. My heart jumps. My hands sweat and I catch cold so easily."

"No. You don't have cancer, Miss Ts'ai. Listen to me. Return to your parents. You will have everything."

Miss Ts'ai's family lived in northern Taiwan and she had come down to central Taiwan to be free of them, and play around. I repeated, "Go home and chant to Buddha."

"I am going to listen to you." She thanked me, walking on in her shy, timid way.

Whenever I saw the bloody shadow on a woman's body and saw how many entities were in the shadow, I could see how many abortions she'd had. I was always correct.

I have discussed abortion with a friend who is a doctor. He said,

"There is not much we can do. We are hired by the patients and they want abortions. It's quite common. Although our principles

are against doing it, there's no denying that it helps people solve their problems. There are so many conflicts."

He thought a moment, then added, "Maternity hospitals make quick money this way."

I felt sad about all the damaged lives. The entities are so helpless.

Either they are attached to their mother, or they just float around. Either way, they enhance the violent energy of this world.

Often women have weak physical bodies because of abortions. Prayers and meditations can improve life. Women who have had abortions are helped through their own prayers and through the prayers of their friends. The kind, gentle and hopeful thoughts of all who pray are a great help to both the mothers and the entities.

I was thankful that Miss Ts'ai listened to my advice and returned to her parents. She married a man who works for the government. They have a nice baby boy.

- Chapter 28 -

The Passage To Death

It was a long, lonely and silent road. Its length seemed as unlimited as a superhighway. The wind was blowing. This is what the spirit world is like, not bright, but misty.

I saw a woman approaching from the distance and wondered,

"Why would a young lady such as this walk on this road?"

Drawn by curiosity, I approached her.

"Sir! Can you tell me where I am?" She discovered me as if she'd found a savior.

"You have died and you are on the passage to death," I replied.

"No! I haven't died! I am still alive! See, am I not talking to you now?"

"Put your hand into your pocket and take a look," I advised her. She put her hand into her pocket and became immediately frightened. Since her clothes and her body were both transparent, her hands, thrashing in invisible pockets, also were transparent. She was already a spirit.

"Where is my body?" she asked in panic.

"Look." I pointed to a city far away. The city immediately appeared in front of us and we saw a funeral home in which lay a coffin surrounded by crying people. The corpse was herself.

"Oh! Is that me?" She looked at the people who were around the coffin-her father, cousins, classmates and neighbors were weeping and talking sadly.

The picture faded.

"I don't believe I'm dead! If I'm dead why am I standing here? I don't understand. Where am I going?" She looked at me with large wondering eyes. "Have you died too?"

"I travel often between the space of life and death," I answered.

"Who are you?"

"My name is Lu. How about yours?"

"I am Wen."

"I guess you committed suicide. Did you take poison?"

I saw a dark smoke on top of her head. Those who commit suicide are

alone, and have no one to guide them in the spirit world.

"Yes," she began to cry.

This was her story:

Wen's mother died when she was a freshman in college and Wen was already in love. However, her father was a businessman and he wanted her to marry the son of a rich business associate. She refused. Because her father forbade her to marry the one she loved, she took poison.

"You really didn't have to commit suicide," I told her.

"I had no choice."

"You died so young. What a pity and a waste. You have lost the meaning of your life."

"It is too late," she wailed.

"Where would you like to go now?"

"I'd like to see my mother."

"Well, I can help you. Close your eyes. Visualize your mother's face. Call her name. Your soul and hers will connect no matter how far away she is. Your mother will appear and guide you to her place."

Soon, far away, a face appeared. It was Miss Wen's mother, emanating light. Being an experienced old soul, she drew her daughter to her.

Miss Wen's spirit body became smaller and smaller, flying away like a butterfly, merging into the spirit world.

The road stretched long and lonely, up and down. I picked up a picture Miss Wen had left. I thought, "On this road will pass many people."

The thing I don't understand is, when I woke from meditation the photograph of Miss Wen was still in my hand.

- Chapter 29 -

Medicine From Grandmother

When I was young, due to malnutrition, I was rather skinny. I always got sick. My mother told me that grandmother really loved me, and to help maintain the proper shape of my head when I was a tiny baby, grandmother always turned me this way and that way as I slept.

A war was going on then and we were moving a lot. Food was scarce; I was lucky to grow up healthy.

I was born in Chia-yi County. Later, my father was transferred to P'ing-tung by the electric power company, and the family moved there. By then, my grandfather and grandmother had died.

After we moved to P'ing-tung, I was still chronically ill. Mother feared I was dying, and had consulted many doctors. Some said I had pneumonia; others said inflamed intestines, and still others that it was a heavy cold. My mother was at wit's end. Late one night my father and I were both asleep while my mother lay half asleep with worry. Suddenly a wind blew into the house, and my grandparents appeared in front of my bed. The two souls looked around and my grandmother said, "Look how these people sleep!"

My mother, half awake, told them about my disease. Grandmother bent down to examine me, then reached into her pocket in search of something. She took out a bag of medicine and put something into my mouth, then she and grandfather silently disappeared.

My mother told me she saw this very clearly. She wanted to get up but could not move.

Amazingly, my health returned and I recovered completely.

After I grew up, I went with my mother to look for grandmother's tomb. We finally found it on a mountain slope. The tombstone was tilted forward. We decided to dig up the bones and lay them to rest in a pagoda. After that, my uncle's wife bore two sons, then many daughters.

I suppose this is the influence of the Feng-shui, that when one's ancestor is buried in a propitious spot, the family will prosper.

After my psychic opening we held a ritual ceremony for the souls of all our ancestors, chanting and making offerings. Both my sets of grandparents appeared, and many other relatives too. We talked with them a long time. They stayed with us for several days before they vanished again.

- Chapter 30 -

The Dark Side Of The Soul

When I was a child I heard a story:

One day after he had reached enlightenment, the compassionate hearted Shakyamuni Buddha was in heaven. He looked through the worlds and observed the six paths of reincarnation. Suddenly he heard a tiny voice calling

"Buddha! Help! Buddha! Help!"

Shakyamuni Buddha followed the voice. Looking down, he saw a red lotus flower at his feet. A tube in the lotus petals extended directly to the bitter ocean of hell. All the entities in the ocean of hell were drowning - floating up and sinking down again, unable to free themselves, they were suffering terribly.

Among them there was an entity named Afuka. He was a bandit when he was alive, and he had killed many people. When he died he went to hell, and had no chance to be freed. He had heard people praise Shakyamuni Buddha, and had heard that Buddha could rescue spirits from the Ocean of Suffering. He cried out to Buddha for help.

The compassionate Buddha was touched. He saw a spider weaving a web on the lotus, and threw a strand of the spider's silvery thread down to the Ocean of Suffering.

Afuka grabbed the thread and began to climb. Other entities in the Ocean of Suffering followed Afuka up.

Seeing them, Afuka thought, "I am the one who called Buddha for help. Now all these people follow. The thread was thrown for me. How could all these people be saved? Besides, maybe the thread will break and I will be stuck here." He hardened his heart and began to kick the others off the thread. The cries of confusion and anguish caused Buddha to look down at them.

He sighed deeply. Then the thread broke. All the entities, including Afuka, dropped once again into the Ocean of Suffering.

Afuka cried out to Buddha again, but since the connection was broken Buddha could not hear.

There was a period of some months when I felt that something was wrong. At home, I could feel some entity in the corner of the house watching me. When I was on my motorcycle, he followed. When I meditated I could feel the entity beside me. But I could see nothing. I ignored the phenomenon for two months. When I couldn't stand it any more I said,

"Who are you? Please manifest yourself."

"I dare not. I look too terrible," a voice said.

"Where do you come from?"

"I am in hell. I have heard that you can unlock peoples' bondage. Therefore, I've followed you for nearly two months. Since you didn't acknowledge me, I didn't dare to speak-only to follow you silently."

"What do you want from me?"

"To free me from hell."

"What crime did you commit?" I asked.

"I broke into houses and stole things. I stole motorcycles, cars, tourists' money-anything I could get my hands on."

"You have earned your bondage," I said.

"I swear! I will never do it again!" the entity pleaded.

Relenting, I said "Very well, I'll help you."

I chanted:

"The most significant things in the world are life and death. When the next breath no longer comes, then you are in a different world. When one thought is evil then you

return to the reincarnation circle. When one's heart becomes pure he is able to see the blue sky again."

I continued to chant:

"Om Cha ro di ya so po ho"

I chanted the Seven Buddha Chant, which removes karma:

"Lee bo lee bo bee Cha ho cha ho be

Tou lo ni bee

Ni ah la bee

Bee le nee bee

Mo ho cha dee

Tseng lin chan dee

So po ho."

In the silence which followed, I told the still invisible entity, "When you think about Buddha, Buddha will immediately appear in your heart. Your bondage is gone now. You are free."

I pointed to the bondage with two fingers, and the bondage disappeared.

The entity went dancing off in delight.

A few days later, the entity was back. His hands were in bondage, and he asked me to free him again.

"I did that already!"

"But it came right back," he wailed.

"So, what crime did you commit this time?"

He mumbled something, not answering. Finally, he confessed that he stole the lotus flower under the Buddha's seat in a temple, and instantly the bondage was upon him again.

When mind rises,

dharma rises;
When mind disappears,
dharma disappears.

I chanted for him again and threw the mudra and said the Seven Buddha chant, but the bond held fast. I could no longer help.

- Chapter 31 -

The Dance Of The Golden Snakes

I always loved the mountains and I have climbed many of them. I have visited many mountain temples. I know one that is especially fine, which houses a highly cultivated monk.

When I visited there the temple was very quiet. All I could hear were the birds in the banyan trees.

"Mister Lu, I need help from you," the monk said.

"How can I help?"

"Recently a mentally disturbed person has come here to stay. He used to be a benefactor for the temple, then suddenly he became unbalanced. He's visited lots of doctors and hospitals, but none can help. His family sent him here to the temple to live, hoping our blessed water and the Buddha would heal him, but there is no sign of recovery. He screams every night. Can you help?"

"Male or female?"

"Male. "

"How old is he? What's his name?"

"He is in his forties. His name is Kuo Te-hui."

The living quarters were behind the temple, surrounded by a garden of chrysanthemums and roses. Orchids hung from the trellises, touching the air with fragrance. A young monk was sweeping fallen leaves. The patient was locked in the last room of the living quarters. We looked in the window and found him idle. He didn't even look at us. His meal was still on his table, hardly touched. Every day people came to care for him and to give him food. He didn't look weak, but he was unmoving.

"He screams every night as if he is angry and fighting with someone."

I scanned the top of his head and saw dark smoke there. I used psychic vision to look more closely. "I see two golden snakes twisting and turning," I said.

"That's right! That's right! Every time after his screaming he yells, 'There's the snakes! There's the snakes! The snakes are coming up! Snakes everywhere! Help!' In the beginning we checked his room for snakes, but of course there were none. We knew then that he was mentally disordered. We ignored his screaming after that."

"Did you give him any medicine?"

"Yes, the doctor has prescribed something to calm him."

I then returned to the temple hall, burned incense and worshipped Buddha. I meditated for five minutes. then turned to the monk and asked, "Could you ask his family to come?"

"Yes, his family comes to visit once a week."

The second time I went to the mountain the monk introduced me to Mrs. Kuo. She was young and attractive; a former school teacher. They had two children; a boy and a girl. They lived in a pleasant house in the foothills. Mr Kuo ran two factories.

"Did you ever kill two snakes in your house?" I asked her.

"No."

"Then who killed them?"

"My servant killed them."

"When?"

"It was just a few days before he got sick."

"That's it then!"

"That servant had nothing to do with my husband. Besides, nowadays there's snake restaurants everywhere! Lots of people eat snakes! Nothing happens to them. Why did this happen to my husband? He has a good heart; he believes in Buddha, and he has

made so many donations to the temple! Why didn't Buddha protect him?"

"Please don't get upset. Mr. Kuo created this situation when he was thirty-three. "

She was silent for awhile, then she responded, "Mr. Lu, that was over ten years ago! How could you know?"

"Buddha told me."

The story was this:

Ten years before, Kuo Te-hui was having an affair with another woman. Mrs. Kuo discovered it and was furious. The other woman was pregnant with Kuo's baby. Caught in this dilemma, Kuo finally gave the other woman some money and asked her to go away. But the girl really loved Kuo, and didn't want to take his money. She jumped into the ocean, killing herself.

Not long after the woman committed suicide, the two snakes appeared in Kuo's house. The snakes were alert; they disappeared whenever people approached. Six months ago a servant had killed them. Then Kuo Te-hui lost his reason!

Mrs. Kuo was silent after hearing all this. The monk was chanting, "Buddha, Buddha, Buddha."

"Mr. Lu, is there any remedy?"

"Nowadays people don't believe anything about reincarnation. Some say there is heaven and hell. Some say heaven and hell exist only in the mind or in the heart. It doesn't matter. Karmic retribution never fails. Only your husband can resolve this. When the karmic retribution is over, he will waken. This is why medicine will not do any good," I said.

"Even if you asked Buddha, it would not help?" Mrs. Kuo asked anxiously.

"All the natures of the dharma are empty and silent. No dharma can manifest at an improper time. Pushing something to happen at

the wrong time will do no good; therefore, my prayers now will not help." I continued, "The knot must be untied by those who tied it. You must not worry yourself. Take things easy and let nature take its own course."

I looked at the Buddha statue.

I felt sad for this couple even though I knew that in time the situation would be resolved.

- Chapter 32 -

Tear Drops

Once I visited a friend in a fishing port called Tung-Kang (Eastern Harbour). My friend also had another guest from Fan-Ch'ung City. His name was Wen Tung-shan. When he heard who I was he cried out,

"Ah! My trip is more than worthwhile now that I see you! I have been to your house but I never got to see you."

"Sorry. I am always out," I murmured. "I have written to you, but I got no response!"

"I am sorry. I receive dozens of letters every day. I hardly have time to read them. I can't respond to most of them. It is a burden to me."

"Mister Lu, look at my eyes!" Wen said, "Do you see anything different?"

I looked closely, then shook my head. Mr. Wen's eyes were very clear.

Nothing strange.

"Look again," he begged.

I used my psychic eye to take a closer look. This time I saw a large pond and a flowing river.

I didn't know what it meant, but I told my friend and Mr. Wen what I saw.

Wen was silent a moment, then said, "Very interesting."

Our host smiled and nodded. "What you have seen makes sense," he said.

Mr. Wen then told me that when he was eighteen, one night before he went to bed he suddenly began to cry without apparent reason.

Tears flowed until he was exhausted. The experience left him puzzled, but he didn't pay much attention to it.

Since then, he found himself crying every night before he slept. Even after a happy day, he cried before going to sleep. He began to avoid seeing friends in the evening because of it.

Mr. Wen was forty. He had been crying for twenty-two years-more than eight thousand times.

"What happens during the day?" I asked.

"Nothing is wrong during the day."

"Have you seen doctors?"

"Yes, all kinds. Even psychiatrists. Nobody knows the reason."

"This is the first I've heard of such a thing," I said honestly.

"Mister Lu, can you help me find the reason?"

"I will," I promised.

I stayed at my friend's house and that evening I asked him to bring incense. I showered and prepared myself to meditate. I wrote Mr. Wen's birthrate on yellow rice paper, then burned the birthrate and meditated for guidance. Soon in the circle of light a funny-looking monk appeared.

He didn't look like a monk, but he dressed like one. He held chanting beads in his hands and continually recited: "Amitaba Buddha."

I saw him asking for donations from house to house.

Then, happily, the monk would go off to enjoy food and drink. I saw him go into the temple to ask the resident monk for money. He said,

"Amitaba Buddha, the great compassionate Bodhisattva, my money was lost because of a pickpocket. I need to go home. Will you loan me some money?"

He asked for charity money from philanthropists, telling them about nursing homes and hospitals that would be built. But once while he was at this he was recognized as a cheater.

Someone cried out, "Yesterday we saw him in another temple asking for money to go home and today he is here asking for money again. He is a swindler. Don't give him anything!"

"Amitaba Buddha! I am a vegetarian. Look, I even have chanting beads!" He drew these out quickly as if they would protect him.

"Clearly! He is a swindler!" shouted another.

"Amitaba Buddha! You are mistaking me for someone else! If I am cheating let my tears never stop!"

After that the light circle became smaller and smaller and I awakened from my meditation.

The second day Mr. Wen asked me if I saw anything.

"Sorry. I didn't see anything."

"I knew you'd never be able to find out."

"You're right," I said.

- Chapter 33 -

The Red Shoes

A while back, for several days, a limousine parked in front of my house. It was a fancy foreign car, twice the size I was used to seeing. The second morning I opened my door and saw it, I observed an older couple in the car. The gentleman had a full head of white hair, and the woman had dyed hers red. Both of them seemed healthy and attractive. The following morning when I rode my bicycle away from the house, they watched me. When I returned after work they were still there. This went on for several days.

One evening I returned home as the sun was setting and found the old couple standing by the door of the car. While I was still some distance away, they bowed to me.

"I didn't believe it," said the old woman, "so I asked some people. You are Lu!"

"It doesn't matter, really." I answered. "I stopped receiving people two years ago."

"We are not here as curiosity seekers. It's hard to believe that you are Lu. You dress so plainly, live in such a small house, and ride a bicycle! We nearly left without seeing you. We risk your rejection now and ask to see you."

The couple was very polite, unlike many visitors. Often, when I rejected them, I saw visitors become surly and charge that I had no compassion. Some raised fists at me and kicked my door. I always kept silent in handling those visitors. This time, however, I felt that courtesy should be returned.

"What can I do for you?"

"We have a son who is mentally disordered."

"Perhaps he needs a psychiatrist."

"Yes. We have seen many doctors. I am a psychiatrist myself. But this doesn't seem to be an ordinary case."

I didn't know how to answer.

"My son's name is Ch'iao Ke-hua" he went on. "He is thirty-seven. When his symptoms appear he lays on the floor shaking, holding his head, and crying that he has a headache. It seems very painful. The time is always the same: 2:00 a.m. 'til 3:00 a.m. During that time he mumbles, and his voice sounds like a woman's. He shouts and insults his ancestors, using more four letter words. When he is coherent again he remembers nothing of what he said."

"These days, people don't believe that one can be possessed by spirits," I said.

"Yes, as a psychiatrist, I know all about the psychological factors; yet when my son's symptoms began he recited all kinds of trivial details about my ancestors that he didn't know to begin with. I have practiced medicine for a long time. I've always believed in modern science and in medical technology. I am, however, aware of many unusual cases. Now I see this happen to my son! I have to believe it!"

"Well, in that case, give me your son's birthrate and his current address. Come back tomorrow and I will give you an answer."

"Thank you!"

"You're welcome."

The address on the note was Malaysia. That evening I saw a mysterious vision. Beautifully dressed fairies were dancing in a palace, spinning to beautiful music. Among them I saw one dressed in a green skirt. She moved lightly, like a butterfly among the flowers. Next I saw a pond with a corpse floating on it. The face was swollen and white, and some of its teeth were missing. The corpse wore a green skirt and new red shoes. The two visions switched back and forth several times.

Next I saw a young man accompanying the green-skirted lady near a shoe store window.

"I love those red shoes!" the lady was saying.

"How about me buying one pair for you every day?" the man said to her affectionately.

"Oh, wonderful!" She leaned close to him.

"Annie! You are easy to please!"

She blushed. "Don't praise me. I am not that nice."

In my meditation I could see the whole picture, but I didn't know the reason behind it. It appeared that Ch'iao Ke-hua hurt her, but they seemed to be such a loving couple. Who was the lady? I wondered what answer and what cure I could tell the old couple when they returned. I felt unsure of myself.

They arrived the next evening, anxious and hopeful.

"Have you found some way to cure my son?" the wife asked.

"Who is Annie?" I asked.

The woman looked surprised and shocked. "Oh, she was a loose woman."

"What does she do?"

"She was a dance girl."

"Does your son have any relationship with her? Where is she now?"

"She's dead. It's been several years. The newspapers said suicide. My son saw her once or twice and took her home a few times. That's all."

"We hope there is a remedy for him," the old gentleman said.

I hadn't been sure until now what the problem was. But now I knew that Annie's spirit possessed Ch'iao Ke-hua.

"When you return, buy red shoes and give them to Ch'iao Ke-hua to wear," I said.

"But Ch'iao Ke-hua is a man!" his father protested.

"Yes. He is a man. But he has to wear woman's shoes," I persisted.

"Well, . . ." the old man paused, wondering what to make of my answer.

"As long as it cures him of his screaming and crying every night!" the old woman said.

They thanked me, bowed and left.

I forgot about the whole thing after that. What reminded me of it again was a letter I received from Malaysia:

"Dear Mister Lu,

"About six months ago we were very fortunate to read your book about spiritual and psychic matter. We were especially gratified to visit you even though you are no longer receiving people. We would like to invite you to visit us. It would be our honour to escort you around Malaysia. When we returned to our home we followed your instructions. At 2:00 a.m., when our son's symptoms appeared, we gave him the red shoes to wear.

The symptoms disappeared when he wore the shoes. My son is very grateful for your help. Yet we still have some small difficulty. We hesitate to bother you again, but perhaps you can help."

"After the fifth wearing of the shoes, this method was no longer effective. Every five days we've been buying new shoes. Our closet is piled high with red shoes! Do you have some method to solve this problem?"

"We realize that your help has been very great already and are sorry to bother you again on this small matter. Please respond to this letter."

- Chapter 34 -

Reincarnation And Retribution

It was New Year's Eve. My family and I were sitting by the fire while a cold wind blew outside. We were in the middle of dinner when my good friend, Mr. Hsieh, came bursting through the door.

"Hey! Lu! he said. "You have to save my niece! She's dying!"

He held a statue of the Veda Bodhisattva. Shih is a devoted Buddhist.

"Where is your niece?"

"Wu-feng Center. All the members are there praying for her."

Reaching for my jacket and bowing to Buddha I left quickly with him to catch a taxi. On the way to the church my friend told me this story:

Liu Min-yu, his niece, was a junior at the normal university, and was doing well there. Two years before, however, she began to act strange.

She often mumbled, and said things that didn't make sense. Sometimes she slept for five days without eating or drinking anything. The school had notified her parents to take her home for therapy.

They took her to see one doctor after another. None of them found anything wrong. Her father was a prosperous businessman and he spent large amounts of money on doctors for her.

When all else failed, he took her to the temple. One of the mediums in the Pu-li Temple said that an entity had bestowed very bad energy on Liu Min-yu. The remedy was that she should stay in the temple for 49 days.

While she stayed there, Miss Liu slept the days through. Whenever she awoke, she continued to mumble nonsense. Finally the medium gave up on her.

Her father took her to another temple, the Five King Temple. There they worshipped the Emperor of Jade, and burned tons of hell money.

She improved a bit and at times she was quiet, but for the most part she cried and screamed.

Once in a while people had difficulty restraining her. They worked through the temple for six months, then her father asked the resident monk at Tiu-yun Temple for help. The monk claimed to have a fan that could sweep away all kinds of bad entities. He said, when he examined Miss Liu, that it was the spirit of the carp fish that caused the trouble. He chanted, used the dharma water and waved his fan to get rid of the spirits.

It didn't help.

Mr. Liu then took his daughter to the King Mother Temple of Wu-ch'i. The medium there covered Miss Liu's body with paper charms. No food was allowed her-only sacred water. After four days of this, the girl had a high and serious fever. Her face turned dark and her eyelids white. She mumbled ceaselessly.

She was sent to a mental hospital for electric shock therapy. Hsieh told me, "We've visited the famous Buddhist scholar, Master Lu. He told us he was only a teacher. I am thinking that you have some kind of psychic power, and you can help. If you don't help her she will die today! She told us there are two entities coming to get her tonight."

When we arrived at Wu-feng Temple I bowed to the Buddha in the hall. Members sat in a circle chanting to Buddha for the girl. I was touched, since this night was New Year's Eve. Liu Min-yu was there, speaking loudly, sometimes screaming. She repeated that she could not live anymore; that someone was coming to get her. She pointed to the temple members, "It's useless to chant! The god of death will come to get you too!".

I met her father, Liu Ta, and her mother. I inquired briefly about her situation, then followed the ritual ceremony of Buddhism to pray for sacred water to spread on her body.

Nothing changed.

I requested all the members to chant for Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva. I stood in the center of the hall and focused myself on the Ksitigarbha statue, chanting the mantra to invite the Bodhisattva. Finally, I saw the Bodhisattva appear, sitting on a lotus flower and holding a staff.

"Lian Shen," he opened his eyes slightly and said, "nowadays people often have this ailment. This is the retribution of insanity. It should be that way."

"Bodhisattva! Does she have to die tonight?" I anxiously asked.

"No. What has happened to her is an accumulation of the grievances and hatred of many entities who are upset with her."

"Can I help her?"

"It is from an entanglement of her mind with other entities. Great power will be needed to resolve this. " The golden body of the Bodhisattva slowly disappeared.

I turned to Liu Ta, "Your daughter is possessed by very strong entities. Great power is needed to resolve it. But she will not die tonight."

A few days later Mr. and Mrs. Liu came to visit me.

"Mister Lu, I'm hoping so much you can cure her. We have done everything we can!"

I nodded. "I will do my best, but it all depends on Buddha. I hope the almighty power of Buddha will cure her insanity."

That evening I burned incense and prayed about this matter. Lying on the bed half asleep, I saw a mysterious phenomenon:

It was late at night and foggy. Near a long bridge a man carried a woman's body. A big rock was tied to her body. He threw her into the river.

The vision was so painful that I couldn't breathe. I felt almost as if I were the woman's body.

Then I saw the same man running into an alley with a samurai sword. He killed a man and threw the body into a lime pond. When the killer turned around I saw a woman's face! She looked like Liu Min-yu! I was frightened and I woke up. It was four o'clock in the morning.

I washed, went to my altar, burned incense, and asked for the Buddha's guidance.

Buddha said, "What you saw in the dream is her past life. Those entities are coming back for revenge. The only resolution is to negotiate with those who are grieved.

At seven o'clock in the morning I rushed to Mr. Liu's house and I told them about my dream. They said nothing.

We all went back to my altar. I took out my ouija board so they could experience direct guidance.

"In Liu Min-yu's previous life," said the ouija board, "she killed a man and a woman. In this lifetime she reincarnated as a woman. The victims have come to take revenge. Liu Min-yu will be crazy for eight years.

Only then will the grievance be neutralized. This is the retribution. Even the gods cannot help. One victim's name is Huang, a male. The other is Lin, a female."

After seeing the ouija board spell this out Mr. and Mrs. Liu Ta looked at each other. Mrs. Liu sighed and said "No wonder! Min-yu once was yelling and begging Miss Lin for forgiveness!"

Liu Ta asked the ouija board if there was any solution, and the board said, "It's up to the person who tied the knot to untie the knot."

I respectfully asked the Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva to bring the souls of Mr. Huang and Miss Lin to express their opinions through the ouija board.

To begin with they responded that they would not yield at all. They wanted full revenge for their grievances.

Mr. and Mrs. Liu Ta begged and pleaded for compassion, and finally the two souls gave this condition:

First, donate a statue of Buddha to the temple in the name of Mr. Huang and Miss Lin.

Second, hold a three day deliverance ceremony for the two souls.

Third, pledge a sum of four thousand dollars in the name of the two souls to help in building a temple.

Fourth, hold a deliverance ceremony every July for five consecutive years.

Mr. and Mrs. Liu Ta, because of their love for their daughter, agreed immediately to follow all of the conditions.

I was in charge of the three day deliverance ceremony. Seven days after the ceremony Liu Min-yu slowly recovered her sanity. A month later she had recovered normal health, and had a lovely face.

She became a teacher.

- Chapter 35 -

The Old Man Of The Orchard

A beautiful young lady brought her old grandfather to me. She was 18; lovely and spirited, with rosy cheeks. Her grandfather, however, had a grayish cast to his complexion. The two stood in marked contrast.

"Mister Lu," said the young woman, "I've heard that you do reading to help people to solve their problems. That's why I've brought my grandfather, Kuo Ju-feng here. Grandfather has had bad luck this year. Do you know when his luck will change? He is 63." The old man remained silent.

I lit three incense sticks for them. The young lady received the incense from me, bowed, and put it in the incense holder.

I prayed for guidance.

There appeared to me a mountain with fruit trees growing on it. It looked well cared for.

"Sir," I said to the old man, "do you grow fruit in the mountain?"

After a pause the gray-faced man squeezed a small smile and answered, "Yes, I grow many papaya trees on my mountain. . . Please check to see what my ailment is. I would appreciate your insights so much. I've seen doctors and received shots and medicines to no avail. I can really use some help."

I looked at his fingernails and at his skin. I judged that, most likely, he had a stomach ailment.

"Yes, I do have stomach trouble. You are right again. It's strange though. The pain always starts at the same time: 3:00 to 4:00 a.m. It's like living hell. I am about ready to commit suicide! I've seen so many doctors, and I take so many painkillers. Frankly, I've never believed in the spirit world. My visit to you is the first time in my life I've searched for answers this way."

I wondered about his pains coming at 3:00 to 4:00 a.m. I asked again for guidance.

I envisioned the mountain full of papaya trees again. Among the trees I saw a tomb with the name Su on it.

I asked "Is there a tomb on your mountain?"

"Yes. When I bought the mountain the tomb was there in ruins. I never bothered to fix it, and no descendants have ever come to worship."

"The person buried there is named Su, is that right?"

Surprised, the man exclaimed, "How did you know?"

I smiled. According to my psychic vision, the story was this:

The old man grew papayas in the mountains and as the papaya trees grew the tomb site became very dense. Some roots pushed through the cement of the tomb, becoming entangled with the coffin and the corpse. The man in the coffin had died of a gastric ulcer.

When I explained the reason for Mister Kuo's ailment, he couldn't believe it. I gave him a prescription: "prepare fruits and tea and go to worship at Su's tomb. Tell him you know you were wrong to ignore his tomb. Repair the tomb. Put the bones into a jar and make the tomb right. You will not need any medicine to recover."

Mr. Kuo had tried all kinds of cures, and he was ready to try this one too, strange as it sounded to him. He had already spent a lot of money trying to find a cure. To fix the tomb would cost only a fraction of what he spent on medicine.

When workers began the project they found the bones entangled with papaya roots.

After the bones were in a new jar and the tomb was repaired, Mr. Kuo had no more stomach pains. He slept well. His body recovered strength and health.

One day he came again to see me with his beautiful granddaughter at his side.

"Sir, how do I thank you? Whatever you say I will do it," he said.

"Okay. If I say it, you'd better keep your word."

"Be assured I will. Ask as much money as you wish."

"I don't want money. Every morning when you get up, I ask you to recite 108 times: "Amitaba Buddha," I said, smiling.

"Chant Buddha? You don't want any money?"

His granddaughter sighed and said, "Grandpa, chanting Buddha is very simple. Just promise him. Mr. Lu's purpose in life is just to help people. If you give him money, it's almost an insult."

"Chanting Buddha has great merit," I said.

The old man heard me finally and knelt down to pray to Buddha. He promised me that he'd chant every day. Before he left he thanked me profusely.

- Chapter 36 -

A Christian's Visit

Yen Yun-p'eng, a colleague of my father's, worked for the Taiwan Electric Power Company.

Once he and his wife came to visit us and he saw my altar. Mr. Yen himself was never interested in religion. When he graduated from college he went to a foreign country to study. He was an intellectual. His wife, however, was different. She had graduated from a Christian school and was very devoted in her religion.

Looking at the altar, Mrs. Yen said, "I don't believe this. I am a Christian."

"Have you ever studied Buddhism?" I asked. "If you don't understand it, surely you won't believe it."

"I only know that Buddhists worships idols. This is evil. Worshipping idols leads to hell! Worshipping God and the Christ leads to heaven. There is only one God; one Christ."

"According to what you say, I will go to hell because I believe in Buddha. Buddha has something to offer," I said.

Mrs. Yen was apologetic. "I don't see you as a disciple of the devil, just most other people. There might be something to Buddhism, but I'm not interested in studying it."

Mr. Yen smiled and said nothing. He asked me to do a reading for him about his future and his career.

I not only told him about his own career, but also about his brothers' careers.

His wife was astonished at the accuracy of my reading.

"You have a cousin in Tai-nan who is a police officer. Is that right?" I said.

"Yes. He used to be strong and healthy and study judo. Now he is weak. We don't know what ailment he has," said Yen.

Mrs. Yen smiled slyly. She wondered if I could know which illness her cousin in Tai-nan had.

I asked for guidance, then said, "He has tuberculosis."

Mr. and Mrs. Yen looked at each other, shocked. They already knew he had tuberculosis.

Yen nodded, acknowledging that the T.B. was true. Mrs. Yen couldn't smile any longer.

She pointed to one of the statues on my altar. "What Buddha is that?" "It is Medicine Buddha."

"What Buddha is that?" she asked, pointing to another.

"Amitaba Buddha of Western Paradise." "What Buddha is that?" she continued, pointing to another.

"That's Shakyamuni Buddha."

She continued asking one by one. Finally Mr. Yen said, "Hey, don't use your finger to point at the Buddhas. It's not polite."

Before he had the sentence out, his wife's other hand jerked up to the hand she'd been pointing with. Despite anything she tried, her hands were joined together, palms closed in front of her chest. She bowed from the waist again and again. She couldn't stop. She kept moving faster and faster.

"I cannot stop! I cannot stop!" she screamed.

Yen was frightened.

I stood to one side, using my psychic eye to take a look at what was going on.

I saw two deities, one in the air pushing her neck, moving her up and down. Another was moving her hands. I saw another goddess whose eyes projected lights onto Mrs. Yen's eyelids, closing them. Mrs. Yen yelled,

"I can't see. I can't open my eyes!"

I said, "If you want this to stop just say: 'please forgive disrespect' three times. After you stop, bow five more times."

She did it, and the movements stopped.

She sighed, "Oh Jesus! It's real!"

Since then she never dared to look down on the gods in my house. Although she was Christian she always paid her symbolic respects to the gods by placing her palms together when she was near the altar.

- Chapter 37 -

The Secret Seal

"The so-called spiritual man knows that everything is an illusion." This is a verse from the Transmission of the Lamp. It also says, "A spiritual man can travel through all ten realms. He can manifest himself anytime, anywhere, as he desires. He can be the Buddha of ten directions. He can be the master of twenty generations. He can be the Bodhisattva, Pratyeka Buddhas, or Sravakas. He can be the devil. He can be the Dieties of all the different heavens. Any animal, any bird could be his reincarnation. He could even be in hell or be a hungry ghost. Such a person has great, great power! Unmeasurable. Unthinkable. He can do evil, create hungry ghosts, and create all forms of animals. He can do good. He can create heaven and the 33 celestial worlds. He can be both evil and good. He can manifest riches, nobility, joy, suffering, all the manifestations of the world. He can cultivate virtue yet not cut off the root of hatred. The manifestation of the devil, Satan, are his to create. He can be a hermit and cultivate himself, or he can pledge to deliver other people, like a Bodhisattva.

After all of this he can return to his original face and sit in his Buddhahood expounding on the dharma to the point that there is no dharma.

He can deliver a sentient being to the point where there is no sentient being to be delivered."

Someone told me of a small temple on a mountain where there was a lot of good psychic energy. Everything asked there was answered. I was curious so I went to visit the temple. Behind it was a cemetery. In front of the temple stood a sign with three Chinese characters: You-Ying Hung."

The temple was small and dilapidated, yet lots of incense was burning inside, which meant the place was popular. I noticed that the temple hosted many wandering souls. I didn't want to be there. While I was trying to leave a voice surprised me:

"Lian Shen! Where are you going?"

"Who are you to know that I am Lian Shen."

"I am in charge of this temple! San-shan-chiu hou! Lian Shen, don't you recognize me anymore?"

"San-shan-chiu-hou!" I was shocked. My spiritual teacher. He is in the realm of the formless. How could he be in charge of this dingy temple? I couldn't believe it.

I went inside. The room was narrow and incense filled the air. On the altar stood the figure of a god wearing a red robe. Two coins hung around his shoulders indicating he was from the Yin realm.

I closed my palms and asked, "San-shan-chiu-hou, if you are in the formless realm how could you be a Yin god here?"

"Lian Shen, have you never heard that I can freely travel throughout the ten dharma realms? I can hide myself in a grain of sand! I can manifest into ten thousand forms. I can transform heaven and hell. I can be the Buddha of the eons. Ordinary people don't recognize me. Monks insult me. Dieties of other realms avoid me. Yet can't you recognize me? I am San-shen-chiu-hou! Use your psychic eye and look!"

I used my psychic eye to look. I was astonished! Frightened! Frozen in fear! The temple became wider and wider, taller and taller, expanding beyond the clouds. The width of it covered four or five mountains. In front of me appeared strange-looking ghosts; some had blue faces and fangs, others had long horns, long tails, three heads, and four hands.

All were fierce-eyed and ugly. They sat in two rows. Above them, in the center, sat an especially strange creature. It had a head like Buddha; gentle and loving. Above him were nine heads, all with the dignified faces of Bodhisattvas, but below their necks they had snakes' bodies, bluish-green and luminescent. They had claws as sharp as knives. Their backs curved to sit on chairs.

"My spiritual teacher is the god of the formless realm. He has no body. How could he look so ugly?" I said aloud.

"Look again."

The temple then became infinitely large. In the sky appeared 72 gods and 36 bodhisattvas. All held fragrant flowers to worship San-shan-chiu-hou. The golden chair changed into a lotus flower, and on it sat a beautiful Buddha.

The two rows of ghosts transformed into arhats and Bodhisattvas. A wonder fragrance arose as the temple itself was transformed to gold and crystal. Facing this scene I couldn't help kneeling.

The Buddha said, "So-called spiritual man knows everything is illusion and not real. Lian Shen, you should understand what this means. I am San-shan-chiu-hou. Nobody knows that I have the power to travel through ten different realms. I can create everything. I can do anything without obstruction. I can transform to any form as I wish."

"In this temple," he continued, "under the table of the altar a wooden seal lies wrapped in a rag. This seal is very special. Take it home. Later it will become the seal for your temple. That is the purpose of your visit here today. See it as precious. Use it carefully."

"Master, what power does the seal have?"

"The seal comes from the Eastern Emperor god. A superior person who obtained it could transcend to heaven. A middling person would merely take care of the seal. He would have the respect of the deities, and hungry ghosts would avoid him. The low and pitiable person who has this seal can manage and stabilize the country.

"Lian Shen," he commanded, "as you keep this seal, be careful in using it. You don't have to return to this small temple. I have only stopped here temporarily to deliver this sacred seal to you.

"Because of the seal hidden in this temple there has been great energy here. Many guardians have protected it. After the seal gone I will leave, and the energy will be gone with me. This temple will become the ward of Asura - the ghosts."

When San-shan-chiu-hou finished talking, the vision of the infinite temple, the Buddhas and the Bodhisattvas all disappeared. I was back in the old rundown temple. I bent down and reached under the altar table, searching with blind fingers. My hand closed around something wrapped in a rag. Opening the rag, I found a very old seal. I bowed to San-shan- chiu-hou and left.

After I returned home I cleaned the seal and placed it on my altar near the statue of the Golden Mother. That is the story of the sacred seal on my altar.

How To Take Refuge in Living Buddha Lian-sheng

There are two ways of taking refuge in Living Buddha Lian-sheng and becoming a disciple of the True Buddha Lineage

1. By writing

It is often not possible for someone who lives far away to come in person to take refuge. Those students who desire to take refuge can, on the first or fifteenth of any lunar month, at 7:00am, while facing the direction of the rising sun, recite three times the Four fold Refuge Mantra: “Namo guru bei, namo Buddha ye, namo dharma ye, namo sangha ye” and prostrate three times

On the first or fifteenth of every lunar month, at True Buddha Tantric Quarter, a True Buddha Master performs a ceremony of “remote initiation empowerment” – to give empowerment to all the students who could not journey in person.

A student who takes refuge from a distance, after performing the rites at home, only needs to send a letter to the True Buddha Tantric Quarter stating that he/she is seeking refuge, together with his/her name, address, age, and small fee for making offerings to the Buddhas. Upon receiving the letter, True Buddha school will send a certificate, a picture of Living Buddha Lian-sheng, and a note stating the level of practice he/she should start with. The address of the True Buddha Tantric Quarter is:

Ling Shen Ching Tze Temple
17012 NE 40th Ct.
Redmond, WA 98052, USA
Tel: (425)885-7573
Fax: (425)883-2173

2. Through a local chapter of the True Buddha School

Contact a local chapter and make arrangement with the local chapter to take refuge in Living Buddha Lian-sheng.