Your Jesus! My Buddha!

Sense Chen
The book is devoted to the most respectable Fr. Albert Poulet–Mathis, S.J. (1927-2010)
“Each partner in dialogue must try to make his own, as far as possible, the intuition and experience of the other, to personalize it in his own depth, beyond his own ideas and even beyond those through which the other attempts to express and communicate them with the help of signs available in his tradition. For a fruitful dialogue, it is necessary that I reach, as it were, in the very depth of myself to the experience of my brother, feeling my own experience from all accretions, so that my brother can recognize in me his own experience of his own depth. ”

—Swami Abhishiktananda (1910-1973)
This is a book in memory of the founder of Taiwan Conference on Religion and Peace (“TCRP”), Fr. Albert Poulet-Mathis, S.J. and his contribution to accomplish the religious cooperation and religious harmony in Taiwan. As the founder and first chairman of the TCRP, Fr. Albert spent a lot of time to study the religious culture in Taiwan in many ways. The religious culture in Taiwan is a culture without barrier among religions. Fr. Albert visited religion leaders, organized various religious events, invited leaders from different religions to participate religious activities. The author Mr. Sense Chen has been an important member of TCRP, Sense used to spend a lot time to be with Fr. Albert and with many religious leaders in Taiwan. Sense is one of the witnesses in Taiwan to tell the world about an existing miracle in Taiwan, i.e. the religious harmony in Taiwan from a genuine true power of religion and peace.

I believe people in all religions should honestly face each of our own inner minds, because we all know all the changes of the external environment are being influenced by the changes of the inner mind. Though each religion may have different “God”, we all hope God bless the world and the human beings. I always urge disciples from each religion to do two
daily works: First, to pray for the world and all beings for world peace, happiness of human beings, no corruption, and no wars in the world. I trust our Gods will listen to our prayers.

Second, to daily self-examine and introspect ourselves in front of our God. The greatest enemy of human beings is “the self”. The biggest question of human beings is “how to face the self?” The most necessary lesson of the human beings is to breakthrough the self and inner barrier. I often quoted the Chinese word “jie” (calamity) in the traditional Chinese religions, this “jie” is like many knots tightly tied in each mind, millions of mindful knots cannot be untied and become hatred, suspicion and calamity in the society. Then collective mindful knots become the common karma of the human beings that lead to destruction and wars. The best solution is to solve it from each of us, by self-examining and introspecting, we may gradually untie our own mindful knots and help people to untie their mindful knots. By doing the self-examination, we collect our inner positive energy to repent and start anew in front of our Gods, to untie the mindful knots one by one. The self-examination is the most appropriate religious activity and is the best way of introspection of all disciples from all religions.

World peace is the most precious for all human beings. By continuing praying the world peace and self-examining ourselves, we will know all religions
may bring along the most important power to reach the world peace and the peace among human beings.

We all feel the 21st century is becoming more chaotic, we all face the worsening environment. In this chaotic era, we commemorate Father Mathis and his contribution to religious peace, I also call on all readers and all disciples from all religions to continue working together to replace hatred and suspicion with love and trust in God, so to stop wars and build a peaceful world community.

Tze-ye Lee, chairman of TCRP
Sep.25, 2014
In a world where deepening polarization increasingly characterizes social, political, and religious interaction, this work comes as an invigorating breath of fresh air. In addressing the realm of the sacred—the most personal and intimate space in one’s heart and soul—this book details the remarkable courage of extraordinary individuals who have sought for knowledge and understanding—not for establishing the superiority of their own beliefs but rather for the purpose of building bridges of tolerance and respect.

Interreligious dialogue, like intercultural dialogue, can only happen when those who would participate have expanded their comfort zones so that they can engage without feeling threatened or without feeling a need to threaten others. This can only happen when one is truly comfortable in one’s own “skin,” for only then is one likely to have the courage to set out on a voyage of discovery with a heart fully open to learning about and from others. In this insightful work, we are invited to glimpse into and learn from the remarkable respective personal voyages of Father Albert Poulet-Mathis and of the author, Sense Chen. Their life journeys, as characterized in this work, reflect precisely the brave, frank, and open inquiry and
respect for others that is required to initiate and sustain a meaningful and honest dialogue. We are fortunate to be able to listen in on this heart-to-heart dialogue because there is much we can learn—including the compelling notion that when it comes to religion, “accepting others and being accepted is the perfect ideal.” After all, “God is in everyone.”

If there is to be hope for overcoming the polarization of the present age, there are valuable lessons to be found within the pages of this book—lessons about tolerance, respect, and unconditioned acceptance. For those committed to their own voyage of discovery, this work can help chart a course into what promises to be a remarkable journey while, at the same time, inviting serious self-reflection on the basis for one’s own beliefs.

American Institute In Taiwan
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I am the door! Anyone who goes through the door will be safe!
—’Gospel of John’ x 9
Chapter 1

Open the Door
Time: Winter 1940  
Place: Strasbourg, France

In 1940, World War II was in motion, with German forces invading France. Because Strasbourg was located near the boundary between France and Germany, it became the main target and was heavily attacked by German troops. The sounds of artillery and explosions were everywhere. Many tall buildings were bombarded and lay in ruins. When the explosions came to a short stop, several youngsters in Khaki clothes went back and forth in the ruins with “first aid”, their arms bearing armbands designated “Red Cross”.

“There are people here!” shouted someone in the group. The other young people hurried to the spot where a weak sound of “Help” was heard beneath the rubble. The young people moved the stones away and a baby buried in the stones was rescued. They shouted with ecstasy!

Albert went home in a hurry to tell his family the good news. “Mum! Today I rescued a kid!” Not until he opened the door did he find his parents kneeling on the ground in the kitchen. They were looking at Albert in panic. From behind the door a rifle was aiming at his head. In German, a soldier shouted an order that he come into the kitchen. Oh, my God! His house was unfortunately occupied by German troops!

It was almost funny to note several German soldiers
aiming their guns at a teenager! It seemed that weapons and high tones justified their actions! Albert was very angry but his father wanted him to cease resistance for fear of danger. His kid brother burst out crying in the arms of his mother.

With his hands on the head, Albert moved slowly toward the kitchen table where his family once gathered to eat. The seat beside his father had always been left empty for their customers! His father told him: “We must learn from others!” so as the boss of coal miners, he often invited friends of all walks of life to his home. Various occupants of the coveted seats had included neighbors, friends, workers, and poor people and so, the table was never lacking in fresh topics. Their dining room was always full of laughter! Now unexpectedly, their house had been conscripted as a camp for German soldiers.

All three floors were now allocated to the German soldiers. All of the families were forced to live in the basements and former landlords became servants. They were allowed to use the kitchen only after the soldiers. They could constantly hear noisy footsteps upstairs and every time he went upstairs, he found that more of their belongings were disappearing as the German soldiers stole valuables, packing them up and sending them to their respective homes in Germany.

Albert’s mother had just given birth to a baby. She was still weak but had to continue serving the German soldiers. She ate less and less and became
undernourished. She had no milk to feed her baby and found that the baby got even weaker, too. She couldn’t help crying.

“Run away from here!” Albert’s father advised him to take his kid brother and flee to his relatives in southern France. In the moonlight, Albert ran, with his little brother on his back while the German soldiers were sound asleep. He ran all the way to the railway station and boarded the train. The train set out in the early morning and only then did he dare to take a deep breath. The railway carriages were crowded with passengers. Everyone carried packages. They all looked exhausted. The thin and short Albert was pushed to the corner where he unloaded his heavy package and took out the feeding bottle, but with horror, he saw that his baby brother’s eyes were closed tightly and the ashen pallor showed that he had been dead for a long time!

“Wake up! Wake up!” Albert broke out crying. He kept calling his kid brother. The train was traveling and shaking. In tears, he innocently wished his kid brother might open his eyes anytime.

Morning was breaking. The winter sunshine shone brightly through the train carriage. The face of his little brother looked vivid in the warm sunshine.

“Wake up!” Albert kept on praying. This naughty boy had never been so devout. He prayed that God might forgive his wrongdoings. He also made promises for the future. He only wished that his kid
Suddenly his kid brother opened his eyes, clear and bright. He uttered in a gentle tone, “It is time to wake up! Albert! Don’t you have an appointment this morning?”

Albert awoke with a start. The whole room was spotless and sparkling. He was still lying on the floor. Not until now, did he recognize that he was lying in the dormitory of Tien Education Center in Taipei. As consciousness returned, he struggled to try and stand up. Though he was still dizzy, his dream remained clear and vivid. Especially, his kid brother’s tone sounded familiar. He must have heard it somewhere. He should have been familiar with it. But how come he couldn’t remember. He was sure that his kid brother did not survive!

What happened after that? In no way could he have thought it up! The back of his head hurt badly. “Sure! Do I not have an appointment with a Buddhist this morning? What time is it? I do not want to be late!”

Fr. Albert hurriedly washed his face, changed his clothes, opened the door and strode out of the house.
Chapter 2

The First Meeting
I did not know until the third day that Fr. Albert (Albert Poulet–Mathis, S. J.) had been admitted to the hospital. I was told that he had fallen from his bed onto the floor and that his head been badly injured. He still attended a special meeting with some masters in the morning and had not called the hospital for emergency treatment until he found that his head was bleeding!

I hurried to Cardinal Tien Hospital to see him and while on the way, I paused to buy a box of strawberries. I knew that at about 80 years of age, he now ate less and there were fewer foods that he could chew.

Fr. Albert lay on the bed. His cheeks were quite obviously thinner but he was still in high spirits. “Alas!” I thought. He had aged so much and yet did know seem to know how to take care of himself! As with many people, there are in fact, many who do not know how to take good care of their health no matter their age! When he saw me, he opened his arms wide in greeting. This was the second time I had seen him in the hospital. The first time was in 2002 when we went to America for a conference. He was admitted to a hospital because of heart stroke. He almost failed to return to Taiwan.
Fr. Albert was born in France in 1927. In 1959 he came to Taiwan. It is almost 50 years since he began to serve in Taiwan. He said with loud laughter, that he had lived in Taiwan longer than I did. I jokingly answered: “You are a Taiwanese with French blood circulating in your body!” He served at the Tien Education Center at that time. Fr. Albert is famous, not as a Father of The Holy Roman Catholic Church, but for his contribution to “Religious Dialogue and Cooperation”. Many people, (including me), and many groups were able to open up the door to “Religious Dialogue” because of Fr. Albert!

I still remember well the first time I saw Fr. Albert on the train bound for Fu Long in the fall of 1979. On that particular day, Fr. Albert and I received and then led a group of Austrian Roman Catholics to visit the Buddhist site at Ling Jiou Mountain Buddhist Society. Fr. Albert was responsible for the arrangement of their itinerary. I joined them because I served at the “The Museum of World Religions” under the direction of the Ling Jiou Mountain Buddhist Society. I always regard myself as a Buddhist. Some Buddhists may have different opinions of me but I one hundred percent believe myself to be a devout follower of Buddhism, (after all, am I not the only person who can clearly understand whether I am a true Buddhist believer or not?). Once, a friend who had the power of channeling said that I am predestined for both Buddhism and Roman Catholicism but I must make a
good choice. My soul must have something to depend on so that I can avoid floating in the sea or in the sky.

I have selected Buddhism. Strictly speaking, it is Buddhism that came into my soul at the right time. I have read most of the Buddhist Scriptures that can be found in the bookstores or in public places. I have also become acquainted with some Buddhist masters. I have learned to sit in meditation. I have often attended Buddhist Ceremonies to listen to lectures about the Buddhist Scriptures. However, my knowledge about Buddhism remains only superficial.

At that time, I had a beautiful dream and I sincerely hoped that someday I could set up a “Museum of Buddha”. When I heard there was a Buddhist organization hoping to set up a museum for all religions, (so that all religions would have a channel for equal dialogue), I felt ecstasy! How open-minded the master was! I admired the master! His wish was much greater that mine! Later on, I learned that he was Master Xin Dao, the founder of the Buddhist Group of Ling Jiou Mountain Buddhist Society.

When, because of my work with the Museum of World Religions, we were first introduced, Fr. Albert was an advisor to the museum in the field of religious dialogue and he was the main channel of communication between Buddhists and Roman Catholic Church. He was a good friend to many leaders of other religions. No one other than Fr. Albert was more trustworthy to handle the important
job of religious cooperation and interaction. In 1994, Fr. Albert united with Tian Di Jiao, Buddhism, Christianity and Roman Catholic Church to found the “Taiwan Conference of Religions and Peace” (TCRP). From then until now, TCRP remains the highest profile inter-religious organization. Almost all important religious groups have representatives in the TCRP. Fr. Albert was the first and second President. The voices of religious groups in Taiwan are heard internationally under his leadership and it is said that he worked for sixteen hours per day. He was impatient and was eager to have things done well, but he was very strict with himself!

I assumed that he was a serious old man and it might be no fun to work together with him! I only hoped that he would not preach to me the moment we met; lest we have a hard time along the way!

On that great day, I excitedly showed up earlier than the set time and waited for him in front of the ticket office of the Taipei Railway Station. Fr. Albert showed up right on time, neatly dressed in a dark western jacket with necktie. He also had a suitcase in his hand. His bright white hair was neat and clean and he wore a pair of far-sighted glasses. Behind those glasses were two large and curious eyes!

“You are Sense, aren’t you?” He recognized me at the first sight. He heartily shook hands with me in warmly, kindly manner. His palms were as big and powerful as those of a giant. He exhibited a kind
demeanor and was easy to get along with! He spoke Chinese more than just fluently and so, we could communicate with each other with little difficulty. On the train, we talked clearly, freely and happily. He showed his concern about my everyday life while I was curious about his decision to be a Father. It was not long before we came to the main topic-religious dialogue- and religious experiences. I’ve almost forgotten the details but I clearly remember I had a strange feeling! Though he was much older than I and this was our first meeting, I felt no need to hide my true feelings about the fact that we had religious differences. I knew nothing about his viewpoints on values but we kept on talking pleasantly and happily until we arrived at Fu Long Railway Station. That was the first time in my life that I talked so open-mindedly and heartedly about my life with anyone, let alone a foreigner.

At Fu Long Railway Station, we met some Austrian Roman Catholics, boarded a bus and together, traveled up the steep mountain road.

Halfway up, we got off and then climbed upward on foot, along a rough path. On the way, everyone enjoyed the beautiful scenes, but I worried. It rained in the afternoon and I was very afraid that many of the people who were old, might slip. I shared my umbrella with an old sister who did not understand English. We could communicate very little but she had
a wonderfully warm smile which made me smile, too. Smiling is contagious! It is enough to express human kindness!

They toured the temple and then had a small symposium with Master Xin Dao. The allotted time was too short for much talk but the feeling was very good and certainly was a brand-new experience for the foreigners!

On our way back to Taipei, we encountered "Rush hour" and we got delayed by the traffic jam. In the twilight and in the rain, we prayed and thanked God for His beautiful arrangement. We had a wonderful time! We felt embarrassed because the Austrians thanked us profusely for our arrangements and the warm reception. We chanted “Amitabha” in answer. It was fun to hear them say “Amen!” They began to sing hymns which I did not understand but I hummed with their melody. I saw Fr. Albert in the back seat smiling and nodding to me. The old sister beside me held my hand tightly, with tears in her eyes. We were all touched!

“Do you still remember the first time we met?” asked Fr. Albert lying on the bed.

“Of course I do! Amitabha! Amen!” He laughed happily at my answer. Amitabha to Buddhists is just like “Amen” to Christians.

I kept him company while we ate several strawberries. I felt that if he was left alone, he might eat none...
“How long have we been acquainted with each other? Twenty years?” asked Fr. Albert.

“Not as long as twenty years. It has only been eight years.”

“Is that so? I think we have known each other for a long time.”

I encouraged him, “You have to take good care of yourself so that we can be good friends for more than twenty years.” I understood that his physical condition was much worse than it was eight years ago. His speech was illogical and I was concerned that there might be something wrong with his mind. I asked why he did not go to the hospital for emergency treatment, and he answered that he had something to do in the morning. “I was scolded by the doctor!” Fr. Albert admitted as he smiled at his own embarrassment. It seems as if a father should do nothing wrong!

He introduced me to an old woman next to his bed by saying that I was his savior. The woman did not know the whole story, but strangely enough she did not look confused! She said to me with a smile: “Many thanks, young man! The Fathers came all the way to Taiwan to help us, and we have to take good care of them!” I nodded to show my agreement but I remained doubtful as to how much I could do.

I asked Fr. Albert how he felt. He said he felt aches in every inch of his body. He could not fall asleep at night!
“Perhaps it is time to leave the world!” Fr. Albert said seriously.

“It is not your time yet, nor is it your turn! You can rest assured! If you are destined to be gone, God will tell me in my dreams. God knows that as a Buddhist I often have dreams.

“Are God and you on such good terms with each other?” he smiled heartily.
Chapter 3

Which Door?
I respected Fr. Albert very much, and we got along together quite well. Our relationship was honest and open as we tried to be our true selves in each other’s presence. To tell the truth, it seemed to please him to indulge me too much! We had a number of meetings and after the 921 Earthquake when he asked me to edit the monthly magazine ‘Company---the Concern of All Religions about the renovation of 921 Earthquake’, we began to get in even closer communication. I had to meet Fr. Albert every week on so, and I received telephone calls from him every couple of days. My wife, Heaven, laughed at me, saying: “Are you going to be a Buddhist Monk or a Catholic?”

After the initial issue of the monthly magazine ‘Company’ Fr. Albert called on me one night and said that everybody was ecstatic! Someone jokingly said that if we could change the editor-in-chief, it would be better! I said: “No Problem”. Fr. Albert broke into loud laughter at the joke!

It was fun to know such a mischievous Father! The first time I received his fax, he called me “Respectable Sense”, which surprised me! I was flattered! Did he seriously think that I deserved the word “Respectable”? One time, he told me that he felt like taking responsibility for the title because I really did deserve the word “Respectable”. Once when he
introduced me to others, he used other, even more flattering expressions than the word “Respectable” but I just smiled and told them that they should not believe anything he said! However, Fr. Albert then added, “Fathers can never tell a lie!”

He was always serious in life! I felt that I had to do my best to try and be equal to his kind title, “Respectable”. He respected everybody! And he spared no labor to live up to his father’s teachings: “We have to learn from all the others!” I seemed to see Sadāparībhūta Bodhisattva in Lotus Sutra’ in him. The Buddha respects everyone! He believed that everyone has Buddha-nature and that everyone can reach “Buddhahood”!

As editor-in-chief of 'Company’, I had even more opportunities for growth and learning under his leadership. From then on, we became close friends in spite of our great age gap, and we never hid any secrets from each other! Thanks to Fr. Albert's recommendation, I joined TCRP. Perhaps I had too many opinions or perhaps I did well, I don't know but I was selected as one of the directors. Fr. Albert teased me that I was too young to be chosen as the president!

Ha! The old Father was really good at making jokes!

Fr. Albert kept on talking: “The president, he must earn lots of money! Ha!”

I laughed loudly at him: “But, you are so poor! How can you possibly be the first and the second
He replied, “I do not know either.” We laughed loudly face to face!

In October, 2002, the Goldin Institute in Chicago, America, invited TCRP to attend an International Peace Conference. According to precedent, Fr. Albert was to lead the team abroad and attend the international religious interactions. For over ten years, as the one who had been chosen by the Roman Catholic Church for this task, he acted as the director of Religious Dialogue in the Asian District. Almost all of the important religious leaders of other countries knew the French Father who represented Taiwan. In those years, because he was aged and partly because he was in poor health, he no longer went abroad. And so, the Asian District committee decided to entrust two directors with the hard job of attending.

About this same time, I left my job with the Museum of World Religions in order to work in a publication company, helping with the compilation of Taiwan History. One day, I received a telephone call from Fr. Albert. He asked me whether I felt that I could communicate comfortably with others in English. I replied: “Yes!” and he went on: “Can you go abroad to America, to represent TCRP? Both of the selected directors could not go because they had other business!”

Though I had confidence in myself, I had no
experience with international conferences. Yet, I would have to act as the representative of Taiwan's religious groups at an international conference. I was not sure of myself. However, I said: “Of course, but are there no other proper candidates?” Fr. Albert said: “Everybody says you are equal to the job!” I asked: “Do I go alone?” He said: “That's right! OK?” I said it was an honor!

Two days later, Fr. Albert called at my home saying he was much better and that he would like to go with me. I knew he was worrying about me, if he was willing to keep company with me at the risk of his life. My wife, Heaven, and I were both very much touched! His noble thoughts and feelings diluted our sorrow at the thought of being separated. Heaven determinedly instructed me to return Fr. Albert to Taiwan alive, at any cost.

And thus, the two of us, one old and one young, one Chinese and one French, one Buddhist and one Catholic Father, acted as the representatives of TCRP to the international conference. Though it was the first time for me to go overseas, I did not feel nervous! Any fears that I had were overshadowed by worries about Fr. Albert's health! My concerns seemed well-founded, as the moment we arrived at Detroit Airport, he fell ill because of a heart attack. An ambulance took him to the nearest hospital for emergency! I tried my best to get in touch with the Society of Jesus in America. When I was finally able to make contact, I asked them
to provide him with proper, useful and timely help! Fr. Albert was a member of the Society of Jesus and he had often said that all of the members are “Brothers!” Wherever you are, if you need help, the Society of Jesus anywhere in the world is willing give you a hand!

Fr. Albert, dressed in his hospital gown, lay on the bed looking nervous and weak. He was waiting for further examinations, but he was very worried about the next step in our itinerary. I wanted him to feel at ease, so I said that what might really help, would be for him to keep praying!

He heard what I said and he closed his eyes, praying while I read ‘Great Compassion Mantra Buddhistic mantra’ in silence! I prayed to Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara to protect him! Because I have experienced spiritual cures, I immediately tried my best to help Fr. Albert. I held a fingertip and read the Mantra as I traced magic arts on his forehead! As a Buddhist, I tried to do this for a Catholic Father in the manner of folk religion! It might sound ridiculous but I could do nothing else, in this foreign land! My faith was my strongest power!

After a little while, Fr. Albert opened his eyes, looking at me, puzzled.

Fr. Albert asked: “What are you doing?”
I said: “I’m praying for you!”
He smiled and received my blessing peacefully.
Not long after, he said again: “I feel that Americans are strange. Christmas comes so soon!” This sentence sounded senseless. I did not respond but instead, went on with my magic arts. Fr. Albert kept his eyes wide open, with his hands pointing to the bulletin board in front of the bed and said: “The bulletin board is full of “MERRY CHRISTMAS”! I looked in the direction in which Fr. Albert pointed. However, there was nothing there, except several notices printed on A4 paper.

“I see nothing at all!”

“There they are in big, colored letters!” said Fr. Albert, quite seriously.

I went closer to the bulletin board but still saw nothing. Fr. Albert was confused! He asked again: “Didn’t you see it?” I answered: “I really did not see anything. Perhaps, I am not destined to see it unless God wants me to!” Fr. Albert did not know how to answer and sat there, laughing.

Three hours later, a foreign Father came all the way from town to show his concern. He was very kind, even though that was the first time we had met. The fact that he was willing to travel such a long way to the hospital must be because he and Fr. Albert were both members of the Society of Jesus. I was very touched and I thanked him!

He said politely and generously, “It is because we are brothers!”

Excellent! If people all over the world treated one another like brothers and sisters, how nice it would be!”
The doctors ordered Fr. Albert to stay in the hospital for further observation and examination and so he told me to go to Detroit by myself! I did as he asked, and everyone in the conference inquired after him! They all looked worried and prayed for him! I could see that Fr. Albert was very popular!

Three days later, Fr. Albert also showed up in the conference in Detroit. He was unstable, but I supported him! He was in high spirits and as he heartily greeted all of his friends from other countries, it was obvious that all of the representatives liked him, no matter which religion they practiced!

Back in Taiwan, I had heard some complaints against Fr. Albert. Some said that he had changed and that he had done too much for Buddhist Groups. He was no longer concerned enough about Catholics!

Although I am not in a position to justify his
actions, I believe that time will prove that he did the right things!

I wanted the host organization to make arrangements for us to stay in the same room so that I could take care of Fr. Albert, and I wanted him to get some rest. I knew I would not be able to prepare for the next day’s report while trying to keep an eye on him. To tell the truth, the old man was very interesting! Even though he was ill, his luggage was neat and orderly. Funny to say, even when he was lying on the bed, his body was perfectly aligned and straight! He gave me the impression that he was still a boy who was afraid of doing something wrong.

I asked whether or not he had ever taken drugs. He said that he had taken sleeping pills for scores of years!

Fr. Albert said that if he had a stroke, he would stop taking sleeping pills!

“And so, you didn’t sleep for several days?” “That’s right!” he responded.

If an old man did not sleep for several consecutive days, how could he be healthy? I was very much worried and I turned to look at him, to tell him that I wanted him to try to sleep. At that moment, I observed him without his glasses. Who was this man? He looked surprisingly old without the glasses or the false teeth that he wore daily. He looked very thin without his false teeth in. I felt sad. I thought of Heaven’s words:
“Remember to return Fr. Albert back to Taiwan, ALIVE!”

“Will you attend Mass tomorrow?” I asked. We were staying at a Catholic church. Every morning they have Mass.

“Sure!” said Fr. Albert. Mass was very important and meaningful to him.

The next morning when the alarm clock sounded, he was already dressed and sitting on the bed. Then, we went to the sacred hall together. Morning had not yet broken but in the dark yellow lights, I could see that there were already several people in the sacred hall. I did not know some of the Philippines representatives until the conference began. We nodded to one another in greeting. I supported Fr. Albert as he took a seat. I did not know the process of a Mass so I just followed the Father who hosted the Mass. We said prayers and sang hymns. I admit that I was not totally attentive to the ceremony! I focused on Fr. Albert who stood and sat by turn. I was afraid he might fall down!

The magnificent Communion ceremony was about to begin. The officiating father held up what looked like cookies to pray to God devoutly. The piece of cookie, called a wafer, symbolizes Jesus’ body that atones for people’s sins. The father had a bite. The officiating father held up a cup of wine to pray. The cup of wine symbolizes Jesus’ blood.
The father had a drink. All through the ceremony and consecration, and by way of the symbolism of blood and flesh, we could be unified with Jesus! We did these things to commemorate what Jesus had done and to help us live a new life.

At that time I did not know that a non-Catholic was not supposed to partake of the sacred meal, but the moment I received the sacred bread and took a sip of the wine, I felt that my soul was full, and tears fell down my cheeks. I felt so very thankful for all this. The journey enabled me to get acquainted with many people who practiced moral teachings. We tried to cooperate and promote world welfare. I was thankful to Fr. Albert for his sickness, because it gave me the chance to make more friends. However, I truly hoped that I could bring him back peacefully and for this, I prayed sincerely to God.

At the Mass, the officiating father invited us to come to the altar and pray together. Fr. Albert stayed in his seat, but I did as the officiating father did. He prayed in silence, and I did the same. He opened both of his hands, and I did as he did. At this particular moment, I saw a strange smile on his face!

At the beginning of the conference, Fr. Albert accompanied me while I briefed them on the experiences of religious cooperation in Taiwan. We shared our experiences of cooperation based on the “Company” communication net after 921 Earthquake. In addition, we offered our experiences with
sponsoring a “Religious and Peaceful Life Camp” for youngsters. The close and friendly cooperation of all the different religions in Taiwan on a large scale meant a lot to some participants from tense countries.

At night, Fr. Albert broke down again because he was too tired! He was hospitalized to have more examinations and remained hospitalized for several days until the conference came to an end. It came time for us to go back to Taiwan but in the week he was in the hospital, he did not sleep for a whole week and he ate little. He was told that he had an irregular heartbeat. He was advised to stay in the hospital for further observation but the doctors did not provide any additional treatment. All his acquaintances and friends tried to persuade him to stay in America for better care until he got over the problem or at least got better. The more-than-ten-hour flight could easily become too much for him, and any problem while over the ocean could be fatal! He was not sure of his health condition and thought better of getting on a plane. This time, it became the turn of the fathers in the Society of Jesus in Detroit to take care of him.

He was discharged from the hospital and moved to the Detroit branch of the Society of Jesus for rest. His physical condition would decide whether Fr. Albert would return with us.

We went back to our assembly hall to pack our luggage. Fr. Albert said he would go out for a while. I wanted to keep him company but he rejected that and
Went ahead, alone! I was worried and followed him. Oh, the sacred hall was his destination! At that time there was nobody in the church. The light was weak and glowing! I stood outside, looking at him from a distance. He knelt down with difficulty, and I knew that he was praying! I thought, "He wants to go back to Taiwan."

The next morning, one of the Detroit Fathers drove us to the airport, but as soon as he unloaded our luggage, he left. I inquired of Fr. Albert as to whether or not he thought that he could stand the long journey. Fr. Albert looked upbeat.

I bought something for breakfast and insisted we should both eat to keep ourselves in high spirits. He was obedient, and we enjoyed our breakfast in the waiting room. He jokingly said he would try his best to stay alive in case he might be troublesome for me and the other passengers.

On the plane, we were not able to sit side by side. Fr. Albert sat behind with an aisle between us. I asked the woman beside him whether Fr. Albert could change seats with her. If he sat by the aisle, then I could take his seat and I could take care of him more easily.

The woman near the aisle could speak fluent Chinese. She kindly told me that she was exhausted, really needed her sleep and by remaining in her present seat, she could stretch out her legs on the long flight. Obviously, she had no intention of changing
seats! I knew that I had better keep my mouth shut. After all, it was us who were troubling others. So, all I could do was to remind Fr. Albert to call me any time he needed help!

On the way I kept praying, asking Buddha to bless us! From time to time, I turned to see if he was all right! If he saw me, he would just smile in reassurance. He indicated that he was OK by his eye expressions. Sometimes, he seemed to whistle on purpose as he tried to mask his tenseness! Whenever he closed his eyes, I would watch him for a few seconds more! I was very much afraid that he might lose his breath, never to wake up.

I remember well while we were in the airport in Detroit, Fr. Albert said that he heard some people singing hymns. The hymns meant something like: “If only people follow God, they will have confidence” but I heard nothing at all. However, he again heard the same hymn on the plane connection in Osaka, Japan. This time, even louder. He asked whether Southwest Air Line had anything to do with the Roman Catholic Church because otherwise, why would the same hymn be played over and again? I was now very concerned because I still heard nothing!

We were coming near to Taiwan and I went closer to see how he was. He looked fine and we gossiped. The woman next to him was busy filling in the immigration application form. I was kind enough to remind her that a Taiwanese native did not need to do so. She said
she had a green card! She was not a Taiwanese! She looked so proud!

Perhaps because I said nothing, the atmosphere was somewhat embarrassing! She actively asked why this foreigner could speak Chinese so well. I said Mr. Albert was a Frenchman and he had lived in Taiwan for more than forty years!

Then she asked again: “If he is a foreigner, why doesn’t he need to fill in the application for immigration?”

Fr. Albert took out his wallet and showed his permanent resident card. He said happily: “I am a Taiwanese!” She said nothing further.

After more than ten hours of flying, the plane finally reached Taiwan! We felt happy and warm to see the bright and sparkling hometown lights of Taipei. The return trip to our home took such a long time that it was almost beyond imagination. The mission of more than ten days away combined with the tiring flights had really almost been a matter of life or death to Fr. Albert!

I had mixed feelings and practically shouted with joy, “Fr. Albert, here we are in Taiwan!” He nodded and he looked relieved, too!

The moment we got out of the “Customs”, I sighed with relief. Fr. Albert was as happy as a child. He said: “Do you hear? It is the same hymn as we heard on the plane and it even sounds louder.” I shook my
head. I heard nothing. Fr. Albert asked: “Do you still hear nothing?” I answered: “God must be playing that hymn only to you!”

Two Society of Jesus “Brothers” of Fr. Albert came from the Tien Education Center, to meet us at the airport. The driver was a lay Brother in his sixties. The other was a Spanish Father in his eighties, named Father Lai. He was a doctor and he immediately started checking the physical condition of his old friend who was in his seventies. I was in the front seat and understood none of their conversation because they conversed in their mother tongue. Father Lai said that when they were told Fr. Albert had fallen ill, they were quite worried. Fr. Albert vigorously detailed the misfortunes he had encountered while in America. He described the happenings freely and lightly but in fact when he was in the hospital, with many tubes stuck all over his body nobody knew what would happen next. Whenever Father Lai heard the moment of crises, he would say: “God bless you!” The driver followed with, “God bless you!” This went on, all the way homeward, “God bless you!” came into my ears again and again! I thought, "Yes, thank God that we are home!"

Fr. Albert paid me a compliment which deeply touched me and warmed my heart. He showed his deep, warm and sincere thanks by saying that I was full of confidence and composure and that this had allowed him to feel at ease and to be peaceful. Fr. Albert said: “In Chicago, Sense acted as if he was a
Father. During the Mass, he opened his hands as if to ask for blessings on me!” Oh, that strange smile on his face had to do with that incident at Mass and I was embarrassed when I understood his meaning! Father Lai had smiled warmly and said to me, “Thank you. You are the guardian angel sent by God to take care of Fr. Albert!”

The car in which we were traveling on the freeway roared through the night with the lamps on both sides spread far into the distance. The square Chinese characters on the posters meant we were back in Taiwan. Fr. Albert said happily: “It is wonderful to be home!” It was indeed good!

I couldn’t agree more. Before going abroad, I had told my wife, Heaven, that I would not call on her during the ten days while I was in America. There is a 12 hours “time difference” between Taiwan and America so it was very hard to get in touch with each other. We would just each do our jobs peacefully, rather than worry about our communication. In case of emergency, it was no use worrying. We would be informed! If everything went well, we would meet ten days later.

In those days, Americans were still living under the atmosphere of the 911 terrorist attacks so on the night before my departure, I wrote Heaven a letter (Appendix 1) that was something like a “will”. Heaven cried while she was reading my letter. She saw it as a “forever departure”! It was the longest time for us to
be apart from each other since we had been married. She knew that I had to do what I needed to do, so she obediently focused on doing what she should do, too. During that period, she completely lost herself in her work. This is from our experience of practicing moral teachings. We also encouraged each other to demonstrate our appreciation from experience. When I got home, she was surprised! We both felt that “Time really did fly!” She showed me her “Life Message” (Appendix 2). As I read it, I was touched. I felt happy to have such a good soul partner in life! We lit incense and thanked Buddha for His blessing and protection. Then, we prayed for His blessings for Fr. Albert!
Appendix 1: A Letter to Heaven!

Dear Heaven! It’s me! I am still alive! I am still in Taiwan! Because of the absence of this seventy-kilogram body, you can’t call me “Fatty!”

I know that it is a lot to ask, but if I should "pass" from this life, I can only hope that you do not cry! It is normal to feel reluctant to let a loved one go, so cry if you must, but remember to keep yourself elegant as usual. You have to remember to wear a charming smile on your face because we know that for us, death is a blessing.

I thought you were right when we discussed which of us might leave the world first, it was sort of decided that perhaps I might bear this sort of suffering better than you. I was unwilling to be sad, even when you said to me: “Sense! We must devoutly follow the moral teachings so that maybe, we will pass away together!” But predestination is impossible to predict, so we made a promise that “If one of us passes away, the other has to keep on living happily and to live out the meaning of two persons!” And so my Dear, don’t forget our promise!

At the age of 29, you said you were anxious
because you did not know how to face the age of 30. You had never thought of the age of 30. Later on, you felt light! You found that I was OK with the thought of living beyond that. You said that if I was walking in the lead though, you could rest assured. Therefore, my dear, I hope that I do indeed "go" first so that I can pave a smooth way and prepare a house with a beautiful garden!

My dear, My happiest decision in life has been to make you my wife! Thanks to Heaven, just remember, our love will never stop, even if it seems invisible. Anytime you just think of me, I am there with you! You can see me in every drop on the petal and in the sunrise and at sunset. You can see me in everybody’s smile. I will speak to you every second you breathe, even though I am too shy to say aloud in your presence: “I love you Dear Heaven! Thank you so much! If I have "passed" and you are still on this earth, please go embrace my father and my mother for me, as we need to thank them. Tell them that I am getting along very well and do not want them to worry about me! Instead, they should take just good care of themselves! I wish that Buddha may bless them!”
Appendix 2: Lovers Will Meet Again at Last!

Dear Sense, The key to the riddle is made known. It is me that will go first! When we come to the critical moment, I am very much moved. Whatever it will be, I am finished!

I am reluctant to let you go. I am reluctant to leave our sweet family. And I am reluctant to leave the beautiful world and human kindness. Because I am reluctant, I put all the “reluctances” deep in my mind. And I fill them to the full. Dear Sense, How happy I am in this life to have you as my life partner! Because of you, my life has become richer and fuller.

You are a happy person! Our life is full of happiness and laughter when we get together. Though there are only two of us and we have no children, I never feel lonely. You often laugh at me, saying I am silly. You always say you treat me so heartily and I do not know. How come I don’t know? While waking, eating or sitting absent-mindedly, I smile sweetly whenever I think of you! I even smile in my dreams! Dear Sense, Many thanks! Thank you for you sincere concern and true love! I heartily hope I can accompany you to the end
of life! If we cannot leave the world together to another world, it means we still have left much undone! These unfinished things are waiting for you. I know you can take good care of yourself. You have so many good friends, but without my reminding, you might eat too much and become a “Fatty” and when we meet in the Heaven, I may be unable to recognize you!

Please take good care of Mother and younger brother as you did when I am alive! People say lovers will meet again at last!

(The above two articles are selected as the prize winners in the contest of “Life Message” sponsored by Bureau of Health Promotion.)
Appendix 3: Two of Fr. Albert’s and My Letters!

In the past ten years, Fr. Albert and I communicated with each other in this way while he was alive. I wrote in Chinese. He wrote in English.

Dear Fr. Albert:

I wish you a peaceful Life!

Please do not worry about my life! I never said there is any need to worry about me. It is really so! We have been acquainted with each other long enough. Am I worrying? I don’t think so. I am blissful because I have God, Buddha, many masters, and many fathers to bless and be concerned about me. I have nothing to worry about. So Fr. Albert, please rest assured!

I hope that you live to see the book that I want to dedicate to you. I hope to detail your irreplaceable experiences with religious dialogue for scores of years. I expect that the book can offer another way of thinking to mankind! There are many people who are keenly aware of the unspeakable shared
feelings that come through religious dialogue, and if we expect to have peace in the 21st century or in the far future, religious peace is necessary and indispensable, not only in Taiwan and Mainland China but also in the whole world! World peace is everybody’s business!

I hope I can finish writing the book as soon as possible. In the course of conception and writing, I feel extreme happiness so do not worry about me!

If I am the ark sailing in the ocean, you are my rudder. Your stability and experience help stabilize my impatient mind. At first, my parents always worried about my heart of renunciation. I tried to assure them that they could be proud of me. After so many years, I think they could roughly read my inner mind. To tell the truth, I have found all these to my favor! I enjoy my life!

Sense
Very Dear Sense:
Thank you for your message of yesterday.
It’s good to know that you will be back home this evening!
As the time of the end of your work on your manuscript is getting close, I feel an urge to share concerns on the content of the book.
As it’s a long time since we began to know each other, to learn from each another, and to enter into a deep mutual friendship, I feel confident that you already know what can be written and what should not be written to produce an attractive and helpful book on the call for inter-religious dialogue not only in your life and in my life, but in the life of each one of us, people of all faiths, and people of good will, living and working in Taiwan today.
You know what should be done to make your readers spiritually moved.
You know what can be written and what should be not written to help the readers of the book discover or re-discover the importance and urgency of new initiatives and creative initiatives in the field of inter-religious dialogue and cooperation among people of all faiths and of good will. This of course is not only for Taiwan but also for parts of the world where possible translations of the book could
some day become available.

You and I, together with Fr. Paul, should perhaps find a way to meet again one afternoon in a peaceful place, to share our ideas, our hopes and also our dreams.

Let us keep in touch with one another.

To reflect together,
And let us keep praying for one another, keep praying together!

Fraternally yours,
Fr. Albert
Chapter 4

Only For You
Thanks to our mission to Detroit, I came to a better understanding of “marriage” and “belief”. Marriage is the outcome of a period of getting along so well with another person of different gender or background, that the two join legally as one under God’s moral law, to create a new entity, a family. “Belief” is the result of experiencing some period (long or short), whereby one gains an understanding of God or Buddha and is willing to follow proscribed religious doctrines and so, becomes a “Follower”. “Religious Dialogue” between different religions can begin by using the same principles as a “marriage relationship”. Even if one is not able to understand another’s religious doctrines, observing and even taking part in another’s religious ceremonies is important in order to become familiar with and to experience, the “mysteries” of religions. These don’t necessarily need to influence one’s own beliefs but they do serve to demonstrate that the more they are different, the more they are similar. We are one family!

As soon as Fr. Albert returned to Taiwan, he was admitted to the hospital for medical treatment. He was barely able to keep body and soul together and was obviously looking much older while showing increasing signs of weakness. His bodily functions had degenerated. Two sections of his spine were pressing on nerves and his body aches were beyond even his toleration limits and so
he had to have an operation. While seemingly successful, it had little effect and later on he felt too much pain to walk. He could move about only with the help of a cane or walking stick which he adamantly resisted, calling it a “third leg”. He ignored his “stick”, and several times during an adventure to the MRT Station, fell harshly. Some kind-hearted soul finally escorted him back to the Tien Education Center. Alas, previously he had been able to venture out at will but now he lost that freedom and it seemed to devastate him, as it often does those who lose their mobility.

The night he fell, he lost almost all of his walking ability. The doctor said that another operation was really called for but Fr. Albert was just too old. There were many risks and the effects could be really bad, so the doctor said that he would not suggest any more operations! He just prescribed pain-killers and asked Fr. Albert to be patient and rest while his body tried to heal.

Fr. Albert tolerated his pain and went on with his work. However in his poor physical condition, he was no longer very efficient. He had to lie down and rest for longer and longer periods of time. We were all aware that he might pass away any time so each of us tried to mentally “steel” ourselves for what was going to be a sad eventuality. Priests themselves, never cry, even at the funerals even of loved ones because they know that death for a good person is just another step through Jesus’s promise of eternal life to those believe and follow. It was still sad though. The Society of Jesus got ready to assign another
father to take over Fr. Albert’s duties. His secretary, Li-Ting, told me that every time Fr. Albert saw me, it raised his spirits so much that she hoped that I would often visit him!

I have never been afraid of death! If Fr. Albert passed away, I would just accept God’s doctrine. We had already made each other a promise to read together in the library in Heaven but it pained me to see him worried about not being able to finish his work. It was hard to convince him to put down his work and rest for health’s sake. Whenever I had any free time, I would rush to see him. He always seemed to be elated at my arriving! He said he hoped that he could live on until his successor came, because only then could he rest in peace and be ready to leave the world!

His office was the most distinguished and impressive in the Tien Education Center. There were symbols and publications of many different religions, and there was a big map of the 921 Disaster Area. There were several red marks on the map. There was a special space behind his table---his “Buddha Table”. There were Buddha Portraits, several photos of monks, including Master Chan Yun, Master Yi Shun, Master Zun Yian, Master Sheng and the like. On the wall, there was a picture given him by Master Xiao Yuen. On the right wall, there was an antithetical couplet. “I spend all my life learning limitless Dao and enjoy life in poverty: Everything is gone with the wind and wind is there, but I ask for nothing!” This had been presented by a friend who believed in Daoism. Under the
antithetical couplet there was a ‘Cochin Burning Horse’. That horse and another were looking at each other across a narrow space.

It seemed that everybody liked to present Fr. Albert with horses. His Chinese Zodiac sign was the “Horse”, according to the Chinese lunar calendar. Li-Tieng said: “I once cleaned the table and when I carelessly turned the direction of the horse. Fr. Albert immediately turned the horse in the right direction! He said that he did this to let the horses look at each other face-to-face so that perhaps after the door was closed, the two horses would begin a conversation! He was sometimes as innocent and as cute as a little boy!

We often had pleasant talks, but after about ten minutes, Fr. Albert would always have to stand up and do some exercises. His waist ached if he sat too long but when he stood, he was not very stable. I guess that I felt a little pride whenever he mentioned the trip to Detroit because he always stressed that it was I who had brought him back to Taiwan safe and sound, in spite of his infirmities!

I always thought that there must be a hymn that God played only to him. I really hoped that someday, I too could hear it. I said: “Father! You should pray that you might have less pain”. Fr. Albert said: “Why would I do? In fact, I prayed to God for this pain”. I was surprised and said, “Why would you do such a thing?” He just laughed and replied, “Well you see, near the end of last year, when I went for a “Retreat,” I prayed to God to allow me to feel the pain that Jesus had when he was nailed on the Cross.
I also prayed to God to let me experience pain that would remind me of the pain that human beings experience. Lo and behold, about a week later, God answered my prayer”! “Ha” said he with a twinkle in his eye, “I just did not expect the answer to come so soon”! He was willing to suffer for mankind. Isn’t this “Buddhist Mercy,” too?

I said: “When you go for a Retreat this year, please pray to God to let you feel the pain of human beings only mentally. You have too much left undone! He laughed and looked a little strangely at me so that I did not know if he understood what I had meant.

At dinner time, we ate with the Fathers of the Tien Education Center. I told Superintendent Wang (Rrv. Gino Picca), the story of Fr. Albert’s “asking for trouble”. He laughed and said to Fr. Albert: “It would be my prayer that you might pray to God to feel only the pain that you are responsible for!”

In past years, Fr. Albert had acted as the Director of the “Committee on Religious Dialogue and Cooperation of the Roman Catholic Church”. He hoped to pass the work over to the young fathers but certain religious leaders thought Fr. Albert was still up to the task of this important job!

So, the executing the transfer of responsibility was postponed. Unfortunately, his physical condition made it imperative that the Church face the fact that Fr. Albert was just too old and weak to go on alone with the job. However, they were finding it almost impossible to find a talent of sufficient excellent background. After all, he
was a Father from the Society of Jesus, with a proper background and pure thought. Additionally, any Father selected, had to be young and open to studying different religions. What was more important though, was that he be able to represent the Roman Catholic Church and take part in the Religious Dialogue with different religions. Only at the last moment, did they find that most Fathers were really unfamiliar with “Religious Dialogue”. Fr. Albert regarded that with great regret!

Fr. Albert put down the eating utensils and said: “Sense might just be as capable a candidate as anyone. It is a pity that he is not a Catholic!” He eats little and he has been a vegetarian since he touched Buddhism more than thirty years ago.”

Superintendent Wang thought at length and then said: “Why not? Sometimes we are supposed to get out of our comfort Zone with its fixed thoughts. If a Buddhist can lead Catholic groups to carry on a religious dialogue, we are sure to see things in new and perhaps even, unique ways!”

How great that thought was! Such an attitude of open-mindedness and confidence, led us toward long-term thinking! I thought to myself, “If Fr. Albert proposes the suggestion to me, will I accept his kind suggestion? Am I competent for the job? If only a Catholic can take the job, will I change my faith?” Though I am a Buddhist, I have a deep sense of predestination with the Roman Catholic
Church. For several years, I worked as the editor-in-chief Publication Officer of the Catholic Kan Tai Medical & Educational Foundation and had many Catholic friends and acquaintances. So, I might have a better chance than many of getting along with Catholics. Yes, some Buddhist friends voiced concern that someday, I might convert my faith from Buddhism to Roman Catholic. Some Catholic friends also tried to convince me that Fr. Albert was already looking forward to performing a Catholic Baptism Ceremony for me. I did not believe them and I know that this would be the last thing I might do! Because of religious dialogue and because of Fr. Albert, I had learned to understand more, but I know he understood that I cherished my own faith more. I didn’t believe for a minute that Fr. Albert expected me to become a Catholic, so I told him what my friends had said. He replied that he never even thought of such an idea!

He said, “Religious dialogue is carried on not for preaching your own faith but for learning from other religions by way of religious dialogue. Preachers should not preach in this atmosphere, as such thought and action would be completely counter to the conclusions of the 1965 Second Vatican Council. It is true that currently many Catholic Fathers do not accept the fact that there might be different religions and different gods! They could not do this job."

Religious dialogue is not an easy job! Human beings have experienced several centuries of “trial and error”
and have even fought wars over religion. Not until recent years were people willing to step out of their life circle in order to learn from all! They mostly just tried to convert others to their faith. Most people would be unable to deal with experiences that range from talking with those of no religion, all the way through accepting those of different religions with mutual understanding and with have sympathy for the suffering of all, as this involves many different levels of interaction between soul. I always thought that faith opened the door to another world. You, of course, could choose to close the door and just live a peaceful little comfortable life in familiar surroundings. However, you can also opt to open the door and get out of your houses to see the open, spacious world of love created by a loving and almighty God! The key to the door was only found in opening your mind! Otherwise, why did almighty God create so many religions and viewpoints?"

One month later, Father Paul, a black Father from the Congo showed up, right on time. He filled all of the qualifications, and he had an open enough mind to be able to carry on with Inter-religious Dialogue. The only potential problem was that he belonged to a different group of the Roman Catholic Church---“the Society of St. Francis Xavier”.

However, any concerns turned out to be baseless, as he was an open and optimistic person. He was smart and deeply appreciated life. He often wore a bright smile.
His experiences were rather special. His family was apparently well-off in the Congo which happens to be a Catholic country. Since I felt certain that he would have had more and better opportunities for development in the Congo, I could not help but wonder aloud why he had chosen to follow the spirit of St. Francis Xavier and serve in foreign lands. I was secretly worried how he might react if he happened to face any race discrimination in Taiwan. So, I asked him why he chose Taiwan. He just said, "Because I am black, where people were willing to accept and like me, is where I will stay. I like what God likes."

Fr. Albert could now ease his worrying mind. He could pass over to Fr. Paul the contacts and resources of forty years. Soon, Fr. Paul was lost in reading all of the documents of Fr. Albert. Every week, Fr. Albert also took Fr. Paul to pay friendly visits at the sites of different religious groups.

Not long after, an unexpected opportunity came to me. I left Taiwan for India to film a special on Buddha.

In fact, I was informed about this trip a year prior, through my friend Xiao-Huei who had the power of channeling. To my surprise, the prediction came true! It was mysterious! I still remember that the first idea I had when I got the prediction from my friend, was to save a lot of money. Based on my current income, I estimated that I would have had to save money for about three years. But as it turned out, Fou Guang Shan planned to film a
documentary —“A Trip to Buddha Country”. They very much wanted a person who had a Buddhist background, and ample experience in TV programming, and one who could bear all the hardships. I met their requirements and joined them. To my delight, my dream came true. I did not need to be responsible for the high expenses because I was a member of the team!

Those were beautiful days! Before departing, I needed to more deeply understand the story of Buddha and Indian culture and customs in order to write a proper manuscript. Upon arriving in India, we set out to document the purity of Buddha’s heart and mercy, wherever he went. When we returned to Taiwan, I had to write down what I felt and what I learned in order to help with the production of the film. On the journey, my emotions rose and fell due to different places, things, and people. Face-to-face with Buddha, I reflected on the meaning of the trip again. Thanks to Buddha, I regained my confidence, and I was full of pleasure and happiness!

As soon as I came back to Taiwan, I went to see Fr. Albert. He looked even older. I was very much worried but I could do nothing! I felt that I was letting him down! Fr. Paul told me, “It is very hard for anyone to take the place of Fr. Albert. Even though I accompanied Fr. Albert to the sites of different religions where we were made welcome, the big doors were, in fact, opened to Fr. Albert only!”

Facing the unpredictable date of his death, my anxiety
was unavoidable. I understood the mental feelings and stress of Fr. Albert. I wrote a letter to him: “Fr. Albert: I wish you peace! As for your soul, God will certainly take care of that! As for your mind, we will pray for you! As for your body, the doctors will treat that! As for work, Fr. Paul and Li-Ting will do it, as best they can! So please, just rest assured for recuperation.”

Fr. Albert told me the letter enabled him to feel lighter as if he didn’t need to worry! He forwarded the letter to many of his friends who were concerned about him. They all said what I said was right! They hoped that Fr. Albert could follow my suggestion!

Several days later, I went to visit him in the Tien Education Center without an advance appointment, as I wanted to make a surprise visit. However, I found Fr. Paul, Superintendent Wang and Li-Ting in front of his office. They were shocked to see me walking toward them. Li Ting said in excitement: “Speak of you and you come! It is God’s arrangement!” They hoped to have the experiences of Fr. Albert's religious dialogues written down! This very important project had been brewing for many years! It was the Archbishop of Asia that first proposed the project but Fr. Albert never began it! He always said this was a hard project! Now it could not be postponed any longer, and they took it for granted that I was the prime candidate to help facilitate its completion! They knew that Fr. Albert had complete confidence in me. They had not yet mentioned the project to Fr. Albert, as they wanted to first see if I would do it!
Of course, I was willing to. Imperceptibly but inexorably, there was a strange feeling of predestination! I had already had a dream about this in 2001! In my dream, I visited a Buddhist site located in the mountain. I walked along the mountain path to the peak. After a sudden turn, I saw a magnificent palace which had a brilliant “spirit column” with a dragon and a phoenix carved on it. I hurried toward it in excitement. A red uniformed lady priest of Lamaism came toward me. I told her what I had seen on the previous night but she did not respond. She showed more interest in a group of foreign tourists who were turning big pray wheels. It was a pity that she could not appreciate my surprise and ecstasy!! There was a big tree on the left side of the palace. I walked along the stone path in back of the palace, and suddenly I saw Fr. Albert. He was reading four books that were a green "flannelet de luxe" edition. Two of them were Buddhism doctrine. One was “Core method”. The fourth was the biography of Fr. Albert in Chinese and in English written by a Buddhist.

Three days later, I showed Fr. Albert my diary of that particular dream. He felt it was mysterious! While he considered it to be a "mission impossible," he still believed I could do it!

Fr. Albert said: “This is your book. Do not mention too much about my business.” Humbleness was always his virtue.

I said: “This is not my book either. It will not be complete without mentioning you! You have the fullest experience conducting of religious dialogue in
Taiwan. We are at the point where we want to share our experiences and interactions with other people. We want to be the witnesses of religious dialogue.”

Fr. Albert nodded to express his agreement.

It was a trio to beget action. Fr. Albert from France in Europe, Fr. Paul from the Congo in Africa and me, from Asian Taiwan. It was comprised of three different cultural backgrounds, three complexions, (white, yellow and black), and three different levels of age, old, middle-aged and young. We met every Wednesday at Fr. Albert’s office and thus a new religious dialogue between Buddhism and The Roman Catholic Church was underway! Amen.
Chapter 5

I Hear and I Believe!
Many “faith” tells miracles. When a person speaks of experiencing a miracle, he or she regards them as incredible though they may sound ridiculous to others! The miracle that led Fr. Albert become a father happened in the late part of his twelfth year during World War II. The German troops had not yet invaded France, and his kid brother was still alive.

Fr. Albert said: “I acted as Altar Boy. Once in Mass, Father stood at the altar, and I sat below. Suddenly I seemed to hear the sound of God inviting me to be a Father. Two days later, I was in the church of “the Society of St. Francis Xavier”. God continued to tell me to preach the Gospels in China and to learn from St. Francis Xavier.

“It is not that you select me but that I select you and assign you to bear fruits and to bear enduring fruits.” (‘Gospel of John’).

Fr. Albert said: “That was the turning point of my life! I clearly understood what I would do in my life thereafter. At that time, I was still a naughty boy. I just stood beside the father as his little assistant. I never imagined that I would be invited to be a Father. I told my dream to the “Father”. And then I wrote a letter
to my parents saying that I would go home. I also mentioned that I had something to tell them.”

“One day before Christmas, I went home by train. The school was within three hours of distance from my home by train. On the train, I felt clearly the sound of God. On arriving at home, my parents were waiting for me. My mother asked whether I fell ill as soon as she opened the door. What happened? Was I discharged? I said I wanted to be a Father and preach in China. My mother was moved and burst out crying. They did expect that the first boy in the family could act as a father. But they did not tell me. My mother asked why I chose China. I said that was God’s decree. I decided my whole life in a short time. I became a Father after my graduation.”

I asked: “Did you never doubt it? Maybe you just experienced an auditory hallucination.”

Fr. Albert said: “I never doubted it at all, it was just as Buddhists hear Buddha’s words.

I hear and I believe! It is so simple! The base of faith is “trust”! But people are not so obedient. People often regard themselves as the masters. They love “doubt” more than they love “God”. I am such a doubtful person, just as they are. More than twenty years of studying the sciences and engineering have trained me to harbor a spirit of doubt. How could I believe the illusory miracle before the practical experiments? I am not so submissive. Not until I was
twenty-nine years old did I for the first time meet the “Holy Mother”---a formless “Buddha” who instructed me to practice moral teachings. The more stories I tell of the Holy Mother, the more they sound like incredible fairy tales. But they really happened to me as the miracles happened to Fr. Albert. These things changed my whole life!

My family has always worshipped King Ming-Shan---a folk Royal Highness. When my father went from his hometown to Kaohsiung to make a living, he accepted the Royal Highness as an object of worship. I have no special affection for the god. I only knew that no matter how busy my father was, he would take time to come home to burn incense to worship the god. Maybe thanks to the god, my father was able to establish himself! All the family members lived in harmony!

In seventies, The “Big Lottery” was popular and worked in coordination with “National Lottery”. People seemed to go crazy, especially when it came time to draw the winning numbers of the lottery. It was another form of gambling. My parents were addicted to The “Big Lottery”. They dreamed of becoming rich overnight. My father always said if he got the grand prize, he could use part of the prize to set up a scholarship in his hometown to help poor children. My father’s great wish was to repay his hometown. But the meaning of his faith underwent a subtle change. Before the time to draw the winning numbers of the lottery, he
I Hear and I Believe!

devoutly and respectfully worshipped Royal Highness, with a wish that God might answer his seemingly impossible beautiful dream. The power of human beings was limited. They turned to gods for help. The idea of receiving “gods’ answer” was popular at this time. There were many such answers described in the newspaper advertisements. But unfortunately, there were many more losers than winners. People who lost their money took their spite out on the gods. Along the rivers, in the bushes, and in piles of trash, etc., many gods who had been thrown away or even beheaded.

At that time, I was busy preparing for the joint entrance examinations. I still remember that the government agencies involved decided to stop The “National Lottery” because the islanders were caught up in gambling. The final lottery caused an even greater sensation! Three days before drawing the winning numbers, my father said the god “Third Prince” in a temple had the lucky numbers. My father wanted to buy the number. But the number was too hot to sell. No group head dared to sell it. My father heard that some unknown person monopolized the number all over Taiwan! Later on, it turned out to be a “god’s number”! Surprising! Something mysterious and explicable existed in the ghosts world. My father sighed that while he did know the lucky number existed, but he was not so fortunate as to get the grand prize. Two years later, my family participated in a very bad “pooled money group”. My parents went bankrupt
and sold our house. From then on, King Ming Shan began to follow our family as we moved around. I began to doubt the spirituality of King Ming Shan. Even though my father was very devoted to Him, The god betrayed us!

I am proud by nature. In my childhood, I enjoyed books and poems. I could talk beautifully. I was selected into the “Gifted Class” as the winner of the mayor’s prize. I went on to attend the best school in southern Taiwan. I acted as the editor-in-chief of the school publication in my sophomore year. I enjoyed special privileges in “legal cutting class”. I was quite full of myself. I arrogantly claimed to play all the games that college students did! And so I rejected studying for the college entrance examinations. I talked beautifully. In fact, I did not work hard. I became flunked and I was a retained student!

Several years later, I re-read my books. I told my family I wanted to take the entrance examinations to college. My parents supported me. But I knew they were still worried! But to their surprise, I was admitted to a national university. One day, I happened to find a red paper in the drawer of the table used for worshipping Buddha. The paper had my name and the date of my birth on it. That was my fleeting time. I realized that my father had prayed to have good luck for me. The red paper had “the question of my luck” on it. The answer was “to no purpose”. I thought nothing of it. I was upset that my parents believed
the cheating tricks of the swindlers. My parents were worried because I had rejected the college entrance examinations. And they could not offer any help. So they turned to fortune-tellers for help. My father evidently knew the meaning of the bad prediction, and he was afraid it might affect my emotions. They kept me in the dark about it. Anyway, they prayed I could go on to the ideal college!

Ignorance! Superstition! In one word, people should not believe anything that science cannot prove. In my pride, I considered Buddha and Jesus were the best commercial spokesmen. They told the biggest lies in the world! And the followers deceived themselves as well as others. But strongly, if people believed the “lies”, they seem to live better lives and feel more at ease and more relieved and more comfortable. I can’t agree more if one says religions are nothing but “placebos of the soul”.
Chapter 6

Transition of Cause and Effect
Time: 1993
Place: from Taipei to Taoyuan

It is very hard to convert those who have no faith into becoming believers or even followers.

At the age of twenty-nine, in spite of the objection of my family and relatives, I left the Science and Engineering fields in which I worked for more than ten years and pursued my dream of working in the film industry. I worked for internationally world-famous director Edward Yang (one of the leading filmmakers of the Taiwan New Wave and Taiwan Cinema. He won the Best Director Award at Cannes for his 2000 film Yi Yi ). I had a hot temper and was convinced that I could make my own way in this world. I did not want to be a burden to my family or to become the laughing stock of others. I told myself “The key to success is tolerance”. I was living in a small room at the top of my friend’s home. The conditions were poor and I was often unable to even pay for three meals a day. My life was rather unstable and my girlfriend, Heaven, and I, maintained a lukewarm relationship. I did not want to settle down or to be bound. My attitude toward love was free and easy. I did not believe that a couple could live to a ripe old age in conjugal bliss. Reluctance was not necessary! If a couple could get along well or were matched well, they could live together as long as they liked without such formal bonds. Otherwise, it would
be better to part as early as possible!

Such a man as I was would surely have problems if he met a girl who believed in true love. Heaven suffered from true love and was getting thinner. She looked like she had an illness. However, the hospital could not detect any reason at all. A friend of hers introduced her to Aunt Wu who had the “power of “Channeling”. Heaven began to follow Aunt Wu and worship gods here and there. They called the activities “Mountain traveling” with the objective of “allowing spirits touch their souls”. “Receiving decrees” meant “receiving messages from God”. After receiving “spirituality”, her body would move with “spiritual motion”. In those days, she often talked about “faith” with me. She wanted me to come to know “Buddha”. but I was not interested. After all, where could we find a Buddha in the flesh? Although I rejected her suggestion, I did not object to her faith under the condition that she would not try to make me follow her.

Until Buddha spoke to me directly through her body, I thought this spirituality was largely superstitious.

One night, we argued by telephone about the question of whether or not we should go on with our love. Sometimes she cried and sometimes she was as cold as ice. I felt strange and worried. I said I would come over to see her. I went to her dormitory by motorcycle. I rang the door bell and her roommate very tensely opened the door. She asked what was
wrong with us, as Heaven had said that she did not want to see me. I went into the room and found Heaven hiding herself under a cotton quilt. Like a frightened girl, she would not look at me. The more I pulled at the cotton quilt, the more tightly she pulled it back. Her roommate was too scared to know what to do. Suddenly her roommate asked whether she wanted to have a cup of water. She answered “Yes, please”. After drinking the cup of water, she looked calm. She then sat face to face with me, with her legs crossed and had an inviolably magnificent look on her face.

I became angry and shouted, "I want my Heaven back. Beat it!” I tried to wake her up by shaking her shoulder but she just kept smiling. She looked as if she thought that I was being mischievous. She used her hand to gently but firmly push my hand away. Then in a completely different tone of voice, she proceeded to recite many Morals to me. Using Taiwanese, she spoke about my background, slowly but logically. I asked and she answered. We had different viewpoints. And it seemed to be a conversation between Heaven’s Buddha and I. I was convinced that it was not my Heaven speaking. Suddenly she looked cold and spoke in angry words that sounded like many voices. All the while, she was shaking all over. Her voice sounded as if it was coming from an ice cellar. I recognized the voices as being those of my late relatives. They were expressing their concern about my chaotic life but the words were coming through Heaven’s body. At first,
I felt doubtful and couldn’t help thinking that this was just Heaven trying to convert my faith by "play-acting". However, her affection was so pure that it made me doubt my “doubt”.

Before Moon Festival, I went to the company for a meeting at 9:00. We were assigned to deliver gifts to addresses in different areas. My colleague Ping and I were in the same group. Just as we were ready to set off, Heaven called me.

She said: “Are you going out to the intersection of Dun Hua S. Rd. and Xing Yi Rd. with Ping?” Her voice showed her tenseness.

“That’s right!” I said. I was a little angry. I was busy.

Heaven said: “Don’t go. You are in danger!”

How could I refuse to go? It was my duty and responsibility. But I wondered how she could know my itinerary. I had just finished my meeting. And she even knew my companion and my destination. I asked her the reason. Heaven said: “Anyway, you are not supposed to go there by motorcycle. There is a destined calamity. You can go by motorcycle but before you get to the intersection, stop and go to the destination on foot. You must follow my instruction”. Her words were full of worries.

In order to let her rest assured, I agreed reluctantly. After hanging up, I went out with Xiao Ping as scheduled by motorcycle. But I felt uneasy. At about
4:00 P.M., we arrived at the given spot. I followed her advice and stopped my motorcycle near by. I went to distribute the present on foot. When I went back to the company, I called Heaven to tell her I was all right. Heaven was in the store of her friend, Xiao Huei. Xiao Huei said Heaven had fallen asleep. It was at about the same time I left the intersection at about 4:00 P. M. I went to Xiao Huei’s home that evening. Heaven took out a piece of paper with scribbled words on it. She told me the whole story.

Heaven said: “Last night, in my room, I did not know why, but I felt uneasy and scared. The model on the card posted in front of the table by my roommate looked evil. That was scary! I took another piece of paper to cover the card. I began to read the “Great Compassion Mantra” to calm myself down. But my body shook spiritually. A soon as I shook spiritually, I felt assured. I let my “spirituality” do as it would. It seemed as if “Spirituality” was looking for something. She found a pen first. Then she used the paper on the card. She then painted some circles on the paper. I found that the paper listed your schedule for photographing. I began my senseless actions. I circled the words “car”, “motorcycle” and “Dun Hua S. Rd.”. The more I circled, the more I felt panicky. I told the “Spirituality” that I did not understand “its” meaning. I wanted “it” to express the idea more clearly. And the “spirituality” turned the paper to the back and began to write in Chinese. I was conscious. I checked again and
These were the words on the paper: “It will be alright! Do not go to distribute moon cake with Ping./Escape from the destined calamity!/Ancestors of Sense’s will come to worship./Sense is not supposed to go to Dun Hua S. Rd.” The way in which the word “road” was written showed clearly that her hand was shaking. Some words were illegible, but the last word was clearly “Death”!

Heaven said: “She began to write down characters, events and spots. At last, she was getting more and more frightened. She was afraid of writing the word “death”. I kept resisting! But I couldn’t help writing it.” Her tone turned and said: “It is your time! I want you to see Aunt Wu with me!”

I did not know why. I agreed to her proposal. I could only say the whole thing was very mysterious. I remember when I was a kid, maybe 10 years old, I told my brother I might die at the age 29. I wanted him to help with the care of our parents. I told my parents the same. I requested them not to be sad. My parents scolded me: “Stop your bullshit!” So many years had gone by. This mysterious thing happened in the year when I was 29 years old. Was it possible that my prediction would come true? And the illegible words on the paper turned out to be palm prints.

We came to the agreement that we would go to see Aunt Wu by motorcycle in the afternoon the next day.
But it just left me in terrible spirits. I felt very weak, as if I was going to faint on the motorcycle. Getting to Heaven’s dormitory, I rang the doorbell. I wanted her to come downstairs to help me. I was too weak to go upstairs. When she came down, she was frightened to find me in such a terrible state. I leaned against the handrail of the stairs, pale-faced and announced, “I am exhausted! I need sleep.”

I only remember Heaven supporting me to the bedroom. I then slept for a long while. When I awoke, I found that Heaven was very concerned about me. She used her lotus-like fingers to so a circling motion on my face. She kept on reading the Great Buddha Mantra. It seemed that there was something with me. We dared not ride our motorcycles, and decided it would be better to spend more time to travel by train to see Aunt Wu.

In fact, there was no temple, only an iron factory. In the corner of the factory, there was a wooden Buddha hall. And there was a wooden traditional Buddha statue. I did not know the name of the god. Aunt Wu and the senior sister apprentice sat in front of the Buddha statue with their legs crossed. Heaven knelt down facing the Buddha hall. I was still tired and it was as if I could not straighten my spine. I sat behind them with my back stooped. It was late in the night and the weather was a little cold. The factory smelled strange. I smelled a fragrant flavor rising from the incense burner and I sensed an unreal feeling. I began
to regret my coming.

It was so boring! I was witnessing a ceremony that I did not understand. What was worse, I could not leave! It was very hard to endure this torturing time! How long should I stay? Weren’t they tired? I thought of unimportant things, over and again.

Suddenly I had a strange feeling. What? Somebody was pushing me. I turned to see what was the matter. But there was nobody at all there. Nevertheless, I could feel a force slowly pushing my waist rhythmically. I straightened my waist naturally and sat with my legs crossed too. My body began to shake back and forth.

Aunt Wu began to talk in Taiwanese; “If you want to move, just let him move. Do not refrain!” Was she speaking to me? I found that she did not turn her head, but I seemed to be encouraged. I just let my body shake and the movement went faster and faster twice every second. My thoughts were very clear. I felt mysterious, and the fast movement was really strange. I did not want to stop the action because I felt comfortable. Later I learned that my “spirituality” moved. When one spirituality interacted with another, they responded like two magnets. It is said: “Ordinary people are more likely to have a “Smart Causal Transition” after they “transfer their cause and effect.” Because my spirituality is “smart,” I was eager to practice moral teachings.

Later on, Aunt Wu talked much to me about my
present conditions and my inner conflicts. She seemed to possess limitless mercy and had a mysterious magnificence. She spoke slowly like Master Cheng Yen of TZU CHI. Every sentence of her speech sounded like truth! I could not help believing her speech. Later, I got to know Aunt Wu’s appearance hinted that the “Holy Mother” of the world spoke to me by means of Aunt Wu’s body.

The Holy Mother said: “You should hide yourself in your bed quilt and cry. You are not fit to enter the film industry. Even if you are competent and qualified, you will just run errands for your superiors. You will not escape their circle. What’s more, your mind is unstable. If you stay where you are, you will get worse.” The Holy Mother said: “The “spirituality” of my working place was poor and did not fit me. I would be better off resigning and leaving that place.

I answered: “But filming is my ideal!” I could not tolerate the thought of giving up my ideal!

Holy Mother continued: “I do not want you to give up. It is because you are not yet prepared! Yesterday, you narrowly escaped your destined calamity. Wasn’t it clear enough? Look at where you are. You are the prime of life, yet you cannot even straighten your waist. You were supposed to pass away, but your ancestors came to pray for you.”

It was my destined death! It was my prediction. Coincidently, I was 29 years old. The Holy Mother said that many things remained unclear before the
“Transition of Cause and Effect”. She asked me to resign and to go through “Transition of Cause and Effect” at once. It was strange that I did talk back but rather agreed then and there. Even when she asked me if there was anything more, I answered “No” obediently, as if I had already gotten all of my needed answers. I felt certain and sure.

That night, Heaven and I returned to Kaohsiung by night train, in order to have my previous life’s “cause and effect transferred”. We arrived at Kaohsiung early in the morning at about 5:00. Though my home is in Kaohsiung, we did not go there. Instead, we went straight to Aunt Wu’s house to meet with her. The five of us then went to the Temple of the King. On the way, we bought five different kinds of fruits and divided them into two bags. Each bag had two of the five different kinds of fruits. Aunt Wu said that one bag was for worshipping. Heaven and I could carry those back home to eat. However, the other bag was for worshipping my previous life’s “Transition of Cause and Effect” and those contents were for others, not for us!

In front of Tian Kong Temple, Heaven, (who at that time was still my girl friend), and I knelt down on our knees before the main hall, with Joss Sticks in our hands. Aunt Wu stood beside me and faced the empty sky, holding up her right hand while opening her palm. She read a short passage of prayers which I did not understand. Later, I came to know these prayers were
in what is known as “god’s Language”. She asked me to follow her actions and then uttered my name and residence. Then, we went to the main Hall and knelt down facing three gods. The main god was Yu Huang Shang Di, the Jade Emperor. Aunt Wu handed me two “god divination blocks” and a piece of photocopied paper. As she read: “Follower XXX, I appeal to Yu Huang Shang Di for mercy. I was innocent.”, I requested Him to forgive my wrongdoings in my previous life. I prayed that I be allowed to devote my good deeds to the “Transition” of my previous life. I requested that he give me three positive “god divination blocks”, and then began to throw the “god divination blocks”. What I needed was three consecutive, “one positive and one negative” throws or the process would have to be repeated until successful. This is the Taiwanese traditional way of worshipping god. I figured that it was just a question of chance and that it would just take time to come up with the right answer. After all, I had previously witnessed someone who won over others to gain the position of the host, after just twenty-one times. I "just knew" that it would not be long before I got through this difficult stage. I felt so full of myself that I even said aloud, “Wait and you will all see that I am not an ordinary person!”

I threw the blocks. Nothing! Then, I turned to face the “God of North” on my left side and repeated the process. I then turned to the right side, to face yet another god “God of South”. However, after many
throws, I was still unable to get three consecutive “one positive and one negative” throws for a correct answer. My legs hurt from kneeling on the hard floor for such a long time, and I was losing my patience! Aunt Wu came over to me. She was face to face with the god and read a long passage of “God’s Language” I then threw the “god divination blocks” again.” It just took one time to get the three consecutive “one positive and one negative” right answers! Though I still thought it just might be coincidence, my mind wondered, "Was it?" However, this meant that I had consent from Heaven and was now qualified to bargain with all the debtors of my previous lives, somewhat like in the courts of the human world. All of the conflicts, arguments, dissatisfaction, injustice, hatred and spite of both sides settled, through the negotiation of "just" people and judges. Both sides could then agree how to make up for the wronged people. Then, we went to the “Spiritual Court” that could “channel” the ghosts in Hell and the people in the world. Aunt Wu then told us that this Feng Kang site was indeed a very special location as it was the only place in Taiwan that had these special properties.

We then drove for two hours and arrived at Feng Kang where we turned left. Strangely enough, at the bottom of the mountain, I kept covering the upper part of my nose. I felt very nervous! Aunt Wu said that my “spirituality” was crying!
After several curves, there appeared a concrete platform and a small house made of iron. It leaned against the mountain and faced the spacious sea, providing a spectacular view. There were already many people there with incense worshipping gods. The house was so smoky that it had become oily, black and brilliant. We washed the fruits clean and put them on the table. We then worshipped from the altar outside and afterward went into the temple. I knelt in front of the wooden Buddha statue which was about one meter away. This god statue was easy to recognize. It was Avalokiteshvara (Mercy Buddha) with one thousand hands and one thousand eyes. It was the exact god I had appealed to for mercy! I read Buddhist scripture and threw the “god divination blocks” again! I repeated the process more than ten times but again, no right answer was shown me! Aunt Wu even communicated with the god in “God’s Language” but her prayer did not work either, this time. She continued her communication, saying, “Mercy! Mercy!” over and again! I did not know to whom she spoke. Eventually, we safely got through this difficult stage and I bought ghost money from the temple keeper, for six hundred dollars. Aunt Wu asked me to stamp my fingerprints and to the debtors, we burned the ghost money. After this process, I succeeded in the “Transition”. Then with Heaven present, Aunt Wu continued to tell me about my affairs, including my origin, lot, love, marriage and business.
Aunt Wu said: “Now, you have to practice moral teachings! If you both have good intentions, you had better practice these moral teachings well so that you can live together, for the long run.” This made Heaven burst into tears!

I asked: “What should I do?”

Aunt Wu said: “Sit in meditation. Read Buddhist scriptures. Justify your behavior.”

I asked: “What scriptures should I read?”

Aunt Wu answered: “Just ‘Heart Sutra’ and ‘Great Compassion Mantra’ are enough!”

She gave me a paper folder with ‘Heart Sutra’ and ‘Great Compassion Mantra’ in it. She said that ‘Heart Sutra’ could add wisdom and ‘Great Compassion Mantra’ could develop a “merciful heart”. My doubts had never ceased, but this was so simple!

Only sometime during the past two years, I finally began to be willing to submit myself to these instructions. When I looked back at past years, I now realize that the problems still persisted so that if I did not correct my behavior or change my way of thinking, I was bound to repeat my errors, experience more suffering and have to undergo limitless “Reincarnation.” Sometimes I wondered why people do not follow instructions? Maybe because they have not had enough suffering!
THE HEART SUTRA
(Translated by E. Conze)

Om Homage to the Perfection of Wisdom the Lovely, the Holy!

Avalokita, the Holy Lord and Bodhisattva, was moving in the deep course of the Wisdom which has gone beyond. He looked down from on high, He beheld but five heaps, and He saw that in their own-being they were empty.

Here, O Sariputra, form is emptiness and the very emptiness is form; emptiness does not differ from form, form does not differ from emptiness, whatever is emptiness, that is form, the same is true of feelings, perceptions, impulses, and consciousness.

Here, O Sariputra, all dharmas are marked with emptiness; they are not produced or stopped, not defiled or immaculate, not deficient or complete.

Therefore, O Sariputra, in emptiness there is no form nor feeling, nor perception, nor impulse, nor consciousness.

No eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind; No forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touchables or objects of mind; No sight-organ element,
and so forth, until we come to: No mind-consciousness element; There is no ignorance, no extinction of ignorance, and so forth, until we come to: There is no decay and death, no extinction of decay and death. There is no suffering, no origination, no stopping, no path. There is no cognition, no attainment and no non-attainment.

Therefore, O Sariputra, it is because of his non-attainmentness that a Bodhisattva, through having relied on the Perfection of Wisdom, dwells without thought-coverings. In the absence of thought-coverings he has not been made to tremble, he has overcome what can upset, and in the end he attains to Nirvana. All those who appear as Buddhas in the three periods of time fully awake to the utmost, right and perfect Enlightenment because they have relied on the Perfection of Wisdom.

Therefore one should know the prajnaparamita as the great spell, the spell of great knowledge, the utmost spell, the unequalled spell, allayer of all suffering, in truth -- for what could go wrong? By the prajnaparamita has this spell been delivered. It runs like this: gate gate paragate parasamgate bodhi svaha.

Gone, gone, gone beyond, gone altogether beyond, O what an awakening, all-hail!

This completes the Heart of perfect Wisdom.
Chapter 7

The Wrong Place!
Time: 1959
Place: from France to the Philippines and then to Taiwan

Fr. Albert, Father Paul, and I met every Wednesday over four consecutive months, until my father fell ill. Before we met, I used to offer some topics for discussion with the hope that I could put the thoughts of Fr. Albert in order systematically. However, I found that Fr. Albert had his own thoughts. After greeting, he spoke freely and fluently on our topics and although he might repeat what he had said, his thinking was clear. We could detect no signs of dizziness remaining from the time that he was sick. He often said: “We are the tools of God. I feel assured under His use.”

Since the time in 1940 when Albert heard the holy summons from God, he knew that he would become a Catholic Priest, (a "Father"), in the future, learn from St. Francis Xavier, and go as far away as China, to preach the Gospels. Albert entered into this new religious field of God as he was ordered by going into a monastery to study. He prepared to enter a second new world that he had never seen anywhere but on the map—China.

Fr. Albert said; “That was my dream! I was very much excited at that time. I began to look at the map and think about how to travel by ship and how to learn
to speak Chinese. Perhaps I might learn to preach Buddhism. I did not know. I was not a saint, but under any condition, I would follow His example, and I was determined to go to Mainland China!”

Unfortunately, the process was not as perfect as he imagined. He suffered much in his studying days. The silent penance of the tortuous training was a strain on his active nature. He tried to follow God’s instructions, but he felt pain in his inner mind as he endured the hard training. He wondered if perhaps he was too innocent and maybe not qualified to be a Father. Could it be that, just maybe, God had made a big mistake? Or, maybe something was wrong with his ears! He was quite concerned that he had mistaken the message but God had clearly gave him a decree. He had been detailed to a senior of the monastery with the
holy summons of “being a Father and going to China
to preach the Gospels and learning from St. Francis Xavier.”

The senior smiled and said: “Your holy summons
is clear enough. This member of the Society of Jesus
which was founded by St. Francis Ignatius of Loyola
more than four hundred years ago should learn from
St. Francis Xavier and travel the world, all the way
to Singapore, India and Japan. His world is the Asian
Continent. However, you are now in the monastery
of St. Francis of Assisi, not St. Francis Xavier. This
Francis is not that Francis! You are in the wrong
place!”

"Oh! I was mistaken! I had gone to the wrong
place!" Fr. Albert smiled and added, "Luckily,
they consented to let me go, and they gave me the
necessary training. Monasteries are important power
centers for the Roman Catholic Church. This colossal
mistake gave me a great chance to experience two
different Catholic Orders. The experience was
invaluable. Later, I joined the Society of Jesus and the
president told me to learn Chinese well because if I
wanted to understand the thoughts of the Chinese, I
had to learn the Chinese language. In order to carry
on a conversation with Chinese people, knowing the
language and its subtleties would be indispensable!
Day-by-day, I understood that I needed a brand-new
living style! After graduation as a new Father, I went
to the Language Center of Paris University. I learned not only about Chinese culture but also about different religions. In those days, I lived in the dormitory for Chinese students. I spoke Chinese every day. They knew that I wanted to serve in China and after all, what better experience could there be than that of speaking Chinese with Chinese people.

I was positively certain that they did not speak that language in Hell but that the language came from God. I wanted truth! I wanted to learn from them so I got to know Buddhism and Daoism! The thoughts entered my life by degrees.”

Fr. Albert had entered the Society of Jesus at the age of 18 and did the first thirty days of “Holy Exercises”. The Society of Jesus wanted to cultivate him to be a scientist, and they meant for him to teach physics and chemistry in mainland China. However, in the last year of his “Priesthood training”, conditions on mainland China were in chaos. He could not go there, and so, was instead assigned to practice at a Manila hospital in the Philippines.

Fr. Albert said: “I am a blissful person, and so I was assigned to the hospital for counseling work. Almost every day, I had to accompany some dying person until his death. I personally experienced what the right attitude a person should have, when the person was going to leave the human world. This was an important subject that everyone should learn. I lived
Father Albert continued, "People came to see me almost every night. Some of them were healthy people, but I still prayed for them with the hope that the sick could obtain perpetual happiness when they passed away. Some people said that they were unwilling to become Catholics because it was not a good faith. Mutual respect is the basic principle of religions, and so I just respected them and offered blessings. On one occasion, I had a particularly deep and lasting experience. A patient who was not Catholic, was dying, after a failed operation. I went to the room to pray for him. He was helpless and even unable to speak. He just lay there, smiling at me and an hour later, died. The doctor in attendance said that they did indeed need me!" He said that he had learned in the hospital what a special "power" that people who had any type of religious faith possessed.

Although I did not begin to really understand it until after my own baptism, I too am also convinced that no matter what religion people believe in, they do indeed possess such a "power"! If we do believe the truths that religions help us learn, we may then realize that much of our faith in God already exists and has always been, embedded in our minds.

After completing fifteen years of training to
become a Priest, Fr. Albert was assigned to Taiwan. In those days, the 823 Artillery Fight (bombardment of Kinmen Island) was in full swing and the situation between Taiwan and Mainland China was very tense. After he landed at Keelung, he went straight to the Chinese College to learn Chinese. He began to be familiar with Taiwan's environment and finally started to feel that after ten long years of waiting, he had arrived on Chinese soil!

He believed that a "Preacher" must meld with the life of the natives before he can preach there. There was a small temple across from the church and so he actively paid them a visit. He politely introduced himself by saying he was a Father in the church across from the temple and was eager to know more about Taiwanese folk faiths. The people in the temple welcomed him warmly and heartily explained the meanings of the different ceremonies. Fr. Albert felt that he had learned much, and as he repeated his sincere thanks before he left the temple, people there told him that he was the first person to ever come from the church to the temple.

Not long afterwards, Fr. Albert was assigned to Tung
Hai University to act as an instructor. Fr. Albert said: “While in Taichung, I started talking with Catholics about how to play our role as Catholics and how to understand other religions. At that time, “Religious Dialogue” was too new to be accepted and many Catholics complained to other Fathers about having to listen to that young father.” In the 1960s there were, in fact, conflicts and debates between Buddhism and Christianity. Missionaries and monks argued with one another. Both sides often reacted or verbally attacked each other. The relationship was very tense.

On October 11, 1962, the Roman Catholic Church summoned leaders to the Second Vatican Council. On August 6, 1964, Pope Paul VI announced an important general call known as “Ecclesiam Suam.” In this general call, religious dialogue was mentioned. Pope Paul pointed out that, “Before you speak, you must listen not only to people’s voices but for their thoughts. The spirit of dialogue is much more effective if one provides service and friendship, as well.” This speech had a profound effect on Fr. Albert. For the first time, he felt an awareness regarding the urgency of implementing the Pope’s speech, in order to summon up meaningful religious dialogue.

Three months later, the Pope traveled to Bombay, India and attended a conference with representatives of different religions. Nine months after, on October 28, 1965 the Second Vatican Council announced a
declaration known as ‘In Our Times’-‘Nostra Aetate’. It was the first time that the Roman Catholic Church had opened a friendly door to other religions for the purpose of furthering religious dialogue. A brand-new idea, “Those who do not believe in religions can be saved.” formally appeared in human history. In 1966, Mao Zedong started his “Cultural Revolution” on Mainland China. In that same year, I was born, Master Cheng Yen founded the Buddhist Tzu-Chi Merit Society in Hua Lien and Fr. Albert was forced by a serious illness to leave his beloved Taiwan.
Chapter 8

Close to Heaven
Although hard to imagine during his youth, Fr. Albert was a heavy smoker. Particularly when he was teaching in central France, he smoked two packets of cigarettes each day. Now, all these years later, he developed a continuous cough that kept getting worse as he got thinner and thinner, sometimes coughing up blood. He became too weak to get out of bed, so his colleagues sent him to the hospital to have his lungs examined by X-ray. Both of his lungs appeared to have almost turned white and this seemingly confirmed that he had 3rd-stage lung cancer. He was seriously ill, but he would not believe or accept it. He went to another hospital to have another examinations. The result was the same, and he was told that his days were numbered. It was roughly estimated that he had only another three months of life remaining.

Fr. Albert recalled, “I knew that I was dying! The President told my family by telegraph that he was sending me back to France for my final days. Before I left Taiwan, he had a western suit jacket made for me, in case my parents should be sad to see me so thin. Most people don't know this but in keeping with the vow of poverty that Catholic Fathers take when ordained, we were very poor at that time.

This vow even affected the way we dressed. Only the front part of my western jacket was made of new, and
better cloth. The back part was made from old cloth, as were the trousers we wore. This did not matter because the lower part of the body and the back were invisible in a coffin. The President and many of my schoolmates came to see me off at the airport. I sat in a wheelchair as we embraced one another. We all broke out crying! Sadly, I thought, "This will probably be the last time we will see one another!"

The plane was flying high in the sky. This was the nearest that we could get to God without dying, I thought, so I asked the stewardess to give me a cup of wine. Maybe this would be the last cup in my life! I was both excited and pleased, and I held up the cup to pray to God. I saw the cup of wine as the blood of Jesus, atoning for human sins. I also thanked God for allowing me to make so many good friends. As I drank, I prayed for their peace. When the plane arrived at Roissy Charles de Gaulle Airport in Paris and the gate was opened, I decided not to use a wheelchair. I got out of plane on foot, all by myself. I saw that my surprised family members who had been pre-notified of my return, all came to meet me, and an ambulance was standing by. I did not look as seriously ill as they had said, so my father asked what was wrong. I shrugged and the ambulance took me on what seemed to be a long trip to Paris Hospital for further examinations. The next day, they X-rayed my lungs and the doctor incredulously announced that he had never seen healthier lungs! It was a miracle! My future again
looked bright. Now I knew only that I had for some purpose, again, received God's mercy."

From being a terminal cancer patient to being the epitome of health, Fr. Albert had "miraculously" recovered his health. What meanings could this have? Why did God perform such a mysterious arrangement? Would God tell me? Fr. Albert confided that although he had not heard God's voice for a long time, he knew that God's mercy was involved.

After comparing the X-ray photos taken in Taiwan with the photos taken in France, the doctors were especially cautious. That this could possibly be the same person's X-ray did not make sense to medical professionals. However, they asked Fr. Albert to regularly re-visit every week. The hospital was in the neighborhood of Paris University and he dutifully reported in. However, about a week later, he saw a notice in front of the university. They wanted a person who spoke, read and wrote Chinese. Fr. Albert put his own name forward and was selected.

Fr. Albert said: "I got the job to compose a paper on the “Dream of The Red Chamber”. However, My instructor soon realized that it would be improper for a Father to read such content as The “Dream of Red The Chamber”. So, instead I wrote a paper about an Immortal Woman, He-Xiangu---the only female among eight Immortals. Legend has it that she was a goddess who had the power of "channeling". I made up
my mind to study Taoism and other Folk faiths at the Chinese Graduate School in Paris University. At that time, I could have easily been the oldest student in Paris University so I lived in the Society of Jesus facility with the other Fathers. After a period of time, I moved to the Far East Student Center in Paris where I felt it would be more interesting to live with the students. Every week though, I dutifully went back to the Society of Jesus to visit the other Fathers! I was well-mannered and disciplined! (Ha!).

Was Fr. Albert really so well-mannered and disciplined? Yes, as far as faith and God were concerned, I believe that he was completely obedient. Even now, most ordinary people still do not understand what he accomplished. Some, even regard him as a traitor. There are always a few people who think differently than ordinary people. Jesus, Buddha, Muhammad, Nahatwa Gandhi, St. Francis, Albert Schweitzer, Nightingale and Joan of Arc, were among those who could "see far out" and who were considered to "have vision". None of them were obedient. They were convinced that they had embarked upon "the right way"! Perhaps they all sensed that they were responsible to “Heaven”, not to man!

Of course, religious zealots also are unfortunately usually convinced that they are on the correct path. The danger with this is that one must be able to perform a rational, honest and unbiased self-examination of one's action and motives. Probably very few people are capable of performing such a dispassionate
and disciplined self-study. Since they are often by themselves and there is no one else around to judge their motives, they must soberly and coldly ask and answer three questions. First, "Is what I am doing really for others or for myself? Second, "Is there anything that I am doing which is against my own religious doctrines?" Third, "Have I forgotten or deviated from my original mission, intention or charge?"

In 1968, France experienced a violent student movement. In those days, Communism, Existentialism and other different thoughts were flourishing and challenged original mindsets. Some students especially admired and even worshipped Mao Zedong. Photos of Mao were seen everywhere in the schools. ‘Quotations of Mao’ stimulated the thinking of many naively idealistic students. Most of them considered the schools to be too closed-minded and too Europe-centered. They felt that educational policies had failed to keep step with changing trends. The students demanded that the schools be opened up to dialogue! They did not get much positive response, so many students began to wear jeans and stayed away from the schools at night. Some students occupied the school campuses and even launched class strikes. Later, labor groups that had been heavily influenced by the students recognized the proposals of the students and Workers. They then occupied factories to show support. The whole of France seemed to slide into anarchy. There were violent disturbances throughout the society. Many vehicles
were burned, and people demanded that the President of France should resign! In the evenings, Fr. Albert also went out to the street. He regarded himself as a member of Paris University but he rather admired the idealistic nature of the students and felt that he himself should be responsible to the students.

Fr. Albert recalled those days: “When I got to the demonstration area, I found that many Fathers and Sisters were among the demonstrators. In fact, the French Bishops knew it, but they did not express objections! At that time, some within the Roman Catholic Church and indeed throughout Christianity in general, began to cooperate in support of the student movement. In 1968, the student movement had a great and profound effect on the whole of Europe. I wanted very much to meld the students way of thinking into the paper on the Immortal Woman He-Xiangu."

"In Jun, because of my various experiences in conducting with Religious Dialogue, I was assigned to lead a group of more than twenty French students to Tokyo for the study of Japanese culture. We were together for more than twenty days. Although most were Catholics, they were fond of this new thinking! I was invited to make a speech at Tokyo University on “The Effects of the French Student Movement on the World”. However, the University administration objected to this proposal so the Japanese students proceeded to occupy the presidential office and they
locked the administration out. They invited me to sit in the presidential seat and deliver an address on “How I Joined in the Student Movement as a Father”.

Not long after, I received a telegraph in Japan to the effect that I should immediately return to Fu Jen Catholic University in Taiwan. I flew straight from Japan to Taiwan, I was in such a hurry that work on my paper on Immortal Woman was delayed, and the paper is in fact, still unfinished. My instructor flew from France to Taiwan to discuss my paper and my status with my president. He told the President that what I had written was very "deep" and showed great insight by preparing excellent materials. He wondered why the church would not let me finish the paper first. The president said he was sorry and apparently then reconsidered the plan. I thought that it must have been God and Buddha’s idea that I go to Paris in 1966. Those three in France years were very important to me and I could not have become who I am without going through 1968.

“A loss may turn out to be a gain.” We cannot know the plans and meanings of many events, until we look back to the past. As there is a cause, so is there an effect. All relationships are connected through a series of mysterious predestinations. The present effect emerges only if every knot is tightly fastened.

However, miracles can seem to be only silly superstitions to those who have no faith. Those without
faith often sneer at so-called miracles! Frankly, I also even wondered, “Why don’t I witness miracles?” “Why don’t you see them? Who do you think you are? Why shouldn't miracles be seen by you?”

Let’s go back to the topic. "Can miracles be seen everywhere, if we just "look"? Every day when we wake up from our dreams, we find ourselves breathing and with hearts still working. Aren’t these also miracles that happen to each of us? Just look at the world around us! The earth and the moon keep on their rotation and revolution, and the sun perpetually supplies heat. All creatures, strike a very good balance even as they keep changing. Isn’t this a miracle, too? Our ancestors thanked Heaven for its mercy and favor. Now, the people of the earth are too self-important. “By growing up surrounded by happiness, many people often fail to appreciate what happiness really means.” As such, they fail to learn to express true gratitude. Everybody knows this principle but few can execute it! One can get high marks in Civics and Morals, but will be at a loss when faced with practical conditions, such as pain and hardship. Why? Because, their spirituality has not experienced The “beauty of life”. Only when they experience “beauty”, will they not allow themselves to do the “unbeautiful”! The famous Indian philosopher Rabindranath Tagore said: “Life is brilliant like summer flowers; Death is also beautiful, like autumn leaves.” Everything, is so beautiful!"
My daily conference with Fr. Albert came to an end and I went home by bus at six P.M. It was rush hour in Taipei. The bus traveled slowly along the Xin Dian River. Since my house lies on the other side of the mountain, I had plenty of time to observe and enjoy the setting sun which was so large and round. The reflection of sunlight on the Xin Dian River was so beautiful that I cried out in ecstasy! How I felt like I just had to this beautiful view with everyone around me. However, as I looked around, I saw that most of the other passengers were either sleeping or looking tired and disinterested. Of course, there were a few people looking out of the windows, but I could observe no sparkling excitement on their faces. How could it be so? Didn’t we see the scenes in the same way? Buddha and God have made miracles again and again, but human beings often remain indifferent or unaware on untouched!

The giant sun hangs high in the sky, full of zealous power. It gives out its warmth to make nature, beauty, poetic nature and predestination, all without asking anything in return. You and I are God’s blessed miracles, but do we have enough confidence and willingness to follow the sun’s unselfishness and cooperate in order to address the great causes of the world?
Chapter 9

The Poor Guy Living without Self-Respect!
When I recall the past experience by which I became acquainted with Heaven and fell in love, it seems that imperceptibly but inexorably we were destined for each other! If I had graduated smoothly from high school and had gone on to college, I would not have known her. If her father had not passed away and her studies had not been delayed for two years, or if I had not gone through what I did or if she had not gone through what she did, then what might have happened to us? We might not have met. Of course, it might have happened, but in a different manner and with a different story. Of course, past happenings may not be repeated. Faced with things that have happened, how should we view them? Buddha once said: “As for the bygones and for the past errors, I felt grateful.”

To tell the truth, I was not mindful of these things, before my own “transition”. Afterward, I took part in several activities such as 'mountain traveling'. Led by Aunt Wu, we traveled around the island to visit different temples like pilgrims. The scenes experienced at some places were very beautiful. As one senior sister said, the “spirituality” of these places was very strong. We went there to “welcome or receive spirituality” and to “receive decrees” for the purpose of understanding the duties in our lives while in this world. In fact, I didn’t think much of these activities and sometimes
felt like a superstitious, foolish person. I regarded these activities as tours. Anyway, we had delicious food to eat and good drinks to taste, too. In addition, we had drama to enjoy. Some senior brothers and sisters would present different plays. Some of them might shout out loudly or burst out crying hysterically. They might climb or roll as if they were acting out in a Taiwanese drama. Some imitated animals, looking fierce and mischievous. They looked as if they were hypnotized. Why would they drive themselves to such poor and pitiable conditions? Strangely enough, however, when they regained their consciousness, they felt embarrassed. However, some of them moved gracefully as if they were professional dancers or as if they were performing “Kung Fu”! I saw that such events appeared to be good for them, just like participating in “art therapy”! To my surprise, every one of the groups had their respective misfortunes, whether it be physical, mental or spiritual.

In the beginning, I tried to maintain my sense and character. Later, my body began to respond to spirituality. I thought that I responded to spirituality once while at the bottom of a mountain, and before we arrived at our destinations, but Aunt Wu said the spirituality there, was simply responding to mine.

Could this really have been so? I just left it as it was! Anyway, nobody knew me! I “unloaded” my mental defenses and took off my mask of disguise. I went back to my original ego and allowed spirituality
to flow freely. It was easy, free and unrestricted.

Later, the Holy Mother explained to us through Aunt Wu why we had such strange actions and sensitive feelings. Sometimes “the cause and effect” of the persons in question was apparent as they were seen to keep nodding their heads and wiping tears because every word touched their minds! I asked myself: “Am I able to show such expressions? Why did Buddha choose an ordinary woman without much schooling to carry on such a sacred task? Why do people have so much suffering and why are people so pitiable?”

During three days of “Mountain Traveling”, it seemed as if we had lived in another world. After that, we went back into "normal" human society. We felt good, but the experience also left me with many puzzles. I made up my mind to leave my original work and to try and restart everything with a new beginning! I did as they said. Every day, I sat in meditation and chanted a “Sutra”. In less than a week though, I was tired of this way of living. My senses warned me against being deceived, and I felt that I should not just let the matter go on as it was.

At that time, I could not find any acceptable new job. My love with Heaven sometimes went well and sometimes went poorly. I lived a miserable life and often could not even afford to eat three meals a day. I was stubborn, self-centered and even extreme. Everyone around me seemed disagreeable to my eye, and I felt under-appreciated. Occasionally, Heaven
invited me to go to the dress store of Xiao Huei and practice moral teachings together. They sat in meditation and chanted a “Sutra” but I fell asleep within five minutes. I knew it was impolite, but I had no intention of pretending to anyone that I was "into" this. I said that everyone had his own way of practicing moral teachings, and my religion was “sleeping”. After all, there had been a sleeping Lama in Tibetan Buddhism. They finally gave up debating with me, and I did as I liked.

When the Holy Mother spoke spiritually, why was it that I found myself to be a little scared without knowing what I was afraid of. Was I afraid that “she” might see through me?

When Aunt Wu was absent, The Holy Mother would provide new messages by way of Xiao Huei. One night, The Holy Mother spoke something through Heaven’s body. Once, Xiao Huei had a mysterious dream in which she discovered a “wordless book” and suddenly gained the power of guessing words and “channeling”. At first, we wondered whether these words were true or false, but just as soon as the words were spoken, we immediately "knew" that they were factual. Perhaps, we were too familiar with Xiao Huei. She had done a lot of reading, and we thought that we could guess what she was going to say. However, I soon recognized that when The Holy Mother spiritually spoke of something profound and logical through her, Xiao Huei was unable to explain
it, let alone explain the complicated “cause and effect” between human society and the spiritual world.

When The Holy Mother was present, we posed our puzzles to her and no matter which vessel she "channeled" through, she answered each question. The Holy Mother understood clearly the thinking of people whether their thoughts were trivial or important. All of the stories were very interesting and I enjoyed listening to these conversations. Some of the conversations could have made good material for plays, but other disorderly, troubling matters were like endless torture for those in question. Some stories were actually funny but they always still provoked the question, “Did this mean something?” Sometimes they sounded weak-minded. "Do people lose their power of telling the difference after they have gods?" In spite of it all, the Holy Mother patiently pointed out the frailties of human beings, but she was not as merciful as a “Budhisattva”.

I did not like asking questions and was always thinking of hiding. The Holy Mother looked at me and "willed me" to go over to her. I sat in front of her, feeling uneasy.

The Holy Mother said, looking serious, “If you find things right, just do them!” Just look at yourself! You are as stiff and hard as a stone. You locked yourself in an ivory tower built by yourself. It seems as if you regard all people in the world as being in a sorry state! You are too self-centered! In fact, you don’t REALLY
I was not convinced of this in my mind. But I did not speak it aloud. The Holy Mother’s tone turned stern. Do not think I want to hurt you, but you have just never really self-examined yourself. “If you don’t throw away your stubbornness, how can you ever accomplish any great things? “Do not be self-centered! You are not the best! You are just another poor pitiful soul hiding behind false self-respect! You just THINK of receiving! You had better face yourself honestly. It is never too late to turn back!”

Heaven secretly wiped her tears.

I felt terrible that day. I was insultingly scolded in public, and I angrily closed myself in the room. I did not want to be in communication with the outside world so I pulled out the telephone wire. I wanted to sit in silent meditation. I was in utter confusion. How could I face myself so dishonestly? I played the ‘Heart Sutra’ sung by boys and girls. Every time Heaven sits in meditation, she plays the disc ‘Heart Sutra’. It sounds pleasant to the ear and enables us to calm down! I got up and sat with my legs crossed. I held each of my middle fingers with a thumb, forming a lotus shape! Looking at the lotus and lost in thought. I said to myself, “That’s right! It really looks like a lotus! How could I neglect it? The gesture really looks good!” I took a deep, long breath. And then I chanted the ‘Heart Sutra’ with rhythm. At once, I felt at peace and felt my blood mysteriously circulating through my

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body. I seemed to be in spiritual motion! I purposely did not suppress it.

I silently watched both of my hands drawing circles, big and small. I had tears in my eyes and could not stop crying.

I do not know when I finally fell asleep, but after waking I went by bus to see Heaven. I was used to riding my motorcycle, and I do not know why I instead took the bus. There were only a few passengers in the air-conditioned bus, the likes of which I had not been in for a very long time. The sunshine outside of the bus was very brilliant. I sensed that the colors on the streets were brighter, and it was as if I were traveling in some foreign land. I suddenly felt very comfortable in this bus! It was as if someone was serving you and you could sit and enjoy the beautiful scenes along the roads. Lost in thinking, I dozed! When I got off the bus, I even said “Thank you!” to the driver. For quite a long time, I had not said those two words sincerely. The bus driver kindly said “Thank you” to me.

That was the miracle that happened to me! The two words “Thank you!” enabled me to undergo a “qualitative change”. Compared with the period before my “Deterioration”, I was suddenly so aware of my surroundings. I felt much more sensitive, and was certainly more tender in my feelings toward others. The way in which I looked at matters had definitely changed. Many things that I did not understand became clear to me. My mind was sharper, and I was
not as careless as I had been. I was now eager to look for the books about Buddhism, to recite prayers, and to listen to the lectures about the texts of Buddhism. I suddenly lost interest in any book except ones about Buddhism.

One night, we went to Xiao Huei’s store again. The Holy Mother again came to us through Xiao Huei’s body. Holy Mother said in a slow speed as usual: “Sense, you have worked hard, recently! You spend much time reading books.” I could not help but feel proud. "That is right! Holy Mother does know that I worked hard reading the ‘Diamond Sutra’?"

However, Holy Mother continued: “You don’t even know the four line Chinese verse. There is no use reading it.

The four line Chinese verse is part of the ‘Diamond Sutra’.” Everything has its way, like a dream or an illusion. It sometimes seems to be dew, and it sometimes appears like electricity. This is just the way it is.”

To tell the truth, while I was reading ‘Diamond Sutra’, my head started aching within the first few sentences. The scriptures seemed to magically repeat. I knew the words but I did not understand the meanings. Holy Mother saw through my lack of understanding and said, “If you know the meanings of the books, then they are useful. You are still at the degree of kindergarten. Of course you get a headache, because you are trying to go straight to college.”
These words touched me to the heart and she added, “What you need now, is not books or knowledge but peaceful-mindedness. If reading just troubles your mind more, then give it up! Understand?”

I nodded to mean “I understand” and from that day on I only concentrated on sitting in meditation. I did not read books any more. One month later, we went to Xiao Huei’s store again. The Holy Mother came again, smiled and said: “Sense, you are now being honest and straightforward. I want you to not read. It means not you should focus only on learning by reading. Are you at peace? If you want to get more wisdom, you have to work hard. Someday, you will be able to tell the stories from the Buddhist scriptures in order to help others progress and gain salvation!”

Aha! I felt like my spirit was linking to my mind. The next step was to practice moral teachings! For about two months, The Holy Mother told us through Xiao Huei about life, Buddhist scriptures, appreciation, spirituality, perspectives and so on. The Holy Mother continuously gave us individual instructions. In those days, I seemed to get plenty of spiritual nourishment, but in everyday life many things happened and sometimes these deeply hurt my feelings. I was taken advantage of many times. Perhaps, I was just too naive! I was short of practical, social experience, and I had nobody around, who was smart enough to remind or warn me! Once, one guy from the medium field pitched a delicious “proposition” and I fell for it. I did
my best work but for no purpose, as I went unpaid. I became extremely angry for a time after I was cheated. I was really upset and wanted to sue him!

The Holy Mother said to me, “Disadvantage became an advantage! Life is like a tree! If someone commits a crime, his tree will bear a bad fruit. If you forgive him, your tree will bear a good fruit.

Which do you think is better? There are too many things good to strive for in your life. Don’t waste your valuable life paying attention to bad things!”

Later, I found this expression mentioned in the Diamond Sutra “By those who know the discourse on dharma as like unto a raft, should forsake dharma, still more so no-dharma.” In front of The Holy Mother, I was like Sun Wu Gong, the Monkey King, in the hands of Buddha. My level was far inferior to that of Buddha!

It is beautiful to think back to this special time! Every day, I seemed to feel growth. I did not try to always understand everything at once! Instead, I learned to look at the present predestination more elastically. I realized that inflexibility is not always good! I was still looking forward to movie making. However, I was not eager to go into the movie business! The Holy Mother once said to me, “When people stick to one point, the possibility of seeing other things becomes less clear. One may lose many chances to learn if one places too much stress on winning! There is no need to hurry up! It is important
to give things and events enough time in order to find ways of working things out! It is also very, very important to pay attention to human relationships!”

“We need to forgive and forget!” When I released my resentments, I found improvements in mutual relationships. One month later, I got a new job as a photography editor in the “New Idea Magazine”.

At that time my father called me, saying that the brother–in-law of my aunt in Japan had a set of photography equipment that was not being used. She was reluctant to sell the set and felt as if she had been keeping it for someone who would value it. When she heard that I was interested in photography, she asked if I needed it. I answered “Of course! I have been wanting to have a set.” Not long afterward, I received an airmail parcel from Japan. It included two professional cameras and a set of original lenses. Oh my goodness, it was quite a big and nice gift! Though I did not understand the true value of photography equipment, I knew that it cost a lot! Later, my friend who was versed in photography told me it cost at least three hundred thousand NT dollars, a sum that even now, I could not afford! Just think of it! This professional photography equipment came all the way from Japan and from a kind person whom I had never met!

I soon got used to my new job. To my great surprise, I was able to apply my experience of acting as the editor of the school publication to my new work. My
chief work was taking photos, but sometimes I had to also write articles. Photography was done mostly outside while working with lots of heavy equipment. I had to carry it with me in case I needed it. I went out to find suitable subjects. I went out to Penghu Island to see green turtles lay eggs. I ventured out to look for the source of Zhuoshui River (the mother river of Taiwan). I visited celebrities from many different fields, and I sought out anecdotes from each place. It was very interesting. My new job broadened my vision, but occasionally I would encounter unpleasant topics. For example, someone committed suicide, even before I reached the site, I felt sick and disgusted. I was especially sensitive because of my practice of moral teachings. Unless I chanted ‘Great Compassion Mantra’ after I went home, I would almost always get a headache that lasted for several days. The Holy Mother said: “It is because their spirituality knows that you are practicing moral teachings, and they are hoping that you may “transit,” help them with their spiritual growth.

My work in the magazine agency was regular, but before every deadline I was very busy and worked late of night. Once, I could not stop for rest until three A.M. At that time, there were no buses and I had no cash in my pockets. I had planned to draw cash from an ATM machine, but all of them were closed. My colleagues were all gone and I was left stranded at an intersection
in Taipei. It took me almost two hours to walk back home! I walked home by way of Xingtian Temple. Strange to say, there were bright lights in the temple, and there were many people worshipping Guan-Yu (one of the three heros). I never knew Xingtian Temple could be so lively this late at night. Xingtian Temple really had good attendance! I went inside and took a book by the name of ‘the Scripture of Di-Zang -Wang (the King of the Inferno) ‘.

I took a cushion, sat down and read scriptures in the corner where I could see the statues of gods in the main hall while still seated comfortable enough to appreciate the texts of the scriptures. I could hardly breathe, just like a student who is in a hurry to finish his homework! I had heard stories of Di-Zang-Wang, but when I read his expression “If hell is not empty, I volunteer not to be a Buddha.” I was very moved and burst into tears. I found that at that time, I was too easily moved by purity. The simple oath of Di-Zang-Wang seemed vivid in comparison with the devout faces of those around. The pre-dawn morning light was magnificent. There was a mysterious color on the eaves of the temple. This was yet another miracle! God had again given me a message. I looked up at the sky and prayed to Heaven: “I will devote my whole life to helping Di-Zang-Wang close the door to the hell.” Later, I learned that the day just happened to be July 1 on the lunar calendar. Legend has it that on that day every year, the door of Hell is opened. No wonder
there were crowds of people in the temple. Maybe there were groups of ghosts, too.

“I want to found my own church. The door in Hell can never win over it. I want to hand you the key to Heaven. If you are bound on earth, you are bound in Heaven too. If you are released on earth, you are released in Heaven too.” (‘ Matteo Ricci Gospel ‘XVI 18 - 19)
Chapter 10

Karma Can’t Be an Importune Demand!
“Every time I finished chanting Buddhist scripture, I read the following Buddhist prayer:

“May the merit and virtue accrued from this work,  
Adorn the Buddhas' Pure Lands,  
Repaying four kinds of kindness above,  
And aiding those suffering in the paths below.  
May those who see and hear of this,  
All bring forth the resolve for Bodhi,  
And when this retribution body is over,  
Be born together in the Land of Ultimate Bliss.“

At least, I hope that all my family members can be enlightened.

My family sensed the change in me as they dealt with the consequences of my becoming Religious. I became a vegetarian. I chose to wear Chinese robes like the Taoists. The Holy Mother, Buddha and Buddhist doctrines were included in almost all of my conversations. My parents began to worry about me. My father gave me this advice, “It is OK to believe in a religion. But do not go too far!” To me, such a statement from him was incredulous. I certainly did not understand why my father said this and so I answered back without thinking, “It seems to me that
“yes” or “no” is the question. How can a person stay in the middle? If you father, do not completely believe, how can you justify your own worship of the Royal Highness every day at home?” My father did not know how to answer and instead just looked angrily at me.

"Even though I was the oldest boy in my family, I never worried about what I might have to do in order to make a living and take care of myself. I was too busy hoping that my family members might have better lives.

Every day, my parents got up every early, (about 3:30 AM) and went to work in the vegetable and fruit market. Although they worked very hard and were honest and truthful all of their lives, they fell into debt because of having some bad friends.

Although I argued with my father, it was really no wonder that he complained against the “Royal Highness” for not blessing us. My father had high blood pressure, and even worse, was a heavy smoker and addicted to drinking. The workers in the market were mostly laborers, and they were certainly not positive influences as they got together to practice their favorite “hobbies”— smoking and drinking. My father got drunk almost every day. When he was inebriated, his less-than-stable motorcycle-handling skills really worried us. We were afraid that he would get in a car accident. Even more frightening though, was my mother have to ride on the back seat as
my father weaved along. Father and Mother often quarreled about his bad habits, but he did not want to listen. Meanwhile, my mother suffered from hereditary diabetes and could not seem to keep her diet under control. Perhaps, this was because she set out early each morning to toil with my father in market, but then at noon, had to rush home and hurriedly cook lunch for everyone. In addition, there were still piles of housework to be done requiring still more hours of her time. We offered to give her a hand but we did not really know what to do. Every time I saw her sleeping exhaustedly on the living room sofa, I could hardly bear it.

My younger brother was also of great concern to me. He was very smart, but while still a junior high school student, he began associating with some gangsters. He became addicted to smoking, drinking, gambling and he developed other bad habits. He was even sentenced to prison for murder by mistake. During that period, my family feared that it might affect me, so they kept me in the dark about it.

However, there were too many things to hide from me and once, when I was partly awake, I heard my father talking on the telephone, piteously begging the prison warden in to take care of my brother. I felt all of my father’s pain in my heart, and I felt as if the weight of the whole world was mine to bear. My father was a tough man but for my brother’s sake, he forsook his self-respect and begged to beg for mercy! Three years
I received much help and support in my search for faith. I even decided to take my family to get acquainted with “The Holy Mother” so I could ask her how I could help them. The Holy Mother said: “It is hard to help one’s family because one tends to treat family members habitually. You should first concern yourself. If you live a good life, your family will be affected. They may then be willing to accept your words, but it is not your responsibility to make them progress.” She said that I might not competent enough to help them and so, I should not let it trouble me. This seemed almost impossible for me to grasp! After all, I felt great affection for them, so how could I ignore that? I could not understand how Buddha, could forget human beings. The holy Mother added, “Everyone must be responsible for him (or her) self. I thought, “If there is a chance, I must take my family to see Aunt Wu. But my intuition told me, however, that this would probably be impossible because of my father’s character. To my surprise, I asked him to go, and he gave his consent without hesitation. Before we set out, I burned some incense in order to request The Royal Highness “to go with us”, in the event He have something to tell us.

As soon as we got to the house of Aunt Wu, my father sat down in front of her. The Holy Mother must have been spiritually present at the spot because Aunt
Wu’s first words were, “Follower, the god in your home came along with you. You can’t say that Royal Highness does not protect and bless you.” My father was so surprised and said: “But I do not feel that the god Royal Highness did protect and bless me.” Aunt Wu continued: “All of your family is peaceful and healthy. What else do you expect?” My father said: “But, this god did not bless me to win the grand prize in the lottery”. The Holy Mother smiled and said; “Come on, it’s not how it works.”

The peace of my family has always been one of great concern to me. I think that I know wherein the problem of my family lies. I believe that they need to correct their behavior. I also know that if only they are willing to change their behavior, they can make it. One problem with this is that I live in Taipei and they live in Kaohsiung, 400 kilometers away. Even though we keep in touch by telephone, we meet only a few times a year.

My brother and I seem to live in two different worlds, too. He was used to staying out late, so even when I went back to Kaohsiung, I could not necessarily get to see him. We usually encountered each other just a couple of times each year, and there was never really time to have an in-depth, long, and warm talk. If there was a chance, I would always make good use of the time to preach to all of them! Once I called my family and luckily, my brother answered the
telephone. I began to “Preach” at him with one of my moral lessons but he interrupted me by saying, “dear brother, we hardly ever get the chance to even speak to each other so why do you insist on criticizing my ways of living, every time we get on the telephone? Do you ever even consider my inner feelings? You do not live with the family, and you can’t be expected to understand all of the reasons why we might have these habits. Why don’t you instead use our time together to just show concern for our health and well-being.”

I had never even considered that what I saw as my good intentions could result in facilitating any of our family’s problems. Wow! My brother’s words brought about a thorough self-examination. While going mountain traveling, I “asked” The Holy Mother about this confusion. “We intend to help people progress, but they may not necessarily accept this as being kindness. If we try to force them, it may backfire and instead, spoil our relationship. Do you persist with the idea of trying to save people?”

Yes. I am so haunted and perplexed when I see people around me suffering from misery which I can do nothing about.

Again, The Holy Mother’s voice was clear. “Karma (Predestination) is not something that can be controlled or manipulated and therefore, no inopportune Karma is good! Experiencing true Karma can only be cherished.”

Later Aunt Wu asked, “Did The Holy Mother
answer you?” I said, “Yes”, and told her about it. Aunt Wu said she did not understand exactly what The Holy Mother had said and so, she was afraid that she might speak the wrong words.

Many people may long to have stable jobs, but this security did not seem to be for me. My work at the magazine agency was steady and it even offered room for development and growth. However, my mind was unstable because I longed to seek my dream. My mind kept pushing me.

Once I went to cover the news story about the suspension of publication of the “Independent Morning News”---the first private newspaper in Taiwan. There were crowds of staff members present, and they were there to express their strong protest. The atmosphere was very tense, and I felt that this might result in violence. I held my camera tight, lest I miss any of this “intoxicating” event when suddenly I visualized the ugliness contained within the very thought! I had actually been holding my camera, anxiously and almost enjoyably anticipating violence. The more serious the situation, the better the news! I could not bear this unhealthy mentality. In addition, the impulse of being free was urging me to leave! I could not continue to live this way! I estimated that my deposit would enable me to live economically for at least three months, so I handed in my resignation and left Taipei. I traveled to Yilan where I buried
Karma Can’t Be an Importune Demand!

myself in my writing.

“Mr. Chan” was a good and kindly storekeeper with whom we had become acquainted in Taipei. He offered Taiwanese cuisine food, and he treated me as if I were his own child. We practiced moral teachings together.

Later, “Mr. Chan” moved to Yilan and after I resigned, I went there to rely on him. Most of the time there were no other people but me at his home on the mountain. Every day, I read books and tried hard to gain inspiration. I wrote a movie script. I ate a little rice and boiled a handful of spring vegetables for the three meals of each day. I took long walks in the evening, and enjoyed the beautiful scenery of the wide and open Lanyang Plain. In the distance, I could often see white clouds flying over Turtle Island. In the evening, I could have a hot spring bath, sit in meditation, or read scriptures. Reading Buddhist scripture while in the bathtub seemed to purify both body and mind, and although many people might blame me for not being respectful by saying this, I have to say that this is how it felt.

I also read any books available, providing they dealt with the practicing of moral teachings. I often jokingly said: “Every family has its hard scripture to read. But there is more than one scripture book in my home. These included Taoist scripture, Buddhist scripture, ‘The Holy Bible’, ‘the Qur’an’, etc.

"I am thankful for the scriptures. Practicing moral
teachings and faith is ultimately an individual affair and each person chooses their own way of expressing and practicing them. To have faith, does not necessarily mean that they practice moral teachings. Even those who consider themselves “saved”, unless they remember the promises that they have make to Heaven and unless they remember the responsibilities and duties they have promised to carry out, and unless they honestly face themselves, no one can help them, not even God or Buddha.

One night, after I took a bath and changed my clothes, I burned some incense and opened the ‘Diamond Sautra’ to read. This time, every word and every sentence became crystal-clear to me. I seemed to smell the flavor of “truth”! Oh, there was such a spacious cosmos in the universe. I felt hot and in ecstasy!

At that moment, I found my faith!
Chapter 11

A Fairy Tale or a Ghost Story!
Watch out for your thoughts, they will become your emotions.
Watch out for your emotions, they will become your words.
Watch out for your words, they will become your actions.
Watch out for your actions, they will become your habits.
Watch out for your habits, they will become your character.
Watch out for your character, it will become your destiny.

I am a convert to Buddhist and I follow the laws of Buddha. What may seem ridiculous, however, is that I forgot when and where I became a convert, and by what master I was instructed. I only remembered that before my graduation from college, I went to a temple in the middle of Taiwan with Heaven’s family. Heaven’s mother suggested that we all converted to Buddhism together. She said: “It will be good to convert to Buddhism!” I regarded it as a sacred thing to convert to Buddhism. Without good preparations or without understanding the Master’s morality, I did not believe one should casually convert to Buddhism. Besides, shouldn’t the Master understand the background of the followers? I don’t think Masters should make converts at random. I gave my consent reluctantly because I did not want to make the occasion embarrassing. The Master explained the “Five Precepts and Three Refuges” to us and gave each of us a “Dharma Name”. This meant that we had Karma
with the Master, even though we never went to that temple and saw the Master again.

Later on, I became acquainted with other noble and moral Masters. Many people suggested that I should get converted under the instruction of their Master, as if this would make a great difference. However, I understood that if I was already converted to Buddhism because of “Karma”, I already had a predestined relationship with the Master. If I was converted to Buddhism because “I wanted to be a Buddhist,” I was already a convert. Conversion was already accomplished! I was already converted as a self-natured Buddha,” I promised to be an “obedient” Buddhist!

However, I got in touch with The Holy Mother because of our predestined relationship. I discovered that her methods were quite different from the Buddhist magic I had experienced. The Holy Mother used Taoist magic! Buddhists dare not say “supernatural powers”. Supernatural powers do not equal “karmic effect”. However, The Holy Mother does have great magical powers. Take “cause and effect’ for example. It’s logical and reasonable”. The Holy Mother on the other hand, would talk about transitioning or being saved. Who was right? It was like “Zen”. It seemed contradictory. But I found they could both be compatible even though they seemed different!

People are strange! If things are going smoothly,
they seldom think of religion or practicing moral teachings. Usually, only if they are short of money or fall sick or become unlucky do they begin to think of faith and worship Buddha or other gods for good fortune. They request gods to tell their fortunes about marriage, business, love, and health. People pray to change for the better by means of an outside power but they do not understand that the key is in personally practicing moral teachings! To have faith means that one has to begin to practice moral teachings!

After she completed her schooling, Heaven also came to Yilan. We hoped to get richer in knowledge and to advance our inner minds. The Holy Mother said that human beings are composed of “body” and “soul”. Both parts have to learn and to grow. However, most people put too much stress on the physical learning. They continue to accumulate worldly knowledge and experience but they neglect mental nourishment. But countless external accomplishments cannot fill up an internal emptiness. No amount of love can satisfy them. When they look back to the past, their neglected innocent hearts remain unnourished and alone! The hearts are waiting for spiritual growth, understanding and maturity to co-exist with the gods.

Our home in Yilan had a Buddha shrine. Heaven and I gave an oath that we would as eat vegetarian diet and chant Buddhist scripture for 49 consecutive days. The continual loud chanting drew our neighbor’s attention. We got along well and had friendly talks. She warmly
joined in our chanting!

We reduced our material desires to a minimum. I felt purified physically and mentally, and my mind was sharper. Sometimes I could feel my spirituality leave my body to travel elsewhere. In dreams, I could speak god’s Language and catch god’s messages. I possessed the power to drive away devils and to cure diseases. While doing Samadhi meditation in my dream, I could hear sounds from another world. I often heard the voices of The Holy Mother and manjusri (Gentle Glory). In the beginning, I suspected it was a figment of illusion growing out of my self-centeredness. I careful conducted self-examinations, but again and again, I gained confidence in my dream following one confirmation after another.

I remember especial one night when I had two dreams. In one dream, the son of an unfamiliar aunt came to see me at night. (I did not know that she had a son). In the other dream, I understood that I would be buying a house in Kaohsiung in a couple of years. Then and quite unexpectedly, my aunt’s son really came to see me, just as it happened in my dream. Encouraged by what transpired, I excitedly telephoned my parents in Kaohsiung and told them that we would have a house of our own as long as we practiced moral teachings well enough. I was concerned that my parents might think I was a dreamer!

Anyway, Heaven and I loved to have these dreams. It was beautiful to have dreams! We did not have
materialist aspirations at that time, and we enjoyed the simple life! We fancied ourselves working in beautiful surroundings with mountains and forest—all within ten minutes’ walk from home. We both loved reading and listening to good music, and in those days we hoped that someday we could own a library and a good quality stereo-system. How immature, but then, dreams cost us nothing! However, we had to spend many years living a simple life without eating or drinking much to make the very dream come true!

We very much enjoyed the local customs and practices in Yilan, and we also loved the easy, leisurely pace of living there. With many good friends, we longed to settle down in Yilan. We tried to find appropriate jobs, but our search did not go smoothly. What was worse, none of my "scripts" were being purchased. I began to worry about our lives. Once in Samadhi meditation, Buddha told me: “Talent must adhere to the materials that are available. Affection should not be stubborn. It is not yet time for you to enjoy such. You have to acquire more “Karma!” So Heaven and I left Yilan and return to Taipei. Not long after, I went to the North Coast with my friend.

Along the way there was a temple. About 10 kilometers away from the temple, I had a strange feeling so when we arrived got out of the car to worship the gods in the temple. We drew for fortunes and got a poem which written “spring, east, wood, plane”.

146  Your Jesus! My Buddha!
A week later, I got a new job working at the Tea Museum in Pinglin. Heaven also got a new job as a teacher in the Pinglin primary school. Pinglin is located in the mountains east of Taipei and the area full of woods just as had been predicted. Half a year later, my first television script went on the air. The program was called ‘Taiwan Chameleon’, and it drew a created record audience and it moved to the first place position in audience ratings.

One night, Heaven and I walked along the river and, crossed an old bridge toward home. The sound of rushing water traveled through the silent valley. When I looked up at the starry sky, it occurred to me that our dream had come true! Here we were in silent mountains and with the sound of rushing water. The dormitory in which we lived was within a five minute walk from the library. The luxurious audiovisual equipment in the museum was worth the one million dollars we had hoped to someday have. We had hope for a library and Buddha gave us a library. Though we owned nothing at all, we shared them. Karma was really miraculous!

The Karma with my screen scripts was very peculiar. From a time when I could not sell any script to the time when I had to regularly hand in a script, it seemed to just happen! I felt that the key was good Karma. I prepared by writing on ordinary days and once there was an apportioning, I knew that I would be recognized. They knew I had the capacity to make
it! I remember reading that when Buddha was dying, his disciples requested that he go on living because there were still many people who had never heard of Buddhist scripture. Buddha smiled and said: “Those who needed to save had been saved. For those who had yet to be saved, I have already left good Karma for them in the future.”

“Pinglin Township was notorious for its mysterious stories, especially ones including ghosts. As far as my sensitive body nature was concerned, I had actually found some spots that felt strange and mysterious. Later, I was told that at different times, many accidents occurred at some of the spots. The locals had held some ceremonies every year, but to little purpose.

I told Heaven we should avoid those places, especially as we didn’t have enough power to protect ourselves or help others. We had better keep a safe distance.

One evening, Heaven and I went motorcycling to enjoy the beautiful views in the mountains. We went to a small valley, where two rivers met. We stopped to enjoy the charming scenes! In recalling the events of recent days my heart was full of gratitude, so we began to chant the ‘Great Compassion Mantra’ together. A moment later, blasts of wind began started. The colorful wind was waving! We were scared to observe the sight. We felt as if our hair stood on end. After chanting, we crossed our hands and faced the valley respectfully, and we started reading louder and
louder. We thanked all of the gods here for protecting us. We were willing to do our best to serve while we lived here, and we would be glad to devote all of our merits to all of the creatures that were connected with us. As soon as finished reciting, the wind suddenly stopped, and we stood in silence. Only the pleasant sound of rushing water reached our ears. Was this just coincidence or did THEY hear our prayers?

Because I worked in the daytime, I was able to make good use of the nighttime to write scripts. When I was on night duty, it was the most productive period for me. Although I was not afraid to stay in the big, vacant library alone at midnight, I couldn’t help but feel a little nervous. Most of the screenplays I wrote were real events. They were about criminal cases that had happened earlier. Either in the name or for love of treasure, people killed, were killed, or committed suicide. There was a sad story behind every person and most of these individuals destined seemed bound to meet with misfortune. Usually, all the background, information I could get were clippings from the newspapers. I used my imagination to conceive the characters of the leading actors and actresses and the figures around them. As strong as it seems, my imagination seemed to be able to go right into the inner hearts, understanding their emotional responses and what would happen to them. Once I wrote about an author who, due to a divorce, lost control of his emotions and went mad with anger. He killed his
boss's entire family. When the program was on the air, a friend of the murderer telephoned the TV Station to ask who was the writer of the screenplay and how that writer could know have known so well their earlier conversation that really transpired.

The success of ‘Taiwan Chameleon’ also caused lots of criticisms about society. Some of the media even complained about the program's containing too much violence. I answered back by asking, “Is other media reporting less bloody and violent?” The answer was of course, “No”. It was only because our dramatized stories drew the attention of the public and made a strong impression on people. I tried very hard to make the viewers understand the causes and the effects in the cases. I reminded the viewers that “A good turn deserves another” with the hope that viewers who had similar circumstances in their lives would stay awake after watching the programs and consider these issues. I hoped very much that people would avoid making the same mistakes. In society, there are always many people on the margins who will not listen to good speeches or attend the religious ceremonies. However, they might watch the programs at home and so, if any plot or any expression in a play helped them, it was worthwhile doing. I did not have a guilty conscience about what I wrote, and I was completely willing to take responsibility.

To get "caught up" in a script, can be good for the writer but it can also do harm to an individual,
physically and mentally, especially when the roles in the plays are negative. Because of this, if you watch too many programs about ghosts or murders, it is impossible for a normal person to feel good. One day, I broke down and was unable to get out of bed. I felt cold and knew something was wrong with me. I knew that I had to cheer myself up, but I seemed to have lost control of my body. Suddenly, I had an idea. With the support of Heaven, I made it to a nearby grocery store and bought some ghost money. We then went to a temple in the neighborhood where I knelt down facing the limitless sky. I appealed to Buddha for help, and as I read in my mind the names of the people about whom I had written, I said, “I am sorry! Perhaps I was too careless in awakening memories of your past misery and you are suffering in hatred from this misery. I meant by means of your experiences to help human beings not repeat your errors, thus turning bad things into positive power. I am practicing moral teachings and if you recognize that, I request mercy from you! I will burn the ghost money to show my sincerity in the name of Buddha.”

After praying, burned the money on the spot. Immediately, the bad feeling was gone with the wind. As strange as it may seem, I experienced several hiccups and my body shook so much that I had goose humps, all over my body. After that, I felt all right.

The experience helped me learn yet another lesson: “Conversation should be accomplished in a manner
that can be accepted.” The Taiwanese folk faith dictates the releasing of water lanterns during the July lunar calendar (The Ghost Month). Water lanterns connect the human world and the ghost world by carrying true and sincere affection to repay and praise warmth and light for those in another world. This is a sign of love!

I prayed that I would have the opportunity to write uplifting stories about good people and that I could have positive experiences that would allow my spirituality to progress in my soul.

One year later, I got promoted and left Pinglin to work at the Museum of World Religions. It was there that I wrote my first book 'Understanding of the Mind' with the hope that I could introduce religions of the world and introduce the experiences of great religious figures.

I finally felt that perhaps I might be able to meet the strong expectations of my parents--the meaning of my name, Sense Chen, is to state the true great things taught by the world's great people and feel a sense of beauty in the world. I hope that I can make it!

For me, Pinglin is where I began my early stage of practicing moral teachings. It is because Ping Lin is a small township in the country; I finally took the step of marrying Heaven. Originally we did not plan to get married. We thought “If love has a firm base, there is no need of marriage certificate to prove anything.” I remember when I got in touch with The Holy Mother,
on this subject, she did not agree with me on seeing Heaven as my match. She insisted that I was still not ready. We might interfere with each other is progress. We had to part from each other before we could get together. The Holy Mother said to Heaven: “It is good for health but not for business to go southward, and it is good for business but harmful to health to go northward.

To take care of health without thinking of business presents has many opportunities, but to take care of business without regarding health, leaves no room for the generations to come. It is proper to take everything into careful consideration. It is best to manage everything with a calm and peaceful mind. Things may not go as well and as smoothly as you expect, but you still can live an easy life. After you finish your one–year mission, you are bound to see a new world.”

How would thing work on? When lovers live far away from each other, then the old adage “out of sight, out of mind” may take effect. So, even though we had doubts, we followed her suggestion for the sake of practicing moral teachings. I went to Yilan and Heaven returned home. One year later, Heaven obtained her qualifications as a teacher, and we got together in Yilan. I recalled the Holy Mother’s suggestions. Because we parted from each other, Heaven did get the opportunity to receive her teaching certification. Afterwards, she became a primary school teacher and had a better chance to keep me company in Pinglin.
I lived in the dormitory in Pinglin, and when Heaven came to see me we, of course, live together. However, when a single man and an unmarried woman lived together, it might draw criticism, especially as Heaven was a teacher. We needed to justify our living together so we told others that we were engaged. With that, however, came a deadline for the engagement. So, to avoid perplexity and complications, we chose a good day to go to the court and have a legal “civil marriage”. We did not want to trouble others, and we took into consideration that our families lived far away from Yilan. We did not mind. On the contrary, we enjoyed the simplicity. We managed to get together because we parted from each other first. After marriage, my mindset has changed a lot. On deeper consideration, marriage is not only the business of two persons or two families, but an announcement to heaven and earth and the public by way of marriage that I should take responsibility for another person. That responsibility is a sweet burden. Sister Teresa said: “We see our responsibility in the need of others.” I do not have such a great heart, but I do see my responsibility toward Heaven. I can accept this responsibility, and I am steady in fulfilling it!

In married life you must face many changes. We often remind each other, “In times of difficulty, we should not forget our promises.”

Apparently, we have made a good and warm impression on some, as our friends call us the
“supernatural couple”. Even monks and nuns say so. Heaven asked me why I think we hold such affection and passion for each other. I said, “I married you with love and determination. I do not know how time we will be together, so in order to avoid regret, I cherish all of the time we are together.”

Compassion can help reconcile friction and conflict. One year after our marriage, the local people of Ping Lin began to show concern about when we planned to have children. One of Heaven’s students, an honest boy, asked her: “Teacher! You have been married for quite a long time. How come you have no children?” When Heaven was still thinking about how to give a proper answer, the boy answered his own question: “Teacher! I know the reason. It is because you do not really love each other.” With that, he disappeared in a twinkling of an eye. However, this small boy spoke like an adult. Did he know what true love is?

Fr. Albert has asked me the same question. He considered life to be incomplete without children. I said, “To tell the truth, if we have children, I will love my children more. If we do not have our own children, I will be able to love all children the same.” Fr. Albert seemed to understand and never again asked a similar question.

Heaven asked me, “If one day you have a dream in which Buddha tells you to get divorced, will you follow the suggestion?” I said: “There must be a logical reason. People should have the capacity to
distinguish between right and wrong.” Heaven said, “Faith is belief!” I said: “That is right, but practicing moral teachings can change destiny, I believe. Buddha once said we were not fit to be together. But now we are husband and wife!” Heaven smiled and said, “If by getting divorced, KMT Party could make up with the Democratic Progressive Party, what would you do?” I laughed loudly and said, “The framework is too small and the sacrifice too great. If we could exchange a divorce for fifty years of peace between Taiwan and Mainland China, I might take it into consideration.”

When our “Karma” with Ping Lin came to an end, we returned to Taipei, still homeless. I expressed great gratitude to Master Lian Chan ---the “blind mentor” for taking us in. I had become acquainted with the Master in Ping Lin. She was a Nun even though she looked like a man. She knew I had no house in which to live. She generously provided her Buddhist facility for us to stay in. During this period, I was able to study Chinese Buddhism, Tibetan Buddhism, and how to practice Buddhist teachings in everyday life.

Originally we saved a sum of money to start a business in Ping Lin. However, we instead turned the money for a down payment over to my father so that they could purchase a house in Kaohsiung. That was not part of our plan or expectation, but it happened! Less than half a year later, my younger brother got married. After the wedding, my father and I sat in the garden of our new house to rest and relax. We talked
about the great changes of the past two years. My father said in satisfaction, “Two years ago, we had no house. Now we have a new house. You two brothers have your respective businesses. We now have two daughters-in-law plus a grandson, and we live in happiness and harmony. We are content with what we have and what we are. We have no more requests. I think it is because you practice moral teachings and follow Buddhist laws.” My father suddenly said to me, “Sense, thank you!” My father’s gratitude provided me with the greatest contentment of my life.

Everything goes just as Buddha taught,” As long as you practice moral teachings well, your family members will be saved. Everything depends on your determination.

From conversing with gods, we advance to communicating with the invisible spirit; from being strangers, we advance to where we become life partners, from being close family members who are unable to communicate well with one another, I advance to being recognized and understood. These dialogues all began with self-change. One’s way of thinking can result in a change of behaviors. Therefore, the same predestination can produce different results, and these can change the resulting reincarnation because of faith.

Yes! The transition of “cause and effect” is accomplished!
Chapter 12

The Chief of the Village
Time: 1996  
Place: Fu Je University, Taiwan

In 1968, Fr. Albert came back to Taiwan to serve at Fu Jen Catholic University. At that time, Taiwan was under strictly enforced martial law. And, in general, Taiwan’s society was very conservative. The strict governmental controls had a strong impact on Fr. Albert who had experienced the student movements in France and in Japan. He was curious why the president of Fu Jen University, Bishop Yu Bing, invited him to the university. Maybe it because Fr. Albert had rich experience in conducting dialogues with different religions. In the first year, Fr. Albert acted as the chaplain of the university. During the second year, he acted as the director of the Student Counseling Services---a brand-new job. There was a big portrait of Buddha in Fr. Albert’s office-- even bigger than the “Cross”. Many Catholic students could not accept his actions, but Fr. Albert told them: “The world must be open to all religions!” This was his consistent attitude.

Later, he was invited to be the instructor of the Buddhist Society. He began to have more interactions with Muslims and other Christians. The students used to call his office the “Horse Stable”. Fr. Albert, of course, lived there. The door was always open, and the Horse Stable became the favored meeting place of people believing in different religions. There was a message book at the door where students could
write down their thoughts, philosophies, feelings, or whatever they wanted to express. Also listed in the book were many different religious activities. Everyone who went to the Horse Stable could read the messages in the book. Sometimes they would write their own responses to the “verbal” religious dialogues.

Fr. Albert’s actions were very different from what was traditionally done, and some conservatives regarded his actions as disloyalty and betrayal. Even some of his Father colleagues found it difficult to tolerate his actions, and some people suggested that the university should discharge him.

One day, several people in black clothes and hats came onto the university campus and went straight to the Horse Stable. They asked the students where was Fr. Albert. The students answered that Fr. Albert was giving lessons in a classroom. The men in black turned as if to go away.

The students hurriedly informed the University President, Bishop Yu Bing. He hurried to the classroom where one man in black blocked the front door and another guarded the back door. Two other men surrounded Fr. Albert as he sat on his chair and were already questioning him. They were officers of “National Security Bureau”.

Fr. Albert recalled, “They asked me many questions, and I began to feel very tense. I did not know how to cope with the situation, and since many other
foreign fathers were being deported, I surmised that they intended to the same to me. Fortunately, Bishop Yu Bin had experience dealing with these faceless "Men in Black" and so, asked me to go to his office. Once there, he asked if I had done anything that the officers might be able to use against me. When he was convinced that I had not, he immediately telephoned the Minister of the Ministry of Education. He guaranteed that there was no problem with Fr. Albert, and said that the school greatly needed Fr. Albert. Shortly thereafter, the frightening minions reluctantly withdrew.

Later on, Bishop Yu Bin nominated me for the “Good People & Good Deeds’ Award. That year, there was only one nomination for the “Good People” award placed as the recommendation list. The others were all nominated for representatives of "Good Deeds". So perhaps by default, I became the person named. This was quite an honor, and soon I was often invited to TV stations to be interviewed.”

After that incident, Fr. Albert moved from the university dormitory of the Jesus Society to the simple student dormitory known as “Fu Jen New Village” in back of the university. He and his roommate lived in a room of about 108 square feet with a broken door and no toilet. The moment he went to bed the first night, a student in low spirits came to talk with him. Fr. Albert patiently kept him company and was pleased that he
was wanted for confession, even outside of the church. The news traveled fast, and by-and-by more and more students came to see him. The students knew to go to Fu Jen New Village to see the “Chief” of the village.

Catholics in the dormitory asked Fr. Albert if he could perform Mass, so he offered it daily in the kitchen. To Fr. Albert, it was a new experience of getting closer to civil society.

The year that he turned 55, Fr. Albert joined in the "Winter Camp" sponsored by the Catholic college student societies. It rained for three consecutive days, and the students could do nothing but stay inside to pray. So, the suggestion was made to set up a “Service Society” not only for the Catholic students but also for all the students at Fu Jen Catholic University. This later became known the “Xing Xin Society”. The purpose of the society was to awaken the human spirit, to invigorate life, to preach, and to serve human beings. At the same time, Cheng Chi University set up the “Ai Ai Society” and Taiwan University founded the “Kuang Chi Society”. Because of God’s love, the students were willing to go to the poorest and neediest places to offer service.

Fr. Albert said, “In those days, many people in Taiwan were poor. There was a place in Wan Hua called the beggar refuge---“Ai Ai Refuge”. It was the most pitiable place in the suburbs of Taipei City. An old Japanese woman and her three daughters took
care of the beggars there. Some young Frenchmen went there to offer services, and the Japanese police took poor people to this beggar refuge. Ambulances went to and from the beggar refuge every day. Almost every day some of the beggars died. There was no place for the dead bodies so the warehouse became the mortuary. By going there, I learned to appreciate Japanese love and mercy. Mercy is an incredible and irresistible power! I led the students of Fu Jen Catholic University in bathing the old people of "Ai Ai", but there was no water available so we tried our best to wipe them with pieces of wet cloth. In the beginning, I myself was scared. But I believed this was the work that we had been called to do. I went to the “Ai Ai Refuge” almost every day. Because I had to wait for a long time for the bus, I bought a bicycle. It then took me about an hour to bicycle there. While serving in the beggar refuge many of the people there became my friends.”

“You should show mercy. You should be as merciful as Heavenly Father (Jesus Christ).” (‘Luke June 36’)

“Later on, Fr. Luis Gutheinz began helping the leprosy patients in Losheng Sanatorium. Many students dared not get close to the patients because their parents were very worried that they might contract Leprosy. We spent a lot of time explaining to
the students that leprosy was not contagious. I put my hands on the sick spots without being infected. This was meaningful work. Every week I went there to attend Mass.

Once when I was holding Mass, someone hurried in to tell me one of my good friends had died. He was a leprosy patient who suffered from the skin disease as well as from a mental disorder. I hurried to him and he looked very pitiful. Nobody dared to look at his dead body. He was covered with a piece of cloth. The doctor had not yet come, so I took the cloth off his dead body. I was not afraid to massage his body, his legs and hands. I gradually got his body straightened up and I put his head on the pillow. He looked beautiful on the bed. His body seemed to give off light. The church members gradually moved closer to his body. They prayed for him together. We were all affected and some people shed tears.”

“One leprosy patient had no hands. He had one remaining leg. When he came out from the operation room at Losheng Sanatorium which lacked medical equipment and was not air-conditioned, there were many flies on his body and he was suffering from much pain. He kept shouting that he wanted to commit suicide, and he continued to hit the bed with his head. I put both of my hands on his shoulders and said, "I will not let go of my hands until you decide not to commit suicide." I still remember the feeling in my hands and that his body was covered in sweat.
After a long while, he promised not to take his own life. So I said, "OK, OK! I wish you hope that you will be peaceful!" Later, we helped him get additional limbs and we gave him a wheelchair. He had no hands or legs, but he happily went around in that wheelchair. He was not a Catholic but there was a Catholic, church and a Buddhist hall there. This was an example of truly good cooperation between the Catholic Church and Buddhism."

"Whoever believes me should do what I do. And he should do things bigger than these because I go toward our Heavenly Father." (‘John Gospel’ XIV 12)

In fact, it is now much easier for different religions to cooperate through the coordination of social services. For example, take the 921 Earthquake, provision of medical rescue services to remote places. Subject like hospice care made me curious about the possibilities of the cooperation between religions and Government entities. Did they or did they not work with religious groups at that time?

Fr. Albert said that in earlier days, when they provided social services, religious groups never thought about inter-religious dialogue. They offered pure social services but those who had practical service experience, were highly conscious of the need
for religious cooperation. Fr. Albert said: “When we found there were still many places which needed help, different religions would take turns providing services. Those involved in providing the services constantly dealt with death and disease. These were not the experiences unique to the Roman Catholic Church but were experiences of all people. He said, "We kept company with many people facing death. We turned the sufferings of others into our sufferings. Because of faith, we are not afraid of death. Death is at our gate forever. My kid brother died in his childhood because of the war. My school was bombarded and destroyed. At that time, I hated the Germans. Why did they start the War? When the war came to an end, I went to Cologne in Germany and found many houses lay in ruins. In fact, many houses were destroyed by the French troops. The Germans were also pitiful. In Germany, there were many Christian families and I did not understand how both the Germans and the French people who were Christians could slaughter one another. I did not want to continue to hate the Germans because this was of no use.

Observing the damage caused by cruel wars helped me to understand that we just have to find ways to avoid wars. We must learn from one another and show concern for one another. From the viewpoint of Buddhism, those I helped rescue as apart of the rescue team might be my brothers from a previous generation.”
Pray for the people who persecute (crucify) you.  
(‘Gospel 44’)  

“Whatever you do to one of my smallest brothers is what you do to me.” Does God dislike what people of different religions do to the smallest brothers? What God likes always exists in Fr. Albert’s joys. To be able to feel joy is a sublime blessing.

At Song Shan there was another slum where Fr. Albert often rode by on a bicycle in order to show his concern. There were no beds and everybody slept on the ground. Sometimes Fr. Albert stayed for the night. In the cold winters there were no quilts. Fr. Albert slept together with the poor residents keeping his clothes on.

Fr. Albert said; “I prayed to God for quilts. To my surprise, the next day people sent more than one hundred blankets to the church. Many thanks to God! I was in so happy. I hired a taxi and hurriedly went all the way to send those blankets to Song Shan. Can you guess it? The traffic lights were all green the entire way. The driver and I thought that it was unbelievable! I went back to the church by bus and I was told that some of the blankets were to be given to poor students. I could do nothing but go back to Song Shan again. I said “Sorry!” to the people there and reclaimed a number of the blankets. I called a taxi. To my extreme surprise, it was the same taxi that I
had taken earlier. The driver was the same too. What was more unbelievable was that we hit all green lights all the way back to the church. The driver was not a Catholic, but he said he would like to come to listen to my preaching.”

Fr. Albert used the same blanket for forty years. It was one that was given him by a friend before he died. Though it was worn, and frayed, out of shape, the blanket reminded him of the smiles of those friends.
Chapter 13

The Path to Becoming a Buddhist Believer
I have never seen Fr. Albert wear the white gown usually warn by catholic Fathers. He said that when he did wear the gown there seemed to be a boundary between him and others. He did not like that distance, and I later found that he was not the only one who felt this way. Most of the fathers at the Tien Educational Center felt the same.

While Fr. Albert acted as the director of the counseling center, he unavoidably "dealt with" students of different religions. He became aware that he needed to understand other religions but wandered how he should start? He could just sit in the office waiting for students who might come to see him. At that time, people of different religions did not know one another well nor did they go to each other's churches or temples to visit. Moreover, religious believers often criticized those of other faiths--either intentionally or unintentionally. Fr. Albert wandered, “If there was no interaction among different religions, how could they find common ground? How was it possible that different thoughts and beliefs could enrich the lives of others? Because he thought the differences of belief, although unclear, might not be as serious as imagined, Fr. Albert decided to pursue active visits of good will.

The students of a Buddhist group recommended that he first visit Master Chan Yun at Lian-Yin-Temple in Nantou.

Fr. Albert telephoned to make arrangements to go
visit and from the other end of the telephone line came the voice of a middle-aged man speaking in the Taiwanese tone. “Who would you like to speak with?” Fr. Albert answered in Chinese with a foreigner’s accent: “Sorry! I am Fr. Albert, director of the religious counseling room of Fu Jen Catholic University. I am a Catholic Father. May I come to visit Master Chan Yun?”

The party of the receiving end seemed not to understand his meaning until Fr. Albert repeated it several times. Fr. Albert heard whispers on the line. “It
is a foreigner. He said he is a Father and he wants to come over and visit our Master. “Hurry up! What can I do?” This is the first time a Catholic father is asking to come over, and his intention is unclear.” The confusion was relieved slightly when they told Fr. Albert that their Master was out, and they asked Fr. Albert to call back that evening. When he called as they had requested, Master Chan Yun answered the telephone. Fr. Albert made his intentions clear by saying that he wanted to learn more about Buddhism. Master Chan Yun expressed a hearty "Welcome", and said there was a Buddhist Camp coming up. He invited Fr. Albert to join in the activity. Without hesitation, Fr. Albert agreed to come.

On the appointed Saturday, Fr. Albert went to Taichung by train and transferred to a bus to Natou. When he arrived, it was already evening. The master in charge of the reception kindly asked him whether he would like something to eat, even though those at the temple eat nothing after noon. There are no evening meals. Fr. Albert answered: “I came to learn from you so. I will live my life as you do.”

Later Fr. Albert was led to the reception room to meet Master Chan Yun. Oddly, even though this their first meeting, they talked pleasantly and as if they were not strangers. Both understood and learned much during the exchange. Master Chan Yun realized that Fr. Albert had rich experience and, asked him to give a
lesson the next day.

Fr. Albert said: “I do not know what to speak about.” Master Chan Yun said, “It doesn’t matter. It is up to you to decide to talk on Buddhism or Roman Catholic Church or about religious dialogue.” Fr. Albert agreed and he took part in the group life of the Buddhist camp.

There were strict regulations in the camp. All the trainees were supposed to get rid of their worldly possessions. They (Fr. Albert included) had to hand in their watches and wallets. Afterwards, they put on the robes of a monk. Fr. Albert jokingly described himself as turning into a “little monk”.

The next morning, Fr. Albert followed the Masters and trainees in chanting and praying to Buddha and then in sitting in meditation. One of the ceremony guides explained the meanings and purposes of every ceremony. Every process was fresh and fascinating to Fr. Albert because this was his first experience.

Fr. Albert recalled: “To tell the truth, I almost fainted. The ceremony host patted me on the shoulder and asked if I was all right. He mistakenly thought that I was finding it hard to sit still. In fact, it was because I was just about starved to death! The day before I went to Natou, I had eaten nothing because it was too early for breakfast. At the camp, I kept stealthily glancing at the clock. Oh, my heavens, I felt time was going by so slowly that I kept thinking that I was not going to be able to hold out. However, I did, and I began gain
acceptance and be able to talk with others. I learned many new concepts which I feel had much effect on my desire to understand.”

The rich and full experience of this camp activity helped Fr. Albert to better understand the students at the university, as they all worked to experience the joy of interacting with different religions. He applied to the university administration to invite Master Chan Yuen to come give a lecture to their students. However, the conservative elements among the school's authorities did not agree so he took his case directly to Bishop Yu Bing to whom he gave a more detailed explanation for his request. Bishop Yu Bing approved of his suggestion and Fu Jen Catholic University began to have leaders of different religions come and give lectures. That was an example for other Catholic schools.

Later on, Master Chan Yun founded the Buddhism center at Temple Yung Ming on Yang Ming Shan. Fr. Albert often led students from Fu Jen University to the temple, to sit in meditation. At about the same time, many other Buddhist groups exhibited renewed interest in interaction and dialogue. In the current age, Buddhism no longer secludes itself in the deep mountains in order to remain away from ordinary people. Instead, it steps into the crowds of humanity. Mercy is to help ordinary humans and places an emphasis on “Human Buddhism”. The notion of “Human Buddhism” was first put forward by Master Yin Shun. In the beginning, he faced many objections.
but he was determined to push away these objections and make his way forward. Many of Master Yin Shun’s disciplines tried to implement the notion of Human Buddhism and turn it into social concern. “We must show mercy and sympathy for strangers or acquaintances and to our relatives or outsiders.” Buddhists should give a hand to people in need. The Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu-Chi Foundation which was founded by Master Cheng Yen is the most well-known example.

Fr. Albert said; “I often go to the Jing Si Abode in Hualian to have meals and sit in meditation with Masters. I also joined in some of the great projects of Tzu-Chi. I arranged for "living camps of social concern" so that young Catholics could have dialogue with followers of Tzu-Chi. I learned much from the
monk groups and believe they did, as well. Master Cheng Yen often told me, if there were no Catholic Sisters, then there would be no Buddhist Tzu-Chi foundation either." She felt that Buddhists only chanting Sutras were inadequate and, they really needed to be addressing social concerns. She gave many thanks to the Roman Catholic Church and stated that she was enlightened by Catholics.

Fr. Albert added, "I was invited to attend the Opening Ceremony of Tzu-Chi University. On that day, one monk told me that Master Chen Yen expected me to come to the platform and give a speech. I said that I had made no preparations. She said it didn’t matter and went away. I was very nervously drawing a blank regarding a subject when a nice lady legislator sitting next to me gave me an idea. The first speaker was President Lee Teng-hui and the second was the Minister of the Department of internal affairs, and then the host announced: “Let us welcome the representative of Taiwan religions, Fr. Albert." "My heavens, how could I represent all of the religions in Taiwan? I was not even a Taiwanese but instead, just a foreigner who happened to also be an ordinary Catholic father. I could do nothing but go up to the platform and give an extemporaneous speech, (which although I don't remember what I said, it must have had some good effect).”

Fr. Albert was a good friend to almost all Buddhist groups and he spared no effort in establishing a good
foundation for interaction between Buddhists and Catholics.

One relationship however, between Fr. Albert and Master Sheng Yen in Dharma Drum Mountain, actually started over a “misinterpretation.”

Fr. Albert said that some of his most beautiful experiences were sitting together with Master Sheng Yen for several hours without saying anything. He said, "We found ourselves lost in dialogue with each other in silence, and we were “heart to heart” in spirit. We realized the mysterious miracle: “He is in me and I am in him.”

Fr. Albert recalled: “In 1978, Master Sheng Yen returned to Taiwan with a Doctoral degree. Though we had never met, I wanted to visit him right away because in his youth, he had written a book about Christianity, and I felt upset after I read it. Many of his ideas were wrong. Although we had never met before, I mustered my courage and called him saying, "Sorry,
Master! You don’t know who I am but I want to visit you. Is it alright?” He immediately said that it was OK and arranged an appropriate time for me to visit him regarding his book.

Although I realize that it was an impolite act, I said, "Master, as a Catholic, I cannot accept the part you wrote about Christianity." He probably gave me leeway for being an ignorant "foreigner" and accepted my criticism, even thanking me. We continued to talk and the roots of a friendship began in this way.

He was younger than I by two years but was interested in learning from the Catholic Church. So I invited him and fifteen Masters to the Tien Educational Center. We arranged for them to visit the church and also the place for confessions. I said to him if he was interested, he could go in.

Confession is a holy event in the Catholic Church. There is no similar practice in Buddhism. After confession, sins are pardoned. He took a special interest in Mass, so I explained it to him. We have cooperated well.”

Each time Master Sheng Yen went abroad or returned to Taiwan, Fr. Albert went to see him off or to meet him. Fr. Albert always opened both of his hands to bless him. Master Sheng Yen always crossed his two hands to give his thanks. However, the last time they met at the airport just before Fr.
Albert fell down and was hospitalized, Fr. Albert opened both of his hands to welcome Master Sheng Yen home as he usually did. But Master Sheng Yen to our great surprise, also opened both of his hands, and heartily embraced Fr. Albert. This was the first time this had happened and perhaps, it was to be the last.
Chapter 14

Opening the Door to the Mind
Fr. Albert recalled: "Holding religious dialogue was not even considered until about twenty years ago. Even though in 1965 the Second Vatican Council announced its conclusion regarding this subject, it received little support from members." It proved to be very difficult to ask conservative older Fathers to learn from different religions. They said, "Do not ask me to do what is impossible. It is not possible for me to join in the activities of Buddhists or Muslins. What we should or can now do, though, is to set up a unit within most Catholic groups to promote religious dialogue. Hopefully, we can then over the next twenty years, train some young leaders. We have hope, but we just dare not hope for too much, too quickly."

I could not help feeling curious so asked him, "Does dialogue between religions increase understanding of, acceptance of and tolerance for other religions?"

Each of us has our own religion. This is the mercy of Heaven.
Fr. Albert replied: “Religious dialogue has now become an indispensable part of most every religious group. This is a new work for a new world. The point of understanding lies in religion, and friendship is the basis. We hope to learn further from studying the principles of others. I place more emphasis on the relationship between people, though. An event occurred whereby a Father was once forced to leave the Catholic Church because he dared to deeply study Hinduism. The event had a deep effect on us but did stimulate us to perform more self-examination and to conduct more research. By the time I met you, I realized that you had already set high standards to promote religious dialogue in order ‘To see Jesus Christ in the bodies of others!’ . In your body I see a man who knows Jesus Christ but most likely is not interested in switching faiths. Thirty years ago, we did try to convert non-Catholics into Catholic members, but now we respect the choice of everyone.

We have learned to be open to others and to love their similarities but to respect their differences. This is the basic attitude needed in order for real religious dialogue to take place. Do not be shy about discussing differences between your thought and religion and my thought and religion. Rather, just learn from each other. Someday, even if it takes hundreds of years, we will come to understand that we are all brothers and sisters who just happen to be from different groups.

It is precisely these differences that provide us
with the opportunities to learn much more from one another.”

I asked: “Has the interaction of the Roman Catholics with people of other religions caused some Catholics to become converted to other religions?” This seemed like a relevant question as this issue needs to be discussed and dealt with prior to meeting with other groups, especially with those who believe that they just have to "sell everyone else" on the idea that one can only be right or be "saved" if they join their religion. Those who are weak in their own faith probably should not be engaged in religious dialogue.

Fr. Albert answered the question by saying, “No. That phenomenon seldom occurs. We are not doing it to promote being Catholic. We come to learn from others. Though I am a Catholic Father, I learn from all other Masters or religious people, just as I hope they learn from me. Religion interchange is the greatest opportunity anyone can experience to learn that we are all family.”

“If someone comes to see me and expects to become a Catholic member. I will ask him to cultivate his own faith more and to open up his mind. It is the same God who exists in each of our bodies. Those who are devoted to religious dialogue have the same experiences in religious life and, they try their best to avoid criticizing by not even discussing which religion is "better or the best". Many people criticize Muslims. But not all the Muslims in the world are terrorists.
Those who criticize usually do not have real deep experience in or knowledge of their own religions. However, those who are devoted to religious dialogue do need to be alert and to continuously learn from others.”

I asked: “How can we know whether the someone has deep experience in his own religion or not?”

Fr. Albert answered: “If you are good friends, you can broach this topic and by-and-by, you will 'just know' their position. Most of what I know came through experience and learning over the past twenty or thirty years of holding religious dialogue. Faith and dialogue have been carried on in the ways cultivated in the Catholic system. The first principle of religious dialogue is to place emphasis on our own religion but with the equally important requirement of respecting and accepting the right of all other religions to co-exist. While we can each emphasize our own religion, we must all also recognize the value of the religions of the others.”

I asked: “Is it critical to have faith before we carry on religious dialogue? Those who have different religions often have problems of getting along with each other when they get married. We often hear that for sake of expressing love the spouse is asked to convert his or her religion. Or after marriage, one of the couple lives his or her religious life in spite of the other. What do you think?”

Fr. Albert answered: “Love comes from God, and
different religions are from the mercy of God. People of different religions often love one another, and we should learn from them because we are all limited in many respects. We may find insufficiencies in the opposite party, but as with a husband and wife, most problems arise when there is a lack of communication due to a lack of the knowledge that explains the others' actions. Without basic knowledge, problems will arise in any relationship. While we can put our own emphasis on the religion we embrace, we should also open our eyes and ears to learn continuously as there is no limit on learning. While it is great to help others understand our faith-- especially as it relates to their religion, we should not pressure. People sometimes ask: “Why do you believe in this religion?” So far as I am concerned, that is an arrangement from God. Religious dialogue helps you take one more step in your own faith.”

**You should love one another as I love you. (‘John Gospel’ XIII 34)**
Chapter 15

Religious Dialogue in Depth
During the course of interviewing Fr. Albert, Fr. Paul Batairwa and I discovered that Fr. Albert's health seemed to improve. Superintendent Wang Bing Jung even told us Fr. Albert felt especially better on Wednesdays. We could see that Fr. Albert constantly had this book on his mind. He told me more than once that at the present time there were still no ideal or even satisfactory books on religious dialogue. Religious dialogue should not be only about theory, superficial dialogue, social activities or get together. Religious dialogue should offer a creative opportunity to get acquainted, in depth, so that bothsides understand and come to have greater love for others. In order to help me better understand this concept, Fr. Albert sent me two articles beautifully written in Chinese and English. This deeply touched me.

In one of the two articles, Fr. Albert began with the very touching paragraph, “In the past twenty years, I have been devoted to religious dialogue and cooperation. I have been deeply influenced by Dom Henri Le Saux, Swami Abhishiktananda (1910-1973), who lived and served in India for a period of twenty-six years. In 1969, shortly after the Second Vatican Council he wrote a long article which twelve years later, in 1981, I was lucky enough to read when I visited India. The article had profound influence on me and greatly encouraged me. The following is a passage of the book”:
“Each partner in dialogue must try to make as far as possible, the intuition and experience of the other, his own. One must personalize it in one’s own depth. One must look beyond one’s own ideas and even beyond those through which others attempt to express and communicate to them with the help of signs available in their traditions. For fruitful dialogue to be meaningful, it is necessary that I reach as it were, into the very depth of myself, to absorb, feel and understand the entire experience from my brother’s perspective. I can only do this by freeing my own experience from all actions, so that my brother can then recognize in me, his own experience, from his depth.”

Dom Henri Le Saux, Swami Abhisiktananda (1910-1973)  
“The Depth-Dimension or Religious Dialogue” 1969,  
The other article is a passage from a speech Pedro Arrupe, S.J. (former General Chairman of the Jesus Society) made in Rome at the Ignatian Courses of the Center of Ignatian Spirituality from 1980 to 1981 in Rome.

“Feeling myself in the other, feeling the other in myself, accepting him and being accepted, is an ideal of supreme perfection, especially since I know that he is God’s dwelling, that every human being is god’s dwelling, that Christ is in him, suffers and loves in him and is waiting for me in him.”

(1980, The Trinitarian Inspiration of Ignatian Charism, n.88)

“God is in every man, waiting for me with his love, and this is a call that I cannot neglect…
God receives in others, the love we have for him…
The presence of each human being in my life becomes, transcendentally, a form of the presence of God, and my acceptance of my brother, becomes my implicit acceptance of God…”

(1981, Rooted and grounded in Love, n. 49)
One day, I walked into Fr. Albert’s office and found him anxiously and rapidly scrolling through file after file using a computer mouse. The files on the screen turned quickly and sometimes he would suddenly stop to look at a certain file. He would open his eyes wide to take a closer look then whisper something and apparently ponder. Then, he would nod and continue searching. I sat behind him and dared not disturb him for fear of distracting him.

From time to time, Fr. Albert would turn and say things like, “For many years, I acted as the Executive Secretary of Religious Dialogue and Cooperation Committee in the Asian district. The Archbishop from India who was in charge and I cooperated very well. Sometimes when he wanted to talk about something with me, I even flew to India to meet him. After each meeting, I wrote down what we had discussed. I wrote much, and today I wanted to read them again.

I spent much time doing this and I sincerely prayed that some scholar or someone who was devoted to religious dialogue and interchange would help us put them in order so that they might be utilized to help the Church and all religious groups understand what we are doing.”

I comforted him: “Isn’t this what we are making every effort to do now? I may not necessarily write well, but I can at least help build a good foundation so that those who follow may have an easier time.”

Fr. Albert seemed to feel relieved and said; “These
have not yet become documents belonging to the church. It is my hope that they can and will be used to stimulate a more conscious awareness regarding the importance of religious dialogue. Many religious groups now have departments of religious dialogue. However, the paramount question arising from my perspective is whether or not those in charge of religious dialogue will possess adequate knowledge and understanding all of the factors so as to be effective enough."

I still remember that when I was working in the Museum of World Religions, the ideal of the museum was “Respect for every faith, tolerance for every race and charity for every life”. I really hoped that this museum could provide a platform for dialogue between all religions. However, what I instead observed was that there were many subtle differences. Take for example, the recruitment of outside guide volunteers. These "Outsider Volunteers" were made to understand that part of their job was to better understand all religions. We conducted many courses and visited the religious sites of many different religions. The guides obviously affected by the ideas and ideals of the Museum of World Religions and enthusiastically enrolled. Although many of them had their own faiths or religions, they had a spirit of devotion. Their attitude regarding learning was quite serious and many of the volunteer guides used
their personal time to read books, lest they make mistakes and mislead others. In comparison, few hired employees from the Museum of World Religions took part in these lessons. I wondered whether they thought they had already had enough knowledge about religions or they were simply too tired. Later, I came to learn that many of them had no faith at all. It is hard to imagine how those who have no faith can explain the good points and beauties of faith. If people could come to experience religion just by knowing a few sayings, symbols, or artistic works, then everyone could become a religionist.

However, in the matter of religious dialogue, the attitude of people without faith can potentially be more open-minded than that of people with faith. Is it possible that the deeper one’s faith, the more stubborn one may become?

Fr. Albert turned to face me and said; “I often talk about ‘religious dialogue in depth’ It is meaningless for people of different religions not to be good friends. What society should do is to offer some new points of view or opportunities for better interaction. In the past, I quoted many articles repeatedly but I don’t "preach" that so much anymore, I guess that I lost some interest over the years. People will lose interest if the same thing is often talked about repeatedly. It is like constantly being told to re-learn some that you have already done many times. More than twenty years ago, I began to have “religious dialogue in depth.”
Many of the dialogues were very deep. Many people cannot understand such dialogues. I think you may have a better chance to understand. But now, I cannot adequately describe this feeling.”

I said: “Certainly! It is the most important thing but since it is hard to articulate, people often misunderstand.”

Fr. Albert laughed and the atmosphere became lighter. He said: “I can write what ordinary people can understand. But I have written about this meaningful interaction many times, and I’ve also edited the article many times. However, I found that the more times I corrected my article, the worse I felt. My father told me that an article could not be published before it was corrected more than one hundred times. He said if we want to do a thing well --like religious dialogue--, we cannot do it well before we have held more than one hundred councils. The Fathers in the Asian district have influenced me the most, and we all understand ‘I am in you, you are in me, and we see peace on the faces of one another. ‘The churches and Buddhist organizations need such religious dialogue, but I cannot put my ideas into words properly. I just cannot find proper expressions.”

He went on, “I often go back to one particular article. Several sentences in the article changed my whole life. You know, we both had similar experiences. I remember several years ago when we met at the MRT Station at Xing Dian, and Heaven came along
with you. The period of those several minutes really
did affect my life because I really wanted to learn from
you. You were so peaceful, as if meeting with me was
a simple thing, but it was deeper than that. You came
as a couple and it had more influence.”

Strangely, Heaven and I often talked about what
happened at that particular day. In 1999, the Great
Earthquake 921 had just occurred. The hard rescue
work was under way. Before the manuscripts of the
monthly magazine ‘Company’ were turned in for
publication, we had planned to travel to Yilan to visit
our friends. Suddenly, Fr. Albert called to say that the
manuscriptshad just come in. He needed to give them
to me so that I could take them with me to Yilan where
I could check them at my convenience. I agreed and so
we made an appointment to meet at the MRT Station.
Since Heaven had often heard me speak of Fr. Albert
but had never met him, we went there together.
When we arrived at the MRT Station, Fr. Albert was already there. I waved my hand to him, and as usual, he was smiling happily and opened both of his hands wide in greeting. I have now forgotten what was even said that ordinary day and I wondered curiously why Fr. Albert remembered that particular day?

He explained, “Husband and wife understand each other better than any other people in the world. Why shouldn’t they? They have more and better chances to get together than do best friends. You two are blissful.

You are in a position as a couple to make contributions to society that I cannot, even though you are kind enough to tolerate me who has no wife and children. Heaven needs you but you need her, too. You walk hand in hand and step by step down the 'contribution road' and I need people of much experience like you. I would never feel "touched" if I only encountered people without experience.”

Touched? Was life so simple? I remembered that before marriage, Heaven and I were perplexed by love. We wanted to escape from a complicated and boring life. We had even considered becoming a Monk and Nun and forsaking the world, but the Holy Mother smiled and said: “You two have so many things that you cannot put aside. For instance, you have affection for your family. If you are willing to forsake everything for a life of such devoted service, affection must be forsaken too. Right now, you both think too much of love and your minds are obsessed. The
things in the world are like a cup of water. It takes one hundred years to be able to keep the mind as clear as water. If one side cannot forsake all, the other side will surely be influenced, so unless both sides can really forsake all else, it would be very hard to succeed!”

“Nowadays in the world, there seems to be fewer and fewer people who can treat each other with true love. Society is fickle and the mind is fickle, too. Human feelings of love vary. How can people choose among these? We should be considerate of others and forgive their behavior. For many people, what they can see and touch are only the things they like in their minds. Should we ask ourselves, “Do we treat others as well as we treat ourselves?” We love our spouses, but they are not our only “love” in the world. There are many important things waiting for us to do. If the things are worth doing, we need to complete them as soon as possible. If we leave the things uncompleted, we are sure to have regrets in the generations to come.”

“We have to ask ourselves what we want. We should see clearly who treats us with true love. We should treat others as we treat ourselves. In fact, a wife and children are a happy burden. The most blissful and best reward is to bring happiness to others!”

In marriage, “It is best to practice moral teachings together at the same time. Don’t let it happen that one goes first and then the other only follows!” Marriage enables me to grow faster. Many bad habits that I did
not know I had, before marriage are have become more evident to me because husband and wife live together from morning to night. I do know what impression I have made on others, but in order for a husband and wife to get along well and harmoniously, both sides have to learn to adjust themselves in a positive direction. To go forward positively, they need to practice moral teachings. They should remember to “pull” the other and help the other grow spiritually; otherwise, the one who is practicing moral teaching may become disgusted with the other for his or her “secularization”.

Heaven and I enjoy tranquility and we love living a simple life. We face ourselves honestly and hope that our inner thoughts can conform to our outer actions. We go from “adding wisdom not adding bliss” to “accumulating both wisdom and bliss”. Every person has faces unique demands and has their own roads to take. As for us, we hope that what we do is good for the human race. A monk who practices self-torture (applied asceticism) becomes used to a hard life. Other people cannot really understand his happiness and satisfaction. To become monks or nuns, what matters are not only the outer appearance but the inner determination. There are certain limitations on monks or nuns. Married individuals may have chances to touch some levels that monks or nuns cannot touch easily. We encourage each other and help each other in practicing moral teachings. We can be witnesses that
we can derive joy from living a simple life and that even a simple smile can bring hope.

Maybe on that day at the MRT Station, Fr. Albert saw this kind of simple happiness from our mutual smiles. In a way, maybe our meeting was like one described by Abhishiktananda.

Fr. Albert recalled “More than twenty years ago, had a complete experience in spirituality. I had not yet seen him or talked with him, but he was already very important in my life. I did not even have his photo. He was a Father of Le Saux of the OSB (Ordo Sancti Benedicti/Benedictines), France. He learned to Hindus in order to help the Catholic Church understand it. He only wrote down a few words. Religious dialogue is really too hard for many people to even understand, let alone write about. It takes time, too, and many people would not know what to talk about.

Personal life experience is very important and I don’t know what we can do to get round that, but I will always remember well the very moment we met. Alas! We sat together and talked much, but I am still unable to put my feelings into words.”

I asked, “Can we identify some means of helping people describe the depth of their religious feelings?”

Fr. Albert said, “I think we must learn how, as those who seek for faith are envious of believers who can talk about their religious experiences. Fr. Archbishop Fernandes of New Delhi, India, and we worked together for a long time and we traveled all over the
Asian districts. Sometimes only a few words passed between us. Sometimes we went to a quiet place and were moved right away. We had many chances to exchange our opinions but agreed that we could most often not find proper ways of expressing our feelings and thoughts. Now, here I have spent a whole hour reading these old articles and find that the more explanations I gave, the worse they were.”

I smiled and said: “I must be terrible for I am very talkative.” Fr. Albert also smiled: “This proves you have much experience. Ha!”

Fr. Albert quietly added: “I am convinced that in my memory, those who influenced me will have an impact on me that continues until my death. Maybe I will find the time of death more beautiful. Most of my experiences come from the Fathers and Sisters of the Roman Catholic Church who have touched me the most. I have deep experiences but am unable to describe them. Even in these recent days, we spent much time carrying on our religious dialogue but, perhaps we will not be able to write one thing that the other party can understand completely. We can only understand that the friendship between people can deepen.”

I said: “It depends! Friendship between people is fragile. A careless word or action may destroy many years of friendship.” Avoiding misunderstanding requires adequate communication. However, misdirected emotions may cause us to refrain from
dialogue. Someone said that human life is full of stories of fools who are full of sounds and emotions.

Fr. Albert said: “Therefore, in recent days I was very worried that the work we are facing might fail.”

I said: “Don’t be afraid! All we can do is to try our best!”

He responded, "I am an incurable pessimist" and then added, "The phrase "Don’t be afraid!" is very important. We are all human. We have brains and affections. Affections are very important but they must be connected with correct thoughts.” He pointed at the words on the computer monitor and said: “Those are words which touched many other people many years ago, but I wonder whether or not the same words can affect people now.”

Everyone has his or her own background as it relates to growth. Maybe a person will be affected by words, maybe not. We may be walking along the same road where we see similar views, but our responses may be very different. A person may be affected even if they are unable to express many things. For example, you may be unable to tell where you have gone and with whom you get along, but you can still understand each other. Maybe you can share your experiences with us, and it is possible we will find them not only touching, but similar to the ‘Enlightenment’ attained by some within the Christian faith of Christian religionists."

I asked: “Is the enlightenment which occurs in different religions, the same as the enlightenment that
occurs within the same religion?”

Fr. Albert answered: “Though I said religious dialogue is hard to promote, I cannot forget the impressions that God provided and affected me with at the age of twelve. I cannot forget. They have always remained clear in my mind. I often imagine that it will be my greatest bliss if I can have a dialogue with my late friends. I often think of the topics we talked on when they were alive. They talked about spiritual life. If someone feels that I am in him and he is in me, I thank him and he thanks me. We thank each other but there are no other ways of expressing our feelings. Perhaps, other people cannot understand. I do not care because we cannot expect everyone to have the same feeling.” Some things are to be understood in the mind but not to be understood by words.

Fr. Albert pointed to the painting on the wall given to him by Master Hsiao Yun. He said: “I did not talk much with Master Hsiao Yun but she presented me with that painting. I was so moved that even if we were never to meet again, I would never forget her. She was a distinguished scholar and I, just an ordinary person. While she was teaching in the university, her office was next to my “stable” and she said that we should have more dialogue. We were acquainted for many years. She was a philosopher and painter, and her accomplishments of religious faith were rather deep and very respectable. She had full experience. There were many important things in her life and
Religious Dialogue in Depth

Master Hsiao Yun used painting and carving to express her spiritual experiences.
she was able to express her feelings by painting. I remember that one day, I led a group of Catholic college students to practice moral teachings at her Buddhist reserve. All of a sudden, it rained "cats and dogs". Our clothes and shoes got wet and the ground was very muddy. Some students thought it wasn’t worth going all the way to her Buddhist reserve. However, we were mercifully blessed and had a very worthwhile visit, even though some students did not come to that awareness. Even though some did not even know her name, I will never forget that particular day and her tremendous assistance.

“In 2003, on the occasion of Master Hsiao Yun’s funeral, it rained heavily outside and there was water in my shoes. There were too many people but those few hours were very precious. How can I express this in words?"

Fr. Albert turned and spoke to Father Paul Batairwa, “These are often simple things, like the day in that Detroit hospital when Sense found that I felt uncomfortable. Originally, I was with another person in the same room but Sense arranged to live with me. I was a bit worried that I might die, but because he was with me, all my concerns and worries vanished like sand from the top of an hourglass. How do you put that into mere words?”

The shadows from the trees outside were wavering on the windows, with the tender light reflecting in
the room. Suddenly I felt that I was in harmonious surroundings. Fr. Albert became quiet, as if he had taken in too deep a breath. He said: “Now when I speak, I keep thinking of Master Hsiao Yun. She liked to call me “Teacher Albert”. These were simple feelings which we cannot express but can only experience. She used painting and carving to express her experiences. The friendship of deepest spirituality is different.”

How beautiful it is! Language can’t express the deep meaning of love. The transmission of love has its unique ways.

“Why do so many people enjoy being your friend?” I asked.

Fr. Albert said: “Perhaps it is because they seldom see so foolish a man as I. Ha!” We both laughed. "It turns out that the more foolish people are, the more friends they have".

“Have there been any international conferences that addressed spiritual experiences?” I asked.

Fr. Albert replied: “Yes. Once in Jordan, I talked about spiritual experiences and the experience of facing death. I felt these were meaningful but it is hard to reach a deep level. At an earlier time, we talked about ‘preaching (religion)’. Now we talk about mutual help, sharing cultures and faith, reflecting the idea that 『you are in me and I am in you』. There are too few people in Taiwan who have deep faith but through dialogue or the sharing of our experience, we
might offer an opportunity to grow spiritually.

He continued, "All the leaders of religious groups agree that, ‘Only by understanding other people’s faith, can we have deep dialogue. ‘ Most people start with this and then step further. Deep dialogue cannot be effective without mutual exploration. People of different faiths can live together lost in a shared tranquility."

“In others we feel ourselves and in ourselves we feel others. Accepting others and being accepted is the perfect ideal. God is in everyone. “What is more important is that we be conscious of the significance of others. We can help people of different religions become aware of their own bliss. What we need is not ordinary dialogue but deep dialogue.”

“In the past twenty years, I have explored many religions and it has enriched my life. I am still a Catholic Father and my faith is even deeper than it was. Oh! We are all family and we must learn from each other. Even if a person is of no faith, I will do my best to help him become aware of this. I am also a Buddhist and also a person of Hinduism. My duty is to help Taiwan society. My Heavens, if we only open the doors, my experience proves that we can make it.

Fr. Abhidshitananda is an example of a Catholic believer practicing in religious dialogue. The Roman Catholic Church is still not open enough and there is still room for progress. Formerly, Catholics believed that only the Roman Catholic Church was the one true
and holy faith. Now, we understand that you and I are family and we are siblings.

Our important duty is to cultivate people to be able to accept us and to encourage people of all religions to be able to accept one another.

If young people like you stand out to share this understanding, it is more meaningful. In view of my experience, the experience is bound to get richer each and every day.

What is religious dialogue? What good news does it bring? Its purpose is to help one understand the meaning in one’s life and know that life is related to that of everyone else around. It is to help them know how blessed they are. The dream can come true in just two or three generations, if people will listen and try to live it. However, it takes love to move the process along. We need to convince everyone to share the love and to join in religious dialogue in order to change or grow. Religious dialogue, too, may need to change and grow this concept is so simple. In the beginning, I also felt it was too difficult but later I myself learned from experience. I need to not only understand others’ faith, I need theirs, in order to steady my own faith. Don’t try to be a believer of all religions. It is impossible. You are supposed to act your role well in your own religious tradition by demonstrating the mercy that God gives us.”
Chapter 16

Am I a Good Father?
Fr. Albert had a very dear older friend named Teacher Chen who was in the publication business. Although Teacher Chen published many books about Catholicism, both he and his wife were Honorable Directors of the Buddhist Tzu-Chi Merit Society and his family members were Buddhists. Teacher Chen was an exception. He often said that he had two religious heroes: Buddhist Master Cheng Yen and Catholic Sister Theresa.

"How can a person follow two different religions?" Mrs. Chen had difficulty understanding her husband’s religious attitude. Just as she pondered this question, there appeared a Catholic priest who showed a very strong interest in Buddhism. It was very confusing to her, and Mrs. Chen often said jokingly that Fr.
Albert was a Buddhist without conversion, and her husband, Mr. Chen, was a Catholic without receiving baptism. Fr. Albert believed that Teacher Chen had a deep and special blessing that enabled him to be able to appreciate both religions, apparently without creating a conflict in his mind. Fr. Albert often visited Mr. Chen and they discussed how best to strike a good balance between Catholicism and Buddhism in religion dialogue.

One day, Teacher Chen called Fr. Albert and asked if he could, for the first time, come visit Fr. Albert in his office. Teacher Chen had just come back to Taiwan from a book exhibition in Japan and was in high spirits. With great interest, he examined the artifacts in Fr. Albert’s office. He laughed and said that while he had only two faiths, these objects indicated that Fr. Albert had many faiths. Their conversation centered around Fr. Albert’s work, and they covered many topics during the two hours that they talked.

Before leaving, Chen suddenly said to Fr. Albert: “If some day I were to have a stroke, lose my ability to speak and were likely to die soon, would you baptize me into the Catholic religion?”

Taken by surprise, Fr. Albert replied: “What are you talking about? You are healthy and your family members are Buddhists. I cannot baptize you.” But Teacher Chen seemed determined. He persisted and asked Fr. Albert if he could entrust him with this important request: “I am serious. Please help me get...
baptized. Don’t tell my wife until the day of baptism.”

After Teacher Chen left, Fr. Albert called Teacher Chen’s wife right away to tell her that Teacher Chen was acting somewhat strangely. He warned her to keep a watchful eye on him. Just four days later, Fr. Albert was stunned as he learned that Teacher Chen had, indeed, had a major stroke. Fr. Albert hurried to the hospital and joined Teacher Chen’s family members as they waited for several hours outside the emergency room. When they got to see Teacher Chen, he was sitting in a wheelchair. The stroke had affected his facial muscles, and he had no control of his lower face. He could not speak clearly. He was no longer the man he had been—vibrant, humorous and interesting. Fr. Albert held his hands and told him to rest while he prayed for him.

While Teacher Chen was confined to bed, Fr. Albert often went to see him. The two just sat and talked little, as Fr. Albert quietly demonstrated his concern. One day, Teacher Chen told Fr. Albert: “If I leave the world earlier than my wife, I ask that you and Master Cheng Yen arrange a good funeral ceremony for me.” Fr. Albert gave his promise to help do so.

Soon, Teacher Chen was transferred to Hualien for rest, and he and Fr. Albert could no long visit as much.

One day five years later, Fr. Albert received a telephone call from Mrs. Chen saying that her husband was in a poor condition. She requested that Fr. Albert
travel to Hualien. Fr. Albert hurried to TZU CHI Hospital by plane. It was already eight o’clock when he arrived at the hospital ICU and there were already many people gathered around Teacher Chen. Teacher Chen lay on the bed with many tubes connecting to his body, and he looked pale and old. His eyes were tightly closed. Mrs. Chen said her husband had not spoken nor opened his eyes for several days. Fr. Albert was quite aware that Teacher Chen appeared to be preparing to face death, and he sat on the bed holding Teacher Chen’s hands tightly.

Mrs. Chen said quietly but firmly: “Father, I have had a discussion with my children. We want you to convert him to Catholicism.” Fr. Albert was surprised. The request was put forward actively by Mrs. Chen. Fr. Albert thought carefully and said; “I am sorry! I cannot give my consent. He has his own way to enter Heaven.”

Mrs. Chen continued earnestly: “Fr. Albert, please believe me. I understand my husband. I know he thinks highly of Buddhism, but I also know his greatest wish is to become a Catholic. My children also agree that his way of faith is Catholic.” Fr. Albert was in a dilemma and replied, “But Teacher Chen is unable to speak now and I wonder whether he has enough knowledge of Catholicism or whether he really wants to become a Catholic.”

Mrs. Chen said with determination: “He believes in you, and we also believe in you.”
At last, Fr. Albert agreed. About Ten o’clock in the evening when the ICU nurses changed the tubes for Teacher Chen. While his family members gathered around his bed with their hands crossed respectfully Fr. Albert, holding a bottle of holy water, stood in front of Teacher Chen and blessed him. Then Fr. Albert knelt beside his bed and prayed. He praised God for letting him became acquainted with such a good friend. Fr. Albert continued by saying, “Teacher, now you are leaving us and though you never got converted or baptized, your wife and children who are here beside you, know your desire and have asked to have you baptized as a Catholic. To meet your wish, I, by the authority of the Holy Roman Catholic Church, now baptize you. You are baptized as a Catholic, in the name of the Holy Trinity, God, the Father, God, the Son, and God, the Holy Spirit. Amen!”

As soon as Fr. Albert said this prayer, Teacher Chen opened his eyes and smiled. He did not speak but he gave his family members a clear and definite expression that he was now at peace. Fr. Albert was the only Catholic present and though all of the others present were Buddhists, they were moved to tears by the magnificent ceremony of this different religion. The funeral of Teacher Chen was arranged to be held in TZU CHI, Taipei and there was another funeral mass held in the Catholic Church where there were many Buddhists, along with monks and nuns in the holy hall. In this manner, Fr. Albert shared his
mysterious mercy with others.

Fr. Albert said: “Our friendship and resulting spiritual dialogue is very precious to me, and although Teacher Chen lost consciousness, he still knows my voice. We can still communicate with my hands. Though he cannot speak, we all respect his choice of faiths. Perhaps we will someday meet in paradise.”

When Fr. Albert recalled this experience, he was always touched. However, he carefully tried to avoid changing other person’s belief lest he cause controversy and bring harm to the course of religion dialogue. On the other hand, he did not want Catholics to be misunderstand either, so he did his best to avoid giving others any reason to think that he was not a good Catholic Father.

Speaking of Teacher Chen, Fr. Albert said: “His life and my life had deep experiences at the same moment. We faced critical moments in our lives together. There was no distance between him and me. Most people understand that faith cannot be abandoned. It may not be easy to believe a father who thinks so much of promoting friendship between different religions. I have been devoted to religion dialogue for more than thirty years, and I ‘respect every person and I especially respect his faith.’ My chairman has never said that my attitude is wrong and we have sponsored many international conferences. Most importantly we need to cultivate spiritual dialogue
between people. However, we must be very careful, as some people do not understand and do not want any religious dialogue. They believe that only the religion they believe in is correct and possesses unique truths."

“What can we do to help them?” I asked.

Fr. Albert responded: “It is unfortunate but we must wait for a more opportune time. The wish of our God is that we respect others and to respect their wishes.”
Chapter 17

We Are Family
April 8, 2007 was an important day. April 8 is the birthday of Buddha. Coincidentally, in 2007 it was Easter for the Catholics. (The first Sunday after March 21 every year) It was a rare coincidence which only occurs once each one hundred years. Fr. Albert called to say “Happy Buddha’s Birthday”. (Actually, I had almost forgotten. Thanks to Fr. Albert, he reminded me of it.) He said he had taken part in an unforgettable mass. He wished that he could join in activities celebrating Buddha birthday. In earlier year, he was always invited by Buddhist groups to make speeches as a Father. He wished to bless the Buddhists. But this year his physical condition was too poor to allow him to be present at the activities. He said he would call some masters later. He would like to say that although he could not go and join with them, his spirit was always with them. If more Catholics could join in Buddhist activities and more Buddhists could join in Catholic mass, the interchange and interaction would surely help both sides understand each other better.

The next day, there were news reports about the two festivals on the same page in the newspapers, both small in scope and balanced but without commentary. This was predictable. The media are not interested in routine religious ceremonies. No wonder, many
religious activities can do nothing but to “let karma run its course”. There are some religious groups which focus on “enterprise operation (management)” and which emphasize management and cost benefits. I have doubts that this is the best way for religious groups to operate. If the motives are wrong, how is it possible to have good results? Little wonder, Master Lian Chan once sighed and said: “Nowadays many people believe in Buddhism but few people worship Buddha; of the people who worship Buddha, few people learn from Buddha; of the people who learn from Buddha few people practice Buddhism; of the people who practice Buddhism, few people justify Buddhism.” Buddha preached “The Middle Way”, which helps one focus on mercy and wisdom. However, it is not enough to study without practicing mercy or getting wisdom.

Originally, I intended to return to Kaohsiung on Tomb Sweeping Festival (Day) in 2007. Since it was the second year after the death of my father, my mother was still sad and upset. I know I should go back home to keep my mother company, but I was too busy to go back to Kaohsiung so I asked for my mother’s understanding. I thought my father would surely pardon me. Where did this self-confidence come from? Would he pardon me? There is no connection between life and death, so how could I be sure?

Every time I comfort my mother, I advise her against feeling upset. I often say that my father passed away but in fact he did not leave us. He would come
into my dreams and tell me his matters. He is, as it were, still alive. He can still communicate with us except that he does not exist in our dimension. My mother doesn’t believe this. She said that I only say the same words to comfort her. I told her that the books I have read document this. The experiences I have had prove this too. There is no need to deceive her.

The lovers will meet in Heaven some day at last!

Before my father passed away, I had a dream that my aunt was suffering from lung cancer and my father went together to join in observing the “Eight Precepts”. Through such observances lay Buddhists can experience the life of monks and nuns and thus cultivate their roots of goodness. I hoped all my family members would attend “Eight Precepts” training my father gave his consent but he did not know where the activity was held. Not long after, I was told my aunt died of lung cancer. Then came the bad news that my father had pulmonary tuberculosis.

I was extremely worried about my father getting cancer. Luckily, the X-ray examination was negative and the possibility of my father’s pulmonary tuberculosis resulting in cancer was low. I thought I could rest assured, but after a month, my father started coughing as badly as before. He gasped badly even when he went to the toilet. We took him to another
hospital for more examination. To our surprise, his lung cancer was now diagnosed as “Phase IV”. The lung cancer cells had spread to his brain and skeleton. My brother cried on the telephone when I broke the bad news.

Last year, I got the idea that if my father could live another ten years to the age of eighty and if I went home twice a year, we would be able to meet only about twenty times. When I thought of this, I couldn’t help feeling upset. I told my wife I had decided to go home more often. However, I was too optimistic in my calculations, as the time of his passing came much sooner.

It fell to me, to personally go to the ward and inform my father of the real facts involving his illness. He was shocked. How could it be that bad? He asked how much more time he had left and I answered that the doctor estimated he had about three months more. For a long time, he remained silent. Then in his usual pragmatic manner, he began to give me instructions regarding certain things that needed to be done to make preparations. He also asked me not to relate these facts to my mother. I agreed but I was simply appeasing him and I knew that I would have to tell her as soon as I had the opportunity. After all, he was just following the advice of the Hospice to allow the living and the dying to all rest assured.

In order to take working on of my father, I slowly sought to release myself from the work I was doing,
including the book on religious dialogue. Fr. Albert was considerate of my needs and wanted me to take good care of myself. He also prayed for my father’s health. In that period, I was looking forward to a miracle, but life is something that we cannot command, let alone demand. If he was destined to leave the world, I hoped he could leave peacefully. Anyway, all human beings are mortal.

There was a master who was then holding “Eight Precepts” training in Kaohsiung. He was Master Ti Ching and he had once had cancer, so I listened to his lectures on TV. Heaven’s mother joined in Master Ti Ching’s Dharma Sabha sermon and said Master Ti Chang was very intense. He had the power of touching people. Miraculously, he had survived cancer and had given his oath to preach Buddhism for the rest of his life.

I attended the Dharma Sabha in the name of my father. There were crowds of people. Each person had his own reason for participating in the Dharma Sabha and the ceremony lasted for a whole day. There were endless “bowing repentances, worshiping of Buddha and chanting of Sutras”. Master Ti Ching was really serious. He went up and down in the ceremony to cleanse everybody and to release misfortune. While he was carrying on his preaching, he advised everybody to think of Buddha every day not just on the first day and the fifteen day of every month lunar calendar. It is necessary to practice moral teachings seriously.
Life is unpredictable! His lecture was simple and understandable. This was the basic Buddhism. At a time of life or death, every word was impressive.

I converted my father to become a Buddhist with the adopted name of “Juei Wu”. I explained to my father the meaning of conversion and of the “five precepts”. My father smiled and nodded. His cancer had softened his hard temper. I suggested he could repeat “Amitabha Buddha” or “Avalokiteshvara/Mercy Buddha” anytime. To my surprise, his answer was “That’s impossible!” He said Karma varied with people and that we did not need to force him.

Life flows like this! It is always hardest to get through to the key point! I thought of those sisters with breast cancer. Ninety-nine percent of their fellow patients were egotists. They have the character of stubbornness and finding fault with others. The result is the reflection of “ill things” in their bodies. Wasn’t my father one of these examples? I could not force him but only bless him. To friends I cannot do anything more but give my sincere blessing. To my family members I do the same.

In those days, my mother was really tired out. In the afternoon, I saw her sleeping soundly on the sofa. Back in the ward, I had felt the strong feeling of truly loving these people very much. For them, I was
willing to forsake anything, and I only wished that they might be at peace.

I took care of my father all day long in the ward. My father told the nurses jokingly that I was his “Taiwanese servant.” At night, my father had to go to the toilet, every half hour. He was unable to walk by himself, so I had to get up to help and chat with him. However, this gave us the opportunity to talk more and for this I felt thankful. We talked about how my parents had fallen in love and about my childhood and the miracles of faith.

I washed his hair and shaved his beard. He looked neat, clean and comfortable. I touched his cheeks. He smiled and said; Lovely!” When I warmed his face with a hot towel, he gave out a sign of enjoyment. I smiled and said, “Comfortable?” He looked contented and answered, “I have no regrets in my life!”

I asked my father whether there was anything I had done about which he felt discontented. He said he was contented with everything I had done. I asked if he felt hungry. He waved his head and said "No", even when in fact, he had eaten nothing for a long time. I said: “You eat nothing. Are you going to be a god?” My father laughed: “Not a god. It’s this sickness.” I said: “A few days ago, if my brother had not sent you to the emergency, you might have been gone.” My father replied, “I had hoped to leave this world earlier.” I realized that he did not want to burden us more.

I said: “I have told you that a person can leave the
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world without pain. There is no need to suffer from pain. There is hospice care.” It turned out that my father had misunderstood, thinking that hospice care was the same as euthanasia (mercy killing). I told my father my brother and I would be responsible for things. It was better to die in bed of old age (to die a natural death) but if that was not to be, it was better to leave peacefully. If possible, we prayed to Buddha to give him ten more years so that perhaps, he and my mother might leave this world together and we could bury them together.

My father said: “I am very touched to hear your filial plan.” My father kept saying: “I feel so blissful to not only have a virtuous wife but also to have you and your younger brother--children who show so much dedication to filial duty.”

I thought to myself: “Come on, father!” This is the beginning of practicing moral teachings. I hope there is still time! I pray that if this is the unknown cause and effect, that I can be willing to bear the burden.”

There was not sufficient oxygen in the blood of my father so he wore a mask of high-pressure oxygen. His lethargic sleeping became longer and longer. In the night, I often looked at him. His chest heaved with each breath and his hands and his face began to look like Fr. Albert's had looked in Detroit. Still I expected another miracle. "Buddha!" I prayed for help!

Every time my brother and I left the ward, my mother sat on the bed holding my father’s hands. This
expressed the marriage vow, "Holding your hand, I swear to grow old together with you!"

In the evening, Heaven also came back to Kaohsiung to accompany us in the hospital. A few days ago, I had told her why Father tolerated his pain. She said most of the patients did not want to encumber his or her family. Heaven’s father also died of cancer. The grief of her family lasted until Heaven began to practice Buddhist teachings.

Life or death is irresistible change. To see our beloved ones go through this transition is a kind of preparation and also a source of lasting grief. Thanks to Buddha, Father almost did not suffer from much pain. This was a great comfort. I found Father was losing his consciousness. Whenever he was unconscious, I shouted at him: “Father, do you know who I am?” At the sound of my scream, Father woke up. Beneath the respirator: “You are Shi Xian.” The voice seemed to come from another world. He found my facial expression strange: “What are you worrying about?” I answered, “Nothing at all,” when in fact, it pained me terribly to see Father like this!

In the afternoon, Father’s condition got worse and worse. I called for the doctor at once. The doctor said that the level of Carbon dioxide in his blood was too much. He put on a filter for my father. In ten minutes, Father became more conscious. His eyes were clear. He told me: “I insist on getting out of the hospital. I am eager to stay home for at least one night.”
He passed away on February 28. This is a day of remembrance of the suffering of the Taiwanese people, (on February 28, 1947, a serious conflict between Taiwanese and non-Taiwanese broke out in Taiwan and until now deep hard-to-heal wound has continued to exist.

I asked: “Did you talk with them?” I meant Buddha in the Heaven. Father nodded.

In the night, Mother and other family members came to the hospital. Father was glad and said hello to the grandchildren. Thankfully, the children did not know or care about life and death and played happily in the ward. The family members all came to the hospital. Father sat up and said he was leaving, but Mother wouldn’t permit him to keep saying so. Then, Father admitted that he knew it was impossible. "All is set", he said. This caused Mother to burst into tears as she sat holding Father’s hands. Mother said: “You cannot leave me alone. Didn’t you say you will live to be eighty years of age? We will pray to Buddha to let you live some more years.” But Father said everything was decided and there was no possibility of changing the decision. Father comforted Mother by saying she was growing more and more beautiful. Mother burst out crying again.

That night, I asked Mother to stay for the night. But she could not fall asleep. I pulled the sofa near to Father’s bed and let Mother hold Father’s hand when
she slept. I slept on other side of the bed and held his hand, too. I just took a short nap and at midnight, Father came to his consciousness and said, “If you did not ask the doctor about me getting out of the hospital, just forget it.” Mother was glad to hear this and so was I. Was there still a chance or was Father saying this only to comfort Mother?

The next day (February 27), though, Father urged me again to arrange his release from the hospital. I answered that I had to wait for the doctor for his permission. I said: “Didn’t you say that you will hold on? Don’t give up. We can wait for more evaluation results.” I didn’t think his conditions was so serious terrible. I even asked Mother to go home for rest. But Mother insisted on staying. I could do nothing but respect her decision, as each time they were together might be the last. Mother was too sad to know what to say. She just fondled Father’s hands and looked at his face. I tried to leave them alone together as much as possible.

There was nothing to but wait and observe until afternoon when the doctor made the rounds of the patient wards. Outside the ward, I told him that my father wanted to get out of the hospital and go home. The doctor said that my father still needed constant oxygen and the ambulance did not have such equipment. He might die any minute during the trip. The doctor asked whether or not my father needed tubes in case of emergency. My brother and I respected
my father’s wish. If it was just prolongation, there was no need for such emergency measures. As for getting out of the hospital, the doctor said there was no possibility unless the oxygen levels in my father’s blood rose to 65.

I asked the doctor to explain my father’s physical condition to members of my family. Everybody knew the worst condition was coming. My father seemed to feel lighter and urged my mother to go home. Father and I were alone in the ward with the hot afternoon sun. Father was hallucinating and repeated the same things. I held my father’s hands tight and asked him to read Buddha scriptures with me. My father said he liked “Avalokiteshvara” and we chanted “Avalokiteshvara”. And we repeated “Avalokiteshvara” again and again. I looked out of the window and prayed. I hoped the scriptures could help soften the debtors of my father and could give my father some more time. He could do something good for society. The clouds outside the windows and the trees on the ground started waving in the wind and they seemed to hear my prayer. I saw the oxygen in my father’s blood rise from 71 to 80, then to 85 to 90 and to 91. I was so excited that I had tears in my eyes. I told my father it was of use to read Buddha scriptures. We went on reading prayers for more than two hours, the longest time I had ever read prayers!

Not long after that, my brother called to say my father was showing remarkable improvement.
Everybody was glad. About half an hour later, the doctor made his rounds again. I told him about the rise in blood oxygen. He was also glad but said my father’s condition required more observation and that we couldn’t depend on this temporary improvement. As soon as the doctor left the room, my father’s face turned pale and twisted. He looked terrible. His blood oxygen level dropped way down and this made the machines scream. I called the nurses, and then there was utter confusion. Many machines were pulled in. The nurses asked whether my father needed emergency resuscitation. I shook my head in the negative, and the doctor told us that Father's condition was very serious and that we probably should just take him home.

I telephoned my brother and I told him that I was going to bring Father back home. I told my brother should put everything in order and put hot water in the bathtub.

In the ambulance, I sat beside my father, held his hands and said, “Father, we are going home.” Though Father wore a gas mask, he smiled. His facial expression was peaceful and beautiful. I think I will never forget it!

We bathed Father and put the certificate of conversion in his pocket. He was still conscious and he was even more responsive than in the hospital. He still remembered his Dharma Name was “Jiei Wu”. Fr. Albert, Father Paul Batairwa, Aunt Wu, and many
friends telephoned to show their concern. They said they would pray and chant scriptures for my father. I told my father and he cried. That was the first time I saw and heard him cry. On the night of February 28, my father passed away peacefully as he had predicted. In connection with his death, there were many seemingly impossible things that happened. I felt grateful. My father’s last word for all relatives and friends was: “Cherish our (your) meetings”.

_In this life_
_I cannot forget two cries_
_One, the beginning of my life_
_The other, the end of your life_
_The first time, I do not remember, you told me_
_The second, you cannot know, there is no use to say_
_But in the time between the two cries_
_There is no end of laughter_
_One time after another_
_Echoing for thirty years_
_You know all, and I remember all_

Every time I read this poem “Cherishing the Memory of Mother” by Professor Yu Guangzhong, I cannot help recalling the night of my father’s death. On that night, several senior fellow brothers and sisters of the “Promise that Abode” took turns chanting scriptures at our home. According to the Buddhism ceremony, they chanted scriptures heartily and
magnificently, as if the late person was their beloved one.

They came in silence and after two hours they went away without asking for anything. They did not want to bother the family who were all sad and busy with funeral preparations. As they disappeared slowly into the dark lanes and valleys, and I was both embarrassed and touched. We were complete strangers but they were willing to sacrifice so much. This was the night of guarding the coffin and they, too, were now my family.

After Father died, I dreamed of him almost every night. Was I missing him too much? I did not know. Our affection for each other that spanned two different dimensions was of great comfort and the times when I drifted off into dreamland was very beautiful, (otherwise, the living would be very much worried). In my latest dream, it was already the time of one hundred days since my father had died. He said his bus was leaving. He was peaceful and he asked me to take care of the sick as I took care of him and as I treat my family members.
We Are Family

The lovers will meet in Heaven some day at last!
Chapter 18

The Sacrifice on the Cross
I still remember the first time I read about Buddha’s Death, I felt upset and wondered why, since Sakyamuni had become “Buddha,” couldn’t he get beyond reincarnation and became immortal? Did his death mean only the physical disappearance of flesh?

My experiences over time have enabled me to come to the understanding that if Sakyamuni—Buddha—had
not passed away, people would not have been able to cherish him forever. People do not cherish what they have until they lose it. How about Jesus? Despite his death, he survived. Does survival refer to the “flesh” or “spirit”?

Truth, goodness and beauty are what exist in the world. In the Tien Educational Center, the survival of Jesus is symbolized with a crucifix. Fr. Albert’s cross was very special. It seemed to be made of two golden circles beaten flat. Fr. Albert connected them with a simple thin string and attached the symbolic body of Jesus.

In 1975, Fr. Albert went to Rome for a council meeting. On the way, he stopped at his home in France to baptize the child of his brother. It had been seven years since he had returned home.

On the day of the Baptism, Fr. Albert’s parents and his all family listened to his sermon which he based on the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans: “You are baptized in the death of Jesus.” He explained the close connection between baptism, rebirth, and the death of Jesus and said: “Don’t you understand when we are baptized as Christians, we are baptized under his death?”

To mention death at the ceremony of baptism would be considered bad taste in Chinese tradition. However, Fr. Albert thought he would use this opportunity when all of his family was present, to repay them by sharing, his most precious understanding about the salvation of mankind through the death of Jesus and hence through baptism.

He wondered how his family would respond to his
sermon. To his surprise, his parents walked near the pulpit and said they approved of his sermon. His father said, “Father, please tell your brother, If some day we die earlier than you, remember that what you say today will enable us to leave the world peacefully.”

Much to the surprise of Fr. Albert, his parents died instantly six days later, in a terrible traffic accident.

When Fr. Albert was informed of the bad news, he hurried to the morgue to identify the badly mutilated bodies of his parents. Mercifully, he did not let others enter the morgue lest the sight might destroy their perfect mental image of his parents. Alone, Fr. Albert considered the corpses of his parents with tears in his eyes. He prayed for them and cleaned their bodies. Because his parents had encouraged him and praised him on the day of the baptism, he peacefully accepted the pain of their loss. After Fr. Albert cleaned their bodies, he gently kissed their faces for the last time.
Fr. Albert told me: “On the day after my parents’ death, we had originally planned to hold a celebration party for my niece’s baptism, so we arranged a lot of food and wine. Even though a terrible accident had claimed the lives of my parents, we knew that they were at peace so we held the activity as scheduled.”

Fr. Albert delivered the funeral mass for his parents. On that day, many of his parents’ friends joined in the funeral ceremony. They were, of course, sad about the accident and the loss of two such good people. An elderly woman stood up to share her experience of participating in Fr. Albert’s parents’ wedding ceremony. She clearly remembered that the newly married couple had three wishes: “1) We wish that our oldest son will become a Father; 2) that we can support and respect each other in our married life and 3) that we can leave the world together. Their dream came true so there is really no need to show grief.”

In Fr. Albert’s office, he pointed at the small letters in script style on his crucifix and said, “These are the names of my parents. I took the rings off their fingers with my own hands. Later, my family members made the rings into this cross and gave it to me. I often think of my parents. They were devout Catholics, but they encouraged their children to learn from other religions. They once told me that it was very important for me to be devoted to religious dialogue.

Even though I cannot help but be sad that my parents are gone, I feel peaceful and assured. I am a
Catholic who follows Catholic teachings from baptism through death. However, I still respect the ideas and ideals of other religions. People of different religions should make an effort to help all others understand the meaning of life. I am convinced that the purpose of my life is to see Jesus’ image in everyone.”

"I have told you all this so that you may find peace in me. In this world, you will have hardship but be courageous: I conquered the world." (Gospel of John 16:33)

After he handled the funeral of his parents in 1976, Fr. Albert returned to Taiwan and functioned as the counselor of “The Alliance of the Catholic Social Young Men Associations”. In 1978, America broke off diplomatic relations with Taiwan and although Taiwan was going through a terrible political situation, religious groups were not repressed. On the contrary, they could freely seek to promote their ideals.

In the same year, Fr. Albert founded the “Asian Religious Dialogue Center” in answer to Bishop Michael Rodrigo’s request. Fr. Albert acted as the Executive Secretary of the “Religious Dialogue Operation Association of Jesus Society in Southeast Asia.” With the following meaningful aims, he organized an “International Symposium on Religious Dialogue” and in 1980, he set up the “Committee of Religious Dialogue and Cooperation in the Tien Educational Center:
1. To help fellow brothers and sisters of the Jesus Society in the Taiwan district to understand more the importance and urgency of religious dialogue and cooperation.

2. To cultivate fellow Catholic brothers and sisters in respecting other religions and to accept the believers of different religions.

3. To arrange for fellow brothers and sisters of the Jesus Society in the Taiwan district to visit churches, temples, Buddhist sites, cultural centers of religious groups as well as educational and social welfare institutions.

4. To receive leaders of different religions and people of different religious groups in visiting the Tien Educational Center and other activity centers of the Jesus Society.

He also added the following, "Though the objects of our aims are only the fellow brothers and sisters of the Jesus Society and we do not cover lay Catholics, the depth of dialogue still remains on the stage, so as to establish friendship. In comparison to the narrow religious conceptions held for the past two thousand years, we have made great strides. However, the aims of religious dialogue are still urgent and we need to make every effort to fulfill them.

In the same year, Fr. Albert got a “letter of appointment” from the Pope to act as “Counselor of Vatican Religious Dialogue”. The appointment
was to be valid for five years at a time. However, Fr. Albert served for fifteen years in total. In the field of religious dialogue, there were only twenty counselors from all over the world and Fr. Albert was the only one in Taiwan. With support from the Roman Catholic Church, Fr. Albert traveled all over Asia. He got to go abroad every month. He visited India, Bangladesh, Korea and Japan in order to get acquainted with religious leaders. He regularly got together with the bishops in Asian districts and they discussed how to accomplish the ideals embodied in “Live and Let Live / Peaceful Co-existence”. Additionally, every year he joined other councils, along with the more than twenty counselors of religious dialogue. These enriching experiences widened his insights but also made him feel the importance of his mission more and more heavily. He arranged twelve religious
symposiums in the Asian district and in 1992, had all of the documents published. The title, “Pioneer of Taiwan Religious Dialogue” was well-deserved as he paved the way for a sound foundation in Taiwan for Catholic-led religions dialogue and he nurtured valuable cooperation between Taiwan religions and international religious groups.

During this long period of time, Fr. Albert became acquainted with three Catholic fathers who had profound influence on him. One of the three fathers was an Indian bishop named Fr. Michael Rodrigo who served in Bangladesh. The second was a Philippine bishop named Fr. Benny Tudrud. The other was a Sri Lanka theologian named Fr. Amalor Paradass who was devoted to social work.

Over a period of several years in the late twentieth century, the three fathers died. Father Maluo, who had written many books about theology and religious dialogue died in a traffic accident. Fr. Benny Tudrud, who helped with the religious dialogue between Catholics and Muslims, taught that: “the true love of religious dialogue is the love between religions”. One time he had forewarned that when he died no one would be able to find his ring. He died in a plane crash where they were unable to find his body, let alone his ring. Bishop Michael Rodrigo who was devoted to helping the poor, was shot to death by a rich religious fanatic. He was in the middle of saying mass and the altar was covered with his blood.
Fr. Albert said with a sigh: “Those with whom I have had religious dialogue in depth are all gone. I am the only one left in the world.”

I believe the deaths of these holy men was much like the sacrifice of Jesus who was nailed on the cross for the sins of mankind and also like the sacrifice of Buddha who forsook honor and richness to help people overcome the confines of this world. How many more people will need to sacrifice their lives if we cannot stop religious fanatics from thinking that their religion is such a unique truth that they are willing to commit murder to further it? How can we make them understand the basic principle of love and peace? Even young pupils can understand the principle:

“If people love the world and love one another and if they love others as well as they love themselves, will there be anyone who does not practice filial piety? If people look upon father, brother and His Majesty as themselves, will there be people without filial piety or without mercy? If people regard disciples and courtiers as themselves, will there be anyone without mercy? If people are filial and merciful, how possible is it to have bandits? If people see the houses of others as their own houses, who will steal? If people consider others’ bodies as their own bodies, who will be self-abandoned to be thieves? Therefore, there will be no bandits or thieves. Will there be senior officials
who make their families in disorder? Will there be dukes who attack one another? Who dares? If a country recognizes other countries as its own country, what country will aggress upon others?” ---《Mozi, Universal Love 1》

Once when Fr. Albert went abroad to visit Bandung, Indonesia, he was warned of reported cases of Catholics being kidnapped by Muslims. This was near the time that, Bishop Michael Rodrigo had been shot, and the situation was fairly tense. The priests of the Jesus Society warned Fr. Albert that he should not go out at random so as to avoid putting himself in danger. But Fr. Albert did not follow their advice. He decided to visit a mosque looked at the foot of a mountain.

Fr. Albert recalled, “I found it was a sunny beautiful day. I just went down the mountain, walking farther and farther. Suddenly there appeared a number of people who surrounded me. They had guns and it appeared that they were Muslims. I was not worried and said that I was an old friend of Bishop Michael Rodrigo’s but more importantly, I was also a true friend of Muslims. I asked, “May I visit your mosque?” They had a short discussion, then agreed to lead me there. The Muslims in the mosque were nervous at the sight of me. I explained that I just wanted to talk with them, but they said they had to make preparations. They brought a video recorder
to tape our conversation. We had a long talk and afterwards, the Muslim accompanying me said that since they did not know who I was, they wanted to have a record in case something unpleasant happened. He said, "But then, we heard you speak so many good things about Muslims. We never thought a Catholic priest could have such great love." Later, they even escorted me back to the monastery where the other Priests were preparing to go to the mosque with guns to rescue me.”

Fr. Albert said, “The best benefit of religious dialogue is the establishment of true friendship. Even if I were to return to those places now, they would regard me as their best friend. Some people may think I took the wrong approach and do not act as a priest should act. In the beginning, H. E. Jozef Cardinal Tomko in charge of religious dialogue in the Vatican had a different opinion about what I was doing. At the time, I was younger and not afraid to speak up, nor was I afraid of criticism. Every year, I had to travel to Rome to make reports. One year, I got a phone call from Cardinal Tomko asking that I come for a meeting, so I agreed. To go to the meeting, I had to borrow a friend's Priest’s attire because I did not own a set. The appointment was at 8:00 a.m., and I nervously arrived early. The Cardinal was a very important figure in the Roman Catholic Church. At 7:50 a.m., he entered the office.

I immediately stood up and said, ‘Archbishop, thank
you for inviting me to come here. May I introduce myself?’ He said: ‘Not necessary! I have already known who you are for a long time. I have heard what you think of me, but today I want to know more what you are thinking about.’ We talked pleasantly for quite a long time. He said that every year from now on when I came to Rome, I should leave some time for a talk with him.”

Previously, Cardinal Tomko had not understood what religious dialogue was all about. I believe that through our dialogue, I helped him to understand better. He was senior to me and had more experience and a deeper knowledge of theology than I but we established a friendship. The Chairman-in-General of the Jesus Society said that in Rome there was not a single priest like me who was on good terms with Cardinal Tomko. The last time I had a talk with him was when I was ready to leave the Vatican. Cardinal Tomko was away for a week but his secretary told me that the Cardinal had hoped to arrange a dialogue. I said, “I am sorry but I am scheduled to leave Rome the day before his return”. To my surprise, my plane was delayed. His secretary called to say the Cardinal had returned and asked me whether I would like to talk with him. I, of course, said ‘Yes’, and we then talked by phone, for a long time. When I returned, I informed the Chairman-in-General who said, ‘Could it be possible?’ Indeed it was, and it had happened just like that!”

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Fr. Albert said: “In 1982, the Jesus Society held a conference in Sri Lanka. The Archbishop, the Secretary-in-General of the Religious Dialogue Center in Rome Mgr. Rossano, and I spent a whole week promoting religious dialogue to every parish. The Bishops said that they were willing to listen to our ideas but wanted us to make them clear. To my surprise, they mentioned my name as the speaker. I was admittedly a little nervous. I closed my eyes for a few minutes and prayed to God saying, ‘you know Lord, that I am not able to answer these questions. Nor, can the Archbishop or Mgr. Rossano do so. Give me strength because I am not sure that I can handle it well enough.’ Later, I asked God to talk through me because I needed to ‘Let go and let God’. After my speech, the audience gave me a big hand. That night, the Archbishop knocked on my door apologizing because it was very late. He said, ‘I would like to show my gratitude. You clearly gave us the necessary answers.’ I said: ‘It’s not me, but God!’ I did not have enough wisdom to conceive the content. I am nothing but an ordinary small-time priest. I completely put myself in the hands of God. I am only God’s instrument. I believe that adherents of Buddhism and Taoism can also have the same experience.’ Later, the Chairman-in-General said to me: ‘We need to cultivate young people and let them understand the mercy of Buddha, Jesus and Allah.’
On October 27, 1986, the Pope held World Rogation Days (World Prayer Days) in Assisi. In the 34th council, the Jesus Society introduced a document entitled Our Mission and Interreligious Dialogue.” The Society declared, “What is most important, is that we need to be more open under the leadership of God so that we can cooperate closely and sincerely with the brothers and sisters of other religions. We should accompany one another in a brother-like atmosphere and together, fulfill the goals God expects us to.”

In fact, Fr. Albert was not satisfied with the declaration. The purpose of religious dialogue is
not simply friendship or social service. “Religious
dialogue-in-depth” is beyond the declaration-makers’
understanding. Though this declaration was far
from satisfactory, he believed it could be accepted
as a beginning. At least under the declaration all the
Fathers of Jesus Society were encourage to now start
to think deeply about this. Unfortunately, many of
the Fathers were not prepared in their minds. Fr.
Albert’s abundant experience helped make up for this
deficiency.

I believe that Catholicism needs is not only theory,
but more time to cultivate deeper dialogue and
experience.

Fr. Albert said “My only concern is that I have
become a “monster” in my own church. It hurts me
badly. Nobody invites me to make a speech about my
ideas.”

When Fr. Albert first came to the Tien Educational
Center, some Catholics might have thought there was
something wrong with his mind because he suggested
that the church must be more open. There are religions
other than Catholicism that may have more followers.

Fr. Albert said, “Father Chang Chen Zhong a
theologian who is famous throughout Taiwan, and
I were good friends. We wrote reports and attended
meetings together but some people say I have strange
thoughts. They asked, "How come Fr. Albert is a good
friend of Father Chang Chen Zhong?" I said, "Fr.
Chang Chen Zhong is a theologian and he accepts me. However, this does not mean that others should, keep their mouths shut and accept my ideas. I depend on Fr. Chang completely. He epitomizes the mercy of God, and he has a great ability to make his thoughts clear and understood. But, honestly speaking, it was also clear he had no interaction with other religions. I was curious since he knew that religions need dialogue. Why didn't he carry on any religious dialogue?

Fr. Albert continued, “So, we have to cooperate. Fr. Chang provided theoretical support. I often praised him. Sometimes he thanked me for going on errands for him outside the office. Once we were invited to Rome to see the Pope who asked me whether it was difficult to have a dialogue with Muslims. It was a hard question to answer, but I replied, ‘To do so is hard but in order to understand, it is necessary.’ The Pope smiled. Obviously, he was satisfied with my answer.”

Don’t be afraid! Open the door for Christ and keep it wide open! Let his salvation break through the boundaries between nations. Make economic and political systems open to public access or use. Don’t be afraid! Christ knows what human minds have. Only He understands! --- John Paul II

Fr. Albert continued, “In recalling the past, the encouraging words of the Pope still echo in my ears.
He was the leader of a flock of wild geese, flying along the way to truth. He was the first Pope in history to visit Israel. At the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem, He expressed regrets and apologized for not standing up to stop the Nazis from slaughtering the Jews during World War II. He was also the first Pope to go into a mosque to pray. Though he has passed away, he set a good and memorable example for the world.”

Next, Fr. Albert freely observed, “I am nothing but a small-time French priest. I do not have any high status in the Roman Catholic Church so how can I be a good friend of a Pope and an Archbishop? It is because true friendship does exist and is able to transcend everything. I continue to cultivate friendships with people of other religions. I am old now and it is almost my time to leave the world. My memory is getting worse, but I feel that it would be a real pity if I were unable to have my experiences help young people with religious dialogue …”

Fr. Albert looked at me with determination and said, “Don’t be afraid! Just go ahead and do it! God will protect you!”
Chapter 19

Why Do Good People Do Bad Things?
Once a father asked Master Hsin Tao: “Why do people have right and wrong? Master Hsin Tao answered: “Because you are people of right and wrong.

Originally, I was a carefree man who did not know how rough the world could be. Playwriting stimulated my powers of observation. The more people I observed, the more clearly I could see into people’s minds and the more I came to understand how important it is that people practice mortal teachings; otherwise, the plays would be boring to watch. Too many “actors” turn their plays into farces or soap operas. They allow themselves to fall into miserable traps of misery of their own creation. It is a pity that they are not conscious of the fact. There is a dark side of humanity. Some people are absorbed by their selfishness. Buddha hoped that we could awaken ourselves to selflessness and transmit this idea to the public through mercy. Jesus Christ asked us to work not only for our own benefit and to avoid losing our tempers easily. Most people are forgetful and cannot follow this wise advice. People tend to be pious when inside in temples or churches but turn out to be ordinary people as soon as they leave these sacred places. Even priests, monks or nuns are not immune from the influences of bad customs and cultures. Therefore everyone must wipe off the dust to keep their minds spotless. We must strictly behave ourselves and treat others generously.
Deep or shallow faith influences the depth and width one experienced when engaging in religious dialogue. The word “depth” has many different levels. Even groups with the same ideas that have been founded by people of love may not necessarily integrate smoothly. For example, Tzu Chi, Dharma Drum Mountain, Fo Guang Shan, Ling Jiou Mountain (of Buddhist Society) and Buddhist Societies all have their respective missions and have many followers. However it is hard for these Buddhist groups to be seen together on the same occasion even though they are all Buddhists. Their systems of thought and methodologies of reasoning are similar and they can easily communicate with one another. Why, therefore, do they resist religious dialogue and cooperation? Likewise, different interpretations of the Holy Bible have resulted in great divisions within Christianity. Also, folk faiths in Taiwan are in a state of discord. For example, several temples dedicated to Matsu compete for “orthodoxy”. Though Catholicism is a united church system, many priests cannot agree with the idea that other gods or goddesses exist for other religions. They believe there is only one God. For what people purpose do communicate? In order to form groups? For themselves? To promote faith? To promote cooperation? To serve mankind? To promote love? There is a beautiful sentence: “Because of love, we cooperate to do beautiful things.” Is it possible that all people and groups can cooperate with one another.

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to promote “love” simply on the basis of “love,” while moving beyond individual and group identifications? We cannot insist on a complete meeting of minds, but at least we could try to live in peaceful co-existence. To tell the truth, peace is the lowest level of religious dialogue.

“Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things. Love never fails. If there are prophecies, they will be brought to nothing; if tongues, they will cease; if knowledge, it will be brought to nothing.” — 《1 CORINTHIANS》 13:4~8

Is peace truly so difficult to achieve? Generally speaking, a person who knowingly and deliberately commits crimes is likely to be despised by the public. How come people who cause religious conflicts are often devout believers who have a great influence on others? They are supposed to be good people, but why do they do bad things? For example, there are three main religions in Bosnia. They all claim their religions are good, but when they positioned together, they treat each other badly, and they can’t tolerate one another. They have often engaged in war with each other. The
UN can do nothing but send troops to demand that the religious groups shake hands and make peace. The leaders of the three main religious groups at last agreed to sign a Peace Declaration, but when the UN troops left, the three religious leaders began to criticize the others and urge their followers to eliminate the heretics who did not believe in the same manner. Innocent people turned out to be bargaining chips and victims of the religious conflict.

In the late 20th century, a tragic case occurred in Roger Park in the north of Chicago. A religious fanatic gunned down several students from different religious groups and then killed himself with his own gun. Roger Park is multicultural; there are people of different ethnicities and religions. The lifestyles and customs of the various ethnic groups vary greatly. Although people of different ethnicities originally did not associate with one another, they lived together peacefully. Within the various groups there were bound to be some people who found fault and caused conflicts. The residents were not aware of a serious problem until the tragedy took place. However in reacting to the horrible event, people from different religions joined together to raise the funeral fees for the victims, and they held a joint funeral ceremony. Then, they cooperated in setting up a group called “Skokie”. Several religious groups opened classes in the schools in the community and they provided
teachers to teach languages of eight countries and twenty-six different cultures in total. Every year they held festivals, including carnivals, to help children and young people learn about diverse cultures. They established libraries for the community. In addition, they also created opportunities for students of different religions to work together. They deliberately made efforts to provide chances for young people to live together peacefully and to work together, thus paving the way for good interactive dialogue among the different religions. “Skokie” spared no effort to make the dream come true. Not only did the community become more united, but the children also learned to have broader global vision.

“Don’t ask whether God truly exists? But ask whether we treat others honestly.” The greatest hindrance lies in people because people are easily misled or to do bad things against their conscience for self gain. They forget that a person should have a heart of mercy and compassion. The scriptures of all religions teach us to treat others with love, not only verbally but actively---a kind of love that others can feel. Love requires learning. In particular, people who have different cultures but live in the same communities need more education and more opportunities to understand one another. Conflicts result from a lack of understanding. Only understanding can reduce misunderstanding and enable individuals to avoid conflicts.
More than ten million people died during World War I. Seventy million people died in World War II. Forty million of them were innocent civilians. Unfortunately, these have been followed by the Vietnamese war, Korean wars, battles in mid-east Asia, the conflicts between Israel and Palestinians and the cruel slaughter of Kurds. The 911 terrorist attack shocked the whole world. It is a great pity that the sacrifice of hundreds of millions of lives has not been enough to awaken the conscience of people. What is most regrettable is that people all over the world know where in the problem lies, but they have failed to find practical and effective resolutions. People who have power are often selfish and ambitious and turn a deaf ear to advice and turn a blind eye to the suffering of innocent people. Often the advice is practical and feasible but often it is not heeded. World peace remains highly elusive.

During the nineteen seventies America and Russia
were engaged in the Cold War. People lived in state of uncertainty between two powers with destructive nuclear weapons.

In this state, religious leaders from all over the world were conscious of their responsibilities. They cooperated to set up the World Conference on Religions and Peace (WCRP) in Kyoto Japan. This is the largest love-promotion group of world religions. They decided to hold a world conference in a different country every five years. Ironically, Taiwan was forced to withdraw because of political reasons from this promising group because of the UN. Since that time Taiwan has become an international “orphan” and has had to make its own way.

In 1942, Bishop Yu Bing founded “The Association
of Religion Believers in China” with a hope that different religions could cooperate for the good of society. The members were the leaders from every religion. They meet once a year to have a feast in
order to cultivate fundamental friendships. The group had significant symbolic meaning. Late, the name of the association was changed to “The Association of Religion Believers in Taiwan”. Fr. Albert took responsibility for facilitating the group is communication and networking. He earnestly and heartily visited all of the religious leaders and made good friends with them. He became a good friend to all religious groups in Taiwan. In 1994, the Taiwan Conference on Religions and Peace (TCRP) was established, and it has become, the greatest religious cooperation group in Taiwan and includes Buddhism, Taoism, Catholicism, Christianity, Islam, Yi Guan Dao, Tian Di Jiao, Tien Te Chiao, Tian Li Chiao, World Orthodox Church, etc. The members of the association are leaders within their respective religious groups, and they have produced good results. Since 1995, the association has sponsored a yearly “Religion and Peace Living Camp” to provide opportunities for young people to understand different religions and to make friends with people of different religions.

In 1999, the 921 Earthquake aroused the love of the Taiwanese and also stimulated great energy in religious cooperation. The different religious groups quickly went to the disaster areas to help rescue victims and provide assistance. The Japan Conference on Religions and Peace (JCRP) also contributed a large sum of money to help TCRP. TCRP helped facilitate material cooperation among the religious
groups and broadcast information on the conditions inside the disaster areas by means of network programs and the monthly magazine “Company”. This “Special Information Sharing Network” could be said to represent the first and most significant cooperation among Taiwan’s different religions. Fr. Albert acted in a key role.

So that TCRP was something like the child whom Fr. Albert raised. Even after he left his post, he was still actively present at the conferences. He showed great concern about the election of the president every time. He knew the new president would be a key figure in the area of domestic religious cooperation. However, TCRP has its limitations; it is without offices, staff, or a regular supporting administrative. It even lacks its own website or web page. TCRP depends on each group to promote its ideals and interpersonal relationships. Even though TCRP has no visiting card of its own, TCRP appears to be a huge family consisting of all religions.

However TCRP is not subject to any management oversight. How can such an organization operate? How does it collect funds to cover its expenditures? Where is its staff? The organization’s affairs have moved forward slowly through continuous trial and error.

In 2001, Master Jing Xin of the China Buddhist Association became president of the TCRP. After that time, other large Buddhist groups have seldom
been seen in the activities sponsored by TCRP. However, these other groups have held their own large international religion and cooperation conferences. In observing this strange phenomenon, Fr. Albert of course saw through their excuses and recognized that it was strange for every group to sponsor its own activities. “Why don’t they cooperate with one another? If there are no benefits or significant outcomes, why do they sponsor conferences? How come they spend so much time and so much money, mobilizing so much man-power to create scripted performances that attract few or even no audience members?”

I asked Fr. Albert: “When different Buddhist groups do not cooperate, do you try to persuade them to cooperate and to interact with one another?”

Fr. Albert said: “It hurts me to the heart that you
must ask me that question. I am old, and my heart is in poor condition. I can’t speak much. I can only listen to God.”

I asked: “As a Catholic priest, would meddling in relations between Buddhist organizations cause you any problems?”

Fr. Albert said: “There is no antipathy, but I must be very cautious. TCRP has made a great contribution, but it is not stable.”

For one reason or another, I can’t help feeling sad. No wonder, Buddha said Buddhism will surely be eliminated by the hands of Buddhists. When a person gets involved too deeply in personnel affairs, he is sure come out looking ugly and disgusting.

I asked: “What qualifications do you think a president of TCRP should have?”

Fr. Albert said: “He should have sufficient time for free use to meet the needs of the society. In addition, he should know the leaders of other religions. He should also understand that religions need practical cooperation.”

Such a person should have deep religious experience himself, and he should have great influence within his own group and other religious groups. He is surely a busy person. It is very hard to ask this type of individual to pay personal visits to others or to telephone them like Fr. Albert did.

I asked if he knew of any person who had the
Fr. Albert thought for a while and he answered: “There is no one. All the religious leaders I know are too busy.” Then he said: “The point is not that the president should meet other religious leaders often but that his mind should be open to every religion, including different factions of the same religions. This is the hardest.”

I think it is a considerable challenge for every group to spare the money and labor required to cultivate a professional talent to serve other religion. This is hard to imagine.

Are there other figures such as Fr. Albert who can foster better cooperation? Fr. Albert said: “I pray there will be more. Thanks to the Jesus Society’s qualities and qualifications.

The friendship between Cardinal Shan Kuo-His and Hsing Yun (the founder of the Fo Guang Shan Buddhist order) had been last for 30 years.
sufficient support in the past thirty years, I have been able to learn from other religions and to serve them. I visited bishops and the leaders of different religions. In principle, they agreed to cultivate such talents. Fo Guang Shan and Chung Tai Temple do not have such talents. Master Hsing-yun told me Fo Guang Shan needs talents like me. The person does not necessarily need to belong to Fo Guang Shan, but through him or her, Fo Guang Shan can connect other religions.”

“Is it your impression that although every group says they need such talents as you, they do not cultivate such talents?” Fr. Albert admitted it was strange. Religious dialogue is not a tool or a way to fish for one’s own benefits. Religious dialogue should be regarded as a bridge to help with increased interaction and interchange.

Fr. Albert continued. He said: “Each of us has our own religion. This is the mercy of Heaven. If there were no religion, there would be no urgent motivation to improve. When I was young, I was worried about those who were not Catholic because I was afraid they could not get to Heaven. Now I respect the chance that Heaven gives to everyone. I can see the portrait of God in others. God will prepare a way for them. For example, I know you. You helped me learn more about Buddhism. This is part of God’s mercy. This is what we can offer to others, and we must listen to other for any good and useful messages. Perhaps there are
people who think that only if they believe particular in one religion can they be saved. This is nonsense. Faith is a form of mercy. Your mercy becomes your religion. Take the Korean Unification Church, for example, it helps many couples learn to respect each other. They have done a lot of good work! I am sure this is part of God’s good arrangement.”

I asked: “If you meet a person who cannot accept other religions, how can you carry on a dialogue?”

Fr. Albert said: “It is alright if a person cannot. We just let him do what they like. Hopefully they will eventually come to understand, by degrees. All devout religious followers are worthy of respect. If their experience is deep enough, they will come to understand the mercy of God. Formerly, St. Francis of Assisi wanted everyone to become Catholic, but now we do not pressure others to become Catholic. We respect freedom of religion. We want everyone to cultivate his own faith. In recent years, Master Hsing-Yun, Master Sheng-Yen and I have walked on the same paths. We have talked about a lot of things together. I can accept their ways of doing things, but that doesn’t mean I must find time to read Buddhist Scriptures or to pray in front of Buddha. We all know learning is continuous. We are moved by mutual faiths. Everyone has to think deeply about his own faith. You have your own faith. It’s good. I can learn from you. We have known each other for many years. I have continuously
learned from you, but I don’t know whether you have learned anything from me. Ha!”

Fr. Albert’s words reminded me of Sudhana, the young lad described as dispersing wealth in the Avatamsaka Sutra. He traveled everywhere to learn from 53 virtuous people and thus he came to understand truth.

In August 2006, the president, Master Mater Jing Xin, Imam Ma Xiau Qi of Taipei Mosque, Vice-president Hau Guang Shen of Tian Di Jiao, and I attended the VIII World Assembly of Religions for Peace in Kyoto, Japan. Owing to uncertainty surrounding Taiwan’s international status and because of pressure from Mainland China. The status of TCRP in the WCRP was unclear. Taiwan was neither a member nor an observer. Taiwan was not listed in the conference handbook. There were not even any name cards prepared for Taiwan. It seemed strange that an organization dedicated to world peace and involving religions should give in to political practice. What hope does this provide for achieving world justice? However, the secretary-in-general of the WCRP, Dr. Vendley, earnestly requested that we continue to tolerate the ambiguous arrangements. He said; “Without Taiwan, the WCRP means nothing! Whatever the conditions, I hope TCRP can take part in this conference.” In fact, if Taiwan were absent even once, it could be permanently excluded.
For this reason, we reflected on underlying the purposes of religious dialogue. At last, the members of the council came to the agreement that in spite of the name issues, Taiwan’s representations would take part in the international activities and share, with the whole world, the successful experience in Taiwan. Mainland China tried to create all sorts of obstacles for the purpose of suppressing the voice of Taiwan. The more actively Taiwan plays its role, the more attention the Taiwan problem was drawing. However, members of the council took a chance to promote was taken for mutual communication and dialogue. The conference was both a good occasion and a good chance to get acquainted with many leaders from many countries. Contact with and comparison with great religious figures does, though, expose our smallness and insufficiency.

Some people jokingly said this was the greatest
“religious worshipping” event in the world. During the course of the conference, doubts in my mind became clear one after another. There were no slogans. All of the participants were very serious. We came to the consensus that religious believers should not be confined to religious fields but they should employ their faith to face the changes of the world, and they should take their faith into account in considering political, economic, cultural and other issues. Believers should respect the various sources of religion and recognize religious diversity. They should engage in dialogue, understand one another, share their moral rules, put them into practical action, support the expression of different religious ideas and activities, and respect the manner in which of agreement different religions operate, so as to promote harmony on small points and to offer promise in larger areas. WCRP is trying to promote a civil “Peace Agreement” by means of peaceful measures introduced through the UN, non-government organizations, not-for-profit organizations and increasing understanding about terrorist organizations. Believers all over the world should not keep silent about terrorist attacks. Otherwise, the door of justice may never be open to all the people!

In the conference, there were some fierce political battles. A Jewish Rabbi from Jerusalem said he envied the secretary-in-general of the WCRP, Dr. Vendley’s position. From which he could make friends
with many religious leaders from other countries. The Rabbi mentioned that sixty years ago the Nazi persecution greatly harmed the Jews. He thanked the UN for giving Israel a precious chance to establish a country. He especially quoted from Chapter Seven, verse 137 in the Koran: “I let people bullied by other races inherit the four pieces of the land that I blessed. The offspring of Israel can put up with the maltreatment. Therefore your God has fulfilled the promises he made.” The Rabbi noted that the land of Israel belongs to the people of Israel. The countries surrounding the Mediterranean Sea have inflicted misery on Israel. They have slaughtered the Jews and, up until now, the representatives of these countries still refuse to sit together with Jewish representatives. He took out a picture and his Koran. He said the three soldiers in the picture, were being held captive by Hezbollah, the Party of God. He hoped he could give a letter to the leader of Hezbollah through Dr. Vendley. He sincerely hoped that Hezbollah would release the three Israel soldiers. He earnestly requested all of the religious representatives present to use their influence to persuade their governments not to kill anybody because of different beliefs. Dr. Vendley went up to the platform and accepted the prayer letter from the Jewish Rabbi along with the Koran.

After the Rabbi, a representative of the Palestinian Supreme Court—a Muslim—spoke. He noted there are many Muslims and Christians. They should “live
and let live”; otherwise, there would be no peace. He noted that Israel was tearing down fences and creating residential areas and that about ten thousand Palestinians had been arrested by Israel. He insisted that Israel abide by international laws. Although he questioned whether the UN Security Council had double standards, he requested that the WCRP pay more attention to the aggression of Israel against the Palestinians and try every way possible to stop the religious conflicts. He thought the Jewish Rabbi had twisted the meaning of the Koran, and said the Rabbi should not only select the meanings in their favor.

At times during the conference, loud applause was heard. Obviously this applause represented the response of people who agreed with a particular speaker.

Next, a Catholic father from Central Asia addressed the conference. He referred to the previous representatives as “brothers” and then spoke of the lack of peace and those being held captive. He acknowledged that the representatives present wanted to do something constructive. He opined that the captives included not only the ten thousand Palestinians but also all the people who live in the area, including Jordan, Israel, Palestine, Lebanon and Iraq. He said, “They are all victims of wars. All live in danger. Everyone asks: Why do you want to kill us? What on earth is justice? What is injustice? What is the justice for Israel? What is the justice for Palestinians?
Especially in Jerusalem, please put your hands on the wounds and imagine the pain of others." Deeper dialogue might lead both sides to better understand each other and thus lead to mutual security and peace.” He also took out a copy of the Koran and gave it to Dr. Vendley. Dr. Vendley took the two copies of the Koran presented by both sides and said, “The scriptures are based on religion and mankind’s search for truth, goodness and beauty. All of these are the way to world peace. Everyone, please be silent as we pray for world peace!”

![Diagram of battle-deaths, 1946-2002]

Dr. Mark, who specializes in security issues in Canada and who once worked shoulder to shoulder with UN Chairman Kofi Annan, published a human rights report in the UN Assembly last October, He
noted, “We seem to see the dawning of peace. In the past fifty years, international noticeable armed conflicts decreased by 40%. Slaughters and the number of deaths decreased. The poverty index lowered. The number of truce agreements and the number of countries that violated human rights and were prosecuted increased. Also, the number of “security-keeping actions” increased 4.5 times in the last ten years. In spite of some failures, half of the actions were useful and effective. This progress is hard to imagine for people who grew up during the Cold War.”

For reason stemming from events such as the 9/11 terrorist attack to the breakdown of nuclear negotiations, we know that we must seek a solid solution from our experiences. Security in some ways is just a fancy word for mutual good. Security should be based on the idea of “Security that two or more countries share”. Security is not achieved by protecting only a specific country. Complete security can be achieved only by ensuring world security. There are many things that we can do and that we should do. Actions speak louder than words. Religious cooperation and peace should overcome violence. Religion should transcend self-interests and should help elevate humanity to a higher level. What the world needs is common and shared morals, not just random, specific moral principles. Religious dialogue should operate as the bridge that connects different
fields so that human energy is channeled into practical actions that contribute to peace.

The winner of Nobel Peace Prize Albert Schweitzer once said: “Though my rational knowledge is pessimistic, my wishes and hopes are optimistic.”
Chapter 20

Dream and Practice
Alfred Victor Vigny is quoted as saying, “Greatness is the dream of youth realized in old age.” Many people say, however, they are forced to give up their dreams. I think this is just an excuse.

Fr. Albert executed his dream when he was only twelve years old. But he never claimed to have done something great. He spent thirty years listening to God’s teachings, and then he spent another forty years being devoted to religious dialogue. He said: “When someone finds so many problems existing among religions, how is it possible that one would not devote oneself?” Throughout his life, he struggled to execute his dream of “Love and Peace.” “In my dream, I am looking for guidance in connecting “dreams” and “practice”. There are various explanations as to why dreams may or may not be meaningful. It largely depends on the dream-makers. To me, “divinity” help fills the gap between “dream and practice”.

"Once, I dreamed of “being in a dream”. I wrote down in my diary what I dreamed of when I woke up. At that time, I found the dream I had now. This is what I dreamed:

Everything has its way, sometimes like a dream and sometimes like an illusion. It sometimes seems to be dew, and it sometimes appears like electricity. It should be seen the way it is. — 《Diamond Sutra》
While I was working in the Museum of World Religions, I felt unhappy. Though I was as enthusiastic as I had been before, my energy was decreasing. I was still committed to the principles of religious cooperation, but I had many doubts. I found there were big gaps between the thoughts of monks and nuns and lay Buddhists. Sometimes when someone in charge was insistent on having it his or her way, it spoiled “Karma” and everyone was miserable. I could not feel the joys of love and peace. But I couldn’t change it. I couldn’t turn the “Dharma Wheel”. I don’t know whether my capacity was insufficient or if it was due to “shared karma.” Anyway, I longed to leave the Museum of World Religion. But the Master in charge would not give his consent. I had a dream in my struggle.

In this dream, Master Hsin Tao was teaching his disciples in the upstairs room of a medieval church. I was present and listening to his lecture. Someone suggested that we should light the lanterns. I went downstairs with a hope of offering help. There were two bags of lanterns in total. In fact, the bags were a little too heavy to move. Someone said to me it was not my business and wanted to know why I had come downstairs. I said that it was because I was willing to help. It was then that I became the awareness that “Lantern-lighting” was the way that the Master told fortunes. Lanterns spread from the windowsills of the upstairs downward to the first floor. There were
several hundred lanterns and when they were lit, it was bright everywhere. I saw the Master write numbers on a piece of paper, and he began to tell the fortune of a disciple. Vivid images of his life were seen on the screen hanging high in the sky.

I asked: "Master! Do the number you wrote, stand for the number of lanterns?" The Master was surprised and said: "You are wise!" It was my turn to light the lanterns. As the lanterns became bright one after another, images appeared. A small ant knocked down a hunter and pulled him into the nest. Master said: "You have personnel problems, and you should resign." I said: "But I wanted to help do good and beautiful things." A disciple beside us said, "Sense was a director of the museum staff. How come the Master..."
encouraged him to resign? ” Master said: “Sense is a once-returner. Only when he leaves first, will he come back again.” Master gave us an example. “Formerly, there was an advisor in the Museum. After he worked for two months and got paid, he resigned and went to help her mother with the management of a Buddhist temple. If it is a good thing, it doesn’t matter. Even now, his mind is still here with us and it will be the same with Sense.”

The next day I went up to the Buddhist temple to help decorate the site of a ceremony that would take place. Luckily I met Master Hsin Tao and had lunch with him. I told him about the dream I had in the morning. Master said: “Don’t worry about it! It depends on Karma. Just go ahead! No matter when, you will be welcomed back.”

I asked him what I should try to do?

The Master answered: “Keep your eyes away from objects and you will think of nothing!”

I asked him if he often read books.

The Master replied, “Not often! Usually, I self examine myself. Reading is for the convenience of helping others.” The attendant disciple later told me; “Here on the mountain there are many others who are more senior than you, so you may be unable to completely have everyone agree with your own way of doing things.” Because of the dream, I was able to get the Master’s consent. Leaving the Museum of World Religion seemed be the right choice, so I resigned next day.
To communicate certain thoughts across different languages requires great courage, love for mankind, and love for peace. There is a great gap between religions. There is serious resistance against each other. Therefore, all religions need to learn how to tolerate one another. In every country, a small unit should be established to promote. This work more importantly, religious leaders should visit other religions to better understand and to learn how to interact with one another thus creating good and beautiful friendships.”

---Master Hsin Tao

My experiences at the Museum of World Religion enabled me to become acquainted with many great and honorable people. One of them was Teacher Chang Huang Shi. He was the embodiment of Buddha and was expert in Tibetan Buddhism. He invited me to join a reading society. He helped me understand that religious doctrines are different from fine arts. I found that the active practicing of Tibet Buddhism is fit for me. In the dream, I was lost in ecstasy every day. In my dream, I traveled to Tibet, Lhasa, Jokhang Temple, Yong and Rongphu Monasteries. As if in a "vision", I could feel the "flavor" of the land and the freezing cold weather. The founder of Kagyupa Gampopa told me I was an incarnation of a Tibetan person. But in my life prior to this one, I had been in America around 1904. I do not understand the meaning of my dream but there
seemed to be another “Me” in my life. In my dream, I was a person who practiced Buddhist teachings, and it often seemed that Buddha talked to me directly.

Buddha taught: “Mercy is the best solution for solving all things! You should learn to be constructively and actively and how to engaged guide others in a positive the way.” Buddha encouraged me to make my actions conform to my words and to set good examples.

Once I had a dream. I spiritually traveled to the Bing Lin Temple in Guan Su Province to visit the historical “Stone Caves”. The Buddha in the “Stone Caves” told me: “Buddha will sacrifice for to compensate for all the miseries you have had and will remind you that once you learn and understand a principle you should never make the same mistake again. Once you go pass through a crisis, never trouble the same trouble again.” I read a similar passage as this in another Buddhism scripture many years later. Buddha taught me and constantly reminded me. He kept me company all of the time and said, "If everyone remembers that the "Gods are always watching over our heads, I think no one will dare do anything wrong.

Several days later, Professor Chang from the Palace Museum attended our reading society. She shared with us her travel to Bing Ling Temple in China. I was both surprised and pleased. It was as if I had traveled myself to mainland China.

Suddenly, I came to a deep understanding. Although
Buddha who lived two thousand and six hundred years ago. I have never seen him and don’t even understand his language. I can have experiences and learn as if I am in a direct conversation with Buddha. He is like a family member of mine. He is concerned about me and has guided me toward goodness, and he has given me confidence. So long as I am willing, I can become better. Therefore, the people appearing in my dreams and in my daily life turned out to be part of “Karma” in facilitating the practicing of moral teachings.

In 2000 at an academic symposium on religious dialogue sponsored by Fu Jen University, Fr. Albert shared with us a speech on “Practical Business and Personal Experience”. His was a touching speech, and this was one of the memorable passages from the speech, “For many years I have kept in touch with local religious leaders, monks, nurses and lay Buddhists. I cherish and miss the tolerance and mercy of those teachers and friends. They have helped enlighten me and enabled me to make progress in stepping out of my “Ivory Tower,” each day to get acquainted with more brothers and sisters, both younger and older. As Christians, we are challenged each day to see in everybody, Jesus Christ who served humanity, suffered misery and hardship, sacrificed his life for our sins and arose from the dead as a sign of the promise of everlasting life.”
Commit no crimes. Do all good deeds. Keep your mind clean. That is Buddhism. —《Dharmaphrase sutra》

In another dream of mine, then-president of the republic of China Chen Shui-Bian led several officers in going from Kinman to Xiamen, by boat. He even ate a bowl of fish ball soup in a Xiamen fishing port. President Chen Shui-Bian, speaking with tears falling down his cheeks, said that this was the first step of promoting interaction between Taiwan and mainland China. When he returned to Taiwan, governmental officers were waiting to welcome him in front of the Presidential Building. TTV and CTV cooperated to broadcast the program. We all witnessed a historical moment in Taiwan’s history.

But in real life, the leaders on mainland China and Taiwan do not have a direct dialogue with each other and the leaders of different parties do not communicate with each other. They even intentionally or unintentionally allow their subordinates to criticize the others. How can they hope to have a dialogue? How can they open their hearts to the other side? How can they let people have peace? How can they make their efforts to promote the social welfare?
“When I live a happy life but see people around me are suffering from miseries and are struggling against worries, I feel a guilty conscience. I can’t take my own happiness for granted. I must be grateful to others and pay back.” — 《the Autobiography of Albert Schweitzer's — My Life and Thought》

In order to compile the monthly publication “Company”, I retained close contact with every religious group. A monk kindly reminded me to be cautious not to let myself become a “religious mixture” and said he hoped I would think more about Buddhism. I asked myself: “Am I not doing my best for Buddhism?” I realized that I had better reflect more on the question or whether I was really doing good deeds or mostly concerned about my personal future.
In my dream, Buddha praised me for doing well recently. He said that he would present me with a statue of the Mercy Buddha to help me. Not long after, Boss Chioa in charge of the artwork for “Company” brought a statue of Mercy Buddha made of clay. He said the statue of Mercy Buddha was fitting for me. I felt pleased at the sight of the statue and brought it home that night by taxi. The driver mistakenly thought I was a person who was making a pilgrimage. (I guess I may have looked something like that).

When I arrived at home, Heaven greeted me by saying, “Happy Birthday”. Only then did I remember that this was my birthday and the dream came back into my mind. The statue of Buddha was one of the masterpieces of Yang Yuan Tai. It had the flavor of the earth, and it was difficult to tell its sex by its facial expression. There were three dots on the face, just like Heaven’s moles. I was both alarmed and happy at the same time for this discovery. I penned the following in my diary, “In the days ahead until the end I will cherish them. I will do my best to make everything that flies in front of my eyes to become more beautiful and everything passing through my hands to become better. I have aroused the feeling of self-consciousness in my mind. Buddha will surely respond. He is connected with divinity. Everything, including me, is revolving smoothly and harmoniously toward the fulfillment of the dream.”
There is a famous saying: “The longer we spend with people, the more we come to like dogs,” I like people and I often talk with dogs. Ah Neon was a dog raised by Heaven’s mother. It was a cute dog with round eyes. Ah Neon was like a girl from a humble family. She tended to smile slightly and gracefully. She never begged for food nor was it greedy for food. She behaved well and everybody loved her. Every day Ah Neon slept with Mum and kept her company while she went mountain climbing. Where Mum went, Ah Neon followed. Mum kept reading “Amitabha Buddha” all the day for Grandma and for Ah Neon with a hope that she would not be reborn as a dog again.

I too loved animals. In my childhood when my dog died, I cried uncontrollably under the quilt. Since then, I was afraid I might become too attached and so I no long kept pet around. To my surprise soon afterwards, Mum brought Ah Neon to entrust me with her care. Her excuse was that there were too many lice, and Ah Neon was being excessively bitten. She needed to be moved to a better environment.

I was reluctant to be a “care taker for a dog” but I could do nothing but accept the “disgusting” job. Every day I had to scoop up her excrement secretion. In addition, I had to bathe her, clean the lice and to apply ointment. I was a vegetarian but I had to prepare a special meal of meat for her.

All of this was not really too troublesome. It did hurt me to catch the lice and kill them, as that
was against my principle of “no killing!” Again and again, I repeated my cruel actions. It made me very uncomfortable. So, I began to read the Great Compassion Mantra for the lice. I hoped they would willingly depart but they would not go away. I could do nothing but to wrap them with pieces of tissue paper. Ah Neon looked at me innocently. I said to her: “I owed you a debt in my prior life and so I have to be your servant now and take responsibility for killing the lice.” To my surprise, I had a dream that afternoon.

In my dream there was a scene from a palace of the Qin Dynasty. I was to have assassinated the Emperor Chin Shihhuang, but I failed. The guards were chasing me. The arrows were falling around me like a rainstorm. I exercised my Kung-fu and successfully got away from the arrows. The palace was in confusion and many screams were heard. A young maid in front of me was shot in the heart and died. She had been a shield to protect me. I ran for my life. I happened to find her eyes look very similar to Ah Neon’s.

I woke up with a start. I had a guilty conscience. I turned to look at Ah Neon. She looked innocently at me. I stroked her head and complained no more. I said to her with a tender voice: “So you want to hide yourself in a safe place? That is what I owe you. I give in!” In both my dream and in real life, I took a very different attitude toward Ah Neon. In turn, Ah Neon and I developed a “Revolutionary Affection”. Soon, I noticed fewer and fewer lice got on her body and it
appeared she was getting better and better. Finally, she looked as beautiful as before. Sometimes I seemed to wonder if the lice were the reincarnations of the guards of Qin Dynasty. In my dream, I did not know. I myself was only a guest and didn’t know what would happen to me.

Ah Neon was spiritually very smart. I remember once that I lost temper with my family, and I did not talk with them. I observed Ah Neon standing aside motionless, eating nothing. Only then did I become conscious that I was acting childishly. Even though the dog could not speak, she was aware of the tense atmosphere; her awareness helped me with my self-examination.

Ah Neon was getting older and older and was sick now. But she tried her best to make up to us. One night, I had another dream. In this dream, I was taking a piano lesson. Many other students did not understand what the teacher was saying but I thought I could help them understand so I closed my eyes and went into a tranquil state. My body became as light as a balloon. I raised my two hands straight above and turned around as if I were dancing. Though I closed my eyes, I could completely feel the distances between the spaces. In tranquility, I saw Ah Neon dying. Her body was shaking due to the cold and I covered her with a blanket. She stood up and ran to me so that I knew she was alright. I went away with an easy mind.

The next morning, Mum telephoned to tell me, that
Ah Neon had died. I asked Mum not to feel upset. I told Mum about my dream. I believe Ah Neon is peaceful now.

Life is hard to get and now I have gotten; Buddhist scriptures are hard to learn, and I have learned; if I do not transcend my current state in this lifetime, in what life should I transcend it?

—《The Point of Zan》

In 2001, the Dalai Lama visited Taiwan. He generously donated support payments offered by sponsors and added his own contribution of fifty thousand dollars to aid the victims of the 921 earthquake with re-construction costs. The Dalai Lama spoke of mercy in the Dharma Ceremony. When he expressed his excitement, he shed tears and I, too, broke into tears. He was a world-famous figure and the winner of the Nobel Peace Prize. He had made so many contributions to the world. It was a pity that some people in Taiwan would doubt his motives. Even though Taiwan was in a depressed economic state, the conditions in Taiwan were much better than in Tibet. It was ridiculous that those who were poorer than Taiwan would give us support in time of crisis. Heaven said she was furious. I told her, this was the way Dalai Lama the chose to help people transcend their current state.

Fr. Albert told me he wanted to arrange for me to
meet the Dalai Lama. Of course I wanted to meet this great man but I did not like to trouble people so much. I believe that if there were “Karma”, I would have the opportunity to have a face-to-face meeting with this world- famous figure whose spirit I have admired, for a long time.

In 2005, I had special “luck” to travel to Dharamsala in India to take part in the Dharma Ceremony of the Dalai Lama’s 70th birthday. How lucky I was to stand close to him and listen to him. It was hard to imagine that he was responsible for the spiritual lives of hundreds of thousands of Tibetan refugees, including believers of Tibetan Buddhism. Many people cried when they saw him, but he smiled happily when he saw everyone. He had a great ability to comfort others.

Many people cried when they saw the Dalai Lama, but he always smiled happily when he saw everyone.
Dream and Practice

and to move and guide them. The Dalai Lama came specifically over to me and shook hands with me before he left. He simply said one word to me, and it gave me great encouragement.

My existence in this world is to struggle for the welfare of all people all over the world, not only in this life but in many lives to come. This gives me limitless courage and peace. And this makes the problems trivial which I have faced. —Dalai Lama

In 1996, I dreamed of Master Yin Shun for the first time. I had read his name in a book about Ksitigarbha. I had never seen Master Yin Shun in person and did not know who he was. In the dream, I observed a Buddhist hall. There were about forty monks standing on both sides and I was among them dressed in a monks’ clothing with short hair. Master Yin Shun came over from the aisle in the middle. He wanted his disciples to make a finger stamp. He could tell the degree of disciple-ship from the finger stamp. I held the thumb of my left hand with my right hand. Master Yin Shun looked at me and nodded his head. He wanted me to practice Buddhist teachings well and to learn from Gautama Buddha (Sakyamuni Buddha).

In 2000, before I went to the TZU CHI complex in Hualien to join in a Buddhist camp. There, I had the second dream about Master Yin Shun. In it, I saw a big star hanging high in the sky, flew over the Central
Mountains to Hualian where it was a sunny day. On the train bound for Taipei, the young Master Yin Shun offered a blessing for a pregnant middle-aged woman whose mother-in-law was very happy. I felt as if I were the fetus in the woman’s abdomen.

The day I joined in the Buddhist camp, Master Yin Shun was in Ciji Jing Thinking Abode. It was a pity that I had no chance to see him, but before the camp came to an end, Master Cheng Yen addressed us. This was the first time I saw her. She was getting thinner because of the suffering of the 921 earthquake victims. We were moved and upset. Her tone was something like that of the Holy Mother. When I fixed my eyes on her, I felt as if I was looking at a family member. It was so strange that when she was answering other’s questions. She starred at me as if she was talking directly to me. I asked her: “Buddha said this is a degenerate age and Buddhist scriptures are going to be eliminated, then for what reasons are trying so hard?”

The outsiders were worried that if Master Cheng Yen some day passed away, who would be qualified enough to lead TZU CHI? TZU CHI might collapse. Master Cheng Yen answered even if it should collapse she could only do her best and would not want us to witness such an unfortunate happening.

Certainly, the heavier the burden, the faster the steps should be.

The third time I dreamed of Master Yin Shun was in 2005. In my dream I made a calligraphic copy of
the “Heart Sutra” and intended to present it to Master Yin Shun as his birthday present. I saw Master Sheng Yen and Master Cheng Yen writing something on a birthday card. I knew immediately that practicing moral teachings was one’s own business. We could do nothing to help him. I woke up with a start early in the morning with a special feeling. So, I copied the “Heart Sutra” one time. I, then, asked for his address and I mailed it to him. Several days later, I was told Master Yin Shun had passed away. I felt sad and upset. I had no opportunity to see him, to shake hands with him, or to talk with him. But because of these dreams I felt even more grateful to him. I was overcome by the generosity of a great religious leader.

I neither intend to return to the ancient way of living nor intend to innovate and create new ways. I insist on the nature of Buddhism. In practicing the teachings, we promote genuine Buddhism.

—Master Yin Shun 《Human Buddhism》

My “Karma” with TZU CHI was mysterious. I had admired Mater Cheng Yen for a long time. Later I had to write scripts for Ta Ai TV Station and began to better understand the spirit of TZU CH. But my work did not go smoothly. For example, I had to write a story on a senior fellow Buddhist. The executive producer of the TV Station hoped that I would not touch upon too many negative parts. I told them
that I had to be frank and could not only write about the good parts while deliberately neglecting, the bad parts. Nobody is perfect and not all the TZU CH followers are saints. Who on earth couldn’t face these facts? Why wouldn't they dare to tell the truth? I changed my scripts over and over again in order to address their concerns but because of this, I had no income for several months and life was, again, tough. Meanwhile, I kept dreaming of Master Cheng Yen.

In my dream, Master Cheng Yen told me to make more concentrated efforts. "Life is a relay race of love". She said some people who are blissful could achieve reincarnation in this life. And then she said to me since I was sitting in the first row: “Take Sense, for example. At the end of this life, he will

Master Cheng Yen often said,” if there were no Catholic Sisters, then there would be no Buddhist Tzu-Chi foundation either.”

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become a Buddhism Protector”. The students looked surprised and envious. Master Cheng Yen was sure and determined, and she continued speaking with her hands crossed, “It will do you good to learn emptiness and the twelve links in the chain of interdependence”. Suddenly, I felt as if I was a piece of yellow flower falling on Master Cheng Yen.

Master Cheng Yen encouraged me to learn and practice well Buddhist moral teachings and instructed me on the key to the dharma-gate. In fact, many people were more blissful than me. They followed Master Cheng Yen, and the Master referred to them as “Buddhas”. She taught them how to become real Buddhists. If TZU CHI followers believed her, they had to believe her words were true. They have taken it for granted that they would surely become “Buddhas” (a enlightened man).

On September 9, 2004, my cell phone showed that I had I missed a call. It was from my good friend Hui Chu at Yi Lan. I answered her call but got no response. I felt that something was wrong. Recently, she had seemed to be depressed. She was short of money and was poor in health. She wanted to practice Buddhist teaching but was too impatient and forced herself too much. She even joined a rescue team. Every time she went out on a mission, she was hurt physically and mentally.

That night, Hui Chu’s daughter called me to say
her mother was badly hurt and now was in ICU of a hospital. Heaven and I traveled to Yilan in a hurry. In the hospital, Hui Chu wore a respirator. Her face was alright and there was no obvious external injury. However, her brain was seriously damaged and she was unconscious. We could do little but wait and pray. I could only comfort her family. I hugged Hui Chu with the hope that she would “revive” because just a week earlier in Hong Kong, I had dreamed of Padmasambhava. He told me: “When a person dies, you can embrace her or him. She or he may revive.” Is it possible? I had absolutely no confidence in doing this.

In a dream that night, however, Hui Chu stood beside the Holy Mother. Hui Chu was clean and smiled brightly as she had always done before. She said that her work in life was over and that she no longer cared for the physical form and, therefore, there was no need to save her. It costs much. She said that she felt light now and was leaving for Paradise.

I told her family members about my dream and we prepared for the worst.

Three days later, Hui Chu died peacefully. It was her family members who were reluctant to have her leave them. Hui Chu’s daughter changed her mother’s a suit of pink sportswear and went home prepare funeral. Almost at the same time, her neighbor telephoned Hui Chu’s daughter that she dreamed of Hui Chu driving home. Hui Chu wore a suit of pink sportswear and she
looked good.

Half a year after my father died, I went back to the work of writing this book. Fr. Albert wanted me to visit Master Sheng Yen and ask his personal experiences. Fr. Albert said that some of his most beautiful experiences were sitting together with Master Sheng Yen for several hours without saying anything. He said, "We found ourselves lost in dialogue with each other in silence, and we were “heart to heart” in spirit. We realized the mysterious miracle: “He is in me and I am in him.” And we were both moved but were unable to put these strange feelings into words.

I often dreamed of Master Sheng Yen. In the dream, I was his disciple at a Buddhist temple located on a small island. Fr. Albert and I were dressed in red casual clothes. We lived a leisurely life near a church in the country. Master Sheng Yen was listening to a talk about Buddhist scriptures given by fellow Buddhists. I was sitting on the side listening quietly.

They did not talk much until they began to discuss Taiwan’s present condition and social wrest resulting from recent elections. I whispered: “Ill laws are laws, too.” Master Sheng Yen said to me: “You’ve got it. You have to speak louder next time.”

The following was another dream in the office of the Museum of World Religions. Master Sheng Yen and several monks were busy helping pack things when
Master Hsin Tao entered. Master Sheng Yen held out both of his hands and bent his waist. He was respectful and humble hoping that Master Hsin Tao might bless him. Master Hsin Tao put his hands on his head and blessed him. I thought: “Master Sheng Yen was so humble.” There was great admiration between the Masters. The Buddha-dharma Master Hsin Tao was preaching the Buddha-dharma about world peace. The two Masters announced their common Peace Declaration in the UN. The believers following him, knelt down and earnestly asked Master Sheng Yen to impart a blessing on them. I knelt down, too. After all, a chance like this, seldom arose. Master Sheng Yen imparted Buddha-dharma to me and then noticed the necklace around my neck. He asked whether there was something inside. I answered there was “Buddhist relic, star sand and saffron” presented by Master Lian Can. I opened the necklace and poured Buddhist relic, star sand and saffron in his hands. He looked at it and admired the mystery of everything in the world. He held his hands tightly and the relic, star sand and saffron” mixed together and into dust, never to part again.

Master Sheng Yen said: “This is the nature of life.”

People come to the world, not to be served but to serve others and to sacrifice their lives for the ransom of many people.— 《Gospel according to St. Mark》
Chapter 21

Dharma of the Mind
This book “Your Jesus! My Buddha!” begins with “opening the door” and ends with “Dharma of the mind”. “Opening the door” is an action and “the Dharma of the mind” is the experience. What is the “Dharma of the mind” experience of that “Dialogue in Depth” provides?

I had a dream. In the dream, I was present at a concert sponsored by the Dharma Drum Mountain. In an auditorium with a capacity of one thousand people, I sat in the second row from the back. Suddenly I saw Master Sheng Yen sitting one row in front of me on the far left side. (It was strange that the host did not sit in the seats reserved for VIPs.) The light was getting darker and music was playing. Master Sheng Yen was speaking on “The Relationship between Music and Fr. Albert” to the attending disciples. He took out a piece of paper and began to draw. He drew a straight line from the left to the right. There appeared a dot marked with an arrow between the pointed dots. He wrote “Dharma of the mind” and then the picture spread continuously like music. Suddenly, Master Sheng Yen turned his head back and said to me: “You are doing well. Go ahead and you will make your way in the world!” I thought, "We have never met. And I am nothing but a “small potato”. I wondered how Master Sheng Yen knew me. I thought it might be because of Fr. Albert. I replied: “Thank you, Master!”

Master Sheng Yen then asked: “Did Fr. Albert promise to come?”
I said: “Fr. Albert came to my house this morning. He said someone would come to pick him up.”

Not long after, the door at the back of the auditorium was opened. Fr. Albert and a Buddhist elder came in through the light. Master Sheng Yen stood up to welcome him. Fr. Albert knelt down to show respect to Master Sheng Yen and Master Sheng Yen went down on his knees, too, in response. All were moved at the sight of the scene. The Buddhist elder was puzzled. He felt that this was unbelievable, but it was happening.

Master Sheng Yen told the disciples around him, “This is Dharma of the mind”.

Then, Master Sheng Yen and Fr. Albert sat together and were talking, kindly and warmly.

I had the impression that because Master Sheng Yen turned his head back to look at me, Fr. Albert was introducing me to Master Sheng Yen. I briefly told him my dream and his role in it. Master Sheng Yen then motioned toward and said, “This is Dharma of Mind”.
Thank you, dear friends!

This message of thanks is also a message of hope. I have been asked several times by my superiors to write down my experiences of interreligious dialogue all through the last thirty-nine years, especially since the publication, in May 1981, of the essay written in India in 1969 by Dom Henri Le Saux (1910-1973), Catholic Priest of the Benedictine Order, on the theme of ‘Interreligious Dialogue in Depth’.

This essay was published in “Vidyajyoti” Journal of Theological Reflection of which the editor was, at that time, Father Jacques Dupuis, S.J. As written in the first page of this Vidyajyoti issue, the Editor clearly points out that, as all the pioneers, Abhishiktananda was in many ways ahead of his time. Then, the Editor of Vidyajyoti adds: “There is no doubt that we shall continue to derive inspiration from him for the task ahead...“ “The present essay of Abhishiktananda raises many questions which even today evade a satisfactory theological answer. Its merit consists in raising them and, more still, in showing the way without waiting for all the answers.” This sentence has remained deeply engraved in my memory, and I am very happy that Sense has written this book inviting us to go ahead in our search for an always more fruitful interreligious dialogue in depth.
Thank you, dear Sense, for having dedicated this book to me who does not deserve such a honor. I am still learning, and I must say that I have learned very much from your personal commitment, as Buddhist faithful, to the promotion of an always more genuine and deeper “dialogue in depth”. May the deep friendship strengthened by that work bear more and more abundant fruit. Thank you, dear Heaven for the support given to your husband for the realization of this long planned book.

Thank you, very dear Mr. Ignacio Bengoechea! Let me warmly thank you with all my heart, for having so generously provided us with the funds, which have enabled Sense and his wife to publish a challenging book on “Interreligious Dialogue in Depth”.

My wholehearted thanks also to Fr. Raymond Parent and his team in KuangChi Cultural Group for this first publication of a Buddhist book: significant and promising sign of growing interest in the promotion of interreligious dialogue.

“Openness to others in dialogue depends on openness to the Spirit in self... Openness to others is indeed openness to the Spirit who is present everywhere, in the core of any being and event, and more still in the heart of every human being and in all outward manifestations of his heart.” (Abhishiktananda, ‘Interreligious Dialogue in Depth’, p219)

Albert Poulet-Mathis, S.J.
Your Jesus! My Buddha!
The Postscript of the Author

This book was not intended to come out like it did. At the onset of the book’s conception in my mind, I did not know how it would turn out. I did spend a great deal of time outside walking around, trying to decide how to write it. I really did not feel any “time is knocking on my door” sense of urgency until I was faced the “departure and death” of my beloved friends and relatives. I decided that it was high time that I should begin writing this book.

I have known Fr. Albert for more than ten years. He has always understood and believed in me. It was he who opened up the door and happily guided me, into the field of “religious dialogue-in-depth”, helping what was initially unclear to become more clear. As I have tried to put into words his ideas and contributions over the past forty years, I have better understood his mind through his touching stories. These, however, seemed to get mixed up with my own life experiences. Sometimes we had appointments and sometimes we just coincidentally met. Though we often walked our separate ways, we would somehow always seem to eventually cross paths and have opportunities to talk.

When we open “the doors of our minds”, the outer world becomes wide and spacious and we see beautiful and fascinating sights. We want to share our bliss of being moved with others. However, Fr. Albert was so careful and discreet by his very nature that he was hesitant to
write his own story. When I began this book, I knew I lacked the skills to do so. However, I was eager to try and somehow document the greatness and many contributions of this man in the hope that this book might be of help to some people. Finally, I began to sit down and start writing what became this present draft. At least it was a beginning, and even though I realized that I was accountable to heaven, I knew that I was writing with a clear conscience.

As for “the levels of understanding about religion”, the process proceeds from not having any understanding to “having”, from holding a belief only in one’s own religion to being able to accept others’ religions and beliefs. It continues by gaining experiences and a deeper understanding of religion and especially about one’s own religion. The objects of the inter faith dialogue are to facilitate communication, knowledge and understanding among mankind, society, within oneself, and with The gods, ghosts and even among The gods. The content of dialogue may have special meanings beyond the what appears on the surface. It is like the well-known saying: “Only when one drinks the water, does he know whether the water is cold or warm.” I think that it is appropriate to say that this book is a little like “The Arabian Nights” in that many of its characters are especially interesting and charming. I am thankful to know them and I appreciate the opportunity I have had to be educated by them, especially in the field of “religious dialogue”. However, everything in this book is based on real experiences.

I am very thankful to Fr. Albert. He has been a father
The Postscript of the Author

I also feel great gratitude to the ex-president of the Tien Educational Center, Rev. Gino PICCA and to Fr. Paul Batairwa who continues to carry on a dialogue together with me. I especially thank them for their wisdom and open minds as evidenced in their willingness to publish a book about a Catholic Father written by a Buddhist. I am also very grateful to Justin Huang, Bridget and Daniel, and Gary for help with translation. All these people help me to understand more fully love and of mercy. I am much obliged to my wife Heaven for her tender company and careful polishing of my writing. I particularly give my heart, sincere gratitude and appreciation to a Spaniard, Mr. Ignacio Beneoechea, for his financial support. The timely support and help of all these individuals, has enabled me to bury myself in the writing of this book. Finally, I give thanks to God. Because of his love, we can cooperate “with one heart” in a combined effort to do beautiful things.

Finally, although I am the author of this book, I want to say that really I am just a “listener.”
# The Main Records of Fr. Albert

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Matters</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>May 5, Albert Poulet-Mathis, S. J. is born in Strasbourg, France. He is the eldest child in his family.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>In Paris, he hears the vocations of God telling him to preach gospels in China. He should learn from St. Ignatius of Loyola.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>The Second World War ends and Fr. Albert completes his first “Spiritual Exercise”.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Fr. Albert goes for the first time, to serve in Taiwan where he will learn Chinese and eastern “Spirituality”.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Fr. Albert acts as instructor in Tung Hai University, [same year that The Roman Catholic Church held the Second Vatican Council]</td>
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<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>On August 6, Vatican declared its intentions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>On October 28, the Second Vatican Council declared <em>Nostra Aetate</em>. This is the first time Catholicism opens the door of religion dialogue with other religions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year</td>
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<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Fr. Albert’s forced to return to Paris because of lung cancer. He studies in Mandarin graduate school at Paris University until 1968, [on July 1, of that year, Sense Chen was born in Taiwan].</td>
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<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Fr. Albert leads group of students from French Catholic schools, to visit Japan. He studies at a Japanese school in Kamakura sponsored by Jesus Society. In answer to the invitation of Bishop Yu Bing, he returns to Taiwan and acts as the director of the Student Religious Guidance (Counseling) Room of Catholic Fu Jen University.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1968~1974</td>
<td></td>
<td>He joins in the activities sponsored by Buddhist Society. He regularly goes to serve some poor areas, while beginning his cross-religion visits in Taiwan.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>WCRP is founded in Kyoto, Japan.</td>
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<td>1975</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Fr. Albert serves as an instructor of Catholic Social Young Laborers until his parents die in Paris traffic accident.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Matters</td>
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<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Fr. Albert serves as a member of Religion Dialogue and Cooperation Committee of Catholic Asian Bishop Association and becomes executive secretary of religion dialogue squad of south-east Asia of Catholic Jesus Society. He begins to go abroad to visit many countries and Buddhist sites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Fr. Albert gains valuable knowledge from reading books of Father Le Saux, [whose Indian name is Abhishiktananda]. Through this experience, he learns more about how to address “Religion Dialogue in Depth”.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>October 27, Pope hosts World Praying Day in Assisi.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>Catholicism sup “Religion and Cooperation Committee of Bishop Group”.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>In September, TCRP is established</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>The 34th Council of Jesus Society declares “Our Mission and Inter-religious Dialogue”.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year</td>
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<td>Matters</td>
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<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Sense Chen while working in the Museum of World Religions and meets Fr. Albert for the first time.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>Year of the “921” Great Earthquake in Taiwan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>《Company》is first published and Accompaniment Net is on air, with Sense as main editor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>Religion dialogue and cooperation center is set up in Tien Educational Center. Fr. Albert and Sense attend Gordan International Conference in Chicago, America.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>Fr. Albert, Father Paul Batairwa and Sense begin their “Wednesday Meeting”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>Sense helps TCRP attend the eighth WCRP Conference in Kyoto, Japan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>《Your Jesus! My Buddha!》is completed on Fr. Albert’s 80th birthday.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>Fr. Albert dies in Taiwan.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## The Main Records of Sense Chen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Matters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Sense was born in Taiwan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>TCRP was established. Sense met a holy spirit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Curator of Tea Museum Scriptwriter of TV program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Curator of World Religion Museum the first met with Fr. Albert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>911 Earthquake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>The chief editor of the “Company” magazine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Dream of the book of the biography of Fr. Albert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Sense and Fr. Albert participated the religious dialogue meeting in Chicago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Met the Dala Lama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Sense participated the meeting of WCRP in Kyoto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>The book “Your Jesus! My Buddha!” was published. CEO of Taitung St-Mary’s Hospital</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Your Jesus!
My Buddha!

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