

Teaching the Fa at the Meeting on Writing Music (Li Hongzhi – July 21, 2003 – Washington, D.C.)

Most of our Dafa disciples are validating Dafa and walking their own paths in cultivation by using their special talents and what they have learned. All social strata and different occupations in human society can serve as settings for cultivation and, under the persecution, for clarifying the truth and saving sentient beings who have been led down evil paths by the wicked Party. If you can maintain righteous thoughts and righteous actions while under the pressure from the evil, that is validating the Fa and proving yourself. Those who have special skills in the arts may blaze a trail in validating the Fa. Today we have some students here who hadn't stepped forward and have come to attend the Fa conference, and this is excellent. Naturally there are some who fall behind under the pressure of circumstances. To realize that and start anew is to be responsible to oneself.

Many of our students didn't go through the colossal catastrophe that was the Cultural Revolution, for they were still quite young at the time. So amidst the present persecution of Dafa disciples and facing the pressure of harsh and sinister circumstances, they have been hit psychologically. They never went through something like this, and all of a sudden oppressive conditions like these were bearing down on them, making for a huge psychological impact. With this kind of suppression and persecution—one that utilizes every form of governmental capacity to lie, libel, and frame, and one that puts to use every instrument of dictatorship and every means of propaganda in the evil Party's arsenal—there were indeed some newer students who had never been through something like this and students who hadn't been diligent about Fa-study who didn't at the time know what they should do. Some even became outright pessimistic, and then there were those who began to completely indulge themselves among ordinary people. And since the number of people who had taken up Dafa was enormous, the students who were like this back then were not few in number. But for the majority of the Dafa disciples, Dafa had already taken root in their lives over the course of their learning the Fa, and if they were really asked to leave Dafa, I think they, being lives that had gained the Fa, would have felt that it would amount to their lives losing all hope, to having no future, and thus they truly couldn't separate from Dafa. As for the students who turned pessimistic, in reality that was fleeting confusion, though of course there were some who were far too confused. (*Master laughs*) But whatever the case, as long as you can realize it and come back, all's well. Whatever the situation, the persecution has not yet ended, and there are still opportunities to return to the path of cultivation and do the things Dafa disciples ought to do. It will then just count as a test in cultivation that you didn't pass well, and you should just walk well the path ahead. You didn't do well in the past, but don't feel burdened. That was actually because you didn't take Fa-study seriously, and because you cultivate among ordinary people, and so, under circumstances such as these, the attachment of fear leads you to fall behind the state of Dafa disciples' cultivation, and over time you are sure to have a gap in your understanding of the Fa. But don't be anxious, as you can gradually catch up through studying the Fa. As for the rest of our students, you should help the type of student [I just described]. Be understanding toward them. All of you, as long as you are counted among the disciples of Dafa, should work together with and help one another.

There is a requirement in Dafa disciples' cultivation, namely, you have to save sentient beings and validate the Fa. Ever since the persecution was launched, on the whole you have done an excellent job. Every person has been making use of what he is good at and what he has

learned in order to validate Dafa, and this encompasses using the means of culture. Of course, when it comes to using the arts, if you want to have good results, you have to do a good job producing your music or artistic dance. That's right, if we're talking about music and dance, we need to have students with special aptitudes in this area. So let's see if we can't unearth a few. We do in fact have talented people like this. Let's now turn to the topic of creating [music and dance].

If you want to compose good music and put together fine works of performing arts, you really need to put your heads together and come up with ideas. Improving the quality of your performances, including those for TV, requires your collective efforts. As things stand at present, the talented people like this are very few among our students outside mainland China. Among the students inside mainland China there are persons of every sort of talent, and there wouldn't be any problem putting together as many performance troupes as you wanted. But outside of mainland China that's pretty hard to do. So you need to think of a solution to this. I've had one idea myself. You've seen how New Tang Dynasty TV's programs are more and more on the right track, but in many regards there are still improvements to be made. Its music and performance programs aren't that rich still. You don't want your audience to feel that your TV programs are boring. So you have to think of a way to make your TV programs attract more viewers. If you are to do even better at clarifying the truth, you have to have a lot of people watch, and that means you have to suit the general public's tastes. Only that way can you be more effective clarifying the truth. That is why you have to think of a way and work together well. So it's up to you to figure out how to better achieve the maximum possible effect, that is, to make your work, be it each of your performances or each of your television programs, richer in content and higher in level. Let's sit here and discuss this a bit. Whoever has a good idea, bring it up, and we can talk it over and see how it might work out.

At present there are many challenges. One is funds, and another is having few persons with special talents—those who are trained professionals are especially few. These are the most fundamental challenges, and they're the most difficult. But as I see it, you are Dafa disciples after all, and so when it comes to validating the Fa and saving sentient beings, so long as you try hard, however much you can do, do. Since our means are limited, I think we should see if we can get the most out of what means we do have.

I have another idea. Can the TV station put together a New Years event this year? Come New Years time the Chinese TV programs in North America or wherever it is around the world lack the feel of New Years. And that's especially true for the New Years shows on mainland Chinese TV. Many people call it "disastrous TV." With that stiff Party culture and those stereotypical formulas, [those shows] all ridiculously extol the wicked Party for being "great, glorious, and correct." The "great state of things" they've invariably rigged up for decades was meant to clumsily dupe the people of China. So how about this time you create a cultural program that's free of that Party culture, and free of vulgar and crude jokes—one that truly belongs to humankind? At the very least you can give New Tang Dynasty TV's main audience a more satisfying show to watch, and this will help the station's programming overall. Though the persons of talent available now are few, it's not that we have no capacity. In fact I've seen that some of the performances you have put together are quite good. What we lack most at present are people who can compose and arrange music; with some of the performances you do the musical accompaniments are a bit plain. But as a matter of fact, we do have people who can do this. It's just a question of getting the Dafa disciples with these abilities to join in and play their role.

Those are the main things. Let's discuss and refine them together. Actually, with these sorts of concrete things, you ought to do them yourselves. These things [I've discussed] are really a bit specific, and normally I opt not to talk about specifics. Whenever Dafa disciples hold a meeting they want Master to come and say a few words, and this time, it has to do with blazing a trail in the field of arts for cultivation, saving sentient beings, and validating Dafa, so I agreed to say a few things so as to help you all be more clear on the importance of the things you do in validating the Fa. Actually, in the recent period of time you have done quite well, but we need to do things on a wider scale. You should be able to work together better; your strength should become somewhat greater; and the content of the works you create can, in each regard, improve somewhat. So that's what I think should happen. Before I came, your meeting had been underway for a bit, so let's continue it. (*Master laughs*)

Disciple asks: Master, could I ask your advice on something?

Teacher: Go ahead.

Disciple asks: I have an old friend who plays the erhu and piano, and he composes too. I know him really well, and can say that he doesn't like the way things are in China. I would like to invite him to come over [from China], and the first thing I would do after he left that place would be to clarify the truth to him.

Teacher: Actually, I had thought a while ago about the idea you're bringing up. The students in mainland China have the means to assemble as many performing troupes as need be, and it wouldn't even be a problem to put together large-scale ones; even a huge symphony orchestra could be formed. But outside China the conditions aren't there. Well anyway, an idea is just an idea, and whether or not it's practical to invite him is something you will need to think through well. And the kind of role he would be able to play after coming here has to be realistic. His stance toward Falun Gong, of course, won't be a problem once he has the truth presented to him. I can only say try and see.

Disciple asks: I think we're short on talent when it comes to composing music.

Teacher: Speaking of composing music, there are actually a good number among you [who can], and it's possible there are more who aren't here today. Right now composing music, as I see it, isn't in fact a big problem. It's how to arrange it that is the challenge.

Disciple asks: Among ordinary people there are many persons who have outstanding talent when it comes to arranging music. Can we invite them to help us?

Teacher: That's an idea, and you can try and see.

Disciple asks: I feel terribly ashamed sitting here today before Master. Yesterday at the Fa conference my tears fell like rain, because I once specialized in composing and arranging, but I haven't yet stepped forward under the persecution. All along I haven't been firm, and all along I haven't been able to discard my own baggage. I ask Master's forgiveness. From today forth I will get involved, from today forth I will truly step forward. (Applause) I have an idea for the great Tang concert. In England there are some people who specialize in researching ancient Tang music, and they have put together scores for some Tang music. I'm thinking that for the classical part [of the concert] we could write scores on the basis of Tang music.

Teacher: You all might wonder why it is I always talk about the Tang Dynasty's culture. Tang culture is real human culture, and it is the pinnacle. Whether it be craftsmanship or the culture people had, it was all at the ultimate height. Things began to decline after the Tang. Of course, you've seen that some things were pretty good in the Ming and Qing times, but actually they had already taken a turn for the trite, and the literati or artisans all focused their attention on trivial details. Their minds had become very narrow—excessively detail oriented—and they no longer had the grand air, nor the fine and exquisite crafts, of Tang times. But whatever age it was, you can draw upon [things from those ages] in your creation of performing arts. However, you need to make sure it integrates the traits of the culture that Dafa itself is to give to mankind, blazing a righteous path that Dafa disciples started and leaving it to mankind. It's not as though you should copy everything from the Tang times alone. You can draw upon the culture that the ancients of the Tang Dynasty or whatever dynasty had, and as for music, you can make its mood and flair your keynote, and create things that make the most of the characteristics of the Chinese people.

Disciple asks: Hello, Master! When dubbing background music I experience unexplained feelings; for instance, when I'm dealing with children's music, I often feel a sense of joy. I have written two songs that have a jazz feel, and wonder if this isn't that good to do?

Teacher: Contemporary music or ancient music, whatever the case, you need to walk your own paths, based on your understandings as Dafa disciples. And why do I put it this way? Because any person in this world, however great his abilities, however great his natural gifts, if you were to ask him to walk a path that is pure and clean he couldn't. Merely having superb technique or mastery of a skill doesn't do it. Dafa disciples have become very pure in the purifying process of cultivating themselves and validating the Fa, and their realms of mind, or the ways they look at things, are different [from ordinary people]. And that is why you *are* able to do it, why you are able to truly steer the “modern” people onto a path that's truly for humans, so you can make such a difference and lay such a foundation for mankind. As I have said, the TV station you run, your newspaper, radio station, etc., all seem to face many challenges. But slowly those challenges will all be resolved. The crucial thing is to give to humankind a good form of culture. You will see that the people of the future will follow, in each and every regard, everything that Dafa disciples are doing. It will later become the principal culture of the future human race. So what's critical is whether or not you are able today to produce good things. If you can establish these essential things, the future people will study them, and so what you do and what things you produce are extremely important. The ordinary, the ancient, the modern—if it's what we need we can draw upon it. But, you definitely need to create upright things. You need to act responsibly toward people. (*Master laughs*) Relax—I'm not saying you have to have a terribly hard time with whatever you do. Actually, the things you normally produce are already different from those of ordinary people, and if your skills are taken into account those things really aren't average.

As I said a moment ago, whether it's Tang music, contemporary music, or whatever, if you can manage to integrate the strong points of these things while producing your own things, it's guaranteed to be different from the things of ordinary people. That's because your realms and the deeper meaning you have will ensure that the inner meaning of the music you create is different. But there is one thing. If you can find a way to make the fundamentals of the music itself even better, and do this well, then you will be truly taking a great path.

Disciple asks: Master, I'm somebody who has received training in Western music, though I now often deal with Chinese music. What do you think about merging Western and Chinese music?

Teacher: There is no problem with doing that per se, and you can draw upon any of them. What's key is to blaze a trail. For example, take the matter of arranging music. Arranging music wasn't something they were all that particular about back in ancient China. Back then, what they had basically took the form of playing together, and at most they'd have different instruments playing the lead or solo parts. So they didn't pay much attention to musical arrangement. The concept of musical arrangement that we have today in fact comes from the culture of Western music, and it is fundamentally something imparted to man by gods. It is one of the very best things of this cycle of human civilization, and it brings goodness to mankind.

Disciple asks: Master, the difference between classical Chinese music and Western classical music is enormous. What sort of difference is there between them in the heavens?

Teacher: Before the Renaissance the musical instruments and the music itself in the West were quite simple. After the Renaissance Western music gradually approached its zenith, and the arts of human culture in no time made a gigantic leap forward. The contrast between that period and the cultural arts man had formerly is dramatic. Now, you mentioned the music in the heavens. Of course, the varieties of music there are many, and they are formed of the different characteristics marking the states of being that the different lives there have. Today's Western music, be it the use of arrangements and musical instruments or the mastery of its instruments' capacities, its overall music theory has developed into a comprehensive system of music, which counts as a complex and difficult subject of study compared to the music mankind originally had. Here on the human plane Western music can be seen to be a complete system, something gods purposefully passed on to man in recent times. Asian music is a kind of normal culture gods continually imparted to man over the course of establishing the larger cultural history of mankind. So the discrepancy isn't just one of the two cultures of East and West, for these are things transmitted from multiple cosmic systems, and in other, incredibly numerous cosmic systems those systems each have their own unique things, and those are extremely systematic, extremely holy, and mystical. So what we have here is but what gods passed on to man, something that can be expressed using the means of man. And it includes performing arts and painting. Man knows of only oil painting, traditional Chinese painting, etc., when in fact these are simply the traits of the cultures of the lowest lives of multiple systems passed on by gods of various systems. In other words, the yellow race corresponds to the gods at different levels of a cosmic body system, all the way up to the highest god, and in that system there is a state in which its own characteristics exist. The same is true with the whites: they have their corresponding cosmic system. And found in each such system are the characteristics and ways of existence of the different lives of a given cosmos, which, when expressed in the human world, manifest as the characteristics of the different cultures of different races. For this reason there are differences in their musical instruments and the features and styles of their music. However, the system of music present in the West in recent times, including its instruments, is not in fact something originally found in the heavenly kingdoms of the gods of the white race. It belongs to the cosmic system of faraway lives, and it was passed on solely to Western society; it was brought here for the Fa. The human culture fostered for the Fa-rectification over a long period of time is, for this level of lives, something extremely rich.

Disciple asks: Hello, Master! I'm a student whose major is Jazz. (People chuckle) So I sometimes wonder whether this is something I can do?

Teacher: Here's what I think. At present, it's the stage in which Dafa disciples cultivate amidst validating the Fa, and it's not the time of Fa rectifying the human world. So, since you are cultivating in ordinary human society, you have to eat, which means, you have to have a job. Some jobs aren't all that fitting, but, well, what can you do? What I'm saying is, it's okay for you to maximally conform to the state of affairs in the society of ordinary people when it comes to going about your work. Many things in human society are not in fact good, but that's just how ordinary human society is at this point, and the world's people accept all that. That's how society is. That's the way mankind will be before the Fa rectifies the human world, so for now we leave it as is. So you can do your work just as before. But, as you go about cultivating you have to be clear on which things are upright and which aren't. So maybe you say that you've studied those things, well then at a minimum you have some knowledge of music theory and some musical accomplishments, you've mastered that knowledge. So then, along with getting down your musical foundation, you can, in order to make a living, put to use in the form of a job what you have learned, and if you just do your best that's fine. At the same time you can produce some more standard and traditional things, and if conditions allow, you can explore other forms of more standard music, you can choose to study some things that you consider to be upright—that's something you can do. Actually, whatever it is you study, how the notes are expressed is just a matter of style, while the knowledge of music theory to be grasped is the same.

Disciple asks: Ever since the music team was formed, be it in arranging or composing, all along I have been up against a great barrier, namely, with the things I write or the arranging I help others to do, there's a shortfall in quality. But it seems that everybody has already given their all, and it seems the things I've learned have all been put to use. I really can't figure out how to break through this and improve further. (People laugh)

Teacher: If you ask me, I don't think that's necessarily the issue. Actually, I have heard the music you've played. And if we're to talk about the quality, I don't think it is a problem of the quality being low. What's critical is that the things we create be traditional and well-liked, and that we blaze a path that is upright. Don't ordinary people say that songs need to be catchy? The moment you sing it, the people near you should want to learn it and be able to hum along. In other words, it's a question of how you can make it both upright and suited to people's tastes. As a matter of fact, put plainly, on the question of how the things Dafa disciples create fare, quality is not an issue. What's key is your blazing your own path.

Disciple asks: Since 1949 China has basically had no music; the moment the average person opens his mouth to sing, what comes forth is guaranteed to be the songs of the Party and its culture, and that includes both lyrics and music. Now we have this opportunity, by drawing upon the power of Dafa and this opportune time, to truly pioneer a vast field for mankind. I feel that the music our students have created overall right now tends to have a gentle beauty and be extremely calm, but perhaps it lacks a feeling of being glorious or majestic.

Teacher: Of the descriptive words you were just using there is one that was really well put, and that's "calm." *(People laugh)* People are excessively passionate or intensely combative, and these are not the normal states of being human. It's in fact something that comes about under the effect of demon nature. Good and evil both exist in a person, so when a person is especially worked up, or when his actions even overstep the bounds of what is rational, that mostly comes

from the stuff of contemporary music. When a person is irrational and in the throes of something, when he goes wild and has lost his reason, that has to do in fact with the things of his negative side being roused. By contrast when a person is in a calm state, he is good, and that in fact is the true state of a human being. Within calmness there are ups and downs, but it's fully rational, and in calmness there is its own glory, though that glory is based on calmness. (*Applause*)

As I see it you have plenty of ability. There's no need to compare yourselves to what are currently regarded as "elite" standards. Actually, nowadays much of what passes for elite is the contemporary stuff. How many people now can compose truly traditional, decent, great musical movements? They've all gone the route of "contemporary music." The songs in China in recent times are all the product of the Party's culture, with nothing left that is truly presentable. No one in China now can produce anything like what those Western musicians created before the last century. Of course, the West can't produce that now either, for its peak has already passed, and that chaotic "contemporary" stuff has knocked [its classical music] down to the very bottom. But the West once had it, whereas China did not. There have in fact been some very good things in ancient and recent Chinese music. Their bases and essential melodies are all the kinds of things that reflect the true state of man, and if somebody wanted to create [such music] he could truly capture with it enormous, vast dimensions; it's only that now there is nobody putting effort into such things, making it even harder for it to develop into a system. Of course, with a change in dynasty comes a change in culture, and the things of the previous dynasty are washed away by the impact from the new dynasty's culture. That too is a reason [for such music's disappearance]. So there is no way that the essence of the music of the culture of some 5,000 years could carry through to today; nobody in any dynasty has managed to preserve it. The schools for painting and music in the West didn't come about until the last two centuries. Such schools have subject courses, standards, and norms. And those studying there know what to learn, and all who graduate from the schools have gone through systematic and standard training. Thus a complete system has been formed. In China's dynastic history there was never anything like that. Of course, after the founding of the Republic¹ there began to be people in China who placed value in these things. Gradually there came to be students who returned after some time studying abroad, and they had mastered some things of Western music. So from the latter days of the Qing Dynasty on there gradually came to be persons with these talents. But as for being able to truly systematize via music the culture, depth, or flair of the Chinese people, or to make of it something truly decent and part of mainstream culture, nobody has done that. The wicked Party has been barking up a storm for so many years, what with stuff like its "Let a hundred flowers bloom" campaign, but that's all in the interest of its sinister rule. And in fact, it hasn't really done anything, for this Party culture that's meant to serve the dictatorship is violent, intensely fervent, and it has made a goal of destroying China's ethnic culture. It clashes with the true, calm features of human beings, and it has no human touch, much less of course anything like the depth and flair of China's 5,000-year-old classical civilization. And the most foundational stuff the wicked Party came up with was introduced from the Soviet Union.

I think you all seem to have rather lofty aspirations and high ideals. If that's what you are aiming for, then make a go of it and see. From what I can tell, of the ditties and folk songs that have been handed down in China from antiquity to the present, many of those things have the flavor of various dynasties, and the things that people in China create nowadays have some elements from various dynasties too, along with Soviet flavor. Back in the times of Old Shanghai there were a lot of popular songs. Although the lyrics of some of them weren't so good,

¹ The year 1912, that is.

embodied in those songs was the rich, lasting charm of classical China along with the consciousness of our forefathers. So the basis of the tunes then was the rhythmic charm of China's ancient traditions. If you can, on the basis of the tunes and rhythms of ancient China's music, and using the techniques and methods of Western music, build on them—if you can blaze this path—then *that* would be magnificent. You're clear on what I am saying, right? I ask since you're experts when it comes to these things.

Disciple asks: Western musical instruments have their overtone. I think that a person can sense the connotations behind the overtone. The overtones of Western instruments and Chinese instruments each have their own specific properties and characteristics.

Teacher: That's just your own particular sense. Now as to connotations, human culture has a definite historical process to it, and each note that is performed has the connotations of that ethnic group's specific characteristics as well as an individual's feelings in life. Each piece of music contains the mood which the performer wishes to convey, and of course the notes used will have to do with expressing connotations, and that includes the utilization of overtone. [What you described] is just your own sense of these things.

Disciple asks: I'm a student from Austria. We have formed a band in Austria composed of four people. I study classical piano, while the other three play jazz. We now have a problem: they say that the music they produce is pure, while in fact it's still pretty much jazz.

Teacher: Perhaps it's the notion that they have formed that thinks it's pure. If there were really no notions stemming from contemporary music affecting them, the things they create would definitely be different. It's still like I said, though: if you perform those things so as to make a living, then that's fine. However, when it comes to truly producing the music of Dafa disciples, you have to blaze your own path. And in that process there are bound to be issues in terms of understanding.

Disciple asks: They do jazz music at school. If we perform on the street is that okay?

Teacher: If you can truly blaze a trail that is good, your performances will draw large numbers of listeners—for sure. Remember something I said: mankind revolves around Dafa, and each and every action of Dafa disciples today has an effect on mankind. The other day I had a meeting with those who specialize in painting, and I spoke with them about why one should go the route of traditional arts. Before, when they sought out a site for a show and wanted to hold an art exhibit they had a hard time finding one. After I finished explaining that mankind should return to the path of traditional art, one could sense that the attitude of the world's people had changed, for gods wanted to make way for the Fa. But that said, if you don't do well with things you will meet with obstacles, because whatever Dafa disciples do is inseparable from cultivation. The fact is, mankind is revolving around Dafa. If you really produce your own things—take a look yourself—everybody will listen to it and watch it, and many will even want to learn it.

Disciple asks: I would like to ask Master to spell out some things that have to do with the principles of creating music. One is, when I am writing a concerto, can I incorporate the music of Dafa, that is, Pudu, as one of the movements? A second question is, when it comes to forming an orchestra we are lacking in manpower, and so sometimes when we have only a handful of people performing on stage it doesn't have the impact of a full orchestra. Could I create some

background music and then have people play along on top of it? A third question is, in the past I have heard music from other dimensions, and I'm wondering if can I use that?

Teacher: The matter of working together that I just talked about involves exactly this, for there aren't going to be any clashes over copyrights among you. It's a question of how to do a good job of working together, and how to blaze a trail that Dafa may leave to the people of the future. Cultivators aren't concerned with the successes and failures one has in this world; it's ordinary people that take success and failure, or even fame and wealth, seriously. What Dafa disciples seek is the true attainment that comes through cultivation, and so they attach no importance at all to those ordinary things. Whenever someone does something for Dafa, the gods make a careful record of it to be kept for the future. As for what people here seek to gain, we seek none of it, and that's why you are, for one, cultivating yourself, and secondly, doing things for sentient beings. You are saving sentient beings, and you are paving for sentient beings the path of the future human race. However, if you want to use Pudu in the music you are creating, it's not that you can't do it—what's key is that you have not grasped the inner meaning of Pudu. In it is the entire process Master went through from prehistory up through the Fa-rectification—could any concerto possibly encompass that?

As for your second question, it's about orchestras. At present it's not possible to put together overnight a large-scale symphony orchestra and have it perform. But we do have a few different approaches right now. For the music for stage performances such as dance and the like, you can create it by using a computer to overdub the sounds of the instruments. One violin can become many this way, and by overdubbing you can turn a handful of instruments into what seems like a full-fledged orchestra. People often do this to cut costs when they make movie soundtracks. So that's one approach. Another is, you can use a computer to directly simulate an orchestral performance. That's fine too. But the quality of some things isn't so good, and you can tell right away that it's electronic. Since it's a simulation, be sure your simulation is as realistic as possible. All of you who play music understand this, for you should all have some knowledge about the properties of musical instruments. So of course, however realistic the simulation might be, professionals can hear the difference, though your average listener can't make it out. (*People laugh*) Those are both approaches you can take. The third question was about music heard from other dimensions. If you can truly produce that, then go ahead, but I think in general it will be hard to do. The reason is that when you are not in higher dimensions yourself, you won't have musical instruments that are comprised of more microcosmic matter, and as a result you won't be able to bring out that sound. Moreover, sound itself is the transmission of a material field, and without a material field composed of matter of higher dimensions there won't be the feeling of holiness [otherwise present].

Disciple asks: Can Pudu and Jishi be incorporated into our compositions?

Teacher: Pudu and Jishi... the first question I just talked about was this, and [I said] there's no issue of copyrights. Other than the two pieces of music you use with your exercises that aren't to be used elsewhere, other pieces can be used; and they're meant to be used in situations where they are needed, so it's no problem. The exercise music absolutely cannot be used elsewhere, though, for so much is at stake in its connection to cultivation. It cannot be integrated into other music. With other music, then, though it was created by Dafa disciples, it's meant for ordinary people after all. As for Pudu and Jishi, you need to know what the inner meaning is that they portray. Cramming the cosmos into an egg isn't right.

Disciple asks: If the quality of the exercise music deteriorates, can we sometime down the road re-record it?

Teacher: That's fine to do. There is no problem with improving its quality.

Disciple asks: When synthesizing music it's best to make it sound more lifelike. Then that would mean we need to buy rather good equipment and need substantial funds.

Teacher: That's not necessarily so. Some rather simple computer software is inexpensive, and you can buy it from China. *(People laugh)* The quality is acceptable and yet it's inexpensive.

Disciple asks: Thinking in the long-term, would it be okay to take out a loan to buy a better computer?

Teacher: You can think of your own approaches. But there's one thing, and that is, Master has never said that you should insist on doing something where circumstances don't allow for it. You should definitely do things in keeping with your own capacity. Otherwise, though your motivation might be good, it would still be going to extremes. If you bring hardship into your daily life, if in each and every regard you make things hard for yourself, then it's going to be harder for you to do the things that Dafa disciples should do. Don't make things hard for yourself.

Disciple asks: For the concert we bought a zhongruan and a daruan.² When buying them we noticed that the music store had a Qing era pipa. After it was described to us we came to realize that the strings used on premodern instruments were different from today's. Nowadays they have steel strings, whereas in ancient times the construction was different. Now they are somewhat louder.

Teacher: In antiquity they used silk strings and beef tendon strings. The environment man had back in ancient times wasn't noisy, people's minds were quiet, and if you used silk strings back in that setting the volume wouldn't seem too low to people. That's because in antiquity they didn't have modern Western instruments, whereas nowadays when people compose they want to blend with present circumstances. In antiquity it was always silk or tendon strings, and it wasn't just a matter of not having the manufactured goods crafted with modern technology; it had a lot to do with the atmosphere of antiquity. What we want to do now is blaze our own path, not return our instruments to their ancient forms. Man's setting today is already how it is now, and we have no choice but to use today's instruments.

Disciple asks: If we want to broadcast live our New Years event, at present we probably don't have the equipment needed. But if we're to now go about preparing as if to broadcast live on New Years...

Teacher: Here's how I see it: we lack the conditions and a live broadcast isn't feasible. And if we were to have everybody come to the U.S., and gather all of our talent for one event, that would be hard to do. That's because some people have to work or go to the office, or they can't get away from family, or it's too much of a burden financially—there would be difficulties of all sorts. But if you could weave together the artistic programs of each area and produce a DVD, to bring them all together and integrate them, that would work. With computers nowadays you can really make it so that it looks realistic.

² Chinese musical instruments similar to the *pipa*.

Disciple asks: [I understand that] we can share one another's music, but is there a copyright issue when it comes to the outside world? To illustrate what I mean, four years ago when I made a Falun Gong program I used Pudu and Jishi. A TV station director really took a liking to the music and said it was unbelievable. He asked if we might contribute it to the station, and we did.

Teacher: That wasn't very appropriate. Also, people won't treasure it. What if they use it recklessly? We don't have time to oversee what ordinary people do with the things we create for them, but it's not appropriate to give Pudu and Jishi to ordinary people for casual use. Other things are okay. Generally speaking there's no issue with the songs Dafa disciples create, save for these two pieces.

Now as for copyrights, do you know how we did things during the years when I was spreading the Fa? We had to go through a lot of trouble to have *Zhuan Falun* published legally. So a press published it, but after printing it for a while the press came under pressure and stopped. But they knew the book was really profitable, and they didn't want to go back on the contract with me. And then there were so many students who needed the book and they became anxious. And what could we do about it? So many students were learning the practice, and the students at the practice sites were increasing in large numbers, but they had no books. The books were in short supply. It was at that time that pirated editions sprang up all around the country, and they were being made everywhere. As long as they didn't change a single character of mine and could guarantee the quality, I didn't mind. People live to make money after all, and the merits and problems with what they were doing offset one another, so I didn't mind if they made money off of it. Many of our Dafa disciples' things are to be given to people after all. As long as somebody is able to cherish it, he won't use it haphazardly or modify it. If he does modify it you should track him down, for we still hold the copyright.

Disciple asks: Good songs can influence generations of people, and right up through today they are still popular.

Teacher: A talented musician, you know, how is it that he can compose such quality songs? And how is it that he is able to have a lasting reputation? It's not just that the melodies are exquisite. The connotations of a piece of music come from a person's good character, his rich life experiences, and his innate talent. That's the human side of it. The life of a cultivator has been changed, and what's more, it surpasses the level of ordinary human beings. Dafa disciples, when you are able to truly blaze your own paths, your things will be revered by people even more than those of the famous musicians among ordinary people. They will have a lasting reputation, and for a thousand generations at that. That's because you are Dafa disciples, and your path is righteous, so what you create will forever be what mankind will learn and use. *(Applause)*

Disciple asks: Master, I'd like to ask, is pop singing demonic in nature?

Teacher: The popular way of singing is just the common people's song, and it doesn't need to have the manner of formal vocal performance. The folk songs of each country have been passed down through the years like that, and it's true of all ethnic groups. These days, however, people have standardized them into contemporary music's system, and they have added in modernist coloring, turning it into something of poor taste, a venting of demonic nature—even to the point that you have obscene stuff that's a mess. Many young people seek out this stuff. Regardless of what type of singing it is, you can always draw on the good things in it. But you have to walk your own path.

Disciple asks: Master, I think that there are two tendencies in the songs [that we are] creating nowadays. One is that they are singing things that have to do with our own cultivation, and the other is that, so as to have ordinary people understand what they hear, even things like “Falun Dafa is good” can’t be mentioned in the songs. I don’t think that’s right.

Teacher: Validating the Fa is something Dafa disciples should definitely do (and there is nothing wrong with that). So when you are creating music you should take as your goal saving sentient beings, clarifying the truth, and praising Dafa disciples. Of course, if we’re talking about a television drama, and you want to add in some mood music to the story of the drama or a performance on stage, then that’s no problem. Television dramas are entertainment programs after all, and they are made for a range of viewers to see—especially ordinary viewers. Of course, as for the content of musical compositions, some, owing to the needs of the story line or the life stories of many ordinary people [being depicted], have nothing to do with Dafa disciples. Then does that mean you aren’t going to write them? You still need to write them, you still need to produce them. And in fact, whatever the case may be, those will be things Dafa disciples have produced after all, and so they will be different. When it’s something that truly portrays Dafa and Dafa disciples in a direct and positive manner, Dafa’s things should still be the theme. If you, who are Dafa disciples, don’t consider Dafa whatsoever, and you just want to create ordinary people’s things, then you *are* an ordinary person. The responsibility of Dafa disciples is to save sentient beings and validate the Fa. It’s not hard to keep these things in perspective.

Disciple asks: Teacher, I’d like to ask something, though I’m not sure it’s appropriate. Doesn’t it seem that ever since the CCP seized power in China, that wicked Party has often been using waist drums?

Teacher: I can tell you that the waist drum has a history of almost a thousand years in China, and it’s a form of culture handed down from the areas of western China and the central Shaanxi plain. So talking about waist drums, I know there’s also another form of drum. You’ve seen how in Shaanxi province there’s a kind of drum this size, almost a foot and a half in diameter, one that only men use, and it has a real air about it when it’s played. Do any of the people here who are dancers know about this one? You can also use that type, it too is good. You know what? When you first used the waist drum in a parade in New York, many people said, “The Chinese people have come.” They felt that these were the true people of China who had come. The wicked Party is using the things of Chinese culture to glorify itself. But those sure aren’t the wicked CCP’s things. That Party is a spirit from the West, an evil spirit. *(Master laughs)*

Disciple asks: Supposing we want to issue some music that’s pleasant to the ear, such as a special collection of erhu music, would it be inappropriate to merge Chinese and Western things when arranging the music?

Teacher: The idea I expressed was that you can draw upon anything that is good. So of course the method of arranging music they have in the West or its music theory is fine to use. If you say you want to bring those things over full-scale, say, half will be Chinese, half Western, then that’s not the idea. It’s about how to blaze your own path [that I am getting at]. I think that the Western music and Asian music found in the cultures of this cycle of the human race are both good things. No matter what race it is, when each first came down here and entered the human world they were first born in China. After the passing of a dynasty they would then leave China for places throughout the world. Then by whom were China’s things left behind? By gods, from

the cultures of various dynasties, and from the whole world's people. I have talked about these things before. What you are doing is making choices, choosing the good things from the inheritance given to us by history.

Disciple asks: The local folk songs of Shanxi and Shaanxi provinces make up some 80% of all of China's folk songs. The basic melodies of the music there are remarkably beautiful. Some of the lyrics have been distorted since 1949, but in fact the original music and the melodies are excellent. I'm not sure if it's right [for me to think this way]. Might Master say a word about this to put my mind at ease?

Teacher: With some of the folk songs from northern Shanxi and Shaanxi, many of the melodies are things of ancient China.

Most of our discussion so far has been about music. The creation of performing arts also needs to keep pace. Generally speaking the bulk of an evening entertainment program involves group dance, and without that it would seem a little monotonous or dull. If an evening artistic event on stage doesn't have dance in it, then it doesn't really count as evening entertainment. Then we need to think about how we might be able to further explore this front, and blaze a trail. I've seen before evening entertainment programs by song and dance troops in western China where they perform things from ancient culture, and the items from historical culture are many. You can look into those things, but don't completely follow the example of someone else. Blaze a path that is your own.

Disciple asks: What should we do to be able to better coordinate with the television station? I ask because we're all scattered around the world.

Teacher: It's not easy for you to get together, and it's hard if you want to coordinate things. But you can use computers, fax machines, and the phone, and you will be able to communicate about a lot of things. Make the most of these. You're all poles apart, all around the world. For all of you to come together really is hard. The good thing is, after today's meeting you will know how to go about things, and can this way chart out a path to take. And in fact you all have latent potential [still to tap].

Disciple asks: Our ensemble would like to play throughout Austria. If our own songs don't number enough, can we as Dafa disciples play the classical songs of ordinary people? For example, how about the works of Mozart or Chopin?

Teacher: That's not a problem. I've long since said that classical music is fine. You can cautiously use things from times before the Cultural Revolution—just make sure they're free of Party culture. Basically anything that predates the wicked Party can be used. Don't use anything from these times of the Despot, for inside they are brimming with evil; mankind has been controlled by demons during this period.

Disciple asks: So if we can't use the music that was made during the decade or so under the Despot, what about the television programs and movies from that period, should we also not use those?

Teacher: I think that none of the things from that era are good. They have behind them the factors of all sorts of rotten ghosts which control people.

Disciple asks: We already have some songs. Which songs should we take as our theme music around which to build an orchestra or a small ensemble?

Teacher: Detail-type things like this you will have to talk over yourselves. There shouldn't be any problem.

Disciple asks: Recently a Western student at our TV station produced a couple of music videos, but what he adopted was a contemporary music style that's suited for guitar and electric guitar.

Teacher: That's okay. The TV station has a foot in ordinary society, and it's directed at common, ordinary people. So electrical instruments are fine to use. Dafa disciples need to do well, and be upright, on the path of cultivation they take, but when it comes to ordinary work you just need to try hard to do a little better than is typical. Our TV programs are for ordinary people to watch. Right now isn't the time when the Fa rectifies the human world, but rather the phase where Dafa disciples cultivate, clarify the truth, and expose the persecution. At present there's nothing problematic about [what you described].

Here's the situation, who here knows how to arrange music? Raise your hands. Okay, everybody take a good look—especially those of you from the TV station. Whenever your shows are in need of music you can look for these people. And whoever knows how to arrange can write the songs.

Look around—there are quite a few. And I know that there are a lot more who are not here but are very skilled, and let's have them play their parts. If people can't do well right on the first try, don't nitpick. With goodwill you can improve together by sharing and discussing, and each will gradually come to mature on his own path; when you have just started it's possible it won't go well. So, not only do you need to produce your own things, but also, later on, you should increase the output. (*Master laughs*) For example, maybe you produce something and then think you're all set, and you feel satisfied—"I did it." That's no good. If a Dafa disciple saves just one person, does that do the job? No, it doesn't. You need to save many.

Disciple asks: Master, I'd like to ask something that has to do with the Fa. Buddha Shakyamuni attained the Dao by cultivating many hundreds of millions of eons ago, but our Earth has only had two cycles of Earth, with each being 100 million years long. So does that mean that...

Teacher: It wasn't on Earth that Buddha Shakyamuni did his cultivation before. (*People laugh*) Buddha Shakyamuni came to the world to save people. In the heavens he is a god, and he has long since attained the Dao. [His coming] that time around was to validate the attainment status of Tathagata and to give mankind Buddhist culture. Many of the stories Buddha Shakyamuni told were about affairs in the heavens, not affairs on this earth. Haven't I said, when a human being sees a Buddha sitting there he is so holy, but when a Buddha looks upon a Buddha it's not like that. They are part of a collective society of gods.

Time is limited, so we have to wrap up the meeting now. You are Dafa disciples, so I am confident you can do well. I look forward to good news from you. (*Applause*)

Note: Only this much could be assembled owing to matters related to the sound recording.