

LOVE FOR GOD

**A Program for Students
Ages 7-10**

1992

Committee for Meher Baba and Scouting
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Love For God

This program is for youngsters, grades 1 through 5, who would like to follow a simple course of study about the life of Avatar Meher Baba and focus on some of His messages of Love and Truth.

The Love For God Study Program can be completed in twenty-one days. To start the program and begin to qualify for your Love For God award, you will need an adult study partner. Your partner can be one or both of your parents, a relative, or an adult friend. As you go through the program together, your partner will share with you, guide you, and help you complete each step.

The program opens with "Begin to Love God," a message Meher Baba gave to young people. Read this

message with your study partner as an introduction to the rest of the program.

Both you and your study partner need to fill in and initial the progress sheets as you go along. Your study partner will send these sheets, along with your application form, to the Committee for Meher Baba and Scouting, at the end of the program to register you for your award.

Contact the Committee for Meher Baba and Scouting if assistance is needed in obtaining materials connected with this program or for further information.

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Begin to Love God *

The youth of today is the ruling force of tomorrow. All things have a small beginning: the seedling grows into a tree, the stream into a river, and the child grows into a man to use or misuse the lessons he has absorbed in life as a youth. But even after he has grown into a man, he often remains a child in the spiritual sense of the word. The world is a kindergarten and school necessary for the spiritual lessons man must learn through countless lives of experiencing the opposites such as pain and pleasure, joy and suffering, good and bad, wealth and poverty.

All growth is gradual, and it is only through slow gradual stages that man truly begins to "grow up" and discover his true Self, and to relinquish the childish playthings of hate, greed, and anger through selfless service and love. In the spiritual school also there are many grades to be passed, for which few have the required courage and

determination. Just as there are masters and instructors to guide you along the path of your studies, so there are Perfect Masters who can guide you along the path of the spirit to the glorious destination of Godhood. Few have the good fortune to meet and follow such a spiritual guide, – when you do, you must earn his grace and be worthy of his love.

Do not balk at the discipline given by your parents and teachers. Discipline in small ways leads to the greater necessary discipline of Self. Do not try to conquer others—conquer yourself and you will have conquered the world. The simplest way to do this is to love God. Begin to love God by loving your fellow beings. Begin to see God by seeing Him in all beings and things. Give without thought of return, serve without thought of reward. God is everywhere, in everything. Most of all He is right within yourself. You do not exist for the world—the world exists for you.

There is an amusing illustration of this in the story of an ant. An ant was trying to cross a stream on a leaf. Tossed by the wind, the leaf overturned in midstream and the ant cried, "Help, help, the world is drowning."

A frog close by said, "What rubbish! The world is not drowning, you mean *you* are drowning."

"Well," said the ant, "once I drown the world might as well not exist for me, so for me it means not only that I am drowning but that the world is drowning too!"

In the same way, all existence is within you. God is to be found within yourself, and once you find Him you have found the only treasure worth finding. I give you my blessing that you may love God and find Him.

* Meher Baba gave this as a spiritual message for young people.

I - SEVEN WAYS TO LOVE GOD

These seven ways to love God, given by Meher Baba, are from the chapter "Love and God" in the book *Listen, Humanity*.

ACTIVITY: Starting with the first, way to love God, read one a day, with your study partner. What does each way mean to you? Give an example from your own life. Throughout the program, each day, let one of these ways be the starting point of a conversation with your partner. After you have gone through each of these seven ways together, repeat them again, starting with the first, for another seven days. Do this again for a third seven-day period, as part of the Love For God Study Program.

How To Love God

- 1) If, instead of seeing faults in others, we look within ourselves, we are loving God.

- 2) If, instead of robbing others to help ourselves, we rob ourselves to help others, we are loving God.

- 3) If we suffer in the sufferings of others and feel happy in the happiness of others, we are loving God.

- 4) If, instead of worrying over our own misfortunes, we think of ourselves more fortunate than many many others, we are loving God.

- 5) If we endure our lot with patience and contentment, accepting it as His Will, we are loving God.

6) If we understand and feel that the greatest act of devotion and worship to God is not to hurt or harm any of His beings, we are loving God.

7) To love God as He ought to be loved, we must live for God and die for God, knowing that the goal of life is to love God, and find Him as our own Self.

II - SAYINGS

These twenty-one sayings are from messages by Meher Baba.

ACTIVITY: Read one of these sayings, on any given day, during the study program. Discuss each with your partner, describing what the saying means to you.

1) I have only one message to give, and I repeat it age after age to one and all: Love God.

2) Trust God completely and He will solve all difficulties. Faithfully leave everything to Him and He will see to everything.

3) Things that are real are given and received in silence.

4) The aim of life is to love God. The goal of life is to become one with God.

5) The finding of God is a coming to one's own Self.

6) The greatest law of God is Love which holds the key to all problems.

7) God cannot be explained...God can only be lived.

8) The Divine Beloved is always with you, in you and around you. Know that you are not separate from Him.

9) I am never silent. I speak eternally. The voice that is heard deep within the soul is My voice.

10) Only when one loves Me and loses one's self in Me am I found, and only those who lose themselves in My Love find themselves in Me.

11) I have come to help you win the One Victory of all victories, to win yourself.

12) To get nearer and nearer to God you have to get further and further away from "I", "my", "me", and "mine".

13) Baba's Love is with His lovers always, helping and guiding them.

14) The religion I give teaches the knowledge of the One behind the many.

15) Wherever I am, wherever you are, I am always with you.

16) I am the Divine Beloved who loves you more than you can ever love yourself.

17) God is everywhere and does everything. God is within us and knows everything. God is without us and sees everything. God is beyond us and IS everything.

18) You and I are not "we" but "One".

19) God is Infinite Honesty. To love God you must be honest.

20) Drown all sound in My Silence to hear My Word of words.

21) There is nothing which is beyond Me and there is nothing without Me, yet I am and can always be captured with love.

III - STORIES

These stories are from *Merwan—Stories of Meher Baba for Children*, a book about Meher Baba, his father Sheriar, his mother Shireen, and his close disciples like Mehera, Mani, Eruch, and Bhau.

ACTIVITY: During the God Is Love Study Program, read these stories by yourself or with your study partner. Answer the questions at the end of each.

1. Introduction

This is a book of stories about Merwan Sheriar Irani. Although Merwan lived most of his life in India, he was loved by people all over the world. When he was a young man, some people gave him the name *Meher Baba*, and he was known by this name from then on. *Meher* means “compassionate,” or

very loving. Baba is another word for "father." The people who called him Meher Baba thought of him as their Spiritual Master.

A Spiritual Master is someone whose job is to help people grow closer to God. It's not quite the same as being a minister or a priest because a *real* spiritual master has to be perfect. That means someone who has become one with God. People like this are very, very rare.

Meher Baba also called himself the Avatar. According to him, the Avatar is the first person who ever became perfect. He is one with God, and he keeps coming back to the world as man, again and again—every 700 to 1400 years. As God, he sees himself in everyone and everything. His job is to help all of creation with his love. When his work is done, he leaves his body. But he never really leaves the world. His love and spirit stay

around helping people until he comes again.

Meher Baba says that he has come before on earth as Zoroaster, Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Jesus, and Mohammed. Sometimes he is called the God-Man. Other times he is called the Messiah or the Christ. But no matter what people call him, he says his message is always the same:

“Love God, and you will find that your own Self is nothing but God.”

God is in every one, so if you try to love others, help others, make others happy, you are loving God.”

Meher Baba

1) What does the name Meher Baba mean?

2) *How is a Spiritual Master different than a minister or a priest?*

3) *How often does the Avatar come back to the world as a man?*

4) *What is the Avatar's job?*

2. Playing Marbles, Flying Kites

Merwan grew up in a small house in Poona with his mother and father, three brothers, and a sister. Their home was called Pumpkin House because a large pumpkin-shaped stone stood near the door.

As a young child, Merwan often got into mischief when Shireen wasn't looking. Once she found him playing happily with a big black snake. It was a cobra, one of the most dangerous snakes in India! Shireen was terrified, but luckily the snake slipped away without hurting Merwan and was never seen again.

Merwan grew up happily. He was a lively often mischievous boy who loved to fly kites and play marbles in the lane near his home. He became especially good at games and sports. One game called *gilli-danda* was played with a stick

and a wooden puck. Another, *atyapatya*, was like "tag," played with two teams on a large field. A third game, "Seven Tiles," was played with seven flat stones and a ball. Merwan liked it so much that he played it even after he grew up.

When he was older, Merwan went to Camp Government English School and St. Vincent's High School in Poona. At school Merwan became quite good at hockey and another game called cricket. He was so quick and fast that the older boys had to run to catch up with him. Because of this, they nicknamed him "Electricity."

Merwan became one of the best cricket players at St. Vincent's. Once, during a school match, he learned an important lesson about sportsmanship. In this match, Merwan was the first player to bat. He stayed on the field for the whole game without being "out." But he scored very few runs for his

team, and the match was very boring to watch. Merwan learned that a good player should not play just for himself, but so that people will enjoy watching the game, too.

After high school Merwan went on to Deccan College in Poona. He was a good student. He could now speak and read a number of Indian languages—Gujarati, Marathi, Hindi, and Urdu—as well as English and Persian. His favorite subjects were literature and poetry. He especially like Hafiz, a Persian poet. Merwan had a beautiful voice and was fond of music. People loved to hear him sing songs and *ghazals* about God. He even wrote songs and poems of his own, which appeared in the school magazine and in a Bombay newspaper.

During this time Merwan started a club. It was called the Cosmopolitan Club. Its rules were: no gambling, no fighting, and no swearing. There was something

about Merwan that people liked. Other boys often chose him as their leader. Whenever they had arguments, they would often come to him for advice.

Otherwise Merwan seemed to be a normal and ordinary young man—that is, until one day when an extraordinary event changed his life forever.

1) *What games did Merwan love to play as a child?*

2) *What sport was he especially good at?*

3) *What was the nickname given to Merwan by the older boys?*

4) *What were the rules of the Cosmopolitan Club?*

5) *What did other boys want from Merwan when they had arguments?*

3. A Kiss

It was a fine warm day in May of 1913. The city of Poona was bustling with activity. Shopkeepers were sweeping out their shops. Housewives hurried on their way home from market. Children were playing noisy games in the streets.

Merwan had been going to Deccan College for two years now. Every day he would ride his bicycle home from class through the busy streets of Poona. Every day he would pass a broad, green tree where an old woman sat, surrounded by crowds of people. The old woman's name was Babajan. She was said to be over 120 years old. Some people said she was a saint. Others said she was even greater.

Merwan usually paid no attention to these things. But today, for some reason, he glanced over at her. Their eyes met, and

Babajan beckoned to him. Getting down from his bicycle, Merwan went over to her. Without a word, Babajan stood up and embraced him. Then she kissed him on the forehead between the eyes.

Merwan remained with Babajan a short while, and then went home. The next evening he came back to see her again. He found himself strangely attracted to this old woman. As the days passed, Merwan spent every evening with Babajan. One night in January, 1914, Merwan kissed Babajan's hands and stood before her. Babajan kissed Merwan on the forehead. He stood there for a few moments and went home.

This time when he returned home, something quite unusual happened. Merwan began to feel great thrills of joy and pain through his whole body. Then, in a flash, he felt as if a blindfold had been taken away from his eyes. It was like

waking up from a dream and remembering who he really was. Instead of seeing the world, he saw that he alone existed. He was like a vast ocean, without limits or boundaries. Everywhere within him was great joy . . . the joy of being one with God.

The next morning Shireen found Merwan lying in bed. His eyes were wide open, but he didn't seem to see her. Shireen was worried. She called the doctor, but none of his medicines made any difference. Merwan still acted as if he were in a trance. He didn't eat or sleep, and he seemed totally unaware of anything he was doing.

Desperately, Shireen went to Babajan. "What have you done to my son?" she demanded.

Babajan smiled. "Merwan isn't just your son," she said. "He belongs to the whole world."

Babajan knew what was happening to Merwan because it

was her kiss that caused the change in him. She knew that he wasn't sick, or hurt, or even in a trance. He just acted that way because at the moment he was only aware of being God. She knew that soon he would have to become aware of the world again. It would be painful, but others like herself would help him.

Babajan was no ordinary woman. Merwan said later that she was one of the five Perfect Masters who always help the Avatar when he is born on earth. While he is young, he grows up as an ordinary child. Then, at the right time, the Perfect Masters help him know who he is and help him get started in his work.

Soon, without knowing why, Merwan felt the urge to travel. One by one, he visited the four other Perfect Masters. Their names were Narayan Maharaj, Tajuddin Baba, Sai Baba, and Upasni Maharaj.

Upasni Maharaj helped Merwan the most. Merwan visited him for nearly seven years.

Finally the time came when Upasni Maharaj knew that Merwan needed his help no longer. He folded his hands and bowed before the young man.

“Merwan,” he said, “you are the Avatar, and I salute you.”

Merwan was nearly twenty-eight years old. He was ready to go off on his own now and begin his work. During these years many people had become attracted to him. One group was made up of men who lived near him in Poona. Upasni Maharaj told some of these men that Merwan was now perfect. He told them to stick to Merwan and carry out every command.

Merwan called these men his *mandali*, a word meaning “close companions.” At first they called him simply “Merwan.” But now that he was their master, some of

the men wanted to give him a new name. Merwan did not object to this. Soon, to all who heard of him, he became known as Meher Baba—the Compassionate Father.

1) Who was Babajan and what did she do to Merwan?

2) What did Merwan's unusual, new experience feel like?

3) What did Babajan tell Shireen?

4) How do the five Perfect Masters help the Avatar?

5) Who were the mandali?

4. Meher Baba's Silence

At the end of June, 1925, Meher Baba had some important news for the men and women who lived with him at Meherabad. For a whole year he would be keeping silence—not speaking any words at all. He said this was part of the work he had to do in the world at that time.

Mehera and the other women loved Meher Baba's beautiful voice. They always enjoyed Baba's joking, singing, and teasing the others. They just couldn't imagine him being silent.

"At the most," they said, "he will keep silence for one month."

But they were wrong. On the 9th of July Meher Baba gave the mandali final orders. He told them exactly what to do while he was silent.

"Hear well my voice," Baba said. "You will not hear it for a long

time." Then he went off to his room for the night.

The next day, July 10, Meher Baba got up as usual. Instead of talking, he made signs with his hands and wrote on a small blackboard slate. That was the first day of Meher Baba's silence. But it didn't last one year. It lasted for 44 years—the rest of Meher Baba's life.

During the first year of Meher Baba's silence, he began writing a book. He would write a little of it each day. Sometimes he sat inside a large wooden table that was closed on the sides. Sometimes he would write at night when everyone else was sleeping. The book was a secret book. Very few people have ever seen it. Today no one seems to know where it is.

When he finished the book, Meher Baba stopped writing as well as talking. The only thing he sometimes wrote was his name. He always signed the name that was

given when he was born (Merwan Sheriar Irani), not the name “Meher Baba,” that the mandali had given him.

Later, someone made Meher Baba an alphabet board. This was a small wooden board with the letters of the English alphabet painted on it. Baba would point to the letters, one by one, to spell out words he wanted to say. He would do this with great ease and speed. Many years later he discarded the alphabet board, using only hand gestures to express what he wanted to say.

So, when you read that Meher Baba said something after July 10, 1925, you know that he didn't say it out loud. He wrote it down, spelled it out on his board, or gestured with his hands.

Sometimes Meher Baba would invite people to share in his silence. He would tell them not to talk on a certain day. July 10th, the

day Meher Baba stopped speaking, became known as "Silence Day." Baba often asked people to keep silence with him on that day.

It wasn't always easy to remember not to talk! Once Dr. Nilu, one of Baba's mandali, was keeping silence when a man named Ali Shah came up to him.

"Why don't you talk?" Ali Shah asked, "Is anything the matter with you?"

"No," Dr. Nilu answered, not realizing that he spoke out loud. "It is simply that I must not speak today!"

One day Meher Baba asked the men mandali this question: "Why do people shout at each other when they are angry?"

The men thought about it for a while. "We lose our tempers," someone suggested. "That's why we shout."

"But why should you shout when the person is by your side?" Baba

asked. "Can't you speak to him in a low voice? Why do you shout at the person when you are angry?"

The men talked some more, but none of their answers satisfied Baba. Finally he gave this explanation:

"When two people are angry," Baba said, "their hearts move very far apart. And to cover that distance, they have to shout—so they can hear each other. The angrier they are, the louder they have to shout—to hear each other across the great distance."

Then Baba asked, "What happens when two people fall in love? They don't shout at each other. They speak softly. Why? Their hearts are so close together. The distance between them is very small."

Baba went on, "When two people fall further in love, what happens? They don't talk—they just whisper. And they come still

closer in their love. Finally they don't need even to whisper. They just gaze at each other."

Then Baba said, "How much closer I am to you! I am closer to you than your very breath. What need have I to speak?"

1) When did Meher Baba begin his silence and how long did it last?

2) After he stopped writing, how did Baba express what he wanted to say?

3) When is Silence Day and what do people often do during this day?

4) Why does Baba say people shout when they are angry?

5) Why does Baba say he doesn't need to speak?

5. Hold On!

In 1928 Meher Baba started a school for boys from many different countries. One part of the school was called the Prem Ashram. That means "a place for those who love God." Meher Baba didn't want just to teach the boys regular schoolwork. He wanted to teach them about loving God, too.

One of the students was a boy from Persia (Iran). His name was Esphandiar, and he came to Baba's school with thirteen other boys from his town.

Soon classes began. Esphandiar and the other students were busy with their lessons. Sometimes the teachers would read poems to them about God. One of the poems said that a person can love God so much that he sees nothing *but* God.

"Is that true?" Esphandiar asked the teacher.

"Yes," the teacher replied.

That struck Esphandiar very deeply. After this, he stopped doing his regular schoolwork and began repeating God's name all the time. He became so absorbed in saying God's name that he didn't even notice his teacher or the other children.

A few days passed like this. Finally the head of the school went to Meher Baba.

"Esphandiar isn't paying attention to his studies," he told Baba. "What should I do?"

Baba went to see Esphandiar in the classroom. "Why aren't you studying?" he asked.

"I can't," the boy replied.

"Are you homesick? Do you want to go back home to your family?" Baba asked.

"No," the boy answered.

"Then what is the matter? Why can't you study?"

And so Esphandiar told him, "I want to go toward God."

“All right,” Baba said with a smile. “If you really want it, I will give that to you. But only if you obey me and listen to what I say.”

He took the boy by the hand and led him outside. He called for the small carriage that was kept nearby. Sometimes Baba used to sit in the carriage while the boys pulled him around for fun.

Baba got into the carriage and asked Esphandiar to sit beside him. The boy started to climb in, but he saw that there wasn't enough room for him to sit down. The carriage just wasn't big enough. So Esphandiar stood on the floor of the carriage right next to Baba.

“Hold on,” Baba told him.

A few of the other students began pulling the carriage up the road to the top of the hill. The road was full of small rocks. Esphandiar found he had to grasp Baba's arm

very firmly or else he would lose his balance.

When they got to the top, Baba said, "Did you see how bumpy the road was? If you were not holding my arm, you would have fallen off. In the same way, when want to go toward God, you have to obey the Master completely."

This was one of the ways that Meher Baba liked to teach the boys in the school. Esphandiar saw that if he held on to Baba by obeying him as tightly as he held on to Baba's arm in the carriage, Baba would help him grow closer to God.

1) What was the name of the school in Meherabad where Esphandiar studied?

2) What did Meher Baba want boys at his school to learn?

3) *Why wasn't Esphandiar paying attention to his studies?*

4) *What did Baba ask Esphandiar to do in the carriage?*

5) *What did Baba teach Esphandiar about obedience?*

6. How Meher Baba Slept

At night Meher Baba would always have one of the men mandali keep watch while he slept. The night watchman would sit right outside Baba's room, making sure that no one disturbed Baba's rest. Baba always gave the night watchman three orders—not to move, not to make any noise, and to keep awake the whole night.

Once, one of the mandali named Bhau was keeping watch for Baba. Baba told him, "I'm tired today and not feeling well. So please don't make any noise. Don't move, and keep awake." Baba repeated the order five or six times. Then he directed Bhau to close the windows, close the door, and go sit outside on the porch.

Bhau didn't find it hard to stay awake or keep very quiet. But he did find it hard to sit like a statue for such a long time. Mosquitos

kept buzzing around his face and biting him. But Baba's order meant that he couldn't even lift his hand to brush them away.

Usually, every fifteen minutes or so, Baba would give Bhau a chance to move and stretch. But this particular night Baba didn't clap after fifteen minutes. Half an hour went by. Then another hour. Two hours. Still Baba didn't clap. All the time, the mosquitos were biting and Bhau was becoming very stiff. Finally after two and a half hours, Baba started snoring.

"This is my chance," Bhau thought. "At last I can change the way I'm sitting in this chair." Slowly Bhau started to lift his leg off the ground. Without making a sound, he moved it ever so slightly. At that moment, Baba clapped.

Bhau went inside to Baba's room. "Why did you move?" Baba asked him.

At first Bhau was so startled he didn't say a word. He thought to himself, How did Baba know that I moved? The door and the windows were closed. I did not make any noise, and obviously Baba was sleeping."

Baba knew what Bhau was thinking and said to him, "When I sleep, I can see the whole world. Can I not see you, who are so near to me?"

This was how Bhau learned that Baba's sleep was not like yours or mine. Even when Baba was asleep and snoring, he always knew what was going on around him.

1) What three orders did Meher Baba give the men who kept watch at night?

2) Why was it hard for Bhau to keep still?

3) *Why did Baba clap?*

4) *How was Baba's sleep
different from ours?*

7. The Good Shepherd

At first, after Meher Baba left his body, the mandali had no time to think of themselves. They were kept very busy doing the work that Baba had given them. Later, at Meherazad, they were not so busy and found themselves missing Baba very much.

One evening at dusk Mani found Eruch washing his face at the tap outside his cabin. She spoke to Eruch, but he didn't answer. He just wiped his face with the towel.

She waited patiently. But instead of answering, Eruch beckoned to Mani and started walking past the mango tree toward the edge of the field.

Mani was puzzled. All Eruch had said was, "Come," so she went.

By now it was so dark that she could hardly see. Silently she stood beside Eruch at the edge of the

field. Finally Eruch spoke. "Can you hear?" he asked her.

Mani strained her ears. Sure enough, from the other side of the field, she could hear a soft sound: "Baa-baa, baa-baa, baa-baa."

It was the sound of sheep in the field, and they seemed to be calling out Baba's name. Hearing them made Mani feel happy. "Ah, yes," she said. "I hear."

Mani and Eruch knew that sometimes the shepherds left their flocks of sheep on the field. Usually they made a pen, or fence, of thorny branches. Then they put the sheep inside the pen so that the animals were protected.

Eruch spoke again. "Can you see?" he asked.

Mani strained her eyes. Some of the sheep were white. They were moving about restlessly. Because of that, she was able to see them.

"Yes," she said. "I can see sheep."

“No, look to the left,” Eruch pointed. “Can you see what’s there?”

It was quite dark, but as Mani looked, she saw a darker shape. It looked like a big rock, a short distance from the sheep pen. Thoughts raced through Mani’s mind. There *is* no rock in the middle of the field, she thought. Then suddenly she realized what it was. It was not a rock. It was a *person*. Someone was sitting there as still as a rock with a blanket around him.

“Oh, it’s the shepherd!” Mani exclaimed.

“Yes,” Eruch nodded. “Because it is dark and the sheep cannot see, they think that their shepherd has left them. They think that he is not there. They are restless, calling out to him, searching everywhere for him.

“But the shepherd is sitting there all the time. He is watching

over his flock, protecting them. He will sit like that, very still, all night long. He will not move from there.

“And when the dawn comes, the sheep will see that their shepherd has never left them. He has been there all the time.”

This helped Mani to realize that Meher Baba had not really gone away. She could not see him anymore, but, like the Good Shepherd, he was still there. It was just as Meher Baba once said:

“Don’t lose heart, but keep me in your heart. And remember I am always with you.”

1) How did the mandali feel after Baba died?

2) What did Eruch want Mani to hear?

3) What did Eruch want Mani to see?

4) *Why were the sheep restless and calling out to their shepherd?*

5) *How is Meher Baba like the shepherd?*

IV - SERVICE

In *Sparks from Meher Baba*, Meher Baba says, "Purity, Love, and Service are the elements of spiritual life. Always be in readiness to serve the cause of humanity. Select the kind of work you are qualified to do by your individual aptitude and abilities. And whatever service you can render must faithfully be carried out."

ACTIVITY: With the help of your Study Partner, come up with an idea for a service project that will benefit your place of worship or the general community. Complete this project during the study program period.

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