



The Scripture of the
Founding Master

The Scripture of the Founding Master

Chapter Eleven Maxims

1. The Founding Master said, “The study of any science has limits to its use, but if you learn how to make the mind function, this study can be utilized without a moment’s interruption. Therefore, mind practice becomes the basis for all other studies.”

2. The Founding Master said, “A practitioner of the Way seeks to know the mind in order to achieve freedom of mind, to understand the principle of birth and death in order to transcend birth and death, and to understand the principle of transgression and blessings in order to control them as one pleases.”

3. The Founding Master said, “If the mind is wholesome, everything wholesome arises along with it; if the mind is unwholesome, everything unwholesome arises along with it. Thus, the mind becomes the basis for everything wholesome and unwholesome.”

4. The Founding Master said, “When a person whose mind is crooked has a lot of money, knowledge, or power, then those things instead become the basis for transgression and unwholesomeness. Only after one’s mind is upright will money, knowledge, and power be transformed into eternal blessings.”

5. The Founding Master said, “Goodness is fine, but if one becomes tied to a lesser good, that will interfere with an even greater good; wisdom is fine, but if one becomes tied to a lesser wisdom, that will interfere with an even greater wisdom. Thus, one can attain the greater only if one practices not being tied to the lesser.”

6. The Founding Master said, “An ignorant person who knows he is ignorant will gain wisdom. A wise person who knows only his wisdom but not his ignorance, will gradually fall into ignorance.”

The Scripture of the Founding Master

7. The Founding Master said, “A person cultivating the great Way makes use of absorption and wisdom together, but by establishing wisdom on the foundation of absorption, he attains true wisdom. A person working on the great enterprise pursues virtue and talent together, but basing talent on virtue makes it into true talent.”

8. The Founding Master said, “A brave person is likely to encounter a strong enemy; a talented person is likely to spoil the work.”

9. The Founding Master said, “When a foolish person has worries and anxieties he tries hard to be rid of them, but once free of them he is busy acquiring them anew. Hence, throughout his life there is no end of worries and anxieties.”

10. The Founding Master said, “Those who have made a great vow to the great Way should not hope to accomplish it quickly. With quick steps one cannot walk a long distance; with an impatient mind one cannot achieve the great Way. That tall tree is the result of a small shoot growing for many years without decaying; buddhas and bodhisattvas are the result of accumulating merits over a long period of time without going back on their original vow.”

11. The Founding Master said, “There are two Māras hindering great practice. The first is, ignoring one’s own spiritual capacity, one stops progressing by denigrating and giving up on oneself. The second is, satisfied with a modicum of knowledge, one stops progressing by being proud and haughty. Without getting rid of these two hindrances of Māra, one cannot accomplish great practice.”

12. The Founding Master said, “A person who has lost all hope is someone whose physical body is still alive but whose mind is dead. Even a villain who has committed murder, robbery, or sexual misconduct, if he turns his mind around just once, may still become a buddha or a bodhisattva. But for a person

The Scripture of the Founding Master

who has lost all hope, there is nothing that can be done for him until his mind becomes alive again. Therefore, the buddhas and bodhisattvas set up the power of their vow to arouse great hope in all sentient beings and work hard without interruption through numerous lifetimes.”

13. The Founding Master said, “There is no special wish-fulfilling gem. If you detach yourself from greed and free yourself from likes and dislikes, this will be the wish-fulfilling gem.”

14. The Founding Master said, “If you wish to correct others, you must first correct yourself. If you wish to teach others, you must first learn yourself. If you wish to receive others’ grace, you must first offer your grace to others. When you do this, not only will you achieve your own wishes, but everybody will enjoy grace and achieve their wishes regardless of self and others.”

15. The Founding Master said, “One who vanquishes another is strong, but one who vanquishes oneself is even stronger. One who is able to conquer oneself will gain the strength to conquer anyone under heaven.”

16. The Founding Master said, “There are two types of foolish persons in this world. The first is a person who, though unable to use his own mind as he wishes, tries to use others’ minds as he wishes. The second is one who, though unable to handle his own affairs, meddles in others’ affairs and suffers from getting involved in quarrels.”

17. The Founding Master said, “There is a Way to acquire all things, but ordinary people try to acquire them without being in accord with the Way, so the more they seek them, the further away those things become. Because buddhas and bodhisattvas seek in accordance with the Way, even if they do not seek things out eagerly, there is a principle that those things will naturally come their way.”

18. The Founding Master said, “A person who works first and eats later is

The Scripture of the Founding Master

a superior person. A person who works later and eats first is an inferior person.”

19. The Founding Master said, “Foolish people like to receive blessings but hate to make blessings; they hate to receive misfortune but like to commit transgressions. This is all due to the fact that they do not understand the source of blessings and misfortune, and even if they understand it, they do not act upon it.”

20. The Founding Master said, “A person who bestows much grace on others spiritually, physically, and materially is a person who will receive many blessings in the future. The person who is comfortable with his lot, regardless of the sensory conditions he faces, is the most comfortable person; the person who finds satisfaction no matter the situation in which he finds himself is the wealthiest person.”

21. The Founding Master said, “Sentient beings seem smart for focusing solely on their own concerns, but ultimately they end up injuring themselves; buddhas and bodhisattvas seem foolish for doing things only for others, but ultimately they end up benefiting themselves.”

22. The Founding Master said, “Because a wise person is unconcerned about high or low position but simply devotes himself to his work without dishonesty, his work and merit shine brilliantly as time goes by. Because a foolish person only seeks fame and reward without being faithful to his work, his fame and achievement eventually disappear as vanities.”

23. The Founding Master said, “A person who lauds himself will perforce be humbled; a person who always insists on defeating others will perforce be defeated.”

24. The Founding Master said, “The more wholesomeness is displayed, the more its merit is diminished; the more unwholesomeness is hidden away, the deeper its root becomes. Thus, by hiding wholesomeness, its merit becomes

The Scripture of the Founding Master

greater; by displaying unwholesomeness, its root becomes shallower.”

25. The Founding Master said, “The virtue of helping others surreptitiously is the greater virtue; the transgression of harming others surreptitiously is the greater transgression.”

26. The Founding Master said, “Even when one has practiced wholesomeness, if one resents others for ignoring it, a sprout of unwholesomeness will grow within that wholesomeness. Even when one has committed unwholesomeness, if one repents, a sprout of wholesomeness will grow within that unwholesomeness. Therefore, do not become conceited or self-satisfied with a moment of wholesomeness and thereby hinder one’s progress; do not fall into degradation by giving up on oneself because of a moment of unwholesomeness.”

27. The Founding Master said, “A foolish person likes free things but does not realize that they can lead to greater loss many times over. A wise person not only dislikes free things, but when he obtains them, he refrains from keeping them all for himself but shares them in appropriate places, thus guarding in advance against misfortunes.”

28. The Founding Master said, “An authentic person’s mind is free from pretense, so everything one does proves genuine. A sage’s mind is free from mutual harm, so everything one does proves virtuous. Therefore, an authentic person’s mind is always upright and thus free from perversity; a sage’s mind is always serene and thus free from distress.”

29. The Founding Master said, “Do not say without meaning it that you will give something to others, nor exaggerate what you have given; these words will instead become debts and damage your virtue. Also, do not make insincere vows to the dharma realm of empty space; the lie you have told to the dharma realm of empty space will become the source of frightening transgression and suffering.”

The Scripture of the Founding Master

30. The Founding Master said, “Only a person who has removed the unwholesome and venomous energies in his mind can resolve others’ unwholesome and venomous energies.”

31. The Founding Master said, “The mind of mutual harm is the source for inviting misfortune. The mind of mutual lifegiving is the source for inviting blessings.”

32. The Founding Master said, “Even though a person has at one moment committed unwholesomeness, if he genuinely repents and accumulates merit, the unwholesome energy in his body will dissolve, brightly opening his road ahead. Even though a person has at one moment accumulated wholesomeness, if he has resentment in his heart or the intent to hurt others, then unwholesome energy will enwrap him, darkly obscuring his road ahead.”

33. The Founding Master said, “Sentient beings turn even a benefactor ten times over into an object of resentment if he fails just once to favor them. Persons of the Way thank a person who has wronged them even ten times over if he favors them just once. Therefore, sentient beings discover only the harm within grace and bring on disorder and disruption; persons of the Way find the grace within harm and bring on peace and comfort.”

34. The Founding Master said, “A wholesome person teaches the world through his wholesomeness, but the unwholesome person awakens the world through his unwholesomeness. The service of teaching and awakening the world is the same, but a wholesome person does his work for the world while gaining blessings for himself and an unwholesome person does his while creating transgressions for himself. Thus, we should pity the unwholesome person rather than hating him.”

35. The Founding Master said, “There is not a single thing under heaven to discard if you know how to make use of things.”

The Scripture of the Founding Master

36. The Founding Master said, “By saying even one thing or writing even one line, a person can give others either hope and peace, or despair and turmoil. Thus, a person does not always commit transgressions because he is fundamentally bad, but will often commit transgressions without realizing it because he does not understand the principle of what creates transgressions and blessings.”

37. The Founding Master said, “Breaking the important precepts against murder, robbery, or sexual misconduct is unwholesome, but cutting off a person’s right faith and blocking his road ahead over an infinity of kalpas and many lifetimes is an even greater transgression. Making offerings of money, clothes, and food is wholesome, but arousing right faith in others and opening up their road ahead over an infinity of kalpas and many lifetimes is an even greater good.”

38. The Founding Master said, “In this world, there are three types of people who are difficult to deliver. First is a person who in his heart respects no one. Second is a person who has no sense of shame about anything. Third is a person who feels no remorse even after committing transgressions.”

39. The Founding Master said, “Breaking the rules of a congregation while being a member is tantamount to bringing destruction on the congregation; ignoring the will of the congregation amounts to going against the will of heaven.”

40. The Founding Master said, “Someone who, without being especially good or skilled, maintains his ordinariness within a congregation for a long time and continues to accumulate merit is a special person; he or she will instead experience great success.”

41. The Founding Master said, “The life of a religious order does not exist in its facilities or assets but in receiving and transmitting the wise mandate of

The Scripture of the Founding Master

the dharma.”

42. The Founding Master said, “True freedom is attained by refraining from self-indulgence; great benefit is attained by ridding oneself of selfish desires. Therefore, a person who seeks true freedom must first keep the precepts well; a person who seeks great benefit must first foster a public spirit.”

43. The Founding Master said, “Sentient beings take buddhas and bodhisattvas as their field of merit; buddhas and bodhisattvas take sentient beings as their field of merit.”

44. The Founding Master said, “If a human being does not have broad understanding of the world of the six destinies and the four types of birth, one knows only one aspect of the world; if one does not have comprehensive understanding of the principle of progressing and regressing within the six destinies and the four types of birth, one is a person who only knows what is right in front of one’s eyes.”

45. The Founding Master said, “A person who does not have in his heart a single thought of self is someone who owns the triple worlds in the ten directions.”