



The Scripture of the  
**Founding Master**

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# The Scripture of the Founding Master

## Chapter Twelve Exemplary Acts

1. Once, while the Founding Master was traveling by boat from Pöpsöng to Pongnae hermitage in Puan, there unexpectedly occurred a severe storm that violently rocked the boat. The seamen and passengers were all distraught, some crying, some vomiting, some collapsing, which created much havoc on the boat. But the Founding Master, with a calm and serious demeanor, said, “Even when a person is confronted with death, if you collect yourself and repent from the transgressions you made in the past and promise to perform good karma in the future, then you may draw on heaven’s power to open up the path to life. Pull yourselves together!” Trusting in the Founding Master’s inspiring virtue, all the people on the boat tried hard to calm their minds. Shortly afterwards, as the wind gradually died down and the waves subsided, people could not but revere the Founding Master’s imperturbable composure and his compassionate and luminous presence.

2. The Founding Master visited Silsang monastery one day and witnessed two elderly monks harshly scolding a young novice who, they said, would not obey their instruction to practice meditation. They said to the Master, “A person like him could not be delivered even if a thousand buddhas appeared right now. He’s trash.” The Founding Master smiled and said, “Though you reverend monks have shown concern for him, you are also preventing him from ever practicing meditation.” One of the senior monks asked, “Why do you say so?” The Founding Master said, “By demanding that a person do something he doesn’t want to do, you are making him dislike it forever. If I told you that inside the rocks of that mountain there is gold and demanded that you crack open those rocks and extract the gold, would you trust my words and immediately start mining?” The elderly monks thought for a while, and said, “It would be hard to believe you and immediately start mining.” The Founding Master said, “In the same way, if I demand that you go mining without first gaining your trust, what would you do? You would most likely think my words spurious.

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When a young disciple has no interest in meditation nor any such aspiration, if you demand that he practice meditation, it would make him consider meditation to be spurious, and once he does so, wouldn't that keep him from ever practicing it? Thus, your approach is not a skillful means of guiding a person." One of the senior monks said, "If this is the case, then what would be a skillful means of guiding him?" The Founding Master said, "Knowing that there is gold inside the rock, if you first go and mine it yourself and then make splendid use of it, people will want to know how you became wealthy. If you tell them the details to suit the degrees of their desire to know, how gratefully they would then go and mine the gold! Wouldn't this be a skillful means of guiding others?" The senior monks sat up straight and said, "The Master's method of guidance is truly magnificent!"

3. When the Founding Master was living at Pongnae hermitage, one day he would not take the evening meal. His attendants, Kim Namch'ŏn and Song Chŏkpyŏk, asked him why, to which the Master responded, "While I've been staying here, I've been much obliged for your efforts on my behalf. However, you will have a quarrel with each other tonight and you will leave before dawn. So I've decided not to have dinner this evening." Both said to the Master, "We are especially close to one another, so even if we were to be upset with each other over some matter, how would we ever leave? So please accept the dinner we've prepared." A few hours later, the two attendants suddenly began to argue with each other and, unable to control their anger, packed their bags. Namch'ŏn, recalling the Master's premonition, stayed and remained under his guidance for the rest of his life, but Chŏkpyŏk left the following morning.

4. In the ninth year of the Won-Buddhist Era, after Iksan Headquarters was first established, the members invested for a while in taffy-making as the first means of attempting to sustain the poor religious order. The Founding Master always advised his various disciples, "In today's world, not all people's minds are regulated, so be sure to lock the front gate and guard your possessions so nothing gets stolen. If we are robbed, not only do we lose our possessions, but we are also letting others commit transgressions. We must be

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careful.” He even provided them with a lock. However, due to their inexperience, the disciples weren’t careful about taking all the precautions, and one night had all their taffy molds and candy stolen. The disciples could not get over their feelings of shame and anxiety, so the Founding Master said, “Don’t worry! The thief who visited last night was a great teacher for you. You may have believed I was the most respected teacher, yet you were not alerted by my warning alone. But from now on, even if I do not say anything, you will be extra careful. Consider the few things you lost last night tuition you paid to the teacher.”

5. One of the disciple’s nature and behavior were so rough, that even many years after he ordained, he could not correct his bad habits from the past. So, the disciples said to the Founding Master, “It seems that there would not be much benefit even if you were to guide him in the dharma for a hundred years. We think you should return him to society and purify the atmosphere in this practice site.” The Founding Master said, “How could you say such a thing? If he is like this now even in a religious order, what would happen if I sent him back to society? Moreover, to view the practice site and society as separate is a Hīnayāna (Lesser Vehicle) concept and a point of view concerned only with one’s own perfection. From a broader perspective, society’s impurity is in fact the order’s impurity, and the order’s impurity is in fact society’s impurity. How can you say it is appropriate to eliminate only the impurity in the order and send it back to society? In general, the major point of the buddhadharma is to teach all people to the very end by employing all expedient means necessary to guide them toward what is wholesome. If we associate with wholesome people alone, then where is our original duty? Therefore, do not readily hate or abandon those who do not respond right away to what is being taught, but keep trying hard to teach them until the very end. If a person cannot take it and wants to leave, then let him, but unless he does so, do not let him ever set aside his affinities to achieve buddhahood together with us as disciples of the Buddha.”

6. A disciple flagrantly violated the order’s regulations, so the disciples met to open a public discussion for his expulsion. The Founding Master said,

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“How can you possibly initiate such an action? This is not my will. My disciples do not stop at tens of thousands of people and my temple grounds do not stop at tens of thousands of pyŏng of facilities. All the people of this world are my people and every facility in this world is my practice site. Someone who has been following me may decide to leave, but I will never abandon him first.” He then called the disciple to him and both scolded him strictly and admonished him tenderly, so that finally the disciple was able to attain the path of repentance and make a fresh start.

7. When the Founding Master was staying in Yŏngsan, a few prostitutes joined the order and occasionally visited the temple. Those around him were bothered and said to the Master, “If such people visit our pure dharma site, then not only will outsiders laugh at us but it will also become a hindrance for our development. We think it best if you do not let them visit our temple anymore.” The Founding Master smiled and said, “How can you say such petty things? Generally, the great intent of the buddhadharma is always to deliver all sentient beings everywhere in the spirit of ‘great loving-kindness and great compassion.’ How can we exclude these people alone from that domain? The gate of deliverance is opened even more for sentient beings who are suffering from their transgressions. The original duty of proselytizing is to accept those sentient beings even more warmly, so that they may realize their transgressions and attain awakening on their own, as well as to feel ashamed of their occupation and abandon it on their own. How can we let go of our original duty because we fear others’ ridicule? What is more, in the world there may be both high and low classes of people as well as high and low occupations, but in the buddha-nature there are no such distinctions. If you do not understand this fundamental principle and dislike practicing together with them when they visit the temple, then you are the people who are difficult to deliver.”

8. After the March First independence movement of 1919, public sentiment grew extremely excitable and surveillance of the Founding Master by the Japanese authorities was becoming more intense every day. While he was staying at Kŭmsansa, he was called down to the Kimje police station, and while in

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Yōngsan, to Yōnggwang station, for several days of intensive police interrogation. Throughout his life, the Founding Master experienced numerous other occasions when he was detained and suppressed, but he never showed the slightest hint of hatred or resentment toward his oppressors; instead, he always treated them with equanimity. The Founding Master said, “They are only doing their job, just as we are only doing ours. If what we are doing is right, then in the long run no one will be able to harm or stop us.”

9. A Japanese policeman disrespectfully addressed the Founding Master by name, so Oh Ch’anggōn became angry at the policeman’s rudeness and severely scolded him. The Founding Master said, “That man acted that way because he does not know me very well yet. What is the point of reprimanding him so strongly? A person who converts others must always try hard to reform them by winning their voluntary submission. If one knows when to accept defeat, then there will surely come a day when one wins; but if one wins when one shouldn’t, then there will surely come a day when one loses.”

10. Claiming that a disciple’s political ideas were subversive, a Japanese policeman interrogated the Founding Master for an entire day and finally ordered him to swear that, in the future, he would make sure never again to have his disciples cause trouble. The Founding Master responded, “Parents always try to guide their children well, but because each child’s nature and behavior are different, they don’t always do what their parents want. The government may try to get all its subjects to act correctly, but because each subject mind varies, it may not turn out as the government wishes. It is much the same with my work: I do my very best to make people better, but how will all those people be made better in one morning or one evening? Thus, I will continue to make every effort in the future, but it is difficult for me to swear that I will never again have such a disciple.” Having said this, the Founding Master returned and addressed the congregation, “For a long time, the strong and the weak have opposed one other, and the discrimination against some has become so severe that there are deeply buried resentments that will lead to a great war in the future. Subsequently, the people’s intelligence will steadily become brighter, and in-

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dividuals and nations will aid and amicably communicate with each other, so that never again will anyone unjustly infringe on another's liberty."

11. A person asked the Founding Master, "In a world such as ours today, are there still persons of the Way who have seen the nature?" The Founding Master said, "The more the world is like ours, shouldn't persons of the Way who have seen the nature appear all the more?" The person asked again, "Have you, sir, seen the nature and achieved buddhahood?" The Founding Master laughed and said, "Seeing the nature and achieving buddhahood are not something you do by means of words or recognize through someone's words. Only a person who has attained that kind of perception can recognize that realm. The true value of the Way and its virtue is something to be authenticated by future generations."

12. A detective was assigned by local police department to stay at Won-Buddhist Headquarters for several years and maintain surveillance on both the Founding Master and the order. The Founding Master loved and cared for that detective just as if he were one of the Master's beloved disciples. A disciple asked, "There is no reason to treat him that well, is there, Master?" The Founding Master said, "Your ideas and mine are different. What reason would I have for not inspiring him and helping him gain deliverance?" The Founding Master still continued to love and care for that man, whether the man was in his presence or not, and he finally submitted of his own accord and joined the order, afterwards rendering much assistance on many issues facing the order. His dharma name was Hwang Ich'ön.

13. One day when the Founding Master was staying in Yöngsan, a district policeman came to a neighboring village and sent someone over to summon the Master. The Founding Master was willing to accept the summons, but the disciples around him were indignant at the policeman's insolence and tried to stop him from going. The Founding Master said, "What's so wrong about going to see him?" A disciple replied, "Even though this world may not recognize the value of the Way and its virtue, how can a mere policeman dare to summon

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at his own accord a teacher who instructs a congregation of several hundred people? If you comply, then not only will you harm the dignity of your dharma status but it will also be a considerable disgrace to our order.” The Founding Master said, “Your words are true enough, but don’t worry. I’ve already thought about it.” The Master went right over to meet the policeman and upon his return, said to the disciples, “When I went over to see him, he looked humbled, greeted me warmly, and went away looking completely satisfied. I am sure that his eagerness to oppress us has greatly diminished. Had I not gone to see him, that eagerness would have grown stronger. What would have happened, then? These days, don’t Japanese officials try to find any excuse possible to suppress all Korean organizations? Therefore, in this sort of situation, it is better to respond as I did. Generally speaking, if you want to be treated well by others, you should first show cause for being treated well yourself. If you do so, then others will treat you accordingly. However, the minds of buddhas and bodhisattvas have no thought of status even though they have attained it.”

14. Among the new indigenous religions at the time in Korea, there were quite a few incidents that attracted the attention of government officials and society due to scandals involving money and sex. As a consequence, the authorities frequently interfered with and investigated all religious orders. However, they were never able to find even a hair’s breadth of irregularity in our order, so they went back to their office and said to each other, “The organization, plan, and practice of the Society for the Study of the Buddhadharma [viz. Won-Buddhism] are such that, even if the whole country were entrusted to them, they would be able to govern it competently.” When these comments were related to the Founding Master, he said, “The authentic Way and its virtue is the great dharma that helps everyone to live well, from the individual and the family up to the nation and the world. Thus, even if the whole world were entrusted to us, why couldn’t we govern it well?”

15. At the Seoul Temple, the Founding Master weeded the temple grounds himself and said, “I had two reasons for weeding the temple grounds today: one was to set an example to the temple managers always to pay close attention to

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the neatness of the temple grounds; the other was to demonstrate that when we do not examine our minds regularly, distracted thoughts will arise right before our eyes, just as will these weeds should we neglect the temple grounds for even a short while. By demonstrating that mind practice and the act of pulling weeds have the same intent, I am emphasizing that you may assess your mind practice by pulling weeds and may pull weeds as a part of your mind practice, so that you may keep clean both the temple grounds and the field of your mind. I ask that you constantly bear in mind these two intents, so that you do not neglect my original objective.”

**16.** The Founding Master always kept his belongings neatly arranged, with everything in its proper place, so that he could find them even in the dark. He kept the temple grounds pristine as well, without even a single dust-mote remaining. He said, “If one’s personal belongings are messy, a person’s mind is messy also; if one’s temple grounds are dirty, a person’s mind ground is coarse as well. Hence, if the mind is lazy and coarse, then nothing can be regulated. How can we neglect such so-called little things?”

**17.** A disciple asked the Founding Master why he locked his chest each time he left his room, even for a moment. The master replied, “Since my residence is frequented by people whose practice is immature, of both sexes and all ages, from both inside and outside our order, I am trying to keep them from committing transgressions prompted by ‘an object seen, an object desired.’”

**18.** The Founding Master discarded nothing needlessly, whether it was a piece of paper, a pencil stub, or a piece of string, saying: “No matter how abundant certain things may be, if a person does not know how to use them sparingly, he will receive the retribution of poverty. Water may be abundant in the world but, if a person wastes it needlessly, he will experience the causal retribution of being reincarnated where water is scarce and of suffering a water shortage.”

**19.** The Founding Master would foresee the general contours of future

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events each time he had nothing urgent at hand, so that he was never unprepared when they occurred. The Founding Master thought about the usage of objects that seemed to be worn out and would never discard them needlessly, so that such objects could often be put back into use as if they were indeed perfectly useful things.

20. The Founding Master always warned against extravagance in clothing, food, and shelter: “By living beyond one’s means in clothing, food, and shelter, one can bring about the destruction of one’s family and ruin of oneself. Even though one is rich, ultimately perverse states of mind will flourish and hinder the spirit of cultivation if one is extravagant. Therefore, practitioners must consistently give precedence to plainness and simplicity in regards to clothing, food, and shelter.”

21. When the Founding Master stepped outside the gate of Won-Buddhist Headquarters with a few disciples, several children who were playing outside all bowed to him, except for the youngest. The Founding Master gently stroked the child’s head and said, “If you bow, I’ll give you a candy,” so the child bowed. The Founding Master smiled and walked off for a while without giving it any further thought. Then, all of a sudden he said to the disciples, “Wait here for a moment. I forgot to do something.” He returned to his quarters, got some candies, and gave them to the child before going on. This act demonstrates how the Founding Master always kept his word even in small matters.

22. Once when the Founding Master had taken ill, a disciple said, “In a member’s home next door, there is a comfortable chair that you could sit on. I will bring it over.” The Founding Master said, “Never mind. The owner is not home at the moment, so how can I consider only my comfort and have you bring it over for me? No matter how close your relationship, unless it is unavoidable, it is better not to borrow and use something arbitrarily without the other’s offer or consent.”

23. When the Founding Master received mail, he always read it himself and

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sent his reply right away. Afterwards, he would carefully put away the ones that he decided to save and the rest he would collect and burn at a clean spot. He said, “A letter contains the sincerity of the sender, so it is not proper decorum to handle it carelessly.”

24. One day the Founding Master severely scolded one of his disciples. When the disciple reappeared a little later, the Master treated him with a loving look on his sagely face. Another disciple who was next to the Master asked him why. The Master said, “Before, I scolded him to break the perverse mind that he held, but now I am trying to encourage the right mind that has returned.”

25. The Master’s wife, Yang Haun, underwent all kinds of hardship to manage the private household affairs of the Founding Master entirely by herself until he established the new order; and even afterwards, she would perform hard physical labor toiling in the fields and rice paddies. The ordinary adherents were embarrassed and were talking about collecting donations from throughout the order to ease her burden. Hearing of this, the Founding Master said, “This may be good decorum, but you should desist. In establishing a new religious order as great as ours, how can she impose on the followers, even though she has not been able to take the lead as a major founder of the new establishment? It would be a different story if she were unable to support herself. But if she can be self-supporting, that would be an honorable and happy life.”

26. While Yi Ch’ōngch’un was watching two pigs copulate, she had a profound awakening and she shook off all worldly joys and joined the order.

While arduously cultivating the Way, she decided to donate all of her land holdings to the order, but the Founding Master said, “Your intention is quite touching, but a person’s mind may not be the same in the beginning and at the end. So think this over more carefully.” He refused her offer many more times. Ch’ōngch’un not only did not have a change of heart, but was even further impressed by the Master’s many refusals and begged him to grant her this wish. Finally, the Master consented and said, “In exercising virtue, exercise great virtue that is signless like that of heaven and earth’s, so that your merit will re-

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main forever unextinguished.”

27. When the Founding Master was visiting Maryŏng Temple, Oh Songam came to visit him and said, “Since my daughters Chongsun and Chongt’ae joined your order, they have refused to get married. That’s not what I would like, but since I haven’t been able to change their minds, I have left them alone. So, please, would you take responsibility for their futures?” The Founding Master said, “My dharma is different from that of Buddhism of the past, in that it does not formally prohibit married life. However, how can I be indifferent to those who, having made such an exceptional vow, aspire to spiritual practice and public service with pure bodies and minds? But their futures depend not on their parents or their teacher, but on their own minds. Hence, leave the ultimate responsibility to them, and let’s you and me just try to guide them with sincerity.” Songam got up, bowed and happily consented to his daughters becoming ordained.

28. When the Founding Master took a trip to Pusan, Im Ch’ilbohwa came to visit him and said, “I would like to invite you to my home.” The Founding Master said, “Your faith is devout, but would your husband, who is still not a Won-Buddhist, understand?” Ch’ilbohwa responded, “When I asked my husband about my wish to prepare a meal offering for the Founding Master, he replied, ‘I have not joined the order because my conduct is not up to par, but it would be an honor for our family to have such a person come and visit.’” The Founding Master understood their past affinities and happily accepted her invitation.

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29. A person came and begged to be accepted as a disciple. The Founding Master said, “Why don’t you come back one or two more times over the next few days and then see?” The person said, “My intention is set, so please give me your consent.” The Founding Master thought for a while then gave him the dharma name Ilchi [‘Going in a Day’]. The man withdrew and then said to the congregation, “What affinities have brought us together as disciples in the same order?” He claimed that he had some fantastic medicinal pills and urged the congregation to buy them without suspicion, but no one would buy any. Ilchi became angry, and said, “How can you have such little loyalty for a comrade?” and before the sun had set, he left.

30. When a disciple was thatching the roof of a house at the Headquarters, he only laid out the straw but did not tie it down with rope. The Founding Master said, “If a strong wind blows in the middle of the night, then won’t all the work you did be for naught?” But the disciple replied, “The wind in this area is not so severe,” and left it as it was. That night a strong wind arose unexpectedly and blew away the newly thatched roof. The disciple was mortified and distressed: “You, oh Great Master, foresaw with your supernatural powers what would occur and warned me about it, but in my folly I disobeyed your order and met with this disaster.” The Founding Master said, “You didn’t listen to me when I instructed you in a sound and proper way, but it is even worse that you now turn me into a psychic. If you think of me that way, then you will not learn from me the right dharma of the great Way but will only try to observe psychic events. How will your road ahead not then be fraught with danger? You must correct your thoughts and from now on conduct yourself in all matters by only pursuing the sound and proper way.”

31. Once when Yi Unoe was seriously ill, a family member came rushing over to the Founding Master to consult with him about a remedy. The Founding Master said, “Call a doctor and get treatment for her.” A bit later, after she had recovered from her illness, the Founding Master said, “When Unoe was seriously ill, it was not really right to come to me first to ask for a remedy. I am a teacher who, knowing the Way and its virtue, treats your minds’ illnesses.

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There are various types of medical specialists available to treat the illnesses of your physical body. From now on, you may consult me for the illnesses of the mind, but for your physical illnesses, consult a doctor. That is the correct understanding of the Way.”

32. When the Founding Master’s second son, Kwangnyōng, fell ill, he made sure that his family members nurse him. When his son met with an early death, the Founding Master said, “We can only do our best; what is beyond our human ability to control is fate.” Afterwards, whether conducting official business or giving dharma sermons, he carried himself exactly as he always had.

33. When Yi Tongan entered nirvana, the Founding Master, after a moment of silent reflection, shed tears. The disciples said, “Please don’t let your mind be so aggrieved.” The Founding Master said, “Though my mind may not be hurting, I cannot help but shed tears as I part from him. From the very beginning of our dispensation, he completely supported my aim and firmly grasped the rope of faith. Afterwards, no matter what official task he was carrying out, he was utterly unconcerned about status or position.”

34. A young dog that had been raised at headquarters was mauled by a large dog in the village and he whimpered pitifully as he neared death. Hearing the dog’s cry, the Founding Master said, “Whether human beings or animals, we’re all the same in valuing life and hating death.” A look of pity then came over his sagely countenance. When the dog finally died, he then provided the expenses for a deliverance service and ordered the officer in charge of rituals: “For the sake of the departed spirit of the dog, perform the deliverance service for seven seven-day periods.”

35. The Founding Master was kindly to people but they would not dare be familiar with him. He might scold people severely for their mistakes, but they would not be resentful. He might realize that someone was good for nothing, but he still would not be the first to give up on him.

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36. Though the Founding Master warned his disciples against mere talk without follow through, he never ignored what they said. Though the Master warned against mere talent without virtue, he never disregarded talent.

37. In leading the congregation, the Founding Master established four strict prohibitions: one, turning public property into private possessions; two, after one has ordained, staying for an extended period without good reason with one's own family or running a private business; three, seeking only one's own ease and not cooperating with others in public affairs; four, not cultivating the great Way of progressing in concert through the Threefold Study, but developing only absorption and quiescence in the hopes of gaining supernatural powers."

38. In meting out praise or blame to the members of the congregation, the Founding Master had five set standards in accordance with their spiritual capacities: first, the spiritual capacity in which one does everything so well that he does not need to use either praise or blame; second, the spiritual capacity in which one does a few things poorly while doing most things well, so he sets aside praise and only gives blame in order to help him overcome even minor faults; third, the spiritual capacity in which one does many things well and many things poorly, so he metes out both praise and blame; fourth, the spiritual capacity in which one does most things poorly but a few things well, so he sets aside blame and gives praise in order to encourage his mind; fifth, the spiritual capacity in which one does everything poorly, so he metes out neither praise nor blame but simply observes him for the time being."

39. The Founding Master always scolded faithful and conscientious disciples even for their minor faults, but he would ignore the major faults of disciples with little faith or little goodness and instead compliment them profusely even for their minor good deeds. A disciple asked why, and the Founding Master replied, "For a person who does ten things well but one thing poorly, I try to correct his one fault in order to make him into pure gold and flawless jade. For a person who does ten things poorly but one thing well, I try to nurture

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even that single sprout of goodness.”

40. When the Founding Master was going to appoint a person to a post, he would always inquire about his belief and dedication, his public spirit, and his actual conduct first, before going on to inquire into his knowledge and talent.



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41. The Founding Master would occasionally listen to traditional Korean music with his disciples. Especially when he was listening to such Korean classical operas as the stories of Ch'unhyang, Simch'öng, and Hüngbu, he always praised their virtues of fidelity, filial piety, and brotherly love, and often emphasized the importance of constancy and social harmony in a life of public service. The Founding Master said, "Though the expression of loyalty, fidelity, filial piety, and brotherly love may vary according to the era, their spirit will live on without change in all ages."

42. If any matter occurred concerning the order, the Founding Master always shared it with the congregation, working hard at what required hard work, enjoying what was to be enjoyed, worrying about worrisome matters, and being sorrowful about what brought sorrow. He never did anything that fell short in human affection, took on anything beyond his means, or relied on luck.

43. Whenever the congregation was summoned for physical labor, the Founding Master would show up at the site and coordinate all the details of the work himself. He always said, "Of the Six Great Principles of spirit and body, you are summoned for physical labor in order not to neglect the Three Great Principles of the physical body." If without an appropriate excuse someone was absent, or was lazy even when they did turn out, the Master would severely reprimand them.

44. A person who had sojourned all around the country met with the Founding Master and exclaimed, "I have traveled widely throughout the countryside and of all the mountains I've ever seen, the most magnificent was the Diamond Mountains; I have met many people everywhere, but this is the first time I have met a teacher like you, oh Master." The Founding Master said, "Why do you only mention mountains and persons? Don't you understand that the greatest Way and its virtue, peerless in all the world, past or present, are being established in this country?"

45. Tosan An Ch'angho came to visit the Founding Master. The Master

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greeted him warmly and consoled him for the hardships he had gone through on behalf of the Korean nation. Tosan said, “What I am doing is small in scope and short in skill, bringing little benefit to the nation, and even leading to the persecution of many of my comrades by the colonial police. But what you, sir, are doing is vast in scope and proficient in its expediencies. While inwardly making great contributions to the multitude of our compatriots, you are not directly oppressed and intimidated much. Your ability, sir, is truly magnificent!”

46. The Founding Master said, “When it comes to talent, I don’t even have any unusual skills with my hands. When it comes to knowledge, I fall short even in basic education. What do you see in a person like me, who has no talent and no education, that you would believe and follow me?” But the Founding Master, while having no ability, had nothing in which he was not able and, while having no learning, had nothing he did not know. Thus, in delivering sentient beings, his virtue was superior to that of heaven and earth, and, in penetrating into universal principles and human affairs, the radiance of his wisdom was brighter than that of the sun and moon.

47. Kim Kwangsŏn sighed and exclaimed: “While I have been under the Great Master’s guidance for over twenty years, I have respected and admired every single one of the Master’s words and actions and have tried to conduct myself by following his example. Even so, I am still not even one ten-thousandth of him. There are three things about him that I most admire and wish to learn but have been unable to follow: one, is his genuine, unselfish public spirit; two, is his unvarying and unalloyed sincerity; three, is his magnanimity in embracing both the pure and the sullied. Generally speaking, from my observations of the Great Master’s employment of mind and his handling of matters, every single word and action are concerned only with the public, never for himself. Apart from establishing this religious order, he has no other thought, speech, or conduct. This is what I admire deeply in my heart and wish to learn. When I watch the Great Master carrying out his work, it is true he has superior natural endowments; but his sincerity now after so much time has passed is certainly not less, but may in fact be more, than the sincerity he showed in guiding

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us nine disciples during the reclamation work in Killyong-ni in Yōnggwang. This is also something that I admire deeply in my heart and wish to learn. When I watch the Great Master guiding the congregation, the more a person behaves hatefully, the more he discreetly corrects and loves him, saying always, ‘Who wouldn’t love a good person? To love a hateful person is the practice of what we call great loving-kindness and great compassion.’ This also is what I admire deeply in my heart and wish to learn.”

