



The Scripture of the
Founding Master

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Chapter Three Practice

1. The Founding Master said, “The purpose of having you recite the essential dharmas of daily practice in the morning and evening does not lie in reciting simply the words. Rather, it is intended to help you grasp their meaning in your hearts and assess it in your minds, reviewing them generally once a day, and more specifically examining them each time you are faced with sensory conditions. You must assess and check your mind over and over to see whether or not your mind-ground is disturbed, deluded, or subject to wrong-doing; whether or not you have been making active progress in belief, zeal, questioning, and dedication; whether or not you have been living in gratitude, living a life of self-power, readily learning, readily teaching, and benefiting others. You must do this until ultimately you reach a state in which the mind needs no checking. It is said that a person’s mind is so extremely subtle that it exists when you take hold of it, but disappears when you let it go. How then can a person cultivate one’s mind without checking it? Therefore, in order that you may realize this checking mind, I have established Items of Heedfulness in Daily Applications and Items of Heedfulness Regarding Temple Visits, and also established the Dharma of Keeping a Diary to examine thoroughly whether one has followed these instructions well. Thus, I have provided perfectly precise guidance regarding your methods of practice. I urge all of you to practice diligently according to this dharma, and to accomplish the great task of transcending the ordinary and entering sagehood as quickly as possible.”

2. The Founding Master said, “The quickest expedients for practitioners to attain the power of Cultivation in both action and rest are as follows. First, in all your actions, do nothing that will disturb or devastate your spirit and avoid such sensory conditions. Second, do not entertain craving or greed in responding to any matter but, instead, habituate yourself to having a dispassionate attitude. Third, when you are doing one thing, don’t be distracted by something else, so that you concentrate only on the task at hand. Fourth, in your

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spare time, pay attention to reciting the Buddha's name or sitting in meditation.

“The quickest expedients for attaining the power of Inquiry in both action and rest are as follows. First, in all your actions, strive to gain knowledge regarding that particular matter. Second, strive to exchange opinions with teachers and colleagues. Third, if points of doubt arise while you are seeing, listening, or thinking, strive to resolve your doubts by following the proper order of inquiry. Fourth, strive diligently to deepen your acquaintance with our scriptures. Fifth, after deepening your acquaintance with our scriptures, broaden your knowledge and perspective by consulting the scriptures of all previous religious schools.

“The quickest expedients for attaining the power of Choice in both action and rest are as follows. First, once you know something is right, proceed with it even at the risk of your life, regardless of whether it is great or small. Second, once you know something is wrong, desist from it even at the risk of your life, regardless of whether it is great or small. Third, in all your actions, do not be discouraged if the power of Choice does not come readily, but persist in your sincere effort and endlessly accumulate the virtues of practice.”

3. The Founding Master said, “Examining the practice of past religions, they have emphasized only the training in rest. Saying that if we work, we can't practice and if we practice, we can't work, some have even left their parents, wives, and children behind and spent their whole lives deep in the mountains; others only continued with their reading unaware of the rain washing away the grain. How can this be called a well-rounded method of practice? Therefore, we do not look at practice and work as two different things. So, I have expounded the dharma of continuously gaining the three great powers in both action and rest so that if one practices well, work will go well, and if one works well, practice will go well. Exert yourself in this great practice that is unremitting in both action and rest.”

4. The Founding Master addressed the congregation at a meditation hall, “A novice to intensive Sōn might find the regulated life somewhat stressful or restrictive. However, when that person's practice matures and his body and

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mind gradually adapt, there is no life more comfortable or enjoyable than this. When you are keeping your daily regimen, constantly assess your mind to see if you are living a life of difficulty or comfort. People who are living a life of difficulty still have remaining karmic ties to this dusty world; for those living a life of comfort, the gate to the achievement of buddhahood is gradually opening.”

5. The Founding Master said, “No matter what one may be doing, whether a person is wholly devoted to it or not depends on how well he understands its connection to him. A person is diligent in obtaining clothes and food because he understands that clothes and food have a close connection to sustaining his life; a patient diligently seeks a cure because he understands that his health depends on finding that cure; a practitioner trains diligently, because he understands that practice is vital to his future. A person who understands these connections will readily overcome the myriad hardships and suffering caused by practice, and will not complain even when teachers or colleagues are inattentive to him. However, if one does not understand these connections, one will have no patience when practicing, will feel unfounded dissatisfaction toward one’s teachers and colleagues, and will feel like he’s practicing and working for someone else. You all must review with a critical spirit whether you have awakened to what connections your practice has to yourselves.”

6. The Founding Master said, “The hunter who is out to capture a lion or a tiger does not shoot at a pheasant or hare, even if he sees one, because he does not want to forsake capturing a large animal by going for a small one. In the same way, a person whose mind aspires to the great practice does not generate desires for trivial things, for fear of obstructing the achievement of that great aspiration. Thus, a practitioner whose goal is to achieve buddhahood must disregard all worldly craving and desires in order to achieve that goal. If you cannot bring an end to that trivial greed and thus digress from your great vow and goal, then it would be like a hunter losing the chance to capture a lion or tiger because he was chasing a pheasant or hare. How pitiful would that be! Thus, I warn you that a person with a great aspiration should not be attached to trivial

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greed.”

7. The Founding Master addressed the congregation at a meditation hall, “I have heard that one of the members of the Yōnggwang congregation works in the neighborhood of the temple on the day of the regular dharma meeting in order to earn a day’s wages. What do you think about him?” One disciple replied, “It is wrong only to be concerned with money and to ignore practice. But if his parents, or wife and children, would starve but for that day’s wages, then, wouldn’t it be all right for him to relieve his family’s hunger and cold even if he misses the service for the day?” The Founding Master said, “What you say makes sense, but since meetings are not held every day, if he were a person who has a true aspiration regarding practice and deeply understands the value of the dharma, he would have done his best to prepare ahead the daily provisions for that meeting-day. Still to be searching for provisions on the very day of the meeting shows that he is neglectful of his practice and lacks devotion to the dharma. This is already spelled out in the Items of Heedfulness Regarding Temple Visits. Furthermore, if a person tried in advance and still could not prepare enough provisions, there is also the principle that if one practices without one iota of selfishness in one’s mind, then provisions will naturally appear. To give you an example, it is just as when an infant is born from its mother’s womb, previously nonexistent mother’s milk starts to flow and it survives by drinking that Heaven-sent endowment.”

8. The Founding Master addressed the congregation at a regular dharma meeting, “Today, I am going to tell you how to make money. Listen carefully and try to lead a well-to-do life. This technique refers not to any specific external skills but to the internal method of using the mind. The dharma of our religion in effect can serve as a technique for making money. Look! Just think how many assets are wasted on liquor, sexual profligacy, and gambling in the ordinary lives of people in the secular world. Just think how many resources are wasted on vanity and ostentation, and how much property lost through laziness and disrepute. As soon as a person who is used to living his life without clear standards attends regular dharma meetings, learns all the dharmas, and

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carries out even a few of the tasks that he should and shouldn't do, he will prevent money from needlessly flowing out of his pocket and will accumulate assets earned through prudence and trust. This is the way to make money. Even so, most people presume that there is no relation between practicing and making money, and they say that they cannot practice because they lack money and cannot attend regular dharma meetings because they need to make money. Isn't this a perverse way of thinking? Therefore, people who understand this principle will gain conviction that they must practice harder because they have no money and that they must attend dharma meetings more regularly in order to make money, and will attain that road which advances together practice and daily living."

9. The Founding Master said, "Ordinary people consider practice to consist of always sitting quietly in meditation, reciting the Buddha's name, and reading scriptures, and do not realize that there exists a practice conducted throughout everyday life. How, then, can they be said to have learned the great dharma of practice in both internal and external absorption and quiescence? Generally, the great practice involves initially inquiry into the principle of one's own self-nature and realizing the realm that is originally free from attachment, and then in everyday life to perform actions that are free from attachment. People who keep to this road will in good time attain great ability. If a practitioner, in doing any one thing, does not become distracted by something else, that is in effect the practice of one-pointedness of mind; if in doing one thing the practitioner seeks knowledge of that particular matter in its proper order, and in doing another does the same, that is in effect the practice of Inquiry; if one is free from wrong when handling this or that matter, that is in effect the practice of Choice. If in one's free time one focuses on 'one-pointedness of mind' by reciting the Buddha's name or sitting in meditation, or on 'Inquiry' by deepening one's acquaintance with the scriptures, and one continues to practice unremittingly whether or not one is involved in activity, then inevitably the power of Cultivation will accumulate in Spirit, the power of Inquiry will be gained in Human Affairs and Universal Principles, and the power of Choice will develop in Action. Look! Ever since Song Kyu entered

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our order, he has been so busy working at our headquarters and our branch temples in the countryside that he has been unable to attend even a three-month Sŏn-retreat. But if we were to examine his current abilities, through the power of his Cultivation of the Spirit he has severed most of his attachments and cravings, so that he is little given to the influences of joy and anger, sorrow and happiness, or of remoteness or closeness, intimacy or distance; through the power of his Inquiry into Human Affairs and Universal Principles, he understands and analyzes in broad swath the right and wrong, benefit and harm, of human affairs, and the great or small, being and nonbeing, of universal principles; and through the power of his Choice in Action, he can clearly distinguish right and wrong, and is thereby able to practice right actions eight or nine times out of ten. When I read the letters he sends even while being so busy at the office, I can surmise that not only has he a profound understanding of the truth, but also a writing style that is easy for ordinary people to understand, and employs reasoning that is clear and accurate, so that there is very little that needs to be revised. It will not be long before he gains mastery of the three great powers and becomes a precious personage who will benefit the masses wherever he goes. This is in fact the merit that results from unremitting practice in both action and rest. All of you too must advance still further in your practice in timeless Sŏn of ‘one suchness in action and rest’ so that you will gain the three great powers you seek.”

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10. The Founding Master said, “When you’re not busy, prepare the things you will need when you are busy; and when you are busy, keep the state of mind of your free hours. If you don’t prepare when you’re not busy for the things you will need when you are busy, then once you get busy you won’t be able to avoid becoming confused and upset. And if when you are busy, you don’t keep the state of mind of your free hours, then inevitably you’ll become entangled in that situation.”

11. During the conversation period, Chŏn Ŭmgwang was talking about the issue of the differences between those who practice and those who don’t: “Even people who don’t engage in our practice end up using all aspects of our Threefold Study in various situations; but once those situations pass, they become careless and indifferent, and therefore make no progress in their practice over their entire lifetimes. However, because we practitioners continue to practice in the Threefold Study regardless of whether it is a time of action or rest and whether we have work to do or not, if we diligently continue in accord with the dharma, we are sure to perfect great personal character.” The Founding Master listened to him and said, “What Ŭmgwang has said makes sense, but let me now elucidate this point more explicitly. Suppose three people are sitting here, one inquiring into machines, one doing sitting meditation, and the last one just sitting idly. From outside, there may be no difference in their seated appearance, but after much time has passed, great differences will appear between them. The one who was inquiring into machines would have invented something; the one who was doing sitting meditation would have attained the power of absorption with regard to his spirit; the one who was passing the days idly would have accomplished nothing. In this wise, there are great differences in the results forthcoming from working continuously on something. I will give you another example. There was a boy with whom I studied together for a while as a child. He had little interest in studying but he liked to sing the music of kwangdae (traditional entertainers), and sang even while his books were open before him or when walking down the street. He didn’t stop singing even after his hair turned gray, and had become a locally acclaimed singer when I saw him a few years ago. On the other hand, from early

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in my youth I somehow began to have an interest in the matters of truth and had little interest in reading books; day and night my thoughts were on the one abstruse principle, to the point that I would forget to eat or sleep and was often absorbed in meditation. Ever since then my dedicated efforts have never flagged, and as a result I have to this day led a life of truth. Looking at these examples, the most important element in a person's life is choosing a direction; and, once you have decided on a direction and taken the right stance, continuously exerting yourself toward that goal without any selfish motives will be the foundation of success."

12. The Founding Master said, "The many enlightened masters of the Sŏn school have opened myriads of stratagems and myriads of gateways to Sŏn. But if we were to combine them all into a single phrase, it would be: 'Bring an end to deluded thoughts and cultivate the true nature, so that the void and calm, numinous awareness will appear in front of you.' Therefore, the following phrase expresses the main principle of Sŏn: 'Ever-alertness within calmness is correct, but the blankness within calmness is wrong; ever-calmness within alertness is correct, but idle thoughts within alertness are wrong.'"

13. The Founding Master appeared during the seated-meditation period at a meditation hall and asked the congregation, "What goal do you have in mind for sitting in meditation and resisting drowsiness?" Kwon Tonghwa answered, "The human spirit is originally whole and bright, but this integral spirit is lost because it splits into myriad pieces in response to greed-creating sensory conditions, which at the same time dim the radiance of wisdom. Thus, we meditate in order to calm the defilements and to unify our distracted spirit, so that we will gain the power of Cultivation and the radiance of wisdom." The Founding Master said, "If you all truly understand the merit that derives from Cultivation, your dedication will naturally continue without anyone pressuring you. However, there is one thing you should be careful about: if you do not accurately understand this technique and, becoming either impatient or seeking out strange signs, you do not practice the genuine Sŏn dharma, then during your practice you may instead become ill, fall into a perverse path, or create

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more defilements. You must often assess your method against our dharma of seated meditation, or inquire about the correct procedures from your seniors, thereby assuring that your practice does not have the slightest error. If you diligently pursue the right practice, you will easily gain freedom of body and mind. All the buddhas, sages, and great masters have attained such power of mind through this Sŏn dharma.”

14. The Founding Master addressed the congregation at a meditation hall, “In recent years various lineages in the Sŏn school have been debating the relative merits of different Sŏn techniques. Of these, I have adopted the dharma of resting in the elixir field (tanjŏn chu), and have instructed you to focus exclusively on Cultivation during the Cultivation period, and to investigate the hwadu every now and then at the appropriate time. This is because the method for awakening to the cases for questioning (ũidu) does not involve obsessively thinking on it for extended periods with a murky state of mind; rather, investigating cases for questioning with a bright spirit in the right context – that power will be far superior.”

15. To a disciple’s question about the principle of ‘water ascending and fire descending,’ the Founding Master replied, “The nature of water is to flow downward and for its energy to be cool and clear; the nature of fire is to rise upward and for its energy to be hot and hazy. When a person has complicated thoughts and his energy rises, the reason that his head becomes hot and his spirit hazy, causing his saliva to dry up, is because of the ascending fiery energy and descending watery energy. On the other hand, when a person’s thoughts are calm and his energy stable, the reason that his head will be cool and his spirit bright, circulating clear saliva in his mouth, is because of the ascending watery energy and descending fiery energy.”

16. The Founding Master said, “There are two paths to attaining the power of Cultivation: one is the Cultivation of temperament, and the other is the Cultivation of the mind-nature. For example, a soldier who attains an immovable state of mind by disciplining his mind in actual combat is the Cultivation

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of the external discipline of temperament; a practitioner of the Way who attains an immovable state of mind with regard to any favorable or adverse conditions by conquering the minions of Māra amid the sensory conditions of the five desires is the cultivation of the internal discipline of the mind-nature. Even though a soldier may externally attain the power of the Cultivation of temperament, it will not be the full power of Cultivation if he does not also attain internally the power of the Cultivation of the mind-nature. And even though a practitioner of the Way attains internally the power of the Cultivation of the mind-nature, his power of Cultivation, too, will remain incomplete unless he attains the power of the Cultivation of temperament amid actual sensory conditions.”

17. Yang Tosin asked the Founding Master, “We have been trying our best to follow your instructions not to be distracted by another thing while doing one thing, and to try to maintain a peaceful and undivided state of mind whenever we’re doing something. However, recently while sewing I also had to prepare some herbal medicine, and I ended up burning the medicine because I was fully engrossed in my sewing. But if I were to attend closely to the medicine while I was sewing, then that would mean that something distracted me while I was doing another. On the other hand, if I were to pay close attention just to my sewing and ignore the medicine, then I would have to throw out the medicine again. In such a situation, what would be the correct path of practice?” The Founding Master replied, “If at that time you had to attend to both preparing the medicine and sewing, then both of these duties were your responsibility and you should have performed them with all sincerity and dedication. Fulfilling well that responsibility is perfect one-pointedness of mind and true practice. But if you say that you were focusing only on one of those duties, that would not be perfect one-pointedness but was instead a fragmented mind and negligence. Thus, whether you are attending to ten or twenty duties at once, as long as you deal with those within the range of your responsibility, it will not be distraction but an undivided state of mind and an essential method of practice during action. However, if you are idly thinking about things that are not your concern, idly trying to hear and see things that are not your concern, med-

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dling in things that are not your concern, and thinking of one thing while doing another, and are thereby unable to bring an end to endless deluded thoughts, that then is something that should be scrupulously avoided by practitioners. But to pay attention to various things within your responsibility will present no hindrance at all to your training in one mind, even if you are taking care of thousands of things a day.”

18. The Founding Master said, “Do you know the fundamental cause for your mind being either distracted or peaceful when you are practicing one-pointedness of mind? It is whether in action you are always doing the right thing, or not. The person who is doing the right thing may seem at first to face many complicated and difficult obstacles, but as he continues with his task, his body and mind will gradually become supple and peaceful, and as his road ahead opens widely, he will achieve one-pointedness. The person who is doing something wrong may seem at first to have an intriguing and easy time of it, but as he continues with his task, his body and mind will gradually become troubled and pained, and as his road ahead becomes blocked, one-pointedness becomes impossible. Therefore, if we are to practice in perfect one-pointedness, we must first eliminate wrong aspirations and bring an end to wrong actions.”

19. The Founding Master asked Yi Sunsun, “How do you practice as a lay adherent?” Sunsun replied, “I mainly strive to settle my mind.” The Founding Master asked again, “What method do you use to settle your mind?” Sunsun replied, “I just try to keep it settled, but I don’t know any special method.” The Founding Master said, “Generally, people always have moments of either action or rest, and the method of achieving absorption and quiescence also involves the two paths of external and internal absorption and quiescence. External absorption and quiescence means that, when you are involved in an active situation, you must embrace a grand purpose and initially exercise Choice in Action so that you do not get involved in distracting or complicated matters, thereby eliminating the root of Māra that disturbs the spirit. Internal absorption and quiescence means that, when you are free from activity, you re-

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cite the Buddha's name and sit in meditation, and, by whatever other method, put to rest any defilements that may arise and nurture the undisturbed fundamental spirit. External absorption and quiescence becomes the foundation for internal absorption and quiescence, and vice versa. Only by advancing both internally and externally will one achieve a true settling of the mind."

20. Song Tosŏng was so fond of reading the newspaper that he would stop doing the work at hand to read it; and even when there was something urgent to do, he would at least look at the headlines before taking up his work with his mind at ease. One day, the Founding Master admonished him, "Seeing how you get lost in something as trivial as newspaper reading, I worry that you may do the same with other matters as well. Everyone has things that they like to do and hate to do. When ordinary people are doing something they like, they become drawn to it, losing their undivided and true mind. When they are doing something they hate, they become so entangled in it that they lose sight of their true responsibilities as human beings. They do not walk the right path of impartiality and attract hardship and suffering to themselves. These sorts of people ultimately do not attain tranquility of spirit or radiance of wisdom. I am warning you about such a trivial matter in order to give you a realistic picture of how your spirit becomes influenced. You should not be drawn in by things that you either like or hate, but should always follow the right path, thereby controlling the myriad sensory conditions rather than being controlled by them. Then, you will preserve forever your true and noble original nature."

21. Yi Ch'ŏngch'un asked, "Does the mind of a great person of the Way have any attachments?" The Founding Master said, "If the mind has attachments, then one is not a person of the Way." Ch'ŏngch'un asked again, "Even Chŏngsan loves his children. Doesn't that mean his mind is attached?" The Founding Master said, "Would Ch'ŏngch'un call insentient wood and rocks persons of the Way? 'Attachment' means that someone is so attached that he cannot bear to leave another person behind, or he so wants to see that person when separated that he cannot proceed with his own practice or public service. That doesn't happen to Chŏngsan."

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22. The Founding Master said, “Most people only recognize those who have read widely in the scriptures to be persons who embody the Way. Even though they may expound the same truth, often people will listen with trusting ears if one quotes from the ancient scriptures, but will pay little attention if one elucidates those fundamental truths directly in simple language. How frustrating! ‘Scriptures’ contain the truths elucidated by the past sages and philosophers of this world in order to enlighten people’s manners and minds. Through the ages, expatiations and annotations have been added to them, forming the Confucian ‘five carts of books’ and the Buddhist ‘eighty-thousand pages of sūtras.’ It would be difficult to read through them all even if you devoted your entire life to it. What free time would you have to acquire real competence in Cultivation, Inquiry, and Choice, and to achieve character that transcends that of common sentient beings? Thus, in the past the Buddha predicted the vicissitudes of the dharma by distinguishing the periods of the right dharma, the semblance dharma, and the final dharma. The main reason for this change is that the scriptures became so complicated that sentient beings of the final age lose their self-sufficiency; and as their self-power declines, they act foolishly and the right dharma naturally is weakened. When the period of the right dharma comes again, however, all people will again be trained realistically with simple doctrines and convenient methods, and each and every person will be guided under the right dharma that is transmitted by speech and received by the mind, so that they will experience and awaken to the great Way. What, then, would be the point of studying all the ‘five carts of books’ and reading the entire ‘eighty-thousand pages of sūtras’? I urge you not to let yourself be distracted by so many complicated old scriptures, but instead diligently practice by making use of simple doctrines and convenient methods; and, after you have gained extraordinary capability, just glance over ancient scriptures and all kinds of doctrines for reference. If you do so, one morning’s quick consultation will then be better than ten years of reading.”

23. The Founding Master said, “Who among you has discovered a scripture that can be read over and over again without end? Most people consider only

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the ‘four books and three classics’ of Confucianism, the ‘eighty-thousand pages of sūtras’ of Buddhism, and the books of other religions to be scripture, but don’t recognize the great scripture that is open right here and now. How regrettable it is! If people look at this world in the right spirit, there will be nothing in it that is not scripture. When you open your eyes, you will be seeing scripture; when you listen, you will be hearing scripture; when you speak, you will be reciting scripture; when you act, you will be applying scripture. Anytime and anywhere, this scripture will unfold without end. Generally speaking, what we call ‘scripture’ elucidates the two aspects of human affairs and universal principles. Human affairs are to be analyzed in terms of right and wrong, benefit and harm; universal principles in terms of great and small, being and nonbeing. Hence, it guides us to choose the right direction in our lives and to follow the Way of humanity. Even if you look at all the scriptures of Confucianism and Buddhism, and all the writings of other religions, they will not diverge from this. However, human affairs and universal principles do not derive from the written word; rather, the whole world is in fact human affairs and universal principles. Our entire human life is contained within them: we are born, live, die, and then are reborn again within human affairs and universal principles. Thus, our lives have a profound and inescapable relationship to human affairs and universal principles, and the world is an open scripture on human affairs and universal principles. In this scripture, we must critically observe the numerous human affairs that are right and wrong, wholesome and unwholesome, so that we may choose and carry out righteous and beneficial affairs and abandon wrongful and detrimental affairs. We must also critically examine all the principles of great and small, being and nonbeing, and awaken to their root. If we do so, what else could this world be but a great scripture? Therefore, I ask you first to read well the living scripture of reality, before reading all the numerous and prolix written scriptures.”

24. A disciple asked, “I am not very proficient in handling matters. How can I become more proficient?” The Founding Master said, “You must be diligent in the practice of studying the matter before getting involved in anything, of choosing well when handling it, and of assessing the matter again once you

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have completed it. If you extend this practice of always reflecting in your mind even regarding others' matters, you will gradually become proficient in handling matters and find no impediments in all applications."

25. The Founding Master addressed the congregation at a regular dharma meeting, "When you are listening to a dharma talk or a lecture, you must pay attention as if you were out to receive a great treasure. Whatever beneficial words a dharma teacher or lecturer speaks, those words will not have their full practical effect if the listener does not catch their point and listens carelessly. Thus, if you listen carefully with sound spirit to whatever words you hear, assessing what you hear against your own practice and against sensory conditions, then you will gain much and, at the same time, it will naturally enable you to reflect upon your actual situation. The merit of regular dharma meetings will consequently become all the more apparent."

26. While the Founding Master was staying at Pongnae hermitage, he pointed at a lamplight and asked, "Why does that lamplight illuminate all directions except directly underneath?" Kim Namch'ŏn replied, "This is exactly how I am. I have been the Great Master's direct attendant for several years already, but what I know and can do is inferior to that of my dharma brothers who come from afar occasionally to visit you." The Founding Master smiled and asked Song Kyu the same question. Song Kyu replied, "The light of that lamp shines upward, illuminating the far distance, but the lamp stand, which is right below, makes everything underneath dim. If we take this as a simile, this is just like certain people who are well aware of others' faults, but are blind to their own mistakes. The reason is because, when they look at other people, there is nothing blocking their view, so they can directly look upon the strengths and weaknesses and good or bad points, but when they look at themselves, the shadow of the sign of 'I' covers the light of wisdom, preventing them from recognizing their own right and wrong conduct." The Founding Master asked, "What then can an imperfect person do so that he illuminates everything without distinguishing self and others?" Song Kyu replied, "If one is not attached to joy, anger, sorrow, or pleasure and eliminates all signs from the mind, then

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one's understanding will be free from self and others." The Founding Master said, "You are right."

27. The Founding Master said, "If you wish to become a well-rounded person and attain wide knowledge and vision, you absolutely must not cling to a single point of view. Virtually everyone today clings to a single point of view, preventing them from achieving the perfect Way. Confucian scholars are attached to Confucian customs, Buddhist monks to Buddhist customs, and people active in other religions or societies for their part to what they know and do and, thus, they lack a broad understanding of what is right and wrong, of benefit and harm, and do not know how to adopt and apply other people's dharmas. In consequence, they do not manage to become well-rounded persons." A disciple asked, "If a person abandons his own traditions and doctrines, wouldn't he lose his principal convictions?" The Founding Master said, "I am not saying that you should lose your principal convictions and adopt other dharmas indiscriminately, but rather that you should widely apply other dharmas after you have established your principal convictions. You must understand this point well, too."

28. The Founding Master said, "There are two conditions that cause ordinary people to have their wisdom dimmed in any situation. One is that they act out of greed, thereby losing the Middle Way and dimming their wisdom. The other is that they fall into attachments by focusing only on what they have an aptitude for, thereby becoming ignorant of everything else. People who are cultivating the Way must be especially wary of these two conditions."

29. A Tonghak (Eastern Learning) adherent paid a visit to the Founding Master and said, "Hearing of your reputation, I have come from far away, so please grant me many kindnesses in the future." The Founding Master said, "If that is how you felt, there must be something that you seek in your mind. Tell me what it is." The person replied, "What may I do to broaden my knowledge?" The Founding Master said, "Visiting and questioning me is a method of broadening your knowledge. For my part, too, receiving you and listening to your

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words is a method to broaden my knowledge. For example, if a person lacks some household tool, he buys it at the store. If a businessman lacks the knowledge he needs to run a business, he acquires that knowledge from the outside world. Therefore, in all matters I do not gain knowledge only by inquiring by myself, but I acquire knowledge for my use when meeting with various people. When I talk with you, I gain knowledge of Tonghak, and when I talk with adherents of other religions, I gain knowledge of those religions.”

30. The Founding Master said, “Human nature is originally neither wholesome nor unwholesome, but good or bad character comes into existence in accordance with one’s habits. Habits are formed as one’s initial thought responds repeatedly to various causes and conditions around oneself. For example, when you have the aspiration to train and first come to this practice site (bodhimanda), meet teachers and colleagues, and observe the dharma and regulations, initially everything is awkward and ill-suited to you, and adjusting to it is difficult. However, if your aspiration does not change and you persevere for a long time, gradually your mind and conduct will mature until finally they will become naturally balanced without having to work at it. This is what I mean by a habit. In this wise, the principle of habits forming in accordance with causes and conditions is the same whether they are good or bad habits, but it is difficult to become habituated to good things and easy to become habituated to bad. Even when you are practicing to develop good habits, if you let your guard down even a little, you will fall into bad sensory conditions without even realizing it, and end up with a result exactly opposite of your initial goal. You must always be very cautious about this if you want to develop good character.”

31. The Founding Master said, “While teaching many male and female students, I have observed that men for the most part are more generous but less practical, so that lack of steadfastness becomes a serious fault; women generally are more scrupulous but rigid, so that lack of flexibility becomes their serious fault. In order to cultivate perfect character, men, while remaining generous, should work at making their inner mind firm and sincere; and women,

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while remaining scrupulous, should work at developing an inner mind that is well-rounded and magnanimous.”

32. The Founding Master said to a disciple who ate too fast and talked too much, “Eating a meal or speaking a single word is also practice. If one eats too fast or too much, one is likely to become ill; and if one says things that are unnecessary or that deviate from the right Way, then misfortune will readily occur. How, then, can one become careless by considering eating a meal or speaking a word to be trivial acts? Thus, a practitioner must see every situation as an opportunity to practice and take pleasure in always responding appropriately. You too must set your heart upon this practice.”

33. Mun Chōnggyu asked, “In trying situations, what broad standards should we apply in making our Choice in Action?” The Founding Master said, “There are three thoughts you should adopt as such standards. First, think about your original vow. Second, think about the original intent of your teacher’s instructions. Third, consider the given circumstances and think about whether you are free from bias. By taking up these three broad standards, your practice will never be obscured and all your responses will naturally be balanced.”

34. While climbing with Yi Ch’unp’ung over a steep mountain pass behind Ch’ōngnyōn hermitage, the Founding Master said, “Climbing a steep pass naturally enhances my practice in one-pointedness of mind. Consequently, you rarely stumble on a steep trail but are actually more prone to stumble on a level trail. So, too, you are more prone to make mistakes on an easy task than a difficult one. A practitioner who maintains consistent standards on either steep or level trails, or on easy or difficult tasks, will achieve the single-practice samādhi.”

35. The Founding Master said, “Have you ever seen heavenly beings? Heavenly beings do not reside in some distant heavenly realm. The infants over there are heavenly beings: since they don’t have one iota of selfishness in their

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minds, they receive heaven's endowment through their mothers, but as their self-consciousness begins gradually to grow, their endowment from heaven also gradually comes to an end. People cultivating the Way without selfish thoughts will receive immeasurable endowments from heaven, but as soon as they begin to have selfish thoughts, the path to heaven's endowments will also be blocked."

36. One of the disciples asked, "By what method should I cultivate so that I may eliminate all of the five desires, focus singlemindedly on cultivating the Way, and lead a life of tranquility and comfort like the Buddha?" The Founding Master replied, "Rather than eliminating desires, you should expand them. Once your petty desires are transformed into a great vow, they will naturally subside as you focus singlemindedly on your vow. Then, you will inevitably lead a life of tranquility and comfort."

37. The Founding Master said, "It is not my instruction to have you eliminate by force your feelings of joy or anger, sorrow or happiness. Rather, I urge you to exercise your free frame of mind without constraint by applying joy, anger, sorrow, and happiness properly, according to time and place, only making sure that you do not diverge from the Middle Way. Instead of resenting shallow talent and petty desires, worry instead that your own talent and aspiration are not great. Therefore, the dharma I teach is meant only to enlarge what is small and to redirect practitioners' efforts away from things that are petty and toward things that are great. This is in fact the great dharma that achieves great things."

38. The Founding Master said, "You must foresee that there comes a moment of great danger when you are proceeding with your practice or your work. For practitioners, the moment of great danger occurs when various types of wisdom begin to open. For workers, it occurs when various rights and powers begin to devolve to them. This is because, when a person of lesser spiritual capacity begins to acquire a little wisdom, he could lose his dedication to great practice and easily become satisfied with petty wisdom; and, by acquiring a few rights and powers, the worker becomes selfish, greedy, and arrogant, no

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longer focusing on advancing the project. At such a time, if practitioners and workers are not careful, they will cause themselves to fall into the abyss.”

39. There was a disciple who had been practicing faithfully for several decades, especially devoting himself to seated meditation practice. Gradually his spirit became clear and he was able to foresee when guests would visit or rain would fall. The Founding Master said, “This is nothing more than a phantasm that appears during your practice like the glow of a firefly. Hence, you must be alert to eliminate that state of mind. If you become fascinated with that phenomenon, not only will you not attain the great truth, but it will also be easy for you to fall into a perverse path and become a type of asura. How can we accept such a thing in the right-dharma order?”

40. Song Pyökcho, overeager to have the watery energy ascend and the fiery energy descend, devoted himself exclusively to seated meditation, but ended up with headaches instead. The Founding Master said, “This is a result of not understanding well the road of practice. As a rule, a well-rounded method of practice involves practicing during both action and rest. During action, it mainly involves exercising heedfulness in making choices through observation of all sensory conditions, which will then lead to the simultaneous attainment of three great powers. When at rest, it mainly involves Cultivation and Inquiry, which will then lead to the simultaneous attainment of three great powers. Practitioners who are aware of this path and practice accordingly will experience few difficulties in their practice and will be calm and composed like the surface of the ocean without a trace of wind. The ascending of watery energy and the descending of fiery energy will naturally occur as the mind is settled. But if you don’t know this path, then you may easily condemn yourself to an entire life of hardship by suffering unnecessary illness. You must be extremely careful about this.”

41. The Founding Master said, “My dharma has as its core the essential dharma of the Way of humanity, which perfects imperfect dharmas and simplifies the difficult dharmas of the past, so that anyone may immediately enter

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the great path. People who do not understand my intent and who refuse to abandon obsolete ideas say that, in order to practice, one must enter into the quiet mountains, or acquire special superpowers that allow you at will to move mountains or walk on water, or to summon the wind and rain. They also say that scriptures, lectures, or conversations are unnecessary and one need only recite the Buddha's name or sit in meditation. Thus, there are some who do not practice my teachings correctly. This is truly regrettable! Now, there are still quite a few people in the monasteries and meditation halls of every province, and out in the sheer mountains and deep valleys, who wander about their whole lives without an occupation, hoping to acquire numinous penetration and a penetration of the Way. If one seeks the dharma by renouncing the secular world, or separating oneself from the Way of humanity hoping only to attain superpowers, then that is in fact a perverse path. Therefore, first by following my teachings regarding the essential Way of human life and the essential Way of practice, you must proceed to train well within the secular world. Then, you will ultimately be endowed with both merit and wisdom and, at the same time, you will find along with them superpowers and the power of absorption. This is the practice that follows an orderly sequence and the great path that is well grounded."

42. The Founding Master said, "The right-dharma assembly does not value superpowers because, besides having no real benefit in delivering the world, they actually cause real harm. This is because most of those who aspire to superpowers renounce the world and enter into the mountains; leaving behind the Way of humanity, they cling to voidness and nonbeing, and spend the rest of their lives chanting spells or mantras. If everyone were to emulate this, the whole world of scholars, farmers, artisans, and merchants would collapse, and human morality, law, and order would become obsolete. Furthermore, not knowing the origin of the Way and its power and moved by confused thoughts and improper desires, they aspire to extraordinary talents. If some sort of miracle appears temporarily through a false spiritual opening, they will misuse it to deceive the world and injure people. Thus, a sage said, "Superpowers are incidental things," and "superpowers that appear without a foundation in the

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Way and its power are nothing more than a magic trick.” On the other hand, if a person practices well the right path and keeps his desires simple and his behavior pure, then, in accordance with the radiance of the self-nature, mysterious traces will occasionally appear. But this is something that happens naturally, without seeking it. How can this be surmised from the perspective of sentient beings who retain false thoughts?”



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43. The Founding Master said, “Occasionally, a person who has just had his first arousal of aspiration does not well understand his own spiritual capacity and exerts himself to awaken at once to the great principle through temporary strenuous practice. But with that sort of mind, he will be readily susceptible to serious physical ailments; or when things don’t turn out as he wishes, a backsliding state of mind will arise and he will become estranged from a life of cultivating the Way. This is something to be cautious about. But there are by chance also some persons of the Way who reach the ground of buddhahood in a single jump; these are people of the most superior capacity who have practiced over many lifetimes and numerous kalpas. Those of middling and lesser faculties must instead work hard to accumulate merit over a long period of time. Therefore, the proper sequence is: first, after making a great vow, great belief arises; after great belief, great zeal; after great zeal, great questioning; after great questioning, great dedication; and only after great dedication will a great awakening occur. Nor is awakening and awareness completed all at once, but involve thousands upon thousands of insights.”

44. The Founding Master said, “A foolish person tries to attain great wisdom that transcends the ordinary and surpasses the sages as soon as he has his first hint of awakening, but this is a completely wrong idea. The water that fills the great ocean is the accumulation of small drops; the great soil of mountains and fields is the accumulation of small dust motes; the achievement of the great fruition of all the buddhas and sages is the accumulation of merit in the formless and invisible mind. Those who aspire to great practice and who have initiated a great enterprise first must start by accumulating merit in small matters.”

45. The Founding Master said, “Some people who have left the household life in order to seek the Way forget their original intent midway and occupy their minds with seeking external learning and external knowledge. Such people may gain great erudition but their spiritual energy will instead weaken and they will find it difficult to attain true wisdom. Those who seek the true Way must reflect upon the original intent of their aspiration, take hold of their minds

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that are scattered in all directions, and devote themselves to accumulating the three great powers. If they do so, they will naturally be endowed with abilities in external learning and external knowledge as well.”

46. The Founding Master said, “Before I gained my first thought of awakening, I sometimes offered up formal prayer, or recited spells that spontaneously arose in my mind, or fell unawares into a tranquil silence. After I inadvertently gained my first insight and the awakened perception cleared and the numinous gate sprang open, there continued to be fluctuations from brightness to darkness between one day’s morning and evening, or between one month’s two halves. During these fluctuations, when the gate of wisdom opened, I felt as if there were nothing under heaven I could not know or do; but when the gate closed again, I didn’t have the faintest idea what to do with my own body and worried anew about my road ahead, even doubting whether I might not be possessed by some spirits. Eventually, however, those fluctuations disappeared, and my awakened perception continued consistently.”

47. The Founding Master suffered from coughing every winter and each time he delivered a dharma talk his coughing would disrupt it. On that account, he said to the congregation, “Killyong-ni, where I grew up, as you all know, is a place of severe poverty and backwardness. Thanks to the habituation of my past lives, I fortunately had a spiritual aspiration since I was young and sincerely sought the Way. However, I had no opportunity to ask questions or to receive guidance. I had a spiritual inspiration all on my own, and there was not an act of asceticism and hardship that I did not perform. Sometimes I would go into the mountains and spend the night; sometimes I would spend the whole day sitting on a road; sometimes I would stay up all night with my eyes open; sometimes I would bathe in icy water; sometimes I would fast; sometimes I would stay in a cold room. I finally entered a condition in which I lost all consciousness, and while ultimately my questioning was resolved, the root of my physical illness was already so deep that as my physical energy has weakened, my illness has grown increasingly worse. Because I did not know the road, there was nothing I could do at the time. Fortunately, even without performing

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ascetic and difficult practices, you have directly learned the well-rounded dharma of Mahāyāna practice by benefiting from my experiences. This is your great blessing. Generally speaking, the practice of timeless Sōn and placeless Sōn is the fast lane to Mahāyāna practice. If you practice in this manner, you will get twice the results with half the work and will succeed without getting ill. I beseech you all not to fall into the error of harming your body by recognizing the uselessness of the ascetic practices I performed before I found the road.”

48. The Founding Master said, “In the same way that tests are given in schools at the end of each academic term or year, so too do practitioners of the Way have various tests involving favorable and adverse conditions as their dharma rank rises or as they are about to ascend to the stage of the buddhahood. When the Buddha was about to attain the Way, it is said that he was attacked by Pāpiyān, the king of the Māras, who was leading the 84,000 minions of Māra. Practitioners in later generations have had similar experiences. As I now look at you, there are some among you who are being tested and are waging an uphill battle, others who are being defeated and losing their chance at eternal life, and others still who have passed the test with good results and now have a boundless road ahead of them. I hope that each of you will examine your own level and make sure that you do not fail the test.”

49. The Founding Master said, “People who are learning a skill must have their skills evaluated by their teachers; people who are engaged in the study of the Way must have the rightness or wrongness of their acts assessed by their teachers. If those who are learning a skill do not have that skill evaluated, their skill will not be a precise skill; if those who are engaged in the study of the Way do not have the rightness or wrongness of their acts assessed, their practice will not be a practice that focuses on what is essential. Thus, the reason I constantly evaluate the quality of your practice in both human affairs and universal principles is because I wish to help you avoid the convoluted path and walk the straight path. If you are uncomfortable about receiving evaluations from me or are discontented with being told about the quality of your practice, then what

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was your original intent in coming to me to learn and how do you expect to proceed with your practice? And not only from me – but appropriate advice and criticism from anyone are precious guidelines for the road ahead. If one harbors resentment toward a benefactor who has helped to open up the road ahead for you, then wouldn't one be committing ingratitude? Thus, you must be thankful to me or to anyone in this world who evaluates you as doing either well or poorly, and simultaneously exert even more effort to attain the real essentials of practice.”

50. The Founding Master said, “A practitioner of the Way who avoids all sensory conditions and disciplines his mind only in quiet places is like a person trying to catch fish who stays away from water: what effect will it have? Thus, if we are to cultivate the true Way, we must learn to discipline our minds amid thousands of sensory conditions. Only in this wise would one gain the great strength that is not disturbed by such conditions. If one disciplines one's mind only in places that are free from all sensory conditions, then, on coming out into such conditions, one's mind will be instantly disturbed, just as a mushroom grown in shade will wilt when exposed to the sun. Thus, it is said in the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* (The Teaching of Vimalakīrti), ‘A bodhisattva's mind is settled even in a noisy place; a non-Buddhist's mind is disturbed even in a quiet place.’ This means that practice depends on the mind's finding its suitable measure, not on external sensory conditions.”

51. The Founding Master said to several of his disciples, “You should indeed apply the buddhadharma and try to enhance your everyday life; you should not be so attached to the buddhadharma that you waste your life. In sum, the buddhadharma was originally the great Way for delivering the world, but if some people instead renounce the world, enter the mountains to engage only in such practices as reciting the Buddha's name, reading scriptures, or sitting in meditation, and waste their whole lives, finally leaving no real marks of having delivered anyone, then such people have been overly attached to the buddhadharma. Not only do they achieve little success for themselves, but they offer no benefit to the world, either.”

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52. The Founding Master addressed the congregation, “The reason people want to know the Way is to be able to apply it when needed. If you don’t know how to apply it in necessary situations, you might as well not know it at all. What benefit would there be?” He then held up the fan he was holding and said, “I may have this fan, but if I don’t know to use it when it’s hot, what value will there be in having a fan?”

53. The Founding Master said, “Practitioners, externally, must be able to sever all attachments to causes and conditions and, internally, to drop even the attachment to the one mind. Attachment to the one mind is called the bondage to dharma. If people end up falling into the bondage to dharma, then even in one blink of the eye or in the smallest of gestures, they will always be hampered by the dharma and will never gain freedom. How will they be able to enter the great gate to liberation? Therefore, practitioners, in cultivating their nature, should do so in a way that is natural, and let it operate dynamically. When the six sense organs are free from activity, they need only to remove distracted thoughts; when they are involved in activity, they need only to remove what is wrong. Why would we be attached to the one mind while in the midst of the one mind? To give a simile, we say a babysitter watches children well if he or she lets the infant come, go, and play to its heart’s content and makes its body and mind livelier, restraining the infant only when it wanders toward a dangerous place, or taking away a dangerous object that the infant has picked up. But if the babysitter, in the name of watching the infant, holds it and sits tight all day long without moving at all, then the infant will obviously suffer from the constraint. The fault of being attached to the one mind is no different from this.”

54. The Founding Master said to Kim Namch’ön, “The other day I saw a man riding an ox. It seemed, though, that the man wasn’t leading the ox, but that the ox was leading the man. If the ox went into a thorny patch or a ditch, the man was led into a thorny patch or a ditch. If the ox went up into the hills or out into the fields, the man was led up into the hills or out into the fields.

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Pitching forward and backwards, the man's clothes were ripped and his body injured. It was painful to watch. After watching this sight, I told him that if he held the ox's reins tightly and, by leading it only on the road, kept it from going wherever it wanted, then wouldn't he be able to avoid such a mishap? The man replied how wonderful that would be, but when he got the ox he did not know how to train it and let the ox have complete control; now, as the man aged, the ox was getting wilder and he no longer had the ability to control it. I saw you, Namch'ön, coming here today, riding on an ox. Where is your ox, now?" Namch'ön replied, "I am still riding on its back." The Founding Master asked, "What does your ox look like?" Namch'ön replied, "It is nearly one fathom tall, yellow in color, wears hempen shoes, and has salt-and-pepper whiskers." The Founding Master laughed and said, "You know the looks of your ox pretty well. Then, does your ox do whatever you tell it to do or are you, too, led around by it?" Namch'ön said, "It usually does what I tell it. If the ox is lazy in doing what I want it to do, then I yell at it to make sure it does what it's supposed to do; and if it tries to do the wrong thing, I yell at it to stop." The Founding Master said, "Since you have already discovered your ox and know how to train it, and since it usually listens to what you tell it to do, you must work hard to train it further so that you may do all kinds of things with complete freedom."

55. The Founding Master said to the congregation at a meditation hall, "Intensive meditation training is like training an ox. When a person behaves in the world without moral discipline and, in what one sees, hears, and thinks, does only as one pleases, deviating from the righteous path of humanity, one would be the same as when an unweaned and undisciplined calf who runs around just as it pleases. After practitioners leave their homes and enter a meditation hall, they often frustrate their teachers because they find it hard to sever their old habits when they are trying to keep all the regulations and precepts; many delusive states of mind and distracting thoughts arise in their minds, and they are unable to settle their minds in their practice or in their work. They are then just like a weanling calf who is tied to a pole, crying for its mother and writhing in agony. When a practitioner follows all the required courses of training regularly every day, gradually starts to comprehend the import of what he

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is taught, and little by little begins to eliminate delusive states of mind and distracting thoughts, finding joy in progressively understanding what one did not know before about human affairs and universal principles, one is then like an ox who is not yet fully trained but is gradually becoming accustomed to its situation. When one does not go astray in interpretations of the doctrine or in practice, and thereby gradually matures the powers of Cultivation, Inquiry, and Choice, and one also benefits the public everywhere one goes by offering up one's spirit, body, and material possessions, then one is like a well-trained ox who fulfills all its tasks well, bringing much profit to its owner wherever it goes. In this wise, the purpose of a farmer training an ox is to use it well when ploughing the field, and our purpose in putting you through these intensive sessions in the meditation hall is so you may utilize well what you have learned here when you are active in human society. Thus, it is my wish that, by not wasting your time but, by diligently practicing and taking full advantage of this opportunity and by serving the whole world with your well-trained ox of the mind, you become glorious apostles who will deliver sentient beings and cure the world.”

56. The Founding Master addressed the congregation at the opening ceremony for a retreat at a meditation hall, “Entering an intensive session at a meditation hall is like a patient entering a hospital. When a person's physical body gets ill, one is treated with medicine at a hospital; when the mind gets ill, one is treated with the Way and its power at a school of religion. Therefore, just as the Buddha may be called the Medicine King, so too can one say that his doctrinal teachings may be called his medicines and his temples his hospitals. However, most people recognize only physical illnesses as sicknesses and spend their time and money to cure them, but do not recognize illnesses of the mind as being sicknesses and do not even think of curing them. How can this not be lamentable to the wise? No matter how severe illnesses of the body may be, their pain will last only a lifetime; or, if they are minor, they can be cured in a short period. But if illnesses of the mind are left untreated, they will become a seed of transgression and suffering interminably throughout the future. If one has illnesses of the mind, one will lose one's freedom of mind and be attracted

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by the temptations of external sensory conditions. One will then commit wrong speech, wrong action, and wrong thought, and willingly enter the realm of death, willingly invite contempt from others, and willingly create suffering for oneself. As a result, transgressions will follow from transgressions and suffering from suffering, and there will be no hope of recovery. However, if the mind is free from illnesses, throughout the wide land of the worlds of the ten directions one will readily transcend suffering and happiness, come and go freely, and be able to make use of all blessings and happiness as one pleases. Dear disciples! During this Sōn-retreat, diagnose well the illnesses of the mind that each of you has and dedicate yourself to curing them.”

57. He continued, “If each practitioner wishes to diagnose his illnesses of the mind and cure them, then one must first know how to do it. First, just as a patient with a physical illness must reveal his symptoms to his physician without hiding anything, you must also reveal honestly the symptoms of your mind’s illnesses to your mentor. Second, just as a patient with a physical illness must comply with all of his doctor’s instructions, you too absolutely must comply with the teachings of your mentor. Third, just as a patient with a physical illness must not neglect making sincere effort until that illness is completely cured, you too must try with utmost sincerity to cure your mind’s illnesses until the very end. If in this wise you carry through conscientiously, you will finally recover the mind’s complete health, and at the same time gain the ability to treat and cure the multitudes who are suffering from illnesses of the mind. You then will accomplish the great enterprise of delivering sentient beings and curing the world.”

58. The Founding Master addressed the congregation at a meditation hall, “Our practice dharma is the art of war for pacifying a warring world, and you are like cadets who are learning that art of war. The wars are those that arise incessantly in the countries of people’s minds. The country of the mind is originally untouched and peaceful, bright and pure, but it becomes dark and turbid, complicated and disturbed, due to Māra’s minions of selfish desires, leaving few peaceful days in this infinite world. Thus I have called the way such sen-

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tient beings live ‘the mind’s wars’; what I call the ‘art of war’ is the method by which we subjugate all of Māra’s minions in our minds. That method is the training in absorption, wisdom, and precepts, and is our path of practice for distinguishing dharma from Māra. This is the great art of war, which is the best for quelling the chaos in the world. But most people do not even consider the mind’s chaos to be real chaos. How can we say that they know anything about the root and its branches? If we probe the origin of all the small and large wars of individuals and families, societies and countries, they all derive from the wars raging in people’s minds. Therefore, the mind’s war is the origin of all other wars and the most severe of them all; and the method for pacifying the mind’s wars is the chief of all other methods and the greatest art of war as well. Thus, you must understand this meaning very well and practice absorption and wisdom diligently, while keeping the precepts even unto death. If you practice incessantly over a long period of time, you finally will subjugate all of Māra’s minions. Once this is accomplished, I feel certain that you will attain the rank of dharma strong and Māra defeated, and will also become excellent commanders who pacify this world, which knows not a single day of comfort due to the wars raging in the mind.”

59. The Founding Master said, “The way in which wholesome and unwholesome mental states arise from our nature, which is originally free from discrimination and attachment, is just like the way in which various types of crops or weeds grow in a field. The so-called ‘field of the mind’ is the foundation of our minds, for, just as we may cultivate a fallow field to make it into a productive one, so too we may cultivate the foundation of our minds in order to gain wisdom and merit; thus, the expression ‘cultivate the field of the mind’ was coined. Hence, people who cultivate their mind-fields well are like good farmers who keep weeding their fields again and again until they eliminate all the weeds and are growing only crops, thereby reaping a good harvest in the autumn. In the same way, you must investigate over and over the arising of wholesome and unwholesome mental states: when an unwholesome mental state arises, you must eliminate it over and over until you eliminate it completely, nourishing only the wholesome mental state so that wisdom and merit

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will always be abundant. People who do not cultivate their mind-fields well are like bad farmers who neglect their fields whether weeds or crops sprout there, and so have nothing to harvest in the autumn. In the same way, if one follows one's mental states regardless of whether they are unwholesome or wholesome, and acts just as one pleases, one will encounter only suffering, and the path to wisdom and merit will recede still farther. Therefore, our myriads of transgressions and merits depend on nothing other than whether we cultivate our mind-fields well, or not. How then can we be negligent in this matter?"

60. He continued, "Since time immemorial, schools of religion have characterized the discovery of the mind-field as 'seeing the nature,' and cultivating the mind-field as 'nurturing the nature' or 'commanding the nature.' This training in the mind-field was considered by all the buddhas and sages to be their innate mission, and was also the foundation for leading the world to goodness. Thus, in our order, we have designated the three principles of Cultivation, Inquiry, and Choice to be the specialized subjects for cultivating the mind-field, and have taught all the methods of daily practice for their implementation. Cultivation is the subject that clears the field in preparation for farming the mind-field. Inquiry is the subject that teaches you various farming methods and enables you to distinguish between crops and weeds. Choice is the subject that enables you not to fail at farming and to have an abundant harvest by putting into practice what you have learned. In the present world, with the development of scientific civilization, people's greed is surging day by day. Hence, if we do not engage in training that cultivates the mind-field, we will not be able to subjugate that greed; and if we do not subjugate that greed, it will be difficult for this world ever to find peace. Therefore, from now on, the minds of all people under heaven will naturally desire to cultivate the mind-field, and once cultivating the mind-field is desired, they will seek out true religions, which are the specialists in this, and among these, people whose practice has fully matured will receive immeasurable respect. Therefore, at this time you all must once again renew your determination and try to become exemplary farmers who will have great success in farming the mind-field."

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61. The Founding Master addressed the congregation at a meditation hall, “I have spoken a lot during this Sŏn-retreat period, and will be speaking again today. I don’t know whether some of you may be tired of it, but the reason I keep speaking over and over again in this way is because those who have insufficient understanding of the Way and its virtue need to be told again and again before all human affairs and universal principles naturally become clear and can put them into practice. Thus, when all the sages and saints in the past were edifying and instructing neophytes, they first tried to help them understand human affairs and universal principles and then proceeded accordingly to have them gradually put their knowledge into practice. After attending just one or two Sŏn-retreat, don’t be anxious or frustrated if your own knowledge and conduct are still not in accordance, and also don’t ridicule or criticize other people who are like that. Hence, just because you keep hearing the same teaching over and over again, do not regard it as easy; and just because you have still not been able to put it into practice, do not become discouraged. If you listen and practice over and over again, then you will eventually attain a fully rounded human character, in which knowledge and conduct are in perfect harmony.”

62. The Founding Master addressed the congregation at the ceremony marking the end of the retreat, “This closing ceremony today marks the end of the retreat only for this small meditation hall. The larger meditation hall is beginning its intensive retreat. If you consider this ceremony to be only a ceremony that marks the end of the retreat, then you do not understand the dharma of great practice.”

63. Kim Taegŏ asked, “Since precepts are no longer required after the rank of dharma strong and Māra defeated, is the practice in Choice then finished?” The Founding Master replied, “After the rank of dharma strong and Māra defeated, one ascends to the first stage of sagehood, so one no longer needs to train to bind oneself to the dharma or to restrain oneself with precepts. Internally, however, the mind-precepts are still present. One of them is to guard against being concerned only with one’s own cultivation of the Way and contentment, lest one fall into the Lesser Vehicle. A second is to beware of falling

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into a life of wealth and pleasure lest they obscure one's original vow. A third is to be cautious lest they should hinder the right dharma by possibly acquiring superpowers and heedlessly betraying them before the eyes of other sentient beings. Beyond these, through the practice in the Threefold Study of Cultivation, Inquiry, and Choice, they must accumulate merit by, further securing the stage of buddhahood above and, furthermore, nurturing loving-kindness and compassion below in order to deliver sentient beings.”

