



The Scripture of the
Founding Master

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Chapter Four The Way of Humanity

1. A neophyte to the order asked, “I happen to live on Kyeryong Mountain, so I have many conversations with representatives of the various religious groups who live on that mountain. They always boast about their own doctrines and mention the Way and its virtue on every possible occasion, but I still have not heard an explanation that clarifies what that means. So, please, Great Master, teach me the meaning of the Way and its virtue.” The Founding Master replied, “Now, the fact that you want to know the Way and its virtue is commendable. However, the ‘Way and its virtue’ is extraordinarily vast in scale and it is impossible to explain it all in a short period of time. Thus, only after beginning this practice and receiving substantial training will you gradually begin to understand. However, in order to satisfy your curiosity, I will now roughly explain just the main theme of the Way and its virtue, so listen carefully!

“Generally speaking, the ‘Way’ (to), to put it simply, is another name for ‘path’ (kil). What we mean by ‘path’ is conducting oneself rightfully in any and all circumstances. Therefore, the conduct of heaven is called the Way of heaven, the conduct of earth is called the Way of earth, and the conduct of human beings is called the Way of humanity. Within this Way of humanity, there are two types of paths: the path of physical conduct and the path of spiritual conduct. Thus, the principle of the Way has but a single root, but its ancillary categories are so numerous that it would be impossible to count them all. Therefore, of these various types of Ways, I’ll take up only the single case of the Way of humanity. Just as the road of our physical movements connects each and every region via a network of main roads and side roads and includes a limitless number of routes that extend through mountains, water, fields, and villages; so too, in the same manner, the path of the dharma of our spiritual conduct progresses everywhere in this and other worlds through a combination of main and side Ways and appears as an infinite number of routes in accordance with the respective conditions of individuals, families, societies, and nations.

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However, if I were to offer just a few examples: between parents and children, there is a path for parents and children to follow; between superior and inferior, a path for superior and inferior; between husband and wife, a path for husband and wife; among friends, a path for friends; and among fellow countrymen, a path for fellow countrymen. In this manner, each time you encounter situations and circumstances, there is a suitable path for each of these to take. Regardless of the situation, a person who simply knows this suitable path is a person who knows the Way; and a person who does not is a person who does not know the Way. If we were to speak of the greatest Way of them all, it is the Way that is free from arising and ceasing and involves the retribution and response of cause and effect, which is our original nature. This Way unifies all the dhar-mas; heaven, earth, and humanity are founded on it. Hence, a person who knows this Way is said to know the greatest of Ways.”

2. The Founding Master continued, “‘virtue [of the Way]’ (tōk) is, to put it simply, just a name for the manifestation of grace in whatever place or matter. When heaven follows the Way, then heaven’s grace will be made manifest; when the earth follows the Way, then the earth’s grace will be made manifest; and when human beings follow the Way, then the grace of human beings will be made manifest. According to the thousands of Ways, thousands of virtues will materialize. Therefore, among these various types of virtues, if we explain initially only humanity’s virtue, its aspects also will be infinite. If one follows the Way between parents and children, the virtue between parents and children is made manifest; if one follows the Way between superior and inferior, the virtue between superior and inferior is made manifest; if one follows the Way between husband and wife, the virtue between husband and wife is made manifest; if one follows the Way between friends, the virtue between friends is made manifest; and if one follows the Way between fellow countrymen, the virtue between fellow countrymen is made manifest. Thus, when the virtue of the Way is encountered in an individual, a true individual materializes; when encountered in a family, a true family materializes; when encountered in a society, a society will be in harmony; when encountered in a nation, a nation will be in harmony; when encountered in the world, the world will be in harmony.

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If we were to speak of the greatest virtue of them all, it is to be a person who, having awakened to the great Way, readily transcends being and nonbeing, liberates oneself from birth and death, masters cause and effect, and guides all sentient beings who are wandering lost inside the ‘burning house of the triple world’ to abide together in the paradise of Ultimate Bliss. Such a person can be said to have achieved the great virtue of the Way.”

3. The Founding Master continued, “However, if one does not understand the fundamental principle of the Way and its virtue but, while seeking selfish and perverse things and engaging in unprincipled and immoral conduct, one extols the Way and its virtue only with one’s lips, then one is following the perverse Way and the evil Way. What has this got to do with the true Way and what virtues can materialize? Therefore, a person who wants to learn the Way and its virtue must first understand the fundamental principle of the Way; and also, having understood it, must cultivate its virtue sincerely and incessantly. Whoever does so will gradually come to master the Way and attain virtue. However, ordinary people do not understand the gist of the Way and its virtue and, if there is someone around who has some strange magical powers, they refer to him as a person of the Way, regardless of whether that person understands the fundamental principle of great and small, being and nonbeing. They also refer to a person with only a gentle heart as a person of virtue, regardless of whether that person makes clear choices between right and wrong, benefit and harm. Isn’t this ridiculous? Now, as a neophyte to our order, your wish first to understand the Way and its virtue indicates an appropriate order of learning. I hope that you will take to heart what I have said, always be thorough with regard to the main idea of the Way and its virtue, and not stray into arbitrary Ways.”

4. The Founding Master said, “When human beings try to follow the Way of humanity, they cannot be heedless even for a moment. Between parents and children, teacher and disciple, superior and inferior, husband and wife, among friends, and among fellow countrymen, regardless of the situation in which one might find oneself, how can the Way of humanity be accomplished by neglect-

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ing one's checking mind? Thus, since ancient times, all the sages have appeared in this world at appropriate times and established dharma and regulations, and each of them has illuminated the path for people to follow. If one takes dharma and regulations lightly and prefers to behave as one pleases, then in the current lifetime that person will not be able to manifest the worth of a human being and, furthermore, in the next lifetime he will fall into evil destinies and be unable to avoid transgressions and suffering.”

5. The Founding Master said, “Generally speaking, all matters under heaven have roots and branches, primary and secondary. If, knowing the root, one exerts effort regarding that root, then the branches will naturally turn out well. However, if one follows only the branches and exerts effort only regarding the branches, then the root will naturally be neglected. Also, if one understands what is primary and exerts effort regarding the primary, then the secondary aspects will naturally turn out well. However, if one follows only the secondary and exerts effort only regarding it, then the primary will naturally be neglected. To give an example, for human beings, the mind is the root and the body the branch; for the world, study of the Way is primary and science secondary. Only when one understands clearly root and branches, primary and secondary, will one finally be a person who understands the Way. Only such a person can easily rectify also all matters under heaven.”

6. The Founding Master addressed Yi Tongjinhwa, “Among the affairs that a person born into this world should conduct, there are two major ones. The first is to meet a right-dharma master and to attain buddhahood. The second is, after attaining the great Way, to deliver all sentient beings. These two are the most important root and the greatest of all human affairs.”

7. The Founding Master read Dong Zhongshu's words: “While focusing solely on righteousness, he does not contrive to profit; while illuminating only the Way, he does not calculate the merit.” He praised it, then added another line at the end: “If, while focusing solely on righteousness, he does not seek profit, then an even greater profit will return to him; if, while illuminating the Way,

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he does not calculate the merit, then an even greater merit will return to him.”

8. The Founding Master, upon seeing a horse pulling a cart, asked one of his disciples, “As for this moving cart: is it the horse that is moving, or the cart?” The disciple answered, “The horse moves, and the cart follows along.” The Founding Master asked again, “If it stops while moving, would you then whip the horse or the cart?” The disciple answered, “One should whip the horse.” The Founding Master then continued, “What you have said is right. Whipping the horse is identical to regulating the root. People must first seek out the root and regulate it, then they will find success in nearly all matters.”

9. Kim Kich’ŏn asked the Founding Master, “What should human beings do in order to understand what is accordant and what discordant?” The Founding Master said, “To be ‘accordant’ (sun) means to carry out all human affairs by knowing the right order, just as the changes in the four seasons of spring, summer, autumn, and winter always keep their proper sequence. To be ‘discordant’ (yŏk) means to try to carry out matters that are beyond one’s capabilities without knowing the right order, and to insist that others do what they don’t want to do, and always to irritate others. When people are carrying out matters, if they first distinguish well the accordant and discordant and act by focusing on the accordant, then there will be hardly any matters that don’t succeed.”

10. The Founding Master said, “There is no one who does not wish to do what is good for oneself. In this search, however, depending on each person’s knowledge and ability, one may follow what is accordant with principle or discordant with principle and what is real or illusory, and thus create differences in one’s success and failure. A person who searches in accord with principle follows the Way in which one does what is good for oneself while doing good for others, thus opening up an infinite paradise; a person who searches in discord with principle harms others while trying to do what is good only for oneself, thus falling into infinite transgressions and suffering. A person who searches in accord with what is real attains the result because one seeks merit

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and happiness in the relevant places in accordance with principle; a person who searches in accord with what is illusory ultimately does not achieve any result because one seeks all merits and happiness in questionable places of superstition. The reason there are fewer people in the world who search in accord with principle and reality, but more people who search in discord with principle and while relying on what is illusory, is because the right dharma has still not spread widely and the spirit of the whole human race has yet not been equally awakened. The moment the Way of searching in accord with principle and the Way of searching based on what is real become illuminated, then, as at midday when the sun's radiance shines overhead, everybody, regardless of self and others, them and us, will attain transformation in grace."

11. The Founding Master said, "Few people who are filial to their parents and affectionate to their siblings at home will treat others badly; few who are not filial to their parents and not affectionate to their siblings will treat others well. Thus Confucians say, 'Filiality is the foundation of all conduct,' and 'Look for loyal officials at the gate of filiality.' These words all agree with reality."

12. The Founding Master said, "What I can't bear myself is what others can't bear, either. What is pleasurable to me is what others find pleasurable, too. I shouldn't do to others what I find regrettable myself; I should do to others what I also find satisfying. This, in short, is the dharma that thinks of other's state of mind by inferring from my own. If one practices in this manner for a long, long time, each of you will receive the grace of influence from one another, eliminating the gap between self and others."

13. The Founding Master said, "A person with immense talent knows how to make others' talents his own. If there is such a person in a family, that person will make the family prosper; if there is such a person in a nation, that person will make the nation prosper; if there is such a person under heaven, that person will make the whole world prosper."

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14. The Founding Master said, “A matter, the original intention of which was to bring benefit to others, might inadvertently go wrong and instead cause them harm. Thus, when you are doing something for the sake of others, you must take advance precautions; and people who are inadvertently harmed in such a case should remind themselves of that original intention, and should instead remain grateful rather than become resentful by considering only the harmful result.”

15. When the Founding Master was staying at Yōngsan, he received offerings of food and valuable gifts from a neophyte to the order. Upon receiving them, the Founding Master said, “I appreciate your expression of respect. But, depending on your state of mind, the cordiality you feel today may change in the future. Do you know why this is?” The neophyte replied, “How would it change so unreasonably?” The Founding Master said, “That is determined by what you seek in your mind. As you keep company with me, if what you seek is within me, then our affinities will last forever; but if it is not, then our relationship will not last long.”

16. The Founding Master said, “The reason that a good relationship does not last is mostly because people are not mindful where they should be mindful, and are not free of thoughts where they should be free of thoughts. Not to be mindful where they should be means that they forget the various benefits they receive from someone, so that they treat the benefactor ungratefully if the benefactor hurts their feelings. Not to be free of thoughts where they should be free of thoughts means that, having brought some benefit to another, they have a thought that they should be repaid, so that when the beneficiary wrongs them, they feel even more hatred by remembering the benefit they had conferred and, thus, a good relationship does not last long but turns instead into resentment and hatred. Therefore, you must understand these principles well, and be mindful where you should be mindful and be free of thoughts where you should be free of thoughts. In your mutual ties, you must try to sustain good relationships for a long time, and take care that those relationships are not turned into inferior ties.”

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17. Yi Kongju said to the Founding Master, “The other day I gave my poor neighbor a small donation. Since then, he has not spared himself in doing our household chores. I have learned, in this manner, the lesson that we must make merit and, if we do so, we will receive in kind.” The Founding Master said, “You have understood the principle that, if you make merit, you will receive in kind. But have you also understood the principle that merit could, by a simple mistake, turn into a transgression?” Kongju replied, “How could merit turn into a transgression?” The Founding Master said, “It is not that the merit you have accumulated turns into a transgression; rather, the mind that has made merit could turn into a mind that commits transgression. Ordinary people, having provided a bit of benefit to others, cannot let go of that concept or sign; and, when the beneficiary does not acknowledge the benefit and commits ingratitude, then hateful and resentful feelings multiply many times over, extreme love arousing extreme hatred instead and a minor benefit making a great enemy. Thus there are many instances where, though one means to cultivate goodness, that goodness cannot be believed and, though one attempts to make merit, one ends up producing transgressions. Therefore, Bodhidharma said, ‘Acting in no-thought is virtue,’ and Laozi said, ‘Superior virtue has no sign of virtue.’ Thus, only when practitioners understand this principle and apply this mind, will merits become eternal merits, blessings eternal blessings, and virtues one with those of heaven and earth. You must, therefore, work even more steadfastly to make virtues without sign and merit without change.”

18. Yi Chǒngwon asked, “What can I do so that I do not get attached to either hatred or love and so that I can maintain a well-rounded state of mind?” The Founding Master said, “The method for remaining free of attachment to hatred or love depends on always knowing how to redirect one’s thoughts well. Presume that someone hates me: instead of thoughtlessly hating the other person, first consider the fundamental cause. If I did something to warrant being hated, then I should work hard to rectify it; and if I didn’t do any such thing, then I should just receive it serenely, knowing that this is due to karma accumulated in past lives. At the same time, considering that I feel bad, if only for a

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moment, when someone hates me, I must make up my mind not to hate anyone. If I can do this, the person who hates me will become a teacher who teaches the dharma of using my mind. When I recognize that person as my teacher, how would any thoughts of hatred arise in me? This is exactly the method of not being attached to hatred. Again, if someone loves me, instead of thoughtlessly exulting in it, I must first consider the cause. If I did something to deserve being loved, then I should make sure that that cause will never change. But if it is a love that I receive without deserving it, then I must know that it is just a debt. Also, there is both proper and improper love. While a proper love is all right, you must also learn how to sever an improper love. Even when it is a proper love, if you detect signs that your attachment to it might hinder other matters, then you must be resolute and endeavor generally to have no failings in handling your affairs. This is the method to avoid getting attached to love. If you continue with this practice of not getting attached to either love or hate, then you will soon achieve a well-rounded state of mind.”

19. Seeing a disciple excessively reprimanding a subordinate of his, the Founding Master said, “If you have admonished him without being attached to hatred or love, your words will become the dharma; but if you were so attached, then they will not become the dharma. According to the principle of heaven and earth as well, a change occurs if either heat or cold is too extreme; in the same way if one is too extreme in managing people one weakens oneself later.”

20. A disciple was using frivolous language in speaking to a child. The Founding Master said, “When human beings deal with elders, there is a Way to honor the elders; when dealing with children, there is a Way to love the children. Even though the formalities may differ depending on the case, the spirit that respects the other side and is considerate to them is not different. So how then can one be so inconsiderate just because it is a child?”

21. The Founding Master said, “We have a popular expression ‘going around blowing his horn’ for someone who goes around talking to people.

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Each and every person has a horn; and when each of them blows his horn, some melodies make the listener's mind peaceful, some make it uneasy, some make it sad, some make it happy, some induce harmony, and some incite strife; and so the road of transgression or merit will split, depending on the melody. Therefore, when you are involved in any sensory conditions and have to blow your horn, by always playing a nice melody, make the thousands of people live in harmony and help both your own affairs and public matters to flourish, never causing others to fight or ruin themselves. Then, your horn will become a fine instrument that creates infinite merit. But if not, your horn will become the main source for inviting infinite transgressions.”

22. The Founding Master said, “Even in a familiar relationship like that between parents and children, if the parents instruct children with advice that the parents themselves cannot follow, then the children will not readily accept that advice. Even in an intimate relationship like that between spouses, if one spouse admonishes the other with advice that he or she cannot follow, then the other spouse will not readily accept that admonishment. Therefore, the proper technique for teaching others is to put it into practice ourselves first.”

23. One night the watchdog at the door of the Founding Master's quarters barked loudly as someone approached, so a disciple got up and scolded the dog. The Founding Master said, “This dog's duty is to bark. Why do you stop the dog from doing its duty? Everyone and everything in this world have their specific duties. Even in a single person, the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind each has their own duty to perform. Whether superior or inferior, noble or humble, if everyone performs his or her duty, this world will then have order and progress. Thus, you must perform your own duty well, but also not hinder others from fulfilling theirs. However, among all these duties, there also is the central duty that governs all other duties. In human beings, the mind has that central duty; in societies and nations, the leaders have it, running and controlling all institutions. Therefore, if the person with the central duty neglects that duty even a little bit, all the duties within his purview will collapse together, and the institutions will naturally be thrown into disorder. You must each ex-

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amine your own situation and be completely dedicated to performing whatever your duty may be. Be careful in commanding your mind, which is the pivotal agent of all duties, so that you create no hindrances to either your own fate or people's futures."

24. The Founding Master addressed several of his disciples, "Generally speaking, the world is composed of two types: the strong and the weak. If the strong and the weak cooperate with each other and each fulfills its respective Way, then this world will be in eternal peace. If not, the strong and the weak will both suffer disasters, and peace will never be achieved in the world. Thus, an ancient sage said that if a superior treats an inferior like his own son, then the inferior will treat his superior like his own parent; but if the superior treats the inferior like chaff, then the inferior will treat the superior like his enemy."

25. The Founding Master said, "All people wish to be respected by others, but they are more apt to do what will make them slighted. How then can they get their wish? The method to receive others' respect is first for me to respect others and be considerate of them. If I am respectful and considerate of them, then they, too, will be respectful and considerate of me."

26. The Founding Master said, "I always feel sorry for the strong who do not know how to play the role of the strong. One who is already strong must constantly help and guide the weak, and encourage them to become as strong as oneself; then one's strength will become an eternal strength, and one will be forever respected as a forerunner and pioneer. Nowadays, the strong in many cases resort only to oppressing and deceiving the weak; how can this lead to eternal strength? The weak need not remain perpetually weak: if gradually their spirits open and they recover their inherent vital energy, then they also will some day stand in the position of the strong. When the weak awaken and stand in the position of the strong, then the position of those who oppressed and deceived them will naturally deteriorate. Therefore, a really wise person will always help all the more when others are poor and protect them all the more when they are weak, in order eternally to preserve one's own strength."

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27. The Founding Master was visiting the agricultural department and, seeing emaciated pigs in a pen, asked for an explanation. Yi Tongan replied, “While we were feeding them barley that got a bit spoiled during this year’s rainy season; they were getting fatter every day. Starting a few days ago, we began to feed them chaff again, but they can’t change their acquired taste for barley and so they lost their appetite. So they’re getting skinnier like this.” The Founding Master said, “This is a living scripture. The sufferings of the rich who become poor or the powerful who lose their rank are no different than the sufferings of these pigs. Hence, since time immemorial, the sages have all regarded human wealth and honor matter-of-factly, and did not become overly happy when wealth and honor came their way nor overly concerned when wealth and honor left. In ancient times, the emperor Shun received the rank of the Son of Heaven after doing such lowly jobs as cultivating the fields or making pottery, but he never became arrogant. The World Honored One Śākyamuni abdicated his destined position of king and, fleeing the palace, left the household life behind; but he didn’t retain even the slightest attachment. How equanimous were their attitudes toward wealth and honor, and how admirable was their power to transcend suffering and happiness! Hence, if you too aspire to the Way and want to learn how to be a sage or a saint, do not blindly pursue comfort, joy, or power above all else but rather shun them; and even if you unavoidably find yourself in such situations, do not let yourself become attached or corrupted by them. You will then be able to enjoy eternal comfort, eternal honor, and eternal power.”

28. The Founding Master was explaining the meaning of “being content with poverty and rejoicing in the Way”: “Generally speaking, poverty refers to an insufficiency of some sort. If one’s facial appearance falls short, it is poverty of the face; if one’s learning falls short, it is poverty of learning; if one’s property falls short, it is poverty of material assets. The saying ‘being content with one’s lot’ means to be comfortable with one’s given portion in whatever aspect. If one is not content with one’s existing poverty and struggles to avoid it unreasonably, then one will only become more anxious and increase one’s

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suffering, instead. If poverty is unavoidable, accept it with equanimity, and take pleasure in preparing for future wisdom and merit. The reason, however, that a practitioner who is content with one's lot comes to rejoice in the Way is because one understands that whatever poverty and suffering one receives now will change into merit and happiness in the future; furthermore, one derives pleasure from the fact that the functioning of one's mind never digresses from the truth and one's power of cultivation is able to enter the genuine realm that transcends suffering and happiness. Since ancient times, sages and philosophers have all understood this principle and applied such a state of mind in their actual lives; and thus, while living in poverty, they lived an unparalleled life of rejoicing in the Way."

29. The Founding Master said, "A person who wants all things in the world to be just as he wishes is as foolish as a person who builds a house in sand and presumes he will live in splendor for thousands of years. A wise person will be satisfied and grateful if six out of ten times things work out in life the way one wished. Moreover, even if all ten things turn out to one's liking, one does not monopolize those satisfying things but enjoys sharing them with all the world. For that reason, not only will one avoid misfortunes, but one's blessings will always be infinite."

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30. The Founding Master said, “It is often the case that people’s major transgressions start with minor faults. Therefore, you must occasionally examine your own conduct, and if you discover even a minor fault, do not procrastinate, but work hard to correct it. There is an animal in the south called an orangutan that is so strong and quick that humans can’t capture it by force. But they say that these animals like alcohol, so people leave a large bowl full of liquor along the roadside, so that an orangutan will see it as it walks by. At first the animal laughs at it and walks away, but then it comes back and drinks a little, then returns again to drink more, repeating this action several times until without even being aware it has drunk all the liquor. Finally it passes out drunk and people come out to capture it. The liquor that the animal initially intended only to sip is eventually completely finished, until it finally is either killed or captured alive. Human beings are just the same. If minor faults keep accumulating because they were not corrected in the beginning, people will commit major transgressions and badly ruin their future. How can one not be careful about this?”

31. Concerned that some of his young male and female disciples were straying because they had not found the right path of practice, the Founding Master said, “There are some of you who advance quickly in your practice in the beginning but digress later, and others who learn slowly in the beginning but advance quickly later. I have foreseen your tendencies, and guided each of you appropriately. But if you are over thirty, your lifelong character has by now been mostly decided. I myself am rather worried about those who have not yet matured, but this is something that should be a matter of great concern to the persons themselves.”

32. While the Founding Master was staying at Pongnae hermitage, the dry pond in front of a pavilion filled with water during a big monsoon. Frogs gathered from all directions, spawning numerous tadpoles. After a while, the rain stopped and the weather warmed up, so the pond water began to dry up and it didn’t look like the water would last much longer, but the tadpoles were playing in the pond, wiggling their tails. Seeing this, the Founding Master said,

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“This is such a distressing sight! Not realizing that their life spans are decreasing moment by moment, they are playing blithely in this manner. But how is this only the case for tadpoles? Human beings are much the same. When a wise person looks at the future of people who spend more than their income or who only abuse their current power, it seems no different than those tadpoles in the shrinking pond.”

33. The Founding Master addressed the congregation, “Today, I will tell you the most important method of guarding the mind and protecting the body, so listen carefully and use it always as a motto for practice in all sensory conditions. The motto is: ‘Never neglect a mind of respect and awe.’ This means that, whenever and wherever you encounter persons or things, treat them always with a mind of respect and awe. When one neglects a mind of respect and awe, then, even in the most intimate and familiar relationships, such as that between parents and children, siblings, and spouses, complaints and resentments will inevitably occur, and even insignificant sensory conditions and trivial things will often cause bondage and injury. This is because, by considering the relationship familiar and the sensory conditions casual, one behaves recklessly by forgetting to maintain respect and awe in one’s mind. For example, if a person tried to steal a box of matches but gets caught by the owner, would the owner let the person go free just because a box of matches is insignificant? Only the most generous owner would stop at just scolding the thief, but otherwise, the owner would probably humiliate the person. This means that the owner scolded and humiliated the person because of one box of matches, but on further consideration, the thief’s own greed for matches prompted him to steal and he ended up demeaning and humiliating himself; his greed derived from forgetting to maintain the mind of respect and awe regarding that one box of matches. Therefore, if a person neglects the mind of respect and awe, then even an unfeeling and insignificant box of matches will exhibit that much power; and how much more so will it be the case for humans, who are more significant beings and who have limitless power? Therefore, I say that we must always maintain respect and awe. If we live righteously by maintaining respect and awe toward all things, then whether we look at the blue sky above or the

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wide earth below, all things created throughout the entire universe will be for my use and all laws practiced in this world will be mechanisms for my protection. But if I neglect respect and awe and act recklessly, all things in the universe will instead be instruments that harm me, and all the laws in this world ropes that bind me. How is this not to be feared? Thus, I reiterate to you that, as people who have appeared in this turbulent world, if you are to guard your mind and protect your body well, you must engrave this motto deeply on your mind and apply it in whatever you do.”

34. On a New Year’s Day, the Founding Master said, “I received New Year’s bows from many people today. If I were like secular people, I would return your greetings with either food or gifts, but instead I will tell you a secret to help you live safely in the impending time of troubles. So, take it as a paradigm.” Then, he wrote a poem by an ancient sage for them:

For living in this world, gentleness is most precious,
Rigidity is the root of catastrophe.
In speaking, always hesitate like a stutterer.
For matters at hand, respond slowly like a dullard.
The more urgent the situation, the more leisurely consider it.
In peaceful times, don’t forget future perils,
If you live your life following these maxims,
You will truly be a fine man.

At the end of this verse, he added another line, “One who conducts oneself according to these guidelines will always live in peace and bliss.”

35. One day some disciples were arguing the pros and cons of current events while reading the newspaper. The Founding Master heard them and said, “Why do you talk rashly about matters that are none of your business? A person with a genuine outlook does not talk lightly about others’ pros and cons. Even while reading the newspaper, the proper conduct for practitioners, and the way to gain true benefit, is to examine carefully in what you read the root cause and the good and bad fruitions that result, taking them as mirrors for one’s future conduct. This is an approach for illuminating the one mind by pen-

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etrating all dharmas. For a person who reads newspapers in this spirit, they will become a living scripture and source material for wisdom and merit. Otherwise one will only become good at critiquing other people's pros and cons contentiously and glibly, thereby falling easily into the abyss of transgression. You must be extremely careful about this."

36. The Founding Master scolded Kim Namch'ŏn about a certain matter, then said to Mun Chŏnggyu, "What I've scolded Namch'ŏn about does not pertain only to Namch'ŏn. What do you think, Chŏnggyu? Whomever I might scold, you, Chŏnggyu, should first examine your own conduct: if you have committed the same mistake, correct it; and if not, keep reminding yourself about it so that you do not commit the same error in the future. Never criticize or be scornful of the person being scolded. A foolish person is so engrossed in pointing out the faults of others that he is oblivious to his own; a wise person examines his own faults and has no time for others' pros and cons."

37. The Founding Master said, "When a person tries to accomplish something in this world, he may receive others' approval or criticisms. If he simply feels pleased or displeased without giving it any thought, he is just like a child. When others criticize me, I must examine the situation, and if my conscience tells me I have no reason to be ashamed, then even though thousands of people criticize me, I must proceed apace with indomitable courage. On the other hand, however broad the approval, if my conscience tells me it is something I shouldn't do, then I shouldn't hesitate to throw it out like an old shoe. This is what a practitioner with self-power does."

38. The Founding Master said, "When a person starts something and has yet to make any errors, one continues with the sincere determination to do the job well. But after one or two errors along the way, his initial resolve is apt to weaken and he performs the task haphazardly. This is like a person wearing new clothes who is at first cautious in wearing them, but once they get dirty or wrinkled, he becomes utterly careless. If one does things in this manner, how is there any hope of success? A person with absolute determination and grand

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vision would rather take any mistake that might occur as a past lesson and use it to probe the future more actively, not allowing it to discourage him into abandoning his original plan. For such a person, a minor error becomes instead the foundation for a major success.”

39. The Founding Master said, “Everyone wants things that are beneficial, but does many more things that lead to harm. Everyone wants to be wealthy and noble, but does many more things that lead to poverty and degradation. Everyone wants to be praised, but does many more things that lead to ridicule. There are so many cases in which what one wishes in one’s mind and what one practices with one’s body do not correspond. This is all because they do not realize the root source of suffering and happiness, and because, even if they do know it, they do not put it into practice. You must think deeply about the causes, discriminate clearly, and practice thoroughly, so that what you wish and what you do are never in contradiction. Then, all things will be achieved according to your wishes.”

40. The Founding Master said, “Among people’s occupations, there are those that create merit and those that create transgressions. Occupations that create merit are those that, through pursuing that occupation, bring benefit to all of society and naturally make my own mind wholesome as well. Occupations that create transgressions are those that, through pursuing that occupation, damage and poison all of society and naturally make my own mind unwholesome as well. Therefore, a person must be discriminating in the choice of an occupation. Of all occupations, the best is the Buddha’s enterprise of correctly guiding the minds of all sentient beings and delivering them from the sea of suffering to paradise.”

41. The Founding Master said, “The prosperity or destitution of a family depends to a great extent on the state of mind of the head of the household. If a household is to be prosperous, first, the spirit of the head of the household must be assiduous; second, all members of the household should collaborate and combine their energies in handling all things; third, whatever the task at

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hand, one should undertake it only after first acquiring sufficient knowledge and experience; fourth, one should build up the enterprise step by step by following the basic premise of ‘through the small, accomplish the great’; fifth, one should make good use of techniques for recycling discarded goods; sixth, one should strike a proper balance between the main job and any side jobs, and seek to maintain a proper relationship between both aspects of production; seventh, before production has achieved its planned goal, one should not use funds recklessly in other places; eighth, even after achieving that goal, one should not seek excessive profits, but always should make investments in other well-grounded and trustworthy places; ninth, one should always keep one’s eyes on income and expenditures, not hesitating to make appropriate expenditures and strictly guarding against unnecessary waste. If you do your best to manage your home through these methods, then your households will naturally grow wealthier and, as a result, will correspondingly help in your mind practice, and vice versa.”

42. The Founding Master said, “A household is the microcosm of a country; a country is the amalgamation of numerous households. A household is simultaneously both a small country and the foundation of a large country. Therefore, a person who regulates well his own household will also regulate well his own society and country, when one enters into the society or the nation. What is more, if each and every individual regulates well each and every household, then the country will accordingly be well regulated. You must realize that the responsibilities of the head of the household are weighty and immense.”

43. The Founding Master said, “To create an exemplary household, first all members of the family should have a religion that is worthy of common faith and should constantly develop a new life with a new spirit. Second, the head of the household should possess sufficient dignity, wisdom, and force of practical example to be worthy of mentoring all members of the family. Third, the head of the household must focus on educating the members of the family by whatever means possible, but must initially learn much and experience much

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so that he may become a mirror for the entire household. Fourth, all the members of the family must not live idly but should try to save up even a little by establishing a budget and balancing daily income and expenditures. Fifth, find employment but be discriminating in choosing an occupation, avoiding jobs that require killing living creatures or paralyzing others' spirits, nor abuse the power of position to threaten others' lives and property or to cause them grief. Sixth, as far as possible, even spouses should remain financially independent, endeavoring together to build a prosperous household and a prosperous society and nation. Seventh, faithfully fulfill one's duties and responsibilities toward the nation and society, and, in particular, cooperate as best one can with those organizations that protect people who lack self-power, as well as organizations devoted to education and edification. Eighth, instruct your children in both study of science and study of the Way and, after they have finished their schooling, make sure that for a significant period of time they serve the nation, society, or the religious order. Ninth, when bestowing inheritance on one's children, give them about enough to make a start in life but donate the rest to the public interest organizations of the nation, society, or the religious order. Tenth, in order that one may cultivate body and mind while living in complicated human society, one should foster new energy by taking appropriate breaks a few times every month or every year."

44. If the Founding Master received a pregnant woman, he would always say, "Do not think harsh thoughts; do not say harsh words; do not commit harsh actions." In particular, he would prohibit her from killing living beings: "When a fetus is in the mother's womb, it is the time when its numinous consciousness begins to develop, so the parents' thoughts, speech, and actions readily influence the fetus' future character. Therefore, during this period, it is extremely important for the mother to be circumspect."

45. The Founding Master said, "There are four dharmas for teaching one's children. First is teaching via the mind: by placing a locus for faith in one's mind, and maintaining a state of mind that is upright, wholesome, and serene, one leads the children to model themselves on that mind. Second is teaching

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via conduct: by first conducting oneself correctly and maintaining right measure in one's actions, one leads the children automatically to model themselves on that conduct. Third is teaching via speech: by frequently talking to them about the exemplary words and wholesome actions of the buddhas and bodhisattvas, sages and saints, and distinguished and accomplished persons, one leads children to remember and adopt those examples, and teaches them through gentle and rational words about human affairs and universal principles. Fourth is teaching via severity: this is a method of teaching through strict authority when children are immature; it is not a method to be used often. Therefore, in teaching the children in one's household, if one applies these four methods from the time a child is in its mother's womb until it becomes an adult, they will be of great help in turning that child into a good person."

46. The Founding Master said, "In teaching one's children, the parents themselves first must not diverge from the Way of respecting elders and commanding the young; for, if in front of one's children, one personally is unfilial, disrespectful, or does other things wrong, one will lose the dignity one needs to guide one's children. Second, one's speech and actions must be grave and dignified, for if children consider their parents to be too soft, it will be difficult to teach them with appropriate regulations. Third, one must give them intimacy and affection; for, if one is only stern and does not convey those feelings of intimacy and affection, one cannot truly influence one's children. Fourth, one must always keep one's word, for if trust is lost, one will not be able to elicit the strict obedience of one's children. Fifth, one must be clear about reward and punishment, for if reward and punishment are not clear, one will not be able to bring one's children to true self-awareness. Sixth, from early in their childhood, one should imbue them with an appropriate mind of faith, for if they do not have it, while they are growing up it will be easy for them to be tempted by external sensory conditions. Seventh, from early in childhood, one should encourage a mind dedicated to the public interest, for if one does not encourage it, the sprout of selfishness will naturally grow. Eighth, from early in their childhood, one should forbid them to negatively criticize or disparage others, for otherwise frivolous habits will naturally grow in them and the gate of mis-

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fortune caused by talk will open. Ninth, from early in their childhood, one should prevent one's children from taking improper things, even if those things are trivial; for, if one lets them bring back improper things, shameless habits will naturally grow in them."

47. The Founding Master said, "When a child is young, it typically is likely to inherit the spirit of the parents by watching and hearing the behavior of its parents. In the position of a parent, therefore, one must for the sake of posterity be prudent in choosing an occupation and must endeavor to conduct proper business and to walk the right path."

48. The Founding Master, at a commemoration ceremony for those of 'the rank of bestower' (hūisawi), that is, parents of those who took the vows of the Won-Buddhist order, said, "In our order, for the purpose of honoring the merit of those parents who have raised and contributed their precious children to help establish our order, we commemorate them with the honorific title 'bestower.' Human sentiment in the secular world of both past and present is mostly filled with selfishness, so there are extremely few who benefit others in the three aspects of spirit, body, and material goods. As parents, they also often are pre-occupied with the idea of depending on their children and, even if a child has extraordinary talent, the parent unfortunately confines the child within a single household for its entire life. The 'bestowers' transcended such thoughts early on and, disregarding their own glory or comfort, they have donated their precious children for this great global enterprise. This is an example of compassionate bodhisattva practice. We should forever cherish the spirit and merit of all the 'bestowers' and, by honoring their intent, should become true human beings who always consider the greater public wherever we go."

49. While he was staying at Pongnae hermitage, the Founding Master heard the news of his mother's grave illness and hurriedly left for his parental home in Yōnggwang. While nursing his sick mother, he said to his younger brother, Tongguk, "As someone who elucidates the Way and its virtue, how could I neglect my mother's illness? However, the reason my present situation

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has prevented me from nursing our mother as much as I would wish is, as you well know, because there are already a large number of people who want to follow and learn from me. If I do not take care of them myself, there will be obstacles along their roads ahead, and all the work I have done so far will also face serious impediments. Thus, you must devotedly nurse our mother in my stead. If you do so, my fault of unfiliality may be even slightly absolved and you will also be recognized as a great founder of this religious enterprise.” In addition, he consoled his mother, “The birth and death of humankind depends on the mandate of heaven. Mother, settle your mind and always abide in the genuine realm of the one mind, which is pure and clear.” Having said this, he resolutely left his home, returned to the hermitage, and devoted himself to his work of delivering people.

50. One of his disciples asked, “Is it right always to focus on frugality in conducting all ceremonies, such as coming of age, weddings, funerals, and ancestral worship?” The Founding Master said, “Extravagance in ceremonies must always be avoided. However, never contributing to the public welfare and only being frugal out of miserliness is not the original intent of the reformed rules of ceremony. Also, in this same matter of frugality, since a wedding represents the start of a new life, it would be better if one is more frugal so as to help the newlyweds establish a foundation for their new lives; and since a funeral represents the consummation of a life, it would be right not to neglect the duties of posterity in accordance with the merits of the deceased.”

51. One day, the Founding Master was watching the village children play. Two of the children got into an argument over some trivial item, each claiming it was his. They finally came over to the Founding Master and asked him to resolve the issue by presenting another child as a witness. That child thought it over for a while, but since the whole matter had nothing to do with him, he said that he didn’t know anything about it. After the Founding Master had resolved the matter for them, he remarked to his disciples, “Even little children argue and exert themselves about something that concerns them, but care little about something that doesn’t. So, how can there be many people who, forgetting their

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own interests, will work hard on others' behalfs? Therefore, people who work for the sake of the public, leaving behind their desire for profit and power, are worthy of the public's reverence. But then, people whose minds are fully open cannot help but work on the public's behalf."

52. The Founding Master said, "The Way was present when Admiral Yi Sunsin (1545-1598) used his mind. Although he was of high rank, he was never arrogant and shared life and death, suffering and happiness, with all his sailors. When he was deprived of his command and demoted to a mere cavalry groom, his mind was neither resentful nor debased but instead he exerted all his energy in rearing horses, and reportedly would say to them sometimes, "You may be mere animals, but you have grown this big at the country's expense, so do your best in this time of national crisis." He turned easy and conspicuous matters over to other generals, but kept difficult and inglorious matters for himself. In serving his superiors he was totally loyal; in leading his inferiors he showed the utmost love. Indeed, he was a sage admiral combining wisdom and virtue, a person worthy of being regarded as a mirror for everyone who handles affairs in either the country or the world."

53. The Founding Master asked Yu Hōil to read the introduction to the Book of History (Shu jing). When they got to the line 'The two emperors (Yao and Shun) and the three kings (Wu, Tang, Wen) are the ones who preserved this mind, but King Jie of Xia and King Zhou of Shang are those who lost this mind,' the Founding Master said, "This line will become a great secret key for the coming age. Those who forget their minds out of desire for wealth and power will not only ruin their own households and destroy their bodies in the future, but if the leaders of a nation or the world are also like this, then the calamities will reach the nation and the world. Thus, do not be attached to wealth and power, but in sustaining your lives with clothing, food, and shelter keep only within proper bounds, so that your original mind will not be lost. Then, whatever chaos you may face in this world, you will not be in danger but will be the first to receive the good fortunes of heaven and earth."

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54. There was a wealthy man who, after saving his poor neighbors by releasing some money and grains in a famine year, kept wishing he would be eulogized for his virtue. The villagers conferred and erected a stele, but the man was still dissatisfied, so he spent more of his own money to erect a new stele and to construct a tremendous stele pavilion. The villagers thought his actions ludicrous, so there were many criticisms and disparaging remarks made. Kim Kwangsŏn heard about this and presented it during a conversation session. The Founding Master listened and said, “This is a living scripture about warning people who compulsively seek honor. Although that person did this deed in order to enhance his reputation, didn’t he actually lose even his previous reputation, not to speak of enhancing it? Thus, a foolish person in seeking honor only damages it instead; a wise person does not intentionally seek to be honored; instead, merely by performing proper actions, great honor naturally comes to him.”

55. Yi Ch’unp’ung asked, “The other day my son was up in the mountains and was badly startled by a hunter’s misfire. Had an unfortunate accident occurred at the time, I am not clear as to the choice in action I should have made in handling that matter.” The Founding Master said, “Tell me your thoughts.” Ch’unp’ung said, “Since laws are intended to regulate such matters, I would have reported the facts to the law and expressed my feelings as a father.” The Founding Master asked Song Chŏkpyŏk, who said, “All things result from the workings of cause and effect. I would consider the matter also to be a result of cause and effect and take no legal action.” The Founding Master next asked Oh Ch’anggŏn, who said, “If I were not a practitioner, I would definitely have appealed to the law. But instead, I would have considered the matter to be the mandate of heaven and would have let the whole thing go.” The Founding Master said, “None of your three explanations hones to the Middle Way. The current statutory system requires people to register at the government office if a person is born or dies. What is more, when a person suffers an unforeseen accident or unexpectedly dies, a witness to the incident has an obligation to report it to the government office even if he has no relation to the victim. Since that law applies even to unrelated people, how much more would it be the case for

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the father? Therefore I would, as a citizen and a father, immediately report the details to the government office. I would subsequently entrust the matter to the office that regulates the law and consider it to be out of my hands.”

56. One day, the Founding Master was listening to a historical novel being read and said, “When authors write novels, in order to interest the general reader, they exaggerate the psychologies and actions of inferior people or bad persons and often make them into extremely evil characters. This also may become a seed for an unwholesome cause and condition. Therefore, whether you are talking about the history of bygone people or the pros and cons of contemporaries, be careful not to exaggerate the facts.”

57. One day the Founding Master was reading the Zhuangzi and came across a passage about Confucius going to teach Dao Zhi, but returning in vain after suffering many insults. He said, “Confucius is a great sage. Voluntarily risking danger and humiliation, he tried to enlighten Dao Zhi to what is good, and thereby revealed the true meaning of deliverance for the next thousands of years. However, the means of delivering people differ according to the age. To deliver people today, rather than just preaching to them, you must first practice what you preach and, after the results are apparent, have them find their own way to deliverance on their own. This is so because many people nowadays hasten to preach to others without practicing what they preach and in the end often fall into falsehood, so that the general public does not trust the truthfulness of those who merely preach. Today’s approach is different in method from Confucius’ going to Dao Zhi in order to preach to him directly, but whether one is teaching the world by preaching directly or teaching the world by first embodying the truth, the original intent is the same. Only the means differ in accordance with the times.”

58. One day the Founding Master remarked on the case of King Wu of Zhou, who dethroned Zhou of Shang, the Son of Heaven of his time, and after subjugating all under heaven, himself became the Son of Heaven: “If I were faced with the same situation as King Wu, I would reluctantly follow the will

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of the people and dethrone the Son of Heaven, but would concede the throne to some benevolent person. However, if there were no benevolent person, or if all the people under heaven would not hear of my conceding the throne, then I would have no choice but to accept.”

59. After returning from an excursion to the Diamond Mountains, a person said to the Founding Master, “While I was on an excursion there, I saw a man who was able to call forth and send away crows or snakes at will. I suppose he is a real person of the Way?” The Founding Master said, “Crows flock together with other crows, and snakes stay together with other snakes. Why would a person of the Way stay with crows and snakes?” The man asked, “Then what is a real person of the Way?” The Founding Master said, “A real person of the Way simply follows the Way of a human being amid other humans.” The man asked, “If that’s the case, then aren’t there any distinguishing traits of a person of the Way?” The Founding Master said, “No, there aren’t.” The man asked, “Then, how do we recognize a person of the Way?” The Founding Master said, “If you are not a person of the Way yourself, it will be hard to recognize him even if you see one. Only if you speak a foreign language well, can you tell whether or not another person speaks that language well. Only if you know music well, can you tell whether another person’s music is well played or not. Therefore, it is said that it takes one to know one.”