

Entries 21–30

21

Your teacher's whole heart yearns to offer heartfelt admonitions to those who stand at the front of your temple and manage its affairs — yet it remains impossible. This is simply because your hearts cannot resonate with mine. You cling too much to worldly rights and wrongs and to external forms, bustling anxiously through temple business all day yet never turning the light inward to illuminate the innate awakening of your original nature. Perhaps your teacher lacks virtue, and so cannot move you.

22

The Three Talents are not the exclusive possession of a single temple. Whenever there is an opportunity to help people see and complete Dao, your teacher is willing to go anywhere to strengthen the faith of all my disciples. If you fail to make good use of this, you will have squandered the whole arrangement of marvelous potential that Heaven bestowed.

23

In truth, Heaven has given your temple far too many opportunities. Regrettably, your hearts lack sincere and grateful acceptance. Toward the dozen-some long-standing cases of karmic grievance that came before you, you have harbored weariness and rejection, and so you have forfeited a deeper opportunity for cooperation with the spirits of the ten directions and the netherworld. Indirectly, this has caused the conditions for celestials of the atmospheric heavens to descend and manifest to stall or shift elsewhere. Your teacher says this not knowing whether the senior cultivators can accept it. Believing oneself free of clinging to appearances while in fact still clinging to appearances — that too is an obstacle.

24

Toward disciples who have already left the temple or withdrawn from Dao, your teacher cannot bear to abandon them or sever the bond. You, as fellow cultivators, how can you turn a deaf ear? All the more should you nourish a heart of prayer and blessing, hoping that Heaven shows compassion, wishing they may soon realize their error and find their way back. The more genuine

your intent, the more surely you can move them to awaken and return.

25

Do not cling to annual fortune-readings. Do not grow dejected at adverse currents in your circumstances. When you make great vows and establish great resolve, and your heart resonates with the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, a single thought can transcend three thousand worlds, going straight beyond the path of birth and death. Sentient beings of the ten directions are gathered into that resonance by the sincerity of a single thought — truly, what cause for rejoicing!

26

Do not over-emphasize how many prayer halls you have or how large the number of your Dao-kin, thereby breeding thoughts of rivalry and possessiveness. The slightest deviation gives rise to calculating, and one easily falls from Dao. Know this: Heaven's final evaluation of merit and assessment of results is based on moral character, precepts, thought-intention, vows carried into action, and spiritual refinement — these determine one's rise or fall, not externally acquired blessings or forms.

27

How many have already been swept, before their very eyes, into the trap of Dao-power, Dao-influence, and Dao-name without even knowing it — truly heartbreaking! If cultivators cling to these appearances to the very end without awakening, what more can be said? Your teacher and the Matriarch returned empty-handed in those days, leaving behind only the responsibility of the three realms and the earthly temple for you to carry on. Why then must you cling to "yours" and "mine" and fight over them?

28

Those who cultivated Dao before me and have passed on are the ancient sages. Those who entered the path before me are the senior cultivators. Those who walk the path alongside me are fellow cultivators. All are precious teachers and true friends — the great fortune of a thousand lifetimes. All deserve our respectful bows. Keep a humble heart at all times and learn Dao from them always.

29

Do not spend decades cultivating and serving Dao only for your wealth and fame to grow while your innate wisdom remains unmoved. That will forever be merely worldly blessing, nothing more. Beings of the Dharma-ending age must see through this clearly.

30

Throughout the entire process of cultivating Dao, employing and relinquishing, acting and withdrawing, must be held in balance with one another. With the outer king's achievements, pioneer the four directions — this is the visible work of Dao. With the inner sage's virtue, elevate heart and nature — this is the invisible work of Dao. Only by both can there be true accomplishment.

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