

Entries 51–60

51

If in ordinary times you do not read the written teachings of the sages, you cannot truly appreciate the aspirations and resolve of the sages. When danger and hardship come, how then will you calmly face the choice between life and death, between ascent and descent?

52

Your teacher's heart is weary — who can understand this? Who can share this burden? My hope is that you, advancing, can serve; retreating, can cultivate. Just as your teacher has said: In cultivating Dao, cultivate the heart. In serving Dao, give your whole heart. In refining yourself, save others. You must carry through from beginning to end.

53

One who cultivates Dao, before having completed the path, must never harbor greedy thoughts or vain imaginings, nor claim one's own merit and achievement. A single errant thought, and you fall into the snare of the demonic path.

54

Hold yourself to the strictest discipline, yet treat others with generosity and magnanimity. Always carry a heart of forgiveness, and forever keep open the road of return for Dao-kin who know remorse.

55

If you seek only liberation in this present life, then your bond with your teacher lasts merely this one lifetime. But if you arouse vast bodhi-minded compassion, broadly forming wholesome conditions to benefit all beings, then in the next cosmic era we will surely meet again — accompanying your teacher to transform the saḥā world, as friends life after life, age after age.

This is the undying heroic vow of compassion of all who cultivate Dao.

56

Cherish the thought-impulse of every minute, every second. Safeguard this one point of spiritual light within your life.

57

The heavenly timing is dire and urgent — all beings stand now amid great calamity. How can you not seize the time and pour yourselves fully into cultivation and service? Where is there leisure to judge others' strengths and shortcomings? How much time do you have to waste?

58

My disciples! The heavenly timing no longer permits you to be slack or delay. Strive with all your might for diligent progress, and do not betray the grace of the Buddhas who assist in your transformation — and who wait for you still.

59

If along the path of cultivation and service there were no ordeals, no interpersonal setbacks, how would you develop deep virtue and elevate your inner nature? I hope you comprehend this truth: do not breed resentment or create vexation amid adversity, for that only invites your own downfall.

60

Cherish every ordeal that can bring about your own perfection. Respect every being's viewpoint and criticism. Learn to accept the guidance and even the harsh reproach of others, receiving it all with a spirit of harmonious joy. Your teacher will bless you for this — for in doing so, you not only perfect your character but also create a peaceful and harmonious temple.

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