

# Chapter 17: Establishing Vows and Fulfilling Vows

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A vow is the original heart. Whenever conscience manifests, the earnest and aspiring heart that naturally arises from one's innate heavenly nature — that is a vow.

In our cultivation of Dao, regarding the matter of establishing vows, we are all quite clear. Once a great vow is established, it is immediately registered in the primordial realm, causing our ancestors in the spiritual realm to ascend on high and our karmic debts to retreat far away. The congratulations I just offered you carry precisely this meaning.

Since Heaven is so compassionate toward us, we should establish our vows and fulfill them, proceeding with solid action. Otherwise, when the appointed time of Heaven arrives, Heaven tests the genuine and verifies the real, and not only will we be unable to reach the realm of ultimate bliss — we will certainly drag our ancestors in the spiritual realm down into the sea of suffering along with us. Why is this? Only because, though Heaven is compassionate, it absolutely will not shelter and protect those who outwardly comply but inwardly defy, or who seem right but are not. Therefore, in the vow text established at the time of receiving Dao, it already tells us plainly: "If vows are established but not fulfilled, it is hard to return Home." Viewed from this, in our cultivation of Dao, on the topic of establishing vows and fulfilling them, we must regard it with the utmost seriousness and must not take it lightly.

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