

Chapter 20: True Dao, True Trials — There the True Heart Is Seen

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This is the final topic. Over these two days, the Dean has spoken with you on many subjects, recounting the ancient and deliberating on the present. All of it has been to illuminate the preciousness and sincerity of Dao, so that each of you may carry out your own practice and fulfill your own vows.

But on the path of advanced cultivation, karmic debts and trials and tests absolutely cannot be avoided. Whoever cultivates the true Dao must undergo heaven's true trials, for only through true trials can the true heart be seen. Moreover, those whom you have wronged over accumulated lifetimes, those to whom you owe debts — how could these not be repaid?

From this it is clear: within the true trials, heaven is secretly dissolving your sins and karmic debts. Therefore, when you encounter trials and tests, it is precisely heaven having compassion on you and bringing you to completion through hardship. You must understand this clearly. This topic may be called my parting word from the heart — so that you may hold a settled understanding, and never again be bound or constrained by trials and tests.

The Dean once more earnestly admonished the assembly, sincerely and ardently encouraging them, and bestowed the "Song of Remembering Mother and Striving Forward" (set to the tune *Falling Flowers and Flowing Water*) as a keepsake:

“ Good times flow ceaselessly, like water —
the Great Gathering is not far off,
and when dissolution comes, no one can remain.

The final catastrophe is upon us;
how pitiable that the ninety-six billion lost children
drift in the sea of karmic suffering.

Think of the Compassionate Mother who grieves for the world,
her boat upon the bitter sea,
rescuing all living beings —
evening after evening, morning after morning,
morning after morning, evening after evening,
always her heart grieves.

Her brows are furrowed,
her tears flow —
if the ninety-six billion cannot be saved,
how can the Gathering be called complete?

Brothers and sisters — awaken!
Follow our Mother and press forward!
Go everywhere, pioneering and planting seeds;
hurry and help our compassionate Mother —
Sisters! Brothers!
Remember my words!

The Holy Teacher said:

"When you understand principle, cultivating Dao comes easily." "When your understanding is correct, nothing can topple you."

On the road of cultivation and service, always preserve the luminous original heart of the newborn. Only then can wisdom arise unceasingly, ignorance be broken through, and no trial — however fierce — bring you down. When your understanding of the meaning of Dao is sufficiently clear and transparent, your foundation stands firm and your practice runs deep. Neither wind nor trials can shake the original heart, and only then can the temple's work endure for the long term.

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