



*From the book: The Teachings of Zen Master Man Gong
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CHAPTER 6

MONKS AND NUNS

1. Monastics exist before name and form appear, did you know that? They are the host for all beings, teaching even those in heaven.
2. Monastics, whose life it is to practice, must give up their families (parents, mates and children), all their possessions and even themselves.
3. Monastics should not let their lives be controlled by fate. They should not fear hell or have their happiness be dependent on others.
4. Monastic discipline means keeping your true nature pure as a white lotus, don't attach to worldly things.
5. The completion of even worldly study can take half a life-time, so how can we say it's boring to study for 10,000 years to find the way to infinite life.
6. Many feel the need for a worldly education, which isn't even concerned with the wheel of life and death; imagine how much more we need the lessons of Zen practice, which cut the hold of life and death forever and allow us to realize our true nature.
7. Worldly people adopt the dharma as a "doing", but monastics learn the dharma by "not doing."
8. Worldly people do everything with attachment, while monastics act through cutting attachment. Monastics should not even attach to Buddha or patriarchs.

9. The inheritance of worldly people is through blood lines, while the inheritance of monastics is through enlightened mind, which is the Dao. The biggest sin for a worldly person is to interrupt the inheritance from their ancestors. For monastics, who are the students of the Buddha, there is no greater sin than not inheriting the dharma.

10. In ancient times, older lay women who understood the dharma would often test monks. But these days, even monks who lead assemblies do not understand the Buddha dharma. This is truly a time of darkness! How will we ever escape?

11. The fortune and misfortune of mankind are the result of the ups and downs of buddhism.

12. World peace always goes together with the flourishing of buddhism.

13. The tattered clothes of practicing sunims are very precious, even the clothes of a king can not compare. The clothes of a king cover a lot of bad karma but a sunim's tattered clothes take away karma and allow wisdom to grow.

14. If a monastic still envies a lay person's wealth and fame or is lonely and still feels sorrow, this is truly shameful.

15. A monastic is a person who has attained becoming one with the whole universe.

16. Monastics should not use anything for themselves even if it is gained through their own effort, because everything they have is the property of the three jewels (buddha, dharma, and sangha.)

17. If you receive an offering as a monastic and use it without practicing, you are a swindler.

18. If you are a monastic and do not function correctly, then you sin against your family, country, and sangha.

19. If a person becomes a monastic when they are young—before their true nature is tainted—and they function correctly their whole life, then the virtue they create will cover both heaven and earth.

20. There are many monastics who waste lay people's offerings and don't practice sincerely. Because of this there are very few lay people these days to support monastic life. The effort that one makes for the Dao becomes the Dao, so you must practice bravely, even in very difficult situations.

21. The direction of your thoughts is determined only through practice. When you are able to choose the direction of your thoughts then you can take the correct path, and infinite life is guaranteed.

22. Worldly life allows for lapses of attention, but monastic life requires that practice be continuous, even in a dream. Even a small gap allows for all kinds of hindrances to appear.

23. Even a murderer of 10,000,000 people who repents, pays homage to the Buddha, and becomes a practicing monk, can take away the hatred of their victims and remove the bad karma they've created for infinite kalpas.

24. Because people attach to the false "I", everything they see, hear, and do becomes impermanent.

25. Sentient beings can not escape the samsara of the six realms controlled by time and space because they are attached to living only in time and space. ☸