



The Fool Guards the Door

One day, there was an elder who planned a journey. Before he left, he told his servant: “You must take care of the house, watch the door, my donkey, rope, etc. and don’t let someone steal them!” The servant replied, “No problem! I’ll look after them!”

After the elder left, the servant felt bored. All of a sudden there were sounds of beating gongs and drums

outside indicating that a show was about to start! While the servant excitedly rushed out to go outside, he recalled what the elder said: “You have to watch the door....” The servant worried about how he could fulfill the elder’s instructions and still see the show! “Ah! I will tear down the door and tie it onto the donkey with the rope! Then I won’t lose any of the things that the elder asked me to guard.” The servant then happily led the donkey, with the door tied to it, to watch the show.

After the servant left, a thief passed by the elder’s house and finding the doorway wide open, he ran into the house and stole almost everything.

When the elder returned from his journey and found the house empty, he was mad and asked the servant, “Where are all the things that were in my house?”. The servant said reasonably, “You asked me to guard the door, the donkey and the rope. You see, all of them are still here! You didn’t ask me to take care of other things, so how should I know why they’ve gone!”

The elder shouted angrily, “I told you to watch the door which means you need to look after everything in the house, the things I mentioned were examples! Now that I have lost all my treasures and furniture, what’s the use of the door?”

--paraphrasing from “Hundred Parables Sutra”

Reflections:

Sometimes, we are just like the servant and hold onto something inexplicably and not realize the true treasures that we should guard. As a cultivator, our true and pure mind which contains myriad treasured virtues is what we should protect. We should keep our awareness and be consistently kind to others rather than focus on what we desire. If we only hold onto our desires and act without wisdom, we are in danger of losing much more.