

Determine If Your Views Are Correct

Excerpt from the Classical Buddhist Chinese Class and lecture series given on the *Records of the Chan Patriarchs*(歷代祖師傳) at Gold Mountain Monastery, San Francisco, by the Venerable Master Hsuan Hua.

When you seek for the Way(道 *Dau*), you should also seek for certification¹. You should go to wherever there are good and wise teachers, and seek certification from them. When the virtuous monks of old visited and studied under good teachers they sought for certification from them to determine if their views were correct.

Nowadays people who draw near to good and wise teachers do so out of greed. They don't seek for certification; rather they want "certification of their seeking." That is they want to get something. They don't want to give anything to their teacher; rather, they want the teacher to give them Dharma treasures. That's how it is to-day.

Let's not talk about anybody else; just take for example people who come to the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas. They all come to the City to get spiritual penetrations, or to be number one, or to get Dharma treasures, or to get wisdom. They all want to get something. No one wishes to merely cultivate and offer up his own wisdom and ability in order to contribute to Buddhism.

If the causes are not proper,
Then the results will be crooked.

On the level of causes they are greedy. They come to the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas out of greed. They are greedy for the City's wealth or for its spiritual penetrations. Or they are greedy for efficacious responses at the City. Those with diseases come to give their diseases to the City and take back healthy bodies. They're not interested in benefitting the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas; rather, they want the City to benefit them.

Yesterday, one of my left-home disciples suddenly realized this. He told me, "For so many years I've been seeking outside of myself, always trying to get something. Only today do I understand that inside one shouldn't contend, be greedy, seek for anything, or want self advantage. That's truly the inexhaustibly, wondrous Dharma."

1. (求印證) certification literally means "to seek for certification." It's a term unique to the Buddhist tradition, particularly the Chan School of Buddhism. When a student practices and studies the Dharma and gains some understanding, he has to have his understanding "certified" by a genuine teacher to insure that it is correct.

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