

CHAN TALKS

XVI. The Gate To Wisdom

by the Venerable Chan Master Hua

The whole purpose of sitting in Chan is to open wisdom. From beginningless time until now, because we have not known to sit in Chan and not known how to cultivate wisdom, we have grown more and more stupid every day, and we have accumulated more and more polluted thoughts. The purpose of investigating Chan is to obtain enlightenment. But "enlightenment" has no shape or color; it's not something that you can reckon or try to fathom with your ordinary human intellect. What's meant by enlightenment anyway? It means understanding how you were born and how you will die. You should understand where you came from, and where you will go at death. Having understood that, you will smash through your ignorance. Having smashed through your ignorance, you will no longer have afflictions. Without afflictions, you won't have any polluted or errant thoughts. Once those errant thoughts die down, your deviant thoughts will also lessen. With not so many deviant thoughts cluttering your mind, your proper thoughts will appear, and your wisdom will increase day-by-day. This is like the grass in springtime. Although you don't see it grow, it keeps getting taller and taller every day. Wisdom develops in the same way. Once you have proper mindfulness and lessen your deviant thoughts, your wisdom will grow. Can you see your wisdom? No, it can't be seen because wisdom is a very sacred and spiritual thing. However, you can detect whether or not you have wisdom. If you continue to do stupid and upside-down things the way you used to, then you still don't have wisdom. But if you can refrain from your former stupid and upside-down ways, then you can be said to have acquired some wisdom.

Wisdom is returning to the source and going back to the origin. It is opening up your inherent wisdom-mine. Once this mine is developed, you will truly understand. When true understanding reaches an extreme point, one becomes a Buddha. A Buddha is really not that different from a common person. The only difference lies in the fact that a Buddha has wisdom. Those of us who believe in the Buddha do not have to seek spiritual powers or wonderful functioning, such as the three bodies, the four wisdoms, the five eyes, and the six spiritual penetrations. All we have to do is to believe in the Buddha's wisdom. It is the wisdom that we all have within ourselves. It's not an exclusive possession of the Buddha. It's a potential that everyone has. The Buddha simply pointed out the road for us, and if we can follow that road, we too, can open up our original wisdom mine.

The scientists, physicists, chemists, philosophers of our times are all running outside for answers. In actuality, everything we need is contained within our own nature. In investigating Chan, we open up our own chemical laboratory and carry on all kinds of chemical experiments. Investigating Chan is a chemical process. In fact, it is the mother of science and the mother of philosophy, and is able to help you develop great wisdom. Once you develop great wisdom, all problems will solve themselves. People who

investigate Chan can open up their great, perfect, mirrorlike wisdom; their equal wisdom; their wonderful contemplative wisdom; and the wisdom that accomplishes that which needs to be done. Once you are replete with those four kinds of wisdom, then the five eyes and six spiritual penetrations will come to you quite spontaneously, without your asking. Therefore, it's not necessary for you to run outside for spiritual powers; everything is already contained within your own nature.

However, you have to have patience. Day and night you should be focused on your work. In the morning you should find time to sit, and in the evening sit again before you sleep. That way you can lessen your desires and purify your thoughts. In essence, you are carrying out all kinds of experiments in your own chemical lab. Whatever kind of ingredient you put in, you will obtain a corresponding result. Therefore, it is important that you bring forth proper thoughts when you sit. Be focused in every thought. And then your wisdom will grow like the grass in springtime. Invisibly it will increase and get higher and higher each day. If on the other hand, you don't investigate Chan and you don't cultivate, then your wisdom will be like a polishing a stone. Without your being aware of it, the stone daily diminishes. This refers to when you keep on doing upside-down things and abuse your precious energy and resources. The body will weaken from dissipation and when it becomes weak to the extreme point, it will die. However, if you are able to cherish your primal energies and not abuse your body, if you are able to maintain good physical health, then your wisdom will increase day-by-day.