

# CHAN TALKS

## *Be Vigorous, Whether Faced with Pleasant or Adverse Situations*

Some people come here to sit in Chan, and as the weeks pass, they feel they have made progress. Their bodies have gotten healthier, they feel spirited and happy; their afflictions daily decrease, while their wisdom daily increases. They are no longer worried, upset or hateful. And these are signs of gaining skill in meditation.

However, there are others who come to sit in Chan, who feel restless and agitated, their wild thoughts flying everywhere. The more they sit, the more listless they become. They can't bear to sit down. Originally they had no afflictions, but sitting there they start to worry. Some people start to entertain thoughts of money when they sit; others think desirous thoughts. Still others think, "This is not as much fun as eating out at a restaurant." Still some others think, "It would be much more comfortable if I stayed at home and slept in..."

And so there are those two kinds of people. The first kind are discovering their good roots. They want to build a solid foundation in Buddhism and to cultivate. If they can put down the ten thousand conditions bit by bit, their good roots will ripen, and eventually they will become a Buddha. As for the other kind—their karmic obstacles are too heavy. As the saying goes,

"If you wish to be good, your former karmic  
obstacles look you up.  
If you wish to become a Buddha, you have  
to undergo the demons."

Demons come to polish your nature, to refine you. They test you to see how solid your resolve is, whether or not you really want to sit in Chan. Face to face with a test, don't be turned by the situation: You should be vigorous whether you meet a pleasant or adverse situation. Faced with a pleasant situation, you want to push forward and make progress. Faced with an adverse situation, you still want to go forward. Since you know that sitting in Chan has many good benefits, then even if your false thoughts arrive, and you find it very hard to sit, still you should be patient and continue to sit. That way you will make progress in your skill. Bring forth the great Bodhi resolve, and in the future you will most certainly become a Buddha.

Moreover, you should rely on three things to overcome all difficulties.

1) Resoluteness: Your resolve should be firm. Be unwavering and keep on working hard no matter what test arrives.

2) Sincerity: Be earnest and intent to the utmost in doing your work. Do not entertain phony thoughts.

3) Perseverance: Be unchanging and constant. If you start out with doing something, make sure that you pursue it to the very end. Since you have begun to sit, you should keep on sitting until you come to some success. Then you will experience a breakthrough, and reach a penetrating understanding. Only then can you end birth and death, and arrive at the Buddha's position of Bodhi.

Don't forget those three conditions. Don't forget to remain vigorous when faced with either pleasant or adverse situations. Those are your provisions for your journey to the Buddha's land. With them you will most certainly arrive at your destination.