

Class 5: 10/16/07

Five Poisons

Buddha said "The cause of human suffering is five poisons --- craving, anger, attachment, arrogance and suspicion (CAAAS)." These five poisons can be reduced and eventually eliminated through the purification of body and mind in Zen meditation.

Cultivate Inner Buddha Nature

Everyone has the same wisdom, the innate wisdom. The main purpose of practicing Chan or Buddhism is to discover and witness this hidden wisdom.

Many Buddhist practitioners do not have a clear goal in their practices. Some mistake chanting as the sole practice, hoping to be ferried to Buddhahood by Bodhisattva when they die. Others practice for their career and wealth, hoping for a more successful career and bigger wealth. No matter what the goal would be, an undisputed fact is that we will all age and deteriorate. Our energy will dwindle, and eventually to the degree that it can not sustain the life.

Then, what is the value of a person's life? Our title and fame and possessions seem to define our life. In fact, besides just living a good life and having a successful career, we should also invest time to do things most people ignore to do. Like what? Like witness one's true self, or Buddha nature within ourselves through Chan meditation practice.

Once you witnessed your true nature, you will realize that we are all a family. The life force and wisdom within each of us came from the same origin.

Our mother earth is just a planet among other millions of millions of planets in the universe. But the earth is connected with other planets in some subtle ways. For instance, the earth, sun, and moon are all part of the solar system and the interactions in between directly influence our moods -- even consciousness. When the sun, moon, and earth are in alignment -- inducing the strongest influence -- people tend to be more emotional and impulsive during this time. Patients of psychological disorders tend to have a relapse, especially on the 15th of the lunar month. Nature also has its cyclical phenomenon, such as the ebb and flow of the tides of the ocean. Chan practitioners should contemplate on this as there is immense wisdom in nature.

Life is created by dual energies, such as *yin* and *yang*. For example, all creatures in the animal kingdom have male and female. Even the earth is no exception, as its existence depends on the sun (*yang*) and the moon (*yin*).