

Words of Wisdom from the Grand Master Wei Chueh

Pear Blossoms

By Chan Master Wei Chueh at Deji Solitary Abode in 1992

Realization of Impermanence

Pear tree blossoms paint the pear tree white,
The blossoms fill the garden white as snow.
Snowflake petals fall to the ground,
Now the whole garden is green once more.

Realization of Emptiness

Pear tree blossoms paint the pear tree white,
The blossoms fill the garden white as snow.
Snowflake petals fall to the ground,
Now the whole garden is green once more.
The myriad things in nature all will perish,
Only the true emptiness does not cease.

Realization of the Disparate Middle Truth

Pear tree blossoms paint the pear tree white,
The blossoms fill the garden white as snow.
Snowflake petals fall to the ground,
Now the whole garden is green once more.

Green and white are only relative,
Avoid all dualities to transcend birth and death.

Realization of the Middle Way Reality

Pear tree blossoms paint the pear tree white,
The blossoms fill the garden white as snow.
Snowflake petals fall to the ground,
Now the whole garden is green once more.
Green and white both reveal the true nature,
Spring breezes fill the garden with Chan joy.

Sweet Dew of the Dharma _____

To attain true happiness, we must begin by transforming the mind's afflictions.

When the mind is peaceful and serene, even with low-grade tea and plain food, our lives will be happy and carefree.

Wherever you are, that is where the mind should be. Always be mindful, and be your own master. This is true freedom.

The sutra says, "If we practice without giving rise to the bodhi mind, it is like farming without planting seeds." All buddhas and bodhisattvas have great compassion as the foundation. Great compassion gives rise to the bodhi mind, and the bodhi mind gives rise to ultimate enlightenment. Therefore, in our cultivation, we must first develop a mind of compassion.

All sentient beings have the Buddha nature within. Therefore, we should

respect the lives of all sentient beings besides cherishing our own lives.

Vegetarianism is the sign of a compassionate mind. When we are filled with compassion, blessings and merits will increase and good health will come naturally.

Compassion is a good medicine to cure anger. If your mind is all-embracing and compassionate, then everyone will enjoy being with you.

Having good thoughts is heaven. When the mind is lucid and pure, this is the Pure Land.

To extinguish the afflictions in our mind is enlightenment.

The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch says, “Let not a single thought arise.” Let this present mind think neither of good nor of evil, so that it is like a clear mirror, whose merit lies in reflecting myriad things faithfully. When an object appears, an image is manifested; when the object is gone, nothing remains. When we realize this fact, our mind is clear and luminous; no matter where we go, we can be at ease and free.

We have a wordless sutra within our mind. By upholding and reciting the physical sutra with words, we evoke the sutra of our inherent nature, uncover our own inherent treasure, and truly attain an unwavering faith in the Buddha Dharma.

In cultivating the Way, we should not seek and grasp externally; instead, we should probe within to see whether our mind has given rise to afflictions. We should constantly cultivate a compassionate mind, be lenient toward others yet be self-disciplined, and frequently reflect upon and examine ourselves.

The Confucian sage Mencius said, “Those who love others will be loved by others; those who respect others will be respected by others.” This is the Principle of Causality in Buddhism. If we are courteous and respectful toward others, others will treat us in the same way.

Buddhism teaches us to transform our thoughts. Always be mindful of the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha. Use good thoughts to counteract bad thoughts. When all bad thoughts are extinguished, one then lets go of even the good thoughts, thereby arriving at “no thought,” which is the realm of absolute reality.

The aim of practicing Buddhism is to free the mind from the influence of external circumstances and maintain peace and serenity within.

When you succeed, do not be conceited; when you fail, review and reflect. This way, you will accomplish your goals.

To be liberated is not to escape from difficulties but to use the power of wisdom and samadhi to eliminate the present obstacles. That is liberation.

He who is content is always happy. By attributing what is good to others and taking responsibility for what is bad, we put the Chan/Zen practice into our lives.

The bad things that we face may not be bad. If we face all things calmly, we can control our fate.

Prosperity and adversity are both expedient means that facilitate our cultivation. Prosperity fulfills us; adversity disciplines us.

To affirm the truth of causality, work hard on the cause, and life will be filled

with hope and light.

To practice Buddhism is to learn from the Buddha, to emulate his purity of body, speech, and mind. When we have achieved the highest and the most perfect standard in our cultivation, we will attain the Buddha's compassion, wisdom, and samadhi.

When we realize our original mind and nature through the Zen practice, our existence will be replete with infinite life, brightness, and wisdom, and we can transcend impermanence and the cycle of birth and death.

“Without understanding of the original mind, it is futile to study the Dharma.” Hence, the Buddhist practice does not merely consist of the recitation of the sutras (scriptures), or making prostrations to the Buddha. The true merit of practicing the Way comes from the awareness of our own mind and the discernment of our self nature. Yet, if one has already attained understanding of the original mind, one should not neglect the practice of virtuous acts either.

“With a mind at peace, the thatched hut is safe. With a serene nature, the vegetable roots are fragrant.” If you can harness your ever-clinging mind, abide in the original mind, the original nature, then your mind will naturally be peaceful and serene.

“The bodhisattvas dread the cause. Mundane beings dread the retribution.” We should be true and down to earth in all our undertakings. Ask only how much we cultivate, not how much we shall harvest. Work diligently on the right causes, and then you will surely succeed. Conversely, success is unlikely if you aim too high but overlook the groundwork.

The Principle of Causality (cause and effect) in Buddhism actually teaches us to

depend on our own diligent efforts. If we understand our life then we can direct our life. If you can perceive these truths clearly, then you can understand your fate and create/establish your fate.

The problems in the world are no other than suffering and joy. Suffering and joy are opposed and relative. Joy from stimulation of the senses is like clouds or smoke passing before our eyes; it is short-lived and empty. After experiencing joy, unending attachments and afflictions follow. Only when we pacify the mind, when the mind is pure and serene, do we experience true joy.

In Buddhism we say, “Affliction is Bodhi (enlightenment).” This means that when we encounter afflictions (distressful circumstances), we must use wisdom to perceive and understand them clearly, turning the afflictive outlook into joy, freedom, and tranquility. “Affliction” and “joy” are, in reality, within one single thought.

We should pursue a spiritual life. A mind of contentment and tranquility is the true blessing, prosperity, and happiness in life.

“**A** dharma does not arise by itself, it is born out of the right conditions.” All worldly phenomena arise from the combination of causes and conditions. Virtuous causes and conditions result in good retribution. Malevolent causes and conditions lead to dire retribution.

“**E**nlighten the mind and see the true nature; seeing the true nature one becomes a Buddha.” This is equivalent to the “Amitabha Buddha” of the Pure Land School, which means infinite light and infinite life. Realizing this present-mind, one enjoys the same longevity as that of empty space. The empty space never perishes; neither will this mind, which is replete with infinite life, light, and wisdom.

Practicing “unconditioned compassion” is to treat all people, whether related or unrelated to you, with the same compassionate mind.

Purity of mind is to be away from the mind of delusion. The Diamond Sutra says, “the mind moves freely without attachment” That is the mind of purity.

With respect, we eradicate arrogance; with compassion, we extinguish anger; with harmony we eliminate violence; with truth and sincerity, we eradicate deceit.

To be liberated is not escaping reality. It is eliminating afflictions, eradicating erroneous thoughts, and opening the knot in our minds. When the mind is opened to true understanding, that is liberation. To face sufferings without worry, and happiness without rejoicing, this present-mind is a liberated mind, it is already in the Pure Land.

What is attachment? Not letting go of outward circumstances, of gain and loss, of right and wrong, of self and others, this is attachment.

If we are content, our minds will be at peace, we will see our blessings, be filled with gratitude and a willingness to help all, and our lives will be filled with hope and happiness.

The riches and honor in this life are fleeting, like the dew on the flower, evaporating when the sun rises. Only when the mind becomes truly pure and content is it the true prosperity in life.

Tolerance is an expedient means in cultivating samadhi. If we are tolerant and patient we will surely achieve samadhi.

Praise others frequently and slander no one. When our speech is pure and

faultless, then we achieve freedom in verbal karma. (e.g. abilities in speech and debate, free from verbal handicaps.)

If we care for others with a mind of compassion, equality, and respect, we will generate good karma with everyone.

“**When** the mind is pure, the Buddha Land is pure.” When this mind is lucid and pure, then everywhere is the Pure Land.

By using respect to overcome pride, we can eliminate karmic obstacles, and increase our merits and wisdom.

Be humble and harmonious in all circumstances; this can eliminate violence and conflicts. Be congenial and pleasant with others and you will achieve harmony and accomplish all things.

If we are truthful and sincere with others, we can maintain true friendships. If we are truthful in our endeavors, we can accomplish all things.

If you cannot assume responsibility for your own cultivation or endure its trials and hardships, then you are at best studying Buddhism, not practicing it.

People have afflictions because they not capable of being content. If we always harbor a “grateful mind”, dealing with people and things around us with a mind of gratitude, we will always feel happy and content.

When we see through the gains and losses in this world clearly, our mind will be peaceful and serene.

Blessings are the accumulated result of good deeds. Broadly cultivate blessings and wisdom, and we can enjoy a bright and meaningful life.