

Chan Talks

by Tripitaka Master Hua

Put an End to the Mind, Intellect, and Consciousness

Dharma wealth is lost,
And merit and virtue destroyed,
Due to nothing other than the mind, intellect, and consciousness.
Through the door of dhyana, the mind is ended,
And one suddenly enters the powerful knowledge and insight of the
unproduced.

The Song of Enlightenment
by Great Master Yung Jya

Cultivators of the Way cannot afford to lose their Dharma wealth or destroy their merit and virtue. If Dharma wealth is lost, they won't have any wealth or blessings to speak of. If merit and virtue are destroyed, then these cultivators sever their own good roots. Instead, they should daily deepen their own Dharma wealth and daily increase their merit and virtue. Then their cultivation will bring about some response.

Why is Dharma wealth lost, and why is merit and virtue destroyed? For no other reason than this: you are constantly using your mind, intellect, and consciousness. You use your mind to calculate, your intellect to guess and speculate, and your consciousness to make discriminations. You are incredibly busy calculating, speculating, and discriminating non-stop. Since you put your efforts exclusively into using your mind, intellect, and consciousness, you end up losing your Dharma wealth and destroying your merit and virtue.

Investigating Chan is called "stilling one's thoughts." It means training your thoughts not to move, but to be quiet and still instead. The door of Dhyana is a dharma that aspires to the highest, a dharma that penetrates the true mind directly. You separate from the activities of your mind, intellect, and consciousness in your cultivation of Chan. For this reason, the verse says, "the mind is ended." The "mind" here also includes the intellect and consciousness. You have to put a complete stop to the activity of those false states of mind. Only then can you be considered to have stilled your thoughts. If you manage to still your thoughts, then you will "suddenly enter the powerful knowledge and insight of the unproduced." You will obtain the patience with the non-production of dharmas and be certified to the four stages of warmth, summit, patience, and foremost in the world.

1. Warmth: This is the stage where you start to generate some warmth from your investigation of Chan.
2. Summit: Your skill has reached the highest level, the summit.
3. Patience: This state is very hard to bear. Nonetheless, you are able to endure it.
4. Foremost in the world: In the world and outside of the world, you become number one, a great hero.

If you wish to realize these four positions, the very first thing you have to learn is how to still your thoughts. This means not being turned by your mind, intellect, or consciousness. Our thoughts are like waves in the ocean; they come up one after another and never stop. Now you are able to stop them --

you still your thoughts. When stillness reaches the extreme point, you bring forth wisdom. Once wisdom is produced, there is penetrating light. For this reason we say, "When stillness reaches the extreme point, the light breaks through.". This is also the meaning of the line, "One suddenly enters the powerful knowledge and insight of the unproduced."

If you are able to put an end to the activity of your mind, intellect, and consciousness, you will open up great wisdom. Therefore, cultivators of the Way need not look for the esoteric or pursue spiritual powers. Once the stillness of your mind reaches the ultimate point, you will naturally produce great wisdom. And then you will be able to slice right through any problem that comes your way. When you have wisdom, you will no longer be upside down. This is the first step in sitting in Chan. Therefore, when you sit in Chan, be sure not to engage in false thinking. Seek to still your thoughts and bring them to a complete stop.