



上宣下化老和尚開示

# 初步參禪的方法(一)

## DHARMA TALKS BY THE VENERABLE MASTER HUA BASIC METHODS OF INVESTIGATING CHAN (I)

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參禪這個法門，要有相當的工夫，不是一鍬就可以挖個井，也不是一步就到西方極樂世界，也不是修行一分鐘就成佛果，這是要參的。現在所講的初步用功的方法很淺顯，對初學的人不能說的太深。誰要能依照這個方法來修行，都會得到你所應該得到的好處。善知識只能告訴你怎麼樣用功修行，怎麼樣打坐；雖然指示你這條路，可是這條路要你自己去修行，要你自己去走，你自己不走，那還是沒有用的。

### 第一單元——參禪參什麼？

#### 參破話頭露端倪 打碎黑桶現本源

「禪」梵語叫禪那，中文叫靜慮，靜就是清靜，慮就是思慮；你動念多是妄念，不動就是真念、是正念。把你的思慮都靜下來，不動那麼多，沒有妄想，這叫靜慮，又叫思惟修。有人說：「靜慮連『想』都沒有了，怎麼還有『思』呢？」這個「思惟」是似有似無，並不一定有，也不一定沒有，就是什麼呢？就是參禪的「參」字，參什麼呢？就參這個思惟修。

#### (1) ——認識本來的面目

打佛七念「南無阿彌陀佛，南無阿彌陀佛……」天天這麼念，究竟是誰念的呢？有人說：「是我念的！」我又是誰呢？這個臭皮囊

The Dharma door of investigating Chan requires some skill. It takes effort to investigate. One cannot expect to have a well after digging a single shovelful of dirt. One is not able to reach the Western Pure Land with one single step. Nor can one attain Buddhahood within one minute of cultivation. The methods and skills that I am presenting now for investigating Chan are quite elementary, as we should not introduce them in depth to beginners. You will gain some benefit if you can practice according to these methods. A good knowing advisor can only tell you how to apply effort in cultivation and meditation. You must cultivate and walk this road yourself. It is useless if you don't walk it yourself.

### Section 1 — What are we investigating in Chan?

Penetrate the meditation topic and reveal the sign  
Smash the black pail and reveal the original source

'Chan' is derived from the Sanskrit word *dhyana*. It means "stilling thought" in Chinese. To be still is to be serene. If your mind is busy and active, it is false thinking. The mind that does not move is the true mind, the proper mind. Calming your thoughts and reducing the activity and false thinking is called 'stilling thought' and 'thought cultivation.' Someone may say, "If thoughts are stilled until they are no more, then how can thought be cultivated?" Actually, you could say that this kind of thought seems to exist and yet doesn't. It does not necessarily exist or not exist. Then what is it? It refers to investigating Chan. And what are we investigating? We investigate thought cultivation.

#### 1. Recognizing our original face

When we participate in the Buddha recitation session, everyday we recite, "Namo Amitabha Buddha, Namo Amitabha Buddha ..."



如果真是我，它死了之後，怎麼就會壞了呢？如果真是我，我應該做得了主；可惜我做不得主，它不聽自己的招呼，到時候又老又病，死了之後什麼都沒有。有人說：「什麼都沒有了，那念佛又有什麼用呢？這不是自己欺騙自己嗎？」不是的，這其中一定有支配臭皮囊的，這個「念佛是誰」我們要把它找出來，要研究明白了它。

你要能返本還原，迴光返照，認識本來的面目，你才知道「未生以前誰是我？生我之後我是誰？長大成人執著我，轉眼朦朧又是誰？」你要研究這個問題，不是我們一天到晚糊塗吃、糊塗穿、臨死了還鑽到糊塗棺材裏去，這個人生就沒有什麼價值，我們對這點要特別注意。

## (2) ——先打佛七再參禪

佛教傳到中國有禪教律密淨五宗，禪就是參禪的禪宗，律就是持戒律的律宗，教就是講經說法的教宗，密就是專門修念咒的密宗，淨就是淨土宗。我們先打一個念佛七，這是淨土宗；打完了念佛七，大家又來參禪，這是禪宗。為什麼先打佛七後打禪七呢？因為先念佛，然後大家就找「念佛是誰」的話頭。本來話頭也有很多，不過近代多數都是用「念佛是誰」來參禪。禪，梵語叫禪那，中國人只說一個「禪」字；傳到日本，就念成日本音Zen，因為讀音不正確和中國不同，現代人就以為日本Zen是很特別的。

## (3) ——什麼是參話頭？

你參話頭，要參話頭，不要參話尾。「話頭」是在言語還沒有說出來的時候，就是話語之頭。你參話頭要參這個，這時有一個思慮沒有呢？沒有，只是一個參。「參」就像什麼呢？就像用一個錐子鑽窟窿一樣，又好像鑿井。用錐子鑽地，把本來沒有窟窿的地硬鑽、鑽，鑽出個窟窿來，鑽窟窿的錐子就是「參」；這個參是無形的，你鑿井鑽窟窿是有形的，用有形來譬喻這無形的，你就容易明白什麼是「參」。參就是硬往裏頭鑽

Ultimately who is reciting the Buddha's name? Someone might say, "It is me!" Then who is 'me'? If this stinking skin bag of a body is really 'me', why does it decay when it dies? If it is truly 'me', then I should be my own master. However, I cannot be my own master. My body does not follow my instructions. When you are old and sick, there is nothing left when it dies. Someone may say, "If there is nothing left, then what is the purpose of reciting the Buddha's name? Aren't we cheating ourselves?" No. In fact, there must be something that controls this stinking skin bag. We should use the Chan topic, "Who is mindful of the Buddha?" to find out and thoroughly understand 'who' is the one that is controlling us. If you can return the light, illumine within and recognize your original face, then you will know, "Who was I before I was born? Who am I after I'm born? When I grow up I become attached to this 'self', but in the twinkling of an eye I get confused, and who am I then?" You should investigate these questions. Everyday we eat in confusion and wear clothes in confusion, and at death we enter the coffin of confusion. Such a life is worthless. We should pay special attention to this.

## 2. Attend the Buddha recitation session first and then investigate Chan

There are five main types of practices: Chan, Teachings, Vinaya, Esoteric, and Pure Land. The Chan Practice focuses on investigating the Chan topic, and the Vinaya Practice emphasizes observance of the precepts. The Teaching Practice is based on studying sutras and speaking the Dharma. The Esoteric Practice specializes in the recitation of mantras. And then there is the Pure Land Practice. Our Buddha recitation session is considered as Pure Land Practice, and later we shall investigate Chan. Why do first hold the Buddha recitation session and then investigate Chan? It is because we should find the answer to the topic, "Who is mindful of the Buddha?" Actually, there are many meditation topics. However, in recent years, most people just investigate this topic, "Who is mindful of the Buddha." 'Chan' in Sanskrit is called 'Dhyana'. The Chinese just use the word 'Chan', and after it was brought to Japan, the Japanese called it 'Zen'. Due to the difference in pronunciation, most people today think that the Japanese 'Zen' is very special.

## 3. What does it mean to investigate the Chan topic?

When you investigate a Chan topic or "word head," you should investigate the beginning of the phrase, not the tail end. The "word head" is what comes before language is spoken. There is no thought process involved, but merely investigation. What can



，鑽不進去還要鑽，什麼時候鑽透了，那就是「破本參」了。

#### (4) ——有很多話頭可以參

有很多話頭可以參，日本人參「無」，他說無，無？，像中國人參「念佛是誰」，他念「無」。在中國參「念佛是誰」參「誰」，有的參「父母未生以前的本來面目」在父母沒有生我以前，我的本來面目是什麼樣子；有的又參「如何是沒有了的？」有種種話頭，看你歡喜參哪一個就參哪一個。久坐就有禪，久住就有緣，你要有一種忍耐心，不要躁進，什麼叫躁進呢？就想貪圖快，愈快愈好。我們修道要認真拿出工夫來，拿出時間來，是一點一點成就的，一天一天成就的，不是立刻就能成就，所以要繼續努力。腿痛要能忍得住，我們要了生死脫輪迴，不是一件小事，所以要拿出真正的忍耐心。

#### (5) ——一個不能沒有的東西

日本人參「無」，我現在教你們也可以參「有」，因為無有定法。像參「念佛是誰」這是很不容易找的，有的人找了幾年也找不著這個誰；有的參「父母沒生以前的本來面目」也找不到，日本人參無、無、無？，還是沒找著。我現在教你們參「有」，不是念「有！有！有！」這要怎麼樣呢？世間一切都可以沒有，到底有沒有一個「不能沒有」的東西呢？你找這個。什麼都沒有了，究竟哪一個是有的呢？找那個「有」的。一切都能了、都可以斷滅，那什麼是不斷滅的呢？你找那個不斷滅的。你要找著那個不斷滅的，你就開悟了；你要找著那個不能沒有的，也是開悟了；你要找著你父母未生以前的本來面目，那也是開悟了；你找著念佛是誰，也是開悟了，但是要找著才算。你找不著就會口頭禪，那是沒有用的；人家說過的，你再跟著說，那都不是你的。

#### (6) ——要你自己去找

investigation be compared to? It is like using a drill bit to drill a hole, or like excavating a well. Using a drill bit to make a well or to make a hole in a surface is analogous to investigating. However, drilling a well is tangible, whereas investigating is intangible. This comparison makes it easier for you to grasp the meaning. You must keep on drilling until you have broken through. Drilling through is known as “penetrating the fundamental investigation.”

#### 4. There are many Chan topics that can be investigated

There are many Chan topics that can be investigated. The Japanese investigate nonexistence. They look into that idea. The Chinese investigate, “Who is mindful of the Buddha?” Some people investigate, “What was my original face before my parents gave birth to me?” or “What is nothingness like?” You can use whichever topic you prefer. There is a saying: “Sitting for a long time, one attains Chan. Staying in the same place long enough, one develops affinities. You must be patient and not be edgy or impatient, overcome by greed for quick results. We should dedicate our time and effort, progressing bit by bit each day in our cultivation. Do not expect to succeed instantly. You must continue to put in effort and endure pain in the legs. To end the cycle of birth and death is not a small matter. You must have genuine patience.

#### 5. Something that does not cease to exist

The Japanese investigate ‘nonexistence’. I’ll teach you to investigate ‘existence’. There is no fixed dharma. It is not easy to answer the topic, “Who is mindful of the Buddha?” There are people who investigate this topic but cannot find the answer for years. And those who investigate, “What was my original face before my parents gave birth to me?” are not always successful. The Japanese who investigate “nonexistence, nonexistence, nonexistence” are not always successful either. I will teach you now to investigate ‘existence’. This does not just mean repeating, “Existence! Existence! Existence!” Then what should you do? Everything in this world can cease to exist. Is there something that cannot cease? You should investigate this. When everything else is gone, what ultimately is left? Look for that which still exists. Everything can end or be annihilated. Then what cannot be annihilated? You will be enlightened when you find this one ‘thing’ that cannot be annihilated. You will also be enlightened if you can find that something that does not cease, or the original face before your parents gave birth to you, or who is mindful of the Buddha. But it must be a genuine attainment. Some people fake a breakthrough and simply talk intellectual Chan. That is useless. You cannot use what people have used before. It is not your own.



參話頭有的只參「無」，我又叫你們參「有」，可是你也不要參「無」，也不要參「有」。「那我究竟怎麼辦呢？」你不要著急，一定有辦法的。在外道的經典上一開始是用「啊」「嚶」兩個字，他們說一切不是有就是無，不是無就是有，「啊」就是無，「嚶」就是有。我們不可以參「啊」，也不可以參「嚶」，那參什麼呢？我們參「非無非有」，也不無也不有。什麼是不無？什麼是不有？非空非色，非無非有，非是非非，非垢非淨，非去非來。這個「非」當「不」講，「無」就是個真空，「有」就是個妙有。真空不空，妙有非有。真空不空，所以才有妙有；妙有不有，所以又是真空。真空和妙有，二而不二。真空妙有是有形相的，你要找出那個無形相的；凡所有相皆是虛妄，能夠說出來的都是假的，所以六祖大師說「密在汝邊，與汝說者即非密也」現在我講的這不是祕密，是顯宗的教理，你的祕密還要你自己去找。

☞待續

## 6. You must find it yourself

Some investigate the topic of 'nonexistence,' and I tell you to investigate 'existence.' However, you want to investigate neither of them. What should you investigate then? There must be a solution. The texts of the externalists start with the syllable E or O. They say that all phenomena are either existent or nonexistent. E means 'nonexistence' and O is 'existence'. We do not investigate E or O. We shall investigate 'neither nonexistence nor existence'. What is not nonexistence? What is not existence? It is neither emptiness nor form, neither nonexistence nor existence, neither defiled nor pure, neither going nor coming. Nonexistence refers to true emptiness. Existence refers to wonderful existence. True emptiness is not empty, and wonderful existence does not exist. When true emptiness is not empty, then there is wonderful existence; when wonderful existence does not exist, then there is true emptiness. True emptiness and wonderful existence are two and yet not two. True emptiness and wonderful existence have form. You must locate that which is formless. Anything with form is said to be unreal. That which can be expressed in words is all false. That is why the Sixth Patriarch says, "The secret lies within yourself; what has been spoken to you is not secret." What I am telling you is not something secret. It is the teaching of the non-secret schools. You have to find the secret yourself.

☞To be continued

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在這糊塗時好像做夢似的，所以古人又說：「富貴是五更春夢」，不要那麼認真，我一定要發財，我一定要當官，你發財要能不死，那你就發了；你當官，閻羅王請客的時候，你要能說了算，也有辦法，可是我相信你都做不了主，所以說「富貴五更春夢」，就像五更--早晨的時候，做一場好夢一樣。在夢裏有人告訴你：「先生你現在是做夢呢！」這個做夢的人說：「你看我現在發這麼大的財，當這麼大的官，我哪是做夢呢？」等他一早醒了起來，不用有人告訴他，他自己也知道了，「哦！我昨天晚間做一個發財的夢，做了一個當官的夢，原來不是真的！」不用告訴他，他也知道了。

☞待續

(Continued from page 23)

The confused life you live is as if a dream. That's why the ancients said, "Wealth and status are early morning dreams in the spring." Don't take them so seriously, saying, "I must be rich. I must be a politician." You are rich if you can avoid death. You have it together if you can refuse King Yama when he comes to invite you. I believe you're not the one who makes the decision though. That's why, "Wealth and status are early dreams in the spring." They're as if a part of a sweet dream at approximately 4 a.m. In that dream, someone asks you, "Are you dreaming, mister?" The dreamer hears the question and says, "How could I be dreaming? I am so wealthy and I have such a powerful post!" When he wakes up, no one needs to tell him and he knows, "Oh, I had a dream about striking it rich, about being a high ranking official." Actually, it wasn't real. He knows then, without having to be told.

☞To be continued

