



上宣下化老和尚開示

# 初步參禪的方法(二)

DHARMA TALKS BY THE VENERABLE MASTER HUA

## BASIC METHODS OF INVESTIGATING CHAN (2)

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### (7) ——行住坐臥不離禪

有的參「念佛是誰」，有的念六字大明咒，總而言之就叫你的心老老實實的，不要離開修道這一念。你修道這一念、參禪這一念，總要保持著綿綿密密的。我給你們說四句偈頌，你們各位就本著這個意思去修行去參

，「行住坐臥，不離這個」就是不離參禪的這一念；「離了這個，當面錯過」你要離開這個，你就當面遇到佛也會錯過，你也不認識，所以我們每一個人不要當面錯過參禪這個時間。「行住坐臥，不離這個；離了這個，當面錯過」所以各位都要好好用功，希望有人開悟。

### (8) ——參跟求有什麼分別？

問：我們參「念佛是誰？」這不是在求嗎？

答：這是參，不是求。

問：參跟求有什麼分別？

答：參就好像用錐子鑽窟窿似的，你鑽窟窿，並不是求窟窿。你要是用求的，求到什麼時候，窟窿也不會有的

；你用錐鑽窟窿，才會有窟窿，懂了嗎？

問：「念佛是誰」那個「誰」好像是在

### 7. Whether moving or still, awake or asleep, do not leave Chan behind

Some people investigate, “Who is mindful of the Buddha?” Some recite the Six Syllable Great Bright Mantra. In short, these are training your mind to be honest and to be mindful of cultivation. You must remain continuously mindful of cultivation and of investigating Chan. I would like to tell you a four-line verse so everyone can investigate Chan according to its meaning.

Moving or still, awake or asleep,  
Do not let go of it.

Do not stray from the thought of Chan investigation.

Once you let go of it,  
You will miss it right in front of you.

If you wander away from this thought, you will face the Buddha and fail to recognize him – even when he is with you in person. Therefore, no one should miss the time for investigating Chan. “Moving or still, awake or asleep, / Do not let go of it. / Once you let go of it, / You will miss it right in front of you.” So, apply your effort well. I hope some of you will be enlightened.

### 8. What is the difference between investigating and seeking?

**Q:** When we investigate, “Who is mindful of the Buddha?” isn’t this considered seeking?

**A:** This is called investigating, not seeking.

**Q:** What is the difference between investigating and seeking?

**A:** Investigating Chan is like drilling a hole. Such effort is not considered

找一個東西。

答：是在找，這不是求。找也是參，這都叫參話頭，沒有叫求話頭的。

### (9) ——久坐有禪

參禪法門，要有相當的工夫，不是一鍬就可以挖個井，也不是一步就可以到西方極樂世界，也不是修行一分鐘就可以成佛果，這是要參的。這個參的意思，就是專心致志來研究，所謂念茲在茲的，心無旁騖，所謂

「專一則靈，分馳則弊」。這譬如雞孵卵，老母雞天天趴在那兒孵蛋，時候到了小雞就出來了，參禪也是這樣

；又如龍養珠，龍時刻不忘在養自己的寶珠；又好像貓捕鼠，老鼠不出來則已，只要一出來，貓一爪就把老鼠抓住，牠就跑不了了。你有「時長耐久」的工夫，自然就會開悟，所謂「久坐有禪」坐久了，念慮自然就會靜止下來。

### (10) ——因為你不會用！

問：用什麼方法來控制妄想？是不管它？還是用貓捕鼠的方法，一來就把它抓走？

答：貓捕鼠是個譬喻，因為你用「念佛是誰」沒有用好，才會有妄想。你只有「念佛是誰」單單這一念持續著「念佛是誰？念佛是誰？」妄想怎麼會生出來？沒有法子生的。

問：聽人家說要「萬緣放下，不生一念」為什麼要一念不生？

答：一念不生全體現，六根忽動被雲遮。參禪也是妄想，你參「誰」這不是妄想嗎？可是這是以妄止妄，以這個妄想來止住其它的妄想，這也叫以毒攻毒，卻能把毒病治好，所以要參話頭。參話頭的功夫不是一朝一夕就能有的，這要久而久之，久參就有禪了。

### (11) ——參「誰」也可以

seeking. When one seeks, the process is endless and one will never produce a hole from it. When you drill, a hole is produced. Do you understand?

Q: It seems like we are trying to find something by asking, “Who?” in “Who is mindful of the Buddha?”

A: Yes, we are trying to find something. However, we are not seeking. Finding is the same as investigating. It is called investigating the meditation topic [literally, “what comes before words”], instead of seeking the meditation topic.

### 9. Chan is acquired through long periods of sitting

You must have some skill when cultivating Chan meditation. Just as no one can dig a well by scooping up a single shovel of dirt, no one can reach the Western Pure Land by taking only a single step. Nor can someone realize Buddhahood after one minute of practice. One must apply effort in Chan investigation. ‘Investigation’ here refers to studying single-mindedly. It also means applying effort in thought after thought without thinking of anything else. It is said, “When the mind is focused, things come together wonderfully. When the mind is scattered, matters turn out undesirably.” Investigating Chan is analogous to a hen hatching eggs. The mother hen sits on her eggs every day. When she has sat long enough, the chicks hatch. Investigating Chan is just like this. It is also like a dragon nurturing its pearl; it never forgets to nourish its precious pearl. It is also like a cat trying to catch a mouse; as soon as the mouse appears, the cat pounces on it so that it cannot escape. If you have the ability to sit patiently over long periods of time, you will naturally be enlightened. Therefore, it is said, “Chan is acquired through long periods of sitting.” After sitting for an extended period of time, the thoughts will naturally subside.

### 10. It is because you do not know how to apply it

Q: What methods can be used to control false thoughts? Do we pay no attention to them? Or should we catch and throw them away like cats catching mice?

A: Cats catching mice is only an analogy. Since you don’t know how to skillfully use the phrase, “Who is mindful of the Buddha?” your false thoughts appear. If you continuously keep in mind the single thought, “Who is mindful of the Buddha?” how can false thoughts appear? There is no way these thoughts will arise.

Q: I’ve heard people say that, ‘When one lets go of the myriad conditions, not one thought will arise.’ Why is that?

A: When not a single thought arises, the entire substance manifests. As soon as the six sense faculties move, one is covered by clouds. The thought of investigating Chan is also false. When you investigate “who?” this investigation is considered a false thought. However, this is called using one false thought to stop other false thoughts. It is also known as using one poison to counteract another one, so that the illness can be cured.

**問：**師父教我們參「念佛是誰」要一直去參「誰」字，可是我在念「誰」，第二個「念佛是誰」的話頭就提不起來了。

**答：**你要是提不起來，單單就參一個「誰」也可以，這個「誰」參多久的時間都可以。你有「誰」在這兒，什麼妄念都沒有了。人家參「念佛是誰」就這一個「誰？」可以參幾個鐘頭，你要能接接連連不斷的參都可以的。

**問：**有時候我好像找不到門，不知道怎麼出去？

**答：**不要著急，慢慢找，慢慢就會找到了。

**問：**修道有時候進步，有時候退步，到現在還是不穩定、很迷糊。

**答：**你要是都穩定，那不早就成佛了嘛！

### (12) ——沙裏澄金

這麼多人在這兒打禪七，其中不一定哪一個開悟，也不一定哪個不開悟，這就是沙裏澄金。

你能結雙跏趺坐，或者單跏趺坐，把身體坐直，不要東歪西歪，前仰後合，心裏常常思惟這個「念佛是誰」久而久之，自然就會相應了；相應之後，你就會返本還原，明心見性，認識本來的面目，見著你本地的風光，這就是你參加禪七得到真正好處了！現在所講的初步用功的方法，是很淺顯的，對初學的人不能說的太深。你哪一個能依照這個方法來修行，都會得到你所應該得到的好處。切記不要像風從耳邊颳過去，什麼也沒有了。你在禪七的期間，明白用功的初步，這是很要緊的！

☸待續

That's why we investigate the meditation topic. The ability to investigate this topic is not obtained overnight. One must apply effort for an extended period of time before Chan manifests.

### 11. You can also investigate "who?"

**Q:** Master, you teach us that in investigating, "Who is mindful of the Buddha?" we should keep on investigating the "who?" However, when I am reciting the word "who," I am not able to give rise to the subsequent thought: "Who is mindful of the Buddha?"

**A:** If you cannot be mindful of the entire phrase, it is all right to just investigate the word "who?" You can investigate "who?" for as long as you like. When you focus on "who?" no other false thoughts will exist in your mind. When others investigate, "Who is mindful of the Buddha?" they can investigate the word "who?" alone for hours. As long as you keep the thought "who?" going without interruption, it is perfectly fine.

**Q:** Sometimes, I do not seem to be able to find the door. I don't know how to get out.

**A:** Do not panic. Take your time. You will eventually find it.

**Q:** When cultivating the Way, I sometimes advance but sometimes I retreat. Till now I feel very unstable and confused.

**A:** If you had been stable all the time, you would have become a Buddha already.

### 12. Sifting gold from the sand

Since so many people participate in the Chan session, it is not for sure who will be enlightened and who will not. The work of investigating Chan is like panning for gold in the sand. You can sit in full lotus posture or half lotus. Try to keep your body straight. Do not lean to either side or lean forward or backward. Contemplate "Who is mindful of the Buddha?" After a while, you will get into it. After you get into it, you will return to the source, see your nature and your mind, know the original face, and see the scenery of your homeland. This is the true benefit of investigating Chan.

The methods for investigating Chan that I have explained are very shallow. We should not speak profound theories to beginners. Whoever can use this method to cultivate will obtain the benefits you ought to receive. Do not let these words go in one ear and out the other. During the Chan session, it is very important to understand how to begin to apply effort.

☸To be continued

