

Questions and Answers

On how to go through the First and Second Gates

My question is, when I focus on my body and relax from the head down to my feet, but I haven't entered the second gate yet, and I already feel peaceful. When the body is still, the peace (peaceful state) comes to me immediately.

That's correct.

But if I want to reach the second gate, I breathe in and out, inhale (the belly expands), exhale (the belly contracts), and I focus on the heart chakra. I feel like I have to go back down again (I know that the heart chakra is a still point, and it helps me sense my physical stillness better). But at the second gate, do I return to abdominal breathing? Is that how it works?

This tip is very important because, after teaching this for three months, I feel it's time to open up deeper layers. As I just mentioned, if you understand what I'm saying today, you'll realize this focus is the focus of consciousness—it's a concentration that cannot be disrupted by abdominal breathing, inhaling and exhaling, or by scattered thoughts, emotions, feelings, joy, anger, or sadness. It cannot be disrupted by the impulses of habitual formations (hành ấ́m)—no!

This focus is profoundly authentic because it is the instinctual nature of the True Mind. Therefore, I couldn't introduce it in the first lesson, but I am introducing it in this lesson. That is, after three months of teaching, I am now introducing it. Why? Because now we must practice how to feel and sense this consciousness.

After sitting for a long time, we move on to abdominal breathing. We will practice abdominal breathing until we master it and become so familiar with it that we no longer pay attention to it. At that point, we will no longer be distracted. In the beginning, it's true that we will be distracted.

When I focus on my chest and then shift my attention to my abdomen, it means I'm following my abdominal breathing. It means I'm distracted. But when I focus my attention on the heart center, that concentration does not belong to thoughts or emotions—it is the focus of the energy of consciousness.

The entire consciousness focuses on one spot, stays there for a while, and then as I breathe in and out gently, I don't feel peacefulness; instead, I feel a sense of harmony. Harmony of the brain, heart, and abdomen—these three centers. I sense the harmony of the blood, the breath, and the endocrine system. Everything harmonizes and begins the healing process.

This is called coherence. Coherence is the state in which the heart and brain, as well as all our autonomous organs, gradually start to repair themselves, to self-adjust, and to heal.

Humans have two nervous systems:

- Sympathetic Nervous System: When facing danger, it responds by fighting or fleeing.
- Parasympathetic Nervous System: Its role is to help us relax, so our cells are no longer tense. At this point, the cells function again and begin to recover. Recover what? If the cell walls are damaged, they repair the walls; if something is broken, they fix it.

When we're stressed, there is a phenomenon called inflammation. If we're not stressed and not inflamed, and we're always calm and light, we naturally won't easily get sick. That's because the cells become increasingly capable of recovery and function better.

For example, if there's a fire burning in your backyard while you're cooking, sweeping the house, or sitting with friends enjoying music. Can you still enjoy the music, cook, or have fun? No, because you're worried about putting out the fire. Similarly, when we're stressed, we cannot heal.

The healing process occurs when our parasympathetic nervous system is very strong. It commands the entire body to harmonize, heal, and repair itself, bringing us back to the most optimal state.

Therefore, when we meditate in silence for a long time, sitting very gently, at that point the cells begin to repair themselves and are no longer under stress. Gradually, it's as if we are becoming younger, and the functional organs slowly regain their natural abilities.

You'll be amazed. For example, if you're injured or sprain your hand. In the past, it might have taken a week to heal, but now it heals in just a day or two because your parasympathetic nervous system is very strong.

What we are doing is strengthening the parasympathetic nervous system immensely. Why? Because we are forcing it to relax, relax, and not be stressed. So, after sitting quietly for a while, we gradually begin to heal ourselves without even realizing it.

That's why after entering the first gate and then the second, you must breathe very slowly and focus on breathing very slowly. After a few months, you will discover that focusing on the heart center and controlling the breath to be very slow are not in conflict with one another. But for now, because we don't yet understand what it means to concentrate the energy of consciousness into one place, to bind it to one spot, and to observe the breath becoming light, we don't know whether these two things are conflicting or not. They aren't conflicting.

Later, when studying at a higher level, you'll see that you can maintain the concentration of spiritual energy while still observing the seed syllables and allowing the flow of mantra energy to run without obstruction. It's truly amazing. This is why you can practice Dharani meditation without encountering obstacles.

The main problem with humans is that when our house is on fire, we focus on the burning house, then we get upset, angry, sad, happy, irritable, and do all sorts of things. The more we spin out of control, the harder it is to resolve.

Look at firefighters. They're so skilled. When they see a house burning fiercely, they don't panic or run. Instead, they assess: where is the wind coming from? Should they go left or right? How should they create a firebreak? Where should they position the ladder? They have incredible determination. They're not fearful or flustered.

But most of us, when stressed—our child breaks something, does something wrong—we spin out of control, blaming ourselves for this or that. We forget that the more we spin out of control, blame ourselves, or are afraid, the worse things get, and the cells in our body become damaged.

Now, we need to reprogram our way of thinking.

- The first gate is to focus the mind on the heart center, develop the energy of consciousness attached to the heart center by meditating for 15 minutes, 20 minutes, or half an hour.
- Next week, I'll teach a new lesson on how to open the second gate, and it will be even better.

What's important is that you must grasp and understand what I've just said because it's very abstract. This abstract part is something only a master teaches the disciples. If you don't understand it, you'll wander all over the place. You must remember that "attachment/

adherence" is translated from the term "an trú". For hundreds of years, meditation masters have taught the term "an trú." "An trú" means attachment/adherence. When we think of the heart center, we attach to it and don't think about anything else. Even if other thoughts arise, they cannot disrupt it.

The attachment of consciousness is strong enough that thoughts, emotions, and feelings cannot break it. The reason we are distracted is that we allow ourselves to think about those things—we enjoy thinking about them. We enjoy the emotions, the anger, and the frustration of not being able to retaliate against others.

When we sit in meditation, we think about retaliation, about angry words to respond to others. We torment ourselves, distract ourselves, and cause our own distraction. But in reality, nothing can break that attachment if it is strong enough.

It's truly amazing.

Another question: When you talk about focusing on the heart center, in the past, we learned to place the syllable "VA" on the heart center. Can we still think of the syllable "VA" now, or should we just think about the heart center?

For now, think of the heart center in a simple way—as this area. Focus your mind on attaching to that area first. Later, yes, you can place the syllable "VA" there. If you place "VA" there now, make sure you attach to it and don't think about anything else. The syllable "VA" must be located right at the heart center.

Your question is excellent, but it is a question of advanced practitioners. For now, I want to return to the most basic level, where we practice the attachment ability of consciousness, not the attachment ability of thoughts.

Those terms are my copyright: **the attachment ability of consciousness.**