

Meditation: Now and Zen

What precisely is Zen meditation? And why is this meditation method associated with Buddhists?

Zen meditation is not unlike any other types and methods of meditation. However, some see meditation as a spiritual practice to achieve self-awareness. Its association with Buddhists is not by coincidence. In fact, Zen Buddhists are known as Meditation Buddhists. Zazen, the heart of the Zen meditation, is described as the study of one's self. Buddhists think that to study the Buddha Way means to study one's self.

A Japanese Buddhist established the San Francisco Zen Center. He was responsible in bringing and publicizing the practice of Zen meditation in the Western society. His constant practice has influenced others, particularly the young Westerners to follow him. This Japanese Buddhist shared his knowledge and beliefs on how to advance their lives without emphasis on Buddhism as a religion, even if his training was from the Soto school of Zen Buddhism in Japan.

The Soto Zen meditation teachings assert that all of us are Buddhas. True human nature is merely synonym to Buddha nature. Buddha means "an awakened one". It further affirms that a Buddha is someone who sees things as they really are, without any meddling to how we want to see it.

Most people have turned to Zen meditation or other modes of meditation to change their lives. Some want to end their depression, fix their problems or take away their stress. Some have even resorted to Zen meditation to rid themselves of their vices like smoking. However, Buddha doesn't concur. Supposedly, the fact that we are all Buddha means that we are merely practicing Zen meditation as a self-expression of our true nature. Ever since we are born, we have always been challenged with the notion that there is still something that we need that we don't possess. By entertaining these thoughts, we are in fact disregarding our inner completeness. Zen meditation just wants to reveal that while life is full of disappointments and constant struggles, happiness and comfort are still there to be found. For those who interpret this statement literally, entering a monastery would be the best way to find joy. But Zen meditation is actually just allowing time for yourself. It may not be as simple as going for a long drive or looking at the stars at night, but those can be a good start.

Zen meditation claims that if done with a strong conviction and unwavering commitment it will help people conquer their addictions to vices, help them recover, and lead better lives. As with many other meditation techniques, be open to the idea that Zen meditation may or may not work best for you.