

BUDDHIST MEDITATION



Buddhist Meditation

Learn About The Differences & Similarities Of Buddhist Meditation To Other Techniques.

Is Buddhist meditation a religion in itself or simply a mind exercise like most others?

While Buddhist meditation is not a religion, it is inspired by the goals of the Buddhism religion. After all, the human mind is the heart of the Buddhist teaching.



The Dhamma, or the teaching of the Buddha, is probably the most misunderstood among all other religions. The Buddha is also being likened to God and people have considered the Buddhist meditation as a hypnotic method to flee from the real world.

There are eight noble truths involved in Buddhism. The first noble truth is the dukkha, a Pali word which means the unpleasant experiences like worry, pain, sorrow, fear, etc.

The second noble truth points out that dukkha are the consequence of desire and craving.



The third noble truth says that dukkha can be resolved, while the fourth noble truth tells us the means by which the third noble truth can be achieved.

Buddhism, through the fourth noble truth is then closely linked to Buddhist meditation.

It was transformed into a method or discipline of releasing people from the bondage of negative feelings and enhancing the nature of human life.

This part of the Dhamma is known as the Noble Eightfold Path, which encompasses lessons that can influence the personal and social aspect of one's life.



It may be understood therefore that the cause of everyone's agony is psychological.

Logic would tell us that the cure would be psychological as well.

Thus, Buddhism designed mind exercises called the Buddhist meditation, aimed to help these psychological problems.

However, the Buddhist meditation is often confused with other practices that claim to have possessed powers after engaging in meditation, which is totally in contrast to the Eightfold Path.



Some people view meditation, Buddhist meditation included, as a higher state of the pious life.

That meditation is a step towards sainthood or being a holy person.

Meditation is not an act of converting a sinner to have a deeper commitment to his religion.

But it is just a good instrument to free oneself from the clutter that fills the mind in order to have a more serene life.



The goals of Buddhist meditation do not differ much from the other methods of meditation. Specifically though, Buddhist meditation aims to get rid of the dukkha and attain Nibbana. According to many Buddhist meditation practitioners, Nibbana is too difficult to put into words. But they describe it as the highest point of moral and psychological maturation.

Since Buddhist meditation, like any other technique, is a personal experience which brings about self-fulfillment, it must be practiced according to one's conviction and faith that enlightenment and bliss are attainable.



Different Buddhist Meditation Techniques

There are a number of different Buddhist meditation techniques that followers and many meditation enthusiasts practice.

Despite their differences, the techniques are all generally based on developing two things; mindfulness and concentration.

Attentiveness to the movements of the body and to the ever changing states of mind is to be developed in order to identify the real concept of self.



Objectivity in this case can be a valuable aid to clear thinking. With objectivity comes concentration, the ability to focus the mind and keep in focused on a single point or object.

Many Buddhist schools employ different techniques in meditation. Some may focus on such practices as breathing meditation while others on movements. The diversity can be so wide ranging that there are a multitude of variations available.

Most Buddhist techniques can be school specific. Only a few masters aim to combine and categorize the techniques from several Buddhist traditions.



One of the known meditation techniques is that being practiced by Western Order meditation master Kamalashila.

The teacher identifies that there are five basic methods to be used as a traditional set for meditation.

Each method can be used as an antidote to one of the five primary obstructions to Enlightenment - distraction, hatred, craving, conceit and ignorance.

One of the five basic methods is the mindfulness of breathing. This involves the practice of tranquility meditations.



This method helps to counteract distraction and aims to develop better concentration.

Another of the five basic methods laid out is the Metta Bhavana.

This method includes the four brahma viharas and is used to counteract sentimental attachment or hatred. This method aims to develop loving kindness in a person.

Another of the five basic methods in Buddhist meditation is the contemplation of impermanence.



This method can help counteract craving and develop inner peace and the feeling of freedom. The six element practice is based on meditation involving the six elements - earth, water, space, air, fire and consciousness.

The six element practice method of meditation counteracts craving and develop instead some clarity in a person regarding to self.

The fifth basic method of meditation is the contemplation of conditionality which aims to counteract ignorance and instead develop wisdom and compassion.



There are also other Buddhist meditation techniques not identified by the five basic methods.

This includes different methods of visualizations, meditation by sitting and the walking meditation.

Another of the many techniques used in Buddhist meditation include the five types of Zen as grouped by Kuei-feng.

In this case, the Zen practices were grouped according to five categories.



Although mostly common for Zen practitioners, the techniques are also applicable to Buddhist meditation methods.

One of the types is the "bonpu" or "ordinary" meditation that is done to achieve physical and mental well-being in absence of any spiritual goal. There is also the "gedo" or "outside way" which is meditation that is used for non-Buddhist purposes.

The third is the "shojo" or "small vehicle" which is meditation used in pursuit of self-liberation or nirvana.



The fourth of the Zen Buddhist meditation techniques as grouped by Kuei-feng is the "daijo" or "great vehicle" which is the meditation in pursuit of achieving self-realization to experience the unity of all things. Then there is also the "saijojo" or "supreme vehicle" which is the meditation aimed to realize the Buddha nature as imminent in all beings.

There are many ways for you to learn meditation. Find the best fit for you and practice daily.



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