

## **The Practice of Meditation**

Dōgen Zenji

Truth is perfect and complete in itself. It is not something newly discovered; it has always existed.

Truth is not far away. It is nearer than near. There is no need to attain it, since not one of your steps leads away from it.

Don't follow the advice of others; rather, learn to listen to the voice within yourself. Your body and mind will become one, and you will realize the unity of all things.

Even the slightest movement of your conceptual thought will prevent you from entering the palace of wisdom.

The Buddha meditated for six years; Bodhidharma for nine. If such effort was required of these ancient Masters, how much more is required of you.

Your search among books, sifting and shuffling through other people's words, may lead you to the depths of knowledge, but it cannot help you to see the reflection of your true self. When you have thrown away all your conceptions of mind and body, the original person will appear, in his fullness.

To obtain the inestimable benefits of meditation, you should first make a firm decision to practice every day. Your meditation room should be clean and quiet. Wear loose clothing and remove your shoes. Sit on a cushion, with legs crossed, in as comfortable a manner as possible. Keep your back straight. Don't lean to the left or right; don't tip forward or bend back. Your ears should be in line with your shoulders. Keep your tongue at the roof of your mouth and close your lips. Your eyes should be slightly open, unfocused on the floor at a forty-five-degree angle. Breathe through your nostrils.

Before you begin meditation, take several slow, deep breathes. Hold your body erect, allowing your breathing to become normal again. Many thoughts will crowd into your mind. Don't dwell on thoughts of good or bad. Don't desire to attain enlightenment. Let your thoughts come and go, without getting involved in them or trying to suppress them. Think the unthinkable. In other words, think no-thinking.

Meditation is not a way to enlightenment, nor is it a method of achieving anything at all. It is peace and blessedness itself. It is the actualization of wisdom, the ultimate truth of the oneness of all things.

In your meditation, you yourself are the mirror reflecting the solution of your problems. The human mind has absolute freedom within its true nature. You can attain this freedom intuitively. Don't work toward freedom; but allow the work itself to be freedom.

When you want to rest, move your body slowly, and quietly stand up. Practice this meditation in the morning or in the evening or at any leisure time during the day. You will soon realize that your mental burdens are dropping away one by one, and that you are gaining an intuitive power previously undreamed of.

There have been thousands upon thousands of people who have practiced meditation and obtained its fruits. Don't doubt its possibilities because of the simplicity of its method. If you can't find the truth right where you are, where else do you think you will find it?

Life is short, and no one knows what the next moment will bring. Cultivate your mind while you still have the opportunity. You will soon discover the treasure of the wisdom which in turn you can share abundantly with others, bringing them happiness and peace.