

PROJECT CLEAR LIGHT

BUDDHIST OUTREACH PROGRAM - IN SERVICE / INSIDE

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Is Meditation a Buddhist practice?

Yes and No. Yes, meditation is one of the core contemplative practices of Buddhists, and no, meditation is and has been an essential practice in every known spiritual tradition.

Is there a difference between Christian and Buddhist meditation?

The essential qualities of relaxed stillness, silence, openness and alertness are universal to the meditations of all faith traditions. Meditation, regardless of our faith, is the opportunity to be present, in the direct presence of God, to become one with spirit.

Is there a right and wrong way to meditate?

We may often find that we have been spontaneously meditating, totally present to nature, a loved one, a moment of reflection. This natural tendency to be at peace, open, receptive, reflective, at one with whatever is going on in the moment, is the basis for all forms of meditation.

There are several different types of meditation, just as there are many different types of prayer. Different spiritual traditions have developed variations on these types. Buddhist teachings are a rich and invaluable source of specific instructions in many styles and techniques of meditation that allow us to practice in such a way that we are more present, more aware, more sensitive to all that is going on. Regardless of our faith, meditation practice allows us to be less reactive, less negative, to relax our attitudes and be more open, understanding, wise and compassionate.

Is there a tradition of Christian meditation?

Yes, but most of these practices are not widely known or taught. There was a tradition of meditation practice that was preserved and practiced in the monastic system of the Catholic Church for centuries, practices that were undoubtedly taught by Jesus and other mystics before him. After the protestant reformation, many of these practices were lost or fell out of favor as they have not survived in many protestant denominations. Christian Contemplative Prayer and Christian Centering Prayer are certainly meditation.

Why is meditation not a standard practice in most churches?

Meditation allows us direct and immediate access to the presence of God. The importance of an intercessor or priest in the Catholic tradition discouraged this direct approach for centuries. Most church organizations, in all religions, rely upon exoteric, or rite and ritual based, services to meet the needs of the parishioner community. Many pastors and priests are well trained in the performance of these services, and the day-to-day operation of their particular churches, but lack training in esoteric or contemplative practices.