

MEDITATION 禪 · 禪定



There are three approaches to meditation in Buddhism: (1) to utilize thoughts, (2) to still thoughts and (3) to observe thoughts. Loving-kindness meditation would be an example of the first of these. The meditator deliberately thinks particular types of thoughts for the purpose of evoking certain emotions and behavior. An example of the second of these types of meditation would be mindfulness of breathing, where the meditator focuses his or her attention on the breath, thus slowing down and finally stopping the flow of thoughts. In mindfulness meditation, the mediator develops the ability to simply observe mental activity such as thoughts, emotions, and conceptualizing.

The Buddha and his ordained disciples spent a significant amount of their time in natural surroundings. This was mainly because forests offered them the silence and peace that can make meditation easier. But apart from this advantage, it seems the beauties of the natural world, of the groves and hills, the flowers and the jungle pools, the rustle of the leaves and the songs of the birds, have the ability to enhanced meditation. The Buddha specifically mentioned that he decided to settle down to do the final meditation just before his enlightenment at Uruvelà, in part because of the sylvan surroundings. He said: `Then, being a seeker for the good, searching for the incomparable, matchless path of peace, while walking on tour through

Magadha, I arrived at Uruvelà, the army township. There I saw a beautiful stretch of ground, a lovely woodland grove, a clear flowing river with a delightful bank and a village nearby for support. If the beauties of the natural world can assist meditation it is also true that the meditator's mind can develop a heightened awareness of and appreciation for beauty, including natural beauty. When someone told him that he found the forests frightening, the Buddha replied: 'At the midday hour when the birds are quiet, I find the rustle of the great forest delightful'.

Core meditation techniques have been preserved in ancient Buddhist texts and have proliferated and diversified through teacher-student transmissions. Buddhists pursue meditation as part of the path toward Enlightenment and Nirvana. Buddhist meditation techniques have become increasingly popular in the wider world, with many non-Buddhists taking them up for a variety of reasons.

Buddhist meditation encompasses a variety of meditation techniques that aim to develop mindfulness), concentration, supramundane powers, tranquility, and insight. Specific Buddhist meditation techniques have also been used to remove unwholesome qualities thought to be impediments to spiritual liberation, such loving kindness to remove ill-will, hate, and anger, equanimity to remove mental clinging, and meditations on the parts of the body and meditation on death and corpses to remove sensual lust for the body and cultivate impermanence. The practice of focusing the mind on one point in order to purify the spirit will eradicate illusions, and perceive the truth. Meditation is a practice in which an individual trains the mind or induces a mode of Consciousness, either to realize some benefit or as an end in itself.

