

Beginners Chan (Zen) Meditation

Most of us have developed the habit of over thinking. However, like any habit it can be un-learned, with effort. What Qi Gong teaches is rather than trying to jump straight from 100 thoughts to no thoughts, that we should learn to hold a single focus. Using that focused mind as a stepping stone to a non-thinking state. Below is an introduction to a beautiful meditation that I find very helpful in getting to a zen mindset.

This meditation can be done either sitting, standing, or laying down, but for starters try it seated comfortably, with your back straight, chin slightly tucked to keep your neck straight, your hands palms up on your knee or lap, and eyes closed. Spend a couple minutes breathing deeply, focusing on your breath. Other thoughts will come to mind, smile to yourself and mentally say, 'not now' and bring your attention back to your breathing.

Now visualize your nose smiling, hold that image for a while. Visualize your nose filling with joy... Feel the joy penetrate from your nose deep into your brain...

Then visualize your eyes smiling, hold that image for a while. Visualize your eyes filling with joy... Feel the joy flow from your eyes through the optic nerves deep into your brain...

Next visualize your ears smiling, hold that image for a time. Visualize your ears filling with joy... Feel the joy fill your ears deeply, passing deep into your mind...

Now visualize your jaw smiling, relax your jaw and let it open comfortably. Fill your jaw with joy... Feel the joy pass deeply into your jaw...

Then visualize your tongue smiling, hold that image. Let your tongue float in your mouth, neither touching the roof nor the floor of your mouth. Visualize your tongue filling with joy... Feel your tongue fill deeply with joy... Do not swallow, allow saliva to pool in your mouth for a time.

When you are ready, swallow, visualize the saliva carrying joy down to your heart. Visualize your heart smiling for a while. Fill your heart with joy... As your heart fills deeply with joy it shines like a star... Visualize the light of joy filling your entire being... Visualize the light of joy shining from every pore in your body to illuminate the world...

Remain in the relaxed luminous state as long as you would like. When you are done bring your hands together in front of your face with a loud clap. Rub your palms together and then rub your face and scalp to come out of the deep meditative state.

Give yourself 15 to 30 minutes for this meditation at first. With practice you may be able to comfortably extend the meditation out to an hour, or run through the sequence in a quick five minute meditation for a dose of zen wherever you are.