

Zen

Presented by Jason

The background of the slide is a blue-toned landscape. It features a range of mountains in the distance, with some peaks partially obscured by soft, white clouds. The sky is a gradient of blue, transitioning from a lighter shade near the horizon to a darker shade at the top. The overall mood is serene and professional.

Introduction and Disclaimer

Modern Impression of Zen



Original Meaning of Zen

- A school of Buddhism that developed as it spread from India to China and its neighbours
- Strongly emphasizes meditation and the application of its insights in every moment over religious details



Buddhism

- A religion based on the teachings of the Buddha
- Core Message: We suffer because we are deeply attached to how we think things should be instead of seeing things as they are
- Through concentration and mindfulness, we can be freed from our attachments and achieve enlightenment



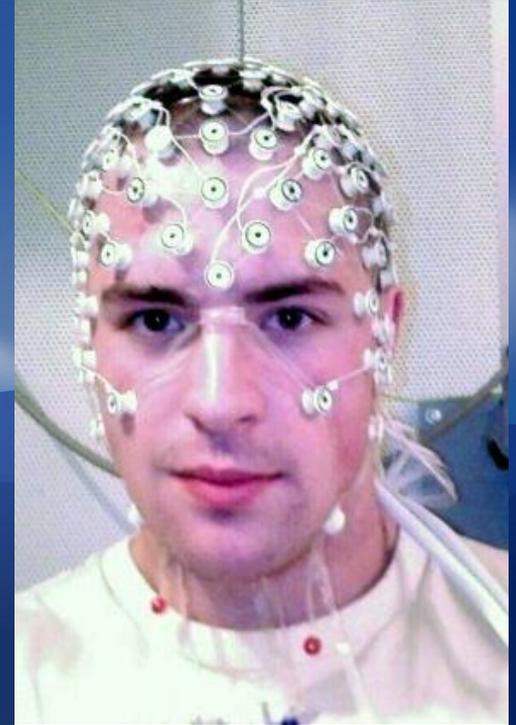
Zen

- A kind of a “back to basics” movement for Buddhism centered around meditation
- “Stop thinking all the time, start doing”
- “Stop living in your mind, start living your life”



Meditation and Science

- Meditation is linked to both short and long term changes in brain activity and connectivity
- Evidence for improvements in stress resilience, attentional control, emotion regulation, and more
- Some benefits are evident after weeks of practice



The image features a dark blue background with a faint, misty mountain range silhouette. A semi-transparent horizontal bar is centered across the middle, containing the text "Zen Meditation" in white. The overall aesthetic is calm and serene.

Zen Meditation

Zen Meditation

- Sitting
- Walking
- Everyday
- Probably More



Two Most Important Sitting Meditations (in Zen)

1. Concentration Meditation

2. Mindfulness Meditation

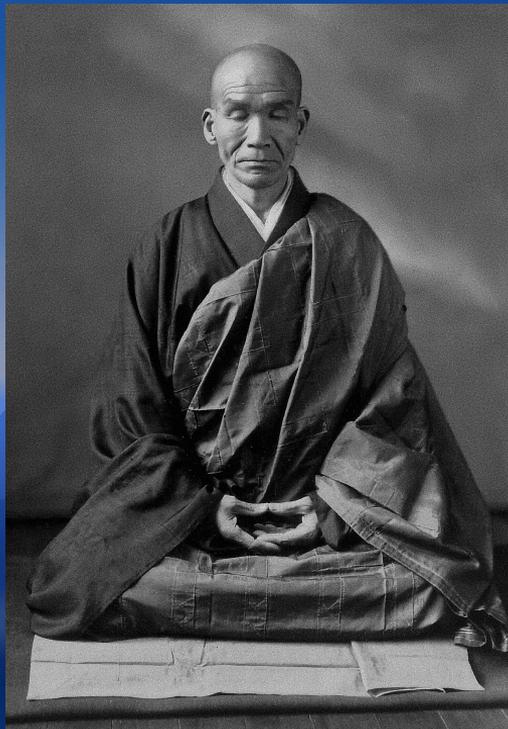
How to Do: Concentration Meditation

1. Gently rest your attention on the breath
2. When thoughts appear in your awareness while your attention is still on the breath, notice them without pushing them away
3. When you realize you have been lost in thought, gently rest your attention on the breath again

How to Do: Mindfulness Meditation

1. Simply sit in a state of conscious awareness
2. Do not rest your attention on something specific
3. Meet your subjective experience in its entirety without trying to control it

Sitting Meditation Posture



Zen Meditation Tips

- Meditation is not about intentional control, it is about observation
- Breath counting can be helpful for beginners
- The moment you realize you were lost in thought is the moment you should celebrate!



Common Meditator Worries

- “I can’t focus, I have too many thoughts”
- “I’m bad at meditation so this is a waste of time”
- “It’s hard for people in modern society to meditate well”
- “I want to meditate more but I don’t have the time”



Common Meditator Worries

- “I get sleepy whenever I meditate”
- “I get frustrated about how bad I am at meditation”
- “I am not making progress”
- “I keep getting carried away by the same thoughts”



Meditation in Every Moment

- Zen says attention and awareness cultivated during sitting meditation should be applied in everyday life
- There is nothing so special about sitting meditation





Zen Philosophy

Meditation Teacher: "Beware of your thoughts... they are fake news."

@overheardla

Before
Spiritual
Awakening

After
Spiritual
Awakening



Zen Tells Us to Meet Reality as It Is

- We always live in the present
- All our ideas of the past and the future are thoughts arising in the present
- All that we think and perceive can only be subjective
- Being in touch with the present experience means being in touch with the only reality we have known, know now, and can ever know

Zen on the Nature of Reality (Which Includes You!)

- Zen says there is no fundamental distinction between you and everything else, but your thoughts create that distinction
- Zen says we are all fundamentally “perfect” and that we can see this for ourselves after sincere and consistent meditation



Zen and Adversity

- Our lives will literally be full of problems until we die
- Zen highlights the truth that every problem we encounter is an opportunity for us to cultivate our resilience to suffering
- Importantly, zen says it is not good enough to know this fact; what matters is applying this insight to real problems in our lives



Zen and the Freedom to Make the Choices You Value

- The more we think and act a certain way, the more habitual those thoughts and actions become
- Many times in life, we make choices that we regret because we act instinctively according to our habits
- Through concentration and mindfulness, zen can help us liberate ourselves from unhelpful habits and make decisions aligned with our core values



Never be a
prisoner
of your past.
it was just a
lesson, not
a life sentence.



Zen is Not about Passivity and Doing Nothing

- Zen may seem to be about retreating into a safe and peaceful mental state
- Zen is more about seeing the situation clearly and single-mindedly acting
- Zen takes issue with compulsive acting not the actions themselves



On Self Restraint

- Zen is not about restraint or detachment of your emotions and thoughts
- Zen is about meeting your emotions and thoughts where they are without trying to control them or being controlled by them
- This can enable “healthy self expression”



On Compassion

- Zen underscores the need to be compassionate toward oneself and others
- Compassion toward others is a natural consequence of zen's belief system



Going Beyond Thought

- Our thoughts are our mind's model of reality
- But, it is not reality itself
- We sometimes forget this fact and this causes us additional suffering
- Hence zen says go beyond thought and experience reality itself

Does Practicing Zen Require One to be a Buddhist?

- Not really!*



Appreciation of Uncertainty and Imperfection



“The Goal of Zen Practice”

- A zen master will say the goal of zen is to do zen
- Zen is about applying, applying, applying its insights right now!



Thank You For Listening

- Feel free to ask questions or reach out personally

