出來，最後則根本無物可讓你暴露的。

所以，坐禪的人，不必向別人掩飾甚麼，也不必爲了改造自己而感受到來自外在的壓力，更沒有像人忍受着痛苦割除毒瘤那樣地掙扎的必要。

坐禪，只是循着修習的方法，漸漸地將妄念減少，乃至到了無念的程度，你自然會發覺你的過去的存在，不過是存在於一連串的煩惱妄念的累積之上，那不是眞正的你。

眞正的你，是與一切客觀的事物不可分割的，客觀事物的存在，是你主觀存在的各部分而已。所以你不必追求甚麼，也不必厭棄甚麼，你的責任是如何將你的全體，建立得更有秩序、更完美。

坐禪的人，到了這樣的程度之時，他將是一個熱愛人類的人，也將是熱愛一切衆生的人。他的性格，將會開朗得如春天的陽光；縱然爲了接引及教化方法的運用，在表情上也有喜怒哀樂，他的內心則必將是經常平靜而清徹得如秋天的明潭。這種人，我們稱他爲開了悟的人、賢者或聖者。

釋迦牟尼佛陀曾說，「一切衆生無不具備佛的智慧和功德」，如果你嚮往坐禪者可能得到的利益，你的願望必將成爲事實。不論男、女、老、少，不別智能的優劣、體能的強弱，也不問職業、地位和宗教信仰，禪的大門是爲一切人開放的。

只是有一句極要緊的話，必須告訴你，你看了這篇討論禪的文章，這篇文章的本身，決不等於禪那個東西。坐禪的事實，尙等着你下定決心，並以恆心來實際地跟着你所信賴的老師，去學習、去實習。否則，這篇文章僅僅爲你增加了一些知識的葛藤，無助於你希望學禪的一片好心。

一九七七年一月一日

當你患了醫藥不易奏效的怪病之時，不妨學習坐禪。坐禪雖不能像割除盲腸那樣，使得患者手到病除，但是它能安定你的情緒，減少你對疾病的恐慌及恐懼，也能減輕疾病加諸你痛苦的感受。縱然，人的生理機能，有其一定限度的壽命，坐禪不能使你永遠不老不死，但它能够使你活得較大、活得比較愉快有趣，乃是可以辦到的事。

七、培養完美的人格

完美的人格，可以從教育、藝術、宗教等的薰陶之中養成，但那並不完全可靠。有些人迫於名利及權勢等欲望的誘惑，接受了教育、藝術、宗教等的薰陶，在人前也能表現出高尚的人品和聖潔的行爲，他們的內心，都包藏着不可告人的熊熊野心和陰謀詭計。這些人，我們稱之爲雙重人格。

因此，世間有受過良好教育的僞君子，也有藏形於教會之內、列身於教士羣中的魔鬼。因爲，不論是宗教的教條、教育的倫理、藝術的欣賞，均係由外來的灌輸，甚至是權威的高壓，與各人內在的欲求，未必能够吻合。

坐禪，是培養完美人格的最好方法，它是由於內發的自覺，而達到人格昇華的目的。用不到教條來施於任何壓力。倫理、道德，對於坐禪的人是沒有用處的東西。而且，宗教的教條、倫理的標準、道德的尺度，均會由於時代、環境及對象的不同而失却其可通性。所以，近世以來的新興宗教之出現，幾乎如雨後的春笋，乃至佛教也不例外。

禪雖脫胎於佛教，因其不假外緣，不立文字，故係萬古長青的修行法門。坐禪的實習，是將自我這樣東西，像剝芭蕉樹一樣地，一層妄念又一層妄念剝光之後，不但見不到一個裝模裝樣的我，連一個赤裸裸的我也見不到的，起初是將自我暴露

至客觀的自由世界，得到身心的解放。

六、長壽、愉快

減輕交感神經系統的負荷，與呼吸很有關係，常人均以肺部爲呼吸的重心，坐禪的人，則將呼吸的重心，移至小腹部，我們稱它爲丹田、氣海，目的在以腹壓爲媒介，再以意志支配副交感神經系統，擴張血管、降低血壓、鬆弛興奮機能、大量分泌 Acetylcholin，產生鎮定、安靜、解毒的功能。

呼吸的重心，由胸部移至小腹，不是一兩天的工夫可以辦到的。有些教瑜伽術及氣功方法的人，卽主張以腹式呼吸，來達成這個目的。不過，那種方法，並不能適用於所有的人，有些人的生理機能，出於先天或後天的原因，如果用强制手段，作腹式呼吸的實習，便可能導致疾病。

安全的方法，是順乎自然，將注意力集中在呼吸上，勿求急切，保持平常呼吸，繼續實習下去，日子稍久，呼吸的速度自然緩慢、次數自然減少、長度也自然向下延伸，有那一天，你會發現你的呼吸重心，已從胸部下降到小腹部去了。

腹部呼吸，能使儲蓄在肝臟及脾臟內的血液，輸送到心臟，發揮其功能。肝和脾有造血並儲血的功能，在這血庫之中，藏有人體總血量的三分之一，心臟及全身的肌肉內，各佔三分之一。肝和脾的血液，平常不進入循環系統，只有必要時，始適量地補充心臟內血液的不足。腹部呼吸，則等於爲人體增加一個輔助心臟，使得循環系統內的血液量，增加一倍。

血液量增加，輸送營養的功能加強，能使已經萎縮了的細胞組織，賦予活力而健全起來，使得閉塞而將死的細胞組織，漸漸地復甦而賦予再生的機能。正因如此，坐禪能够治病，能够破除種種所謂奇難雜症、慢性病的病灶。

應該平衡發展，否則，除了在生理上的不健康之外，在心理及性格的發展上，也是不健康的。如果偏於前者，他將是敏感、自私、急躁、易怒、和缺少友誼、不得人緣的人。如果偏於後者，他將是渾厚、老成、樂天、和善的人。

前者發展的結果，好的一面，可能成爲孤傲的哲學家、精明剛強的軍事家、憤世疾俗的書生；壞的一面，則可能成爲剛愎自用、暴戾成性、頑劣不悛的人物。後者發展的結果，好的一面，可能成爲悲天憫人的宗教家、寬宏大量的政治家、胸襟開朗的藝術家等；壞的一面，則可能成爲沒有理想、不辨善惡、不明是非、爲人處事缺乏原則的濫好人。

當然，如果僅僅偏於一邊的發展，那是決定傾向壞的一面，如已從好的一面現出特色，必定多少是得力於兩者的調和。

坐禪，是協調全身的組織機能，步上正常的工作，並助其發揮最高功能的方法。下手處，是以調身、調息、和調心的方法，減輕交感神經系統的負荷，沖淡主觀意識的影象，將自我中心的界限，漸漸向外擴大，乃至忘却了自我的存在，主觀意識便會消溶於客觀意識之中，到了這種境界的人，種種的煩惱，雖未徹底解除，對他已不會構成身心健康的威脅。

貪欲、瞋恨、不反省自己、不原諒他人、不分析事理而形成爲煩惱的原因，即在於主觀的意識太强烈。以爲他雖與一切事物相對立，一切事物均不應與他的主觀意識相違背。未得之時，他要追求；求得之後，可享受之事物唯恐失去，可厭的事物又唯恐脫不了手。求不到時，固然煩惱，求到之後，依然受着各種煩惱的包圍。

唯有坐禪的方法，可將人們從自我中心的主觀心態，漸漸地轉變爲客觀心態，從主觀的煩惱陷阱之底，撥救着冉冉上升

傲慢、失望等，均能使得生理組織，發生震撼而失去平衡的作用。假如學會了坐禪的方法，你就能够減少那些雜亂及無益的妄念，使你的頭腦經常保持輕鬆與冷靜的休閒狀態，當在需要用它來解決問題的時候，便得以充分地發揮它的最高功能。又能使你的全身各種內分泌腺，保持住相互調配、合作無間的工作狀態，促成交感神經系統與副交感神經系統的相互爲用。

比如，交感神經系統的腦下垂體、松果腺、耳下腺、甲狀腺、胸腺等，有收縮血管、升高血壓，使得全身的興奮機能活躍的作用，表現於外，則爲反應機警敏感等的功效。副交感神經系統的副腎、卵巢、睪丸、胰臟等的內分泌腺，有擴張血管、降低血壓、緩和興奮機能的作用，表現於外，則爲沉着穩定等的功效。兩者的優點相加，便可形成完美的人格，偏於任何一邊，均有它的缺陷。

我們知道，由於工作緊張、用腦過度、或者由於某種外來因素的刺激，不論是狂喜、暴怒等，均能使得血管收縮、脈搏跳動的次數增加、血壓升高、呼吸急促，結果，便可能形成腦溢血、失眠、心悸、耳鳴、神經過敏、消化不良等的病症。這是因爲，當你的情緒在劇烈地激動之時，你的血液中，由於內分泌腺的工作，失去了平衡，所以出現了毒素。

內分泌腺在正常狀態下是促進人體健康的。使之失去平衡，便會對於人體健康亮起警報的紅燈。坐禪的功效，能使人將浮動的情緒，轉化爲清明而平靜的情操，臨危險，不恐懼；逢歡樂，不狂喜；得之不以爲多，失之不以爲少；逆之不以爲厭，順之不以爲欣。所以它能成爲你身心安全的保障。

五、身心的調和及解放

說得更清楚些，人體的交感神經系統與副交感神經系統，

⑪胆結石。

⑫高血壓。

坐禪的最高目標，固然在於轉迷成悟。如果一開始便高談迷悟的問題，除了極少數根機深厚明利的人之外，對於大多數的人而言，是不切實際的。所以我們不得不借助科學的研究報告，向讀者介紹，坐禪對於身心所能產生的效果。此對於已有實際坐禪體驗的人，沒有用處，對於希望嘗試坐禪經驗的人，則有若干誘導作用。

四、身心安全的保障

人們在日常生活中，對於自己的身心的瞭解程度，是極其有限的，一個人在心理活動方面，每天究竟有過多少的念頭波動起伏，固然無暇審察，即使剛剛滑過的一分鐘之間，有過多少什麼樣的念頭？主要的一兩個，或尚有點印象，許多微細的、一閃即逝的念頭，就弄不清楚了。再從生理的活動方面探討，細胞組織的新陳代謝，生滅不已，從常識上說你是知道的，從感覺經驗上說你是無法知道的。當然，我們也沒有把這些問題弄清楚的必要。

重要的是，處身現代工商業社會中的人們，不論從事學問或職業、不論爲個人謀生活或爲大衆謀福到，處處需要運用高度的智能及强靭的體能，人們却很少知道，在其智能及體能的寶庫深處，有着很大的漏洞，將大量的能源，無謂地漏掉，同時，又不能生產出應該可以生產的足够的能源來。這可稱爲能源的浪費，也可稱爲生產量的停滯，既未盡力開源，也未能够節流，實在是極其可惜的事。

這個漏洞是甚麼？就是各種雜亂的妄念，消耗了體能，降低了智能，妄念之中尤其是使情緒激動的强烈的欲望、忿恨、

學KYOTO University心理學教授佐藤幸治Sato Yukimasa博士所著「禪のすすめ」(Zen Nosusume) 中的報告，坐禪有十種心理方面的效果·

①忍耐心的增強。

②治療各種過敏性疾患。

③意志力的堅固。

④思考力的增進。

⑤形成更圓滿的人格。

⑥迅速地使得頭腦冷靜。

⑦情緒的安定。

⑧提高行動的興趣和效率。

⑨使肉體上的種種疾病消失。

⑩達到開悟的境地。

又根據日本的醫學博士長谷川卯三郎 (Hasekawa U. Zaburo) 所著「新醫禪學」Shinizengaku 中的報告，提出了坐禪的十二種功效，治十二種疾病：

①治療神經過敏症。

②胃酸過多及胃酸過少症。

③皷腸症。

④結核病。

⑤失眠症。

⑥消化不良。

⑦慢性胃下垂。

⑧胃、腸的 Atonie。

⑨慢性便秘。

⑩下痢。

方法使得可遇而不可求的禪的經驗，成爲人人皆有機會獲得的財富，如果你希望得到它，而去跟隨一位禪的老師學習的話。

二、可貴的人身

求取禪的經驗，不限定採用某種特別的姿勢，比如正在病中的人，生理機能有殘障的人，或者工作特別忙碌所謂席不暇暖的人，他們可以躺在床上、坐在輪椅上，或在巴士站、電車站、車上、工作房等的任何所在，或立或坐，均可照着他們的老師所教的禪的方法，作數分鐘乃至數小時的實習。

效果最大、見效最快的方法，當然是採取雙腿盤坐的姿勢。雖然，初心學禪的人，尤其是中年以上的人，若想把雙腿盤坐的姿勢，坐到馴熟，並且享受到坐禪的樂趣的程度，必須先有忍耐兩腿疼痛及麻痺的心理準備，兩腿的痛和麻，也正是初心坐禪者和他自己的怯弱面，作堅苦戰鬪的一段歷程，當他通過了這段歷程之時，至少他的意志力，已戰勝了他的畏懼艱難而不敢面對現實的退縮心理，在人生的境界上，他已悄悄地向前上邁進了一步。

在所有的動物之中，唯有人體的構造，能够採取盤腿而坐的姿勢。所以，坐禪的方法，只對人類而設，坐禪的利益，只有人類才有機會享受。

我們應該慶幸，能够生而爲人，也該珍惜我們得到了的人身。因爲，從坐禪的實習之中，可以得到三大利益：①堅靭的體魄，②敏捷的頭腦，③淨化的人格。所以釋迦牟尼佛陀，經常對其弟子們讚歎人生的可貴，並且强調，在天上至地下的各類衆生之中，唯有得到了人身的衆生，最適合修行佛道。

三、科學家所見坐禪的功效

坐禪的好處，是從身心的反應而被發現。根據日本京都大

才是最好的方法。

坐禪的方法，雖是淵源於東方人的智慧，事實上，不論東方或西方，凡是偉大的宗教家、哲學家，傑出的政治家、科學家、藝術家等，多少均須得力於若干禪的功能，即使未必須採取特定的坐禪姿勢或坐禪的名稱，就他們發揮出超乎常人的智力和毅力的本質上說，與坐禪的功能是相應的，只是他們不知道那是出於禪的功能而已。由於他們的天賦高於常人，故在不自覺的情形下，能够得到若干禪的功用，使他們成爲傑出，成爲偉人。

我們既已知道，坐禪是發掘並發揮人類潛在智能和潛在體能的最佳方法，所以不難把普通人改造爲傑出的偉人。將天賦低的人變優秀，體魄差的人變強健，優秀者變得更優秀，體魄強健的變得更強健，使人人皆有成爲完人的可能。所以，坐禪是健全人生、建設社會、改善一切環境的最佳方法。對常人而言，坐禪可以堅強意志，改變氣質。在生理方面，可以得到新的活力；在心理方面，可以得到新的希望，對遇遭的一切環境方面，可以得到新的認識。因此，坐禪能使你獲得一個嶄新的生命，能使你發現你是多麼的幸福、自由、和生氣勃勃。

坐禪的功能，主要是由於心力或念力的集中於某一個抽象或具象的念頭而來。所以，在行、立、坐、臥的任何姿勢之時，均可能發生禪的反應。不論是沉思、默禱、禮拜、讀誦，乃至細心的審察、凝神的傾聽等心無二念之時，均有發生禪之反應的可能。唯其此等狀態下的禪的反應，是可遂而不可求的，對於絕大多數的人是不易發生的，縱然在極少數人的身上，偶然發生一兩次，却無法求其經常發生的。

正因如此，發源於東方的修習禪的方法，便成爲必要，這

坐禪的功能

聖嚴法師主講

于加拿大多倫多大學

一九七七年三月廿三日

一、坐禪即財富

近世以來，由於科學的長足進步，爲人類解決了不少來自自然環境、社會環境、以及生理和心理等各方面的難題。但是，等待着我們去解決的難題，也隨着人類物質文明的進展而越來越多。實際上，直到地球毀滅的那天爲止，自然環境加諸於人類的難題是不可能全部克服的，直到我們的肉體死亡的那一瞬間爲止，對於身體的機能是無法完全控制的。至少，人類無法阻止太陽熱能的漸漸消失，所以，地球的衰老與毀滅，將是無可避免的事。又由於人類無法阻止生理機能的漸漸老化，所以，肉體生命的必將死亡，也是無可避免的事。

然而，當地球尚可爲人類居住的一天，我們應該設法，改善自然環境，使之更有利於人類的生活與生存；當我們的肉體生命尚繼續活着的時候，我們就該設法，改善身心的健康，使之生活更舒適更愉快。這雖是現代科學的課題，但却不能將此責任交給現代科學，因爲推動科學，要仰賴人類的智能和體能，要想發掘潛在於人類身心深處的最高智能和體能，唯有坐禪

is radiant, open, as bright as the spring sunshine. Although externally emotions may appear for the sake of propagation and teaching, internally his mind is constantly calm and clear like the water in an autumn lake. We call such a person an enlightened saint.

Buddha Sakyamuni once said: "Every sentient being has the wisdom and merit of Buddha." So, if you long for the benefit that a meditator can get, your wish can definitely come true. The door of Zen is open to all, male and female, old and young, wise and dull, strong and weak, of all professions and trades, and of any religion and belief.

I must draw your attention to one thing which is very important: what you have just read is a discussion of Zen, and surely is not Zen itself. Zen Meditation requires your own determination and persistence to learn and to practice under a master whom you trust and can rely upon. Without practice, these pages may have just added some confusing knowledge to your already confused mind, and have not assisted you in any way toward your sincere wishes of learning Zen.

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layer of impure thoughts within oneself until not only you do not see a disguised and pretending self, but also you do not even see a naked self. The first object is to expose yourself. and the eventual object is to discover that there is actually nothing to expose. Therefore, a Zen Meditator needs not hide anything from others, nor feel any external pressure during the course of self reforming, and he definitely shall not have the feeling of a struggle as if sustaining the pain from cutting off a tumor. By means of practicing the method, meditation gradually reduces your wandering thoughts until reaching the state of mindlessness. Then you will naturally realize that your existance in the past was built on an accumulated pile of perplexed and wrongful notions which are not your true self. Your true self is one that is inalienable from all matters. The objective existance of all events is all the various parts of the subjective existance of yourself. So, you do not have to seek for anything or to despise anything, your aim is to build the entire self to be more orderly and to approach perfection.

A meditator, having reached this stage, becomes one full of warm compassion towards all human beings and towards all sentient beings. His character

power has initiated a secret burning ambition, mean ideas and dirty tricks. We speak of this kind of person as having a dual personality. Therefore, there are in this world well educated hypocrites and robed devils. Because religious doctrines, educational ethics, and artitsic appreciations, all come from outside and very often with authoritarian pressure, they do not necessarily correspond with the inner desires of each individual.

Zen Meditation is the best way to cultivate a perfect personality, because by discovering oneself from within, one achieves the goal of sublimation of personality. There is no need of any pressure from doctrines or ethics and morals. Besides, doctrines of religion, standards of ethics, and judgements of moral change with the time, the environment and the party dealt with. This is why so many new religions and new sects have emerged in recent decades, just like new bamboo shoots after a spring shower. Buddhism is no exception either. Due to its being unattached to outside causes, unwritten and unspoken in words, Zen, though being an offspring of Buddhism, constitutes a method of practice that lasts all seasons. Practice of Zen is like peeling a banana tree. It peels off layer after

just like adding an auxilliary heart to a human body, to largely increase the volume of blood in the circulatory system, increase the function of delivering nourishment, and reactivate the atrophic cell structure, enabling the dying cell structure to regain its regenerating function. Because of this, Zen Meditation can cure all kinds of diseases, serious diseases and chronic diseases.

When one suffers from a disease that medicine finds difficult to cure, he should try Zen Meditation. Although Zen Meditation can not produce an immediate result like removing an appendix, it can neverthless stabilize his emotion, reduce his fear, and ease his sufferings. Although there is a limit to the life of a physical organ, and Zen can not make a person permanently young and alive, at least it is possible Zen can make one live longer and live more happily.

7 To Cultivate a Perfect Personality

A perfect personality can be cultivated by education, art, religion, etc., but these are not absolutely dependable. Some people, because of education, art or religion, may exhibit on the surface a dignified character and noble deeds, but actually the irresistable desire of fame, wealth, and

relax the nerves, and largely secrete acetylcholin to attain tranquility, relaxation, and relief of toxic substances. To shift the center of breathing from chest to lower abdomen can not be accomplished by a couple days' practice. Some teachers of Yoga (瑜伽) and 'Chi-Kung' (氣功), suggest adopting abdomenal breathing as a means for that object. But that method can not suit everybody, if it is imposed on those who are physically not suited due to hereditary or acquired causes, practice may bring them sickness. The safe way is to follow the natural course by concentrating on breathing. Don't be anxious of having a quick result, just maintain normal breathing, practice regularly without break.

After a period of time, your breathing will naturally slow down, frequency will reduce, length of each breath will naturally extend and someday you will find that your breathing has already moved down to your lower abdomen from your chest.

The abdomenal breathing can send the blood from its storage in the liver and spleen to the heart. Liver and spleen have the function of producing and storing blood, a large volume of blood is kept in them and can suitably make up the blood deficiency in the heart when needed. Abdominal breathing is

greedy, full of hatred, lacking of self examination, unforgiving others, and unreasonable is because of disturbances which are none other than the excessive stress of subjective views. When you do not have it, you fight to get it, after you have got it, and if you love it, you would fear to lose it; and if you dislike it, you would fear that you could not get rid of it. So, you are disturbed when you cannot get it, and even if you do succeed in getting it, you are still surrounded by troubles. Only Zen Meditation can gradually turn your self-centered subjective attitude into objective attitude. to slowly bring you to the objective free world and liberate your body and mind from the bottom of the trap of subjective troubles.

6. Longevity and Happiness

Breathing has a lot to do with relieving burden of the sympathetic nervous system. Normally, a person uses the chest as the center of his breathing, a Zen Meditator, however, shifts the center to his lower abdomen, which we refer to as 'Tantien' (丹田) or 'Chi Hai' (氣海). The idea is to use the abdomenal pressure as a medium, coupled with mind control over the parasympathetic nervous system, to enlarge the blood vessels, lower the blood pressure,

may result in such good characters as a truly compassionate religious leader, a broad minded legislator or an inspired artist. While it may bring such bad results as to make a person who is indifferent of good and bad, right and wrong, lacking of ideals and principle, sloppy, and happy go lucky. Of course the result tends to be towards the negative side when the development of the two nervous systems is unbalanced; and if there is any good character in a person, it must be due to the harmonious development of the two systems.

In short, Zen Meditation is a method to coordinate the functions of all organs, helping them to work normally and to achieve their best performance. It starts with regulating the body, the breaths, and the mind, so as to reduce the burden on the sympathetic nervous system, to dilute the image of subjective views, - and to expand the boundary of a self-centered ego, making it larger and larger until the existance of "self" is forgotten. The subjective mind will then be merged with the objective mind. Having reached this stage, although the various disturbances have not yet been thoroughly untied and removed, one is free from their threat to physical and mental health. The reason that one is

you fear, no happiness can drive you crazy, no gain can make you feel rich and no loss can make you feel poor, no opposition can frustrate you and no flattering can excite you. It therefore assures you a security of body and mind.

5. Harmonization and Liberation of Body and Mind

To put it more specifically, the sympathetic nervous system and the parasympathetic nervous system should develop in balance; otherwise a person will be unhealthy as regards mental character development, not to mention having physical disorders. If the sympathetic nervous system is emphasized over the parasympathetic, then one will tend to be sensitive, selfish, restless, temperamental, lacking in friendliness, and unable to get well with others. If one tends towards the reverse then he will be dull minded, indifferent, lacking in vitality, resigned to his fate. By developing the former one may produce such good results as becoming a lofty and proud philosopher of high principles, a brilliant and firm militarist or a very critical scholar; or one may produce such bad results as a self-centered, brutal, daring and obstinate person. On the other hand, the effect of developing the parasympathetic system

the body. The result is building up alert and sensitive reactions. Whereas the endocrine glands of the adrenal, ovary, testis, pancrea, etc. of the parasympathetic nervous system can cause the dilatation of the blood vessels, lowering the blood pressure and slowing down the stimulation function of the body. The result is bringing about stable and steady character. The combination of the advantages of these two will form a perfect personality, and to incline either one side of the two will bring about a certain degree of defect in personality.

As we are aware, the pressure of work, excessive strain of brain, extreme excitement or anger caused by outside factors will give rise to the constriction of blood vessels, increase of pulse frequency, rise of blood pressure, and shortness of breath, thus resulting in such diseases as cerebral hemorrhage, insomnia, palpitation of heart, ringing of the ear, nervousness and indigestion. The reason is that when your emotion is storming violently, the function of your endocrine glands loses its balance and creates toxic substances in the blood. The effect of Zen Meditation is to turn a disturbed emotion into an alert and calm mood. Then, no danger can make

energy leaks out, and at the same time, our production of energy is way below our capability and our need. Indeed, it is a pity that we have not done everything we can to increase the production and to reduce the leakage.

What is the hole of the leakage? It s the ncontrolled distractive thoughts. These unco trolled distractive thoughts consume your physica' power and lower your mental power, and the worst of such thoughts are strong desires, hatred, arrogance, despair, etc. that stimulate emotion and thus disturb the balanced functions of physical organs. If you have learned the method of Zen Meditation, then you can reduce the disorderly and useless distractions and constantly keep your head in a restful state of clearness and coolness, so that it can fully exercise its function to a highest degree when needed. It will coordinate the endocrine glands, coordinate the sympathetic nervous system and the parasympathetic nervous system, and make function as complements to each other. For instance: the pituitary gland, pineal gland, thyroid giand and thymus gland, etc. of the sympathetic nervous system can cause the constriction of the blood vessels, raising the blood pressure, thus activate the stimulation function of

like to give Meditation a try, these reports may be useful introductions.

4. The Assurance of a Secured Body and Mind

We have very little knowledge of our own body and mind in the course of daily life. Mentally you do not know and have no time to examine how many times you have thoughts come and go in a day, or even in the very last minute that has just slipped by. You may catch some images of a few very outstanding thoughts, but you are not clear at all about the numerous trivial ones that have passed like lightening. On the other hand, physically, the cellular metabolism has not for a moment stopped. You may know it only because you learned it by common sense, but in no way do you experience the feeling of it. Of course, there is no necessity for us to clarify these problems.

What is important is that we, who live in the modern society of commerce and industry, must exercise a high degree of mental and physical power all the time whether in studies or on jobs; whether making a living or contributing to the welfare of others, and yet very few people realize that down at the deep bottom of our reservoir of energy there is a big hole through which tremendous amount of

Zen Meditation has 12 effects and can cure 12 diseases:

(1) nervousness
(2) too much or too little gastric acid
(3) abdominal distension tympany
(4) tuberculosis
(5) insomnia - trouble to fall asleep
(6) indigestion
(7) chronic ptosis of the stomach
(8) atonia of the stomach and intestine
(9) chronic constipation
(10) dysentery
(11) gall stones
(12) high blood pressure

The highest objective of Zen Meditation is enlightenment, but if we talk about enlightenment at the beginning stage, it will be impractical to the great majority of people with perhaps a very few exception who have good karma rooted deep in their past. So, we have to introduce to our readers, with the help of scientists' reports, Zen Meditation in respect of the effects it may bring to a person physically and mentally. To those who have had experience of Zen Meditation, these scientific reports can serve no purpose, but to beginners who would

with admiration of the valuable human life, and stressed the point that among all sentient beings, including those in heaven and in hell, only the being that have a human body are most suitable to learn and practice Buddhism.

3. Function of Zen Meditation as Viewed by Scientists

The benefits of Zen Meditation were discovered in the reaction of body and mind. According to the book "Zen Nosusume" (禪のすすめ) by Dr. Sato Yukimasa (佐藤幸治), Professor of Psychology of Kyoto University, Japan, Zen Meditation produces the following ten psychological effects:

(1) To increase patience
(2) To cure allergic conditions
(3) To strengthen willpower
(4) To improve reasoning power
(5) To refine personality
(6) To speedily calm mind
(7) To stabilize emotion
(8) To raise working spirit and efficiency
(9) To eliminate illness
(10) To attain enlightenment

According to the book "Shinizengaku" (新醫禪學) by Hasekawa U. Zaburo, M.D. (長谷川卯三郎),

hours.

The most effective method is of course practicing with a full lotus posture. However, for a beginning Zen student, particularly one who has passed middle age, in order to get used to sitting and further to be able to truly enjoy Zen Mediation, one must be psychologically prepared to tolerate the pain and numbness of the two legs in the posture of full lotus. This is actually a hard fight between the beginner and his/her own weakness. When this trouble is overcome, one has at least overcome one's inner cowardice of being afraid to accept challenge and daring not to face the reality, and has thus taken one big step ahead already without being aware of it. Of all the animals, only mankind has a body construction that can take a lotus sitting posture, and so the method of Zen Meditation is designed for mankind only, and only mankind can enjoy the benefit of Zen Meditation. We ought to congratulate ourselves for being born as a human being, and should treasure this human body that we have. Because from Zen Meditation we shall be able to derive three main benefits: (1) strong body, (2) alert mind, and (3) purified personality. That is why Buddha Sakyamuni has often told his disciples

how full of future you are. The effect of Zen comes from concentration of mind on one point--abstract or material. Therefore, it can be achieved while walking, standing, sitting, or lying down; in deep thought, silent prayer, confession, recitation or even close observation and watchful listening. In other words, when mind is focused on one and only one thing, there is the possibility of getting the effect of Zen. But getting the effect of Zen under such circumstances is accidental only. To the great majority of people, this does not happen easily, and even to the very few to whom it did occur, in no way could it happen regularly. It is because of this that the method of Zen Meditation developed in the Orient becomes a necessity. This method makes the Zen experience which could otherwise be obtainable only by accident a wealth that is accessable to every individual if one wishes to get it and learn from a Zen Master.

2. The Preciousness of Being a Human Being

In seeking the experience of Zen, one does not have to take any specific posture. For example, the sick, the handicapped, the busy businessmen can follow the method taught by their master and practice anywhere from a few minutes to several

more or less to the function of Zen. They might not have adopted the specific posture or form of Zen Meditation, but their ability to exercise their wisdom and persistance corresponded with the function of Zen Meditation, only they were not aware of it. Because they were gifted, they were able to derive benefits from the function of Zen naturally and unconciously, which made them outstanding and great.

Since we know that Zen Meditation is the best means of uncovering and developing one's hidden wisdom and physical power, then it is not difficult to transform an ordinary person into a great one, and undergifted person into a brilliant one, a physically weak person into a strong one, thus enabling all people to become perfect. Therefore, Zen Meditation is the best means to strengthen human life, build up society, and improve the entire environment. For an ordinary person, Zen Meditation can strengthen one's determination, beautify one's character; it helps one to gain new motivation physically, new hope psychologically, and fresh perception and understanding of the surrounding environment. Because of this, Zen Meditation can give you a new life, make you realize how fortunate, how free, and

Earth, the problems that come from nature can not be totally overcome. To give a few examples: human beings may not be able to stop the gradual diminishing of the solar heat energy, thus the weakening and eventually the dying of the Earth seem inevitable; human beings may not be able to stop the aging of the physical organs, thus the death of the physical body again seems inevitable. But, before the Earth becomes uninhabitable by human beings, we shall try to better the natural environment so that it can be more suitable for living; while our physical bodies are still alive, we shall find ways to improve our health, mind and body, so that we may live more comfortably and happily. Although these above are the direct challenges to modern science, we shall not leave the entire responsibility to the latter. In fact, the work of science depends on the wisdom and physical power of person, and Zen Meditation is the best means to uncover the supreme wisdom and physical power which are deeply hidden in a person's mind and body.

Althugh Zen Meditation is historically speaking the wisdom of the Orient, as a matter of fact all the great religious leaders, philosophers, politicians, scientists, artists, East or West, owe their greatness

THE ADVANTAGES ONE MAY DERIVE FROM ZEN MEDITATION

by Rev. Dr. Chang Sheng-yen

Translated from Chinese into English

by Kang Chen

1. Zen Meditation is Wealth

The speedy advance of science has in recent centuries solved many problems that were brought about by natural and social environments as well as human physical and psychological conditions. However, with the advancement of the material civilization, the problems waiting to be solved have instead increased. In fact, till the last day of the