

**Walking Zen:** gives rise to the unique experience of remaining detached, yet aware of every movement. It should ideally be a continuation of the meditative experience with each movement, harmonious and flowing. What in fact usually happens with the beginner is that movements are clumsy and disjointed rather than letting the moment express itself in movement. It is not unlike running downstairs, if you stop and think which foot goes next you are liable to trip and fall, yet if you let it happen, you seem to glide down the stairs. The important difference with Zen is that the movements are not mechanical but wholly conscious without losing any of their fluidity.

Zen walking requires that you be aware of your contact with the ground, the moment a foot leaves the ground, and every detail of the synchronised movement of your body, with each movement flowing into the next. The final stage comes when there is attunement not only the body but with everything around you; your walking does not offend nature and there is the sense that the air, sea and sky and everything that should be around you is sharing your experience. Do not be disappointed if things do not happen immediately, persevere and hold each moment until timeless movement holds past and future in a simultaneous act of comprehension. Contemplative walking can provide the relief needed after long periods of sitting. It also provides the means of continuing the spirit of meditation at the same time as enjoying gentle exercise.

Prepare for walking by placing the hands together with the back of one hand resting on the palm of the other and the thumbs lightly touching. Then start to walk slowly, fully aware of the function of walking. There should be no aspect of walking which escapes your attention, heel touching, sole of the foot etc. There should also be awareness of the breath, which is peaceful and co-ordinated. In the hands you can visualise a golden ball which symbolises the Will to Self Realisation. Alternatively feel that it is Peace or Love which rests in your hands like a Lotus Blossom, and that as you walk the spirit of love becomes part of your every movement.



**Spiritual Enfoldment – The Lotus:** We are evolving from the ground up and the history of mankind shows a gradual evolution from cave to modern man, with mutually agreed laws, based not only on the practical necessity of having to live together, but also on the spiritual perception we have of fair play and justice. To help us to continue the spiritual evolution, we have our guides and spiritual leaders; but there will come a time when we have to journey alone, guided by the guru or teacher that lies within.

This natural phase in the process of evolution comes when we progress to the of Raja Yoga or Self-Rulership and able to harness our own natural talents to guide us along the path we wish to follow.

Very few in the West can devote a lot of their time to yoga and meditation, and yet the demands of a busy life can also be an opportunity. The watchwords are “Be Here Now” and is a reminder to step back occasionally from the thoughts and feelings that dominate and control the mind. This stepping back into the present is an essential for regaining control and putting life back into perspective.

Every thought in the mind has an emotional charge which makes us vulnerable to the hidden persuaders, whose job it is to influence our likes and dislikes. We have a choice, wither to drift along, persuaded by others, or work to bring control back into our lives. This is where yoga is helpful, as postures can create the forms and patters that act as a form of psychic protection, also meditative breathing exercises can be calming, and soothes heart and mind. Watchfulness and discrimination are also two important watchwords and remind us not to get caught by wayward thoughts.

When we discover that essentially we are will, we are then divine beings, at one with the essence that has been with us since birth. To maintain this, we have to practise in each moment, living in the ‘Here and Now’ and experience the inner harmony that comes from a universal sense of purpose.

Every plant or tree starts its journey by emerging from the ground before flowering, and reaching its highest level of development, that started as an impulse that lay deep within. The Lotus symbolises this impulse toward light and life, in reaching up from the mud at the bottom of the lake, to flower and reflect the light of the sun.

In the human being the central channel or spinal cord within the spine has a subtle correspondent, referred to by yogis as the sushumna, along which the

rising and developing energy is symbolised by a lotus at each chakra and which if unimpeded unfolds into the spiritual beauty of the topmost chakra. This upward progression is usually slow due to preoccupation with appetites, emotions and thoughts; rarely does the energy rise spontaneously from chakra to chakra. Release usually comes after a period of isolation and quiet reflection, which is symbolised by the butterfly, which after a period of meditative isolation is transformed from grub to butterfly and independent flight.

Spiritual evolution to be successful, is a gradual process of enfoldment, as to experience prematurely the light of higher consciousness can cause stress in the unprepared nervous system. Calm evolution is the key, preparing the way by watching the breath and calming the breath, stilling the mind and practising “No Mind”, while taking the time to achieve a degree of inner strength.

When ready to awaken the refining light of consciousness, visualise the mind of the heart a beautiful Lotus, and then gradually allow the Lotus to dissolve back into the light from whence it came. Next allow the Lotus to return from God’s garden, more beautiful than before; continue this process of visualisation and dissolution until light and lotus become as one. Then let heart and mind enjoy the light of the transforming Consciousness.

Imagination can be an important link between the world of spirit and the world we see around us, as all forms are a manifestation of spirit. To reverse the process is to release the essence and spirit of the form. Sit for meditation with backs of hands resting on the knees, with fingers and palms open, resembling a Lotus on the still waters of a lake. Imagine that golden ripened ears of corn are placed in your hands, then let the form dissolve and experience the fullness and captured sunlight as it is released into your auric field.



Similarly drop into your palms the petals of a Lotus and experience the joyous spirit of the Lotus as it completes its journey towards light and life, or imagine that jewels of indescribable beauty drop into your palms, representing the Rainbow light of colours of the chakras. Then let the jewels (*mani*), dissolve into the spirit from whence they came, capturing and enriching every level of your being. Alternate nostril breathing will then carry the spirit and life of your meditation into your being at every level.