A Look At Zen Essay, Research Paper

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MARK FERGUSON

The study of Zen, it seems, became a main preoccupation of the Japanese, something never seen elsewhere. Embracing it with gusto, allowing it to mingle with old tales and myths, the Japanese raised Buddhism to a new height.

Students of the ways of Buddhism found they could, if diligent, attain a measure of spiritual freedom or self-fulfillment, which may well be lacking in other forms of thinking, certainly in religions. Though I doubt very seriously that any become deities (or powerful in the ways described in the stories found in Buddhist literature) in themselves, the Zen masters do possess an aura of attainment which, obviously from some form of realization, they emanate freely to all about them.

This single-minded approach to achieving the Buddha nature is reminiscent of earlier times when the Chinese practitioners attempted to attain immortality via potions and such. They surely have not the attainment with which Turnip found in legend, but I believe they profess a ability not unlike his, if even only in their own minds and not apparent to others.

With the exception of art forms and poetry, the advancement of mental ability probably hasn?t seen any change in 1300 years. This, I feel is a loss, and possibly a detriment to Buddhism in general. Its main claim to the benefit of man is in its ability to allow those who practice it a measure of release from the stresses brought about by living. And in this, maybe it has accomplished its initial goal. It just isn?t spelled out so clearly.

The stories are colorful and greatly descriptive, more so than most any other belief I?ve ever seen or delved into. They even exceed the myths of the Greeks, which paints pictures in the minds of those who listened to them. Woven in and around the myths of creation already extent in Japan when it reached its shores. Buddhism takes on new life in Zen and propels the Japanese into an extremely unique cultural development.