

Children and Meditation.

Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett

I am often asked, “How do you teach meditation to children and what is the best age to start at?” In the east the average child is taught to meditate as soon as it is possible for it to sit upright; i.e. around one or two years old. No doctrine is put into the child’s head. The mother and father, and the rest of the family, will sit quietly in front of the family altar; the child, without being restrained, will either sit for a few moments or roll around on the floor with the parents taking no notice. The parents thus express their knowledge of the child’s latent understanding and do not treat it as less than themselves. In a very short time the child wants to sit like the parents, as do, interestingly enough, the dog and cat. I have sat down to meditate and my cat has come up, looked at the wall and then sat down to look at it with me. Thus, if the parents meditate, the child will meditate too. I have seen children at the age of two and a half doing formal meditation in the laymen’s meditation hall in Sojiji—and doing a wonderful job. I have photographs of them. These children do a meditation so pure and exquisite it is unbelievable to watch; but they would not be able to discuss the Buddha Nature with you, nor would they be able to put into words the doctrine of the Trikaya—nor would they be able to explain the “all is one” and the “all is different” that their little bodies express. Their explanations are not as the world understands explanations. And yet every part of their bodies will express the “all is one” and the “all is

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different”—they will express the Buddha Nature for they have learned to meditate with their whole being untrammelled by duality. They are indeed whole creatures and can teach us much.

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