

Method of Tendai Sitting Meditation

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How to do Sitting Meditation

Calm Abiding and Insight Meditation - A New Way of Breathing

Introduction

Zazen (sitting meditation) is widely known as an excellent method of spiritually strengthening and calming oneself. However, it is difficult to practice sitting meditation simply because the sitting posture involved in it is hard to maintain.

The purpose of this booklet is to explain that the key to effective meditation is breath control. Once this is understood, it is possible for anyone to meditate in anyplace and at anytime. In the following pages, we explain how this can be done.

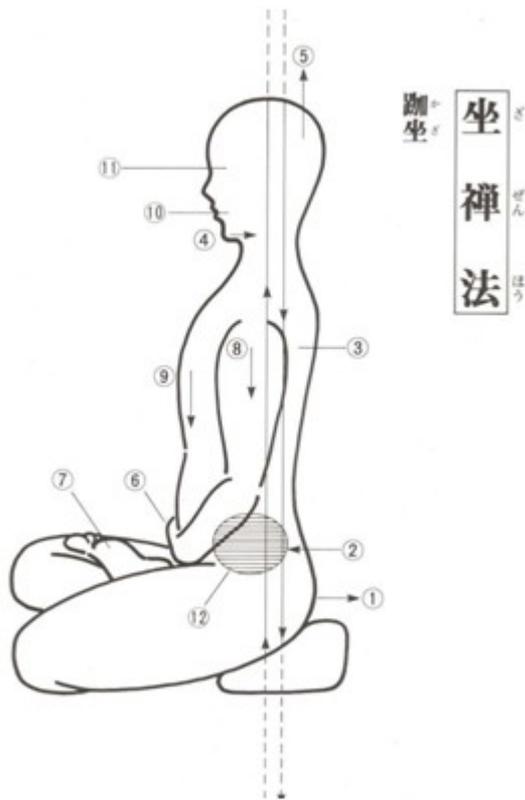
If you correctly understand this breathing method and put it into practice for even a short period of time every day, in the near future you will find yourself convinced of its benefits and enjoying the time spent meditating more than before.

People who are physically or spiritually weak will find themselves strengthened. Those who are depressed and negative will become more positive and optimistic. People who viewed everything in a distorted manner will at last stand straight and act with integrity and firmness.

In this pamphlet, we have refrained from all difficult explanations and theories. At a latter date and in a different format, we would be happy to explain such topics to those who are interested in them. At the present time our primary purpose is to urge people to try meditation with the new style of breath control described in the following pages.

Generally speaking, sitting meditation is a means for focusing the mind. Thus it should be matter which physical posture we adopt in practicing it. In this booklet, we will simply refer to meditation (rather than sitting meditation) and describe three ways to practice.

Of course, the methods of practicing are not limited to three ways. Any way of practicing which works in your daily life can be used. But here we will consider three postures and then proceed to discuss breathing techniques.



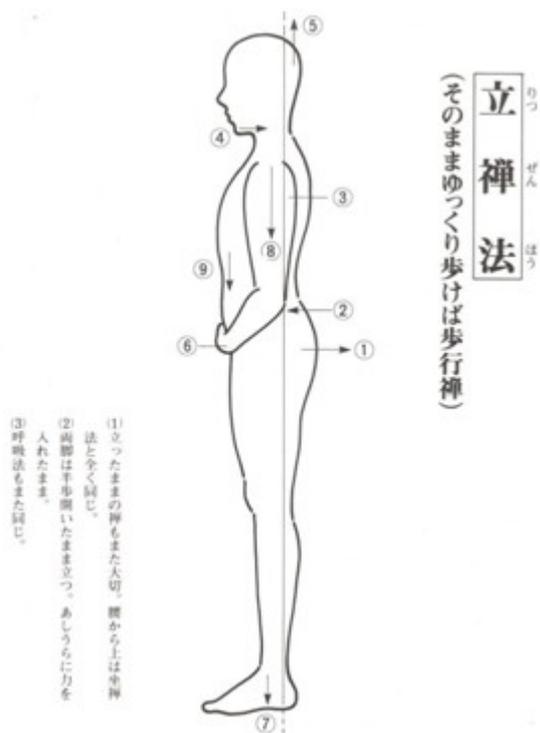
Sitting Meditation

1. Draw your buttocks backward.
2. Shift your hips firmly forward.
3. Extend (lengthen) your backbone.
4. Pull in your chin firmly.
5. Set the back of your head in a vertical line with your back and hips.
6. Grasp the right hand with the left hand and place them over your abdomen.
7. Concentrate your energy slightly on the soles of your feet.
8. Let your shoulders drop and relax.
9. Let your stomach drop downward.
10. Place the tip of your tongue lightly behind your upper teeth and close your mouth
11. Focus your attention on a spot directly in front of you. Your eyes should be open.
12. Your energy should be in your hips, along your backbone, and your chin. Your energy should not be placed in any other part of your body. It is important to sit comfortably.

Breathing Method

1. The upper half of your body should be relaxed. Exhale quietly, slowly, drawing the breath from deep within yourself (no.12 in the diagram). You should feel as if you were blowing air out.
2. As you finish exhaling, you should feel some of your energy in your abdomen.
3. Exhale thoroughly and in a downward direction.
4. As you exhale, slowly count 'one and...'
5. When you inhale, feel as if you were bringing the air upwards through your body and beyond the top of your head.
6. When you inhale, slowly count 'two and...'
7. In this way, you should count your breaths from one to one hundred and then repeat the whole process. As you count, your mind should be focused on the counting and no other thoughts should enter your mind.
8. Remember that you exhale on odd numbers and inhale on even numbers.
9. The basic rule of this type of breathing is to 'breathe comfortably.'

Walking Meditation



1. Learning to meditate while standing or walking slowly is important. The upper half of the body should be held in the same position as it is for sitting meditation.
2. Stand with the feet about one-half of a step apart. Your energy should be in the soles of your feet.
3. The breathing method is the same as in sitting meditation.

Meditating While Lying Down

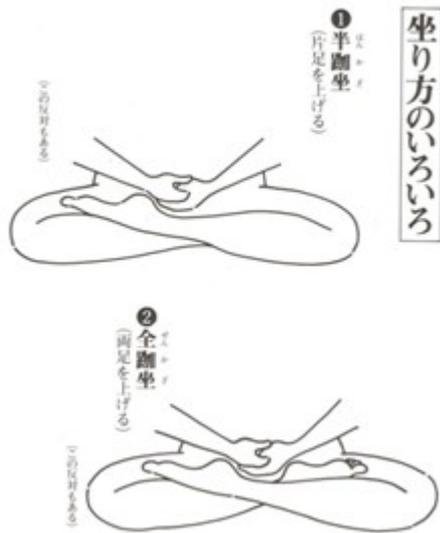
臥 禅 法 が ぜん ほう

- (1) 臥たままの禅は眼を閉、目覚めた後、必ず毎日五分以上はする。
- (2) アシを立てて、きちんと合せ、アシウラにやや力を入れる。
- (3) 両掌は下の方へ向けて、
- (4) 全身リラクセスして眼を開けたまま、
- (5) ゆっくりと呼吸をくり返す。
- (6) 自然にアシが伸びた時が睡るときである。両アシをやや開いて、この形のまま睡るのが理想。したがってマクラは使わないが良い。



1. You should meditate while lying down before going to sleep or after waking up for at least five minutes a day.
2. The toes should be pointing upwards and your legs neatly aligned. Place a slight amount of energy in the soles of your feet.
3. Your hands should be at your side with the palms down.
4. Your body should be relaxed and your eyes open.
5. Breathe slowly.
6. When your legs feel like they are stretching, then it is time to sleep. Your legs should be slightly apart. This is the ideal posture for sleeping. It is best not to use a pillow.

Illustrations for Sitting Meditation



1. Half-Lotus position (hankaza): one foot on the opposite thigh.
2. Full-Lotus position (zenkaza): Both feet up on the opposite thighs. Either foot may be in the superior position.
3. Sitting on the knees with the legs folded underneath (seiza): the knees should be two fists apart for a man, and one fist apart for a woman. The feet may be completely crossed (like a X) or at an angle (like a V).



1. Sitting on a chair (koshikakeza). You may meditate while sitting on a chair (but you should not be too far back on the seat). The upper part of the body is held in the same way as for sitting meditation. The feet should be about one-half of a step apart. It is important to have the height of the chair the same as the height of knees. The legs may not be crossed. Sit lightly on the chair with only your thumbs touching.

Vertical Breathing

Even though your body is aligned vertically, 'vertical breathing' is not easy. Practice is usually for the technique to be mastered.

This type of breathing comes from the diaphragm. It does not involve merely one part of body. Rather the breath seems to travel through the entire body. Thus although this type of breathing is based on breathing from the diaphragm, it has its own special qualities which surpass those of breathing from the diaphragm.

Below, we explain how to master and understand this type of breathing.

1. Practicing while standing on your tiptoes. Stand with your feet straight and stretch your body. If you feel unstable, you may hold onto a pillar with one hand. In this position inhale from the tips of your toes to the top of your head. Then exhale from the top of your head downward through your abdomen to the tips of your toes. Practice this over and feel the breath in your abdomen.
2. Practicing while walking. You can also practice by walking on your tiptoes. Begin by folding hands behind you and standing on your tiptoes. While you are walking draw your breath in along the vertical line running down your body. You should inhale once every three or four steps and exhale once during the next three or four steps. The essentials are the same as in method 1. Since this includes movement, it is enjoyable and the practitioner does not quickly become tired of it.
3. The elevator method of breathing. The method is the same whether one is sitting or standing. As the breath travels vertically through your body, you should feel as though the car of an elevator is going up and down through you. This feeling is important. The elevator car moves along a rope tied to the two ends of your body. Although the car is fairly heavy, it still moves at a constant speed as it travels between its two destinations. If the car does not move smoothly, then you should put more energy into the rope.
4. The rocket method of breathing. When the elevator method of breathing is carried further we have the 'rocket method of breathing.' The body is regarded as a tube with a rocket travelling up and down it. Starting from the upper end

of the tube, the rocket slowly descends down the tube. When it reaches the bottom of the tube, the rocket is fired with a deafening blast downward.

When you exhale, you should do so along with the rocket's movement, slowly counting 'one....and.' Your exhalation should be drawn out from the diaphragm all the way down to coccyx (to the heels when you are standing). Thus your exhalations are expelled downwards with the sound of a rocket as you count 'and.'

The rocket has moved downward to the bottom of the tube when you begin to inhale. It moves upward from your coccyx to the top of your head as you inhale and you slowly count 'two...and.' From the top of your head, the rocket takes off and soars upward as you continue to inhale and count "and."

If you practice faithfully at every opportunity, before long you will have mastered these breathing techniques.

Once you have mastered these techniques, when you do sitting meditation (which is in fact the basic practice), you will notice that your energy naturally is placed in your hips and abdomen as you repeatedly practice the rocket method of breathing.

Your center of gravity will be firmly settled at its lowest position and you will feel as though you are the axis or the center of the universe.

In this way, you will eventually come to feel one with the universe and overcome all delusions and discriminations. The time will come when you realize that you are indeed the Buddha.

General Rules for Meditation Practitioners

1. It is important that you are prepared to meditate at any time, any place, and under any circumstances. Any thing can be an opportunity to meditate.
2. Always count your breaths when you meditate.
3. Your center of gravity should drop from the lower half of your body to the soles of your feet. Your energy should be placed lightly in the soles of your feet whether you are standing, sitting, or walking.
4. You should feel as though your breath were travelling along a vertical line in your body.
5. If you can not devote a long period of time to meditation, then use five-minute periods throughout the day for meditation.
6. Do not meditate for one hour after meals.

