

A Brief Introduction to Shinsokan

For additional information, please call or visit Seicho-No-Ie Truth of Life Center, 14527 South Vermont Ave., Gardena, California 90247, phone: (310) 323-8486.

What is Shinsokan? It is a God-given prayerful meditation revealed directly to Rev. Masaharu Taniguchi when he attained spiritual enlightenment. Man cannot live by bread alone. Since he is a spiritual being even before he is a physical being, he needs spiritual food as much as, or even more than, he needs physical food. Shinsokan is that spiritual food which brings to the one who practices it, the spiritual knowledge that one is a Child of God and therefore perfect in every way. A mere intellectual understanding of this fact is not enough. The understanding must be intuitive and spiritual. We must know that God is within us with our heart, soul, and body, and Shinsokan is the way to that kind of understanding.

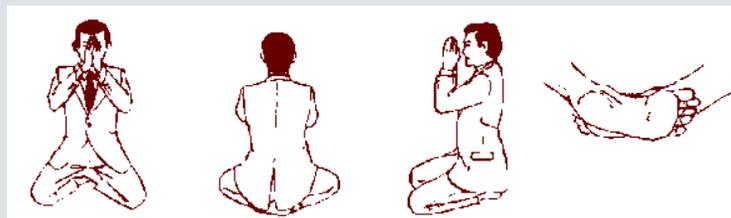
Shinsokan is not a means of placing certain conditions or requests before God to right a wrong, heal a disease, or attain some other selfish wish. Rather, Shinsokan is the way to recognize the God within, and therefore our own perfection as we are, and thus become sincerely grateful to God, oneself, all people, and all things.

To practice Shinsokan effectively, bear in mind its five elements: (1) posture, (2) breathing, (3) invocation, (4) word of the meditation, and (5) affirmation.

Proper posture is very important in the practice of Shinsokan. The universe is governed by a certain cosmic order - you might want to call it God - and if we wish to be part of the order and be in tune with the universal forces, we must have the proper posture, just as the various components of a TV set must be properly arranged so that the picture comes in without distortion. To place ourselves in proper alignment with the cosmic forces, we must put what belongs above, above; what belongs on the bottom, on the bottom; what belongs to the front, in front; and what belongs in back, in back.

The Seiza or formal posture is the one most highly recommended for proper alignment with the cosmic order. In this posture, we sit with legs folded beneath us, the left foot resting on the right. The left foot symbolizes fire, the masculine principle, positive polarity, and heaven. The right stands for water, the feminine principle, negative polarity, the earth. This position of the feet agrees with the cosmic order in which the heavens cover the earth.

Now, touch the spot about midway between the heel and the anklebone on the inside of the right foot, and you will feel an indentation. Place the left big toe in this hollow spot. Your right big toe should be placed near the anklebone on the outside of your left foot. This is somewhat uncomfortable, especially for the beginner. Therefore, to ease the tension, men should sit with legs spread 4 or 5 hand-widths between the knees; ladies 1 or 2.



Now, lean forward supporting most of your weight on your hands, raise your hips slightly, and push your hips back as much as you can. Now, sit up erect, with back straight and abdomen pushed out to the front as far as it will go. The upper body should be at ease without stiffness. You are now in a position of firm, balanced readiness, with all parts of the body in alignment with the cosmic forces. The head held high is at the highest point as it should be, the backbone is in line with the flow of the forces between the heavens and the earth, the feet are properly beneath everything and hidden from the view.

Shinsokan may be practiced also while sitting on a chair or even in bed if you are ill and cannot sit up for the meditation. When sitting in a chair, sit as far forward as possible. Keeping your toes together, draw your feet directly beneath you with only your toes touching the floor and supporting a good part of your body weight. If you are in doubt as to whether you have assumed the correct position, test it by putting all of your body weight on your toes and lifting your hips off the chair momentarily. If you can do this and return to your original position or one close to the edge of the chair, it means that you have the correct posture. Other details of the posture are the same as when sitting in the Seiza style.



The hands held together in prayer - this is called "Gassho" - play an important role in Shinsokan, for together with the center of the forehead, which is a spiritual center, and the breath, which is passed through the gassho, it helps one to attain a deeper concentration. When doing the gassho, put your hands lightly together, fingers extended but with a hollow between your palms large enough to hold an egg. The angle of the forearms where the hands meet should be approximately 60 degrees or as wide as an angle of an equilateral triangle. The distance between the elbows should be about as wide as your shoulders. Hold your gassho in front of and as close as possible to the face, but without touching it, so that the tips of the middle fingers are on a level with the center of the forehead. There will be a slight opening formed by the thumbs between the first and second joints, and this opening should be directly opposite your mouth so that your exhaled breath may be directed through this opening into the hollow of your gassho.

This will help to accentuate the life force that is generated by the positive and negative poles, or the left right hands respectively, which are together in the gassho. A tingling sensation will be felt as you exhale into the hollow of your gassho. Thus the three spiritual forces - namely, the spiritual center of the forehead, the gassho, and the breath which is the third life force - have been combined to form a powerful magnetic center that serves as an antenna to help you tune in on God's power which permeates the universe.

The physical eyes are closed lightly so as to completely shut out the world of the five senses and all worldly influences.

At the beginning of the Shinsokan will be the Invocation and Kiai (shout which is optional). The English Invocation is as follows:

*O Parent God who gives life to all living beings,
Fill my whole being with your Spirit and all blessings
My Life is not my own to claim,
It is the life of God, who permeates the universe.
My acts are not my own to claim,
They are the acts of God, who permeates the universe.
May the Lord of Seicho-No-Ie, who has appeared to teach us the
way of God, the Parent of heaven and earth,
Guide us and protect us!*

Follow the Invocation with:

*I now leave the world of the five senses and enter the Kingdom of God.
This is now, as is, the Kingdom of God!*

"Five Senses" means the five sensory perceptions of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and feel. The world perceived through the five senses is the "world of the five senses." It is a world that consists of both light and darkness, health, and disease, wealth, and poverty. The world of Jisso, however, is one of only goodness, although the world around us seems to be full of darkness, evil, and disease. This is like the full moon on a cloudy night. Yet, in reality, the moon is never cloudy; it cannot become cloudy, since it has no moisture. It is instead the cloud over the earth that causes the moon to appear cloudy. In the same way, the Jisso world is never cloudy, imperfect. So, we must turn our mind's eye away from the physical world and focus on the Jisso world, which is a world of God's wisdom, love, life, abundance, joy and harmony. When we focus our camera on a cloud-free full moon, we will get a perfect picture of a full moon. In the same way, when we visualize this world to be the Jisso world as it is, the reflected or phenomenal world will also be one of Jisso or perfection.

So, close your eyes to the imperfect phenomenal world and open your spiritual eyes. Your physical eyes are closed, but you have your spiritual eyes, or mind's eye, which you now open to visualize the spiritual world of Jisso, which is a world of brilliant light everywhere as far as the eye can see. It is a vast sea of light. So meditate as follows:

*God's sea of infinite wisdom;
God's sea of infinite wisdom;*

Feel deeply that God's infinite wisdom, which has appeared as light, is filling every part of the sea around you. With the same feeling, meditate on the remainder of the six attributes of God:

*God's sea of infinite love; God's sea of infinite love...
God's sea of infinite life; God's sea of infinite life...
God's sea of infinite abundance; God's sea of infinite abundance...
God's sea of infinite joy; God's sea of infinite joy...
God's sea of infinite harmony; God's sea of infinite harmony...*

After visualizing the Kingdom of God in this manner, continue as follows:

*I am in the Kingdom of God of Grand Harmony, and , as a child of God,
I am receiving from him an infinite supply of his infinite life power.*

Infinite life power means the six attributes or blessings that come from God. When you inhale and feel the flow of air into your lungs, believe it to be the infinite life power of God that is flowing into you, and quietly meditate:

God's infinite life power is flowing into me, flowing into me...

When you have taken a full breath of light, push your breath downward into your lower abdominal region, feel the fullness, and meditate:

God's infinite life power is filling me, sustaining me, filling me, sustaining me... Thank you very much, thank you very much. This is no longer my life, but the life of God that dwells in me.

Concentrate on this visualization and become sincerely grateful to God for the child-of-God awareness. In the meantime you will be slowly exhaling. When approximately 70 percent of your breath has been exhaled, begin inhaling once again, repeating the meditative thoughts as stated above.

This ends one cycle of the meditation. So, it is now time for you to apply what you have learned. (The average Shinsokan is about 30 minutes long.)

The Affirmation affirms the active presence of God's life and love in the universe:

*The life of Almighty God permeates the universe,
And the universe is thus blessed with perfect peace and grand harmony,
Now and forevermore. (repeat)*

The affirmation brings the Shinsokan to a close.