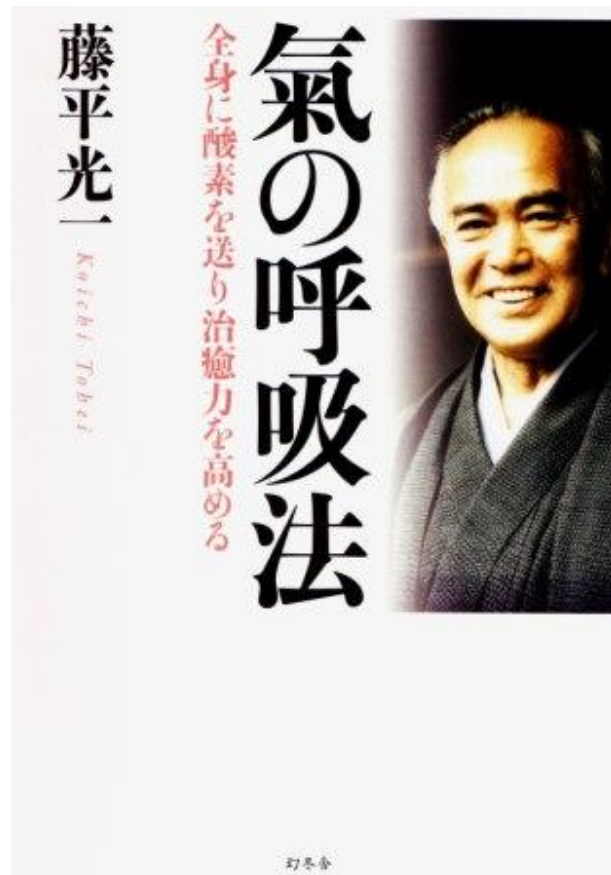


Ki Breathing - Koichi Tohei Sensei

Ki Breathing

by

Koichi Tohei Sensei



Koichi Tohei sensei wrote a new book, "Ki breathing (Ki no Kokyūho)" in Japanese on March 2005. This book has been best selling book in Japan. Many people have started to study Ki through this book. Many overseas members requested us to translate this book into English. Therefore, we decided to translate this book into English and upload it on the Shin Shin Toitsu Aikido weblog. I hope you will learn Ki principles more through this book. Thank you very much.

Shinichi Tohei

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Preface

I reach the age of eighty-five this year. I have been teaching Ki breathing all over the world beginning with Japan, U.S.A., Europe, Russia, Asia, Australia etc.

If you do Ki breathing correctly, it will help you to overcome any kind of illness naturally. Most modern diseases are caused by lack of oxygen in the cell.

If your cells lack oxygen, you may have cold hands and feet, headaches, stiff shoulders, rough and/or dry skin. In addition, you may experience problems with your tongue and nails or inflammation of the eyes.

It is easier to get cancer, cerebrovascular disease and dementia if your cells are lacking oxygen.

Therefore, it is important to bring fresh oxygen through every capillary vessel to maintain your health.

Modern people live with a lot of stress and they become irritated or upset. This causes blood vessels to contract and makes it difficult to bring fresh oxygen throughout the body effectively. Bad posture will also constrict blood flow. This is a weakness in modern people.

What kind of breathing exercise can we do to maintain our health?

There are many breathing methods in this world, such as Tanden breathing, Yogic breathing and so on. In some methods of breathing, exhale and inhale time are decided. In another method, you expand your lower abdomen when you inhale and hold in your lower abdomen when you exhale.

These breathing methods cause you to inhale strongly or stop your breath intentionally, or put strength in your lower abdomen. These breathing methods make your capillary vessels to contract making it difficult to carry oxygen throughout your body. They are just practicing deep breaths, which only exchange air in your lungs temporarily.

The breathing method that will carry fresh oxygen throughout your whole body is "Ki Breathing".

Ki breathing methods come from an old Shinto breathing called *Misogi no Kokyuhō* "Nagayo no den". (Misogi breathing)

Based on the oneness of mind and body, I designed this breathing method to be whole body breathing and named it "Ki Breathing".

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Characteristics of Ki breathing are breathing with oneness of mind and body, and to breathe naturally. Ki breathing does not require you to control your breath nor to stop your breath intentionally. You just breathe easily with a natural posture.

It is greatly misunderstood that if you strain in labored breathing, it is good for your health. It is difficult to continue labored breathing, however if the method of breathing is easy, natural and effective, anyone can continue.

The important thing is to know:

- What is natural?
- What is breathing naturally?
- How to breathe naturally?

If you read this book through to the end, you will understand what is *oneness of mind and body*, and what is *natural*.

My hope is for all the people in the world to have a bright, happy life.

About thirty years ago, I founded "Ki no Kenkyukai (Ki Society)" to study Ki principles together.

We have many branches all over the world now. And I am very glad that many people practice Ki principles with great earnestness and have a positive life.

Those people who can come to these classes and practice Ki have a desire for truth, motivation and health.

There are many people who do not have the energy to attend class because they are suffering from disease or misfortune. I especially hope for these people to study Ki principles, become conscious of the great power that is naturally ours, and overcome their misfortunes.

It is difficult to study anything by oneself. If you study with your friends and encourage each other, you will be able to continue studying Ki principles. Therefore, I hope you will study Ki breathing with your companion and/or friends and continue the Ki breathing everyday.

It is my great pleasure that this book will help those people.

About forty years ago, I published a book, "KI IN DAILY LIFE" to the U.S. and Europe. This book has been reprinted about several thousand every year in straight succession. And this remains a long seller book.

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This book is based on the book, "KI IN DAILY LIFE". And concerning Ki breathing part, I have updated the way of teaching the Ki Breathing methods to be easy to understand for beginners.

Many people practice Ki breathing and they have proven the effectiveness of Ki breathing. There are many benefits.

- Boost immune function (to activate life power and increase one's resistance to disease)
- Relax both mind and body (both mind and body become calm)
- Have good blood circulation whole body (improve cold feet and hands, inability to conceive)
- Become healthy and have radiant skin (gain your beauty)
- Less stress (to be able to control your emotions)
- Get high quality sleep (to improve apnea and fatigue)
- Improve climacteric disorder, autonomic ataxia and depression (recover from disease of mind and body)
- Having positive relationship in your home and office.
- When your Subconscious mind becomes plus (realization of the dreams and success)

By doing Ki breathing, whole body's blood circulation becomes good. Therefore, people who have developed diabetes can lower the level of sugar in the blood. Also, you can recover from cold feet or hay fever. Broken bone recovers very fast. Hairline fracture will be cured in a few days.

By doing Ki breathing and Kiatsu therapy, many people recovered from cancer, after effect of brain infarct and cerebral apoplexy.

(When your) Mind becomes calm, therefore, you can get over autonomic ataxia or depression.

I will teach you Ki breathing based on *oneness of mind and body* in the book.

First, I will explain to you basic ways of thinking to understand Ki breathing. Then, I will teach you a posture which is a fundamental of the Ki breathing and Ki breathing itself. I hope as many readers as possible understand natural posture, natural breathing and natural life. And by doing Ki breathing, I hope you will live a more fulfilling life.

March, 2005
Koichi Tohei

History of the Author

Koichi Tohei was born in Shitaya, Tokyo, in 1920. When he was three years old, he went back to his home town located in Tochigi prefecture. He was very weak when he was young. He always needed a doctor. His father worried about him. So his father started to teach Judo to Koichi Tohei. He was awarded black belt in Judo when he was 14 years old.

When he was 16 years old, he entered Keio University. He practiced Judo very sincerely. But he practiced it so intensely that he contracted pleurisy. As a result, he had to take a year off from the University. During recuperation, he read many books. He then began a serious self examination period, which concluded with the understanding that his mind was too weak. After he recovered from his illness, he practiced Zen and Misogi breathing earnestly.

When Koichi Tohei was 19 years old, he became a disciple of Master Morihei Ueshiba and started to practice Aikido. (In 1969, Koichi Tohei was awarded the 10th dan, the highest rank, from Master Morihei Ueshiba.)

Koichi Tohei entered the army soon after graduating Keio University. He was 23 years old at the time. He became a platoon leader in the army and was sent to China for four years. He discovered that if on the battle field, one's defenses are down for just a moment, this could mean death. Considering this circumstance, he decided to do Ki breathing 200 times a day. By doing Ki breathing on the battle field, he mastered keeping one point. Sometimes he could not calm his breath even though he did Ki breathing. When he felt like this, he noticed that it was because the enemy was hidden somewhere nearby.

After the war, he returned to practicing Zen, Misogi and Aikido. He also became a disciple of Master Tenpu Nakamura and mastered the principle "Mind moves body" through Master Tenpu's teaching. This then became the center of his own teaching.

In 1971, Koichi Tohei founded the Ki Society to spread Ki principles.

1950s

Mr. Sadaharu Oh (Japanese professional baseball player)

When Mr. Oh joined the Giants (Japanese professional baseball team), his personal growth seemed sluggish. Koichi Tohei taught him one point in the lower abdomen and to stand on one foot with Ki. This is known as "Ippon-ashi dahou"(Hitting ball standing on one foot)

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Mr. Shigeo Nagashima (Japanese professional baseball player)

Koichi Tohei taught Mr. Nagashima, who was also a professional baseball player. He taught Mr. Nagashima how to hold the bat with Ki. Soon Mr. Nagashima began to understand. After that, he hit many home runs. After Mr. Nagashima retired from baseball, he became the coach of the Giants. When his team had slumped to bottom in the league, he sent all the baseball players in his team to the Ki dojo and asked them to study the principle of Ki from Koichi Tohei.

Koichi Tohei went to the US and Europe numerous times to teach Ki principles and Ki-Aikido in over 20 states in the US and all over the world.

1970s

Takamiyama (Japanese Sumo wrestler)

Koichi Tohei taught Ki principles to Takamiyama at the request of his student in Hawaii. After this, Takamiyama became a champion of the tournament. However, by this time in his Sumo career, his stable master would not permit him to study anything other than Sumo. Therefore, he could not study Ki after that.

The Dragons (Japanese professional baseball team)

A year after the Giants became the Champions of the league for the ninth time in a row, Koichi Tohei taught Ki principles to the Dragons. In the season, the Dragons defeated the Giants and became the new Champions.

1980s

Chiyo-no-fuji (Japanese sumo wrestler)

At that time, Chiyo-no-fuji had just become Yokozuna (highest rank in sumo). At this point in his career, he had a match which resulted in the dislocation of his left shoulder. He was afraid that it would take a long time to heal, and he began to worry about a come back. However, he received Koichi Tohei's Kiatsu, and he recovered completely. After that, he won sixty-nine times in a row. This is a stupendous achievement.

The Lions (Japanese professional baseball team), Mr. Tatsuro Hirooka

Mr. Tatsuro Hirooka, who was a coach of Lions at that time, learned Ki principles from Koichi Tohei. He let each baseball player in the Lions club to study Ki principles. Each of the players came to Shinjuku dojo, and learned Ki principles. Starting from this year, the Lions became the Champions of the league for many years.

1990s

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Koichi Tohei put emphasis on seminars for companies and the training of business people. Koichi Tohei taught over 400 businessmen who attended "Koichi Tohei's Ki Dojo", which was sponsored by Japan Management Consultants Association. And before Mr. Hideki Matsui went to the US, Koichi Tohei taught him Ki principles. Koichi Tohei taught him to send Ki to the tip of the bat and how to relax.

Koichi Tohei has taught Ki principles to many people over the years including a world famous pianist, photographers, artists, singers, Kabuki and Noh actors, calligraphers, philosophers, policemen, narcotic investigators, the body guard of President of the US, and more from throughout of the world. They learned Ki principles and they achieve remarkable success.

Especially Ki breathing is studied by many of these people. For example, narcotic investigators learn Ki breathing to ease their mental pressure from their cases. Also, musicians and opera singers also learn Ki breathing to develop her vocal skills. Photographers are also learning Ki breathing to be one with the Universe.

Introduction

Human beings are one with the Universe

First, let's think together.

Where did we come from?

Everyone answers we were born because our mother's egg was fertilized with the father's sperm.

Well, where did the sperm and egg come from?

First we need to understand, what was the beginning of human beings?

Not only human beings but everything has its beginning.

Anything that has form must have a beginning. For example the sun is said to be blazing now, but there must have been a beginning of the fire. There must also have been a fire, before the fire started. If we trace the history of all things, we can only say that everything came from something invisible.

This is called "Mu" in Zen world. But this does not mean just nothing. This also means "there is nothing, but something exists".

If we think this way, our mind, body, sun, star, earth, animal, plants, everything was born from something invisible.

That is, everything came from infinitely small particles.

Ki is the infinite gathering of infinitely small particles.

Mathematically speaking, the basic entity of mathematics is the number one. The earth is one. A pebble is one. If it is reduced by half, what remains is also one. If it is reduced by half infinitely, it does not become zero. If there is one, half of it always exists. Ki is the infinite gathering of infinitely small particles. In this way the sun, the stars, the earth, plants, animals, and human mind and body are all born of the ki of the universal. Ki is the essence of the Universe and it interacted in various ways which gave the universe its form. Then the Universe was created. We are one with the Universe. And our lives are part of the life of the Universe.

Breathe the Ki of the Universe through your body

Our lives are like the amount of water we might take from the great sea and hold in our hands. We call this "I". Yes, it is the same as calling the water our water because we hold it in our hands. On the other hand, from the standpoint of the water, it is a part of the great sea.

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Although if we open our hands the water will fall back to the sea, even as it remains in our hands it is in conflux with the outer great sea. If we refuse to let the water flow with its own, it will go stale.

Our lives are part of the universal ki enclosed in the flesh of our bodies. Though we say that this is "I," viewed with the eyes of the mind, it is actually the ki of the universal. Even though that ki is encased in flesh, it is in conflux with and active as a part of the universal. When we breathe, we breathe the ki of the universal in with our entire body. When the conflux of our ki and that of the universal is unimpaired, we are in good health and are lively.

We live in harmony with the Universe.

Harmony means to interact with the Ki of the Universe.

Breathing is important to keep this harmony. We breathe the Ki of the Universe throughout our body.

Ki Breathing is to activate and interchange with the Ki of the Universe. This is the best way to activate your life power and keep your health.

Chapter 1: Ki Testing Your Posture

I will explain some important points with Ki Testing. It is not important if you move or not move. When you receive Ki test, you can resist "not to move" intentionally. However, if you think "Do Not Move!", you become tense and as a result, you lose natural stability.

There is no value in trying to not move.

The posture which is in harmony with the Universe or the posture with oneness of mind and body has natural stability. If your posture is correct, your posture is naturally stable. ***You do not have to brace yourself.*** The posture with oneness of mind and body is not only stable but allows you to move at anytime. If your body is tense, you cannot move freely at any time. If you tense your muscles in your legs or lower abdomen, you cannot be stable and cannot move freely. The posture in harmony with the Universe is the posture with oneness of mind and body. In this posture natural stability is kept and you can move anytime quickly.

Let's do Ki test while sitting (Seiza).

First, rise on your knees as shown in the photo.

Many people have a habit of putting their chest out and becoming tense. Move your shoulders up and down. You must move only your shoulder. You will find that it is difficult to move your shoulders up and down when you are tense.

On the other hand, if you have a hunched posture, it is difficult to move your shoulders up and down. The position that allows you to move your shoulders up and down the easiest is the natural position of the shoulder.

Next, sit down calmly. When you sit down, please do not push down on your lower body. When you sit, cross your big toes, one over the other. It does not matter which toe is above.

Check to be sure that you move your shoulders up and down several times. Put your hand on your lap lightly. Do not push down. When you receive Ki test, you will find that you are stable naturally without trying to not move. This is Seiza (sitting) posture with oneness of mind and body.

How to Sit Seiza Correctly

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Illustration 1: Seiza Preparation

First photo: Rise on your knees. Move your shoulders up and down several times to find a posture where you can do it easily. You should be sitting with your feet up.

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Illustration 2: Sitting in Seiza

Second photo: Sit seiza lightly. Check to be sure that you move your shoulders up and down several times. Put your hand on your lap lightly. Do not push down. Your toes cross, one on top of the other lightly.

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Illustration 3: Seiza Ki Testing

Third photo: When you receive Ki test, you will find that you are stable naturally, without thinking to not move.

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Seen from the back



Illustration 4: Seiza Preparation (Rear View)

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Illustration 5: Seiza Preparation (Rear View: Part 2)

Fifth photo: Your right first toe overlaps with left first toe lightly. It does not matter which toe is above or below.

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Illustration 6: Seiza (Rear View)

Sixth photo: You will sit down calmly. Then, move your shoulders up and down several times. Put your hand on your lap lightly.

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Seen from the side



Illustration 7: Seiza Preparation (Side View)

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Illustration 8: Seiza Preparation (Side View: Part 2)

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Illustration 9: Seiza (Side View)

Anyone can check if their posture is natural or not

We sit and stand frequently without thinking about it in our daily life. Therefore, not many people think deeply about their sitting posture and standing posture. However, let's think about the quality of your posture. You might have not heard the phrase "quality of the posture", but this is very important.

I have already written that children are taught correct posture as chest out and back straight at school and home. That is, posture that puts strain on the body.. If people are taught that this is correct posture, most people do not doubt this and believe that it is correct posture. But this is a big mistake.

True correct posture is not the posture that puts strain on your body.

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True correct posture is the most comfortable and stable posture, which is called natural posture.

The trouble is that people do not know how to check if it is natural posture or not. People who lived during the preindustrial era, lived during a time that machines were at an early stage of development. Therefore, people learned the most natural way to use their body through heavy work.

In particular, it's felt that people called masters or experts had outstanding techniques and performed their duties with natural posture. It can be said that because they did their work with natural posture, they could create masterpieces. However, nowadays, people devote most of their time to desk work and heavy work is done by machines. Children spend much time on computer games. As a result, people have less chance to use their body.

I think that this makes it difficult for people to master natural posture. However, there is a way that anyone can check if it is natural posture or not. I developed a "Ki test" to check natural posture. Let's do the following exercises. You will need one person who receives Ki test (A) and another who gives Ki test (B) here.

1. First, A straightens her spine and stands straight and stiff. This is shown by photo No. 1.
2. B touches around A's chest with her right hand, then B pushes straight toward A without interruption.
3. And then, A's upper body loses its stability and she becomes off balance and moves.

Some people often say, "Because she was pushed, it is natural to move." However, **this is not correct.**

Let's say A's weight is 50kg. If A is a sack of hammers, can B move it when pushing lightly as B did A? Yes, it is impossible to move.

However, if it is a person with weight 50kg, the person is moved very easily. If A moves by B pushing lightly, this shows that A's posture is unstable. Just because someone is physically larger or stronger does not mean they are stable. If one uses natural posture, there will be natural stability.

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Also, it goes without saying that photo No.2 "hunched posture" will be moved easily.

Next I will explain what correct standing posture is.

1. First run in place. By doing this, you will find the most natural foot position and distance between your feet.
2. Next stand on your toes with your heels off the ground. If you stand on your toes you might wobble the first time, but if you practice this several times, you can do this naturally.
If you can get stability when you stand on your toes, then ease your heels down to the ground. At this time, please check if your posture is like photo No. 3 "correct posture". Body should be leaning slightly forward as shown in the photo No. 3.
3. Then do the Ki test as you did before; B touches around A's chest with her right hand, then B pushes straight toward A without interruption. A can understand that her posture is stable without doing anything more.

By standing on your toes and easing your heels down to the ground, we can get stable posture.

Let me explain. It is important to use your mind and ki for your correct posture. In most of the cases, people stand with their weight on their heels. In other words, their mind reaches only to their heels.

When we measure the length of your arms and hands, everybody measures the length from shoulder to fingertip. What about leg and foot? Usually, people measure the length of the leg and foot from hip joint to heel. However, the toe is also a part of the foot.

When we are practicing standing with correct posture, it is natural that our mind or Ki goes to the tip of the toe. However, if people stand with their weight on the heel, this means Ki goes only to their heels.

The people of the past wore Japanese sandals. Therefore, if their Ki did not go to their toe, the sandals would come off.

Most modern people wear shoes. Therefore, if their Ki does not go to the toe, the shoes will not come off. Instead, shoes wear down at the heels much more and often unevenly.

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Your body is yours, therefore, it is natural that your Ki goes to all over the body. This is natural posture. If your Ki goes to your toe, you can keep natural posture and natural stability.

Ki test



Illustration 10: Chest Out Posture

Tenth photo: Stand straight and stiff

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Illustration 11: Standing Ki Test

Eleventh photo: Do Ki test...

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Illustration 12: Standing Ki Test (B moving A)

Twelfth photo: Easy to be moved

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(2) hunched posture



Illustration 13: Hunched Posture

Thirteenth photo: Loosing Ki and loss of energy

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Illustration 14: Hunched Posture Ki Test

Fourteenth photo: Do Ki test...

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Illustration 15: Hunched Posture Ki Test (B moves A Easily)

Fifteenth photo: Easy to be moved

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(3) Correct posture



Illustration 16: Correct Posture

Sixteenth photo: Run in place and check the natural distance of the feet. Then stand on your toes and ease your heels down on the ground. This is the relaxed standing posture.

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Illustration 17: Correct Posture Ki Testing

Seventeenth photo: Person who does Ki test stands diagonally in front and left of her partner and with her right hand, pushes gently on examinee's body between the left chest and shoulder.

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Illustration 18: Correct Posture (A is Immovable)

Eighteenth photo: Examinee can keep her posture stable without trying to not move.

Chapter 2: Correct Posture is an Elixir of Health

Correct posture prevents diseases and other problem conditions.

In daily life, anyone can have healthy life in mind and body if they can always maintain a correct posture. You might be surprised at hearing this. Or you might say that you cannot believe it. However, this is true. If you practice correct posture all the time, you will be able to prevent diseases and other problem conditions.

The length of a human being's blood vessels is 96,000 kilometer (about two and a half times around the earth). We have blood in our veins. Blood has a very crucial role. Blood flow carries Oxygen and nutrition throughout our whole body. At the same time, blood gathers body wastes and carbonic anhydride. Materials are exchanged between blood and body tissue through blood capillaries.

Bad posture constricts blood flow, therefore, this becomes the cause of many diseases.

As a result, your life power will decline; you will get discouraged and have no power to bear many hardships.

Bad posture leads to the disorder of the mind and body. If children practice poor posture, when they get old , they will have problems with curvature of the spine. In this condition, it is natural that they will easily get diseases and experience other health problems.

What most people believe to be correct posture is in fact wrong.

There are two types of wrong posture:

1. One is posture which is losing Ki. Everyone can understand this as wrong posture.

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- By practicing a hunched posture, internal organs are compressed. This constricts blood flow to the brain, you feel disoriented and your breathing becomes very shallow. If your breathe becomes shallow, it is easy to disturb your mind, which causes some people to become upset easily.
2. Another wrong posture is to tense your body. You might learn this posture at school or at the office known as "Ki o tsuke." When you do this, you straighten your back, throw back your shoulders and straighten your arm and leg. This posture is believed to be correct posture. Actually, this is wrong.
If you make your body tense, you feel tense. If you become tense, it compresses your blood vessels and constricts your blood flow. Unnatural posture makes unnatural movement, and this becomes the cause for other health problems.

The correct posture is the posture which is the most comfortable, the most stable and which allows you to move anytime.

If the correct posture is a comfortable posture, you can maintain this posture all the time. When you practice this natural posture, it follows universal principles.

Mind moves body

The mind and the body were originally one. We call this "Shin-shin ichinyo (oneness of mind and body).

(Editor's note: *We can think of this statement as a philosophical one: e.g. in mankind's preternatural state in the garden of Eden, body and mind were one. We can also think of this from a developmental perspective: e.g. an infant will move and grasp with disproportional commitment because they have not yet learned to "hedge" their grasp*).

The relationship between mind and body is compared to "when you stand in front of the mirror" and "reflection of your image in the mirror".

In this example standing in front of the mirror is "mind" and the reflection of your shape in a mirror is "body".

No one says "I become two people" when one sees the reflection of one's shape in a mirror. Both mind and body are you. However, mind has no color, no shape and cannot be grasped by the five senses. On the other hand, body is visible and tangible. Human beings recognize mind and body as separate by difference of their nature.

Our body reflects our mind.

When you smile standing in front of the mirror, the reflection of your face in the mirror also smiles. If you feel sad and stand in front of the mirror, the reflection of your face in a mirror also looks sad. There is an old saying that the reflection of your face in a mirror never smiles in advance.

The mind moves body.

Here is a simple example. Raise your hand while thinking "I will never raise my hand". Can you do it? You can raise your hand because you think "I can raise my hand". (Editor's note: this is the basis of hypnosis and self-hypnosis)

To the contrary, let's think "body moves mind". Body is influenced by your surroundings all the time. If the body moves mind, mind is always disturbed by your surroundings and will never become calm. "Mind moves body", therefore, we can have strong mind. Even if my body gets sick, mind will not necessarily become ill. Even if my body is exposed to adverse circumstances, my mind will not necessarily be affected by adverse circumstances."

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Body is visible. Mind is invisible. Therefore, many people only think about how to use body and they do not think about how to use their mind. There are big differences between using both your mind and body when doing things and when you do things without using mind but only using body.

Each movement has quality when we use mind.

If I give you an example in our daily life, you will understand it more easily. When you do something, you might have instances that you think "I do not want to do" in your mind but you physically do it anyway. This is a state of mind and body separation. In this state, you get tired easily and nothing good comes of it. On the other hand, when you do something which you want to do in your mind, you will feel almost no fatigue and you can work efficiently.

When you do not use your mind positively and use only your body, you are practicing the separation of mind and body. In the latter case, when using mind positively to the purpose and using body, this is the state of oneness of mind and body.

A common example of separation of mind and body occurs when you are walking up stairs. If you are preoccupied with other thoughts and walking up stairs, it is easy to miss a step and stumble.

Another example can occur when you leave your home and cannot remember locking the door to the house. By habit you may have locked the door, however when leaving the house if mind and body were not working together, you will not remember.

Have you ever had the experience where your eyes just see letters when you read a book, resulting in the need to reread the pages again to understand the content? This is another example of separation of mind and body.

As described above, oneness of mind and body and separation of mind and body can occur frequently in our daily life.

Today people are taught mind and body as separate items. Many people tend to think of mind and body as different in nature. People tend to think of the separation of mind and body as natural. If you try to put two things in one, it is

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difficult. Mind and body were originally one. Therefore, it is natural to use them together.

To use mind and body together, it is necessary to remember: ***your mind moves your body***. Before using your body, you should use your mind clearly first. By doing this, you can use your mind and body together.

In the first chapter, I explained the important ways of thinking to understand Ki breathing. In the next chapter, I will talk about natural posture (posture with oneness of mind and body) which is necessary to do Ki breathing.

The more you extend Ki, the more you receive Ki

Some people think of Ki as a supernatural power.

However, Ki is not a supernatural power. Ki is the infinite energy which exists among us. It is important to apply Ki in your daily life. This is the key to have a better life.

I use the word Ki in Kanji (Chinese character) like this 氣 (hereinafter called A) not using 氣 (hereinafter called B).

Why am I using A instead of B? A is the old way to express Ki in Kanji. So, some people may think I use this because I am old. But this is wrong. The kanji A is combination of meaning the universe and infinite. In the kanji B, the word 止 is included. This 止 means stop Ki. Therefore, I do not use kanji B because it does not express real meaning.

It is important to think about KI. Everyone says that they want to make the most out of life. What is a fulfilling life for you? If you have enough things, can you say you have a fulfilling life?
Work, life, money, love... there should be many answers.

I define a fulfilling life as the Universal Ki is fulfilling both our mind and body. We are part of the Universe, therefore, it is natural that our KI and the Ki of the Universe is always interchanging. We call this state as "ikiteiru" or "Ikioshiteiru" in Japanese. And when we do this, we have vitality.

As I stated before, if our Ki and the Ki of the Universe is prevented from interchanging, we become bad condition. And if this interchange is stopped completely, we will die. We call this "iki o hikitoru" in Japanese. If we extend Ki, we can receive fresh Ki from the Universe. And we can interchange Ki between the Universe and ourselves.

Some people say that if we use Ki, then our Ki will be drained. Therefore, they seldom use Ki.

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We should never stop extending Ki. Should we stop extending Ki, we cannot interchange our Ki with the Universe. If the water is stagnant, the water will go stale. However, flowing water will not go stale.

Ki is similar to water. Even if Ki appears to be stopping, Ki is always interchanging with the Universe. It is true that Ki can become depleted. However, it is also true that the more we use Ki, the more we receive Ki. If we interchange our Ki always with the Universe, our life power will be activated and we will become healthy.

The Universe never stops. The Universe is always changing. However, we cannot feel this movement by our senses.

We are on the earth. The earth rotates daily and go around the sun. However, we hardly realize this.

If you are sitting in a chair without moving, your blood is circulating inside of your body. There is nothing which does not move in the Universe. You can understand that it is unnatural to stop your Ki if you understand the principle of nature.

Breathing is similar, if you exhale, naturally breath comes in. If you try to stop your breath intentionally, this is unnatural. By understanding this principle, you will be able to do Ki breathing comfortably.

Chapter 3: Live with Positive Ki

Mind has a power

Our Ki is a part of the Universe and our body is the vessel used to house our Ki.

The mind is that thing, given by the Universe, with which we must protect and bring up the physical vessel and with which we must prompt and control the exchange of our own Ki with that of the Universe.

Perhaps we could make a comparison between the processes involved in the generation of electricity and those in the flow of Ki. In the generator, the basic essence of electricity becomes electricity and flows out to activate machines. The Universe is filled with Ki, our mind similar to an electrical generator, we use our mind to receive Ki, which in turn becomes our own Ki, the Ki that moves our body.

In fact, "Extend Ki" means by using our mind positively, mind generates Ki just like a power plant generates electricity. This means by using mind positively, our Ki interchanges with the Ki of the Universe.

Therefore, I call "plus Ki" as to extend Ki, "minus Ki" as to pull Ki. Now, I will talk about "plus Ki" which is important to do Ki breathing.

If I ask "Have you ever been injured or caught a cold?"; most of the people will say "Yes". And if I ask "Have you ever got angry, suffered sadness, had a conflict?", nobody will answer "No".

(Editor's Note: from a Western / Christian perspective, compare with: the Gospel - Matthew 9:5, Mark 2:9, Luke 5:3 "Which is easier to say: Your sins are forgiven, or to say, your illness is healed?")

Did I ask you two separate questions above? Most of the people think that first question is question about body, and the second question is a question about mind. But let's consider well. When we get sick, we are sensitive about small things and easy to anger, be afraid, suffer sadness, be jealous and have conflict. Many people become sick mentally by thinking as "Others are living happily. Why am I sick? What kind of bad thing have I done?"

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As described above, physical ailment is closely associated with mental issues. Physical ailments are on the surface; however, the cause of sickness comes from mental sources in many cases.

The reason we catch cold is not only due to the fact that we become physically weaker, but also from problems originated from the mind.

When people get sick, many people think only about their body and forget about their mind. Many of them do not realize their own mind problems and think they will get well if they take medicine. They are living forgetting some things and are living an unnatural life.

I will talk about my experiences with unnatural life which forgets about mind and only thinks about body.

I suffered a severe illness in the past. Before I was born, my mother had a close encounter with death from severe pneumonia which a doctor gave up on as hopeless. After that, I was born. Therefore, she was incredibly protective of me. Even after I entered elementary school, my mother made me absent from school if I sneezed once, because she believed I was weak child. I embraced it and I was absent from school many times. I attended school only six months until I was in the 2nd grade. I had a caretaker with me on my way to and from school to protect me from being bullied by pupils.

However, the more my mother took care of me well, the more I got sick. If some kind of sickness was to appear, I was the first one to catch the sickness in my family.

My father changed my weak mind and body. He made me wear light clothing even in the winter. Also, he taught me Judo. Thanks to Judo which my father taught, I got strong and healthy. When I entered the Judo club in Junior high school, I was awarded a black belt in Judo at 14 years of age.

I experienced other difficulties soon after. Judo which I learned for health gave me some important life lessons. When I was 16 years old, I entered Keio University. I had been practicing Judo, therefore, I entered the Judo club at Keio University. I met with misfortune while attending spring camp of the Judo club.

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During practicing Judo, I was tangled with a huge senior and we both tumbled. My left chest was hit very hard. I went to the hospital and found I had contracted pleurisy. The doctor told me to enter a hospital immediately.

Lucky for me, my fever went down the next day. The doctor permitted me to leave the hospital after a 17 day hospital stay. I thought that I could spend my University life like before. However, my doctor told me unexpected words at the very last medical examination. He told me to not practice Judo anymore. Not only Judo but also tennis, table tennis and so on. He permitted me to take walks. He also told me, "Your body is like a cracked cup. If you hit your chest again, it will be the end. Therefore, you should not raise your left arm high, and you should not do anything that will cause shock to your chest. You should not talk in a loud voice because this shocks your chest."

The doctor's words brought me back to my young days when I was weak. After that, I talked with others in a very small voice. When I tripped over a small stone while taking a walk, I felt shock on my chest and I was worried about the crack in my chest. Therefore, I was nervous even when I took a walk.

When I went to the seashore to a health resort for therapy, someone said, "Sea breeze is too rough for pleurisy. You should go to the mountains." Therefore, when I took a walk along the seaside, I wore a mask. Suddenly, I had a high fever nearly 40 degree. The doctor said this was a recurrence of pleurisy. I took medicine for the fever and lowered it. This was my daily life.

Not only with the doctor but it is common practice that if we have a severe attack of sickness, such as pleurisy, we should rest quietly. This is common practice for most people.

However, in contradiction to above, I did things which most people would consider out of the norm. When I got sick, my mind became weak, and I took things in a minus way. By doing this, I found that everything went bad through my experiences.

I decided to change myself from living a minus life.

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I visited Tetsuju Ogura sensei, a senior student of Tesshu Yamaoka sensei who had been known as a sword master and an excellent calligrapher.

I began my practice of misogi (breathing). "Misogi" is the practice of the breath which came from Japanese Shinto. This practice is sitting all day long for many days and exhale breath with loud voice as much as possible. We lose our voice in a half day. In addition to that, the seniors hit the backs of the participants during this practice. "Making loud voice", "Being hit on my back" I did these things which I had been prohibited to do by my doctor.

After I started practicing Misogi, my left chest started to hurt and I worried about a recurrence of illness. However, I promised my teacher that it was okay to die at the dojo during practice before I started.

(Editor's note: Can you think of a better place to die?)

Therefore, I made up my mind to let things go. I was practicing forgetting about my sickness and my pain disappeared during practice. After one year, I went to the hospital and took a medical examination. The pleurisy was by then completely gone. In general, the heavy pleurisy such as mine left patterns of pleurisy. However, there was no trace of pleurisy in my case.

My pleurisy was cured by doing Misogi breathing. This personal experience let me know if we train our mind and body and use mind in a positive way, we can use the great power that is naturally ours.

If I had continued my life as the doctor suggested, I would not have made a loud voice, run, played sports and would have worried about the recurrence of pleurisy at all times. It is easy to imagine that this was not a good life. The doctor advised only about the body.

We call body sickness "Yamai" in Japanese, and both mind and body sickness are called "Byoki" in Japanese. My experience shows that we cannot grow strong in health if we take care of only our body and we have worries or sickness in our mind.

If you hope to grow strong in health, it is important to realize not only the visible body but the invisible mind. Mind has such a power.

Change everything around you to plus

Both a plus and minus thinking method apply to practically everything. For instance, a person might see a few of his friends talking together. The person with a plus attitude will think nothing of it. The person with a minus attitude will immediately wonder if perhaps they are saying something bad about him. By thinking more than is necessary about such things this negative person's attitude will become more and more negative.

It is important to realize that plus attracts plus and minus attracts minus. If you are in a minus frame of mind, you will think minus, do minus, and change everything around you to minus. Because minus calls minus, if one thing goes bad, everything will look bad. If you fight with your wife when you leave the house in the morning, the whole day will go wrong.

Let one ill-tempered person come in to a group of four or five who are happily chatting together, and everyone will go silent and gloomy because that one person's minus is powerful enough to change everything around him to minus.

On the contrary, if your Ki is plus, your thoughts, deeds, and everything around you will be plus also. Conversely, when you are plus, you are happy in everything. Even if you are in a difficult situation, you can maintain calmness. Your plus mind calls plus, everything goes well.

"Happiness comes in through a laughing gate". This is a Japanese saying. Laughing is plus Ki. This saying means that plus calls plus, and happiness will come to you.

A person with a strongly plus nature enlivens a group of four or five people talking. Because his powerful plus is able to change his surroundings to plus.

It is said that "A brave general has no cowardly soldiers." This is because his powerful plus infuses his men with courage. On the other hand, a cowardly general will infect even his brave men with the same disease.

If we are interested in making the whole world and all of society brighter, not just ourselves alone, we must individually develop our own plus attributes and with them attempt to change everything around us to plus.

To be plus when you are under adverse circumstances

A sick person is usually minus. A minus person tends to go to another minus person and say, "Are you also sick? I am suffering from this type of illness. It is hard to be sick, isn't it?" In this way, the person becomes more minus. The more minus he is, the more plus he should seek from a strong healthy person.

Most people in a hospital are minus. Even a healthy person tends to become minus without knowing it if he stays in such a circumstance for a long time. Under these circumstances one must try to extend Ki plus.

Let's say the man above you on the job or your teacher has to reprimand you. You take it in either as minus or a plus way. You should realize that you are being corrected because you did something wrong.

If you take it with a good will before being reprimanded, and resolve not to repeat the mistake, the cause of scolding will vanish. Later even if the teacher or the higher official reprimands you, you can use your plus Ki and take the correction as you should.

And you should not move your mind about this matter.

There is no need to become downcast. The man who is scolding you will sympathize with your plus Ki, and without even knowing it, his Ki will become plus. He will lose all desire to be angry, and when he might find cause to reprimand you ten times, he will make do with only one or two.

On the other hand, you should not become minus by being hostile and resentful toward the reproving person. If you snivel and look as if you are about to burst in to tears, your minus attitude will transfer to the man reprimanding, who will become angrier than ever and reprimand you more than he should.

We always practice extend Ki in our Ki training.
Because we always practice plus Ki, the training hall is always filled with plus Ki.

Someone who is not well or is actually too sick to engage in practice can change his own Ki from minus to plus by just coming to the training hall and watching and receiving part of the abundant supply of positive Ki.

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Anyone who is not actively engaged in the training program and whose Ki becomes minus finds that it is extremely difficult to change back to plus. He can change it back if he has the help of the positive Ki of a large number of people.

When things are going well, anyone can easily keep himself positive. We have to discipline ourselves to change negative to positive when conditions are adverse. Since plus calls plus, a positive disposition can lead to a plus fate.

Our Ki is interchanging with the Universal Ki. If we extend our Ki as much as possible, we can improve this interchange. We can extend Ki all that we like because the supply is inexhaustible.

Once we have made our Ki positive, we should not be satisfied with it. We should spread it to all people. If we make our effort like lighting our individual lights one by one, our effort becomes big power and we can illuminate the whole world.

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Know your state of mind

Many people understand the importance of plus mind. However, it is not an easy thing to be plus mind always.

When we are in a state of minus mind, we do not realize it by ourselves. Before trying to keep plus mind, you should know your state of mind correctly.

Ki breathing is important to know yourself. If you do Ki breathing everyday, your breath becomes calm, and your mind also becomes calm.

If your mind becomes calm like the calm still surface of the water, your mind reflects all things clearly. In this state, you can know your state of mind correctly whether you are in a minus state of mind or obsessed with something.

I teach this state of the mind as "Like the calm, still surface of the water that reflects the moon and a flying bird, true living calmness is the condition of our mind that reflects all things clearly."

(Editor's Note: in early times, good mirrors were rare. A body of water, in the correct lighting could be a perfect natural mirror if it were to hold perfectly still).

The state of mind is similar to the surface of the water. When your mind is disturbed by worry, upset and nervousness, your mind is like water with many waves. This prevents you from seeing anything. If the surface of the water is calm, it reflects the moon as the moon and a bird as a bird like a mirror.

The most important thing is that we can realize the Universe. Let us live daily by calming our minds by practicing Ki breathing. By doing this, it reminds us to have a mind thankful to the Universe and our mind becomes plus naturally.

There are not always good things in our lives. Even if your mind become plus, if some minor minus things happened, your mind can become minus easily. Therefore, not only practice being plus mind by Ki breathing but also you need training in your daily life to keep your mind plus.

Training, however, does not mean that you force yourself to think of minus matters as plus.

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This way of thinking creates stress for you and minus will call minus.

Therefore, how can we train our minds to be plus?

You have a conscious mind which we can recognize and a subconscious mind which we cannot recognize. Subconscious mind is like the storehouse of the mind. The materials stored in the subconscious mind form the conscious mind. Generally, this is called action of the mind.

Therefore, even if you try to be plus minded on the surface, if your subconscious mind is minus, you can easily become minus. To change subconscious mind to plus, you will need daily practice.

The easiest practice is to use plus words in your daily life.

Words have a great power. The words you speak are spoken the closest to you. Therefore, it deeply works with your subconscious mind.

If you say to your child "You are a failed child" again and again, it speaks for itself. However, you may carelessly say minus words to yourself, phrases such as "I cannot", "I hate" and so on. If you say "I cannot" to yourself, this goes into your subconscious mind. Therefore, when you do something, you think "I cannot" first.

To keep plus mind always, you say plus words always. Even if you say minus words, you can alter your words. When you change your subconscious mind to plus, you can realize things in a plus way naturally.

"Be natural" is very important. There is no stress when you are natural. If you just want to be positive without practicing to change your subconscious mind, you cannot change.

There are many ways to practice changing your subconscious mind to plus. One of the ways is for you to write, "I will be a plus minded person" on a sheet of paper and put it in your dining room or bed room. By seeing it everyday, it will have great effect. Another way is to say "You will be a positive person" to yourself in a mirror before going to bed. This is also very effective.

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Even if these ways are so simple, many people will not do it. Many people ask me "How long should I do this?" I answer, "Until you will have changed." You need to do it for at least three months.

There is a lot of minus information that you are exposed to such as violent crime and criminal acts on the TV news or in the newspaper. Media need to report the truth, therefore, that will not change.

(Editor's Note: from a Western / Christian perspective, compare with: the Gospel - Luke 12:5 *Don't fear those who can kill the body; rather, be ware of those who can harm the soul*).

If you put minus information in your mind vaguely, it will have a minus influence on your body without you noticing. The minus stored in your subconscious mind will appear in certain situations.

It is very important to keep your subconscious mind plus for protecting yourself.

The art of self-defense is not the only way to protect yourself.

First, you need to calm your mind by practicing Ki breathing and be plus, furthermore, by practicing to change your subconscious mind everyday, you can master true plus life permanently.

Plus way of thinking according to the Universe

Many people think that the plus way of thinking is important. On the other hand, there are people who think that the plus way of thinking gives poor results sometimes. Which is correct? The important point is to define "plus".

I said that it is important to live according to the Universal principles. We should always think that "be plus" means true plus which is according to the Universe.

To be plus according to the Universe is not a difficult thing.

Sometimes, a plus thing for me is not a plus thing for others. If your benefit is a disbenefit for others, it is the same. True plus is to be plus both for oneself and others. If only you become plus, something is wrong with your way of thinking or approach. By forcing your self-centered plus on to others, there will be objections and conflict.

If you are a business person, you cannot prosper much if it is a disbenefit for your customer. Even if the business person earns a lot, if the business has environmentally destructive practices, the business will not last long.

Do not think pros and cons with selfish mind. We need to think of benefits for customers, as well as for the public benefit and the Universe.

Currently the media talks about national benefit many times. Similarly, if one nation is only thinking of its own country's benefit, this is not true national benefit. The true national benefit needs to benefit other countries as well as our own country. If a nation seeks for only its own benefit, there will be conflict or war.

This is the same as our communication in daily life. Many people have similarly experienced this. If you tell something good to others but others do not agree with you. We can see many scenes like this when parents tell their children, "I am saying this for your benefit."

It is true that parents said something for their children. However, sometimes it is parent's hope not the children's hope. Many times parents are unaware that

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they force their hope on children. If this occurs there will be conflict between the parents and children.

Every human being recognizes things that are presented in a self-centered way. Therefore, we need to verify always if our own plus coincides with the universal plus.

If your plus is only for yourself, your state of mind becomes self-centered, and you will always have conflict with others. If you cannot get along with others well even if you try to be plus mind, please evaluate to see if your plus is also plus for the Universe. This is the pitfall of thinking plus sometimes.

Some may say, "We need ego to grow". If this ego means the mind which is good for both you and others' growth, this is not ego. How will we be able to know if own plus corresponds to the Universal plus?

The Ki breathing will have a great role.

By practicing Ki breathing, your mind becomes calm, and your mind does not cling to any specific thoughts. If you do this you will realize if your way of thinking is correct or what you should do.

I define this state of mind as "Living calmness (Ochitsuki in Japanese)", and call this mind "Reiseishin (mind which is directly connected to the mind of the Universe)".

During World War II, my life was saved many times by practicing Ki breathing. There was no time to practice Ki breathing sitting while on the battle field. Therefore, I practiced Ki breathing while marching.

Usually, my mind got calm naturally, however, my mind did not get calm sometimes. When my mind did not calm, I sent a soldier out on reconnaissance immediately. Then we found the enemy's ambush always. I had experience of a calm mind, and I could identify dangerous situations.

Since returning from the World War II battle field, I have continued the practice of Ki breathing to this day. If my mind did not become calm even after I did Ki breathing, this was the sign of a dangerous or bad condition. Ki breathing saved my life so many times.

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I have taught Ki principles to hundreds of business people at "Koichi Tohei's Ki Dojo (seminar)" sponsored by Japan Management Consultants Association.

Business people need to make important decisions everyday. If those people make decisions with a self-centered mind, the results will always be wrong. If you make decisions according to the Universe, you can make decisions correctly. By doing Ki breathing and calming your mind, you can always keep your mind calm. Business people especially need to develop Reishin.

Chapter 4: Tohei-style Ki Breathing Methods

There have long been a number of methods for attaining spiritual unification. Unification means power. Just as if we concentrate light rays on a single spot we develop great power, so by concentrating our mind we can give birth to equally great power. The people of old said, "If you want to, you can do anything." People who fulfill important tasks are always those who excel in being able to concentrate their mind. Believing in God and praying with all your heart is certainly one way of unifying the mind.

There are many clear historical incidents of people whose true religious faith has given them great strength. Seated quietly with one's eyes closed, as we do in Zen meditation or in yoga, is also an outstanding way of unifying the mind. A scientist wrapped in his work or a farmer intent on his labors are instances of people who have unified their minds.

Many people in this world, however, are unable to concentrate their minds on one thing. Many others, though they manage to concentrate temporarily, are weak in powers of concentration. Just as we might expect, the ability to concentrate requires training.

Right now, I want to introduce Tohei style **ki** breathing methods as a method of spiritual unification that anyone anywhere can practice daily. The number is considerable. In some you inhale through the nose and exhale through the mouth, inhale and exhale through the nose, inhale through the mouth and exhale through the nose, or in others you add some motions as you breathe.

Among them, there is one long known in Japan as misogi breathing. I developed it into a Tohei style **ki** breathing method through applying the principles of mind and body unification. It is not only the method which beginners can most readily learn, it is also the most effective.

The Tohei Style Ki Breathing Method I

1. Kneel erect with your big toes crossed and with enough space between your knees for two fists. Rest both hands lightly on your thighs. (Note: When you first begin kneeling this way your legs are likely to become tired; but with practice you will become accustomed to the position, and the strength of your waist section will increase tremendously. Although for those who absolutely cannot kneel this way it is all right to sit in a chair, the kneeling position is by far the better.)

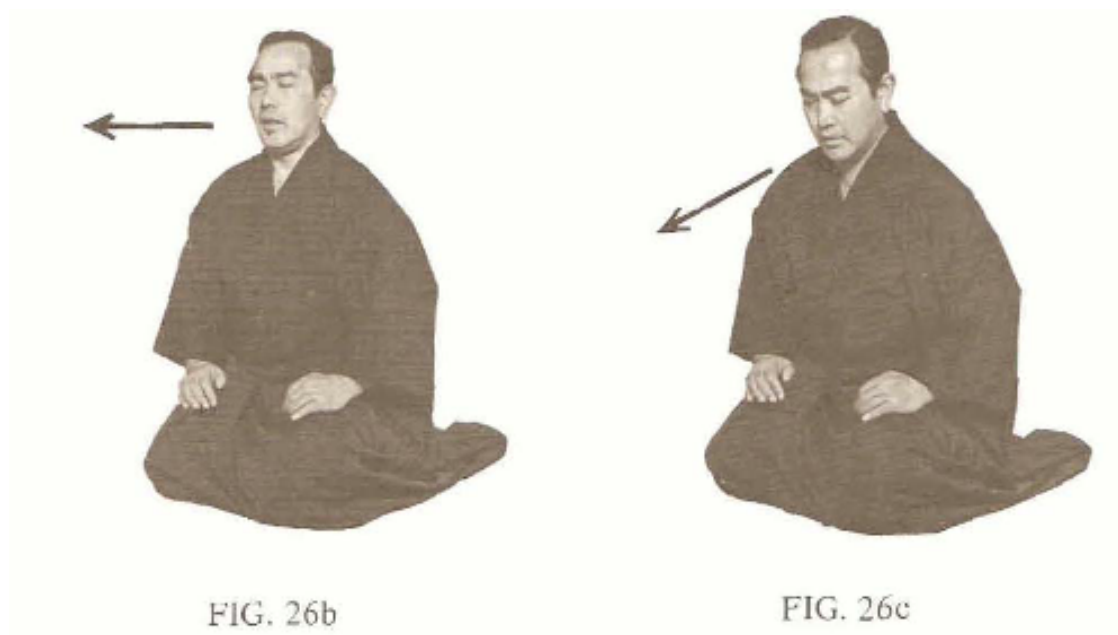
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FIG. 26a

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Hold your upper body erect and stretch your back muscles upward. The weight of your body should be concentrated in the one point. Relax your shoulders, and be at ease, (**Fig. 26 a**). From the beginning of the exercise to the end keep your eyes closed.



2. Form your mouth into the position for making the sound "ha". While letting a small sound escape your mouth begin quietly exhaling a long breath. Without stopping, let out as much breath as you can in the direction of the arrow in **fig. 26 b**. We ask you to make a small sound because if you

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FIG. 26d



FIG. 26e

do you can conveniently tell if your breath ceases midway and because from the sound you can tell whether you are exhaling quietly or not. The sound must be a clear long one. Usually this breath lasts for thirty seconds, but since this is a little hard on beginners, twenty seconds will be adequate. With practice you will be able to exhale for a longer time.

3. When you think you have exhaled enough, incline your upper body slightly forward and force out one last breath. Even when you think you have gone about as far as you can, usually there is a little breath left. To make sure there is no breath left in the body take special care and force out one last breath. This time the breath will travel in the direction shown by the arrow in *fig. 26 c*. Even when you have exhaled all your breath, you must not lose the one point in the lower abdomen, because if you do you will find it difficult to inhale in the next step.

4. When you have completely exhaled, wait a second or two, close your mouth, and making a small sound begin inhaling keeping the inclined posture. If you inhale directly into the chest you will be unable to inhale fully. You must always inhale quietly in the direction of the arrow in *fig. 26 d*. From beginning to end, the inhalation takes about 25 seconds. When you think you have inhaled all you can, draw in one last breath.

5. When you inhale in the direction in *fig. 26 d* you will naturally draw yourself up slightly. Now you must return to the original position **so** that

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your weight is again located in the one point in the lower abdomen *fig. 26 e*. If you do not keep one point in the lower abdomen it will be too painful for you to hold it in for ten seconds. The next exhalation will be disturbed. If you keep one point, you can relax completely. Then you will be able to hold your breath completely, even for thirty seconds if you want.

6. Concentrate your breath on the one point in the lower abdomen, when ten seconds have elapsed, draw yourself up slightly and open your mouth, and quietly begin to exhale.

Repeat this breathing exercise any number of times. Though actually the process of one inhalation and exhalation should take more than a minute, beginners may begin by setting forty seconds as their aim.

Though some people say that when you inhale you should not inhale fully but should hold one eighth of your breath, and others claim that when you have inhaled you should let a little air leak out and then hold your breath, both attitudes indicate ignorance of the one point in the lower abdomen. The idea behind both is that if one inhales fully it will be too painful to bear. Actually, we must learn the painless method in which we inhale completely and to concentrate all of the breath in the one point.

If our breathing stops during the process or if it is rough, we have clear indication that the one point is lost. Maintaining that point makes it possible always to both inhale and exhale in long, quiet, even breaths. Making a sound is the best way for beginners to practice on their own because it lets you know immediately when your breathing method is mistaken.

When you perform this breathing exercise, remember that it is not merely a matter of inhaling and exhaling. You must approach it with real spiritual concentration.

Breathe out so that your breath travels to heaven; breathe in till the breath reaches your belly. In other words, when you exhale do it so that you feel that your own breath will not expire before your eyes but will travel to the shores of heaven. We say this is **ki o dashite haku** or exhaling as we extend **ki**. In this method though our breathing is quiet it has strength.

In inhalation we say we must draw in the **ki** of the universal completely and concentrate it in the one point in the lower abdomen. In other words, we feel as if we were drawing the universal into our own abdomen. When we have exhaled all of our breath, we are in a position of having put everything into the hands of the universal. When we have inhaled completely we are at one with the universal.

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At first, you may be uncomfortable, your breathing may be disorderly and liable to break off midway, but if you repeat the exercise for ten or twenty minutes, your mind will calm down, and breathing will become comfortable.

With constant practice, you will reach the stage where your breathing will be long and calm and comfortable right from the start whenever you decide to perform the exercise. You will by then have forgotten your own body and will have entered into a world of nothing but breathing. You will feel as if it is the universal, not you yourself, who is doing the breathing. Finally you will come to comprehend yourself as a part of the universal. You will not realize the effect of breathing methods overnight; it takes discipline to enter its world.

When you have gotten to the point where you can practice your breathing method successfully in the proper kneeling position, you will be able to practice it anywhere, anytime whether you are standing, sitting in a chair, walking along, or lying down. When practicing while walking calm your mind by concentrating on the one point in the lower abdomen, and walk gently along the surface of the ground. Do not agitate the one point in the lower abdomen. If you shorten both the inhalation and the exhalation time slightly and extend the time in which you support the one point in the lower abdomen you will be able to practice quite comfortably. This is an extremely effective method of calming your mind even as you walk along.

To practice breathing while lying down, lie flat on your back with your legs stretched out straight. Since it is difficult to aim your inhaled air at the back of your head while you are lying down; inhale only as much as you can without straining, and concentrate the air in the one point in your lower abdomen. In this case also, shorten inhalation and exhalation times, and lengthen the time you hold in the one point. This method is useful when you are sick.

You can also practice breathing while you are driving or while you are waiting for someone.

If you are in a group of people where it would be embarrassing to open your mouth and make a sound as you breathe, follow the same general breathing pattern, but inhale and exhale through your nose. In ten minutes' practice you can acquire ten minutes' power, in an hour's practice an hour's power. Even if the practice periods are short, if you use them without waste their effect will add up to a great deal of power.

Do not forget, however, that practicing all the time can easily develop into not practicing at all. Things are as easily lost as they are easily acquired. The best habit to make is about fifteen minutes of practice just before sleeping and fifteen minutes just after getting up in the morning. You will certainly find that your

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strength will increase and you will be healthier if you give up fifteen minutes of sleep time for the sake of breathing practice.

Incidentally, if you have been studying or doing some work that has tired you, you will find that you will feel much better if, instead of **taking** a walk to rest, you practice breathing for fifteen or twenty minutes.

If on the occasion of some great incident you are agitated and unable to get a single good idea, resolutely practice breathing for about two hours, and you will be able to make up your mind, as new courage surges through you.

Sometimes it is stimulating for a group of like-minded people to get together and practice breathing. A person of irresolute temperament is likely to give up his practice halfway through, but if there is a group to lead him he can carry on successfully. When you practice in groups, of course, it is necessary to select a leader whose instructions everyone must follow. The leader should have something like wooden clappers to make a noise. When he strikes them together, everyone exhales together. When he strikes them a second time, everyone begins to inhale together. One more strike and everyone once again exhales together.

Continue this practice for about an hour.

Do not gasp for breath between the sounds of the clappers. Even though it may be uncomfortable, stick it out, and follow the leader's instructions.

If you do so you can master proper breathing, but you cannot if you cheat. If your breathing is uncomfortable because somewhere along the line you made a mistake, it is better to make the effort to find that mistake than it is to cheat. Though the leader himself may be able to breathe long and continuously he should not make himself the standard. He should control his breathing by making it more forceful and shorter so that the new members of the group can keep up.

Humans can manage to live for a time without eating, but if breathing stops for even a little while, all is over.

Though we breathe unconsciously, whether our breathing is proper or not has a great effect both on the spirit and on the welfare of the body.

A healthy person breathes in long strong breaths; a sickly person breathes in short weak ones. A spiritually stable person breathes quietly and evenly, whereas a nervous person breathes at random and in jerks. We can always promote spiritual stability and preserve health by controlling our breathing. In our body, nourishments absorbed through the digestive organs are broken down and

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burned to supply the energy needed to sustain life. Oxygen is absolutely necessary for this process. If the body cells are richly supplied with oxygen, the transformation of food into energy takes place efficiently. As by-products of this process, waste matters like carbon dioxide are produced. These waste matters must be eliminated immediately.

External breathing or breathing with the lungs describes the process where air from the external environment is inhaled into the lungs, and the carbon dioxide gas in the lungs exhaled. Internal breathing describes the process where oxygen is taken from the lungs by capillary vessels covering the air cells of the lungs into the larger blood vessels, and thence into the capillary vessels supplying the cells of the body with oxygen. In the opposite direction carbon dioxide produced in the cells are absorbed by capillary vessels which flow into larger blood vessels then into the capillary vessels of the lungs where it is exhaled. The important thing is the internal breathing.

Recent medical reports say that 80% of modern diseases are due to nervous problems. Most people get nervous, angry, or worried unnecessarily and tense their bodies. The capillary vessels naturally contract, becoming narrower and impeding the free circulation of blood. Being dependent on the flow of blood to exchange oxygen and carbon dioxide at the cellular level, internal breathing cannot be complete in this state. As a result, our life power or vitality naturally declines leaving us weakened and susceptible to diseases and disorder. Just like it is more important to prevent fire than to extinguish it, it is better to activate the life power than to cure diseases.

The method to activate the life powers the Tohei style **ki** breathing method. By breathing deeply, keeping one point and relaxing completely, all the capillary vessels open and the oxygen is sent to every part of the body. The nourishments are completely metabolized and the life power is manifested. The diseases of the liver, kidney, heart and diabetes and high blood pressure can be cured easily through the manifestation of your own life power.

Tohei style **Ki** breathing method *is* truly an **elixir of life**. Through setting aside a little time each day for breathing practice may not bring about any visible results, if we continue practice unfailingly we will be able to cultivate an invisible but powerful undercurrent of strength. By and by, we will reach the stage where **we** are always able to enter the realm of bodily and spiritual unification, where we are capable of amazing displays of power and health.

Plenty of people can see a lofty tree, but few notice the roots. A tree can grow to be lofty only if its roots are firmly planted. Such things as breathing methods are disciplines that form the roots of progress. Use the time and people ordinarily

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neglect or waste to practice these root disciplines, and you can grow to towering stature.

The Tohei Style KI Breathing Method 2

If we only have a short time, there is a breathing method that consists of inhaling and exhaling through the nose.

I. Stand with your legs open about a half step. In this breathing method you may either open or close your eyes. Spread your fingers, and let your arms hang naturally, (*fig 27a*).



II. Breathe in as if you were drawing in the *ki* of the universal. Then, as if you were pulling in the *ki* of the universal, close the fingers of both hands in order beginning with the little fingers. As you inhale, rise up on your toes. Inhalation should take about five seconds, (*fig. 27 b*).

Chapter 5: The Unity of Calm and Action

Thinking that calm and action are diametric opposites, many people may consider the very idea of the unity of calm and action strange. Ultimately, however, the two unite. All true aikido with mind and body coordinated techniques demand that the person performing them be in that state of unity between calm and action.

Among the disciplines of calm inactivity we might mention seated Zen meditation, breathing methods, quietly sitting, and praying, among active disciplines, of course, the martial arts and the sports, and physical labor itself. People who engage mainly in the quiet disciplines easily fall into the habit of reverencing calm only and of arriving in a state of the calm that is dead.

On the other hand, those who practice only the active disciplines respect only activity and easily become frenzied in their bustling about. Though in speech we make the distinction between calm and activity, since both are processes born of the **ki** of the universal, fundamentally they are the same. Either state implies the existence of the other. Action within calm, or calm within action, mean that a state of complete calm implies the element of extremely violent activity and that violent activity, by its own nature, implies absolute calm.

As we sit perfectly still we imagine that we are in a state of complete calm, but the fact is, seated on the surface of the revolving earth, we are traveling at great speeds. All of our calm includes this much activity.

Tops that children often play with approach a state of calm stability the faster they spin. We might say that their most perfect state of calm is reached when they move at the greatest speed. The truest calm must contain the nature of the most rapid movement.

This is what we mean by action within calm. True calm is not merely sitting still and allowing your consciousness to grow vague. A state of that sort makes wasted time of any attempts to practice seated Zen meditation or breathing methods. If you feel that this is the condition you are about to fall into as you practice some calm discipline, it is much preferable to fall asleep and get a good supply of the **ki** of the universal.

We must be able to instantaneously move with great speed even though, to outward appearances, we remain perfectly calm. We are able to move most rapidly and violently when we are most calm. If even when you confront your opponent's naked sword you remain clear-minded and as calm as the surface of a lake, you can immediately move in accordance with any action your opponent

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makes. The man who fusses with tricks and frantic devices is not worth mentioning. The man who is so calm that his opponent cannot predict his next move is formidable indeed.

Maintaining a profound calm within even the most violent action is also essential. Like the sea whose lower depths are always peaceful whatever tempest furrows its surface and like the eye of the typhoon around which the violent winds howl, we must always retain our own calm. Strength of action is born from inner calm. For this reason, if we have that calm, regardless of how rapidly we act, we will not upset our breathing.

A person who has not mastered this calm will disrupt his breathing, and even a little activity will dull the action of his limbs. Though a man may be ordinarily highly skilled at his techniques, if his breathing is uneven he cannot perform them. If he is facing one man, his opponent will lose control of his breathing too, and everything will be all right. If, however, he is fighting four or five men, if his breathing is rough, he will soon find himself unable to move at all.

We must always be conscious of the great importance of preserving our calm in action and of controlling our breathing. To master action in calm and calm in action you must concentrate all of your spirit in the one point in the lower abdomen. When the one point is infinitely condensed by half, for the first time unity of calm and action is obtained. Whether you are active or still, if you keep your mind and body unified, you will have mastered the secret of unity of calm and action.

When you have achieved this state you will be able to handle whatever complexities the world may offer with equanimity and accuracy.

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