

## *Seiza*: Quiet-Sitting/Sitting-in-Stillness Meditation

The style of *Seiza* meditation was developed and established by Torajiro Okada in the early years of 20<sup>th</sup> century in Japan and has been practiced by many Japanese people until now.

The basic process of *Seiza* can be found in documents in China and Japan written nearly one thousand years ago. Originally meditation has been experienced and developed by Buddhist monks and followers since about two thousand five hundred years ago when Shakyamuni Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, finally attained Enlightenment during his deep and calm sitting-meditation.

*Seiza* is a precious path and natural law and the way to properly activate our mind and body. *Seiza* is meant to be experienced rather than explained. It should be embodied, not researched.

The power/strength/force/energy of *Seiza* is enormous and without end. We should not carelessly harm our precious bodies through incorrect posture or idle life.

By proper posture and proper breathing, *Seiza* nurtures the power of *tanden*, or the lower belly, the internal energy of mind, and deeply strengthens the body's power, in so doing, we realize how precious and valuable our life and health are.

Through the self-discipline of sitting repeatedly we will deeply embody this realization.

*Seiza* masters say: “Regardless of circumstances, we must become real human beings settled calmly in the strength of their *hara* (belly), completely accepting things as they are, and surpassing the hardships in their lives. We fervently hope many people will adopt *Seiza* and earnestly practice.”

Power resides only in the *tanden*, or the lower belly. By incorporating the points of *Seiza*, the body develops stability by raising/erecting the lower back while relaxing the rest of the body. Then proper breath by breath, we fill the *tanden* with power.

Philosophy and thoughts of *Seiza* were expressed by Okada's sayings like as follows:

- When the vertical line of the body is established, then the perpendicular of the mind is also firm. Undisturbed quiet and fearless courage naturally occur.
- *Seiza* induces the development of our intelligence, virtue, and body. If we are able to rebuild our mind and body by training, we can make full use of our facilities.
- *Seiza* sitting style alone is not significant, but all of our behavior, walking, standing, sitting, lying as well as our daily lives must be *Seiza*.
- As jealousy, hatred, anger, ambition, doubt, and other vices arise, there is no power at the *tanden* (the point below and behind the navel).
- Breath by breath complete the great art of oneself.
- Release all force except for *tanden*.
- Be silent & sit down.

Effects of keeping *Seiza* in our daily lives and devotion to and mindfulness of the power of *tanden* are as follows:

- Do whatever you do with the power of *tanden* with this posture and with this breathing throughout the day. Before bedtime, we do *Seiza* in order to end the day and relieve all fatigue. While lying down on the bed you release the power of *tanden*, then you can enter deep sleep. On arising, sit *Seiza* immediately. Start your day by strengthening your lower belly and keep stabilizing your lower back to be able to do all you do with the power of *tanden*.
- Anyone can fully achieve their ability with the power of *tanden*, because it nurtures the fundamental human life force and our sound development of body and mind will be attained.

- If one slumps absentmindedly and the lower back isn't kept elevated, 20-40% of the total (5L) blood in whole body will stagnate and not circulate out of the inner organs. Using the power of *tanden* (found in the sustained exhalation), we eliminate this stagnation, improve blood circulation, and activate the inner organs. This nutritious blood flow will be absorbed and rapidly heal any illness naturally. The subordinate organs will carry out the harmonizing will of the strong central authority, improving our vitality, both physical and mental. Repeated *Seiza* practice will reveal this unity of body and mind.
- The three factors necessary for health are good diet, adequate sleep, and regular bowel movements. These conditions are easily attained through *Seiza* practice.
- One is aware and sensitive of the body, so that should illness arise, one immediately takes care both by visiting a physician but more importantly by focusing the power of *tanden*, which will actually benefit you.
- If one always maintains *tanden* with power, one should be ashamed of one's carelessness in catching a cold. Getting any illness, physical or mental, is never blamed on others, no matter what. Each accepts their own responsibility for these occurrences and practices *Seiza*.
- First putting power into *tanden* and breathing slowly will calm school students to better sit for examinations.
- *Seiza* practice will calm pregnant mothers and their fetuses mentally and physically and make childbirth easier for both. Mothers will be more able to easily breastfeed their infants and their children will grow up healthy and tranquil, passing vibrantly the spirit of *Seiza* to the next generation.
- Okada-sensei said, "Health is *Seiza's* free gift." Not only achieving good health, but more valuable matter, by avoiding dependence on external things, one achieves fundamental power through *Seiza*, the power of being truly alive. That achievement is the real value of *Seiza*.

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