

SHINTAIDO: ANCIENT TEACHINGS, NEW BODY LANGUAGE

EXPLORING THE PRACTICE OF HOLISTIC MARTIAL ARTS, MEDITATION AND HEALTH

[Shintaido means "new body way"](#) from [d franklin](#) on [Vimeo](#).

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The Shintaido non-method of breathing (4): Tenshingoso

Tenshingoso (天真五相, loosely translatable as "five expressions of the reality of the cosmos") is one of the basic forms of Shintaido, which includes vocalization of five sounds (A, E, I, O, Um) in combination with movements.

According to Shintaido instructor Giovanni Rossi, our general natural tendency is to inhale when we extend our arms upward or outward and to exhale when we bring our arms downward or closer to ourselves. For example, observe your natural tendency to inhale when reaching up for something on a high shelf.

In contrast, when practicing Tenshingoso, in conjunction with vocalizing, we exhale while our hands and arms are extending upward or outward. So because of the vocalizing, Tenshingoso is certainly a form of breath control or a breathing technique (even if the method of breathing is never explicitly mentioned).

In other words, we can consider any way of breathing which is different from what we tend to do without any special training or practice as "breath control" or a breathing technique. This raises the question of whether Tenshingoso can be considered a type of *qigong* (氣功, sometimes also transliterated *ch'i kung*). *Qi* (Japanese *ki*) can be translated as "life force energy," while *gong* means "skill acquired through training". Generally, *qigong* is a Chinese discipline associated with both martial arts and health exercise that encompasses a broad range of methods for working with the life force.

I can say from experience that Chinese recognize some Shintaido techniques as *qigong*. During a trip to China in 1987, Michael Thompson and I visited the Beidaihe Qigong Rehabilitation Hospital of Hebei Province (*Hebeisheng Beidaihe Qigong Liaoyang Yuan*, 河北省北戴河气功疗养院). In spite of not having a letter of introduction (de rigueur in China), we were graciously received and the director met with us and gave us a quite enthusiastic and detailed explanation of *qigong* and its medical

applications. Unfortunately a lot of it was beyond my linguistic capabilities, but one main point stuck clearly in my mind:

True *qigong* consists of the harmonious integration and disciplined training of three elements:

- breathing
- movement
- visualization

I'm sure that most Shintaido practitioners would agree that Tenshingoso fits this definition quite well and therefore can be considered a type of *qigong*.

POSTED BY DAVID FRANKLIN AT [14:47](#) 

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ABOUT SHINTAIDO

Shintaido (新体道, literally "new body way") has been called an "avant-garde martial art." Developed in Japan in the 1960s by Hiroyuki Aoki and the Rakutenkai group, it draws on a number of traditional martial arts. However, it is also inspired by fine arts, tea ceremony, theatre, etc. Thus the purpose of Shintaido goes beyond the confines of fighting or self-defense: as a meditation in motion and a way to express our creative intelligence, Shintaido aims to be a comprehensive art of human growth and development.

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