

NOTE: This article is a direct translation of an interview with Abe Sensei by AikiNews. While we have tried to maintain the integrity of that interview, it was necessary to augment certain concepts that required further explanation. These explanations will be highlighted in this blue typeface.

Eight Misoginogyo	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Noritohoujyou 2) Mizunogyo 3) Furitamanogyo 4) Chinkonnogyo 5) Amenotorifunenogyo 6) Otakebiokorobinogyo 7) Genshokunogyo 8) Bunkontouitsunogyo 	<p>Grand master, Mr. Abe, kindly performed and commentated on Mizunogyo and Genshokunogyo in eight Misoginogyo, which is explained</p>

The above summary represents the basic construct of the practice of Misogi (stringent rituals) as explained in this article. Misogi can be done on its own as a way to focus on the spiritual aspects of your practice (as done by ancient Japanese peoples in front of the shrines). Or Misogi can be done in conjunction with Aikido, Shodo, etc... as there is a real physical benefit/connection to these exercises that train Kokyu or “Breath Power”.

Kokyu is, by definition, to “breathe out and breathe in”. By training in Misogi one can focus the breath and mind so that proper breathing becomes natural, practitioners of Aikido (as well as other martial arts) can advance their techniques

O’Sensei has said that Aikido came from the Kojiki (see Kojiki article) and that “the two are inseparable”. With this in mind, Misogi too has its roots deep in mystical Shinto practices with practical applications today.

1) Haishinnogyo Noritohoujyou

(Method of Respiration, Lower Abdominal Deep Breathing, Chanting/Vocalizations)

Ooharaenokotoba - 2 times bow, 4 times handclaps.

Takaamaharanikamuzumasu Sumeragajitsukamurogigamurominomikotomochite
 Yaoyozunokamitachio kamutsudoenitsudoetamahi Kamuhakarinihakaritamahite
 Wagasumemimanomikotowa Toyoashiharanomizuhonokunio
 Yasukunitotairakekushiroshimesetokotoyosashimatsuriki.

Kakuyosashimatsurishikunuchini Araburukamitachiwoba Kamutohashinitohashitamahi
 Kamiharahiniharahitamahite Kototohishiiwanekinetachi Kusanokakihaomokotoyamete
 Amanoiwakurahanachi Amenoyaegumooitsunochiwakinichiwakite
 Amakudashiyosashimatsuriki.

Kakuyosashimatsurishiyomonokuninakato
 Ooyamatohitakaminokunioyasukunitosadamematsurite
 Shitatsuiwabanimiyabashirafutoshikitata Takaamaharanichigitakashite
 Sumemimanomikotonomizunomiarakatsukahematsurite

A m e n o m i k a g e h i n o m i k a g e t o k a k u r i m a s h i t e
Yasukunitotairakekushiroshimesamukunichininariidemuamenomasuhitoraga
Ayamachiokashikemukusagusanotsumigotowa Amatsutsumikunitsutsumi
Kokodakunotsumiidemu.

Kakuideba Amatsumiyagotomochite Amatsukanagiomotouchigiri Sueuchitachite
Chikuranookikuraniokitarahashite Amatsusugasoomotokaritachi Suekarikirite
Yaharinitorisakite Amatsunoritonofutonorigotoonore.

K a k u n o r a b a A m a t s u k a m i w a a m a n o i w a t o o s h i b i r a k i t e
Amenoyaegumooitsunochiwakinichiwakitekikoshimesamu Kunitsukamiwatakayamanosue
H i k i y a m a n o s u e n i n o b o r i m a s h i t e T a k a y a m a n o i h o r i
Hikiyamanoihoriokakiwaketekikoshimesamu.

K a k u k i k o s h i m e s h i t e b a T s u m i t o i u t s u m i w a a r a j i t o
Shinatonokazenoamenoyaegumoofukihanatsukotonogotoku Ashitanomigiri Yuubenomigiri
Asakazeyuukazenofukiharofukotonogotoku Ootsubenioruoofuneo Hetokihanachi
Tomotokihanachite Oounabaranioshihanatsukotonogotoku Ochikatanoshigekigamotoo
Y a k i g a m a n o t o g a m a m o c h i t e U c h i h a r o f u k o t o n o g o t o k u
Nokorutsumiwaarajitoharaetamahikiyometamofukotoo Takayamanosue Hikiyamanosueyori

Sakunadariniochitagitsu Hayakawanosenimasuseoritsu himetoiukami
Oounabaranimochiidenamu.

Kakumochiideinaba Arashionoshionoyaojino Yashiojinoshionoyaoainimasu
Hayaakitsu himetoiukami Mochikakanomitemu.

K a k u k a k a n o m i t e b a I b u k i d o n i m a s u I b u k i d o n u s h i t o i u k a m i
Nenokunisokonokuniniibukihanachitemu.

Kakuibukihanachiteba Nenokunisokonokuninimasu Hayasasurahimetoiukami
Mochisasurahiushinatemu.

Kakusasurahiushinahiteba Kyouyoriahajimetetsumitotsumiwaarajito
Harahetamahikiyometamahetomaosukotookikoshimeseto Kashikomikashikomimaosu.

4 times handclaps. 2 times bow.

“Norito is written very wonderful things by 延喜式norito. We learn method of respiration
by making best wishes. Content and concept of Norito is to get rid of muddle in your
mind and uelv side of your human nature. This is the method of respiration of Norito.

When we visited Abe Sensei's dojo, Norito was recited after Mizunogyo in the morning while
seated in seiza in the main dojo. It was recited (chanted) very quickly using an average of 7 or 8
breaths for the entire passage (as performed by Kinoshita Sensei). The breathing method was
most interesting as this Norito passage is rather long and took about 3 to 4 minutes to recite.
Quick deep breaths in and long slow exhalations with the vocalization of this Norito. Slow
Aikido/Kokyu practice followed this exercise for about 20 minutes.

(Note: While the eight Misogi are presented here in a specific order, when we were in Japan
recently, the order in which we practiced Misogi was slightly different. Also, each Misogi can be
performed as a stand alone practice. For example, in our dojo we practice Torifune and

Furitama at each lesson as part of our warm ups. Genshoku (reduced diet) can be practiced on a rotation, daily or only three days per week basis. Each individual can determine for themselves what level and what exercises they would like to incorporate into their practice.)

2) Mizunogyou (Get Rid of Evils)

The place for Mizunogyou is seashore, lake, pond, waterfall, river, practice place at school/dojo, and bathroom at home.

Pouring water on yourself, starting with your left leg and in order of right leg, knee, body, and head.

3 – 4 times a day before each meal and going to bed.

This exercise is a ritual purification and breath training using cold water. Used in conjunction with (3) Furitama, (5) Torifune and (6) Otakebi/Okorobi. Special protocols and etiquette accompany this practice including bowing, handclaps, entering and exiting the Misogi area.

3) Furitamanogyou

(Rapid Movement, Response and Motion are Identical, Method of Weakness)

Both of your hands rest with the palms together (left over right) in front of your stomach and shaking the hands up and down with your entire body as one, but relaxed at the shoulders. You do this Gyou when your body becomes (feels) stiff because of training or when you felt cold because of practicing Mizunogyou.

“You do this rapidly. You practice this several hundreds times in a minute. You can do this practice by itself. You can reach into spiritual state of nothingness by this movement. This is one of the important matters. If you do this before you do Mizunogyou, it helps to keep warming your body.”

Continuation of this one movement, there is extreme silence, only breathing. Next Chinkon is the deed for that.

This exercise passively trains the breath while standing in meditation. It is to keep warm, loosen stiff shoulders or muscles of the upper body, or relieve stress. It also, represents another way to focus and train in opposition to the larger movements and vocalizations done in (5) Torifune.



Here is a photo of Abe Sensei demonstrating the hand position for and posture for Furitama.

4) Chinkonnogyo (Good Spirit, Origin of All Existents is Same, Even Though the Way of Appearing and Vanishing of Existents is Different, the Root is Same)

“First, turn palm of your hands up in front of you and touch your left index finger with right index finger, and then touch your left thumb with right thumb, the rest of the fingers link together

(note: think making a church steeple). You then turn the palms down and the elbows go up and out with your index fingers pointing towards the sky and the thumbs pointing towards your chest. This is for entering into the stage of extreme silence. Breathing starts with inhaling from nose and you hold your breath, and then you exhale from nose. You repeat it. You do not move at all when you hold your breath. You search such ultimate silence by this form.

To be more specific, breathing should be inhaled from nose quietly like pushing air into bottom of your stomach (under the navel). And, the air should be held there for a while. Then, you exhale spending a lot of time very quietly and slowly. When you exhale, you need to feel like exhaling from pores of all your body. When you complete exhaling, you also need to hold your breath for a moment.”

“At this point, your eyes stay opened only one third, which is called Hangan. Your spirit should be concentrated. You can be focused on fingertips or somewhere in your hand that is invisible.”

Self is so-called human being. Human being is so-called self. Self

→ (Visible body and invisible heart). Center of self ⇔ Unification. Universe → (Visible Earth and invisible air). Self and universe are unified.

After this extreme and ultimate silence, now you search for absolute motion. Next Amenotorifunenogyo is for that. This stimulates the metabolism of every cell of your body.

This Misogi represents a distinct method of visualizations and breathing. Deep silence is the goal with the possibility of a momentary stillness of mind and body. Chinkonkishi lasts only one or two minutes and is done with the attitude that sometimes you may get “it” and sometimes you may not – the point is to try sincerely.



Here are two photos showing Abe Sensei in Chinkonkishi. The first shows the full seated posture and the second is the detail of the hand position.

5) Amenotorifunenogyo (Breathing Method while in motion)

“First, you stand with right leg in front and your hands are formed like paddling oar on dugout canoe. When you go forward, you move from hip. Your hands are helping to move the center of your body just like moving the boat to forward by paddling oar. When you do this, you put willpower into it. When you grab the oar, you vocalize, “Ei”, and when you pull, you vocalize, “Hoh”. You do both of right and left side.

When you practice, please imagine several situations; such as, when flow of a river becomes harder, what if you are at the sea, and the boat may crash if it is close to the quay. You do this with imaging in a dangerous situation when the boat is being swept away by a swift current. When you do fast, you vocalize, “Ei” “Sah”.”

In practice we use Torifune as a warm up exercise. Practitioners of Aikido will be familiar with this as the “rowing exercise”. It is generally made up of three components that represent yin/yang, tenkan/irimi, circle/triangle, etc... Unification of breath, mind, movement and vocalization is the goal.

The first of the three movements we start with the left foot forward (good hamni posture), hips soft, knees slightly bent and hands moving forward from the hips to a point extended in front of your hara. As you move the hips forward, the hands follow while exhaling gently and vocalizing the sound “Hoh” and as the hips move backwards quickly and the hands follow in the same way vocalizing the compound sound “Eeee-Aaaay”. It is like rowing a boat (practice to oar) while the hands/wrists remain relatively fixed and you pull the oar back towards your hips. The idea is to find where your breath fits into the rhythm of the movement. This movement can be interpreted as yin/female/accepting/tenkan/circle as the extension to blending is soft and the combining of the return stroke is firm.

In between each movement we transfer to Furitama (standing silent meditation) for a few moments to further control and define the breath.

The second movement is the opposite motion with right leg forward and the reverse breath, sound and hand movements. Firm extension with the sound of “Eeee-Aaaay”, soft return with the sound “Hoh” combined with the continuous breathing in rhythm of the movement. This may be interpreted as yang/male/giving/irimi/triangle.

The third and final movement is done with the left foot forward and the hand position is changed slightly from a rowing position to fully extended fingers moving at between hip and chest level. Almost like digging your fingers into the air in front of you. As you move the hips forward, extend the fingers extend and spread with the palms facing downward. The vocalization is “Saaaaaaahhh” and exhale. Continue to exhale and pull the fingers back and rotate the palm facing up vocalizing “Aaaay”. Try this movement is ever quicker back and forth motions and only using one breath until you cannot Kiai any longer. Then finish with Furitama. If you cannot use one breath, then breathe like the first two movements.

You can practice each movement 20 or more times each but only as a set of the three movements together. This way you can connect to the cycle of giving/accepting – triangle/circle – yin/yang and develop your Ki and Kokyu power to incorporate into your techniques.

Here are photos of Abe Sensei demonstrating the movements for the first two sets of Torifune as described above. The movement is virtually the same for the first two sets, only the direction, sounds and intention are switched.

6) Otakebi/Okorobinogyou (Ibukinogyou, Freezing Lower Abdomen)

Raise your index and middle fingers and grip like gripping sword. And, do as taking a backswing of sword above your head. When you bang your hand down, vocalize “Ye” (voice of fight spirit) with willpower. Then, at the same time you vocalize “Ei” (voice of fight spirit), you get your foot lined up and you try to have upright right arm above head like your right arm touches to your right ear. Those movements are repeated

“This is how a samurai draws a sword, girds, and cuts. This is such movement as encouraging other party who you cut. It is totally different from killing by cutting. The form is to encourage other party by cutting. You cut with the voice, “Ye”, and encourage with the voice, “Ei”. The voice starts with “i” and then, “Ei”. The fast “i” and “e” should be vocalized strongly and “tsu”, which is an afterglow, should be vocalized softly. When you encourage other party, you should vocalize only “e” and breathe as if pulling up other party’s last breath. This is the form when you bang your hand down. Please remember that you practice both right side and left side

This Otakebi practice is for moving quickly with your body (hands), breath, voice and ki. You practice sharp movements to focus your mind for the moment of meeting your opponent. If you are able to move quickly and set your center, then you can extend this to others in your sphere and meet them correctly

Okorobi was not described here but has the same intention but is a slightly different exercise. For Okorobi, you stand with feet forward and shoulder width apart. You breathe in while interlacing your fingers and raising them above your head. At an instant you rise up on your toes and stand as tall as possible and then immediately drop everything and exhale while shouting “Eeee-Aaaay” sharply. You force all the breath from the body at once as you drop.

7) Genkshokunogyou (Deed for reduced diet)

Refer to the interview.

This is covered very completely in the “Misogi” article posted on our website. It basically demonstrates the power of a diet made up mostly of brown rice with side dish of vegetables (ancient diet) versus the way we eat today.

8) Bunkontoutsunogyou (Center and Unification)

This Misogi is like 4) Chinkonkishi in that it is a seated meditation with breathing and concentration but not necessarily visualizations. This is done as the last Misogi in order to come to grips with all the various thoughts competing in your mind after practice. You focus on these various thoughts and bring them together for a moment of silence and reflection.

copyright 2002 by Aikido Doshinokai