

Mokusō – Contemplating in Silence (黙想)

The meaning of mokusō is "contemplating" or "thinking without words." Sometimes it is also translated as "meditation." The purpose of mokusō is to 'clear one's mind' which is very similar to the Zen Buddhism's concept of mushin (no mind). The reason why it is done at the beginning of class is to clear our minds from all past activities from that day/week and to prepare us for the intensity of training of the class. One doesn't need to be thinking about their financial issues, traffic, family, work, ect. The practitioner should be ready to train very hard and nothing should take his/her mind away from that. At a more advance level, he should be working on developing mushin. At the end of class, mokusō is used for relaxing and controlling your breathing from the intensity of training. This helps to clear their mind.

It is during [reihō](#) (etiquette during the bowing-in and the bowing-out ceremony) when mokusō is done. It is performed by sitting in [seiza](#) (seated posture) with both hands are placed in the lap with the right hand over the left and the thumbs touching lightly. The spine should be straight and the shoulders relaxed. One should breathe gently and only through the nose.

To "clear one's mind" one should concentrate on their breathing, along with the point between the eyebrows, and try to remove all thoughts. Removing all thoughts will be hard, so not everyone will be able to reach that point before reihō. In the Genbukan, to get everyone to the same level of clearing their mind we recite the [Ninniku Seishin](#) (Spirit of perseverance. Also, referred to as Ninja Seishin) poem. If one ever needs to reach a state of mental control quickly, just repeat the Ninniku Seishin poem.

