



The Power of Gassho

BY MARIE-EVE SÉNÉCHAL

WHEN I LOOK BACK on my journey with Reiki, I cannot help but remember the teenager I was almost 30 years ago. Just introduced to Reiki by my parents, I only had a manual containing the most basic information needed to grasp the power of the energy given to me in the attunements I received. That weekend, my parents only had two students, and one cancelled. I was not even planning to be there, but my parents offered me that second space in the class. Based on that opportunity, I wouldn't have believed that 30 years later, I would become a professional Reiki practitioner and even a Reiki Master Teacher. I have been teaching all levels of Reiki for six years. When I think back, the number of years seems insignificant compared to all the work done, and the progress made. During that weekend in my first Reiki class, I never thought the Reiki energy would take me this far.

When I decided to start a Reiki business, I took a refresher of Reiki I & II training with a different teacher to receive a certificate and begin my practice of Reiki in a remedial massage clinic. The manual *Reiki: The Healing Touch* introduced me to the Usui Japanese Reiki Techniques and then to a world of possibilities of practice I hadn't known were possible.¹ I remember particularly appreciating the Gassho Meditation. I enjoyed the deep relaxation it brought me, along with the mental, emotional, and physical balance I could reach every time I practiced. It not only showed me the traditional way to meditate with my two hands together, but it also revealed a greater power beyond a reminder of the Original Reiki Ideals or a prayer before a Reiki session.²

After reading an article about the five transforming secrets of that meditation, I started using Gassho to connect with the symbols and learn more from them to improve my

teaching methods.³ I learned with surprise how the effectiveness of that meditation helped me merge with the symbols. This healed different aspects of my life, enhancing my confidence in my teaching methods. Later, after I finished the Master level training, I connected with the Master symbol, which took me further in my journey. After completing the Holy Fire® III Karuna Reiki® training, I used the same process with the Karuna symbols and Gassho helped me develop a greater inner awareness and connect with my spiritual core. However, I never thought I would share that personal journey with my students.

Since the beginning of my practice as a Master Teacher, I have seen many students with different needs and expectations. Some challenged me with their questions and willingness to learn more in every new class. I experience the same challenges with my Reiki Circles every month. It amazes me how both have greatly helped me in the evolution of my teaching techniques and my knowledge of Reiki energy. But recently, one of my students became genuinely concerned about passing the class without having reached a solid level of comprehension of the symbols and feeling she needed more time to be fully ready to practice Reiki on her own.

I saw those learning concerns in the classes when I was still using the Usui attunement technique. However, they vanished when I started using Placements. I also noticed an improvement in my students' learning. The HSZSN, which was usually a little more challenging for my Reiki II students, became easier to grasp. I have even had students be able to remember the names and the drawings of the symbols in half the time I usually allow for the practice, which is about ten or fifteen minutes, after conducting the Placement. Therefore, students were ready to practice them right away in a Reiki session.

One student, however, was still having concerns after the Placement. From the beginning of class, I noticed she finished all the exercises faster than the other students. That did not disturb me, although I wanted to ensure that she fully appreciated all the steps in her learning journey with me and the group before going home. During one break, she confessed to me she felt uncomfortable about being quiet for a long time; that she worried she could not have all that learning time for herself. I reassured her she was at the right place at the right time and that she could enjoy all the exercises scheduled and even learn the symbols. That is when I thought of my personal practices with the Gassho medita-

tion and thought it could help her find her core and connect with the symbols. I decided it would benefit all the students in the class. The results were powerful.

I asked everyone to put their chairs in a circle, eyes closed and hands together in prayer close to the heart. I told them we would do a double experiment. We would practice Gassho and the symbols. The exercise was simple:

- Breathe three times slowly and deeply, focusing on the space between the hands.
- Say the name of the first symbol three times.
- Draw and visualize the CKR for five minutes.
- Let go of the CKR, welcome SHK and hold the image for five minutes.
- Let go of SHK and welcome HSZSN and do the same exercise as with the first two symbols for five minutes.
- Finish with three deep and slow breaths, focusing back on the space between the palms of the hands.
- Return the awareness to the eyes and share the experience with others.

Within each five-minute block, I guided them to connect with each symbol, breathe each symbol, feel the symbol, and listen to what each symbol had to communicate to them, either with all their chakras or with one in particular. In fact, the exercise also became a practice of the second pillar of Reiki, Reiji-ho, except for their own healing.⁴ The energy flow became very intense. Some breathed more deeply than others. I saw faces twitching and shy smiles, but most importantly, everybody seemed fully present in their personal experience.

My student shared she kept her concentration on the palms of her hands and each of the symbols for the exercise duration, connecting with CKR profoundly. Indeed, I had noticed her breathing was deeper and steadier. Most of all, she never opened her eyes to check the time as she had done at the beginning of the class. It was the first time I saw her so invested and present in an exercise. I was thrilled for her. However, something also happened in how she assimilated the learning of the symbols afterward. She reported she felt the “aliveness” of each symbol and experienced the differences in their purpose. Some students felt that profound connection with CKR as well. One of them even told me, “Now I understand why it is called the Power Symbol,” followed by a big laugh. Another reported feeling the symbol’s coil genuinely moving, and another, who

was struggling with the passing of a sibling, had been transported by the SHK. He felt a strong connection with that symbol even further into the class. Finally, another student shared feeling the expansion of the HSZSN from the inside out. She shared that the minute the energy was out, she felt surrounded as much as protected. As with the CKR for the other student, it was a really powerful experience.

Even after that day's results, I never thought this teaching method would become one of my standard teaching tools. However, I have been doing it since then with the same solid results for my students. That day, the Gassho Meditation showed it was a great learning tool for me and my students. I have found that this simple exercise can be of great help, whether for personal or professional reasons, to improve our connection to the Reiki energy and enhance a practitioner's confidence in using it. I realized even more during that class that all the techniques we teach separately are part of the same goal—connecting with the Reiki energy. Therefore, we can mingle techniques if need be. Finally, I received a wonderful reminder that we never teach alone, and if we ask Reiki to help, it comes instantly. Always ask Reiki energy to support you in any of your activities. ■

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Endnotes

- ¹ William Lee Rand, *Reiki, The Healing Touch First and Second-Degree Manual* (Southfield, MI: Vision Publications, Revised Edition, April 2019), 176.
- ² *Ibid.*, 56.
- ³ Kevin Schoeninger, "Five Transforming Secrets of Gassho Meditation," *Reiki News Magazine*, Spring 2017, 62-63.
- ⁴ William Lee Rand, *Reiki, The Healing Touch First and Second-Degree Manual* (Southfield, MI: Vision Publications, Revised Edition, April 2019), 56-57.