

For thousands of years, sages from east have attempted to impart various descriptions of the Truth. Unfortunately, it is impossible to use words to describe an experience devoid of comparison. Thus, the nature of the Tao, including Shin, remains mysterious.

Shin, a Japanese word (Chinese: Shen) is a many-faceted symbol refracting a central notion of authenticity beyond intellectual understanding. Taking the time to contemplate Shin is a big step towards understanding Danzan as a path to greater self-awareness and personal power (mana).

While the word Shin serves a variety of uses in Japanese culture, I think you'll agree they all tend to point to a common theme. Here are a few definitions taken from a modern Japanese translator for the romanji "Shin"--- the subsequent correlations are my thoughts regarding shin's central notion.

**Confidence.** The feeling of confidence represents an accord between your thoughts and your beliefs. A belief is an unconscious product of experience. Experiencing your Shin creates belief in your non-physical being and hence creates confidence in your total self. Experiencing your Shin to the extent of belief is the intent of many "Ways" or "Paths" of the martial arts.

**Core.** That part of yourself that is central to your being. The part of you that influences subsequent layers of your personality. The purest, most original essence of the human phenomena. Your Shin.

**Deity.** The state of being a god. The essential nature of one who is god-like. Your Shin, an aspect of you outside your perception of time/space, is by all intellectual accounts more God than human.

**Faith.** In the many Arts and Ways of the east, students and disciples are asked to move along the path towards experiencing Shin with no possible way of understanding its quality. Shin then becomes more a matter of "faith" that something is rather than a belief. We must first have faith in our Shin before we may experience it.

**Genuineness.** Something that is "actual" or "legitimate"... authentic. Our Shin is that aspect of ourselves that was complete at birth and will be unchanged at death. It is the "soul" of ourselves that exists outside the influence of our perceived reality. Our Shin has no agenda and knows no loss or gain.

**Heart.** Often translated as the Mind/Heart, Shin is the eastern equivalent

of "knowledge held outside the brain." An infinite wisdom expressed through emotions and intuition. "What the mind makes cloudy the heart makes clear." The Shin only knows truth.

**Reality.** "That which is absolute, self-sufficient, or objective, and not subject to human decisions or conventions." If you walked into a lecture hall and saw that all 150 people were listening to an invisible man speaking at the podium... would they be carted away or would you? The reality we live in is completely based on convention and consensus. Shin requires no such confirmation.

**Truth.** "That which is in accordance with fact or reality." By that definition, Shin represents the only truth because it is the only thing that is in accordance with reality. Being in a state of pure Shin reveals the illusory nature of the world we live in as a false projection (what the Hindu call Maya) and enlightens us to the "Buddha-mind."

**Wick.** The part of the candle up which fuel is provided to the flame. The Shin is that part of our being that has access to the inexhaustible sustenance of the universe... light. It is at the core of our human form and provides the etherial material necessary for life to animate (Qi). Ultimately, It is our Shin that Shines!

Suffice it to say, when we speak of Shin in the arts of the Danzan Ryu, we speak of all these qualities for Shin is the potent reality of our being. The part of us that merges with all that is. The experiential truth that within us is a little bit of God, and within Him- a little bit of us.

"Once upon a time, I, Chuang Chou, dreamt I was a butterfly, fluttering hither and thither, to all intents and purposes a butterfly. I was conscious only of my happiness as a butterfly, unaware that I was Chou. Soon I awaked, and there I was, veritably myself again. Now I do not know whether I was then a man dreaming I was a butterfly, or whether I am now a butterfly, dreaming I am a man. Between a man and a butterfly there is necessarily a distinction. The transition is called the transformation of material things." — Chuang Tzu

This awareness is our Shin.