



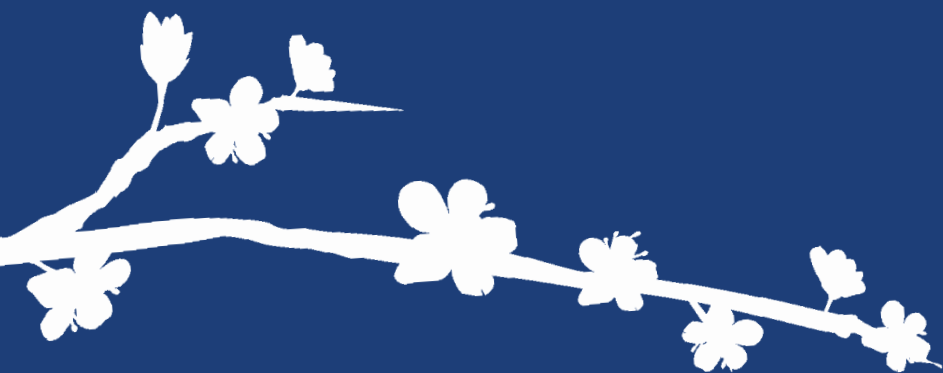
## >> CORE ISSUES

Touch in Shiatsu

Shiatsu for:  
Trauma, Burn Out, Life Crisis

>> European Shiatsu Congress 2017

>> Shiatsu Research Network



**FIND YOUR CENTER  
LIVE YOUR POTENTIAL**

## Welcome! To the first issue of Hara.

Shiatsu, for me, is communication and connection. We connect with our clients, we communicate with our hands. This is very simple, this is very beautiful. Being touched is such a basic human need that just by doing so, we create very strong reactions and can stimulate insight, growth and also healing. We touch the body. We touch the mind. We touch the soul. Shizuto Masunaga, the founder of Zen Shiatsu, called Shiatsu the „King of Medicine“, because of its richness and deep understanding of the dynamics of life, health and illness. So within Shiatsu, we can find almost everything.

Within the Shiatsu scene, I would like to find more communication and connection. I love Shiatsu and have been doing Shiatsu for more than 25 years now. Fulltime. 24-7. I know a lot of Shiatsu people. I know: We are individuals. We choose a different path in life and commit ourselves to it. We practice Shiatsu, we live Shiatsu. And sometimes we feel alone. At least: I do. But I can see it within my colleagues too. You know the problem: I should get treatments myself, I would like to discuss cases with someone else, I would like to have a vital exchange about Shiatsu with someone. As Shiatsu individuals we need a community. We need other people, following a similar path. We need backup, we need inspiration, we need nourishment for the soul. That's why we did the European Shiatsu Congress in Vienna, with more than 600 visitors from 26 nations. The feedback was: We should have more events like this. Because if we meet, we feel connected, we communicate, we get the feeling, that we are not alone, that we are many of us. This strengthens us in our Shiatsu mission, in our daily Shiatsu routine. But the congress takes place only every three years...

So the idea of an international platform, of an international tool for Shiatsu communication and connection was born. A tool that keeps the congress spirit alive. A tool like this journal. We called it Hara. Because Hara is the center, where everything begins. And Hara is the center, where energy returns to get nourished. We want to start discussions, we want to start international exchange. We want to create inspiration, Shiatsu food for your Shiatsu soul and your Shiatsu mind. Let us connect. And let us support each other in order to let Shiatsu grow. This is my wish.

**>> MIKE MANDL (AUT)**

Editor of Hara

Director of the 5<sup>th</sup> European Shiatsu Congress (Vienna)  
Director of the International Academy for Hara Shiatsu



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## >> CONTRIBUTORS WELCOME

If you have something to share, to show or to say: Feel welcome to do so! If you want to initiate something: Feel free to do it! If you have pictures to contribute: Bring 'em on! Our main focus is Shiatsu. But we are a journal for bodywork and spirituality as well.

## >> TWO ISSUES PER YEAR

There will be two issues of Hara per year. One in January. One in September. The best way to stay updated is via Facebook: [www.facebook.com/europeanshiatsucongress](http://www.facebook.com/europeanshiatsucongress)

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# BURN ON WITH SHIATSU

by Mike Mandl

In March 2012 the International Academy for Hara Shiatsu started a practical training set-up where Hara Shiatsu practitioners work with burnout clients, producing remarkable results...



# „The European Agency for Workplace Safety and Health estimates the economic follow on costs caused by burnout within the EU to be about 20 billion Euros. Per year.“

In the burnout practical training in Tomas Nelis-sen's International Academy for Hara Shiatsu an average of 18 clients receive a weekly Hara Shiatsu treatment for 10 consecutive weeks. From March 2012 to the end of 2013 Hara Shiatsu practitioners gave 900 treatments to 90 clients. Some of the clients came from physicians or psychotherapists who suggested Shiatsu as a supportive therapy while others came on their own behalf. The treatments were focused on burnout issues, which is a commonly used term for a broad variety of imbalances that manifest in stress related symptoms, ranging from sleeping disorders, headaches or massive muscular tension to many years of being unfit to work, due to severe exhaustion related depression.

The variety of clients is just as multisided as the challenges the practitioners had to deal with. There is no such thing as the typical burnout client. But: Then what is burnout? It is often referred to as the end result of a pattern of complete exhaustion that shows itself on physical as well as on emotional level and develops over a longer period of time. However, at the end of the day the result is a dead end – no more choices left! This leads to a loss of well being and control over everyday life and in many cases also to a number of related disorders. Due to the variety of possible manifestations and patterns associated with burnout, it can be considered a collective term or description of a combination of issues and patterns rather than

a clear diagnosis. In the International Classification of Diseases (ICD 10) burnout is defined as “a factor influencing health that demands action from side of the health system (Z73.0).” Burnout is not a clearly defined disorder with a clear diagnosis and a defined set of suggested treatment options, like depression for example. Therefore there is no common definition of the burnout syndrome yet, only different approaches to define and tell it apart from similar disorders. One fact however seems to be agreed upon: the condition of being “tired” of working, causes tremendous costs. The European Agency for Workplace Safety and Health estimates the economic follow on costs caused by burnout within the EU to be about 20 billion Euros. Per year.

## THE ENERGETIC DYNAMICS OF THE BURNOUT SYNDROME

To find access to dealing with this very variable issue with Shiatsu, we chose to use the twelve step model of psychoanalyst Herbert Freudenberger, who played a major role in establishing the term burnout, using it in his book “Staff Burnout”, released in 1974. We tried to evaluate the characteristics of these twelve steps to burnout from an energetic point of view adapting it, translating it into terms of yin and yang, as well as the five phases.

Like many psychosomatic patterns burnout is nourished by respective behaviour and valu-

es. The perfect soil for burnout is made out of a strong longing for perfection. And a lack of self confidence that tries to buy affection with performance. The desire to grow and be successful is something positive. However, as soon as this desire turns into a compulsion we have entered the first phase of burnout.

## 1. THE COMPULSION TO PROOF ONES CAPABILITIES

The kidneys are the home of will power. The liver forms an according vision. The Gallbladder manifests this vision with determination. The American educational scientist Howard Earl Gardner has found a starting point that has proven to be effective in overcoming burnout. To put it simple: we are the captain of our ship, but do we always have a hold of the steering wheel? Do we set the course? Do we cruise at the speed we like to? It is all about conscious self-control, when Gardner asks the following three questions: Who am I? What do I want? How can I efficiently accomplish my goals? The first two questions are about aspects of the water element, while the third question mirrors the wood element. The first two questions form the foundation of our identity. The more insecure we are about the first two aspects, the more vulnerable we are to acting in a way that does not express our strengths, abilities and longings, but increasingly focuses on getting someone else's attention. An insecure identity needs one thing above everything else: approval. In this ongoing quest, the water element cannot express its essence freely, since it is focused

more to the environment than the core of things. Out of the seed for what we could be, grows a tree that is not rooted in itself. In challenging situations the water element is no more a source of self-confidence, self-worthiness and clear unbroken will power. In turn we try to build these aspects by showing increased activity. We want to prove ourselves, because just being is not enough. We need to do. Our natural desire to unfold, turns into the need to be acknowledged. „Want“ turns into „must“. The consequence is:

## 2. INCREASED EFFORTS

The roots of our vulnerability for burnout can often be found in our personal development, our history. Within the cycle of the five phases, in cases of a weak water element, the metal element takes over – mainly in the large intestine, with it's quality of holding on to things – and tries to make up for the missing role of the guiding mother, that tries to provide structure, rituals, order and control to support the insecure child. We often witness this dynamic development when parents split up, which in turn unsettles children in most cases. These kids benefit from structures, rituals and mental, as well as emotional, clarity, because they all give direction and generate security. This direction and support (metal element) helps build a feeling of security (water element). As long as the initial pattern is not dealt with and let go of, this kind of “protection” will be taken into adulthood, where any kind of weakening of the water element can lead to according patterns.

„Like many psychosomatic patterns burnout is nourished by respective behaviour and values. The perfect soil for burnout is made out of a strong longing for perfection.“

This goes also for attacks on the water element that happen in our adult life, like the fear of losing our job for example, or being anxious when facing new challenges. The effects however are the same: our mental aspects increasingly control our actions, our activities, no matter if the actions being taken are congruent with our self, our own desires and goals, as long as they serve the purpose of getting attention and a certain amount of security in life. The metal-wood-dynamic within the five phases “overrules” the water element and the individuals involved cling to their pattern of “increased efforts” while relaxation and regeneration are neglected. Which leads to:

### 3. SUBTLE NEGLIGENCE OF ONES OWN NEEDS

Overruling the water element's quality of focusing on what they really want in life, individuals face the result of an increasing negligence of their own needs. The need to pursue a certain assignment has completely got hold of the individual. Minor everyday tasks and pleasures feel increasingly annoying, taking a break is deemed useless, the body neglected. The yang energy of the wood and fire elements gets dense, contact to the yin is lost and the water element is a mere energy reservoir to be exhausted. Pursuing this path leads to:

### 4. SUPPRESSION OF CONFLICTS AND PERSONAL NEEDS

The deranged dynamic between metal and wood element has become so strong that personal needs are not only neglected but com-

pletely suppressed. The continuous exhaustion of the water element causes an inner emptiness that leads to withdrawal and secret behaviour. No one shall know what is really going on, how the person truly feels. However, sometimes in this phase of the disorder, compensating mechanisms develop, leading to excessive or addictive behaviour, to make up for the feeling of emptiness.

### 5. RE-EVALUATION OF PRIORITIES AND VALUES

Studying the small intestine meridian, we see that it shows a strong affinity to the yin aspects of the water element. Be it the diagnostic areas on the back and the Hara or the Mu and Shu points: all these areas are located in a region strongly associated with the water element. Small intestine needs water. The main energetic aspects of the small intestine are based on a functioning connection to the fire-water-axis. To be able to tell apart what is important and what is not, we need clarity. Clarity comes from consciousness (fire element) connected to calmness (water). Stamina comes from combining passion (fire) and a strong will (water). Because of the rising yang of the prior phases and the resulting exhaustion of the yin, the water-fire-axis starts to dissolve in phase 5. The persons concerned lose clarity and consciousness regarding the factors in their lives that define who they truly are. Individuals lose contact to their values and beliefs. And they also lose stamina and the ability to push through. They may start to stay away from the job. More and more often.

### 6. INCREASING DENIAL OF ARISING PROBLEMS

Losing touch with our personal values we also lose contact to our personal needs. The yang on the outside becomes hard and spry while the yin becomes increasingly exhausted, also in the wood and fire elements. The liver's flexibility is lost and the happiness of the heart vanishes. Physical symptoms related to this energetic condition increase.

### 7. WITHDRAWAL

Feelings of hopelessness and loss of direction become overwhelming. Affected individuals start to withdraw from themselves and the world. The metal element collapses. The elemental spirit of the lungs becomes weak. The controlling energy of the large intestine is exhausted. Energetic cohesion within the system dissolves and suppressed disharmonic tendencies surface all the stronger. In the water element anxieties arise, the wood element causes mood swings, tension and headaches, the fire element shows throbbing of the heart or a tight feeling or pressure in the chest and the earth element shows chaotic and disharmonic digestion.

### 8. OBSERVABLE BEHAVIOURAL CHANGES

Withdrawal increases. The energetic imbalance manifests as obvious changes in behaviour.

### 9. DEPERSONALISATION & 10. INNER EMPTINESS

The water-fire-axis breaking apart causes a loss of sense for the own personality and therefore the last bit of recognizing the own needs is completely lost as well. That leads to overall self denial regarding the body as well as the own personality. In this phase the exhausted kidneys often lead to severe phobias and panic attacks, the individual feels useless, worn out and devastated. Using up the yin like this on every level, increases the feeling of inner emptiness. This may once again lead to compensatory addictive behaviour.

Thorough separation between fire and water. And as a result of this, loss of sense for the own personality. This may lead to self negation. The exhaustion of the yin causes inner emptiness which is often compensated with the use of drugs of any kind.

### 11. DEPRESSION & 12. THOROUGH BURNOUT

The whole system is completely polarised. Initiative and motivation are down to zero. A prevailing symptom at this point is the longing to sleep all the time, which mirrors the total exhaustion of all yin-sources. The loose yang can cause destructive tendencies. There is no “I” or “me” anymore, earlier mentioned compulsions have dissolved, and along with them any purpose in life. Suicidal thoughts arise. At this point the immune system often breaks down.

These 12 phases suggested by Freudenberger do not necessarily come in the same chronological order. They reflect certain steps on the way to burnout that can be more or less severe, depending on the affected individual. Most of the clients in our practical training however, clearly showed to be in one of these phases, with a strong tendency to phases 3 to 7. But there were also clients with many years of exhaustion related depression and according inability to work, meaning phases 10, 11 or 12.

This approach was not made up, but was derived solely from practical experience and continuous re-checking of already acquired data and results. When I increasingly started working with burnout clients in 2008, just the term “burnout” created an image of complete emptiness and the according approach that formed in my mind was all about tonifying and nurturing the body energetically. However in the following practical work I was often surprised and learned that burnout is but a condition of polarised energy. In extreme conditions yin and yang are separated from each other. A huge lack of energy on one side and massive tension on the other. That really got my attention and was the kick off for the burnout practical training.

Of course we also wanted to know how our clients perceived the changes and outcome of our treatment. So in our practical training at the International Academy for Hara Shiatsu, we

„The roots of our vulnerability for burnout can often be found in our personal development, our history.“



„Dealing with the symptoms at hand is a mere stepping stone on the way to dealing with the true nature of the individual.“

used written questionnaire to get feedback from our clients. We handed them out to our clients at the beginning of a treatment cycle and they consisted of two parts. The questions dealt with the common condition and well being of the clients at the beginning of the treatment series as well as at the end of it. Our clients were free to decide to take part and to throw the questionnaire in a box, if they wished – part one after the first treatment and part two after the last of the ten treatments. The questionnaire was completely anonymous to avoid any influence from the practitioner or by the relationship between practitioner and client. The rate of returned questionnaire averaged at 73%.

- out of these 73% the energy level improved remarkably in 58% of the cases, meaning that symptoms like fatigue, sleeping disorders, overload, etc. decreased

- 51% noted a remarkable improvement with emotional issues, including anxiety, insecurity, being unsatisfied or angry

- plus: a major part – 92% of the clients – were happy about the treatments, 62% were very pleased with the appearance and competence of the practitioners

### THE TRUE NATURE

It became clear during the practical training that working with the energetic aspects of the burnout cluster made the individual energetic patterns surface all the clearer, while the imbalance of the burnout condition decreased. It is for a reason that in times of extreme stress, we use terms like “I feel completely besides myself”, “I am drowning in work” etc. This is meant to say that behind the burnout waits the real issue, the energetic pattern, the individual as such. Behind the noise lies peace and quiet. Behind the stress and the compulsion to „do“ waits the chance to „be“. Dealing with the symptoms at hand is a mere stepping stone on the way to dealing with the true nature of the individual.

The above mentioned questions that Howard Earl Gardner asked in the first phase of burnout were: Who am I? What am I? How do I efficiently accomplish my goals? Finding an honest answer to these deep questions is probably the best burnout preventive measure.

And the first question directly guides us to our true nature itself, our innermost core. And it this core we want to touch, that is the heart of Shiatsu.

### >> MIKE MANDL (AUT)

Author of „I Yin, You Yang“, director of the International Academy for Hara Shiatsu, director of the 5<sup>th</sup> European Shiatsu Congress, international lecturer

His matter of fact attitude and everyday language together with his sense of humor make Mike an inspiring and encouraging teacher.

[www.mikemandLeu](http://www.mikemandLeu), [ww.hara-shiatsu.com](http://ww.hara-shiatsu.com), [mikemandl@me.com](mailto:mikemandl@me.com)



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# SHIATSU FOR THE CONSEQUENCES OF TRAUMA

by Peter Itin

„Trauma is the designation for: The experience or observation of an unusual event ... that comes unexpectedly ... is inevitable ... poses a serious threat to physical health and existence ... has consequences that might last for a long time.“



## WHAT IS TRAUMA?

Trauma is the designation for:

- The experience or observation of an unusual event
- That comes unexpectedly and is inevitable
- That poses a serious threat to physical health and existence
- That has consequences that might last for a long time

In a traumatic situation it is not possible to escape or defend oneself. The protective mechanism is overpowered and an overwhelming violation takes place. Traumatic events often happen too fast and too intense and sometimes also too often.

A crucial element of trauma is that there are subsequent consequences. After the first shock the trauma still sits in the nervous system. Usually, the consequences diminish by themselves. Sometimes they influence life in the here and now for a long time after the event and influence thinking, feeling and acting.

The following symptoms are indicative for trauma:

- **Hyper arousal: quick activation, overly sensitive, irritability, being jumpy, panic, fear attacks, obsessive compulsion – which mirrors the constant expectation of danger**
- **Hypo arousal: emotional anaesthesia, indifference, speechlessness (“I don’t have the words to describe the horror”), avoiding people, places (for example not using an elevator anymore), directions (left, from where the car came) and emotions – because they mirror the capitulation, freezing and powerlessness**
- **Reliving in the form of visual flashbacks (as if seeing the scene with the inner eye) and nightmares – they mirror the undeletable imprint through the traumatic experience**

The consequences of trauma are even more serious if the trauma has been caused on purpose and it is effected by:

- **The closeness of the relationship with the person who caused the trauma**
- **The duration the traumatizing actions happened**
- **The age the person was at the time of the traumatization**

- **The bigger the danger and the affectedness were**
- **Natural disasters and accidents that where unavoidable or strokes of fate create less stress than violence, abuse and violations**

Traumatized people often react within rigid patterns in stress situations. These stereotypical ways of reacting are self-protecting automatisms of the organism. Traumatized people are not capable to react to different degrees of stress in an accurate way and with the right dosage anymore. Their perception is distorted and is “stuck” to the past. Traumatized people are prisoners of their emotions, a vicious cycle of fear and helplessness. Trauma victims also show strong psychosomatic reactions that have to do with the organ functions (asthma, heart racing, insomnia, sleeping disorders, diarrhea, strong sweating, skin rashes and others). Secondary consequences can be addictive behaviour, depression, isolating behaviour, eating disorders etc.

Traumatized clients can usually be supported well with Shiatsu. It is recommendable that they also get trauma-therapy and medical support as well as having a social network. Trauma-therapy is all about bringing, what is frozen, back into flow, to re-establish broken connections and to strengthen the ability to lead a content life in self-responsibility. Trauma-therapy contains three phases: stabilization, trauma-confrontation and integration.

## SHIATSU FOR THE CONSEQUENCES OF TRAUMA

Shiatsu for traumatized people can generally contribute to:

- **Soothing physical symptoms**
- **Increasing emotional stability, well-being, joy of life and quality of life**
- **Releasing energy-blockages and regaining connections**
- **Strengthening body awareness, self-esteem and the ability to draw clear boundaries**

„It is crucial to first create a feeling of connectedness and trust, security, protection and positive support with trauma-clients and to create an according energetic space on relationship level.“

Fundamentally we need to keep in consideration that:

1. **Trauma means death proximity, existential helplessness, basic fear and the loss of continuity, connection and trust.**
2. **Trauma is overwhelming, a massive violation of boundaries, a rupture of the natural protective system.**
3. **Trauma is complete loss of control, which is then compensated with over-control (which can lead to obsessive compulsion).**
4. **Trauma is dissociation and disorientation; the clients are not fully present in the here and now anymore.**
5. **Trauma is a deregulation of the nervous system, an inadequately strong over-stimulation (Jitsu), or under-stimulation (Kyo).**
6. **Trauma is immobility, frozenness and an incompleting movement of escape or defense.**
7. **Trauma is a reaction of the organism that has been frozen in time.**
8. **Trauma has linking-dynamics, meaning is often linked with other traumas.**

For the work with Shiatsu we can extract the following conclusions:

### REGARDING 1

It is crucial to first create a feeling of connectedness and trust, security, protection and positive support with trauma-clients and to create an ac-

cording “energetic space” on relationship level. Our own inner stability, centeredness, alignment and confidence is perceived by the client on vibrational level. On the other side the client also feels insecurity, injury, like being sucked in. He or she will possibly keep checking: Am I safe here? In a compassionate, stability-giving containment clients will feel safe, respected and in good hands. This is a basic requirement for the nervous system to be able to relax. We need to respect that some clients will not be able to close their eyes during a treatment and trustingly give themselves into it in the beginning. Some can only bear short sequences of physical contact at first. Centering, alignment and the power to act are as important as focus. Working with the Hara (center), with governing- and conception vessel and bladder-meridian (central-line), head and feet (connection of heaven and earth) and with the hands (regaining the power of action) can strengthen inner stability.

### REGARDING 2

The violation of boundaries of which the client has been suffering must be addressed by the practitioner and must be respected and strengthened. Trust into the body must be rebuilt. Avoid inattentive touch. We ask whether what we are doing is okay for the client. We need to find out, if certain body-areas are taboo and should not be touched. We should ask how the pressure should be to be accurate. That’s how the clients can become aware of their body



„Traumatized clients can usually be supported well with Shiatsu. It is recommendable that they also get trauma-therapy and medical support as well as having a social network. In trauma-therapy it's about bringing back into flow that which has frozen, to regain broken connections and to strengthen the ability to lead a content life in selfresponsibility. Traumatherapy contains three phases: stabilization, trauma-confrontation and integration.“

again and gain the courage to express needs. This strengthens their self-responsibility and personality. The clients can feel their own body, themselves and their boundaries better, if we bring their awareness to the physical perception of the body, by asking about the changes they are feeling. Shiatsu will then give internal space to the client.

#### REGARDING 3

A traumatized organism functions in rigid, narrow patterns and is afraid of losing control. Controlling mechanisms give the feeling of security, even if this is a false security. Not having any control is associated with the trauma and a threat of life. Over-control may only be released slowly and step by step. Controlling means holding, holding on to something. Physically this expresses as permanent muscle contraction. Active stretching can be interpreted as a re-violation by the nervous system and have a re-traumatizing effect. Tension in the system should only be taken away gradually. Releasing the Jitsu must happen very carefully. We offer the Jitsu a channel for relaxation. Being able to let go means being free of fear and able to trust. This is only possible when one can build on inner resources. With trauma it is especially important to not have the aim to release frozen, concentrated energy in the beginning, even though the trauma-vortex draws the attention to the Jitsu. It is important to first bring attention to the Kyo. We connect ourselves with the unfulfilled need to e.g. receive consolation, nourishment or to be held and support the strength and resources of that.

#### REGARDING 4

The stronger the mental distancing, the disconnection from the here and now has taken place, the more important the usage of our whole body-weight becomes, so that the clients feel themselves, life, the physical quality of being-here, the earthly basis, the substantial and the stability again. Often it's about simply regaining a sense of one's own body again, to feel parts of the body that have been separated ("this is my arm") and to reconnect these parts with the whole body (arm-shoulder-torso). Dissociation is also emotional numbness and the incapability to think clearly. In trauma

the reptile brain takes the lead. The goal is to give space for feelings again and to let racing thoughts settle down. In Shiatsu we can reactivate the different frequency levels and reconnect them.

#### REGARDING 5 AND 6

In trauma a strong movement (fight/flight), which is crucial for survival and therefore especially strong, has been interrupted forcefully. This movement is then stuck in the body in the form of blocked energy. Maximal strain is followed by a collapse of the energy system in the case of traumatizing violation. So we will find very extreme energetic phenomena: Jitsu (fullness, compressed energy that is calling for movement and liberation) and Kyo (emptiness that calls for nourishment, grounding and the re-creation of connections). If there is an over-stimulation, the organism needs to be relaxed and calmed down. If there is frozenness, a gentle return into motion is required. Through a gentle alternation between Jitsu and Kyo we want to cause a natural movement and the re-creation of the self-regulative mechanisms. Through rhythmically moving the arm gently, a motion between opening (lung) and closing/protecting (large-intestine) can be evoked, so that the organism can remember this qualities.

#### REGARDING 7 AND 8

In case of post-traumatic stress disorders, the energetic pattern of the event that happened, has an effect for a long time. In Shiatsu we can contact energy patterns that have been created earlier in time and support the release of the still effective energy pattern that has been frozen in time. We can make a Hara diagnosis for the traumatic point in time and find out which meridian energy was Kyo at the time and strengthen that unfulfilled need. We can find out in the energetic evaluation in which years the energy feels significantly different (condenses, becomes empty etc). That way we can recognize possible trauma-times and find out about the contexts.

## DEPENDING ON THE TRAUMA CATEGORY THERE ARE ADDITIONAL ASPECTS THAT NEED TO BE CONSIDERED

A whiplash trauma is the result of a too fast physical contraction and collapse. We find highly compressed muscular “protection-shields” as well as zones that are completely lacking energy and are restricted in their physical ability to move. That’s how the typical symptoms of becoming tired easily, vertigo and headache are triggered. Initially Shiatsu helps to strengthen the Kyo. In the place of the maximal Jitsu the work is “offering”, never demanding. That means for example that sideways movements of the head can be made possible through simple holding or be initiated through very small movements, but never forced. Loving attention and providing time and space is paramount. When the head does not want to go into a rotating movement, we offer it an open channel that supports and protects and allows it to find motions autonomously. That’s how the organism can be successful in regaining trust in these movements and to avoid re-traumatizations. Often internal encouragement is helpful (“see, it is safe again on the left side, the danger is over”). Our inner attitude helps the nervous system to relax and to give up patterns, which are not required anymore. At the same time, energetically weak areas need to be strengthened and connections re-established. In case of a frontal collision the small intestine- and

bladder/kidney meridians are usually affected by the shock – physically and emotionally. If the accident was lateral, especially the gall-bladder/liver- and spleen meridians are often affected.

If the trauma has occurred a long time ago, we can also work in history, based on a Hara diagnosis for the period of concern. We can refer to these energetic conditions with Shiatsu and strengthen the unfulfilled needs (Kyo) with the energetic resources (Jitsu). The time period right after the event is important regarding the question of what was most helpful and what could have needed even more support. Energetically we search for the need (Kyo). Sometimes we ourselves receive a topic in the form of an image or a word.

If the trauma has been caused deliberately, it is often important not to “do”, but rather to “be there” with the touch, to transmit trust and well-being and to work in a nourishing and consoling way. One must be able to wait, resonate, and go into contact with the inner strength of the client. That’s how we can provide space and time for the clients’ organism so they are able to process and integrate what is needed.

## MERIDIAN-ENERGIES AND TRAUMA

The starting point and basis of every Shiatsu treatment is the energetic evaluation. In a workshop I let twenty participants mentally experience an “almost car-accident”.

„If the trauma has been caused on purpose, it is oftentimes important not to do, but rather to be there with the touch, to transmit trust and well-being and to work in a nourishing and consoling way.“

## SPLEEN

Pitying oneself, feelings of guilt and racing thoughts and melancholy can be effects of trauma. The working focus in Shiatsu is to nourish and console.

## BLADDER

Escape was not possible in the moment the trauma happened, panic-like fear is constantly present, the flow of life has frozen, the bones are ice cold. We try to bring the blockages to melt or flow and to address the courage to live. We connect the water element with the fire element, with life, consciousness, joy, warmth.

## KIDNEY

Trauma affects the kidneys. The universal trust has been lost, its connection to the heart is broken and the nervous system is destabilized. We try to get in touch with the deep, fundamental life force and a deep confidence and to embed the kidney energy in universal, great heart energy.

## LIVER

Aggression and anger are over abundant. As a consequence of the violation, traumatized people are easily irritated. But as a consequence of resignation and repression the anger can be completely suppressed, not be felt and be feared, because it contains a latent “potential to blow up” (fear of being overwhelmed by the anger). First the work is simply about attentively perceiving negatively rated emotions, being with them, holding them lovingly.

## GALLBLADDER

Movement and orientation are lost in the trauma and afterwards they are restricted. We can lead out of immobility with rhythmical Shiatsu and promote the physical self-perception by asking about it and using a lot of our body weight.

The Hara diagnoses that referred to the time before and after the accident where, as expected, very different. And also the diagnosis for the stage of shock were different in each person. Very significant were fire Jitsu (heart/small intestine) and earth Kyo (stomach/spleen). I interpreted this as a taking off of the Shen, connected with the need and the necessity to re-ground. Bladder and large intestine Jitsu and liver and heart-governor Kyo also showed up.

The meridian energies give us important information with which we can work in reverence to the trauma. In the following I give examples, although other interpretations are also possible. The headwords help to find access and contact and strengthen the positive forces and effects.

## HEART

Trauma shatters the heart, gives it an almost fatal blow. The heart is still bleeding. The spiritual soul Shen has escaped from its home and lost its identity. In Shiatsu we go into contact with the attentive consciousness and the deepest inner core of the client. Through the large intestine- and heart-governor meridians we can support the recreation of the protection of the heart. With the earth energy we can give home, compassion and consolation.

## SMALL INTESTINE

The overwhelming event is only partially remembered. Things have fallen apart, are disconnected, not understandable and cannot be integrated. In Shiatsu we connect all levels of vibration with each other (physical sensation level, repressed and split off feelings, thoughts, spirituality and level of meaning). We connect and integrate body parts (for example arms with the torso).

## STOMACH

The affected person has lost touch with the ground. Centering and stability are lost; the experience is not digestible and takes the appetite of the client. We work physically and with a lot of our body weight, strengthen the contact with the earth through the feet, call out to their hunger for life.

## LUNG

Shock is breath taking. Life stands still. Asthma and breathing difficulties are often consequences of trauma. We can give the body space to breathe again. We find trust in the rhythm of life that always goes on, that indicates towards the future and stands for the autonomous force of life. So it is important to consciously work with rhythm and giving space.

## LARGE INTESTINE

Boundaries have been violated. Becoming conscious of the physical borders can recreate integrity. The full use of body weight is important. We can consciously work with the topic of opening/closing or the topic of letting go (for example joint rotations, aligning downwards).

## HEART-GOVERNOR

The protective mechanism has been overwhelmed, which has the consequence of immobility, withdrawal and an inability to have relationships. Protecting oneself is strongly connected with closing, making boundaries. We can e.g. consciously "oscillate" between protecting and opening: first working on the protective yang-side of the arm (large intestine, gall-bladder), and then gently opening the arm and working with yin-meridians (spleen, heart-governor, lung). When the person is stable, he can open himself and still feel protected.

## TRIPLE HEATER

Trauma causes fragmentation, a loss of connections, for example in the interrelation of the organ functions (digestion-, circulatory- and breathing system). The relationship between up, down and center is disordered. With Shiatsu we can integrate disconnected things again.

## THE BODY REMEMBERS

Tensions caused by trauma can be released with Shiatsu. Physical reactions such as tiredness, yawning, tears, shaking of the body and others can show up. These discharges are to be rated positively. Encourage the client to let them happen.

Under certain circumstances Shiatsu can reactivate traumatic feelings and experiences. This can express in different forms:

- **Physical symptoms:** pulse getting higher, nervousness, sweating or cold skin, dizziness, breathing insufficiency, touch is experienced as unpleasant, body parts become insensitive.
- **Flashbacks** (memories of the trauma in the form of images)
- **Emotional arousal**, fear and anger coming up
- **Racing thoughts**
- **Speaking fast and wanting to tell, denying** ("no no, it's nothing").

That's why tension should be released slowly and step by step. We need to be especially careful with certain parts of the body. With strongly traumatized clients we should not work with the jaw-joint too much, because screaming and experiences of sexual violations can be stored there. The neck is another zone that should not be touched at all as a consequence of the experience of being choked. Even touching close to the neck can create a certain activation that could manifest as the head becoming hot and red, the upper body becoming stiff and the breathing difficult. A slight activation can surely be positive. But it must not go beyond a certain point and it should be released again, discharged or relaxed. Too strong activation can lead to re-traumatizations and to being overwhelmed by the negative vortex of the trauma. They need to be stopped early enough. Tools to avoid too strong activation are:

- **Changing the work**, for example the position, the area you are working on, the meridian (for example changing to the feet)
- **Changing from meridian work to physical work** ("grounding")
- **Pausing the treatment**, asking questions about how the clients are doing so that they stay in contact with themselves and the therapist
- **Taking a break and redirecting the orientation to the here and now** (the clients should open the eyes, sit up, look around and say what they see; the therapist shall use everyday language and bring the attention to something beautiful and positive)
- **Stop the treatment**

„Often a client is not aware of early traumas. But based on their inappropriate behavior we suspect such a background. It can also be that the client is aware of early traumas, but doesn't talk about them with the Shiatsu therapist because he or she feels ashamed or is avoiding the link with that situation.“



If you stop a treatment you need to ask what the client requires now; physical contact or a tissue that you offer respectfully. You need to signalize to the client that you are capable to hold the process, that you are not overwhelmed, that you can be with the situation and you are capable to bring it to a safe completion.

### THE ACCOMPANYING DIALOG

Often a client is not aware of early traumas. But based on their inappropriate behavior we suspect such a background. It can also happen that the client is aware of early traumas, but doesn't talk about them with the Shiatsu therapist because he or she feels ashamed or is avoiding the link with that situation.

We need to deal with such situations very subtly. The path is best taken through questions. Are there especially heavy feelings and situations in your life? Do they come back regularly? Since when is it like that? What connection do you see between symptoms and events? One can offer conversation as an open channel to the client, which leads to self-perception and self-recognition and supports the client in being resilient. That way the understanding might develop that psychotherapy or a trauma-therapy could be helpful.

There are clients that see the connection between their problems and their traumas very clearly and come to Shiatsu precisely because of that. Some are going to psychoanalysts, psychotherapists or trauma-therapists at the same time and others are not. We need to

find that out in the first conversation. They are primarily looking for support through energetic bodywork, not through conversation. But still the dialog is an important part of every therapeutic encounter and can be utilized in a useful way additional to the treatment.

If there is a trauma, leading a therapeutic dialog has two main goals as orientation:

- Avoid the overwhelming (feeling powerless etc)
- Building stability and resources

Before every treatment emotional and spiritual stability must be tested. We must develop a feeling for where we are allowed to move in and what the client can hold emotionally. If the client gets overwhelmed anyway, the orientation in the here and now is crucial. This is an indication for professional trauma-therapy being necessary.

It is not recommendable that the client speaks about the traumatic experiences. But it is good if the Shiatsu therapist knows that there are traumas. It is enough to know the "chapter titles" of the book; one does not need the contents of the story. Often the client has the need to tell everything and virtually floods the therapist. We need to draw clear borders here for the sake of both parties. Talking about traumatic experiences too much and over and over again has, in my experience, a re-traumatizing effect on the client, because feelings such as panic-like fear and being at someone's mercy are reactivated and enhanced at the neuronal level. One can only succeed in cutting the vicious cycle of such a strong trauma with professional trauma-therapy.

„It is not recommendable that the client speaks about the traumatic experiences. But it is good if the Shiatsu therapist knows that there are traumas.“

„Building up resources and developing stabilizing attitudes and patterns is hard work. This path must be followed with willpower and persistence. Without willingness and motivation on part of the client, every effort of the therapist will lead to nothing except frustration.“

An important goal of every trauma-therapy is that the client learns to withdraw from the suction of the trauma-vortex and to develop competences to be able to deal with the subject consciously and in appropriate doses. One of the goals for this is to recognize the signs early enough when the vortex starts to unfold and to "get off" early enough and to not get overwhelmed. Getting off means finding a way back to the resilience factors. The importance of the ability to not get flooded by feelings and retrieving your own, inner strength must be made aware to the client. And the client must want change. If this is the case, then the Shiatsu therapist can help with pursuing the goals mentioned above, with the dialog that goes along with the treatment. In this way the client should not only perceive the obviously damaged, but bring the attention to the strength that made it possible for him or her to survive under adverse conditions. Another way of support can be to value the client's ability to be a good mother/father. This shifting back and forth must be explicit and happen in a very subtle way, to avoid a "push-and-pull" situation between the client and the therapist, in which the client does not feel understood because the therapist is constantly bringing the attention away from his or her suffering. So an explicit agreement is required that it is the role

of the therapist to continuously navigate the attention towards the healthy, the strengthening and the nourishing. Questions are most suitable to dissolve negative vibrations and feelings. Questions like: What would help? What would feel good at the moment/bring relieve?

Building up resources and developing stabilizing attitudes and patterns is hard work. This path must be followed with willpower and persistence. Without willingness and motivation on part of the client, every effort of the therapist will lead to nothing except frustration.

In the dialog Shiatsu therapists can support traumatized clients to recognize their mental strength and to develop stability. The goal is that clients recognize their possibilities to choose from and to take those choices.

- The first step is to do all actions with as much attention as possible, which means to not let the mind race but to keep it in the here and now. I ask the clients for example to pay attention to the contact with the ground and to feel into their feet while walking, to develop self-perception.
- The second step is self-observation, in loving and indulging perception of one's own reaction-patterns, attitudes and behaviors.



„You should not treat any trauma clients as if this kind of work seems to be a burden. Working with strongly traumatized people is only possible, if you as therapist have worked with your own personality intensively and if you can deal with “relationship-traps”.

- The third step is to recognize their own strengths and “nourishing” resources and to take care of positive things and to develop rituals for that.
- The fourth step is to visualize alternative ways of reacting and to visualize what effect that would have and to try to feel the sensation connected with it.
- The fifth step is to make small “practice fields” (for example regarding the topic of “setting boundaries”), to search for little successes in expanding one’s own borders and response options (don’t use husband/wife as an initial practice-field, if the relationship is difficult and linked with trauma).
- Looking for supportive relationships, cherishing them, taking care of them and utilizing them.
- Doing joyful things (movement in nature, making music, being with people, cooking well and eating consciously, reading emotionally nourishing books, contact with animals etc.)
- Keeping a “joyful-diary”. The goal is to write something every day, to bring the attention to the joyful things they have got and away from the problems and to prove that positive aspects are increasing and to discover resources.
- Making a list of personal strengths
- Consciously looking for little experiences of success and creating them.
- Balance exercises, Tai Chi, Yoga, breathing exercises and/or meditation (to regain lost control and inner stability).

If the client undergoes psycho- or trauma-therapy simultaneously, we should talk with the respective therapist to find out how we can support their work. We should not do anything that contradicts their concept. And we should also avoid overloading the client with additional ideas and exercises. We can help the client to find inner and outer resources and to develop and stabilize them.

Through questions and impulses we lead them to the following possibilities:

Positive feelings such as being contempt, gratitude, joy and trust are important. They should be brought about intentionally, recognized and valued (e.g. eating by candlelight, visualizing joyful experiences). The sense of self-value and treating oneself lovingly must be recreated.

In the end it is the mental attitude that needs re-orientation, away from the negative and from the trauma, towards the positive and the resources.

### THE THERAPEUTIC FIELD

From psychotherapy we know that a compassionate relationship is co-decisive for the success of therapy. We need to “tune in” with the client and create a field in which transformation and healing of the wounds is possible. This field must be constellated consciously. With traumatized clients, this requires an increased amount of attention. With trauma it is important that the therapist is stable, emotionally and spiritually, so that he/she is able to hold the space and the orientation in the here and now compassionately and he/she can keep the confidence and wisdom of life upright.

Trauma requires the ability of the therapist:

- To address the wounds and physical injuries and to perceive them full of compassion, to touch their energy on the level of vibrations but to not get overwhelmed and drawn into the emotions.
- To always keep the contact with the here and now and to stay oriented about what is happening.
- To recognize when the vortex starts pulling and to interrupt the client respectfully, so that he or she will not be overwhelmed by it.
- To keep all experiences of the client in a “larger context”, i.e. being connected not only with the “surface” but also with the inner life force, the confidence and the “cosmic-context”.

The danger is to do too much and want things the way we think they should be with the well-meant intent to help, but actually overwhelming and restricting the client. It is essential to find a good sense of yourself, observation of yourself and to be able to take yourself back and to consciously find the right measurement of closeness and distance, intervention and not doing anything, when in contact with trauma clients. There is a difference between compassion and feeling sorry, in which the therapist loses his boundaries, identifies with the client and burdens himself with their suffering. The consequence of that can be burnout.

Things a client says can activate own traumas, so that you might feel dissociated yourself. And clients have the un-conscious tendency to draw therapists into their energetic pattern. Typical are idealizations (“you are my last hope”), depreciation (“Shiatsu doesn’t help either”) and blackmail (“if you don’t help me, then...”). As therapist one should not be the savior, not give any smart recommendations and not have any private relationships with the client. Self-de-validations happen quite often. The client unconsciously is always looking for the confirmation that he or she is not worth the struggle and a hopeless case. One should not use any de-valuing phrases – not even in a joking way.

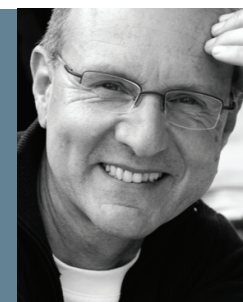
You should not treat any trauma clients as if this kind of work seems to be a burden. Working with strongly traumatized people is only possible, if you as therapist have worked with your own personality intensively and if you can deal with “relationship-traps”. Additionally, you should definitely take supervision.

>> PETER ITIN (CH)

Initiator and project manager of the Swiss qualification for professional complementary therapy, author of „Shiatsu als Therapie“, international lecturer

In addition to his vast experience in Shiatsu, Peter is certified in trauma management and Core Process Psychotherapy. He brings all these skills together in his workshops in Switzerland, Germany and Austria.

[www.peteritin.ch](http://www.peteritin.ch)





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# SHIATSU AND POST-TRAUMA SYNDROMES

Recognising and Dealing with Chronic or Latent Shock in Clinical Practice.

by Paul Lundberg

These days, as we move on in the twenty-first century, civilised society is more apt and more able to respond with sensitivity and skill to traumatic and shocking events, whether they involve one individual, a limited group of people, larger communities or even the whole of society itself.

I think this statement is one that can justifiably be made in the light of progress in the fields of medicine, psychology and sociology, and the general improvements in education, social services and awareness throughout this and the previous century, but only tentatively. Natural disasters are frequent, and human tragedies continue to repeat themselves. Today, as ever, shock is endemic in society.

I have come to understand the depth and breadth of this topic only gradually, in a process that not only involved my work as a clinical practitioner but which deeply touched my personal life and development as well.

In order to cover the difficult subject of chronic shock, it seems worthwhile to briefly review the various types of trauma, and the treatment of injury and shock in general, from both Traditional Eastern and Modern Medical perspectives.

## CLINICAL SKETCHES: TRADITIONAL AND MODERN VIEWS OF TRAUMA, INJURY AND SHOCK

In Traditional Chinese Medicine, the Nine Principle Causes of Disease include the category: "Trauma and Injury", without distinction between the physical, emotional, and mental aspects and without elaborating further on the varying degrees of injury that might be experienced. Each must be diagnosed and treated as encountered, using surgery and bone-setting, herbal salves, acupuncture or manual therapy as necessary. We must look deeper into the tradition for guidance on emotional and mental issues and, where that is deficient, we must find other ways to understand and help.

In practice we might encounter minor degrees of trauma with various clinical conditions from localised swellings, cuts, bruises and pain, through to dislocations and broken bones. After emergency and first line treatment, all these would be seen traditionally as "channel problems" and treated accordingly with Shiatsu and Moxibustion to "move the Qi" where it is blocked. Equally, however, such injuries may only be a part of more serious trauma with deeper effects on the entire system and the integrity of the person concerned.

Such trauma frequently manifests with symptoms that include palpitations, dizziness, fainting, trembling and shivering, disorientation and loss of memory, or even more extreme states of collapse and unconsciousness. Some of these symptoms can also recur during the recovery phase, compounding the patterns of existing disease, just as there can be recurring or prolonged symptoms of tension and pain (blockage of Qi), even after initial treatment and apparent recovery. N.B. some acute traumatic illnesses can have similarities with acute episodes of chronic disease, e.g. cardiac and diabetic emergencies or stroke.

In reacting to emergencies, the body reaches and surpasses certain limits as it attempts to protect our most vital functions. If we survive, there are many, often delayed, effects to the system. The most obvious of these relate to the Heart and Blood. From the viewpoint of Traditional Eastern Medicine, haemorrhage damages the Blood directly and also depletes Body Fluids. Conversely, severe diseases with vomiting or diarrhoea rapidly exhaust the body-fluids and so damage the Blood. Exposure to "Summer Heat" is a classic example; heat or fire attacks the Yin and fever with profuse sweating further reduces the fluids. There is rapid heartbeat, palpitations, delirious hallucinations and, finally, chilliness and loss of consciousness. In such extremes we can see that the Shen is also disturbed because it is housed in the Heart and rooted in the Blood.

Apart from the range of injuries commonly associated with accidents and emergencies, which are treated in familiar ways in a modern hospital, the symptom pictures cited above include variants that modern medicine would term "clinical shock". This is normally associated with extreme stress and loss of blood or fluids. Defined by cardiac stress (instability) with lowered blood pressure it is regarded as a situation of medical emergency. There are established medical routines to stabilise the heart and bring blood-pressure back to normal, including drugs, administration of fluids and rest under observation. Principal symptoms are palpitations or irregular heartbeat, pallor, chills, spontaneous sweating and anuria (loss of urinary function). Milder symptoms include disorientation, lack of concentration, anxiety, and forgetfulness, all associated with "Deficient Blood" in Chinese medicine.



In any extreme situation, the sympathetic response of the autonomic nervous system is triggered – the so-called “fight or flight mechanism” – when adrenaline surges into the blood. A state of heightened alert with acute sensory awareness and increased circulation to the heart muscle and peripheral blood vessels readies the person to face the worst. The mind and body are galvanised to act in the moment. Strength and speed may be all that is needed. Pain may be barely felt. At this time the blood supply to certain inner organs is reduced and their normal metabolic functions partially closed down (e.g. digestive secretions and peristalsis).

Then, whatever the outcome, the system needs to recover and, depending on the effort, there can be a sudden collapse with acute symptoms of the kind noted above. Sometimes there is a complete failure of memory which acts as a further protection until the physical demands of the situation are met. At the least, a period of depletion and disorientation follows, requiring sufficient rest. Prolonged or repeated emergencies can obviously have seriously deleterious effects.

Not all traumas have physical injury as the primary factor. Some can be principally shocking to the mind and to the emotions, as when we hear of, or witness, terrible and unexpected events, but we should remember that the mind and body are interdependent and that effects cross from one field to the other. Physical symptoms do result from mental and emotional trauma. As practitioners of Oriental medicine, we will have less difficulty understanding the links. Qi, and Blood, Essence and Mind (Shen) are indubitably connected.

Here we should properly refer to the “Seven Emotions” or “Passions”. These are recognised in Oriental Medicine as the primary internal cause of disease whenever they are excessive, overwhelming or repressed. The list includes both “fear” and “fright”, so distinguishing a more extreme state that we might now call “traumatic shock”. Fear causes the Qi to descend (a person can go weak at the knees or lose control of their bladder or bowels); fright causes the Qi to scatter. There is an implication that this scattering similarly affects the Mind. The rapid fluctuations in blood circulation described above in relation to the adrenaline

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response can be seen as shaking the Shen to its roots. The harmonious relation between the Heart and the Kidneys is compromised and so the Will too is affected. These two organs form the “axis of the constitution”, regulating Fire and Water, Blood and Essence, Yang and Yin.

If we are well trained in our art, we will know whether, and to what extent, we can treat these severe episodes and their aftermath. It is rare that shiatsu practitioners are involved at the sharp end of medical service, but we can and should take a course in First Aid with Heart and Lung resuscitation. And we can remind ourselves of the key points that are known traditionally to revive and resuscitate: Look up GV 26, Lung 9, Stomach 36, Heart 7 and 9, and Kidney 1 out of interest. Think of Moxa on GV 4, GV 20 and CV6, for exhaustion with extreme cold. Moxa over a ginger slice on CV 8 (the umbilicus) stops diarrhoea due to damp heat (dysentery). CV 6 and 12, and St 25 are also effective. Treat the Small Intestine and Bladder Meridians in relation to spinal injury, whiplash and shock – SI 3 and BL 62 open the Governing Vessel. HP 6 stops vomiting, and HP 7 and 8 could be part of a strategy to reduce fever. But we should also know our limits and how to call for help. Many emergencies result in a mixture of symptoms that require diagnosis and treatment using contemporary or traditional methods or a mixture of both.

We are more usually involved in the second phase of treatment, aiding recovery from injuries, accidents and operations, after the emergency phase has passed. Then we will most likely work on or from the Hara, and of course treat according to our diagnosis, bearing in mind the need to treat injuries and pain according to meridian as mentioned above.

It is not the purpose of this article to go further into treatment strategies for injury or acute trauma and its aftermath, but to emphasise the symptoms and signs of shock that can accompany any trauma and to set them in context so they may then be clearly recognised.

The fact is that many people receive essential medical treatment, sometimes life saving, and recover from the acute phase of trauma by one means or another, but are then left to make sense of the more subtle effects of shocking experiences and rebuild their lives as best they can, and many are unsuccessful in this regard.

#### LATENT OR CHRONIC SHOCK

We must penetrate further into the background to understand the obscure scenarios of chronic or unresolved shock that result when effective treatment is lacking or does not go far enough, and a latent condition persists that can have far-reaching consequences – not only for the patient but for people around them, including those who treat their illnesses.

It is itself somewhat shocking to realise that many people are suffering from the effects of traumatic episodes but have received no adequate treatment at all, and that this goes unrecognised even by the persons concerned.

When we treat these people for any condition, be it soon after a traumatic incident or many years afterwards, we should be alert to signs that shock may be present in the system and prepared for its effects to emerge from the latent state, which our form of therapy makes more likely. And we should be as ready as we can to withstand any disturbing manifestations and support the client / patient in the process of completing recovery and reintegrating consciously and energetically the defensive blocks and previously suppressed memories.

Shock is contagious. People suffering from chronic and suppressed shock states often involve those around them in fixed patterns of behaviour – defences that are unconsciously carried by the whole group. When the blockage shifts, the realisation of what happened re-activates the shock, now with the possibility of completing recovery. However, if those around fail to respond adequately and resist, feeling themselves too exposed and shocked in turn, then the person can be re-traumatised and there is no resolution. A therapist or anyone else involved may interpret the situation as an emergency crisis when this is not necessarily so, or, taken unawares, react defensively or inappropriately in some way. A valuable opportunity may then be lost.

## THE INCIDENCE OF CHRONIC SHOCK - IN PEOPLE AND IN SOCIETY

Ordinary accidents will always occur – people will go on falling out of trees, or from horses or ladders, and we will be caught off guard by terrible storms on mountainsides or at sea; we will crash our cars and sometimes be caught in bigger tragedies like wildfires or train wrecks. All these are hard enough to deal with for the injured and for the bereaved, but they are at least seen and acknowledged as accidents and there is a chance that families and communities will understand and openly rally to the support of those affected – just a chance. However, there are large gaps in our collective

consciousness, regarding the cause and effects of worse and self-inflicted disasters.

After initial resistance, many in the medical profession at the beginning of the twentieth century began to take notice of Freud's experiments with the unconscious and his cataloguing of the workings of the mind. But psychology was still in its infancy when the horrors of the Great War erupted across the Globe. The prolonged confrontations in the trenches saw many soldiers suffering from extreme forms of mental stress as well as physical injury and deprivations. Those lucky enough to survive came home traumatised beyond comprehension, dazed, speechless and incapable of adjusting to ordinary life. Exhausted officers found respite in residential clinics and were offered various experimental treatments, but the clinicians had few answers for their nerve-wracked condition. The term "shell-shock" was coined and entered the language – the first recognition of the lasting effects of trauma. However, the ordinary soldier had no option but to carry home the violence endured and witnessed, as he had always done, and families no recourse but to suffer the consequences and manage as best they could.

By the time of Vietnam, half a century later, the euphemism "battle fatigue" was employed instead of shell-shock and, despite advances in psychology and psycho-therapy, there was still little help for the survivors of war. Many veterans were left with inadequate means to deal with what they had been through and alienated from the self-preoccupied consumerist culture to which they had returned.

Of the vast numbers of civilians who suffered and continue to suffer on both sides in such conflicts, we can hardly bear even to imagine their plight. We suppress it. Since Franco invited the German Luftwaffe to bomb the town of Guernica, in the Spanish civil war, through the second world war and up to recent aerial attacks such as those by Israel on ordinary homes in Beirut, or the Syrian government's bombardment of its own cities, governments have seen fit to kill civilians, including women and children, indiscriminately – and terrorists have followed their example. The best of our compassionate humanity may be drawn to help in rescue operations and medical assistance. But the trauma lives on in us all. War has been endemic in our species.

„When we treat these people for any condition, be it soon after a traumatic incident or many years afterwards, we should be alert to signs that shock may be present in the system and prepared for its effects to emerge from the latent state, which our form of therapy makes more likely.“



„Individual or group counselling is very helpful, if it is of the right sort. People need to recount their experiences and be heard without judgement.“

The tragedies that occasionally engulf communities – mining accidents, landslides and floods – produce heroic responses from rescue services and compensation from the government, but it was not until late in the last century that “counselling” became an accepted therapy in official circles and began to be offered to victims and their families as a matter of course.

Now, “Post Traumatic Stress Disorder” is an official medical term, but treatment is not universally available and there are many areas where these advances have made little impression.

In the field of developmental psychology and in the treatment of alcoholism and drug abuse, it was realised that the environment and the manner of a child’s upbringing had important effects on their mental and emotional stability. Patterns of alcohol or drug abuse and violence ran through families for generations and the roles of victim, rescuer and aggressor were interchangeable over time in complex patterns that unconsciously perpetuated the damage in families and communities. This picture began to throw a new light on the whole of society.

Television programmes that revealed the level of child abuse existing in England during the nineteen-eighties shocked the nation and help-lines began to change the culture of denial.

It is now more common for police to receive special training in regard to the treatment of persons reporting rape or domestic violence but many women and gays of either sex still find such recent, hard-won concessions difficult to believe and trust.

In Spain, where I now live, trauma related to the civil war and the years of dictatorship has been left un-investigated during the ensuing decades. People are just now coming to terms with it. Levels of domestic violence that have been quietly tolerated for untold generations are being questioned and society is finding ways to deal with it openly.

Hatred simmers under the surface in many communities around the world, still injured and unrecovered from past trauma, and so erupts in further acts of racial and religious and intercommunity violence. This has been the clear cause of recent wars, from The Balkans to Somalia and Syria. The use of torture is still a contentious issue in the community of nations.

Chronic Shock is itself endemic among human beings. Nature’s protection numbs the pain, erases memory and helps us survive, but our own ignorance and fear impede our full recovery and cause unconscious repetition of violence among our own kind. Denial negates our true human potential for compassionate healing and creative endeavour.

### FUNCTIONAL STAGES OF SHOCK AND RECOVERY PROCESS

Shock is a normal response to extremes that gives a person the possibility to carry on – it is a friend at the time.

Shock occurs when events happen too quickly or intensely for the neural system to cope.

The first stage is an immediate, unthinking or instinctive response, a more primitive state of the neural system where there is initially hyper-sensitivity and hyper-alertness associated with increased adrenaline, vaso-dilation at the surface and raised blood-sugar.

Then, in the second stage, there is numbness, a less alert, absent sense, short attention span and lost recall. There is generally reduced sensitivity and strange behaviour, with the person believing that he or she is unaffected.

All of the above can remain in chronic shock states to varying degrees. It can be very difficult to return to a more normal (present, open and sensitive) state, and indeed requires a great deal of trust, as the shock process was a necessary response for survival, even though now it may not be.

A third stage is the gradual return of memory with an increased self-awareness, including of physical functions as they stabilise, but the symptoms of clinical shock related to low blood pressure may also manifest and delay or compound this stage. There can be varying degrees of exhaustion, requiring rest.

The fourth stage of recovery and full reintegration is often ignored. It involves the need to talk and to work things through, to be able to re-live the event in a sufficiently safe and supportive environment. There is a great need to really assimilate and accept what has happened.

If this need is not met then people will somehow keep returning to it to try to understand – but it is often never fully resolved. Feelings of guilt, that somehow this could have been avoided, or anger and blame for others, all compound the situation. Unresolved, it is repressed and shelved, but its energy can contaminate the psyche and affect relationships with others. Very often

there is depression along with chronic physical disease. At worst the suppressed elements re-surface in irrational tempers and a compulsion to repeat violent acts.

Individual or group counselling is very helpful, if it is of the right sort. People need to recount their experiences and be heard without judgement. The family or community may offer this possibility and render official therapy less necessary. The spirit of the pow-wow is recalled. But it is also through touch that this essential process is often initiated. Here we approach the core of the issue.

### CHRONIC SHOCK IN THE SHIATSU CLINIC-RECOGNITION

There are three main “diaphragms” in the body:

- 1) **The head – the muscular structures of the temple and the jaw.**
- 2) **The Diaphragm itself, at the base of the ribcage.**
- 3) **The muscles of the pelvic floor.**

In addition to their specific functions, these horizontal structures act as regulators, controlling the flow of energy and feeling impulses from one area of the body to another. Any one of these three diaphragms or “gates”, to use an image from Qigong, may get blocked, but when all three are frozen this shows shock.

There is a resonance with all horizontal structures and similar tensions and blocks may be encountered in the soles of the feet, the knees, waist, or neck and throat, and at the top of the head. This pattern points strongly to the “Liver System” in Oriental Medicine. The Liver is responsible for ensuring the “free flow of Qi and Blood throughout the body”. Keeping open the pathways of Qi – the up and down flow of

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the meridians – puts the Liver in charge of all horizontal gateways. Obstruction (pain) at these sites gives rise to symptoms typical of Liver patterns – vertex and temple headaches, “plum stone” sensation of blocked throat, oppression in the chest and diaphragm, contracting menstrual pains (dysmenorrhoea) etc. – and many of these have repressed emotional content with anger or rage.

Apart from these key elements there are a number of further clues that help us recognise the presence in a client of latent shock:

- 1) **No progress. In spite of following various courses of treatment a person feels that nothing works for them; they keep coming back to the same place. This may echo their experience of life in general. When a client presents for the first time with a long history of persistent or compounding problems we may think that there is some latent shock, but we must not jump to conclusions.**
- 2) **Diminished affect. This is equivalent to what in Chinese medicine is referred to as “damaged Shen”. The eyes do not shine, the voice is flat, the tongue has no spirit and the person lacks vitality and animation.**
- 3) **There is a degree of denial. The person cannot see their situation clearly. They fail to make “obvious” connections. They can also show a marked lack of sensitivity both for themselves and others. In treating these people we may slowly become aware of what is not there, what is missing, unmentioned.**

#### TREATMENT – MODERATE TOUCH IS THE ESSENCE

I do not believe that we should think in terms of treating chronic shock. Even with specialist training the idea is to me a little worrying. We should address the person, primarily, and devote ourselves to understanding the patterns of disharmony according to our training. To my mind, awareness is all that is needed for a healing process to begin. Treatment proceeds in natural order. I have learned from the medical and therapeutic traditions of both East and West and received helpful pointers on this contentious topic from many teachers and colleagues. In the course of my professional life, however, my patients above all have showed me how I could

best help them, through attention and integrity, and through touch. Over the years my approach to my clients changed as I abandoned most treatment imperatives and end-gaining techniques and learned to be more present in an interlayered ongoing process where diagnosis and treatment are barely distinguished. This attentive attitude unfolded into the more sensitive rhythms of communication and spacious touch wherein necessary changes would simply manifest.

Caring hands are a principal key in reaching and resolving chronic shock. When we are touched with sensitivity and confidence our whole system openly responds. When coupled with a caring and capable disposition and the necessary skills, there is great potential for healing.

As infants we are held in arms, nourished and protected in our most vulnerable condition. Whatever the degree of safety and harmony we experienced in passing through this dependent phase of our lives, it serves as a reference and a trigger for all later responses to physical closeness, intimacy and touch. As we grow up our confidence in human contact of all kinds continues to depend on an adequate fund of appropriately caring and respectful physical touch.

As adjusted adults in modern western societies, we come to accept the limits and norms of the culture but, unfortunately, many of us have either lacked good nurture on this level, paid a distorted price for it or, worst of all, suffered abuse at the hands of those who should have been our protectors.

Our bodies react to such negative experiences with defensive contractions of the soft tissues and our nervous system adjusts to cope. A process that Reich first described as “bodily armouring” begins that reduces our sensitivity and defines elements of our perception and behaviour. Some people may pass through various crises or periods of difficulty and recover fully, others become chronically tense in key areas of the body, and some are already in a kind of “shock state” at an early age. Such people may be seen by others as “accident prone”, “unlucky”, “foolhardy” or “tough”, among a gamut of labels that their habits confirm. If they become our clients/patients, they are simply persons.



Here are three reasons why Shiatsu treatment will pre-dispose for the emergence and possible resolution of latent shock:

- 1) **Because we work with touch and because, through training and experience, our sense and use of touch is refined, sensitive and caring, we will have the capacity to dissolve some of the defensive blockages that our patients carry within.**
- 2) **Further, because we are guided by diagnostic methods to locate patterns of blockage and we are attuned to subtle movements of Ki, we will encounter soft spots and trigger points as Tsubos, or “resonant energetic connections”, which can reactivate sensory pathways and open up key processes in the receiver.**
- 3) **Most importantly, many of our clients, even the most defended and inwardly vulnerable, slowly come to trust us – both as professionals and as persons – sufficiently to risk allowing the hidden to emerge, and this can sometimes trigger an avalanche of feeling which is the shocking thing.**

This is when we need to know that a person at this precise time is not going into shock, as it can seem, but emerging from the long held shock state with all the urgent fears, confusion and physical turmoil that pertained in the original situation. There can be strong projections. The person may feel convinced that we have precipitated the crisis through the treatment. At first there may be only a faint sense of connection to their own past experience. Things will not just “click into place”. It takes time and sometimes repeated positive experiences for a full realisation and resolution to take place. We must hold the space long enough for the sense of crisis to pass. We must keep a cool head, an open heart and our Hara well grounded.

## WHAT DOES THIS MEAN IN PRACTICE?

**E**volution and Resolution: In the middle of a treatment the receiver becomes disturbed or agitated. They feel that something strange is happening to them, but at first they try to deny it and control themselves. Often it is the practitioner who first notes the change and asks if the client feels alright. Perhaps they have started to hyperventilate, or their teeth begin to chatter, the jaw muscles feel tense and the person works the mouth or yawns to ease the discomfort. Perhaps they feel a bit faint or suddenly dry in the mouth and thirsty. They may ask us to stop what we are doing. We need to be attentive and respectful, but not panic.

On the contrary, we respond as naturally as possible. First we can talk to them about what is happening. They may not be so sure, but we can say to them that this is probably something their body needs, a natural response of their system to the treatment. It may not have happened before but there is always the possibility of some deeper level that needs to surface for healing to continue. (For practitioners who use and recognise the Japanese term, it is a particular form of Katsugen). They may accept this but still not be able to calm down. Perhaps they have broken into shivering, a cold sweat; we cover them with a blanket. It is not valid at this point to try to carry on with our normal Shiatsu but we must use our intuition and adapt our touch to their needs. Two hands placed, one on the belly and one on the chest, with the intention to steady their breathing; holding their hand in ours and pressing Stomach 36 with the free thumb; holding their feet at Kidney 1, or touching their head; all these are possibilities but every step must be simple and steady, direct and straight-forwardly explained. Sometimes this is enough and the person

„It is important that we know how to maintain our boundaries while acting with honour and integrity.“

slowly regains a more normal state; sometimes not. We fetch water and let them drink; we give them some homoeopathic Arnica or some drops of “Rescue Remedy”; we explain to them a little about shock. There is no hurry – they can have the time they need – we will explain any delay to the next client; we will call a taxi to get them home, or any suitable strategy. Probably they will calm down, but they may feel quite shocked.

They will then quite likely need to talk a bit. There may have been some relevant insight, but perhaps nothing has yet made any sense and we will need to wait until their next visit to talk. If we have the facilities, we can offer tea and let them regain their stability before leaving; advise them not to drive until they feel quite able.

We will need to show great patience and understanding, perhaps over several sessions. They may have fears regarding future treatments. These must be heard and dealt with sympathetically. The possibility of referring people to a trained therapist or counsellor should always be considered, but let us recognise too the value of persevering with what has usually only emerged because the circumstances are “right”.

## CONTINUING THE PROCESS

**T**here are no special strategies apart from addressing the issues as they present, and here I would like to make the clear point that we do not need to radically change our normal approach. We should not go “hunting the Snark”, that is to say we should not be tempted to assume an expert role in helping our client to explain things or seek deeper reasons. Our usual way of giving shiatsu treatment is an authentic offering to the client’s need. On future visits we can simply continue and again be ready to deal with whatever arises.

I would venture to suggest only one simple modification to our approach, based on the recognition that chronic shock involves restriction or “freezing” of all three of the main energetic gates (diaphragms), as already mentioned above. We can pay more attention to the tonal qualities in these key horizontal zones, devoting significant periods of time to simple, quiet contact and to observing and feeling the general passage of Ki through the area, rather than focusing on specific meridians. (A softening in these zones is often identified with a deeper and more relaxed flow of breath between the chest area and the lower Hara). We can afford this change of emphasis because, as was also mentioned earlier, until the chronic shock is addressed and substantially resolved there can be little progress in diagnosing and treating more specific conditions. For example, the differentiation of meridians in the Hara will be distorted and of limited use if the Hara zone itself is held in a pattern of chronic shock. When the breath deepens it shows the system is becoming more integrated and then we can better understand the Hara.

A final note: It is important that we know how to maintain our boundaries while acting with honour and integrity. Normally, we will know something of the person concerned, and will by some sense distinguish an unexpected therapeutic crisis from any real emergency. If we are in any doubt, and always in cases of collapse and unconsciousness, we should call the emergency services. If we work alongside other colleagues it is often advisable to speak to them about any crisis issues that occur with a client. They can give us support if necessary. Even if we work alone we can talk with colleagues about our doubts and concerns. This is part of a necessary opening up around traumatic conditions and their wider effects.

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„Even if we work alone we can talk with colleagues about our doubts and concerns. This is part of a necessary opening up around traumatic conditions and their wider effects.“

## CASES

Acupuncture training clinic, 1978. Certain patients occasionally have reactions similar to those described above, even after having previously received many treatments that have passed routinely. We are told that this is “needle shock”, and that we should remove the needles immediately and massage or moxa Stomach 36. Observing this on several occasions, I become convinced that it is not the acupuncture needling itself that is responsible for the shock, as implied, but some inner release due to the action of the needles that appears as shocking. I begin to talk my own patients through such experiences when they occur, with hands on support but without removing the needles. This is nearly always appreciated and fruitful. My experience of Shiatsu has given me confidence in touch, a resource that benefits my acupuncture patients as well.

Later, during the course of Bio-energetic Analysis and Training Workshops, my understanding of the shock process is developed and my intuition is confirmed, supporting my clinical work with both acupuncture and shiatsu patients over the years.

1) A man at a party is, it seems, only the worse for wear with drink, but when no-one can revive him from his stupor, and he appears cold and lifeless there is talk of calling an ambulance. However his pulse shows a steady rhythm, if rather weak. Strong pressure on GV26 on the top lip, under the nose, towards the root of the gum revives him rapidly. He gets to his feet and

tries to account for himself. Nonetheless he is accompanied back home by a responsible friend.

2) A female patient, 48, with a complex medical history, who has been receiving treatment for several years, begins to tremble and shake during a session. She says she is not cold but her teeth chatter uncontrollably and she feels stifled and unable to breathe. This occurs on one or two occasions and is managed by gentle but firm pressure on CV 17 and CV 6 with verbal reassurance. Sometimes she feels faint and other revival points are used. During a similar recurrence in a later session, she suddenly shuffles away and sits up, staring at me sideways, wild-eyed, not recognising me and telling me, “Get away from me; get away!” I keep my distance but ask gently for direct eye contact, using my voice to remind her, “I am Paul. You appear to be seeing me as someone else and I know you feel threatened, but I am Paul. You are in my clinic and you are safe. I will stay here near you and you can keep talking to me. I won’t touch you till you feel it’s ok. If you want I will call in my colleague (named). Please, try to breathe, you are safe here”, and so on. She seems to realise where she is and lies back, exhausted. The session is concluded satisfactorily with contact and talking.

This was a break-through regarding memories of childhood abuse, which she later worked through with a therapist. She also continued with shiatsu treatment and acknowledged the benefit of those crucial sessions.

3) After several routine sessions, a divorced female client, a mother of two young

children, had one or two angry outbursts during treatment, apologising quickly each time and saying she did not know what had come over her. Though her symptoms were of a physical nature, I also knew from her case history that she had “issues with men”. In a later session she became suddenly disoriented, shivery and cold, projecting an abject and disconsolate image, she curled up in a ball on the futon saying she needed to be hugged. I covered her with a warm blanket and explained that I would just sit close and hold her. Placing one hand on her arm near the shoulder and steadily holding the area of Ming Men (GV 4) and other spots along the spine, I invited her simply to say what she was feeling if she could.

She continued with shiatsu treatments for another few months, occasionally showing anxiety but also allowing herself a degree of vulnerability. Her general condition improved somewhat and she stopped treatment. Two years later she wrote me a letter of thanks, explaining that the various “problems” with men that she had alluded to had included domestic violence and a male therapist who had abused her. She had later formed an “association” for those abused in therapy. She had not felt able to bring all this out at the time but the sessions with me had given her confidence and helped her to trust men again. She wrote that, shortly after finishing treatment, she had formed a new relationship that continued to be nourishing and supportive and that she remained well.

4) A young man of 26 years had received repeated treatments for a knee problem related to a sports injury. This always improved with treatment, but recurred when he increased his level of sporting activity. During one treatment he appeared to go “into shock”, with a sudden “crisis” of cold shivering. He could not get warm for some time but was given blanket and reassured. Later, as he recovered, he talked of a bad experience suffered on an exposed mountainside in which he had feared for his life. He had omitted to mention this key episode before. I used moxa over GV 4 (Life Gate) and other points on the lower back. After that his knee problem was quickly resolved. Perhaps it was a way of reaching back to that earlier incident that had left him with memories and feelings he had been reluctant to admit?

5) A woman of 58 years had persistent leg and knee pain, after a “successful” hip operation. Repeated treatments brought relief but the pains recurred for some months. Eventually she recovered a much better level of pain-free mobility, but only after several tricky sessions in which she “went funny”. Her panicky feelings were always managed satisfactorily, however. She usually felt reassured when I held her feet and pressed Kid. 1. During those sessions she spoke about her fears regarding dependence on her more elderly husband, which she had harboured since her operation and throughout her “convalescence”.

This paper was first published in the Manual of the 2nd European Shiatsu Congress, Kiental, Switzerland, 2007. It was written to accompany a practical workshop on the subject, for which there are further separate notes. Similar workshops have been presented since, and may be repeated by arrangement.

## >> PAUL LUNDBERG (GBR)

Author, Blogger and Co-founder of the Shiatsu College UK

Author, Blogger and teacher; Co-founder of the Shiatsu College UK

Coming from photography and theatre, Paul later transferred his skills of observation and expression to a career in East Asian therapies. Alongside his acupuncture, TCM and Shiatsu practice, he devoted over thirty years to the study and practice of Seiki with Akinobu Kishi. Now living in Tenerife, he continues to write and to offer creative healing workshops internationally.

[www.paul-lundberg.com](http://www.paul-lundberg.com), [pbalundberg@yahoo.com](mailto:pbalundberg@yahoo.com)







# WORKING WITH TRAUMA WITH CLEAN LANGUAGE AND SHIATSU

by Nick Pole and Peter Cadney

When you're in the middle of a treatment and your client suddenly connects with a trauma, reliving powerful emotions that fill the whole room, what do you do? The Japanese roots of shiatsu offer little guidance on how to bring language into a session, so the language we use in the west is usually borrowed from some kind of psychotherapeutic approach.

Pioneers in the psychology of trauma like Peter Levine, Bessel van Der Kolk, Pat Ogden and Babette Rothschild have developed trainings for working with trauma in ways that include the body as well as the mind. These all use some kind of 'facilitative' language that allows clients to feel they can put the brakes on, return to a safe place and feel more or less in control, while at the same time exploring the hints that emerge from body and mind about how to approach the unapproachable.

In this case study, we use extracts from a workshop demonstration to explore what happens when a trauma unexpectedly arises during a session. Nick, the teacher, is demonstrating how to use one form of facilitative language – the questioning process known as Clean Language, developed by the New Zealand psychotherapist David Grove – to help Peter explore a peculiar and rather mystifying problem, as a way towards starting a shiatsu treatment.

The key principle in Clean Language is to ask very simple questions like "What kind of...?", "Where is....?" or 'Is there anything else about...?' and whenever possible to include the key words which the client has just spoken in the next question. In this way, the client is invited to move from using words simply as labels for symptoms to actually experiencing emotionally and somatically what those words are labels for. In fact, one of the most important ways that facilitative language can help us in shiatsu is not to do with words themselves but the gestures and movements clients make as they speak about their issue. Usually the client is quite unconscious of these movements, but bringing them into awareness often begins to shift the energetic patterns that hold trauma in the body, and prepare the ground for the shiatsu treatment.

**Nick: So you were telling me at lunch about this problem working at your computer?**

Peter: After 15 years working with computers I reached breaking point and gave it all up to live a quieter life in the country, learning how to be more self-sufficient and doing manual labour jobs outside. After that, when I came back to using computers, I noticed a lot of discomfort that seemed to build up. It seems to take my awareness out of my body. It's almost like my whole body wants to get away as quickly as possible, and it's very uncomfortable. And

if I use a computer for a long period of time, I have to do a lot of work grounding myself afterwards, or my mind starts to go into overdrive and some uncomfortable feelings arise in my body.

As Peter tells us this, his voice and gestures are full of information. As he talks about the discomfort building up, his hands rise in a fast-flowing spiral towards his chest; when he talks about wanting to get away as quickly as possible, his hands are palm-to-palm a few inches apart, moving jerkily from side to side as if pulled one way and then the other.

**And when your whole body wants to get away as quickly as possible, and it's very uncomfortable, then what happens?**

Like an anxious feeling.

Nick mirrors Peter's gesture – his right hand held rigidly in front of his solar plexus. Nick talking to the group: We're not trying to solve a problem here, we're just helping Peter to de-construct the pattern, so we're not asking why he gets anxious, or what would stop him from getting anxious, we're just looking for an open kind of question to help him explore that anxious feeling, for example:

**And where is anxious?**

Here.

Peter gestures to his upper chest and throat area.

**And what is it like there?**

There is a long pause as Peter explores this internally

Tight, constricting, choking, closed.

He coughs.

**And when it's tight, constricting, choking, closed, then what happens?**

Coughing.

**Anything else about coughing?**

Alert, alarming.

**And when it's alert, alarming, then what happens?**

Joking.

**Choking...?**

Joking – with a J.

**What kind of joking?**

Peter pauses again for a long time, his head

Pic: flickr.com/dirklaudio



down, as if he is feeling some strong emotion. His right shoulder starts moving as if trying to free a tight muscle.

### **And is there anything else about that?**

Nick mirrors Peter's posture and shoulder movement.

I don't want to do it anymore – that's what comes up with that. I don't want to.

### **And when you don't want to do it anymore, then what happens?**

The name 'James' came out of that, which is meaningful for me.

### **Meaningful?**

James was a friend that died when I was twenty-seven...about ten years ago.

Nick's sense at this point is that something profound and powerful has happened – almost as if James has somehow entered the room.

**So can I pause for a moment, and honoring James and your memory of him, Peter, just taking your time to be with whatever's happening for you...(long pause)... and when it's ok with you to carry on, then let me know.**

Yup.

Peter is silent for a while longer, then smiles. This is not going the way I wanted it to go!

[Laughter from the group]

### **Is there anything else about James?**

Is there anything else about James? Good question. It was a very tumultuous time in my life. And...

(Trying to speak but words not quite coming out – a slight choking sound)

... and I used to write music with him at the computer.

### **Was there anything else about writing music with him at the computer?**

I guess this is the logical part of my mind, saying, 'Well, here I am not liking working with computers, and I used to work with James and James died, and I used to write music on a computer'.

Peter's right hand makes a circling motion around his heart area.

### **And is there anything else about that movement?**

Nick mirrors the circling gesture.

It's boring. I've done this a lot.

### **How do you mean?**

I've been over it a lot. Again, and again, and back to it, and here I am again, coming back to it.

### **So this is the point where it's kind of stuck?**

Yeah, right.

Nick talking to the group.

So the Wood energy is not flowing, and Peter's gestures have maybe indicated where it's not flowing, and we could just begin the shiatsu treatment here. But first, let's ask a different kind of Clean Language question:

### **When it's like this, and it's been going on again and again, and it's boring, what would you like to have happen?**

(After a long pause)

I'd like to move on.

### **And can you move on?**

Yes. I can move on. But when I say I can move on, there's something in there saying, 'Can you?'

**And there, for the first time, I get the sense that your bodymind or your Ki, or whatever you want to call it, is asking me to do some shiatsu; would that be ok?**

Yup.

Nick's comment: At this point, it was like Peter's bodymind was saying, 'Do some work on my right shoulder!' That's often when I start working directly with shiatsu – when I feel there's an invitation from the client's energetic field, and not before. This is when I know they need help through direct touch. Up till that point, it's as though they are doing the shiatsu themselves via the Clean questions.

Nick starts working on the Gall Bladder channel on Peter's right shoulder in the sitting position, asking more questions as he works.

### **And there's a something saying, 'Can you?' What kind of something?**

(Peter takes a deep breath)

A closure?

### **And where is a closure?**

A closure, I can feel here. Peter's left hand connects with the right side of his chest.

„In the Clean Language approach, the client is always in charge of the process, and you always ask permission to go a step further if you're in any doubt.“



## And is there anything else about a closure there?

Another long and moving silence as Peter experiences something strong.

Peter's comment: Here I leaned forward, supporting myself with my hands on the ground. My breathing deepened and the experience became quite intense; a lot of emotional energy was being released, tears and sadness, and it felt like I was going into a breathwork session, something that I had become interested about 18 months previously because I felt like I needed a way to express some deep emotional charge.

## I'm letting my hand just begin to explore. I don't know if I've got the right kind of contact yet but if you just say... is that ok?

Uh-huh.

Peter let's out a deep sighing breath.

## What just happened?

It's a relief.

He breathes out again deeply and repeatedly as Nick works the Large Intestine and Gall Bladder channels on his right shoulder.

## Is that ok?

It feels like it's opening there.

## And when it feels like it's opening, what happens next?

Deep emotional breathing from Peter continues.

'Let go.' Just those words.

## And is there anything else about 'Let go'?

Nick's comment: There was no verbal response from Peter, but the response from his energy was a kind of 'bleeping' from the lower back, so I put my hand there.

## And what's here?

There's deepness.

## And is there anything else about deepness?

Again, Peter doesn't answer but there is a lot of movement in his body.

## And what's happening now, with all that movement?

Peter starts laughing softly, followed by some more very emotional breathing.

Just taking your time and feeling what you

## feel...mmm. And can I ask a question as you stay with all of that?

Peter nods.

## What is this contact like here in your lower back?

Supportive and allowing. I feel a childlike sense of going into the body, and into the sensation that's arising. Allowing the sensation to be, and going into it, and it turning into a joke, and then a joyful experience.

Another very long pause.

## Would it be ok to gently come back to sitting up, because it's nearly time to finish?

Uh-huh.

Peter's comment: I remember feeling as though it would have been better to stay where I was and continue, but because of the workshop setting I sat up.

## And how is it now?

Good. It's lifting. It felt like that moment I was describing was like it was coming to fruition, like a joyful opening - in the heart.

## And is that still going on?

Yeah, it kind of felt like talking was good, but also that the questions were interrupting that feeling.

## And how is it here and here?

Nick gestures to Peter's right shoulder and right side.

Great. It feels good now, like a peace - like a release.

## So I'm just wanting to check back to the original issue. It's too soon to really know if anything's different about working at the computer, but certainly there's something to do with James that seems to have changed. Could you say anything more about that?

Um, peace is all that springs to mind. It felt like, 'Ahh, this is what I was waiting for...' It felt the whole complex was getting attention - getting what was required.

## And how about your sense of having been over it again and again?

I had definitely connected the difficulty with the computer to the issue with James, but now it's more clear. The time specifically when I

first came to the computer to sit down and write music - it's almost that same feeling every time I sit in front of the computer - uncomfortable, anxiety, don't want to be here. So it could quite easily have shifted after this session. I think now I'll be able to go back and have a different experience in front of the computer.

## Remember what they say about trauma - using that word loosely because I don't know how traumatic that was for you...

This session?

(Laughter from the group).

## No, no, I mean around James...

Very, very traumatic.

Nick's comment to the group: A very good description of what happens in trauma is that it's a mixture between a vacuum cleaner and a spotlight. The spotlight of intense awareness suddenly shines onto anything that's happening in that traumatic moment, and then there's the vacuum cleaner sucking up into the memory everything that that spotlight reveals - that's how we learn to survive. So in the trauma around James, that spotlight of hyper-awareness included the computer and it got sucked in. Whatever we were doing with the Lungs and Gall Bladder was just helping to dissolve that association and let things move on.

A few questions from the group:

Do you ever get to a place where you can't bring someone back from all that emotional opening?

In the Clean Language approach, the client is always in charge of the process, and you always ask permission to go a step further if you're in any doubt. Remember that Peter allowed himself to go to this place, and if he hadn't felt comfortable with me he probably wouldn't have allowed himself to do that. Peter is obvi-

ously very experienced in various mind/body therapies, but if you were working with someone who didn't have that kind of experience, there were various points in that session where you could have put some brakes on and said, 'Would you like to lie down now?' and whatever your level of skill, it would have been safe to do some shiatsu with whatever point they had allowed themselves to get to.

We're told if you haven't been trained as a counsellor, don't go there.

It's professional to know your limits, and what you feel safe with, but the more experienced you are, the more you just stay with it. For me, the question is, 'Don't go where? Where is the 'there' that we don't go? You're here with a person and all their meridians and all of their life, where do you not go? It's the client who's leading and all you have to do is follow.

Final comment from Peter:

The evening after the workshop, I sat in front of the computer and it felt different but after a short while I had to lie down because it brought up more emotion. That confirmed a sense that I should book a follow-up session with Nick, and after that session I definitely noticed a big improvement in being able to use the computer, though there are still issues there that I am continuing to work on. For me, this experience was a beautiful education in Clean Language and its effectiveness. After the workshop I continued to practice, asking questions internally with myself and allowing the intelligence of the body to express itself. Since the workshop, I have adopted Clean Language as a key component of my own Shiatsu practice. It has given me an authentic method of communication that helps my clients access deeper layers of themselves, as well as giving them control over their own process of self-discovery.

**>> NICK POLE (GBR)**  
Author of „Words that Touch“, coordinator of the London Mindful Practitioners Group, international lecturer

Nick has been practicing, teaching and writing about Shiatsu for more than twenty years. Bringing together his expertise in Shiatsu, Seiki and NLP he founded Clean Language, which he now specializes in.

[www.nickpole.com](http://www.nickpole.com)



„The meridian in the Masunaga style is not only an energetic channel with a specific pathway in our body and with tsubos having a very precise location and action, but it also represents a vital function, a movement of our life that expresses at all levels“

Pic: flickr.com/dirklaudio

# SHIATSU WITH CLIENTS IN A LIFE CRISIS

by Gabriella Poli

How can we define a “life crisis” in Shiatsu terms? Or better, as I am talking about my experience, how would I define a “life crisis” in “my” Shiatsu terms? First of all, I would like to present my philosophy about Shiatsu, what is Shiatsu for me and, especially, how I believe it works. Only if I clarify these concepts, I can explain how I use Shiatsu with clients who are in a life crisis.

It is not by chance that I have used words like philosophy, belief, concepts. As we all know, “the mind leads the Ki”, therefore our concepts, beliefs and ideas will strongly influence our Shiatsu and, consequently, its effect on our clients. What I believe, based on my studies but mostly on my experience, is that Shiatsu influences all levels and aspects of our life: the functions and systems of our body, our emotions, our thoughts, our relationships with ourselves, with others and with the Universe.

The Shiatsu I practise is basically the Masunaga style enriched by the innovative concepts of Pauline Sasaki and Clifford Andrews. I believe that the most revolutionary aspect of Masunaga style was not only the introduction of meridians in his Shiatsu but the development of a totally new concept of what a meridian is.

The meridian in the Masunaga style is not only an energetic channel with a specific pathway in our body and with tsubos having a very precise location and action, but it also represents a vital function, a movement of our life that expresses at all levels: physical (bones, muscles, tissues, organs, systems, etc.); emotional (emotions, feelings, experiences, etc.); mental (thoughts, ideas, concepts, principles, belief systems, etc.); at the spiritual level (who we are, our origin, our destiny, our path

in this life, etc.). The meridian therefore has a yin nature, its structure, and a yang nature, its function. Masunaga further emphasizes this concept maintaining that meridians, being functions, exists also in a unicellular organism like the amoeba.

Let's explore now which are these vital functions, these expressions of our life and what kind of information they can give us on our clients. We will then see how we can concretely work with them to support our clients in recovering the quality of their life.

## FUNCTION OF THE LUNG AND LARGE INTESTINE: INTAKE OF KI AND ELIMINATION.

This function gives us the faculty to exchange: to take in from the external environment and let go from the internal realm; therefore, it grants us the ability to create our borders, our structure at all levels. This function speaks of the ability to have a good exchange, a good relation with the external environment through permeable borders and a flexible structure; hence, if not used to its potential, of isolation, loneliness, of the need to let go of old life structures, of grief, mourning, losses, resentment;



48 of the need to define our borders, to have our own space, to get away from confused situations where we have lost our definition, our own structure. It speaks of the need to forgive ourselves and the others.

### FUNCTION OF THE STOMACH AND SPLEEN: INTAKE AND TRANSFORMATION OF NUTRIENTS.

This function gives us the faculty to satisfy our needs: to go and get what we need (nourishment) and to break it down (transformation/digestion) so that we can use it to make our life fertile. It speaks of satisfaction, of the ability to care for ourselves and for our needs, of a good grounding, of concreteness, of the ability to transform ideas and thoughts into concrete actions. And therefore of "situations" to be digested, of the need for stability and concreteness, of a life spent to "nourish" others hoping to receive love and thoughtfulness in return, of dissatisfaction, of unsatisfied hunger, of research for new objectives.

### FUNCTION OF THE HEART AND THE SMALL INTESTINE: INTERPRETATION, INTEGRATION, ABSORPTION AND ASSIMILATION.

This function gives us the faculty to bring information, stimuli we get from the external world, through our senses, into our "centre", to interpret them, integrate them and convert them into experience and awareness, and to express and manifest ourselves from this "centre". It can therefore speak of self-awareness, self-consciousness, self-esteem, of emotional stability, of the ability to express ourselves, our essence in the world and therefore of a need for a deeper knowledge of our "self", of little self-esteem, of separation from our Source, of shyness, of lack of confidence, of vulnerability, of unresolved negative and traumatic experiences.

### FUNCTION OF THE BLADDER AND KIDNEY: PURIFICATION AND IMPETUS.

This functions gives us the faculty to regulate and balance, in our life, activity (impetus, the life push) and rest (regeneration, purification) to have vitality. It speaks of the "thrust" of life, of the survival instinct, of confidence in life, of courage, of ambition, of our life path, of wisdom; and therefore of fear, of pessimism, of apathy, of long lasting unresolved stress situations, of fatigue, of weakness, of feeling inadequate, of difficulty in coping with life challenges.

### FUNCTION OF THE HEART CONSTRICTOR AND OF THE TRIPLE HEATER: CIRCULATION AND PROTECTION.

This function gives us the faculty to let our life circulate and to protect us and our "centre" through the circulation of our life. This function speaks about living our life fully in all its aspects, at the same time protecting our centre, our self, not allowing it to be threatened or endangered. It speaks of the protection that comes from being present and active in all the aspects of our system (as the blood circulating in all our body keeps it "alive" and "warm") It may therefore speak of vulnerability, of difficulty in communicating with others, of accepting situations and love relationships that threaten our integrity, our dignity, of undergoing violence, abuse, injustice.

### FUNCTION OF THE GALLBLADDER AND OF THE LIVER: DISTRIBUTION AND DECISION-MAKING; DEPOSIT, PLANNING AND DETOXIFICATION.

This function grants us the "freedom of movement" at all levels. It gives us the ability to choose in which direction we want to go to accomplish our plans, the ability to control our life, to take responsibility for our decisions, to use the power of anger to change what we do not like in our life. It gives us a clear vision, a vision beyond the present, together with the capacity to accomplish this vision, and hence of confusion, uncertainty, indecision, unrealistic projects or of little vision or planning, of impulsive anger, of dependence.

„The circulation of Ki is something which takes place in all forms of life..... We can regard amoebas as also having meridians, since amoebas live by the movement of protoplasm and exist as independent living entities. Amoebas perform the basic life functions of locomotion, ingestion, elimination and reproduction and are also capable of defensive reactions, like higher forms of life such as human beings. All these basic life functions depend on the working of the meridians.“

Masunaga / Zen Imagery Exercises

In my Shiatsu, together with the theory of the meridians/functions, I utilize, for the energetic evaluation, the concept of kyo-jitsu. To be coherent with the concept of the function being the expression of an “energetic quality”, of a “movement of our Ki”, the traditional “quantitative” vision of kyo and jitsu as “empty” and “full” becomes too limited and reductive. In this wider vision, kyo and jitsu do not only represent a “quantity” of energy that we can sedate or tonify, but also two energetic “qualities”, two expressions of Ki in our life, two functions that interact. Kyo and jitsu thus become the two expressions of the “unity” human being.

And it is working with the movement, with the interaction of the kyo-jitsu functions that show up in the hara or back evaluation, that we can help our clients to overcome a life crises, supporting them in restoring the movement of their vital functions and allowing them, ultimately, to recover all their possibilities and potentials. Some practical examples:

### HEART KYO / STOMACH JITSU

The receiver is going through a period of lack of self-confidence, of emotional instability, he feels extremely vulnerable (Heart) and unsatisfied, he has the feeling he needs something but does not know what (Stomach). Through our work on these two functions, we can support our receiver to get more and more in contact with his true nature, with his “self”, to develop self-esteem and, once our client becomes more aware of himself, it will be easier for him to identify and reach his objectives, to satisfy his needs, to nourish himself with the food that will make his life rich and fertile.

„Through the modelling I, myself, become a model for the receiver through the way I set my energy in my whole system“

### LIVER KYO / LARGE INTESTINE JITSU

The receiver is confused, undecided (Liver), feels too tight, imprisoned in his present life situation (Large Intestine), he feels he does not have enough space to move freely (Large Intestine/Liver); through our work on his meridians/functions we can help him and support him in recovering and redefining his space so that he can have the clarity of mind and the freedom to decide in which direction he wants to go.

### KIDNEY KYO / HEART JITSU

Our receiver is overstressed by his work, by money problems, he is exhausted but he is no more able to stop and rest, he cannot sleep well (Kidney), this whole situation has caused him anxiety, and more and more often tachycardia and this makes him even more anxious (Heart). He has lost contact with his self (Heart), always one step ahead, always doing something, always under stress (Kidney). Working the functions of Kidney and Heart we can support him in recovering his ability to stop, to be able to get again in contact with his inner “silence”, to become more aware of who he is and of what his priorities are in life.

### HEART CONSTRICTOR KYO / SMALL INTESTINE JITSU

Our client has had some traumatic experiences in his adolescence, experiences of violence and psychological abuse (Small Intestine), and, as a consequence, he has closed himself to love relationships, to feeling emo-

„The mind leads the Ki, and therefore what I think during the treatment, will pass through my touch“

tions, to life itself (Heart Constrictor). Working these two functions, we can help our receiver to assimilate his past traumas, to integrate them into his energetic system, to convert them into life experiences, so to recover his possibility of fully living his life and of sharing it with the persons he loves.

Obviously, our clients, due the very nature of Ki, which is movement and transformation, will not always have the same kyo/jitsu movement; but, usually, the tendency is to find in the first sessions a similar kyo/jitsu movement or at least a dominant energetic pattern. However, session after session, we will see how this pattern will “expand”, how the same function will be used “to its potential” and how other functions and different kyo-jitsu movements will emerge. These new movements will show how the energetic pattern of the receiver is evolving, how slowly slowly other possibilities are emerging and how the person is recovering all his possibilities and potentials of living his life fully.

After this introduction that has clarified the basic concepts and principles of my Shiatsu, I can now explain what I do in my treatments to support and help those of my clients who are in a life crisis. When a client comes to me with an existential problem, my main guidelines are the two functions (kyo-jitsu) that I find in the hara or back evaluation and their interrelation. Of course, I will also take into consideration all the other shins but the interrelation between the two functions will remain the “core” to which I will refer all the other information I will receive (bo-shin, bun-shin, mon-shin, setsu-shin).

In practice, when working with the two meridians, I am getting in contact and interacting with the corresponding functions at all levels. I am therefore establishing a global approach with the receiver’s whole energetic system, through the two dominant functions in his life in the

“here and now” of the treatment. And, as I am dealing with the client’s as „one” manifested by the two functions, I will endeavour to be totally present in the contact (body/mind/spirit) to reinforce the client’s experience of oneness.

When I start a treatment, therefore, I will first try to establish what I would define a “basic contact” with the receiver, an overall contact with his energetic system and dominant functions. I will be in a listening, open mode to receive whatever information will come from the contact, information such as how the two functions interact, which is the dominant level of expression of the two functions (physical, emotional, mental or spiritual), which aspect of the functions is more present (for instance if I work the Lung meridian, it could be borders, exchange, structure, letting go, etc.), where the functions in the body have a stronger expression, where I can best contact them, if there are energetic blockages, unresolved past stress or traumas, etc.

I will “respond” to these information through my touch, utilizing the depth of leaning, the rhythm of work, the modelling, the mindset, the time scanning and fascia release techniques. In short, I will entertain a non verbal dialogue with the receiver’s functions through my touch.

I will research the depth of leaning and rhythm of work that will allow the deepest and widest contact with the meridians/functions: I will try to tune in with the vibration of the meridians/functions, with the receiver’s life flow, and will try to experience, together with him, through each touch, this very special feeling of being totally in contact and in tune with each other.

Through the modelling I, myself, become a model for the receiver through the way I set my energy in my whole system. Through the mindset, I consciously use my mind and my thoughts.



„And Shiatsu represents a very special tool to support life as it is...”

„In my experience, a life crisis, as any other “disease” of the human being at any level, is a manifestation and an expression of his Ki, a movement of his life that needs to recover its full natural capacities.”

As I mentioned before, “the mind leads the ki”, and therefore what I think during the treatment, will pass through my touch; for instance, I can offer the receiver an image or an idea of “silence”, think and suggest through my touch: “what about experiencing the pleasure of deep silence, of being in stillness, how does this feel to you?”.

In the time scanning, which I have experienced with Clifford Andrews, I have another very effective tool to treat clients that are in a life crisis. Quite often clients are energetically stuck in the past due to a physical, emotional, mental or spiritual trauma: an accident, a very serious disease, the loss of a dear person, abuses, moral subjugation, etc. The technique consists of scanning the energetic field of the receiver going back in time until I reach the period of the trauma. Once I am energetically “there”, I can interact with the functions that were predominant at that time and thus support the receiver’s energetic system to resolve the trauma.

I also integrate fascia release techniques in my Shiatsu as I find them a very useful tool to release what we could define “energetic cysts”, places in our body where energy connected with unresolved stress is stuck and held. As fascia represents the intermediate energetic level between our denser structures (bones, muscles, ligaments, organs, etc.) and our more

expanded structures (emotions, thoughts and spirituality), the release of this tissue allows several healings to occur at different levels. Furthermore, I have found, through my experience, that fascia and meridians are very closely energetically connected, so working on meridians influences fascia and viceversa.

To conclude, in my experience, a life crisis, as any other “disease” of the human being at any level, is a manifestation and an expression of his Ki, a movement of his life that needs to recover its full natural capacities. All we have to do, therefore, is to establish a deep, wide, overall contact with our client’s energetic system and its dominant expressions and support and stimulate his Ki to recover its natural vibrational potential, its natural movement: in short to simply support life to recover what by nature is its potential.

And Shiatsu represents a very special tool to support life as it is and as it shows to us, without judgement, being respectful of our clients, of their freedom of choice, of their possibilities, of their timing. Shiatsu is a life sustaining discipline that gives support and does not force or constrain, that leaves space and at the same time offers incredible possibilities for change, for developing, for healing in the widest meaning of the word.

>> GABRIELLA POLI (ITA)

One of the Founder of the European Shiatsu Institute, Founder of the ESI in Rome

Gabriella worked very closely with Pauline Sasaki on Advanced Quantum Shiatsu, which then became her main field of research and experience. With her kind heart and humor she is a highly respected teacher and lecturer.

[www.gabriellapoli.com](http://www.gabriellapoli.com)





GET INTO ACTION // EVENTS // RESEARCH

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All Pics: Mili Badic / mudita.at

# EUROPEAN SHIATSU CONGRESS VIENNA

by Mark Vroonland / Translation support: Tamsin Grainger

At the end of September 2017, I visited the European Shiatsu Congress in Vienna, the biggest Shiatsu event in European history so far. Much learned, much seen, made contact with other Shiatsu approaches and practitioners.



„Doubt is what your consciousness cannot accept. Your Heart already decided what it wants.”

### BODY AWARENESS

It is remarkable how many ‘people in offices’ have totally lost their body awareness. His ‘officetreatments’ are therefore aimed at restoring this contact. With simple touches, exercises and visualizations. A hand on a shoulder can change a lot in a body. “When we touch, we always get an answer”. Extensive Shiatsu techniques do not have a place at the office.

### HOT CONTACT

He also gave tips on how to prepare yourself for a business conversation; how to sell Shiatsu to decision makers in a company. It’s important to know your own strength, your own element. Plus that of the company’s representative. Indeed, Metal people like evidence

based on facts & figures. Wood people are quickly enthusiastic. Klaus has to admit that selling Shiatsu in the workplace is difficult. It actually only works if you already have a “hot contact” within the company.

### UNRECOGNIZABLE

In the afternoon I followed Ryokyo Endo’s workshop: ‘The Mission: Stop suffering’. A sold-out course room. Endo is a smiling Japanese man in a judo suit. Everybody knows him. That is everybody but me. It obviously helps if you are Japanese and you are talking about Shiatsu. His English is as good as incomprehensible. A German follower (also in a judo suit) translated. A tired Austrian woman then translated it once again, this time into German. So you had three chances to understand it.



The Gala Evening was a highlight of the ESC 2017. Inspiring speakers, excellent food and good music to dance to – a night to remember. And in case anybody wonders – yes Shiatsu people know how to party!

### DAY 1

First of all, Vienna. Everyone says: beautiful city and don’t forget to visit the Spanish riding school. I nod. Who knows, maybe. It soon turned out that I did not come here well prepared. 6 or more metro lines flow like blood vessels under the city centre. The relationship between the upper and lower levels cannot be grasped at a glance. I confess, I’m not much of a traveller. The complexity of this metropolis overwhelmed me. My Liver was going into overdrive.

### BLOWN OUT

The Hara-Shiatsu school in Vienna is the host and organizer of the event. The conference venue is housed in a courtyard, adjacent to the Mariahilferstraße. The contradiction between the exciting shopping street and the serenity of the court is immense. Here the missionaries are trained; the benefactors, the therapists. Those who give new fire to the blown, bored or burned out. And maybe another direction in life.

### CONSCIOUS CHOICE

I received a wristband for a four-day congress and met Carla and Nicolas; the youthful and sympathetic entrepreneurs behind the TsuBook app. They had a small stand. A display showed their sexless male with acupuncture points. I went to the first workshop. ‘Shiatsu in the workplace’. A conscious choice because the course room was nearby. It gave my Liver some rest.

### ESSENCE

The workshop was given by Klaus Gisinger, educated at the Hara-Shiatsu school in the 90’s. He has lots of experience in giving Shiatsu treatments in companies. His biggest challenge is how to sell Shiatsu without using vague terms. Also without denying the essence of Shiatsu. In practice, he returns to the base: touch.

With the room full of people, the atmosphere was not so much like in a workshop, but more like a family reunion...





Endo began his story with the announcement that you must forget about the meridians. They are not real. You felt the shock vibrating through the audience. Everything they have believed in for years, sometimes defining their existence, was swept away in these first 5 minutes. A hoax. Fake news. Endo had their attention.

## SMILING AND FAINTING

Then a story followed that the Du Mai and Ren Mai (which apparently did exist again) also have a trajectory over your arms. Interesting. He demonstrated this by bringing his big assistant to the floor. Just by touching a Du Mai point on his arm. It was like he fainted. Endo just smiled. And to show that it was not a coincidence, he also grabbed the forearm of the unsuspecting Austrian translator. And yes, she also went down. It worked! But what was this about? We practised on each other but nobody fainted.

Endo continued. You have to make your Qi field as wide as possible during a treatment. Not only work with your recipient's Qi or your own Qi. But with the Universal Qi. That you should wish everyone and everything the best. I loved it. The temperature in the room was now tropical and my Hara could no longer connect with Endo. When I walked out of the room, I heard him say "doubt is what your consciousness cannot accept. Your Heart has already decided what it wants." This first day could not have ended more poetically.

## DAY 2

On day 2 of the European Shiatsu Congress I went to the workshop of Gayaka Backheuer. He is a Shiatsu teacher from the German ShenDo Shiatsu school. As an Osho-adapt it is no coincidence that this workshop is all about love. Unconditional love. Remember Osho? He was the founder of Bhagwan. The public remembers him as the owner of 93 Rolls Royces. But he is mostly recognized as a spiritual teacher. Claiming that everyone can become a living

A heartfelt discussion about the „Role of Language in Shiatsu“ with a variety of inputs from people who choose every single word carefully. Capturing for the audience, a major callange for the interpreters.



Buddha. By opening the heart. By totally accepting what lies within. The good and the bad. Backheuer mixes Osho with Shiatsu. And it's like a warm bath.

## HEAD RULES

Shiatsu and love. I have never considered this relation. Love, by itself, seems such a worn-out word. It is hard to find genuine love these days, where the head and not the heart rules. I know Shiatsu and empathy. The caring for the receiver. Listening and feeling their pain and suffering. Hoping you can give a stimulus in the right direction. A spark that can start a change. But love?

Backheuer sits in front of a classroom of the Hara-Shiatsu school. No chairs. Just yoga mats. There are about 30 participants. In the next 3 hours, his funny German-English guides us straight to our heart energy. As the heart is where the connections are made. The hands are tools of the heart.

## HARA HUG

He starts with some nice stretching exercises. Reaching for heaven and for earth. Heart in the middle, connected with the hara. Then he talks about touch. Connecting. He shows us the 3 ways how people hug. Most commonly in public: the shoulder hug. Less often and closer: the heart hug where the breast is connected. The closest one and specifically for lovers: the hara hug. We, his audience, his public, followed his directions.

My father thinks Shiatsu is some kind of sect. I knew that if he could see me at that moment, it was his ultimate proof. Hugging with a stranger, at first a bit hesitant but later on without shame. I was like the scene in Fight Club, but without the crying part.

## EXPLORING NERVES

Next exercise. I am standing back to back with a German Shiatsu woman. We put the weight of our bodies against each other. We keep each other in balance. I feel her back, she feels mine. It is touching and feeling in the highest gear. You connect your back to a chair, clothes, a wall, a bed. But how often do you

connect your back to another human? We are exploring with nerves we never use for this kind of action. We approach, enter, engage, listen, back off, shocked by the intensity of what we experience, we make and lose contact. We melt together for a split second. It was an unknown and overwhelming experience (to get a picture, check this still of the video impression of the ESC).

## BEYOND EMPATHY

I have no idea what Gayaka Backheuer told during the rest of the workshop. My mind switched off. My heart opened. I can not remember feeling this open before. I do know that if you can reach this kind of contact within a relationship, like within a Shiatsu session, a bigger world of outcomes reveals itself. Shiatsu beyond empathy. It is about sharing yourself, diving in with your whole heart.

## LOVING ACCEPTANCE

After the workshop, I had my lunch break through sunny Vienna. My heart was open. The whole world would have fitted in. But walking through the classical streets where Johann Strauss and Gustav Mahler left their footprints, I only met a few open hearts. What did I expect? The public was not enchanted with the Backheuer exercises. Their hearts were closed, like mine was this morning.

Being captured into this cocoon of love, I only wanted to extend it. So I went to the afternoon workshop 'Love is the best therapy' with Ramita and Nalina Keienburg. It took some time before I figured out they were mother and daughter. They are also trained in the Shen-Do Shiatsu-style like Backheuer. Combining loving acceptance with Shiatsu.

## KARLSRUHE-LOVE

In their practical workshop, they showed some nice massage techniques. Some were new like making breath-like movements around a joint. Others just had a new name ('sandwiching joints', 'moving touch'). It was nice to have a lot of practice time. But there was something missing. Ramita and Nalina gave another kind of love. More Metallic. More clinical. Karlsruhe-love. It felt like they tried to express a





The room was full of people, but still you could have heard a pin drop when Wilfried Rappenecker worked his magic...

feeling, an emotion, that they only know from the outside. They definitely did not vibrate on the deep red Backheuer-frequency.

### ACT FROM THE INSIDE

As these workshops were both centered around the Heart, it gave me a good insight into the different approaches and mindsets for applying love, or a loving touch, in a Shiatsu treatment. We can say we have a loving acceptance to our clients. Or we can act from the inside. Enabling the heart energy to flow without words. Sigmund Freud, one of Vienna's celebs, already told us: "Out of your vulnerabilities will come your strength". Sometimes we just need an exterior impulse to prompt us to remember.

### HOW I MET THE WIENER SCHNITZEL GIRL

Picture a huge conference room. A classic ambience with a wooden floor and 100 mats on it. On the mats are the participants of the European Shiatsu Congress. There is a man dressed in white at the front. Beside him sits a woman on a chair. I cannot see her face but her body posture suggests she is not the happiest human in the world. He asks her: "What do you feel?" She answers: "Sadness. Loneliness. Being un-connected".

She is the demo-receiver of Peter Itin in his workshop 'Language guides the Qi'. Earlier she has rated her 'overall life index' as a '5' and volunteered for this public treatment. I was surprised that there was anyone in the room with such a low self-rating. If I felt like a '5' I would be hiding somewhere under the carpet. Out of sight of public life. This woman must be very courageous. Or desperate.

### IMPULSES TO THE BODY

Peter Itin asks: "Where do you feel this the most in your body?"

She: "In my back and in my chest" and tears roll down.

By naming the body parts where her feelings reside, her inside self seems to come out.

There is a deep and tense silence.

Her head is bent forward. Sorrow is written all over her body.

– "How do you feel now?"

– "I feel safe in my own small world. I don't have the power to rise." She says in a quiet voice.

He stands up, walks behind her and puts his hand on her shoulders. Moves them a bit more dynamic over her upper back.

A few moments pass.

## "Out of your vulnerabilities will come your strength"

"I can breathe better," she says.

Then she got onto the massage table. Face facing earth. He put his hand on her sacrum. Tells the public that he is not doing a back diagnosis. Just gives some impulses to the body.

### EMPEROR

Peter does the talking. About the 3 meridian families, he mostly works with: Earth-Metal, Fire-Water and Small Fire-Wood. The themes from these meridians form the basic questions to be answered in life: Who am I? What do I really want? What is my role in life? The first question is addressed by the Earth-element, the nourishing, by parents, by food. The second is to be answered from the Heart, the Shen, the emperor. In traumatic circumstances, the Shen becomes separated from its source of origin, the Kidney Qi. The third question is addressed by the Small Intestine and its role of integrating challenging life circumstances. Shining light into dark places.

### "YOU ARE SAFE"

He asks her where she wants to be touched. She tells him the place. By putting his hand on the desired spot, he is guiding the Qi. "Your presence is for 50% to yourself, for 50% with your client. Or better: for 100% to yourself and

with your client. During the treatment, you are constantly talking with the client. With words in your head. It is an inner dialogue." With the Heart meridian of his lower arm, he leans in on the Heart-zone of her back. His aim is to let her experience a route back to answers of those basic questions: "You are welcome as you are. You don't have to change. This current state is temporary. Your base is safe. You are safe."

As my own life-index glitters at an 8 (being naive has its advantages), I cannot make up and say: 'you will find the right spot'.

### LITTLE VOICE

It was nice witnessing this process. But there was a little voice inside me asking: "What makes Peter Itin so special that he is on stage? What distinguishes him from other experienced Shiatsu practitioners?" And I couldn't put my finger on it. Other participants seemed to have heard that same voice because they left the course room. It felt a bit ungrateful and disrespectful to leave in sight of the speaker. But who am I to judge?

### BIG WOW

Those who left didn't hear how the treatment worked out for the sad women. She said: "I am so happy with the present of doing this

Diego Sanchez about Shiatsu in hospitals – „You have to work with what you have got.“

Tomas Nelissen, hands on and with a Samurai spirit – knowing means doing...







„Melting together for a split second.“

Mike Mandl and Wilfried Rappenecker:  
„What does Shiatsu need for the future?“

work”. This work, of course, being Shiatsu. That was a big wow for me. From internal sadness (level 5, remember) to external thankfulness. And in the same sentence profiling the profession of Shiatsu as a therapy. As something that helps. This was magic! Or am I just being naive?

### THE RIGHT SPOT

At the end of the workshop, there was time to practice ‘the Itin-method’ on each other. As I came alone, I had to find a Shiatsu partner and am invited by the lovely girl beside me.

We made some space on the mat. She offers to start the exchange, which was unusual because, at most workshops, people usually wanted to receive first. Being paid in advance! Or more positive: they need some Qi-stimulation before they can perform. The lovely girl asks me the Itin-question: “Where do you want to be touched?” As my own life-index glitters at an 8 (being naive has its advantages), I cannot make up and say: ‘you will find the right spot’. She laughs and starts somewhere on my back. It feels heavenly. The best Shiatsu treatment for months. I did not say a word. Our connecting Qi did the talking.

### >> MARK VROONLAND (NED)

**Shiatsu blogger from Rotterdam, Netherlands**

His ambition is to specialize in Shiatsu work with emotional issues. In his blog Mark writes about Shiatsu and interviews interesting people from the Shiatsu community.

[www.happyhara.nl](http://www.happyhara.nl)



# 6<sup>TH</sup> EUROPEAN SHIATSU CONGRESS



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„Everybody can be part of the Shiatsu Research Network. As different as you are, as strong we will be. Because science always needs a multifaceted approach for establishing the proper question for a proper answer.“

# THE SHIATSU RESEARCH NETWORK

by Dr. techn. Kristina Pfeifer

A lot is going on in this world. The internet has brought humanity into a level of worldwide communication like it has never existed before. With the expansion of social media everybody can quite directly be in touch with what is going on out there. And it is much. Too much. Emotions going high. That is the wild side that may be a bit too destructive as well. While experiencing this, we accidentally learn something new. The ability to be more cautious in expression and to use this intensive energy of communication in a constructive way. In the course of this slow metamorphosis, the intense growth of the European Shiatsu Congress has taken place.

Pic: flickr.com/ Doug88888

We met each other, just as different as we are, and we found so many commons. We have found common visions. The Shiatsu Research Network is one of these. Likewise, as we have learnt new ways of communication, science itself has learnt how to embrace a broader variety of visions. With evidence-based research a new era of chances for complex therapy models arose. Furthermore, science started to invite everybody in as it had become obvious that restricted sources only lead to restricted results. Therefore, cautiously without hurting its own rules, science tries to open up.

That is where we hop in: Everybody can be part of the Shiatsu Research Network. As different as you are, as strong we will be. Because science always needs a multifaceted approach for establishing the proper question for a proper answer. The other thing about science is, that you do not need to be afraid when the proper answer is not nice. In real science, „failure“ is dearly welcomed. Because with failure you start to understand your boundaries. And such boundaries let us discover our strength within. They will help Shiatsu to grow. Just as metal helps wood to find its direction. Some have their doubts whether modern science and old Eastern philosophy can have a way in common.

## WELL, THERE IS A STORY TO TELL

When I was younger, I met some nomads in the Turkish mountains. They lived in a traditional hair tent of 3500 years heritage. They told me that it is the coolest place during heat, the driest during rain and the strongest against sandstorms. Well, I had difficulties to believe them, because the thin tent's textile was black and perforated with big pores. Curious about their statements, I dragged some textile samples to university. Only days later I got a working place at the laboratory for building materials there. As they did not have a proper artificial sun and no proper artificial sandstorm generator for testing, we decided to take focus on the rain. So I built a rain machine according to detailed international specifications after „Bundesmann“. Soon it was raining according to standards in the laboratory all day long. And it turned out that the textile showed zero resistance to rain. It leaked horribly. It had big pores, you know.

This was my diploma thesis and on that point I wondered how to explain that a building tradition of 3500 years that had helped nomads to survive in most difficult environments, shows to be a sham in laboratory conditions.



So what should a student do when lacking progression? Why yes, of course, party! Thus, I went to an outdoor event with bonfire to meet some Austrians who lived in Tipis according to a Native American tradition. On that evening I had a drink and a talk with the senior sewer of Tipis, because, in Austria the Tipi canvas is often made of cotton. And this cotton canvas had similar features like the black hair tent textile of the old nomads in the Middle East. The senior sewer revealed to me how to never break a certain rule with the tent while it is raining. This rule was everything I needed to know. On the next day I ran into the laboratory, turned one tiny accessory part of the rain machine off and ran the test sequences again. The textile of 3500 years heritage showed 99% resistance to rain constantly. The old textile resisted to rain by absorbing it and guiding it down within its plane. Here, the Eastern strategy of absorption got into contact with Western ideas of resistance. Fellow scientists welcomed this gain of knowledge dearly.

## NOW THAT, WHAT TO DO WITH SHIATSU ON THAT ISSUE?

Well, it is not so much different. Shiatsu is strongly based on the gains of knowledge in Traditional Chinese Medicine. An empiric medicine system of more than 3000 years of age. Dependant on the stages of systematic dispute among Chinese and later on also among Japanese doctors, in strict sense, 2000 to 2300 years are enough already to understand that the roots of Shiatsu had actually to do their purpose in a challenging environment for a while. It is a question of health and illness and of life and death. While Shiatsu has come into its definition in Japan at the beginning of the 20th century, we do of course have a short history on some new insights that had added up. But yet, Shiatsu largely derives from old Anma tradition and included some new Western and Eastern insights and techniques that had proved to be effective. Now, the development of Shiatsu is getting faster and we are hoping for ack-

„Each tradition of Shiatsu will find its benefits depicted in modern research, I am sure. Along with modern research we will keep on learning how and when to use which technique in its most effective way. And that will be translated between the Western and Eastern language of knowledge.“

nowledgement from the outside world. Modern research is not so much different to what the old Chinese and Japanese doctors did, though, of course, it is much larger than empiric approach only. And why not? Each system has to develop and the times they are 'a-changin'. Each tradition of Shiatsu will find its benefits depicted in modern research, I am sure. Along with modern research we will keep on learning how and when to use which technique in its most effective way. And that will be translated between the Western and Eastern language of knowledge.

Ah, back to the tent. It was not only about the rain. Later, I survived a sandstorm in such a tent while the modern fellow tents got crushed. And I drank cool beer beneath there while it was 45°C outside. Thus, the nomads had always been right about that. Growing older I reckoned that I was not able to sit in a chair for hours anymore and after finishing my doctoral thesis on some similar issue in anthropological architecture, I switched over to Shiatsu completely for getting old healthily. There, I have met Mag. Silvia Eberl-Kadlec who initiated and led the Shiatsu pilot study about high blood pressure. I was part of her team and thus learnt how Shiatsu showed big potential in a measurable setting. At the congress inspired by the lecture of Leisa Bellmore I had the idea to start this project, based on a dream that we all will have a common platform for scientific dispute and development.

## AND WHAT ABOUT YOU?

Don't you want to join and tell us your story, your background? Your experiences will contribute well on our common path. We need you, you can play a big deal in this and Shiatsu will need the research network. We are starting.

## IT IS YOUR GOOD CHANCE!

The Shiatsu Research Network will help individuals, teams, schools, etc. ... to get their project into acknowledged tracks. We help announcing your calls and provide information about easy introduction into science, proper study alignment in many variations, funding possibilities, international registration procedures, publishing know-how and networking with professionals in similar fields. Real life meetings will strengthen members, and effective concepts in accordance to family life and profession will widen our possibilities. Supported by the European Shiatsu Congress, a vast platform of contacts, know-how and large-scale publishing will already be available to us right from the beginning. And the network itself will have space on the European Shiatsu Congress webpage, including a mailing group, a forum for discussions, public study database and free blog spaces for members of the network who want to present their work in progress. By now, you can become member of the preliminary mailing group by sending an email to me: [shiatsuekristina.at](mailto:shiatsuekristina.at). We need to enlarge our management team and we want you to take part in the development process. The platform will be available this spring. Even if you have only few time to spare, we are happy to read your input. Let the wood grow!

## JOIN THE RESEARCH NETWORK!

Do you want to be part of the Network? Send an email to [group@shiatsu-research-network.org](mailto:group@shiatsu-research-network.org) and we add you to our mailing group! Already by now, there are open calls for joining research teams, building academic cooperations and information exchange. Everybody is welcome! You also can find more information about the Research Network on the website of the European Shiatsu Congress:

[www.europeanshiatsucongress.eu](http://www.europeanshiatsucongress.eu)

>> DR. TECH KRISTINA PFEIFER (AUT)

Founder of the Shiatsu Research Network,  
Co-author of the study „Shiatsu and hypertension“

Coming from a technical background of architecture and research, Kristina is interested in understanding Shiatsu, also from a fact based point of view.

[www.kristina.at](http://www.kristina.at)





„The integrative approach recognises that we are all individuals, and as such, we need care that is tailored to suit our individual needs – physical, mental and emotional.“

#### THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION PROVIDES THE FOLLOWING DEFINITION

Integrated care is a concept bringing together inputs, delivery, management and organization of services related to diagnosis, treatment, care, rehabilitation and health promotion. Integration is a means to improve services in relation to access, quality, user satisfaction and efficiency. (Groene & Garcia-Barbero, 2001)

Research demonstrates that the integrative approach can lead to improved treatment outcomes. It can result in more effective care by combining therapies in a way that exceeds the collective effect of individual practices (Boon et al, 2009). As it gains acceptance and recognition, new ways to incorporate integrative medicine into clinical settings to better serve patients are sought after. It is seen as a person-centred, holistic approach that provides the best care possible. As the Academic Consortium for Integrative Medicine & Health states: „Integrative medicine and health reaffirms the importance of the relationship between practitioner and patient, focuses on the whole person, is informed by evidence, and makes use of all appropriate therapeutic and lifestyle approaches, healthcare and disciplines to achieve optimal health and healing.“ (Academic Consortium for Integrative Medicine & Health, 2015)

In the Canadian healthcare system and around the world, the idea of an integrative clinic is more common than the reality of it. There are few truly integrative clinics where practitioners

can collaborate and provide their clients with fully integrative holistic healthcare.

In contrast, multidisciplinary clinics are quite common, offering a selection of natural health practices under one roof. At the same time, integrative clinics offering various biomedical services are also common. However, clinics that offer biomedical services alongside a range of natural health practices are few and far between.

I am fortunate to be working in one such clinic, where the integrative approach is central to our philosophy. The Al & Malka Green Artists' Health Centre (AHC) is an integrative clinic at Toronto Western Hospital, part of the University Health Network. The AHC was established in 1994 to serve the specialised healthcare needs of professional performing and creative artists. Its services include chiropractic care, cranial-sacral therapy, acupuncture, naturopathy, physiotherapy, massage therapy, shiatsu therapy and psychotherapy, alongside biomedical care. A subsidy fund provides assistance in offsetting the costs of fee-for-service treatments, ensuring that all artists can access the care they need, regardless of finances. Education and outreach are also part of the AHC mandate.

In my experience, the benefits of an integrative approach to healthcare are many, both to the client and the practitioner as well as the healthcare system:

- eases burden on the healthcare system - a patient is not going for unnecessary treatments/appointments/tests;
- convenience for the patient - all of their healthcare needs can be addressed in one clinic setting;

Pic: flickr.com/ Doug88888

# INTEGRATIVE HEALTHCARE

by Leisa Bellmore

Integrative healthcare is becoming more and more prevalent and is now becoming part of mainstream medicine. There are many interpretations of integrative healthcare. The term means different things to different people.



- **a greater understanding among practitioners regarding roles and perspectives along with scopes of practice;**
- **greater respect for other practices;**
- **builds team atmosphere;**
- **increases practitioner/team satisfaction;**
- **patient gets the best care possible due to an integrative approach that involves all relevant practices for their healthcare needs;**
- **patient understands there are options for care and gains an understanding of various natural health practices that can be accessed;**
- **patient has a voice and can exercise choice in their healthcare and wellness.**

As with any complex system, challenges exist. The Artists' Health Centre has the added challenge that comes with varying schedules. Often practitioners will work on different days or during different hours, meaning the team can have difficulty connecting and communicating. A number of processes have been established to mitigate this challenge. Additionally, collaboration and integration are fostered through a number of processes as well as the core values of the clinic and the hospital itself.

Best practices to facilitate collaborative care:

- **promote an atmosphere of respect and openness throughout the team;**
- **organise regular staff meetings to bring the entire team together;**
- **mandate overviews of various natural health practices: theory, technique, uses, research;**
- **hold case reviews by the team to discuss possible treatment approaches;**
- **establish communication mechanisms that facilitate interprofessional collaboration;**
- **provide integrative assessments and treatment plans for clients.**

The integrative approach recognises that we are all individuals, and as such, we need care that is tailored to suit our individual needs – physical, mental and emotional. Not every person will respond in the same way to a given treatment, a combination of modalities may achieve the best results. As the individual's healthcare needs change, so should the assessment and treatment plan.

As a clinic moves towards a model of integrative care 'there is a greater emphasis on the treatment of the whole person in his/her social, environmental and cultural context and a greater recognition of an increased number and variety of determinants of health' (Boon et al, 2004). This emphasis on the whole person resonates well with shiatsu therapy. The holistic approach that recognises the connectedness of mind and body and the person-centred philosophy that recognises each person as a unique individual are aligned with the theory of shiatsu. As such, it would seem a natural fit for shiatsu to be a part of integrative healthcare.

Many of us do not have the opportunity to work in an integrative clinic, but that does not mean there are no opportunities for fostering collaboration with other healthcare practitioners. If working in a multi-disciplinary clinic there is certainly potential for collaboration. In this instance creating opportunities to discuss cases (with the patient's permission to do so), sharing information about each other's modalities, treatment approaches and specialisations, consulting on treatment plans, and coordinating care for those who are seeing more than one practitioner are good steps in this process.

For those working in private practice more effort may be needed to initiate a collaborative approach with other professionals, but once relationships are established it is possible. Providing information about you and your practice is a good introduction to healthcare providers in your area. Meeting with those in your immediate area or those who share similar professional interests can initiate a relationship that can develop into something beneficial for both parties and for your patients. If you are working in a remote area lacking in other health professionals, online networks are a possibility.

An added benefit to collaboration for those in private practice is the opportunity to network with other practitioners. Aside from the benefit of shared knowledge and possible referrals, the value of connecting with other healthcare providers for those who work in what can sometimes be isolating circumstances is significant. Interaction, dialogue and support from other healthcare providers can aid in our professional development and help to prevent burnout. As Kenny (2002) states: 'Interprofessional collaboration has the potential to be a catalyst for professional development' (p. 67).

It has been suggested that trailblazing, innovative integrative healthcare includes a multitude of challenges that require novel ways of thinking, including new practice models that encourage collaboration (Sharf et al, 2012). It may be that the more traditional model of practitioners working in the same clinic will not always be possible. Connecting and collaborating with other practitioners, whether in our own clinics, in our communities or through online communities, is invaluable. There is a link between team-working and the wellbeing and satisfaction of those involved, leading to lower stress levels, and greater effectiveness and innovation (Haward et al, 2003; Proudfoot et al, 2007). However, successful interdisciplinary collaboration necessitates that those involved believe that collaboration results in excellent patient care with notable benefits to patients and practitioners (Yeager, 2005).

The AHC appears to conform to what Hollenberg (2006) refers to as the ideal type of integrative setting in which 'a non-hierarchical, collaborative relationship between practitioners...forms a trusting, respectful and 'seamless' continuum of care illustrated by inter- and transdisciplinary practice' (Hollenberg, 2006). And while we can't all work in this type of setting, we can build relationships that allow us to collaborate and work with our colleagues, for the betterment of our patients and our own professional gratification.

If we as natural health practitioners wish to be an equal part of our national healthcare systems, we must collaborate and integrate with other natural health practitioners and biomedical health practitioners to achieve the best possible outcomes for our patients. Respect and understanding of each other's roles, scopes of practice and abilities combined with person-centred collaborative care can raise healthcare to a new level while raising

awareness of shiatsu and allowing it to take its rightful place in the healthcare system.

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## >> LEISA BELLMORE (CAN)

### Former President of the National Health Practitioners of Canada

A key element of Leisa's Shiatsu practice is the combination of education and treatment. She is an international lecturer and researcher with a particular interest in self-management for chronic conditions.

[leisa@leisabellmore.com](mailto:leisa@leisabellmore.com); [www.leisabellmore.com](http://www.leisabellmore.com); Leisa Bellmore, Shiatsu Therapist on Facebook







INSPIRATION // KNOWLEDGE // PHILOSOPHY

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# THE EVOLUTION OF SHIATSU TOUCH

by Cliff Andrews

During the eighties, in a series of yearly residentials at Lam Rim in Wales, Pauline successfully systematised and taught the Masunaga “Zen Shiatsu” method. These were hugely in advanced workshops, almost every one of the students there went on to become senior teachers or heads of schools in the UK. When I returned to Europe after my apprenticeship in the USA in 1986, Pauline and I would meet up at least twice a year to co-teach workshops in Europe or in the USA. The sparks would fly as we struggled to put our combined experiences into an understandable and teachable form.

# „The most basic way we can experience touch in Shiatsu is on the local physical level.“

I was lying on a futon in a room at Grimstone Manor in Devon over twenty years ago, receiving a Shiatsu from my teacher Pauline Sasaki, and I didn't understand what was happening to me. I could feel the deep, focused pressure of her thumbs as she worked, but there was something else, something unexpected. I was experiencing changes on other levels, a feeling of movement in the space inside and outside my body.

I was used to two-handed Masunaga technique, feeling change locally and between the working and mother hand, but this was quite different. At the time I couldn't understand how the pressure of her thumbs could be creating all these unusual sensations. I realised that Pauline had transformed Shiatsu touch, and that at that time I had much to learn. It is amazing now to reflect on how our conception of the Enegetic Field has changed over the last twenty years, and how much more we are able to understand how our experiences are possible after the publication of books like "Energy Medicine – the Scientific Basis" by James Oschman.

During the eighties, in a series of yearly residencies at Lam Rim in Wales, Pauline successfully systematised and taught the Masunaga "Zen Shiatsu" method. These were hugely in advanced workshops, almost every one of the students there went on to become senior teachers or heads of schools in the UK. When I returned to Europe after my apprenticeship in the USA in 1986 Pauline and I would meet up at least twice a year to co-teach workshops in Europe or in the USA. The sparks would fly as we struggled to put our combined experiences into an understandable and teachable form. In the last few years I have been working to put these breakthroughs into some kind of order. I figured it must be possible to put them into an

historical perspective, a logical development of Shiatsu theory and technique, an evolution of Shiatsu touch within the lineage that I had been apprenticed into. The Physical touch.

The most basic way we can experience touch in Shiatsu is on the local physical level. By focusing on the sensation beneath our hand we can tune into skin, muscle and bone, and the amount of energy in a special place. We can apply techniques that give us feedback from the local area where we are working. The Namikoshi system is based on Western anatomy and physiology. For historical and political reasons the meridian system was not presented as part of the system in the early Namikoshi textbooks. Techniques often use one hand, with the other hand used to brace the giver against the floor. Shizuto Masunaga taught at the Namikoshi school for ten years and his studies of TCM and Ki, combined with his extensive clinical experience of Shiatsu, led him to revolutionise Shiatsu touch. Masunaga Revolution.

Shizuto Masunaga was probably the world's most influential Shiatsu Master. Masunaga made a discovery that set the stage for all the subsequent developments in Shiatsu: 'how we use our own energy determines how we experience the energy of the receiver.' The two point pressure experiment (See Zen Shiatsu p. 49) allows us to experience Shiatsu as more than a local physical sensation. Suddenly we are not just feeling the physical anatomy, the bones and muscles, or the quantity of energy in a particular place. By relaxing and bringing our focus into our own Hara our experience changes – we feel the connection between our two hands. It is in this feeling of connection that we experience the Meridian pathways. The feeling

of connection or movement of energy between the hands in Masunaga technique becomes the dominant experience, and the feeling of energy in a special place becomes secondary. The two handed technique of connection, Kyo and Jitsu, tonification and sedation, placed Yin and Yang, Ki and the meridian system firmly back into the core of the Shiatsu experience.

## THE KYO JITSU PARADOX

You palpate Bladder Jitsu in the Hara, and Large Intestine feels the emptiest meridian, with He- art and Small Intestine feeling the next emptiest. You hold the Bladder area and check two or three Kyos, the Heart meridian is the one that reacts with the Bladder – you feel the Bladder Jitsu "blip" and then disperse. So the diagnosis is Bladder Jitsu and Heart Kyo. This is basic Masunaga technique, but have you ever really questioned why we use this method to choose the Kyo? Why isn't the reacting Kyo always the most empty meridian? This is the Kyo Jitsu paradox. Its solution leads us into a wider experience of the nature of Ki, it is the doorway to a wider experience of Ki that takes us away from local physical perception.

Surely if tonifying means filling up energy, and sedation means emptying energy, and our aim is to rebalance the energy of the receiver, we would always get the most change from the "fullest" and "emptiest" meridians? If the reacting Kyo meridian is not the emptiest meridian on a physical level then there must be some other non-physical quality about the Kyo meridian that makes it "react" with the Jitsu. Focusing on the non-physical aspects of Ki naturally leads us out from the physical body into the etheric field.

## KISHI'S SOLUTION

I am in a workshop with Akinobu Kishi in 1983 – he sits motionless, he centres himself, you can see him gathering his energy. He places his hands together in the prayer position and then sweeps them above the body of the receiver. He is drawn to one point, contacts the body, and with a sharp exhalation sweeps his hand away. The treatment is over. A dramatic and unforgettable experience, but what is going on, why is he working in this way? Kishi was Masunaga's first "disciple" and the one chosen to take on his work in Shiatsu, so why did he abandon the Shiatsu form at that time? Kishi solved the Kyo Jitsu paradox by shifting his focus, he moved away from the physical body and the duality of Kyo and Jitsu by treating the whole energy eld as one. He moved into the etheric field or the expanded awareness of the Ki field, I believe, because this is where one of the answers to the Kyo Jitsu paradox lies.

## PAULINE SASAKI AND THE QUANTUM SHIATSUTM REVOLUTION

The nineties were a time of breathtaking change in the development of Shiatsu in Europe and the USA. The limits of the Masunaga system were being explored, with some developments transforming Shiatsu touch to allow access to the wider energetic eld. Pauline Sasaki was probably the world's leading Zen Shiatsu teacher in the 1970s and 1980s. She had translated the book Zen Shiatsu and studied with Masunaga extensively in the USA and Japan. She was becoming famous all over Europe for

# „Shizuto Masunaga was probably the world's most influential Shiatsu Master.“



„I now felt that I had reached a natural completion of the Kyo Jitsu project, none of these discoveries would have been possible without the work of Masunaga, Kishi and Pauline Sasaki.“

her systematic and profound understanding of his work. But during this time in her practice she was reaching the limits of Masunaga's system. "I was starting to experience things in my Shiatsu that no one could explain or help me with" recounts Pauline, "it was at this time that I searched out Kishi and apprenticed myself to him."

Pauline's mission was to integrate Kishi's high-level energy perception back into the Shiatsu technique. To achieve this she had to re-invent the way Shiatsu techniques are performed, and as a result she evolved a new style of Shiatsu. The challenge of Quantum Shiatsu™ technique is to maintain the connection with the information in the etheric field, or the non-physical aspects of the Ki, while at the same time using the body weight to apply Shiatsu techniques. In a way similar to Masunaga's transformation of Shiatsu through the use of the Hara to feel connections in the body, Pauline further developed the system by using the spine, or microcosmic orbit of CV and GV, as the new centre for the giver. The technique of expanding your energy field by opening the spine and expanding peripheral vision while bringing body weight forward allows access to the wider energetic field – even as that relaxed body weight is used to apply perpendicular penetration to the receiver's physical body. Pauline has thus revolutionised Shiatsu again and opened a new chapter in the evolution of Shiatsu touch.

#### WHOLE BODY SCANNING AND THE KYO JITSU REACTION

By the mid-90s I had gone as far as I could at that time with my developments in connecting with the energetic field. Pauline had by then, following Kishi, moved beyond Kyo and Jitsu by developing a "monadic" way of working on one primary meridian. However I was convinced that the whole Kyo Jitsu story had not been fully explored. So I decided to return to palpating

the Hara on the body, I had been using mainly off-body palpation since my apprenticeship. However the previous decade and a half of developments in Shiatsu touch had transformed my experience of the Hara. I started to experiment with experiencing the meridians in the whole body from the Hara using a technique called meridian scanning. After a few years of practice I made an astounding discovery that changed my conception of Kyo and Jitsu completely. I found that it is possible to feel the movement of the Kyo and Jitsu reaction directly in the whole energetic field from the Hara. This transformed the process of treatment as it made it possible to feel directly the energetic movements involved in the reaction of the Kyo and Jitsu meridians, helping us to understand symptom manifestations, the effects of tsubos, as well as how to pace and focus our treatments.

Around the same time I also discovered a technique to directly experience the Vibrational levels of the meridians, to feel if they were more active on the physical, emotional, mental or spiritual levels. This technique I called Vibrational frequency scanning. So now it was possible not only to feel the energetic effect of the Kyo Jitsu reaction in the whole body, but also experience on what dominant level, or levels the reaction was occurring.

I now felt that I had reached a natural completion of the Kyo Jitsu project, none of these discoveries would have been possible without the work of Masunaga, Kishi and Pauline Sasaki. It has been very rewarding to see these new discoveries spread throughout Europe and the USA, and to be taught by a new generation of teachers, techniques that I would not have dreamt of being possible twenty years ago are now fast becoming part of normal Shiatsu practice. There has been an evolutionary transformation of Shiatsu touch.

>> CLIFF ANDREWS (GBR)  
Co-founder of the Shiatsu College UK

Cliff is well known for his development of Shiatsu diagnosis and treatment and renowned for his clear, structured and supportive teaching style. He teaches widely in Europe, the US and Australia.

[www.newenergywork.com](http://www.newenergywork.com)





„Work with the hands is the apprenticeship of honesty. May the work of your hands be a sign of gratitude and reverence to the human condition...“

Ghandi

# TOUCH IN SHIATSU

by Gabriella Poli

“Touch: Babies thrive when they are held in loving arms. A small gesture of touch can mend hearts in times of sorrow or pain. All of humanity uses touch to connect, communicate and bond together. It is the oldest sensory system in the human body and therefore lies at the core of our existence. It links us to the outside world and makes our life experiences real. Yes, our need to touch and be touched is vital to our very survival.”

Pauline Sasaki

I have decided to include in this article what very special people have written or said about touch, about touching with our hands the body and the life of another person and what this touch generates, what it implies, how vast and deep its effect and its resonance are:

Pauline Sasaki: „So it is not surprising that bodywork which uses touch as a therapeutic tool can create significant invaluable changes in our bodies. Bodywork can also open the door to a spiritual dimension that few therapists can match. Through human touch we experience love, care and compassion, emotions that give us the support, strength and courage we need in order to initiate healing on many levels of both body and soul. Shiatsu is one type of bodywork that utilizes these powerful qualities.“

## TOUCH: „THE“ TOOL OF SHIATSU

I believe that touch is “the” tool of Shiatsu, and it is touch that enables us to establish that quality of contact that is unique to Shiatsu. As we have read in the quotes, when we touch our receivers, we don’t touch only their body, but we touch their life in all its expressions and manifestations: physicality, emotions, thoughts and belief systems, spirituality. From an energetic point of view, we get in contact with the whole range of their energy vibrations, from the slow vibrations of their physical body, up to their very fast spiritual vibrations.

But there is more to it: when we lay our hands on a person’s body we convey through that touch all of ourselves; it is not only therefore our hands touching the receiver’s body, mind and spirit, but two lives, ours and his, getting in contact, supporting each other, two energetic systems interacting. Heaven and Earth are there, the whole Universe is there, as each one, giver and receiver, are the Universal energy manifesting into the physical form.

Furthermore, in our touch, when we do Shiatsu, we convey love, compassion, empathy, respect: love comes from the acknowledgement that we are both human beings and that we come from the same source, we have the same origin; compassion is accepting our receivers as they are and opening our hearts to them; empathy is being able to recognize emotions being experienced by the receiver, being sympathetic and understanding; and respect is again appreciating who they are and where they are, without judgement and especially without forcing, manipulating or deciding for them, but acknowledging their possibilities and stimulating their potentials.

We also use our touch to listen and observe: through touch we can listen to what the life of our receiver is telling us, what are its requests, its wishes, its needs and we can as well observe how our receivers are reacting, how they are responding to our touch, so that we can adapt it to how they are in the here and now of the treatment.

Pic: Mike Mandl



## TOUCH AS A REMINDER OF OUR STRENGTH AND POTENTIALS

I have studied for many years with Pauline Sasaki whom maybe most of you have met or at least have heard of. In the last years of her life she was maintaining that the old paradigm of healing which focused on correcting what is wrong is now becoming obsolete and being replaced by a new paradigm requiring the alignment of our energy with what is right.

This is a real revolution: we are no longer concerned with what is wrong and we do not use our touch to repair or to fix what does not work in our receivers, but we want to get in touch with what is right, with their force, their strength, their power, their possibilities. Through our touch we remind our receivers about their human potential, we help them remember who they are, what their birth rights are. And if our receivers can acknowledge and recover their power, then they can become the masters and co-creators of their life.

## TOUCH AND FASCIA

When we talk about touch in Shiatsu, we should also have a close look at the Fascial System and at the "Living Matrix". Fascia is the general term used to define the connective tissues also called extracellular matrix. The peculiarity of Fascia is that it is a single smooth sheath that spreads throughout the body in a 3-dimensional web from head to foot without interruption, reaching as deep as the cellular level.

Research has in fact discovered that the connective tissue system or extracellular matrix is connected through the cell surface, with the cellular matrix and that the cellular matrix is connected through the nuclear envelope with the nuclear matrix. This entire interconnected system – a nuclear matrix within a cellular matrix within the extra cellular matrix – has been called the connective tissue or simply, the "Living Matrix".

Therefore, when in a Shiatsu session we touch and lean on our receiver's body, we establish a deep, extensive and global contact with this interconnected webwork, with all the structures of his body down to the cellular level.

## TOUCH AND BIOMAGNETIC FIELDS

Based on my experience, I do believe that when I touch my receivers, I do not only touch them with my hands, but I "touch" them also with my heart and my mind, i.e. what I feel and what I think influence all the levels of their energetic system. Research has proved that living organisms have electromagnetic fields around them, that we emit electromagnetic vibrations through our hands, our heart and our brain and that these electromagnetic vibrations interact both with the body tissues and the energy field of human beings.

From „Energy Medicine – The Scientific Basis“ by James L. Oschman:

„In a few decades scientists have gone from a conviction that there is no such thing as energy fields in and around the human body to an absolute certainty that they exist“ ... „Medical interest has focused on the magnetic fields around the body, which are now referred to as biomagnetic fields ...“

„It is a basic law of physics that when an electric current flows through a conductor, a magnetic field is created in the surrounding spaces. This phenomenon was discovered by accident by Hans Christian Oersted during a physics lecture he was giving in Copenhagen in 1820.

„A few years after Einthoven received his Nobel Prize for the discovery of heart electricity, Hans Berger (1929) announced that much smaller electric fields could also be recorded from the brain...“

„A study conducted in Japan by Seto et al. (1992) confirmed that an extraordinarily large biomagnetic field emanates from the hands of practitioners of a variety of healing and martial arts techniques, including Qi Gong, Yoga, meditation, Zen, etc. The fields had a strength about 1 000 times stronger than the strongest human biomagnetic fields (from the heart) which are about 1 000 000 times stronger than the fields produced by the brain...“

So when I lean on my receivers' body, I treat them with my hands and of course with their electro-magnetic vibrations and, at the same time, I reach them with the electromagnetic vibrations that emanate from my heart and my brain; I therefore "touch" them with the

„I work with my hands. It is a great privilege to touch a human being, to remind her in word and in touch that she is lovely, to put a hand on the brow of life and call her home. The wonder of touch is the wonder of human kindness. A giving of one's hand is a giving of one's life, one's word, one's promise, one's blessing. It is a gift of the highest order, as forgiveness and compassion...“

Dianne Connelly; "All Sickness is home sickness"

„... and if ever I touched a life  
I hope that life knows that  
I know that touching was and  
still is and always will be the  
true revolution!“

Nikki Giovanni

“There is but one temple in the  
universe, and that is the Body of  
Man. Nothing is holier than that  
high form. Bending before man is  
a reverence done to this  
Revelation in the Flesh. We touch  
Heaven when we lay our hands  
on a human body...”

Novalis

compassion, love, acceptance, respect that come from my heart, and with my faith and trust in the possibilities of Shiatsu, with my good intentions, positive thoughts, etc., that come from my mind. And that explain why the touch in Shiatsu is so soothing, so reassuring, so effective, so healing!

#### TOUCH ON THE FUTON

And now I would like to share with you how I try to get such a special quality of touch in my practical approach on the futon.

From “The Human Potential” by Pauline Sasaki:

„Energy comes into being through a never ending cycle of contraction and expansion. The yin and yang symbol is an illustration of these two opposite and complementary actions working together to create one life form...”

„In the contractive phase energy tends to manifest itself by becoming more structured. When an energetic form is in a contractive phase, the speed of the vibrations slows down and it tends to separate out into its parts. The expansive phase is characterized by a fast rate of vibrations this causes the energy to free itself by becoming less concrete and structured. During this phase the energy organizes itself so that the parts start merging together...”

In order for my touch to contact and interact with all the levels of my receivers’ energetic system – physical, emotional, mental, spiritual – and for me to be present and use all of my

energy vibrational range, I have to incorporate in my touch both the contractive and expansive aspects of energy.

In order to achieve this objective, I use body alignment (expansive phase) and depth of penetration (contractive phase).

In Shiatsu I can center my energy in hara, as it is the case in martial arts, or align it in my spine. When I align my energy in the spine, in my central axis, I have the possibility of expanding from there in all directions into my energetic field: I can expand towards Heaven and Earth (the yin and yang movement) and also all around my physical body (the expansion and contraction movement, from the centre outwards and vice versa). I can therefore be present at all the vibrational levels of my system and I can, consequently, contact my receivers at all the vibrational levels of their system: I become a very precise and sophisticated device that can receive and transmit at all the wave lengths. Conversely, when I use my hara as the center of my energy, I feel a certain predominance of the physical level.

Aligning with my spine also gives me grounding as I choose my most dense structure, i.e. vertebrae, bones, as the centre from where to expand, which in turn means that no matter how much I expand my energy and raise my vibrations, I always keep in contact with my physical body, with my denser structure.

In order to balance the expansion that comes from the body alignment, I use the depth of



penetration, which is the most contractive aspect of my Shiatsu technique: I transfer the weight of my relaxed body into my hands and lean deep into the body tissues.

In essence, I lean when I am in the expansive phase: aligned in the spine, expanded in the space around me, my hands totally relaxed, and, at the same time, I use all my body weight to lean deep into the receiver's body.

When I feel that the expansive phase is ending and that the contractive phase is naturally arriving, I release the leaning, renew my alignment (expansion) and lean again using all my body weight (contraction).

This approach where the contractive and expansive phases of the energy are present together gives the receiver a sense of wholeness, of total presence. He experiences unification: the "I am": all parts of his body and all his energetic levels merging into "one": He can feel his body, his physicality, and, at the same time, feel in contact with the most subtle part of himself, with his spirituality.

## TOUCH AND RESEARCH

And I would like to conclude this article by quoting what Ashley Montagu reports in his book „Touching“ (Chapter 5):

„Surveying the research studies on animal and human responses to touching, one is impressed by how frequent are the marked advantages in health, alertness, and responsiveness of those who have been “handled” as compared with those who have received minimal or no handling. Weininger\*, is an early unpublished study of ten infants beginning at ten weeks of age,

whose mothers were taught to stroke their infant's back, reported that at six months of age these infants had fewer sniffles, colds, vomiting and diarrhoea than the infants in the control group, whose mothers had not been taught to stroke their infants. What is becoming increasingly evident is that underlying these and many other differences are significant changes in the structure and interrelated functions of the nervous and immunological systems.

The findings of these and other investigators provide the experimental evidence for what has long been suspected – namely, that there are significant biochemical differences between humans who have enjoyed adequate tactile stimulation and those who have not, a statement that will probably be found to hold true throughout life: that the unloved person, taken at any age, is likely to be a very different biochemical entity from those who have been adequately loved.... “

\*Otto Weininger, personal communication, October 12, 1984

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## >> GABRIELLA POLI (ITA)

**One of the Founder of the European Shiatsu Institute, Founder of the ESI in Rome**

Gabriella worked very closely with Pauline Sasaki on Advanced Quantum Shiatsu, which then became her main field of research and experience. With her kind heart and humor she is a highly respected teacher and lecturer.

[www.gabriellapoli.com](http://www.gabriellapoli.com)



Pic: flickr.com/Ms. Glaze

# INTERNAL TECHNIQUES THE QUALITY OF TOUCH

by Wilfried Rappenecker

The quality of touch in first place depends on the level of internal freedom the practitioner has achieved. How far can this person relax and act from the Inner Space rather than from the surface, which manifests in the tension of shoulders and muscles for example. Luckily the capacity for an open and focused state is enhanced by the Shiatsu-practice itself.



It can be supported by a regular practice e.g. of Qi Gong, Taiji, by Yoga, breathing exercises, dance etc. or by the experience of meditation. The practitioner's own development in this respect can also be promoted by certain exercises, which aim at training the attention and at the same time have an astounding effect on the energetic organisation of the body as a whole. These exercises are usually quite simple and similar to exercises, as they are known from Still Qi Gong. They do however require some discipline and perseverance if we want to apply them in our Shiatsu for more than just a breath's time.

I would like to suggest the term "internal techniques" for such exercises of focused attention. On the one hand, the practitioner practices them quietly inside; only the skilled observer senses that there is something going on, or being done. And for the other, I would like to call them "techniques" because they are (and should be) used specifically and performed with precision, just the same as physical Shiatsu techniques.

Already at the first application, internal techniques often lead to interesting and even stunning "aha" experiences. Applied "physical" Shiatsu techniques feel different and have different effects. Their true potential however only starts to unfold – just as Qi Gong exercises e.g. – after years of persistent and interested practice. Then, inner limitations open up in the practitioner, the understanding of Ki and how we work with it in Shiatsu deepens, the energetic perception develops etc.

## TOUCHING THE WHOLE BODY

This exercise is really simple – just as all internal techniques. Their principle is always that we first sink in and touch as we are used to. The actual exercise consists in combining touch with a specific mental image, which designates this certain exercise. Most often it is easier to use this image in a Kyo-spot, it is somewhat more difficult on Jitsu-areas. So it is also with this following exercise, but it can – and also should – be used on any spot on the body. The image, which we use in this case is that our touch does not only affect the spot on which the thumb, the hand or any other body part is working on, but that it irradiates far beyond it into the whole of the receiver's body.

At the beginning it may not be so easy to let this image arise. When it works, however, something will change in the receiver's body. When one practices this for the first time one will notice that it only works if there is a change occurring in the practitioner's body – and this exactly is what the exercise is about.

It can hence be that the shoulders of the practitioner widen up, that she feels more space and softer inside, the back may be a little bit more straight, the pelvis slightly changes its position or the practitioner becomes aware at that moment of certain spots in her own body, where she is holding on to and now feels a need to let them go.

This is exactly the important thing about it: The relaxed and clear intention to reach the whole body of the client by a local touch brings forward the need in the practitioner to create the preconditions for such a touch – i.e. to become more wide and open, to let go of the tension in some key areas and thus to allow space in our body to unfold.

A touch that reaches the whole body is more than a physical contact. An "energetic" component is added to the physical touch, and this only becomes possible, when a feeling of "space" emerges in the practitioner's body.

If we practice working with this image regularly in our Shiatsu practice, every time we do so the body recognises this state that wants to arise a little bit quicker. It will finally be so familiar to the practitioner that she can create this state in herself she is was switching the light on.

## TOUCHING THE MERIDIAN IN THE DEPTH

An exercise to discover the depth People who learn Shiatsu as well as practitioners often believe that their Shiatsu is already meridian-Shiatsu when they just follow the courses of the meridians with their thumbs. Personally, I had this assumption before as well. Learning with different teachers and especially the experiences gained from practice showed me that such kind of meridian-Shiatsu is just a faint idea of what meridian work can really mean.

At least equally important as the exact knowledge of the meridian courses and a precise technique is a clear attention in the meri-

dian as I touch it. This attention arises from the perception of the quality of the meridian; we could also say that it emerges from "seeing" the meridian, as it were, when we touch it.

Meridians are subtle energetic phenomena; their presence can be enhanced significantly through our attention in the treatment. It is only this wide and focussed attention that makes them clearly perceptible and ready to be touched. Meridian-Shiatsu can become the more effective, the more clearly we perceive a meridian and are able to touch it consciously and with focus.

"Seeing" the meridians is a tricky issue, though. The more we try hard to see them and stare at where they are supposed to flow, the more they withdraw from our searching eyes – same as with any other energetic pattern. The best thing that can happen is that one discovers the energetic perception of a meridian "by chance", if one stumbles into it. Two essential preconditions for this can be pinned down: abundant practice and serious interest in the issue.

The following little exercise can serve as a kind of introduction to the perception of the meridians. It is best to practice this perception in small groups of three to four before we try to apply it in our own treatments. In groups of three to four, one person is working on a second while the others can watch. As a spectator it is possible to see more as if we are treating ourselves. This seems to be a fundamental phenomenon of energetic perception: the closer we are to what is going on, the less we are able to "see". For our exercise it is best if the observer keeps

a distance of one and a half to two and a half meters from the people who are working. It is easier to "see" when you are standing.

It is helpful to start this exercise with "loud" meridians, i.e. with a meridian quality that can also be perceived relatively easily by less experienced people. (Every meridian quality can be "loud" or "soft"; it depends on its vibrational state). Under normal circumstances Stomach, Gallbladder and Bladder meridian offer themselves as "loud" meridians, especially in their courses on the leg. Pericardium or Small Intestine on the arm are other examples.

## SOMETHING FEELS DIFFERENT

After the treating person has decided for a certain meridian sequence, he chooses a simple treating position, localises the meridian according to its theoretical course and then sinks in attentively with his thumb or the middle fingers of the hand.

Those who are watching will now perceive a change occurring at different depths of the process of sinking in. It is difficult to say of what nature this change is. Something just feels different. We cannot actually see it. We feel something in our body or in the room. It is really subtle, but at the same time nothing special. In discovering it we often feel we found something we have already known long before. And this is true, in fact. We perceive all these things in our everyday lives all the time, most of the time without being aware of them, though.

„Meridians are subtle energetic phenomena; their presence can be enhanced significantly through our attention in the treatment.“



# „Physically contacting the energetic space of the meridians brings forward a response, which can be felt and seen.“

Something feels different because the touching person comes closer to the meridian. In a more colloquial way we could say, he scratches its surface. Physically contacting the energetic space of the meridians brings forward a response, which can be felt and “seen”. This response is stronger if the practitioner’s attention perceives the meridian space before physically touching it.

The contact in the “centre” of the meridian then is often “softer” than the reaction to the contact on the “periphery”. It can however also be more prominent, clearly perceptible for the observer, depending on the energetic state of the spot. Basically we can say, that it feels good and satisfying for the receiver and the observers (and with a little experience for the treating person as well) when the “centre” of a meridian or a tsubo is being reached. In fact it can be utterly frustrating for anybody involved in this experiment when the treating person does not get there.

There is an interesting phenomenon to be observed here: if the giver is tense (e.g. in his shoulders or arms), we will have the feeling that the meridian is not really being reached – even if physically the practitioner has sunk in deep enough. If he can become wide in his shoulders and arms (and beyond this in all of his body), and at the same time with his relaxed attention rests totally on the touched spot, then the energetic reaction will become softer, while at the same time the observer more and more will get the feeling that this touch reaches its goal.

## EVERY TOUCH INDUCES AN ENERGETIC REACTION

How can all these observations be explained? Obviously, as mentioned above, every touch of the body induces an energetic reaction, which expands through space similar to acoustic or light waves. These waves meet the people in the room, partially penetrate through them and can therefore be perceived by them. Most often, a watching person feels the energetic reactions in her own body.

The touch that induces such reactions can be physical, e.g. with our hands. Energetic structures can, however, also be touched mentally, which also induces a clearly perceptible reaction. In meridian-Shiatsu, we work with the body and with the mind. Shiatsu, understood like this, is a kind of Still Qi Gong.

When the hand comes into contact with a meridian on its “surface”, then there is some kind of threshold reaction emerging. It shows that the touch induces a clear energetic reaction in the meridian field as well as in the body of the receiver. With more experience in such exercises one will notice that there are several such “changes” in one comes closer step by step. The clearer the attention of the giver has established a contact with the place that he will touch, the more prominent the reaction will be. If this mental contact is strong, then the first “threshold reaction” can already be perceptible outside of the physical body, before the treating hand has even touched the body’s surface.

This “external” reaction is comparatively yang, i.e. quite prominent. And it is the more prominent, the more strongly the touched spot is positively charged (i.e. Jitsu).

Also the reaction in a Kyo state can strongly spring to attention, although in a different way. Compared to the threshold reaction on the surface it is yin. It is softer, while in its effect often more powerful.

In this way energetic perception is more about sensing or feeling within one’s own body than seeing. Still the eyes are of great importance for it. If we look with our relaxed glance to where we are working the reactions are much more easily perceptible than with eyes closed. It seems as if beyond being optic organs the eyes are organs of focussing our mind. Thus they facilitate getting in contact with energetic structures. More experience is needed to be able to “see” the above described with eyes closed. Blind people often have developed this ability.

## EVERY SPOT SHOWS A DIFFERENT PATTERN TO TOUCH

The observed reactions can now be quite different. Depending on the energetic state of the touched spot, the first prominent “peripheral” reaction can already occur on the surface of the skin at the first light touch (e.g. in the case of a prominent Jitsu-state) or relatively soft in the depth of a tsubo (e.g. in the case of a Kyo-state of the meridian at that spot). The touch in the centre can be utterly still and yet quite powerful (e.g. in a Kyo-tsubo). Whereas usually a Kyo-spot likes to be touched, it can sometimes be impossible to reach its centre if this proves to be too painful. Also touching the centre in a prominent Jitsu-spot at times can be difficult because the strong Jitsu state does not allow an easy access.

If one is unfamiliar with in this kind of perception, one may at first have the impression of not getting anything of what is going on. This will quickly change, though. The exercise is so simple that even an untrained observer most often will realise that he can sense the reactions.

The next step is then to perceive the reactions not as an observer, but as the giver. This is a bit more difficult, due to the nature of the energetic world that allows a clearer vision if you watch

from a greater distance. However, with the help of the others participating in the exercise it will also become possible. Whoever is interested in discovering more may start to examine the differences between the different spots and meridian sequences in the own practice and finally learn how to account for them during the treatment.

For some the “seeing” proves easier when treating, instead of watching. In that case the perception of the meridian contact from a distance of one and a half to two and a half metres is a challenge for us, and a possibility to discover new things.

However, also for these practitioners the actual exploration of the deep contact has to take place in their own everyday practice. It is therefore recommendable to practice this exercise (of attentive sinking in, feeling the first contact with the meridian and the touching it in its depth) for five to ten minutes at the most during a treatment. With more experience one will be able to apply it at any given time in a treatment.

In the end it becomes so familiar that we do not want to give Shiatsu in any other way anymore. This is because the level we are touching when we get in contact with the meridian is quite rich in energy, and it allows connections to other areas of the physical and energetic body happen more easily and quickly than any other level. I call this the Communicating Level. The meridians run through it like the veins through a leaf. It is satisfying to get in contact with the Communicating Level.

In order to really work with the energy of the meridians, we first need to be interested in touching the meridian in its centre. Not only the hands, but also the mind should be ready to touch there. This is something that can be learned with this exercise.

Second, it needs to be ready to contact the energetic in general. This demands inner wideness and lightness. Such an inner state on the side of the practitioner is being supported through the application of Internal Techniques like “Touching the Whole Body”, “Free Flow of Ki” or “Ki-Projection”.

„To work with the meridian means to be present in its depth, physically as well as with one's attention.“

### DEEP RHYTHM SHIATSU AND CONNECTING

Central subject of this internal technique is the discovery of the real depth in which the meridian runs and to be there with one's own attention in the treatment. When we touch at this depth, the rhythm of our treatment changes.

For beginners in Shiatsu, this rhythm is a result of the consequently sinking in, going out of a tsubo and proceeding to the next one. Each one of these phases has its own meaning in a Shiatsu-treatment. If it is disregarded, the treatment will lose of its quality.

If the three phases are respected as equally important, a steady rhythm emerges, which makes it easy for the beginner to practice the use of her own body in Shiatsu. Meridian-work, however, means to work clearly and unequivocally with the meridian. To work with the meridian means to be present in its depth – physically as well as with one's attention. If only the phases of sinking in, coming out and proceeding to the next are consciously effectuated, we cannot be in the meridian with our attention. We are then in the process(es) of sinking in, coming out and proceeding to the next.

For this reason we introduce the phase of holding. When I have come in contact with the meridian in its depth, I stay there. This moment is the most important in meridian-Shiatsu. It is here that the essential energetic movements take place. This is why this phase of holding is more important than the other three.

In fact, sinking in, coming out and going on are only there to enable this holding of the contact in the depth, this is from where they draw their

right to exist. As important as it may be not to neglect them, they do not have any essential own meaning. The real key-point is the relaxed holding in deep contact.

If this phase of holding becomes the most important in meridian-work, a fundamentally different treatment rhythm emerges. The contact in the depth leads us. This becomes so strong that the treating person does not leave the depth with her attention anymore. The thumb has to go out and on, and then sink in again; the mind however stays down there in the meridian.

In the beginning, the deep rhythm may appear difficult and unusual to practice. The impression may arise that we have to learn Shiatsu completely anew. And yes, in a certain way, this is true. Once mind and body got used to the new rhythm though, it becomes much easier, and a space opens that allows to explore the deep contact: e.g. where is the precise centre of this Kyo, which angle of touch allows a direct access, and what is the quality of touch that should be applied here?

If the attention of the giver in such way rests in the depth of the meridian then the phase of holding will gain special importance in a Shiatsu treatment as well as in meridian work. This is made possible because the giver internally can let go, and allows space to unfold. Thus she can enter the energetic space, enter the reality of the meridian as well as the whole person. This is a very precious moment, which not only may create a major change in the energy field of the receiver, but it also feels very good. So don't miss it – but enjoy it!

„Space and wideness that unfold inside the giver also have a widening effect on the spots that are being touched and where the attention of the giver rests. This can be made use of by allowing a connection to take place in between the two spots that are held. In this moment access to a deeper understanding of the meaning of two hand Shiatsu is offered.“



„A connection of that kind one could also try to achieve by means of a high mental concentration. However, such a construction will appear weak and ineffective. Again it is the space and the wideness within the giver, which renders the connection to appear strong and vivid.“

Space and wideness that unfold inside the giver also have a widening effect on the spots that are being touched and where the attention of the giver rests. This can be made use of by allowing a connection to take place in between the two spots that are held. In this moment access to a deeper understanding of the meaning of “two hand Shiatsu” is offered.

A connection of that kind one could also try to achieve by means of a high mental concentration. However, such a construction will appear weak and ineffective. Again it is the space and the wideness within the giver, which renders the connection to appear strong and vivid. Certainly the mental image of connection may be needed to initiate this process. Then, however, the body has to take over; like the corpus of a guitar or a violin it becomes the resonance body for the applied technique, and more: for the spots that are touched and even for the whole person who lies there on the futon.

In the beginning allowing a vivid connection to occur is not always an easy thing to accomplish. One may feel tempted to somehow force it to happen, however the result will be rather

disappointing. Then one understands: you cannot “make” such a connection, you can only allow it to take place. To try hard to make it happen means that you get narrow inside yourself; what is needed though is the wideness of letting go.

One other effect of this work is that it allows a clearer perception of the meridian as space. The giver may experience the feeling as if holding a continuous space at its two ends. The meridian field becomes more clearly perceptible, which can be used for more precise meridian work: suddenly it is easy to “see” where in this space there is an interruption, a spot that does not communicate fully with the rest. Then one can work with that point directly and immediately feel or see the change (for more details of this work see article “Living Meridians”). The Inner Technique of Connecting presents a paradox: trying to achieve something by letting go, becoming wide, allowing it to happen. It is a real challenge; a solution does exist. Because looking for that solution may initiate important changes within the practitioner it is also a beautiful and effective kind of Still Qi Gong.

## THE TECHNIQUE OF A TOTALLY FREE FLOW OF KI

When techniques of pressure are merely effectuated in a mechanical way in Shiatsu, which means that no connection with the space of the energetic is taking place, then the movement of Ki will be blocked for the time of the exerted pressure. Energetic movements then for a big part only take place as a reaction after the weight has been removed from the spot.

It is however also possible to initiate Ki-movements while touching and to influence them. This can happen in different ways. One of these possibilities consists in the technique of the Totally Free Flow Of Ki. The technique itself is as simple as it can be: we imagine that the Ki under the thumb (or the palm, elbow, knee etc.) that we are working with can move totally free.

The technique of the Totally Free Flow Of Ki is especially suitable for the work with meridians. After all it is the meridian’s job to channel Ki, respectively to allow it to vibrate freely. For this technique the course of the energetic channel offers our imagination a clear focus: we give Ki the space to vibrate freely in the meridian course – in both directions! With this exercise we support the function of a meridian.

Also in a local meridian-free Shiatsu this internal technique can fertilise the work. In class, I like to present this on the neck. The neck as connector between the head and thorax often lets the effect become more apparent than elsewhere. For this purpose all neck-techniques are suitable, which work with the neck resting on one, two, or three fingertips. First, I let students apply such a technique merely mechanically, without any imagination, and then I ask them to activate the mechanical approach by the internal technique.

Both techniques, the “merely physical” and the one activated by imagination have different effects, as the receivers confirm over and over again. Often the merely physical technique is being described as pointed, relatively painful, locally effective, pressing, narrowing, intruding and similar attributes. Activated by the described image the same technique is being sensed clearly differently, e.g. as softer, less painful, reaching a lot further and deeper, less urging or intruding, some say they feel a stream down their back, that one feels more connected, protected etc.

## EFFECTS ON THE TREATING PERSON

The technique of the Totally Free Flow Of Ki will, after some practice, clearly change the quality and the effectiveness of a Shiatsu-treatment. However, the effect of this exercise on the practitioner is maybe even more important to me than the effect on the client. It is for this reason that I introduce these techniques to the students of our Shiatsu training. Treating people thus reported e.g. that their thumb got warm. They noticed that they had pressed much too hard in the first, “mechanical” phase, that they had to change their position in order to effectuate the technique well or that they had become aware of their own blockages in different areas/joints of their body and much more. All these phenomena spring from the fact that a lively imagination in this exercise only becomes possible when the treating person gives up at least some essential blockages in her own body.

In a fascinating way, the aspiration to get a clear image of the free flow of Ki often dissolves such blockages by itself. It is like a present that suddenly comes to the practising person as a reward: in the moment the image of a free flow of Ki becomes vivid and “real” the own body suddenly feels more light and free. We notice e.g. that, when we do Shiatsu, we always hold on to at this or that spot, in this or that joint. We may start to understand that it is holding on to the Ki in our own body that holds the Ki in the body of the client, and that the Ki in the client can flow the more freely, the freer the practitioner allows it to be in her own body.

Through persistent and relaxed practice of the internal technique, this effect will be experienced over and over again; eventually the body will gain the ability to let go, to allow space prevail in its depth, without the image of a free flow of Ki. Selfcontrolling thoughts like “I need to let go in my shoulders (elbows, thumbs, lower back, diaphragm etc.)” become superfluous.

The internal release of the body is also a precondition for becoming aware of the Hara. One can concentrate on the Hara for years, without it becoming more alive and stronger. Only when Ki gradually becomes freer in our whole body, the Hara can gain strength, and we can start to work from there.

„Shiatsu is, as a matter of fact, bodywork and energetic work at the same time. It is easy to perform physical techniques mechanically, as we learn it at the beginning of a Shiatsu training. It is even easier to get in contact with energetic patterns when the touch is light or even no physical contact at all. It is however not so easy and requires practice and experience to combine energetic work with the use of the body weight or other physical techniques.“

## A FEW THINGS THAT ARE TO BE CARED FOR

Now, when effectuating this internal technique, there are a few things to be aware of. One thing e.g. is that when working with this image we tend to release the physical contact a bit, to go a bit out of the touch. This is good and wanted if it is expression of the changes inside the treating person. Not rarely, however, it is an escape. Essentially, the application of internal techniques does not replace external techniques, but they should enrich them. The physical contact should therefore be kept upright.

Shiatsu is, as a matter of fact, bodywork and energetic work at the same time. It is easy to perform physical techniques mechanically, as we learn it at the beginning of a Shiatsu training. It is even easier to get in contact with energetic patterns when the touch is light or there is even no physical contact at all. It is however not so easy and requires practice and experience to combine energetic work with the use of the body weight or other physical techniques. I believe this to be one of the greatest challenges that Shiatsu has to offer. Again here is the paradox: How can I be in a concrete and (more or less) deep physical contact and at the same time be open and free and allow endless space inside my own body and beyond?

Furthermore when practising this internal technique it may be that in the beginning our mind rebels against the clear imagination of a free flow of Ki. A certain discipline is required to go on practising and to rebuild the image over and over again. We also need understanding for the situation of our mind, which for good reasons does not allow that easily to be forced into any direction. It should remain a game, similar to Qi Gong (in fact, this is a kind of Still Qi Gong), which is best practised with a light, wide-open mind and an inner smile. Persistence and understanding for the own “weak points” (which are, closely looked at, not only weaknesses) are needed to proceed on this way.

I recommend our students to practice this technique in the beginning for only five to ten minutes per treatment. On one hand, it is not good to force the mind into a certain direction for long time and torture it in this way. This is the surest way to lose having fun with it. On the

other hand, this technique is able to destroy the flow and the rhythm of a treatment when at the beginning it is applied slowly (which is naturally the case: it simply takes time until the image becomes vivid in each contact). Equally important is that a beginner in the practise of this exercise runs the risk to lose contact with the client when her mind is focused on such an image over a long time instead of being aware of the situation of the client.

Finally, the contact with a single spot/area should be kept up as long as it takes until the image of the free flow of Ki has become totally vivid. To become vivid does not mean anything than that it is light and feels good and right. As soon as the image becomes vivid, the Ki-flow is released and the practitioner can go on.

To become alive also means that we cannot force this image to come, as the consequence would not be liveliness but rigidity. Rigidity however would contradict the flow. It is enough to imagine the free flow with a light but persistent mind and watch this image become more and more real and vivid as space and openness spread out inside one's own body. This offers the possibility to understand deeper the meaning of “No-Intention” or “Non-Doing” in Shiatsu, as Non-Doing is the expression of freedom in our own body.

## FREE FLOW OF KI AND KYO-/JITSU-AREAS

There will be some (few) spots on which a vivid image will emerge only very hesitatingly – or even not at all. We can understand this phenomenon in the way that this area does not want a free movement of Ki and quasi defends itself against it. Except for the case of the practitioner's attention being absent, there will most often a prominent Kyo or Jitsu be found on such a spot. As such reactions are helpful for the understanding of Kyo and Jitsu I briefly want to mention discuss them here:

Ki always has a longing to move freely. Therefore our work will usually be welcomed also by a moderate Jitsu – and it will feel good and right for the practitioner as well as for the receiver. With a really prominent Jitsu-spot, this is however not always the case. One could say that in such a strong Jitsu Ki simply does not understand why it should move. In fact, Ki got stuck



„In order to understand the hindrances that appear with a prominent Kyo we have to understand that in a Kyo-spot we find a lack of Ki-activity, respectively of liveliness.“

creating this Jitsu because the body ordered it to do so – and not to vibrate freely. With our imagination then, we work against the body's clear order – and the prominent Jitsu feels strong enough to resist the freeing presence of the practitioner and continue to do its job. In such a case the impression may arise that nothing would happen at all, as if we would be working on concrete. Then we have to stick to the motto: the wiser head gives in. To insist too much could lead to a wrestle, a fight, in which the practitioner will never get wide and open but narrow and blocked; this will let the blockages only become even more prominent. (There is the possibility to work with this technique on such a strong Jitsu, though. This requires more experience and specific, focused physical techniques).

In order to understand the hindrances that appear with a prominent Kyo we have to understand that in a Kyo-spot we find a lack of Ki-activity, respectively of liveliness. One could say that with our technique of a Totally Free Flow Of Ki we would make the little Ki that is there move away, too. Strong Kyo-areas according to their nature do not resist the focused attention of the practitioner as much as strong Jitsu-areas. Being wakefully present, however, it will not feel right, suitable to apply this technique here.

The practitioner will get the clear feeling that something else is needed. A prominent Kyo does not need the image of movement to find balance. The tranquil presence and simple, cle-

ar touch of the practitioner in its very centre are enough for that purpose. This may feel as if we were holding our hands in a pool or a very slow and calm creek.

Some have always been doing it like this... What sometimes happens in class is that some students look at me in surprise, asking what was so special about this technique. They had always been doing it this way, after all.

The precondition for the work with Ki is that its freedom is being promoted in the treatment. And in fact, not few intuitively work in this or a similar way right from the beginning. When they use this imagination, they become aware of it. They would however most often describe their way of treating in a totally different way and much simpler than I did.

And really, there probably is an infinity of possibilities to work consciously or unconsciously with free Ki. The one outlined here is only one approach among many. The more, I have already said far too much about the technique of the Totally Free Flow Of Ki. This probably is a consequence of the attempt to put something elementary into words, which actually can only be experienced directly.

## THE TECHNIQUE OF FOCUSED KI-PROJECTION

The use of internal techniques gives us the possibility to make use of our attention – and therewith our Ki – in a focused way in Shiatsu. They are an important supplement for Shiatsu techniques of physical touch, which themselves could be called external techniques. Their effects rest upon the phenomenon that our thoughts are an expression of Ki. Even more: Ki follows the mind, which means that the conscious mind is able to guide our Ki to be effective where ever we want. Internal techniques are at least equally important as external techniques, let them be applied consciously or unconsciously.

The internal technique that I am going to describe in this section has a lot in common with the technique of the Totally Free Flow Of Ki. Again it is quite a simple exercise for our attention, which furnishes many “aha” experiences already at the first time that we use it. Its true sense however lies on a different level, which only opens up after persistent and relaxed practice – similar to Qi Gong.

Ki follows our attention. In other words: my energetic field reaches to where my thoughts go. This phenomenon is the basis of the majority of everyday activities that we successfully perform. In the oriental martial arts it is specifically being practised and applied. To be fully present with our attention at the spot where we are working at a given moment is one of the essentials for a good and effective Shiatsu.

This technique is known to many under the term of “Ki-projection”, especially to those who have studied with Pauline Sasaki and Cliff Andrews. For my feeling the term “Technique Of Focused Ki” describes what really happens in a better – even though somewhat more complicated – way: the practitioner aims her Ki at some place in the body of the client, maybe comparable to a laser-beam, which gets its force from the rays being parallel bundled. Such a comparison however already leads us astray, as this exercise is much more about the play of focus with space rather than a “hard” technical exercise, which like a laser gains its effects from a rigid focus only.

## INITIAL EXERCISE

A good start into this play is the work with the Hara. This then becomes an excellent exercise for our energetic perception too. To start, you first sit in Seiza besides your Shiatsu-partner. The most important precondition for the success is that you have a secure and relaxed posture that feels good in the Hara and gives you a good and pleasant feeling of contact to the ground. Then put your hands on the Hara of your partner. Let them simply rest there and look into the Hara with your Inner Eye.

At first, there may not be much to see. After a short while however, the Hara will not appear as the same everywhere in its depth anymore. Differences will become visible, bright and dark spots maybe, dense, full or empty places, powerful or rather thin, empty structures, patterns and many more other differences. The Hara can present itself to us in the most different ways – and it is always a surprise!

Then you choose one of these patterns for your work. It can be any of the different structures that came to your attention. It is good to take something of which you think it has importance or “weight” – or just one that attracts you most, interests you most. And then the actual exercise starts:

First, become aware of your own Hara once again – of the whole of the Hara with the Tan Den as its centre of gravity. Care about sitting straight and relaxed and that it feels good. Now, allow your attention that is resting in the Hara to expand slowly, beyond the limits of the Hara into the thorax. On the way up, you include the strength of the Middle Warmer (Wood and Earth) into the movement. In the chest it is the Heart that vibrates along, which gives the emerging touch the right colouring.

And it expands further: through the shoulders into the upper arms and the elbows, into the forearms, through the wrists into the hands. Actually you do not do anything, but just sit there and watch it happen. Internally you step aside and give room to the expanding attention of the Hara.

Then the movement goes beyond the limits of your hands into the Hara of your partner, into the centre of the structure or quality that you have chosen. You will find this centre easily; you just have to “look closely”. It is where the chosen quality is most intense, maybe most bur-

ning or clear. When you have chosen an empty area e.g., the centre will be where the emptiness is clearest, most prominent, if the spot is dark, then the centre is where it appears darkest.

What is important: your Hara-attention does not flow from your Hara into the Hara of your partner. It expands to there! This is an important difference: in the first case you lose something – maybe only little – but you lose something. In the second case however, you strengthen your centre.

Maybe in the meantime your attention broke down on the way through the thorax, shoulders or arms. This is absolutely normal, as it is quite difficult and needs some practice to be able to keep it up integrated over a certain period of time. This does not have to bother you, though, you just start it again from the Hara. If it crushes twenty times in a minute, you reinstall it twenty times, light-hearted and with the Qi Gong's Inner Smile.

Maybe you discover spots on the way from your Hara into the hands on which your attention always dissolves, respectively where it cannot pass through. You can assume that these are places where you hinder the Ki-flow in one way or another. Vividly imagine then that the attention can expand through there, step aside internally and make room for it.

You possibly notice that something makes it difficult for you to give room there. Maybe it is your posture, maybe a lack of calmness and ease in yourself, or it is a thought that distracts you. Whatever you find, care for the situation to change and that you can perform the exercise without being bothered.

## KI WORKS

When the arc from your Hara to your partner is installed it is as if you would touch her there with your own Hara. It does not only seem like – you really touch her in this way. It is because the attention or power of your Hara has expanded to that point that you are able to touch there. Now you just touch as relaxed as possible. Be clearly aware of the centre of this structure – and offer space to it with your attention. Do not try to change anything, as this is less effective (and more exhausting) than the attentive touch with an inner feeling of wideness.

This is a very concrete energetic technique that works. Few moments of direct and vivid contact between the two spots are enough to change something. You will notice this when you “see” that under the influence of the attention of your Hara the pattern in the Hara of your partner will probably change. At first, the centre of the pattern that you are touching may move – in this case, you simply follow, respectively look for a new centre. Maybe this pattern disappears or clearly changes its energetic quality. When something has changed, this technique has fulfilled its task and you stop – unless you have the clear feeling that there is still something more to change soon, thus that it is better to stay some more.

The technique of focusing our Ki and to treat with it is quite simple, then. All we need is the will to perform it and a little discipline to keep up the arch of attention. It can be used at any spot of the body, in nearly every situation as a support of other Shiatsu-techniques or also by itself. It can be really effective and really change something. It is, however, not a magic technique. Even if you master it, the same what is true for all subtle Shiatsu-techniques applies here too: they are especially effective when we use them to support a movement that wants to happen in the client. It can lead to blockage when we want to use it to force our client “on the right track”.

## THE APPLICATION IN SHIATSU

The technique described here can be used in all possible situations in Shiatsu. It enables us to be really where we work, even there, where our hands cannot reach to on a physical level. It supports the physical work but is also effective by itself. In fact to my understanding it is the fundament for Shiatsu. I use it a lot in meridian free local Shiatsu e.g. when working with joint problems.

In meridian work it allows for a more direct contact to the meridian in the depth under our hands. The wideness that opens up in shoulders, arms, wrists and beyond helps you to understand that what the tip of your thumb, fingers or elbow touch is not just body tissue, that you enter a space instead when you touch the meridian.

„The technique of focusing our Ki and to treat with it is quite simple, then. All we need is the will to perform it and a little discipline to keep up the arch of attention. It can be used at any spot of the body, in nearly every situation as a support of other Shiatsu-techniques or also by itself. It can be really effective and really change something.“



# „And even later, with even more experience, it may sometimes appear to make sense to touch directly with the attention of the Hara and the Heart.“

Meridians are vibrating space. To touch means that your hara is in this space; that you are right in there.

In the flow of a Shiatsu-treatment the application of this technique is however something different from the exercise on the Hara described above. First, we work here with two hands that often have different tasks. It takes some practice to let the attention equally expand into and beyond both arms and hands.

Second, the application of this technique is more difficult when we work with the thumb instead of working with the palms. Most often we start to build up tensions in our wrist and shoulder (and other, more far away regions of our body) as soon as we start using the thumb. When working with the thumb it gets more difficult to step aside internally and to give full space to the attention of the Hara. Third, we do not have as much time in a treatment for the single touch as we had in the former exercise on the Hara. If it takes too long to build up the attention at a point, the treatment flow can get interrupted.

The first step is to learn to build up the attention from the Hara to every spot of the sequence we are treating. Therefore you first sink in physically as you are used to. Then you add the touch with the attention of your Hara: it expands from the Hara through the chest and arms to the spot you are treating. Later on you will not have to rebuild the attention at every new spot, but be able to keep it upright over longer time and many contacts.

Further on it is best to practise the exercise only with the Resting Hand first. To start with both hands right away is quite difficult, and the Resting Hand is the more important of the two. When you are familiar with this feeling, add the Wandering Hand. Take your time to get to this point; it can well take a few weeks (doesn't have to, though).

In the beginning this exercise is often a one-way road: we still need a high level of concentration to focus the attention. There is no more space left to perceive anything else. There also seems to be no space left for all the other important and beautiful aspects of Shiatsu. The more, the treatment can become drowsy and viscous, everything goes on really slowly now and the treatment flow can get interrupted.

In order to avoid this it is recommendable not to practise more than five to ten minutes a treatment. This way you can avoid becoming rigid, that your treatment falls apart and you lose joy for what you do. As with all these exercises it is helpful to perform it with a light mind and an Inner Smile.

## THE REWARD AND THE USEFUL DETOUR

However, it will soon become a lot easier and the toil in the beginning is rewarded. To touch with the attention of the Hara will soon become as familiar to you as all the other Shiatsu-techniques that you have already mastered until now. Your body starts to understand how it can be used as an instrument in

Shiatsu without having to close the locks. This understanding may perhaps evolve only in the arms at first and later also in other areas like the chest, the pelvis or the legs.

Now it pays off that you have freed the way for your Hara-attention to pass through the chest and the difficult spots in the shoulders, arms, wrists and thumbs so often. Once you get to the point where you can give "stereo"-Shiatsu with both arms in this way, a new wideness and lightness becomes possible in your work. For the one it allows you a more intense contact and for the other overview and distance to the spot you are touching.

The distance is important, as it makes it easier for you to perceive energetic patterns and to touch them directly, with a focus. It supports you to keep an overall view of the treatment, to assess the meaning of a spot that you are working with in relation to the whole, to gain a broad view and perceive important changes in other parts of the body. Distance protects you, too.

Even more: you start to experience yourself in a different way in your body and energetic space. How exactly this will be is difficult to say, the more as everybody experiences it differently and would describe it in another way. It has to do with lightness and wideness, maybe also with stability, and opens the way to the understanding of Ki. It can evolve early, after a few months, or it can take some years, and it is not a disadvantage if it takes a little longer.

One can ask now whether it is not possible to touch directly with the attention of the Hara, and whether the detour over the chest, shoulders and arms is a necessary one. This would save us a lot of effort. The answer is yes, it is possible. It is, however, not as effective – especially not in the beginning. Most important, the heart does not get involved in this kind of touch. The "detour" through the chest makes the practitioner act not

only from the Hara, but also from the Middle Warmer and with the Heart. The power and the contact come out of the whole human. This is a totally different encounter, much more vivid – and besides, more effective, too.

There is also another reason why it pays off to do this "detour". To work with open shoulders and arms is one of the greatest challenges in Shiatsu for many. "Shoulders wide, elbows not stretched to full but neither too bent, let go of the wrists, open thumbs" etc. are therefore hints that are often given by Shiatsu-teachers – for good reasons. With this technique of the focused Ki you get all this for free: the state of openness evolves as a side effect by itself when I imagine the arc of attention.

If we only think from the Hara directly to the place we are working on without making the detour through the body it is also possible that the technique of focused Ki is only performed mentally but not being created within the body. The body and its centre, the Hara, are probably not that open yet in the beginning to receive the arriving mental impulse and to perform it effectively. The detour through the thorax, shoulders and arms however binds the body into the exercise, gives it the possibility to learn how to work in the "open state" and hinders us from performing the exercise only mentally. If the technique only relies on mental control there is a danger on the longer term that the Ki of the practitioner becomes too yang, i.e. too quick and hot (especially with those who are prone to it anyway).

Later then, with more experience, it will become possible to let the attention of the body expand directly into the forearms, wrists, hands and thumbs, and from there to the place of the actual touch. And even later, with even more experience, it may sometimes appear to make sense to touch directly with the attention of the Hara and the Heart.

## >> WILFRIED RAPPENECKER (GER)

Author and co-founder of the German Society for Shiatsu, director of three Shiatsu congresses

After his approbation in Western Medicine, Wilfried founded the Shiatsu School in Hamburg, Germany. He is one of the most distinguished representatives of Shiatsu in Europe.





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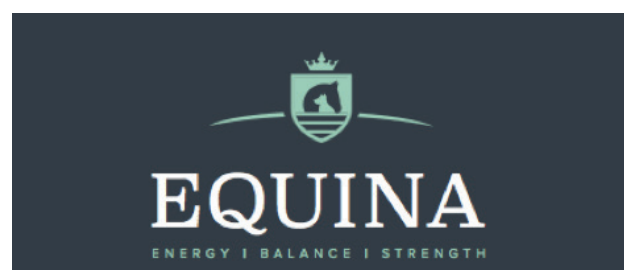


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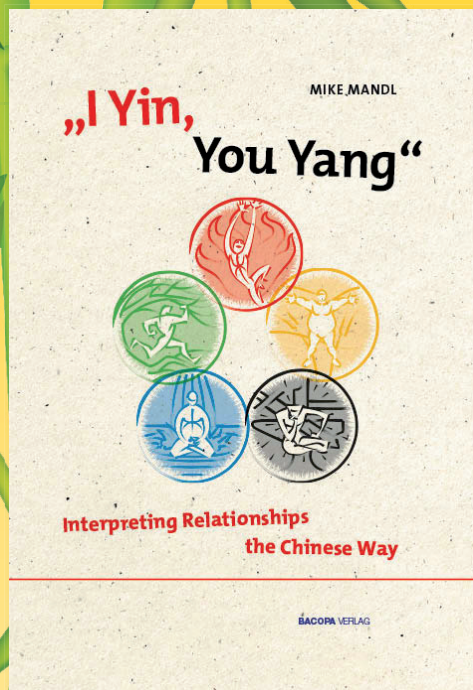
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## CONTACT

**Mike Mandl / Editor**

[mike@europeanshiatsucongress.eu](mailto:mike@europeanshiatsucongress.eu)

**Susanne Schiller / Advertising**

[susanne.schiller@hara-shiatsu.com](mailto:susanne.schiller@hara-shiatsu.com)

## WEB

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