

shiatsu society journal



- **Wandering in the Inner Landscape**
Joyce Vlaarkamp
- **The Greatest Gift**
Margot Rossi M.Ac
- **Ampuku at the Heart of Shiatsu**
Philippe Vandenabeele





From the Editor

Welcome to your Winter Shiatsu Journal - an absolute treasure trove of gems to bring a bit of sparkle to the long dark nights...

There are pleasing serendipitous links among these gems. Joyce Vlaarkamp uses the extraordinary Nei Jing Tu - from the White Cloud temple in Beijing - to demonstrate the metaphorical nature of Chinese medicine. There are many beautiful vignettes in this image: Yin and Yang as girl and boy cycling the water wheel, Lao Tzu sitting in contemplation in the Kunlun Mountains, a maiden spinning silk from moonlight... The tongue is depicted here as a drawbridge connecting the central Conception and Governing channels.

Nicola Ley shares the Chinese folklore tale of this same connection, in the form of the 'Magpie Bridge' between Heaven and Earth. Her focus is on Chong Qi, where the Yin and Yang energies meet, and on Chong Mai - the most central of the Central channels. It's exciting to learn that Nicola is working on a book about Lightbody Shiatsu - developed from the late work of our beloved teacher Pauline Sasaki.

In Carola Beresford-Cooke's enthusiastic review of Masunaga's last book she expresses surprise at finding references there to 'anpuku' - while Philippe Vandenabeele tells us of his long quest for understanding of this same early form of bodywork. I was privileged and delighted to work with Philippe, helping to edit the English translation of his book. His article offers a fascinating taste of what you can find there.

Margot Rossi writes beautifully about water, a central metaphor in Chinese medicine 'for energy moving through our bodies; our bodies moving through our lives; and our thoughts moving through our minds'. For her 'the greatest gift' is our inner attention - 'cultivating a sense of presence inside yourself is its own medicine'.

Adam Hellinger and Cindy Engel both echo this notion of bringing awareness to our inner landscape. Cindy recommends mindfulness meditation and building yourself 'a library of somatosensations' to help discern self from other and increase the value of our somatic empathy. Adam shares his exploration of the 'structure of awareness' - using his long practice of Zhan Zhuang ('standing like a tree') to inform his Shiatsu.

I love Alice Whieldon's piece about katsugen - one of the many forms of 'surrender' practice from the wisdom traditions. It reminded me of watching the Sufi 'whirling dervishes' on a great open circle of sand just outside Khartoum many long years ago... Alice describes surrender as opening a door to 'another kind of knowing' which can allow us to '...enter again the stream of life, consciously'.

Sandy Gsell, of the Shiatsu Research Network, encourages us to record our work to support the evidence base of Shiatsu. We also have a contribution from a very new graduate. Liz Anderson's client found her sessions so helpful in supporting her through some major life challenges that she was moved to write an article about it - a valuable reminder of the simple power of Shiatsu available to us from the first.

Several authors have shared practical exercises with us. When I open the door to my own inner landscape just now, I find a bright bubbling quality in the Upper Burner - linked perhaps to my excitement at the wonderful content of this Journal! I hope you enjoy reading as much as I've enjoyed editing it. I write this shortly before the Winter Solstice and I wish you all a new year filled with Light and Love.



Dinah John
FwSS

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Cover photo: Yangshuo Li River at sunset

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Wandering in the Inner Landscape

By Joyce Vlaarkamp



Joyce Vlaarkamp (1959) was born near the seaside in Holland, and she studied physical therapy and Shiatsu with Sasaki Kazunori. She also studied Acupuncture in Holland and Japanese Acupuncture (Toyo hari) in Tokyo. In 1996 she established 'Zen Shiatsu® Opleiding' in Amsterdam, offering a four year hands-on training programme. She is inspired by Haruhiko Masunaga, by moxa and the Tao - and she is always passionate about learning more.

She is the author of 'Shiatsu in Uitvoering' (2004) and 'Met Zachte ogen: Shiatsu en het Innerlijk Landschap' (2021). Her most recent book is currently being translated into English and will be called 'Softening our Gaze, Shiatsu and the Inner Landscape'.

I first trained in the early days of Shiatsu in the West, seeking out teachers who were keen to share their knowledge. Then I went on to study Acupuncture - looking to find further insights into the growing understanding of my hands and Hara. Somehow the concept of the 'Inner Landscape' never came up. I was just waiting, impatiently, for science to provide the proofs that would fully explain Qi, trusting that it would remove all doubt about what we were doing.

About 10 years ago I came across the picture of the *Nei Jing Tu* (see page 5) which I really couldn't understand but which I found myself strongly drawn to. The text that came with it was very poetic but confusing, it provided no clues! In my search for more insight I enrolled in Tao training, hoping this would lead me to a further understanding of what the picture really represented - and why I wanted so much for its secrets to be revealed to me...

Today I no longer believe that it is necessary for science to prove the existence of Qi. Western medicine comes from Western philosophy and science, which has a completely different perspective from Eastern philosophy and science. The Eastern view of the body - as we can see from the Inner landscape - is a vision of symbols and metaphors. It is simply not based in physical anatomy and clinical study like Western medicine.

In our trade of Eastern medicine, we work with 'wholeness' – with no division between body, mind and emotions. But at the same time, we do work with a certain duality, that of the Inner and Outer landscapes. The Outer landscape, the manifested body, is what we can see and hold: skin, bones, muscles, organs. Regular Western medicine treats us from this perspective.

Eastern medicine works from a very different perspective: the Inner landscape. This is where the manifested body comes from and will return to, more like its full potential. It is a complete reflection of the wider world around us, having a sun and moon, water, mountains, forests and stars. All our functions are depicted here in a symbolic way. It is abundant and complete, with no reference to sickness. Treatment and training, from the perspective of this landscape, works on optimising the Qi network, the meridian system, and our consciousness.

It was during the first half of the 19th century in Japan - after two centuries of being closed off from the rest of the world by the Tokugawa shogunate - that the Rangaku (literally 'Dutch learning') movement first encountered this dualism between the Inner and Outer landscapes. A group of Japanese scientists was given permission by the shogun to study the Western anatomy books brought by Dutch and German doctors to Dejima, the artificial island just off the coast of Nagasaki where the Dutch



內經圖

魏蘭全繪

alone were allowed to continue their trading activities. The students first had to learn Dutch to be able to study the medical books!

They witnessed their first autopsy and discovered that the actual physical body looked far more like the pictures depicted in the Dutch anatomy books than the symbolic representations of the body found in the Chinese medical texts which they had studied.

Symbols versus Manifestations

As we develop, training our skills and expanding our knowledge, it is very important to understand the relationship between Inner and Outer landscapes. In Taoism these two landscapes are compared with the ocean and the wave: 'Why work with the crest of a wave when you can move an ocean?'

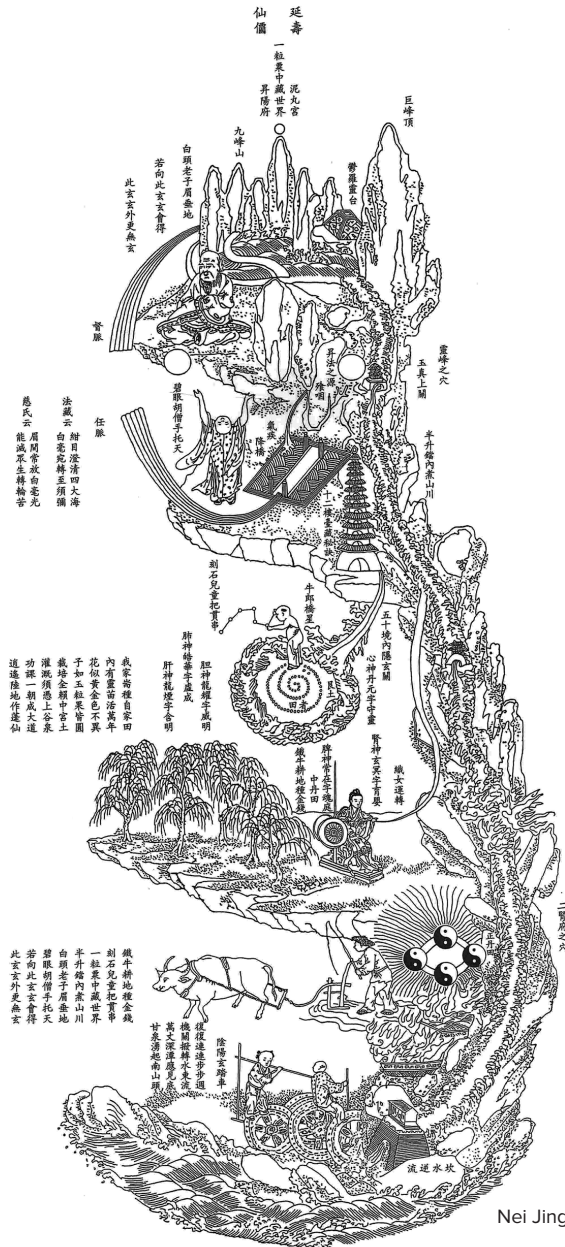
The *Nei Jing Tu*, this image of the Inner landscape, is carved in stone and can be found in the White Cloud Temple in Beijing. The representations available to us come from stone rubbings taken from the original.

You will see that it depicts a human torso, in profile. The lowest point is the perineum, and here we see a boy and a girl - representing Yang and Yin / the testes and ova - on a watermill, cycling the water up from the lowest region of the spine. We can see the spine rising up from this base, all the way up to the nine peaks of the Kun Lun mountains, connecting us to the heavens. Here we see Lao Tzu, sitting in meditation, as a symbol of wisdom and consciousness.

The Governing and Conception vessels meet in the front of the face, where the tongue (depicted as the drawbridge we can see)

can be placed behind the teeth to make the connection between them. We see the sun and moon represented as the eyes. The twelve levels of the Pagoda symbolise the throat, which connects the head with the trunk.

In the middle region we see a cowherd reaching out to hold the stars of the Big Dipper, symbol for the Heart and for innocence. We also see a grove of mulberry trees, which symbolise the Liver and the Element of Wood.



Nei Jing Tu (1886)



The weaving maiden at her loom is using her special gift for spinning silk from the light of the moon. This symbolises the function of the Spleen, transforming the foods we eat into Gu Qi (Food Qi) and sending it upwards.

Below the weaving maiden is the ploughman, with his buffalo, cultivating the Earth. This symbolises the diligence needed to train and cultivate our own earth - for self-transformation. Behind the ploughman, Kidney Yang is symbolised by the cauldron of blazing fire at Ming Men, the Gate of Destiny, between the 2nd and 3rd lumbar vertebrae.

There are many more symbols to be found in this image but let us leave the details aside for now. In terms of the bigger picture, the Nei Jing Tu is showing us the *San Bao*, the Three Treasures of Jing, Qi and Shen, which are housed in the three Dan Tien, the elixir fields.

The upper Dan Tien is inspired by the heavens and houses the Shen, our consciousness. In the Hara, the lower Dan Tien, it is the earth that produces the Jing, the essence of our physical manifestation. At the level of the Heart is the middle Dan Tien, between the polarities of heaven and earth. The Heart centre houses the connective powers of love and respect and therefore the treasure of Qi.

As Shiatsu practitioners, we need to be present in our Jing - to be rooted and vital and have a strong base from which we can provide the full depth of our physical connection. Working with the Heart centre, we can develop the quality of our touch to make a genuine, sensitive, and appropriate connection with our clients, at the level of the Qi. Developing our Shen, in terms of clarity and consciousness, allows



Symbolic representation of the Lungs

us to see far beyond what comes to us through our regular sense organs. These Three Treasures can provide a precious resource for us to develop our Shiatsu skills.

At last I have come to understand my original strange attraction to the Nei Jing Tu. This Inner landscape offers us symbols which can provide the tools we need to train and develop ourselves - both as human beings and as Shiatsu therapists - to access the abundant Qi landscape for ourselves and for our clients. It is not possible directly to train our Spleen or our Liver, but it *is* possible to activate or train the symbols that relate to them; to make sounds to wake them up, to nourish and to endow them with their appropriate colours, movements and foods. The Inner landscape should be attended to just like the Outer landscape: ploughed, sown, watered and cared for - well prepared for all seasons - so we can look forward to the best possible outcome at harvest time. It is this idea that inspires me and gives me a sense of how to develop my Shiatsu skills of connection and diagnosis.

Activating the Inner Landscape

To activate the Inner landscape takes just a few minutes of your time, standing up or sitting on a chair or on your meditation

cushion. Make sure your support is solid, sitting bones and crown of the head in line, spine erect but relaxed (not leaning back on your chair).

Close your eyes or turn your gaze inward. Relax the eyes - all the tiny muscles around the eyes become soft - your eyes become round, like when you wake up in the morning, the eyes of a child. Relax your jaws. Undo all the lines in your face, soften up. Then make an imaginary line between the corners of your mouth and the tips of your ears and beyond; lightly pull on that line a little. Feel a slight smile as the corners of your mouth are lifted. Listen to the sounds around you one by one: the ticking of a clock, the song of a bird, distant voices, the hum of traffic. Contact the silence between the sounds. Settle there for a moment. This activates your Shen.

Allow this silence to sink down to your chest. In the chest region you meet your Heart, symbolised by a flower opening slowly, from bud to fully open flower. Feel connected to your dearest ones, the ones that matter in your life: your partner, children, family, friends, cat - you are not alone, you are connected. Your Ki is activated.

Then let the silence from the Shen and the power of connection from the Heart drop down below your diaphragm into the lower belly, the place we know as Hara. This is the place where your power resides, your vitality, your sexuality, the supporting influences from your ancestors. Connect to your breath and just 'be' with your Jing, your Essence.

Close the lower surface of your torso (at the perineum) by gently contracting or making the sound 't' with your tongue against the back of your front teeth. You are now on the doorstep, step in please and meet your Inner landscape. How are you today?



The Chong Qi - Manifestation

Where the energy of Heaven and Earth meet

By Nicola Ley MrSS MA BA BSc PGCE

The Taoists hit the nail on the head when they made their symbol for Yin and Yang. The symbol does not have a 'right way up' as it represents the ever-changing nature of energy. If the white covers the top, it represents midday, mid-summer and bright Yang, if the dark is at the top then it represents midnight or midwinter. It is often shown with the Yin and Yang side by side, representing dusk and dawn or dawn and dusk. The little dots inside each fish shape show how Yin is constantly changing into Yang, and Yang is constantly changing into Yin. Within the darkest of darks there is always a light and within the brightest of lights there is always a dark spot. Sometimes, if I have trouble getting to sleep, I try to imagine a three-dimensional spherical Yin Yang shape, with the tail of each part emerging in the centre of the other.



Chong Qi - the energy of manifestation

The character for Yin represents the shady, darker and cooler side of a mountain while the brighter, warmer and lighter side of the mountain is Yang. This shows how their relationship is constantly changing - day to night, summer to winter - all change the relation of Yin to Yang.

The Yin Yang symbol represents the fact that matter is constantly changing into energy and energy is constantly manifesting as substance. Einstein's famous equation, which he wrote over a hundred years ago now, also says this: $E=mc^2$. To me, this roughly translates as 'energy is equivalent to matter with a whole bundle of light' and for me it makes sense of my Shiatsu and Qigong practice.



Nicola first turned up for a Shiatsu class in Shinjuku, Tokyo expecting it to be a martial arts class. Instead, she discovered Shiatsu and has been studying and practising it for over 40 years since then. She was a co-founder of the Shiatsu College and is currently writing a book about the Lightbody Shiatsu work, which she learned from Pauline Sasaki. Pauline called this new work Quantum Shiatsu because of the different levels of energy in the physical, ether and astral bodies. Nicola prefers to call it Lightbody work.

In early representations of the symbol, the line between Yin and Yang was sometimes drawn with flames along it – the line of the Chong Qi. This represents the place where Yin and Yang meet, where they are rubbing up against each other creating friction - and this friction between them is seen as the source of the creation all of life. I first learnt about the Chong Qi from a student on the Shiatsu College Qigong Teacher Training course (which I teach with my colleagues Annie Cryar and Catherine Burnett). A few years ago, we were teaching the Residential option of this course on the beautiful tiny Greek island of Agistri.

This student was a wonderful storyteller and as we sat, looking out at the blue Aegean Sea, he told us about the Chong Qi. His story took the form of a romance - a marriage between Yin and Yang – and was a creation myth of his own invention. It was a brilliant story and almost certainly involved Yang having a pocket full of diamonds! When Yang finally convinced Yin to accept him and they kissed, I finally understood the Chong Qi and Chong Mai connection as the place where heaven kisses the world. That kiss of life created the beautiful planet we live on and all the life on it. It's the place where our energy meets our matter and we become something more than just flesh and bone - we receive the 'spark of life'.

The Chong Qi is the snake-like line between Yin and Yang in the symbol, and this line can also represent the Chong Mai, the meridian in the centre of the Central channels. The Chong Mai is also called the 'Personal Vessel' or the 'Sea of Qi for the Twelve Meridians'. It's the



Yin and Yang with fire

place where the infinite starts to become part of us - we receive the Qi of Heaven via the lungs and the Qi of Earth via our food. Every part of us receives the energy of the universe via the Sea of Energy for the Twelve Meridians.

So the Chong Mai meridian is located in the centre of our being, but it is also in the centre of every cell. Every part of us receives the life-giving Qi from Heaven, our breath, and every part of us receives nutrients from the Qi of Earth. The macrocosm is reflected in the microcosm - the holographic nature of life.

This makes me think of another equation. When I was a human biology teacher I would often write on the board: '*Oxygen and Sugar leads to Energy plus Water and Carbon Dioxide*'. However we look at this, it is some sort of miracle that we live on a planet which is perfectly adapted with enough oxygen for us to process our food and to get the energy we need to live.

The Central channels are created at our conception. The egg and the sperm meet in a flash of light and the two become one.

Something which has been going the rounds on my social media links is about the amazing flash of light when the egg accepts a sperm (I think the scientific explanation is something to do with zinc...). It reminds me of the light in Einstein's equation. The two single strands of DNA entwine and create another unique human being.

Another way to look at the Central channels is to connect to the energy of the craniosacral flow - the rhythm of the spine which is said to start as the cells divide. When I did my Craniosacral training in Bath, my teacher was an Acupuncturist as well as a Craniosacral teacher. The Craniosacral central flow and the Central channels merge and resonate together. Several of us students who were Shiatsu-trained spent many of the breaks discussing which came first, the Ren Mai and Du Mai, or the Chong Mai? This is about as fruitful as wondering which came first, the chicken or the egg! What is clear is that, as the embryo develops, the Craniosacral flow is already pulsing, and the rhythm of life is deep within whatever life is developing.

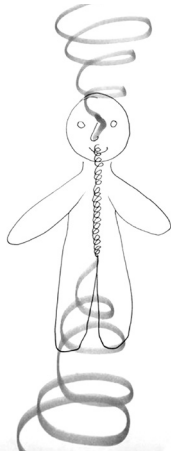
Breathing round the Microcosmic Orbit is taught in many different ways. I often teach it as 'figure of eight breathing'. I suggest breathing up the front of the body - drawing up Earth Qi - and down the centre, the Chong Mai. Then breathing up the spine - connecting to Heaven's Qi - and down the centre, activating the Chong Mai. Sometimes I teach it the other way: breathing down the back, up the centre and down the front then up the centre.

Chong Mai

A meridian with no points and many names:

'Directing Vessel', 'Penetrating Vessel', 'Personal Vessel', 'Sea of Blood', 'Sea of the Qi for the Twelve meridians'.

The Chong Mai has no points on the surface of the body because it runs deep in the body. It is said to arise between the Kidneys and radiate throughout the body. The classic route, according to Acupuncture charts, shows the channel flowing from the base into the head, with numerous branches. Some charts use the Kidney meridian up the front of the body.



The Opening point for Chong Mai is Spleen 4

The Coupled point for Chong Mai is Heart Protector 6

When working with the microcosmic orbit it is often suggested that we connect the tongue to the roof of the mouth, just behind the front teeth. This helps create the connection between Yin and Yang and is sometimes referred to as the 'Magpie Bridge' (see page 11).

My preferred translation of the Chong Mai is the Personal vessel as it is the place where the raw energy of the universe is received into us and becomes our own personal energy. For me, it could even be called the Nicola meridian! The Personal vessel represents something like the DNA, the blueprint of an individual. The energy of the Sea

of Qi comes from Heaven and Earth - and is concentrated and made manifest in the Chong Mai. Then it is available to us and can flow to all the meridians in the body. For example, the Liver receives energy from the Chong Mai, via the Triple Heater, which distributes Qi to the whole body and all the meridians. This pure Qi then becomes Liver Qi in the Liver meridian.

The pure energy of the universe is condensed in the coaxial cable at the core of us - the pranic tube - it is like white light with all the 'invisible' colours added in. The Chong Mai sorts them out and sends

energy where it is needed and starts to move the energy towards manifestation in the physical body.

Case study - Lara's story

The three Central channels, and particularly the Chong Mai, are effective in treating Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME) or Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. They are probably good for treating Long Covid as well, but my sample is too small to make assumptions.

I was first alerted to this by a dissertation from a third-year student who worked at the ME centre in Newcastle. The clients' experience was that they had no energy. However, when the student worked on them he found plenty of energy there, but it was just not flowing easily. He worked on them using the Chakras, because he had never been taught the Central channels. This worked really well, as the Chakras are actually part of the energy in the Central channels.

This is also my experience. I have treated many clients with ME and, for at least three quarters of them, the Central channels were the fulcrum of the treatment. Here is Lara's story. She came with ME. She had lost her mother young, which had left her grieving and somehow she had lost her centre. She was in a long-term relationship and was wanting to start a family. She knew it would be better for her and the child if she could turn her health around. Her first treatment really got to the core of her energy distortion. I did a scan of her energy and tried to connect to the Central channels. They were there strongly





connecting to her mind, but not connecting to her heart or her lower Dantien or even her feet. It was as though when her mother died, she also lost her connection to Mother Earth. I worked on the Earth meridians and, after what felt like an age, I finally felt the energy moving in her feet. For her early treatments that was our marker - could she feel her feet?

As she connected to her feet, the Ren Mai - the energy from the Earth - started to cycle through all the Dantien's and Chakras. It was as though the river of her Qi had previously been diverted to her head and then - as the water returned to the dry riverbed - the flowers began to bloom. It was not all smooth going, as we also had to work on her grief, but over the

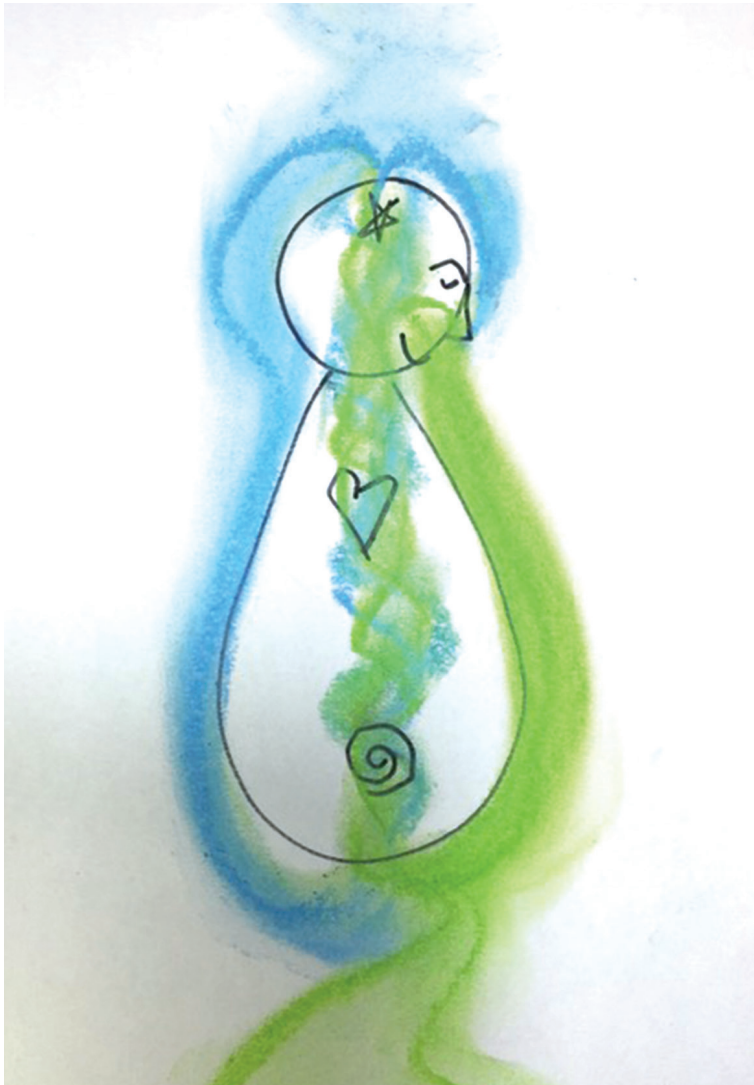
next few months more and more the Central channels started to settle.

At the end of each session, her Central channels were clearly in place, making the microcosmic orbit through her core and including all the energy centres. By the time she came for her next treatment however, it would have shifted back towards her head. I will remember the first day when she came and I found the Central channels were actually in her centre!

One piece of homework she found really useful was breathing around the microcosmic orbit. This really helps to reinforce the pathways of the energy - as they say, the breath and the Qi flow together. She also used the points for the Chong Mai. She would sit cross legged and press Spleen 4 (below the first metatarsal) with her thumb, and hold Heart Protector 6 (above the inner wrist) with the opposite hand. This brought the two sides of her body in and then she would do a few rounds of the microcosmic breathing.

The main work was done. We had stabilised the energy, particularly the Chong Mai, and Lara felt much stronger and was no longer always tired. Soon after this she conceived her first child. She still comes back for sessions now and again - just to check in and to keep grounded.

The Central channels, and in particular the Chong Mai, are close to my heart because they underpin the 'Lightbody' work which Pauline Sasaki was developing at the end of her life. The Lightbody is the 'whole



A side view of the microcosmic orbit showing the Chong Mai deep in the core flowing through the Three Dantien - head, heart and hara

of our being' and includes all aspects - from the physical body to the astral body.

The Physical Body, in this approach, includes our physical flesh and bone as well as the basic energy in the body - such as the heart beat and the breath. We can compare this physical body to an unlit lamp. The Ether Body is the whole energy of someone, including the energy of the meridians, of the emotions and all of our thoughts. It is like the lit lamp - the flame of a living candle. The Astral body is the light of the lamp expanding out to infinity. Light does not stop until it reaches something - such as our eyes.

The role of the Chong Mai is to bring that light back from infinity into every part of the physical body - this was also Pauline's aim. She enjoyed connecting to the more esoteric levels of energy. But the focus of her healing work was to connect to that infinite Qi of Heaven and Earth and to bring it into the body. I will repeat that, as some people think that Lightbody work (or Multidimensional work as they call it in Europe) is all 'off the body'. In fact, the aim is to connect to the highest levels of energy and to allow them to connect down into the body. To drop deeply down into the body - to every cell, every molecule and every atom of our being. This happens via the Central channels, in particular the Chong Mai.

So Pauline's treatments were never light. She would sometimes work off the body, but her aim was always to bring the higher vibrational levels of energy into the physical body.

When she did this we would most certainly feel it. Her fingers would drop into the body and as the energy came in it would be strong, sometimes painful even, but the results were always extraordinary.

That is why I believe the Taoists were so right when they used the Yin Yang symbol to represent their connection to the mystery, something beyond normal words: the connection to the Tao. Of course, as we know from the Tao Te Ching, the true Tao cannot be named, it is beyond words. The Chong Qi represents the line which comes from this place beyond words. A place of friction between Heaven's energy and Earth's matter - with a whole lot of light thrown in!

Try this: The Microcosmic Orbit

Use the map of the microcosmic orbit as a guide but follow the path which opens up within you - the 'right' way is the one which feels right to you. Breathe in and imagine the breath coming up your back to the top of your head. Breathe out, let the breath descend through the core of your being. Breathe in, up the front of your body, either to your mouth or again to the top of your head. Breathe out down through your core. Two breaths make one cycle - practise it in sets of three. Nine is a good number of cycles to start with.

The Magpie Bridge

In Chinese folklore, the Magpie Bridge is made by hundreds of magpies connecting Earth to Heaven. A folk tale, celebrated on the seventh night of the seventh lunar month, tells of the seven daughters of the Queen of Heaven who were brought to Earth by their mother for an adventure. They were bathing and laughing in a stream by a waterfall when they were seen by a cowherd who, on impulse, stole their clothes. The sisters sent the youngest one, Zhi Nu, to ask for their clothes back. When the cowherd saw her naked beauty he instantly fell in love with her. She was also entranced and they decided to get married.

The Queen of Heaven was angry and did not want her daughter living with a mortal, a lowly cowherd, so she took her back to Heaven. But Zhi Nu pined for her lover. Eventually her mother relented and allowed them to meet once a year. The Queen of Heaven asked the magpies to form a bridge connecting Earth to Heaven enabling Zhi Nu to meet her mortal lover.

This 'Magpie Bridge' is often used in Qigong. For example, when we do a version of the microcosmic orbit breathing - inviting the energy of Heaven and Earth, or Yang and Yin, to circulate in our Central channels and especially the Chong Mai - we can make this connection more powerful by lightly placing the tongue just behind the front teeth, on the roof of the mouth. Heaven and Earth are linked through this bridge, and the transformation of energy to matter and matter to energy can take place.



Ampuku at the Heart of Shiatsu

By Philippe Vandenebee



'Every living being that resides in the cosmos is animated by the ceaseless flow of Ki, or life force. Because of this, even a small degree of stagnation can cause illness or, in the case of blockage, may cause death.'

Ampuku Zukai

Philippe Vandenebee is a senior Shiatsu practitioner and teacher based in Fukuoka, Japan.

For those interested in learning more about Ampuku, Philippe's book 'Ampuku Abdominal Acupressure: The Classics at the Heart of Japanese Bodywork' is available through Amazon.

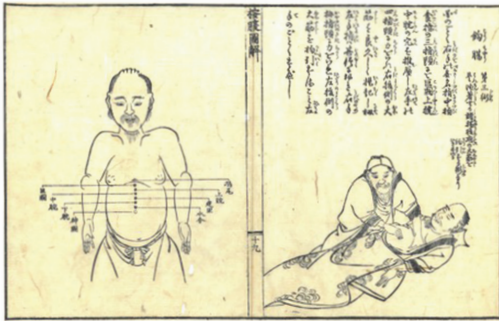
Philippe also offers online Ampuku courses and once a year he visits Europe to teach workshops. He also offers intensive courses and private tuition for small groups at his school in Fukuoka. Check his website for the latest information: www.shinzui-bodywork.com

More precisely, there was one Hara technique included in the first Shiatsu kata that especially caught my attention. Later I learned more about the Hara, its importance for our overall wellbeing and its significance in the Japanese classical arts. I was told there were practitioners in Japan who treated the Hara exclusively, and that this treatment was called Ampuku. During my initial Shiatsu training I spent considerable time learning Hara diagnosis but, to my surprise, little time was devoted to treating the Hara directly.

I became a certified Shiatsu practitioner with a busy practice, doing my best to help my patients. However I was still struggling to make sense of the Hara diagnosis I'd been taught and there was something frustrating me even more. I just had a sense that I was missing some essential techniques to work more effectively with my Shiatsu. I knew that at some point in time those techniques had existed, but I was yet to find anyone who could teach them to me. I had to find out more...

In Shizuto Masunaga's book 'Zen Shiatsu', I found several references and the author stressed the importance of Ampuku in Shiatsu practice. However, the explanations mainly focused on how to perform Hara diagnosis, with almost nothing written about the actual techniques. What I retained from reading Masunaga's book, and from my own training, was that those Ampuku techniques were important to Shiatsu practice but that they were considered 'highly sophisticated and difficult to learn'. Masunaga wrote: 'Ampuku is a very important part of Shiatsu and can contribute enormously toward helping the critically ill and those patients who require calm but penetrating manipulation. Ampuku therapy not only allows the patient to remain tranquil, it also rehabilitates the patient's internal functioning'. Reading this intrigued me further - my curiosity increased.

In 1995, I visited Thailand on my way to do a 3-month intensive course in Australia. In Thailand I visited the newly opened 'Tao Garden' of Daoist Master Mantak Chia, and I got hold of his then recently published book on *Chi Nei Tsang*. Here I finally found more information on treating the abdomen directly. During my stay in Australia, I devoured that book and decided I must revisit Thailand on my way back to Europe, to see if I could learn more. On my return to Chiang Mai, I went looking for practitioners who could teach me. I ended up



staying for 6 months - absorbing all the wisdom I could from the highly skilled practitioners I met there, for whom the belly held no secrets! When I returned to Europe I relocated from Belgium to Sweden and opened a Shiatsu practice in Stockholm. Incorporating my newly acquired Chi Nei Tsang techniques enabled me to spend more time freeing and strengthening my patient's bellies resulting in better and more lasting results. Another benefit I noticed was that Hara diagnosis started to make more sense to me. At last, it became easier to read the Kyo and Jitsu in my patients' bellies!

I continued my studies under the guidance of Dirk Oellibrandt, who had been one of my Shiatsu teachers back in Belgium and who regularly visited Scandinavia to teach Shin Tai and Shiatsu. Later, I became the director for his bodywork school in Sweden. Dirk happened to be a very experienced Chi Nei Tsang teacher and - thanks to his many connections - I was able to invite to Sweden teachers like Mantak Chia, Henny Eleonora, the osteopath and fascia therapist Frans Deprez and Hilde Verhulst. The Belgian osteopath Helga Wohlmutter came and gave an amazing Chi Nei Tsang workshop in our school. Helga's subtle and profound work has

inspired me a lot and has helped me to see abdominal work in an entirely different way. It made me start exploring the world of Visceral Osteopathy and the work of the French osteopath Jean-Pierre Barral and the many talented teachers of the Barral Institute.

Although I now had more effective ways to help my patients, and had learned different approaches and alternative maps for seeing and treating the belly, I still wanted to learn those Ampuku techniques from the Shiatsu tradition. At the lokai Shiatsu School in Tokyo I discovered that Masunaga had published more books, some of which were not available in English. Among them is his magnum opus, *'Keiraku to Shiatsu'*, which includes several longer references to *'Ampuku Zukai'* – confirming for me that I was on the right track. Masunaga describes Ampuku Zukai, published in 1827, as *the* classic text which would later form the basis of Shiatsu. He identifies himself strongly with its author (Ota Shinsai, from the late Edo period) who - much like Masunaga himself in the 1960s - wanted to restore the deeper value and, in his eyes, the true meaning of Shiatsu and diagnosis rooted in the East Asian medical tradition.

Masunaga went so far in his admiration for the Ampuku Zukai that he republished the second edition and wrote an introduction to it. This edition had been published in 1887, in the Meiji period, with the illustrations completely redrawn and in more accessible language than the original 1827 edition.

When, finally, I got hold of a copy of the first edition of the Ampuku Zukai - and found practitioners who could actually demonstrate the techniques it contained - at last I could start to learn more Ampuku! After a few years, I also found the academics who could help me make sense of the old style in which it was written and all its subtleties. Thus began the long process of translating and attempting to understand this precious early text. I am happy to say that in November 2020 I was finally able - with the invaluable help of my wife Hiroko - to make available the first complete translation of the Ampuku Zukai in the English language. The book includes the images used in the original first edition as well as the chapters on Fukushin and Ampuku contained in the *'Anma Tebiki'* - another important classic text in the history of manual therapy in Japan.



Now I would like to share with you a few things I learned during my Ampuku journey:

- **Ampuku involves the whole body!**

Contrary to what I had been told, I was surprised to discover that, although there is a special emphasis on the abdominal work, Ampuku treats the entire body. This becomes clear when reading the Ampuku Zukai. Before we reach the section on actual abdominal work is an explanation of the 3 groups of techniques used over the whole body - together with illustrations of practitioners treating the joints of the arms, legs and feet. Next come chapters describing protocols for treating the whole body in prone, supine and side positions. It's important to stress that these techniques are linked with and seen as important as the actual abdominal work. When the practitioner is experienced, they no longer need to follow the prescribed order of the protocols. The author also tells us how to work the belly - and the places in the belly where there may be a lack or an excess of Ki - together with treating the corresponding areas on the back. This, together with what I learned

from the practitioners with whom I studied, proved to me that Ampuku is truly a holistic treatment involving the whole body.

- **There are 13 Ampuku techniques at the core of the Ampuku Zukai**

In the chapter on the Hara/abdominal work each of the 13 techniques receives its own illustration and separate explanation. What is interesting to note is that the first two techniques, Bunpai and Bunroku, are techniques to free the chest. They can respectively be translated as 'Segment and expand the chest' and 'Divide and expand the left and right sides of the ribcage'. Their purpose is to release tension in the ribcage and to help release the diaphragm before addressing the Hara, thus augmenting the efficacy of the techniques performed on the abdomen. Here again this clearly shows that Ampuku is a treatment of the whole body not just the belly.

- **There are two Ampuku Classics**

Although initially I was mainly focusing on the Ampuku Zukai, I became aware that there was another important book about bodywork from the same late Edo period. It took me a while

before I had a closer look at this other classic, written by Fujibayashi Ryohaku and entitled the 'Anma Tebiki' or 'An Illustrated guide to the Art of Anma'. When I read the Anma Tebiki I found that it also contained Ampuku techniques! Suddenly I had not one but two sources I needed to investigate.

At the core of the Anma Tebiki there are 17 Ampuku techniques very similar to those found in the Ampuku Zukai. Some of the techniques even have the same name, although they are not necessarily the same techniques. Some of their descriptions give a clearer understanding or another perspective on the techniques described in the Ampuku Zukai.

The chapter on Ampuku is preceded by an illustrated chapter on Fukushin or Hara diagnosis. This chapter states that the practitioner, 'after having learned Do-in/Healing massage should learn the techniques of Ampuku' and that, 'even if one's Do-in technique is excellent, no intended outcome can be expected without knowledge of the illnesses which occur inside the belly'.

The introduction to the chapter on Ampuku goes on to say: ‘Once the practitioner has understood the illness inside the belly, by studying the previous illustrations that show how to perform Fukushin, they should practice Ampuku to cure those illnesses.’ There is also a severe warning, ‘However, if the practitioner is not skilled enough, it will damage organs rather than healing them. Ampuku must be applied only after an elaborate, unhurried and thorough training.’ This warning is still valid - Ampuku cannot solely be learned from books!

- **By the mid 1800s the Ampuku Zukai made it to London**

Since this article is for the UK Shiatsu Journal, I wanted to share this interesting story that few in our community may know, I certainly didn’t. It is taken from the introduction to the second edition of the Ampuku Zukai (1887).

‘There was once a man from America who stayed in Yokohama and hired a Dōin-ampukushi. When he went back to his own country, he took the masseur with him. Back home, the American had this masseur provide treatment to other Americans, who were very impressed by his techniques. Word spread, and since then

medical professionals in Europe have also been interested in the Japanese system of massage.

Totsuka Kankai, a Japanese Surgeon General who worked at St. Thomas’ Hospital in London, wrote to his acquaintance Kumaya Kan, a naval surgeon in Japan, and asked him for any books or publications about Japanese massage techniques. Mr. Kumaya looked far and wide throughout Japan but he found it was almost impossible to find such texts, as there were so very few written documents relating to these methods. It is most unfortunate that we have so little written material about these treatments, which are not only part of our traditional medicine but also provide fundamental background knowledge for all Japanese medical practitioners.

One day Mr. Kumaya happened to visit a practitioner called Saito Yoshizo and told him about this sequence of events. On hearing the story, Mr. Saito was extremely upset and disappointed. He said, “It is a great pity that there are so few books available. Perhaps these treatment methods are going to disappear. And yet, I feel honoured to hear that our skills are being appreciated abroad.” After their conversation, he gave Mr. Kumaya his own copy of Ampuku Zukai, a book which until then he had kept for himself. Mr. Kumaya immediately shipped this manual to London.

There is so much more I could say but I hope this brief introduction has sparked an interest for the reader to learn more about Ampuku and the roots of Shiatsu. For me personally, this engagement with the classics of Shiatsu has given me more trust in the depth and efficacy of our manual medicine. Thank you for your attention.





The Greatest Gift

By Margot Rossi M.Ac.



Margot is an acupuncturist, Asian medicine physician, health educator, and movement instructor with 30 years of experience. Her book 'To Be Like Water - Cultivating a Graceful and Fulfilling Life Through the Virtues of Water and Dao Yin Therapeutic Movement' was born from her passion to help people develop an awareness of mind, body and spirit to cultivate a happy, healthful life.

Trained in the US and China, Margot creates innovative programs on mindfulness, self-care, preventive and complementary medicines, Dao Yin, and Hatha yoga. In addition to Western and Asian therapeutic movement practices, Margot has training in classical ballet, belly dance, and modern dance. She lives with her family by the pristine waters of the South Toe River in Western North Carolina.

While I was working on my book, I spent a lot of time visiting water. Up my road is a spring that feeds into the sometimes lazy, sometimes roaring South Toe River in the valley below. Just down the hill from our home, a happy-go-lucky stream meanders through a tangle of rhododendrons. Across the river is a boggy place where mist rises into hovering clouds. At the high elevation where we live, winter offers magical, strange frozen-water formations such as hoar frost and rime ice. All that is to say that I have plenty of opportunities to observe water, attending to how it emerges from the ground, falls from the sky, changes state, and flows amorphously.



Our local spring

Why is water, in all its various forms, so significant to me? Water is at the very foundation of Chinese medicine theory, which is essentially applied Chinese philosophy. Daoists used water and its flow through a landscape as a metaphor for energy moving through our bodies; our bodies moving through our lives; and our thoughts moving through our minds. Water is also a metaphor for our attention — how it flows, pools and seeps into hidden spaces. Finally, we can 'be like water' as we choose our responses to ourselves, each other and our environment as we flow through our lives. We can fight what we experience or we can go with the flow.

Water moves with ease, without struggle, through all kinds of landscapes. These now rolling Blue Ridge Mountains were transformed from sharp rocky peaks by water's continued and persistent presence. The principal deep wisdom I've gleaned, over these past four years of intently observing water, is that we can change the landscape of our body and the shape of our lives when we allow our energy and attention to flow, seep into, and transform it like water. The relationship works both ways; change the landscape and the energy and attention can shift, too. This shifting of the body to change the flow of energy, and vice-versa, is the cornerstone of South and East Asian energy cultivation, movement, and therapeutic practices.

To experience how the shape of your landscape changes your energy, I invite you to lie down with your legs long yet softly bent at the knees, arms resting by your sides. If you prefer to be seated, go for it. Allow your attention, like water, to travel through the landscape of your body from head to toes. Notice the rolling hills and dales, the full round curves, the bony peaks. Take note of your weight, length, and width. Check in with how your body is contacting the earth, even if through a chair.

Tune in and notice any sensations in the landscape of your body — maybe you feel the firm pressure from the ground beneath you, a tingle or vibration in your palms, perhaps an ache or sharp sensation you might call ‘pain’ in a joint, or a feeling of ease or tension in a muscle. Does one side of your body feel different than the other? Moving your attention to your breath, where do you feel your breath moving most clearly in your body - chest, ribs, belly? What’s your breath like in that breathing space - slow, fast; deep, shallow; wide, narrow? Tuning in to your energy, how does the landscape impact upon it - do you feel energised, tired, strong, weak, tense, or relaxed? To really get a ‘picture’ of yourself, create your own metaphor to describe your landscape. What is the shape of your landscape like? Maybe it’s not a landscape at all. Maybe an image comes, maybe not. (Sitting here, I’m like a hollow walnut husk).

Like water moving through a landscape, the body scan we just did invites us to inhabit ourselves with attention, bit by bit, until we have a full sense of ourselves.

Now, widen your legs and extend an arm out in one direction and the other arm in another direction - it doesn’t matter if your arms and legs are symmetrical. Notice any sensations now. By changing your shape, did your sensations shift? Have new ones arisen, or former ones faded? Did your breathing space shift location or the qualities of your breath change? Do you feel strong, weak, energised, tired, or relaxed? What is the shape of you like now? (I now feel like the tree that walnut husk fell from). How did the changes in

your landscape change your experience?

When we integrate movement with attention, we begin to stretch our understanding of ourselves. To check this out, move around a bit, just now, and pay attention. Are there places you can’t move so easily? If so, is that due to limitations - pain or discomfort? Are there movements you feel really comfortable making, so much so that you don’t even have to make an effort? If you hold your breath, or focus your eyes in a certain way, does that change your mobility? Reflecting in this way, we get direct feedback on the effects our actions have on us. We can also see where we are, and are not, fully ‘living’ in the landscape of our bodies and lives.

One of the things I appreciate about mindful movement practices like Qigong, Tai Ji Quan, Dao Yin, Yoga, or some of the Western energy-sensitive practices like Alexander Technique, is that they invite us consciously and slowly to explore and transform the shape

of our landscape, just like water does as it flows down a mountain. Moving mindfully, we can observe the effect of the movements and postures on our energy. In this way, we have the possibility of positively affecting our physiology and mental-emotional wellbeing, as well as shifting how we relate to the world around us with intention - consciously.

In Asian medicine, we understand that pain is caused by not enough or too much energy engulfing a particular organ, tissue, or energy pathway. To understand this concept of energy in relation to pain, we imagine a stream. If water gets obstructed by a dam of tangled sticks, there will be a deficiency of water downstream and an excess above. Sometimes there’s no dam, just not enough water in the stream causing the stream to pool and stagnate in places. Either way, there is no longer a continuous flow.

Where energy is not flowing, the landscape doesn’t receive



Water shaping stone



nourishment or a way of refreshing itself. This is when we can experience physical or emotional pain. Likewise, anywhere lacking the energy of our attention for a long enough time is likely to experience dysfunction or pain, whether physical, mental, emotional, or all three.

From this, we can understand how regulating the volume and flow of our energy and attention is the basic treatment principle of Asian medicine, regardless of whether you are receiving Acupuncture, Herbal medicine, Dao Yin exercises or Shiatsu as treatment. Resting attention, breathing and movement together - in the form of mindful movement - is one of the most potent medicines I offer my patients. Recently, I've been exploring another way we can attend to ourselves and I'm discovering it is quite powerful.

In the last year, I've been working with a Shiatsu practitioner, rediscovering how to tune in more and more to the power of touch. It's made quite an impact on me, so I'm turning my attention to working with various kinds of touch in my practice, as well as in my movement classes. While



Rime ice on pine needles

most movement classes don't involve touching ourselves with our hands, I find this is one of the most rewarding invitations as we move - it can bring up vulnerability, tenderness, and it can build awareness.

Cultivating a sense of presence inside yourself is its own medicine. It's often said, you can change only what you're aware of, what you are truly present to. If you are looking to change your experience - whether that's the pain in your fingers when you try to open a jar of pickles, acid

reflux after eating summer-ripe tomatoes, or anxiety you can't seem to shake off - a skilful and essential first step to healing is to cultivate an awareness of yourself and how you respond to whatever (or whoever) arises in your body, mind or environment.

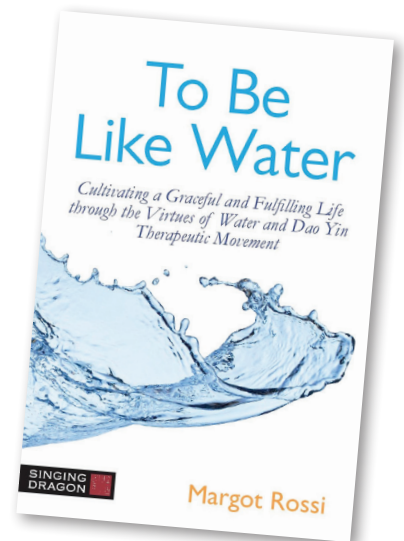
This way of healing requires a small commitment: to cultivate your attention, consciously invite it, direct it, or notice where your attention lands without direction, and be aware of what you discover. Just as a stream changes day to day, so can your attention.

I see this attention as the greatest gift we can give ourselves.

As one of my favorite musical artists, Heloise Letissier, writes, 'Ce qui se caresse est cicatrisé', which can be translated as 'What is caressed is healed.' Being like water means letting your attention go where it's called and inviting it into places where it hasn't been for a long time. Be curious and let this water of attention touch you deeply, all over. See how your landscape and your energy - your life - transform from its presence and touch.



Margot practising Dao Yin at the South Toe River





The Structure of Awareness

By Adam Hellinger FwSS

Throughout my interest in bodywork, Shiatsu and Chi Kung, a recurring theme and question has always returned: 'How do we develop our sense of awareness and touch and how do we translate these aspects of ourselves into our practice of interacting with and supporting others?'

Soon after I had graduated from my Shiatsu training, this specific question came up in a workshop, 'How do we create a reflective space to touch someone while remaining open and interactive both to their energy field and to our own?'

That question has stayed with me for the past 25 years! My interest in Shiatsu has always run alongside an interest in Chi Kung - and in particular a certain style of Yi Chuan (intention training/development), the main cornerstone of which is Zhan Zhuang (standing pole/standing like a tree). These aspects of the form have, for me, always been inextricably interwoven, both in their development and in their support of each other.

Form, structure and awareness

Over time I've come to realise that the form and structure we physically create, and how we create it, directly relates to our sensory awareness. This does not mean that we 'have to hold a certain posture' but that our posture creates a relationship within us, which in turn can support the development of our senses and therefore of our self awareness.

The principles of the practice create a universal framework around which we can build and develop our senses. Our senses literally 'hang' suspended, grow, entwine, create and are part of this frame. Our bones, muscles, tendons, connective tissue, organs, nervous and endocrine systems are all inter-related around their own frame. And as a result, so are our senses, both internal and external, along with our sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems.

We can only know what, where and in fact who we are through the feedback of our senses to 'ourselves.' Inside our brain is total darkness and yet we have a kinaesthetic sense of our location in a 3D environment (even if we have sensory impairment).

We can begin this journey with the bony structure of our skeleton. When we ask our body to do anything, the request is mainly carried out by the body referring to learnt patterns of response and behaviour. We live our lives following habits and patterns of muscle and neurological response. Some of these may not be the most efficient response or even be healthy for our system but they are our 'go to' answers and we tend to select them. This can also be seen to manifest in patterns of Chi/Ki. When we ask our systems to do something, these habitual patterns are the reference points for carrying out that request.

In Zhan Zhuang Chi Kung we begin to develop our structure using the bones and their relationship to each other. What controls how our bones relate to each other? The muscular and tendon system is controlled and monitored via the nervous system, both conscious and subconscious.

We can ask our body's skeletal system to interact and we can monitor its responses via our nervous system and our conscious mind. Remembering too, that this is against the backdrop of our familiar muscular patterns. As I assume a posture, I do so with my habits, both mental and physical. How I interact with that posture and instruct it can also be the actions of my conscious mind. I can begin to listen to my neural feedback, if I focus on it.



Adam began studying bodywork in the mid 1980s and graduated from the BSS-Do in 1996. He has gone on to become a senior teacher for the BSS-Do as well as teaching throughout Europe. He also studies classical Chinese medicine, Tuina, Chi Kung, Seiki and Clean Language - always integrating these into his practice via the universal aspects of Yi Chuan Chi Kung. Adam will be leading a workshop at the next Shiatsu College Residential in April '22. If you are interested in attending this Residential please visit: www.shiatsucollege.co.uk/the-residential or contact Hannah Mackay: hannahmackay@hotmail.com





For example, I ask myself to stand with my feet approximately shoulder width apart, with the medial aspects of my feet in parallel to each other, with my knees 'unlocked'. How does my body respond? It tries to carry out the request, to the best of its ability. But is it physically able to do it? What is the muscle tension and alignment in the required joints? Perhaps it can do it, but after a short while it begins to feel uncomfortable, and if one persists it can even become painful. Or perhaps it can carry out the request easily...

One of the interesting aspects of Zhan Zhuang is that the practice asks you to interact with your system and ask it to follow your instructions. Perhaps that requires some muscles to lengthen and others to shorten - you can say to your body, 'relax that...'. Your nervous system is designed and programmed to follow that request. Even if it's not your usual pattern or habit you can ask it - but will it or can it obey?!

That's the practice; asking your body to follow your requests and developing its ability to adhere to them. But why would it do that? What is there to gain? The answers lie in the core principles of this art.

Integration and connection

Structural integration and connection present 'the potential for the sum to become much greater than its parts.' Our systems are designed to work and interact as a unified whole. This approach very much links with that of classical Chinese medicine.

How we interact and respond creates our relationship with Chi

as well as its functions, where the interplay of Chi manifests and maintains us as a human being. The most efficient and effective way for this to happen is via Chi and physical interactions manifesting with the minimum of resistance relative to the required task. When you ask the body to do something it requires an 'effort' from your system. Using any more of its resources than are needed for this effort could be seen as a waste or a surplus. Over time this can become an aspect of our habits and may be seen as going on to create a pathology.

Returning to the efficiency of our structure. The most efficient, strongest and most simple structure in our 3 dimensional world is that of the triangle. As we allow the idea of structure to create a framework in our practice, so our system is able to begin to reference 'with it' and 'against it' - rather like giving our spatial sense a map to find its positional reference. This is controlled and monitored by our nervous system, particularly through feedback from the sensory motor system. As we enter into our practice we can begin to ask and reference these map co-ordinates as a sense of self. The process of asking ourselves to relax and soften in relation to these references creates a supportive

framework for our connective tissue and muscular system to come into alignment. The difference is that we are using our senses, and therefore our sense of self, to construct and interact with this framework.

A small personal exploration

- A) • Allow yourself to sit on a chair or on the floor
 - Reach out and pick up an object close to you
 - Make a note of any thoughts and or feelings which may come up during the process, and also once you are holding the object
- B) • Allow a sense of connection with your chair/floor and your sitting bones
 - Gently rock forwards and backwards around these points



Supporting triangles

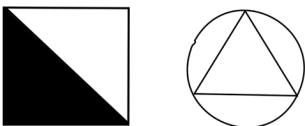
- Become aware of the area around GV1 (anterior to the tip of the coccyx)
- Allow yourself to move forwards and backwards within the triangle created by the interaction of these 3 points by adjusting your weight
- Allow the corners of this triangle to connect with GV20 (at the top of the head) while feeling in balance with the lower triangle - creating a pyramid
- Note any sensations, thoughts and feelings
- Using this framework as a reference - reach out and lift the same object as before
- Do you notice any differences?

From this exercise we can begin to see how the structure can support and develop our sense of self and our awareness.

Taking these principles forward into our Shiatsu practice

As we can see from the image above right I am illustrating a few of the triangles I can use to support and develop my awareness and connection.

Next we can look at how to develop a quality of touch which has the direction and intention of a straight line - supported by the very efficient triangle's properties - but with a softness and listening aspect. Classical Chinese Taoism



Triangles and circles to develop space and awareness when treating



Supporting triangles while working. (Thanks to Maria for use of photo).

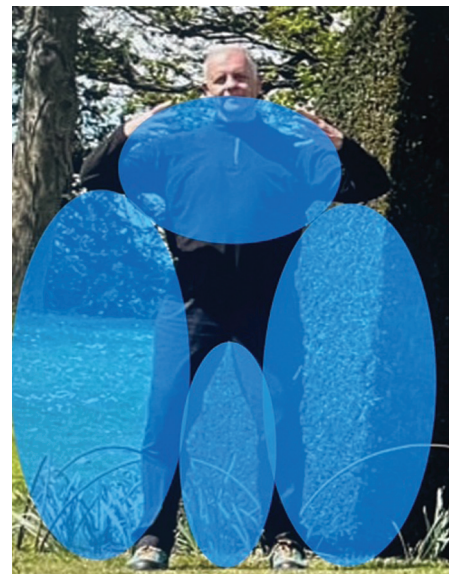
comes to our aid here, with its concept of Heaven meeting Earth. This intersection provides the potential energy and space for the manifestation of human beings. Earth is represented by a square - straight lines and 2 triangles. Space is represented by a circle.

The most efficient way to cover an area is a circle. When a triangle interacts with a circle we have the two most efficient ways of constructing a framework. We need therefore to incorporate a circle into the construction of the framework we are creating. Imagine lying against a large inflated ball. This feels soft and supportive but at the same time the inflation of the ball pushes back against us and this 'pushing back' gives us a sense of where we are.

The framework is now supportive, strong, efficient and flexible. The practice develops our ability to relax into our framework and to interact with our own senses via the boundaries created by their feedback. I feel this is an exceptional method and process for self development. When we ask our body to assume a posture we now have a method of relaxing and resting into it - while at the same time we can connect with its power and potential. We can both relax and be 'pushed' into alignment.

Fundamental principles of offering Shiatsu include:

- Relax
- Relaxed connection
- Weight not force
- Centre oneself and remain centred
- Listen rather than lead



Supporting circles

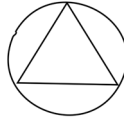




How does the framework we are developing support these principles? Remember the difference between picking up the object with and without the supporting pyramid? This feeling/awareness translates into our touch. The focus of the practice is to develop a space in which we are not only aware but also comfortable. This comfort leads to a sense of relaxation, both in the body and eventually in the mind. Our nervous system learns to recognise our postures as they become more integrated into our default patterns of behaviour.

We are using and interacting with our perception as we ask our muscles to relax both against and into this structure. Usually when we ask ourselves to relax it will be against the floor or a breath. Here we are relaxing against ourselves. It's a process which manifests from within our own senses and as a result can be much more organic in both its origins and manifestations. When we come into contact with another with this approach we have a sense of ourselves and from here a reference point for our interaction with others. If we revisit the diagram we see that the circle is not quite perfect. The small 'gap' represents the potential for change within our systems towards a more balanced, efficient and therefore whole system.

We can also call this the Kyo/Jitsu interaction - within which the entire system is seeking to rebalance itself. Kyo and Jitsu manifest from our intention/lifestyle. They can also be seen as patterns of behaviour, just as we can view our habitual muscle patterns. Using our



developed sense of self, we have a place for observation and interaction with these Chi/Ki patterns which can be applied to different diagnostic approaches. As modern science explains, it's not what we observe, it's from where we observe that defines our experience. As I interact with another person, my perspective is defined by my senses. As we are interacting, I can develop and refine my senses within the framework against which I reference those senses.

As we develop our Yi Chuan practice we can refine the requests we ask of our system.

When I ask my shoulders to relax, they can respond! This is a slightly unusual concept to explore in a written article as it's a sensory 'felt experience'. Eventually our system begins to relax into its space and in this quiet we can develop our potential for reflection and observation.

Here's a metaphor I discovered recently: it's like trying to cut a hedge with a ladder

which is too short. You can't see the overall picture, you're not comfortable, not stable and it's difficult. Find the correct size and stabilise the ladder (your framework) and you can get to the right relationship with the hedge to cut it efficiently! It's exactly the same when offering Shiatsu. The space one is in defines the interaction and the potential for the entire session - the stability of the triangle with the expansion and contraction of the circle, the stability of the circle with the expansion and contraction of the triangle. These are interacting from my perspective, in my awareness of space and framework, with the receiver. Heaven and Earth in a true dance of interaction and manifestation.



The structure of awareness



Discerning Self from Other

By Cindy Engel PhD

'... a raven soaring in the distance is not, for me, a mere visual image; as I follow it with my eyes, I inevitably feel the stretch and flex of its wings with my own muscles, and its sudden swoop toward the nearby trees is a visceral as well as a visual experience for me.'

David Abram, The Spell of the Sensuous (2017)



Cindy trained with the Shiatsu College Norwich and has been learning and teaching Qigong for more than 20 years. She is a certified instructor with Lotus Neigong International and has a thriving Shiatsu practice in rural Suffolk. She mingles her fascination with physiology and behaviour with her experiential approach to Shiatsu. Her first book *Wild Health* has been re-released and she is soon to publish her second - about somatic empathy. www.cindyengel.com

A new client - a man about my own age - introduced himself as single and looking for a new woman. He expressed concern about the condition of his genitals, after an operation he'd had, and he mentioned sex more than seemed necessary. I felt uncomfortable. The strongest sensation I picked up was one I can only really describe as 'creepiness'. It seemed to be a combination of sex with either 'uncleanliness' or inappropriateness, but I couldn't quite pinpoint it. My alarm bells were certainly ringing loudly. I felt deeply uneasy about our intimate contact and, as a single woman living and working alone, I really did not want him to book another appointment. BUT - and this is the important bit - it was at this point that my appreciation for somatic empathy kicked in. I reminded myself carefully to consider the possibility that what I was picking up from him was the result of somatic empathy rather than my protective early warning system 'doing its thing'.



Photo by Sonny Mauricio on Unsplash

Neuroscientists define somatic empathy as **experiencing what other people feel while being aware that this vicarious state is produced by someone else.** It is an ancient pre-verbal form of intelligence gathering that is totally natural and widespread, in both humans and other animals, but is poorly recognised even by therapists.

There were two clear reasons for doubting my early warning system in this case. Firstly, this was a Shiatsu session and I *never* normally make any such personal judgement of my clients. So this feeling of being creeped out by a client was absolutely 'not like me'. The second clue was that this feeling of mine had a strong element of fear attached to it and I never entirely trust an assessment based on fear (see below). So, for these reasons, I decided to override my alarm bells and agree to rebook him for another Shiatsu.

During this second session, he mentioned casually that he had had a homosexual experience in his teens which had caused him a lot of problems.



At the time, his father had berated him for being 'a disgusting poof' and for not being a 'real man'. He had been made to feel unclean - and this feeling persisted for him - even three decades later.

My alarm bells faded, and the healing wonders of Shiatsu could proceed.

This case raises some important points for us Shiatsu practitioners, not least of which is how subtle are the differences between self and other. It is incredibly easy to confuse our own feelings with those picked up from another via our somatic empathy. In this complex and subtle realm of interpersonal coordination there are many questions: what is yours and what is theirs? How do I know what is my imagination and what is somatic empathy? It is my belief that these important questions deserve to be integrated into professional and personal development for Shiatsu therapists.

Having studied this (via both personal experience and academic study) for many years now, I would like to offer some suggestions as to how we might discern self from other. I'm also interested to hear how you manage to discern self from other in your own practice.

Know Thyself

It is only through many years of Mindfulness meditation training that I am now able to discern my usual thought patterns from new ones which I pick up from others. Mindfulness meditation shows us how our mind works, reveals its nooks and crannies, its habitual wriggles and obsessions. Through focused mindfulness practice we really get to know

how our own mind works. Then, being familiar with our habitual mind, we can tell more easily when we are thinking in an unfamiliar way, or we are experiencing mental imagery that is not of our usual repertoire.

Interoceptive Sensibility

The other important way to know self from other is to develop what is known as interoceptive sensibility. This is basically how you feel inside your body. You can practice bringing internal sensations into personal awareness - what physiological and/or emotional sensations are you experiencing - precisely? How does today differ from yesterday? How does your irritation differ from your anger? How does a sense of urgency feel compared to a sense of foreboding? Practice mindful awareness of your own internal senses and how they relate to complex conditions. You can 'build yourself a library of somatosensations' on which to draw for recognition of somatic empathy with someone else.

Again, once you are familiar with your own habitual internal environment you will notice when this changes. Studies show that those individuals with good interoception can more effectively report their emotions to others and are better at assessing how others are feeling. This is because interoceptive sensibility enables you to recognise somatic empathy.

Fear

For me, the most important aspect of self-development in this arena is to remove fear from the equation. Fear does strange things to perception. Because it is so closely aligned with the fight for survival, fear

primes sensory receptors and unconscious search engines to find problems, identify threats and amplify threatening information. If you have the slightest fear of your client - even just an anxiety that you might catch 'bad energy' from them - you will not have a truly clear perception of them. That is just the way that perception works.

In Practice

Establish a clear, energetically clean condition in yourself before switching your attention to your client. What I mean by this is to avoid being 'messy' with your attention or with your body posture. Physical alignment reduces physiological 'noise'. Mental and emotional quietude reduce attentional and intentional noise.

Mindfully monitor your interoception as you shift your attention to your client. Remember that somatic empathy may be fleeting and transitory and you do not want to miss valuable information.

If it is appropriate – and quite often it is not – you can check with your client to see if your somatic empathy is valid. This is easy enough if you have an uncomfortable throat and casually ask how their throat feels, but I would not ask a client if they have had an unpleasant sexual trauma in their lives. The fact that my client in this case offered validating information was simply fortuitous.

Boundaries

Once the session with a client is over, it is really important not to keep one's attention on them. A clear boundary between self and other is established through good practice. I strongly recommend

having a clear beginning and end to each session. This includes even just thinking about your client outside of the session, because intention and attention influence perception. If you are thinking about them in the evening after work, you may experience somatic empathy and this can make any future information exchange between you much less clear. It is definitely best avoided. Staying clear of these connections out of hours keeps us practitioners healthy too!

I hope these suggestions will help you in learning to discern self from other. This allows us to make best use of the incredibly sophisticated information our clients give us, which can be so therapeutically transformative.

References (edited):

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My online school www.wildhealthbodywork.thinkific.com contains a short video presentation about somatic empathy, a summary e-book, and a longer comprehensive course, Somatic Empathy Explained, which is tutor-supported and aimed specifically at therapists who are interested in exploring the science and experience of somatic empathy. My website www.cindyengel.com contains a range of free and affordable summaries of research about somatic empathy.

Discerning Self from Other

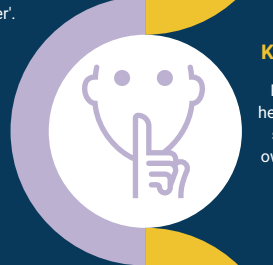
KNOW THYSELF

Get to know both your habitual mind via mindfulness practice and your habitual interoception via listening to changes. You need to know your self in order to recognize 'other'.



KEEP IT CLEAN

Physical alignment helps iron out somatic sensations of your own. Mental quietude similarly reducing confusing 'noise'.



MONITOR

Monitor your interoception before, during, and after you move your attention. Notice how attention influences your interoception.



VALIDATE

Check with your client (if appropriate) to validate your interoception. This helps you learn to tell self from other.



BOUNDARIES

Because attention (thinking about someone) will enable somatic empathy, STOP thinking about a client after they have gone. This reduces messy boundaries of self and other.



www.cindyengel.com



The Power of Surrender

By Alice Whieldon FwSS



Alice Whieldon graduated from the Shiatsu College in 1994 and worked with Kishi Akinobu from 1998 to 2012. She and Kishi collaborated in writing '*Sei-ki: Life in Resonance, the Secret Art of Shiatsu*' (2011, Singing Dragon) and she is also the author of '*Mind Clearing: The Key to Mindfulness Mastery*' (2016, Jessica Kingsley). She presents workshops in Sei-ki and Clearing internationally, and she practices in London and Norfolk. *Surrenderwork* is a partnership with Rene Fix of Ki College, Heidelberg.

I first experienced *katsugen* many years ago, when I met Kishi Akinobu and attended his Sei-ki workshops. After preparatory exercises, experienced students would move and jerk, sometimes rolling round the room, burping and making other curious sounds. After some time, in which the room resounded to thumps and shrieks, it would wind down to a palpable calm and the practice would end.

Over the years since then, I have met people who told me they were put off working with Kishi after experiencing this apparent chaos. Some newcomers found it unnerving, others were unimpressed by what they saw as 'acting out' and many could not see the relevance of *katsugen* to the hands-on experience of Sei-ki.

I also suspect there were those who felt excluded by an in-crowd of students who looked forward to 'letting it all hang out' as a key part of their Sei-ki experience. The atmosphere of license that seemed to accompany Kishi on his tours, until a few years before his death in 2012, perhaps found its clearest expression in the howls and flailing of this group practice. Little wonder that some never returned for more.

Personally, coming from a background in the 'Human Potential Movement' of the 1980s, I was not put off - I had seen plenty of stranger things! For me, the quality of touch that Kishi demonstrated far outweighed the scenes of bedlam that sometimes accompanied his work. I joined in, tentatively at first and, over time, began to grasp the point and value of what I now prefer to call, '*Surrenderwork*'.

The world has moved on from the atmosphere of the late 1990s. What was strange then is less so now. The touch and embodiment movement, if I can call it that, is more open to spontaneous expression than it was, whether in Laughter Yoga and breath work, spontaneous Qigong, Trauma Release, Contact Improvisation or the many other ways people are (re)discovering connectivity and releasing trauma.

People coming on Sei-ki workshops seem more prepared for the *Surrenderwork* we do and more sensitive to their own movement. Its value is largely taken as self-evident. I like to think Kishi's influence, which was and is huge in the European Shiatsu arena, has permeated the Shiatsu world in this way - as it has in others, perhaps unnoticed.

Katsugen, so named, comes out of the Seitai of Noguchi Haruchika and has connections with the shaking practice of Shinto. But you do not have to be Japanese to know about it. We find it in the surrender meditation or Yoga of Bhakti (devotion) in Indian culture, in the ecstatic dance of Sufism, the Holy Ghost of Christianity and many more. In these contexts it is a surrender to Reality with a big 'R'; to the Divine, however named or understood. Surrender is a desire for union and a letting go of individual will and duality. We surrender to the will of the Divine or Reality, Truth, whatever that might bring. It is framed differently in each of these traditions and, as a result, there is a different flavour to each. So they are not identical to one another yet there is a commonality.



Some characteristics of wisdom tradition surrender may include:

- The context and explanations of a spiritual path
- An understanding of the person having a 'soul' that is fundamentally separate from mind and body. Thus we can surrender the mind and body without losing this essential aspect
- That it is done for spiritual rather than personal purposes
- That it connects us to a Divine life force or divinity
- That there will likely be visible signs of this connection such as spontaneous movement, speaking in tongues, shaking...
- That healing is often a side effect

In this surrender, we open ourselves to reality and give up control over what may happen. It sits within a broader structure with a non-medical understanding of humanity

and health. If you continue to surrender in this context, you will hit discomfort sooner or later. The deeper detritus of our minds and bodies will start to surface and we might experience flashbacks, pain from injuries long 'healed', fear, panic etc. It is a case of 'Thy will be done, not mine'. The divine does not care if you need to get up tomorrow to go to work; the picture is much bigger. In a spiritual context, especially with an experienced teacher, this can be understood and weathered.

Although challenges will likely arise, and while surrender in the wisdom traditions is not done for health, it often brings health, vigour, clarity of thought and vision alongside, or as aspects of, spiritual development. So it is no wonder that the evocation of spontaneous movement has been harnessed specifically for health purposes over the years; the results can be nothing short of miraculous.

But the shift from one kind of surrender to another can easily be inadvertent and the assumption made that they are the same thing. When it is employed specifically for health, the practice is changed, particularly in modern society which tends to see people primarily as complex machines. I do not know if that really matters, but I do think it is good to know the difference.

When we surrender to spontaneous movement for health, we have an agenda; we specifically want to feel better and we frame the practice in this way. There is nothing wrong with this, it is effective medicine.

In the context of improving our health, there may be a limit to what we will experience in terms of movements, expressions and discomfort because we are not actually open to just *anything*, we are open to improving our health.





I can only speculate, since this is not the context in which I know surrender best. In any case, if we surrender in order to feel better, but instead feel worse, the practice may be dismissed as damaging, though the understanding that there is often pain on the healing journey is fairly well understood.

The same questions can be asked about Mindfulness when it is used by medics for mental health. Yes, it can help with depression, but if you continue to practice meditation, then the full force of Reality is only a breath away and no physician in the world can shut the door on Grace.

In any case, spontaneous movement for health has a different feel from katsugen and Surrenderwork. Where the boundary is between them I do not know; it sits in a blur between medicine and religion which is as old as the hills. Yet, as I say, the different intentions distinctly affect tone and practice. In Sei-ki, we are surrendering in the broader sense.

Why I am discussing this is to note that surrender is the door to another kind of knowing from that of our daily lives; a much bigger knowing; a silent knowledge. Most people do not surrender enough to experience many of the deeper effects, but I find it interesting that this doorway is being discovered by a somewhat wider audience. We need this move from prioritising intellect. We need to allow in another kind of knowing and enter again the stream of life, consciously.

In Surrenderwork, and specifically in our Surrender Project 8 week online course, we note the health values of surrender; these are real and



attractive. But we also look at surrender as an approach to life that challenges our most basic assumptions. Even on a small scale, what happens if, at least for some part of your day, you send your willpower on holiday and allow yourself to experience a few moments of agenda-less, meaningless time? This is far from easy, but once achieved (which is the wrong word for it, since it is the complete opposite of doing anything), something else may come to you... insights, peace, grief... It is not just a practice you make space for in the day, it connects you to the space that was always there but you were too busy to notice. In that space, the meaning structures of ordinary life shrink in its vastness.

This doorway to this space is why we practice surrender in Sei-ki.

We practise surrender in Sei-ki to 'clean' ourselves of the 'mind-stuff' that stands between me and you, and gets in the way of me seeing you as you really are. I surrender my mind and body and cleansing takes place. My sight and touch clarify. We surrender the rational mind and

rational knowing and invite silent knowing. This creates space in us, in our touch, in the way we are. We bring this space to others, beyond technique. The patient's body recognises this space and uses it to unfold into. Thus, I do not make you well. I offer a space that is conducive to you finding your health or maybe health finding you, whatever that might look like. This is the path of the skilled physician; knowing how not to know and not to do.

Sei-ki is a threshold practice, and feeling better is the gateway to another kind of knowledge.

If you would like to know more about Surrenderwork, go to www.surrenderwork.com for a taste of it through our free mini-course. Or join our 8 week Surrender Project.





Shiatsu - Vitality and the Process of Change

Getting started with recording your clients' cases

By Sandy Gsell of the Shiatsu Research Network

Many of us Shiatsu practitioners are natural born explorers - curious about the world and about life. The curiosity to discover more about our own vitality and to explore how our clients change through treatment cycles is a valuable precondition for getting started with research.

The Shiatsu Research Network (SRN - www.shiatsu-research-network.org) aims to *close the gap between Shiatsu and research*. One of our recent steps towards this was to take part in a Webinar at the International Shiatsu Congress Online 2020 (www.newenergywork.com/courses/isco) on the subject of *Case Reports*. Case Reports offer any practitioner who is interested in research the opportunity to contribute to the evidence base of Shiatsu.

During our Webinar, the participants said they would really like the SRN to provide some templates to help with documenting Shiatsu Cases – including 'initial intake' client questionnaires and subsequent treatment notes. Following the Webinar, a series of discussions took place among an international group of volunteers (Leisa Bellmore, Karin Koers, Claudia Leyh-Dexheimer, Kristina Pfeifer, Tamara Odermatt & Sandy Gsell) and these discussions led to the development of the requested templates.

A lively culture of discussion in the Shiatsu community is another important precondition for closing the gap between Shiatsu and research. Here we are faced with some particular challenges:

- the difficulty of finding words for what we do and what happens in Shiatsu sessions
- the traditional master-disciple relationship, which tends to lead to a hierarchy and can prevent discussions taking place on an equal footing
- the many differing Shiatsu styles, each creating their 'own world'

In developing the templates, we hope to have taken some small steps towards overcoming these challenges. We were clearly guided by the idea of keeping them very general and simple – so they can be useful for all practitioners, no matter which style of Shiatsu they follow. Moreover, the templates encourage us to describe what we do and what actually happens in our sessions. Importantly too, in the SRN we practice a democratic culture of discussion and you are freely invited to discuss them with us via our Roundtable-mailing list.



Sandy was born and grew up in Germany. From early childhood she was fascinated by numbers, as her synesthetic perception connected them with sensations. For her, the beauty of maths is a spiritual connection to the roots of our being. On the more practical side, she studied civil engineering in Dresden, and her doctorate, in mechanical engineering, focused on working with ultrasonic waves. She graduated in Shiatsu from the Ko-Schule, Zürich, and these days divides her time between her Shiatsu practice and caring for her family. She is 'twinned' with Kristina Pfeifer in the administration team of the Shiatsu Research Network.





Why is it Relevant for Shiatsu practitioners to Document Client Cases in a Structured Way?

The open structure of the template for the initial intake with the client gives individual flexibility and supports you in capturing important aspects of their health, lifestyle and needs. The templates also offer many ideas for questions to help you guide conversations with the client. For example, asking about any changes in a client's concerns or symptoms helps to raise their awareness of the health-promoting process at work; and documenting these changes in the treatment notes is a matter of 'quality control' in your practice. Writing down a client's feedback, your observations or perceptions, treatment strategies - as well as your assessment of those strategies - allows you to look back later at the client's healing process and at your interventions.

This process provides valuable practice in verbalising your experiences and is very helpful

in enabling you to engage in useful discussions with other practitioners. It will deepen your understanding of your client's healing process but it will also make you more aware of your own process - by reflecting on what happens during the treatments: what you feel, what you perceive, what you decide, what you 'do' or where you give 'open space'. To record this kind of information is not in itself research, but it is a solid basis from which to start, since it sharpens your skills of observation and ensures that you have enough information recorded in case you do want to write a Case Report.

Documentation of the Initial Intake

You can download the templates at www.shiatsu-research-network.org - follow the 'Getting Started' link and just complete the aspects relevant for your approach. We provide a number of Comments for you - to clarify various points - and a summary of these Comments is found below.

The intake template starts with some general self-explanatory information, like *Name, Address, Phone, Date of Birth*. This is followed by information about the client's *Occupation* and *Family status*, which is always helpful in assessing their social life, emotional stress, workload etc. An important part of the initial intake questionnaire is the *clarification of the client's concerns*. Besides general opening questions like 'What brings you to me?', you will find the Comments give a list of possible questions to give further insight into their concerns. The answers often give interesting hints for Shiatsu-specific approaches, such as the Five Elements. We would also like to encourage you to **reflect on your own limitations** by asking yourself:

- *Can I treat this person?*
- *Where do I need to be careful?*
- *Should I refer this person on to another specialist?*



This kind of reflection is part of good professional ethics and aims to ensure the client's best interests. The next headings: *current therapies and drugs, plus illnesses, injuries, health issues*, support you in gathering enough information to assess the client's safety and to adapt your treatment appropriately.

There is space for *lifestyle, diet and leisure activities* to complete the profile before you guide your client to set his or her **goals for the treatment cycle**.

Are you Familiar with Goal Setting?

To establish a goal at the first treatment, you might ask a question like 'What do you want from Shiatsu?' A frequent response may be: 'I want to get rid of my pain, or symptom X', especially for a person with well-defined symptoms. However, this response is neither positive nor empowering for the client. To help empower the client, it's recommended to encourage them to formulate their goal using **'I' and a verb in the present tense**. If clients initially use modal verbs - like 'can', 'may', 'must', 'shall', 'will' - we can invite them to rephrase their sentence. In answer to the question above they may just say, 'Relaxation' or 'Wellbeing' and with such short answers it is worthwhile finding out more about the context, which may lead to a more precise goal. For example, someone seeking 'Relaxation' may have a very stressful job, so a more useful goal for them might be 'I handle stressful situations better'. This emphasises the client's own responsibility for improved **self-regulation** - or taking better care of themselves. The Shiatsu can then support the client's change



processes by providing a safe space as well as the bodywork.

In some cases, an unaddressed trauma response prevents the sympathetic nervous system's excitation from being reduced. In this situation our work might focus - as described by Cliff Andrews in 'A Brief Guide to Treating Stress and Trauma with Shiatsu and TCM' (see SSJ 148, Winter '18) - on helping them to get 'back in touch with their body-mind connection'. Here a goal such as 'I handle stressful situations better' would be inappropriate because clients with trauma can be 'trapped' in a highly stressed state precisely because they have dysfunctional self-regulation. However, it is especially important that we support the empowerment of clients suffering with trauma - encourage their self-efficacy - and one way to do this is by encouraging their **active participation in the treatment planning**.

I'll give another example which may highlight the value of working with treatment goals.

A guitarist with shoulder pain gave as his goal 'I exercise by playing the guitar for two hours', which seems quite achievable. However, in speaking about this goal it turned out that his shoulder pain actually helped him not to feel the fear of failure of not becoming a concert guitarist. It appeared that this fear of failure was actually the problem, and his shoulder pain was a body reaction which prevented him from feeling the fear. So the pain was a kind of protection, but at the same time it also raised the fear of being unable to earn a living simply by guitar teaching. It became clear that, in this case, the pain and fear were interwoven and the pain could not be treated without addressing the fear.

Another approach to working with goals and wishes is to contrast the goal or wish with the obstacle which prevents the client from achieving it. You can find more information about this evidence-based method here: www.woopmylife.org/en/home.





Talking about their goals shows the client that they are being taken seriously and it helps to develop trust and a safe **therapeutic relationship**. Moreover it brings more clarity, and the **clients can participate actively** in the treatment planning, which in turn activates their sense of empowerment – their **self-efficacy and their own responsibility**.

Treatment protocols

From the second treatment onwards, the protocol starts with **feedback** from the client on their reactions to the last treatment and any changes they have observed since then. This is followed by **today's concerns/symptoms** where the client's physical, mental and emotional state, and the aim for today's treatment, is clarified. There is space for Bo Shin, Bun Shin and Mon Shin, observations of posture, range of motion or anything else that seems significant in **observations before treatment**. These observations are particularly helpful later, when noting any changes following the treatment. At any stage

you may **review the goal**. The client's goal gives orientation during the healing process, but any new concern and/ or changes in the symptoms may mean that the original goal needs to be adjusted. You can assess, together with your client, whether the goal is still appropriate or should now be changed.

Under **treatment** you can record everything relevant to the session that day - findings, meridians, Setsu Shin, client responses, your own reactions etc. What did you treat? What was your focus? Did it change during the treatment? Did you notice anything special?

During the **reassessment** you can ask the client how the session was for them – did it address their concerns? / has their body perception changed? and so on. Also note down your own observations and any changes you noticed. Under **ongoing treatment plan** write down what approach you took and what you might address in the next session. You can also record how today's treatment relates to the overall goal and if

at the next session an adjustment may be necessary.

At the end of the treatment protocol, the final point is **Self-care**. Here we suggest looking at how clients can support themselves between treatments. Being aware of, and making use of, both inner and outer resources. You can consider things such as social activities; body, breathing and mindfulness exercises; nutrition; maintaining one's own boundaries etc...

We hope many practitioners will start to use our templates and to find them of value. Please don't hesitate to give us **feedback** via mailing to admin@shiatsu-research-network.org or subscribing to our newsletter or our Roundtable.

See www.shiatsu-research-network.org - and follow the 'Get in Touch' link.



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Shiatsu during Life Transitions - A Receiver's Experience

Introduction by Liz Anderson MrSS

In June 2021, towards the end of my third year of Shiatsu training, I was contacted by Amy - a Biodynamic Massage Therapist who was looking for treatment from a bodywork practitioner. This was her first experience of Shiatsu and we have subsequently met weekly for sessions. Amy has written a fascinating article entitled 'How Hands-On Bodywork Helped Me Navigate Change' which has been published on the website welldoing.org¹

Amy wants to encourage more people to use touch therapies to complement talk therapies and her article highlights the benefit of body support during life transitions. She felt that Shiatsu was instrumental in 'helping me find my footing when the ground shifted beneath me'. Amy's account of how Shiatsu has helped her may be useful if you are looking for a reference to demonstrate the effectiveness of Shiatsu.



Liz Anderson graduated from the Shiatsu College Hastings in September 2021. She is now giving Shiatsu sessions in Tunbridge Wells, Kent and is interested in developing her practice to work with people receiving palliative care. Liz would like to thank Amy Barnes, her teachers Annie Cryar and Rose Fuhrmann and friends at the Shiatsu College Hastings www.naturalshiatsu.weebly.com

HOW HANDS-ON BODYWORK HELPED ME NAVIGATE CHANGE

By Amy Barnes

(Amy has given permission for her full name to be used for this article)

We were one of the many thousands of people who decided to move house during lockdown. We had lived in our previous home for 18 years. Although we knew we had outgrown our place quite a few years ago, it took the pandemic, the lockdown and the stamp duty holiday to facilitate our move.

At first, we were delighted to be moving out and we looked forward to moving from commuter town to the countryside in East Sussex. We grew up abroad and our work also took us to different countries so we treated the move as largely a logistical challenge. We couldn't have been more wrong.

The reality was, beneath the logistical challenges were layers of history melded together by the highs, the lows and the routines of life. Each round of clearing things out involved repeatedly asking ourselves the questions 'do I still need this?', 'will I ever use this again?' and the sub-text 'does this still have meaning for me?' Layered on top of these reflective and emotional moments, we were still navigating our way through the day-to-day business of living within the context of a national lockdown.

Out of the blue in February, I had a severe anxiety attack. I was lucky to have just about enough psychological support to recover and I was functioning enough to move us in and out of temporary accommodation before finally moving into our new house in April. Just when I thought our struggle had come to an end, the extent to which the house needed renovations was far more than we expected. So instead of moving in and nest building, I had to dig a bit deeper physically, emotionally and financially, to carry out remedial work.





The extent to which I felt exhausted and completely disorientated was not something I had ever experienced before. Even though I was able to carry out tasks, I felt totally ungrounded. It was as if I was floating in some nether region between our old place and the new place. I felt as if I had been dropped into a totally alien place where I could not connect with anything around me. I was doing tasks mechanically but I felt disconnected and absent inside. This was a very odd experience because we have always enjoyed being in different places and part of the excitement of being out of my comfort zone was the exposure to new experiences which I used to relished. In short, I felt alien to me, to the self I knew.

Having had the benefit of previous training in Gestalt psychotherapy and now working as a biodynamic massage therapist, I was able to access a range of resources to help myself but I knew I needed additional support, particularly hands-on work. I found a local Shiatsu therapist and we started work together. Although Shiatsu was not a modality I knew, the way the therapist was able to tune into what was going on in my world and fine-tuned what she did in order to support me meant that she was able to provide what I, as a whole being, needed. I remember feeling profoundly met and instantly safe in our first session when she simply sat next to my body on the mat. I remember tears rolling down both sides of my face and somewhere in my body, a

release, a letting go. The internal churning, like choppy water on a stormy day, instantly calmed.

Since June, we have had eight sessions together and I feel the sessions have been incredibly effective in helping me settle within myself and, in turn, I feel a gradual easing into my new environment. What made the hands-on work so effective? I think our sensory feelings are important components of what we experience as anxiety, overwhelm, scattered etc. Thoughts and feelings inform each other as a unified whole system.

Perhaps in times of extreme stress our internal bearings get disrupted.

In other words, our sense of disconnection is likely to be both a somatic phenomenon and a psychological one. Below, I am offering some possibilities as to why being supported primarily from my body helped me settle into myself and into my new environment.

A feeling-sense of place

This is a kind of 'landing' of feeling fully here and feeling my body as solid and substantial. In the first two months after the anxiety attack, my body felt as if it was barely there. When I touched my belly, my hands and my body felt fuzzy as if my skin was not all there. After the first

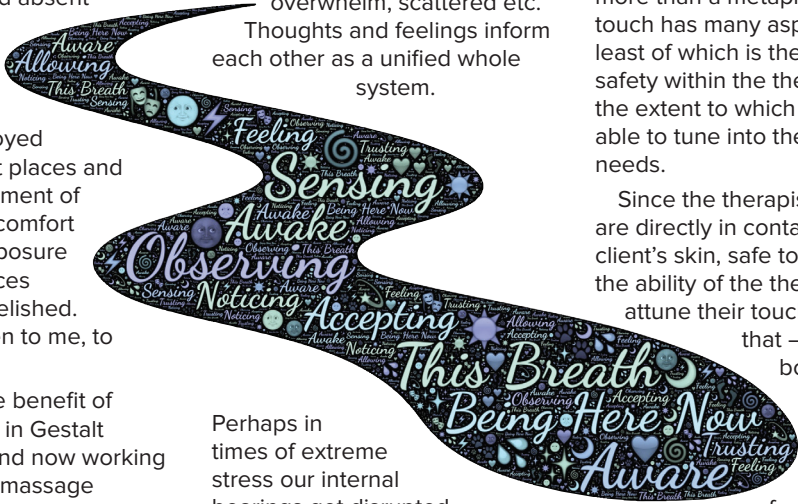
bodywork session, I could feel my body as firmer more 'here'. Eight sessions later, when I put my hand on my belly I can now fully differentiate between my hand and my belly and my body feels solid. The tissue is firmer and more full.

A feeling-sense of safety

For me, the feeling of safety in bodywork is conveyed through safe touch, making the phrase 'a safe pair of hands' more than a metaphor. Safe touch has many aspects, not least of which is the feeling of safety within the therapist and the extent to which they are able to tune into their client's needs.

Since the therapist's hands are directly in contact with the client's skin, safe touch means the ability of the therapist to attune their touch such that – from a boundary perspective – the client does not feel it is too much or not enough.

As a biodynamic massage therapist, we refer to neutral touch as contacting in a 'matter of fact' way. This can be described as the therapist simply reinforcing 'I'm here and you are here' at the skin boundary. This way of being held where there is no expectation, no exploration, only affirmation of existence. I think this way of making contact may be particularly helpful in restoring an in-body feeling of everything being in-place and safe. This may well be a process within interoception,² an emerging field of research.



A feeling-sense of support

Some generic ways of holding the body or regions of the body – for example, ‘sandwich’ the upper back and chest – often elicit an in-body feeling of support. However, a skilled body therapist can locate particular regions of the body where suitable ways of contacting can be felt as particularly supportive to an individual.

It is this bodily felt sense of support that gave me a tangible feeling of being supported, and because that was grounded in the actuality of someone’s presence and their hands holding me, it also helped me find safety and grounding within myself in the present and that in turn helped me regather the scatteredness and countered the strong sense of isolation I had been feeling.



A sense of routine

Within the shadows of the pandemic and being in a totally new environment, weekly sessions formed part of the skeleton for building a weekly routine. This routine helped me establish new connections and helped me familiarise myself with new surroundings. I found routine to be an important handrail to orientate myself in relation to time, place and space.

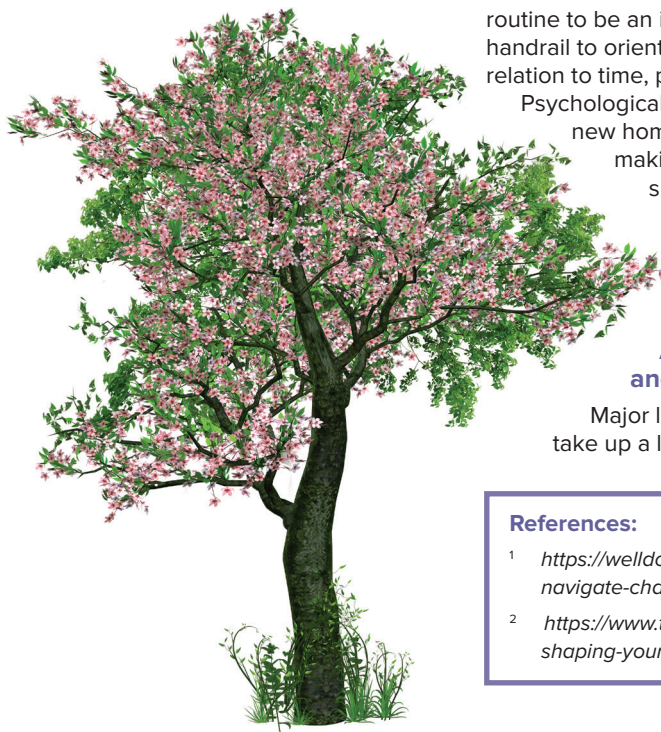
Psychologically, since my new home is still in the making, the therapy space has become the safest space for me each week.

A time for rest and integration

Major life transitions take up a lot of energy, so

periodic rest to find still points in the chaos is essential. While we rest, we are also allowing our whole being to resettle and integrate into a new whole. Each session allowed my body to get what was needed and after each session, I felt a marked shift in how I felt and a marked change in my capacity to deal with a larger range of challenges without feeling overwhelmed.

What I did for and with my clients in biodynamic massage therapy sessions I was able to experience for myself through a different modality of body-based therapy. My experience has furthered deepened my trust in what hands-on body-based therapies can offer and how it can complement talk-based therapies during major life transitions.



References:

- ¹ <https://welldoing.org/article/how-hands-on-bodywork-helped-me-navigate-change>
- ² <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2021/aug/15/the-hidden-sense-shaping-your-wellbeing-interoception>



Book Review

'Tales of 100 Treatments' by Shizuto Masunaga. Re-published in English by Shiatsu Milano Editore, 2021.

By Carola Beresford-Cooke FwSS

This was Masunaga's last book and in fact only contains 58 'tales' as he died before completing it. There is a poignancy in knowing this as we read the last few tales, in which he crams foreign tours and presentations into his last remaining months and reflects wryly on how he has had to submit to 'treatment' for the first time in his life:

I have emphasized the necessity of waiting when examining the kyo/jitsu diagnosis. I have explained from the perspective of the theory of the meridians that life must be seen from the whole towards that which cannot be seen. Despite this fact, concerning the rhythm of my own life, it was agonizing for me to wait... And for the first time in my life I was forced to receive treatment over several months. Experiencing the extraordinary difference of vegetative rhythm, I am studying all over again what it means 'to wait'. (Tale 54)

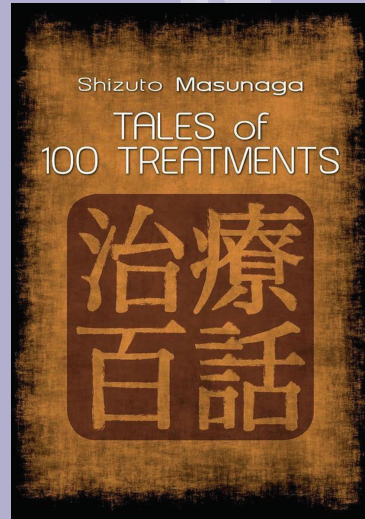
This book is far from a textbook explanation of Shiatsu treatments. It is a journal, a memoir and a compendium of anecdotes drawn from Masunaga's long career in healing and teaching. It is also in a sense a record of his journey towards formulating a new theory of Shiatsu, based on meridian function and the interaction of kyo and jitsu. By Tales 50 and 51, he has arrived at the theory of the meridians as expressions of the desires and function of the whole being. Over the 40 years since his death, we have seen the extraordinary developments in Shiatsu springing from this understanding.

The 100 Tales are immensely valuable from a historical perspective on Zen Shiatsu diagnosis; we can see how it has evolved from a more physically based interpretation to the more current Western model, which emphasises the energetic. Masunaga seems to arrive at the theory, in the form we recognise, in Tale 51 where he concludes that the root of a meridian's function is not an anatomical organ but 'the ki that wants to do something'. The earlier Tales show a much more physically oriented approach to the diagnosis, with great emphasis on the spinal distortions associated with each. There can also be a 'typical diagnosis' for particular ailments.

Sometimes he favours us with a detailed description of a technique to correct one of these physical ailments. My favourite is the technique on how to relieve heart palpitations by physically pulling the diaphragm down after performing abdominal massage (*anpuku*). I was surprised to find *anpuku* figuring at all here, since it is not part of the 'Zen' style as currently practised in the West, but there are two Tales devoted to it, which include a touching conversation with his mother:

...even though she has stopped her practice she'd sometimes say on my occasional visits "Let me just see your abdomen", she'd give me shiatsu... (Tale 57)

There are many asides in the book that throw unexpected light on Masunaga's traditional



Japanese mindset. I was surprised to read in Tale 6 that problems with the legs and stomach mean that one has disobeyed one's father in a previous life (or perhaps, as in my case, this life). However, although he sometimes expresses this kind of traditional view, clearly Masunaga has a deep understanding of how his patients' condition may be rooted in their relationships, particularly within the family. In the fascinating Tale 29, a young man is treated for insomnia, which appears to be a mental disorder but is traced back gradually to gastrointestinal problems in childhood and thence further back to family distress. The insomnia does not improve for many sessions and the young man is sceptical, but Sensei is quietly confident. I found this Tale consoling because so often we want the receiver's primary symptom to improve right away, not after months, as in this case. It also includes a wonderful description of the simplicity of Shiatsu touch:

The deeply penetrating pressure of the shiatsu exerts influence on the region where the primitive babyhood body image remains intact.

This is an area like virgin soil left untouched by the influence of civilisation, so the communication which takes place in that domain does not require technique nor is it hampered by an unexpected wariness. It is a world where one can talk frankly in plain terms like an innocent child.

I found many such gems in this book, too many to give them all here. For example, in Tale 3, where Masunaga explains the importance of the lower back and neck as *kaname*, points from which all movement originates, and compares them to the pivot of a folding fan, a beautiful

metaphor. Or in Tale 34:

...the visible Yang points to the existence of Yin, which is invisible. What is visible leads the way to taking care of the unseen area. This allows a sort of relaxation to be born at the bottom of the patient's heart.

As a 'Masunagaphile', what I really enjoyed most about this book was getting to know better the man himself. He has a disarming capacity for self-observation. When a woman falls near his clinic and is brought in for Shiatsu help, he takes a little while to realise she has broken her hip, and recounts how, as he phones the hospital, he can feel the cold sweat trickling down his neck as he gives thanks he did not try further.

Tale 14 is completely taken up with the kind of situation we are rarely taught to deal with in Shiatsu schools – feeling responsibility for a patient in a grave condition, to the point of praying for them, dealing with the relatives and their scepticism, and even when the outcome is positive, thinking that it could have been handled better and doubting its success. There is a touching humility and caring there.

The last half of the book is taken up with his overseas trips. First of all there is the jetlag: '*I am writing this manuscript in the middle of the night in New York*' he says, as he tries to fit the circadian rhythm into Yin and Yang theory. Then there are the Western people:

They think nothing of entering the living room with their shoes on. The only time they take off their shoes is when they go to bed. They seem to become conscious of sex when they take their shoes off. (Tale 34)

In France he cannot understand why eating a meal is so long and

complicated - he only manages to eat half the food on offer (Tale 48). In San Francisco he is sweet-talked into accepting a spliff:

However, I am generally inclined to be doubtful of strange and bizarre things, so I was feeling more uneasy than curious. (Tale 38). So, probably he didn't inhale!

He goes into great detail when describing his course in a large venue north of Paris. This interested me hugely, as I was there, a budding Shiatsu student overcome with emotion at studying with this master, although his English was so incomprehensible that his theories and philosophy, on which he spoke volumes, were fairly incomprehensible as well. He recounts being "at his limits" and wondering what to do for the afternoon so, as most of the participants are women, he decides to abandon theories and teach 'beauty shiatsu', which is a great success – and which I remember well. This is such a treasured memory of mine, Masunaga Sensei relaxed and joking – and finally a technique I could understand and practise with joy!

I do recommend this book, hugely, even for non-Masunagaphiles. The translation is a little clumsy at times (it has been translated from Japanese into Italian and thence into English) but Masunaga's voice speaks clearly from the pages, giving us all the benefits of decades of Shiatsu practice; experience, wisdom, curiosity, humour and understanding. As a record of an influential life in Shiatsu and an intensely significant transitional period in Shiatsu history, it has great value.



Board report

Looking back, 2021 has been an intense year for the Board. Pared down to a small team of four Directors, with Ruth in the Office working tirelessly alongside us, we have made major decisions about the future administration of the Society. We have had to hold on to our courage over the last few months until we could see the fruits of the new platform and website emerging.

Our future vision and core values (as presented to you at the AGM) remain clear and we trust that - after a period of rest over the festive season - we will enjoy stepping into 2022 with renewed vigour and the determination to continue putting these into practice. To remind you:

Our Guiding Ethos

- We believe that the widespread recognition and use of Shiatsu can make a significant contribution to national health and wellbeing
- We believe that Shiatsu has the power to transform lives
- We believe that connection to self and to others through Shiatsu can benefit people personally, within families and communities
- As a Society we commit to working professionally, respectfully and with compassion
- We see putting our values into action and embodying them with integrity as the basis of being an effective organisation. Transparency and leading by example are essential
- We believe that the Shiatsu Society belongs to all its members and that we are responsible to each other. We are all the Society
- As a professional membership organisation, we see ourselves as part of the wider Shiatsu and complementary therapy community. We seek to work collaboratively with everyone in those wider communities, in the spirit of friendship and because by working together we are stronger

Wishing you all a very happy and healthy New Year, filled with friendship and a sense of community

From the Directors - Annie, Alan, Elaine W, Elaine L, and from Ruth – the Office Manager

We are sorry to report the death on Dec 2nd of Mandy Mosley. Originally from Ireland, Mandy graduated from the Newcastle branch of the Shiatsu College in the early 90s and has been a treasured member of the College's teaching team for many years. She was especially valued for her warmth, her kindness, her positive energy, her wonderful sense of humour and her joyous laugh.

She was much loved by many - the College is mourning the loss of a rare and beautiful soul.



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The Shiatsu Society is the UK's leading professional Shiatsu organisation. Shiatsu is a unique stand-alone complementary therapy which supports health and wellbeing. We are committed to the spirit and ethos of Shiatsu and the development of integrated and accessible healthcare.

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