

WINTER 2020 - ISSUE 156

ISSN-2045-3590

shiatsu society journal

- **Quantum Shiatsu - on the path of Pauline Sasaki**
Gabriella Poli
- **The Idea of Sovereignty in Chinese Medicine**
Nick Pole FwSS and Margot Rossi M.Ac. L.Ac
- **European Shiatsu Congress - Reflections, Making Connections**
Tracy Krikler FwSS



Contents

4 **Quantum Shiatsu - on the path of Pauline Sasaki**
Gabriella Poli

10 **The Idea of Sovereignty in Chinese Medicine**
Nick Pole FwSS and Margot Rossi M.Ac. L.Ac.

14 **Pauline Sasaki: The Elegance of Wisdom**
Diego Sanchez

17 **News**

18 **Shiatsu and Loneliness**
Carola Beresford-Cooke FwSS

21 **How the Pressure of Lockdown Freed the Flow of Qi**
Dr Cindy Engel

23 **The Tao of Nature**
Nicola Ley FwSS

27 **Sei-ki at the Shiatsu Congress 2020 - Live and Online**
Alice Whieldon FwSS

30 **European Shiatsu Congress - Reflections, Making Connections**
Tracy Krikler FwSS CQSW

33 **Evidence-Based Medicine and Research for Shiatsu Practitioners**
Stergios Tsiormpatzis MSc



Cover photo: A single tree with beautiful space background
By Triff - Shutterstock

Registered Address
The Shiatsu Society (UK) Ltd
20-22 Wenlock Road
London, N1 7GU

Correspondence to:
The Shiatsu Society (UK) Ltd
PO Box 87, Oakengates DO
TF3 3WT

Tel: 01788 547900
Web: www.shiatusociety.org
Email: membership@shiatusociety.org
for all membership enquiries
office@shiatusociety.org
for all other business

Editor
Anne Palmer

Editorial Board
Anne Palmer, Dinah John
Laura Davison, Tamsin Grainger

Journal Director
Elaine West
Layout
Chris Thorpe Graphic Design Ltd.

Printing
Welshpool Printing Group,
Printing House, Severn Farm
Enterprise Park, Welshpool,
Powys SY21 7DF

Paper/Web
Shiatsu Society Journal is published quarterly by the Shiatsu Society (UK) Ltd to keep members informed and to act as a forum for members in the UK.
The Shiatsu Society is a not-for-profit organisation and holds the national Professional Practitioners Register.

Articles and Contributions
Articles and any other contributions are welcomed. If possible, send your submissions

as a Word or rtf file by email to us at office@shiatusociety.org or on a disk. If in doubt, contact the office to discuss options.
Images may be sent via the post, preferably as a hard copy or on a CD. Images should be scanned to 300dpi and saved as a jpg file. The Editor reserves the right to revise contributions.

Advertising
The preferred format for advertising copy is as a 300dpi jpg or PDF file, to the correct size (see advertising rate box on the inside back cover for sizes). If sending your advert as a Word document or InDesign/QuarkXPress file please ensure all fonts and images are included separately, and send with a proof copy. Flat artwork to photoset quality may also be supplied. We can provide a design service for your advertisement. Send your text and a rough layout

of the style you require. At present there is no extra charge for this service. Please send full payment with your advertisement.

Copy Deadline
Spring 2021 issue (issue 157)
For editorial and advertising:
14th February 2021. Publication date: 1st April 2021.
Disclaimer: The views expressed in this Journal are not necessarily those of The Shiatsu Society. Publication of an advertisement in the Shiatsu Society Journal does not imply endorsement of either the advertiser or their services.

© The Shiatsu Society 2021
No part of this Journal may be reproduced without permission.



The Idea of Sovereignty in Chinese Medicine

By Nick Pole FwSS and Margot Rossi M.Ac. L.Ac.



Nick Pole's work integrates Shiatsu, Clean Language and various mindfulness-based approaches. He has over 25 years experience in both eastern and western forms of mind-body therapy and has also trained in Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy. He is the director of London Mindful Practitioners, a non-profit support group for health professionals who use mindfulness in their work. His book, 'Words That Touch - How to ask questions your body can answer' (2017), is a comprehensive guide to using Clean Language in mind-body therapy.

'The Sage's heart/mind in stillness is the mirror of Heaven and Earth, the glass of the ten thousand things.'

Zhuang Zi



Margot Rossi, M.Ac. is passionate about helping people cultivate awareness of their mind, body and spirit to take charge of their wellbeing. An acupuncturist and Asian medicine practitioner trained in the US and China, Margot sees her primary role as a practitioner as that of an educator, listener and collaborator. She has over 30 years' experience practicing and teaching mindful movement. Margot is based in rural Western North Carolina. She's currently writing a book for Singing Dragon Press, *To Be Like Water*, exploring the virtues of water and Daoyin Therapeutic Movement.

The idea that there is something irreducible, invaluable and unique at the core of every human being is fundamental to eastern - and many western - notions of therapy. And even though there are tectonically deep differences between east and west about what that irreducible something is, helping our clients discover it and connect with it remains the ultimate goal in both traditions. However much the client may be focused on symptoms and pain when they come to see us, our power to help them depends ultimately on how well as practitioners we can connect with our own sense of that irreducible something, and how effective we are in inviting our clients to find it in themselves.

In this article we look at two ways to explore this in ourselves and in our clients: firstly, in an embodied way via the practice of Dao Yin, which Margot has studied for many years with her teacher Jeffrey Yuen, and secondly by using the mindful enquiry process known as Clean Language, which Nick has spent 20 years integrating into the way he teaches and practises Shiatsu.

The Self and the Shen

But first, we need a name for this irreducible something. In the western therapeutic language, it is usually called the 'authentic self'. In Chinese medicine probably the best place to start looking for it is in the concept of 'Shen' - that aspect of the human heart which knows the will of Heaven, or the Dao, and which is in charge of translating it into the way we live our life.

In her discussion of how the concept of Shen evolved from both Daoist and Confucian roots, Elisabeth Rochat de la Vallee emphasises how important it was to cultivate the ability to perceive 'the natural order as it is and not the vision or reasoning we indulge in because of our desires, emotions, ambitions, passions... As soon as one makes oneself able to see the underlying patterns of cosmic life, what one perceives fills one's heart/mind and influences one's thought, intention and action.' We are aware of this, (if we want to be), she says, through, 'the presence in the human heart of a kind of 'moral law', the ability to discern the natural order and to submit to it to fulfil one's destiny'.¹

聽

‘Listen’

‘Fulfilling one’s destiny’ here does not refer to any western notion of the heroic individual. As Giovanni Maciocia points out emphatically, ‘the Western concept of Self as an individualized, inward-looking, autonomous centre of consciousness is completely different from the Confucian self that is family- and social-defined.’²

The Confucian Self

Margaret Thatcher once said that there is no such thing as society. In the Confucianism that has dominated Chinese culture and the medicine that developed within it for the past 2,000 years (and, Maciocia argues, continues to do so today), the opposite is true - there is no such thing as the individual. Humans exist in and through intricate networks of relationship, and the ability to behave appropriately in each social role depends ultimately on one’s ability to listen to the heart/mind - to be guided by one’s Shen.

No wonder that the ability to listen was valued so highly in Chinese medicine. Listening was what held everything together domestically, socially and politically - and doing it properly involved listening not just from the head but from the heart. This kind of listening is very different from the objective, information-oriented, pattern-seeking listening common to both

western medicine and textbook forms of TCM. It is an embodied and relational ability to listen to the heart/mind - to be guided by one’s Shen.

Listening from the Heart

The Chinese word for Listen is ‘Ting’. You pronounce it with a high-pitched singing tone, like the sound of a meditation bell being lightly struck - ‘ting’! It’s a reminder of the profound difference between a language whose meaning depends on the tone and musicality of its sounds, like Chinese, and one like English where the meaning comes neatly packaged in the word itself, however you pronounce it. ‘Listen’ in English has no particular music to it - just a sharp hiss in the middle. ‘Ting’, on the other hand, speaks directly to the ear, making you look up, demanding attention and presence.

All these elements are in the Chinese character for Listen (*fig.1*). The ear and the eye are represented top left and right. On the right, below the eye, you see a single horizontal line, implying undivided attention. Below that is the character for ‘Heart’ or ‘Heart/Mind’, reminding us of that core Confucian principle that listening is about relationship. Then, in the bottom left-hand corner is one more ingredient - a squiggle that can mean both ‘Mind’ and ‘Sovereignty’. Real listening, it seems to say, has to involve the core of us, our ‘sovereign self’.

So how do we bring that sovereign self to the way we listen to our clients in a Shiatsu or Acupuncture session? And how do we invite the client to connect with theirs? The Chinese character for Sovereignty (*fig.2*) contains one answer to

主權

‘Sovereignty’

that question. The left side represents an owner or a master - no surprise there - but the symbol on the right, representing ‘authority’, includes a beautiful metaphor - the image of a heron. In Chinese cosmology, the heron is a symbol for many good things: independence, longevity, purity and stillness, for example. It is also ascribed the task of connecting the human soul to heaven, not only after death but with every breath we take. Sovereignty, this seems to say, is about owning or mastering an in-the-moment sense of something independent, enduring, pure and still. If you look closely at the image of the heron (*fig.3*), what happens? If you imagine embodying the way it effortlessly expresses its sovereignty, what happens to your posture, your breath, your Ki?

Dao Yin - the original source

This natural poise of pure embodied sovereign self, which comes so easily to the heron, is exactly what Dao Yin is all about. Dao Yin practice is the original source of most Chinese forms of mindful movement. But while Tai Chi and Qigong, for example, have developed into sophisticated, choreographed forms, Dao Yin takes us back to the simplest elements of human movement in terms of both ontogeny: how we develop from embryo to adult, and phylogeny:





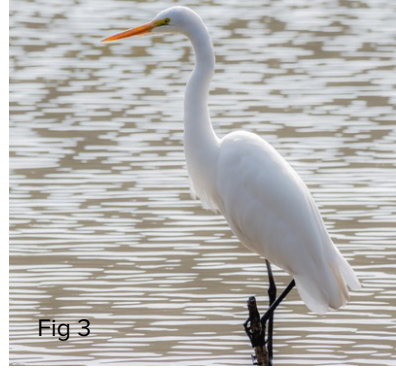
how the evolution of the human species reflects the many forms of life that came before it.

The simplicity of the Dao Yin form takes us deep inside ourselves. For westerners especially, it is a reminder that the human body is not a lookout tower from which we survey, objectively, the natural world; we are a living part of that natural world, as worthy as anything else on the planet of the kind of genial, awe-struck curiosity that David Attenborough seems to convey towards every sentient being he encounters. The Chinese character for Dao Yin includes, on the left side, a path, an eye, and the idea of measuring. On the right side is a bow and arrow with the sense of stretching, pulling, aiming at something. By stretching ourselves and measuring ourselves through mindful movement, we develop the self-awareness we need to govern ourselves and our responses in a truly embodied way.

‘Butterfly Emerges’

This practice mimics the work a butterfly has to do to emerge from its chrysalis. It activates the spine and opens the front and back of the Heart centre, allowing Heart energy to circulate downwards, warming the Kidneys and the Lower Dan Tian. It also supports the circulation of Yuan (source) Qi up the spine. This is important both physically and metaphorically. The spine is our ‘backbone’, we need it to stand upright. When we embody our sovereignty, we can ‘stand up for ourselves’ and move forward through life with courage and fortitude.

The Butterfly Emerges practice is best done lying on your back,



but you can also do it sitting in a chair or on the floor:

- 1) Tune in to your entire body, resting.
- 2) Notice any sensations that to come into your awareness.
- 3) If you are lying down, fold at the knees and hips to stand your feet on the floor, with feet a hips-width apart, and your heels a comfortable distance from your buttocks. If you’re sitting in a chair, feel your feet squarely resting on the floor; if cross-legged, feel your legs and hips on the ground.
- 4) Cross your arms, placing each hand to its opposite shoulder, embracing yourself.
- 5) Without lifting your head off the floor, or if you are seated, without dropping your head forward, inhale and draw your chin toward your chest, lengthening the back of your neck.
- 6) Exhale and gently lift your upper body off the ground, drawing your chest toward your thighs. Your lower back is still resting on the ground. If you’re sitting, bend your upper body slightly forward.
- 7) Continue exhaling as you twist your upper body and head to the left.

- 8) Stay lifted up, or slightly bent forward, as you inhale and come back through centre.
- 9) While remaining lifted or bent forward, exhale as you twist your upper body and head to the right.
- 10) Remain up as you inhale and come back to centre.
- 11) Exhale as release down to the ground to rest.
- 12) Once you’ve learned the sequence, repeat it a few times, then have a rest.

A Few Clean Questions

Next – just notice how you are, take three deep breaths and when you’re ready, come back to sitting up. Now ask yourself - or even better, get someone else to ask you - a few Clean Questions. Take your time after each one to be open to whatever answer may come - if any answer comes at all. Don’t put any pressure on yourself to think of an answer. Your Heart/Mind knows perfectly well that you’re listening to it, but it may have its own reasons for responding cryptically or not at all right now. Silence is also communication.

Bring your attention to your whole embodied self once more, being open to meeting your own authentic, sovereign self. What are you aware of? If something comes - a word, an image a sensation - welcome it, be curious about it, notice if you have any judgment about it, and using whatever key words come to you, put those words in the place of ‘X’ in the following questions:

- Is there anything else about that...X?
- And where exactly is that X?

- And is that X on the inside or the outside?
- Does it have a size or a shape... or a colour... or a sound?
- And that X is like what?

Once you have some sense of how your body/mind represents 'sovereignty' to you, you're ready for the next step.

Bring to mind a Shiatsu client you know, imagining this client is present with you and you're present with them and there's a safe, respectful space between the two of you. Reconnecting with your own sovereign self, imagine you are inviting their sovereign self into the space. What do you notice? What is it like to be present with this person in this way? In this meeting of two sovereign selves, what do your hands want to do, what do they know? Then, imagine bowing to each other and, when you're ready, come back to yourself.

There are two more questions you might want to ask:

- And what do you know now about all that?
- And what difference does knowing that make?

Whatever you know now, do something to help you remember it: make a quick sketch, write a few words, or find the gesture or the sound that expresses it best. Each time you do this you are saying hello to your own personal sense of sovereignty.

Learning from the Sovereign Self

Another way to connect with it, of course, is to spend time with people who seem to have a strong connection to theirs. This is the essence of the traditional eastern way of learning.



Fig 4

If you've ever been around someone who lives as their sovereign self, their presence is undeniable. Humble, guiding without leading, with equanimity and compassion, these wise beings help us perceive and discover something enlightening or inspiring about whatever it is we are grappling with as a 'problem'. In their presence, we experience the first step required for learning and growth - an ability to be more aware of ourselves and to bring kindness and compassion to what we discover.

For Margot, the 88th generation Taoist priest and Chinese medicine teacher Jeffrey Yuen has been such a guide: 'Quiet and full of humility,

his steady presence is palpable. The clarity of his spirit is like a highly polished mirror or the most placid surface of water. Just being around him helps me see myself more clearly. The compassion he emanates helps me have compassion for what I see in myself and in my world. He's taught me how to forgive myself. By following his lead, grounded yet unfettered, and by sincerely answering the questions he asks, which often take me by surprise, I come into my own sense of sovereignty. That's a grace and a gift I want to pass on to my patients.'

When the practitioner's sovereignty meets the client's sovereignty, without interfering with it, directing it or colonising it, the potential for healing is enormous: the butterfly emerges, the heron takes flight. (fig.4) Elisabeth Rochat de la Vallee puts this beautifully in her commentary on the Su Wen, Ch. 11, when she says that gifted healers, 'can treat without much diagnosis because they have an authenticity which connects directly with the authenticity of the patient.

Then there is joy in the practitioner...that is received with joy by the patient.'⁴

Nick and Margot's presentation for ISCO '20 - Ting-Shui: Listening like Water - is available here: www.international-shiatsucongressonline.org

References:

1. Zhuang Zi ch.13. Transl. B. Watson
2. Rochat de la Vallee, 'Shen in Chinese religion and Medicine' http://www.elisabeth-rochat.com/docs/31_shen.pdf
3. Giovanni Maciocia, (2009) The Psyche in Chinese Medicine, Churchill Livingstone
4. Rochat de la Vallee, Commentary on Su Wen, Ch.11 http://www.elisabeth-rochat.com/docs/33_patient_practitioner_relationship.pdf