



TO THE POINT

Shiatsu Therapy Association of British Columbia
 Providing professional standards and ethics in Shiatsu Therapy

Newsletter ideas email: shiatsuclaire@gmail.com

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Review: AGM AND CONFERENCE 2011

“The AGM this year, in my experience, was the best one I have ever attended since I became a Shiatsu therapist. The idea of having workshops added more value to the AGM and brought therapists closer together, literally. The board did a great job of bringing quality instructors, finding a wonderful location and creating a unique experience”. - conference participant.

The STA held its first conference in conjunction with the Annual General Meeting this year on June 26, 2011. The event was held at a central location in Gastown, The Vancouver School of Bodywork and Massage (VSBM). The facility lent itself well to a workshop of this nature, with plenty of space for shiatsu floor work, and conference set-up afterwards. Futons, as well as chairs, were provided by the VSBM, adding to the convenience of this location. The intention for the event was to provide valuable continuing education workshops, together with a shorter, more efficient, business meeting.

The conference attracted many attendees, not only from the Vancouver area, but also from the islands. A delicious catered lunch was provided for all, with a good opportunity to meet and re-connect with our Shiatsu friends.



For this first conference/ AGM, we invited members of the British Columbia Acupressure Therapy Association, BCATA. The BCATA had extended a warm welcome to the STA members for their conference in Autumn 2010, and both STA and BCATA seem to be benefiting from this reciprocal arrangement. Members of the two associations are discovering their common therapies, making important networking connections and extending our wellness community.



Margarete Eller and Massimo de Angelis, originally from Austria and Italy respectively, presented **The Essence of Ohashiatsu**. Both Margarete and Massimo are trained in the Ohashiatsu method, with years of experience in Europe where they studied. They introduced the basic approach to Ohashiatsu in a practical and energizing format.

Participants paired up and experienced this wonderful, yet simple, approach to Shiatsu. After lunch and the AGM, Samantha Jennings, doctor of TCM, gave an impressive lecture on **Windows of the Sky - Point Energetics**. Samantha's 25+ years of experience were evident as she presented in-depth knowledge of the Five Elements and important points. Her lecture gently guided us to be more effective in our deliverance of Shiatsu.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER



Hello Shiatsu brothers and sisters,

I hope all of you are having a wonderful autumn so far. Mine has been very hectic helping Ted with clinic renovations, interviews and hiring, a busy summer workload and not to mention minor house repairs and general maintenance, a wife, family, friends and a 3 year old who has discovered his independence (I feel blessed).

I want to start by saying how honored I am to be the President of our association. I am very excited to work with all of you wonderful people and feel very lucky to be chosen. You all have wonderful abilities and talents, and I am sure to discover more as we work together. This year's AGM was in my opinion the most successful since I graduated in 2002! The workshops, the food, the location, the organization and love that was put into it was palpable. But what impressed me most were the changes that the previous board members have put into place. The board in the past two years has done a tremendous job in revamping our financial picture and improving our communication channels and we thank you so much.

I have some great plans for our "FAMILY", our Shiatsu community, for my Shiatsu brothers and sisters. They are grand and exciting but practical at the same time. We would need to channel our collective abilities and positive energies with our limited time and limited finances. I always say where there is a will there is a way. We are all very busy and I believe time is precious and I don't like getting involved in something I don't believe in or get involved with people I don't believe can make a difference. I know all of you care and want to make a difference, that's why you are a Shiatsu therapist. We are at a very important junction where we can go one way, or the other. One being very positive and with a bright future and one very negative. I would like to concentrate on the positive only, so here are the things that I see us implementing and striving for:

- **Make us a paperless organization** – We need to align our organization with the green movement and contribute to the betterment of the environment. It's good karma and it will make our information accessible online. Fast, accessible and green.
- **Create a FAMILY** – I feel we are entering an Earth phase where nurturing, caring and empathy are dominant. We have many "lost" Shiatsu therapists out there. Therapists who feel isolated, discouraged, resentful, or just confused. We need to let them know that they are part of a family. We have lost many members over the years and we need to find why and what we can do to bring them back. Earth phase also to me means having healthy soil to plant seeds in. This is the time to create that so we can all harvest in the future.
- **Define or Redefine Our Goals** – Since I started I've never heard anyone talk about goals at our annual meetings. What are our long term goals? What are our short term goals? When you define them you start creating an action plan, a map or event better a blueprint. This way we know where we are now and where we are going, and when we are replaced by those that follow us they have a starting point and a direction.
- **Create More Awareness** – I believe the public knowledge of Shiatsu, even though it has grown since I started 10 years ago, is still limited. We need to find more ways to create awareness through media, fundraising and participation at carefully selected events, talks and workshops. Hiring a publicist on a part-time basis could be extremely helpful!
- **Offering Extended Benefit Packages** – I know there have been some enquiries into this subject matter and I think it is very important to pursue and make it happen. This will give a BIG incentive for past RST's to rejoin, current RST's to stay and will attract more Shiatsu therapists from other sources to come and join us. More importantly, it will give many us a longer "shelf life" in our profession. We can choose Green Shield since they cover Shiatsu Therapy; they will give us a group rate that will make it affordable to most, and Shiatsu therapists could go and receive Shiatsu and get reimbursed. It financially supports Shiatsu therapists, one receives the benefits of Shiatsu and more bonding occurs.

MASTER OHASHI 4 DAY WORKSHOP IN VANCOUVER!



18-21 November 2011

Space is limited! Don't miss this amazing opportunity!

Call 604 726 4746 to register

or download the workshop brochure:

<http://www.ohashiatsu.org/us/index.php/canada>

PRESIDENT'S LETTER cont'd

· **Raising More Funds** – We need to create more sources of revenue to take us to another level. Increasing membership is essential but we need to come up with more creative ways. Sponsorship, donations box on the website connected to PayPal account, selling more merchandise to our members and the public, more advertisement on our newsletter and website are some ways I can think of.

· **Recognized By Insurance Providers** – We need to start an action plan on this subject matter once and for all. A good place to start is to see what others did. By others I mean the Acupuncturists that will give us an idea of what it takes. Many believe we will never be recognized but I believe we will one day. Five years ago I had a meeting with the Head of Sun life Insurance (Western Division) and in his words he told me that we have been on their radar for many years (thanks to the efforts of our Ontario Shiatsu Association) and they see us as a viable therapy. It is up to us to start moving forward and make it happen. With the pressure that will be put on our medical structure in the near future with all these baby boomers retiring there will be a window for us to jump through.

· **Education** – The workshops organized by the STA were great for the moral of our community. We should do more, maybe offering a workshop every 3 months to our members. One it could bring us more revenue, two it will bring us closer as a community, three it will keep us getting better as therapists. Marketing and business building workshops are ESSENTIAL!!! A successful Shiatsu therapist makes our community healthy.

· **Developing Alliances/Relationships** – I think it will be wise to open our doors to create alliances with the Acupressure, Acupuncture, Reiki, Reflexology associations and one day with the “other” Shiatsu family too. We started and need to continue developing our relationships with other related fields. One it might draw more people interested in becoming Shiatsu Therapists, two we can advertise our workshops and events with them (more income!). three some of these groups one day, possibly, might join under one big umbrella which could benefit us collectively when we will be considered by the powers to be as a “Viable Therapy”.

We also need to develop a closer relationship with our Ontario “Family” so we might learn from them, and be stronger in number, and possibly creating a National Board or Association that governs across Canada. Many countries such as Australia, Italy, France, England and other European and South American countries have a national association.

I want again to emphasize that we as a group stand at a crossroads and it is of utmost importance that we stick together and try to help our Shiatsu family grow and thrive. I am a dreamer and I truly believe with a strong community, planning, goal setting, a strong work ethic and lots of dedication we can achieve more than we could possibly imagine. I call upon all past and current members to come together, connect our energies, our skills and minds in bringing Shiatsu Therapy in Canada to the next level.

Sincerely,

Mihael Mamychshvili

RST President of Shiatsu Therapy Association of BC

Owner: Angel Hands Wellness 604.619.1926

NEWSLETTER IDEAS

www.angelhands.ca

The STA welcomes our membership to contribute to our newsletter. We also need your participation for various projects and committees. There is a well known proverb "You reap what you sow". It is through the process of doing and participating that we yield the greatest benefit. Our STA Board members have been hard at work to carry on the work of our association, but we do need your participation. Let us make this an active and thriving association which we all can be proud of.

Please forward all articles and advertisements to:

sta@shiatsutheraPy.ca. We have set the following newsletter deadline for submissions for the year 2012:

WINTER ISSUE February 15, 2012

SPRING ISSUE May 15, 2012

AUTUMN ISSUE October 15, 2012

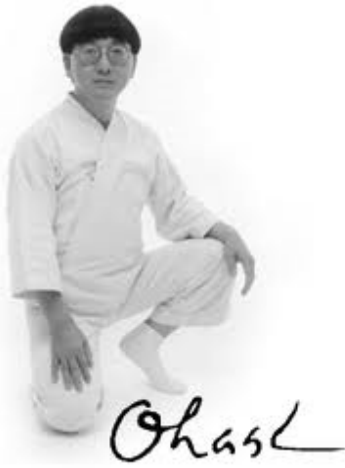
We look forward to hearing from you!

VOLUNTEER OPS

- ◆ NEWSLETTER
- ◆ WEBSITE
- ◆ COMMUNICATIONS
- ◆ FUNDRAISING

Let us know how you can help our association!

OHASHI...FROM BODYWORK TO TOUCH COMMUNICATION



Manhattan's 27th Street is the Asian wholesale's territory. Between showcases with handbags, umbrellas, real and artificial hair extensions, straw hats and plastic flowers, just before the street crosses Broadway, a metal framed entrance invites me into house number 12. Two rabbits, a tiger, a mouse, and a cat giggle in

their costumes, when they leave the elevator at the floor of a film production company. Some floors up, the elevator doors open to the serene Japanese interior of the Ohashi Institute. Rice paper screens, flower arrangements and dark wood interiors prepare the guest for the transition into another culture.

The Japanese word Ohashi means "great bridge". For more than twenty years, the center has brought Eastern and Western healing arts and their philosophies together, providing mutual development by connecting and learning from each other. Each year, about 2000 men and women of all ages, cultures, and social backgrounds are crossing this bridge to learn and practice Ohashiatsu, the art of touch communication.



OHASHIATSU®
Touch for peace

"Touch for Peace" is the motto of the institute. "I would like all people to feel peaceful,

happy and healthy, and the beginning will always be touch" says Ohashi, who understands his activity as the initiation of a learning process. He has become an internationally recognized messenger of Eastern healing arts, a renowned teacher who inspires people from all over the world with humour, knowledge and his positive philosophy and vision. "Most people today think that something is wrong with them. This attitude makes them feel bad and guilty. My way is different. I think we don't have to change ourselves. Every human being is unique and already has everything he/she needs for a happy life." For Ohashi, this is the key to happiness: to understand our weak and strong sides, to take care of our weaknesses and to make best use of our strengths. He is continuously encouraging people to engage in the adventure of Ohashiatsu, to discover the path of self-knowledge and self-awareness. For him, the integration of hundreds-of-years-old knowledge into modern life means to enable more and more people to contribute to a peaceful life on this planet.



Born in 1944 in Hiroshima, Wataru Ohashi talks frankly about the despair that overshadowed his first years in America, in the early seventies. He suffered a big cultural shock, as he didn't speak English, didn't have money or work, and missed his family and friends. "I could not change the facts, only my way at

looking at it. For example, I thought to myself: I am little, short-sighted with slit eyes – that makes me an authentic Japanese for the Americans, who will give me lots of respect as a teacher for Shiatsu and oriental diagnosis. Or: better to not understand English so well. Therefore I will not hear people's complaints about me, and rather keep my peace of mind. Having no close friends and family gives me the freedom to live my life without their expectations and advice." Ohashi successfully turned his problems into opportunities, a motivating force for growth and success. His success spread out all over the world. Besides the mother-institute in New York there are more than 30 Ohashiatsu centres, some in the U.S., but also in many countries in Europe, mainly in Italy, where many of his graduates opened schools to teach Ohashiatsu. He is author of seven books, several videos, and travels most of the year teaching courses and giving lectures. Acting in his favourite role as a teacher, he sees every student and every client - Henry Kissinger and Liza Minelli amongst them – as his own teacher and a continuous proof of quality.

"Resisting the temptation of feeling proud and superior, you have to reach up to highest standards and best quality, and still stay curious, with an open mind for all that contributes to your own development. With this attitude, your life will always be exciting and interesting, you will never get bored." Another motive is the simple pleasure he enjoys with every kind of communication, he commits, laughing. "In other words, if it makes me happy to make other people happy, if I respect them and they respect me, I get more energy and power."



Healing with the hands is a universal concept, a natural human instinct from which shiatsu and acupuncture have developed in the Eastern cultures. Whereas in acupuncture needles are used, it is thumbs, elbows, knees and palms in shiatsu. The common believe, that shiatsu is

nothing but applying strong pressure to points on the body, is wrong though. Shiatsu is based on a comprehensive Eastern healing concept, in which the human being is seen, as a microcosmic reflection of nature.

OHASHI...FROM BODYWORK TO TOUCH COMMUNICATION



Like in a garden, where sunlight and water are transformed into living material, that is growing, maturing, bringing forth fruit and getting composted, following the cycles of the seasons, the human being is a dynamic self

regulating system. In this process of transformation, the garden is continuously maintaining and regenerating itself. People have been observing and describing this natural interaction for human beings for many centuries.

An exciting image is to describe the human being as a garden, where doctors act as gardeners, respecting the unique beauty of each garden, its shady and sunny sides, understanding its individual harmony, fertilizer, water, and making just enough space to enable the plants that became out of balance to return to original harmony by itself. Exactly that approach is the basic principle of shiatsu. We don't provide medical or therapeutic aid. Instead of treating physical and spiritual symptoms, we see them as signs of disturbed flow of energy in the body. With a shiatsu treatment we mobilize, stimulate and harmonize this flow and thereby activate the self healing power of the person.



Energy – or Ki in Japanese – is a fundamental term in Eastern philosophy. Everything alive has Ki, it is our life essence. In human beings the connecting element between heaven and earth, an undividable entity of body, mind and

spirit, there is a network of meridians or pathways deep within the body as well as on the surface, in which this Ki is channelled. A free flow of energy allows wellbeing, flexibility and development of body, mind and spirit. Any stagnation or imbalance within the meridian system can result in physical and psychological disease.

Without feeling sick, every person has his individual stagnation pattern, reflecting his own way to think and feel. Physical pain, which always includes spiritual pain, is a sign of long-term or severe stagnation of Ki. Touching the Ki on the surface of the body sometimes causes pain which makes us aware of these stagnations. This might be the beginning of painful but necessary steps in our lives in gaining more flexibility and self awareness.

Ohashi has moved away from traditional shiatsu. Touch communication, not bodywork. Having learned from his Japanese teachers Tokujiro Namikoshi and Shizuto Masunaga, he developed his own method based on years of experience with this technique, that was very hard on his body. "Ohashiatsu is not pressing, but leaning and supporting

each other. We don't call ourselves healers, and we are not treating patients. Instead, we focus on the person who is giving Shiatsu." This concept might sound easy, but it is still one of the most difficult exercises for those starting the Ohashiatsu training. We all want to help, give energy, make a difference, do something. Exactly this charitable and possibly arrogant attitude is in the way of the mutual support between giver and receiver, and makes it impossible to see how much we are getting and learning from the receiver. That's why we learn not to do anything, not to press, but to be open and let your body be supported by the receiver.

"The giver is never sweating, or jumping on his partner's



back, does not scream and is never exhausted. Giving shiatsu is a meditation, an exercise like Tai Chi or Japanese archery. As a result, the client usually feels great, but our first goal is the wellbeing of the giver." This is the impression we get when we watch Ohashi moving around the partner's

body in an elegant flow of movement, his treatment creating a powerful dance that arises when two life energies meet.

Most important for Ohashiatsu is that the giver is well prepared, in good physical, psychological and spiritual condition. It is also essential to always move from the centre of the body, the belly, the hara. Through the hara we receive the echo of life and find out which meridians need to be re-balanced in order to help the body regain its own natural impulse to heal itself. The quality of a shiatsu treatment depends not only on the technical skills of the giver, but also on the relationship between the giver and receiver, the compassion and respect for each other, and a mind-set, that every human being – unique in his individual patterns of strengths and weaknesses – takes full responsibility for himself.

"Massage and bodywork will become extremely important in the future. In Western medicine, the body is touched only for diagnostic reasons. But touch also brings flow to the source of life, which will reduce medical bills at least by half. The human body is a reflection of our planet. If we learn to respect and take care of our own health, we will also respect other people and all life on earth." This is why Ohashi wants to unite people through Ohashiatsu, to show them a way for a healthier and happier life that will ultimately lead to peace on earth.

The author Winnie Abraham, studied at the Ohashi Institut in New York from 1997-1999, as well as in Ohashiatsu schools in Europe.

10 WAYS TO MARKET YOUR SHIATSU PRACTICE WITHOUT SPENDING ANY MONEY

Many Shiatsu therapists struggle with creating a practice that is thriving and self sustaining.

Over the last 10 years I've build a strong and thriving practice through hard work, dedication, persistence and smart marketing **with minimum cost**. As the President of our Association I would like to see all Shiatsu therapists succeed. The more therapists create healthy and thriving practices the more the Shiatsu community and the public will benefit.



1. **Give out your cards** - For every client that comes in right after you give them the best treatment you can give, hand out 3 of your business cards and ask them: "Can you think of any people in your life who are in pain, or stressed?" the answer is of course everyone knows of someone like that. "Can you hand them my cards please". Proceed in handing out 3 – 5 of your cards.



2. **Create social media profiles in Facebook and LinkedIn** – Many of you already have social media profiles, it's a great way to educate and advertise with specials to attract friends and possible clients.



3. **Create a referral system** – Offer referral rewards to your existing and future clients. For every client that is referred to you, both the one that referred and the new client will get reward discount. You can choose the percentage, the higher the percentage the more initiative people will have to refer to you. But as a range \$10 - \$25 is a good place to start.



4. **Gift Certificates Sales** – I sell between 100 – 200 gift certificates a year. Have signs displayed in your treatment room (with periodic specials for Mother's day, Christmas etc), on your website, flyers and social media.



5. **Create Alliances** – Get out there and educate other health professionals about what is it that you do and how you can help people with certain problems. Contact therapists and offer to do an exchange for the purpose of cross referring clients. Some of them you might already know like a Chiropractor, Massage Therapist, Acupuncturist, Physiotherapist, Naturopath, Personal trainer, yoga teacher, Pilates instructor, Homeopath, Medical Doctor, Specialists, Midwives, Reflexologist and more.



6. **List your business for FREE** – There are many website locally where you can list your business for free. Go to Google and search free listings Vancouver (or your local city) check them out and see where you want to list your business. You can list your business on Google maps.



7. **Create a website** – If you don't already have a website get one please. These days one has to have a web presence, that's where people search and it makes you look more professional. Sites like Wordpress, Weebly and Wix, will help you build a website with minimum, or no cost (a minimal monthly hosting cost will be charged).



8. **Offer Free Talks** – It can be torture for most but talking about Shiatsu and how you can help people will bring you clients. Retirement homes, senior centers, community centers, yoga centers, corporation all are great places to offer free talks. People need to know who you are and how you can help.



9. **Networking** – You don't need to belong to "Networking group", networking can happen everywhere. In a grocery line, elevator, gym, social gatherings, coffee shop. The point is always carry your cards!!! Put some in your purse, wallet, jackets, cars, bags get into the habit of never leaving the house without cards, you never know where your next client can come from. Just state this is what I do and these are the conditions I can help with.



10. **Be passionate** – People love to see and feel passion. If they see how passionate you are about what you do it makes you look more credible, it's contagious and they want to try and experience what is this Shiatsu all about.

I want to leave you with one more thing, as long as you touch people, people will be touched by you."

Sincerely,

Mihael Mamyshvili RST

**President Shiatsu Therapy Association of BC
Owner Angel Hands Wellness**

604.619.19126 www.angelhands.ca



CAN SHIATSU SUPPORT PSYCHOTHERAPY?

By Dr. Eduard Tripp

The answer to the question whether psychotherapy can be supported by Shiatsu seems easy to be given at first, as Shiatsu is founded – finally, as the whole traditional occidental philosophy and medicine – on a holistic approach that understands body, soul and mind as an inseparable unity.

A separation between psychotherapy and somatic medicine as we know it in western medicine was totally unknown in the traditional Far East. The energetics of Yin and Yang, and also the manifestations of the Five Transformations include all phenomena - somatic, emotional, mental and social. Everything is connected to everything else, causes everything, influences each other and has its roots in the same causes. Whether such an energetic imbalance manifests in mental or somatic symptoms and ailments does thus not really change the fundamental approach of the traditional treatment.

The mental aspect of the Transformations also describes their psycho-emotional side. The Lungs thus stand for sadness and sorrow, the Water (Kidneys) is related to fear and the Wood (the Liver) with frustration and aggression. It would however be quite an oversimplified approach to use Shiatsu as a quasi-psychotherapeutic instrument in such a way as to treat fear by the Kidneys, sadness by the Lungs and aggressions by the Liver. Or we take into account – a bit more differentiated, if one also observes the interplay of the Elements and organs which leads to a symptomatic as depression e.g. – beyond this, whether the symptomatic may (additionally) be caused by a general emptiness. In this case, the unspecific filling and strengthening of the whole organism would be of at least supplementary meaning.

Yet still, as tempting as this model appears, experience shows that the treatment in practice is not that easy to handle. The attempt at treating an anorectic patient e.g. simply by the Middle Warmer does, from experience, not succeed. The best herbs are not enough here and the problem is also not easy to be solved with acupuncture. And even if Shiatsu would be a good way (what it is under certain circumstances – at least as a supplement), so it is either the lacking willingness of the patient (treatments are not being started at all or suddenly stopped) or the practitioner suddenly finds her- or himself entangled in an awkward relationship – a phenomenon which has been termed transfer and counter-transfer by psychotherapy.

The problem of anorexia that keeps the person who is to be treated “under control”, is not however not being solved by this. It is rather probable that another injury adds to the former experiences (and this possibly also on the side of the Shiatsu-practitioner).

On the other hand – and we can also experience this daily in our praxis – Shiatsu also has a strong, mentally balancing, stabilising and enriching effect. The questions that arise in this context are therefore: By what and in which way does Shiatsu work? and How can we support psycho-emotional processes in the best possible way with Shiatsu?

By what and which way does Shiatsu work?

The first question touches western, especially psychoanalytical/psychotherapeutic scientific approaches and models of explanation, which can be looked at for comparison with Shiatsu. In relation to this it is to be said that there are no considerable empirical or theoretical papers on the effect of Shiatsu. We thus step on unsecured ground in answering these questions.

A further approach at understanding the broad psychological spectrum of effects of Shiatsu lies in the psychoanalytical theories and models on the fundamental meaning of the early childhood in relation to the later development, which have also been enriched and supported in many aspects by the modern research on sucklings (see also Daniel N. Stern). At this phase of early childhood, the experiencing is in general still undifferentiated and therefore also more global. René Spitz calls this the coenesthetic world of experiencing in which the physical contact through the body and the skin, vibration, rhythm, tension and relaxation, posture, temperature and pitch of the voice – and thus the plain musculature and the autonomous nervous system, i.e. sympathetic and parasympathetic – are most important. A separation between physical sensations and a mentalo-psychological world is hardly present yet. The infant understands – and literally grasps – her or his world to the highest grade physically, and her or his communication is especially physical and holistic.

In this early stage of development (according to the psychoanalytical understanding basal-narcissistic) and differentiation of the suckling, Günther Bartl mainly differs three qualities, which have a major effect here: warmth, rhythm and constancy.

The adequate experience of warmth that the mother (the referential person) conveys to the child, due to her love and affection, founds the early basis for having confidence in the world, for the emotional openness to the world, for ‘geborgenheit’ (i.e. security) and the ability to enjoy. The adequate experience of rhythm again gives security and hold and enables the experiencing and development of limits and delimitation. Together, warmth and rhythm form at the same time content and form, as well as the basis for the experiencing of the own body and thus for the self-perception as a whole, fulfilled and independent being.

Constancy as the third fundamental quality fastens the experiences of warmth and rhythm, makes them enduring. Constancy forms the solid basis of original confidence after Erikson, enables us to bind ourselves later and leads to continuity and endurance in the complex emotional relationships and bindings, which form part of a rich and fulfilled life.

Early physical and therefore actually holistic experiences, thus especially the experience of warmth, rhythm and constancy form in this way the basis of our psycho-physical core and regulate the understanding of ourselves and our self-esteem.

CAN SHIATSU SUPPORT PSYCHOTHERAPY?

In the later, greater differentiation between body and psyche/mind (de-somatisation after Max Schur) this basal (narcissistic) core coins the way in which we encounter the world; how we communicate with it, live in and with it.

And exactly on this early non-verbal level of encounter with immediate physical (coenesthetic) communication is it that we move onto with our Shiatsu and have hence the possibility to tie to early experiences (potentials, resources as well as conflicts and deficits) and to stimulate processes of development. An essential pre-condition therefore is, however, that the respectful social intercourse with the client is given, that the attention given to and the communication with the client happens in a sensitive way. Of special importance here is the attentive dealing with the client, which should be adapted to her or him, to be authentic (congruent) with her or him as well as with oneself as a practitioner. Fundamental pre-condition for this is a high amount of self-perception and self-experience in order to be able to perceive and pay attention to the deficits, conflicts and limits of the client.

Important are thus the skills of the Shiatsu-practitioner in terms of self-perception and the perception of others, which can and should be enhanced and taught by specific settings, as well as the skills and possibilities of the Shiatsu-practitioner to design her or his life in a satisfying way. From the psychotherapeutic practice it can clearly be seen that a high degree of unfulfilled wishes, of frustrations and longings from the side of the therapist (Shiatsu-practitioner) leads to prominent distortions of the perception – and hence to crossing boundaries and injuries on the side of the clients.

The mechanisms which underlie these processes in a major part are being described as transfer and counter-transfer by the psychoanalytically oriented therapy and bring along a big danger of acting, the danger of unconsciously living out wishes and fantasies which do not have their origins in the present situation.

In the work with people, self-experience and self-reflection therefore constitute the basis of professional acting. Without reflected experiences a differentiation between the different impulses and motives that become active in us is hardly possible. Only the personal experience and the becoming aware of own potentials of conflict, fears and deficits protect us and our clients from the often hurting and painful neglect of boundaries, overwhelming and getting entangled in transfers and counter-transfers.

The own psycho-hygiene, the perception and reflection of own needs, issues and “blind spots” (e.g. in self-experience and supervision) is therefore equally important for the Shiatsu-practitioners – especially when they are working with Shiatsu in the psycho-emotional area – as the emotionally satisfying design of their own life-situation, in order not to get too much under emotional pressure.

How can we support psycho-emotional processes in the best possible way with Shiatsu?

As to the second question which is about how we can support the psycho-emotional situation as well as possible I want to point out in advance that Shiatsu is not a form of psychotherapy, as an additional therapeutic education would be needed for this, as well as a respective legal frame.

As a supplement however, as a support of psychotherapy – and not as a subsidiary for it – Shiatsu is well suitable. Through the mobilisation of the flow of energy, the experiencing of the physical relaxation & letting go, the inclusion of physical self-perception, the diving into a deep, coenesthetic level of communication (under inclusion of basal principles like warmth, rhythm and constancy), the experience of closeness and limits and other similar things more, Shiatsu can support the psychotherapeutic work quite well (also see Ze'ev Bergman et al.). We have to be aware, though, that the Shiatsu-practitioner is confronted with a sensitive situation of encounter. It is of great importance that the Shiatsu-practitioner understands the therapeutic process and does not start to “act” with the client. The therapeutic treatment would be rendered more difficult by this or under especially difficult conditions even become impossible. Important are furthermore clear (personal and regarding to treatment) limits, an if possible stable, appreciating empathic basic attitude and maybe even – after having talked to the client – contact with the treating (psycho-) therapist, as to be able to adapt the Shiatsu-sessions better to the treatment course or also to better understand a momentary situation of the client and be able to support her or him more effectively.

I only want to take some examples out of the multitude of possible approaches to Shiatsu as a company to professional psychotherapy. Shiatsu can help some patients e.g. to make important experiences of letting go, letting happen, being passive, accepting and relaxing. Beyond this, Shiatsu has the potential to transmit fundamental qualities like warmth, rhythm and constancy, on which the further development will draw back from, in a non-verbal encounter – and this strengthening supports the therapeutic way on a basal, non-verbal level, sometimes in a really essential way.

A further important aspect of Shiatsu consists in the physical self-experience, the immediate experience of physical limits as well as the perception of superficial and deeper structures of the body. In brief, Shiatsu promotes an intense experiencing of the own body and the formation of a differentiated image of the body.

To say it once again, in the work with Shiatsu as a support for psycho-emotional developments, as well as for the work on conflicts, a high degree of maturity and (self-) experience is necessary besides a needed understanding of mental illnesses as structures of communication. Otherwise we run the risk to load the own problems in the sense of transfer up on the client. And we should not forget that the work with Shiatsu sometimes requires a high degree of carrying capacity, the ability of being able of supporting and bearing also difficult encounters without losing the open and empathic attitude towards the client.

Tetsuro Saito: Taking Shiatsu to New Places

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF SHIATSU



It is 2011 – the 40th anniversary of shiatsu in Canada.

Forty years since Tetsuro Saito, age 30, a fresh graduate of the Japan Shiatsu School, speaking no English, with no mon-

ey, and holding the seed of a strange therapy called shiatsu, stepped from his island-country, and for no reason other than curiosity and the pure and simple spirit of adventure, set up shop in Canada.

Almost everyone who practices shiatsu here today, including many who have shifted their focus to acupuncture and moxibustion, can trace their professional roots back to him. But his legacy is far greater than this. In these four decades, Saito has transformed shiatsu. He has pushed the boundaries of the field, deepened our understanding of the subtle and profound powers of the body and mind, introduced new techniques, and inspired practitioners around the globe.

Central to all of this: his elaboration of a simple technique called the Finger Test Method and his gift to us of sensing ki. It's like the light bulb going on – suddenly, there it is, energy. Mysterious, intangible, magical but obviously there, and nothing will ever be the same again. Tetsuro Saito: electrical engineer, shiatsu therapist and teacher, but above all, explorer. His story starts out ordinarily enough.

East Meets West



The young Tetsuro arrived in Canada on June 11, 1971. It was nearly solstice, so the skies were bright and the days long, much longer than in Japan. "Everything just felt right," he says. The first thing he did was find a bed at the YMCA in downtown Toronto.

Shiatsu was an unknown word in this country. As foreign as acupuncture: diplomatic channels between China and the US were just opening under the Nixon administration, and later that same summer, *New York Times* reporter James Reston would write of his experiences at a Beijing hospital. He'd had an emergency appendectomy and needles were used to ease his post-operative pain: this would be the first time many North Americans had ever heard of Oriental medicine.

Saito began knocking on doors, introducing himself and the art of shiatsu to Toronto's health practitioners and members of the Japanese community. After a week or so he pulled out the one contact name he carried with him from Tokyo. Theresa Hunter, now in Toronto, had taken a short shiatsu course with his teacher, Tokujiro Namikoshi, in Tokyo. "She had expressed to him an interest in starting a shiatsu business in Toronto if she could find a teacher from Japan to work with her," Saito says. "Namikoshi Sensei suggested I look her up."

"My life is so lucky because I always meet the right people at the right time," Saito says. Hunter spoke fluent Japanese, and she was a skilled business promoter.

Shiatsu a Household Word



When the Shiatsu Centre opened on College Street two years later, TV cameramen and reporters were there, and lots of patients – lining up to experience this new healing phenomenon. Saito's shiatsu was such a success he had to go back to Japan to get more therapists. In time, they would leave his Shiatsu Centre and

go on to establish their own clinics and schools; they would in turn invite more therapists from Japan. Ultimately, hundreds of therapists trained in the East and the West would treat thousands of patients. Shiatsu was on its way to becoming a household word in Canada.

"Those were interesting times," says Saito. Just out of the Sixties, in a society learning to question the impersonal and mechanistic underpinnings of modern medicine – there was a yearning for alternatives. "This made it easy for us to introduce our new therapy."

And Tetsuro Saito (by now, Ted Saito) was also the right person at the right time. Born in the small city of Noda in 1941, just four months before the outbreak of World War Two, Saito was somewhat sheltered from the cataclysmic events that shook the world, and nowhere more than his own country. His father had worked his way up the ranks to become a manager in the Kikkoman soy sauce corporation: the job had taken the family to northern China for the first years of the war. Tetsuro, the second child of three, was still a toddler when the family was evacuated back to Japan. His first childhood memories were of hunger. "There were food shortages all over Japan."

Saito loved nature and to play along the banks of the Edo River. He excelled in school and was fascinated with how things – radios and other gadgets – worked. When he attended university to study electrical engineering, he discovered another passion. Scaling the 3,000-metre walls of the snow-clad Japanese Alps that form the heartland of Japan's main island, Honshu. "One step could be the difference between life and death."

Teduro Saito: Taking Shiatsu to New Places

For Saito, it was all about “the challenge of going that one step higher.”

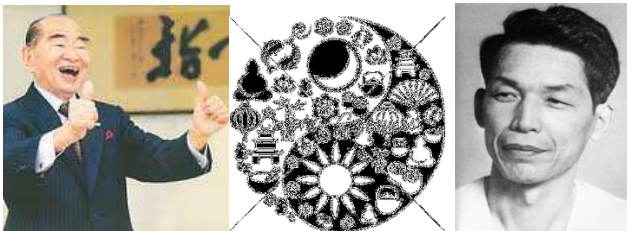
As an electrical engineer for a major construction company, the young Saito quickly felt something was missing. The drudgery of working with blueprints day in and day out also aggravated an existing eye problem. His doctor told him to get another job.

“I was very lucky to have developed this problem,” says Saito.

Japan at the time was on a seesaw between tradition and modernization. With the American occupation at the end of the war, the practice of Oriental medicine had been discouraged in favour of Western medicine. Now, it was undergoing something of a renaissance. The charismatic Tokujiro Namikoshi, the founder of modern-day shiatsu, had been in the news. “It was my father who suggested I might want to explore this. He had a friend who had been greatly helped by shiatsu.”

“Studying the human body sounded far more interesting than electrical circuits.” Saito enrolled in The Japan Shiatsu School in 1966 and from the outset was profoundly influenced by both Namikoshi and another teacher there, Shizuto Masunaga. Namikoshi had opened the school 10 years earlier: Masunaga was a student in that first class.

His Teachers – Yin and Yang



Most shiatsu practitioners are familiar with the story of these two influential teachers and the division between them: Namikoshi (1905-2000), who based his system and view of the human body on Western anatomy and physiology. And Masunaga (1925-1981), a student of psychology, impassioned by the classics of Oriental medicine, the anatomy of meridians, and the language of ki. Masunaga would go on to develop his own approach, popularized in the West as Zen Shiatsu, and his own meridian charts presenting quite a different view than the TCM charts.

But, says Saito: “When I started at the school, the two teachers were not so strongly separated. Namikoshi talked a lot about meridians; one of his closest colleagues was researching meridians. Their differences became stronger after I graduated. Namikoshi gradually increased his emphasis on Western science until he never talked about Eastern medicine anymore.”

“Masunaga was a quiet researcher, always learning.” Says Saito, “He possessed what we call *meijin-gei* in Japanese, ‘master’s skill’ – he could sense ki as it flows through the meridians and was able to diagnose the condition of the whole body from the hara. Not anybody could do this.” Saito was among a number of students who participated in his study group outside of school hours.

Tokujiro Namikoshi was extraordinary in very different ways. “He had a unique appreciation for humanity,” says Saito. “Masunaga himself recognized this. This is why, before he died, he said Namikoshi was a true master. He was so accepting of people whoever they were. And, happy, always laughing. When I first met him, he was in his early 60s, and 95 when he died. He had such a healthy energy.”

“Namikoshi became my model of what a shiatsu therapist can be as a human being,” says Saito. “Treating the patient is the outer level of our work in shiatsu. You see, through the patient, the therapist is treating himself: identifying and treating his own weaknesses. This is why Namikoshi said shiatsu is a religion. It is not about accumulating knowledge or techniques,” says Saito. “It is about our inner development.”

So rich and dynamic was the environment at the Japan Shiatsu School that it produced not only skilled therapists, but outstanding teachers in their own right, who would carry shiatsu to distant lands: among them, Akinobu Kishi (Seiki Soho), Ryokyu Endo (Tao Shiatsu), and Tetsuro Saito (Shin So Shaitsu).

Shu Ha Ri (Hatchling Takes Flight)



SHU

HA

RI

Now ten thousand kilometres away, establishing his own shiatsu centre, Saito maintained ties with his teachers.

Masunaga visited Toronto annually between 1975 and 1980, the year before he died. “We had little to offer him in payment for his visits, or even his travel expenses,” Saito recalls. “But he continued to travel halfway around the globe

to support his students and share what he knew.” Tokujiro’s eldest son, Toru Namikoshi, visited the Shiatsu Centre in 1989. “Although our approaches were totally different, the heart connection was very strong.”

Saito’s approach was meridian-based shiatsu, following Masunaga. But, like Namikoshi, he was a people person and strong shiatsu advocate. He treated patients six and seven days a week, taught night classes and weekend workshops, organized intensive summer camps and served as a mentor figure at other shiatsu schools – all while supporting a young family at home. After everybody went to bed, he burned the midnight oil pursuing his own studies in Oriental medicine.

Tedsuro Saito: Taking Shiatsu to New Places

Ironically, when demonstrating the art of shiatsu to his students, Saito's motto was "Just relax, enjoy." He envisaged a happy, fun-loving community of therapists. But he was very serious about shiatsu. When asked why he did not take up acupuncture as many of his contemporaries would, Saito replies: "Shiatsu is enough for me." A simple statement, but implicit in it, an understanding of shiatsu that few besides Saito possessed. Shiatsu at its fullest potential. Shiatsu as it could be if we all had Namikoshi's heart and Masunaga's ability to sense and influence the meridians.

Masunaga's death in 1981 at the young age of 56 was a tragedy for Saito and his colleagues worldwide. "Masunaga was so sensitive. With his palpation method he could feel disturbances that other people could not. No one could prove or disprove his meridian charts as published in the 1960s. I couldn't explain his findings. I was teaching, but how could I give answers to my students? I had to pick up where he left off. I had to research."

Saito's first hurdle: sensing energy.

The Key to Ki



"After a few years, finally, I found the Finger Test Method." This curious technique – in which the practitioner rubs together their index finger and thumb to obtain either a sticky or a smooth sensation – was developed in Japan by the

acupuncturist Dr. Tadashi Irie. "He was looking for alternatives to the pulse diagnosis, which takes years to master." It is similar to Applied Kinesiology commonly practiced by chiropractors and the Bi-digital O-ring test (BDORT) developed by Dr. Yoshiaki Omura in that energetic reactions of the practitioner's body provide information about the energetic/functional status of the patient's body. "I owe this, my luckiest finding, to Dr. Irie," says Saito.

Saito's first successful experiments in the early 1980s spurred him on. His training as an electrical engineer provided him with a language and theory to at least partially explain how it worked. "I tell my students it's something like television – an antenna that can pick up so many different messages, the vibrations, energy that is out there." His scientific background also gave him a methodology for research; the curiosity and determination was his own.

Saito finger tested himself when he woke up in the morning, throughout the day, and last thing at night. He finger tested what he ate for breakfast. He diagnosed his patients, students, family members, and even the family dog. He finger tested up close, and from a distance: his long subway rides to and from the Shiatsu Centre became field trips.

So were his visits to art galleries – (he finger-tested paintings and sculptures), parks, pharmacies, grocery stores. Day after day, year after year, he tested ki and jaki in every shape and form.

In effect, he was "building" his *tanden*. "This is the main focus of the finger test," says Saito, "the development of the *hara*, our second brain, from which comes our sensitivity to ki for diagnosis and our capacity to give powerful treatments."

"I could sense the meridians, Masunaga's diagnostic zones, and I could prove they existed. And then, finally, the deeper meridian systems that Masunaga couldn't get into before he died. Some three or four thousand years ago, Chinese medicine discovered a system of energy meridians in the body that had seven different layers. We still have the names of those layers but over the last thousand years we've lost much of the ancient knowledge behind those names."

"Whatever I researched I sent to Dr. Irie as my direct master. One paper in particular – on the meridian belt zones – he was very impressed with, and gave me a lot of feedback. He said this was revolutionary in Oriental medicine." Their mutual regard and friendship culminated with Dr. Irie's visit to Canada in 1995, and his conferment to Saito of the legal right to use and teach his patented Finger Test Method.

Dr. Irie had been following Dr. Yoshio Manaka's innovative work with magnets and diodes. Saito the electrical engineer saw nothing incongruous about their use in diagnosing and treating anomalies in human circuitry. He too began experimenting with protocols that combined these tools with the Finger Test Method – catapulting shiatsu to a new level, and taking his students with him.

In Berlin, Matthias Wieck – a *heilpraktiker* who taught shiatsu – had been looking for a teacher to guide him and his own students "beyond theory and technique." Like Saito, he had a background in Western sciences and an intense curiosity about energy in the human body. "In my own practice of shiatsu, I didn't feel anything. I thought, I'm just pressing. I have to learn more." He heard about Ted Saito from an American teacher, Pamela Ferguson, and wrote him a letter.

Saito made the first of many visits to Germany in 1995. "At first I was disappointed," says Wieck. "I expected the shiatsu we knew. I felt responsible to my students, and at first had a great deal of resistance to the Finger Test method. But what he taught us changed everything."

The right students seemed to step forward, working with Saito to establish what were in effect satellite "shiatsu centers" in Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Austria, as well as Canada (Ontario and British Columbia).

Teduro Saito: Taking Shiatsu to New Places

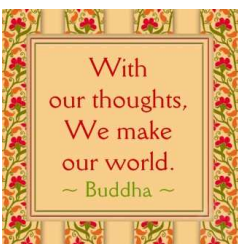
In Italy, Saito was among several of Shizuto Masunaga's protégés invited to address a major congress of shiatsu therapists in 2002. "Ted picked me out of the audience to demonstrate the Finger Test," recalls Pietro Roat. "He told me I had a problem with my right knee. It was true, I had an old skiing injury and tore a ligament. I talked to him later and he said diodes would fix it. He was running out the door to catch a plane, and asked for my address. I never expected to hear from him."

"Fifteen days later, I received a long letter: 'Dear Pietro, how are you...' It included some diodes and how to use them. I said, I must meet this man again, at least see who he is. So, in 2003, I went to Germany for his workshop there. It was wonderful, incredible. I said yes, it is very clear. I had an idea of the depth of shiatsu – that was confirmed. I understood that I needed a master like this to believe in miracles."

By now Saito had named his approach Shin So or "deeper level" Shiatsu, reflecting his exploration of not just the Regular meridians, but also the Extra, Divergent, Ocean, and Taikyoku meridian/energetic systems. Saito's regular intensive workshops were followed by a strict regimen of refresher courses led by senior students. The minimum requirements for a Shin So Shiatsu diploma were graduation in basic shiatsu training, plus two years of work with Saito and the Finger Test Method. In 2006, Saito published a two-volume compendium of his new paradigm: [Shin So Shiatsu – Healing the Deeper Meridian Systems](#) and [Shin So Shiatsu – Practitioner's Reference Manual](#). A long-awaited step forward from Masunaga's *Zen Shiatsu*, published a full three decades earlier, it was immediately republished in Italian and German. Meanwhile, Saito's colleague, acupuncturist Dr. Hideo Yoshimoto, set to translating it into Japanese.

The world of shiatsu was evolving, but not all of it for the better. Since the late 1990s, Saito had been quietly observing declining enrollments in shiatsu schools across the Canada. Thanks to Shin So Shiatsu, there were more students practicing at a higher level, but overall there was a diminishing pool of recent graduates to draw from, and fewer full-time shiatsu practitioners in general.

The Future is Now



The "Father of Shiatsu in Canada" is paying close attention. "The schooling system is good, the theory is good, but then students have no opportunity to continue their education in a clinical environment. This is the most important way to learn a system like shiatsu," says Saito. "Oriental medicine is all about practical training, developing a higher sensitivity to subtle changes in the human body. It's the most important part, and yet few schools strongly emphasize how to sense properly, how to diagnose."

In recent visits to Japan, Saito has observed a similar phenomenon. "Enrollments are dropping. Graduates can continue to work with their favorite teachers in seminar situations, but unfortunately, styles of shiatsu in Japan do not focus on diagnosis. Masunaga said, we have to study diagnosis or we can't call it therapy. This is what our patients need."

The current climate in Europe is much better for shiatsu. "The practical aspect of education – in any profession – is so important there. It's a characteristic of the culture. So Europeans can more easily follow our training," says Saito. Plus, he adds, more than 90 percent practice meridian-style shiatsu. In Italy alone, there are at least 10,000 shiatsu therapists.

"I think it is the huge responsibility of instructors to pay attention to what's missing. What must we give our students so that shiatsu can continue to grow and develop?"

Saito is more qualified than anyone to address this question. He is one of a rare few in the world today who has devoted his entire life to shiatsu. As he approaches his 70th birthday, he is still treating patients, still researching and teaching, at home and abroad. "I am not a master. I have a long way to go," he says. "But the work is very interesting: that's why I never get tired of shiatsu."

In the end, it is not the number of students that's important. It's the quality. Says Saito, "If even just one student becomes a great therapist, that is enough to lead the way for the next generation."

In Gratitude



"I really want to express my appreciation to all who have helped me so that I could spend my life here with this vocation. It would have been impossible without the support of my family, friends, colleagues, and students. And I am especially indebted to Dr. Tadashi Irie and his Finger Test Method. Without them, I would be at the same level as when I started this work."

Cheryl Coull

B.A. Certified Shiatsu Therapist

Graduated in 1991 from the Shiatsu School of Canada (SSC) under the tutelage of Kaz Kamiya (who began his shiatsu career as a patient at Saito's Shiatsu Centre). As a student at SSC, she also received instruction, inspiration, and treatments from Ted Saito and Junji Mizutani (who would go on to found NAJOM). She has been practicing shiatsu in Victoria, British Columbia since then. She is currently an organizer and instructor for Shin So Shiatsu International (British Columbia chapter), and studies acupuncture at Pacific Rim College in Victoria.



From Shiatsu-ho to Shiatsu-woe Problems in Ontario

Submitted by Ted Thomas

The shiatsu community in Ontario has long been diverse, if somewhat divided. There are currently at least four professional associations representing practicing therapists in the province, and until March of 2010, there were a number of schools offering trainings in a variety of styles of shiatsu. Now however, this community appears endangered.

In March, the Provincial Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities launched 'Operation Hands On,' an effort to take enforcement action against shiatsu schools that were not approved under the Private Colleges Career Act (2005). This resulted in restraining orders being issued, and schools being raided, fined and shut down. Overnight, the number of schools permitted to teach shiatsu in Ontario was reduced to two.

This state of affairs in part derives from the discipline's unsuccessful effort to seek provincial regulation, first alongside massage therapy, and then on its own. In the early 1980s, Kikkawa College and later, the Shiatsu School of Canada (both in Toronto), began to offer 2200-hour Shiatsu Therapy diploma programs. These were modelled on the curriculum of massage therapy schools in a move to have these shiatsu schools included within the mandate of regulating body of massage therapists in Ontario. This move however was rejected by the massage therapy membership and subsequently by their board. Yet the two shiatsu schools were already both registered as vocational schools, which meant that their students were eligible to apply for government loans to pay their tuition, but also that the schools' curriculum was now set at 2200 hours, which had become the standard for shiatsu therapy education once they were registered under the Private Vocational Schools Act.

In time, Kikkawa College ceased to operate as a shiatsu school, becoming instead a massage therapy college, while the Shiatsu Academy of Tokyo applied for and received vocational school status for its 2200-hour shiatsu program. Efforts made to attain regulation for shiatsu as a health profession distinct from massage came to naught however, with the implementation of the Regulated Health Professions Act of 1991.

In the 1990s, a number of new shiatsu schools opened (most still in Toronto), offering shorter courses of instruction, suggesting that the 2200-hour standard was unnecessary since the regulation of shiatsu was unlikely at best.

They were not required to be Private Vocational Schools, and so were free to design their own programs, most choosing to set a curriculum of around 500 hours, although some offered fewer hours, while others gave students the option to extend their training up to 1100 hours.

This situation persisted for a while, with the SSC and SAT offering 2200-hour curricula, and schools such as the Shiatsu Centre, Shiatsu Place, Kokoro Dojo and The Living Earth School offering 500-hour programs. These lines of affiliation were productive of some acrimony within the community, and led to the development of rival professional associations.

In 2005 the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities launched the Private Career Colleges Act, which mandated that if a particular trade were included under the Act, then it would be illegal to operate an educational institution for that trade without first registering it with the Ministry and conforming to the requirements laid out in the Act. Suddenly, all non-2200-hour programs became illegal in Ontario. For a time, this was only the case on paper; but in March of 2010 it became a costly reality for several long-time members of the shiatsu community, who saw their schools closed and themselves fined.

Shiatsu is the only non-regulated health profession to be governed by the PCC Act. No such strictures apply to Thai massage, Ayurvedic massage, reflexology, Anma or to any other non-regulated form of bodywork in Ontario. Shiatsu schools became outlawed not because of shiatsu's status as a regulated health profession, but because of the historical status of two schools that attained vocational status on the premise that shiatsu would eventually be regulated. When that failed to happen, the schools did not lose their vocational status; rather, their status was cemented in a special provision in the Act.

This means that at present, in order to study shiatsu in Ontario, one must complete a 2200-hour program. Massage therapy also requires the completion of a 2200-hour program, but affords one the chance to join a regulated profession. So the shiatsu schools operate at a distinct disadvantage. With the trend towards declining enrolments being witnessed in other parts of the country (see the article by Ted Thomas in this issue of NAJOM) also being felt in Ontario, it remains to be seen whether shiatsu's 50th anniversary in this province will give much cause for celebration.

Learning to Speak Ki

And on it goes. *Kyo* quality energy tends to enter the Divergent meridian system (which reflects most closely the state of the organs). When the Divergent system is over-taxed, then the 'Ocean' system is activated; and if the imbalance continues to grow, then the deepest level, what Saito has termed the *Tai Kyoku* or 'Cosmic' meridian system (which exhibits a spiral trajectory across the limbs and torso) becomes engaged. In all cases, the front line of the imbalance is carried by the deepest meridian system presently engaged, while the more 'surface' systems hold the wake of the imbalance. It is at this 'front line,' or 'deepest layer' that treatment needs to be directed to be most effective. An imbalance at the level of the 'Ocean meridians' will in most cases not respond to a treatment which targets the Regular meridians. In such a case, the Regular meridian system might return to a state of balance, but this will inevitably be short-lived, and the continuing exertion of the deeper systems will pull it out of balance quite soon. Conversely, successful treatment of the imbalanced Ocean meridian will result in the balancing of the Divergent, Extra and Regular meridian systems.

2. New Findings, New Interventions

The above scenario describes an approach to constitutional diagnosis and treatment, what Saito refers to as *honji* treatment. Shin So Shiatsu also includes a number of approaches for discerning and treating structural imbalances, or *hyoji* treatment. Key to these is the notion of 'energy circles,' circular zones that form at sites of inflammation, injury, or misalignment, and which are detectable via the finger test. Like *tsubo*, these energy circles are zones where fresh *ki* is brought into the body and *jaki* expelled—although these circles can be 10-15cm in diameter or more, and they exhibit an intricate network of longitudinal, lateral, and diagonal meridian pathways *within* their boundaries. As well, like *tsubo* or other diagnostic zones, they dilate and contract in the manner of pores or pupils as they work to release stagnant *ki*, movements that can be detected and measured. In fact, a sign of successful treatment of such a circle is that it disappears after treatment (often bringing much of a client's pain along with it).

Saito has identified other features of the meridian system that have not been observed before, but perhaps the most interesting for NAJOM's readership would be his perspective on the meridians as they are disclosed on acupuncture charts. Essentially, Saito sees such charts as shorthand, presenting useful points for needling, but as not as accurate depictions of meridian flows. Rather, the charts highlight the major points from the 1st, 2nd and 3rd degree pathways of a given meridian, and then 'connect the dots' to give the semblance of a single meridian line.

But in fact there are three lines for each Regular meridian, and the individual pathways do not trace such sharp, angular flows as we see depicted in places on the acupuncture charts, but rather smooth and stream-like ones.

Such knowledge may not be necessary for acupuncture treatments, which naturally prioritize the location of points for needling, but is of immense help in meridian shiatsu which emphasizes treatment of the whole meridian line. Yet Saito's protocols for treating structural imbalances, for confirming the effectiveness of specific interventions, and for measuring the meridian system's shifts in state throughout the course of a treatment clearly have much to contribute to an acupuncturist's toolkit. Indeed many of the tools used in Shin So treatments will be familiar to acupuncturists, such as diodes and ion-pumping cords; *yaki hari* treatment may be familiar to some. But in all cases, the way of employing these tools becomes decidedly non-formulaic and requires no element of guesswork. For example, the finger test can help determine not only which pair of confluent points are indicated for an Extra meridian treatment, but which side of the body merits attention, and which lead goes to the hand and which to the foot. Saito has found that there is no general rule for such that holds in all cases (i.e. treat women one way, treat men another), and instead finds it preferable to determine the specifics on a case by case basis. This becomes the logic of Shin So-inspired practice: to respond to the patient's *ki* as it is in this moment.

3. A Dynamic System

The heart of Shin So Shiatsu lies in the finger test method, which Saito learned and adapted from Tadashi Irie. Irie, an acupuncturist, developed the finger test as an alternative to pulse diagnosis, and found it was also applicable to sensing the location of points. Saito, a shiatsu therapist trained in the meridian style of Shizuto Masunaga, was inclined to investigate whether the finger test could also be used to locate meridians themselves, and thus serve as a means of assessing Masunaga's claims about extended meridian pathways. Saito found that the finger test could indeed be used to trace meridians, and embarked on an ambitious project of mapping the entire meridian system (which turned out to be much more complicated than Masunaga had suggested). This honed Saito's sensibility and led to the findings described above, as well as to new ones which continue to emerge in his ongoing research directed towards simpler and more powerful treatments.



**LEARNING TO SPEAK KI
CONT'D**

This practice of learning to locate meridians – not by memory or measurement, but by feel with the aid of the finger test – is taught in introductory Shin So Shiatsu workshops, and is a skill that proves to be quite transmissible. Long-time practitioners and novices alike find themselves amazed to perceive these pathways, to be able to trace their routes along the body, and to tune in to their ongoing fluctuations.

It is this last quality which has been the most intriguing for me, as both a therapist and an anthropologist. Shin So diagnosis can be quite easily done on oneself – along with tracing meridians, it is deemed an essential practice for developing competence with the finger test. My own explorations have impressed upon me just how dynamic and responsive the meridian system is. It is a fascinating study to monitor the state of one's meridians throughout the day, and to see how they reflect and respond to all manner of events – from emotional challenges, to meals, to time spent on the computer. As one senior student of Saito's described it, learning to work with the finger test is a bit like learning a new language, learning to 'speak ki.' Certainly, this form of dialogue with your own body makes for great conversation – and it confirms and reconfirms that the meridians are a system whose potential for healing we have only begun to understand.

Peter Skrivanic, M.A., Dipl ST, D.Ac., first encountered shiatsu while living in Japan in the mid 1990s. On his return to Ontario he enrolled in the Shiatsu School of Canada, graduating with diplomas in both shiatsu therapy and acupuncture. Since 2003 he has been an instructor at the school and was appointed director of the shiatsu diploma program in 2008. He is also a practitioner and instructor of Shin So Shiatsu. Peter is currently pursuing a doctoral degree in medical anthropology at the University of Toronto, where his project focuses upon the production, transmission, and transformation of knowledge in globalized healing practices such as shiatsu.



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