

Kyo and Jitsu: a central concept in Shiatsu energy work (Cliff Andrews)

*“According to string theory the properties of an elementary
“particle” are determined by the precise resonant pattern that its
internal string executes.”*

Brian Greene, physicist (The Elegant Universe p. 144.)

*“Even what we call matter or substance, and all that does not
seem to speak or sound, is in reality all vibration.”*

Hazrat Inayat Khan, Sufi healer and musician (Music, p. 16.)

Shizuto Masunaga first introduced the concepts of Kyo and Jitsu into Shiatsu in the 1970s and since then there has been continuous debate and research within the profession regarding the meaning of the terms. As Kyo and Jitsu are essentially descriptions of Ki it makes sense that as our understanding of Ki widens our experience of Kyo and Jitsu will widen also. In this article I have identified seven stages in the development of Kyo and Jitsu that reflect the evolution of Shiatsu theory and practice since the 1960s.

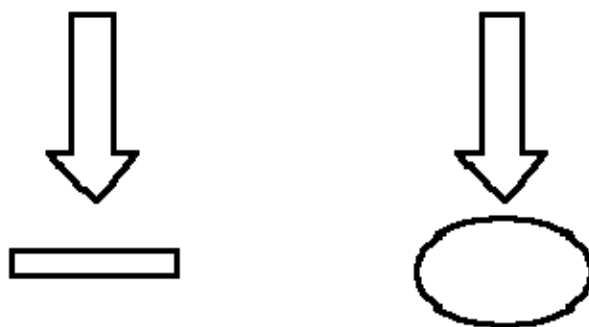
Each stage of the development of Kyo and Jitsu has led on from the resolution of paradoxes thrown up by the preceding level of understanding. Perhaps the most radical recent contribution to our understanding of Kyo and Jitsu can be found in Ki field theory and the recent research into the quantum nature of living systems. The study of Kyo and Jitsu is intimately connected to the study of Ki and therefore to fundamental questions about the nature of life and the universe. Exploring the meaning of Kyo and Jitsu is therefore a limitless one, bounded only by the limits of our imagination and our abilities to develop our awareness through self-development. For any healing system to be integrated, the philosophy, diagnosis, theory and treatment method should work together as a whole. In each section I have suggested how the focus of each of these four components changes as the understanding of Kyo and Jitsu widens.

Stage One - The Physical Level

At the most basic level Kyo and Jitsu can be understood physically. Masunaga himself used the terms Kyo and Jitsu in a similar way to the physical associations of Yin and Yang. (Zen Shiatsu

p. 63). At this stage of understanding it makes sense to think of Kyo as empty, or lacking in energy, and Jitsu as full, or an abundance of energy. In diagnosis, we can experience each area on the Hara as having a Kyo or Jitsu state: Kyo being more Yin, soft, yielding, cold, resistant etc, and Jitsu being more Yang, hard, pushing out, hot, resilient etc. In treatment we experience the meridian being Kyo or Jitsu in terms of the amount of energy present in a particular place. There is no need for a quantum interpretation at this stage of understanding as the quantities of energy expressed by Kyo and Jitsu can be understood in Newtonian terms, i.e. quantitatively in three-dimensional space.

The philosophy that fits this stage of working is that we are balancing the person's Ki by redistributing the Ki, i.e. tonifying where it is Kyo, or lacking, and dispersing or sedating where it is in abundance. It is very useful to be able to do this as a Shiatsu practitioner, because if we are working locally we need to be able to work the Ki in this way. For example if we are working an elbow problem we should be able to feel where the Ki is Kyo and Jitsu around the joint physically and be able to balance it out. The physical body is a manifestation of Ki, and the Ki of the meridians is rooted in the physical body. However paradoxes thrown up by the next stage of understanding will take us to the limits of a physical model of Kyo and Jitsu.



One Handed: Kyo & Jitsu are felt as separate quantities of energy



Two Handed: Kyo & Jitsu are defined by interaction

Stage Two - Kyo and Jitsu as Interaction

It is easy for us to forget just how radically Shizuto Masunaga transformed Shiatsu in the 1970s. The earlier style of Shiatsu, the Namikoshi method, was based theoretically on Western anatomy and physiology. The treatment method involved one handed technique at specific points on the body. When we palpate with one hand we become aware predominantly of the quantity of energy located underneath our hand. We feel Kyo and Jitsu as the quantity of energy at any location, this is reflected as the physical manifestation of energy



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at that place. Two handed technique radically switches our perception, we are now more concerned with the feeling between our hands, indeed this feeling of connection between the hands becomes our defining experience of the meridian.

These two distinct experiences, awareness of discrete areas and the contrasting feeling of connection, Masunaga termed epicritic and protopathic. In Zen Shiatsu Masunaga describes the two-point pressure experiment (p 49). In quantum terms we can now understand this phenomena as switching from particle perception to wave perception. Following this transformation of Shiatsu technique, our next level of understanding of Kyo and Jitsu is as an interaction. In treatment we experience Kyo and Jitsu as an interaction that creates movement or change in the Ki of the receiver. Masunaga used the terms Kyo and Jitsu with this meaning (Zen Shiatsu p. 61).

Diagnostically we use the Kyo Jitsu reaction method. This involves palpating for the most Jitsu meridian, based on the criteria in stage one, and then testing the presenting Kyo meridians until a reaction is felt in the Jitsu. The diagnostic Kyo and Jitsu meridians are defined by the reaction. In treatment our focus also changes. We focus more on two handed technique and we look for movement or interaction between the Kyo and Jitsu areas either within one meridian or between the two diagnostic meridians. Our philosophy has to change too: we are creating balance by optimising the movement of Ki in the receiver.

In treatment, meridians can be balanced by placing the mother hand on the Jitsu area, while the working hand palpates for Kyo areas on the same meridian. The Kyo areas are selected on the basis of the reaction in the mother hand. A similar method can be used to balance the two diagnostic meridians: the stationary hand palpates the Jitsu meridian and the working hand is used to select Kyo points on the Kyo meridian that have an effect on the Jitsu meridian.

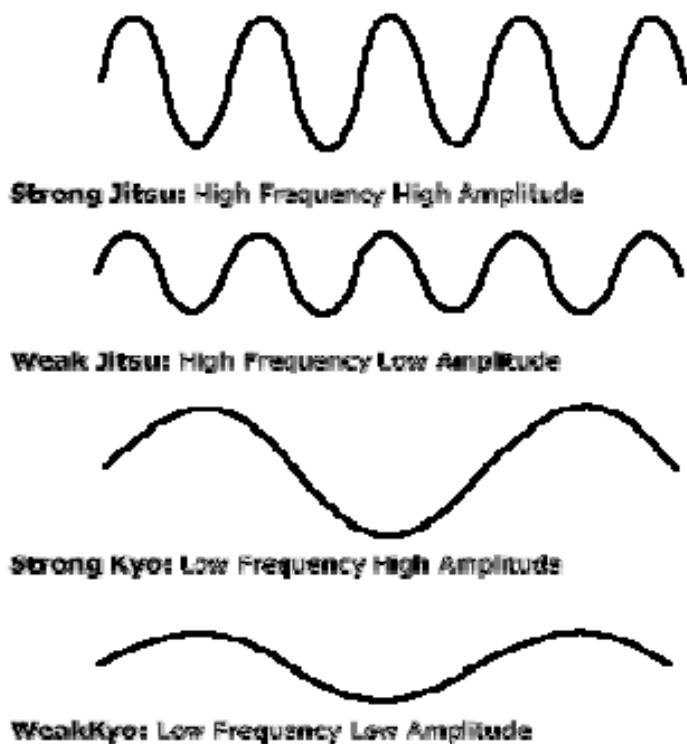
Practising this method over time leads to the discovery of the "Kyo /Jitsu paradox" which is: why is the "reacting" or diagnostic Kyo sometimes different from the "most" Kyo meridian on a physical level? Answering this paradox takes us deeper into the nature of Ki and the human energy system.

Stage Three - Kyo and Jitsu as Functions

This stage involves widening our understanding of meridians, from pathways of Ki to functions in the body. Masunaga was moving towards this idea in his meridian "Expressions" and his work on the energetics of single cell organisms. At this stage each meridian is experienced as a function or quality of vibration in the body. The meridian pathways and the different functional parts of the body are experienced as a stronger resonance of that function.

In diagnosis although we still use the Kyo Jitsu reaction method we can transform the technique internally by tuning into the meridians as functions in the body. In the treatment our mother hand, instead of focusing on the connection between the two hands, widens to tune into the function of the meridian in the body. For example as you work the Lung channel you define the Kyo points on the channel by their effect on the Intake of Ki function, rather than by the quantity of Ki (stage one) or the connection between your hands (stage two).

The appropriate philosophy at this stage would be that we are balancing two interacting functions in the body to create change. The theoretical model used at this stage is called a "composite". This more functional approach to Kyo and Jitsu is implicit in much of Masunaga's later work.



Stage Four - Kyo and Jitsu as Resonance in the Whole Energy Field

At this stage we widen our experience of Ki again, to experience the body as a whole energy field. This development is based on Masunaga's ideas of each cell in the body having each meridian function. It makes logical sense at this stage that all the meridians can be experienced at any part of the energy field. This development is also derived from the work of Shinmei Kishi who developed "whole field" techniques, less dependent on physical space than traditional Shiatsu technique.

It can be argued that Kyo and Jitsu become meaningless at this stage, and it is true that Kishi dropped the concept. Pauline Sasaki also developed a "monadic" method based on scanning for only one significant meridian. In my experience it is possible to use Kyo and Jitsu by again redefining them, to do this I developed a new technique called Whole Body Scanning (WBS).



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The purpose of WBS is to move the focus from the meridian as functions to experiencing them as vibrations in the field as a whole. The Kyo and Jitsu meridians are experienced as two different qualities that contribute to the way that the Ki field is set up. In diagnosis we first perform a whole body scan to get an overall picture of the Ki. The Kyo and Jitsu meridians are then palpated with the focus on the whole field. Once the two meridians have been selected they can then be experienced in the field individually in a similar way to the WBS, a technique called Meridian Scanning. In this way it is possible to experience directly the manifestations of meridians in a wider way than just the channel or the functional areas, as in stages one to three.

At this stage the vibrational properties of the meridians, or in quantum terms the wave function, become dominant. This is because our focus is primarily on the whole field. It is at this stage that we discover another paradox: Jitsu can be weaker than Kyo and Kyo can be stronger than Jitsu. We have to go beyond our physical conception of Kyo and Jitsu at this stage to understand this further paradox. Incidentally, if you are having the common experience that Kyo and Jitsu seem to be switching back and forth uncontrollably, this is a symptom of being at this stage of development in your work.

The difference between Kyo and Jitsu in terms of vibration is that Kyo meridians vibrate at a lower frequency and Jitsu meridians vibrate at a higher frequency. The amplitude of the vibration determines the strength at which the meridian manifests. In quantum terms, the energy state of a wave and therefore any resulting particle formed by the collapse of the wave function, is directly related to the frequency of the wave. This is why we feel a physical Jitsu or Kyo feeling, of fullness or emptiness, when we collapse the wave of the meridian into a specific area on the pathway or on the Hara. The philosophy at this stage is that we are creating a space in which the whole energetic field can re-harmonise.

Stage Five - Kyo and Jitsu and Vibrational Levels

Mastering the WBS technique leads to a wider, less three dimensional and physical, experience of the receiver's Ki. As a result the experience of the Ki field will not always relate to physical phenomena. A theoretical understanding of vibrational levels is introduced early on in Shiatsu training. For example muscles, anger, planning, and the "Hun" are related to the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual levels of the Liver, but it usually takes several years of practice before the experience of Ki on less physical levels becomes clearer.

Try this practical exercise to experience how the manifestation of Kyo and Jitsu depends on the vibrational level that is being worked. Firstly focus on all the physical associations of the Heart: the Blood, the physical heart organ etc, and then work the channel and note the areas that are experienced as Kyo and Jitsu using the Stage Two criteria. Secondly, focus on the emotional associations of the Heart: joy, emotional centre etc, and then work the same part of the channel

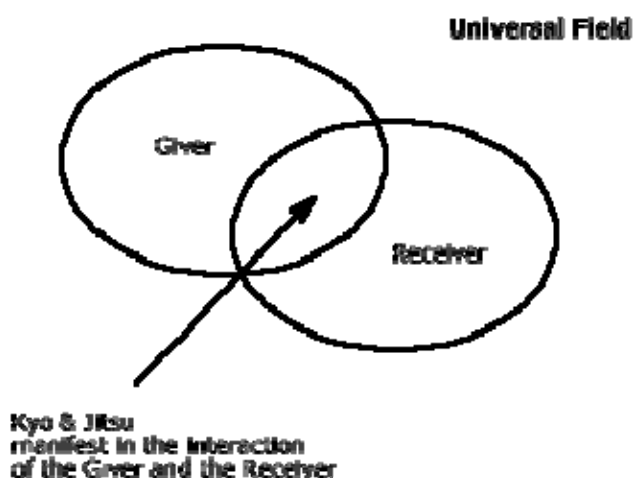
again. Typically the Kyo and Jitsu areas will appear in different places as a result of the shift in focus.

This initially strange phenomenon is due to the meridians having an internal energetic structure analogous to the range of vibrational harmonics within a sound. As the Ki is often distributed differently at different vibrational levels the experience of Kyo and Jitsu will change depending on which level is being focused on. Although this seems very advanced it is something we do naturally. For example two clients may present with Lung Kyo, one may have a severe cold, the other may be grieving. We would instinctively treat these two clients differently, even though in both cases the Lung channel is being worked.

At a treatment level we can either work on a specific level, or we can work “open”, providing space for all the levels to re-harmonise. Our philosophy has to change yet again, to one of providing an opportunity for the vibrational levels of the receiver’s Ki to harmonise. A study of vibrational levels can be clarified by studying the nature and properties of the etheric field.

Stage Six - Kyo and Jitsu and the Universal Ki field

Experience of the vibrational levels, particularly the spiritual level, leads us deeper into the nature of the relationship between Universal Ki and human Ki. The physical body is defined as a condensation of Ki, and the human form is experienced as a condensed form of Universal Ki. At this level Kyo and Jitsu are interpreted as an interactive resonance between the giver, receiver and the Universal Ki field.



Ultimately Kyo and Jitsu is experienced as the interaction of the giver’s and receiver’s Ki field in the context of the universal Ki. The physical sensation of Kyo and Jitsu can now be re-defined in quantum terms as the collapse of this combined wave function. This interpretation allows us to understand why, even on the physical level, Kyo and Jitsu can change depending on who is palpating. This has many repercussions for us as teachers of Shiatsu, not least of which is that it demands that we be able to verify our student’s perceptions.



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Working at this level, the three dimensional aspects of the human form become less dominant. Our philosophy moves to one that encompasses the integration of the client within the wider Universal Ki field. Techniques that allow us to access the past or to work spatially removed from the client, based on the quantum phenomenon of non-locality, become a practical possibility.

Stage Seven - all stages transcended

This stage can be experienced at any time in the process of Ki development. It is a place where the practitioner works without conscious awareness of technique. This is most common when each stage is mastered and treatments become more natural and automatic. The practitioner finds himself or herself working appropriately with little conscious effort. In quantum terms this feeling of effortlessness is a reflection of a high level of coherence in the giver, which is lost when a conscious effort is made to develop techniques or concepts.

The nature of Ki, and of Kyo and Jitsu, is that there is always more to experience. Each stage throws up paradoxes that challenge us to question what we are doing and why, and to lead again into the process of examining and refining theories and techniques.

Recommended further reading:

The Elegant Universe by Brian Greene, Vintage Books 2000 ISBN 0 09 928992 X,
An excellent description of the quantum wave duality and an introduction to String theory.
The Quantum Self by Danah Zohar, Quill 1990 ISBN 0 688 10736 2
Interesting applications of quantum theory directly relevant to Shiatsu energy work.

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