



**Berührung ist Begegnung
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Shiatsu and problems of the soul (Brigitte Ladwig)

*„Die Mächte, die den Kosmos bewegen, sind nicht verschieden von jenen,
die die menschliche Seele bewegen.“
(Lama Anagerika Govinda)*

Men and women will come to shiatsu sessions with problems and desires, ranging from backaches to chronic blocked sinuses. They may be seeking support due to heavy chronic illness or simply wish for well being in a variety of very different situations. Some of them will come wishing for help on matters directly relating to the soul. They may find themselves in an emotional state of conflict, experience fear, symptoms of stress or difficulty in decision making, and desire support for life or even death. However, some of these physical symptoms may also include a psychological component. While backache might be related to feeling low or a depressive basic mood, a stiff joint might be related to some unconsciously held back emotional expression. Exhaustion might a loss of one's joy of life and dizziness might reflect losing trust in one's direction in life.

This paper will focus on how shiatsu can answer questions of the soul. And by "answer" we do not mean that we find solutions to the given problem (while it is not excluded that naturally something can be solved). To "answer" questions of the soul with shiatsu we must first of all point out that we as practitioners of shiatsu use only the "tool shiatsu". Apart from the short talk with the client before and after the actual treatment, we usually need nothing more. Yet we do of course have to recognize the limits of our own competence and abilities and also take into account whatever might be counter-indicated for shiatsu treatment.

"Answering" means that I will first of all come into resonance with the energetic equivalents of the question by relating my techniques, my procedure, my presence and my focus to it. I will then explore this facet of energy and will watch for the overall connections to the whole person as well as to other aspects. I am curious to connect to this expression of energy as well as to its transformation movements and changes in quality, which will show up when I connect with it and thus come into dialogue.

This subject is so huge and the possibilities of shiatsu to respond to questions of the soul are so manifold, though always of course only individually true, that for our purpose the paper will be restricted to a small selection of psychological problems and a possible shiatsu "answer" to



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some of them. Some basic concepts and principles as well as procedures will be described and clarified. In addition, the presentation of various case histories may provide the reader with some insight into the concrete and inner working techniques, the energetic reactions of the clients and reflections with regard to their themes.

Soul

*„Were it not for the mobility and iridescence of the soul,
man would come to a standstill in his greatest passion – inertia“
(C.G. Jung)*

If we start looking throughout different cultures, past and present times and sciences, we find quite different ideas on what is meant by "soul". Should we ask our every-day friends, we would get many different answers. Soul is a concept that cannot be confined to a precise definition. Placed within the framework of the body-soul discussion, soul is first of all that which is not body. Sometimes soul is equated to the psyche in all its conscious and unconscious aspects. In this sense, emotions and perceptions belong to that definition as well, which also means in a way quite physical aspects. Yet we can also add all mental activities such thinking, imagination, self-perception, concepts, beliefs and so on. We also understand the soul as some finer vibrating level – like a supra-individual self-perception in an atmosphere that by itself contains hints beyond that what is collective and earthbound. And we see the soul as that which is life in us and that what causes life. Perhaps today's use of the term "heart" might come closest to some meanings of the term "soul". In this paper soul will be referring to emotional problems, mental questions or maybe spiritual aspects.

Soul level within the context of shiatsu

*„Our souls do not dwell in our bodies; our bodies dwell in our souls.“
(R. Sheldrake)*

*„Nature is made up of energy, which can take all forms, and fields,
which are the form-giving principles of all domains of nature.“
(R. Sheldrake)*

Both these quotes convey concepts very close to shiatsu concepts. We work with Ki. Ki is vibration, form and non-form, and is constantly changing. Ki is the substance within human beings that relates body to emotions, to mental and to soul aspects. Ki communicates instantly, directly, transcending into and within these levels. The Ki to which we relate in shiatsu is found in the physical body as well as in the field (in a sense unlimited) around the body. We can imagine the energetic field of a person as a mixture of different dense and quick vibrations with

holographic capacities. Even the most refined soul or spirit vibrations with high frequency and low density are present within the frame of the physical body.

According to Masunaga the meridians with their functions – also reflect this spectrum. For example, via the kidney meridian, we will reach the capacity of impetus on a pure physical level – the hormones that are responsible for the push, the behavior in case of stress – but also on an emotional level- for example the fear that can serve for life preservation by eventually leading to more acute attention or causing a reaction of flight. "Will" can be understood as a mental aspect but also as the force that binds us to the continuum of life. The Yin-aspect of Zhi (will) describes the faculty to flow with the natural stream of events. It is the "Long Will" that cannot be willed; it flows through us. It stands for courageous undertakings and for welcoming the unknown.



In Traditional Chinese Medicine, the Shen, the least material aspects of the Zang Fu functions (the organ systems) are partly translated as souls; according to our understanding, some of them would correspond more to what we call instincts or mental faculties. The Chinese characters also reveal dimensions of ghosts and demons. Some of these different levels too, can be found with the names and indications of acupuncture points, i.e. "Heart 7", "Gate of Spirit", "Bladder 52", "Seat of Will", "Lung 3", "Residence of Heaven", with the

indication to calm the Body Soul (Po).

In any event, we work with all of these aspects, including the soul aspects, whenever we tune into Ki. However, we are able to develop and refine our techniques, our perception and our understanding of underlying laws in a way that allows us to enter into contact with the dimensions of the soul in a more specific way.

General effects of shiatsu with regard to soul problems

First of all, shiatsu is physical touch. It can help in feeling that we exist. The clear touch fosters sensitivity for one's own borders, communicates tranquility and perhaps even some quite new



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self-consciousness via a clearer body consciousness and more body acceptance. It can result in relaxation, feeling of well-being or a lightening of one's mood and mobility on all levels.

By the specific shiatsu contact, the function of the para-sympathicus is enhanced, our muscles relax, our mind becomes clearer and more attentive and it deepens the contact to ourselves. The energy potential of the tissue is vitalized and by means of change in chronic tissue conditions there might also be change in behavior conditions.

Touch is always situated at the intersection between outer and inner worlds. These worlds function in relationship to the receiver like flashlights for dark or unfamiliar rooms. Via the sense of touch we gain notions of the world and of ourselves. The basic principle of shiatsu, not being an exterior mechanical technique, but always involving non-verbal communication and dialogue by touch, will mostly be experienced by the client as a beneficial touch, and it might open new "windows".

Other aspects of shiatsu philosophy, such as respect for the other person, plus awareness and presence, are also transmitted by contact in treatment. Experiencing undivided attention during treatment can in itself have a healing effect. Shiatsu also conveys to the client - without the use of words – the notion that health consists of physical, emotional and mental health as well as social well-being.

These general effects of the shiatsu touch are already reason enough to answer in the affirmative the question of shiatsu being a support for problems of the soul. And it is obvious that this technique can be complimentary to psychotherapy and also might well be offered in psycho-somatic clinics or in death accompaniment.

The state of relaxation in a shiatsu session can go beyond a merely reactive relaxation. It can go deeper than the level of psycho-vegetative self-regulation. From those depths, unconscious dynamic "material" can move to the surface. It can show up in images or in physical or emotional reactions. This process of organizational change within one's depths, can provide a valuable opportunity for gaining a greater understanding of one's own life situation, and it might lead to a new impulse in life, to more freedom and courage and trust, allowing transformation to take place. In these cases, it is of utmost importance that the Shiatsu practitioner accompany the client with competence and tranquility.

In shiatsu we do not so much focus on the tissue, but rather on the energetic system of the human being. Entering into energy via the meridians (which represent paths of energy as well as an expression of the actual specific life functions) allows us to simultaneously contact different qualities and densities of energy. With the same exterior techniques, we can reach the other being in his/her physical and emotional as well as mental or spiritual aspects. As described above, this is also reflected by the different facets of the meridian functions.



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Specific accompaniment with Shiatsu on soul level

Important methods

In working with soul aspects in shiatsu, a very important factor lies in the practitioner's own alignment. Alignment is already playing a decisive role during the verbal exchange part serving to meet the other person in a most comprehensive, understanding and clear attitude, while not getting emotionally involved or wanting to help, or being limited by a purely rational approach. Alignment in this sense, means a physically released upright posture, that allows the energy to be well anchored, allowing the practitioner to move on all levels as well balanced and as free as possible. It also plays an important part in the evaluation of the energy by Bo Shin (looking) or Setsu Shin (touching) so that we are able to be open and clear for receiving information on as many levels as possible. This quality is also important during the practical treatment part, so that our own focus may be well translated into the work and that our touch is open and wide in depth in order to maintain constant contact with the finer vibrations too. In this way, resonance with the person and his/her energetic qualities is possible on a very large scale.

In order to come into contact with the energies of a client, experience has shown that scanning methods are helpful. These are techniques that can give us an "image" in space, a sort of "touch perception" or some multi-dimensional information about the distribution and expression of energy. Scanning can focus on bodily space or on the energetic field of the whole person or we can scan more specifically certain levels of vibrational frequencies (i.e. emotional, physical, spiritual), or certain meridians or specific body parts.

During the oral exchange that precedes the actual session, the energetic dynamics underlying the request are already being actualized. Thus we can be confident that the energetic expression we perceive in scanning, Bo Shin, is truly related to the indicated theme.

The "living picture" that is developed by the different diagnostic possibilities is an important reality with which we can dialogue during the session.

From this picture I will develop a leading idea for the whole session. With regard to the request of this client, what energetic change could be helpful? In all cases, the overall focus will always be integration. How can what is coming to our attention as dominant be reintegrated into a whole? How can the energy become livelier and freer while maintaining enough support and structure? Which of the dominant aspects are coming into contact with me and are ready for change?

When we are approaching a person in our shiatsu practice and understanding, we have the option of interpreting what we perceive as a kind of pathology or weakness. However, we can also chose to come into dialogue with the energy, which by the mere fact that it shows up



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indicates its readiness for change. What we perceive as dominant depends on our focus, our tuning in, our concept of what a human being is, our presence and our experience. Soul needs space and does not understand right or wrong. We can, while thus tuning in, come into contact with aspects of life that transcend what can be traced by biographical facts, transcend what is tangible and we can touch something that cannot be named yet that relates us to the client and binds everything into a greater whole.

During a Shiatsu session, a prerequisite for moving freely and without fear within those spaces of the soul and of other experiences, lies in our capacity to constantly organize ourselves and to be able to come back to our own alignment and clarity.

*„All that is visible touches the invisible
All that can be heard touches the unheard
All that can be touched houses the untouched
And perhaps all that can be thought touches the unthought.“
(Lama Anagerika Govinda)*

Shiatsu's uniqueness lies in its broad spectrum of treatment possibilities within which we can vary. Our focus and the desired effect can be located in different dimensions: from a local focus to a distant focus or a global focus; from physical to finer energy; from a physical vibrational frequency to a spiritual one; from the focus on the client in a very personal way to impersonal areas; from the practitioner being dominant while contacting the energy, to the client being dominant or even to the cosmos being dominant. In this way the touch in shiatsu is not only felt locally, but clients experience the feeling of being addressed as a whole. My alignment, as adjusted to the described dimensions, allows me to chose to focus on a clearly limited physical problem, like enhancing the mobility of a joint, or concentrate on the emotional context of a dream, or give support for clear thinking, or even link this person to a cosmic presence. Yet if we only want to rely on what we can perceive with our senses, then only material phenomenon will show up.

Just as alignment assures us of neutrality and openness for the "diagnosis", it provides us with a fundamental background for the practical part if we want to work with the finer aspects of energy as described above. Along the different dimensions, we can direct the focus of our attention onto the most different parts, levels and aspects. By transforming our own energy to gain a special quality, by accentuating a special part in ourselves, by emphasizing a movement, this energetic pattern can be communicated to the energetic system of the other person by the law of resonance. In this way we can also tune ourselves into the Masunaga meridian functions. In order to judge if the specific tuning is adequate at this moment, we will be continually oriented by the energetic reaction of the client with regard to our offer.



Working with soul aspects in shiatsu will not always mean that we need to work on an emotional or spiritual level of frequency. As shown by psychotherapies with a body focus, such as bioenergetic analysis, focusing on the body by stretching or pressure or putting on some strain, can bring emotional blocks to the surface and resolve them. On the other hand, we will notice that working with the more subtle energies, and within a wider context, can also affect the body, daily attitudes and our feeling towards life.

To avoid a general misunderstanding, we will stress that we do not need to work with a lighter touch in order to meet a problem of the soul. The finer frequencies are everywhere, thus also in the physical body. And often, while wanting to relate to all levels, an important theme is found just within the integration into the

physical.

During the practical treatment period, if we always remind ourselves what the theme was and what we perceived in the beginning, we can easily observe the dynamics and the interrelation of the energy qualities. Experience shows that it is helpful to be able to communicate some of all this (when asked), translating it into a common intelligible language. How do things work together? How was the reaction? What did I try to do in the session? This way shiatsu practitioners have no need to become "oracles" or to interpret. If we put into words what is nearest to the personal experience of the client, this only affirms and enhances his/her perception of him/herself. Normally the client is keenly interested and motivated and thus we have an excellent ground for a working contract. On the basis of these observations we can also deduce recommendations that the clients can understand within this framework.

Commented session description

The different procedures and other aspects of a treatment will be described and explained in a detailed documentation of a session. At the beginning, there is our tuning into the request and



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into the receiver so that we can adequately resonate in our own energy in order to enter into dialogue.

Mrs. W., in her mid-fifties, has a part-time job in a helping profession. She has been having Shiatsu sessions for some time. Lately her main theme is pain, the despair about the separation from her partner. For a long time she reacted with insomnia, loss of appetite and loss of weight. In addition she had —heavy, nearly uncontrollable emotional attacks accompanied by weeping. This time she comes to the session in a phase of mental and emotional self-destructivity. "I don't know anything". "I am useless". "My life has no meaning". She says that she is only too familiar with these emotions and thoughts. They would continue, on and off, surging up from down below. She lacks impetus. Each step is already too much. She also has the sensation that her head does not quite belong to her body. She desires support with regard to her self-doubts and to relating the head to the rest.

At this point we might easily be tempted to follow the normal human impulse, wanting to help. That is, we might be tempted to try to encourage her or try to relieve her of her self-doubts. We might like to prove to her that her life still is worth living. Another unnecessary detour in this context would consist of thinking of interventions considered by Western psychotherapeutical approaches to be helpful with regard to low self-esteem. Or we might want to know in advance with which meridians or with what concept for shiatsu we should work: perhaps the kidney meridian because of her lack of impetus, or the heart meridian in order to support her self-identity, or the lung meridian because of her depressive basic mood. Or maybe she needs more the liver meridian in order to reach some repressed anger... or maybe the feet, to strengthen the grounding as an opposite pole for the head....

This "already knowing in advance", however, limits us. Proceeding this way, we would leave the lively, "breathing" contact instead of following our curiosity, and staying alert to the fact that at any moment we might be surprised by her movements and potential of life.

With Bo Shin I perceive her energy in general as not moving, I feel her in some way constricted (for me the energy looks in a way very "decent" and "rational"). I find such concepts and images helpful for naming special qualities of the energy and for being able to later on recognize it again. For me it is clear that such images do not stand for a statement about the person: they are only an attempt to describe the "flavor", the "atmosphere" of the energy.

At other times Mrs. W. looks fuller, even though she is slender by constitution. When she feels well, her energy radiates simultaneously a somewhat vigorous tranquility and a cheeky, luminous and curious mobile state. This time it feels like this very luminosity is missing. She seems to be in a waiting state of mind, not very involved in life. During our conversation, she does not search much contact with me. And her head seems as if it wants to stay above the surface of the water. The scanning by touching the hara corroborates these perceptions. There



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is not much movement, but a quality like fatigue combined with simultaneous tension everywhere. The hara itself is calm, retired, like drawn back into itself.

On the whole there is not much contact with the outside world. In the hara the spleen energy reacts as kyo and the lung expresses in a jitsu quality. By meridian scanning for the lung energy, I perceive a peripheral tension in the energetic field that is mostly expressed on the spiritual level but also on the emotional level of vibration. The quality of the spleen meridian shows up on all levels of frequency as if the energy lacks tonus and might fall away or break up.

In shiatsu we work with the energy of the person. Therefore the "translation" of verbally formulated problems, information and requests into an energetic "picture" of the person is important, including, too, what might be seen from "outside" in the physical body or attitude. Note that it is not my mind that translates; it happens by a direct perception of energetic qualities as presented to me. At the same time I will notice how, specifically, the person's request for this session is presented. I will choose one or two of the main aspects as "indicators" (a parameter that indicates change to me) to find out if my offers are effective in the chosen direction. In this way, as I work I can always relate back to the main idea and to my main focus via my "motherhand", or by Bo Shin or by scanning.

My aim for this treatment is to encourage the energy to regain some of its vibration. Then I will determine if and in what direction support will still be helpful. This non-mobility, non-communicativeness is the most outstanding aspect perceived. It is, however, obvious that I will always be ready to change my focus, if there is no reply to my offers in that direction. Some other focus will always be maintained as an underlying focus, which is the integration of her head into the whole of her body.

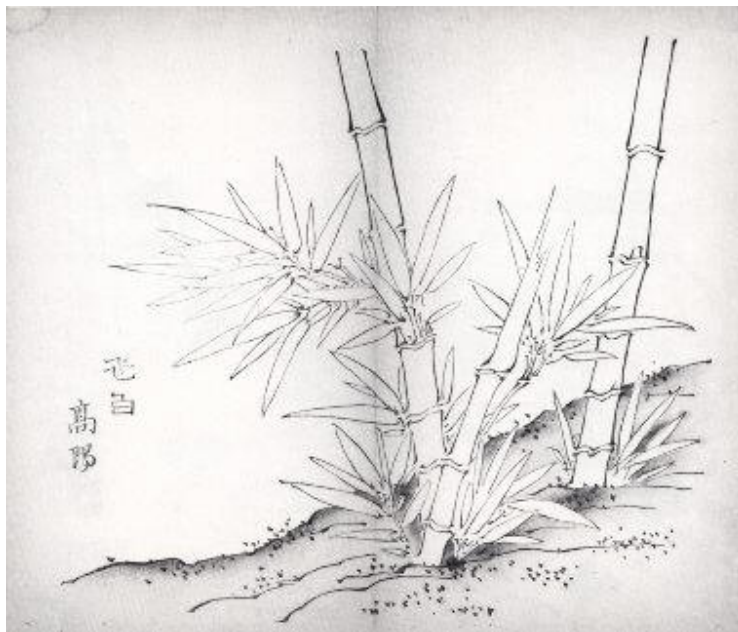
The beginning of a treatment is defined by my tuning into the person as a whole. With the motherhand resting on the hara, I work the thigh with a soft open touch and vary my rhythm, my inner tuning in a way to find the best possible basic contact with the client.

I begin treatment in the supine position. If I want to establish a good basic contact with Mrs. W. I need a quality that is full of care, like coating her with a calm vitality. In other sessions, this client was reached more effectively with an inner attitude of forceful, "cheeky" energy. Tuning into what I had perceived as an immobile, tired quality of energy, I work the spleen meridian in the leg. The contact is rather weak and dull. I try out variations of techniques and rhythms including inner techniques (in this case tuning into different aspects of the unctons), looking for the one that comes into resonance best and allows the energy to move in the right direction. "Nourishing" is clearly not accepted. "Earthing" seems boring.

The contact apparently needs tuning into something containing more movement, so I try the "mixing together", the "moistening", the "transformation" aspects. There is an immediate direct reply. The energy in the meridian line of spleen as well as in the whole field and in the hara

reacts with liveliness. The overall expression is better defined and has regained tonus and strength.

When working with the feet and foot joints, I relate more to binding in her head. Also when doing micro-rotations of the articulations of the feet, I look for the meridian that will make the best connection in each specific place.



The hara already feels more lively....

For working on the chest, I place my "motherhand" on the spleen zone and work the lung meridian. The function that reacts best is "Po", the condensation of cosmic energy, the connection to the physical being and to the cosmos – as if the latter resided in each cell. In addition, the emotional and mental levels need to be integrated. This means that I will make sure that these special levels stay well alive in me all along, but that also the other levels are represented by my

alignment to ground the energy and to offer the whole spectrum of frequencies. Deep, clear sinking in is needed. There are reactions of deep relaxation and release especially via the lung meridian branch under the clavicle. I repeat leaning with my elbow into Lung 1 point fully and deeply. Mrs. W. takes a deep relaxed breath and sighs. Her energy begins to "glitter", while at the same time there is deep tranquility like the long ringing sound of a bell. There is more space within and without. Deep work on the spleen meridian on the chest area with the thumb and tuning into "Fullness and richness" brings even more release in the lung meridian quality.

I work the arm with both knees on the spleen meridian in order to continue stabilizing. No further impulses are needed. I open the shoulder blades quite vigorously. The head and neck maintain some tension. The general work on the backside of the neck already helps for loosening up. By stretching the shoulder, the space between head and chest opens up even more. When working the spleen meridian in the head and neck down to the chest, the client has tears running; when working the lung meridian near the throat, her breathing deepens even further.

In the side position, I work the back and again the lung meridian in the arm while continuing to stabilize the more open softer quality of energy. In the prone position, working the bladder

meridian from the head downwards, I relate once more back to the quality I found working the chest area. Once more I open the neck. While working in the side position, my motherhand lies on the head to connect this area to the rest. For the lung meridian at the bottom and in the leg I choose the basic contact to give affirmation and space for integration. Nothing more needs to be done; much has already happened.

The client reports that in the beginning while being worked in the legs (spleen meridian), she felt courage and hope emerging and she is again feeling impetus in herself. The touching on the chest area opened her heart. She connected back to a deep relationship with herself and renewed contact with the world. She feels once again transparent and as a consequence can see her vulnerability. She also feels quite sure she can now take care of herself, that is, eat well and care for herself...

The client's feeling of low self-esteem and low impetus was in this case closely related to the perceived tired, tense and poorly communicative overall energetic expression. Working the spleen meridian resulted in restoring a good tonus in the energetic field. Working the lung meridian brought up "motivation" for the energy to exchange and expand in space. Experiencing the feeling of vitality and experiencing the relationship of oneself to a greater whole provide quite a different basis for questions of self-esteem, if in the case of such a feeling about life, such questions were actually asked in that form.

After the session the client sees possibilities of what she can do and what the underlying question is (being hurt, and the need to take good care of herself) instead of - as before the session - being stuck in a non-related merry-go-round of self-depreciation.

Here follows a short description of the ongoing sessions that followed this last one. In the next session the client's request was to relate down into her legs. The work with the lung meridian tuning into the function of "exchange", had the overall effect of vitalizing the legs. Work on the spleen meridian brought more reaction in the chest area.

The next session, the meridian scanning showed the quality of the heart constrictor meridian as being still and somewhat shaky and it responded well during treatment to the focus of "emotional stability". The energy of the lung meridian felt as if it wanted to drive up and get out of the skin. What helped to release this tension was the tuning into „space“. The heart constrictor meridian needed an almost laser-like deep pressure. When treating her left leg, the client first reacted with fear. That changed into excitement and then confidence (that is how she called it during the session). After that, her legs looked much more present, as if connected to the ground like a bow. Important in stabilizing this feeling was the point Heart Constrictor 8.



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After the session, the client reported that the feeling of shakiness while the leg was being worked on was related to her fear of going her own way and assuming full responsibility for herself and her actions. This does not mean that she does not otherwise accept responsibility for herself - but in this case, the request for it was "summoned" consciously and on quite a new level.

In the next session, she explained in the beginning that she had felt as if she were walking through a wall. Something completely basic had changed. She would no longer automatically react when she was involved in disputes with her partner, yet she still feels shaky in this new state of being. She would like to get even more support in the process of her development and would like to once again feel her legs (this is always good for her).

While scanning, my first impression was: all is well and nothing feels as if it needs "treatment". Looking more closely, I found that the chest area could "rest" more towards the ground and that the legs could use some strengthening. Through scanning, I could feel the energy of the heart constrictor meridian moving lightly, in a flickering way as if it would wind away.

During treatment, my main inner tuning was "harmonizing". The liver meridian showed in its energetic expression a tension in the area of the head and arms, like aiming forcibly outward. This movement did not yet feel completely freed. The tuning to "free flow of energy" was adequate for resonance. In the supine position, the sides of the chest and arm areas were letting go more and more down to the ground only by stretching the liver meridian in the leg, while the "motherhand" rested on the heart constrictor meridian in the sacral area.

On the whole, the liver meridian had an effect on the client of a "Life" meridian. The work with Liver 1 point, in particular, resulted in more "joy of life" and vitality and the client said she felt an impulse to dance. The heart constrictor meridian needed a soft, almost caring and enveloping touch, yet for the liver meridian the touch could not be sharp enough to get more freedom in the energy flow of the client, even when working the arm. In the side position I worked the liver and heart constrictor meridian simultaneously.

After that, the client felt warmth and vitality streaming through herself, as if all the cells had become brighter. She felt the urge to go shopping with friends and felt happier than she had felt in a long time when she was in a depressive state.

For this sequence of sessions, supporting the energy for finding more vitality proved to be essential. This was the basis for greater stability and freedom.

Desire for boundaries and protection

The following case studies will show that in shiatsu we can answer similar requests in quite different manners that are always individually related to the person. I chose as example the wish for boundaries and protection, a question for help often found in psychotherapy as well as in shiatsu.

Mrs. F., in her mid-forties, holds a position in the medical-therapeutic area. She has been for shiatsu sessions every four to six weeks for a year and a half now. She had already come to shiatsu eight years ago, mainly with psychological problems. The actual sequence of sessions is mainly about requests on the physical level: knee problems, stomach problems...



In today's session she wants more openness. She says when riding her bike recently she often feels attacked by other careless cyclists or drivers. She also claims she often has to strongly assert herself with a female colleague who fails to respect her boundaries. Although she has noticed that she is able to open up a lot during her work with own patients, she finds that she cannot in the outside world, where she feels the need to protect herself. In our short conversation before the session, we find out that the question is not so much about not enough

openness but rather about better markers as well as better transitions from one state of being to another (work-open; outer world- protecting).

Zones in the hara show the kidney meridian expressing itself as kyo and it reacts with the small intestine zone. In meridian scanning the small intestine meridian gives a dominant impression of a tense, held-in and over-active area in and above the head. The kidney meridian shows primarily that in the belly/hip area there is a quality of kidney energy present on the backside of the body. From here it widens out towards the exterior while it folds up in the front as if the connection to the front part of the body was not stable and was too open.



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One aim of the session is to integrate the perceived quality of the small intestine meridian into the physical body in its spatial reality as well as to integrate its energetic vibrational frequency. On the other hand, I want to support and stabilize the front side.

Working with the small intestine meridian in the leg in the supine position, the energy reacted best with regard to the desired effect, when tuning into "centering in each cell". Before that, I tried "centering" while modeling in myself a strong middle axis. Yet this quality of touch was met with energetic resistance. This tells us that each cell should be supported so that it can perceive what it needs and what it cannot assimilate. This tuning has the advantage of enough openness. It produces many energetic movements of release, flowing and vitalizing in the basin area and on the whole, the energy is awakened in the body space. The "tenseness" at the head releases. When holding the hara with one hand on the belly, the other under the back, the perceptions of the scanning of the kidney meridian are corroborated. With one hand in the kidney zone on the backside, I work the front kidney meridian line in the belly. The focus is on connecting the front and the backside.

I feel as if I am stitching the energy on the front side together. The outer places on the kidney meridian under the clavicles offer a good doorway to more energy for the body space. The same holds true for the kidney meridian on the tip of the little finger. Also while working in the prone position on the small intestine and kidney meridians, the focus is always once again on the contact between front and back and integrating the energy into the whole spectrum of vibrational frequencies.

After the session, the client feels her inner core to be wider and more filled. I tell her some of my impressions and suggest that she visualize the line of the kidney meridian on her trunk. She remembers that when she is horseback riding she quite automatically expresses this support to the front side of herself or can connect to it easily. On other occasions she often gets the feeling something is missing in her chest/belly area.

The question of protection and boundaries does not need to be dealt with by working with the triple heater meridian. Although "protection" is indeed the main function of the triple heater meridian, life is much more complex and cannot be represented in such a simplistic way. Basically we look for how the energy of the person moves, what patterns it forms, what inclinations and tendencies it shows when reacting to stimuli.

We contact the pattern that comes up by means of the kyo-jitsu meridians that reacted with one another. Through these meridians, with their functions and dynamics we can try to understand our observations, the information we receive and the client's requests. In a way, each symptom can be connected with each meridian. For the same symptoms in different people, we might find different meridians show up each time in the kyo-jitsu reaction. In some clients we sometimes recognize certain diagnostic meridians showing up repeatedly over a period of time. This could

eventually relate to special life situations, to the weather, to stress or to other problems. In this case, even though the symptom is expressed entirely personally, we can recognize it as a pattern - via the meridians.

Reflecting the expression of energy of the client in this session, I get the picture of a person who is frightened. The arms fly up, the front side opens without protection while the energy in the back turns rigid. It is like some kind of disintegrated fright. With panic there is no integration.

If something is not assimilated, it can lead to a "vulnerable point", to some "location" in the energetic system where the energy does not know how to answer events adequately. Similar energies of the outside world can easily "get hooked" on such a vulnerable point. It seems as if for the time being the client's energy is not ready to deal with inattention and animosity as a reality of life. It is as if this should rather not exist in life.

For sure, there are yet other ways to interpret the present energetic expression. The above description is a useful working hypothesis that allows us to connect the observations with the interacting meridian functions and to tune into the client. The small intestine meridian is solicited here in its task to assimilate and so be also able to integrate experiences of shock, while the kidney meridian is solicited in its capacity to react to threat.

In the following description of a session the theme is again marking one's boundaries and protection:

Mrs. B., in her late thirties, is a specialized shop assistant. She very much likes her work, yet she is recently having trouble marking her boundaries. For example, as she is almost always ready to work more, she has collected hundreds of extra working hours. This huge investment in her profession over such a long period of time has served as compensation for her private isolation and longing for a partnership. Yet for some time now, she is daring to take new directions and is conquering new space and is feeling joyful in her private life. However, her tendency to be influenced by the desires and actions of others remains.

Originally she came to sessions with strong headaches and neck pains that were alleviated after several sessions. To her astonishment, she found that her thinking was beginning to change as well; she was feeling freer and more flexible in thinking in a way that other people noticed. Now more and more psychological questions are beginning to come into focus.

In this session she relates getting acquainted with a man at a large assembly who since then keeps calling her quite often. She is not particularly attracted but always answers in a friendly way when he calls, talks with him and even promises to call him back. Yet inwardly she becomes furious. She is not able to tell him that he should stop ringing. The entire last weekend she felt the pressure and anxiety that he might call her and even avoided meeting some people she knows in order to avoid running into him. At this moment she needs a lot of warmth. She

desires protection and needs a widening of the chest and shoulders where she so often feels constricted.



The shoulder area looks tense, as if it were higher than the rest of the body while in the lying down position. The large intestine meridian as jitsu reacts in the hara zones with the gall bladder meridian as kyo. In scanning, the quality of the large intestine meridian expresses itself as a tense constriction and it reacts during the session with my tuning into "letting go" and "space". The gall bladder meridian energy feels clustered together- heavy and stationary. The distribution of energy reacts efficiently when I color my own energy into

"following my own path". After a short period of work on the legs there is a release in the shoulder area, and after a while, the energy in general moves more, in a more refined way, and no longer feels stagnated.

The client felt right in the beginning how her shoulders relaxed. She tells me that shortly after she saw a bright yellow light shining and was quite astonished to notice that there was no sun shining.

In the talk following the session, because she asks, I share some of my observations. She begins to clearly distinguish between fighting "at and for her boundaries" and a new feeling of "permission" to trust her own perception, values and inclinations. In this new state of being, she feels she has a right to her own "space" and she can imagine that she is able to occupy it without reacting to an anticipated imagined infringement. As the following sessions proved, she would need still more time and support, until "all the cells" understood this new way of seeing.

In the following case, with a similar question, the shiatsu answer focuses more on integrating the body and its energetic field:

Mrs. M., late-twenties, started out her profession as a social educator. She comes to shiatsu because she wants support in a difficult life situation. With her new job she feels over-

challenged, especially because of her colleagues' aggressiveness and low esteem. At the same time, at home the situation is characterized by a rather hostile atmosphere.

In order to protect herself she closes up, though it still hurts. Her body is delicate and I find it in a way almost transparent. I feel her open, friendly and "light". She has already experienced other forms of body and healing work. Her concrete wish for this first session is to feel stronger. With Bo Shin and Setsu Shin I come into contact with some fine, lively, and strong energy. What is special in this case is the impression that the physical body is not contained in this energy. It gives the impression of complete stillness, as if nobody dwells in it. My aim for the session, which develops according to her desire and my perceptions, is to try to connect the physical body more strongly into this lively energy.

The kyo-jitsu reaction in the hara shows up with two interacting meridians: spleen kyo and lung jitsu. The inner attitudes, which allow me to come into resonance with her and with which I can support an integration of the lively energy into the body are: "transformation" for spleen and "condensation of cosmic Ki " for lung. Through the touch I consciously connect to the whole energetic field, as if my hands knew that they were getting at the same time into the body and into the field around the body. Within myself, while working, I try to be attentive to connecting to the physical and spiritual aspects of the body space and field around me. A very deep sinking into the spleen meridian was especially effective for gathering together some of the qualities that were not so well connected.

After the session she is beaming. She feels quite different, much more grounded. Very soon, when I work on her legs, her heart opens up once again. She recognizes her tendency to "step out of the body", but now feels again well connected.

Further sessions stabilized this process. From the third session onwards, the client perceived herself as taller, and a few sessions later, she was residing more consistently in her body and seemed to be quite strong and resistant - no longer so delicate as in the beginning. She quit her unfortunate living situation quite quickly. Being a newcomer to her job, she did not immediately want to change it. So the challenge of the situation there became a constant practice field for her to mark her boundaries and become more independent in the eyes of her colleagues. In this situation shiatsu helped her to gain centeredness, grounding and clarity and also to assimilate difficult experiences.

*„Fundamentally shiatsu helps us to appreciate the uniqueness of each human being and to value life. Shiatsu allows us to heal not only others but ourselves as well. It offers us the opportunity to discover our place in the infinity of the universe and to participate in this continuum through transformation.“
(Pauline Sasaki)*



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