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The Importance Of General Shiatsu **(Nobuyuki Fujisaki & Masami Fujisaki)**

General Shiatsu

After we have learned the basic skills of shiatsu pressure, we can practice general shiatsu. General shiatsu is composed of four positions: sitting, side, supine and prone. Each position has its own shiatsu pattern, but they all use the basic rules of pressure. General shiatsu is the basic pattern for all shiatsu treatment. Therefore, general shiatsu is also important for Sho diagnosis. The effects cannot be induced enough by only specific shiatsu treatments. Some shiatsu books say that performing shiatsu on the same points as acupuncture is effective against the symptoms, but this is not correct. Shiatsu is softer than acupuncture, so performing shiatsu on specific points is not as effective as performing general shiatsu.

Disease is a distortion of the body that appears through symptoms on specific points of the body, so first we must perform general shiatsu to heal the underlying disease and then treat the symptoms if they still exist. The aim of general shiatsu is to remove the distortions throughout the body, which makes healing specific symptoms easier. Symptoms are often improved by only using general shiatsu. Therefore, general shiatsu should usually be performed first, which is the same in general medicine.

Relevant Pressure

Each shiatsu point is not fixed like anatomical points, but along meridians. Although there are points away from the meridians, they are fixed along the line of treatment, so it is not a problem. The back is pressed a lot in shiatsu because it tends to be more Yang than the front of the body, so it is easy to alter the condition. We also must press stiff muscles too.

There are two types of stiff muscles. One is soft muscle on the surface, and the other is hard muscle inside. The relevant pressure is the level of pressure that a patient feels comfortable with, but stiff muscles don't feel pain or discomfort, so it is difficult to decide how much pressure to give. Generally speaking, we may conclude that as long as the patient feels comfortable or has little pain that this is the right pressure, but in the case of stiff muscles the patient scarcely feels uncomfortable or pain, so we may conclude to be the relevant as the finger has reached the surface of it. Although there are a lot of clinical cases, those judgments are correct at the points of the safety and the effect of the treatment.

Shiatsu can be unsafe if it is performed forcibly and the patients' concerns are ignored. If we cannot understand the patient's condition, then we should press softly and get a better understanding of the condition. We should judge the condition as Kyo and treat the patient when we cannot judge Jitsu or Kyo. And we would give a soft pressure a little long time, when we choose it.

The point of learning



Basic pressure must be sustained during treatment. It is easy to lose stationary pressure, when shiatsu is performed quickly, so we must carefully maintain stationary pressure during treatment. Generally the movement of general shiatsu is slow and the movement is paused throughout the treatment. This slow movement is one of the features of shiatsu and shows the influence of Zen on shiatsu. However, the motion can be performed sloppily since the movements are so monotonous, which is

ineffectual and leads to bad meridian diagnosis.

Performing general shiatsu takes more than a hour, but can be strenuous. Our shoulders, arms and fingers become tired, which causes the pressure on the patient's skin to become too tense. When the patient feels the change, it causes strain by closing the tubo on the skin. We should perform relaxed shiatsu every time to prevent this and often check the pressure. We might not awake the meridian by general shiasu the first time because we can get the effect enough as the meridian runs along the route of shiatsu pressure, even if we press there automatically.

General Shiatsu and Local Shiatsu

It is important to coordinate local shiatsu with general shiatsu to be efficient. At the beginning of the treatment, it is hard to find the Kyo and Jitsu since the patient's skin is strained, though it is important to read Kyo and do Ho there. The strain appears around the diseased part especially. So the pressure doesn't penetrate into the strain even if we press hard. Therefore, we need to perform shiatsu lightly on the body, which relaxes the strain and makes it possible to do shiatsu on the diseased area. For example, when we look into a muddy stream, we can't see stones at the bottom. However, if the stream is clear, we can see the stones. Similarly, we can find Kyo/Jitsu easily when the strain of the inside is clear. It's better to start on the local treatment



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after the inside strain is clear. This makes shiatsu more accurate and prevents complications when these measures are taken. In a nutshell, we need to diagnose the condition of the diseased part first, then perform general shiatsu and finally perform the local treatment. Since time is restricted, we can combine some patterns of general shiatsu, which will be adequate yet efficient. Which combinations need to be used is based on the symptoms of the patient. We usually combine two or three of the four patterns when practicing general shiatsu.

By performing general shiatsu on the patient properly, their heart rate will be low and the muscles relaxed. When this happens, we know we have chosen the right combinations. In Zen shiatsu we consider the Kyo/Jitsu of a meridian when performing shiatsu, but it takes a long time to learn this skill. Therefore, Japanese practitioners learn the patterns of general shiatsu first. If it is not performed carefully, it could become massage instead of shiatsu. It is difficult to break bad habits we have learned, so we need to learn good habits from the beginning. Bad skills stimulate the sympathetic nerve system, so the patient doesn't relax. Remember to check how you are pressing if you feel your shiatsu is not effective. If the treatment fails, it is due to bad pressing skills, not the meridian treatment. Learning shiatsu skills is similar to sports. Progress is fast if you learn it correctly from the beginning, but it takes longer if you learn it inaccurately. Learning general shiatsu will make you an efficient shiatsu practitioner and help you in the long run.

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Nobuyuki Fujisaki is born in 1954 in Tokyo, Japan and Graduate Tokyo Electrical Engineering College after majoring in Tele Communications. He became interested in Shiatsu Therapy at age of 11 and began practiced own method of Shiatsu until the age of 20 , when he joined the Ioh Kai Zen Shiatsu Center, where he studied original style of Zen Shiatsu under the Master Shizuto Masunaga. After graduating from the Institute, he went to the Japan Shiatsu School in Tokyo and obtained a National License for Shiatsu Therapy in Japan in 1987. After obtaining a license, he formed the "Zen Shiatsu Association" to promote this unique method of Shiatsu treatment world-widely. His activities include teaching, seminars, workshops teaching classes for professional Shiatsu therapists.

Masami Fujisaki is born in 1959 in Chiba, Japan. Graduated from Kanda Institute of Foreign Languages. After 2 years of studying psychology in Crafton Hills College, California, Masami graduated from the Japan Shiatsu School. At the same time, she studied Zen Shiatsu in the IOHKAI Shiatsu Center and got a certificate from the institute. She obtained Japanese national license of a professional therapist of western massage, Chinese massage, and Shiatsu therapy in 1987 and started to manage Zen Shiatsu Association with her husband to promote Zen Shiatsu therapy. She is a Zen Shiatsu therapist and instructor.