

Traces of KI – introduction into a meridian-free Shiatsu

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A note in advance

Shiatsu is in the western world in wide parts being equalled to meridian work. This can be explained historically by being aware of the fact that it was Shizuto Masunaga's meridian Shiatsu that has spread out the most during the last thirty years in the west. In the Shiatsu of Namikoshi that is mostly being practised in Japan, however, from what I know meridians do not play a nearly as important role as they do in the European Shiatsu today.

Also in my own Shiatsu trainings it is the meridian Shiatsu of Masunaga that has been taught to me. For many years I have exclusively been working accordingly and have been exploring this way. Through the course of the years my understanding has substantially changed, though. The different way of understanding that has emerged from practise is what I want to briefly outline here.

I understand Shiatsu today in the really simple way as work with a person who comes to me in a specific situation and with a history. Beyond all meridian-, Five Transformations- or TCM-theory *this* is the foundation of my acting in Shiatsu. I try to perceive and to understand this person aside of all such theories – better, this only becomes possible to me beyond all such theories.

What I do need instead is on the one hand a clear perception of the person; this also includes the perception of her or his internal energetic patterns (see below).

Above all however, it is a really subjective realisation quasi from human to human, into which all the experience of my life comes in.

Theories come into play at the point where I ask myself what I am going to do with the impressions that I have gained, how I want to transform them into a treatment that makes sense for me and the client. And here it is also that the meridians can come into play, in case it appears to make sense, to be useful to me – or better: where it *feels* right – to use them in a focused way as an instrument in my treatment. They are then however not more than an instrument besides several other meridian-free ways of working.

Orientation in the physical and the energetic body

What actually is touch? Is it above all the physical contact that I can produce with my hands on the body of the client? Or is it much more – is it not that touch also happens through my attention? In fact it is the attention of the Shiatsu therapist that I take for one of the most important instruments in our work. Beyond this, we are also touching, with nothing but our attention, in the energetic space, when we share the "therapeutic space" with the client.

In order to touch in the right way with the instruments of presence, attention and one's own body (e.g. with my hands), I need to orient myself in the physical and energetic body of the client. It is a deceitful

help that is being offered here by the meridian system, as it seems to tell me where I have to touch.

Today however I prefer to orient almost exclusively at the information that the client has given me about her situation and at what I perceive and feel. Besides the perception of fullness and emptiness it is also the "feeling attracted" that is important to me. That means that I experience a spot or a region of the client as being essential for the situation as described by the client. My orientation in Shiatsu is fundamentally meridian-free in first place.

The perception of the situation of a person and her body first relies on the information that the client is giving to me verbally, but also by her behaviour, gestures, mimic and merely the way of "being in the room". I orient myself at the expression of her body as well as at patterns in body and space that spring to my attention when listening, observing and touching. Hara- or back diagnosis also in a meridian-free Shiatsu are of a great help to come to a clear orientation.

One of the most important sources of information however consists in the energetic perception. It is very helpful to "scan" through the whole body or certain areas with the Inner Eye in order to attentively perceive the patterns of energetic activity, of fullness and emptiness. The energetic organs do always show their actual and specific situation here, independently of whether someone experiences problems there or not.

Energetic perception fundamentally requires that the perceiving person has to be relaxed (at least up to a certain degree) and

allows "wideness" to emerge internally. Such a perception is always "spatial". The surface becomes more and more irrelevant for the treatment course, the orientation occurs on the "deeper spaces" of the body. It is there that the patterns are perceived that relate to the subject of a treatment, and which I can touch directly – be it with my attention or be it by the touch of my hands. It is also there that the changes are being registered which are telling me whether I am working correctly and what effect my treatment has.

All this information helps me to find a clear focus for the treatment. Triggered by my meridian-free way of working, the term focus area (also: area of reference) has become of great importance in my own Shiatsu practise as well as in my teaching. The focus area is the place in the body of the client where the subject of a treatment manifests most clearly perceptible. This can be a place of pain or the expression of the situation of an energetic organ in one of the three burning spaces (see more below). For advanced practitioners a focus area may also be a perceptible immaterial vibrational level in the energetic field of the client. That place is usually not to be found by following the meridian system only.

The focus area becomes the central, pivotal point of a treatment, it enables the treating person to connect to the subject at any moment of the session and thus to know what she is doing and why she is doing it. A clear focus area is also of great importance in a meridian oriented Shiatsu. However, while in a meridian Shiatsu it is possible to cheat oneself here in orienting at the meridian courses without having a treatment focus at all, this is not

possible in meridian-free Shiatsu. Here without a defined focus the treatment will quickly become arbitrary and aimless.

The fact that the meridians are only coming into play later has the great advantage that my perception and orientation remains mostly undisturbed by them. In my opinion it is essential to perceive the (energetic) space of the body beyond the meridians and to include it into the treatment. Put in other words: one fundamental disadvantage of the mere orientation at the meridian system, be it the traditional or the one extended by Masunaga, consists in the practitioner often overseeing the many interesting and important messages that the body of the client offers to her off the meridian courses. If the orientation on the body is fundamentally meridian-free, then we have the freedom to look wherever something "shows up" and to work there in the frame of the treatment subject.

Direct work with the body, clear perception and direct touch of its energetic structures beyond all meridian courses for me is the actual basis for a good Shiatsu. It allows a highly specific and focused work for example with clients who are suffering from specific problems.

The energetic organs

Even before the theory and treatment practice of the meridian comes the theory of the energetic organs for me. In difference to Masunaga (at least how he expressed himself in the two books that have been translated into English so far from what I know) I do not see the meridians as independent entities (respectively as being identical with the organs), but

according to the understanding of TCM as one expression of the energetic organ (besides others).

I especially need the knowledge about the organs when I want to assign my perceptions of the client to a theoretical system that I am familiar with in order to proceed with more clarity in my treatment. So it is of special importance where in the body, respectively in the three cavities, the organ in question is at home.

This knowledge helps me e.g. to assign a perceived local phenomenon (e.g. pain or a prominent physical or energetic expression) to an organ in the area of the three cavities. This makes the decision for a clear treatment focus easier, yes often this only makes it possible. Every energetic organ, which offers itself as a treatment focus e.g. in Hara diagnosis shows its actual condition well perceptibly in one of the three body cavities. On the one hand the local manifestation of the organ allows a deeper understanding of the situation of the client regarding the given treatment subject – on the other hand it leads my attention to a place where I can directly work with the organ in question (and what it stands for in the life of the client). With such an orientation it is possible to give very good Shiatsu treatments. Meridians are absolutely not necessary for this.

The value of the meridians in my Shiatsu

However, I do frequently make use of meridians as a specific technical tool in order to work with the perceived situation of an energetic organ. This is because meridians have two special advantages. For one it allow it to

easily stay in touch with the vibrational quality of an organ throughout the body (this counts especially the Masunaga flows); to explore this quality through the touch on the course of the meridian as well as by perceiving the "mood" and information as it presents itself in the treatment space.

To the other, meridians offer the elegant possibility to connect areas over long distances through their courses. Beyond the technical connection they help me recognise connections between specific phenomena that I perceive in a treatment, which otherwise I may not have become aware of. The disadvantage here is, as already mentioned, that too much fixation on the meridians easily leads to oversee other important areas and phenomena, e.g. important Kyos, which may only be one or two centimetres away from the meridian course, but sometimes also at the other end of the body. To "see" the connections off the meridians requires some experience, to perceive them along the flow of meridians is easier in the beginning.

Touch also in Shiatsu has nothing to do with meridians in first place. For me to touch above all means to get in contact with the client in her inner spaces, to set individual areas in the body in relation with each other, to allow connections to emerge so that something new becomes possible. Meridians can be a valuable tool in this respect, they can however never be more than an instrument.

Some basic principles of Shiatsu as I understood them through meridian-free Shiatsu

(too many word for a very simple thing)

Through the exploration of the possibilities of a meridian-free Shiatsu my understanding of Shiatsu has deepened a lot. To detach Shiatsu from the meridians and only to follow the patterns of Ki unveiled certain principles that are not only essential in a meridian-free Shiatsu but that are of great importance for Shiatsu in general – meridian related or not.

That they have only rarely been used in Zen-Shiatsu is only partially to be explained by the fact that they are the expression of my subjective way in Shiatsu. It seems much more that the exclusive work with meridians has made us blind for essential aspects of Shiatsu - for some time at least. Looking back, besides other influences, it was especially the time of learning with Saul Goodman that made me look and explore beyond the meridians.

In the following I want to describe two principles that the meridian-free Shiatsu taught to me, and which in my opinion are of great importance for Shiatsu in general. These two principles are:

1. the **focus area** resp. area of reference in a treatment
2. the **8 steps of a local meridian-free Shiatsu**

1. Focus in a Shiatsu treatment

The clarity of a treatment depends on a clear focus – and this has strong influence on its effect. Everything towards which we direct our attention, anything that is related to the request of the client, which is leading him to our practice (and which often is a means of measure for the effect of our work) can become the focus of a treatment.

If a client comes with specific physical problems like back pain e.g. then this area of trouble will offer itself as the focus of the treatment. It may however also be another area that seems to be highly important for the reported troubles, as it may be the neck and shoulder area in the case of headaches. Also psychological and emotional issues are often to be located in a specific area of the body. Hence it makes sense to ask the client where he can feel a described emotional state best or most clearly in the body.

The focus of a treatment can however also clearly lie in the immaterial sphere, as in the case of emotions like sadness, fear or anger that the practitioner senses in the space or also in an area of the client's body. It can be impressions of how a person deals with certain sides of life, what strengths and possibilities, but also what restrictions seem to consist. Examples for this could be the way of dealing with stress and pressure, a general emotional, mental, physical or similar tension. The practitioner can also connect with the situation of an energetic organ by asking the question how the client deals with a central functional aspect of this organ in her or his life, respectively what strengths and restrictions she or he experiences here.

Precondition for working with such an immaterial focus is to perceive it "clearly" and to be able to notice changes during the treatment.

The focus area

Not only during a Shiatsu training – respectively during the first years of professional practice – does it make sense to clearly find the focus in such a described area in the body of the client. I want to call this physical place of manifestation of the treatment subject focus area (or area of reference). Also for advanced Shiatsu practitioners this will always be an excellent means of orientation, especially when a client comes to Shiatsu with troubles that can be physically localised.

The main reason for choosing a physical area of focus or reference is to enable the practitioner keeping the focus more easily during the treatment, to "stick to the subject". Thus the practitioner has a place where he can work locally with the subject (which is an important aspect of professional Shiatsu) and to perceive the changes that are happening there. To the other, when working with other areas of the body, we can easily relate these back to the area we started from and allow connections to unfold when this seems helpful.

The aim of a Shiatsu treatment is to increase the freedom of the client in the area of focus (and beyond this in the whole of the person). The practitioner will therefore adapt and point his treatment to the needs of this one area. During the whole time he stays in contact with this place, even while working on a more distant spot – respectively he repeatedly goes back into contact with it, be it

immediately physically or with his attention. He gets aware of changes that are taking place there or of changing needs and adapts the following course of the treatment accordingly. The area of focus becomes the central, pivotal point of the treatment.

The energetic Kyo-Jitsu pattern of the focus area stands in living contact with the pattern(s) in other areas of the body; yes in fact it can only show a specific pattern because other corresponding areas make this possible through their own Kyo-Jitsu configuration. A change in the area of focus is only possible when these other areas also experience a change. Through his connection to the area of focus, even while working on another spot, the practitioner facilitates communication and balance between the different interrelated areas.

Two ways

In the practice of Shiatsu principally there are two ways to come to a clear focus area through the perception of the physical and energetic patterns and thus to come to a satisfying whole body treatment:

- a) to the one by the place where the client's problems show or can be felt in the his body
 - b) to the other through a body diagnosis like Hara- or back diagnosis.
- a) Whole body Shiatsu departing from a local issue

If the client comes with a specific, physically localisable ailment (e.g. back pain, joint problems or

also an emotional issue, which may go along with a local sentiment like a pressure behind the sternum) then this place offers itself as a natural focus area that becomes the pivotal point of the treatment and from which one can read whether the treatment "goes into the right direction", whether it is effective and enables energetic change.

Let's take the example of acute or chronic problems in one single joint. If this is the reason for the client's coming, then it most often will make sense to define the painful joint and its surrounding as focus of the treatment. This means that the practitioner carefully examines the area, takes it into his hands, asks concrete questions on the nature and the history of the ailment and then locally works with this place (see further below under "8 steps of a local Shiatsu"). At this early point already one will be able to perceive whether and in which way it reacts to the touch by the attention and the hands.

After this local work has been concluded the practitioner through a whole body treatment will integrate this area into the whole of the person. In this way the place that has been worked with is being offered the whole body of the client as space of resonance, which usually deepens the effect of the treatment at the original place significantly. In this phase of the treatment too, the practitioner will repeatedly go into contact with the area of focus, be it with the hands, be it with the attention, in order to experience how it reacts to the expansion of the field of treatment. Sometimes it can also make sense to let unfold the "big" space first by a whole body treatment, before you turn to the area of focus. The aim of the Shiatsu treatment in both methods is to allow

the place of trouble a better integration into the whole body.

The full presence of the attention of the practitioner at the place where his hands touch is the basis of such a work (and in general of any good Shiatsu). For the one this allows the perception of different energetic qualities and patterns (Kyo and Jitsu) in the body and the direct work with them (see also article "Working with Kyo and Jitsu"). To the other, the presence of the attention in itself is an effective tool of Shiatsu. Even more: I would call it the most important tool in Shiatsu.

Whole body treatment starting from Hara- or back diagnosis

If one follows Hara- or back diagnosis, one will decide for one organ with which one wants to work in the first line during this Shiatsu treatment (see below). The situation of the chosen energetic organ almost always clearly manifests in the expression of the physical body. All energetic organs show most clearly in the trunk, in the area of the three burning spaces where they are "at home". These manifestations of energetic situations of the organs can be perceived, "seen", and felt. The place in the body where an organ shows most clearly offers itself as a focus area for the treatment. The practitioner will work with it in the same way as with a place of complaint that has been made the area of focus.

Contrary to the common practice in Zen Shiatsu to work with two meridians, respectively energetic organs in a treatment, I propose to choose one of the two corresponding Kyo-Jitsu-organs to represent the theme of the treatment and to work with this one in the first line. In this

way it becomes easy to decide for one clear focus area where the first organ manifests most clearly. Even though we work primarily with one focus area in a treatment, the second organ and its manifestation in the body (as well as in the course of the meridians) can be used in order to address the main issue of the treatment from an energetic counter-pole and to support the communication between Kyo and Jitsu. It can however also be totally left out if this seems to be the appropriate thing to do.

It is often not easy for the students to take the decision for one organ to become the treatment's subject. This may be above all because they do not have that much experience at this early stage of their Shiatsu way as to trust their own subjective feeling. It is this subjective feeling, which tells us most reliably which decision will be the right one and what is to be done. This radically subjective point of view and taking decisions may appear insecure and unreliable to the inexperienced. In fact however, with increasing experience it is the best warrant to do the right thing in Shiatsu.

2. Eight steps of a local, meridian-free Shiatsu

The work with a local area (of reference) can be displayed in several steps for the better understanding: the eight steps of a local meridian-free Shiatsu (whereas some of these steps are also important for a meridian related Shiatsu):

- Receive exact information from the client

- Take the area into your hands, respectively lay your hands onto it and look into it with the attention of the Hara. Perceive differences and decide for one area with which you want to work
- Touch the centre of this area with Pure Attention
- Support the body's own movement
- Support Pure Attention by touch "from outside"
- Connect energetic antagonists / polarities
- Apply structural techniques
- Integrate the local into the whole (allow connection with the whole body)

These eight steps shall be briefly described here.

Receive exact information from your client

In order to be able of working with an area of trouble we need the most exact possible information of the client on the nature of her ailment, as well as on its history. This includes information on the first appearance and the duration of the problem, whether it appears continually or periodically (e.g. every night or during menstruation), what factors – if this is the case – contribute to an amelioration or make it worse (e.g. stress or relaxation), whether the client herself has an explanation for the appearance of the ailment and whether there have been special circumstances in her life at the time of its first appearance (the problem may well be related to such circumstances).

Of great importance is an exact localisation for example of pain; if possible one should ask the client in such a case to point at the spot where and in which depth it hurts the most. Knowing the exact localisation e.g. of pain supports the orientation as one is looking into the area with the Inner Eye.

All these pieces of information support the practitioner's understanding for the situation of the client. A deeper understanding positively influences the Therapeutic Space that is being created by the therapist and the client. This Therapeutic Space is most essential in every holistic work with other people – so in Shiatsu.

Take the area into the hands and "look into it" with the "attention of the Hara"

This is a further essential precondition for a good local Shiatsu. In taking the concerned area into her hands and "looking into it", the practitioner brings all her attention into it and gives meaning to this spot for the duration of the treatment. Without such a step there is a danger that the physical touch that follows will only have a weak effect or that a different area, a different subject could suddenly become the focus of the treatment.

"Looking into it" (we could also say "feeling into it") also says that this work is not about a superficial observation or touch but about something that is happening in the deep space under the body surface. This space may be bigger or smaller, but we can always perceive different energetic patterns and structures.

It is clear that "looking into it" does not happen by the optical

apparatus of the eyes, even though the glance may support the focus of attention: what we are looking at, there also goes our attention. Nevertheless, many are using the term "looking" for this activity. Others would say "feel" or "sense" is a more appropriate term. I myself like to call it "looking with the Inner Eye".

More exactly speaking it is the attention that expands from the inside of the practitioner's body into the space that is being "observed". If it works well then this attention comes out of the whole of the observing person and therewith from the Hara. I have described a good exercise for this in the article "Internal Techniques" under "The technique of the focused Ki – Ki-projection".

When one is doing this for the first time, one may probably not "see" anything at first and one may want to give up right away. If one stays however longer in the area that is to be explored with the attention, then one will suddenly become aware that it does not feel or "look" homogeneous anymore, but that there are differences. Some spots feel different from others or look different than others.

What we "see" here some people may consider as totally unreal, as the product of pure imagination. In fact I like to call this procedure "dreaming into the body". However, practice shows that the patterns are very real. In the same way as we can "see" or "feel" them when we first look into such a space we can also observe it's pattern changing while we work with them.

Touching the centre with the Pure Attention

Within the energetic patterns of the explored space the practitioner now chooses a "prominent" area that she feels is most related to the client's ailment, respectively the subject of the treatment. She guides the focus of her Hara's attention right into the centre of this chosen spot, stays in it and observes, if and how this centre changes, e.g. wanders or weakens/becomes more prominent.

If the centre starts to wander, she will just follow and not let herself be cast off. If there is a really prominent change showing up (e.g. the pattern becoming weaker) this is most often a sign that the work at this place can be finished and that we can go on to another place. There is no need to stay until a pattern has fully dissolved, which will not happen anyway. Once a clear change has started to occur it is the right time to go on to some other place or point. The change will now continue to unfold even if the practitioner's attention is not with it anymore. If she should decide to come back to that spot 5 or 10 minutes later, it will feel and look different.

If one is doing this exercise for the first time one will often not have the feeling to perceive something essential, not to speak of even to touching it. Energetic patterns, which the Inner Eye is perceiving there so unclearly, by their very nature are fuzzy and less sharply perceptible than physical structures or patterns. For this reason the untrained will often either not perceive anything at all, respectively "oversee" them, or will not take them as being important or reliable. Some experience is needed to find one's way in there, in order also to take what is "seen" for

real and to take it seriously. Then however it is all simple and not different from watching a thrilling movie on television, only that this movie is truly interactive.

To touch with attention is touch with Ki. It is by itself an effective therapeutic technique and at the same time the basis for every touch in Shiatsu.

Support the body's own movement

In order to effectuate this valuable technique the practitioner has to be relaxed, internally wide but also really present. When she holds a body area in such a way without effectuating greater pressure, not wanting to change anything but simply being there, it can happen that it feels like the touched area wants to move slightly under her hands.

What can be perceived here are energetic impulses of movement (that are nevertheless often clearly being felt physically), which make clear that any body tissue and any part of the body is in a permanent, living dynamic state. In the area of pains and problems this movement usually is restricted. One could say that this restricted energetic movement is a definition for any energetic blockage. Under our relaxed hands it feels supported and tries to break free. Therefore it makes sense to tenderly support it, to follow it with a soft touch only – or better to become a part of the movement oneself without developing too much own activity. Usually one will notice right away that the client reacts positively to these subtle movements, e.g. with a deepened breathing or that the

energetic pattern in the area of trouble changes.

In a primarily physically oriented Shiatsu such tendencies of movement will hardly be noticed, as the own physical activity in the practitioner's body is quasi much too loud to perceive the subtle impulses within the client's body. It is the wide-open calmness of just touching and looking into it that is needed to sense the impulses of movement.

All that has to be done then is to follow the movement, to support it in going where it wants to go by its own impetus. With more experience one will not rarely become aware that there are directions or places that the movement is excluding or that it wants to describe the same arch stereotypically over and over again. In this case it can make sense to tenderly guide the motion quasi from inside (as we are being part of the movement), to support certain directions while not allowing others.

The impulses of movement that are being perceived here are described elsewhere as motion of the fascia. Work with these has extensively been made a subject in osteopathy and craniosacral work. In my opinion it also offers in Shiatsu very good possibilities and can and should become a standard technique, an integral part of Shiatsu. After all it is right that as a logical consequence when Ki starts to move the body wants to move too, and it makes sense and enriches our work to support this in our work.

Supporting Pure Attention with touch from outside

While the attention of the treating person is still resting in the centre of the Jitsu resp. of the Kyo it

can become important to support it with physical touch from outside. With thumb or fingertips she touches the surface at a spot, which feels to be related to the place inside. This touch can range from being very light and tender to very physical, strong and deep. It is always a vertical touch that is aiming right at the centre of the area in the depth that one is working with. In doing this the practitioner perceives whether the effect of her touch reaches down into this depth, respectively changes her technique in order to make this possible. Further on she perceives every change of the pattern in the focus area.

Connect energetic polarities

To support the work that has been done so far it is often highly effective to connect two opposite polarities (Jitsu and Kyo) or two Kyo-points through touch. If the practitioner meets density (Jitsu) at the place of pain (as often occurs with acute problems) she then starts looking for a place of energetic emptiness (Kyo) at the place of trouble. In doing this she proceeds the same way as at the beginning of the treatment.

Let's take the example of knee troubles with a painful density in the area of the internal cleft of the joint (quite a frequent issue in a Shiatsu praxis): in such a situation there may be an emptiness, a Kyo e.g. in the knee pit, under the patella or in the area of the external cleft of the joint. These are merely examples; in fact, energetically prominent points can occur at any place. The energetic counterpart is often been found on the other side of the body area in question. It can however also be found in a totally different place,

sometimes even in the direct neighbourhood of the Jitsu.

If one is finding Kyo in the area chosen as an origin – happens more often with chronic ailments – one goes looking for a Jitsu, or – equally well suiting – another prominent Kyo, as the deep connection of two different Kyo places can as well kick-start an effective energetic dynamic.

Let's stay with the example of the Jitsu in the area of acute pain: while she is resting with her attention in the centre of the Jitsu the practitioner touches the Kyo in the knee pit in its centre with finger or thumb. She imagines that both places connect to one single place, respectively that she is touching *one* energetic space at it's both ends. This imagination makes energetic connection and balancing much easier – thoughts and imaginations are energetic fields and as such influencing other energetic fields.

Everything else happens by nature. The polarities communicate with each other all by themselves and get balanced in tendency, respectively two Kyos communicate with each other and thus kick-start deep energetic movements – if it is right for the "system" of the receiver at that time. We can support this process by different ways of touching, e.g. by sinking in again and again on one side or by tenderly moving the tip of the thumb or finger back and forth in the contact in the depth. Such a technique can support the readiness of the locally bound Ki to "get moving". Most important is that the practitioner is touching with light and wide attention. This offers Ki the space to move in.

The important thing is to stay in contact with the Jitsu (as it is our example) in the painful area during

the whole process with the touch – as well as with the attention – and perceive any change that occurs! Often the density will start wandering or changes in some other way. Whenever we get the impression that its centre is moving we follow with our attention, if necessary also with our hands.

As I already stated it is not necessary that the perceived pattern totally dissolves. It is enough if it clearly starts to change. Touch, be it with the hands, be it with the attention, has an effect over hours and days. It is only then that we can say what effect the treatment has had.

Apply structural techniques

"Looking" into the energetic space and perceiving the pattern there is also prerequisite for applying any structural technique. In this sense working locally in Shiatsu as I describe it here is a perfect preparation for applying structural techniques for example on a joint.

Being present in the space of a joint allows me to "see" its internal energetic state. I get all the information that I need to choose the right technique. It also immediately shows any change that is being affected by the technique that I use.

Once you have reached step three of this eight-step-model (i.e. the practitioner rests with her attention in the centre of the space that she is working with) all steps that follow do not have to be applied in the sequence as I describe it here for didactic reasons. Instead they may be used at any time in the process that seems appropriate. This also counts for structural techniques: it may feel right to introduce a

specific technique into the treatment right after being in contact with one's own attention. It may also feel right to do this before one connects the local with the whole body – or at any given point in between.

Integrate the local into the whole (allow connection with the whole body)

The local work with the place of trouble should then be connected with the whole body. When the own attention is looking for antagonistic polarities in the body of the client in that way described above it may be that not only individual points spring to our attention, but also lines that are running from prominent Kyo- and Jitsu-spots into the closer and farther surrounding. In doing this they are sometimes exactly following the meridian courses, more often they go their own ways, though. These lines too, as all energetic patterns, are perceived rather vaguely, we guess them more than we see them. Despite of their seemingly very volatile nature they give us important hints about which lines we should be following on the way from the local area into the whole body.

The body is an energetic space in which every spot is always related to every other spot in a lively connection. It is always the whole of the human being and the whole body that is involved in a state of feeling well or not. This means that a local problem can never be isolated, but can only arise "in collaboration" with all other areas. A Jitsu can e.g. only arise when there are Kyos evolving at several other places – and vice versa.

When the energetic pattern of a local place of ailment changes through a Shiatsu treatment this

effect will last the longer and reach the farther the more also the resonance partners of this area in the whole body are being addressed in that treatment. For this reason we most often work with the whole of the body in Shiatsu; only rarely we do concentrate on individual parts.

Already for the reason of getting a clear focus for the treatment it usually makes sense to put the work in the area of the local problems at the beginning and to widen the treatment to the whole body after the local Shiatsu. Sometimes, however, it appears wiser to go first to the "periphery" and to address the local area only after this preparation. This could e.g. make sense when it does not feel right to touch the area of ailment directly without preparation, because it seems to be too sensitive an issue.

For didactic reasons I am describing here the work from the local to the whole. After the local work has been finished because changes started to happen in the energetic pattern of that area (sometimes also because despite of all efforts no changes have set in), the glance of the practitioner becomes wider and perceives how the local area is embedded in the whole of the body. Actually of course, the glance has been wide all the time perceiving the connection to the whole; now however the attentive wideness becomes especially relevant for the treatment.

There are different ways to get from the local to the whole. In a meridian based Shiatsu one will use the courses of the meridians, mostly by following one or two meridians that emerge from the perception of the whole human being e.g. from Hara diagnosis and/or from the local Kyo-Jitsu pattern.

The procedure in a meridian-free Shiatsu is different. Since it is not meridian course oriented, it has to rely on the perception of energetic patterns. If the local area e.g. is found on the knee then the surrounding area of the knee becomes interesting, i.e. the way down to the ankle and the feet as well as the way up into the groins and buttocks.

A prominent energetic area, be it kyo or jitsu, always has several corresponding partners in the body, be it of the opposite or of the same quality, as already described. These important corresponding places are always prominent and that is why they can be found by the practitioner. They can lie in the immediate surrounding of the body up to its opposite end. In general they are to be found at all of these described places.

The work with such corresponding areas usually has direct effect on the pattern in the focus area. This is why they should be included in the treatment.

Moles and Kangaroos

In the meridian-free Shiatsu there are basically two possibilities of going from the local to the whole:

- By continually proceeding to the next corresponding place (in our example e.g. at the ankle or in the groin)
- In directly "jumping" there after having perceived it and by letting emerge the connection to the area of origin from there.

Continuous work – "follow the mole's tunnels"

A continuous work in Shiatsu has the advantage that we can widen the focus area we have already worked on step by step and in a reliable way, so that effects can unfold in there on a broader scale. The more, we are less likely to oversee important disruptions in the vibrational space.

In the meridian-free work there are on the one hand no meridians at hand that could quasi lead us from on spot to the next like on a road map. On the other hand we are also much freer in our perception and in choosing important and interesting areas.

When following the continuous ways it is helpful to orient ourselves at the Kyo-lines that are running like moles' tunnels more or less continually through the whole of the body, including the arms and legs. One of the central meanings of Kyo in Shiatsu is that it offers an entrance to the depth, to the *Communicating Level*. This entrance should also be used here.

Meridian-free continuous work along an arm or leg e.g. does not primarily have the sense of getting from one point to the next. The aim is much more to let emerge a open, connecting space between two areas that allows both of them to communicate with each other. In following the Kyo we quasi "open" this body area, a method that can be very effective.

Perceiving such Kyo patterns usually is not so easy for the beginner, since the nature of Kyo is the hidden - contrary to Jitsu, which is the obvious. Kyo spots don't jump at you as does Jitsu; that is why it is advisable to train the perception of

Kyo. The more you look for the Kyo in your Shiatsu treatments the easier it will be to connect with the depth via your attention, to really be down there. When you reach this state in your work then Shiatsu will become a lot easier. All peripheral tension and stress becomes unimportant once you are in contact with the relevant. It pays to follow the moles tunnels.

“Throw out the fishing rod” – jumping to the relevant spots

It is however also possible to jump directly from the focus area to more distant prominent and probably communicating spots. When the practitioner has become familiar with the place of origin, she simply holds it and lets her wide and soft glance glide over the client's body, from the closer surrounding up to the far-away end. In this way it becomes possible to see this body so to say with the eyes of the focus area.

It is then as if important corresponding areas would quasi show up, calling for our attention. Again this kind of information is not so strong, actually it usually is so weak that untrained practitioners most often do not pay attention to them, simply “overhear” them. As we get more familiar with this kind of perception it becomes easier and easier to feel these hints and to follow them. When I am teaching I sometimes call this technique “throwing out the rod”.

If one goes to such a calling spot it is necessary to keep the connection with the original area – be it with our hands, be it with our attention. Finally working with this new spot only makes sense because we have been working on the focus area before. Many times it will be possible to allow a connecting space

emerge between both spots with the attention and also with the hands...

A further important and simple technique

Whole body scanning

The orientation in the body of a client during the treatment should start as early as possible, e.g. at the moment when she or he comes into the treatment room. Already at this early point it is possible to let the field of our own attention wander through the client's body. When the client then speaks of his situation it becomes really interesting to compare this information with the image of the energetic patterns that is emerging at the same time and to make out possible and important areas for the treatment.

An experienced practitioner will thus at the beginning and as well during the treatment “scan” the whole body or individual areas with his Inner Eye and attentively perceive the patterns of energetic activity, of fullness and emptiness. Of course this also is a valuable technique when a client is not presenting any problems at all, as differentiated energetic patterns are the origin of all life expressions and there for can be found anywhere in the body at any time.

A good exercise for this technique of “scanning”, which is also being used by experienced practitioners, consists in putting the hands on the client's Hara in a relaxed state and to let the field of one's own attention wander through the partner's body.

As with all energetic exercises of perception you will at first probably not see, respectively feel anything,

or if, then something quite vague, quasi foggy, of which you may not think that it may be of any importance. As we get more familiar with this way of looking, the possibility opens to look around in the whole body and to receive a complex image of the energetic pattern of this person. This image mirrors an important part of this person's energetic reality, it is

reliable and one can work with it directly – and also register changes that occur during the treatment.

With more and more experience it then becomes possible to scan through the body without even touching it.

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