

## **Working with Kyo and Jitsu**

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Already at birth the human shows an accentuated personality, which is different from anybody else's. At this early point in life already, some character traits are more distinct than others. Wherever these may come from, any further development follows the patterns of this personality. In the course of life the forces that live therein prevail more and more. The human is not able to realise all the possibilities that she carries within herself, though.

Familiar and social education and coinage are external forces that co-shape the unfolding of the internal power of the personality. They can have a really supporting effect on this development but may also hinder or even suppress it. Education and social norms have their strongest shaping effect in the first half of our life.

The continuously developing human is everything else than a homogeneous entity. The different regions of his body and his personality as whole are alive and active to quite different extents. Besides his personality that he brought into the world and the social forces, it is especially the wishes and fears of man that make him use certain parts of his personality more than others. Whatever is allowed to live unfolds in liveliness, what is avoided and un-lived will be suppressed, will stagnate, or become stunted.

The described forces of development produce a highly individual pattern of sides that are lived and such that cannot (anymore) unfold. Some of these

patterns develop over a very long term, over years and decades. Others only form for a short time according to the daily changing requirements and activities of life and resolve later on.

In the course of the years, the sides that have been active for a long time become stronger and stronger. The sides that stay un-lived and suppressed over long term, however, lose power. Finally, most people identify with their strong and lively sides while the un-lived ones are repressed from their self-image and often become unwanted shadows of their personality.

The body truly mirrors the life patterns of a person. In our work we understand the body of a human as the manifestation of her personality and it is impossible to separate one from the other. Hence it is no wonder that the active and strong sides as well as the weak, respectively suppressed sides of the personality show clearly in the body.

In the same way, our body shows the specific stresses of certain life phases, as in sicknesses for example. It also mirrors in which way we deal with the special requirements of our daily life.

The ever-changing patterns of strength and weakness, of stagnation and flow in all parts of the human and his body are a positive expression of life. Problems, sickness and suffering emerge when these patterns do not anymore continually change, when they get stuck. Maybe this happens because it is difficult for us humans to constantly change,

maybe out of fear for our shadows,  
finally maybe out of fear of life itself.

### **Kyo and Jitsu**

Shiatsu works with Ki, energy. In Shiatsu we understand that it is movement of Ki or changing Ki which is the root of all expressions of life, be it in the personality of a human, in his thoughts and emotions or in the expressions of her or his body. The patterns that are brought forward by the changing or stagnating Ki are perceptible in the whole person, as well as in every single part of her or his body and personality. It is here that the practitioner of Shiatsu finds information about what is to be treated in what way. At the same time the changes in these patterns through our therapeutic work serve as a kind of monitor for the effectiveness of the treatment.

Jitsu and Kyo are terms of the traditional Japanese medicine for energetic fullness and emptiness, for energetic over-activity respectively under-activity, and for strength and weakness. In Shiatsu they are used to describe the energetic structures of a person, which are the origin of all physical structures, the strengths and weaknesses, difficulties and sicknesses on a physical, mental and spiritual level.

Naturally, there are indefinitely many kinds of strength and weakness, be it within one person or in comparison to others. Exactly speaking, one will never find a single time the same Kyo or the same Jitsu. This is because every expression of life emerges from an ultimately individual situation.

The importance of the terms Kyo and Jitsu in Shiatsu lies in the fact

that they enable us to abstract from the unique situation of an individual and relate different energetic states to each other. Thus it becomes possible to reflect on the nature of strength and weakness, of liveliness and unliveliness and to communicate about experiences on this subject. Moreover, with the terms of Kyo and Jitsu it is possible to develop concepts of treatment that are not only good for one single time for a specific person. These terms enable us to collect experiences in the treatment of energetic fullness and emptiness and to pass them on – in class, for example.

### **Kyo and Jitsu assure the energetic balance**

Nevertheless it is important to understand that Kyo and Jitsu do not exist in a human in a disconnected or abstract way, but are the expression of his way to live, to feel, to think, to understand, etc. In treatment, we will always meet a unique energetic fullness or emptiness at a given spot within the body, which has never been there before and will never be there again.

Fullness or emptiness are a necessary expression of life. On the one hand they are an expression of the ability of man to deal with the requirements of life in a highly differentiated way, on the other hand they also are a manifestation of his tendencies to try to escape from his reality, to escape pain and other unpleasant feelings and to strive for positive states, whatever this may mean to him.

Therapeutic work is not about getting rid of Kyo and Jitsu, as there is nothing wrong about them. The aim is rather to allow them to connect through simple touch, to

give them the opportunity to communicate with each other and – if it is necessary and right for this person in this moment – to find a new balance in-between them. In this way, flow (i.e. change) can evolve, and flow is the expression of life.

In the end we create our Kyos and our Jitsus, our strengths and weaknesses, flow and stagnation, blockages and sickness ourselves. They don't "just occur" to us. And it takes (a lot of) energy to control the flow of life in this way. The biggest part of this energetic effort could surely be saved in an ideal case. There are, however, always good reasons for each and every stagnation, even if its production and maintenance should consume a lot of energy. It is the necessity to keep up the balance of life, which leads us humans to sometimes create breathtaking constructions of blockades.

Stagnations assure a certain balance within a person at a given time. They will only change if a new balance has become possible. In this case, the human has – often on an unconscious level – learned something new. She may see her situation with a different, often wider view that allows former antagonisms to connect, thus rendering the stagnation superfluous. As it takes energy and creates tension to keep up blockades, this balancing of Kyo and Jitsu allows a human to relax, and things become easier.

### **Shiatsu means to touch and to support communication**

Through therapeutic Shiatsu a client learns how to allow to communicate what had to be kept separate before. In this process the

separated places in the client come closer to each other and balancing can take place – be it on a local or on a more fundamental, comprehensive level.

I understand the support of communication between energetic opposites as the second main instrument of Shiatsu besides supporting the flow of Ki (i.e. expanding the vibrational space). Both goals are reached through simple and "wide" touch. Improvement in communication does not only take place on an energetic level. Usually it expresses itself in a sturdy, physical way and is clearly perceptible, physically as well as in what the client experiences.

As energetic antagonisms exist on all levels of the human existence, improvement of communication and a certain balancing can hence also take place on all of these levels. The opposites may express themselves on a physical level and locally limited as headaches or shoulder/neck problems. They may cause functional disorders of the organs such as respiratory problems or diarrhoea, manifest as a premenstrual syndrome (PMS) or emotional distress, or bring up the question of life during so-called midlife crisis.

In the following I wish to outline how I work on connecting and facilitating communication between Kyo and Jitsu in my Shiatsu practice. Through different combination of the different techniques all of the above stated examples can be treated with prospect of success.

### **The local balance of Kyo and Jitsu**

In the case of acute or chronic ailments, which can be localised in a

specific part of the body, it often makes sense to strive for a local balance first before working with the body as a whole. I want to describe my procedure by using two examples: knee problems and pain in the chest.

*Example of knee problems:*

Precondition for any specific balancing is the perception of the energetic opposites. Supernatural skills are not needed for that. The basics can be learned in a good Shiatsu training. Thereafter, genuine interest and continuous practice are needed to continue to develop this ability. This is an enthralling life-long process.

To get an impression of the energetic pattern that is related to the problems, I first ask my client to exactly describe where, under which circumstances and in what way there is a problem here. Having received this information I then take the knee into my hands and carefully look at it from the in- and outside with my Inner Eye.

Take for example problems in the region of the inner meniscus. Here I may perceive a density in the gap between femur and tibia on the inside of the joint that may expand as far as into the medial head of the shinbone. Being with my clear and wide attention in the centre of the density within that gap on the inside of the joint is already a treatment, which not rarely shows amazing results. Attention is pure Ki and Ki works!

To connect two opposite states through my touch, however, quite often is even more effective. If I find density (Jitsu) at the place of pain (as there often is with acute problems), I look for a spot of

energetic emptiness (Kyo) in the region of the knee now. Such a situation may be found for example in the back of the knee, or in the region of the outer gap of the joint. Often in balancing of Kyo and Jitsu, the energetic antagonist is to be found on the opposite side of the concerned part of the body. It can, however, be located somewhere totally different, possibly even in the direct vicinity of the Jitsu.

If I find Kyo in the painful region (as it is more often in the case with chronic troubles) I look for a Jitsu - or even better for another prominent Kyo, as the connection of two communicating Kyo-spots usually effectively changes the pattern of Kyo and Jitsu (see further down).

Let's stay with the example of a Jitsu at the place of acute pain. To prepare the connecting of Kyo and Jitsu it often makes sense to work locally with the Jitsu first. Therefore, my attention stays within the centre of the energetic density, while I touch the jitsu area from the outside with one hand (thumb, fingers, palm). In doing this I carefully take note of how deep the impulse of this physical touch reaches and whether it stimulates the centre of the jitsu, which is the objective of this work. Also I watch for any changes that may occur within the jitsu while I am working on it.

To connect Kyo and Jitsu I then stay with my attention *in the centre of the Jitsu* and with the finger or thumb I touch the Kyo e.g. in the back of the knee *in its very centre*. I imagine that both spots are one, respectively that I touch one energetic space at both its ends. This imagination facilitates the energetic connection and the balancing (thoughts and images are energetic

fields and influence other energetic fields).

Everything else happens all by itself. If it is the right time for the "system" of the receiver, communication and a certain balancing will occur. I can support the process through different techniques of physical touch, e.g. repeatedly sinking in on a relatively small area around one of the spots. Or I gently move the tip of my thumb or finger back and forth while being in contact with the depth of the Kyo. In this way I can promote the readiness of the locally bound Ki to "start moving". It is of high importance that the practitioner touches with a light and "wide" attention. This offers Ki the room to move.

In performing this technique it can happen that the practitioner suddenly gets the feeling as if the touched spots under her hands – in this case the knee - slightly want to move. If such a perception comes up it is helpful to gently support the movement with the hands. This tendency to move is energetic by nature and strives for the balancing Kyo and Jitsu. Through light external movements this can be supported in a wonderful way.

The important thing is that during the whole process I stay in contact with the Jitsu in the area of pain with my hands as well as with my attention and register exactly any change that occurs. Not seldom the density shifts its centre to another place or changes in some other way. Whenever I get the impression that the centre moves I follow right away with my attention, if necessary also with my hands.

It is not necessary that the perceived pattern completely

dissolves. It is enough that it has clearly changed. Touch, be it with the hands, be it with the attention continues to affect, over hours and days. Only after this time one can say with certainty what effect a treatment has had.

#### *Example of pain in the chest*

Here, too, I first ask the client to exactly describe where, under which circumstances and in which way the pain in the chest occurs. In this example I assume that the trouble has been consisting for some time already in varying intensity, that a doctor of Western medicine has excluded any serious heart troubles or other diseases of the chest (e.g. that the pain does not indicate a pneumonia, pleurisies, or returning attacks of Angina Pectoris, respectively a heart attack). Otherwise the practitioner should request the client to have his problems checked by a medical doctor immediately. However, according to the understanding of modern medicine the pain may be caused for example by functional heart disorders, heart neurosis, blocked ribs or vertebrae, emotional distress or others.

Now I lay my hands on the chest of my client as close as possible to the spot where the pain is described to be (maybe in the depth). If it should prevail in the wall of the thoracic cage in connection with the breath, a density in the space of one or two ribs may spring to my attention (this could be so in the case of "blocked ribs").

I then proceed as described above in the example of the knee troubles. At first I contact the painful area with my attention from outside as well as from inside. I find an

important dense spot, and if it feels right I work locally with it. I then look for a prominent energetic antagonist and connect both with my imagination, then also with my hands. I can give the stagnating Ki a nudge through sinking in and going out again and again and in this way support the balancing. Maybe here as well I perceive that the spot under my hands wants to move. This I can support with slight following movements of my hands.

If the pain should exist locally in the depth of the thorax, I may "see" an energetic pattern, e.g. a density in the inside of the chest where the client says that the pain is. There, I cannot touch directly with my hands. However, I can use my awareness as a precise instrument and touch the density this way. The energetic opposite, a distinct Kyo may be found in the region of the Solar Plexus (or in another place). To allow a connection and balancing I work there with one hand while at the same time my attention stays in contact with the Jitsu in the chest. The Resting Hand lies on the thorax at a spot which best supports my attention in the chest. I can precisely follow the changes in the Inner Thorax with my Inner Eye.

If the whole chest hurts, I may for example perceive that it seems to be under a general tension, that especially the flux into the throat, through the diaphragm into the stomach, or through the shoulder into the left or right arm seems to be restricted, or (and) that the pain may be related to emotional issues. In such a case, it may be easier for the energy within the chest to find a balance if the blockages at the outer borders of the chest are worked on, thus the connections to other more distant parts of the body are

facilitated (see "From the local area to the whole" further down).

The energies that are released during this kind of work on the chest not rarely let the client experience emotions which have been held back for a long time. Basically emotions are as well a movement of Ki. What is being experienced may seem dramatic in certain cases, however, it is always releasing. When the movement of Ki is completed, the therewith connected emotion also stops to prevail. All that will be left are memories. It is the practitioner's responsibility to give the client a secure space for this development, which rarely lasts for more than ten to fifteen minutes. A further verbal intervention as in psychotherapy is not needed and can even be disturbing.

### **From the local area to the whole**

To let energetic opposites balance themselves at the place of pain is often quite effective in itself. Not rarely even strong problems dissolve. In many cases, regional work does not suffice, though. This is why during the treatment my attention goes from the place of trouble into the environment to see whether there are spots, which may enable the energetic state at the hurting spot to get balanced.

Typically, such points lie in the region of the next joint. They can, however, as well lie before or beyond the joint. Often good "partners" can be found on the meridian that flows close to the hurting spots, and often they are the points of classical acupuncture. The pattern can be very different, though, and therefore it is necessary to always take a close

look and not just mechanically press standard points.

In the example of knee pain I will hence look along the Spleen-Pancreas meridian, which runs through or close to the density in the inside of the knee. Helpful Kyos are often to be found in the regions of the groin or ankle (or on the way there). From experience, points on the meridians of Liver or Kidney in this region can also support the balancing process. If the local Kyo is located in the bend of the knee, other essential points may be found along the Bladder - or another meridian that runs through the bend of the knee. It can also be very helpful to go beyond the meridian system and take a look into the leg as a whole. In looking for effective balancing partners, one should not let one's view be restricted by any theory or any dogma.

With the example of the thoracic pain, the work on surrounding areas such as shoulders, shoulders joints or the upper abdomen may be of great importance. Either the energetic opposites for the pattern of the pain are found there - or it is just about releasing the blockades that lie there. Through such a release the way becomes free for the stagnating energy to connect with patterns beyond these barriers and balance. Points that wish to communicate with the thorax or its inside will be found for example on the arms, a/o in the environment of the armpit, the elbow, wrist, or in the sequences in-between. Depending on the location of the troubles in the chest, they lie in the course of the concerned meridians and can also quite often be found apart from the meridians.

A special case consists in the connection of two Kyo-regions, as I

have already mentioned before. A Kyo can also be seen as a gate of entry to a deeper communicating level in the energetic system. In holding the deep connection of two Kyos, Kyo and Jitsu can naturally not equalise directly. However, balancing on a deeper level will take place if the practitioner holds the depth of two relevant Kyos with clear and wide attention and observes changes on this level.

This technique can be used in the meridian work as well as in a meridian-free Shiatsu. It makes sense in the case of an energetic organ that needs to be balanced as well as when a Kyo shows up in the region of local pains, being in a deep communication with another, more distant Kyo. According to my experience allowing the depth of two Kyos connect is one of the most effective techniques of Shiatsu.

The balancing of Kyo and Jitsu can now be extended from the place of trouble to far-away areas - as far as on the opposite side of the body. In the example of the knee troubles, important Kyo-points may be found on the lower back or on the shoulders, respectively the forearms. When the practitioner touches the right distant Kyo the original Jitsu on the inside of the knee lets go and releases Ki. In the case of the thoracic pain e.g., more distant points that communicate with the hurting area may lie for example in the groins, the bends of the knees or the feet. They can be located on the course of the meridians of the concerned energetic organs, but as well away from the principal courses of the meridians.

With the Resting Hand (Mother Hand) the practitioner holds the connection to the area of trouble and will register any change there. It can,

however, also be laid on a sensitive spot on the way between the two points which shall find a balance, preferably on a spot where the practitioner can sense an interruption in the connection. The Resting Hand temporarily dissolves this interruption so the points, Kyo or Jitsu, can communicate with each other with less disturbance.

If the practitioner is not only concentrating on the immediate environment of the place of ailment anymore but works with such distant regions, the nature of the balancing process changes, too. Not anymore is it restricted to one region of the body, but more and more it means to allow the whole human being and the whole of his life-situation to find a new balance, a new orientation on a physical, emotional, mental and spiritual level.

### **The balancing of the energetic organs**

To my knowledge, working with a problem area by balancing local Kyo and Jitsu is not a technique in the so-called "Zen-Shiatsu" as it has been transmitted by Shizuto Masunaga.

"Zen-Shiatsu" works under the assumption that Shiatsu with meridians influences the energetic organs that are at the origin of these meridians. (In his books that have been published in the West, Masunaga only speaks of meridians but never mentions the energetic organs, a concept of TCM. Apparently he did not distinguish those two terms.).

According to Masunaga's idea the energetic organs are closely related and depend on each other. They directly influence each other in fullness and emptiness, wherein

emptiness in one organ causes fullness in another one. Thus, working with the emptiness in the one organ influences the fullness in the other one – and vice-versa.

In my experience this view is often not sufficient for the treatment of specific problems that are located in one part of the body. Too much does it seem to refer to the whole human, too little does it seem to reach the local Kyo-Jitsu-imbalance that causes the troubles. On the other hand, Masunaga's meridian work offers the possibility to reach the whole human on a more encompassing level as this were possible by the local balancing of Kyo and Jitsu alone. It is hence the combination of both ways of proceeding that proves to be quite fertile.

### Insecurity and tension

In the case of knee problems, a physical diagnosis like Hara diagnosis may show for example a Kyo situation of Spleen-Pancreas and a Jitsu situation of the Gall Bladder. This does not in first place describe local, quasi physically perceptible energetic states. More than that it illustrates a global state of activity within the whole energetic organ, which manifests on all the different levels of the human existence in the most different ways.

On a spiritual and mental level, Spleen-Pancreas stands for "feeling at home in the world", with the feeling of security which is made possible through the certainty to be "provided, cared for" physically, mentally and/or emotionally. A deep – and often unconscious – insecurity in this sense can provoke knee problems like the ones described in the example above, even more so if

an acute stressful situation occurs additionally.

Gall Bladder can be seen in this context as the organ, which can create positive tension, as it is needed to overcome difficulties in life. However, such a helpful tension in difficult situations will always restrict the flow of the vital energy in other areas. For this reason, a tension should regularly give room to a state of relaxation, as else the restrictions in the flow of the vital energy continue working and can have a damaging effect over a longer term.

A deep insecurity as it may be the background of e.g. a Spleen-Pancreas Kyo can require a persistent tension e.g. in Gall Bladder to keep the balance. Moreover, an acute pressure situation could require active Gall Bladder energy. Physically this may express itself as high tension along the flow of Gallbladder meridian on the outside of the legs. Combined with the weakness in the Spleen-Pancreas meridian on the inside this can critically shift the energetic balance of the knee.

With differentiated work on the meridians of Spleen-Pancreas and Gall Bladder on all important areas of the body (including the knee zone) the Kyo-Jitsu imbalance of the underlying organs can be allowed weaken. In doing this, the practitioner supports the communication of both organs with each other in a way that the emptiness of the Spleen-Pancreas Kyo can balance with the fullness of the Gall-Bladder Jitsu.

In this kind of meridian work the local balancing of Kyo and Jitsu as it has been described before can become very important, too. Local

energetic fullness or emptiness creates a prominent hindrance for the flow of the meridian energy. They are built up by the human in the course of the meridians precisely for the reason of reducing the faculty of the concerned organ to balance itself! If the Kyo/Jitsu hindrances in the flow of the meridian are of greater importance, their release may require all the techniques for the local balancing of Kyo and Jitsu as described above. Such an area can even become the central subject of a Shiatsu treatment.

When tension in Gall Bladder and weakness in Spleen-Pancreas find a new balance, this always means that the client experiences himself differently. Maybe he does not anymore feel as insecure as before, maybe he has found other possibilities than to tense up Gall Bladder energy to meet his inner feeling of uncertainty. Most often this expresses itself on a very practical and every-day level, e.g. that this person has new ideas, wants to deal with different situations in a new way etc. It is very likely that also physically he feels different, maybe he becomes aware (and reports it) that his way of walking has changed – or other.

The combination of meridian-Shiatsu (actually: organ-Shiatsu) with local work on the aching knee and the balance of the energetic disturbances there is a good method to help the person feel better globally and help his knees not to hurt anymore.

Taking the knee as the starting point in a whole series of treatments and work with the pattern of Kyo and Jitsu locally as well as in the whole body without following meridians is an equally promising approach (even though a different method with

different effects). Without working with specific meridians, the distant energetic opposites can be touched and be connected. Here too, the level of the energetic organs can be reached and a balancing process effectuated on the level of the whole human.

### **Exhaustion and excitement**

In the case of the functional heart troubles a physical diagnosis like the Hara-diagnosis may for example show Pericardium in the Jitsu and Bladder in the Kyo. Pericardium supports the heart in all situations of stimulation, excitement and arousal. Pericardium in the Jitsu could be the expression of a tension or excitement of the heart in consequence of an acute emotional stress. Perhaps we meet an over-active heart here, which, in striving for the manifold stimulation in life, never allows itself to feel weak or delivered to the deep fears.

Exactly such deep fears may show up in the Kyo of the Bladder. The Bladder is the executing organ of the Kidney, which governs the basic power of the human, and deep, unconscious fears draw on the forces of a human. Bladder in the Kyo may however also be the consequence of a permanent overcharge of the forces and of exhaustion, being a sign that this person has never learned to use the forces given to her actively and meaningfully.

Through the work with the meridians of Bladder and Pericardium, the human can come into contact with the causes for the energetic imbalances in these organs that lie in her biography. Different to the current dogma of psychotherapy, in Shiatsu this "getting in contact" does not have to be a conscious

process in order to be effective. Usually the client will see her situation more clearly and then find new creative ways how to deal with it.

When in the given example Bladder and Pericardium get balanced this may have the immediate effect that the person feels more free and relaxed in her chest, the week- or month-enduring tensions in the upper back being "blown away".

Not rarely however, the balancing on the level of the energetic organs does not sufficiently take effect in order to ease the troubles. Precise local work with the pain zone itself and the balancing of local Kyo-Jitsu opposites works as a kind of transmission belt that can transmit the effect of the Meridian-(Organ-)Shiatsu to the place of trouble.

### **Final remarks**

To balance Kyo and Jitsu as I have outlined in this article is only one of the technical elements that are used in therapeutic Shiatsu.

At least equally important for me is the clear and deep contact in the depth to which I like to refer to as Communicating Level, as here the inner continents of the human are in the most direct way connected to each other (and balance each other, too). This level is an energetic phenomenon, at the same time it can also be localised physically in practical Shiatsu, though.

To perceive energetic patterns precisely and to – sometimes radically – decide to take them as the guiding-line for my own Shiatsu is another very important element

for me. This includes the perception of interruptions in the vibrating field and to facilitate the communication through work with a connecting energetic space.

To consciously touch the person at important spots of her body and therewith her life, and to let her feel

and experience this place is an aspect of Shiatsu which can hardly be overestimated in its meaning.

You were not able to find terms like "tonification" or "sedation" in this article, as they have no importance in my work.

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