

All Pathways lead down to the Field.

By Graeme Docherty



There is nothing more profound in a life than getting the correct touch, in the right place, at the exact moment it is needed, the same goes in a shiatsu session.

The one touch that counts in a session is crucial for client and practitioner and is never forgotten. Once this level of contact is in place, the treatment will have a very good chance of success. It's a special touch, in that it creates space for the client to enter deeper into themselves, plants a seed in their unconsciousness and helps them to re-enter their oneness. This one touch allows the practitioner and client to bond and form a deeper relationship for future sessions.

In shiatsu, like in life we make many wrong turns, go down paths that are dead ends, but its good too remember that nothing we ever do is without a meaning. Around 10 years ago I started experimenting with trying to integrate off the body energy work into my shiatsu. At the time, I was

caught up in the whirl, there were many great teachers and practitioners experimenting with the chakras, off the body work, energy fields and such like, it felt like anything was possible. Now days I personally feel that off the body work is not a part of shiatsu; the catch is that it is part of the same energy we work with in shiatsu.

I found that although working off the body could be very effective with certain clients, most my clients preferred physical touch.

What I learned from experimenting with off the body work has had a deep impact on the way I give shiatsu today.

No plans, just stay in contact

For me now, there is only one thing that's important in shiatsu, that is to stay in contact with my client and with every touch build a deeper connection to myself, my client and the atmosphere in the treatment room. I have no plans or agenda when treating anymore.

I find now that hara diagnoses, the organ functions and meridian expressions were the backbone of my shiatsu practice for nearly 20 years have now become counterproductive and only seem to get in the way when I treat. They can still very useful tools but not during the actual session. The organ energy system of TCM and the different organ function are without a doubt the greatest ever human energy map, in shiatsu however I find this knowledge works best before a treatment, to understand the client's situation and after the session to give advice on life style changes.

During a session, it's the level of contact and how we perceive it that's crucial, this must be given our absolute attention. This change came about not because I saw anything wrong with Hara diagnoses and that way of working, my results were very good at that time. Like on many other occasions the energy connection to myself and my client changed and my view of what I was doing followed.

I remember feeling only half present in my touch and half present in a treatment plan, in retrospect I can see how I was creating a filter between me and my client and this ultimately meant that I was only half present in the treatment.

The energy is in the eye of the beholder



The energy field of the client responds to the practitioner's field. When I talk about energy fields I am suggesting this to be the total sum of the person's life energy. During the session, the fields of client and the practitioner gradually begin to mirror one another; this is also the same when we are in nature we, mirror the universal field, and we are part of the vast infinity of all things. At a special moment in a treatment, at the center of our touch, the client and practitioner's fields will bond and together resonate out, first into the space around them in the room and again further out to the larger collective field, to bring about change.

When being treated the client's, field can only be as big and have the same possibilities as the one who is treating it, this is because if the connection cannot be mirrored by the giver this type of KYO will not appear.

Treatment is about resonance and connection - field to field, frequency to frequency - the depth of field - possibilities for change – mirrored in the practitioner's field.

It is very important to understand when treating; that the treatments outcome will depend on how we perceive the client from the onset. To have a plan, a treatment strategy is usually seen as

the sign of a master but here I have found, a plan can narrow and limit the givers field, this in turn will be echoed in the contact they can attain with the client.

It is practically impossible to truly focus on two things at once.

It is important to be as unrestricted as possible when working with fields. When working in this way, we are more like passengers than drivers, we are not at the steering wheel driving forward following a plan but we are just staying in contact with the driver, our client, and waiting for them to take off so we can follow.

The Adaptability of Qi

Nowadays when I treat, I work on the same 5 or 6 meridians nearly every treatment.

This is the treatment routine I normally use.

I start working from the hara and down through the ST. meridian in the legs – work on the feet – then work up through the chest-treat the LU. and TH. meridians in the arms- turn the client around - work BL meridian on the back- PC. Meridian in the arms- and BL. meridian legs- turn them around again – work neck, face and lastly on the hands.

On my way around the body, if I am treating physical pain I will use time to treat it directly otherwise I use the meridians merely as paths to get around the body and give a full body shiatsu. I try as much as possible when working to bring together the meridians under one banner, the unified energy field of the client, stripping them of their expressions and functions and focusing only on how my touch is affecting the client.

The underground carpark. Depth in the Field.

The underground carpark is a technique I have started to use and teach to categorize the meridians. I categorize them on how they react to pressure through-out a session. I use the floors/levels of the carpark to measure the depth of contact I have with my client during a session. This helps me to understand how effect my treatment is and to focus my attention in specific areas.

The carpark has 3 floors/levels, some meridians start at level 3. others at level 1. All the meridians have the possibility to function on all 3 levels.

1. Level one: physical/mechanical. This is the surface level at this level there is nearly no connection with the client. It can feel more like massage, pushing and pressing the client. Here I have practically no contact to my own energy body.

2. Level two: organ/organ functions. This is the middle level at this level the connection comes and goes. The client may at one point feel pain and then the next second doze off. The same is happening in my own energy body, lots of contact and then none.
3. Level three: unconsciousness/ energy fields/ spirit. This is the deepest level at this level the connection is in place. The practitioner and client are one. This contact does not come and go. I am in total contact with my own energy field and can use it when I am treating.

.....

4. A meridian that starts at level 3. Will automatically open up the levels 1-2.
5. A meridian starting at level 1. Will have the possibility to expand and open up at level 2-3.
6. A meridian that starts at level 2. Will already be active on level 1. and have the possibility to expand to level 3.

When I am treating in my experience the meridians usually start at the following levels.

- Level 1. ST, S.I, GB, L.I,
- Level 2. LIV, LU, SP, UBL
- Level 3. TH, KID, HT, HC

Take for example that I am working on the Kidney meridian on the back side of the legs, I expect the Kidney meridian to start at level 3. and when it does I know that my field and the clients field are merge and in place, levels 1-2 will automatically be open. If I am treating a client with lower back pain and using the Kidney meridian in the leg I don't have to work physically, pressing hard, manipulating the area of pain, I am in a way doing that already because level 1 is automatically open. This is another form of doing without doing, there are lots of these in Shiatsu because once the meridians turn into the Field you are ultimately affecting everything at once.

When treating energy takes the form we want it to take, this is why using the Yi/intention can be so affective in some treatments. I cannot say that I don't use my intention any more when working but as much as possible I follow how the meridians react to pressure and let this decide what direction/level the treatment taking.

As I have said above I have a basic out line for a treatment, it's a help in a busy clinic. There are many ways to work with meridians and I will try to explain why I choose these meridians.

I start on the *ST. meridian a level 1. Meridian* using its powerful grounding to help move the client from there head into their hara. At this stage we are still talking, and our connection is superficial because of this. I use this meridian to negotiate depth of pressure with new client. Then I move up to the hara again and then through the chest area to the top of their shoulder and I start to work on the *LU. meridian a level 2. meridian*. Here I want to check out how they are breathing, I view the lung as the real Heart Protector and the flow in the natural internal breathing as the pathway of the emotions in the subconscious. Without natural relaxed breathing the door to the

Heart/Spirit/Field will not open. I don't interfere with their breathing by telling them what to do, I simply observe. When I am working on the Lung I am able to find out where the treatment will go, if I feel my own energy field expanding towards the clients Hara this is a good sign that the treatment will good deep. With the client still lying on their back I work on the TH. meridian in the arm, a level 3. meridian. Once again, I am still checking out where my client is willing to go in the session. I use the TH. meridian to tune in and view the outer energy body of the client. How open or closed their field is, how the chakras are responding to Shiatsu and if there are dominant blocked areas. I find the TH. meridian to be incredibly versatile and it is especially strong on levels 1. physical pain in the neck and shoulders and level 3. Opening the outer energy body. Now I start to work on their back starting with the YU points. Expecting the deeper part of the session to kick in. When I work on the YU points I use the clients finger movements to let me know what points are active/ interesting. When I have the right connection I use the PC.meridian to open the door to the Heart and the Field. Although the deepest touch can happen at any time it is usually going to appear when the Field is open. Then I move down the back into the Kidney meridian in the legs a level 3 meridian. At this stage I expect that the clients field to have merged with my own, there is no separation now. I turn the client on to their back again, hold their wrist and use the outer body to gauge the chakras, are they up or down. I use the rest of the treatment to clear the field. I am not finished a session until the outer body is clear and has moved down to the clients feet. MORE EXPLAIN WHY/WHAT

For me Shiatsu is about touching hearts more than solving puzzles. It is a level of contact I seek when I work, not a function, not a meridian or a point.

KYO is universal

I still work with the concept of KYO as my central component, but now I see the main KYO as the deepest most powerful touch in a session. It doesn't matter where the deepest touch happens in a session, as long as I am aware that it is happening, and I am in the right place to follow it. Only when the degree of bonding between myself and the receiver is just right will the main KYO materialize. This KYO is the Field. There are many different signs that this is happening- the connection between our hands becomes clearer - the clients body surface softens - the

atmosphere in the room changes - we feel equally connected to the client and the room - the client starts to shake - there can be many more signs but generally we will feel that something different from the rest of the treatment is happening or about to.

I find that this most often occurs when the client is in a sleep like unconscious state travelling in their own field during the session. It is here they have no borders; they are in a kind of free fall. It is interesting that this key experience in a session usually occurs when client and practitioner are most bonded but at the same time the client is perhaps furthest away from their own conscious self. Although the clients are not asleep they can after the session tell of strange thoughts, lucid dreams or visions that they have experienced, this is a good sign, these don't have to be significant but they may well be.

This type of KYO is the touch that I mentioned at the start and is paramount to the success of the treatment. When it arrives on the scene, this is my opportunity to follow the client deeper into the unconscious side of their field. It is here, at this precise moment I can bring a deeper awareness in the form of an energy resonance and plant seeds and form pathways for my client to investigate between sessions. If I can create enough space deep inside for my client to investigate between sessions then I know this will bring about change. When clients are conscious or semi-conscious during the session, their thoughts will block out the deeper unconscious zones in their field, so this type of KYO I am talking about will not appear during the treatment. There is a group of clients who cannot let go enough to enter their unconscious side in a treatment. These clients are usually suffering from long term chronic illnesses that have a strong psychological element. It is not that these clients cannot get great benefits from receiving shiatsu, they do, but we must be very patient with them and hope that one day when they are ready they will dive into their unconscious pool and find the space to change.

Shiatsu is all about change, the more room we have to move in our own energy field, the greater the possibility of change.

I am an experienced shiatsu therapist and teacher, so of course most of the time when with clients I can see possible energetic patterns and have a fair idea what needs to be done.

Travelling Backwards

I have found that working with level of touch in the client's energy fields as my only real focus, has helped me build stronger bonds with many different types of client. I now look at a client and think how can I **support their life energy** and not as before, always trying to find the correct one or two organ systems to solve a puzzle.

This has also helped me relax and connect with a broader spectrum of client. There were especially some categories of client that in the past were more hit or miss, like diagnostically technical clients who have for example - burnt-out energy systems - long term chronic illnesses - have many different contradictory symptoms - with severe psychological disorders.

I find now I can relax with most clients, I don't need a good plan or be very intuitive, just concentrate on how I touch them.

As shiatsu therapists, the more we treat, the more our own energy field will develop. As an experienced shiatsu practitioners, your field interacts with the client's field in different ways, some of which have become so natural, that you don't think about it. You have a presence when treating, a kind of "energy field intelligence".

This can of course be developed through training, becoming more aware of the subtle changes in our own surrounding energy body when giving shiatsu is a good way to start. Qi Gong is also a very good method to do this.

At the time, I didn't notice it was happening, through my years of off the body experimenting, when I returned to doing physical body work again, I noticed that I had a sharpened sense of the client's energy and picked up on changing moods in the treatment room. I knew when a session was finished by the feel of the client's outer energy body and the sensation in the room. It felt like my own and the client's energy bodies filled up the whole room.

Shiatsu and energy are all about change, so I am always aware that this phase in my shiatsu development, like many others in the past, may well be short lived. From my own experience, I know that with every change it feels like my shiatsu is returning to a simpler more primitive natural form.

Anyone with knowledge of shiatsu can use the meridians in this way, it's not at all difficult. First choose some meridians you like to work on and can get you around the client's body. Try to imagine when giving your pressure that the connection between your hands becomes stronger with every touch. When you press the receivers body you do not only affect the clients body but also the area above and around their body. Focus simply on your touch.

Graeme Docherty runs a busy shiatsu practice in the center of Copenhagen and teaches at the Shiatsu Skolen, a Shiatsu school that co-founded in 1997.

www.centerforshiatsu.com. Contact. graeme@docherty.dk

