

SHIATSU & JOINT PROBLEMS



CASE STUDIES

Hala Zaluckowska, MRSS

Personal History

R is 53 and lives in a small coastal village with her 2 dogs. She is in a long-term relationship and has a business with her partner. She also has a demanding full time job, with a regional post, which often requires travel all over the country. She has 2 grown sons who have been through college and are now quite independent.

R is somewhat overweight with saggy flesh, her upper body being more densely built than her legs. She exercises regularly, taking her dogs for walks twice a day. She also goes swimming occasionally and tries to incorporate exercises into her daily routine. She enjoys cooking and has a healthy diet with no meat. She sees this phase of her life as quite positive as she embraces the changes and is able to make more time for herself. She has been able to concentrate more fully on her love of writing, which has been something she has wanted to do for a while.

Medical History

R generally has a healthy constitution. Her main issue has been joint problems, which she attributes to a huge iron infusion when she had her last child in 1979. She has been prone to flu type symptoms, which often develop in to chest infections, most often in Autumn. She has also been prone to sinus problems in the past and has occasional wheezing or coughing episodes and dry skin on occasions. Another major issue has been her sleeping patterns with frequent insomnia.

R has been involved in 3 car accidents (1972, 1994, 2004) and often suffers from discomfort in her neck and shoulders exacerbated by having to do a lot of driving or computer work. R has suffered from menopausal symptoms (hot flushes, lacking in energy) over the past 5 years and these seem to have subsided now. Her mother died about 2 years ago and although this stirred up difficult emotions, it also felt quite liberating for R at time when she wanted to reassess her life. She has been coming to me for treatments since I first started studying Shiatsu in 2000.

Presenting Symptoms:

- Joint pain
- Work stress
- Reassessment of life – post menopause
- Tendency to overweight
- Intermittent sleeping – insomnia
- Neck and shoulder stiffness

Aims:

To support R in her reassessment of life. Work with joints to create greater flow of energy. Release of tension in shoulders and neck.

Treatments:

1. 20.10.04 Kyo: BL Jitsu: HT

R feeling well generally. Slight tightness in chest. Some shoulder pain in left shoulder. Talked about diet, in particular macrobiotic diet.

R would like to lose some weight. Talked about doing some exercises on a more energetic level i.e. Tai Chi, Yoga.

2. 10.10.04 Kyo: LI Jitsu: HT

R in car accident. Left shoulder is more painful. Week off work and generally feeling well and stimulated. Feeling unsupported at work.

Upper body felt full with lower legs lacking. Strong connections on LI. Worked to disperse Ki in upper body, working shoulder points and LI 10. R knee wanted attention.

3. 1.12.04 Kyo: LIV Jitsu: SI

Last night was awake from 3-6am. Tension in shoulders, due to a lot of driving and computer work. Scanning indicated banding. Worked heavily on the hips but R welcomed work. Legs felt more energised with upper body more yielding. Work on shoulders and neck always creates release.

4. 22.12.04 Kyo: SP Jitsu: LIV

A bit tired today. Doing some work in the house and is feeling a bit achy. Heaviness in the shoulders and neck. General banding of energy. Treatment worked to create a more even distribution of energy and also to disperse energy downwards.

5. 2.02.05 Kyo: LI Jitsu: ST

Helping partner move house – some back strain. Too much sitting/driving. Very hectic work month. Flu bug after Xmas. Not exercising. Strong connections on LI & ST. Left side of body lacking, more energised after treatment. Neck tight and banding of chest area.

6. 16.02.05 Kyo: SI Jitsu: TH

Feeling well. Some shoulder ache. Joints good and diet.

L & R of SI noticeably different. More similar and yielding after treatment.

TCM Diagnosis

Metal tends to figure primarily in R's symptoms. She tends to wake early at 5am (LI time) and is prone to colds, which can lead to bronchitis particularly in the autumn. She also has periods of dry skin and occasional wheezing relating to the function of elimination in LI. Her neck and shoulder pain could be attributable to meridian problems in LI or SI.

Frequent presentation of SI reflects the function of assimilation. Although there seems to be little evidence of physical symptoms relating to SI, emotionally R is going through a process of change as she digests the possibilities of what is available to her and makes appropriate choices, as to her own needs (rather than that of the family). The functioning of the Liver and Gall Bladder has been affected by R's process of planning and deciding on her life goals. The defensive quality of TH is evident in R feeling unsupported in her work role, with LI marking her ongoing struggle to 'let go' of associated responsibilities. Ongoing joint pain may be attributable to deficient Liver Blood where the Liver is slow to release blood to the muscles. Her abdominal structure with soft flabby flesh indicates a deficiency of Original Qi.

Zen Shiatsu Diagnosis

The last 2 years has been a time of significant change with the death of her mother and relinquishing of her financial responsibility of her sons, which has necessitated a period of 'letting go', mainly on an emotional level. The nature of her work can create a lot of stress with frequent travelling which tends to upset her diet affecting the functioning of the Spleen with Spleen Qi Deficiency evident SI presents on three occasions and has presented regularly in past treatments. The disharmony evident in her body at times, with accompanying heaviness of legs is likely to be due to the process of assimilation. It is possible that the iron infusion that she had in 1979 created a shock to her body, (she describes it as this) with ongoing subsequent joint pain. The car accidents that she has been involved in are also likely to have created some inherent shock within the body, creating past hurts that may not have been fully assimilated, evident in her tendency to neck and shoulder pain. This is likely to have manifest in a Heart-Blood deficiency indicated by R's insomnia and pale complexion.

Results of treatments:

R's main focus for treatments was in relation to joint pain. This has progressively improved and she is only occasionally aware of any pain in her joints. Her neck and shoulder pain is relieved by treatments and is related to busy periods at work, which she is aware of. Her sleep is much more regular and she only occasionally suffers from insomnia. R is generally more aware of how her life and work affect her body and actively seeks to balance out elements.

Conclusions:

R comes for Shiatsu for 'general maintenance' and feels it supports her in her various roles. The last few years have been a time of change as she has been dealing with menopausal symptoms and coming to terms with her changing role in relation to her family. The Shiatsu has supported R to embrace all these changes and focus on her needs and where she wants to go with her life. In the past work has been a prominent stress, but this is now more of a functional role, allowing her more space to do other things which she has maybe not allowed herself to do in the past i.e. creative writing.

We have discussed the benefits of a macrobiotic diet and although R finds it difficult to follow this diet strictly she tries to incorporate elements of this diet, which she feels has benefited her joint pain. She also practices the Makho stretches as part of her daily exercise routine.

Anna Garry

Kristina Oliver (n.b. false name)

Personal history

Kristina is a 43, a single parent, with a 5 year old son. She works as a primary teacher part-time. Her mother and sisters live in the area and help out with the child, but she finds life challenging, and can feel emotionally unsupported and has to withdraw. A lot of the time she wants the world to go away, and can struggle with depression, but puts on a cheerful face, tries to get on with things, not make a fuss, ignore pain. At times she will explode, and it seems really out of character. She was a nurse for many years. She is a fish-eating vegetarian, and is very slim.

Medical History

Her questionnaire shows she's had measles, whooping cough as a child, and had an operation to straighten a squint at 7. She still gets herpes, and has had anaemia. I have been treating her almost weekly from February 2003 (about 20 treatments) and she's talked about how she has been in

excruciating pain over the years: in her lower back (plus sciatica), neck, shoulders and under her feet. She keeps going, ignoring it, continuing to work. In crisis she's been to chiropractors, physiotherapists, and had cranio-sacral work (the latter left her in terror because she could feel all the pain at once and she didn't go back). Nothing has helped. She gets bouts of psoriasis (since a teenager), which can take a couple of months to clear.

Presenting Symptoms

She came to me because sleeping badly, shoulder pain, sciatica, neck problems. It becomes clear that she is very stiff in joints and muscles all over.

Diagnosis

Zen Shiatsu

The diagnoses for KO show mainly kyo in the metal element (Lu and LI) and jitsu in the fire element (SI and HT). Using Masanaga's theory of the amoeba, it can be argued that there is a hidden need in stage one, that of "making a border and initiating exchange" and this need is manifesting in stage three, the area of "assimilating and integrating nourishment," the phase related to absorbing our own identity. In addition KO has a lack of flexibility in her muscles, tendons and joints which suggests an underlying stagnation of Ki or liver disharmony, meaning that stage six "choice of direction" is involved in this diagnosis, at an underlying level. This may link into the time that she explodes with anger, which seems to be out of character.

KO has problems with her borders, or the metal element, both in terms of them being tested (she has a young child) and in terms of exchange with the outside world. She's a single parent and can struggle with seeing people, both knowing whether she wants to see people, and saying no when she doesn't want to. She hasn't had strategies for herself and tends to deal with it by going with the flow and getting more and more rigid and stressed. This has been manifesting on a physical level, as she has been living with, and ignoring, a great deal of pain, particularly in her shoulders, her neck and her hips. Here we have the almost consistent diagnosis of SI jitsu, though more recently this has become HT jitsu. She sleeps very badly and cannot relax. In her treatments she keeps her eyes open and once, she was so startled that she had drifted off, that for the rest of the treatment she became more rigid and unable to relax.

This is a long term pattern, which is why liver disharmony is involved, as KO has been suppressing her emotions and ignoring the consequent pain in her body. She finds stretches and rotations of the joint very difficult. Even rotations of the ankle joints lead to her say "this feels abnormal and scary". I have asked her about accidents, as shock is another part of the SI manifestation and she's spoken of falling as a gymnast as a child, rollerskating (at 23), hurting herself lifting a patient. There does seem to be an underlying lack of ability to absorb and assimilate, and the need is to assist the borders: on a physical level with breathing, but also issues of self-value, and eliminating old emotional structures which don't allow exchange.

TCM

On a TCM level one of KO's major issues is liver stagnation which has arisen from suppressing her emotions for years. This manifests in stiff muscles, joints, tendons, and in pain in shoulders, neck and hips. Liver makes the blood, and if there is a deficiency in the blood, perhaps arising from lack of circulation of Ki (KO's upper body is rigid, and there is an almost bar-like block over her HT meridian in RHS) there is no restful place for the emotional core. This can lead to insomnia and agitation. KO has slept very badly, for as long as she can remember. As Metal is a consistent diagnosis, and KO tends to ignore her body, it is likely that the Po cannot reside in her body with ease, adding to her problems with relaxation. Another sign of imbalance in the metal element was an eruption of

psoriasis which occurred over the summer, which may have been her body attempting to eliminate some of the stagnation.

Treatments Given

A: Aims **D:** Diagnosis **T:** Treatment **R:** Recommendations

7/10/03: LI kyo SI jitsu

A: balance inner to outer self through elimination of old emotional structures, give experience of relaxing; help pain in shoulders.

D: needs to assimilate her world of work, home (SI) and not to hold all the stress in her muscles, needs support in letting things go.

T: SI, LI, BL and used SP 1, LI 1, 4, 10, 11, and yu points

R: take time to notice self every day.

14/10/03: Lu Kyo SI jitsu

A: to give vitality, self-value and experience of relaxing

D: inner to outer self. Ignoring how she feels until explodes. Needs support in valuing herself, giving time to breathing and relaxing.

T: Lu, SI body, GB in shoulders. Used SI 3, HP 8, Lu 1, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11

R: take time on day off for self. (n.b. I repeat this in subsequent treatments)

21/10/03: GB kyo SI jitsu

A: to support emotional decision making to allow absorption of her environment

D: struggling to prioritise so that she can cope better with school, her child (GB). Still in a lot of shoulder pain and finding everything hard (SI)

T: Worked GB, SI, BL through body. Used GB 12, 20, 21, 44, LI 4, SI, 3, 9, 10, 11, SP 1, 3

12/11/03: LI kyo SP jitsu

A: to bring energy down, calm the mind and help relax, let go

D: totally in head as result of long days work (Sp), said very little (LI).

T: worked LI, Sp, BL through body. Used Yu points, good reaction

18/11/03 Lu Kyo HT Jitsu

A: to calm emotional core, bring energy down, support breathing, relaxation

D: very emotional week, sickness in upper chest (HT), exhausted (Lu)

T: Worked on emotional level, Lu, HT, BL in body, LI in legs as support to giving self value and space.

26/11/03 Li Kyo HT Jitsu

A: calm emotional core, ease pain where can, bring energy down

D: she's all over the place, trying not to be, feel (HT), pain in shoulders, unable to express where she is emotionally (LI)

T: Worked LI, HT, BL in body gently, helping her feel physical self

Results of Treatments

I'm recommending that she find space for herself, however little, and explained that SI is about being able to absorb things, and needing space to link outwards, and know what she needs. I

encourage her to tell me how she feels as I work, to make her more conscious of her body. She is now taking some time on her day off, for herself. Plus she's observing how her body feels in different situations in her life, work, with her family, whereas before she just ignored it. She still loses focus on her physical and emotional self, but the regular treatments bring her back. She also decided to get out and do some theatre work, an activity specifically for herself.

Conclusions

The problems that KO is dealing with are long term, and long established, from as far back as childhood. She has been in chronic pain for most of her life. Initially I tried to deal directly with the presenting symptoms, particularly her shoulder, but have found that a patient, holistic, regular approach, where I repeat the issues (listen to your body, think of yourself) so she can absorb them, is starting to lead her to incorporate them into her life. Shiatsu treatments remind her of her place in the world.

ARTICLES

Treating Joints with Shiatsu. Notes to Accompany a Workshop Clifford Andrews MRSS(T)

Diagnostic Phase

1. Whole Body Scan: I want to find out how the joint feels compared to the rest of the energy field. The WBS can tell me whether the joint feels weak, blocked, or whether it is an expression of a bigger movement of Ki in their energy field.
2. Hara Diagnosis: the Hara and the meridian analysis, tells me which functions are combining to create the Ki pattern in the joints. Every meridian function relates to joints, and how the diagnostic meridians combine, in the Kyo Jitsu reaction, gives me ideas on how I can treat. For example TH Jitsu LI Kyo could mean protecting the joint because of not being able to let go. The treatment would then focus on allowing the LI meridian Ki to release.
3. Meridian Scan: now I scan the diagnostic meridians into the joint. This tells me how the Kyo and Jitsu meridians are combined in the joint, and if either the Kyo or Jitsu meridian is dominant.
4. Vibrational Frequency Scan: I apply this to either the WBS or the meridian scan and it tells me at what level(s) the Ki in the joint is expressing itself, either physical, emotional, mental or spiritual.
5. Temporal Scan: this is useful if I want to explore how the joint problem has developed over time. I can 'feel out' the history, and in the case of trauma I have the option of treating back at the time of the accident.
6. Local diagnosis: I feel around the joint and confirm how the meridians are expressing themselves locally. I also check the Kyo Jitsu reaction locally.

Treatment phase

There are two main ways that I treat joints: locally and at a distance.

Local treatment

This consists of two approaches – balancing the Ki around the joint and balancing the Ki through the joint, by connecting the channels above and below.

Working Ki around the joint

I first assess the local Kyo and Jitsu pattern by palpating around the circumference of the joint. I then hold the Jitsu areas with my mother hand and treat the Kyo points, until the Ki around the joint is normalized as much as possible.

It is sometimes useful to rotate the joint. I find that Tsubos around the joint open up as I rotate and often mobility is increased by combining Tsubos work with rotations. I hold the Tsubos with the mother hand and feel them open as I rotate the joint. GB20, S10, LI11, L15, GB30, GB40 are all good points to hold during rotations of various joints.

Working Ki through the joint

Now I check the meridians running through the joint, starting with the diagnostic meridians. Concentrating on the Kyo meridians and tonifying them using two-handed connection technique above and below the joint, I continue until I have normalized the movement of Ki through the joint as much as possible.

If the joint I am working on is only affected on one side of the body (i.e. left or right), I like to work the good side first. I often find that this will help the imbalanced side, by resonance. It also gives me an idea of what their joint should feel like – I use this as a reference when I treat the problem joint on the other side.

Working with Distal points

In many cases I find it useful to work distally. If the joint is inflamed it can be impossible to work it directly. I use my mother hand to assess the joint as distal points are worked. Points that create change can be found by palpation.

If the joint is too sensitive to touch then the mother hand can assess etherically or the joint can be scanned. I find scanning useful if I can't reach the joint from the points I am using. For example I may use Kid 3 to treat the neck – if my client is tall there is no way I am going to be able to reach their neck with my mother hand, so I need to scan the neck to assess the effect of the point.

Meridian associations with the joints.

All the meridians are associated with the joints. The functions of the meridians all contribute to the Ki of the joints. Below I have summarized the associations that I use the most when treating joints. You will find a mixture of Masunaga, Five Elements and TCM information.

Lung and Large Intestine

The Lungs govern the Ki from the breath and give vitality to the joints, and also are responsible for the structure of the joints. Vital, well-structured joints are a sign of good Lung Ki.

The Large Intestine is responsible for elimination of waste products from the joints, poor LI function can cause joint stiffness, and blockage along the LI channel through the joints (e.g. tennis elbow). On an emotional/mental level you need the elimination function to let go of structures in your life. Holding on emotionally/mentally can manifest in stiffness in the joints. Flexible well-structured joints are a sign of a good elimination function of the LI.

Stomach and Spleen

The ST/SP meridians are responsible for nourishing the joints by the intake of food and fluids and also for the transformation of Damp.

Poor ST/SP functions can lead to weakness in the joints, sometimes the person can be over weight – putting more strain on the joints. Fluid can also build up around the joints – typically the knees and ankles, which are connected to the ST/SP channel via the location of the meridian. The stability of the patella is influenced greatly by the strength of the ST/SP channels in the leg.

A stable patella, flexible but toned flesh around the joints, and strong knees and ankles are a sign of well functioning ST/SP meridians.

Heart and Small Intestine

The Heart can affect the joints physically via the Blood, a good supply of which is important for the joints to function well.

The Small Intestine function of protecting the body from shock often manifests in the joints, commonly the neck, shoulders, elbows, wrists, and hips. The SI is particularly common in whiplash injury of the neck.

A stable scapula and an ability to assimilate shocks without the physical structure being affected, are signs of stable HT/SI meridian Ki in the joints.

Kidney and Bladder Meridian

The Bl and Kid meridians are related to the bones and synovial fluid. They are particularly important due to their relation with the Essence, so congenital or age-related disease of the bones and joints are often related to the Kidney.

Dryness, cracking and bone degeneration are commonly associated with Kidney Yin deficiency (TCM), while weakness in the joints can be associated with Kidney Yang deficiency.

On a spiritual level the 'Zhi' or Will, is manifested in movement through the energy of the joints.

Strong joints which age well without excessive dryness or degeneration are a sign of strong Kid/B1 Ki.

Triple Heater and Heart Protector

The Heart Protector is responsible, with the Heart, for supply of Blood to the joints. Good circulation is important for the joints. The TH protects the joints (together with the Lung) from invasion by pernicious influences such as Heat, Cold and Wind. It is also related to body fluids especially the lymph and, together with the Spleen, is often involved in swelling in the joints. The TH is also often significant in the neck, shoulder, elbow, and wrist, along the pathway of the channel.

Warm flexible joints that are not susceptible to invasion from outside the body indicate a strong HC/TH function.

Liver and Gall Bladder

The Liv and GB are directly related to the joints – the Liv “controls the sinews” (TCM). The Liv also houses the spiritual function of the 'Hun', which expresses our path through life. This involves decision making, decisions involve turning, and the joints are a physical expression of this turning function.

The Liv Yin governs the lubrication of tendons and joints (together with Kid Yin) so dry, stiff joints are often related to Liv.

On an emotional level, repression of any strong emotions (particularly anger and frustration) can lead to immobility on a physical level – felt as stiffness in the joints.

The Liv and GB channels are particularly important. The pathways are significant in all the major joints of the body, and points such as GB20, GB21, GB30, GB40 are commonly used for treating joint problems.

Healthy flexible joints that are strong but supple, are a sign of smooth flowing Ki in the LIV and GB meridians.

Pathogenic Factors

Sometimes I find that the most important thing that is affecting a particular joint is an external pathogenic factor (TCM). I have found it useful to be able to feel and understand how to treat these pathogenic factors as it gives me another way of addressing the problem. Each pathogenic factor is connected to a meridian, but the pathogenic factor will often spread through the whole joint and not just affect a particular channel.

The pathogenic factors are Heat, Cold, Wind, Damp and Dryness:

Heat can usually be felt etherically. Cooling points, dietary recommendations and direct application of cold (e.g. cold pack) are things I use to treat Heat in the Joints.

Cold can be felt on palpation. Moxa is great for driving out Cold – I usually get my client to do it at home to save me having my clinic smoked out! Alternatively I tonify the Ki. Ki is Yang and I often find it possible to expel Cold by increasing the Ki flow to the joint. Mindset is useful too – just think “Heat”. I make sure they do basic things – like wear enough clothes, and avoid sitting on concrete steps, etc.

Wind often manifests with sudden onset pains which move about, Shiatsu is effective for this. I use Wind expelling points such as GB20. Because Wind is associated with the Liver I sometimes find rotations help expel Wind. You can make sure they avoid drafts and wrap up in the wind.

Damp is seen as swelling around the joint, and is often associated with Sp weakness. It is usually possible to move Damp locally during the session, but chronic conditions can take time to resolve and you need to balance out the whole body and its ability to transform Damp. I often give dietary recommendations, but also watch out for exposure to Damp, e.g. in their house.

Dryness is felt by rotating the joint and feeling or hearing a grating sound. Stimulating the Ki around the joint leads the Blood flow to increase (Ki leads the Blood-TCM). The Blood is Yin, and will help moisten Dryness in the joint. I have found that it is often possible to create significant change even in chronic cases of Dryness in the joint. Rotations are a good way of checking – you can feel the grating reduce as the Dryness reduces.

Conclusion

Joint problems are common in Shiatsu and we have a whole range of techniques to help our clients. The success you will have depends on how much the joints have degenerated, and how well your client responds to Shiatsu. I have often been amazed by how powerful Shiatsu. I have often been amazed by how powerful Shiatsu is at treating supposedly irreversibly degenerated joints.

The Healing Process of a Broken Hip

By Anne Satow

Published in the Shiatsu Society News 90 Summer 2004

A skiing accident gave Anne Satow the opportunity to deepen her appreciation of the value of Shiatsu.

A year ago I fell while skiing and broke my hip. After the mountain rescue I ended up in a (very good) French hospital. I had never suffered any major accident or illness, and this accident and my subsequent recovery gave me a useful personal case study which I thought might be worth sharing. I have tried to combine my own experience with Shiatsu theory.

Physically, the neck of my right femur was shattered too badly to mend, and I was given a hip replacement (arthroplasty). Although this is regarded as a routine operation, it is a major surgical

intervention, and was not at all routine for me, and I was terrified. I didn't know what to expect, or how I would recover.

At first after the operation I was quite passive, content to rest and be nursed, but also having to walk around on my crutches (I didn't expect that!). After a few days I wondered how I could help myself in this situation, and tried some Hara breathing. Lying on my back I breathed in earth's Ki and heaven's Ki. I visualized Ki trickling through my body from a full Hara, and thought of it soothing and feeding the new joint, the tissues around it, and the scar. It felt good, and I felt pleased and positive to be doing something to help myself. When Sonia Moriceau at congress last year described the seven levels of healing, I recognized my own experience in which found meditation the most active and surgery the most passive. (It may be coincidence, but I have been told several times that the scar tissue is remarkably good!).

Besides the physical shock of the accident, I remember three dominant emotions – shock, anger and fear. These are apparently quite common following sports injuries, together with denial ('this isn't really happening to me'). I was shocked that a simple fall could have such a serious result, that it had all happened so fast, that I was in hospital. I was angry at myself for being so stupid, and at losing most of my holiday. And I was scared of the operation, its implications and its outcome. In Zen Shiatsu terms, Small Intestine, Liver/Gall Bladder and Kidney/Bladder meridians were primarily affected, all of which are directly associated with the hips.

Small Intestine, the shock absorber meridian, took the brunt of the shock, not only of the accident but also of the operation. Its function of manufacturing blood may also have been impaired, as I developed anaemia after the operation (not unusual for an arthroplasty), and needed a blood transfusion. Despite having been a donor, I was surprised to feel apprehensive about receiving someone else's blood. Again, SI was implicated in the assimilation of that as well as my gradual acceptance that all this was happening to me. For a couple of months I had pain in my right groin in an area which I eventually associated with the SI Zen extension.

In my first full Shiatsu treatment, about eight weeks after the operation, work with SI released a lot of that stored shock and tension, and I immediately began to move, and especially walk, more freely. SI was an important meridian to work for several months. I also found that although work on recent scar tissue is contraindicated it was helpful to have Shiatsu around the scar area, as well as the buttock, an area that was sensitive, but needy.

My anger at myself and my frustration indicated the Tree element, which was involved by the damage to the joint, its ligaments and tendons, both from the accident and from the operation. The break, on the neck of the femur, is the location of GB30, which is relevant to the whole hip area, and could also connect to the groin pain. (My Wood energy was further stressed by my impotent anger as the invasion of Baghdad took place. I took refuge under my blanket feigning sleep when my roommate watched TV.) When I got home it was high spring, very appropriate for Wood energy, and I connected intensely with the sappy green energy of new growth in the garden and countryside. Anger can be positive, and I was able to turn the frustration of immobility, and problems I encountered when I returned home, into a determination to be active again.

Kidney territory

Broken bones are Kidney meridian territory, and so is the fear I felt. Perhaps because of the deep nature of this meridian's associations, it felt less apparent to me than the keen symptoms of SI or GB. In the Five Transformations, Water is important as the mother, supporting its child Wood energy, which was crying for help. I was aware of the deep reserves of energy I was drawing on for recovery. As I started to get mobile again I experienced deep fatigue, and needed to give myself time to rest. I had some hydrotherapy, which I found very helpful for my mobility, and visualized the deep nourishment of Water energy as I exercised in the pool. One obvious manifestation of Kidney came after a few weeks when for a while I lost more head hair than normal.

One other meridian connection I made was with Spleen, associated with the anxieties which accompanied the initial fear, with the flesh and muscle mending, and also its association with SI and blood. Sp is also important for grounding. In hospital the physiotherapist rested my feet on his belly as he bandaged my legs every morning – a great Hara connection. Back home, I lost touch with my feet, until Shiatsu and reflexology restored them. Feet are essential to stability, giving a vital base for tentative walkers. I found a wooden ‘footsie roller’ helpful for self-treatment.

At this time I was in the final year of my Shiatsu course, with assessments ahead. I was able to attend the course weekends, and received lots of support, encouragement and Shiatsu from my colleagues. It was useful to work around the constraints of my immobility – at first I could only work standing up, with a receiver seated in a chair. It was three months before I felt confident, healthy and strong enough to resume giving treatments outside the class situation.

Artistic reaction

As an artist, I was interested in my reaction to colour. It is known to affect our moods, and I am confident in its relationship with physical condition. For at least six months after the accident I could not wear black or navy blue which made me feel uncomfortable, even nauseous. I found bright pink was a necessary colour to wear, supporting fire energy (red was too strong).

I paid some attention to my diet. I concentrated on blood-nourishing foods, apricots, kidney beans, spinach and Guinness, to help the anaemia. I tried to eat fish twice a week and incorporated seaweed into my diet (good in stir-fry and sprinkled over salad) to help the Water energy; and I used lots of sour tastes, lemons, pickles and sauerkraut as well as vegetable, as a boost for Tree energy.

It is an adage of Shiatsu that though illnesses are the same, the people suffering from them are different. This is my experience, and my diagnosis. Someone who had the same operation and may have been looking forward to it as a relief from the pain of chronic arthritis or a congenital hip condition would present a different diagnosis; so might someone with a history of accidents. What I have found helpful is relating my own experience to my knowledge and experience of Shiatsu.

Now recovered, well, strong (and reckless) enough to have been skiing again, several things stand out as really positive lessons for me and my Shiatsu:

- huge respect for the wonderful surgical process and the skills of the medical staff who mended me.
- experience of the emotional aspects which can encourage or inhibit healing
- experience of the interconnectedness of surgical and emotional healing
- the need to be involved positively in the healing process, both physical exercise to restore and mobility, and mental attitude
- learning to accept dependence; and an awareness of the effects on healing of what I experienced as the aura of goodwill and compassion from others, and
- the benefit of a comprehensive travel insurance.

CLIENT TESTIMONIALS

Practitioner: Sara Browne, MRSS

Client: Hilary McLeod. Age: 57. Occupation: Teacher

What were your main reasons for receiving Shiatsu?

General aches - particularly my legs and shoulders.

Do you feel Shiatsu has helped?

Yes.

If Yes, in what ways?

After treatment my whole body feels much more flexible eg, I don't feel as stiff in the mornings. Emotionally I feel more relaxed. I feel as if every part of my body has been re-energised and the flow of energy is unblocked. I also think I feel more peaceful - the tightness and aches have gone for a while.

How does Shiatsu compare to other treatments you have received?

I have reflexology - my feet and body respond well but Shiatsu provides an all over treatment which has different benefits.

Any other comments:

Shiatsu is a brilliant workout where everything is loosened and treated - it is balanced and specific to parts of my body which need extra focus.

Thinking about sleep patterns. Probably no different and energy levels the same so for me, Shiatsu has worked on the physical side more - less aching/tension, which then probably makes me more relaxed generally.

Shiatsu isn't as 'violent' as some treatments and I like to feel my arms/legs/shoulders being manipulated and stretched firmly where they need it.

The treatment is also a time of calm and a sense of healing, away from daily routine.

Practitioner: Tania Gallindo

Client: Patricia Attwater, Singing instructor

"Shiatsu with Tania has and continues to be very helpful with Chronic Arthritic pain in various joints and also with Migraines/Headaches. Also my shoulder and elbow injuries have improved and so my knees and back. Shiatsu induces a feeling of well-being and relaxation during the treatment and this continues afterwards with a cumulative effect over a long period of time."