

'The six conditions for healing' with Chi Nei Tsang Abdominal Massage

(Written by Kim Knight for the Therapeutic Massage Association Journal May 2006)



Gilles Marin, Director and Founder of the Chi Nei Tsang Institute, USA

It has long been a tenet of natural health practitioners that good health depends on a correctly functioning digestive system. Research also tells us good digestion has an emotional component and that many disorders of the internal organs are exacerbated by stress.

Why is it, then, that we pay more attention to massaging the back, neck and limbs than we do to the very core of where our emotions are processed - the belly? Massage schools teach few techniques that work directly on the abdomen, and the "center," as it is called by the holistic healing procedure known as Chi Nei Tsang, is often entirely overlooked.

Our Gut Feeling

Gilles Marin, master teacher and practitioner of Chi Nei Tsang (pronounced Chee-Nee-Sahng), points out that our bodies are constantly digesting emotional "charges" we feel at the visceral level. A charge is internal pressure that can manifest in many ways -- pain, nervous tension or even high blood pressure. For example, if someone smiles at you on the street, you feel something pleasant that's usually fairly easy to "digest." If, on the other hand, someone comes at you on the street with anger or aggression, you may have a harder time digesting your response, and it will take longer for that emotion to move through your body.

Some charges, Marin says, never really get digested, because they are too shocking and the body wants to protect you from feeling them. Consequently, the body finds places to hide the charge and it is the enteric nervous system of the digestive tract that is most often affected when emotions are not processed.

Marin believes we process emotions the same way we process food and that poor emotional digestion

leads to ill health. By exploring the abdomen, a person allows herself to connect with whatever emotions are present there. And since the emotional body, Marin asserts, has no time or space, emotional charges of the past are still just as present in our bodies as they were when the trigger occurred.

"Remember," says Marin, "the physical body is expressing over and over again whatever emotional issue is most important at that given time through its structure, its metabolism, its breathing, its movements, in any way it expresses itself. We can only process what we allow ourselves to feel."

In order to find a conduit to those emotions buried in our core, presence of mind on both the part of the client and the practitioner is required. This is no lay-back-and-enjoy-it, feel-good session. Sessions are focused, with the client's breath being directed to wherever the practitioner's hands move. A great deal of attention is paid to the energy needed by therapists to help the client feel safe with such intimate, visceral contact, and to allow them the time and space to work through these emotional issues at their own pace.

The Six Conditions for Healing

Healing happens, according to Marin, when the body is given permission to transform the stifled energy (which it has been using to protect a person from feeling) into a surge of energy that heals them. It is up to the practitioner "to provide the opening for the client to reach that place (of being able to stay with an emotional issue and allow the healing process to take place) and remain in it until the emotional charge is dissipated."

This is accomplished, Marin believes, when the following conditions are met:

1. Clients feel safe physically, mentally and emotionally, and are properly supported, validated and respected for their feelings.
2. Clients relax deeply, feel nurtured and remain present where the healing is happening, no matter how uncomfortable they feel.
3. Clients' minds become quiet. In other words, they stop thinking, as thinking takes people out of the present, and the present is where healing happens.
4. Clients get permission to recognize and validate their feelings. Increased awareness can be scary and sometimes very painful. They must know someone understands so they are able to stay with the process.
5. Clients feel the importance and sacredness of the moment, that everything they feel is important. This

is where the energy that has been used to hold the charge gets freed and turned into healing energy.
6. Clients are open to the surge of increased chi and surrender to the power within. The page has been turned. This is the place of acceptance where healing has occurred.

While it is true that Chi Nei Tsang aids such conditions as constipation, indigestion, ulcers, menstrual cramps and irritable bowel syndrome, Marin emphasizes that Chi Nei Tsang is a holistic therapy that doesn't work with particular labels or symptoms, but rather with the reason why people have symptoms.

"We work at the level of information, of emotional content, to digest emotional charges," Marin says. "By bringing to the surface more awareness, true healing -- which is synonymous with growing -- can begin and a person can outgrow the reason for having to manifest symptoms." Usually, Marin asserts, you will find that a symptom is a healthy reaction to an unhealthy situation. The body says, "That's enough. I can't hold this tension any longer. Something must change."

Chi Nei Tsang's origins

Chi Nei Tsang is loosely translated as "inner organ Chi transformation". It was originally used in ancient China by Taoist monks to strengthen and purify their organs and blood. Chi Kung and the five-element theory of Traditional Chinese Medicine are also at its roots. Chi Nei Tsang was developed by Mantak Chia of Thailand who, at age six, was trained by Buddhist monks to sit and "still the mind." He went on to study many forms of martial arts, kundalini and Taoist practices, as well as Western medical science. Master Chia fused many aspects of all these practices to create what he termed the Universal Tao system, of which Chi Nei Tsang is the 'physical' branch.

Gilles Marin Gilles Marin, Founder and Director of the Chi Nei Tsang Institute, Berkeley, USA is one of the most sought after practitioners and teachers in the world. He is the author of two books; "Healing from Within with Chi Nei Tsang" and the soon to be published "Five Elements, Six Conditions - A Taoist Approach on Emotional Healing, Psychology, and Internal Alchemy".

He will be teaching for the first time in New Zealand in November 2006. For details of workshops see www.chineitsang.co.nz or email info1@chineitsang.co.nz or phone Kim Knight 09 828

1336 / 021 410 633. For more details of courses in the Universal Tao in New Zealand see www.taomotion.com

Adapted and abbreviated with permission from an article written by Jill Ruttenberg published in Massage & Bodywork magazine, August/September 2002. Reprinted with permission from Massage & Bodywork magazine. For the full article see

www.chineitsang.co.nz/article_digestemotions.htm