



Asian Bodywork

HAVE YOU WONDERED what it would be like to expand your knowledge and practice by becoming certified in an Asian bodywork modality? Here, practitioners of shiatsu, Chi Nei Tsang, acupressure, tuina and medical qigong share their experiences in practicing these types of bodywork. These articles were facilitated by the American Organization for Bodywork Therapies of Asia (AOBTA®, aobta.org), which provides education and support to practitioners of Asian bodywork modalities.

The Wonder and Surprise of the Study of Shiatsu

Karen Elisa Broyles, Dipl. ABT (NCCAOM)®, AOBTA-CP

Shiatsu is rooted in traditional Asian medicine, which is poetry and art, philosophy and science. It is a form of meditation in which we train our attention to the rhythm of the person with whom we are working and match this as closely as we can. This kind of resonance, even without adding point or channel dynamics, is profoundly healing.

Adding the point and channel dynamics, the work deepens. I spent my first year of shiatsu study being repeatedly surprised by the energy of a point. My first surprise was on my very first day of study. Bladder 27, one and a half body inches from the middle sacral crest, level with the first posterior sacral foramen, is the back *yu* point for the small intestine. One can assess and treat the small intestine using this point, but I didn't know that at the time. The teacher was simply demonstrating treating the bladder channel, and I was the person on the mat. When she pressed bladder 27, I felt a tremendous, pleasant warmth spread through my abdomen. A year earlier, I'd had surgery to remove two inches of my small intestine—but my digestive symptoms had continued. Over the next year and a half, I received weekly shiatsu sessions and had the firsthand experience of watching symptom after symptom of that chronic illness resolve.

Shiatsu helps to balance the body, but it also helps to balance the mind and emotions. The psyche is not truly separate from the soma, and this understanding is foundational to traditional Asian medicine. The correspondences of the five phases of

transformation include the emotions associated with each phase.

Fear is associated with the water phase, which is also associated with the kidney (think adrenals). Anxiety is an interplay between the fire and water phases (heart and kidney). So, for example, if I were treating a client with anxiety, I might well begin by supporting the water phase and follow by treating the fire phase.

Movement dynamics as they relate to the channels are fascinating. For instance, with an understanding of the movement dynamics of the Six Divisions, one could surmise that working the small intestine channel might be an integral part of relieving a client's back pain. I often treat difficulties in turning parts of the body, or restrictions in the diaphragms of the body, by working with the *shao yang* (gallbladder and triple warmer channels).

During my first year of study, I found myself becoming clearer and calmer. I experienced a near-unshakeable sense of health and well-being. I have been pleased to observe this process in my clients and myself for nearly 30 years now. Shiatsu is profoundly healing, not only for the recipients of the work but for those who undertake to study it. I invite you to walk with me on this path.



Karen Elisa Broyles, Dipl. ABT (NCCAOM)®, AOBTA-CP, Registered Advanced Practitioner of Ortho-Bionomy®

Profound Transformation through Chi Nei Tsang

Osi Livni, AOBTA-CI

Chi nei tsang, the ancient Taoist practice of internal organ massage, has been a very inspiring process for my healing and spiritual evolution. I still recall the thrill of my first exploration of it, at the Healing Tao Center in New York. Various sensations and symptoms in my body began to make sense. I learned to recognize them as energetic blocks, stored in the body's cells and memories, constricting chi circulation in the vital organs, causing tightness, pain, stress and toxicity.

The profound transformation I experienced receiving chi nei tsang and witnessing my clients' improvements with this modality inspired me to make it the focus of my practice.



Sharing these healing tools with clients and students brings much fulfillment as I see the lasting impact on their health and their lives.

Chi nei tsang means internal organ chi massage. It is a branch of Chinese medicine developed by Mantak Chia and is based on the ancient principles of the Tao. This therapeutic process affects the *chi* vibrations of the organs. It clears up physical and emotional symptoms associated with imbalances, supporting physical function and providing deep rejuvenation.

Asian modalities, chi nei tsang included, view the symptomatic

or imbalanced areas and the healthy or balanced parts as a whole. The focus is to increase overall vitality and bring the flow of balanced energy from the healthy part to the symptomatic one. Often, symptoms, injuries and chronic conditions present with an emotional component. The physical pain reflects an emotional pain that causes internal obstructions and imbalance.

The chi nei tsang session specifically addresses both physical and emotional stagnation and facilitates harmonious integration of the body and mind. The practitioner and the client are working together in co-creating trust, openness and well-being.

Each session includes abdominal massage, internal organ manipulation, evaluation and opening of the navel gate, transforming emotional stress and toning the six healing sounds. I find that blending these healing tools increases my clients' awareness of how emotional stress affects their bodies and is particularly beneficial for stress-related syndromes, including migraines, digestive disorders, allergies, circulatory

problems, fatigue, tension, muscle and joint pains, PMS, hormonal imbalances, sports injuries, back pain and spiritual transformation.

The chi nei tsang methods are easily applied for self-healing. Most clients and students adopt these tools into their self-care routines.

Whether for your self-growth or as part of your professional training, I invite you to explore the unique methods of chi nei tsang. They are valuable for both self-healing and as hands-on practice with others. They restore balance, rejuvenate the internal organs, increase vitality and expand one's positive attitudes, inner wisdom and strength.

Osi Livni, AOBTA-CI, Instructor at Pacific College of Oriental Medicine

Acupressure Relieves Stress and Trauma-Related Problems

Sheryl Huske, Dipl. ABT (NCCAOM), AOBTA-CP

Have you ever wondered if the body is the unconscious mind? Or had the experience of a knowing or feeling deep within you? I think most of us have heard ourselves say, "I just feel it in my gut," or "I didn't think about something, I just knew what to do or say in the moment."

I am a Registered Jin Shin Do® Acupressurist, Authorized Jin Shin Do Teacher and a Certified Practitioner of Asian Bodywork Therapy through the American Organization for Bodywork Therapies of Asia (AOBTA). I am also a Diplomat in Asian Bodywork Therapy through the National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (NCCAOM®). Through the past 10 years of giving and receiving this work, I have learned the wonderful benefits of Jin Shin Do Bodymind Acupressure®.

As a practitioner, I find Asian Bodywork Therapy to be extremely rewarding in that, along with my clients benefiting from the energy work, I too feel renewed and connected with the abundant source of energy available to us always. "How so?" you may ask. One of the wonderful things about giving acupressure is the ability to stay in the present moment. Time falls away as I stay focused on what I hear, feel and smell with my client. All the senses are engaged during an acupressure session, which automatically gets me out of my mind and into feeling the energy supporting and surrounding the session.

As a recipient of acupressure, I have learned to trust my body and the messages I receive from the acupoints. For example, when holding a point, the practitioner may ask what I'm noticing

about the point, inviting me to be open to sharing a word, image, phrase, feeling or color that helps describe what I am experiencing. Keeping me focused on this feeling allows me to stay connected to my body while continuing to express myself as the layers of tension

release. Through this technique, I have learned countless truths from my body that the mind could never come up with. In other words, my truth lives in the bodymind!

What is Jin Shin Do Bodymind Acupressure? Jin Shin Do means "The way of the compassionate spirit" and this form of acupressure uses gentle-yet-deep finger pressure on specific acupoints and verbal bodymind focusing techniques to help release armoring or chronic tension, balance the qi, or energy, and improve vitality. It's a unique synthesis of traditional Japanese acupressure technique, classic Chinese acupuncture and acupressure theory, Daoist philosophy, qigong (breathing and exercise techniques), Reichian segmental theory and principles of Ericksonian psychotherapy. It's a clothes-on method that helps relieve stress and trauma-related problems.

I invite you to do yourself a favor: Find a registered Jin Shin Do acupressurist to enjoy the magic for yourself and possibly begin studying!



Sheryl Huske, Dipl. ABT (NCCAOM), AOBTA-CP, Registered Jin Shin Do Acupressurist, Authorized Jin Shin Do Teacher. Jin Shin Do Bodymind Acupressure is recognized as a particular form of Asian Bodywork Therapy by the AOBTA. To learn more, visit jinshindo.org.

Tuina Relaxes People at the Physical, Emotional and Mental Levels

Zhenni Jin, DAOM, LAc, AOBTA-CP

I began to learn Chinese medicine in 2010 when I was a freshman majoring in acupuncture and tuina at the Hunan University of Chinese medicine. Even now, I still remember all the body strength training I did during my first three years in school before starting any tuina classes.

Tuina consumes the practitioner's qi, so the first class I had in my tuina studies covered how to increase qi. In China, tuina doctors typically switch to other departments in their 40s because recovering from giving tuina sessions becomes more difficult.

Tuina, a combination of channel palpation, acupressure and body manipulation, is the earliest form of Asian Bodywork Therapy and has been used in China for centuries. Generally, in a tuina session, the patient lies on the table or sits on a chair in their most relaxed position. The practitioner asks a series of questions and then begins treatment with fingers, hands, elbows and forearms—pressing, kneading, pushing and tapping on the body surface.

The type of tuina delivered by various practitioners can be quite different, but we always check with patients about their feelings and technique endurance. Many times, we use herbal wine, ointments and heat to enhance the tuina techniques. Often, we combine cupping with tuina when treating muscular disorders.

I love tuina even though it is time- and energy-consuming. From my perspective, tuina helps relax patients at the physical, emotional and mental levels. Tuina helps to activate qi and blood flow.

I remember two patients with headaches and insomnia in my



clinical theater class at AOMA. Both their pulses were deep and weak before treatment, and I did 15 minutes of tuina for each before proceeding with acupuncture. The first patient's pulse became stronger, and the second patient's pulse didn't change.

I told students that the first patient's headache would decrease greatly after needling and that the second patient's would not. My "guessing" was correct—when the patient has a positive reaction to tuina, qi and blood circulation will accelerate, and their pulse will change. This is a significant indication for the practitioner to evaluate their prognosis during treatment. Tuina is beneficial for muscular issues and other problems arising from qi and blood stagnation, and pain is the symptom we deal with the most.

Tuina is not only for adults. A branch of tuina specializes in pediatrics. Tuina is a noninvasive and low-cost treatment for children, especially for those from 0 to 3 years of age. Techniques in pediatric tuina are different than those used on adults, and the focus is more on the frequency and timing of each session. Parents with babies find that performing tuina on their own children at home is an excellent remedy when the children experience mild coughing, asthma, fever and indigestion.

Young or old, practitioner or client, tuina provides many benefits!

Zhenni Jin, DAOM, LAc, AOBTA-CP, Instructor at AOMA

Guiding Patients to the Best Version of Themselves with Medical Qigong

Chris Bouguyon, AOBTA-CP

Qigong requires three components: breath, movement and intention. The intention behind qigong can then be divided into four cultivation paths: martial, health, spiritual, and medical or clinical. In recent years, the term medical qigong has been conflated with health qigong. So, for clarity, I will refer to my client-centric therapeutic work as clinical qigong.

I was introduced to qigong in 1991 as part of my martial training. My Tibetan kung fu teacher, an



herbalist and acupuncturist by profession, taught us to use qigong as a way to develop internal strength, enhance our awareness and heal training injuries.

By 2000, my training focused on healing not only physical injuries but also mental and emotional pain. I felt my whole being transform through this deep, personal cultivation path. In 2014, I began training in medical qigong with Bernard Shannon, DTCM, DMQ (China) at the International Medical

What is Asian Bodywork?


Qigong College and found many of the puzzle pieces I needed to continue my personal cultivation/healing journey. In 2016, my Master of Medical Qigong certification set me firmly on a path to working with others through the lens of traditional Chinese medicine and five element theory.

In September 2016, I opened the Medical Qigong Therapy Center, which has been integrated into the SimplyAware Wellness and Training Center. My clinical qigong practice is focused on helping people find the internal strength to heal and integrate painful life experiences.


Because clinical qigong involves mental, emotional, physical and potentially spiritual levels of the human condition, there really is no typical path through a clinical session. During a client's initial consultation, we learn about each other, determining if we fit as partners on their healing journey. The next step is usually a qigong energetic assessment, a discussion of what was discovered, and their first of many homework assignments.

Because our physical, mental and emotional aspects are deeply intertwined, each needing to be addressed as part of the whole, my clinical qigong practice incorporates many modalities. Qi emission therapy helps me understand a client's energetic landscape which then guides perspective-shifting discussions addressing mental and emotional incongruences. Because the energy meridians from traditional Chinese medicine run along the body's fascial layers, I often use tuina and cupping to help release fascial adhesions and scar tissue.

Once free, I can more effectively use qi emission to fully clear the meridians, helping the client move toward homeostasis. From there, I am better able to offer prescriptive qigong exercises to help the client realign and reset physical issues, and meditations or breath work to help realign mental and emotional disharmonies.

I see myself not as a healer but a facilitator, guiding clients toward the highest and best version of themselves. I invite them to be kind to themselves and teach them how to listen and work with their amazing bodies to reduce or eliminate pain. I empower them to empower themselves, which to me is the most rewarding and challenging job I have ever had. 

—Chris Bouguyon, AOBTA-CP, Master of Medical Qigong

 Download your complimentary guide: "The Asian-Bodyworker's Guide to Practice Success," at massageliabilityinsurancegroup.com/practice-success-for-asian-bodywork-therapy-ebook.

Asian Bodywork Therapy is a unique bodywork therapy that supports healing. It is unique because the primary focus is on treating the body's system of *qi*, meridians and acupoints through the lens of Chinese medicine. By dispersing stagnation, nourishing weakness, creating balance and encouraging the flow of *qi*, profound healing is realized.

The most common forms of Asian Bodywork Therapy include shiatsu, anma, tuina and acupressure. While having roots in the same Far East Asian medicine theories and principles as acupuncture, Asian Bodywork Therapy uses thumbs, fingers, elbows, knees and non-invasive instruments rather than needles. Treatment of the client includes using various assessments, strategies and techniques in order to promote, maintain and restore physical, emotional, mental, energetic and spiritual health.

Other bodywork therapy practitioners who wish to support clients in an integrated and holistic way may find great benefit in studying and becoming qualified in Asian Bodywork Therapy. The American Organization for Bodywork Therapies of Asia (AOBTA®) is the professional membership organization for Asian Bodywork Therapists in the United States and provides for the professional recognition of practitioners, instructors and schools. Find the details on the AOBTA® website, aobta.org.