

Koshi Balancing - An Eclectic Method of Structural Alignment

by Jeffrey Dann

In this brief article I want to introduce a number of different concepts and approaches that have shaped the way I treat musculoskeletal problems. My style has evolved through a series of studies in Japanese therapeutics since 1973. It represents an eclectic combination from different sensei I have studied since I first went to Japan. I am indebted to these sensei and want to acknowledge them here. Eclectic Shiatsu from Kamijo Hideyaki of the Kyoto Tenrikyo Church, Seitai therapy, from Miyata Tomei of the Mito Toubukan dojo Ibaraki Prefecture, Keiraku Chiryō (Meridian Therapy) most especially from Shudo Denmei, Sotai movement therapy from Sorimachi Dai-ichi and Peter Thompson, and Seitai Shinpo from Sorimachi sensei.

After years of studying kendo, iaido and naginata-do as well as Seitai manual therapy with Miyata Tomei sensei I came to understand the importance of the Japanese cultural body-mind concept of koshi – the lumbar-pelvic center. Later, studying with Sorimachi Dai-ichi sensei I came to realize that his structural acupuncture system was also founded upon correct balancing and aligning of the koshi.

In the following years of practicing acupuncture and Eclectic Shiatsu and Seitai therapy, I became fascinated with the significance of the Gallbladder channel and its relationship to the koshi and acupuncture energetics of the Dai Mai extraordinary meridian as well as the Gallbladder's special relationship to chronic connective tissue and musculo-skeletal problems.

This interest deepened and evolved into a study of acupuncture and manual therapy focused on connective tissue and fascial planes in chronic and acute muscular problems. During this period of study and clinical practice I was fascinated and perplexed by the apparent contradictions of deep needle techniques seen in TCM and Seitai Shinpo and the superficial needle techniques of Shudo sensei and other Meridian Therapy practitioners including Toyohari instructors.

I can remember returning to Japan after studying in Beijing, China in 1982 and visiting various Japanese acupuncturists. "How effective can that be?" I thought, "The needles don't even stand up." They don't even reach the muscle layer where many of the problems reside. Then I personally experi-

enced the superficial needle techniques of Shudo sensei and felt the effectiveness of superficial treatment on an intermittent sacroilitis and sciatica that I have had. Ever since then I have struggled with understanding the appropriate clinical and theoretical uses of superficial versus deep needling.

Therefore I would like to delve into this issue in some depth in four successive articles covering the areas of interest mentioned above. In the first article I will analyze the body-mind concept of koshi and then root it in a structural understanding of anatomy and movement function.

In the second article I will explore the various interrelationships of koshi and fascial structures to the Dai Mai extraordinary meridian, the Gallbladder channel, Liverwood and connective tissue nourishment and function, and Shao Yang energetic level in terms of core pivotal movement and chronic muscular problems.

In the third article I shall attempt to summarize the existing physiological studies on the mechanisms of acupuncture looking at deep muscle layer Deqi stimulation versus superficial fascial, or as I call it, Wei Qi, stimulation.

In the final article I will give an overview of my eclectic clinical approach that focuses on koshi balancing through manual techniques of shiatsu, Seitai, and Sotai while incorporating superficial needling of anterior Dai Mai – Gallbladder-Liver points and deep structural Seitai Shinpo needling of the lumbar sacral joints.

Jeffrey Dann, PhD, Dipl. Ac. now lives in Boulder Colorado after having practiced on the Big Island of Hawaii for many years. He is currently president of the Traditional Japanese Acupuncture Foundation (Hawaii). His previous training was in cultural and medical anthropology where he did his field work in Japan and studied kendo, shiatsu, and sei tai ho at the Mito Toubukan Dojo in Ibaraki prefecture from 1972-1975. He attained the rank of yondan in kendo.