

## **Zen Touch™ Practitioner Thesis** **By: Faye Yousry**

As an intern in the Zen –Touch Practitioner program, I have embarked on this thesis project to fulfill the requirements for graduation as a Zen – Touch Practitioner/Instructor.

The following text is the compilation, research and analysis of an experimental journey along the path of health. The ancient techniques of Shiatsu and acupuncture modernized by the innovation of Zen –Touch are the tools used in conjunction with holistic therapies to empower several souls to change their lives dramatically.

I wish to extend my thanks to all the participating individuals in this project, to my teachers along the path of Zen –Touch internship and to all souls who facilitate it for humanity.

### ***Subject 1: Gloria***

#### **Introduction and Symptoms**

When Gloria arrived for her first session, she was very eager to be part of the project. She said she had no major problems; that she was looking for work for some time as an English/Spanish teacher (which later showed in her hara as a very active (full) future direction/liver area) and had some weight problems (can easily gain weight).

Gloria is generally very active; always fussing and doing chores around the house and outside. Her “nine star ki” year is 3- *tree*, which is confirmed by her creative talents in cooking, accessorizing and general style. She also has the ambitious, idealistic qualities of 3-*tree* and the spiritual values (regular to church). I thought her year was metal or water because of her combination timid (water) and grief-like (metal) voice quality but that voice quality turned out to reflect an imbalance in kidney/bladder and lung/Li areas.

Her symptoms were:

- Lower Backache with PMS cramps, so strong, that it causes her to curl in a fetal position (kidney indication).
- Gas and pain of stomach and intestines; irregular or missing bowel movements; that I attribute to her overly active/full liver (Hara assessment) not functioning efficiently in directing the smooth flow of stomach and spleen.
- Craves sweets (Spleen and blood sugar imbalance indicator) and has pain in intestines when probed for hara work or when nervous or sad. Abdominal pain that is worse on pressure indicates a Full Cold condition (according to TCM).

- Tightness of chest that causes shortness of breath “I can’t take a deep breath”; This can be a Lung and heart challenge; possible lung not being nurtured by stomach/spleen or being insulted by an overworked liver. Also she has the dryness of scalp and dandruff (inefficient lung chi).
- Often feels like going to the bathroom but urinates very little though having the urge to urinate more (again points to inefficient kidney function of directing the fluids and an empty heat condition (scanty urination).

### **Analysis and Assessment**

According to her nine star ki, Gloria’s weak organs are spleen/pancreas and lung/large Intestines which seems to agree with her symptoms. She has a double chin and blemishes in chin area which reflect reproductive organ challenges. She had just gotten off the pill; hence kidney/bladder and spleen/pancreas are affected; as their meridians run through the reproductive organs. Her fluid retention and easy weight gain reflect dampness/spleen issues. Her anxious waiting to fulfill her dream of teaching and to get on with her life can be seen in the excessive bladder meridian in the legs. Liver in the hara was full. This interrupts the smooth flow of spleen and stomach chi causing her to have gas. Also full uncontrolled liver rushes up against descending lung chi causing tightness of chest area and shallow breathing.

## **Treatment and recommendations**

I worked on bladder at legs to sedate it with hand on hara to move some of the stagnant chi to the empty bladder in hara. I did ginger compresses for kidney in back. That she enjoyed a lot.

I also worked on hara which showed liver (full); spleen (empty) and bladder (empty in hara; full in legs). I got great response from Hara after holding LV/SP simultaneously for three minutes. This practice I repeated periodically through her sessions. She expressed her enjoyment of our sessions and mentioned that she felt a lot of warmth during the sessions (She is generally cold).

Gloria was also put on a cleanse diet to eliminate meat, eat more veggies and grains and cut down on sweets and dairy (especially important to reduce mucus in female organs). I recommended beans/seaweed for tonifying kidneys and sprouts for liver (staples which she had not partaken at all in her diet previously). A general, slightly expansive, vegetarian diet was recommended because of her compacted, contracted condition.

Conclusion: activation of Gloria's dream combined with regular Zen –Touch™ sessions, a good diet and yoga, would sedate the bladder. As I tonify lung and Large intestines area (breathing exercises), they could control liver which would fill her empty heart and spleen areas.

## **Results**

Gloria now eats lentils and peas regularly (she never ate them before; and they are a good substitute for beans, which she would not eat!). she drinks ginger or astragalus tea for her cold condition, and takes daikon drink for relieving her contracted, compacted organs. She never eats a cookie (which was a favorite pastime) and is much conscious about her diet in general. She does yoga and taichi regularly.

About one month after treatment, Gloria got a teaching position in San Diego. She is a newlywed who also walks, bikes and enjoys the outdoors.  
A Happy Ending!

### ***Subject 2: Debra***

#### **Introduction and symptoms**

When Debra arrived for her first session, she had such lower back pain that she could barely walk. She was actually limping. The doctors had told her she had compressed disks in the lumbar areas and her hips were visibly misaligned.

Bo Shen(visual) assessment revealed red spots all over her body (salt/mineral imbalance); double chin (reproductive issues), general flaccid soft appearance and texture of the body and soma and graying dry hair (depleting kidney essence and inefficient lung chi). Her 2<sup>nd</sup> toe was longer than the rest (inclination to

blood/sugar imbalance). She used to have emotional ups and downs that prompted her to use St. John's Wart tranquilizer every day. She would experience mood swings and depression. She takes a tremendous amount of vitamins and minerals; also consumes a lot of salt and salty products (pretzels), which contribute to the red spots.

### **Analysis and Assessment**

My back assessment of her is weak kidney (there was a major dip in lower back area) and hara/facial assessment revealed sluggishness (possibly mucus) in sexual organs. She has a family history of hysterectomy and tumors in ovaries; and I strongly advised her to take measures to protect and rejuvenate her reproductive organs (less dairy and meat and more whole foods and exercise). She had a general yin condition in her gait and lifestyle, so I recommended more life and energy giving foods like grains and vegetables and some fish, which would also lead to an even, stable blood sugar condition. She had experienced blurred vision (liver condition possibly occurring because of a weak parent kidney/bladder).

I had Debra write a diet diary and one of the major foods she was consuming was the one-page! full list of vitamin supplements. I advised her to reduce her intake because they were used as a crutch and a psychological boost but were putting great strain on kidney and bladder to filter all those minerals.

Even though Debra's symptoms and diagnosis point to kidney/liver scenarios; I felt that there is a deeper issue and source for her condition. Intuition dictated that there are heart/inspirational issues involved and a dream that somehow has gone unfulfilled (empty heart area in hara confirmed that), and the mood swings, depression and insomnia also pointed there.

I had a (heart to heart) talk with Debra and asked the following: Can you go far back in your life and tell me your major emotional event? Did you aspire to do something or be someone like an actress or so? (Debra is still a beautiful woman in her fifties.) She was visibly touched by the question and said: "Yes!" She had aspired to be a model yet fell in love at a very young age, got pregnant, married and had two children then the marriage broke up soon after and she solely took up the care of the children. She sacrificed her dream for love and toiled hard to raise her children singlehandedly.

This topic was obviously very emotional to Debra. I explained that these events could be the root of her current problem. (Original Ht/SI issues which acted as a domino effect eventually affecting kidney and liver through the inhibiting cycle.) she was very emotional as she was listening to this and was crying. She agreed that she had always played second to her relationships, even now to her current second husband.

Debra vowed to take more care of herself and more charge of her life when she returns to resume life with her husband. Debra commuted from Las Vegas for our sessions. I could feel a new life and energy building in her as she was speaking.

## **Treatment and Recommendations**

Debra was given regular Zen –Touch™ and parasympathetic sessions and put on a cleansing/building diet of whole grains, seaweed, legumes and vegetables. To nurture kidney chi; Parsley, sweet rice and wheat berry were recommended for foods and rosehips, raspberry and blackberry leaves for herbs.

Debra dramatically improved in a few months. She can walk with a better posture and the spasms she used to get in legs and hips are less intense. She does yoga and hikes occasionally.

In Debra's case, the therapeutic element of communication between therapist and client was valuable necessary healing tool in addition to her bodywork and diet regime.

## **Results**

Debra was very happy with her treatment and continues to get sessions with me flying in from her home in Las Vegas.

Her general back problems are consistently better. She cut down on vitamins and is more conscious of her diet. She also sleeps better (the Mind has found residence in a healthy heart!) and relates well to her family and friends.

“My heart yearns to be filled that I may behold my dream.”

### ***Subject 3: Tom***

#### **Introduction and symptoms**

When Tom replied to my ad for project volunteer, he sounded enthusiastic, cooperative and eager to begin. But upon consulting with him, I discovered a reluctance on his part to relay his symptoms and a tendency to make a light matter out of the seriousness of his condition. This was later revealed as a lung/Li imbalance, which hampered his communication and connection with others and showed in his reluctance (on a small scale) to complete sentences of his speech and (on a large scale) to complete projects of his life.

Tom suffered from acids “rising up to his chest”, especially during bodywork; causing him great discomfort and shortness of breath. This is a result of stomach's “normally descending” food chi ascending (rebellious direction) in his case, lung chi too weak to push chi down and kidney not anchoring chi. He also experienced a burning sensation accompanied with the above. This is stomach heat.

He described himself as someone who does not change easily, set about his ways; indicative of a metal imbalance (rigin/fixed). He seemed sure or what he needed to do to get healthy; but lacked the discipline or the drive (liver stagnation/congestion and a bladder/kidney imbalance (activation of life path). Such symptoms could be the culmination of years of alcohol intake (Tom is a recovered alcoholic and an AA member).

At the initial sessions, he was unemployed on the hunt for jobs which caused him some anxiety (further affecting and is affected by stomach/spleen). He was experiencing joint stiffness at wrists, shoulders, ankles and knees which is kidney (bones) and liver (tendons and muscles) related.

Socially, he has never been married, with one son, and described himself as “not easy at making relationships but misses the lack of”. This also points to a challenged spleen/stomach network. He is a recovered alcoholic and chain smoker and constantly blames and holds himself responsible for his condition “If I would do such & such, then such & such would happen.” The self-blame is another metal (LU/LI) indication and a characteristic of his 5-soil nature.

### **Analysis and Assessment**

Tom's nine star ki is 5-soil which is reflected in his realistic, practical nature and his preference to solve his (personal) problems on his own. He also has the 5-soil nature of a strong ego-self and being highly opinionated.

Tom has a steadfast constitution with a 1/6 head to body ratio and a back/left head spiral (further confirming his adherence to past proven methods and a steadfast nature). He operates on an emotional, sensorial and somewhat intellectual (he was very inquisitive about my techniques) consciousness level. He has a general very contracted condition. His left shoulder was higher and more contracted while the right shoulder was low and expanded. This could be stomach expansion pushing left side up or liver contraction pulling the right side down, and a probable heart expansion as well. He stands with his feet turned out, indicative of a jitsu stomach meridian. His right leg was fuller (showing bladder/kidney stagnation). He has a recurring rash, which is a manifestation of uprising liver chi and heat invading and restricting the moistening, dispersing lung function.

Hara assessment revealed a very expanded upper area (LV/ST/Upper colon). Heart area empty. Bladder was empty in hara/full in legs. The full areas were liver/GB and Stomach. Most of Tom's conditional symptoms point to heart/heart regulator emptiness, lung and large intestines stagnation and liver/GB excess. He has a strong, deep rooted constitution, lots of will power and guts but lacks the focus, direction and ignited passion to drive his dream forward. He also has no idea what that dream is!!

Further face diagnosis: Reddish lines in eyes (overworked organs), bluish hue in eye (kidney imbalance, cold in the system). A constitutional nose cleft and a conditional red tip tongue indicate heart challenges. White coating on tongue with a slippery thick coating indicate excess mucus (meat and bread are a major diet consumption). His forearm skin shows chicken texture which he does consume regularly. Face complexion is red (fire-heart chi and liver heat). Brittle dry skin and toe nails show mineral imbalance.

Back assessment revealed full ST/LV and empty lung and ht areas corresponding to and confirming hara assessment.

## **Treatment and Recommendations**

One of the most urgent recommendations that Tom needed was a change of diet. He consumed a (SAD) Standard American Diet of meat, soda, fatty foods and sugar. Tom does not cook; he eats out regularly. A simple-to-prepare meal of brown rice and veggies was suggested, (it had to be simple because his contracted nature cannot stand being in the kitchen too long)), and a cutting back on meats, fats and rich foods to reduce liver excess was also recommended. Seaweed and beans were recommended to tonify kidney and as an alternative protein source. Other dietary suggestions were: Flax seed tea (special preparation "Healing with Whole foods book p. 340) for heat in the stomach and constipation and Nettles tea for protecting prostate and increasing jing and vitality.

Bodywork treatment included: Ht meridian in arm was tonified, Bladder meridian sedated in legs and tonified in hara.. Also, the "parent" spleen was tonified and treated to nurture and boost the "son" lung. Holding heart and SI points in hara brought good response. However, after 3 minutes of hara work, Tom would feel a burning sensation, a rising feeling of heat in stomach causing symptoms of "heart burn" and a shortness of breath. He would have to sit up. This occurred at several of our sessions. Yoga was then performed for 15-20 minutes. Hara was retested and reworked for six minutes with no discomfort. The Hara was also softer, easier to manipulate and organs were less full after every yoga practice. The "Taoist acupressure" technique (holding with one hand and vibrating with the other) was also used on hara.

Emotionally, Tom was exhorted to discover and find his dream and passion in life and pursue it.

## **Results**

Tom always felt better after each of our sessions and began to include some vegetarian meals in his diet. He was employed after three months of treatment. He continues to improve, albeit slowly, because of scarcity of motivation and interest to change old habits. I consider Tom very fortunate to have been able to subsist on his old diet and lifestyle; possibly owing to his strong pre-natal essence & his naturally strong 5-soil organs (spleen/stomach/pancreas).

"Born with grace I may have the means to follow my bliss"

### ***Subject 4: Terri***

#### **Introduction and symptoms**

Although my sessions with Terri were interrupted with her departure to Europe, there was enough interesting information to warrant including hers as a case study in this thesis. Before I asked Terri to volunteer for this project, I knew

she would consent. She had the eager, innocent (almost naïve), ready-to-be-mentored look.

Terri was mainly frustrated with her weight. She felt she had a lot of extra fat (fluff; she called it) and it was hard for her to keep it off. Terri did not, however, appear fat. She had aches and pains that moved around her body (wind/liver condition) and problems on both sides of feet. Her left foot visibly pointed to the left (possible GB or BL jitsu). Her general condition spoke of excess: Hot body, red complexion, slightly overweight, loud voice (qualities of fire imbalance). However, there was also a heaviness to her walk and speech that spoke of earth imbalance.

### **Analysis and assessment**

Terri's *8-soil* nature showed in her cheerful face, generous spirit and accommodating patient personality. She seemed generally grounded, enduring, poised and a people's person. She had a "dancer's back" which further showed her ability to take-on and endure. Her forehead lines were all indistinct; the earth, practical live being most prominent (She told me later that she thinks about daily practical money matters a lot and is trying to develop the emotional and spiritual aspects of her life.)

She was about to make a trip to Europe to "gain freedom physically and emotionally," but was afraid of the new adventure. Her kidney area was very low in the back (fear, apprehension about following her dream.) There was a general soft, flaccid feel and look to her body and a low muscle density (signifying spleen imbalance). Her eyebrows thinned out toward the end and I advised her to take good care of her health now to prevent decline in later years.

Terri said her goal was to cut down on the "fluffiness" and extra fat in her body, but she was consistently unsuccessful because of her weakness toward cheese, dairy products in general, and hot spicy foods. She craved routine and stability as her soil nature would normally dictate, but constantly changed and was not able to stick to any regimen.

The craving for fatty foods – particularly cheese which is stringy and connected-bespeak of lack of security, social connection and nurturing in our lives. That applied well to Terri; coming from a home of a stepfather that abused her and strained communication channels between her and her mother.

Back assessment revealed low kidney/bladder and high heart area. Especially calling was the heart regulator on the back. Hara assessment showed empty heart regulator and spleen and pain in intestines. Her heart challenges also showed in the red tip of the tongue and her fast strong pulse.

The tongue has a white coating with teeth indentations on sides (indication of spleen-pancreas Qi deficiency). A probable explanation for deficient spleen Qi is that the cheese and other dairy products coat spleen and pancreas causing them to be sluggish and not functioning efficiently. Also, fire energy is in excess and probably stagnant and cannot nurture spleen.

### **Treatment and Recommendations**

At almost every session, I would sedate heart regulator in arm and hara and tonify kidney/bladder in legs and hara. I also worked the heart meridian to supplement and protect it; as too much heat and activity from Terri's lifestyle could damage the heart.

Her craving for hot,spicy foods points to heart network disturbances, and I suggested cooling and high-water content foods like raw vegetables (cooked lightly), some fruit and soy and goat cheese for dairy cravings. Brown rice and quinoa were recommended to enhance heart and spleen. Oat straw tea was taken to harmonize heart.

At the sessions to follow, Terri seemed healthier and more peaceful. She began to bring some veggies to work as snacks and brought her first complete meal of broccoli, soy cheese, tofu and cranberries. She was advised to eat large green, leafy veggies, seaweed and miso soup regularly.

### **Results**

Terri started to take yoga regularly and enjoyed it very much. Meditation would help her to connect to a bigger dream in her life and tonify kidney/bladder network. She started to do short meditations along w/yoga.

Due to Terri's departure to Europe, the above discussion covers all the interactions that the writer had w/Terri. At least, she traveled a little wiser and healthier.

"The path of the cooling streams revives me and leads me home"

### **Conclusion**

The combination of Zen –Touch™ with holistic therapies such as whole foods nutrition, Eastern exercise and lifestyle management have profoundly contributed to the health enhancement of my clients. The major health-influencing factor was the regular, lengthy and complimentary sessions of Zen –Touch™ bodywork and assessment.

Zen –Touch™ has proven to enhance their flexibility and endurance for Yoga and Tai Chi, renew their hunger for healthy foods and change their attitude toward life to a more positive, optimistic view.

God bless Zen –Touch™ and the souls that weave its threads among mankind!