

Seventh Annual Seitai Shinpo Seminar

by Regan J Archibald

How many of you have thought of using acupuncture to realign the spine and correct postural imbalances? As acupuncturists, we see our fair share of patients with fairly serious structural distortions. If you observe closely enough you may discover that everyone has structural distortions in one area or another. By palpating the hips and using a few simple orthopedic tests, it becomes clear that one side of the spine is much more contracted, or that the person shifts their weight forwards or backwards on their feet. Many of these patients have sought out acupuncture mainly for pain management and see other specialists for structural correction.

How many of you would believe me if I said that you can achieve this with just acupuncture and moxibustion? For more than 30 years, Sorimachi Daiichi Sensei has been developing and refining a system of acupuncture that is able to accomplish this very thing. Please see previous articles by Sorimachi Sensei in *NAJOM* (July, 1997; July, 2002; and November, 2005) for an introduction to the basic treatment. I have been using this very structural-based practice of acupuncture called Seitai Shinpo in my practice. It has yielded amazing results and I would now like to share some of these concepts with the acupuncture community.

Knee Pain? Treat the Hips

At the October 2005 Seitai Shinpo Seminar Hawaii, I closely observed Sorimachi Sensei treating several patients with knee disorders. I quickly realized that they had all gotten off the table feeling much less pain in the knees than before the treatment, yet the acupuncture was performed on the hip of the affected side. There wasn't a single local treatment given. When I asked Sorimachi Sensei if he ever did local knee treatments he replied, "Treating the hips is enough. Sometimes, to help the patient feel like I am working on the affected knee I will needle it, but this will not do as much as the hip treatment."

Structural Needling

One patient treated by Sorimachi Sensei had suffered from patella chondromalacia and arthritis in his knees for over 10 years. Six points were carefully palpated and needled on each gluteus using a good part of a 100mm no.8 needle. The needles were not retained and there

was no thrusting or twisting of the needle, just a smooth continuous movement deep into the muscle tissue, stopping just a few millimeters from the bone.

The first three points were located along an imaginary line that runs in a lateral and anterior direction, slightly superior to BL 27. The next three points were found by drawing a line in the same direction from the end of the gluteal fold, the middle point being at the highest point on the gluteus maximus. The patient's diagnosis was simple: Right/Right. This means that he was manifesting one of four patterns of misalignment that Sorimachi Sensei developed for assessing structural abnormalities: 1) Right/Right 2) Right/Left 3) Left/Left 4) Left/Right. This patient's primary bias (bias in the bottom portion of his body) was on the right side; his secondary bias (the upper portion of his body) was also right, so his right scapula was pulled towards the iliac crest. In the treatment, Sorimachi Sensei carefully palpated and needled the basic Seitai Shinpo points that work to realign the spine and balance the whole structure. The patient was then asked to get off the table and walk around.

Initially, the patient felt off balance because of the structural shift. But as he continued to walk he said, "My knees feel like they are aligned and the pain is gone." Those of us observing also saw a noticeable change in the way he walked after the treatment. The next day he reported that his knees hadn't felt that good in 10 years.

Another patient, in her mid 70s with osteoarthritis in the knees, was asked to kneel on the treatment table and then to sit back on her heels. Before treatment she went down about 10 degrees before stopping due to pain. She was diagnosed with the Left/Left pattern and treated accordingly with 60mm needles in the hips and low back. She then received acupuncture while resting on her hands and knees.

After the treatment, she was asked to sit back down on her heels. This time she was able to sit completely on her heels without pain. She was also able to walk much more easily. (It is interesting to note that the patient was in child's pose for most of the treatment.) Treatment was administered to several patients throughout the weekend, many of whom had challenging conditions and they all had amazing results with Seitai Shinpo.

Mastering Seitai Shinpo

Sorimachi Sensei says that the basic treatment alone will help heal most conditions. He has said, "You might be surprised to learn that almost all diseases can be treated as one of these four basic distortion patterns." When we asked him about treating particular conditions, his response always includes this: "do the basic treatment and they will get better." His treatment philosophy revolves around one common theme: balance the structural imbalance. He does this mainly through acupuncture and moxibustion. He varies from the traditional theories of Yin/Yang, Eight Principles, Five Elements, and meridian therapy, but maintains that these can work in harmony with Seitai Shinpo.

For me, many of the traditional concepts of Qi and Blood and Yin and Yang are very abstract and take years to master and develop a feel for. But with Seitai Shinpo, just a little knowledge of structure will take you a long way in less time. From my first day in practice, until now, I have seen amazing results through the application of Seitai Shinpo, and others who graduated in the same Seitai Shinpo class have reported the same. It is a new acupuncture system, extremely efficient and effective, and based on fairly simple concepts. To become a master, just do what masters do. It seems that masters always have the ability to keep things simple. Observing Sorimachi Sensei work on patients was almost like a magic show for me. Every patient got off of the table feeling much less pain and having much better ROM than before the treatment.

I express my sincere appreciation to Sorimachi Sensei who came from Tokyo and has conceived this amazing secret of life, and to my teacher Dr. Maekawa Chieko for sharing Seitai Shinpo with me. Stephen Brown and Jeffrey Dann have also been great sources of inspiration to me and I thank them for their efforts in bringing Japanese acupuncture to the United States. I would also like to thank Kim Gitzel and all of Dr. Maekawa's students at the Traditional Chinese Medical College of Hawaii for putting on such an amazing event.

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