



Do you ever think how great it would be to really treat all your clients and yourself holistically? To be able to look at them and assess their condition and at the same time benefit yourself? As therapists it would be ideal for us to look at the whole person even when they come through the door with shoulder pain.

I often see people in practise who have gone through the medics and found no diagnosis for various symptoms. As a massage therapist sometimes I can help and sometimes not but with Ohashiatsu I am not only helping more people but getting better results.

I first heard of Wataru Ohashi about 15 years ago when covering some oriental facial analysis on an aromatherapy course. Since then my interest in eastern philosophy and therapy has grown and in true Oriental style has led me right back to where I began and Ohashi.

### **Wataru Ohashi**

Wataru Ohashi was born near Hiroshima, Japan in 1944 and although a sickly child his health was restored by ancient Japanese healing techniques; shiatsu, moxa and acupuncture. Because he owed his life to the Eastern concept of health, he later dedicated himself to teaching it to others. After graduating

from Chuo University in Tokyo, Ohashi studied Eastern healing arts with many masters. In 1970 he travelled to the United States and established the Ohashi Institute, a non-profit educational organisation located in New York City. He now has certified Ohashiatsu Instructors teaching his own system of technique, exercise and meditation throughout the USA and Europe.

### **Ohashi Philosophy**

Offering the optimum combination of eastern philosophy in the west could be called bridge building because it is in doing this that universal friendships are formed. Once we become more aware of other cultures and peoples we can live in peace and in harmony with others whatever their cultural background thus promoting peace, cooperation and harmony in all our thoughts and actions. Ohashi's mission in setting up the school was to provide quality education allowing everyone to "bring excellence to the art of healing and serenity to the art of living".



Wataru Ohashi performing Ohashiatsu

### **What is Ohashiatsu?**

"More than massage, Ohashiatsu combines the healing benefits of shiatsu, or

acupressure, and powerful self improvement techniques that quiet the spirit, open the mind, and rejuvenate the body". These benefits apply not only to the receiver but to the giver simultaneously which is rare in bodywork therapy when the therapist is often involved in very hard, physically tiring work. As Ohashi says "if you want to be a happy practitioner for years and years, you must develop good habits now". Too many good therapists are lost not because they do not have talent or passion for their work but because they lack the fitness and physical stamina to overcome constant strain and injury.

Ohashiatsu is a unique method of healing touch, a method of meditation and self-improvement. It was originally developed to allow the giver to remain in "a relaxed, balanced and healthy state" throughout treatment; a feeling which passes through the giver's hands to the receiver. It is a calming therapy to perform allowing the movements to flow gently in a soothing rhythmic synergy with your own mind and body and binding you to the client. This relaxed and harmonious state allows your intuition to be unlimited and go with the flow of the treatment and client requirements. But do not be misled into thinking this is a superficial therapy. This method of Shiatsu can work very deeply into the hara and meridians to create balance and promote health and well-being. The unique point is that this is achieved without any strain or tension on the giver.

As a treatment Ohashiatsu utilises traditional Shiatsu techniques working on releasing energy along the meridians and using tsubo points for stimulation.

However, an Ohashiatsu practitioner works on an even greater level to treat holistically using oriental diagnosis and Five Element theory. Oriental diagnosis allows you to read someone and assess them by what you see in their face and mannerisms rather than purely what they tell you, a fascinating insight into friends and family – quite eye-opening in some cases! Working with Five Element theory has been something of a revelation to me teaching me who I really am and helping explain why I may respond to circumstances differently to others. It teaches tolerance and helps us to understand ourselves and those around us; essential as we pursue careers helping others. The Five Elements of Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal and Water can teach us how our intrinsic qualities such as appearance, habits, likes and dislikes mould us as individuals. As the elements are all present in nature they are with us constantly creating balance with the universe we inhabit.

Studying with the Ohashi Institute is an enlightening experience and helps you along the path of self-development making the most of every moment. As Ohashi says “Waste your money, but don’t waste your time because it never comes back”, a true maxim to live your life by. The program offers flexible study options where you can study as much as you chose when you chose. Since the programme of study is broken into very manageable two or four-day workshops the course can be taken at your own pace allowing you to progress at your own rate when you feel ready to move on. In fact you can study Beginning 1 and 2 and that to give you a greater awareness and understanding of your own health and allow you to treat family and friends.

You also have the opportunity to study abroad as Ohashiatsu training is available in other countries including France, Italy, Sweden and the United States. As a student of Ohashiatsu you are encouraged to sample other trainers to enhance your understanding and learning experience. Students are regularly invited to take part in practice sessions providing the opportunity to learn from each other and experience regular treatments yourself. This open way of experiential learning serves you well to pursue the mission of promoting understanding and cooperation.

From my very first lesson I have been able to incorporate the theory and practice into my usual bodywork. I find working with the meridians builds me a better more holistic picture of my client and I am therefore able to assist their development on more levels.

I have a client who was coming to me as a case study for shiatsu who had arthritis in his knee and needed (according to the medical profession) a knee replacement. This was the main issue he discussed with me but he did mention he was seeing a counsellor, he gave no more details and I didn't pry. I was confused by the treatment as during my initial diagnostic the lung meridian was constantly telling me it was out of balance but he had no symptoms that I was aware of regarding this meridian. My instructor encouraged me to trust my intuition and so I went with it and we seemed to make progress. The client was very interested in how the therapy worked

and asked what I meant by meridians and their various indicators. I began to describe very briefly that the lung meridian for example often held grief, which could be from a lost loved one or any great change in life that meant 'letting go'. His face changed immediately and he confessed he had been seeing a counsellor about the loss of his father. His father had died over 60 years ago when the client was a child and he feels he never grieved and lived his life with this loss unrecognised. Once recognised and accepted he could move on and has in fact moved on. This is why I believe this is the ultimate holistic therapy as we only found the way to better physical health by discovering an emotional imbalance.

In twenty years of therapies I have not found anything that brings together mind, body and spirit in quite the same way. This example is the tip of the iceberg and the knowledge I have gained has helped my understanding of my own highs and lows and those around me. To illustrate this I have spent six weeks studying hard and now my exams are over and I have passed I am looking forward to rejoining the world. Unfortunately I have felt frustrated by symptoms of a cold until I realised it is simply my lung meridian 'letting go' of the exam stress and rebalancing ready to move on.

### **Ohashiatsu UK**

The Ohashi Institute was established in 1974 in New York City offering education and self-improvement. In 1994 Linda McQuillan graduated from the Institute and practiced Ohashiatsu in a GP surgery for 12 years. In 2006

she was invited by Ohashi to share the benefits of this therapy in the UK and began teaching in London. Now in it's 5th year the London school welcomes students from all over the country.



As an Aikido instructor Linda is an enthusiastic and passionate lecturer in oriental studies. Having begun studying Aikido in 1979 at Trinity College Dublin Linda is now a 4<sup>th</sup> Dan. In 1986 she moved to London and trained under Kanetsuka Sensei 7<sup>th</sup> Dan (British Aikido Federation) and opened the North London Aikido Dojo with her partner Ken Gannon in 1999. Linda continues to study Aikido in the UK and Japan as well as practising Ohashiatsu believing it to be "something for life, a different way of seeing your own body and your own health". She is a true role model for her students, one of who believes "Linda is a knowledgeable and inspiring teacher of oriental arts".

### ***Side note on training***

If you would like more information on this health-giving therapy please go to [www.ohashiatsu.org](http://www.ohashiatsu.org). Alternatively contact Linda McQuillan at [www.thewellbeingcentre.org](http://www.thewellbeingcentre.org) or by telephoning mobile number 07857629992.

For more details or to find the next scheduled dates for Beginning 1 course in London please contact Linda.

***Side note on Ohashi visit***

Ohashi is an invited speaker to the 2011 Shiatsu Society annual conference.

For more details please contact the Shiatsu Society on 08451304560 or go to

[www.shiatusociety.org](http://www.shiatusociety.org).

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