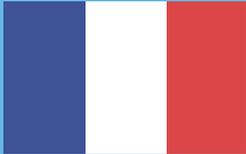


A journey into French Shiatsu - Focusing on the body

By Catherine Dompas



I am a Belgian Shiatsu and Seiki practitioner and I have been surfing through the French Shiatsu world and its many Shiatsu federations, styles, schools and teachers since I moved here, five years ago.



Catherine Dompas lives and works in Montpellier, France. She graduated in 2007 as a Shiatsu practitioner from the Yoseido Shiatsu Academy having trained with Master Yuichi Kawada in Brussels. She now works as a Shiatsu and Seiki practitioner and workshop organiser both in Montpellier and Paris. She is also a Waraku teacher and in-company trainer and coach.

When I arrived in Paris, I was very excited to see how the Shiatsu landscape looked, and to become part of the big French Shiatsu family, but I quickly found out that it was not as simple as it seemed! There were many schools with different styles and focuses: ranging from the Traditional Chinese Medicine inspired Shiatsu and the acupuncture of Namikoshi, to Masunaga and Zen-influenced Shiatsu - with everything in between. There were also a lot of teachers creating their own mixes, and a great deal of competition between the schools - which is probably one of the reasons why France has three Shiatsu associations: FFST (Federation of French Traditional Shiatsu), SPS The Union of Shiatsu Professionals), UFPST (French Union of Shiatsu Professionals), and at least as many therapist directory sites listing Shiatsu therapists. I decided not to be part of any of them so that I could explore without any limitations and be open to every way, experience and exchange.

‘1000 Monks, 1000 Shinto’

From ‘The Essence of Shinto - Japan’s Spiritual Heart’ by Motorise Yamakage

At the end of the 1960s, and early 70s, Shiatsu was flourishing and it was an exciting time for French people to get direct teaching from Japanese masters who were both visiting and resident in Paris. They were introduced to Japanese culture: *budo*, *Zen*, martial arts and healing arts, by people like Deshimaru (*Soto-Zen*), Noro (*Aikido*, *Kinomichi*), Nakazono (*Aikido*, *Kototama*), Tsuda (*Aikido*, *Seitai*), Kawada (*Shiatsu*), Kishi (*Shiatsu*, *Seiki*), and many more. These teachers encouraged and inspired some brave people to further practise and study with the Masters, both in France and Japan.

After some time of talking and exchanging with many practitioners who graduated from different schools and whom I have had the chance to meet during the Seiki workshops I have been organising, it has become clear that the genuine roots seem now almost to have been forgotten, despite the country’s rich historical connection with Japanese culture and with various Senseis. Chinese Traditional Medicine, Qigong and Tai Chi, Chinese concepts, acupuncture points and diagnostics have become almost more familiar to Shiatsu students in France than the genuine Japanese concepts, basics and specific Ki exercises, the importance of macrobiotics, Hara work, touch and the roots of Shinto culture in Shiatsu. Of course, some schools and teachers do know, but, in general, not many practise or teach it.



The diagram below is from 'Seiki, the Secret Art of Shiatsu' by Akinobu Kishi and Alice Whieldon (Singing Dragon press). It summarises the Japanese healing arts and the roots and connections with Shiatsu. Shiatsu practitioners who were looking for something more in their Shiatsu practice have reported that they have found it in this book.

I believe it is good that there are many teachers and schools who follow their own style in France, that it might be very positive for the further study of Shiatsu as a continuously evolving discipline. This spread gives space to diversity and creativity, where everyone can find what they need and can continue to evolve with an open mind, while, at the same time

respecting the roots of Shiatsu and the Japanese healing arts.

www.suuu.fr

www.seiki.paris

www.waraku.fr

www.happy-mondays.fr

Contact:

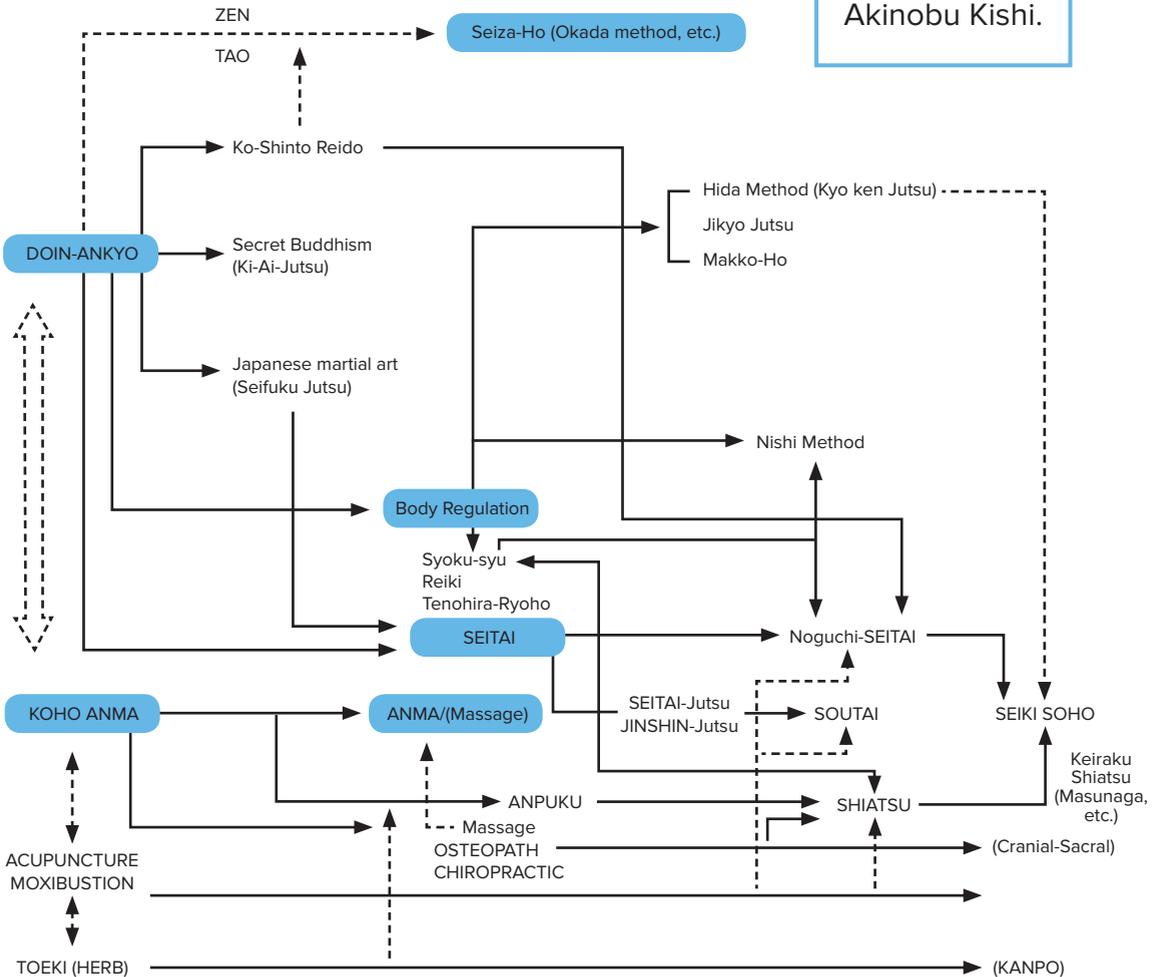
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Diagramme de l'histoire de la médecine ancestrale et traditionnelle japonaise

(p166, du livre 'The secret art of shiatsu, Sei-Ki, Life in Resonance', Akinobu Kishi et Alice Whieldon, edition Singing Dragon)

Légende

----- Lien indirecte ——— Lien directe



**'Don't try to copy me, just find your own way'.
Akinobu Kishi.**