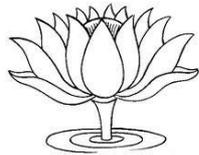




Marma Chikitsa



An Introduction for Bodyworkers,
Energyworkers and Yoga Therapy

Part 1



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An Introduction to Marma Chikitsa: Subtle Energetics and Practical Application for Therapists; Part I

The professional art of healing is both a blessing as well as beauty in action. To witness the change of the body and mind is a unique, yet visible experience. This skill requires patience, guidance as well as intuition. We all have the capacity to cultivate the tools needed to develop "healing hands". Even our words or intentions are valuable tools that enhance the practice. *"Marma therapy is usually included in the curriculum of Ayurvedic training programs, of which there are several in the United States and in the state of California. It is taught along with Ayurvedic massage and is often used along with Pancha Karma therapy, Ayurveda's special detoxification approach. Many Ayurvedic centers offer marma therapy either by itself or as part of other therapies. A good resource in this regard is the National Ayurvedic Medical Association (NAMA)."* (<http://www.layogamagazine.com/issue9/feature/feature.htm>)

The system of marma as chikitsa/ or therapy is related to kalarippayattu, a martial art form from the southern state of Kerala, India. This theory resides under *siddha vaidhyam*, great works of knowledge which are passed down through select families. The systems of Siddha and Ayurveda are very much similar. In both systems, the basis of treatment is the three element theory or 'tridosha' (three humours). The three humours are Vata (air), Pitta (bile) and Kapha (phlegm). These works are attributed to the sage Agastya. He is considered as the first and foremost Siddha. The guru of many other Siddhas who has made contributions to the field of Medicine and Astrology - especially Nadi astrology. [1] <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kalarippayattu> , [2] <http://www.indiadvine.org/audarya/hare-krishna-forum/487117-concept-siddhas-siddha-vaidyam.html>

In Thailand, practitioners of Thai traditional medicine revere Jivaka Komarabhacca (also known as Shivago) as the founder and original source of the medicine and the system of Sen Lines upon which this medical approach is based. He was Indian by birth and the foremost doctor India during the time of the Buddha. He became a personal attendant to the Buddha. Jivaka studied Ayurvedic medicine for 7 years under the tutelage of the master Atreya in the north of India. He became a renowned physician and was known to be an expert surgeon and herbologist. He is mentioned in some of the earliest Buddhist texts, including the Pali Canon, which was recorded on palm leaves during the first century BC.

Thai practitioners often recite one of various versions of a Pali prayer, or Wai Khru to Shivago to invoke the healing power of the lineage. An image of Shivago will be found at any traditional school, as well as the treatment rooms of most practitioners. The earliest mention of marma is found in the Rig Veda where Indra is said to have defeated Vritra by attacking his *marman* with a vajra. References to *marman* also found in the Atharva Veda and numerous other epic texts. Sushruta (c. 6th century BC) identified and defined 107 vital points of the human body in his *Sushruta Samhita*. Of these 107 points, 64 were classified as being lethal if properly struck with a fist or sticks. Sushruta's work formed the basis of the medical discipline Ayurveda. [3] <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agastya>

“The Sushruta Samhita states there are 22 marmas on the lower extremities, 22 on the arms, 12 on the abdomen and chest, 14 on the back, and 37 on the neck and head. Marmas range in size from one-half angula to four angula(angula means:the width of the middle finger measured across the medial interphalangeal joint). Smaller marmas can be called points, but the larger marmas correspond to a zone or region. There are major marmas that correlate to the seven spinal chakras, internal organs have marma points, and joints may potentially be marma regions. In addition to the 107 classical marmas, each individual will also have their own unique marmas relative to their age, build, weight, posture, behavior, and diet. The entire skin surface of the body can be thought of as the 108th marma, conjoining all the other marmas.” [4] (http://www.massagetherapy.com/articles/index.php/article_id/819/Asian-Bodywork-Therapy-Part-II)

Eighteen Yogic Marma Regions and Main Corresponding Marmas

- 1) The toes are the starting point. **Kshipra** marma.
- 2) The ankles: four and a half finger units from the toes. **Gulpha**(ankle) marma.
- 3) The middle of the calf: **Indrabasti** marma.
- 4) The root of the knee: eleven finger units from the middle of the calf: **Janu Mula** Marma.
- 5) The center of the knee: **Janu** marma.
- 6) The middle of the thigh: **Urvi** marma.
- 7) The anus: **Guda** marma.
- 8) The middle of the hip: **Kukundara** and **Nitamba** marmas.
- 9) The root of the urethra: **Vitapa** marma.
- 10) The navel: **Nabhi** (navel) marma.
- 11) The center of the heart: **Hridaya** (heart) marma.
- 12) The base of the throat: **Nila** marma.
- 13) The root of the tongue: **Shringataka** marma.
- 14) The root of the nose.This marma is not one of the classical 107, but control of it can be related to **Phana** marma by the nostrils at the base of the nose.
- 15) The center of the eyes: **Apanga** marma.
- 16) The middle of the brows: **Sthapani** marma.
- 17) The center of the forehead. This marma point here is not one of the classical 107 but is still very useful, **Anja** marma.
- 18) The top of the head: **Adhipati** marma.

These eighteen marma regions include points for seven chakras. The body can be divided into five regions relative to the five elements. We can treat the elements in the body according to the marmas in the portion that relates to them.



Space



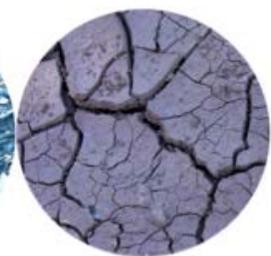
Air



Fire



Water



Earth



1. MARMAS IN THE REGION FROM THE FEET BELONG TO THE EARTH/*Prithivi* ELEMENT. *Structures affected are: pelvic bone, skeletal structure, bones, cartilage, muscle, tendons, hair, teeth, flesh, skin and feces.*

Key marma: Talahridaya on the feet.

2. MARMAS IN THE REGION FROM THE KNEES TO THE ANUS BELONG TO THE WATER/*Apas* ELEMENT. *Structures affected are: peritoneal fluid, urine, sweat, CSF, plasma, blood, saliva, digestive juices, pleural fluid and cytoplasm.*

Key marma: Urvi marma on the middle of the thighs.

3. MARMAS IN THE REGION FROM THE ANUS TO THE HEART BELONG TO THE FIRE/*Tejas* ELEMENT. *Structures affected are: stomach, digestive enzymes, liver, neurotransmitters, eyes, cellular metabolism, nucleic acids, agni component of each dhatu.*

Key marma: Nabhi (navel) marma on the navel.

4. MARMAS IN THE REGION FROM THE HEART TO THE MIDDLE OF THE EYEBROWS BELONG TO THE AIR/*Vayu* ELEMENT. *Structures affected are: lungs, colon, respiration, circulation, cytoplasmic movement, movement of chromosomes, RNA/DNA molecules, all voluntary and involuntary actions, movement of neurons and skin.*

Key marma: Phana marma on the nostrils

5. MARMAS IN THE REGION FROM THE MIDDLE OF THE BROWS TO THE TOP OF THE HEAD BELONG TO THE ETHER/*Akasha* ELEMENT. *Structures affected are: cranial space, sinus space, nasal space, ventricular space, thoracic space, abdominal cavity, oral cavity, intracranial space, respiratory tract, GI tract, veins, ligaments, synaptic space, intercellular space, cell channels, tubes, pores, ears.*

Key marma: Adhipati marma on the head.

An Ayurvedic practitioner can obtain information for use in a client's treatment plan by observing an individual's constitution, diet, daily habits, relationships, age, season, and stress level. Observation via the interview of the client and during the treatment itself can lend to the diagnosis and treatment plan. Overtime, patterns become present to the practitioner.

Marmani are akin to vehicles used for communication within the body, mind and spirit. Sensitivities can reflect a particular disturbance, whether it be in a dosha, dhatu, upadhatu, srotamsi or organ. Dr. Vasant Lad states” for example, a pain response on initial pressure that disappears soon thereafter is suggestive of vata imbalance. When a marma remains tender throughout the applied pressure, pitta may be affected. If a marma is tender only when deep pressure applied, kapha may be imbalanced.” [4]Marma Points of Ayurveda; Chpt 2: Functions of Marmani,pg 21

There are many ways one can perform marma therapy, whether it be via thumb (most common), stone, electroakuputor, or needle(one must be specifically licensed to perform with needles). The treatment can be performed via through clothes(except acupuncture) or with direct contact with the skin. When pain or sensitivity is present in a marma/ or region, there are specific techniques that can be applied for further analysis and observation. Intuition is additionally crucial for interpretation. Feedback from the client during and after the session has expired is useful information in communicating any changes necessary. With continued treatments clients may notice a “feeling” or a witness experience as the transformation unfolds.

Just as in pulse diagnosis, one can train the subtle senses to “pick up” on vata, pitta, and kapha imbalances. Our hands are our gifts to each other, an ability to connect.

