

The Art of Zen Shiatsu presented by Byron Barth

Review by Rebekah Hayden

Presenter, Byron Barth, is a Zen shiatsu therapist based in California. He has a simple and easy manner, although some may get annoyed at the persistent American accent. The shiatsu demonstration takes place in a very Zen environment — a pagoda with an open window behind which is a tropical garden complete with trickling waterfall. The ubiquitous accompaniment of shakuhachi and koto played by Jeff Cairns and Izuma Fujikawa adds to the Zen feel.

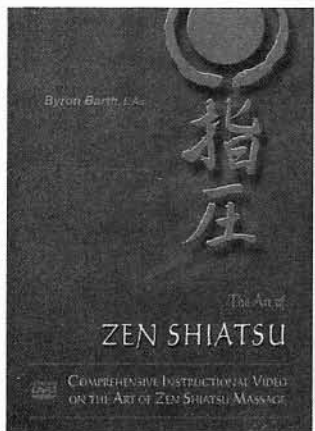
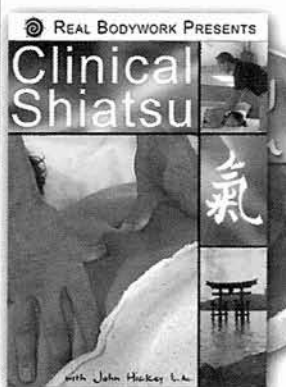
Aimed at the beginner, the DVD is a good introduction to Zen shiatsu, describing in simple terms what shiatsu is, and how to do it. The DVD is set up so that it can be watched while practising the techniques on a partner, and indeed, I feel that is the way to get the most out of it. At two and a half hours, it is long, but working on someone while watching it would help to integrate and assimilate the information. The DVD is accompanied by an instruction booklet which includes information on key shiatsu principles, photographs and descriptions of postures and manipulation techniques. There is also an index of the whole DVD, so you can skip to exactly the point you need if wanting to check on a particular technique or area of the body.

Barth has been trained in the lineage of Masunaga and

Namikoshi, and this is evident in the techniques and style of shiatsu used. Before the treatment, Barth leads the viewer through the Makkahos assuming you will do these along with the DVD. The viewer is then guided through a basic shiatsu treatment, including hara diagnosis. As Barth works, the voice-over introduces concepts such as kyo and jitsu, tonification and sedation, the location of the points and the situation of the meridians, as well as going into more detail about the treatment methods. Graphic overlays from *A Manual of Acupuncture* by Deadman et al are a nice touch, providing a visual reference that displays the position of points and meridians in relation to surrounding anatomy. Different techniques on each side of the body are used to show the variety of methods possible when treating a client.

This would be an ideal reference for a student or as an introduction to someone thinking about doing shiatsu, and helpful for a practitioner wanting to brush up on technique. However, as it consistently refers to points and uses anatomical references as guides to point position, it is not a DVD for the total novice.

I felt it could be nice for a practitioner to watch this with their partner, with the aim of getting a good treatment from them in future!

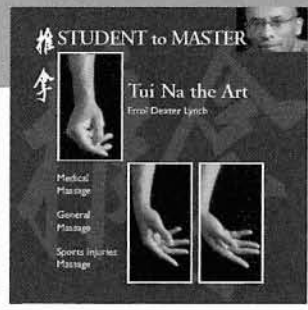
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