

Experiences with KI

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I don't know what ki or energy is, and I am not a natural scientist who proves the existence of energy indirectly through elaborate experiments. What I do know is that there is a reality beyond our physical reality. I know this from my own experiences in life and in my Shiatsu practice, experiences that don't allow any other conclusion. I would like to write about some of these experiences here.

Energetic perception is something very common, everybody can do it and everybody does it; probably it dominates our daily life without us being aware of it. However, it is a different perception than the one via the five senses, which we believe we are familiar with.

Surely the five senses are a part of the energetic perception, they represent the "material" part of it. However, the actual sensory organ for ki is our whole body. More so, it is the complete space of our energetic body; it actually is our whole person with all the experiences that life has given us so far. We ourselves with everything that makes our personality seem to be the organ of perception for energetic phenomena.

We perceive energetically by allowing our own energetic field or space to go into resonance with other spaces or fields.

Ki has no limitations

Material structures have clear outlines and unmistakable borders. I can say where a material thing is and where it isn't. In the energetic world one cannot say that. In the same way as it is impossible to give an anatomical definition of the organ of energetic perception, also energetic structures present themselves with a peculiar yet characteristic blurredness.

Ki seems not to have any clear borders. Rather energetic structures seem to be completely connected with their environment,

to blend into it, to form a unity with it. This again seems to be in the nature of ki, which we could describe as at least 3-dimensional, as a vibrating space, which always and immediately goes in resonance with neighbouring vibrating spaces. In the end, everything seems to be connected with each other through resonance. Of course in the end this also counts for the material world, which has rightfully been described as a manifestation of the energetic world.

When students "look into" the body for the first time, many can hardly believe that these shadowy mists are supposed to be something real, let alone something important or even reliable. Although when we get more familiar with this kind of "seeing", paradoxically a great deal of clarity is possible because of this haziness. We can "see" what is there and how it changes under our hands.

On the way we experience another fascinating phenomena: The more urgent it is for a person to "see" these patterns, the more he/she wants to be able to do it, the more the patterns withdraw from the person's perception. The same thing happens if we are afraid not to be able to perceive them. What these two conditions have in common is that they are linked with inner tension, with narrowness in the perceiving person.

In my own classes for energetic perception it is often essential for didactical reasons that I perceive energetic patterns. Because this "has to be", there is the temptation for me to directly and actively wanting to do it. I have made the experience that this doesn't work very well. Especially in the first years of teaching I had to basically put myself in the "reverse gear". I had to consciously expand and feel myself in my own body first. I also had to allow the feeling that it wasn't important whether I could perceive in that moment or not. Only through such a trick did perception become possible - and sometimes it still is that way today.

This is how I explain this phenomenon: we can basically only directly experience ki as vibrating space through resonance. And for that we need "space" and being relaxed in our body and mind. Every inner condition that limits this expanse (like stress e.g.,

which is also caused by too much intention, effort or fear) becomes an obstacle in going into resonance, to basically be affected by the vibrations of the space we are looking at. It is very helpful in this context if the perceiving person feels herself in her own body when resting in it. By resting in our own body-mind-space we allow expanse to unfold - this prevents us from having too much intention and stress.

However, in order to have a concrete experience of ki it is not enough to be relaxed and open. It requires something else: clarity and precision. Through clear and focused attention in connection with a serene state of inner openness it becomes possible to linger in the perceived energetic spaces of a certain place. This enables a differentiated perception, reflection and goal-oriented action. Without focus in the Shiatsu practice, expanse and openness can easily become meaningless. Without openness the focus is too narrow and can only have a small effect.

Ki can only be experienced subjectively

Since energetic perception is only possible with the whole body, with the whole personality, what a single person experiences will always be coloured by his/her current life situation. My personality, my strengths as well as my weaknesses flow into my perception and influence it. That's why two different people will never perceive exactly the same thing - energetic perception/resonance is fundamentally subjective and always unique. And still it is possible to communicate, exchange and even develop something like a mutual understanding about what we perceive. In my practice I have learned that there is an astonishing amount of truth about the perceived person in the depth, respectively in the essence of a practitioner's own subjective perception.

To perceive ki it is necessary that expanse and openness predominate in the observer. The openness rattles at blockages in the observer, it may even cause temporary health problems. Opening up also means that many things become visible that we might rather not want to see. Using this kind of

perception we cannot hide, though. All this explains why energetic perception can initially cause fear, discomfort and strong repulse. Some feel that it takes courage to perceive in this way.

Our language doesn't contain a verb to name the perception of ki. This leads to many misunderstandings, because depending on whether I say I "see" an energetic pattern or I "feel" it, my partner in conversation will search in completely different rooms of his own experience for what I might mean by that. In classes many students will try to see or feel this thing in the same way as they see or feel things usually. And when they then discover what it actually is we are talking about, they often realize that it is something that they know well already.

Since energetic perception is a radically subjective experience, everyone will bane this experience differently. "Seeing" and "feeling" have already been mentioned; some people may prefer other words, like to sense, to dream or to play.

Energetic perception is or is not

It was surprising for me to discover, that there is no path to energetic perception upon which we can approach it slowly. Either we are in the space, which we experience, or we aren't. Whether or not I perceive something in the energetic world is a radical decision. I have to want it and courageously jump right into the middle of it. A possibility for slowly and carefully getting there does not exist.

Of course it is possible and necessary to get into the state of openness more and more easily through practice and exercise. Here actually quite a fast development can happen. But the perception itself is always a decision: "now or never!"

In the moment of perception itself it is necessary to radically regard what we perceive as true; if we fundamentally question it, it will slip out of our perception. Still doubt is possible and an awake sense of scepticism is necessary, however, not in the moment of the perception itself, but

e.g. afterwards. Energetic perception is or is not, there are no in between states.

Energetic space is always structured

If one feels into a human body one will discover that there are always patterns within the energetic space. Such patterns can be described with the terms of kyo and jitsu. In a living organism you will never meet a space that is homogenous without perceptible structures. There will always be differences to be felt between the different sections of that space.

If a human experiences pain or some other ailment in a part of his/her body usually the pattern will be more pronounced and easier to "see". As a principle the perceived energetic structures represent the present situation in this part of the body as well as in the whole human. When we work with them, i.e. touch them with great clarity and attention with the instruments of Shiatsu, changes will always occur. The person will feel different in that space, in his body, and in most cases also the problem resp. the pain will change.

I am not sure, whether any energetic space is structured always and in every place, so also in a stone or a wall. Certainly it is always structured within a living organism.

Energy is always simple and always only now

If one works with energetic structures for a while, even more remarkable things reveal themselves:

The life of a person can be so complicated and tangled up, that no solution can be seen and desperation spreads. But the pattern, which lies at the base of the situation in the body of the person, is never complicated. There's also nothing that needs to be resolved here, rather the resolution lies in going into contact with this reality, in recognizing and accepting it. That is not always an easy thing to do because the suffering of the person is partially based on

the fact that he or she (unconsciously) refuses to take the situation the way it is. Shiatsu can help here.

In the same way, energetic patterns always mirror the momentary situation of the person in an impressive way. There seems to be no past, only the present – ki is obviously always only now.

Of course experiences and things that happened in the past have an influence on our reality today. But only in the way that patterns, which were created in the past under the impressions of the experiences then, are still being created and held upright every day. This might happen for example, when at a certain point in life a painful experience was not totally allowed to happen, could not complete. Energetic patterns, which have been created in connection with such an experience, can become fixed and isolated within a person so that he/she doesn't have to experience them consciously.

This isolation – or de-integration – isn't something that just happens to a person; also the isolated pain does not exist separated from the person concerned. More so, the patterns of isolation are actively created again and again if they didn't dissolve subsequent to the experience. Keeping them up is an active and strength consuming achievement of the affected person. I have the impression that in our culture people use the largest part of their energy to maintain such interruptions in their vibrating life-space.

In a ki oriented Shiatsu one learns that such patterns are always an expression of the current life situation of a person. No matter how long the event, as a consequence of which they were created, lays back and however painful the experience they mirror might be, they are created today (respectively are kept going). They can only dissolve today.

If this evaluation is true, our life is not defined through past traumas. In that case we aren't victims of injustice we experienced in the past, we are the actors of our life. We ourselves are responsible for how we deal with a traumatizing experience. Someone who hurt us deeply does not have any power over us and our life beyond the point in time when the

injustice occurred - unless if we give him/her this power. To discover this fact may feel like a big challenge. It also gives us courage, though – for ourselves as well as for the work with our clients.

P.S.: Energetic spaces manifest in different ways

Four examples:

Good examples for pure energetic structures are the meridians. There are no physical structures that correspond with the courses of the meridians, so they aren't a physical expression of life. That is why in a certain sense the lines that are presented in meridian atlases or in books (in the same way as muscles and bones are shown) are misleading. These lines exist only in books, not in the human body. What does exist is vibrating spaces, which by their energetic nature have no limitation. The meridian lines in the charts only serve as the indication that where they are drawn on the body, there is something to be experienced. Some people have interpreted this as meridians. However anybody who wants to work with them needs to experience them by himself/herself.

If in the energetic world everything is connected with everything, it is not surprising that also in the human body a specific local condition – e.g. a kyo or a jitsu – can only be created by the system if the whole body helps to carry it. A painful jitsu can only evolve if some kyos (and jitsus) in other parts of the body enable this through their existence. Every condition, be it a happy or an unhappy one, is always an achievement of the whole person. And not only that: it is also always an achievement of the environment of the person, with which every individual is connected through resonance by the laws of the energetic. This does not contradict the free will decision and responsibility, but we must be aware that every personal decision also has an effect on the environment.

Thoughts and feelings have a physiological correspondence with our physical body (e.g. the physiological activities of the central nervous system, hormone discharge, changes in the tonus of the muscles or reactions of the circulatory system), but in all cultures it is clear that

they themselves are not matter. That is why I look at thoughts and feelings in their essence as energetic fields, as vibrating spaces. In the practice it shows again and again that energetic patterns in painful areas of the body also change through the touch with nothing but pure attention. Our presence, our thoughts, wishes and feelings are vibrating energetic spaces. It is not surprising therefore, that other energetic spaces are influenced through our presence – and the other way around.

Another important aspect of our work is the space we create together with our clients in every treatment. I like to call it the therapeutic space. The practitioner and the person being treated create this space with their personality, their wishes, fears and hopes, their knowledge and experience in the same way as described above. Nothing can be excluded from it; everything has an effect in the therapeutic relationship. This is exactly what makes it so powerful.

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