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Article Title: Uechi-Ryu and Ki Healing

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Abstract: Many styles of martial arts utilize some form of ki healing as part of their system. However, in some cases, martial arts based ki healing approaches require the practitioner to use their own ki and also provide no mechanism to protect the practitioner from any negative ki of the recipient. These deficiencies combine to deplete the practitioner of ki and make them more prone to fatigue and illness. A ki healing approach is presented here which does not have these deficiencies and which is applicable to students of Uechi-Ryu. The methods provided are safe, easy to use, and ethical. The description and discussion of the technique is detailed and draws on experience which most Uechi-Ryu karateka should be familiar with.

INTRODUCTION

Many martial arts styles have specific techniques for ki healing in addition to the use of ki for combative purposes. One could argue that Ki healing methods reflect the superior purpose of these various arts and that they are more in line with the martial arts precepts of promoting peace, health and vitality. For example ki (syn. qi, chi, or chee in Chinese) healing is

imbedded deeply in the practices of *Qi*-Gong, Tai-*Chi*, and Aikido; just to name a few. Many of these systems utilize the India Chakra and/or the Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) Meridian and Five Element systems as a basis for deciding where, when and how to treat. These approaches can be complex.

However, some of the current energy based healing systems, as used in martial arts training suffer from two fundamental deficiencies. These are:

- 1. The practitioner is often called upon to move their own ki into the recipient. This depletes the person doing the work which induces fatigue and a state of bodymind which is more prone to illness.*
- 2. The practitioner has no mechanism to protect themselves from the stagnant or negative ki from the other person which may flow into them and promote temporary symptoms or worse, illness.*

Since Uechi-Ryu does not formally have a ki healing element in its system (that I know of anyway), it at least does not suffer from these deficiencies. So we have a clean slate to work with. The practice of Uechi-Ryu has us do things with our body, breath and mind that are preparatory to and which will facilitate successful ki healing approaches. For whatever reasons though, this is not developed in the usual Uechi-Ryu curriculums. Yet, we are set-up to learn it through our karate practice.

There are also some additional minor deficiencies in some of these other systems. These include a somewhat ambiguous ethics policy, unnecessary complexity, and undue secrecy.

The purpose of this paper is to provide the Uechi-ryu practitioner with a basic method of applying ki healing which does not have these deficiencies. Where appropriate, I include references to Uechi-Ryu principles and practices for valuable perspective.

The source of the healing ki techniques discussed herein come from my own practice and teaching of Uechi-Ryu and Reiki; plus techniques I have learned in the areas of Therapeutic Touch and other forms of energy healing over the years. I have distilled these down to the essential elements to get you started working with healing ki energies today in a safe, healthy and ethical manner.

You can use these techniques on yourself, or to help others. You can also use them on your pets too. (The same basic techniques apply to treating animals.) For the sake of space, I have written the rest of this article in the form of you working with a recipient friend whom you are working with to promote their healing.

In the few situations where it is necessary to distinguish self practice techniques from those used with others, it is clarified in the text. Otherwise the techniques are the same. The reader will also note that several points are repeated in the text. This is intentional to reinforce certain key principles to you.

You do not need any special talent or ability to use these techniques. Your desire to learn and help yourself and others is almost enough in and of itself. If there is one special element it is this... Practice! Just like with our study of Uechi-Ryu, first learn correct technique and bunkai. Then the more you practice and develop it with an open mind, the better you will become. Eventually, you reach a point where your karate flows automatically without thinking. This is the essence of allowing something to happen; and it develops best with practice. Therefore ***“allowing” does not mean without effort; rather it means without resisting.***

Be patient with yourself and this learning process. Enjoy it step by step. Let the creative visualizations that are provided here as initial guidance, also serve as tools to help you on your way along your own best path of ki healing development.

BACKGROUND

More than a dozen years before I began my study of Uechi-Ryu in 1985, I had developed interests in energetic methods of healing based on thought or intuitive processes in parallel while obtaining my professional and advanced degrees in Pharmacy. After some years teaching karate, I began to see and feel the connection between Uechi-Ryu and ki healing.

These connections came in interesting ways but they are not the subject of this paper. Thankfully, my Sensei John Spencer and more recently his Sensei Kiyohide Shinjo encouraged me to pursue this work. In particular,

Spencer Sensei was always available to talk and exchange ideas; a special part of my training I will always deeply appreciate. I was also strongly influenced by the Ki manipulations as taught to me by Sensei James Thompson. After much searching, study, and practice (in that order); in 1999 I became a Reiki Instructor.

PREPARATION

To keep the technical elements in this paper as straightforward as possible, we will work directly with the affected or injured part of the body (a sprained ankle for instance). For now, we will skip a more lengthy discussion of energy meridians, charkas and other aspects of energetic structure and function which do not include the affected part. Think of the techniques provided in this paper as a form of *additional first aid for minor injuries*.

Please note that I said *additional* first aid. Apply or obtain all of the standard practices of first aid and medical care first, then apply ki healing as an adjuvant. The same applies to any chronic condition you work with (arthritis for example). *Ki healing is applied in addition to regular care and not in place of it. It is complimentary, not alternative.*

Bear in mind the injured part is likely to be painful to the touch and may be covered by protective bandages, ice, etc. Also, the injured part of the body may be an area you should not touch on another person (for example, the breasts, lower abdomen, etc.) or you may not be in a situation where you cannot wash your hands, etc. This is ok. You simply do not have to touch the affected area(s). You can work several inches to a foot or more away and the process works just fine.

It is also extremely important to *get permission* from the person you propose to help, or from their parent if a minor is involved. If the injured person is a minor, by all means get and keep a parent present during the ki work. *Do not work with minors unless a parent is present and has given permission.* Use common sense; the fact that you offer ki healing gives you no special privilege.

Wash your hands before doing any ki healing work if that is feasible. If not and an open wound is involved, be sure to work over the affected area, not on it. However, washing your hands is more than just good hygiene. Use

the act of washing your hands to symbolize the beginning of your process to calm, center and clear your thoughts of distraction and to begin setting your intention to help the other person for *their greatest good*.

Get yourself and the person to be worked on in comfortable positions in a safe and relaxing environment. Typically, lying down or sitting positions work fine. Just make sure you will be comfortable too because you may hold some positions for as long as ten minutes. That is a long time if your back is not supported and starts to ache, or if your knee is twisted, your leg falls asleep, arms tire, etc. Good posture goes a long way to minimizing any discomfort. A comfortable environment also helps to reduce distracting thoughts and external stimuli; facilitating mental clarity.

Center yourself. A good way for a Uechi-Ryu karateka to center, is put the feet flat on the floor, roll the hips under and relax the shoulders down as in Sanchin; only very relaxed. The feet and legs are in natural positions and flat on the floor. Breathe slowly and deeply with the abdomen (as in yoga); in the nose and out the mouth in a normal fashion with no sound. Use the diaphragm muscle to primarily move air in and out of the lungs slowly and deeply, with minimal chest motion. However, don't use Sanchin breathing. That is for power, not relaxation.

Abdominal breathing is also very relaxing physiologically. Oxygenation improves, and as a result the breathing and heart rates slow which also tends to relax the mind. Abdominal breathing also allows the shoulders relax down more easily because chest breathing motions which want to raise the shoulders are minimized.

You can maintain the posture and breathing whether standing or sitting. Unlike in the dojo, be much more relaxed in your Sanchin-like posture. The Sanchin-like hip and shoulder posture and yoga-like abdominal breathing are very good tools for mental centering and relaxation in addition to all the other things we get from it in the dojo. (Practice this breathing technique anytime you want to relax; for example, in traffic, waiting on long lines, etc.)

Set your intention for the highest benefit of the person you are working with (or yourself if doing this solo). There may be many subtle aspects to a given person's injury or disease, both medical and non-medical. In our zeal to help, we may try to force an outcome in a direction that fits our personal

model or expectation of what should be. That is our ego talking loudly; it wants us to inappropriately connect to the outcome for the sake of helping another. That sets us up for trouble despite a nice original intention. If we feel connected to the outcome of ki healing, we may then feel arrogant pride or disappointment depending on what happens outwardly. At worst we may develop a codependency, an illness in its own right.

By setting the intention for highest benefit, the recipient's total person (mind, body and spirit) decide whether to accept the ki energy or not; and if so, how to use it. It is not our decision. The healing ki energy may be utilized in ways that are not immediately obvious to anyone. Our compassion to help is still there; however we remain appropriately detached from the outcome. Work with this approach in your heart and mind and you will help yourself and others more effectively in the long run. You will realize that you have helped in the best possible way. That is always rewarding.

One final background point is to distinguish between healing and curing. You can help healing using ki in the manner described in this paper. Reduced pain, diminished swelling, improved function, faster overall recovery, and improved emotional acceptance of a condition or disease are all relevant healing reactions. But these are not necessarily cures. ***Ki healing provides a tendency towards healing and wellness.*** There are many factors beyond the your control which affect healing in others. We are just helping and that is enough.

TECHNIQUE

Except for shoes, regular clothing is not removed. Place the hand(s) on or above the affected area as appropriate. You can use either hand, both hands, or switch them every few minutes as desired to keep your body comfortable. You can work with your eyes closed or open as you are comfortable. However, when we close the eyes, distracting visual stimulation is turned down. The same applies to the person you work with.

Once you are centered, relaxed and breathing natural abdominal breaths, set your intention to help the person and that you provide this time to serve their highest benefit.

You will NOT use your own valuable ki in this healing method. You will use the universally available ki which is all around us like our atmosphere.

Once your hand is in position, imagine that the palm of your hand functions as a ki lens. ***This lens collects and focuses the healthy ki energy from the environment, through your hand(s) and into the affected area;*** just like a magnifying glass does with light. In fact, you may visualize the healing ki energy as light. You can visualize any color you feel comfortable with; full spectrum white, gold, red, purple, etc. Visualize the light entering directly into the affected area and stimulating the healing process.

You may find that silver light works for an initial cleansing followed by red or orange light, then finishing with gold light for protection at the end. That's just one approach; experiment and be flexible. Don't force the issue for any visualization. ***This process is not so much as trying, but rather more about allowing.*** Please relax. How much better does your kata flow when you are relaxed (and practiced) as opposed to being all tight, bound and nervous?

You can also visualize the healing ki energy as air or a steam-like flow if you like. Again, focus through your hand from the environment to the person you are helping. You can use the action of your own relaxed abdominal breathing to help "pump" the ki visualized as air or steam through your hand. use your imagination; use what suits you and what appears to work. Again, stay relaxed and don't try; allow.

Ki healers who feel fatigued after working on another person have unknowingly depleted their own ki. This induced fatigue is unnecessary... Use the focusing techniques described herein to access the freely available healing ki that is flowing all around us. Why not tap into that essentially unlimited source and save your own strength?

Also, perhaps by virtue of your good intention, you will feel energized, relaxed, and uplifted yourself after giving some ki healing time to a friend. Every time you give a ki healing, you get one. That's a pretty good deal.

Another essential technique is to ***visualize a shield running like a plate of energy through your wrists;*** in the same plane as the wa-uke blocking circle. You may imagine this as a golden layer of light, or as opaque golden glass

pane for example. However you visualize it, this shield blocks any negative ki from your friend from entering your body. This is an essential protective element for your own ki health. (There are martial arts applications of this shielding, but that is another story.) If your friend's stale or negative ki is not good enough for them, then it's not good enough for you.

Ki healers who take on the symptoms of those they work on are unknowingly absorbing negative ki. This is not healthy at all and in the long run would deplete your desire to do such work by giving you continued and unwanted and unnecessary discomfort and suffering.

Hold your hand(s) in position over each affected area for several minutes. Try to develop a feel for when the area feels "full" of ki. Typically, this may take 3-10 minutes. If your hands are actually off the body, you may tend to feel the push-back of full ki a bit more easily. It feels like a slight puffy resistance as you move your hands from eight to four inches over the part you are working on.

If you need to change your hand position for comfort or want to cover another portion of the affected area, slowly lift and move your hands to the new position bearing in mind all of the appropriate ethical issues regarding touch and so on. Alternatively, you can accept the fact that healing ki energy can find the affected area from any angle or location whether your hands are on or off the body.

For example, you can work on the left knee of someone with your hand(s) on their left shin or ankle if the knee is painful to touch. The same applies if you cannot hold your hand(s) in place relaxed and in the air over the knee for very long due to fatigue (it can get tiring). It would seem to be better to have the hand resting comfortably on the ankle and focus the energy towards the knee rather than expending energy trying to hold your hand in the air over a sore knee which may fatigue and distract you. Simply use the imaginary lens (or pump) in your hand to focus the light, air, steam, etc. as necessary right along the leg from where your hand is to its intended destination.

When you have finished working on all the affected areas; there are just a few more simple things to take care of. From whichever is your last hand position, focus red light energy from the environment, through your hands, into the other person's body and out of their feet into the ground. This will

help ground your friend and reduce the tendency for them to feel light headed or chilled after receiving environmental ki. Next, gently end the session with a smile and a few reassuring words. Saying less is more; let things be and take root as they are intended to. However, it is productive to ask your friend to provide some feedback as a courtesy to you over the next few days regarding how they feel. Finally excuse yourself to wash your hands. If you are not near soap and water, cleanse your hands symbolically and brush off any negative ki into the Earth.

CONCLUSIONS

Because you are not using your own ki in this method, and you are intending for the highest good of the recipient, and because you have acted only to focus and make more available external ki energy, your ego is freed from becoming connected emotionally to the outcome. A healthy so-called ki healer is akin to the pizza delivery person who brings you that fresh, warm, easy dinner on Friday night. The deliverer did not make the pizza, and will not consume it. All they did was help to get the pizza from where it is, to where it is supposed to go. That's probably the closest everyday description to what you are doing with Ki healing that I can come up with. You don't create the ki or use the ki, you simply help deliver it.

If you were to become emotionally connected to the outcome of ki healing you risk at least creating conflict within yourself and at worst develop a codependency. This method allows you to be compassionate yet appropriately detached from the outcome. In the long run this is the healthy high road to take.

If you have interest in further training in energy healing practices, I recommend you read, study, talk and learn about your many options before jumping into anything. Just like with your Uechi-Ryu training, the Sensei you study with is as important as the art you study.

However, no matter which approach you consider studying, the healthiest systems work with environmental or universally available healing energy, not your own. Healthy systems also provide for some mechanism to shield you from the energies of your clients, and they have strong and clear ethical policies.

Finally, I hope you enjoy the journey of learning and practicing ki healing techniques.