



THE HEALING TOUCH

Sunlight, filtered by trees outside and shutters inside, gently warms my skin as I sink into a soft, bed-like structure. Sound like a precursor to the perfect afternoon nap? Not quite. Before I can contemplate dozing off, Debbie Elman deftly slides one hand beneath the pastel plaid sheet I'm laying on, positioning her fingers on a tense spot on my back. Her other hand skillfully searches for—and quickly finds—a place on the inside of my left knee. Almost immediately, the area where Elman's hand rests on my back begins to throb strongly and steadily. This, I discover, is what Jin Shin Jyutsu® Physio-Philosophy is all about—unblocking energy to create harmony and well-being in the body.

Exactly where Jin Shin Jyutsu (jin-shm-JIT-soo) originated is hard to divine. Elman suspects it was innately developed in various cultures throughout the world. Whatever the case, the art was virtually lost until a Japanese philosopher named Jiro Murai rediscovered it in the early 1900's. Murai was diagnosed with a terminal illness and went to his family home in the mountains to, as Elman suspects, prepare for death. Instead of dying, however, Murai put to use what he'd culled from ancient texts, experimenting with holding his fingers in certain sequences, which caused him to pass in and out of consciousness. On the seventh day, he emerged healed and determined to study the practice that had cured him.

How did Jin Shin Jyutsu make its way from the mountains of Japan to Scottsdale? The answer lies in Mary Burmeister. A Japanese-American, Burmeister traveled to Japan and met Murai. She spent years studying with him before returning to the U.S. and developing the art for use on a practical level.

Elman met Burmeister in the late 70's. "I was living with some people who were studying with her, which," Elman says, laughing, "was *my good* fortune. They would come home from class and say, "This is

what we learned in class. Try this, try this."

Soon, Elman was practicing Jin Shin Jyutsu on herself and studying with Burmeister to learn more.

Jin Shin Jyutsu utilizes 26 places in the body that Elman refers to as "safety energy locks." By working with these "locks," Elman can guide the body back to harmony. Elman compares it to jumper cables. Her hands help jumpstart the body and get the necessary "juice" to the battery. "It's not like we're healing the body," she says. "The jumper cables just allow the battery to have enough juice to start the car."

The beauty of Jin Shin Jyutsu lies in its spectrum of difficulty. Having someone jumpstart *your* body is an option, but so is doing it yourself. "You don't have to just expect that someone else is going to fix you," Elman says, "You can take your well-being into your own hands by doing things that seem to be very, very simple, but are very dynamic." For example, according to Jin Shin Jyutsu, you can hold your index finger to aid digestion, or you can hold your middle finger to help get rid of a headache in the front of your head. Each finger controls meridians to different parts of the body and therefore helps alleviate a number of ailments. "We're working with the cause," Elman says. "When you take a drug, it deals with the symptom, and it isn't really getting rid of what caused it in the first place."

The causes that Elman, Burmeister and their colleagues address in their work have been both numerous and varied. From a hydrocephalic baby (who is now a normal, 20-something college graduate) to a woman with a severely swollen leg that healed dramatically, they have seen the miracles Jin Shin Jyutsu can work, though Elman is quick to state it doesn't always offer immediate cures. "The gift is there," she says, "and if people choose to use it, the results are there," —e.e.

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FOOTHILLS MAGAZINE