

A Travelogue, Shiatsu in Paris (part 1 of 2)

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From 20 to 23 August 2018, there was the opportunity for a Shiatsu workshop in the capital of France, Paris. I wasn't really sure how it goes working out with the people who weren't familiar with Namikoshi shiatsu. But with a lot of support, I could make it all four days workshop with a great result. Every morning in Paris, a huge cup of hot chocolate was my kick-starter of a day. Here comes the report!



Hot chocolate in the morning



Monge Street

Institut Français de Shiatsu !

In the middle of Paris, from Notre Dame Cathedral, walking down to the south for 25 minutes along Monge Street, through the beautiful curvatures of buildings, and passing some brilliant Brasseries (Cafe restaurants), there was a triangular building appeared. A little further to Mouffetard Street, you can see some local people enjoying wine in front of each brasserie. Back to the triangular building, climbing up a spiral staircase behind the entrance. On the 3rd floor, this is the Institut Français de Shiatsu (IFS). You can see Saint-Medal church from the window by hearing a clear tone of their bell. In the room, the white wall was holding a scroll of Japanese calligraphy which principal Michelle's wife's handwritten. Then the hands-on room with sliding doors has such an elegant interior decorated in Eastern and Western eclectic.

IFS was founded In 1996 by Principal Michelle Odrul. Today, more than 100

students enroll every year, and they take 4 to 5 years to acquire skills and knowledge. Classes are 200 days a year. Taking a single unit of a course for 1 to 3 days, then 5 days of self-study follows.

In the hands-on Room, there is a Namikoshi Shiatsu Pressure points chart and meridian chart by Shizuto Masunaga sensei (he's the one the very first graduated student of our school!), But neither Namikoshi nor ZEN, here they study Nakazono shiatsu. This is one of shiatsu style that Principal Michelle, over 40 years of experience of shiatsu, has studied from Nakazono Sensei. He told me that it's not quite the same as Masunaga sensei's ZEN Shiatsu. This pressure point chart was brought back when Ms. Sayori Okada visited our chairman in 2004.



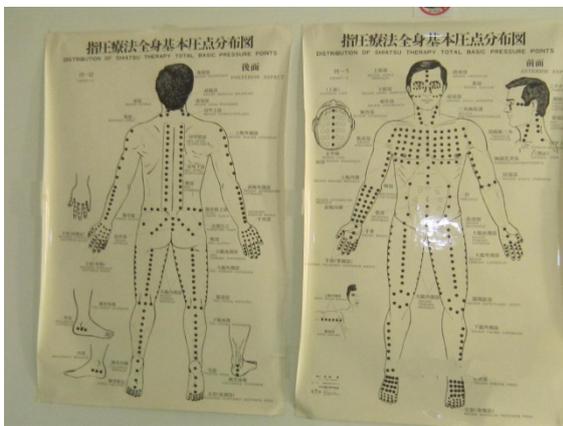
Institut Français de Shiatsu



Saint-Medal church from the window



Practice Room



Namikoshi shiatsu points

Principal Michelle's passion !

Principal Michelle always has been interested to study Namikoshi Shiatsu and give the same opportunities to his students. But the time just went so quickly, he finally set up all the environment to invite the Japanese shiatsu teachers after 20

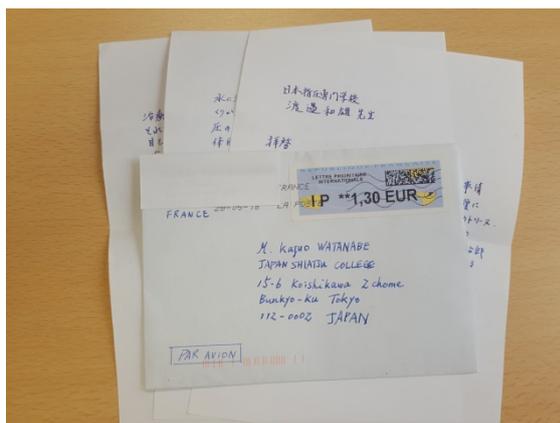
years since the school foundation. As a start, visiting our school and took a treatment session at our treatment center, and met the chief manager Yuji Namikoshi in 2016. Then he just realized that there's a language barrier which is enough to be on his way expressing his passion.

In 2017, he sent an email to request his second meeting in Japan. It was coincidentally delivered to me and I happen to become the responsible person for this request. His email was a request for the second meeting. This time he was coming with his interpreter, so he could talk about his plan with more details.

In April 2018, Principal Michelle has visited our school with his wife, three instructors (David, Jacques, and Bertrand), and Ms. Matsuda, the interpreter. Principal Michelle's passion and honesty made our chairman decided to accept IFS's request readily. All the arrangement left was going to be my job.

An advice from a graduate in France !

There is a graduate living in France who sends our chairman a Christmas card every year. I was not sure about the French shiatsu situation, so I wrote her a letter, asking for some advice for this coming shiatsu workshop in Paris. Even my letter wasn't really the best, but I received a polite reply. This is a part of it.



“Shiatsu is widely accepted in France. Some magazine article said that even the celebrities receive it. But in reality, the opportunities to receive the original Namikoshi shiatsu are limited.

An advice from a graduate

Most of the therapists are under the influence of Masunaga shiatsu which based on the theory that corrects deficiency and excess. They love theories. This would be your big role to introduce Namikoshi shiatsu for the people who have believed in Masunaga Shiatsu. Just stay confident. I think the way of shiatsu is the clients' sensation that comes from the full body shiatsu treatment with keeping the three principles of pressure, right finger works, right direction of pressure, and the rhythm.”

Now to France !

The day of my departure to Paris-Charles de Gaulle (CDG) Airport. My flights' duration was roughly 12 hours and local time to arrive was 5 pm. When I've got the arrival gate of CDG Airport, I found a man holding a card of my name. I tried to speak up my very first speaking in French. "Bonjour!" "Konnichiwa" The guy answered in Japanese. Both of us released out the only words we knew.



During the cab ride to my hotel, my first guy in France taught me some French words. The basic way to say hello other than Bonjour, and how to count 1 to 20. Why 20? Because I needed it to teach the abdominal region shiatsu.

In this vacation season in Paris, a lot of residents are out of the city and you would see less traffic. I took only 40 minutes riding through the highway that usually jammed, I was at my hotel which located between Notre Dame Cathedral and the building of IFS.

Principal Michelle was right there waiting for me. For the first time in six months. We had a walk along Monge street toward the Saint-Medal church, and a little tour of IFS classrooms, then he took me to a brasserie, enjoyed both the dinner and the night view of a church at Mouffetard Street. At that moment, I already started feeling like we are close friends, but actually, it was our first time to have a real conversation. Their great gift of spending such a good time there made me relaxed and loosened up all my nerves to make this so far.



In front of the Louvre



The Louvre

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