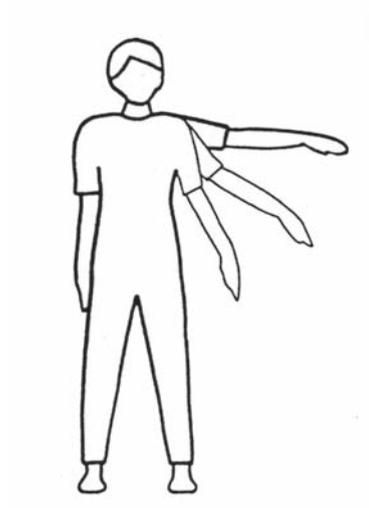


Sotai

Natural Exercise

by Keizo Hashimoto, M. D.
translated by Herman Aihara



George Ohsawa Macrobiotic Foundation
Chico, California

Other Books by Herman Aihara

Acid and Alkaline

Basic Macrobiotics

Kaleidoscope

Learning from Salmon

Macrobiotics: An Invitation to Health and Happiness

Milk, A Myth of Civilization

Natural Healing from Head to Toe

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Contents

Foreword	5
Foreword to the English Edition	7
Introduction by Cornelia Aihara	9
Sotai	12
Why Some Illnesses Cannot Be Cured	13
The Principle of Health	19
Health Maintenance	35
Practical Suggestions for Sotai Treatment	47
Basic Sotai Exercises	55
Basic Sotai Exercises with Helper	74
Sotai Treatment According to Illness	94
Headache	96
Dizziness	97
Scoliosis	98
Insomnia	99
Stiff Neck	100
Shoulder Ache	101
Arm Movement	101
Hip Pain	102
Body Movement	105
Stomach Pain	106
Leg Pain	108
Twisted Wrist or Ankle	110
Bed-wetting	111
Autobiography	113

Foreword

The first thing you have to understand before you learn this sotai exercise is that Nature designed and built us in such a way that we can live our whole life healthfully and happily. However, we often live against this natural design and make ourselves sick and unhappy; if we make ourselves sick and unhappy, then we simply must return our body to its natural condition.

Sotai is the exercise which brings our body back to the natural conditions. It is not the normal kind of exercise which is intended to build muscles such as athletic or training exercises.

When most people do not feel well, they go to doctors who take X-rays, examine blood pressure, heartbeat, and even brain waves with expensive machinery. Furthermore, they check the urine, blood, and other body fluids chemically. After gathering the data from all the tests, the doctors decide what kind of sicknesses the patient is suffering from. The patient is released from worry about his suffering when he is given a fancy name for the sickness – such as atherosclerosis, diabetes, etc.

However, curing the sickness is not so smooth. Furthermore, there are many cases in which doctors cannot give any specific name for the sufferings claimed by the patients. In such cases, doctors don't know how to treat patients.

Since I became a medical doctor fifty years ago, I have had many cases in which I couldn't give specific names for the symptoms, not to mention the treatment. Recently I reached the idea by which I can explain the cause of those sicknesses and treat them successfully. This book is the result of my fifty-year practice of medicine. By this you can correct your suffering which medical doctors

often cannot.

In order to publish this book, I am indebted to Dr. Yukinori Hashimoto of *Modern Agriculture* magazine, who inspired me to publish my work. I must also give my greatest appreciation to the publisher of this book (the director of the Farmer's and Fisherman's Cultural Association) and Mr. M. Shigenuki, who has been supporting my ideas.

– *Keizo Hashimoto, M.D.*

Foreword to the English Edition

Why does man have to suffer from sicknesses? Nature (God) planned man perfectly so that he can live in good health. Western medicine developed based on a pathological, anatomical, and histological concept of medicine. Oriental medicine realized that one of the causes of sickness is the deformation or imbalance existing in the basic body construction. Oriental medicine succeeded in correcting those deformations or imbalances by the stimulation of acupuncture reflex points. However, it has not yet tried to correct deformations by body motions or movements.

From my fifty years of experience I reached the firm conclusion that the movement or motion which is in the opposite direction of the pain in other words, movement which brings a good feeling – will correct bodily deformation or imbalance. However, right motion is not the only condition for healthy living. For this, man must establish the right order and balance in breathing, eating and drinking, body movements, and spiritual activities (thinking, emotion). These activities are all voluntary movements; we can change them by our will. In other words, our health or sickness depends on our choice of these activities. However, most people do not know right breathing, diet, movement, or mental activities.

This book is a guidebook of body movements that will cure many sicknesses and keep people healthy. You cannot believe what I say, but please try some of them. You will find that what I said is right. Health is not a miracle. Health is the state Nature planned for us, and this should be achieved in a comfortable way. If we move our

body in the comfortable direction, the body achieves a healthy condition. This is Nature. Please find this out for yourself.

There is one secret in my sotai exercise. Please move the part of the body slowly and easily to the point where comfortable movement of the arm or leg ends, hold that point for a few seconds, and then quickly release all the force. This is the secret of the sotai exercise movement which has cured thousands of sicknesses in Japan.

In the East as well as the West, medical care has been given by others. A few people in olden times knew how to cure sicknesses by themselves, but they left no record. Therefore, the methods of self-curing have been hidden from sight. I fortunately found one of those secrets and have applied it to thousands of people with good results for fifty years. My method has been published in Japan and has benefited thousands; now this book has been translated into English and is going to be published in America.

Since I know sotai will help many suffering people, my happiness is not only selfish but also altruistic. At the same time, I have no way to express my appreciation to Mr. and Mrs. Herman Aihara who painstakingly worked on the translation of my book from Japanese to English.

– *Keizo Hashimoto, M.D.*
June 1980

Introduction

by Cornellia Aihara

How I Learned Sotai Exercise

When I was in the 6th grade, Japan was at war with China. My teacher chose me and one other person in my class as medical assistants to help the wounded during the war. We bandaged and carried the wounded on stretchers and did many things to help them. I was like a trainee to help wounded men in battle. Two persons from each 6th grade class were chosen to do this.

One day a professional finger massage person came to my school and taught us how to massage all parts of the body. After school I would go home and tell my parents what I learned that day. I would practice this massage on my father. He was so happy after I massaged him. I would give both my parents a massage from time to time. I remember I used to give my grandmother a shoulder massage and the next day her shoulders would expand and she had a little pain. So I realized that one should probably change the strength of the massage depending on the age of the person receiving it. I gave a massage that was too strong for my grandmother.

I also thought finger massage should be used on middle-aged or older persons, but after opening Vega Institute it seemed to be the younger generation that needed do-in, yoga, and finger massage. Most of the young people had taken many drugs, so I think their bodies became older than their age.

About 7 years ago at the French Meadows Summer Camp, two do-in teachers came from Japan. They came with a group of macrobiotic Japanese touring the United States. After summer camp I studied do-in from them. While I was in Japan in 1975, I planned to

study do-in. I told my mother and sister. My sister is a busy woman, but she sent two letters advising me to study sotai exercise instead of do-in. She recommended sotai because it is simple and effective. So I asked her if I could learn sotai in one month. She recommended Reverend Sakuyama, a disciple of Dr. Keizo Hashimoto. Reverend Sakuyama came to my mother's house in Aizuwakamatsu and taught me several times; I studied from him a total of about one month. He took me to Sendai City and introduced me to Dr. Hashimoto.

I also wanted to study do-in in Kanagawa prefecture, but unfortunately the trains were on strike for a long time so I missed my opportunity to study do-in.

In 1977 I returned to Japan and studied sotai with Reverend Sakuyama again. He taught me very well because he said he knew we were running Vega Institute. He chose me to develop sotai exercise in America. He also knew macrobiotic philosophy and diet, and planned to start a similar kind of dojo in Japan. He was Dr. Hashimoto's favorite student.

Dr. Hashimoto was born in the same town as I was. He has been a medical doctor in Sendai City for a long time. He studied macrobiotic philosophy from George Ohsawa. During World War II he was captured by the Russians and sent to Siberia. They tried to brainwash and convert him to communism. They were not successful in brainwashing him because he understood macrobiotic philosophy. He then appreciated George Ohsawa. When he was a young man he had much mental suffering; his character was too sensitive. In order to solve the problem he studied Christianity. He met a good teacher. Since then he no longer suffers from the sins of man. He found a new world.

I went to Sendai City and met Dr. Hashimoto for the first time. At the time of my visit he was working at his own clinic with about 5 students. He was a gentle man. He was quiet and did not talk much – like a samurai.

He published a book called *Treatment for Curing all Diseases*. I would like to introduce this book in America, because if we study the teachings of this book many Americans will be helped. I recommend sotai exercise because it can be done in 15 minutes. Other exercises of this nature such as do-in, yoga, etc., take a longer time and if you are too busy you won't have enough time to practice them.

You will have time to do sotai.

There are two kinds of sotai exercise. One is self-exercise and the other requires an assistant to help you. Practice basic sotai exercises every day for 15 minutes in the morning or evening. Practice basic sotai with helper for an hour once a week or once a month.

When I was in Seattle there was a man who came to my class; he had been in a car accident and had not been able to sit down for 6 months. After two or three sotai treatments, he could bend his knees and could also sit down. Sotai exercise balanced his body. We were all surprised to see he could so quickly cure his stiffness caused by the accident. This is the reason I introduced sotai into the United States.