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## Namikoshi Shiatsu Therapy: Long Definition

Namikoshi Shiatsu Therapy is not a separate Form in the AOBTA but a subset of Japanese Shiatsu. Some practitioners prefer to list themselves in the AOBTA Directory as Namikoshi Shiatsu.

The following Long Definition was submitted in January 2014 by Cari Johnson Pelava, Dipl. ABT, NCCAOM, AOBTA®-CI, Director of CenterPoint Massage & Shiatsu School & Clinic

### Background/History

Namikoshi Shiatsu Therapy is a primary form of shiatsu in Japan that practitioners learn in order to become licensed. Mr. Tokujiro Namikoshi is the founder of Namikoshi Shiatsu Therapy and Japan's Shiatsu College. He was born in 1905 on the island of Shikoku, and moved to the northern island of Hokkaido with his family when he was seven years old. The cold northern climate caused his mother to be in bed with debilitating pain. Tokujiro was determined to help her from a very young age and discovered that pressing and rubbing her body helped to alleviate the pain. Because of this early experience he went on to study science and healing methods while developing his own distinctive methods and system of points, now known as Namikoshi Shiatsu therapy.

Mr. Tokujiro Namikoshi passed the exam for massage and anma in 1925, and opened the first shiatsu clinic soon after. He began teaching Shiatsu in the 1940's and established the institute that is now Japan's Shiatsu College. Namikoshi developed a system of pressure points and applications founded in the principles of western anatomy, physiology and pathology. His vision was for shiatsu to be founded in the "new" science from the west as he saw that this would be the future of medicine in Japan. Namikoshi helped to create the Japan Shiatsu Association in 1946 and was its first president. Through his efforts, the Japanese Government officially recognized Shiatsu. In 1957, the law was changed to give Shiatsu equal status with Anma and Massage. Japan's Shiatsu College continues to be the leading school for Shiatsu Therapists in Japan. In 1990, the curriculum was extended to be a three-year training program.

### The Basics

Shiatsu applies manual and digital pressure techniques to the skin with the aim of preventing and healing illness, injury and discomfort. This is accomplished by stimulating the body's own powers of recuperation, eliminating fatigue-producing

elements, and promoting general well-being and health. The basic principles upon which Namikoshi Shiatsu is founded are:

- Shiatsu combines assessment and treatment.
- The therapist uses only his/her hands and fingers, and no mechanical devices.
- When applied correctly, there are no side effects.
- Shiatsu is beneficial to people of all ages.
- Shiatsu is a health barometer, detecting and preventing conditions that lead to illness.
- A deep trust develops between client and therapist that increases the effectiveness of the treatment.
- Shiatsu is effective because it treats the whole body.

The theoretical and training foundation of Namikoshi Shiatsu Therapy includes:

- The anatomical structure of the body
- The physiological functioning of the body
- The effects of pressure on the physiological systems
- The pathology of illness and disease
- The Namikoshi system of points and application
- Shiatsu application in side posture, prone, supine, seated, and self-administered shiatsu
- Mastering the pressure, stretching and correcting techniques of Namikoshi Shiatsu therapy
- Understanding the conditions that require shiatsu therapy
- The benefits of shiatsu therapy
- 16 pressure application techniques
- 8 kinds of pressure
- Stages of pressure intensity and its effects
- Assessing and treating both internal and external pathological conditions with specific treatment protocols.

Applied with the thumbs, fingers and palms, Namikoshi Shiatsu is the official shiatsu of Japan and is entirely based in modern anatomy and physiology. Through the application of pressure to specific points along the body, Namikoshi Shiatsu directly affects the nervous system, which in turn affects the internal physiological systems of the body. Founder Tokujiro Namikoshi discovered a mechanism through which touch applied to the surface of the body reflexes to the internal organs, thereby releasing blockages and evoking the body's own healing power. According to Tokujiro Namikoshi, "The heart of shiatsu is like pure maternal affection. The pressure of the fingers causes the spring of life to flow".