

Rolf Movement®

Faculty Perspectives

The Art of Yield: An Interview with Hiroyoshi Tahata

By Hiroyoshi Tahata, Certified Advanced Rolfer™, Rolf Movement Instructor and Kathy McConnell, Certified Advanced Rolfer, Rolf Movement Practitioner

Note from the Editor: In 2016, U.S. workshops on the Art of Yield will be held in Santa Cruz, California: Yield 1 dates are April 13-16 and Yield 2 dates are April 19-22. Contact Carol Agneessens for more information at carolagneessens@mac.com.

Introduction by Interviewer Kathy McConnell

‘The Art of Yield’, developed by Rolf Movement instructor Hiroyoshi Tahata, has been described by Mary Bond as “an exploration in being fully present and in observing the whole again and again.”

I attended a workshop on The Art of Yield with Tahata in April 2015. Since then, I have been weaving various aspects of his innovation into my sessions with good results. In his method, sessions begin with the practitioner bringing awareness to his/her own body sensations, then grounding him/herself, and finally expanding awareness to include the client, and the space in the room. This all happens before making physical contact with the client, and is what creates the ‘field’. The practitioner then employs a technique called ‘conditioning’. Conditioning prepares the body for change by applying a light touch, most often with the back of the hand, in various places on the body. The purpose is to ground the client, set up scaffolding for cells, and animate subtle waves of motility. Once this first part is complete, the rest of the interventions are equally gentle and brief. After each one, the practitioner steps away from the table to scan and track changes. The client’s system will give directions about where to go next when the practitioner is acutely receptive. Typically, more time is spent away from the body than actually touching the body during a yield session.

In my own practice, I have found that beginning sessions mindfully, with the intention of creating a field of change, sets a tone that helps me maintain a rich presence throughout the session. As long as I keep bringing my awareness back to my body, specifically my belly, I am able to engage the flow within the field. Time slows down and



Hiroyoshi Tahata



Kathy McConnell

my intuitive perception emerges. My hands seem to know where to go, before thoughts about what I want to accomplish invade the space. Everything feels more malleable; my breath, my body, and, best of all, the client’s tissue. Strategizing with my thinking mind has become secondary to staying present.

Feedback from clients has been very positive, in part because integration is inherent to each contact. They have been surprised at how effective the light touch is, as have I. One of my longtime clients

expressed it this way: “It seems like you are doing less and I am feeling more.” The essence of my practice is evolving in a new direction. The work now is in being present with myself, the client, and the third organism that is activated by the relationship (the field).

This interview was done via email, and as English is not Hiro’s native language, it has been edited for clarity.

Kathy McConnell: Please describe the Art of Yield approach to Rolwing® Structural Integration that you have developed.

Hiroyoshi Tahata: The Art of Yield stimulates the motility response in living tissue, which promotes a system-wide coherency that has profound transformative potential. The practitioner’s touch invites a very deep relaxation in the whole body-mind system, facilitating decompression of joints and core-space expansion. It evolved in response to the need to provide structural integration to people who could not tolerate the classical myofascial release techniques typically used in Rolwing SI. The Art of Yield demonstrates that effective structural change can be achieved through gentle and brief, but precisely timed, touch. It is based on the concept that change becomes more lasting and meaningful by engaging the client’s own self-regulatory intelligence, rather than forcing change that the practitioner believes needs to happen.

The perceptual state of the practitioner is key for this work. It is important to attend to your internal sensations, as well as the sensation of the space around you, including the client, consistently throughout the session. This state enables a palpable flow that assists the practitioner in tracking the emergent wave of motility. In addition, orienting around perception and interoception engages presence, which is essential.

KM: How did the Art of Yield evolve?

HT: I am relatively sensitive to pressure, so I was looking for a way to touch people in the way that I would like to be touched. I saw many Rolfers hurting themselves by using too much pressure with elbows, knuckles, or fingers in their practices. We are body/wellness professionals teaching others how to live and move with more ease. There should be a consistency between what I am doing and what I am teaching the client. I wanted to find a way to work with more ease.

Just after becoming a certified Rolfer in 1998, I took a gentleman in his eighties through a Ten Series. He was very satisfied with the work because his tinnitus improved. However, the Series didn't yet feel complete for him. I gave him a post-ten session using a prototype of the Art of Yield touch in which I simply put my fingers under him and followed the motility. He really appreciated it, and I felt a true 'closure' of the Series that had resulted in meaningful structural change. Soon after that, another client came to my office. He was suffering from severe constipation. His skin was so slick and waxy that I finally had to give up using manual techniques to affect his structure, and took him through the Ten Series using exclusively movement work. Interestingly, by the end, his constipation was resolved and his skin became more normal. These cases, together with various other people who had skin conditions or other reasons for not being able to tolerate direct fascial manipulation, forced me to improvise. They ended up becoming great resources for the development of the Art of Yield.

[There were other influences too.] In my Advanced Training in 2002, my left shoulder was strained, so it was difficult to use my elbow during practice sessions. Fortunately, I was able to have a private Rolf Movement session with Vivian Jaye. During that session, the epiphysis of my humerus found 'home' with a loud pop, and my shoulder was completely fixed. It was a dramatic change, and I was able to experience the power and potential of movement work in a very deep way. Before that, an event happened during my Rolf Movement training in 1999. The instructor, Carol Agneessens, gently touched my low back and head without stretching or forcing decompression. I felt my spine elongating spontaneously. It was the first time I had felt this kind of motility response. This experience ignited my curiosity to find a way to evoke this kind of reaction more frequently.

Also during the Rolf Movement training, we were introduced to the concept of *yield* as the first movement underlying all movement.¹ With this new foundational understanding, I recognized a bridge between my experience in cellular biology and the practice of structural integration. It dawned on me that this touch may act to stimulate a collective response in cells, providing scaffolding for enhanced motility.

That was the turning point in my Rolfing career. Since that class, I have been actively experimenting with the yield touch in my practice. I find that when I intentionally use the touch to introduce cellular scaffolding, the client responds more easily.

KM: Why do you think this minimalist intervention can create such significant change?

HT: Imagine the body as if it were jigsaw puzzle. As Rolfers, we know that if we only change one piece without including the entire picture, the change will not hold. Trying to keep track of the jigsaw puzzle while we are working has the potential to block us from sensing the living, breathing whole. By working at the cellular level, it becomes possible to bypass the individual pieces of the puzzle. One tiny shift of a cell transmits information to all the cells and holographically affects the whole field. This results in systemic coherency, or what I call 'palintonic harmony'. The cell is different from a jigsaw puzzle piece, it is more dynamic and more responsive.

KM: How does Art of Yield fit within with the traditional Rolfing paradigm?

HT: I blend Rolfing SI, Rolf Movement, and the yield touch with the Ten Series, taking photos before and after the sessions. The Art of Yield evokes structural change and integration in a new way by using the client's system to make the decisions about where to go. I use the classical territory of the session as a portal to the system, instead of trying to change the part that I am touching. We establish a functional goal at the beginning of the session as you would in any Rolfing session. However, I use my internal sensations, as well as my awareness of the field, as the primary tool to create change. Each time I touch the body, I am feeling for the resonance of the entire body in that place. For example, when I put my hand lightly on the knee, I feel for the resonance of all the diaphragms through the knee. I often find the change starts to happen after releasing my hand from the body and stepping back to observe the wave.

KM: Is there anything else you would like to share?

HT: People often ask me if this intervention is a kind of energy work. I do not see it as energy work, despite the very light and brief interventions. I see The Art of Yield as a movement intervention. It allows the

practitioner to discern and follow a more extensive range of change. In the early stages, I thought I would be using the Art of Yield only for pressure-sensitive people, but over time, I am finding it is appropriate for everyone.

Hiro Yoshi Tahata is a Certified Advanced Rolfer and Rolf Movement Instructor. Prior to becoming a Rolfer, he worked as a research biochemist at Hayashibara Biochemical Laboratories, where he became intimate with the colonizing behavior of cells. Also relevant to the development of his current work is his training in Somatic Experiencing®, completed in Tokyo in 2011. He lives in Tokyo with his beloved wife, son, two dogs, two cats, and a turtle. To find out more and see photos, go to: <http://rolfing.com/>.

Kathy McConnell, RCST, is a Certified Advanced Rolfer and Rolf Movement Practitioner. She is also certified in Biodynamic Craniosacral Therapy and Medical Qi Gong. She has been practicing in the San Francisco Bay Area since 2000.

Endnote

1. The Art of Yield approach is a derivation of 'yield' touch being taught in some Rolf Movement trainings. A key difference is that integral in Tahata's approach is the ongoing inclusion of the practitioner's perception, which creates the field the work occurs in. For more information, see the article entitled "Yielding" in the June 2012 issue of *Structural Integration*. From that article: "Yield is the first developmental movement. Often misunderstood as a passive surrendering or a 'doing nothing', yielding is in fact an active coming into relationship and is the fundamental movement behavior underlying all others." The issue also includes an article by Tahata called "Case Studies with Yielding," where you can read more about his process and see before and after photos of his clients.

Bibliography

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