



Acupuncture, **eczema** and yangming

A case history and analysis

by **Teja A. Jaensch & Suzanne Cochrane**

This is an interpretive naturalistic case study of a patient suffering severe chronic atopic eczema who was treated using acupuncture, low dose herbs and self-cultivation. Coming in with a history of previous Chinese medical treatment, this patient presented an opportunity to consider several aspects of Chinese medical theory and therapy; bleeding therapy, the *siguan* (Four Gates), *yangming* and its action of concealing, the treatment and understanding of blood and heat, yin and yang in relation to the *kan* (water) and *li* (fire) trigrams, and the difference one acupuncture point can make.

ECZEMA IS AN inflammatory skin disease caused by an allergic reaction to internal or external stimulus and can be a very distressing condition. In late 2014 a 46-year-old woman, Jane (pseudonym) attended my clinic with chronic atopic eczema. After years seeing another acupuncturist she had relocated and it was no longer convenient to see him. At first Jane had visited another practitioner, who told her she had *too much heat* and, she indicated, used the points *Hegu* (LI-4) and *Taichong* (LIV-3), which together form the four gates. This one treatment exacerbated all of her symptoms.

When asked about the treatment she had received from her initial physician, Jane described intensive bleeding therapy, again

to remove excessive blood heat. These treatments would relieve the itching during acute episodes, but would not reduce their occurrence. While many herbal formulae had been tried, she would react strongly to everything and was nervous about taking herbs.

Examination of Jane's skin revealed extremely red and raw dorsal aspects of hands and feet from her wrists distally to her digits; her fingers were cracked and bleeding. Working as a receptionist in a medical centre, her hands were always on display, which was quite distressing for her. While the hands are the most common sites for adult eczema, there were also smaller patches on her chest, abdomen and back. Constant intense itching led her to pour boiling water over her hands and feet to relieve it.^a Multiple steroid creams would slowly reduce the exacerbation, but it would return if she ceased application. In the past she had been prescribed high doses of Prednisone orally, but she disliked using it.

Jane did not suffer from the "atopic triad" as she did not have asthma or allergic rhinitis (Sohn et al., 2011, p. 730). Regardless, biomedical treatment usually comprises internal and topical anti-

a. This is particularly concerning as eczema sufferers are advised to avoid washing in hot water. Al-Khafaji (2013) states that eczema sufferers would rather experience pain than itching. The intensity of itching directly correlates to the patient's psychological well-being (Hon et al., 2014, p. 83).

inflammatory agents, topical corticosteroids, antimicrobials, and immunomodulators, oral immunosuppressive agents and radiation therapy (Anderson, 2005, p.46). This is despite “long-term or repeated use of even mild-potency topical corticosteroids may be of greater concern... [a] small percentage of percutaneously absorbed corticosteroid can exert systemic adverse effects” (Hengge, Ruzicka, Schwartz & Cork, 2006, pp 2-4), thus creating a medical paradox; potentially harmful substances used to ease suffering. (Aschengrau & Seage, 2014).^b

There was a strong correlation between what Jane was exposed to (foods, fluids, clothing and smells) and her symptoms. Her diet was strictly controlled to avoid salicylates, and she was careful with new synthetic clothing. Apart from water, she drank one coffee in the mornings and would occasionally have a glass of alcohol. Jane’s church had imported new chairs that had a strong chemical odour, thus she would have to sit outside and listen through a window, otherwise her skin would become inflamed and she would suffer headaches.

Emotionally she tended to become angry or frustrated when faced with stressors, a tendency since childhood. Jane expressed herself with a sharp, loud, shouting voice. Without salicylates, both her dermatological and emotional symptoms were calmed. However, she said that her current flare-up started after a bad interpersonal relationship, which ended in separation. Emotionally this exchange resulted in tumultuous anger.

Nulliparous, with her menarche at 13 years of age, she had a regular, painless menstrual cycle, yet noticed premenstrual bloating and irritability. On occasion when she had taken oral contraceptives these had not relieved or intensified her eczema. An external environmental factor that clearly irritated her was wind. Whenever she was exposed to windy conditions, her anger would blaze and her skin would burn and itch. At these times of acute presentations, she felt icy inside while her skin was hot to touch.

All of these disease features were amplified

b. This has implications for Chinese medicine and how it defines *health* in its modern *replication* (rather than integration) of biomedicine in the treatment of inflammation and heat. See also Aschengrau & Seage (2014) for epidemiological implications of this paradox.

at night. Her usual bedtime was close to midnight, but she would not sleep at times due to the intense itching, and often her sheets would be stained with blood.^c There was no family history of allergies, dermatological conditions or serious diseases.

Apart from the listed symptoms below, there were no other complaints:

- postural dizziness
- sensitive, itchy eyes
- occasional palpitations
- strong appetite, yet no thirst
- upper and lower back ache
- occasional constipation with bleeding, when exposed to salicylates.

Tongue: red body, dry yellow coat.

Pulse: very weak, soggy, and slightly rapid.

Diagnosis: *Yangming* unable to *conceal*.

A diagnostic and treatment approach using the Hunyuan model^d was decided upon. The body structure can be considered yin, which is made alive by yang. Yang must *conceal* into the vessel to make the material alive, and this function, at least initially, is dominated by *yangming* (Seidman, 2014). From mouth to anus could be considered a hollow tube, and the lining of this tube a reflection of the outside (the skin). Thus, an irregularity within *yangming* was seen to be the predominant feature in her case, as yang could not conceal, and was instead stuck in the interior linings and reflected on the exterior linings of the body, which were hence extremely reactive to the changing environment. Inspired from the work of Zheng Qin’an and the Huo Shen Pai (Fire Spirit School), Hunyuan medicine uses the *kan* (water) and *li* (fire) trigrams of the *Yijing* (Book of Changes) to illustrate the relationship of yin and yang.

In the diagram below, the four cardinal trigrams, *qian* (heaven), *kun* (earth), *kan* (water) and *li* (fire), inform a rationale of human life and how medicine can approach it. From the extreme yang of *qian* (heaven) to

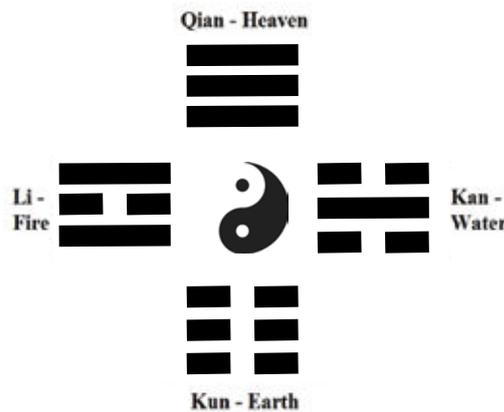
c. Frustratingly, the itching and resultant scratching in eczema cases leads to a self-perpetuation of the disease, as the skin is further damaged (Xu, 2004).

d. Hunyuan medicine, developed by Dr Yaron Seidman, is a synthesis of the classics of Chinese medicine. It seeks a principle among the myriad theories/discussions/approaches by attempting to be observers of social and cultural trends that may inadvertently adversely impact medicine (Unschuld, 2009). It is a practical philosophy for the clinician.

■ This case study emerged from a clinical encounter in Teja Jaensch’s practice. It was written for a Masters of Chinese Medicine unit at Western Sydney University. Sue Cochrane facilitated its development for publication.

the extreme yin of *kun* (earth), life exists with the intermingling of *kan* (water) and *li* (fire).

It is only the kǎn water trigram that relates to the living Heart and we can learn much from studying it. Before the Separation of Heaven and Earth, the Heaven was pure yáng and the Earth was pure yīn, which was connected to Tàijí. This is the one origin, the state of pure yáng and pure yīn. This place of pure oneness is our Pre-Heaven, the source of our



Natural Character and life. As soon as Heaven and Earth start to separate, the three solid lines become pregnant with a broken line in the middle, giving birth to the lí fire trigram. Opposing this, the pure yīn lines of kūn earth become pregnant with a yáng line and we have the kǎn water trigram. Yīn amid yáng and yáng amid yīn: this is all connected to Tàijí, which makes creation and transformation possible... In order for Tàijí to become complete within the human vessel, the Pre-Heaven Natural Character from qián must enter into kūn to form the kǎn so yáng is concealed therein.

*– Liu Yuan
Commentary on the Zhongyong^e*

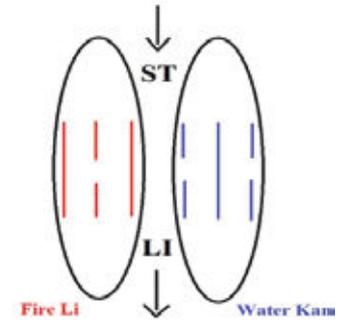
The principle of Heaven is constant movement; the principle of Earth is stillness. The body is a part of Earth; substance and structure. This body is made alive by Heaven's movement *concealing* within it, as exemplified by the yang line in the centre of the *kan* (water) trigram. As described in a recent study on acupuncture and insomnia, treatment was aimed at "guiding yang into yin" (Jiang, 2010, p.28).

e. As cited in Seidman & Jaensch (2013, p. 62).

阳气下交入阴...
气越外泄。
阳不入阴

*When yang qi descends,
it joins and enters into the yin...
When qi disseminates and discharges
outward,
yang does not enter yin.
– Ye Tian-Shi*

The *kan* (water) trigram represents the body's ability to unify, with the yang line from *qian* (heaven) contained, concealed and submerged within the yin lines of *kun* (earth), creating water. The *li* (fire) trigram represents the body's separation, with the yin lines from *kun* (earth) driving the yang from *qian* (heaven) outward.^g Transcribing this phenomenon onto the concealing aspect of *yangming*, Jane's case was seen as yang not concealing from the outside into yin.



Looking at the image on the left, the yang lines are on the outside (surface of the skin externally and digestive mucous membranes internally), as in the *li* (fire) trigram. Thus the yang cannot conceal inward to form the *kan* (water) trigram, resulting in yang harassing the exterior and Jane's eczema. The sensitivity to salicylates indicates a failure of the gut lining to adequately filter from the chyme, which supports this diagnosis.

While dermatology is considered an external science, or *waike*, in Chinese medicine, the manifestations on her skin were assumed to be reflections of an internal condition (Pirog, 1996; Tan et al., 2009).

Considering that her diet was less than ideal,^h *yangming* and its function of

f. Adapted translation from Blalack (viewed 2016).

g. For more on this, see Seidman & Jaensch (2013).

h. The issue regarding salicylates is complex. While considered an irritant, the removal of certain food sources can also be harmful. Duthie & Wood (2011):

extracting life from consumed materials has also been affected along with the production of qi and blood. In chapter 31 of the *Su Wen* (Simple Questions) Qi Bo states: “The [yangming channels] are the leaders of the 12 [channels]... their blood and qi abound.” (Unschuld & Tessenow, 2011, p. 498). Disease affecting or caused by yangming can be life threatening, despite the fact that these two organs are *fu* (hollow) organs. Without adequate entering and exiting of food, fluids and the *life* they bring to the vessel, the body can quickly deteriorate.

Based on descriptions of her prior Chinese medical treatments, it was assumed that the main pathology being treated was an excess of heat in the blood, and skin conditions almost always involve blood disharmony (Deadman, Al-Khafaji, & Baker, 1998), related in Jane’s case to Liver qi stagnation. Indeed, the majority of her symptomatology would justify such a diagnosis and resultant treatments. All but one—the weak, soggy pulse. This fascinating case presents with such a severe manifestation, mainly on the yang (dorsal) surfaces of the hands and feet, yet is contrasted with a deficient pulse.

Adding to the complexity is the fact she feels icy cold inside, especially when the skin is at its most inflamed. This could be considered a case of *false heat, true cold*; however this theoretical construct has been and still is fiercely debated, and as a consensus on this topic is rarely found, confident clinical application can be difficult.

Scheid (2014) discussed how strong division between medical theories and their proponents, *generals not gardeners*, is an inherent aspect of pre-modern Chinese medicine, and has been shown to be equally present throughout modern history (Seidman, Patterson & Nethery, 2015). This controversial topic about heat, fire, warmth, human physiology and pathophysiology can engage an extreme dichotomy among

“Major food sources are tomato-based sauces, fruit and fruit juice, tea, wine and herbs and spices. In mammalian cells, salicylic acid demonstrates several bioactivities that are potentially disease-preventative, including the inhibition of production of potentially neoplastic prostaglandins, which arise from the COX-2 mediated catalysis of arachidonic acid. Moreover, it appears to be readily absorbed from the food matrix. This has led some to suggestions that the recognised effects of consuming fruit and vegetables on lowering the risk of several diseases may be due, in part, to salicylates in plant-based foods.” (p. 515)

physicians. What is heat or fire within the human body and what is its role in disease?

It has been suggested that at the heart of this dichotomy is an argument about the true nature of imperial and ministerial fire. Care is required in cases such as Jane’s, distinguishing yang from *xie* (evil) heat or inflammation (Seidman & Jaensch, 2013). Is the drying up of the body tissue due to an excess of heat, or rather yang failing to conceal into yin? These philosophical discussions directly relate to the clinical setting, with the treatment of eczema often treated by Chinese medicine with ever increasing doses of cooling medicinals, such as *Sheng Di Huang* (*Rehmanniae Radix*) or strategies such as bloodletting, and this case study offers an opportunity to rethink our understanding of the manifestation of heat.ⁱ

The contradictory symptoms of severe skin disease and a weak pulse indicates caution is needed using treatment strategies such as venting, extinguishing, clearing or moving excess blood or heat. There is a long history of bleeding therapy in Chinese medicine, and specifically for the treatment of eczema (Wang, Iiko & Zhao, 2004). Jane’s pulse and body temperature suggested a different approach than bloodletting.^j

Taking heat (or blood) out of the body must be approached cautiously. Even though it would temporarily relieve her symptoms, just as the use of steroids, the one principle of Chinese medicine is that the living body is defined by warmth. Once living has ceased so has the usefulness of medicine, and the body is left cold (Seidman & Jaensch, 2013). If we take the heat out of Jane to alleviate her symptoms, even though severe, is this in accord with the principle of medicine? While we must engage the symptom, this cannot be done at any cost.

The use of *si guan* (four gates) had ample

i. See Hou (2009) for clear examples of biomedicine treating eczema, along with other autoimmune disorders, using acupuncture and herbs.

j. While used extensively by incipient Western medicine, bloodletting met its decline, along with traditional concepts of disease, with the rise of scientific medicine and germ theory along with societal change (Carter, 2012, p. 117). In Chinese medicine, there are also “taboos of blood” related to superstitions of seeing blood (Piao, Mei, & Koonce, 2011). Jane’s skin was dry and cracked, indicating a deficiency of blood. Further, her reaction to being exposed to wind, and extreme itching, could all be related to internal Liver wind from blood deficiency.

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justification for the point combination.^k The Large Intestine forms a yin-yang pair with the Lung, which governs the skin^l and the Liver is clearly in distress. Opening the four gates to the city^m may also balance the internal/external thermal irregularity, as this coupling activates “qi and blood and ensure[s] their free and smooth passage.” (Deadman et al., 1998, p. 105).ⁿ Irrespective of rationale, the use of *si guan* led to a severe worsening of Jane’s symptoms.^o *Hegu* (LI-4) is the *yuan* (source) point, with a clear emphasis on regulating qi (Deadman et al., 1998, p. 103). *Taichong* (LV-3) is a *shu* (stream) point, as well as being the earth and *yuan* point, and is the most important point on the Liver channel (*ibid*, pp 477-478) and could clear the damp heat revealed on her tongue. The *si guan* refer to the *gates of qi* on the *yangming* and *jueyin*, and despite both being *yuan* points, this coupling is not used for tonification (Wang & Robertson, 2008, p.564). The authors of one study looking at acupuncture and the allergic symptoms of eczema came to the following conclusion: “Acupuncture at the correct points showed a significant reduction in Type 1 hypersensitivity itch in patients with atopic eczema.” (Liu, 2011, p. 38), and as *si guan* is vigorously activating to the qi and blood, scattering and extinguishing by dredging the pathways (Wang & Robertson, 2008, pp 564-565), these points are not correct in this patient’s case, as the chronic nature of her case demonstrates a deficiency of vitality.

k. The late Professor Carole Rogers would use *siguan* as a first step in almost all of her treatments, yet personal experience with trying to emulate her results revealed that the effect a master can achieve with a set of points is quite different to one of less experience. When the pulse is weak and you open the gates, one either lets something in or lets something out.

l. “Qi Bo: Skin and body hair are the correlates of the lung.” (Unschuld & Tessenow, 2011, p. 575)

m. Sun Zi in the Art of War states: “The worst policy is to attack cities. Attack cities only when there is no alternative.” (trans. Griffith, 1963, p. 117)

n. The old capital city of China, Xi’an, is a great example of monumental walls defending the Centre, permeated by four impressive gates.

o. Considering the antique (*shu*) points describe life entering or *concealing* into the vessel from Heaven and Earth via the extremities (Deadman et al., 1998, p. 30), with the *jing* well points being the most dynamic interchanges of yin-yang (*ibid*. p. 31), her reaction to *siguan*, both relatively distal points, reinforces the diagnosis of non-concealment or failure of the yang to enter deeper into the body.

Treatment

The following acupuncture protocol was followed throughout the treatments, except where indicated. Single-use sterile 0.22 by 30mm needles were used, and points were treated bilaterally with perpendicular insertion and little stimulation. Jane would lie with the needles in place for 30 minutes.

First acupuncture prescription: all with an even method: *Quchi* (LI-11), *Zusanli* (ST-36), *Xuehai* (SP-10), *Fuliu*^p (KID-7).

The primary treatment for *yangming* was the combination of the *he* (sea) points on both channels, *Quchi* (LI-11) and *Zusanli* (ST-36). Being near elbows and knees respectively, they have a natural synergy.^q According to the *Ling Shu* (Spiritual Pivot), *he* points on the yang channels treat the *fu* (Deadman et al., 1998, p. 31) and are assigned points for the treatment of skin disease. The combination of these two points is recommended for chronic eczema, along with *Xuehai* (SP-10) (Xu, 2004, p. 77) specifically for immune function (Li & Pu, 2013, p. 267). Since the diagnosis encompassed the idea of concealing inward, the *he* points are the places where *qi enters inward* (Deadman et al., 1998, p. 36). There is also precedent for combining similar points on the six division channel pairings (Wang & Robertson, 2008, pp 551-7), and this pairing specifically facilitates *yangming* when there is insufficient nutrition from food, thus used “when the channels are exhausted due to a chronic condition”.

Individually, *Quchi* (LI-11) is the foremost *he* point used in skin conditions (Deadman et al. p. 37), and is a Ma Dan-Yang “heavenly star” point (p. 112). As an earth point it will draw energy from earth into metal, thus strengthening the son of metal—water. To treat the *biao* (branch/manifestation), this point covers all aspects of the patient’s skin presentation, as it “clears heat, cools the blood, eliminates wind, drains damp and alleviates itching.” (Deadman et al., 1998, p. 112). Since the diagnosis is one of a *yangming* pathology, Large Intestine points will be crucial in its

p. This is a typical point prescription for unification treatments, with one point on the upper body and three points on the lower body, in Hunyuan medicine (Seidman & McLaren, 2012, pp. 128-135).

q. According to Doane’s (2015) description of distal needle acupuncture, the elbows and knees can be considered a reverse image, hence referencing the wrists and ankles, where Jane’s eczema started.



Ante Babic’s Tips for running a successful clinic

Some pain can only be cured with moxa; some, only with Rakija.

treatment, and Ross (1995) highlights its use in relaxing muscular tension.

As a component of the Sea of Nourishment, *Zusanli* (ST-36), the earth and *he* (sea) point, has a strong role in the production and circulation of blood (Rogers & Rogers, 1989, p. 33), and *he* points are used with disorders resulting from irregular dietary habits (Deadman et al., 1998, p. 31).

Man requires water and grain as his basis.

Hence, once man is cut off from water and grain, he will die.

Once the vessels contain no stomach qi, death [is imminent] too."

– *Suwen* (Simple Questions) chapter 18
Unschuld & Tessenow, 2011

This one point, considered by the Jin dynasty physician Ma Dan-Yang as one of the most vital acupuncture points, and by Song dynasty commentator Qin Cheng-Zu as a point that can treat all diseases, covers most of Jane's symptomatic picture, treating palpitations, dizziness, constipation, anger,^r and back pain (Deadman et al., 1998, pp. 158-161). It is the most important point for generating qi and blood (p. 159), thus treating the root of the disorder. There is precedent for the use of *Zusanli* (ST-36) in cases of eczema (Xu, 2004, p. 77), specifically when presenting with a yellow tongue coating (Zhao, 2004, p. 39).

The Sea of Blood, *Xuehai* (SP-10) is a point of *Chong Mai* and is a special point for the blood, treating all disorders of the blood, explaining its use with *Quchi* (LI-11) for the treatment of eczema (Loc.cit; Xie & Li, 2013, p. 270). Regarding *yangming*, the Spleen forms a yin-yang pair with the Stomach, so its use would hopefully reinforce the *yangming* points, along with being the counterpart with the Lung (and skin) in *taiyin*.

Fuliu (KID-7) was used as the metal point on the Kidney channel, to draw excess from the Lung and skin into the root of the body. Given her sharp voice and tendency to anger, metal and water would influence wood as there is a strong relationship between the Kidney and the Lung channels (Hammer,

1980). Using the metal point to reinforce metal also uses the five-phase *ke* (controlling) cycle to strengthen metal's capacity to control wood. Needling the Liver was avoided^s as that system was quite stimulated and reactive emotionally.^t Strengthening Jane's Kidneys was seen as a primary focus, once *yangming* could conceal, and according to *Suwen* (Simple Questions) chapter 64, there is a relationship between *shaoyin* (the Heart and Kidneys) and disorders of the skin (Tan et al., 2009, p. 650). It was hoped that by strengthening the Kidney channel she would get some relief from her back pain.

Jane was advised to reduce her coffee and alcohol intake, and to get to bed earlier. Taijiquan was suggested for relaxation and breathing,^u however this was proscribed by her religious leaders^v so reading and walking were agreed upon to deal with stress.

It is the opinion of Ross (1995) that many skin diseases are related to emotional factors (p. 430). See also Hammer (1980, p. 8). Hon et al. (2014) also state that "a holistic approach should encompass psychotherapy, behavioural therapy and coping strategies in conjunction with dermatologic therapy." According to Meding and Swanbeck (2006) "80 per cent of the patients experienced some kind of disturbance to their social and emotional lives, considered to be caused by the hand eczema."^w

Due to Jane's reaction to previous herbal formulae, a simple prescription of two herbs was prescribed in raw form, *Huang Qin* (*Scutellariae Radix*) and *Bai Shao* (*Paeoniae Radix alba*), 5 grams each, to be steeped in hot water and sipped throughout the day. According to the Hunyuan model, both of

s. If indeed medicine equates to warfare (Scheid, 2014), Sun Zi states: "An army may be likened to water, for just as flowing water avoids the heights and hastens to the lowlands, so an army avoids strength [wood] and strikes weakness [metal and water]." (trans. Griffiths, 1963, p. 153)

t. According to Qin Bo-Wei, "attention to Liver physiology enables us to avoid excessive coursing or dis-inhibiting of the qi, or eroding and dissipating it in a manner that impairs the proper function of Liver qi." (Chace & Zhang, 1997, p. 12)

u. *Neigong* (internal cultivation) is a way of balancing fire and water (Reid, 1993, p. 180), the *li* and *kan* trigrams. Further discussions occurred throughout the course of treatment regarding *xinfa* (the Heart method) and self-observation.

v. To quote: "Practising *taiji* will lead you down the slippery slope of Eastern mysticism..."

w. See also Rossi (2007, p. 21).

r. Hua Tuo of the Han dynasty used *Zusanli* (ST-36) to treat the five taxations and seven injuries, one of which being "great anger that injures the Liver". (Deadman et al., 1998, p. 160)

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these herbs have an action on facilitating *yangming* concealment.

Two weeks later Jane returned, she had been compliant with her herbal tea, reduced her coffee and alcohol and focused on relaxation. Her symptoms had improved, and importantly her skin had calmed and her bowels were regular with no bleeding. However, there was still stiffness in her back, itchy eyes, and the reflections of the tongue and pulse remained unchanged.

An interesting phenomenon had occurred, however, on the evening of her first treatment. Jane had felt well and rested, until it was time for bed. As soon as she lay down her mind began to race, and she felt full of energy. That night she got no sleep at all. As this occurred only once, on the night of the treatment, it was assumed to be a reaction to re-establishing circulation.

Second acupuncture prescription, all with an even method: *Quchi* (LI-11), *Zusanli* (ST-36), *Xuehai* (SP-10), *Zhaohai* (KID-6).

The second treatment was identical to the first, except for one point; *Zhaohai* (KID-6) was used in place of *Fuliu* (KID-7). This point was mainly incorporated as an alternative point on the Kidney channel to influence her back pain, as one can needle directly into the joint, thus affecting the joints of the spine (Doane, 2015).

One month passed before Jane returned, and she presented with some tightness in her chest after a recent cold. When asked about her reaction to her previous treatment, she reported sleeping better than ever. Again, all her symptoms were improving, including her back pain and irritated eyes, and her tongue coating was now dry and white. However, the pulse remained unchanged.

Third acupuncture prescription, all with an even method: *Quchi* (LI-11), *Zusanli* (ST-36), *Xuehai* (SP-10), *Fuliu* (KID-7).

Due to the Lung involvement in her current presentation, the same point prescription was used as in the first treatment, utilising *Fuliu* (KID-7) for its effect on the Kidney's grasping of *da qi* in respiration (Rogers & Rogers, 1998, p. 113). *Fuliu* (KID-7) is also a *jing* river point, and the *Nanjing* (Classic of Difficulties) suggests their use for cough and dyspnoea (Deadman et al., 1998, p. 31).

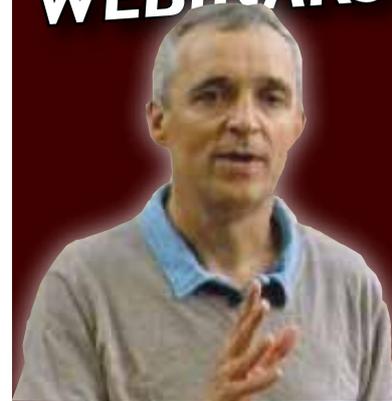
Another month passed before seeing Jane again. All her symptoms were improving, including her premenstrual symptoms. She had not used boiling water on her extremities since the first treatment, and her respiratory symptoms had cleared. Emotionally, Jane felt less reactive, yet anger still occasionally surfaced.^x Only one thing concerned her, the night of our last session she had again been unable to sleep, with the same symptoms that occurred after our first treatment. It seemed that the use of *Fuliu* (KID-7) was having some effect on her sleep the evening of the treatment.

Fourth acupuncture prescription, all with an even method: *Quchi* (LI-11), *Zusanli* (ST-36), *Xuehai* (SP-10), *Zhaohai* (KID-6).

On this, our fourth session, *Zhaohai* (KID-6) was used again, and the patient was advised to call the next day and report on her symptoms overnight. She slept peacefully. Further treatments have continued on the same line, without *Fuliu* (KID-7), and Jane continued to improve, even being able to eat a few new foods and spices without reaction. However, her pulses were still weak.

An argument could be made that, despite the diagnosis and resultant treatment principle of concealing yang, the use of *Quchi* (LI-11), *Xuehai* (SP-10) and *Zhaohai* (KID-6) simply cleared heat out of the blood (Deadman et al., 1998, pp. 112 & 197), which is the antithesis of the current discussion. However, whether heat is *cleared* or rather *concealed* is open to debate. To increase the strength of the pulse we need

x. Getting to know Jane over time, there seems to be something behind her anger. While it is not yet appropriate to discuss this deeper with her, there appears to be a hidden sadness in the background, which could be implicated in relation to her Lungs and the reaction to *Fuliu* (KID-7). As the metal point it draws from the Lungs to nurture water, in turn to calm wood. While the Liver is primarily related to anger, it can also be impacted by sadness, particularly in women (Maciocia, 2005, p. 503). If the Lungs are weakened and we draw from them further, this could explain her reaction to this point, with yang fleeing instead of concealing at night. The quality of her voice, being of a sharp shouting nature, seemed to indicate an excess of wood. However, sharp is cutting, and metal cuts wood, and the *ke* (controlling) cycle has a fundamental role in emotional dynamics; "Liver: sadness and sorrow convulse the centre, the *hun* is injured... one dies in autumn." (Rossi, 2007, p. 26). Acupuncture has been helpful for Jane, but there is a concern that when we find the true heart of her condition, she may not be ready emotionally to deal with the resonance of what lies hidden (Ko, 2015).



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■ Volker Scheid PhD – visiting professor (Zhejiang University of TCM, Hangzhou), medical anthropologist, Professor of East Asian Medicines at the University of Westminster, practitioner for 30 years – is one of our foremost teachers and practitioners. Those who attended his seminars in Australia were blown away by his thought-provoking style and depth of knowledge. He is author of the acclaimed *Chinese Medicine in Contemporary China and Currents of Tradition in Chinese Medicine*, and co-author of *Chinese Herbal Medicine: Formulas & Strategies* (2nd ed). His interests have moved towards how East Asian medical traditions can be integrated into contemporary health care without losing their independence and effectiveness. Volker lectures in Europe, UK, the USA and Australia. His 2014 seminars received high acclaim and are now offered as webinars.



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to influence the volume of the vascular supply, which is predominantly the role of nutrition. The fact that the external manifestations of her condition have subsided indicates that *yangming*, with its yin and yang correlations to the Lungs and Spleen, are somewhat recovered. The quality of her diet still remains questionable. Hopefully as she continues to improve it will allow her a broader variety of fresh foods which will be her true medicine.

Further treatment hopes to combine the *yangming* treatment, which was at first the root treatment, but perhaps has now become the branch, with *Ren Mai*—*Lieque* (LU-7) and *Zhaohai* (KID-6)—the new assumed root. Perhaps using *Quchi* (LI-11) with *Shangjuxu* (ST-37), thus combining *yangming* and also the upper and lower *he* (sea) points of the Large Intestine, along with *Shangjuxu* (ST-37) being a part of the “sea of blood” (Pirog, 1996, p. 138), will be of further benefit. Alternatively, a more nourishing treatment of *yangming* would be the two *li* (mile) points, *Zusanli* (ST-36) with *Shousanli* (LI-10) (Wang & Robertson, 2008, p. 568).^y

KID-6 *Zhaohai* has been of clear benefit in this case, so its continued use is warranted. If indeed the Lung is found to be at the heart of her condition, as the Lungs and Kidneys are often used to help each other (Hammer, 1980), *Taiyuan* (LU-9) could be a better option than *Lieque* (LU-7), as it is the earth, *yuán* (source), *shu* (stream) and special meeting point for the pulse, and is useful in skin conditions (Rogers & Rogers, 1998, p. 6).

Either point could be justified, as Matsumoto and Birch (1986) list “skin itchy, skin problems that cause peeling, rash, wind” under the treatment indications for *Lieque* (LU-7).

Using the earth point on the metal channels has an interesting effect on the system, as it draws energy from earth into metal, yet the Lungs form a divisional unit with the Spleen—*taiyin*—thus these points form a circuit of reinforcement between earth and metal.

Jane’s reaction to the two Kidney points, *Zhaohai* (KID-6) and *Fuliu* (KID-7), was most interesting, and required a deeper inquiry.

y. Treatment has continued along these lines, with Jane now able to eat small amounts of foods containing salicylates without getting a reaction.

Comparison of Zhaohai and Fuliu

The Kidneys, being with the Heart a part of *shaoyin*, are the deepest aspect of the human being, apart from the *shen* or *xing* (natural character).^z Guiding the yang which is being concealed by *yangming* into the deeper aspect of *shaoyin* is considered vital for the patient’s recovery,^{aa} hence the need for a Kidney channel point, often utilised in unification acupuncture treatments.^{ab}

“Illuminating sea”, “shining sea” or “sea of illumination” is the English translation of *Zhaohai* (KID-6),^{ac} perhaps due to its proximity to the fire point *Rangu* (KID-2) or “blazing valley” which is reflected on the ocean. (Ellis, Wiseman & Boss, 1989, p. 202). “The vital yang qi of the Kidneys is found here, as deep and all-encompassing as the sea—it shines and illuminates the whole body” (Bertschinger, 2013, p. 279). In Jane’s case, this *shining* and *illuminating* seems to be an inward movement, illuminating from within, holding yang within yin as described by the *kan* trigram, the true principle of water.

Indeed, *Zhaohai* (KID-6) treats insomnia (Matsumoto & Birch, 1986) primarily through its action as a point of *Yin Qiao Mai*,^{ad} which guides the treatment into the Kidneys to nourish yin, cool the blood and calm the *shen* (Twicken, 2013). Hammer (1980) considers *Zhaohai* (KID-6) “a strong psychological point for anger”, and it is even seen as a “tranquiliser for the mind” (Piao, Mei et al. 2011), inviting “self-reflection” (Cecil-Sterman & Didner, 2012) via the “quietness” of *Yin Qiao Mai* (Deadman et al., 1998); light shining on a tranquil ocean creates a clear mirror for us to see our reflection.

Yin Qiao Mai deals with excess and empty heat (Cecil-Sterman & Didner, 2012, p. 300) and is closely related to *Ren Mai*. Interestingly, signs for disease in the *Qiao Mai* vessels are

z. *Xing* (性) here referring to *Natural Character*, as described by Liu Yuan (Seidman & Jaensch, 2013).

aa. Consider Ni’s (1995) creative concluding sentence to *Suwen* (Simple Questions) chapter 11: “This is evidence that healing actually comes from within.”

ab. For more on Unification and Separation acupuncture, see Seidman & McLaren (2012).

ac. Sun Si-Miao stated: “The names of the points are not merely nominal; each has a profound meaning.” (Ellis, et al., 1989, preface)

ad. Twicken (2013) states that why this point in particular has been designated an Eight Extraordinary Vessel master or coupled point remains a mystery, and could be related to incipient *herbalisation* of acupuncture (p. 18).

a vacuity of yin and an exuberance of yang (Pirog, 1996, pp. 181-182), or rather, yang on the outside (exuberant) unable to conceal inward into yin (vacuous).

Further, *Zhaohai* (KID-6) may be more appropriate in Jane's case due to *Yin Qiao Mai* and its pathological symptoms of the skin related to damp heat (Deadman et al., 1998, p. 22). Eczema often has a component of dampness (Xie & Li, 2013, p. 271), and her tongue coating at the beginning showed clear signs of damp heat,^{ae} which improved after *Fuliu* (KID-7) was replaced with *Zhaohai* (KID-6). Also, her irritated eyes improved after *Zhaohai* (KID-6) was used, and *Yin Qiao Mai* has an action on dry and itchy eyes (Pirog, 1996, pp 181-2).

Other indications for the use of *Zhaohai* (KID-6), such as irregular menstruation, excessive vaginal discharge and frequent urination (Liu & Liu, 2007, p.70) show a restraining and concealing action on the fluids and blood. As discussed by Neal (2013a, p. 28;) the *shenming* of the Heart (the illuminated spirit) is distributed throughout the body via the blood, illustrating further the correlation between the physiological and psychological features of this point. More pragmatically, it could also help *yangming* via its effect on constipation (Pirog, 1996, p. 310); *the sea floating the boat*.

The “returning current” or “recover flow” point, *Fuliu* (KID-7) (Deadman et al.,

ae. It could be argued that the diagnosis should have included damp heat, references to the Liver and blood, and so on. However, all of these phenomena were seen to be results of the inability of *yangming* to conceal. A more fundamental diagnosis, most likely applicable to any case, is that of a compromised *shaoyin*, for if the core of the body, the Heart and Kidneys are strong and stable, where can there be illness? This is a different approach than that of *Shang Han Lun* physician Liu Li-Hong (2010), who suggests the first place we can reach in each case is *taiyang*, the first level; however, *taiyang* can be considered the outward reflection of *shaoyin*.

1998) is a *jing* river and metal point. Like *Zhaohai* (KID-6), it also has a restraining action, particularly on diarrhoea, persistent sweating and night sweats (Liu & Liu, 2009), to recover the flow by dredging water and fluids; “at this point the channel's qi has already become broad and deep, and the current so powerful there is nothing it cannot overcome” (Bertschinger, 2013, p. 279). Perhaps this powerful control over the fluids is due to *Fuliu* (KID-7) being a yang supplementation point (Pirog, 1996, p. 311). While we are not necessarily trying to supplement Jane's yang, we are trying to allow it to *conceal* into yin.

The astringing action *Fuliu* (KID-7) has on the blood may further the case for this point in order to restrain her bleeding from her skin and bowel. It is also used for damp heat conditions, particularly those affecting *yangming*, and can strengthen the lower back when there is pain from deficiency or stasis. Looking at the combination with other points, *Fuliu* (KID-7) is more often combined with *Hegu* (LI-4) than with *Quchi* (LI-11).

There is precedent for using them together (Pirog, 1996, p. 310). Both points could be considered in the general area of influence of the Kidney *luo* channel and its related conditions (Cecil-Sterman & Didner, 2012, p. 45), along with a branch of the *Chong Mai* (Deadman et al., 1998, p. 19). Both of these points would be considered “reactive points” (Shu, 2003, p. 6); due to Jane's reaction, reactivity alone clearly does not equate to propriety.

Comparing the two points, it could be simply stated, as in Rogers and Rogers (1989) and Ross (1995), that *Fuliu* (KID-7) tonifies Kidney yang while *Zhaohai* (KID-6) tonifies Kidney yin. Jane's case presents an interesting view of the dynamics of yin-yang, and what it actually means to “tonify” them. It could be argued that *Fuliu* (KID-7) facilitates the *function or expression* of yang, while KID-6 *Zhaohai* supplements yin by *submerging yang within it*, making the yin alive.^{af}

As *yangming* conceals life, *shaoyin* gladly receives it; *Fuliu* (KID-7) opens the floodgates with a *powerful current* for the yang to

af. 32 This is the true meaning of *tonifying yin* in Hunyuan medicine, often damaged by the common prescribing of cold, sticky and cloying medicinals to create more yin.

KID-6 <i>Zhaohai</i>	KID-7 <i>Fuliu</i>
Light shining off a calm ocean	Deep, strong current of a river
Master point of Yin Qiao Mai	Metal point
Governs quietness, self-reflection	Jing/River point
Used for nourishing yin and blood	Supplements yang
Used for damp heat	Used for damp heat
Has astringing properties	Has astringing properties

be expressed (the *li* fire trigram). *Zhaohai* (KID-6) gathers the yang with yin, concealing it, and thus the ocean shines (the *kan* water trigram). The table highlights the contrasting and complementary aspects of their functions.

Conclusion

Skin disorders can be approached from several avenues according to Chinese medicine. Looking superficially, distracted by the symptoms, the physician can follow the path of biomedicine in its use of anti-inflammatory techniques and products, yet this does not account for the long-term well-being of the patient. Looking deeper, with tools such as concepts of yin-yang, fire and water, and the functioning of *yangming*, Chinese medicine can find efficacy in its roots.

Manifestations are endless, yet one principle penetrates them all.

– Master Chen Zhong-Hua

Diagnosing a case leads directly to the principle and application of treatment. Depending on the theoretical construct used to describe the symptomatology, therapies such as bloodletting, clearing and moving, or *concealing* will be utilised. Ideally, the patient is offered treatment that addresses the symptomatology *and* her longevity, rather than the symptoms *or* longevity.

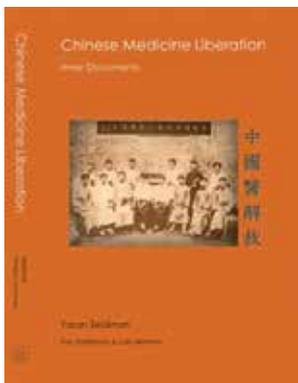
From the broad definitions we come to the fine points of treatment. While the intention of the physician may lead to the correct channel, the variation between two points, just moments apart, can be as different as night and day. At the heart of it all is the patient who presented in clinic with an excess of heat, yet a limited supply of warmth.

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Narratives of medicine in 20th century China

CHINESE MEDICINE LIBERATION: INNER DOCUMENTS, by Yaron Seidman, Zac Patterson, Lois Nethery; Hunyuan Research Institute (2015).



THIS SUBSTANTIAL VOLUME is a collection of translations of more than 150 documents on the development of Chinese medicine education, regulation and theory. Many derive from *Compilation of Discussions about Chinese Medical Education* while others are from journal articles and books.

In general, the documents originate from the 1920s and 1930s during the Republic of China period, and the mid-1950s to 1960 during the Peoples' Republic. In both of these periods the status and conception of traditional Chinese medicine were points of contention.

In the Republican period, at issue were the value of traditional medicine in a modern medical system and whether any form of accommodation of the “old medicine” was possible or desirable.

The key issues during the early communist period were how to accommodate traditional medicine and how to integrate traditional and modern medicine to benefit the people.

The first chapter provides some extracts of a book published in English in 1921 concerning the development of modern

medicine in China from the viewpoint of the medical missionary, along with extracts translated from Chinese on the history of modern medicine in China (1936) and the history of acupuncture (1956).

Each of these extracts provides a simple narrative but they are from quite different viewpoints. It is likely that each author believed they were providing an objective account but with the benefit of hindsight we can see how each was greatly influenced by their personal experiences and their social context.

Subsequent extracts contain a mix of translations of highly partisan polemics attacking or defending Chinese medicine during the Republican period interspersed with documents on education and curriculum standards and more balanced discussions of issues in education, theory and practice.

Prior to many of the longer extracts Seidman provides a biography of the writer and he also adds his own commentary at the beginning of the extract to alert the reader to points he thinks the extract illustrates. This helps the reader to contextualise the text