

Fire Element:

San Jiao Theory, Meridians & Points I (from: Davis, 2000)

THE TRIPLE HEATER, SAN JIAO

San jiao zhe jue du zhi guan
shui dao chu yan.

Triple Heater, San Jiao

‘The triple heater is responsible for the opening up of passages and irrigation. The regulation of fluids stems from it’. (from Suwen, chapter 8)

A Summary of the Triple Heater, (San Jiao)

E. Rochat de la Vallée and M. Macé (Larre & Rochat, 1992a)

San jiao, the triple heater, is one of the most difficult concepts to grasp in Chinese medicine, not only because as an entity it has no equivalent in Western medicine, but also because in China itself it has not been clearly and plainly defined.

In fact the triple heater can be presented as much as a concrete and localised organ, such as the pipes for evacuating urine or the cavities of the stomach, as it can as very general functions for the animation and irrigation of the whole body. The triple heater appears in the texts of the Nei jing as one of the 6 fu with the stomach, the two intestines, the bladder and the gallbladder. With the exception of the gallbladder (Su wen 11), they form the set of fu for transmission and transformation, chuan hua zhi fu, in charge of digestion, assimilation and elimination.

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Although several texts in the Nei jing give glimpses of the regions that are under the authority of each of the heaters, it is the Nan jing 31 that clarifies their positions. The upper heater encompasses the chest, the middle heater the stomach cavity and the lower heater the area of evacuation below. The heart and lungs are associated with the upper heater, the spleen and stomach with the middle heater and the kidneys, intestines and bladder with the lower heater. The liver, along with the gallbladder, is usually linked to the lower heater, although certain interpretations place it with the functions of the middle heater.

The triple heater is sometimes specifically linked to the kidneys (Ling shu 2 and 47) forming one of the two fu corresponding to the zang of the kidneys (with the bladder). It is certainly through this link with the kidneys that it fulfils (Su wen 8) the charge of opening passages and irrigating, allowing the proper management of liquids in the body. The link with the transformation of liquids is constantly confirmed in its pathology, as its relationship with water, in all its forms, is emphasised by the traditional titles attributed to each of the three heaters (Ling shu 18):

- Wu, mist, humid vapours, for the upper heater
- Ou, maceration for the middle heater
- Du, canal, conduit for the lower heater

The triple heater plays a role in all stages of digestion and assimilation. It regulates the body fluids and their distribution. The fire inherent in its character was seen to play an increasingly important role in the activity of each of its three parts. In the Ming dynasty, eg. in the Yixue shengshuan of Yu Tuan, it was considered that the triple heater was the fire that circulated in the median to develop all life, the minister fire, the element to which the triple heater is linked.

Nan jing 66 presents the triple heater as the agent of distribution of original qi and gives it the title of yuan, origin. It is through the same theory that the Nan jing 62 gives the triple heater as responsible for the power of the yuan, source points on the yang meridians.

One can then easily link to the three levels of the triple heater the three fundamental qi of life that constancy regenerate man:

- the ancestral qi, zong qi, in the upper heater
- the nutritive qi, ying qi, in the middle heater
- the defensive qi, wei qi in the lower heater

The defensive qi are related to the lower heater even though for their distribution in the body, the defensive qi leave through the distributive movement proper to the lung, the sea of qi in the chest, in the upper heater. This mixing of fire and water that is characteristic of the triple heater recalls the joining of yin yang at the origin of a being's life.

Thus, the relationship of the triple heater with the origin of life in man developed in parallel with the concept of ming men and reflections on the origin of all the organic constituents of life in man through water and the original fire, the authentic yin and yang, dependent on the kidneys and ming men.

Its double fire-water polarity makes it the representative of the origin of life, which diversifies and persists at the heart of transformations. The triple heater was increasingly linked with the notion of

transformation through the work of the qi, qi hua. Wang Shuhe put the triple heater in a biao li relationship with ming men (Mai jing), while it is more usually coupled with the xin bao lu (Nan jing 25, Ling shu 10). But in either case, the couple represents the functions of minister fire, xiang huo, in the body. In the Tang dynasty, Sun Simiao emphasised its ability to unify all the elements of the body (Qianjin fang). The triple heater gathers together all the zang and fu and allows them to function in unity.

This unity is fully expressed in the texts of the Song dynasty (Zhongzangjing of the pseudo Hua tuo) or the Yuan dynasty (Dongyuan shishu of Li Gao) where the three heaters incorporate all the functions and circulations of the body, and extend from the top of the head to the heart (upper heater), from the heart to the navel (middle heater), and from the navel to the feet (lower heater).

They are then truly considered as the triple origin in man, the final development and theorisation of what was begun in the Nan jing through their double fire-water polarity (Nan jing 31) and link with the original qi (Nan jing 8, 62 and 66). Function conclusively supplanted localization or purely anatomical definition: they have a name but not a form (Nan jing 25, 38). The qi circulate everywhere, the unified qi of the body with its different functions and varied intensity. These qi drive the liquids and the vital nourishing elements, allowing the transformations through which the qi and essences are renewed and by which the organs function. The union of qi and water, at work in these vital mechanisms, is well represented by the triple heater (Ling shu 36, Nan jing 31 etc.). This does not limit it from being the simple reunion of the organs located in each of the levels, but in a more far-reaching way it represents the synergy of all the zang fu, renewing and properly circulating qi and liquids without stagnation or shortage.

Some San Jiao Details (Wiseman & Feng, 1998)

triple burner, san jiao

One of the six bowels, comprising upper, middle, and lower burners. The hand lesser yang (shao yang) triple burner channel passes through all three burners, linking up with many of the organs. The triple burner is an exterior organ, and its corresponding interior organ (for the purposes of acupuncture only) is the pericardium, to which it is connected by the hand reverting yin (jue yin) pericardium channel. The nature of the triple burner has always been the subject of disagreement. The following three points, however, seem to be well established:

(1) The triple burner refers to specific body areas: According to this view, the organs of the human body are distributed among three segments, referred to as the upper, middle, and lower burners. The upper burner includes the head and chest, the heart and the lung. The centre burner corresponds to the upper abdomen (the area above the umbilicus) and includes the stomach and the spleen. The lower burner corresponds to the lower abdomen (inferior to the umbilicus) but includes the liver and kidney.

(2) The triple burner represents the waterways: Elementary Questions (su wen) explains, "The triple burner holds the office of the sluices; it manifests as the waterways."

This is interpreted to mean that the main functions of the triple burner are the processing of fluids by qi transformation and ensuring free flow through the waterways. As such, qi transformation in the

triple burner is a global expression for the roles played by the lung, spleen, kidney, stomach, small intestine, large intestine, and bladder in regulating the body's water metabolism. The Magic Pivot (ling shu) states, "When the triple burner is open and permits effusion, it causes the five flavors of food to diffuse, nourishes the skin, makes the body firm, and keeps the [body] hair moistened, like the sprinkling of mist and dew. Such is the action of stomach qi." This fits the imagery of the phrase "the upper burner is like mist," which in practice refers to the diffusion of defense qi and distribution of fluids by the lung. The Magic Pivot (ling shu) states, "The center burner. .. strains off the waste and distills the fluids out of which the essence of grain and water is formed. This then flows upward into the lung channel where it is transformed into blood."

This statement supports the phrase, "The center burner is like foam," which refers to the movement and formation of the essence of grain and water by the stomach and spleen, the source of blood formation. "In the middle burner, the small intestine connects through to the bladder... It transforms waste that is then sent down to the large intestine... and distills the juices, sending them down to the bladder." The intestines, kidney, and bladder are located in the lower burner. The small intestine governs humor, the large intestine governs liquid, and the kidney governs the opening and closing. Their combined functions explain the phrase "the lower burner is like a sluice."

(3) The triple burner is also a concept in pattern identification; see TRIPLE BURNER PATTERN IDENTIFICATION.

triple burner channel, san jiao jing

See details of the San Jiao Meridians in this volume.

triple burner cough, san jiao ke

Cough with abdominal fullness and no desire to eat or drink.

triple burner governs the sluices, san jiao zhu jue du

See note on the triple burner, particularly the lower jiao.

triple burner pattern identification, san jiao bian zheng

A method of pattern identification developed in the Qing Dynasty by Wu Ju-Tong of the warm disease school on the basis of the experience of previous physicians. It divides warm diseases according to stage of transmission through the upper, middle, and lower burners.

Diseases of the upper burner include invasion of the lung by external evils, construction-aspect evil patterns, and external evils penetrating the pericardium, which for the most part correspond to initial-stage externally contracted heat (febrile) diseases.

Diseases of the centre burner include gastro-intestinal heat bind and spleen-stomach damp-heat, which usually correspond to midstage externally contracted heat diseases.

Diseases of the lower burner include such conditions as deep penetration of evils, wearing of kidney yin, insufficiency of liver blood, and yin vacuity stirring wind, which correspond to the advanced stages of externally contracted heat diseases.

The concept of the three burners and the triple burner method of pattern identification are also used in diagnosing internal damage miscellaneous diseases, but to a much lesser degree and in a less systematized way than that of externally contracted heat diseases.

triple burner repletion heat, san jiao shi re

1. Repletion heat in the upper burner (heart and lung), center burner (spleen and stomach), or lower burner (liver and kidney). 2. Qi aspect repletion heat.

triple burner vacuity cold, san jiao xu han

Vacuity cold in the upper burner (heart and lung), centre burner (spleen and stomach), or lower burner (liver and kidney).

An Instructive Discussion (Larre& Rochat, 1992b)

Claude Larre: The triple heater is in charge of something which is called jue du. Both characters contain the water radical, but they do not have the same meaning. Jue is always the first character and du is an extension or a complementary aspect of jue. Jue is to make a determination of how things flow. Historically Emperor Yu, the founder of the first Xia dynasty, was able to control the flow of rivers in China and thereby changed the destiny of the country. Jue was found previously in relation to the gallbladder, so it has a connection with the shao yang and the creating of circulation and deciding what passage to take. Du means to block.

So it's interesting to see that when we talk of heat or fire, or the triple heater, the function has something to do with the channelling and blocking of the circulation of liquids. But the final product, shui dao, has nothing to do with fire. Shui dao means the conduction of all rivers in the organism just as might be seen in the empire. We have to understand something not seen so much in Europe where the rivers are not as important, because the control of water has been and still is one of the main preoccupations of the Chinese. This vocabulary comes from ancient history and reveals that the way they understood life in an individual was the same as how they understood the control of life in the empire.

But the question of water does have something to do with the question of fire. Life is like a sort of cooking where you cannot really use fire without water and you cannot really use water without fire. You have to be at a certain degrees of temperature in order to get all the essences. This is controlled between fire and water.

Elisabeth Rochat: It should be noticed that for the first time since the heart we have a viscera which does not have the flesh or part of the body radical. This is because the triple heater has no form. It just has some points of command and some functions. It has expression but no actual place where you can say that its function is located. You can simply say that it is triple, it is a 3, and 3 means that we enter the world of qi moving in the median void. The triple heater will always have something to do with qi and with mediation, being a go-between. We have already seen how it was the messenger of the original qi and the representative of the fire of ming men which allows all life to continue. The four strokes that you see beneath the character jiao represent fire, just like the fire beneath the cooking pot. In chapter 8 of the Su wen we cannot speak of the triple heater as encircling or encompassing all the other functions, we are rather forced to allocate it a particular function.

Claude Larre: Why?

Elisabeth Rochat: In order to correlate it with the other functions at the same level. It has to be described in its most concrete sense, in charge of the drainage of liquids of the body. But this

function has repercussions on the whole body. In terms of other zang connected with the liquids of the body we have the kidneys which are responsible for water in the lower heater, the spleen being responsible for the production and diffusion of the jin ye, body fluids, in the middle heater, and the lungs responsible for the regulation of liquids in the upper heater. It is all this ensemble of the circulation which we put together and which becomes the unity of the triple heater.

There is, in the Nei jing, important pathology particularly linked to swellings and oedema on the body which is linked to the triple heater in its function of being in charge of the correct conduct and regulation of liquids. It's obvious that the conduction of liquids cannot be made except under the government of the qi, and it's also obvious that the liquids which arrive in the lower part of the body are transformed by the kidneys and bladder. One part will be rejected from the body and the other will be reused after purification. At that moment it will be clear and therefore useful to life. Under the action of the fire of ming men it will be able to evaporate and rise up in a vapour throughout the whole body. Afterwards there comes the descending function of the lungs and so on, and the reconstitution that derives from the stomach and spleen.

Triple Heater (San Jiao) (Theory: a snap-shot from Davis 2000)

The San Jiao [Triple Heater, Triple Burner, Triple Energiser, Three Heater] is one of the Yang Organs of the Fire Element. The other is the Small Intestine. Considerable ambiguity and debate is associated with the San Jiao Organ. Its exact nature is not clear from the classical texts (Larre and Rochat, 1992a). It is said to 'have a name but no shape' or 'is located separately from the Zang Fu Organs and inside the body'. It may be understood as the functional relationship between the various organs which regulate water metabolism - Lungs, Spleen, Stomach, Kidneys, Small Intestine, Large Intestine and Bladder.

It is possibly best thought of as the overall unity, or pathways, which make these Organs a complete system - in terms of fluid metabolism. It does not exist as an entity outside these other Organs (Kaptchuk, 1983; Wiseman et al, 1985).

The Huang Di Nei Jing emphasises the San Jiao's control of the body's Water. It is 'where the Water Channel arises' and is the 'official of the bursting water dam' (Kaptchuk, 1983). The Qi of the San Jiao regulates those aspects of the Lung, Spleen, Kidney, Stomach, Large Intestine and Small Intestine and Bladder which are involved in Water movement. Wiseman et al. (1985) refer to it as the global expression of the roles played by these organs.

The San Jiao also defines three areas of the body: the Upper Jiao which includes the head and chest - above the diaphragm; the Middle Jiao, which lies between the diaphragm and the level of the navel; and the Lower Jiao which corresponds to the abdominal area below the navel.

In the Upper Jiao (Heart, Pericardium and Lungs) there is a mist or fog.

In the Middle Jiao (Stomach, Spleen) there is a foam or froth of bubbles - Maciocia (1989) refers to a 'maceration chamber' or 'bubbling cauldron'.

In the Lower Jiao (Kidney, Liver, Large Intestine, Small Intestine, Bladder) there is a swamp, drainage ditch or sluice. The Liver here is associated with its channel pathway (Kaptchuk, 1983).

Cheng (1987) suggests that the main functions of the San Jiao are to govern the various forms of Qi, and to serve as the passage for the flow of Yuan Qi and Jin Ye. It is utilized as the pathway for distribution of Yuan qi which stimulates and promotes the functional activities of the Zang Fu and various tissues throughout the body.

Digestion, absorption, distribution and excretion of food and water is undertaken as a cooperative effort by various Zang Fu organs, including the San Jiao.

Su Wen, chpt. 8, p. 58. "The Triple Burning space is the irrigation official who builds waterways." (Lu, 1990).

Ling Shu, chpt. 18. p. 827: "Man receives energy from grains; when grains enter the Stomach, they are transmitted to the Lungs, so that the five viscera and the six bowels will receive energy. Clear energies are nutritive energies while muddy energies are defensive energies; nutritive energy travels in the meridians while defensive energy travels outside the meridians; both of them constantly travel without a stop ..." (Lu, 1990).

Ling Shu, chpt. 18. p. 829-832: "The Upper Burning Space is originated from the upper opening of the Stomach, travels upward along the esophagus, cuts across the diaphragm, spreads in the middle of the chest, moves through the armpit, travels in the portion of the great Yin (the Lung meridian), returns to the bright Yang (the Large Intestine meridian). And then, it moves upward to the tongue and downward to the bright Yang of foot (the Stomach meridian), constantly travelling along with the nutritive energy..... after fifty circulations, a grand meeting will again take place at the great Yin of hand" (Lu, 1990).

"The energy of the Middle Burning Space, like that of the Upper Burning Space, is also originated from the Stomach, but it is originated after the Upper Burning Space. This is due to the fact that the energy received here must go through the process of excreting the rough substances, steaming the fluids, transforming the refined substances for sending upward to the Lungs where it is transformed into Blood for the maintenance of life as a most precious substance to have a unique privilege of travelling through the meridians, and it is called nutritive energy" (Lu, 1990).

"The energy of the Lower Burning Space discriminately transmits refined substances to the lower section of the Small Intestine (namely, that section of the small intestine which is connected with the jejunum and the large intestine); and it also transmits water to the Bladder by soaking and penetrating. Thus, water and grains always reside in the Stomach first where rough substances are singled out for transmitting to the Large Intestine which becomes the task of the Lower Burning Space. The soaking and penetrating process will proceed downward so that refined substances will be separated from rough substances with the latter to be transmitted to the Bladder" (Lu, 1990).

Ling Shu, chpt. 30. p. 893-894: "Energy refers to the substance that initiates from the Upper Burning Space, spreads the flavours of five grains, warms up the skin, fills up the body, moistens the hair, like irrigation by fog and dew" (Lu, 1990).

"When the Middle Burning Space (Stomach and Spleen) receives food energy, it will transform it into red fluids which is called Blood..... The Stomach is the great sea of five grains" (Lu, 1990).

Nan Jing, Q. 31. p. 1196: "The Triple Burning Space is the passage of water and grains and it is the beginning and ending of (the) energy mechanism" (Henry Lu, 1990).

"The Upper Burning Space is located in between the region below the Heart and the diaphragm and around the cardiac orifice; it is in charge of receiving but not excreting ..." (Lu, 1990).

"The Middle Burning Space is located around the middle of the Stomach, neither above nor below; it is in charge of digesting water and grains ..." (Lu, 1990).

"The Lower Burning Space is located around the upper opening of the Bladder; it is in charge of separating the clear from the muddy, and of excreting but not receiving in order to facilitate transmission..." (Lu, 1990).

Nan Jing, Q. 38. p. 1202: "There are only five viscera, but there are six bowels; why is that? The so-called six bowels actually include the Triple Burning Space which is a separate channel for the original energy in charge of various energies; but it has name without shape and its meridian belongs to the little Yang of hand. Thus the Triple Burning Space is an additional bowel, and when this additional bowel is added to the five regular bowels, we have a total of six bowels" (Lu, 1990).

Nan Jing, Q. 39. p. 1203: "There are five bowels and six viscera; why is that? The six bowels include five regular bowels; and when we say that there are six viscera, we mean to refer to the five viscera plus one additional Kidney, namely, the left Kidney and the right Kidney which is called life door. Life door is the residence of pure energy and Spirit in store of semen in men and connected with the womb in women, and its energy is in communication with the Kidney. Hence there are a total of six viscera"

"How come there are five bowels? Each of the five viscera corresponds to one bowel, and there is one additional bowel called the Triple Burning Space which does not belong to the five viscera. Hence there are only five bowels" (Lu, 1990).

Nan Jing, Q. 66. p. 1235-1236: "The lake points [Yuan pts.] on the five meridians of viscera are also places where the energy of the Triple Burning Space resides. Why are the lake points [Yuan pts.] called the starting points just because they are the places where the energy of the Triple Burning Spaces resides? The moving energy of Kidneys below the navel is the root of human life, and it is also the root of the twelve master meridians, and that is why, it is called the starting (original) energy - [Yuan qi]. The Triple Burning Space is a separate channel of the original energy, and it is in charge of the flow of three energies (namely, nutritive energy, defensive energy, and assorted energy) for distribution among the five viscera and six bowels. The word "starting" (or original-[Yuan]) is an honorary name of the Triple Burning Space; and this is why the places where the energy of the Triple Burning Space resides are called starting points [Yuan pts.]. When the five viscera and the six bowels are diseased, the starting points may be used for treatment" (Lu, 1990).

San Jiao Meridian, in Ling shu chapter 2

An Instructive Discussion (Larre & Rochat, 1992)

Elisabeth Rochat: In this ... chapter there is another particular presentation of the triple heater. When the so-called five element points are given for each meridian, the triple heater is treated specially, and in fact is taken three times. Here is the text:

The triple heater above joins with the shao yang of the hand and comes out at guan chong, TH-1, at the extremity of the ring finger. It's the well point and the metal point. It flows down and is the fu of the liquid at ye

men, TH-2, which is the rong point. It spreads with power to zhong zhu, TH-3, in the middle of a hollow, at the rear of the metacarpophalangeal joint, the yu point. It passes to yang chi, TH-4, which is in a hollow below the wrist and is the source point. It circulates to zhi gou which is in the hollow between the two bones above the wrist in the centre, and is the jing point. It penetrates the depth at tian jing, TH-10, which is in the hollow above the large bone on the outside of the elbow in the centre. It is the reunion, he, point, and you bend the elbow to find it.

The same kind of presentation is made for all the other meridians, but the text for the triple heater continues by saying:

Its yu point below is at the anterior surface of the big toe, behind the shao yang. It comes out on the external surface in the middle of the calf and its name is wei yang.

This is Bl-39 in the new numbering system, Bl-53 in the old. It's a network of connection, a luo, of the tai yang. The text continues:

The triple heater is what accompanies shao yang and tai yin

It must be said that the text here is certainly corrupted, and the majority of commentators correct it. The problem is that they are not in agreement about the correction! Some say the triple heater is what accompanies the shao yang and the tai yang, and others say the triple heater is what accompanies the shao yin and the tai yin. We will look later on at the different possible explanations.

It is a detachment, bie, of tai yang. At 5 cun above the malleolus it separates and enters deeply, passing the upper part of the calf. It comes out at wei yang, Bl-39, (the departure point of the jing bie of tai yang).

So the triple heater enters into the depths to take a luo relationship, to connect up, with the bladder. Then there are some clinical symptoms:

In case of fullness there is anuria or dysuria. When there is emptiness there is urinary incontinence. In the case of urinary incontinence you tonify and in case of anuria or disuria you sedate (or disperse).

In this chapter we can see how the triple heater is presented as omnipresent in the body, and not simply reduced to its expression as the shao yang of the hand, all of which is exceptional in the framework of these presentations in Ling shu chapter 2.

First there is the presentation of the meridian, then of its junction above, and then below, where the power of the triple heater is rooted right down in the big toe, the big toe serving as a support for the yin meridians. Sometimes the text is corrected to the little toe, and in those instances it is the tai yang which is more present. Either you see it as drawn from below, rooted downwards into the yin, given a great yin resonance if it's put with the big toe. Or on the other hand it can be linked to the power of tai yang which spreads in the little toe. In any case it is with the tai yang that it has a certain communion of qi since it is a point on the bladder, wei yang, which has a special action on the triple heater and is given as its yu point below.

The triple heater is linked to tai yang in the same way as if it were a luo connection in this region of the popliteal fossa. At the point wei yang it is possible to regulate the triple heater and influence its rooting towards the bottom. It is always said to be the lower he point of the triple heater, as if it were a point where through the tai yang and the bladder you could grasp the power of the triple heater. This comes back to what we were saying earlier, that the triple heater is dependent on the bladder, particularly for everything that is for drainage below.

Thirdly and finally there is this presentation in the text which concerns the central region of the body. Here the triple heater is seen as the intermediary between the tai yang and shao yang of the leg. This is understandable because being the shao yang of the hand it shares the same quality of qi as the shao yang of the foot, the gallbladder, and it has a privileged connection with tai yang because of its special relationship with the bladder, and with the kidneys because the bladder and triple heater are both special fu of the kidneys. In this third presentation the triple heater either accompanies the shao yin or the tai yang in which case it is found between the bladder and the kidneys. But it particularly follows the pathway of the jing bie (divergence) of tai yang that penetrates the lower abdomen. This very close connection of the bladder and the lower heater regulates the elimination of liquids: this is seen pathologically as either anuria or dysuria if there is too great a pressure forcing the liquids out in too great a quantity, or incontinence which is a loosening preventing tension and retention. A presentation of symptoms, in this latter case, is made on the model of the pathology of the great luo in Ling shu chapter 10.

We have here, therefore, a triple presentation of the triple heater which is anchored above at the extremity of the ring finger, and which is rooted below in the big toe, or just in the toes in general, the text is not clear on this. But what is clear is that it is rooted in the toes which are the lower extremity of the body, and this gives a particular connection between the qi of leg tai yang and the qi of shao yang, a connection which can be particularly grasped at the point wei yang, Bl-53, and finally which manifests inside the body in the proper regulation of the outflow of liquids.

The kidneys are well served by this union of bladder and triple heater, and in particular the lower heater. We have to remember the two sides of the two aspects of the lower heater: all the direction and drainage of liquids on one hand, and the fire of ming men, the cinnabar field, dan tian, below, on the other. The fire and cinnabar field permit all the transformations of qi. This is mentioned in Su wen chapter 8 where the bladder is said to control and store all the liquids in the body and then, through the transformations of qi, enable all the manifestations of power. It's by means of this alliance, this close connection, that the relationship of the bladder and triple heater is maintained. And what is interesting is that the pathology of the triple heater is clearly linked to the lower part of the body.

Question: Is there a reason why the triple heater meridian is rooted in the big toe?

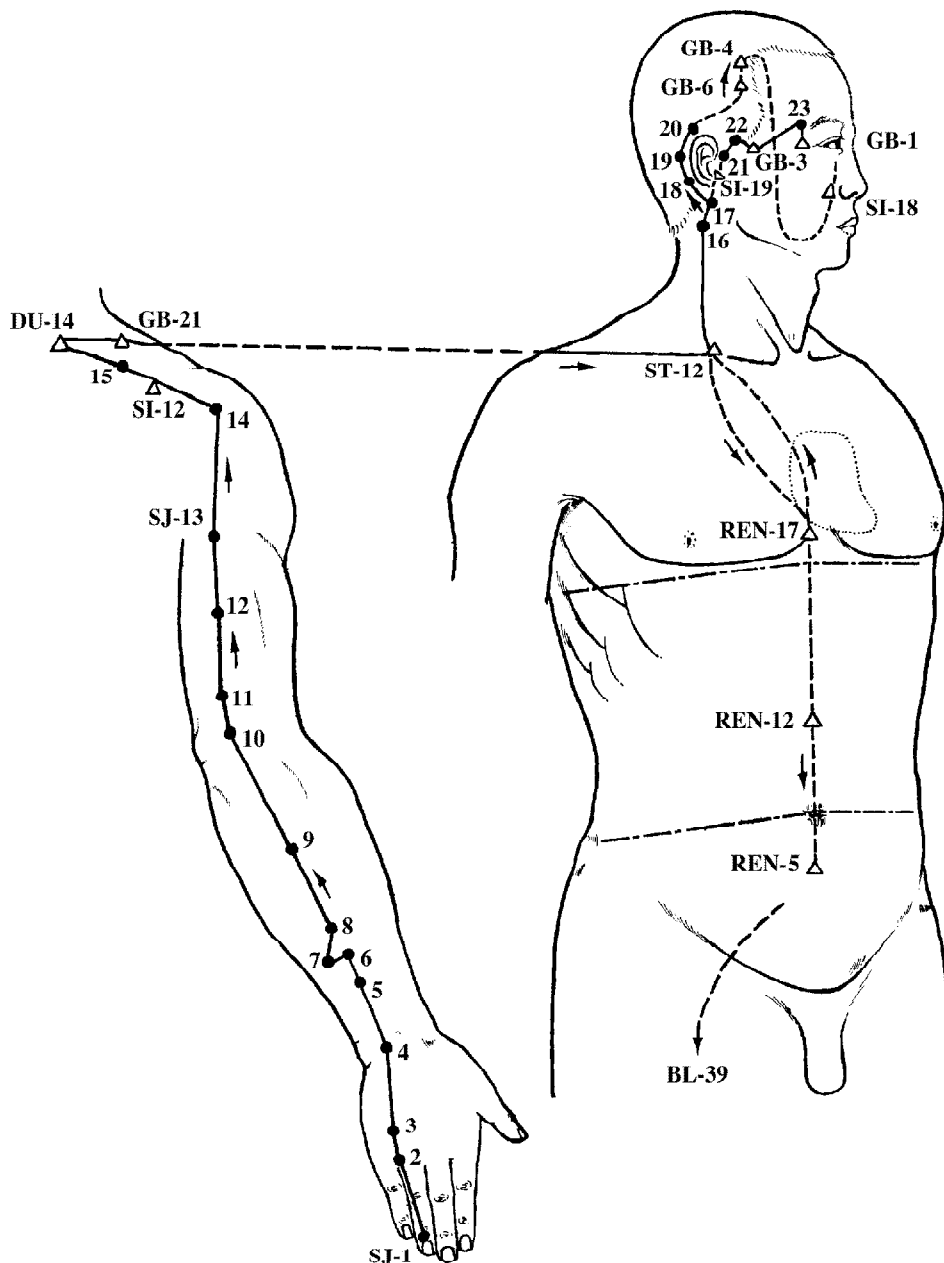
Elisabeth Rochat: No. If the text says it's the big toe and not the little toe, it's to reinforce the connection within the yin, within the earth, and if it says it's the little toe it's simply the connection with tai yang. But it's difficult to say because the text is not sure whether it's the big or little toe, and the commentators are cautious.

Shou Shao Yang San Jiao Jing

San Jiao Channel of hand Shao Yang (Davis, 2000)

PRIMARY SAN JIAO MERIDIAN

The primary San Jiao Channel of hand Shao Yang begins at the medial (ulnar) side of the tip of the 4th finger (SJ-1, Guan Chong), and travels up between the 4th and 5th metacarpal bones on the dorsum of the hand to the posterior wrist (SJ-4, Yang Chi). It travels up the posterior midline of the forearm between the radius and ulna bones, and runs over the lateral aspect of the olecranon process at the elbow (SJ-10, Tian Jing). It then ascends the posterolateral aspect of the arm to the shoulder (SJ-14, Jian Liao) where it intersects the Small Intestine Channel of hand Tai Yang at SI-12 (Bing Feng). It then runs to the midline of the upper back where it meets Du Mai at DU-14 (Da Zhui).



Primary San Jiao Meridian (modified from Shandong, 1982, p. 44)

As it crosses back (anteriorly) over the shoulder, it intersects the Gall Bladder Channel of foot Shao Yang at GB-21 (Jian Jing), then enters the supraclavicular fossa (ST-12, Que Pen), penetrating to the Interior and travelling to the mid-chest region where it meets Ren Mai at REN-17 (Dan Zhong). There it connects with the Pericardium Organ. It then descends Internally through the diaphragm into the abdomen, thereby homing successively through, and linking, each of the three body cavities (Jiaos), [upper (REN-17, Dan Zhong), middle (REN-12, Zhong Wan), and lower (REN-5, Shi Men)], of its pertaining Organ the San Jiao.

An Internal branch descends from the San Jiao Organ to connect to its lower Sea/Uniting-He point at BL-39 (Wei Yang). A branch emerges from this point and follows the course of the Urinary Bladder Channel of foot Tai Yang to join with the Bladder Organ.

A branch separates in the mid-chest region (at REN-17, Dan Zhong), and rises to emerge in the supraclavicular fossa (ST-12, Que Pen). It then runs superficially up the neck, and behind and above the ear. It intersects the Gall Bladder Channel of foot Shao Yang at GB-6 (Xuan Li) and GB-4 (Han Yan) in the hairline on the lateral forehead. It then winds down across the cheek (Internally) to the infraorbital region, where it intersects the Small Intestine Channel of hand Tai Yang at SI-18 (Quan Liao).

Another branch separates behind the ear at SJ-17 (Yi Feng), enters the ear, then reemerges in front of it. This branch intersects the Small Intestine Channel of hand Tai Yang at SI-19 (Ting Gong). It then crosses in front of the Gall Bladder Channel of foot Shao Yang at GB-3 (Shang Guan), and travels along the zygomatic arch to the lateral end of the eyebrows, to SJ-23 (Si Zhu Kong). It terminates at the outer canthus of the eye, at GB-1 (Tong Zi Liao), where it links with the Gall Bladder Channel of foot Shao Yang.

There are 23 points on the San Jiao Meridian, and 14 points intersecting on other Meridians. This Meridian pertains to the San Jiao Organ and connects with the Pericardium Organ.

FLOW OF QI/ DISTRIBUTION OF POINTS:

Upper Limb: SJ-1 (Guan Chong), SJ-2 (Ye Men), SJ-3 (Zhong Zhu), SJ-4 (Yang Chi), SJ-5 (Wai Guan), SJ-6 (Zhi Gou), SJ-7 (Hui Zong), SJ-8 (San Yang Luo), SJ-9 (Si Du), SJ-10 (Tian Jing), SJ-11 (Qing Leng Yuan), SJ-12 (Xiao Luo), SJ-13 (Nao Hui).

Shoulder, Neck, Trunk: SJ-14 (Jian Liao), SI-12 (Bing Feng), SJ-15 (Tian Liao), DU-14 (Da Zhui), GB-21 (Jian Jing), ST-12 (Que Pen), REN-17 (Dan Zhong), REN-12 (Zhong Wan), REN-5 (Shi Men).

[Lower Limb: BL-39 (Wei Yang)].

Head, Neck: SJ-16 (Tian You), SJ-17 (Yi Feng);

i) SJ-18 (Chi Mai), SJ-19 (Lu Xi), SJ-20 (Jiao Sun), GB-6 (Xuan Li), GB-4 (Han Yan), SI-18 (Quan Liao).

ii) SI-19 (Ting Gong), SJ-21 (Er Men), SJ-22 (He Liao), GB-3 (Shang Guan), SJ-23 (Si Zhu Kong), GB-1 (Tong Zi Liao).

MERIDIANS INTERSECTED BY THE SAN JIAO CHANNEL:

Gall Bladder Channel of foot Shao Yang: GB-1 (Tong Zi Liao), GB-3 (Shang Guan), GB-4 (Han Yan), GB-6 (Xuan Li), GB-21 (Jian Jing).

Small Intestine Channel of hand Tai Yang: SI-12 (Bing Feng), SI-18 (Quan Liao), SI-19 (Ting Gong).

Stomach Channel of foot Yang Ming: ST-12 (Que Pen).

Urinary Bladder Channel of foot Tai Yang: [BL-39 (Wei Yang)].

Du Mai (Governing vessel): DU-14 (Da Zhui).

Ren Mai (Conception Vessel): REN-17 (Dan Zhong), REN-12 (Zhong Wan), REN-5 (Shi Men).

MERIDIANS INTERSECTING ON THE SAN JIAO CHANNEL:

Pericardium Channel of hand Jue Yin: SJ-1 (Guan Chong)

Small Intestine Channel of hand Tai Yang: SJ-22 (He Liao)

Gall Bladder Channel of foot Shao Yang: SJ-17 (Yi Feng), SJ-20 (Jiao Sun), SJ-22 (He Liao)

Yang Wei Mai (Yang linking Vessel): SJ-15 (Tian Liao), [SJ-13 (Nao Hui)]

SAN JIAO SPECIAL POINTS/ COMMAND POINTS:

SJ-1 (Guan Chong): Metal, Well-Jing.

SJ-2 (Ye Men): Water, Spring, Gushing-Ying.

SJ-3 (Zhong Zhu): Wood, Stream, Transporting-Shu.

SJ-4 (Yang Chi): Yuan-Source.

SJ-5 (Wai Guan):
i) Luo-Connecting
ii) Master point, Yang Wei Mai (Yang linking Vessel);
Coupling point, Dai Mai (Girdle Vessel).

SJ-6 (Zhi Gou): Fire, River, Traversing-Jing. Horary point.

SJ-7 (Hui Zong): Xi-Cleft, Accumulation.

SJ-8 (San Yang Luo): Group Luo-Connecting point of the Yang Meridians (San Jiao, Small Intestine, Large Intestine) of the upper limb.

SJ-10 (Tian Jing): Earth, Sea, Uniting-He.

BL-39 (Wei Yang): lower Sea, Uniting-He point of the San Jiao Channel.

REN-5 (Shi Men): front Alarm-Mu, Collecting point.
Upper Jiao Alarm-Mu, Collecting point: REN-17 (Dan Zhong)
Middle Jiao Alarm-Mu, Collecting point: REN-12 (Zhong Wan)
Lower Jiao Alarm-Mu, Collecting point: REN-5 (Shi Men)

REN-7 (Yin Jiao) Special Command Point of the Lower Jiao

BL-22 (San Jiao Shu): back Associated-Shu, Transporting point.

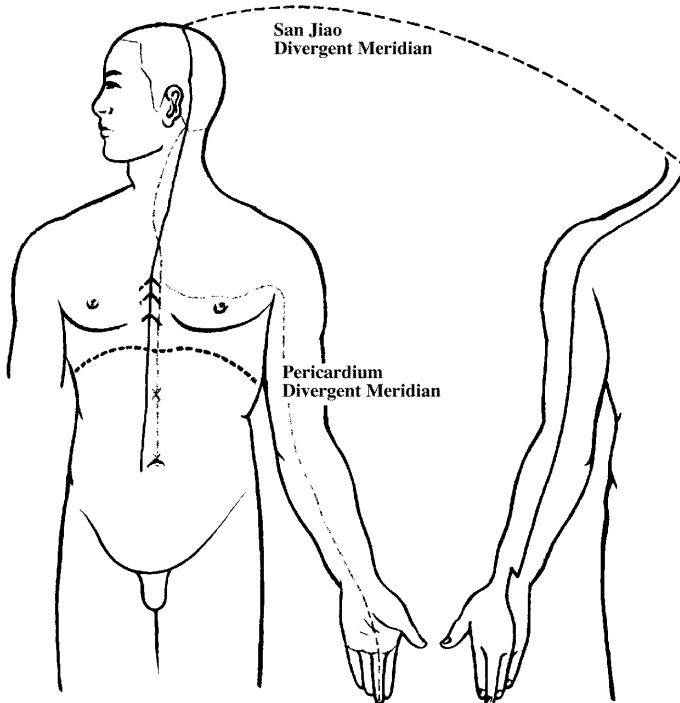
PRIMARY SAN JIAO MERIDIAN SIGNS/SYMPTOMS:

Sore and swollen throat, pain in the cheeks and jaw, pain and redness of the eyes, deafness, pain behind the ears and on the posterior and lateral aspect of the shoulder and upper arm.

SAN JIAO ORGAN SIGNS/SYMPTOMS:

Abdominal distension and fullness, or hardness/stiffness and fullness in the lower abdomen, dysuria, urinary frequency and urgency, oedema of the skin, enuresis, nocturia.

SAN JIAO DIVERGENT MERIDIAN

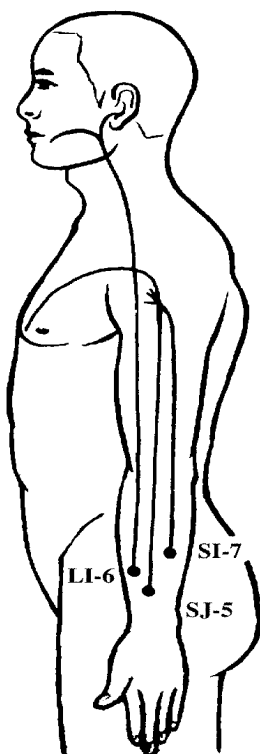


The San Jiao Divergent Meridian leaves the primary San Jiao Channel at the vertex, near DU-20, Bai Hui. From there it descends through the supraclavicular fossa and down through each of the three body spaces (Jiaos) of the San Jiao Organ. It disperses in the chest.

Ministerial Fire Divergent Meridians

(from Cheng 1987, p. 90)

SAN JIAO LUO (CONNECTING) MERIDIAN



The San Jiao Luo Vessel separates from the primary San Jiao Channel at SJ-5 (Wai Guan), 2 cun proximal to the wrist. It travels proximally along the posterior aspect of the upper limb, crosses the shoulder and disperses in the chest, where it unites with the Pericardium Channel of hand Jue Yin.

Signs/ Symptoms:

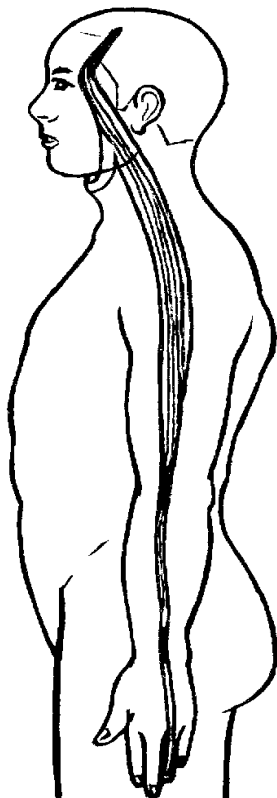
Shi: spasms and cramps of the muscles around the elbow, restrictions in elbow movement.

Xu: atony and flaccidity of the muscles around the elbow

Yang Luo Meridians, Upper Limb

(modified from Cheng 1987, p. 91)

SAN JIAO MUSCLE-TENDINO (SINEW) MERIDIAN



The San Jiao Muscle-Tendino Meridian (MTM) begins at the tip of the 4th finger. It binds at the dorsum of the wrist, then continues up the forearm and binds at the elbow (olecranon). It then travels up the lateral aspect of the arm onto the shoulder. From there it ascends the neck where it unites with the MTM of the Small Intestine Channel of hand Tai Yang.

A branch separates at the angle of the jaw and connects with the root of the tongue.

Another branch proceeds upward in front of the ear and runs to the outer canthus of the eye. It then travels across the temple and binds at the side of the forehead.

Signs/ Symptoms:

Stiffness, strain or muscle spasms and pain along the course of the Sinew Meridian, curled tongue.

San Jiao Muscle Tendino Meridian

(from Cheng 1987, p. 104)

DEADMAN'S MERIDIAN COMMENTARY

The Sanjiao channel of hand shaoyang belongs to the fire phase, is interiorly-exteriorly coupled with the Pericardium channel, and is paired with the Gall Bladder channel of foot shaoyang according to six channel theory. The Sanjiao-Pericardium relationship is further strengthened by the fact that:

- the Sanjiao primary channel connects with the Pericardium
- the Sanjiao luo-connecting channel converges with the Pericardium channel in the chest.

The Sanjiao-Gall Bladder relationship is strengthened by the fact that the Sanjiao channel connects with the Gall Bladder channel at the side of the head at points Tongziliao GB-1, Shangguan GB-3 to Xuanli GB-6, Touqiaoyin GB-11, Fengchi GB-20 and at Jianjing GB-21 on the top of the shoulder.

In addition it is important to note that:

- the interior pathway of the Sanjiao primary channel passes through and links the upper, middle and lower jiao.
- the interior pathway of the Sanjiao primary channel descends between the breasts to Shanzhong REN-17.
- the Sanjiao primary channel ascends both posterior and anterior to the ear as well as entering the ear.
- the Sanjiao primary channel ascends to the inferior aspect of the eye and the primary and sinew channels go to the outer canthus of the eye.
- the Sanjiao divergent channel spreads to the vertex.
- the Sanjiao sinew channel connects with the root of the tongue.
- the Sanjiao primary channel ascends through the cheek.

These channel connections, and the status of the Sanjiao as belonging to fire, determine many of the actions and indications of the Sanjiao channel points, which may be summarised as follows:

- Reducing fever.

The Sanjiao channel belongs to fire and many of its points are indicated for febrile diseases, especially when due to exterior pathogenic factors. As far as differentiation of fevers according to the four levels is concerned, the Sanjiao channel primarily treats fevers at the defensive and qi levels, whilst the Pericardium channel mainly treats fevers at the nutritive and blood levels, although the most distal points of the Sanjiao channel (where the Pericardium and Sanjiao channels converge) are able to treat both. As far as differentiation of fevers according to the Sanjiao theory is concerned, points of the Sanjiao channel mainly treat febrile diseases affecting the upper jiao Lung pattern, although its most distal points also treat the upper jiao Pericardium pattern. As for fever differentiation according to the six channels, both the Spiritual Pivot and the Essential Questions state "Taiyang is the opening, yangming is the closing and shaoyang is the pivot". The Sanjiao belongs to shaoyang (the pivot between exterior and interior) and several points of the channel are indicated for alternating chills and fever and malaria, the characteristic indications of shaoyang pattern. The heat-clearing action of the Sanjiao channel points extends to clearing heat from all regions traversed by the channel.

- Benefiting the ears.

Various portions of the Sanjiao channel encircle or enter the ear, and many of its points are indicated for disorders of the ear such as tinnitus and deafness, especially when due to heat, uprising of yang or other excess pathogenic factors.

- Clearing heat from the eyes, especially wind-heat and Liver-Gall Bladder heat.
- Clearing heat from the neck, throat and tongue.
- Soothing the Heart and calming the spirit.

Due to the close relationship between the Sanjiao and Pericardium channels, many points of the Sanjiao channel are indicated for pain of the chest and Heart as well as agitation, restlessness, mania, epilepsy and other manifestations of disordered spirit.

- Treating headaches.

Shaoyang channel traverses the temples and side of the head, and points of the Sanjiao channel are much used in the treatment of headaches affecting this region.

- Harmonising the three jiao.

Waiguan SJ-5 and Zhigou SJ-6 especially, are able to regulate the middle and lower jiao in the treatment of vomiting and constipation.

POINTS OF THE SAN JIAO FU

TB-1 (*guān chōng*)關 *guān*: passage, gate, door衝 *chōng*: hub, thoroughfare; 沖 surge, flush

關衝

Passage Hub

Location: On the medial dorsal (ulnar) aspect of the 4th digit approximately 1 fen proximal to the medial proximal corner of the finger nail.

Features & Categories: Metal, Well-Jing point of the San Jiao Channel. Intersecting point of the Pericardium Channel of hand Jue Yin on the San Jiao Channel.

Functions: Disperses Wind and dissipates Pathogens; resolves San Jiao Pathogenic Heat; frees Channel and Connecting Vessel Qi; clears Heat and drains Fire; invigorates Blood; restores consciousness.

Indications: Headache; red or swollen eyes; conjunctivitis; sore, swollen throat; stiff tongue; laryngitis; Heat diseases; fever; irritability; fainting; ear ache.

Supplementary Indications: Pain in the shoulder and arm; tinnitus; deafness; difficult ingestion; pterygium; pathogenic Heat in the San Jiao; absence of sweating in Heat diseases; throat Bi; curled tongue; dry mouth; pain at the root of the tongue.

DEADMAN'S COMMENTARY

As the jing-well point, Guanchong SJ-1 is the terminal point of the Sanjiao channel, and in common with the other jing-well points has its most powerful influence on the opposite end of the channel. The primary action of Guanchong SJ-1 is in clearing heat affecting the upper jiao, and as a jing-well point it is mainly used for acute symptoms. This action is reflected in two main ways:

- i. clearing heat from the channel, and
- ii. treating febrile diseases of external origin.

The Song of the Jade Dragon recommends Guanchong SJ-1 for 'congested Sanjiao heat in the upper jiao' and says "bleeding this point will remove toxic blood". The upper portion of the Sanjiao channel originates in the chest and ascends via the neck to the ear, temple, inferior aspect of the eye and outer canthus. If exterior heat (primarily wind-heat) or interior heat (mainly Liver heat which transmits to the foot shaoyang Gall Bladder channel and thence to the hand shaoyang Sanjiao channel) obstruct the Sanjiao channel there may be tinnitus, deafness, earache, headache, dizziness, redness of the eyes, throat painful obstruction etc. The Sanjiao sinew channel ascends to the root of the tongue and Guanchong SJ-1 has a special affinity for this area. It is indicated for stiff tongue (usually due to heat injuring body fluids), curled tongue (usually due to excess or deficiency fire of the Heart) and cracked tongue (usually due to heat scorching body fluids), as well as pain at the root of the tongue.

There are three main systems for differentiating fevers in the corpus of Chinese medicine:

- i. according to the six channels,
- ii. according to the four levels, and
- iii. according to the sanjiao (three jiao).

The sanjiao theory divides the body into three portions, the upper, middle and lower jiao.

According to this method of differentiating fevers (developed by Wu Ju-tong in the Systematic

Differentiation of Warm Diseases) the upper jiao corresponds to the Lung and Pericardium. The Warp and Woof of Warm Febrile Diseases explains "When a warm pathogen attacks the upper body, first it invades the Lung; it is then transmitted to the Pericardium". As far as exterior pathogenic heat attacking the Lung is concerned, this corresponds to the taiyang channel stage and the defensive level in the differentiations according to the six channels and the four levels respectively, and is the most exterior and superficial stage of fever, manifesting with chills and fever, headache, sore throat, and redness of the eyes. If exterior pathogenic heat penetrates deeper to attack the Pericardium, the heat condenses the body fluids to form phlegm. Phlegm-heat then obstructs the Pericardium and disturbs the spirit, giving rise to such symptoms as high fever with agitation, Heart pain, dry mouth with a bitter taste, and stiff or curled tongue. Since Guanchong SJ-1 is able to dispel pathogenic heat and wind-heat from the upper jiao as a whole and from its interiorly-exteriorly coupled Pericardium channel in particular, it is therefore able to treat both these patterns.

It is interesting to note that in general, points of the Sanjiao channel treat fevers at the defensive and qi levels and the Lung pattern, whilst points of the Pericardium channel treat the nutritive and blood levels and the Pericardium pattern (see Discussion). Since the defensive level, qi level and Lung patterns are relatively more superficial and yang, this reflects the interior-exterior relationship of this yin-yang pair of channels. As the jing-well point of the Sanjiao channel where the qi of the Pericardium enters the Sanjiao, however, Guanchong SJ-1 is ideally suited to treat both the Lung and Pericardium patterns.

Guanchong SJ-1 is indicated in two other conditions. Firstly, acute disharmony of the Stomach and intestines manifesting as sudden turmoil disorder, vomiting of sour fluid and loss of appetite, reflecting the interior pathway of the Sanjiao primary channel to the middle and lower jiao. Secondly, it appears in a number of classical combinations for the treatment of wasting and thirsting disorder, reflecting its ability to clear heat and moisten dryness of the mouth and lips.

CLASSICAL COMBINATIONS

- Deafness: Guanchong SJ-1 and Zuqiaoyin GB-44 (Spiritual Pivot).
- Tinnitus and deafness: Guanchong SJ-1, Xiaguan ST-7, Yangxi LI-5, Yemen SJ-2 and Yanggu SI-5 (Systematic Classic).
- Ear pain, deafness and tinnitus: Guanchong SJ-1, Yemen SJ-2, Zhongzhu SJ-3, Tianchuang SI-16 and Yangxi LI-5, (Thousand Ducat Formulas).
- Wind dizziness and headache: Guanchong SJ-1, Kunlun BL-60, Tianyou SJ-16, Fengmen BL-12 and Guanyuan REN-4 (Thousand Ducat Formulas).
- Throat painful obstruction, curled tongue and dry mouth: Guanchong SJ-1, Zuqiaoyin GB-44 and Shaoze SI-1 (Thousand Ducat Formulas).
- Flaccid tongue with inability to speak: Guanchong SJ-1 and Yamen DU-15 (One Hundred Patterns).
- Wasting and thirsting disorder with great desire to drink: Guanchong SJ-1, Chengjiang REN-24, Rangu KID-2 and Yishe BL-49 (Thousand Ducat Formulas).
- Heat sensation of the shoulder with inability to turn the head: Guanchong SJ-1, Jianzhen SI-9 and Jianyu LI-15 (Thousand Ducat Formulas).

TB-2 (yè mén)

液 yè: humor, water, fluid

門 mén: gate, door

液門

Humor Gate

Location: On the dorsum of the hand between the fourth and fifth digits. The point lies in the skin webbing distal to the metacarpophalangeal joints, and is best located with the hand forming a loose fist. With deep needling the needle enters the hand between the fourth and fifth metacarpal bones.

Features & Categories: Water, Spring, Gushing-Ying point of the San Jiao Channel.

Functions: Frees the Channels and quickens the Connecting Vessels; expels Wind; reduces swelling and relieves pain; clears and drains Pathogenic Heat in the San Jiao; benefits the ear.

Indications: Headache; red or swollen eyes; ear ache; (sudden) deafness; sore, swollen throat; laryngitis; pharyngitis; pain of the arm and hand; pain and swelling of the fingers; malaria.

Supplementary Indications: Fright palpitations and raving; red complexion and excess tears; aching among the upper teeth; shortness of breath; Wind Heat and Wind Cold; ear pain; tinnitus; pain at the back of the hand; dry eyes.

DEADMAN'S COMMENTARY

According to the Classic of Difficulties ying-spring points are indicated for "heat in the body". The Sanjiao primary channel ascends:

- i. both posterior and anterior to the ear as well as entering the ear,
- ii. to the inferior aspect of the eye and the outer canthus, and
- iii. through the cheek. Yemen SJ-2, the ying-spring and water point of the Sanjiao channel, is therefore able to clear heat from the upper reaches of the channel in the ears (deafness, tinnitus, earache), eyes (redness, dryness, lacrimation) and gums and teeth (pain and bleeding).

The Sanjiao is interiorly-exteriorly related to the Pericardium, the 'outer wrapping' of the Heart, and Yemen SJ-2 is able to clear heat from the Heart and spirit manifesting as palpitations, fright, mania, raving and epilepsy.

In comparison with Guanchong SJ-1, it is less effective in the treatment of febrile diseases and distal channel disorders affecting the shoulder and elbow, but more effective in calming the spirit and treating local channel disorders affecting the wrist, hand and fingers.

CLASSICAL COMBINATIONS

- Ear pain, deafness and tinnitus: Yemen SJ-2, Tianchuang SI-16, Yangxi LI-5, Guanchong SJ-1 and Zhongzhu SJ-3 (Thousand Ducat Formulas).
- Tinnitus and deafness: Yemen SJ-2, Guanchong SJ-1, Yangxi LI-5, Xiaguan ST-7 and Yanggu SI-5 (Systematic Classic).
- Sudden deafness: Yemen SJ-2 and Sanyangluo SJ-8 (Supplementing Life).
- Throat pain: Yemen SJ-2 and Yuji LU-10 (One Hundred Symptoms).
- Toothache of the lower jaw: Yemen SJ-2, Yanggu SI-5, Shangyang LI-1, Erjian LI-2 and Sidu SJ-9 (Thousand Ducat Formulas).
- Fright palpitations: Yemen SJ-2, Tianjing SJ-10, Baihui DU-20 and Shendao DU-11 (Supplementing Life).

TB-3 (zhōng zhǔ)

中 zhōng: central, middle

渚 zhǔ: an islet

中渚

Central Islet

Location: On the dorsum of the hand between the fourth and fifth metacarpal bones. The point lies in a depression just proximal to the metacarpophalangeal joints, (proximal to the heads of the metacarpal bones).

Features & Categories: Wood, Stream, Transporting-Shu point of the San Jiao Channel.

Functions: Dissipates Wind Heat; clears the head and eyes; frees the Channels and Connecting Vessels; benefits the ear; regulates Qi; supports the Shen.

Indications: Headache; red or swollen eyes; blurred vision; deafness; tinnitus; sore, swollen throat; pain in the elbow and arm; pain in the shoulder and back; inability to flex and extend the fingers; Heat diseases; intercostal neuralgia.

Supplementary Indications: Absence of sweating in Heat disease; enduring malaria; pain in the spine; deaf-mutism.

DEADMAN'S COMMENTARY

The Sanjiao channel both encircles and enters the ear, and Zhongzhu SJ-3 is one of the most important distal points for treating ear disorders due to any pathology. Tinnitus and deafness may be differentiated into six main patterns

- i. attack by exterior pathogenic wind,
- ii. uprising of Liver fire or Liver yang,
- iii. obstruction of the ear by phlegm-damp or phlegm-heat,
- iv. Kidney deficiency,
- v. Spleen and Stomach deficiency, and
- vi. traumatic injury or exposure to sudden or persistent loud noise.

Zhongzhu SJ-3 is particularly suited to treating the first two patterns (exterior wind and Liver disharmony). This is because, like most distal points of the Sanjiao channel, it is able to expel exterior pathogens, and also as the wood point of the Sanjiao channel it can assist in descending Liver fire or Liver yang which have transmitted to the shaoyang channel. Due to the intimate relationship of the Sanjiao channel with the ear, however, the application of Zhongzhu SJ-3 extends to the treatment of any pattern of tinnitus and deafness, especially when due to excess. Zhongzhu SJ-3 is equally important as a distal point in the treatment of disorders such as earache, otitis media and blockage of the ears following a head cold. In blockage of the ears during or following flying, Zhongzhu SJ-3 may be massaged or needled whilst the patient pinches their nose shut and attempts to blow through it.

When heat or fire, whether of internal or external origin, harass the Sanjiao channel in the upper body, there may be one-sided headache, pain of the temples, dizziness, redness, swelling and pain of the eyes, throat painful obstruction and red face. In all these situations Zhongzhu SJ-3 will help lower and clear the excess heat.

According to the Spiritual Pivot "Taiyang is the opening, yangming is the closing and shaoyang is the pivot". In the six channel differentiation of fevers expounded in the Treatise on Injury by Cold,

the shaoyang level is the pivot between the interior and the exterior, and shaoyang pattern occurs when the pathogenic factor is trapped between these two levels. The characteristic symptoms of this 'half interior, half-exterior' pattern are distinct phases of fever alternating with chills (typified by malaria). The Sanjiao shaoyang channel belongs to fire, and many of its points are effective in reducing fever. Zhongzhu SJ-3 is indicated for chills and fever, fever accompanied by headache, and especially for chronic malarial fever. According to the Classic of Difficulties⁵ shu-stream points are indicated for heaviness of the body and pain of the joints. Zhongzhu SJ-3 is an important point to circulate the qi of the channel and is indicated in the treatment of pain of the shoulder and elbow, pain of the spine (at the level of the Heart), numbness of the four limbs and inability to flex and extend the fingers.

CLASSICAL COMBINATIONS

- Deafness: Zhongzhu SJ-3, Waiguan SJ-5, Erheliao SJ-22, Tinghui GB-2, Tinggong SI-19, Hegu LI-4, Shangyang LI-1 and Zhongchong P-9 (Precious Mirror).
- Deafness and tinnitus: Zhongzhu SJ-3, Tianrong SI-17, Tinggong SI-19 and Tinghui GB-2 (Thousand Ducat Formulas).
- Tinnitus: Zhongzhu SJ-3, Tinggong SI-19, Tinghui GB-2, Ermen SJ-21, Baihui DU-20, Luoque BL-8, Yangxi LI-5, Qiangsi SI-2, Houxi SI-3, Wangu SI-4, Yemen SJ-2, Shangyang LI-1 and Shenshu BL-23 (Great Compendium).
- Ear pain, deafness and tinnitus: Zhongzhu SJ-3, Guanchong SJ-1, Yemen SJ-2, Tianchuang SI-16 and Yangxi LI-5, (Thousand Ducat Formulas).
- Visual dizziness: Zhongzhu SJ-3 and Toulinqi GB-15 (Supplementing Life).
- Throat pain: Zhongzhu SJ-3, Zhigou SJ-6 and Neiting ST-44 (Thousand Ducat Formulas).
- Swelling of the throat: Zhongzhu SJ-3 and Taixi KID-3 (Supplementing Life).
- Chronic malaria: Zhongzhu SJ-3, Shangyang LI-1 and Qiuxu GB-40 (Great Compendium).
- Malaria with generalised fever: Zhongzhu SJ-3, Yindu KID-19, Shaohai HE-3, Shangyang LI-1 and Sanjian LI-3 (Supplementing Life).
- Difficulty in defecation: Zhongzhu SJ-3 and Taibai SP-3 (Systematic Classic).
- Inability to bend the elbow and fingers: Zhongzhu SJ-3, Quchi LI-11, Shousanli LI-10 and Waiguan SJ-5 (Great Compendium).
- Pain of the elbow, at times cold: Zhongzhu SJ-3, Quchi LI-11, Guanchong SJ-1, Shousanli LI-10, Yanggu SI-5 and Chize LU-5 (Thousand Ducat Formulas).
- Contraction of the five fingers with inability to flex and extend: Zhongzhu SJ-3 and Wangu SI-4 (Thousand Ducat Formulas).

TB-4 (*yáng chí*)

陽 *yáng*: yang, the complement of yin
池 *chí*: pool, pond

陽池

Yang Pool

Location: On the dorsum of the wrist in a depression just medial (ulnar aspect) to the group of tendons of extensor digitorum muscle. The point lies between the tendons of extensor digitorum and

extensor digiti minimi muscles. An alternative location places the point on the lateral side of the tendons of extensor digitorum muscle (Cheng 1987, Rogers 1981).

Features & Categories: Yuan-Source point of the San Jiao Channel.

Functions: Disperses Wind and drains Heat; frees the Channels and Connecting Vessels; relaxes the Sinews; regulates the Stomach; promotes Fluid transformation; benefits Yuan Qi.

Indications: Wrist pain; arm and shoulder pain; malaria; deafness; common cold; tonsillitis.

Supplementary Indications: Thirst and dry mouth; vexation and oppression; pain and weakness of the wrist; redness and painful swelling of the eyes; tinnitus; throat Bi; absence of sweating in Heat disease; tidal fevers; swelling of the neck.

DEADMAN'S COMMENTARY

The Classic of Difficulties says " The Sanjiao is the envoy of the original qi ... the places where the original qi resides are known as the yuan source [points]". This passage therefore implies both that the original qi resides at the yuan-source points and that the Sanjiao is the transmitter of the original qi. As the yuan-source point of the Sanjiao channel, therefore, there is every reason to expect that Yangchi SJ-4 would be an important point to strengthen the original qi in the treatment of diseases of deficiency, and Yangchi SJ-4 is used for exactly this purpose in the Japanese tradition of acupuncture. It has also been suggested that Yangchi SJ-4 is effective to regulate the Conception and Penetrating vessels in the treatment of disordered menstruation. Examining the classical Chinese records on the use of Yangchi SJ-4, however, the following observations may be made:

- i. it appears in very few traditional combinations,
- ii. there are very few indications or combinations reflecting its effectiveness in tonifying deficiency, and
- iii. it has no gynaecological indications.

It is interesting to note also that Zhigou SJ-6, rather than Yangchi SJ-4, is indicated for 'blockage of the Conception vessel in women'. In clinical practice, Yangchi SJ-4 is principally used for local disorders of the wrist joint, including redness, swelling, weakness and pain.

Finally, in learning the names of the points of the yang channels at the wrist, it is helpful to remember their similarity: Yangxi LI-5 (Yang Stream), Yanggu SI-5 (Yang Valley) and Yangchi SJ-4 (Yang Pool).

CLASSICAL COMBINATIONS

- Contraction of the arm with tightness of the sinews of both hands resulting in inability to open the hands: Yangchi SJ-4, Quchi LI-11, Chize LU- 5, Hegu LI-4 and Zhongzhu SJ-3 (Great Compendium).