

Wood Element: Liver Meridians & Points I

(from: Davis, 2000)

Liver (Gan): Summary of Zang Functions

The Liver is the Yin Organ of the Wood Element.

The Liver Rules Flowing and Spreading

The Liver is responsible for the smooth movement of Fundamental Substances and for regularity of body functions. Qi and Blood are moved in all directions, to every part of the body.

Nei Jing image is that of the "general of an army". It maintains evenness and harmony of movement throughout the body.

Its image is conveyed by the words soft, subtle, light, gentle, and sprinkle. These words describe the desirable state of its normal activity. A herbal treatment to benefit the Liver is called 'Free and Easy Wanderer' (Kaptchuk, 1983).

Creating these circumstances is a basic role of Liver energy, and may be thought of as the function of the Liver.

Liver disharmonies involve variations from this normal pattern of activity. Stagnation of Qi, inappropriate flow or impaired circulation of Qi and Blood, and congealed Blood, are all indications of Liver disharmony.

Functional aspects of Flowing and Spreading

A Adjusts and makes smooth.

Smooth movement of Qi throughout the body depends upon the Liver. All activity which depends upon Qi (ie. everything), must therefore also depend upon the Liver - such as the movement of Qi itself, of Blood, of Meridian Qi, and the functions of the Zang Fu.

Liver Qi may become stagnant in its own pathways with symptoms such as pain, swelling and distention eg. lateral costal, genitals, breasts, lower abdominal, and frontal headaches.

Adjusting and making smooth is very important to digestion. In disharmony, Liver Qi may invade the Earth Element, with digestive disharmonies such as abdominal pain, nausea, belching, intestinal rumbling or diarrhoea.

B Controls bile secretion

Bile in TCM is necessary for the digestion of food and fluids. If the Liver's spreading and flowing activities are unable to function adequately, bile production may be disrupted. Signs and symptoms include a bitter taste in the mouth, vomiting of a yellow fluid, jaundice, distention of the flanks, and loss of appetite.

C The Liver harmonises the emotions

The Liver creates a relaxed and easy going internal environment through its sprinkling activity. This creates an even emotional disposition. Marked changes in emotional circumstances will directly effect the flowing and spreading function of the Liver. Conversely, Liver disharmonies may be expected to effect an individual's emotional status. Irritability, anger, wrath, and frustration are particularly associated with the Liver, especially if these are habitual modes of emotional expression.

All three aspects of flowing and spreading are interrelated. They are commonly present together, though not necessarily all three.

The Liver Stores the Blood

This involves both the storage and regulation of Blood. When an individual moves, the Blood moves to the Meridians. When a person rests the Blood returns to the Liver. In physical activity, when more Blood is needed to nourish the body, the Liver ensures it moves freely outward. At rest or with inactivity, the Blood returns to the Liver to be stored.

Storage disharmonies may occur. These include insufficient Blood for nourishing and moistening, such as when the eyes are dry or rough, and loss of proper storage ability. This latter may occur with an unusually heavy menstrual flow.

The Liver Rules Tendons and Manifests in the Nails

All Tendons of the body are closely related to the Liver. The word "Tendons" here not only refers to the tendons of WMB, but includes ligaments and to a certain extent muscles. Excess Liver Qi may lead to tension and taughtness in muscles and tendons, while deficient Liver Blood may mean the nourishment of tendons and muscles is insufficient, with spasms, difficulty in bending and stretching, and numbness of the limbs possibly resulting.

Also occurring in Liver disharmonies are significant variations in the nails of fingers and toes. They might normally be expected to be supple, strong, pink and moist. But with Liver Blood deficiency they may become cracked, thin, brittle and pale.

The Liver Opens into the Eyes

The Liver has a special relationship with the function of the eyes.

"When the Liver is harmonized the eyes can distinguish the five colours".

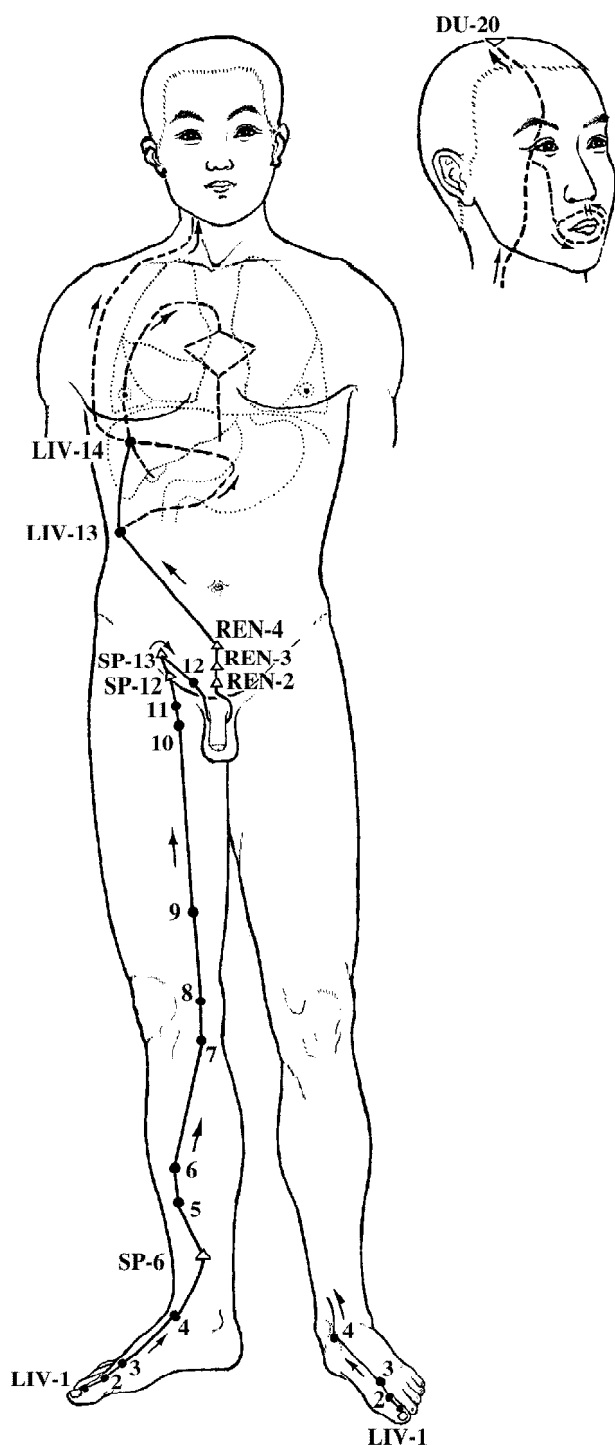
"When the Liver receives Blood the eyes can see".

Many disorders of the eyes and of vision may have Liver involvement.

Zu Jue Yin Gan Jing

Liver Channel of foot Jue Yin

PRIMARY LIVER MERIDIAN



The primary Liver Channel of foot Jue Yin begins in the 'hairy' dorsum of the big toe (lateral aspect) behind the nail (LIV-1, Da Dun), and ascends the dorsum of the foot between the first and second metatarsal bones (LIV-3, Tai Chong) to a point 1 cun in front of the medial malleolus (LIV-4, Zhong Feng). It travels up to SP-6 (San Yin Jiao), where it intersects the Spleen Channel of foot Tai Yin. It continues up the medial aspect of the leg immediately anterior (5 fen) to the Spleen Meridian, to a point about 8 cun above the medial malleolus. It then crosses over, and ascends posterior and medial to the Spleen Meridian over the knee (LIV-8, Qu Quan) and continues up the thigh. It meets the Spleen Channel again at SP-12 (Chong Men) and SP-13 (Fu She) in the inguinal region, then encircles the external genitalia and penetrates the lower abdomen where it meets Ren Mai at REN-2 (Qu Gu), REN-3 (Zhong Ji), and REN-4 (Guan Yuan).

It then ascends the lateral aspect of the trunk, curves past (skirts) the Stomach Organ, homes to its pertaining Organ, the Liver, connects with the Gall Bladder Organ, and disperses over (through) the lower costal region and hypochondrium (LIV-14, Qi Men).

Primary Liver Meridian

(modified from Shandong, 1982, p. 54)

From the Liver Organ a branch passes upward through the diaphragm, enters the Lung Organ and connects with the Lung Channel of hand Tai Yin. This is where the flow of Qi in the Meridian system begins anew.

The main pathway (now Internal) continues from the lateral costal region (LIV-14, Qi Men) runs over the chest and up the neck. It passes up the posterior aspect of the pharynx, enters the nasopharynx, and links with the tissues surrounding and connecting to the eyes (the "eye system"[Cheng, 1987]).

The Channel finally ascends and spreads over the forehead. It meets Du Mai at the vertex, at DU-20 (Bai Hui). A branch separates below the eye (from the "eye system" [Cheng, 1987]), runs through the cheek and encircles the inner surface of the lips.

There are 14 points on the Liver Meridian, and 7 intersecting points on other Meridians.

This Meridian pertains to the Liver Organ and connects with the Gall Bladder Organ. It also connects directly with the Organs of Lungs, Stomach, Kidneys and Brain as well as other Organs.

FLOW OF QI/ DISTRIBUTION OF POINTS:

Lower Limb: LIV-1 (Da Dun), LIV-2 (Xing Jian), LIV-3 (Tai Chong), LIV-4 (Zhong Feng), SP-6 (San Yin Jiao), LIV-5 (Li Gou), LIV-6 (Zhong Du), LIV-7 (Xi Guan), LIV-8 (Qu Quan), LIV-9 (Yin Bao)

Inguinal Region, Lower Abdomen: LIV-10 (Zu Wu Li), LIV-11 (Yin Lian), SP-12 (Chong men), SP-13 (Fu She), LIV-12 (Ji Mai), REN-2 (Qu Gu), REN-3 (Zhong Ji), REN-4 (Guan Yuan)

Chest: LIV-13 (Zhang Men), LIV-14 (Qi Men)

Head: DU-20 (Bai Hui).

MERIDIANS INTERSECTED BY THE LIVER CHANNEL:

Spleen Channel of foot Tai Yin: SP-6 (San Yin Jiao), SP-12 (Chong Men), SP-13 (Fu She).

Du Mai (Governing Vessel): DU-20 (Bai Hui).

Ren Mai (Conception Vessel): REN-2 (Qu Gu), REN-3 (Zhong Ji), REN-4 (Guan Yuan).

MERIDIANS INTERSECTING ON THE LIVER CHANNEL:

Gall Bladder Channel of foot Shao Yang: LIV-1 (Da Dun), LIV-13 (Zhang Men).

Spleen Channel of foot Tai Yin: LIV-14 (Qi Men).

Dai Mai (Girdle Vessel): [LIV-13 (Zhang Men)].

Yin Wei Mai (Yin linking Vessel): LIV-14 (Qi Men).

LIVER SPECIAL POINTS/ COMMAND POINTS:

LIV-1 (Da Dun): Wood, Well-Jing. Horary point.

LIV-2 (Xing Jian): Fire, Spring, Gushing-Ying.

LIV-3 (Tai Chong): i) Earth, Stream, Transporting-Shu. ii) Yuan-Source.

LIV-4 (Zhong Feng): Metal, River, Traversing-Jing.

LIV-5 (Li Gou): Luo-Connecting

LIV-6 (Zhong Du):	Xi-Cleft, Accumulation.
LIV-8 (Qu Quan):	Water, Sea, Uniting-He.
LIV-13 (Zhang Men):	i) front Alarm-Mu, Collecting point of the Spleen Zang. ii) Meeting point of the Zang Organs.
LIV-14 (Qi Men):	front Alarm-Mu, Collecting point of the Liver Zang.
BL-18 (Gan Shu):	back Associated-Shu, Transporting point.

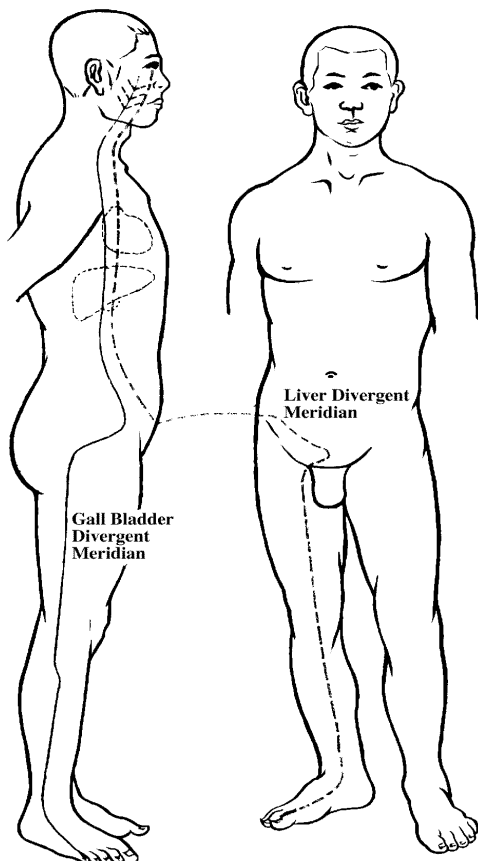
LIVER PRIMARY MERIDIAN SIGNS/SYMPTOMS:

Headache, dizziness, blurred vision, tinnitus, fever, muscle spasms in the limbs in severe cases.

LIVER ORGAN SIGNS/SYMPTOMS:

Fullness, distension or pain in the costal region with the sensation of an abdomino-thoracic lump, fullness in the stomach region with thoracic oppression, abdominal pain, vomiting, jaundice, watery diarrhoea, lower abdominal pain, hernia, enuresis, urinary retention, dark or yellow urine.

LIVER DIVERGENT MERIDIAN

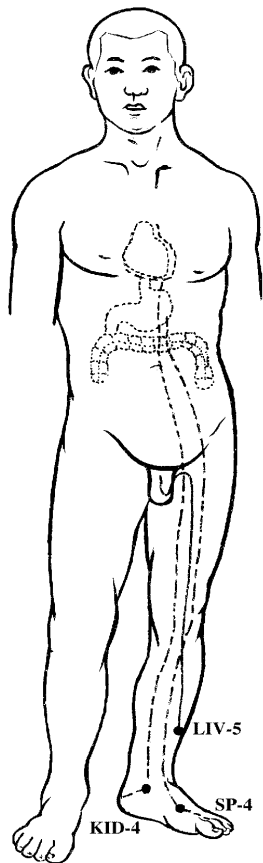


The Liver Divergent Meridian separates from the primary Liver Channel on the medial, dorsal aspect of the foot. It ascends to the pubic region where it unites with the Gall Bladder Channel of foot Shao Yang, near REN-2 (Qu Gu).

Wood Divergent Meridians

(from Cheng 1987, p. 87)

LIVER LUO (CONNECTING) MERIDIAN



The Liver Luo Meridian separates from the primary Liver Channel at LIV-5 (Li Gou) on the medial aspect of the leg, and connects to the Gall Bladder Channel of foot Shao Yang. A branch follows the primary Liver Meridian upward and binds at the genitals.

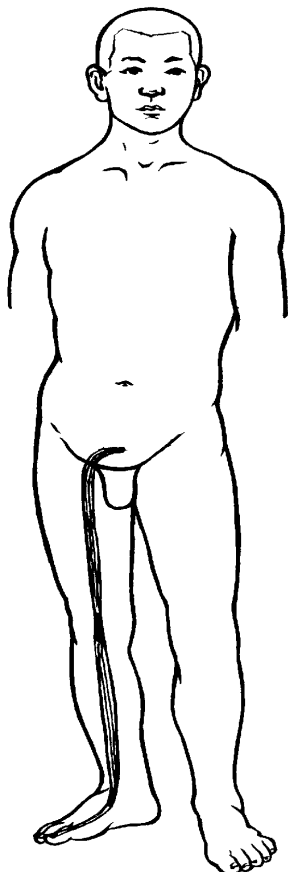
Signs/ Symptoms:

Qi counterflow:	colic, testicular swelling
Shi:	frequent erection
Xu:	severe/ violent itching in the genital region

Yin Luo Meridians, Lower Limb

(modified from Cheng 1987, p. 93)

LIVER MUSCLE-TENDINO (SINEW) MERIDIAN



The Liver Muscle-Tendino Meridian (MTM) commences on the dorsum of the big toe and binds in front of the medial malleolus. It runs up the medial leg and binds at the medial aspect of the knee. It proceeds up the medial aspect of the thigh and binds at the genitals, where it connects with other MTM's.

Signs/ Symptoms:

strained muscles of the big toe (inability to support), pain in the foot anterior to the medial malleolus, pain at the medial aspect of the knee, pain or muscle spasms along the medial aspect of the thigh, dysfunction of the genitals (impotence from excessive sexual indulgence or Internal damage, contraction/ retraction of the genitals if injured by Cold, flaccidness or frequent erection if injured by Heat).

Liver Muscle-Tendino Meridian

(from Cheng 1987, p. 102)

DEADMAN'S MERIDIAN COMMENTARY

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

- the Liver primary channel connects with the Gall Bladder fu.
- the Liver luo-connecting and divergent channels connect with the Gall Bladder channel.
- the Liver primary, luo-connecting and sinew channels go to the genitals, whilst the divergent channel ascends to the pubic region.
- the Liver primary channel enters the lower abdomen, curves around the Stomach, spreads in the Lung, ascends just posterior to the throat, passes through the nasopharynx, links with the eye system (the tissues surrounding the eye), and ascends to the vertex to intersect the Governing vessel at Baihui DU-20, the highest point reached by any yin channel.

The Liver has five primary functions:

- i. storing the blood.
- ii. spreading (maintaining the free flow of) the qi.
- iii. dominating the sinews.
- iv. opening into the eyes.
- v. manifesting in the nails.

In addition:

- the Liver zang belongs to the wood phase and corresponds to wind.
- the Liver governs uprising, and in disharmony its qi may therefore rise excessively.
- the Liver is entrusted with the ming men fire which in disharmony may easily flare upwards as pathological heat.
- the Liver free-flowing function assists the qi movement of the zangfu, especially the descending of Lung and Stomach qi and the ascending of Spleen qi.
- the Liver free-flowing function assists the qi transformation function of the Bladder.
- the Liver stores the ethereal soul (hun) and as the wood zang is the 'mother' of the Heart.
- the Liver stores the blood which flows into the Conception and Penetrating vessels to become menstrual blood, and its qi is responsible for the smooth flow of menstruation.
- the Liver is closely associated with such emotions as anger, irritability, fractiousness, frustration, resentment, depression weepiness and mood swings.

It is by virtue of these functions as well as the channel pathways discussed above, that many of the actions and indications of the points of the Liver channel can be explained. These can be summarised as:

- resolving distention and pain due to stagnation of Liver qi in the head, throat region, chest, Heart, Lung, Stomach, abdomen, lateral costal region, lower abdomen, intestines and genitals.
- assisting in the descent of Stomach and Lung qi and the ascent of Spleen qi.
- pacifying interior wind and uprising of yang giving rise to headache, dizziness, epilepsy, spasm etc.
- cooling Liver fire affecting any region of the body.
- benefiting the eyes.

- treating disorders characterised by pain and swelling of the external genitals (especially in men) as well as seminal emission, ejaculatory disorders, priapism and impotence.
- regulating menstruation and the menstrual cycle.
- treating shan disorder (a broad category that includes hernia, genital swelling and pain, and severe pain of the lower abdomen).
- treating disorders of urination such as urinary retention, painful urinary dysfunction, incontinence, frequent urination etc.
- treating lumbar pain.
- treating psycho-emotional disorders deriving from Liver blood deficiency, Liver qi stagnation or Liver fire, all of which may disturb the ethereal soul and spirit.

POINTS OF THE LIVER ZANG

LV-1 (*dà dūn*)

大 *dà*: large, great, major

敦 *dūn*: to pile up; a hill; thick

大敦

Large Pile

Location: On the dorsal lateral aspect of the distal phalanx of the great toe, one fen proximal to the lateral proximal corner of the toenail.

Features & Categories: Wood, Well-Jing point of the Liver Channel. Intersecting point of the Gall Bladder Channel of foot Shao Yang on the Liver Channel. Horary point.

Functions: Promotes smooth flow of Liver Qi; regulates menstruation; harmonizes Ying Qi (Nutritive Qi); regulates the Lower Jiao; resolves Damp Heat; returns Yang and restores consciousness; clears the Shen; frees the Channels; opens the Spirit portals.

Indications: Prolapsed uterus; painful hernia; metrorrhagia; irregular menstruation; enuresis; orchitis; hematuria, syncope.

Supplementary Indications: Profuse, incessant uterine bleeding; absence of menstruation; genital retraction; swelling of one testicle; pain in the glans penis; urinary frequency, urgency, difficulty, and incontinence; pain or swelling of the abdomen or scrotum, including hernia; epilepsy; urinary incontinence in children; excessive perspiration; umbilical pain.

DEADMAN'S COMMENTARY

According to the Song of the Jade Dragon "For the seven types of shan disorder, choose Dadun LIV-1", whilst the Essential Questions says "when the pathogen resides in the foot jueyin luo, it will give rise to sudden pain of shan disorder; needle above the nail of the big toe". Shan disorder is a broad category that includes hernia, genital swelling and pain, and severe pain of the lower abdomen. The most common patterns for these disorders include stagnation of qi, accumulation of cold in the Liver channel, damp-heat, traumatic injury and deficiency. Dadun LIV-1 is the jing-well point of the Liver channel which encircles the genitals and enters the lower abdomen. It is an important point to regulate the qi in these areas and is the pre-eminent distal point in the treatment of any pattern of shan disorder, but as the jing-well point is especially suited to urgent conditions with acute and sudden pain. Both the Yellow Emperor's Inner Classic and later texts such as the Great Compendium of

Acupuncture and Moxibustion recommend that cross-needling be applied at Dadun LIV-1, in other words left Dadun LIV-1 is needed for right shan disorder and vice-versa.

Through its action of regulating qi in the lower jiao Dadun LIV-1 is also indicated for a variety of disorders of both urination and menstruation. As far as urination is concerned, it is notable that all the distal points of the Liver channel are strongly indicated in classical texts for a wide range of urinary disorders. Some explanation may be offered by the fact that the Liver's free-flowing function is said to assist the qi transformation function of the Bladder, and therefore Liver qi stagnation, Liver damp-heat or Liver fire may all impair the smooth flow of urine giving rise to difficult and painful urination, painful urinary dysfunction (especially qi painful urinary dysfunction) etc. In modern clinical practice, points of the Liver channel are often selected in the treatment of such excess patterns, but it is clear from indications such as frequent urination, enuresis and urinary incontinence that Liver channel points were also considered effective in the treatment of deficiency patterns. This reflects the ability of points of the Liver channel to regulate any disorders of the genito-urinary region.

As far as menstrual disorders are concerned, the Liver stores the blood, and if Liver qi stagnation transforms to heat and enters the blood it will give rise to agitation and turbulence manifesting as irregular menstruation, ceaseless uterine bleeding, menorrhagia or metrorrhagia. The important action of Dadun LIV-1 on stopping excessive bleeding extends also to blood in the urine and, according to Sun Si-miao, to nosebleed, which is frequently due to upsurging heat of the Liver. It is useful to compare the application of Dadun LIV-1 with its neighbouring point Yinbai SP-1. Whilst Yinbai SP-1 has a wide application for haemorrhage due either to Spleen qi deficiency or blood heat, Dadun LIV-1 is primarily applicable for haemorrhage due to blood heat.

The focus of Dadun LIV-1 on shan disorder, disorders of the genitals, urinary diseases and uterine bleeding reflects its close affinity for the lower jiao. In this respect it is something of an exception among the jing-well points, which mostly treat disorders of the head and chest region.

Finally, in common with the majority of the jing-well points of the twelve channels, Dadun LIV-1 is indicated for restoring consciousness in cases of collapse and epilepsy, and calming the spirit, being indicated for fear and fright, mania-depression, worry and oppression and sighing.

CLASSICAL COMBINATIONS

- Cold shan disorder: Dadun LIV-1 and Zhaohai KID-6 (One Hundred Symptoms).
- The seven kinds of shan disorder: Dadun LIV-1 and Taichong LIV-3 (Song of Points).
- Abdominal fullness that radiates to the back, one-sided swelling and sagging of the testicle: Dadun LIV-1 [7 moxa cones] and Guanyuan REN-4 [3 moxa cones] (Great Compendium).
- Sagging and swollen testicle without pain: Dadun LIV-1, Guilai ST-29 and Sanyinjiao SP-6 (Great Compendium).
- Involuntary erection with difficult urination: Dadun LIV-1, Weiyang BL-39, Yingu KID-10, Qimen LIV-14 and Weizhong BL-40 (Supplementing Life).
- Enuresis: Dadun LIV-1, Jimen SP-11, Tongli HE-5, Pangguangshu BL-28, Taichong LIV-3, Weizhong BL-40 and Shenmen HE-7 (Supplementing Life).
- The five types of painful urinary dysfunction: Dadun LIV-1 and Xuehai SP-10 (Song of Points).

- The five types of painful urinary dysfunction, with inability to urinate: Dadun LIV-1 and Qihai REN-6 (Thousand Ducat Formulas).
- Uterine prolapse: Dadun LIV-1, Ququan LIV-8 and Zhaohai KID-6 (Great Compendium).
- Hot constipation, qi constipation: first needle Changqiang DU-1 then Dadun LIV-1 and Yanglingquan GB-34 (Song of Points).
- Somnolence: Dadun LIV-1 and Lidui ST-45 (Supplementing Life).
- Loss of consciousness: Dadun LIV-1 and Yinbai SP-1 (Systematic Classic).

LV-2 (*xíng jiān*)

行 *xíng*: to walk, to move

間 *jiān*: between; a space

行間

Moving Between

Location: On the dorsal aspect of the foot, between the great and second toes. The point is in the webbing between the toes, distal to the metatarso-phalangeal joints.

Features & Categories: Fire, Spring, Gushing-Ying point of the Liver Channel.

Functions: Drains Liver Fire; cools Blood Heat; clears the Lower Jiao; extinguishes Interior Wind; subdues rising Liver Yang; disperses stagnant Qi; frees the Channels and quickens the Connecting Vessels; clears Heat and drains Fire; rectifies Qi.

Indications: Incessant menorrhagia; irregular menstruation; urinary tract pain; enuresis; urinary retention; hernia; wryness of the mouth; red, swollen, painful eyes; conjunctivitis; glaucoma; pain in the lateral costal region; intercostal neuralgia; headache; visual dizziness; vertigo; epilepsy; (infant) convulsive spasms; insomnia; night sweats; orchitis.

Supplementary Indications: White turbid urethral discharge or cloudy urine; wasting thirst; bitter fullness below the lateral costal region; retching; diarrhea; colic; cough; swollen knees; lumbar pain; abdominal distension or pain; fullness below the heart; retching of blood; chest and back pain; throat Bi; liver disease; fecal incontinence in children and the elderly; lower abdominal swelling; pain or swelling of the abdomen or scrotum, including hernia; pain in the penis.

DEADMAN'S COMMENTARY

The Liver, entrusted with the ministerial fire, is known as the 'indomitable zang' and corresponds to the energies of Spring, growth and forcefulness. Although the Liver free-flowing function assists the ascent and descent of the qi of all the zangfu, its own qi direction is upwards, hence the saying "The Liver governs uprising". Since its yang activity is by nature exuberant, fierce and strong, the Liver easily becomes overheated and the normal ascending of Liver qi readily flares up into excess.

The Great Compendium of Acupuncture and Moxibustion says "When the Liver is excess, reduce Xingjian LIV-2" whilst according to the Classic of Difficulties ying-spring points are indicated for 'heat in the body'. Xingjian LIV-2, the ying-spring and fire point of the Liver channel, is therefore the principal point on this channel, indeed in the whole body, to clear Liver fire and descend Liver yang.

It has three principal spheres of activity:

- i. the head,
- ii. the emotions, and

iii. the lower jiao.

The Liver primary channel ascends along the neck and posterior aspect of the throat to the nasopharynx and the tissues surrounding the eye, and then ascends across the forehead to link with Baihui DU-20 at the vertex. Xingjian LIV-2 consequently is much used clinically to treat headache, dizziness, burning heat of the face, nosebleed, throat painful obstruction and dry throat, red and painful eyes, lacrimation and other eye diseases due to Liver fire ascending to the head, although it is interesting to note that headache, dizziness and nosebleed are modern indications and do not appear in any of the major classical acupuncture texts. When extreme, Liver fire or Liver yang may give rise to stirring of interior wind, and Xingjian LIV-2 is used to treat such consequences of this development as epilepsy, loss of consciousness, childhood fright wind, contracted sinews, windstroke and deviation of the mouth.

The Spiritual Pivot says "The Liver stores blood and the blood is the residence of the ethereal soul (hun); when Liver qi is deficient there is fear, when excess there is anger", whilst the Essential Questions says "Anger easily injures the Liver". The free and unobstructed spreading of the Liver qi is closely related to the harmonious interplay of the seven emotions. Repression of any of the emotions will cause the Liver qi to stagnate, and after time to transform into fire. At the same time, stagnation of Liver qi, and even more so the blazing up of Liver fire, will render a person prone to experience feelings of irritability and anger. At the stage of qi stagnation, acknowledgement and expression of the appropriate emotion will help free the qi and dispel stagnation, thus Fei Bo-xiong said "Joy, anger, melancholy, anxiety, grief, fear and terror are common to everyone. Giving vent to joy, anger and melancholy as occasion requires is what is meant by venting emotions properly". When Liver fire is blazing, however, it is like a fire with an unlimited supply of fuel, and giving vent to rage and anger will not only fail to dispel the fire but will continually stoke and encourage it. At the same time, the anger itself will injure the body, and at this stage moderation of excessive emotion and not spontaneous expression must be practised. Thus Cao Tong of the Qing dynasty recommended in Common Sayings on Gerontology "When faced with something exasperating, one should calmly consider which is more important, anger or health. This comparison will enable one to gradually eliminate one's anger". Li Yi-ru of the Qing dynasty, however, said "Of the seven emotions, anger is the hardest to control".

Acupuncture treatment seeks to quell and douse the fire, and Xingjian LIV-2 is the primary point to subdue blazing Liver fire giving rise to such manifestations as raging anger with a red face and clutching sensation in the throat. The Spiritual Pivot says "with anger the qi rebels upwards and accumulates in the chest". If Liver fire and stagnant qi attack the chest and Lung they will give rise to distention and pain, shortness of breath, sighing and difficulty in catching the breath. If, as is commonly seen clinically, Liver fire and stagnant qi transmit to the Heart there will be pain of both the Liver and Heart, as well as severe disturbance of the spirit manifesting as mania disorder, insomnia, palpitations etc. If there is a deeply established pattern of repression of anger, usually deriving from early childhood experiences, then the stagnant qi and fire will have no appropriate outlet and a person may become sad and tearful. Anger, overt or hidden, is not the only emotion associated with the Liver however, as stressed by the statement in the Spiritual Pivot that "when Liver qi is deficient there is

fear". The Liver and Gall Bladder are associated in Chinese culture with decisiveness and courage. If the Liver is deficient, especially Liver blood, or if a person is unable to acknowledge their anger and thus embrace their power and courage, there may be fear and fright with a feeling of lack of strength and a tendency to close the eyes and have "no desire to look".

The Liver stores the blood, and the Liver channel converges with the Conception vessel in the lower abdomen at Qugu REN-2, Zhongji REN-3 and Guanyuan REN-4. Liver fire can easily transmit to the uterine blood and induce wild and reckless flow, manifesting as ceaseless uterine bleeding, menorrhagia and early menstruation. If heat condenses the blood and causes stagnation, or if Liver qi stagnation is prolonged, uterine (jia) masses may form or there may be inhibited menstruation. Disturbance of the blood by Liver fire may also give rise to coughing of blood and nosebleed.

The Liver channel encircles the genitals and penetrates the lower abdomen, whilst the Liver assists the free movement of qi throughout the body. If there is qi stagnation or consequent fire or damp-heat in the lower jiao, especially the genital region or Bladder, there may be a variety of symptoms such as itching and pain of the genitals, sudden involuntary erection, painful urinary dysfunction, retention of urine, difficult and turbid urination, leucorrhoea and shan disorder. If qi stagnation binds the intestines there may be constipation. In all these cases Xingjian LIV-2 may be used.

One special condition for which Xingjian LIV-2 is indicated is the symptom of hands and feet counterflow cold, where only the hands and feet are cold but the body is warm. This may occur in the pattern known as 'true heat, false cold', where heat constrained in the interior prevents the yang qi from circulating to the limbs. Despite the apparent cold, the other symptoms, as well as the pulse and the tongue, are indicative of heat and constraint. In clinical practice, this symptom is often encountered in patients with Liver qi stagnation rather than heat, where the stagnant qi prevents adequate circulation of qi to the extremities.

According to the Spiritual Pivot "The Liver governs the sinews", and Xingjian LIV-2 is indicated in many classical sources for pain of the lumbar region. Although more commonly ascribed to Kidney deficiency or painful obstruction, stagnation of Liver qi or Liver blood deficiency may also give rise to lumbar pain due to contraction and inflexibility of the sinews. However, the frequency with which Xingjian LIV-2 appears in classical combinations for lumbar pain points more towards an empirical application rather than a theoretical one.

Finally, Xingjian LIV-2 is indicated for swelling of the knee, pain of the inner aspect of the leg, heat in the shins and pain and swelling of the instep, and the Song of Points for Miscellaneous Diseases says "for leg and knee pain covet Xingjian LIV-2".

CLASSICAL COMBINATIONS

- Lacrimation: Xingjian LIV-2 and Shenting DU-24 (Supplementing Life).
- Liver qi night blindness: Xingjian LIV-2 and Jingming BL-1 (One Hundred Symptoms).
- Dry throat with desire to drink: Xingjian LIV-2 and Taichong LIV-3 (Thousand Ducat Formulas).
- Pain of the Liver and Heart: Xingjian LIV-2 and Taichong LIV-3 (Thousand Ducat Formulas).
- Pain of the Heart with a green complexion like death, inability to catch the breath all day long, pain of the Liver and Heart: Xingjian LIV-2 and Taichong LIV-3 (Systematic Classic).
- Heart pain: Xingjian LIV-2 and Yinxi HE-6 (Supplementing Life).

- Fright epilepsy, mad walking and madness: Xingjian LIV-2, Jinsuo DU-8, Qugu REN-2 and Yingu KID-10 (Thousand Ducat Formulas).
- Retention of urine and pain of the penis: Xingjian LIV-2 and Ququan LIV-8 (Supplementing Life).
- Severe thirst of wasting and thirsting disorder: Xingjian LIV-2 and Yongquan KID-1 (One Hundred Symptoms).
- Lumbar pain with inability to stand for long or to move: Xingjian LIV-2 and Jingmen GB-25 (Systematic Classic).
- Lumbar pain that radiates down the leg: Xingjian LIV-2, Huantiao GB-30 and Fengshi GB-31 (Song of Points).
- Lumbar pain with inability to bend and extend: Xingjian LIV-2, Weiyang BL-39, Yinmen BL-37, Taibai SP-3 and Yinlingquan SP-9 (Thousand Ducat Formulas).
- Lumbar pain with difficulty in moving: Xingjian LIV-2, Fengshi GB-31 and Weizhong BL-40 (Glorious Anthology).
- Inability of the legs to support the body: Xingjian LIV-2 and Tianzhu BL-10 (Thousand Ducat Formulas).

LV-3 (*tài chōng*)

太 *tài*: great, supreme; too, excessive

冲 *chōng*: surge, rush; flush; empty;
thoroughfare, key position, hub (衝)

太冲

Great Surge

Location: On the dorsal aspect of the foot, between the first and second metatarsal bones. The point is located proximal to the metatarso-phalangeal joints, in the 'V'-shaped depression formed by metatarsal bones. It lies towards the back of this depression.

Features & Categories: Earth, Stream, Transporting-Shu point, and Source-Yuan point of the Liver Channel. A Heavenly Star point of Ma Dan-Yang.

Functions: Extinguishes Liver Fire and clears Liver Yang; expels Interior Wind; calms the Shen; discharges Damp Heat in the Lower Jiao; soothes the Liver and regulates Qi; enhances and frees the Connecting Vessels and regulates the Blood.

Indications: Metrorrhagia; hernia; enuresis; urinary retention; hypertension; headache; dizziness; vertigo; insomnia; hepatitis; pain in the anterior aspect of the medial malleolus; distention or pain of the lateral costal region; mastitis; wryness of the mouth; infantile fright Wind; epilepsy patterns; soreness in the joints of the limbs; thrombocytopenia.

Supplementary Indications: Genital pain; genital retraction; chest and rib pain; scrofula; fright Wind; diarrhea with undigested food; sore throat; dryness of the upper esophageal opening; lateral knee pain; weakness and aching in the lower leg; red, painful eyes; lumbar pain; lower abdominal fullness; pain in the umbilical region; cold feet; difficult defecation; jaundice; thunderous rumbling in the abdomen; retching with no food intake; urinary frequency, urgency, difficulty and incontinence; deficiency edema; profuse, incessant postpartum perspiration; absence of menstruation.

DEADMAN'S COMMENTARY

Taichong LIV-3 is the shu-stream and yuan-source point of the Liver channel. The Spiritual Pivot in Chapter 6 recommends the use of the shu-stream points in disorders of the zang, whilst in Chapter 1 it says "When the five zang are diseased, select [from] the twelve yuan-source [points]". Taichong LIV-3 is arguably the most important point of the Liver channel, with an extensive range of actions, and may be used with equal effect for both excess and deficiency patterns of the Liver zang and its channel. So important did the Ming dynasty physician Xu Feng consider Taichong LIV-3 to be, that he added it to Ma Danyang's 'eleven heavenly star points' when listing them in his work Complete Collection of Acupuncture and Moxibustion. Since this time, these points have become known as Ma Danyang's 'twelve heavenly star points'.

Master Zhu Dan-xi in the 14th century said "The Liver governs spreading and draining" and "When the qi and blood flow harmoniously, the ten thousand diseases will not arise. Once there is constraint, all diseases may arise". The Liver's function of spreading means that although the Liver is not considered responsible for the production of qi, it ensures that the flow of qi in the body remains free, easy, open, relaxed and unobstructed. This function may be impaired in three main ways.

Firstly, and most commonly, it may develop when the spontaneous expression of any of the emotions is restricted, especially anger.

Secondly, the spreading function of the Liver is an expression of its yang qi and a saying of Chinese medicine stresses "The body of the Liver is yin whilst its function is yang". In other words, the Liver yang is dependent on Liver yin. Stagnation of Liver qi may therefore result from failure of yin or blood to moisten, nourish and soften the Liver.

Thirdly, the ability of the Liver to spread qi may be obstructed by the presence of pathogenic damp-heat.

A full understanding of Liver disharmony also stresses one further point which is that Liver qi stagnation may bring about the development of any other Liver pattern, for example by transformation into Liver fire the consequent consumption of yin and hence the uprising of Liver yang, or by transformation of either Liver fire or Liver yang into wind. For this reason it is said that clinically any pattern of disharmony of the Liver may be accompanied by qi stagnation.

When Liver qi stagnates it gives rise to sensations of pressure, distention and pain, predominantly in those areas traversed by the Liver channel and its interiorly-exteriorly coupled Gall Bladder channel. Qi stagnation tends to move around and fluctuate, mainly according to emotional changes, and is relieved by emotional expressiveness and physical activity, both of which free the flow of qi. The name of Taichong LIV-3 'Great Rushing' refers to this point's function as the great passageway for the flow of qi in the channel. It is a primary point for promoting the free-flow of Liver qi, and can resolve Liver qi stagnation giving rise to distention and pain in any part of the body, whether the head, eyes, throat, chest, Heart, breasts, epigastrium, abdomen, lateral costal region, uterus or genitals.

According to the Spiritual Pivot "The Liver stores blood, the blood is the residence of the ethereal soul (hun); when Liver qi is deficient there is fear". Although much used in modern clinical practice for emotional and psychological manifestations of qi stagnation such as depression, frustration,

pent-up feelings, irritability, premenstrual tension, mood swings, weepiness etc., it is striking that with the exception of fearfulness, psycho-emotional indications are almost entirely absent from major classical sources.

Taichong LIV-3 is an essential point for subduing Liver yang and pacifying Liver wind. The Liver is the zang of wood and wind and is entrusted with the ministerial fire. Its qi is vigorous, forceful and active, and according to sayings of Chinese medicine "The Liver governs uprising" and "The Liver dominates physical movement". It is common, therefore, for the hot, aggressive, ascending, and moving nature of the Liver to exceed normal limits and manifest as upsurging of Liver yang, or progress to the stirring up of Liver wind. Alternatively wind may stir due to deficient blood and consequent emptiness of the blood vessels. Typical manifestations of wind for which Taichong LIV-3 is indicated include headache, dizziness, numbness of the head, childhood fright wind, tetany, epilepsy, opisthotonos and deviation of the mouth.

Taichong LIV-3 is equally important for all deficiency patterns of the Liver. It promotes the generation of both Liver blood and Liver yin and hence nourishes those areas of the body dominated by the Liver, namely the eyes, sinews and uterus. Liver yin deficiency is the root of hyperactivity of Liver yang, whilst Liver blood or yin deficiency frequently lie at the root of Liver wind. Taichong LIV-3, therefore, is able both to subdue excess and nourish deficiency, and thus treat both the root and manifestation of these patterns.

The Spiritual Pivot says "Liver qi opens into the eyes, when the Liver is in harmony the eyes are able to distinguish the five colours" whilst the Essential Questions states "When the Liver receives blood it gives rise to vision". Taichong LIV-3 is indicated for failure of the Liver blood or yin to nourish the eyes resulting in blurred or failing vision, as well as for excess disharmonies where Liver fire, Liver yang, or Liver channel wind-heat result in red, swollen, and painful eyes, or where Liver wind leads to unusual movement of the eyes or eyelids.

The Liver channel connects with the brain at Baihui DU-20, the topmost point of the body, and is the only yin channel to ascend directly to the upper part of the head. Taichong LIV-3, therefore, is used to treat many disorders of the head, especially headache and dizziness, due to both excess and deficiency patterns of the Liver. It is specifically indicated for vertex headaches, although it is worth noting that neither headache nor dizziness are found as indications for this point in any major classic.

The Liver is closely related to the menstrual cycle. The Liver stores the blood and its channel enters the lower abdomen and connects with the Conception vessel at Qugu REN-2, Zhongji REN-3 and Guanyuan REN-4, whilst it is the free movement of Liver qi prior to menstruation which ensures the smooth flow of blood. So important is the Liver to menstruation that Ye Tian-shi stated "the Liver is the pre-heaven qi of women". Liver qi stagnation, Liver fire or deficiency of Liver blood may therefore give rise to such disorders as amenorrhoea, irregular menstruation and incessant uterine bleeding. Taichong LIV-3 is an important point in the treatment of any of these disorders.

The Liver channel passes through the genitals and lower abdomen, and is closely related to the genito-urinary organs. Normal excretion of urine depends mainly on the Kidneys and Bladder but is also assisted by the Liver's spreading function. Taichong LIV-3 is indicated for retention of urine, painful urinary dysfunction or difficult urination characterised by qi stagnation, as well as for shan

disorder, pain of the genitals and swelling or retraction of the testicles. Due to its general affinity for this area, however, Taichong LIV-3 is also indicated for deficiency urinary patterns such as enuresis, incontinence and deficiency-taxation oedema. In fact there are other indications of the ability of Taichong LIV-3 to tonify deficiency in this region, for example insufficiency of essence (semen) in men and seminal emission.

In the intestinal region, failure of the qi to flow freely may lead to binding of the stools, and Taichong LIV-3 may be used for constipation or difficult defecation due to qi stagnation or stagnant heat. When Liver qi stagnation coexists with Spleen deficiency, the commonly-seen clinical pattern of abdominal pain and diarrhoea with thin stools, alternating with difficult defecation or constipation, may be encountered. Taichong LIV-3 is an important point for the treatment of this pattern, and may be combined for example with Zhangmen LIV-13, the front-mu point of the Spleen. In the middle jiao, Taichong LIV-3 is indicated for vomiting due to Liver-Stomach disharmony and jaundice due to Liver and Gall Bladder damp-heat.

Bilateral Taichong LIV-3 and Hegu L.I.-4 are known as 'the four gates'. This combination first appeared in the Ode to Elucidate Mysteries which said "for cold and heat with painful obstruction, open the four gates". The text goes on to imply that the yuan-source points of the six yang channels emerge at the four gates. Since a fundamental principle for treating painful obstruction is to select points from yang channels, this helps to explain why these two points are considered so effective in treating painful obstruction. Subsequently, the use of these points has been extended to treat a variety of disorders involving pain and spasm. This is an elegant combination. Hegu L.I.-4 on the upper extremity lies in the wide valley between the first and second metacarpals, whilst Taichong LIV-3 on the lower extremity lies in the wide valley between the first and second metatarsals. Hegu L.I.-4, the yuan-source point, belongs to yangming channel which is 'abundant in qi and blood' whilst Taichong LIV-3, the shu-stream and yuan-source point of the Liver channel, has the function of spreading the qi. Together they are able to vigorously activate the qi and blood and ensure their free and smooth passage throughout the body.

Finally Taichong LIV-3 is indicated for a variety of channel disorders such as lumbar pain, pain or weakness of the knee and leg, coldness of the knees and feet and contraction of the five fingers.

CLASSICAL COMBINATIONS

- Red eyes and bleeding from Yingxiang L.I.-20 (i.e. nosebleed): Taichong LIV-3, Toulinqi GB-15 and Hegu L.I.-4 (Song of Points).
- Nasal congestion, nasal polyp and nasal congestion and discharge: Taichong LIV-3 and Hegu L.I.-4 (Song of Points).
- Swelling of the lips: Taichong LIV-3 and Yingchuang ST-16 (Supplementing Life).
- Cracked and bleeding tongue: Taichong LIV-3, Neiguan P-6 and Yinjiao REN-7 (Miscellaneous Diseases).
- Erosion, heat and dryness of the mouth: Taichong LIV-3, Laogong P-8, Shaoze SI-1 and Sanjian L.I.-3 (Thousand Ducat Formulas).
- For most types of acute throat pain: first needle Baihui DU-20 then Taichong LIV-3, Zhaohai KID-6 and Sanyinjiao SP-6 (Ode of Xi-hong).

- Dry throat with desire to drink: Taichong LIV-3 and Xingjian LIV-2 (Thousand Ducat Formulas).
- Pain of the Liver and Heart: Taichong LIV-3 and Xingjian LIV-2 (Thousand Ducat Formulas).
- Pain of the Heart with a green complexion like death, inability to catch the breath all day long, pain of the Liver and Heart: Taichong LIV-3 and Xingjian LIV-2 (Systematic Classic).
- Breast pain: Taichong LIV-3 and Fuliu KID-7 (Systematic Classic).
- Swelling and sabre lumps of the axilla: Taichong LIV-3, Xiaxi GB-43 and Yangfu GB-38 (Thousand Ducat Formulas).
- Abdominal distention leading to back pain: Taichong LIV-3 and Taibai SP-3 (Great Compendium).
- Pain of the genitals: Taichong LIV-3, Shenshu BL-23, Zhishi BL-52 and Jinggu BL-64 (Supplementing Life).
- The seven kinds of shan disorder: Taichong LIV-3 and Dadun LIV-1 (Song of Points).
- Profuse and ceaseless uterine bleeding: Taichong LIV-3, Jiaoxin KID-8, Yingu KID-10 and Sanyinjiao SP-6 (Supplementing Life).
- Profuse and ceaseless uterine bleeding: Taichong LIV-3 and Sanyinjiao SP-6 (Great Compendium).
- Uterine prolapse: Taichong LIV-3, Shaofu HE-8, Zhaohai KID-6 and Ququan LIV-8 (Great Compendium).
- Difficult delivery: reduce Taichong LIV-3 and Sanyinjiao SP-6, reinforce Hegu L.I.-4 (Great Compendium).
- Red and white leucorrhoea: Qugu REN-2 [7 cones of moxa], Taichong LIV-3, Guanyuan REN-4, Fuliu KID-7, Sanyinjiao SP-6 and Tianshu ST-25 [one hundred cones of moxa] (Compilation).
- Difficulty in defecation: Taichong LIV-3, Zhongliao BL-33, Shimen REN-5, Chengshan BL-57, Zhongwan REN-12, Taixi KID-3, Dazhong KID-4 and Chengjin BL-56 (Supplementing Life).
- Diarrhoea with thin stools, dysenteric disorder with blood in the stools: Taichong LIV-3 and Ququan LIV-8 (Thousand Ducat Formulas).
- Diarrhoea with thin stools: Taichong LIV-3, Shenque REN-8 and Sanyinjiao SP-6 (Great Compendium).
- The five types of haemorrhoids: Taichong LIV-3, Weizhong BL-40, Chengshan BL-57, Feiyang BL-58, Yangfu GB-38, Fuliu KID-7, Xiaxi GB-43, Qihai REN-6, Huiyin REN-1 and Changqiang DU-1 (Great Compendium).
- Blood in the stool: Taichong LIV-3, Chengshan BL-57, Fuliu KID-7 and Taibai SP-3 (Great Compendium).
- Deficiency-taxation oedema: moxa Taichong LIV-3 one hundred times, also moxa Shenshu BL-23 (Thousand Ducat Formulas).
- Enuresis: Taichong LIV-3, Jimen SP-11, Tongli HE-5, Dadun LIV-1, Panguangshu BL-28, Weizhong BL-40 and Shenmen HE-7 (Supplementing Life).
- Wasting and thirsting disorder: Taichong LIV-3, Xingjian LIV-2, Chengjiang REN-24, Jinjin (M-HN-20), Yuye (M-HN-20), Renzhong DU-26, Lianquan REN-23, Quchi L.I.-11, Laogong P-8, Shangqiu SP-5, Ranggu KID-2 and Yinbai SP-1 (Great Compendium).
- "For cold and heat with painful obstruction, open the Four Gates" [Taichong LIV-3 and Hegu L.I.-4] (Ode to Elucidate Mysteries).

- Unendurable pain of the arm that radiates to the shoulder and spine: Taichong LIV-3 and Hegu L.I.-4 (Ode of Xi-hong).
- Flaccidity of the legs: Taichong LIV-3, Yanglingquan GB-34, Chongyang ST-42 and Qiuxu GB-40 (Great Compendium).
- Weakness of the legs: moxa Taichong LIV-3, Lidui ST-45 and Fengshi GB-31 (Outline of Medicine).
- Inability to walk: Taichong LIV-3, Zusanli ST-36 and Zhongfeng LIV-4 (Ode of the Jade Dragon).
- Difficulty in walking: Taichong LIV-3 and Zhongfeng LIV-4 (Song More Precious Than Jade).