

Kidney (Shen)

The Kidneys are the Yin Organ of the Water Element.

The Kidney Orb plays a vast functional role in TCM. The broad and comprehensive nature of this role does not easily relate the anatomy-based knowledge of kidney organ function in western medical bioscience (WMB), although part of its functions can be seen there.

The Kidneys Store Jing

This means that the Kidneys rule birth, development, maturation, decline and death. Each person gains their specific individuality through Jing, so it is the source of an individual's character. The Yin and Yang of the Kidneys provide the foundation of the Yin and Yang of the entire body. Pre-Heavenly Jing is inherited from our parents. Post-Heavenly Jing derives from the refined product of food ingested (Kaptchuk, 1983).

"The Kidneys are the mansion of Fire and Water, the residence of Yin and Yang the channel of death and life." (Kaptchuk, 1983). "The Kidney area is the origin of the five Yin and five Yang organs, the root of the twelve Meridians and the origin of the three Burners" (Nan Jing, difficulty 8, p.17, Kaptchuk, 1983).

The Yin and Yang of the entire body derives from Jing, as does that of the Kidney itself, so it is a "primal organic material" (Kaptchuk, 1983) which antecedes the coalescence of Yin and Yang which each of us personifies. But Jing also has an "undifferentiated, primordial character" (Kaptchuk, 1983), so it may also be thought of as being Yin. The Kidneys store Jing.

The Yang of the Kidneys is called Ming Men, gate of vitality, or "life gate fire" (Kaptchuk, 1983; Maciocia, 1989). It is the foundation of all the Yang of the body, and provides the necessary heat for bodily functions. Ming Men is sometimes thought to be located between the kidneys, and is sometimes associated with the Pericardium and San Jiao (Maciocia, 1989).

The Kidneys are referred to as the "Root of Life", because Jing is the source of reproduction, development and maturation (Kaptchuk, 1983). Conception is possible due to the power of Jing. Indeed all reproductive processes are associated with Jing in some way, and are consequently governed by the Kidneys.

The Kidneys Rule Water (Su Wen chpt.1, p.6, Kaptchuk, 1983; Maciocia, 1989)

The Kidneys "are the foundation upon which the entire process of Water movement and transformation is built" (Kaptchuk, 1983). All circulation of Water in the body depends on the vaporizing power of the Kidneys, particularly Kidney Yang (Maciocia, 1989).

"In the Kidneys, the impure part (of Fluids) is further separated into relatively 'clean' and 'turbid' parts the final impure portion goes into the Bladder, where it is stored and subsequently excreted" (Kaptchuk, 1983).

The Kidneys Rule the Bones and Produce Marrow (Su Wen chpt.23, p.154,

Kaptchuk, 1983; Maciocia, 1989). Both these functions reflect the activity of Jing.

Development of teeth is included within this aspect of Jing. Bones, bone marrow, brain and spinal cord all derive from Marrow. Thus the brain and spinal cord have a direct relationship with the Kidneys, and are referred to as the "Sea of Marrow" (Kaptchuk, 1983).

The Kidneys Open into the Ears, and Manifest in the Hair of the Head.

Hearing problems are commonly associated with Kidney energy, as may also be premature hair loss.

The Kidneys Rule Grasping of Qi.

The activity of breathing is administered by the Lungs but depends upon Kidney Qi. This allows the Qi in air (Na Qi) to be 'grasped' by the body and to penetrate deep within. This Qi is sent down to the Kidneys (Kaptchuk, 1983).

The Kidneys control the two lower orifices, anus and urethra. They are also directly involved in sexual function (Maciocia, 1989).

The Kidneys house the Will, and control Will Power and motivation (Kaptchuk, 1983).

'The Kidneys are responsible for the creation of power. Skill and ability stem from them.'
(Su Wen, chpt 8. Larre & Rochat, 1992e, 1992b).

Zu Shao Yin Shen Jing Kidney Channel of foot Shao Yin

PRIMARY KIDNEY MERIDIAN

The primary Kidney Channel of foot Shao Yin begins beneath the little toe. It crosses the sole of the foot obliquely and emerges from the medial arch of the foot at the instep, underneath the navicular tuberosity at KID-2 (Ran Gu). It travels [superior and] posterior to the medial malleolus (KID-3, Tai Xi), continues into the heel (KID-5, Shui Quan), and encircles the ankle. From there it travels up the medial aspect of the leg where it intersects the Spleen Channel of foot Tai Yin at SP-6 (San Yin Jiao).

It travels up through (within) the gastrocnemius muscle, and ascends across the medial aspect of the popliteal fossa (KID-10, Yin Gu) and the posteromedial thigh to the base of the spine, where it meets Du Mai at DU-1 (Chang Qiang).

It continues up the interior of the spinal column and homes to its pertaining Organ, the Kidney, then turns downward and connects with the Bladder Organ, and intersects Ren Mai at REN-4 (Guan Yuan) and REN-3 (Zhong Ji). It then ascends the anterior aspect of the abdomen and chest.

A branch ascends directly from the Kidney Organ, goes to (through) the Liver Organ, crosses the diaphragm, enters the Lung Organ, and follows the throat (Internally) up to the root of the tongue.

Another branch separates in the Lung Organ, connects to the Heart Organ, and disperses in the chest. It connects with the Pericardium Channel of hand Jue Yin.

There are 27 points on the Kidney Meridian, and 5 intersecting points on other Meridians.

This Meridian pertains to the Kidney Organ and connects with the Bladder Organ. It also connects directly with the Organs of Liver, Lungs, and Heart as well as other Organs.

FLOW OF QI/ DISTRIBUTION OF POINTS:

Lower Limb: KID-1 (Yong Quan), KID-2 (Ran Gu), KID-3 (Tai Xi), KID-4 (Da Zhong), KID-5 (Shui Quan), KID-6 (Zhao Hai), KID-7 (Fu Liu), KID-8 (Jiao Xin), SP-6 (San Yin Jiao), KID-9 (Zhu Bin), KID-10 (Yin Gu)

Lower Spine, Abdomen: DU-1 (Chang Qiang), REN-4 (Guan Yuan), REN-3 (Zhong Ji), KID-11 (Heng gu), KID-12 (Da He), KID-13 (Qi Xue), KID-14 (Si Man), KID-15 (Zhong Zhu), KID-16 (Huang Shu), KID-17 (Shang Qu), KID-18 (Shi Guan), KID-19 (Yin Du), KID-20 (Tong Gu), KID-21 (You Men)

Chest: KID-22 (Bu Lang), KID-23 (Shen Feng), KID-24 (Ling Xu), KID-25 (Shen Cang), [REN-17 (Dan Zhong)], KID-26 (Yu Zhong), KID-27 (Shu Fu).

MERIDIANS INTERSECTED BY THE KIDNEY CHANNEL:

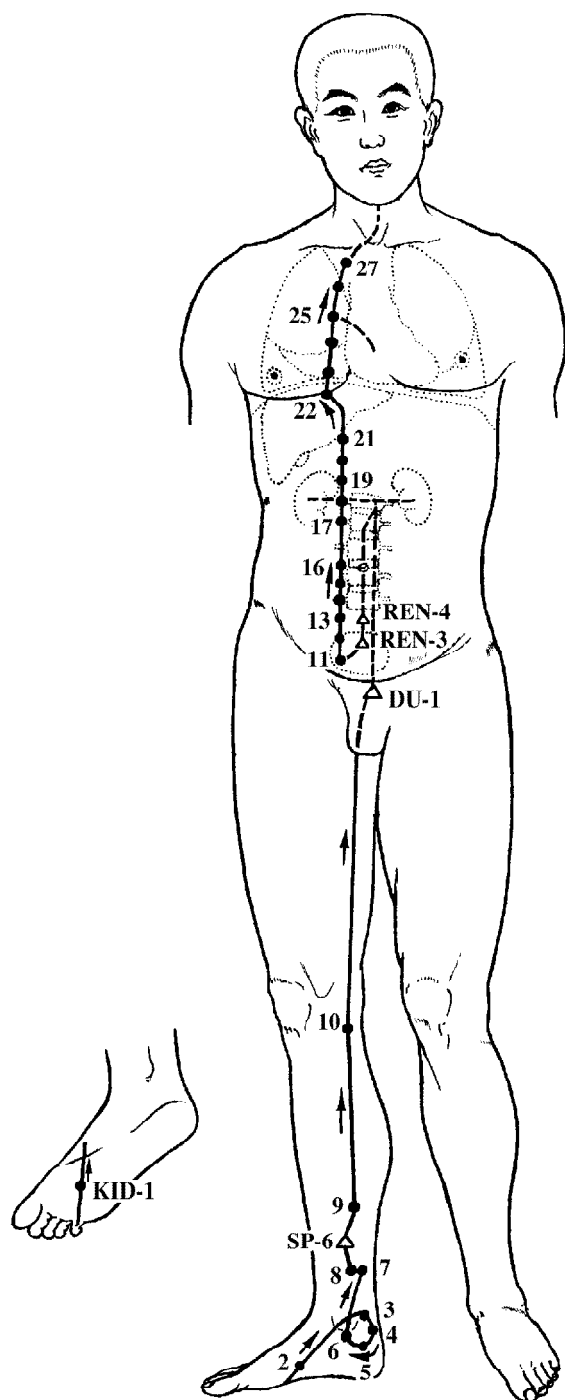
Spleen Channel of foot Tai Yin: SP-6 (San Yin Jiao).

Du Mai (Governing Vessel): DU-1 (Chang Qiang).

Ren Mai (Conception Vessel): REN-4 (Guan Yuan), REN-3 (Zhong Ji), [REN-17 (Dan Zhong)].

Primary Kidney Meridian

(modified from Shandong, 1982, p.37)



MERIDIANS INTERSECTING ON THE KIDNEY CHANNEL:

Chong Mai (Penetrating Vessel): KID-11 (Heng gu), KID-12 (Da He), KID-13 (Qi Xue), KID-14 (Si Man), KID-15 (Zhong Zhu), KID-16 (Huang Shu), KID-17 (Shang Qu), KID-18 (Shi Guan), KID-19 (Yin Du), KID-20 (Tong Gu), KID-21 (You Men)

Yin Qiao Mai (Yin heel/motility Vessel): KID-2 (Ran Gu), KID-6 (Zhao Hai), KID-8 (Jiao Xin)

Yin Wei Mai (Yin linking Vessel): KID-9 (Zhu Bin)

KIDNEY SPECIAL POINTS/ COMMAND POINTS:

KID-1 (Yong Quan):	Wood, Well-Jing.
KID-2 (Ran Gu):	Fire, Spring, Gushing-Ying.
KID-3 (Tai Xi):	i) Earth, Stream, Transporting-Shu. ii) Yuan-Source.
KID-4 (Da Zhong):	Luo-Connecting
KID-5 (Shui Quan):	Xi-Cleft, Accumulation.
KID-6 (Zhao Hai):	Master point, Yin Qiao Mai (Yin heel/motility Vessel); Coupling point, Ren Mai (Conception Vessel).
KID-7 (Fu Liu):	Metal, River, Traversing-Jing.
KID-8 (Jiao Xin):	Xi-Cleft, Accumulation point of Yin Qiao Mai (Yin heel/motility Vessel)
KID-9 (Zhu Bin):	Xi-Cleft, Accumulation point of Yin Wei Mai (Yin linking Vessel)
KID-10 (Yin Gu):	Water, Sea, Uniting-He. Horary point.
GB-25 (Jing Men):	front Alarm-Mu, Collecting point.
BL-23 (Shen Shu):	back Associated-Shu, Transporting point.

KIDNEY PRIMARY MERIDIAN SIGNS/SYMPTOMS:

Low back pain, lumbar pain, coldness of the lower limbs or feet, atony or weakness of the lower limbs or feet, thirst or dry mouth, sore throat, pain in the lateral gluteal region and posterior thigh, possibly pain in the soles of the feet. (mainly from Ellis et al., 1988; O'Connor & Bensky, 1981)

KIDNEY ORGAN SIGNS/SYMPTOMS:

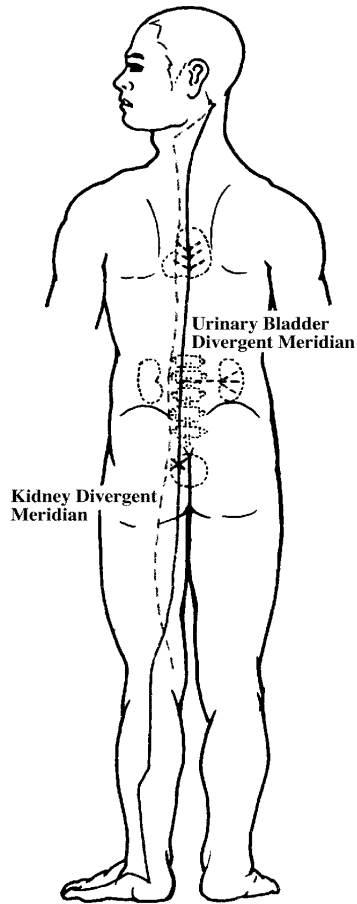
Dizziness, facial oedema, blurred vision, ashen complexion, shortness of breath or short rapid (coarse) breathing, somnolence or restlessness and irritability, chronic diarrhoea or constipation, watery stool or dry stool evacuated with difficulty, abdominal distension, nausea and vomiting, impotence. (mainly from Ellis et al., 1988; O'Connor & Bensky, 1981)

KIDNEY DIVERGENT MERIDIAN

The Kidney Divergent Meridian separates from the primary Kidney Channel in the popliteal fossa, near KID-10, Yin Gu. It then unites with the Divergent Meridian of the Urinary Bladder Channel of foot Tai Yang, near BL-40, Wei Zhong.

It then rises to the Kidney Organ, and at the level of the 2nd lumbar vertebra, homes to Dai Mai. This Divergent Meridian then rises and connects to the root of the tongue. From there it travels

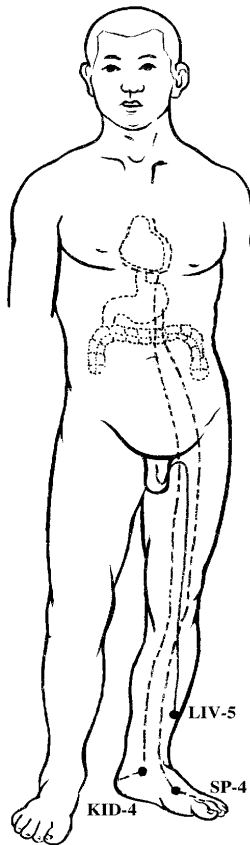
around to the nape of the neck where it unites with the Urinary Bladder Channel of foot Tai Yang, near BL-10, Tian Zhu. (mainly from Ellis et al., 1988; O'Connor & Bensky, 1981)



Water Divergent Meridians

(from Cheng 1987, p. 84)

KIDNEY LUO (CONNECTING) MERIDIAN



The Kidney Luo Meridian separates from the primary Kidney Channel at KID-4 (Da Zhong) behind the medial malleolus, crosses the heel, then connects to the Urinary Bladder Channel of foot Tai Yang. A branch follows the primary Kidney Channel to the region below the Pericardium. From there it descends and connects with the lumbar vertebrae.

Signs/ Symptoms:

Qi Counterflow: vexation oppression, irritability, depression

Shi: blockage of stool and urine, enuresis, constipation

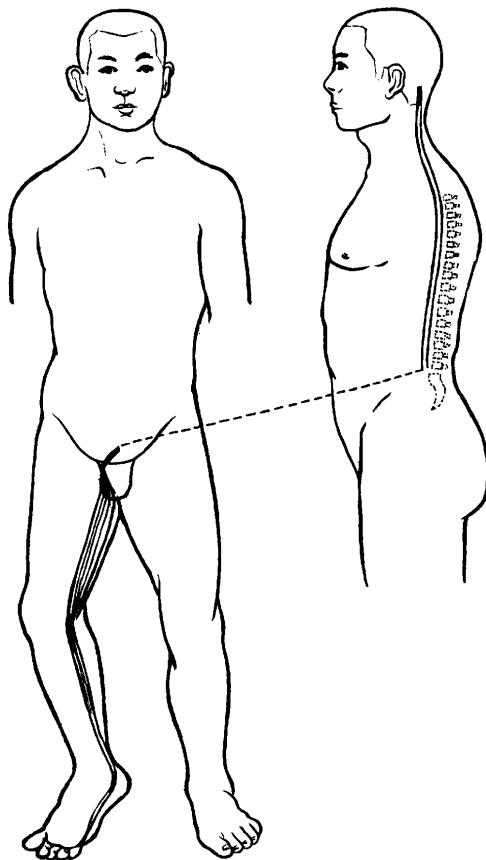
Xu: low back pain, sore loins

(mainly from Ellis et al., 1988; O'Connor & Bensky, 1981)

Yin Luo Meridians, Lower Limb

(modified from Cheng 1987, p. 93)

KIDNEY MUSCLE-TENDINO (SINEW) MERIDIAN



The Kidney Muscle-Tendino Meridian (MTM) commences beneath the little toe and enters the plantar surface of the foot. It runs together with the MTM of the Spleen Channel of foot Tai Yin, travels below the medial malleolus and binds at the heel. There the Kidney MTM converges with the Muscle-Tendino Meridian of the Urinary Bladder Channel of foot Tai Yang, travels up the leg, and binds at the inferior medial aspect of the knee. It joins the MTM of the Spleen Channel of foot Tai Yin, rises up the medial aspect of the thigh, and binds in the genital region.

A branch of the Kidney MTM ascends beside the spine to the nape of the neck. It binds to the occipital bone and unites with the MTM of the Urinary Bladder Channel of foot Tai Yang.

Kidney Muscle-Tendino Meridian

(from Cheng 1987, p.103)

Signs/ Symptoms:

Muscle spasms or cramping on the plantar surface of the foot, pain or muscle spasms along the course of the MTM. Other symptoms may appear along the course of the Channel, especially those associated with epilepsy, infantile convulsions.

In Exterior conditions it may be difficult to flex the head. In Interior conditions the head cannot be extended. In Yang disorders - sinews on the back are tense - the back cannot be flexed (bent forward), and in Yin disorders - sinews on the front are tense - the back cannot be extended (bent back). (mainly from Ellis et al., 1988; O'Connor & Bensky, 1981)