

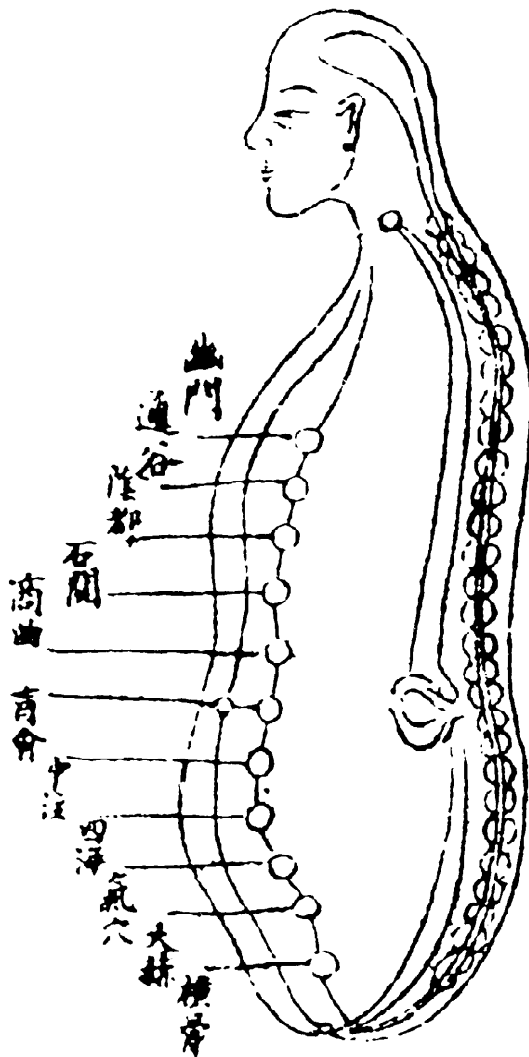
Chong Mai/ Penetrating Vessel/ Thoroughfare Vessel, part#1.

Introduction, Meridian, Pathology, Symptomology, Points #1

CHONG MAI 衝脈

衝

圖穴脈衝



Chong Mai,
from the
Neiwaigong
tushuo (Larre &
Rochat, 1997).

LARRE & ROCHAT

Introductory Discussion (Larre & Rochat, 1997).

Elisabeth Rochat: Chong is made of two parts, one is the radical, which is split and is seen on the left and right sides of the character. The radical (xing) means to walk well, and is a repetition of the same thing, as we can see in the etymology in Wieger lesson 63C. It means to take a step forward with the left foot and is the image of a man putting forward his left foot and finishing the step with his right. One of the early meanings is to march, and also to circulate; a circulation that is without fault and error, flowing effortlessly from one to another; the pattern or model for good circulation and exchange. Of course this is the character used for the five elements or five phases (wu xing). Here the meaning of the radical is to march or to circulate.

Inside the two parts of the radical we insert the phonetic chong. In Wieger lesson 120K this is explained as a man on the top, trying to raise from the earth at the bottom, an object which is seen at the centre. The first meaning of the character is heavy; a heavy weight or a great effort. A second is repetition, the repetition of an effort. The third meaning is of something serious, for example a serious illness; serious because it is very important and essential. From the pictogram we have the idea of an accumulation. The image of power and the effort to raise something is very strong in this character chong.

The first meaning of chong is of a great route of communication, a route with a lot of crossings or tributaries. And if people can meet together because of this major route, then the main idea of chong is not just the meeting of routes but also the power to continue to walk straight, gathering more and more things on the way from the other routes that join.

One common meaning of this character chong is to go straight on. It suggests a very important route, a very important passage, and sometimes a strategic route, but also it implies that the movement and circulation facilitated by such a route is quite fast and quick. You can drive much faster on a motorway than on a small country road, the power of your car can show itself. There is the idea of a rush, a push, and in military vocabulary it is to attack with great strength and impetuosity and is used in a term for a special kind of battering ram. It is full of vigour, full of power.

If we add to the phonetic the radical of the ear of corn then we have the idea of the seed and to sow. In the seed there is a concentration of power able to break out and push up through the earth. If you add the radical for the body the character becomes one of the many characters used for the pregnant woman. With the image of a tendon (dong), we have the character for the movement of living beings, for example the beating of the heart. The term for zoology, the science of living beings, is made with this character. With the radical for vegetation it means to regulate, to govern, to overlook, to administrate (dong). These related characters can help us to understand the implied meaning of chong. It is a great power, full of the seed of life and the promise of life, animated with the vigour of the movement proper to life and the living being, but which is so important and serious that it is able to regulate and administer something. Sometimes commentators emphasise the rapidity, and they explain chong as the way to ensure all circulation is quick and correct.

So why is chong mai so important? All the texts, especially the Nei jing, stress the fact that the chong mai is able to regulate both blood and qi. Because of that chong mai is called the 'sea of

blood', but it is also called the 'sea of the meridians'. And of course the meridians are nothing but the regulation of the circulation of qi, allowing the blood and qi to circulate in the correct way without deviation.

THE PATHWAY OF CHONG MAI

Nan jing difficulty 28:

Chong mai arises at qi chong (St-30) the crossroads of the qi; it doubles the pathway of the yang ming of the foot (the stomach meridian); it surrounds the navel and rises. It reaches the middle of the thorax (xiong zhong) and diffuses there.

We can add the description in Su wen 60:

Chong mai arises at the street of qi (qi jie); doubling the pathway of the shao yin (the kidney meridian) it surrounds the navel and rises; it reaches the middle of the thorax (xiong zhong) and diffuses there.

The pathway is very similar in the Su wen and the Nan jing, but one has the chong mai doubling the yang ming of the foot (stomach meridian), the other the shao yin of the foot (kidney meridian). Here we have a short trajectory from the bottom of the abdomen, not at the centre but at both sides, at the level of qi chong (St 30). Qi chong is made from the character for qi and the same character chong that we find in chong mai; 'vigorous street of qi'. It is not exactly the beginning or origin of chong mai, but it is the starting point of its pathway on the front of the body, passing through the navel, or the level of the navel, to the area of the sea of qi in the centre of the chest, with a great movement of effusion and expansion in the upper heater.

The main point about this trajectory is the power of the circulation of qi coming from the point of emergence in the lower abdomen. At the level of the chest the qi is certainly a conjunction of the qi of the stomach and the qi from the lower heater, coming up through the navel to the sea of qi at the centre of the chest, which regulates its circulation throughout the whole body. Through the ancestral qi, or zong qi, the qi finds the principle of leadership and unified mastership to guide it into the regular circulation of the defensive and nutritive qi, and to guide the rhythmic circulation through the twelve meridians. Through the function of the lungs, the sea of qi and the heart, there is a good regulation of the 100 mai which represent the whole network of animation and circulation throughout the body, meridians as well as all other connections and networks of relationships and circulations, even the smallest and most superficial. This is the first function of chong mai. Chong mai is concerned with qi and with creating a good rhythm of circulation. It makes the connection between the sea of qi at the origin and the sea of qi in the chest.

In other texts chong mai is given other trajectories and other functions. And often the trajectories are actually symbolic of the function. For example in Ling shu 38:

The chong mai is the sea of the five zang and six fu. Its rising part emerges from the naso-pharynx, filters into all the yang, irrigates all the essences.

Its descending part pours out into the great luo of the shao yin, arises under the kidneys, leaves the street of qi (qi jie), runs along the internal face of the yin aspect of the thigh; obliquely penetrates the middle of the back of the knee, buries itself and circulates on the internal face of the tibia; together with the shao yin meridian it descends and penetrates behind the internal malleolus; it penetrates under the foot.

Its detachment together with the shao yin, filters into the three yin, obliquely penetrates the malleolus, buries itself and circulates, leaves and takes a dependent relation with the top of the foot, penetrates between the big toe; it filters into all the luo and warms the flesh of the foot and the leg.

Through this ascending movement the chong mai reaches its highest point - the inner orifices of the nose and the area between the nose and mouth - just at the level of the contact between heaven and earth. The mouth is the orifice of earth, the nose the orifice for heaven, as we saw earlier.

Chong mai, being linked with the qi and the blood, is connected with both the qi of heaven and the essences coming from earth. We can see the connecting movement of chong mai, making bridges, bringing together the two facets of reality, heaven and earth, yin and yang, qi and blood. Because at that level chong mai is in the area of the yang, it is able to filter into the yang and penetrate all the yang circulation. Chong mai is like the mother of the yang circulation, and not only that, but it is also able to provide the yang with essences, liquids and blood, to enable the yang to be efficient.

Now, after that there is a description of a descending trajectory which makes a strong link with shao yin of the foot, the kidney meridian, or the luo of the kidney meridian. It runs to the knee, descending the internal face of the tibia to the internal malleolus, finally penetrating underneath the foot, which suggests the first point of the kidney meridian, yong quan. Another name for this point is di chong. Di is the earth, with the chong of chong mai, and the meaning is certainly that at this point the power of the chong mai joins with the power of the earth. After that there is a kind of delegation of power - the power of chong mai has joined with the power of the earth, making it able to filter into the yin circulation.

Then the text describes a pathway penetrating the top of the foot and the inside of the big toe, which suggests a link with all three yin meridians of the foot and the stomach meridian too. That it 'filters into the luo' suggests that it is not only the main meridians which are concerned here but that the action of chong mai is felt in all the network of the more superficial and more detailed circulation - penetrating the mass of the body, warming the flesh of the feet and the legs. This implies the yang power of the qi, because the qi warms the flesh, especially through the circulation of the luo. So here we have a kind of mastery of the yang circulation, at the same time enriching the qi with essences. But also the mastering of the yin circulation, bringing warmth, heat and movement into the territory covered by the yin circulation. That is the reason why the chong mai is said to be 'the sea of the twelve meridians'.

We saw that du mai has a special mastery of the yang meridians and the yang function throughout the body, and ren mai has the same for the yin. Now in the third position we have the chong mai, with its gathering and inter-penetration of these two powers. The purpose of this text, Ling shu

chapter 38, is to show this double aspect of vitality through the pathway of the chong mai. At the beginning of the text chong mai is not called 'the sea of the meridians', but 'the sea of the five zang and six fu'. Here we have a complete presentation of the chong mai. If it is under and behind the yin as well as the yang circulation, and behind the essences as well as the ability to warm, it is able to master all kinds of circulation and the good balance between yin and yang, between essences, blood and qi, and is able to provide a good pattern of vitality for the five zang and six fu. That is the reason why it is the sea of the five zang and six fu.

It shares this name with the stomach, which is also said to be the sea of the five zang and six fu because the stomach is in charge of the renewal of essences and qi. We can see here the strong relationship between the chong mai and the stomach meridian, which work together. The stomach is able to continually renew the essences through digestion and assimilation, but it is unable to regulate the distribution of qi and essences on its own. The chong mai represents the pattern of organisation for the distribution.

In Ling shu chapter 62 we have the chong mai presented as the 'sea of the twelve meridians':

The chong mai is the sea of the twelve meridians (jing). With the great luo of the shao yin, it arises under the kidneys and leaves at the street of qi (qi jie), St-30. It runs along the upper part of the internal aspect of the thigh and obliquely penetrates the middle of the popliteal crease; it runs along the leg inside together with the meridian of shao yin; it descends and penetrates behind the internal malleolus; it penetrates underneath the foot.

This is the same as in chapter 38, but we add two things. One is the starting point, which is given as below the kidneys; qi chong is the point where the power of the qi emerges.

Ling shu chapter 65:

Chong mai and ren mai both arise in the middle of the intimate envelopes (bao zhong); they rise up the back on the inside and make the sea of the jing luo. Their pathway, emerged and external, runs along the abdomen to the right and then rises. They meet together at the pharynx; a divergence (bie) takes a luo relation with the lips and the mouth.

Here the starting point is not just below the kidneys but in the middle of the envelope of vitality. The pathway is much the same, but we will come back to this a bit later.

Su wen chapter 44:

The yang ming is the sea of the five zang and six fu. It commands the humidification of the ancestral muscle (zong jin). The ancestral muscle commands the bony chain; it gives ease to the mechanism of the other articulations (ji guan).

If we have a place to master all the muscular forces, and if the mass of the muscles are attached to the bone, then all the interplay of the bone articulations depends not only on a good irrigation, but also on the strength and suppleness of the attachment of the muscles to the bones. This is the reason

why the zong jin, the so-called ancestral muscle, which is the common point for all the muscular forces throughout the body, is in charge of the articulation of the spine. Su wen chapter 44 continues:

Chong mai is the sea of the jing mai. It commands humidification and irrigation through impregnation of the small and large valleys (xi gu). It makes its junction (he) with the yang ming at the ancestral muscle.

Here we have another mention of the relationship between chong mai and the yang ming of the foot, the stomach meridian, concerning the command of all the movement throughout the body. This movement depends on the muscular forces and the good irrigation of all the parts of the body. If there is dryness in any articulation, both in the bones and the muscles and flesh, movement will become more and more difficult and stiffness develops. In this text chong mai appears to be not only the director of the circulation of qi and the part of the circulation bringing nourishment, but also the function which regulates all the irrigation carrying liquids and blood throughout the body, even in the small and large valleys. The small and large valleys represent the circulation in the mass of the flesh, from the twelve meridians to the smallest luo which irrigate up to the surface of the skin. This is the broad function of chong mai. The chong mai seems to be everywhere in the body, from the upper orifices to the bottom of the feet, and from the first centre of the vitality to the most exterior areas of the body, wherever there is circulation of the elements of life, blood and essences.

These classical presentations of pathways are really quite symbolic or emblematic, and the function of chong mai is seen everywhere. Great commentators such as Zhang Jiebin said that there is really no place where the chong mai does not go. In this text we can see that it gives support to the back, to the area of the kidneys and ming men. And chong mai is able to have this relationship with the back as well as with the navel and the front of the body. It can extend the power of the vitality.

Another important point is to understand this double designation of chong mai as it passes over the abdomen; in one text shao yin of the foot, the kidney meridian, in another yang ming of the foot, the stomach meridian. This is also a way to indicate that chong mai is able to make the connection between posterior and anterior heaven, the connection between the first pattern of life and the perpetual renewal of life following that pattern.

It is important to consider chong mai in the third position, appearing as an emanation from the combining of the two poles of vitality, yin and yang, represented within the function of the body by du mai and ren mai. You know that in China one is 1, two 2 and three 3. But when the character for three is written, one stroke is not added on the top or bottom but in the middle of the first two. This means that the third is the result of the communication and exchange coming from the two. That is why three is the proper number for man and for qi in Chinese numerology, because qi is just the result of the communication between heaven and earth - the movement caused by this exchange, heaven is turned towards the earth and earth turned to receive from heaven. Three is the proper number for mankind if we take mankind as the ultimate expression between heaven and earth, mutually dependent on heaven and earth. The vertical position of humankind was seen as a sign of the ability to communicate with heaven at the time of the Han Dynasty. In Lao zi chapter 42 we have:

The dao produces the one

*the one produces the two
the two produce the three
the three produce the 10,000 beings.*

The correct position of humankind is between yin and yang, the right harmony for life appearing in this median void. The character for the median void (chong) is very close to that of chong mai. It is made with the water radical, which is used to symbolise all kinds of invisible movements and currents, and with the centre as the space between. From ancient times there has been a correlation between these two characters chong and chong. And nowadays the simplified version of chong is chong. We can see chong as the power of life made through the harmony of the opposites of yin and yang and all the contrasted powers in each living being made in the pattern of yin and yang like xue qi, blood and qi. At this junction and conjunction the power is very broad and can invade everything and create everything.

After the three we can continue to the four and the five to understand the differentiation step by step, but you can also just pass directly to the totality, as in Lao zi, where the three produce the 10,000. In the chong mai, which is the sea of blood, the sea of the jing luo, the sea of the meridians, the sea of the five zang and six fu, chong mai is the whole organism, nothing else, able to go into the smallest and largest valleys throughout the body. This is why sometimes, for example in Su wen chapter 1, it is called the powerful chong mai, or the great chong mai.

Chong mai is seen everywhere within the body, but where chong mai is at the level of the navel, on the kidney meridian, (KID-16, huang yu) there is an injection of vitality, Huang is a kind of membrane, and the source of these membranes is both around the navel and at the centre of the lower abdomen. Huang is also found between the diaphragm and the heart. This huang is able to envelop all the essential functions and is found every where in the body where something needs to be enveloped and protected, they line all the hollows where the qi and the zang and fu are kept. The connection between chong mai and the kidney meridian at the navel, both through the name of this point and also in other texts, shows that these membranes are also the place where the power of chong mai can be manifest.

When you take chong mai it appears to be both the link between and the manifestation of a couple, yin and yang, blood and qi, etc. and also the connection between posterior and anterior heaven, stomach and kidneys. It is also able to unify the three levels of the body, the three heaters; for example the relationship with the origin in the centre of the intimate envelope; the relationship with the stomach in the middle heater; and the pattern of diffusion giving the power to expand and diffuse from the sea of qi in the middle of the chest, which is the function of the upper heater.

In another view we have the three parts of the body with the legs, the trunk and the head, the first extraordinary meridian which is able to penetrate and to join the body from below and make the connection with heaven.

In Ling shu chapter 33 there is the presentation of the four seas, and chong mai is one of these four seas. It is very unusual to call a meridian a sea. The other seas presented are the stomach, tan zhong and the brain. The brain is the sea which receives the finest marrow of the body, and the stomach receives the essences of liquids and cereals. As for tan zhong, it is able to unify the qi, and lead all the

circulation of the qi in the body. But chong mai is everywhere and nowhere. It is a sea, but not only that, this sea changes its name. In the first presentation chong mai is called the sea of the twelve meridians, and further on in the chapter when the pathological aspect is discussed, chong mai is called the sea of blood.

Ling shu chapter 33:

The stomach is the sea of liquids and cereals, its points are above at the street of qi (St-30), and below at each san li (St-36). Chong mai is the sea of the twelve meridians, its points are above at da zhu (BL-11), and below at the upper and lower face of the great void (St-37 and 39). Tan zhong is the sea of qi. Its points are above and below the pillar bone, (Du-14, 15 or BL-10) and at the front at ren ying (St-9). The brain is the sea of marrow, its points are above at the canopy (Du-20) and below at fengfu (Du-16).

In an excess of the sea of blood, one has constantly the sensation of a large body, one is ill at ease (anxious and unhappy) without knowing where the illness is. If there is insufficiency of the sea of blood one has the sensation of a small body, one is cramped without knowing where the illness is.

If you consider the special points to treat the four seas, for the stomach both points are on the lower part of the body, for tan zhong they are at the level of the neck, for the brain on the skull. But for chong mai the points are one at the top of the trunk and two others on the lower limbs. This shows the broad extension of chong mai.

As far as the pathology is concerned, it is described as a general feeling, something which is everywhere in the body. In the case of excess as well as deficiency, one is unable to know where the illness is. If it is really a pathology of chong mai, it has repercussions in all the circulation of the meridians and connections, the illness is everywhere. The sensation is to have a large body, as if you are swollen with blood and qi, and to be ill at ease as if the skin cannot contain such a large amount of blood and qi. In deficiency it is the opposite, like a slowing down of the circulation and a diminution in the quantity of blood causing a feeling of shrunk-ness. To call chong mai 'the sea of the twelve meridians' at the beginning of the chapter and later 'the sea of blood' is a way to show the coupling of the blood and the qi. This is a definition of all the circulation in the meridians, which is nothing other than good movement through good balance between blood and qi.

Finally the sea of blood is sometimes associated with chong mai sometimes with the liver, because the liver also takes part of the function of chong mai which is apparent in gynaecology. The bao or uterus is also called the sea of blood, this is not only the physical uterus but includes all the functions which allow the uterus to work well - the mechanism of the gathering of the blood to make regular menstruation and all the regulation of the circulation of blood for a woman.

The connection between chong mai and the uterus is very strong, and if the connection of all this kind of protecting and enveloping in the body, not only the bao but also the huang (membranes), is also linked to the chong mai - for gathering as well as for discharge and emission - we can see why chong mai is here the sea of blood for menstruation, and also the sea of blood for the circulation through the meridians and all the network of channels.

Ling shu chapter 65 explains how chong mai and ren mai have the primitive and structural principles for the circulation of blood:

When blood and qi rise in power, the skin is benefited and the flesh warmed. When only the blood rises in power, a drop by drop infiltration of the layers of the skin gives what is necessary for the growth of the hair.

Now women in their physiology have an excess of qi and an insufficiency of blood, following the frequent loss of blood; chong mai and ren mai do not make her mouth and lips flourish and because of this she does not have a beard.

Eunuchs (by accident or operation) - their ancestral muscle (zong jin) has gone, their chong mai has been attacked, the blood has been dispersed without return, the skin is knotted on the inside; there is no flourishing at the lips and mouth, and this is why the beard does not grow... (With natural eunuchs) there is an insufficiency in their nature (tian); with them ren mai and chong mai have not risen in power (bu sheng) and the ancestral muscle (zong jin) is incomplete (bu cheng); they have qi, but not blood; the lips and mouth are not flourishing (bu rong) and because of this the beard does not grow.

Chong mai and ren mai become the key for all the network of animation and the meridians, but also are able to regulate the distribution of the blood. It is not only the distribution through the twelve meridians, and through the small and large valleys, but also to give the particular rules within the body of the man and woman, which of course are not the same. Ren and chong mai regulate the circulation of blood - for the woman that is the menstruation, for the man it is the growth of the beard.

In the second part of the text we can see again the important relationship between the zong jin, the ancestral muscle or the common point for the muscles, and the chong mai. This is another way to show the power of the chong mai because in the ancestral muscle lies the power of all movement, and for the man the power of the erection and therefore the power of reproduction.

In this same area there is the sea of blood, even for a man. That is why when you castrate someone you affect the muscular forces but you also affect the sea of blood, and therefore change something in the role of its animation through the chong mai. Because of that the man is unable to grow a beard, the fundamental rule of the circulation of his blood is changed and altered. It is the same thing with natural eunuchs; there is a deficiency and an abnormality in the rules of the circulation of blood from the beginning.

We can see here the importance of ren mai and chong mai for all gynaecological and obstetric problems. They are linked in their function to the kidneys, the liver, and maybe the gallbladder for the man, and also the heart and spleen as far as the blood is concerned.

AN ACUPUNCTURE COMPENDIUM: Chong Mai

(Davis, 2000)

Chong Mai has five pathways:

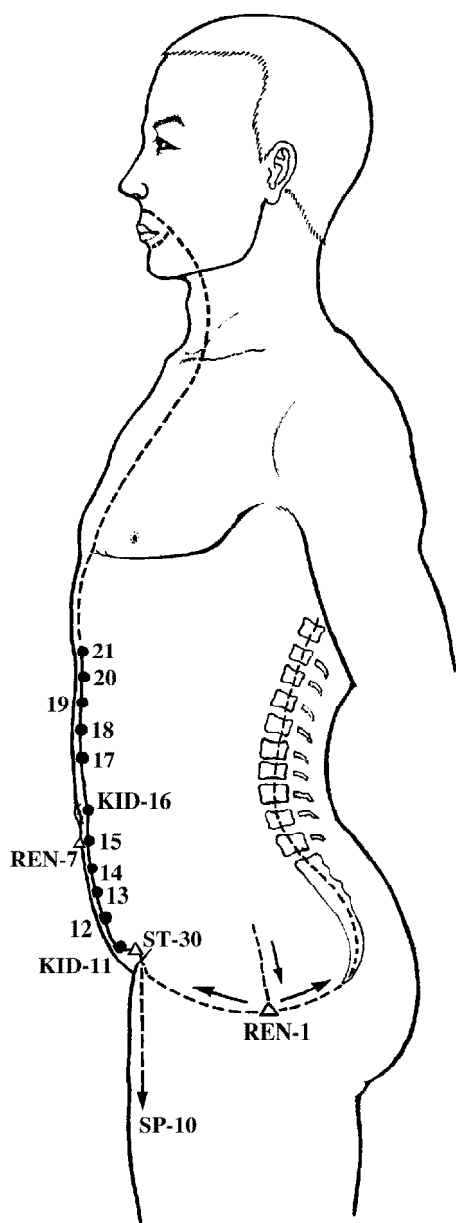
1. The main pathway commences in the lower abdomen (possibly the uterus in women, Matsumoto and Birch, 1986). It emerges in the Qi thoroughfare in the inguinal region (ST-30, Qi Chong), and ascends the abdomen with the Kidney Channel of foot Shao Yin, from KID-11 (Heng Gu) to KID-21 (You Men). It passes lateral to the umbilicus and travels to the chest. It disperses into the intercostal spaces.

2. This pathway begins where the previous pathway dispersed in the chest. It ascends the throat to the face, curves around the lips, and terminates in the nasal cavity.

3. This pathway emerges from the Qi thoroughfare of the lower abdomen at KID-11 (Heng Gu). It descends along the medial aspect of the thigh to the popliteal fossa, then continues down the medial aspect of the tibia. It passes posterior to the medial malleolus, then disperses in the plantar surface of the foot.

4. This pathway separates from ST-30 (Qi Chong), and travels down the lower limb to the medial malleolus, possibly encompassing the lateral margin of the tibia as it descends (O'Connor and Bensky, 1981). It enters the heel, crosses the tarsal bones of the foot, and reaches the big toe.

5. This pathway separates from the main Channel in the pelvic cavity. It runs to, and then ascends, inside the spinal column. It circulates through the back.



Chong Mai (modified from Shandong, 1982, p.64)

Chong Mai connects to the three Yin Meridians of the lower limb - Kidney Channel of foot Shao Yin, Spleen Channel of foot Tai Yin, and Liver Channel of foot Jue Yin (Matsumoto and Birch, 1986).

Points on this Meridian include: on Ren Mai (Conception Vessel), REN-1 (Hui Yin), REN-7 (Yin Jiao) (O'Connor and Bensky, 1981; Shandong, 1982); on the Stomach Channel of foot Yang Ming, ST-30 (Qi Chong); on the Kidney Channel of foot Shao Yin, 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).

Other points on this Meridian may include: on the Spleen Channel of foot Tai Yin, SP-10 (Xue Hai), (Rogers, 1981).

CHONG MAI SPECIAL POINTS/ COMMAND POINTS

SP-4 (Gong Sun): Master point

PC-6 (Nei Guan): Coupling point

FLOW OF QI/ DISTRIBUTION OF POINTS:

Lower Jiao: REN-1 (Hui Yin), ST-30 (Qi Chong), [SP-10 (Xue Hai)], KID-11 (Heng Gu), KID-12 (Da He), KID-13 (Qi Xue), KID-14 (Si Man), KID-15 (Zhong Zhu), REN-7 (Yin Jiao).

Middle Jiao: KID-16 (Huang Shu), KID-17 (Shang Qu), KID-18 (Shi Guan), KID-19 (Yin Du), KID-20 (Tong Gu), KID-21 (You Men).

Functions:

(O'Connor & Bensky, 1981; Ellis et al, 1988): Chong Mai is the sea of the main Channels. It has a regulating effect on all twelve primary Channels. Its main function is to regulate menstruation, but it may also be involved in male sexual irregularities. "The Penetrating Vessel is the sea of Blood" (Ellis et al., 1988).

(Ross, 1995): Tonifies the Qi of the Kidneys, Spleen and Stomach; tonifies the Blood of the Spleen and Heart; moves stagnant Qi and Blood in the Heart and chest, in the epigastrium, in the uterus, and in the arms and legs; calms emotions, calms Kidney fear, Spleen worry, and Heart anxiety.

Indications:

(O'Connor & Bensky, 1981; Ellis et al, 1988; Shandong, 1982): Gynaecological disorders including metrorrhagia, miscarriage and irregular menstruation; male sexual irregularities including impotence, prostatitis, urethritis, orchitis, and seminal emission; abdominal pain and fullness, periumbilical pain, indigestion, colic, dyspnoea, retained placenta.

LARRE & ROCHAT (1997)

PATHOLOGY OF CHONG MAI

Nan jing chapter 29:

When chong mai gives rise to illnesses the qi moves counter (to the normal) current (ni qi) and the inside is tense.

Su wen chapter 60:

When chong mai gives rise to illness, the qi ascends in counter-current and the inside is tense.

Elisabeth Rochat: There is no location for this pathology, just a general indication of a pathology following the function of chong mai. If the chong mai is the sea of all the pathways of animation, if it is able to give a good direction and good stimulation to all the circulation because it is everywhere - in

the legs as well as the trunk, in the front as well as in the rear - it has connections with all the meridians, or connections coming from the meridians. It is this broad and large road or street, from which all other circulation diverges.

There is a connection with this character chong with another character tong meaning free circulation. If the chong mai is unable to ensure free circulation and good communication, if it is unable to ensure a good direction for the qi, with the right proportion of qi, blood and essences, then that is a countercurrent. That the 'inside is tense' suggests a kind of contraction within the organism, perhaps due to a weakness and diminishing of blood and yin unable to irrigate the muscles. This pathology is similar to the pathology of the sea of blood in Ling shu chapter 33, with no specific place, and no specific symptoms. The chong mai is implicated wherever there is something wrong with the circulation, not just involving one or two meridians, but more generally. If there is a diminishing in the nourishment of the yin everywhere in the body that can be seen as a pathology of chong mai.

Normally and practically speaking the disturbances linked with chong mai are linked to the irregularity in the distribution of blood, especially for women. This is a practical application of the most general pathological indication of chong mai. This pathology is related to the qi and also to all the irrigation circulating with the qi. The jin mai is a system of distribution within the small and large valleys of the flesh and the muscles. It is the circulation of blood and qi and essences needed for movement and the nourishment of the muscles. If there is a kind of contraction in the interior, it is a general pathology affecting the jin mai, which is this regular animation, nourishment and irrigation of the muscles. Here we can also see the connection with the liver and gallbladder, and the spleen and stomach too.

If the counter-current of qi occurs in the chest at the level of the sea of qi, it would cause pain, even in the heart. And that is why some pains in the heart are related to chong mai. Also there may be pain and discomfort in the thorax with a feeling of being stifled, and respiratory disturbance, especially shortness of breath. Many different kinds of symptoms related to problems with the circulation of blood and qi everywhere in the trunk come under the authority of chong mai if it is just a general pattern of disorder.

Question: Is it possible to say a little about when you would decide to treat ren mai or chong mai in gynaecological problems, rather than say the spleen or the liver?

Elisabeth Rochat: It is up to each practitioner to have their own vision of the human life and the body. In this vision the eight extraordinary meridians are just the first structure, but we have to deal with the present structure of the person in front of us and we can make a diagnosis only in terms of ordinary meridians and zang and fu. For instance through the kidneys, and the play between the kidneys and stomach, you can treat even the deep and structural root of the person. But you can also enlarge that and have a different approach. When more than one or two zang or meridians are involved, just think about the principles behind these two zang or fu or meridians. When it seems that a specific function is involved, for example that it is something to do with the blood, or something to do with the general organisation of the circulation of qi, or something to do with a general weakness of yin, or a general weakness of yang, you can treat each of the zang and fu and meridians

concerned, or you can see in your vision the extraordinary meridians, which are like the common basis of them all. And as far as the treatment is concerned, I think that there is no difference, because whether the diagnosis is made with the extraordinary meridians, or the zang and fu and meridians, the points may be the same. Often with a zang and fu diagnosis you may choose to use points which are also points for the extraordinary meridians. You can also have the opposite approach, beginning your reasoning with the extraordinary meridians and adding other points for the complete treatment.

There are special techniques taught in schools on the extraordinary meridians, which are very well documented in the book 'The Extraordinary Vessels' by Matsumoto and Birch (Paradigm Publications). This is a very good clinical study of all the Japanese techniques using the extraordinary meridians.

For specific problems, for example with menstruation, there may be a relationship with one of the five zang, but generally speaking you can also use ren and chong mai. It is of course possible to make a more specific connection between chong mai and the spleen and liver for these kinds of problems, or with ren mai and the liver, spleen and kidney meridians, too. It is important to see that ren mai is more concerned with the yin and the blood itself, the production and the conservation of the blood, and chong mai rather more with the power of the blood and the correct working of the physiological function through the movement of the blood. At that level the answer is always in your practice.

MATSUMOTO & BIRCH (1986)

Chong Mai Symptomology

In the "Four Ocean" chapter of the Ling Shu, upper and lower transportation points are described for the chong mai, which is seen as the ocean of the twelve meridians and the ocean of the blood. These points are BL-11, ST-37 and ST-39. It is not clear whether these are trajectory, special or treatment points. Symptoms associated with these points denote a feeling of fullness in the body, for an excess blood condition; and a feeling of smallness in the body, for a deficient blood condition.

The chong mai was clearly seen to relate to the blood. The association of the chong mai with ST-37 and ST-39, points that have strong effects on the digestive system, helps explain why one modern practitioner uses the chong mai to treat stomach ulcers. The Ling Shu has another interesting discussion of the chong mai and its relationship to the blood and qi:

If the qi and blood are sufficient, the skin becomes healthy and the flesh has heat. If only the blood is sufficient, the blood moistens the skin and makes the body hair. Pre-natally, women have sufficient qi, but not enough blood. The ren mai and chong mai cannot nourish the mouth and lips sufficiently, which is why women do not have moustaches or beards. In the eunuch, having the zong muscle {penis and testicles} cut off damages the chong mai. The beard and moustache do not grow because the chong mai cannot nourish around the mouth.

This passage relates the chong mai to what we now call hormonal function. We have seen potential relationships of the extraordinary vessels to the endocrine system in an earlier chapter.

The Nan Jing symptoms are clear:

When the chong mai has problems, the symptoms will be rebellious qi and tension or contraction of the lining.

Tension or contraction of the lining is tension of the abdomen and abdominal muscles. Wang Shu He explains these symptoms:

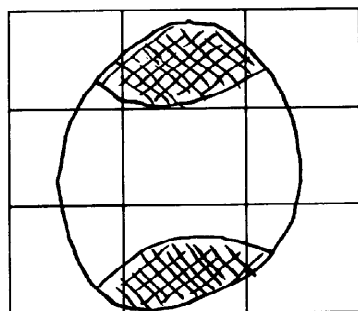
If the kidney qi is deficient, this deficiency damages the chong mai. The chong mai has rebellious qi, which does not rise up, making the lining tense with abdominal swelling and pain.

This clarifies the Nan Jing symptoms. Other authors, Li Shi Zhen and Gao Wu, for example, concur that this is a reference to abdominal tension.

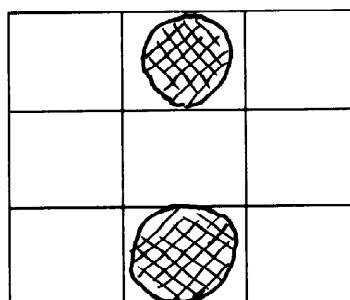
According to Wang Shu He, it is a yang pulse if both pulses are floating. If both are sinking, it is a yin pulse. If both the yin and yang are full, this is a pulse of both the du and chong mai:

Radial Artery Pulse Cross-Sections

The pulse is felt both superficially and deep:



The pulse feels like two separate pulses:



The chong mai and du mai combined are the way of the twelve meridians. If the chong and du mai do not function correctly, the twelve meridians will not return to the great meeting of the vessels (at LU-9). The patient will be in a trance, mad or idiotic. If the patient does not show these symptoms, the pulse diagnosis cannot possibly be correct. In a chong mai pulse, the first and third positions will evidence the prison quality: deep, strong and hard. The pulse will rise and fall perpendicularly, and the symptoms will include a feeling of something in the chest that causes coldness or pain. If the middle pulse feels fuller and harder than the other positions, this too is a chong mai pulse. Symptoms will be: pain in the lower abdomen, pain caused by movement, the feeling that there is a stick pressing the heart, lumps, inability to become pregnant, dripping urine with incontinence, discomfort or fullness below the ribs {similar to chest distress}.

The relationship of the kidney qi and the chong mai is also interesting, supporting the interpretation of a connection between the chong mai and the moving qi between the kidneys. This is explicitly stated in the Tai Su and implied by other texts. Li Shi Zhen, citing the Ling Shu, says:

When treating rebellious qi that rises to the upper parts, treat the places on the chest that are depressed {CV-17 or CV-22}. Below this,

find a moving pulse and needle it. . . . For abdominal pain, which is related to the chong mai, put needles on the right and left moving pulses near the umbilicus. If this does not eliminate the pain immediately, treat qichong {ST-30}.

Gao Wu tells us that if there is rebellious qi and tension of the abdomen, choose points from KI-11 to KI-21. We may infer that Gao Wu is referring to palpation of the points to find reaction, or examining the effects of each of the points to see if they treat the patient's symptoms.

POINTS OF CHONG MAI, PART 1

CV-1 (*huì yīn*)

會 *huì*: meeting, convergence

陰 *yīn*: yin, the complement of yang

會陰

Meeting of Yin

Location: In the centre of the perineum, midway between the anus and the posterior margin of the external genitalia - which is the posterior border of the scrotum in males and the posterior labial commissure in females.

Features & Categories: Intersection point of Du Mai (Governing Vessel) and Chong Mai (Penetrating Vessel) on Ren Mai - initial acupuncture point of all three Vessels. 11th of the 13 Ghost points - Gui Cang, Ghost Store. General Luo-Connecting point of the Yin.

Functions: Strengthens the lumbar and benefits the Kidneys; benefits Jing; regulates Chong Mai (Penetrating Vessel) and Ren Mai; nourishes Yin; clears Heat and resolves Damp; restores consciousness.

Indications: Genital itch; vaginitis; irregular menstruation; urethritis; vaginal discharge; pruritis vulvae; pain and swelling of the anus; urinary retention; enuresis; incontinence; nocturnal seminal emission; prostatitis; mania and withdrawal; fainting; respiratory failure; asphyxia.

Supplementary Indications: Genital sweating; pain at the glans of the penis; postpartum stupor; vaginal protrusion; pain and swelling of the vagina; chronic hemorrhoids; inability to urinate and defecate; Cold at the glans of the penis; Heat in the Portals; Connecting Vessel Excess or Deficiency; abdominal skin pain; itch; sudden infantile convulsions; pain or swelling of the lower abdomen, possibly reaching the genitals; hernia; revival from drowning.

ST-30 (*qì chōng*)

氣 *qì*: qi

冲 *chōng*: to flush, surge; a thoroughfare; important place;
to rush against

氣冲

Surging Qi

Location: At the lower border of the abdomen in the depression immediately superior to the pubic bone. The point is located 2 cun lateral to Ren Mai point REN-2 (Qu Gu), 1.5 cun lateral to KID-11 (Heng Gu), and medial to the femoral nerve and vessels. This location is 5 cun inferior to the level of the umbilicus (ST-25, Tian Shu).

Features & Categories: Intersection point of the Gall Bladder Channel of foot Shao Yang, Ren Mai (Conception Vessel), Chong Mai (Penetrating Vessel), and Du Mai (Governing Vessel) on the Stomach Channel. Point of the Sea of Nourishment (ST-30, ST-36).

Functions: Soothes the Sinews; disperses counterflow Qi; regulates Stomach Qi; regulates the Urinary Bladder; harmonizes Ying and Blood; regulates Chong Mai (Penetrating Vessel); benefits Jing.

Indications: Pain and swelling of the external genitalia; hernia; abdominal pain or masses; borborygmus; irregular menstruation; other menstrual disorders; retained placenta; swollen prostate; impotence; diseases of the reproductive organs generally.

Supplementary Indications: Abdominal pain and sagging; infertility; fullness in the lateral costal region; severe abdominal distension and fullness; colic; prolapse of the rectum; sensation of pain and weakness of the shins; urinary retention; dysuria; oedema; difficulty in lactation; foetus surging up below the heart causing pain that makes rest difficult; disorders related to childbirth; impotence; Stomach/Spleen deficiency; rumbling intestines.

DEADMAN'S COMMENTARY

The name of this point Qichong may be translated as 'Rushing Qi' or 'Pouring Qi'. The character 'chong' is the same as in the Penetrating vessel (chong mai). This name reflects both the ability of Qichong ST-30 to regulate the circulation of qi in the lower abdomen and its status as the point where the Penetrating vessel emerges on the abdomen. Qichong ST-30 has a broad action in treating many disorders affecting this area. By regulating qi, Qichong ST-30 may be used to disperse stagnation, pain, cold and heat in the genital region, intestines, Bladder and the abdomen as a whole, and is indicated for such disorders as pain, fullness and distention of the lower abdomen, abdominal heat, twisting pain of the abdomen, heat in the Large Intestine, retention of urine and faeces, hot painful urinary dysfunction, stone oedema etc.

The Penetrating vessel emerges at the perineum and meets the Stomach yangming channel at Qichong ST-30. The Penetrating vessel influences the lower abdomen as a whole, including the genital organs, and especially helps regulate the function of the uterus and menstruation. Qichong ST-30 is therefore indicated for such genital disorders as swelling and pain of the penis and vagina, pain and retraction of the testicles, impotence etc., and such gynaecological and obstetrical disorders as irregular menstruation, sudden amenorrhoea, abnormal uterine bleeding, infertility, retention of the placenta and difficult lactation.

According to the Classic of Difficulties, when the Penetrating vessel is diseased, there will be upsurging qi and acute abdominal disturbance. Qichong ST-30, located on the lower abdomen and the point where the Penetrating vessel emerges, is the single most important point in the treatment of running piglet qi. According to the Essentials from the Golden Cabinet "Running piglet disorder arises from the lower abdomen; it rushes up to the throat with such ferocity that the patient feels he is close to death. It attacks and then remits. It is brought about by fear and fright". Running piglet qi primarily arises when stagnant Liver qi transforms to heat, or when Kidney yang deficiency leads to accumulation of cold in the lower jiao. In both cases, qi is violently discharged and rushes upwards along the Penetrating vessel causing great agitation and anxiety. Qichong ST-30 is also indicated for

foetal qi rushing up to the Heart. This condition, described by Zhu Dan-xi, manifests as distention, fullness and pain of the abdomen and Heart in a pregnant woman.

In the chapter 'Discourse On the Seas' in the Spiritual Pivot Qichong ST-30 is given as the upper point of the 'sea of water and grain' (Zusanli ST-36 is the lower point). According to this passage, when the sea of water and grain is in excess, there is abdominal fullness, and when it is deficient there is hunger with inability to eat. Finally, the Essential Questions includes Qichong ST-30 among the eight points to clear heat from the Stomach (bilateral Qichong ST-30, Zusanli ST-36, Shangjuxu ST-37 and Xiajuxu ST-39).

CLASSICAL COMBINATIONS

- Insomnia: Qichong ST-30 and Zhangmen LIV-13 (Supplementing Life).
- Prolapse of the rectum: Qichong ST-30, Dachangshu BL-25, Baihui DU-20, Changqiang DU-1, Jianjing GB-21 and Hegu L.I.-4 (Compilation).
- Stone oedema of the upper abdomen: moxa Qichong ST-30, Rangu KID-2, Siman KID-14 and Zhangmen LIV-13 (Thousand Ducat Formulas).

SP-10 (*xuè hǎi*)

血 *xuè*: blood

海 *hǎi*: sea

血海

Sea of Blood

Location: On the superior medial aspect of the knee, in the prominent muscular bulge of vastus medialis muscle. With the knee flexed to 90° the point is 2 cun proximal to the superior medial corner of the patella.

An alternative means of location is for the acupuncturist to place his/her left palm on the patient's right flexed knee (or vice-versa). The point is located at the tip of the thumb, which should be held at 45° from the palm.

Features & Categories: Intersecting point of Chong Mai (Penetrating Vessel) on the Spleen Channel, [from Carol Rogers, 1981].

Functions: Regulates and Cools the Blood; harmonizes Ying Qi and cools Heat; rectifies the Lower Jiao; regulates menstruation.

Indications: Irregular menstruation; amenorrhea; metrorrhagia; pain on the medial aspect of the thigh; eczema; urticaria; pruritis; erysipelas; neurodermatitis; anemia.

Supplementary Indications: Malign blood discharge from the uterus; painful, itching sores or red, swollen purulent sores on the medial aspect of the thigh; genital sores; urinary frequency, urgency, difficulty and incontinence.

DEADMAN'S COMMENTARY

The name of Xuehai SP-10 (Sea of Blood) reflects its pre-eminent role in treating various disorders at the blood level. It is generally recognised as having two principal actions:

- invigorating the blood and dispelling stasis, and
- cooling the blood.

These two actions find their expression in its ability to treat a wide range of gynaecological and dermatological disorders due either to blood stasis or to heat in the blood.

As far as gynaecology is concerned, normal menstruation depends on a number of factors including the smooth circulation of blood. Impairment of blood circulation and consequent stasis may be due to a variety of causes including stagnation or deficiency of qi, traumatic injury, haemorrhage, penetration of cold or heat, chronic disease or emotional factors, and may give rise to many different disorders of menstruation. These include dysmenorrhoea and uterine bleeding characterised by severe fixed pain and the discharge of dark or clotted blood, and amenorrhoea accompanied by distention and pain, a purple coloured tongue and a choppy pulse.

By contrast, if heat enters the blood level, most frequently due to internally generated heat from the Liver or Heart or over-consumption of excessively heating foods, then two principal conditions may arise:

- i. the movement of blood may become reckless and overflow its bounds leading to profuse uterine bleeding, or less commonly,
- ii. the heat may desiccate the blood leading to amenorrhoea.

In both cases there will be signs of heat such as a red dry tongue and a rapid pulse. In fact, both the blood cooling and blood invigorating properties of Xuehai SP-10 come together in its ability to treat uterine bleeding. Blood heat is the most commonly seen pattern of uterine bleeding, but as well as cooling blood, treatment must emphasise resolving stasis, since any pathological bleeding may lead to pooling and stagnation of extravasated blood. This is expressed in the Chinese medicine saying "where there is haemorrhage there is stasis" .

The close inter-relationship between blood heat and blood stasis is further illustrated by the fact that blood heat may condense and dry the blood giving rise to stasis, as stated in the Treatise on Epidemic Warm Febrile Disease "Because latent stagnant fire evaporates the blood's fluid, the blood simmers and forms stasis".

Some authorities further attribute blood nourishing properties to Xuehai SP-10 and incorporate it into prescriptions for the treatment of blood deficiency. In the light of Xuehai SP-10's pre-eminence in invigorating blood, this action reflects the saying in Chinese medicine "if blood stasis is not transformed, new blood cannot be generated". This refers to situations where blood stasis has pooled outside the channels, leading directly to blood deficiency as sufficient blood is no longer available to nourish the body. This complex pattern of haemorrhage with both consequent blood stasis and blood deficiency is commonly encountered after childbirth and profuse uterine bleeding.

As far as dermatology is concerned, blood disharmony often plays a central role. The main dermatological patterns treated by Xuehai SP-10 are heat in the blood level characterised by red lesions, and blood stasis characterised by purple lesions. Xuehai SP-10 may also be used for the concomitant blood deficiency and stasis seen for example in eczema with thickening of the skin (lichenification) or post-herpetic neuralgia. Xuehai SP-10 may also be used to treat the manifestations of wind in skin diseases, the most important of which is intolerable itching. This illustrates the Chinese medicine saying "to treat wind first treat the blood; once blood moves wind will be dispelled".

Although the action of Xuehai SP-10 on invigorating and cooling blood is classically confined to the two principal areas of gynaecology and dermatology, there are in fact relatively few acupuncture points able to treat the blood directly. For this reason, its application may be extended to any disorder in the body with these pathologies. Thus the Song of the Primary Points of the Fourteen Channels says "Xuehai SP-10 can treat all blood diseases".

CLASSICAL COMBINATIONS

- Irregular menstruation: Xuehai SP-10 and Dijī SP-8 (One Hundred Patterns).
- Amenorrhoea: Xuehai SP-10 and Daimai GB-26 (Supplementing Life).
- The five types of painful urinary dysfunction: Xuehai SP-10 and Qihai REN-6 (One Hundred Symptoms).
- The five types of painful urinary dysfunction: Xuehai SP-10 and Dadun LIV-1 (Song of Points).
- Running piglet qi in women: Xuehai SP-10, Sanyinjiao SP-6, Qimen LIV-14, Guanyuan REN-4, Zhongji REN-3 and Shimen REN-5 (Supplementing Life). Urticaria: Xuehai SP-10, Fengmen BL-12, Quchi L.I.-11 and Weizhong BL-40.

KI-11 (*héng gǔ*)

橫 *héng*: horizontal, crosswise

谷 *gǔ*: bone

橫骨

Pubic Bone

Location: At the inferior border of the abdomen 5 fen lateral to Ren Mai point REN-2 (Qu Gu). The point is located in the depression immediately superior to the pubic bone. This is 5 cun inferior to the level of the umbilicus (KID-16, Huang Shu). ST-30 (Qi Chong) is located 1.5 cun lateral to KID-11 (Heng Gu).

Features & Categories: Intersection point of Chong Mai (Penetrating Vessel) on the Kidney Channel.

Functions: Tonifies the Stomach and resolves Damp.

Indications: Pain in the genitals; nocturnal seminal emission; impotence; dysuria; urinary retention; urethritis; hernia.

Supplementary Indications: Abdominal distension; lower abdominal pain; chronic prolapse of the rectum; painful protraction of the genitals; enuresis; urinary frequency, urgency, difficulty or incontinence; swelling of the lower extremities.

CLASSICAL COMBINATIONS

- Stagnation of qi, lumbar pain with inability to stand: Henggu KID-11 and Dadu SP-2 (Ode of Xi-hong).
- The five types of painful urinary dysfunction from chronic accumulation:: Henggu KID-11 and Huangshu KID-16 (One Hundred Symptoms).