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LESSON 25  
OF  
31 LESSONS

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The people of the entire English-speaking world owe a debt of gratitude  
to the acupuncturists and medical researchers  
who have made possible this correspondence course. Thanks go to:

Dr. Nguyen Van Nghi,  
Charles H. McWilliams,  
Dale E. Brown,  
Gregory Delaney

Full acknowledgements are found in Lesson 31

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# MODERN & TRADITIONAL ACUPUNCTURE

## LESSON 25

### THE EXTRA OR ANCESTRAL MERIDIANS

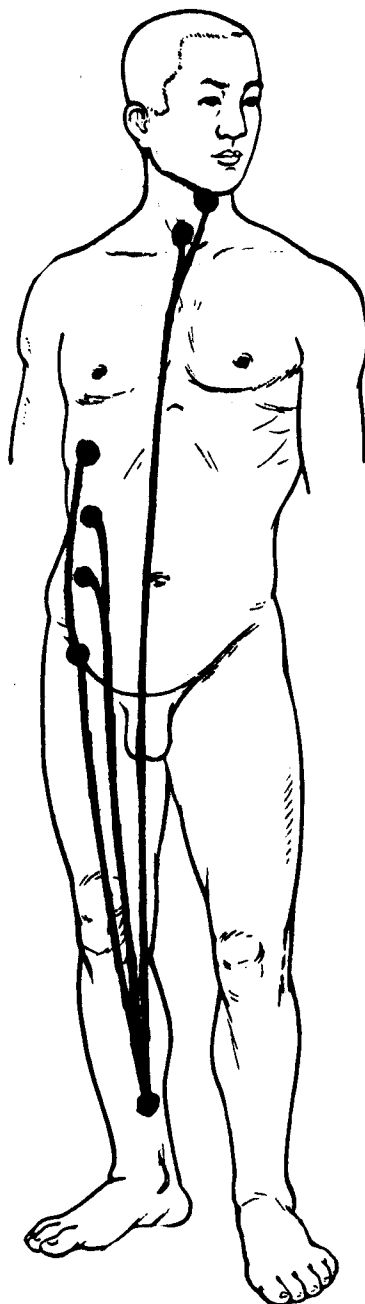


DIAGRAM ILLUSTRATES YIN WEI VESSEL SEGMENTAL CONCEPT (Page 12)  
Note: This Institute respectfully acknowledges the extensive contributions of its mentor, Dr. Nguyen Van Nghi (Vietnamese), to the material presented in this Lesson. Much of this information appears here for the first time in the English language.

## THE EXTRA OR ANCESTRAL MERIDIANS

The term "Extra meridians" for those covered in this Lesson is used in contrast to the principal or main meridians (chings) which naturally constitute the most important part of the complete meridian system. The word "Ancestral" in regard to these meridians comes from the fact that these special meridians or vessels are concerned with "Ancestral Energy" as described in Lesson Ten (page 15). The two terms, Extra or Ancestral, can be used interchangeably in referring to the meridians or vessels discussed in this Lesson.

There are eight such Extra or Ancestral vessels (or meridians). Their main role is to supply energy to the spaces between the principal meridians. The classics figuratively describe their function as follows: "The principal meridians are the rivers of the body, the extra meridians are the lakes". As regards their individual peculiarities, their names give us an initial explanation:

TOU MO (or Du Mai): Signifies "commander or governor". The Tou Mo or Governing Vessel follows the posterior midline of the back and head. It commands all of the Yang meridians of the body, and hence its other name as "the sea of all Yang meridians".

JEN MO (or Ren Mai): Signifies "responsibility or director". The Jen Mo or "Director Vessel" follows the anterior midline of the abdomen, chest and throat. It is responsible for all of the Yin meridians, and hence its other name as "the sea of all Yin meridians". The term Jen Mo has been translated in error as Conception Vessel. We will however maintain the term Conception Vessel in spite of its inaccuracy because it is the most common terminology for this vessel in North America and Europe.

CHONG MO (Ch'ung Mo or Chong Mai): Signifies "strategic or vital points". The Chong Mo is a vessel which joins or reunites the important points of the Kidney meridian at the level of the abdomen and thorax (Lesson 19). The Kidney meridian on the abdomen is a deep running meridian and its points emerge to the external part where they are joined or linked to, and by, the Chong Mo Vessel.

TAI MO (or Dai Mai): Signifies "belt". This meridian circulates under the false ribs and circles the body once horizontally. Most of the principal meridians passing vertically at this level are obliged to place themselves under the command of the Tai Mo vessel like a bundle of sticks wrapped in the middle with a cord. The Tai Mo is therefore superficial like a belt, and the principal meridians encircled by it are at a somewhat more deep level.

The CHIAO VESSELS (Chiao Mai or Ch'iao): Chiao signifies "force, strength and movement". It is also the transliterated name given in Chinese to the "heel", and some authors call them Heel Vessels. The two Chiao Vessels (YIN and YANG) have their origin near the ankles, the Yin Chiao at the internal malleolus, and the Yang Chiao at the external malleolus. Their role is to direct or control all the movements of the body. They ascend up to the internal corner of the eye in order to support the movement of the eyelids, etc.

The WEI VESSELS (or Wei Mai): Wei signifies "to connect, regulate, or bind". One has its pathway in the Yin region and contacts all the Yin meridians (the YIN WEI) and the other has its pathway in the Yang region and reunites all the Yang meridians (YANG WEI).

Each extra or ancestral vessel has its own function and its own pathway, yet you will see that they cannot totally be separated from the principal meridians because most of these extra meridians do not have their own acupuncture points and must therefore utilize certain such points from the principal meridians. Only the Governor and the Conception Vessels (which together encircle the body at its vertical midline) have, as you already know, their own acupuncture points and it is for this reason that these two midline vessels are sometimes classed among the principal meridians (ie. fourteen meridians rather than just the principal twelve). In this Lesson we will describe the pathways of most of the extra vessels and their major functions. Additionally, we will detail the symptomatology corresponding to disturbances in these extra vessels, as these symptoms are about the only way that we can diagnostically recognize their disturbances.

The origin of these extra meridians has been the object of numerous discussions throughout the ages. From the very first, these meridians were not subjugated by the same rules of Yin-Yang alternation as accorded to the principal meridians. They are simply considered as conductors that transport the Ancestral Energy of the Kidneys to the different parts of the body, in particular towards the Singular Organs (see Lesson Ten, page 16). Sometimes they flow directly and sometimes they flow through the intermediary of the principal meridians. In the latter case, they let out their energy into the meridians and receive from them Yong and Wei energy, so that no matter in which meridian or part of the body, superficial or deep, nor whether organs or viscera, there circulates without ceasing the three kinds of energy, namely Yong, Wei and Ancestral.

According to the Yellow Emperor's Classic (Nei Ching): "The Tou Mo (Governor Vessel) and the Jen Mo (Conception Vessel) take their source at the Kidneys. They communicate equally with the Yin and the Yang of the Universe."....."The Chong Mo (Strategic Vessel) is the sea of the twelve meridians, similar to other ones from the Kidneys (Go and Co). It has its origin at that organ, then descends to the genital parts. It then rises towards the upper part of the body, circulates to the exterior, thrusts into the chest. It circulates equally in the meridians."

There is no doubt that the three extra vessels, Tou Mo, Jen Mo and Chong Mo have their origin at the level of the suprarenal glands (part of the 'Kidneys' to the Chinese). Like the principal meridians the extra meridians must submit to the law of nature (Tao). In other words, they are Yang or Yin according to the region of their pathways. Thus, circulating at the posterior part of the body, the Tou Mo is Yang. For the same reason, the Jen Mo which circulates in the anterior part is Yin. As for the five other extra meridians, Yin and Yang Chiao, Yin and Yang Wei, and Tai Mo, they are 'extra' because of the process of circulation of the Chong Mo:

Again we offer quotes from the Nei Ching: From the very first, through the numerous ramifications of Chong Mo at the level of the abdomen, of the chest and of the internal surface of the lower limb, the Ancestral Energy travels through the flesh, the tissues and the interosseous spaces. The Ancestral Energy circulates accordingly outside of the meridians, like the Wei (defensive) energy."...."This energy 'outside of the meridians' penetrates into the principal meridians at the 'Ting' points [see Lesson 14]. It then circulates like the Yong and Wei energies in the meridians."....."Finally, the Ancestral Energy circulating in the flesh and epidermis, re-enters into the meridians at the Ting point, then circulates in the principal meridians in order to fulfill the complete cycle of the circulation."

When this Ancestral Energy penetrates into the Ting points and reaches points Ki-2, Ki-9, Bl-62, Bl-63 and GB-26, a great part of that energy, accompanied by a small quantity of Yong and Wei energy, passes successively into the Yin Chiao, Yin Wei, Yang Chiao, Yang Wei, and Tai Mo Vessels. Topographically then, these five meridians are secondary vessels of the corresponding principal meridians. But physiologically seen, they serve as vehicles for the Ancestral Energy. This then is why they are considered as extra meridians in relation to the other vessels (ie. distinct meridians, Lo vessels, tendino-muscular meridians, etc.). Thus, the extra meridians have some very close relationships with the principal meridians. The classics have not hesitated to compare these extra meridians to a canal system and the principal meridians to main waterways, which is a most interesting and generally exact comparison. This comparison of course invites further explanation, however one can find this explanation only in the actual therapeutics of these extra meridians.

#### THE GOVERNOR VESSEL (Tu Mo or Du Mai)

The discussion of the external pathway of the Governor Vessel (the part with acupuncture points) as given in Lesson 22, is not sufficient to fully understand the many pathological manifestations of this important vessel. Thus, before describing the types of disturbances affecting this vessel, it will be necessary to examine in detail the entire course of this vessel, from the standpoint of its external, internal, and secondary ramifications.

The Governor Vessel has its source at the Kidneys, arrives at the genital-urinary organs, inserts itself into the perineum at the point Co-1 (Ren 1), and passes to the first point of its own meridian, namely Go-1 (Du 1), from where the "Lo Vessel" of the Governor Vessel [Lo Vessels are discussed in a later Lesson] departs as well. It then ascends along the vertebral column, connecting briefly to the Bladder meridian at Bl-12, continues upward to the back of the neck, where at Go-16 (and Go-17) it sends a secondary branch to the brain. It then ascends further to the summit or crown of the head and forward to the forehead, descends to the nose and through the upper lip to the gum, where it meets with the Conception Vessel and

a secondary branch from the Stomach meridian. The above is basically the pathway of the external portion of the Governing Vessels containing acupuncture points.

From Go-16, a secondary branch descends to the shoulder and to the scapula (shoulder-blade) in order to join itself to the Tendino-muscular meridian of the Bladder [Tendino-muscular meridians to be discussed in a later Lesson], descends to the buttocks and comes to an end in the genital-urinary region.

The internal branch of the Governor Vessel from the level of the genital organs produces a ramification which emerges at the middle of the pubic hairs at the Co-2 (Ren 2) point and splits into two separate internal branches. The "Abdominal Branch" follows the Tendino-muscular meridian of the Spleen and flows into the navel (umbilicus), rises the length of the internal wall of the abdomen, traverses the heart, comes out again at the chest to join itself to the anterior vessel of the Tendino-muscular meridian of the Bladder. It then reaches to the throat and the face, penetrates into the center of the eye and comes to an end at the point B1-1. The "Dorsal Branch" follows the genital-urinary organs and passes to the rectum, outlines the buttocks and joins itself to the Tendino-muscular meridian of the Bladder in order to climb again to the head, up to the internal corner of the eye at the B1-1 point, where it penetrates into the brain as well. From that B1-1 point, it follows the principal meridian of the Bladder in order to descend again to the neck and the renal region, where at B1-23 it penetrates into the Kidneys.

#### DISTURBANCES OF THE GOVERNOR VESSEL

- a) Essential signs of disturbances of the Governor Vessel itself:
  1. In states of fullness: Stiffness and pains in the region of the vertebral column (often backward bend to spine).
  2. In states of emptiness: A feeling of heaviness or "emptiness" in the head.
- b) Disturbances (attack) of the Governor Vessel are generally associated with troubles of its secondary vessels, as follows:
  1. Renal pains with fever. Sometimes neck stiffness and urinary incontinence. When it concerns a severe illness, the patient has the feeling as if he were "stiff as a board".
  2. Pain at the heart, radiating to the back. This indicates that there is conflict between the Yin and the Yang. When there is disequilibrium between the Yin and the Yang, there is pain either in front, or in back, at the chest or at the sides with sensations of the energy climbing (ascending) to the upper part of the body.
  3. Pain at the lower part of the abdomen, radiating up to the heart. If this occurs in a woman, she will present sterility, some urinary troubles (retention or incontinence), hemorrhoids, and dryness of the throat.
  4. Intermittent fever, when the perverse energy (pathogenic climatic energy such as from excessive exposure to wind) penetrates into the Go-16 point. This fever may or may not be accompanied by meningitic symptoms, ie. stiffness of the neck, of the vertebral column, visual disorders.

DISTURBANCES OF THE CONCEPTION VESSEL (Jen Mo or Ren Mai)

## a) Symptoms of disturbances in the secondary vessels:

1. Disturbances of the vessels that lead to the face\*: Internal branch pains and swelling of the lips and the gums, the sick person has difficulty speaking, spasms and contracture of the face musculature with deviation of the eyes and the mouth (facial distortion). Eye pains with uninterrupted tearing and itching. Eyelid spasms.
2. Disturbances of the internal abdominal vessel\*\*: In fullness, the skin of the abdomen is painful (sedate Co-15). In emptiness, itching of the skin of abdomen (tonify Co-15).

## b) Symptoms of disturbance of the Conception Vessel itself:

1. Renal pains: The sick person sweats and when sweat ceases he wants to drink. After having eaten, he wants to stretch or run about. General uneasy feeling inside the body.
2. Seven types of genital\*\*\* ailments in the male, which can be provoked either by the perverse energy or by the disequilibrium between the energy or the blood:
  - through cold, the scrotum is contracted and hard, the testicles are painful but without inflammatory signs;
  - through dampness, hydrocele (collection of serous fluid in the serous sheath of the testis and epididymis). Sometimes this perverse energy attacks the Yang (heat) and in that case the hydrocele is accompanied by inflammatory signs;
  - through chronic accumulation of dampness, elephantiasis (filariasis);
  - through overworking, excessive fatigue or disappointment. The Yin energy of the body is no longer able to ascend to the upper part of the body. It localizes itself in the genital parts, resulting in orchitis (inflammation of the testis) and torsion of the testicle;
  - through poor circulation, hematocele;
  - through renal insufficiency (after sexual excesses), prostatorrhoea.
3. In the female: Leukorrhoea (fluor albus), sometimes abdominal growth or masses.

\* See Lesson 15, Page 1, second paragraph under section (1) regarding Internal Branch.

\*\* The abdominal vessel (secondary branch) of this meridian starts at point Co-15 (Ren 15), spreads out downwards and laterally into the abdominal cavity to about the horizontal level of the navel and links up with some of the branches of the Chong Mo Vessel. This was not discussed in the Lesson on the Conception Vessel because this secondary branch is also its "Lo Vessel" and Lo Vessels are discussed together in a later Lesson.

\*\*\* Some authors say seven kinds of "hernias" instead, however this is possibly due to a misnomer of the original transliterated character, and perhaps should mean male "genital hernias".



CHONG MO VESSEL (Chong Mai)

Like the Governor and the Conception Vessels the Chong Mo also has besides its main pathway an inner vessel branch and secondary branches. See Figure 22, un-numbered page 59 of textbook.

The Chong Mo originates in the Kidneys, flows downwards to the genital region, where the left and right branches from the Kidneys unite themselves at Co-1 (Ren 1) and then part themselves again into two courses, a posterior one and an anterior one. The posterior one runs up the internal surface of the vertebral column. The anterior one follows the Conception Vessel to the Co-4 (Ren 4) point, then runs across (bilaterally) to the principal meridian of the Kidney, meeting it at point Ki-11, and along the Kidney meridian to the Ki-21 point (connecting with Kidney meridian points #11 to 21, inclusive). On the way through the abdomen here it gives off numerous branches that discharge into the Tendino-muscular meridians of the Small Intestine and the Stomach and one major branch from Ki-15 to Co-7 (Ren 7). The Chong Mo Vessel then runs upwards on the thorax to the Ki-27 point, and on its way there spreads numerous branches into the intercostal spaces. It then runs further upwards to the throat, meets its bilateral component and unites with the Conception Vessel and the Yin Wei Vessel at the Co-23 (Ren 23) point, climbs further upwards to the face and circles around the lips.

From the Ki-11 point a secondary vessel branches off that runs to the inner side of the thigh and discharges into the Kidney meridian. Another branch of this runs further to the calf, to the inner malleolus and to the inner edge of the foot. In the course of this latter branch, numerous ramifications disperse into the various regions of the lower limbs. From that Ki-11 point, yet another such branch runs to the St-30 point, runs obliquely to the calf, to the inner malleolus and to the big toe, where it circles around the big toe and about-turns back to the inner malleolus.

DISTURBANCES OF THE CHONG MO VESSEL

a) Disturbances of the inner branch and the main pathway on the abdomen:

1. Pains in the renal region that hinder bending backwards or forwards; in bending backwards the patient has the feeling of loosing his balance. The interruption of Chong Mo circulation is often a disturbance resulting from heavy lifting.
2. Feeling of constraint or distention inside the body.
3. Feeling of heaviness and pain in the abdomen, linked with an impression that the energy is ascending to the upper part of the body.

4. Genital troubles:

In the woman: Pain and swelling of the vagina, vaginal pruritis, Yin fullness at the uterus, hemorrhage, uterine inflammation, uterine prolapse, vaginal spasm, metritis, uterine displacement, dysmenorrheas, painful menses, white or red leukorrhoea, sterility.

In the male: Swelling and pain at the penis, inflammation of scrotum, urethritis, impotence, spermatorrhea, prostaticorrhea.

- b) Disturbances of the branch that runs to the thorax and face:
1. Precordial pain and dyspnea with impression that the energy is rising to the head.
  2. Dyspnea, angina, aphonia with sensation of contraction or constriction of the throat.
  3. Dryness of the mouth and of the nose.
- c) Disturbances of the branch descending to the lower limb:
1. Pain in the groin, pain and cramps on the inner surface of the thigh, in the calf.
  2. Pains in the inner surface of the foot, pain in the big toe, with the feeling of ice cold feet up to the knee.

### THE TAI MO VESSEL (Dai Mai or Belt Channel)

The Tai Mo Vessel originates near the lower ribs and at the point that carries its name (GB-26), passes downward to the renal region, GB-27, and circles around the abdomen once in a single track (on different levels in front and back), to unite at the GB-28 point with the Gall Bladder meridian. See Figure 23, un-numbered page 61 of the textbook. Some authors state this meridian starts at the Liver Thirteen point although we can find little classical support or clinical significance for such a statement.

### DISTURBANCES OF THE TAI MO VESSEL

The Tai Mo is a special kind of vessel because it encircles or bundles together the remaining meridians and thus has a great deal of command over them. Its disturbances are always harmful to some of the meridians it surrounds and that are under its command so to speak. For this reason we must look at a few fundamental comments regarding it, in order to better understand the physio-pathology of this vessel.

A good functional capacity of the Tai Mo is dependent on the energy of the Yang Ming (Stomach) and the Ancestral Energy. But, the Tai Mo is also dependent on the state of the principal meridian of the Gall Bladder as it originates out of it. The Gall Bladder meridian then plays not only the role of an intermediary between Yin and Yang (Interior and Exterior, Su Wen) but also builds the axis of rotation (hinge) between the Tai Yang Energetic Layer (Bl and SI) and the Yang Ming Energetic Layer (St and LI). This is why when this hinge or axis of rotation does not function properly, there is paralysis of movement (Nei Ching). This idea also demonstrates the action of the course of the Gall Bladder meridian on the pathways of the Yang Ming (Stomach) and Tai Yang (Bladder), the troubles of these latter two being more aggravated by an attack or disturbance of the Tai Mo Vessel. (The Gall Bladder meridian also ties together the Tai Mo and Yang Wei Vessel in an energetical relationship.)

Thus, in practice, the symptomatology alone is always insufficient for complete diagnosis and treatment, and a knowledge of the intricacies and origins (knots and roots, classically) is always

necessary as well. As stated in the Nei Ching: "Acupuncture consists primarily in knowing or recognizing where the beginning and end of all illnesses are found."

Which meridians are held together by the Tai Mo? The Su Wen names the meridians situated at the level of the abdomen that are commanded by the Tai Mo: Stomach, Chong Mo, Kidney, Spleen, Conception Vessel and Governor Vessel. In other words since the Gall Bladder meridian is obviously affected by the Tai Mo as a part and parcel of it, that leaves only the meridians of the Liver and Bladder that are independent of any disturbance in the Tai Mo Vessel. This concept is important, for it indicates the mechanism of disequilibrium of the Tai Mo and its treatment. When the Yang Ming is weakened, the Tai Mo is no longer nourished and functions poorly. In this contracted state, the Tai Mo prevents or obstructs the circulation in the meridians it encircles like a very tightened belt would impair the circulation there, and this provokes the paralysis of the legs.

In summary, the essential sign of a disturbance (or attack) of the Tai Mo Vessel is a degree of paralysis in the lower limbs. Often this paralysis is preceded by advance symptoms such as a sensation as if the sick person were sitting in water up to the waist, or a sensation of difficulty or fullness at the interior of the abdomen, with weakness of the legs (the joints seem loose or slack), and in females sometimes irregular menstruation.

#### THE YIN CHIAO VESSEL (Yinchiao Mai)

The Yin Chiao is a secondary vessel of the principal meridian of the Kidneys. It begins near the Ki-2 point and goes direct to Ki-6 and Ki-8. It then runs superficially up the medial surface of the leg to the thigh, and penetrates into the genital organs at the Co-2 (Ren 2) point. From there it goes into the interior of the abdomen and runs on its inner wall up to the chest, coming out above the clavicle at the St-12 point to again become superficial. From St-12 it runs up to St-9 on the throat and on to the face where it traverses the zygomatic bone and ends at the inner corner of the eye at the B1-1 point. A secondary branch of it runs over the top side of the head to the B1-10 point, which is called the "reunion" point of the Yin Chiao Vessel. See Figure 25, un-numbered page 64 of the textbook.

#### DISTURBANCES OF THE YIN CHIAO VESSEL

1. If the Yin Chiao is injured, the Yang of the body grows weak (insufficient) and the Yin becomes very strong (excess). As a result arises a perpetual need for sleep in the sick person (somnolence or drowsiness). Here the traditional literature says that in disturbances of the Yin Chiao the Yang relaxes or hesitates while the Yin tenses or hurries forth.
2. Disturbances of the Yin Chiao evokes pains that do not allow themselves to be exactly localized. In this case one punctures in women the Yin Chiao and in males the Yang Chiao (see next section).

3. When the Yin Chiao is disturbed through perverse energy (pathogenic climatic energy) renal pain (provoked by the mechanism of Yin and Yang Chiao) radiates up to the neck. The patient's vision is blurred. If the illness is serious the body is bent backwards, the tongue is stiff, and the sick person can not speak.
4. The Yin Chiao brings the body "liquids" to the eyes in an energetic sense. If the slightest disturbance is exhibited, the eyes can not close nor shed tears. [It also brings Ancestral Energy and Essential Energy (Yong and Wei) upwards along its pathway.]
5. The B1-1 point is the place where the Yin and Yang Chiao unite. If the Yang Chiao is in fullness the eyes want to stay wide open. If the Yin Chiao is in fullness the eyes want to stay completely closed.
6. When in the interior of the body Yin symptoms with anuria exist, the acupuncturist should consider the possibility of a disturbance of the Yin Chiao. This refers to the fact that the abdominal pathway of the Yin Chiao courses in the interior of the abdomen. Traditional acupuncture schools in Peking and Hanoi have proved this idea first suggested by the Nei Ching.

#### THE YANG CHIAO VESSEL (Yangchiao Mai)

Most traditional literature describes the pathway of the Yang Chiao Vessel strictly from the standpoint of it following the general rule of all secondary vessels (ie. distinct, Tendino-muscular, Lo longitudinal, as discussed in a later Lesson) and thus as flowing Yang and Yin energy only from "below to above", as follows:

The Yang Chiao starts near the B1-63 point, runs to B1-62, B1-61 and B1-59. It then climbs the lateral side of the leg and joins the principal meridian of the Gall Bladder at GB-35, following that up to the lateral side of the buttocks and GB-29. It then runs along the posterior-lateral side of the body to the shoulder where at SI-10 it meets with the Tai Yang meridians (B1 and SI) and the Yang Wei ancestral meridian (see later on in this Lesson regarding the Yang Wei Vessel). It then connects to the points LI-15 and LI-16 of the Large Intestine meridian before flowing upwards to the face where it meets St-4 and St-3 belonging to the remaining aspect of the Yang Ming Energetical Layer, namely the Stomach meridian. It then contacts St-1 and runs to the inner corner of the eye and point B1-1, through which the Yang Chiao and the Yin Chiao Vessels interconnect (also Governor Vessel). From B1-1 it climbs over the forehead and head along the Bladder meridian to the back of the skull where near the mastoid process it ends at GB-20, and meets the Gall Bladder meridian. See Figure 26, page 65 of the textbook.

Topographically, the Yang Chiao is characteristically a vessel that emanates from the principal meridian of the Bladder. Essential Energy flows in it from "below to above", as described in the preceding paragraph. But physiologically seen, the Yang Chiao is an Ancestral meridian in which the Ancestral Energy of the Kidneys circulates abundantly. From where does this Ancestral Energy come, and how does it circulate? The Nei Ching explains it in this way:

"The Yin Chiao is an annex of the principal meridian of the Kidneys. It corresponds to the energy of the earth, and it consequently runs from below to above and carries the body "liquids" to the eyes. The Yang Chiao is an annex of the principal meridian of the Bladder. It receives the energy of Yin Chiao at the point B1-1, from where it redescends to the lower legs. It stands in correspondence to the energy of the heavens, and for that reason it runs from above to below [it carries Ancestral Energy and body "liquids" from above to below]. These two meridians Yin Chiao and Yang Chiao have great importance. The Yin Chiao is chiefly a vessel concerning the woman, as it takes or leads away the Kidney energy towards the upper part of the body. The Yang Chiao is important for the male, as it receives this energy originating from the Kidneys --- the energy that is known as ancestral or hereditary. The ancestral or hereditary energy regulates the temperature and the transport of the body fluids in the tissues and joints, and additionally plays a basic role in fertility."

Traditional writings and the text of the Nei Ching are of great importance here, as in their comparison and agreement, it becomes clear that in the same vessel many energetic streams can be flowing, in the same or in opposite directions. For example, in the Yang Chiao the Yong energy (nutritive energy) flows from "below to above", from foot (B1-62) to the point B1-1. The Ancestral or hereditary energy however flows from "above to below", from B1-1 to the foot (B1-62). Of course in the portion of the meridian from B1-1 to the nape of the neck (GB-20) the Ancestral Energy flows in the same direction of flow as the Yong energy.

SUMMARY: The Yang Chiao in its characteristic as an extra or ancestral vessel is the continuation of the Yin Chiao. The B1-1 point is indeed the union or interconnecting point of both of these ancestral vessels, but at the same time the "end" of the Yin Chiao and the "beginning" of the Yang Chiao. The Yin-Yang alternation at this point plays an extraordinary role, for it is by the intermediary of B1-1 that the fullness of one of these two vessels always entails (or draws along, classically) the fullness of the other. (In the principal or main meridians this type of fluctuation of course takes place at the extremities (exterior) and in the interior at the organs and viscera.) Traditional literature describes this occurrence as follows: "When the Yang Chiao is affected, the Yin becomes weak (insufficient), the Yang very strong (excess), and it often results in insomnia. When the Yin Chiao is attacked, the Yang becomes weak, the Yin however very strong, which leads to persistent tiredness (sleepyness)."

#### DISTURBANCES OF THE YANG CHIAO

Essential symptom of a disturbance of the Yang Chiao is insomnia. The insomnia may or may not be accompanied by secondary symptoms according to circumstances, primarily whether or not the Yang Chiao has been attacked by perverse energy (pathogenic climatic energy):

- a) Pains in the renal region with the feeling as if hit with hammer blows, sometimes tied to swelling of this region.

- b) The eyes cannot close themselves. They cannot shed tears or on the other hand they tear abundantly (see Yin Chiao).
- c) The eyes stay wide open (see Yin Chiao).
- d) Pains in the eyes which begin at the inner corner of the eye.
- e) Pains without fixed localization. Movement is made difficult with lack of agility (motor impairment?).

### THE YIN WEI VESSEL (or Yinwei Mai)

When traditional acupuncturists speak of this ancestral vessel or extra meridian, they describe it as beginning at the crossing point of all Yin meridians, or at the spot where all Yin meridians meet. This refers to the proximity of its origin to Sp-6, which is the meeting point of all three Yin meridians of the Feet, and thus by Energetical Layer relationship, a meeting point of all the Yin meridians. The Yin Wei Vessel actually originates on the medial aspect of the leg at the Ki-9 point, ascends along the anterior-medial aspect of the thigh and progresses upward to reach the lower abdomen where it contacts the Spleen meridian. From there it ascends further up the abdomen, penetrates through the diaphragm, and runs inside the chest near the ribs, contacting the Liver meridian. It then follows the chest part of the Kidney meridian upwards to the throat, where it contacts the Conception Vessel (and Chong Mo) and ends at the larynx. See Figure 27, un-numbered page 66 of the textbook. Although shown on one side only, it is of course bilateral, having a similar pathway on each side of the body.

In the process it connects to points Sp-13, Sp-15 and Sp-16 of the Spleen meridian, point Li-14 of the Liver meridian, as well as points Co-22 and Co-23 of the Conception Vessel (Ren channel). The Yin Wei Vessel therapeutically however, should not be considered as running in a single, continuous pathway connecting all these points as shown in the textbook. It must instead be considered as being in three separate segments, all originating from the Ki-9 point, with the first and most lateral such segment contacting Sp-13 and Li-14 only (after swerving laterally from Sp-13 to bypass Sp-14, Sp-15 and Sp-16). The second or middle such segment contacting Sp-15 and Sp-16 only, and the third or most medial such segment contacting Co-22 and Co-23 only [Co-23 is a concentration point for the energy of the Kidney meridians]. SEE DIAGRAM ON PAGE 1 (Cover).

Traditional acupuncturists also speak of the Yin Wei Vessel as flowing from "outside to inside" rather than from "below to above", which is an entirely different picture from that of the other meridians, be they principal, ancestral, distinct, tendino-muscular, Lo longitudinal, etc., which either flow from "above to below" or from "below to above", energetically speaking. The description of "outside to inside" flow, here, concerns its relationship to the Yin Energetical Layers and the Conception Vessel. Of those three Energetical Layers, the Tai Yin is considered as opening to the outside (to the Yang), the Ch'ueh Yin Layer as being in the middle, and the Shao Yin Layer as being the deepest or most inside (most Yin) of the three. The Conception Vessel is even more Yin, and is

generally placed as a fourth layer, underneath these three. In this arrangement, the basic flow of energy then is from the outside (outermost) Layer to the most inside (deepest) Layer, namely from Tai Yin (Lu and Spleen), to Chüeh Yin (EH and Liver), to Shao Yin (He and Kidneys), to the Conception Vessel (Sea of all Yin meridians).

On the basis of this energetical knowledge we can now discuss a more therapeutically rational description of the Yin Wei Vessel's pathway: (1) The Yin Wei is a vessel associated with the Kidney meridian that starts from Ki-9, runs along the medial side of the thigh upwards to the abdomen and connects to points Sp-15 and Sp-16 of the Spleen meridian, which here opens itself energetically to the outside. (2) It furthermore connects to the point Sp-13 and to the energetically intermediate meridian of the Liver at point Li-14. (3) Via the Kidney meridian of the energetically most inside Layer it finally connects to the points Co-22 and Co-23 of the Conception Vessel, which is the Sea of the Yin meridians and is considered to be deep inside. The pathway of the Yin Wei Vessel can be summarized in the following manner:

- (1) Ki-9 -----> Sp-15 + Sp-16.
- (2) Ki-9 -----> Sp-13 + Li-14.
- (3) Ki-9 -----> Co-22 + Co-23.

In traditional thought, the following are the three most important points regarding the Yin Wei Vessel:

- (a) It binds the Yin meridians together.
- (b) Its pathway consists of three segments, namely:
  - the Spleen segment,
  - the Spleen-Liver segment,
  - the Kidney-Conception Vessel segment.
- (c) It forwards the Ancestral Energy of the Kidneys to the Spleen, Liver, and throat region.

When energetic disturbances arise, all three segments of the Yin Wei Vessel may not necessarily be affected at the same time. When for example perverse energy (pathogenic climatic energy such as cold, dampness or wind) enters into the Spleen-Liver segment and reaches the Sp-13 point, the perverse energy cannot penetrate deeper to the Sp-16 point and reach the organ of the Spleen, because in this region the Wei Energy (defense energy) is particularly strong. Instead, the defensive energy pushes the perverse energy towards the Liver meridian up to the Li-14 point which conducts it towards the organ. In such a case the patient will show signs of Liver disturbances that are accompanied by symptoms of a Yin Wei Vessel disturbance. The important aspect here for now, is to remember that such disturbances do not necessarily attack the entire Yin Wei Vessel.

When however the three segments are attacked simultaneously, this indicates that all of the Yin energies of the body are weakened (empty and disturbed) and entails always a conflict between the Yin and the Yang. In order to combat this disequilibrium, the employment of the ancestral vessels of Governor and Conception is mandatory, because the first governs all of the Yang energy and the second all of the Yin energy of the body.

DISTURBANCES OF THE YIN WEI VESSEL

The essential symptom is heart pains. Traditional writings state: "The Yin Wei ties all Yin energies together with one another. When these cannot circulate, there arises numerous disturbances in the blood circulation and heart pain." "The Yin Wei begins at the crossing point of all Yin meridians. When this Yin cannot join with the rest of the Yin there is a state of emotional indecision and disappointment created, and such illnesses produce heart pains." "When the Yin Wei is affected, the sick person complains about heart pains because the Yin Wei follows the Yin meridians into the Yin region and circulates in that Yin region (Yin=Yong=Blood=Heart). This is why when the Yin is attacked, it is always the heart which is implicated."

To recap, it can be said that the essential sign of an illness of the Yin Wei is heart pains, whether the disturbance occurs segmentally or not. Such pains result through a disturbance of the Yin energy of the body --- the Yin energy no longer circulates, it stagnates. The Nei Ching specifies that the pains at the heart are owed to some disturbances of the energies of the Kidneys, the Stomach, the Spleen, the Liver, and the Lungs. These heart pains then are INDIRECT, not originating through true organic cardiac illnesses, but nevertheless are a characteristic symptom of a Yin Wei Vessel disturbance. In other words, a given disturbance cannot be diagnosed as a disturbance of the Yin Wei Vessel if heart pains are absent. Thus when a segment of, or the entire pathway of the Yin Wei is affected, the sick person shows indirect symptoms (heart pain) which may or may not be accompanied by direct symptoms (ie. headache). Any such direct illness symptoms of course are provoked through a disequilibrium between the Yin and Yang energy.

DIFFERENTIATION

1. Disturbances of the Spleen segment: The heart pains are like bee stings and may or may not be accompanied by situations of abdominal distention, sensations of oppression in the chest, migraine with loss of memory (these headaches have no exact localization).
2. Disturbances of the Spleen-Liver segment: The heart pains are atrocious and the slightest movement makes the pain worse. So painful are these heart pains that the patient cannot even let out a sigh for fear of moving and increasing the pain, and he has a corpse-like face. Migraine with temporal pain, weeping, and groaning may or may not accompany these pains.
3. Disturbances of the Kidney-Conception Vessel segment: The heart pains are like a blade being sunk in from behind and thereby it is impossible for the patient to hold himself upright. They may or may not be accompanied by migraine, a heavy feeling in the head and localized pains.
4. Disturbances of the entire Yin Wei Vessel pathway: If the total vessel is confronted, this signifies that all three Yin meridians are disturbed. This disturbance entails automatically a disequilibrium between the Yin and the Yang and provokes the pains at



the heart. These heart pains radiate out to the back and are often accompanied by other pains that stretch out towards the front or the back of the body, on the chest, or localized on the sides, and with a related feeling of pressure. The patient has the impression as if the energy was climbing to the upper parts of the body, or the feeling of a lack of energy. The Su Wen explains the spreading out of these pains with the help of the secondary branches of the Governor Vessel. "The Governor Vessel is linked with the Conception Vessel at Go-1. From there originates a secondary branch that reaches up to the shoulders uniting the Governor Vessel with the Bladder meridian. Yet another branch goes from the middle of the pubis upwards through the diaphragm and to the heart ...". These pains at the heart are accompanied by migraines, which always begin at the nape of the neck and descend to the renal region. In serious cases, one observes additionally that the limbs are icy cold up to the elbows or to the knees, which is a symptom that the disturbance is deadly.

#### YANG WEI VESSEL (or Yangwei Mai)

The Yang Wei Vessel originates on the lateral side of the foot at the B1-63 point\*, ascends to the external malleolus and runs upward along the lateral side of the lower leg (following the course of the Gall Bladder meridian through point GB-35), past the knee and up to the hip as far as GB-29. After passing through the hip it runs further upward along the lateral-posterior aspect of the abdomen and ribs (sends a small branch to GB-24), the posterior axillary area and to the shoulder region. At the shoulder region it contacts SI-10, TB-15 and GB-21. From there it goes near the ears to the side of the forehead (contacting St-8, GB-13, GB-14 and GB-15) and follows the upper section of the Gall Bladder meridian there from points GB-16 through to GB-20 (inclusive), and ends up by contacting Governor Vessel points #16 and #15 (Du channel). See Figure 26, unnumbered page 65 of the textbook. Although shown on one side only, it is of course bilateral, having a similar pathway on each side of the body.

Several important energetical relationships take place at the shoulder region. First of all, at the point SI-10 the Yang Wei Vessel interconnects with the Tai Yang Energetical Layer (Small Intestine and B1) and of course also with the Yang Chiao Vessel for which SI-10 is a common point. Secondly, at the TB-15 point, the Yang Wei Vessel interconnects with the Shao Yang Energetical Layer (Triple Burner and GB). Thirdly, at the GB-21 point (and the St-8 point) the Yang Wei Vessel interconnects with the Yang Ming Energetical Layer (LI and Stomach) as the GB-21 point receives a secondary branch from the Stomach meridian at that point.

\* Some texts say this point originates at the crossing point of all Yang meridians. This may relate to the proximity of the three Foot Yang meridians to the external malleolus near the starting point of this Vessel.

Although there are a few different traditional interpretations regarding the pathway of this vessel, particularly on the head, the one given above presents much of interest, therapeutically. It clearly defines the position of the Yang Wei Vessel in relation to the principal meridians, and shows that in order for it to bind all of the Yang meridians together (ie. the outer with the inner), the Yang Wei Vessel is obliged to constantly circulate in the intermediate (ie. middle) Energetical Layer belonging to the Shao Yang (Gall Bladder and Triple Burner).

1. The Yang Wei is a vessel associated with the Bladder meridian that starts from Bl-63, and thus has its origin in the outer or exterior layer (Tai Yang).

2. It flows on the lateral side of the leg up to the buttocks, by passing immediately into the Gall Bladder meridian (intermediate layer, Shao Yang), to reach the exterior layer again (Tai Yang's Small Intestine meridian) at the level of the shoulder. Thus:

GB-35 + GB-29	----->	SI-10
Middle Layer		Outer Layer
(Shao Yang)		(Tai Yang)

3. In order to unite the Tai Yang (outer) to the Yang Ming (interior) it must return to the middle again (Shao Yang). Thus:

TB-15	----->	GB-21 (receives a vessel from St) + St-8
Middle Layer		Inner Layer
(Shao Yang)		(Yang Ming)

4. In order to penetrate even more deeply into the "Sea of the Yang meridians", namely the Governor Vessel\*, it again is required to return to the middle layer (Shao Yang). Thus:

GB-13 + GB-14 + GB-15		Go-16
+ GB-16 + GB-17 + GB-18	----->	+ Go-15
+ GB-19 + GB-20		(deep, inside Yang*)
Middle Layer (Shao Yang)		Governor Vessel

Thus, the Yang Wei Vessel flows in the Yang regions and binds all Yang meridians together. Topographically speaking it is a vessel that originates from the principal meridian of the Bladder, and the Yong energy circulates in it "from below to above". However physiologically speaking, the issue is of an extra or ancestral meridian that forwards the Ancestral Energy of the Kidney.

Where does this Ancestral Energy come from and how does it circulate in the Yang Wei Vessel? In the first place the Ancestral Energy comes from the Yin Chiao by the intermediary of the Bl-1 point, which has numerous branches to the forehead and is in direct contact with the GB-14 point. From GB-14 the Ancestral Energy flows with the Gall Bladder meridian up to point GB-20, to reach the Go-16

\* The Governor Vessel being the Sea of all Yang is considered to be the most interior of all Yang. Thus it is generally placed diagrammatically and conceptually as a fourth layer, underneath these three, and between them and the three Yin layers.

and Go-15 points of the Governing Vessel. It then runs with the ramifications of the Governor Vessel to the shoulder, and reaches the point SI-10. It then descends down the Yang Wei Vessel pathway to the feet and enters at point Bl-63 into the principal meridian of the Bladder. This means that the Ancestral Energy of Yang Wei circulates from "above to below", in contrast to the Yong energy of the Yang Wei Vessel which circulates from "below to above". Thus, the Yang Wei also has the duty of distributing Ancestral Energy into different parts of the body such as the limbs, the sides, the shoulder, the head and the neck.

Like the Yin Wei, the Yang Wei Vessel also has different segments: (1) The segment Shao Yang (GB and TB); (2) The segment Tai Yang (Bl and SI); (3) The segment Yang Ming (St and LI); and (4) The segment of the Governor Vessel.

Just like the Yin Wei Vessel, in cases of disturbance, all the segments (four) of the Yang Wei Vessel are not necessarily affected simultaneously, but the disturbance can pass from one segment to another quite readily. For example: When the perverse energy attacks the face, it directs itself towards the Tai Yang (layer which opens itself to the exterior or outside) to the point Bl-1, but instead of following the meridian of the Bladder (Tai Yang), it passes to the GB-14 point (intermediate layer, Shao Yang) in order to attack the neck. The perverse energy can localize itself in this section provoking hemicrania and fever of the Shao Yang Type. If the perverse energy passes to the Governor Vessel and descends the length of the vertebral column, the patient will present an intermittent type fever with pain and stiffness of the neck and of the vertebral column. If the perverse energy follows the course of the Yin in order to localize itself at the shoulder, it will pass to the Yang Ming and the patient will present fever of the Yang Ming Type with pain at the shoulder. If the perverse energy passes to the Tai Yang, the patient will present fever of the Tai Yang Type with pains at the ribs.

Often however the perverse energy does not develop in this fashion, that is it does not pass from one segment to another. So when for example it finds itself at the shoulder it goes to entrench itself in the muscles or the bones of that region. In this case, the fever disappears but the pains persist, and the Yang Wei has been ridded of its perverse energy. In other words, one is not able to diagnose the attack of Yang Wei Vessel in the absence of fever.

#### DISTURBANCES OF THE YANG WEI VESSEL

The essential symptom is alternating chills and fever. The classics state: "The Yang Wei Vessel ties all Yang energies together with one another. If these are not able to circulate there is much fever, and these illnesses are of the serious 'hot and cold' type." "When the Yang Wei is attacked, the patient has many chills and a strong fever (cold and hot) because the Yang Wei follows the Yang meridians into those which dominate the Wei (exterior) energy. This is the reason why there is chills and fever." The following traditional explanation specifies the mechanism of the chills and

of the fever. "In effect this is owed to a conflict between the Wei Energy (defensive) and the perverse energy. At first this perverse energy penetrates into the tendino-muscular meridians which are superficial (ie. in the flesh and the epidermis) which results in chills and fever. Afterwards in order to attack the Yang Wei Vessel it must necessarily pass into the principal meridians, which results in even more chills and fever." Consequently by the time the perverse energy attacks the Yang Wei, there are already some febrile manifestations of it. These chills and fever are therefore the indirect but essential signs of an attack on the Yang Wei Vessel. They are accompanied by some particular symptoms which allow determination of which segment is attacked.

#### SEGMENTAL DIFFERENTIATION

1. Disturbances in the region of the head (Shao Yang) segment: Fever; cold and hot feeling; heavy feeling and pains in the head region; bitter taste in the mouth and dry throat; 'blackouts'; nausea and vomiting; unrest; hearing disturbances.
2. Disturbances in the segment of the nape of the neck (Governor Vessel): High fever; dislike of the wind (draughts); diffused headaches; pains and stiffness in the nape (of the neck).
3. Disturbances in the shoulder (Yang Ming) segment: High fever; sensitivity to warmth, wind or coldness (always after the nature of the perverse energy); pains in shoulder that radiate out to the neck.
4. Disturbances in body (Tai Yang) and lower limb (Shao Yang) segments: Fever; pains at the sides of the body and the chest; feeling of hot and cold; pains in the hip (sciatica); pains and contracture of the outer side of the legs and the external malleolus.
5. Disturbances of the entire vessel

The Nei Ching states: "The Yang Wei constantly returns to circulate in the middle Yang layer connecting all of the Yang layers among themselves. Consequently when the Yang Wei is affected, the three Yang layers are equally affected (in fullness) and there is a struggle between the Yin and the Yang. At times, it is the Yin that gains in this struggle, in which case the patient becomes chilly, has some shivers and some tremblings; the neck, the head, and the trunk become painful. On the contrary, if the Yang has conquered the Yin, the patient has a strong fever with sensations of heat at the exterior part of the body (which is Yang). But with Yin being weak, the patient feels the heat likewise at the interior part of the body (which is Yin); and this is why the patient has great thirst and wishes some ice cold drinks." The Su Wen states in this regard: "When the Yang Wei is attacked, the patient has strong fevers, the renal region and the side of the body are suddenly swollen". This swelling is a result of bad progression (towards the upper part of the body) of the energy of the Bladder and of the Gall Bladder because of the presence of the perverse energy localized at points of the Yang Wei Vessel.

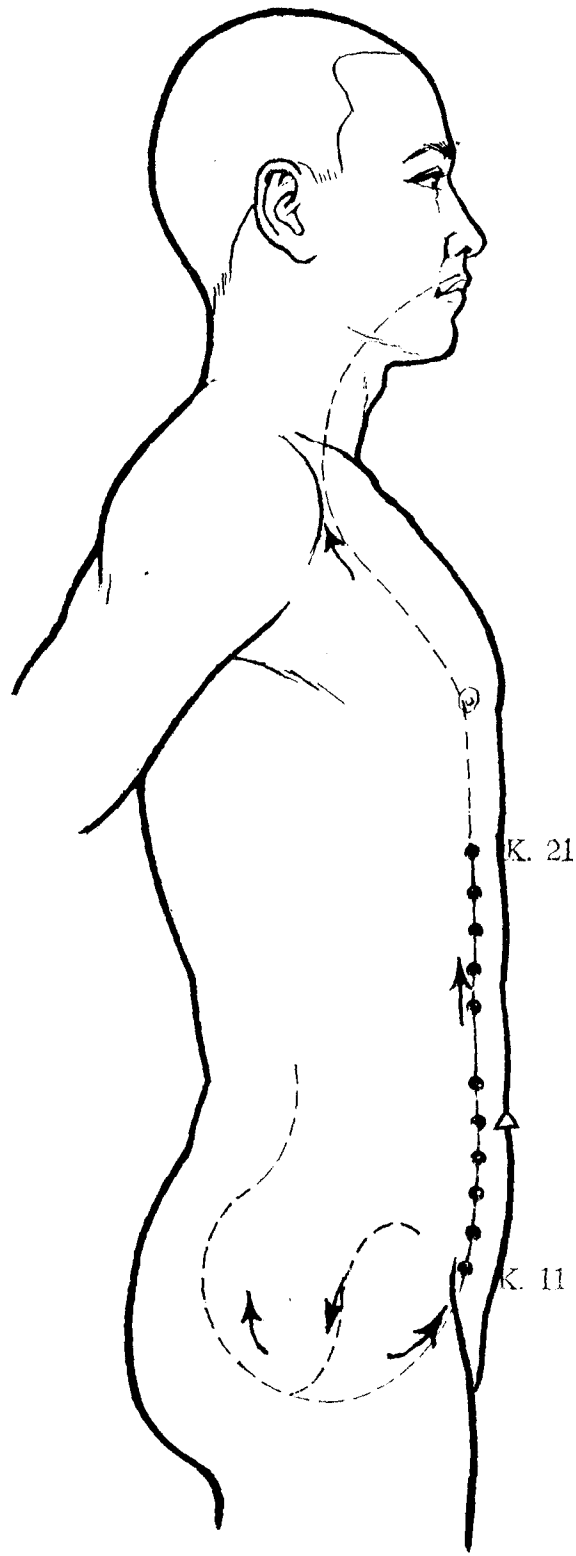


Fig. 22. Chong Mai (the Vital Channel)

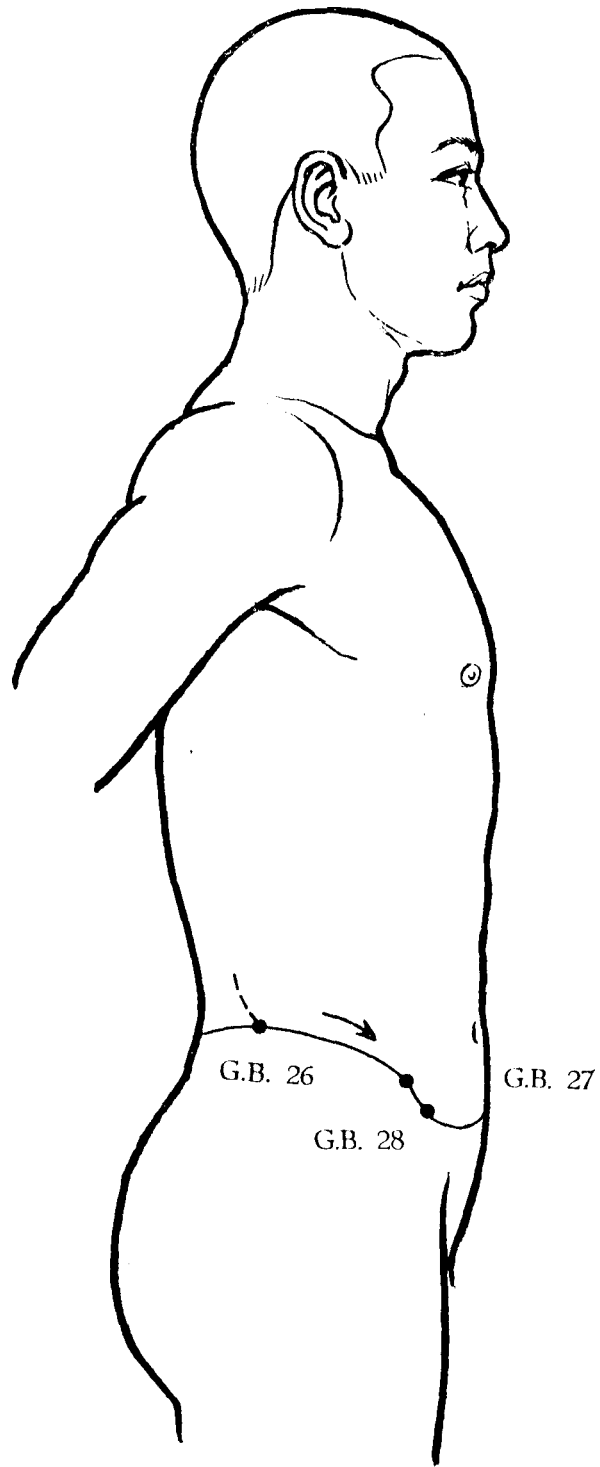


Fig. 23. Dai Mai (the Belt Channel)

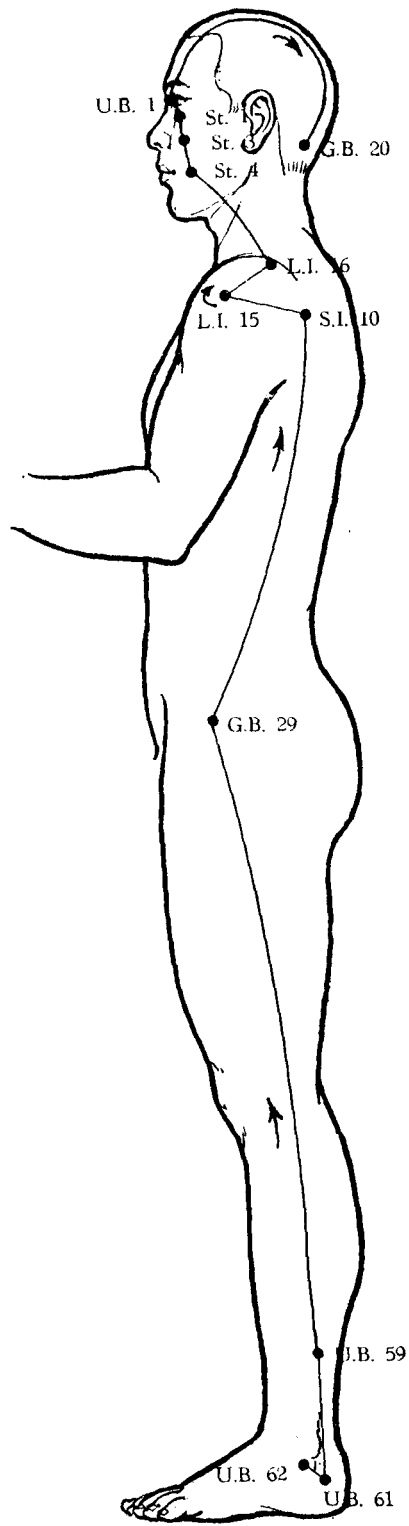


Fig. 24. Yangchiao Mai (the Motility Channel of Yang)

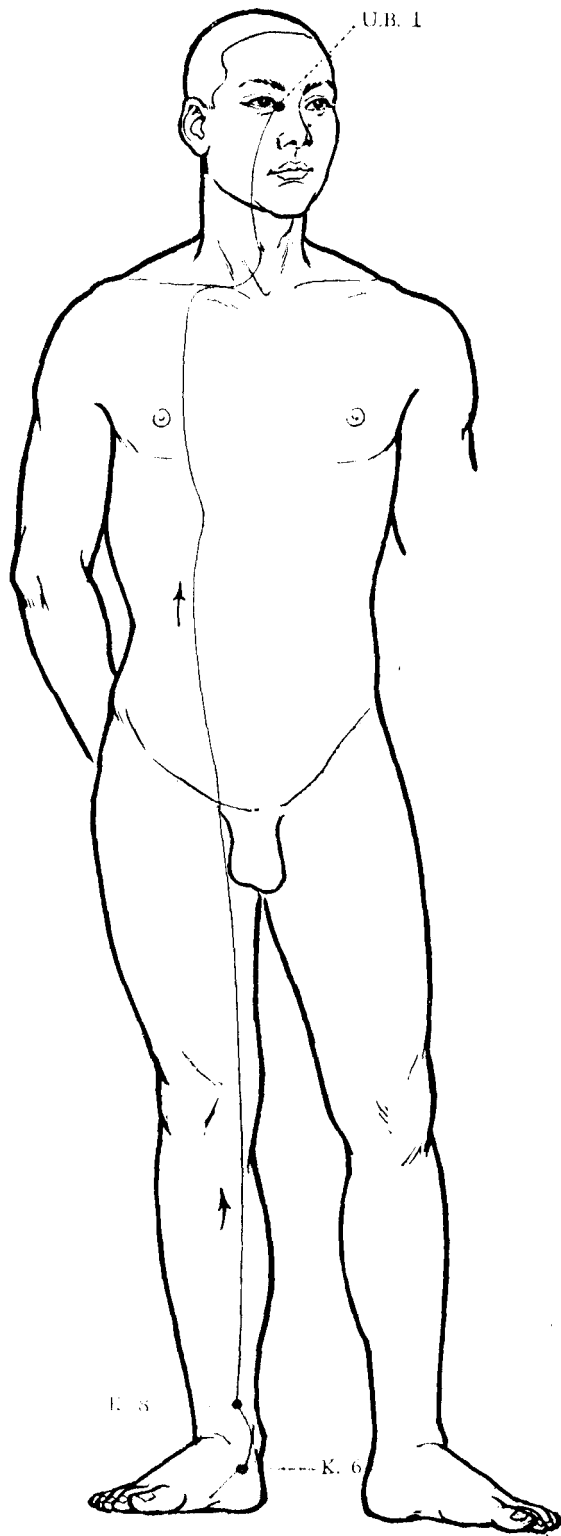


Fig. 25. Yinchiao Mai (the Motility Channel of Yin)



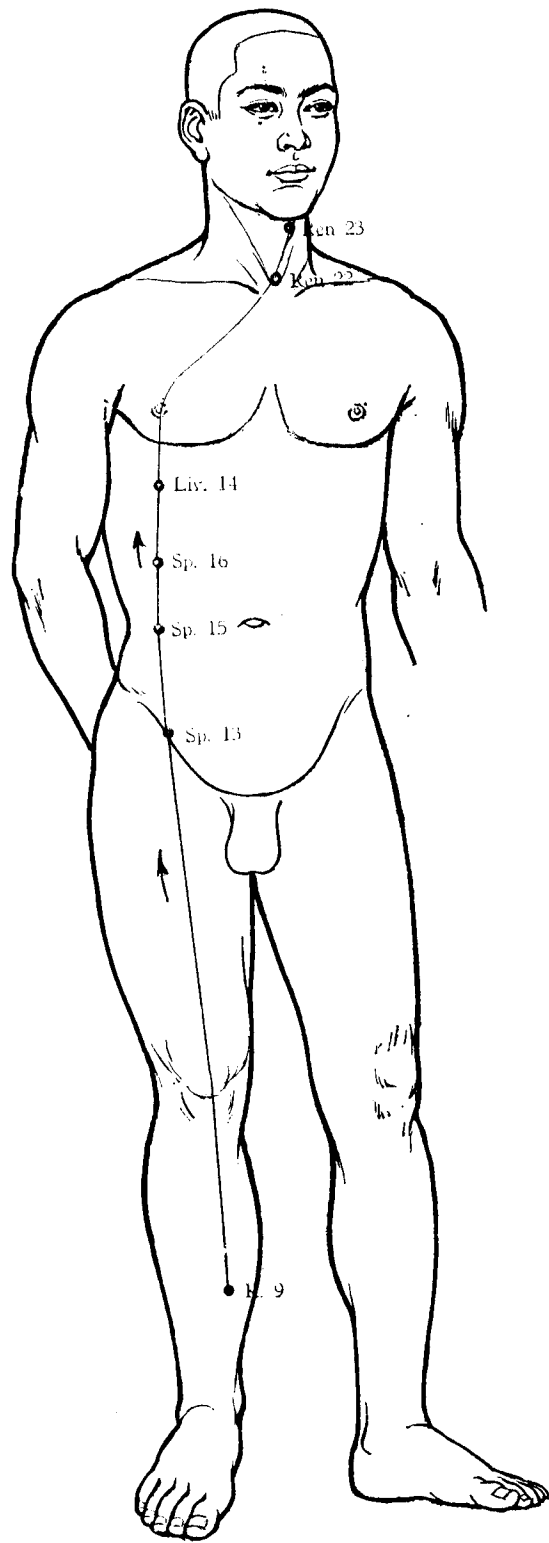


Fig. 27. Yinwei Mai (the Regulating Channel of Yin)

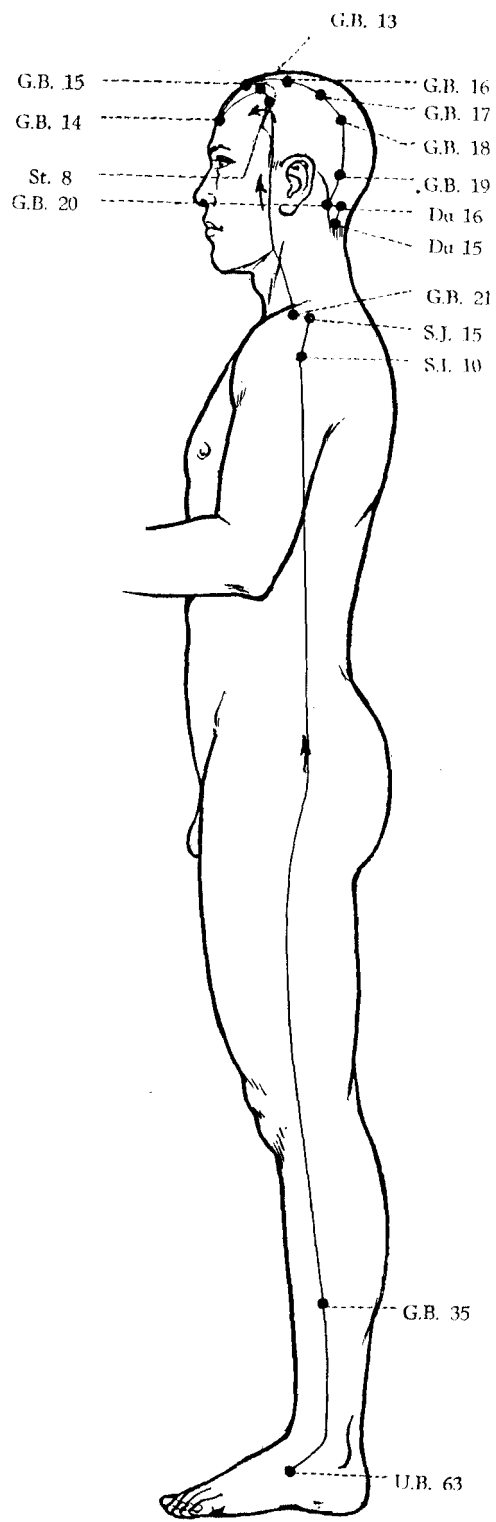


Fig. 26. Yangwei Mai (the Regulating Channel of Yang)