



HEALTH & WELLNESS / LIFESTYLE

Diverting the Crisis Stages of Life: Yang Wei Mai and the Necessity of Change

YANG WEI MAI AND THE NECESSITY OF CHANGE

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One of the biggest struggles in which we help our patients is the process of change. I often hear two common questions, "I'm unhappy. How can I change?" and "My life is changing, how do I deal with it?"

The Cycle of Change

The Su Wen states several times that "wind is the cause of hundreds of diseases." Wind is a metaphor for change. Life and its challenges frequently ask us to adjust - internally and externally. This process is written into our Jing-essence via "the cycles of 7 and 8," a concept of change based on the eras we progress through in our lives. Aging is part of change. As are the "rites of passage" we go through as we go through life. The Su Wen says that every 7-8 years we go through a cycle of change, where we let go of aspects of ourselves to embrace the new. Within the acupuncture channel systems "the cycles of 7 and 8" are governed by the Wei Vessels.

One of the strongest statements made about the process of change is the inclusion of Xi Cleft points on the trajectory of the Wei Vessels. Change can be painful. It can cause emergency, crisis situations. This is what Xi Cleft points treat. Our role as healers, especially within the "alternative" medical field can be to help our patients with the more sensitive, non-physical aspects of life, including difficulties regarding change.

The Crisis Stage



The Nan Jing describes the Extraordinary Vessels as "ditches and reservoirs" devised for "Extraordinary" situations. They have resonance with the process of growth and change, especially crisis moments in our life where we are forced to stop and take stock of our choices.

The closest acupuncture channel system to the Extraordinary Vessels are the Divergent Channels. These two systems can often help explain and illuminate one another. The extreme crisis stage is dramatically illustrated by the Triple Heater's Divergent Channel.

The Triple Heater Divergent channel begins at the crown of the head at DU-20 Bai Hui, "the 100 Meetings." It descends into the neck to TH-16 You Men, "the celestial Orbit," into "the center of the chest" at CV-17 Dan Zhong to end at CV-12 Zhong Wan. Within the progression of the Divergent Channels, the Triple Heater represents the "loss of latency," when the body can no longer keep an unresolved condition quiet and asymptomatic. The problem comes gushing out, often in the form of extreme heat or fluid swelling. When it moves into the Pericardium's Divergent, it can also emerge as extreme mental-emotional disturbance (Dian Kuang).

The Triple Heater Divergent trajectory shows itself as a type of spiritual intervention, with "shamanic" imagery. The "ancestors" or "spirit guides" get involved, as evoked by the first two points on the trajectory. "The 100 meetings" is an ancestral spirit image, as is "celestial orbit." In practical terms, it is often when we are faced with life-threatening or life-disturbing illnesses that we start to re-evaluate our lives, often becoming more "spiritually-minded."

We start to assess what we are putting into our chests and abdomens: our emotional and physical choices. We no longer have the luxury to delay or ignore our "stored baggage." I often see this as a state of forced evolution, where we are pushed to change and rectify, whether we are ready or not. In the case of the Triple Heater Divergent we are usually not ready or even willing.

It is more ideal to catch a condition before it reaches "loss of latency." The Extraordinary Vessels

can be powerful ways to deal with the challenges of time and space before we reach the crisis stage.

Unresolved Conditions

According to the Nan Jing, the Wei Vessels manifest dramatic symptoms. The classic symptom of Yang Wei Mai is "alternating chills and fever," which indicates the body is harboring an unresolved condition, but still successfully maintaining its latency.

The symptoms of the Wei Vessels can be indicators that it's time to rectify our relationship with our past, present and future: our choices, actions, aspirations, sense of self, and that which we have accumulated and come to see as the normalcy of our life.

The Nan Jing says "when the Wei Vessels cannot maintain their respective ties, one feels uncomfortable and loses one's mind. One is weak and cannot support one's stature." One can interpret this to mean when a person is not able to harmonize their past (Yin Wei) with their movement into the future (Yang Wei), there is severe mental disturbance, loss of will and motivation. This inability to "tie" or "link" time affects the present, represented by the Qiao Vessels, which Yang Wei communicates with at the points GB-29 Ju Liao and SI-10 Nao Shu.

Yin Wei fixates us on the past, causing us to relive it again and again, haunted by our "heartaches." Yang Wei keeps us in a different type of stuck state: a severe "Shao Yang" state where a condition is trapped between the interior and exterior layers of the body. In terms of time, this can manifest as loss of will, strength or motivation to move forward in life: "fits of heat (agitation) and cold (withdrawal or contraction)."

The Yang Sinew Channels of the body are an unconscious self-motivated propulsion mechanism. The "zones" of Yang Ming, Shao Yang and Tai Yang take an impulse from inside the body (Yang Ming) into external action (Tai Yang) via the "pivot" of Shao Yang which is a type of decision-making compass. The opposite is also true: stimuli from outside the body (Tai Yang) gets internalized into the self (Yang Ming) to influence and nourish us. Shao Yang as the pivot directs this action, empowered by the Kidney essence which "controls the exterior." The trajectory of the Yang Wei Vessel illustrates this process.

When something is blocking the unconscious propulsion of the Yang, it can be due to the inability of Yang Wei to link the Yang together to create action and movement. The impulse to act gets stuck in the level of Shao Yang.

The Cleft Points

Yang Wei begins at the point BL-63 Jin Men, which Li Shi Zhen said is a meeting of Tai Yang, Shao Yang and Yang Ming. It is the Xi Cleft point of the Bladder channel, a strong statement about the first point on the trajectory, setting the theme of Yang Wei as a channel involved in both the gathering of Qi as well as relieving pain: two functions of Xi Cleft points. BL-63 soothes the sinews, quiets the Shen (mind and spirit), opens the portals and pacifies wind.

The next point on Yang Wei, GB-35 Yang Jiao also soothes the sinews and quiets the Shen. The combination of these two points shows Yang Wei to be a channel that calms and soothes both the physical body as well as the mind and spirit. The action of soothing and quieting implies gathering Blood to create a sense of calm. Yang Wei soothes and calms while also "pacifying" or reducing the pressure of Wind/change as it urges us to open our portals of perception to change the way we see the world.

Neither BL-63 nor GB-35 invigorate or tonify the Yang Qi, instead they gather or disperse so it will link and "Jiao" (exchange) between the three "zones": Tai Yang, Shao Yang and into Yang Ming via the next point on the trajectory LI-14 Bi Nao.

GB-35 is designated at the Xi Cleft point of Yang Wei. It is preceded by the Xi Cleft point of the Bladder channel. Bladder is the Primary Channel most involved in the consolidation of Yang Qi to both consolidate the vitality of the body and also to use the Yang to eradicate unresolved pathogens. The Bladder channel in itself behaves like a Xi Cleft point. It also behaves like an Extraordinary Vessel, considered the "reservoir" of the Primary Channels. BL-63 can be seen as a point that gathers Qi to support the Yang Wei, connecting our current daily gathered resources to empower our movement into the future.

Once Yang Wei moves into the head it connects not to Bladder points, but instead to Gallbladder. Yang Wei is thus established as a channel that empowers us to make a choice about our direction in life. Gallbladder empowers decision-making; it is also about fear. Once we have calmed our mind-body reaction to change and the necessity to move forward in time; once we've opened our senses, gathered our resources and stabilized ourselves in the face of changing circumstances, we realize we must make some choices. This is coalesced in the point GB-21 Jian Jing which opens the portals, as well as the Sinew-activating Jing Well points of the Arms.

Yang Wei works strongly on our sensory-motor apparatus: the way we perceive the world and how that perception causes us to react. Gallbladder is the bridge between our postnatal selves and that of our essence: the pivot between where we are and where we are destined to go. When Yang Wei is working well our actions will be a spontaneous, powerful and dynamic expression our essential selves.

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