

(((The Luo Vessels)))

Paula Chin's class notes
Fall 2003

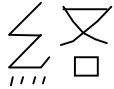
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(((History)))

I) Etymology

 = Luo

 = silk thread

 = skein (of thread) or net

- Luo Vessels (a.k.a. Linking/Passage Vessels/Collaterals/Channels) are a network of channels interconnected like a net or a web
- The image of the Luo character alludes to the concept of a fishing net
 - Like a net, the Luo Vessels catch pathogens

II) What the Classics Say

- 1) The Luo Vessels are unable to float through the “Great Joints” Unlike the Divergent Meridians, which penetrate deeply into the body – the head and torso
- 2) In the *Nan Jing*, Ch 10 of the *Ling Shu*, the Luo Channels are described:
 - It says they are channels that float (*i.e.*, are at the surface of the body) and can frequently be seen (unlike the Primary Meridians)
 - If they can be seen, it means they’re full
 - In this case, there’ll be discoloration and/or broken blood vessels
 - The most visible Luo Channels are at the Yang Meridians of the arms
- 3) Each of the 16 Longitudinal Luo Vessels have their own Full/Empty pathologies
- 4) In evaluating the Luo Vessels:
 - If they’re Dark = Cold and pain
 - If they’re Red = Heat and fever
- 5) If there’s Stagnation in the Luo Vessels, there’s fever
 - If they’re Empty, they’re not visible
 - If they’re deficient in Qi, they’re small and short
 - If they’re Full, they’re visible
 - When Full, the Luo Vessels are trying to get rid of a pathogen
 - To help this process, a Plum Blossom needle can be used

- 6) Evaluating Lu-10, which reflects the condition of the Stomach:
 - If Blue = Stomach-Cold (usually due to chronic Bi-obstruction)
 - If Red = Stomach-Heat
 - If darkening or blackening = chronic Bi-obstruction in Stomach
- 7) Alcohol goes directly to the Ying level and excites/heats the Ying-Qi up (causing a red complexion)
 - The Wei-Qi, in this case, goes to the Ying level in order to support it
 - Because of this, an EPF can invade the Wei-Qi level of the body and be quickly moved to the Ying-Qi level
 - This causes the Luo Vessels to become full and heated
 - Ying-Qi gets depleted, causing Fluid Deficiency
- 8) For treatment, blood-let once every-other day
 - After bleeding, harmonize Luo point by tonification or dispersal
- 9) Ch 22 of the *Ling Shu* says:
 - You can use the Luo for rebellious Qi
 - Rebellious Qi leads to Heat diseases
- 10) Ch 39 of the *Ling Shu* says:
 - The Luo Vessels influence the production of Blood and Fluids
 - The Great Luo of the Spleen is the origin of Blood
 - The Great Luo of the Stomach is the origin of Fluids
- 11) In the *Nei Jing*, Ch 50, 57 and 63 of the *Su Wen* say:
 - The location and relation of the Luo Vessels to the Primary Meridians is that they're extensions of the Primary Meridians
 - The goal of the Luo Vessels is to “float up to the surface,” *i.e.*, their energy tends toward the surface
 - EPF movement: jing-wells → Luo Vessels → Primary Meridians → organs
- 12) Ch 24 of the *Su Wen* says you can blood-let the Luo for emotional/mental problems, as well as stress
 - Ch 62 says to blood-let them for spirit (Shen) Excess
- 13) Ch 39 of the *Su Wen* says Cold penetrates and constricts the Luo Vessels, causing pain
 - If Cold penetrates to the Stomach and Intestines, the same happens
 - If there's stagnation and the Qi cannot move to the paired channel, nodules/lumps will appear
- 14) Ch 56 of the *Su Wen* says the Luo Vessels provide a holding space for EPFs
- 15) The *Nan Jing*, in Ch 23 and 26 identify 15 Luo Vessels (in comparison to the 16 in the *Nei Jing*)
 - It also says that the Great Luo of the Spleen (Sp-21; classically GB-22) is a link between the Internal and External, Yin and Yang, Above and Below

(((Side Note)))

- The Luo points are the earliest acupuncture points
 - They were typically bled
- Tibetan Medicine has medical diagrams of what looks like the Luo Vessels
 - Their treatments use a lot of bleeding (after an herbal treatment)

- The Luo of Yin is Yin Chiao Mai point Ki-16
- The Luo of Yang is Yang Chiao Mai point Bl-62

(((Energetics of the Longitudinal Luo Vessels)))

I) Longitudinal Luo Vessel Energetics

- 1) How the Longitudinal Luo Vessels deal with pathogens:

Yin Arm → Yang Arm → Yang Leg → Yin Leg

Lu; Ht; P → SI; LI; SJ → Bl; GB; St → Sp; Ki; Lr

Chest → Arms → Legs → Chest

- This is also how the regular meridians flow in Tai Yang, Shao Yang, &tc.
 - According to Western Medicine, this is how blood flows in venous and arterial circulation
- 2) The above *Ling Shu* sequence shows how pathogens enter the body
 - Some people don't follow this older sequence, but instead organize the luo like the Primary Meridians (Lu, LI, St, Sp...)
 - 3) When Wei-Qi is fighting EPFs in the chest, Heat is created
 - 4) Luo Vessels take the Excess and move it to Lung, Heart and Pericardium vessels
 - They don't treat the EPF, just hold it to maintain homeostasis
 - It then tries to move the EPF out via the Shu-stream point
 - 5) If the Luo Vessels can't move the EPF out, it goes to the Yang Arm and Yang Leg Luos, then back to the chest via the Yin Leg Luo Vessels
 - To treat the EPFs being stored in the chest, needle Sp-21 (Great Luo), which is indicated for pain throughout the body
 - 6) Luo Vessels hold or expel EPFs, moving it to the Ying-Qi level if they're holding it
 - Divergent Meridians hold EPFs, then try to expel it; while they're holding an EPF, they move it to the Jing level
 - 7) The body always tries to expel or make the EPF harmless, otherwise it goes into the organs
 - If there's not enough Blood to hold the EPF in the Luo Vessel, it can go into a Divergent or Regular meridian, or...
 - Sometimes the Jing will break itself down to support the Ying-Qi by creating more Blood
 - REMEMBER: Jing is associated with the 8-Extras
 - Li Shi Zhen said: if you're going to use the 8-Extras, you must clear the Luo Vessels, the Divergent Meridians, all blockages, and the Primary Meridians

II) The Luo Points and Longitudinal Luo Vessel Pathways

- 1) **Lu-7 (*Lightning Strike*)**: the vessel goes down and scatters along the thenar eminence (or fish boarder) before entering the palm at P-8
 - From this point, a separate branch travels to its Yin-Yang paired meridian

- Lu-7 is called in Chinese *Lightening Strike*... “Lightening Strike is like something that comes into consciousness and shakes you; it strikes and then enters the chest and affects the Shen.” –Jeffery Yuen
 - FULL: Heat in the palms
 - EMPTY: Frequent urination and yawning
- 2) **Ht-5** (*Penetrating Mile*): the vessel follows the Primary Meridian to Ren-17 (P. Mu) and Ren-14 (Ht. Mu), then to the root of the tongue (Ren-23), and then to the eyes
- FULL: Oppression in chest – a heavy, “sticky” feeling
 - EMPTY: Loss of speech
- 3) **P-6** (*Inner Gate*): the vessel travels along the Primary Meridian to connect with Ren-17
- FULL: Heart pain
 - EMPTY: rigidity and pain in the neck and head... it’s trying to prevent Heat and Wind from entering the head, resulting in stroke
- 4) **SI-7** (*Branch to the Upright*): the vessel goes through the elbow, connecting with SI-8, then to the lateral tip of the shoulder where it spreads out and connects with LI-15
- FULL: Loose joints and elbow atrophy
 - EMPTY: Small itchy swellings that scab up
 - Flaking/scaling skin, as in psoriasis
 - Pebbly excrement
- 5) **LI-6** (*Bearing Passage*): the vessel runs up the arm to LI-15, then up the neck to curve along the jaw and enter the teeth; a branch divides on the cheek to enter the ear
- FULL: Toothache and acute deafness (deafness that’s just begun)
 - EMPTY: Coldness in teeth, *i.e.*, teeth overly-sensitive to food temperature (this can also mean cavities)
 - Diaphragmatic numbness – breathing feels funny, as you can’t feel the expansion and contraction of the diaphragm
- 6) **SJ-5** (*Outer Gate*): this vessel goes up the arm and into the shoulder at LI-15 (or possibly GB-21), then to the middle of the breast before terminating at Ren-17
- FULL: Elbow dislocations and stiffness
 - EMPTY: Difficulty in bending arm
 - Weakness in elbow joint
 - Body weakness and pain
- 7) **Bl-58** (*Taking Flight*): the vessel runs down to Ki-4 to join the Kidney Luo Vessel (it does not have its own pathway)
- FULL: Nasal congestion
 - Headache
 - Lumbago (low back pains)
 - EMPTY: Nose bleeds (way of body getting rid of an EPF)
 - Runny nose with clear fluid

(((Treating Shen with Luo Vessels)))

I) Luo Vessels in Relation to Psycho-social (Yi/Mind) Development

- 1) The Longitudinal Luo may be thought of as a continuum that represents self-evolution
 - About the individual moving towards self-knowledge
- 2) The development of the psyche goes through three distinct phases:
 - a) Development of perception, sensation, and thought
 - This is related to the Luo Vessels of the Lu, LI, St, Sp
 - b) Development of social skills
 - This is related to the Luo Vessels of the Ht, SI, Bl, and Ki
 - c) Development of a sense of self-preservation
 - This is related to the Luo Vessels of P, SJ, GB, and Lr
 - d) After all this, we come to terms with life and ourselves
 - There's an emergence of a new self
 - The Great Luo of the Spleen, and the Luo Vessels of Du and Ren Mai get developed

II) The Luo Vessels can also Address Shen Issues

- 1) The Luo Vessels can treat mental/emotional problems since they carry Blood, which holds emotions, feelings and experiences
 - Blood gives them residence
- 2) The classes of feelings that can be treated:
 - a) **Primal**, or Non-cognitive feelings are an External/Wei-Qi response
 - Ex.: Fright, a combination of fear and shock from a sudden and unexpected noise
 - This is instantaneous
 - b) **Premeditated feelings** are conscious and cognitive
 - These are an Internal/Ying-Qi response
 - We have control over these types of feelings
 - We can choose how to feel
 - Ex.: Anger from a perceived insult
 - Emotions in this area have a time frame, *i.e.*, they have a beginning, middle and end like a story
 - Emotions in this area have a focus or target
 - You have an emotion about something in particular
 - c) **Moods** are different from the above in that in that they're "floating around" and not fixated
 - Moods are undefined – they have no target
 - Moods are held at the surface/Wei-Qi level... so they are acute

- d) **Suppressed emotions** are felt, but there is a decision not to express them in order to conform to one's culture/society's expectations
 - Ex.: *boys don't cry...*
 - This is cognitive in nature... at the Ying-Qi level
- e) **Repressed emotions** are unconscious
 - There's a non-recognition/denial of the emotion
 - This is at a deep level – the Yuan-Qi level of dealing with emotions
- 3) These emotions can be processed, or they can be suppressed or repressed
 - Recognizing these emotions releases them and allows patient to reconnect with themselves, resulting in subsequent psychological release and sense of freedom
- 4) Denial and repression lead to stagnation in the Blood, eventually...
 - This leads to Heat in the Blood
- 5) Longitudinal Luo Vessels buffer and protect the Primary Meridians by holding Excess Heat created by these Internal factors – *i.e.*, emotions that are not released, as well as conflicts between emotion and thought

III) Points for Processing and Harmonizing Emotions via the Longitudinal Luo Vessels

- 1) Use Yin Luo points to work on person's "armoring"
 - a) **Moods** (Wei-Qi level)
 - Lu-7 & Lr-5
 - b) **Suppression** (Ying-Qi level)
 - P-6 & Sp-4
 - c) **Repression** (Yuan-Qi level)
 - Ki-4 & SJ-5
 - d) Plum blossom these points (those for the appropriate level) in an ∞ pattern
 - Start with side of body with the dominant symptoms
 - Ex.: Right arm → Left leg → Right leg → Left arm
 - e) If you're not sure what level the person is at, do ALL levels (mood, suppression and repression)
- 3) Use Yang Luo points for patient's emotional disposition, tonifying the Yuan-source point of the organ's Yin-paired meridian first:
 - a) **Anger** = GB-37 + Lr-3
 - b) **Anxiety** = SI-7 + Ht-7
 - c) **Obsession** = St-40 + Sp-3
 - d) **Grief/depression** = LI-6 + Lu-9
 - e) **Fear** = Bl-58 + Ki-3

(((Treating Cardiovascular Issues))) (((with Luo Vessels)))

I) Cardiovascular Applications of the Luo Vessels

- 1) Wang Qing Ren (14th c.) was the physician who wrote *Errors Made By Physicians*
 - His primary focus was on the blood vessels
 - He did autopsies on the thoracic cavity and gave descriptions of the lungs, trachea, bronchi, heart and aorta
 - He said that internal conditions can be acute or chronic, and that there are four types of diseases
 - Excess/Stagnation or Deficiency of Qi
 - Excess/Stagnation or Deficiency of Blood
 - Because Qi and Blood are related, you can't treat one without treating the other
 - a) Wang Qing Ren believed that the chest is where Heat (as a lymphatic response) is produced
 - Heat at the chest causes palpitations and chest distress
 - b) Heat also rises to affect the upper orifices
 - In response to Heat, the Stomach channel brings Yin-Fluids/lymph to upper regions to support the moisture of the eyes, mouth, lips and even brain
 - c) When he did autopsies on the victims of high fevers and infectious diseases, he found high levels of lymph fluid in the Stomach channel areas
 - d) Wang Qing Ren also believed that Heat affects fluids first, then blood
 - If the body can't bring fluids to moisturize the upper regions, Blood will come up to contain the Heat
 - Ex.: No fluids in upper regions → blood-shot eyes
 - e) When Blood is involved, there's possibility of stagnation
- 2) The Luo Vessels are a link to the 8-Extra Vessels
 - Most 8-Extras start at Luo points (with the exception of Ki-6 and Bl-62 – Yangchiao and Yinchiao Mai)
 - 3) Blood vessels are Curious Organs
 - Long-term blood issues can affect the other Curious Organs (and *vice-versa*)
 - 4) The conditions in the Curious Organs can affect the Blood and Ren Mai because of their special relationship (more later)
 - Blood and Luo Vessels move towards Curious Organs like the brain, spine, marrow, uterus, gall bladder, and genitals
 - 5) When evaluating complicated cardiovascular conditions, you should look at the history of the medical condition and see whether any Curious Organs are involved

VIII) Treatment of Hemorrhage

- 1) Hemorrhage is usually due to Heat or Spleen Deficiency
 - To figure out which, take the pulse to see if there's Heat or Cold
 - Heat = Rapid pulse
 - Cold = Slow pulse
- 2) Treat Luo point at the site of hemorrhage
 - Bleed or plum blossom
 - ...or moxa
- 3) Treat corresponding Jing-well point
 - Bleed with a lancet
 - ...or moxa
- 4) Example:
 - Acute coughing up blood due to Wind-Heat
 - Tongue: Red
 - Pulse: Rapid
 - a) Plum blossom Lu-7
 - b) Bleed Lu-11
 - c) For Heat, add Ying-spring point – Lu-10
 - This is considered a branch treatment in order to stop bleeding
- 5) A root treatment is used for bleeding at various sites
 - This condition is usually due to Deficient Blood (this can be caused by blood loss), which can lead to Blood Stasis
 - a) This condition can be treated at the same time as the above (or later)
 - b) Treat Spleen for not managing the Blood
 - You can select some, all, or add in different points for the following treatment
 - c) Tonify Spleen:
 - Moxa Sp-1
 - Tonify Sp-10
 - Also tonify:
 - Bl-17 (Blood)
 - Sp-3 (Yuan-source)
 - St-36 (moves Blood)
 - Bl-20 (Spleen Back-shu point)
 - d) Harmonize Liver
 - Tonify:
 - Lr-3
 - GB-34
 - Lr-2

(((Treating Hematological Issues))) (((with Luo Vessels)))

I) Simplified Treatments for Hematological Conditions

- *Treatments should be done in conjunction with an MD so that blood tests can be monitored*
- *For all the following conditions, monitor the patient for a healing crisis with Heat*
 - *Treat this with the Yang Longitudinal Luo Vessels*

1) Anemia

- reduced oxygen-carrying capacity of red blood cells due to an iron deficiency
 - Diet is insufficient in that element
 - Iron deficiency can also be due to malabsorption
 - ...or chronic blood loss, as in heavy periods and stomach ulcers
 - Pregnancy
 - Chronic diseases like cancer
- a) To increase the iron content of the body, modify the diet
- Seaweed is a good source of iron
 - As is Guinness
- You must also tonify Stomach-Fire (if deficient) so that iron will be absorbed by the Small Intestine and stored in the Liver
- If Stomach-Fire is deficient, there's Deficient Spleen-Qi... so iron cannot be properly transformed and transported
- b) Transverse Luo treatment for Stomach-Fire (Excess or Deficient):
- Tonify St-40
 - Tonify Lr-5 (for Qi Deficiency)
 - Tonify Ki-4 (for Yang Deficiency)
 - Tonify Sp-4 (for Blood Deficiency)
- Also tonify Xue Fu (Blood Mansion): Ht-1; Sp-21; Lr-13
- See Week 7; II, (1)
- c) TCM treatment for Deficient Spleen-Qi and Stomach-Fire:
- Tonify Sp-6; Sp-9; Sp-10
 - Moxa Bl-17

2) Vitamin B-12 Deficiency (pernicious anemia)

- Most often occurring in Nordic blondes
 - Usually due to aging and atrophy of the GI tract
 - Can also be auto-immune based
 - Peptic cells in stomach fail to bind to B-12 to be carried to Small Intestine for absorption
- a) Signs and symptoms include:
- Indigestion