The 8-Extraordinary Vessels
(Qi Jing Bai Mai)

Jeffrey Yuen’s class
Winter/Spring 2004

Transcribed by
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These notes were taken during a series of lectures in a class on the 8-Extra Vessels taught by Jeffrey Yuen at the Swedish Institute, January through March 2004. The concepts presented are his; I have rephrased them for ease of flow in reading.

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8-Extra Overview

I) History of the 8-Extra Vessels

1) These treatments were not popular until the Ming dynasty (1368 – 1644)
   - Prior to this it was thought improper to work on a constitutional level – alter one’s ming (one’s life), one’s destiny – the ancestral genetic subset with which a person was born

2) In the Ming dynasty, there was an increased interest in the function of the Kidneys/Jing – and thus the 8-Extras – and the ability to affect congenital factors directly
   - The thoughts on this at the time were most heavily influenced by Zhang Jing-Yue (the creator of the 8-Parameters and the 10-Questions), the Ming Men School, and the Warming Yang School (Bu Yang Pai)
     - Warming Yang School believed Yang/movement is our essential nature and should be supplemented
     - These schools were influenced by the earlier teachings of Zhu Dan Xi and his School of Nourishing Yin (Ci Yin Pai)
       - Zhu Dan Xi came from a sub-tropical area in China, and so came to believe that everyone is too Yang, and are at risk of depleting Yin

3) In the Song (960 – 1279) and Ming (1368 – 1644) dynasties, acupuncture was not that popular because it was painful; the preference was herbal medicine
   - The interest in and use of acupuncture to treat illnesses was revived in the 15th century by Xu Feng with his book Zhen Jiu Da Quan, Great Compilation of Acupuncture
   - Interest was revived again in the 17th century by Yang Ji Zhou with his book Zhen Jiu Da Cheng, Great Accomplishments of Acupuncture
     - He developed the opening points, as well as the coupled pairs for the 8-Extra Vessels
   - Li Shi-Zhen tried to one-up the acupuncture guys with his own writings on herbs, the 8-Extras and their pulses, which were influenced by the work of Wang Shu-He – in particular, his Mai Jing (Pulse Classic) and his commentaries on the 8-Extras
     - Li Shi-Zhen was the last major person to talk about the 8-Extra Vessels… he standardized their trajectories

II) Theoretical Aspects of the 8-Extra Vessels

1) The 8-Extra Vessels reflect the evolutionary/transformational dynamics pertaining to humanity, ethnicity and gender
   - They are the “roadmaps” of physiology, pathology and evolution
   - They are responsible for both natural and moral adaptations to the world

2) The 8-Extra Vessels deal with constitutional energetics – Yuan-Qi – as it is reflected by morphology and astrology
   - They touch upon both Fate (Ming) and Destiny (Yun)
   - When you use your patient’s astrological chart and/or physiognomy to determine the course of treatment, you will be using 8-Extra Vessel points
3) Working with the 8-Extra Vessels gives one the power to alter one’s genetics/fate, thereby playing the role of creator/architect of life (probably the reason these vessels were avoided in earlier practice)

   a) Cultivation of these vessels is the deepest form of self-exploration; in the process of doing so you come closer to full self-acceptance and begin to understand your life’s purpose

   b) With the 8-Extras, you can work on a person’s temperament
      – Temperament is caused by a preponderance of Essential-Qi being directed to one of the zang-fu

   c) Emotional problems like suicidal thoughts and low self-esteem can be treated by 8-Extra therapy, as it works on a person’s non-acceptance of themselves

   d) 8-Extra therapy is used only to help a person through a crisis – NOT (for ethical reasons) for frivolously changing a person’s make-up

4) If certain things like diabetes, breast cancer or heart disease “runs in your family,” 8-Extra therapy can work against these conditions arising in yourself
   – 8-Extra therapy can actually change your constitution, dealing with mutations to DNA and RNA
   – It’s therefore the treatment of choice when confronted with cases of cancer, AIDS, tropical diseases and biological warfare

   a) The Divergent Meridians also work constitutionally
      – The difference is that they begin at the major joints (bones) of the body, and work to divert EPFs coming in from the Wei-Qi level
      – They span from the Wei-Qi to the Yuan-Qi levels of the body
      – Acute pathologies (Ebola; malaria; lime disease) and auto-immune diseases are Divergent meridian issues

   b) Constitutional issues related to the length and quality of life are in the realm of the 8-Extra Vessels’ control

5) The constitution is related to:

   ANATOMICALLY             LEVEL
   Jing.................................Humors
   Kidneys............................Zang-fu
   8-Extra Vessels.................Meridians
   Yuan-Qi............................Energetics
   Bone, Marrow &
   Curious Organs....................Anatomical

III) The Unfolding of Life – of Ming and Yun (Fate and Destiny) – via the 8-Extras

1) Fate – or Ming – is pre-given… it’s the “cards” you’re dealt in life: where you’re born, your parents, what you look like, your over-all constitution and disposition
2) Destiny has more to do with choice – what you do with those “cards” – how you “play the game”: you’re given choices to make at every turn in Life, and Destiny represents those choices
   - Regardless of good or bad, experiences that are difficult can only be transcended so as not to be re-lived again
   - One must embody the Taoist concepts of he and ding – harmony and balance – to realize and work with the dynamics of Yin and Yang, for everything occurs in the presence of its opposite

3) Conception follows the course of Pre-Natal energetics, which is a reversal of the Generation Cycle
   a) Water represents the blending of male and female sexual fluids
   b) Metal represents the heavy breathing going on during the blending of sexual fluids
      - This heavy breathing causes the Kidneys to grasp Lung-Qi, bringing in Da-Qi, along with Po – which wants/needs a body in order to experience life – to the place where Water mixes
        
        ![Diagram of Breathing-pattern changes cause Cosmic-Qi to descend](image)

        ![Diagram of where Male and Female Essences blend](image)

   c) Earth represents the Water and Metal congealing into a matrix, bringing forth the first trimester of pregnancy
   d) Fire represents the second trimester, when Shen begins to develop in utero
      - This is when Shen – or the “Sovereign Fire” – decides its conquest in life
      - Questions are formed – questions that will be dealt with and answered in life
      - Lessons to be learned are determined
   e) Wood is the third trimester, when energetically, things ready themselves to spring forth
      - Because of its association with Liver energetics, Taoists believe that if the mother gets overly angry or upset, it can trigger a premature delivery
   f) Acupuncture is used during the first trimester for things like morning sickness and over-all tonification
      - It should not be used at all during the second trimester, leaving the energies of the mother and developing fetus to their own devices
      - During the third trimester, acupuncture can be used to prepare the mother for birth as well as correct the position of a breach baby

4) The birthing process (controlled by Chong Mai) begins with the positioning of the head of the fetus on top of the cervix, which dilates
   - The water breaking represents a movement of the body’s energies toward the Yang
Delivery happens via the contractions of the diaphragm, abdomen and pelvic regions (the zong jin – ancestral sinews – which is related to Dai Mai)

a) Labor contractions stimulate the brain to begin to synchronize with light and time
   – This is under control of the pituitary gland, which is related to Bl-1; this point also has some control over the hormones (see Qiao Mai, (II) (12))
     – The pineal gland regulates Yin/Yang (Prenatal-Qi)
     – The pituitary gland regulates Qi and Blood (Postnatal-Qi)

b) Birth trauma begins with the loss of darkness and buoyancy, coming into a world of light and gravity
   – Then the umbilical cord is severed, requiring nourishment to now come via the mouth and nose
     – There’s an intimate relationship between the mouth and navel

c) The first cry activates Qi-Ke – mouth of qi – to circulate Qi and Blood
   – This is reflected by the pulses at Lu-9 and St-9
   – Breathing into the Lungs (for the first time) sets the Heart-Blood in motion
     – This also creates a pressure in the left atrium, which is greater than that of the right atrium, thereby creating the "Heart barrier," or Pericardium

d) The bonding process begins with the infant yearning to reunite with the maternal matrix
   – This reveals itself later on in life as relationships of dependency, either with God – or the gods; one’s parents; employer; teacher(s); doctor; &tc….
   – In the absence of an individual, the nourishing relationship can be with food (eating disorders) or drugs (addiction), or, I suppose, any set of external stimuli which is pleasing to the senses and the person’s idiosyncratic needs
   – Synchronizing with the sensations of one’s own bond to nourishment – one’s heartbeat and breathing – creates the same patterns and does the same things as when nourishment/closeness/love is needed

5) The 8-Extra Vessels, seen as propagating the continuum of generation and development, are deemed responsible for the manifestation of the different stages of life*
   – These stages are dubbed “the cycles of 7 and 8” (in the Su Wen) or "the cycles of 10” (in the Ling Shu), which refer to the ages at which major developmental changes occur
     – At 7 or 8, children in China were typically sent out to work in the fields for their family
     – And at 14 – 16, they were typically married

6) As the architect of Life, the 8-Extra Vessels have a “blueprint” – determined by Chong Mai
   – which is responsible for a person’s:
     – Gender
     – Ethnicity
     – Nature/disposition
   a) There needs also be raw material (Yin), which Ren Mai is responsible for
   b) Construction (Yang) is under the province of Du Mai

* See Taoist Yoga by Lu K’uan Yü, pages 16 – 20, for a more in-depth discussion.
c) Wei Mai is responsible for the process of aging/maturing; it is linked to the defining moments of a person’s life
   - **Yang Wei Mai** has to do with bodily functionings, External/climactic factors; for instance, a severe draft causing Bell’s Palsy, *i.e.*, permanent deviation of the mouth
   - **Yin Wei Mai** has to do with structural changes, Internal/mental factors; it deals with the past and future issues of a person’s inner life

d) Qiao Mai has to do with the present moment
   - **Yin Qiao Mai** has to do with how one perceives themselves at the present moment
   - **Yang Qiao Mai** pertains to how one perceives the world at the present moment

e) Dai Mai revolves around things – issues, emotions – a person has held on to for a very long time, and not released
   - They know something in their lives need to be changed, but rather than deal with it they pigeon-hole the issue, sweep it under the rug so to speak, within their bodies, within their energetic matrix
   - This suppression eventually causes a physical disease; the person becomes so “full” of what they’re trying to suppress that it begins to “leak” out
     - Leukorrhea and spermatorrhea are two examples….

IV) **The 8-Extra Vessels’ Relationship with Jing/Essence**

1) The 8-Extra Vessels derive their Qi from the Kidneys and the Jing stored therein to support Post-Natal Qi
   - They are the link between Pre-Heaven and Post-Heaven Qi
   - They thereby play a major role in the cycles of growth, development, maturity, conception and pregnancy
     - This is supported via Blood and jin-ye/body fluids

2) The dissemination of Jing:

   ![Diagram](image)

   a) Kidney-Qi/Yuan-Qi extends outward from Du Mai to the Back-Shu points, which then gets transferred to the Primary Meridians, proceeding to the Yuan-source points
     - In this, a preponderance of Qi tends to go to one organ/meridian, creating one’s temperament and constitution
b) The combustion of Jing leads to aging
   – But also gives Life… which builds up the brain, bestowing knowledge through the experiences gained
   – The process of Life is the transmutation of Jing to Shen

3) The Nan Jing identifies the Right Kidney as Ming Men, or Life’s Gate
   – Men = a superficial door, as opposed to guan, a deep, hidden portal
   – Ming Men brings life out to the “surface”

4) The 8-Extras generate bone via marrow

5) Because of their relationship with marrow, the 8-Extras nourish the brain ( nao )

6) It is said that the energetics of the 8-Extras are conveyed through the eyes via Zong-Qi (Ancestral Qi)
   – In Chapter 71 of the Ling Shu, it says: “Zong-Qi accumulates in the center of the chest (Ren-17) and expresses itself through the throat and larynx, and links to the Heart (which links to the eyes)”
   – Bl-1 is therefore an important 8-Extra point
   – This correlation with the Heart and the eyes signifies the role the 8-Extras play in one’s self-image, and how one’s thoughts come to reflect the way one perceives the world

V) The 8-Extra Vessels’ Relationship with Other Meridians

1) Where the 8-Extras lie energetically in the body:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qi Type</th>
<th>Meridians and Vessels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wei Qi</td>
<td>Primary meridians; Sinew meridians; Divergents (Exterior)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ying Qi</td>
<td>Primary meridians; Luo Vessels; Divergents (Interior; Blood level)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yuan Qi</td>
<td>8-Extra Vessels; Divergents (Jing level)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2) The 8-Extras have a relationship with the Luo Vessels, Divergent Meridians, and Yuan-source points

   a) The sequence of the Luo Vessels end with the Luo Vessels of Ren and Du (in the Ling Shu), or alternatively, with Yin and Yang Qiao Mai (in the Nan Jing)
      – Luos thereby have a correlation with the opening points

   b) The 8-Extras relate to the Divergent Meridians by way of the bones/joints (the yin of yang)

   c) The 8-Extras relate to the Yuan-source points via the dissemination of the Jing (stored in the Left Kidney) by the Right Kidney (Ming Men) along Du Mai, which then travels to the Back-Shu points, and thence to the Yuan-source point of the pertaining zang-fu

3) In Chapter 27 of the Nan Jing, it is said the 8-Extra Vessels are beyond the reach of the 12 Primary Meridians
According to Jeffrey Yuen, you can only probe the 8-Extra Vessels; you don’t necessarily "open" them as you would other channels since the energetics here relate to one’s essence – one’s soul – and rarely does a person bare to you their absolute self.

4) The same chapter of the Nan Jing goes on to relate the 8-Extras to reservoirs, or ditches that catch the surplus overflowing from the main waterways/channels.

- “The ancient sages constructed ditches and reservoirs for the waterways in the event of something extraordinary. When rain pours down from Heaven, the ditches and reservoirs become full.” (An obvious reference to meditative practices)
- In the actual wording of this they use the word hai (sea), relating the 8-Extras to the ocean, which is the collecting place of water from all rivers
- The “ocean” can also be seen as a metaphor for the state one’s consciousness enters when in a state of trance induced by meditation.
5) Needles are kept in for 30 – 40 minutes

6) Ming dynasty texts recommend 3 cones if using moxa
   – Except when treating Du Mai, then only 1 cone is used
   – With Ren Mai, 7 cones are used

7) Between treatments, you can have the patient treat themselves using essential oils on certain prescribed points
   – Here, you’re using the essence of a plant to treat the essence – or Jing – of an individual
   – These oils can be applied directly without dilution; however they should be tested on the person first to make sure there’s no allergic reaction
   a) Chong Mai: Angelica + Patchouli
   b) Du Mai: Cedarwood + Cinnamon Leaf
   c) Ren Mai: Neroli + Ginger
   d) Yin Wei Mai: Rose + Melissa
   e) Yang Wei Mai: Rosemary + Citronella
   f) Dai Mai: Mugwort + Niaouli + Sandalwood
   g) Yin Qiao Mai: Narcissus + Jasmine + Juniper
   h) Yang Qiao Mai: Basil + Cinnamon Leaf

IV) Point Selection

1) The Confluent (or “Opening”) Points are most often used
   – These were developed in the Ming dynasty – discovered through the interplay of Yin and Yang – by Zhen Jiu Da Cheng
   – He did not use them in all his treatments
   – Li Shi Zhen did not have the same Confluent Points
   a) The Confluent Points are →
   b) If you needle a leg point, an arm point should also be needled:
      – GB-41 ↔ SJ-5
      – Bl-62 ↔ SI-3
      – Ki-6 ↔ Lu-7
      – Sp-4 ↔ P-6*

* The last two couplings are the reverse of how they’re paired according to meridian energetics…. 
c) Coupled pairs should be needled in a criss-cross fashion:
   - The order in which these points are needled depends on whether the patient is male or female
     - For men, begin on the left side
     - For women, begin on the right
   - The Japanese regard the left as pertaining to Yang, male energy; the right as Yin, female energy
   - Irrespective of gender: the left is always used when opening Du Mai; right is always used when opening Ren Mai
   - Between these points, ion pumping cords can be used – a Japanese technique

d) There’s debate on the use of coupled pairs:
   - Whether they are to be needled bi-laterally (or just the leg point on one side, the arm point on the other)
   - Whether they are to be done at the beginning, or the end of the treatment
   - Whether the treatment should begin with one Confluent Point, and end with the other

5) Other points used relate to Yuan-Qi
   - Yuan-Source points
   - Back-Shu points
   - Mu points
   - Hui-Influential points
   - Luo points
   - Divergent Meridian points

6) Points along the trajectory of the 8-Extra Vessels are, of course, used as well
b) In terms of supporting Post-Natal Qi, Chapter 33 of the Ling Shu says, “Chong Mai is the Sea of the 12 Meridians with its upper Shu-transport point at Bl-11 and lower Shu-transport points at St-37 and St-39....”

c) The Sea of Grain and Fluids (which correlates with the Spleen) has an upper Shu-transport point at St-30 and a lower one at St-36

III) Needling Technique

1) When you normally use the Kidney meridian, you needle perpendicularly or obliquely, inferiorly or superiorly

2) When tapping Chong Mai, you needle obliquely, either towards or away from the midline
   a) To bring a pathology into latency, needle towards the midline (thread to Ren Mai)
      – The patient needs sufficient Jing in order for this to be effective
      – This is often used with patients who have cancer
   b) To support Stomach-Qi, needle towards the Stomach meridian (thread to Stomach)

3) In a case such as the one highlighted in (I) (4), you’d tonify Spleen-Qi via Kidney-Qi, needling obliquely from the Kidney to the Stomach meridian the following points:
   – Sp-4
   – Ki-11
   – Ki-16
   – Ki-21

IV) A Few Chong Mai Treatments

1) Some notable Chong Mai points are:
   – Ki-11 (Heng Gu, Curved Bone): benefits the Lower Jiao
   – Ki-13 (Qi Shu, Qi Point): regulates Ren and Chong Mai, as well as the Lower Jiao
   – Ki-16 (Huang Shu, Membrane Movement): regulates qi; warms intestines; alleviates pain; deals with how the body absorbs and moves fluid in and out of an organ
   – Ki-21 (You Men, Dark Gate): affects pylorus/Stomach rebellion; spreads Liver-Qi; fortifies Spleen

2) To Strengthen/Tonify Spleen-Qi via Kidney-Qi, use:
   – Sp-4
   – Ki-16
   – Ki-11
   – Ki-21

   Needle obliquely from the Kidney to the Stomach meridian

3) To treat difficult menses with the 8-Extras: (II)(14)(a)
   – Palpate the vertebra and the proximal area (Hua-Two points)
   – In cases of PMS or amenorrhea, find the tight areas and disperse them
   – In cases of early or excessive menstruation, find the flaccid areas and tonify them
   – Use other points to treat symptoms/condition, remembering not only Liver, but Lung involvement
4) To **Nourish and Invigorate Blood** (with Zong-Qi {Chest-Qi}), use:
   - Sp-4 and P-6
   - The Kidney Shu-points
   - The He-sea and yuan-source points associated with the Blood Deficiency or Stasis

   a) Lung-Qi (as expressed by Zong-Qi) moves Blood
      - Blood engenders Qi
      - If there is stagnation, blockage or weakness of either, the classical signs and symptoms are:
        - Heart pain (can be emotional or physical)
        - Xiong jing (knotting of the chest)
        - Fullness
        - Distension
        - Tightness
        - Pain below the sternum
        - Nausea/vomiting

   b) A classic example would be Liver Blood Deficiency with Blood Stasis
      - **Signs and symptoms:**
        - Anemic
        - Scanty period (Qi and Blood Deficiency)
        - Tired on exertion
        - Tightness in chest at time of period (Cold)
        - Clots in menses
        - Tongue: Thin; dark Purplish; Thin, Pale coat
        - Pulse: Thin and Tight, or Choppy
      
      - **Treatment:**
        - Open Sp-4 on the right side
        - Sp-4 probes the First Trajectory of Chong Mai (Kidney-Spleen/Stomach relation)
        - Needle Ki-24 bilaterally; even technique
        - Needle P-6 bilaterally; even
        - Palpate spine and Hua Two points, looking for tightness (Blood Stagnation)
        - Needle and disperse

5) To **Invigorate Yang to treat Bi-syndrome due to Blood Stagnation**, tonify:
   - Sp-4
   - GB-26
   - Du-4 (where Dai and Du Mai meet)
   - Bl-17 (needle obliquely towards spine and tonify, using lift and thrust method)
   - Bl-11 (needle obliquely towards spine and tonify, using lift and thrust method)
     - With either of the Bladder points, check and see if their parallel Hua-Two points are more tender; if they are – needle them instead
   - GB-41 (add in if treating zong-jin – the ancestral sinew)
   - SI-3 (opens Du Mai)
   - Ahshi points along Chong, Dai and Du Mai (needled in that order)
6) To **Ascend Spleen-Qi** (via Kidney Yang), use:
- Sp-4   –     Ki-6
- Ki-11   –     Ki-3
- Ki-10   –     Ki-1
- Bl-40
- This treatment is good for:
  - Supporting the Spleen
  - Diaphragmatic problems
  - Hemorrhoids
  - People who are flaccid around the back of the knees (usually obese people)

7) To **Tonify Spleen-Qi and Nourish Stomach-Yin** (Yang Ming), use:
- Sp-4   –     For Stomach-Yin, add:
- St-30          –     Ren-22
- St-36          –     Ren-23
- St-37          –     St-4
- St-39          –     St-1
- St-42
- Lr-1
- Sp-1

a) The above treatment is good for symptoms like:
- Food stasis
- Nausea/vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Intestinal Wind (ulcerative colitis, where there’s the frequent need to fart and crap)
- Esophageal reflux
- Borborygmus
- Naval pain
- The five types of jaundice:
  - Food (due to too much fried, greasy, fatty food)
  - Alcohol
  - Unilateral (where there’s injury to the Gall Bladder)
  - Limbic (due to overexertion over a long period of time)
  - Weak/Male (due to too much sex)

b) If there’s jaundice, add Du-9 to the above treatment

c) For nue malaria, add Lu-7 to the treatment

d) For Rebellious Qi manifesting as rapid, horse breathing and/or plum-pit throat, add Ren-22 and St-5 to the treatment

e) A common point combination to add in to the above treatment is Ren-12, Ren-17, and St-36