The Role of the Liver Meridian

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THE LIVER MERIDIAN IN TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE

In this course we will look at the physical channel that the liver meridian follows and the role the meridian plays. We live in an environment where we are given plenty of medical information that doesn’t quite fit into our paradigm. So let's keep in mind that in Chinese Medicine, the liver is an “organ network”. This explains that in the past, Chinese doctors were not knowledgeable in the scientific aspects that are commonplace in today’s medicine. They did not view the organs as physical substances sitting in one place, but rather as extended networks that function throughout the body. We are not simply referring to the western idea of an organ. The Chinese system was developed by considering the person as a whole and by relying on what is visible or palpable at the surface.

When you think about how the system was developed, it is nothing short of amazing. So we need to keep a balanced mind with information from the present and the past, always remembering that we are practicing Chinese Medicine.

In classical or traditional *Chinese medicine, our knowledge of the five organ networks is the foundation for practicing Chinese medicine. Viewing the body as dynamic and energetic, where all systems function together internally and have the ability to resonate with the outside world.

*of a kind that has been respected for a long time

The Liver Meridian is known as foot jueyin (Absolute yin) channel. Absolute yin is the linking area between lesser yin and great yin. Some books say the absolute yin is the foundation of greatness and honesty.
With slight variations depending on what book you are reading: The external pathway starts on the lateral aspect of the big toe in the hairy region. It follows the dorsum of the foot to the area anterior to the medial malleolus, then, goes up the leg on the medial aspect (intersects with SP6). At the level of 8 cun above the medial malleolus, it crosses the Spleen Channel. From there it goes along the medial aspect of the knee and thigh, running between the Spleen and Kidney Channels, then to the inguinal groove, 2.5cun lateral to the Ren channel (intersects SP 12,13). It curves around the external genitalia, travelling lateral to the Stomach Channel and goes through the abdomen to the hypochondriac region, where it ends at LV 14.

The internal pathway begins when it enters the abdomen at SP 13 passing through the lower abdomen (intersecting with Ren 2,3,4) then along the side of the stomach it enters the actual liver organ. It then connects with the gall bladder, penetrates the diaphragm and distributes in the chest and hypochondriac region. It continues upward along the posterior aspect of the trachea to the nasopharynx, connects with the eye system, then passes through the forehead to the vertex (intersecting with Du 20) where it ends. A branch from the liver goes through the diaphragm to the Lung and connects with the Lung channel in the chest where it completes the cycle. A branch from the eye goes down the cheek and encircles the lips.
The Diagram below is the external pathway with 14 points.
the internal pathway is shown with dotted blue line
The 14 points of the Liver Meridian:

In the past, point location was in the name, which told you by it’s description where to find it. There are many translations, most are similar in nature so as to give an idea of point location in the past with point location that is now based on named muscles, tendons, bones, etc.

LIV1 (Liver 1) – Dadun
The Jing-Well point of the Liver channel

*Jing-Well points are where the qi bubbles up. Jing-Well points are indicated to revive consciousness. Jing-Well points are known to treat fullness below the Heart and clear Heat.*

**English Name:** Great Honesty, Great Clarity, Big Mound, Large Pile

**Translation:** Da, large; Dun, thickness. Da, refers to the big toe. The point is at the medial aspect of the big toe, where the muscle is thick.

**Location:** On the lateral aspect of the big toe, 0.1 cun from the corner of the nail.

*Studies have shown that Acupuncture at Dadun (LR 1) point can adjust the movement of the large intestine and can strengthen the peristalsis of the lower part of the descending colon and rectum. Acupuncture at this point can also strengthen the effect of Shenmen (HT 7) in lowering blood pressure.*

LIV2 (Liver 2) - Xingjian
The Ying-Spring point of the Liver channel.

*Ying-Spring points are where the qi dribbles down the meridian. Ying-Spring points are indicated for heat in the body and changes in the*
complexion. **Ying-Spring points are known to clear heat from the meridian.**

**English Name:** Walk between, Moving between

**Translation:** Xing, walking; Jian, middle. The point is in the depression anterior to the 1st and 2nd metatarsophalangeal joints. The qi of meridian runs between them.

**Location:** Proximal to the margin of the web between the first and second toe.

**LIV3 (Liver 3) - Taichong**
The **Shu-Stream** of the Liver channel, Yuan-Source point of the Liver channel.

It is the 7th of **Ma Dan Yang's 12 stars** *

**Yuan-Source points are of great significance in treating diseases of the internal organs. Yuan-Source points are the sites where the Yuan (Primary) qi of the Zang-Fu organs passes and stays. Puncturing the Yuan-Source points stimulates the vital energy of the regular meridians, regulates the functional activities of the internal organs, reinforces antipathogenic factors and eliminates pathogenic factors. This method of treating diseases deals principally with the root causes. The Yuan (source) point from the affected meridian is often combined with the Luo (Connecting) point of the internally-externally related meridians in use. Shu-Stream points are where the qi starts to pour down the meridian. They are known to alleviate heaviness and pain in the joints. On Yin Meridians, Shu-Stream points are identical to the actions of Yuan-Source points.**

**English Name:** Great Rushing, Great Surge
Translation: Tai, big; Chong, important pass. The point is on the foot, where the Qi of the meridian is abundant. It is an important pass of this meridian.

Location: In the depression distal to the juncton of the first and second metatarsals.

Studies have shown that Acupuncture at Taichong (LR 3) alone can quickly lower the pressure of the biliary tract after morphine is injected. Coupled with LI 4 it is known as the 4 Gates and is used to effectively move Qi and Blood throughout the body.

*Ma Dan-yang, of the Jin Dynasty, grouped together what he considered to be the most important acupuncture points on the body. the grouping became known as 'The Twelve Heavenly Star Points.'

The points San Li (ST 36) and Nei Ting (ST 44), Qu Chi (LI 11) together with He Gu (LI 4), Wei Zhong (BL 40) paired with Cheng Shan (BL 57), Tai Chong (LV 3) and Kun Lun (BL 60), Huan Tiao (GB 30) and Yang Ling (GB 34), Tong Li (HT 5) combined with Lie Que (LU 7): all the indications of the 360 points are covered by these 12 points

LIV4 (Liver 4) - Zhongfeng
The Jing-River point of the Liver channel.

Jing-River points are where the qi of the meridian begins to flow more heavily. They are known to treat cough and asthma due to pathogenic cold or heat.

English Name: Mound Center

Translation: Zhong, middle; Feng, earth heaped into a mound. The point is between the two malleoli as if between the mounds.
Location: One cun anterior to the medial malleolus, midway between Shangqiu (SP5) and Jiexi (ST41) in the depression on the medial side of the tendon of tibialis anterior muscle.

Some experiments have shown that puncturing Zhongfeng (LR 4) can strengthen the function of Neiguan (PC 6) and Zusanli (ST 36) to reduce the heart rate.

**LIV5 (Liver 5) - Ligou**  
The **Luo-Connecting** point of the Liver channel.

*Luo-Connecting* points of one meridian can communicate with two meridians. They treat diseases of the collaterals and can be used to treat chronic diseases, especially chronic diseases of the Zang-Fu organs. Clinically, Luo-Connecting points are often combined with Yuan-Source points in the treatment of diseases.

**English Name**: Gourd Ditch, Woodworm Ditch, Worm-eaten hole

**Translation**: Li, shell; Gou, groove. The external shape of the gastrocnemius muscle looks like a shell and the point is in the groove medial and anterior to it.

**Location**: On the medial aspect of the lower leg, 5 cun above the tip of the medial malleolus, on the middle of the medial aspect of the tibia.

**LIV6 (Liver 6) – Zhongdu**  
The **Xi-Cleft** /Accumulation Point

*A Xi-Cleft point is the site where the Qi of the meridian is deeply converged. Qi and blood are stored deeply at these particular points. If there appear abnormal reactions at X-Cleft points, it shows that the pathogens have entered the deeper parts of Zang-Fu organs. Thus, they are used for acute, painful symptoms, inflammation, protracted diseases*
of its pertaining meridian and Zang-Fun organ. Also, Xi-Cleft points of the Yin meridians have hemostatic functions.

**English Name:** Middle Capital, Middle Metropolis

**Translation:** Zhong, middle; Du, confluence. The point is on the medial aspect of the leg and at midpoint of the leg. It is a confluence of the qi of the Liver Meridian.

**Location:** 7 cun above the tip of the medial malleolus, on the midline of the medial surface of the tibia.

**LIV7 (Liver 7) - Xiguan**

**English Name:** Knee Gate

**Translation:** Xi, knee; Guan, joint. The point is in the vicinity of the knee joint.

Location: Posterior and inferior to the medial condyle of the tibia, in the upper portion of the medial head of the gastrocnemius muscle, 1 cun posterior to Yinlingquan (SP9).

**LIV8 (Liver 8) - Ququan**

The **He-Sea** point of the Liver channel, confluent point

**He-Sea** points are where the qi of the meridian collects and goes deep into the body. He-sea points are indicated to treat rebellious qi.

**English Name:** Crooked Spring, Spring at the Bend

**Translation:** Qu, crooked; Quan, spring. The point is at the medial end of the transverse crease of the popliteal fossa. With the knee flexed, the local depression is like a spring.
**Location:** When the knee is flexed, the point is above the medial end of the transverse popliteal crease, posterior to the medial condyle of the tibia, on the anterior border of the insertion of semimembranosus and semitendinosus muscles.

**LIV9 (Liver 9) - Yinbao**

**English Name:** - Yin wrapping, Yin Bladder

**Translation:** Yin, Yin of Yin-Yang; Bao, womb. The interior is Yin. Bao refers to the uterus. The point is at the medial aspect of the thigh and is indicated in disorders of the uterus.

**Location:** 4 cun above the medial epicondyle of the femur, between the vastus medialis and sartorius muscles.

**LIV10 (Liver 10) - Zuwuli**

**English Name:** - Leg Five Miles, Foot Five Li

**Translation:** Zu, lower limbs; Wu, five; Li, used as cun in ancient times. The point is in the lower limbs, 5 cun above Qi men.

**Location:** 3 cun directly below Qichong (ST30), at the proximal end of the thigh, below the pubic tubercle and on the lateral border of the abductor longus muscle.

**LIV11 (Liver 11) Yinlian**

Some books say no needle, others Perpendicular insertion 1.0 - 2.0 cun, moxa is applicable

**English Name:** - Yin corner

**Translation:** Yin, Yin of Yin-Yang; Lian, edge. The interior is Yin. The
point is on the medial aspect of the thigh, near the genitalia.

Location: 2 cun directly below Qichong (ST30), at the proximal end of the thigh, below the pubic tubercle and on the lateral border of the abductor longus muscle.

**LIV12 (Liver 12) Jimai**
Some books say do not needle, others say to avoid puncturing the artery, puncture perpendicularly 0.5-0.8 cun. Moxibustion is applicable.

**English Name:** - Urgent Pulse

**Translation:**  Ji, urgent; Mai, artery. The point is at the medial aspect of the thigh, where the artery is felt.
Location: Lateral to the pubic tubercle, lateral and inferior to Qichong (ST30), in the inguinal groove where the pulsation of femoral artery is palpable, 2.5 cun lateral to the anterior midline.

**LIV13 (Liver 13) – Zhangmen**
**Front Mu** Point of the Spleen, **Influential** point of Zang Organs

*Front-Mu Points are those points on the chest and abdomen where the Qi of the respective Zang-Fu organs is infused. They are located close to their respective related Zang-Fu organs. When a Zang or a Fu organ is affected, an abnormal reaction such as tenderness may occur in the corresponding Front-Mu Point. These points are significant in diagnosis and treatment of diseases of their respective Zang-Fu organs.*

**English Name:** Chapter Door, Camphorwood Gate, Ornamental Gate

**Translation:**  Zhang, screen; Men, door. The point is below the hypochondrium, which is like a screen for the internal organs.
**Location:** On the lateral side of the abdomen, below the free end of the eleventh rib.

**LIV14 (Liver 14) - Qimen**
The **Front-Mu** point of the Liver, Crossing point

*Front-Mu Points are those points on the chest and abdomen where the Qi of the respective organ is infused.*
*see above Liver 13 for explanation*

**English Name:** Cycle Door, Cycle Gate

**Translation:** Qi, cycle; Men, door. The flanks on both sides are like an open door, where the point is located. When the qi of meridian circulates here, it is considered as one cycle, therefore named Qimen.

**Location:** In the sixth intercostal space, on the mammary line (4 or 3.5 cun from midline), two ribs below the nipple. This point is at the same level as Juque (REN14), namely 6 cun above the navel.

Puncturing Qimen (LR 14) has a certain effect in the treatment of chronic hepatitis and early cirrhosis. Puncturing Qimen (LR 14) can reduce hepatic blood flow and also increase the amount of white blood cells. Puncturing Qimen (LR 14) can make the sphincter muscle of the bile duct contract, and become relaxed after withdrawing the needle, and promote the movement of the gallbladder. Puncturing Qimen (LR 14) can also affect the movement of the urinary bladder.

*Studies have shown that twisting the needle can make the urinary bladder contract and the internal pressure increase, and when stop twisting, the urinary bladder becomes relaxed and the internal pressure goes down.*

The Front-mu points are also in close proximity to their corresponding internal organs. For example, the Front-mu point of the lung Zhongfu (Lu.l) is the highest whilst Zhongji (Ren 3), the Front-mu point of the urinary bladder, is the lowest. Their special influence is due to their close proximity to their corresponding internal organs, rather than their location on specific meridians. Among the Front-mu points, only three are situated on their corresponding meridians, namely Zhongfu (Lu.l), Riyue (G.B.24) and Qimen (Liv.l4).

The chapter Genjiepian of the book Lingshu states, "The key to applying acupuncture therapy is to master the method of regulating Yin and Yang." Puncturing the corresponding Back-shu and Front-mu points simply regulates the balance between Yin and Yang, so as to either force the pathogenic factors out of the body or treat internal disorders of the zangfu organs.

Disorders of the Yang meridians and the six fu organs are sometimes manifested at the Front-mu points on the Yin aspect of the body. When Yang is diseased, Yin is also involved, and vice versa. So Back-shu points are often prescribed for disorders of the zang organs, while the Front-mu points are often prescribed for disorders of the fu organs in the clinic. Such an application of Back-shu and Front-mu point is also known as "expelling Yin disorders from Yang meridians, and expelling Yang disorders from Yin meridians".
The Circadian Clock:

The twelve meridians follow specific time schedules and pathways. For every two hours throughout the day, one organ-channel is at its peak, while the organ opposite of that hour (ie, liver/small intestine) is at it's low. The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine says, "The three yins of the arm go from the organs to the hands. The three yangs of the arm go from the hands to the head. The three yangs of the legs go from the head to the feet. The three yins of the legs go from the feet to the abdomen." Qi is continuously circulating through the meridians in a daily cycle. At certain times, both qi and blood have maximum flow in particular meridians.
Bilaterally

yang meets yin
in the abdomen
yang meets yang
in the head
yang meets yin
at lower extremity
yin meets yang
at upper extremity
yang meets yin
in the abdomen

yin meridians
of the arm
HT 11a-1pm
PC 7-9 pm
LU 3-5 am

yin meridians
of the arm
KI 5-7 pm
LV 1-3 am
SP 9-11 am

yin meridians
of the leg
BL 3-5pm
GB 11p-1am
ST 7-9 am

yang meridians
of leg

yang meridians
of the arm
In the Su Wen, the Liver is referred to as the body's general. In Chinese, the word for liver is “GAN” translated as “Rectifying System”.

The general is in charge having certain duties, responsibilities and authority. So we know that the job of the general of any army coordinates the movement of his troops, deciding when and how to attack or retreat. Inside the body, the liver defends against attacks and invasions. As an example: The liver protects us from various poisons and pathogens by filtering and detoxifying them when it is possible. When the liver functions smoothly, our physical and emotional activity, also runs smoothly. The liver is responsible for filtering, detoxifying, nourishing, replenishing, and storing blood.

What we know from western science: The liver stores large amounts of sugar in the form of glycogen, which it releases into the blood stream as glucose whenever the body requires energy. The liver receives nutrients extracted from food by the small intestine and uses it for growth and repair of tissues. The liver controls the peripheral nervous system, which regulates muscular activity and tension.

How this translates to Chinese Medicine: The inability to relax is often caused by liver dysfunction or some might use the expression an “imbalance in Wood energy”. Liver energy also controls ligaments and tendons, which together with muscles regulate motor activity and determine physical coordination. Liver function is reflected externally in the condition of fingernails and toenails and by the eyes and vision. The liver can be seen to influence the degree of determination and resolve, and the ability to make decisions in life. Stagnation of the flow of liver qi frequently disrupts emotional flow, producing feelings of frustration or anger.

The liver marks the beginning of cyclical action, spring yang or energy, which all living things rely upon as a catalyst for growth. Deriving its
origin from the mother element Kidney /Water, the creation cycle begins with the wood element but draws energy from the water element.

Through its association with Wood energy, the liver governs growth and development, drive and desires, ambitions and creativity. It is the source of all endurance, its ability to go against the flow is symbolic of our enduring ability to continue on, to keep trying.

Any obstruction of liver energy (stagnation of qi) can cause intense feelings of frustration, rage, and anger, and these emotions in turn further disrupt liver energy and suppress liver function, in a self-destructive cycle that in five element theory could be the Destructive (Ke) cycle(Over acting cycle) or Insulting (Wu) Cycle.
In modern medicine, it is common to look at the internal organs as only physical objects with limited physical tasks. Looking at the body in this way, as “parts” so to speak, has the result of viewing it as a mechanism that can have parts removed and / or replaced without a problem or consequence, as if we were an automobile. The development of the traditional Chinese system of medicine relied on keen observation and touch, over a long period of time, and always considered the person as a whole. This was the empirical “science” that they had to work with.

“To respond to the challenges of what some might call an antiquated system and modern scientific medicine, it is necessary to first grasp the unique features of the Chinese medical system and observe their positive and negative features in relation to the modern situation. Therefore, one must look beyond the doctrines and practices themselves and observe the organizing principles that make the system work.” Subhuti Dharmananda

In classical Chinese medicine, the details of the interrelationship of the five organ networks is considered the foundation for successful practice. To understand the body is a dynamic system of intertwined functional circuits that reflect and resonate with the macrocosm of the universe. That everything is constantly changing with the forces of yin and yang.

In modern times, the organs have been directly linked and that can sometimes cause confusion. In Chinese, both the traditional organ network and the anatomical organ are called "gan," and in English, both are called "liver." Because of this, we can sometimes forget that the traditional function of the liver network is regulating the upward and outward expansion of qi and blood. In western medicine the liver is thought of in a different way, just metabolic function.

Prevention through harmonization with nature and balance within the body has been one of the original attractions that Chinese medicine offered to Westerners.
Professors Deng Zhongjia and Zhou Xuexi of the Chengdu University of Traditional Chinese Medicine are prominent voices calling for the restoration of a Chinese medicine education that is anchored in the classics. Professor Zhou is one of the few remaining elders of the field. He is one of China's leading authorities on studying the connection between ancient Chinese philosophy and traditional Chinese medicine. To further this cause, he has written two influential books, *The Science of Change: Root Theory of Chinese Medicine (Zhongguo Yi Yi Xue)* and *The Five Organ Networks of Chinese Medicine and Their Pathology (Zhongyi Wuzang Bing Xue).*

“Again, it is the Tao of herbal medicine to always consider the time of year, the geographical location, and the individual constitution of the patient when designing a prescription, and work with these parameters in a very flexible manner. Otherwise we will not be able to overcome the disease. We should never use a static approach. The science of Chinese medicine clearly shows that ancient medical wisdom can be more than a fascinating study subject, by offering clinical approaches that still work in a very palpable manner today. Fittingly, the academic engagement with our field is split in half.

On one side, we have the sinologists working with the primary literature to illuminate the record, but most of these people would never want to be caught dead promoting the actual use of these healing methods; and on the other side we have practitioners who work hands-on with the medicine but know very little about its history. We live in the 21st century, and it is out-dated or old-fashioned for us to believe in the clinical power of Chinese medicine on the one hand, but root ourselves in the work of scholars who still promote a 19th century imperialist mindset on the other. With the Contemplative Studies Initiative, which encourages scholars to actually practice the disciplines they study, we have a good example of a unified approach in the fields of religion and anthropology, so why not embrace this open-minded method in Chinese medicine? I very much believe that it behooves practitioners of Chinese medicine to embrace foundational concepts that have always been a part of our science. The problem, really, are not the demons, but the proper
understanding what a “demon” is. No need to be triggered into some kind of panic that we are going back to a medicine that was practiced in 500 BC. Now we have people in the field who read Chinese, who actively immerse themselves in Chinese culture, and bring with them a new level of maturity.” an excerpt from an interview with Heiner Fruehauf

Science tells us that the liver filters over a liter of blood every minute. It is responsible for detoxifying, nourishing, replenishing, and storing blood. It also acts to energize the blood by releasing stored sugar, and it recombines amino acids to create the protein our bodies need to grow and repair tissue.

The liver is considered a storage area for blood when blood is not being used for physical activity. During rest periods, the body is able to restore and regenerate. Blood is released to nourish the tendons and muscles in the form of glucose during activity. Liver cells are able to store up to 8% of their weight as glycogen and then transform that back to glucose as needed to maintain a balance in energy and blood sugar.

The quantity of blood that is available to nourish the muscles and surface help promote the strength of the Wei (Defensive) Qi. The liver meridian maintains an adequate blood supply and regulates the timing as well as the comfort / discomfort of menstruation. Any dysfunctions in the menstrual cycle are almost always treated through the regulation of liver blood, qi, or yin.

Blood flow varies according to the time of day, the season of the year, a person's constitution, and the state of physical and mental health / harmony. Thirteen centuries ago, the influential Tang dynasty scholar Wang Bing described this function of the liver in the following manner: "The liver stores the blood, and the heart moves it. If a person moves about in a waking state, then the blood is distributed throughout all channels; if a person rests, the blood returns to the liver."
The actual storage of blood is done in the Chong Mai / Penetrating Vessel, one of the eight extraordinary vessels. This vessel is often considered to be part of the liver network. This extra vessel is also known as the Sea of Blood because it is related to the Blood in the uterus and controls the blood connecting channels. Maciocia translates the words as: “In modern Chinese, the word chong means to infuse, charge, rush and dash but it also means a thoroughfare and important place. Chinese books say that in the context of the Chong mai, chong has the meaning of jie (streets), dong (activity and movement), xing (movement) and tong (free passage). All these words and attributes apply to the Penetrating Vessel and it is difficult to choose a single English word for it.”

Each organ network has a direction in which its qi flows. The liver qi goes in all directions while also ensuring that all qi is flowing the way it should. This is a primary role of the liver network.

*The blood cannot go where the qi does not go.* In the vessels the qi and blood move together. Though the heart and lung are the promoters of blood circulation, stagnation of liver qi can and will still cause stagnation of blood.

In the lower burner, the liver connects to the Sea of Qi at Ren 6, a powerful revitalizing and reinvigorating point, making the liver a close associate of the body's ministerial fire. It can utilize the power of this fire to aid the spleen channel.

The eyes represent the orifices of the liver. When a person closes his/her eyes and falls asleep, the blood returns to the liver.

The eyes are nourished by the essence of all five organ networks, and thus differentiated into five organ specific zones which may reveal important diagnostic information. The eyes as a whole, however, represent the opening of the liver, and are thus considered to be more closely linked to the liver than to any of the other organ networks. "Liver qi communicates with the eyes," states the *Neijing*, "and if the liver functions harmoniously, the eyes can differentiate the five essential
colors. A person's eyesight may therefore also serve as an indicator for liver function.

One way that the liver governs the eyes is epithelial tissue. It is important for the proper function of the cornea as well as all mucous secreting membranes in the body. So when there is Liver Yin deficiency there is dryness. Another aspect to prove to us that those ancient guys really knew what they were talking about, and we prove it over and over with science.

The nails are considered the surplus of the tendons, and are thought to be the external view of the tendons and liver blood. Dry and brittle nails and pale nail beds always indicate a poor quality of liver blood. Pink nailbeds and firm nails indicate a healthy state of liver blood. Hair is also associated with the liver blood: it is called the "surplus of the blood". Dry and brittle hair can be an indication of liver blood deficiency.

What can we tell from nails:

The average adult nail takes approximately 6 months to grow. The shape of the nails can also change with health status. These are just adjunctive things to look at to help form a diagnosis and should not be relied on as the only sign or symptom.

Ideally, healthy nails should be pinkish. Pale nails are an indication of poor circulation and may indicate underlying anemia. This is fairly common in menstruating women and may be indicated by fatigue and is caused by a lack of iron, vitamin B12 and/or folic acid. A lack of iron can also lead to the development of spoon- or spade-shaped nails of which the medical term is koilonychia.

The white half-moons at the base of the nails may show how active the metabolism is. A small or no half-moon may indicate a slow metabolism. It is not unusual for the half moon to diminish with age, disappearing with old age.
Deep horizontal ridging of the nails aka Beau’s lines is due to lack of nail growth. It may be a sign of a significant dietary change, stress, a serious illness or infection, a heart attack, zinc deficiency or anorexia. This ridging will grow out with the nail.

The formation of vertical ridging of the nails may be due to an excessive consumption of carbohydrates and/or a lack of protein and too much salt. The digestive system, liver and kidney are frequently underactive so when this type of ridging is visible it may also be accompanied by fatigue.

Thickened nails are most commonly associated with some sort of fungal infection. The nails may yellow and start to come away from the underlying skin.

Brittle nails can be caused by household or work related chemicals and lack of care. They may also be a sign of Raynaud’s disease (a numbing of fingertips and toes) or hypothyroidism. Split nails can indicate a deficiency of zinc and/or iron. Because many meridian end and begin at the finger / toe, it may designate involvement of that meridian. The issue also tends to be reflected on the same side of the body according to the list below.

The thumbs: Lung and respiratory functions
The first fingers: Large intestine and its functions
The second fingers: Energy and blood circulation, reproductive functions
The third fingers: Energy and heat metabolism
The little fingers: The heart and small intestine and their functions
The big toes: The spleen, pancreas and liver and their functions
The second and third toes: The stomach and its functions
The fourth toes: The gall bladder and its functions
The little toes: The bladder and its functions
The liver (network) houses the *Hun*, the spiritual or ethereal soul which is believed to give us a feeling of purpose. Anchoring us so we don’t feel useless or empty – giving us direction. Important to classical Chinese medicine, the ancients believed it was the ethereal soul that leaves the body to join the spirits and qi of nature. Sometime during the Chou period before ~220 BC, it was believed that disease was caused by the curse of evil spirits and demons. It was the ethereal soul of ancestors that were coming to haunt and plague the ill.

*Hun* is originally an ancient astronomical term, describing the light of the moon. *Hun* can be interpreted as the realm of the subconscious that is particularly active during sleep time. Therefore, all Chinese words that include the character *hun* describe states of dreaming or trance.

*Hun* is what is believed to leave the body after death and what can be called upon in prayers. The troublesome wandering ghosts described in Chinese stories are actually *hun* that roam about aimlessly, because they have nobody to perform the pacifying sacrificial rites for them.

The seasonal cycle of transformation begins with the wood phase. Springtime is the season where a new cycle begins, the process of germinating and nurturing the twelve channel systems. This is initiated by the liver, because the liver network is responsible for cyclical action. “Nourishing the liver, therefore, first of all means to refrain from anger. This is the key for the maintenance of good health.”

*Medical Teachings Continued (Xu Yishuo), 1522*

The concept of “wind” in Chinese Medicine is a confusing one. What do we understand about “wind”?  

Just as we cannot look at the organ named meridians as just the organ we cannot think of wind as something that is weather based. We must be able to understand this basic Chinese medical thinking sufficiently to practice this medicine and diagnose properly. The term is
freely used and has no equivalent meaning or implication in western medicine. It is one of the six “evils”.

In the field of modern medicine, a number of causative factors have been identified for the “wind” disorders. The modern explanations and ancient terminology make it difficult to understand what is meant by this term. Modern scholars of Chinese medicine that can speak the language and interpret it with an understanding of Chinese medicine provide an important concept to what this term means in our system of medicine.

I offer an explanation far better than I could write, from Subhuti Dharmananda, “The best explanation for wind may come from dividing its role in the medical system into two: etiology (cause of disease) and manifestation (characteristics of disease), each of which can be separately described.”

Wind could be involved in the following:

- diseases involving excess movement of the body: epilepsy (rare convulsions) and Parkinson’s disease;
- diseases involving symptoms appearing in different parts of the body at different times: early stage rheumatism involving differing joints or skin rashes that appear in different places;
- diseases involving loss of movement: stroke, paralysis, tetany, and coma;
- various pain, numbness, and spastic syndromes, sometimes referred to as bi syndromes, including headache, toothache, limb numbness, tendon spasms, arthritis, deep bone pain;
- diseases that are acute: common cold, influenza, sinus infection, skin eruption, sore throat, cough, eye disorders; and
- diseases that affect the surface of the body (skin or flesh, rather than viscera): chronic eczema, leprosy, scrofula, hair loss.

The manifestation of the wind (feng in Chinese), particularly its direction, was long considered important. In particular, it was observed that the wind conditions at each seasonal change, and at mid-season seemed to
have a different fundamental nature. All together, there are eight winds that were specified.

The type of wind that was actually encountered at any of these eight points in the year was thought to have prognostic value for a variety of outcomes, including crop yields. The concept that wind was a pathological agent appears to have correlated with divination practices. In ancient times, the eight winds were related to the bagua (the 8 triagrams of the Yijing) and they came from the eight directions, such as northeast, northwest, etc. (see table)

According to the Lingshu, the adverse influence was so great that “the sages avoided the winds like avoiding arrows and stones.” In particular, they were concerned about sudden death from what corresponds in the traditional descriptions to a stroke (zhongfeng). Zhongfeng, meaning struck [penetrated] by wind, is mentioned in the Huangdi Neijing (Suwen and Lingshu), Shanghan Lun, and Jingui Yaolue, where the descriptions often, though not always, suggest a stroke; in modern Chinese medicine, zhongfeng still means stroke. This zhongfeng is a dominant concern about the effect of wind for centuries, into the modern era.

We have also been taught that wind is:
- one of the six external causes of disease (six qi or six yin);
- one of the conditions associated with the five elements systematic correspondences (wind associated with the wood element);
- an entity that has an external and an internal origin, associated with diagnostic categories; and
- one of the terms used in acupuncture point names, such as fengchi (GB-20), fengfu (GV-16), fengmen (BL-12), and fengshi (GB-31).

When it comes to avoiding the influence of wind, so as not to have an adverse affect if exposed to wind, then these are steps to be taken:
One should be careful to avoid having the pores open excessively. The pores are the entry point for wind; they are open when one is sweating profusely. They are open when the wei qi is weak and cannot hold them
closed. Wind, as a pathological agent, will further act to open the pores. The Lingshu states: “When the hollow evil attacks man beginning in the skin, the result is the skin slows and the foundation between skin and flesh and the pores open. These openings allow the evil to follow the hair, to penetrate, and to enter. This entry reaches deeply....This causes a transmission to the location of the channels.”

One should be careful to avoid having the channels become deficient. The wind enters the pores and proceeds to the channels. The wind cannot easily enter the channels if they are replete of healthy qi and blood, that is, when the ying qi is well nourished. The Lingshu states: “When suddenly encountering the quick wind and violent rain and there is no illness, it means one is covered and there is no hollowness. Consequently, these evils singly cannot injure man. Disease must originate in the wind’s hollow evil and in the body’s form.”

One should be careful to avoid the channels becoming full of phlegm and heat, as occurs with excessive eating of rich food and drinking wine. Then, the wind combines with phlegm and fire and causes severe obstruction and stroke. Examples of this will be given in the following section.

One should quickly remove wind from the body if it enters. This is accomplished by using wind-dispelling herbs, herbs that induce perspiration (such as ma-huang and cinnamon twig), and by acupuncture performed at certain sites. In the Rumen Shiqin (1228 A.D.) it says: “All evil influences resulting from the impact of wind or cold assemble in the skin; they are stored inside the conduits and network vessels (jing luo); they remain there and do not leave the body by themselves. In some cases, they cause pain that moves through the body, or numbness and loss of sensitivity, and also swellings, itching, and cramps in one’s four limbs. In all of these cases, the evil influences responsible can be eliminated through therapies causing perspiration.” Although not all wind-dispelling herbs induce sweating, sweating therapies are one of the methods for dispelling wind.
The reference to hollow wind or its hollow evil in the *Lingshu* goes back to the process of divination. As explained by Paul Unschuld: If the wind on these days (the divination days, such as first day of each season) came from the direction in which *Taiyi* (the head of the demon spirits) happened to be residing, it was the so-called wind of repletion and was considered an auspicious omen. If the wind blew from the opposite direction (being the wind of depletion; hollow), it was regarded as an unfavorable sign.

This “hollow” (or “deficient”) wind had an adverse effect on crops, weather, and the health of humans. As to the latter, the *Lingshu* states further:

Eight are the winds. For the winds, man has the eight joints of the legs and arms (hip, knee, shoulder, and elbow). The eight primaries, the beginning and middle of each season (four seasons), can possess hollow winds. These eight winds can injure man. When sheltered in the inner being, they make deep rheumatism in the bones, and may be released among the loins, the backbone, the joints, and in the area between the skin and flesh. Therefore, to cure with acupuncture, one must use the needles with a long body and a sharp tip. This can be used to grasp the deep evil and distant rheumatism.

There is also another traditional Chinese reference to wind that should be considered in order to fully understand the context in which the term is used medically. Around 200 A.D., a book called *Fengsu Tongyi* was published; the term *feng* in the title is the same as that for wind, but the compound *fengsu* means manners and customs. In the preface to the book, the author discusses the meanings of *feng* and *su*:

*Feng* includes such things as the warmth or coldness of the air, the treacherousness or gentleness of the land, the perfection or imperfection of waters and springs, the toughness or suppleness of wood and fibers. *Su* includes those classes of beings with blood in them....

From this explanation, one can see that *feng* had the connotation of a quality, nature, or characteristic; thus it has a meaning somewhat similar to that of qi. Unschuld has argued that the concept of wind in Chinese
medicine was, in fact, a transitional one: previously, the main pathological phenomena were evil spirits and ghosts, and, later, the main pathological phenomena were the six qi (of which wind is one).

The term *feng* is still used to suggest qualities and influences in several modern expressions: *fengdu* is bearing, manner, behavior; *fenghua* is to change or reform by example; *fengsu* still means customs and manners; *fengtu* means the local climate or natural features. The importance of *feng* among the six qi (environmental qualities that have influence) that appears in subsequent medical texts implies that *feng* and qi were viewed in somewhat similar fashion.

The four *feng* acupuncture points are: *fengfu* (GV-16), *fengchi* (GB-20), *yifeng* (TB-17) and *fengmen* (UB-12). They are located respectively at the nape of the neck, posterior lower margin of the earlobe, and upper back, which are easily attacked by pathogenic wind. Therefore, all of these points are named with one of the words being *feng* (wind), and they have the functions of expelling and dispersing the pathogenic wind, not only the exogenous wind but also the endogenous wind. So they are the important points for treatment of both the endogenous and exogenous wind syndromes. Clinically they are used in treatment of the exogenous wind syndrome intermingled with cold or heat caused by the attack of exogenous pathogenic wind, with the following symptoms: aversion to cold, aversion to wind, fever, nasal obstruction and discharge, discomfort and pain in the head, neck, shoulder and back; and they can also be applied for treatment of convulsion, epilepsy, and hysteria induced by endogenous wind, with the symptoms of aphasia from apoplexy, dizziness, tremor, and ocular and auditory disorders. Although the four *feng* acupuncture points have similar functions, they have their own specialties.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wind Direction</th>
<th>Name of Wind</th>
<th>Internally Affects</th>
<th>Externally Affects</th>
<th>Its Qi Causes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>great feathery wind</td>
<td>heart</td>
<td>channels</td>
<td>heat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwest</td>
<td>scheming wind</td>
<td>spleen</td>
<td>muscles</td>
<td>weakness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>hard wind</td>
<td>lungs</td>
<td>skin</td>
<td>dryness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest</td>
<td>breaking wind</td>
<td>small intestine</td>
<td>arm major yang channel</td>
<td>blockage in channel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>great hard wind</td>
<td>kidneys</td>
<td>bones, shoulder, back</td>
<td>coldness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>unfortunate wind</td>
<td>large intestine</td>
<td>sides of ribs, armpits, lower bones, limb joints</td>
<td>[not stated in text]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td>children’s wind</td>
<td>liver</td>
<td>thick muscles</td>
<td>dampness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast</td>
<td>feathery wind</td>
<td>stomach</td>
<td>muscles, flesh</td>
<td>body weight</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When the Liver is balanced and functioning well, the Liver qi is smooth, active and floating. We are able to live our lives without the feeling of stress.

When the Liver is not functioning well, qi becomes stagnant or is forced upward. What we see is someone with a short temper or rage. A less than healthy Liver network causes life on an emotional roller coaster with feelings of resentment, aggression, edginess and possibly compulsive behavior.

When this condition remains for a long time, these emotions can lead to depression.

The theories in Chinese medicine of how people become sick has actually evolved over the centuries. Pathogens were thought to come from various sources, and you could "catch" them in various ways.

In general, there are two types of pathogenic factors: external pathogens, which are our infectious diseases--viral, bacterial, fungal, parasitic; and internal pathogens, which are diseases that comes from internally generated conditions--mainly, diet and emotions.

Both internal and external pathogens have the potential to cause disease, and they have the potential to interact with one another, which if improperly treated, can create more serious conditions. When we seek to diagnose a condition according to the theories of Chinese medicine, it's important to determine whether we have an internal or external pathogen at the root of the problem.
Disease Progression and the Six Paths / Channels:

Chinese Medicine practitioners observed around 1800 years ago that acute diseases tend to follow a specific course; they divided this course into six stages: three stages of excess, followed by three stages of deficiency.

Differentiation of syndromes according to the 6 channels originally appeared in the Traditional Chinese Medicine classic called the *Shang Han Lun*. It was written by Zhang Zhong Jing in the late Han Dynasty, circa 20-200 A.D.

The original was then divided into two separate texts, one being the *Shan Han Lun* which focuses on external conditions, and the *Jin Kui Yao Lue* which focuses on internal conditions.

Tai Yang (Initial Yang) Syndromes
*The Tai Yang syndrome corresponds to the initial invasion of the external Cold Evil through the skin.*

Tai Yang Zhong Feng Syndrome
*Febrile Disease caused by Wind (External Deficiency)*

Tai Yang Shang Han Syndrome
*Febrile Disease caused by Cold (External Excess)*

Yang Ming (Greater Yang) Syndromes
*As the pathogenic factor invades the interior of the body in the Yang Ming stage, both the Zheng (Upright) Qi and the Evil (Xie) Qi are strong, turning the excess pathogen in to heat within the body. Yang Ming fevers are therefore more severe than fevers in the Tai Yang stage. In the Yang Ming Syndrome, there are no chills. There are two types of Yang Ming Syndromes, one that involves the channel, and the other involves the related Zang Fu (Stomach and Large Intestine organs). Both of these syndromes can occur at the same time, and have the four bigs as symptoms. Big Fever, Big Thirst, Big Pulse, Big Sweat.*
Shao Yang (Lesser Yang) Syndrome
The Tai Yang stage involves “Evil” pathogens (Cold, Wind) on the exterior of the body which need to be released or "sweated out." The Yang Ming stage involves pathogenic Heat in the Interior which need to be purged through the bowels. In between these two stages is the Shao Yang syndrome where the pathogen is between Internal and External.
Although the Shao Yang symptoms include both chills and fever, these symptoms alternate from one to the other. The related channels of the Shao Yang syndrome are the San Jiao, Gallbladder, Pericardium, and Liver.

Tai Yin (Initial Yin) Syndrome
The invasion into the Tai Yin can occur from a chronic Tai Yang syndrome progressing into the Tai Yin, inappropriate treatment of a Tai Yang disease which forces it into the Tai Yin, or if the pathogen is strong enough, it can bypass the exterior and immediately invade the Tai Yin stage. Food poisoning, for example, can cause sudden diarrhea and Cold-Damp in the body (symptoms of Tai Yin syndrome). In all cases, the Spleen and Stomach Zang Fu will be deficient and there will be Internal Cold and Dampness present.

Shao Yin (Lesser Yin) Syndrome
Shao Yin syndrome affects the Kidneys and the Heart. There are two types of Shao Yin syndromes: One involves a deficiency of Yang Qi and Cold, and the other involves a deficiency of Yin and Heat. Both involve a serious disruption of the body's basic Yin and Yang balance.

Jue Yin (Greater Yin) Syndrome
Jue Yin is the last yin stage. Starting with the initial Tai Yang stage, we progress through the stages until the Jue Yin Stage. This syndrome is the last stage of disease caused by Cold Evil. It chief attribute is the weakness of the Zheng Qi.

Chinese Medicine considers that diseases do not necessarily follow each of the six stages, but may first manifest at a particular stage, resolve at a particular stage, or remain and get stuck at a particular stage. Diseases may also pass so quickly through a stage, that its symptoms do not have adequate time to manifest. Therefore the concept of the six stages of
disease is primarily a foundation system for the classification of disease that serves as a baseline for further diagnostics.

**Herbs that are associated with the health of the Liver:**

**To course the liver and regulate qi (shu gan li qi):**
When liver qi is depressed, rectify the course of the liver. cyperus rhizome (xiang fu zi), bupleurum (chai hu), blue citrus peel (qing pi), curcuma / tumeric (yu jin), melia / chinaberry (chuan lian zi). When the liver qi doesn’t flow correctly and affects the spleen and stomach meridians there is distress in the middle jiao.

**To move blood and expel stasis (huo xue xin g yu):**
When qi stagnation affects the blood by causing blood stasis, the liver blood needs to moved and the stasis expelled. persica/peach seed (tao ren), carthamus/ safflower (hong hua), tang-kuei (dang gui), red peony root (chi shao), leech (shui zhi), tabanus / horsefly (meng chong), corydalis (yan hu suo), notoginseng (san qi), achyranthes root (niu xi), leonurus fruit (chong wei zi).

**To smooth the liver and nourish blood (rou gan):**
If the liver fails to store the blood, the blood needs to be nourished and smoothed with blood tonics such as tang-kuei (dang gui) and peony (bai shao). If liver yin has been damaged, the liver needs to be moistened with yin tonic substances.

**To tonify yin and moisten the liver (zi yin):**
If the kidney is weakened, it can have a detrimental affect on the liver's qi, yin, and blood. When tonifying the liver, use herbs like rehmannia (di huang) and lycium fruit (gou qi zi), polygonum root (he shou wu), ligustrum fruit (nu zhen zi), astragalus seed (sha wan ji li) because they will also have a tonic affect on the kidney.
To clear liver heat (**qing gan**):  
Liver heat needs to be cleared with herbs such as:  
scute/ skullcap root (**huang qin**), gardenia (**zhi zi**), prunella (**xia ku cao**),  
celosia seed (**qing shuang zǐ**).

To purge liver heat (**xie gan**):  
A more serious situation calls for purging liver heat with:  
gentiana root (**long dan cao**), indigo (**qing dāi**), isatis leaf (**da qìng ye**),  
dried aloe leaf (**lu hui**).

To cool liver blood (**liang gan**):  
Calming and descending substances need to be combined with herbs that  
will cool liver blood, like moutan / peony tree root (**mu dan pǐ**);  
lithospermum root (**zi cao**), sanguisorba / bloodwort root (**di yu**), biota  
leaves (**ce bái yè**).

To course wind heat in the liver channel (**shū fēng**):  
Wind-heat invades the liver channel, the wind has to be expelled:  
menthe / mint (**bò hé**) or chrysanthemum flower (**jú huá**), dried  
tribulus fruit (**bái jī lì**), vitex seed (**mán jīng zǐ**), siler root (**fāng féng**).

To open the collaterals and sweep out the wind (**huò luo sou fēng**):  
When there is internal liver wind, it is necessary to calm the liver and  
extinguish the wind.  
silkworm larvae (**jiāng chàn**), typhonium rhizome (**bái fù zǐ**), dried  
scorpion (**quán xiè**), tribulus fruit (**bái jì lì**), equisetum / horsetail (**mú zì**),  
agkistrodon/ white flower snake (**bái huà shé**), zaocys / garter snake (**wu  
xīào shé**).  
If wind-phlegm pathogens block the collaterals causing surface  
numbness and pain, then substances that can both sweep the wind from  
the collaterals and clear phlegm obstruction of the collaterals, are  
silkworm larvae (**jiāng chàn**) and /or typhonium rhizome (**bái fù zǐ**).
To warm the liver (wen gan):
Wind-cold pathogens are obstructing the proper flow of blood in the liver channels, the liver needs to be warmed which will drive out the cold:
evodia fruit (wu zhu yu), Artemisia / mugwort leaf (ai ye), fennel seed (hui xiang), zanthoxylum/Szechuan Pepper (chuan jiao), cinnamon twig (gui zhi), tang-kuei (dang gui).

To calm the liver (ping gan):
In a situation where there is rage, with qi quickly moving upwards the liver needs to be calmed with gently descending herbs:
white peony root (bai shao) or uncaria / cats claw (gou teng).

To sedate the liver (zhen gan): oyster shell (mu li), haliotis/abalone shell (shi jue ming), tortoise shell (gui ban), turtle shell (bie jia).

To extinguish internal wind (xi feng): gastrodia root (tian ma), antelope horn (ling yang jiao), centipede (wu gong), scorpion (quan xie), silkworm (jiang chan).
The physician Zhang Xichun, has cautioned against pushing down and thereby “humiliating” the liver; (the proud general" of the organ systems) too intensely; small amounts of substances that promote its physiologically upward qi flow, such as sprouted barley (mai ya) and melia / chinaberry (chuan lian zi), should be included in formulas that sedate the liver.

Disease Patterns of the Liver Network:
and certainly there can be combinations of these patterns as well as different symptomology.

LIVER QI STAGNATION (gan qi yu jue): Primary symptoms are tendency to get depressed; frequent sighing; impatient disposition and temper outbreaks; sensations of stuffiness; fullness or congestion in the chest, intercostal, or subcostal regions. Secondary symptoms include obstructed bowel movements; dry and distended eyes; feeling of
something being stuck in the throat; self-doubts and crying; intercostal and abdominal pain that is characterized by moving, pulling, or penetrating sensations. Premenstrual breast distention; menstrual cramping and irregular menstruation.

**Commonly used Qi Moving Formulas:**
There are many other formulas that can be used depending on symptoms. Maciocia suggests Xiao Yao San when there is liver qi stagnation arising from blood deficiency and Yue Ju Wan when it is from emotional stress.

**Tang-kuei and Bupleurum Formula / Xiao Yao San**
chai hu / bupleurum
dang gui / angelica
bai shao / white peony root
bai zhu / white atracylodes
fu ling / poria
bo he / mint
shen jiang /fresh ginger
zhi gan cao / baked licorice

**Bupleurum and Peony Formula Jiawei / Xiao Yao San**
Jiawei literally means added flavors, this is a modification of Xiao Yao San when there is evidence of heat.

To above formula add:
zhizzi / gardenia fruit
mu dan pi / tree peony

Both formulas will move liver qi stagnation and replenish blood by regulating the function of both liver and spleen.

For Liver Qi stagnation deriving from emotional stress:

**Cyperus and Atractylodes Combination / Yue Ju Wan**
*This formula can also be called Escape Restraint Pill or Gardenia Chuanxiong Pill*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cang Zhu/ Atractylodes</th>
<th>Chuan Xiong / Ligusticum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Xiang Fu / Cyperus</td>
<td>Zhi Zi / Gardenia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shen Qu / massa fermenta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Addressing pain in fixed areas, some heat, digestive issues with some dampness. Xiang fu is used for frequent sighing as if one cannot take a full breath and addresses qi stagnation caused by stress.
LIVER BLOOD DEFICIENCY (gan xue xu): Primary symptoms are pale face, dizziness, dry eyes or at a more advanced stage, blurry vision (especially at night), numbness in the extremities (including arms easily "falling asleep" while sleeping), limited flexibility of tendons and muscles. Secondary symptoms include pale lips and nails, dry, split, atrophied, or malformed nails, muscle twitching, spasms or cramping (charlie horse) in the extremities, trembling hands or feet, occasional intercostal pain, ringing in the ears, decreased and/or pale menstrual flow.

Commonly used Formulas:

Tang-kuei Four Substance Decoction (Si wu Tang)
Shu Di Huang / Processed Rehmannia
Bai Shao / White Peony
Dang Gui
Chuan Xiong / Ligusticum

Liver Blood and Heart Blood deficiency
Ginseng and Longan Combination (Gui Pi Tang)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredient</th>
<th>Ingredient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ren Shen / Ginseng</td>
<td>Huang Qi / Astragalus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bai Zhu / White Atractylodes</td>
<td>Fu Ling / Poria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suan Zao Ren / Jujube seeds</td>
<td>Long Yan Rou / Longan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mu Xiang / Aucklandiae</td>
<td>Zhi Gan Cao / Fried Licorice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dang Gui</td>
<td>Zhi Yuan Zhi / Fried Polygalae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheng Jiang / Fresh Ginger</td>
<td>Da Zao / Jujube Date</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LIVER YIN DEFICIENCY (gan yin xu): primary symptoms are dizziness; blurry vision; dry eyes; dull intercostal pain; dry mouth and throat; heat sensations in palms and soles. Secondary symptoms include numbness in extremities; limited tendon flexibility; lusterless nails; impatient disposition and temper outbreaks; flushed cheeks; dark urination; constipation; low grade fever; restlessness and insomnia; tidal heat sensations; night sweats.
Commonly used Formulas:

**Linking Decoction (Yi Guan Jian)**
- Sheng Di Huang / Rehmannia
- Gou Qi Zi / Lycium fruit
- Sha Shen / Glehnia Root
- Mai Men Dong / Ophiopogon Tuber
- Dang Gui
- Chuan Lian Zi / Chinaberry

**Liver Blood and Kidney Yin deficiency:**

**Ligustrum and Eclipta Formula (Er Zhi Wan)**
aka Two Ultimate Pill because there are two ingredients in equal parts
- Nu Zhen Zi / Ligustrum fruit
- Han Lian Cao / Eclipta Alba

**Dang Gui and Rehmannia Decoction (Dang Gui Di Huang Yin),
Eight Ingredients Rehmannia Pill (Ba Wei Di Huang Wan)**
which are both variations of **Six Ingredients Rehmannia Pill (Liu Wei Di Huang Wan)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ba Wei Di Huang Wan</th>
<th>Ba Wei Di Huang Wan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shu Di Huang /Prepared Rehmannia</td>
<td>Shan Zhu Yu / Cornus Fruit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mu Dan Pi /Peony Tree Root</td>
<td>Shan Yao / Dioscorea Yam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fu Ling / Poria</td>
<td>Ze Xie / Alisma Rhizome</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ba Wei Di Huang Wan** same as above with
- Gui Zhi / cinnamon twig
- Fu Zi / prepared Aconite

**Dang Gui Di Huang Yin** same as above with addition of
- dang gui / angelica
- zhi gan yao / honey fried licorice

and removal of fu ling, mu dan pi, ze xie

**Liver Blood and Kidney Yang deficiency:**

Commonly used Formulas:

**Restoring the Right Pill (You Gui Wan)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>You Gui Wan</th>
<th>You Gui Wan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dang gui /angelica</td>
<td>Du Zhong / eucommnia bark (rubber tree)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rou Gui / Cinnamon Bark</td>
<td>Shan Yao / Dioscorea Yam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shan Zhu Yu / Cornus Fruit</td>
<td>Shu Di Huang / Prepared Rehmannia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fu Zi / Prepared Aconite</td>
<td>Gou Qi Zi / Lycium fruit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lu Jiao / Deer Antler Glue</td>
<td>Tu Si Zi / cuscuta seed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Aiding Fertility Pill (Zan Yu Dan)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredient</th>
<th>Ingredient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fu zi / Prepared Aconite</td>
<td>Rou Gui / Cinnamon Bark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rou Cong Rong / Cistanche</td>
<td>Ba Ji Tian / Morinda root</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yin Yang Huo / Epimedium or Horny Goat Weed</td>
<td>She Chuang Zi / Cnidium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jiu Cai Zi / Allium Seed</td>
<td>Xian Mao/ Curculignis Rhizome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shan Zhu Yu / Cornus Fruit</td>
<td>Du Zhong / Eucommia bark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shu Di Huang / Prepared Rehmannia</td>
<td>Dang Gui / Angelica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gou Qi Zi / Lycium fruit</td>
<td>Bai Zhu / White Atractylodes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Liver Blood Deficiency with Liver Yang Rising:

#### Gastrodia and Uncaria Decoction (Tian Ma Gou Teng Yin)
aka Liver Wind Clear

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredient</th>
<th>Ingredient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tian Ma / Gastrodia</td>
<td>Gou Teng / Uncaria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shi Jue Ming / Abalone Shell</td>
<td>Zhi Zi / Gardenia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huang Qin / Scute, Skullcap root</td>
<td>Chuan Niu Xi /Cyanthula root</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Du Zhong / Eucommia bark</td>
<td>Yi Mu Cao /Leonuri herb, Chinese motherwort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sang ji Sheng / Mulberry mistletoe stem</td>
<td>Ye Jiao Teng / Polygonum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fu Ling / Poria</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Tonifying the Liver Decoction (Bu Gan Tang)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredient</th>
<th>Ingredient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dang gui / Angelica</td>
<td>Chuan Xiong / Cnidium Rhizome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bai Shao / White Peony Root</td>
<td>Shu Di Huang / Prepared Rehmannia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suan Zao Ren / Jujube seed</td>
<td>Mu Gua / Quince Fruit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhi Gan Cao / Prepared licorice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Liver Blood Deficiency with Empty Heat:

#### Four Substances Decoction with Scute and Coptis (Qin Lian Si Wu Tang)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredient</th>
<th>Ingredient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mai Men Dong / Ophiopogonis Tuber</td>
<td>Huang Qin / Scute, Skullcap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huang Lian / Coptis</td>
<td>Chuan Xiong / Cnidium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dang Gui/ Angelica</td>
<td>Bai Shao / White Peony Root</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheng Di Huang / Rehmannia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Liver Blood Deficiency with Wind Heat in the skin:
Nourishing Blood and Subduing Wind Decoction (Yang Xue Qu Feng Tang)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Herbs</th>
<th>Dosage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sheng Di Huang / Rehmannia</td>
<td>Dang Shen / Codonopsis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mu Dan Pi / Tree Peony Root Bark</td>
<td>Bai Xian Pi / Dictamnus Root Bark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xi Xian Cao / Siegesbeckia</td>
<td>Dang Gui / Angelica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wei Ling Xian / Clematis root</td>
<td>Gou Teng / Uncaria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ji Xue Teng / Spatholobus root &amp; vine</td>
<td>Ye Jiao Teng / Polygonum vine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He Shou Wu / Polygonum root</td>
<td>Di Fu Zi / Kochia Fruit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nourishing Blood and Moistening the Skin Decoction (Yang Xue Run Fu Yin)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Herbs</th>
<th>Dosage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dang Gui / Angelica</td>
<td>Dan Shen / Salvia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheng Di Huang / Rehmannia</td>
<td>Bai Xian Pi / Dictamnus Root Bark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xuan Shen / Scrophularia</td>
<td>Mai Men Dong / Ophiopogonis Tuber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tao Ren / Persica, Peach seed/kernel</td>
<td>Bai Shao Yao / White Peony Root</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He Shou Wu / Polygonum root</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Liver Blood deficiency and qi deficiency:

Eight Treasure Decoction (Ba Zhen Tang)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Herbs</th>
<th>Dosage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dang Gui / Angelica</td>
<td>Chuan Xiong / Cnidium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bai Shao Yao / White Peony Root</td>
<td>Shu Di Huang / Prepared Rehmannia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ren Shen / Ginseng</td>
<td>Bai Zhu / White Atractylodes Rhizome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fu Ling / Poria</td>
<td>Zhi Gan Cao / Honey Fried Licorice Root</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Liver Blood deficiency and Liver Blood stasis:

Four Substances Decoction with Persica and Safflower (Tao Hong Si Wu Tang)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Herbs</th>
<th>Dosage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shu Di Huang / Prepared Rehmannia</td>
<td>Dang Gui / Angelica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chuan Xiong / Cnidium, Ligusticum</td>
<td>Bai Shao Yao / White Peony root</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Hua / Safflower</td>
<td>Tao Ren / Persica, peach seed/kernel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Liver Channel can also suffer from Cold:
It is often caused by being exposed to external cold, as in cold weather, and especially being submerged in cold water. It can affect people who swim in cold water, or those that have to work in conditions which repeatedly expose them to cold temperatures.
A headache that is at the top of the head, or a vertex headache, is the hallmark symptom of this pattern. To differentiate between this pattern and Kidney Yang Deficiency, you must decide whether there is an external source of cold that has travelled inside the body or if there is a metabolic weakness of creating heat internally, as in the Kidney Yang Deficiency pattern. Infertility is often caused by this pattern.

**Liver Blood deficiency with Cold in the channels Formulas:**

**Tangkuei Decoction For Frigid Extremities (Dang Gui Si Ni Tang)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dang gui / Angelica</th>
<th>Bai Shao / White Peony Root</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gui Zhi / Cinnamon Twig</td>
<td>Xi Xin / Asarum (Wild Ginger)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhi Gan Cao / Prepared Baked Licorice</td>
<td>Da Zao / Jujube Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mu Tong / Clematis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Liver Blood deficiency and Cold in uterus :**

**Warm the Menses Decoction (Wen Jing Tang)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wu Zhu Yu / Evodia fruit</th>
<th>Gui Zhi / Cinnamon Twig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dang Gui / Angelica</td>
<td>Chuan Xiong / Ligusticum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bai Shao / White Peony Root</td>
<td>E Jiao / Gelatin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mai Men Dong / Ophiopogonis</td>
<td>Mu Dan Pi /</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ren Shen / Ginseng</td>
<td>Gan Cao / Licorice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheng Jiang / Raw Ginger</td>
<td>Ban Xia / Pinellia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A 2006 study confirmed that Wen Jing Tang was effective in improving endocrine condition in the treatment of disturbances of ovulation in patients with Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) without taking eight-principle pattern identification into consideration. This finding indicates that wen-jing-tang is appropriate for use in treating PCOS in women with various constitutions (as determined by the matching theory of eight-principle pattern identification) in clinical practice and may prove to be a potent therapeutic agent with a wide therapeutic spectrum.

**A bit about food as a therapeutic agent:**

Spring is associated with the Liver Network and is the season of “new growth”. Adapting to climate change was/is important as a preventive measure. Present day allows us to consume fruits and vegetables out of season, and have access to a variety of “foods” that are too rich, too sweet, too frozen, etc. Cooking methods have changed from cooking
over a fire to cooking in a microwave. All of these things have an affect on us. Sometimes they are visible, sometimes not.

In general, for Spring (Liver/Wood) it is advisable to reduce the intake of sour flavors and increase sweet and pungent flavors as this helps the liver to regulate qi throughout the body.

Gently warming, pungent foods include: fennel, oregano, rosemary, caraway, dill, bay leaf, grains, legumes and seeds. Pungent flavored foods stimulate circulation of qi and blood, moving energy up and out. They also enhance digestion, disperse mucus, remove obstructions and improve sluggish Liver function. Pungents make grains, legumes, nuts and seeds less mucus forming. Pungent foods you can add to your foods in spring include mint, citrus peel, fennel, spring onions, ginger, horseradish, cardamom, oregano, dill, pepper, and rosemary.

Examples of recommended foods for the spring include onions, leeks, leaf mustard, Chinese yam, wheat, dates, cilantro, mushrooms, spinach and bamboo shoots. Fresh green and leafy vegetables are color correct, and also remove heat; watercress, kale, chard, dandelion greens. Lemon juice helps to decongest the liver.

Raw, frozen and fried foods should only be eaten in moderation as they can injure the spleen / stomach if consumed in large amounts.
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