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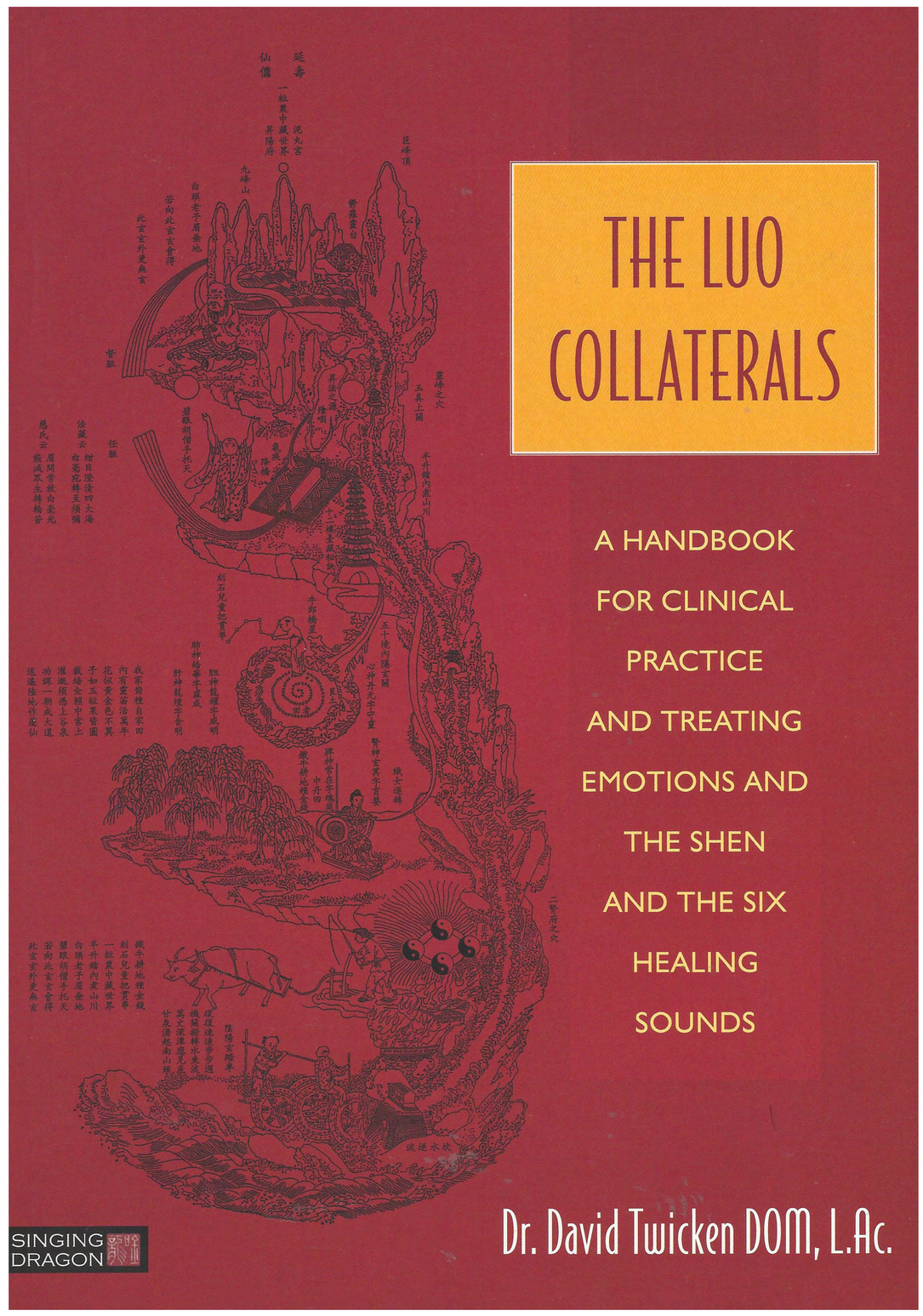

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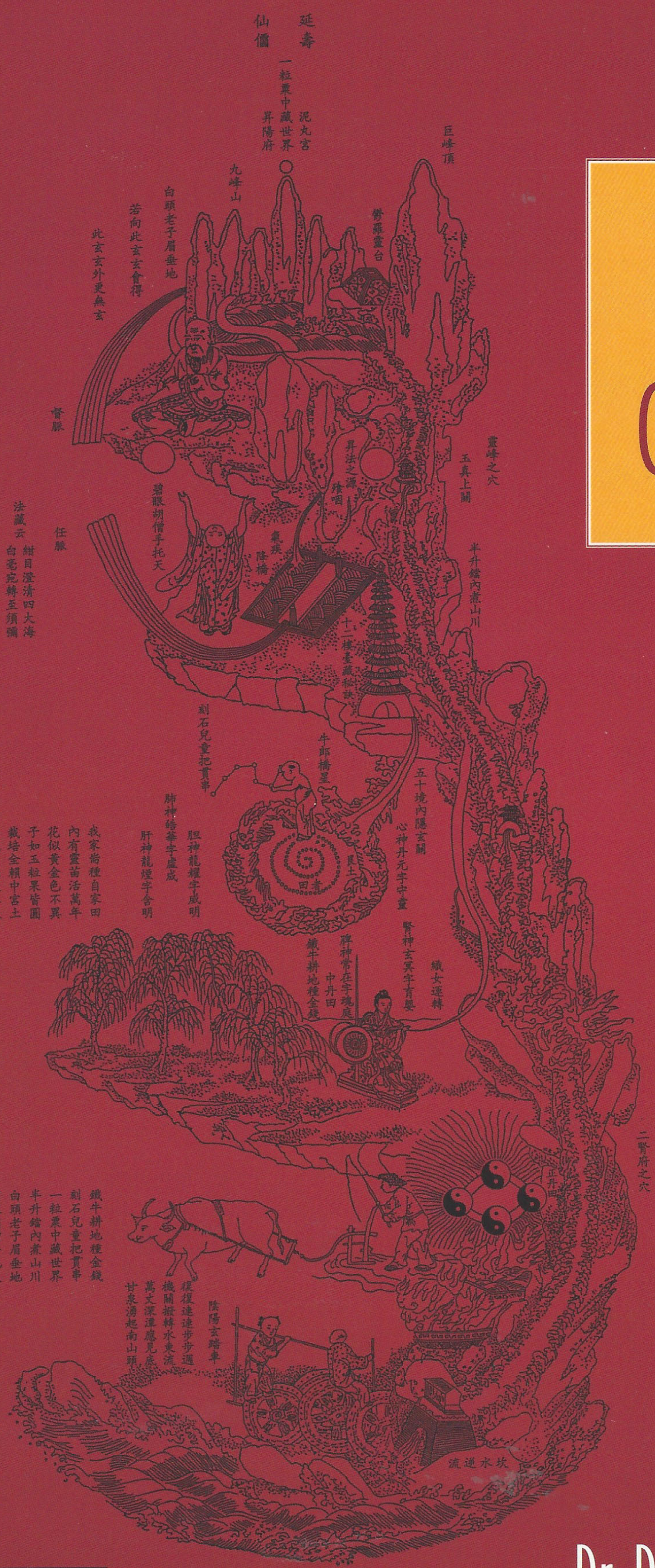

THE LUO COLLATERALS

A HANDBOOK FOR CLINICAL PRACTICE AND TREATING EMOTIONS AND THE SHEN AND THE SIX HEALING SOUNDS

Dr. David Twicken DOM, L.Ac.

SINGING DRAGON

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CHAPTER 3

THE LUO MAI FUNCTIONS AND CONDITIONS

The luo mai are primarily presented in Chapter 10 of the *Ling Shu*, "The Main Channels." These vessels are called the luo mai; the luo linking; the connecting vessels; or the luo collaterals. The chapter presents specific signs and symptoms in the luo mai, and states a treatment method, which is to treat the luo point. This knowledge is the classical clinical application of the luo mai found in Chapter 10 of the *Ling Shu*. The foundation information and functions of the luo mai are now presented.

- The luo mai are located in the superficial region of the body.
- The luo mai flow through the minor joints; they cannot flow through the main joints. (However, when a pathogen transfers to the main channels, it can flow into the main joints and wherever the main channels flow.)
- The luo mai can be visible. When pathogens are lodged in the luo mai they can be seen. Diagnosis includes visual examination of the luo mai. The main channels cannot be seen.
- The pulse does not detect the luo mai. The pulse does measure the main channels and the internal organs.
- Heat and cold are the main pathogens in the luo mai. Rheumatism occurs when pathogens in the luo mai are not treated effectively.
- The luo mai can have excess and deficiency conditions.

The *Su Wen* presents a few important aspects of the luo mai:

- The luo mai make up a protective channel system that can block and hold pathogens.
- Luo mai treatments release pathogens.
- Pathogens can be transferred from the luo mai to the main channels and the internal organs.

These functions are now presented in detail, with supporting theory from the *Su Wen* and the *Ling Shu*.

A PROTECTIVE SYSTEM

From the *Su Wen*, Chapter 56, "Dermatomes of the Channels."

> All disease begins at the skin level. When a pathogen invades the skin, it forces the pores to open and pathogens penetrate and lodge in the luo mai. If the pathogen remains it will transfer to the main channels. If the pathogen is not released it will then enter the fu organs.
>
> The function of the luo mai is to dispel pathogens and promote (allow) the normal flow of the ying and wei qi.
>
> Before a pathogen enters the main channels it can be seen in the luo mai. The luo mai are considered Yang and float to the surface; they can be seen. The main channels are considered Yin because they run relatively deep; they cannot be seen.[9]

This chapter goes on to say that if the pathogen is excess, it will be transmitted into the main channel. If it is a Yang pathogen, it will go to the channel. If it is a Yin pathogen, it will go first to the channel and then to the organ. This pattern occurs for all the channels.

From the *Su Wen*, Chapter 58, "Acupuncture Points."

> The collaterals that connect throughout the body act as connectors that can be utilized to release pathogens. They can also supply qi to

fight illness. There are 14 main collaterals, and there are numerous tiny collaterals crisscrossing the body, connecting the channels. If a pathogen enters the deep level of the bones, the collaterals are insufficient to treat this condition; the treatment must enter the five main channels of the five zang organs. The luo mai cannot treat this condition. (The luo mai are at the superficial level of the body.)[10]

LUO MAI PATHOGENS

The pathogenic factors of the luo mai are listed in the *Ling Shu*, Chapter 10, "The Main Channels," and in the *Su Wen*, Chapter 57, "The Channels and Collaterals." These pathogens and conditions are: cold, heat, rheumatism, qi stagnation and blood stagnation. Temperature, stagnation, deficiency, excess and the changes in the seasons can cause pathology in the luo mai. Heat and cold are the main pathogens in the luo mai. Pathology can show as colors. The changes of the seasons also cause reactions in the luo mai. The luo mai are especially susceptible to heat and movement generated by heat. The movement can transfer pathogens within the luo mai, and to other areas of the body. The luo mai are also susceptible to stagnation, which can lead to fever. The following are the main pathogens in the luo mai.

Heat

Heat and fever are a red color.

When the middle of the stomach is hot, the luo mai along the border of the fish (thenar eminence) will be red.

Cold

Cold and pain are a blue or green color.

When the middle of the stomach is cold, the fish on the hand (thenar eminence), the base of the thumb's luo mai, will be mostly green-blue.

CHAPTER 10

CLINICAL STRATEGIES FOR TREATING EMOTIONS AND SHEN DISTURBANCES

Chinese medicine is holistic medicine. An important aspect of holistic medicine is that there are multiple causes of health conditions and numerous ways to treat them. In Chinese medicine, holistic models of diagnosis and treatment developed. One holistic model is the three treasures: Jing–Qi–Shen. These treasures correspond to the physical, mental (emotional) and spiritual qualities of each person. Practitioners can view every condition through the lens of Jing–Qi–Shen; a goal is then to identify which of the treasures is influenced. Each of the treasures can influence the others, and treatment can include treating one, two or three of the treasures. For example, psycho-emotional conditions can influence the physical body. A person may have anger that causes muscle tension. Another example is a person suffering from chronic, intense fear. The fear influences the kidneys and the bladder, causing frequent and urgent urination. These two examples are situations where emotions influence the physical body. The early Chinese healers understood that each person was an integration of physical, mental and spiritual energies, and they presented numerous ways to treat multi-dimensional people. Effectively treating a wide range of psycho-emotional conditions requires comprehensive use of the acupuncture channel system.

When treating psycho-emotional conditions and the Shen, it is common to treat multiple channel systems. The first analysis is to determine if the condition is acute or chronic. If it is acute, it is common to treat the luo mai. If the condition influences the musculoskeletal system, then including the muscle channels (sinew channels) in the treatment will make the treatment

more effective. If the condition influences the internal collateral organs—for example, nausea, vomiting or loss of appetite—adding the main channels to the treatment will make it more effective. Identifying which areas of the body are influenced by the psycho-emotional condition is essential in effective treatments.

THE LUO POINTS

The luo points can be used to treat their corresponding collateral and shen. There are a variety of ways to treat the Yin and Yang luo points. I have found a treatment to be most effective when both are included in it. The classic method is prick to bleed. This method can include using a lancet. Lancets can be challenging for practitioners to use if they are not trained in the method; plum blossoming is a very effective alternative to a lancet. The treatment goal is to remove the pathogen from the body. Needling superficially would be a third option.

There are several ways to use the luo points in a treatment. The following is a list of eight ways to use luo points for treating psycho-emotional conditions.

1. Treat the Yin luo point.
2. Treat the Yang luo point.
3. Treat the Yin and Yang luo points on Yin–Yang paired channels.
4. Combine the Yin luo point on the imbalanced channel with other channels' luo points.
5. Combine the Yang luo point on the imbalanced channel with other channels' luo points.
6. Combine the Yin and Yang luo points on the imbalanced channels with other channels' luo points.
7. Use the luo points with points from other channel systems. In this situation, use the luo point to release the pathogenic factor and qi.
8. Combine window of the sky points with luo points.

EXAMPLES OF APPLYING THE LUO POINTS

1. Treat the Yin luo point

The *Nei Jing* states the Yin organs house the five shen. Imbalances of the shen can be treated with the Yin luo points. They can release the intensities and emotional imbalances of the shen. It is most effective to treat these points bilaterally. You can needle the points according to gender: the right side is Yin and females, and the left is Yang and males.

2. Treat the Yang luo point

Yang organs empty; they release and let go. Yang organs should not be full. The fundamental energetics of Yang organs is to release. To release emotions, treat the Yang luo point of the corresponding organ and shen; this will release the emotionally charged energy. This method is a powerful way to obtain a quick emotional release.

3. Treat the Yin and Yang luo points

In my experience, treating both the Yin and Yang luo points is the most powerful method. My preferred method is to treat the Yin luo on the right side of the body and the Yang luo on the left side of the body. I use two points for most conditions. If there was a severe condition, I would treat both points bilaterally. Ideally, plum blossom both points. An alternative method is to needle the Yin luo point and plum blossom (or lancet) the Yang luo point. Needling the Yin luo point sends a message to the body that the channel, organ and shen are to be treated. Treating the Yang luo paired point releases the pathogen or emotionally charged qi. Prick to bleed is the most powerful method. If needling is performed it should be done superficially with a reducing method. Gua sha can also be applied instead of plum blossoming.

First referenced in the *Ling Shu* and the *Su Wen*, the luo collaterals or luo mai, are an integral part of the acupuncture channel system. Modern practitioners often use the luo collaterals to treat the emotions and the organs, with treatments influencing the blood network, especially the veins and capillaries, along the luo pathways.

In this book, Dr. David Twicken presents a thorough historical analysis of the new theories on which a modern understanding of the luo collaterals and luo points is based, and explains the applications. He explores the classical Chinese medical and Taoist interpretation of the Shen, the five Shen and the emotions and provides a comprehensive historical analysis of the Window of the Sky points. Dr. Twicken also includes instruction on Healing Sounds Qi Gong.

"In this book Dr. David Twicken presents a Taoist and a classical Chinese medical understanding of emotions and how to treat them with Chinese medicine and qi gong. Especially valuable are the insights he shares about the Shen and the five shen. I highly recommend Dr. Twicken's book… to anybody interested in learning about ancient natural ways to obtain emotional health and well-being."

—Taoist Grandmaster Mantak Chia, Founder of the Universal Healing Tao and Tao Garden, and author of Healing Light of the Tao, Taoist Cosmic Healing, Awaken Healing Energy Through the Tao, *and* Emotional Wisdom

"Dr. David Twicken is the ideal expert to help us unlock TCM's potential…His clinical and teaching expertise in the field as well as his esoteric studies in ancient Taoist philosophies make him, in my opinion, one of the most valuable masters in TCM today. Studying and applying the information contained in his books has been indispensable to my practice."

—Tarek Adra D.C., L.Ac., Pharm-D

"Dr. David Twicken's presentation of the luo mai is immediate, present and practical. This book weaves the idea of spirit in Chinese medicine into the collaterals and Window of the Sky points. The tables consolidate the narrative, highlighting a depth of knowledge not often found in Chinese medical books. Dr. Twicken proves his longstanding, lineage-based roots and this work is a truly refreshing exploration of the topic."

—William R. Morris, Ph.D., DAOM, President/CEO AOMA, Graduate School of Integrative Medicine

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David Twicken DOM, L.Ac., is a licensed practitioner and professor of Chinese medicine. He teaches qi gong, tai chi chuan, nei dan, feng shui and Chinese astrology. He has studied Chinese healing arts for 30 years and is the author of *I Ching Acupuncture—The Balance Method*, *Eight Extraordinary Channels—Qi Jing Ba Mai* and *The Divergent Channels—Jing Bie*, also published by Singing Dragon. He resides in Los Angeles, California.

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