

THE 5 TRANSPORT POINTS

Clinical Applications and Personal Insights

By Dr. Wei-Chieh Young

American Chinese Medical Culture Center

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Introduction to the Author

Dr. Young Wei-Chieh was born in Qingdao, in Shandong Province, China. He was raised in Taiwan and presently resides in the United States. He earned Ph.D. degrees in philosophy from Beijing University, in medicine from Beijing TCM University, and in oriental medicine from Samra University of Oriental Medicine. Dr. Young is an exchange scholar of historiography at National Sun-Yat Sen University in Taiwan.

Dr. Young has done extensive research in Chinese literature, history, and philosophy and has a particularly deep understanding of Chinese medicine and *The Book of Changes* (*Yi Jing* 易經). He has passed all of the highest national tests on Chinese medicine in Taiwan. He learned Chinese medicine from his own family and moreover has studied with numerous famous Chinese physicians.

He was a disciple of the preeminent acupuncturist Tung Chingchang,¹ and a Ph.D. student under both the preeminent Chinese herb doctor Liu Duzhou and preeminent *Book of Changes* scholar Zhu Bokun.

Dr. Young was the first Chinese doctor from Taiwan to be invited to lecture in the People's Republic of China. He has also lectured in Taiwan, Japan, Korea, Singapore, and Europe as well as many places in the United States. He has furthermore written a newspaper column for several major newspapers in Taiwan.

He has served as director of the Taipei Municipality Chinese Physician's Association, Executive Director of the Taipei Municipality Chinese Herbal Medicine Research Association, academic chairman for the American Acupuncture Association, and chairman of Taiwan's Society for the Study of Chinese Medicine Theories and Principles.

Dr. Young has been engaged in the practice of Chinese medicine for forty years. In 1990, he won the Hua Tuo prize in Taiwan for the Best Chinese Medical Doctor in the field of acupuncture. In 2000 he won the outstanding person of the year award from the World Congress of Chinese Medicine. He has published more than thirty books in Chinese on topics such as the theory of Chinese medicine, *The Inner Classic*, acupuncture, Master Tung's acupuncture points, the five transport points, internal medicine, the treatment of pain, longevity and diet therapy, and *The Book of Changes*. Many of these have already been translated into and published in Korean, English, and simplified Chinese characters. Dr. Young has also

¹ Tr. note: Because Dr. Tung is widely known for "Master Tung's points," we have retained this well known spelling of his name. The standard pinyin for his name is Dong Jingchang (董景昌).

published more than one hundred papers and articles, and he is internationally recognized as a doctor and a scholar. He presently serves as doctoral advisor at many schools and is regularly invited to lecture and teach all over the world.

Foreword

1. Dr. Young's first book on the five transport points, *Acupuncture Applications of the Five Transport Points* (*Zhēn Jiǔ Wǔ Shū Xué Ying Yòng* 針灸五輸穴應用)(which we will refer to as *Acupuncture Applications*) was written in 1981 and was based on his study of the famous writings on acupuncture throughout history. That work went through multiple reprintings with few changes.

2. There are two main parts to this book, the first being an overall introduction to the five transport points, including their significance, nature, point locations, and principles. The second part explains various applications of the five transport points in detail.

3. The predecessor volume of this book was originally the first monograph to appear in Taiwan that addressed this special class of acupuncture points. Because there was a general lack of materials to review when the research was done, there were many challenges to writing the book. Although the author did everything possible to make the text complete, he always felt there was more that could be included. This is why most of the material in the book was created by the author himself or represents conclusions he arrived at, and why it is clearly different from other books on channel points.

4. In order to make a complete narrative of the five transport points, this volume maintains virtually all the material from *Acupuncture Applications*, but that material has been revised and supplemented. Furthermore, other fresh content was added, such as several methods for applying the five transport points that appeared in another volume by the author, *Acupuncture and Moxibustion Treasury* (*Zhēn Jiǔ Bǎo Diǎn* 針灸寶典). These include detailed explanations and insights about hexagram-based point selection and bleeding technique. A few other small sections were borrowed for this book and lightly revised. In short, the author did all he could to make this book as complete as possible.

5. In every academic field there are always advances. The precursor of this volume, *Acupuncture Applications*, was first published in 1981. It had been in print for thirty years and had gone through more than ten editions, but unfortunately Dr. Young's busy schedule did not allow him time to revise the text. During those thirty years Dr. Young accumulated extensive experience and insight. Finally, between 2008 and 2011 Dr. Young devoted a great amount of his non-clinic time to enhancing his text with expanded information and more personal insights. The resulting volume had many fresh and creative insights that made its contents much broader and more clinically applicable. Because of the vast changes, the title of the

book was changed to *The Five Transport Points: Clinical Applications and Personal Insights*.

6. This book is volume 4 in the acupuncture section of the Complete Works of Dr. Young Wei-Chieh. We continually seek corrections and encouragement from readers to assist us in our ongoing efforts to offer new works.

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Part I — Introduction — Foundations of the Five Transport Points

Chapter 1.

Significance of the Five Transport Points

“Five transport points” refers to five special acupoints that can be found on each of the twelve channels and distal to the elbows or knees. Known as the *jing*-well points, *ying*-spring points, *shu*-stream points, *jing*-river points, and *he*-sea points, these five types of points all have special characteristics related to the five phases, and thus they are sometimes referred to as the “five phases points.” The ancients used analogies of these points to describe the movement and strength of qi and blood, and thus each of the points has a separate function. “Nine Needles and Twelve Yuan-Source Points” (“Jiǔ Zhēn Shí Èr Yuán Piān”) in *Spiritual Pivot* (*Líng Shū* 靈樞) says:

[Each of the] five viscera has five transport points; five [times] five is twenty-five transport points. [Each of the] six bowels has six transport points; six [times] six is thirty-six transport points. There are twelve channels and fifteen collateral vessels, for a total of twenty-seven [kinds of] qi. As the qi ascends and descends, [it] emerges at the *jing*-well points, flows at the *ying*-spring points, pours at the *shu*-stream points,² moves at the *jing*-river points, and enters at the *he*-sea points. As the twenty-seven kinds of qi move, it is all done thus through the five transport points.

This means each channel for the five viscera (liver, heart, spleen, lung, and kidney) has five transport points, for a total of twenty-five transport points. It is said that “pathogens do not attack the heart, so the pericardium represents it,” and this probably explains why the arm jueyin pericardium channel had five transport points but no transport points were associated with the arm shaoyin heart channel.

In the Jin Dynasty (265–420), Huangfu Mi expanded this idea and established five points on the heart shaoyin channel as transport points,³ filling in the vacant space. From that time the transport points have been complete. Thus, the six viscera (that is, the five viscera plus the pericardium) altogether have thirty transport points, and each of the six

² Au. note: The “On Transport Points” (“Běn Shū Piān”) chapter of *Spiritual Pivot* adds: “passes at the *yuan*-source points” to this same text.

³ Au. note: Those points are: HT-9 (*shào chōng*), HT-8 (*shào fū*), HT-7 (*shén mén*), HT-4 (*líng dào*), and HT-3 (*shào hǎi*).

bowels has six transport points (including *yuan*-source points), or thirty-six transport points altogether,⁴ for a total of sixty-six transport points.

The channels of the six viscera and the six bowels are collectively called the twelve channels. Branches of the channels are called collateral vessels, and each of the twelve channels has one collateral vessel; the spleen has an additional collateral vessel and the du channel and ren channel each have collateral vessels, so altogether there are fifteen collateral vessels. The aforementioned “twenty-seven kinds of qi” references these fifteen collateral vessels plus the twelve channels. The word “qi” in that context should be understood to mean “qi and blood.” Within the body, qi and blood move ceaselessly, similar to a river, and likewise there are places where the flow diverges and where the volume varies. The “Water of the Channels” (“Jing Shuǐ Piān”) chapter of *Spiritual Pivot* says:

The twelve channels externally resemble twelve rivers and internally connect with the five viscera and six bowels. The water of the twelve channels/rivers varies in size, depth, breadth, and length, just as there are variations in the position, size, and grain-receiving capacity of the five viscera and six bowels.⁵

As mentioned above, the saying that qi “emerges at the *jing*-well points, flows at the *ying*-spring points, pours at the *shu*-stream points, moves at the *jing*-river points, and enters at the *he*-sea points” illuminates this meaning.

The table below presents the flow and movement of channel qi by analogies to the flow of water in rivers. Qi gradually moves from distant to close, small to large, and from shallow to deep, as explained in detail below.

⁴ Au. note: Channels of the six viscera do not have *yuan*-source points, so the *shu*-stream points of those channels play that role. This is because within five phase theory *yuan*-source points and *shu*-stream points have the same properties. Although some people do not include the *yuan*-source points within the five transport points, others include them because they are part of the five phases points.

⁵ Tr. note: This quote is a section from *The Spiritual Pivot* that discusses the nature of the various channels by metaphorically comparing them to various bodies of water.

| Point | Location | General Description |
|------------------|---|--|
| 井 <i>Jīng</i> | to the side of the fingernail or toenail | Where channel qi <i>emerges</i> is similar to a fountainhead of water, and we call those points <i>jing</i> -well points. The qi is shallow and scant. |
| 榮 <i>Yīng</i> | on the meta-carpals and metatarsals | Where channel qi <i>flows</i> is similar to a slight amount of water coming out of a spring, and we call those points <i>ying</i> -spring points. The qi is slightly greater. |
| 俞 <i>Shù</i> | near the wrists and ankles | Where channel qi <i>pours</i> is similar to water changing from shallow to deep, and we call those points <i>shu</i> -stream points. The qi is relatively flourishing. |
| 經 <i>Jīng</i> | near the wrists and ankles, on the forearm or lower leg | Where channel qi <i>moves</i> is similar to unobstructed water flowing in a river, and we call those points <i>jing</i> -river points. The qi has great strength. |
| 合 <i>Hé</i> | near the elbows and knees | Where channel qi <i>enters</i> is similar to many smaller waterways flowing together ⁶ and into the sea, and we call those points <i>he</i> -sea points. The qi is deep and vast. |

All of these points are “located distal to the elbows and knees,” so they are easy to find, safe to use, and clinically effective.

Throughout history, Chinese medicine scholars have interpreted the significance of the five kinds of transport points (as well as the extra *yuan*-source point on the yang channels). In particular, *The Classic of Difficult Issues* (*Nàn Jīng* 難經) listed many details about the nature, meaning, and functions of these points. According to *The Classic of Difficult Issues*, the “63rd Difficulty”:

The “Ten Variations” in the classic says “The *ying*-spring points, the *he*-sea points [and other transport points] of all channels begin from the *jing*-well points.” Why is that?

⁶ Tr. note: The character for the *he*-sea point (合 *hé*) literally means “uniting,” which relates to it being the point where the various rivers of qi and blood flow together. However, traditionally it is translated as the “sea” point, presumably because this maintains the consistent use of flowing water analogies that develop from the tiny well to the big sea.

The *jing*-well points correspond to the direction east and the season of spring. Spring is when the myriad things begin to grow, when creatures begin creeping, breathing, flying, and climbing. Of all living things, there is not one that has not grown anew in spring. Thus, spring is the beginning of the year, and *Jia_{s1}* is the beginning of the heavenly stems,⁷ and the *jing*-well points are at the beginning of the channels.

The “65th Difficulty” says:

The classic says: “where [channel qi] emerges is the *jing*-well points” and “where [channel qi] enters is the *he*-sea points.” Why is that?

The points where [channel qi] emerges are called the *jing*-well points because they correspond with the direction east and the season of spring, [which are associated with] the birth and growth of the myriad things. [These are similar to] the emergence [of channel qi] at the *jing*-well points.

The points where [channel qi] enters are called the *he*-sea points because they correspond with the direction north and the season of winter and to yang qi entering the viscera. Thus, the place where [channel qi] enters is known as the *he*-sea points.

The following summarizes what various schools have said about the different kinds of transport points.

***Jing*-Well Points (井)**

1. “The well [corresponds to the] direction east and [the season of] spring. Thus, where [channel qi] emerges is the *jing*-well [point].” (“66th Difficulty”)

2. The ancients used the word “well” (*jǐng*) for the place where water emerged from a spring. Later, when people would dig in the ground and find water, they used the same word. In the human body, qi and blood

⁷ Tr. note: The nomenclature used in this book for referring to the ten heavenly stems and twelve earthly branches is to give the name of the stem or branch in Pinyin, followed by a subscript *s* (for stems) or *b* (for branches), followed by the respective number of the stem or branch. For example, “Yi_{s2}” refers to the second stem, 乙 (yi), and “Yin_{b3}” refers to the third branch, 寅 (yin).

Chapter 3.

Locations of the Five Transport Points

All of the five transport points are located distal to the elbows and knees. In general, the *jing*-well points are to the side of the fingernails and toenails. The *ying*-spring points are positioned along the fingers and toes. *Shu*-stream points are near the wrist and ankle joints, while the *jing*-river points are found on the lower arms and lower legs, near the wrists and ankles. The *he*-sea points are near the elbow and knee joints. The specifics of the point locations are as follows.

3.1 – Arm Taiyin Lung Channel.

- A. LU-11 (少商 *shào shāng*), *jing*-well and wood point

Point Location: To find this point, extend the thumb. The point is on the radial side of the thumb, about 0.1 *cun* from the corner of the fingernail. See Figure 3.1.

- B. LU-10 (魚際 *yú jì*), *ying*-spring and fire point

Point Location: With the palm up, the point is located near the middle of the first metacarpal, on the side at the border of the red and white flesh. See Figure 3.1.

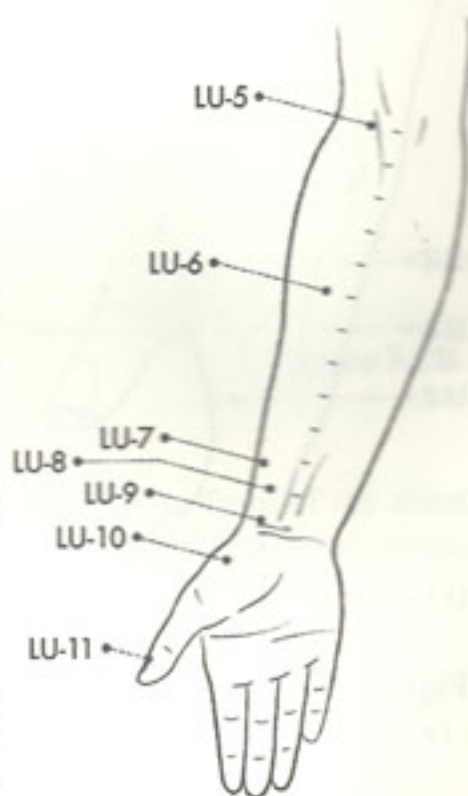


Figure 3.1

- C. LU-9 (太淵 *tài yuān*), *shu*-stream, earth, and *yuan*-source point

Point Location: With the palm up, find the depression at the radial end of the wrist crease. Press in the depression to locate the throbbing pulse; the point is located just lateral to the throbbing pulse. See Figures 3.1 and 3.9B.

- D. LU-8 (經渠 *jīng qú*), *jing*-river and metal point

Point Location: With the palm up, the point is just medial to the radial styloid process, one *cun* proximal to the transverse wrist crease at the radial artery. It is located in the depression at the radial side of the radial artery. See Figure 3.1.

Part II — Applications of the Five Transport Points

Chapter 5.

Applications of the Five Transports Points from Classical Texts

Although there are many ways to use the five transport points, the most important applications are the classical methods from *The Inner Classic* and *The Classic of Difficult Issues*. In “According with Qi in the Four Divisions of the Day” (“Shùn Qì Yī Rì Fēn Wéi Sì Shí Piān”), *The Spiritual Pivot* states:

For diseases in the viscera, treat with *jing*-well points. For diseases with changes in colors, treat with *ying*-spring points. For diseases that come and go, treat with *shu*-stream points. For diseases with changes in sounds, treat with *jing*-river points. For patients with full channels and [static] blood, diseases in the stomach, or diseases from eating and drinking without restraint, treat with *he*-sea points.

As stated in the “68th Difficulty” from *The Classic of Difficult Issues*:

The *jing*-well points treat fullness below the heart. The *ying*-spring points treat body heat. The *shu*-stream points treat heaviness and joint pain. The *jing*-river points treat panting [or] cough [with] chills [or] fever. The *he*-sea points treat counterflow qi [and] diarrhea. These are the diseases of the five organs and six bowels that are treated by the five transport points.

If you understand these two passages, you have basically grasped the gist of applying the five transport points. If you can flexibly apply these passages in the clinic, you will be able to treat an overwhelming majority of diseases. A detailed explanation of these passages follows.

5.1 – General Applications from *The Inner Classic*

Among the many articles that discuss uses for the five transport points from *The Inner Classic*, the chapter that is cited most often is “According with Qi in the Four Divisions of the Day” from *The Spiritual Pivot*:

For diseases in the viscera, treat with *jing*-well points. For diseases with changes in colors, treat with *ying*-spring points. For diseases that come and go, treat with *shu*-stream points. For diseases with changes in sounds, treat with *jing*-river points. For patients with full channels and [static]

blood, diseases in the stomach, or diseases from eating and drinking without restraint, treat with *he*-sea points.

This quote outlines how to use the five transport points for associated pathogenic changes. Also, "Pathogenic Qi and Its Effects on Diseases of the Viscera and Bowels" ("Xié Qì Zàng Fǔ Bìng Xíng") in *The Spiritual Pivot* says:

The *ying*-spring points and *shu*-stream points treat the outer channels; the *he*-sea points treat the inner organs.¹⁷

The Spiritual Pivot, "Rigidity, Suppleness, and Length of Life," says:

For disease in the yin of yin, needle the *ying*-spring and *shu*-stream points of the yin channels. For disease in the yang of yang, needle the *he*-sea points of the yang channels. For disease in the yin of yang, needle the *jing*-river points of the yin channels. For disease in the yang of yin, needle the *luo*-connecting vessels.

These chapters all give excellent clinical guidance and their applications are fully discussed below.

A. Applications of "According with Qi in the Four Divisions of the Day" from *Spiritual Pivot*

(1) For diseases in the viscera, treat with *jing*-well points.

The *jing*-well points arouse the brain, open the orifices, quiet the spirit, discharge heat, drain excess, and dispel pathogens. They can be used to treat: emergencies involving a sudden change in consciousness; inflammation that starts with sudden, severe pain; or irregularities of any of the viscera. As explained in *Spiritual Pivot*, "On Viscera" ("Běn Zàng Piān"), the various viscera store essence, spirit, qi, blood, and the ethereal soul and corporeal soul. The ancients considered loss of consciousness a disease in the viscera, such as recorded in *On Cold Damage*: "In regard to fainting, when yin and yang qi are not uniting, this leads to fainting." Because the *jing*-well points are locations where channels intersect, they

¹⁷ Tr. note: Here "inner organs" could arguably be translated as "inner bowels." The character used, 府 (*fǔ*), is a variant of the character for bowels, 腑 (*fǔ*). Dr. Young references this phrase many times throughout this book, and in most instances it refers to all internal organs (that is, both the viscera and the bowels), while in a few places it specifically refers to the bowels. If the character was the actual character for bowel instead of a variant, for consistency I would have translated it as "bowel." But in this context "organ" seems the better term choice.

are essential points for acute and emergency situations. Here are some examples:

- Bleeding points LU-11 (*shào shāng*) and LI-1 (*shāng yáng*) drains heat from the viscera, frees congealing and stagnating qi and blood from the channels, and opens constraint while unblocking the orifices. This treatment is especially effective for stroke, heat syncope, throat swelling, and mania.
- Needling the *jing*-well points of both the spleen and stomach (SP-1 (*yīn bái*) and ST-45 (*lì duì*)) settles the spirit and treats dream-disturbed sleep.
- The spleen controls blood and the liver stores blood, so *jing*-well points of the spleen and liver (SP-1 (*yīn bái*) and LR-1 (*dà dūn*)) treat acute flooding and spotting.¹⁸
- HT-9 (*shào chōng*) and SI-1 (*shào zé*) treat stroke with sudden fainting, sudden confusion, congestion with phlegm-drool, and loss of consciousness. In particular, HT-9 clears heat and settles the heart.
- BL-67 (*zhì yīn*) is used to turn a malpositioned fetus and for difficult birth, while KI-1 (*yǒng quán*) is used for reversal counterflow cold of the limbs and many kinds of epilepsy as well as for convulsions in children.
- Both PC-9 (*zhōng chōng*) and SJ-1 (*guān chōng*) restore yang to rescue from counterflow and treat stroke with sudden collapse.
- GB-44 (*zú qiào yīn*) is also effective for insomnia.

In looking at these examples, we can observe this saying about *jing*-well points is truly an experience-based gem. The following quote from *The Great Compendium* explains the special role of *jing*-well points in treating emergencies:

Whenever there is first onset of stroke with collapse, sudden fainting with congested phlegm-drool, coma, lockjaw, [or] inability to drink liquid medicines, immediately use a three-edged needle on the twelve *jing*-well points of the fingers to eliminate noxious blood. This

¹⁸ Tr. note: "Flooding and spotting" refers to profuse uterine bleeding and scanty uterine bleeding, respectively. When used together they refer to various degrees of uterine bleeding.

Chapter 10.

The Twelve *Yuan*-Source Points

The twelve *yuan*-source points, special acupoints that are distributed around the ankles and wrists, are closely related to source qi. They are considered the roots of the individual channels, the points where source qi passes and collects. The *yuan*-source points and sanjiao are also very closely related, as the sanjiao, the envoy of source qi, distributes source qi to all parts of the body from its origin, the moving qi between the kidneys and below the umbilicus. Furthermore, the *yuan*-source point locations manifest symptoms of source qi from the entire body, so if there is some pathological change in an organ or bowel, frequently there is a corresponding indication near the associated *yuan*-source point.

Over time there have been changes in which points are considered the twelve *yuan*-source points. The presently accepted *yuan*-source points are listed in the table below.

| Yin Channels | <i>Yuan</i> -Source Points | | Yang Channels |
|-----------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|
| Lung | LU-9 (<i>tài yuān</i>) | LI-4 (<i>hé gǔ</i>) | Large Intestine |
| Spleen | SP-3 (<i>tài bái</i>) | ST-42 (<i>chōng yáng</i>) | Stomach |
| Heart | HT-7 (<i>shén mén</i>) | SI-4 (<i>wàn gǔ</i>) | Small Intestine |
| Kidney | KI-3 (<i>tài xī</i>) | BL-64 (<i>jīng gǔ</i>) | Bladder |
| Pericardium | PC-7 (<i>dà líng</i>) | SJ-4 (<i>yáng chí</i>) | Sanjiao |
| Liver | LR-3 (<i>tài chōng</i>) | GB-40 (<i>qū xū</i>) | Gallbladder |

10.1 – Historical Origins of the *Yuan*-Source Points

At present when we talk of the twelve *yuan*-source points, we mean one point from each of the twelve channels that is located near the wrists or ankles, as spelled out in the table above. But in ancient times people had a number of different perspectives on these points, which went through a phase of historical development.

A. *The Spiritual Pivot* and the Twelve *Yuan*-Source Points

The six yang channels each have a *yuan*-source point, and on the six yin channels the *shu*-stream points represent the *yuan*-source points. The first mention of “twelve *yuan*-sources” came in *Spiritual Pivot*, “Nine Needles and Twelve *Yuan*-Source Points”:

The five viscera connect to the six bowels, and the six bowels connect to the twelve *yuan*-sources. The twelve *yuan*-sources emerge at the four joints, and the four joints govern treatment of the five viscera. When there is disease