

Student

Azusa Hirota

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### Luo Connecting Channels

In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), we believe that there are Meridians which Qi of vital energy passing in the body. The Meridian is the most important to know for Acupuncturists. Acupuncturists use needles on Acupuncture Points, they are on the Meridians and regulate or get rid of pathogenic factors which obstructed in each Meridian's path way. Meridians are connected with internal organs. Therefore, acupuncture treats whole body.

This is the simple explanation about Acupuncture and TCM Meridians theory. However, the human body of TCM is not this simple. I will introduce the big roles of "Secondary Channels" which is as important as Main Meridians in TCM. This is called Connecting channels, "Luo Mai" in Chinese.

The Channels of Acupuncture, the book written by Giovanni Maciocia who studied in China, combined with ancient and modern Chinese medicine and translated TCM in English. He said, "Apart from the Extraordinary Vessels, the Connecting Channels are probably the most important and most clinically relevant secondary channels. Their pathology is very wide ranging and the treatment methods very important." (2).

Luo Connecting Channels (Luo Mai) is communicating with Main Channels (Jing Mai). The difference from Luo Mai and Jing Mai is flowing directions. Jing Mai is main stream vertical through such as head to toe. In the other hand, Luo Mai flowing is "net-like" such as Right to Left, Deep to Shallow and small vertical pathway slightly parallel flow with Jing Mai. This explains and answers, why acupuncturists needle and work for opposite side of injury areas or use far away points: for instance, wrist points for heart palpitation or foot points for migraine headache.

There are three kinds of Luo Channels from superficial to deep: 1. Superficial Luo Channel (between skin and muscles, not including muscles), 2. Luo Channel proper (hair roots, sweat roots) and 3. Deep Luo Channel (Blood vessels, bones). Jing Mai is between 2 and 3 of Luo Channels. Most disease are external pathogenic factors (EPFs) and emotions. All EPFs are invaded through to Luo Mai. They stay in Luo Mai and do troubles. Chapter 56 of the Huang Di Neijing, Su Wen says "the Luo Mai provide a holding space for EPFs". (3) Luo Mai's other functions are balanced Full or Empty, Yin and Yang in the arms and legs, they absorb Excess or augment Deficiency. This means that Luo Mai controls the human condition of constitution or immune for fighting with EPF. Facial paralysis, cold, skin disease, carcinoma, cyst, myoma, bleeding, swelling in Lymph etc are all causes due to Qi imbalanced or Blood stasis in Luo Mai. Deep Luo Mai makes Blood with communicating with Jing Mai which is direct related with organs such as Stomach, Spleen etc.

The complexations are made from Luo Mai. The Ligh Shu Chapter 10, which is ancient Chinese Medicine text book said "We can see the Luo Mai", but not Jing Mai. Also, we can palpate the Luo Mai. Stiffness and hardness of skin is Full condition of Luo Mai, flaccidity indicates a condition of Emptiness of the Luo Mai. (2)

In clinical use, there are 16 Luo Mai in human body. There are 15 “Luo Points” on the Jing Mai. They are “departure points” to Luo Mai. The Spark in the Machine, written by Daniel Keown who is Acupuncturist and Medical Doctor, said “Luo points allow pressure in the channels system to be transmitted from the Yin channels to the Yang (or vice versa).” He explains one of Luo points of PC 6 where is in the wrist treats to Heart condition, nausea and vomiting. (4) The Luo points are the earliest acupuncture points. Tibetan Medicine has medical diagrams of what looks like the Luo Mai. Their treatments use a lot of bleeding techniques after an herbal treatment. In TCM, treatment for Luo disorders include, shallow acupuncture, Moxa, Cupping to remove stagnation, prick and bleed, or use the 7-star hammer (the plum blossom needle). Luo treatments are not used for Wind, Cold, Heat, Damp. Because it will push these things deeper into the body. (1)

I write about Luo Mai Theory and treatments. For TCM practitioners, they are very important to know and use for daily practice in the clinic. The Main Channels (Jing Mai) is well known for public. In three years of Acupuncture school, we have learned Jing Mai Theory mainly. These Luo Mai knowledges are essential for the advanced Acupuncturists.

(1) [https://www.point-to-point-acupuncture.com/files/The\\_Luo\\_Vessels.pdf](https://www.point-to-point-acupuncture.com/files/The_Luo_Vessels.pdf)

The Luo Vessels, Paula Chin’s class notes, Fall 2003, Transcribed by Nicholas V. Isabella III

Paula Chin at the Swedish Institute, September through December 2003

(2) The Channels of Acupuncture Clinical Use of the Secondary Channels and Eight Extraordinary Vessels, by Giovanni Maciocia, Part 3 Connecting Channels (Luo Mai) page. 218-281

(3) The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Medicine, : A New Translation of the Neijing Suwen with Commentary, Book by Maoshing Ni, CH56

(4) The Spark in the Machine: How the Science of Acupuncture Explains the Mysteries of Western Medicine, by Daniel Keown ,page 214