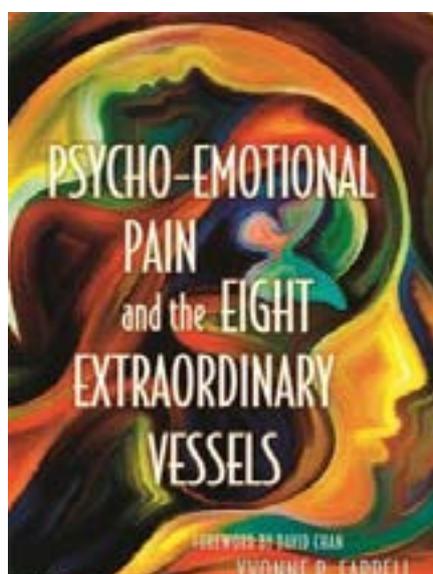




Farrell, Y.R. Psycho-Emotional Pain and the Eight Extraor- dinary Vessels



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CLINICAL USE OF THE EIGHT EXTRAORDINARY VESSELS

The typical use in a clinical setting is to combine two of the vessels together to access a sea of energy with a way to transport that energy. This is sometimes called nuclear pairing. These pairs work together to influence a specific area of the body.

Sea	Area of influence	Transporter
Ren Mai	Abdomen, chest, lungs, throat and face	Yin Qiao
Du Mai	Posterior aspect of the body, spine, neck, head, eyes and brain	Yang Qiao
Chong Mai	Inner aspect of legs, stomach, heat, chest and abdomen	Yin Wei
Dai Mai	Lateral aspect of the legs and body, shoulders, lateral aspect of the neck and retro-auricular region	Yang Wei

This is by no means the only way to look at these vessels. As is true with all channel theory, the trajectories/pathways of the 8 EV are informative. If you want to understand these vessels more deeply and use them more effectively you must know where they begin, where they end and where they travel in between. This can take some time and patience but it is definitely worth it.

You could of course decide to use the Yin Wei for a patient who has anxiety based on symptomology of palpitations, chest pain and blood deficiency. But if you know the trajectory of the vessel and the points along the way you will have a much deeper understanding of how to use that vessel in a more directed and powerful manner. The channel pathway is more important than any individual point on the channel.

The Chong Mai for instance has five distinct branches and each branch has a specific impact on pathology in the Chong. If you know these branches then you can treat just one branch or

you can support a relationship between two or more branches in your treatment.

In understanding the trajectories of each vessel you can see pathology in the 8 EV based on posture and demeanor as well. For example, you can see the influence of the Yang Qiao in those people who are over-extended in the world, driving forward all of the time and never stopping to smell the roses. They often have a very tense, upright posture and even their visual focus is often forward directed (tunnel vision/tai yang). The Yang Wei on the other hand often presents with a posture that has some twists and turns in it. The effort to adapt to life over time can often cause the structure to try to accommodate life's uncomfortable experiences by bracing in a way that affects rotation. These people also have difficulty turning the head and neck so that they can see their options. We can see both of these tendencies in the pathways.

There will be an image provided in each of the coming chapters for the individual vessels. This will allow you to see the pathway while reading about the functions and indications for its use. The visual will help you to see the reason that these vessels can do what they do.

For instance, it is meaningful that the Chong, Ren and Du Mai originate in the same area of the body. It is significant that this area of the lower burner, where they originate, is governed by the kidneys. These three channels are known as the "first ancestry" because they are the source vessels for all of the rest, just as the kidneys are the source vessels of postnatal existence because they are responsible for storing jing/essence.

It is also notable that the Yin and Yang Qiao begin in the regions of the heels/ankles and intersect at the eyes. These intersected pathways make it possible to view these two vessels as informing "stance" and "perspective." They connect us to the present moment in time and dictate how we see ourselves and the world around us. They influence how we take a stand.

The Yang Qiao and Yang Wei have points in common that intersect where the arms and the legs attach to the trunk and these two vessels govern action/locomotion (SI-10 and GB-29).

The pathway of the Dai Mai is the only horizontal vessel. It comes in contact with all of the other vessels and this helps to explain the integrating and harmonizing functions of this vessel. It is also said to have a stabilizing effect on the other vessels, just like a belt or girdle. Once again we can see the influence of the vessel directly through its trajectory.

There is no real need to think of these simply as pairs of channels used together to impact a specific area or function of the body. These vessels can be used individually with a single master point or they can be combined in ways not prescribed by the nuclear pairing. More simply said, you can mix and match. To mix and match effectively you must know the pathways of these vessels.

INDICATIONS FOR USE

Because the 8 EV are jing vessels they can be used to treat any problem that is related to the seven/eight year cycles of growth and development or any problems that affect the yuan qi or constitution. This would include the following.

- **Fertility issues:** recurring miscarriage, infertility, impotence, seminal issues, inability to achieve orgasm, vulvodynia and any gynecological condition that impacts fertility. These conditions are the cause for much suffering. The inability to procreate has a terrible impact on one's sense of self.
- **Developmental and congenital issues:** birth defects, epilepsy, babies born to addicted mothers and diseases that affect development like meningitis. Although we cannot change chromosomal abnormalities, the 8 EV can definitely improve how those congenital issues unfold,

allowing the patient to have the best possible relationship to them. Many of the 8 EV have pathways that enter the brain so they can regulate neurological function, which in turn affects how we develop physically, emotionally and cognitively.

- **Pathology in the curious organs:** brain, uterus, bones, marrow, spine, blood vessels, gall bladder and prostate. Unlike the primary channel system, the 8 EV has a direct connection to these organs and tissues.
- **Diseases or conditions that affect the DNA:** aging and dying, cancer, AIDS and genetic disorders. Once again we are speaking of how jing unfolds. How do we feel about aging? Are we frightened of dying? How does having HIV/AIDS affect a person's sense of self? Can we make the most out of a life that begins with a genetic condition?
- **Psychological or emotional issues:** especially those that develop in the first cycle of jing (seven/eight years), including birth trauma, abandonment, abuse, neglect and illness or physical trauma, especially trauma or illness serious enough to require hospitalization. Those traumatic experiences leave an imprint on the psyche that may disrupt how our jing unfolds. We can help patients to renegotiate whether or not those experiences interfere with their pursuit of meaning and purpose. Even though we cannot change a person's history we can indeed help them to let go of the suffering associated with early trauma. When we are able to let go of the suffering then we are less likely to live our lives through the lens of that trauma. We may even be able to understand, at least a little, how that experience may have given us the opportunity to become more of who we are.

- **Unresolved conflict associated with identity:** suffering associated with gender, culture or sexual orientation. These are jing issues. When these issues create suffering then we are unable to fully accept who we are. Or perhaps we have suffering based on the fact that we may live in a society that makes us feel as though who we are is somehow unacceptable.

The list of physical, emotional or spiritual disorders that can be treated by the 8 EV goes on and on. What is key here is that the 8 EV can be used to support patients with any condition that is challenging their ability to maintain a connection to who they truly are. They are powerful advocates for those who are suffering because they can help patients to recognize that although they may feel lost, those feelings and the suffering associated with them in no way damage who they are at the core. Their original self is intact and all they need do is remember who they are, why they are here and what they are going to do about it. They remind us of the uniqueness and perfection of our original self and they allow us to once again bring forth the light that is our purpose for being here. The 8 EV can put us back on track to pursuing our destiny. When the 8 EV are functioning freely we can be the best of who we are, accepting that our current circumstances are an opportunity to learn, grow and become.

PRECAUTIONS

Opening the 8 EV is serious business. It must be handled with great respect and humility. If patients are not ready to do the work they may feel pressured or violated, which will cause them to further shut down. One should move into the 8 EV lightly with the idea of not trying to do too much at first. We want to give patients an opportunity to embrace the treatments and to open to the possibility that their suffering can be alleviated.

For this reason I personally prefer not to use the 8 EV in children in their first two cycles of jing unless there are severe congenital issues or diseases causing great suffering. For me, it is more respectful to let the curriculum of children unfold in the most natural way possible. So for most children I will try everything else first before turning to the 8 EV.

Another thing that is very important in the use of the 8 EV is the humility the practitioner brings to the treatment. It is important to create an environment with the treatment where patients have the opportunity to choose. We should not thrust our own agenda on the patient. This means we must provide the best treatment possible but not be attached to the outcome. It is hubris to assume we know what will put this patient back on track to pursuing their destiny or even that the return to that pursuit will look a certain way. I try my best to see my patients as unbroken. If I can see past their suffering to that wholeness that is untouched by present circumstance I feel as if I create a treatment that will balance the need to relieve suffering with an acknowledgement of their unique and perfect spirit.

A last word on cautions. These vessels are miraculous in their broad-reaching effect and they can basically treat anything. Just because they can doesn't mean you should. The 8 EV can be used to treat the common cold but doing that is like killing a fly with a cannon. It will get the job done but it is a terrible waste of resources. One must have a respect for the preciousness of jing and yuan qi. This is the deepest level of a person's existence. You have the knowledge to treat these lesser conditions with other systems and herbal formulations. With respect, use the 8 EV when you can be certain that the problem lies with yuan qi and jing. Use the 8 EV when you can determine that a patient's suffering is impeding their ability to express themselves fully in the world and is obstructing the pursuit of their destiny in a wholehearted fashion.

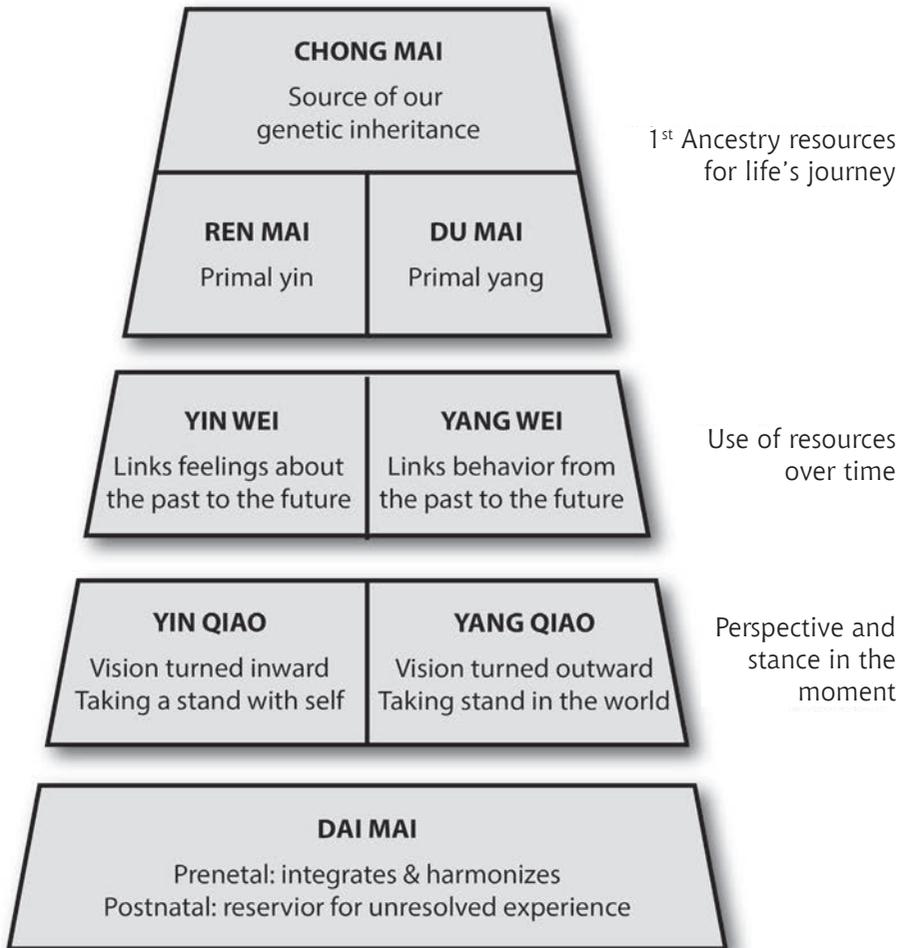


Figure 2.1: Development of the psyche

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PSYCHE

For the sake of our discussion about suffering, I prefer to view these 8 EV the way that I learned from Jeffrey Yuen. For me, this view explains the development of the psyche and how we grow, learn and individuate. In this view, the Chong Mai is the source of all of the other vessels. It gives birth to primal yin (Ren) and primal yang (Du). From the gifts of this first ancestry we must learn over time how to use our resources (Yin and Yang Wei) and we must eventually individuate and take a stand in who we are and how we see the world (Yin and Yang Qiao). At the end of this unfolding is the Dai Mai. It can serve to integrate the whole process or it can serve as an overflow vessel for those events or emotions that are too overwhelming to process.

This perspective allows us to see how resistance develops and to recognize the coping mechanisms that people use when they are under stress. It also makes it possible to understand how the environment or circumstances during our first cycle of jing (first seven/eight years) is responsible for much of what occurs later in our lives. The first ancestry (Chong, Du and Ren) unfolds during gestation through the first two years of life. During this time trauma, neglect and disease can negatively impact our resources. As we transition from the first ancestry of the Chong, Ren and Du we can begin to see not only the impact that early postnatal experiences have on our resources but also how a lack of prenatal resources (weakness in the Chong, Ren or Du) can affect our ability to face the challenges of a postnatal existence. We know that in the first cycle of jing (seven/eight years) children typically have a weaker digestive system. Their capacity for postnatal processing is affected by this weakness in the middle. They also do not have fully developed cognitive function. Their prefrontal cortex governing executive function is not yet fully developed so they must rely on the constitutional strength of the 8 EV. If during this time they suffer trauma, illness, rejection or abandonment then this will imprint deeply on the 8 EV. This

imprint often defines how we make our way in the world as adults.

This way of organizing the 8 EV allows us to see the unfolding of primal yin and yang into life. We can see then if patients are using their resources appropriately to maintain health, well-being and achieve their purpose for being here. We can easily see if those resources are depleted and in need of postnatal support.

EMBRACING OUR DESTINY

In Figure 2.1 we can see the 8 EV configured in a way that shows the unfolding of jing and the development of the psyche. The 8 EV support the growth and development of not only the physical body but also the mental-emotional and spiritual growth that defines who we are. We can view the Chong Mai as the source of life and the birthplace of our curriculum in this configuration.

The Chong Mai receives the genetic material from previous generations but it can also be seen as the vessel through which the spirit determines to become earthbound in a physical body. The ability of the Chong Mai to link pre and postnatal qi through its influence on the kidneys, spleen and stomach allows for the transition from the “unity” or oneness of the source into a state of polarity that creates the potential for a postnatal experience.

So, it can be said that the undifferentiated yin and yang of the Chong Mai gives birth to Primal yin (Ren Mai) and Primal yang (Du Mai). This polarity or division of oneness gives us the ability to interact with the world around us. The Ren Mai provides us with the Yin or substances that source our postnatal journey. It gives us the building materials needed to have a life. The Du Mai provides the motive force to construct something with those resources. Then of course we may see the Chong Mai as the blueprint for the building of that life.

Since we do not live life in a static state, time becomes a factor in how we use the resources from this first ancestry (Chong, Ren

and Du). The Wei vessels have the capacity to link the past with the future. They actively record life as we live it. They register our experiences and our responses to those experiences. In some ways, we can view these vessels as helping us to develop a coping style that helps us to deal with the ups and downs of life. They help us to determine how we might use the resources we have been given and how we use those resources determines how content we are with our life. If the Wei vessels are functioning in a healthy manner then we are able to learn from our experiences and embrace the new opportunities that we are given by life. If the vessels are overwhelmed or damaged by painful experiences then these vessels will try to keep us from moving on. They will keep us “stuck” in the past or longing for a future that can conquer the hurts of the past. A future that will make everything okay. We may be stuck in a fantasy or immobilized by the fear of future imagined pain and disappointment.

We live our childhoods in a state of dependency. We rely on our parents or caregivers to survive and thrive. We also rely on them to teach us values and how to succeed in life. It is from them that we learn what a successful life looks like. We take that knowledge when we leave the nest they have provided for us and we try to apply what we have learned. The process of individuation requires us to take what we have been taught by others and measure it against who we know ourselves to be. Do we have the same values as our parents, families or culture? In order to live our own lives we must at some point take a stand in who we are and how we will relate to the world around us. We must eventually make our own way. To do that, we must determine which of those values are resonant with who we are and which are not. We can love our parents, respect their values, appreciate their standards for a successful life and choose to live differently.

We must also align ourselves with some aspect of the world around us. Can we be present to who we are in this moment and then decide how we will participate in the world around us?

Will we make an effort to participate in the world in a way that is in alignment with who we are or will we live a life that is based on who others perceive us to be? That is the job of the Qiao vessels. They help us to use the resources of the first ancestry in the present moment to develop a healthy perspective on who we are and also on the world around us. They help us to take a stand here and now based on our perspective.

The Dai Mai is the last vessel in this process. The Dai Mai is the system's way of saying that no matter how bad or overwhelming life gets we will do whatever we need to in order to survive. Even the strongest of us may be overwhelmed by tragedy or trauma. How do we survive it? How do we manage in the face of insurmountable pain and continue to put one foot in front of the other? How do we keep going when our will to survive is fading away?

The 8 EV represent everything given to us to fulfill our destiny, including a way to survive the worst that life throws at us. The Dai Mai provides a container far away from the heart and the mind where we can store those events or emotions that overwhelm us and make us doubt our will to continue. The idea is that with time and perspective we will eventually be able to face that which we once pushed away. The memory of those experiences is repressed. It is stuffed down into the lower burner, far removed from the ever accessible memories in blood and captured in jing. They are far away from the consciousness of the heart/shen. If there are too many traumas or events that are unprocessed, the Dai Mai will use dampness to weigh things down and keep them contained. The containment then weighs down the spirit, taking the joy out of life leading to depression and apathy. If we are unable in our lifetimes to process these events then they are stored in the jing of the Chong Mai and passed on to the next generation.

In the development of the psyche, problems/pathology can occur anywhere in the process. One can be deprived of constitutional resources, which means we may have limited

resources or diminished capacity with which to build. Life may have been harsh or cruel to us, damaging our desire to embrace future opportunities. We may have been overprotected or neglected by our primary caregivers early in life, affecting our ability to know and trust ourselves enough to be present in the moment and move out into the world. Or we may have been traumatized by life so significantly that we have forgotten who we are and our will to live or desire for experience is weighed down by the dampness we generate to forget.

So this configuration of the 8 EV gives us a map that guides us in a way that we are able to see what stage of development may be problematic in our patient's current state of distress.