

Acupuncture Treatment of Pi Disease in the Shang Han Lun

Abstract

As defined in the *Shang Han Lun* (Discussion on Cold Damage), pi (痞, glomus) refers to a condition characterised by distention or fullness, pain and/or other discomfort in the stomach and chest region. There are 11 different patterns of pi disease, many of which correspond to common digestive disorders involving dysregulation of Spleen and Stomach qi, i.e. rebellious Stomach qi and sunken Spleen qi. According to the *Shang Han Lun* (Discussion on Cold Damage), a patient may present with pi-disease when a cold pathogen invades from Taiyang due to the wrong use of purging methods. Pi-disease may also correlate with a pattern of qi xu (deficiency) in the middle jiao. If the ascending-descending dynamic is disturbed, water or phlegm may be retained in the middle jiao and chest, manifesting as pi disease. This paper analyses the eleven patterns of pi disease in the *Shang Han Lun*, including cold pi, exterior yang xu, heat pi, shaoyang pi, water pi in the middle jiao, sanjiao water pi, water pi in chest, chest phlegm pi, rebellious phlegm pi, xu pi and lower jiao xu li (watery stools) after pi disease. Commonly used acupuncture points that treat pi disease by supplementing the qi of the middle jiao and balancing the ascending-descending dynamic of the Spleen and Stomach are given, including Gongsun SP-4, Yinlingquan SP-9, Pishu BL-20, Zusanli ST-36, Neiguan P-6 and Zhongwan REN-12.

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1. Definition

In the *Su Wen* (Basic Questions) the term pi (痞, glomus)¹ is attributed to invasion of a cold pathogen into the Heart and Stomach,² damp in the Spleen,³ irregular life style⁴ and cold in the zang organs.^{5,6} In the *Shang Han Lun*, pi refers to disharmony of Stomach qi resulting from the disturbed ascending-descending dynamic of the Spleen and Stomach. This may be due to invasion of a pathogen from Taiyang and blockage of damp-phlegm in the middle jiao. Because the middle jiao is disturbed, the whole sanjiao can also be disturbed, leading to qi stagnation, water retention and rebellious xiang huo (ministerial fire).⁷

The original clause (O.C.) 151 in the text states:

The patient, presenting with a floating and tight pulse, is again treated with purging methods, resulting in the invasion of external pathogens into the middle jiao. The condition is called pi. It is soft rather than hard in xin xia,⁸ which called qi pi.⁹

The representative symptoms of pi patterns are distention and fullness in the region of xin xia. However, the area feels soft rather than hard, indicating intangible pathogens accumulated in this area. This happens if a purging method is misused to treat exterior (Taiyang) symptoms, which impairs the

yang qi of the middle and thus the external pathogen is brought inwards to invade the Stomach. Pi disease results from impaired middle qi and dysregulation of the ascending and descending movement of qi. The softness on palpation indicates the underlying internal deficiency.

The symptoms of pi can be found in many places in the *Shang Han Lun*, not only in the paragraphs of pi disease. In fact, pi is one the most frequently encountered symptoms in the *Shang Han Lun*, indicating that the author emphasises the importance of the function of the Spleen and Stomach (Su & Hao, 2013). In modern medical terms, pi disease can be seen in the following conditions: (1) Gastrointestinal diseases such as acute and chronic gastritis, bile reflux, irritable bowel syndrome, indigestion and cholecystitis; (2) cardiovascular diseases such as hypertension, myocarditis and arrhythmia; (3) kidney diseases such as nephropathy and chronic renal failure; and (4) various other diseases such as vomiting in pregnancy and Meniere's syndrome. Some modern research supports the therapeutic effectiveness of *Shang Han Lun* pi theory to inform herbal formulas and acupuncture to treat gastrointestinal diseases, for example gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD - see Jiang & Liu, 2010).

2. Pi in the Yi Jing

The term pi (痞) originates from pi (否) in the *Yi Jing* (Book of Change). The hexagram Pi (䷋) in the *Yi Jing* is comprised of upper qian/heaven and lower kun/earth (see Figure 1). This hexagram means that heaven (yang) qi fails to descend and earth (yin) qi fails to ascend, which leads to disconnection of the heaven and earth qi and blockage (or other unfavourable condition). This entails the isolation of yang and yin, which in health terms is a dangerous situation. In contrast, the hexagram tai (䷊) has upper kun/earth and lower qian/heaven (Figure 1) and indicates heaven (yang) qi sinking and earth (yin) qi ascending - a condition of dynamic and smooth communication and movement and the beginning of taiji and life (see Figure 2).

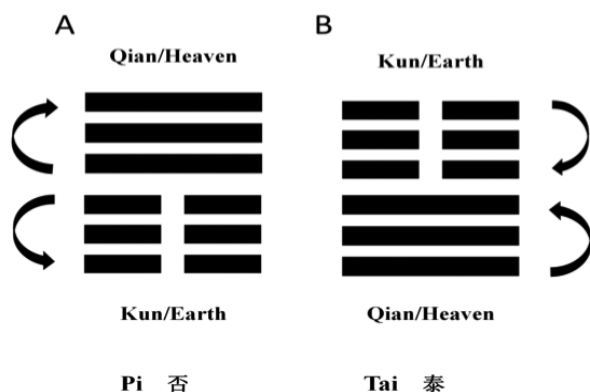


Figure 1: Pi and tai hexagrams.



Figure 2: Tai ji - yang ascends from below and yin descends from above

3. Eleven patterns of pi disease

This paper analyses the eleven patterns of pi disease in the *Shang Han Lun*, including cold pi, exterior yang xu, heat pi, shaoyang pi, water pi in middle jiao, sanjiao water retention, water pi in chest, chest phlegm pi, rebellious phlegm pi, xu pi, and lower jiao xu li¹⁰ after pi disease (Figure 3). A summary of the presentation of each pattern in the text is first provided, followed by an explanation of the pathomechanism involved, and the acupuncture points and herbal formulas that can be used to treat the pattern.

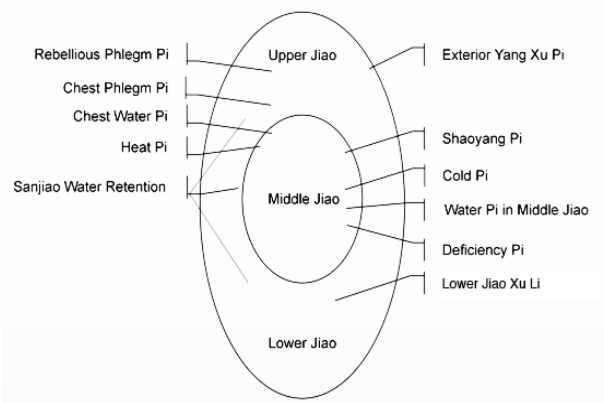


Figure 3: Approximate locations of pi disease patterns

3.1 Cold pi

Summary: Purging methods are frequently misused to treat patients who still present with a Taiyang exterior pattern.¹¹ The resulting symptoms are fever and ceaseless li (watery stools), distention and a subjective feeling of a hard mass¹² in xin xia, and remaining exterior symptoms. *Gui Zhi Ren Shen Tang* (Cinnamon Twig and Ginseng Decoction) is used (O.C. 163).

Explanation: The ceaseless watery stools indicate internal Spleen yang deficiency cold caused by wrong use of purgative medicine. Pi disease results from the impaired middle qi and dysregulation of the ascending and descending movement. The feeling of hardness indicates a combination of internal yang xu cold and an externally invaded cold pathogen. Meanwhile, the patient may also present yin xu symptoms such as thirst and restlessness due to loss of fluids from the purging treatment and ongoing diarrhoea.

Points: Zhongwan REN-12 and Pishu BL-20, the front-mu and back-shu points of the Spleen. These points supplement the middle qi and restore the ascending and descending movement of qi. Thus the watery stools are treated. Moxibustion should be used on these points to warm the middle qi. Neiguan P-6 unblocks xin xia and qi stagnation to treat the pi disease. Zhubin KID-9, the jing-river point of the Kidney channel and xi-cleft point of the Yinwei vessel, supplements yin and fluids. These points should be supplemented to invigorate the yang qi of the yin channels and thus assist in expelling the invaded cold pathogen.

Herbal formula: *Gui Zhi Ren Shen Tang* (Cinnamon Twig and Ginseng Decoction). *Gui Zhi* (Ramulus Cinnamomi Cassiae) treats the exterior syndrome. *Ren Shen* (Radix Ginseng), *Bai Zhu* (Rhizoma Atractylodis Macrocephalae), *Gan Jiang* (Dried Rhizoma Zingiberis) and *Zhi Gan Cao* (Radix Glycyrrhizae) supplement the middle yang qi to stop the watery stools.

3.2 Exterior yang xu

Summary: The patient has been repeatedly attacked by a cold pathogen and developed pi disease; they now present with aversion to cold and sweating. *Fu Zi Xie Xin Tang* (Prepared Aconite Decoction to Drain the Epigastrium) is used (O.C.155).

Explanation: In combination with the symptoms of pi disease, the aversion to cold and sweating here are distinguishing symptoms in the *Shang Han Lun* indicating deficient Shaoyin Kidney yang.

Points: Guanyuan REN-4, Qihai REN-6 and Dazhui DU-14. These points are warmed with moxibustion to supplement the yuan-primary qi and invigorate the yang of Shaoyin (Kidney).

Herbal Formula: *Fu Zi Xie Xin Tang* (Prepared Aconite Decoction to Drain the Epigastrium). Da Huang (Radix et Rhizoma Rhei), Huang Lian (Rhizoma Coptidis) and Huang Qin (Radix Astragali Membranacei) drain the blockage and depressed heat.¹³ Fu Zi (Radix Lateralis Praeparatus Aconiti Carmichaeli) supplements the yang of the lower jiao. Huang Qin (Radix Scutellariae Baicalensis) also prevents excess heat from the use of Fu Zi (Radix Lateralis Praeparatus Aconiti Carmichaeli).

3.3 Heat pi

Summary: Although the area of xin xia feels soft on palpation, the patient subjectively feels distention in this area, as well as feeling restless. The pulse is floating in the guan position. *Da Huang Huang Lian Xie Xin Tang* (Rhubarb and Scute Decoction to Drain the Epigastrium) can be used (O.C.154).

Explanation: When there is a pathogen blocking xin xia, the qi flow is disturbed. The floating pulse in this clause indicates heat and restlessness. This is because the pathogen causing the pi has disconnected the mutual interaction of water and fire so that the Kidney water fails to restrain the Heart fire.

Points: Juque REN-14, Shaochong HE-9 and Zhongchong P-9. Juque REN-14, the front-mu of the Heart, sinks the Heart fire to strengthen the earth (Spleen). Shaochong HE-9 and Zhongchong P-9, the jing-well points, release the fullness in the chest and drain Heart fire (with bleeding technique).

Herbal formula: *Da Huang Huang Lian Xie Xin Tang* (Rhubarb and Coptis Decoction to Drain the Epigastrium). The cold and bitter properties of Da Huang (Radix et Rhizoma Rhei) and Huang Lian (Rhizoma Coptidis) reduce the Heart fire and release the blockage.

3.4 Shaoyang pi

Summary: After five or six days suffering with shang han (cold damage), vomiting and fever as well as other Shaoyang symptoms¹⁴ remain. The patient has been mistreated with purging methods. *Xiao Chai Hu Tang* (Minor Bupleurum Decoction) can be used again to induce sweating and cure the condition. However, if there is fullness and pain on palpation in xin xia, it can be diagnosed as jie xiong (chest binding), and be treated with *Da Xian Xiong Tang* (Major Decoction for Pathogens Stuck in the Chest). However, if the patient only feels fullness rather than hardness or pain, this is pi disease. *Xiao Chai Hu Tang* should not be used any more. *Ban Xia Xie Xin Tang* (Pinelliae Decoction to Drain the Epigastrium) should be used instead (O.C.149).

Explanation: The clause explains various prognoses following mistreatment for a Shaoyang disease. If the invading pathogen disturbs the ascending-descending dynamic of the middle jiao, pi will present. In this case, because the middle qi has been impaired but an excess condition has not developed, the patient does not experience hardness and pain in xin xia. This contrasts with jie xiong disease in which there is fullness, hardness and pain on palpation at xin xia. According to Chapter 17 of the *Jin Gui Yao Lue* (Essential Prescriptions from the Golden Cabinet), vomiting and borborygmus can also present in shaoyang pi. Since the middle jiao is stagnated, ministerial fire fails to descend and rebels upwards. Therefore, heat symptoms such as restlessness, insomnia and palpitation are frequently seen.

Points: Neiguan P-6, Gongsun SP-4, Pishu BL-20 and Xiangmu ST-43. Neiguan P-6 and Gongsun SP-4 open the blockage in the middle jiao and descend rebellious fire. Pishu BL-20 regulates the ascending-descending dynamic of the middle jiao. Supplementing manipulation and/or moxibustion should be used. Xiangmu ST-43, the shu-stream and wood point of the Stomach, sedates the rebellious minister fire in the middle jiao.

Herbal formula: *Ban Xia Xie Xin Tang* (Pinelliae Decoction to Drain the Epigastrium). Gan Jiang (Dried Rhizoma Zingiberis), Zhi Gan Cao (Radix Glycyrrhizae) and Ren Shen (Radix Ginseng) supplement the middle qi and warm the cold. Huang Lian (Rhizoma Coptidis) and Huang Qin (Radix Scutellariae Baicalensis) clear heat. Ban Xia (Rhizoma Pinelliae Tematae) sinks the rebellious qi.

3.5 Water pi in the middle jiao

Summary: After a cold pathogen has been treated with the sweating method, the patient feels discomfort in the Stomach and distention and hardness in xin xia, and presents with hiccup with the odour of undigested

food, shui qi (water retention) in the rib-sides (with fullness and distention), borborygmus and watery stool. *Sheng Jiang Xie Xin Tang* (Ginger Decoction to Drain the Epigastrium) can be used (O.C.157).

Explanation: When a patient has constitutionally deficient Spleen and Stomach qi, the capacity of raising the lucid and lowering the turbid qi is compromised. The function of the middle jiao also becomes susceptible to invasion of external pathogens such as cold. In this clause, the patient has not been cured by promoting sweating and shows symptoms of water retention in the middle jiao. In Master Huang Yuan Yu's¹⁵ understanding of the *Shang Han Lun*, once ying (nutritive) and wei (defensive) qi are disordered by invasion of cold, the middle qi dynamic must be disturbed too. If the middle jiao fails to digest foods and liquids, the undigested food gives rise to a fetid smell in the mouth, rebellious Stomach qi leads to hiccup and the deficient Spleen qi causes water retention in the rib-sides. The combination of undigested food and water retention contributes to borborygmus and watery stools.

Points: Zhongwan REN-12, Pishu BL-20, Zusanli ST-36 and Xiangyu ST-43. Zhongwan REN-12 and Pishu BL-20 strengthen the Spleen and harmonise the Stomach, promote digestion and the transportation and transformation of essences. Zusanli ST-36, the he-sea point of the Stomach channel, strengthens the Spleen and harmonises the Stomach to restore the balance of ascending and descending. Xiangyu ST-43, the shu-stream point, invigorates Yangming (the Stomach and Large Intestine), disperses water and opens pi.

Herbal Formula: *Sheng Jiang Xie Xin Tang* (Ginger Decoction to Drain the Epigastrium). Sheng Jiang (Rhizoma Zingiberis) and Ban Xia (Rhizoma Pinelliae Tematae) descend rebellious Stomach qi and disperse water. Zhi Gan Cao (Radix Glycyrrhizae) and Ren Shen (Radix Ginseng) supplement the middle qi. Huang Lian (Rhizoma Coptidis) and Huang Qin (Radix Scutellariae Baicalensis) clear the heat in xin xia (see footnote 13). Gan Jiang (Dried Rhizoma Zingiberis) warms Spleen yang.

3.6 Sanjiao water retention

Summary: After *Xie Xin Tang*¹⁶ (Decoction to Drain the Epigastrium) has been used to treat pi caused by the misuse of the purging method, the patient presents with thirst, dryness in the mouth, restlessness and difficult urination. *Wu Ling San* (Five Poria Powder) is used (O.C. 156).

Explanation: If *Xie Xin Tang* (Decoction to Drain the Epigastrium) is not effective, wrong application of this formula should be considered. Clinically, there are reasons for pi other than invasion of a cold pathogen.

Considering the thirst and dryness and difficult urination in this pattern, pi may also result from the failure of qi transformation in the sanjiao, water retention in xin xia, and rebellious xiang huo. Therefore, the treatment must focus on correcting the water dynamic.

Points: Jinggu BL-64, Taixi KID-3, Zhongzhu SJ-3 and Pangguangshu BL-28. Jinggu BL-64 and Taixi KID-3 are yuan-source points. This combination regulates the qi of the foot Taiyang Bladder and foot Shaoyin Kidney channels and promotes qi transformation in these two organs. Zhongzhu SJ-3, the shu-stream point, promotes the qi dynamic of the Sanjiao channel to circulate water and subdue xiang huo. Besides, it expels the cold pathogen from Taiyang in combination with Jinggu BL-64. Pangguangshu BL-28, the back-shu point of the Bladder, is used to trigger the Bladder to transform water and promote urination. Moxibustion can be applied.

Herbal formula: *Wu Ling San* (Five Poria Powder). Bai Zhu (Rhizoma Atractylodis Macrocephalae), Fu Ling (Poria), Zhu Ling (Agaric Polyporus) and Ze Xie (Rhizoma Alismatis) drain retained water. Gui Zhi (Ramulus Cinnamomi) supports the Liver to smooth qi and moves dampness.

3.7 Water pi in the chest

Only after the exterior has been released can a purging method be applied to treat a patient suffering from watery stools and nausea. In addition to these symptoms, if the patient shows slight sweating without aversion to cold, headache, painful distention and fullness in xin xia, nausea and shortness of breath, this indicates that the pathogen is located in the interior. *Shi Zao Tang* (Ten Jujube Decoction) can be used (O.C.152).

Explanation: If there is no longer aversion to cold this indicates that the exterior pattern has been released. The painful pi in this pattern results from water retention in the chest. Nausea indicates rebellious Stomach qi and watery stools indicate water going downwards. The headache results from dampness blocking the lucid yang in the head. The shortness of breath indicates qi stagnation in the chest. The sweating is due to retention of water in the cou li (interstices).

Points: Zhongwan REN-12, Tianshu-ST-25, Zhangmen LIV-13 and Yinlingquan SP-9. Zhongwan REN-12 is warmed to supplement the middle qi and disperse water. Tianshu ST-25 is warmed to drain the retained water and subdue nausea. Zhangmen LIV-13, the front-mu point of the Spleen and the meeting point of the Liver and Gall Bladder channels, regulates Liver qi and strengthens the Spleen to remove retained water. Yinlingquan SP-9,

the he-sea point, supplements Spleen qi to drain water stagnation. Zhangmen-LR13 and Yinlingquan-SP9 should be drained with reducing technique to remove the water retention in the chest.

Herbal Formula: *Shi Zao Tang* (Ten Jujube Decoction). Yuan Hua (Daphne Genkwa), Gan Sui (Radix Kansui), Da Ji (Radix Euphorbiae Pekinensis) are used to drain the retained water. Da Zao (Fructus Jujubae) protects the middle qi.

3.8 Chest phlegm pi

The patient shows symptoms similar to Taiyang disease,¹⁷ but without headache or stiff neck. Besides, the pulse is slightly floating in the cun position, and there is distention and tenderness in the chest and dyspnoea due to qi rushing upwards to the throat. This is a condition of phlegm in the chest due to cold invasion. *Gua Di San* (Melon Pedicle Powder) can be used to induce vomiting (O.C.166).

Explanation: Cold invasion into the chest is the essential pathomechanism of this condition. Cold phlegm blocks the chest and the yang fails to disperse. According to the *Huang Di Nei Jing* (Yellow Emperor's Inner Classic), wei qi comes out from the upper jiao. In this pattern ying and wei qi are disharmonised, causing symptoms similar to Taiyang disease, but without headache and stiff neck. The chest distention and tenderness result from qi and phlegm blockage. The dyspnoea indicates that phlegm is being driven upwards to the throat. The slight floating pulse at the cun position indicates that a pathogen is located in the upper jiao, which can be treated by the method of promoting vomiting.

Points: Zhiyang DU-9, Tiantu REN-22, Danzhong REN-17 and Fenglong ST-40. Zhiyang DU-9 is drained using plum-blossom needle to unblock the chest stagnation and soothe the yang qi of the whole body. Tiantu REN-22, the meeting point of the Ren (Conception) and Yinwei Mai (Linking Vessel), is used to induce vomiting. Danzhong REN-17, the hui-meeting point of qi, opens the upper jiao and unblocks qi stagnation. Fenglong ST-40 resolves and removes phlegm.

Herbal Treatment: *Gua Di San* (Melon Pedicle Powder). Gua Di (Pedicellus Melo), Chi Xiao Dou (Semen Phaseoli) and Dan Dou Chi (Semen Sojae Preparatum) induce vomiting to expel the phlegm from the chest.

3.9 Rebellious phlegm pi

After the patient with shang han has been treated by inducing sweating, vomiting and purging, the exterior has been cured but belching and distention/hardness remain in xin xia. *Xuan Fu Hua Dai Zhe Shi Tang* (Inula and Hematite Decoction) can be used (O.C.161).

Explanation: Although the exterior has been cured by the treatment, the middle qi has been harmed. Then the Spleen and Stomach fail to regulate the ascending-descending movement of qi, leading to phlegm with distention and hardness in xin xia. The Stomach qi rebels and leads to belching.

Points: Gongsun SP-4, Huangshu KID-16, Zhongwan REN-12 and Taichong LIV-3. Gongsun-SP4, the luo-connecting point and opening point of the Chong Mai (Penetrating Vessel), supplements the Spleen and harmonises the Stomach. Huangshu KID-16, the meeting point of the Kidney and Chong Mai, regulates and lowers rebellious qi in the Chong Mai. Zhongwan REN-12 harmonises the Stomach qi and resolves phlegm. Taichong LIV-3 subdues rebellious qi.

Herbal formula: *Xuan Fu Hua Dai Zhe Shi Tang* (Inula and Hematite Decoction). Ren Shen (Radix Ginseng), Da Zao (Fructus Jujubae) and Zhi Gan Cao (Radix Glycyrrhizae) supplement the middle qi. Xuan Fu Hua (Flos Inulae), Dai Zhe Shi (Ochra Haematitum), Sheng Jiang (Rhizoma Zingiberis Recens) and Ban Xia (Rhizoma Pinelliae Preparatum) lower the rebellious Stomach qi.

3.10 Xu (Deficiency) pi

Summary: A patient with zhong feng (wind attack) was mistreated with purging methods and developed symptoms of distention and hardness in xin xia, frequent watery stools with undigested food, borborygmus 'like thunder', nausea and restlessness. Moreover, the purging method was applied again in order to treat to the symptom of hard pi. This condition is not due to accumulation of heat but rebellious and stagnated Stomach qi due to Stomach deficiency, which gives rise to the hardness. *Gan Cao Xie Xin Tang* (Glycyrrhizae Decoction to Drain the Epigastrium) can be used (O.C.158).

Explanation: When a patient suffers from zhong feng, the correct treatment is to induce sweating. If purging method is applied, the Spleen and Stomach qi will be harmed, which frequently leads to deficiency of the middle qi. Then the external pathogen can enter more deeply to disturb the ascending-descending of the middle jiao, and disconnect the Kidney water and Heart fire. Thus, the Yangming Stomach qi rebels and Taiyin Spleen qi sinks. The sinking of Taiyin Spleen yang can be seen here in the symptom of frequent watery stools, while rebellious Stomach qi causes nausea and restlessness. This disorder is wrongly regarded as Yangming excess heat and treated with purging medications again, after which the condition of pi will inevitably worsen. The weaker the middle qi, the worse the pi disease will be. Therefore, treatment should focus on middle qi deficiency.

Points: Zusanli ST-36, Xianggu ST-43, Jianli REN-11 and

Neiting ST-44. Zusanli ST-36, the he-sea point and Xianggu ST-43, the shu-stream point strengthen and harmonise the Stomach and Spleen to restore the balance of ascending and descending. The combination of Jianli REN-11 and Neiting ST-44 regulates the qi dynamic of the middle jiao and eliminates pi. Jianli REN-11 is called 'Constructing the Middle' in Chinese and can be used to invigorate the middle qi (Wang et al., 2015).

Herbal formula: *Gan Cao Xie Xin Tang* (Glycyrrhizae Decoction to Drain the Epigastrium). Zhi Gan Cao (Radix Glycyrrhizae) and Da Zao (Fructus Jujubae) supplement the middle qi. Gan Jiang (Dried Rhizoma Zingiberis) warms the middle cold due to qi deficiency. Huang Lian (Rhizoma Coptidis) and Huang Qin (Radix Scutellariae Baicalensis) drains blockage and clears any depressed heat. Ban Xia (Rhizoma Pinelliae Preparatum) subdues the rebellious qi.

3.11 Lower jiao xu li

If ceaseless watery stools appear after treating shang han illness with a purging method, this can be treated with *Xie Xin Tang*.¹⁸ But if the patient is mistreated with a purging method again, this will result again in more watery stools. In this pattern, *Li Zhong Wan* (Pill to Regulate the Middle)¹⁹ was given by another doctor, which worsens the condition. *Li Zhong Wan* can be used only for illness of the middle jiao. But in this condition, the illness is located in the lower jiao, and therefore the formula does not work. *Chi Shi Zhi Yu Yu Liang Tang* (Halloysit and Limonite Decoction) can be used. If the watery stools remain, diuretic methods must be used (O.C.159).

Explanation: When watery stools are caused by deficiency of the lower jiao, the middle jiao should not be treated. If this symptom remains after applying methods to supplement the lower jiao, a diuretic method such as *Wu Ling San* (Five Poria Powder)²⁰ can be used, which follows the principle of promoting urination to treat watery defecation.

Points: Guanyuan REN-4, Zhongji REN-3, Shenshu BL-23 and Tianshu ST-25. Guanyuan REN-4, front-mu of the Small Intestine, is warmed to supplement the primary yang and separate lucidity from turbidity. Zhongji REN-3, front-mu of the Bladder, is warmed to invigorate the qi transformation in the Bladder and promote urination. Thus, this combination promotes urination and treats the watery stools. Shenshu-BL23 and Tianshu-ST-25 are supplemented to warm the fire in the lower jiao and expel cold and damp in the intestines.

Herbal Treatment: *Chi Shi Zhi Yu Yu Liang Tang* (Halloysit and Limonite Decoction). Chi Shi Zhi (Halloysitum Rubrum) and Yu Yu Ling (Limonitum) consolidate the

lower jiao with warmth to arrest the watery stools.

Conclusion

Pi disease is characterised by distention or fullness, pain and discomfort in the stomach and chest regions. Eleven different patterns of pi disease can be identified in the *Shang Han Lun*, which correspond to common digestive system disorders and involve dysregulation of the Spleen and Stomach qi. According to the *Shang Han Lun*, a patient often presents with pi disease when a cold pathogen invades from the Taiyang due to the wrong use of purging methods. If the ascending-descending dynamic is disturbed, water or phlegm may be retained in the middle jiao and chest. Moreover, Heart fire and Kidney water may be disconnected. Pi disease may also result from a constitution of qi deficiency in the middle jiao. Commonly used acupuncture points that treat pi disease by supplementing the qi of middle jiao and regulating the ascending-descending dynamic of the Spleen and Stomach include Gongsun SP-4, Yinlingquan SP-9, Pishu BL-20, Zusanli ST-36, Neiguan P-6 and Zhongwan REN-12.

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Endnotes

- 1 Pi is also referred to in the text as pi man (痞满, pi fullness), man (满, fullness), pi se (痞塞, pi blockage), and pi ge (痞隔, pi blockage).
- 2 *Zhi Zhen Yao Da Lun*, Chapter 71, *Su Wen*
- 3 *Wu Chang Zheng Da Lun*, Chapter 70, *Su Wen*
- 4 *Tai Yin Yang Ming Lun*, Chapter, 29, *Su Wen*
- 5 *Yi Fa Fang Yi Lun*, Chapter 12, *Su Wen*
- 6 *Elementary Questions of Yellow Emperor's Inner Classic*
- 7 Normally, xiang huo sinks to warm the Spleen and Kidney.
- 8 The stomach region or 'region below the heart'.
- 9 Qi pi: qi stagnation pi.
- 10 Li: watery stool e.g. diarrhoea or dysentery.
- 11 Representative symptoms of a Taiyang or exterior pattern include aversion to cold, sweating or no sweating, stiff neck and fever.
- 12 The patient subjectively feels the area to be hard, but it feels soft on palpation.
- 13 The depressed heat can be inferred from the choice of herbs. In fact, it is advisable that the three cool-bitter herbs should be cooked for just long enough so that their cool qi and bitter taste are intense enough to drain the blockage and release the depressed heat.
- 14 Atypical shaoyang presentation includes a bitter taste in the mouth, dry throat, dizziness, poor digestion, restlessness, nausea and fever (O.C.96); it is treated with *Xiao Chai Hu Tang* (Minor Bupleurum Decoction).
- 15 Huang Yuan Yu (黄元御), 1705-1758.
- 16 Can be *Sheng Jiang Xie Xin Tang*.
- 17 I.e. fever, aversion to cold, floating and tight pulse, etc.
- 18 Refers to *Ban Xia Xie Xin Tang*.
- 19 From *Jin Gui Yao Lue* (Essential Prescriptions from the Golden Cabinet).
- 20 See the section on *sanjiao* water retention.

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