

Pairing the Extraordinary Vessels and the Extraordinary *Fu* - Part 2: The *Ying Qi* Cycle and the Evolution of Consciousness

by Thomas Richardson

Abstract

In this article, the *ying qi* cycle is used to examine the way in which the paired extraordinary vessels and extraordinary *fu* may relate to the evolution of consciousness and the art of humanity. This investigation is a coalescence of two previous articles—one which examined the way in which the diurnal unfoldment of the extraordinary vessels (following the *ying qi* cycle) may have a relation to the evolution of consciousness (CJOM, Fall/Winter 2009), and one which proposed a theoretical model in which the extraordinary vessels and the extraordinary *fu* are paired together in a one-to-one correspondence, similar to the manner in which the *zangfu* and primary channels are paired together (Chinese Medicine Times, February 2010).

Introduction

In the last issue of the Chinese Medicine Times (February 2010), I proposed a theoretical model that pairs the extraordinary vessels with the extraordinary *fu* in a one-to-one correspondence, similar to the way in which the *zangfu* are paired with the primary channels (See: (Richardson 2010)—hereafter ‘Pairing’). In another previous article ((Richardson 2009a)—hereafter ‘Evolutionary Unfoldment’) I examined the way in which the extraordinary vessels may have a relation to the evolution of consciousness, as seen through the diurnal flow of the *ying qi* cycle. In this article, I would like to take another journey through the *ying qi* cycle, to further expand on these models by examining the order of unfoldment of the paired extraordinary vessels and extraordinary *fu*. In combining these two models, it becomes apparent that the order in which the *ying qi* cycle theoretically accesses the extraordinary *fu* also mirrors this process of the evolution of consciousness, and vertical and horizontal integration.

Pairing the Extraordinary Vessels and the Extraordinary *Fu*

In this section I will briefly review the theoretical model proposed in the last issue of the Chinese Medicine Times, in which the extraordinary vessels were paired with the extraordinary *fu* in a one-to-one correspondence. The pairings are posited as follows:

Table 1. *Pairing the Extraordinary Vessels and the Extraordinary Fu*

Extraordinary Vessel	Extraordinary <i>Fu</i>
<i>Ren mai</i>	Uterus
<i>Chong mai</i>	Vessels/ <i>mai</i>
<i>Du mai</i>	Brain
<i>Qiao mai</i>	Marrow
<i>Wei mai</i>	Bones
<i>Dai mai</i>	Gall Bladder

As was posited in ‘Pairing’, the *ren*, *chong*, and *du mai* have intimate correspondences with the three *dantian* and the three treasures of *jing*, *qi*, and *shen*. In this schema, the *ren mai* corresponds to the *jing*/essence, lower *dantian*/Earth, and the Uterus, while the *du mai* corresponds to *shen*/spirit, upper *dantian*/Heaven, and the Brain. The *chong mai*, being the polarity between *ren* and *du*, *yin* and *yang*, has correspondences to *qi* and blood, middle *dantian*/Humanity, and the Vessels/*mai*. Thus, by extension of looking at this trinity in relation to the three treasures, the *ren mai* may even be called the Sea of *Jing*, the *chong mai* the Sea of *Qi*, and the *du mai* the Sea of *Shen*, thereby shedding some light on the discussion present in Chinese medicine of both the Brain and the Heart being the ‘residence of the *Shen*’.

The *qiao mai* and the Marrow can be paired together as both have correspondences to global nourishment by the essence (and particularly nourishment of the Brain), and to movement in general. The *wei mai* and Bones

both relate to protection and boundaries, and are therefore intimately related to connecting the inside and the outside and the process of horizontal integration. Finally, the *dai mai* and the Gall Bladder both have strong correspondences to the Wood element and share the function of assisting the *qi* in returning to the Source. This allows post-heaven to nourish and replenish pre-heaven (both of the Kidneys and the quiescent state of the extraordinary vessels—*ren-chong-du mai*) and corresponds to the process of transcendence—the transition from a state of duality to a state of unity.

The *Ying Qi* Cycle: Vertical and Horizontal Integration

It becomes easier to see how well these pairings fit together when examining the flow of the *ying qi* cycle. The *ying qi* cycle is the process of the dynamic flow of *qi* at the level of humanity (vertical and horizontal integration), expansion outward from the Source and the return to Source on a daily basis. The entire flow of the primary channel system (through which the *ying qi* cycles on a daily basis) is based upon connecting above and below and the interior and exterior. As stated by Yuen (2006, p104), the primary channels “...are developing and devising a connection between External and Internal...constant movement between the outside and the inside, Exterior and Interior connection.” Similarly, the very anatomy of the primary channel system is based on connecting above and below—the *yang* primary channels flow from the fingertips down to the toes, bringing *yang qi* from Heaven down to Earth, and vice versa for the *yin* primary channels, bringing *yin qi* from Earth up to Heaven. The *ying qi* cycle thus provides an elegant means to examine the associations of the extraordinary vessels and *fu* and their relation to vertical and horizontal integration, center and periphery, and the evolution of consciousness.

In ‘Evolutionary Unfoldment,’ the diurnal flow of the *ying qi* through the primary channels was used to examine the order in which the confluent points of the eight extraordinary vessels are accessed on a daily basis. To summarize this theoretical model, during the first half of the cycle—corresponding to the time period from 3am to 3pm—the *ying qi* starts in the Lung channel and travels through the Large Intestine, Stomach, Spleen, Heart, and Small Intestine channels. During this journey, the *ying qi* accesses (in sequential order) *Lieque* LU-7, *Gongsun* SP-4, and *Houxu* SI-3. These three confluent points correspond to the extraordinary vessels that have their origin in the lower *dantian*—the *ren*, *chong*, and *du mai*, respectively—which may be said to correspond to the quiescent state (the deep, still reservoir of *yin* and *yang* from which all life springs forth). These three extraordinary vessels correspond to the oneness as it is just beginning to form the polarity of *yin* and *yang* within the body.

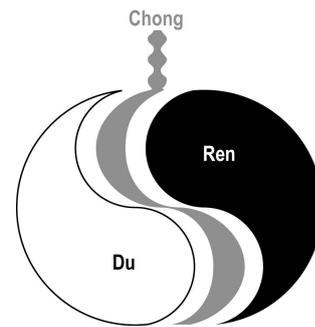


Figure 1. The quiescent state

This is followed by the mobilization of the dynamic *yin* and *yang*, which occurs when the *qiao mai* are accessed at *Shenmai* UB-62 and *Zhaohai* K-6. The *yang qiao mai* may be seen as the movement of *yang* (“Yang Motility”) that arises from the quiescent *yang* of the *du mai* (“Sea of Yang”), while the *yin qiao mai* may be seen as the movement of *yin* (“Yin Motility”) that arises from the quiescent *yin* of the *ren mai* (“Sea of Yin”). This may further clarify the pairings of the *yang qiao* with the *du mai* and the *yin qiao* with the *ren mai* within the master-couple system.¹ Continuing along the *ying qi* cycle, the dynamic *yin* and *yang* of the interior is linked, consolidated, and integrated by the *yin wei mai* (which occurs as the *ying qi* reaches *Neiguan* P-6). The *yin wei mai* is paired with the *chong mai* in the master-couple system, suggesting that the *yin wei mai* has the function of balancing and integrating the dynamic *yin* and *yang* of the *qiao mai*, just as the *chong mai* balances the quiescent *yin* and *yang* of the *ren* and *du mai*.

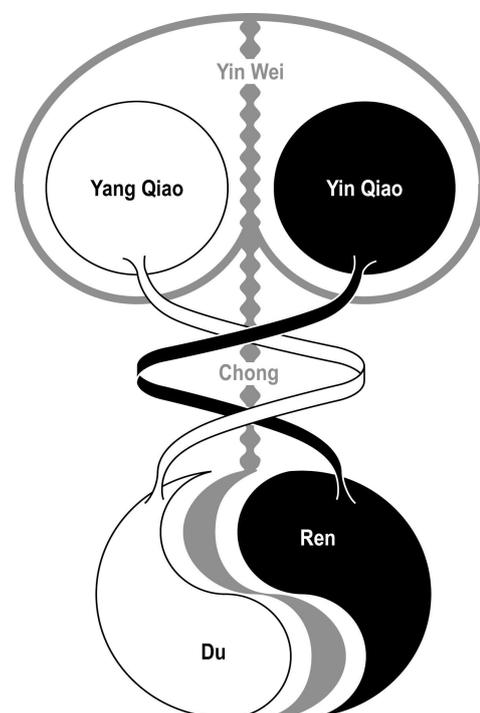


Figure 2. Manifestation and integration within self

After the interior is integrated, one is able to extend and connect within and without as represented by the opening of the *yang wei mai*, as the *ying qi* reaches *Waiguan* SJ-5. The *yang wei mai*, which “masters the exterior and movement towards the exterior,” may be seen as an expansion outward from self, and is intimately involved in horizontal integration. Finally, the exterior energetic matrix is consolidated, brought together, and regulated by the *dai mai* (as the *ying qi* accesses *Zulinqi* GB-41), which plays an integral role in balancing vertical and horizontal integration through dynamic structural stability and spherical integration.ⁱⁱ The *dai mai* also facilitates the return to the Source, thus taking one from the most exterior back to the deepest interior and allowing one to start the cycle again the next day.

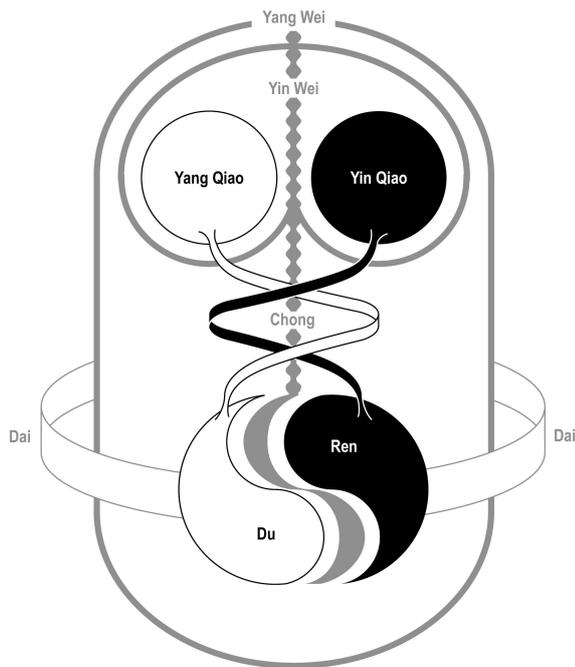


Figure 3. Connecting interior and exterior, returning to the Source

In following the unfoldment of the extraordinary vessels (as viewed through the *ying qi* cycle) we see a clear reflection of the evolution of consciousness. This is the process of the one breaking into two, into three, into the ten thousand things, allowing integration within oneself and connection to all else present at the level of humanity, and eventually transcending duality and returning to oneness to start the cycle again. In the following sections I will follow the *ying qi* cycle once again to further build on this theoretical model, in the hope that this will allow greater insight into the relation of the paired extraordinary vessels and the extraordinary *fu* to vertical and horizontal integration and the evolution of consciousness.

Lung through Small Intestine: Vertical Integration and Pre-Heaven

Starting in the Lung channel, the first confluent point we come to is *Lieque* LU-7, confluent point of the *ren mai*. In the model proposed in ‘Pairing,’ the *ren mai* is paired with the Uterus and *jing*, both of which correspond to the lower *dantian*. Thus we start at the quiescent state, the lower *dantian*, which is the source of the extraordinary vessels and pre-heaven. Within the extraordinary *fu*, the Uterus also corresponds to the most logical starting point, as it is the seat of the essence. As noted by Jeffrey Yuen (2006, p69), “...if you were to follow a hierarchy of the Curious Organs, we would begin that hierarchy with the Uterus. The *Jing* Essence begins in the level of the Uterus”.

From the Lung channel, the *ying qi* continues through the Large Intestine and Stomach channels, until it flows into the Spleen channel and reaches *Gongsun* SP-4, confluent point of the *chong mai*. At this point, the *ying qi* accesses the *chong mai* (within the extraordinary vessels), and therefore the Vessels/*mai* (within the extraordinary *fu*) and the middle *dantian*. Thus we move from the Uterus to the *mai*, from the lower to the middle *dantian*. Continuing on, the *ying qi* flows through the Heart channel and into the Small Intestine channel, until it reaches *Houxi* SI-3, confluent point of the *du mai*—which in this model also corresponds to the Brain and the upper *dantian*.

Through these first six channels of the *ying qi* cycle (LU-SI, 3am-3pm), we can see a clear unfoldment of the extraordinary vessels and *fu* corresponding to the three *dantian* and the vertical axis of integration within the body (also referred to as the *taiji* pole or the *zhong mai* (Central Meridian))—starting from the lower *dantian*, Uterus, and *jing*, moving to the middle *dantian*, Vessels/*mai*, and *qi*, and finally reaching the upper *dantian*, Brain, and *shen* (see Table 2 below). This mirrors the process of internal alchemy, transforming *jing* into *qi* and *qi* into *shen*, and may be said to correspond to the vertical axis of integration and the quiescent state of the *ren*, *chong*, and *du mai*. This is the formation of the core of the body, corresponding primarily to pre-heaven, vertical integration, and the Source. (It is of note that the *ren*, *chong*, and *du mai* (along with the *dai mai*) are also referred to as the “nuclear” vessels, as compared with the “peripheral” vessels of the *qiao* and *wei mai*—we will return to this point later on (Pirog 1996).) This process of vertical integration is also the means of connecting Heaven and Earth within oneself, thus allowing the spirit/awareness/consciousness to be firmly rooted in the essence/body.

Table 2. Correspondences of the Axis of Vertical Integration and Internal Alchemy

Energetic center	Extraordinary vessel	Extraordinary <i>fu</i>	Three treasures
Upper <i>dantian</i>	<i>Du mai</i>	Brain	<i>Shen</i>
Middle <i>dantian</i>	<i>Chong mai</i>	Vessels/ <i>mai</i>	<i>Qi</i>
Lower <i>dantian</i>	<i>Ren mai</i>	Uterus	<i>Jing</i>

As was seen in ‘Evolutionary Unfoldment’, it is from this quiescent state of pre-heaven and vertical integration that manifestation, integration within self, and connection to everything else present at the level of humanity can occur, as represented by the activation of the *qiao* and *wei mai*. Thus the *qiao* and *wei mai* correspond relatively more to the state of post-heaven and horizontal integration within the extraordinary vessels. We can now continue along the *ying qi* cycle and, in observing the extraordinary *fu*, we will see this process mirrored once again.

Urinary Bladder - San Jiao: Horizontal Integration and Post-heaven

As the *ying qi* continues its flow, it exits the Small Intestine channel and enters the Urinary Bladder channel, beginning the second half of its daily cycle (corresponding to the time period from 3pm – 3am). Flowing through the Urinary Bladder channel, it arrives at *Shenmai* UB-62, confluent point of the *yang qiao mai*, followed quickly by *Zhaohai* K-6, confluent point of the *yin qiao mai*. As seen in ‘Pairing’, the *qiao mai* have a strong correspondence to the Marrow; both the *qiao mai* and the Marrow share a relation to the movement of the essence out from the source/lower *dantian*, and relate to global nourishment by the essence (especially nourishment of the Brain). Further, both the *qiao mai* and the Marrow may be said to have a strong correspondence to the legs (and motility and movement in general) and the ability to walk and move around and thus experience more at the level of humanity.ⁱⁱⁱ

This relation between the *qiao mai*, Marrow, and legs is significant and deserves further discussion. If both the *qiao mai* and the Marrow are seen as corresponding to the emergence of the post-heaven state from the Source/pre-heaven, then, within the extraordinary vessels and *fu*, they also correspond relatively more to horizontal integration and the periphery. Within the anatomy of the human body, the legs and arms also correspond more to horizontal integration and the periphery, relative to the trunk/core of the body. The legs allow the human being to move through the world and thus have a greater capacity for experiential awareness at the level of humanity—much as the *qiao*

mai and Marrow relate to the movement of essence through the body, leading to the manifestation and nourishment of the individual human being.

Continuing along the *ying qi* cycle, one reaches *Neiguan* P-6 and *Waiguan* SJ-5—the confluent points of the *wei mai*, and therefore, by association, the Bones. If the *qiao mai* are seen as being in correspondence with the legs, perhaps the *wei mai* may be seen as being in correspondence with the arms.^{iv} This association is also seen in some Daoist traditions—according to Deng Ming-Dao (1990, p93-94), the *yang wei mai* “...travel bilaterally along the back of each arm, around the tip of the middle fingers, along the inside of the middle fingers to the point *laogong*,” while the *yin wei mai* travel “From the *laogong* point of the palm...along the inside of each arm, curve across the pectoral muscles, descend through the nipples, and connect with the *renmei* via a brief trip along the *daimei*.”

Although it is the legs and feet that connect to Earth and allow each individual to move through the world, it is the arms and hands allow each individual to truly connect (‘link’) to everything else present at the level of humanity—as humans we wave to each other, shake and hold hands, hug and embrace, and touch to experience and connect to the world around us. This is also seen in *qigong* theory and practice—*Baihui* DU-20 is the point that exchanges *qi* with Heaven, *Yongquan* K-1 exchanges *qi* with Earth, and *Laogong* P-8, in the center of the palms, exchanges *qi* with the level of humanity. Similarly, it is the Bones that create channels for the Marrow to flow through, linking the flow of essence throughout the body and providing the structure of connection and integration. The Bones also participate in the entering and exiting of *qi*, and thus assist in the connection between oneself and everything else present at the level of humanity. Thus the *wei mai*, Bones, and arms also share correspondences to horizontal integration and the periphery.

Here we can see a beautiful resonance—the *ren*, *chong*, and *du mai* (and Uterus, *mai*, and Brain) correspond to the trinities of the three *dantian* and the three treasures that form the vertical axis of integration within the body, connecting Heaven and Earth, above and below. They are the three aspects of the *taiji*, the Supreme Polarity of *yin*, *yang*, and the pivot between. Thus they are three yet one. They correspond to the core of the body and the relatively pre-heaven state, and are the “nuclear” extraordinary vessels. It is this axis of vertical integration/pre-heaven that allows one to experience horizontal axis of integration, connecting the inside and the outside, connecting with all else present at the level of humanity. The horizontal axis is in correspondence with post-heaven and also corresponds relatively more to duality and the periphery. Thus the *qiao* and *wei mai* are the “peripheral” extraordinary vessels and are in a state of duality (they have both *yin* and *yang* aspects), and they

correspond relatively more to the four limbs and horizontal integration. Pre-heaven exists in a state of unity, post-heaven exists in a state of duality.

Gall Bladder - Liver: Transcendence and the Return to Unity

Finally, as the *ying qi* flows into the Gall Bladder channel and reaches *Zulinqi* GB-41, the *dai mai* and Gall Bladder are accessed and there is the opportunity for balance between these processes of vertical and horizontal integration, allowing one to transcend duality, reach a state of wholeness, and return to the Source to start a new cycle. The *dai mai* and Gall Bladder both assist in connecting back to the pre-heaven of the Kidneys and Uterus, as well as the quiescent state of the extraordinary vessels, bringing the post-heaven essence back to nourish pre-heaven and preparing to start the cycle again the next day (Richardson 2010). This corresponds to the movement from the greatest exterior and expanded state back to the deepest interior.

As seen in ‘Evolutionary Unfoldment,’ the *dai mai* may correspond to the movement from the most expanded, external, post-heaven state back to the deepest pre-heaven. This is a return to the quiescent state of the *ren-chong-du mai* within the extraordinary vessels, which correspond to the lower *dantian* and the pre-heaven state.^v Similarly, in ‘Pairing,’ it was seen that the Gall Bladder, as an extraordinary *fu*, shares this function of connecting the post-heaven essence of the Spleen to the pre-heaven essence of the Kidneys. The Gall Bladder, which is paired with the Liver within the 12 *zangfu*, may also be seen as the link between the twelve primary channels and *zangfu* (post-heaven) and the extraordinary vessels, extraordinary *fu*, and lower *dantian* (pre-heaven) (Yuen 2006).

Thus the *dai mai* and Gall Bladder, in part, render the *yin* and *yang* aspects of being (Above and Below, Inside and Outside) into a unified whole and allow one to start a new cycle again the next day. This ability/function of both the *dai mai* and the Gall Bladder to transcend duality and facilitate the return to source on a daily basis is significant. This is a challenging point of transition that occurs not only within the *ying qi* cycle, but also within the evolution of consciousness as mirrored by the daily unfoldment of the extraordinary vessels and *fu*. This relates to the drive towards transcendence, moving from the world of duality and post-heaven into a state of unity.

From this perspective it is interesting to note that, in Neoclassical Pulse Diagnosis, there is a dominant tendency for individuals to have a *dai mai* pulse (which occurs when both middle positions are the largest) according to diagnosis of the extraordinary vessels, as well as a tendency for a Wood (GB/LIV) to Metal (LU/LI) blockage along the *ying qi* cycle (Morris

2009).^{vi} These pulse patterns correspond to the end of the *ying qi* cycle, when one is just on the verge of transitioning back to the interior and pre-heaven state. In modern society, the individual’s energy is often “exteriorized” and drawn outward, and there is difficulty in guiding the *qi* back to the Source and returning to the quiescent state—thus it makes sense that many individuals would have stagnations along these patterns. Perhaps it is also for this reason that the Gall Bladder is associated with courage—it takes courage to maintain the dynamic tension between vertical and horizontal integration, and to make the transition from the greatest exterior back to the deepest interior, from a state of duality to a state of unity.

Further, if the *qiao* and *wei mai* are said to correspond to the legs and arms, respectively and relatively, then perhaps the *dai mai* can be seen to relate to the head.^{vii} Just as the legs and arms are in a state of duality (as are the *qiao* and *wei mai*), the head is a singular peripheral “limb”. Thus, in the second half of the *ying qi* cycle, there may be reflected once again the movement from the lower *dantian*, to the middle *dantian*, to the upper *dantian*. The *qiao mai* and Marrow correspond to the legs (as well as grounding and movement), which can be seen as an extension out from the lower *dantian*, while the *wei mai* and Bones have correspondences to the arms (as well as integration and boundaries), which can be seen as an extension out from the middle *dantian*. The *dai mai* and Gall Bladder, relating to transcendence and the return to oneness, have correspondences to the head and the upper *dantian*. The head shares aspects of both core and periphery—thus it is a meeting place of duality and unity, and the place where one connects to Heaven (oneness) while present at the level of humanity (duality). This also speaks to the above discussion of the *dai mai* and Gall Bladder relating to the return to oneness, moving from duality (legs and arms, earth and humanity) back to unity (the head, upper *dantian*, and heaven).

Table 3. *The Ying Qi Cycle and Evolutionary Unfoldment*

<i>Ying qi</i> cycle	Confluent points	Extraordinary vessel	Extraordinary <i>fu</i>	Vertical and horizontal associations
LU-LI	LU-7	<i>Ren mai</i>	Uterus	Lower <i>dantian/Jing</i>
SP-ST	SP-4	<i>Chong mai</i>	Vessels/ <i>mai</i>	Middle <i>dantian/Qi</i>
HE-SI	SI-3	<i>Du mai</i>	Brain	Upper <i>dantian/Shen</i>
KD-UB	UB-62, K-6	<i>Qiao mai</i>	Marrow	Legs and feet/Movement
PC-SJ	P-6, SJ-5	<i>Wei mai</i>	Bones	Arms and hands/ Integration
LIV-GB	GB-41	<i>Dai mai</i>	Gall Bladder	Head/Transcendence

Note. This table also foreshadows a forthcoming article that continues building on this theoretical model by pairing the extraordinary vessels and *fu* with the primary channels and *zangfu*.

Conclusion

One of the most integral aspects of life is the exchange between pre- and post-heaven and vertical and horizontal integration. It is along (and through the transcendence of) these aspects of duality/polarity that the evolution of consciousness may be said to occur. In this paper I have examined the way in which the extraordinary vessels and *fu* may have a relationship to the evolution of consciousness, as seen through the lens of the *ying qi* cycle. This cycle shows an intimate relationship between the extraordinary vessels and *fu* with vertical and horizontal integration, and thus with the process of transformation and the art of humanity. The evolution of consciousness often occurs through these processes of connecting above and below and the inside and the outside—vertical and horizontal integration—which allow for a fuller realization of self on a daily basis.

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Biography

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Extraordinary Chinese Medicine, and can be contacted at tomasrichardson@hotmail.com.

ⁱ “...the *qiao mai* follow the same pattern as the *du mai* and *ren mai*... They are just a development of the *du mai* and *ren mai*” (Larre and Rochat de la Vallée 1997, p204). For other perspectives and information on the master-couple pairings, see (Twicken 2006) and (Pirog 1996).

ⁱⁱ For more information on this interpretation of the functions of the *dai mai*, see (Richardson 2009b).

ⁱⁱⁱ Besides the spinal cord and Brain, the long bones of the legs have the greatest concentration of Marrow within the body. If the Marrow and *qiao mai* have a strong correspondence to the legs, as well as to nourishing the Brain (Sea of Marrow), perhaps they also relate to the connection between the feet and the Brain (macrocosmic Earth and Heaven). It is this connection between the Brain and the legs that allows each individual to walk around at the human level of reality.

^{iv} The *qiao mai* pertain relatively more to the legs as they are “walker” vessels and their confluent points are on the foot *taiyang* and foot *shaoyin* channels, while the *wei mai* may pertain more to the arms as they are the “linking” vessels, and their confluent points are on the hand *shaoyang* and hand *jueyin* channels. It is the hands and arms that allow us to truly connect and link to everything else around us.

^v It is perhaps for this reason, in part, that the *dai mai* is also one of the “nuclear” extraordinary vessels.

^{vi} Fullness in the middle/*guan* positions can also be associated with other imbalances, depending on the perspective and pulse system used—e.g. this may also relate to middle *jiao* issues or an imbalance between the Liver and Spleen, or even diaphragmatic involvement.

^{vii} In the *Ode of the Obstructed River* are discussed the ‘Eight Therapeutic Methods’ of using the confluent

points of the extraordinary meridians to treat specific areas and symptoms. Here *Zulinqi* GB-41 is indicated for disorders of the eyes, which may offer confirmation of the influence of the *dai mai* at the level of the upper *dantian* and head region (as cited in: Deadman 2005).

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