

A BRIEF DISCUSSION OF The Points of the Window of Heaven

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There is a group of ten points which have come to be known in Western acupuncture circles as 'Window of the Sky' points*, or perhaps more suitably 'Window of Heaven' points.

Although taught in certain acupuncture colleges, there is (to the knowledge of the authors) no authoritative written discussion of them in any English text. Equally, questioning of a number of eminent Chinese acupuncturists over the years has drawn a blank, indeed several have stated categorically that there is no such grouping, even when given the names of the points concerned. Clearly, if such a group of points does exist as an entity, it is little known within the classical Chinese tradition.

The points concerned are in fact referred to in Chapter 21 of the *Su Wen* (Spiritual Pivot) which lists a group of five (Tianfu LU-3, Renying ST-9, Futu L.I.-18, Tianyou SJ-16 and Tianzhu BL-10) in the following passage:

Headache due to rebellion of Yang, fullness of the chest with difficulty in breathing, choose Renying ST-9. Sudden loss of voice with obstructed Qi in the throat (literally 'fishbone Qi'), choose Futu L.I.-18 and bleed the root of the tongue. Sudden deafness with excess of Qi, the ears and the eyes are not clear, select Tianyou SJ-16. Sudden twitching, epilepsy and dizziness, with inability of the legs to support the body, select Tianzhu BL-10. Severe thirst, internal upsurge, Liver and Lung struggle against each other, blood pours from the mouth and nose, treat with Tianfu LU-3. These are the five regions of the Window of Heaven.

There is no further discussion of the significance of this grouping in this chapter, but *Zhou Zhi Cong*, in his commentary on this passage, stated:

The points and the orifices of the head and face are like the great windows of a high pavilion, by virtue of which Qi moves. When there is chaotic and rebellious Qi (*Jue Qi*) below, then the channels in the upper region do not move and there is lack of clarity of vision and hearing, sudden loss of speech, convulsions and dizziness. The Qi of speech of the three Yang originates in the lower and emanates in the upper. Therefore, to summarise, it is said these are the five regions of the great window".

The term *Jue Qi* that Zhou Zhi Cong uses can be translated as 'rebellious and chaotic Qi'. *Jue Qi* may be compli-

cated by disharmony of Yin and Yang, disturbance in the flow of Qi and blood, obstruction of turbid phlegm, obstruction and stagnation of food etc. It is said to arise suddenly at a time of change and transformation in the course of an illness, and can give rise to various new symptoms such as disturbance of the mental faculties as well as sudden fainting and four limbs *jue* cold (coldness of the fingers and toes). The Chapter 'On Yin and Yang' in the *Su Wen* says of this condition: "when *Jue Qi* rebels upwards, the vessels are full and there is floating of the spirit as if about to separate from the body". In many of its manifestations, *Jue Qi* resembles stirring of interior wind. Whether it is a concept which predates interior wind, or whether it is a different concept, is not clear.

Chapter 2 of the *Su Wen* includes the five Window of Heaven points listed above in a greater list of ten points, with the addition of Tiantu REN-22, Tianchuang SI-16, Tianrong SI-17, Fengfu DU-16 and Tianchi P-1. Later commentators have suggested that Tianrong SI-17 should in fact be Tianchong GB-9. This would be more logical since each of the six Yang channels would then be represented in the group of ten points. In this discussion, however, we have continued listing Tianrong SI-17 rather than Tianchong GB-9. This passage in the 'Spiritual Pivot' first discusses Tiantu REN-22, and then the six Yang channel points (Futu L.I.-18, Renying ST-9, Tianchuang SI-16, Tianrong SI-17, Tianyou SJ-16, Tianzhu BL-10) as a sequence of vertical lines spreading from the Ren Mai and ending with Fengfu DU-16 on the Du Mai, with Tianfu LU-3 and Tianchi P-1 as additional points. There is no reference to this group of ten points as Window of Heaven points and the passage concerned offers no explanation or clinical or diagnostic application. The evidence for all ten points to be classified as Window of Heaven points is therefore very unclear, but there are a few interesting observations that can be made.

Firstly, most of the point names include the character 'Tian', literally 'Heaven' or 'Sky', in their name (although it should be stressed that there are other acupuncture points, such as Tianquan P-2, Tianding L.I.-17, Tianzong SI-11 etc. not included in this list). It is interesting, though, that an alternative name for Renying ST-9 is Tianwuhui (literally 'Heaven's Five Meetings').

Secondly, as indicated above, all but two of the ten points are located around the neck - the junction of the head and the body.

Thirdly, there are strong hints of a discernible pattern in their indications, the following appearing with some

*[They are listed, for example, in Felix Mann's *Treatment of Disease by Acupuncture* although no further information is given].

frequency:

- i. goitre or Luoli (glandular disturbance) or throat disorders
- ii. coughing, wheezing or chest oppression from rebellious Lung Qi
- iii. vomiting from rebellious Stomach Qi
- iv. headache and dizziness
- v. heat, redness or swelling of the face or eyes
- vi. sudden onset of disorders
- vii. disorders of the sense organs.
- viii. in some cases mental and emotional disorders

When these observations are put together, we can suggest that the Window of Heaven points are indicated in the following situations:

1. When there is a major disharmony between the Qi of the body and the head, usually with Qi or blood rebelling upwards. If rebellious Qi affects the Lungs it gives rise to cough, wheezing or oppression of the chest. If rebellious Qi affects the Stomach there may be vomiting. If blood rebels upwards there may be coughing or vomiting of blood. If rebellious Qi gives rise to fullness and heat in the head there may be headache and dizziness, and heat, redness or swelling of the face, as well as disorders of the sense organs, especially the ears and eyes.

Thus, for example, Tianfu LU-3 is indicated for when Liver-Fire attacks the Lungs causing an upsurge of reckless hot bleeding from the mouth and nose, and rebellion of Lung Qi with wheezing and asthma. Renying ST-9 is indicated for wheezing, coughing and vomiting due to rebellion of Lung and Stomach Qi as well as red face, dizziness and headache. Tianzhu BL-10 is indicated for stirring up of Liver-Wind and Liver-Fire giving rise to dizziness, headache, stiff neck, spasms and red eyes in the upper body, and lower deficiency manifesting as inability of the legs to support the body etc. Fengfu DU-16 is indicated for stirring of interior Wind giving rise to headache, head wind, "all types of wind disease", stiff neck, nosebleed, dizziness and "the hundred diseases of the head".

2. The majority of these points are indicated for Luoli (glandular swelling) or goitre as well as swelling, pain and stagnation in the throat region. Whilst this may seem self-evident, as most are located in the neck region, it is worth noting that Tianfu LU-3 and Tianchi P-1 which are located on either the chest or the arm (as well as Tianchong GB-9 on the head), also have these indications. Since stagnation of Qi in the neck region is a major part of the pathogenesis of Luoli or goitre, once again these points demonstrate an ability to harmonise the flow of Qi in this pivotal area between the head and body.

3. Many of these points are indicated for sudden disorders, e.g. sudden turmoil disorder for Renying ST-9, sudden loss of voice for Futu L.I.-18, sudden aphasia for Tianchuang SI-16, sudden deafness for Tianyou SJ-16, sudden dyspnoea and sudden loss of voice for Tiantu REN-22, sudden twitching, epilepsy and dizziness, with inability of the legs to support the body, for Tianzhu BL-10, and "all wind diseases" (implying sudden onset) for Fengfu DU-16. This reflects their ability to treat the sudden chaos that arises during *Jue Qi* type disorders. One of the manifestations of *Jue Qi* is sudden acute pain, and this may help to explain the important modern use of

Renying ST-9 for acute lumbar sprain, as well as sprain and severe pain in any region of the body. The ability of Renying ST-9 to reorder rebellion and upsurge of Qi also explains its strong action in reducing hypertension.

4. Disturbance of mental faculties is one of the manifestations of *Jue Qi*. Tianzhu BL-10, Tianchuang SI-16, and Tianfu LU-3 are indicated respectively for 'seeing ghosts', 'manic ghost talk', and 'floating corpse ghost talk'. These indications, referring to some form of possession (and probably nowadays understood as schizophrenic type disorders) again reveal a state of chaos and rebellion of the Qi.

Window of Heaven Points Effect on goitre, Luoli (glandular disturbance) or throat disorders	
Renying ST-9	Goitre, Luoli, swollen and painful throat, difficulty in swallowing.
Futu L.I.-18	Goitre, Luoli, swelling and pain of the throat, rattling sound in the throat, difficulty in swallowing.
Tianyou SJ-16	Goitre, throat Bi.
Tianzhu BL-10	Swelling of the throat.
Tianfu LU-3	Goitre, swelling of the throat.
Tiantu REN-22	Goitre, ulceration of the throat which prevents eating, swelling of the throat, cold sensation of the throat, dry throat, throat Bii.
Tianchuang SI-16	Goitre, throat pain.
Tianrong SI-17	Goitre, Luoli, throat Bi, obstruction of the throat.
Tianchi P-1	Luoli of the neck.
Fengfu DU-16	Swelling and pain of the throat.

Window of Heaven Points Effect on cough or wheezing from rebellious Lung Qi or vomiting from rebellious Stomach Qi	
Renying ST-9	Fullness of the chest, shortness of breath, wheezing, asthma, sudden turmoil disorder, vomiting.
Futu L.I.-18	Cough, wheezing, asthma, coughing with much saliva.
Tianfu LU-3	Wheezing, dyspnoea, coughing, asthma, vomiting blood.
Tiantu REN-22	Fullness of the chest, rebellious Qi with cough, asthma, inability to breathe, abscess of the Lung with purulent bloody coughing, vomiting.
Tianrong SI-17	Chest fullness with difficulty in breathing, wheezing, coughing, chest pain, vomiting and spitting of foam.
Tianchi P-1	Cough with copious phlegm, shortness of breath, wheezing, stuffy chest, coughing.
Fengfu DU-16	Ceaseless vomiting.

Window of Heaven Points Effect on headache and dizziness and heat, redness or swelling of the face or eyes	
Renying ST-9	Headache, dizziness, red face.
Tianyou SJ-16	Dizziness, headache, swollen face.
Tianzhu BL-10	Dizziness, redness of the eyes.
Tianfu LU-3	Dizziness.
Tiantu REN-22	Heat sensation of the skin of the face, red face.
Tianchuang SI-16	Headache, swelling and pain of the cheek, heat sensation of the skin of the face.
Tianrong SI-17	Swelling of the cheek.
Tianchi P-1	Headache.
Fengfu DU-16	Headache, head wind, dizziness, the hundred diseases of the head.

Window of Heaven Points Effect on headache and dizziness and heat, redness or swelling of the face or eyes	
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Tianyou SJ-16	Dizziness, headache, swollen face.
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Tianfu LU-3	Dizziness.
Tiantu REN-22	Heat sensation of the skin of the face, red face.
Tianchuang SI-16	Headache, swelling and pain of the cheek, heat sensation of the skin of the face.
Tianrong SI-17	Swelling of the cheek.
Tianchi P-1	Headache.
Fengfu DU-16	Headache, head wind, dizziness, the hundred diseases of the head.

Window of Heaven Points Effect on disorders of the sense organs.	
Renying ST-9	Blurred vision.
Tianyou SJ-16	Impaired hearing, blurred vision, inability to open the eyes, lacrimation, nosebleed, loss of smell.
Tianzhu BL-10	Bursting eye pain, blurred vision, lacrimation, difficulty in speaking, nasal congestion, loss of sense of smell.
Tianfu LU-3	Nosebleed, unclear vision of distant objects.
Tianchuang SI-16	Deafness, tinnitus, ear pain.
Tianrong SI-17	Tinnitus and deafness.
Fengfu DU-16	Flaccid tongue with inability to speak, blurred vision, nosebleed.

Window of Heaven Points Effect on sudden onset of disorders	
Renying ST-9	Sudden turmoil disorder.
Futu L.I.-18	Sudden loss of voice.
Tianyou SJ-16	Sudden deafness.
Tianzhu BL-10	Epilepsy.
Tiantu REN-22	Sudden dyspnoea.
Tianchuang SI-16	Sudden aphasia
Fengfu DU-16	Sudden inability to speak

This article forms a chapter of the forthcoming textbook on the acupuncture points 'A Manual of Acupuncture'.