Six Channels Identification

六经辨证
I. Introduction
Zhang, Zhongjing 张仲景

- Eastern Han dynasty (146 – 210 AD)
- He established therapeutic principles of pattern identification and treatment, and summed up the medicinal experience up until that time, making a great contribution to the development of TCM, been called “medicine sage”
- Writing a masterpiece Shang Han Za Bing Lun (傷寒雜病論)
Completed between 200 – 210 AD, lost during the war.

Jin Dynasty Wang Shu He (265 – 316) put a book together named Shan Han Lun (傷寒論) discourse on how to treat epidemic infectious diseases causing fevers prevalent during his era. Which include 22 chapter, 397 treatment strategies, and 113 herbal formulas

Established six channels pattern identification.
Song Dynasty (800 years after Zhang Zhongjing), rest of the book was been found and published, call *Jinkui Yaolue* 金櫃要略 (Essential Prescriptions of the Golden Cabinet).

*Golden Cabinet* includes 25 chapter, 262 herbal formulas, discuss treatment for various kind miscellaneous diseases which includes internal disease, external disease, and women’s disease, etc.
Definition

- Exogenous Diseases
- Exogenous Febrile Diseases
- Endogenous Miscellaneous Diseases
- Shan Han Bing
Classification of Six Channels

- Channel, level, or stage
- Three Yang Channels
  - Taiyang, yangming, Shaoyang
  - Usually pathological changes in six fu organs
- Three Yin Channels
  - Taiyin, Shaoyin, Jueyin
  - Usually pathological changes in five zang organs
II. Six Pattern Identification
1. Pattern Identification for Taiyang Disease

- Taiyang disease
  - Early stage of the febrile disease

- Physiopathology of Taiyang
  - Great yang, exuberant of yang qi
  - Govern and contain ying/wei system, dominate body surface, sever as shield
  - Usually is the first channel attacked by the exopathogens
Classification of Taiyang pattern

- Taiyang pattern
  - Taiyang channel pattern
    - Wind attack taiyang pattern
    - Wind cold attack taiyang pattern
  - Taiyang Fu (organ) pattern
    - Taiyang water retention pattern
    - Taiyang blood retention pattern
Definition: A pattern results from exopathogenic wind cold attack the body surface, lead vital qi battle with exopathogenic factors, cause ying (nutritive) and wei (defensive) system disharmony. It is the initial stage of the exogenous diseases.
Etiology and pathogenesis

Exopathogenic wind cold attack

- Wei Qi failure warm
- Wei qi battle with exopathogens
- Pathogens block channels obstruct qi
- Lung qi failed to descend/dispense
- Defense qi rise up against pathogens

- Aversion to wind or cold
- Acute High fever
- Body ache, headache
  - cough
  - nasal congestion
  - nasal discharge
- Floating pulse
a. Taiyang wind attack (strike) pattern

- **Symptoms:** aversion to wind, fever, sweating, headache, neck and back stiffness, a superficial and moderate pulse.

- **Key Points:** aversion to wind, fever, sweating, a superficial and moderate pulse

- **Treatment strategies:** promote sweating and harmonize ying and wei system.

- **Herbal formula:** Gui Zhi Tang (Cinnamon Twig Decoction)
Symptoms: aversion to cold, fever, no sweating, headache, body ache, joints pain, a superficial and tight pulse

Key points: chills and fever, no sweating, a superficial and tight pulse

Treatment strategies: promote sweating and relieves exterior, facility lung qi and calm panting

Herbal Formula: Ma Huang Tang (Ephedra Decoction)
# Taiyang Channel Patterns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptoms</th>
<th>Wind attack pattern</th>
<th>Wind cold pattern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>chills and fever, running nose, cough, headache, superficial pulse</td>
<td>No sweating, aversion to cold, bodyache,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweating, aversion to wind</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulse</td>
<td>Superficial, moderate</td>
<td>Superficial, tight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pathogenesis</td>
<td>Wind attack with exterior deficiency</td>
<td>Wind cold attack with exterior excess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment strategies</td>
<td>Harmonize ying/wei, relieve exterior</td>
<td>Diaphoretics to relieve exterior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formula</td>
<td>Gui Zhi Tang</td>
<td>Ma Huang Tang</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Definition: When taiyang channel pattern are not resolve, the pathogenic factor(s) may following its channel penetrate into taiyang fu organ, result the bladder not being performed its transform qi’s function, causing water retention or blood accumulation.
a. Taiyang water retention Pattern

- **Symptoms:** Chills and fever, sweating, edema, difficult urination, distention and fullness of the lower abdomen. In severe case there are irritability, thirst and desire drink water, but vomiting after drink, a superficial pulse may with rapid

- **Key points:** chills and fever, difficult urination, superficial pulse
Pathogenesis: Pathogenic heat transmit into bladder through the channel, lead bladder qi transforming function disorder

Treatment strategies: Relieve exterior, promote the Bladder qi transformation, and promote urination

Herbal Formula: Wu Ling San (Poria Five Power)
b. Taiyang blood retention pattern

- **Symptoms:** Hardness and fullness in the lower abdomen, normal urination, thirst, restlessness, irritability or manic behavior, nigh fever, blood in urine or tar like stool, a purplish tongue, or a bluish-black spots on the tongue, a deep and choppy pulse.

- **Key Points:** Normal urination, abnormal pain, tar like stool, a deep or deep and choppy pulse
Pathogenesis: Pathogenic heat transmit into bladder and SI and injury blood level, lead blood stagnation

Treatment strategies: Breaks up blood stasis and clears heat

Herbal Formula: Tao He Cheng Qi Tang (Prunus Order the Qi Decoction)
## Taiyang Fu (organ) Patterns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptoms</th>
<th>Water retention pattern</th>
<th>Blood retention pattern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Difficult urination, edema</td>
<td>Normal urination, abdominal pain, distention, tar like stool</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pulse</th>
<th>Superficial, may with rapid</th>
<th>Deep, or deep and knotted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pathogenesis</th>
<th>Water retention pattern</th>
<th>Blood retention pattern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Excess heat in bladder qi level, cause bladder dysfunction</td>
<td>Excess heat in bladder blood level, cause blood stagnation and retention</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treatment strategies</th>
<th>Water retention pattern</th>
<th>Blood retention pattern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Release exterior, promote urination</td>
<td>Invigorate blood, removes blood stasis, clears heat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formula</th>
<th>Water retention pattern</th>
<th>Blood retention pattern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wu Ling San</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tao He Cheng Qi Tang</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Yangming Channel

- Yangming disease
- Physiopathology of yangming
  - Bright yang, exuberant of yang qi
  - Stomach and Large Intestine, Sea of the qi and blood, strong ability to against pathogens
  - Transform pathogens into heat and dryness
  - Excess and heat pattern
Classification of Yangming Pattern

- Yangming Pattern
  - Yangming Channel Pattern
  - Yangming Organ Pattern
(1) Yangming Channels Pattern

- **Definition:** a pattern refers to excessive pathogenic heat accumulates in the yangming channel, and spread to entire body, manifested with interior excess heat syndrome.

- **Clinical manifestation:** high fever, perfuse sweating, server thirst and desire drink cold water, or irritability, restlessness or even coma, harsh breathing, red face, a dry yellow tongue coating, and a surging and large pulse.
Pathogenesis

Yangming Channel Pattern

Antipathogenic qi strongly against pathogens → High fever

Excess heat

- Evaporate body fluids → Perfuse sweating
- Consumes body fluids → Severe thirst
- Dilates blood vessels and accelerates qi and blood → Large pulse
Key points: high fever, severe thirst, profuse sweating, large pulse (4 big symptoms)

Treatment Strategies: clears heat purging fire

Herbal Formula: Bai Hu Tang (White Tiger Decoction)
Definition: a pattern refers to the syndrome with retention of dry feces in the intestines due to mixture of excessive pathogenic heat with waste materials in the intestines, manifest with high fever, abdominal pain and severe constipation.

Clinical manifestation: high fever which peaked at 3:00 pm (tidal fever), abdominal pain and distention which resistant to touch or press, severe constipation, or in coma, delirium, manic, irritable and insomnia. A thick dry yellow coating, or dark brown coating with thorns, and a deep and forceful pulse.
Pathogenesis

- Heat dries intestine track → Constipation
- Dry feces blocks qi → Bloat, distention and fullness
- Yangming qi excess around at 3:00 pm → Tidal fever
- Heat steam up the turbid from Stomach
- Thick yellow coating
- Dry feces obstructed, qi failed push outward
- Deep and forceful pulse
Key Points
- Constipation, high tidal fever, abdominal fullness, bloating, deep and forceful pulse

Treatment Strategies
- Purgatives, and drain heat

Herbal Formula
- Da Cheng Qi Tang
- Xiao Cheng Qi Tang
- Tiao Wei Cheng Qi Tang
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptoms</th>
<th><strong>Yangming channel pattern</strong></th>
<th><strong>Yangming fu-organ pattern</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Common</td>
<td>High fever, thirst, sweating, irritable, restlessness or even coma, delirium. Red tongue, dry yellow coating and a forceful and rapid pulse.</td>
<td>Tidal high fever, worst in 3:00 to 5:00 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fever</td>
<td>Persistent high fever</td>
<td>Sweating on hand and feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweating</td>
<td>Entire body profuse sweating</td>
<td>Mild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thirst</td>
<td>Sever thirst</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Surging, forceful and rapid</td>
<td>Deep and forceful, or slippery and rapid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pulse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abdomen</td>
<td>No pain, soft</td>
<td>Fullness, distention, hardness and pain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowl movement</td>
<td>Normal</td>
<td>Sever constipation, dry stool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tongue</td>
<td>Red tongue, yellow and dry coating</td>
<td>Red tongue, thick dry brown or dark brown with thorns coating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulse</td>
<td>Large, surging, forceful and rapid</td>
<td>Deep, forceful and rapid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pathogenesis</td>
<td>Excessive pathogenic heat attack yangming channel and spread entire body</td>
<td>Excessive heat and dry feces bound inside intestinal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Shaoyang Channel

- Concept of Shaoyang
- Physiopathology of Shaoyang
  - Little Yang, “new born Yang”
  - Hand Shaoyang Sanjiao, foot Shaoyang gallbladder
  - Between exterior and interior
  - Pathogens transmit from Taiyang or Yangming channel, or directly attack
Shaoyang Pattern

**Definition:** Shaoyang pattern occurs when the exopathogens is not expel and the anitpathogenic qi is insufficient. The antipathogenic qi and pathogens fight each other between the exterior and the interior, disruption the gallbladder’s dispersing function.

**Clinical manifestation:** alternate fever and chill, distress and distention in chest and hypochondria regions, poor appetite, reluctant to speak, irritable and nausea, bitter taste in the mouth, dry throat, dizziness or blurry vision. A wiry pulse.
Key point: Alternative chills and fever, poor appetite, chest and hypochondria fullness and distention, wiry pulse.

Treatment Strategies
- Harmonize Shaoyang

Herbal Formula
- Xiao Chai Hu Tang
- Da Chai Hu Tang
4. Taiyin Channel

- Taiyin disease
  - Early stage of the three yin channel, mild. characterized with interior deficiency cold

- Physiopathology of Taiyin
  - Great yin, excess yin
  - Hand Taiyin Lung, foot Taiyin Spleen
  - The most outside yin channel
  - Pathogens directly attack, or transmit from three yang channels
Taiyin Pattern

**Definition:** a pattern is characterized by a preexisting spleen qi deficiency which further impairs the transformation and transportation process, and leads to the retention of cold damp.

**Clinical manifestations:** fullness of the abdomen, vomiting, poor appetite, loose stools, abdominal pain relieved by warmth and pressure, cold limbs, no desire to drink fluids, pale tongue with white coating, slow, deep and weak pulse.
Taiyin disease pattern

- Failed to transport and transform
  - Impair qi transformation, dampness accumulate
  - Failed to warm

- Poor appetite, bloating, nausea, vomit, loose stool
- No desire to drink, white thick coating
- Cold limbs, abdominal pain relieve by warmth

Pathogenesis
Key Points: abdominal pain and distention, loose stool, without thirst.

Treatment strategies: Warm and tonify middle jiao

Herbal Formula: Li Zhong Tang (Regulating Center Decoction)
5. Shaoyin Channel

- Concept of Shao yin
  - Later stage, critical, yin and yang failure, locate at Heart and Kidney, manifestation thready and faint pulse, and lethargy

- Physiopathology of Shaoyin
  - Beginning of yin, between Taiyin and Jueyin, so been called “pivot”, it has function to pivot yin qi
  - Pathogens directly invade Shaoyin, or other channel disease transmuting
  - Depends on the condition, appears cold or heat pattern
(1) Shaoyin cold pattern

- **Definition:** a pattern characterized by an insufficiency of heart and kidney yang, manifested with deficiency cold syndrome.

- **Clinical manifestation:** somnolence, intolerance of cold (畏寒), cold limbs, lassitude, listlessness, chronic loose stool, or early morning diarrhea, no desire to drink fluids, a pale tongue, and deep slow and faint pulse.
Key points: intolerance of cold, loose stool, cold extremities, deep and faint pulse

Treatment strategies: Strengthen the yang and repress the yin

Herbal Formula:
- Si Ni Tang (Four Rebellious Decoction)
- Fu Zi Tang (Aconite Decoction): for yang deficiency with pain
- Zhen Wu Tang (True Warrior Decoction) for Yang deficiency with water retention
Definition: a pattern characterized by an insufficiency of heart and kidney yin, manifest with deficiency heat syndrome.

Clinical manifestations: irritability, insomnia, feverish sensation in five center areas, night sweating, dry mouth and throat, red tongue tip, or dark red or purple tongue with little coating, a thin and rapid pulse
Key Points: irritability, insomnia, red tongue with little coating, a thready and rapid pulse

Treatment strategies: Nourishes yin and clears the heat

Herbal Formula: Huang Lian A Jiao Tang (Coptis Colla Asini Decociton)
6. Jueyin Channel

- **Jueyin Disease**
  - Final stage, mixture heat and cold

- **Physiopathology of Jueyin**
  - Terminal yin, yin end where is yang start grown.
  - Hand Jueyin Pericardium, foot Jueyin Liver
  - Pathogens directly attack, or transmit from Shaoyin channel, or from Shaoyang channel when shaoyang disease delay or receive improper treatment
Definition: a pattern due to yin and yang disharmony, heat and cold staggered, manifested with heat above with cold below

Clinical manifestation: Fullness in the upper abdomen or a sensation of gas rumbling upward (running piglet qi), thirst, feeling of air rushing up to the chest, burning and painful sensation in chest area (heartburning), hunger but no desire to eat, cold limbs, loose stool, vomiting, or vomiting with round worms after eat.
- **Key points:** thirst, hunger, no desire to eat, or vomiting after eat, loose stool, cold limbs.
- **Treatment strategies:** harmonize, clears heat from above, warms cold below, expels worms
- **Herbal Formula:** Wu Mei Wan (Mume Pill)
III. Rules for Transmission of the six channel patterns
1. Transmission along the channels (传经)

- It refers to the rules by which pathogens give rise to different patterns by transmitting along different channels. In the beginning, pathogens attack the exterior along a particular channel for which the pattern is named. As the invading pathogens gradually reach the interior for the body, the pathogens transfer to the different channel leading to another pattern which is named for this different channel.
Favorable transmission: It means that the invading pathogens are transmitted along the six channels in the sequence Taiyang → Yangming → Shaoyang → Taiyin → Shaoyin → Jueyin.

Unfavorable transmission refers to a progression where pathogens skip from one channel to another, for instance taiyang – taiyin, or yangming – shaoyin. It usually related with patient constitution, or due to improper treatment.
2. Combination (合病)

- Refers to the pathogenic condition in which disorders present in a simultaneous two or three channel combination. It means that two or three different channel patterns manifest at the same time.

- For instance, at the beginning of an exogenous pathogen based disease, the patient may manifest taiyang channel pattern and shaoyang channel pattern in combination, or shaoyang channel pattern and yang ming fu pattern is combination.
Refers to the pathogenic condition in which one channel pattern initially is secondary to another one which has not improved, until, finally, both channel patterns manifest at the same time.

For instance, a taiyang channel pattern may cause a yangming channel pattern, if a taiyang channel pattern still exists when a yangming channel pattern starts, the patient may manifest exterior cold signs and the “four big” at the same time.
4. Directly attack (直中)

- Refers to a pathogenic condition in which one or two, or all three yin channels are attacked directly by the pathogenic factors without transmission via the three yang channels. The patient presents yin channel patterns from the beginning of the disorder.

- This condition usually is determined by the patient’s constitution,