

兰江赋  
Ode of the Orchid River<sup>1</sup>

Translated by Allen Tsaur and Johan Hausen

担截之中数几何？有担有截起沉痾。  
我今咏此兰江赋，何用三车五辐歌。  
先将八法为定例，流注之中分次第。

Amidst 'Support' and 'Severance',<sup>2</sup> how many could be counted?  
With 'Support' and 'Severance,' one [can] cut off and uproot grave diseases.  
As I, today, sing this 'Ode of the Orchid River,  
where is the need for the Three Carts and Five Spokes Song?<sup>3</sup>  
At first, establish the eight-fold methods<sup>4</sup> as rules of practice,  
then, amidst Ebbing and Flowing,<sup>5</sup> arrange [the opening points] into sequence.

胸中之病内关担，脐下公孙用法拦。  
头部须还寻列缺，痰涎壅塞及咽干。

For ailments within the chest, Support Nei Guan,<sup>6</sup>  
below the navel, utilizes the method to obstruct<sup>7</sup> Gong Sun.<sup>8</sup>  
For the head region, one must yet seek for Lie Que,<sup>9</sup>  
as well as phlegm and spittle congestion and dry throat.

噤口咽风针照海，三棱出血刻时安。  
伤寒在表并头痛，外关泻动自然安。

For inability to speak and throat-wind, needle Zhao Hai,<sup>10</sup>  
and blood-let with a three-edged needle, within in a short amount of time, one is at peace.  
For superficial Cold Damage<sup>11</sup> and headache,  
once Wai Guan<sup>12</sup> is drained and activated, it will calm by itself.

眼目之症诸疾苦，更须临泣用针担。  
后溪专治督脉病，癫狂此穴治还轻。

For symptoms of the eyes as well as various diseases and discomfort,  
it is further necessary to Support Lin Qi<sup>13</sup> by needling.  
Hou Xi<sup>14</sup> is specialized on ailments of the Governing Vessel,<sup>15</sup>  
for mania, this point treats it and returns one to ease.

申脉能除寒与热，头风偏正及心惊。  
耳鸣鼻衄胸中满，好把金针此穴寻。  
Shen Mai<sup>16</sup> is capable of removing cold and heat,  
head-wind, deviation, as well as fearfulness,  
ear ringing, nosebleeds, fullness of the chest,  
grasp well a Golden Needle and seek this point.

但遇痒麻虚即补，如逢疼痛泻而迎。  
更有伤寒真妙诀，三阴须要刺阳经。

But once encountering itchiness, numbness, and deficiency, one should promptly tonify,  
just as when encountering pain, one drains by [needling] against the flow.  
Even more truly ingenious are the secrets of Cold Damage,  
for the Three Yin [diseases], one must necessarily prick the Yang channels.

无汗更将合谷补，复溜穴泻好施针。  
倘若汗多流不绝，合谷收补效如神。

Without sweating,<sup>17</sup> one must even more tonify He Gu,<sup>18</sup>  
as well as draining Fu Liu<sup>19</sup> point, it is apt to implement needles.  
If sweat is copious and flowing incessantly,  
contract [the sweat] by tonifying He Gu,<sup>20</sup> the effect as though [being caused] by the Spirits.

四日太阴宜细辨，公孙照海一同行。  
再用内关施绝法，七日期门妙用针。

In four days,<sup>21</sup> it is suitable to meticulously differentiate Tai Yin,  
Gong Sun and Zhao Hai are to be coursed simultaneously.  
Further employ Nei Guan to implement the Severance Method.  
In seven days,<sup>22</sup> it is brilliant to employ needles on Qi Men.<sup>23</sup>

但治伤寒皆用泻，要知素问坦然明。  
流注之中分造化，常将水火土金平。

Nevertheless, whenever treating Cold Damage, they all employ draining,  
one must understand the Simple Questions<sup>24</sup> unperturbed and clearly.  
Amidst Ebbing and Flowing, arrange [the opening points] into creative transformations,<sup>25</sup>  
frequently balance Water, Fire, Earth and Metal.<sup>26</sup>

水素亏兮宜补肺，水之泛滥土能平。  
春夏井荣刺宜浅，秋冬经合更宜深。

For consistent lack of Water, it is appropriate to tonify the Lungs,  
Once Water is overflowing, Earth can balance it.  
In spring and summer, it is suitable to shallowly prick Well and Brook [points],  
In fall and autumn, it is even more apt to go deeply into River and Sea [points].

天地四时同此类，三才常用记心胸。  
天地人部次第入，仍调各部一般匀。

Heaven and Earth, and the four seasons have these types in common,  
the Three Powers<sup>27</sup> are frequently employed and  
[should be] memorized within Heart-Mind and chest.  
The positions of Heaven, Earth and Humanity enter in sequential order,<sup>28</sup>  
yet regulate each position to be evenly distributed.

夫弱妇强亦有克，妇弱夫强亦有刑。  
皆在本经担与截，泻南补北亦须明。

When the husband is weak and the wife is strong, there is also restraining.  
When the wife is weak and the husband is strong, there is also tormenting.<sup>29</sup>  
They all are Support and Severance of the original channels,  
Draining the south and tonifying the north must also be clarified.<sup>30</sup>

经络明时知造化，不得师传枉费心。  
不遇至人应莫度，天宝岂可付非人。

Once the meridians and channels are illuminated, one knows the creative transformations,<sup>31</sup>  
Without obtaining the masters' transmissions, the Heart-Mind's [effort] is wasted in vain.  
Without encountering a virtuous person, one ought not to deliver<sup>32</sup> them.  
How could the Heavenly treasures be handed over to un-rightful people?

按定气血病人呼，撞搓数十把针扶。  
战提摇起向上使，气自流行病自无。

After pressing and settling the Qi and Blood, [ask] the patient to exhale,  
after knocking and rubbing dozens of times, straighten up the needle.  
By trembling, lifting, swaying, and raising, send [Qi] upwards,  
When Qi flows and courses by itself, the ailment will vanish by itself.

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<sup>1</sup> This ode appears in the *Great Compendium of Acupuncture and Moxibustion* [zhen jiu da cheng 针灸大成] (1601) by Yang Ji Zhou [杨继洲].

<sup>2</sup> The terms Support and Severance appear in 'Ma Dan Yang's Twelve Star Song on Curing Miscellaneous Diseases' [ma dan yang shi er tian xing zhi za bing ge 马丹阳十二星治杂病歌]. There are two viewpoints as towards their meanings, the former believes Support [dan 担] to be tonification, and Severance [jie 截] to be draining and dispersion, the latter interpretation is that Support stands for bilateral needling, and Severance for hemilateral needling.

<sup>3</sup> No original source for this song could be found.

<sup>4</sup> The Eight-Fold Methods is a reference to the 'Divine Turtle's Eightfold Method' [ling gui ba fa 灵龟八法].

<sup>5</sup> The term Ebbing and Flowing alludes to an acupuncture method called Zi Wu Liu Zhu [子午流注], which utilizes the Ten Heavenly Stems [tian gan 天干] and Twelve Earthly Branches [di zhi 地支] to calculate open points according to designated times.

<sup>6</sup> PC-6.

<sup>7</sup> Obstructing [lan 拦] is synonymous with Severance [jie 截], i.e. to drain or needle hemilaterally.

<sup>8</sup> SP-4.

<sup>9</sup> LU-7.

<sup>10</sup> KD-6.

<sup>11</sup> The theories of Cold-damage disease are in length discussed in *Discussions on Cold Damage* [shang han lun 伤寒论] by Zhang Zhong Jing [张仲景].

<sup>12</sup> SJ-5.

<sup>13</sup> GB-41.

<sup>14</sup> SI-3.

<sup>15</sup> In Chinese, 督脉 [du mai].

<sup>16</sup> BL-62.

<sup>17</sup> In herbology, this corresponds with Ma Huang Tang [麻黄汤] pattern with evil excess in the exterior.

<sup>18</sup> LI-4.

<sup>19</sup> KD-7.

<sup>20</sup> The tonification of Defensive Qi [wei qi 卫气] through He Gu point is to close the pores for Gui Zhi Tang [桂枝汤] pattern, which has exterior deficiency rather than exterior excess.

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<sup>21</sup>Four days appears in a sentence from the Discussions on Cold Damage [shang han lun 伤寒论]:

尺寸俱沉細者，太陰受病也，當四五日發。

For those, whose Chi and Cun [pulse positions] are both deep and thin, the Tai Yin has contracted the disease, which should manifest after 4-5 days [of initial sickness].

<sup>22</sup>This sentence also comes from the same source:

尺寸俱微緩者，厥陰受病也，當六七日發。

For those, whose Chi and Cun [pulse positions] are both faint and moderate, Jue Yin has contracted the disease, which should manifest after 6-7 days [of initial sickness].

<sup>23</sup> LIV-14.

<sup>24</sup> 'Simple Questions' [su wen 素问] is one half of *the Yellow Emperor's Classic on Internal Medicine* [huang di nei jing 黄帝内经].

<sup>25</sup> Creative Transformations [zao hua 造化] draw upon a sequence of the opening points whose channels cycles in the Generative Cycle [xiang sheng 相生].

Furthermore the opening point tends to go in the sequence of Well [jing 井], Brook [ying 荣], Transport [shu 输], River [jing 经] and Unification [he 合].

<sup>26</sup> These four are representative of all Five Phases [wu xing 五行].

<sup>27</sup> The Three Powers [san cai 三才] are Heaven Earth and Humanity.

<sup>28</sup> The sequential order are the Three Positions and Nine Indicators [san bu jiu hou 三部九候], which are for Heaven the pulse on jaw, the pulse in front of ear, and pulse on the head corner, for humanity the radial wrist pulse, the ulna vein pulse, and the pulse on Yang Xi [阳溪] (LI-5), and for Earth the pulse found on Tai Chong [太冲] (LIV-3), Chong Yang [冲阳] (ST-42) and Tai Xi [太溪] (KD-3).

<sup>29</sup> An alternative for Wiseman's Torment [xing 刑] would be Punishment

<sup>30</sup> This statement comes from *Classic of Difficulties* [nan jing 难经] 'Question 75'.

<sup>31</sup> Creative transformations [zao hua 造化] in this instance refers to one's understanding of nature's creation.

<sup>32</sup>To deliver [du 度] is a very Buddhist term. In its original connotation [du 渡] it literally depicted to ferry someone across the ocean of samsara, or rebirth, to the shore of nirvana, such as in:

法渡有缘。

The dharma ferries across those who are predestined to.

As the very act of offering Buddha's instructions and teaching brings one closer towards enlightenment, the term took on the meaning of preaching or instructing.