

**DR SHEN'S  
SYSTEMS THEORY**

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(NCCAOM)

# Influence

- Dr. John HF Shen
- Dr. Leon I Hammer

# origins

- Dr. John HF Shen formulated the Systems Theory based upon many years and thousands of miles of global experience. In one sense, in our own globally-connected world, his work provides an example of cultural transmission and preservation coupled with a uniquely synthetic approach to solving problems.
- The model was gradually developed due to clinical necessity, wherein patients complained of symptoms with no familiar patterns via pulse, tongue, etc. Often the symptoms were vague, frequently changing and presenting with no biomedically defined diseases.
- Dr Shen theorized these as disturbances in entire *organ systems* rather than any one or combination of singular organs.
- He categorized four major *systems* — *circulatory*, *digestive*, *nervous*, and *organ*. From superficial to deep, these were analogous to the layers as detailed in the Shang Han Lun as described by Zhang Zhong-Jing, ie tai yang (*nervous system*), shao yang (*circulatory system*), yang ming (*digestive system*), and tai yin, shao yin and jue yin (*organ system*).

# TAI YANG NERVOUS SYSTEM

The *nervous system* in one respect is conceived as relating to tai yang and wei qi.

The integrity of the *nervous system* is the primary concern in the development of psychological disorders;

- if vulnerable stress will manifest as a psychological disorder, but
- if in fact the stress will likely result in physical symptoms (being mindful that integrity of these energies can be overcome by intensity or chronicity).

# Vulnerability

- In terms of vulnerability to stress, following the Systems Model, stress will have an effect on the organism from the most superficial first, to the deepest last.
- In other words, if there is equal integrity of all the systems and the *nervous system* is intact there will be no psychological problems but the nervous innervations of the *circulatory*, *digestive* and *organ system* will be affected in that order.
- Much like the model detailed by Zhang Zhong Jing, stress will bypass the intact systems and directly strike the weakest system. Within that affected *system* the stress will first affect the outer most layers and move deeper; i.e., should stress bypass both the *nervous* and the *circulatory systems* and strike the *digestive system*, its nervous innervations will be affected first, then the circulatory aspect of the *digestive system* and finally the organ itself.

# Vulnerability cont'd

- Systems theory helps explain why people will respond differently to the same conditions. Under extreme stress there are a number of presentations:
  1. those suffering emotional breakdowns have vulnerable *nervous systems*
  2. those who faint have weak *circulatory systems*
  3. those who get diarrhea/vomiting, weak *digestive systems* and
  4. those that die suddenly from heart attack have constitutionally weak *organ systems*.

# Nervous System

- The *nervous system*, while reflecting tai yang energies, draws on the energy of kidney essence that provides the marrow or substance of the *nervous system* and mental energy arising from the five tastes of the spleen provided to the heart. Thus, one can say that tai yang nervous system reflects the tai yang/shao yin confluence.
- The Kidneys provide the material foundation (jing) of brain activity and heart energy the more ephemeral activities of the mind and spirit (shen). While Kidney yang fires the *nervous system* (*Du mai as source of all yang qi, which wei qi is a part*), liver blood and yin nourish the peripheral *nervous system* and the energy of metal provides its structure.
- Due to the Kidneys relationship to the jing, constitutional disorders are rooted in this system.
- There are two types of constitutional defects:
  1. *nervous system* weak and
  2. *nervous system* tense. (*nervous system* tense may also develop from life experience)

# Nervous System Weak

- The nervous system weak presentation often begins early in life and continues through adulthood.

Complaints often include

1. fatigue,
2. difficulty thinking clearly/concentrating, though they're often very creative and bright.
3. vague pains that shift areas and may involve all organ systems,
4. easily frightened
5. palpitations; they make their way through life to some extent as shadows.
6. shyness,
7. emotionally vulnerable to peers,
8. often victimized,
9. easily disturbed and unstable from childhood,
10. lifelong history of neurasthenia; Kidney/Heart qi/yang/jing ↓

# Nervous System Weak

1. Looking Diagnosis: Often these patients present with:

pale face, blue green around the chin and mouth, at extra point TaiYang there is often a single line of varying depth with a relatively dull color, skin on the entire body may be thin and translucent.

2. Pulse: According to Dr Shen the pulse goes through a series of stages.

Early: pulse is a little floating since the *nervous system* is on top. The rate may be 88-120 with a superficial vibration over the entire pulse and frequently the proximal positions are weaker than the others. This is related to kidney essence as a critical factor in the development of the *nervous system* and as a measure of constitutional weakness, especially in a younger person.

Mid: over time the *organ system* becomes affected with the left side becoming Deep, Thin, Reduced Substance.

Late: Feeble-Absent with Tight superficially.

3. Rate may also slow as the *nervous system* affects the *circulatory system*.

If the *organ system* is affecting the *nervous system* the left side will be more deficient and the first symptom will be fatigue rather than nervousness. The tongue and eyes will be relatively clear.

# Nervous System Tense

- *Nervous system* tense presents with a uniformly tense to tight quality over the entire pulse. Often referred to as the ‘vigilance’ pulse this can be either constitutional or arise as a result of life experience.

## Constitution

This person presents with extreme tension despite his/her level of stress. This often runs in the family as does impulsivity. This presentation reflects a state of readiness in which people are constantly in a state of vigilance and often appears constitutionally in ethnic groups whose survival through the centuries has required this responsiveness.

Over time this tension takes its toll on the *nervous system*, as well as other vulnerable systems. While the Tense quality reflects strength and vigor, over time it will deplete the Kidney essence, the major source of sustenance to the *nervous system*, resulting in inevitably profound fear and paranoia.

# Nervous System Tense

## •Symptoms:

a. principally, ongoing tension unrelated to any particular externally generated life stress. 3

b. Other symptoms depend on the vulnerability of other *organ systems*, affected by the heat from excess, and eventually deficiency

## Signs:

a. Pulse:

1. rate is Normal to slightly Slow
2. uniformly Tense and mildly Robust Pounding.
3. Later, the qi depth Thin and Tight.
4. Changes occur in the proximals, if the intervening events are prolonged and severe.
5. If the *circulatory system* is vulnerable, possibly Blood Heat, Hollow Full-Overflowing and later a Tense Ropy quality.
6. patient will feel less distress after a few treatments but the pulse will remain

b. Tongue and eyes: normal. c. Eyebrows:

a. thicker than normal, increasing in thickness with the increasing degree of inherited tension in the *nervous system*, and a commensurate tendency toward impulsive behavior.

b. The individual hairs are not easily distinguishable, especially in the impulsive person.

c. There are often vertical lines between the eyes, two if the problem is profound, and one if it is less serious. If the line has a bright color, the condition is less severe than if it is dull.

d. Face: generally dark, and blue-green around the chin and mouth.

# Nervous System Tense

## • Life Experience

The nervous system tense pulse can be found today in almost anyone living in a large city, or with the need to be vigilant. Hypervigilance over time can give rise to mild heat from excess, as can the stagnation resulting from one's need to suppress spontaneity and emotional response. This affects the Liver as well as the diaphragm creating heat as a response to overcome said stagnation. If the *circulatory system* is vulnerable, the heat can easily affect the blood vessels and the blood.

### **Symptoms:**

1. Tension while under stress;
2. mild flushing;
3. intolerance of heat;
4. mild headache;
5. dryness of eyes;
6. thirst which is easily quenched;
7. tendency to constipation;
8. difficulty getting to sleep;
9. readily perspires;
10. eczema.

# Nervous System Tense

- Life Experience

- **Signs:**

Pulse:

- a. as with the constitutional etiology, the pulse is Tense but generally a little more Rapid, because here the *nervous system* is affecting the Heart.
  - b. Early: Tension feels stronger at the qi depth if the condition is mild and in the early stages.
  - c. Mid: When the tense situation has existed a moderate length of time, the Tense quality will be felt more at the blood depth.
  - d. Late: When it has existed a very long time, the Tension will be strongest at the organ depth.
    - a. The blood depth can be slightly expanded over time into a ‘blood heat’ and ‘blood thick’ disorder with these qualities.
    - e. When the stress is related to life events, Rough Vibration may be present over the entire pulse due to shock, trauma, fear, and guilt.
- Tongue: thin red with patchy or no coat
- Eyes: red and inside lower lids are red with confluence of vessels.

# Nervous System Tense

- Distinctions:
- The difference between the constitutional etiology and that rooted in life experiences is that in the latter case the tongue and eyes will show more signs of heat, and the pulse rate will be more Rapid. Also the eyebrows are normal in thickness, there are no lines between the eyes and the facial color is normal. In contrast to the constitutional origin of this quality, when it is based on daily stress the pulse will become less Tense with treatment that relieves the patient's distress.

# Shao Yang Circulatory System

- The *circulatory system* involves the movement of blood, and to a lesser extent qi,. Diseases of the blood involve cold extremities and if there is pain it is accompanied by swelling of a persistent nature. Qi disorders commonly show evidence of general weakness and if there is pain it is intermittent and migratory and are generally less serious than those of the blood.

Because of its involvement with blood, the *circulatory system* is especially connected with the function of the Heart and is particularly affected by the shock and the ongoing outcome of trauma, which tends to diminish the flow through the vessels. Manifestations of *circulatory system* dysfunction are:

1. fluctuating symptoms of being easily fatigued,
2. cold hands and feet,
3. migrating joint problems,
4. and being easily angered.
5. More serious manifestations are severe anxiety and depersonalization.

# Shao Yang Circulatory System

- There are 2 categories of problems associated with this system:
  - a. First: *Circulatory system* secondary to an energy problem. Deficient energy to drive the heart resulting in poor circulation of blood and qi to the extremities. In this scenario the heart rate is slow and the superficial aspect of the pulse is diminished. The tongue is pale and the face is pale in comparison to the palms.
  - b. Second: *Circulatory system* affecting the energy. Events such as trauma, sudden emotional shock and severe weather impact the peripheral circulation and increase the resistance through these structures. Here the heart rate initially increases to overcome the resistance and over time falls as the energy of the heart is depleted. Thus the pulse at first can have a fast rate but later becomes very slow and the deeper portions become feeble and tight. The tongue tends to be darker with a slight purple hue and can have a purple blister on the side of the accident. The inner lower eyelid will also show a horizontal line on the side of the accident if the condition is a result of trauma. In this situation the face can be redder than the palms.

# Yang Ming Digestive System

- The *digestive system* includes the Lungs (digest mucus), the Stomach-Spleen (digest food), and the Bladder-Kidneys (digest water). The *digestive system* can be accessed over the entire right side of the pulse when all of the qualities on that side are approximately the same.

Symptoms associated with *digestive system* disorders include:

- a. fluctuating appetite and
- b. irregular bowel movements (changing from constipation to diarrhea) and
- c. mucus in the chest and throat.

There are 2 main categories of dysfunction within this system.

# Yang Ming Digestive System

- Firstly, the *digestive system* can be weakened by irregular eating habits. Eating when not hungry or ignoring an appetite and not eating when hungry reduce the efficiency of the digestive process. With this presentation the pulse is Feeble on the right side.

Secondly, eating too fast affect the nerves of the esophagus, the stomach and the organs of digestion creating heat in the *digestive system* that injures stomach yin. In this case the right side of the pulse is very Tight especially at the qi depth.

The right middle position may show Inflated, Flat or Feeble with physical work directly after eating.

# Tai Yin, Shao Yin, Jue Yin Organ System

- The *organ system* includes the yin solid organs, especially the Heart, Liver, and Kidneys. *Organ system* function is accessed on the left side of the pulse when all of the qualities are approximately the same.

The problems associated with this system are primarily yang and qi deficiency, but also involve yin- deficient symptoms as well. They include:

1. spontaneous sweating,
2. being easily fatigued,
3. frequent pale urination,
4. aversion to cold and preference for warmth,
5. diarrhea with undigested food or infrequent bowel movements,
6. extreme vulnerability to chronic illness and infections and difficulty recovering.

# Tai Yin, Shao Yin, Jue Yin Organ System

- Generalized yin deficiency results from an overworking mind. In addition, daily frustrations commonly cause liver stagnation and heat. In response the body supplies yin to quell it and over time yin is consumed leading to a situation of yin deficiency. Long term yin deficiency decreases organ metabolism at the cellular level diminishing the contribution of the organs to the overall energy of the body and yang deficiency. The body becomes deprived of its source of usable/ metabolic heat (the heat from yin deficiency is of no metabolic use in the body and is expelled by the feces, urine and sweat).

*Organ system* problems can be constitutional or situational.

# Tai Yin, Shao Yin, Jue Yin Organ System

Constitutional: these people have inherited the deficiency, been weak their entire lives and fatigue easily. They are, however, less vulnerable to severe illness as they are generally more in touch with their limitations as their life long deficiency will stop them over working before serious diseases manifest.

Life experience: here yin deficiency leads to yang deficiency. The person does not connect their symptoms with their activities and tends to work to the point of exhaustion. See the elaboration on states of Yin Deficiency, especially in the Wood phase, of *Dragon Rises, Red Bird Flies*. This can happen suddenly with devastating symptoms and equally severe disease such as cancer and ischemic heart disease with infarction. In this scenario the person goes from yin deficiency to yang deficiency with sudden collapse.

# Tai Yin, Shao Yin, Jue Yin Organ System

- The function of the *organ system* is assessed on the left side of the pulse:
- a. In the case of yin deficiency:
  - 1. The left side is thin tight and wiry
  - 2. the tongue is red with a thin yellow coat
  - 3. the inner lower eyelid is red and shows a loss of distinction of the vertical lines with the confluence of them depending on the amount of heat from deficiency.
- b. In the case of yang deficiency:
  - 1. the left side of the pulse is deep, wide and diffuse initially and in the later stages feeble absent.
  - 2. The tongue is pale with a thin white coat and teeth marks.
  - 3. The inner lower eyelid is pale.

# Dr. Shen's view

- Dr. Shen's views about the right and left side pulses are an integral part of his systems theory in which the right side represents the *digestive system* and the left side the *organ system*.
  - a. When the right pulse is more Robust than the left, the inference is that the *digestive system* is overworking to compensate for a deficient yin *organ system*. The left side is thin tight and wiry the tongue is red with a thin yellow coat. The inner lower eyelid is red and shows a loss of distinction of the vertical lines
  - b. When the left pulse is stronger than the right, the inference is that the *digestive system* is more deficient than the *organ system*, either from poor nutrition or eating habits in a young person, or through resuming work too soon after eating in an older person.
- Dr. Shen viewed the integrity of the *digestive system* as a predictor of whether a person can or cannot recover from an illness. In other words, while the preference would be for equality between the sides, if the *organ system* is impaired and the left pulse is Reduced, the preference is for the right-side *digestive system* to be more Robust than the left side to support the *organ system*.

# Synopsis

## **Systems model synopsis**

A system problem does not yet involve specific organ pathology and is only a sign which explains often inexplicable symptoms. These systems are prognostic of a pathologic process that will end in disease if not interrupted. As such, this represents a tool for preventive medicine, charging us with recognizing and halting the progression of disease even prior to it showing pathognomonic signs and symptoms.

## **Balance**

Balance between the left and right pulses is dependent on the proper functioning of the *digestive system* and *organ system*. Balance between the upper and lower portions of the body is dependent on the ability of the *circulatory system* to maintain a steady and smooth flow of qi and blood through the three burners.

## **Movement**

When the movement of qi and blood is inadequate, the problem is with the *circulatory system* and the pulse is Slow. When the movement of qi is too quick, the problem is with the *nervous system* and the pulse is too Rapid.

# Systems affecting each other

- The sequence that follows — initiated in the *nervous system* — is the one that occurs when all the systems are approximately equal in strength. Otherwise, the system that is affected first is the weakest, and there is no further progression through this sequence.
  - a. If the *nervous system* is not treated effectively, it first affects the *circulatory system*.
  - b. If the *nervous system* and *circulatory system* are not treated effectively, it will affect the *digestive system*.
  - c. If the *nervous system*, *circulatory system*, and *digestive system* are not treated, it will affect the *organ system*.
  - d. Finally, if one of the yin organs in the *organ system* is especially vulnerable, serious disease ensues.
  - e. The *system* whose symptoms first appear is the root source.
  - f. Life experience most commonly affects the *circulatory* and *digestive* systems.
  - g. The *organ* and *nervous* systems are more often influenced by constitutional factors than are the other two systems.
  - h. The *digestive system* (the earth) nourishes the others.

# Effects of nervous system on other systems

The effects described below are related to a *nervous system* tense disorder. The cause may be based on life experience, or be constitutional. With the former, the person is tense only under stress; with the latter, the person is always tense. It is the *nervous system* that is most often the culprit that adversely affects all of the other systems.

# On the Organ System

- If the *nervous system* affects the *organ system*, then over the entire left pulse there is one very Thin, Tight line on the surface of whatever depth is first accessed, usually moderately deep, especially in the left middle and proximal positions. Symptoms include:
  - a. Agitation
  - b. Irritability
  - c. Excitability
  - d. fatigue:

When the *organ system* affects the *nervous system*, the fatigue arrives earlier, and is more prominent than the tension that characterizes the *nervous system*.  
When the *organ system* is the etiology, the pulse, especially on the left side, is Slow, Deep, and Feeble- Absent, and the person is more depressed than agitated.

# On the Digestive System

- Habitually eating too quickly due to a tense *nervous system* can cause the entire right side to be Tight at the surface of whichever depth is first accessed.
- Irregular eating caused by a tense *nervous system* can lead to the right side being Feeble.
- The left side is probably Long, Robust, and Tight in either circumstance, unless the *organ system* is deficient.
- Historically, tension will precede a digestive disorder.

# On the Circulatory System

- The rate is Normal, the qi depth is Tight, the middle depth separates on pressure (partially Hollow), and the organ depth is Tense or Tight. Dr. Shen stated that the pulse is also superficial.

## **Effects of *circulatory system* on other systems**

### **On the nervous system**

A deficient *circulatory system* will make the *nervous system* more vulnerable to emotional stress. Diminished circulation impairs the Heart, which controls the mind, and in turn further diminishes circulation to the brain (marrow) and to the peripheral nerves. The pulse is generally Slow and Tense-Tight.

# On the digestive system

A deficient *circulatory system* along with poor eating habits can affect the *digestive system* by reducing circulation to the splanchnic plexus, causing digestive problems. The right side is Feeble and the entire pulse (both wrists) is Slow.

# On the organ system

Deficiency of the *digestive system* due to an impaired *circulatory system* eventually affects the *organ system*, although a very Slow pulse rate over a long period of time — which indicates poor circulation in the organs — can weaken the *organ system* directly. In that case, the pulse is Slow and the left side is Feeble.

# Effects of *organ system* on other systems

## On the nervous system

Deficiency of the organ system can lead to poor nutrition in the *nervous system*. When there is stress on Kidney qi (due to constitutional factors and/or excessive work—mental or physical—or sex), or a *nervous system* tense or weak condition, the *nervous system* is adversely affected by a deficient *organ system*.

- a. The left side is Deeper and more Feeble
- b. The right side slightly Tense-Tight, and the entire pulse is perhaps slightly Slow.

The symptoms include:

a. severe fatigue; b. emotional tension, c. lassitude; d. depression; e. labile emotions, f. anxiety.

The fatigue is essentially the same as that associated with the *nervous system* affecting the *organ system*, except that when *organ system* deficiency is primary, the onset of fatigue is earlier and is more prominent than the tension that characterizes the *nervous system*.

# On the circulatory system

Deficiency of the *organ system* leads to a deficiency of true qi. To compensate, the *circulatory system* must work harder to nourish the organism. Especially if accompanied by overexercise, this can deplete the *circulatory system*. The pulse is exceptionally Slow and Feeble. In addition to extreme fatigue, other symptoms include cold hands and feet, migrating joint pain, and quick temper.

# On the digestive system

If the *organ system* is unable to sustain metabolic function, the functioning of the *digestive system* will likewise diminish. One must check to see whether the first symptoms were associated with *organ system* deficiency — fatigue and weakness — or with *digestive system* deficiency, where erratic digestive symptoms in which appetite and bowel function fluctuate precede the fatigue. The entire pulse is Feeble- Absent or Empty. If the *organ system* is the cause of a generally deficient condition, the left side is Deeper and more Feeble. If the *digestive system* is the cause, the right side is Deeper and more Feeble.

# DR SHEN'S SYSTEMS AND THE COMMAND POINTS

Dr Shen also related his systems model to the command points.

1. Jing – well points to the nerves
2. ying – spring points to heat and febrile conditions.  
Both of these he associated with the *nervous system* as the organs often associated with heat, the liver and the heart, are closely related to and very important in treating *nervous system* disorders.
3. shu – stream points relating to muscles and ligaments he linked to the *circulatory system*. This relationship can be seen in the correlation of the use of these points to treat musculoskeletal conditions with the migratory aches and pains that are often a result of the *circulatory system*.
4. jing – river points to do with respiration he aligned with the *digestive system*. He argued that mucous is made in the stomach; the lungs digest it - disperse it into water and descend it to the kidneys that dispose of it.
5. he – sea points that affect digestion he assigned to the *organ system* as the *digestive system* is under a lot stress to support the *organ system* that is drained by life.

# Systems Model and SM/DM

- Tai yang Nervous System:
  - KI jing: foundation of nervous system
    - yin: resources, structure
    - yang: function, movement
  - BL:
    - outward yang manifestation
    - wei qi (tai yang as lightest fastest moving energy)
    - SM activity
      - autonomic, instinctual, survival (shiver/cold, sweat/hot or nervous, vigilance/fear). BL and KI hyper-arousal to stimuli

# NST

- constitutional: hard-wired readiness, vigilance, tension,
- qi depth Thin and Tight (wei qi SM pulse; if floating at all 3 positions, Du mai...),
- eyebrows, wrinkle at Taiyang/Yintang: BL SM and BL I ming men (readiness/vigilance means we are prepared looking ahead: eyes --> tension --> wrinkle);
- face blue-green (trauma origin: something affected yuan/jing level);
- over time taxes KI (fear, paranoia, etc.)

# NST

- life experience:
  - tension from stress: where is armoring, tension, what channels deal with that?
  - dry eyes and eyes red and lower eyelid confluence of vessels (constant stress consumes resources/yin): fluids being depleted at what stage? Yang ming
  - thirst: fluids depleted; yang ming
  - constipation: fluids, wei qi smooth muscle impact, internalization to abdomen (yin SM?)
  - sleep issues: wei qi dysfx, internalized to chest

# NST

- BL/KI DM: jing level insults, constitution; trauma, etc.
- GB/LR DM: stress as a pathogen. constant tension, constant imbalance b/w the internal environment (yuan/KI) and the external (wei/BL)
- ST/SP DM: ST as source of wei qi and jin-ye production: pure to sensory orifices, turbid to skin/sinews and wei qi

# Dr. Shen's Systems Formulas

- **Digestive System**

Bai Zhu	Rs. Atractylodis M.	6 gm
Fu Ling	Poria Cocos	10 gm
Chen Pi	Pc. Citri Reticulata	6 gm
Shan Yao	Rz. Dioscoriae	10 gm
Zhi Ke	Fr. Aurantii	2 gm
Huang Qin	Rx. Scutellariae Ba	2 gm
Bai Shao	Rx. Paeoniae Alba	6 gm
Ji Nei Jin	End. Corneum Gigeriae Galli	12 gm
Gu Ya	Fr. Oryzae Germinatus	6 gm
Mai Ya	Fr. Hordei Germinatus	6 gm

Strengthening SP, processing fluids and dampness, clearing heat from ST, dealing with food stagnation, regulating LR in relation to SP, nourish/protect ST fluids

Directionality: mixture of rising (bai zhu and zhi ke) and descending chen pi, fu ling, shan yao, huang qin) and regulation of middle...

# Dr. Shen's Systems Formulas

- **Nervous System Tense**

Chuan Xiong	Rz. Lingustci Chuanxiong	5 gm
Yu Jin	Rx. Curcumae	6 gm
Lu Lu Tong	Fr. Liquidambaris	12 gm
Jing Jie	Hb. Schizonepetae	12 gm
Bai Shao	Rx. Paeoniae Alba	6 gm
Yin Chai Hu	Rx. Stellariae Dichotomae	3 gm
Xiang Fu	Rz. Cyperi	2 gm
Yan Hu Suo	Rz. Corydalis	10 gm
Huang Qin	Rz. Scutellariae	2 gm

Focus on relaxing LR from zang fu perspective and moving qi and blood. More symptomatic focused...

# Dr. Shen's Systems Formulas

- **Nervous System Tense (alternate)**
  - Shi Chang Pu 2.4g (for HT nerves)
  - Chuan Xiong 4.5g (relax nerves)
  - Jing Jie 3g (relax skin nerves)
  - Bai Shao 6g (relax 'inside' nerves)
  - Xiang Fu 4.5g (relax organ nerves)
  - Ge Gen 4.5g (relax muscle nerves)
  - Yu Jin 6g (relax organ nerves)
  - Gua Lou Pi 9g (relax organ nerves)
- Notice additional focus on opening orifices (chang pu with yu jin), also more on opening chest (gua lou pi)

## Menopause, Nervous Tension and Weak Body

- Ren Shen                      Ginseng Radix                      4.5 gm
- Fu Ling                      Poria                      9 gm
- Da Zao                      Jujubae Fructus                      9 gm
- Bie Jia                      Trionycis Carapax                      12 gm
- Yuan Zhi                      Polygalae Tenufoliae Radix                      6 gm
- Bai Shao                      Paeoniae Radix alba                      6 gm
- Nuo Dao Gen Xu Oryzae glutinosae Radix                      30 gm
- Chai Hu                      Bupleuri Radix                      3 gm
- Di Gu Pi                      Lycii Cortex                      9 gm

# Menopause, Nervous Tension and Weak Body

- *Seen as a Nervous System imbalance, one can also look at this formula as creating a relationship between the lighter faster moving wei qi ('tai yang nervous system') and the denser yuan qi levels. Signature herbs for making this connection include the use of Di Gu Pi (whose energetic vector is related to Lungs, Liver and Kidneys and wei qi which goes inward to the yuan level to come back to the wei level and release pathology) and Bie Jia which is heavy, yin tonifying and also breaks up and moves yin stasis.*
- *The 'Nervous System' has its roots in the yin-essence of the Kidneys (marrow), but also relies on its channel pair the Bladder and tai yang for it's movement. Tai yang is related to wei qi. The mediator between the yuan level and the wei level is shao yang, associated with the Gall Bladder, but more commonly seen with the Liver channel associations from an herbal perspective. From a zang fu perspective, the Liver is often seen as influencing the peripheral nervous system with its dominion over the muscles and wei qi associations therein.*
- *So, looking from a perspective of communicating the wei and yuan levels we see a need to strengthen the root (Ren Shen), anchor any floating yang (Bie Jia: Liver and Kidney yin) as well as releasing any pent up internal heat (Di Gu Pi). To mediate this, herbs to regulate the Liver are used (Chai Hu, Bai Shao) as well as herbs to strengthen post natal qi (Fu Ling, Da Zao, Glutinous Rice). Fu Ling will also deal with any damp from the yin tonics. Yuan Zhi further assists the anchoring and communication of wei and yuan and settles the spirit.*
- *It's important to note that menopausal symptoms are often associated with hyperactivity of adrenal functioning as women in our day tend not to take this rite of passage and slow down and internalize. Still meeting the demands of a hectic life, most women are very active, creating the adrenals to create not only more estrogen, but more adrenaline; that increase in adrenaline hyperstimulates yang qi and also effects its child, wood-Liver, creating a flaring of Liver yang.*



# **Nervous System Tense and Yin Deficient Heat, February 2000**

- *Understanding this as a Nervous System imbalance, and recalling the discussion from above (Menopause and Weak Body), we can once again see these herbs as creating a relationship between the lighter faster moving wei qi (“tai yang nervous system”) and the denser yuan qi levels. Our signature herbs are Di Gu Pi which clear deficient heat, and Bie Jia which tonifies yin and anchors, while also breaking up and moving yin stasis.*
- *As in the Menopause and Weak Body formula, here we have herbs to regulate the Liver (Chai Hu, Bai Shao, Yu Jin, Lu Lu Tong) as well as herbs to clear heat from deficiency (Di Gu Pi, Qing Hao). Fu Ling helps to deal with any damp from the yin tonics as well as damp that gets created as a response to the yin deficient condition (ecologically, the body holds on to fluids to compensate). Yuan Zhi further assists the anchoring and communication of wei and yuan and settles the spirit. Long Chi and Mu Li help to anchor as well as providing some astringency to hold onto yin.*

# Dr. Shen's Systems Formulas

- Nervous System Weak (**Original Formula**)

Chuan Xiong	Rz. Lingustci Chuanxiong	4.5 gm
Yu Jin	Rx. Curcumae	4.5 gm
Jing Jie	Hb. Schizonepetae	3 gm
Bai Shao	Rx. Paeoniae Lactiflorae	6 gm
Xiang Fu	Rz. Cyperi	4.5 gm
Yan Hu Suo	Rz. Corydalis	9 gm
Bai zhu	Rz. Atractylodes Macrocephalae	6 gm
Huang Qi	Rx. Astragali	9 gm
Shan Yao	Rx. Dioscorae Oppositae [Yam]	9 gm
Gan Cao	Rx. Glycyrrhizae Uralensis	4.5 gm

Adding of tonics like bai zhu, huang qi, shan yao and gan cao

# Dr. Shen's Systems Formulas

- **Nervous System Weak**, recent formula
- Ren Shen                      Ginseng Radix                      4.5 gm
- Fu Ling                        Poria                                      9 gm
- Da Zao                        Jujubae Fructus                      9 gm
- Bie Jia                         Trionycis Carapax                    12 gm
- Yuan Zhi                      Polygalae Radix                      6 gm
- Bai Shao                      Paeoniae Radix alba                6 gm
- Nuo Dao Gen Xu            Oryzae Glutinosae Radix           30gm
- Chai Hu                        Bupleuri Radix                        3gm
- Di Gu Pi                        Lycii Cortex                            9gm
- Notice di gu pi and bie jia again; here with Ren Shen

# Dr. Shen's Systems Formulas

- **Circulatory System**

Qiang Huo	Rz. seu Rx. Notopterygii	6 gm
Si Gua Luo	Fasc. Vasc. Luffae	6 gm
Dan Shen	Rx. Salviae Miltiorrhizae	6 gm
Sang Ji Sheng	Ram. Sangjisheng	12 gm
Yuan Zhi	Rx. Polygalae Tenuifoliae	6 gm
Da Zao	Fr. Ziziphi Jujubae	10 gm
Dang Gui	Rx. Angelicae Sinensis	6 gm
Mu Gua	Fr. Chaenomelis	12 gm
Fang Feng	Rx. Ledbouriellae Divaricatae	6 gm

- *Focus is to unblock stagnation in the channels and the chest in order to restore Heart function*
- *Open Chest: Qiang Huo (which penetrates into the Heart from the Bladder channel at BL 15 (DM)), Si Gua Luo, Sang Ji Sheng and Mu Gua and Fang Feng (shao yang)*
- *Move the qi and esp in chest. These include Yuan Zhi and Si Gua Lou (and to some degree Qiang Huo).*
- *Moves blood: Dan Shen, Dang Gui and to a lesser degree Si Gua Lou.*
- *The formula also contains some zone herbs from the wai ke tradition, namely qiang huo (tai yang) and fang feng (shao yang) which have a major effect on circulation through these major confluent. They are also drying but Dang Gui and Da Zao moisten*

# Dr. Shen's Systems Formulas

- **Organ System Weak**

Dang Shen	Rx. Codonopsis Pilosulae	9gm
Shan Yao	Rz. Dioscoriae	12gm
Bai Zhu	Rx. Atractylodis M	9gm
Shan Zhu Yu	Fr. Corni Officinalis	9 gr
Fu Ling	Poria Cocos	9gm
Yuan Zhi	Rx. Polygalae Tenuifoliae	6gm
Da Zao	Fr. Ziziphi Jujubae	9gm
Ji Nei Jin	End. Corneum Gigeriae Galli	12gm
Sang Ji Sheng	Ram. Sangjisheng	9gm
Yu Jin	Tu. Curcuma	6gm
Bai Shao	Rx. Paeoniae Lactiflorae	6gm
Rou Gui	Cx. Cinnamomi Cassiae	3gm

supplementing tai yin, jue in, shao yin...

# EO

- NST: peppermint; lavender; spruce
- NSW: geranium; lavender; fennel; black spruce
- Dig Syst: coriander; savory; ginger; peppermint; Roman chamomile (LR/SP); nutmeg (diarrhea); caraway (constipation)
- Circ Syst: carrot; parsley; myrrh; angelica; lavender; frankincense; benzoin; fennel; douglas fir
- Org Syst: fennel; cypress; savory; benzoin; pine, etc.

# Dr. Shen's Heart Patterns

by Ross Rosen, JD, MSTOM, LAc, Dipl OM  
(NCCAOM)

- See article by Ross Rosen and Brandt Stickley with Hamilton Rotte

# HT qi deficiency

## Symptoms

Palpitations on exertion (not as pronounced as Heart Blood Deficiency)

Shortness of breath on exertion

Spontaneous or excessive sweating on exertion that becomes more cold as it approaches Yang deficiency

Fatigue which is most pronounced in the morning

Insomnia (frequently waking throughout the night without agitation)

Slightly cold extremities (without pronounced internal cold)

Excessive talking (lack of containment of emotions)

Mild anxiety, emotional vulnerability and emotional lability

Very mild dependent edema (especially on hands and face)

Mild chest pain

## Signs:

Pulse: Change of Intensity on the entire pulse which is consistent, slow rate, rate change at rest which is consistent, rate change with exertion increase less than 8 b/m, Intermittent, and Interrupted. Also: Smooth Vibration or the Slippery quality in the Mitral Valve position.

Tongue: pale or normal in color. In constitutional Heart Qi deficiency there is a shallow midline crack reaching the tip. If the Heart suffers insults from lifestyle the crack becomes deeper. Swelling along edges of crack. Paleness and swelling at tip.

Inner canthus: pale

Complexion: Pale, especially on the forehead

# Etiology

Constitution: This includes inherited (genetic) and congenital factors.

Over-exercise and physical overwork

Physical and emotional trauma- the Heart has to overwork to overcome the stagnation from the trauma

Dampness and Heat in the blood forcing the Heart to overwork

Previous Rheumatic fever

Heart Qi Agitation

Maciocia: Blood loss, emotional problems

In Heart Qi deficiency the Heart is vulnerable to other Heart pathologies such as Heat, Phlegm and other deficiencies of the Heart. In constitutional Heart Qi deficiency symptoms and signs of other Heart pathologies are likely to manifest sooner, in greater measure and will be more difficult to reverse.

# HT yang deficiency

- **Symptoms:**

- Palpitations (more severe than with Heart qi deficiency)

- Shortness of breath on exertion

- Severe fatigue

- Spontaneous cold sweat with oil (beady)

- Chest pain, oppressive sensation in chest

- Feeling cold, cold hands and feet

- If Heart is enlarged, there is difficulty sleeping on the left side

- Poor concentration and forgetfulness

- Dependent pitting edema

- Need to sleep in sitting position (late stage)

- **Signs:**

- Pulse: Feeble-Absent left Distal, slow rate, Deep with severe irregularities, Heart Enlarged position positive, no change or decreases of rate on exertion

- Tongue: Pale, wet and swollen, central crack with swelling along crack, loss of color at the tip in severe Yang deficiency

- Complexion: pale face (paleness is pervasive, pasty)

# Etiology

Constitutional deficiency of the Heart (Qi deficiency)

Over-exercise, which is especially harmful in individuals who have not reached adulthood.

Kidney Yang deficiency leading to Heart Yang deficiency

Weakness of Yang due to old age or severe disease [CAM]

Wind-cold damp settling in the Heart [Wiseman]

Loss of Qi and Blood due to acute or chronic hemorrhage

Previous incidence of scarlet fever

# HT yang collapse

- **Symptoms**

Severe palpitations

Shortness of breath

Cyanosis of lips

Profuse oily sweat

Cold limbs

Weak and shallow breathing

Coma

- Signs**

Tongue: Blue color

Pulse: Interrupted, Scattered or Minute, Yielding Hollow Full-Overflowing

- Etiology:**

Same as Heart Yang deficiency

# HT blood deficiency

- **Symptoms**

Palpitations on exertion that are mild to moderate

Poor memory

Poor concentration

Depression; flat affect, blank mind

Dizziness with change of position

Insomnia waking up after 4 – 5 hours, returning to sleep after 15-30 minutes

Mild coldness of the extremities (possible numbness in the upper extremities)

Dream-disturbed sleep

Mild to moderate anxiety that is consistent

Fatigue, especially in the morning (not as pronounced as fatigue from Heart Qi deficiency)

Emotional distress [Shanghi]

- **Signs**

Pulse: Thin, particularly at left Distal position

Rate increase with exertion of more than 12 beats

Complexion: dull, pale

Tongue: pale, thin and slightly dry, peach color on edges, pale tip, central crack in underlying constitutional

Heart Qi deficiency

# Etiology

Constitutional deficiency of the Heart (Qi deficiency)

Mental overwork

Prolonged, severe Heart Qi agitation

Deficiencies of the Spleen and/or Kidney Jing

Acute or chronic hemorrhage

Liver blood deficiency [Wiseman]

Diet lacking in blood producing foods

Blood damaged by chronic disease [CAM]

# HT fire

- **Symptoms:**

- Palpitations (pounding and forceful)
- Anxiety
- Excessive talking (loud, invasive, pressure behind speech)
- Excessive, forceful demeanor
- Grandiose (expansive sense of self)
- Stays up working
- Thirst- temporarily relieved by fluids
- Tongue ulcers
- Mental Restlessness and Agitation (mind racing)
- Feeling of Heat
- Insomnia (difficulty falling asleep)
- Vivid, often disturbing dreams
- Dark Urine or blood in the Urine
- Bitter taste
- Delirium occurs with a high fever (as seen in pericarditis and myocarditis)
- Complexion: whole face Red
- Red inner canthus

# HT fire

- **Signs**

Pulse: Rapid rate, Bounding (rate feels more rapid than it is) Pounding in left Distal, Tense in left Distal, Flooding Excess or Full-Overflowing in left Distal.

Tongue: Raised red points on tip of tongue, red tongue body, red and swollen tip, dry (not as dry as Yin deficiency)

Complexion: whole face Red

Red inner canthus

**Etiology:**

Any source of Heat, commonly from nervous tension (TCM: Stagnation of Qi creating Heat), the digestive system, substances such as cocaine and methamphetamines

Inability of the Triple Burner to regulate physiology

Constitutional vulnerability of the Heart exacerbated by insults to Heart from life

Very high fever

This pattern is seen in Graves disease, the manic stage of bipolar disease, and in stimulant abuse, particularly cocaine.

# Phlegm fire disturbing the HT orifices

- **Symptoms**

This pattern includes Heart Fire symptoms (See Heart Fire) plus:

A) Mania stage of bipolar disease

Mental confusion

Out of touch with reality

Delusions

Hallucinations

B) Schizophrenia (often of the hebephrenic type with excessive and inappropriate laughter)

Hallucinations

Poor boundaries- unable to distinguish inner world from outer world Possible Paranoia

C) Epilepsy

D) Yang Obstruction type of Phlegm Obstructing the Heart Orifices (Stroke)

# Phlegm fire disturbing the HT orifices

- **Signs**

Heart Fire signs (See Heart Fire) plus:

Pulse: Slippery left Distal

Tongue: Thick, greasy coat, concentrated in the central crack.

- Etiology**

Fluids are brought to the Heart in order to cool Heat or Fire and congeal into Phlegm.

Dampness from the Spleen or Gall Bladder

Liver Fire

Heart Fire

# Phlegm confusing the HT orifices (phlegm cold)

- **Symptoms**

Mild:

Diminished awareness (selective inattention)

Poor memory, poor concentration

Mental fog (cotton in the brain)

Neurosis

Severe:

A) Severe depression- sometimes associated with depressive stage of bipolar disease

Mental confusion

Clouding of consciousness including sensory organs

Psycho-motor withdrawal

Paranoia

B) Schizophrenia (catatonic type)

Poor boundaries (inability to distinguish inner world from outer world)

A) Epileptic seizures

D) Yin Type Stroke in Phlegm Obstructing the Heart Orifices (stroke)

# Phlegm confusing the HT orifices (phlegm cold)

- **Signs**

Pulse: Slippery in the left Distal position (often with Ht Qi and Blood deficient signs)

Tongue: Thick white coat, often concentrated in a central crack, swollen body

- **Etiology**

Heart Qi deficiency, usually constitutional

Shock (particularly when condition is mild)

Depressed phase of the bipolar disease (Same etiology as Heart-Phlegm fire), involving the Triple Burner unable to regulate metabolism

Dampness from the Spleen and Stomach and/or Gall Bladder

# Phlegm obstructing the HT orifices

- The pulse associated with this condition is Slippery and Wiry, or Hollow Full-Overflowing, and is usually Rapid. Its rate is difficult to determine. This pattern includes all three types of stroke: Yang obstruction, Yin obstruction and Exhaustion syndrome. The primary cause is Liver Yang transforming into Liver wind, which generates heat and combines with pre-existing phlegm.

# Yang Obstruction

## Symptoms

Sudden collapse with loss of consciousness, lockjaw (trismus) clenched fists, retention of urine and feces, stiffness and spasm of limbs, redness of the face and restlessness, eyes open.

## Signs

The tongue is red and has a yellow, greasy coating; the eyes are congested

# Yin Obstruction

## Symptoms

Same as Yang Obstruction except that the face is pale, the limbs are cold and there is no restlessness.

## Signs

The tongue is less red and has a white, greasy coating

# Exhaustion Syndrome

## **Symptoms**

The mouth is open, hands are relaxed, and the eyes are closed; there is oily perspiration and incontinence of urine and stool.

## **Signs**

The tongue is pale, swollen and flaccid.

# HT qi agitation

- The different varieties of Heart Qi agitation do not necessarily manifest in order or move from one type to the next. The later stages of Heart Qi Agitation include other deficiencies of the Heart.

## 1) Milder variety (Dr. Shen's Heart Nervous)

### **Symptoms**

Worry which becomes more severe and consistent as the Smooth Vibration increases in the number of positions it is accessed on and depth which it is appears.

### **Etiology**

The tendency to worry

## 2) More severe (Dr. Shen's Heart Tight which is Excess heat moving into Deficient Heat)

### a) Early (Excess Heat)

#### **Symptoms**

Agitation

Irritability

Tension

Difficulty falling asleep

Mild to moderate anxiety

#### **Signs**

At first there is a Tense-Tight Quality in the Pericardium position (a sign of excess heat)- as the Heat becomes more severe the whole left Distal position becomes Tense and Robust Pounding.

# HT qi agitation

- b) Later (Yin Deficiency)

## **Symptoms**

Restless

Constant worry

Racing mind

Constant waking throughout the night with agitation

Mild to moderate anxiety

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

## **Signs**

Pulse: Tight in the Left Distal position, Hesitant on the whole pulse

## **Etiology**

Overwork of the mind, obsession, worry for a long time, over-thinking

# HT qi agitation characterized by instability

- **Symptoms**

Changes of mind about others and the chosen course of one's life, as if they are on a "roller coaster" and mildly out of control

Difficulty focusing thoughts and actions; self-doubt and indecisiveness

Propensity to panic with greater change of rate at rest

- Signs**

Pulse: Occasional change of rate at rest

- Etiology**

Emotional shock

Physical trauma (often at birth and sometimes in utero)

Living in an emotionally suppressive environment (?)

**Note:** As the change of rate at rest becomes more consistent or if the pulse becomes occasionally or consistently interrupted the individual is showing Heart Qi deficiency and is likely to be too fatigued and depressed to produce the instability of moods. Another very common finding in individuals who report mental or emotional instability is the change of Qualities in the Left Distal position (separation of Yin and Yang in the Heart).

# HT full (trapped qi in HT)

- **Symptoms**

- Tired their entire lives
- Possible depression
- Quick to anger
- Whole body discomfort
- Difficulty breathing out
- Discomfort lying on left side
- Possible incipient (early stage) hypertension
- Advanced stage: Coughing blood

**Signs**

Pulse: Tense-Inflated left Distal position (Yielding Inflated in less serious conditions), normal or slightly rapid rate.

**Etiology**

- Sudden and very profound repressed anger at time when a person is extremely active
- Breech birth
- Trauma to the chest
- Emotional trauma (involving grief if the Inflation is present in the right Distal)
- Sudden lifting beyond one's energy

# HT closed (HT qi stagnation)

- **Symptoms**

- Constant emotional difficulty

- Vengeful and spiteful

- May experience chest pain in connection to the closing of Qi circulation

- This condition exacerbates Heart Qi deficiency and diminishes circulation

- Cut off from feelings

- Signs**

- Flat quality in left Distal

- Eyes look withdrawn, or angry

- Etiology**

- Cord around neck at birth

- Emotional trauma when an individual is underdeveloped or deficient. Often the event is loss of a loved one during childhood.

- Can occur later in life, such as sudden bad news or breakup of a romantic relationship

- Physical trauma to the chest

# HT blood stagnation (HT small)

- **Symptoms**

- Lifelong fear

- Propensity to social anxiety

- Anger and tension

- Pain in the cardiac region which is needle-like or stabbing. The pain can also be in the shoulder and/or radiating down the arm

- Insomnia- up after 4-5 hours, often fearful at the time of waking, can't get back to sleep

- Palpitations

- Shortness of breath- easy to expel air and difficult to take it in.

- Feeling of oppression or constriction of the chest

- Cyanosis of lips and nails

- Cold hands (lack of circulation to the limbs)

- Nightmares

- Easily startled

- Late stage: coronary artery disease

- **Signs**

- Pulse: Earlier- very Flat. Later- Deep, Thin, and Feeble (according to Dr. Shen). Choppy left Distal (serious). The Rate is Normal, Slightly Rapid, or Slightly Slow. Later: Arrhythmias

- Tongue: Purple, often with raised red points (signs of Heat)

- **Etiology**

- Can evolve from Dr. Shen's Heart Closed (Qi stagnation)

- Emotional trauma- early loss of a loved one, abuse

- Birth trauma

- Physical trauma

- Maciocia: Heart Yang deficiency, Heart Fire, Heart Blood deficiency, Emotional problems, particularly anxiety, grief, resentment, anger

# HT Shock

- **Symptoms**

See Heart Yin Deficiency, Heart Qi Agitation, Heart Full, Heart Closed and Heart Blood Stagnation, Heart Qi Deficiency (in late stage)

In children- fearful, nightmares

- **Signs**

Pulse: At first the rate is rapid, later it becomes slower (at Heart Qi deficiency ensues). Rough Vibration is found on the whole pulse. The Flat pulse in the left Distal position indicates that the trauma occurred when the individual was young or weak, or that the event was of overwhelming intensity. The Inflated quality in the left Distal position indicates that the event occurred when the individual was relatively robust.

Face: Blue-green color around the mouth (earlier), temples (later), or on the whole face (if it was very severe)

- **Etiology**

Severe physical trauma

Abuse (physical, emotional, sexual)

Deprivation

Birth trauma

Sudden loss of a loved one

Disappointment in love

Etc.

(SEE WEBINAR)