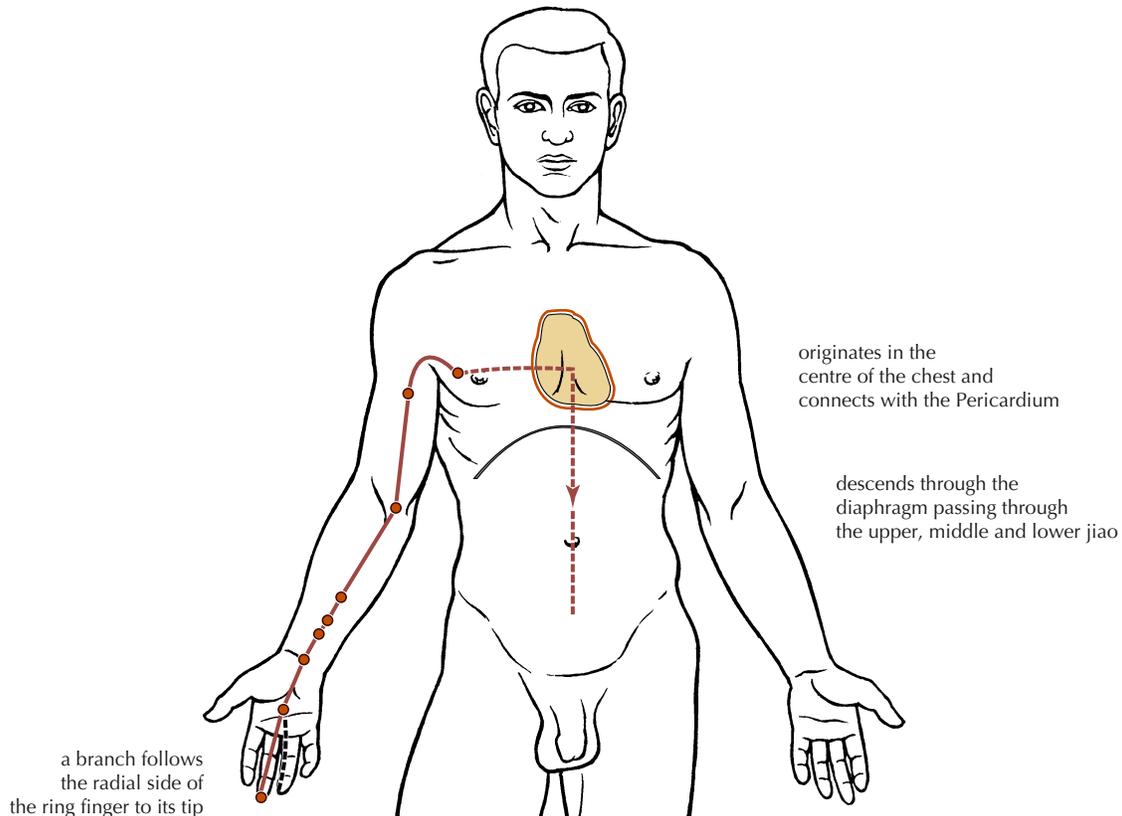


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手厥陰心包經

THE PERICARDIUM  
CHANNEL  
OF HAND JUEYIN

## THE PERICARDIUM CHANNEL OF HAND JUEYIN



The Pericardium primary channel

### THE PERICARDIUM PRIMARY CHANNEL

- originates in the centre of the chest, connects with the Pericardium, and descends through the diaphragm to the abdomen, passing through the upper, middle and lower jiao.

#### One branch

- runs from inside the chest to emerge in the costal region 3 cun inferior to the anterior axillary fold (near Tianchi P-1),
- arches over the axilla, and follows along the antero-medial aspect of the upper arm, between the Lung and Heart channels to the cubital fossa of the elbow at Quze P-3,
- descends the forearm between the tendons of the

palmaris longus and flexor carpi radialis muscles to reach the palm at Laogong P-8,

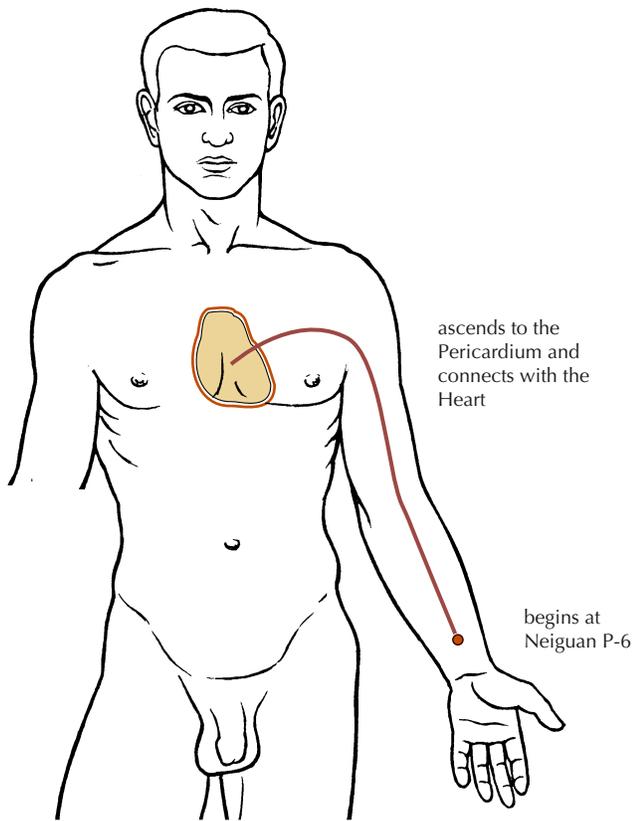
- travels from the palm along the middle finger to terminate at its tip at Zhongchong P-9.

#### Another branch

- arises from the palm at Laogong P-8 and follows the radial aspect of the ring finger to its tip .

*The Pericardium primary channel connects with the following zangfu: Sanjiao.*

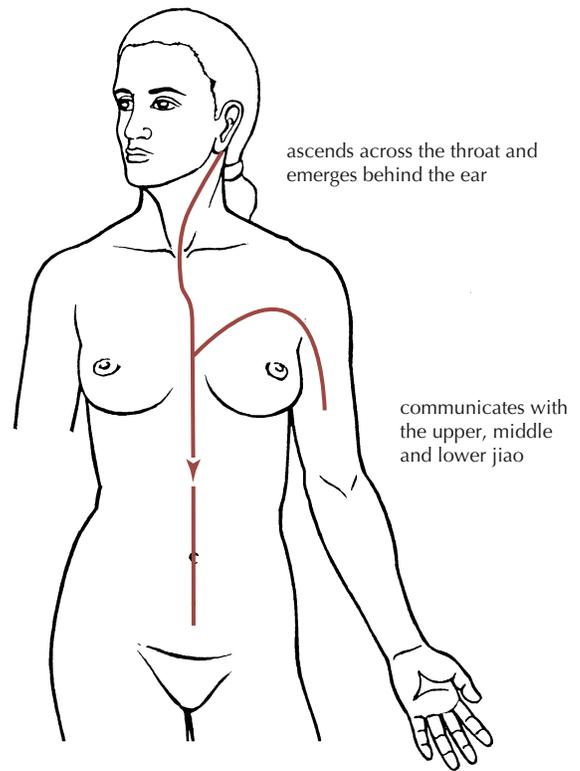
*The Pericardium primary channel meets with other channels at the following points: None*



**The Pericardium luo-connecting channel**

**THE PERICARDIUM LUO-CONNECTING CHANNEL**

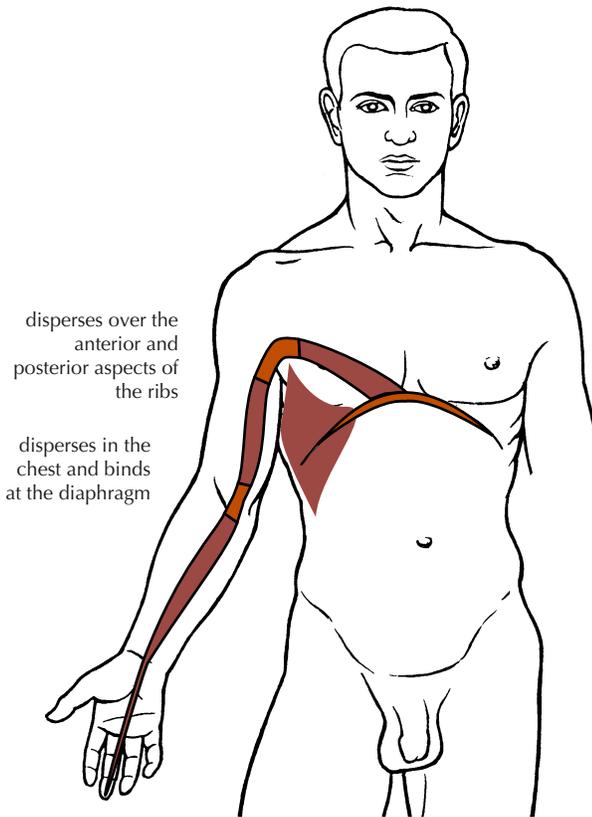
- begins at Neiguan P-6 on the anterior of the forearm,
- ascends along with the Pericardium primary channel to the Pericardium and then connects with the Heart.



**The Pericardium divergent channel**

**THE PERICARDIUM DIVERGENT CHANNEL**

- separates from the primary channel on the arm, at the level of a point below the axilla and 3 cun inferior to Yuanye GB-22,
- enters the chest and communicates with the three jiao,
- a branch ascends across the throat and emerges behind the ear to converge with the Sanjiao channel.



**The Pericardium sinew channel**

#### THE PERICARDIUM SINEW CHANNEL

- originates at the tip of the middle finger and runs together with the Lung sinew channel to bind at the medial side of the elbow,
- follows the antero-medial side of the upper arm to below the axilla where it binds before descending to disperse over the anterior and posterior aspects of the ribs,
- a branch enters the chest below the axilla, dispersing in the chest and binding at the diaphragm.

*Pathological symptoms of the Pericardium sinew channel*  
Strained and cramping sensation along the course of the channel, pain of the chest with urgent breathing and an 'inverted cup sensation' below the lower right ribs.

#### DISCUSSION

The Pericardium channel of hand jueyin originates in the chest and descends through the diaphragm to the middle and lower jiao. It is interiorly-exteriorly coupled with the Sanjiao channel, and with the Liver channel of foot jueyin according to six channel theory. The Pericardium-Sanjiao relationship is strengthened by the fact that:

- a branch of the Pericardium channel separates from Laogong P-8 in the palm of the hand and connects with Guanchong SJ-1 on the ring finger.
- the Pericardium divergent channel connects with the Sanjiao channel behind the ear.
- as far as the Pericardium luo-connecting channel is concerned, in the *Spiritual Pivot* at least there is no reference to it connecting with the Sanjiao channel.

In addition, it is important to note that:

- from Neiguan P-6, the luo-connecting channel travels to the Heart, strengthening the Pericardium-Heart relationship.
- the Pericardium primary channel originates in the chest, its divergent channel enters the chest, and its sinew channel disperses in the chest.
- the primary channel descends through the diaphragm and the sinew channel binds at the diaphragm.
- both the primary and divergent channels connect with the upper, middle and lower jiao.
- the primary channel arches over the axilla and the sinew channel travels inferior to the axilla.
- the sinew channel disperses over the anterior and posterior ribs.

The Pericardium (xin bao/Heart wrapping) is described in Chinese medicine as a membrane surrounding the Heart, and its primary function is to protect the Heart (the Emperor) from attack by exterior pathogenic factors. In the *Yellow Emperor's Inner Classic*, the Pericardium was not accorded independent status as one of the zangfu, and this has been reflected in the Chinese medical tradition ever since in discussion of the 'five zang and six fu'. Although not considered a discrete zang, but rather an appendage of the Heart, the Pericardium channel paradoxically was originally considered the primary channel to treat Heart disorders. Thus in the *Spiritual Pivot*<sup>1</sup> the Yellow Emperor asks Qi Bo "Why does the hand shaoyin channel alone have no shu points"? Qi Bo replies "The shaoyin is the Heart vessel. The Heart is the great master of the five zang and six fu and is the abode of the essence-spirit. It stores so firmly that no pathogen can come to reside. If it does, then the Heart will be injured and the spirit will depart. If the spirit departs there is death. It is

for this reason that the pathogens destined to attack the Heart will attack the Pericardium. The Pericardium is the channel that is controlled by the Heart. Therefore the Heart alone has no shu points". In Chapter 2 of the *Spiritual Pivot* Qi Bo describes the Heart channel (rather than the Pericardium channel) as originating at Zhongchong P-9 and travelling to Laogong P-8, Daling P-7 etc. as far as Quze P-3. The *Spiritual Pivot* elsewhere, however, does discuss points of the Heart channel, for example Shenmen HE-7 for Heart disorders, reflecting some of the contradictions inherent in a text written by different authors at different times. It was not until the *Systematic Classic of Acupuncture and Moxibustion*, written in the third century, that the shu points of the Heart channel were first discussed.

In the theory of differentiation of patterns according to the zangfu, the Pericardium has no patterns of disharmony of its own. The only discussion of Pericardium disorders per se follows on from its function as the wrapping or protector of the Heart, and the disturbance of consciousness manifesting as mental confusion and even coma that occurs during the course of febrile diseases is ascribed to the Pericardium rather than to the Heart.

The Pericardium channel pathways, as well as the status of the Pericardium as the protector of the Heart, help explain most of the actions and indications of the points of the Pericardium channel. These can be summarised as:

- treating disorders of the Heart zang such as pain, palpitations, irregular Heart rhythm etc.
- treating disorders of the spirit.
- treating disorders of the chest in general, including disharmony of the Lung.
- treating disorders of the upper or middle jiao due to stagnation of the qi of the foot jueyin Liver channel with which the Pericardium channel is paired according to six channel theory.
- treating disorders of the middle jiao, especially the Stomach.
- treating disorders of the lateral costal region (the Pericardium sinew channel disperses over the anterior and posterior ribs).
- treating febrile diseases: the Pericardium belongs to fire, and takes the brunt of attack by exterior pathogens that might otherwise injure the Heart; the points of the Pericardium channel, therefore, are important in the treatment of febrile diseases, especially at the nutritive and blood levels and when there is disturbance of consciousness.
- treating swelling and pain of the axilla.