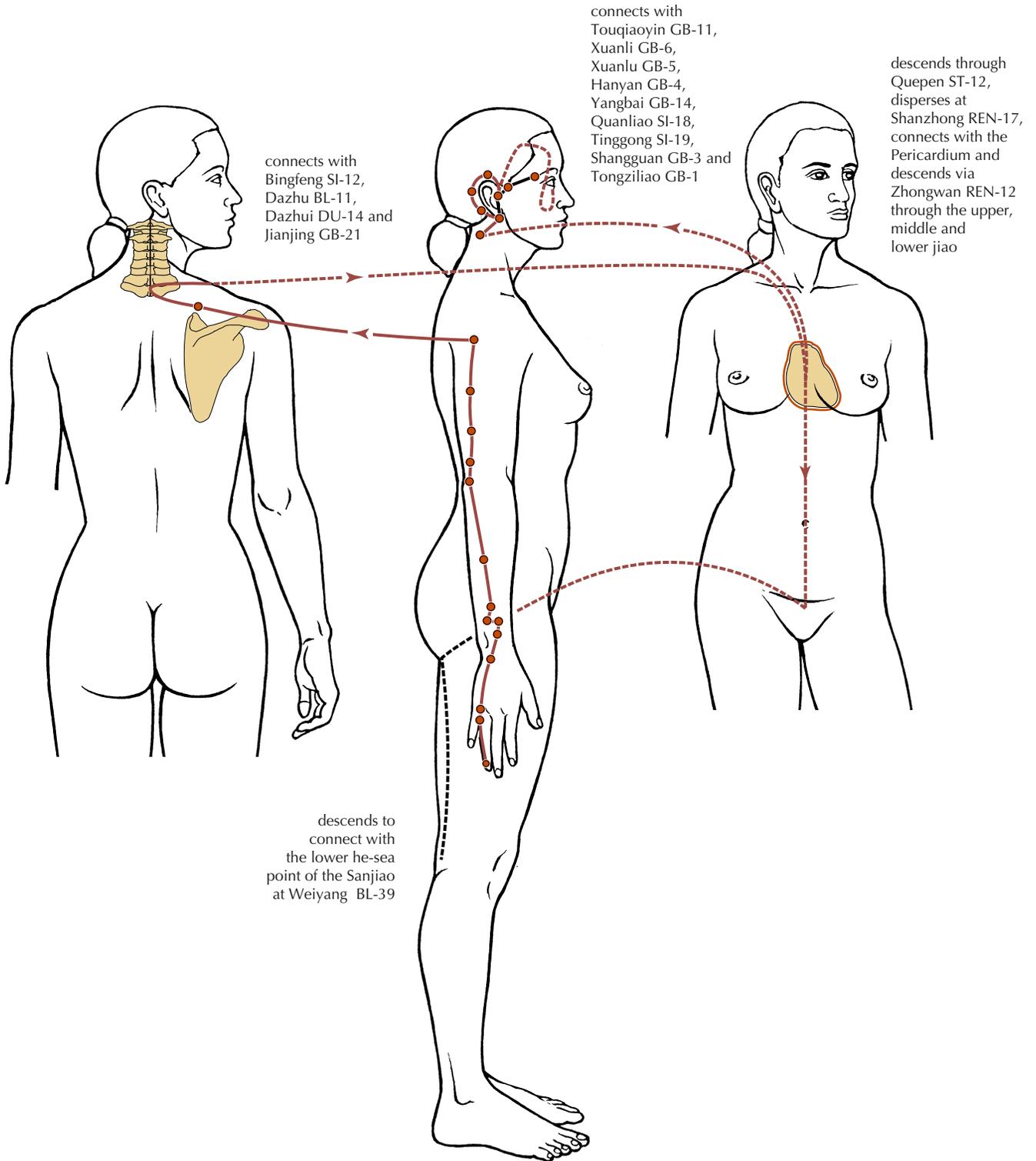

手少陽三焦經

THE SANJIAO CHANNEL
OF HAND SHAOYANG

THE SANJIAO CHANNEL OF HAND SHAOYANG



The Sanjiao primary channel

THE SANJIAO PRIMARY CHANNEL

- begins at the ulnar aspect of the tip of the ring finger and runs between the fourth and fifth metacarpal bones along the dorsum of the hand,
- travels up the posterior aspect of the forearm between the radius and the ulna and between the Large and Small Intestine channels,
- traverses the olecranon of the ulna at Tianjing SJ-10 and continues up the postero-lateral aspect of the upper arm to the shoulder where it intersects the Small Intestine channel at Bingfeng SI-12,
- travels towards the spine via Dazhu BL-11 where it intersects the Governing vessel at Dazhui DU-14,
- ascends laterally to the highest point of the shoulder where it intersects the Gall Bladder channel at Jianjing GB-21,
- descends anteriorly into the supraclavicular fossa at Quepen ST-12, then disperses midway between the breasts at Shanzhong REN-17,
- connects with the Pericardium then descends through the diaphragm to the abdomen via Zhongwan REN-12, linking along its pathway the upper, middle and lower jiao.

A branch of the channel

- separates in the region of Shanzhong REN-17,
- ascends to emerge from the supraclavicular fossa,
- rises along the neck to the posterior aspect of the ear,
- circles behind the ear via Touqiaoyin GB-11 to the temples where it intersects the Gall Bladder channel at Xuanli GB-6, Xuanlu GB-5, Hanyan GB-4 and Yangbai GB-14,
- winds down across the cheek, intersecting the Small Intestine channel at Quanliao SI-18,
- ascends to the inferior aspect of the eye.

Another branch

- separates behind the ear and enters the ear,
- emerges in front of the ear to intersect the Small Intestine and Gall Bladder channels at Tinggong SI-19 and Shangguan GB-3,
- crosses the previous branch on the cheek to terminate at the outer canthus of the eye at Sizhukong SJ-23, linking with Tongziliao GB-1.

According to the *Spiritual Pivot*¹ a branch of the Sanjiao primary channel descends to Weiyang BL-39.

The Sanjiao primary channel connects with the following zangfu: Sanjiao (upper, middle and lower jiao), Pericardium.

The Sanjiao primary channel meets with other channels at the following points: Bingfeng SI-12, Dazhu BL-11, Dazhui DU-14, Jianjing GB-21, Quepen ST-12, Shanzhong REN-17, Zhongwan REN-12, Touqiaoyin

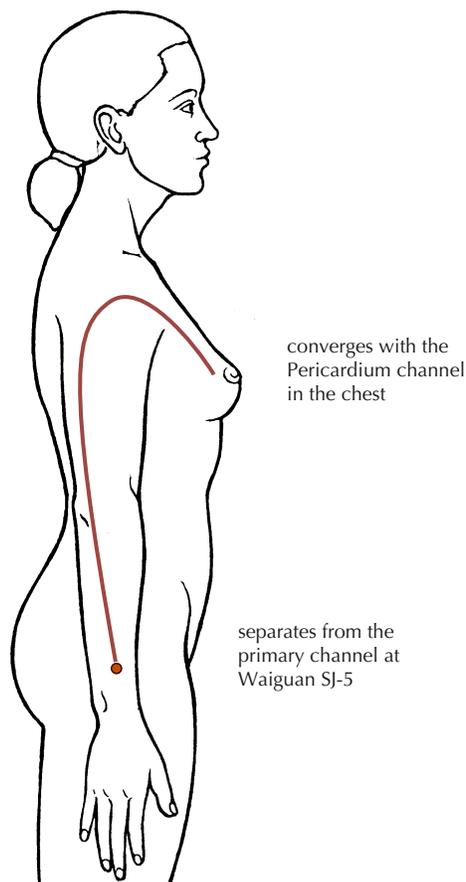
GB-11, Xuanli GB-6, Xuanlu GB-5, Hanyan GB-4, Yangbai GB-14, Quanliao SI-18, Tinggong SI-19, Shangguan GB-3, Tongziliao GB-1. *Note:* Jingming BL-1, Tianchi P-1, Baihui DU-20 and Fengchi GB-20 are classified as meeting points of the Sanjiao channel, but illustrations of the channel do not normally show these connections.

THE SANJIAO LUO-CONNECTING CHANNEL

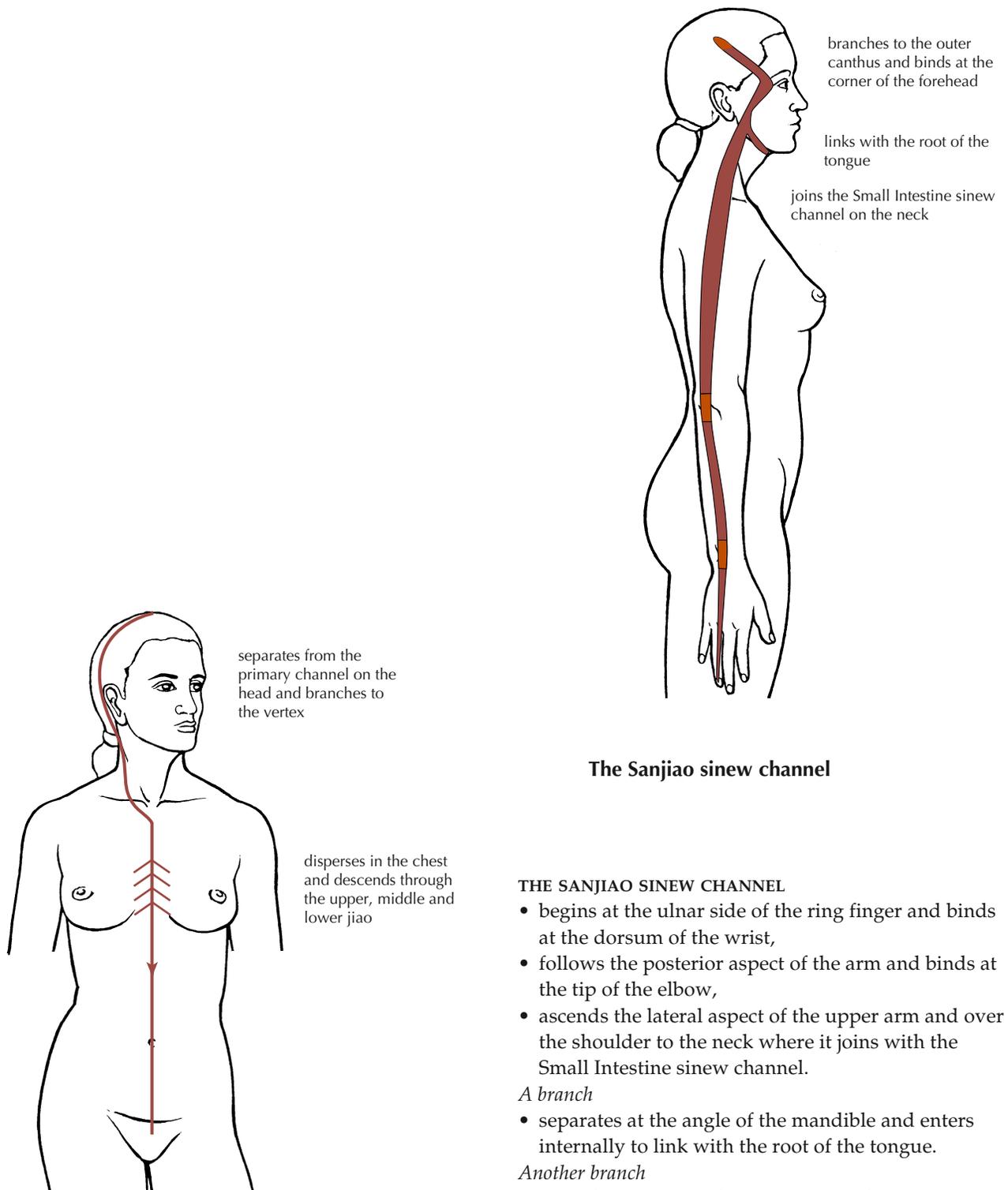
- separates from the Sanjiao primary channel at Waiguan SJ-5,
- proceeds up the posterior aspect of the arm and over the shoulder, converging with the Pericardium channel in the chest.

THE SANJIAO DIVERGENT CHANNEL

- separates from the primary channel on the head and branches to the vertex,
- descends into the supraclavicular fossa and across the three jiao, dispersing in the chest.



The Sanjiao luo-connecting channel



The Sanjiao sinew channel

THE SANJIAO SINEW CHANNEL

- begins at the ulnar side of the ring finger and binds at the dorsum of the wrist,
- follows the posterior aspect of the arm and binds at the tip of the elbow,
- ascends the lateral aspect of the upper arm and over the shoulder to the neck where it joins with the Small Intestine sinew channel.

A branch

- separates at the angle of the mandible and enters internally to link with the root of the tongue.

Another branch

- ascends anterior to the ear to join at the outer canthus of the eye,
- then ascends across the temple to bind at the corner of the forehead.

Pathological symptoms

Strained and cramping sensation along the course of the channel, curled tongue.

The Sanjiao divergent channel

DISCUSSION

The Sanjiao channel of hand shaoyang belongs to the fire phase, is interiorly-exteriorly coupled with the Pericardium channel, and is paired with the Gall Bladder channel of foot shaoyang according to six channel theory.

The Sanjiao-Pericardium relationship is further strengthened by the fact that:

- the Sanjiao primary channel connects with the Pericardium
- the Sanjiao luo-connecting channel converges with the Pericardium channel in the chest.

The Sanjiao-Gall Bladder relationship is strengthened by the fact that the Sanjiao channel connects with the Gall Bladder channel at the side of the head at points Tongziliao GB-1, Shangguan GB-3 to Xuanli GB-6, Touqiaoyin GB-11, Fengchi GB-20 and at Jianjing GB-21 on the top of the shoulder.

In addition it is important to note that:

- the interior pathway of the Sanjiao primary channel passes through and links the upper, middle and lower jiao.
- the interior pathway of the Sanjiao primary channel descends between the breasts to Shanzhong REN-17.
- the Sanjiao primary channel ascends both posterior and anterior to the ear as well as entering the ear.
- the Sanjiao primary channel ascends to the inferior aspect of the eye and the primary and sinew channels go to the outer canthus of the eye.
- the Sanjiao divergent channel spreads to the vertex.
- the Sanjiao sinew channel connects with the root of the tongue.
- the Sanjiao primary channel ascends through the cheek.

These channel connections, and the status of the Sanjiao as belonging to fire, determine many of the actions and indications of the Sanjiao channel points, which may be summarised as follows:

- Reducing fever. The Sanjiao channel belongs to fire and many of its points are indicated for febrile diseases, especially when due to exterior pathogenic factors. As far as differentiation of fevers according to the four levels is concerned, the Sanjiao channel primarily treats fevers at the defensive and qi levels, whilst the Pericardium channel mainly treats fevers at the nutritive and blood levels, although the most distal points of the Sanjiao channel (where the Pericardium and Sanjiao channels converge) are able to treat both. As far as differentiation of fevers

according to the Sanjiao theory is concerned, points of the Sanjiao channel mainly treat febrile diseases affecting the upper jiao Lung pattern, although its most distal points also treat the upper jiao Pericardium pattern. As for fever differentiation according to the six channels, both the *Spiritual Pivot*² and the *Essential Questions*³ state “Taiyang is the opening, yangming is the closing and shaoyang is the pivot”. The Sanjiao belongs to shaoyang (the pivot between exterior and interior) and several points of the channel are indicated for alternating chills and fever and malaria, the characteristic indications of shaoyang pattern. The heat-clearing action of the Sanjiao channel points extends to clearing heat from all regions traversed by the channel.

- Benefiting the ears. Various portions of the Sanjiao channel encircle or enter the ear, and many of its points are indicated for disorders of the ear such as tinnitus and deafness, especially when due to heat, uprising of yang or other excess pathogenic factors.
- Clearing heat from the eyes, especially wind-heat and Liver-Gall Bladder heat.
- Clearing heat from the neck, throat and tongue.
- Soothing the Heart and calming the spirit. Due to the close relationship between the Sanjiao and Pericardium channels, many points of the Sanjiao channel are indicated for pain of the chest and Heart as well as agitation, restlessness, mania, epilepsy and other manifestations of disordered spirit.
- Treating headaches. Shaoyang channel traverses the temples and side of the head, and points of the Sanjiao channel are much used in the treatment of headaches affecting this region.
- Harmonising the three jiao. Waiguan SJ-5 and Zhigou SJ-6 especially, are able to regulate the middle and lower jiao in the treatment of vomiting and constipation.