

HOUXI SI-3

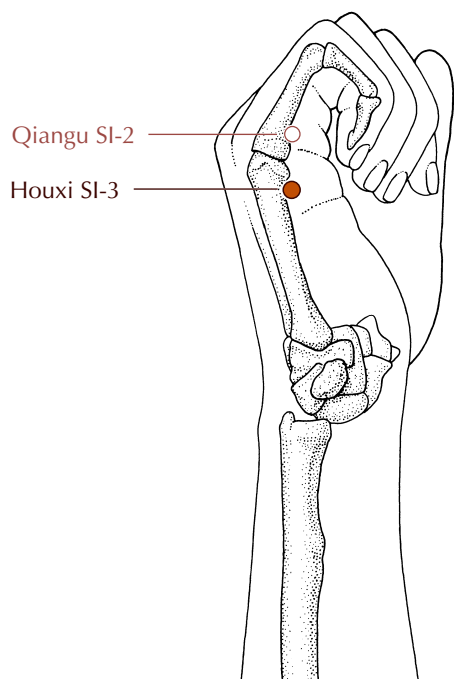
Back Stream

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溪

Shu-Stream and Wood point of the Small Intestine channel
Confluent point of the Governing vessel

LOCATION

On the ulnar border of the hand, in the substantial depression proximal to the head of the fifth metacarpal bone.

**LOCATION NOTE**

This point is easier to locate when the hand is made into a loose fist.

NEEDLING

Perpendicular insertion 0.5 to 2 cun, directed towards Sanjian L.I.-3. **Note:** needle with the hand in a loose fist position, i.e. with the metacarpal bones lying in the same plane; this is especially important when needling deeply towards the opposite side of the hand.

ACTIONS

Benefits the occiput, neck and back
 Activates the channel and alleviates pain
 Clears wind and heat and treats malaria
 Calms the spirit and treats epilepsy
 Clears heat and benefits the sensory orifices
 Regulates the Governing vessel

INDICATIONS

- Stiffness and pain of the neck, difficulty in turning the neck, one-sided headache, bilateral headache, pain of the back and shoulder, pain of the shoulder, elbow and arm, contraction of the elbow, contraction and pain of the fingers, pain of the lumbar region and knees, hemiplegia.
- Malaria, night sweating, cold shivering, chills and fever, febrile disease with absence of sweating, fullness of the chest, jaundice, dark hesitant urination.
- Epilepsy, mania-depression, disorders of the Governing vessel.
- Deafness, tinnitus, superficial visual obstruction, redness and pain of the eyes, swelling of the eyes with lacrimation, nosebleed, toothache, swelling of the throat and cheek, redness, swelling and pain of both cheeks, loss of voice following windstroke.

COMMENTARY

Houxi SI-3 is both the shu-stream point of the Small Intestine channel, which is interiorly-exteriorly coupled with the Heart channel, and the confluent point of the Governing vessel. Most of its actions and indications can be explained by its relationship to these three channels. In clinical practice Houxi SI-3 can be seen to have four main spheres of action.

Firstly it is an important point to treat pain, stiffness and contraction along the course of its related channels. Taiyang (Small Intestine and Bladder) channel traverses the occiput, neck, scapula and paravertebral regions, whilst the Governing vessel ascends along the spinal column from the coccyx to the head. According to the *Classic of Difficulties*³ the shu-stream points are indicated for “heaviness of the body and pain of the joints”. Houxi SI-3 is an essential distal point in the treatment of occipital headache (although also used for one-sided and bilateral headache) and stiffness and pain of the neck, whether acute or chronic and whether due to exterior pathogenic factors or interior disharmony. It has a significant influence on the spine as a whole, and is an important and frequently used distal point for pain of the upper spine and scapula, as well as in the treatment of acute lumbar sprain on the midline or lateral lumbar region. Houxi SI-3 is also important for disorders of the finger joints, especially the little and ring fingers, and may be needled deeply towards Sanjian L.I.-3 when all four fingers are affected. Houxi SI-3 is equally important in the treatment of pain and contraction of the arm, elbow and shoulder.

The second principal action of Houxi SI-3 is to dispel febrile disease. This may be explained by the fact that the taiyang Small Intestine channel belongs to fire, taiyang is the most exterior of the six channels, and the Governing

vessel governs all the yang channels and hence the exterior portion of the body as a whole. Houxi SI-3 is especially indicated in the treatment of malaria, and for when attack by exterior pathogenic wind-cold or wind-heat gives rise to chills and fever accompanied by severe neck pain or pain of the spine. A further reflection of its heat clearing action is in the treatment of night sweating, particularly in combination with Yinxi HE-6.

In the *Ode of the Obstructed River* the use of Houxi SI-3 is referred to as one of 'the eight therapeutic methods'. In this description of the application of the eight confluent points of the extraordinary vessels to affect specific symptoms and areas of the body, Houxi SI-3 is indicated for diseases of the Governing vessel and for mania-depression. The third action of Houxi SI-3, therefore, is in calming the spirit and treating both mania-depression and epilepsy. The former is due to phlegm and phlegm-heat which disturb and agitate the spirit, and the latter to disturbance of the spirit and brain by pathogenic wind and phlegm. According to Sun Si-miao, the famous 7th century physician "the head is the supreme leader, the place where man's spirit concentrates"⁴, whilst in the 16th century, Li Shi-zhen stated "the brain is the residence of the original spirit". Since the Small Intestine channel is interiorly-exteriorly related to the Heart which stores the spirit, and Houxi SI-3 is the confluent point of the Governing vessel which enters the brain, this point has long been considered important in the treatment of epilepsy. The *Song More Precious Than Jade*, for example, recommends it for the five types of epilepsy.

Fourthly, in common with points Shaoze SI-1 and Qiangu SI-2, Houxi SI-3 is able to clear both exterior and interior heat from the Small Intestine channel in the head (especially the ears and eyes) and to benefit the sensory orifices. It is thus indicated for disorders such as tinnitus and deafness, superficial visual obstruction, redness, pain and swelling of the eyes with lacrimation, nosebleed, and pain and swelling of the cheeks.

COMBINATIONS

- Stiffness of the neck with inability to turn the head: Houxi SI-3 and Tianyou SJ-16 (*Supplementing Life*).
- Headache: Houxi SI-3, Tianzhu BL-10, Taodao DU-13, Dazhu BL-11 and Kongzui LU-6 (*Thousand Ducat Formulas*).
- Pain of the head and eyes: Houxi SI-3 and Waiguan SJ-5 (*Divine Moxibustion*).
- Pain of the forearm: Houxi SI-3, Shousanli LI-10 and Quchi LI-11 (*Supplementing Life*).
- Contraction of the elbow: Houxi SI-3, Chize LU-5, Jianyu L.I.-15, Xiaohai SI-8, Jianshi P-5, Daling P-7 and Yuji LU-10 (*Great Compendium*).
- Pain of the shoulder and back: Houxi SI-3, Wangu SI-4, Fengmen BL-12, Jianjing GB-21, Zhongzhu SJ-3, Zhigou SJ-6 and Weizhong BL-40 (*Great Compendium*).
- Malaria with much heat and little cold: Houxi SI-3, Dazhui DU-14, Jianshi P-5 and Quchi L.I.-11 (*Great Compendium*).
- Malaria with much cold and little heat: Houxi SI-3, Dazhui DU-14 and Quchi L.I.-11 (*Great Compendium*).
- Severe night sweating: Houxi SI-3 and Yinxi HE-6 (*One Hundred Symptoms*).
- The five types of epilepsy: Houxi SI-3, Jiuwei REN-15 and Shenmen HE-7 (*Song More Precious Than Jade*).
- Epilepsy: Houxi SI-3, Neiguan P-6, Shenmen HE-7, Xinshu BL-15 and Yinbai SP-1 (*Complete Collection*).
- Epileptic convulsions, mad walking, inability to sleep, agitation of the Heart: Houxi SI-3, Zanzhu BL-2, Xiaohai SI-8 and Qiangjian DU-18 (*Thousand Ducat Formulas*).
- Mania, desires to ascend to high places and sing, discards clothing and runs around: Houxi SI-3, Shenmen HE-7 and Chongyang ST-42 (*Great Compendium*).
- Sudden mania: Houxi SI-3, Jianshi P-5 and Hegu L.I.-4 (*Great Compendium*).
- Deafness: Houxi SI-3, Qiangu SI-2 and Pianli L.I.-6 (*Supplementing Life*).
- Nosebleed with stifled breathing: Houxi SI-3, Chengling GB-18, Fengchi GB-20, Fengmen BL-12 and Yixi BL-45 (*Thousand Ducat Formulas*).
- Jaundice: Houxi SI-3 and Laogong P-8 (*One Hundred Symptoms*).