

# Bulletin of Clinical Acupuncture®

## A Compendium of Clinical Methods

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## The Forbidden ‘r’ Word – relapse!

### Preamble

You diagnose a condition well and treat it so symptoms and signs disappear. Patient is glad and sings your praise and life is fun all around. What could go wrong with this near perfect picture? A relapse!

In a few days or weeks the patient is back with very nearly the same problem, or it may even have become aggravated.

You go through the same routine, this time with a fine toothcomb, and come to more or less the same diagnosis, and treatment plan, and again there is gratifying relief, and the sun begins to shine in its right quarter.

Praises, thanks, handshakes, smiles, bill, payment, sound ethics, fun. And you begin to fervently wish to not see the patient again, certainly not for the same problem.

But the patient *is* back, and things look hairy, and the interaction awkward. That there was a sound diagnosis, of that there is no question. That the treatment helped, no controversy to that. That things did not stick, that is painfully obvious.

At last the patient asks the fateful words, “What is wrong? O healer of the most celestial demeanor, what in heck is going on? Is something wrong with me? Or ...”.

Where does one go from here? Does one do the chivalrous and refer to a fellow acupuncturist or herbalist? Who might take care of the problem so it is gone, which is well, but the patient may also fade in that direction. And the basic issue of what went wrong in spite of the many things that went right, remain unresolved?

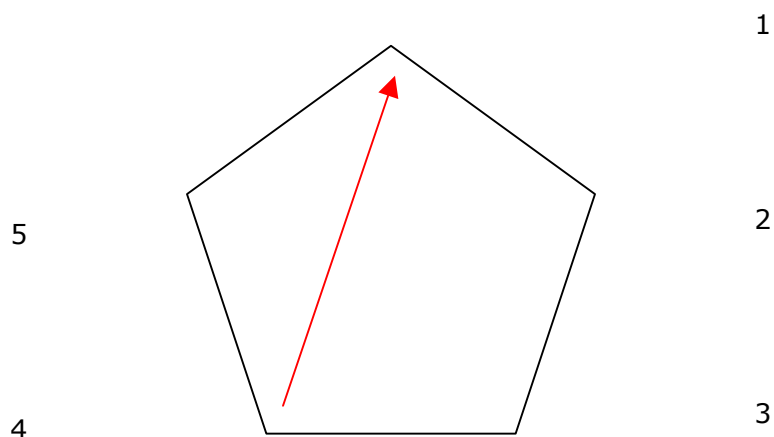
In a TCM practice one sound patient less can mean a significant set back, and certainly the risk, in lieu of the relapses, of a word of mouth one will have to do much to live down.

To that mystery there is this one possible answer. That something lacked to the system of diagnosis, which led you to the symptoms of the problem, but not to the Design of what was wrong.

A simple remedy to this vexing question is that always, repeat always, look for a diagnostic *pattern*. Even when a swath of symptoms points to an easy conclusion to what is wrong in a symptomatic way, in a way which involves paired channels, or an organ zang or fu or both, avoid that and look for patterns.

Traditional medicine is a pattern, not a rote of symptoms and signs. For instance migraine is not a migraine, it is variously:

**Figure 1. The Five Kinds of Migraine – see legend**



Legend<sup>1</sup>

1. The Wood migraine is self-inflicted and will cause no grave harm. Its nature is that of a **regular evil**. If corrected it and maintained there can be no relapse.
2. The Fire migraine is Son inflicted on Mother and will cause no grave harm. Its nature is that of a **depletion evil**. If corrected it and maintained will be little risk of relapse.
3. The Earth migraine is the Afflicted element returning the favor on a debilitated Afflicter. This will cause no grave harm. Its nature will that of a **weakness evil**. If corrected it and maintained there will be little risk of relapse.
4. The Metal migraine is the Afflicter element now uncontrolled and bent on overwhelming. This will cause grave harm. Its nature is that of a **destroyer evil**. If not corrected it there will be great risk and certain relapse.
5. The Water migraine is Mother inflicted on Son and will cause no grave harm. Its nature will be that of **repletion evil**. If corrected it and maintained there will be little risk of relapse.

Moral of the story

If the patient were indeed a Metal migraine and was treated by the regular symptomatic point prescription using reduction on a rising Liver Heat or Fire, supported by augmenting points to free the flow of Liver Blood, which is a large part of Liver yin, but all the time Metal was not addressed, there would be certain relapse.

Temptations

Even when during the history, the channel pairs and organs are very visible, don't fall for that, for the real Design tends to hide, and unless actively looked for with a knowledge, is easily missed.

### Whence ye Design?

Over the centuries there have been very many systems of Design, which are there for the Edification of the Innocents.

Which ever you take to after trial and error is the one, which should work for you, the critical criterion being that you see the Design, Pattern, the Elemental signatures.

### Is there a scenario worse than Relapse?

There is, where a well-meaning, symptoms-based intervention actually warps the elemental pattern so that the presenting symptoms disappear and turn into a vicarious set with no bearing on the original Design.

### Does the Design approach have a different treatment protocol?

Entirely. While the symptomatic approach uses points with specific utility, the Design or Pattern approach works largely with a highly specialized pair of open 5-Shu points.

In the case of the Metal migraine one would be preoccupied with settling issues with Metal and then going ahead and directly dealing with the Liver flux, if there remained any.

In other words such a migraine would be treated largely with Metal harmonizing, where by the attack would begin to subside with not one Liver or GB point touched, these being brought into play almost as an adjunct to finally consolidate the effect.

Not many, perhaps not any of the typical migraine points like Liver 2 or 3, GB 41, SJ 5, GB 20, would have to be invoked.

### Why 5-Shu points and why horary?

5-Shu because they are element specific and horary because they are open at the time with all the healing qi you would ever want to create a spectacular healing.

### And relapses?

What relapses? Never heard of the word.

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## An anatomical basis of elemental relationships

Often one finds an anatomical basis to the classical bi-elemental relationships on the 5-element grid. Less frequently one finds a microscopic substantiation of such relationships which can be charming to see.

One such relationship has two fold implications, revolving around Fire and Water:

1. First such relationship is that of Water as Controller and Fire as the Controlled. In pleasant time this results in a fine bonding with due and benevolent control so Fires do not Rage and Heat not do a Nero burning down the neighborhood on a mad impulse. If things do go wrong, as they will in all closely knit relationships, an equilibrium is urgently desired if one will avoid an entire dampening down of all Fires of emotion and awareness, as well of precious Shen, and all things somatic which go along with the pair.

2. Second such relationship is more equivocal and civilized and has no inherent threatening. In this case there is a finely tuned balancing act between two equal partners, a near perfect relationship of two aware, and civilized partners, one Fire and the Other Water, colloquially and somewhat unromantically known as the Axis of the same name.

Below is a diagram, which typifies this at the microscopic level, which disposition can also be applied to human relationships if one has the imagination to sustain it and the adventurous spirit to get away with it.

**Figure 2. Distribution of blood vessels in the cortex of Kidney**

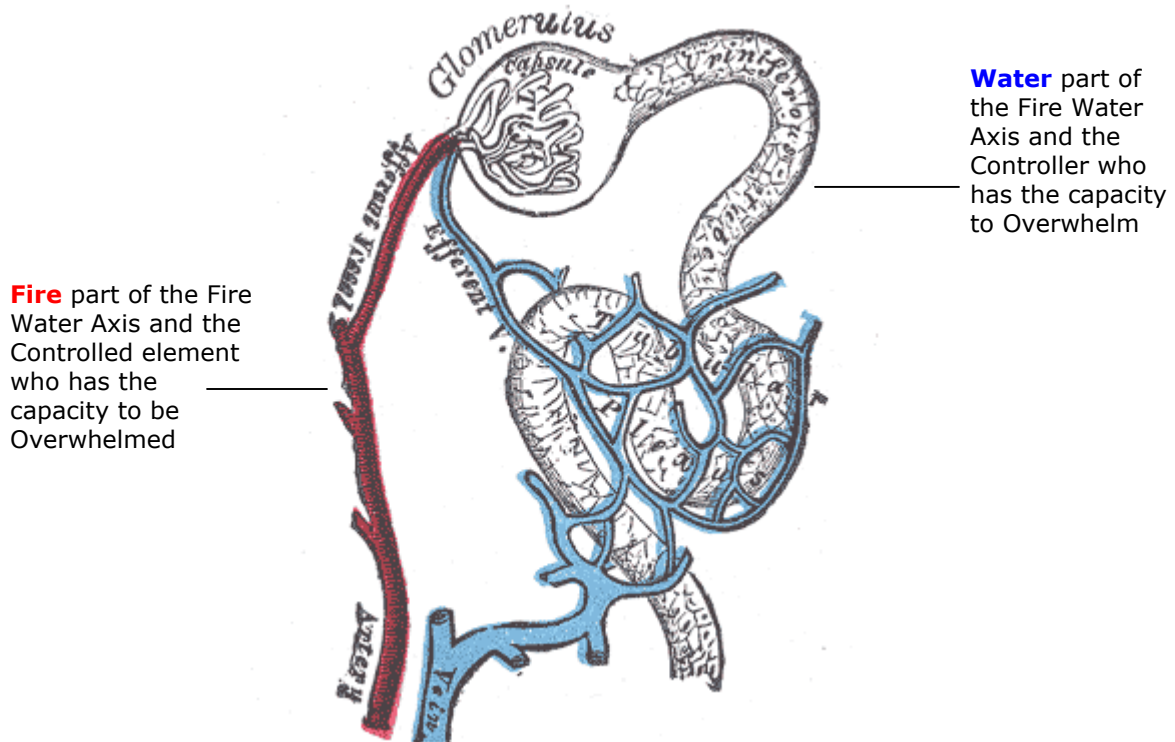


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*Notice the yang of Fire, the arteriole, approaching the Water complex as the Afferent aspect, all intent and content and attitude. The yin of Fire, the venule, emerges from this interaction and as a tame consort, sans Heat, Fire nor incendiary tendencies, with the tubular complex aspect of the glomerulous surrounding Bowman's capsule.*

### Wisdom?

That Fire, however Wild and Rising and Heated and Rampant, had better watch it, for Water can so easily Douse it. On any given day.

### Clinical applications?

Very many and picturesquely dramatic, but we leave it for another day, we are near to have exhausted the word count to, and the pixel load for, the Bulletin and ye Editor watches with a Hawk eye which doth not bear trifling with.

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All these Courses are exclusively Design based

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## In coming Issues

One sure topic is the Astro-Numeric aspects of healing as they apply to illnesses and to the Healers who deal with these.

Did you know there are as many as Nine Gates of Healing open all healers, regulated by the date of which the he or she drew the first breath in Metal?

By that respect one may be a Healer at the Gate of Intellect, while another is at the Gate of Intuition, and so on.

Problems come about when you don't know your Natural Portal and work out of an alien Gate all your life, always wondering what in the world is wrong, what's missing in the picture

In the next issue then, if fair winds continue to blow.

## The editorial staff

The Bulletin is the work of acupuncture professionals like you with an aptitude and experience in journalism, reportage, screenwriting, and movie making. The same team also creates state of the art workshops on DVD and audio CD as well as highly clinical workbooks.

## In conclusion

We hope you found this Bulletin edifying as well as easy to read and will enjoy the coming issues.

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