



# **An Exposition on the Eight Extraordinary Vessels: Acupuncture, Alchemy, and Herbal Medicine**

*Charles Chace, Miki Shima*

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Li Shi-Zhen's Exposition on the *Eight Extraordinary Vessels* (*Qi jing ba mai kao*) is among the most remarkable texts in the Chinese medical literature. Bringing together writings on acupuncture, herbal medicine, and internal cultivation (*nei dan*), it argues that aspiring adepts and physicians alike must understand the full scope of the extraordinary vessels if they hope to achieve their respective goals. Although the Exposition is a cornerstone of the extraordinary vessel literature, it is rarely, if ever, considered on its own terms. Li's approach to extraordinary vessel acupuncture and herbal medicine reflects a perspective that differs considerably from the strategies familiar to most modern readers. His work on the extraordinary vessels is every bit as innovative in its own milieu as his other seminal writings, *Pulse Studies of the Lakeside [Recluse]* (*Bin-Hu mai xue*) and *Comprehensive Outline of the Materia Medica* (*Ben cao gang mu*), are in theirs.

This volume is the first translation of the Exposition published in English, and it is among the most comprehensive discussions of the text available in any language. It is divided into five parts. Part I provides an introductory overview of the main themes running throughout the text: theory, acupuncture, herbal medicine, internal alchemy, and pulse diagnosis. Part II contains the Chinese text and translation of the Exposition itself. Part III presents extensive commentaries on the text, and Part IV discusses the influence of Li Shi-Zhen's extraordinary vessel writings on subsequent pre-modern and modern physicians. Part V consists of appendices containing tables of herbs, prescriptions, acupuncture holes, and the people and books mentioned in the Exposition. There is also an extensive bibliography, point/hole and herb/formula index, and general index.

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