

What is the Difference in Nature and Clinical Application of REN-6 Qihai and REN-4 Guanyuan?

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During my years of teaching acupuncture, many students asked the same question: 'What is the difference between REN-6 Qihai and REN-4 Guanyuan?' This column will explain the difference between REN-6 Qihai and REN-4 Guanyuan using the TCM classical texts.

REN-6 Qihai

REN-6 Qihai – sea of Qi – was first described in *Zhen Jiu Jia Yi Jing*. The point is also called Dan Tian. It is the place where the Yuan Qi has been formed and is concentrated. REN-6 Qihai is the steam of the Yuan Qi. It can either support and strengthen Spleen Qi or steam Bladder Qi to distribute Jin (of Jin-Ye) into the whole body.

REN-6 Qihai is the one of most important points to tonify and regulate the Qi.

REN-6 Qihai has the following main functions in the clinical applications:

1. *Tonify Yuan Qi and rise the Yang Qi:* Using REN-6 Qihai as major point can treat all kinds of Zang-Fu Qi deficiency syndromes; combination with DU-20, REN-12, REN-4 Guanyuan and ST-36 Zusanli can strongly rise Yang Qi to resolve Qi prolapse syndromes.
2. *Tonify Kidney Qi and regulate the menstruation:* Using REN-6 Qihai with REN-4 Guanyuan, REN-3 Zhongji, SP-6 Sanyinjiao, ST-29 Guilai and BL-23 Shenshu is the formula to tonify Kidney Qi to treat, for example, impotence, uterine bleeding, leucorrhea and irregular menstruation.
3. *Regulate the Xia Jiao Qi mechanism:* REN-6 Qihai is also named as Dan Tian, the location where the whole body Qi is concentrated. For the treatment of distension of lower abdomen and running piglet syndrome it combines with REN-17 Shanzhong, SJ-6 Zhigou and LIV-3 Taichong.

REN-4 Guanyuan

REN-4 Guanyuan – closed gate of yuan – was first described in *Ling Shu* Chapter 21.

The name indicates that REN-4 Guanyuan is the store of Yuan Yin, Yuan Yang, Yuan Jing and Yuan Qi.

REN-4 Guanyuan is the gate of life between the two kidneys and is related to Ming Men, San Jiao Yuan Qi and moving Qi between kidneys.

It is the meeting point of the Ren Mai with the foot three Yin meridians, as well is the front mu-point of the Small Intestine.

REN-4 Guanyuan is the root of 12 meridians and five Zang and six Fu. It is the most important point to tonify Kidney Yang.

Using moxa on REN-4 Guanyuan as major point for treatment of all kinds of Yang deficiency syndromes.

REN-4 Guanyuan also strengthens Yang and stops Yang Qi collapse.

It is said in the *Bian Que Xin Shu* (Book of Bian Que's Secrets) written by Dou Cai in the Song Dynasty: 'In case some one his four limbs are extreme cold, with a fine and thready pulse in all six positions (wei xi mai), it means that the Yang Qi is going to collapse, three hundred moxa cones are need to apply on REN-4 Guanyuan immediately in order to rescue Yang and life.'

Not only REN-4 Guanyuan but also REN-8 Shenque and DU-4 Mingmen have Yang tonifying functions. REN-8 Shenque is used for warming and tonifying Spleen yang and DU-4 Mingmen supports the Ming Men fire.

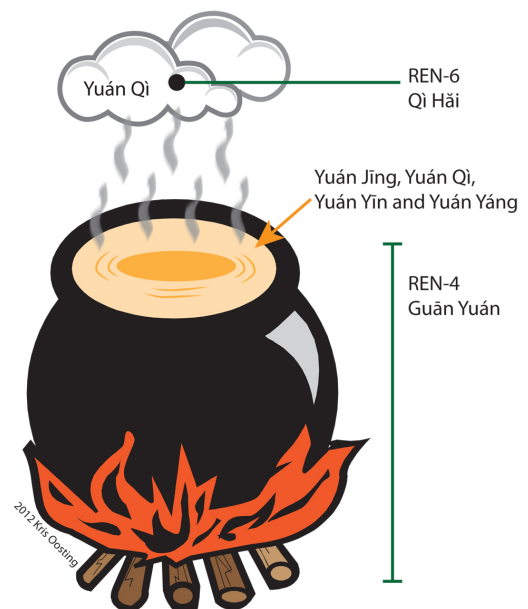
Conclusion

According to classical texts, the main difference between REN-6 Qihai and REN-4 Guanyuan is:

- REN-6 Qihai is the point mainly to tonify the Yuan Qi and
- REN-4 Guanyuan is the major point to warm and strengthen Kidney Yang and indirectly nourish Kidney Yin and Jing.

The mechanisms are depicted in the illusion below.

REN-4 Guanyuan is like a kettle, which contains the Yuan-Qi, Yuan-Jing, Yuan-Yin and Yuan-Yang. And if one tonifies REN-4 Guanyuan, shown by the fire under the kettle, the content becomes available. One opens the gate (Guan). REN-6 Qihai then activates the available Yuan-Qi.



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