

## Pediatric Shonishin Case Study: A Full Childhood

by Raven Lang, L.Ac., O.M.D.

I shall call the child Levi. He first came to me at 21 months of age and stopped coming when he was getting ready to finish high school and already on his way to college.



Levi comes from a mother and father who are both highly educated, very close with each other in philosophy and life style, and both professional. If

babies could choose their parents, many would choose these. They are lovely people whom I came to know through the care of Levi. The mother is Italian and was raised Catholic but is a practicing Buddhist, and the father is Eastern European Jewish.

Levi's mother called me on the phone in January of 1995 and gave me a brief history of Levi's health. His DOB was in March of 1993. He had already been on antibiotics 8 times for ear infections and his mother was at the end of her rope with following that course of care. Since I knew she had a lot to say and I had a number of questions to ask and information to gather and impart, I asked her to come in without her baby for our first meeting so that these tasks could be completed more easily.

On January 14th, 1995 I met Levi's mother. On that day Levi weighed 28 lbs, was 21 months old, and was 31" long. He was a happy baby and in the care of a pediatrician who had a good reputation in the community. His birth was a STAT cesarean section

after a three-day labor that was non-productive due to fibroids. He was fully breastfed from birth and continued to nurse. He was partially immunized because he was held behind by recurrent ear infections, and was not up to date with boosters for polio, DPT, nor had he had the MMR. Due to the ear infections he had also been under the care of a chiropractor and a homeopath for one full year. He was in daycare while his mother worked part time and his daycare provider was an excellent woman who was an ex-nurse, with four other babies in her care. Beside his mother's milk, Levi's diet consisted of cucumbers, pasta, whole fruits, beans, carrots, mushrooms and no milk. He had been introduced to small amounts of cheese, peanut butter, bread, yogurt, O.J., and drank 3-4 glasses of soymilk per week.

During this meeting we talked about the possibility of wheat and dairy being the cause of mucous and possibly disturbing the immune system—especially in future months. Since Levi had been given so many antibiotics, I encouraged his mother to give him probiotics and remain on them for months. I gave the mother a little booklet that I wrote and give to each set of parents that includes information about herbs and supplements, and also instructions on how to prepare herbs with appropriate dosing. I also sent her home with Xiao Chai Hu Tang and some vitamins for children so they could begin an herbal and supplemental treatment right away. I talked about Shonishin, when to bring the baby in for treatment, and showed her the tools used in Shonishin. In the booklet I drew an outline of the body, both the

anterior and posterior, and explained some of the concepts of how Shonishin worked, showing her how to massage specific areas of the body that addressed Levi's problem.

On January 16, 1995, I met Levi. He was a happy healthy bright little guy and was very trusting and receptive to me. His lungs were clear, his heart rate was 86/minute, and on an ear scale of 1-10 (#1 being slightly pink and red being #10) his right ear was #5 and his left was #2. Mother said he was resistant to the herbs, but that she was able to get them into him with a little coaxing. I then did Shonishin on Levi and learned with palpation of points and the spinal roll that he was very sensitive at T2, 3, 7, and 8, and the traditional ear points such as TW 17, GB 2, TW 5, and GB 41. I taught his mother how to do the spinal roll on Levi and then drew on paper the points Feng Men, Fei Shu, Gan Shu, Dan Shu, and Pi Shu. I instructed her to do the spinal roll each night before bed and massage the shu points nightly or whenever he was in her lap throughout the day. I also taught her how to find the Shao Yang points on Levi's hands and feet and instructed her to massage them daily.

On January 28, 1995, Mother said Levi is "Doing much better". He enjoyed the massage and was compliant in taking the herbs (minor bupleurum, glycerine echinacea, mullein), and supplements—Vit A, C, D3, E, and a propolis product I carried for children. At the first sign of a cold Levi was given the homeopathic Oscilloccinum, which his mother learned about from the homeopath.

For the following year I saw Levi once a month at Shonishin time. He did well with herbal treatment and home massage, and his mother said he "has had radiant health". In March of that year he was exposed to chicken pox twice and in May got a case of it that was a bigger outbreak than any of the other children in his care center. I told his mother this was a sign of his ability to release the toxins and that a big outbreak is superior to a small one, giving him lasting immunity. In November, 11 months after we began Shonishin, I began to give Levi one or two in-and-out needles, especially if he had a runny nose or was extra clingy with his mother. Also at the end of May he had his DPT booster and did well afterwards, although he did

have a bout of diarrhea the following day. In June he was exposed to pinworms but he never got them. I also spoke to his mother about pinworms and how she could tell if he had them, since she was looking hard for them daily. In August his four other day-care mates got fevers, but Levi did not.

One year after Levi's first treatment we celebrated in the fact that he had gone the year without taking antibiotics and any little cold or virus he seemed to get came and went unremarkably. He continued to come in monthly for Shonishin, sometimes with needles, and sometimes without. On May 1st, 16 months after Levi began treatment, he came in with glassy eyes, green nasal mucous, strawberry tongue, and a fever with a heart rate of 144. Both ears were very red, both #10. His lungs were clear. I treated him with Shonishin and needles, increased his dose of herbs, and saw him the next day for a ten-minute follow up and for supporting his mother in getting through a fever without relying on antibiotics. His ears were #6 and #7, his heart rate was down to 120, and his eyes looked more normal. So I was encouraged that we were on the right track and encouraged his mother to have faith he'd come through this fever. I once again gave him needles, and saw him 4 days later on May 6. His heart rate was down to 96, and ears were #1 and #2. He did well and mother was empowered with getting him through this "infection" by a brand new method of treatment, which is a necessary and important step for the parents. He resumed the monthly treatments for the next three months.

In August all three members of his family had been fighting colds and his mom brought him in "just because". Levi's heart rate was 96, lungs clear, and right ear was #3. His tongue was moist with a red tip. He received Shonishin and needles, and did well. In September and October he came in and was fine, and in those months it was the first time Levi exercised his two year old right-to-refuse needles. In honoring his right to refuse, we did only Shonishin. I did not see him again till January of the following year.

In 1998, I saw Levi 17 times. During that year he had a nausea/vomiting bug in January that was relieved quickly with Shonishin, needles, dietary advice, and herbs. In August they vacationed hard and he did splendidly. In September he began kindergarten with 18 other children in a Buddhist school where he immediately caught a cold. Mother felt anxious about

her little one going to school and felt that Levi picked up on her anxiety. She had lots of emotions about this big change. That month Levi came in with a temperature of 100. His lungs were clear, his heart rate was 84, and his left ear was slightly pink. He had Shonishin and needles and mom picked up more of his formulas. In October Levi came in and he was on his 8th day of antibiotics, which was the first time since his initial visit. His heart rate was 90, lungs and ears were normal, but he was continuing to cough, and the cough sounded wet. I taught his mother how to percuss his lungs and gave her dietary advice, which was to feed him small frequent meals rather than three squares a day, and suggested foods that were easy to digest. Advice was to increase probiotics and keep him on the Xiao Chai Hu Tang and all his vitamins and supplements. At that time he was given Morus and Platycodi for the cough as well as Protease. In November and December of that year he was well and came in for monthly treatments.

In 1999, I saw Levi four times. Each time he was slightly under the weather but otherwise the year was unremarkable. He remained on herbs and supplements and his mother happily continued to work on him at home with massage.

In 2000, Levi was seven years old. I saw him once when he had a cold. His mother had learned enough about Shonishin and the pressure points, percussion, and which herbs to give when, that they stopped Shonishin treatment for the other eleven months of that year.

In 2001, Levi came in once for sinus congestion and a cold. Ears and lungs were clear, heart rate was 80, and mother was dosing him with the appropriate herbs and following the instructions as she had been doing for years.

In 2002, Levi came in May and it was the “first sickness in a long time”. He had a big cough that was worse in the evenings and without much phlegm. His tongue was full of strawberries, lungs clear, heart 84, and each ear was slightly red. He received Shonishin, in-and-out needles, and moxa via a tiger warmer. I saw him one more time the following month with tender ears, but all other signs and symptoms were unremarkable. There was some fluid behind the tympanic membranes, which

I thought was likely due to the debris caused by the cough he had the month prior.

In February 2003, Levi came in for a treatment. Ten days prior he had a flu shot and shortly thereafter got sick with a fever and a nasty sore throat. His parents took him into ER and there he was given an antibiotic shot because he was positive for strep. His mom took him to the doctor who prescribed a full course of antibiotics. He remained on the full regime of herbs and high doses of probiotics. His heart rate was 75, right ear #2, left ear normal. His tongue was full of strawberries with a yellow coat in the back. He received a needle treatment and mom stocked up on more herbs and supplements. He was sent home with Chuan Xin Lian.

In March and April of that year Levi was on a third round of antibiotics for continued strep throat and he came in each of those months during Shonishin time. In May he returned, finally off the meds and on his full regime of probiotics, Xiao Chai Hu Tang, vitamins, and Protease. He had nasal congestion with a slight headache. He received a treatment with retained needles. In August he came in because he had caught a cold after a boogie-boarding event the week prior and was coughing. He was cupped and given needles. In October he came in for a wellness treatment. He remained on the herbs and supplements and was off dairy, wheat, and sugar. He was cupped again and given needles. During all these procedures Levi had been very receptive, never refusing the cupping or the needles, and always had a smile on his face when he saw me. He was a quiet boy, very focused, and seemed to be intent on what we were saying as we talked. During these early years I never remember Levi being difficult or having a tantrum. He was a grounded individual even as a baby and a youngster.

In 2004, I saw Levi three times. In February for an injury from a Tai Kwan Do class which froze his shoulder and neck and for which he saw a chiropractor. I treated him with a strong procedure of gua-sha (which he received well) and gave him needles. In June Levi came in for a cold, which he had had for 8 weeks. Apparently he caught it right after the neck injury and mom reported that “it just lingered and lingered”. His sinuses were full and the sinus points at various places on his body (such

as: UB 2, ST 2, TW 3, GB 15 - 16, and 41 - 42, L.I. 20, St 43 - 44) were all sore. He had a cough and his throat was sore, but looked normal on visual inspection. His ears looked perfect, his lungs were clear, and his heart rate was 72. He received a needle treatment with cupping, percussion, and moxa.

In 2005, Levi came in three times. Each time he had sinus congestion or cough, but his ears remained clear and he never had a fever or elevated heart rate. In each visit his lungs were clear. He remained on herbs, his mother continued to percuss him when needed, and he cut out dairy and sugar when not feeling well, as these two foods had been shown to clearly aggravate his symptoms. Otherwise he was well and growing beautifully. He was maturing into a wonderful person with a strong center, an open heart, and great respect for his parents and teachers. He was a high achiever in school. His kidney pulses had become quite present, showing the strength of his constitution and the start of his sexual maturation.

In 2006, Levi came in twice. In April he had a sore throat and cough. His appetite was good, his pulse was 72, his mouth was dry and the tongue was pink, moist, and had a red tip. He was given needles and cupping. In July he had the stomach flu with vomiting and diarrhea, tongue had a greasy coat, his pulse was slippery and 80. I had them pick up a recharge to re-establish his electrolytes, advised rice, probiotics, and applesauce, and sent him home with Pill Curing.

In 2007, Levi was in twice, in January for a cold and again in October when he was exposed to his friend's virus and had a sore throat and his sinuses were beginning to congest. He was given gua-sha, needles, and herbs for sinus congestion and sore throat. He was doing the neti pot at home for the sinuses.

In February 2008, Levi came in fighting a viral infection. His temperature was 99 but two days previously had been 101.5. He felt sick with reduced appetite and a headache. His treatment included lots of gua-sha (on neck, head, and above eyebrows) and needles, which were retained. I advised his mother to give him hot foot-baths when he was feeling stuffy, hot, or headachy.

In July he came in for a wellness treatment. His

schedule was full, as he was in summer school and had been feeling a bit off with the sensation of a virus. We talked about the need for rest and play as continual schooling is stressful.

In September he came in twice. He was back in school and doing advanced classes. His nose was stuffy and phlegmy with clear phlegm. Back of his throat was sore. Since July he had seen his doctor twice for sore throat, and two strep tests were negative. The doctor was unconcerned. His right ear was full of wax, so I candled it twice. His left ear was clear and healthy. Throat looked healthy and lungs were clear. He was again on no dairy or sugar. He was taking Vitamins A and D, protease, Chuan Xin Lian, and 15 drops of Grape Seed Extract. Whenever Levi was sick and for some days afterward, he was also on Xiao Chai Hu Tang.

In December he came in with another cold. Sinuses stuffed and right ear was slightly red with lots of fluid behind the drum. Left ear was normal. Tongue was moist and pink, pulse was soft, full, and both kidney pulses were quite palpable. The rate was 60/minute. He was given cupping, gua-sha, and needles that were fully retained. A hot rice pack was placed on the right ear during his needles and he was sent home with instructions to heat ear with a hot rice pack and blow up a balloon once the rice pack had cooled. This helps the fluids in the eustachian tube to be released.

In 2009, Levi was sixteen years old and at the start of his second eight-year cycle in maturation. He came in October. He was not only in high school but also taking classes at the junior college. He was stressed. Said he wanted to go to school and become an architect. His pulse was soft and slow with very palpable kidney pulses, the tongue had white fur and the tip had strawberries. Right ear tender but looking normal. He just finished a stomach virus with vomiting and diarrhea. I tiger warmed points and gave him needles.

I left my practice in April 2011, and had not seen Levi since 2009. He went off to UCLA and finished college, and I received an honorable invitation to attend his graduation and was sent photos of him with his parents all smiling with joy of his accomplishments. His major was in political



science. As of this moment, 2016, he is presently working out of state in one of the democratic president campaigns and is a happy young man. I continue to be in touch with his parents and hear about him whenever changes are afoot.

In conclusion, we can look at this case and see many aspects of care. When looking back to 1995, we had less information about the microbiome than we do today, but in seeing that Levi was born by a STAT cesarean section, and likely his mother was given last minute antibiotics for the section, we can see that he was born with less of an endowment of good bacteria than a vaginally born baby, or one whose mother was not on antibiotics. He was, however, given to his mother immediately after delivery, and was also nursed during the immediate post-partum. Knowing the type of relationship that he had with his mother, I am sure that the microbiota of the skin and breast milk were passed on in those first days after delivery.

During Levi's babyhood and childhood he was, along with allopathic, chiropractic, and homeopathic care, treated with Traditional Chinese Medicine. The acupuncture was begun at 21 months with Shonishin, and at three years old an in-and-out insertion of needles had begun. Herbs were given from the first day I met his mother, and even though formulas changed throughout the years, some of them remained a constant base-line for maintaining wellness and getting through a cold or flu without much ado. Dietary advice and home care such as which points to massage, when to percuss, which specific herbal remedies for the typical problems was discussed at each visit. Within the first year Levi's mother had become very versed in the points to rub and which of the formulas was indicated at specific times in the course of an illness. He had 8 courses of antibiotics in the first 21 months of life, and in the next 13 years had antibiotics 4 more times, three of which were one right after the other, which indicated to me that the initial infection (strep) had not resolved. Once Levi was about 9 or 10 years old he knew it was time for a treatment, and so his knowledge of self-care had been seated. His mother, who had been exhausted with the initial care of Levi as a baby and feeling inadequate to take him through the various viruses that take shelter in a child as they grow, turned into

a pro-active mom who had tools to use and ways to understand when to and when not to reach for the then current and aggressive allopathic treatment of childhood problems.

When Levi was in high school and junior college and got sick, it was he who said he needed to come in for acupuncture, gua-sha, cupping, or moxa, and by the time he was at UCLA and in his final college years, I am confident that he was able to administer his own herbs and supplements, and knew some of the self-care techniques to deal with the various viruses that accompany one through life. As a practitioner, getting to know a family and watch them grow with success and strength is one of the perks for one's own spirit, and as a result of this relationship, I continue to be in touch with this family.

*Bio:*

*Raven Lang was one of the first homebirth midwives in California. In 1970 she founded the Santa Cruz Birth Center, the first birth center in North America. Two years and fifty births later she wrote "Birth Book". In 1972 Raven helped to found the first birth center in British Columbia. Six years later she returned to California and founded the Institute of Feminine Arts, the first non-medical school for midwifery in North America. In 1982 she began her training in TCM and incorporated TCM into her midwifery. For the next three years she studied with Dr. Miriam Lee, a nurse midwife from China and one of the first licensed acupuncturists in California. Since 1985 Raven has practiced TCM in Santa Cruz CA specializing in women's health and pediatrics.*



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