



ACUPUNCTURE TECHNIQUES

Spirits of the Points: The Spleen Official (Pt. 2)

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In my previous article ([October 2020](#) issue), I discussed the earth element and the functions of the Spleen Official at the levels of body, mind and spirit; and spleen points 1-3). It has been my experience in nearly 40 years of practice that no patient is imbalanced at the physical level only. There are always associated energetic repercussions at the non-physical levels.

In Classical Five-Element Acupuncture, the emphasis of treatment is directed at the primary elemental imbalance, determined by diagnosing a patient's odor, color, sound and emotion. In the case of earth, the patient's odor will be fragrant; the facial color will be predominantly yellow (most easily seen lateral to the eyes); there will be a singing quality to the voice, and an excess or lack of the emotion sympathy. Three of these four diagnostic indicators pointing to the same element confirm it as the primary elemental imbalance.



Most people are born with a primary elemental imbalance already established, or acquire it as a result of trauma(s) in the formative years of life. As this primary element is the starting place of imbalance - the "weak link in the chain," the imbalance ultimately spreads energetic disorder throughout the entire system, as all the elements are connected like a family. Thus, symptoms can show up anywhere.

The Points

Properly addressing imbalance on the primary element will similarly cause healing to spread throughout the entire system. The points that follow will have the greatest impact on patients whose primary imbalance is earth.

The keys to understanding the meaning of the point names are knowing the associated element in depth, what the particular organ/function (aka, "Official") does, and what the point name (translated from the beauty of the Chinese characters) tells us about how it helps the Official to do its job.

Each of the 21 points on the spleen meridian has a name that suggests the unique gifts it can bring to the patient in need. The following are examples. I realize that there are many interpretations and uses of these points in various traditions; thus, the following is not meant to encompass all possibilities.

Spleen 4: Prince's Grandson

The earth element, associated with the season of late summer, is the season of the harvest. The buds, which had sprouted in spring and blossomed in summer, are now ripe, lush and ready to be picked. Harvest time is a period of great abundance; a time of filling our storehouses in order to make it through the cold months of winter.

The 12 Officials were likened to ministers of an imperial court. The monarch (Supreme Controller) owned the land, ruled over it wisely, and distributed its bounties fairly and impartially to all. Wise rule meant taking proper care of the land, the plants that grew on it, the animals that inhabited it, and the people who lived on it. Such wisdom ensured an abundant harvest and prosperity for all.

It was the job of the monarch to train the son or daughter (the prince or princess), who would someday rule, to care for the land to ensure future harvests. The prince would teach his son, and so on through the generations.

The Prince's Grandson refers to four generations downline. Thus, the monarch could rest easy knowing the land and the people would be cared for and prosper even after his or her time had ended.

This point is chosen for its spiritual connotation for earth-imbalanced patients who cannot envision a future harvest in their lives. They lack the security and trust that nature will provide abundance. Even in the midst of material wealth, to such people, it seems never enough. They see only scarcity and insufficiency. When we know, in depth, that nature will provide, we can experience the gifts of earth - feeling grounded, centered and in unity with the world around us, like a baby at the breast of the mother.

Spleen 5: Merchant Mound

A merchant is one who buys, sells and trades goods. He or she must know what is valuable and not, what people need, and what the worth of the goods are in order to establish fair prices. As the metal point of the meridian, Spleen 5 brings the ability to take in the good and eliminate the waste, as any smart merchant must do.

A mound is a high place, usually a mound of earth - stable and secure. From the top of such a mound, one can see a great distance and from a high perspective. We would choose this point for earth-imbalanced patients who have difficulty seeing their own harvest; unable to glean the wisdom and value from their life experience, digest it and move forward. They live in a state of perceived emptiness and are thus often needy and dependent on others - hence the excessive need for, or in the opposite extreme, a rejection of, the emotion of sympathy.

This point can elevate such a patient to truly see with the eyes of spirit the fullness that is always available.

Spleen 6: Three Yin Crossing

Crossings, in this context, are places of intersection where several meridians meet - in this case, the lower predominantly yin meridians of the leg: kidney, liver and spleen. With this point, all three meridians can be affected, uniting them in strength and energy.

The qualities of yin refer to the shady side of a hill - cool and tranquil, emphasizing the passive female principle of the universe: feeding, sustaining, and associated with earth. This point brings the qualities of all three elements: the vision and new growth of wood, the rejuvenating, lubricating, and cleansing power of water, as well as the nurturing of earth. We would tend to call upon this point when the patient's pulses are relatively the same in each of the three above meridians and the patient needs support in all three.

Author's Note: English translations of point names are those taught by Professor J.R. Worsley and appear in *Traditional Chinese Acupuncture, Volume 1: Meridians and Points* by J.R. Worsley; published by Element Books, 1982. Part three of this article discusses points 7-9 on the spleen

meridian.

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