



ACUPUNCTURE

Spirits of the Points: Gallbladder Official

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The gallbladder, with its paired official, the liver, is the wood element within us. The ancient Chinese considered the organs and functions to be more than physical entities, but akin to ministers (AKA "officials") of an imperial court, each with a specific job to do (physically, mentally and spiritually) for the well-being of all in the kingdom. The kingdom, in this case, refers to the body, mind and spirit of a human being.

The Wood Element Within Us

Wood is associated with the season of spring – a time of birth, growth, new beginnings and a vision of the growing cycle to come. The energy of spring is vigorous, forceful, exuberant, and surging forward. Like a plant cracking a cement sidewalk as it grows upward, an insect emerging from its cocoon or a person breaking through to a next level, innate assertion and strength break through existing boundaries.



All of our functions, from the smallest cellular activities to our grandest hopes and dreams, are not random, but follow natural laws. Like DNA, which carries genetic instructions for the development, functioning, growth and reproduction of all known organisms, every conscious or unconscious process contains a design or "blueprint" for its occurrence. Before any process can begin, there must always be an internal plan.

While the liver is the official of planning, likened to a grand architect who has the vision and sets the plan, the gallbladder, the official of decision-making and judgment, like a good and reliable construction supervisor, carries out the plans; deciding when, where and how the plan will be implemented - organizing, coordinating, and carrying the plan into manifestation. When these officials are healthy, everything flows like clockwork: smooth and well-coordinated, with everything arriving in the correct amount, at the right place and at the right time.

The Mental and Spirit Levels

At the level of the mind, we make decisions constantly: how we organize our time - what we will do first, next, and after that. Clarity of mind is necessary as the basis of clear vision, wise judgment, and good decisions. When our mind is healthy, we live in a state of real creativity and mental agility, with the power of well-organized reason and logic. We can clearly follow a line of thought, draw realistic conclusions, and be appropriately direct and assertive in our actions and reactions.

At the spirit level, all ancient wisdom affirms there is a divine or higher purpose, a destiny for every one of us, leading to the goal of what has been called enlightenment, divine realization, freedom, liberation, clarity of consciousness, etc.

As in every other realm, we have decisions to make. What spiritual path is right for us? What choices will support us in our journey - what we eat and drink, whom we will choose as friends or partners, what livelihood we will pursue? When our plans and decisions are in alignment with our

higher purpose, our actions are imbued with confidence, hope and optimism, oriented to the well-being of all.

In a state of pure, unobstructed consciousness, there is really no "choosing." Seeing with brightness and clarity, we simply see which path to take – the path of the *Tao* (nature, divine will – call it by any name). It is the path that is right for who we uniquely are, the lessons we need to learn, and the unique gifts we bring.

The Points

The following are three points of the gallbladder that assist in its job of decision-making and wise judgment. (*Note: I discussed additional gallbladder points previously: [Acupuncture Today](#), June 2013 and March 2016 issues.*) In Classical Five-Element Acupuncture practice, these points are found to have most impact with patients in whom the wood element has been determined to be the primary elemental imbalance.

Gallbladder 1: Orbit Bone

The orbit is the cavity of the skull in which the eye is held and protected. Bones are the deepest, strongest and most enduring of body tissues. The eye sees more than physically. When we say, "I see what you mean," we are seeing with the mind's eyes.

At the spirit level, if healthy and clear, unobstructed awareness witnesses changing phenomena, but is itself the unchanging observer – like a clear mirror. Seeing with the eyes of spirit, we can see the spirit inherent all things and evaluate and choose what is right for us. However, our level of perception can be compromised and obscured by a multitude of thoughts, emotions and feelings. We can become lost in indecision and frustration, unable to move forward.

Using the point Orbit Bone on a wood-imbalanced patient strengthens and stabilizes their innate clarity of vision. Just as bones provide support and foundational strength to the body, Orbit Bone can provide unshakable support, strength and endurance at the spirit level for those who are tentative, indecisive and tend to easily lose their objectivity.

With such core strength, they feel more secure, optimistic and clear in their decisions; and are less likely to be shaken in their resolve – whatever contrary opinions, obstacles or distractions may arise.

Gallbladder 16: Eye Window

A window, when clean and clear, allows light and freshness to enter; what is old, stale, toxic and dark vanishes. We can see out clearly. Light floods dark areas of the mind and spirit with brilliance and clarity. Darkness is the retention of old thoughts, negative emotions associated with the past and the resultant fear of taking action anew. This clutter closes off the light and prevents us from seeing our way forward.

We tend to call on this point when a patient, although showing improvement overall, is still in some area(s) imprisoned: "I just can't decide about...", "No decision looks right, "I just can't see my way to..." When this window is clear, decisions are more effortless and aligned with our higher purpose. We are back "on track" with hope, optimism and inspiration.

Gallbladder 20: Wind Pond

This point is well-known in TCM because of its ability to release any kind of "wind" condition. For

its spiritual connotation, it is helpful to consider the word *pond* or *pool*: a small body of still water, effortlessly reflecting reality as it is.

The effect of wind on a pond causes ripples, analogous to turbulent thoughts and emotions which disturb the state of natural stillness, quiet, peace of mind, and our ability to make clear decisions. This point releases this turbulent wind – the distractions of thoughts that can sweep us into endless illusions and stories – giving them reality that they do not have.

In fact, the turbulence is temporary phenomena. As the mind is stilled, these fragmented aspects dissolve and we become whole – at peace, like a still pond, reflecting movement and change as it occurs, without attachment, frustration or disturbance to our true self.

We are reminded of the Chinese concept of "*wu wei*" or "action of non-action." We act, but without the intervention of extraneous thoughts – clearly and spontaneously, with both the innocence of a child and the wisdom of a sage.

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; Element Books, 1982.

MAY 2021