



ACUPUNCTURE

Spirits of the Points: Urinary Bladder Official

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Water is associated with the season of winter – the coldest and darkest of the seasons. Cold and darkness preserve and store. Life at the surface of the Earth seems to have disappeared, but winter's power is latent and potent. It gives us endurance, flexibility and cleansing. It is a time of hibernating, of gathering our reserves and recharging ourselves for the burst of life in spring.

Its officials are the urinary bladder and kidney. Its color is blue. Its odor is putrid – like urine, stagnant water or a fish market. The sound is groaning; the sound one makes when exhausted, but needing to push onward. The emotion is fear – appropriate in circumstances when we need be cautious and wary of danger.

The water-imbalanced patient, perceiving an internal lack of reserves and strength on which to draw, will express fear, alarm and vigilant arousal in the face of imagined present and future terrors; even though there may be nothing, in reality, to fear. In the other extreme, the patient may live in denial of fear and present a façade of daredevil fearlessness and toughness. The following points on the urinary bladder, the official responsible for the storage of water, illustrate how its functioning may be restored.

UB 1: *Eyes Bright* (Entry Point)



The eyes are said to be the windows of the soul. We generally meet and connect with each other by eye contact. We often sense the state of a person's spirit by the brightness of their eyes.

The fuller our reserves, the greater our sense of security and brilliance of spirit will be. The more unclouded by the residue of the past and fear of the future, the brighter the natural radiance of spirit will manifest. We can often see this innate spirit in its brightest state in the eyes of a child below the age of 1.

The urinary bladder, in addition to its function of storing water, also disposes of waste. If waste is retained at the levels of mind and spirit, our brightness is darkened and obscured. Darkness within is projected onto the exterior world. Instead of meeting the world with bright confidence and enthusiasm, we perceive it as dark and fearful. We tend to hide, retreating into solitude and alienation.

This point, used for its spiritual connotation, helps clear away darkness and restore our sense of wonder and fascination - the freshness of our vision. It deepens our appreciation of the divine gifts within and all around us.

Used as an entry point, the most common use of the point, Bladder 1 is tonified if, by pulse diagnosis, we feel a block at the *wei* level, between small intestine (SI) and bladder (UB). SI will have a relative excess, while UB will have a relative deficiency. To clear the block, we would tonify SI 19 and UB 1 in that order. (I authored a detailed explanation of entry / exit blocks in the March 2006 issue.)

UB 2: *Collect Bamboo*

The qualities of bamboo point to the precious gifts this point can bring. It is a fast-growing, strong and resilient perennial. Its stems are hollow. Even amid storms, it bends, but does not break.

The point is used to clear the mind and restore its natural quietude. A quiet mind is more aware and receptive to wisdom than a cluttered one. The point orients the patient toward growth. It helps instill the qualities of strength, but with flexibility.

The water-imbalanced patient needing the point may manifest a cluttered, anxious mind, a narrow or rigid point of view, and the inability to grow and adapt to change.

UB 4: *Crooked Servant*

"Crooked" in the context of this point refers to the qualities of being able to bend and be flexible. A servant is one who follows to serve another and fulfill their needs and wants. The point helps bring humility to the water-imbalanced patient who cannot bend easily; who is unwilling or unable to serve others. It helps with adaptation and the ability to blend in harmoniously with others.

It is also a reminder that we are all servants of Nature, here by her grace. When our lives are oriented to the service and benefit of all and the well-being of Mother Earth, our lives have utmost meaning and purpose. Eastern religions teach us, metaphorically, to bow continually, manifesting our willingness to show reverence and gratitude to all beings and all things.

UB 6: *Receive Light*

Located near the top of the head, this point provides access to the Heavenly light. Being internally empty of thoughts and concepts, it is said that we are filled with light. The New Testament says, "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." Light, in this context, is a metaphor for awareness.

Light and darkness do not stand in opposition to each other; nor do things we like and those we dislike. When we show reverence, acceptance and gratitude for all things, including those we dislike, we unify these apparent opposites, transcend fear and duality, and our eye becomes single. All is a part of Nature, Divinity - the *Tao*; call it what you like.

This point helps us to accept, face and embrace it all. Then, we are able to experience the unchanging radiance of the Divine Light of the Eternal, which is always in and around us.

UB 10: *Heavenly Pillar* (Window of the Sky)

A "pillar" is a vertical structure used as a support for a building. Pillars are the most enduring of structures. If one is referred to as a "pillar of strength" or a "pillar in the community," we know the term refers to being of reliable and essential support.

This "pillar" is "Heavenly." It brings the qualities of unshakable spiritual strength with a high and exalted view. We would consider this window for the water-imbalanced patient who, in spite of overall improvement with treatment, still has areas in which they cannot see clearly, to which fear or fantasy is still attached, making them ungrounded and insecure.

We might hear things like, "I feel better, but I'm just too sacred to... ." This point takes the patient to a place beyond their avoidances, hindrances and anxieties, to where they can see clearly what is, and feel strong enough to deal with it.

As with all windows, the patient must be prepared - ready to see and appreciate reality as it is. We may hear things like, "I know it's time to make amends for what I did, and I'd feel better if I did, but I just can't bring myself to do it," or "I really need to ask my boss for a raise, but I'm just too scared."

UB 11: *Great Shuttle*

A shuttle is a device used in the weaving of cloth, carrying the crosswise threads through the lengthwise threads. Within us are many threads of inner and outer experience, woven together to make up the fabric of our life.

"Great" refers to the realm of the spirit. We consider this point for the water-imbalanced patient who may be experiencing ambivalence - having mixed, fluctuating or contradictory ideas. It is as if the threads have become disconnected. We refer to it colloquially as feeling "torn."

This point can help repair the tears, resolve contradictions, steady the mind, and make the cloth "whole" - a strong and beautiful tapestry of body, mind and spirit.

Author's Note: There are many interpretations and uses of these points in various traditions; the preceding is not intended to encompass all possibilities. 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.

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