

The Spirits of the Points: The Gall Bladder Official

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The Gall Bladder is known as The Official of Decision Making and Judgment. In any given day, this Official makes countless decisions – conscious and unconscious, which influence every aspect of our being. From deciding whether to eat or shower first, to the internal mechanisms of clotting blood after a shaving cut, to intricate cellular exchanges, to deciding how we'll present our ideas and thoughts in a logical fashion, to allowing everything to be at the right place at the right time, this Official is at work constantly. Every movement we make is a result of countless decisions, which keep us coordinated and balanced – a shift of weight here, an extension or contraction there, a lean to the left or right, a bend of the knees, a change of speed or direction.

The Gall Bladder judges and evaluates, determining whether our thoughts and actions are righteous – in alignment with our highest good and the well being of others – fulfilling the visions and plans made by its brother Official, the Liver (*see AT Vol. 13, issues 2 and 6: The Spirits of the Points: The Liver Official*).

Whereas the Liver is the analogous to an architect of a structure whose vision is set upon blueprints, the Gall Bladder is analogous to the on-site construction supervisor, who organizes and coordinates the actual construction of the building. He determines what is to be brought to the building site, how much, and when. Within us, no organ or function can smoothly operate without the organizing influence of this Official. Without its wise evaluation, judgment, and clear decisions, internal chaos and frustration would surely ensue. In health, this Official brings a sense of purpose, order, self-assertion, confidence, hope, and optimism to our lives.

The Diagnostics

In the practice of Classical Five-Element Acupuncture, points are generally chosen from the meridians diagnosed as the primary elemental imbalance, known as the Causative Factor or "CF" to achieve maximum impact. This diagnosis is based upon sensory analysis of the patient's odor, color, vocal sound, and emotion. As the Gall Bladder belongs to the Wood Element, we would consider the following points in the context of treating a Wood imbalanced patient, evidenced by a rancid odor (the smell of old butter, olive oil, lanolin, the fur of goats, sheep, llamas, and the like), the color green (best observed on the skin lateral to the eyes), a shouting (or in some cases a lack of shouting) sound predominant in the voice, and an excess (or in some cases a lack) of the emotion of anger. In treating a Wood imbalanced patient, we would generally treat both Wood Officials (Liver and Gall Bladder in the same session), based upon the expressed needs of the patient, including pulse diagnosis. As most patients are, in fact, imbalanced at the level of the spirit, regardless of the presence of physical symptoms, let us now consider the spiritual connotations of several points on the Gall Bladder meridian.

The Points

The point names, translations from the Chinese characters give us insight into the gifts they are capable of bringing to the patient in need.¹ Each point uniquely helps guide the patient toward the fullness of a healthy Wood element.

Gall Bladder 37 Bright and Clear, Junction (Luo Connecting) Point

As with all junction points, this point can be used when there is a disparate amount of energy between paired Officials within an element. Using this point in such a circumstance would balance the condition of an excess of energy in Liver and a deficiency in Gall Bladder. Thus, we would tonify GB 37 to pull the excess from Liver to its brother, the Gall Bladder. This could only be determined by pulse diagnosis.

Used for its spiritual connotation, this point embodies everything that this Official provides. Decision-making is never a matter of weighing several equal options or flipping a coin. There is always a best, right and proper choice in front of us, if we have the perception to see it. In order to see it and decide wisely, we need light and brightness to penetrate darkness and uncertainty. We need clarity – a mind and spirit free of obscurations, distractions, and confusion. When the way is clear, it is obvious. We need only take the next indicated step.

Gall Bladder 38 Yang Support, Fire point

This point encourages and motivates forward movement for Wood imbalanced patients who have become lazy, unmotivated, and inactive on any level. It is the nature of Wood to be assertive, determined, and forceful. It takes strong, focused, and vigorous energy for Spring buds to burst forth from their winter husks. Consider the force of Spring growth in weeds that can actually crack cement sidewalks. When these qualities of opening and expanding up and outward, innate to the energy of Wood, are lacking, bringing the warmth of fire of this point awakens, supports and encourages their expression. Plans and decisions are of relatively little use if they are never put into action, leaving the Wood imbalanced stagnant and frustrated. The "Yang" aspect of the point name implies upward and forward action.

Gall Bladder 39 Hanging Cup

A cup is a vessel that contains fluid – in this case energy. Thus, this point collects and holds reserves for use by the Wood Officials for the benefit of all Officials. As a "hanging" cup, there is implied flexibility and the ability to adapt to whatever is presented. Wood must be flexible lest it become stubborn, rigid, and bossy, attached to perhaps, only one point of view. This Cup can receive input and energy from any direction and source, see and evaluate it with clarity, and make an appropriate decision based upon the reality of the situation rather than a preconceived, fixed idea. A healthy Wood element is able to come up with contingencies.

As a Meeting Point of the Gall Bladder, Stomach, and Urinary Bladder, this point can collect and store energy and reserves for all three of those predominantly yang meridians. In choosing this point to treat the three, it must first be determined, by pulse diagnosis, that the three are in the same relative state of need.

Gall Bladder 40 Wilderness Mound, Source point

As all source points, this point can be used to reinforce, ground, and anchor any treatment on the Wood element. As all source points, it brings just the right amount of energy from deep within the Official to strengthen, harmonize, and balance. Source points are the safest group of points on the whole of the body, as they cannot be over-tonified or over-sedated. They will "switch off" when the needed amount of energy has been obtained.

Used for its spiritual connotation, this point can be used to elevate the patient to a higher level from which he or she can see from a higher perspective and with greater clarity. Some Wood imbalanced patients are metaphorically lost in a wilderness, with no direction, as if the internal compass has been lost. Every direction, every attempt seems fraught with frustration and hopelessness. From atop the security of this mound, they can once again see and regain their path, get on track, and find their way home.

Gall Bladder 41 Foot Above Tears, Wood, Horary, Exit point

As with all Horary points, this point clears away old, dead debris to make way for new beginnings. In the case of Wood, it is akin to pruning away dead branches and heavy brush that impede new growth of the plant. Similarly, within the Wood imbalanced patient, there may be old frustrations, memories of endless "shoulds" and "should nots", fears, resentments, sadness, and bottled-up tears from the past retained such that new growth - a step forward - seems impossible. As the Wood point, GB 41 brings an especially strong and forceful burst of energy and a blessed relief, as the perceived shackles of blocked growth are broken, blasted through, transcended, and finally released. The taste of newfound freedom is sweet, indeed.

Reference

1. Worsley, J.R., Traditional Chinese Acupuncture Vol 1 Meridians and Points (Worsley Inc. 2004) 81, 83

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