



GENERAL ACUPUNCTURE

The Spirit of the Points: The Pericardium Meridian (Part 2)

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As indicated in [part one](#) of this series, the vast majority of our patients, regardless of the presence of physical symptoms, are also imbalanced at the levels of mind and spirit. The ancient Chinese knew that to treat the whole person, all levels must be taken into account so that complete balance and harmony can be achieved.

Each acupuncture point has a name, translated from the Chinese characters, which gives us insight into what that point is capable of delivering to the patient in need.

In Classical Five-Element Acupuncture, our choice of points is determined, in part, by pulse diagnosis, in part from having determined the patient's underlying elemental imbalance (Causative Factor, AKA "CF"), and from perceiving the state of the patient's mind and spirit through our own senses.

Emptiness & Receptivity

When we are internally quiet, curious, receptive, and fully present to the patient before us, we can feel within ourselves what the patient is experiencing. Like the metaphor of two bells, if one rings, the other will vibrate in sync. As all people have basically the same instincts, emotions, needs, drives, and desires, when an emotional, mental, or spiritual "chord" is struck in a patient, we can feel the resonance of that chord within ourselves. Then, our familiarity with the point names and their spiritual connotations will lead us to the exact point or points to respond to the need of the patient.

The Diagnostics

In choosing points for their spiritual connotations, those on the patient's primary elemental CF will

have the most profound impact. In the case of the Pericardium, AKA "Heart Protector" or "Circulation/Sex" Official, we will have first diagnosed the patient via odor, color, sound, and emotion, as a Fire imbalance (i.e. Fire CF). This will be determined by our perception of a scorched odor, a red or ashen gray color on the face, the sound of laughter (either in excess or deficiency), and the emotional expression of joy (either in excess or deficiency).

As we know, there are four organs/functions in the Fire Element: the Heart and Small Intestine being the "organ" side, and the Heart Protector and Three Heater (San Jiao) being the "function" side. Though the diagnostic indicators of odor, color, sound, and emotion will be the same, regardless of which side of Fire is principally imbalanced, it is the job of the practitioner, by interaction with the patient, to determine which side is primarily imbalanced and struggling the hardest, and upon which side to focus treatment.



The Points

Each point on a given meridian helps the organ or function (AKA "Official") do its naturally ordained jobs, but in a unique and specific way. Thus, there is some similarity in their meanings, as well as a particular gift that only that specific point can give. Having diagnosed a patient as a Fire CF, and having determined that the Pericardium is in need of support, here are examples of points on this meridian and their spiritual connotations. The English point name translations are those passed by my teacher, Professor J.R. Worsley.

Pericardium 6: Inner Frontier Gate (Junction, AKA Luo Connecting Point)

A frontier is a border or boundary. Historically, walls of protection encircled cities and entire

territories. A wall guarded the palace; finally, a guarded entry protected the inner sanctum of the Sovereign. In each of these boundaries, there were gates, allowing entry to those needing and deserving access, and denying entry to those who would do harm. A good Sovereign must hear the needs of his people; he needs the love, support, and counsel of his ministers. Thus, he cannot live in isolation. He also needs to be protected in order to freely and wisely rule - unbiased, with fairness and justice - lest he favor some and unjustly ignore the needs of others in the kingdom.

Thus, the gates must open and close appropriately. Metaphorically, within each of us is a Sovereign - the Heart Official, or "Supreme Controller." This Official, who allows us to open our hearts to others - to give and receive love unselfishly, must be protected from harm, while also allowing appropriate interaction.

Within us, if our Heart Protector is imbalanced, this gate may be stuck open, allowing entry to any and all, including those who would bring insult and injury to an unprotected and unsuspecting heart. This can manifest as allowing inappropriate intimacy, easily hurt feelings, colloquially "wearing our heart on our sleeve." If stuck shut, no one can get in. Our heart is closed; we feel alone, isolated, cold, joyless, defensive, and detached.

Within us is an inner voice that senses, "Better not let this one in too close." It innately knows. It sees the "red flags." Yet, we often ignore the warnings and let the "bad" ones in, and suffer the eventual hurt and heartbreak. At other times, we may fearfully bar the gate to those who would truly bring love, joy, understanding, and connection to our heart.

This point, used at the right time, can balance and normalize the opening and closing of this crucial gate, allowing love and compassion to flow in and out - freely, but appropriately.

Pericardium 7: Great Mound (Earth, Source, Sedation Point)

A mound is a high place, offering a perspective unavailable from the flat land. The Fire imbalanced patient may feel overwhelmed by problems - often issues of the heart - over sentimentality or rigidity. He or she may feel alone and abandoned, unlovable, agitated and anxious at the prospect of interaction. Conversely, the patient may be overextended - the "party animal", or drowning in social obligations, endlessly put upon by the needs and desires of others.

The "Great Mound" is a place to which we may ascend to gain clarity of vision - to see what is truly important and essential - to see where love and joy can truly be found. As the Earth point of the meridian, it brings forth the qualities of groundedness and stability, security, serenity, and calm. Traditionally, mounds were places where the bones of the ancestors were buried.

Thus, the treasured collective wisdom of those who had gone before, seen and done it all many times is available at this mound. Whether we believe the concept of ancestors to be literal (as being actual non-physical "beings"), or referring to accessing deeper wisdom within ourselves, this point can bring the security and reassurance in proper measure to an imbalanced Fire imbalanced patient.

Pericardium 8: Palace of Weariness (Fire, Horary Point)

With the word "Palace" in its name, we know that this is a residence of the Sovereign. Legend has it that, as China was and is a vast territory, the people built outpost palaces for their Emperor in distant places so that when he was far from home on campaigns, there would be a place in which to find

comfort and allow for rest and recharge. Though this palace was not his principal residence, it still contained the best of everything – truly fit for a king.

It was a place to spend a long weekend, away from the constant demands, the required vigilance, the hard work of overseeing a multitude of people and addressing their needs: akin to Camp David for U.S. Presidents. In this palace was the finest of food, the comforts of home, and most importantly, a chance to recover, reinvigorate, and regain inspiration.

A true leader must hold the vision and inspiration for his/her people. All would willingly follow a leader whose vision is clear, purposeful, and oriented to the good of all. Though the Supreme Controller is Divinely inspired, he is also mortal, and thus subject to exhaustion and fatigue at any level. He can become weary and lose inspiration. If the leader loses the vision and purpose, the others will cease to follow.

A Fire imbalanced patient can become so weary and exhausted – from disease, difficulties in relationships, overwork, ongoing stress and trauma at any level – that he or she may essentially "lose heart." Nature has provided, within us, such a Palace – a place of rest, renewal, and revitalization. Used at the right time, this point can re-ignite the spirit with love, hope, and literally change the course of disease.

Pericardium 9: Rushing into the Middle (Wood, Tonification Point)

As the Wood point of the meridian, this point brings the burst and bold impulse of Spring to the Heart Protector. The season of Spring does not come timidly, but violently and explosively. Thus, this point rushes warmth and energy to our very core. The energy of Wood is self assertive and self directed.

Often Fire imbalanced patients can become preoccupied with obligations, feeling scattered, placing the concerns and minutia of the external world—people, events, institutions, etc. before their own well being. They look to the opinions of others for validation. Strangely, however, they find that in spite of outward approval, they feel phony, alienated, self conscious, and depressed. Like trying to fit into a mold that doesn't fit, they contort and injure themselves (physically, mentally, and spiritually) to make themselves fit. Projecting their center externally, they lose their deeper core self.

Coming from our spiritual center (our "middle"), peripheral problems and worldly concerns can be handled with love and compassion, but also with directness and certainty. The more we break free from outer attachments and come from our own center, the more we feel at home, peaceful, comfortable, and connected to the world around us.

We more deeply embody self-sufficiency; we feel less reliance and dependence on others. Like a little child prior to its social conditioning, we can be our authentic selves, without internal censorship and fear of disappointing or losing the love of others. We can more truly and spontaneously live our own life, rather than merely thinking about it, trying to measure up to some imposed and imaginary image. Coming from our middle, we more clearly see, and effectively interact with the world, without wasting energy needlessly, while remaining true to our inner self.

Editor's Note: For more detailed explanations of the functions of the four Fire Officials, please refer to author's [archived](#) articles.

