



ACUPUNCTURE

Spirits of the Points: The Spleen Official

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The Spleen Official, with its paired official the Stomach, represent the element earth within us. Late summer is the season of the earth – harvest time. Earth provides us with the nourishment we need to live and thrive – hence the common reference to "Mother Earth."

The officials of the earth receive the food and drink we consume, make it into a proper, easily digested mixture, and then transport and distribute its essence to fuel every organ, function and system – both physical and non-physical. Professor J.R. Worsley likened the Stomach Official to a bakery. It receives the various ingredients and, if blended and baked properly, will result in a delicious cake. The Spleen Official is likened to a fleet of trucks that carry the cakes to the consumers.

The Mental Level

The spleen's transporting function is not limited to food and drink, as we do not live by physical food alone. Sights, sounds, smells, information, concepts and ideas that also need to be "digested" feed the mind. In a healthy state, we are able to contain our harvest of experiences in the storehouse of memory, retrieve them as needed, and smoothly transmit our thoughts outwardly.



The gift of the spleen allows for mental peace, clarity and the security of knowing we have access to our inner harvest of experience and knowledge. Like food and drink, experience is virtually useless if we cannot digest it, glean its wisdom and put it to use. In a state of imbalance, the mind may race uncontrollably, or become stuck and immobile. Obsessions, worry, confusion, mental anxiety and depressive thoughts are expressions of stagnancy, just as surely as phlegm in the physical body.

The Spirit Level

The mother or mother figure is our first source of nourishment. From a loving and nourishing mother, we learn to nourish and care for ourselves and others. If deprived of the love, care and nurturing of the mother, we tend to go through life searching to fill this perceived void, manifesting as an inappropriate need for (or rejection of) sympathy, the emotion associated with element earth. We may be stuck in self-pity, lack the ability or motivation to move forward, feel ungrounded, uncomfortable in our own skin, isolated, fragmented, needy and unsatisfied.

In spiritual health, we can feel "at home" anywhere – secure, at peace, contented, like an infant at the breast of the mother. Fully nourished, we can move forth to share of our abundance and serve for the benefit of others.

The Points

Each of the 21 points on the spleen meridian has a name, translated from the Chinese characters, which suggests the unique gifts it can bring to the patient in need. The following are examples. (*Note:* I realize there are many interpretations and uses of these points in various traditions; the following is

not meant to encompass all possibilities.)

Spleen 1: Retired White

As the wood and entry point on the meridian, this point is considered when there is a need for a new beginning or rebirth. Wood energy is forceful and explosive, useful for the spleen-imbalanced patient who is jammed up, stuck like a plant in a pot too small, and needs an expansive release to break free from unneeded constraints. Wood, related to our sense of vision, also helps to see how our life is connected to a higher purpose, providing strength and confidence in our endeavors.

The word *retired* implies a time in one's life when one has put in the work and effort to manifest a harvest, and has reached a point of being able to perceive and enjoy it – to derive pleasure, security, abundance and freedom from worry. It can be used for those who, at any stage of life, cannot relax and enjoy, pause and reflect.

The color white represents the unity of all colors. White light is composed of the colors of the spectrum, suggesting that all of one's experience – pleasant and unpleasant – contributes to growth, the treasures of a full harvest with gratitude for it all.

Spleen 2: Great Capital

As the fire point of the meridian, this point brings warmth to the Earth so things planted can come to fruition and harvest. Having an abundant harvest naturally brings a desire to share. Bringing in a big harvest requires the efforts and teamwork of many. Its abundance is more than one person can eat. Loving celebrations often follow the completion of the hard work.

Thus, for those who cannot celebrate their own harvest or joyfully join in the harvest of others, and who hoard their possessions, energy, love and compassion in a miserly fashion, this point can enable the sharing of their abundance with warmth and heartfelt generosity.

Capital cities are places of great resources: knowledge, artwork, exchanges of goods and services from near and far – a gathering of so many harvests. A "great capital" is the seat of power of the monarch, where royal proclamations are made for the good and prosperity of all. Thus, this point helps a patient find that place within where the abundance of the harvest meets with the love of the heart.

Spleen 3: Supreme White

This point is the earth, source and horary point of the meridian. As the earth point, it helps a patient who is lost find the way home – to their true center, to regain stability when things have been shaken up. As a source point, it is the safest point on the meridian, with a built-in safety mechanism to provide just the right amount of available energy from the source deep within.

It switches off when the correct balance has been reached. Thus, it cannot be over-tonified or over-sedated. As a horary, at the official's peak time or in its season, it clears away surface debris to reveal (by pulse diagnosis) the true state of the patient's earth. It allows the sun and water to penetrate the soil so the seeds can grow.

"Supreme" implies the highest attainment, authority, quality and character. Attaining the freedom of consciousness – perceiving the divine energy in everything is the true harvest of life. These are qualities of the spirit – eternal and incorruptible. The word *white* again implies the harmonious and

united blend of all colors – all life experience. This is truly where home is, the payoff of our real work; the heaven on Earth for which we all search, consciously or unconsciously, to be found deep within ourselves.

Author's Note: English translations of point names are those taught by Professor J.R. Worsley and published in *Traditional Chinese Acupuncture, Volume 1: Meridians and Points* by J.R. Worsley; published by Element Books, 1982.

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