

## WATER ELEMENT: Urinary Bladder Points II *(from: Davis, 2000)*

### BL-12 (*fēng mén*)

風 *fēng*: wind

門 *mén*: gate

風門

*Wind Gate*

**Location:** On the superior dorsal aspect of the trunk, 1.5 cun lateral to the depression immediately inferior to the spinous process of the 2nd thoracic vertebra. This is about 2 (middle) finger widths from Du Mai. BL-41 (Fu Fen) is 1.5 cun lateral to BL-12 (Feng Men), 3 cun from the posterior midline.

**Features & Categories:** Intersection point of Du Mai (Governing Vessel) on the Urinary Bladder Channel of foot Tai Yang. Special point to treat (Exterior) Wind.

**Functions:** Eliminates Wind and benefits the Lungs dispersing function; frees the Channels and releases the Exterior; regulates Ying Qi and Wei Qi.

**Indications:** Common cold; sneezing; chills; bronchitis; pneumonia; pleurisy; asthma; Wind damage; chronic rhinitis; cough; fever; headache; stiff neck; pain in the back and lumbar; urticaria; shoulder sprain; disorders of the back generally. Frequently used for acupuncture anesthesia in head/brain surgery.

**Supplementary Indications:** Wind dizziness and headache; nasal congestion and runny nose; heavy eyes; sneezing; cough due to Cold; counterflow Qi retching; belching; vomiting; pain in the back and chest; Heat in the chest; inflamed skin on the back; jaundice.

#### DEADMAN'S COMMENTARY

As its name 'Wind Gate' implies, Fengmen BL-12 is an important point to expel wind and release pathogenic factors from the exterior portion of the body. This action may be explained by three principal factors:

- i. Fengmen BL-12 belongs to taiyang channel, the most exterior of the six channels, and therefore most commonly the first to be attacked by exterior pathogenic factors;
- ii. Fengmen BL-12 is located on the upper back, over the upper portion of the Lung which is known as the 'delicate zang' due to its predisposition to be easily injured by exterior pathogens;
- iii. Fengmen BL-12 is a meeting point of the Bladder channel with the Governing vessel which dominates all the yang channels of the body and hence has a close relationship to the exterior (yang) portion of the body.

When exterior pathogenic wind attacks via the skin, nose or mouth, it may

- i. obstruct the defensive qi and impair its warming function, giving rise to chills, aversion to wind and cold and headache, whilst fever which accompanies chills is a sign of the struggle between the defensive qi and the pathogen;

- ii. impair the disseminating and descending function of the Lung, resulting in copious nasal discharge and cough;

iii. obstruct taiyang channel giving rise to rigidity and pain of the head and neck. Fengmen BL-12 may be treated by needling or cupping to release the exterior in all cases of attack by wind-cold, wind-heat or wind-dryness which bind the superficial portion of the body and give rise to such excess exterior pathology. In the case of wind-cold, moxibustion may be used. Fengmen BL-12 is also indicated for patterns of exterior deficiency where attack by wind gives rise to disharmony of nutritive qi and defensive qi, characterised by fever and chills unrelieved by sweating, aversion to wind and a weak floating pulse.

The ability of Fengmen BL-12 to firm the exterior and strengthen the defensive qi, thus helping the body to resist attack by exterior pathogenic factors, is discussed in various classics. The Song of the Jade Dragon recommends it for "flaccidity of the interstices with frequent coughing and clear watery nasal discharge", whilst Methods of Acupuncture and Moxibustion from the Golden Mirror of Medicine recommends it for "flaccidity of the interstices with susceptibility to catching wind-cold". In other words, as well as releasing the exterior and expelling wind, Fengmen BL-12 may be treated by needling or moxibustion to tonify the defensive qi in patients with susceptibility to catching frequent colds.

The nose is the gateway of the Lung. According to the Spiritual Pivot "The qi of the Lung opens into the nose; when the Lung is in harmony the nose is able to distinguish the fragrant from the foul". Methods of Acupuncture and Moxibustion from the Golden Mirror of Medicine recommends Fengmen BL-12 for "nosebleed and all kinds of nose disorders". Nasal blockage and discharge commonly result from Lung and defensive qi deficiency with concomitant retention of pathogens in the nose and Lung, which render a person liable to frequent nasal stuffiness and discharge, sensitivity to dust and pollen, sneezing, etc. The ability of Fengmen BL-12 to firm the defensive qi, expel exterior pathogens and benefit the nose make it especially suitable in the treatment of such cases of perennial and seasonal allergic rhinitis.

It is useful to compare the points Fengmen BL-12 and Feishu BL-13, each reflecting different aspects of the Lung function. Although Fengmen BL-12 is indicated for painful cough and cough with bleeding, this is primarily in the context of exterior disease and its affinity for releasing the exterior and firming the defensive qi underlines its close connection with the more superficial and yang aspect of the Lung. It is significant however, that despite its ability to strengthen the defensive qi which is distributed by the Lung, it is not used to tonify other aspects of Lung deficiency for which the deeper (yin) action of Feishu BL-13 is preferred.

According to the Illustrated Classic of Acupuncture Points on the Bronze Man "If Fengmen BL-12 is repeatedly needled it will clear the hot yang qi and the back will always be free of sores and carbuncles". Finally the Essential Questions includes Fengmen BL-12 among the eight points (bilateral Quepen ST-12, Dazhu BL-11, Zhongfu LU-1 and Fengmen BL-12) to clear heat from the chest.

#### **CLASSICAL COMBINATIONS**

- Rhinitis with clear nasal discharge: Fengmen BL-12, Shenting DU-24, Zanzhu BL-2, Yingxiang L.I.-20, Hegu L.I.-4, Zhiyin BL-67 and Futonggu KID-20 (Thousand Ducat Formulas).
- Constant sneezing: Fengmen BL-12 and Wuchu BL-5 (Thousand Ducat Formulas).

- Nosebleed with stifled breathing: Fengmen BL-12, Chengling GB-18, Fengchi GB-20, Yixi BL-45 and Houxi SI-3 (Thousand Ducat Formulas).
- Pain of the shoulder and back: Fengmen BL-12, Jianjing GB-21, Zhongzhu SJ-3, Zhigou SJ-6, Houxi SI-3, Wangu SI-4 and Weizhong BL-40 (Great Compendium).
- Injury by cold with fever which clears and then reoccurs: Fengmen BL-12, Hegu L.I.-4, Xingjian LIV-2 and Xuanzhong GB-39 (Outline of Medicine).

## BL-13 (*fèi shū*)

肺 *fèi*: lung

俞 *shū*: acupuncture point

肺俞

*Lung Shu*

**Location:** Between the scapulae on the posterior superior aspect of the trunk, 1.5 cun lateral to Du Mai point DU-12 (Shen Zhu). DU-12 (Shen Zhu) is located on the posterior midline in the depression immediately inferior to the spinous process of the 3rd thoracic vertebra. BL-42 (Po Hu) is 1.5 cun lateral to BL-13 (Fei Shu), 3 cun from the posterior midline.

**Features & Categories:** back Associated-Shu, Transporting point of the Lung Zang.

**Functions:** Regulates and tonifies Lung Qi, stimulating dispersing and descending functions; supplements Deficiency; clears Deficient Heat; reduces fever and stops cough; harmonizes Ying Qi and Blood; regulates Ying Qi and Wei Qi.

**Indications:** Cough; common cold; nasal obstruction; asthma; breathlessness; bronchitis; pneumonia; pain in the chest; pulmonary tuberculosis; coughing or spitting blood; fever; restlessness; spontaneous sweating; Deficient Yin tidal fever; night sweating; afternoon malar flush; disorders of the back generally.

**Supplementary Indications:** Pulmonary atony; tuberculosis; thoracic fullness and Qi ascent; cough and dyspnea; wheezing cough; tension and stiffness in the back; fullness in the chest and lateral costal region; no pleasure in eating; absence of sweating; throat Bi; persistent cough in children; Heat sensation in the Bones; goitre; convulsions; mental illness.

### DEADMAN'S COMMENTARY

Feishu BL-13 is the back-shu point of the Lung, where the qi of the Lung emanates from the interior to the body surface, and in common with all the back-shu points, especially those of the yin zang, has a strong action on regulating and tonifying its corresponding zangfu at the deepest level. Feishu BL-13 is the pre-eminent acupuncture point to treat all disorders of the Lung zang.

Feishu BL-13 is an essential point to tonify the Lung qi and nourish Lung yin. Lung qi deficiency may derive from constitutional deficiency, previous Lung disease, chronic illness, extreme sadness and grief, excessive desk work (especially with a hunched back), excessive physical labour or lack of exercise. It is characterised by symptoms such as weak cough, dyspnoea and asthma that are worsened by exertion, and shortness of breath with no desire to speak. According to a saying of Chinese medicine "The Lung is the gateway of the voice". When there is insufficiency of Lung qi therefore, there is lack of vigour in the voice, speaking readily tires a person and there is unwillingness to speak. According to the Essential Questions "All qi is subordinate to the Lung". Since the Lung dominates the qi of the whole body, there may also be signs of general qi deficiency

such as lassitude, facial pallor and a weak pulse. In such cases Feishu BL-13 is often combined with points such as Taiyuan LU-9, Shanzhong REN-17, Zusanli ST-36 and Pishu BL-20. In cases of chronic Lung qi deficiency giving rise to asthma or cough that is worse in winter, intensive moxibustion is often applied to Feishu BL-13 in the summer months.

Lung yin deficiency may derive from prolonged Lung qi deficiency, overwork, febrile disease which consumes yin, or Kidney yin deficiency which fails to nourish and support Lung yin. It is characterised by cough or asthma with dry, stringy or blood-tinged sputum, night sweating and dryness of the mouth, throat and tongue. In more severe cases there may be tidal fever, steaming bone disorder, deficiency agitation and spitting of blood. In such cases Feishu BL-13 is often combined with points such as Gaohuangshu BL-43, Taiyuan LU-9, Guanyuan REN-4 and Shenshu BL-23.

Feishu BL-13 is also classically indicated for Lung atrophy and consumption, both terms denoting conditions of severe exhaustion and depletion. In Lung atrophy, the Lungs are said to wither and shrivel, in the same way that the limbs are seen to wither and shrivel in atrophy disorder, whilst consumption broadly corresponds to pulmonary tuberculosis.

The action of Feishu BL-13 is not restricted to tonifying and nourishing the Lung however, and it is equally important in all excess Lung patterns. Through its actions of regulating Lung qi and clearing heat, it may be used for such patterns as

- i. excess heat afflicting the Lung,
- ii. retention of phlegm-damp or phlegm- heat, and
- iii. toxic heat obstructing the Lung.

It is consequently indicated for fullness of the chest, chest pain, Lung abscess, coughing of phlegm and difficult breathing on lying down. In such cases, in addition to other appropriate points, Feishu BL-13 is often combined with Zhongfu LU-1, an example of the principle of combining the back-shu and front-mu points.

Feishu BL-13 is also an important point for the treatment of pathogenic factors lodging at the defensive (or taiyang) level. Combined with points such as Fengmen BL-12, Lieque LU-7 and Hegu L.I.-4 it may be used to release and expel pathogenic factors binding the exterior and giving rise to chills and fever with cough, and to harmonise nutritive qi and defensive qi in cases of night sweating with chills and fever and aversion to cold.

According to Warp and Woof of Warm Febrile Diseases "The Lung and Heart are mutually connected, thus when there is Lung heat it most easily enters the Heart". Because of its ability to clear heat of excess or deficiency type from the Lung, and due to its profound effect on the gathering qi and the upper jiao in general, the action of Feishu BL-13 extends to the Heart and various classics mention its use for disorders of the spirit such as mania, mad walking and even desire to commit suicide.

The Lung and Stomach have a particularly close relationship. Both have a strongly descending action, whilst the Lung channel originates in the middle jiao in the region of the Stomach. Failure of the Stomach qi to descend due to deficiency or food stagnation may therefore impair the Lung's descending function leading to coughing and dyspnoea, whilst failure of the Lung qi to descend may

injure the Stomach's descending function and lead to rebellion of Stomach qi. Feishu BL-13 is therefore indicated for fullness with no pleasure in eating, vomiting, vomiting of foam and vomiting of fluid after eating, and especially for vomiting accompanied by coughing.

A further important use of Feishu BL-13 is for Lung disorders which give rise to pain of the upper back. In cases of children with severe Lung qi deficiency, there may even be rounding and deformity of the back (turtle back). This condition is referred to in the Essential Questions which says "The back is the residence of the chest and when the back is curved and the shoulders are hunched, the residence is about to fall into ruin".

Finally, according to the Illustrated Appendices to The Classic of Categories, Feishu BL-13 is one of five points (Feishu BL-13, Xinshu BL-15, Ganshu BL-18, Pishu BL-20 and Shenshu BL-23) which "drain heat from the five zang".

### CLASSICAL COMBINATIONS

- Cough with phlegm: Feishu BL-13 and Fenglong ST-40 (Ode of the Jade Dragon).
- Cough that reaches the voice (hoarse voice): Feishu BL-13 and Tiantu REN-22 (One Hundred Symptoms).
- Lung distention: Feishu BL-13 and Taiyuan LU-9 (Systematic Classic).
- Chest pain: Feishu BL-13, Yunmen LU-2, Zhongfu LU-1, Yinbai SP-1, Qimen LIV-14, Hunmen BL-47 and Daling P-7 (Thousand Ducat Formulas).
- Spitting blood: Feishu BL-13, Kongzui LU-6 and Quze P-3 (Supplementing Life).
- Seasonal fever: Feishu BL-13 and Taodao DU-13 (Glorious Anthology).
- Mad walking with desire to commit suicide: Feishu BL-13 and Fengfu DU-16 (Thousand Ducat Formulas).
- Stiffness of the lumbar region and back with inability to bend to the side: Feishu BL-13 and Yaoshu DU-2 (Great Compendium).

## BL-14 (*jué yīn shū*)

厥 *jué*: faint, lose consciousness

陰 *yīn*: yin, the complement of yang

俞 *shū*: acupuncture point

## 厥陰俞

*Jue Yin Shu*

**Location:** Between the scapulae on the posterior aspect of the trunk, 1.5 cun lateral to Du Mai. The point is located 1.5 cun lateral to the depression immediately inferior to the spinous process of the 4th thoracic vertebra. BL-43 (Gao Huang Shu) is 1.5 cun lateral to BL-14 (Jue Yin Shu), 3 cun from the posterior midline.

**Features & Categories:** back Associated-Shu, Transporting point of the Pericardium Zang.

**Functions:** Frees the Channels and quickens the Connecting Vessels; soothes the Pericardium and Liver and rectifies Qi; regulates the Heart.

**Indications:** Cough; palpitations; cardiac pain; chest pain; angina pectoris; rheumatic heart disease; coronary heart disease; arrhythmias; tachycardia; Heart diseases generally; neurasthenia; thoracic oppression; stuffy chest; intercostal neuralgia; vomiting; insomnia; epilepsy; mental disorder.

**Supplementary Indications:** Qi accumulation pain in the chest and diaphragm; toothache; vomiting due to rebellious Qi.

### DEADMAN'S COMMENTARY

Jueyinshu BL-14 is an exception among the back-shu points in that all the others are named after their respective zang or fu. The fact that Jueyinshu BL-14 is named after the jueyin (Pericardium and Liver) channel emphasises its ability to unbind the chest by invigorating the circulation of qi. When Liver qi stagnates, usually as a result of emotional factors, it frequently binds the qi of the upper jiao giving rise to symptoms such as pain and oppression of the Heart, chest and diaphragm, restlessness, agitation and oppression.

As the back-shu point of the Pericardium, Jueyinshu BL-14 is not exclusively reserved for chest and Heart disorders due to qi stagnation, but in combination with Xinshu BL-15 is widely used to regulate the Heart in many kinds of dysfunction.

The descending function of both the Stomach and Lung is assisted by the smooth and unobstructed movement of Liver qi. When Liver qi stagnates and impairs their descent, there may be cough and vomiting respectively.

### CLASSICAL COMBINATIONS

- Heart pain: Jueyinshu BL-14, Shenmen HE-7 and Zulinqi GB-41 (Supplementing Life).

## BL-15 (*xīn shū*)

心 *xīn*: heart

俞 *shū*: acupuncture point

心俞

*Heart Shu*

**Location:** Between the scapulae on the posterior aspect of the trunk, 1.5 cun lateral to Du Mai point DU-11 (Shen Dao). DU-11 (Shen Dao) is located on the midline in the depression immediately inferior to the spinous process of 5th thoracic vertebra. BL-44 (Shen Tang) is 1.5 cun lateral to BL-15 (Xin Shu), 3 cun from the posterior midline.

**Features & Categories:** back Associated-Shu, Transporting point of the Heart Zang.

**Functions:** Stabilizes and nourishes the Heart and calms the Shen; clears Heat; opens the chest and regulates Qi; regulates Blood; stimulates the brain.

**Indications:** Neurasthenia; intercostal neuralgia; angina pectoris; rheumatic heart disease; epilepsy; distress; palpitations; atrial fibrillation; tachycardia; arrhythmias; Heart disorders generally; absent mindedness; vexation; cough; coughing or spitting blood; depression; psychosis; seizures; panic; nervous anxiety; insomnia; hysteria; childhood mental retardation.

**Supplementary Indications:** Fever and chills; cardiac pain; chest pain; vexation and oppression in the Heart and chest; coughing blood; retching, vomiting and difficult ingestion; vomiting without eating; mania, withdrawal and epilepsy; Heat in the palms and soles; tidal fevers; night sweats; nocturnal seminal emission and white turbid urethral discharge; poor memory; shortness of breath; clear, runny nasal mucus; eye pain and excess lacrimation; not speaking for years.

### DEADMAN'S COMMENTARY

Xinshu BL-15 is the back-shu point of the Heart, where the qi of the Heart emanates from the interior to the body surface, and in common with all the back-shu points (especially those of the yin zang) Xinshu BL-15 has a strong action on regulating and tonifying its corresponding zangfu at the deepest level. It is used equally to tonify deficiency (the Heart is unique amongst the zangfu in that it commonly suffers from all the four main kinds of deficiency: blood, yin, qi and yang), and to resolve excess pathogenic factors such as blood stasis, Heart fire and obstruction by phlegm.

According to the Essential Questions "The Heart is the monarch from which the spirit emanates" and "The Heart stores the spirit". Since storage is a yin function, it is primarily the Heart blood and yin that have the function of nourishing the Heart and providing the material basis for the Heart to house the spirit. Blood and yin deficiency of the Heart may originate from physical causes such as loss of blood, chronic illness and overwork or from emotional causes. Fei Bo-xiong said "The seven emotions injure the five yin organs selectively but they all affect the Heart". According to the Essential Questions "The Heart stores the spirit ... when the spirit is insufficient there is sadness". When Heart blood or yin are deficient, the malnourished and un-rooted spirit loses its harmony and becomes restless and unquiet, resulting in such symptoms as anxiety, poor memory, fearfulness, insomnia, excessive dreaming and weeping with grief. According to Essential Readings from the Medical Tradition "That which is stored by the Heart internally is blood, externally it is emitted as sweat; sweat is the fluid of the Heart". Xinshu BL-15 is also indicated for night sweating due to deficiency of either Heart blood or Heart yin, and is therefore ideally suited to treat the commonly encountered pattern of excessive dreaming, or waking with anxiety, accompanied by sweating.

The Heart controls the pulse, and when Heart qi is deficient and is unable to regulate the blood, there may be palpitations or irregular pulse, especially if the Heart blood is also deficient. In the latter case, palpitations will be more likely to be accompanied by anxiety, in contrast to the palpitations caused purely by qi deficiency which are usually unrelated to emotional changes. In fact palpitations may accompany any pattern of Heart disharmony, whether excess or deficient, and in all these cases Xinshu BL-15 may be selected.

References to the relationship between the Heart, the blood and its vessels abound in the classics. The Essential Questions says "All blood pertains to the Heart", "The Heart dominates the blood vessels of the entire body" and "The Heart stores the qi of the blood vessels". The Classic of Categories states "The vessels are the pathways of the blood qi, the movement of the vessels is dependent on qi", whilst in the Spiritual Pivot it says "When the qi of hand shaoyin channel is exhausted, the vessels are not open, thus the blood will not flow; when the blood does not flow the circulation will eventually stop ... and the blood will die". The above statements all emphasise the close relationship between the circulation of blood, and the qi and yang of the Heart. Clinically this relationship is most clearly manifested in the chest region. When Heart yang is deficient and unable to circulate the blood in the chest and Heart, there may be consequential Heart blood stasis giving rise to pain and oppression. In clinical practice, this pattern is often complicated by deficiency of qi, blood or yin, or stagnation of qi or phlegm. Whatever the pattern, Xinshu BL-15 is an essential point.

The action of Xinshu BL-15 in treating blood stasis reflects its ability to treat both deficiency and excess patterns of the Heart with equal effect. According to a number of classics it is an important

point to clear heat of excess or deficiency type from the Heart. The heat-clearing effect of Xinshu BL-15 extends to the treatment of bleeding, and when Heart fire injures the blood vessels of the Lung or Stomach there may be coughing or vomiting of blood. A different explanation of these symptoms is offered by the Investigation Into Points Along the Channels which says that Xinshu BL-15 is indicated for "Heart blood unable to enter the Liver; in the upper, there is wild movement, in the lower there is blood in the stools".

The heat-clearing action of Xinshu BL-15 finds its most important expression in the treatment of excess type psycho-emotional disorders. When Heart fire rages out of control it agitates and excites the spirit leading to such symptoms as severe insomnia and excessive dreaming. When Heart fire combines with phlegm and obstructs the portals of the Heart, there will be severe disorders of the spirit such as epilepsy, dementia, mad walking and mania-depression.

The heat clearing action of Xinshu BL-15 extends beyond the Heart itself, and the Illustrated Supplement to the Classic of Categories states that Xinshu BL-15 is one of five points (Feishu BL-13, Xinshu BL-15, Ganshu BL-18, Pishu BL-20 and Shenshu BL-23) which "drain heat from the five zang".

Seminal emission may present in a number of different patterns and is broadly differentiated into seminal emission accompanied by dreaming and seminal emission without dreams. Seminal emission with dreams may be due to Heart fire, Heart and Spleen deficiency, Heart and Kidney deficiency, ministerial fire or damp-heat. Even in cases where the Heart is not directly involved, however, if seminal emission is accompanied by erotic dreams, Xinshu BL-15 is indicated.

Finally, in common with most of the yin back-shu points, Xinshu BL-15 is able to treat the tissues and sense organs associated with its corresponding zang. The tongue is the 'sprouting forth' of the Heart and Xinshu BL-15 is indicated for slow speech development in children and lack of strength in the root of the tongue. Xinshu BL-15 is also indicated for lacrimation and eye pain. These indications however, reflect disorder of the Heart channel rather than the Heart zang.

#### **CLASSICAL COMBINATIONS**

- Weeping with grief: Xinshu BL-15, Shenmen HE-7, Jiexi ST-41 and Daling P-7 (Supplementing Life).
- Sadness, anxiety and disorientation: Xinshu BL-15, Tianjing SJ-10 and Shendao DU-11 (Supplementing Life).
- Heart disorientation: Xinshu BL-15, Tianjing SJ-10 and Jueque REN-14 (Great Compendium).
- Dementia: Xinshu BL-15, Shenmen HE-7, Shaoshang LU-11 and Yongquan KID-1 (Great Compendium).
- Epilepsy: Xinshu BL-15, Neiguan P-6, Houxi SI-3, Shenmen HE-7 and Yinbai SP-1 (Complete Collection).
- Agitation of the Heart: Xinshu BL-15 and Jueque REN-14 (Supplementing Life).
- Coughing and spitting blood: Xinshu BL-15, Ganshu BL-18, Quepen ST-12, Jueque REN-14 and Jiuwei REN-15 (Supplementing Life).
- Weakness of the Kidneys and lumbar region accompanied by seminal emission: Xinshu BL-15 and Shenshu BL-23 (Ode of the Jade Dragon).

- Depression in the chest: Xinshu BL-15 and Dazhu BL-11 (Thousand Ducat Formulas).

## BL-16 (*dū shū*)

督 *dū*: to govern

俞 *shū*: acupuncture point

督俞

*Governing Shu*

**Location:** On the posterior aspect of the trunk, 1.5 cun lateral to Du Mai point DU-10 (Ling Tai). DU-10 (Ling Tai) is located on the midline in the depression immediately inferior to the spinous process of 6th thoracic vertebra. BL-45 (Yi Xi) is 1.5 cun lateral to BL-16 (Du Shu), 3 cun from the posterior midline.

**Features & Categories:** back Associated-Shu, Transporting point of Du Mai (Governing Vessel).

**Functions:** Opens the chest and rectifies Qi; regulates flow through the San Jiao; regulates the Heart; invigorates Blood.

**Indications:** Cardiac pain; chest pain; endocarditis; pericarditis; spasm of the diaphragm; abdominal pain; intestinal noises; mastitis; pruritis; psoriasis; alopecia.

**Supplementary Indications:** Thunderous rumbling of the intestines; counterflow of rebellious Qi.

### DEADMAN'S COMMENTARY

Although conventionally categorised as the back-shu point of the Governing vessel, it is interesting to note that Dushu BL-16 was not discussed at all in such texts as the Systematic Classic of Acupuncture and Moxibustion, the Illustrated Classic of Acupuncture Points on the Bronze Man or Elucidation of the Fourteen Channels. This downplaying of Dushu BL-16 is reflected in other classics by the absence of any clear indications of disorders of the Governing vessel, and the general paucity of indications and classical combination for this point as a whole. Its modern use is in the treatment of various skin disorders including psoriasis, alopecia and generalised pruritis.

### CLASSICAL COMBINATIONS

- Psoriasis: Dushu BL-16, Geshu BL-17, Quchi L.I.-11 and Xuehai SP-10.

## BL-17 (*gé shū*)

膈 *gé*: diaphragm

俞 *shū*: acupuncture point

膈俞

*Diaphragm Shu*

**Location:** On the posterior aspect of the trunk, 1.5 cun lateral to Du Mai point DU-9 (Zhi Yang). DU-9 (Zhi Yang) is located on the midline in the depression immediately inferior to the spinous process of 7th thoracic vertebra. BL-46 (Ge Guan) is 1.5 cun lateral to BL-17 (Ge Shu), 3 cun from the posterior midline.

**Features & Categories:** Meeting point of the Blood; back Associated-Shu, Transporting point of the Diaphragm.

**Functions:** Regulates Blood and transforms Stagnant Blood; nourishes and invigorates Blood; clears Blood Heat; strengthens Deficient conditions; harmonizes Stomach Qi; opens the chest and diaphragm; calms the Shen.

**Indications:** Vomiting; hiccough; spasm of the diaphragm; difficult ingestion; esophageal constriction; spasm of the esophagus; pain or stuffiness of the chest; nausea; nervous vomiting; belching; epigastric distension; asthma; cough; coughing or spitting blood; pulmonary tuberculosis; tidal fever; afternoon malar flush; night sweating; anemia; (chronic) hemorrhage disorders; urticaria; measles; tuberculosis of the lymph glands; acute infection of the bile tract.

**Supplementary Indications:** Back pain and stiffness of the spine; vomiting of food eaten the previous day; abdominal pain, distension or lumps; Yin Deficient night sweats; tidal fever; fever without sweating; Heat sensation in the Bones; generalized Bi; all Blood Patterns; evacuation difficulty; mania and withdrawal; lassitude; hypersomnia.

#### **DEADMAN'S COMMENTARY**

Geshu BL-17 is the hui-meeting point of blood and, as its name 'Diaphragm Shu' implies, is a kind of honorary back-shu point of the diaphragm, although it is not generally listed as such. These two properties inform its principal actions.

Geshu BL-17 has long been considered a vital point in the treatment of the widest range of blood disorders, indeed many classics simply state that this point can be used for "all blood diseases". Although varied and complex in presentation, disorders of blood may be generalised as being of three main types: blood stasis, blood heat and blood deficiency.

Impairment of blood circulation and consequent blood stasis may be due to stagnation or deficiency of qi, traumatic injury, haemorrhage, penetration of cold, blood deficiency, heat, chronic disease or emotional factors. The variety of symptoms which blood stasis can give rise to is extensive, but of these the principal one is pain. Pain of excess type may be due either to stagnation of qi or stasis of blood, as reflected in the famous adage "without movement there is pain, with movement there is no pain". Pain due to qi stagnation is characterised by a tendency to move and fluctuate, whilst pain due to blood stasis is fixed and stabbing. According to Wang Qing-ren, the Qing dynasty author of *Correcting Errors in Medicine* "whenever there is pain in the abdomen that does not move, it is blood stasis". Tang Rong-chuan in the *Treatise on Disorders of Blood* said "... When blood stasis is between the jingluo and the zangfu the whole body is in pain ... when it is in the upper jiao ... there is stabbing obstinate pain of the arm, chest and diaphragm ... when it is in the middle jiao there is pain of the abdomen and lateral costal region". As is clear from its indications, Geshu BL-17 is applicable in all these cases. It should be noted, however, that due to its location and its special action on the diaphragm which intersects the upper and middle jiao, its main sphere of action is on these two areas and it is less used for blood stasis in the lower jiao. Geshu BL-17 is also an important point to treat various kinds of fever due to blood stasis. The *Treatise on Disorders of Blood* states "when brood stasis is at the level of the pores, the nutritive qi and defensive qi are not harmonised, there is fever accompanied by chills ... when it is half-interior half-exterior ... there is alternating chills and fever ... when it is at the level of the muscles and flesh there will be a burning fever ... when it is in the jingluo and zangfu ... there is necessarily steaming bone consumption fever".

Finally, according to Wang Qing-ren in *Correcting Errors in Medicine* "In the pattern of mania-depression, where there is continual crying and laughing, swearing and singing ... then the qi

and blood will coagulate in the brain, the qi of the zangfu are disconnected, [the patient] will be as if in a dream". This quotation emphasises the relationship of blood stasis to severe psycho-emotional disorders. Although Wang Qing-ren ascribes the site of the disease to the brain, as discussed elsewhere (see the introductory discussion preceding the Governing vessel points) there is an overlap between the Heart and brain in the various traditions of Chinese medicine. Whatever the location of the disorder, however, the pathology is similar. Blood stasis may directly disturb the spirit, or alternatively blood stasis may both obstruct the blood vessels and transform to heat. The heat agitates the spirit whilst the blood stasis prevents nourishment by fresh blood from reaching the Heart and brain. The combination of heat and Heart blood deficiency leads to a malnourished and restless spirit.

Geshu BL-17 is an important point for many kinds of bleeding disorders, primarily due to blood heat or blood stasis, including coughing blood, vomiting blood, spitting blood, nosebleed and blood in the stool. Heat entering the blood level may be due to a number of causes including constitutional heat, exterior pathogenic heat, over-consumption of excessively heating food or drink, or heat of excess or deficiency type generated by disharmony of the zangfu. When heat agitates the blood it causes it to move recklessly and burst out of the vessels giving rise to haemorrhage that is usually acute and profuse. Geshu BL-17 is able to cool the blood and stop bleeding, primarily from the upper and middle jiao (Lung and Stomach).

Another important cause of haemorrhage is blood stasis. When blood is stagnant and does not move, it accumulates and may be forced out of the vessels, giving rise to haemorrhage characterised by its intermittent nature, dark purplish colour and presence of clots. At the same time, haemorrhage due to any aetiology is itself an important cause of blood stasis, as blood that is forced out of the vessels easily pools and stagnates. This is reflected in the saying "where there is haemorrhage there is stasis". The close inter-relationship of blood heat, blood stasis and haemorrhage is further illustrated by the fact that blood heat may condense and dry the blood giving rise to stasis, as stated in the Treatise on Epidemic Warm Febrile Disease "Because latent stagnant fire evaporates the blood's fluid, the blood simmers and forms stasis".

The ability of Geshu BL-17 to nourish blood (and yin) is clearly overshadowed in the classical indications by its ability to resolve blood stasis and heat. There are three areas, however, that reflect its nourishing and tonifying properties. The first is its ability to treat disorders such as night sweating and steaming bone disorder due to severe blood and yin deficiency. The second is the combination of Geshu BL-17 with Danshu BL-19 known as the 'four flowers'. The four flowers were first mentioned in Secrets of a Frontier Official by Wang Tao in 752 CE, who did not specify the points but described rather a complex location method. He advised tying a piece of string around the neck, with a knot made at the level of Jiuwei REN-15. When the string is allowed to fall down the back, the knot will then lie on the vertebral column at the crossing point of two diagonal lines the end of each of which leads to one of the four points.

The Classic of Supplementing Life with Acupuncture and Moxibustion in the 13th century first defined the four flowers by name as Geshu BL-17 and Danshu BL-19 and said that they dominated blood, being indicated (for treatment by moxibustion) for taxation consumption disorder. The third application of the blood nourishing property of Geshu BL-17 is its special ability to treat blood

deficiency allied to blood stasis. It has long been understood that following haemorrhage, the consequent blood stasis prevents the formation of new blood. This is reflected in the saying "if blood stasis is not transformed, new blood cannot be generated", and the statement by Tang Rong-chuan in the Treatise on Disorders of Blood "In vomiting blood, nosebleeds and blood in the stool, the blood leaves the channels; any blood that has left the channels is separated and no longer connected with the blood that nourishes the entire body ... this blood is unable to augment with good blood, thus the transformation of new blood is hindered". Thus, by pooling outside the channels, blood stasis may lead directly to blood deficiency as sufficient blood is no longer available to nourish the body.

The action of Geshu BL-17 on painful obstruction (commonly referred to as wind-damp in Chinese medicine) which affects the whole body, reflects its action of regulating blood. Prolonged painful obstruction may give rise either to blood stasis or blood deficiency, whilst blood deficiency may render a person prone to invasion by wind-damp. The importance of treating the blood in such cases is reflected in the saying "to treat wind first treat the blood; once blood moves wind will be dispelled".

As its name 'Diaphragm Shu' implies, Geshu BL-17 has an important action on the diaphragm which lies between the upper and middle jiao. By harmonising the diaphragm, Geshu BL-17 is able to descend rebellious qi of both the Lung in the upper jiao (cough and dyspnoea) and the Stomach in the middle jiao (vomiting, Stomach reflux, hiccup and difficult ingestion). Geshu BL-17 is specifically indicated for oesophageal constriction characterised by difficulty in swallowing and, in the latter stages, by vomiting in the evening what was ingested in the morning, and vomiting in the morning what was ingested the evening before.

Finally, due to its action on the diaphragm and Stomach, and by extension the Spleen, Geshu BL-17 is indicated for various kinds of retained fluid giving rise to symptoms such as heaviness, swelling, distention and pain of the body, weariness of the four limbs, somnolence and cold phlegm of the diaphragm and Stomach.

#### **CLASSICAL COMBINATIONS**

- The hundred syndromes of deficiency-taxation: moxa the four flowers (Geshu BL-17 and Danshu BL-19), Gaohuangshu BL-43 and Huanmen (M-BW-6) (Compilation).
- Vomiting: Geshu BL-17 with moxibustion on Zhangmen LIV-13 and Zhongwan REN-12 (Thousand Ducat Formulas).
- Cold phlegm in the diaphragm and Stomach: Geshu BL-17 and Shuaigu GB-8 (Supplementing Life).
- Contraction and cold of the shoulder and back with pain of the inner aspect of the scapula: Geshu BL-17, Yixi BL-45, Jinmen BL-63 and Chize LU-5 (Thousand Ducat Formulas).
- Throat painful obstruction: Geshu BL-17 and Jingqu LU-8 (Supplementing Life).
- Bone pain: Geshu BL-17, Zigong REN-19 and Yutang REN-18 (Supplementing Life).

**BL-18 (gān shū)**

肝 gān: liver

俞 shū: acupuncture point

肝俞

*Liver Shu*

**Location:** On the posterior trunk 1.5 cun lateral to Du Mai point DU-8 (Jin Suo). DU-8 (Jin Suo) is located on the midline in the depression immediately inferior to the spinous process of 9th thoracic vertebra. BL-47 (Hun Men) is 1.5 cun lateral to BL-18 (Gan Shu), 3 cun lateral to the posterior midline.

**Features & Categories:** back Associated-Shu, Transporting point of the Liver Zang.

**Functions:** Benefits the Liver and Gall Bladder; supplements Ying Qi and Blood; disperses Stagnation and eliminates Wind; dispels Damp Heat; stabilizes the Shen and brightens the eyes.

**Indications:** Jaundice; chronic and acute hepatitis; cholecystitis; diseases of the liver and gall bladder; pain or distension in the lateral costal and hypochondriac region; nausea; regurgitation; coughing or spitting blood; nosebleed; red, painful or swollen eyes; visual dizziness; blurred vision; night blindness; glaucoma; 'sandy' eyes; eye diseases generally; Stomach diseases; pain in the spine or back; intercostal neuralgia; neurasthenia; irregular menstruation; mania and withdrawal; mental disorders; epilepsy.

**Supplementary Indications:** Painful accumulations, gatherings or focal distension of the chest or abdomen; cough causing acute pain in the chest and lateral costal region; nosebleed; lower abdominal pain; shortness of breath.

**DEADMAN'S COMMENTARY**

Ganshu BL-18 is the back-shu point of the Liver, where the qi of the Liver emanates from the interior to the body surface, and like all the back-shu points (especially those of the yin zang) Ganshu BL-18 has a strong action on regulating and tonifying its corresponding zangfu at the deepest level. The principal functions of the Liver are to maintain the free flow of qi, store blood, dominate the sinews and open into the eyes. By spreading Liver qi, nourishing and cooling Liver blood, clearing damp-heat and pacifying wind, Ganshu BL-18 is able to regulate all these aspects of the Liver function.

According to Master Dan-xi of the Jin-Yuan dynasty "The Liver governs spreading". This refers to the Liver's function of ensuring the free and easy flow of qi throughout the body and assisting the normal qi movement of all the zangfu, for example the descending of the Lung and Stomach qi and the ascending of the Spleen qi. Stagnation of Liver qi is considered the pre-eminent pathological pattern of the Liver since it is frequently the starting point of other Liver patterns (for example the transformation of Liver qi into fire) and it commonly accompanies any other pattern of Liver disharmony. The ability of Ganshu BL-18 to promote the free flow of Liver qi is reflected in various ways. Stagnant qi in the upper, middle or lower jiao may give rise to distention and pain of the chest, lateral costal region, epigastrium and hypogastrium as well as to shan disorder. According to the Spiritual Pivot "with anger the qi rebels upwards and accumulates in the chest". If Liver qi or Liver fire invade the Lung there will be cough with chest pain, coughing of blood, cough with fullness of the lateral costal region and inability to catch the breath, or shortness of breath. According to

Correcting Errors in Medicine by Wang Qing-ren of the Qing dynasty "qi is without form and thus unable to congeal into masses; the development of masses requires form in the shape of blood". If stagnation of qi leads to blood stasis, therefore, there will be abdominal masses. If Liver qi stagnation inhibits the function of the Gall Bladder in secreting bile there will be damp-heat of the Liver and Gall Bladder and consequent jaundice. According to the Spiritual Pivot "The Liver stores blood, the blood is the residence of the ethereal soul (hun); when Liver qi is deficient there is fear, when excess there is anger". If stagnation of qi is pronounced, and especially if it transforms to fire, there will be emotional manifestations such as anger, mania-depression, and even epilepsy.

The increasing pressure of prolonged qi stagnation may easily transform to fire. According to the Essential Questions "Anger will cause the qi to surge upwards; if it is extreme there is vomiting of blood". Since the Liver stores the blood, the heat of Liver fire or Liver yang may easily transmit to the blood and, given the tendency of the Liver qi to rise excessively, cause reckless upward movement of blood leading to symptoms such as vomiting blood, nosebleed, and spitting and coughing blood.

When Liver blood or Liver yin are insufficient, they will be unable to nourish and moisten those regions of the body dominated by the Liver and irrigated by Liver blood, principally the eyes and the sinews. It is a special property of the back-shu points of the zang that they nourish and regulate their corresponding sense organs. According to the Spiritual Pivot "Liver qi opens into the eyes; when the Liver is in harmony, the eyes are able to distinguish the five colours", whilst the Essential Questions says "The Liver receives blood so there is sight". Insufficiency of Liver blood or Liver yin may lead to disorders such as blurred vision, night blindness, lacrimation and dizziness. If heat from Liver fire or Liver yang rises to disrupt the eyes, there will be redness, itching and pain. If Liver fire leads to the stirring of wind, there will be upward staring of the eyes.

The Investigation into Points Along the Channels therefore states that Ganshu BL-18 is indicated for "all diseases of the eyes pertaining to the Liver". According to the Essential Questions "The Liver dominates the sinews of the entire body", and "When a person sleeps the blood returns to the Liver". If Liver blood or Liver yin fail to nourish the sinews and thus maintain their softness and flexibility, there may be chronic stiffness and contraction, cramps or pain of the sinews. These symptoms may be especially pronounced both when the body is exhausted and the blood is less effective at nourishing, or during or following sleep or inactivity when the blood returns to the Liver and less is available to circulate throughout the body. This kind of stiffness, contraction, cramping or pain will be even more pronounced when there is concurrent stagnation of Liver qi or when deficiency of yin or blood leads to stirring up of Liver wind.

According to sayings of Chinese medicine "The Liver governs uprising" and "Anger makes the Liver qi rise to the neck and shoulders". Stagnation of Liver qi or uprising of Liver yang therefore easily lead to stiffness and pain of the neck and shoulders. If Liver fire or high fever consume Liver yin and generate wind there may be such acute spasmodic symptoms as opisthotonos, lockjaw, rigidity of the neck and spine and tetany. Ganshu BL-18 is indicated for all of these symptoms.

Finally the Illustrated Supplement to the Classic of Categories states that Ganshu BL-18 is one of five points (Feishu BL-13, Xinshu BL-15, Ganshu BL-18, Pishu BL-20 and Shenshu BL-23) which "drain heat from the five zang".

## CLASSICAL COMBINATIONS

- Fullness of the hypogastrium: Ganshu BL-18 and Baohuang BL-53 (Thousand Ducat Formulas).
- Acute pain of both lateral costal regions: Ganshu BL-18, Pishu BL-20 and Zhishi BL-52 (Thousand Ducat Formulas).
- Coughing and spitting blood: Ganshu BL-18, Quepen ST-12, Xinshu BL-15, Juque REN-14 and Jiuwei REN-15 (Supplementing Life).
- Vomiting blood and spontaneous external bleeding: Ganshu BL-18, Yinbai SP-1, Pishu BL-20 and Shangwan REN-13 (Great Compendium).
- Liver blood deficiency with cloudy vision: reinforce Ganshu BL-18 and reduce Zusanli ST-36 (Song of the Jade Dragon).
- Superficial visual obstruction: Ganshu BL-18 and Toulinqi GB-15 (Great Compendium).
- Somnolence: Ganshu BL-18, Taixi KID-3, Zhaohai KID-6, Baihui DU-20, Tianjing GB-21, Erjian L.I.-2, Sanjian L.I.-3 and Lidui ST-45 (Great Compendium).
- Cold abdominal shan disorder: Ganshu BL-18, Yinshi ST-33 and Taixi KID-3 (Great Compendium).

**BL-19** (*dǎn shū*)膽 *dǎn*: gallbladder俞 *shū*: acupuncture point

膽俞

*Gallbladder Shu*

**Location:** On the posterior trunk 1.5 cun lateral to Du Mai point DU-7 (Zhong Shu). DU-7 (Zhong Shu) is located on the midline in the depression immediately inferior to the spinous process of 10th thoracic vertebra. BL-48 (Yang Gang) is 1.5 cun lateral to BL-19 (Dan Shu), 3 cun lateral to the posterior midline.

**Features & Categories:** back Associated-Shu, Transporting point of the Gall Bladder Fu.

**Functions:** Clears and drains Heat from the Liver and Gall Bladder; clears Gall Bladder Fire; resolves Damp Heat; harmonizes the Stomach; relaxes the diaphragm and regulates Qi; brightens the eyes.

**Indications:** Jaundice; hepatitis; cholecystitis; gastritis; bitter taste in the mouth; pain or soreness in the chest and lateral costal (hypochondriac) region; abdominal distension; hiccough; belching; nausea; vomiting; tidal fever; afternoon malar flush; pulmonary tuberculosis; tuberculosis of the lymph glands; fever and sweating due to tuberculosis; sciatica; disorders of the back.

**Supplementary Indications:** Dry retching; pain in the throat; difficult ingestion; irascibility; headache, chills and quivering from Cold; yellowing of the eyes; Yin Deficient fever; Heat sensation in the Bones; Deficient conditions; semen in the urine; axillary swelling; swelling of axillary lymph glands; fullness in the chest and lateral costal region that prevents turning; shortness of breath; round worm in the bile duct.

**DEADMAN'S COMMENTARY**

Danshu BL-19 is the back-shu point of the Gall Bladder fu, where the qi of the Gall Bladder emanates from the interior to the body surface. It is an important point to clear damp-heat from the

Gall Bladder and Liver which gives rise to the classic symptoms of jaundice with yellow eyes, vomiting, distention of the lateral costal region and bitter taste in the mouth.

Damp-heat in the Gall Bladder and Liver may arise in the following ways:

- i. stagnation of Liver qi both generates heat and invades the Spleen, suppressing its transportation and transformation function and leading to the formation of dampness,
- ii. Spleen deficiency leads to failure of its transportation and transformation function and subsequent formation of dampness which either stagnates and ferments over time and transforms to damp-heat or combines with pre-existing Liver stagnant heat,
- iii. invasion of exterior damp-heat,
- iv. consumption of contaminated food, or over-consumption of greasy, rich or spicy food and alcohol.

In all cases the damp-heat impairs the Gall Bladder function of secreting bile, and whatever the aetiology, Danshu BL-19 is indicated.

According to both the Spiritual Pivot and the Essential Questions "Taiyang is the opening, yangming is the closing and shaoyang is the pivot". In the Treatise on Injury by Cold by Zhang Zhongjing, shaoyang pattern denotes the stage where the pathogen is 'half-exterior, half- interior'. In other words the pathogenic factor resides between the taiyang (exterior) and yangming (interior) levels and in this sense shaoyang is the pivot or hinge between the exterior and interior. When the pathogenic factor disrupts the Gall Bladder function it gives rise to stagnation of qi, impairment of the Stomach descending function and uprising of Gall Bladder heat. The clinical manifestations of shaoyang pattern include alternating fever and chills, dry throat, blurred vision, bitter taste in the mouth, fullness and distention of the chest and lateral costal region, and vomiting and nausea. All but the first of these symptoms are classical indications for Danshu BL-19.

According to five phase theory, wood is the mother of fire, and disorders of either the Liver or Gall Bladder wood may co-exist with or be transmitted to the Heart which belongs to fire. In the case of the Gall Bladder there are two main patterns of disharmony which may give rise to disturbance of the Heart and the spirit:

- i. Gall Bladder qi deficiency and
- ii. Gall Bladder damp-heat combined with Stomach phlegm-heat.

According to the Essential Questions "the Gallbladder is the upright official from where judgement emanates". If there is sudden fright, unusual or abrupt noise or shock, or continuous fear and fright, whether in the formative years of childhood or as an adult, the qi of the Gall Bladder will be injured, giving rise to palpitations, restless sleep or insomnia, inability to sleep alone, mental restlessness, susceptibility to timidity and fear, and indecisiveness.

The Gall Bladder qi can only be injured, however, when the Heart qi is also weak. This was emphasised both in Achieving Longevity by Guarding the Source, the 17th Century classic by Gong Ting-xin, which said "Susceptibility to fright ... timidity in which the patient fears being apprehended, all result from deficiency of the qi of Heart and Gall Bladder", and the Essential Readings from the Medical Tradition which explained "When the qi of the Heart and Gall Bladder is

strong, sudden fright and danger will not cause disease. However, if the qi is deficient, it will be harmful."

In the case of Gall Bladder damp-heat combined with Stomach phlegm-heat, there may be insomnia, palpitations and anxiety accompanied by bitter taste in the mouth, vomiting, and distention and pain of the chest and lateral costal region. In the treatment of both these patterns, Danshu BL-19 forms an important part of the point prescription.

Finally, bilateral Geshu BL-17 and Danshu BL-19 are known as the 'four flowers', indicated for steaming bone taxation fever, deficiency-taxation, tidal fever etc. For a discussion of the history and application of these points see Geshu BL-17.

### CLASSICAL COMBINATIONS

- Yellow eyes: Danshu BL-19 and Yanggang BL-48 (One Hundred Symptoms).
- Yellow eyes: Danshu BL-19, Naohu DU-17, Yishe BL-49 and Yanggang BL-48 (Supplementing Life).
- Pain of the lateral costal region: Danshu BL-19 and Zhangmen LIV-13 (Thousand Ducat Formulas).
- Difficult ingestion: Danshu BL-19, Zigong REN-19 and Zhonghng REN-16 (Thousand Ducat Formulas).
- Dry mouth and tongue with difficult ingestion: Danshu BL-19, Shangyang L.I.-1 and Xiaochangshu BL-27 (Thousand Ducat Formulas).
- The hundred syndromes of deficiency-taxation: moxa the Four Flowers (Geshu BL-17 and Danshu BL-19), Gaohuangshu BL-43 and Huanmen (M-BW-6) (Compilation).
- Fright palpitations: Danshu BL-19 and Yangxi L.I.-5 (Divine Moxibustion).
- "When a person is frequently indecisive, the Gall Bladder is deficient. The qi will flow upwards giving rise to a bitter taste in the mouth. To treat this use the front-mu and the back-shu of the Gall Bladder" [i.e. Riyue GB-24 and Danshu BL-19] (Essential Questions).

## BL-20 (*pí shū*)

脾 *pí*: spleen

俞 *shū*: acupuncture point

脾俞

*Spleen Shu*

**Location:** On the posterior trunk 1.5 cun lateral to Du Mai point DU-6 (Ji Zhong). DU-6 (Ji Zhong) is located on the midline in the depression immediately inferior to the spinous process of 11th thoracic vertebra. BL-49 (Yi She) is 1.5 cun lateral to BL-20 (Pi Shu), 3 cun from the posterior midline.

**Features & Categories:** back Associated-Shu, Transporting point of the Spleen Zang.

**Functions:** Tonifies Earth and eliminates Damp; regulates the Spleen, supporting its transportation and transformation functions; nourishes and harmonizes Blood and Ying Qi.

**Indications:** Abdominal distension; epigastric pain; jaundice; indigestion; vomiting; nervous vomiting; tiredness; loose stools; diarrhea; dysentery; blood in the stools; gastritis; gastric ulcers; lack of appetite; untransformed digestate; prolapsed stomach; hepatitis; enteritis; edema; anorexia; back pain; anemia; enlargement of liver or spleen; (chronic) hemorrhage diseases; profuse menstrual bleeding; prolapsed uterus; urticaria; weakness of the limbs; chronic weakness or exhaustion; Damp and Phlegm Patterns; disorders of the Stomach and Spleen.

**Supplementary Indications:** Jaundice; pain and distension in the lateral costal region and abdomen; severe pain in the chest and lateral costal region; cough and vomiting; esophageal constriction inhibiting swallowing; accumulations, gatherings, lumps and focal distension of the chest or abdomen; lassitude or prostrate exhaustion; thinness despite large food intake; or no pleasure in eating; abdominal 'drum' distension; (chronic) infantile convulsions; Phlegm patterns; muscle spasms; fever and chills.

### DEADMAN'S COMMENTARY

Pishu BL-20 is the back-shu point of the Spleen zang, where the qi of the Spleen emanates from the interior to the body surface, and like all the back-shu points (especially those of the zang) has a strong action on regulating and tonifying its corresponding zangfu at the deepest level.

According to the Complete Works of Jing-yue "Ming men is the sea of essence [and] blood, the Spleen is the sea of water and grain, together they are the root of the five zang and six fu". The principal function of the Spleen is to dominate the transportation and transformation of the products of food and drink. This vital activity, the basis of the post-natal qi of the body, requires continual yang activity and heat and pathologically therefore, the Spleen suffers mainly from deficiency of qi and yang. This tendency underlies all patterns of disharmony of the Spleen zang.

Spleen qi deficiency may result from constitutional deficiency, irregular diet, excessive thinking or overwork, insufficient or excessive exercise or prolonged illness. Deficiency of Spleen qi and impairment of the transportation and transformation function will give rise to such symptoms as lassitude, lack of appetite, diarrhoea with undigested food in the stools and childhood nutritional impairment, and Pishu BL-20 is an essential point in the treatment of such disorders.

Pishu BL-20 is specifically indicated for the symptom of remaining thin despite much eating. The Treatise on the Spleen and Stomach by Li Dong-yuan offers an interesting discussion on the various possible relationships between appetite and obesity or leanness, saying

- i. that if the Spleen and Stomach are both excess, food intake is large and a person easily becomes fat;
- ii. if both are deficient there is either inability to eat and a person is thin, or alternatively a person easily becomes fat (yet weak), despite a low food intake, this latter condition being due to accumulation of phlegm-dampness;
- iii. "There are also cases of thinness despite large food intake. [In this case] fire hidden in the qi phase in the Stomach results in large food intake, while Spleen vacuity leads to withered flesh. This is known as food languor. Shu-he has said, 'Large food in take is not incompatible with weak muscles' ". The apparently contradictory condition of Spleen deficiency with a large appetite is often encountered in clinical practice and Li Dong-yuan's explanation of hidden Stomach fire with Spleen qi deficiency explains this well.

The important role that dampness plays in the pathology of the Spleen has been discussed in many classics. According to the Essential Questions "The Spleen loathes dampness", "Damp, swelling and fullness all pertain to the Spleen" and "When the Spleen is diseased, damp is generated", whilst the Case Histories from the Guide to Clinical Patterns by Ye Tian-shi of the Qing dynasty states "The Spleen likes dryness whilst the Stomach likes moisture". The origin of dampness may be interior or

exterior. Interior deficiency of Spleen qi and impairment of the transportation and transformation function may give rise to incomplete separation of the clear and the turbid and the subsequent formation of interior dampness. This dampness may be carried to all parts of the body by virtue of the Spleen's function of distributing qi, but especially to the lower parts since 'the nature of dampness is heavy and turbid'.

Alternatively, if exterior dampness or damp-heat attack the body, especially in cases of underlying Spleen deficiency, the function of the Spleen may quickly be compromised. Dampness gives rise to such symptoms as heaviness of the body, lassitude, somnolence, diarrhoea, dysenteric disorder, yin jaundice and oedema. Pishu BL-20 is an essential point both to tonify the Spleen qi and to resolve dampness, whether of internal or external origin.

Two further patterns that may develop from deficiency of Spleen qi are:

- i. failure of the Spleen to hold the blood, and
- ii. sinking of Spleen qi.

According to the Treatise on Disorders of Blood "When Spleen yang is deficient it is unable to gather the blood", whilst the Supplement to The Thousand Ducat Formulas states "The Spleen gathers the blood, when the Spleen is deficient it is unable to unite the blood". Part of the Spleen's function of controlling the blood is to hold the blood in the vessels. Weakness of this function will lead to haemorrhage in any part of the body, giving rise to such indications as blood in the urine or stools, menorrhagia, vomiting of blood and indeed any kind of chronic haemorrhage. When the Spleen's function of raising the qi is impaired, there may be sinking or prolapse of the uterus. Pishu BL-20, through its action of tonifying and hence raising the Spleen qi, is able to treat both these conditions.

An important further symptom of Spleen disharmony is stagnation in the middle jiao manifesting as abdominal fullness, distention and pain, or pain of the lateral costal region. There are three main causes of this disharmony:

- i. Spleen qi deficiency leads to impaired circulation of qi, and the treatment principle here is to both tonify and circulate the qi,
- ii. the formation and retention of dampness in the middle jiao may obstruct the circulation of qi, and the principle of treatment in this case is to resolve damp and circulate qi,
- iii. Liver-Spleen disharmony, due either to excess of the Liver which overacts on the Spleen, or deficiency of the Spleen which fails to counter the normal aggressive qi of the Liver. The aggressive Liver qi impairs the transportation and transformation function of the Spleen leading to stagnation. The treatment principle in this case is to harmonise the Liver and Spleen. In all these patterns Pishu BL-20 is a primary point.

One particular form of abdominal stagnation for which Pishu BL-20 is indicated is known as focal distention. This is characterised primarily by a sensation of severe blockage and distention, or the appearance of a swelling like an upturned bowl. It is one of what is known as the 'five accumulations' and pertains to the Spleen.

Since Pishu BL-20 tonifies the Spleen and regulates the middle jiao, it may also be used for treating the commonly encountered dual disharmony of the Stomach and Spleen with distention of both the epigastrium and abdomen, nausea and vomiting, and diarrhoea.

Finally the Illustrated Supplement to the Classic of Categories states that Pishu BL-20 is one of five points (Feishu BL-13, Xinshu BL-15, Ganshu BL-18, Pishu BL-20 and Shenshu BL-23) which "drain heat from the five zang".

### CLASSICAL COMBINATIONS

- Spleen deficiency with undigested food (in the stool): Pishu BL-20 and Pangguangshu BL-28 (One Hundred Symptoms).
- Much eating but remains thin: Pishu BL-20 and Weishu BL-21 (Great Compendium).
- Abdominal pain with no pleasure in eating: Pishu BL-20 and Weishu BL-21 (Supplementing Life).
- Sadness below the Heart: Pishu BL-20 and Tinggong SI-19 (One Hundred Symptoms).
- Vomiting blood and spontaneous external bleeding: Pishu BL-20, Yinbai SP-1, Ganshu BL-18 and Shangwan REN-13 (Great Compendium).
- Loss of use of the four limbs: Pishu BL-20, Jiquan HE-1 and Riyue GB-24 (Supplementing Life).
- Acute pain of both lateral costal regions: Pishu BL-20, Ganshu BL-18 and Zhishi BL-52 (Thousand Ducat Formulas).

## BL-21 (*wèi shū*)

胃 *wèi*: stomach

俞 *shū*: acupuncture point

胃俞

*Stomach Shu*

**Location:** On the posterior trunk 1.5 cun lateral to Du Mai. The point is located lateral to the depression immediately inferior to the spinous process of 12th thoracic vertebra. BL-50 (Wei Cang) is 1.5 cun lateral to BL-21 (Wei Shu), 3 cun lateral to the posterior midline.

**Features & Categories:** back Associated-Shu, Transporting point of the Stomach Fu.

**Functions:** Regulates the middle Jiao; harmonizes and tonifies the Stomach; transforms Damp and disperses Stagnation; supports Zhong Qi and eliminates Deficiency; relieves food retention.

**Indications:** Pain in the chest and lateral costal (hypochondriac) region; pain in the stomach region; stomach ache; gastritis; stomach distension; prolapsed stomach; ulcer; pancreatitis; hepatitis; enteritis; abdominal distension; indigestion; gastric reflux; regurgitation; belching; nausea; vomiting; hiccough; rumbling intestines; untransformed digestate in stools; (chronic) diarrhoea; loss of appetite; anorexia; insomnia; pain along the spine; disorders of the Stomach and Spleen.

**Supplementary Indications:** Cold Stomach with pain; abdominal distension and rumbling intestines; diarrhea; edema and abdominal 'drum' distension; marked emaciation; tension and pain in the back; hypertonicity of the Sinews; difficult ingestion or swallowing; prolapse of the rectum; accumulation lumps persisting for many years; no pleasure in eating; jaundice; infant vomiting milk.

### DEADMAN'S COMMENTARY

Weishu BL-21 is the back-shu point of the Stomach fu, where the qi of the Stomach emanates from the interior to the body surface, and is a powerful point to treat all diseases of the Stomach, as well as to regulate the middle jiao as a whole. According to the Spiritual Pivot "The Stomach is the sea of water and grain". Its function is to receive food and drink, 'rot and ripen' it and descend it to the Small Intestine. Most pathology of the Stomach, therefore, involves impairment of its descending function. This may be due to deficiency of Stomach qi or Stomach yin, excessive cold, heat or

dampness whether of internal or external origin, stasis of blood in the Stomach, stagnation of food, or invasion of the Stomach by Liver or Gall Bladder qi. Failure of the Stomach descending function leads to stagnation of qi and hence distention, fullness and pain of the epigastrium and abdomen, whilst upward rebellion of the Stomach qi leads to Stomach reflux, nausea and vomiting. Whatever the pattern, whether deficient, excess, hot or cold, Weishu BL-21 is a primary point to reestablish harmony of the Stomach.

It is interesting to compare the actions and indications of Weishu BL-21, the back-shu point of the Stomach, with Zusanli ST-36 the he-sea point of the Stomach channel. Both have an equally strong action on regulating disorders of the Stomach fu, but Weishu BL-21 shares none of the ability of Zusanli ST-36 to tonify and nourish the qi and blood of the body as a whole.

The Stomach and Spleen are interiorly-exteriorly related, and the descending of Stomach qi and the ascending of Spleen qi together dominate the whole process of digestion. By virtue of this close relationship, Weishu BL-21 is able to regulate disharmony of both the Stomach and Spleen, giving rise to abnormal ascent of Stomach qi (vomiting), abnormal descent of Spleen qi (diarrhoea) and failure of the Spleen transportation and transformation function (borborygmus and oedema).

A healthy appetite is a sign of the harmonious functioning of both the Spleen and Stomach, and Weishu BL-21 is indicated in various disorders affecting the appetite. Poor appetite may be due either to deficiency of the Stomach and Spleen which lack the force to 'rot and ripen' and transport and transform what is eaten, or to various forms of excess which lead to stagnation of food in the Stomach and hence lack of desire and inability to take in more food. Hunger with inability to eat is due to insufficiency of Stomach yin with consequent deficiency heat, the heat stimulating desire to eat, the yin deficiency and resultant dryness causing inability to digest what is eaten. Excessive eating without gaining weight is a sign of Stomach heat, with or without Spleen deficiency (see commentary on Pishu BL-20). Weishu BL-21 is indicated in all such cases.

### CLASSICAL COMBINATIONS

- Abdominal pain with no pleasure in eating: Weishu BL-21 and Pishu BL-20 (Formulas for the Living).
- Much eating but remains thin: Weishu BL-21 and Pishu BL-20 (Great Compendium).
- Vomiting or cold in the Stomach with distention, much eating but remains thin: Weishu BL-21 and Shenshu BL-23 (Thousand Ducat Formulas).
- Cold in the stomach with undigested food (in the stool): Weishu BL-21 and Hunmen BL-47 (One Hundred Symptoms).

### BL-22 (*sān jiāo shū*)

三 *sān*: three

焦 *jiāo*: burn, char

俞 *shū*: acupuncture point

三焦俞

*Triple Burner Shu*

**Location:** On the posterior trunk in the lumbar region, 1.5 cun lateral to Du Mai point DU-5 (Xuan Shu). DU-5 (Xuan Shu) is located on the midline in the depression immediately inferior to the

spinous process of 1st lumbar vertebra. BL-51 (Huang Men) is 1.5 cun lateral to BL-22 (San Jiao Shu), 3 cun from the posterior midline.

**Features & Categories:** back Associated-Shu, Transporting point of the San Jiao Fu.

**Functions:** Regulates the transforming function of Qi and eliminates Damp; opens the Water passages; regulates the lower Jiao.

**Indications:** Abdominal distension; rumbling intestines; indigestion; gastritis; enteritis; untransformed digestate in stool; vomiting; diarrhea or dysentery; edema; ascites; edema of the lower limbs; pain and stiffness of the lumbar region; nephritis; urinary retention; painful urination; urinary tract infection; enuresis; neurasthenia; all Damp Patterns of the lower Jiao.

**Supplementary Indications:** Visual dizziness; headache; body fever; jaundice; indigestion; difficult ingestion; alternating fever and chills; large accumulations, gatherings, lumps and focal distension in the lower abdomen.

### DEADMAN'S COMMENTARY

Sanjiaoshu BL-22 is the back-shu point of the Sanjiao, where the qi of the Sanjiao emanates from the interior to the body surface. The Sanjiao integrates and harmonises the upper, middle and lower jiao and dominates the free flow of qi and fluids through these three areas. Located between Weishu BL-21 above and Shenshu BL-23 below, Sanjiaoshu BL-22 however has the action of regulating the qi of the middle and lower jiao only. It integrates the activities of the Stomach and Spleen in the middle jiao, and the Kidneys, Bladder and intestines in the lower jiao, and hence the transformation, transportation and excretion of both food and fluid.

The Classic of Difficulties states that "the Sanjiao is the pathway of water and grain", the Essential Questions says "the Sanjiao is the official in charge of drainage and controls the water passages" and the Introduction to Medicine says "The middle jiao dominates transformation of the flavours of water and grain ... therefore it is said the middle jiao is like foam. The lower jiao dominates moving and draining the urine and faeces and at the right time discharging them ... therefore it is said the lower jiao is like a drain".

In cases where there is loss of harmony between the Stomach and Spleen in the middle jiao and the intestines in the lower jiao, there are symptoms such as abdominal distention, borborygmus, diarrhoea or dysenteric disorder, undigested food (in the stool), difficult ingestion, oesophageal constriction and vomiting. In severe cases where there is obstruction and accumulation there may be abdominal masses or hypogastric lumps. Sanjiaoshu BL-22 is especially effective to activate and harmonise the qi of the middle and lower jiao, to resolve damp and to dispel stasis, and is one of the most important classically indicated points for such abdominal masses.

In cases where there is loss of harmony between the Spleen in the middle jiao and the Kidneys and Bladder in the lower jiao there may be oedema with difficult urination, blood in the urine and white turbidity due to deficiency and exhaustion. Sanjiaoshu BL-22 is able to treat such disorders by its ability to move the fluids and activate the qi transformation function of the Bladder.

Finally the Sanjiao channel belongs to shaoyang, and although not a point of the Sanjiao channel, Sanjiaoshu BL-22 is indicated for the treatment of alternating chills and fever, heat in the body, bitter taste in the mouth, headache and visual dizziness, all manifestations of shaoyang pattern.

**CLASSICAL COMBINATIONS**

- Borborygmus, abdominal distention and watery diarrhoea: Sanjiaoshu BL-22, Xiaochangshu BL-27, Xialiao BL-34, Yishe BL-49 and Zhangmen LIV-13 (Thousand Ducat Formulas).
- Borborygmus: Sanjiaoshu BL-22, Dachangshu BL-25, Taibai SP-3 and Gongsun SP-4 (Supplementing Life).
- Undigested food (in the stool): Sanjiaoshu BL-22, Zusanli ST-36, Dachangshu BL-25, Sanyinjiao SP-6, Xiawan REN-10, Xuanshu DU-5 and Liangmen ST-21 (Supplementing Life).
- Hypogastric (ji ju) masses that are hard and big like a plate, with epigastric distention and undigested food (in the stool): Sanjiaoshu BL-22 and Zhongwan REN-12 (Thousand Ducat Formulas).

**BL-23 (shèn shū)**

腎 shèn: kidney

俞 shū: acupuncture point

腎俞

*Kidney Shu*

**Location:** On the posterior trunk in the lumbar region, 1.5 cun lateral to Du Mai point DU-4 (Ming Men). DU-4 (Ming Men) is located on the midline in the depression immediately inferior to the spinous process of 2nd lumbar vertebra. BL-52 (Zhi Shi) is 1.5 cun lateral to BL-23 (Shen Shu), 3 cun lateral to the posterior midline.

**Features & Categories:** back Associated-Shu, Transporting point of the Kidney Zang.

**Functions:** Regulates and tonifies the Kidneys; nourishes Jing; strengthens the transforming action of Qi; resolves Damp; strengthens the lumbar and spine; nourishes Blood; benefits Bones and Marrow; tonifies Water and invigorates Fire; brightens the eyes and benefits hearing.

**Indications:** Nocturnal seminal emission; impotence; infertility; lack of sexual interest; enuresis; urinary tract infection; urinary retention; dysuria; irregular menstruation; vaginal discharge; leukorrhoea; nephritis; nephroptosis; renal colic; (chronic) low back pain or weakness, and weakness of the knees; blurred vision; tinnitus; dizziness; fatigue; deafness; edema; (chronic) asthma; anemia; alopecia; soft tissue injury to the lumbar region; (chronic) diarrhoea; sequelae of infantile paralysis; Deficient Yin or Yang of the Kidneys; poor vision; dry eyes; diminished willpower; osteoporosis; osteomalacia; osteophytes; arthritic bone deformities.

**Supplementary Indications:** Deficiency and emaciation; Deficient Kidneys; blood in the urine; turbid urine containing semen; aching lumbar and Cold, stiff knees; fullness in the lateral costal region; acute pain in the lower abdomen; thirst; cough, dyspnea and Deficient Qi; tidal fever; headache; genital pain; diarrhea and untransformed digestate in stool; Wind strike deafness and paralysis of the limbs; rumbling intestines; accumulation of Cold giving rise to Deficiency in females; emaciation in females due to intercourse during menstruation; alternating fever and chills; seizures.

**DEADMAN'S COMMENTARY**

Shenshu BL-23 is the back-shu point of the Kidney zang where the qi of the Kidneys emanates from the interior to the body surface, and like all the back-shu points (especially those of the zang) has a strong action on regulating and tonifying its corresponding zangfu at the deepest level. Shenshu

BL-23 is one of the principal acupuncture points to strengthen the Kidneys, fortify yang, nourish yin, and benefit essence.

According to the Spiritual Pivot "The Kidneys store the essence" and "essence is the source of life". The Essential Questions states "Essence is the root of the human body", whilst a saying of Chinese medicine emphasises "The Kidney is the root of pre-heaven". Since neither essence nor pre-heaven qi can ever be excessive, the Kidneys can only suffer from deficiency patterns. Kidney deficiency may be congenital in origin, or may develop during the course of a person's life as a result of chronic illness, dissipation, excessive sexual activity, overwork, old age, prolonged fear, or prolonged disharmony of other zangfu which eventually transmits to the Kidneys.

Deficiency of the Kidneys is subdivided into the following patterns:

- i. Kidney qi not firm,
- ii. Failure of the Kidneys to grasp the qi,
- iii. deficiency of Kidney essence,
- iv. deficiency of Kidney yang,
- v. deficiency of Kidney yin.

Shenshu BL-23 is an essential point in the treatment of all these patterns.

The Kidneys dominate the two lower yin (urethra and anus) and control the opening and closing of the Bladder and its qi transformation function. Deficiency of the Kidney qi (Kidney qi not firm) therefore, may impair the Kidneys' ability to firmly hold and astringe the urine resulting in such symptoms of leakage as frequent urination, dripping urination, enuresis, white turbidity due to deficiency and exhaustion etc.

According to the Master Hua's Classic of the Central Viscera by the great Han dynasty physician Hua Tuo, the Kidneys "serve the purpose of shutting in the essence in males". Deficiency of Kidney qi therefore, may give rise to leakage of essence manifesting as seminal emission, seminal emission with dreams, urine containing semen and premature ejaculation. This kind of leakage may be seen in the context of qi deficiency alone (in other words without accompanying symptoms of cold or heat), or as part of deficiency of either Kidney yang or Kidney yin, more commonly the former since qi belongs to the broad category of yang. Whatever the pattern, Shenshu BL-23 is an important point to firm the holding and astringing action of the Kidneys.

The Kidneys control the movement of water throughout the body, and although the Spleen and Lung also play an important role in the circulation of fluids, their yang qi is ultimately dependent on that of the Kidneys. This is reflected in the statement that 'the Kidneys dominate the yang of the whole body and govern water'. When Kidney yang fails to move the body fluids there may be oedema with difficult urination. The Supplement to the Thousand Ducat Formulas says "Shenshu BL-23 treats the hundred oedematous diseases" (i.e. any kind of oedema).

The uterus depends on the Kidney essence for its growth, maturation and nourishment, the Penetrating and Conception vessels are both nourished by and have their root in the Kidneys, and the Essential Questions says "the vessel of the uterus connects with the Kidneys". Shenshu BL-23 is indicated for a variety of disorders of the uterus including irregular menstruation due to Kidney

deficiency, chronic cold of the uterus giving rise to taxation, 'emaciation in women due to sexual intercourse during menstruation' and leucorrhoea.

The intimate relationship between the Kidney yang and ming men (the gate of life) has been emphasised in numerous classics. According to the Classic of Difficulties "On the left is the Kidney, on the right is ming men", whilst Li Dong-yuan wrote "The dynamic qi that moves between the Kidneys is ming men". Zhang Jing-yue of the Ming dynasty stated "ming men resides between the Kidneys" and "ming men is the root of original qi and the residence of the water and fire; without it the yin qi of the five zang is unable to grow, the yang qi of the five zang is unable to develop". The Kidney yang therefore corresponds to ming men fire and is the source of the fire of the whole body. Failure of Kidney yang to warm the body leads to such symptoms as chronic cold of the uterus, lumbar region, legs and bones. Decline of the Kidney yang and waning of ming men fire may lead to weakness of the sexual function and hence impotence. Kidney yang is also the source of Spleen yang. When Kidney yang is unable to warm Spleen and Stomach earth there may be chronic diarrhoea due to cold or dampness, diarrhoea containing undigested food, cold and distention of the Stomach, and cold vomiting. The diarrhoea associated with this pattern characteristically occurs in the early hours of the morning and is known as fifth-watch (cockcrow) diarrhoea. The Complete Works of Jing-yue stated "The opening and closing of the two excretions is dominated by the Kidneys. When the yang qi of the Kidneys is insufficient, then ming men is in decline and yin cold is in abundance; therefore after the fifth watch when the yang qi of the Kidneys is in decline and the yin qi is reaching its zenith there will be ceaseless diarrhoea".

According to the Complete Works of Jing-yue "The Lung is the master of qi, the Kidneys are the root of qi. The Lung dominates the exhalation of qi whilst the Kidneys dominate the reception of qi. Only when yin and yang are mutually communicating is respiration harmonious". This quotation emphasises the essential role of the Kidneys in normal respiration. The Lung is the uppermost zang with the function of descending the qi and controlling exhalation, whilst the Kidneys are the bottom-most zang with the function of grasping the qi and controlling inhalation. If Kidney qi is deficient and unable to grasp and hold the Lung qi there may be dyspnoea, asthma or cough. This pattern is characterised by its chronic nature and is usually seen with other accompanying signs of Kidney deficiency. As is the case with Kidney qi not firm, this pattern may be seen either without symptoms of cold or heat, or in the context of deficiency of either Kidney yang or Kidney yin.

According to Essential Readings from the Medical Tradition "The fire and water of the human body is yin and yang ... without yang, yin cannot engender; without yin, yang cannot transform" whilst in the Complete Works of Jing-yue it is said "yin and yang are of the same origin...fire is the ruler of water, water is the source of fire...". These quotations underline the inseparable relationship of the yin and yang of the Kidneys and help explain why all acupuncture points which treat the Kidneys invariably benefit both Kidney yin and Kidney yang. Although the indications for Shenshu BL-23 emphasise deficiency of Kidney qi or Kidney yang, therefore, it also has an action on nourishing Kidney yin.

Like Kidney yang, Kidney yin is the root of the yin of the whole body. Kidney yin deficiency may lead to impaired nourishment of the body and the flaring up of deficiency fire, giving rise to such symptoms as emaciation, wasting and thirsting disorder, and redness and heat of the face and body.

It is a characteristic of the yin back-shu points that they nourish and regulate their corresponding sense organs. According to the Spiritual Pivot "The Kidneys open into the ears; if the Kidneys are in harmony, the ears can hear the five sounds". Since the Kidneys store essence, produce marrow which fills up the brain and dominate yin, Shenshu BL-23 is indicated not only for ear disorders such as tinnitus and deafness, but also for blurred vision, night blindness and visual dizziness, all due to deficiency of marrow, essence or yin.

Since the Kidney yin and yang are the root of the yin fluids and the yang qi of the body, this explains the action of Shenshu BL-23 in diseases of chronic deficiency. It is indicated for the five taxations and the seven injuries, taxation of the five zang, and prolonged accumulation of cold leading to taxation.

The five taxations as discussed in the Spiritual Pivot are:

- i. excessive use of the eyes which injures the blood,
- ii. excessive lying down which injures the qi,
- iii. excessive sitting which injures the flesh,
- iv. excessive standing which injures the bones, and
- v. excessive walking which injures the sinews.

In later texts, the concept of the five taxations was also used to refer to taxation of each of the five zang. Although also referring to a range of male genital disorders, the seven injuries in this context are:

- i. overeating which injures the Spleen,
- ii. great anger which injures the Liver,
- iii. heavy lifting or prolonged sitting on damp ground which injure the Kidneys,
- iv. pathogenic cold which injures the Lung,
- v. worry and anxiety which injure the Heart,
- vi. wind, rain, cold and summer-heat which injure the body, and
- vii. excessive fear which injures the emotions.

According to the Essential Questions "The Kidneys store the qi of the bone marrow", "The Kidneys reside in the lumbar region", "The Kidneys generate bone marrow" and "... when there is internal attack, and heat resides in the Kidneys, then the bones will wither and the marrow will be deficient, therefore the legs will not be able to support the body and bone atrophy disorder will develop".

Any Kidney deficiency pattern may give rise to chronic lumbar pain and weakness or soreness of the knees, whilst in cases of Kidney yin deficiency there may be hot sensations in the bones and in case of Kidney yang deficiency, cold sensations of the bones. Located in the lumbar region and having a direct action on the Kidney zang, Shenshu BL-23 is an essential point in the treatment of any kind of lumbar pain which has its root in Kidney deficiency, as well as Kidney deficient atrophy disorder and hemiplegia.

Finally the Illustrated Supplement to the Classic of Categories states that Shenshu BL-23 is one of five points (Feishu BL-13, Xinshu BL-15, Ganshu BL-18, Pishu BL-20 and Shenshu BL-23) which "drain heat from the five zang".

#### CLASSICAL COMBINATIONS

- Cold of the lower extremities: Shenshu BL-23, Jinggu BL-64 and Rangu KID-2 (Supplementing Life).
- Cold and pain of the bone marrow: Shenshu BL-23, Dazhu BL-11, Xuanzhong GB-39, Fuliu KID-7, Lidui ST-45 and Shenmai BL-62 (Compilation).
- Weakness of the Kidneys and lumbar region accompanied by seminal emission: Shenshu BL-23 and Xinshu BL-15 (Ode of the Jade Dragon).
- Lumbar pain: Shenshu BL-23, Qihai BL-24 and Zhonglushu BL-29 (Supplementing Life).
- Lumbar pain due to Kidney deficiency: Shenshu BL-23, Weizhong BL-40, Taixi KID-3 and Baihuanshu BL-30 (Great Compendium).
- Lumbar pain in the elderly: Shenshu BL-23 and Mingmen DU-4 (Compilation).
- Incontinence of urine and faeces in the elderly: moxa Shenshu BL-23 and Mingmen DU-4 (Ode of the Jade Dragon).
- Invasion by cold or damp (dong) diarrhoea containing undigested food: Shenshu BL-23 and Zhangmen LIV-13 (Thousand Ducat Formulas).
- Cold or damp (dong) diarrhoea with undigested food: Shenshu BL-23 and Dachangshu BL-25 (Supplementing Life).
- Vomiting or cold in the Stomach with distention, much eating but remains thin: Shenshu BL-23 and Weishu BL-21 (Thousand Ducat Formulas).
- Deficiency-taxation oedema: moxa Taichong LIV-3 one hundred times, also moxa Shenshu BL-23 (Thousand Ducat Formulas).
- Seminal emission, white turbidity: Shenshu BL-23, Guanyuan REN-4 and Sanyinjiao SP-6 (Great Compendium).
- Impotence: Shenshu BL-23, Rangu KID-2, Mingmen DU-4 and Qihai REN-6 (Illustrated Supplement).
- Pain of the genitals: Shenshu BL-23, Zhishi BL-52, Jinggu BL-64 and Taichong LIV-3 (Supplementing Life).
- Irregular menstruation: Shenshu BL-23, Daimai GB-26, Qihai REN-6, Zhongji REN-3 and Sanyinjiao SP-6 (Great Compendium).
- Ceaseless uterine bleeding: Shenshu BL-23, Zigong (M-CA-18), Zhongji REN-3 and Shimen REN-5 (Great Compendium).
- Deafness due to Kidney deficiency: Shenshu BL-23 and Tinghui GB-2 (Song of the Jade Dragon).
- Deafness due to Kidney deficiency: Shenshu BL-23, Pianli L.I.-6 and Tinghui GB-2 (Illustrated Supplement).
- Deficiency tinnitus: Shenshu BL-23, Zusanli ST-36 and Hegu L.I.-4 (Great Compendium).

- Tinnitus: Shenshu BL-23, Tinggong SI-19, Tinghui GB-2, Ermen SJ-21, Baihui DU-20, Luoque BL-8, Yangxi L.I.-5, Qiangu SI-2, Houxi SI-3, Wangu SI-4, Zhongzhu SJ-3, Yemen SJ-2 and Shangyang L.I.-1 (Great Compendium).
- Fullness of the chest and lateral costal region radiating to the abdomen: Shenshu BL-23, Xiajuxu ST-39, Qiuxu GB-40 and Xiaxi GB-43 (Great Compendium).
- Chest and diaphragm obstructed by blood stasis: Shenshu BL-23 and Juliao ST-3 (One Hundred Symptoms).