

THE GALL BLADDER

(Collated by Michelle Wilkinson www.movingnaturally.co.uk)

The gall bladder is a small storage bag located by the 10th rib under the superior lobe of the liver.

It has a 50ml capacity to store, concentrate and acidify the bile which is continuously made in the liver.

Bile is composed of 97% water, 1% bile pigments/salts, 2% mineral salts and fatty acids.

Bile release into the duodenum section of the small intestine is triggered by the ingestion of fats during a meal. Here it aids the breakdown of fats and oils.

Bile and pancreatic juices are released together into the duodenum during a meal.

A series of nerve reflexes and hormones stimulates the gall bladder to release bile. It is the cholecystokinin hormone which stimulates the release of bile while the secretin hormone causes the pancreatic acinar cells to give up their enzyme-rich juices.

The pair of Vagus Nerves which begin at the brain stem and wander down the neck and thorax into the abdomen, carry autonomic nerve fibres which allow the gall bladder and pancreas to act automatically under our conscious control.

Due to its strong relationship with digestion, the gall bladder may influence digestive discomforts such as hiccups, nausea and abdominal distention.

The Gall Bladder Meridian starts at the outside of the eyes and finishes on the lateral side of the fourth toe on each side of the body. As it runs along the bodily sides, it is important for the posture, connecting the front and back surfaces of a person.

This meridian runs along the side and back of the head and neck and as such is indicative of headaches and neck stiffness.

In the Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) the gall bladder Ki nourishes the tendons and ligaments allowing for a smooth flow of movements through the joints.

In TCM the nature of wind is associated with the liver and gall bladder. External wind can be challenging creating mood changes such as anger and depression. An internal wind can cause hiccups, spasms and tremors.

Energy or Ki stagnation in the body often occurs along the horizons which includes the throat, diaphragm and pelvic floor muscle.

Ki stagnation can also be seen from an emotional context. The repression of feelings is very much within this domain.

In TCM the gall bladder is responsible for day-to-day decision-making. It is easy to become frustrated when the direction a person is going in is thwarted.

Ki demands expression. By rebirthing from repressive behaviours, a person can discover their mature self.

Rather than explosion or repression it is possible to stay with an emotional feeling long enough for it to become a powerful strength. For instance, anger has the potence for the determination and drive to achieve something while grief can stem a support group which benefits the wider community.

A way of releasing strong Ki is by running, going to the gym, or creating strong, direct and quick movements such as kicking or punching.

Having gall means the capacity to take risks, stand by decisions made and move away from timidity and hesitance.

Pupil's Crevice is the gall bladder acupressure point GB1. It is in a small bone indentation on the lateral edge of each eye. Pressing here brightens the eyes and supports conjunctivitis, light sensitivity, and migraines.

Shoulder Well is the gall bladder acupressure point GB21. It resides on the crest of the shoulder midway between the shoulder edge and the base of the neck. It is a powerful point for stiffness in the neck and shoulders, contradicted in pregnancy but promotes childbirth and lactation.

Jumping Circle is the gall bladder acupressure point GB30. It is located one-third of the distance from the top of the leg bone (femur) to the base of the sacrum. Important for energising a stagnant and tired body, it also supports pain in the hip, groin, lower back, leg and the sciatic nerve.