

Lung + Liver = Liberation

By Brendan Armm, LAc, Dipl. OM

The following is an article that I wrote several years ago, when I was beginning my TCM education at Emperor's College of Traditional Oriental Medicine. While I have since graduated from Emperor's, I consider this article among my favorites, and asked that it be published in *Acupuncture Today* to share with the profession.

For all those upperclassmen (and women) who find this concept beyond simple, please excuse my second-year theory regarding the relationship between the liver and lung. I am intrigued by the spiritual component of these two organs, and am focusing on the outer back *shu* points of the Urinary Bladder channel (foot *tai yang* channel).

"Lung Spirit," UB 42, the "door of corporeal soul" (*po*), is level with lung point UB 13 (*fei shu*), which is beneath T3. The corporeal soul ends when the spirit leaves the body. Our lungs breathe life, and breath is the primary focus in most yogic practices. Yoga means to unite or yoke with the divine, and the practitioner's focus (hopefully) is to become a peace-making person. We perform various *asanas* (meaning "seat," referring to the physical postures of hatha yoga) to realize how the mind moves through various stretches of the body and bends of life.

"*Hun men*," the liver outer back *shu* point, UB 47, is known as the "door of the ethereal soul" and is level with liver point UB 18 (*gan shu*), which is beneath T9. The ethereal soul does not die when the individual passes, but instead transfers into new life. It is important to be aware how and when the liver rises or experiences other disharmonies, for the individual then loses sight of his or her true nature. Since the spiritual nature of this organ goes beyond the body, understanding and working through our anger, depression and anxiety has a direct relationship on our future karma and rebirths.

As such, one first uses the breath to focus the mind and to be still through the ebb and flow of life. Yet alone, this is not enough for liberation, for the slate is washed clear when we pass. Therefore, the peace of mind realized from the breath must carry over to the liver and be seen in our outer emotions, which relate to ourselves and others, in order that the merits of well-being have any effect on the undying soul.

Try it on your patients, and keep in mind, oh nobly born: Do not forget your true nature.

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