

# 40 Acupuncture Points Every Martial Artist Should Know: Part 1 & 2

<https://www.internalartsinternational.com/free/20-acupuncture-points-every-martial-artist-know-part-1/>

[Read Part 2 of '20 Acupuncture Points Every Martial Artist Should Know' HERE](#)

A basic knowledge of acupuncture points (acu-points) is an invaluable tool for the martial artist. If you are interested in learning about acupuncture points, start with the **20 acu-points every practitioner of the internal martial arts should know**. If you practice Qi Gong, Nei Gong or Daoist Meditation, you should know these points too.

Many martial arts practitioners are interested in acupuncture points. Knowledge of acu-points can enormously benefit martial artists, not only because they can be used to treat pain and a variety of diseases, but also because acu-points can be used to promote health and prevent injury. Furthermore, knowledge of acu-points deepens one's understanding of the body's internal energetic processes. This knowledge is extremely helpful if you practice Qi Gong or Nei Gong exercises from the internal martial arts. Lastly, striking vital points is a part of every martial art, and a basic knowledge of vital points can be a useful self-defense tool.

My observation is that a lot of martial arts practitioners begin to learn about points and then quickly give up, because the science of acu-points seems like a difficult and insurmountable task. This usually happens because one attempts to memorize the points out of the context of practical application, or because one attempts to learn the points on a meridian, or group of meridians, all at once.

Another difficulty is that there are multiple approaches one can take to learn about acu-points: health, self defense, meditation & Nei Gong, and treating disease. If one attempts to engage with all of these applications at the same time, it makes learning difficult.

The approach suggested here is to start with 20 acu-points that give an internal martial artist global insight into the energetic workings of the body during the practice of Nei Gong and internal forms. From this perspective, the only meridian pathways one needs to know are the circulation of the Du Mai and Ren Mai, which are two channels running on the centerline of the body, back and front, respectively. These 20 points have many functions, so by learning them you are engaging with many different applications of the points: from Nei Gong and self-defense to health and healing.

Once you know these 20 key acu-points and understand their various uses by sensing them internally during your daily practice, it is easier to go on and learn others. You do not need to know all the acupuncture points – there are hundreds of acu-points if we include points that are not on meridians. Most acupuncturists do not know all the points, and even if they do, the average acupuncturist probably uses 40-60 points most of the time. These are usually the points that consistently produce clinical results and more importantly, the points the individual acupuncturist has a certain resonance with, points that they have a certain “sense” about.

Start by reading about a few points and then see if you can sense what is happening at those points as you practice your forms and exercises. Or try acupressure on some of them to promote

health and healing. Develop your own feeling about the points and begin to “know” them viscerally from the inside-out, rather than as a series of dots on a two-dimensional picture.

You will need a book that helps you locate the points. There are many. I suggest Mark Tedeschi’s book *Essential Anatomy for Healing and Martial Arts*. It is inexpensive and is a good starting point. Almost any point can also be looked up online and there are free PDF downloads of acupuncture points available online, so you do not need to buy an expensive textbook. Each of the 20 points below will be accompanied by a picture. Detailed instruction about location can be found in books or online.

**Do learn the point names. If possible, learn the point names in Chinese, but if not, at least learn what the Chinese name means. Often the name gives clues to function, inter-relationships between points and/or location.**

### **The 20 Acu-Points**

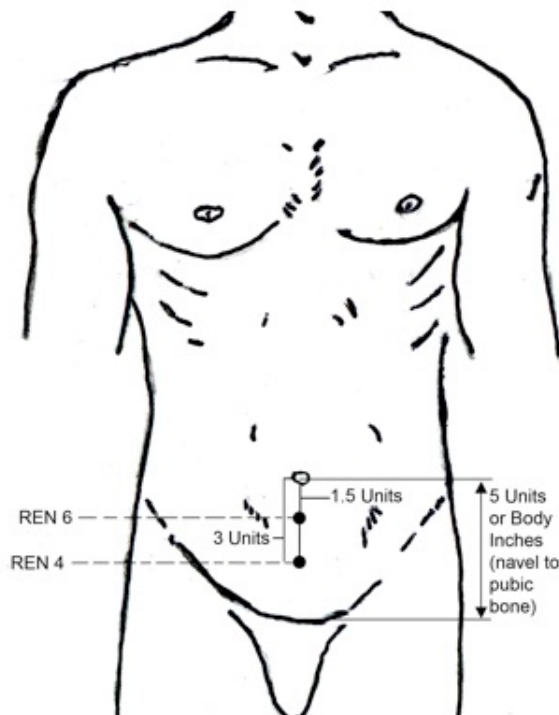
1. REN 1 (*Huiyin*)
2. REN 4 (*Guanyuan*)
3. REN 6 (*Qihai*)
4. REN 17 (*Danzhong*)
5. DU 1 (*Chengqiang*)
6. DU 4 (*Mingmen*)
7. DU 14 (*Dazhui*)
8. DU 16 (*Fengfu*)
9. DU 20 (*Baihui*)
10. DU 26 (*Shuigou*)
11. KID 1 (*Yongquan*)
12. P 8 (*Laogong*)
13. LI 4 (*He Gu*)
14. SJ 5 (*Waiguan*)
15. P 6 (*Neiguan*)
16. GB 21 (*Jianjing*)
17. LV 13 (*Zhangmen*)
18. ST 36 (*Zusanli*)
19. LI 10 (*Shousanli*)
20. SP 6 (*Sanyinjiao*)

### 1. 會陰 REN 1 (*Huiyin*) “Yin Meeting”

*Huiyin*, on the Ren (Conception) Vessel, is the meeting point of Du Mai, Ren Mai and Chong Mai, and is the gathering point of yin Qi in the body. *Huiyin* lies anatomically opposite *Baihui* DU 20, on the Du (Governing) Vessel. *Baihui* is the gathering point for the yang qi of the body. *Huiyin* is in the center of the perineum, while *Baihui* is on the top of the head.

### 2. 關元 REN 4 (*Guanyuan*) “Pass of the Origin”

*Guanyuan*, the “Pass of the Origin” is also called *Dantian* (“Cinnabar Field”). This is the point on the front of the body that corresponds to *Mingmen*, the life gate, where the original yang has its root. This area is connected internally with *Qihai* (REN 6) and both are often referred to as the Dantian, either singly or collectively. Breath and Qi gather and are stored in *Guanyuan* and *Qihai* during the practice of “Kidney Breathing.” This acu-point promotes health and strengthens the kidneys particularly when moxibustion is employed.

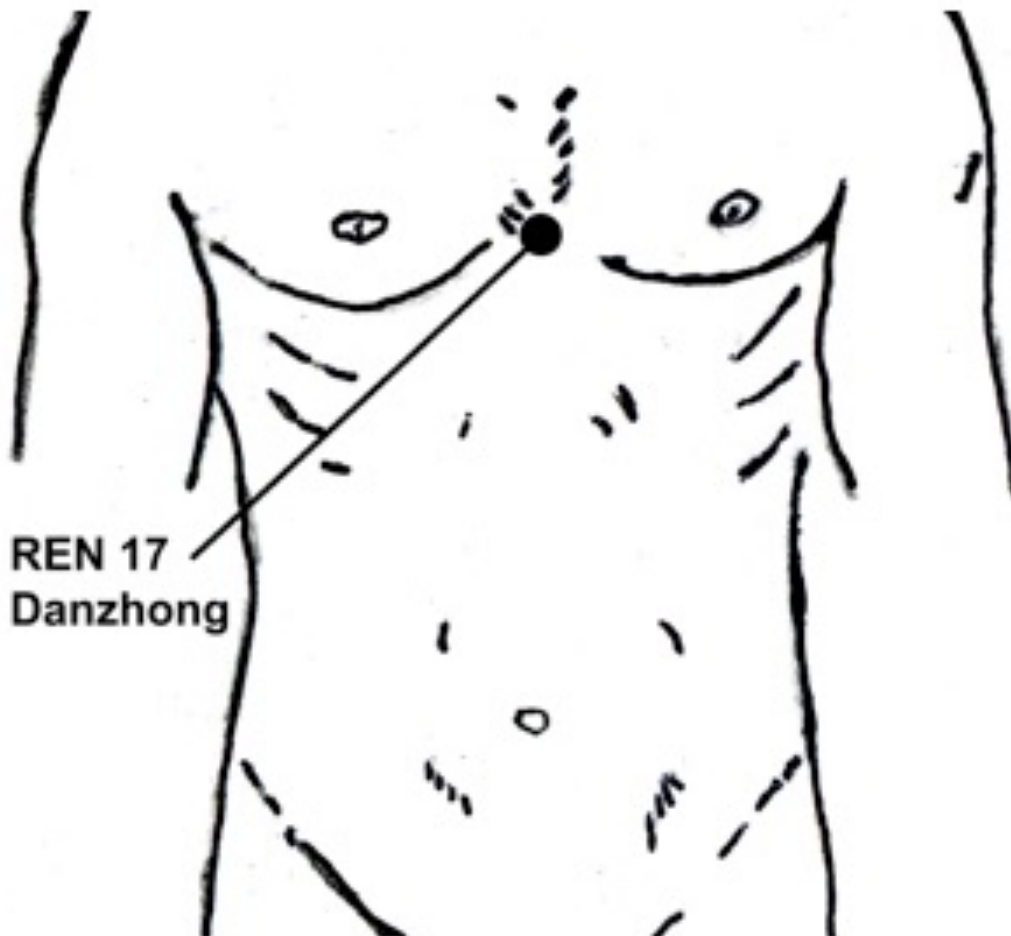


### 3. 氣海 REN 6 (*Qihai*) “Sea of Qi”

*Qihai*, a point on the Ren (Conception) Channel, is also known as 下氣海 *Xia Qihai* (“Lower Sea of Qi”). Breath and Qi gather and are stored here during the practice of Kidney Breathing. *Qihai* is sometimes referred to as the *Dantian*. This acu-point promotes health and can strengthen the kidneys particularly when moxibustion is employed.

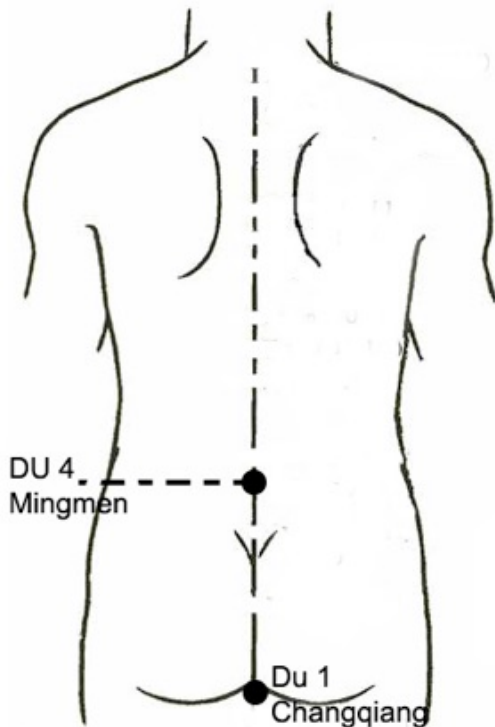
#### 4. 膻中 REN 17 (*Danzhong*) “Chest Center”

*Danzhong* is also known as *Shang Qihai* (“Upper Sea of Qi”). The first character (*Dan*) is also sometimes Romanized as *Shan*. Qi and Breath gather here because it is a meeting point of Qi and of several meridians: the Spleen (foot *Taiyin*) channel, Kidney (foot *Shaoyin*) channel, Sanjiao (hand *Shaoyang*) channel and Ren Mai. The pericardium, the sac that wraps the heart, lies right behind this point. It is an attack point that can damage the heart if hit with sufficient force, and fractures to the sternum in this area are dangerous. Many of the movements in internal martial arts are done in such a way that this point is protected.



## 5. 長強 DU 1 (*Changqiang*) “Long Strong”

*Changqiang*, a point underneath the tip of the coccyx, has many names. Common names for *Changqiang* in Daoist texts are *Guiwei* (“Tortoise Tail”) or *Weilu* (“Tail Gate”). DU 1 is the starting point of the Du (Governing) Channel, where the kidney yang energy emanates outward, extending itself along the Du Channel. Since the Governing Vessel controls the yang of the body, this point effects the body’s strength and vigor. Some sources say that needling this point will make the penis “long and strong.”[1] In martial arts, this acu-point is a vital point that must be protected. A hard kick to this point can do great damage to the body.

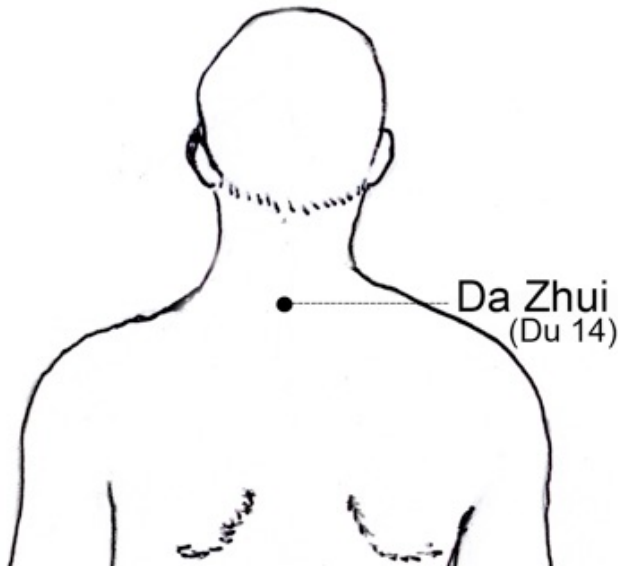


## 6. 命門 Du 4 (*Mingmen*) “Life Gate”

*Mingmen*, The Gate of Life, is located between the kidneys and is sometimes called “the moving Qi Between the Kidneys.” Yang energy connects and gathers here. Although the “Life Gate” (*Mingmen*) is actually inside the body, the *Mingmen* acu-point is a major acu-point for directly accessing the Life Gate. Often Moxibustion is applied to this point to activate and strengthen the *Mingmen*. *Mingmen* has a direct connection with *Dantian*. They are essentially one entity with two expressions. The *Mingmen* is said to “dominate all twelve channels.” In Kidney Breathing, one is breathing directly into *Mingmen*. In the *neijia*, internal movement emanates from *Mingmen* and its connection with the *yongquan* points on the bottoms of the feet.

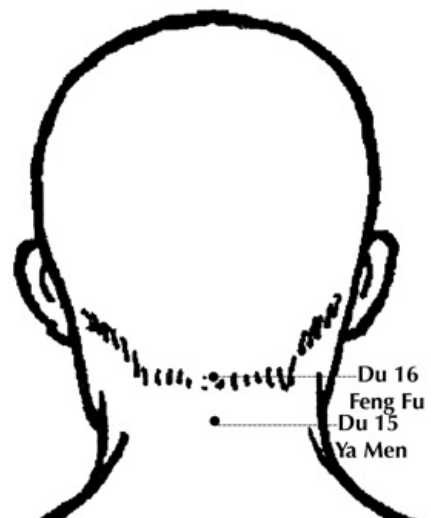
## 7. 大椎DU 14 (*Dazhui*) “Big Hammer”

*Dazhui* can also mean “Big Vertebrae.” It is located below the most prominent of the Cervical vertebra. *Dazhui* is a meeting point for all of the six yang meridians and Du Mai. It acts a hub for Qi and Breath entering or leaving the head and neck, and also for the movement of Qi and Breath into the arms. It is a place where Qi can block in Microcosmic Orbit Circulation.



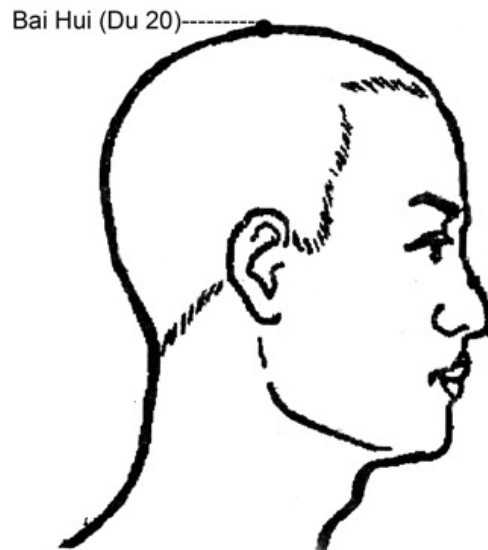
## 8. 風府DU 16 (*Fengfu*) “Wind Mansion”

*Fengfu* is a point where wind can enter the body, leading to colds, stiff neck and even numbness of the head and face. In acupuncture, DU 16 is also used to treat wind disorders. DU 16 is just below DU 17 *Nao Hu* (“Brain Door”), also called *Yu Zhen* (“Jade Pillow”). Yang Qi rising along Du Mai enters the brain through this point. In Daoist meditation and Micro-cosmic Orbit Circulation, the area between DU 16 and DU 17 is one of the places where Qi easily blocks. In the internal arts and in Qi Gong and Nei Gong exercises, one of the functions of the fundamental postural alignments is to keep this point open so that Qi and Breath can enter the brain unobstructed. DU 16, and the area at the base of the skull in general, are susceptible to vital point strikes that shock the brain. *Fengfu* is particularly susceptible to chopping and shearing strikes.



## 9. 百會DU 20 (*Baihui*) “Hundred Meeting”

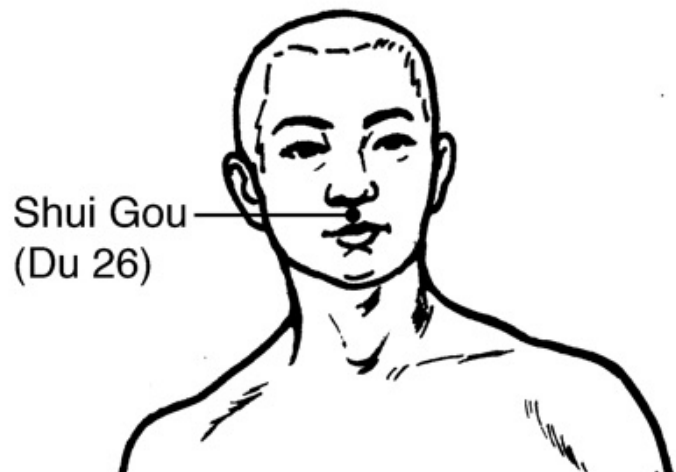
*Baihui* is anatomically opposite REN 1 (*Huiyin*) in the perineum. *Baihui* is a place where yang converges and gathers, while *Huiyin* is a gathering or collecting point for the yin. The yang vessels and Du Mai all meet at *Baihui*. Other meridians like the Liver Meridian of Foot *Jueyin* also have internal pathways that connect to *Baihui*. As the highest point on the body, *Baihui* has a direct connection with the energy of Heaven (yang). In this sense, *Baihui* is in energetic opposition to KID 1 (*Yongquan*), which is on the bottom of the foot and connects directly with Earth (yin). When practicing Nei Gong or *Zhan Zhuang* exercises, one of the basic goals is to foster the rising of the “clear yang,” which leads to a sensation of Qi and Breath gathering at



*Baihui*. It is a point where the “hundred spirits are also said to converge. [2]

## 10. 水溝DU 26 (*Shuigou*) “Water Ditch”

*Shuigou* is also known as 人中 *Renzhong* (“Human Center”). The name of the point describes the location and appearance of the point in the philtrum, the ditch or trough below the nose. This point is where Qi and Breath, moving through Du Mai, enter the mouth to connect with Ren Mai. DU 26 is a very strong point, famous for its ability to revive someone even if they appear to be dead. It is used as a revival point in cases of shock, fainting and heart attack. Like many revival points, it can also be used to knock someone out. A hard strike to DU 26 with one knuckle or a chop can cause unconsciousness



[1] *Grasping the Wind: An Exploration into the Meaning of Chinese Acupuncture Point Names*, By Andrew Ellis, Nigel Wiseman and Ken Boss. Brookline Mass: Paradigm Publications 1989, p. 328.

[2] *Grasping the Wind* p. 344.



# 20 Acupuncture Points Every Martial Artist Should Know: Part 2 – Internal Arts

## International

A basic knowledge of acupuncture points (acu-points) is an invaluable tool for the martial artist. If you are interested in learning about acupuncture points start with the **20 Acu-points every practitioner of the internal martial arts should know**. If you practice Qi Gong, Nei Gong or Daoist Meditation, you should know these points too...

### 11. 涌泉KID 1 (*Yongquan*) “Bubbling Well”

The name of this point, *yongquan*, conjures up the image of a spring where water is gushing out of the earth. Qi gushes forth from this spot to move upward through the body. In the internal arts, Qi and Breath emanating from the Earth come through this point and move up to connect with the kidneys and *Mingmen*. This is the water of the Earth connecting to *Mingmen* fire. Their combination creates balance and strength. Proper posture and alignment enhance this connection. Awareness of *Yongquan* is critical to remaining stable and rooted and to generating power that comes from the ground up. In *Zhan Zhuang*, *San Ti Shi*, Qi Gong exercises and Circle Walking Nei Gong, practitioners sense the connection between *Yongquan*, *Mingmen* and *Baihui*.



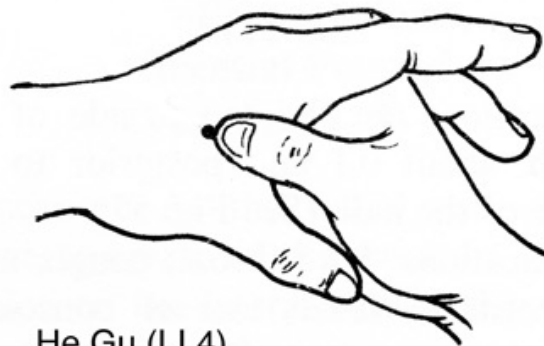
## 12. 勞宮 P8 (*Laogong*) “Palace of Labor”

*Laogong*, in the center of the palm, must be open and hollow for Qi to spread into the hand and fingers. This point also has a direct connection with *Yongquan*. In *Nei Gong*, any change at *Yongquan* – for example from a weight shift – has an immediate and direct reflection at *Laogong*. These four points on the hands and feet (*Laogong* and *Yongquan*) must connect to *Dantian* for the body and the Qi to be integrated. This is called “Combining the Three Hearts.”



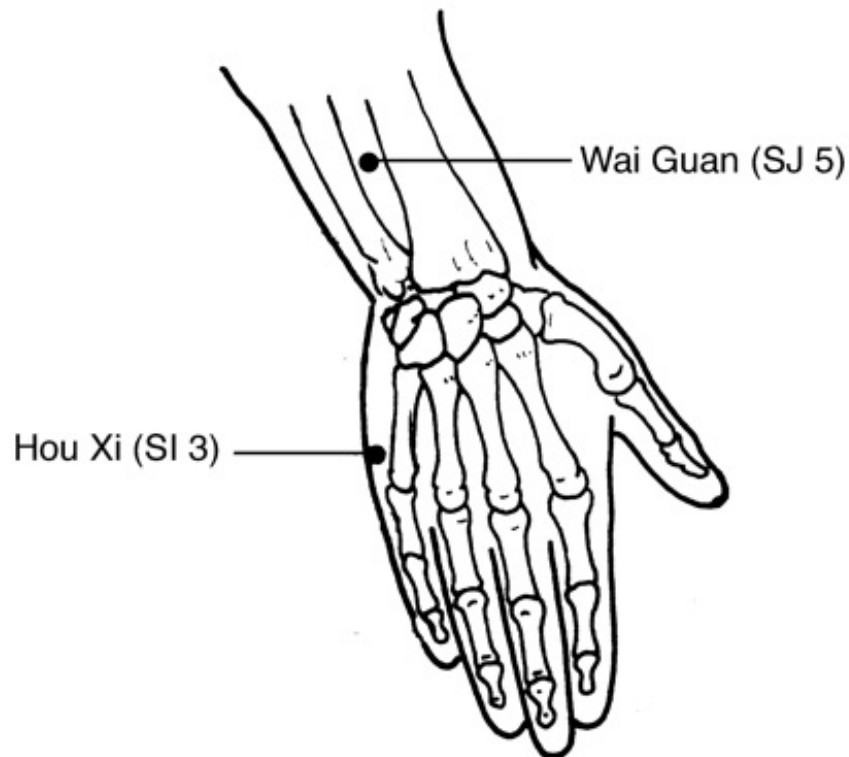
## 13. 合谷 LI 4 (*Hegu*) “Valley Junction”

In the internal arts, *Hegu* is commonly called *Hukou* (“Tiger’s Mouth”). This is because when the fingers are spread, the space between thumb and forefinger resembles the mouth of a tiger. In internal arts and *Nei Gong*, this area must be open and round for Qi and Breath to fill the hands. The “Tiger’s Mouth” can also seize and attack. LI 4 is a famous point for headaches and in fact can be used for many problems of the head and face. It is effective with both acupuncture and acu-pressure. In *Qinna* techniques, one sometimes seizes this point to weaken the opponent’s hand. This point should not be needled or pressed hard during pregnancy, because it moves Qi very strongly in the whole body.



#### 14. 外關 SJ 5 (*Waiguan*) “Outer Pass”

Located in the forearm above the wrist crease, *Waiguan* is where the *San Jiao* (Triple Burner) Channel connects to the Pericardium Channel through *Neiguan* (P 6). *Waiguan* lies directly opposite *Neiguan*. *Waiguan* is a “gate point” which, when open, allows Qi to flow smoothly into the hand and fingers. In the internal martial arts and Nei Gong exercises, SJ 5 is kept open during the postures and movements. *Waiguan* is also a confluent, opening point for the Yang Linking Vessel (Yang Wei Mai), an Extraordinary meridian that links the yang Channels of the body, hence it is an important point in Macro-Cosmic Orbit Circulation. Lastly, SJ 5 is a point that is often attacked in *Qinna* techniques, like Golden Thread Wraps the Wrist.

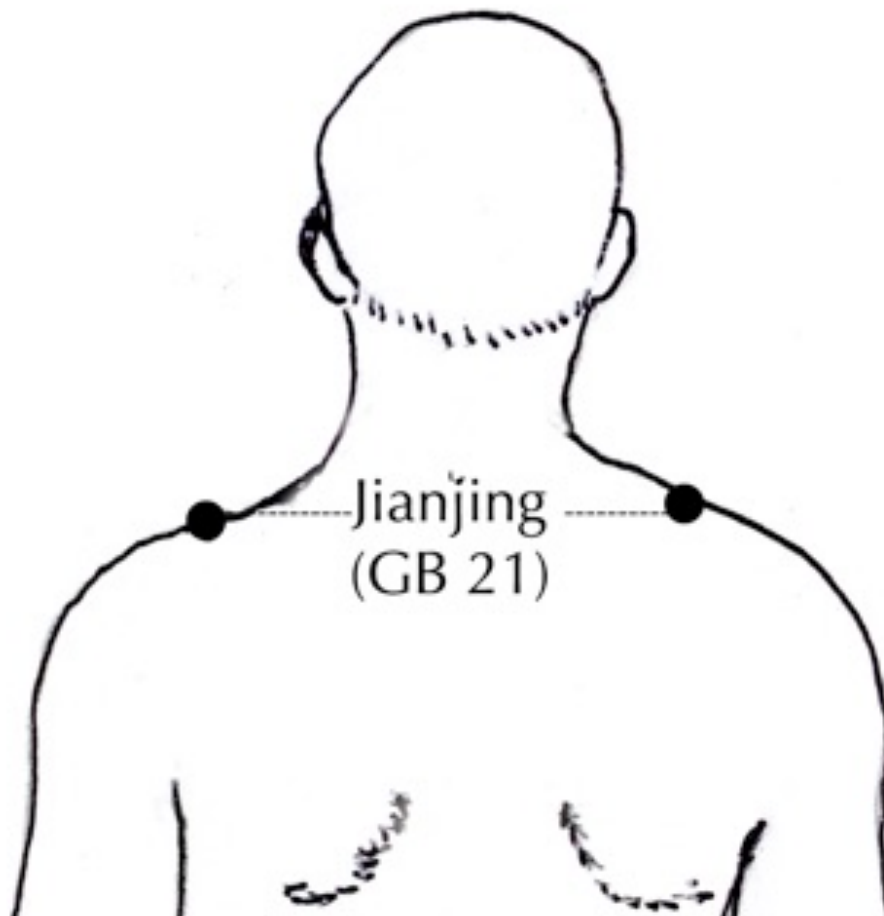


#### 15. 內關 P 6 (*Nei Guan*) “Inner Pass”

*Nei Guan* is a corollary to the SJ 5 point, in that it connects the Pericardium channel with the San Jiao Channel via SJ 5. *Neiguan* lies directly opposite SJ 5 and like SJ 5 is a gate point for Qi to flow smoothly into the hand and fingers. In the internal arts and Nei Gong exercises, P 6 is kept open during the postures and movements. *Neiguan* is also a confluent, opening point for the Yin Linking Vessel (Yin Wei Mai), an Extraordinary meridian that links the yin Channels of the body, hence it is an important point in Macro-Cosmic Orbit Circulation. P 6 is a vital point that can be struck to weaken the arm and the pericardium channel. It can be struck by blocking, hit by direct strikes or seized in *Qin Na* techniques. *Neiguan* is also an important acupuncture point for relieving nausea and motion sickness. It can be needled or pressed for this purpose.

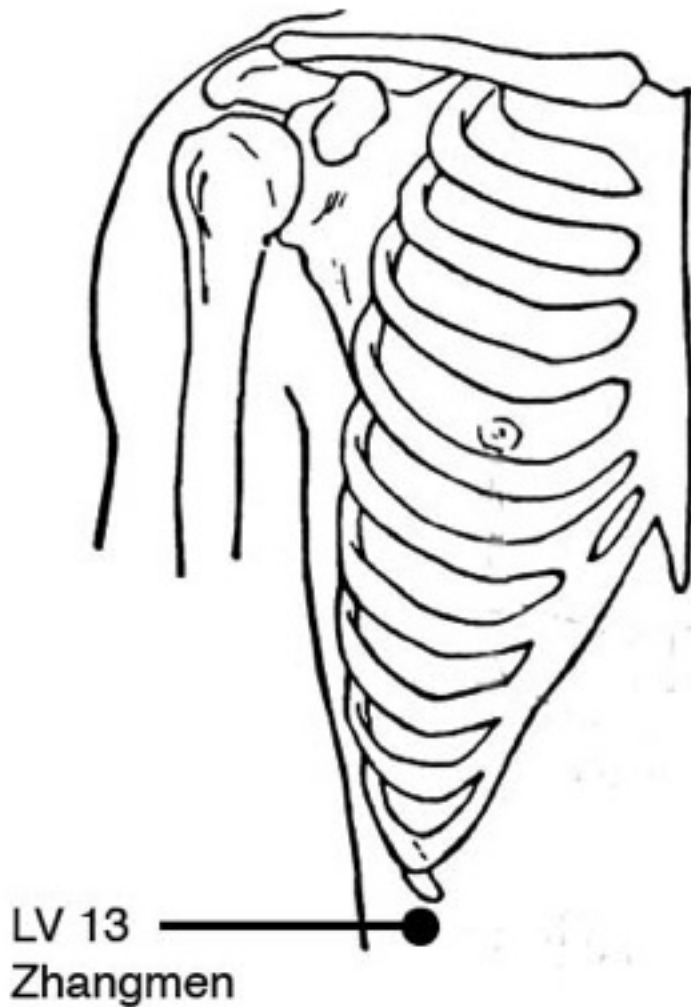
## 16. 肩井 GB 21 (*Jianjing*) “Shoulder Well”

*Jianjing* is an important point that regulates the flow of Qi downward, both into the torso and into the shoulder and arm. The San Jiao, Stomach, Gallbladder and Yang Linking Vessel all meet at *Jianjing*. The Neigong Classic states that in order to refine the steps, “one must gather Jin, from GB 21 and make it sink down to Kid 1 (*Yongquan*).” [3] Sinking GB 21 to Kid 1 stabilizes the body and allows the shoulders to naturally relax, so that power can be transmitted out of the arm, while simultaneously connecting that power to the legs. GB 21 and LI 11 and LI 10 are acupoints that must be open and relaxed in order for whole body power to be transmitted to the hands. Sinking GB 21 to Kid 1 also lowers the blood pressure and makes Qi descend. For this reason, it is contraindicated to needle or press the point with force during pregnancy. Disrupting *Jianjing* can break the opponents balance. *Jianjing* can also be struck in order to weaken and damage the arm and neck. When struck downward it weakens the legs.



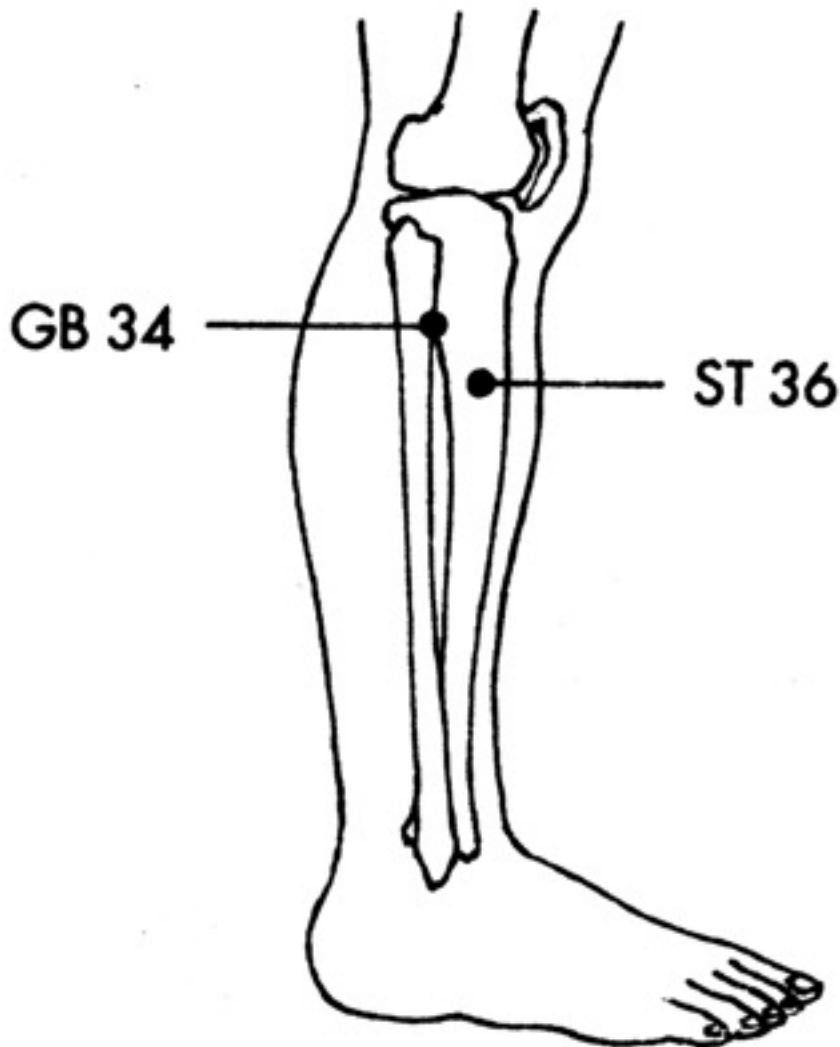
## 17. 章門LV 13 (*Zhangmen*) “Section Gate” “Screen Gate”

*Zhangmen* is an important point on the Belt Channel (Dai Mai). It is also a meeting point for the *Zang* Organs: Kidneys, Liver, Spleen, Lungs and Heart. This point is located at the tip of the 11<sup>th</sup> rib. One means of locating it is to bend your arm at the elbow. The tip of the elbow is generally on the point. This point acts as a “screen” that protects the internal organs. Attacks that penetrate into this point can cause internal organ damage. Therefore, *Zhangmen* is a vital point that many techniques in the internal forms are targeting. The elbows must sink and wrap inward in the internal arts, because it is crucial that this area be protected. Anatomically, the Liver and Gallbladder are behind the right *Zhangmen*, and the Spleen lies underneath the left *Zhangmen*. It is particularly dangerous to be hit in the Spleen, as it is a soft organ filled with blood that can easily rupture. Qi gong exercises that benefit the Liver often have movements in which the elbows brush LV 13 as the arms move forward and back. This stimulates the LV 13 acu-point and benefits the Liver and Spleen Qi.



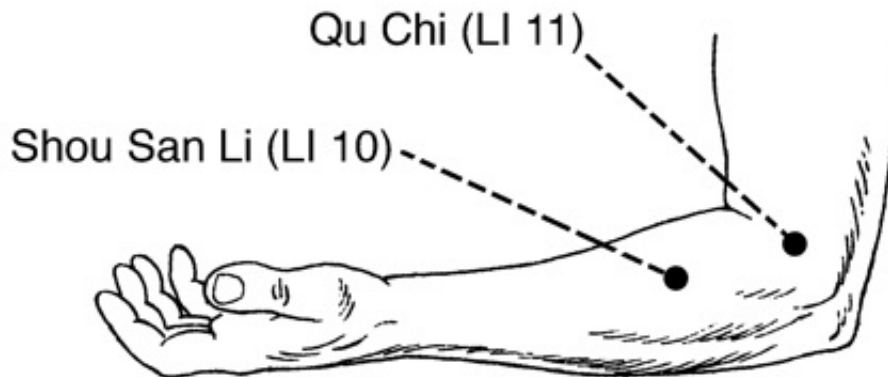
### 18. ST 36 (*Zusanli*) “Leg Three Li”

One of the most well known and most commonly used acupuncture points, *Zusanli*, ST 36, energizes the leg. It is called “Leg Three Li” (a Li is a measure of distance equaling about a third of a mile), because stimulation of the point, particularly with moxibustion, allows a fatigued person to go another three Li. *Zusanli* is also sometimes called 下氣海 *Xiaqihai* (“Lower Sea of Qi”) It implies that this point may have an effect comparable to *Qihai* (REN 6). [4] *Zusanli* is also a vital point that is kicked in order to weaken the leg.



## 19. LI 10 (*Shousanli*) “Arm Three Li”

*Shousanli*, or Arm Three Li is comparable to ST 36. It is an energizer point for the arm. Pressure on this point can relieve pain in the shoulder and arm, and give the arm more energy to keep going. *Shousanli* is also a vital point that is commonly attacked in martial arts. Striking this point can cause temporary paralysis of the arm, because it is a point where the radial nerve can be accessed.



## 20. SP6 (*Sanyinjiao*) “Three Yin Intersection”

*Sanyinjiao*, on the inside of the lower leg, is a point where the three leg yin meridians (Spleen, Liver and Kidney) intersect. Because this point promotes the functioning of the three yin leg channels, all of which meet in the abdomen, it is an important point for abdominal pain, and digestive issues, as well as and gynecological problems, such as Dysmenorrhea. In the martial arts, this point is a target for low kicks, as a blow here weakens the leg.

[3] *Nei Gong: The Authentic Classic. A Translation of the Nei Gong Zhen Chuan*, translated by Tom Bisio Huang Guo-Qi and Joshua Paynter. Denver: Outskirts Press, 2011, pp. 16-17.

[4] *Zusanli (Stomach 36)*, by Subhuti Dharmananda, Ph.D., Director, Institute for Traditional Medicine, Portland, Oregon. <http://www.itmonline.org/arts/zusanli.htm>

