

## **The Patterns of Chinese Command Points and their Relationship to Touch for Health Acupressure Holding Points**

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**Abstract:** In my early days of Touch for Health, of all the balancing techniques I learned, I found that the one I was both most intrigued with and the one I used the least was the Acupressure Holding Points (AHP) technique. When I ask other TFH practitioners, even the most experienced ones usually say the same. I believe the reason for this is a lack of understanding of the points themselves, and difficulty using the technique due to not knowing where the points are. In this paper, I will attempt to better define the points used in the AHP technique, and offer a way of learning these points so that they become easier to use.

### **What is the Acupressure Holding Points Technique?**

Touch for Health uses combinations of acupressure points in a specific sequence as a means of balancing the body. This technique is one of the five main balances taught in the TFH synthesis, along with NeuroLymphatics, NeuroVasculars, Meridian Tracing, and Origin/Insertion technique.

Admittedly my training in TFH was some years ago (longer than I care to admit), so my remembrance of how and what I learned may be a little suspect. As I recall, however, when I learned the AHP technique, very little background was given other than the basic concept of moving energy through the 5 elements. There was a little about the Mother/Grandmother relationship in the elements, "closing the gate", and, of course, how to hold the points. But that was about it. It wasn't until PHP (as PKP was know then) that I learned that the points involved were special points known as Command Points.

A year after finishing my Touch for Health training, I went to Bali to take the PHP series, and then spent several months having fun in the South Pacific. During a 2 month stint in Thailand, with several weeks in a row on one island or another drenching in sun, I decided to figure out a way to learn these points.

Having already memorized the NeuroLymphatics and NeuroVasculars, the meridian pathways and origin/insertions, I now wanted a way to better remember the AHPs. Surely there must be a pattern of some sort to make this easier to use!

I proceeded to chart out these points with my new understanding of Command Points, and then stared at the paper looking for anything that would make it easier to remember and use these points. Sure enough, it was all there. This "discovery" has made it easier for me to use not only the AHPs, but have a better understanding of 5 Element theory and easier use of many other techniques found in Specialized Kinesiology. And while these patterns have existed for thousands of years, and are no doubt familiar to doctors of Chinese Medicine and Acupuncturists, they don't seem to be common knowledge in our circles.

My hope is that by sharing this with you, you will be able to more effectively and more often utilize the AHPs of Touch for Health, as well as other similar techniques you might come across (or already have come across). As well, for those of you that are instructors, by deepening your understanding of these points, you will improve your ability to teach the AHPs.

### **Command Points**

Because the Acupressure Holding Points use a special type of point known as a Command Point, the best place to start is with a definition.

**Command Points:** Points on each meridian that relate that meridian to each of the elements. Remember that within the 5 Element structure, we are only speaking of the 12 bilateral meridians and do not include Central and Governing.

In other words, on each meridian, there are five points that act as junctions between the meridian and each of the elements. The point is named after the element it relates to. So on each meridian, there is a Fire Command Point, an Earth Command Point, a Metal Command Point, a Water Command Point, and a Wood Command Point. The Wood Command Point on the Spleen meridian connects the Spleen Meridian to the whole Wood Element – which contains the Liver and Gall Bladder Meridians.

If you think of the body as a house, and each meridian as a room, the Command Points act as windows between all the different rooms of the house.

### **The Acupressure Holding Point Theory**

Before we get into the location of the points and the patterns involved, let's revisit the AHP technique to provide the context of why we are using these points to begin with.

There are two effects of working with AHPs relative to a specific meridian: either to tonify it or sedate it. We first hold a pair of points that accomplishes one of these effects. In doing so, we are "opening the gate" of energy to allow the flow between two elements balance the energy of our target meridian. We then hold a second pair of points to "close the gate", so we don't drain too much energy in or out. While the first pair of points differs depending on desired outcome, the second pair of points is the same for that particular meridian. Therefore, each meridian has three pairs of points that can be used for balancing.

When we wish to tonify, the object is to draw energy into the meridian. To do that, we use

points that bring the energy from the "mother" element into the meridian. The mother element is the element one position counterclockwise from the element of the meridian we are working with. For example, to tonify the Lung Meridian, which is in the Metal Element, we want to draw energy from the Earth Element – the mother element to Metal.

When we wish to sedate a meridian, the object is to release energy from the meridian. In this case, the target meridian becomes the mother, and we pass the energy to the "child" element, which is the element clockwise from our meridian. For example, to sedate the Lung Meridian, we want to pass the energy out to the Water Element. Now Metal is the mother, and Water is the child.

To close the gate, we always look to the grandmother. The grandmother is the element two positions counterclockwise from the target meridian's element. Using our Lung Meridian example, the grandmother would be the Fire Element.

So which points do we actually use to accomplish all this balancing? Well, the Command Points!

### **The Rules**

As just mentioned, when we hold combinations of command points to move energy around, we are either drawing energy from one element to our target meridian, or draining energy from the target meridian to another element. We use the command points of the element that we are either drawing energy from or draining to. In other words, sticking with the Lung Meridian as our example, to tonify, we would use the Earth Command points, because the Lung Meridian is in the Metal Element and we are drawing energy from the mother, Earth. However, when sedating the Lung Meridian, we use the Water Element Command Points, because now we are draining the energy from Lung towards Water.

Each element has two meridians. So how do we decide which meridian to use within the element we are either drawing from or draining to? The rule is to use the meridian with the same yin/yang orientation as the meridian you are balancing. Therefore, to

tonify the Lung Meridian, you would use the Earth Command Point on the Spleen Meridian along with the Earth Command point on the Lung Meridian. (Tonify Lung by drawing energy from Earth to Metal. Lung is yin, so we would use the Spleen Meridian – the yin aspect of Earth – to tonify. We are drawing energy from Earth, so we use the Earth Element Command Point on the Spleen Meridian and the Lung Meridian).

Following these rules to sedate the Lung Meridian, you would use the Water Command Points on the Lung Meridian and the Kidney Meridian, because Kidney is yin in the Water Element.

To close the gate, you always use the Command Point of the element of the grandmother. So with Lung, you would use the Fire Element Command Point for Lung and Heart (Heart being yin in the Fire Element).

To actually accomplish the balance, simultaneously hold the tonify or sedate points on one side of the body. Then repeat on the other side of the body. Once complete, repeat this with the second set of points for closing the gate. Voila!

### **Close Up and Personal with the Command Points**

As you can see, this is not a difficult technique to apply. And yet, it is overlooked much of the time. Where are these points anyway? What if I'm not on the right spot? In my experience, this was often answered with, "put your hand over the general area and you'll be sure to get it."

While being general may accomplish desired results, it is my experience that the more you know about what it is you are trying to accomplish and the means of doing so, the better results you will get. If you know where an acupuncture point is located, and you know what that point is and does, your own energy and intent will be more focused in applying the technique. This will lead to better results, and you will probably find the technique showing up more often as a balancing choice for your clients.

So let's spend a little time getting to know the Command Points of Chinese Acupuncture.

There are two patterns we will look at to help us get to know these points. One is the Element Numbering Pattern – seeing how to think about which point on each meridian connects to which element. The other is a Location Pattern – how to get to know where these points are actually located on the body. We will start with the Element Numbering Pattern.

### **The Element Numbering Pattern**

Please refer to the 5 Element Chart in the appendix. If you have one that is in color, it will make it easier to use. However, even in glorious black and white, you will still be able to understand.

On the chart, each element is represented by a large circle. Within that circle are two medium sized circles – one for each meridian in the element. The "inside" circle is the yin meridian, the "outside" circle is the yang meridian.

Inside each meridian circle are five more circles – one for each of the elements. Notice that the location of the 5 circles inside each meridian circle are arranged in the same order as the 5 large element circles – Fire at the top, followed by (clockwise) Earth, Metal, Water, and Wood.

Within each of the small circles of the Meridian circles are numbers. These numbers represent the point on that meridian that are related to the element of the small circle. For example, look at the Spleen Meridian circle located in the Earth Element circle. The number in the Fire Element position circle within the Spleen Meridian circle has the number "2" in it. That means that the second point on the Spleen Meridian, known as "Spleen 2", is the Fire Command Point on the Spleen Meridian. The "9" in the Water Element position means that Spleen 9 is the Water Element Command Point.

So let's look for a pattern. First we will look only at the yin meridians. Notice the numbers for the Wood Command Points in the six yin meridians. You'll see that three of them are the number 1. Those three happen to be the yin

meridians of the leg – Kidney, Spleen and Liver – which all begin on the feet. The other three yin meridians – Lung, Circulation/Sex (also known as Pericardium) and Heart – end at the hand. If we know that the Lung Meridian has 11 points, the Circ/Sex meridian has 9 points, and the Heart Meridian has 9 points, then we see that either the beginning or end of each yin meridian respectively is the Wood Element Command Point.

**(Note:** Because the Command Points are all located between either the elbow and the hand or the knee and the foot, I will refer to the points located furthest away from the trunk of the body as “extremity points”, also known in Acupuncture as “Tsing Points”. Depending on whether a meridian begins or ends at the extremity determines whether it is the first or last point on the meridian.)

Next, look at the Fire Element Command Points for each of the yin meridians. You'll notice that the Kidney, Spleen and Liver Meridians all now move up one to Ki 2, Sp 2 and Lv 2. Meanwhile, the Lung, Circ/Sex and Heart meridians all move back one to Lu 10, Cx 8 and Ht 8 respectively. A pattern begins to emerge.

Now, you guessed it, we are going to look at the Earth Element Command Points. You'll see that we simply move another point in from the extremity. So for the Earth Command Points, we have Ki 3, Sp 3 and Lv 3 on the feet, Lu 9, Cx 7 and Ht 7 on the hands. This brings us to our first rule of the Element Numbering Pattern.

**Rule #1:** For the yin meridians, the extremity point is the Wood Element Command Point. Continuing around the 5 Element wheel in a clockwise direction, the Fire Element Command Point is the next point on the meridian in towards the trunk of the body from the extremity point, and the Earth Element Command Point is the third point on the meridian in from the extremity. There are no exceptions.

If you know these point locations (and don't worry if you don't, we'll get there), you've just learned 18 Command Points.

Let's jump over to the yangs for a moment and see what we see there.

This time, we're going to look at the numbers in the Metal Element circle positions within the yang meridian circles. And what do we see?

Again, there are three “1”s. These are for the Large Intestine (LI), Triple Heater (TH) and Small Intestine (SI) meridians – the yang meridians of the arms and hands. However, for the yang meridians of the legs and feet, we find Bladder (BL) 67, Gall Bladder (GB) 44 and Stomach (St) 45. Well, if you happen to know that this is how many points are on each of those meridians respectively, then you now see that the extremity point for each of the yang meridians is the Metal Element Command Point.

Moving clockwise to the Water Element, each meridian changes by one number. This is the second point in from the extremity for each of these meridians. And clockwise once more to the Wood Element shows a similar pattern. Except...the Gall Bladder meridian skips a number! Therefore, the Gall Bladder meridian becomes our one exception for the 3 in a row pattern that we've noticed in both the yins and the yangs. If you can remember that one exception, you've now learned 36 Command Points! This brings us to...

**Rule #2:** For the yang meridians, the extremity point is the Metal Element Command Point. Continuing around the 5 Element wheel in a clockwise direction, the Water Element Command Point is the next point on the meridian in towards the trunk of the body from the extremity point, and the Wood Element Command Point is the third point on the meridian in from the extremity – with one exception; the Gall Bladder meridian Wood Command Point skips one and is the fourth point in from the extremity – Gall Bladder 41.

This brings us to the end of the numbering patterns of the 5 Element Command Points. After the first three points in from the extremity, there is no other specific numbering pattern to help with the identification of the points. However, there are two meridians that do have four points in a row – the Lung and Liver meridians. For each of them, the next element in the sequence (Metal, since they are each yin meridians and their pattern sequence

starts with Wood) is the next point in from the extremity – Lung 8 and Liver 4 respectively.

### **Location, Location, Location**

The above rules have told us about the numbering pattern of the Command Points, but not very much about the location of the points. Let's examine the locations in a little more detail.

The first thing to know is that all the Command Points are located between either the elbows and the hands or the knees and the feet, depending on where the meridian is located. Because we've looked at the sequence of the elements starting at the extremity, there is a pattern that evolves as a necessary result of what we've seen so far.

Because the yin meridians start with the Wood Element at the extremity, and we know that the points go no higher than the elbows and the knees, we can safely say that the Water Element Command Points for all the yin meridians are located either around the elbows or the knees, depending on which meridian we're looking at.

For example, the Spleen Meridian begins on the foot. Spleen 1 is the Wood Element Command Point. The fifth Command Point in the 5 Element sequence starting from Wood and moving clockwise around the wheel is the Water Element Command Point. Because the Command Points can go no higher than the knee, the Water Command Point for Spleen must be located around the knee. In a similar fashion, because the Wood Element Command Point for the Heart meridian is on the hand, the Water Command Point for the Heart meridian is located around the elbow. This brings us to...

**Rule #3:** The Water Element Command Points for the yin meridians are located at either the elbows or the knees.

For the yang meridians, we use the same comparison, but we start at the Metal Element because of Rule #2. Therefore, what we find is that the Earth Element Command Points for the yang meridians are located at either the elbow or the knees. While this doesn't help us with the numbering of the points, it is the

pattern of the numbers that we looked at earlier that set up this pattern for location.

**Rule #4:** The Earth Element Command Points for the yang meridians are located at either the elbow or the knees.

Now we're going to look at locations patterns that are based on a metaphor from Chinese Medicine. This should appeal to you right brainers out there!

### **From Well to Sea**

The Chinese have a beautiful way of looking at the world from a different perspective than most western cultures. By applying their observations of the environment to the body and health, a model is presented that offers us a new way of seeing things. Using one aspect of this model for looking at the energy flow of the meridians from the extremities in towards the center of the body as a flow of water, an Earth based water analogy comes to light. This flow is a meridian flow that relates to the 5 Elements.

Starting with the source of water, a well, water collects and flows into ever enlarging bodies. Hence, the well becomes a spring, the spring becomes a stream. From there, the stream enters a river, where it is eventually carried into the largest body, the sea. The "sea" points are those points located at the elbows and knees. The well points, or *source points*, are the extremity tsing points located at the tips of the fingers and toes (with the Kidney 1 point on the bottom of the foot as the exception). We will now look at where these "water zones" are located, and what kind of location patterns exist for this progression of points on the body.

The well/source points are the extremity points, or Tsing points, and are located near the nails of the fingers and toes – with one exception (Kidney, as mentioned above). These "nail" points are usually described as being one tenth of a body inch from the corner of the nail beds of the specific toe or finger.

There are six meridians that either begin or end on the fingers. The thumb side of the hand is also called the "radial" side. The pinky side of the hand is the "ulnar" side. These names come from the bones of the forearm,

and provide a useful means of referring to a position on the finger. The Lung, Large Intestine, Circulation Sex and Heart meridian Tsing points are all located on the radial side of their respective fingers, starting on the thumb itself and going across the hand to the pinky, skipping the ring finger. The Triple Heater and Small Intestine Tsing points are located on the ulnar side of the ring finger and pinky respectively.

Remembering that in Chinese anatomical position, the thumbs are medial (closer to the midline of the body) compared to the pinkies, we see that the yin meridians have tsing points on the medial, protected side of the fingernails, while the yangs – with the exception of the Large Intestine – have tsing points on the lateral sides of the fingernails.

Moving to the feet, we find the other six meridians. The three yin meridians all travel along the medial side of the leg, the yangs on the lateral. The Spleen and Liver meridians start on either side of the big toe, while our “exception” meridian, Kidney, starts on the bottom of the foot. On the yang side, the Stomach meridian begins on the lateral side of the second toe, while Gall Bladder and Bladder have their extremity points on the lateral side of the fourth and fifth toes respectively.

All of these extremity points define the Well Points in our flow of water analogy. If you think of the fingers and toes as antennas, they are like the entry points of energy, in the same way as the rain is the entry point of water into the wells that eventually find their way to the sea.

Looking at our diagram of the foot and hand (front and back), there are zones that define the progression of the flow of water towards the sea. If you visualize these zones, you get an idea of where the Command Points are located as you move from the extremity point of each meridian in towards the trunk of the body.

Let's look at the foot first. We've already identified the well points (Wood Element Command Points for the yin meridians, Metal Element Command Points for the yang meridians – as defined in Rules # 1 and 2 above) as the nail points across the distal ends

of the toes. (**Anatomical definitions:** *Distal* means further away from the trunk of the body. *Proximal* means closer to the trunk of the body.) Sp 1, Ki 1 and Lv 1 are the yin well points, St 45, GB 44 and Bl 67 are the yang well points.

The spring points (Fire Element Command Points for the yins, Water Element Command Points for the yangs) are located at the distal end of the webs between the toes, just where the toes join the foot. For the Spleen meridian, this is distal to the big bump on the medial side of the foot where the big toe joins the foot. Liver is between the big toe and the second toe, Stomach between the second and third toes, Gall Bladder between the fourth and fifth toes, and Bladder distal to the bump on the lateral side of the foot where the small toe joins the foot. Our exception continues to be the Kidney, which has its spring point closer to the center of the middle of the medial side of the foot, at the lower, distal edge of the navicular bone of the foot.

The stream points (Earth Element Command Points for the yins, Wood Element Command Points for the yangs) on the foot are just proximal to the spring points. For Spleen (Sp 3), just move to the proximal side of the bump on the medial side of the foot. Moving laterally across the top of the foot, the points are located at the proximal edge of the web where the bones of the foot, the metatarsals, come together. So Liver (Lv 3) is in the web between the big toe and second toe, Stomach (St 43) between the second and third toes, Gall Bladder (GB 41 – remember our numbering exception?) between the fourth and fifth toes, and Bladder (Bl 65) on the proximal side of the bump on the lateral side of the foot. Kidney continues to be our exceptions, with Ki 3 between the ankle and the Achilles tendon on the medial side of the leg.

The river points (Metal Element Command Points for the yins, Fire Element Command Points for the yangs) of the foot are located around the ankle. The Spleen river point (Sp 5), is located at the medial, distal corner of the medial ankle bone. Moving laterally over the big tendon there, you find the Liver river point (Lv 4 – remember Liver has 4 points in a row?). One more tendon over brings you to the Stomach point (St 41), right in the middle



of the crease of the foot. Skipping Gall Bladder for a moment, the Bladder point (Bl 60), is located between the ankle and the Achilles tendon on the lateral side of the foot (opposite from Ki 3),

Again, Kidney is an exception, along with Gall Bladder. The Kidney river point (Ki 7), is located 3 body inches above Ki 3 on the medial side of the leg. You can measure 3 body inches by lining up the fingers of the hand tightly together and placing them perpendicularly across the side of the leg. Remember that this is relative to the person you are working with, so use *their* hand to measure *their* leg.

Gall Bladder's river point (GB 37), is located 3 body inches up the lateral side of the leg from the ankle, on the front edge of the bone (the fibula).

The sea points are all located around the knee. Spleen (Sp 9), Liver (Lv 8) and Kidney (Ki 10) are all located around the medial side of the knee. Stomach (St 36) and Gall Bladder (GB 34) are on the lateral aspect of the knee, and Bladder (Bl 54) is in the center of the back of the knee. Refer to the drawing for the specific locations.

If you now combine the numbering patterns discussed earlier with the location patterns discussed here, the 18 Command Points from Rules #1 and 2 become quite easy to remember. As well, by applying the water analogy to the river and sea points, you'll know where to go to use the appropriate Command Points when necessary, even without remembering the numbers.

Let's move on to the hands. Here we have enough exceptions that in order to make it easier, I've split the hand in two – the front and the back. Because the back of the hand is similar to the foot, let's begin there.

The well points of the hand (Wood Element Command Points for the yin meridians, Metal Element Command Points for the yangs) are the nail points found on the fingers. There are no exceptions. Starting with the radial side of the thumb, we have Lung (Lu 11). Then, moving across the hand towards the pinky, we find Large Intestine (LI 1) on the radial side of the index finger, Circulation Sex (Cx

9) on the radial side of the middle finger, Triple Heater (TH 1) on the ulnar side of the ring finger, Heart (Ht 9) on the radial side of the pinky, and Small Intestine (SI 1) on the ulnar side of the pinky.

From there, the yang meridians move up the back of the hand. The zone for the yang spring points (Water Element Command Points) is on the distal side of the knuckles where the fingers join the hand, and in the same line as where the meridians extremity point is located. Large Intestine (LI 2) is on the radial side of the index finger, Triple Heater (TH 2) between the ring finger and the pinky, and Small Intestine (SI 2) on the ulnar side of the hand.

The yang stream points (Wood Element Command Points) are found on the proximal side of the knuckles where the fingers join the hand. Just move to that "other side" of the knuckle from where the brook points are, and you'll find LI 3, TH 3, and SI 3 respectively.

The yang river points (Fire Element Command Points) are found across the wrist (whereas on the foot, they were found around the ankle). However, here we run into one exception – Triple Heater. Large Intestine (LI 5) is found on the radial side of the back of the wrist, between the tendons that you can see very clearly if you bend your thumb backwards. This forms a little pocket, sometimes referred to as the "snuff box". Small Intestine (SI 5) is found directly on the side of the ulnar aspect of the wrist. Triple Heater (TH 6), is found 3 body inches up from the wrist in the center of the back of the arm. These three points form a triangle, with the wrist as the base.

Finally, the yang sea points (Earth Element Command Points) bring us to the back of the elbow. A little harder to describe, the Large Intestine sea point (LI 11) is found between the inside crease of the elbow and the bone that forms the radial side of the elbow. Small Intestine (SI 8) is on the ulnar side, between the bones where the upper arm joins the lower arm (the not so funny "funny bone"). Triple Heater (TH 10) is in the depression just proximal to the big bone of the elbow itself, in the center of the back of the arm.

Moving to the front of the hand, we will look at the yin meridians of the arm. The yin well

points (Wood Element Command Points) are as already stated earlier – Lu 11, Cx 9 and Ht 9 on their respective fingers.

The yin spring points (Fire Element Command Points) go across the palm of the hand. Lung 10 is in the mound below the thumb, pointing into the bone that joins the thumb with the wrist. Circulation Sex (Cx 8) is located directly in the center of the palm of the hand in line with the middle finger. Heart (Ht 8) is found on the “line”, at the base of the knuckle of the pinky between the pinky and ring fingers.

The yin stream points (Earth Element Command Points) go across the crease of the wrist. Lung (Lu 9) is on the radial side of the crease, Circulation Sex (Cx 7) is in the middle, and Heart (Ht 7) is on the ulnar side of the crease, but on the radial edge of the tendon there.

Because the stream points go across the wrist, the river points are located proximally to the wrist, differing from where the river points are located on the back of the hand and the foot. They’re still pretty close though.

The yin river points (Metal Element Command Points) form a triangle, similar to the back of the hand. Moving 1 body inch (the width of the thumb at the knuckle) proximal to the stream point, we find the Lung river point (Lu 8 – remember 4 in a row for this one?) on the radial side. One and a half body inches (the width across the knuckles of the index and middle fingers held together and straight) proximal from the Heart stream point is the Heart river point (Ht 4). In between them is the Circulation Sex river point (Cx 5). This is located 3 body inches proximally from the center of the crease of the wrist in the middle of the forearm, directly opposite to our Triple Heater river point on the back of the arm.

Finally, our yin sea points (Water Element Command Points) go across the crease of the elbow. Lung (Lu 5) is between the edge of the visible crease and the bone on the radial side of the elbow. Circulation Sex (Cx 3) is in the middle of the crease. Heart (Ht 3) is on the ulnar edge of the visible crease.

While I’ve attempted to write descriptions of the locations of these points in easy language,

it is recommended that you have at your disposal a good acupuncture point chart and/or book to refer to for more specific and accurate location. However, between these descriptions and the pictures included, I hope this provides a good quick reference for locating the Command Points of the 5 Elements.

### **How to Think Command Points**

Having the concepts explained above relative to numbering and location of Command Points is useful only when finally put into practical application! So let’s look at an example of how to “think” Command Points in a way that can be applied to the Touch for Health Acupressure Holding Points.

Suppose you are working on the Heart Meridian, and you wish to use the AHPs to tonify the meridian. We know that to tonify, we must draw energy from the “mother” element. Heart is in the Fire Element, so the energy must come from the Wood element. Because the Heart meridian is yin, we will also use the yin meridian in the Wood element – Liver. And because we are drawing energy from the Wood Element, we will use the Wood Element Command Points on the Heart and Liver meridians.

Rule #1 applies here. Because these are yin meridians, we know that the Wood Element Command Points are the extremity points found on these meridians. The Heart meridian ends on the hand, so the extremity point is the last point on the meridian – Ht 9. The Liver meridian begins on the foot, so the Wood Element Command Point is the first point on the meridian, Lv 1.

To close the gate, we use the command points for the element of the grandmother - in this case, Water. Again, because we are working with yin meridians and therefore the sequence begins with the Wood Element, going clockwise from Wood, Water is the 5th Element of the 5. This is outside of our numbering rules, but from a location point of view, we will be using the sea points. On the arm, the Heart sea point is located at the elbow – Ht 3. Following the meridian line up the ulnar side of the arm, we find this point on that side of the crease of the elbow.



The Kidney meridian is the yin meridian found in the grandmother Water element. So now we're on the leg. Remembering that the sea points are at the knee, the Kidney sea point is between the hamstring tendons on the back aspect of the medial side of the knee. This is Ki 10.

Sure enough, we hold Ht 9 and Lvl 1 to tonify, then Ht 3 and Ki 10 to close the gate. Voila!

### **Summary and Conclusion**

At the risk of using a lot of paper to descriptively explain the patterns of 5 Element Command Points, if you learn these rules and apply them thoughtfully, you will find that in a short period of time you'll know what points on each meridian are the respective Command Points and where they are located. In doing so, the Acupressure Holding Points technique from Touch for Health, as well as many other techniques found in Specialized Kinesiology, will be much more at your disposal.

The purpose of learning these patterns is two fold. One is that, if so inclined, it will help you memorize the 60 Command Points of Chinese Acupuncture. More importantly, though, is that it gives you a way to *think* about the points. By simply memorizing the 4 rules of numbering patterns, and the location zones of the water analogy, you have a way of figuring out which point and it's likely location for using to balance, even when you don't have your book handy.

Ultimately, the overall purpose of this paper is to bring your attention to the power and usefulness of the Command Points so that you may more effectively use them. By seeing in your mind's eye where these points are, and understanding their relationships as windows between the rooms of the meridians, you will be more effective in applying the Acupressure Holding Technique from Touch for Health.

For those of you who are Touch for Health instructors, with a better understanding of the background of the Acupressure Holding Points, you will be able to share this technique more effectively with your students. While you may not go into the detail here in your Touch for Health class, your understanding will allow you to offer ways of making this technique more accessible to your students.

Then, this underutilized balancing technique will begin to be recognized for the powerful healing tool that it is.

### **Appendix**

What follows is a summary of the 4 rules of Element Numbering, a 5 Element chart, and a chart of the numbering sequences of the Command Points of the meridians. I have found it useful to learn the numbers of the Command Points as 12 different sequences. For instance, Spleen is 1, 2, 3, 5 and 9. Heart is 9, 8, 7, 4 and 3. By learning these, it is easy to overlay the numbers on the element chart knowing that the yins begin with the Wood Element and the yangs begin with the Metal Element. It's not as hard as it sounds! You've probably memorized at least as many phone numbers, and they have seven numbers each!

**Rule #1:** For the yin meridians, the extremity point is the Wood Element Command Point. Continuing around the 5 Element wheel in a clockwise direction, the Fire Element Command Point is the next point on the meridian in towards the trunk of the body from the extremity point, and the Earth Element Command Point is the third point on the meridian in from the extremity. There are no exceptions.

**Rule #2:** For the yang meridians, the extremity point is the Metal Element Command Point. Continuing around the 5 Element wheel in a clockwise direction, the Water Element Command Point is the next point on the meridian in towards the trunk of the body from the extremity point, and the Wood Element Command Point is the third point on the meridian in from the extremity – with one exception; the Gall Bladder meridian Wood Command Point skips one and is the fourth point in from the extremity – Gall Bladder 41.

**Rule #3:** The Water Element Command Points for the yin meridians are located at either the elbows or the knees.

**Rule #4:** The Earth Element Command Points for the yang meridians are located at either the elbow or the knees.

## Command Point Pattern Chart

### YIN COMMAND POINTS

Element ->	Wood	Fire	Earth	Metal	Water
<i>Shu Pt.</i> MERIDIAN	<i>Well</i> (Jing)	<i>Spring</i> (Ying)	<i>Stream</i> (Shu)	<i>River</i> (Jing)	<i>Sea</i> (He)
KIDNEY	1	2	3	7	10
SPLEEN	1	2	3	5	9
LIVER	1	2	3	4	8
LUNG	11	10	9	8	5
CIRCULATION/SEX	9	8	7	5	3
HEART	9	8	7	4	3

### YANG COMMAND POINTS

Element ->	Metal	Water	Wood	Fire	Earth
<i>Shu Pt.</i> MERIDIAN	<i>Well</i> (Jing)	<i>Spring</i> (Ying)	<i>Stream</i> (Shu)	<i>River</i> (Jing)	<i>Sea</i> (He)
STOMACH	45	44	43	41	36
GALL BLADDER	44	43	41	38	34
BLADDER	67	66	65	60	54/40
LARGE INTESTINE	1	2	3	5	11
TRIPLE HEATER	1	2	3	6	10
SMALL INTESTINE	1	2	3	5	8

