

Master Tung's Magic Points and 11.17 Mu (The Wood Anger Points)

by Susan Johnson, L.Ac.

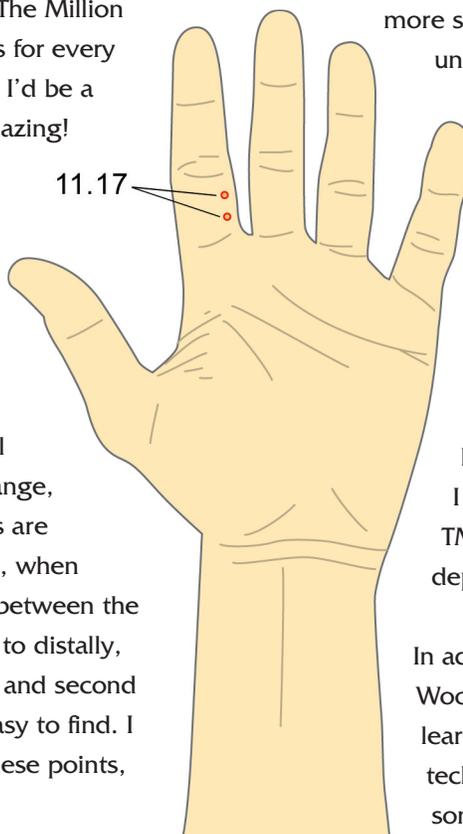
In more than twenty-five years of clinical practice,



I have never found any point to be more useful than Master Tung's points called "Mu" or wood points. My teacher, Dr. Miriam Lee (1926-2009), fondly called them "The Wood Anger Points" because they have such a profound effect upon the nervous system and the liver. I

have been known to refer to them as "The Million Dollar Points" because if I had ten cents for every time these points have come in handy, I'd be a millionaire. These simple points are amazing!

The Mu Points (11.17 in the textbooks) are a pattern including two points found on the palmar first phalange of the index finger. They are located on a line that is halfway between the palmar midline and the red and white skin (change point of palmar and dorsal surfaces), on the ulnar side of the phalange, nearest to the middle finger. The points are one third and two thirds along this line, when measuring proximally from the crease between the index finger and the palm of the hand, to distally, at the most proximal crease of the first and second phalangeal joint. They are extremely easy to find. I have some helpful hints for needling these points, which I will explain later.



The Mu points are particularly distinct because of: 1) Their extraordinary effect of releasing liver qi congestion. and 2) How often they can be added to a treatment protocol to open the flow of energy throughout the entire nervous system, thereby adding a very calming effect to the overall results of the treatment. Patients absolutely love these points and often ask especially for them; they know that whatever else their practitioner chooses to address in their acupuncture visit, with the Mu points, they are very likely to go home feeling happy and relaxed.

Practitioners recognize that many people suffer from a chronic mild depression. Some people who are more seriously depressed carry rage and anger underneath their depression. I will never forget Dr. Lee telling us that the liver needs to "stretch out, to be big and free, to speak, and to say just how it feels." She explained that the patient with a congested liver, who for any reason cannot speak their truth, gets tighter and tighter until they are boiling mad. When this anger is not allowed expression, it turns inward on itself and so this energy becomes depression, with internal rage. I have yet to meet a migraine or case of TMJ that did not have some symptoms of depression or anger.

In addition to treating these patients with the Wood Anger points, I often counsel them to learn and practice some kind of releasing technique. Most patients are comfortable with some form of stream-of-consciousness writing,

as they can do it in the privacy of their own room. But they must not try to make perfect sentences and pretty images, as they have often already been over-controlled, and need to be encouraged to relax and free themselves from rules. If this is not easy for the suffering spirit to allow, I might suggest some kind of physical expression to which they might associate a thought or feeling. My 90-pound dog, Trinity, one day taught me the joys of kicking milk cartons down our long and steep driveway; ever since then, I have suggested that patients kick cardboard boxes in order to move stuck energy and release anger and frustration. A patient of mine discovered breaking dinner plates (purchased inexpensively at a thrift store) against a brick wall. She said that by the time she was finished breaking a stack of plates, she did not mind cleaning up the broken pieces! Others have found that ripping up a phonebook can be enormously freeing. Too often in cases of depression, migraine headache or temporomandibular joint pain, irritability is internalized and the patient becomes sad, stuck and angry. In order to heal, people experiencing these symptoms need to be understood, listened to and encouraged in their efforts to safely release anger.

The Wood Anger points utilize the connection between the Hand Yangming (LI) and the Foot Jueyin (LV) to provide a clinical alternative or adjunct to physical release like those noted above. Used for any kind of irritability, anger, frustration, anxiety or depression, these points calm the liver, open qi congestion, lighten the mood and lift the spirit. What patient wouldn't want that?

There are a few tricks to make the needling these points easier. Firstly, hold the back of the patient's left hand securely in the palm of your left hand, arching back their wrist by using the side of your hand at their dorsal wrist crease. Secure their index, middle and ring fingers open (if you are left-handed, you will need to do this with your right hand). You may also want to secure the patient's thumb inside a ring made by the thumb and index finger of your needling hand. This ring is formed when holding a 15mm needle where the shaft and handle come together (the place of utmost control of the tip). If the patient tends to apply any pressure to your needling hand with their thumb, then I will usually suggest that they hold their

own little finger and thumb together, thus making it easy to needle them without their interference in your needling technique.

Perhaps most crucial step to take for the comfortable needling of the Mu points on the palmar surface is to very carefully scan the area for faint or obvious blood vessels. I recommend that the practitioner look for the pink or white skin, avoiding any area, however small, that has a blue or greenish hue. Making a tiny adjustment to avoid blood vessels will make a huge difference when comfortably needling these points. It is rare but nonetheless, noteworthy, that a practitioner may encounter a patient for whom a small nerve sensation may be created that extends to the tip of the patient's index finger. Should this happen, do not stimulate the needle, but rather take it out completely and note in your chart to avoid the exact same location in subsequent treatments. If the needle is not removed quickly, the patient may experience a minor yet slightly annoying nerve sensation when they fully extend the finger for up to six weeks following the event.

Practice makes perfect with these points. Needling the sensitive palmar surface where there are lots of nerve endings means that we want to quickly insert the needle's tip through the skin's surface, before gently bouncing it down to the desired depth. After quickly and shallowly penetrating the surface, putting the needle in with a tiny bouncing approach will inform you if you are "pegging" a tendon or tapping the bone. We want the needle to be free in its correct position, so pay attention to the tissues through which the needle passes. With the dorsal surface of the patient's fingers lying gently against the palmar surface of your own, you will be able to feel the pressure of the progressing needle before it goes in too deeply and penetrates the opposite side of the finger. The underside of the epidermis is just as sensitive as the outside of it, so stop before the tip contacts the underside of the skin.

11.17 Mu points can be added to almost any treatment protocol if liver qi congestion is a part of the diagnosis. As they will be mostly used for this purpose, the points will almost always be placed in the patient's left index finger, side opposite to the liver. For premenstrual syndrome, menopausal imbalance, dry or teary eyes, interstitial cystitis or urinary bladder infection, liver type insomnia, headaches, TMJ or emotional disturbances, they are used on the left side only.

There are a few reasons for which we may choose to use these points bilaterally. If there is any kind of skin problem on the hands, both hands are needled simultaneously. Both the lung and liver govern the skin, and these points utilize both the connection between the lung and large intestine, as well as the connection between the large intestine and liver. As such, the wood points are very helpful when treating psoriasis, eczema or hives on the hands and fingers.

If the patient's hands are extremely sweaty, leaving a handprint when placed on a hard surface, the wood points will dry this dampness when done bilaterally.

The wood points can also be used for opening sinus congestion. There are three reasons for this: 1) The points utilize the lung and large intestine relationship; and the end point of the large intestine meridian is on either side of the nasal ala. 2) The liver channel moves through the throat and sinuses before ending at the vertex of the head. 3) Because wood is associated with wind, and because wind heat or wind cold almost always affects the lungs, these points connect to the lungs, and therefore the sinuses. The wood points are especially effective in treating a clear runny nose,

but also useful for white or yellow mucous. For sinus congestion they may also be used bilaterally. For patients with serious liver organ issues, like hepatitis, cirrhosis or liver cancer, 11.17 Mu are NOT the points we would choose. For those cases, please study 11.20 Wood Inflammation. They are priceless in treating the above conditions, but should never be used in combination with 11.17 Mu.

Add Mu points to Four Gates (LI4 and LV3), along with ear: shenmen, internal secretion, liver and brain stem, for a dynamite detox treatment, or to "soothe the savage beast." ■

Bio: Susan Johnson, Licensed Acupuncturist, has been practicing Master Tung's style of acupuncture since 1983 and has been licensed in California since 1985. A student of Dr. Miriam Lee and Dr. Young Wei-Chieh, she has studied Master Tung's Points for over 25 years. Susan maintains a private practice in Santa Cruz, California. She is a dynamic teacher who loves her work, and is renowned for her clear presentation of this style of acupuncture.



If you would like to learn more about 11.17 Mu and many other Master Tung's Acupuncture Points,

visit https://www.mayway.com/store/herbal_news_lecture_schedule.jsp or <http://tungspoints.com/> to see the seminar schedule for the upcoming "Best of Master Tung's Magic Points" weekend seminar and "Beginning and Advanced Series." Each weekend contains new material and may be attended individually.

To register, please go to www.mayway.com, or give us a call at (510) 208-3113.