

Qi Powerhouse: Your Gate of Life

by Shoshanna Katzman



We learn from Chinese medicine about a special powerhouse of Qi (vital energy) known as “Mingmen” located on the centerline of the lower back between the kidneys. This region of the body is also known as the “Gate of Life” due to being the area in the body in which a human embryo begins to develop in the womb. It acts as a gate, allowing energy to come in or out, along with blending Yin and Yang energies of the kidneys.

Mingmen is said to be the primary source of the body’s Yang energy. This means that it fuels physical activity and growth, along with metabolism, ambition, and mental focus. Its activation is reputed for boosting vitality, reducing fatigue, and providing warmth to the body. Acupuncturists strengthen its energy by inserting needles into acupoints such as governing vessel 4. Taiji (Tai Chi) and Qigong practitioners cultivate and build its energy through flowing movement and applying mind intent power – often linking Mingmen on the back of the body to the lower dantian located directly in front approximately three inches below the belly button.

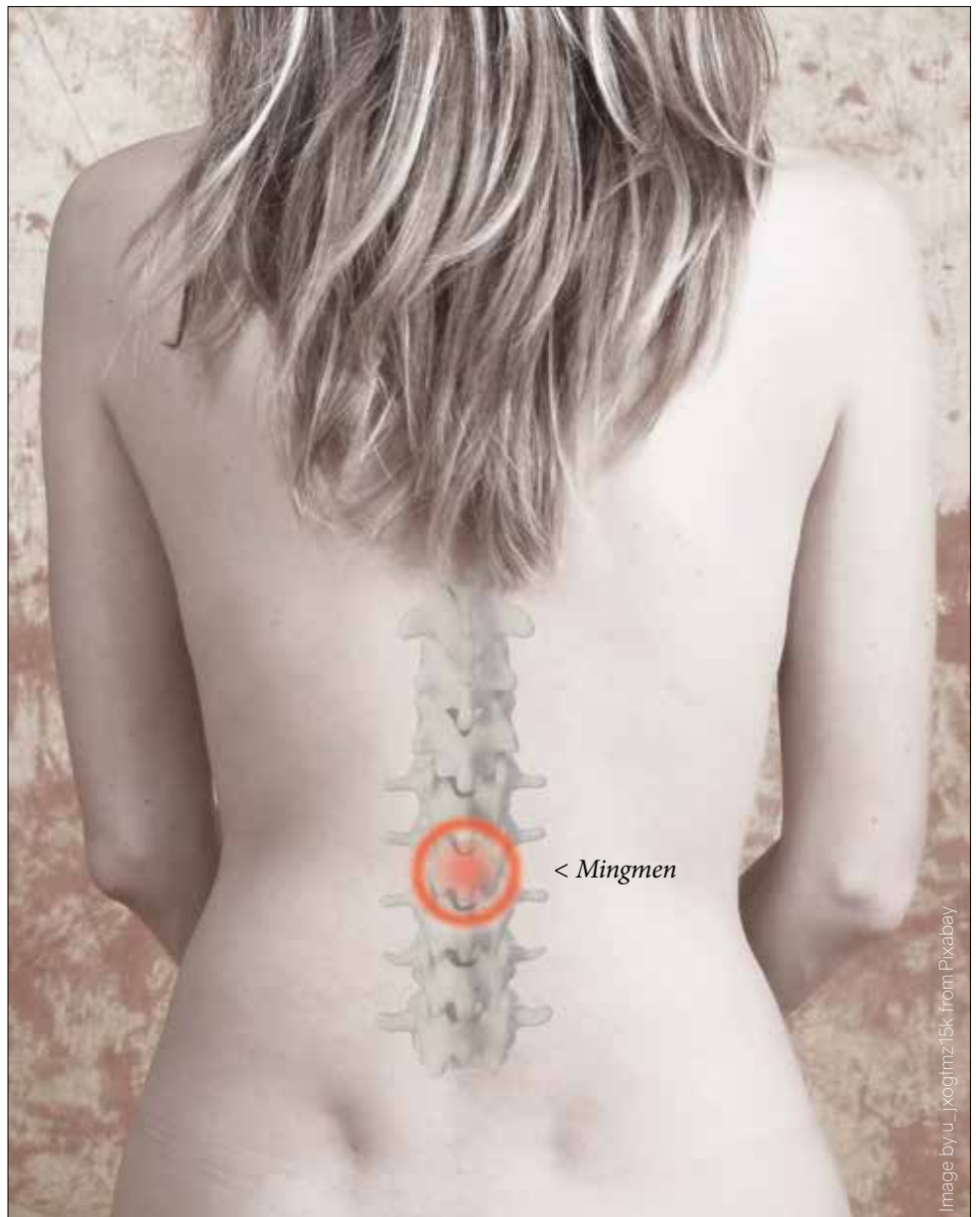
These ancient Chinese medicine healing techniques help relieve lower back pain and strengthen flow of Qi throughout the spine.

Due to the Mingmen connection to the body’s kidney energy, receiving acupuncture and practicing Taiji and Qigong exercise are effective for enhancing sexual energy and nourishing gynecological health. Chinese food therapy for cultivating the Gate of Life

includes avoiding cold drinks as “the kidneys hate cold and love warmth”. Keeping water in the refrigerator is thus contraindicated along with adding ice to drinks. Whereas, consuming warming, cooked foods such as soups and stews are recommended for nourishing the kidneys and Mingmen, as are foods such as black

beans, walnuts, and kidney beans.

Chinese herbal medicine is another way to build energy within the Gate of Life. An herbalist typically recommends a yin tonic to nourish, calm, and restore or a yang tonic to warm and stimulate the body. Choice of which type of herbal



elixir is based on a recipient's constitution and presenting symptoms and typically consumed as a decoction or in pill, capsule, or granular form.

Each of these ancient holistic methods are used individually or in combination to build immunity, reduce inflammation, along with promoting vitality throughout the aging process.

Here is a simple exercise to further strengthen Mingmen:

Sit upright on a chair with feet flat on the floor and palms resting on your thighs. Close your eyes and concentrate your mind on your lower belly. Inhale slowly and deeply through your nose with mouth closed. Simultaneously, expand into your belly and lower back – bringing air and warmth into the small of your back. Then exhale slowly through your nose and draw your belly and back inward toward each other.

When ready, stand up and form your hands into gentle fists. Then circle them over your kidneys on your lower back a total of nine times. Upon doing so, apply your mind intent to open, soften, and warm your Gate of Life. End by relaxing your arms by your sides, concentrating your mind on your lower belly, and taking a moment to reflect on your experience. You may now feel calmer, more focused, and experience greater willpower.

Practicing this exercise on a daily basis keeps yourself centered, balanced, and empowered. Cultivating and strengthening Mingmen energy is excellent for revitalization and a way to reach




your highest potential. Chinese medicine wisdom provides us with many ways to enhance our health and vitality – tapping into this special powerhouse is most certainly an easy way to do so.

Shoshanna Katzman, L.Ac., M.S. has been director of Red Bank Acupuncture & Wellness Center (www.healing4u.com) for 35 years in Shrewsbury, NJ providing acupuncture, Chinese herbal consultation along with Taiji and Qigong private and group classes. She is author of "Qigong for Staying Young: A Simple 20-Minute Workout to Cultivate Your Vital Energy", co-author of "Feeling Light: The Holistic Solution to Permanent Weight Loss and Wellness" and "Center of Power: Life Mastery through Taiji" a comprehensive online curriculum (www.yourcenterofpower.com). For more information call or text 732.758.1800.

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Shoshanna Katzman, M.S., L.Ac.

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