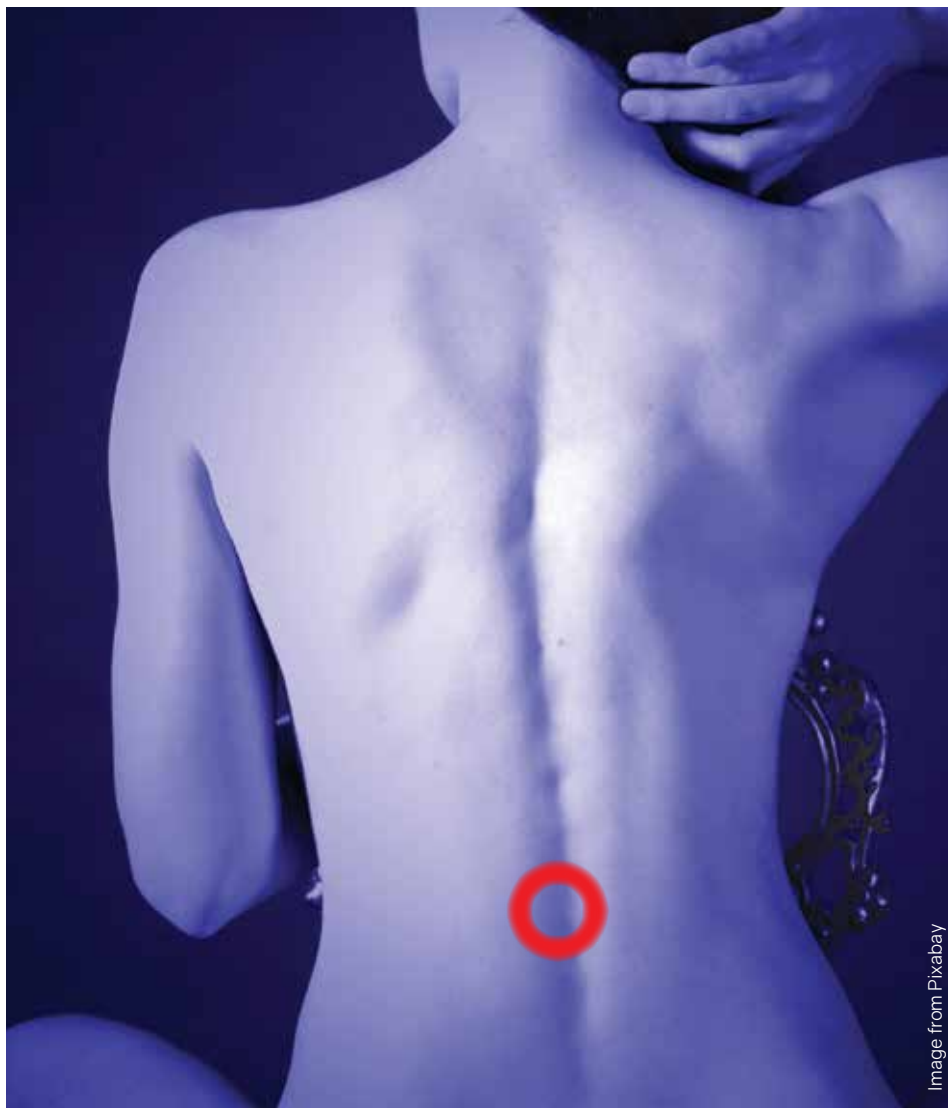


# The Gate of Life

by Shoshanna Katzman



the abdominal cavity below the belly button.

This special form of fire maintains warmth and flow of qi (vital energy) within the vital organs located within these three burning spaces culminating in plentiful energy, sufficient warmth, ample blood circulation, peak metabolism, and excellent respiratory function. In addition, proper amounts of this fire provide the heat required to transform food within the body, thereby supporting digestive function. It produces a restful and peaceful sleep and a pleasant and happy disposition. Fire of the Gate of Vitality, furthermore, promotes the maturing of sexual energy throughout puberty and results in healthy sexuality and fertility.

A main goal of Chinese medicine is to strengthen mingmen through its various energetic modalities. Chinese dietary recommendations include avoidance of ice in drinks, limiting consumption of cold foods, chewing food properly, and being vigilant about taking time and being present while eating meals. A Chinese medicine practitioner typically recommends lifestyle habits that include avoiding too much stress, keeping the lower back covered to protect the vital energy of the kidneys, and adhering to a balanced work-life strategy.



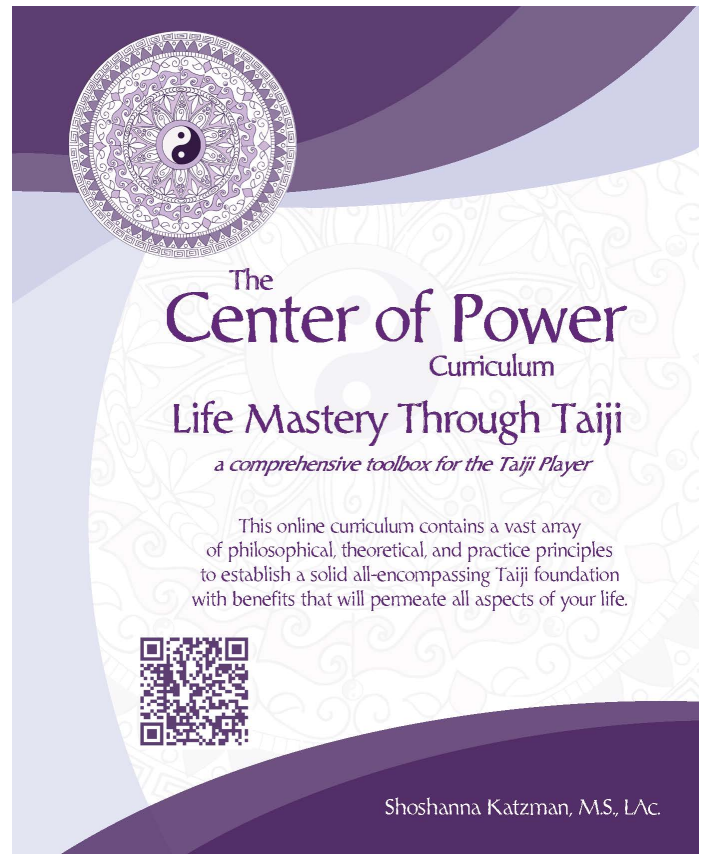
An energetic area exists on the centerline of the back between the kidneys known as “mingmen” and commonly described as “The Gate of Life”. Chinese medicine teaches us that this is where a person’s original life-essence is created. This major “center of transformation” is formed at the moment of conception, even before the formation of a fetus. According to Taoist cosmology, mingmén is said to be where heaven and earth meet and interact within a human being to produce life.

Throughout life, mingmen serves to strengthen energetic immunity and provides the body with warmth from what is traditionally known as the “life gate fire” of mingmen. This form of fire moves throughout the body within three burning spaces known as the “Triple Warmers”. The upper warmer is located within the chest cavity, the middle warmer on the abdomen below the diaphragm and above the belly button, and the lower warmer within

Acupuncture strengthens the mingmen gate of life, especially when Governing Vessel 4 is treated due to its proximity to the mingmen region. Acupuncturists also select points along the kidney, spleen, stomach, and conception vessel meridians, and may apply heat treatment (moxibustion) over the mingmen area. Taiji and Qigong are effective techniques for enhancing mingmen vitality by balancing qi and blood flow, and yin and yang energies along with that of the entire body, mind, and spirit.


These ancient Chinese methods for health and healing work to build the life gate fire of mingmen through strengthening flow of qi and blood and balancing the energies of yin (coldness) and yang (heat) within the body. They provide ways for a person to maximize their own healing capability and protect the vital resources of energy within their body. Strengthening mingmen and kidney energies, in turn, builds upon a person's will power to stick with a health plan that includes making the right choices around food, drink, and lifestyle habits. It instills in a person the desire to nurture their energies, protect their bodies, nourish their spirit, and balance their emotional body through having the wherewithal to give themselves the support they need to flourish each and every day of their life – to become the most authentic and best version of themselves.

*Shoshanna Katzman, L.Ac., M.S. has been director of Red Bank Acupuncture & Wellness Center ([www.healing4u.com](http://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 recently released “Center of Power: Life Mastery through Taiji” a comprehensive online curriculum ([www.yourcenterofpower.com](http://www.yourcenterofpower.com)). For more information call or text 732.758.1800.*



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Shoshanna Katzman, M.S., LAc.



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### Immune-Boosting Soup With Miso and Ginger Scent

This macrobiotic soup combines all the healing and digestive benefits of miso and ginger. Noodles, fish and a variation of vegetables can be added, too.

#### YIELD: 4 SERVINGS

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <i>Dash sesame oil</i>  | <i>3 cups boiling water</i>                  |
| <i>1 leek, finely sliced</i>  | <i>Spring onions, finely cut for garnish</i> |
| <i>1 carrot, finely diced</i>   | <i>4 tsp brown rice miso paste</i>           |
| <i>1 zucchini or summer squash, finely diced</i>                                | <i>1 inch ginger root, juiced</i>            |
| <i>3-inch portion of wakame sea vegetable, rinsed and cut into small strips</i> |  |

Heat the sesame oil and sauté the leek for one minute. Add the other vegetables and wakame. To make a broth, add water to cover the ingredients, bring to a boil then simmer for 4 minutes.

Remove one ladle of broth and place in a bowl. Add the miso to this broth, stirring to dissolve and incorporate the paste into the broth, and then pour it back into the original pot of cooked vegetables. Add ginger juice and simmer for another minute or so. Garnish with spring onion.

*Recipe courtesy of Anna Freedman.*