QI TRANSFORMATION

Things to Remember
- Qi assumes different forms depending on its state of aggregation or dispersal.
- Qi is constantly transformed, changed, transported, condensed, and dispersed.
- The functional activities of Qi are collectively known as ‘the Qi transformation’.
- Qi in aggregation forms the material body and is Yin in nature.
- Qi is dispersal moves and transforms and is Yang in nature.

Original (Yuan) Qi is the Motive Force of Qi Transformation
- Transforms Gathering (Zong) Qi into True (Zhen) Qi.
- Helps to transform Food (Gu) Qi into Blood.
- “The Triple Burner (San Jiao) causes the Original (Yuan) Qi to differentiate; the Yuan Qi passes through the three burners and then spreads to the five Yin and six Yang organs and their channels. The place where the Yuan Qi stays are the Yuan-Source points.” (Classic of Difficulties)

Ming Men
- “The Fire of the Gate of Life”
- a.k.a. Minister Fire
- The Ming Men transforms and sets things in motion.
- The idea of Ming Men varies greatly from time to time or source to source.
- Some say the Ming Men is between the KD, other say it is the right KD (and therefore the left KD is Yin while the right is Yang). This is reflected in pulse diagnosis, where the KD yin is on the left and the KD Yang is on the right.
- Corresponds to DU4:

    - Essence and Ming Men are an example of Yin-Yang or Water-Fire duality in the human body. Essence and Ming Men interact and mutually engender one another. Essence provides nourishment and substance, Ming Men provides warmth and activation.
    - Ming Men also interacts with Gathering (Zong) Qi: Ming Men warmth rises to the chest, Gathering (Zong) Qi transports Air (Da) Qi down to the Ming Men.
    - The Ming Men provides warmth to initiate Qi transformation all over the body.

The Qi Mechanism
- Definition: the complex process of Qi movement that guides the physiology of the body.
- Four Fundamental Movements of Qi:
  1. Ascending (Yang)
  2. Descending (Yin)
  3. Exiting (Yang)
  4. Entering (Yin)
- A harmonious balance of the movements of Qi is necessary for production of Qi and Blood, and any disruption of this balance can result in pathology of Qi and Blood (deficiency, stagnation, or rebellion).
- Balance of the Qi Mechanism is also necessary for proper management of Body Fluids. Lack of balance may lead to Phlegm or Dampness.
Ascending-Descending
- Some physiological processes rely on ascending of Qi, while others rely on descending of Qi. For example: ST Qi flows downward, SP Qi flows upward.
- The balance of ascending (Yang) and descending (Yin) is a type of Yin-Yang balance. An excess of Yang implies excessive ascending, and excess of Yin implies excessive descending.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ascends</th>
<th>Descends</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spleen</td>
<td>Lung</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liver</td>
<td>Kidney</td>
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<td>Stomach</td>
<td>Bladder</td>
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<td>Bladder</td>
<td>Large Intestine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Large Intestine</td>
<td>Small Intestine</td>
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Entering-Exiting
- Qi must move into and out of organs and body structures. This is the horizontal movement of Qi.
- Structures Qi Enters and Exits:
  - Channels
  - Cou Li-space between skin and muscles
  - Triple Burner (San Jiao) spaces
  - Fatty tissue (Gao)
  - Membranes (Huang)
  - Bones
  - Mind (Shen)

Channels
- As Layers: (Conformations)
  - Tai Yang (UB & SI)
  - Shao Yang (GB & SJ)
  - Yang Ming (ST & LI)
  - Tai Yin (SP & LU)
  - Jue Yin (LV & PC)
  - Shao Yin (HT & KD)
- The entering-exiting of Qi explains the movement between layers of the 6 conformations.

<table>
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<th>YIN</th>
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<td>Tai Yang</td>
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<td>Yang Ming</td>
<td>Jue Yin</td>
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- The entering and exiting of Qi is controlled by the Po (Corporeal/Bodysoul).

Cou Li (Space between Skin & Muscles):
- Part of the Triple Burner (San Jiao).
- This refers to an energetic layer of the body, roughly the fascial layer and subcutaneous tissues.
- The Cou Li is the space where the Wei (Defensive) Qi circulates, where sweat comes from, and where external pathogens first invade the body.
- Qi enters and exits this space, regulating the flow of Wei (Defensive) Qi and the opening and closing of the pores.
- The flow of Qi in and out of the Cou Li is governed by the Lung Qi.

Triple Burner (San Jiao):
- The Triple Burner is conceived of as a series of internal body spaces. The three burners are the largest of these spaces.
- The three burners are the chest (upper burner), abdomen (middle) and pelvis (lower).
- The Liver and Triple Burner control the flow of Qi throughout the body.

Joints:
- Qi must flow into and out of the joint spaces, under the control of the Liver, Triple Burner, and the local channels.
- If Qi exits too much, the joint will be rigid and painful.
- If Qi enters too much, the joint will be weak and ache.

Fat Tissue (Gao):
- Different than the Western idea of fat tissue (adipose), Gao refers to the adipose tissue of the abdomen and breasts, as well as the peritoneal membranes.
- It is primarily the SP that controls flow of Qi into and out of the Gao.
- Excessive entering of Qi may result in accumulation of fat and obesity.
- Excessive exiting of Qi may lead to loss of weight and emaciation.

Membranes (Huang):
- Huang Membranes roughly correspond to the connective tissues of Western medicine.
Huang are found throughout the body, and wrap and anchor the organs, muscles, and bones, and connect the organs together.

Huang refers primarily to membranes of the abdomen, including the peritoneum and omentum.

Proper entering and exiting of Qi allows for smooth flow of Qi in the abdomen.

“If there is excessive exiting of Qi, there will be stagnation with distension and pain.”

“If there is excessive entering of Qi, there will be deficiency, possibly sinking of Qi, and a slackening of the Membranes.”

Bones:

- The TCM idea of bones includes the anatomical bones, but also refers to a deep energetic layer of the body.

- Tissues as Energetic Layers
  - Skin
  - Lung
  - Muscles
  - Spleen
  - Sinews
  - Liver
  - Blood Vessels
  - Heart
  - Bones
  - Kidneys

- Qi enters and exits the bones on its way to and from the deep energetic layers of the body.
- When there is excessive exiting from the bones, there may be night sweats.
- When there is excessive entering to the bones, there may be a tendency towards Blood stasis.

Mind (Shen):

- The entering and exiting to Qi from the Shen is understood in the context of the Hun.
- The Hun is a repository of ideas, dreams, projects, aspirations, ideals, and inspiration.
- The Shen controls and integrates the psychic contents produced by the Hun.
- The Hun is conceived as ‘the wanderer’ and its interaction with the Shen is the entering and exiting of Qi from the Shen.
- When the Shen controls the Hun too much, there is a tendency towards depression, but if the Shen fails to control the Hun enough, there tends to be mania.

The Spleen and Stomach are the Central Axis:

- The Spleen and Stomach are the ‘center’ of the body.
- They are located in the center of the body, in the space of the Middle Burner.
- SP and ST are the source of Qi and Blood, and Post-Heaven Essence, which are required for all physiological processes.
- The SP is Yin and its Qi ascends, transforming and transporting food.
- The ST is Yang and its Qi descends, taking in and forming fluids.
- Balance between the directions of Qi and the functions of the SP and ST provide the resources to allow the rest of the body to be in balance.

The Liver and the Lungs are the Outer Wheel:

- In relation to the 5 element cycles, the Liver is on the right and its Qi rises, and the Lung is on the left and its Qi descends.
- Balance between the Liver Qi ascending and the Lung Qi descending ensures that the head and sense orifices receive proper nourishment from the Liver Qi, while the internal organs, sinews, and bones receive proper nourishment from the Lung Qi. These two actions together create balanced flow of Qi and Blood.
- The Liver is considered to be in the Lower Burner, while the Lung is in the Upper Burner, creating a smoothly balanced Qi flow between the Three Burners.

The Heart and Kidneys are the Axis:

- The fundamental balance of Fire and Water is illustrated by the relationship between the Heart and the Kidneys.
- The Kidneys store the Essence and pertain to Water.
- The Heart stores the Shen and pertains to Fire.
- Fire from the Heart naturally descends to warm the Kidneys. This is physiological fire that provides warmth to the Kidneys and keeps Body Fluids and Essence in a fluid state.
Water of the Kidneys normally ascends to nourish the Heart (Yin aspect). Warmth from Heart Fire allows Body Fluids and Essence (Yin substances) to 'steam' and rise up, nourishing the Heart and preventing an excess of the Heart Fire.

Five Elements as Axis, Center & Wheel

Triple Burner Transformation of Qi

- The exact nature of the Triple Burner (San Jiao) has been the subject of much debate, and still is.
- The oldest references to the Triple Burner relate its functions as 'making things go through', 'letting out' and 'to excrete'.
- The San Jiao ensures that passages are open (for Qi, Body Fluids), that Qi can flow smoothly, and that wastes can be properly excreted.
- The San Jiao is also a series of body cavities that allow entering and exiting movements of Qi.
- San Jiao acupoints are very good to relieve stagnation of Qi.

PATHOLOGY OF QI TRANSFORMATION

Spleen and Stomach:

- If SP Qi does not ascend, it is unable to send Food (Gu) Qi and pure fluids up to the Lung and Heart. This will lead to insufficient production of Qi and Blood in the long term. Weak SP Qi will also allow food and fluids to descend without proper digestion, leading to loose stools and diarrhea.
- If the lifting function of SP Qi ascension is impaired, there may be sinking of the Qi leading to prolapse or hemorrhoids.

Liver and Lungs:

- When Liver Qi fails to ascend it can lead to stagnation. As the Liver is responsible for the smooth flow of Qi throughout the body, this can manifest in many different areas—hypochondrium, abdomen, uterus, throat, head...
- Liver Qi stagnation may prevent the Lungs from normally descending Qi (Wood insulting Metal), leading to a feeling of distension in the chest and breathlessness.
- An excessive rising of Liver Qi can also become rebellious (called Liver Yang rising) causing headaches or irritability.
- If Lung Qi fails to descend, there will be cough, asthma, or other breathing difficulties.

Heart and Kidneys:

- When the Heart Fire does not descend, it fails to warm the KD, leading to conditions of KD Yang deficiency, which is then unable to keep fluids moving leading to edema.
- When Kidney Water does not ascend, the Fire of the Heart may become excessively hot and damage HT Yin, leading to anxiety, insomnia, or Mania.

- ST Qi normally descends to carry impure food waste to the Intestines. If the ST Qi instead rises, there will be nausea, hiccups, belching, or vomiting.
- Both of these cases are considered Qi Rebellion, as the Qi flows opposite its physiological direction.
- SP Qi sinking is due to a deficiency, while ST Qi rising is due to an excess.