

# Oriental Medical Physiology

Yangming (Stomach and Large Intestine) Physiology

# Six Levels of Physiology In Chinese Medicine

- Taiyang (UB/SI) – Opens outward (to outside)
- Shaoyang (GB/SJ) – Pivot
- Yangming (LI/ST) – Closes inward
- Taiyin – (LU/SP) – Opens outward (to inside)
- Shaoyin – (HT/KD) – Pivot
- Jueyin – (LV/PC) – Closes inward

# The Spleen-stomach holds the office of granaries and issues the five flavors

- We discuss this when discussing the Spleen and noted both are mentioned together, highlighting the unity of these organs
- These are the primary organs of digestion and both are in the center of the body (middle jiao)
- Yangming Stomach is where closing inward meets Taiyang Spleen opening outward
- Stomach pathology often involves heat due to its warm and dry nature (so does the LI), this heat can damage the yin of the ST and LI

# Stomach Functions

- Controls 'receiving'
- Controls rotting and ripening of food
- Controls the transportation of food essence
- Controls the descending of Qi
- Is the origin of fluids

# Stomach

## Functions – Controls ‘receiving’

- The Stomach receives food and fluids which enter the mouth and reach the stomach via the esophagus.
- Receiving also implies that the Stomach keeps the food and fluids down.
- The Stomach’s function of receiving food is related to a good appetite.

# Stomach

## Functions – Controls ‘rotting and ripening’ of food

- Stores and decomposes
  - All food that enters the body is fermented (adding warmth and maintenance of proper fluid composition) by the Stomach
- This occurs before the Spleen T&T into nutritive essence. It prepares for the Spleen to do its function.
- Practically, these functions are difficult to separate
  - Food is fermented by the Stomach, transferred to the SI where the Spleen refines into nutritive aspect and combined with external qi from the Lungs.
- The Stomach and the Spleen is the origin of Qi and Blood.

# Stomach

Functions – Controls the transportation of food essence

- The Spleen-Stomach is responsible for the transportation of food essence to the whole body, especially the limbs.
- Clinical Note, pg 186
- The Stomach's condition relates to tongue coating. The coating is formed by 'dirty dampness' that is generated as a by-product of the Stomach's function of rotting and ripening.
  - Normal function indicated by a thin white coating
  - No coating can indicate a weakened Stomach function
  - Thick white can indicate Cold in the Stomach
  - Thick yellow can indicate Heat in the Stomach

# Stomach

## Functions – Controls the Descending of Qi

- In health, Stomach has a downward descending movement
- If Stomach Qi fails to descend, food will stagnate in the stomach and lead to fullness, distension, sour regurgitation, belching, hiccup, nausea, and vomiting. This is assisted by the Liver's dredging and draining action.
- The Stomach-Spleen occupy a central place in the Qi dynamic. They are both in the middle burner. There is a balance between the upward movement of the Spleen and the downward movement of the Stomach. This is related to the steady movement of the diaphragm in breathing.



# Stomach

## Functions – It is the origin of fluids

- The Stomach ensures that the part of food and drink that does not go to make food essence condenses to form Body Fluids. It is said that the Stomach 'likes wetness and dislikes dryness'

# The large intestine holds the office of transport master, issuing change and transformation

- Differentiates LI function from SI function
- Material transformation comes from SI
  - It take food from Spleen and Stomach and further modifications are made
- By contrast LI is a transport master and is more of a passageway than receptacle for further refinement, maintains constant movement through digestive system

# Large Intestine Functions

- Controls passage and conduction
- Transforms stool and reabsorbs fluids

# Large Intestine

Functions – Transports and Transforms Waste  
(Controls passage and conduction)

- The LI receives digested food from the SI, transforms it into stool and makes sure it moves along. It is associated with removal of waste.
- The LI has a downward movement. Stagnation of Qi affects the LI and can lead to abdominal distention and constipation.
- The rhythm set by Taiyin physiology is important in the regulation of the Large Intestine function, accounting for the pairing of Lung and Large Intestine
- Downward descending aspects of Lung assists the LI in transforming dregs of food into waste. If the Lung Qi is deficient, there will not be enough impetus for defecation.

# Large Intestine

## Functions – Removes Fluids

- LI serves as the final step in fluid metabolism. Plays an important role in fluid absorption as digested food undergoes its final transformation.
- Failure manifests as watery diarrhea
- Compared to loose stool from Spleen deficiency, this is watery with no undigested food.
- If excessive fluids are absorbed, or if Heat in the LI burns the fluids, the stool will be dry and difficult to pass.