Heart & Lungs

The relationship between the Heart and the Lungs is one of Qi and blood: the Heart governs blood and the Lungs govern Qi. Qi pushes blood so it can circulate in the blood vessels, and blood nourishes Qi. The Heart needs Qi from the Lungs to drive blood through the vessels and the Lungs need blood from the Heart for nourishment. If Lung Qi is deficient, Qi can stagnate. If this occurs Heart Qi will stagnate leading to Blood Stasis (palpitations, blue-purple lips, chest pain). It is common for both Heart and Lung Qi to be weak at the same time (upper Jiao). This can also mean that the Gathering Qi has become weak and is effecting both the Heart and Lungs. Sadness can also weaken the upper Jiao Qi.

Heart & Liver

This relationship is one of blood. The Heart governs blood and the Liver stores blood. Disease of the blood of either organ will surely effects the other. If Heart blood is deficient, this will lead to Liver blood deficiency and mismanagement of the regulation of blood causing dizziness and excessive dreaming. Mother not nourishing the child is also quite common; deficiency of Liver blood causing Heart blood deficiency resulting in palpitations and insomnia.

On the mental level, these two organs are the most important when it comes to emotional management. The Heart houses the mind and the Liver controls the smooth flow of all emotions. Disorders of either can result in a wide array of mental/emotional problems.

Heart & Kidneys

This relationship has two main elements: 1) The mutual assistance of Fire and Water, 2) The common root of mind and Essence.

The mutual assistance of Fire and Water

The Heart is in the upper Jiao, it corresponds to Fire, is Yang in nature, and relates to movement. The Kidneys are in the low Jiao, they correspond to water, are Yin in nature, and relate to non-movement. These two elements represent the Yin and Yang of all the organs (Fire and Water). Heart Yang descends to warm Kidney Yin, Kidney Yin ascends to nourish Heart Yang. The Heart and Kidneys are constantly communicating. If Kidney Yin is deficient it can’t rise to nourish the Heart Yin which leads to hyperactive Heart Fire (insomnia, restlessness, anxiety, flushed cheeks, night sweats, red tongue with no coat and a midline crack).

The common root of mind and Essence
The Heart houses the mind and the Kidneys store Essence. The mind is a manifestation of pre-heaven Essence. Post-heaven Essence also gives the mind nourishment. Therefore if the Essence is abundant the mind will be healthy. If the Essence is weak then one will have poor mental function, emotional instability, low self-esteem & will power will suffer. This relationship shows the Traditional Chinese Medicine point of view that the body and mind are an integrated whole.

Liver & Lungs

This relationship is that of the one between blood and Qi. Lungs govern Qi and the Liver stores and regulates blood. The Liver helps the lungs to ensure smooth flow of Qi all over the body, and the Liver needs Qi from the Lungs to regulate the blood. If Lung Qi is deficient Liver Qi can stagnate. If Liver Qi stagnates it can obstruct the flow of Lung Qi causing rebel Lung Qi symptoms (cough, asthma, etc.). This is wood insulting metal from the five elements point of view. If Liver Qi stagnates long enough it can cause Liver Fire which rises and damages Lung Yin.

Liver & Spleen

This relationship is often seen in clinic when emotional stresses stagnate Liver Qi and effect the Spleen causing digestive troubles, this is known as wood overacting on earth. When Liver Qi is flowing normally it aids the Spleen with digestion. Conversely, if the Spleen is deficient, food can stagnate in the mid Jiao and disrupt the smooth flow of Liver Qi, earth insulting wood.

Liver & Kidneys

Liver blood nourishes Kidney Essence, and Kidney Essence produces bone-marrow which helps produce blood. Kidney Yin nourishes Liver Yin from a mother/child relationship in the five element theory, water nourishing wood. Essence deficiency can lead to blood deficiency causing dizziness, blurred vision, and tinnitus. If Kidney Yin does not nourish Liver Yin it can lead to hyperactivity of Liver Yang causing anger, headaches, dizziness, and hypertension. Liver blood deficiency can lead to malnourishment of the Essence which may lead to auditory and reproductive problems.

Spleen & Lungs

The Spleen sends the refined essences from food to the Lungs where it combines with air to form Gathering Qi. In turn, the Spleen relies on the Lungs to send down Qi to fuel the process of transformation and transportation. Therefore is Spleen Qi is deficient the Lungs won’t get the Food (Gu) Qi required to mix with air to make Qi. Spleen deficiency can also lead to the formation of Dampness and Phlegm which gets stored in
the Lungs. If Lung Qi is weak the Spleen may also lose function of transforming and transporting fluids which can result in edema.

Spleen & Kidneys

The Kidneys are the root of pre-heaven Qi and the Spleen is the root of post-heaven Qi. Post-heaven Qi produced by the Spleen from food constantly replenishes pre-heaven Qi. The pre-heaven Qi (from the Minister Fire) provides the heat for the Spleen to digest the food and drink. If Spleen Qi is weak the Essence will not be replenished and symptoms of Kidney deficiency will arise (backache, tinnitus, no appetite, fatigue, sexual malfunction). If Kidney Yang is deficient the Spleen will not get warm enough to digest and there will be diarrhea and coldness. If Spleen Qi is deficient there may be an accumulation of fluids which will impair Kidney function. Conversely, if Kidney Yang is deficient there will be no steaming of fluids in the low Jiao and the Spleen will not get the warmth it needs as discussed before, causing diarrhea, coldness, edema, and fatigue.

Lungs & Kidneys

The Lungs send fluids and Qi down to the Kidneys, the Kidneys hold down the Qi and steam fluids back up to nourish the Lungs. Thus the Lung function of governing Qi and respiration is dependent on the Kidney function of reception of Qi and vice versa. If the Kidneys are deficient and their function of reception of Qi is impaired there will be asthma, breathlessness (more on inhalation), and cough. The Lungs send fluids down to the Kidneys and the Kidneys steam and send water back up to the Lungs to keep them moist. If Lung Qi is weak and cannot properly send fluids down there can be retention of urine or incontinence. If Kidney Yang is deficient there can be impairment of the steaming function, the low Jiao accumulates with water and the Lungs cannot send water down which will cause edema. If Kidney Yin is deficient there are not enough fluids in the low Jiao to be steamed and keep the Lungs moist, this causes Lung Yin deficiency (dry mouth/throat, dry cough, night sweats, 5-centre heat sensation).

Spleen & Heart

This is a connection of blood. The Spleen makes blood and the Heart governs blood. If Spleen Qi becomes deficient and does not produce enough blood there can be Heart blood deficiency which causes dizziness, poor memory, insomnia, and palpitations. Heart Yang pushes blood through the vessels and Heart blood is needed to nourish the Spleen.