

Spleen (Pi)

The Spleen is the Yin Organ of the Earth Element.

The Spleen Rules Transformation and Transportation

The activity of the Spleen is essential to the process whereby food is transformed into Qi and Blood. In TCM, the Spleen is the primary Organ of digestion. It extracts the pure nutritive essences of ingested food and fluids and transforms them into that which will become Qi and Blood.

The Spleen is the source of Qi and Blood in the body. It is referred to as the "foundation of postnatal existence" (Maciocia, 1989).

The Spleen is responsible for sending Gu Qi upward to the Lungs where the final synthesis of Qi and Blood takes place. It directs ascending movement and is also involved in the movement and transformation of Water in the body. This is referred to in the aphorism, the Spleen rules "the raising of the pure."

With the transforming and transporting functions of the Spleen functioning properly, Qi and Blood are abundant and digestive powers strong.

In the case of disharmony, there is likely to be Deficient Qi or Deficient Blood. Digestive symptoms may include abdominal pain or distention, diarrhoea, or anorexia.

The Spleen Governs the Blood

The Spleen is the key Organ in the creation of Blood and keeps it flowing in its proper pathways. It is generally true that Blood is commanded by Qi. It is Spleen Qi which holds Blood in its proper place. When this aspect of the Spleen's function is weak, the Blood may escape its pathways and move recklessly. In this case signs and symptoms may include easy bruising, blood under the skin, blood in faeces, vomiting blood, menorrhagia, or uterine bleeding. Chronic bleeding disorders generally have a significant Spleen component.

The Spleen Rules the Muscles, Flesh, and the Four Limbs

The Spleen transports Qi and Blood throughout the body. All tissues and Organs depend upon the Spleen, with muscles, flesh and the limbs particularly dependent on the power of the Spleen. Muscle tone and the relative bulk of flesh and muscles are generally indicative of Spleen function.

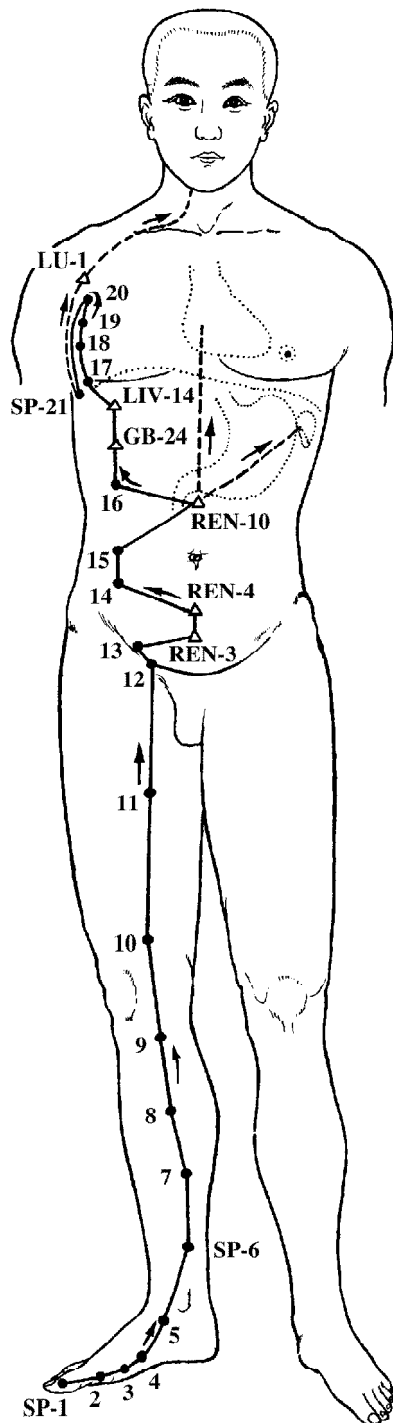
The Spleen opens into the Mouth. Its brilliance is manifest in the Lips

When the Spleen is functioning properly, the five tastes will be distinguished, and the lips will have a healthy moist rosiness. With Spleen weakness, the vibrancy of taste may be markedly reduced, and the lips may be pale, dry and cracked.

‘The Spleen and Stomach are responsible for the storehouses and granaries. The five tastes stem from them.’ (Su Wen, chpt 8. Larre & Rochat, 1990, 1992).

Zu Tai Yin Pi Jing Spleen Channel of foot Tai Yin

PRIMARY SPLEEN MERIDIAN



Primary Spleen Meridian
(modified from Shandong,
1982, p. 19)

The primary Spleen Channel of foot Tai Yin begins on the medial tip of the big toe (SP-1, Yin Bai) and runs along the medial border of the foot between the light and dark skin (SP-4, Gong Sun). It passes anterior to the medial malleolus (SP-5, Shang Qiu) and up the medial border of the leg along the posterior margin of the tibia (SP-6 (San Yin Jiao). At approximately 8 cun above the medial malleolus it crosses and runs immediately anterior (5 fen) to the Liver Channel of foot Jue Yin. It crosses (passes through) the anteromedial aspect of the knee, continues up the anteromedial aspect of the thigh (SP-10, Xue Hai) to the inguinal region (SP-13, Fu She), then enters the abdominal cavity. As it ascends, it intersects Ren Mai at REN-3 (Zhong Ji) and REN-4 (Guan Yuan), before homing to its pertaining Organ, the Spleen, and connecting to the Stomach Organ.

The pathway continues up the antero-lateral abdomen (SP-16, Fu Ai), passes through the diaphragm, and intersects the Gall Bladder Channel of foot Shao Yang at GB-24 (Ri Yue), and the Liver Channel of foot Jue Yin at LIV-14 (Qi Men). It then continues upward over the lateral chest.

It meets the Lung Channel of hand Tai Yin at LU-1 (Zhong Fu), and then ascends (Internally) beside the oesophagus. It finally proceeds to the root of the tongue to disperse (spread Qi and Blood) over its lower, ventral surface.

A branch separates in the region of the Stomach Organ. It crosses the diaphragm and transports Qi to (into) the Heart Organ, then connects with the Heart Channel of hand Shao Yin.

There are 21 points on the Spleen Meridian, and 7 intersecting points on other Meridians.

This Meridian pertains to the Spleen Organ and connects to the Stomach Organ. It also directly connects with the Organs of Heart, Lung and Intestines.

FLOW OF QI/ DISTRIBUTION OF POINTS:

Lower Limb: SP-1 (Yin Bai), SP-2 (Da Du), SP-3 (Tai Bai), SP-4 (Gong Sun), SP-5 (Shang Qiu), SP-6 (San Yin Jiao), SP-7 (Lou Gu), SP-8 (Di Ji), SP-9 (Yin Ling Quan), SP-10 (Xue Hai), SP-11 (Ji Men)

Inguinal Region, Abdomen: SP-12 (Chong Men), SP-13 (Fu She), REN-3 (Zhong Ji), REN-4 (Guan Yuan), SP-14 (Fu Jie), SP-15 (Da Heng), REN-10 (Xia Guan), [REN-17 (Dan Zhong)], SP-16 (Fu Ai)

Chest: GB-24 (Ri Yue), LIV-14 (Qi Men), SP-17 (Shi Dou), SP-18 (Tian Xi), SP-19 (Xiong Xiang), SP-20 (Zhou Rong), SP-21 (Da Bao), LU-1 (Zhong Fu).

MERIDIANS INTERSECTED BY THE SPLEEN CHANNEL:

Gall Bladder Channel of foot Shao Yang: GB-24 (Ri Yue).

Liver Channel of foot Jue Yin: LIV-14 (Qi Men).

Lung Channel of hand Tai Yin: LU-1 (Zhong Fu).

Ren Mai (Conception Vessel): REN-3 (Zhong Ji), REN-4 (Guan Yuan), REN-10 (Xia Guan), [REN-17 (Dan Zhong)].

MERIDIANS INTERSECTING ON THE SPLEEN CHANNEL:

Kidney Channel of foot Shao Yin: SP-6 (San Yin Jiao)

Liver Channel of foot Jue Yin: SP-6 (San Yin Jiao), SP-12 (Chong Men), SP-13 (Fu She)

Stomach Channel of foot Yang Ming: SP-1 (Yin Bai)

Chong Mai (Penetrating Vessel): [SP-10 (Xue Hai)]

Yin Wei Mai (Yin linking Vessel): SP-12 (Chong Men), SP-13 (Fu She), SP-15 (Da Heng), SP-16 (Fu Ai)

SPLEEN SPECIAL POINTS/ COMMAND POINTS:

SP-1 (Yin Bai): Wood, Well-Jing.

SP-2 (Da Du): Fire, Spring, Gushing-Ying.

SP-3 (Tai Bai):
i) Earth, Stream, Transporting-Shu. Horary point.
ii) Yuan-Source.

SP-4 (Gong Sun):
i) Luo-Connecting.
ii) Master point, Chong Mai (Penetrating Vessel);
Coupling point, Yin Wei Mai (Yin linking Vessel).

SP-5 (Shang Qiu): Metal, River, Traversing-Jing.

SP-6 (San Yin Jiao): Intersection (common) point of the three Yin Meridians (Kidney, Spleen, Liver) of the lower limb.

SP-8 (Di Ji): Xi-Cleft, Accumulation.

SP-9 (Yin Ling Quan): Water, Sea, Uniting-He.

SP-21 (Da Bao):

Connecting-Luo point of the Great Luo Channel of the Spleen.

LIV-13 (Zhang Men):

front Alarm-Mu, Collecting point.

BL-20 (Pi Shu):

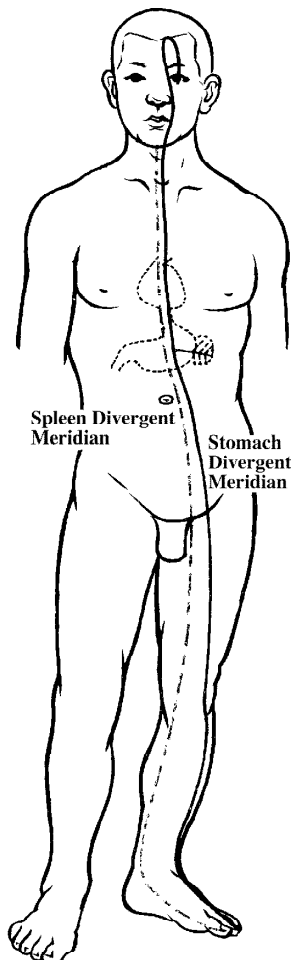
back Associated-Shu, Transporting point.

SPLEEN PRIMARY MERIDIAN SIGNS/SYMPTOMS:

Heaviness of the head or body, fatigue and weakness of the limbs, general feverishness, motor impairment or stiffness of the tongue, atony and atrophy of the muscles of the limbs, cold along the medial aspect of the thigh and knee, oedematous swelling of the legs and feet. (mainly from Ellis et al., 1988; O'Connor & Bensky, 1981)

SPLEEN ORGAN SIGNS/SYMPTOMS:

Pain in the stomach region and watery diarrhoea, stool containing undigested food, indigestion, splenomegaly, abdominal fullness and distension, borborygmus, retching and nausea, sensation of abdominal mass, reduced food intake, jaundice, dysuria, constipation. (mainly from Ellis et al., 1988; O'Connor & Bensky, 1981)

SPLEEN DIVERGENT MERIDIAN

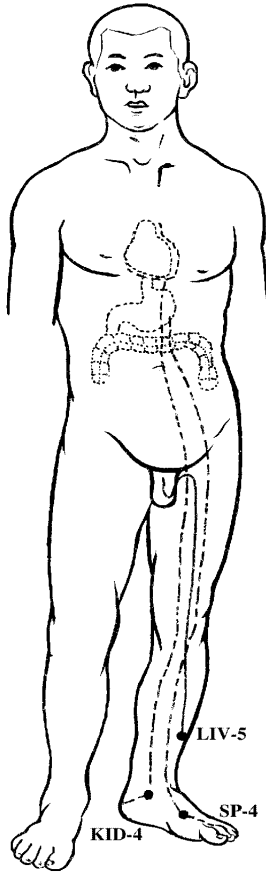
The Spleen Divergent Meridian leaves the primary Spleen Channel on the thigh and ascends to the inguinal region, where it unites with the Divergent Meridian of the Stomach Channel of foot Yang Ming, near ST-30 (Qi Chong). It then rises and proceeds to the pharynx, and enters the root of the tongue.

(mainly from Ellis et al., 1988; O'Connor & Bensky, 1981)

Earth Divergent Meridians

(from Cheng 1987, p. 85)

SPLEEN LUO (CONNECTING) MERIDIAN



The Spleen Luo Meridian separates from the primary Spleen Channel at SP-4 (Gong Sun) on the medial border of the foot, and connects to the Stomach Channel of foot Yang Ming. A branch ascends to the abdomen and connects with the Intestines and Stomach.

Signs/ Symptoms:

Counterflow Qi: cholera

Shi: sharp/ cutting pain in the abdomen, vomiting and diarrhoea

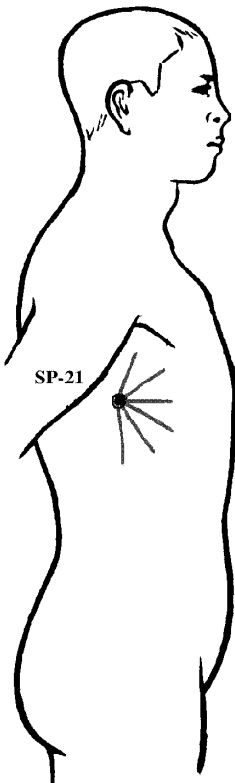
Xu: drum distension of the abdomen, abdominal swelling

(mainly from Ellis et al., 1988; O'Connor & Bensky, 1981)

Yin Luo Meridians, Lower Limb

(modified from Cheng 1987, p. 93)

GREAT LUO MERIDIAN OF THE SPLEEN



The Great Luo Meridian of the Spleen separates from the primary Spleen Channel of foot Tai Yin at SP-21 (Da Bao), then issues from GB-22 (Yuan Ye), 3 cun below the axilla. It spreads over the chest, lateral costal region, and hypochondrium. This Vessel distributes and gathers Qi and Blood around the circumference of the body, particularly the lateral aspect of the trunk, and especially the lateral costal region.

Signs/ Symptoms:

Shi: generalized aches and pains throughout the body

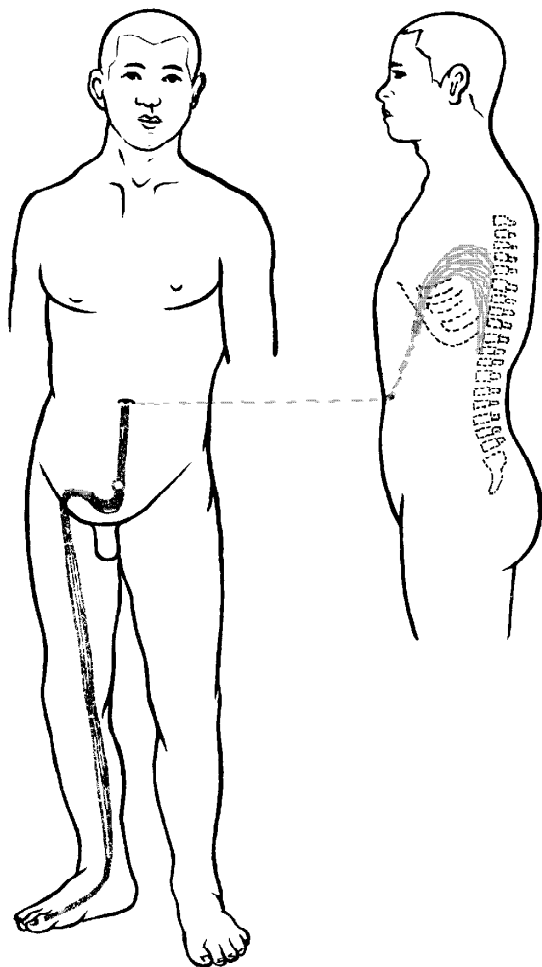
Xu: weakness in the muscles of the limbs and joints

(mainly from Ellis et al., 1988; O'Connor & Bensky, 1981)

Great Luo Meridian of the Spleen

(from Cheng 1987, p. 95)

SPLEEN MUSCLE-TENDINO (SINEW) MERIDIAN



Spleen Muscle-Tendino Meridian

(from Cheng 1987, p.101)

The Spleen Muscle-Tendino Meridian (MTM) begins at the medial side of the big toe, travels proximally and binds at the medial malleolus. It ascends to the knee where it binds at the medial aspect of the tibia. It then travels up the medial aspect of the thigh, binds in the hip (inguinal) region and connects at the genitals. It proceeds up the abdomen, binds at the navel, then enters the abdominal cavity and continues upward to bind with the ribs and disperse through the chest.

A deep branch of this MTM attaches Internally to the sides of the spine.

Signs/ Symptoms:

Strain (of the muscles) of the big toe (inability to stretch or support), pain at the medial malleolus, pain in the muscles around the ankle, pain along the medial aspect of the leg and knee, pain in the adductor muscles of the thigh, pain due muscle strain of the groin/genital region, which may extend to the navel and (strained) upper abdominal muscles, or to (strained) muscles of the chest or mid-thoracic spine.

(mainly from Ellis et al., 1988; O'Connor & Bensky, 1981)