

THE TRIPLE HEATER

(Collated by Michelle Wilkinson www.movingnaturally.co.uk)

In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) the triple heater is not an organ, but concerned with certain functions, which involve different body systems and their respective organs.

A major function of the Triple Heater is that of homeostasis namely the body's capacity to regulate its internal environment to maintain a stable and relatively constant condition of temperature and pH levels.

The body cells require this constant internal environment to survive. All body systems contribute to maintaining a stable internal condition, but the autonomic nervous system (ANS) is the most important in homeostasis.

A function of The Triple Heater is protection. It follows the body's connective tissue where electro-magnetic signals are conveyed. For instance, the superficial fascia, the layer of connective tissue below the skin creates a defensive barrier against harmful foreign invaders.

The body is also protected by the peripheral circulation of the blood which oxygenates and nourishes the cells. The lymphatic system protects the body by removing toxins, waste and other harmful materials. The Triple Heater supports these functions and if there is too much energy in the Triple Heater meridians it creates an overprotected environment which can lead to allergies such as hay fever and urticaria.

In TCM the Pericardium and Triple Heater are paired together. The former yin structure controls the lining of the body while the latter controls the surface of the body and is yang in nature.

The functions of the Triple Heater allow a person's inner processes, the consciousness from the body's core, to connect with the surface. In this way it creates an adaptable boundary that becomes the interface between the self and others in the outer world.

Fascia a form of connective tissue wraps bones, muscles organs and blood vessels. It links bodily systems to each other and provides pathways for whole body communication and a feedback system between the consciousness and body.

The Triple Heater interconnects three mutually supporting chambers or burning spaces in the torso called burners.

The Upper Burner lies in the chest above the diaphragm and houses the lungs and heart which are concerned with respiration and circulation. It can be viewed as the

social aspect of self where external expectations are placed upon a person by the society in which they live.

The Middle Burner lies in the upper abdomen above the navel (the solar plexus). It contains the liver, gall bladder, pancreas, stomach, spleen and small intestine. It is concerned with the digestion and extraction of nourishment and the distribution of energy around the body. It deals with the expectations and demands of the outer world and digests and assimilates them according to what is compatible within our own character and personality. It can reject something which may inhibit something essential within our own sense of self.

The Lower Burner lies in the lower abdomen below the navel and contains the reproductive organs, the intestines and bladder. Although not located here, due to its pairing with the bladder, the kidneys are considered part of this burner. The role of the Lower Burner is to separate the pure from the impure allowing the pure to be absorbed and the impure to be excreted. It deals with personal drives of the self without regard for other people and the environment.

These three burners each have their own doorways. The thyroid for the Upper Burner, the diaphragm for the Middle Burner and the pelvic floor for the Lower Burner.

The Triple Heater relates to the chakras via the acupuncture point BL10, Heavenly Pillar. It is located two fingers' width either side of the spine at the base of the skull on the lateral border of the trapezius muscle.

Another function of the Triple Heater is to distribute a person's Source Ki, the origin of all the yang energy for action and accomplishment. It could be seen as the human pilot light and is found in the space between the two kidneys and the surrounding area. There is a related acupuncture point GV4 called Gate of Life found between the second and third lumbar vertebrae.

The Triple Heater meridian pathway follows the Small Intestine meridian. It begins at the outside corner of the ring/fourth fingernail, passes up the back of the hand and midline of the forearm. It continues up the back of the arm until a point just posterior to and inferior to the acromion. It travels across the top of the shoulder blade (scapulae), up the back of the neck, between the trapezius and sternocleidomastoid muscle to the mastoid process. Finally, it follows around the back of the ear to end at the outside corner of the eyebrow.

Due to its location this meridian can be used for ear infections, tinnitus, deafness, headaches, swollen glands, tonsillitis, stiff neck and shoulders.

The TH23 acupuncture point called Silk Bamboo Hole is on the lateral border of the orbit at the lateral tip of the eyebrow. This point benefits the eyes, headaches around the temples, facial paralysis in surrounding area and eases pain.