Organ System Attributes
of Chinese Medicine

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Organ Systems

Chinese medicine has a unique perspective of our organs. Organs such as the heart, liver, and large intestine are understood to be part of a larger web of relationships within the body-mind. Because of the difference between western science and Classical Chinese medicine, I refer to “Organ Systems” rather than “organs.”

Below are attributes of each Organ System, as explained in the Yellow Emperor’s Classic of Medicine. This book was written over 2,500 years ago. It is one of the source texts for Chinese medicine.

“These twelve zang (Yin) and fu (Yang) organs must work together harmoniously, just like a kingdom.”
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**Heart** - The Heart is the sovereign of all the organs and represents the consciousness of one’s being. It is responsible for intelligence, wisdom, and spiritual transformation.

**Lung** - The Lung is the adviser. It helps the Heart in regulating the body’s Qi.

**Liver** - The Liver is like the general who is courageous and smart.

**Gallbladder** - The Gallbladder is like a judge with the power of discernment.

**Pericardium** - The Pericardium is like the court jester who makes the king laugh, bringing forth joy.

**Stomach and Spleen** - The Stomach and Spleen are like warehouses where one stores all the food and essences. They digest, absorb, and extract the food and nutrients.

**Large Intestine** - The Large Intestine is responsible for the transportation of all turbidity. All waste products go through this organ.

**Small Intestine** - The Small Intestine receives the food that has been digested by the Spleen and Stomach; then it further extracts, absorbs, and distributes it throughout the body, while separating the pure from the turbid.

**Kidneys** - The Kidneys store the vitality and mobilize the four extremities. They also aid memory, willpower, and coordination.

**San Jiao** - The San Jiao or three visceral cavities, promotes the transformation and transportation of water and fluids throughout the body.

**Bladder** - the Bladder is where the water converges and where it is eliminated after being catalyzed by the Qi.
“If the Spirit is clear, all the functions of the other Organs will be clear.”

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The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Medicine