

三焦

the Triple Warmer (Sanjiao)

- 三焦，是中医学臟腑学說中一個特有的名词。
- The term, triple warmer, is peculiar to *TCM*.
- 三焦是上焦、中焦、下焦的合稱，為六腑之一。
- It is a collective name of the upper, middle and lower warmer and is one of the six bowels.
- 關於三焦的型態与實質，中医界眾說紛紜，至今尚無定论。
- In the field of TCM, no unanimous conclusion has been drawn about the *form and crux* of the triple warmer.

三焦

the Triple Warmer (Sanjiao)

- 一般認為，**三焦**是包羅人體所有內臟的一個大臟，
- It is generally recognized that “*triple warmer*” is a large bowel containing all the internal organs.
- 如明·張介賓說：「三焦者，確有一**腑**，蓋**臟腑**之外，軀殼之內，包羅諸臟，一腔之大腑也。」
- For instance, Zhang Jiebin, a medical man in the Ming dynasty, said, “Triple warmer is, in fact, a bowel. It is outside all the *viscera* and *bowels* but within the body, contains all the other organs and is the largest bowel within the body cavity.”

三焦

the Triple Warmer (Sanjiao)

- 在中医理论中，三焦也是劃分軀体部位的一個概念。
- In the theory of TCM the term “triple warmer” is also used to locate the body parts.
- 即膈以上的部位為上焦，包括心、肺；膈以下、**臍**以上的部位為中焦，包括脾、胃；**臍**以下為下焦，包括肝、腎、大小腸、膀胱、女子胞等。
- The upper warmer is the portion of the body cavity above the diaphragm which houses the heart and the lung. The middle warmer is the portion between the diaphragm and *umbilicus (navel)* which houses the spleen and the stomach. The lower warmer is the portion below the umbilicus which houses the liver, the kidney, the urinary bladder, the intestines and the uterus.

三焦

the Triple Warmer (Sanjiao)

- 其中肝臟，按其部位來說，應歸划中焦。
- According to the liver's location, it can be clearly seen that the liver is an organ within the middle warmer.
- 但中醫認為，肝腎同源，關係密切，故將肝腎同劃歸下焦。
- But it is said that the liver is an organ within the lower warmer. Why? Because TCM believes that the liver and the kidney have *the same source (a common source)* and a close relationship, thus puts the liver into the lower warmer *(together with the kidney)*.

三焦

the Triple Warmer (Sanjiao)

- 三焦的生理功能，总的來說，是总司人体气化。
- Generally speaking, the physiological functions of triple warmer *control* the activities of the *qi* of the human body.
- 分开來說，上焦主呼吸、主宣发 (实指心、肺的功能)，即把積於胸中的「气」宣布、布达全身，若霧露之溉，故稱「上焦如霧」；
- The upper warmer controls respiration, and *activates the flow of vital energy, blood and body fluid* (referring to, in fact, the functions of the heart and lung), i.e., it *disperses* pectoral *qi* accumulated in the chest to all parts of the body *just as fog and dew moisten the earth*. This is why TCM says that “*The upper warmer is like a sprinkler for distributing nutrients and qi.*”

三焦

the Triple Warmer (Sanjiao)

- 中焦主运 (实指脾、胃的功能), 即腐熟水谷, 运化精微, 以化气血, 故喻之為「中焦如漚」;
- The middle warmer functions in *transportation and transformation* (referring to in fact, the functions of the spleen and stomach), i.e. it ferments water and food and *transports and transforms food essence* in order to *produce vital energy and blood*. Therefore, it is likened to a *fermentation tun*, where food is digested.

三焦

the Triple Warmer (Sanjiao)

- 下焦主分別清濁、排泄尿液与大便 (实指肾、小肠、大肠、膀胱的功能), 以上生理功能均具有向下、向外排泄的特点故稱「下焦如瀆」。
- The lower warmer *separates clear fluid from turbid fluid* and discharges urine and stool, (referring to, in fact, the functions of the kidney, the small intestine, the large intestine and the urinary bladder). These two physiological functions mentioned above are characterized by excreting wastes downwards and outwards. It is said that the lower warmer works like gutters, to filter and drain off waste and superfluous water.

三焦

the Triple Warmer (Sanjiao)

- 三焦的這些生理功能，實際上是體內各臟腑功能的總合。
- In fact, all these physiological functions of the triple warmer are the sum total of the activities of all the viscera and bowels in the body.
- 在病理上，上、中、下三焦異常所出現的**病証**，實際上也是各部位臟腑功能的異常表現。
- Pathologically, diseases (**disease patterns**) due to an abnormality of upper, or middle, or lower warmer are manifestations of dysfunctions of the viscera or bowels within it.