

PULSE DIAGNOSIS

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In learning pulse diagnosis, before one can understand unhealthy or diseased pulses, obviously one must first learn what the foundational stomach pulse, organ pulses, and seasonal pulses feel like when they are healthy. However, it is difficult to learn what a peaceful and normal pulse feels like to the fingers since there are almost no chances to observe such ideal pulses.

One method of learning what a normal pulse should feel like is to observe the changes in the pulse that take place as the patient's symptoms improve. After observing, many treatments an image of a model pulse will gradually take form in your conscience.

Another method is to learn the classical definitions of a normal pulse and to then remember them with your fingers by having a practitioner with extensive clinical experience in pulse diagnosis point them out to you on actual patients.

When learning meridian therapy one studies comparative pulse diagnosis in the beginning. Basic comparative pulse taking differentiates between deficiency and excess in the Six positions.

Excess and Deficiency are fundamental pulse qualities that are immediately used in determining the Root treatment. Point selection is determined by gaining further understanding of the pathological changes in the patient's symptoms through reading the Eight Basic Pulse qualities and using the finger-needle method. There are said to be 30 or more pulse qualities. These can be used for even deeper, subtler observation of pathologies. These pulse qualities are mentioned below,

Eight Basic Pulse Qualities

1. Empty/Deficient
2. Full/Excess
3. Floating
4. Sinking
5. Slow
6. Fast
7. Slippery
8. Choppy/Hesitant

Other Pulse Qualities

9. Wiry
10. Tight
11. Hollow
12. Flooding
13. Hidden
14. Leathery
15. Minute
16. Thin
17. Soft/Soggy
18. Weak
19. Scattered
20. Moderate
21. Hasty
22. Knotted
23. Intermittent
24. Moving
25. Firm
26. Long
27. Short
28. Big
29. Small
30. Rapid

Just by initially touching the pulse there will be difficulty determining the quality. For example, a wiry pulse usually has a slippery quality in it. You first need to know the overall basic pulse quality before determining the specifics. An example of overall quality is excess or deficiency.

Since ancient times there have been many pulse diagnosis methods.

- A. Three-positions nine-indicators pulse diagnosis found in the *Su Wen*
- B. Carotid pulse diagnosis from the *Ling Shu*
- C. Radial artery pulse diagnosis from the *Nan Jing*
- D. Various other pulse diagnosis methods are introduced in the *Mai Jing (Classic of Pulses)*.

We believe the “Six-position Pulse diagnosis” is the only diagnostic method whereby one can perceive all pathological conditions of the organs and meridians, and so can thereby demonstrate the effectiveness of this traditional medicine at its best.

The Six-position Pulse Diagnosis is a method used to examine the six positions as a whole and each of the six positions individually in order to determine whether there is any deficiency, excess, cold, or heat in the ki, blood, and fluids of the organs and meridians. However, it is very difficult to ask beginners to understand how to do this. Therefore, to begin with, we start by practicing only how to differentiate deficient and excess (weak and strong or the width of the pulse from the middle pulse) qualities—in other words, the so-called pulse-strength comparison diagnosis or the pulse comparison diagnosis methods. The pulse-strength comparison diagnosis is useful only for determining STOMACH KI with deficiency and excess in the meridians. Moreover, the most important thing to remember is that, while the pulse-strength comparison diagnosis can be used to select which meridian(s) to treat, it will not help in determining which technique is the most appropriate to use. To that end it was natural to develop the 'six-basic-pulses diagnosis.'

The six-basic-pulses diagnosis is a method for classifying various pulse qualities into six categories. Through the utilization of this method it is possible to get a hold on the general pathology, as well as determine which technique (tonification or dispersion) is appropriate to apply.

However, even though a floating pulse, for example, within the six basic pulses, can be determined, that does not help in addressing the fact that there are many *degrees* of a floating quality that can be seen from pulse to pulse. The same thing can be said about the other six basic pulses. Therefore, in order to comprehend pathology in even greater detail, and to accordingly apply precise techniques, it is necessary to further divide the six basic pulses into more detailed pulse categories.

The pulse-quality diagnosis was therefore developed in order to achieve that goal.

When pulse qualities are examined on the left and right wrists, it is found that, although the same overall quality may be found in all six positions, sometimes a single position shows a different quality from the rest. At those times, although the entire pulse quality must be taken into account as a whole, it is needless to say that attention should be paid to any unusual characteristics in individual pulses among the six positions. In other words, the pattern of imbalance should be determined by considering the pulse qualities in each of the six positions. (Note: the pulse-strength comparison diagnosis was used only to ascertain deficiency or excess within the pulse.) In this way the location of disease (i.e. the meridian(s) to be treated), the pathology, and needling techniques all become that much more precisely determined.

The Pulse Diagnosis Positions and Pulse Diagnosis Techniques

Pulse Comparison Method (Introductory)

Beginners should follow the steps outlined below for learning pulse diagnosis.

- ① First place your fingers on the pulse and then repeatedly try to feel the pulse at the superficial, deep and middle levels. Pay attention to any pulse position(s) that are clearly felt at the superficial level, as these are often the positions that are found to be deficient at the deep level.
- ② Next look for the weakest or/and strongest (narrow or/and wide) position among the six at the deep level. For example, Liver deficiency is indicated if the weakest position is found at the middle position of the left wrist. In this case attention, should also be paid to the proximal position of the left wrist, as Kidney deficiency often appears along with Liver deficiency.
- ③ A cold pattern with dual yin and yang deficiency is often indicated when there is a pulse position at which nothing is felt at the superficial level even though that position was deficient at the deep level.
- ④ It is possible that all the pulse positions may feel weak, and so do not match any of the typical patterns as shown in the diagram. In that case the pattern of imbalance would be determined according to the pulse qualities. However, since this is too much of a stretch for beginners, you should make a judgment by placing more emphasis on symptomology.
- ⑤ Attention should also be paid to any positions at which the pulse can strongly be felt at the deep level. This strongly felt pulse is caused by the stagnation of heat or blood in the area corresponding to that pulse position. However, such a pulse will not always appear in the suspected area even though there may be stagnation of heat or blood, since heat can move to any other organ or meridian.
- ⑥ The pulse diagnosis method explained above is the so-called **pulse-strength comparison diagnosis**. It is possible to make a misdiagnosis using only this method. But, it is not meaningless to start by placing an emphasis on finding the deficiency, since all disorders start from a deficiency of essential ki of the zang organs. However, if you are preoccupied with only finding the strong and weak positions of the pulse, it is possible that you will clumsily grasp the artery. It is best to first and foremost follow the proper methods of observing the superficial and deep levels; otherwise you may make impaired judgments concerning the pulse qualities, which will be explained later.

Six Basic Pulses Diagnosis (Intermediate)

There are 24 pulse qualities mentioned in the *Classic of Pulses*. All pulse qualities can be loosely classified into six categories: floating, sinking, slow, rapid, deficient, and excess. That is, they are the basis of all the other pulse qualities. Some examples are given in the following table.

It must be stressed that the terms floating and sinking, slow and rapid, and deficient and excess have slightly different meanings when they are used to refer to the basic pulses and when describing the pulse qualities.

For instance, a deficient pulse in the sense of a basic pulse includes all the pulse qualities that fall in the deficient pulse category. A weak pulse in the pulse-strength comparison diagnosis should be thought of as the same as a deficient pulse in terms of the six basic pulses. However, a deficient pulse in the sense of pulse

Floating	floating, hollow, large
Sinking	sinking, hidden, thin
Slow	slow, moderate
Rapid	rapid, moving
Deficient	deficient, hollow, minute, thin, soft, weak
Excess	excess, flooding, slippery, wiry, tight

qualities is a narrower concept related to specific pathology.

Accordingly, it is necessary to master the pulse qualities in order to have a detailed understanding of pathology. But it is still important to classify pulses according to the six basic pulses, as this will help you decide which techniques are appropriate to use to treat the pattern of imbalance that you diagnosed by finding the weakest pulse using the pulse-strength comparison technique.

Note, however, that since all diagnoses and their corresponding treatment methods are based first on deficiency and excess, the other four basic pulses should be understood in combination with deficiency and excess. Therefore, even though deficiency and excess are listed individually as two of the six-basic pulses, they are given below in conjunction with the other basic pulses.

① The Floating Basic Pulse

Pathology: The floating basic pulse appears when a lot of ki gathers in the yang meridians. The pathology can vary, but a floating and excess pulse is caused by external pathogenic influences and a floating and deficient pulse is caused by yin deficiency (i.e. blood or fluid deficiency).

Tonification & Dispersion: Principally tonify with shallow needling. If the pulse is floating and excess, the yang channels could be dispersed after tonifying the yin channels. If the pulse is floating and deficient, either only tonify the yin channels, or sometimes tonify the yang channels as well.

② Sinking Basic Pulse

Pathology: The sinking basic pulse appears when there is a lot of ki in the yin channels or organs. The pathology can vary, but a sinking and excess pulse indicates blood and heat stagnation. A sinking and deficient pulse indicates an excess of water, or a lack of yang ki with an abundance of cold.

Tonification & Dispersion: Principally use slightly deep insertion. However, if the pulse is sinking and deficient, both the yin and yang channels must be tonified with shallow insertion. The yin channels can be dispersed if the pulse is sinking and excess.

③ Slow Basic Pulse

Pathology: The slow basic pulse appears when there is chronic chilling that has extended to the blood. A slow and excess pulse indicates blood stagnation. A slow and deficient pulse indicates chilling and water stagnation.

Tonification & Dispersion: Principally use deeper with slow needling. However, if the pulse is slow and excess, retain the needle a little deeper. When the pulse is slow and deficient it is necessary to tonify for a long time or tonify with moxibustion.

④ Rapid Basic Pulse

Pathology: The rapid basic pulse appears when there is heat. When the pulse is rapid and excess the heat is stagnated somewhere in the body. Blood and fluids are deficient if the pulse is rapid and deficient.

Tonification & Dispersion: Principally use the rapid advancing and removal needling technique in order to reduce the heat. However, focus on tonification if the pulse is rapid and deficient.

Pulse-Quality Diagnosis (Advanced)

By using the six basic pulses it is possible to make rough classifications of the pulses. But each of the six basic pulses has a variety of different pulses that fall within its range of description. Therefore, the pulse-quality diagnosis is used to make further classifications within each of the six basic pulse categories. Detailed explanations about each pulse quality

will be given later, so here we will just mention the significance of differentiating pulse qualities.

- ① Knowing the pulse qualities presented by a patient enables you to understand in greater detail the location of disease, etiology, pathology, and the pattern of imbalance, and makes it easier to comprehend the clinical conditions of the disease.
- ② When you understand the location of disease, etiology, pathology, and the pattern of imbalance, you will be able to appropriately employ various kinds of techniques, lessen mistreatments, and speed healing time.
- ③ Misdiagnoses of patterns of imbalance that were undeterminable by the pulse-strength because of multiple deficiencies can be avoided by considering the pathology in terms of the pulse qualities.

Pulse-Position/Pulse-Quality Diagnosis (Most Advanced)

We believe that the pulse diagnosis method that advanced beyond the six-position pulse diagnosis of the six basic pulses is the so-called pulse-quality diagnosis, or the pulse-position/pulse quality diagnosis.

The pulse position/pulse quality diagnosis is meaningful for the following reasons:

- ① It is uncommon to see only one kind of pulse quality appearing by itself in the overall pulse. Rather, it is usual for a combination of two or three kinds of pulse qualities to appear. By categorizing these pulse qualities by position as well, it is possible to gain a more detailed understanding of the pathology and to form a prognosis.
- ② Later in the text we will go into a description of the pulse pictures for each pattern of imbalance. That information is based on the pulse position/pulse quality diagnosis. Your understanding of etiology, pathology, and symptomology, which we have already introduced, will deepen as you practice the pulse position/pulse quality diagnosis.
- ③ You will come to know which among ki, blood and fluids is deficient through having a greater understanding of the significance of the weak pulse positions. It will also become easier to distinguish between cold and heat.
- ④ By understanding the pulse quality of the weak positions, you will be able to know what (i.e. ki, blood, or fluids) is excess and where (i.e. which meridian or organ) that excess is located.
- ⑤ Determining the pattern of imbalance and accurately selecting the appropriate techniques will become easier with the detailed understanding of pathology gained from utilizing the pulse position/pulse quality diagnosis.

Each of the pulse diagnosis methods mentioned above—pulse-strength comparison, six basic pulses, pulse-quality, and pulse-position/pulse-quality—are conducted at the superficial and deep levels. The different methods represent a gradual progression in observed detail, but they are in no way contradictory.

1. CALM PULSE

1. **The Healthy Person's Pulse**, as a rule, in order to do pulse diagnosis one must first know the seasonal pulses and time pulses, Stomach pulse and calm pulse of the organs, and thereafter may proceed to diseased pulses. However, one hardly ever meets someone with the ideal calm pulse, as each person's pulses reflect their own peculiar constitutional imbalances. Nevertheless, it is still important to have a standard, and so this section will present the classic picture of a healthy person's pulse.

2. STOMACH KI PULSE

There are three main points to understand about stomach ki.

1. The strength and quality of Stomach ki is ascertained on the whole and the parts mainly at the middle pulse.

The middle pulse is crucial, as it reflects the amount of life force (the combination of yin and yang). The term middle pulse refers to the middle level or depth between the superficial and deep levels where a clear and stable pulse can be felt equally in all three fingers at the same time. A healthy middle pulse should have a certain vitality, which is an indication of plentiful stomach ki and means that the prognosis is good. A weak middle pulse indicates an insufficiency of stomach ki, which in turn indicates that the patient has a weak vital energy and a low level of natural healing power. If the middle pulse cannot be detected at all, death may be near. When there is serious damage to the middle pulse/stomach ki the body cannot be renewed and death follows. People who attempt suicide have no middle pulse. Uniformly these patients do not have deficient pulses but the middle pulse is missing. The pulse feels as if it is sinking into moist mud. This probably occurs after a considerable amount of time has been spent in worry and anxiety.

2. Stomach ki quality should feel moderate and peaceful.

It is soft and has a bounciness or springiness. The stomach ki quality as seen in the whole pulse is not too fast or too slow, and is neither floating or sinking excessively nor overly deficient or excess. Good Stomach ki quality feels very soft like newly budding leaves. When the amount of Stomach ki decreases, the pulse becomes harder. For example, from childhood to old age, the pulse changes from yang to yin. Therefore, there is more definition as age progresses. If we tried to give an old man a newborn's pulse, we would make him sick or younger body. However, when the pulse is very well defined and excess you may feel the patient is doing well, but this is sometimes a mistake. In hard and strong pulses, it is not possible to detect the middle pulse. This pulse has lost its bouncy, peaceful nature. Most often, these pulses belong to people with chronic diseases and are difficult to treat. If you detect Stomach ki with middle pulse you may tell the patient, the prognosis is good, but if not, be cautious. Lack of a middle pulse is a death pulse. Terminal also with large quantities of drug patients will not regain the middle pulse. Most importantly, if there is no stomach ki pulse quality at any of the positions or in the overall pulse, it indicates that *Jaki* (evil ki) has entered the corresponding area of the body.

3. **Stomach ki can be judged as being abundant if the pulse has enough depth** (thickness) in between the superficial and deep levels. A sinking pulse, for example, is a pulse that can be easily felt at the deep level. Thus, a sinking pulse that has a lot of Stomach ki would be slightly felt at the superficial level and felt very clearly at the deep level. A pulse that cannot be felt at all at the superficial level, and that can only be felt at the deep level would be a sinking pulse with very little Stomach ki.

First, find the pulse that lacks clear Stomach ki (middle pulse) and tonify the source ki. Ask yourself how much ki has been lost from the ideal Stomach ki condition in the person. If there is a great deal of Stomach ki, the prognosis is good. Ask which position is the worst or most deviant from normal. The same amount of Stomach ki may be found in all positions but it may also be different in any single position. For example, deficient Stomach ki in the Liver means the Liver is not well. If the condition of all the organ declines at the same rate, a person will die peacefully and comfortably, but if only one or two deteriorate, death is difficult. The acupuncturist's duty is to equalize ki in the meridians and organs.

3. SEASONAL AND TIME PULSES

① (2/4—4/16)

A spring pulse is soggy-weak and long, and is also called minute-wiry. Minute-wiry means a soft wiry pulse that has Stomach ki. A healthy person should have this kind of pulse during the springtime. Spring is the time when yang ki arises from the power of blood. But, the yang ki is not yet full, and so it is called soggy-weak. However, at this time yang ki is hidden inside, and so it is called long. Such a pulse is also called wiry. But, it is not taut like the string of a newly strung bow, and so is expressed as minute-wiry.

② (5/5—7/19)

A summer pulse is said to arise with a sudden surge and then slowly taper off. Such a pulse is called a flooding pulse, but of course it is not a diseased flooding pulse. It can be thought of as a pulse that floats and is easily felt because it is a soft flooding pulse that has Stomach ki. The appearance of this kind of pulse during the summertime is a sign of health. Summer is the time when yang ki is prosperous. In the human body, as well, it is best to have an abundance of yang ki, and to release it along with sweat. That is why the pulse should be floating, and why it is called a flooding pulse.

③ In the Doyo/midsummer,

It is best to have a slow-moderate pulse during midsummer. A moderate pulse means that the Spleen and Stomach are working well and the production of ki and blood is active. A slow pulse means that summer yang ki has not retreated to the inside, and so there is also not much heat in the Heart. When this slow-moderate pulse accompanies any of the seasonal pulses, those pulses are soft pulses that have Stomach ki.

④ (8/7—10/19)

An autumn pulse is lightly deficient and floating, and so is likened to a hair (Fur). It is floating, but when pressure is applied there is no strength in the middle. However, it has Stomach ki, and so it is not too soft. This is a healthy pulse for the autumn. Autumn is the time everything gathers together. In the body, as well, yin ki becomes prosperous and yang ki hides inside. However, some yang ki remains in the *hyō* areas (surface) of the body as leftover traces of summer. That is why a floating pulse appears, but feels like a hair because the inside is empty.

⑤ (11/7—1/17)

A winter pulse is sinking, soggy, and slippery, and is likened to a stone. The term stone here conveys the meaning of sinking but does not refer to a diseased pulse. It is a soft sinking pulse that has Stomach ki. This is healthy pulse to have during the winter. Winter is the time when everything hides. In the body, as well, yin ki becomes abundant and yang ki hides inside. The sinking pulse indicates that yin ki is abundant. But, the pulse becomes slippery because yang ki increases inside. Of course, it is not a diseased slippery pulse, and so that is why it is a soggy pulse that is slippery.

- **A healthy person** would have each of the pulses described above during the appropriate season. Moreover, it is said that the clinician should aim at creating these kinds of pulses in the patient according to the season. Realistically speaking however, there are very few people who have such ideal pulses. Nevertheless, there are some who do have pulses that are close to these, such as those who, for example, show a floating pulse in the summer and a sinking pulse in the winter. In clinical usage, this concept is adopted as follows: People who show a sinking pulse in the summer, a flooding pulse in the winter, a wiry pulse in the autumn, and a floating pulse in the spring will likely have a slow recovery or a bad prognosis.

There are several influences from TIME upon the pulses.

There is a relationship of sun and earth and these have an influence on the body. Also, people adjust to their climates. Japanese people have lived on their islands for 2 thousand years but have created their own homeostasis by adapting their food and keep a fin house. There may be differences among people but they are essentially all the same. By knowing the charts, you will have a grasp of what is normal for seasons and daily or hourly changes. You will then be able to treat appropriately.

I. Six stage: The annual shifts influence the pulses as follows: (Nan Jing Chapter 7)

Jan. 14-3/5	Shao Yan	big, short, long, small
March 5	Yang Ming	floating, big, short
May 4	Tai Yang	Flooding, big, long'
July 3	Tai Yin	Tight, big, long
Sept. 1	Shao Yin	tight, minute, thin
Oct. 3	Jue Yin	sinking, short

II. 12 monthly pulse: Chinese Clock: Dates and Times (dates shift from year to year) (Somon Yin You Beturon)

Jan. 5-2/4	2 AM	Liver
Feb. 4	4 AM	Lung
Mar. 5	6 AM	Large Intestine
Apr. 5	8 AM	Stomach
May 5	10 AM	Spleen
Jun. 8	12 NOON	Heart
Jul. 7	2 PM	Small Intestine
Aug. 7	4 PM	Bladder
Sep. 8	6 PM	Kidney
Oct. 8	8 PM	Pericardium
Nov. 8	10 PM	Triple Warmer
Dec. 7	12 MN	Gall Bladder

III. Calm Pulses of the Five Zang Organs: According to chapter four of the *Nan Jing*,

- the **Lung shows a floating, choppy, and short** pulse,
- the **Heart shows a floating, large, and scattered** pulse,
- the **Spleen shows a moderate and large** pulse,
- the **Liver shows a wiry and long** pulse or a **sinking, firm, and long** pulse, and

the **Kidney shows a sinking, soggy, and excess** pulse or a **sinking, soggy, and slippery** pulse.

In general, it is said that these pulses appear when the five zang organs are healthy, and that these standards should be kept in mind when using the six-position pulse diagnosis. So, for example, the right distal position should show a floating, choppy, and short pulse, while the left distal position should show a floating, large, and scattered pulse. However, continuing to look at the right distal position, we must next face the question of how to distinguish between a healthy floating, choppy, and short pulse from a diseased pulse. If the pulse is floating, choppy, and short and has Stomach ki, then it is a healthy pulse and really should not be called floating, choppy, and short, but should rather be called by some other name. Therefore, some people mostly use these terms to describe pulses that appear when there is a zang organ disease. Compared to the proximal positions, it is best for the Heart and Lung pulses to be slightly floating, and compared to the distal positions, it is best for the Liver and Kidney pulses to be slightly sinking. That is why we press a little harder on proximal positions than the distal positions when performing pulse diagnosis.

IV. Seven death pulse. In the classics, it is said there are seven-death pulse qualities associated with each organ.

All these pulse qualities have in common the lack of a middle (stomach ki) pulse and no moderate, peaceful quality. Mr. K has found all these pulses in his experience. From their treating these patients who has such death pulse on entire pulse section is difficult. Mr. K recommends that you only treat those who will get better. Make referrals to other practitioners, or, if necessary treat them in an emergency and do not take money.

1. **Sparrow pecking feed.** When ki of the Liver weakens, or disappears the patient will have this pulse.
2. **Goldfish coming up for air.** This is a frail pulse and Heart ki is gone.
3. **Scattered & thread pulse.** A thick thread when fibers separate and become frayed is a loss of Spleen ki.
4. **Water dripping from a roof.** The "waiting for another drip" pulse is tardy and the Stomach ki is gone
5. **Water boiling.** Bubbles coming up from the bottom of a pan when the Lung ki is missing.
6. **Dragonfly flying** just above water. Just over the surface when Large Intestine ki is gone.
7. **Striking the stone pulse.** Feeling the pulse feels like poking a stone when the Kidney ki gone.

4. PATHOLOGY

If you are unable to restore the pulse something is not correct, either the point selection, pulse taking skill or the needling technique. Other techniques involve diagnostic techniques of looking, asking, meridian palpation, etc. Confirm the pulse with the other diagnostic techniques and connect the pulse condition and pathology in your head. As an OPI invades from surface to deeper, the pulse changes. With an OPI invasion, the pulses change to excess as yang disease. If there is also a lack of Stomach ki, the condition is more difficult. The condition of wind cold, which has reached the Yang Ming stage, will have a pulse, which is not as floating as the tai yang stage. There will be no tightness and it will seem more ambiguous than the tai yang stage. The OPI at the shao yin stage will have a thin and sinking pulse that is not tight.

- Tai Yang floating, fast, tight
- Yang Ming ambiguous
- Shao Yin thin and sinking

5. UNSTABLE PULSE CONDITION

The pulse position, which changes qualities as you feel the pulse, is the meridian, which is affected by the pathological factor.

6. PULSE ASSOCIATED WITH AN INDIVIDUAL: *Calm Pulses of the Individual*

We may think that there is almost no ideal normal pulse. It is more important to know our patient's daily normal pulse sooner. For an instance, if someone is very comfortable with Liver Deficient pulse in his everyday life, he may be with Kidney Deficiency, but feels sick with Lung Deficiency or Spleen Deficiency. Therefore, the goal of treatment in this case would be to bring about a return to a Liver deficiency condition.

Our late Hari teacher, Inoue Keiri said in his Classic of Difficulties seminar, that we can make an ideal pulse, but there is no case that people feel better, on the contrary, people feel worse. There are pulse qualities associated with individuals relating to age, sex, etc. Adults and children are different.

- Children's pulses are a little floating, softer, not as spread out as a flooding pulse and naturally faster.
- The elderly has pulses, which are harder, sinking and slower. Hardness among the elderly can be interpreted as stomach ki, which has diminished.
- There are differences between men and women. Men naturally have more yang pulses. A yang pulse is more floating, excess, fast and slippery.
- People who work outdoors have more yang pulses than people who work indoors.
- More physically active people have more yang pulses.
- A pregnant woman's pulse is faster, slightly slippery and more excess than normal.
- **Obesity and skinny person's pulse:** An obesity person's pulse tends to be Sinking and hard to feel and a thin person's pulse tends to be Floating and easy to feel it. So, we should take it granted. An obesity person's entire pulse tends to be sinking. This Sinking pulse indicates the constitution of obesity people. In fact, there is Water toxin or Blood stagnation. Therefore, when we treat these people with chronic disease or malfunction of the body, we may consider as Sinking pulse and decide the Pattern "Sho". When it is an acute case, a pulse looks Sinking but it could be more Floating pulse for that person. So, we should take it as a consideration.
- **Slender people have more yang pulses** than overweight people. There are skinny people and pulse tends to be floating more among men who does physical labor or exercise. This is also a clue as a constitution. Originally this type of person tends to be Blood deficiency. Therefore, when we treat these people with chronic disease or malfunction of the body, we may use this Floating pulse in order to decide a Pattern (*SHO*). However, when it is an acute case and showing Cold, its pulse could be Floating. In this case, we should be careful not to misdiagnose as Yang Excess Pattern, and pay attention to Deficiency-Excess of the pulse.

7. VARYING QUALITIES IN ONE POSITION

Different levels of a pulse position will present different qualities. The depths vary from skin to bone. If the pathology is found in the deep levels, the patient will not heal with only one treatment. You must know how to find the middle pulse. Find the depth where the pulse is equally strong. If there is no middle pulse, the patient may die. A pulse may have little yang or yin width and they may be difficult to distinguish.

THE SHAPE and QUALITY of PULSE and PATHOLOGY

When we discuss about the shape and quality (pulse quality), we followed the categorization of “Pulse Classic”. Regarding to those pulses; Prison pulse, Long pulse, Short pulse, Big pulse, Small pulse, and Hurried pulse, that appeared later period, we used “Gatherings from Eminent Acupuncturists (*Jiu Ju Zhen Ying*)” and “*Zoho myakuron koketsu*” as a reference. First, we explained about what “Pulse Classic” said about the shape and quality. Then we commented on pathology with consulting other books. Last, we referred the insertion techniques that Sodo Okabe once wrote for “*Tohoigakushi*”.

1. Empty / Deficient Pulse

Quality: It is Slow, Big and Soft. A pulse that disappears under the fingers with a heavy pressure.

Pathology: We want you to pay attention to descriptions of Deficient pulse in “Pulse Classic”. This is not just weak pulse, nor Deficient pulse in Six basic pulses. It is very specific. This pulse appears when Blood or Body Fluids are deficient due to exhaustion. Or in the old book says that it happens when Summer Heat injures Meridians. Descriptions of symptoms are easy to get frightened and uneasy. From this fact, we can say that Deficient pulse appears mainly due to deficiency of body fluids, and its root is Kidney Deficiency.

Needling: Tonification of body fluids that is to tonify Water point in Yin Meridian and Earth point in Yang Meridian.

2. Full / Excess Pulse

Quality: a pulse that is felt widely connected above and below, and felt a little strong. When you press this pulse, it feels like pulse gathering under the fingers and knotting. Excess pulse is not necessarily strong as to push the fingers back. When it does not disappear with a heavy pressure touch but it gets more knotted and hard, we take as Excess pulse.

Pathology: When Heat occurs due to external pathogen, and when it stagnates in Yang Meridian or Fu organs, it becomes Excess. When Blood Stasis stagnates, it becomes Excess. When it was affected by the Heat that happens from various Heat pattern, it becomes Excess.

Needling: For Yang Meridian Heat, it should be quick insertion quick withdrawing, and for Yin Meridian Heat, apply deep needling.

3. Floating Pulse

Quality: a pulse that is felt well with a light pressure touch and disappears with a heavy pressure touch.

Pathology: If it is floating and with strength, it is due to external evil. When Ki gathers on the surface (Yang Meridians) it becomes Floating. The reason that Yang Ki gathers on the exterior surface is due to the fever by those external evils like Cold Evil and Wind. If it is Floating and with no strength, it is due to Yin deficiency. When Blood and Body Fluids is scarce because of exhaustion, Deficient Heat occurs. Because of that heat, the pulse becomes Floating. It appears in case of Liver Deficient Heat pattern. When Triple warmer Original Ki is almost gone, it becomes Floating pulse and this case the pulse is significantly deficient. When both Distal pulses are Floating, it is either Yang Excess or Yang Deficiency. If both sides of Proximal and Middle pulses are Floating, Yin (Blood or Body Fluids) of that position is deficient. During the fall, if the pulse shows Floating that is inclined to neither Deficient-Excess nor Slow-Rapid, it is a healthy pulse.

Needling: If it's Floating-Rapid with strength, a dispersion technique with needle quickly in and out should be applied.

If it's Floating-Rapid without strength, a tonification with shallow insertion technique should be applied. If it's

only Floating and no strength, retain the needle and tonify.

4. Sinking Pulse

Quality: a pulse that is not felt with a light pressure touch and felt very clear with a heavy pressure touch.

Pathology: If the pulse is Sinking and with strength, there is a Blood Stagnation (Liver Excess). This tends to appear on the left middle pulse. If Sinking with strength pulse shows in the other positions, there are Heat in that corresponding organs. If the pulse is Sinking without strength, there is Water Toxin such as Phlegm, or Cold-Cool (Cold pattern). This pulse tends to appear in each organ's Cold pattern. During the winter, if the pulse shows Sinking that is inclined to neither Deficient-Excess nor Slow-Rapid, it is a healthy pulse.

Needling: If it's Sinking with strength, Yang should be tonified and Yin should be dispersed. If it's Sinking without strength, retain the needle or use warm needle technique in the lower abdomen area.

5. Slow Pulse

Quality: a very slow pulse that pulsates three times or less in one breath.

Pathology: If it is Slow and with strength, there is a chronic Cold or pain due to Dampness. If it is Slow without strength, either Blood or Body Fluids is deficient and cold. It appears when it is Kidney Deficiency Cold pattern.

Needling: Tonification for a longer time should be applied. If there is strength, find a strong position and disperse there a little.

6. Rapid / Fast Pulse

Quality: a pulse that pulsates 6 or 7 times in one breath. We judge the Slow-Rapid quality as pulsing according to a patient's own breath. If a practitioner is breathing correctly, we can use it.

Pathology: The pulse becomes Rapid with strength when there is an acute Heat disease, when there is an internal Heat due to Liver Excess Heat, and when there is Heat in Yang Meridians or Fu organs. When Body Fluids is Deficient and a lot of Deficient Heat exists, when Yang Ki becomes less due to mistreatment, and when a patient has a boil, the pulse becomes Rapid without strength.

Needling: If it's Rapid with strength, disperse a position that has Excess. If it's Rapid without strength, it should be only a tonification.

7. Slippery Pulse

Quality: Slippery pulse is slippery and rolling. It is like Rapid pulse. It was named after the shape and it does incline to neither Floating-Sinking, Slow-Rapid, nor Deficient-Excess. It tends to appear together with Rapid pulse or Excess pulse.

Pathology: It shows up when Yang Ki is trapped and becomes Internal Heat due to Phlegm and Food Stagnation, and Heat influenced to Blood. Or it shows up to those people who have a lot of Blood as a constitution. Now these days, we see a lot among those people with high blood pressure. If a patient's blood pressure is not high, we think that Heat is trapped somewhere else.

Needling: Tonify Yin first then disperse a position with Heat for a little longer.

8. Choppy / Hesitant Pulse

Quality: a pulse that is Thin and Slow. Pulsing is not smooth. Pulsing feels like tripping. It also has a feeling of Scattering, and sometimes irregular pulsing. This pulse is an opposite of Slippery pulse. This also named after its shape.

Pathology: It shows up when Ki is deficient and stagnated, or when Ki started to get deficient, so Blood does not flow

and started to form *Oketsu* (Blood Stasis). If the right Distal is Hesitant, then it is Ki deficiency, and if the left Middle is Hesitant, then it is Liver Excess.

Needling: We should tonify Qi and disperse if there is Blood stagnation.

8. Wiry Pulse

Quality: a pulse that is not felt with a light pressure touch and is felt like bowstring with a heavy pressure touch. Wiry pulse said to belong to Seven Superficial pulses, because it means it has something to do with Heat. It should be felt even with a heavy pressure touch considering from the pulse shape.

Pathology: This pulse appears because there is some Heat in somewhere. When Blood in muscle is depleted (Liver Deficiency), and becomes muscle pain or arthritis pain, the pulse becomes Wiry. Speaking of internal disease, it shows up when there is Spleen Deficiency and Liver Excess Heat. If there is Wiry without strength pulse in somewhere in Six-positions, we should consider that Blood of that meridian is deficient and Deficient Heat has occurred. If it is Wiry with strength, then it must be Heat stagnating in Zang-fu organs of that position.

Needling: We should Tonify Yin and disperse if it's necessary.

10. Tight Pulse

Quality: a pulse that is like as if one is touching tightly tied rope. It is tense. The sensation that fingers feel is rough, so it is called as if one is touching a rope.

Pathology: It is a pulse that shows up when there is an acute Cold-Coolness, pain, or boils and swellings. If it is a internal disease with pain, and showing Tight pulse, we should be very cautious. If Tight pulse appears in any of Six-position, we think that Stomach Ki of Zang-fu organ of that position is scarce.

Needling: We tonify both Yin and Yang to supplement Yang Ki for taking off Tight pulse. Or we can tonify Spleen and Stomach to supplement Stomach Ki. Even with these treatment does not take Tight pulse off, disperse Excess if there is any.

11. Hollow Pulse

Quality: This pulse is felt Floating, large and soft. It is felt Hollow in the center and can be felt outside with a heavy pressure touch. They say it is as if one pressing green onion (scallion).

Pathology: It is Floating pulse and one of deficient pulse. It does not have a core in the center and there is no strength. This happens with bleeding like bloody stool or bloody urine. Or blood gets deficient because of other reason, and Hollow pulse shows up in any of Six-position, we think that Blood in that position is depleted.

Needling: We tonify greatly, but mainly we tonify Yin Ki.

12. Flooding Pulse

Quality: a pulse that is felt quite large and thick with a light pressure touch. It is Floating pulse and a part of Excess pulse. During summer if the pulse appears to be not too strong Flooding pulse, it is healthy. Later days, it is also called Big pulse.

Pathology: This is a pulse that appears when Yang Meridian has more Heat, or when the disease is strong. Of course, it is Heat Pattern and Excess pattern. The cause is either from external pathogen or from Yin Deficiency.

Needling: Disperse the position where Heat exists. Occasionally we use bloodletting.

13. Hidden Pulse

Quality: a pulse that is felt with quite a heavy pressure almost until you feel the bone. It belongs to Sinking pulse.

Pathology: This pulse appears when Ki and Blood become extremely deficient due to over-thinking, when a patient has

chronic Cold pattern (possibly Dampness, too), or when a patient has a nodule (Accumulative stagnation “*Sekiju*”) like Oketsu in Yin Meridian or Zang organs.

Needling: Tonify with a deep needling. Retaining needle is the best.

14. Leather Pulse

Quality: This pulse cannot be felt unless you apply a heavy pressure like Sinking or Hidden pulse. At the position where you applied a heavy pressure, the pulse is Excess, Big, and Long which is oversized from each Distal, Middle, and Proximal position. And, it is a slightly Wiry pulse. It belongs to Sinking and Excess. However, this is not a real Excess. It feels just hard because Body Fluids became deficient and dried out applying a further pressure, you will find it deficient in the bottom.

Pathology: This is a pulse that appears when Body Fluids becomes insufficient and more Heat is inside, or when Ki and Blood stagnate due to Ki Binding. When there is Kidney Deficiency Heat pattern, the left Middle sometimes shows Leather pulse.

Needling: Tonify Yin Meridians.

15. Minute Pulse

Quality: It is extremely thin and soft. It can be felt or sometimes not. It is just like a web, and it disappears with a pressure.

Pathology: This is one of a Deficient pulse. It appears when Ki and Blood is extremely deficient, or Ki and Blood is not produced in the Middle Warmer. Either way it should be treated as Cold pattern.

Needling: Tonify both Yin and Yang quite a long time with thinner needles and less points.

16. Thin Pulse

Quality: It is a little bigger than Minute pulse and thin. It is not like Minute pulse that can be felt or sometimes not.

Pathology: This pulse appears when Ki and Blood both are deficient, and the Stomach Ki becomes scarce. It belongs to Deficient pulse and it appears to each Cold pattern.

Needling: Tonify both Yin and Yang lightly and slowly.

17. Soft / Soggy Pulse

Quality: This pulse is floating and thin. It belongs to Floating and Deficient pulse. Some book says that Soft as Soggy, but it means the same.

Pathology: It appears when Yang Ki of Lower Warmer becomes deficient and both Yin and Yang becomes deficient. Especially it appears when there is Kidney Deficiency Cold pattern.

Needling: Tonify both Yin and Yang of Kidney Meridian. Tonify lightly and long.

18. Weak Pulse

Quality: It is extremely soft, Sinking and Thin. It feels like it is going to disappear with a heavy pressure. It belongs to Sinking and Deficient pulse.

Pathology: It appears when both Ki and Blood become deficient. Especially when Blood becomes Deficient and Yang Ki disappears. It often shows when there is Liver Deficiency Cold pattern.

Needling: Tonify both Yin and Yang. It is better to use just a touch method.

19. Scattered Pulse

Quality: It is a pulse scattering and has no unity. With a light pressure touch you can feel pulsing but can't recognize a shape of an artery. Of course, with a heavy pressure touch you can't feel a pulse.

Pathology: It is a condition that Ki is gathering to the surface because Blood is becoming deficient. Moreover, Ki is also

about to disappear. If this pulse is going to be continued, a prognosis is bad. It is a Kidney Deficiency and Yang Ki of Three Warmer is deficient.

Needling: Tonify Kidney firmly and tonify Yang Ki of Three Warmer.

20. Moderate Pulse

Quality: It is slow and calm Pulse but a little faster than Slow pulse.

Pathology: The sick Moderate pulse appears when both Ki and Blood are deficient and the circulation is sluggish, or when Yang Ki is deficient. If a person is healthy and has a Moderate pulse, it is said to have a Full Stomach Ki.

Needling: Tonify both Pericardium and Spleen Meridian to activate Stomach Ki.

21. Hasty Pulse

Quality: Pulsing is rapid and sometimes it stops. It is an irregular pulse.

Pathology: It appears when Blood become insufficient and pulse becomes Rapid because Ki wants to circulate fast and make Blood normal. But there are not enough Blood so sometimes it becomes irregular. It tends to appear when there is a Kidney Deficiency Heat or Liver Deficiency Heat, and became Heart Heat or Lung Heat.

Needling: Tonify Kidney Fire point and Liver Metal point, and both Lung and Heart Meridians' Fire points.

22. Knotted Pulse

Quality: It is a slow pulsing and sometimes becomes irregular.

Pathology: It appears when both Accumulation or Binding are present and Yin Ki becomes prosperous, then the circulation of Ki and Blood becomes poor. It tends to appear when there is Spleen Deficiency-Liver Excess or Lung Deficiency-Liver Excess.

Needling: Tonify both Yin and Yang first, and then disperse Excess portion.

23. Intermittent Pulse

Quality: Pulsing stops without coordination to the rhythm of the pulse, and it starts all over the sudden. It is a quite irregular pulse.

Pathology: It appears when Ki, Blood and Body Fluids of the Zang organs are deficient, and at the same time Source Ki of Triple Warmer is about diminish.

Needling: This is a one of death pulses, so basically no treatment should be applied.

24. Moving Pulse

Quality: It is a pulse shaped like a round thing rolling only on Middle position.

Pathology: It appears when a person becomes Blood Deficiency due to either Exhaustion, Bloody stool, or female irregular bleeding

Needling: Treat as a Kidney Deficiency and Heat Pattern.

25. Prison Pulse

Quality: Pulse is solid and has strength with a heavy pressure touch.

Pathology: According to "Gatherings from Eminent Acupuncturists", It says It is Interior Excess and Exterior Deficient. Ki in the chest becomes hasty. Taxation becomes extreme. Most of the time a person does not have Stomach Ki, therefore we say extremely dangerous pulse. And there are sharp pains between bones. And Ki goes out and stay in Exterior."

Needling: Treat as Liver Deficiency or Kidney Deficiency Cold Pattern, and most of the time Yin and Yang are tonified.

Addition - In the later time Leather Pulse said to be a Prison Pulse. There may be confusion about this. Here we

posted a line from “Gatherings from Eminent Acupuncturists”. It says the Leather pulse is “Sinking, Hidden, Excess, and Big, so it feels like as if touching a drum.” On the other hand, in “*Senkin yokuhou*” it says that the variation of Leather pulse is Prison pulse.

26. Long Pulse

Quality: Usually each pulse position has its own length for the individual person, and normal pulse should be felt in each Distal, Middle and Proximal position. Long pulse is overly spread to neighbor positions. In “Gatherings from Eminent Acupuncturists” it says “It is under the finger and over passed.”

Pathology: Ki and Blood are abundant, Heat is stagnated inside, and Triple Warmer is heated, and a patient has feeling of fever all over the body.

Needling: Most of the case it is a Spleen Deficiency and Stomach Excess Heat, so disperse Triple Warmer Meridian.

27. Short Pulse

Quality: It is an opposite pulse of Long pulse. Its length in each position is insufficient. For example, it pulsate small in Middle position and feels like apart from Proximal or Distal pulse. So it is said that it is not in the heads but sits in the middle.

Pathology: It appears when Ki is Deficient. And, it appears when Blood becomes stagnant due to Ki Deficiency and more Heat shows in the Yin Meridian. But the appearance of the symptoms is mainly Ki deficiency. It also appears when the food a patient ate is not digested.

Needling: It shows up when there is Spleen Deficiency or Lung deficiency. Lightly tonify.

28. Big Pulse

Quality: It is Floating and Flood by a light pressure touch, and Big with no strength by heavy pressure touch. So, this is a kind of a Flood Pulse, but the difference is when you apply a heavy pressure touch, there is no strength.

Pathology: It appears when Blood and Body Fluids is deficient and becomes Yin deficient, so Ki is gathering more in Yang.

Needling: It is a Yin Deficient Pattern, therefore tonify Yin Meridian well. There is little case to disperse Yang Meridian.

29. Small Pulse

Quality: It is a pulse felt small by either a light pressure or a heavy pressure.

Pathology: It appears when both Ki and Blood are deficient.

Needling: Tonify both Yin and Yang.

30. Hurried / Rapid Pulse

Quality: It is a pulse faster than Rapid Pulse.

Pathology: It appears when there is more Heat. If it is Hurried pulse with mainly Yang Meridian Heat, it will be treatable. If it is Zang organ Heat with Hurried pulse, it is hard to treat.

Needling: Tonify Yin Meridian and disperse Yang Meridian. If it is a Zang organ Heat, consider taking out the Heat by tonifying Yin Meridian.