

Five season, Five Taste, and Pulse quality

(1) Spring – Liver -- Fair-Wiry pulse

The power to grow and produce

Spring is the time when the Liver ki works to gather the blood and initiate generation or creation.

Sourness and Wood channel and point: In chapter 10 of the *Su Wen* it says, “The Liver desires sourness.” Sourness has the functional property of gathering.

(2) Summer – Heart-- Hook pulse

yang ki the function of growth

During the summer, the Heart heat becomes vigorous, which greatly aids in growth. At the same time the Heart heat is kept in check by the functioning of the lesser yin ki.

Bitterness and Fire channel and point: “The Heart desires bitterness.” Bitterness has the functional property of firming after moving the heat.

(3) Doyō, Mid-summer – Spleen Slow and Moderate

during the doyō, after each of the other four zang organs performs their roles in their respective seasons, the Spleen becomes active and produces ki, blood, and fluids to distribute to the four zang organs. It is also said that the Spleen is located in the center because of its central importance.

Sweetness and earth channel and point:

“The Spleen desires sweetness,”

Sweetness has the functional property of relaxation, and seems to encompass functions such as softening hardened things, relaxing tension, and moistening dry things.

(4) Autumn – Lung --Deficient and Floating Hair/Furry

the hair and skin shrivel because of the effects of the withering ki of autumn.

The Lung itself desires the functional property of gathering.

The autumn (or evening within a single day) is the time when everything gathers.

Pungent and Metal channel and point:

“The Lung desires pungent/spiciness.” This means that eating pungent or spicy food

improves the circulation and release of ki.

In terms of yin and yang, the Lung should be considered as having an abundance of yin ki and functioning to gather, and the Lung channel considered as circulating ki and releasing it.

(5) Winter – Kidney Sinking-Soggy-Slippery

“The Kidney is the water organ and governs the fluids.” The Kidney has an abundance of fluids. Since the Kidney desires firmness, essential Kidney ki and fluids firm it. Essential ki and fluids have a yin function. Yin ki has the nature to firm things. That is why it says in chapter 22 of the *Su Wen* that, “the Kidney desires firmness.”

The yang ki of the life gate works to prevent the fluids from becoming overly plentiful.

Saltiness and Water channel and point: “The Kidney desires saltiness.” Saltiness has the functional property of softening.

the Kidney requires saltiness so that it does not become too firm with fluids.

The fluids are yin. If they increase more than necessary the body becomes chilled. Therefore, the saltiness works to maintain proper levels of fluids. This function is the same as that of the yang ki of the life gate. On the other hand, the lesser yin channel, which is connected to the Kidney, tries to control heat and increase yin ki and the fluids, which firm the Kidney. This is the opposite function of the yang ki of the life gate. When the functions of yin ki and yang ki harmonize, the Kidney performs its proper physiological role.

The Six basic Pulse quality

① The Floating Basic Pulse

Pathology:

a floating and excess pulse is caused by external pathogenic influences

a floating and deficient pulse is caused by yin deficiency (i.e. blood or fluid deficiency).

Tonification & Dispersion:

Principally tonify with shallow insertion.

floating and excess, the yang channels could be dispersed after tonifying (**mother or horary point**) the yin channels.

floating and deficient, either only tonify (**Water or Metal**) 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 (**Earth, Source**) with shallow insertion. The yin channels can be dispersed (**Water, Accumulation**) 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 retaining needles with slow insertion. 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 (**Earth, Source**) 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 insertion and removal needling technique in order to reduce the heat. However, focus on tonification if the pulse is rapid and deficient.

Additional Pulse on the six basic

Slippery Pulse

Quality: A slippery pulse is smooth and seems to roll along nicely. It resembles a rapid pulse. The name slippery was used to invoke the image of traffic flowing along smoothly, in the sense of gliding. It does not incline toward floating or sinking, slow or fast, nor deficient or excess. However, it is more likely than not to appear along with a rapid pulse or an excess pulse.

Pathology: A slippery pulse appears when the influence of heat reaches all the way to the blood, the heat being produced when yang ki becomes bottled up due to mucus and food trapped in the stomach. Or, it is also common in people who naturally have a lot of blood. These days it is frequently seen among people with hypertension. If the patient does not have high blood pressure, it should be considered that heat is trapped somewhere in the body.

Needling: After tonifying yin, apply a slightly long dispersion in the area that has the heat.

Choppy /Hesitant Pulse

Quality: A choppy pulse is thin and slow. The pulsation is not smooth, and seems to stumble along.

It can also feel scattered, or sometimes interrupted. The choppy pulse is opposite the slippery pulse. Here as well, the word choppy was used to invoke the image of difficulty in the flow of traffic.

Pathology: A choppy pulse appears when there is a deficiency and stagnation of ki, or when there is blood stasis due to ki deficiency. Ki deficiency is common when there is a choppy pulse in the right distal position, and Liver excess is common when there is a choppy pulse in the left middle position.

Needling: Tonify ki, and give dispersion if there is any blood stagnation.

Tight Pulse

Quality: A tight pulse is very tense and feels like a tautly pulled straw rope. The analogy of a straw rope is used because the sensation on the finger is somewhat rough.

Pathology: A tight pulse appears when there is a sudden and severe invasion of frigidity, pain, or boils.

Caution should be taken if the patient shows a tight pulse with an internal illness and pain. A tight pulse in one of the six pulse positions should be considered as an indication that there is a lack of Stomach ki in the organ that corresponds to that position.

Needling: Tonify both yin and yang, and remove the tight pulse by increasing yang ki, or by

increasing Stomach ki through tonification of the Spleen and Stomach. If this does not remove the tight pulse, disperse the excess if there is any.

Soft Pulse

Quality: A soft pulse is floating and slender. It is a pulse quality that is included in the floating and deficient basic pulses. Some books use the term soggy pulse (*Nan Myaku* 濡脉) instead of soft pulse, but these terms are equivalent.

Pathology: A soft pulse appears when both yin and yang are deficient due to a deficiency of the yang ki of the lower warmer. It is especially seen frequently when there is a Kidney deficiency cold pattern.

Needling: Gently tonify both yin and yang of the Kidney channel for a long time.

Large Pulse

Quality: A large pulse is floating and flooding at the superficial level, and large with no strength at the deep level. So, it is a kind of flooding pulse, but the unique characteristic is that it has no strength at the deep level.

Pathology: A large pulse appears when a lot of ki has gathered in the yang areas of the body due to yin deficiency (i.e. blood and fluid deficiency).

Needling: Give the yin channels a good tonification, since the large pulse indicates a yin deficiency pattern. It is not common to disperse the yang channels.

Small Pulse

Quality: A small pulse feels small at both the superficial and deep levels.

Pathology: A small pulse appears when both ki and blood are deficient.

Needling: Tonify both yin and yang.