INTERNAL CANON OF THE
YELLOW EMPEROR
TCM DIAGNOSIS METHODS

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Text reading

- S17 – Discussion on the Essentials of Pulse
- S18 – Discussion on the Pulse Conditions of Healthy People
- S49L – Five Colors
- S7 – Separate Discussion on Yin and Yang
- S13 – Discussion on Shifting the Essence and Changing Qi
- S15 – Discussion on the Jade Inscription
- S20L – Five Kinds of Pathogenic
- S74L – Discussion on Diagnosis of Disease Through Examination of the Cubital Skin
The concepts of diagnosis methods

- TCM diagnosis covers the principles and method to collect symptoms and signs that are significant for diagnosis.
- Neijing covers the four aspects of diagnosis: observation, auscultation, inquiry, inspection, palpation, etc.
- Observation stresses the color of face and physical shape.
- Palpation focuses on pulse feeling.
- The diagnosis is based on the comprehensive information collected from all aspects.

S17 – Discussion on the Essentials of Pulse

- Focus on the technique of pulse feeling.
- Combine pulse with observation, especially eyes inspection.
- The best time for diagnosis is the morning.
- The Yin Qi and Yang Qi are stable and quiet.
- Eating also affects the pulse.
- Eyes and face inspection on color and spirit can combine with the pulse for comparison.
The four diagnostic methods

- Observation – spirit and color, tongue coating
- Auscultation and Inquiry – strength of voice, smell
- Inspection – symptoms and history (medical, personal, etc.)
- Palpation – pulse, chest
- Should not stress pulse feeling only
- The information collected from different channels need to be compared

Diagnosis and Prognosis

- The vessels hold the blood, blood holds the Qi and spirit
- Wei Qi outside with the vessels, Ying Qi inside with the blood
- If pulse exceeds the position, it implies Qi is sufficient; otherwise, it implies illness
- The upper part (cun) reflects symptoms in head and face; the lower part (Chi) reflects symptoms in the abdomen
- Dai means deficiency of the organ Qi
- Thin implies Qi and blood stagnation
- Small means Qi deficiency and chest pain
- Weak like a broken string means danger

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**Inspection of the internal essence**

- Eyes reflects the spirit of the internal organs
- The color of the face stress brightness and withholding
- If the color loses brightness and seems exposing, it means the essence of the organs is exposing – danger
- Strength of voice reflects the internal essence
- Body fluid should be properly withheld

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**Withholding position of various essence**

- Head is the house of eyes (jingming) – spirit
- Back is the house of chest – functions of the heart and the lung
- Knees are the house of sinews – liver and sinews
- Bone is house of marrow – essence of kidney
- The five Zang-organs is the center of diagnosis

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Pulse diagnosis

- The principle is to differentiate Yin and Yang.
- The relation of the five elements should be also focused.
- The diagnosis forms the basis for treatment, to tonify or to reduce.
- The treatment should be on time.

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Pulse patterns in different seasons

- The pulse should be in accordance with the season.
- If the pulse and the Qi of the time are inconsistent, it means disorders.
  - Excessive means the pathogen Qi.
  - Deficient means the Qi and blood deficient.
- Guan Ge: the condition that the discrepancy of Yin and Yang, shown by that the pulse cannot accord with the level of Yin and Yang.

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Pulse patterns in different seasons

"There is Dao (principle) in taking pulse. [That is] to be solemn and quiet. In spring, the pulse is floating just like fish swimming in water; in summer, the pulse is superficial, appearing full and floating just like all the things flourishing. [In summer], in autumn, the pulse is beating beneath the skin just like the insects going into hiding; in winter, the pulse is near the bone just like animals in hibernation and Junzi (a man of moral character) living in seclusion. Thus, it is said that (the pulse)

- For pulse feeling, it should be performed in a quiet environment and the patient is relaxed
- For a complete assessment, the pulse diagnosis should last at least 50 beats
- The doctor should concentrate on the pulse
- Spring: the pulse is smooth as flowing small beads – reflect sufficient Qi and blood
- Summer: pulse is rough like touching an angle – reflect over-sufficient of Qi and blood
- Autumn: pulse is flat like touching a clean surface – reflect a declining and withholding tendency of Qi and blood
- Winter: pulse is deep and need pressing to feel it – reflect the withhold of Qi and blood inside the body

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Comparison of face color and pulse

17, 19 Qibo answered, "What a detailed question [Your Majesty] have asked! [Generally speaking,] small pulse and normal complexion indicate that the disease is new while normal pulse and abnormal complexion indicate that the disease is old; abnormal pulse and normal complexion indicate that the disease is new. The appearance of both the Liver-Pulse and Kidney-Pulse with blackish and reddish complexion indicates that the disease is caused by traumatic injury with or without bleeding, just like being attacked by Shi (Dampness) or water."

- To assess the complication of new and old disease, we should compare the complexion and the pulse
- If change exists in pulse but the color is unchanged, the pathogen rest in the meridian not inside the organs – mild and new problem
- If the changes exists in the color but the pulse does not change – old and severe problem
- Pulse reflects the meridian, color reflects the internal organs

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Pulse combined with color

disease is new. The appearance of both the Liver-Pulse and Kidney-Pulse with blackish and reddish complexion indicates that the disease is caused by traumatic injury with or without bleeding, just like being attacked by Shi (Dampness) or water. ”

- Liver pulse (string) and kidney pulse (deep) – string and deep
- Complexion of reddish and dark
- Indication of trauma
- If no bleeding but swelling like water inside – should know that is hematoma

Diagnosis of the medial ulnar

- From thenar to point Chize LU-5
- Comparable to the pulse locations in Nejing
- Mainly reflect the condition of the hypochondria
S18 – Discussion on the Pulse Conditions of Healthy People

Mainly focus on the pulse of normal person

As reference to discriminate different types of abnormal pulse

Pulse frequency with breath by the doctor

Taking doctor’s breath as reference

Exhaustion with two beats

Inhalation with two beats

Taixi – the long pause between two breath circles – one beat

In total five beats within one breath circle

Qi deficiency (Shaoqi): two breaths in a circle

Warm (febrile) disease: 6+1 (Taixi) + hot ulnar

Wind disease: 6+1 + floating pulse

Bi syndrome: 6+1 + stringent pulse

Expected death: over 10, strong pathogen and weak essential Qi

No pulse: death

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Pulse with stomach Qi

“The Changqi\(^{161}\) (Normal-Qi) of healthy people comes from the stomach and the stomach is the Changqi (Normal-Qi) of healthy people. The loss of Wei qi (Stomach-Qi) is called Ni (adverseness or unfavorable) which may lead to death.”

- Pulse should come with the stomach Qi
- Pulse without stomach Qi has bad prognosis
- The stomach Qi has the following patterns:
  - Soft and smooth
  - Beats evenly and regularly
  - Vary based on seasons

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Pulse in different seasons

- In spring, the pulse has mild string
- Excessive string without stomach Qi is dangerous
- Floating pulse with stomach Qi is normal in autumn, over floating will be ill in autumn
- In summer, the pulse should be flooding with stomach Qi, excessive flooding will have heart disease (Bi) in winter, over-excessive will be sick immediately

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Pulse in different seasons

In summer, the pulse is smooth — spleen
Dai pulse: regular interruption after several beats — loss of Organ Qi
— the genuine pulse of spleen

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In autumn, the pulse is floating and smooth
Overfloating is the genuine pulse of lung
Floating + string is liver intervenes lung — coughing with blood
The Qi of lung ascends above to run the Ying Qi and Wei Qi
In winter, the pulse is deep with strength
Over-deep means genuine pulse of kidney

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Summary

- Normal pulse is featured by stomach Qi.
- Any pulse with stomach Qi means good prognosis, without stomach Qi means bad prognosis.
- Stomach Qi is the basis of pulse Qi.
- Pulse originates from the nutrition Qi.
- Pulse is propelled by the lung Qi.
- Stomach Qi runs the genuine Qi organs through the vessels.
- Character of stomach Qi: feeling of balanced, not going to an extreme feeling.

Xuli diagnosis

- Asthma with rough feeling on Xuli indicates internal and severe disease.
- Irregular beating with rough feeling indicates internal massive such as blood stagnation.
- No beating of Xuli means death.
- Rapid and floating beating indicates blood loss and Qi exhaustion.

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Edema, jaundice, pregnancy

- Edema: rapid pulse beating, cervical pulsation, asthma, coughing, eyelid swelling -- Pulmonary heart disease
- Jaundice: yellowish urine and fatigue -- internal damp-heat
- Weidan: hungry soon after eating -- excessive stomach heat consumes the food
- Pregnancy: forcefully beating of the Shaoyin-heat meridian with smooth and rapid feeling

Reversed indication

- Edematous with time: spring-string, summer-floating, autumn-floating, winter-deep
- Absence of the above patterns means reversed pulse
- Spring & summer: inadequate beating -- absence of Qi and blood
- Autumn & winter: contradictory to the withhold tendency

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Pulse patterns for pregnancy

- Strong beat on the Shaoyin (heart) meridian
- Strong beat on the left Cunkou position LU-9
- Strong beat on both Cunkou positions LU-9
- Strong beat on both sides of the index fringer
- Strong beat on KI-3 (Taixi)
- An indication of floating Qi and blood in meridians

S49L – Five Colors

49.2 Huangdi said, “The Mingtang (Bright Palace) refers to the nose. Que refers to the region between the eyebrows, Ting refers to the forehead, Fan refers to the lateral side of the cheek, and Pie refers to the tragus. These regions should be regularly featured and broad and can be clearly seen ten steps away. People with such an appearance will live for one hundred years."

49.4 Huangdi said, “The bone of the apex of the nose is high and straight. The regions for examining the Five Zang-Organs [are located on] the middle of the nose while the regions for examining the Six Fu-Organs [are located at] both sides of the nose. The regions for examining the head and face [are located in] the region between the eyebrows and the forehead. The regions for examining the heart [are located in] the lower region of the face. If the Five Zang-Organs are situated normally in the chest, the normal colors will appear, there will be no mottled complexion and the nose will be lustreless and clear. What is difficult to differentiate the five sensory organs?"

- Discussion on differentiate the problems of the five organs by the five colors
Face diagnosis

- Centered by the nose — contains lung, heart, liver, stomach and spleen
- A metaphor of a castle centered by the heart

Color and complexion

- The normal color of organs should be shown on face — bright and smooth
- Feeling of deep means internal pathogens
- Wind: yellow and red
- Green and black: pain — blood stagnation
- Pale: coldness
- Greasy: pus maturation
- Reddish and greasy: pus and blood
complications

- Severe pain accompanied by spasm
- Coldness accompanied by skin numbness
- Observing the colors on the face can judge disease location, and prognosis
- The doctor should concentrate on the observation

Summary of different disease mechanism

- The requirements for diagnosis
- Comprehensive clinical information collection
- Focus on pulse diagnosis
- Focus on inspection of face and color
- Focus on communications