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# The 5 HORSE TYPES

Traditional Chinese Medicine for Training and Caring for Every Horse



"The best preventive health care system that I know." —INGRID KLIMKE

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# THE SPLEEN-*Pi* TYPE 脾型马

## PSYCHE

The Spleen-*Pi* Type is associated with the element earth, the summer season, and the stomach and spleen.

The Spleen-*Pi* Type is an excellent partner for a fearful rider. He is brave, even-tempered, and doesn't get upset easily. When a rider is insecure, this horse just takes that in stride. He won't get irritated like the *Gan* Type, or anxious like the *Shen*

Type. Instead, the *Pi* Type continues on his way, just the same. He likes to stand still and look around at his environment. A *Pi* Type can also learn to perform, but he prefers a peaceful life, without much effort. His real calling in life is eating! His appetite is significant; therefore, he tends to be an easy keeper who quickly becomes overweight.

The Spleen-*Pi* Type is a friendly, likeable horse who can give a nervous rider a sense of security and much enjoyment.



*The Spleen-*Pi* Type follows bravely...*



*... and doesn't get worked up about life.*



*The Spleen-Pi Type is relaxed and lovable.*



*He's no fighter and would prefer to just eat!*

## SOCIAL BEHAVIORS

The Spleen-*Pi* Type is neither dominant nor fearful. In the herd hierarchy, he'll fall somewhere in the middle. He won't fight for his social status within the herd, but finds a good buddy with whom he likes to graze.

However, if another horse tries to bully him, he'll defend himself loud and clear, in contrast to the *Shen* Types. Afterward, the *Pi* Type will become friendly and calm again immediately, as long as the other horse leaves him alone. And what's most important to him? Access to the food source, of course!



*He quietly wonders at things...*



*...and is a true friend.*

## RIDEABILITY

In the beginning of a schooling session, this horse tends to be slow and lazy. It's as if he needs to warm up his "diesel engine" before he can move fluidly. Often, the rider sweats more than the horse in the beginning of the session, and as soon as the rider stops pushing him along, he will get slower, or stop moving altogether. The rider must never take this badly.

When the Spleen-*Pi* Type is warmed up and in good condition, he can move forward fluidly and with impulsion. But he needs his warm-up time.

The *Pi* Type is the ideal horse for a beginner. He's not interested in throwing off his

rider or running away from the aids. Instead, he just remains steady unless he's told otherwise. Often, people believe that these horses are insensitive or stubborn, but the truth is they are even-keeled and peaceful to the core. Many riders tend to be rough with them, and overlook their positive qualities.

The *Pi* Type is reliable and submissive. He learns slowly but as soon as he's understood an exercise, he will execute it reliably—always and forever. For example, when he's learning flying changes, he'll often trip in the beginning, or just get a partial change or none at all. He lacks long-term concentration. This horse will need more time to learn it, in comparison to the



*This Spleen-*Pi* Type pony is trustworthy and he carries his young, insecure rider everywhere.*



*The brave Spleen-Pi Type has a softer musculature and tends toward a hay belly.*

Liver-*Gan* or Kidney-*Shen* Types. But where the *Gan* Type gets himself worked up and may not be consistent on any given day because of his mood, and the *Shen* Type is an overachiever and therefore confuses everything, the Spleen-*Pi* Type delivers routinely and reliably.

The horses of the *Pi* Type tend to be more introverted, but can become highly lethargic and phlegmatic, especially if they are being overworked or when something is not right with them mentally or physically. For example, if you ask a Spleen-*Pi* Type to learn a new movement too quickly, or you attempt to collect him more strongly than his hindquarters can handle, he won't fight you. Instead, the *Pi* Type will withdraw, hiding inside his "turtle shell." His reaction time to the aids will then lag more and more, or he'll refuse to move altogether.

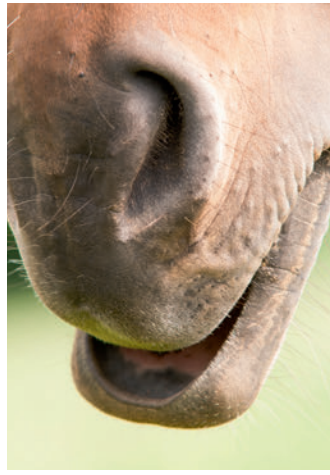
The Spleen-*Pi* Type will turn this burden inward and then develop stomach ulcers and diarrhea.

If this horse is intended for sport and not just for pleasure riding, an essential first step is to improve his fitness. The *Pi* Type will need more conditioning than the *Gan* or *Shen* Types in order to perform to the same level. This is thanks to his softer musculature and loose connective tissue. Therefore, he'll benefit most from interval training out in the open, alternating between canter and walk intervals. Overzealously drilling exercises with this horse is not helpful, as the Spleen-*Pi* Type can't take it mentally and will become dull and lethargic. But once this type of horse is strong and fit, he'll become a competition horse who performs with consistency and reliability at every go, even with a weaker rider.

The Five Horse Types — The Spleen-*Pi* Type 脾型马



*The Spleen-*Pi* Type yields his tongue...*



*... has a hanging lower lip...*



*... and has a soft mouth.*

When competing, keep the warm-up time short, so the *Pi* Type doesn't get too tired. Where the *Gan* Type needs more in order to loosen up mentally and physically, the Spleen-*Pi* Type loses his power quickly, and, if warmed up for too long, flops when it's time for the jump course or dressage arena. Because his soft muscles don't require a long warm-up and he's reliable at his job, a short warm-up will be enough to prepare him to trot confidently into the ring and halt squarely right at "X."

#### THE SPLEEN...

- ... keeps things in their place
- ... controls the blood
- ... controls the muscles and the four limbs
- ... rules over nutrition, transformation, and movement

## PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

The Spleen-*Pi* Type's conformation is coarser and more massive than the *Shen* Type. In addition, the *Pi* Type will have a large muzzle, and usually large hooves and large joints. If he's not getting enough exercise, he'll also have a hay belly.

In contrast to the *Gan* Type, the *Pi* Type has musculature and connective tissue of a much softer consistency. This predisposes him to edema of the legs (swelling or stocking up) without associated lameness. According to TCM, the spleen "holds things in their place" and is responsible for the movement of fluid through the body. If this task is not fulfilled, fluids accumulate in the soft tissue, which is how legs get stocked up. As a horse moves about in the pasture or is ridden, the legs return to normal, but the next day stocking up will recur. The *Pi* Type has a large, soft muzzle and often allows his large lower lip to



hang loosely. His mucous membranes are a pinkish red and covered with ample saliva. The tongue is pink, large, soft, and flabby. The *Pi* Type will easily allow you to take his tongue in your hand, pull it out of his mouth, and keep hold of it. The more often you pull his tongue out of his mouth, the more the Spleen-*Pi* Type enjoys it.

## SUMMARY

Take care during training to consider the *Pi* Type's laid-back nature and allow time for

### SPLEEN-PI TYPE

- is slow at the start of a training session (like a diesel engine)
- must develop condition and strength through interval training

him to build up strength through careful conditioning. So long as these measures are taken, the *Pi* Type will become a remarkably reliable horse for both pleasure and sport. The Spleen-*Pi* Type is the ideal riding horse for a beginner or child.



*In contrast to the dominant Liver-Gan Type, the Spleen-Pi Type always enjoys smooching with his rider.*

### THE SPLEEN-PI TYPE AT A GLANCE

#### When In Balance

- Friendly and kind
- Easily integrates into a herd
- Reliable
- Well-behaved
- Loves eating most of all
- Lazy at the beginning of a ride (like a diesel engine)
- Learns slowly
- Executes familiar tasks perfectly, even with an inexperienced rider
- Soft muscles, soft connective tissue, no tension
- Stocked-up hind legs, which normalize with movement
- Must be fit in order to perform well
- Perfect beginner horse
- Moist, pink mucous membranes
- Moist, soft tongue
- Deep, slow, full pulse

#### When Out of Balance

- Very lazy
- Apathetic
- Introverted
- Unmotivated
- Hay belly
- Obese
- Worried
- Not willing to go forward
- Clumsy
- Very slow
- Stomach ulcers
- Unexplained weight loss
- Diarrhea
- Chronically stocked-up hind legs

# COMBINATION TYPES— OUT OF BALANCE

## CASE STUDY OF A KIDNEY-SPLEEN TYPE

### A KIDNEY YANG DEFICIENCY

Lucky, an 18-year-old gelding, competes in the summer. In the fall, he suddenly started to get cold in his stall and urinated often. A subsequent blood and urine analysis did not



*Lucky is eager and hardworking.*

yield any findings. Lucky is a combination type, a Kidney-Spleen Type. An examination showed a weak pulse and very whitish mucus membranes.

The musculature in the back, particularly in the loin area, was painful and cool to the touch.

## PSYCHE/SOCIAL BEHAVIORS

Lucky is described by his rider as pleasant, always in a good mood, and reliable. He shares a pasture with seven other horses. He is well-integrated into the herd and is not being picked on. His main interest is food and he avoids conflict with other horses.

## RIDEABILITY

Lucky is an eager and cooperative horse. He is a reliable jumper and seldom makes mistakes. As soon as he drops a pole, he gets very nervous and anxious, and loses his self-confidence: his Kidney Type element comes to the forefront. When this occurs, his rider points him at a small jump, verbally praises him when he jumps successfully, and ends the training for the day. The next day



*In old age, the Kidney characteristic can become more pronounced in a combination type.*

Lucky will have found his equilibrium again and jump without a problem. However, ever since Lucky began urinating more often, he has also seemed more anxious. His rider wonders what is going on.

## PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Lucky is a compact horse with a slightly sagging belly, which does not disappear even with intensive work. His joints are well developed. He has whitish mucus membranes and enjoys his tongue being touched. His pulse is full.

## SUMMARY

Lucky shows the characteristics of the Spleen Type in his physical attributes and his social behavior. However, a pure Spleen Type would lack any desire to go forward when it comes to rideability. His ability to learn would be slow and, in addition, he would not show any fear. A Spleen Type would drop poles more often and under no circumstances get nervous.

Lucky is a combination type, composed of the Spleen Type and the Kidney Type. As a result of good management and a deep connection with his rider, the Kidney Type stayed in the background. According to

## The Five Horse Types — Combination Types—Out of Balance

TCM, the Kidney Type can develop a Kidney-*Yang* weakness in old age. This is expressed in Lucky physically by his becoming cold and having to urinate often, and psychologically by his increased insecurity.

Again, in this example, the foundation of TCM is clearly illustrated: every illness has a mental and a physical aspect.

The therapy consisted of moxibustion at BL 23 two times, with 10 days in between, and a Chinese remedy. The rider applied acupressure to KI 3 and SP 6 every day. All symptoms disappeared and Lucky is his old self. In order to keep it this way, his rider

applies acupressure every other day at the type points.

This example demonstrates how age can have an influence on the expression of type characteristics.

## CASE STUDY OF A LIVER-SPLEEN TYPE, TICIANO

### CHALLENGES WITH RIDEABILITY

Ticiano, an eight-year-old bay gelding, came in for an exam because he would not pick up the right lead canter. After additional questioning, it turned out that Ticiano had trouble picking up the right lead canter starting at age five. A blood and X-ray exam did not lead to any medical diagnosis. Likewise, treatment with painkillers did not yield any improvement. The owner lunged Ticiano for two weeks and was able to ride him without difficulty afterward. Ticiano is a combination type, a Spleen-Liver Type. My exam shows a tense, full pulse and very red mucus membranes. The musculature is very tight. The horse reacts angrily when touched.

### PSYCHE/SOCIAL BEHAVIORS

Ticiano's rider describes him as often brave, always in a good mood, and reliable. When asked, she describes how on days when his problems surface, Ticiano can get angry and pin his ears when she enters his stall. He



*Ticiano developed a liver qi build up.*



*Ticiano is a beautiful, fearless horse. He is a Liver Type.*

shares a pasture with three other horses. He is well-integrated into the herd, but here, too, he starts to push and bite the other horses. She never thought twice about this change in behavior, since after two weeks of lungeing, Ticiano was his old self.

## RIDEABILITY

Ticiano is a fearless, eager, and cooperative horse. He reliably jumps a course and seldom makes mistakes. On trail rides and at the beach, he is always the first to go into the water.

## PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Ticiano is a beautiful horse. He is well-conditioned and has well-developed

musculature. Normally his pulse is full, but not tense. He easily allows his tongue to be touched and massaged.

## SUMMARY

This behavior regarding his tongue is atypical for a Liver Type, who usually wouldn't like his tongue being touched. The tongue response and the pulse both point toward the fact that Ticiano also shows characteristics of the Spleen Type. He is a combination, a Liver-Spleen Type. His social behavior also indicates a Spleen Type, as he does not fill the alpha role in his herd. As a riding and sport horse, the Liver-Spleen Type is often perfect. The dominant behavior of the Liver Type is balanced out by the Spleen Type's easygoing nature. These horses, when in balance, are willing and cooperative partners.

The Five Horse Types — Combination Types—Out of Balance

The owner was charged with figuring out if there had been any changes in the horse's environment before she noticed the tension and challenges with rideability. After 10 days she responded. She identified only one change: namely, each time the behavioral challenges had occurred, she had lent Ticiano out to a group of trail riders the weekend prior. I was briefly speechless, but asked the rider if she had let these other riders work with Ticiano ahead of the trail rides or if she knew how fast and for how long he was ridden. She was not able to answer and had never thought about it.

We decided that Ticiano should not be lent out anymore, since these trail rides overwhelmed his Liver characteristics and had led to muscle tension, irritability, and problems with canter departs. In addition,

Ticiano was treated with osteopathy and acupuncture. The owner applied acupuncture to LV 3 and SP 6, the physical points for his type, every day. After 14 days, the Liver-Spleen Type was back in balance and perfectly able to pick up the right lead canter. The rider continued to apply acupressure twice a week and promised not to lend Ticiano to anyone in the future.

Two years later, cantering to the right has not been a problem since.

This interesting patient example corresponds with the Chinese foundational concept that a physical problem always has a psychological component. Ticiano was most likely physically overworked during the trail rides. Then he developed an imbalance of his Liver-Spleen Type, including changes in behavior, muscle tension, and problems with his rideability.



*When horses are ridden by new people, behavioral changes are the first signs of pain and discomfort.*