



Chapter 6

OBSERVATION OF THE EYES

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INTRODUCTION

From a Five-Element perspective, the eyes are the outlet of the Liver. Chapter 4 of the 'Simple Questions' says: *'The East direction corresponds to the colour green and the Liver which opens into the orifice of the eyes.'*¹ However, many other organs influence the eyes and, particularly from a diagnostic point of view, the eyes reflect the state of all the Internal Organs and therefore of the Mind and Spirit. In particular, the eyes reflect the state of the Mind and Spirit because of the close connection between the Eyes and the Heart. In fact, Chapter 81 of the 'Simple Questions' says: *'The Heart transports the Essence of the five Yin organs to the eyes; if the eyes are brilliant and with lustre, it shows that the person is happy and Qi is harmonious. If, on the contrary, the eyes lack lustre it indicates that the person is afflicted by worry and this is reflected in the brilliance of the eyes.'*² The same chapter says: *'The Spirit and the Essence of the Heart gather in the eyes.'*³

However, as mentioned above, many other organs also influence the eyes. Chapter 4 of the 'Spiritual Axis' says: *'Qi and Blood of the twelve channels and of the fifteen Connecting channels reach the orifices of the face so that the Yang-Qi brightens the eyes.'*⁴ Chapter 71 of the same book says: *'By observing the five colours of the eyes, one can determine the state of the five Yin organs and therefore the prognosis.'*⁵

Therefore, as we can see, the essences and fluids of all the Internal Organs nourish and moisten the eyes: for this reason, the eyes can reflect the state of most Internal Organs and not just the Liver, to which they are related within the Five-Element scheme of correspondences. The 'Spiritual Axis' in Chapter 80 says:

The Essence of the five Yin and six Yang organs all reach the eyes which are the 'nest' of the Essence. The Essence of the

bones [and therefore of the Kidneys] manifests in the pupil; the Essence of the sinews [and therefore of the Liver] manifests in the iris; the Essence of Blood [and therefore of the Heart] manifests in the blood vessels and the canthus [of the eye]; the Essence of Qi [and therefore of the Lungs] manifests on the sclera; the Essence of the muscles [and therefore of the Spleen] manifests in the eyelids; therefore, the Essence of bones, sinews, blood and Qi together with the blood vessels form the Eye System which goes upwards entering the brain and backwards exiting at the nape of the neck.⁶

This statement from the 'Spiritual Axis' is important in two ways. First, it establishes a connection between the Internal Organs and the five parts of the eye that are called the Five Wheels. The Five Wheels are the pupil (corresponding to the Kidneys), the iris (corresponding to the Liver), the sclera (corresponding to the Lungs), the two corners of the sclera (corresponding to the Heart) and the eyelids (corresponding to the Spleen). Secondly, this chapter of the 'Spiritual Axis' describes an 'Eye System' composed of all the channels reaching the eye which enter the brain and exit at the nape of the neck.

The same chapter of the 'Spiritual Axis' also says:

The eyes manifest the Essence of the five Yin and six Yang organs, the Nutritive and Defensive Qi, and they are the place where the Qi of the Mind is generated. . . the eyes are the messengers of the Heart which houses the Mind. If the Mind and Essence are not co-ordinated and not transmitted one has visual hallucinations. The Mind, Ethereal Soul and Corporeal Soul are scattered so that one has bewildering perceptions.⁷

In conclusion, in diagnosis the eyes reflect the state of all the organs and of the Mind and Spirit.

!

Remember: the eyes reflect the state of *all* the organs, and of the Mind and Spirit.

The discussion of observation of the eyes will first of all look at the channels influencing the eyes and the various physiological relationships between the eyes and various organs. After discussing the physiological relationships between the Internal Organs and the eye, we shall discuss the particular aspects of the eyes that should be observed in clinical practice.

The various pathological colours of the sclera will be discussed and, finally, various other signs appearing in

the eyes will be discussed. (Please note that many more signs related to the eyes are discussed in Part 5 Symptoms and Signs, Chapter 61.)

CHANNELS INFLUENCING THE EYES

The channels coursing through or around the eyes are illustrated in Figure 6.1. The pathways of the channels coursing through or around the eyes are as follows:

- The Stomach Main channel goes to the eye and connects with BL-1 Jingming.
- The Stomach Muscle channel connects with muscles around the orbit and with the Bladder Muscle channel.
- The Stomach Divergent channel goes to the forehead and down to enter the eye.
- The Heart Main, Connecting and Divergent channels all flow to the eye.
- The Bladder Main channel goes to the inner corner of the eye.
- The Bladder Muscle channel binds around the orbit.
- The Liver Main channel goes through the eye on its way to the vertex.
- The Gall-Bladder Main and Muscle channels go to the outer corner of the eye.
- The Directing and Penetrating Vessels go to the lower orbit of the eye (not shown in Fig. 6.1).
- The Yin and Yang Heel Vessels go to BL-1 Jingming (not shown in Fig. 6.1).

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE INTERNAL ORGANS AND THE EYES

The eyes and the Liver

The relationship between the eyes and the Liver is, of course, very well known owing to the Five-Element correspondence. The Liver-Blood nourishes the eyes and produces normal vision. For example, the 'Spiritual Axis' in Chapter 17 says: *'Liver-Qi reaches the eyes, when the Liver is harmonized the eyes can distinguish the five colours.'*⁸ It also says: *'The Liver stores Blood which allows us to see.'*⁹ The 'Simple Questions' in Chapter 5 says: *'The Liver governs the eyes;'*¹⁰ and in Chapter 4: *'The East corresponds to the green colour and the Liver which opens into the eyes.'*¹¹

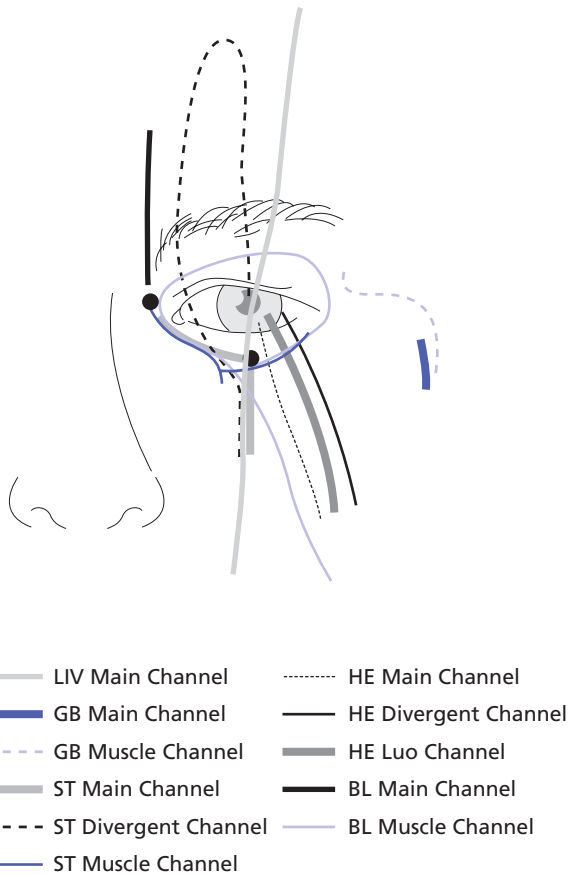


Fig. 6.1 Channels coursing through the eyes

Liver-Yin also nourishes the eyes and, more specifically, it moistens them: in fact, dry eyes are often a symptom of Liver-Yin deficiency, while blurred vision is a symptom of Liver-Blood deficiency.

The eyes and the Kidneys

Like Liver-Blood, the Kidneys nourish the eyes; they also moisten the eyes and control the normal fluids that lubricate them. Many eye problems, especially in the elderly, are due to Kidney-Yin deficiency. The Kidneys also influence the intraocular pressure and glaucoma is often due to a Kidney deficiency.

The eyes and the Heart

The Heart Main channel reaches the eye internally, the Heart Connecting channel also reaches the eye, and the Heart Divergent channel connects with the Small Intestine channel at the inner canthus of the eyes.

The 'Spiritual Axis' in Chapter 10 says: *'The Heart channel connects with the Eye System.'*¹² In Chapter 11 it says: *'The Divergent channel of the Heart connects with the Eye System.'*¹³ The same chapter also says: *'The Heart channel reaches the face and connects with the inner canthus of the eye.'*¹⁴

Therefore, Heart-Blood also nourishes the eye in a similar way to Liver-Blood, or, to put it differently, for Blood to reach the eye it needs the transporting action of Heart-Qi. The 'Simple Questions' also mentions the connection between the eye and the Heart in several places and Chapter 81 says: *'The Spirit and the Essence of the Heart gather in the eye.'*¹⁵ It also says: *'The Heart is the focus of the Essence of the five Yin organs and its orifice is the eye.'*¹⁶ The 'Spiritual Axis' in Chapter 80 says: *'The eye is the ambassador of the Heart.'*¹⁷

The significance of all the above statements is twofold. First, like the Liver, the Heart nourishes the eye and therefore many eye problems are related to a Heart pathology. Secondly, the Essence of the Heart, and therefore the Mind and Spirit, manifests in the eyes: this is an extremely important aspect of diagnosis as a careful observation of the eyes reveals the state of the Mind and Spirit.

The eyes and the Stomach and Spleen

The Stomach channel is closely connected to the eye as it starts just under the orbit of the eye. It transports the Food Essences to the eyes. The Spleen influences the eyelids and the muscles that control their opening and closing. Chapter 62 of the 'Spiritual Axis' says: *'Stomach-Qi flows upwards to the Lungs and on to the head via the throat and connects with the Eye System and from here enters the brain.'*¹⁸ Chapter 31 of the 'Simple Questions' says: *'The Bright Yang controls the muscles and its channel flows to the nose and eyes.'*¹⁹ Chapter 21 of the 'Spiritual Axis' says: *'The leg Bright Yang channel goes to the nose, the mouth and enters the Eye System.'*²⁰ Both the Divergent and the Muscle channels of the Stomach enter the eye. Chapter 13 of the 'Spiritual Axis' says: *'The Muscle channel of the Stomach . . . connects with the Greater Yang channel which controls the upper eyelid, while the Bright Yang channel controls the lower eyelid.'*²¹ However, the prevalent view is that the Spleen controls both eyelids.

The eyes and the Gall-Bladder

The Gall-Bladder channel is closely connected to the eye as it starts at its outer corner. Chapter 10 of the

'Spiritual Axis' says: *'The Gall-Bladder channel starts from the lateral corner of the eye.'*²² Chapter 11 of the same book says: *'The Gall-Bladder Divergent channel . . . scatters on the face, enters the Eye System and joins the Main channel at the external corner of the eye.'*²³ Chapter 13 says: *'The Muscle channel of the Gall-Bladder . . . binds around the external corner of the eye.'*²⁴ Thus, both the Divergent and the Muscle channel of the Gall-Bladder reach the eye.

The eyes and the Bladder

The Bladder channel starts at the inner corner of the eye. Its influence on the eye is a close one. Chapter 10 of the 'Spiritual Axis' says: *'The Bladder channel starts at the inner corner of the eye.'*²⁵ The Bladder Muscle channel is wrapped around the eye socket. Chapter 21 of the same book says: *'The leg Greater Yang channel penetrates the occiput, enters the brain, it connects with the eye and is called the Eye System.'*²⁶

The eyes and the Small Intestine

Chapter 10 of the 'Spiritual Axis' says: *'A branch of the Small Intestine channel departing from the clavicle, goes to the neck and cheek to reach the lateral corner of the eye . . . another branch reaches the nose and arrives at the inner corner of the eye.'*²⁷ The Muscle channel of the Small Intestine also reaches the outer corner of the eye.



Remember: the Liver is *not* the only organ that influences the eyes.

BOX 6.1 THE EYES AND INTERNAL ORGANS

- Liver: Liver-Blood nourishes the eyes; Liver-Yin nourishes and moisturizes the eyes
- Kidneys: Kidney-Yin nourishes and moistens the eyes
- Heart: Heart-Blood nourishes the eyes; Heart-Qi transports Qi and Blood to the eyes
- Stomach and Spleen: Stomach transports food essences to the eyes; Stomach's Main, Muscle and Divergent channels reach the eyes; the Spleen controls the eyelids
- Gall-Bladder: the Gall-Bladder's Main, Divergent and Muscle channels reach the outer corner of the eyes; GB-1 connects with the Eye system
- Bladder: the Bladder's Main and Muscle channels reach the eyes; BL-1 connects with the Eye System
- Small Intestine: the Small Intestine's Main and Muscle channels reach the eyes

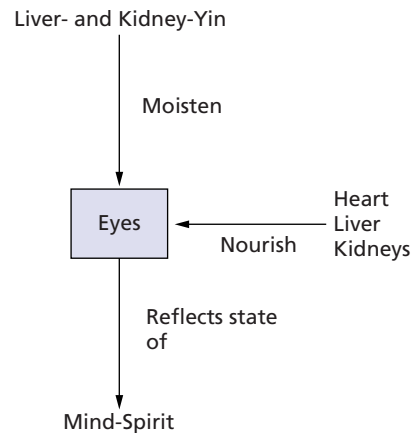


Fig. 6.2 Relationship of Internal Organs with the eyes

Box 6.1 and Figure 6.2 summarizes the relationships between the Internal Organs and the eyes.

The Five Wheels

The 'Five Wheels' is an ancient expression to indicate five areas of the eyes: the pupil, iris, corners of the sclera, the rest of the sclera and the eyelids. These Five Wheels are the Water Wheel, the Wind Wheel, the Blood Wheel, the Qi Wheel and the Muscle Wheel respectively. Figure 6.3 illustrates the Five Wheels.

The Five Wheels are as follows:

- The Wind Wheel is the iris; it is the essence of the sinews and pertains to the Liver.
- The Blood Wheel is the corners of the sclera of the eyes; it is the essence of the Blood and pertains to the Heart.
- The Qi Wheel is the rest of the sclera; it is the essence of Qi and pertains to the Lungs.
- The Muscle Wheel is the eyelids; it is the essence of the muscles and pertains to the Stomach and Spleen.
- The Water Wheel is the pupil, it is the essence of the bones and pertains to the Kidneys.

The significance of the Five Wheels is that it establishes a physiological relationship between those five parts of the eye and the Internal Organs. For example, the pupil pertains to the Kidneys and if it is excessively dilated it may indicate Kidney-Yang deficiency; the iris pertains to the Liver and its inflammation may indicate Liver-Heat; the sclera pertains to the Lungs and a

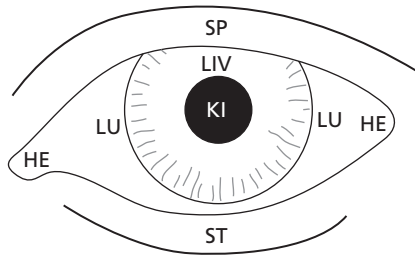


Fig. 6.3 The Five Wheels of the eye

change in its colour or texture may indicate a Lung pathology such as Lung-Heat; the corners of the eye pertain to the Heart and a redness there may indicate Heart-Fire; the eyelids pertain to the Stomach and Spleen and if, for example, they are drooping this may indicate sinking of Spleen-Qi, while if they are swollen and red they indicate Spleen-Heat. However, as always in the Chinese medicine system of correspondences, there are pathologies which escape such correspondences; for example, a redness of the sclera may be related to Heat in any organ and not just the Lungs.

The Eight Ramparts

The 'Eight Ramparts' are another way of classifying areas of the eye in relation to the Internal Organs. The classification according to the Eight Ramparts is broadly the same as that according to the Five Wheels, except that it is more detailed, especially in relation to the sclera, which is divided into three areas corresponding to the Lungs, Minister Fire and Triple Burner. (Fig. 6.4).

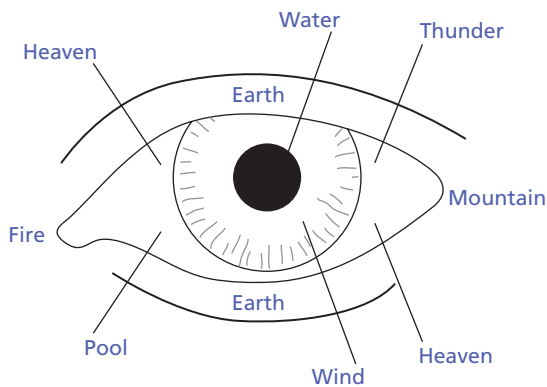


Fig. 6.4 The Eight Ramparts of the eye

The Eight Ramparts are:

- Heaven Rampart corresponding to the sclera and pertaining to the Lungs and Large Intestine
- Earth Rampart corresponding to the eyelids and pertaining to the Stomach and Spleen
- Fire Rampart corresponding to the corners of the eye and pertaining to the Heart and Small Intestine
- Water Rampart corresponding to the pupil and pertaining to the Kidneys
- Wind Rampart corresponding to the iris and pertaining to the Liver and Gall-Bladder
- Thunder Rampart corresponding to the upper part of the outer sclera and pertaining to the Minister Fire
- Mountain Rampart corresponding to the outer corner and pertaining to the Pericardium
- Pool Rampart corresponding to the lower part of the inner sclera and pertaining to the Triple Burner.

The Eye System

Chapter 80 of the 'Spiritual Axis' mentions the Eye System (Fig. 6.5):

The Essences of the five Yin and six Yang organs all reach the eyes which are the 'nest' of the Essences. The Essence of the bones [and therefore of the Kidneys] manifests in the

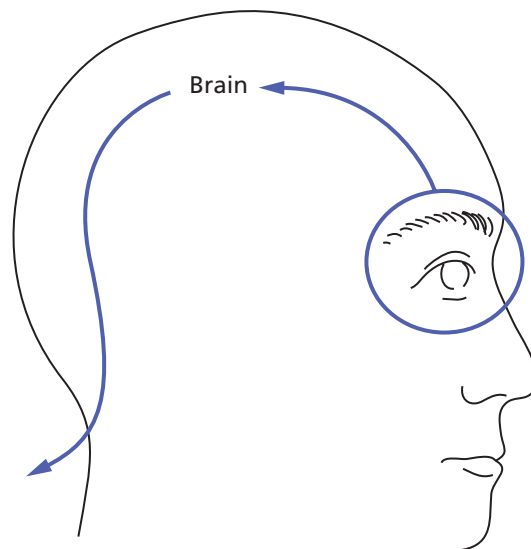


Fig. 6.5 The Eye System

pupil; the Essence of the sinews [and therefore of the Liver] manifests in the iris; the Essence of Blood [and therefore of the Heart] manifests in the blood vessels and the canthus [of the eye]; the Essence of Qi [and therefore of the Lungs] manifests on the sclera; the Essence of the muscles [and therefore of the Spleen] manifests in the eyelids; therefore, the Essences of bones, sinews, blood and Qi together with blood vessels [or channels] form the Eye System which goes upwards entering the brain and backwards exiting at the nape of the neck. Therefore, when pathogenic factors enter the occiput due to a deficiency condition of the body, they penetrate this pathway to the Eye System into the brain. This causes the brain to feel like 'turning' which causes a tightness of the Eye System; a tightness of the Eye System will cause the vision to be obfuscated and there is dizziness.²⁸

The 'Eye System' is, therefore, the complex of channels, Connecting channels and blood vessels converging at the eyes and gathering the Qi and Essence of all organs, entering the brain and then exiting at the occiput. The Eye System essentially highlights the physiological relationship between the Internal Organs, together with their channels and blood vessels, the eyes and the brain. Modern Chinese texts often translate 'Eye System' as 'optic nerve'; this is, in my opinion, a reductionist view: although the Eye System is related to the optic nerve, it is not the same structure (in the same way that channels are related to, but are not the same as, the nerves running alongside them).

From an acupuncture perspective, many of the points around the eye socket have an influence on the brain and therefore the Mind.



Remember: many of the points around the eye socket have an influence on the brain and therefore the Mind through the Eye System.

ASPECTS OF OBSERVATION OF THE EYES

The lustre of the eyes

The lustre (*shen*) of the eyes refers to the brilliance, vitality, glitter and sparkle of the eyes, all of which reflect a normal state of the Mind and Spirit and therefore, in particular, of the Heart. However, as indicated

above, the Essence of the other Internal Organs also manifests in the eyes.

A good, normal lustre of the eyes indicates that, whatever the illness a person may be suffering from, the Mind and Spirit are still strong and that person's emotional and mental life is balanced and well integrated. This lustre is an extremely important sign and when present always points to a good prognosis. The normal lustre of the eyes is somewhat 'moist', that is, the eye looks well lubricated and not dry. However, the eye should not be too wet either.²⁹ As soon as a new patient sits down, I study first, and carefully, the lustre of the eyes.

When the Mind and Spirit are affected by long-standing emotional problems, the eyes may lose their lustre and become somewhat dull and lacking sparkle (see Plate 6.1 on p. P8). The degree of dullness of the eyes reflects the severity and duration of the emotional problems accurately: the duller the eyes, the more severe and long standing the emotional problems. In a few cases, however, the eyes can become dull and lose lustre from physical causes such as a serious disease or from a long course of chemotherapy. Barring the last cause of lack of eye lustre, I find this sign never to fail: even if a person tries hard to hide his or her emotional problems, lack of lustre of the eyes always tells the truth.

The 'Great Treatise of Ophthalmology' (*Yan Ke Da Quan*, 1644) relates the lustre of the eyes in particular to the Fire of the Gate of Life (*Ming Men*): *'The brightness of the Mind manifests with brilliance of the eyes. The brightness of the Mind has its origin in the Gate of Life (Ming Men) and it emerges to the Heart through the Gall-Bladder: therefore it is a manifestation of Fire.'*³⁰

The control of the eyes

'Control' of the eyes refers to the movement or lack of movement of the eyeballs. Someone who has 'controlled' eyes is able to fix the gaze, the person will be able to look directly at other people and engage their gaze; the eyes do not move too much nor are they too fixed, they look stable and at ease. Uncontrolled eyes may manifest either with a fixed stare or with a shifty glance with excessive movement of the eyeballs; a person whose eyes are uncontrolled frequently looks down or away to avoid engaging another person's gaze.

The control of the eyes is quite separate from their lustre and one should not be surprised to see people

whose eyes appear to have lustre but lack control. Lack of control of the eyes indicates obstruction of the Mind's orifices and a troubled personality.

The normal eye

The normal eye is characterized by clear vision, a clear white sclera with a distinct border between sclera and iris, normal lustre, normal control, a bright appearance and normal moisture. The eyelids should not be swollen or red and should open and close normally; the inner corner should be pale red, moist and free from ulcers, sores or gum (sticky secretion collecting in the corner of the eye); the eye in general should be bright and have lustre and control indicating a good state of the Mind and Spirit; the eyeball should move normally, neither darting involuntarily nor staring fixedly; the sclera should have no spots, nebula or visible blood vessels.

The patterns causing each of the eye signs discussed below are listed in greater detail in Chapter 61.

OBSERVATION OF PATHOLOGICAL SIGNS OF THE EYE

Abnormal colour

The pathological colours of the eyes should be observed in the sclera. Chapter 72 of the 'Spiritual Axis' relates the five pathological colours of the sclera to the five Yin organs: *'Red eyes indicate disease of the Heart, white of the Lungs, green of the Liver, yellow of the Spleen and black of the Kidneys.'*³¹

Generally speaking, a yellow or red colour indicates Heat while a greenish or pale colour indicates Cold, and a bright colour indicates disease in the Yang while a turbid colour indicates disease in the Yin.

Yellow

Symptoms and Signs, Chapter 61

The most common cause of a yellow sclera is Damp-Heat. If Heat predominates, the sclera is a light and shiny yellow like tangerine peel; if Dampness predominates, the sclera is a dull yellow.

Cold-Dampness may also cause the sclera to become yellow, in which case it will be a dark and dull yellow.

Toxic Heat may cause the sclera to become deep yellow and bloodshot. Blood deficiency may also cause

the sclera to become yellow but in this case it would be a pale, light yellow.

Finally, Blood stasis may cause the sclera to be very dark yellow, almost brown.

Box 6.2 summarizes the patterns underlying a yellow sclera.

BOX 6.2 YELLOW SCLERA

- Damp-Heat: bright-yellow or dark-yellow sclera, feeling of heaviness, gum in the eyes, sticky-yellow tongue coating
- Cold-Dampness: dark, dull-yellow sclera, feeling of heaviness, cold limbs, abdominal pain
- Toxic Heat: deep-yellow and bloodshot sclera, gum in the eyes, Red tongue with red points
- Blood deficiency: pale-yellow sclera, dizziness, blurred vision, Choppy pulse
- Blood stasis: dark-yellow sclera, pain in the eye, Purple tongue

Red

Symptoms and Signs, Chapter 61

The red colour can be observed either in the sclera or at the corners of the eyes. A redness of the sclera indicates Heat, which may derive from any of the Internal Organs but the three most common ones are Heart-Fire, Liver-Fire and Lung-Heat.

Liver-Fire is probably the most common cause of a red sclera, in which case it may also be bloodshot and painful. Heart-Fire may also cause a red sclera, particularly in the two corners. Lung-Heat may cause a red sclera and this is especially seen in acute conditions of Lung-Heat or Phlegm-Heat in the Lungs occurring after an invasion of Wind. Heat in the Bladder may also sometimes cause a red sclera.

BOX 6.3 RED SCLERA

- Liver-Fire: bloodshot sclera, pain in the eye, bitter taste, Wiry-Rapid pulse
- Heart-Fire: red corners of the eyes, pain in the eye, palpitations, Red tip of the tongue
- Lung-Heat: cough, feeling of heat
- Phlegm-Heat in the Lungs: cough with expectoration of yellow sputum, feeling of oppression of the chest, Swollen tongue
- Heat in the Bladder: burning on urination, difficult urination
- Empty-Heat: pale-red sclera, thin, red blood vessels, night sweating, feeling of heat in the evening, Red tongue without coating

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Apart from the conditions of Full-Heat listed above, Empty-Heat may also cause the sclera to become red in which case it would be pale red, or it might show thin, red blood vessels.

Box 6.3 summarizes the patterns underlying a red sclera.

Bluish-Greenish

Symptoms and Signs, Chapter 61

Liver-Wind may cause the sclera to become greenish, while internal Cold may cause it to become bluish. In some cases, severe, chronic deficiency of Kidney-Yin may cause the sclera to become dull greenish.

Box 6.4 summarizes the patterns underlying a bluish-greenish sclera.

BOX 6.4 BLUISH-GREENISH SCLERA

- Liver-Wind: greenish sclera, giddiness, tremor, Wiry pulse
- Internal Cold: bluish sclera, cold limbs, abdominal pain, Tight pulse
- Kidney-Yin deficiency: dull greenish sclera, dizziness, tinnitus, Floating-Empty pulse

Dark

Symptoms and Signs, Chapter 61

The most common cause of dark sclera is severe Full-Heat or Fire, which, as indicated above, may occur in many organs but especially Liver, Heart and Lungs. In such cases, the dark sclera can be considered as a further stage of red sclera.

Phlegm is also a common cause of dark sclera, in which case it is brownish and the eye sockets may also have a brown colour underneath the eyes. A chronic, severe deficiency of Liver- and Kidney-Yin may also cause the sclera to become dark.

A dull-dark appearance of the sclera may also be due to severe deficiency and dryness of Blood.

BOX 6.5 DARK SCLERA

- Liver-Fire: pain in the eye, bitter taste, headache, Red tongue with redder sides
- Heart-Fire: pain in the eye, palpitations, anxiety, Red tongue with redder tip
- Lung-Heat: cough, feeling of heat
- Phlegm: brownish-dark sclera, dull-white specks, dark sockets, Swollen tongue, Slippery pulse
- Liver- and Kidney-Yin deficiency: dizziness, tinnitus, night sweating, Floating-Empty pulse
- Deficiency and dryness of Blood: dull, dark sclera

Box 6.5 summarizes the patterns underlying a dark sclera.

Other features

White specks

Symptoms and Signs, Chapter 61

White specks may occur on the sclera or pupil. The most common cause of white specks is Phlegm, in which case they are often on the sclera and partially on the pupil. Severe, chronic Liver- and Kidney-Yin deficiency in the elderly may also cause dull-white specks on the sclera. Bright-white specks on the sclera are usually due to chronic Yang deficiency with internal Cold.

Box 6.6 summarizes the patterns underlying white spectra in the eye.

BOX 6.6 WHITE SPECKS

- Phlegm: white specks on sclera and pupil, blurred vision, sputum in the throat, feeling of oppression of the chest, Swollen tongue
- Liver- and Kidney-Yin deficiency: dull-white specks on sclera, dizziness, tinnitus, night sweating, Floating-Empty pulse
- Yang deficiency: bright-white specks, feeling of cold, loose stools, Deep-Weak pulse

Protruding eyeball

Symptoms and Signs, Chapter 61

One of the most common causes of protruding eyeball is in the Liver channel and this may manifest with many different Liver patterns such as Liver-Fire, Liver-Qi stagnation with Phlegm, Liver-Wind, Liver-Wind with Phlegm-Heat, Liver-Qi stagnation, Liver-Qi and Blood stagnation. Fire may also cause the eyeball to protrude and the two most common patterns causing this sign are Heart-Fire and Toxic Heat.

Deficiency may also cause the eyeball to protrude slightly, and especially a Kidney deficiency or a deficiency of Qi and Blood. Finally, the eyeball may protrude in chronic conditions of cough and asthma with rebellious Lung-Qi.

(For a detailed list and description of these patterns, see Chapter 61 in Part 5.)

Sunken eyeball

Symptoms and Signs, Chapter 61

Sunken eyeball is always due to Deficiency, which may be a chronic deficiency of Qi or a sudden deficiency of

Spleen-Qi induced by food poisoning. Another cause of sunken eyeball is collapse of Yin or Yang.

Box 6.7 summarizes the patterns underlying protruding eyeball.

BOX 6.7 PROTRUDING EYEBALL

- Liver-Fire: red, hot and painful eye, bitter taste, Red tongue with redder sides
- Heart-Fire: red and painful eye, anxiety, insomnia, palpitations, Red tongue with redder tip
- Liver-Qi stagnation with Phlegm: feeling of distension of the eye, irritability, feeling of oppression of the chest, Swollen tongue, Wiry pulse
- Liver-Wind: giddiness, tremor, Wiry pulse
- Liver-Wind with Phlegm-Heat: giddiness, tremor, feeling of oppression of the chest, phlegm in the throat, Swollen tongue, Wiry-Slippery pulse
- Liver-Qi stagnation: feeling of distension of the eye, streaming eyes, irritability, Wiry pulse
- Qi stagnation and Blood stasis: feeling of distension and pain of the eye, irritability, Purple tongue
- Toxic Heat: red sclera, gum in the eye, red and painful eye, fever, Red tongue with red points
- Deficiency of Kidney Yin and Yang: slightly protruding eyeball, dizziness, tinnitus, backache
- Qi and Blood deficiency: slightly protruding eyeball, tiredness, palpitations, poor appetite, loose stools
- Rebellious Lung-Qi: chronic cough or asthma
- Invasion of Wind-Heat: fever, aversion to cold, pain and itchiness in the eye, Floating-Rapid pulse

Strabismus

Symptoms and Signs, Chapter 61

The most common cause of strabismus in children is a deficiency of Kidney-Essence. In adults, the two most common patterns of strabismus are Liver-Wind or

Liver-Yang rising. Other patterns which may cause strabismus include a chronic, severe deficiency of Qi and Blood of the Liver, internal Cold, Blood stasis, Toxic Heat and Phlegm. (For a detailed list and description of symptoms of these patterns, see Chapter 61.)

Box 6.8 summarizes the patterns underlying strabismus.

Staring, fixed eyes

Symptoms and Signs, Chapter 61

'Staring, fixed eyes' describes a condition in which the eyes are wide open and the pupils are staring and not moving.

Heart-Fire and Phlegm-Heat in the Heart are the two most common patterns causing staring and fixed eyes. In both cases, this symptom always indicates a disturbance of the Mind and Spirit with obfuscation of the Mind's orifices.

Abnormal colour of the eyelids

Symptoms and Signs, Chapter 61

Both eyelids reflect the state of the Spleen; the lower eyelid also reflects the state of the Stomach. Redness and swelling of the upper eyelid indicates Spleen-Heat, whereas redness and swelling of the lower eyelid indicates Stomach-Heat. If both eyelids are red, this usually indicates Damp-Heat in the Spleen. Redness of the eyelids with acute onset may be due to invasion of Wind-Heat. A redness inside the lower eyelid indicates Full-Heat; a thin, red line inside the lower eyelid indicates Empty-Heat. A redness of the eyelids like

BOX 6.8 STRABISMUS

- Kidney-Essence deficiency: strabismus from early childhood
- Liver-Wind: giddiness, tremor, Wiry pulse
- Liver-Yang rising: dizziness, tinnitus, headache, Wiry pulse
- Severe deficiency of Qi and Blood of the Liver: exhaustion, blurred vision, dizziness, Choppy pulse
- Internal Cold: feeling of cold, cold limbs, Tight-Slow pulse
- Blood stasis: headache, mental restlessness, Purple tongue
- Toxic Heat: fever, gum in the eyes, Red tongue with red points
- Phlegm: dizziness, nausea, muzziness of the head, blurred vision, Swollen tongue

BOX 6.9 ABNORMAL EYELID COLOURS

- Red and swollen upper lid: Spleen-Heat
- Red and swollen lower lid: Stomach-Heat
- Both lids red: Damp-Heat in Spleen
- Red lids with acute onset: Wind-Heat
- Redness inside lower lids: Full-Heat
- Thin, red line inside lower lids: Empty-Heat
- Red lids like cinnabar with small water blisters: Damp-Heat in Stomach and Spleen
- Red, itchy and hot lids with watery eyes: Wind, Heat, Dampness or Heart-Fire
- Dark lids: Kidney deficiency
- Greyish, dull, sooty lids: Cold-Phlegm
- Dark, red, swollen lids: Phlegm-Heat
- Dark lids with dull-yellow complexion: Wind-Phlegm
- Green lids: Stomach-Cold
- Pale colour inside lids: Blood or Yang deficiency
- Pale colour surrounded by yellow inside the lids: retention of food

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cinnabar with small water blisters indicates Damp-Heat in the Stomach and Spleen. Red, itchy and hot eyelids with watery eyes are due to Wind, Heat, Dampness or Heart-Fire.

Dark eyelids indicate Kidney deficiency; greyish, dull, sooty eyelids indicate Cold-Phlegm; dark, red and swollen eyelids indicate Phlegm-Heat; dark eyelids with a dull-yellow complexion may indicate Wind-Phlegm; green eyelids indicate Stomach-Cold.

A pale colour inside the eyelids indicates either Blood or Yang deficiency, whereas a pale colour surrounded by yellow inside the eyelids indicates retention of food.

Box 6.9 summarizes the patterns underlying abnormal eyelid colour.

Swollen eyelids

Symptoms and Signs, Chapter 61

A swelling of the eyelids can derive either from Heat or from Cold. When it derives from Heat it could be due to invasion of external Wind-Heat or to Spleen Damp-Heat (as the Spleen controls the eyelids). A gradual swelling of the eyelids is usually due either to Water overflowing with oedema or to Cold-Dampness. A description of the patterns causing swelling of the eyelid can be found in Chapter 61.

Box 6.10 summarizes the patterns underlying swollen eyelids.

BOX 6.10 SWOLLEN EYELIDS

- Red and swollen lids: Damp-Heat in Spleen
- Pale and swollen lids: Cold-Dampness in Spleen
- Acute swelling of lids: Wind-Heat
- Gradual swelling of lids: Water overflowing or Cold-Phlegm

Streaming eyes

Interrogation, Chapter 42; Symptoms and Signs, Chapter 61

There are traditionally two types of streaming eyes: one is called '*liu lei*', which indicates runny and streaming eyes and is described here; the other is '*yan chi*', which indicates a thick discharge and is described under 'Discharge from the eyes'.

The most common cause of streaming eyes lies in the Liver channel: many different Liver patterns can cause this symptom, among them Liver-Blood deficiency, Liver-Heat, Liver-Fire and Liver-Yin deficiency. The Heart channel also reaches the eye and Heart-Fire may cause streaming eyes. The Kidneys control the fluids in the eyes and a deficiency of this

organ, whether of Yin or of Yang, may also cause streaming eyes. Finally, invasions of external Wind may cause streaming eyes with a sudden onset. (For a detailed description of the patterns causing streaming eyes, see Chapter 61.)

Box 6.11 summarizes the patterns underlying streaming eyes.

BOX 6.11 STREAMING EYES

- Liver-Blood deficiency: mildly streaming eyes when exposed to wind
- Liver-Heat (Fire): profusely streaming eyes
- Liver-Yin deficiency: mildly streaming eyes in the evening
- Heart-Fire: streaming eyes when upset
- Kidney deficiency: streaming eyes, worse when tired
- External Wind: streaming eyes with sudden onset

Discharge from the eyes

Symptoms and Signs, Chapter 61

'Discharge from the eyes' indicates a relatively thick, sticky discharge, different from that of streaming eyes, which is characterized by excessive tears. The most common cause of a discharge from the eyes is Heat (Fire), especially in the Liver or Heart, or Empty-Heat, especially of the Liver, Heart or Lungs. Invasion of external Wind-Heat may also cause a discharge from the eyes. (For a detailed description of patterns causing a discharge from the eyes, see Chapter 61.)

Box 6.12 summarizes the patterns underlying eye discharges.

BOX 6.12 DISCHARGE FROM THE EYES

- Liver-Fire: sticky yellow discharge
- Heart-Fire: sticky yellow discharge, worse when upset
- Liver-Yin deficiency with Empty-Heat: sticky discharge in the evening
- Heart-Yin deficiency with Empty-Heat: sticky discharge in the evening
- Lung-Yin deficiency with Empty-Heat: sticky discharge with cough
- Wind-Heat: sticky discharge with acute onset

Abnormal colours of the corners of the eyes

Symptoms and Signs, Chapter 61

The inner corners of the eyes are called 'large corners' in Chinese medicine, while the outer corners are called 'small corners'. Many different channels reach the corners of the eyes (Table 6.1).

Table 6.1 Relationship between channels and corners of the eyes

	Inner corner	Outer corner
Heart	Main channel	Main channel
Small Intestine	Main channel	Muscle channel
Gall-Bladder		Main and Muscle channel
Bladder	Main channel	
Triple Burner		Main and Muscle channel
Yin and Yang Heel Vessels	Yin and Yang Heel Vessels	

A redness of the corners of the eyes always indicates Heat, which may be external or internal and Full or Empty. Invasion of external Wind-Heat may cause a redness of the corners of the eyes. Full-Heat of various organs can cause a redness of the corners of the eyes: Lung-Heat usually causes a redness of the inner corner, Heart-Heat (Fire) a redness of the outer corner and Liver-Fire a redness of either corner.

Empty-Heat deriving from Yin deficiency may cause a redness and dryness of either corner of the eye; this may be due to Yin deficiency of various organs and especially Lungs, Heart, Liver and Kidneys.

Damp-Heat may also cause a redness of either corner, usually together with a sticky yellow discharge of the eye.

Redness starting from the inner corners of the eyes and extending towards the centre indicates a pathol-

BOX 6.13 ABNORMAL COLOUR OF CORNERS OF THE EYES

- Redness of outer corner: Heart-Fire
- Redness of inner corner: Lung-Heat
- Redness of either corner: Liver-Fire, invasion of external Wind-Heat
- Redness of inner corner in the evening: Lung-Yin deficiency with Empty-Heat
- Redness of outer corner in the evening: Heart-Yin deficiency with Empty-Heat
- Redness of either corner in the evening: Liver-Yin deficiency with Empty-Heat, Kidney-Yin deficiency with Empty-Heat
- Redness of either corner with sticky-yellow discharge: Damp-Heat
- Redness starting from the inner corners extending towards the centre: Yin and Yang Heel Vessels pathology
- Pale corners of the eyes: Blood deficiency (of Liver or Heart); or Yang deficiency (of Spleen or Kidneys)

ogy of the Yin and Yang Heel vessels (Yin and Yang Qiao Mai). (For a description of the patterns causing red corners of the eyes, see Chapter 61.)

Pale corners of the eye is due to either Blood deficiency (of the Liver or Heart) or Yang deficiency (of the Spleen or Kidneys). (For a description of the patterns causing pale corners of the eyes, see Chapter 61.)

Box 6.13 summarizes the patterns underlying abnormal colours in the eye corners.

Abnormal colour of the eye sockets

Dark eye sockets usually indicate Phlegm; dark-purple eye sockets indicate severe Blood stasis. A bluish colour in the lower part of the eye socket usually indicates a Kidney deficiency; a swelling of the lower part of the eye socket extending down towards the cheek indicates a pathology of the Large Intestine. A pale-greenish colour under the eyes generally indicates Liver-Qi stagnation. A dark-blue colour under the eyes indicates Cold in the Liver channel.

Box 6.14 summarizes patterns underlying abnormal colours in the eye sockets.

BOX 6.14 ABNORMAL COLOUR OF EYE SOCKETS

- Dark: Phlegm
- Dark purple: Blood stasis
- Bluish: Kidney deficiency
- Swelling of lower part of socket extending towards cheek: Large Intestine pathology
- Pale greenish: Liver-Qi stagnation
- Dark blue: Cold in Liver channel

NOTES

1. 1979 The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine – Simple Questions (*Huang Di Nei Jing Su Wen* 黄帝内经素问), People's Health Publishing House, Beijing, p. 25. First published c. 100BC.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 572.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 573.
4. 1981 *Spiritual Axis (Ling Shu Jing* 灵枢经), People's Health Publishing House, Beijing, p. 129, para 11. First published c. 100BC.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 128.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 151.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 151–152.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 50.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 50.
10. Simple Questions, p. 36.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
12. *Spiritual Axis*, p. 32.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 40.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 40.
15. Simple Questions, p. 572.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 572.

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17. Spiritual Axis, p. 151.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 112.
19. Simple Question, p. 184.
20. Spiritual Axis, p. 56.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 44.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 35.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 40.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 33.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 56.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 33.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 151.
29. Eyes that are too wet (though obviously not when crying or because of a condition such as allergic rhinitis) may indicate a strong sexual drive.
30. Great Treatise of Ophthalmology (*Yan Ke Da Quan* 眼科大全 1644) cited in Ma Zhong Xue 1989 Great Treatise of Chinese Diagnostic Methods (*Zhong Guo Yi Xue Zhen Fa Da Quan* 中国医学诊法大学), Shandong Science Publishing House, p. 23.
31. Spiritual Axis, pp. 133–134.