

Agnes Fatrai Stefan Uhrig

Chinese Ophthalmology



With the collaboration of:

Ute Engelhardt

Chaling Han

Carl-Hermann Hempen

Josef Hummelsberger

Hans Leonhardy

TIPANI-VERLAG



Tipani Verlag Stefan Uhrig & Agnes Fatrai GbR

Philipp-Holl-Str. 22A

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Germany

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Please send correspondence and critique to:

Tipani Verlag Stefan Uhrig & Agnes Fatrai GbR, Philipp-Holl-Str. 22A, 65195 Wiesbaden, Germany; info@tipani-verlag.de



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Agnes Fatrai, Dr. Stefan Uhrig, Birgid Uhrig, Planegg and Wiesbaden

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fig. 1.1-1.3	<i>Essential Subtleties on the Silver Sea, Yinhai jingwei</i>
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fig. 2.2	<i>Essential Subtleties on the Silver Sea, Yinhai jingwei</i>
fig. 3.2	<i>Important Issues on the Treatment of the Six Channels in Ophthalmology, Yanke liujingfa yao</i> , written by Chen Dafu in 1959
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This chapter presents important physiological functions of the eyes from the point of view of Chinese medicine and it describes the eyes' relationship to the functional systems. It should be noted that the statements below are based on the extensive differentiation of symptoms and physiological relationships which are commonly used in Chinese medicine. The English terms that we have chosen are oriented towards the original Chinese terms.

3.1 The Physiological Functions of the Eyes

The essence (*jing*), the qi, the blood (*xue*) and the fluids (*jinye*) form the essential physiological and energetic basis for human life. Since the eyes are located in the upper body, they rank among the so-called "clear orifices" (orifices in the head area, *qingqiao*). The channels run in the depth of the eyes and are characterised by their delicate and complex structure. Solely the light, clear refined energy potential is able to get to them. The respective part of the essence (*jing*), the qi, the blood (*xue*) and the fluids (*jinye*) which rise to the eyes are referred to as "true essence" (*zhenjing*), "true qi" (*zhenqi*), "true blood" (*zhenxue*) and "fluids oozing upwards" in Chinese medicine.

3.1.1 The True Essence (*zhenjing*)

The true essence (*zhenjing*) is the light, clear energy potential refined from the essence (*jing*) of the zangfu-organs that rises to the orifice eye via delicate channels running in the depth in order to moisten and nourish the eyes. The eyes can only come into existence and provide vision if they are moistened by the essence (*jing*). The essence (*jing*) has a close relationship to the spirit (*shen*) and is the "mother" of qi. Furthermore it is interrelated with the qi, the blood (*xue*) and the fluids (*jinye*). Accordingly, the essence (*jing*) is the most important energetic substance moistening and nourishing the eyes.

3.1.2 The True Qi (*zhenqi*)

True qi (*zhenqi*) refers to the primal qi (*yuanqi*), which moves back and forth in the channels of the eyes. It is the drive for the physiological activities of the eyes. It is rooted in the Kidneys (*shen*). The true qi (*zhenqi*) ceaselessly rises, descends, exits and enters. Thus there is a continuous stream of essence (*jing*), of blood (*xue*) and of fluids (*jinye*) upwards, entering and nourishing the eyes. Furthermore the energetic condition of qi has an effect on the pupil width and on the vision. If the true qi (*zhenqi*) can flow strongly and freely in the eye, the vision is clear. On the other hand, in case of deficiency and blockages, diseases of the eyes may occur. If the qi is damaged, the vision becomes blurred.

3.1.3 The True Blood (*zhenxue*)

True blood (*zhenxue*) refers to the blood (*xue*) streaming upwards into the eyes. It not only has a nourishing effect, but it also may carry qi and accompany the fluids (*jinye*) upwards into the eyes. True blood (*zhenxue*) may also turn into "true water" (equivalent to Kidney yin, *shen-*

- Congestive conjunctival changes possibly with vascular constriction or with pale red blood vessels
- Tense, dry and aching eyes
- Oedematous, dark purple coloured eyelids
- Painful spasms of the blood vessels in the head and eye area.

Summerheat (*shu*)

Summerheat (*shu*) primarily occurs in summer and can cause the following symptoms:

- Hyperaemia and oedemata of the conjunctiva and the eyelids
- Visual impairment.

In those with concomitant symptoms of heatstroke (*zhongshu*), an affection by a summer-heat pathogen (*shuxie*) is present.

Dampness (*shi*)

In cases of protracted, difficult-to-treat illnesses a dampness pathogen (*shixie*) should be taken into consideration. In the eye area it clinically manifests itself as follows:

- Local swelling of the eyelid
- Simultaneously weeping, itching and uncomfortable heaviness
- Increased lymph follicles of the palpebral conjunctiva
- Protracted keratitis
- Scleral icterus
- Oedemata and exudates in the area of the ocular fundus.

Dryness (*zao*)

Dryness (*zao*) easily damages the active fluids (*jin*) and consumes the constructive fluids (*ye*). Hence in cases of eye diseases with uncomfortable itching and dryness of the eyes due to slight conjunctival hyperaemia first a dryness pathogen (*zaoxie*) should be taken into consideration. Illnesses caused by a dryness pathogen (*zaoxie*) commonly occur in autumn. Primarily affected are the elderly (mostly women) with a weak constitution. The following clinical symptoms will occur:

- Dryness of the eyes
- Dry secretion with itching
- Low-grade conjunctival hyperaemia
- Low-grade hyperaemia and dryness of the eyelid skin
- Dryness of the eyelid margin with scales
- Punctate lesions of the surface of the cornea.

6.10 Diseases of the Orbita – Endocrine Orbitopathy

Western Perspective: Clinical Picture and Therapy

Clinical Picture

- Endocrine orbitopathy, also known as Graves' orbitopathy, is an autoimmune disorder, which frequently occurs in conjunction with Graves' disease, a type of hyperthyroidism caused by an auto-immune attack
- Subjective symptoms may include foreign body sensation, double vision or diminished visual acuity
- Endocrine orbitopathy presents as myositis of some or all extraocular muscles, which in its later stage may lead to fibrosis, as well as an inflammation and spreading of the retrobulbar tissue
- It can lead – to a varying extent – to a retraction of the upper eyelids, eyelid oedema, exophthalmus (protrusio bulbi), affections of the conjunctiva and the cornea, increased intraocular pressure (especially when looking upwards), restricted motility accompanied by double vision as well as compression of the optic nerve
- Several stages can be differentiated depending on the clinical findings
- Often insidious onset and progression; stabilisation after several months to approximately 3 years
- Generally a bilateral disorder, but often also asymmetric
- Most commonly seen in women between 30-50 years of age
- Smoking is an important risk factor
- Endocrine orbitopathy is the most common cause of exophthalmus
- Diverse differential diagnoses: numerous, e.g. orbital tumours, motility disorders of a different genesis (for example due to pareses of the brain nerves)

Conventional Western Therapy

- Systemic treatment if in conjunction with a thyroid disorder; sometimes selenium therapy
- For only minor ophthalmic changes: local symptomatic therapy (for example with ocular lubricants)
- For advanced cases depending on the symptoms:
 - Systemic treatment with corticosteroids
 - Orbital radiation therapy
 - Surgical treatment for impaired motility
 - Surgery for orbital decompression
 - Possibly treatment with immunosuppressive agents such as ciclosporin

CAUTION: Due to the potential for severe complications and the diverse diagnostic differentiation, accompanying Western ophthalmological care is essential.

Chinese Medicine Perspective: Clinical Features and Therapy

Overview

Chinese medicine classifies exophthalmus as "From the Eye Cavity Protruding Pearl" (*Zhu tuchu kuang*) and as "Protruding Eye Pearl" (*Muzhuizi tuchu*). These terms summarise all orbital changes that may lead to this clinical picture (for example tumours, inflammatory orbital disorders etc.). However, in this section we only focus on the Chinese medicine patterns relevant to the Western diagnosis of endocrine orbitopathy/Graves' orbitopathy.

Pathogenic Factors and Pathogenesis

Based on a differential diagnosis we can distinguish the following patterns:

- A Stagnant Liver qi (*ganqi*) rebels upwards into the eye cavities, obstructing the primary channels and network vessels (*jingmai luomai*).
- B Spleen deficiency (*pixu*) leads to the formation of dampness and phlegm (*shi tan*), which rise upwards and obstruct the primary channels and network vessels (*jingmai luomai*) in the eye cavity, leading to the disorder described above.

Differential Chinese Therapy

A Stagnation of Liver qi (*ganqi*)

Main symptoms

- Slowly progressing disorder, which may lead to exophthalmus. Accompanying symptoms may include eyelid erythema or eyelid oedema, in severe cases also impaired motility of the eyes.
- Possible general symptoms: nervousness, irritability, palpitations, spontaneous sweating, dizziness, disturbed sleep, ravenous appetite, tremors of the hands, swelling of the neck
- Tongue: puffy edges, possibly increasing redness
- Pulse: wiry and rapid (*xian shu*)

Pathophysiology

- Depressed Liver qi (*ganqi*) cannot flow freely nor can it spread smoothly, it rebels upwards and penetrates the eye cavities, blocking the primary channels and network vessels (*jingmai, luomai*). As a result, qi and blood (*xue*) become stagnant and may force the eyeball to protrude to a varying degree from the eye cavity.
- Liver qi (*ganqi*) may over-act on the Spleen (*pi*, earth phase), causing eyelid oedemata.

- The stagnant Liver qi (*ganqi*) may prevent the Lung qi (*fei qi*) from dispersing and descending, as a result the qi mechanism will become disharmonious, manifesting as oedematous conjunctiva.
- If Liver qi (*ganqi*) has been stagnant over a period of time it can turn into heat (*re*) and fire (*huo*). The wood phase may then transmit the heat (*re*) to the Heart (*xin*), resulting in symptoms such as nervousness, irritability, palpitations, disturbed sleep, dizziness and spontaneous sweating. Heat (*re*) can also affect the middle burner (*zhongjiao*) causing a ravenous appetite. If the Liver qi (*ganqi*) is stagnant, the Liver (*gan*) can no longer govern the muscles and tendons (*jinmai*), manifesting in symptoms such as tremors of the hands. Stagnant qi may further accumulate in the Liver channel (*gan jing*) causing swelling of the neck.

Treatment principle

1. Course the Liver (*gan*)
2. Regulate the qi flow and disperse nodules

Herbal prescription

Principal formula: Escape Restraint Pill (*Yueju wan*), modified; administration as decoction

Herb (the ingredi- ents of the principal formula are placed on a dark background)	Pinyin	Classical daily dose (g)	Modified daily dose (g)	Commentary
Atractylodis rhizoma	<i>Cangzhu</i>	3–10	5	Dries dampness (<i>shi</i>), strengthens the Spleen (<i>pi</i>)
Cyperi rhizoma (processed)	<i>Xiangfu</i>	6–15	10	Moves the qi, courses the Liver (<i>gan</i>), eliminates stagnation
Ligustici rhizoma	<i>Chuan- xiong</i>	1–10	6	Invigorates the blood (<i>xue</i>), eliminates stasis
Massa medicata fermentata	<i>Shenqu</i>	6–15	10	Strengthens the Spleen (<i>pi</i>), relieves constraint caused by food stagnation
Gardeniae fructus (fried)	<i>Zhizi</i>	3–10	6	Clears heat (<i>re</i>), drains fire (<i>huo</i>)
Leonuri herba	<i>Yimucao</i>	10–30	10	Cools the Liver (<i>gan</i>), disperses stasis
Chrysanthemi aureus flos	<i>Huangju- hua</i>	3–15	12	Cools the Liver (<i>gan</i>), eliminates feelings of tension
Coptidis rhizoma	<i>Huanglian</i>	1–10	3	Clears heat (<i>re</i>), drains fire (<i>huo</i>)
Citri reticulatae viride pericarpium	<i>Qingpi</i>	3–10	4.5	Moves the qi, courses the Liver (<i>gan</i>), removes stagnation

Commentary: In combination, these herbs course the Liver (*gan*), regulate the qi flow and disperse nodules.

Dietary therapy

Basic dietary recommendations dependent on diagnosis:

Beneficial: Foods that regulate the qi flow of the Liver (*gan*) (for example celery, water chestnuts, kumquat)

Avoid: Fatty dishes

Acupuncture

The point prescription should be based on a differential diagnosis (depending on the patient's symptoms the inclusion of further points not listed below might be necessary; for treatment methods and techniques -> chapter 5.1 and chapter 6, introduction):

Point	Pinyin	English translation of the Chinese name	Commentary
Local Acupuncture Points			
ST-8	<i>touwei</i>	Head's Binding	Supports and regulates the Liver and Gall Bladder (<i>gan dan</i>)
BL-2	<i>cuanzhu</i>	Gathered Bamboo	Clears vision, unblocks the network vessels (<i>luomai</i>)
BL-10	<i>tianzhu</i>	Celestial Pillar	Opens the network vessels (<i>luomai</i>), transforms dampness (<i>shi</i>)
SJ-23	<i>sizhukong</i>	Silken Bamboo Hollow	Moves the blood (<i>xue</i>), regulates the qi
GB-1	<i>tongziliao</i>	Pupil Crevice	Clears vision
GB-12	<i>wangu</i>	Mastoid Process	Regulates the Liver qi (<i>ganqi</i>)
GB-15	<i>toulinqi</i>	Head Governor of Tears	Supports and regulates the Liver and Gall Bladder (<i>gan dan</i>)
GB-16	<i>muchuang</i>	Window of the Eye	Supports and regulates the Liver and Gall Bladder (<i>gan dan</i>)
GB-18	<i>chengling</i>	Support Spirit	Regulates the Liver qi (<i>ganqi</i>)
GB-20	<i>fengchi</i>	Wind Pool	Clears vision, disperses wind (<i>feng</i>)
DU-17	<i>naohu</i>	Brain's Door	Supports and regulates the Liver and Spleen (<i>gan pi</i>), leaches out dampness-heat (<i>shire</i>)
EX-HN-5	<i>taiyang</i>	Supreme Yang	Clears the eyes

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