

THE EYES AND FEET

(Collated by Michelle Wilkinson www.movingnaturally.co.uk)

The eyes can be seen as an organ of time as they register the light during the 24-hour daily cycle. They regulate between the yang of daily activities to the rest, reflection and stillness found in the yin of sleep.

Vision helps humans to see the bigger picture of a situation contrary to the expression *I can't see the wood for the trees*. This enables the selection of an appropriate course of action. This can be at a practical, physical level as well as the intellectual level of far-sighted planning and decision-making. Equally, there is the intuitive level whereby through thoughts/images insight is gleamed.

Eyes are regarded as windows to the world. However, they express every emotion and feeling which is being inwardly experienced. Interestingly, the facial tissues of the embryo grow out of the heart. Shy people can be seen to lower their gaze away from the world.

The movement of the eyes organises body movement.

The anatomy of the eye is like the structure of a camera. The cornea is the lens at the front with an additional lens behind to adjust the focus. The iris controls the aperture while the pupil has control over the amount of light entering the eye. At the back of the eyeball the retina is the light-sensitive sensor inner lining.

The functioning of the eye depends on the cleanliness of the cornea, lens and the eye fluids which allow the light through. The cornea must remain wet to preserve the surface smoothness while the lens needs to adjust its shape responsively to focus on objects which may be either near or far away. Retina cells need to remain healthy and receptive to the light falling upon them.

The occipital lobe of the brain is the primary visual centre.

There is a strong connection between the eyes and the brain. The eyes gather and process information whether from the organs themselves or messages sent from the earth which travel up through the feet, legs and torso back to the eyes.

In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) there is a Yin and Yang energy channel that links the eyes and the feet; named the Heel or Stepping Vessel (Qiao Mai).

These energy vessels are fast moving and act as a first line of response in the Automatic Nervous System (ANS) which is divided into the Sympathetic (SNS) and Parasympathetic Nervous System (PNS). There are different responses. The *Freeze Response* involves the Dorsal Vagus Nerve and is part of the Parasympathetic Nervous System (PNS). The *Social Engagement Response* includes the Ventral

Vagus Nerve and is also part of the PNS. In the Sympathetic Nervous System there is the familiar *Fight Flight Response*.

There is an acupressure point BL1 'Eye Brightness' located in the corner of each eye, just above the inner canthus near the bridge of the nose. It is near the pituitary gland, a master hormone gland which is linked to the adrenal and reproductive systems.

The acupressure points along the Heel or Stepping Vessels run close to the bones and regulate joints and ligaments of the heels, legs, hips, shoulders, arms and skull. Most of the points are on the feet and the head which allow humans to see where they are travelling.

These Vessels are linked to the tendons which join the muscles to the bones and provide action for our daily activities.

Each foot has 26 bones. There are 14 toe bones known as phalanges, 5 metatarsals from the toes in the body of the foot. Next to these there are 7 pebble-like bones including the large heel bone, the calcaneus.

In the womb the heels of the embryo grow out of the pelvis. This creates a strong connection between the feet and the pelvis which enables people to move forwards in their life, they are taking their *best foot forwards*.

When humans walk, they take steps making a transition from one place to another, a stepping into the unknow. It requires the ability to adjust and adapt to life's changes and with each step make a new reality.

When stepping weight shifts into the inner three toes starting with the large toe to move a person forward and give the action of taking off. Weight shifts into the outer two toes when landing the foot and walking backwards.

The feet are our means to connect with the earth, to find our ground, be solid in the direction taken and secure in our relationship with the world.