

Diagnostic Methods

AMCollege

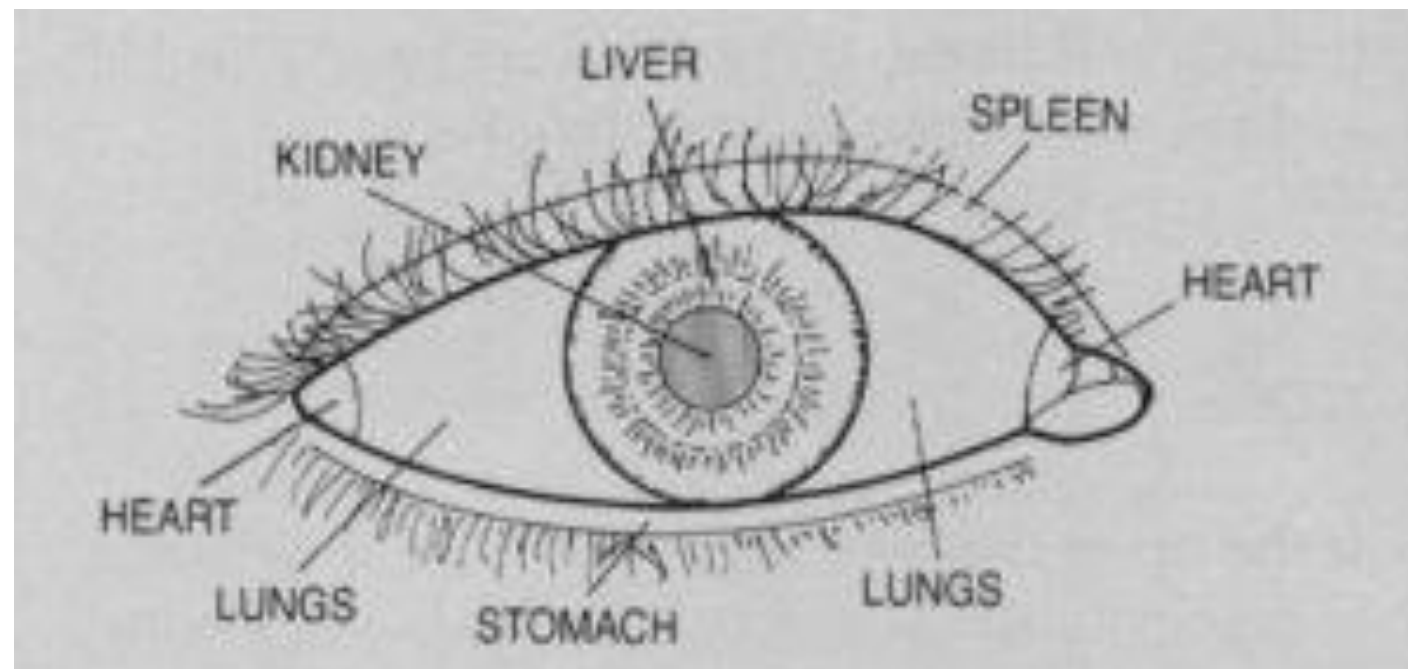
Observation 2

DME class 2 & 3

EYES

- The eyes reflect the state of the Mind and the Essence.
- If the eyes are clear and have glitter, they indicate that the Mind and the Essence are in a good state of vitality.
- If the eyes are rather dull or clouded, it shows that the Mind is disturbed and the Essence has been weakened.

- Different parts of the eye are related to different organs.
- The corners of the eye are related to the Heart, the upper eyelid to the Spleen (or to the Greater Yang channels), the lower eyelid to the Stomach, the sclera to the Lungs, the iris to the Liver and the pupil to the Kidney.



- These are sometimes called the “5 Wheels”
- Blood Wheel = canthi
- Flesh Wheel = eyelid
- Qi Wheel = sclera
- Wind Wheel = iris
- Water Wheel = pupil

- A red colour in the corners of the eye indicates Heart-Fire
- A red colour in the sclera indicates Lung-Heat.
- A yellow colour of the sclera indicates Damp-Heat.

- If the whole eye is red, painful and swollen, it indicates either an exterior invasion of Wind-Heat or rising of Liver-Fire.
- A dull white colour of the corners indicates Heat and a pale-white colour indicates Blood deficiency.
- A swelling under the eyes indicates Kidney deficiency.

NOSE

- If the tip of the nose is green or blue it indicates abdominal pain.
- If it is yellow it indicates Damp-Heat.
- A white colour indicates Blood deficiency.
- Red indicates Heat in Lung and Spleen.
- If it is grey it indicates an impairment of Water movement.

- Greenish bridge of nose: Liver Qi stagnation
- Greyish or dark bridge: Liver Blood stasis
- Red bridge: Liver Fire

- If the nose is slightly moist and shiny, it indicates that any disease there might be is not serious.
- If it is dry, it indicates Heat in the Stomach or Large Intestine.
- If it is dry and black, it indicates the presence of Fire-Poison.

- A clear-watery discharge from the nose indicates a Cold pattern; a thick-yellow discharge indicates a Heat pattern.
- Flaring of the nostrils in a person with high fever indicates extreme Heat in the Lungs.

EARS

- A white colour of the ears indicates a Cold pattern while a Bluish or black colour indicates pain.
- If the ear lobes are dry, withered and black, they indicate extreme exhaustion of Kidney-Qi.

- The ear lobes are an indicator in assessing prognosis:
- if they are shiny and slightly moist, the prognosis is good;
- if they are dry and withered, the prognosis is bad.

- Swelling and pain in the ear (or middle ear) is usually due to Fire in the Lesser Yang channels.
- The shape of the ear also helps to distinguish Full from Empty patterns: a swollen ear indicates the presence of a pathogenic factor, hence a Full pattern.

- A thin ear indicates deficiency of Qi or Blood.
- Apart from the above signs, the shape and size of the ear lobe is related to one's constitution and Kidney energy in Chinese facial diagnosis.
- A long and full lobe is indicative of strong Kidneys and good constitution; a thin and small lobe is indicative of a rather poor constitution.

MOUTH AND LIPS

- The normal colour of the lips should be pale-red and rather moist and shiny.
- If they are very pale, they indicate Emptiness of Blood or Yang.
- If they are too red and dry, they indicate Heat in the Spleen and Stomach.

- If the lips are purple or bluish, they indicate stasis of Blood.
- If they are dry and red, it indicates that the Heat has begun to injure the body fluids.

- If the mouth is always slightly open it is a sign of an Empty pattern.
- If the person only breathes through the mouth, it indicates a deficiency of Lung-Qi (unless of course, it is due to a blocked nose).
- A greenish colour around the mouth indicates stasis of Liver-Blood and invasion of the Spleen by Liver-Qi.

TEETH AND GUMS

- The teeth are considered an "extension of the bones" and are under the influence of the Kidneys.
- The gums are under the influence of the Stomach.

- Moist teeth indicate a good state of the body fluids and Kidneys; dry teeth indicate exhaustion of fluids and deficiency of Kidney- Yin.
- If the teeth are bright and dry like a stone, it indicates Heat in the Bright Yang (in the context of exterior diseases).
- If they are dry and greyish like bones, it indicates Empty-Heat from Kidney-Yin deficiency.

- If the gums are swollen and painful and perhaps bleeding, it indicates Heat in the Stomach.
- If there is no pain, it indicates Empty-Heat.
- If the gums are very pale, it indicates deficiency of Blood.

THROAT

- Acute pain, redness and swelling of the throat: exterior Wind-Heat or
- Chronic pain redness and swelling: Stomach Heat
- If the throat is only sore and dry but not swollen and red, it indicates deficiency of Lung & Kidney-Yin with Empty-Heat.

- Erosion, redness and swelling: Toxic Heat
- Erosion, yellowish red and swelling: Full Heat in Stomach and Intestines.
- Chronic Erosion: Empty Heat
- Chronic Erosion with ulcers having raised hard edges: Blood stasis + Phlegm Heat

- **Tonsils**
- Swollen, normal color: Phlegm or Damp + Qi Deficiency
- Chronic red swollen: Heat in ST/LI or Empty Heat in Lung channel
- Acute red swollen: Wind Heat + Toxic Heat

LIMBS

- A healthy colour and a firmness of the flesh around ankles and wrists indicates a good state of the body fluids.
- If the skin on these joints lacks lustre and is dry and the flesh shrivelled, it indicates exhaustion of Body Fluids.

- Swollen joints of four limbs: Wind-Damp Obstruction (Bi syndrome)
- If joints red and hot: Damp Heat
- Flaccidity: may be Lung Heat, Spleen-Stomach Damp Heat, or Deficiency of Spleen-Stomach or of Kidney Yin

- Rigidity of limbs: May be
- Liver Wind or Yang Rising
- Liver-Kidney Yin Deficiency
- If joint pain & swelling: Dampness or Phlegm
- With pain worse at night: Blood stasis

- Paralysis: May be
- Spleen-Stomach Deficiency
- Qi & Blood Deficiency
- Liver-Kidney Yin Deficiency
- Dampness, Blood Stasis or Wind-Phlegm

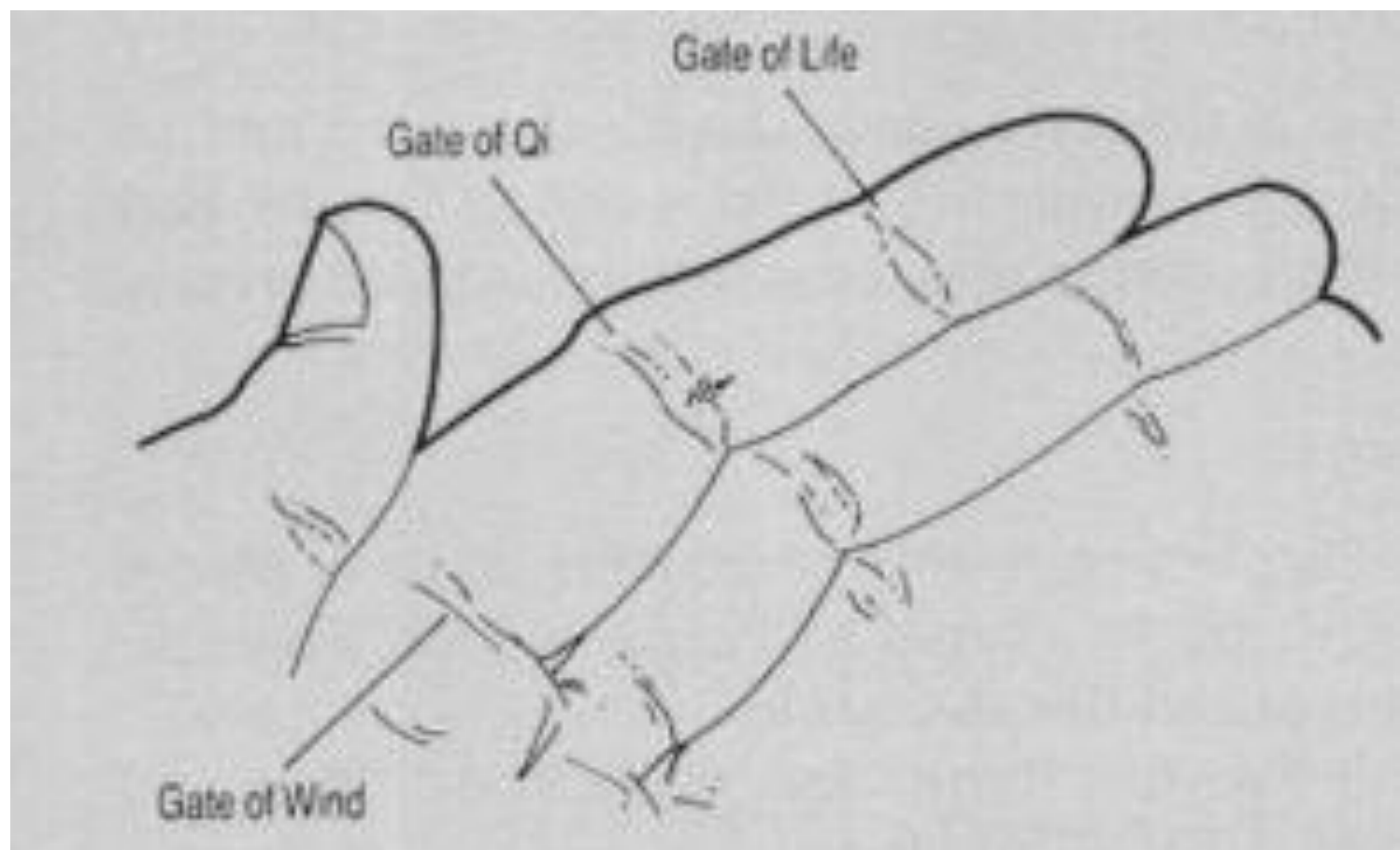
- Tremors/Spasms: Liver Wind
- Fine tremors: Liver Blood Deficiency or Liver-Kidney Yin Deficiency
- Qi & Blood Deficiency

- Nails:
- Pale nails indicate deficiency of Blood;
- Bluish nails indicate stasis of Blood (of the Liver).

- The thenar eminence shows the state of the Stomach.
- A bluish colour of the venules on the thenar eminence of the thumb indicates Cold in the Stomach.
- Bluish and short venules indicate an Empty pattern.
- Red venules indicate Heat in the Stomach.

- Examination of the venules on the index fingers of children under 2 is used for diagnosing infants.
- Usually the left index finger is examined in boys and the right one in girls.

- The creases at the metacarpo-phalangeal articulation and interphalangeal articulation are called "gates",
- the first one at the base being the "Gate of Wind",
- the second one the "Gate of Qi",
- the third one the "Gate of Life"



- If after rubbing the finger towards the body, venules appear only beyond the "Gate of Wind", this indicates an invasion by an exterior pathogenic factor and a mild disease.
- If the venules extend beyond the "Gate of Qi" this indicates an interior and rather more severe disease.

- If they extend beyond the "Gate of Life", this indicates a serious and life-threatening disease.
- Furthermore, if the venules are bluish they indicate a Cold pattern, if they are red they indicate a Heat pattern.

SKIN

- The skin is physiologically related to the Lungs within the 5-Element model.
- However, it is also related to the condition of Blood and, through this, to the Liver.
- So, not all skin diseases are related to the Lungs.

- Many skin conditions are due to Heat or stasis of Blood and are related to the condition of the Liver.
- Furthermore, Heat in the Blood can also derive from Stomach-Heat so that some skin diseases are related to the Stomach.
- Dry skin usually indicates deficiency of Liver-Blood, whilst itchy skin is due to Wind.

- A swelling of the skin which leaves a mark on pressure with a finger indicates edema.
- This is called true oedema in Chinese Medicine, or "Water oedema", and is due to deficiency of Kidney-Yang.
- If on pressure with a finger, no mark is left on the swollen skin, this is called "Qi oedema" and is not a true oedema.
- The swelling is caused by stagnation of Qi.

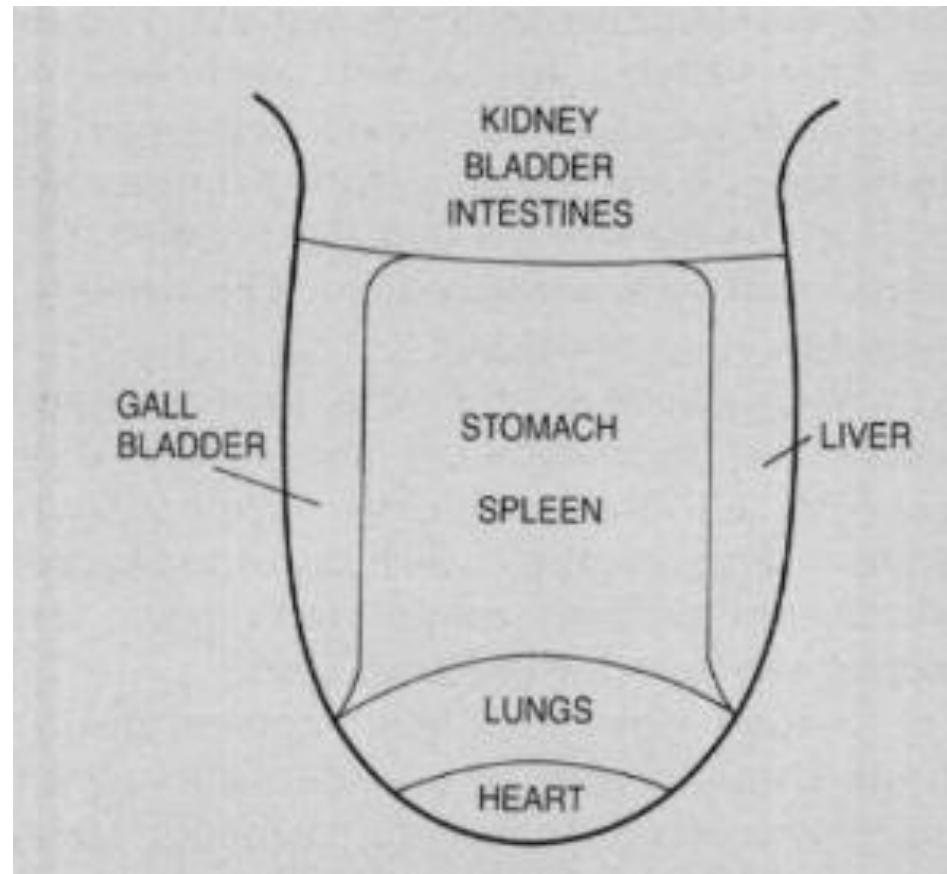
- A yellow colour of the skin may indicate jaundice and two different shades are distinguished.
- A bright and clear yellow colour indicates "Yang jaundice" which is due to Damp-Heat.
- A dull-yellow colour indicates "Yin jaundice" which is due to Damp-Cold.

- The venules which frequently appear on the skin are considered to be an exterior manifestation of the Blood-Connecting channels.
- They indicate a state of Fullness of the secondary Connecting channels.
- If they are red they indicate Heat, if bluish they indicate cold, if greenish they indicate pain and if purple they indicate stasis of Blood.

TONGUE

- Observation of the tongue is a pillar of diagnosis because it provides clearly visible clues to the patient's disharmony.
- Tongue diagnosis is remarkably reliable: whenever there are conflicting manifestations in a complicated condition, the tongue nearly always reflects the basic and underlying pattern.

- Observation of the tongue is based on four main items: the tongue body colour, the body shape, the coating and the moisture.
- Body colour indicates the conditions of Blood, Nutritive Qi and Yin organs
- Body shape indicates the state of Blood and Nutritive Qi
- Coating indicates the state of the Yang organs
- Moisture indicates the state of the Body Fluids.



- Various areas of the tongue reflect the state of the internal organs.

- **Tongue-body colour**
- The normal body colour should be pale-red.
- The body colour reflects the state of Blood and Nutritive Qi and the Yin organs.
- There are five pathological colours: Pale, Red, Deep-Red, Purple, and Blue.

- **Pale**

- A Pale body colour indicates either deficiency of Yang or deficiency of Blood.
- In deficiency of Yang the tongue is also usually slightly too wet and swollen.
- In deficiency of Blood the tongue tends to be somewhat dry.
- If the sides of the tongue are especially Pale, or in severe cases slightly orangey, it indicates Deficiency of Liver-Blood.

- **Red**
- By "Red" is meant too red.
- A Red tongue body always indicates Heat. If the tongue has a coating, it indicates Full-Heat; if there is no coating, it indicates Empty-Heat.
- A Red tip, usually on a Red tongue, indicates Heart-Fire or Heart Empty-Heat, according to whether the tongue has a coating or not.
- In severe cases, the tip can also be swollen and have red points on it.

- Red sides indicate Liver-Fire or Gall-Bladder Heat (with coating); Liver Yin Deficiency (without coating)
- In severe cases they may also be swollen and display red spots.
- A Red centre indicates Stomach-Heat.

- These are raised papillae and always indicate Heat; if they are rather large, in addition to Heat, they also indicate stasis of Blood.
- Red points or spots are frequently seen on the tip (Heart-Fire), on the sides (Liver-Fire), on the root (Heat in the Lower Burner) and around the centre (Stomach-Heat).

- **Deep-red**
- This is simply a shade darker than Red and its clinical significance is the same as for the Red tongue, except that the condition is more severe.

- **Purple**
- A Purple tongue always indicates stasis of Blood. There are two types of Purple colour: Reddish-Purple and Bluish-Purple.
- A Reddish-Purple tongue indicates Heat and stasis of Blood, and it develops from a Red tongue.
- A Bluish-Purple tongue indicates Cold and stasis of Blood, and it develops from a Pale tongue.

- A Purple colour on the sides indicates Liver-Blood stasis; in the centre, indicates Blood stasis in the Stomach.
- Bluish purple sides in women: Blood stasis in uterus
- Purple colour on the sides but only towards the middle section, and the sides are swollen and the rest of the tongue is bluish-purple, indicates stasis of Blood in the chest.

- **Blue**
- The significance of a Blue tongue is the same as a Bluish-Purple tongue, i.e. Interior Cold giving rise to stasis of Blood.

- **Tongue-body shape**
- The body shape of the tongue gives an indication of Blood and Nutritive Qi and it reflects the Full or Empty character of a condition.

- **Thin**
- A Thin body indicates either Blood deficiency if it is Pale, or Yin deficiency if it is Red and Peeled.
- In both cases, it indicates that the condition is chronic.

- **Swollen**
- A Swollen tongue that is also Pale indicates retention of Dampness deriving from Yang deficiency.
- If it is Red or normal-coloured, it indicates retention of Damp-Heat.

- **Stiff**
- A Stiff tongue usually indicates Interior Wind.
- **Flaccid**
- A Flaccid tongue indicates deficiency of Body Fluids.

- **Long**

- A Long tongue indicates tendency to Heat, and in particular Heart-Heat.

- **Short**

- A Short tongue indicates interior Cold if it is Pale and wet, or extreme deficiency of Yin if it is Red and Peeled.

- **Cracked**
- Cracks indicate either Full-Heat or deficiency of Yin.
- Short horizontal cracks indicate Stomach-Yin deficiency.
- A long-deep midline crack reaching the tip indicates a tendency to a Heart pattern.

- A shallow-wide crack in the midline not reaching the tip indicates Stomach-Yin deficiency.
- Short transversal cracks on the sides, in the middle section of the tongue, indicate chronic Spleen-Qi deficiency.

- **Quivering**

- A Quivering tongue usually indicates Spleen-Qi deficiency.

- **Deviated**

- A Deviated tongue indicates interior Wind.

- **Toothmarked**
- A tongue with teethmarks indicates Spleen-Qi deficiency.
- This is frequently called a “scalloped” tongue

Tongue coating

- The tongue coating reflects the state of the Yang organs and in particular the Stomach.
- A normal tongue should have a thin-white coating.

- The tongue coating is formed from some residual "dirty dampness" (AKA turbid dampness) which is left over from the Stomach's digestion and reaches the tongue upwards.
- Thus a thin-white coating indicates that the Stomach is digesting food properly.

- The coating gives an indication of the presence or absence of a pathogenic factor and of its strength.
- A thick coating always indicates the presence of a pathogenic factor and the thicker the coating the stronger the pathogenic factor.

- Such a pathogenic factor may be exterior or interior, such as exterior Wind, Dampness (interior of exterior), Cold, retention of Food, Phlegm, Heat, Fire.
- The absence of coating indicates deficiency of Stomach-Yin and / or Kidney- Yin.
- If the tongue is also red all over, it is a definite indication of deficient Kidney-Yin.

- The pathological coating colours can be: white, yellow, grey and black.
- White indicates a Cold pattern (unless of course, it is thin and white, in which case it is normal).
- Yellow indicates a Full-Heat pattern.
- Grey and black can both indicate either extreme Cold or extreme Heat, according to whether the tongue is wet or dry.

- **Moisture**

- The amount of moisture on a tongue gives an indication of the state of Body Fluids.
- Whenever the tongue is Red or Deep-Red, one should check the moisture: if the tongue is also dry, it means that the Heat has begun to injure the Body Fluids.

- A normal tongue should be very slightly moist, indicating that the Body Fluids are intact and are being properly transformed and transported.
- If the tongue is too wet, Yang-Qi is not transforming and transporting fluids and these accumulate to form Dampness.

- If it is dry, it may indicate either Full-Heat or Empty-Heat, according to whether the tongue has a coating or not.
- If the coating is sticky or slippery, it indicates retention of Dampness or Phlegm.



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- Chest areas of the tongue



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- Pale tongue body



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- Red tongue body



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- Red points on tongue sides



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- Reddish-purple tongue



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- Bluish-purple tongue



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- Swollen tongue



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- Swollen tongue sides (Liver area)



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- Swollen tongue sides (Spleen area)



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- Swollen Lung area



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- Stiff tongue



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- Stomach cracks



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- Heart crack



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- Stomach crack and rootless coating



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- Partially peeled tongue



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- Completely peeled tongue