Golden Flower Chinese Herbs

News Spring 2023

Dear Practitioner,

It was a winter of extremes—extreme moisture, extreme cold, and even extreme unusually mild temperatures. We wish you a happy Spring.

We hope that you will find our newsletter stimulating and useful. We have a lot of great articles in this issue.

I (John) have been interested in herbs since the 1970s. Finding out that local plants offered healing benefits was a revelation to my young mind. My curiosity grew as I started on the path of Chinese Medicine, which led me to found Golden Flower Chinese Herbs in 1990. You can learn more about my evolution as an herbalist on page 2.

We have heard wonderful reports of successful treatments with Chinese herbs. We would love for you to share your case studies with us and your colleagues. You can find more information on how to do this below and on page 6.

From John Heuertz, DOM we have an interesting article on the endocrine system from a TCM perspective, called "Endocrinology & Chinese Medicine – Part 1: Thyroid." You can find it on page 5.

Evelyn Robert, L.Ac has recently published a fantastic book on the effective use of essential oils using Chinese botanicals titled: *Chinese Medicine Essential Oils: A Materia Medica and Practical Guide to Their Use*. We have an excerpt from her book and an article, "The Use of Essential Oils in the Treatment of Memory, Mental Acuity & Dementia" on page 7.

We are thrilled to share an article from Andrew Sterman on a dietary approach to summer-heat. We love his work!

An effective way to increase access to acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine is to be united in supporting our national and state professional associations. By being a member of your state professional association, you are automatically a member of the American Society of Acupuncturists (ASA), our national association. The ASA is continuously working to improve patient access to acupuncture.

US House of Representatives member Judy Chu has introduced H.R. 4803 Acupuncture For Seniors Act. Allowing licensed acupuncturists to be Medicare providers would open access to tens of millions of US senior citizens who do not now have access. Remember that you personally would not be required to participate in Medicare. Please support the work of Dr. Kallie Byrd Guimond, MPH, OM.D, L.Ac and Founder of AcuCongress, our lobby group. Be aware that other medical professionals who are Medicare providers are performing acupuncture without the same training that you received.

Our newsletters past and present and the many papers that we have published are posted on our website. We offer them as a resource to you in gratitude for your business, feedback, and support.

Sincerely,

John Scott, DOM and Lorena Monda, DOM

Call For Case Studies

To showcase the effectiveness of our Golden Flower and KPC formulas, we are currently seeking case studies from practitioners like you who have successfully incorporated our products into their treatment plans.

We know that you're busy, but we truly believe that sharing your success with Chinese herbs will help others and contribute to the growth of Chinese medicine as a whole.

As an incentive, we are offering 20% off one future order of Golden Flower Formulas to anyone who provides a case study that we can feature on our website, newsletters, and social media channels.

Guidelines for Writing Your Case Study

1. Please use a format that will allow our staff to make needed editorial changes. You can use MS WORD and attach the file to your email or simply write in the body of the email itself.
2. Give a title to your Case Study
3. Use a fictitious first name (or first initial) only for your patient in order to be HIPAA compliant
4. Write the age and gender of the patient
5. In 2-4 sentences, describe the Case History
6. TCM Pattern Diagnosis (with medical diagnosis)

[Continued on page 6]

My Evolution as An Herbalist

John Scott, DOM

(John Scott has practiced acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine since 1982. Inspired by his love for Chinese herbs, and desire to create high-quality, effective, lab tested herbal products, he founded Golden Flower Chinese Herbs in 1990.)

In the mid-1970s, when I was in my 20s, I became curious about natural healing. I started hanging out at Herbs Etc. in Austin, Texas, a shop stuffed with herbs hanging from the ceiling and in jars, and various herbal preparations. On guided herb walks through town, it was fascinating to see plants with medicinal uses—like shepherd's purse—growing between the cracks in pavement and a multitude of other medicinal herbs growing along roadsides and in and places where people failed to weed.

In 1980, I met my first teacher of acupuncture and Chinese medicine. I was immediately intrigued by yin and yang, the five phases and the meridian system. The elegant way that the schematic fit together logically resonated and made so much sense to me. I was never interested in being a doctor, but the deeper I got with acupuncture and Chinese medicine the deeper there was to go, and seeing patients added to that profundity.

In the early 1980s, the Chinese herb books that were available in English were not very good for deeper learning. Pang's *Chinese Herbal: An Introduction* was pretty skimpy and the *Barefoot Doctor's Manual* was not very useful in the context of herbal products that were available in the US at that time. What we had was what was available in the Chinatowns of large cities in North America. Not being a Chinese speaker made sourcing herbal products from a Chinatown herb shop a bit tricky—you did not always get what you asked for, sometimes received things that you did not order, and labeling was sometimes lacking or absent.

When I started my practice in 1982, granules from Brion Herbs (Sun Ten) had just become available. The book titled *Commonly Used Chinese Formulas with Illustrations* by Hong-yen Hsu was my number one reference when using the Sun Ten formulas. I still have my original copy; its binding is frayed and coming apart. Dr. Hsu had studied in Japan and brought a Kampo flavor to his work. The "conformation patterns" were a bit like homeopathic patterns, different from the TCM perspective that we are familiar with today—although the more recent edition brings the TCM perspective to the same formulas that are available in the health care system in Taiwan.

The *Chinese Herbal Medicine Materia Medica*, compiled by Dan Bensky and Andrew Gamble with Ted Kaptchuk and published by Eastland Press in 1986, was a game changer for me and everyone interested in Chinese herbal medicine. It was followed in 1990 by *Chinese Herbal Medicine Formulas and Strategies*, compiled and translated by Dan Bensky and Randall Barolet. Other wonderful volumes by John and Tina Chen and other authors followed. Blue Poppy press published translations that have been valuable in making stronger foundational information on Chinese herbal medicine accessible. Needless to say, whenever a new book came out on herbal medicine, I eagerly poured over it.

When I started my practice in Austin Texas in 1982, I was the second acupuncturist in town. When one first starts out, one is not sure what herbal supplies would be useful for the patients who may show up. I would order some popular products like *Zheng Gu Shui*, White Flower Oil, *Tang Gui Gin* and other items from the San Francisco Bay area. I would order specific formulas from Brion as needed and built a little inventory. I was able to order the specific formulas that I thought I would need, trying to anticipate what would be needed, using my patients and coming seasons as guides.

Around 1986, I built up a raw herb pharmacy and started to dispense custom formulas. That was when and how my herbal development really started to deepen. Improved and more comprehensive herbal reference materials gave me deeper understanding and guidance. Using raw herb decoctions pushed me to a Spleen/Stomach School orientation, as raw herbs can challenge the digestive system more directly than prepared products (what some people call 'patent' remedies). It was fun and interesting to construct custom formulas. Inspired by Shen Nong, I would have an herb pot going for myself in the kitchen daily, testing out the effects of different combinations. When I would encounter a new formula, I would look it over to decipher what it was supposed to do. I would wonder, why is that herb in there? Then I would consult the *Materia Medica* to see how that herb fit in that formula.

Foundational Formulas

There are certain classic formulas that are the basis or springboard for many other formulas. In the *Shang Hun Lun*, for example, Cinnamon Twig Formula *(Gui Zhi Tang)*, Ephedra Formula *(Ma Huang Tang)* and Minor Bupleurum Formula *(Xiao Chai Hu Tang)* are the basis for nearly every formula in that foundational text. Modifications of these formulas are exceedingly common in Chinese Herbal medicine. Other examples of common formulas are Tangkuei Four Combination or Major Four Herb Formula *(Si Wu Tang)*, or Four Gentlemen Decoction *(Si Jun Zi Tang)* and Rehmannia Six Formula *(Liu Wei Di Huang Wan)*.

Let's consider Tangkuei Four Combination *(Si Wu Tang)*. It is the foundational blood tonic formula. This elegant four-ingredient formula is the base for many formulas relating to a function of the blood. These Chinese herbs are: prepared rehmannia root *(shu di huang)*, white peony root *(bai shao)*, angelica sinensis root *(dang gui)*, and ligusticum rhizome *(chuan xiong)*. Even seeing only two of these herbs in a formula will inform you that the formula relates to blood.

Four Gentlemen Decoction *(Si Jun Zi Tang)* is the foundational qi tonic formula. The four herbs are: ginseng root *(ren shen)* or codynopsis *(dang shen)*, white atractylodes rhizome *(bai zhu)*, Chinese licorice root *(gan cao)* and poria *(fu ling)* either together or in parts are in a majority of formulas relating to qi.

Rehmannia Six Formula *(Liu Wei Di Huang Wan)* is the basis for nearly every formula supporting the kidney. It is traditionally modified in many ways to accommodate the spectrum of kidney yin and yang issues. I have found that these simple formulas

are a wonderful place to start when thinking about Chinese herb formulas. Of course, there are hundreds of other formulas to consider. These formulas are so very elegant and make a good starting foundation in exploring Chinese herbal medicine.

Creating Custom Formulas

When considering a custom formula, I think about the best herb to include for a particular purpose. I found it very useful to dig into the "Summary of Comparative Functions" in Bensky's *Chinese Herbal Medicine Materia Medica*. This section compares and describes the functions of all the herbs in the particular sections of the *Materia Medica*. The end of each section has this discussion.

Likewise, *Chinese Herbal Medicine Formulas and Strategies* has a Comparative Tables of Principal Formulas at the end of each section of the book. This is a great way to evaluate formulas to select the most appropriate one for your patient. Most of the formula commentaries include suggestions on how to modify a formula to achieve a particular therapeutic goal. This tool is another great way to deepen your herbal skill. It will bring you back to your *Materia Medica* to reacquaint you with herbs that you may have gotten rusty on or forgotten about.

Some herbal practitioners give particular attention to specific constituent compounds in an herb to include in a formula or even prescribe as a single herb. My own perspective is to consider the qi of the herb—how do we need to support or redirect the qi or blood of the person? That is our goal: to redirect, build, invigorate, drain or harmonize the qi or blood so that the healing process can occur. The diagnostic foundation of Chinese medicine is pattern differentiation. Once we determine the pattern of disharmony and what needs to change, we can then be guided to an appropriate herbal approach. If the qi of the herb is right for the pattern, the herb will deliver the beneficial constituent compounds that it contains.

Encouragement

When I speak with practitioners new to Chinese herbal medicine I try and offer encouragement. At first, Chinese herbal medicine can seem overwhelming. There are hundreds of botanical and other substances used in Chinese medicine. Often beginning students feel intimidated with their early study of the *Materia Medica*. There is so much information to absorb. I found that being able to consider single herbs in the context of formulas gives a better basis for understanding the single ingredients. When entering the practice of Chinese herbal medicine, one must start somewhere. Once we get a toe hold, then we can build on our herbal knowledge and skill. For me, that path went from prescribing prepared formulas and custom raw herbal formulas to my patients to making classical formulations and developing modifications for Golden Flower Chinese Herbs—the company that I created in 1990 from my passion for herbal medicine.

Formula Modifications: Four Novel Golden Flower Formulas

Chinese herbal medicine is elegant and versatile. For me, it is a bit like music. One can change the flavor and the tone by dropping or adding particular herbs like notes or chords in a piece of music. Constructing custom raw herb decoctions gave me the confidence to develop modifications and novel formulas that would prove useful for the patterns I was seeing in my clinic and that I wanted to share with other practitioners. Let me discuss a few examples:

Jade Screen & Xanthium Formula *(Yu Ping Feng Jia Cang Er San)* This is a formula that has a base of Astragalus & Siler Formula commonly known as Jade Windscreen Formula *(Yu Ping Feng San)*. It is joined with the primary ingredients from Xanthium Formula *(Cang Er San)* and is augmented with red peony root *(chi shao)* and forsythia fruit *(lian qiao)*.

At the time when I developed this formula we lived in Austin, Texas. Central Texas has been called an "Allergy Capital of the World." Environmentally, central Texas is a meeting place for three distinct ecosystems—the coastal plains, the hill country, and the higher plains to the north. Because of diversity of plant life, there are always pollen and small particles dispersed by plants that cause irritation and allergic reactions. Jade Screen and Xanthium Formula (*Yu Ping Feng Jia Cang Er San)* proved to be a hit in Austin (and later, in other "allergy capitals" as well). Before "cedar fever season" here in New Mexico, for example, patients, friends (and friends of friends) ask for this formula to prepare their *wei* qi for the thick clouds of yellow juniper pollen that fill the air after cold snaps from December through April.

This formula has three synergistic components. Jade Windscreen Formula *(Yu Ping Feng San)* alone is often used to address allergic disorders. Because of its ability to support *wei* qi, it is ideal in combination with Xanthium Formula *(Cang Er San)*. The botanicals in *Cang Er San* have an affinity for the head and the face. This combination has proven to be very effective for sinus allergies due to inflammation, including congestion, facial pain, redness in the face and sinus area. Red peony root *(chi shao)* and forsythia fruit *(lian qiao)* are both cold by nature. Because of this, they help the body address the inflammatory response that is part of the allergic reaction.

Jade Screen & Xanthium Formula *(Yu Ping Feng Jia Cang Er San)* has also been useful in general inflammatory allergic reactions. On multiple occasions we have had house guests that were allergic to dander from animals with fur. When they used this formula while being our guests, they did not experience any discomfort from cohabitating with our cat.

Nourish Essence Formula *(Zi Jing Di Huang Wan)* is a modification of the Rehmannia Six Formula *(Liu Wei Di Huang Wan),* a formula for supplementing kidney and liver yin. The yin

of the kidney is the source of yin for the entire body. Historically, it is also one of the most commonly modified Chinese herbal formulas. In this modification, we added yin botanicals lycium fruit *(gou qi zi)* and prepared polygonum root (*zhi he shou wu)* that nourish blood. Also added were the yang herbs cistanches *(rou cong rong)*, cynomorium *(suo yang),* and cuscuta seed *(tu si zi)* to supplement yang and essence. We then included schisandra fruit *(wu wei zi)*, and palm-leaf rasberry fruit *(fu pen zi)* as astringent botanicals that retain the essence *(jing)*.

This modified version of Rehmannia Six Formula *(Liu Wei Di Huang Wan)* provides significantly more essence building substances than the classical version. It also helps one to hang on to the essence *(jing)* that has been supported with these modifications. I found this formula particularly useful in cases of habitual miscarriage due to deficiency of kidney essence *(jing).* People recovering from substance abuse often suffer from essence *(jing)* deficiency.

This formula is useful for frequent urination or any kind of leaky symptoms with kidney deficiency, when formulas with aconite *(fu zi)* are not appropriate. It is significantly more nourishing than Rehmannia Six Formula *(Liu Wei Di Huang Wan).* You may need to combine with a spleen qi supporting formula like Ginseng & Astragalus Formula *(Bu Zhong Yi Qi Tang)* if loose stools occur.

Sea of Qi Formula *(Qi Hai Yao Fang*) was designed to address spleen qi and kidney qi deficiency. A significant number of patients present with both patterns simultaneously. Often the commonly prescribed Rehmannia Six Formula *(Liu Wei Di Huang Wan)* will cause loose stools or diarrhea. The name *qi hai* relates to the lower *dan tien*, in particular the acupuncture point Ren 6 *(qi hai)*. We know that the interaction between the *ming men* and the area of *qi hai,* referred to as the moving qi of the kidney—is an essential basis of qi in the human body.

Attention given to the spleen qi prevents the accumulation of phlegm and dampness. Spleen support in this formula is based on the inclusion of: ginseng root *(ren shen)*, white atractylodes rhizome *(bai zhu)*, poria *(fu ling)*, and Chinese licorice root *(gan cao)*. You may recognize these botanicals as the most common basis of qi tonification. We have included dried ginger *(gan jiang),* tangerine peel *(chen pi)*, and vladimiria root *(chuan mu xiang)* to warm the middle burner and regulate qi. Chinese yam *(shan yao)* is a botanical that supports the essence of both the spleen and the kidney and does not place a heavy burden on the digestive function.

Chinese cuscuta seed *(tu si zi)*, corni fruit *(shan zhu yu)*, and psoralea fruit *(bu gu zhi)* are all botanicals that support the yang qi of the kidney without being cloying, like prepared rehmannia root *(shu di huang)*.

Alismatis rhizome *(ze xie)* is included to drain dampness and prevent the possible accumulation of fire. Chinese cinnamon bark *(rou gui)* tonifies both the spleen and kidney yang. It also anchors yang in the lower *dan tien*. I have successfully prescribed this formula for menopausal hot flashes due to yang deficiency. I have also prescribed this formula for clear vaginal discharge. You can see how this formula is constructed—it gives great respect to the spleen to support the kidney through supporting the assimilation function.

Persica & Cistanches Formula *(Tao Ren Cong Rong Wan)*
Over the years at Golden Flower, we have been forced to make changes due to either safety concerns, regulatory changes, or herb availability. The classic formula Hemp Seed Pill *(Ma Zi Ren Wan)* is used to treat constipation due to hard, dry, difficult to pass stools. This presentation can be common in debilitated and/or elderly patients. Times and attitudes have changed, but in the 1990s, importing formulas containing cannabis seed *(huo ma ren)* was problematic. We wanted a formula that would address this pattern of constipation. We didn't want to rely purely on purgatives, and it seemed wise at the time to avoid using cannabis seed *(huo ma ren)*. The formula needed to be lubricating to the large intestine. Our modified version of Hemp Seed Pill *(Ma Zi Ren Wan)* is Persica & Cistanches Formula *(Tao Ren Cong Rong Wan).* This formula moistens the intestines to encourage regular bowel movements. It is used for constipation from exhaustion of fluids or dryness, and good for patients who are weak or debilitated, especially if they are blood deficient. Because it is nourishing, it is safe for long-term use than Hemp Seed Pill.

Cistanches *(rou cong rong)* tonifies kidney yang and enriches the essence and blood, plus moistens the intestines. Angelicae Sinensis root *(dang gui)* both tonifies and invigorates blood and moistens the intestines and unblocks the bowels. Biota seed *(bai zi ren)* nourishes the heart blood and yin and moistens the kidney and large intestine. The combination of these three herbs covers the moistening property of cannabis seed *(huo ma ren)* plus other benefits of providing support to the kidney, heart and blood. This makes our Persica & Cistanches Formula *(Tao Ren Cong Rong Wan)* an improved substitute for Hemp Seed Pill *(Ma Zi Ren Wan).*

Chinese white peony root *(bai shao)* supplements blood, harmonizes the liver and spleen, and in combination with Chinese licorice root *(gan gao)* reduces the possibility of cramping and discomfort.

The rest of the herbs in this formula provide downward qi flow. There is a balance of cold and warm herbs in this function to minimize the possibility of stagnation while avoiding excessive harshness: Chinese rhubarb *(da huang)*, immature bitter orange *(zhi shi)*, magnolia bark *(hou po)*, persica seed *(tao ren),* apricot seed *(xing ren),* and bitter orange *(zhi ke).*

Because this formula includes herbs that support kidney yang, blood, and yin it is particularly appropriate for elderly and debilitated patients.

Since 1990, in collaboration with other Chinese herbalists, we have created 48 novel formulas, exclusive to Golden Flower Chinese Herbs and used by thousands of practitioners worldwide.

For more novel formulas only available from Golden Flower Chinese Herbs, go here:

https://go.gfch.com/b1d

Endocrinology & Chinese Medicine

Part 1: The Thyroid

John Heuertz, DOM

Endocrinology can be an elusive and confusing specialty for practitioners of Chinese medicine. The major glands and other tissues that produce and release hormones into the bloodstream are not classified in our medicine under any of the familiar categories. They are neither *zang* nor *fu* nor a curious bowel. We won't find a reference for "thyroid" or "pituitary" in an index of any modern edition of the *Neijing* or the *Shang Han Lun*. Nevertheless, patients seek out acupuncture and herbal medicine treatment for conditions that Western medicine categorizes as "endocrine," and we need to be prepared to help them.

Our medicine is always stronger when we work within the paradigms developed throughout its long history. Something tends to get "lost in translation" when we force an adaptation of a modern medical diagnosis like "hyperparathyroidism" upon our classical medicine by bending and twisting it until we find some way of making it fit. We are more effective practitioners when we diagnose and treat based on traditional pattern identification.

In Chinese medicine, all the functions of the body and every substance that the body produces, including hormones, falls under the governance of one or more *zang/fu.* An important key to working with endocrine disorders is to understand which *zang/fu* govern which endocrine structures. It is important to understand at the outset that hormones are either steroidal or nonsteroidal. Steroidal hormones are fat-soluble and non-steroidal hormones are water-soluble. Steroidal hormones belong to the y*uan/jing/ye* (thick fluids) level while non-steroidal hormones belong to the to the *wei/jin* (thin fluids) level. Non-steroidal hormones include thyroid hormones, insulin, adrenaline/epinephrin, prolactin, and growth hormone. Steroidal hormones include sexual hormones such as testosterone, estrogen, progesterone, and most adrenal hormones, such as DHEA, aldosterone, and cortisol. Steroidal hormones are supplemented with yin tonics and fats, while non-steroidal hormones are supplemented with herbs and diet that generate fluid production by the stomach.

In this and upcoming newsletters, we will present a series of brief discussions on pattern identification and the associate strategies of various endocrine disorders. Part 1 is a discussion of the **thyroid**.

The *zang/fu* that govern the thyroid are the lung and stomach. The stomach makes the thin fluids *(jin)*, and the lung governs the *wei* qi that circulates with the thin fluids *(jin)*. When the stomach yang is deficient, metabolism slows down: fluids are not generated in sufficient quantities, food is not broken down thoroughly, and sufficient body warmth cannot be generated. If the lungs cannot circulate the *wei* qi and thin fluids *(jin)* on the surface, the skin will dry out and the surface will always be cold. All the signs/symptoms of hypothyroidism can be explained by stomach yang deficiency and the weak or impeded distribution of *wei* qi and fluids by the lung. [Author's note: since the 1950s, "stomach yang" has been called "spleen yang." The two terms are virtually interchangeable. In this article we will stick with the older term for the sake of consistency.]

All hyperthyroid signs/symptoms can be accounted for in terms of pathological stomach fire. An excess of stomach fire in the thyroid results in too rich of a mix in the *wei* qi: yang > fluid. This yang excess at the surface can cause the skin to dry up and muscle mass to be consumed. The stomach fire in the abdomen causes symptoms like weight loss, even though the appetite may be big. The fire can cause restlessness and disturbed sleep. The person with hyperthyroidism can have the seemingly paradoxical symptoms of hyperactivity with fatigue. The hyperactivity comes from too much yang coming into the sinews and from the heart being disturbed by the fire. The fatigue can be the result of yang reserves being consumed instead of being available for conversion into qi, or it can be the byproduct of restlessness: the inability to renew and restore during sleep.

The thyroid gland is an axis of the *wei* qi. *Wei* qi physiology can be quite complex; it is supported by many mediums and functions: blood and other fluids can be converted into *wei* qi, good sleep and digestion of healthy food can support *wei* qi; stress can tax the *wei* qi . . . But the essential, unchanging components of *wei* qi are yang and thin fluids *(jin)*. As the need arises for *wei* qi, yang from the spine comes to the surface and combines with the thin fluids *(jin)* so that it can circulate. (*Wei* qi is dependent upon the thin fluids *(jin)* for conveyance the same way that *ying* qi is dependent upon blood.) In this context, the thyroid functions as a major conversion center where yang from the adrenals combines with thin fluids *(jin)* produced by the stomach and is synthesized into *wei* qi.

Both hyper- and hypo- thyroid conditions begin with pathogenic heat trapped in the throat. The heat pathogen can originate from the exterior, it can be the result of too much inflammatory foods in the diet, or it can be the result of stress transforming into heat. This heat causes the body to produce dampness in an attempt to cool it and prevent its spread. Over time the heat and the dampness combine and become turbidity, which accumulates in the throat. If the body wants to evaporate the turbidity, it will summon more yang into the throat. The extra yang entangled in the thyroid can cause it to hyperfunction. The thyroid can remain in this hyper state for a short or prolonged period. If the individual's constitution is generally weak, this extra expense of yang qi will eventually deplete the yang and the condition can transform from hyper-thyroid to hypo-thyroid.

Another scenario leading to hypothyroidism is one in which the turbidity accumulated in the thyroid creates a barrier, preventing the synthesis of yang into *wei* qi. Dampness is not thin fluid *(jin)* anymore. It is thin fluid *(jin)* that has been reassigned and is now part of the pathology rather than immuno-physiology. Damp encumbrance is usually an early stage of thyroid disease.

Because both the hyper- and the hypo- thyroid conditions can have the same core etiology of pathogenic heat and turbidity in the throat, most successful strategies for treatment involve some degree of "dredging" the thyroid. When moving out turbidity, it is essential to make sure that the pathways of elimination remain open. So, any formula for the thyroid should include, on the one hand, substances that transforms phlegm or resolve dampness and turbidity, and on the other, substances that facilitate urination.

An effective strategy for treating the thyroid with Chinese herbal medicine will include:

1) clearing pathogenic heat from the throat
2) facilitating the production of *jin* (thin fluids) by the stomach
3) resolving turbidity or phlegm or dampness
4) opening the bladder

Note that herbs that support the middle burner's production of fluids tend to be qi tonics that enter both the lung and the spleen/stomach channels. Therefore, whenever you are supporting the generation of fluids, you are also supplementing lung qi and the qi of the middle burner. In other words, the strategy of generating fluids can simultaneously address the fatigue.

Formulas for the Thyroid

Twin Shields Formula *(Shuang Dun Fang)* is an excellent base formula for supporting and regulating thyroid function.* It meets all 4 of our strategy requirments above. It augments the qi without creating excess heat. It generates fluids. It softens nodules, resolves phlegm, and clears heat in the throat; and it facilitates elimination of dampness via the bladder. In most simple cases of thyroid disease, it can be used by itself, but can be combined with other formulas to address specific patterns. For example, if there is chronic thyroiditis with nodules, combine with Phlegm-Transforming Formula. If pathogenic fire in the throat is the main issue, you can combine with **Yin Chiao Formula**. For "dead" thyroid, combine **Twin Shields Formula** with **Jing Qi Formula** or **Essential Yang Formula.**

Medicinal mushrooms have an affinity for endocrine structures and functions. You can always add mushrooms to a thyroid treatment strategy. Agaricus/button mushrooms and trametes versicolor/turkey tail are especially indicated for the thyroid. Both of these are part of **Five Mushroom Formula**, which also includes reishi/ganoderma *(ling zhi)*, cordyceps *(dong chong xia cao)*, and maitake/grifola. These other three mushrooms can address attendant symptomology of thyroid disease. The reishi/ganoderma *(ling zhi)* helps to calm the *shen*, settle restlessness, and enhance sleep; the cordyceps *(dong chong xia cao)* supports the yang and lung qi; and the maitake/grifola strengthens digestion and resolves dampness.

**Note that patients with certain autoimmune thyroid conditions, such as Graves' Disease and Hashimoto's Disease, may not tolerate the iodine content in Twin Shields Formula.*

Call for Case Studies (Continued from page 1)

Guidlines for Writing your Case Study

7. As briefly or as detailed as you wish, please give an account of your treatment plan for both acupuncture and herbs

8. What was the outcome of your treatment?

9. Add any comments you wish (Optional)

Sample Case Study

Fluctuating Hyper- and Hypo- Thyroid: A Case Study

by John Smith, L.Ac

Kimberly (not her real name), female, age 42

CASE HISTORY: Kimberly first came for treatment in June of 2021. She had a medical diagnosis of hyperthyroidism. For 4 weeks she has been feeling jittery and anxious everyday and she feels an insubstantial lump in her throat. It was the sensation of a lump that led her to seek a medical diagnosis. She first experienced the lump approximately 2-3 days after receiving her 2 dose of the Pfizer vaccine for COVID-19. She had a history prior to this of "borderline hypothryoidism."

DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT: Her pulses indicated pathogenic heat in the upper burner and that her body was drawing from constitutional resources. (This was determined from the fact that her pulse was much more medial than usual and followed my finger all the way up from the deep level.) My diagnosis was pathogenic stomach fire with lung qi not diffusing, causing the *wei* qi to stagnate. I perfromed a Kidney Divergent Channel treatment to release pathogenic heat from the thyroid and I prescribed Twin Shields Formula because it decongests the thyroid and tonifies qi qithout being warming. The patient reported that her swallowing was much improved immediately after the first treatment and remained in an improved state between treatments. I repeated the treatment a total of three times before the patient returned to her MD for further testing.

The second test showed that the thyroid levels were within normal range. Treatment was subsequently terminated by the patient, who was satisfied with the results. Three months later, the lump had not returned, but she began feeling very fatigued, weak, and "more vulnerable" than usual. Her next blood test showed that her condition had transformed from hyper- to hypo-thyroidism. I concluded that the pathogenic stomach heat had consumed the qi of the middle burner and created a deficiency from what began as an excess. I put her back on Twin Shields Formula and her energy began to come back the next day. She continues to take Twin Shields Formula because she has noted that if she stops, her fatigue returns and her labs become abnormal again.

To submit your case study, go here:

https://go.gfch.com/89y

The Use of Essential Oils in the Treatment of Memory, Mental Acuity & Dementia

By Evelyn Robert, LAc

The physiology of the sense of smell

Anatomically, the sense of smell has immediate access to the cerebral cortex. The nose is like an antenna picking up information from the outside world. Nerve endings in the nose are in direct contact with the outside. While inside of our bodies, the sense of smell has a direct connection to and immediate effect on the brain.

Receptor cells in the nose pick up messages and send them along sensory neurons, passing through a very thin, porous bone to enter the olfactory bulb, which sits just under the frontal lobe of the cerebral cortex behind the eyes. This pathway requires only two synapses to begin integration and interpretation of information from scents. It quickly shares that information with other areas involved in memory, emotion, metabolism, glandular stimulation, sexuality, and more. Substances influencing the nervous system can go directly from the nose to the brain, bypassing the blood. There is also a close connection between the olfactory bulb and the cerebral spinal fluid, which accounts for a direct influence on the spine and the nervous system. Inhalation is the most effective method to affect brain and nervous disorders such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, ADD, and mental illness.

Specifically regarding Alzheimer's, certain essential oils and their aromas have attributes which can help to stimulate and untangle the entorhinal sulcus in the hippocampus, the part of the brain which is initially affected and responsible for the first, early sign of Alzheimer's: loss of sense of smell, and later involved in problems with memory and mental clarity. Typical hallmarks of Alzheimer's disease, such as the presence of amyloid protein and neurofibrillary tangles, are seen primarily in the entorhinal sulcus in mild Alzheimer's disease and "spread" to the hippocampus and other cortical areas as the disease progresses. The term entorhinal, meaning inside rhinal (referring to nose) derives from the fact that it is partially enclosed by the rhinal sulcus where the olfactory bulb is located, therefore directly affected by aroma. Our sense of smell and memory are in close relationship.

Translated into the language of Chinese medicine, these "tangles" may be caused by turbid dampness leading to phlegm stagnation and by extension, states of dementia may be attributed to the TCM syndrome sometimes called phlegm misting the mind. The inhalation of essential oils derived from herbs which aromatically break up turbid dampness and phlegm and strongly open the sensory orifices with strong, sharp, and acrid, pungent aromas are ideal to assist in the treatment of disorders which affect memory and mental acuity.

One such Chinese medicine essential oil is acorus (*shi chang pu).* This herb has long been revered in Chinese Medicine for its ability to open the sensory orifices and resolve turbid dampness that can veil the senses causing mental fog and stupor, and benefit memory and mental capacity. A great deal of modern scientific research has demonstrated that asarone, one of the major chemical components of Acorus essential oil, has beneficial effects on memory, mental illness and the treatment of Alzheimer's.

Excerpt from Chinese Medicine Essential Oils by Evelyn Robert

Shi Chang Pu 石菖蒲
Acorus, Sweet-Flag (Acori tatarinowii Rhizoma)

Shi chang pu essential oil's strong, bright, and sharp aroma has an immediate effect on the brain, bringing a heady expansion which sharpens and focuses the mind and the senses. It can bring one back from sudden loss of consciousness or, used over time, it can improve memory and mental capacity. *Shi chang pu* awakens the spirit and expands consciousness. A little goes a long way in this regard and it can even have what might be called a "psychedelic" effect if overused, but when treated with respect, it can be a tool for meditation and spiritual practices.

According to the *Shen Nong Ben Cao Jing* (*Divine Farmer's Materia Medica), shi chang pu* is classified as a superior grade herb. The text says, "It opens the heart portals, supplements the five viscera, frees the nine orifices, brightens the eyes and sharpens the hearing. Continued use can make the body light, improve memory, prevent confusion, and prolong life. Its other name is *chang yang* (flourishing yang)."

Aroma: Bright, sharp, pungent, slightly sweet.
Note: Base.
Part of Plant: Rhizome.
Extraction Method: Distillation. **Color:** Copper.
Growing Region: Anhui Province, China. Harvested in midsummer.
Major Chemical Components: Phenols (Phenylpropanoids): β-asarone [32] ~60%-80%, α-asarone ~3-14%, eugenol, elemicin [27], eusarone, sekishone. Sesquiterpenes: caryophyllene, humulene. Aldehyde: asarylaldehyde.
CM Category: Aromatic Substances that Open the Orifices.
Nature and Taste: Acrid, bitter, warm, aromatic.
Affinities: Heart, Stomach. As essential oil, also Bladder, Liver, Gallbladder.
Average Dilution: 3-4%.
Cautions and Contraindications: External use or diffusion is recommended. Internal ingestion of Acorus essential oil is controversial due to its asarone component.
Pharmacological Actions: Sedative, antidepressant, cognitive, CNS suppressant, antiseizure, anticonvulsant, anti-Alzheimer's, psychedelic.

Actions and Indications:

- Pacifies the spirit.
- Harmonizes and promotes digestive function to transform dampness, vaporize phlegm, and remove turbidity.
- Unblocks the senses and revives consciousness as in the case of stroke, seizures, mania, stupor, delirium, and spasms.
- Improves sensory and cognitive functions and treats memory loss, dementia, confusion, dizziness, dulled senses, and aphasia.
- Sharpens the vision and hearing, for tinnitus, deafness, and visual obstruction.

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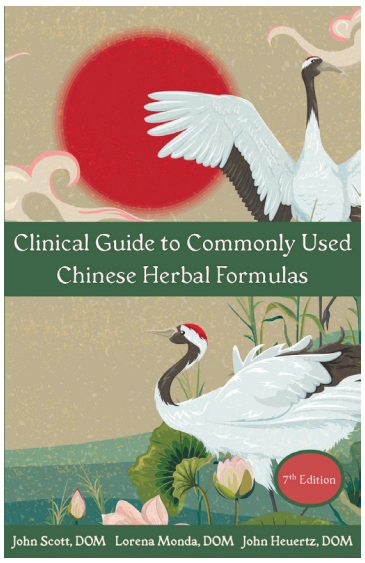

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Summer-Heat: A Dietary Approach within Chinese Medicine

By Andrew Sterman

Previously in this column we have considered dietary treatment for dampness, cold, heat, and wind, matching theory with recipes. The two remaining of the Six Climatic Factors in Chinese medicine are summer-heat and (internal) dryness. Although it may not be oppressively hot when you read this, let's now consider the climatic factor known as summer-heat and how to understand the dietary approaches to safely navigate through its challenges.

Summer-heat illness is a condition where heat becomes trapped within, as if we are under a humid blanket of fluid stagnation. With this condition, vulnerable individuals can't release heat through sweating or urination. Naturally, this is most dangerous during very hot weather. More than common dehydration, here the fluid system begins to seize up, leading toward a heat-induced stroke or heart attack. While a sustained heat wave is a most obvious cause, it is the inner state of health that is most important. As Zhu Dan-Xi writes, fluid stagnation trapped under damp heat can also occur in other seasons, without climatic heat as an obvious cause.

Summer-heat illness can take various forms based on a person's health vulnerabilities, food, and drink. All the internal organs are involved in fluid metabolism. Digestion (stomach, spleen-pancreas, small and large intestines) sorts, separates, transforms, transports, and manages fluids. The kidneys and bladder manage elimination of fluids. The lungs control sweat, with contribution from the stomach and management from the liver. The liver and heart manage blood, whose production begins in digestion. Fluid management engages all our systems. But it is through the lungs that the climatic factors enter, and therefore it is the lungs that must deal with climate challenges most directly.

Today we have access to strong air-conditioning and freely flowing ice-filled drinks, but if the fluid system is impaired, these attempts to cool during very hot weather can do more harm than good. Cold drinks send badly mixed signals to the body: "I was feeling hot, but now I am cold inside since I drank that icy drink. First thing I should probably do is close my pores to gather internal heat to warm up my esophagus, stomach, and upper intestines…oh, and the cold drink passed right by my lungs, and they feel cold, too." As the body closes the exterior, heat can become trapped. When strong, we can manage through, but it causes real problems for many (perhaps for everyone, eventually). The classical description of summer-heat illness includes the sensation of chills despite hot weather, with heat trapped by cold or dampness. In my own training, I have a vivid memory of Jeffrey Yuen explaining summer-heat from the perspective of the Song Dynasty Imperial Academy masters, paraphrased here:

Heat can be trapped by cold, and this becomes very serious. Cold drinks damage lung and kidney, constricting sweating and urination, leading to fluid stagnation, stagnation of the waterways. Dampness rises, pressure builds up, muscles become achy. It is very hot, but the person feels chills. Everything slows down, while pressure continues to build. This is serious. All due to resistance to the weather. If there is a season you "hate", that is an Earth element issue, a problem of belonging in the world as it is, and this focuses on stomach and spleen-pancreas. Food and drink are central here, but, it remains fundamentally an issue of the exterior.

Jeffrey Yuen is a great holder of extensive oral traditions within Chinese medicine (along with formally transmitted text-based scholarship). One of the clearest textual references for summer-heat illness is found in the writings of Zhu Dan-Xi (1281-1358 c.e.), the fourth of the Four Great Masters, following the peak of the Imperial Academy period. He describes summer-heat illness in chapter five of his *Dan-Xi Zhi Fa Xin Yao (Heart & Essence of Dan-Xi's Method of Treatment)*. [In this article I am quoting or paraphrasing from Yang Shou-zhong's translation, published in 1993 by Blue Poppy Press, currently out of print.] Zhu Dan-Xi explains, Summer-heat rages in summer months, and the qi of this exuberant heat can catch people who are susceptible during those months. There can be affliction and stroke.

Zhu Dan-Xi goes on to discuss different types of summer-heat, based on pre-existing problems and weaknesses. Skillful treatment must respond to an individual's condition to be successful. He reminds us that summer-heat can be of a yin or yang type, that is, the person is vulnerable because of deficiency, or deficiency with apparent excess. In the yin type, there is qi vacuity, loss of appetite, and declining energy ("I'll just rest here a moment longer.…") The individual slows down, speaks less often and more slowly, withdraws inward, has a profound thirst but may not wish to drink, being "too tired, maybe later…," or hesitant to have to wake in the night to urinate. Pulses are thin, empty, rapid, and weak. There can be nausea, chills, or diarrhea.

The yang presentation can include, in Zhu Dan-Xi's words, body heat, headache, agitation, restlessness, and a painful pricking sensation all over the body. Pulses can be weak, or large and surging. There can be night sweats or inability to sweat. Jeffrey Yuen recommends not to focus too much on the *zang-fu* pulse positions when screening for summer-heat illness. First, just check for floating or surging pulses, from

the moderate or upper levels (there will likely be a tight quality as well, if summer-heat is present). Then, pulse position focus can add important detail. If the liver pulse is tight, this can indicate that a person is not resolving the condition, their body has lost confidence in the outcome (and may require treatment, including some foods to relax liver qi and free the flow of blood. See below for recipes). Any chronic condition is likely to lead to a wiry liver pulse (liver governs the idea of predictability); the presence of a wiry liver pulse provides important information that the individual entered the heat wave with chronic deficiencies and responding tightnesses, making them more vulnerable to an emergency condition.

Zhu Dan-Xi is very clear that summer-heat can be resolved successfully if treated quickly, but if that window is missed, the illness set in motion can be fatal. This may sound dramatic, but it is precisely what is happening when fatalities occur among the elderly or vulnerable during heat waves. He reminds us that the practice of Chinese medicine should be radically individualistic; in fact, he resigned from the Imperial Academy with all its prestigious comforts precisely because he disagreed that patent formulas could be authentically applied without personal modification, a discussion still very much alive today with the current popularity of standardized patent herbal formulas and an increasing consistency of diet that ignores season, age, or health status. Zhu Dan-Xi writes, Treatments should always be based on specific assessment and diagnosis. Sometimes a more uplifting boost is needed (for the yin, vacuity type), or (for the more yang presentation) more aggressive cooling is needed.

As dietary clinicians, we need to be ready with preventive recommendations and also ways to treat those who may be in dangerous territory. Here is a summary of the strategies needed to treat the varieties of summer-heat illness. Again, ZDX: Whether of the yin or yang type, treating summer-heat illness should include clearing of fluid stagnation with some diuretic agent, replenishment of fluids, and use of cooling or bitter substances.

Looking at the various herbal formulas he recommends, the following dietary strategies emerge:

- Open the orifices and revive yang qi through aromatic kitchen herbs and spices.
- Drain dampness through diuretics.
- Renew fresh fluids with room temperature or slightly warm plain water, avoiding cold drinks, carbonated drinks, caffeine or alcohol.
- Strengthen the Middle (digestion) in order to resolve feeling stuck and uncertain, through simple, easy to digest, cooked meals.
- Nourish yin, restoring yin resources without creating dampness, through soups, good oils, eggs, root vegetables, nuts and seeds.
- Anchoring yang, if needed, through non-glutinous grains, lentils, adzuki or black bean soup, shellfish, duck, pork, root vegetables, nuts and seeds.

Once we know the appropriate strategies, we can design specific meals and drinks (special drinks have long been used as a pleasant and therapeutic game plan to avoid summer-heat problems). As always, meals should be individual applications of sustained strategies based on both general principles and specific diagnosis. Here are some samples to be adjusted and applied.

Stir-fry of celery, water chestnut, chopped radicchio, with gentle herbs and spices

For yin type summer-heat illness, make a gentle sauté dish. Sautéing adds yang qi to a meal, while the ingredients fulfill the strategies needed for preventing or treating summer-heat.

celery | 2 stalks, cut into "sticks"
carrot | 1, washed and trimmed, cut into "sticks"
water chestnuts | 1 8-ounce can, rinsed, sliced, or 1 cup fresh, peeled, sliced
radicchio | 1 medium head, medium-coarse chopped
grapeseed oil | splash, enough to facilitate cooking
fresh ginger | 2 slices, slivered
scallion | 2, cut into ½ inch chunks
green cardamom | 3 pods, lightly crushed
brown mustard seed | 1 tsp
shiso leaf | 5 leaves, fresh or dried, slivered or crumbled
sea salt | chef's pinch
rice wine | ⅓ cup
kuzu powder (or cornstarch) | 1 Tbsp
water | ¼ cup
toasted sesame oil | generous drizzle

Rinse and prep the vegetables. Mix the kuzu (or organic cornstarch powder) in the water, set aside.

Heat a pan, wok, or pot, then add the grapeseed oil to coat and a bit more. Add the ginger, scallion, mustard seeds, and cardamom. Stir in the heat to develop the flavors through the oil, then quickly add the celery, carrots, water chestnuts and a chef's pinch or two of salt.

When celery and carrots are slightly softened, add the radicchio and the rice wine. Stir with high heat to evaporate the alcohol and wilt the radicchio. Re-mix the kuzu powder in the water, add half. The sauce should be mild and just coat the vegetables; if too thick, add more water, if too thin, add the remaining kuzu slurry.

Serve over rice or millet, adding the shiso leaves and toasted sesame to finish. Pieces of a white fish fillet or tofu can be added for a complete meal.

String bean, mushroom, carrot, water chestnut, seaweed, tofu soup

For **yang type summer-heat** illness, fewer warming herbs and more cooling and draining ingredients are needed.

kombu | 1 piece
dried black mushrooms | 5 mushrooms
string beans | 2 cups, washed, trimmed, cut into 2-3 pieces each
carrot | 1, washed and trimmed, cut into angled rounds
water chestnuts | 1 8-ounce can, rinsed and sliced, or 1 cup fresh, peeled, sliced
mushrooms | 1 cup button, cremini, or shiitake, cut into thick pieces
tofu | ½ pound, chunked
fresh ginger | 2 slices, slivered
scallion | 2, cut into ½ inch chunks
sea salt | 2-3 chef's pinches
tamari | 3 Tbsp
water | 4-6 cups
toasted sesame oil | generous drizzle
parsley or cilantro | as garnish

In a large pot, add 4 cups cool water, turn on the heat. Add the kombu piece and the dried black mushrooms (dried mushrooms can be rehydrated first in a separate bowl or pot in order to remove any sand or grit; soak them in warm water, lift the mushrooms out, slowly pour most of the soaking liquid into the cooking pot while holding back the grit at the bottom). After ten minutes, remove the kombu (it can be eaten in a stir-fry dish or discarded). Remove the dried black mushrooms to a cutting board. When cool enough, cut into thick strips and add back to the pot.

Meanwhile, add the carrots, water chestnuts, fresh mushrooms, and string beans. After 2-3 minutes, add the tofu.

Add the slivered ginger and chopped scallions, and the tamari. Taste for moderate saltiness. Add more hot water if needed. Serve in soup bowls with a generous splash of toasted sesame oil and either cilantro or parsley, hand-torn, on top of each bowl.

Sugar Cane and Imperata Drink

When it is very hot in China and Chinatown neighborhoods around the world a popular drink is made from fresh sugar cane that is used to protect against summer-heat illness. There are many local versions. Most of us don't have an industrial juicer at home, so here is a recipe for home kitchens. Fresh, whole sugar cane sections can be found in Asian food markets, as can imperata, a Chinese medicinal herb *(bai mao gen)* used to clear heat and promote urination. Together, the drink moves fluids, is a mild diuretic, helps replenish healthy fluids, clears heat, and treats the kind of gasping for breath that can afflict some during periods of humid, hot heat. Whole sugar cane is only mildly sweet and clears heat (refined, concentrated sugar tends to trap heat). Corn cobs (or corn silk) are also mildly sweet and drain dampness with gentle diuresis. Broth made from the rinds of watermelon is also a popular and effective drink for summer-heat problems; watermelon rinds can be added to this drink as well.

fresh whole sugar cane | 2 pounds
rhizome imperata | 1 bundle, about 25 short segments or 1 ounce
corn cob | 2 corn cobs, cleared of kernels

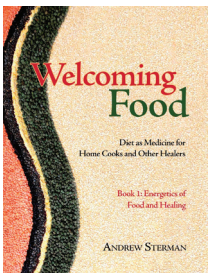
In a bowl, wash the imperata by covering it with boiled water for several minutes before draining and rinsing.

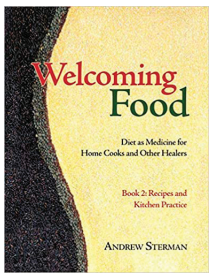
Cut the sugar cane into sections, then cut each section lengthwise to expose the center.

Add 1 gallon of water to a large pot. Add the halved sugar cane, the imperata, and the corn cobs. Bring to a boil, reduce to moderate flame, and cook uncovered for about 45 minutes, or until liquid has reduced by nearly half.

Ladle into mugs, drink warm or at room temperature.

Andrew Sterman *is the author of* Welcoming Food, Diet as Medicine for the Home Cook and Other Healers. *The two volumes of* Welcoming Food *offer a unique entry into understanding the energetics of food, explain how foods work in common sense language and provide easy-to-follow recipes for everyday eating. Andrew teaches food energetics classes and sees private clients for dietary therapy and medical qigong in New York City. He has studied deeply in holistic cooking, meditation, and qigong, and for over twenty years has been a student of Daoist Master Jeffrey Yuen in herbal medicine, qigong, and of course, dietary therapy from the classical Chinese medicine tradition. Visit Andrew at* ***andrewsterman.com/food***





Andrew's two books, *Welcoming Food 1* and *Welcoming Food 2* are available on Amazon.

To find past articles on food and diet by Andrew Sterman go to our past newsletters on our website. Andrew has been contributing articles to the Golden Flower Chinese Herbs newsletters since 2015.

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