

Course:	Chinese Herbology 1	Date:	October 21/28, 2008
Class #:	5 - 6 Clear Heat/Drain Fire Herbs		

Had a test in the 1st hour...freakin' grueling, man.

I'm switching tactics, and will use this document for all herbs in chapter 2, section A (Clear Heat/Drain Fire Herbs). I'll start a new document when we move to 2B. And by the way, this is a big chapter, so we'll be here for a while.

Chapter 2: Herbs that Clear Heat (cont'd)

2A: Herbs that Drain Fire

This sub-category, Clear Heat/Drain Fire, treats:

- ❖ High fever, no chills
- ❖ Irritability
- ❖ Scanty dark urine
- ❖ Thirst and delirium assoc'd with febrile disease

These symptoms generally correspond to the Qi level of the [Four Level system](#) and to the Yangming stage of the [Six Level system](#). Generally speaking, these herbs are associated with heat in the Liver, Lung, and Stomach.

Pay attention to the channels!

Shi Gao



Shi gao is gypsum (sheet rock's predominant ingredient). Taken internally, this is the sheng form. Topically is the duan form, which is calcinated. Another way you might see it is in plaster casts for broken bones.

Shi gao is sweet and acid and *very cold*. This places it at the very end of the cold spectrum (one of 2 we will study). As a result, it will treat very powerfully to clear heat/drain fire. Pay attention to the cautions – the more potent an herb is the more risk will be involved. You have a smaller margin of error with very strong herbs.

Channels are Lung and Stomach. This may refer to the organ or channel.

Actions

All for internal use, and all excess heat.

- 1) Clears heat and drains fire.
 - a. Yangming meridian syndrome

The four bigs... Heat doesn't restrict itself to one area for this action, but affects the whole body.

 - i. Big fever
 - ii. Big thirst

- iii. Big sweating
 - iv. Big pulse
 - b. Yangming organ syndrome
- 2) Clears excess heat from the Lung
Note: the heat is restricted to an area. Lung + heat = phlegm or phlegm heat.
This treats cough and wheeze with thick, viscous sputum/phlegm. Note that you cannot just treat phlegm with shi gao, but must combine it with other herbs which we will discuss later.
 - 3) Clears blazing Stomach heat
This is Stomach channel heat: toothaches, red and swollen and painful gum problems. Also treats organ problems – digestive problems such as acid reflux, excessive appetite, vomiting due to stomach heat and xiao ke.
 - 4) Heals sores and generates flesh
This is the topical use: non-healing ulcers, sores, burns and eczema due to heat. This the duan/calcinated form which is used externally.

Cautions

Weak stomachs or minute pulses, yang xu or heat form yin xu.

Cooking instructions

The dose for minerals is usually larger (unless toxic in which you use a really small dose). You have to cook minerals and shells *first* for 20-30 minutes before adding other herbs.

Zhi Mu



Zhi mu is bitter, sweet, and cold. Note that it enters the same channels as shi gao, but adds Kidney: Lung, Stomach, and Kidney.

Actions

- 1) clears heat and drains fire
Same wording as shi gao, but not as strong – not as cold

- 2) Clears Lung heat

This is also similar to shi gao. Also not good for phlegm. Difference again is the strength.

- 3) Nourishes Kidney yin and clears *deficient* heat.
Nourish Kidney yin implies Kidney yin deficiency. The KI yin xu is the root of the problem here and the deficient heat is the branch—the result of the root of the problem. Happily, this herb treats both the root and the branches. (Not all herbs do.)

This action is very different from shi gao. This difference determines the usage of one or another: zhi mu treats *deficient heat* and shi gao treats excess heat.

Symptoms include typical yin xu symptoms:

- a. Spermatorrhea and nocturnal emission for dudes

- b. Abnormally elevated sex drive
 - c. Night sweating
- 4) Generates fluids, moistens dryness
This is also related to the “nourish yin” action in #3.
Shi gao can also be used for this problem.
- a. Xiao ke
This contributes to the next point...
 - b. Constipation due to dry intestines

Follow the study guide for the cautions and dosage information

Lu Gen



Reed rhizome. Ancient formulas that call for Wei Jing – substitute this herb. Lu gen is sweet and cold and goes to the Lung and Stomach. The temperature is about like zhi mu.

Actions

- 1) Clears heat and generates fluids

Compare this more to zhi mu since it will generate fluids also. Here generate fluids [see section 12 D], but is not a yin tonic. Please note this.

Also, this is slightly weaker than zhi mu.

- a. Treats high fever, irritability and thirst
 - b. Qi level heat due to febrile diseases
- 2) Clears heat from the Lung
 - a. Acute Lung heat with cough and expectoration of thick, yellow sputum.
Expectorates the phlegm.
 - b. Treats Lung abscess.
We probably won't ever see this, honestly. That said, can help pus and blood to come out.
 - 3) Clears Stomach heat and stop vomiting (and belching)
Kind of like shi gao, but treats vomiting and belching d/t Stomach heat.
 - 4) Promotes urination, vents rashes.
Look at the first action and this action...hmmm! This isn't a diuretic—those never both generate fluid *and* promote urination. Note that this is removing heat at the same time. You must also encourage your patient to drink enough water while taking this herb!

*Note also, that this herb does **not** treat xiao ke (excessive drink/eat/urination)!*

Promoting urination in TCM is a way of clearing off heat. This is flushing out the heat.

Treats:

- a. Dark scanty urine

- b. Lin syndrome – painful urination
- c. Measles (the vent rashes part)

This is more of a historical note than it is an indication you will see in clinic.

Dosage: Can use a rather large dose – 15-30 grams which is a bunch.

Tian Hua Fen



Also called gua lou gen. Gua lou is an herb in the clear heat category.

Channel and taste not really special here, but memorize anyhow.

Actions

Not really for yangming level or qi level heat. Not even listed as an indication here.

- 1) clears heat and generates fluids
Same wording as lu gen.

- 2) Clears Lung heat and moistens dryness

Very useful for phlegm heat in the lung.

- a. Dry cough or cough with thick or blood streaked sputum due to:
 - i. Phlegm heat
 - ii. Lung dryness

- 3) Relieves heat toxicity and expels pus

Bai zhi also expels pus, but is a warm herb rather than a cold herb and “reduces swelling/expels pus.” Same formula listed in the study guide however...they are used together in Xian Fang Huo Ming Yin to expel pus.

Cautions

- 1) Note the pegggers caution. Injectable form actually causes abortion – may or may not but protein will strongly increase the risk for termination of preg.
- 2) Diarrhea due to cold from deficient SP and ST
- 3) Incompatible with
 - a. wu tou
 - b. fu zi

Side bar from Dr. Zhou. Note the actions below. These herbs lose and gain strength for the actions indicated.



Dan Zhu Ye



This one is about the heart. Zhu ye might be mentioned in old formulas. This is the same Chinese character. Considered to be exchangeable herbs now. ‘Dan’ means *bland*. **Pay attention to this.** This herb is sweet, *bland* and cold.

The channel is the heart, small intestine and stomach. **Pay attention to HT/SI pair here.** This is important in the 2nd action – Heart fire transfers into Small Intestine.

Actions

- 1) Clears heat and eliminates irritability. This refers to irritability from Heart fire, specifically irritability and thirst due to warm febrile disease.

Note that dan dou chi in clear wind/heat category clears irritability too, but this is a different type of irritability.

- 2) Promotes urination
 - a. Heart fire causing mouth and tongue ulcers
 - b. Heart fire transferring to SI and causing urination problems.
Especially for the urinary symptoms with irritability and a red tongue tip.

Zhi Zi



Gardenia fruit, but not the garden type you see here for the most part. **Pay attention: taste has changed and now this page is bitter and cold.** Purely bitter taste, nothing to enjoy!

Pay attention to the channels entered!!! HT, LV, LU, ST, SJ. In this case will look at SJ to differentiate damp diseases – upper, middle, and lower jiao.

Zhi zi is one of 4 herbs in the 4 excess heat herbs. Belongs to clear heat/drain fire, but does lots more than this which is why it is such a strong

herb with so many actions. The 4 categories of excess heat =

- ❖ Fire
- ❖ Blood heat
- ❖ Damp heat
- ❖ Toxicity

Actions

- 1) Drains fire, eliminates irritability
This irritability concerns both HT and LV. This is an ingredient in Dan Zhi Xiao Yao San for Liver Qi Yu with Heat. Often treats PMS with emotional imbalance – if irritable use dan zhi xiao yao san. If crying and depressed, use xiao yao san.
 - a. Irritability and restlessness
 - b. Insomnia
 - c. Delirious speech
 - d. Stifling sensation in the chest.

- 2) Drains damp heat
This concerns the SJ channel. SJ is more important in damp and damp heat related problems.
 - a. D/h in the lower jiao with PUD
PUD = painful urinary disorder or Lin Syndrome.

 - b. DH in LV/GB or middle jiao with jaundice
Includes hypochondriac pain – liver and gb disease such as cholecystitis or liver diseases

 - c. Damp heat in the upper jiao in GB/SJ channels of face, nose, eyes. Can also include eyes or sores in mouth and facial region.

- 3) Cools blood and stops bleeding
Treats heat in the blood level, epistaxis, hematemesis, and blood in the stool or urine. Use the Chao tan form

- 4) Reduces swelling and relieves toxicity
Both internal and topical.

The last herbs in this section area about Liver Fire. In some books this used to be separate category: Clear Liver Fire, Benefit Eyes. All 4 of these do have these actions, but are no longer a specific category. Can be Liver or Gallbladder.

Clear Wind Heat also had several herbs in the category which affected Liver and benefitted eyes.

Drain fire is a stronger action, by the way than is Clear fire.

Xia Ku Cao



Xia ku cao is known in English as Prunella. Xia ku cao is bitter and acrid and is cold in temperature

Actions

- 1) Clears Liver Fire or Liver Yang hyperactivity and brightens the eyes.
 - a. Liver fire with red, swollen, painful eyes, headaches (including migraines – this is Liver fire – common use for this herb), dizziness
 - b. Liver yin xu with eye pain that is worse at night. Combine with yin nourishing herbs.
 - c. Modernly, used for hypertension (Hypertension is a common use
- 2) Clears heat and dissipates nodules.
 - a. Lumps or nodules d/t phlegm fire in meridians
This is the first herb we've talked about for nodules, but more are coming at us! That said, it's awfully difficult to dissipate nodules. Success rates aren't great though there are a couple of kinds in which there is better result.

Ovarian cysts for instance have a pretty good success rate for reduction and sometimes total resolution. Lymph and thyroid nodules have less success.

- i. Scrofula
Lymph gland swelling in the neck around the clavicle d/t tuberculosis. There are lots of these mentions in TCM. Now scrofula pretty much = swollen lymph glands
- ii. Goiter
Modernly, is a reference to swollen thyroid glands, tumors on the thyroid gland whether malignant or benign. Inland China suffered from this because of a lack of nutritional iodine. Now it's from other reasons, often emotional distress, hormonal disorders.
- iii. Swollen glands
- iv. Fatty tumors
- v. Breast cysts

Cautions

Spleen/Stomach deficiencies because cold is very hard on them.

Jue Ming Zi



Has a 2nd name: Cao jue ming. In English this is cassia seed. It's a polygon/squarish shape. It is bitter, sweet, salty and cool. It goes to the Liver and Large Intestine.

Dose: 9 – 15 grams in a formula. By itself in the tea mentioned in the 3rd action, use far less. 10-20 seeds steeped in a tea daily. The caution is diarrhea and or hypotension (note the 2nd action). If the patient is taking too much they will have loose stool...if the patient has a spleen xu, pick another herb! Then again, for patients with constipation, awesome! Warn your patient about loose stool/diarrhea and to cut back.

Actions

Focus on the Liver here.

- 1) Clears Liver fire or Liver Yang hyperactivity and benefits the eyes
Look at the difference between this and Xia ku cao – this one can be used for wind heat.
 - a. Wind heat or Liver fire with headache, itchy painful red eyes, excess tearing and light sensitivity.
- 2) Moistens intestines and unblocks the bowels
This is the 1st herb for us that does this. Most of the moisten the intestine herbs are considered to be laxatives. Most are seeds or nuts and are rich in oils. This is kind of the opposite of a high fiber type laxative...this is oil to make a bowel movement happen for someone on a bulky diet with no or little animal fat or meats. For a culture like ours that has a lot of oil in the diet, this will not really work right! Americans need more bulk fiber.
 - a. Dry or infrequent stool or chronic constipation due to dry intestines
- 3) Subdues Liver Yang
 - a. Headaches, dizziness d/t Liver Yang Rising
 - b. Modernly, used for reducing *blood cholesterol* with related hypertension.
Dr. Zhou uses it more for the cholesterol than for other reasons. Often taken in powder or pills. You can also use the raw herb steeped in hot water by itself and take it as a tea. Doesn't taste bad. You can use the seeds alone this way or w/ other herbs. Very useful for high cholesterol when ingested daily.

Qing Xiang Zi



Celosia seed. It's tiny. Bitter, *cool*, and goes to the Liver. The dose is 3 – 15 grams daily.

Actions

- 1) Drains the Liver fire and removes superficial visual obstructions

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- a. Wind heat or liver fire causing red, painful, swollen eyes, superficial visual obstruction and cataracts.
See the contraindications/cautions below regarding glaucoma which can look a lot like these symptoms!
- b. Modern use is for hypertension

Note that several of these Liver fire/yang herbs treat hypertension.

Contraindications/Cautions

- ❖ Note: Glaucoma---many times patients will come in with headaches that look a lot like liver fire related eye problems. This herb is *not* for them!
- ❖ Liver or Kidney yin deficiency.

Xiong Dan

Rare to get this...bear gallbladder. Ew. The nature is bitter and cold. Actually, it's the bile you want. Originally you had to kill the bear, get the gallbladder and then hang it to dry so that the bile dried then grind up the bile. In China there used to be bear farms for this reason – shunt in the gallbladder and drain out the bile basically milking the bear once in a while. This was an animal rights issue and most of the farms have been closed down. Frankly, I'm all for it.

Actions

- 1) Clear Liver fire, benefit the eyes
 - a. Red, swollen, painful eyes due to Liver fire
 - b. Mild visual obstruction due to Liver fire
- 2) Clears heat and relieves fire toxicity
 - a. Reduces swelling and pain assoc'd with hemorrhoids and hot skin lesions.
Used topically
- 3) Extinguish wind and stop tremors (Liver wind)
 - a. High fever, convulsions
 - b. Spasms and seizures