

Course:	Chinese Herbology 1	Date:	October 28, 2008
Class #:	6 - 7 Clear Heat/Dry Dampness		

Clear Heat and Dry Dampness

Introduction

There is something in common about this class of herbs: bitter taste which drains (heat/fire) and dries (damp). That said, bitter herbs may do one or the other but not both...or it may do both. Depends on it's mood!

Note: All herbs in this category are Bitter and Cold! No need to memorize that!

The top 3 are the holy damp heat trinity: they are the 3 yellows.
Pay attention to the channels for each. Basically, though not exactly, one does upper, one middle, one lower jiao.

Huang Qin



In English this is scutellaria – or Baikal skullcap root. The western herb is a different species, *S. lateriflora*. Very often used because it can clear dry heat, damp heat, blood heat and toxins too.

Actions:

There are 6 actions here, but don't think about 6 individual actions—think 4 actions plus 2! The first 4 actions treat the Four Excess Heats! Then the other 2 actions.

The Four Excess Heat Actions

- 1) Clears heat, dries dampness

This is one of the 4 heats -- Damp heat.

Damp heat in the upper *and* middle jiao.

Add “jaundice to the diarrhea/dysentery set of indications. Clearly treats LI and GB

- 2) Clears heat in the Lung, drains fire.

Another of the 4 heats is Fire – this is the Fire action.

Note that this also clears toxicity from the Lung too. Doesn't really clear the phlegm, but will clear damp heat in the Lung, dry heat, and toxicity too.

- 3) Cools blood and stops bleeding

Another of the Big 4 Heats – Cool Blood Heat

Use the Chao tan form for various kinds of bleeding. Chao tan commonly used in menstrual bleeding.

- 4) Clear heat, relieves toxicity

And the other 2 actions...

- 5) Clear heat, calm the fetus
Change the first indication to “Warning signs of early miscarriage” (and delete “when fetus is restless or kicking due to heat). Morning sickness is the type caused by heat in the Stomach. (Zi su ye is due to cold in the stomach)
- 6) Clears heat from the Liver and Gallbladder Channel
Different kinds of Shaoyang symptoms

Dose:

Little bigger than normal range. Though this is a bitter cold herb the smallish range of grams tells you it's not so horrid in taste.

NOTE: I will update this as we add to the category. Check back on the website for more complete information.

Huang Lian

Huang Lian is famous for its bitterness...worse than any other herbs...*any* other herbs, man. Ew. Whenever there is bitter and cold together you must be cautious about the stomach as it is very harsh on the digestion. Can cause stomach upset even if patient isn't sensitive to the taste.

Also, if patient is sensitive to taste you *really* need to let them know about this with raw or powdered herbs. One option is to use powdered formula and then capsule it yourself.

Known for the Middle Jiao actions. ST is in MJ...what about LI? Is technically in the LJ. However, some of its functions are close to that of the Stomach. Not an easy division line between MJ and LJ. Kind of blur them together in your mind and make this easier.

What about Liver? Well, depends on what aspect of the Liver. Physically, like in hepatitis or liver disease, it's rather MJ'ish. Then again, it regulates blood, has the same source as the Kidney and in this way it is tied to LJ along with the Kidney. The upshot of this is that Huang Lian is not a cut and dry kind of MJ action.

Actions

Four actions for excess plus a couple more: damp, fire, toxicity, and cool blood/stop bleeding. There are two actions below for fire – Stomach and Heart. That's why there are 5 actions...but it's still the 4 excess heats.

1. Clears heat and dries dampness
Damp Heat – one of 4 excesses.
Add jaundice to the indications on this action which involves the LV. This is about heat in the digestion, both in the stomach and the intestines – LI and ST.

2. Clears Heart fire

Clears/drains Fire – one of 4 excesses.

Huang Lian is the strongest of all herbs for clearing Heart Fire. Yeah, I know this is supposed to be about Middle Jiao, but Heart is Upper Jiao. The Great Creator just ain't as cut and dry as all that!

Huang Lian is an important herb to harmonize Heart and Kidney. *Jiao tai wan* is another formula representative of this herb – has Huang Lian and Rou Gui in it – for HT/KI disharmony – clears heart fire and warms the KI. Might happen in post-menopausal patients who have the sweating symptoms of yin xu on the upper body, but not in the lower – might even have cold feet all the time and no sweating on the lower body. This is fire in the HT and cold in the KI.

3. Drains Stomach fire

Clears/drains Fire – one of 4 excesses.

Shi Gao is similar in action and it too treats ST fire. Both can be used for excess appetite, for toothaches. Representative formulas exist for both pure ST fire affecting the teeth and one for Kidney xu that affects teeth/gums.

By contrast, Shi Gao will treat xiao ke while Huang Lian will not. Why? Huang Lian is just too bitter and would lead to a Yin xu...or a further Yin xu. Shi Gao will not damage fluids while Huang Lian will. Remember this is a *dry damp* herb!

4. Clears heat and relieves toxicity

All of the indications listed here and more will qualify as heat toxicity. Use this herb internally or externally. It's a strong herb even applied topically. (Compare to Huang Qin which is not used topically because isn't strong enough.)

5. Clears heat and stops bleeding

Huang Qin is used more for stop bleeding (Huang Qin Tan). Huang Lian treats the heat *behind* the bleeding, so less direct effect.

The representative formula here treats bleeding – Huang Qin, Huang Lian and Da Huang. Also will treat jaundice due to damp heat. Why is Dr. Zhou talking about this formula? Infantile jaundice which manifests in the first month or so requires that you expose the baby to sunshine but not directly. You also need to clear toxins from the baby's system and you can use this formula for that. Supposedly they won't taste it in the first couple of weeks because the taste buds aren't developed.

You can also use it to cleanse fetal toxins for babies that don't have infantile jaundice. Why would one have this? Maternal intake can pass toxins on to the baby. A cleanse now can prevent future toxic manifestations – skin problems, acne, boils, etc. Much stronger than an adult doing a cleanse! The dose for a newborn is via drops. 2-3 drops each time for 3-5 days in the first week of life. Mix powder rather than doing a decoction.

Dose: 1.5 – 9 g because this is a much stronger herb than Huang Qin.

Huang Bai

Mostly a lower jiao herb: BL, KI, LI. Remember that LI is lower jiao, but has some actions/functions and dysfunctions of MJ. Huang Bai doesn't have all 4 excesses, but has 2. Doesn't clear excess fire from the organ...see the 3rd action.

Actions

1. Clears heat and dries damp

Lower Jiao damp heat – manifesting in the lower body. Note that there is a damp-heat jaundice here even though LV is not one of the places it goes! In the indications you will note all of the lower body areas that this herb treats.

Regarding gout – most commonly in the big toe, but can also happen in the elbows, wrists, any joint really. This refers mostly to heat in the feet, ankles, etc however.

2. Drains fire and relieves toxicity

Commonly used topically for the indications listed in the study guide.

3. Drains KI fire – xiang huo

Xiang Huo = “ministerial fire.” By comparison to heart fire which is imperial fire, KI fire is ministerial fire. This is not an excess fire, but a deficient fire. The indications all point to KI yin xu.

Huang Bai and Zhi Mu are often paired in formula. What's the difference between the 2? Huang bai does not nourish the Kidney Yin. As a matter of fact, it's actually harmful when used along for a long time. You must combine it with Yin tonics...which is why you use Zhi Mu.

Long Dan Cao

Literally means dragon gallbladder herb. Dan means Gallbladder and is related to the channel. This herb goes to the GB and LV. Dragon refers to the herb's strength. **This is the strongest herb to clear Liver fire.** Also probably the 2nd most bitter herb in the whole herb family!

The actions are vertical – follows the channel up.

Note that the actions are for damp heat and dry fire.

Actions

1. Dries damp heat from LV and GB

Add “jaundice” to the list of indications. This indicates that the herb also treats the Middle Jiao.

2. Drains LV and GB fire

You can't really tell if this is dry heat or damp heat. Here's how you know: there's wind in this

set of indications. Anytime there is wind this indicates excess *dry* heat. Dampness is too heavy to do this. The formula here, Liang Jin Wan, is for Liver wind due to excess dry heat.

Ku Shen

“Ku” means bitter and thus means “bitter root” – the 3rd most bitter (though there will be a tie for 3rd place later).

Enters UB, HT, LV, LI, and SI. Actions are kinda scattered.

Actions

1. Clears heat and dries dampness
Add “blood in the stools” after diarrhea and dysenteric disorders. Rather MJ/LJ in actions. Actually not the first choice for this.
2. Disperse Wind, kills parasites, stops itching.
Probably the most important action. This herb is used topically or internally, even more so than Huang Lian and especially for stop itching indication.

Viral myocarditis comes from an infection that eventually makes it’s way to the heart. Sometimes comes from something as simple as the flu which is not treated properly allowing the viral infection to attack the heart. Ku Shen is good to treat this condition.

3. Clears heat by promoting urination.
Related to damp heat in the Small intestine. Add “dysuria during pregnancy” to the list of indications for this action. The formula for that is *Dang Gui Bei Mu Ku Shen Wan*.

Add [4B] to this action too.

Qin Pi

Actions

1. Dries damp-heat and relieves toxicity
Note that this herb has an astringent function which helps prevent loss of fluids. We probably won’t see this in clinic ... unless society crashes and we happen to have this on hand. Dehydration is a very real problem in dysenteric disorders.

And by the way, change the wording in the student guide from “dysentery” to “dysenteric disorder.”

2. Drains Liver Fire and benefits the eyes.
Not used for this much.

And that’s the end of Damp heat.