Essentials of Chinese Medicine

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Chapter 7
Commonly Used Herbs

In this chapter 154 of the most commonly used medicinal herbs are described. Since there are so many of them, some systems for classifying them are necessary. In this textbook the following scheme is adopted:

Section 1: herbs that release exterior
Section 2: herbs that cool Heat
Section 3: herbs that induce catharsis
Section 4: herbs that dispel Wind–Dampness
Section 5: aromatic herbs that dissipate Dampness
Section 6: herbs that drain water
Section 7: herbs that warm interior
Section 8: herbs that regulate Qi
Section 9: herbs that relieve food retention
Section 10: herbs that stimulate blood circulation and remove blood stasis
Section 11: herbs that dissolve Phlegm or stop cough and relieve asthma
Section 12: herbs that restore
Section 13: herbs that calm the mind
Section 14: herbs that calm liver and extinguish Wind
Section 15: aromatic herbs that open orifices (resuscitate)
Section 16: herbs that stop bleeding
Section 17: herbs that stabilize and astringe
Section 18: herbs that expel worms

In addition, Appendix III provides an alphabetical listing of these herbs, both by their names in *pinyin* and by their Latin names. Appendix IV provides photos of these herbs.

Section 1 Herbs That Release Exterior

Herbs that release the exterior have as their principal action the dispersion of exogenous pathogenic evils from the exterior of the body. Their principal clinical use is to release the exterior by dispelling exogenous Wind–Cold or Wind–Heat,

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with such symptoms as Cold-aversion, fever, headache, body aches, with or without sweating, and a floating pulse. Since illnesses of the exterior are of two main kinds, Wind–Cold and Wind–Heat, these herbs are accordingly organized in two groups: warm-acrid herbs and cool-acrid.

Because of their acrid flavor some of these herbs are quite useful for treating edema, cough and asthma. In illnesses with rashes that have not completely erupted, they can be helpful to induce full eruption of the rash so that the patient can recover. In addition, certain exterior-releasing herbs act to remove Dampness and relieve aches. They are used to treat aches in the limbs caused by Wind–Dampness.

When prescribing exterior-releasing herbs, in addition to selecting herbs depending upon whether the illness is one of exogenous Wind–Cold or Wind–Heat, the physician must also take into account the possibility that the patient may have unbalanced deficiency of genuine Qi. In such a situation it is important to add herbs that augment Yang, nourish Qi or enrich Yin. When applying cool-acrid herbs in the early stages of Heat illnesses, it is wise to add appropriate herbs that clear Heat and remove poisons.

When treating with exterior-releasing herbs with a strong diaphoretic action it is important not to induce sweating excessively to avoid damaging Yang-Qi and body fluids. These herbs are contraindicated in those patients who have profuse sweating or are in late stages of fluid depletion. Also, patients who suffer chronically from skin conditions such as abscesses, difficult and painful urination, or persistent blood loss, exterior-releasing herbs must be used with great caution even when they contract an exterior illness.

I Warm-Acrid Herbs That Release Exterior

1 Mahuang (Ephedra sinica)

Chinese name: 麻黄. *Pharmaceutical name*: Herba Ephedrae.

Part Used: stalk.

Flavor/Nature: acrid, slightly bitter; warm.

Meridian Affinity: Lung and Bladder Meridians.

Actions: promotes sweating; relieves wheezing; promotes urination.

Indications: (1) Strength illnesses of the exterior caused by exogenous Wind and Cold. The main chief symptoms are chills, fever, headache, nasal congestion, absence of sweating, and a floating and taut pulse. (2) Cough and asthma due to Wind–Cold invading the lung and disturbing the dispersion of lung-Qi. (3) Edema complicating an illness of the exterior.

Dosage/Administration: 5–10 g. Decocted first before other herbs. Fresh mahuang is used to induce sweating. Prepared mahuang is often used to moisten the lung and relieve asthma.

Cautions/Contraindications: Because this herb is quite potent in inducing sweating, it is contraindicated in a patient with spontaneous sweating, night sweats due to Yin deficiency, or cough and asthma due to kidney failing to receive Qi.

2 *Guizhi (Cinnamomum cassia) (Cinnamon)*

Chinese name: 桂枝. Pharmaceutical name: *Ramulus Cinnamomi*.

Part Used: twig.

Flavor/Nature: acrid, sweet; warm.

Meridian Affinity: Heart, Lung and Bladder Meridians.

Actions: promotes sweating in exterior illnesses; warms meridians and unblocks Yang.

Indications: (1) Headache, fever and chills caused by Wind and Cold. (2) Shoulder, back and limb pain due to rheumatism caused by Wind–Cold–Dampness. (3) Rheum and Phlegm accumulation due to deficiency of heart and spleen Yang, impairing the movement of Yang-Qi and in turn water and Dampness stagnation. (4) Rheumatism of the chest, palpitation of the heart, and a hesitant and intermittent pulse. (5) Amenorrhea or dysmenorrhea due to Cold invading the meridians.

Dosage/Administration: 3–10 g.

Cautions/Contraindications: Because of its acrid flavor and warm nature guizhi can readily injure Yin and move blood. It is contraindicated in illnesses of Heat, Yin deficiency with Yang hyperactivity, and Heat in the blood causing bleeding. It must be used with great caution in pregnancy or during excessive menstrual flow.

3 *Xixin (Asarum heterotropoides, sieboldii) (Manchurian Wild Ginger)*

Chinese name: 细辛. Pharmaceutical name: *Herba Asari*.

Part Used: root.

Flavor/Nature: acrid; warm.

Meridian Affinity: Lung and Kidney Meridians.

Actions: expels Wind, dispels Cold, clears nasal passages, stops pain, warms the lungs and transforms Phlegm.

Indications: (1) Illnesses of the exterior due to exogenous Wind and Cold. (2) Headache, rhinitis, sinusitis, toothache, rheumatism pain. (3) Cold and Phlegm accumulation in the lung causing cough and labored breathing.

Dosage/Administration: In decoction, 1.5–3 g.

Cautions/Contraindications: Xixin is contraindicated in a patient with profuse sweating due to Qi deficiency, headache due to Yang excess and Yin deficiency, or dry cough due to Dryness in the lung damaging Yin. In general, avoid overdose. Xixin is incompatible with lilu (*Veratrum*).

4 *Zisu (Perilla frutescens)*

Chinese name: 紫苏. Pharmaceutical name: *Perillae*.

Part Used: zisugeng, stalk; zisuye, leaf; zisuzi, ripe seeds.

Flavor/Nature: acrid; warm.

Meridian Affinity: Lung and Spleen Meridians.

Actions: disperses Wind and Cold from the exterior, moves Qi and unblocks the middle-jiao, and counteracts fish and crab toxins.

Indications: (1) Illnesses of exogenous Wind and Cold with fever, Cold-intolerance, headache, nasal congestion, and cough or chest tightness.

Dosage/Administration: 3–10 g. Do not overcook.

5 *Jingjie (Schizonepeta tenuifolia)*

Chinese name: 荆芥. Pharmaceutical name: *Herba Schizonepetae*.

Part Used: whole herb (above ground portion).

Flavor/Nature: acrid; slightly warm.

Meridian Affinity: Lung and Liver Meridians.

Actions: dispels Wind and relieves the exterior; and stops bleeding.

Indications: (1) Wind and Cold in the exterior, with headache, fever, Cold-intolerance and no sweating. (2) Itchy rashes of the skin and measles prior to full eruption. (3) Early stages of sores and furuncles associated with an exterior illness.

(4) Charred jingjie has the ability to stop bleeding, and is used in hematochezia, epistaxis and metrorrhagia.

Dosage/Administration: 3–10 g. Cook for about 5 min and do not overcook. For stopping bleeding, must be charred.

6 *Fangfeng (Saposhnikovia divaricata)*

Chinese name: 防风. Pharmaceutical name: *Radix Saposhnikoviae*.

Part Used: root.

Flavor/Nature: acrid, sweet; slightly warm.

Meridian Affinity: Bladder, Liver and Spleen Meridians.

Actions: expels Wind and releases the exterior, dispels Dampness, stops pain, and relieves spasm.

Indications: (1) Exterior illnesses due to Wind and Cold with headache, body aches and Cold-intolerance. (2) Rheumatism due to Wind, Cold and Dampness, joint pains and spasm of the limbs. (3) Opisthotonos, trismus and tetany due to tetanus.

Dosage/Administration: 3–10 g.

Cautions/Contraindications: Fangfeng is principally used for illnesses induced by exogenous Wind. In convulsions of blood insufficiency or blazing Fire in Yin deficiency, it must be used only with great caution.

7 *Qianghuo (Notopterygium incisum, franchetti, forbesi)*

Chinese name: 羌活. Pharmaceutical name: *Rhizoma et Radix Notopterygii*.

Part Used: root and rhizome.

Flavor/Nature: acrid, bitter; warm.

Meridian Affinity: Bladder and Kidney Meridians.

Actions: releases exterior, disperses Cold, expels Wind, eliminates Dampness, and stops pain.

Indications: (1) Exogenous Cold and Wind, with Cold-intolerance, fever, headache and body aches. (2) Limb joint, shoulder and back aching pain due to Wind–Cold–Dampness – especially in the upper part of body.

Dosage/Administration: 3–10 g.

8 Baizhi (Angelica dahurica, anomala, taiwaniana)

Chinese name: 白芷. Pharmaceutical name: *Radix Angelicae Dahuricae*.

Part Used: root.

Flavor/Nature: acrid; warm.

Meridian Affinity: Lung and Stomach Meridians.

Actions: releases the exterior, expels Wind and dries Dampness, reduces swelling and eliminates pus, and stops pain.

Indications: (1) Exogenous Wind and Cold with headache and nasal congestion. (2) Illness in the Yang Ming Meridian with headache, supra-orbital pain, headache and toothache. (3) Boils and furuncles with swelling and pain. (4) Vaginal discharge due to Cold and Dampness.

Dosage/Administration: 3–10 g.

II Cool-Acrid Herbs That Release Exterior

1 Bohe (Mentha haplocalyx) (Peppermint)

Chinese name: 薄荷. Pharmaceutical name: *Herba Menthae*.

Part Used: whole herb (above ground portion).

Flavor/Nature: acrid; cold.

Meridian Affinity: Lung and Liver Meridians.

Actions: dispels Wind and Heat, clears the head, eyes and throat, and promotes the eruption of rashes.

Indications: (1) Exterior illnesses due to Wind–Heat and initial stages of seasonal febrile illnesses with headache, fever, and cold-aversion. (2) Headache and eye inflammation caused by Wind–Heat attacking upward. (3) Initial stages of measles or Wind–Heat binding the exterior without eruption of rashes. (4) Stagnation of liver-Qi causing chest tightness and rib and flank pain.

Dosage/Administration: 2–10 g. Cook for about 5 min only. Do not overcook.

Cautions/Contraindications: Contraindicated in spontaneous sweating due to weakness in the exterior.

2 *Niubangzi (Arctium lappa) (Burdock Fruit)*

Chinese name: 牛蒡子. Pharmaceutical name: *Fructus Arctii*.

Part Used: ripe fruit.

Flavor/Nature: acrid, bitter; cold.

Meridian Affinity: Lung and Stomach Meridians.

Actions: disperses Wind–Heat, detoxifies and promotes the eruption of rashes, soothes the throat and relieves swelling.

Indications: (1) Exterior illnesses due to Wind–Heat with cough but difficulty with expectoration, and swollen and painful throat. (2) Initial stages of measles before full eruption or Wind–Heat illnesses with rashes. (3) Boils, abscesses and mumps due to Heat poison.

Dosage/Administration: 3–10 g.

Cautions/Contraindications: Niubangzi can promote defecation. It is contraindicated in Qi deficiency with diarrhea.

3 *Sangye (Morus alba) (Mulberry)*

Chinese name: 桑叶. Pharmaceutical name: *Folium Mori*.

Part Used: leaf.

Flavor/Nature: bitter, sweet; cold.

Meridian Affinity: Lung and Liver Meridians.

Actions: dispels Wind and clears Heat, purifies the liver and brightens the eyes.

Indications: (1) Exogenous illnesses of Wind–Heat with fever, headache, dizziness, cough and sore throat. (2) Heat or Heat–Wind in the Liver Meridian with eye inflammation, irritation and excessive tearing.

Dosage/Administration: 5–10 g as decoction, pill or powder. For external use the supernatant from decoction to wash the eyes.

4 *Juhua (Chrysanthemum morifolium) (Chrysanthemum)*

Chinese name: 菊花. Pharmaceutical name: *Flos Chrysanthemi*.

Part Used: flower (inflorescence).

Flavor/Nature: acrid, sweet, bitter; slightly cold.

Meridian Affinity: Liver and Lung Meridians.

Actions: dispels Wind and clears Heat, eliminates poison and brightens the eyes.

Indications: (1) Exogenous illnesses caused by Wind–Heat and initial stages of febrile illnesses with headache and dizziness. (2) Eye inflammation due to Wind–Heat in the Liver Meridian or abnormal rise of liver-Fire. (3) Headache and vertigo due to stirring of liver-Wind or abnormal rise of liver-Fire.

Dosage/Administration: 10–15 g as decoction or pill.

5 *Chaihu (Bupleurum chinense, scorzonerifolium) (Thoroughwax)*

Chinese name: 柴胡. Pharmaceutical name: *Radix Bupleuri*.

Part Used: root.

Flavor/Nature: bitter, acrid; slightly cold.

Meridian Affinity: Pericardium, Liver, Sanjiao and Gallbladder Meridians.

Actions: releases exterior and relieves fever, mobilizes liver-Qi and raises Yang-Qi.

Indications: (1) Cold evil in Shaoyang causing alternating fever and chills, chest and flank distention, a bitter taste, dry throat and blurred vision. (2) Depression and gelling of liver-Qi causing epigastric and flank pain and distention, or headache, or in females irregular and painful menstruation. (3) Sinking of Qi leading to prolapse of the rectum or the uterus, or shortness of breath and fatigue.

Dosage/Administration: 3–10 g.

Cautions/Contraindications: The nature of Chaihu is to raise and disperse. It is contraindicated in a patient who has deficiency of kidney-Yin and abnormal rise of liver-Yang.

6 *Gegen (Pueraria lobata) (Kudzu Vine)*

Chinese name: 葛根. Pharmaceutical name: *Radix Puerariae*.

Part Used: bulbous root.

Flavor/Nature: sweet, acrid; cool.

Meridian Affinity: Spleen and Stomach Meridians.

Actions: releases exterior and muscles, raises Yang and promotes full eruption of rashes, reduces Heat and generates fluids.

Indications: (1) Exogenous illnesses with fever, headache, neck and back stiffness and pain. (2) Initial stages of measles with fever and cold-intolerance and before the rashes erupt. (3) Dysentery due to Dampness–Heat or diarrhea due to spleen insufficiency. (4) Thirst in febrile illness and diabetes.

Dosage/Administration: 10–30 g as decoction, pill or powder. For stopping diarrhea roast in slow fire.

7 Chantui (Cryptotympana atrata) (Cicada)

Chinese name: 蝉蜕. Pharmaceutical name: *Periostracum Cicadae*.

Part Used: molt.

Flavor/Nature: sweet; cold.

Meridian Affinity: Lung and Liver Meridians.

Actions: dispels Wind–Heat, promotes the eruption of rashes, brightens the eyes and clears corneal opacities, suppresses endogenous Wind and relieves spasm.

Indications: (1) Exogenous Wind–Heat illnesses and the initial stages of febrile illnesses with headache. (2) Initial stages of measles before full eruption of the rash. (3) Wind–Heat in the Liver Meridian, eye inflammation, corneal opacities and excessive tearing. (4) Heat–Wind in the Liver Meridian, night terror in infants and tetanus.

Dosage/Administration: 3–10 g as decoction, pill or powder.

Section 2 Herbs That Cool Heat

Heat-cooling herbs have as their principal action the cooling of Heat. These herbs are of cool or cold nature, which enables them to purge Heat, dry Dampness, cool blood, eliminate poison and reduce fever due to deficiencies. This group of herbs is principally used to treat conditions in which the exterior has been cleared of pathogenic evil but Heat is strong in the interior although there is no stagnation in the interior. Examples include exogenous Heat illnesses with high fever, irritability and thirst. Other conditions include dysentery due to Dampness–Heat, illnesses with high fever and macular rashes, furuncles and abscesses, and illnesses of Yin deficiency.

Because of differences in causation, progression and the patients' constitution, there are several varieties of illnesses of interior Heat with varying clinical manifestations. Taking into account these differences, as well as the varying responses to the herbs, Heat-cooling herbs are classified into five main categories. (1) Herbs that cool Heat and purge Fire have the capability to clear Heat from the Qi Level.

They are used to treat illnesses of Heat in the Qi Level showing such symptoms as high fever, irritability and thirst. (For the Qi Level, see Volume 1, Part II, Chapter 9, Section 5.) (2) Herbs that cool Heat and dry Dampness are used to treat dysentery, jaundice and other illnesses of Dampness–Heat. (3) Herbs that cool Heat and detoxify its poisons are used to treat such conditions as furuncles and abscesses that result from the poisons of blazing Heat. (4) Herbs that clear Heat and cool the blood have the capability to expel Heat from the Nutritive and the Blood Levels. They are used to treat illnesses of strong exogenous Heat in the Blood Level manifesting such symptoms as hematemesis, epistaxis and rashes. (5) Herbs that eliminate endogenous Heat arising in deficiency states have the capability to reduce fever arising from deficiency-Heat. They are used to treat such serious conditions as the Heat evil injuring Yin, fever in the night and cold in the morning and fever arising in Yin deficiency and steaming heat from the bones in consumptive diseases.

Although it is convenient to categorize the herbs it must be remembered that many of these herbs can fit in more than one category.

When applying Heat-cooling herbs, the physician must first determine whether the Heat is exogenous or endogenous. Three of these five methods apply to exogenous Heat, and two apply to endogenous Heat. At the same time the physician must pay attention to accompanying conditions. If there is illness in exterior as well, this must be released before attempting to cool interior or exterior and interior must be treated simultaneously. If Heat has gelled in interior then it is necessary to add herbs that induce catharsis.

The herbs in this group are all of cold or cool nature. They can injure the spleen and the stomach easily. Great care must be exercised in their usage whenever spleen or stomach Qi is deficient or there is a poor appetite with diarrhea. Heat illnesses readily damage the body fluids and herbs that are bitter and cold readily transform Dryness and injure Yin. Thus, great care must also be exercised in their usage when there is Yin deficiency. If Yin is grossly excessive and expels Yang to exterior, giving rise to genuine Cole and false Heat, Heat-cooling herbs are contraindicated.

I Herbs That Cool Heat and Purge Fire

1 Shigao (Gypsum)

Chinese name: 石膏. Pharmaceutical name: *Gypsum Fibrosum*. Chemical formula: $CaSO_4$.

Part Used: gypsum (group of sulfate minerals called plaster stone).

Flavor/Nature: acrid, sweet; very cold.

Meridian Affinity: Lung and Stomach Meridians.

Actions: clears Heat, purges Fire, and eliminates irritability and thirst.

Indications: (1) Heat evil in the Qi Level with high fever, irritability, thirst and a large surging pulse. (2) Heat in the lung causing cough, labored breathing, viscous sputum and fever. (3) Stomach-Fire blazing upward and causing headache and gingivitis. (4) Calcined gypsum powder is applied topically to treat skin ulcers, eczema, scalds and burns.

Dosage/Administration: 15–60 g. Use raw gypsum for ingestion. Use cooked powder for decoction. Use the calcined powder to external application.

Cautions/Contraindications: Contraindicated in deficiency-Cold of the spleen and the stomach and in endogenous Heat arising in Yin deficiency.

2 *Zhimu (Anemarrhena asphodeloides)*

Chinese name: 知母. Pharmaceutical name: *Rhizoma Anemarrhenae*.

Part Used: rhizome.

Flavor/Nature: bitter, sweet; cold.

Meridian Affinity: Lung, Stomach and Kidney Meridians.

Actions: clears Heat, purges Fire, nourishes Yin and moistens Dryness.

Indications: (1) Febrile illnesses due to strong Heat evil with high fever, irritability, thirst, and a large surging pulse. (2) Cough due to Heat in the lung or Yin deficiency, either without sputum or with thick viscous sputum. (3) Blazing Fire in Yin deficiency, so that both kidney and lung Yin become deficient resulting in low fever, night sweats and agitation. (4) Diabetes due to diabetes with thirst, polydipsia and polyuria.

Dosage/Administration: 6–12 g.

Cautions/Contraindications: Zhimu is of cold and moistening nature and can lubricate the intestines. It is inappropriate in diarrhea due to spleen insufficiency.

3 *Zhizi (Gardenia jasminoides) (Gardenia)*

Chinese name: 栀子. Pharmaceutical name: *Fructus Gardeniae*.

Part Used: fruit.

Flavor/Nature: bitter; cold.

Meridian Affinity: Heart, Lung, Stomach and Sanjiao Meridians.

Actions: purges Fire and relieves irritability, clears Heat and eliminates Dampness, cools blood and detoxifies.

Indications: (1) Agitation due to Heat illness, mental depression, and restlessness. (2) Gelled Dampness–Heat in the liver and gallbladder causing jaundice, fever and scanty dark urine. (3) Disturbed movement of blood leading to hematemesis, epistaxis and hematuria.

Dosage/Administration: 3–10 g.

Cautions/Contraindications: Contraindicated in diarrhea and anorexia due to spleen insufficiency.

4 Xiakucao (Prunella vulgaris) (Self-Heal)

Chinese name: 夏枯草. Pharmaceutical name: *Spica Prunellae*.

Part Used: fruit spike.

Flavor/Nature: bitter, acrid; cold.

Meridian Affinity: Liver and Gallbladder Meridians.

Actions: cools liver-Fire, dissipates accumulations and lowers blood pressure.

Indications: (1) Upward blazing of liver-Fire causing red and swollen eyes, eye pressure, photophobia, headache and dizziness. (2) Scrofula and goiter due to accumulation and gelling of Phlegm and Fire.

Dosage/Administration: 10–15 g.

II Herbs That Cool Heat and Dry Dampness

1 Huangqin (Scutellaria baicalensis) (Baical Skullcap)

Chinese name: 黄芩. Pharmaceutical name: *Radix Scutellariae*.

Part Used: root.

Flavor/Nature: bitter; cold.

Meridian Affinity: Lung, Gallbladder, Stomach and Large Intestine Meridians.

Actions: cools Heat and dries Dampness, purges Fire and detoxifies, stops bleeding and calms the fetus.

Indications: (1) A variety of illnesses caused by Dampness–Heat, such as jaundice, dysentery with diarrhea, abscesses and boils. (2) Febrile illnesses with high fever, irritability, thirst, a yellow tongue coating and a rapid pulse. (3) Cough and labored breathing due to Heat in the lung. (4) Strong Heat in the interior causing abnormal

movement of blood and manifesting as hematemesis, hemoptysis, epistaxis, hematochezia or metrorrhagia. (5) Fetal disturbances by Heat.

Dosage/Administration: 3–10 g. In general, use fresh huangqin for cooling Heat, stirfried huangqin to calm the fetus, huangqin prepared in wine to clear Heat from the upper-jiao, and charred huangqin to stop bleeding.

Cautions/Contraindications: Huangqin is bitter and cold, and is harmful to vital Qi. It is contraindicated in deficiency-Cold of the spleen and the stomach with anorexia and loose feces.

2 *Huanglian (Coptis chinensis) (Golden Thread)*

Chinese name: 黄连. Pharmaceutical name: *Rhizoma Coptidis*.

Part Used: rhizome.

Flavor/Nature: bitter; cold.

Meridian Affinity: Heart, Liver, Stomach and Large Intestine Meridians.

Actions: cools Heat, dries Dampness, purges Fire and detoxifies.

Indications: (1) Diarrhea, dysentery and vomiting caused by Dampness–Heat in the stomach and the intestines. (2) Febrile illnesses with high fever, agitation, restlessness, even delirium or coma. (3) Abscesses, furuncles with internal extensions. (4) Swelling and pain of the eyes and ears.

Dosage/Administration: 2–10 g.

Cautions/Contraindications: Huanglian is very bitter and cold. If too much is used or used for too long a period it can easily injure the stomach. It is contraindicated in vomiting due to Cold in the stomach or diarrhea due to spleen insufficiency.

3 *Huangbai (Phellodendron chinense, amurense) (Amur Cork-Tree)*

Chinese name: 黄柏. Pharmaceutical name: *Cortex Phellodendri*.

Part Used: bark.

Flavor/Nature: bitter; cold.

Meridian Affinity: Kidney, Bladder and Large Intestine Meridians.

Actions: cools Heat, dries Dampness, purges Fire and detoxifies and eliminates endogenous Heat.

Indications: (1) Diarrhea, dysentery and vomiting caused by Dampness–Heat in the stomach and the intestines. (2) Abscesses, cellulitis, eczema and similar skin conditions. (3) Endogenous Heat in Yin deficiency with low fever, night sweats, or spermatorrhea.

Dosage/Administration: 3–10 g.

Cautions/Contraindications: Huangbai is very bitter and cold, and can easily injure stomach-Qi. It is contraindicated in deficiency-Cold in the spleen and the stomach.

4 Longdancao (Gentiana scabra, triflora) (Chinese Gentian)

Chinese name: 龙胆草. Pharmaceutical name: *Radix Gentianae*.

Part Used: root.

Flavor/Nature: bitter; cold.

Meridian Affinity: Liver, Gallbladder and Stomach Meridians.

Actions: cools Heat and dries Dampness, purges liver-Fire.

Indications: (1) Dampness–Heat induced jaundice, swelling and itch of the external genitals, vaginal discharge and eczema. (2) High fever, infantile convulsions and spasm of the hands and feet caused by strong Heat in the Liver Meridian, so that the extreme Heat induces endogenous Wind. (3) Flank pain, headache, a bitter taste, red eyes, deafness and swelling and itch of the external genitals due to strong exogenous Heat in the liver and the gallbladder.

Dosage/Administration: 3–6 g.

Cautions/Contraindications: Contraindicated in deficiency-Cold of the spleen and the stomach.

III Herbs That Cool Heat and Detoxify Poison

1 Jinyinhua (Lonicera japonica) (Honeysuckle)

Chinese name: 金银花. Pharmaceutical name: *Flos Lomicerae*.

Part Used: flower buds.

Flavor/Nature: sweet; cold.

Meridian Affinity: Lung, Stomach and Large Intestine Meridians.

Actions: cools Heat and detoxifies poison.

Indications: (1) Fever and mild wind or cold aversion due to exogenous Wind–Heat or early stages of febrile illnesses. (2) Sores, abscesses, furuncles. (3) Bloody or purulent dysentery due to Heat poisons.

Dosage/Administration: 10–15 g.

2 *Lianqiao (Forsythia suspensa) (Weeping Golden Bell)*

Chinese name: 连翘. Pharmaceutical name: *Fructus Forsythiae*.

Part Used: fruit.

Flavor/Nature: bitter; cool.

Meridian Affinity: Lung, Heart and Gallbladder Meridians.

Actions: cools Heat, detoxifies poison, clears abscesses and dissipates accumulations.

Indications: (1) Fever, headache and thirst caused by exogenous Wind–Heat or in the early stages of febrile illnesses. (2) A variety of abscesses, boils, scrofula and nodules induced by the accumulation of Heat poisons.

Dosage/Administration: 6–15 g.

3 *Pugongying (Taraxacum mongolicum) (Dandelion)*

Chinese name: 蒲公英. Pharmaceutical name: *Herba Taraxaci*.

Part Used: whole herb.

Flavor/Nature: bitter, sweet; cold.

Meridian Affinity: Liver and Stomach Meridians.

Actions: cools Heat, detoxifies poison and dissipates Dampness.

Indications: (1) Sores, boils, furuncles and surface and internal abscesses. (2) Jaundice and difficult and painful urination due to Dampness–Heat.

Dosage/Administration: 10–30 g.

Cautions/Contraindications: Excessive doses can cause persistent diarrhea.

4 *Banlangen (Isatis indigotica, tinctoria)*

Chinese name: 板蓝根. Pharmaceutical name: *Radix Isalidis*.

Part Used: root.

Flavor/Nature: bitter; cold.

Meridian Affinity: Heart and Stomach Meridians.

Actions: cools Heat, detoxifies poison, cools blood and soothes the throat.

Indications: (1) Febrile illnesses with fever, headache and sore throat. (2) Mumps, illnesses with macular rashes, abscesses, furuncles and many other conditions caused by Heat poisons.

Dosage/Administration: 10–15 g.

5 *Yuxingcao (Houttuynia cordata)*

Chinese name: 鱼腥草. Pharmaceutical name: *Herba Houttuyniae*.

Part Used: whole herb.

Flavor/Nature: acrid; slightly cold.

Meridian Affinity: Lung Meridian.

Actions: cools Heat, detoxifies poison, eliminates pus and promotes urination.

Indications: (1) Lung abscess with expectoration of bloody and purulent sputum. (2) Heat in the lung causing cough and viscous sputum. (3) Sores and furuncles due to Heat poison. (4) Heat-induced urethritis with dysuria.

Dosage/Administration: 15–30 g.

6 *Shegan (Belamcanda chinenesis) (Blackberry Lily)*

Chinese name: 射干. Pharmaceutical name: *Rhizoma Belamcandae*.

Part Used: rhizome.

Flavor/Nature: bitter; cold.

Meridian Affinity: Lung Meridian.

Actions: cools Heat, detoxifies poison, dissipates Phlegm and soothes the throat.

Indications: (1) Swollen and painful throat with accumulation of Heat and Phlegm. (2) Cough and labored breathing due to accumulation of Phlegm.

Dosage/Administration: 6–10 g.

Cautions/Contraindications: Contraindicated in pregnancy.

IV Heat-Clearing and Blood-Cooling Herbs

1 Baitouweng (Pulsatilla chinensis and Other Species) (Nodding Anemone)

Chinese name: 白头翁. Pharmaceutical name: *Radix Pulsatillae*.

Part Used: root.

Flavor/Nature: bitter; cold.

Meridian Affinity: Large Intestine Meridian.

Actions: cools Heat, detoxifies poison and cools blood.

Indications: (1) Dysentery due to Dampness–Heat. (2) Bloody and purulent dysentery due to Heat poison with fever, abdominal pain and tenesmus.

Dosage/Administration: 6–15 g.

2 Shengdihuang (Rehmannia glutinosa)

Chinese name: 生地黄. Pharmaceutical name: *Radix Rehmanniae*.

Part Used: (raw) root tuber.

Flavor/Nature: sweet, bitter; cold.

Meridian Affinity: Heart, Liver and Kidney Meridians.

Actions: cools Heat and blood, nourishes Yin and generates body fluids.

Indications: (1) Febrile illnesses in which Heat has entered the Nutritive and Blood Levels, causing fever, dry mouth and a red or crimson tongue. (2) Heat in the Blood Level forcing blood to move erratically, resulting in hematemesis, epistaxis, hematuria, metrorrhagia or other forms of bleeding. (3) Heat illnesses in which Yin has been injured, resulting in a red tongue and a dry mouth or thirst with polydipsia. (4) Diabetes.

Dosage/Administration: 10–30 g.

Cautions/Contraindications: Shengdihuang is of cold and impeding nature. It must not be used to treat patients in whom the spleen is insufficient, producing abdominal distention and loose feces, and Dampness has impeded Qi movement.

3 *Chishaoyao (Paeonia lactiflora, veitchii, obovata) (Red Peony)*

Chinese name: 赤芍药. Pharmaceutical name: *Radix Paeoniae Rubra*.

Part Used: root.

Flavor/Nature: bitter; slightly cold.

Meridian Affinity: Liver and Spleen Meridians.

Actions: cools Heat and blood, dissolves hematoma and stops pain.

Indications: (1) Febrile illnesses due to Heat in the Blood Level causing fever, macular rashes, erratic blood movement that results in hematemesis, epistaxis and other bleeding. (2) Amenorrhea or dysmenorrhea due to blood stasis. (3) Ecchymosis, swelling and pain caused by trauma. (4) Sores, furuncles and cellulitis; and swelling and pain of the eyes.

Dosage/Administration: 1–15 g.

Cautions/Contraindications: Contraindicated in amenorrhea due to deficiency-Cold. Incompatible with lilu (*Veratrum nigrum*).

4 *Mudanpi (Paeonia suffruticosa) (Tree Peony)*

Chinese name: 牡丹皮. Pharmaceutical name: *Cortex Moutan Radicis*.

Part Used: root-bark.

Flavor/Nature: bitter, acrid; slightly cold.

Meridian Affinity: Heart, Liver and Kidney Meridians.

Actions: cools Heat and blood, mobilizes blood and dissolves hematoma.

Indications: (1) Febrile illnesses due to Heat in the Blood Level causing fever, macular rashes, erratic blood movement that results in hematemesis, epistaxis and other bleeding. (2) Late stages of Heat illnesses when Heat resides in the Yin Level, or night fever with dawn cold, or endogenous Heat due to Yin deficiency. (3) Amenorrhea or dysmenorrhea, or masses in the abdomen stasis of blood. (4) Sores, furuncles and interior abscesses.

Dosage/Administration: 6–12 g.

Cautions/Contraindications: Contraindicated in pregnancy or excessive menstruation, as well as blood insufficiency inducing endogenous Cold.

V Endogenous Heat-Cooling Herbs

1 Qinghao (Artemisia annua, apiacea) (Wormwood)

Chinese name: 青蒿. Pharmaceutical name: *Herba Artemisiae Chinghao*.

Part Used: whole herb (above ground portion).

Flavor/Nature: bitter, acrid; cold.

Meridian Affinity: Liver, Gallbladder and Kidney Meridians.

Actions: eliminates deficiency-Heat, cools blood, relieves summer heat; antimalaria.

Indications: (1) Alternating fever and cold in malaria. (2) Late stages of febrile illnesses when the Heat evil has entered the Yin Levels, with night fever and dawn cold, breaking of fever without sweating, or persistent low grade fever following a febrile illness. (3) Febrile illnesses due to Yin deficiency, causing chronic deficiency-fever syndrome with consumption, recurrent fever and a feverish sensation in the palms and soles. (4) Summer heat-stroke with headache, faintness, with or without sweating and a rapid and surging pulse.

Dosage/Administration: 3–10 g. Do not overcook.

2 Digupi (Lycium chinensis) (Wolfberry)

Chinese name: 地骨皮. Pharmaceutical name: *Cortex Lycii Radicis*.

Part Used: root-bark.

Flavor/Nature: sweet, bland; cold.

Meridian Affinity: Lung and Kidney Meridians.

Actions: cools blood and clears deficiency-Heat, and cools lung-Heat.

Indications: (1) Heat in the blood due to Yin deficiency; chronic infantile malnutrition with fever, and deficiency-fever syndrome with recurrent fever and night sweats. (2) Cough and labored breathing due to Heat in the lung. (3) Hematemesis or epistaxis due to Heat in the blood causing erratic blood movement and extravasation.

Dosage/Administration: 6–15 g.

Cautions/Contraindications: Contraindicated in febrile illnesses due to exogenous Wind–Cold, and in loose feces due to spleen insufficiency.

Section 3 Herbs That Induce Catharsis

Herbs that can cause diarrhea or can lubricate the large intestine and promote defecation are grouped as herbs that induce catharsis. Cathartic herbs, or cathartics, can relax the bowels, eliminate accumulations and mobilize excess fluid and other harmful materials for excretion. Some of them can also purge exogenous Heat. These actions make cathartics appropriate for treating such conditions as constipation, impedance of the intestines with accumulations or retained foods, gelling and accumulation of exogenous Heat in interior, retained water and edema.

When prescribing herbal cathartics, the physician should bear in mind certain precautions. If the interior condition targeted for treatment is accompanied by illness in the exterior, the physician should release the exterior prior to treating the interior condition or attack both simultaneously. Doing so will prevent pathogenic evil extending or spreading from the exterior into interior. If interior condition is accompanied by deficiency of genuine Qi, that is, weakened body resistance, include restorative herbs in the treatment, combining reinforcement and elimination, to prevent impairing vital Qi while purging. Always bear in mind that drastic purging readily injures vital Qi. It must be used with great care or not at all in debilitated patients or in women during pregnancy, following delivery or while menstruating.

Because they readily injure stomach-Qi, patients should stop taking herbalcathartics as soon as the desired therapeutic effect has been attained.

1 Dahuang (Rheum palmatum, officinale) (Rhubarb)

Chinese name: 大黄. Pharmaceutical name: *Radix Rehmanniae*.

Part Used: root tuber.

Flavor/Nature: bitter; cold.

Meridian Affinity: Stomach, Large Intestine and Liver Meridians.

Actions: promotes intestinal movement and eliminates retained matter, cools Heat and purges Fire, detoxifies poisons, promotes blood circulation and removes blood stasis.

Indications: (1) Impedance of the intestinal tract and constipation. (2) Heat in the blood causing erratic movement and bleeding, such as hematemesis and epistaxis.

(3) Eye, throat and gingival inflammation caused by upward blazing of Fire. (4) Boils and furuncles due to Heat poison or burn wounds. (5) Conditions of blood stasis.

Dosage/Administration: 3–12 g. Fresh dahuang is somewhat more potent in inducing catharsis than cooked dahuang. When decocted with other herbs it should be added last, since prolonged boiling reduces its cathartic activity. Preparing dahuang with wine further reduces its cathartic activity, but enhances its ability to mobilize blood; thus wine-prepared dahuang is suitable for removing blood stasis but less so for purgation. Charred dahuang is especially commonly used to stop bleeding.

Cautions/Contraindications: Contraindicated in pregnancy, while lactating and during menstruation.

2 *Mangxiao (Mirabilite) (Sodium Sulfate)*

Chinese name: 芒硝. Pharmaceutical name: *Natrii Sulfas*.

Part Used: crystals (group of sulfate minerals called Glauber's salts).

Flavor/Nature: salty, bitter; cold.

Meridian Affinity: Stomach and Large Intestine Meridians.

Actions: induces catharsis, softens the hard and cools Heat.

Indications: (1) Accumulation of Heat leading to dry constipation. (2) Sore throat, oral ulcers, red eyes, skin boils and furuncles.

Dosage/Administration: 10–15 g. Dissolve in the strained decoction or in boiled water.

Cautions/Contraindications: Contraindicated in pregnancy.

3 *Fanxieye (Cassia angustifolia) (Senna)*

Chinese name: 番泻叶. Pharmaceutical name: *Folium Sennae*.

Part Used: leaflets.

Flavor/Nature: sweet, bitter; cold.

Meridian Affinity: Large Intestine Meridian.

Actions: induces catharsis and eliminates.

Indications: constipation.