



*Traditional Chinese Approaches to Gu Syndrome: Two 18th Century Examples**

BY HEINER FRUEHAUF

Su He Tang (Perilla and Mint Decoction)

Source: *New Remedies to Treat Gu Syndrome (Zhigu xinfang)*

This obscure and unusual yet extremely useful remedy was first published in Lu Shunde's Qing dynasty publication on Gu ("Parasitic Possession") syndrome in 1823. While chapters on Gu syndrome appear in most internal medicine primers in ancient China, many of the remedies cited contain highly toxic herbs, or materials that have become unavailable. This relatively recent remedy provides a time-honored and safe approach to many chronic inflammatory diseases and "mystery diseases" of modern times. It should be noted that the herbs listed amount to a total of approximately 350g of crude herbs in decoction form per day—an unusually high amount for a Chinese herb formula. While such a high dosage may have been deemed necessary to rescue people from life-threatening diseases such as schistosomiasis, it is recommended to use the herbs in lower amounts in a modern clinical context, especially for weak and sensitive constitutions.

Category: Gu Syndrome (*guzheng*)

Therapeutic Principles: drive out chronic parasitic (gu) poisons with aromatic materials, disperse chronic wind and damp, tonify deficiencies of blood, qi and yin, remove biofilm

Typical Symptoms: strong constitution; chronic and debilitating digestive distress (gas, bloating, ascites, testicular swelling and pain, alternating

diarrhea and constipation, irregularly shaped bowel movements, food allergies, etc); chronic aversion to wind, constant fluish sensation, wandering joint and/or muscle pain; chronic neurological symptoms (headaches, neck pain, sensation that something is stuck or embedded in the brain, muscle twitching, eyelid twitching, ticks, greatly enhanced sensitivity to noise and/or smell, altered taste, etc); gradually increasing mental-emotional symptoms (sudden mood swings, sensation of "feeling possessed," anxiety, insomnia, depression, obsessive compulsive tendencies, etc)

Tongue: red, with damp yellow coating

Pulse: full, potentially rapid

Western Indications: first phase of treatment for all types of chronic and debilitating intestinal parasitism, including protozoan infections (amoeba, giardia, blastocystis, etc), worm infestations (tapeworm, roundworm, hookworm, whipworm), and other degenerative infections (schistosomiasis, filariasis, sheep and liver flukes, trichinosis, systemic candidiasis, brucellosis, etc); all types of chronic and debilitating nervous system inflammations (Lyme disease [*borrelia burgdorferi*] and other *borrelia* infections, tick fever [*babesiosis*, *ehrlichiosis*], Rocky Mountain spotted fever [*rickettsia*], bartonellosis, tick-borne encephalitis [FSME] and other forms of chronic encephalitis and meningitis, malaria, anaplasmosis, leptospirosis, West Nile virus, Dengue fever); herpes, CMV, leprosy, HIV/AIDS.

TRADITIONAL CHINESE APPROACHES TO GU SYNDROME:
TWO 18TH CENTURY EXAMPLES

Original Instructions: “This remedy treats all types of Gu syndrome--Snake Gu [shegu: chronic protozoan infections and other debilitating diseases of the digestive system], Emaciation Gu [gangu: leprosy and other degenerative diseases of the nervous system], as well as all other manifestations of Gu accompanied by extreme swelling and bloating, and mental/emotional instability of all kinds (diankuang), or convulsions (jian). The remedy can also be used in situations where the patient presents with a common cold accompanied by symptoms of coughing and uprising qi, or a tight and tender abdominal wall. The remedy, furthermore, is suitable for all situations where the patient exhibits signs of hidden excess heat, dark urination, or reacts unfavorably after taking tonic herbs. If this kind of case is treated with this method, it will be effective every single time. After 3-4 doses have been consumed in decoction form and symptoms are now gradually improving, add 60g of Shaojiu (rice wine) and boil together with the herbs for a long time for optimal results. If 6g of Tianzhou Sanqi (pseudoginseng from Tianzhou in Guangxi) are added to each dose, the result will be even better. It is important to note that one should start taking this remedy at a lower dosage first, and then gradually increase up to the prescribed amount. Otherwise the internal poison will flare up, and the patient will become unsettled, potentially causing major episodes of vomiting and/or diarrhea—the more intense the flare-up, the more afraid the patient will be to take the remedy again. After 5-6 doses of the prescription, it will be safe to go up to the full dose.”

30g	Zisuye	perilla leaf	紫蘇葉
30g	Bohe	field mint	薄荷
30g	Baizhi	angelica dahurica	白芷
24g	Lianqiao	forsythia	連翹
18g	Chaihu	bupleurum	柴胡
30g	Danggui	angelica sinensis	當歸
15g	Chuanxiong	cnidium root	川芎
15g	Baishao	(white) peony	白芍
21g	Huangqi	astragalus	黃芪
30g	Heshouwu	fleeceflower root	何首烏
24g	Bei Shashen	glehnia	北沙參
24g	(Sheng) Dihuang	(raw) rehmannia	生地黄
30g	Qinghao	artemisia annua	青蒿
15g	Juemingzi	cassia seed	決明子
30g	Huaihua	sophora flower	槐花

Original Modifications:

- for upflare of internal fire after 1-2 doses, manifesting in symptoms of constipation and burning and ulcerations in the mouth and tongue, remove Danggui, Baizhi, Chuanxiong, Zisu, Bohe, add 15g each of Huangbai, Huangqin, Fuling, Xuanshen, Tianmendong, Zexie, and Shigao

TRADITIONAL CHINESE APPROACHES TO GU SYNDROME:
TWO 18TH CENTURY EXAMPLES

- for effulgent fire symptoms manifesting in dark urination, add 15g each of Xuanshen, Zhizi, Fuling
- for heat cough or cough with blood in the sputum, always signs of excess heat, temporarily remove Zisu and Bohe, further take out Danggui, Chuanxiong, Baizhi, and add 30g each of Sanqi, Baihe, Maimendong
- for symptoms of cold damage (shanghan) with cold cough, use 1-2 doses of a prescription of Paojiang, Chenpi, Xiyangshen, Dingxiang, Danggui, Chuanxiong, Xingren, (Zhi) Huangqi, Heshouwu, (Zhi) Gancao and, if there are signs of internal cold, Rougui and other herbs to treat the acute symptom picture, then return to Zisu Tang and its modifications after the cough has improved to treat the root of the problem
- for diarrhea in weak constitutional types, remove Bei Shashen, Lianqiao, Huaihua, Chaihu, Huangqi, Qinghao, Sheng Dihuang, Zisu, Bohe, Juemingzi, add 9g each of Baihe, Fuzi, Baibiandou, Shanyao, Sharen, Baizhu, Ganjiang, and 3g each of Xiyangshen, Dingxiang, Muxiang
- for cases where Suhe Tang has been imbibed over a long period of time and where the original fire symptoms have now receded, but where the primary symptom is now lower back ache, remove Bei Shashen, Lianqiao, Huangqi, Huaihua, Chaihu, Qinghao, Sheng Dihuang, Juemingzi, (raw) Baishao, Zisu, Bohe, add 15 g of Chenpi, or add 15g of Shu Dihuang, 6g of Rougui, 15g of Paojiang, 9g of Dingxiang, 9g of Zhi Gancao, 6g of Duzhong, 9g of (fried) Baizhu, 9g of (wine fried) Baishao, 3g of Fuling
- for patients with cold and deficient spleen and kidney systems who now have become reinfected with Gu, or who have taken Suhe Tang for a long time and the Gu poisons have for the most part resolved, and what remains to be addressed is cold and deficiency of all organ networks, Su He Tang should not be prescribed anymore; instead, herbs that warm, tonify and benefit qi movement should be used (see Jiajian Su He Tang)



Jiajian Su He Tang (Modified Perilla and Mint Decoction)

Source: *New Remedies to Treat Gu Syndrome (Zhigu xinfang)*

See the remarks on previous pages about its sister remedy, Su He Tang. In general, *Jiajian Su He Tang* is more suitable for deficient constitutions suffering from long-standing viral, spirochetal, or protozoan infections. It is, therefore, the main source informing the design of Thunder and Lightning Pearls. See also remarks to sister remedy, *Su He Tang*.

Category: Gu Syndrome (*guzheng*)

Therapeutic Principles: drive out chronic parasitic (gu) poisons with aromatic materials, disperse chronic wind and damp, tonify deficiencies of blood, qi and yin, warm internal cold in depleted organ systems, remove biofilm

TRADITIONAL CHINESE APPROACHES TO GU SYNDROME:
TWO 18TH CENTURY EXAMPLES

Typical Symptoms: weak constitution; chronic and debilitating digestive distress (gas, bloating, ascites, testicular swelling and pain, alternating diarrhea and constipation, irregularly shaped bowel movements, food allergies, etc); chronic aversion to wind, constant fluish sensation, joint and/or muscle pain; chronic neurological symptoms (headaches, neck pain, sensation that something is stuck or embedded in the brain, muscle twitching, eyelid twitching, ticks, greatly enhanced sensitivity to noise and/or smell, altered taste, etc); gradually increasing mental-emotional symptoms (sudden mood swings, sensation of “feeling possessed,” anxiety, insomnia, depression, obsessive compulsive tendencies, etc)

Tongue: pale, with rooted, damp white coating

Pulse: feeble or deep

Western Indications: middle and late stages (or in weak patient, early stage) of treatment for all types of chronic and debilitating intestinal parasitism, including protozoan infections (amoeba, giardia, blastocystis, etc) and other degenerative infections (schistosomiasis, filiarisis, sheep and liver flukes, trichinosis, systemic candidiasis, brucellosis, etc); all types of chronic and debilitating nervous system inflammations (Lyme disease [borrelia burgdorferi] and other borrelia infections, tick fever [babesiosis, ehrlichiosis], Rocky Mountain spotted fever [rickettsia], bartonellosis, tick-borne encephalitis [FSME] and other forms of chronic encephalitis and meningitis, malaria, anaplasmosis, leptospirosis, West Nile virus, Dengue fever); chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia; HIV/AIDS

15g	Zisuye	perilla leaf	紫蘇葉
15g	Bohe	field mint	薄荷
15g	Baizhi	angelica dahurica	白芷
21g	Danggui	angelica sinensis	當歸
15g	Chuanxiong	cnidium root	川芎
15g	Huangqi	astragalus	黃芪
15g	(Sheng) Gancao	(unprocessed) licorice	甘草
15g	Wujiapi	acanthopanax	五加皮
15g	Heshouwu	fleeceflower root	何首烏
15g	Baihe	lily bulb	白合
3g	Dingxiang	clove	丁香
6g	Chenpi	aged tangerine peel	陳皮
6g	Zelan	lycopus	澤蘭
3g	Yujin	turmeric	鬱金
3g	Muxiang	saussurea	木香
6g	Sanleng	sparganium	三棱
6g	Ezhu	curcuma rhizome	莪朮

TRADITIONAL CHINESE APPROACHES TO GU SYNDROME:
TWO 18TH CENTURY EXAMPLES

Modifications: see Suhe Tang



For more detailed information on the diagnosis and treatment for Gu Syndrome, see the articles “Driving Out Demons and Snakes: Ancient Chinese Parasitology and the Treatment of Gu Syndrome in Modern Clinical Practice” (*The Journal of Chinese Medicine*, May 1998) and “Gu Syndrome Interview: An In-Depth Discussion with Heiner Fruehauf” (both can be downloaded classicalchinesemedicine.org).

For detailed information on the contemporary patent medicines Thunder Pearls, Lightning Pearls and other remedies in the Classical Pearls line of products that are based on the pertinent clinical concept of Gu Syndrome and Su He Tang, please visit ClassicalPearls.org

*Excerpt from Heiner Fruehauf, *A Clinical Handbook for Chinese Herbal Medicine* (Portland, OR: Hai Shan Press, 2011)

© Heiner Fruehauf, 2011