

Introduction

In his book *The 10 Key Formula Families in Chinese Medicine*, Dr. Huang gives a significant amount of consideration to both the physical constitution of the patient (體質 *tǐ zhì*) and the presentations that confirm the use of certain herbs (藥證 *yào zhèng*), this eBook is a summary of the constitute or presentational considerations that indicate the safe and effective use of the 10 key formula families.

This is a brief introduction to the Dr. Huang's thinking about constitution and formula presentation. It is not meant for self-diagnosis. Those with any kind of serious medical problem should seek the services of a licensed practitioner. It is also not meant to be an exhaustive guide for the clinical practitioner. The goal of this eBook is to give the reader a glimpse into this particular system of diagnosis and treatment.

For more information about the 10 key formula families and other classically based methods of prescribing Chinese herbal medicine or to join in the discussion of such, please visit the Classic Formulas website.

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十大類方

In Dr. Huang's Words...

It is best to approach Chinese medicine through a study of the fundamentals of the classic formulas. These famous classical formulas, which mostly come from the *Discussion of Cold Damage* (傷寒論 *Shāng hán lùn*) and *Essentials from the Golden Cabinet* (金匱要略 *Jīn guì yào luè*), have been used over and over again as they have been passed down through the generations over the period of thousands of years to the present day. These classic formulas not only have proven effectiveness, but additionally contain classical medical thought concerning the human body and treatment of illness. This is both the essence and spirit of Chinese medicine that provides the standards and foundation for Chinese traditional medicine.

One hundred formulas were selected for inclusion in this book; it is not a book that discusses the definition of formulas, but one that describes formula presentations. A formula presentation consists of the signs and symptoms that confirm the use of a formula. Formula presentations are easy to grasp as they are objective and practical; they are the key to studying the classic formulas. To aid the reader's understanding and memory, in this book the classic formulas have been grouped together by the similarities in what they primarily treat.

黃煌



From the forward to the English edition

Cinnamon Twig Constitution (桂枝體質 *guì zhī tǐ zhì*)

As with all constitutions, the cinnamon twig constitution refers to the frequently seen constitutional body types that often exhibit signs associated with Cinnamomi Ramulus (*guì zhī*) and cinnamon twig family formulas.

Distinguishing this kind of constitution is accomplished by utilizing the traditional Chinese medicine methods of looking, asking and palpating to examine the patient's body, skin, pulse and tongue.

External distinguishing characteristics: The body tends to be thin, the skin is comparatively fair with a fine texture, the flesh appears moist and is firm. The abdomen is usually relatively flat, and the abdominal muscles tend to be tight. The eyes have a spirited look; lips are pale red or dark. The pulse is often floating and large and can be felt when barely touching the skin. The tongue body is soft and pale red or dark pale in color. The tongue surface is moist with a thin, white coat.

Predisposed toward: sweating easily, or spontaneous sweating, night sweats or sweaty palms and soles. Emotional or physical sensitivity to cold temperatures, frequent colds, tendency toward abdominal pain, palpitations, shallow or dream filled sleep, or muscle spasms.

桂
枝



Cinnamomi Ramulus

Ephedra Constitution (麻黃體質 *má huáng tǐ zhì*)

External appearance: A slightly fat build with musculature that is either relatively well developed or loose. The color of the skin is yellow, light yellow, or has a shallow dark cast.

For people with darker skin, where it is difficult to see the yellow color, or for people with pale skin where the yellow color is washed out, look for a lack of luster in the face, and a slight amount of edema.

The skin texture is rather coarse and dry.

The test for dry skin is to scratch lightly with the fingernail, if it leaves a white mark, it is the dry skin of this presentation.

Generally these people don't sweat easily, and their bodies are relatively robust. They don't have high blood pressure. The lips are dark or purplish red. Their tongues tend to be large, pale red, with a white coat, and they don't have dry mouths.

Commonly expressed symptoms: These patients do not easily sweat, and when they do, the sweat does not flow smoothly. They easily feel chilled and have a tendency to wheeze. They often have nasal congestion, with clear runny discharge. The muscles tend to feel heavy and sore, and the entire body feels tired and worn out. These people are not particularly sensitive to their environment. There is a feeling of heaviness or pressure in the epigastrium or abdominal bloating and their heads tend to feel heavy. They are inclined to have superficial edema.

麻黃



Ephedrae Herba

Bupleurum constitution (柴胡體質 *chái hú tǐ zhì*)

Distinctive external features: a medium to slightly thin physique with a complexion that is dark yellow, greenish yellow or greenish pale, and lacking luster. The skin tends to be relatively dry, and with firm muscle tone. The tongue characteristically looks tough and firm, dark and with purple spots, the tongue body is neither pale nor flabby, and the coat is either normal or a little dry. The pulse generally is wiry or thin.

Easily manifested symptoms: main complaints consist mostly of subjective symptoms, such as a sensitivity to temperature changes, or at times feeling cold while at other times feeling hot, mood swings, and an appetite that is easily affected by the emotions. There could be a stuffy and full sensation in the chest and hypochondria, which can be painful to the touch. The neck and shoulders often feel achy or have spasms, with cold extremities and a lower abdomen that easily becomes distended and is painful. Women may experience irregular periods and are commonly seen with premenstrual symptoms such as stuffiness in the chest, breast distention, and irritability, along with abdominal pain with menstruation, and dark menstrual blood or clots in the menstrual blood.

Constitutional proclivities: tendency towards qi stagnation; tendency towards blood stasis.

柴胡



Bupleuri Radix

Rhubarb Constitution (大黃體質 *dà huáng tǐ zhì*)

External appearance: A robust physique with strong and firm musculature, a reddish oily complexion, or one that is greasy and dirty looking, thick darkened red lips, and a tongue with a thick dry coat.

Commonly expressed symptoms: Ordinarily dreads heat and likes coolness, excessive appetite, tendency towards dizziness or vertigo, tends toward constipation, only sweats lightly or unevenly, chest stuffiness, a dry mouth with thick and sticky fluids (including sputum and saliva), hyperlipidemia, hypertension, and abdominal tenderness or resistance to pressure.

大黃



Rhei Radix et Rhizoma

Astragalus Constitution (黃耆體質 *huáng qí tǐ zhì*)

External distinguishing characteristics: a lusterless complexion that is yellowish pale, or yellowish and faintly red, or dark yellow; soft and loose musculature that appears edematous; eyes that lack liveliness; and a pale complexion. The abdominal wall is soft, weak, and without strength. The tongue is pale and flabby, and with a wet coat.

Predisposed toward symptoms of: sweats very easily and has a dread of wind; allergies, coughs and wheezing, or rhinitis are easily exacerbated by drafts or chills, or there may be a tendency to catch colds. Thin, watery and unformed stools, or stools which are dry at first and then watery. These people have poor appetites and easily experience abdominal fullness and distention. There is a marked tendency toward edema, especially in the feet, as well as a predilection toward numbness in the hands and feet.

黃耆



Astragali Radix

Gypsum Presentation (石膏證 *shí gāo zhèng*)

Dryness (燥 *zào*) is a major aspect of the gypsum presentation (石膏證 *shí gāo zhèng*) along with symptoms of thirst and a dry tongue. This kind of dry heat presentation is frequently seen in acute febrile illnesses, but also can be seen in chronic and allergic kinds of illnesses as well.

Its distinguishing symptoms are:

- 1 Irritability and thirst with a desire to drink
- 2 Aversion to heat and profuse sweating
- 3 A very dry tongue
- 4 Large and flooding pulse, or one that is floating and slippery

石膏



Gypsum fibrosum

Coptis Constitution (黃連體質 *huáng lián tǐ zhì*)

Distinguishing external characteristics: Relatively strong and robust physique, flushed or blackish red complexion with an oily sheen, bloodshot eyes with a copious, gummy discharge, dark red or purple red lips, a red or dark red tongue body that is firm, tough and inflexible, with a thin yellow or greasy yellow coat; abdominal musculature that is relatively tight with a resistance to palpation or which causes the patient some discomfort when pressure is applied.

The coptis tongue is distinguished by being dark and firm due to the presence of old congested blood that is the result of heat impairing the circulation of blood; when extended it is stiff like a piece of wood, as well as tight and contracted so it does not protrude very far.

Predisposed toward: usually likes cold and dislikes heat, enjoys cold drinks, easily agitated, anxious and physically restless, with a propensity toward insomnia and excessive dreaming; frequent sores and boils, upper abdominal focal distension with a feeling of stuffiness and discomfort, dry mouth with a bitter taste, frequent mouth and tongue sores, sore throat, and scanty yellow urination.

The tongue of a patient with a coptis presentation is particularly notable. It is red or dark red and the tongue body itself is tough and firm, with a greasy yellow coat that could be either thick or thin. Moreover the tongue surface itself is somewhat dry. I think of this as the 'coptis tongue'.

黃
連



Coptidis Rhizoma

Dried Ginger Presentation (乾薑證 *gān jiāng zhèng*)

The dried ginger presentation falls within the category of internal cold. These patients have an aversion to cold and like warmth, have a sallow complexion, cold limbs and body, a soft or weak voice, and a pale white tongue with a white greasy coat. The ability of *Zingiberis Rhizoma* (*gān jiāng*) to warm the center and scatter cold is aimed squarely at the presentations of internal cold.

The dried ginger presentation is as follows:

- 1 Clear, thin, and odorless vomitus, saliva, sputum, stool, or urine
- 2 Abdominal distention, abdominal pain, nausea and vomiting, and perhaps coughing
- 3 Excess saliva in the mouth and lack of thirst, aversion to cold and desire for warmth, listless and dispirited
- 4 Pale or pale red tongue, with a greasy coat that is usually white and greasy; it may dark gray and greasy, or white and slimy. (This is the ginger tongue)

乾
薑



Zingiberis Rhizoma

Aconite Presentation (附子證 *fù zǐ zhèng*)

附子

The primary clinical indications of *Aconiti Radix lateralis preparata* (*zhì fù zǐ*) are:

- 1 Profuse sweating, frigid extremities, chills, a sinking pulse, decreased heart sounds, and low blood pressure
- 2 Vomiting and diarrhea accompanied by cold hands and feet, abdominal pain and distention, a sinking and weak pulse, and a white slippery tongue coat
- 3 Severe joint pain, localized swelling and distention, muscle and sinew spasms, decreased range of motion, and frigid extremities
- 4 Chronically ill, debilitated, or elderly patients with coldness in the lower half of the body, weakness and aching of lower back and knees; or cold pain, edema of the dorsal aspect of the foot, nighttime or frequent urination, a dread of cold, and a sinking and feeble pulse
- 5 Chronic nephritis or cardiac insufficiency, accompanied by symptoms of systemic weakness in physiological function, along with edema

The pulse of the aconite presentation is notable. It can be faint and weak (this is an extremely thin pulse, which when pressed feels at times as if it is there and at times as if it is absent); sinking and hidden (only felt when using heavy pressure almost all the way to the bone); thin and weak (the pulse is thin as a thread and forceless), or suddenly become floating and large, but empty, soft and without force. These are all considered to be Aconite pulses.



Aconiti Radix lateralis preparata

Pinellia Presentation (半夏證 *bàn xià zhèng*)

Chinese medicine regards Pinelliae Rhizoma preparatum (*zhì bàn xià*) as a phlegm-transforming medicinal. It treats all kinds of phlegm, not only for sputum, which can be coughed up, but also for phlegm retained in the body, and formless phlegm that cannot be seen by the naked eye. In the Chinese medicine way of thinking, phlegm gets stuck in different places, which then in turn generates different kinds of symptoms in these locations. Thus, it can be used in the treatment of everything from headaches to constipation, dizziness to diarrhea, joint pain to palpitations, and nausea to numbness.

Because in clinical practice there are numerous illnesses that are phlegm induced, Chinese doctors have coined the term “the hundred illnesses are due mostly to mischief caused by phlegm” (百病多由痰作祟 *bài bìng duō yóu tán zuò suì*). Pinelliae Rhizoma preparatum (*zhì bàn xià*) can be used to treat a wide variety of phlegm-induced illnesses. There are many opportunities to use this herb particularly for diseases of the digestive, respiratory, or neuro-endocrine systems.

The following are the definitive signs that confirm the pinellia presentation:

- 1 Nausea or occasional nausea, which when severe results in vomiting
- 2 Slippery or greasy tongue coat
- 3 Sallow or dull ashen complexion

半夏



Pinelliae Rhizoma preparatum

A few thoughts from the translator

Doctor Huang's book *The 10 Key Formula Families in Chinese Medicine* provides practitioners with a clinical perspective that not only helps us to orient and focus our clinic thinking around the prescription of herbal medicines, but also gives us deeper insight into how herbal formulas are related to each other, and how those formula families relate to constitution.

While Doctor Huang's perspective is new to many of us in the West, and for that matter in China as well, as his methods of clinical reasoning and treatment are not considered to be mainstream. The methods he shares with us are rooted in streams that stretch back to the early Qing dynasty writings of Xu Ling-Tai (徐靈胎) and even to the lines of the *Discussion of Cold Damage* (傷寒論 *Shāng hán lùn*). Additionally, they touch on the Kampō tradition of Japan that has also been an influence in his thinking. We are fortunate to have practitioners like Doctor Huang who are able to draw deeply from the well of Chinese medicine's knowledge, have the liveliness of mind to synthesize the contributions of doctors from the past, apply it clinically in our modern life, and explain it all in a way that allows it to come alive in the minds of his students.

Considering constitution and formula presentation are powerful lenses that help to focus our clinical reasoning. Dr. Huang's *The 10 Key Formula Families* will soon be available through Eastland Press, and you can keep up to date with ongoing discussions at on the classic formulas website.

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From the translator's forward...