Chapter 12 Herbs for calming spirit (Shen)

Dr. Li, Dongcheng
Office: 954-763-9840
E-mail: dcljdl@yahoo.com

Concept

• Concept
  – The herbs that are used primarily in treating disturbance of the spirit, which lead to such problems as irritability, insomnia, palpitations with anxiety, and even some forms of insanity.
  – Shen is the general manifestation of vital activities.
  – Spirit (Shen) resides in the Heart.
  – Soul (Hun) resides in the Liver. Disorder of the Liver often manifest in a similar manner as Heart.
• Most herbs in this category enter the **Heart channel**.
• Many of them also affect the **Liver**.
• There are two major categories of substances that calm the spirit:
  – 1. Herbs that anchor, settle, and calm the spirit.
  – 2. Herbs that nourish the heart to calm the spirit.

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• **Herbs for calming spirit (Shen)**
  – **Section 1 Herbs that anchor, settle, and calm the spirit (5 types)**
    • Ci Shi; Hu Po; Long Gu; Zhen Zhu; Zhu Sha
  – **Section 2 Herbs that nourish heart and calm spirit (6 types)**
    • Suan Zao Ren; Bai Zi Ren; Yuan Zhi; He Huan Pi; Ye Jiao Teng; Ling Zhi
Section 1 Herbs that anchor, settle, and calm the spirit

1. Ci Shi 磁石 Magnetitum
2. Hu Po 琥珀 Succinum
3. Long Gu 龙骨 Os Draconis
4. Zhen Zhu 珍珠 Margarita
5. Zhu Sha 朱砂 Cinnabaris
Concept

• **Herbs that anchor, settle, and calm the spirit**
  – The herbs that anchor and calm the spirit are either *minerals* or *shells*. Traditionally their function has been related to their *weight* and *density*. They have a *sedative* and *tranquilizing effect*. Mainly treat *disturbance of the spirit* and *liver yang rising*.

• These herbs are used to “weigh” on the *Heart* so as to calm the spirit.
  – For *palpitations* accompanied by *anxiety* and *insomnia*

• These herbs are used to “weigh” on the *Liver* to subdue *Liver yang rising*.
  – For *headaches, dizziness, bad temper, flushed face*

• These herbs are used to “weigh” on the *Lungs* and contain the leakage of Lung Qi.
  – For *cough* and *wheezing*

• These herbs are used to “weigh” on the *Stomach* to redirect rebellious Qi downward.
  – For *vomiting, hiccoughs, or belching*
Caution

- Most of herbs in this section are mineral substances, they readily injure the stomach Qi and lead to indigestion and a loss of appetite. For this reason, they are commonly combined with substances that nourish and strengthen the SP and ST.
- Some of these metals such as Zhu Sha (Cinnabar), contain heavy metals such as mercury. To minimize toxicity they should not be taken long-term.

Study Objective

- 1. Understand the general information on herbs that anchor, settle, and calm the spirit.
  - a. Concept, common function and indication.
  - b. Characters.
  - c. Compatibility.
  - d. Caution and contraindications
- 2. Get acquainted with the following individual information on herbs in this category.
  - a. Pinyin name, common English name and pharmaceutical name.
  - b. Characters.
  - c. Functions and indications.
  - d. Dosage and administration.
  - e. Cautions and contraindication.
Ci Shi (磁石)  
(Magnetitum)

• **English name:** magnetite  
• **Literal English translation:** “magnetic stone”  
• **Alternate names:** 灵磁石(ling ci shi); 活磁石(huo ci shi)  
• **Pharmaceutical name:** Magnetitum  
• **Where grown:** Hebei, Shandong, Liaoning, Jiangsu, Anhui, Guangdong  
• **Used part:** Mineral  
• **Flavor and properties:** Acrid, salty, cold  
• **Channel entered:** Kidney, Liver, Heart
Ci Shi (磁石) (Magnetitum)

- **Functions**
  - 1. Calms spirit (Shen)
  - 2. Subdues liver-Yang
  - 3. Improves hearing and vision
  - 4. Calms wheezing

- **Indications**
  - 1. For insomnia, palpitation, anxiety, and epilepsy due to kidney deficiency, liver fire disturb heart Shen.
  - 2. For liver Yang rising manifested as dizziness, irritability, to be angry easily. Used with Long Gu, Mu li.
  - 3. For hearing loss due to kidney deficiency and blurred vision due to kidney and liver deficiency.
  - 4. It can help kidney to grasp Qi for wheezing due to kidney deficiency. Used with Dai Zhe Shi, Wu Wei Zi, Hu Tao Ren

- **Dosage and administration**
  - 15-30g decocted in water for an oral dose.
  - Break it to small piece and decocted 30 minutes longer.

- **Cautions and contraindications**
  - Use with caution in cases of weak spleen or stomach.
Long Gu (龙骨)
(Os Draconis)

- **English name:** dragon bone, fossilized vertebrae and bones of the extremities (usually of mammals)
- **Literal English name:** “dragon bone”
- **Alternate names:** 五花龙骨 (wu hua long gu); 白龙骨 (bai long gu)
- **Pharmaceutical name:** Os Draconis
- **Where grown:** Shanxi, Inner Mongolia, Gansu, Hebei
- **Used part:** bone
- **Flavor and properties:** Sweet, astringent, neutral
- **Channel entered:** Heart, kidney, liver
Long Gu (龙骨) (Os Draconis)

• **Functions**
  – 1. Calms spirit (Shen)
  – 2. Subdues liver-Yang
  – 3. Binds leaking

• **Indications**
  – 1. For (1) restlessness, palpitation, forgetfulness, dream disturbed sleep. (2) Epilepsy and convulsion. Used with Yuan Zhi, Gui Ban, Suan Zao Ren
  – 2. For liver Yang rising manifested as dizziness, irritability, easily to be angry. Used with Mu Li, Niu Xi, Dai Zhe Shi.
  – 3. For leaking disorders such as spermatorrhea, enuresis, frequent urination, excessive vaginal discharge, spontaneously sweating and night sweating. Used with Mu Li, Shan Zhu Yu, Qian Shi.¹⁷

Long Gu (龙骨) (Os Draconis)

• **Dosage and administration**
  – 15-30g decocted in water for an oral dose.
  – Raw Long Gu calms the spirit, calcined Long Gu is astringent for leakage of fluids and non-healing sores.

• **Cautions and contraindications**
  – Contraindicated for damp-heat or external syndrome.
Addendum

– Long Chi (Dens Draconis): “dragon’s teeth” or fossilized teeth, are astringent and cool in nature and have basically the same functions as those of Long Gu (Os Draconis). However, the “teeth” are especially effective for palpitations with anxiety, insomnia, and dream-disturbed sleep. The dosage is 9-15g. Long Chi (Dens Draconis) should also be cooked prior to adding other ingredients to the decoction.

• Long Gu: stronger in binding leaks, weaker in calming spirit
• Long Chi: stronger in calming spirit, weaker in binding leaks.

Hu Po (琥珀)
(Succinum Amber)

• English name: amber
• Alternate names: 血珀(xue po)
• Botanical name: Succinum resin
• Pharmaceutical name: Succinum
• Where grown: Yunnan, Henan, Guangxi, Fujian, Guizhou, Liaoning
• Used part: resin
• Flavor and properties: sweet, neutral
• Channel entered: Bladder, Heart, Liver
Hu Po (琥珀)  
(Succinum Amber)

- **Functions:**
  - 1. Calms spirit (Shen)
  - 2. Moves blood and dissipates stasis
  - 3. Promotes urination

- **Indications**
  - 1. For restlessness, insomnia, palpitation and epilepsy.
  - 2. For injury, amenorrhea, chest pain and mass.
  - 3. For Lin syndrome and urinary retention.
Hu Po (琥珀)
(Succinum Amber)

• **Dosage and administration**
  – 1.5-3g
  – Taken as **powder** without decocting because it will make clots and very sticky when decoction.
  – Do not take it much.

• **Cautions and contraindications**
  – Contraindicated in cases of **Yin deficiency with heat signs**.

Zhen Zhu (珍珠)
(Margarita)

• **English name:** pearl
• **Alternate name:** 真珍珠(zhen zhen zhu)
• **Botanical name:** Pteria margaritifera pearl
• **Pharmaceutical name:** Marigarita
• **Where grown:** natural pearls are found off the coast of Guangdong, Guangxi, and Taiwan; freshwater cultivated pearls are found in Heilongjiang, Anhui, and Jiangsu
• **When harvested:** year-round, but mostly in December
• **Used part:** pearl
• **Flavor and properties:** salty, cold
• **Channel entered:** Heart, liver
Zhen Zhu (珍珠)  
(Margarita)

**Functions:**
- 1. Calms spirit (Shen)
- 2. Improves vision
- 3. Clears heat and regenerates tissue

**Indications**
- 1. For (1) restlessness, palpitation, forgetfulness, dream disturbed sleep. (2) Epilepsy and convulsion.
- 2. For red swollen eyes, blurred vision due to liver fire.
- 3. For mouth sore, throat ulcer, and carbuncle.
Zhen Zhu (珍珠)
(Margarita)

• **Dosage and administration**
  – 0.3-1g.
  – Generally used in pill and powder form. Often cooked with bean curd and water for two hours before being ground into powder. Also used topically in eye drops or powders.

• **Cautions and contraindications**
  – None noted.

• **Modern study**
  – Effect on smooth muscle: inhibitory effect on rabbit intestinal specimens.

Zhen Zhu (珍珠)
(Margarita)

• **Addendum**
  – Zhen Zhu Mu (珍珠母, zhen zhu mu) or mother-of-pearl
  – Sweet, salty and cold
  – Heart and Liver channels-entered
  – Calms the Liver and anchors the yang while also clearing the Liver and improving vision.
  – Used for ascendant Liver yang with dizziness, tinnitus, insomnia, or seizures. Also used for when Liver deficiency causes blurred vision, or Liver heat causes red eyes and photophobia.
  – Used in decoctions (decoct first) or powders in doses of 15-30g.
Zhu Sha (朱砂)  
(Cinnabaris )

- English name: cinnabar, Mercury
- Literal English translation: “vermilion sand”
- Alternate name: 辰砂(chen sha); 丹砂(dan sha)
- Pharmaceutical name: Cinnabaris
- Where grown: Guizhou, Hunan, Sichuan, Guangxi, Yunnan
- Used part: Mineral
- Flavor and properties: Sweet, cool, toxic
- Channel entered: Heart
Zhu Sha (朱砂)  
(Cinnabaris )

**Functions**
- 1. Calms *spirit* (Shen)
- 2. Clears *heat toxicity*

**Indications**
- 1. For: (1) restlessness, insomnia, palpitation due to heart fire, heart Yin and heart blood deficiency. Used with Huang Lian, Gan Cao, Dang Gui, Bai Zi Ren, Suan Zao Ren. (2) for convulsion and epilepsy due to wind heat or phlegm heat. Used with Hai Ge Ke, Xi Jiao.
- 2. *Topically use as a powder for carbuncle, sore throat and mouth sore* used topically.

**Dosage and administration**
- 0.1-0.5g used in pill or powder form after being refined by water.
- If used with a decoction it should be taken as a powder that is chased by the strained decoction.

**Cautions and contraindications**
- Should not be used in *large amounts or long-term*.
- To prevent mercury poisoning, *do not place directly in fire* because it will make more mercury come out.
Section 1 Herbs that anchor, settle, and calm the spirit
– 1. Ci Shi 磁石 Magnetitum
– 2. Hu Po 琥珀 Succinum
– 3. Long Gu 龙骨 Os Draconis
– 4. Zhen Zhu 珍珠 Margarita
– 5. Zhu Sha 朱砂 Cinnabaris

Section 2 Herbs that nourish heart and calm spirit
Concept

• The herbs that nourish the heart and calm the spirit are primarily used for palpitations with anxiety and insomnia due to heart blood or liver yin deficiency. They are mild in character and have few side effects.

Section 2 Herbs that nourish heart and calm spirit

1. Suan Zao Ren 酸枣仁 (Semen Ziziphi Spinosae)
2. Bai Zi Ren 柏子仁 (Semen Platycladi)
3. Yuan Zhi 远志 (Radix Polygalae)
4. He Huan Pi 合欢皮 (Cortex Albiziae)
5. Ye Jiao Teng (Shou Wu teng) 夜交藤 (Caulis Polygoni Multiflori)
6. Ling Zhi 灵芝 (Ganoderma)
Suan Zao Ren (酸枣仁)  
(Semen Ziziphi Spinosae)

- **English name:** sour jujube seed, zizyphus
- **Literal English name:** “sour date seed”
- **Latin Name:** Ziziphus spinosa Hu. Also as Z. Jujuba Mill.
- **Pharmaceutical name:** Semen Zizyphi Spinosae
- **Where grown:** Hebei, Shanxi, Liaoning, Henan
- **When harvested:** autumn when ripened
- **Used part:** Seed
- **Flavor and properties:** Sweet, sour, neutral
- **Channel entered:** Gallbladder, heart, liver, spleen
Suan Zao Ren (酸枣仁)  
(Semen Ziziphi Spinosae)

- **Function**
  - 1. Calms spirit (Shen)
  - 2. Stops sweating

- **Indications**
  - 1. For insomnia, palpitation, forgetfulness, dream disturbed sleep with dizziness due to heart and liver Yin and blood deficiency. It is one of the important herbs for calming Shen. Used with Chuan Xiong, Fu Ling, Zhi Mu (as Suan Zao Ren Tang).
  - 2. For spontaneous and night sweating due to Qi or Yin deficiency. Used with Long Gu, Wu Wei Zi, Mu Li.

- **Dosage and administration**
  - 10-15g decocted in water for an oral dose
  - 1.5--3g as a powder.

- **Cautions and contraindications**
  - Use with caution in cases of severe diarrhea or heat excess.

- **Modern study**
  - 1. Hypnotic and sedative effect
  - 2. Analgesic effect
  - 3. Effect on temperature regulation: lower
  - 4. Cardiovascular effect: lower blood pressure
  - 5. Effect on burns: reduce local edema from burns
Bai Zi Ren (柏子仁)  
(Semen Platycladi)

- **English name:** arbor-vitae seed, biota seed
- **Latin Name:** Biota orientalis (L.) Endl.
- **Pharmaceutical name:** Semen Biotae Orientalis
- **Where grown:** throughout China, especially Shandong, Henan, Hebei
- **When harvested:** early winter when seeds have ripened
- **Used part:** seeds
- **Flavor and properties:** Sweet, neutral
- **Channel entered:** Heart, kidney, large intestine
Bai Zi Ren (柏子仁)  
(Semen Platycladi)  

- **Functions**  
  - 1. Calms spirit (Shen)  
  - 2. Moistens intestine  
  - 3. Stops night sweating  

- **Indications**  
  - 1. For insomnia, palpitation, forgetfulness, dream disturbed sleep with dizziness due to heart Yin and blood deficiency or heart and kidney disharmony. Used with Yuan Zhi, Suan Zao Ren.  
  - 2. For constipation due to large intestine dryness. Used with Xin Ren, Tao Ren, Chen Pi, Song Ren (as Wu Ren Wan).  
  - 3. For night sweating due to heart Yin deficiency. Used with Mu Li, Wu Wei Zi.  
  - 4. Hair loss.

- **Dosage and administration**  
  - 10-20g decocted in water for an oral dose  
  - When used topically it is dry-fried until the oil seeps out.  

- **Cautions and contraindications**  
  - Contraindicated in cases with loose stools or phlegm disorders.
Yuan Zhi (远志)  
(Radix Polygalae)

- **English name:** Chinese senega root, polygala  
- **Literal English translation:** “profound will”  
- **Latin Name:** Polygala tenuifolia Willd.  
- **Pharmaceutical name:** Radix Polygalae Tenuifoliae  
- **Where grown:** Shanxi, Shaanxi, Hebei, Henan, Jilin  
- **When harvested:** spring or autumn  
- **Used part:** root  
- **Flavor and properties:** Bitter, acrid, slightly warm  
- **Channel entered:** Heart, Lung
Yuan Zhi (远志)
(Radix Polygalae)

**Functions**
- 1. Calms spirit (Shen)
- 2. Resolves phlegm and open orifice
- 3. Resolves phlegm and stop cough
- 4. Reduces abscess and reduce swelling

**Indications**
- 1. For insomnia, palpitation, forgetfulness due to heart and kidney disharmony. Used with Suan Zao Ren.
- 2. For epilepsy, mania, convulsion due to phlegm covered clear orifice. Used with Yu Jin, Shi Chang Pu
- 3. For cough due to phlegm. Used with Chuan Bei Mu, Ban Xia
- 4. For carbuncle, mastitis, topically use.

**Dosage and administration**
- 5-15g decocted in water for an oral dose
- Can cause nausea and vomiting.

**Cautions and contraindications**
- 1. Contraindicated for yin deficiency with heat signs.
- 2. Caution in cases with peptic ulcers or gastritis.

**Modern study**
- 1. Effect on mucosal membranes: increase secretions in the bronchioles and acts as expectorants.
- 2. Effect on the uterus: stimulation of the uterus.
He Huan Pi (合欢皮)  
(Cortex Albiziae) 

- **English name:** mimosa tree bark, albizza 
- **Literal English name:** “collective happiness bark” 
- **Latin Name:** Albizia julibrissin Durazz. 
- **Pharmaceutical name:** Cortex albizziae julibrissin 
- **Where grown:** throughout China, especially Hubei, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Anhui 
- **When harvested:** summer, autumn 
- **Used part:** bark 
- **Flavor and properties:** Sweet, neutral 
- **Channel entered:** Heart, liver
He Huan Pi (合欢皮)  
(Cortex Albiziae)

• **Function**  
  – 1. Calms spirit (Shen) and sooth liver Qi  
  – 2. Moves blood and reduces swelling

• **Indications**  
  – 1. For insomnia, anxiety, restlessness and depression. It is good at calming Shen and relieving depression. Used with Dan Shen, Ye Jiao Teng, Bai Zi Ren.  
  – 2. For traumatic injury, bone fracture, carbuncle and lung abscess. Used with Ru Xiang, Mo Yao.

• **Dosage and administration**  
  – 10-15g decocted in water for an oral dose

• **Cautions and contraindications**  
  – None noted

• **Addendum**  
  – He Huan Hua (Flos Alizziae Julibrissin)  
    • The flower of this plant  
    • Sweet and neutral  
    • Promote the free flowing of constrained Liver Qi, invigorates the blood, and calms the spirit.  
    • Used primarily for insomnia, poor memory, and irritability due to constrained emotions, especially when accompanied by epigastric pain and feelings of pressure in the chest.
Ye Jiao Teng (夜交藤) / Shou Wu Teng (首乌藤)  
(Caulis Polygoni Multiflori)

- **English name:** fleeceflower vine, polygonum vine  
- **Literal English name:** “vine to pass through the night”  
- **Latin Name:** Polygonum multiflorum Thunb.  
- **Pharmaceutical name:** Caulis Polygoni multiflori  
- **Where grown:** Henan, Hubei, Guangxi, Guangdong, Guizhou, Sichuan, Jiangsu  
- **When harvested:** autumn, winter  
- **Used part:** vine  
- **Flavor and properties:** Sweet, slightly bitter, neutral  
- **Channel entered:** Heart, liver
Ye Jiao Teng (夜交藤) / Shou Wu Teng (首乌藤) (Caulis Polygoni Multiflori)

• Actions
  – 1. Calms spirit (Shen)
  – 2. Unblocks channels
  – 3. Expels wind and stop itching

• Indications
  – 1. For insomnia due to heart Yin and blood deficiency. Used with Suan Zao Ren, Bai Zi Ren.
  – 2. For Bi syndrome due to wind dampness with blood deficiency. Used with Dang Gui, Ji Xue Teng, Dan Shen.
  – 3. For itching due to wind dampness. External wash.

• Dosage and administration
  – 9-15g decocted in water for an oral dose

• Cautions and contraindications
  – None noted
Ling Zhi (灵芝)  
(Ganoderma)

- **English name:** Ganoderma, Lucid Ganoderma, Reishi Mushroom
- **Latin Name:** Ganoderma lucidum.
- **Pharmaceutical name:** Lingchih
- **When harvested:** spring or summer
- **Used part:** Entire plant
- **Flavor and properties:** Sweet, slightly bitter, warm
- **Channel entered:** Heart, lung and kidney
Ling Zhi (灵芝) (Ganoderma)

• Actions
  - 1. Calms spirit (Shen)
  - 2. Stops coughing and calm wheezing
  - 3. Tonify Qi

• Indications
  - 1. For insomnia due to heart and spleen deficiency, or Qi and blood deficiency. Used along or with Suan Zao Ren, Long Yan Rou.
  - 2. For coughing and wheezing due to phlegm dampness or cold phlegm.
  - 3. For shortness of breath, fatigue, poor appetite, loose stool due to spleen Qi deficiency, or weakness and soreness of lower back and knee, dizziness due to kidney and liver deficiency.

• Dosage and administration
  - 6-12g decocted in water for an oral dose
  - 1.5-3g as powder.
  - The broken spore of Ling Zhi is the best.

• Cautions and contraindications
  - None noted
• Section 2 Herbs that nourish heart and calm spirit
  – 1. Suan Zao Ren 酸枣仁 (Semen Ziziphi Spinosae)
  – 2. Bai Zi Ren 柏子仁Semen Platycladi
  – 3. Yuan Zhi 远志 (Radix Polygalae)
  – 4. He Huan Pi 合欢皮 Cortex Albiziae
  – 5. Ye Jiao Teng (Shou Wu teng) 夜交藤 Caulis Polygoni Multiflori
  – 6. Ling Zhi 灵芝 Ganoderma

Practice questions

• 1. Long Gu and Mu Li are usually:
  – A. Decocted 20-30 minutes before adding other substances.
  – B. Decocted 10 minutes later than other substances.
  – C. Decocted with other substances.
  – D. Dissolved in the boiled decoction.

• 2. Which of the following herbs is the best for palpitations, insomnia, impaired memory, profuse dreams, and abnormal sweating:
  – A. He Huan Pi
  – B. Yuan Zhi
  – C. Ye Jiao Teng
  – D. Suan Zao Ren
Practice questions

• 3. Which of the following spirit-calming herbs also invigorates the blood and stops pain:
  – A. He Huan Pi
  – B. Ye Jiao Teng
  – C. Yuan Zhi
  – D. Suan Zao Ren

• 4. Besides nourishing the heart and calming spirit, Bai Zi Ren also:
  – A. Clears Liver and strengthens spleen.
  – B. Cools the blood and excretes dampness.
  – C. Moistens intestines and relieves constipation.
  – D. Reduces swelling and dissipates nodules.

Practice questions

• 5. Which of the following spirit-calming herbs also bind leaking:
  – A. Long Gu
  – B. Dai Zhe Shi
  – C. Mu Li
  – D. Yuan Zhi