

The Classical Formulas for Spring Stagnation – by Dr. Huang Huang

Translated by Allen Tsaur

During the transition from spring into summer, people are often faced with the sleepiness. Many yawn frequently, unable to prevent themselves from falling asleep. Some even feel dizzy or confused. And some find themselves becoming intoxicated with alcohol easily. What causes all of these? Some call this “Spring Stagnation.”

Well, let’s just simply call it Spring Stagnation. The appearance of these symptoms do have something to do with the transition of the season. In spring, the day time is longer than the night time, so some people experience the lack of sleep. In spring, there is an abundance of allergens, which causes rashes, itchiness, agitation, and restlessness, thus many find it hard to be at peace. Further, many people lacked exercise from the previous winter, which often combined with their enormous appetite during the winter months. If they had inappropriate diet nourishment during the winter, then it would cause a variety of conditions such as weight gain, higher blood lipids and sugar levels... etc. So as spring arrives, the symptoms also manifest.

There are many different causes of Spring Stagnation that are unique to each person. So the treatment strategy could be clearing the heat, regulating the blood, transforming the phlegm... etc. So there will also different formulas.

In a clinical case, I saw a middle-age male in his 40s. His chief complains were that he got intoxicated easily in the spring, he felt tired physically, and snored thunderously at night. His greatest concern was that he had an intense lower-back pain that stretched down to his lower limbs – which was really painful for him to bear. Under the western diagnosis, his blood lipid level was around 4 (**mmol/L?**), uric acid level in blood was 501 (**μmol/L**), he had abnormal Liver functions, and had acne all over his face. I prescribed to him Gui Zhi Fu Ling Wan (Cinnamon Twig and Poria Pill) with Da Huang, (**Huai?**) Niu Xi, and Ge Geng. He reported back in a month, with greatly enhanced energy, as though he became a new person.

Last month at the National Classical Formula Training Course in Jinggang Shan, one participant asked me to diagnose him during the break. He reported that he yawned frequently, which he had no control over. He had a good constitution and a robust physique, so I told him to have the combined formula of Da Chai Hu Tang (Major Buplurum Decoction) and Gui Zhi Fu Ling Wan (Cinnamon Twig and Poria Pill). A few days ago, I received a message from him. He wrote, *“Classical formulas are truly miraculous! I had the decoction and the yawning stopped immediately.”*

This time when I traveled to Germany to give a lecture there, the travel exhausted me. I also caught a cold on the plane. I felt exhausted when I arrived in Germany; a folliculitis also

appeared on the back of my neck. I was lucky to have with me the granule of Ge Gen Tang (Kudzu Decoction) and Gui Zhi Fu Ling Wan (Cinnamon Twig and Poria Pill). I combined the two granules and consumed it in the evening. I broke out a sweat at the middle of the night, and I immediately felt more relaxed. The next day I had the stamina to give the lecture.

From here we can see that Da Chai Hu Tang (Major Bupleurum Decoction), Gui Zhi Fu Ling Wan (Cinnamon Twig and Poria Pill), and Ge Gen Tang (Kudzu Decoction) all have the effect of stimulating the energy level and relieving the stagnation.

There is also specific type of people who are especially prone to Spring Stagnation – the artistic adolescents who have vigorous Qi and Blood. As the flowers blossom, their spring-mood (sexual arousal) thrives, and they day-dream and fantasize. At night, they have frequent spring-dreams (sexual dreams), they sleep way past the sunrise, and they don't feel peaceful at night. This will also make them feel exhausted. For this type of Spring Stagnation, I usually think of formulas such as Wen Dan Tang (Warm the GB Decoction), Zhi Zi Hou Po Tang (Gardenia and Magnolia Bark Decoction), Ban Xia Hou Po Tang (Pinellia and Magnolia Bark Decoction), Si Ni San (Frigid Extremity Powder)... etc, that transform phlegm, relieve agitation, regulate Qi, resolve suppression, settles the mind... etc.

This type of pattern, the senior practitioners from my hometown call it “Qi-Fire pattern.” This is the manifestation of stagnant Qi turning into fire. Based on their experience, in clinic I like to combine Ban Xia Hou Po Tang (Pinellia and Magnolia Bark Decoction) and Zhi Zi Hou Po Tang (Gardenia and Magnolia Bark Decoction), with the addition of Huang Qin and Lian Qiao to clear the heat within the chest. I call this Ba Wei Chu Fan Tang (8-Flavor to Relieve the Agitation Decoction: *Zhi Zi 15, Huang Qin 15, Lian Qiao 15, Zhi Ke 15, Ban Xia 15, Fu Ling 15, Hou Po 15, and Su Geng 15*). If the patient also has a red, greasy face, with headache and dizziness, then I further add in herbs such as Da Huang and Huang Lian. When the fire is cleared, then the patient will naturally feel clear and refreshed.

For a very long time, exhaustion and lethargy have been believed to be caused by Qi Deficiency, KI Deficiency, SP Deficiency, or even the HT Blood Deficiency... So the treatment formulas would be filled with herbs like Dang Shen, Huang Qi, Shu Di Huang, and Bai Zhu. Some patients even blindly consume herbs like Ren Shen, Dong Chong Xia Cao, Lu Rong... etc, in order to tonify themselves. This trend of “nourishing and tonification” began during the Jin and Yuan dynasties (1115-1368 AD), and thrived during the Ming and Qing dynasties (1368-1912 AD). Today, this trend has become even more extreme. If we trace back to the root, the ancients treated illness with only three major strategies: promoting sweat, causing vomit, and purging through bowel and urine. Once the evil pathogen is removed from the body, then the person's Qi will return to balance by nature. Why does one need any herb for tonification or nourishment?

For the great practitioners in the past such as Zhang Zihe and Xu Lingtai, who strongly attacked the method of tonification and nourishment in their time; if their spirits are out there somewhere in heaven, if they take a glance at today's world – then I wonder what they would think about.