Discourse on warm-heat disease

By Charles Chace

The section in the previous issue ended with these words:

Now, in a human body the epigastrium is in the upper abdomen, which is located in the position of the middle [burner]. If it is painful to palpation, if there is spontaneous pain, or there is glomus and distension, one should use bitter draining [medicinals] that will enter the abdominal area.

One must examine [the disease in the context of] the tongue [coat], for instance, whether it is yellow or turbid, [and this condition] can be treated with Xiao Xian Xiong Tang (Minor Sinking Into the Chest Decoction) or Xie Xin Tang (Drain the Epigastrium Decoction) depending on the symptoms.

On yellow tongue [coats] LGH, p. 105-111

再前云舌黄或浊，须要有地之黄。 
As previously stated, the tongue [coat in above condition] may be either yellow or turbid, but it must have a yellow root [to qualify as a yellow tongue coat].

LGH, p. 125

若光滑者，乃无形湿热，中有虚象，大忌前法。 
If [the tongue] is glossy and slimy, even though the damp-heat lacks form, the middle has evidently become deficient and the previously mentioned methods are strongly contraindicated [ie. using bitter draining medicinals].

LGH, p. 448, 449

若未见此等舌，不宜用此等法，恐其中有湿聚太阴为病，或寒湿错杂为痛，或气凝为胀，又当以别法治之。 
If one does not see tongue [presentations] such as these, then methods such as these cannot be used for fear [that the fullness, distention and pain] in the middle [burner] is due to damp accumulation and fullness in the tai yin. Alternatively, there may

Ye Tian-Shi’s Wen Re Lun

温热论

温热论
be a mixture of cold and damp producing pain, or an obstruction of qi producing distension. In such cases, one should use alternate methods to treat [the condition].

再黄苔不甚厚而滑者，热未伤津，犹可清热透表。

When a yellow tongue coat is not very thick and is glossy, [this means] the heat has not yet damaged the liquids; one may still clear heat and evict [the pathogen] through the exterior.

LGH, p. 109

若虽薄而干者，虽去而津受伤也。

Even though [a yellow tongue coat] is thin yet dry, [this means that] although the pathogen has been eliminated, the liquids have been damaged.

LGH, p. 109, 111

苦重之药当禁忌，甘寒轻剂可也。

In this case, the use of bitter and heavy medicinals is contraindicated. Sweet, cold and light formulas are appropriate and can be used.

论舌绛

On crimson tongues

再论其热传营，舌色必绛。绛深红色也。

As for [conditions where] heat has been passed to the construction aspect, the tongue color will be crimson. Crimson is a deep red color.

LGH, p. 114-116

初传色中兼黄白色，此气分之邪未尽也，壅卫透音，两和可也。

If, in the initial stages of the passage [of a warm pathogen into the construction aspect], a yellow/white colored [tongue coat] appears on a crimson colored [tongue], this means that the pathogen in the qi aspect has not completely departed. By draining the defence and evicting the construction, both [aspects] can be harmonised.

LGH, p. 115, 167

纯绛鲜泽者，包络受病也，宜犀角、鲜生地、连翘、郁金、石菖蒲等。

If [the tongue] is entirely a bright lustrous crimson [color], the Pericardium has become diseased and one should use medicinals such as Xi Jiao (Rhinoecori Cornu), Xian Sheng Di [Huang] (Rehmanniae Radix, fresh), Lian Qiao (Forsythiae Fructus), Yu Jin (Curcumae Tuber) and Shi Chang Pu (Acori tatarinowii Rhizoma).

LGH, p. 172

延之数日，或平素心虚有痰，外热一陷，里络就闭，非菖蒲、郁金等所能开。

If this [condition] persists for several days, or [the patient] has constitutional Heart deficiency with phlegm, then all the external heat has to do is sink [inward], and it will cause the interior networks to become blocked. Then neither [Shi] Chang Pu (Acori tatarinowii Rhizoma) nor Yu Jin (Curcumae Tuber) will be capable of opening [the phlegm heat in the Pericardium].

Illustrative case histories

Case four: Pao, an elderly [person] with vacuity below, [suffered from] spring warmth contracted in the upper [burner]. [He presented with] phlegm-moisture and confusion. His tongue was red with a yellow coat, and his face was red with slight spasms. First, clear the upper warmer.

Tian Zhu Huang (Bambusae Concretio silicea)
Jin Yin Hua (Lonicera Flos)
Zhu Ye Xin (Phyllostachys avicularis Folium)
Lian Qiao (Forsythia, Fructus)
Zhu Li (Bambusae Succus)

Comment: In this case the phlegm-moisture and confusion were indicative of a phlegm heat pathogen accumulating in the Pericardium. Mister Ye therefore used Tian Zhu Huang (Bambusae Concretio silicea) and Zhu Li (Bambusae Succus) to transform phlegm, compounded with Zhu Ye Xin, (Phyllostachys avicularis Folium) and Lian Qiao (Forsythia, Fructus) to evict pathogens to ensure that the formless heat did not become bound with the substantive phlegm.

须用牛黄丸、至宝丹之类以开其闭，恐其昏厥为病也。

One must use medicinals such as Niu Huang Wan (Cattle Gallstone Pill) and Zhi Bao Dan (Greatest Treasure Special Pill) to open these blockages, lest this clouding reversal progress to tetany.

再舌绛而舌中气虚者，乃心胃火燔，劫烁津液，即黄连、石膏亦可加入。

If the tongue is crimson and the centre of the tongue is dry, then fire flares up from the Heart and Stomach plundering and torching the fluids. Therefore, Huang Lian (Coptidis Rhizoma) and Shi Gao (Gypsum) can be added to [the formula].

若烦渴烦热，舌心干，四边色红，中心或黄或白者，此非血分也，乃上焦气热燥矣。

If there is vexing thirst and vexing heat, the tongue is dry in the center and red around all four sides with a yellow or white [coat] in the center, this is not a blood aspect [indicator] but a [sign of] qi [aspect] heat in the upper burner torching the liquids.

急用凉膈散，散其无形之热，再看其后转变可也。
One should immediately administer Liang Ge San (Cool the Diaphragm Powder) to scatter the formless heat. Furthermore, one should look for [and treat the symptoms of] its subsequent transmission and transmutation.

LGH, p. 261-263, 301 (table)

![Riddle me this!](image)

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The answer to the previous issue’s riddle was Dong Chong Xia Cao (cordyceps). It was answered first by Alasdair Reed, of Greenwich NSW, who has won a year’s free subscription to The Lantern!

Another riddle: Riddle me this!

**Answer**

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If the tongue is crimson and difficult to extend beyond the teeth when one attempts to stick it out of the mouth, then phlegm obstructs the root of the tongue and internal wind is present.

LGH, p. 115-117

If the tongue is crimson, bright and shiny, the Stomach yin has collapsed. One should immediately administer medicinals in the sweet, cool and moistening categories.

If the tongue is crimson and dry, fire pathogens have plundered the construction [aspect, and a treatment strategy] of cooling the blood and clearing fire is essential.

If the tongue is crimson and dry only in the centre, this is Stomach heat, and the construction [qi] of the Heart has been scorched. One should add medicinals that clear the Heart into formulas that clear the Stomach.

LGH, p. 176

If the tongue is crimson and has a thick stickiness on it that resembles a tongue coat but is not a tongue coat, the middle harbors dirty turbid qi and one should immediately add aromatic, fragrant [medicinals] to expel [the turbid qi].

舌绛，欲伸而口动齿难张者，热阻舌根，有内风也。

There are various other tongue colorations and their corresponding treatment strategies, including:

- If the tongue is crimson, dry and yellow, this indicates the association of Fire with Earth, and one should use medicinals to cool the Blood and clear Fire.
- If the tongue is crimson and dry with patches of yellow-white spots, this is a sign of stagnation in the Stomach, and one should use medicinals to detoxify and clear the Stomach.
- If the tongue is crimson and dry with yellow spots, this indicates the presence of Stagnant Phlegm in the Stomach, and one should use medicinals to transform Phlegm and clear the Stomach.

LGH, p. 116, 117

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LGH, p. 176

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LGH, p. 176

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LGH, p. 176
Otherwise, [the dryness and crimson color] will extend to the tip, indicating a drying of the liquids and an exuberation of fire.

If only the tongue tip is crimson and dry, this means that there is a flaring ascension of Heart fire and one should use *Dao Chi San* (Guide Out the Red Powder) to drain its [associated] bowel [ie. Small Intestine, which separates clear from murky fluids].

**If a tongue coat is white, thick and dry, this means that there is Stomach dryness and damage to [the Lung] qi. In addition to medicinals that enrich and moisten, one should add *Gan Cao* (Glycyrrhizae Radix). This is based on the idea that *Gan Cao* (Glycyrrhizae Radix) protects [the Stomach] and restores the liquids.**

If a tongue coat is white and thin, there is externally contracted wind-cold, and one should course and dissipate it.

If [a tongue coat] is white, dry and thin, the Lung liquids have been damaged. One should add medicinals in the light clearing class — such as *Mai Dong* (Ophiopogonis Radix), *Hua Lu* (Indigo Naturalis) and *Lu Gen* (Phragmitis Rhizoma) juice — that ascend to the upper [part of the body].

If there is a white tongue coating covering a crimson tongue body, there is suppressed dampness and lurking heat. One should first drain dampness to evict the heat while protecting [the liquids] from desiccation.

**If, at the beginning of the disease, the tongue is just dry, but the spirit is not yet clouded, one should immediately nourish the correct [qi] while adding small doses of pathogen evicting medicinals.**

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Regardless of [the tongue's] color, if prickles have developed on it, there is extreme heat in the upper burner. One must rub down the body with a black cloth soaked in cool mint water [to dissipate heat toxins]. If this is effective, then [the condition] is mild. However, if [the prickles] return, then [the condition] is critical.

**If the tongue coat is not dry, but [the patient] feels extreme [gastric] oppression, this pertains to an exuberance of Spleen dampness.**

If [the patient's] spirit-affect is alert and relaxed, but the tongue is so enlarged that the patient cannot stick it out of his mouth, this is an indicator of Spleen dampness and Stomach heat causing extreme constraint transforming into wind and toxins extending to the mouth. One should add *Da Huang* (Rhei Radix et Rhi zoma) powder into a prescription which otherwise suits the patient and the tongue swelling will disperse on its own.

**If the spirit is already clouded, this reflects an internal exhaustion, and [the patient] cannot be saved with medicinals.**
Therefore, when there is an accumulation of damp-heat qi mingled together with grain qi then there is a surplus of earth, and this [pathological] fullness floods upward [producing the above mentioned symptoms]. One should use aromatic, acrid and dissipating medicinals such as Xing Tou Cao aka Pei Lan Ye (Eupatorii Folium) to expel [the pathogen], thus causing [these symptoms] to abate.

_LGH, p. 108_

If the tongue [coat] is black and glossy, water is overcoming fire. This is a yin pattern and one should [administer] warming [methods].

_LGH, p. 112_

If the colour [of the tongue coat] is black and glossy, water is overcoming fire. This is a yin pattern and one should [administer] warming [methods].